

Methodism. That has already largely been done.* What concerns us here is, the significance of that history as an episode in the larger history of our Church's advance and mission. The capital fact demanding notice is that Hull's Bridlington Mission for the first time brought the agents of our Church into direct, close, and permanent contact with a distinct class—the fishermen who ply their hazardous calling around our coasts. With what result? We have seen what the new evangelism did for the folk of the Yorkshire Dales and Moors; did it succeed in moralising and sweetening the lives of the fisher-folk dwelling on the cliffs and in the coves "between the heather and the northern sea"? It made a determined attempt to reach them. Did the attempt succeed? Let us see.



FLAMBOROUGH HEAD.

Flamborough, on its bold head-land crowned with the well-known lighthouse, with its cliffs and caves and sea-birds, and the famous entrenchment of the Danes' Dyke running from the North Sea to Bridlington Bay, and cutting off the huge cantle of land on which the village stands, is one of the most interesting spots in England, and its hardy inhabitants, chiefly fishermen, are equally interesting, possessing as they do many distinctive traits. A thousand years ago or so the predatory Danes took possession of this natural stronghold, which, perhaps, the Britons had dug out a thousand years

* See especially "Our Filey Fishermen," by Rev. G. Shaw, 1867. "God's Hand in the Storm," by Rev. C. Kendall, 1870. "Life of John Oxtoby."

before. This stronghold the new-comers fortified and continued to hold. They intermarried, and lived so much a people apart, that their home got the name of "Little Denmark." To this day, it is said, the Flamborians give evidence of their Scandinavian origin in build and gait and complexion, as also perhaps in the deep religiousness of their nature, which, largely if not wholly, purged from the superstition of the past, made them take so kindly to Methodism, that this coigne of Yorkshire has now become one of its strongholds. From the very first, Primitive Methodism found ready acceptance in Flamborough. W. Clowes was frequently here, and as early as January 14th, 1821, he notes in his *Journal*:—

"I preached again at Flamborough at two and six. It was a very gracious day: two souls got liberty. Fifty in society, and I joined five more. Monday, 15th, brother Coulson preached, and I gave an exhortation. One soul got liberty."

The Flamborians are now largely a sober, chapel-going and God-fearing people. What they were at the beginning of the nineteenth century was something very different, corresponding rather to the couplet:—

"A wretched church, and a wooden steeple,
A drunken parson, and a wicked people."

Very suggestive in this regard is the statement, made on good authority, that it was not with the goodwill of many of the people of these parts that the noble lighthouse was erected. One of the first converts of Primitive Methodism in Flamborough was Leonard Mainprize. Considering what the family, of which he was the head, has done and is doing for the interests of our Church in Bridlington Circuit, the winning of such a man must be reckoned a good day's work. One of Leonard's sons was Vicarman Mainprize, for many years a typical working fisherman, who in following his calling had many hairbreadth escapes. Comparatively late in life he became a rich man through the coming to him of a legacy. The change in his circumstances made no difference to the simplicity of his Christian character, though it greatly augmented his power for doing good, and the Bridlington Circuit reaped the benefit of his beneficence.

Midway between Scarborough and Whitby stands Filey, fronting its noble bay. Now it is widely known as a beautiful health-resort, but at the time of which we write, it was little more than a fishing-village. One who was there in 1823, speaks of its "one short row of small cottages, like a coast-guard station, built for visitors who did not come." Hard as it is for us to realise it now, Filey was then "noted for vice and wickedness of every description." So says Mr. Petty in his *History*, and all the evidence goes to prove the truth of the indictment. The Sabbath was disregarded; if anything, the Sabbath was the busiest day of all the week. There was plenty of superstition, the dark survival of Pagan times, but of real religion there was little enough. Methodism was struggling for existence, and the influence of the Church was almost a negative quantity.



MR. V. MAINPRIZE.

True, there was an ancient fabric—St. Oswald's—which stood on the other side of the ravine that divides the North and East Ridings, but according to the testimony of

the visitor already mentioned, it was "a dreary and not quite weatherproof building." Both the situation and condition of the parish church were emblematic of the aloofness of the people from the religion it stood for. So far from exerting any practical influence on the lives of the bulk of the fishermen, it might as well have been in another world as in another Riding. "Like priest, like people," says the adage, and what both priest and people were like may be judged by an incident which took place at the bedside of a dying parishioner, who had asked that he might receive the last sacrament:—

"Parson (*loquitur*): 'Do you swear?' Sick man: 'No.' 'Do you ever get drunk?' 'No.' After other questions of a similar kind, the parson asked: 'Do you owe any debts?' 'No.' 'Well, then, you are all right. But you owe me my



FILEY.

From a photo by Walter Fisher and Sons, Filey.

fee for your father's gravestone, and I cannot give you the sacrament until you have paid me.' The dying man settled with the clergyman, received absolution, and died satisfied."*

There is pathos about the life of the fisherman—an undertone of sadness like the moaning of the harbour-bar Charles Kingsley speaks of:—

"For men must work, and women must weep;
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbour-bar be moaning."

*"Filey and its Fishermen," Thomas P. Mozley, who was at Filey in 1823 and 1825, and in the latter year attended "The Fishermen's Chapel," *i.e.*, the Primitive Methodist Chapel, refers to this clergyman,†"Reminiscences," vol. i., p. 444.

That pathetic undertone was distinctly to be heard in Filey and many another fishing-village eighty years ago. You could catch the sound of it beneath and despite the rude sports, the loud ribald song, the boisterous merriment. There were the daily toil, the hazard of storm and disaster, the anxiety of women waiting and watching at home. The stones in the old churchyard bore the silent record of many such lowly domestic tragedies. There is a passage in one of Mary Linsell's books as true of Filey and Flamborough as of more northern Robin Hood's Bay or Staithes:—

“The two women with whom Genevieve had come down from Thurkeld Abbas were the daughters of a drowned man, the widows of drowned men, the sisters of drowned men. All they possessed—the means of life itself—had come to them from the sea; the self-same sea had taken from them all that made life worth living.”*

Such was Filey, and such, thank God! it soon ceased to be. It needed vital religion to moralise the people. The men needed it to give them strength to cope with the storm and the imminent danger. The women—bread-winners, too—needed it to help them to bear the strain of anxiety, and to comfort them in the time of their desolation. And vital religion came. How and with what results we must briefly tell.

Filey was not so easily won as Flamborough and other places along the coast. It was tried again and again, but the stolid indifference of the people seemed impenetrable. But for John Oxtoby, Filey might have been left to its fate. The tradition is, that when the question of continuance or discontinuance was under serious discussion at the Bridlington Quarterly Meeting, held at the house of Mr. Stephenson, Oxtoby, who had kept silent hitherto, was appealed to, and unhesitatingly gave his judgment in favour of prosecuting the mission. Abandon Filey? It was not to be thought of for a moment. God had a great work to do in Filey; and Oxtoby declared himself ready to engage in that work, whatever privations it might involve. This ended the discussion, and it was resolved to give Filey *one* more trial. Oxtoby had got as far as Muston Hill, on his way to attempt what many regarded as a forlorn hope, when the sight of Filey in the distance drove him to his knees. His audible petitions were not only intensely earnest, but so familiar as almost to suggest irreverence, did we not know the man and the essential reverence as well as intimacy of his intercourse with God. He—John Oxtoby—had given a pledge that “God was going to revive His work at Filey,” and He must do it, or His servant would not be able to hold up his head. He put God on His honour; He would not allow His servant to be discredited: “That be far from Thee, Lord.” He received the assurance that God would verily keep His word, and rose from his knees, saying: “Filey is taken! Filey is taken!” To the foresight of faith, the work not yet begun was already accomplished. Oxtoby, on Muston Hill, pleading for Filey, recalls William Braithwaite's wrestling for souls at East Stockwith,† and both incidents have their counterpart in John Ride's and Thomas Russell's victorious conflict on Ashdown for the salvation of Berkshire. They make companion pictures. “Give me souls, or I shall die;” “Filey is taken!” “Yonder country's ours!” are only short

* “Between the Heather and the Northern Sea,” p. 77.

† *Ante*, vol. i., pp. 369 and 419.

sentences, and easily rememberable; but they are, in their way, as significant for Primitive Methodist history as some of the sayings of great captains, like Nelson, are significant for English history.

Filey was taken. The remarkable revival of 1823 was morally revolutionary and lasting in its results. It laid the foundations of a strong cause in Filey, and before the year ended a chapel was built, which, after two enlargements, was in 1871 superseded by

a handsome and commodious edifice. The Wesleyan Society shared in the labours and success of the revival, and was much quickened and largely augmented, and even the parish church began to look up and to be better attended. The morals of the village rapidly improved. Religion wrought for sobriety, thrift, softening of manners, social peace, and domestic concord. It was Filey fishermen who led the way in abandoning Sunday fishing. At first the innovators were a small minority, and met with the usual difficulties experienced by reformers. Even if they had been losers by their Sabbath observance, the obligation to keep the Sabbath would have been the same; but, as a matter of fact, they were not losers, but caught more lasts of herrings in six days than others did in seven; until even the small



FILEY CHAPEL.

fisher-lads would observe: "If there were twea (two) herrings in the sea Ranter Jack would be seaär to git yan (one) on them." The good example, honoured by Providence, was infectious. Gradually other skippers and owners fell into line with the reformers, until Sabbath observance became the rule. In short, compared with what it had been, Filey became a model fishing-town, so that in 1863 the Rev. Edwin Day, Wesleyan minister, could declare: "He had considerable knowledge of the fishermen on many parts of our coast, but he knew none equal to the Filey fishermen, and he declared, with the greatest freedom, that their superiority was entirely owing to the successful labours of the Primitive Methodist Connexion."

All the credit—if any credit at all belongs to the human agents—must not be given to J. Oxtoby for the remarkable revival of 1823. Not forgetting the pioneer labours of

J. Coulson, we find that J. Peart, B. Morris, W. Howeroft, and W. Garner, all took part in it, and it was under a sermon, preached by J. Peart, that the revival may be said to have begun. But even if we could have wished it otherwise, the rustic evangelist, whose prayers and homely exhortations were couched in the broad East-Riding dialect, is the chief outstanding figure. Tradition persists in associating Oxtoby's name with the revival as its main instrument; and those who have closely studied the history of Filey Primitive Methodism, and are best acquainted with the spirit and prominent features of its Church-life, are the readiest to admit that, in this instance, tradition has not erred; that Oxtoby's influence was not only great and formative at the time, but also procreative of its like, shaping the lives of those who were to become, in their turn, the shapers and directors of the society and circuit. We may here, with advantage, adduce the testimony of the Rev. R. Harrison:—

“Primitive Methodism is very much what it is in Filey through the prayers and faith of ‘Praying Johnny.’ Those who have thought much respecting the history, methods, and spirit of our Church in Filey, see to what extent he has been, and is reflected and reproduced. It has always been marked by Christian simplicity, strong faith, and direct, earnest prayer. It would be under rather than over the mark to say that as many souls have been saved in the class meetings as after the preaching services. There has always been a strange social element in the Church-life of Filey, and a marked domesticity in its devotions.”

Foremost among the converts of Oxtoby, who became the originators and shapers of the society, may be named Mrs. Gordon, John Wyville, and William Jenkinson. The first-named was the wife of a coastguard officer, a woman of education, who had travelled and seen the world, and was ready to be led into the light and repose of faith by Oxtoby. Mrs. Gordon was one of the most remarkable and useful women Primitive Methodism has produced, nor must the fame she afterwards acquired as “the Queen of Missionary Collectors,” and the work she did in London, be allowed to obscure her claim to have been one of the nursing mothers of our cause in Filey. She, in her turn, was instrumental in the conversion of Ann Cowling, afterwards Mrs. Jenkinson, who became second only to herself as a missionary collector, and, as such, excited the wonder of W. Clowes as to how she contrived to raise so much money, until he learned that there was an agreement between the fishermen and herself that they should give her for the missionary cause a certain percentage on all the fish they caught above a certain quantity, on condition that she prayed for them while they were fishing.

John Wyville, who survived until 1866, was another of the “old standards” of Filey. He never forgot John Oxtoby's placing his hand on his shoulder and saying: “Thou must get converted, for the Lord has a great work for thee to do.” The saying was prophetic and fulfilled to the letter. He soon after joined the society, attended to reading and the cultivation of his mind, and became a laborious and efficient local preacher. William Jenkinson (*obit.* 1866) was yet a third convert of Oxtoby's, who lived to see one hundred of his relatives members of society.

The godly succession has been kept up by such men as the brothers Jenkinson and Matthew Haxby, whose portraits appropriately have a place in our pages. Their evangelistic labours as “the Filey Fishermen” have made them widely known, but how

much good they have exerted by their example and leadership and personal influence cannot be told here. Jenkinson Haxby happily still survives, and was honoured in 1902 by being made a permanent member of Conference.



MR. JENKINSON HAXBY.

In closing our observations on the Flamborough and Filey fishermen, we are again reminded of the toils, anxieties, and hazards of the fisherman's life. We still hear the sad undertone, as of the moaning of the harbour-bar. The biographies in our *Magazines*, through a succession of years, show how many of our adherents have been engulfed by the sea from which they sought their livelihood. It is pleasing to know that religion, as presented by our Church, makes the fisherman none the less hardy, brave, self-sacrificing. In the terrible storm of October, 1869, Richard Haxby, sen., said to his crew: "Now, some of you have a wife and young children dependent upon you; I have a wife that I well prize, but no young children, therefore, you should seek every precaution to shun risk and escape death. Besides, you are not ready for another world; Frank and I are insured for eternal life; *therefore, lash us to the tiller, and you go below where there is less danger.*"* This is no solitary instance. In that same storm Matthew Haxby, referred to above, caused himself to be lashed to the tiller, and steered the vessel during most of the seventy hours, for said he: "If a wave comes and washes me overboard, I am all right. I shall go straight to heaven, where there is no more sea."

Religion, in the form of Primitive Methodism, suits the fisherman well, and the fisherman at his best has done Primitive Methodism infinite credit. That, we trust, is what this *History* shows; for after all, while for obvious reasons we have spoken much of Filey, it is taken as a type and object-lesson. While writing of Filey and Flamborough, we have found our thoughts turning to Scarborough and Staithes, to Cullercoats, and to fishing-towns and villages in East Anglia and Cornwall, and elsewhere, where our Church has done a similar work, in kind if not in degree, amongst the fishermen as it has achieved at Flamborough and Filey.

SCARBOROUGH AND WHITBY MISSION.

"On Saturday, January 27th, 1821, by an unexpected providence, my way was opened to preach at Scarborough." So stands the record in the *Magazine*. How providence opened Clowes' way we are not distinctly told. Possibly he may have had an invitation to visit the town, backed by the offer of the use of Mr. Lamb's schoolroom. Be this as it may, on the date mentioned, Clowes, accompanied by his friend Coulson, walked to Scarborough, and found on his arrival a few persons whose minds, stirred by a ripple of excitement, were already in a state of expectancy. Some one had dreamed the night before that he saw two "Ranters' preachers" going up the streets of Scar-



MR. MATTHEW HAXBY.

By permission of W. Fisher and Son, Filey.

* "God's Hand in the Storm," p. 30.

borough with an intention to preach the gospel. The dream would naturally help on its own fulfilment, and Mr. Clowes preached in the schoolroom and Mr. Coulson elsewhere. Three full Sundays out of the six yet available for this mission were devoted by Clowes to Scarborough, and two to Whitby, while the remaining Sunday was divided between Scarborough and Seamer. At Scarborough, his practice was to preach twice in the schoolroom and once on the sands, and he notes with satisfaction that the people who came to the seaside services in such multitudes, behaved with decorum and listened attentively to the Word. The first society class in Scarborough was formed by Clowes on February 11th, and before he returned to Hull, by way of

Flamborough and Bridlington, in order to attend the March Quarterly Meeting, the nine members had been increased by later converts.

From Scarborough Clowes pushed on for Whitby, but as he passed through Robin Hood's Bay, the fishermen "got wit" that a "Ranter preacher" was amongst them, and Clowes was fain to preach in three houses opening into one another. This plural place of assembly was packed with people. When, soon after, Clowes paid a return visit to Robin Hood's Bay, and held a service by preference on the beach, he was assisted by J. Branfoot, and had as one of his hearers William Harland, the young schoolmaster of Stainton Dale, who then and there resolved to lead a Christian life. At Whitby, Clowes followed the same method of procedure as at Scarborough. Both on the 11th and 18th of February, one of the services of the day was held in the market-place. At the first some unruly spirits were present disposed for mischief, but "a man of weight, for duty done and public worth," was on the ground in the person of the Chief Constable, and his presence exerted a restraining influence.

The man of authority had met with Clowes

when conveying prisoners to York, and had listened to his preaching in the open-air. He had then assured Clowes of a hospitable reception, should he ever find his way to Whitby. To his honour, be it said, the Chief Constable made good his word. Fryup in the Dale, Lyth, Sandsend, besides Ayton and Seamer, were also visited by Clowes during his mission.

The mention of Rev. W. Harland's name above, may remind us that in the persons of John and Thomas Nelson—who are said to have come from a village near Whitby,—of Henry Hebborn and of William Harland, the North Riding of Yorkshire gave Primitive Methodism four men who, in their day, were extraordinarily useful and popular. Had



WHITBY TOWN HALL.

the Hutton Rudby and East Coast Missions together done nothing more than send forth these early workers, it would have yielded an abundant return for the toil and self-sacrifice involved in prosecuting the missions; since in the formative period of the Connexion—just when it was ready to take the shaping and impress of strongly marked personalities, these men gave their zeal and strength; their wit and humour and popular gifts to the work.



REV. W. HARLAND.

Mr. Hebbroon and the Nelson brothers we shall meet again in the Sunderland District; but a further word may be permitted in reference to William Harland who, with William Garner, William Sanderson, and George Lamb, lived to be reckoned one of Hull District's "grand old men." William Harland was a native of Newton near Pickering, and was born in 1801. He was educated for a schoolmaster, and hence, from a scholastic point of view, was privileged beyond most of his brethren. Those who came in contact with him were impressed with his amiability no less than with his intelligence. On a subsequent visit to these parts,

Mr. Clowes had some conversation with the young schoolmaster, who set him on his way to Cloughton after preaching at Stainton-Dale, and found him to be "a young man of considerable information and kindness of disposition, and capable of doing much good in his day and generation." Yet Mr. Harland did not for some time identify himself with the new movement, though he lent his schoolroom for preaching services and duly attended them. At last, however, he made up his mind. Mr. W. Howcroft had given an invitation to all who desired to become members to remain after the service and he would give them a ticket on trial; whereupon Mr. Harland stepped up to his own desk and asked if the preacher would give him a ticket on trial. "No; I won't"; said Mr. Howcroft, "but I will give you one as an approved member." Mr. Harland preached his first sermon at the opening of Newton chapel, which was a converted cart-shed, and he lived to preach the opening services of the chapel subsequently erected in 1850. At the Hull Quarterly Meeting, September 1838, Bro. J. Harrison was appointed "to consult him respecting his willingness to enter our ministry." Mr. Harland *was* willing, and for forty-three years he rendered good service on the platform, where he was at his best, and in the pulpit. He was elected President of the Conference of 1862, and filled the editorial chair from 1850 to 1862. He was made a deed-poll member in 1870, and retained that office till 1879, when growing physical infirmities compelled him to resign. Mr. Harland died October 10th, 1880.



WM. HOWCROFT.

No agent better suited for carrying forward the work already begun could have been found than N. West, who was now borrowed from Malton for a month. He made his way to Whitby, where, on the 25th March, he preached twice in the market-place and once in a house, and next day formed the new converts, numbering fifty-five, into three classes. At Robin Hood's Bay there were, he notes, already twenty-eight in society.

Two Sundays N. West laboured at Scarborough. On April 1st, he "stood up" at the Castle Dykes and preached to a large congregation, made up of all sorts of people—"quality, poor, soldiers, sailors," &c. "At half-past five," says he, "I stood up in the name of the Lord again; but was much disturbed by Satan, who opposed very much by his slavish vassals; however, through God we got through, and at night held a prayer meeting. After all, we were more than conquerors through Jesus, for fifteen fresh members joined." On the following Sunday he preached twice on the sands. In the morning, many were observed to weep who had despised religion before, and at the afternoon service there were supposed to have been no less than three thousand present who "paid great attention."

Nathaniel West went back to Malton, and R. Abey came on the ground. In his *Journal* he notes the opening of the first chapel in Scarborough, May 13th, 1821. This home-made structure was designed and built by brother Luccock, and stood on the site of an ancient Franciscan Convent in St. Sepulchre Street. A Sabbath school being urgently needed, the western wing of the building was appropriated to the purpose. To save expense, the work was done by amateurs. George Tyas laid the bricks for the partition wall, and James and William Wyrill fixed the doors and window-frames. These two brothers became the first superintendents of the school, and James Linn became its first scholar. A melancholy interest attaches to the name of James Wyrill. In the terrible storm of February 24th, 1844, the yawl he commanded was struck by a heavy sea when making for the harbour, and went down with all hands in sight of the multitude lining the pier and foreshore. James Wyrill's body was recovered after being in the sea one hundred and twenty-nine days. This sad incident is recalled to show, that ever since Clowes and Nathaniel West numbered fishermen among their auditors, our Church in Scarborough has succeeded in attaching some of those who live by the fishing industry of the town to its fellowship, and has found among them some of its most earnest workers. In this connection the names of Sellars and Appleby should not be omitted.

R. Abey, who opened the first chapel, tells us that during his eleven weeks' term of service on the Scarborough Mission he saw one hundred and ten added to the societies. Then, according to the arrangement made at the first Conference, he and Thomas Sugden were to be transferred to the Tunstall District, while S. Turner and J. Garner were to be drafted to fill their place in the Hull District. When Abey took his departure, a number of the Scarborough friends accompanied him a couple of miles on his way, and then by prayer commended him to the grace of God. R. Abey, having travelled eight years with acceptance, settled down on a small farm at Snainton, and continued a useful local preacher. Bridlington and Scarborough (with Whitby) were now in June, 1821, made the heads of distinct branches, and John Garner was appointed to the former and S. Turner to the latter, the two young men walking from Hull to take up their respective charges. By September it was reported that the work was going steadily on in the Bridlington Branch, and that it had three preachers and 390 members. Scarborough, too, must have made some progress, since in 1823, it was made a separate circuit. Such, however, it remained only for one year. When, in 1824, Whitby was taken from it to form a new circuit, the membership of Scarborough

Circuit was reduced to 160, and it became once more a branch of Hull, and as such it remained, either conjointly with Bridlington or separately, until finally, in 1852, it became a circuit with 654 members. Apart from Scarborough's claim to be the queen of watering-places, there are other considerations, which make all that relates to the beginning and development of our Church in the ancient borough of some interest to Primitive Methodists. To name but two of such considerations: Scarborough is, next to Hull, the largest town in the Hull District, and it is a recognised popular Conference town: sure sign that the denomination has, like Grimsby—with which it has many points of affinity—attained to considerable strength and influence. The history of Scarborough Primitive Methodism has had its two dispensations—the old and the new—rather sharply marked off from each other. The contrast between the Scarborough of 1820, with its primitive Spa, and the Scarborough of the present day, with its



OLD SCARBOROUGH, 1820.

magnificent Spa Saloon and all else that is the outgrowth of recent years, is great indeed, as our illustrations show. But the contrast between the Primitive Methodism of the old epoch and the new in Scarborough is scarcely less noteworthy; and yet how comparatively recent these more impressive developments have been! It is with a feeling of surprise we realise that, as late as 1860, the only chapel the denomination could show in Scarborough was the one standing on the original site in St. Sepulchre Street. True, the building had been enlarged in 1839 to hold seven hundred hearers, but still, we who worshipped there can recall now how the lengthening shadows of the old dispensation rested upon the building. Good work was done in the old sanctuary. There were worthy men—men of intelligence and character, and of Connexional loyalty—

men like Messrs. Boreman, Fenby, Linn, Sellars, Appleby, and especially John Yule, shrewd, quaint, who knew both the outside and inside of books almost as well as he knew men. There were seasons of revival, and much enthusiasm and success in the raising of missionary money, but for all that, one can see now that, until the building of Jubilee Chapel in 1861, the good old dispensation reigned. This enterprise was a turning-point and new departure, and, historically, rightly belongs to the chapel-building era, that seems to have been inaugurated by the erection in Hull of Jarratt Street Chapel. There were those of the old dispensation, however, in Scarborough as there were in Hull, who did not understand or sympathise with the new movement then having its beginning. Men shook their heads and prophesied disaster, but,



SCARBOROUGH, PRESENT DAY.

happily, lived long enough to see their lugubrious predictions falsified.* The *vis inertiae*

* If any proof is needed of the statement here made, it will be found in a letter of warning and remonstrance written to the superintendent at the time by Rev. J. Flesher then resident in the town. That letter is printed in the memoir of C. Kendall, *Magazine*, 1882, and remains to show how even the great and good may have their limitations of view. This reference is due to the dead, and would, one cannot but think, be approved by them; for Mr. Flesher closes his letter which had to be read to the "go-a-heads" with the words: "I keep a rough draft of these views for future reference, and should unexpected facts prove them to be ill-founded, I shall, if alive, rejoice that the superior prudence and zeal of these brethren who think and act differently from me, have been crowned with complete success."

to be overcome was so great, that the superintendent, who had gone some way in pushing on the project for the new chapel, resolved to leave the circuit and let some one else come to it who could bring the undertaking to a successful issue, and then enjoy the fruition of the work. He exchanged circuits with Hugh Campbell, whom



W. BOREMAN.



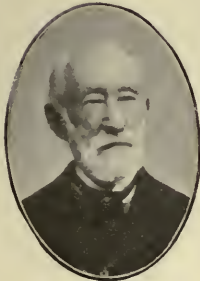
JAMES LINN.



J. SELLARS.



REV. T. WHITEHEAD.



J. YULE.



W. APPLEBY.



REV. H. CAMPBELL.

we may justly regard as one of the great chapel-builders of the Hull District, since sixteen chapels and two unfinished ones, besides schools at Louth and ministers' houses at Scotter, stand to his credit. Mr. Campbell came fresh from building Victoria Street Chapel, Grimsby, but, unfortunately, he lost his life as the result of a street-accident

before the Aberdeen Walk Chapel was opened in 1861. Another notable advance was marked, combining all that was best both in the old and new, when a new chapel, handsome and commodious, was built in 1866 in St. Sepulchre Street, under the superintendency of the Rev. Thomas Whitehead. Since then, as our own view of Scarborough chapels shows, still further chapel extension has taken place in the borough. For Scarborough the chapel-building era has done great things, as it has done also for Grimsby.

SCARBOROUGH



JUBILEE



ST JOHN'S RD



GLADSTONE RD



ST SEPULCHRE ST

CHAPELS

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MAKING OF SUNDERLAND DISTRICT.

THOUGH we begin a fresh chapter, it is but to resume the narrative of Hull Circuit's missionary efforts at the precise point the two preceding chapters left it. These further advances, both in a westerly and northerly direction, resulted in the formation, in 1824, of a new district made up of those branches that were deemed sufficiently strong to stand alone. These new intakes from the outlying field of the world were called the Sunderland District, because the largest and strongest circuits of the district were found along the lower reaches of the Tyne and the Wear, and were the outcome of the Northern Mission. But it is observable that in the Sunderland District, as originally constituted, the Silsden and Keighley Circuits also have a place, the reason being that, besides its Northern Mission, Hull Circuit had also a mission in the West Riding beyond Leeds, among "Craven hills and Airedale streams," and Silsden and Keighley, the first-fruits of this line of evangelisation, were incorporated with the newly-made Sunderland District. This Western or Craven mission had extensions into Lancashire, even as far as the Ribble, and the fact that Preston, Blackburn and Clitheroe stand on the stations of 1824, shows that this evangelistic movement did not spend its force this side the Pennine range. For the time being these Lancashire circuits are attached to Tunstall District, but they will naturally fall to Manchester District when that is formed in 1827. Nor is this all; while moving west and north, Hull Circuit was also at the same time, with Darlington and Barnard Castle Branches as a convenient base, pushing on vigorously in the north-west, and by 1824, Hexham and Carlisle were fit for self-government, and accordingly have their place among the stations of the Sunderland District. Looking at their result, we may regard these three lines of evangelisation as parts of one movement. We have Sunderland District in the making.

HULL'S WESTERN MISSION: SILSDEN IN CRAVEN, AND KEIGHLEY.

Primitive Methodism went into Craven, to Darlington, to Newcastle, to North Shields, just as it had gone to Hull and Leeds—by invitation. In each case, before he went, the missionary had heard the cry—"Come over and help us." But the cry came not from those who wanted saving but from those who wanted to save, and had their own ideas as to how the salvation could best be brought about. One anticipatory observation we cannot forbear making once for all: it is remarkable how in almost every successive district into which Primitive Methodism came, there was the repetition on a small scale of what had taken place in Staffordshire at the beginning of its history. The fact points to the prevalence of similar conditions of church-life—to conflicting ideals of Christian worship, duty and service. To some in the same church "revivalism" was

not wanted any more than fire or fever; while to others it was the thing above all others they wished to see. Differences which have disappeared, or if they have not, no longer serve to divide men, then seemed formidable and unadjustable. These differences were not lessened by the fact that what one class regarded as innovations in practice, the other class claimed to be "according to Wesley"—original and "primitive." So brethren did not quite see eye to eye, and got to be at cross-purposes. These differences ever along tended to differentiate themselves so as to become cognisant to sense, and it has taken three-quarters of a century to disentangle these differences and to bring the estranged brethren together again. Reflections such as these will be obvious enough as we follow the narrative through this new chapter.

Silsden, in Craven, whence came one of these Macedonian cries, was, in 1821,



REV. JOHN FLESHER'S HOME, SILSDEN.

a village of some 1300 inhabitants, who were chiefly engaged in nail-making and wool-combing. As to higher matters, the place, we are told, was notorious for "ignorance, rudeness and crime." And yet, it hardly should have rested under such a stigma, for Silsden was not far distant from Haworth, where Grimshawe had preached and prayed. Six miles away was Skipton, the capital of the Craven district, with its historic castle and its memories of the Cliffords. At this time, John Flesher was living in Silsden at the house of his father, the village schoolmaster. Though but a youth of twenty he had been a Wesleyan Methodist five years, and already had preached his trial sermon before the Rev. Joseph Fowler, of "Sidelights" fame.* As is the case with the many,

* "Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism. Taken chiefly from the Notes of the late Rev. Joseph Fowler," etc. By Benjamin Gregory, D.D.

the young "local" might have been content to tread the beaten path of routine; but he was not. He spent much time in visitation; he made personal, pointed appeals to his friends and neighbours on soul-matters; he even went the length of preaching from his father's doorstep. We need scarcely wonder if some of his proceedings were little relished by his co-religionists. "How forward! How indiscreet! So young a man, too!" There were head-shakings, and non-committal, critical looks and whisperings. Still there were not wanting those who approved, although they might not share his zeal. One who had been down in Lincolnshire buying wool, brought back glowing accounts of the doings of the Primitives in those parts, and finished with the observation that the young schoolmaster might do worse than invite these people into Craven: they would suit him to a nicety. Whether the suggestion were seriously meant or not, it was seriously taken and soon bore fruit.

Meanwhile, another Wesleyan local preacher in the neighbourhood of Skipton was led to take the same step as John Flesher—to invite the Primitives to enter Craven. John Parkinson, a local preacher since 1812, was what Hugh Bourne would at once have described as a "Revivalist." He had taken part in beginning and carrying on a Sunday school in his father's barn; he did not confine his labours to places set apart for public worship, but preached in the streets and lanes and on village-greens; he had what he called his 'mission,' comprising several villages he regularly visited. The criticism and discouragement, which came in due course, led him seriously to "ponder his ways." Was he right or wrong? After conference with a friend, the two adjourned to an enclosure leading to Silsden Moor, and there they believed they received a divine intimation that they must go on in their chosen line of activity. At this juncture, tidings reached them that hundreds of sinners were being converted in Leeds and its neighbourhood through the labours of the Primitive Methodists, and their "Come over and help us" was duly sent. Their resignations were handed in to the authorities and reluctantly accepted, and they were now free to throw in their lot with the missionaries when they should arrive.

In response to this double invitation, Samuel Laister, whom we have already seen on the Wolds, at Leeds, and at Malton, was sent to Skipton and Silsden, March, 1821, and, soon after, the devoted Thomas Batty came on the ground, and laboured some nine months in Craven before going on the north-western mission at Barnard Castle. Thomas Batty (born 1790) as a child came into close touch with Joseph Benson, Joseph Entwisle and other eminent Wesleyan ministers who were entertained at his father's house. William Bramwell's hand had often been fondly placed on his head. Batty entered the navy and got his discharge in 1813. He became a Wesleyan local preacher at North Frodingham, but having preached at two camp meetings in the Driffield Branch, he had to make his choice between ceasing to attend camp meetings or ceasing to be a Wesleyan local preacher. He chose the latter alternative. This was in the spring of 1820, and just a year after, he began as a hired local preacher in Driffield Branch, and



REV. THOMAS BATTY.
Age 45 years.

was soon transferred to Silsden Mission. The second service at Silsden was held in the house of Mr. Flesher, sen., and for some little time the society had the use of his barn for religious services. One of Mr. Flesher's cherished recollections was of a certain evening when "forty-four sinners were pricked in their heart under one sermon." One



OLD BARN, SILSDEN, WHERE THE FIRST SERVICES WERE HELD.

of the forty-four was the late Mr. Joshua Fletcher, for many years a leading Connexional official in Yorkshire. Messrs. David Tillotson and William Newton were also among the first converts in the old barn, and rendered eminent service to the cause, while Silsden was the birth-place, natural and spiritual, of Revs. W. Inman, T. Baron and S. Bracewell, and the home of Mr. G. Baron, whose connection with the Bemersley Book-Room has already been referred to.*

Needless to say, John Flesher not only invited the Primitives to Craven, but when they came united himself to them. Soon, however, he removed to a school in Leeds, and by June, 1822, he had entered the ministry, his first appointment being to Tadcaster. Later, we shall see something of what he was as legislator, re-organiser of the Book-Room and Editor: what he was in his prime as a preacher and platform speaker we can now but imperfectly picture. But one who knew him well, has

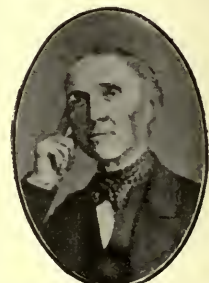
declared that "he surpassed every other speaker it had been his fortune to listen to, 'in the matter of *passion*,' as Foster phrases it, which he infused into all his discourses." He calls him "the Bradburn of Primitive Methodism," and avers that "he might have been its Watson, if he had not preferred *immediate* to *more remote* results." †



MR. JOSHUA FLETCHER.



MR. DAVID TILLOTSON.



MR. WILLIAM NEWTON.

* See vol. ii. pp. 7—8 for portraits and further references to the brothers Baron.

† "United Methodist Free Churches' Magazine," 1859. We judge the writer to have been the Editor, Rev. Matthew Baxter, who for two years, 1829-31, was in our ministry. Mr. Flesher had a high estimate of Mr. Baxter's talents.

As a pioneer worker in the Craven district, John Parkinson deserves a further word or two. He is said to have missioned Braildon, and to have been among the first to publish the glad tidings at Keighley, Shipley and Bradford. He, too, was not wanting "in the matter of passion." He evidently had all the intensity and pervidness of the West Riding temperament, as the following description of an actual camp meeting scene in Craven at which he figured, will show. Mr. Flesher himself is the writer, and while the passage is worth giving as a fair specimen of Mr. Flesher's prose, of which we have so little, it may have its use as going some way to show us—what we are so anxious to know—what sort of preaching it was which in those far-off days produced those immediate and tremendous effects which excite our wonder, and our envy too, as we read.

"He figures in my recollection as I saw him addressing a crowd from a waggon at Silsden. Every eye and heart of the vast assembly seemed riveted on the speaker, and deep feeling was betrayed on every countenance, as if struggling for an outlet. The doom of the finally impenitent was under review at the time, and terribly did the preacher portray it. Suddenly he paused, as if to let his hearers weigh their destinies. This heightened the effect, and many a stone-hearted sinner sighed under the weight of his guilt. As tears were flowing fast, mingling with the moanings of the broken-hearted, brother Parkinson, in apparent triumph, while his countenance, gesture, voice, and feeling harmonised with his address, opened the gate of mercy so effectually that some immediately entered it, and were saved, some clung to the wheels and shelvings of the waggons to avoid being borne down to the ground under the load of guilt, while the praises of the pious poured forth from all parts of the assembly. Jubilant were angels that day over many sinners repenting and turning to Christ."

That John Parkinson missioned Shipley in 1821 is confirmed by Rev. Richard Cordingley, who tells us that meetings were held in the houses of Mrs. Emanuel Hodgson and Mrs. Cordingley. Richard Cordingley joined the class that was formed, and when barely fifteen years of age, came on the Silsden plan, having as his fellow-exhorters Solomon Moore, of Keighley, and Jabez—afterwards Dr.—Burns, whom we shall meet again. Of later worthies of Keighley Primitive Methodism, respectful mention must be made of the two remarkable brothers, Messrs. F. and Addyman Smith.

An untoward event that might have proved a huge disaster happened on the occasion of the holding of the first lovefeast in Keighley, September 16th, 1821, and was deemed of sufficient public interest to be chronicled in the current issue of "The Times." The lovefeast was held in the topmost story of a wool-warehouse. Thomas Batty, as the leader, had just pronounced the benediction, when the floor gave way. With shrieks, and amid dust and broken beams and flooring, the crowd fell into the rooms below. The preacher, by his sailor-like agility, managed to save himself by leaping into the embrasure of a window; but many were hurt, and one woman died next day from injuries received. Some said the event was intended as a judgment on the "Ranters"; nevertheless the cause prospered, and, in 1824, Keighley was made a Circuit of the Sunderland District. One of the first to open his house for religious services was the father of Rev. J. Judson, who began his more public labours by

becoming a hired local preacher in Keighley, his native Circuit. His ministry of forty-one laborious years began in 1833 in the Silsden Circuit, where he stayed three years, the last year being devoted to Grassington Mission under the auspices of Keighley. Mr. Judson travelled in most of the leading circuits in the Manchester District, and died at Oldham, June 28th, 1876.

Before leaving the neighbourhood of Keighley, a reference may be permitted to the opening of Haworth by F. N. Jersey, who spent two months on the Silsden Branch. Writing under the date of April 25th, he says:—



REV. JOHN JUDSON.

“Went to open Haworth. I sung a hymn down the street. The people flocked as doves to the windows. I preached to about nine hundred people, and two very wicked men were awakened. Praise the Lord for ever.”

The Rev. Patrick Brontë became curate of Haworth and removed there in 1820. When F. N. Jersey sang down the streets of the moorland village, Charlotte Brontë was a girl of six. One likes to think that the girl who was to make that village famous heard the singing, and may even have looked on the unwonted scene.

Silsden Branch included not only the Craven district, but also some places in the adjoining county of Lancaster, such as Barley, lying under Pendlehill, where there was a vigorous society, and Trawdon, the native place of Robert Hartley, uncle of Mr. W. P. Hartley, whom also this district was afterwards to nurture, to the great advantage of our Church. Born in 1817, Robert Hartley entered the ministry in 1835, and in 1859 went to Australia, “becoming the most widely-known and most generally respected minister of the gospel of Central Queensland.” He could count among his friends such men as Canon Knox Little and Dr. A. Maclaren, and at his death, in 1892, the citizens of Rockhampton erected a public memorial to his “noble character, godly life, and untiring benevolence.” It was at Barley that John Petty preached, November, 1823, his first sermon, and it was at Trawdon where he began, and fell in lasting love with the practice of open-air preaching. John Petty’s home was at Salterforth, a village on the western border of Yorkshire. It was first missioned by F. N. Jersey, who preached in the village street during the dinner-hour. The next to follow was Thomas Batty. In the character of this minister, whom his father entertained, John Petty found the most powerful persuasive to the Christian life. The sermons Batty preached in the barn were not so telling as the sermon he preached by his daily life and conversation. So this thoughtful youth felt. Hence, without any great spiritual shock or struggle, he went on to know the Lord, being “drawn by the cords” of a Christ-like man. Mr. Petty lived to write the biography of his captor for Christ, and he tells how, as a youth of fifteen, “he was deeply moved, and his heart graciously drawn out after God.” Mr. Batty, he adds: “Seemed to be always happy, constantly joyful in the Lord, practically presenting religion in a most attractive and winning form. He could converse, sing,



ROBERT HARTLEY.

Aged 43.

preach, and pray almost all day long; and greatly did he charm and profit the domestic circle.* Mr. Petty, sen., became the leader of the first class at Salterforth, while his son was soon to enter on wider service. Two years to a day after preaching his first sermon at Barley, "John Bowes fetched me to help him in Keighley Circuit," says

Mr. Petty, and in 1826, when not yet nineteen, he was sent to distant Haverfordwest.†



WM. BRINING.

The missionaries now pushed on still farther into Lancashire. Blackburn and Preston were reached, and these towns became almost at once the head of a new branch. The late Rev. W. Brining affirms that Thomas Batty missioned Preston in 1821. The statement is confirmed by Jonathan Ireland, who tells us that Mr. Batty preached in a cottage, in which some of the more zealous Wesleyans held one of their prayer meetings; that in a short time the members were forbidden to receive the Primitives into their houses, and that some of the members resisted the interdict, Mr. W. Brining, a Wesleyan local preacher, being one.‡ So far Jonathan

Ireland. Mr. Brining himself states, that his father and he joined the Primitives in January, 1822, and took a large room, for the rent of which his father became responsible; also that he and three others were appointed local preachers, and that the March Quarterly Meeting of the Hull Circuit "took him out to travel," and that he began his labours on the Preston Branch along with Mr. G. Tindall. There is also evidence to show that John Harrison, too, was an early pioneer labourer in this district. According to the late Rev. S. Smith, Mr. Harrison made his way to Preston, and was entertained by Mr. Shorrocks (afterwards a leader in Manchester), and was also taken before the Mayor of Preston as a suspicious character, but was courteously entreated and dismissed with "a glass of wine!" §

Mr. Batty also opened Blackburn, Wigan, Padiham, and Accrington. From the *Journals* and memoirs of the time, we cull one or two references to these and other places connected with this early mission. We are told that at Blackburn Mr. Batty preached his first sermon standing on a dunghill! Be this as it may, one man that day was, metaphorically, lifted *from* the dunghill; for a certain James Chadwick, one of the worst men in the town, was converted, and became a useful member of society. At Wigan, on May 6th, 1822, he sent the bellman round the town, and in the evening preached to about a thousand people. At Chorley he spoke at the Cross to an immense concourse of people, and in the evening preached in the room which the players had occupied. Mr. Brining made his way to Haslingden, and a class was formed at "Manchester Mary's." Mr. G. Tindall



J. HARRISON,
Aged 42, 1838.

* "Memoir of the Life and Labours of Thomas Batty, 1857," p. 44.

† See *Ante*, vol. i. p. 344.

‡ "Jonathan Ireland, the street-preacher," p. 26. See also for Mr. Ireland's Preston experiences *Ante*, vol. ii., p. 24.

§ "The Introduction and Spread of Primitive Methodism in Lancashire:" in "Facts and Incidents," p. 103.

enters in his *Journal*, on April 25th, 1822: "Went as a missionary among the small villages to search for places to preach at." On May 6th, he spoke at Clitheroe Market-cross to a large concourse of people, and formed a class of ten members. On June 16th, he spoke at Padiham, Oakenshaw, and Accrington, and adds: "I had to oppose drunkards, formal professors, Unitarians, and almost all other characters of sinners."

The progress made by both branches was such that, in December, 1823, they were granted self-government; Silsden starting its career with five preachers and Preston with three. At the same time Clitheroe, with Burnley, Accrington, Barley, Colne, and other places were detached, and constituted a branch of Silsden. 1824 saw both Blackburn and Clitheroe raised to the status of circuits. But, ere long, Clitheroe found it difficult to maintain its position, so much so that Keighley, Blackburn, and Bolton Circuits were in succession asked to take it under their wing; but in each case the overture was declined. Then, Daniel-like, the circuit determined "to stand alone;" only, as Clitheroe Society had for the time being become extinct, Burnley was made the head of the circuit.

Burnley is a typical Lancashire town, largely the creation of the new industrial era.



BETHEL CHAPEL, BURNLEY 1ST CIRCUIT.

Its position, in a basin-like depression among the hills, has helped it. The humid atmosphere of the valley is just adapted for cotton-spinning, and manufacturers have been quick to seize their advantage, so that now Burnley is a busy centre of the cotton-spinning industry. Hence, if not exactly a town of yesterday, Burnley has made its most notable advance within recent years, as may be gathered from the fact that, at the beginning of the last century, its population was little more than

five thousand. Our Church has thriven with the thriving of the town. Burnley is understood to be the "Lynford" of Mr. Joseph Hocking's story, "The Purple Robe," and amongst the hard-headed, strenuous folk there depicted, our ministrations have met with much acceptance. When, in 1896, Burnley for the first time welcomed the Conference to North-East Lancashire, any one who saw the commodious and substantially-built chapels in the town and neighbourhood, would have learned with some surprise that, up to 1834, the society of but fifty members had not as yet got its chapel, but had to make shift with rented rooms, four of which were occupied in succession before Curzon Street Chapel was opened in 1834. This "setting-up house" took place during the superintendency of Rev. M. Lee, whose term of service in the Burnley Circuit seems to have begun the era of progress. In 1852, Bethel Chapel was built, and certainly not before time, since Curzon Street Chapel did not provide seatage for much more than

half the members who formed the society. This chapel of 1852, since greatly improved and added to, is all that is left to represent the original Burnley Circuit. New interests have been created, and by division and subdivision Burnley Second, Colne, Barrowford, and Nelson Circuits, have been formed—the first division taking place in 1864, when Colne started on an independent career.

The historian of Burnley Primitive Methodism has rightly recalled the names of



BRIERFIELD CHAPEL, BURNLEY 2ND CIRCUIT.

many of its worthies past and present.* We borrow his references to two or three of the early workers. First in order comes John Lancaster, who, as a youth, received lasting good from John Petty when he preached at Burnley in knee-breeches, and standing on the slop-stone. "He was for thirty-three years one of the most devoted and earnest men ever given to a Christian community." Stephen Tattersall "was long a useful and zealous official;" Jonathan Gaukrodger,

"ever ready by toil and purse to help the cause;" John Marsden, "cheerful, generous, 'given to hospitality,' an efficient and devoted superintendent of the Sunday School;" W. Thornber, for fifty-five years a local preacher; and John Baldwin, "who may be described as the successor of John Lancaster; for more than thirty years a class-leader, and who for more than half a century filled, with much acceptance, the office of local preacher."

The head of Burnley Second is Colne Road, Brierfield, with its chapel, erected 1864,



MR. JOHN LANCASTER.



ALD. J. SMITH.



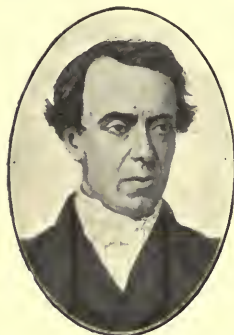
MR. J. CLARKSON.

and its splendid school premises built twenty years after. Connected with this cause, to which he has rendered most efficient aid, is Alderman J. Smith, who was Chairman of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Missionary Meeting in 1902, and who is well known for

*"Bethel Primitive Methodist Chapel, 1852-1902. Jubilee Souvenir," by Rev. George King.

the interest he has taken in the Connexional Orphanage and other institutions. The late James Clarkson was to the Brierfield Society pretty much what John Lancaster was to Bethel. When he was arrested by grace he was a beer-seller; but he pulled down his sign, poured his unsold liquor down the sewer, and never rested till he found forgiveness. "By his diligence, zeal, piety, and abundant labours he became one of the most useful officials in the Connexion."

After Blackburn was made a circuit the same process of "multiplication by division" went on which we have seen at work in the case of Burnley, its earliest offshoot. The one circuit has become at least five; for Blackburn is now represented by Haslingden, formed as long ago as 1837; Foxhill Bank and Accrington, made from Haslingden in 1864, and the three Blackburn Circuits. With Haslingden Circuit was connected Mr. James Whittaker, for many years a prominent Lancashire official. Precisely the same kind of intensive growth has gone on in the Preston Circuit since its formation in 1823. But what it concerns us more just now to note is the fact, that Preston, by its early missionary labours, helped to extend the borders of the Connexion. It pushed forward into new territory—into certain parts of North Lancashire the first missionaries from Hull had not reached. This not very thickly populated country lay to the north by the Lune and Morecambe Bay, and curved round to the Ribble, where, on one side of the estuary, in the Fylde district, were Fleetwood and Blackpool, and on the other Southport, rising among its sandbanks. Here and there in this district Preston succeeded in establishing societies which abide and flourish. Notably Preston began those tentative efforts which ultimately secured a footing for the Connexion in the two popular watering-places, even then fast growing in size and public favour. We must briefly notice these aggressive efforts which were a continuation of Hull's Western Mission, and carried the evangel from the Humber to Morecambe Bay and the sand-dunes by the Irish Sea.



J. A. BASTOW.

We have before us a plan of Preston Circuit for May–July, 1832, when S. Smith, J. Moore, and J. A. Bastow were its preachers. Halton beyond the Lune and Lancaster are two places on this plan regularly supplied with preachers. At Lancaster the Preston missionaries sometimes experienced rough usage, and occasionally made acquaintance with the interior of Lancaster Castle.* (Parenthetically it may be mentioned that as late as 1874 the Rev. Thomas Wilshaw was summoned by the Chief Constable for preaching from the Town Hall steps. The costs of the defence were generously paid by Mr. James Williamson, jun., afterwards Lord Ashton, and the magistrates dismissed the case). A Missionary Meeting was held at Lancaster in 1829, interesting to us because it brought together Hugh Bourne and a Preston youth who was just about to begin a ministry of unprecedented length and influence. A camp

* "Preston entered largely into the mission-work for twenty or thirty miles round. Here they had some persecutions: one of their missionaries was seized by the yeoman cavalry at Lancaster and shockingly ill-treated. Brother F. Charlton was thrown into Lancaster Castle by a bad man, who afterwards died raging mad." Rev. S. Smith, "Anecdotes and Facts of Primitive Methodism," p. 104.

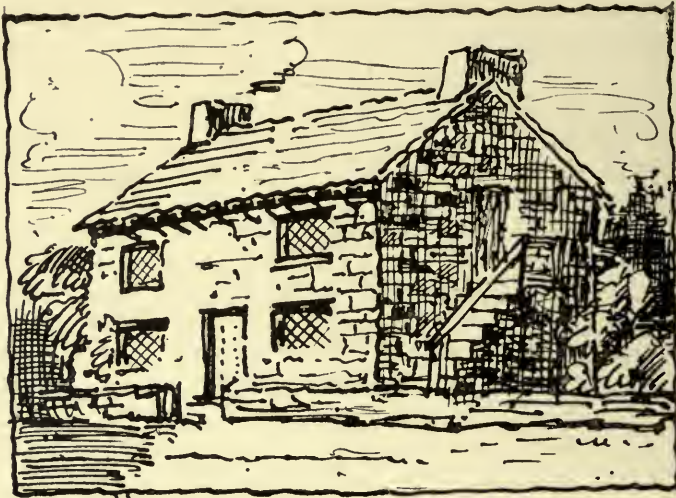
meeting and lovefeast he attended at Preston in 1826 had powerfully impressed George Lamb. He joined the society, and improved his talents so markedly that his profiting appeared to all; and now, it would seem, Hugh Bourne had set his heart upon being the medium of conveying to the young man the call of the Church to wider service, and had come to Lancaster for that very purpose, as well as to assist at the Missionary Meeting. The two had conference together, and then Hugh Bourne thoughtfully gave the young man, just putting on the harness, a letter of recommendation to the friends at Halifax, Leeds, and York, the towns he must pass through on his way to Pocklington, his first circuit. Fifty-seven years after this informal ordination service, Mr. Lamb was still in harness. Old age had but mellowed his character, while there was little appreciable decline of vigour or industry in his service; and then the word of dismissal came, February, 1886. Mr. Lamb was twice President, 1866 and 1884, General Book Steward, Confidential Deputation to Canada, 1876, Member of the Deed Poll, 1880. A mission, that in its first eight years gave John Flesher, John Petty, and George Lamb to our Church, as Hull's Western Mission did, has strong claims on our remembrance.

At Lancaster, an old coach-house in Bulk Street was, in 1836, fitted up as a chapel. Through the spread of "Barkerism" this building was for a time lost to the society. Afterwards, however, it was recovered, made Connexional, and served the uses of the society until 1854, when Ebenezer was built. Meanwhile, Lancaster had been separated from Preston and made part of the Settle and Halifax Mission of Halifax Circuit. In 1837, the writer's father "travelled"—in the full sense of the word—on this mission, which stretched some forty miles, from Bellbusk in Craven to Heysham by the seaside. As he was wont to say: "It constituted a first-rate promenade for creating an appetite, but was remarkably scanty in supplying the wherewithal to appease it. *That* had to be got how and when it could." We need not follow the history of Lancaster after it was taken over by the General Missionary Committee, except to notice that it was again separated from Settle, and after a period of barrenness and struggle it gradually improved, and in 1868 was granted circuit independence, Morecambe being formed from it in 1901. A document in our possession brings home to the mind in a realistic way the amount of toil, voluntarily and cheerfully undergone in the past by the local preachers of some of our most unproductive fields of labour. But for their loyalty and tenacity, what are now comparatively vigorous circuits, such as Lancaster is, might have been abandoned. The document in question is an analysis of the Lancaster Plan for the quarter April to June, 1844. It shows that the twelve local preachers, whose names stand on this plan, took amongst them one hundred and seventeen Sunday appointments, and thirty-nine week-evening services, exclusive of prayer meetings and class meetings, and that the number of miles they walked to their appointments amounted in the aggregate to seven hundred and sixty-two.

Three of the twelve whose names stand on this plan bear the name of Bickerstaffe—William and two of his sons. The former was the carrier of the mails between Settle and Lancaster. He was a Wesleyan local preacher, and in those pre-railway days found a home for the travelling-preacher and stabling for his horse. But he joined the Primitives, "thinking he could be more useful amongst them." He did not regret the choice he had made, but did all for the new community and more than he had done for

the old one, with which he had no quarrel. His son, Henry, was for many years a leading official of the Lancaster Circuit, while *his* son, Mr. T. Y. Bickerstaffe, is its present Steward, and a local preacher of the fourth generation bears the old name. The reference to the Bickerstaffes may be pardoned as, in 1843, the father of the writer took a daughter of this house from the Bulk Street Society to be the companion of his ministerial toils.

On that same Preston Plan of 1832, to which we have referred, we find Chorley, besides Wrightington, Wheelton, and Standish, in the direction of Wigan. To this period and district belongs the story of Mr. Bastow's imprisonment for preaching in Wigan Market-place. An occupant of the same cell, struck by his respectable appearance, wanted to know what he had done to get himself put there. "Preaching the gospel" was the answer. "And I," said the man, "am here for not attending divine worship. They are a strange people here, and how to please them no one knows.



HOOLE FIRST CHAPEL.

You are sent to prison for being good, and I for being bad. We are a strange pair—both to be imprisoned by the same man and the same laws!" We note that in the process of consolidation, Chorley was made from Preston and Wigan from Chorley, in 1837 and 1867 respectively.

Hoole, which also stands on this plan, formed the base for the missioning of Southport and its vicinity. Here, somewhere about 1824, a two-floored house was rented, the partitions were removed, and a flight of stone steps, built on the outside, led to the upper room, which formed a fair chapel, while the room on the ground floor was used as a school. Two chapels have since been built at Hoole, and in the graveyard, attached to the first of these, lie the remains of one at least of the three men who, with the Preston ministers, had much to do with the missioning of Southport—Thomas and Richard Hough and John Webster, who for many years were abundant in missionary

labours. The first services at Southport, we are told, were held in a barn at Churchtown—likewise on this plan—and a chapel and school were built in 1833 and enlarged in 1853, and Southport, with 186 members, became a circuit in 1864. It is interesting to note that the plan of 1832 announces a camp meeting to be held “in the North Meols,” near Southport, on June 10th.

Preston, too, missioned the Fylde district. Rev. S. Smith has an anecdote, from internal evidence belonging to an early period, relating to “our Fylde missionary,” who after preaching at night in the streets of Poulton—“a sadly wicked place”—found himself eighteen miles from home without the prospect of supper or bed, but who providentially found both. There is reason to believe that Freckleton was made the base for opening up the Fylde, in which are now the Blackpool and Fleetwood Circuits. At this place a pious widow, named Rawstorne, lent her thatched cottage for services, and provided accommodation for the missionary. Then, in 1848, the Rev. B. Whillock, the Superintendent of Preston Circuit, in conjunction with the afore-named John Webster, took a factory, and became responsible for the rent. This building was used for worship until 1862, when a small chapel was opened, and this served until superseded in 1892 by a worthier building. The Rev. B. Whillock entered the



THOMAS HOUGH.



J. WEBSTER.



REV. B. WHILLOCK.

ministry in 1830, and in 1870 removed to the United States, where he is a permanent member of the Primitive Methodist Eastern Conference. As his letters show, Mr. Whillock retains a lively interest in the Church of the homeland, and is full of reminiscences of its past.

Besides helping to enlarge the geographical area of the Connexion, Preston also did something towards enlarging the scope of its endeavours. It led the way in one branch of social reform—that which seeks by organised effort to war against intemperance. It showed how this kind of social service could be undertaken religiously, and temperance meetings be made to further the interests of the kingdom of God. No historian of the Temperance movement in this country can overlook the part played by “proud Preston” in the beginnings of that movement. He will point to that town and show how, from 1832 to 1835, the new sentiment in regard to strong drink not only grew in strength, but in clearness of purpose. It became surer of its ground, and more militant and altruistic. Nor can the historian of our Church omit all reference to these things; for, if now we not only have a Temperance Department within the Church, but belong to a Church which is very largely a Temperance Church, it is partly owing to the fact

that, seventy years ago, the ministers of Preston Circuit, and some of the members of old Lawson Street, as after of Saul Street, were heart and soul in the new movement, which speedily drew others within its vortex. Probably, not even before 1831, was our Church one whit behind other Churches in regard to the question of intemperance; rather was it ahead of them. To say this, however, is not to say a great deal; and it is safe to affirm that when this plan of 1832 came from the press, Preston was in advance of the Connexion generally in temperance sentiment. True; there were here and there convinced individual abstainers. The Rev. James Macpherson signed the pledge as early as 1828, and Hugh Bourne was practically a teetotalter before either Moderation

or Total Abstinence Societies had an existence. But what Preston did was to afford an object-lesson, showing how to mobilise the forces of the Church against the



drinking customs which preyed upon society, and even threatened the Church itself. It made a beginning in combining individual temperance men in a league against the common foe—offensive and defensive. Let us give the briefest summary of events relating to the early stages of the Temperance movement in Preston—so far at least as our



SAUL STREET CHAPEL, PRESTON.

Church was concerned in those movements. We give this summation in paragraphs, and those desirous of fuller information may consult with advantage the Rev. J. Travis' articles on "Primitive Methodism and the Temperance Reformation in England."*

"*March 22nd, 1832.*—Preston Temperance Society formed on the basis of the 'moderation pledge.'

"*April 13th.*—Committee appointed, of which Rev. S. Smith was a member. Its first meeting was presided over by Rev. J. A. Bastow. The second memorable meeting was held on May 3rd in Lawson Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, at which Mr. Livesey, in a forcible speech, took the line of total abstinence.

"*July 11th.*—First Temperance Tea-party, at which 574 persons were present, and Messrs. Livesey, S. Smith, and several Preston working-men spoke. Next day

* *Aldersgate Magazine*, 1899.

a Field Meeting of the Society was held on the Moor, at which Messrs. Livesey, Smith, and Teare gave addresses.

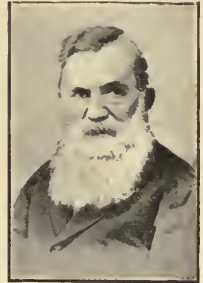
"September 1st, 1832.—A special meeting was held for discussing the question of the total abstinence pledge. No decision was arrived at, but several tarried after the meeting, and seven signed the total abstinence pledge. Of these 'seven men of Preston,' three were Primitive Methodists, viz., John King, Joseph Richardson, who was wont to say, 'I am the happiest man alive, for no man can be happier than a teetotal Primitive Methodist;' and the third was Richard Turner, who is credited with having originated the word 'teetotal.' At his funeral in 1846, the Saul Street Sunday School, and four hundred teetotallers from different parts of the country, attended.



MR. J. KING.

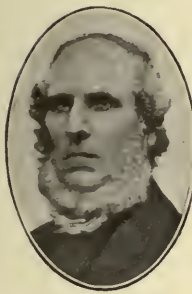
One of the

"Seven Men of Preston."



MR. GEORGE TOULMIN, J.P.

"April, 1834.—Mr. George Toulmin,* the Secretary of the Lawson Street Sunday School, and Mr. Thomas Walsley, moved the resolution, which resulted in the formation of the *first* Sunday School Total Abstinence Society, inaugurated April 18th. It was not till 1835 that the Preston Temperance Society became a strictly Total Abstinence Society, so that the Juvenile Society formed by the Primitive Methodists was the first society on a 'teetotal' basis in Preston, and, it is believed, the first Juvenile Teetotal Society in England."



REV. G. KIDD.

We conclude our notice of Preston by giving the portrait of Rev. George Kidd, whose ministry in Preston, 1864-7, was signalled by his heading one hundred and twenty stalwarts who refused to pay the Easter Church Dues, and secured their abolition: also that of Mr. William Salthouse, born at Roseacre, in the Fylde District, in 1834, who for half a century has stood by Preston Primitive Methodism, and served its interests preferably in the quieter ways of service.



MR. W. SALTHOUSE.

HULL'S NORTH-WESTERN MISSION.

As already said, Darlington and Barnard Castle furnished the base for the prosecution of Hull's North-Western Mission. The immediate fruits of this mission are seen in the inclusion of Hexham and Carlisle in the Sunderland District, at its formation in 1824, and, by 1842, in the addition of Westgate, Alston, and Whitehaven to its roll of stations. This mission was already being vigorously carried on when the large towns on the Tyne

* Mr. Toulmin became proprietor of the *Preston Guardian*, and other Journals, member of the Town Council and Borough Magistrate, and his son, who also is an ardent temperance man, is the Member for Bury in the present Parliament.

and Wear were entered. Naturally, this is just what from geographical considerations one would expect to find; since Darlington lies on the great North Road, and, from time immemorial, travellers have taken Darlington on their way to Newcastle and Berwick. Though, therefore, neither Darlington nor Barnard Castle is among the primary circuits of the Sunderland District, we still must, for reasons both chronological and geographical, glance at the introduction of Primitive Methodism into these Durham towns, and the lines of evangelisation that went out from them, before looking at "the Northern Mission," which, strictly speaking, did not begin until March, 1822.

This section of our history is not without its obscurities and difficulties, largely created, one cannot but think, by the method followed by W. Clowes in his published *Journals*. That method was not rigidly to adhere to the chronological order in his narrative of events, but to group together incidents which occurred on his various visits to the same place. Little harm need have resulted from this method of grouping had the dates of these various visits also been given; but often dates are wanting, and hence the difficulties which have led some previous writers astray. Fortunately, as in the case of Darlington, Newcastle, and South Shields, the *Journals* and memoirs published in the contemporary Magazines furnish us with a clue to guide us on our way with some degree of confidence. It was needful to say thus much, in order that the occasional variations between our narrative and preceding ones may be prepared for and explained beforehand.

As the wind carries the seed in its fairy parachute, so the breeze of rumour had much to do with disseminating Primitive Methodism. The "fame" of the missionaries went through the countryside, bringing men or missives asking for a missionary to be sent to other ground. That is how Primitive Methodism got here and there in the county of Durham, as elsewhere. William Young, whom we take to have been at the time an earnest Wesleyan, had heard of the stirring doings at Knaresborough, and sent Clowes a pressing invitation to visit Ingleton eight miles from Darlington. Our reading of the available evidence is that the visit was duly paid on Sunday, June 4th, 1820. From



REV. J. CLEWER.

the Ripon branch, Clowes made his way to Darlington. Here his coming may have been prepared for and welcomed; for, from the memoir of Rev. Jonathan Clewer, we learn that, after his marriage in 1820, he removed to Darlington, laboured as a local preacher, and "rendered great help towards establishing the infant cause." So well did he acquit himself that it was felt he was fitted for a wider sphere, and in 1822, Jonathan Clewer began his labours at Tadcaster, and continued them until his superannuation in 1851. Whether, on June 4th, Jonathan Clewer had already begun his useful labours in Darlington, we cannot be sure, but on that Sunday W. Clowes took his stand in Northgate and preached. The situation selected was not without

its significance. The street is part of the great North Road leading on to Durham, and in a house in this street, not far from Bulmer's Stone and the new Technical College, Edward Pease lived, and in a room in this house occurred a memorable interview between George Stephenson, Nicholas Wood, and Edward Pease, which resulted in the

construction of the first railway—the Stockton and Darlington line. After preaching he went to Ingleton, where he was welcomed by Messrs. Emerson and Young. They sang through the streets, Mr. Clowes giving an exhortation, and then a prayer meeting was held in Mr. Young's house. We take it, that before July 16th (when Clowes went on the Hutton Rudby Mission) two Sundays more were divided between Darlington and Ingleton. On one of these Sundays he preached at Darlington twice, having for his second congregation a thousand people, and then walked to Ingleton, where he also preached and led the class! On the other Sunday he preached in Bondgate, and the same evening renewed tickets to twenty members at Ingleton. During this visit he preached more than once at Cockfield, and formed a society of four members at Evenwood. With Jonathan Clewer already, or soon to be, at Darlington, with Messrs.



BULMER'S STONE IN EDWARD PEASE'S TIME LYING IN FRONT OF THE OLD COTTAGES, NORTHGATE.

Emerson and Young steady adherents of the cause, and some twenty members at Ingleton, and with a small society at Evenwood, we have already the beginning of a branch in these parts; and so, May 6th, 1821, Samuel Laister began his labours in Darlington Branch, and continued them unremittingly until his lamented death on Christmas Day of the same year. At first, he could not but feel the contrast between the congregations he had been accustomed to in the West Riding, and the feeble cause he found in the Quaker town. Speedily, however, the prospect brightened, and it "begins to remind him of the branch he has left."

The missionaries preached at places as far removed as Wolsingham and Stockton-on-Tees. The former was visited in response to an appeal personally made by Mr. W.

Snowball and two others who, having heard of the work being done in South Durham, came over to Cockfield to see Mr. Laister. Mr. Snowball lived to become the Steward of the Wolsingham or Crook Circuit, as it afterwards got to be called, and from 1821 to the day of his death, his house was always open to the ministers of the Connexion. In a similar way, Mr. Laister was invited to Witton-le-Wear by Messrs. Littlefair and Pyburn. Stockton was visited as early as May 13th, by S. Laister, who writes in his *Journal*: "I spoke at Stockton: a cold, hard place. No Society." By March, 1822, Stockton and the places thereabout were formed into Hull's "Stockton Mission," and reported seventy members. Later, we shall find it formed the southern part of the Sunderland and Stockton Union Circuit.

Meanwhile, Darlington itself—then a small town of some 5,750 inhabitants—was not overlooked. The society grew in numbers, and likewise, it would seem, in public favour, which has never been wanting in this town of progressive ideas. This may be inferred from the fact that, as early as October 16th, the foundation of the Queen Street Chapel was laid. At first, Mr. Laister and his colleague, W. Evans, preached in the market-place, then a room in Tubwell Row was taken, and afterwards services were held in the Assembly Room of the Sun Inn, at the corner of Northgate, where most of the important meetings of the town were then held. But even this room soon became too small, and the young society found itself committed to chapel-building.

Darlingtonian Primitives should do their best to keep green the memory of Samuel Laister, who died in their midst, probably a martyr to excessive toil. As a pioneer worker, he did much for Primitive Methodism in various parts, as our narrative has shown. S. Laister was not spared to see the opening of Queen Street Chapel on March 3rd, 1822, when, according to Sykes' "Local Records," one thousand persons were present, and a collection amounting to £17 2s. taken. The preacher on the occasion was W. Clowes, who had been appointed to the Darlington Branch in January. But while Mr. Clowes preached in the chapel, F. N. Jersey had an overflow congregation of two hundred persons outside the building which, until the erection of Greenbank Chapel in 1879, under the superintendency of Rev. Hugh Gilmore, was to serve as the head of the Darlington Circuit. Mr. Clowes' station in Darlington was a short one, amounting to not more than eight Sundays, three of which were devoted to an evangelistic excursion to North Shields, which will shortly engage our attention. "My appointments in the Darlington Branch," says Mr. Clowes, "were filled up while I was away, by F. N. Jersey, a sailor, who undertook to travel with me one quarter for nothing, that he might have my company. He, however, had but little of it, for I left him, and made this excursion to North Shields, and it has not been in vain." From first to last, Clowes gave three Sundays to Darlington town, including the Sunday of the chapel-opening. One of the remaining Sundays was devoted to Bishop Auckland, where, as was usual where Clowes was, something happened. This time it was a *mishap*. The props that supported the upper room in which the service was being held, being somewhat decayed, gave way, to the alarm of many though, providentially, to the hurt of none. The other available Sunday was given to Barnard Castle, February 24th, where he found a society of one hundred and twenty had been raised up.

From this time Barnard Castle becomes an advanced post—a fresh base for extensive



[RISE CARR SCHOOLS]



[HAUGHTON RP]



[RISE CARR]

**DARLINGTON
CHAPELS**



[QUEEN ST]



[GREENBANK]

missionary effort. Our attention must therefore be directed to this old-world town which has so much of interest, both for the lover of the antique and the lover of nature in her fairest aspects. How did we secure a footing in Barnard Castle?

While the Darlington friends were full of their new chapel project, and discussions on plans and specifications and ways and means were rife, Samuel Laister "thought they would make a push to take Barnard Castle." As usual, invitations had come, and Bro. W. Evans, a good prospector,* was commissioned "to see what kind of an opening there was." He therefore went and preached in the market-place, and announced that S. Laister would follow a fortnight after; accordingly on a day in late August, S. Laister went to Barnard Castle and "spoke to many hundreds of well-behaved people," and formed a society of nine members. In two months the nine had increased to eighty, and in four months, as we have seen, the number had risen to one hundred and twenty.

We may here conveniently add a few further particulars as to the town of Barnard Castle's after history kindly supplied by Rev. B. Wild. "The Society first worshipped in a room in Thorngate, but afterwards removed into the Gray Lane. In 1822, a Mr. Hempson was stationed here, who by his indiscretions caused a division in the fold which considerably reduced the membership. Mr. W. Summersides was sent to superintend the Circuit in 1828, and under his ministry the numbers increased. The erection of a chapel now began to be discussed, and preparations for the building were forthwith commenced. 1829 saw the consummation of the work begun in 1828, and the chapel was opened by the Revs. W. Sanderson, G. Cosens, and J. Flesher, then the superintendent of the Circuit. In 1836, the side-galleries were put in, and in 1851, the vestry adjoining the chapel was built."

Shortly after Mr. Clowes left the Darlington Branch, Barnard Castle was separated from Darlington and formed into a new branch called "The Barnard Castle and Wolsingham Branch of Hull Circuit." On the 18th March, Clowes left for the North Mission which Hull Circuit had agreed to take over from Hutton Rudby. Clowes, as the leading missionary, went on in advance, and was speedily followed by the brothers Nelson. F. N. Jersey had already opened Crook (January 30th), and formed a society and the very day Clowes left for the North, Jersey preached at Stanhope, it being "a fine starlight night." We also find him at Satley and Shotley Bridge. These references are significant as to the degree and direction in which the work was spreading. Still more significant is the fact that Clowes, on his way to North Shields, called at Wolsingham and Barnard Castle, evidently to oversee the North-Western Mission. He visited Satley "on the hills," Stanhope, where he found seventeen members, Hamsterley, Barnard Castle, and other places, and "directing Bro. Jersey to take up Westgate" he went on to his own special field. Westgate *will* soon be taken, but scarcely by F. N. Jersey, as he left almost immediately after for Silsden, where we have already seen him hard at work.

From a minute in an old Barnard Castle Circuit-book it would almost seem as though Shotley Bridge had itself become a kind of sub-branch as early as 1822. The minute in question says: "That if Shotley Bridge does not see its way clear to send a missionary to Hexham during the next quarter, we will send one." This minute confirms the

* See *ante* vol. ii. p. 86.

interesting account already given by Mr. Petty, of the way in which Primitive Methodism was introduced into Hexham. As the account is circumstantial and evidently based on first-hand information, we reproduce it here, simply suggesting that by Weardale we are probably to understand the lower part of the dale.

“A native of this town [Hexham] had been employed in his secular calling in Weardale, and, on visiting his parents at Hexham, he gave exciting accounts of

the introduction of Primitive Methodism into that dale, and of the zealous and successful labours of the missionaries. His statements, together with the hymns and tunes he sang, excited considerable interest among his friends and acquaintances, many of whom expressed a desire to hear the preachers of this new denomination. And a Mr. John Gibson attended their religious services in connection with the opening of the Butchers' Hall, in Newcastle-on-Tyne, on October 20th, 1822, and invited the preachers to Hexham. As the preachers of Newcastle could not comply with his request, he applied to Shotley Bridge, in Barnard Castle branch, and a preacher from that town visited Hexham on the 26th of the same month. A place was provided for preaching, and a society of five members was formed in the evening. The bellman was sent through the town



BATTLE HILL, HEXHAM.

The old Malt Kiln was entered through an opening on the left at the top of the street.

to announce that a Primitive Methodist Missionary would preach in the Old Kiln; on the Battle Hill, the following day. The excitement this announcement produced was very great, and long before the time appointed for the service to commence the Old Kiln was crowded. The services of the day were very powerful; the missionary preached with 'the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven'; many stout-hearted sinners trembled, and five more persons united with the infant cause. The Old Kiln was speedily fitted up so as to make it more convenient for public worship; and despite serious persecutions, bricks and stones being often thrown

by the ungodly, the good work continued to prosper, and many souls were turned to the Lord."*

Hexham Circuit comprised a goodly portion of South-Western Northumberland. The fact, thus barely stated, is quite enough to show that Hexham must have been one of the widest circuits in the Connexion, and when the characteristic physical features of this border district are recalled, one can readily understand that the circuit was wild and toilsome as well as wide. Such it was even in 1842, when the late C. C. McKechnie was one of its ministers. He had already travelled in the Ripon and Brompton Circuits, but neither of these in respect to width and wildness could stand comparison with Hexham, though Ripon was thirty-one miles by thirty, and Brompton was not much less in area, seeing that it took in the greater part of Cleveland. In 1842, Hexham Circuit stretched from Rothbury on the north to the borders of Allendale and to Derwent Head on the south, and from Greenhead on the west to Corbridge on the east. There had, however, been a time in its history when the circuit covered even more ground than this; for Blaydon and Shotley Bridge, Wickham and Swalwell, are on its plan of 1826. These and other places seem to have been grouped together to form the forgotten circuit of Winlaton, which stands on the Conference Minutes from 1827 to 1829 inclusive. After this date, these places were taken over for a time by Newcastle, so that with the extinction of Winlaton as a sort of buffer circuit, Hexham again joined hands with Newcastle. In missionary enterprise, too, Hexham Circuit played no mean part in the early days, having at one time, as Rev. J. Lightfoot tells us, employed and sustained three missions—Morpeth, Rothbury, and Jedburgh, in Roxburghshire. It was very largely through the influence of Squire Shafto, of Bavington—of whom we shall have to speak—that the Rothbury Mission was begun. John Coulson secured Joseph Spoor as the first missionary to “break up” this new ground. It was a rough beginning even for this muscular and intrepid Tynesider. So hard and apparently unproductive did he find the soil, that he lost heart, and one day took the road homeward, in a mood like that of Elijah when he fled from Jezebel; but as he sat under *his* juniper tree, thinking, he took heart again and resolved to go back to his work. It was during this mission also that Spoor had his memorable encounter in Morpeth market-place with Billy Purvis, the once-time famous Newcastle showman. When the tug-of-war between the showman with his drum and horn, and Spoor with his praying and singing, had ended in a victory for the latter, Purvis shouted a parting salute through his speaking-trumpet: “Ah war’n thou think’s thysel a clever fellow noo!” However brought about, it is to be regretted that the Connexion has little to show for its early toils in Upper Coquetdale. It is true that in later years extension has taken place in North-Eastern Northumberland, but we have lost hold of the less populous and more rugged interior of the county.

When, in 1824, Hexham appeared as one of the circuits of the newly-formed Sunderland District, it abutted on Carlisle Circuit, which also formed one of the first circuits of the district. Therefore, in following the trend of evangelisation, we have now to inquire how we came to get a footing in Carlisle. The story cannot be told

* (pp. 186-7).

without reference to a special independent mission, which Hull Circuit began in May, 1822, when, acting upon instructions from head-quarters, F. N. Jersey set out from Silsden on a mission to Kendal, in Westmoreland, and its neighbourhood. This mission concerns us here chiefly because one of its indirect results was the establishment of a cause in Carlisle, and also, secondarily, because of the fierce persecution the missionary met with in prosecuting his mission. Jersey laboured hard, and not altogether in vain. Many of the people heard him gladly—one good Quaker at Sedburgh saying: "The days of John Wesley are come again." An aged woman, near Kendal, who had received spiritual benefit, was so delighted with the small hymn-book she had got, that she walked to Carlisle, some forty-four miles, to show her treasure to her relative, Mr. Boothman, and to tell him of that other treasure of inward peace she had gained. Mr. Boothman was deeply interested in what was told him. He was evidently another of those "Revivalists"—sympathisers with aggressive Christian work—who welcomed our advent into their neighbourhood. He requested his son-in-law, Mr. Johnson, to accompany his aunt to Kendal and make full inquiry as to the doctrines, polity, and practice of the new community. Mr. Johnson returned, well satisfied with the result of his inquiries, and bearing a copy of the rules of the society. The issue was that these two resolved to apply for a missionary; open-air preaching was at once begun, and a society formed. Such was the link of connection between the Kendal Mission and the establishment of our cause in Carlisle. At this point we return for a moment to follow F. N. Jersey, who from Kendal went in March, 1823, to open Ulverstone, Broughton, Dalton, and other places in the Furness district. Here the ground was flintier than at Kendal. At Ulverstone he thus bemoans himself: "What a hardened, wretched place I am stationed in!" At Dalton he writes: "This is the hardest place that ever I was in. In this town they have a market every Sunday, during the harvest, for the purpose of hiring, and fight and get drunk." While holding a service at the Market Cross at Dalton, he was called upon to face a storm worse than any he had met with at sea. Three horns and a watchman's rattle made a din in his ears while he tried to sing and pray, and then he sprang from his knees and shouted: "Glory to Jesus! I can praise Thee amidst all the din of hell." The end of it was, that he was haled before two magistrates and committed to Lancaster Castle for four months. The sentence heard, he was leaving the room when the lawyer said: "Mr. Jersey, remember you'll have to pay all your expenses to Lancaster Castle." "Indeed, sir," replied Jersey, "I'm very glad of that, because if that be the case I shall never get there, for I'll never pay a farthing." "Well," said the man of law, "that will not keep you out of the castle. We will get you there." When he was lying in the castle, like the veriest rogue and vagabond, Mr. G. Herod, who was then labouring in the town, showed him no little kindness, and was allowed to take him food. One old lady, good soul! took the prisoner a pillow. We think we can see her on "kindly offices intent," wending her way with the precious burden under her arm. Jersey, however, did not serve out his full time: on receiving instructions from the Hull authorities, who were much concerned at the incident, he at last consented to give bail, and was liberated after eighteen days' confinement. He preached that night at Lancaster, next day went on to Kendal, and the day after called at Ulverstone to "see after his little

flock." Soon we shall find him taking part in the great revival in Weardale. Peace to F. N. Jersey's memory! He was a capital evangelist, but a poor administrator. Rough mission-work he did well; but he was ill-adapted to govern a large circuit like Nottingham, to which he was sent in 1834. Trouble overtook him. His peace was disturbed, and his usefulness dwindled. He became a Baptist minister, and finally emigrated to America. As for Kendal Mission, though in 1823 it reported one hundred and eighty-nine members, it was for a time abandoned, probably because its retention was found to be financially burdensome. Rev. R. Cordingley, however, recommenced the mission in 1829. Penrith was taken up as a mission by Hull, and united to Kendal in 1831. Afterwards Kendal became a mission of Barnard Castle Circuit, and so continued until it attained circuit independence in 1857, while Penrith became a branch of Alston, until it, too, became a circuit in 1876. After all its vicissitudes, Kendal Mission was privileged to rear and become the training-ground of John Taylor and his fellow-apprentice, and almost foster-brother, John Atkinson, who was destined to be one of the men of 'mark and likelihood' of the middle and later periods of the Connexion's history. John Atkinson was converted under a sermon preached at Staveley by Edward Almond in 1851. He soon came on the plan, and was engaged in preaching almost every Sunday, sometimes walking thirty miles to a single appointment. He entered the ministry in 1855, and the first four years of that ministry were spent in the Shotley Bridge and Wolsingham Circuits, that owed their origin to Hull's North-Western Mission. Rev. C. C. McKechnie was John Atkinson's superintendent at Wolsingham, and it is interesting to note that at their very first interview he was struck with his "uncommon force of mind," and already discerned that there were "intellectual potentialities in him such as he had rarely met with."

Returning to Carlisle: Some few weeks after a missionary had been applied for, Mr. Clowes made his way across the country from the North Mission and began a month's successful labours in Carlisle and places adjacent thereto. His first services were held at Brampton on November 1st, 1822, where the house of Mr. William Lawson—our Connexional pioneer in Canada—was placed at his disposal for the holding of a prayer meeting.* Here also resided John and Nancy Maughan, "distinguished and never-failing friends of the cause." At the time of their death, in 1831, Mrs. Boothman and Mrs. Maughan are spoken of as being the oldest members in the Carlisle Circuit. On examination, Clowes found fifty-five adherents at Carlisle and twenty-five at Brampton. He organised the societies, appointing leaders and other officers, and formed a small society at Little Corby. The services at Carlisle were held in Mr. Boothman's hat-warehouse. A burlesque advertisement inserted in the local newspaper apprising the public "that a collection would be made to support some fellows who had gone mad, like the Prince of Denmark," drew a large and disorderly multitude together; but lampoons were as ineffectual as Mrs. Partington's mop to stay the progress of the work. Nor did Mr. Clowes limit his labours to the holding of public religious services, but he and Mr. Johnson, before mentioned, visited in the city from house to house. Few men could do so much work in little time as Mr. Clowes,

* For portrait and further reference see vol. i. p. 438.

and when, on December 3rd, he set out, one hundred and eighty miles, to attend the Hull Quarterly Meeting, he penned certain reflections which show that his month's mission in Cumberland had, as usual, been productive. "The ground," he writes, "is all broken up between Hull and Carlisle. Where it will go to next I cannot tell. . . . During this quarter the ground has been broken up from Newcastle to Carlisle. Our circuit extends from Carlisle in Cumberland to Spurn Point in Holderness, an extent of more than two hundred miles. What is the breadth of the circuit I cannot tell; it branches off various ways. From Carlisle the work seems to be opening two ways; one to Whitehaven, the other to Gretna Green in Scotland."

From this point the progress made by Carlisle Mission—soon made into a branch—was so steady and encouraging as to justify its being made into a circuit. This was done in December, 1823, and in 1824 Carlisle duly appeared on the list of the stations of the newly-formed Sunderland District. Thus, in 1824, the Carlisle and Hexham Circuits abutted on each other, as did also Hexham and Newcastle. In the *Magazine* for March, 1825, we find a communication, signed J. B. [John Branfoot] and J. J. [James Johnson?], Sec., still reporting progress, financial and numerical, in the most northerly circuit of the Connexion. "That part of our circuit," the *communiqué* goes on to say, "is doing particularly well which lies on the Scottish borders. We preach at two or three places within two or three miles of Scotland. On these the cloud of God's presence particularly rests, and it appears as if it would move into Scotland. But this is with the Lord. However, some who out of Scotland have come to hear, are saying, 'Come over and help us.' Others of them who have got converted among us, and have joined us, are saying, 'Oh, that you would visit our native land.'"

It was not long before the cloudy pillar *did* move Scotland way. Three months after Messrs. Oliver and Clewer walked from Sunderland to open their mission in Edinburgh, Carlisle Circuit, whose superintendent was then John Coulson, sent James Johnson—whom we take to have been the Mr. Johnson already several times referred to—to begin a mission in Glasgow, July 13th, 1826. Open-air services were held in various "conspicuous places" in the big city, and by October one hundred persons had united in Church fellowship, and a preaching-room, capable of accommodating seven hundred persons, had been secured. The mission, thus unobtrusively begun in the commercial capital of Scotland, seems to have made quiet headway, and to have been largely self-sustaining. Glasgow appears on the stations of the Sunderland District for the first time in 1829. Glasgow soon in its turn established a cause in Paisley, and, ere long, a room connected with the old Abbey Buildings, called the Philosophical Hall, was taken for services, and a minister was resident in the town. Though Paisley was attached to Glasgow Circuit, and received considerable help therefrom, it would seem that Carlisle had a hand in the development, if not in the first establishment, of our cause in Paisley, since the Rev. John Lightfoot, writing as the superintendent of Carlisle in 1831, observes: "The circuit considerably improved in its finances, so as to be able to send a missionary to Paisley."

In the year 1834 there was a youth living at Paisley who is of some account to this history. The names he bore—Colin Campbell McKechnie—betokened the Highland clan to which he belonged. His eldest brother, Daniel, had been converted amongst

the Primitives, and was a sort of factotum in the little church—leader, local preacher, steward, superintendent of the Sunday school, and what not. But Daniel had now a home of his own, and the McKechnies were nominally, at any rate, adherents of the



REV. C. C. MCKECHNIE.

Kirk. But, probably through his brother's agency, Bella McNair was servant in the household, and in the providence of God she was used to attach this youth, whom high destinies awaited, to Primitive Methodism. If it be asked how this was done, we answer: the small hymn-book was a chief factor in the process. The early hymns were a powerful instrument of propaganda—all the more powerful because, as in this case, it could be employed in cottage or workshop as well as on village-green or market-place. That Mr. McKechnie was sung into the kingdom seems hardly too strong a way of putting it, if we may judge by his own words:—

“Bella McNair was a thorough Primitive, devout, zealous, and with an excellent voice for singing, which she freely used. Aware of her rare gift of song, and of its power as an instrument of usefulness, she often—I might almost say—she incessantly, used it in singing the charming hymns so commonly sung by our people in those days. Some of them were very touching, so at least I thought and felt. They acted upon my religious nature like the quickening influence of spring, and evoked in my heart strong yearnings after God and goodness. I was led to talk to Bella about her pretty hymns, and the kirk to which she belonged, and she very warmly and earnestly invited me to the services.”

When Colin went for the first time to Sunday school he was warmly received and felt himself in a new world. After a mental struggle, he received the sense of pardon and joined the Church. While yet in his early teens he was made leader and local preacher, and in the year Paisley became a circuit—1838—began his ministry at Ripon, where we have already seen him. Those who are interested in tracing the strange interdependence of events, may see how the aged woman, who carried the small hymn-book from Kendal to Carlisle, was an essential link in a “peculiar chain of providence,” which reached to Glasgow and Paisley, and back again to Wolsingham, where C. C. McKechnie and John Atkinson met as colleagues on ground won by the North-West Mission. Had that link been wanting!—but it is needless to speculate. With the plain facts of history before us, the Kendal Mission can hardly be pronounced a failure—though the history-books may say it was—since, as one of its direct and indirect results, two such shapers of the old Sunderland District were brought together.

Coming back to the further missionary efforts put forth by Carlisle Circuit, reference may be made to Wigton, now the head of a circuit, which was first missioned by Mary Porteus on August 5th, 1831. On that date she preached at the Market Cross, as John Wesley had done before her. The day before she undertook this task, she had read, at Bothel, an account of Wesley's service at the Cross, and the thought that she—a frail woman—was about to attempt what that great and gifted man had done, pressed upon her as she went forward to discharge her trying duty. On September 2nd she took her stand at the Cross again, but when next she went, in November, she found some kind friend had taken a large schoolroom for the services.

Even before the close of 1822, W. Clowes had noted that Primitive Methodism was tending in the direction of Whitehaven. Shortly after this, Messrs. Summersides and Johnson visited this town, thirty-eight miles from Carlisle. Then Clowes himself, in August, 1823, came on the ground and began a campaign in this district, which lasted until November 9th. He visited Harrington, Cleator, Workington, Parton, Cockermouth, St. Bees, and other places. As usual, there was no lack of incidents in this campaign. At Cleator an old man who was hearing him, exclaimed: "Why, I never heard such a fool in my life!" The preacher retorted that the remark was not original, for that precisely the same thing had been said of Noah by people who changed their mind when the flood came; but all too late. At St. Bees he had as one of the fruits of his mission, David Beattie, a native of Dumfriesshire. Beattie did good service as a minister until his lamented death in 1839. He was one of the earliest of that small but distinguished band which Scotland has furnished to our ministry. At this time, too, a camp meeting was held on Harris Moor, near Whitehaven, which, from being the first of its kind ever held in the district, made a stir. At this camp meeting a number of partially intoxicated Papists interrupted the service, whereupon Clowes transfixed them with his eye, and solemnly warned them that, ere twenty-four hours should pass, many of them might be hurried into eternity. And it was so; for by an explosion in the pit, which occurred next day, many of these disturbers lost their lives. This startling event so alarmed Hugh Campbell, that he, with others, was led to join the society. This truly honest man began his ministerial labours at Hexham in 1830. Another of Clowes' Whitehaven converts was Andrew Sharpe, a man of local note on account of his physical prowess. John Sharpe, his grandson, entered the ministry in 1848; went out to Australia in 1855, where, until 1876, he did splendid service. "He was a fine specimen of the strong Cumbrian character: a splendid borderer of clear and decided convictions, held with Spartan firmness;" a man of vigorous and well-stored mind. After his retirement he settled at Hensingham, where he passed away, May 27th, 1895.

As Whitehaven remained a branch of Hull Circuit for so many years, it was from time to time privileged with the labours of most of the best-known ministers of that circuit. John Garner and John Oxtoby were here together during the September quarter of 1824. Despite the trouble caused by a deposed minister, who remained on the station after his deposition and tried to foment mischief, the work still rolled on. "We had," says Mr. Garner, "a great and powerful work, and we took a large church to worship in called Mount Pleasant Church." It had been built for the worship of the Episcopal Church, but its consecration being refused, it fell into the hands of Dissenters, apparently not one iota the worse for the lack. For more than thirty years Mount Pleasant Church was used by Primitive Methodists for the purposes of public worship.

Whitehaven was made an independent station in 1840, so that by the end of the first period we have, as the development of the Kendal, Carlisle, and Whitehaven Missions, the nucleus of the present Carlisle and Whitehaven District, with, however, the addition of Alston, Brough, and Haltwhistle, these being the outcome of Hull's North-Western Mission. Since 1842, consolidation has gone on apace in West Cumberland. Maryport was made from Whitehaven in 1862, and Workington in 1884; and Cockermouth from Maryport in 1893.

THE GREAT REVIVAL IN THE DALES: WESTGATE AND ALSTON MOOR.

One is surprised to find that in 1832 Westgate and Alston had actually more members than the Hull home-branch itself. In a tabular report of that year of the various branches of Hull Circuit, "Westgate and Alston" are credited with 751 members, while Hull has 631, and Driffield 469. It confirms what has already been stated as to Hull's retention of a branch long after it was strong enough to stand alone. It was "a long cry" from Westgate to Hull, and yet it is Hull Quarterly Meeting which, in 1831, by resolution, makes George Race and William Lonsdale exhorters! Though, therefore, Westgate and Alston were not made circuits until 1834 and 1835 respectively, they had long been numerically powerful, and not wanting in officials who knew their own mind, and had a mind to know.

These two strong branches were molten and cast in the fire of a great revival—a revival, take it for all in all, greater perhaps than any we have thus far had to chronicle. And, what is still more remarkable, great revivals have, at ever recurring



WESTGATE CHAPEL AND SCHOOLS.

intervals, swept over Weardale, Allendale, Alston Moor, and Cumberland, one or two of which we may glance at before closing this section. As insurance offices speak of a "conflagration area," so the districts just named, and especially the dales, may almost be termed "the revival area." "Well, then, the people who inhabit those dales must certainly be of a highly emotional temperament, easily stirred to excitement, and perhaps just as easily relapsing into indifference." No, no; the reader has quite missed

the mark; he has not pierced the centre of the sufficient reason. Never was truer word written of the Northmen, and especially of the Dalesmen, than that in which the Rev. J. Wenn describes them as "anthracite in temperament." "Northerners," he continues, "are not exactly comparable to carpenters' shavings, soon alight and quickly extinguished; rather do they resemble anthracite in the slowness of its combustion and the retention of its heat . . . capable of sustained religious fervour could they but once be kindled."*

The first great Weardale Revival, alike in its inception and progress, illustrates the truth of these remarks. It was a work of time, and a work requiring infinite patience, to kindle the inhabitants of the upper part of the dale, but, when once they were kindled, the fire burned with a glowing intensity and spread amain. By common consent Thomas Batty is acknowledged to have been the "Apostle of Weardale." This does not mean that he was the pioneer missionary of the Connexion in the dale;

* Rev. J. Wenn's MSS. Kindly lent.

for he was not. That honour probably belongs to George Lazenby, who is said to have preached the first sermon at Stanhope in a joiner's shop in October, 1821, and he was speedily followed by others. Nor does the word "apostle," accorded to Thomas Batty, prejudice the claim of Jane Ansdale, F. N. Jersey, Anthony Race, and others, to have taken a foremost part in the movement. What makes the title "apostle" as applied to him so eminently appropriate is the fact that, in the preparatory stages and in the conduct of the revival, we see concentrated and embodied in Thomas Batty the very spirit of the revival. It would be difficult to find anywhere a more moving picture of what we understand by "travailing in birth for souls" than the picture Batty has drawn of himself in his *Journals* of the time.

When Thomas Batty came to Barnard Castle Branch from Silsden in the autumn of 1822, others had already been some time at work in the dale, which stretches, some



IRESHOPEBURN.

Home of the Boyhood of Rev. J. Watson, D.D.

fifteen miles, from Lanehead to Frosterley. At Westgate, and in the lower part of the dale, the people had been in a measure receptive of the word from the very first. Jane Ansdale's ministrations hereabout had proved acceptable, and a notable convert had already been won in the person of J. Dover Muschamp, a man of some standing in the dale. Curiosity drew him to Westgate to hear Jane Ansdale, who, because of the unfavourable weather, preached in the Wesleyan Chapel, kindly lent for the occasion. As he listened, the arrow of conviction was lodged, and he went away stricken and mourning. Not for some time, however, did he find peace—not even though he attended a camp meeting at Stanhope, and stood bare-headed under the hot sun listening to the word. But when he had retired to his room for the night, healing and forgiveness were experienced, and at once Mr. and Mrs. Muschamp gave themselves heart and soul to the new cause. But though this conversion was a notable, and by no means

a solitary one in the neighbourhood, yet it is evident that no extraordinary work had as yet begun. Figures, and Thomas Batty's own explicit statements, show this.

Meanwhile, the burthen pressed heavily on Mr. Batty. How he did labour! And yet it seemed to him he was spending his strength for nought. Crowds—and often weeping crowds—attended the services, “but they could not be got to join the society.” They let hearing and weeping suffice. He speaks of one unforgettable night, when he was returning from an apparently fruitless service at Ireshopeburn. As he waded through the snow and water and slush, his depression was extreme, and almost insupportable. He could not talk to his companion; he “could only sigh and groan and weep.” His tell-tale countenance seemed to say, “I am the man that hath seen affliction,” and that sad countenance was long remembered in the dale. The sequel of this journey is worth telling in Thomas Batty's own words, only that we may premise that Westgate was Batty's destination, and that his home was to be with Joseph Walton, “who was a class-leader and a mighty labourer in prayer.”

“When I arrived at Joseph Walton's I was so sorrowful that I could scarce eat any supper. Joseph and I entered into some conversation on the subject that distressed me. I stated to him that if we could not succeed soon, I thought we should be obliged to leave and go to some other people, among whom we should probably do better. He said: ‘Nay, don't do so; try a little longer.’ I replied: ‘Well, I have been at the far end before now, and when I got to the end the Lord began to work, and He can do so again.’ This conversation cheered and revived my spirits, and my faith began to rise. Praise the Lord.”

When some little time after this, the Ireshopeburn preaching-house was closed to them, Batty did indeed seem to have “reached the far end.” But Anthony Race said: “If the devil shuts one door, the Lord will open two.” And so it literally came to pass. Of the two houses now offered them, they chose the better one for their purpose, and there, in March, 1823, while Batty was preaching, a man fell to the ground. That night a small society was formed, and the revival began, which swept the dale and led Mr. Muschamp to say exultantly: “I think all the people in Weardale are going to be Ranters.”

The laws which govern the origin and course of great revivals are obscure and difficult to trace. It is perhaps impossible to say how far Thomas Batty's mental distress was really “travail of soul”—the very birth-throes of the revival, and how far it was the result of imperfect knowledge of the Weardale type of character, and therefore uncalled for. It was reserved for an observant toll-gate keeper to hint that Thomas Batty did not understand the anthracite temperament of the dalesmen as well as he understood it, and to give him advice, which he followed with advantage.

“I lodged with a friendly man one night, a little after this had happened, who kept a toll-gate in the dale, between St. John's Chapel and Prize. This man said to me on the following morning: ‘If you will come and preach about here every night for a week, you will soon have a hundred people in society.’ I replied: ‘Well, if I thought so, I would soon do that.’ The man said: ‘I am sure of it: the whole country is under convictions. *You do not know the people as well as I do*; they often stop and talk with me at the gate. I hear what they say about ‘the

Ranter's, and I am sure if you would come and preach every night for a week, you would soon have a hundred souls.' This toll-gate keeper was not at that time converted, neither did he make any profession of religion ; but he was an open-hearted, well-disposed man, and had taken a liking to our cause. As early as possible, I got my regular appointments supplied by a preacher whom Hull quarter-day sent us. He entered into my labours as appointed on the plan, and I enlarged our borders by missioning entirely new ground. But I previously attended to the advice of my friend, and preached about his neighbourhood every night for a week ; and at the quarter's end we had just added one hundred souls." (Memoir of Thomas Batty, pp. 54-5.)

The irrefragable evidence of the numerical returns for successive quarters remains to



NENTHEAD, NEAR ALSTON.

confirm Mr. Batty's statements, and to witness to the magnitude of the revival. In March, 1823, when the revival began, the membership of the branch was 219 ; in June, 308 ; in September, 625 ; in December, 846, when there were five preachers on the ground. There is a blessed sameness in the personal and more far-reaching effects wrought by every great revival such as that which affected Weardale. On these we need not dwell. But the revival was not without its incidents of a less familiar, and some of even a novel, kind. Amongst the latter must be reckoned the eagerness for hearing the gospel, which, as at Wellshope, led the people to economise every inch of available space by removing all the tables and chairs from the room except one chair, on which the preacher stood, and then some stalwart miner would come forward and

stand with his back to the preacher, so that he—the preacher—might find support by resting his arms on the man's shoulders! There was competition for the honour of fulfilling this office; and who shall say that such a living reading-desk was not as pleasing in God's sight as the eagle lectern of polished brass?

Before the close of 1823 the Revival had spread to Nenthead. The missionaries had been urged to extend their labours to this district, and, in response, Anthony Race is said to have crossed over and preached at Nenthead for the first time on the Lord's day, March 23rd, 1823. Anthony Race was the grandfather of the late George Race, sen. He had been a Wesleyan local preacher, and as such had taken long journeys—sometimes walking as far as Durham, Hexham, Haydonbridge, and Appleby in Westmoreland. Anthony Race entered the ministry this same year—1823—but his term of service was short, as he died between the Conferences of 1828 and 1829. Thomas Batty soon followed his colleagues to Nenthead and Garrigill. By some they were regarded with suspicion as “outlandish men,” or Political Radical Reformers under another name, but the generality of the people waited eagerly on their ministrations and wanted to pay for them by taking up a collection! Batty promised them they should have the opportunity of showing their gratitude on the occasion of his next visit, when the quarterly collection would be due. On this visit, Mr. Batty took his stand on a flag by the door of Mr. Isaac Hornsby, an official of the lead-works. On that flag Mr. Wesley had once stood to preach. When the collection was named each man sought his pocket, and it was as though a body of drilled troops were executing a military movement at the word of command. The precision with which the thing was done was such as to draw forth the admiration of the ex-man-of-war's-man. Although it was a week-night, three pounds were taken up at that collection. In six months one hundred members had been enrolled at Nenthead.

At this point, Westgate was detached from Barnard Castle to become a separate branch of Hull Circuit, with John Hewson as its superintendent, and G. W. Armitage, a youthful but acceptable preacher, as its junior minister. When to these was added John Oxtoby, who in September, 1824, walked from Whitehaven to Westgate, the revival, which had somewhat flagged, gained fresh impetus. The sanctification of believers

as a definite work of grace was a prominent phase of the revival at this stage, as well as the conversion of sinners. During these months very remarkable scenes were witnessed in the Dales. Of these scenes we get glimpses in the full *Journals* of Messrs. Oxtoby and Armitage, and the late Rev. W. Dent has also supplied us with some reminiscences of what he himself saw and took part in. Mr. Dent was converted at Westgate in 1823, entered the ministry in 1827, and travelled thirty-three years with great acceptance. After his retirement he settled in Newcastle-on-Tyne, where his spare form, ascetic, spiritual looking face, and his quick

bodily movements, which at once responded to and registered the feeling within, made him a familiar figure to our churches. Mr. Dent had a wide acquaintance with Methodist theology, and was an able exponent and defender of the doctrine of Christian perfection. He died March 16th, 1864. Mr. Dent was a keen



REV. W. DENT.

observer of the phenomena of Oxtoby's revival, and his remarks on the "fallings" which were so noteworthy a feature of that revival are worth preserving :—

"There were many cases of prostration in connection with that great work. I have seen more than fifteen at one meeting, some of whom were sober-minded Christians, as humble as they were earnest. And what was very observable, there was nothing in the voice or manner of the preacher to account for such effects ; no vociferation, no highly impassioned address. He (J. Oxtoby) stood as steadily, and talked as calmly, as I ever witnessed any one do. But he was fully in the faith—clothed with salvation ; having *in many instances, got to know substantially in his closet what was about to take place in the great congregation.* He did not take a falling down as a certain proof of the obtaining of entire sanctification ; but ascribed much to physical causes—to nervous weakness. I do not recollect that there were *any* cases of the kind proved to be hypocritical mimicry. It was wonderful how some persons so affected were preserved from physical harm. I remember seeing men fall suddenly backwards on stone flags without being hurt, and on one occasion, in a dwelling-house, a man fell against the fire-place, the fire burning at the time, without being injured."

In September, 1825, John Garner became superintendent of Westgate Branch ; and now a wave of the great revival, which may be said to have been going on ever since March, 1823, reached Alston and Allendale. Allenheads, Nenthead and Garrigill are names found in the early books of Barnard Castle Branch. They had been visited by its missionaries, as we have seen, and already had shared in the revival. But the books make no mention of Alston. That place, there is reason to believe, as well as lower Allendale, was first visited by missionaries from Hexham. Now, however, in the autumn of 1825, they are included within the area of Westgate Branch as the following report of the progress of the revival, taken from the *Journal* of John Garner, shows :—

December 19th, 1825.—"I went to Alston, and was glad to hear that one hundred and upwards had united with our Society within the last three months, and that the work of sanctification had been going on all the time. But this glorious, extraordinary and important work, is not confined to Alston. It has spread through the whole branch. According to my best calculation, I think two hundred and fifty, at least, have been converted to God, within the time above specified. The Lord is extending our borders, and opening our way in Alston-Moor, and East and West Allendale. Truly, these are the days of the Son of Man with power, and we are willing to hope for greater things than these ; for nothing is too hard for the Lord."



REV. J. GRIEVES.

A year after this the revival had not spent its force. Joseph Grieves had come to the Westgate and Alston Branch in June, 1826. He himself was a trophy of the revival, having been delivered from "drunkenness, profane swearing, and poaching," by his signal conversion at a lovefeast at Westgate in May, 1824. Grieves was at Alston on January 21st, 1827, where he tells of holding a service by invitation in a farmer's house, at which service several were converted, including the farmer himself, who had taken refuge in his own dairy,

where Grieves found him on his knees crying for mercy. "Twenty-five joined the society; and a publican declared that the revival had lost him a pound a week."

Our mention of the name of Joseph Grieves leads us to mark yet another sweep of the revival movement, which resulted in planting our Church in Upper Teesdale and the Eden Valley, thus geographically rounding off the North-West Mission. Occasional visits had been made by the missionaries to the neighbourhood before the conversion of Joseph Grieves, who lived at Aukside, near Middleton: but "the harvest was great and the labourers were few," and no provision could as yet be made for Sunday services. Characteristically, therefore, Grieves set to work himself. He established a series of house prayer-meetings, to which the people flocked, curious to learn how these former



MAIN STREET, BROUGH.

ringleaders in wickedness would pray. Under this humble agency a revival began, and one of its earliest gains was Mr. John Leekley, afterwards the founder of Primitive Methodism in the Western States of America. Now a recognised exhorter, Mr. Grieves, along with Messrs. Leekley, Rain, and Collinson, missioned Bowlees, Harwood, Forest, and other places in Upper Teesdale, where societies were established which continue to this day. After giving such indications of zeal and courage, we need hardly be surprised that, in March, 1826, Hull Quarterly Meeting should appoint Mr. Grieves to begin his labours as a travelling-preacher in Barnard Castle Branch. He laboured for thirty-eight years, and the impression the Rev. Philip Pugh's ably-written memoir leaves on the

mind of the reader is, that our Church has had few men who have served its interests more faithfully and successfully than did this revival-born dalesman.

And now, as the formation of the Westgate Branch set Thomas Batty at liberty, the Barnard Castle Branch sought compensation for its diminished territory and reduced membership, by sending Mr. Batty to mission Brough in Westmoreland and other places in the Eden Valley. He set out from Middleton on his journey of fifteen miles, commended to the grace of God by his kindly entertainers. He had a long and toilsome journey before him; but, when he stood on the last eminence and looked down on the fair valley beneath, with the Eden like a ribbon of silver winding through, he was not too tired or too much engrossed with the duty that lay before him, to "feast his eyes with the beautiful scenery, and to rejoice at the goodness of God to man."

The gentry of Brough were hostile; the generality, and especially the common people, heard him gladly. Mr. Batty, on that first evening, took his stand on a horse-block before a public-house, which the landlady had obligingly allowed him to use, adding, as she consented, the gracious remark, "that she could have no objection to anything that was good." The bellman's announcement had drawn together a curious crowd, and Batty was suffered to preach without molestation. He slept at Brough Sowerby, where a society was soon formed, and at Brough a friendly farmer lent his barn for services. Meanwhile, the Committee at Hull had officially appointed Messrs. Batty and Thomas Webb to this new mission, and processioning and out-door preaching became the order of the day. The "gentry" now thought it time to bestir themselves. Two of them invaded the barn, where a prayer meeting was being held, and irreverently discussed, to their own discomfiture, the legal bearings of the service they were interrupting. The rumour went that if the preacher persisted in holding a service at the Cross the next Sunday, as he had announced he would do, he was to be pulled down. He was not to be intimidated. A strong band from Brough Sowerby and Kirby Stephen body-guarded Batty as he preached his fourth sermon that day, and the "gentry" watched the proceedings from the outskirts of the congregation. As they crossed the green to the barn for their prayer meeting, Mr. Batty was followed, and asked to show his license. Under protest, the license was produced and handed round, and scrutinised and fingered as though it had been a bank-note of doubtful antecedents and value. "Was it counterfeit or genuine? If good for Yorkshire did it hold good for Westmoreland?" "For all England," said Mr. Batty. At this point the ire of a respectable tradesman of the town was roused by this high-handed procedure. Said he, hotly: "You think to run them down, a parcel of you! You think they are poor people, and cannot stand up for themselves; but I have plenty of money, and I'll back them." And the tradesman was as good as his word. Next morning the "gentry" met at the head inn to consult as to what should next be done in the present serious state of affairs. The plan they hit upon was to send the bellman round to proclaim as follows:—"This is to give notice, that a vestry meeting will be held this evening at seven o'clock to put down all midnight revelling and ranting." When the bellman had "cried" the town, another commission awaited him. The respectable tradesman aforesaid, with the aid of his brother and sundry Acts of Parliament, drew up a counter-proclamation,

which the bellman went round the town again to cry. It ran as follows:—"This is to give notice, that the laws against tippling and riotous midnight revels at public-houses,



OLD PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL AND BROUGH CASTLE.

gambling, buying and selling, and other evil practices on the Sabbath Day, cursing and swearing, and other laws for suppressing vice and immorality, will be put in force, and notice duly given to churchwardens and constables who, in case of neglect, will be presented at the Bishop's Court or Quarter Sessions." The townsfolk listened, then laughed and said: "That's right; that's right!" Thus, so to say, fizzled out amid laughter this fussy, spit-fire attempt on the part of the "gentry"

to frighten the missionary and keep Primitive Methodism out of Brough; and the story is told here because this would-be persecution was the last instance of its kind we shall meet with so far north, and because this persecution that failed was the precursor of a revival such as we have been describing, of which, indeed, it was part and the continuation. "A glorious work," says Mr. Batty, "broke out immediately, and in a fortnight we added thirty-eight souls to our society; and the work was both genuine and deep. Some of the most wicked characters, and others less so, were brought to the knowledge of the truth: "And there was great joy in that town." Mr. Batty adds, that the old gentleman who allowed the use of his barn for services was himself one of the converts. The first chapel, which long stood on the banks of the Augill, and under the shadow of the old castle, was built on a site of land given by him. In 1877, a new chapel was built, which unfortunately was burnt down three years after; but the society energetically set about the work of restoration, and since that time a good school and class-rooms have been added. Brough has been an independent circuit since 1849.

Thus the churches around these northern hills and dales were established by revivals, and again and again have these same churches been replenished and refreshed by similar visitations. No wonder that, in the



PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL, BROUGH.

localities thus visited, these bygone revivals should be often talked of. When such is the case, we are told it is customary for the speaker to distinguish the particular revival he wishes to recall, by attaching to it the name of the person

who, under God, was the chief agent in carrying it forward. Thus they will speak of Batty's or Oxtoby's revival, of McKechnie's or Peter Clarke's—the list is a long one. We can but barely allude to one or two of these revivals which



MR. HENRY MILLER.



REV. ADAM DODDS.

were after the original type. There was the Stanhope revival of 1851–2, which Rev. C. C. McKechnie described in the *Magazine* at the time—a revival which he says “has transformed the character of our little church. It is no longer weak, sickly, emaculate, but full of life, vigour and enterprise.” There was the revival which began at Frosterley in 1861, and spread through Weardale; which in two months increased the membership from 68 to 147, and led to the voluntary closing on the Sabbath of seven public-houses. Indeed, the whole period from 1860 to 1866 seems to have been a time of ingathering in Westgate Circuit, for the membership which had been 600 when the Rev. H. Phillips entered the circuit in the former year, had risen to 975 when the Rev. P. Clarke left it in 1867. Allendale, too, which had gained its independence in 1848, had its visitation of power in the years 1859–61, which, after making good all losses, more than doubled the circuit membership. About the same time and onward, a great revival swept over West Cumberland from Whitehaven to Carlisle. In this revival the late Mr. Henry Miller was brought to God, whose active and useful connection with our Church in the Carlisle Circuit has only recently been terminated by death. The names of Rev. Adam Dodds—Nathaniel-like in his guilelessness—and John Taylor



JOSEPH JOPLING.

—then in the vigour of early manhood and full of revival zeal—will always be associated with this spiritual movement. Nor must the prominent part taken in the revival by Joseph Jopling of Frosterley—a simple, devout, unmercenary lay-evangelist—be forgotten. Himself the fruit of a revival, he in some sort links together the revivals of Weardale and Cumberland. In this suitable connection we give the portrait of Mr. Joseph Collinson, another Frosterley local preacher who showed himself an active promoter of revivals.



MR. J. COLLINSON.

SOME SIDELIGHTS ON THE NORTH WESTERN MISSION.

Barnard Castle and Whitehaven were branches of Hull Circuit until 1840, and Westgate and Alston until 1834 and 1835, respectively. Thus barely stated, this fact of the intimate relations with Hull Circuit, so long sustained by the branches named, seems simple enough. But it is not enough merely to state the fact, which had as many

reticulations as the veining of a leaf, and some of these need following if we are to get a true idea of the state of the societies, which must have been largely conditioned and complexed by this dependence on Hull. We have only to remember that all the affairs of the branches—financial, administrative and disciplinary—were regularly supervised by the parent circuit, in order to see that this must have been the case. Hull sent its preachers, and of these some of its very best, to work these distant branches. Messrs. Flesher, W. Garner, Harland, Sanderson, even Clowes himself—they were all here at one time or another. The societies would fall into the habit of looking to Hull rather than as yet to Sunderland, to know what was being thought of and determined in reference to themselves. The Hull Committee would come to be regarded as a powerful, if somewhat mysterious entity, to be spoken of with respect; so that Thomas Batty could clinch his argument with the “gentry” of Brough by first affirming: “I am sent by our Committee at Hull,” and then by asking: “Do you think they have sent me here without legal authority?” The frequent change of preachers in these branches, and the obligation the preachers were under to attend the quarterly meetings at Hull, were regulations which, in practice, would create variety and incident in the societies from Whitehaven to Barnard Castle. The *Journals* of the time are punctuated by references to these recurring quarterly meetings. You read the details of a spell of work, and then are suddenly brought to a stop by some such sentence as: “I then proceeded to Hull in order to attend the quarterly meeting.” The preachers seem to be always either going to the quarter day or returning therefrom. Now, as we have written in another place: “It is easy to write that the missionary, Mr. Clowes, for instance, proceeded from Carlisle to Hull to attend the quarter day. A moment’s reflection, however, will serve to make it sufficiently obvious, that seventy years ago this was no light journey. It probably enough meant rising with the lark, and with the mission or branches quarterly income in his pocket, and staff in hand, trudging along over bleak fells, and passing through town and village and hamlet. Now and again, it may be, he gets a lift in a carrier’s cart or passing vehicle, and then, towards the gloaming, turns tired and travel-stained into some hospitable dwelling, the home of some well-known adherent of the Connexion or of some colleague in the ministry. Then the frugal meal, seasoned with pleasant talk of the work of God, and all sanctified by prayer; the sleep which needed no wooing, preparing for the next day’s journey. Many such days must have been, when as yet Whitehaven, Alston Moor, and other distant places were branches of Hull Circuit, and we have listened to the description of some such journey as this from those whose lips are now sealed by death.”*

Perhaps the thought may occur to us that these long journeys and frequent absences must have involved much toil and loss of time, and have been a serious interruption of labour. Likely enough it was so; but we are writing of things as they were, and not of things as we think they ought to have been. Besides, one can on reflection see that these “journeyings oft” would have their compensations both for preachers and people. We have already, in speaking of Hugh Bourne’s incessant perambulations during the time he was general superintendent, compared them to the movements of the weaver’s

* Smaller “History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion,” 2nd Ed. pp. 76-7.

shuttle by which the interlacing threads of the woof are added to the warp, and the tissue slowly put together. Similar would be the effect of the constant going to and fro of men who had not lost the taste or tradition of conversation-preaching. Intercourse would tend to knit together the various societies, and have a positive value for evangelisation. As for the preachers themselves, the stimulus derived from association with so many of their brethren assembled in Hull, would conduce to their greater efficiency, and they would return to their stations like iron that has been sharpened by iron. It is no fancy picture we draw. It so happens that both our arch-founders made "religious excursions"—to use their own phrase—in these parts, and in their *Journals* we can see that, even by the head-waters of Tyne and Wear and Tees, and by the coast of the Irish Sea, we are still on Hull territory. We can also gain glimpses of some early befrienders of the cause in these parts, who kept open house for the servants of God and were recompensed by receiving back from them good into their own bosoms. W. Clowes speaks of being able to preach without intermission, night after night, on his way to Hull. It was not in his line, unfortunately, to give an account written with all the circumstantiality of a log-book, of such a journey. But once—only once it would seem—Hugh Bourne preached his way from Whitehaven to Darlington, and, as usual, his *Journal* is not wanting in that welcome particularity which helps to illumine the past. The one journey he describes may stand for many of which no record survives. What Hugh Bourne once did was often repeated by W. Clowes and other leading missionaries when *en route* for Hull.

On the 4th of August, 1831, Hugh Bourne landed at Whitehaven and spent the remainder of the month in traversing, chiefly on foot, but with occasional helps by the way, the district, excluding Carlisle and Hexham, whose first missioning we have already described. He found W. Garner in charge of the Whitehaven Branch. He visited many families in company with Mr. Garner, and took part in services at Whitehaven, Harrington, Distington, and Workington. Then he took coach to Penrith and looked up Bro. Featherstone. A congregation was got together and Hugh Bourne preached. Next he walked twenty miles to Alston, through "a tract of country more dreary than any I saw in any part of the country." He jots down some particulars as to the violence and freaks of the "helm-wind," peculiar to that part and, in his careful vein, notes how a cheap kind of fuel is made in the district by means of "slack" (coal) mixed with clay and formed into fire-balls. Now he is on the Alston and Westgate Union Branch of Hull Circuit with W. Sanderson as its superintendent, and along with him he again visits many families. He sees Bro. Walton, and is the guest of Mr. Muschamp at Brotherlee one night, and going to and fro he visits most of the places we have had occasion to mention—Allenheads, Allendale Town, Middle Acton, Wearhead, Westgate, and Frosterley. "The pious, praying labourers are diligent," he observes, "and the work has been and is rather extraordinary." A revival is evidently again afoot in these parts. Then he walks to Middleton—ten miles—and finds twenty-one members have recently emigrated, one of these being Bro. Raine, who has become a preacher in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., and a letter from whom he reads. Assisted with a horse he now goes to Brough, where the quarterly meeting of the Barnard Castle Branch is being held, and he spends the night at Mouthlock with Bro. Hilton. Barnard Castle

is his next stage, which he reaches partly by riding Bro. Hilton's horse, and partly by walking. He has another diet of visitation here in company with Bro. Harland, the minister in charge of the branch. "In this branch," he notes, "there is a great spirit of prayer, and the work is in a good state." He takes Staindrop on his way, and next day sets out for Darlington, taking care to call at Ingleton in order to share the hospitality of Bro. Emerson. They cross over to Bro. Young's and have a bout of prayer, and Brother Young takes him forward a little way in his conveyance. Their talk is not about beeves or crops, but about camp meetings. Bro. Young tells him of "a confused, unsteady, inefficient camp meeting he had lately attended in a neighbouring circuit;" and Hugh Bourne has his own remarks to make on the cause and cure of this. "The travelling preachers ought to be called to their answer for cutting off the praying services." So he comes to Darlington and Hurworth for Sunday, August 28th, having, in his religious excursion of twenty-four days, preached twenty-eight times—thrice in the open-air—besides attending prayer meetings and visiting and walking an indefinite number of miles. Finally, because the Ripon coach was full, he takes the coach to Thirsk and walks to Ripon, and then by Leeds and Manchester makes for home, but falls ill just before he reaches it—which we cannot much wonder at.

During his itinerary through Hull's North-Western Branches Hugh Bourne, it may be remembered, had met with Joseph Walton and Mr. J. D. Muschamp. The latter was helpful to the Westgate Society when its first chapel was erected in 1824. The land for the site was given, and the miners in their spare time cheerfully assisted in the erection. Mr. Muschamp might have been seen hard at work among the rest. Thirty days he devoted to stone-getting or walling, and twenty to soliciting subscriptions. But presently the work was brought to a stand. It was alleged that the stones in the bed of the burn served to break the force of the "spate," and that their removal would endanger the bridge; hence the person in charge of the bridges of the district, issued his prohibition against the taking out of any more stones for chapel-building purposes. In some way the matter came under discussion before certain magistrates and gentlemen at Durham. "Who are these Ranters?" was the very natural inquiry. Some one well informed as to the facts of the case and well-disposed too, it would seem, stated what had been the moral effects of the entry of the Primitive Methodists into the dale, especially in having done more to put a stop to poaching than gamekeepers, magistrates and prisons together had been able to effect. On hearing this, permission to take as many stones from the bed of the burn as might be necessary to complete the chapel was readily granted. Once more Mr. Muschamp is said to have shown himself a friend in need. When the trustees were straitened for money and unable to meet the payment due to the builder, he went home, sold a cow and gave the proceeds to the building fund. For thirty years he was Circuit Steward and Chapel Treasurer, dying in 1858, at Brotherlee, on the small patrimonial estate where he had lived for eighty-three years.

It was just two months before Hugh Bourne preached at Westgate that George Race had been made an exhorter. It is likely enough the novice both observed and heard the veteran attentively, though they might not have speech the one with the other. But though Hugh Bourne does not mention Mr. Race's name, if he could have foreseen the figure this new-fledged exhorter would afterwards become in the dale and beyond,

he would certainly have referred to him, as we are bound to do. It would be rash and invidious to affirm that George Race, sen., was the ablest layman Primitive Methodism has yet produced.



MR. GEORGE RACE.

It is quite permissible to affirm that, for sheer mental force, there have been few to equal him. He was a dalesman and made no pretension, even in speech or manner, to be anything else. The miners and crofters felt that this village store-keeper was one of themselves, and yet they knew that mentally he was head and shoulders above themselves, and were proud and not jealous of his bigness, of which he seemed hardly aware. For there was in the man a fine balance of brain and heart; his homeliness and companionableness drew men to him, so that the relation between him and his friends and neighbours was like that of a chieftain to his clansmen—familiar, but respectful. He had read much, and he had pondered and explored and discussed with his friends the underlying problems of philosophy and religion. In

later years his mind was greatly drawn to geology in some of its aspects—to stratification and denudation, and the rest. He tried to find out how these valleys and hills amongst which he loved to wander had become what they were; how the valleys had been scooped out, and the course of the torrent scored, and the hills uplifted, and some of his doubts on the accepted conclusions relative to these matters, and his own excogitations thereon, were given to the world. Meanwhile he 'knew whom he had believed.' To him, "conversion was the abiding miracle" and Christian experience the basis of certitude. Few could preach with the same power and acceptance as he could, yet he was easily pleased with the preaching of others, for his faith being simple, his heart responded to the ring of sincerity in the utterance. We know our sketch of George Race, sen., is imperfect, but it is an honest attempt to hand down what may serve faintly to recall some of the features of this dalesman *in excelsis*.

George Race, jun., worthily fills the place his father occupied so long. Heavily weighted as he is by the responsibility of sustaining and carrying onward the traditions and memories associated with the name he bears, that responsibility is being bravely and steadily borne. More would we say were he not, as happily he is, still amongst us.

In this upland region where the rivers have their rise, Methodism in its two branches, old and Primitive, has long been, as it were, the established religion. These moors and dales have received much from Methodism, and it is just as true to say that they have given much to Methodism in return. So far as our own Church is concerned, the mere enumeration of those who have gone forth into its ministry from these parts would occupy more space than we have at command. Were we to add to these the dalesmen born who have, like their own rivers, found their way to the lowlands and populous centres to enrich the life of our churches, the roll would be a long one indeed. We have only to think of the Watsons, Pearts, Clemitsons, Elliotts, Featherstones, Gibsons, Reeds, Emmersons, Gills, Phillipsons, Prouds, and



MR. GEORGE RACE, JUN. ?

the bearer of other Northern names—to be reminded of our indebtedness. The few portraits we give are only “on account.” One of these is that of Joseph Gibson, of Brotherlee, who did such good work in Liverpool and, humanly speaking, died all too



REV. J. GIBSON.



MR. RALPH FEATHERSTONE RACE.



MR. J. RITSON.

soon, in October 1866. Elsewhere will be found that of Dr. John Watson, of Ireshopeburn, who had what was probably the unique distinction of travelling the whole of his probation in his native circuit. As representative laymen of this interesting district we give the portraits of Messrs. Joseph Ritson, of Allendale, Ralph Featherstone Race, of Teesdale, J. Gibson, and J. Elliott, of Weardale.

Mr. J. Ritson, of Ninebanks, West Allen, was intimately associated with the work of Primitive Methodism in the west part of the Allendale Circuit. Converted in Keenley under the ministry of Thomas Greener, he shortly afterwards removed to Ninebanks where he commenced business as a joiner and cartwright. This was in 1833, and at that time we had no chapel in West Allendale. Largely through Mr. Ritson's efforts land was obtained and a chapel built at Carry Hill, three-quarters of a mile further up the Dale. For the next forty years he was a leading figure in the society and laboured indefatigably for the advancement of the cause. His house was the home of the preachers. His eldest son was for many years Circuit Steward; his second daughter

became the wife of the Rev. R. Clemitson, and his youngest son is in the ministry of our Church and vice-editor. Retiring from business in 1872, he removed to the neighbourhood of Allendale Town, and took a leading part in the erection of the present chapel. He died July 26th, 1878. Mr. Ritson was a profoundly religious man; “he carried his conscience into the construction of a cart wheel, the roofing of a house, the making of a piece of furniture—each must be a sound piece of workmanship.”



MR. J. GIBSON.



MR. J. ELLIOTT.

The two honoured ministers named above may be taken as good specimens of that type of men of which this interesting region is the matrix. The type is one not difficult to recognise. You find in it a pronounced sobriety and thoughtfulness, in perfect

keeping with the austere and solemn beauty of the outward things their eyes first looked upon. It has a temperament capable of quiet and sustained enthusiasm. It is hard and solid to look at and handle, but it can kindle and enkindle. In short it is the anthracite temperament. The dalesmen—using the word generally—have the temperament and the tradition of revivalism, and they will be wise for themselves and for the Connexion, if they yield to their temperament and conserve and carry on the tradition.



REV. HENRY HEBBRON.

Some account has already been given of the establishment of our cause in Hexham, and reference has also been made to the extensive area of the circuit and the part it took in early missionary operations. Contemporary journals serve to complete the picture, by giving us glimpses of some of the more notable men and women who in their time contributed to the working and maintenance of the Hexham Circuit.

Invaluable in this regard is the manuscript Autobiography of the late Rev. C. C. McKechnie, who was on the station in 1841-2—just at the end of the first period. Occasionally we shall borrow from his graphic characterisations, and by so doing enrich our pages.

After a time the old Malt-kiln was left for the chapel in Bull Bank, with the preacher's house at its side. This served the uses of the Hexham Society until 1863, when the "Hebbron Memorial Chapel" was opened. Now, after other forty years have passed, a remove is again about to be made to a splendid site at the junction of four principal streets, not more than one hundred yards from the original Malt-kiln. The mention of the "Hebbron Memorial" naturally leads to a reference to the Ridley family of which Mrs. Hebbron was a member. At the time Primitive Methodism was first brought to Hexham, the brothers Ridley occupied a good position and were deservedly held in respect in the town. Though associated with the Congregational Church they showed a very friendly spirit to our newly-planted cause. Their only sister was induced to attend the services, and under a sermon by Rev. W. Garner, Miss Ridley was led to make the great decision, and to cast in her lot with our people. A little romance now began: Miss Ridley became the betrothed of Rev. W. Garner; her friends disapproved of the match, and took their own method to ensure its being broken. Each thought the other false and each was wrong. But Miss Ridley was destined after all to be the wife of a Primitive Methodist preacher. The Rev. Henry Hebbron became her suitor, and a successful one. He was a gentleman by birth, and unmistakably one in appearance and manner, and with expectations. This time the fates interposed no bar. In their union there was a convergence of several ancestral lines associated with the evangelical succession. Miss Ridley belonged to a family which could boast of its connection with the Riddles of Williamswick—a family to which belonged the martyr Ridley, while on the maternal side she was related to Thomas Scott the commentator. On his



MRS. E. HEBBRON.

side, Mr. Hebbbron was the cousin of the Rev. David Simpson—the author of the once well-known “Plea for Religion.” Being left with ample means Mrs. Hebbbron thought to carry out the wishes of her husband, who died in 1860, by building a chapel for the denomination in Hexham. On the day—June 24th, 1863—the chapel should have been opened, Mrs. Hebbbron died, and her remains were brought from Potto and were interred by those of her husband in Hexham cemetery.



MR. JAMES DAVISON.

Besides the Ridleys of Hexham, reference must be made to Mr. James Davison of Dean Row. Mr. McKechnie thus speaks of him:—

“In the west part of the Hexham Circuit we had some most interesting people, among the rest James Davison, schoolmaster of Dean Row, stood prominent. Mr. Davison was a remarkable man, slow and somewhat hesitant of speech, but clear and penetrating in his judgment, consecutive and forcible in his reasonings, and withal of a generous, ardent, passionate temperament. He contributed largely to the building up and consolidating of the Hexham Circuit, and often attended district meeting and conference as circuit delegate.”

As everybody knows, Dr. Joseph Parker was a “Tynechild”—born and brought up at Hexham. Probably neither he nor his father was at any time actually connected with our Church, but they frequently attended its services, and it is about certain that much of young Parker’s early preaching was done in connection with our agencies, and that he delivered his first temperance address in a Primitive Methodist chapel. Several of our ministers were frequent visitors to the home of the Parkers, and with the Rev. R. Fenwick he kept up an intermittent correspondence almost to the end. Though therefore we may not be able to claim so large a part in Dr. Parker as in C. H. Spurgeon or Dr. Landells, we may fairly claim to have had some small share in his early development. Dr. Parker, however, is brought in here mainly because of his early relations



REV. C. HALLAM.



MRS. HALLAM.



REV. HENRY YOOLL.

with Mr. James Davison. Something of the calibre of the latter may be learned from the famous preacher’s juvenile estimate of him. In a letter of the most intimate kind addressed to the schoolmaster of Dean Row, he says: “Mr. Davison has been a name ever associated in my mind with boundless kindness, cultivated intellect and open

straight-forwardness."* "Mr. Davison and Primitive Methodist Camp Meetings!" was the exclamation with which he greeted his old friend on the occasion of a visit paid to Haydonbridge long after he had become famous. Evidently memory still retained in her niche the image of Mr. Davison as the representative figure of Hexamshire Primitive Methodism.

In Mr. McKechnie's manuscript pages we get pleasant glimpses of his colleagues in the Hexham Circuit in this year—1842. Two of these bore names which their sons have perpetuated and made familiar to Primitive Methodists of a later generation. Christopher Hallam, "warm-hearted, genial," was one of these, and Henry Yooll, "a man of devout spirit, who attended well to pastoral duties and was well received as a preacher," was another. Mrs. Hallam might have been reckoned as yet another colleague, for she frequently preached in the Hexham Circuit, as she did in all the circuits in which her lot was cast, and always with much acceptance. Indeed, though Mrs. Hallam was not a travelling preacher in the technical sense, she was known throughout the northern counties as a woman of special gifts and usefulness. Especially was this the case, as we shall see, in Scotland where Mrs. Hallam left enduring memories of herself. Mr. McKechnie speaks of her "wide, intellectual outlook," and claims for her that she had a mental equipment that would have been creditable to any minister of the gospel.

Mr. McKechnie makes grateful mention too of the kindness and connexional loyalty of the Lowes of Cowburn and Galisharigg, and draws an interesting picture of some of the Sunday afternoon services at Cowburn. These had certain features all their own; for the congregation was largely made up of stalwart shepherds from the hills who, as a matter of course, came accompanied by their collies. The dogs were expected to behave themselves, and usually did so, lying quietly under their masters' forms. But sometimes what began in provocative growls would end in a downright fight, and the preacher had to pause till order was restored. Mr. McKechnie had his turn on the Rothbury Mission, and has a good word for the steward of Brinkburn Priory on the East Coquet, who was a warm-hearted and devoted friend of the cause; and especially of Mr. Thomas Thornton, an extensive sheep-farmer of Cambo, some twelve or fourteen miles south of Rothbury. Mr. Thornton had gathered much worldly substance, but subordinated everything to religion. He was a loyal-hearted Primitive, entertained the preachers bountifully, and in other ways supported and helped to extend the cause.

For twenty years Hexham Circuit enjoyed the distinction of having within its borders the owner of an ancient name and of an ancient demesne, who was as thorough a Primitive Methodist as any one could wish to meet. Even in Northumberland, where pedigree counts for much, Robert Ingram Shafto's claim to belong to a good, old, county family was unimpeachable. Now, though our early preachers in their incessant journeyings to and fro often saw the stately homes of England, they usually saw them through the park palings, or from a distant eminence. They seldom came in contact with the owners of these mansions except at Quarter Sessions. It was indeed

* See the article "Dr. Parker" in "Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review," April, 1903, written by Rev. M. P. Davison, the son of Mr. James Davison. The date of the letter is May 14th, 1850.

a novel, if not a unique, experience to be able to feel that the owner of Bavington Hall was a brother Primitive; that, notwithstanding his long pedigree and his rent-roll, he had his name in the class-book; that he liked nothing better than to have Primitive Methodists on his estate and round his table, and enjoyed a camp meeting with as much zest as his shepherd or ploughman. But so it was; and we need not be surprised if Squire Shafto and Bavington Hall rather impressed the imagination of our people, and if, even yet, the names are invested with a certain glamour. Mr. McKechnie was, of course, in his turn a guest at Bavington Hall, and as we know of no better description of it than the one he has given, we shall here borrow from it.

“Bavington Hall stands about twelve miles north of Hexham, on the borders of a rugged tract of country mostly moorland, which stretches away in monotonous dreariness towards the Cheviot Hills. The estate to which it belongs, though not one of the largest in Northumberland, covers a considerable extent of country, and has been the property of the Shafto family for many generations. The Hall itself is not a specially attractive object in the landscape. It is a spacious but heavy-looking building, with little or no ornamentation, evidently constructed more for comfort and convenience than for beauty of appearance.

“Seventy or eighty years ago Bavington Hall was well known to the Primitives in the North of England. Such of them as had not seen it had often heard of it. It had indeed become among them a sort of household word. It was, perhaps, the only house in England where Primitive Methodism had obtained a vital connection with the gentry of the country. The Squire then in possession was a younger son who, after finishing his course of education at Cambridge, had settled at Sunderland as a solicitor. There he came under the influence of our early preachers, experienced the regenerating power of God's grace, and united with the Society. On succeeding to the Bavington estate, he did not hide his light under a bushel. In a simple, unostentatious way, without noise or parade, but not the less effectually, he made it pretty widely understood that he was a Primitive, and intended his life to be in harmony with his religious profession. He opened a communication with the authorities of the Hexham Circuit, invited the preachers to the Hall, and made arrangements for the formation of a Society and Sunday school for the holding of regular preaching services, and the erection of a chapel. The work of evangelising the neighbourhood on Primitive lines also commenced in good earnest. Not only in the surrounding hamlets, but in several outlying farmhouses, this good work was vigorously carried on. Mr. Shafto himself became a local preacher, and had his name on the preachers' plan, though he did not preach much. He considered the Sunday school his proper sphere, and for many years he rendered much devoted and loving service as school superintendent. To strengthen the infant cause and increase its working power, members and local preachers from a distance were, at Mr. Shafto's instance, offered inducements to settle on the estate; and Bavington soon became noted all round the country-side as a centre and stronghold of Primitive Methodism. While liberally supporting circuit and connexional funds, Mr. Shafto took special interest in our Rothbury Mission. For a while, at least, it was chiefly sustained by himself; and the preacher stationed there was encouraged to ask him for any special help he might require in working what was then a much-neglected and semi-barbarous region. The gentry around Bavington, though much shocked with Mr. Shafto's proceedings, prudently abstained from breaking with him openly, thinking, probably, opposition would have the effect of increasing rather than abating the annoyance. Mr. Shafto kept little company, none at all of a gay or worldly character.

He restricted himself almost entirely to the preachers and other prominent members of the Connexion. The Hall was seldom, for any length of time, without company of this kind. On special occasions, when preachers of note were present, the clergyman of the parish would probably be an invited guest; but it was noteworthy that, though treated with perfect respect, no greater deference was paid to him than to our own preachers. To all intents and purposes they were treated alike . . .



HUGH BOURNE AT BAVINGTON HALL.

“Mr. Shafto was a modest, warm-hearted, unpretending gentleman, who might be approached and conversed with by the humblest person with the utmost freedom. His personal appearance was not impressive. He was somewhat under the middle size; his countenance, though pleasant, had no striking features; his dress was plain, and his manners, while perfectly correct, were simple and homely. Nature had not gifted him with the higher qualities of mind; but he had good sense and a sound judgment, and his University education gave marked propriety and polish to his speech. . . . I often noted he never seemed to tire talking about Primitive Methodism. So completely had the Connexion filled the orb of his vision that he seemed to take little cognisance of other churches. The Church of England he regarded as a fallen Church hastening to extinction; nothing could save it—so he thought and said. Primitive Methodism, on the other hand, would, beyond all doubt, grow and multiply and fill the land. More than once I have heard him say it was sure to take the place of the

State Church; and the wonder to him was that everybody did not see this as clearly as himself. Such sentiments would be set down now-a-days as foolish extravagance; but it ought to be remembered that when Mr. Shafto dreamt these dreams and saw these visions, the Church of England was at its nadir, while Primitive Methodism was like a young giant, full of life and blood, prodigal of its strength, and marching on exultingly from conquering to conquer.”

Hugh Bourne, as well as others of the fathers, was an occasional visitor at Bavington Hall; and stories are not wanting of the way in which its mistress, pleasant hostess though she was, would take note of his idiosyncrasies, and would engage him in discussions in which the advantage was not always on his side. For Mrs. Shafto loved an encounter of argument and wit and was a woman of strong convictions. She rallied him on his extravagance, plain to see in the tell-tale sediment at the bottom of his cup! His alarm and contrition when the peccadillo was brought home to him was one of her cherished recollections. She vanquished his scruples as to signing the pledge, and though he claimed "the teetotallers had joined him," he came out from that entrenchment and admitted the cogency of her arguments. Many a scene like that our artist has tried to picture was enacted in the drawing-room of Bavington, and perhaps imagination may be able even to improve upon the picture the artist has drawn. But there was to be an end of them. Squire Shafto died April 5th, 1848, and a new Squire came into possession who knew not the Primitives. The chapel was alienated and a blight came over the fair prospect.

"So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er."

