



## PREFACE.

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THE completion of the third volume of *Old Yorkshire* again gives me pleasant occasion to express my earnest thanks to both contributors and subscribers for the generous help they have given me. With this help I trust that I have been enabled to produce a volume containing much valuable matter, which will, I hope, find permanence through its pages. Many of the original papers are on subjects of interest to antiquaries generally, to Yorkshiremen especially, and of historical value and importance. These have been contributed by writers of known ability, whose researches are evidenced by the array of facts to be found in their contributions.

The pages of *Old Yorkshire* are not intended to supply a history of any particular place, but only to present some solid and valuable information; some leading facts and incidents relating to interesting localities in the county, and to place these before the reader in a readable and attractive form.

*Old Yorkshire* was started with one leading idea, namely, that of rendering service to the antiquarian, literary, and historical worlds; by presenting new and valuable information upon every branch of historical, antiquarian, topographical, and other kindred subjects, and thus become

a work of permanent utility and value. It does not aim to supplant or take the place of any local history; on the other hand it was hoped that it might be a stimulus to any zealous antiquary in each of the historic towns and villages of Yorkshire, who could write the history of his own district. I have reason to believe that this desire has been realized, and I trust that the good example may be speedily followed by others.

*Old Yorkshire* is sent into the world in the spirit with which Miss Mitford, the gifted authoress of "Our Village," wrote when she said that, "she cared less for any reputation she might have gained as a writer of romance than she did for the credit to be derived from the less ambitious, but more useful office of faithfully uniting and preserving those fragments of tradition, experience, and biography, which give to history its living interest."

In first projecting the issue of *Old Yorkshire* I laid down the lines which I proposed to follow, and which I hoped would secure for the work a certain measure of success. That hope has, so far, been fully realized, and should the contributors and subscribers accord me their further support, I assure them, that year by year, my best efforts shall be given to make *Old Yorkshire* even more worthy of public acceptance.

*Osborne House, Morley, near Leeds,*  
*September, 1882.*

W. S.





## INTRODUCTION.

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SEVEN hundred years in the history of the world is but a little space of time ; it is as yesterday amongst nations ; it does not by far even reach to the period of the greatest mental, municipal, and military feats of the human race. As including the whole notable career of a people it is but an evidence of newness, immaturity, and the possibility of something yet to come. Three or four times that number of years ago Europe contained people whose mental attainments have produced results that are deathless, and to-day are among the guiding principles of our knowledge and civilization. Greece had then fixed the laws of liberty, had sung the Iliad and fought at Thermopylæ. Two thousand years ago the chain of Roman sentinels stretching from the bleak shores of the Atlantic, to the sun-parched conquests in the east, was the medium by which the mind-work of a once greatest but then decaying people was slowly imparted to other people just rising from the mind-sleep of barbarism. Two thousand years ago Rome was young, in the full pride of her manhood and the lust of her matchless prowess, crowned with the bays of universal conquest, and elated with the power of universal Empire. Greece, her instructor, and then her victim, was sinking into senile obscurity ; her once invincible sword had become less potent than the pastoral crook of the shepherds of her plains. As this power of mind and sword once belonging to the east had passed to her, so was it passing from her, and slowly following the course of the sun, transmitting itself through Roman channels to the far west. And in the

midst of all these Empirical changes the time of the Old England, for which we have so fond a love, so just a pride, and for which we can boast so proud a fame, was coming, though it was coming slowly. For centuries yet our land, known then only as a region of barbarism, was destined to wait before it became an item in the world's history. If this then be all that can be said for Old England, what can be said for Old Yorkshire? Little, yea very little!

Seven hundred years ago, Yorkshire had scarcely begun to exist as a distinct province and a geographical expression. It was not a county until 1177, when Henry II. created the County of Lancaster, and arranged the present assize districts. But it was a land where men had lived who had made their name famous, among their compatriots at least, in arms and in song. To the successive waves of invaders, who had planted their foot upon our soil, it was a land of dread; a land of toil and trouble, severed from the accessible and controlled portion of the island by the waters of the Humber and Ouse on the east, and the rugged mountains on the west. To the Roman, it was the home of the *Brigantes*, highlanders as the word implies, who for a hundred years defied the Roman arms; an unsafe spot for the intruder and the unwelcome; one to be strongly garrisoned in York, to be cloven by many roads, and held by many *castra*, notwithstanding which the brigand Celt maintained his liberty on the hills for more than three hundred years yet to come. So to the Teuton who named the whole island Angle-land, and changed the ancient name of Eboracum into Eoforwic, it was also nameless; though he could conquer it by slow degrees and with much toil, yet he could but describe it as Northumbria, not as the land of one of his tribes, of the East-Saxon, the West-Saxon, or the South-Saxon, but as the land north of the Humber, belonging to whom he could not say, for in the hills the Celt was still unsubdued. And when the Anglican kingdom ended in 867, with the storming of York and the death of Osbert and Ella, it still continued to be Northumbria. It gave us the earliest recorded native poet in Cædmon, the sweet singer of Whitby, it also gave us the first and not the least valuable of historians in Bede, of Wearmouth, whose venerable name is still as a bright light shining in outer darkness. Its fame in arms remained fresh down to the times of the Norman, who could not penetrate to its furthest bounds, and who has left us a most eloquent if despairing account of his appreciation of the danger of dealing with it, in the bloody, heart-rending devastation that he perpetrated as the annihilation of a people who would not be

subdued. Its political and military history, then, lies in a few words; whether as Eboracum, Eoforwic, or York, the capital of Northumbria, and Old Yorkshire has always been the centre of steadfast valour and unyielding freedom. The epitome of its social history is neither so brief nor so pleasant.

To those who know modern Yorkshire only, a picture of Old Yorkshire will almost appear incredible. The county of "broad acres" and millions of inhabitants of to-day is as exactly different from the county of our ancestors, even of the times later than the Norman era, as it is from the backwoods of America or the wilds of Zululand. Then in Yorkshire as now in those places, wild beasts roamed in the unbroken woods, and birds of prey soared above the hills. The now uninterrupted acres of corn crops and root crops covering valleys and hills, that our fathers only knew as shady forest or woodland waste, are the results of comparatively recent industry. The miles of streets teeming with population and wealth, that our great towns now exhibit, had not one prototype on the birthday of Old Yorkshire. The present railways are not more superior as a means of locomotion and transit, to the highways of half a century ago, than were those highways to the ancient roads. So difficult and costly was transit, even in the times of the Plantagenets, that even in places ten miles apart, famine has prevailed at the one while superabundance has been found at the other.

It is a fact that in the ten largest towns of the West Riding the number of Volunteers is to-day greater than the whole male population of Yorkshire in the time of the Domesday survey. According to Sir Henry Ellis, the total population of the county as registered in the survey did not exceed 40,000; perhaps half the number of the inhabitants of the modern Hunslet. The Domesday census may, however, be abnormally low, the population being then very largely diminished by the Norman desolation, but if we make the most liberal allowance and doubling the calculations, assume that Yorkshire contained 80,000 people in the days of Edward the Confessor, its sterile condition may be measured by the fact that at the time of the survey the adjoining county of Lincoln, swampy, and not the most fruitful at the best, contained 126,500 souls.

The development of the trade, population, and wealth of the county is a story of great interest and curiosity, an interest not lessened by the fact that it was co-existent with the development of freedom. It occurs at the era of the initial decay of chivalry and the uncontrolled

power of the church, but whether by consequence or coincidence we need not stop to enquire. For two centuries after the Conquest the lot of the Saxon had been hard as that of a slave, the rule of the Norman grinding and arbitrary as that of a conqueror. The third century saw a great amelioration, yet still the lot of the native was intolerable. His food, chosen for him by Act of Parliament, was stinted in quantity and ungenerous in quality. His raiment was coarse in material, and of a cut that fixed him as a member of a subordinate class. His chances of rising in the world were extinguished, as he was born, so must he die, and so must his children die also. His sons were not allowed to enter into trade, they were the serfs of the glebe, from which they must not depart. His wife and his daughters must not indulge in the common vanities of dress so dear to the sex; the golden hair of the peasant girl, be it ever so ample and fair, was not to be adorned as was the hair of the tradesman's wife; nor was the head-dress of the tradesman's wife to emulate that of the squire's wife, who in turn was to show a marked inferiority of ornament to that of the knight's dame. Class distinction ruled everywhere. Its relics did not die with "Old Yorkshire." I know a large estate where, three generations ago, the landlady was frequently wont to visit the farmers' houses about dinner time to ascertain the kind of food her tenants indulged in, and among them there was scarcely one who dared to let her see that they could afford to eat the chickens or ducks they reared, for her sense of ownership was dangerous to opposition to her will, and her oft-expressed maxim was that "bacon and buttermilk were food good enough for farmers." And these are the viands that Edward III.'s Act of Parliament prescribed for them. A few years ago, a refractory farm-servant on the Wolds was punished (I believe sent to prison) ostensibly for not attending church according to one of the fusty Acts of Parliament that regulated Old Yorkshire in common with the other counties.

How little of home, too, in the wider sense, was there in Old Yorkshire for the lowly born! It was almost as a residence in a foreign land. The church ministered in a foreign tongue; the few prayers that the peasantry could gather, were of the lips, not of the heart; but as in the case of food and raiment, soul-welfare was regulated by authority, and it must be admitted that in Old Yorkshire especially the Ecclesiastical Parliament had provided a numerically ample machinery for the purpose. How little of intercourse there was between the different grades! The peasant spoke the

Anglian dialect of his forefathers, his lord spoke the Norman dialect of his forefathers, and the speech-severance was most fatal to concord. How little of justice there was done to the peasant of Old Yorkshire may be easily inferred from the fact that in the law-courts the charge against him, and the evidence for him had to be interpreted; for it was not until 1362, that law-proceedings were transacted in his own tongue, and an opportunity given him of understanding that which was raised against him.

The exact condition of Old Yorkshire six or seven centuries ago, can be ascertained. The doings of the aristocracy, and the mighty ones of the church, come before us in the *Placita de Quo Warranto*, which King Edward I. tried in 1290, with a view to check or abolish the abuses that had crept in during his father's reign; an extraordinary series of documents showing the grasping injustice of a feudal aristocracy. Of the hundreds of cases cited, almost every one included some encroachment on the rights or personal liberty of the peasant. His slender territorial rights were invaded; gallows were erected almost at will for his punishment; arbitrary legal authority over his freedom was usurped; the taxes which he must pay, the lord shirked; the game he reared was ferociously denied him; and the lands he claimed in his township as a common possession were filched from him. Bishops, Abbots, Barons, Priors and Prioresses, Knights and Squires, nay, even down to the country parson, were all arraigned. Their offences were manifold, but the great and oft-repeated crime was the monopoly of free warren and its concomitant sin, the emparking of lands. In this matter the temporal barons were exacting to the last degree; the spiritual barons down to Knights Templars and parish priests fairly kept abreast of them. They had to be pulled up for "crenellating" their manor-houses, turning them into castles, whence they could defy the law, the sheriff, and his *posse comitatus*. Thomas de Furnival was one of these offenders. The Prior of Bolton had free chase at Bolton and Hath, and free warren at Emmeshay and Esteby; the Master of the Temple and Francis le Tyeyes were of the many who claimed free warren and their lands quit from toll; William de Stopham came into court claiming free warren in Weston, by reason of the charter given to his father, Robert de Stopham. The ground of the claim was almost in every case the possession of a charter obtained from the weak and worthless Henry III., and it was difficult to set aside.

Perhaps, nowhere was the influence of aristocracy more visible and more potent than in the condition of the towns they frequented

and patronised ; it is very visible and very potent even yet ; it exists as a reality in York ; the desire to show its existence in Wakefield, has once or twice nearly brought that worthy old town to the fate of the frog that wanted to imitate the ox. But in the fourteenth century it was a fact of astounding proportions. The Subsidy Roll taken in 1379, and lately published by the Yorkshire Archæological Society, is the veracious document that has thrown the clearest light upon that subject. It seems almost past belief that the present great manufacturing towns of the West Riding were then not worthy even of being called villages, and that the towns of Doncaster, Pontefract, Selby, Bawtry, &c., now of so little influence notwithstanding the halo of "county" associations, were then of paramount importance. Yet such is the fact. The touchstone of comparison, cash, be it in the shape of taxes or rents, shows some strange results. The town having the highest tax in the Riding was Pontefract, it paid £14 8s. 10d., as against £11 13s. 4d. at Doncaster ; £6 11s. 2d. at Sheffield ; £6 6s. 0d. at Selby ; £6 3s. 4d. at Tickhill ; £5 18s. 0d. at Rotherham ; £4 15s. 8d. at Wakefield ; £4 7s. 0d. at Snaith, which no doubt had its connection with the Abbey of Selby to thank for two of its inhabitants, Thomas de Snayth "Sarjaunt," and Richard de Snayth, attorney, who each paid 6s. 8d. ; £4 9s. 2d. at Ripon ; £3 0s. 4d. at Leeds ; £2 1s. 6d. at Tadcaster ; £2 1s. 2d. at Knaresborough ; £2 0s. 10d. at Bawtry ; £2 0s. 2d. at Rothwell ; £1 16s. 2d. at Wetherby ; £1 13s. 8d. at Barnsley ; £1 6s. 4d. at Otley ; 19s. 4d. at Huddersfield, of which John de Mirfield, merchant, paid 2s. ; there were only other four tradesmen, a wright, a smith, a cobbler, and a tailor in the place, and not one man specified as being in the cloth trade, but there is one man named as residing there, John, surnamed "By-the-broke," for want of a better, or even another, who paid 4d., the lowest tax, but whose descendants have left a name inseparable from the trade of Huddersfield ; 23s. at Bradford, whose tradesmen were three hostilers, two tailors, one fuller, two shcemakers, and a mason ; and 12s. 8d. at Halifax, in the whole of which township there was not a single person of a specified trade. The rate of population has almost exactly followed the rate of taxes. Pontefract is the most populous with 306 families of married persons besides single persons ; Doncaster follows with 303, Selby 200, Sheffield 171, Rotherham 119, Leeds 50, Bawtry 45, Bradford 26. Pontefract and Doncaster were towns of commercial eminence ; Huddersfield, Halifax, Bradford, and Dewsbury, were of neither social nor commercial

importance. In Pontefract, society is represented by Thomas Elys, "Sarjaunt" at the law, and Anna, his wife; the church by two obsolete tradesmen, John Catelyn, and John Queldryk, pardoners, who must have been substantial men, as they paid 12d. each; in Doncaster by Richard de Asshe, another "Sarjaunt," and Elinora, his wife; in Pontefract there are fifteen merchants, of whom two pay 6s. 8d. tax, and three 3s. 4d.; six in Doncaster, but the most wealthy only pay 3s. 4d., of whom there are two; Rotherham has two merchants one paying 10s., the other 5s., they were therefore men of great means; Sheffield and Leeds had each one who paid 12d.; Bawtry one, Selby six, of 3s. 4d.; in drapers, the representatives of elegance in dress, Pontefract had great eminence, she had six, of whom two paid 3s. 4d. each; Doncaster had four, of whom two paid 2s.; Rotherham had two and Selby one, paying 12d. each; Sheffield and the other towns none. The great feature in all the towns is "mine host;" but for splendour and dignity in tapsters, Pontefract is again pre-eminent with William Boteler (in whom we very probably find an ex-servant from the Castle), and William de Karleyll, who each pay 3s. 4d., and whose hostelries are evidently fit accommodation for the travelling "quality" whom the castle will not take; other three pay 12d., and two 6d.; Doncaster has five "hostelries," one paying 3s. 4d.; Sheffield, to its credit be it spoken, had none; Rotherham one at 3s. 4d., and two at 12d.; Selby had two at 2s., and three at 12d., it was a town with a Lord-Abbot, and stately visitors; Leeds had two at 12d., one of them being John Passelew, most probably uncle of the future vicar and kinsman of Robert Passelew, "Esquier" of Potternewton, a man of rank, paying 20s. tax, the same as a knight. The mental condition of the mass of the population was deplorable; except the christian name that the church gave them, they were nameless: a fact that points plainly to the unsociability of semi-civilization. And when they came to coin names for themselves, of what type were they? Mostly the simple designation of their occupation or of the place where they resided. One is called "del Hoyle," another "in the loan"; a third, Ralph "by the yate"; and where humour is allowed a little play we find such names as "Adam yat Godmade," Robert "Slambihynd," William "Smalbyhind," and Avice "Hardwerd,"—a scold no doubt. It would be an agreeable task to carry the comparison further, but this introduction can scarcely afford the necessary room.