

## INTRODUCTION.

There is both pleasure and pain in looking back on the old, old days, but Elland having been my home for so many years is endeared to me by these memories of the past as no other place could ever be ; and as I scarcely think Elland itself would be were it not for the dear old Church, under the shadow of which I was born, and where I have had the privilege of worshipping for over seventy years.

My father, John Hamerton, of this town, was the son of John Hamerton, of Fold, in Shibden-dale, and afterwards

of Staups, Northowram, and the great-grandson of John Hamerton, of Peel House, Warley. He was educated first at the Grammar School, Stockport, and afterwards studied at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital, whilst they were united. He came to Elland in 1815, and lived with his aunt, Mrs. Greenwood, at West House, until 1821, when he married Mary Rushforth, daughter of Joseph Rushforth, of Hill Top, (now known as North House), and went to live at the Cross, next to the Parsonage, and there I was born on March 8th, 1824.

We were first allowed to attend afternoon Service at the age of five, and well I remember our rejoicings when, on Sunday mornings, the Church "loosed," as the expression is, and we saw the congregation coming out.

It is said that the first doctor who came to Elland hoped to establish a very good practice, having no rival, but he soon left in despair, and when questioned as to his reasons for not remaining said, "Elland people never needed a doctor, as the "posnet" was scarcely ever off the fire and they applied an oatmeal poultice inwardly every morning, and another every evening, so doing away with all need of drugs." At the time of my father's coming to Elland, Mr. Hiley was the only medical practitioner in the place; but my father's practice extended to Golcar, Longwood, Lindley, Norland, Stainland, Greetland, Brighouse, Scammonden, Rishworth, &c.

We left our old home at The Cross in 1830 for West House ; until 1834 we had a governess, and then my sister and

I were sent to school at Southport; strange little creatures we must have looked when starting on our journey. I remember we were dressed in nankeen pelisses, and little cottage bonnets, very simply trimmed with brown. We travelled to Southport partly by stage-coach, partly by chaise, and sometimes had to change conveyances as many as eight times,—a method of travelling which would now be considered very tedious and uncomfortable, especially in the cold of a “real old-fashioned winter,” and over so exposed a road as Blackstone Edge; this was, however, a great advance on my mother’s experience, who went to her first school riding on a pillion, behind her brother; her elder sister riding in the same manner behind her father, and their luggage—very little no doubt, according to present-day ideas—being carried behind a man-

servant. A pillion was a kind of little hard mattress cushion, fastened behind an ordinary saddle, on which children or ladies were able to ride, and when a lady rode behind a manservant he had a belt strapped round his waist for her to hold by.

Sometimes in returning from Southport we had to come in a barge on the Duke of Bridgwater's canal as far as Knott Mill, near Manchester, and very much we enjoyed the greater part of our water journey, but as we neared Knott Mill we were disgusted with the blackness of the canal; we used to tell our mother that we might dip our pens in and write with it, little thinking that our own beautiful clear river at Elland would one day be in the same sad state.

I think my pleasantest recollection

of a journey is of one taken when I was eight years old; at that time I had a severe illness, but was sufficiently recovered in May to be able to go out, and the beauty of the spring foliage and blossoms I can never forget. When able to travel I was taken to Redcar, driving all the way, while my little sister was consoled for not being able to go with me, by being taught by our grandmother to make button-holes and to stitch, the work being made easier for her by the use of pink thread. We drove first to Leeds, where we stayed the night, and next morning went on through Harewood, where I well remember the beauty of the trees. Beautiful, also, was the common at Harrogate, and most of the scenery as we passed through Knaresboro', Thirsk, and Northallerton, not far from where we saw the ruins of Mount Grace, and

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the conical hill of Rosebery Topping. What a great pleasure it would be to take that drive again! At Redcar, I first saw the sea, and when some time after there was a great flood in the Calder, with quite large waves, I told my sister that if she would place her hands on either side of her face so as to hide the land she would know what the sea was like.

While at school we were prepared for Confirmation by Mr. Jackson, the incumbent of Trinity Church, but were not confirmed until we came home, where the preparation was finished by Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Fraser. We were confirmed at Halifax, by Dr. Longley, Bishop of Ripon; the Parish Church was full of candidates, many of whom walked into Halifax from the out-lying districts. I was then six-

teen, my dear sister fourteen and a half. We did not return to school, and only studied in a very desultory way at home. At that time we began to teach in the Sunday school, the girls being then taught in Mrs. Grace Ramsden's school, behind the Church. The boys' school was at one time held in what is now called the "Old Prison," then it was removed to a large room in Casson Place, now a plumber's shop, and afterwards to the old Baptist Chapel in Jepson Lane, which is now the "Parish Room." Sunday school teaching was then a very different thing from what it is now, for the children of working people had little or no chance of learning even to read and write on week-days, as they had to go to work when very young, and that not for a few hours a day, but from early in the morning until late at night. Our old nurse, Jane Lumb, who

lived with us forty-nine years and three months, has often told us how she used to go to work at Greetland when only five years old ; she was too tiny to walk such a long distance, so one of the men who worked at the same place took pity on her, and carried her each way. So Sunday school teaching meant usually teaching the scholars to read. I remember teaching mine from a 'Reading made Easy,' with a pictorial alphabet at the end, shewing how 'A was an Archer and shot at a Frog,' &c. ; but this was religiously pasted down by the superintendent as likely to make the children inattentive, the pictures being so much more attractive than letters which, as yet, meant nothing to them.

There was then no "Whitsunday Treat," but at Christmas every scholar had a half-penny book and a bun,—re-

wards which were often valued more than the handsomest prizes are now. When Whitsuntide was first celebrated by a school feast, the scholars were regaled in the large room in Casson Place, where the Boys' school was held, while I believe the teachers had a tea at the Savile Arms, and for long after the school Feast became an institution the scholars had coffee and buns, but the teachers an elaborate tea.

Some time after we began to teach in the Sunday school Elland was arranged in districts for Tract distributing, when we had New Street, with our mother, as a district, and went in turns with an Aunt to Little Bradley, Raw Royds, and Brow Bridge.

In 1841 or 1842, the Sick Club was begun by Miss Caroline Atkinson and