

LOWE R WHARFEDAILE.

BEING A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF THE
HISTORY, ANTIQUITIES AND SCENERY
OF THE PICTURESQUE
VALLEY OF THE WHARFE,
FROM CAWOOD TO ARTHINGTON.

BY
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"ROMANTIC RICHMONDSHIRE";
"CRAVEN AND NORTH-WEST YORKSHIRE HIGHLANDS," ETC.

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PREFACE.



THE following contribution to the history of a very notable part of Yorkshire, fulfils an obligation—explained in the Preface to the companion volume on *Upper Wharfedale*—to continue the story of the remaining portion of the picturesque Wharfe valley.

Starting at historic Cawood, with its memories of Cardinal Wolsey, I have investigated the records of every place from the junction of the river with the Ouse near Cawood, upwards along both banks, a distance of 25 miles, to the attractive domains of Harewood and Arthington. The latter, now a separate ecclesiastical parish taken from Adel, adjoins the old parish of Otley, where my previous work commenced. The district thus dealt with embraces an area of nearly two hundred square miles, and comprises some twenty ancient parishes of varying extent.

Being in remote times, as it still is, accessible by navigation from the ancient city of York, the district possesses many indications of having been cleared and settled at a very early period, and the story of Celt, Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, I have endeavoured to trace succinctly on the evidences of coeval remains and relics, many of which are illustrated by special engravings. These early settlements, and the general fertility of the lands thus appropriated, have operated in no small degree in obtaining for the district that value and importance it acquired in later times.

Quaint Thomas Fuller, writing in the days of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, furnishes a high opinion of the rich and charming vale of the Lower Wharfe and surrounding parts, and is moreover singularly exact in support of his praises. He tells us that when King Henry the Eighth, in 1541, made his progress to York, (journeying from Hatfield by the Doncaster road to Pontefract and thence (*see* page 38) to Cawood), Dr. Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, then attending on him, “shewed the King a valley which the Bishop avowed to be one of the richest that ever he found in all his travels through Europe. Within ten miles of Haselwood, the seat of the Vavasours,” he proceeds to say, “there were 165 manor-houses of lords, knights, and gentlemen of the best quality; 275 several woods, whereof some of them contain five hundred acres; 32 parks and 2 chases of deer; 120 rivers and brooks, whereof five be navigable, well stored with salmon and other fish; 76 water mills for the grinding of corn on the aforesaid rivers; 25 cole-mines, which

yield abundance of fuel for the whole county; 3 forges for the making of iron, and stone enough for the same. And within the same limits as much sport and pleasure for hunting, hawking, fishing, and fowling, as in any place of England besides."

These commendations surely prove the district to possess a more than ordinary importance and one worthy of particular record. The historic battle-grounds of Towton, Marston, and Bramham Moor all lie within the area of the Lower Wharfe, Ouse and Nidd, described by the venerable authority I have quoted. Much of this territory, indeed, is bound up with those great national struggles, which with short intervals of rest, continued from the 14th to the 17th centuries, the consequences whereof, affected in no small measure, the land-ownerships and other interests of the district. The old towns of Tadcaster—a place always of importance in warlike times—and Wetherby, were closely associated with those crises which culminated in the disasters of the Pilgrimage of Grace and Rising in the North, as well as with those later conspiracies of the Jacobites in the earlier half of the 18th century. Within the same area also lie all the old homes of the Fairfaxes,—those redoubtable veterans in arms who had not a little to do in directing the affairs of England during the gravest epoch of her history. Their old houses at Walton, Steeton, Nun Appleton, Newton Kyme, as well as in Virginia, will be found described and illustrated in this work. I have also appended a pedigree of the family brought down to the present time through the kind communications of the present noble representative of the house of Fairfax in America. Other old manor-houses and the (presumed) castles at Ryther, Bolton Percy, Tadcaster, Easedyke, Thorp Arch, and Wetherby, I have also specially described, and have stated, I believe, all that can be learnt in record and tradition concerning these ancient strongholds. Reminiscences of many famous families gather round most of these old manor places. The Percies of Tadcaster and Bolton Percy, the Rythers of Ryther, the Stapletons of Wighill, the Stanhopes of Grimston, the Whartons of Healaugh, the Oglethorpes of Bramham, the Gascoignes and Wentworths of Harewood, and other families of more than local renown have been dealt with in some detail, and in several instances the records are accompanied with original pedigrees.

It is, indeed, not a little remarkable, that a district in point of area comparatively small, should have been the home-land of so many distinguished families. I have to regret not being able to add to this interest some account of another illustrious family, which had close ties with the neighbourhood of Wighill, but my discoveries were made after that section of the work was printed. The Rev. George Walker, who became in 1661, rector of Kilmore and Chancellor of

Armagh, in Ireland, was for many years vicar of Wighill, and at least one of his children was a native of that parish. This family formed alliances with other prominent Wharfedale families. A son of the same vicar of Wighill, also a clergyman named George Walker, was the heroic defender of Derry during the terrible and protracted siege of 1689. His majestic monument now graces the Royal Bastion in that historic city. Walker may be justly described as the champion of the laws, religion, and liberties of this kingdom, and no man from the time of the Fairfaxes has done more to advance those principles of national freedom and religious toleration which have contributed not a little to build up the English Constitution of our own time.

Possibly, too, other important discoveries await the patient investigator of the historic district which I have, however feebly, portrayed in this work. But, singular as it may appear, little or nothing has hitherto been done to elucidate its past life and hidden records. Out of the score parishes dealt with, only two have had anything approaching a succinct history written, and of these two—Cawood and Harewood,—much of a supplementary character is now for the first time recorded. Sir Clements Markham has written very fully and ably on the Fairfaxes, but apart from the circumstances connected with the lives of the great Lord Fairfax, and of the seafaring Admiral Robert Fairfax, no succinct history of their home parishes has hitherto been produced. It is not a little surprising, too, that so important a place as Tadcaster, with its twenty centuries of settled life, going back to an age even before the advent of the Romans, as discoveries prove, should have found no historian. The hundred pages, therefore, devoted to an elucidation of the records of this ancient and important parish, will, it is hoped, not be misplaced.

I need hardly observe that the preparation of so full and consecutive a history of each parish dealt with has been no light undertaking. Moreover, owing to the wealth of unexplored material the work has extended much beyond the limits intended. I have, in fact, added more than one hundred pages above what was stipulated in the Prospectus the work would contain. The parish-chest, with its venerable archives, is always a rich storehouse of information, and so far as Lower Wharfedale is concerned it is a mine of interest not hitherto searched. But in these old registers and precious town-books, many a worthy or forgotten name, or incident in the past life of a place, is often found buried in undeserved oblivion. Who, for example, if we may trust the old books at Bolton Percy, dare assert the existence in a wild state in Yorkshire, down to almost within living recollection, of that rare and curious quadruped, the European beaver? It is believed to have been extinct in this country for

centuries (*see* page 118), though living specimens are recorded to have been taken in Northern Europe as lately as 1845

It is not, however, from local sources alone that a large amount of new and interesting information has been collected, but numerous documents, charters, and other papers bearing upon the district have been obtained from London, Wakefield, and York. Many valuable manuscripts have also been forwarded to me from various quarters, including several unpublished pedigrees of prominent Yorkshire families, while some others I have compiled, notably of the early lords of Harewood and of the great Barony of Skipton-in-Craven, will, I hope, be found a useful reference.

Every portion of the area dealt with has been carefully explored by me, and every notable building, ecclesiastical as well as domestic, has been described from my own personal observations. Many of the churches of ancient origin, as at Ryther, Bolton Percy, Tadcaster, Newton Kyme, Bardsey, Thorp Arch, and Harewood, are particularly noteworthy, and in several instances there can be little doubt they stand upon pre-Christian foundations. Most of them are also remarkable for their contained antiquities, which include numerous stone altars (as at Ryther) and some valuable early sculptured crosses (as at Collingham and Kirkby Wharfe).

To the courtesy of the clergy, gentry, and others resident in the district embraced, I am indebted for an inspection of old parish-books and other useful papers, often illustrative of bygone customs and events. It is superfluous to mention names, of the clergy particularly, where everyone has been kind enough to grant me this privilege, and also in many instances to supply me with special information afterwards. Moreover, to the Rt. Rev. Dr. Crosthwaite, Bishop of Beverley, I am indebted for his kindness in revising the proofs of the chapters on his ancient and interesting parish of Bolton Percy. Also to several of the local clergy, now deceased, notably the Rev. R. H. Cooke, M.A., vicar of Healaugh, and the Rev. James Isaacson, M.A., vicar of Church Fenton, I owe the preservation of many useful facts, otherwise lost. To the Rev. Canon Wilton, M.A., formerly vicar of Kirkby Wharfe, and now rector of Londesborough, I am much indebted for his always instructive communications and loan of papers; likewise the Rev. Algernon C. Dudley Ryder, M.A., rector of Trowbridge, who has taken a very kindly interest in my work, and supplied me with many useful notes on the ancient family of Ryther of Ryther; also the Rev. George Beilby, M.A., vicar of Haselbury-Plucknett, Crewkerne, has done the same concerning the Beilbys of Micklethwaite Grange.

Several of the chapters have undergone revision by the local landowners, and it is necessary to observe that in these, as in all

other places, where special reference has been made to such landowners or to persons now living, the comments have been made without their sanction. It usually happened that when the proofs were returned such notices were either cancelled or so much modified as to be valueless for the purposes of a local history, and I have therefore ventured to restore them on my own responsibility.

Much historical information, together with the loan of various rare books and documents, has reached me from various quarters. To the accomplished researches of the Rt. Hon. Lord Hawkesbury, F.S.A., I am again indebted for many notes on matters genealogical and heraldic. To the learned President of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir Clements Markham, K.C.B., I owe the elucidation of many points relative to the Fairfax family, with whose history no one is more conversant. My thanks, for various other information, are likewise due to many other friends and correspondents, particularly the following: the late Mr. John E. F. Chambers, of Alfreton, an interested and ever-obliging antiquary: Mr. Joseph Foster, Hon. M.A. (Oxon), for the Fairfax pedigree; Mr. Cadwallader J. Bates, historian of Northumberland, for notes on the house of Percy; Mr. T. B. Whytehead, Chapter Clerk, York; Mrs. E. Paver-Crow, Ornhams Hall; Mrs. Tempest, Broughton Hall; Miss A. Bellhouse, Roundhay; Messrs. Wm. Murray Tuke, Saffron Walden; Wm. C. Maude, Bournemouth; Wm. F. Atkinson, Ilkley; George F. Jones, F.R.I.B.A., Malton; Wm. Greenwood, Jersey; Chas. A. Goodricke, Croydon; Dr. J. H. Whitham, Boston Spa; Wm. Callum, B.A., Tadcaster; Dr. Hargreaves, Wetherby; S. Slater Whitfield, Wetherby; F. W. Dalby, Collingham; Ben. Spencer and James C. Eastburn, Bradford. To Mr. John Hopkinson, F.R.Met.S., F.L.S., &c., I am again obliged for the carefully-prepared table on local Rainfall.

Among the large number of illustrations included in the book many rare and valuable ones will be found, engraved from the only known originals. In accordance with my usual method, I have indicated on pages 19 to 21 the sources from which they have been derived. The Frontispiece to the Large Paper edition of the work, I should add, has been specially prepared and printed by Messrs. Armitage & Ibbetson, of Bradford. All the other plates, as well as the book, have been printed by Mr. G. F. Sewell, Bradford, and the quality of this work must be left to speak for itself.

For the large and influential patronage accorded in the publication of the work I desire to express my thanks. I have added the subscribers' names, as usual, at the end of the volume.

HARRY SPEIGHT.