

# NOTES:

(HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL)

MAINLY OF

## TODMORDEN AND DISTRICT

BEING A NARRATION OF

EVENTS AND TRAITS OF CHARACTER;

OR A SERIES OF

CATCHES, MATCHES AND SNATCHES COLLECTED FROM DIFFERENT

SOURCES; BY READING, PERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER

PEOPLE; AND ALSO FROM LEGENDS HANDED DOWN BY

TRADITIONARY RECITAL AND OTHERWISE.

*BY JOHN TRAVIS.*

---

**Hochdale:**

E. WRIGLEY AND SONS LIMITED, PRINTERS, ACKER STREET.

1896.

Many of the following pieces, tales or stories relate to matters and people once resident within the Townships of Todverry, Walvey, Standverry and Langvey, with sometimes a bunch of nettles or sweet-docks gathered in a distant field (the result of a journey over a neighbouring moor); also of an occasional handful of wild thyme, sweet majoram or sage picked up and thrown into the seething pot at random to renew the decoction, so that no offensive odour may arise, to disturb the sensitive organs of taste or smell of any reader who may in future turn the bundle over.

My Son; these maxim make a rule,  
And lump them aye thegither;  
The rigid righteous is a fool,  
The rigid wise anither.

The cleanest corn that e're was dight,  
May hae some files o' caff in,  
Sae ne'er a fellow creature slight,  
For random fits o' daffin.

Address to the "Unco-Gude."—*Burns*.

"And further, by these my son, be admonished; of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

Eccles. xii., 12.

"Oh that . . . . I had the indictment (or books) which mine adversary hath written."—Job xxxi., 35.



## DEDICATION.

---

**T**HO the memory of an old and outspoken friend, one who was sometimes slyly critical and severe. Also to the living members of the family of the late Mr. Peter Ormerod, formerly of Todmorden Edge, then of Stoneswood, Dulesgate, and later of Pexhouse, Todmorden, cotton spinner and manufacturer.

They will please accept this tribute of respect and esteem from one who knew, but will not flatter, the man, knowing as he did, to some extent at least, his strong and weak points.

Mr. Peter Ormerod was a well-read man, fond of anecdote and local nomenclature, who, in conversation with friends or casual acquaintances, often imparted rare bits of information to them, upon old and new subjects, being generally willing to take back scraps in kind, in exchange, which was to him a most congenial occupation at any time of day or night, could something be obtained or imparted in return.

He was not a proud man in any way, but had certain fixed notions about things and people generally, could take most of his acquaintances out of the square and weigh them up in a mild way, or "snatch a glance and mark the spot where Emma walked and wept"

Some of the pieces in the following pages can be clearly traced to his inspiration in one form or another, but have been somewhat re-cast. In one or more of them he himself comes in for personal notice by name, the piece being an old story of his boyish days, was characteristic, and in some degree foreshadowed the man of after days.

Mr. Ormerod knew me well from the year 1836 to the time of his death. At first I was a hand-weaver and lived at Woodshade, Todmorden, and his brother William was, about that time, one of the wardens at Todmorden Church for several years in succession. A friend of mine then said that I ought to go to a day-school and interested himself to the extent of seeing the trustees of the old Endowed School, near St. Mary's Church, Todmorden. The churchwarden for the time being was always a trustee, by virtue of his office,

from the foundation of the school, and could send one scholar there. The matter ripened and an arrangement was made, so that, in the spring of the following year, 1837, I was admitted as a free scholar, and except an interval of about three months I continued there gathering up such stores of learning as the place afforded, until the month of November, 1840.

There were four free scholars, and we all had to do something for the master or mistress for our tuition, besides our school work, "free scholars" indeed we were called so, but two of us had the school-room to sweep out twice a week, besides doing other sorts of work occasionally; the other two having to do the water-fetching and other different jobs of which I speak more particularly in an auto-biographical narrative of the principal events of my life. We none of us liked the schoolmaster or his wife any better for the work we had to do, but had to put up with it, and concluded that it did us no harm except in the opinions of the more advanced scholars.

Mr. William Ormerod, as representative of the Rev. Richard Clegg's Charity, was my sponsor, but his brother Peter, who had a stronger will, was the acting medium, and I gladly tender this acknowledgment to his regard and friendship for me. In such wise I obtained an education which was thought at the time to be good, and certainly I came to know more of the rudiments of knowledge than otherwise I might have done. For that I must always be thankful, but since those days in the past the world has been my schoolmaster, and has taught me other lessons not to be had without buffetings, where I have rubbed shoulder with various sorts of teachers and fellow-pupils.

As a writer for the press and otherwise, I am cognizant of many defects in style, and some prejudices in matter which to some people will be more apparent in the pages of "History and Biography" should they ever be printed. There my weaknesses will be found out, but I have read *Chaucer*, and must abide their judgment, having used names and local words the better to authenticate a tale, story or anecdote, perhaps not always polite.

The pieces range about in an eccentric manner, and include different sorts and conditions of people, from the professional beggar to the opulent manufacturer and merchant prince. That being so, the gamut is both high and low, yet the time for the *tune* is necessarily an hidden matter and must be left outside any sort of speculation at the present. Will the home readers pay the piper for his song?—they will doubtless pay for anything if they are suited, but that is the point where we may differ, however, let us hope on and see what will come out of the venture.

I have the honour to be,

Respectfully yours,

Woodbank,

JOHN TRAVIS.

Walsden, May 4th, 1892.



## BOOK I.

---

### The Name.

THE word Tadmor, as a place name, is mentioned in Volney's Ruins of Palmyra, and is without doubt that mentioned in I. Kings ix. 18, the particulars of which are given in a Bible Dictionary as follows:—"TADMOR, Tad'mor. *Palm-tree*,—change,—a city of great renown, built by Solomon, afterwards called Palmyra, situated in the wilderness of Syria, upon the borders of Arabia Desertia, about 160 miles eastward of Damascus, and 90 west of the Euphrates. It was seized by the Romans A.D. 273. Its ruins are several miles in extent, and astonish every traveller by their magnificence."

---

### Etymon.

It is not intended in giving the above quotation that the word Tadmor has any bearing upon our local name, only similarity. Yet there was in ancient times here a hamlet or village called Todmeredeane, Tod-mere-deane, Tomden, Tomerden, or Todmorden.

---

### The Inhabitants.

The dwellers in which had from time immemorial gone on in a quiet way, minding and managing their own business with great satisfaction to themselves. Hundreds of years later there came a dynasty of peaceable Kings to dwell in the village as curriers and cloggers by trade; first, John, then Benny, and John, his sons, and Edward succeeded his father Benjamin. The family of John, the uncle, died out or removed from the place over fifty years ago. These people were Quakers, and so humble in their business and trading qualities as to bend the knee, measure, and fit the feet of customers with clogs, pattens, boots or shoes, not warranted much, but that could be relied upon to wear well. Edward King dwelt long in Church-street, and on the Strand, being succeeded by his sons John and Ben in the trade of truefitters.