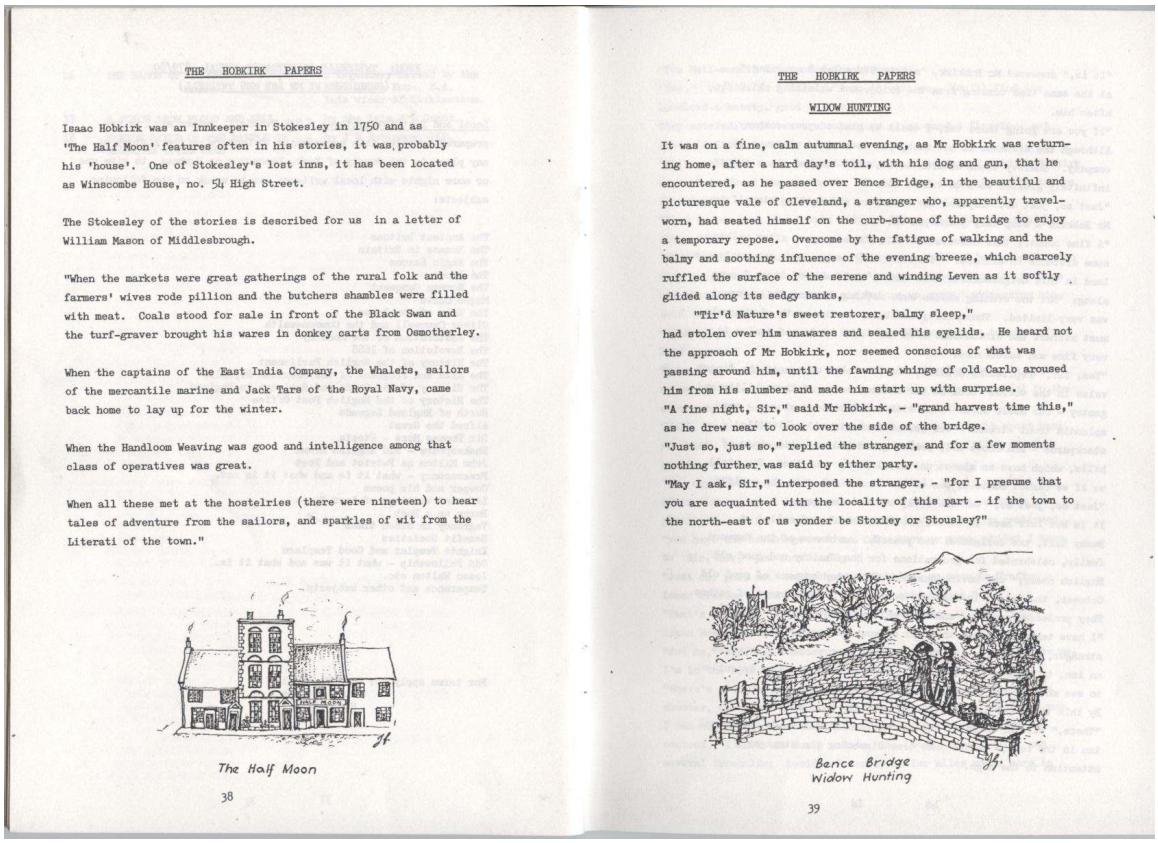
THE HOBKIRK PAPERS

Isaac Hobkirk was an Innkeeper in Stokesley in 1750 and as *The Half Moon* features often in his stories, it was, probably, his ‘house’. One of Stokesley’s lost Inns. It has been located as Winscombe House, No 54 High Street. The following Hobkirk Papers (or stories) were published by Daphne Franks in Printing and Publishing in Stokesley (1984) and George Markham Tweddell – Yorkshire Miscellany 1846.



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The Stokesley of the stories is described for us in a letter of William Mason of Middlesbrough.

"When the markets were great gatherings of the rural folk and the farmers' wives rode pillion and the butchers shambles were filled with meat. Coals stood for sale in front of the Black Swan and the turf-graver brought his wares in donkey carts from Osmotherley.

When the captains of the East India Company, the Whalers, sailors of the mercantile marine and Jack Tars of the Royal Navy, came back home to lay up for the winter.

When the Handloom Weaving was good and intelligence among that class of operatives was great.

When all these met at the hostelries (there were nineteen) to hear tales of adventure from the sailors, and sparkles of wit from the Literati of the town."

The Half Moon

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THE HOBKIRK PAPERS

WIDOW HUNTING

It was on a fine, calm autumnal evening, as Mr Hobkirk was returning home, after a hard day's toil, with his dog and gun, that he encountered, as he passed over Bence Bridge, in the beautiful and picturesque vale of Cleveland, a stranger who, apparently travel-worn, had seated himself on the curb-stone of the bridge to enjoy a temporary repose. Overcome by the fatigue of walking and the balmy and soothing influence of the evening breeze, which scarcely ruffled the surface of the serene and winding Leven as it softly glided along its sedgy banks,

"Tir'd Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

had stolen over him unawares and sealed his eyelids. He heard not the approach of Mr Hobkirk, nor seemed conscious of what was passing around him, until the fawning whinge of old Carlo aroused him from his slumber and made him start up with surprise.

"A fine night, Sir," said Mr Hobkirk, - "grand harvest time this," as he drew near to look over the side of the bridge.

"Just so, just so," replied the stranger, and for a few moments nothing further was said by either party.

"May I ask, Sir," interposed the stranger, - "for I presume that you are acquainted with the locality of this part - if the town to the north-east of us yonder be Stoxley or Stousley?"

Bence Bridge
Widow Hunting

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"It is," answered Mr Hobkirk, "and to Stokesley I am going;"
at the same time turning from the bridge and whistling old Carlo
after him.
"If you are going there too, I shall be glad of your company.
Although the distance is not much, yet there is a pleasure in
company. Society seems natural to us, and time and space appear
infinitely greater when we travel alone."
"Just so, just so," replied the stranger, and setting himself to
Mr Hobkirk's step they journeyed on.
"A fine country this Cleveland," said the stranger, after walking
some distance in silence. "I should imagine you have some valuable
land in this neighbourhood from what I could see of it as I came
along; but the evening shades were setting in, and the prospect
was very limited. Those lofty mountains to the south of the vale
must attract the exhalations from the lower land, and render it
very fine and salubrious."
"Yes, Sir," replied Mr Hobkirk, "we can boast of one of the finest
vales in the world. Look at our ancient seats of the nobility and
gentry - our noble woods - our rich and fertile pastures - our
splendid trout streams - our golden harvests and well filled
stackyards - and above all, yonder grand and majestic chain of
hills, which have an almost universal fame; and then, Sir, tell
me if we cannot boast of one of the finest vales in the world?"
"Just so, just so," was the reply of the stranger.
It is but fair here to state, that Mr Hobkirk had called at
Busby Hall, the delightful and peaceful residence of the Marwood
family, celebrated for generations for hospitality and good old
English cheer; and having partaken of sundry bumpers of good old
October, that might in some way contribute to this burst of pathos.
They proceeded onwards, and soon entered the town.
"I have taken advantage thus far of your guidance," said the
stranger, "may I also ask the favour of your recommending me to
an inn, to take up my abode for a few days, as it is my intention
to see more of the beauties of your delightful vale."
By this time they had arrived opposite the Half-moon inn.
"There," said Mr Hobkirk, "is the most comfortable and economical
inn in the town," at the same time directing the stranger's
attention to the sign.

"The Half-moon?" interposed the stranger.
"Yes," replied Mr Hobkirk, "turn in with me. You'll find the
landlord a hearty, good fellow."
They entered, and over a warm, snug, clean-sanded fireside, sat
good old Kitty, smoking his pipe.
"This gentleman wants bed and board for a few days," said Mr Hobkirk
as he introduced the stranger. "He has come from a distance to see
Cleveland."
"Glad to see you, Sir," said Kitty. "Elcy will make you comfort-
able, Sir."
"Oh!" interposed the stranger, "I have no doubt of being comfotable
with you, landlord." - Well then," continued he, "suppose we have
a tankard of landlady's best ale before we part?" addressing him-
self to Mr Hobkirk.
"With all my heart," said Mr Hobkirk. "Elcy, draw a tankard of
last year's."
Tankard succeeded tankard, and a mutual understanding soon sprung
up amongst them. The company was evidently quite congenial to the
stranger, who began to be communicative and talky.
"Well, Mr Hobkirk," said he, "and what sort of a day's sport have
you had? You appear to have tired your dog, and filled the bag
pretty well."
"Oh, capital!" replied Mr Hobkirk, "capital! I only went out
after dinner, and I bagged six brace of partridges, a brace of
pheasants, and two hares. No bad work that. But," he continued,
"you have the advantage over me. You know my name, whilst I have
to 'Sir, Sir,' you continually."
"Just so, just so. Well then, Mr Hobkirk, my name is Grafton -
Isaac Grafton - and I too am in the sporting line."
"That's capital!" said Mr Hobkirk. "Why, they call me Isaac, -
Isaac Hobkirk, of Stokesley."
"And me," said the stranger, - "Isaac Grafton, of ..... excuse me,
I'm in the sporting line."
"Where's your dog and gun?" enquired Mr Hobkirk. "If you are a
shooter, Cleveland is one of the best places in the world for you.
I can accommodate you with a week's shooting to your heart's
content. I have the Busby estate, the Leven Grove estate, and
several freeholds; besides I can sport for miles round here in

every direction. You could not have fallen in better."
"Why, not exactly sporting in that line," rejoined the stranger.
"Oh, I have it!" said Mr Hobkirk. "You're a turfite, and have been at Hambleton. Well, I like horse-racing as well as most men. You would see some nice tits at Hambleton."
"Out still, Isaac" replied the stranger, with a knowing kind of wink. "Guess again, master."
"Not horse-racing!" said Mr Hobkirk. "Why what sort of sporting do you follow?"
Old Kitty, the landlord, who had been one of the party all the while without taking any part in the conversation, gave Mr Hobkirk a very significant nod, at the same time placing his fingers so as to cause on the opposite wall a familiar representation.
"Oh, oh," said Mr Hobkirk, "that's the time of day, is it? Why you could not have come to a better place for your kind of sport, Isaac. You may have a shy here any day. Cocking, Isaac, cocking, - that's your game."
"Out still, Isaac," was the reply.
"Why this beats cockfighting," said Mr Hobkirk. "Not a shooter - not a racer - not a cocker - and still a sportsman! A bull baiter?" continued he, - "a fisher? a foxhunter? a badger boy?" - to each of which the stranger returned the same laconic answer, - "Out still, Isaac."
"I'll give in," said Mr Hobkirk, - "but stop. - You are not a ...." (placing his little finger between the thumb and forefinger of his opposite hand) "You understand me?"
"Not exactly," replied the stranger.

"It's my delight on a shining night
In the season of the year."

"Now you understand me?"
"Just so, just so," said he, "but out still, Isaac."
"Why, what the d--l do you follow then?" enquired Mr Hobkirk.
"Isaac!" said the stranger - drawing his chair close to that of his companion - "is there no other kind of sporting besides what you have mentioned? Must a man be either a horse racer, a cock-fighter, a fox hunter, or a badger hunter, to be a sportsman?" - and whilst awaiting Mr Isaac Hobkirk's reply, he said, - "Come, Kitty, draw another tankard, and let's drink 'better acquaintance'".

"God bless me, God bless me," said Mr Hobkirk, "that I could never see through you till now! Why, Isaac, you are a woman-hunter!"
"Just so, just so!" replied the stranger with a titter. "Widow-hunting, Isaac, widow-hunting! How stands Cleveland for that sort of sport?"
"Cleveland!" said old Kitty, whose dormant sentiments had by this time been roused by the generous beverage, - "Cleveland! Cleveland for women! Why, man, there's mair women iv Cleveland worth wedding, than iv all t'warld besides!"
"You are right, Kitty," interposed Mr Hobkirk, "Just let him stay here a few days, and we'll show him some widows."
"But," inquired the stranger, "are they of the right sort?"
"There's of all sorts," replied Kitty. "There's Hannah -------, Isaac," addressing himself to Mr Hobkirk; - "there's Betty ------; and" continued he, "there's Bella ------; and if these deean't suit, let him pop ut intiv Bilsdale and see widders there, - reeal, nattural, hard-working, industrious women."
"But," interrupted Mr Hobkirk, "why particular about a widow? Why not pick up a fine, healthy, country lass, with a skin as clear and bright as General Carey's beer," (this allusion was to the well-known beer at Leven Grove, the beautiful and hospitable mansion of the late General Carey, whose cellar and larder were open to all who might call in, which Mr Hobkirk was often in the habit of doing) "an eye like a blue-bell; as straight as a rush; and worth a canny few hundreds when t'old folks drop of?"
"Bonny Isaac!" cried old Kitty, who was by this time fast coming up to the mark, - "them's them, them's them."
"But", inquired the stranger, "age, Isaac, age? - You understand me?"
"Oh, the chances," replied Mr Hobkirk.
"Just so, just so," said the stranger; "but," continued he, "it is already late; I am tired with travelling; you must be equally so: let's to bed. To-morrow morning I shall depend upon your assistance in widow-hunting."
"Agreed," replied Mr Hobkirk; and rising, he shouldered his gun and bag, called - "Carlo, Carlo" and bid the stranger and Kitty good night.

It was a bright and lovely morning in October, when Mr Isaac Hobkirk and Mr Isaac Grafton met, according to appointment, in the snug back parlour of the Half-moon Inn, on the north side of the town of Stokesley; in expectation of which meeting, good, old Elcy Eden had cleaned up the little rendezvous, new sanded the floor, and placed clean pipes and a candle on the old oaken shelf above the fire-place.

Scarcely had the door closed upon the two Isaacs, when the well-known whistle was heard, and to the respectful inquiry of the landlady, - "What's your wills, gentlemen?"

Mr Hobkirk replied; - "Fetch us a tankard of last year's, Elcy, and tell Kitty to come in."

Upon the three getting comfortably seated over the foaming beverage, Mr Hobkirk, commenced the subject of widow-hunting, by observing; "You see, Isaac, there's wheels within wheels; and before we set out on our excursion, let us perfectly understand each other."

"Just so, just so," replied the stranger.

"Why then," continued Mr Hobkirk, "what kind of a widow do you want? What age? what height? thin, or bulky? pale, or rosy? In short, what do you want her for?"

"My dear fellow," rejoined the widow-hunter, "it is my duty to be plain and explicit with you; and therefore I will explain my position, without hesitation or reserve."

"You must know then, that I began life very favourably as a ----- in the city of ------ (excuse this trifling reservation, - I am widow-hunting you know.) My business was a profitable and prosperous one; and had I looked out for a wife then, and settled quietly and attentively to business, I might now have been able to hold the world at defiance, and have been comfortably off, without widow-hunting; but unfortunately it was otherwise. I took up the life of a free and easy bachelor, imbibed bachelor's notions, associated only with bachelors, and strove to be considered by them 'a good fellow!' Things went on smoothly enough for a time. I was courted, praised, appealed to, and nothing was considered perfect without Grafton. A horse-race was not right without Grafton; a cricket club was not right unless Grafton was a member; a dog was not bought, nor a horse exchanged, unless Grafton first took a look at him. Indeed so requisite seemed my presence

and opinion to the interests of the bachelor circle, that I really was made to pride myself upon my position, and believed all they endeavoured to make me. Bye and bye, however, things changed. From not attending personally to business, but leaving it to the management of a confidential clerk, whose salary alone consumed a fair profit, my banking book began to exhibit signs of one-sidedness: the Cr. side did not keep pace with the Dr. The bankers noticed the irregularity, and urged the reduction of the balance. This I could not, consistently with my habits and expenditure, accomplish; and in the long run, to save myself from being Gazetted, I quietly gave up stock and trade into the hands of my banker. This was the finish. This expelled the delusion, and showed things as they actually were. It had the effect of speedily estranging all my bosom friends. Those dear fellows, who could not get a day over without seeing Grafton, now passed the house without ever looking to one side. Yes, Mr Hobkirk, when a man finds himself going back in the world; when he finds himself no longer able to furnish the entertainment and supply the needful; he finds also that his company is no longer sought after - his hospitality no longer required. Yes, Isaac, write prosperity on a man's door, and he will never want friends and admirers; but just chalk ad., and it requires no more, - it is at once known what the remainder of the word is: the door is immediately changed - the house altered - the friends and admirers lost, or perhaps changed to revilers - and very soon the hospitable, good fellow is forgotten. But I must be short. I retain my mother's jointure - a yearly sufficiency for the necessaries of life, but by no means equal to what I have been accustomed to. The change suits me badly. I cannot accommodate myself to my stinted income, and therefore to meet the deficiency, and come back to something like my former self, I have determined upon marrying, and hence the project of my widow-hunting. You will already see that I want one with the needful. Yes, Isaac, without cash the best of your Cleveland widows will not avail. Then as to size, and appearance, and those things, I shall not be very particular. Only age, Isaac, age, - that is important. Not - let me see - not younger than forty, nor older than ------ but here I cannot exactly confine you. You understand me?"

"Oh," said Mr Hobkirk, "the chances."
"Just so, just so," replied the stranger.
"Dash me!" said old Kitty, who had sat an attentive listner until now, - "I've t'varry woman iv my e'e for him, Isaac. But she's out iv Cleveland; she's iv Bilsdill."
"Never mind a trifling distance," interposed the stranger, "so long as she's of the right sort."
"She is that, however," said Mr Hobkirk; for Kitty had made him acquainted with her name. "She is of the right sort, Isaac, I'll engage. But," continued he "lets be going, time flies;" and with this the two Isaacs left the Half-moon; old Elcy, as they went out of the door, throwing her shoe after them for luck. Without this, in the opinion of many in these days, as well as the hostess of the Half-moon, the success of an expedition was not at all certain.
"We'll take the east end of the town, Isaac," said Mr Hobkirk to his companion, "and walk up to the hills."
On they journeyed, over Bouncing Brig, - as the bridge at the east end of Stokesley was then denominated - and onwards through Great Broughton, and towards the hills. At length, they arrived at the base of the well-known eminence in the range of Cleveland hills, called Clay Hill. Here the widow-hunter was desirous to know the distance they had to go.
"Onward," said Mr Hobkirk; and after a tug they reached the summit of the hill.
It was a clear and serene day; not a cloud interposed to mar the glorious prospect which awaits the traveller's gaze when he mounts the rugged height of Broughton Bank; when suddenly turning round, "Now," said Mr Hobkirk, "look behind you, Isaac, and you'll see Cleveland."
He had no sooner done so, than, -
"Cleveland! Cleveland!" ejaculated the stranger, in an evident state of bewilderment, - "is it possible that my eyes are not deceiving me? Am I really looking upon the real, the natural? or is it all a delusion - a phantom of the imagination? Cleveland!" continued he, - "why, Isaac, if that is Cleveland, from Cleveland I will not stir; in Cleveland will I have a wife; in Cleveland I will live and die!" and enraptured with the splendid - the

sublime prospect before him, he exclained -
"How lovely the daughters of Cleveland must be! how charming, indeed, the widows of this delightful vale. No, Isaac, I will rove no farther: I will seek a Cleveland widow."
"But come - onward," interposed Mr Hobkirk, "our way lays 'over the hills and far away.' Come along, and you shall see a nice, blooming Bilsdale widow, something over forty, without incumbrance, and the owner of stock, crop and not less than fifteen hundred pounds besides. That's something like your mark, Isaac."
"Why, yes," rejoined the stranger; "but she's not Cleveland."
"True," replied Mr Hobkirk; "but she's of Cleveland extraction. Her forefathers lived in the vale below; they are of Cleveland origin; they resided in Cleveland for generations: but when the progress of manners, and the advancement of fashion, invaded their lovely valley, and infringed upon their homely and pristine habits, they betook themselves to the romantic dale we are about to enter; and there their posterity dwell, retaining all their ancient simplicity and natural humility, ay, and you will find their natural kindness and hospitality too."
"Just so, just so," said the stranger; "she'll do, she'll do."
They travelled onwards, and in the end arrived opposite the entrance to a neat, snug, compact-looking farmstead; the homely dwelling surrounded with ancient trees; its thatched roof just discernible through a cluster of noble elms.
"Look there," said Mr Hobkirk, directing the attention of his companion to the stack-yard, where a waggon with four runty horses was just discharging its last oat-sheaf. "Look there!" he repeated. "What do you think to a team like that? - and the mistress too, forking to the stack, whilst the maid-servant is handing the sheaves. That looks like industry; that looks like humility, - does it not?"
"Just so, just so," replied the stranger. "And is she really the mistress?"
"Yes," said Mr Hobkirk, "and the owner of stock, crop, and fifteen hundred pounds besides."
"Then that's my widow," replied the stranger, just as she was stepping off the waggon.
"What cheer there, Hannah?" said Mr Hobkirk.

"What, Isaac," replied she, "is that you?" and before they had fairly met, she continued, - "and how's all at Stousley? - Come yer ways in; its likely for wet;" the weather having changed, and one of those dreadful fogs or mists, so peculiar to these parts, coming on at the time.

As they proceeded towards the house, David, the head man, as he drove his team past them, sheepishly said, -

"Raather soft." But whether David considered the strangers, himself, or the weather, rather soft, was not inquired into, so intent were the two Isaacs upon following the widow into the house. No sooner had they entered the house, than the widow called out:-

"Put some turf on, Bessy, an' mak t'fire up; they'll want summet tee eat. You'll mebby tak a collop, Isaac?" continued she, addressing herself to Mr Hobkirk.

"Nothing better," replied he, and took his seat upon the "long-settle;" whilst the stranger eyed the widow with no less admiration than surprise; for Hannah could truly boast the possession of those personal charms, which are contemplated in the graphic line of Thompson:-

"Beauty when unadorn'd 's adorn'd the most."

The homely, but substantial, repast was scarce concluded, when the barking of the curs, the grunting of the pigs, and the cackling of the geese, proclaimed the arrival of another stranger; and in a moment up went the latch, and in walked the well-known Stokesley watchmaker, the humourous and witty Robert Stephenson.

"What, Bobby," said the widow, "is that you? Why, what your all here together. Deeant ye see wheea's on t'lang-settle there, Bobby?"

The watchmaker cast his eyes towards the long-settle, and seeing Mr Hobkirk, he exclaimed:-

"What, Isaac, is that you? Why, we're all here together. And what has brought you up into Bilsdale to-day?"

"Oh, nothing particular," replied Mr Hobkirk. "My friend here has come to see Cleveland, and I thought he had better see Bilsdale too."

"Certainly," replied Stephenson and the two old friends, Mr Hobkirk and the watchmaker, drew towards the fire, the former leaving the long-settle to make room for the widow, who seemed inclined to make

one of the familiar party.

Widow Hunting

The stranger began to converse very kindly with Hannah, whilst the watchmaker was smoking his pipe, on a low stool in the corner, apparently lost in meditation, for he entered not into conversation with any of the other parties. At length he suddenly looked up in Mr Hobkirk's face, and imitating a very peculiar cast which the stranger had with his right eye, began:-

"I say, Isaac! -

"Froggy would a wooing go,
Whether his mammy would let him or no."

"Behave!" interrupted Mr Hobkirk. "Don't spoil sport."

"Oh!" replied the wit, "I see what a clock it is;" and from that moment the two appeared to perfectly understand each other.

The stranger continued to ply the agreeable to the widow; praising her many good qualities; commending her industry; and replying to every passing observation, -

"Just so, just so."

Mr Hobkirk and the watchmaker, who had been enjoying their pipes over a pot of excellent gale beer, now thought it time that some distinct understanding was come to, and accordingly the watchmaker observed, that as they were all friends together, he would advise that they adopted the shortest way of settling matters, by Mr Grafton at once coming to the point, and asking Hannah if she would have him.

The advice was no sooner given than acted upon by the stranger, who immediately said:-

"I want a wife; you want a husband; will you marry? I have wandered over almost the whole of Yorkshire, and part of Lancashire and Durham, without being able to meet with a woman after my own heart until now. Many have I seen, and many more have been recommended to me; but never until now have I met with one to whom I could give my hand and heart; and as Mr Hobkirk there is my friend, and also a friend of yours, I will refer the matter to him, and he can advise both parties. He knows my circumstances."

"And," interrupted the widow, "Isaac knaws mine."

"Exactly," replied Mr Hobkirk; "and I know you will make Mr Grafton an excellent wife."

"But," said the widow, "he mun live here. I'll niver live iv a town amang fine fookes."

"Of course," answered the stranger, "I'll live with you. Ay, I'll even stay with you now, and we'll part no more."

"Exactly," said Mr Hobkirk, "no time like the present time - Bobby draw up the articles. Short courtships are best, and then there is no rueing."

The watchmaker set to work to write out the wedding agreement, and if he did not make it exactly a technical one, it was at all events humorous and precise. It included all the little concessions on the part of the wife, which the most captious husband could desire; and the allowances on his side were such as met with the widow's perfect approbation. Indeed when it was read over in the presence of the worthy couple, they both pronounced it "very good," and praised the skill and consideration of the watchmaker.

"Onny body else," said the widow, "wad ha' left all t'best things out."

"Just so, just so," replied the happy bridegroom; and the party was all enjoyment and delight."

The time was fixed for the happy day; moonshine (as smuggled gin was then sometimes called in these parts) took the place of gale beer; whilst ham and eggs proclaimed the best of cheer.

"I may thank my stars," said the stranger, "that I sat down to rest upon the bridge last night, Isaac; it was a lucky place for

me: I met you there, and through you I was introduced to the hearty old landlord, who had in his eye the very woman for me. Many happy meetings may we have with good old Kitty of the Half-moon. And to you, my newly acquired friend," addressing himself to the watchmaker, "here's my hand."

"All's right," replied the watchmaker. "You might have gone farther and fared worse."

The party became merry; and whilst the widow and the stranger betook themselves apart, to look over the farm-stead, the two humourous friends enjoyed themselves heartily at their expense.

"This is capital, Bobby!" said Mr Hobkirk. "He'll be a capital fellow to drop in to see, when we come up to Bilsdale to hunt."

"He will," answered the watchmaker. "But, Isaac! there's many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"Why, yes," replied Mr Hobkirk, "there is."

Their further conversation, however, was interrupted by the return of the stranger and the widow.

"Isaac!" said the widow, as they entered the house, "then, you'll be t'faather?"

"Exactly," replied Mr Hobkirk; "I will Hannah."

"T'parson offens jokes, and says, when he comes up intivt deeal, 'What, Hannah, you're not married yet!' What will he say now, Isaac?" she continued. "I'll fix him."

The evening passed quickly over, and the time drew nigh for Mr Hobkirk and the watchmaker to return home and whilst preparations were making for their departure, and the soon-to-be owner of Hannah, and stock, crop, and fifteen hundred pounds besides, was repeating over and over his sincere thanks for the kindness shown to him by Mr Hobkirk and the watchmaker, - blessing his stars that ever they met, and protesting the happiness it would afford him to see them at his house to partake of his hospitality, the watchmaker went up to Hannah, and said:-

"Let's see, Hannah, you keep old John's will, don't you?"

"Sartinly, Bobby," replied she, "and wheea's seea fit? All's mine - ivery penny, - stock, crop, an' a canny few hundreds besides."

"Why, come," continued he, "let's see it. I believe I witnessed it."

"I believe you did, Bobby," - and off she set to produce the

important document, which since the time of her husband's funeral had rested quietly and undisturbed in the old oaken cupboard, carefully folded in a clean York Herald. Upon giving it to the watchmaker he cried, -

"Stop, Isaac, stop!" to Mr Hobkirk, who was going out of the doorway linked arm in arm with the stranger. "Here's old John's will. Let's see what it says."

The two returned; and one almost convulsed with attempts to restrain his laughter - the other paralyzed with disappointment and chagrin, heard the astounding intelligence:-

"I give and bequeath unto Hannah, my beloved and lawful wife, the whole of the stock, crops, dairy utensils, and implements of husbandry, at present on the farm occupied by me, at ------, in Bilsdale, in the north riding of the county of York; also all the pictures, books, furniture, money, and other effects, found in the house after my decease: as also the sum of £1,500, now in the hands of James ------, of ------, in the north riding of the county of York, aforesaid: the whole of which I give unto my beloved and lawful wife, for her use and enjoyment, during the whole of her natural life; and nothing shall deprive her of the same, unless she marries, and becomes the wife of another." And here followed the provisions.

It was a plain and simple testament, but its intentions could not be mistaken. Little was said by any of the party for some time after the announcement, save the widow's bursting out at intervals with:-

"Od, rot him, Isaac, he allas sed he wad mak his will that way!"

It was really "a sore blow and heavy discouragment" to the widow-hunter, who was quite dispirited; and with blighted hopes and disappointment pictured in his countenance, he returned with Mr Hobkirk and the watchmaker.

Little is known of the sequel, save that he tarried a day or two at the Half-moon, during which time he avoided all society, and then took his departure, no one knew whither.

Afterwards the subject was never much alluded to, except on those occasions when Mr Hobkirk would over his glass be recounting feats of fishing, shooting, and other kinds of sporting; when the facetious watchmaker would put in;-

"Barring widow-hunting, Isaac."

THE MIDNIGHT KNELL

From the earliest period of human history, a belief in supernatural agency has been current amongst mankind; and sacred, as well as profane records, adduce such innumerable instances of the operation of superhuman influence, as to place the reality of the subject beyond the shadow of a doubt, and establish warnings, signs, spectres, and devinations amongst the incomprehensible workings of Omnipotence. Nevertheless there have ever been sceptics and unbelievers: there are those who deny the authenticity of such records, or attempt to explain their manifestations on what they term natural and philosophical principles. Thus they attribute the occurrence of the death-watch to the amorous ditty of an insignificant insect - the appearance of the waugh, to errors in vision, or optical illusions - the candle-shroud, to chymical agency and an arrangement of the particles of matter - the three knocks, to ignorance of the science of acoustics. In this manner they would explain away the numerous occurrences which less sceptical folks have ever attributed to the exercise of an agency at once superhuman and inexplicable. To such, the mysterious foldings of the candle-shroud, so distinct and ominous, (although observed the very night before an unexpected death takes place in the circle of their family or friends,) appear as insignificant and accidental arrangements of tallow - the unaccountable ringing of house bells, as mischievous lads, or rats - the encountering the exact and perfect figure of a friend at nightfall, as bad eyesight, or an excited imagination - the death-knock at the bed head, (although so loud and distinct as to awaken them out of their sleep,) is ascribed to an unsettled neighbour, or a falling tile; and so obstinate and unbelieving are such people generally found, when relating to them occurrences which fill the better disposed with anxiety and alarm, that to them the emphatic words of sacred history will aptly apply - "neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

In the records of the experience of the individual from which

these papers are taken, there occur several instances of forewarnings, signs, and tokens, which had I not been a believer in supernatural agency, or believed but wavered in my faith, their simple recital would have overcome every doubt, and convinced me by the evidence of my own senses. Ye sceptics and gainsayers! how will ye get over the following?

On a cold and murky December night in Mr Hobkirk's time, when the town of Stokesley was still and silent as the lonely heath - when not a sound disturbed the monotonous and dreary murmuring of the piercing wind, as it swept the deserted street, save the lone and mournful sound of the church clock, as it proclaimed, at punctual intervals, the flight of time - the sexton of the parish, old George Roe, who resided near the church gates, was awoke out of his peaceful slumbers by some of those unaccountable feelings stealing over him, which are so frequently experienced by those to whom some direful and unexpected calamity is about to occur, and which have very properly been denominated presentiments. He tossed and turned in bed - tried this posture, and then that, to court the balmy goddess, but in vain. At length the church clock struck twelve, - that solemn and ominous hour of midnight.

"Thank God!" he ejaculated, "its neea mair; for I feel as if I durs'nt get up if't had been time for t'six o'clock bell. How dark, how fearful a neeght! Lord save poor creatturs foorced tee be out."

Scarcely had this soliloquy ended, when the sad and mournful sound of the death-bell smote his ear.

"Hannah, Hannah!" he repeated, in a voice stifled with fear and emotion, at the same time awakening his unconscious bed-fellow - "Hannah! there's t' deead bell ringing!"

"There's what?" replied his wife: at the same moment the distinct and solemn toll of the passing bell was heard by both.

"Lord seeave us, George!" she exclaimed, - "what's about tee happen? - whisht! - sivven, eeght, neen! - an' it's for an aud man teea! What mun we deea? what mun we deea?"

The terrified sexton - whose perplexity and alarm, however, did not prevent the exercise of that instinctive feeling, proper to man in common with all other animals, self-preservation - very considerately suggested that Tom, their eldest son, should be called

out of bed immediately, to go and inform old Jamie Barthram, the parish clerk.

"Come, Hannah" he said, "get up, and call o' Tom."

"Get up yersel, George," replied his better-half.

"I dar'nt," said George - "Tom, Tom!" he shouted with all his might; whilst his terrified wife kept ejaculating, -

"Lord seeave us, George! Lord seeave us, George!"

In the midst of this their anxiety and alarm, a terrific knocking was heard against the door.

"Now it's us, Geeorge!" roared the affrighted wife, - "I sed it was for an aud man."

"Geeorge, Geeorge!" repeated a voice from the street, in evident consternation and alarm, - "Get up, Geeorge - get up. Didn't ye hear t' deeath knowl? Get up, mun; be sharp an' get up."

The sexton soon recognised the voice as that of his co-adjutor, the parish clerk and this had the effect of allaying his fears in some measure, and inspiring him with a little more fortitude. Up he got, and throwing open his bed-room window, he exclaimed, - "It's ower true, it's ower true!"

By this time not only the clerk and sexton, but several of the inhabitants were aroused, and amongst them one of the church-wardens, who suggested that they should tell t' parson, as he designated the worthy curate. This was immediately agreed to; and off they set in a body, to disturb the reverend man.

The Rev. Dr Wanley, Dean of Ripon, was at that time Rector of Stokesley, but unlike his successor, the late Dean of York, he only spent two or three months at most, in each year, amongst his parishioners; and in his absence the old rectory-house was occupied by his curate, the Rev. Mr Schelding, - a man much and deservedly respected, who fully made up the loss of the learned rector.

Now although the crowd were assembled near the church gates, and by passing through the church-yard could have arrived at the rectory much sooner than by any other way, yet strange as it may appear, they one and all instinctively set off in the direction of Taylerson's bridge, (which crosses the river about the centre of the town,) and with the flickering lights of many lanterns, they wended their dreary and silent way to consult the worthy curate, not one word being spoken after they had left the sexton's door.

The night continued frightfully dark; the clouds lowered; the wind whistled amongst the trees; and just as they entered the court-yard of the rectory, the church clock struck one, and immediately the dreadful sound of the death-bell again proclaimed the working of supernatural power.

"Oh dear!" was the response of every one present.

The awful solemnity of the occasion was forcibly felt by the whole company, and with light, but hasty steps, they entered the portico of the rectory-house. Just as the ponderous rapper sounded on the door, the sixth toll fell upon their ears."

"Sivven," said the sexton, in a faint and tremulous voice, -

"eeght, neen! Lord seeave us! It mun be me. It's for an aud man."

After some little delay, the inmates of the rectory were aroused, and the cause of the disturbance made known to the worthy minister.

"Get away home to your beds," said he, addressing himself to his shivering and terrified flock. "Get away to your beds. Who ever heard of the passing bell tolling at midnight? You are all

bewildered - mistaken - deranged."

Finding, however, that they still persisted in the correctness of what they had said, in spite of his efforts to turn into ridicule their fearful and mysterious story, the worthy divine began to reason with them upon the absurdity of such things.

"How could the death-bell ring," said he, "unless some one rung it? and how could any one ring it without being in the church? and how could they get into the church without either the clerk or sexton knowing? No, no!" he continued. "During darkness sounds seem very different to what they do in the daytime. It has been some other sound which you have first heard; and, when once excited, I can easily imagine your being again deceived. Believe me, it was nothing of the kind. Such things cannot happen. It is all deception and excitement. That good Being who watches over us every moment of our lives; who orders everything for our good; whose laws are immutable; whose deeds are goodness and mercy; would not, never did, permit the operation of causes at variance with his general and undeviating designs. Besides," continued he, "how could you imagine a Being so powerful and all-wise, so just and infallible, resorting to such expedients to make known His will, or obtain His purpose? If to alarm or chastise poor mortals was His pleasure, would He resort to such measures as the ringing of bells? Would He not accomplish His will in a far more immediate and becoming way? I consider it a libel on the Deity, to suppose Him driven to such expedients."

Scarcely had the well-meaning, but (in my opinion) misinformed minister, concluded the last sentence, when the awful reality of what he had been endeavouring to disprove was brought home to his own senses. Again the direful sound was heard - again the death-bell knolled.

"Five, six seven, eight, nine," repeated the minister. "It's for an old man."

"It's ower true, it's ower true," responded the sexton; and one of the servants at the rectory was just beginning, in a faltering voice, to affirm, that "he had heard it before, but dared not get up," when the worthy curate told them he was then convinced that they were right. Beyond this not a word was spoken by any one of the company for some moments. At length the minister resumed:-

"Let us, my beloved brethren, go at once to the church, and endeavour to ascertain the cause of this singular and mysterious occurrence. Surely there is some one in the sacred edifice, whose sinful and sacrilegious pranks are occasioning this alarm," - for in spite of his inward misgivings and evident perturbations, the good man still wished to appear sceptical. "Let us repair to the church," repeated he, "and we will charge them in the name of Him to whom the sacred place is erected, to come forth; and if it is owing to human influence - if it be the work of man, no one, however hardened and depraved, can resist the authority. If not ----"

Here in spite of his utmost vigilance, the worthy divine betrayed the wavering of his belief.

"If not" - (implying at least the possibility of superhuman agency)

"If not human," said he, "we will humbly beseech Him to guide and protect us through whatever trials and calamities this awful forewarning would appear to forebode."

No one seeming disposed to suggest any other line of procedure, the minister set off towards the church, followed in solemn silence by his terror-stricken flock.

Upon arriving at the church door, the sexton, who had hitherto kept a position as near the centre of the group as possible, advanced towards the minister, who led the company.

"Stop, sor," said he, - "where's t' keye?"

"I suppose," replied the clergyman, "you will have the key, George. Don't you keep it?"

"Why, yes, sor," faltered the functionary of the grave, "but ----"

"But what, my good man?" rejoined the minister.

"But," repeated George, "it's at our house; an' wheea's tee fetch't?"

This certainly was a very natural consideration at such a time and under such circumstances. Although the sexton's house was but a few yards from the church gates, yet who was so reckless of his personal safety as to go alone and unprotected, even a few yards. The sexton evidently did not intend to venture himself, and as no one of his companions offered, the curate suggested that they should all go.

"Let us all go together," said he. "It is a trying time."

They did so; and after satisfying the poor sexton's wife that her

husband was safe, she delivered up the important key.

No sooner had the company entered the church, than a terrific gust of wind shook the sacred building. The windows vibrated - the pew doors swung open - and the belfry appeared at once filled with dreadful and unearthly sounds.

"Lord save us!" ejaculated one and all at the same moment; and ere they had recovered from the sudden shock into which this awful and unexpected occurrence had plunged them, the blast had passed by - the windows were still - the pew doors remained in the position in which the vibration had left them - and the hoarse, mournful wail of the wind, as it retired from the belfry, was all that remained of the terrible visitation.

Fixed to the spot on which they paralyzed stood - as if chained by some superhuman and invisible power - the whole party remained in silence. Not a word was spoken - not a look exchanged - not a limb stirred; whilst terror, and almost expiring consternation, was depicted in every countenance. In a few moments, however, the awful silence was broken by the well-known swing of the bell-rope, and immediately the dreadful summons followed.

"One, two, three" repeated the minister, in a voice scarcely articulate - "four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. - Lord save us!" added he, and cast an imploring look towards the company.

The sexton's lantern trembled in his hand - the light flickered - and ere the circumstance was noticed by one-half of his companions, he had gradually sunk down upon the floor, to all appearance a lifeless corpse. The confusion at once became indescribable. Roused, as it were, from a state of unconscious animation, to the most alarming anxiety for their individual safety, they all fled precipitately out of the church; leaving the no less terrified minister alone with the sexton, who lay pallid as death upon the floor.

In this trying dilemma the good man evinced a fortitude and self-possession worthy the holy and sacred calling to which he belonged. Supported, no doubt, by the inward assurance of that faith of which he had, for half a century, been a consistent and orthodox advocate, his duty towards his fellow-creatures overcame that instinctive feeling of self-preservation so very natural on such an occasion; and instead of inducing him to seek his personal safety in flight,

he not only directed his immediate attention to his fallen companion, but fortified his mind against every accession of alarm.
"I am in His tabernacle," said he aloud, "in whose hands are the issues of life and death; and in Him will I trust."
Upon holding the light nearer to the face of the sexton, he discovered, that although pale, and apparently death-stricken, yet he still breathed; and, notwithstanding the bloodless lip and unconscious stare, life lingered - the vital current had not yet stood still - and therefore, while there was life there was hope.
"George, George!" he repeated, in a soothing and affectionate tone. "Do you feel better? Do you know me, George?"
By and bye the features became more natural - the lividity left the countenance - the heat of the body increased; and after two or three inspirations, poor George cast his eye upwards, and recognising the well-known form of the minister, and no doubt associating his presence with the awful summons still ringing in his ears, he faintly said:-
"It's ower true, sor; it's ower true!"
Poor George! It was not surprising that the cause of his suspended animation should be the uppermost in his thoughts when that animation was restored.
The good minister gently raised him up; and seeing the state of alarm into which the sexton was likely to relapse, he meekly said:-
"Don't frighten yourself, George. Don't alarm yourself. You've only swooned."
Upon fairly recovering, however, George expressed a very urgent desire to go home.
"Oh dear, sor! oh dear!" he repeated imploringly. "Let ma gan yam."
"Yes," replied the minister, "you shall George; but first I will examine the church thoroughly. I will look all over it by myself. I will fully investigate this singular circumstance. I will prove whether it be of human origin or not."
The worthy divine was preparing to put this resolution into practice, when the affrighted sexton called after him, -
"Stop, sor, stop! I'll gan an all."
By what agency the reverend man was so suddenly invested with such courage and fortitude; how it came to pass that his language was

so quickly changed from "we'll all go together," to "I will go alone - I - yes, I unprotected," to me must ever remain a mystery; unless it be attributed (as I have before conjectured) to the exercise of that faith, of which no doubt the good man had the inward assurance. Certain it is, however, that he examined the church thoroughly, accompanied by the sexton only, who followed his steps far more like a moving statue than a living and efficient assistant. Every pew was looked into - every crevice examined - the pulpit and reading-desk scrutinised - the vestry and altar table were not neglected; yet nothing was discovered - everything remained in its place - no appearance of human handiwork. The door at the bottom of the stone spiral staircase, leading to the belfry, was locked as usual, and the key still hung in its accustomed place. There was no signs of its having been removed; and had any sacrilegious persons secreted themselves in the sacred building, they must, after so strict a search, have been discovered. The worthy clergyman and the sexton were now fully convinced that this could not be the work of man.
"Surely," said the minister, as he was leaving the church, - "surely, George, this fearful visitation is the work of Omnipotence! It must be a warning. It must forbode some dreadful calamity. Who knows but at this very moment, under the cover of tempestuous darkness, a foreign foe may be invading our shores? Who knows but the enemy may have landed on this coast, and that Redcar, and Coatham, and Marske are already in his possession? Oh, George!" he continued, "it is a dreadful night. There is something ominous in the sound of the wind, as it sweeps over the grave-stones. It makes one's blood chill; it calls up solemn thoughts; it speaks of other worlds; it shows how frail we are."
By this time they had arrived at the sexton's door, which was immediately opened by his terrified wife.
"Oh, George!" she exclaimed, as he entered the door-way, "thou's seeafe efter all!"
The light discovered the cowardly church-warden, and the rest of the run-away company, who had taken shelter under the sexton's roof, sitting in silent watchfulness. They all arose upon the minister entering, and with urgent and pressing enquiries after his safety, attempted to excuse their want of courage.

"Hush, hush!" replied the good man. "I don't upbraid you. It was a trying occasion. It was too much for ordinary humanity. But I fear for the consequences; I dread the morning light. No doubt it is a national calamity. I wonder if the bells of the surrounding churches have also knolled. It is evident, George, that your fears are groundless; the warning is not for you. No, no! it is a public warning. I would suggest that we remain where we are till daylight. No doubt it will disclose dreadful news. I think," he continued, "the wind is not so strong. Oh! that was an awful blast, just before the last knoll. It seemed like the finish of the summons; as if the spirit of the storm had collected all his might to enforce the last warning. - But hark! ------"
He paused for a moment, during which all remained in breathless anxiety.
"Yes," he resumed, "it is it. Hark! it knolls again."
Again he paused.
"Six," he continued, "seven, eight, nine."
"Lord save us!" was the stifled response of every breast.
"It keeps for an aud man," said the clerk, who was set on a low three-legged stool, huddled as near to the fire as he could get.
"It's ower true," ejaculated the sexton, "it's ower true."

Mem. The midnight knell, which so justly alarmed the inhabitants of Stokesley on the night of the twentieth of December, 17--, was a prank of Bob Short, the blacksmith, and Thomas Tinmar, the dyer. Bob got into the church at eight o'clock at night, when the sexton was ringing the curfew bell, and stole gently up into the belfry, fastened a strong cord to the tongue of the death-bell, and put the cord end out of the openings of the belfry to his companion, who was waiting in the church-yard, and removed the end of the cord into an adjoining garden, where they could toll the bell unobserved. In the morning, he again entered the church at six o'clock, when the sexton was ringing the bell as usual, and again he stole into the belfry, and removed the cord he had placed to the tongue of the death-bell the night before. "Isaac Hobkirk"

THE HOBKIRK PAPERS.

EDITED BY ANDREW BROWNE.

INTRODUCTION.

All history descends through the medium of oral or written testimony, and the value of history depends in a great measure upon the character of the agency.

Of the different kinds of history, perhaps that of individuals more immediately owes its interest to the medium of communication; and when the relation comes direct, and the historian has personally witnessed the events which he describes, or received them from the lips of the individual whose life and experience he undertakes to advance, importance necessarily attaches to his narrative—the ambiguity attending a multiplicity of versions, or a succession of testifiers, is entirely done away—and the history assumes its efficient and literal character, viz,—a narration of facts. Such is the nature of "The Hobkirk Papers." They are a faithful relation of events which occurred in the life of the late Isaac Hobkirk, Esq., of Stokesley; and either witnessed by me, Andrew Browne, his contemporary; or related to me by Mr. Hobkirk himself.

To the birth and parentage of Mr. Hobkirk the papers will not directly allude; no distinct relation being made of these events in the journal from whence they have been extracted; and the Editor does not consider himself bound to supply particulars of what the authority from which he recites has seen fit to pass unnoticed. Suffice it to say, that Isaac Hobkirk was born, and of parents too; that his infancy was passed as such a period in the life of man generally is; that he inherited the characteristic peculiarities of the fallen Adam; that his propensities were such as pertain to the nature of humanity; and that during his juvenility he was neither more nor less than a faithful representative of a son of Eve. About the time, however, when the stripling merges into manhood —when we begin to consider ourselves as released from the trammels of parental jurisdiction, and liberated from leading strings—we find Mr. Hobkirk's character developing itself. From this period he devoted a portion of his time to the cultivation of social enjoyment; and hence originated that inexhaustible fund of anecdote and amusement which so particularly characterised "aud Isaac Hobkirk." Could the jovial and care-dispelling scenes which almost every ale-house bench in "bonny Stousley" then witnessed be reverberated, which of our bosoms would not their echo thrill with recollections of by-gone days, alas! never to return —of times to mirth and memory dear.

In selecting for publication "The Hobkirk Papers," great care has been exercised by the Editor to avoid a recital of circumstances with which any of the present generation may be identified; and in every instance where the relation of past events might possibly wound the feelings of the living by a recollection of the dead, he has taken especial care to either pass the circumstance altogether unnoticed, or so to change its direct and relative character, as to prevent the possibility of recognition.

NO. I.—THE COCK-FIGHT.

On the north side of the town of Stokesley there stood (until the rage for improvement and innovation appropriated its site to more fashionable residences) a snug and comfortable little inn, known by the sign of the *Half-moon*. The host—kind, cheerful, jovial Christopher Eden—was a true and unsophisticated specimen of English conviviality, equally respected by all who knew him, as his "better half" was celebrated for hospitality and good pots. Peace to their bones, and reverence to their memory!—good old Kitty Eden and his wife Elcy.

Amongst the barbarous and inhuman amusements in which mankind once took delight, but which in the present day have justly become obsolete, stood conspicuous *Cock-fighting*. Stokesley, like most other towns, had its cock-pit, its cockings, and its cock-fighters; and annually did the abandoned and misguided admirers of this disgusting pastime assemble at Easter, to test the superiority of their respective broods,—to contest the palm of victory, between cocks of different walks, the courage and gallantry of the most inferior of which might have justly put to shame the cowardly and ignominious fellows who sought advantage through their valour, and amusement in their torture and misery.

On the Sunday before a celebrated and important cocking, there arrived, at the *Half-moon*, some cock-fighters from the city of York, who had come prepared to carry off all the prizes. A previous acquaintance with the good host and hostess occasioned their taking up their quarters with them. The birds upon which they depended for success were five of the most noble and beautiful of the kind which the cock-fighters of Cleveland had ever seen. Their perfect mould—their matchless size—their commanding and gallant bearing astonished all; and so superior to any which they could bring forward were the York birds, that the Cleveland boys became dispirited and crest-fallen—betting was at discount—excitement flagged—and nothing but "*a hollow go*" escaped their lips.

During the evening of that day, a select few of the Stokesley amateurs took a turn into the *Half-moon*, and joined in a "*pot of hot*." Flushed with the idea of certain victory, and encouraged by the evident loss of heart of the Stokesley cockers, the men of Ebor talked large, drank deep, and offered great and tempting odds:—but no!—the Cleveland lads were *Yorkshire too*. It was *no go*.

For some time Isaac Hobkirk, who was one of the party, sat a silent and unconcerned listener. At length, after taking a good pull at the *pewter*, he said to his companions;—

"Why lads, I care little about cock-fighting, and would sooner put it down than encourage it; but I never liked *bounce*, and cannot bear to be crowed over. Come, what d'ye say for a sovereign shy? We'll pitch five cocks against their five. Crown match and sovereign main."

His companions hesitated to express their assent, until the significant nod of Isaac Hobkirk convinced them that all was right. Matters, however, were soon arranged, for the Yorkites were too sanguine to waste time in parleying.

The next morning dawned, fine and propitious, and with it rose the admirers of the hood and spur. At the appointed hour to the pit both parties repaired. Matters wore a different aspect—betting was brisk—and the Cleveland men became confident and full of assurance. Owners, trainers, handlers, and all the usual retainers of a cock-pit, entered in full array. Bob Short, a blacksmith, of pugilistic notoriety and singular genius, handled the Stokesley birds. The noble birds of Ebor were attended by first-rate *artists*.

Upon placing the *Hero of Ebor*, as the finest of the York birds was called, against *Roseberry Robin*, one of the Cleveland cocks, the disparity in size and appearance was so striking, as to elicit a cheer of significant derision from the supporters of the stranger birds. A few *flies* however, were sufficient to convince the Yorkites that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The *Hero of Ebor*, instead of following up the advantage which the first blow of his tremendous and powerful *diggers* appeared to give him over *Roseberry Robin*, wheeled

round, erected his combless front, and giving one crow—which certainly had more of friendship than defiance in its echo—strutted round the circle, avoided the embrace of his second, and cut the most amusing and ridiculous antics that ever bird did. For a few moments he set himself in an attitude of defence, and then suddenly dropped his wings and walked off. The audience were no more taken by surprise than was *Roseberry Robin*. He evidently no longer looked upon the bird of Ebor as an antagonist, but rather as a barn-door companion,—one with whom he might hold goodly fellowship, and discuss the particulars of their respective *walks*. No coaxing, no torture, could render him pugnacious. Fight he would not; but upon frolic and playfulness he was alone bent. After repeated trials, the York men were compelled to give in; their *crack*, their *Hero* had shamefully deceived them. Long, loud, hearty, "*Roseberry* for ever!" rang through the building, whilst curses, loud and deep, were heaped upon the unfortunate *Hero of Ebor*; and had it not been for his past services, and his well-known prowess, together with the strange and unaccountable way in which he had then acted, his life would have paid the forfeit.

Another noble and gallant bird was then brought forward—the *Master of the Ouse*, and against him was *pitted* the *Boy of Leven*. But no!—war was not his pastime—blood-thirstiness was not his pleasure. The *Master of the Ouse* upon being *placed*, began to crow and flap his wings with all his might; but not in the manner of contest. There was something remarkable in that crow: it seemed to indicate good-will and benevolence. That flapping of wings was not expressive of hostility: it was incessant, rapturous, and indicative of delight. Not one blow was struck. Neither bird showed any symptoms of combat. The one—influenced by some unnatural and mysterious agency, which entirely changed his common nature from strife and contention to peacefulness and mirth; the other—awed by the unaccountable novelty of a shorn and armed cock, not only refusing to fight, but actually making friendly advances. The thing was paradoxical: it confounded and amused all who beheld it. It must be a drawn match.

Burning with rage and disappointment, the Yorkites became furious. They cursed their trainers, their birds, their handlers, and even themselves; and desperate through chagrin and the cheers of their opponents, they volunteered one last, one final contest, the issue to determine the victor of the main. This was readily acceded to, and *Roseberry Robin*, was again selected by the Cleveland men, to contest the palm of victory. The *Hero of Ebor* and his no less valiant compeer the *Master of the Ouse* having proved themselves unworthy of confidence, their owners brought their favourite cock of all their dung-hills—the master of every *walk*—the "hero of a hundred fights"—the pride of their city—bold, consequencious, indubitable *Iron Duke*. He had never known defeat—had always been accustomed to victory. War was his trade—contention his delight. He glutted in gore—revelled in feathers—ruled through might—and subdued his enemies by steel. Such was the bird upon which the men of York depended for success, and surely they could not be disappointed. But, alas! their champion deceived them—their *Duke* betrayed them. He sacrificed their interests—compromised their reputation—and lost the *main*.

The conquerors and the defeated men stared at each other in amazement; whisperings of *foul play* were here and there heard; revenge was sworn by the men of York, who considered themselves *done*; but no one could unravel the secret—no one ever knew the *ruse*, save a certain few. The stratagem was unique,—it was worthy of the mind that devised it.

Had the circumstance occurred in more recent times—had it taken place now-a-days, no doubt less difficulty would have been experienced in divining the secret,—the cause would have been more readily understood; for we now-a-days can account for everything, however mysterious and unaccountable. If instead of destroying his antagonist and massacreing his enemy, a *spurred cock* should begin to flap his wings in ecstacy, and decline war—should crow in friendship and refuse to gore his fellows, the circumstance would be attributed to moral influences, or *animal magnetism*, or dotage; but in former times—when men were accustomed to consider Nature's laws incontrovertible, and her operations harmonious—every direct violation of known principles—of customary deductions, was considered unnatural and ambiguous.

The fact is simply this: having bribed a retainer, some *moonshine* was introduced into the crops of the most valiant of the York birds, and not belonging to the Emerald Isle, it induced sentiments of conviviality and good-will, instead of engendering feelings of animosity and discord.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

Author of "*The Mind, and other Poems.*"

When first my eyes beheld thee smile
My heart fled to thee in that gaze,
But when I heard thee speak awhile
I ceased thy lovely form to praise!
For higher gifts thy being bore
Than those a beauteous cheek endow;
And if I lost my heart before,
Oh, love, my soul flew with it now!—

And heart and soul shall still be thine,
Come what may come of ills the worst;
As faithful to thy life's decline,
As when they wooed and loved thee first!—
As birds oft sing their sweetest song
When every leaf hath left the tree;
So, when thy bloom hath vanished long,
My heart shall fonder cling to thee!

Cheetwood Priory.

A BRIEF CONTRIBUTION.

BY BERNARD BARTON.

Author of "*Poetic Vigils,*" &c.

Goldsmith told us long ago,
Man wants little here below;
From a poet's scanty store
Courtesy would ask no more.

Little books are soonest read;
Shortest journals quickest sped;
Long spun yarns seem never ended;
But least said is soonest mended.

Trivial boons are promptly given;
Slight offences easiest shriven;
And—as hath been often writ,
Brevity's the soul of wit.

With such hints to be concise,
Tediousness would seem a vice!
That my own it may not be,
I will write no more. B. B.

Woodbridge.

"And is it thus," I bitterly exclaimed, "that I am received by those with whom my thoughts dwelt, and on whom my dearest hopes were rested? Is there not one being in the world by whom I am unforgotten, and by whom I would be kindly welcomed?"

When the tumult of my mind had a little subsided, I remembered a little rosy-cheeked girl, who had been my schoolfellow, and whom I had left just emerging from childhood. She was the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, and had ever been a favourite with me. The thoughts of her recalled scenes of happier hours, and something like hope animated me. I felt it would be some solace to find that I retained a place in her remembrance; but I was now too much accustomed to disappointments, and I scarcely ventured to think I should be more fortunate in this, than on many other previous occasions. However, in this I found myself mistaken: my expectations were more than realized; I was remembered, nay more, I had never been forgotten. I will not attempt a description of my feelings on this discovery. It was the first instance of kindness I had met with since my return to my once happy home, and it could not fail of being appreciated.

The little urchin I had left, was now the accomplished woman. To be brief,—I loved—was beloved—and she became my wife,—the partner of my toils, and the sweet soother of all my sorrows.

Years have rolled over me since that eventful period. I have known many changes; the withering blasts of adversity have been exchanged for the sunshine of prosperity; I have gained friends,—I hope true ones;—but experience has taught me, that nothing in this world can be compared with that which neither wealth nor fame can purchase,—I mean the possession of one faithful and affectionate heart.

Gateshead.

THE HOBKIRK PAPERS.

EDITED BY ANDREW BROWNE.

NO. IV.—JOHNNY DO'EM.

(*Continued from page* 320.)

In a few moments all was still as the grave; each one present listening with anxious expectation for the lyric of the local poet. Their curiosity was soon gratified by Jacob singing, in a manly manner, the following song:—

"THE CLEVELAND FOX-CHASE.

"The glimpse of Aurora appears o'er the hills,
The morning 's inviting and fair;
The murmuring streamlets and fine purling rills,
Along with the sweet-scented air,
Invite the gay sportsmen; and first do appear
The two noble chiefs of Greenhow,
With famed Gisb'rough's lord, and the hounds in the rear,
In hopes to cry off—Tally-ho!

"The pearl-drops of dew now bespangling the thorn,
Give pleasure to sportsmen now here,
Who gates, hedges, ditches, do view but with scorn—
Such sportsmen are strangers to fear.

So each furze and thicket with care then they try,
At Weary Bank meet with the foe;
To Crathorne he scours, in full hopes by and by
To get clear of the cry—Tally-ho!

"Then Limpton, next Worsal, and Picton he tries,
But ah! all these efforts are vain;
The huntsman's loud hollow and hounds' jovial cry
Are fit to rend Reynard in twain.
Then Crathorne and Weary Bank he tries once more,
And these but increasing his woe,
Along Foxton Gill, and across Seamer Carr,
He tries to shake off—Tally-ho!

"The hounds still persuing, to Tanton he scours,
Next Nunthorpe, then Langbaurgh he tries,
But all yet in vain, (then how dull are his hours,)
Each place to him entrance denies.
Then Newton, Rosebury, Hutton-Lowcross Gill,
To each in their turn he does go;
And at Lownsdale, Court Moor, and at Kildale Mill,
He tries for to clear—Tally-ho!

"But all still in vain: he to Percy Cross hies,
To Sleddale and Pelly Rigs bent,
His speed not abated, like lightning he flies,
Which give the true sportsmen content.
Then to Skelderskew, Lockwood Beck, Freeborough Hill,
But none of these earths must he know;
Though admittance denied, yet his hopes are still
He far shall out strip—Tally-ho!

"To Danby Lodge, Coal Pits, and o'er Stonegate Moor,
To Scayling, bold Reynard doth hie;
To Barmby and Ugthorpe Mill he doth scour,
At Mickleby seemeth to fly:
But no aid he finds, so to Ellerby goes,
And then he tries Hinderwell too;
Yet all do but seem as increasing his woes,
Still he hopes for to clear—Tally-ho!

"Rowntree, *Cole, Davison, Stockdale also,
With ten couple of the best hounds,
Came up on the cliff, and poor Reynard do view,
Till he earths in these happy grounds.
On twenty-ninth January, eighty-five,
Bold Reynard made this noble show
Of sixty miles chase, and at last did contrive
To get clear from the cry—Tally-ho!

"Yet though he escaped them, deny it who can,
They acted like sons of the chase,
So fill up a bumper to each honest man—
May fox-hunting flourish apace!
May we run so life's chase, that when to an earth bound,
Like Reynard we may safe to it go,
And in mansions above rest where true joys are found,
And never more hear—Tally-ho!"

* The huntsman.

"Well done, Jacob!" said the vicar, as soon as the song was finished, —"Jackson himself, well as he sings his own song, could not have done it better."

Jacob bowed in acknowledgement of his master's compliment, and helped himself to a horn of the October, but ere he had replaced the vessel on the table, a loud groan, as of a person in great agony, was heard above the applause which all were so lavishly bestowing on the trusty servant.

"What noise is that?" enquired the worthy clergyman. "It must proceed from some one in intense agony. Hush! let us hear whence it proceeds?"

"It is some one in the front garden," said Mr. Dobson,—"only listen again and you will hear."

"Let us go and see, Jacob," said Mr. Sylvester. "Perhaps we may alleviate their pain."

The vicar was not only followed by old Jacob, but all the company present; and on arriving in the little garden in front of the vicarage, what was their surprise, to find Mr. John Dothem suspended from a mountain ash, by a halter round his waist; and although Simon Thwaites, the upholsterer, hastily remarked that it would have been much better round his neck, yet, at the same time that he made use of the expression, he took an old *jack-a-legs* from his breeches pocket, and cut him down.

After some investigation into the affair, they discovered that Mr. Dothem had that evening made an appointment to meet the representative of a respectable commercial house, with whom he at that time had some transactions, and as soon as the church-rate meeting and subsequent chairing were over, he had excused himself from spending the evening with his riotous companions, and retired to the commercial-room of the inn, where the *rider* usually took up his abode during his stay in the village. But as the man of commerce happened to be out, visiting another customer in the place, Mr. John Dothem seated himself on the old-fashioned mahogany sofa, rang the bell, and very deliberately ordered the waiter to bring in supper, with a bottle of the very best old-crusted port they had in the cellar; adding, at the same time,—

"You can charge it to Mr. Archer's account."

Mr. Archer was detained with his customer until late that night, and on his return to the inn, was surprised to find Mr. Dothem (who had just emptied a second bottle) in a state of complete intoxication. Learning from the waiter the shabby trick that had just been played him, he determined to play a prank on Johnny Do'em in return, and for that purpose bribed the inn ostler and a sturdy farm labourer to take him neck and heels out of the room, and suspend him in the manner in which the guests at the vicarage found him.

Good old Mr. Sylvester, in whose bosom humanity ever found a home, immediately that he discovered who the drunken intruder was, had him carefully conveyed to his own house, where, after his sister, Miss Dothem, had got him safely put to bed, he snored and slept, slept and snored, until evening of the following day, when some of "*the oppositionists*," (as Mr. Dothem's party in parish affairs were very quaintly denominated,) called upon him to again lead them on at the adjourned meeting; but poor Do'em was then himself done; for so violent was his head-ache from his last night's debauch, that for the three following days he was closely confined to his own room. The consequence was, that the church-rate meeting passed quietly over, as on former occasions, and the parish rebellion was easily quelled.

(To be continued.)

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RECOLLECTIONS OF SCOTLAND.

BY JOHN EMMET.

NO. IV.—EDINBURGH CASTLE AND PALACE.

"OLD HOLYROOD! Edina's pride,
When erst, in regal state array'd,
The mitred abbots told their beads,
And chanted 'neath thy hallow'd shade,
And nobles, in thy palace courts,
Revel, and dance, and pageant led,
And trump to tilt and tourney call'd,
And royal hands the banquet spread."

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

There are few places in the world which can vie with Edinburgh in beauty of site, in richness of architecture, in noble, poetic associations, and in striking, general outline. Having previously conducted the reader to this most charming of all cities, I will take a passing glance at two of the most noted and conspicuous objects of the "Old Town",—the castle, and the palace of Holyrood.

The palace stands gloomily upon a level plot at the extreme end of the Canon-gate, and from it rise formidable ridges, which are bounded on one hand by the Calton Hill, profusely covered with monuments, columns, and other architectural designs; and on the other by Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, a mountain about eight hundred feet high, on whose craggy breast reposes the crumbling ruin of Saint Anthony's Chapel: the sloping pleasant walks of the king's park, and a heap of venerable houses skirting its vicinage, with their tidy patches of kail-yard and garden, add a chaste and attractive loveliness to the whole. Thus lying contiguous to the country, and partly isolated from the black and staring buildings of a populous neighbourhood, which, however they may detract from its general prospect, do not mar the beauty of its original site, Holyrood continues to possess a great share of its pristine tranquility. It is a large, quandrangular building, with a centre court of upwards of ninety feet square, and has something extremely prepossessing and majestic about its exterior. That portion of it which faces the city is by far the most ancient, and will probably delight the stranger more than any other. It consists of three divisions or compartments,—a middle and two wings. These wings are four stories high, and castellated at the top; they project some yards to the front of the other walls, and have four sides, whose