NORTH RIDING

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There can be no question that this land of the North Riding has no possible peer in England, and few outside it.

— S.P.B. Mais, *The Unknown Island*, 1933

ADDERS

It can only die at sunset, and if you kill one its mate will come looking for you. Adult female adders swallow their young when in danger, then vomit them up once the danger has passed. An adder coming to the door of a house is a death omen, and to dream of adders means your enemies are trying to do you some secret mischief. *[66]*

As once in a year they cast their old skins (whereby as it is thought their age reneweth), so their stinging bringeth death without present remedy be at hand, the wounded never ceasing to swell, neither the venom to work till the skin of the one break, and the other ascend upward to the heart, where it finisheth the natural effect, except the juice of dragons be speedily ministered and drunk in strong ale, or else some other medicine taken of like force that may countervail and overcome the venom of the same. *[2]*

ALUM

What a preposterous, obscure and infernal business alum-making was. The boiling of stale urine and burnt seaweed ash, and that mysterious matter – the alchemical secret – of the floating egg. Someone hazarded dropping a hen's egg into the solution, and found that when it floated the solution was ready to be harvested. All this was carried out in remote clifftop hamlets, hovels cheek-by-jowl with the reeking works. *[18]*

On 17 December 1829, heavy rain caused a dramatic collapse of the cliffs, sending the entire hamlet of Kettleness sliding into the sea. Fortunately, the inhabitants had taken shelter in a ship, the Little Henry, lying just offshore. The vessel had arrived to collect alum, but this was one cargo she would have to forego, for not only was Kettleness village destroyed but so were its alum works, which did not resume production for two years. *[47]*

BAYTOWN

Everywhere huge nets were stretched out to dry. Rosy-cheeked children and pigs were plentiful, playing about promiscuously; sometimes a small bit of garden is walled up above the pathway, and is gay with sweet-william and snapdragon. *[46]*

With angry seas periodically demolishing the outmost houses, it seems almost unaccountable that the little town should have persisted in clinging so tenaciously to the high-water mark; but there were probably two paramount reasons for this. The deep gully was to a great extent protected from the force of the winds, and, as it was soon quite brimful of houses, every inch of space was valuable; then, smuggling was freely practised along the coast, and the more the houses were wedged together, the more opportunities for secret hiding-places would be afforded. The whole town has a consciously guilty look in its evident desire to conceal itself; and the steep narrow streets, the curious passages where it is scarcely possible for two people to pass, and the little courts which look like culs-de-sac, but have a hidden flight of steps leading down to another passage, seem to be purposely intricate and confusing. *[41]*

The people used to sacrifice live cats on the safe return of the cobles from gales at sea, and when they were still out during storms the women used to light fires around which the children were made to dance. *[65]*

BERRIES

I thought of bilberry pie. Brown short crust stained with rich purple juice, arched over the luscious, heaped berries with their indescribable taste. And a tide of yellow cream mingling in marvellous pattern with the juice. Tanner had a masterly way with bilberry-pie. But would Tanner make them for me this year?... Hastily I thrust the thought behind me. I loved my home. But that summer I was caught in a dream of beauty; and who would wish to wake from a lovely dream? *[68]*

Cradled by the Esk in a sheltered part of the valley, with stepping-stones and giant Wellingtonias, Egton is a particularly dream-like place. Gooseberries have been grown and shown there for more than 150 years, and the result on showday is berries to make the mind boggle. No gooseberry can hope to achieve even the mildest glory unless it is at least as big as a small plum. A golf ball or a bantam's egg is more the size that a self-respecting berry must attain. *[47]*

BILSDALE

Once you get inside Bilsdale you realise you are in no ordinary land. Bilsdale has a life and character all its own; likewise a celebrated hunt. In Bilsdale there are no social distinctions. Everyone is of one glorious family, rich man, poor man, beggar-man and poacher - if there are any such! But a man is expected to be able to sit on a horse and smell a fox. *[14]*

Bilsdale East moor in the rainy season is a beast, covered, as it is, with a dense growth of very deep heather, all too frequently interspersed with bogs and "blind" water-logged holes. And yet, gruelling as my own crossing was, I enjoyed every yard of it in the bright morning air; though I should not care to be benighted on those moors. Even in daylight they are apt to be a little sinister. *[14]*

Suddenly we came upon the signs of a school treat; there had evidently been a plentiful tea, judging by the supply of cake that remained on the table-cloth spread on the grass. The children had scattered themselves so widely that we thought it would not be easy for the gentle-looking schoolmistress and the teachers to recall them. One bright-eyed group of girls was swinging on the ash-boughs; others had climbed into the wood and were playing hide-and-seek, their shouts of merry laughter sounded among the trees; baskets full of wild-flowers lay about on the grass, and two gipsy-looking girls were washing their feet in the beck, screened by a projecting tree trunk at the bend of the little stream; they were evidently afraid of being caught. *[46]*

BIRDS

The moor blackbird or ring-ousel is the bird of all birds to "walk into" your fruit of the berry sort. I do not know for certain that birds do blush, or else I should say he is the most unblushing, the most unabashed of all possible delinquents in the fruit-stealing and wasting line. His effrontery exceeds that of the Irish member of fiction, of caricature even. The blackbird flies away when caught in the act with a startled cackle; the thrush retires with an apologetic cheep. But the moor blackbird - always a past master in birds' Billingsgate - swears at you, calls you all the choicest names in his repertory -, blackguards you for interfering with his meal, and if forced to make himself scarce, does so with the assurance emphatically delivered and repeated that "you are no gentleman." *[3]*

The chaffinch, somewhere invisible, added his monotonous song; the little bluetit flew from branch to branch with a short, quick note, in impatience at the concert; the blackcap sang as if he was uncertain whether to imitate the nightingale or the blackbird; on the top of a rugged and twisted old apple tree sat the chiff-chaff, calling his own name as loudly as if he were playing a part in a burlesque; the yellowhammer, who also had words as well as a tune, sang his refrain of "a little bit of bread and no cheese," with a tremendous emphasis on the no; and the great-tit added its two notes, like a saw grinding not out of harmony with the rest. *[8]*

If puffins and gannets are from different worlds, the shags are from another universe. Nothing can really prepare you for the reality of the shag experience. It is an all-power meeting with an extraordinary, ancient, corrupt, imperial, angry, dirty, green-eyed, yellow-gaped, oil-skinned, iridescent, rancid, rock-hole glory that is *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. They are scandal and poetry, chaos and individual rage,

archaic, ancient beyond any sense of ancient-ness that other birds might convey. *[53]*

You boil a guillemot's egg for four and a half minutes. You crack a hard, brittle, shell and taste a most delicious egg. It does not taste strong like a duck egg, and it does not taste of fish. The white is stiff and faintly blue in colour and the yolk is a rich red. It is a most distinguished egg to eat in an hotel. When the waiter bears it through the room, bright blue and wobbling in a tiny egg cup, the usual sulky calm of the British breakfast is shattered. *[51]*

BRANSDALE

No road led through these woods, not even a path; but an adventurous spirit could make his way along the bed of the stream, and after a mile or two he would discover that the dale opened out again, to give space to a mill and a few farms and cottages. This is Bransdale, an oasis on the Moors, which in our time only had a poor moorland track to link it with the outer world. The people who lived here were strange and dark and beautiful even to my childish eyes. *[62]*

CLEVELAND

One should see Middlesbrough if only to think of its blast furnaces, its rattle and roar, its ceaseless striving, when one gets to the sources of the Tees on the Westmorland borders, and remembers that the water which flows down from the fell-sides in such quiet surroundings will ere long sweep past this modern product of foresight and energy on its way to the North Sea. *[29]*

As I approached from Redcar the great iron and steel works loomed through the fog, railway sidings criss-crossed the road, and the wild no-mans-land of the Bran Sands seemed an inhospitable wilderness. Gradually the spit of land narrowed until I could just discern the sea on either side - only a few yards away. The South Gare Lighthouse was invisible, but the screaming of fog-sirens grew ever louder as I approached. *[12]*

The lighthouse loomed overhead and the deafening noise of the fog-sirens was answered by the booming sirens of passing vessels which loomed up out of the mist and crept away like ghosts in the night. It was all very eerie; visibility was down to 25 yards as pockets of fog skimmed the still waters, and the South Gare remained aloof - marooned in a swirling mist with the sea all around. *[12]*

COOK

Long ago James Cook, a little shop-boy hungry for the sea, ran away from Staithes. One marvels that any one could steel his heart to leave it. But to little James, hitherto occupied in the scaring of crows, Mr. Sanderson's shop under the hill was merely the gate of a wonderful new world, and he hardly hesitated before passing through it to his adventurous life and death; to the heights of Montcalm and the depths of hitherto unsounded waters, and finally to the knives of the South Seas. *[70]*


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DANES

It is a region whose heights are haunted by memories, and whose dales are full of history. The very people, by their rugged speech, their blue eyes, and their hardy sun-browned or sea-tanned skins, bespeak a near kinship with the Dane. They are a very pleasant folk, too, to journey amongst. The wayfarer along the country roads may meet, perhaps, a teamster with a load of corn, or a farmer trotting homeward, or it may be a labourer bearing upon his shoulders a huge bundle of the stems of burnt heather, which he has gathered upon the moor, and which will make excellent kindling for his housewife's fire. *[44]*

Hardly anybody had yet seen the Norsemen up close by 800 CE, but they could be beautiful, they could be terrifying and quite often they were simply repellent. Viking women were even more extraordinary: famous for sex, ruthlessness and such military skill that their own lovers did not recognize them in armour. They could make up their own minds, and act accordingly. *[59]*

The sea kings were a race of beings whom Europe beheld with horror. Without a yard of territorial property, without any towns or visible nations, with no wealth but their ships, no force but their crews, the sea kings swarmed upon the boisterous ocean and plundered in every district they could approach. Never to sleep under a smoky roof; nor to indulge in the cheerful cup over a hearth, were the boasts of these watery sovereigns; who not only flourished in the plunder of the sea and its shores; but who sometimes amassed so much booty, and enlisted so many followers, as to be able to assault provinces for permanent conquest. Piracy was reckoned so noble, that parents were even anxious to compel their children to the dangerous and malevolent occupation. From these adventurers the population of England received that spirit of maritime enterprise and daring, which makes them scorn the dangers of the deep, and spread their sails on every sea. *[31]*

DEEPDALE

If the chorales of the birds signify anything, romantic Deepdale is their sanctuary. Vegetation is at its lushest and best, firs of colossal size succeed other trees only less magnificently impressive by their girth and vigour. Every rood upward some new phase of beauty is revealed. Nature has hidden in rich garments of foliage what harsh notes there might be in the bare framework of the scene. Skyward, giant pines upshoot their blue-green or bronze-frosted pyramids, making a fine foil to the yellower greens of the shade grass and the blue sheets of wood-hyacinths which are spread in ethereal beauty of tint over the soil. The fir-tree trunks have the effect of a pillared cloister; we are in Nature's Sanctuary indeed. *[11]*

DRACULA

To-day is a grey day, and the sun as I write is hidden in thick clouds, high over Kettleness. Everything is grey - except the green grass, which seems like emerald amongst it; grey earthy rock; grey clouds, tinged with the sunburst at the far edge, hang over the grey sea, into which the sand-points stretch like grey fingers. The sea is tumbling in over the shallows and the sandy flats with a roar, muffled in the sea-mists drifting inland. The horizon is lost in a grey mist. All is vastness; the clouds are piled up like giant rocks, and there is a "brool" over the sea that sounds like some presage of doom. *[71]*

DWARFS

From fairies the old lady got on to recollections of what clearly was a survival of dwarf folklore. For she told me of certain small people who used to dwell in the houes (grave-mounds) that years ago were to be found in the Roxby and Mickleby direction. *[3]*

We all have a dwarf inside us. It is as if there is something of an essence of a concentrated form of each of us that is screaming to get out and that is a perfectly formed representation of who we are. *[20]*

EARTHQUAKES

The earth moved before breakfast this morning in the unusually named hamlet of Fryup. However most residents in the tiny community in North Yorkshire slept through the quake, which had a magnitude of 2.8. The British Geological Survey said there were no reports that anyone felt the earth shake at 5am. The earthquake was so deep it could only have happened naturally, it was understood, and was nothing to do with any human activity. Fryup is in the North York Moors National Park and has no pub or shops. Its unusual name is nothing to do with English breakfasts but was thought to be honouring the Anglo-Saxon goddess Frige. *[77]*

Here is said to have once stood a large and populous town, the destruction of which was caused, not by a flood, but by an awful earthquake. One day, all of a sudden, the earth was violently convulsed, the side of the hill opened, and swallowed up the whole town, with its inhabitants, and their belongings. This was followed shortly after by a volume of water which quickly covered the site where the town had stood - as was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah. The lake is said to be unfathomable, having no bottom to it. Occasionally, however, the chimneys and tops of the houses are visible to those who are venturesome enough to embark on the surface of the waters of this mysterious lake. *[42]*

FAIRIES

There were no hedges throughout all this locality, and very few stone walls, for enclosure acts had not then come into operation; while trees were of so little value, as scarcely to be worth the trouble of felling. Old England possessed no "green lanes," such as are now deemed picturesque; but there were little dells and hollows beautiful enough for the fairies to live in; and dark woods, where it would be dangerous for young people to go blackberrying; and jungles, where the hunter might almost lose himself in pursuit of game. *[75]*

Where do fairies dwell? Here yet, surely - if anywhere. Tees sparkles like a jewel, now a diamond, now a sapphire, now a topaz, as a fish leaps, leaving a dimpling ripple that rings an octave of colour changes before it declines into a shimmering reflection of the green-leaf canopy above. Swallows and martins, scythe-winged, purple-backed, white-breasted, curvet and sweep over the water, skimming the surface, occasionally kissing it, while among the fringing moss draped dripping rocks and boulders, wagtails flirt perkily, and water ousels display their white vests as they dip in the rock pools of some stony stretch. *[11]*

FAIRS

To the labouring rustic of youthful years nothing is more attractive than the statute-hiring fairs, which take place at the chief agricultural centres at various times of year, but chiefly about Martinmas. These fairs are rapidly losing a great deal of their picturesqueness which they had in the days when men and boys stood about in the streets or market-places bearing something to indicate their particular proficiencies - the shepherd his crook, the thresher his flail, the waggoner his whip. Nowadays the servant-maids, dairymaids, and kitchen-wenches are usually assembled in some hall.. thus the fairs are robbed of one of their most picturesque features - the presence of labourers, male and female, literally waiting in the market-place until some man shall hire them. Truth to tell, the ploughboy and the maidservant alike regard the statute-hiring fair as a day of amusement, and they will do their best to attend several before they finally take a new situation. The side-shows, menageries, exhibitions of petrified men, sword-swallowers, and fat women attract them greatly. The boys, too, are invariably attracted by the ballad-monger, from whom they buy new songs, which they will subsequently sing as they follow their horses across the land. *[26]*

On these occasions 'cheap jacks' and 'quacks' carried on a brisk trade; shooting-galleries and Punch and Judy were attractions to not a few, and shows of fat women, wild beasts, one-eyed and six-legged monsters, and all manner of horrors were literally besieged by uproarious crowds of claimants for admission, till the places fairly reeked again. It was a splendid harvest for the show-keepers, especially if the day was wet, and under that condition of weather the public houses were unfortunately also crammed almost to suffocation. It was from this point of view a sad sight. Boys and girls, lads and lasses, men and women were crowded together in the parlours and passages of the inns in a state of wild excitement, uproar, and

confusion. Music, if such it could be called, and dancing went on merrily; coarse jests were freely indulged in; and songs of every description were bawled out in solo and chorus, and shouts of approval rent the air. It was like pandemonium let loose. *[50]*

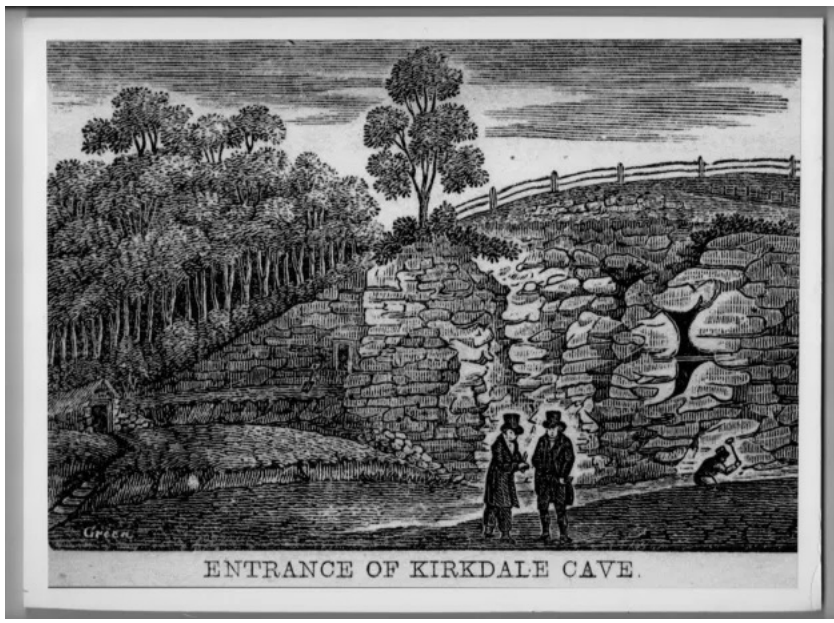
FARMS

Here the farms are largely arable, and each farmstead nestles amongst its red-roofed barns, its warm-looking stacks of hay and wheat, its pleasant orchard, and its more or less trim-looking flower garden. In the harvest time the farms are all awake with the reaper's song, and the fields wave with golden grain. *[17]*

The stillness of a sleeping town, of a village, is nothing to the stillness of a remote farm; for the peace of day in such a place is so kindly that the ear is attuned to the subtlest sounds, and time is slow. If by chance a cow should low in the night it is like the abysmal cry of some hellish beast, bringing woe to the world. And who knows what hellish beasts might roam by night, for in the cave by the church five miles away they once found the bones of many strange animals, wolves and hyenas, and even the rusks of mammoths. *[62]*

FREEDOM

First and foremost of all, they inherited an unchanging and unquenchable love of liberty. They were free, because they inhabited vast wildernesses, rude forests, and gigantic mountains. Liberty is the sole treasure of an indigent people, and is therefore grasped the more eagerly: a poor country does not excite the avidity of the conqueror, and they who possess it defend it easily. They were free, because untrammelled by those pleasures often so dearly bought, rendering the protection of a powerful master an absolute necessity. They were free, because hunters and shepherds of the hills and forests are not oppressed like the timorous and pusillanimous inhabitants of towns; and because a wandering, unsettled people, if deprived of liberty in one place, will command it in another. *[55]*



ENTRANCE OF KIRKDALE CAVE.

FRYUP

The origin of the name Fryup is most likely to stem from a combination of the name of the Old Norse goddess of love, Freja, and hop, which denotes a small valley (literally: Freja-hop). In Norse mythology, Freja is a goddess associated with love, beauty, fertility, gold, seidhr (sorcery), war and death. *[85]*

Fryup Dale is a corner of rural England whose inhabitants deserve congratulation on their foresight and initiative. Men and women of sturdy, independent spirit, they are not sitting back waiting for a Government gift of amenities - a thing so many rural communities dream will come their way. The people of Fryup are not standing idly by waiting for a better world to be presented to them - they are making it for themselves with a true pioneering spirit. *[89]*

GHOSTS

There was a lady who, at a certain hour on a certain night, depending on the moon's age, walked abroad in her bloodstained night-gear, but without her head. There was another of the same sex, and habited also in her white night-gown, who "walked" with her hands chained and her lower limbs fettered, sobbing and crying, and jangling her chains. *[3]*

"At Dalton, near Thirsk," writes Mr. Baring-Gould, "is an old barn, which is haunted by a headless woman. One night a tramp went in it to sleep. At midnight he was awakened by a light, and sitting up he saw a woman coming towards him from the end of the barn, holding her head in her hands like a lantern, with light streaming out of the eyes, nostrils and mouth. He sprang out of the barn in a fright, breaking a hole in the wall to escape. This hole I was shown six years ago. Whether the barn still stands I cannot say. *[37]*

GIANTS

Henry Cooper is believed to have been born in Swainby, and as a boy he worked at Scugdale Hall Farm. An 1890 directory of the North Riding states that 'this remarkable sample of humanity grew thirteen inches in the space of five months'. It adds that Cooper's current height was 8ft 6in. He was at that time reputedly the world's tallest man. And if the evidence of the directory is admitted, he is easily the tallest-ever Englishman, beating the champion in the Guinness Book of Record by 9in. *[47]*

Cooper was certainly too tall for work on the farm: he couldn't move easily in the farm buildings, and he found it backbreaking to follow the plough. Dismissed by his employer, he travelled to London where he joined a circus. In the 1880s he toured the USA with Barnum and Bailey. *[47]*

Once upon a time, it was a terrible place for boys and girls to have to live in, because dreadful things had happened to them in the old far-away days, before all the giants had been made an end of. For everybody knew that the real old sort of giants were very fond of children, before they got too big and tough, for breakfast or lunch; and that, even yet, long pointed objects which might be seen about in the fields, which were giants' teeth, and huge joints of their backbones were still to be met with. Really and truly they must have come out of some huge creature; and the old giants were much the most likely. *[4]*

GYPSIES

It was the great North Riding fair for the sale of unbroken fell and dale ponies, and was attended not only by farmers and dealers, but also by Durham mine owners, who bought their pit ponies at Brough, and tradesmen from the industrial areas of the West Riding who needed van ponies. Above all, Brough Hill Fair was the great rallying place for North Country gipsies, who seemed to set the hill ablaze with their gay costumes and garishly painted caravans. And in fact at the end of the fair they sometimes did set the hill ablaze, for if there was a moon, and the night was fine, they would light huge bonfires and dance till dawn. *[1]*

Sometimes fortune-telling gypsy women, those accompanying the hawker gangs, and "the ladies of the road," take their ale there, but for some reason, it is considered bad form for a village dame or maiden to be seen "going to t'public." *[24]*

Standing there in the sunshine on the road, they appeared to me more than anything like a gang of prehistoric folk risen from some tumulus on the moor; features, garments, horses, vehicles - all were tinctured with Mother Earth's reds and browns picked up from wild heaths, clay-pits, and sandy lanes. Although obviously poor, they were light-hearted - I had caught the lilt of a song before they came in sight. A blithesome spirit of acceptance, a serenity drawn from Nature's bosom was theirs, and I could imagine them whistling cheerily as they bent their heads to buffeting storms. *[33]*

Are you seeking a recipe for youth? Go a-Gypsying. Forth to the winding road under the open sky, the Gypsies are calling you. Scorning our hurrying mode of life, these folk are content to loiter

beneath the green beeches, or in the shadow of some old inn on the fringe of a windy common. Like Nature herself, these wildlings of hers overflow with the play-spirit and thus remain ever youthful. *[33]*

Immorality abounds to a most alarming degree. Incest, wantonness, lasciviousness, lechery, whoring, bigamy, and every other abomination low, degrading, carnal appetites, propensity, and lust originate and encourage they practise openly without the least blush; in fact, I question if many of them know what it is to blush at all. *[69]*

The green lanes too, often with towering hedges and ancient, overhanging trees, with deep ruts and grass-grown passages, evidence of little use, are an abiding joy. These lanes lead to farms and often peter out at a dead end. They are the camping ground for the Romany folk, and the walks of courting couples from the villages. *[24]*

HAND OF GLORY

Almost to the summit of the pass there are farmhouses, but these have a wild, grim air, in keeping with their surroundings. It was at one of them that the gruesome Hand of Glory, the hand of a dead murderer, was used by robbers to prevent sleepers from waking. *[58]*

The Hand must be cut from the corpse as soon as possible after death, a fact which meant that most hangings were attended by criminals who were anxious to acquire a Hand. Once severed, the Hand was tightly wrapped in a shroud or a draw-sheet which was severely tightened to squeeze out the last drops of blood. The next stage was to put it through a curing or pickling process. One method was to use a solution of salt, saltpetre and pepper, all carefully powdered and it was allowed to absorb this mixture for about two weeks. This has been likened to the curing of a ham or side of bacon, a skill in which country folk excelled. *[81]*

HERMITS

Baxter lived for more than forty years at Woodlands Farm in Thorgill. For several years after he arrived in the district he took a normal part in local life, but gradually he withdrew from almost all social contact. From 1934 until his death in 1959 his seclusion was virtually complete. Although he would exchange a few words with neighbours as he walked round his fields, he rarely left his farm and did his best to avoid its few callers. He even boarded up his windows. [47]

Here, at Mount Grace, one sees how the Carthusian lived - a perfect hermit. Here in his little house, with its one room downstairs (wherein was a closet for tools) and its two rooms upstairs, one of which was for sleeping in, the other for praying in, the monk spent what time was not occupied in the church or in the garden which surrounded his cell-like residence. His meals were served to him through a little hatch at the side of the door - a hatch so constructed that the person serving could not see the person served, and v*ice versa*. The members of the community never dined together except on Sundays and great festivals - on all other days, save for attendance in choir, they lived, worked, and ate alone. *[29]*

HIGHWAYMEN

The idealized view of a countryside consisting of romantic rose-covered cottages and lusty, honest peasants loses a good deal on closer inspection. There was indeed a mass of criminal activity, sometimes of a completely unconcealed kind. The lawbreakers fell into three broad categories. There were, first, the crowds or mobs that gathered to vent some grievance, more commonly one concerning a shortage of supplies of grain. Second, there were numerous professional criminals, such as horse thieves, poachers, smugglers and wreckers, highwaymen and footpads, forgers and coiners, many of whom tended to frequent out-of-the-way areas of rocky coastline, forest fastnesses or remote moorlands where the arm of the magistrate failed to reach. And there was, third, the individual villager who occasionally indulged in the stealing of game or other petty theft, and participated not only in drunken assaults and slander of neighbours, but also - though much less frequently - murder and rape. *[48]*

HUNTING

Decidedly less poetic was the not altogether obsolete practice of celebrating the death of a fox killed by hounds by toasting the whole of the vulpine species in blood-stained liquor. After a kill, the fox was hung up on a crook at the nearest inn, and quart mugs of liquor were held underneath the dripping mask in which fox-hunting was toasted. A fox's brush was dipped and squeezed in it to give a zest to the liquor. *[25]*

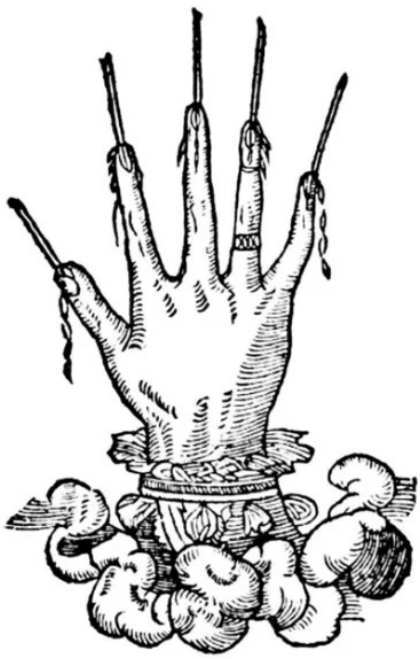
There can be little doubt that the *true* hill-fox is quite different from the low country fox; the hill foxes do visit the low country in the breeding season; of that there is no doubt, as we occasionally find them with hounds, and have wonderful runs to some earth on the moors, of which no low country fox could know. The hill foxes have their earths on the moors, whilst they use old jet workings very frequently. I should say that the big moorland fox is now very scarce, though crosses are frequently met with. You will very rarely find a lowland fox take to the moors but once a moorland (hill) fox, always a hill fox. *[23]*

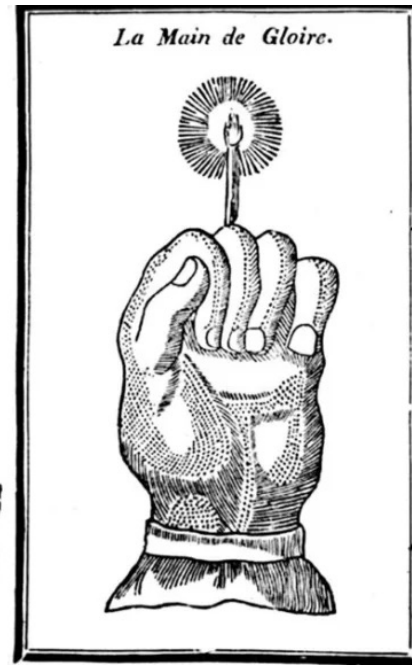
The pomp and circumstance of the olden otter-hunt was very striking; the huntsmen sallied forth arrayed in vests of green, braided with scarlet, their caps of fur, encircled with bands of gold, and surmounted with ostrich plumes. Boots, much of the fashion of those known to modern hunting-fields, reaching the tops of the thighs, and water-proof, encased their lower limbs, and were ornamented with gold or silver tassels. Their spears were also embellished with carvings and costly mountings. *[32]*

This pasture was rather a godless waste: it was pock-marked with erupted rabbit-warrens, countless mole-hills, and dark fairy-rings in the grass. We implicitly believed in the mysterious origin of these rings, and felt that we might any misty morning find the fairies

dancing. Periodically the rabbits had to be decimated, and then fierce dark men with waxed mustaches appeared, bringing ferrets in canvas bags. *[62]*

In dropping down through the slope of the wood to the Priory, we come across one discordant note, a gamekeeper's 'larder' and crucified on the trees, as a warning (one would like to fancy) to their kind not to do what Nature, "red in tooth and claw", formed them for doing. It is a dismal shambles of stoats, pole-cats, weasels, hawks and pynots, and even a heron is (in error) gibbeted to a tree-hole. *[11]*




La Main de Gloire.

HYENAS

Workmen quarrying roadstone in March 1821 broke into the cave and stumbled on evidence that Britain was once the natural home of the lion, the tiger, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus and many other now alien creatures. Altogether twenty-two species of animal were identified. Dated broadly at 70,000 BC, they cover a huge span of time culminating in the onset of the last Ice Age. The relics of lion together with hippo, and of other animals such as the bison, the straight-tusked elephant, the giant deer and the slender-nosed rhino, indicate that at the beginning of the period Britain was a warm country, perhaps even sub-tropical. From the large number of hyena bones, it is believed that the cave was a hyenas' den into which the scavengers had dragged the carcasses of other animals. The failure to find any complete skeleton in the cave also points to the hyena, which devours even its own dead. *[47]*

IDLENESS

Idleness, which is rightly regarded by all industrious folk as a sin rather than a failing, was not unknown on the moorlands. There were a few lazy human monsters, who foregathered at the more remote inns, where they clacked (chattered) all day long, or played pitch-and-toss or dominoes, laid tribute on weary but enthusiastic tourists, or occasionally took a hand in a little poaching. Very rarely a sheep mysteriously disappeared. *[9]*

The real blessing is the idle man, he who lights his pipe and saunters out in the soft sunshine, and seeks a mossy parapet not quite breast high, on which he can spread his arms, and muse and watch the bubbles drifting, and the foamy water leaping, leaping up the buttresses; he who finds excitement in the troubles of some fisherman casting his line in a brown eddy higher up, his creel and landing net safe propped upon a jut of rock, or in the flight of the swallows skimming so low that they seem to dip their white bosoms in the fall, while the sun lights up their backs with every shade of royal blue, or yet more indolent, is content to watch the swift water coursing over the golden shallows, happy only to be alive where all nature is so musical, so animated, and so full of colour. *[54]*

INSANITY

Statistics show that the incidence of insanity in sparsely populated country and moorland districts is above the average. In reality it is much higher than would appear from figures. There are many in the country, living the lives of ordinary people in perfect freedom and under no restraint, who, under the official and stricter surveillance of the town, would be locked up at once. They are looked upon as harmless; everybody knows them, humours their madness, and mades due allowance for their vagaries. Then there are many more on the borderland, half-cracked and half-baked beings who, if exposed to the strain and excitement of town life, would break down at once. *[9]*

These mad folk marry and intermarry and propagate children, and so multiply the evil. Fortunately, by a compensatory law of nature, there is ever a strong tendency in the offspring to revert to normal type; these marriages, moreover, are frequently childless, or, if not childless, productive of weaklings who die early in life. *[9]*

It was my duty as a poor-law medical officer to certify all those who, by their inability to pay the higher charges of a private asylum, became ipso facto paupers, and if I had certified all those I considered to be insane I should have locked up a big proportion of the country-side. *[9]*

One of these moonstruck creatures had already been in an asylum once for a short time, and the story went about that on this occasion, when he arrived with a half-baked relation of the same name at the institution, the doctors had been in so much doubt as to which was the lunatic, that they nearly succeeded in locking up the wrong man. *[9]*

Consanguinity in marriage is a great factor in the causation of insanity, and these moorland people intermarried so much that the maze of relationship was more than bewildering. One never knew where it began or where it ended. Nieces were sisters-in-law, brothers-on-law were stepsons, and so on. I felt I was going mad myself in threading my way through this labyrinth of relationship. I was for ever discovering new complications. *[9]*

Another great factor is the extreme monotony of their lives. Man is essentially a sociable animal, and solitary confinement often means a punishment worse than death. These moorland dwellers love their lonely homes, are loathe to leave them, and, like their sheep, are eager to return to them, but this very loneliness and isolation renders them liable to collapse under any sudden shock, strain, or mental excitement. *[9]*

IRON

Life in Rosedale during the boom years had a true frontier flavour. As one miner tumbled out of bed to report for his shift, another clambered in. The miners created their own entertainment. One earned 5s. Per night playing at hunt balls on a violin made from animal gut and pit roofing timber. There were pigeon shoots, challenge horse races, and the annual Abbey Sweepstakes. A Kirbymoorside jeweller frequently walked to Rosedale with a caseful of watches on Friday night, selling every one before returning home on Sunday. *[47]*

The iron-miner is probably of a more intellectual turn than the collier, not so narrow and not so childlike. But the pitman, in spite (or because) of his hard life and bad pay, is one of the best-tempered men. He is very simple and straightforward, very generous, and greatly inclined to sport. Indeed, he has brought the joys of betting to a fine art. I should doubt if any one ever got so much value in excitement for his money as the collier. *[78]*

Again and again this community of ironstone miners has been moved mightily by the Holy Ghost. Many men, women, and youths were converted, and the whole region seemed to be transformed. Instead of swearing and drunkenness, singing and praying went on everywhere, down the mines as well as in the homes and streets. Men and lads were so eager to know the truth that the old Bibles were taken from the school into the mines. *[56]*

MINSTRELS

I was just sauntering out after tea when a couple of negro minstrels, with banjo and tambourine, came down the street, and struck up one of their liveliest songs. Instantly, and as if my magic, the narrow thoroughfare was thronged by a screeching swarm of children, who came running down all the steep alleys, and from nooks and doorways in the queerest places, followed by their fathers and mothers. I stepped up the slope and took a survey of the crowd as they stood grinning with delight at the black melodists. *[83]*

The Minstrels, roaming up and down the land singing bawdy ballads and furnishing music in taverns, at fairs, and at country wakes and feasts, were in very bad repute. But at the same time they were very popular. They commonly sold copies of the ballads which they sang, as Autolycus does, and like him they combined with their trade various kinds of roguery. *[5]*

But the queerest tale of all was that of the man who vanished. He was actually seen to vanish by three witnesses. One moment he was walking in the middle of a pasture, the next he wasn't there, and nobody ever saw him again. In those romantic days men often disappeared without notice and without trace. Above the village lies an area of allotments still called Canada, and when, after his day's work was over, a villager announced his intention of "going to Canada", he might equally have been on his way up to the allotments or across the Atlantic, and nobody worried, nobody cared. *[34]*

The youth of today has little interest and less respect for tradition, or for the holy places which gave solace and spiritual refreshment to others of quite recent times. Their attitude towards the past, its lore and traditions deny to them the power of seeing fairies disporting themselves, or restless spirits, and these same youths were denied the power of seeing witches in the form of hares, the Devil masquerading as a black fox, or the astrals of those whose bodies had hung on local gibbets. Only those with a long heritage of faith saw all these things. *[24]*

Throughout the ages there have been adventurous spirits who have gone forth into the great world beyond. Many of these returned, drawn, as it were by the lodestone of the everlasting hills, to die and be buried in their homeland; always they have left behind kinsfolk to maintain the unbroken succession, to marry and inter-marry amongst dalesfolk and to lead pretty much the same primitive life as did their forebears. *[24]*

MONSTERS

Eight or nine hundred years ago these valleys were choked up with forests. The Early British inhabitants were more inclined to the hill-tops than the hollows, if the innumerable indications of their settlements be any guide, and there is every reason for believing that many of the hollows in the folds of the heathery moorlands were rarely visited by man. Thus, the suggestion has been made that a few of the last representatives of now extinct monsters may have survived in these wild retreats, for how otherwise do we find persistent stories in these parts of Yorkshire, handed down we cannot tell how many centuries, of strange creatures described as 'worms'? In many places there are traditions of strange long-bodied dragons who were slain by various valiant men. *[41]*

MOORS

Greater than all the folk-lore and the history of these dales is their wonderful beauty of scenery, their purity of air, and the peaceful lives which their folks live. From the summit of Danby Beacon, a round-topped hill, encrusted with tumuli and earthworks, and eloquent of the long-dead prehistoric races who lived there, the eye falls on one of the widest prospects in Yorkshire, wherein there is scarce a spot that is not full of invitation to one weary of the life of cities to rest and let the affairs of the outer world go by unheeded for ever. *[28]*

At last I reached the Beacon, the highest point, houe-crowned, of all that part of the North Yorkshire moors, and the site of a beacon in Armada times, and on many subsequent occasions when it was thought or feared that invasion might ensue. Before me, looking westward, was moor, so that I could see nothing else. On either side was moor, with a valley on the left, and on the right, to the north, an expanse of cultivated land beyond. Across the valley just named there was moor again; and the valley was, it was clear, but a narrow one; while behind me, as I knew, lay three good miles of moor, and nothing but moor. It was a solitude, and a singularly lonely solitude. *[3]*

The mountains of Yorkshire's North Riding lie like a wall of brass, and indeed, in one sense, they are a wall of brass; for it is the opinion of the most skilful and knowing people in the country, that those mountains are full of inexhaustible mines of copper, and so rich, as not only to be called brass, copper being convertible into brass, but also to have a quantity of gold in them too. *[21]*

Its immense ranges of majestic hills; its far-extending moors, interspersed with fruitful valleys and picturesque dales; its

embowering groves of beech and pine, and wide-spreading forests of oak; its calm and peaceful rivers, clear and musical with the rush of innumerable mountain streams; the beauty or sublimity of the ocean, girding its romantic shores; the enormous chain of towering sea-cliffs against which in calm the billows leap with playful sportfulness, or in a tempest fiercely hurl their thunders, - all these combined present a majesty and loveliness in Nature, unsurpassed, we may venture to affirm, within the circuit of the British isles. *[55]*

When the atmosphere is heavily charged with moisture they are sapphire blue, deepening in intensity when rain clouds roll their black masses along the flat summits. Under these conditions only a grand succession of bold curves outlined against a gloomy sky can be discerned. Each great land-form - the cone of Roseberry Topping, the flat-topped Hasty Bank, the sugar-loafed shape of Cold Moor, the hog-backed sweep of Cranimoor (Cringle Moor) - looms up yet larger as day wanes and dark shadows fall athwart its crags and slopes. *[23]*

This moorland resembles nothing as much as a heaving sea, wave behind wave, swell merging into swell, hollow into hollow. Every moment you expect the crests to break into foam. Instead shafts of silvery sunlight shot down from behind the clouds to reveal the blended greys, greens and reds of a variegated vegetation. The light withdraws, and once more the moorland becomes sea - a strange immovable sea whose mountain-high waves have ceased to surge forward, as if arrested by God's command, so that puny man might wonder and admire, generation after generation. *[22]*

The curves and contours of the North York Moors are likened to backs, shoulders, arms, hips, breasts: these are the only metaphors that can suggest both the durability and the age-worn nature of the rounded

headlands, the saddles slung between low summits and the slope of moor slipping down into dale. It is not a youthful body but one marked with the imperfections of age: the moors are the earth's crust at its most ancient, millions of years in the making with nothing as raw or recent as a jagged ridge or a mountain peak. *[15]*

Despite the human influences in their making, the moors of Britain and Ireland have become wild places for numberless people, who leave behind the confines of their cities to enter another realm: of mazes made by troughs and hags, of wheatears flicking between stones, and of mica sand that causes stream-beds to flash in the sunlight with a silver fire. *[45]*

Many moods of the moors are, indeed, coy, and must be wooed, not by the speeding wayfarer, but by him who can linger and return. There are seasons when the ling is long, and difficult to make one's way through; and there are places on the moors that are boggy and dangerous; and, indeed, let the wayfarer be warned against certain spots which assume a hue of most delicious green, and seem to lengthen out in tempting pathways downward from the hills, for these are but the mossy vesture of wet swamps, in which one may easily sink, but whence it is far more difficult to escape. *[44]*

Such a district as this high crest of North-east Yorkshire, this towering wilderness of moors and crags stretching from the very sea coast into lands so solitary that only curlews know their intricacies, must have offered an easy and inviting shelter from pursuit. It is even yet a land in which a man might hide, as one may ascertain to his cost who wanders from the beaten road. *[54]*

MOTHS

Grass Emerald; Small Fan-footed Wave; Riband Wave; Red Twin-spot Carpet; Purple Bar; Small Phoenix; Dark Marbled Carpet; Green Carpet; July Highflyer; Small Rivulet; Clouded Border; Brimstone Moth; Peppered Moth; Lesser Swallow Prominent; Yellow-tail; Dingy Footman; Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing; True Lover's Knot; Antler Moth; Small Angle Shades; Dark Arches; Small Dotted Buff. [15]


Saltersgate.


THOS. Y. ALLISON
DANVERS ALLIN
MARGERY ALLISON

MOUNTAINS

Mountains I have no love for; they are accidents of nature thrown up in volcanic agony. But moors and fells are moulded by gentle forces, by rainwater and wind, and are human in their contours and proportions, inducing affection rather than awe. *[16]*

MURDER

There is no doubt that the self-murderer, or the doer of some atrocious deed of violence, murder, or lust, was buried by some lonely roadside, in a road-crossing, or by the wild woodside, and that the oak, or, oftener, thorn stake was driven through his breast; but not because of any intended scorn, or horror, or abhorrence. These were the characters who could not "rest in their graves." They had to wander, nay, often they were self-constrained to wander about the scenes of their crimes, or the places where their unhallowed carcases were deposited, unless, that is to say, they were prevented; and as they wanted the semblance, the simulacrum, the shadow-substance of their bodies for that purpose - otherwise there could have been no appearance - the body it was which was made secure by pinning it to the bottom of the grave by aid of the driven stake. *[3]*

Lonely and remote from the world as Eskdale is, it has notwithstanding been lately the scene of one of the most atrocious and diabolical murders recorded in the annals of crime. The unfortunate victim was Mrs. Robinson, who, with her husband, resided in a quaint old-fashioned farmhouse situated in a romantic portion of the vale. The brutal murderer escaped the fangs of justice only to perish soon after in the most miserable manner, and in the agonies of dissolution confessed his guilt. *[55]*

NIGHTFALL

It is not good to linger in such places after nightfall when the howes cast chill, ghostly shadows in the moonlight, and the silence seems to be full of sounds and presences that can be felt but cannot be heard or seen. In this place where the dead were laid to rest with strange rites for, maybe, a thousand years before Caesar came, the darkness wakes ancestral memories in the mind below the threshold of consciousness, and it is easier to wake them than to lull then back again to sleep. *[73]*

And then the darkness of coming night began to intensify the heavy gloom of the fog. But the brave, hardy little chaps did not give up or lose either heart or head in their trouble. They were lost, and they must spend the night on the open moor. Well then, they must make the best of it, and do what they could towards making the inevitable as bearable as they could. And so they looked out a hollow way worn by the feet of the sheep, and dry, and sheltered in a growth of tall ling; and then they pulled some more ling to hap themselves withal, and munching some of the gifts of food they had got at the different farms they had visited, they prepared to spend the night as comfortably as wet boots and stockings and damp clothes would permit. *[3]*

NORTH SEA

Perhaps the fulness of the North Sea's charm is never realised until one has seen it in winter or in the gales of autumn and early spring. Seen under these conditions it becomes a thing of gigantic life, a perpetual reminder to the folk who live on its shores of the mighty forces of nature which lie behind it. They themselves are not less interesting than the sea from which most of them gain a living. Successors of the hardy Norsemen who came across the ocean centuries ago, many of them retain the names of their ancestors, and in some places a man might fancy himself in Norway or Denmark rather than in England. Like all dwellers on the coast they are not too free of speech, and it is only by long coaxing and patient forbearance that one can get stories of the sea out of the weather-beaten old salts who hang about the wharves of Scarborough or Whitby, gazing seaward with that curious fixed stare which takes in even the shifting of a cloud. But if they will talk, and especially if they talk by the light of a winter fire, what time a howling storm is raging along the cliffs and headlands and over the wild waters at their feet, they will tell of marvellous things and mighty deeds which they have known and seen along the coast-line 'twixt Tees and Humber. *[28]*

All down the coast, the village folk live in fierce, detached shyness. Their Viking blood is still strong-running. They are a silent, dour people, busy among shore-wrack and sea-junk, nets, crab-pots, boats, tackle, and such. Their eyes are uncompromising. *[34]*

Many a time, with anxiety tugging at my heart, under a dirty sky full of rain, sleet, wrack, and tumult, and darkening to the four o'clock darkness of a December afternoon, I have watched from my sheltered vantage-point trawler after trawler, greasy smoke blowing away from their black-and-red-ringed smoke-stacks, leave the oily smoothness of

harbour to face the crashing seas and freezing spray of a north-easterly gale, watched them rise to the crests and disappear unto the troughs until they dwindled to mere specks, until drift and darkness swallowed them up. *[34]*

I was fortunate in the time, for a strong north wind was blowing, and the great waves, checked in their career, dashed headlong against the stony barrier, and broke into little mountains of foam, bursting up here and there in tall white intermittent jets as from a geyser; here one solid surge tumbling over another, mingling with rush and roar in a wide drift of spume; there flinging up gauzy whiffs of spray as if mermaids in frolic were tossing their veils. So mighty were the shocks at times as to inspire a feeling of insecurity in one who stood watching the magnificent spectacle. *[83]*

It is a wild scene, and wilder beyond the point, where the whole beach is strewn with broken lumps, and ledge succeeds to ledge, now high, now low, compelling you to many an up-and-down, stooping under a rude cornice, or scrambling over a slippery ridge. In places the cliff overhangs threateningly, or, receding, forms an alcove where you may sit and feast your eye with the wondrous commotion, and your ear with the thundering chorus of many waters.

PASTIMES

In Fryup School in the 1930s there was much fist fighting one to one - organised by the older boys who formed a ring round the pair. There was opposition to advancement in learning. A pupil who elected to go to the grammar school was ostracised. But if he passed the examination for entrance, he was considered a hero. *[63]*

It is true, the young people have learned to dance within the last twenty years or so, and dance with great enjoyment and quite proportionate vigour. It is equally true that the young women (rather remarkable always for their prevailing comeliness) have learned, like other young women in other places, to study the fashions of female dress. *[3]*

PEDLARS

Elderly travelling salesmen would trek onto these moors, even in the height of winter, to sell trinkets from bags and baskets. These were mendicants and old soldiers, and they often met their deaths on these inhospitable moorlands. There are stories of how sheepdogs, during the spring and summer after a particularly hard winter, would find the decaying bodies or bones of these men. Bodies were found lying near the streams or other isolated places where they had fallen, unable to reach the warmth and security of the Lettered Board or any other shelter. The weather had killed them. *[81]*

Tales of lost pedlars wander all around the Yorkshire dales, where for so many centuries every housewife was dependent on their coming, and every child watched through the dull days of winter for the playfellow who could crack a droll jest, tell a merry story, or sing a ballad with as much readiness as the strolling minstrels of older days. There is no smoke without fire; and when I hear so many tales of pedlars who vanished on the moors, I know that here, as elsewhere, human nature has been acting after its predatory kind. Sometimes the story speaks of a sudden gunshot, or of a few bones dug up, or found bleaching on the moor, years afterwards. *[54]*

PEOPLE

Moorland people, though they are eternally and viciously curious about the "concerns" of their neighbours, are slow to attempt any interference. They have a most wholesome dread of the law and its mysterious and never-ending sequences. There are, it is true, very rare occasions when the stand is still ridden to shame some prominent local individual or manifest hypocrite, who has shamefully used a woman in either single or married life. The influence of the country bully, quick to follow a threat by a blow, must not be under-rated. And as far as the outer and greater world is concerned the clannish feeling is still very strong. I was called once to a lonely and distant farm to see a fugitive from justice, who had been successfully hidden for a long time by his daughter, and was amazed that his concealment had not been given away. He was wanted in a notorious poaching case. *[9]*

I regret to say my moorland friends were very obstinate, very quarrelsome, and very irreconcilable in their quarrels. Hill men from the earliest times in all countries have been more quarrelsome and pugnacious than their lowland brothers. They are much more remote from the influence of civilisation, are stronger and hardier, and more primitive in their instincts. *[9]*

The typical North Riding countryman is a hard-working, clear-thinking man. He is keen at a bargain but is generous in his hospitality; he delights in his dogs and horses; he is fond of sport, healthy, long-lived, and is independent even to aggression. Shrewd and keen-witted he is, he has a voluminous folk-lore, and some strange notions still linger in the lonely farms, perhaps age-old traditions of "the little men" driven out by the Celts. *[82]*

Tall, large-boned, muscular persons; visage long, angular; complexion fair, or florid; eyes blue or gray; hair light, brown, or reddish. Such persons in all parts of the country form a considerable part of the population. In the North Riding, from the eastern coast to the western mountains, they are plentiful. *[57]*

Environment makes the moorsiders hardy, cautious, thrifty, stoical, and self-reliant. On the other hand, they are thereby rendered hard, suspicious, taciturn, quarrelsome, and implacable. When a man is his own chief companion, this solitude makes for strength of mind and happiness so long as all is well within, but should it be otherwise then it makes for the worst. *[9]*

PIGEONS

Early next morning, at a point about a hundred miles south, all the baskets out of the special van will be seen on a railway platform or in a siding arranged in tiers four high. By every group a man will be standing leaning his body up against the side of a tier. In each basket there is a side-flap with a fastening, and these fastenings have all been removed. Time! The word is given, all the men step aside from the baskets; down fall the side-flaps and out pour the pigeons, streaming into the sky, tearing the air as they make their first direction-finding wheel. *[78]*

A culture with a mythical status in the north-east, pigeon crees cluster like brightly painted Wild West shacks from Skinningrove to the Scotswood Road. A cross-channel race is a tense blue-sky sport of watch and wait for dedicated owners and the "toss" of thousands of pigeons is an awesome sight. In 1905, the volume of pigeon traffic on the railways from mining districts was heavy enough to begin running pigeon specials during the racing season. *[88]*

PIKE

The size attained by the pike in our islands has been the subject of a good deal of controversy, and according to one authority "more lies have been told about the pike than any other fish in the world." *[72]*

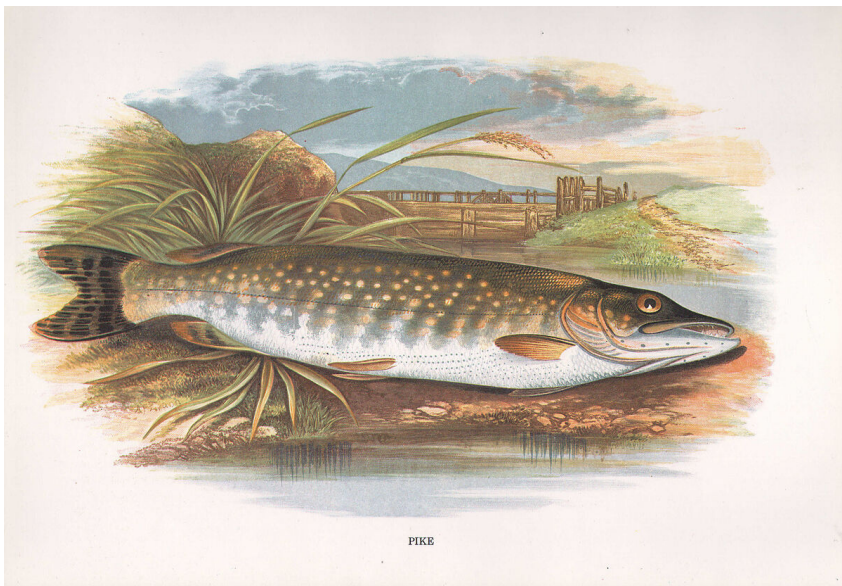
The pike leads a solitary life and often seems to select a pool or a stretch of quiet water which he regards as his domain for the season, and from which he never wanders far. On warm days in the summer he may often be seen lying motionless, basking at the top of the water and resembling a log of wood, or he may lurk within the shelter of a clump of lilies or a bed of reeds, from which concealment he may suddenly dash out to seize his prey. *[72]*

Sufficient has been said to indicate the voracity and ferocity of the pike, which when driven by the pangs of hunger will even attack man himself; anger and revenge also seem to influence him, for I have seen one spring from the ground and close his jaws on the arm of the angler who was about to take the hook from his mouth. *[72]*

POTATIONS

I knew men who rarely went home sober from either market, fair, or meeting, or who never missed their daily potations, and carried on so for so many years - two of them lived to be over eighty - that many notes of admiration were employed in speaking of their marvellous endurance. But many, sadly too many, came to grief in either (or both) body and substance, in consequence of their indulgences of this kind; and more than one I have known whom drink excited to such a degree that the lives of their wives and children were hardly safe on their return home drunk. *[3]*

Most excellent home-made wines were made by the clever housewives. These were blackberry, gooseberry, cowslip, rhubarb, colt's-foot, elderberry, and beetroot. Some had been kept for some years and were decidedly potent and very clear. A beverage frequently brewed too on those moorlands was species of mead called botchet, made from the moorland honey. It was much too sweet to be pleasant taking, and decidedly heady. *[9]*



PIKE

PRUDOM

Barry Prudom, the killer, was a psychopath. He hated the police. It was said that he planned to wipe out the Yorkshire police force. He had been a commando. He knew how to live off the land. “Do not approach strangers,” the police said in public warnings. They published Prudom’s picture - he was unshaven, jug-eared, rather wolf-like and dark. Have You Seen This Man? the posters said. Four hundred people reported that they had. Every day there were fresh sightings. No-one said his name. They said, “Haven’t they caught that bloke yet?” People were giddy and talkative, excited by the danger. It was a classic example of the mad killer on the loose - a form of public theatre. *[74]*

I even called him Sir. I said, excuse me Sir, out of the car. Nothing. He never even looked at me. I said, I don’t tell anybody twice. Out of the car, now. Then I saw the gun. I knew for a fact he was going for my head. He shot me across the nose. The young dog came out then. He shot him twice, which just gave me enough time to start and run. *[79]*

White, early 30s, approximately five feet eight inches tall, slim build, sallow complexion, thin face with high cheekbones and prominent eyes, short dark curly hair, clean-shaven. *[79]*

A man walked into my shop and bought a loaf, a can of pilchards and other food. He looked like an ordinary, mild-mannered man. He left the shop and a few seconds later I heard a shot. I ran outside and saw Sergeant Winter lying in the road. *[79]*

QUOITS

Quoits still figures in the programmes of a few local shows and sports. Once it was played often in the inn yards by enthusiasts night after night throughout the summer, except in hay-time. A set of quoits used to be kept on most farms or failing that the game was played with horseshoes. *[35]*

It will be a dull individual indeed whose interest does not quicken when he sees the heavy iron quoit curl through the air, to be followed by the robust clang of metal on metal and the eager cries of the quoiters and their supporters as they gather around the pin. *[47]*

RELIGION

The itinerant Methodist's first visit to any Yorkshire village usually ended in a visit to the nearest justice of the peace, or in an undignified retreat before rotten eggs and showers of stones; he was fortunate if he escaped with a sound skin and unbroken bones; it was rarely that he left with dry garments, for in that age of coarseness and brutality the ducking of an interloper in the squire's fishpond or the village pool was considered a high form of innocent diversion. Nevertheless (so impossible is it to kill the fervour of convinced men) the Methodists endured and prevailed, and folk who had scoffed and reviled began to learn that they had a message. A new spirit came over the land - the same spirit that had stolen into the hearts of men when, in the far-of mediaeval days, some brown-frocked friar, standing up in market-place or on village green, had lifted his crucifix, and asked those who gathered round to pause for one moment and reflect on what it meant. *[30]*

On the higher moorlands the illegitimate births were much below the average of a country district. When a moorland maid did get into trouble, there seemed to be a high sense of honour among the young moorland men, so that a marriage almost invariably followed. Moreover, moorland maids were not too plentiful, and housewives were consequently in demand. But as one descended to the lowlands, the number gradually increased to the normal average of the country. Many were distinctly attributable to the frequent religious revivals, and the midnight services which sometimes formed part of them in summer-time. One of the most popular preachers was a young woman who, in addition to her gift of eloquence, had considerable personal charms. All the young men were desperately in love with her, and followed her about to the different villages in turn, some being quite a long way off, and I heard she had many offers of marriage from them. *[9]*

Upon the rugged and engaging beauty of the hills, the dells, the waterfalls - theme of many a romance and many a song - we cannot linger. We are concerned for the moment about the fashioning of obtuse and unlovely characters into saints of God and heralds of salvation, accomplished there in a manner almost miraculous. *[56]*

The parish clerk reopened the grave of a married woman in order to take her wedding ring. He couldn't get it off so he amputated the finger. The corpse sat up and screamed. The woman had been buried whilst in a trance. She walked home to her shocked husband, who praised the parish-clerk for saving her, despite having sawn her finger off, giving him an annual web of linen (as he was a linen manufacturer) *[32]*

I have the world, the flesh, and the devil to fight against as long as I am in this world; its riches, pleasures, honours, and all its vanities, blessed be God, I have under my feet. The flesh, such as pride, anger, covetousness, self-love, love of the world, and the devil, by grace I find to be overcome with ease. We read in 1 John v. 18, that "*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not*." *[80]*

ROGUES

Rufflers, sturdy vagabonds who begged from the strong and robbed the weak.
Upright Men, vagabonds who were strong enough to be chiefs or magistrates among their fellows.
Rogues, ordinary vagabonds, weaker than Upright Men.
Wild Rogues, rogues born on the road, of vagabond parents.
Hookers or *Anglers*, thieves who stole clothing and other light articles by pulling them through an open window with a hooked stick.
Priggers or *Prancers*, horse thieves.
Abraham Men, pretended mad men.
Whip-jacks, vagabonds who pretended to be shipwrecked sailors.
Dommerers, sham deaf mutes.
Demanders for Glimmer, men or women begging for pretended losses by fire.
Bawdy Baskets, female pedlars.
Walking Morts, unmarried whores. *[5]*

ROWDYISM

That there may be a rowdyism among us still, it would be absurd to dispute; but, at least, it is limited rowdyism, and of a mitigated character. Time was, unquestionably, when such an assertion could not truthfully have been made. But that time had passed before I had ever heard of Danby. But there were men I had a personal acquaintance with soon after I came into residence, who were the last of an expiring class; men whose pastime it had been, if not whose object and desire, to provoke a row or a scuffle, and to fight it out then and there. One of these persons, a stout- built muscular man, even in his old age - he must have been turned of seventy - was described to me as literally the "hero of a hundred fights." Poor old William was quiet enough when and after I began to know him; but those who had known him in the elder days said he had, in the days of his youth and vigour, been the most turbulent of a turbulent group. Rows, scuffles, scrimmages had been the rule then, and William, with another still then living, was never out of them. Hardly-contested boxing-bouts, with a cruel amount of "punishment," were of continual occurrence, and truly William's scarcely lovely countenance looked as if it had been sorely battered. From all I could hear, the stranger whose devious footsteps brought him to Danby in those old days, was likely to experience something of the "Heave 'arf a brick at 'im" treatment recorded by George Stephenson as the customary welcome extended by north-country natives to unlucky explorers of the country wilds. *[3]*

RYEDALE

All this enchanting district merits a most leisurely exploration. There is a veritable network of lanes, steep, winding, and picturesque. There are glorious views from the highpoints and charming woods in the sheltered dells, where you will find carpets of bluebells, violets, primroses, and forget-me-nots, a perfect blaze of colour. This is district where I have frequently found the elusive bee-orchid; wild strawberries are quite common and so are wild daffodils; this garden of Yorkshire is a paradise for the botanist and naturalist, a district especially delightful in springtime. *[12]*

SCARBOROUGH

In full noon sunshine you would not be surprised to meet a sheik in a blue burnous riding a white Barbary stallion up one of the many hilly streets. The old fishing town at the back of the harbour which climbs the steep hill to the castle, its red roofs clustered thickly together and at all angles one to the other, has the look of a naturalized Kasba. The broad blue bay, edged with white foam, from which rise the hanging gardens of Scarborough, and the modern houses might be its French quarter. *[51]*

SKINNINGROVE

Skinningrove, a small village lying in a low deep creek of the sea, presents many charms to the admirer of the romantic and picturesque. The broad, level, shingly beach looking upon a vast expanse of waters, the lofty projecting precipes, the gay motion of vessels skimming their native deeps, the glorious diapason of winds and waves along the coast, arouse and elevate the soul with the loftiest and most sublime contemplations. *[55]*

We now approach Skinningrove - an astonishing place with a vast iron and steel works along the cliff top, a rather sinister scene which I find strangely fascinating. The very narrow road descends on to the beach by a series of very steep hairpin bends. This strange place has still stranger legends. *[12]*

Skinningrove is a very small, very insular village which you can't see from the main road. It's fiercely independent, fiercely protective and it's very hostile to strangers. The men of Skinningrove believe that the sea in front of them belongs to them. Other people say of Skinningrove, 'oh, Skinningrove - that's where they eat their babies'. It is a pretty tough place, and it is a pretty fantastic place because people are obsessed with the sea. *[43]*

Skinningrove has railway-sidings and branch-lines running down to it, and on the hill above the cottages stands a cluster of blast-furnaces. In the daylight they are merely ugly, but at night they form a strange silhouette of steel cylinders and connecting girders against a blue-black sky, with silent masses of flame leaping into the heavens. *[40]*

It was in the year 1585 - for the event is most carefully recorded in a manuscript of the period - that some fishermen of Skinningrove caught a Sea Man. This was such an astounding fact to record that the writer of the old manuscript explains that 'old men that would be loath to have their credyt crakt by a tale of the stale date, report confidently that… a sea-man was taken by the fishers.' They took him up to an old disused house, and kept him there for many weeks, feeding him on raw fish, because he persistently refused the other sorts of food offered him. To the people who flocked from far and near to visit him he was very courteous, and he seems to have been particularly pleased with any 'fayre maydes' who visited him, for he would gaze at them with a very earnest countenance, 'as if his phlegmaticke breaste had been touched with a sparke of love.' The Sea Man was so well behaved that the fisher-folk began to feel sufficiently sure of his desire to live with them to cease to keep watch on his movements. 'One day,' we are told, 'he prively stoale out of Doores, and ere he coulde be overtaken recovered the sea, whereinto he plunged himself; yet as one that woulde not unmanerly depart without taking of his leave, from the mydle upwardes he raysed his shoulders often above the waves, and makinge signes of acknowledgeing his good entertainment to such as beheld him on the shore, as they interpreted yt; - after a pretty while he dived downe and appeared no more.' *[77]*

SLEDDALE

The vagaries of the weather, the bleakness of the moorland, the tardy charity of the soil and the isolation of many hill farms breed a combination of stern human qualities rarely found outside the covers of serious fiction. Typical of these sturdy dales farmers is the tenant of the solitary farmhouse in Sleddale, Fred Proud. A magnificent figure of a man, almost 17 stone of hard bone and muscle, Fred is a war scarred veteran of the years 1914-1918. His big frame has been riddled with shrapnel, he has not yet rid himself of the effects of a poisoned system, but his dogged Yorkshire determination to face life boldly remains unaffected. *[60]*

SMUGGLERS

The dangerous character of the coast, intersected with numerous ravines and wooded dells, facilitated the designs of the smugglers, and disposal of their stock. In later times however, they were frequently interrupted, and in many cases severely handled in their rude encounters with the well-armed revenue-officers. The stratagems used by the smugglers for the concealment of their goods were endless; but the most singular was that of a clerk in a small parish near the coast, who for many years stored his kegs in the church-steeple, and all efforts to discover his treasures proved futile. Moderate prices were asked for the articles, and respectable persons in the neighbourhood made no scruple of purchasing; consequently the trade continued for a long period to a great extent. Those halcyon days for the smaller villages are now almost at an end, although sometimes a cargo continues to be landed, in spite of the most vigilant efforts of the coast-guard. *[55]*

pickets to disperse.

FUGITIVE IN FOREST IS NAMED

Barry Peter Prudom

DETECTIVES today named the man they want to question in connection with the shooting of a police dog handler in Dalby Forest.

He is Barry Peter Prudom, otherwise known as Barry Peter Edwards, aged 37, from Leeds.

His name is not being linked specifically with the deaths of PC David Haigh near Harrogate and of Mr George Luckett at Girton, Notts.

Det Supt John Charlton, deputy head of North Yorkshire CID, said of Prudom: "This man may be in possession of a firearm, and the police consider him to be dangerous.

"Members of the public having any knowledge of his whereabouts should immediately inform the police.

They must not, under any circumstances, approach him.

Warrant

Det Supt Charlton said he wanted to interview Prudom in connection with an incident last Thursday, when seven shots

and described him as being 5ft 9in tall, with dark brown hair and a tanned complexion.

He said that in the past Prudom was known to have a beard. He also had tattoos on his forearms.

He is recently known to have a fawn coloured jacket or car coat, and also, possibly, a khaki combat jacket, blue jeans and brown shoes.

Det Supt Charlton appealed to Prudom to contact him at Harrogate police station (telephone number 0423 504891). "I will speak to him at any time, if only to eliminate him from the inquiry," he said.

Det Supt Charlton said Prudom could be heading anywhere, and that every force in the country was involved in the search.

He declined to say whether there was any connection between the inquiry and reports that armed police yesterday surrounded a house in Leeds.

Meanwhile, the hunt in Dalby Forest continued today, but the size of the search was scaled down.

THE Royal baby has been named William Arthur Philip Louis.

He will be known as Prince William of Wales, a Buckingham Palace spokesman announced today.

The baby son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who is second in line to the Throne, was born last Monday in St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

The Palace was quick to forestall any link being made with King William III — the William of Orange still revered as the hero "King Billy" by Ulster Protestants.

Godparents

"The baby will be known as Prince William, and the name won't be [illegible] in any way," said the spokesman.

The six [illegible] will be the King of the Hellenes, Lord Romsey, Sir Laurens Van Der Post, Princess Alexandra, the Duchess of Westminster and Lady Susan Hussey.

The spokesman said he had no information on why the names William and Arthur were chosen by the Prince and Princess.

But Arthur is one of Prince Charles's own names — he is Prince Charles Philip Arthur George.

Philip is the name of Prince Charles's father too, and Louis that of his much-loved uncle, the late Lord Mountbatten, who was murdered by an IRA terrorist bomb.

Close link

Weekend bookmakers odds had put William at 7-2 and Arthur 6-1. George, not among the names chosen, had been favourite at evens.

The last King William was William IV (1765-1837) whose nicknames were "the Sailor King" and "Silly Billy." He was the third son of George III and his successor was his niece, Victoria.

Mr Patrick Montague-Smith, former editor of Debretts, said: "It is one of the greatest historical names, and there is a close link with the present royal family through Prince William of Gloucester, who was killed in an air crash a few years ago.

"It would be possible for the boy to choose one of his other names for the accession, but it

FLASHBACK: The Princess of Wales leaving hospital with her baby last week.

is not likely. He could grow up as Prince Arthur, but they would normally choose the first name unless there was an overriding reason.

"William is not a surprising choice. It was among the names mentioned by many people."

William comes second only to James in this year's analysis of boy's births, announced in The Times.

And there is a connection on the Princess of Wales's side of the family — her great-grandfather was Colonel William Smith Gill.

Turn to Page 7

Bomb damages RC church

A bomb exploded in a Roman Catholic church today and responsibility for it was claimed by the newly-formed Loyalist Prisoners Action Group in a telephone call to Belfast's commercial radio station, Downtown.

The bomb wrecked the boiler house of the Church of the Resurrection, in Cavehill Road, Belfast. The caller, who used a code word, said the bomb was in support of [illegible] Somerville, who has been on hunger strike in the Maze Prison for a month, demanding special category status.

Murder charge

STAITHES

A scene more impressive could scarcely be imagined: the tall rocks shrouded with luminous mists; the pale glimmering radiance of the murmuring billows; the white rustling sails gleaming in the distance; the cottages of the weary fishermen bathed in the lovely light of the moon! Early in the morning we again strolled forth on the rocky beach. The breezes with gentle murmur sounded melodiously as an Aeolian harp; the lovely sea-birds hovered high in the air, or dropped, with all their snowy plumage, amidst the envious foam; whilst the sea, calm and placid almost as a sleeping child, rustled dreamily against the huge barriers of cliffs, as if lamenting the fury and desolation of the past. *[55]*

In this deep gully, hidden from land and sea, one seems to be worlds away from ordinary English life. Even the people are picturesque; the women and little girls in pink or lilac sunbonnets and gay aprons, and the men and boys in dark blue knitted jerseys. Every group of children, every ancient mariner, every pretty girl in a doorway, is as decorative as a peasant in the chorus of an operetta. *[70]*

It is, according to some who have known Staithes for a long while, less than fifty years ago that the fisher-folk were hostile to a stranger on very small provocation, and only the entirely inoffensive could expect to sojourn in the village without being a target for stones. *[41]*

ST MARK'S EVE

Those who are curious to know about the death of their fellow-parishioners must keep watch in the church-porch on St. Mark's Eve for an hour on each side of midnight for three successive years. On the third year they will see the forms of those doomed to die within the twelvemonth passing one by one into the church. If the watcher fall asleep during his vigil he will die himself during the year. *[37]*

An old woman who lived in Fryup, and whose chief celebrity depended upon the allegation that she kept the "Mark's e'en watch," and was able in consequence to foreshow the deaths of the coming year, one St. Mark's day, when she was questioned on the subject after her vigil, announced her own death as among the foredoomed ones, and assigned her reason for saying so. "And," she added, "when I dee, for dee I s'all, mind ye carry me to my grave by t'church-road, and not all the way round by t' au'd castle and Ainthrop. And mind ye, if ye de'ant, I'll come again." *[3]*

Should you have no dream that night, you will be single and miserable all your life. If you dream of thunder and lightning, your life will be one of great difficulty and sorrow. *[77]*

STORMS

The rain had ceased and the narrow valley was deserted. I paused a moment when I reached the bottom, watching how the mill leat rushed out clear and sparkling from beneath the wet blossoms of a hawthorn. A rather wild brown light fell from the thunderous sky. The low church tower looked wan and shadowy. The sheep upon the heights were bleating still. The place had a strange aspect of solitude, of aloofness from the world, which made its beauty rather eerie, so that when the lightning began to play once more upon the hilltops, and an occasional sharp crack of thunder rattled round the crags, the sense of awe which it brought with it was but in keeping with all the impressions of that lonely spot, and I climbed up the steep and weary hill with a consciousness of pleasure in the keener air which chased away the thick fancies begotten in the valley bottom. *[54]*

The nine weeks' storm of 1895 was of course the record storm. Till the great thaw came, the moorlands were covered deep with snow, which, owing to continuous frost and slight mid-day thaws, became firmly frozen over on the surface, so that one could walk without difficulty straight across country over the buried stone walls. Many houses were deep in drifts, and in one homestead the household were roused from their slumbers by hearing the sheep on the roof. The roads were continually opened by an army of farmers, only to be blocked again by recurring blizzards. The moorland sheep were brought to the lowlands, where also flocked the moorcock and all moorland birds. *[9]*

Storm clouds gathered; thunder crashed in the dale and torrential rain poured from the dense black clouds. In minutes, the dale tracks were awash with thick brown floodwater which poured from the hills. Cottages and farms were flooded, tracks were flowing like rivers and

the carcasses of drowned livestock like poultry and lambs were washed into the newly-formed streams and carried away. *[9]*

So the storm lasted until dusk. But then a small red spot came and sat upon the summit of one of the inky hills, sole in the waste of angry sky, and by and bye it spread its wings like a crimson bird, and then it was a bar of flame, and then a river of orange and copper flowing all along the ridge, and next a wide gap of gold and crimson in the torn sky, piercing the mists with shafts of radiant light. And then the sun sank, and the crimson paled, and the hilltops swam in a sea of watery green and opal. *[54]*

SWALEDALE

It is impossible to say of the surrounding country that it is picturesque or charming - it is rather wild, savage, awful in its vast extent, and terrible in its solitudes. Were it not for the houses of Reeth and Grinton lying at the hill's base, and for the signs of human life which show themselves here and there along the valley far below, one might well imagine that all this wild land had lain desolate since the days when the early Britons honeycombed its fell-sides for lead. *[27]*

It is surely the nature of their surroundings that breeds men like this, surely the great, silent hills, awful in their loneliness, the long stretches of solitary moorland, the music of the becks and gills which provides the steadfastness which is the most noticeable feature of the dalesman's character. But the influences of the land from whence the Swale springs cannot be described - to gain but a slight understanding of it a man needs wander for long days through its valleys and across its moors, and must climb its highest points, there to marvel at the vastness of what is, after all, but the corner of a county. *[27]*

Keld is embosomed on the breast of desolation: “A land where no man comes / Nor hath come since the making of the world”. In spots like this we are able to realise - if it still be possible anywhere in England - something of the old charm and isolation of the pastoral life of Wordsworth’s “Michael”. The place is approached by savage mountain walks from two directions. *[49]*

SUNSETS

It is loveliest here just before darkness comes, when shapes are softened in the evening light, and the moor seems to draw the road back to itself in sleep; but local people advise you not to stay too long on the moor at this time, for there are ghosts of more than Romans on it. Hob comes out to haunt the becks and bogs in a wraith of mist, and utters a peculiar cry which is not lucky for men to hear. *[58]*

All that was everyday, commonplace, dull, was refined, all that was worn and faded was renewed and glorified; and not a thing left to remind us of the old, the worn, the faded, or the unbeautiful. At my feet and before me was, as it were, a carpet, hundred-piled, of the richest brown, such shades as I had never seen nor imagined; the greens of the valleys were become the greens - and only there seen - of the sky in a gorgeous sunset; the fields and sheets of bracken were spaces of "old gold" and burnished gold, and all the great space behind was in vast expanses of richest purple gorgeous with heaven's own perfect bloom. *[3]*

I can state precisely the moment when the special beauty and strength of the moors first struck deeply home to me. It came as I travelled westwards one November evening in 1967 after a visit to Robin Hood's Bay for my work. The dark mass of the moors rolled away to merge into a tremendous November sunset. Alone in my car I might have been alone on a planet of moor. In my experience only the moors, among many magnificent kinds of countryside, afford so strong a sense of infinity, which it does us all good to be reminded of from time to time. *[47]*

SUPERSTITIONS

A weasel crossing your path is most unlucky; it speaks of treachery. This evil omen may be counteracted by the performance of a very mean trick: drop a coin where you saw the weasel cross, and the evil which was yours by right, will cling to those who are unlucky enough to find it. If there is a tramp behind you, when you see a coin lying, leave it for him; he won't mind about the ill-luck. *[10]*

The existence of so much superstition is a proof that the moral character of the inhabitants is not the most eminent; and too many additional proofs might easily be advanced: yet it is pleasing to observe, that the district is much improved within the last 30 or 40 years. Many gross superstitions have become obsolete, and others yet retained are practiced only for diversion. Many villages and dales that were the abodes of ignorance and irreligion, abound with pious and worthy characters. *[70]*

TEESDALE

It is a bleak, exhilarating road, swept by the westerly winds and bordered by the moorlands of Lune Forest, but there is a contrasting world hidden away in the valley bottom where the Lune runs, deeply set among its fringing trees. A few few farm-houses sheltered by trees and steeply-rising banks are tucked away at intervals, but human activity is too slight to interfere with the bird-life of the river and its woodlands. *[61]*

The miners and quarrymen live in the hard, forthright villages of the upper dale. They owe much to their setting, for in themselves they contribute little to the attributes which make for charm. *[61]*

The hills are marked with spoil heaps, drifts, adits, old mine shops and engine houses. No miners live there now, but sturdy ponies, the legacy from that era, still roam. They graze amongst the mat grass tussocks on the bents and fescues which have grown there since before Roman times. *[7]*

A thousand feet above sea level and taking in some of England's most forbidding terrain, it was an upland place far from a world she tended to ignore. "The beauty - to me there's nowhere like it, never will be," she said. "If there's a funny old person in years to come, a ghost walking up and down here, it'll be me. A big part of me, wherever I am, will be left here. That's me. There's nowhere else." *[6]*

TRAMPS

What is the beginning of tramping? Digging thru garbage? Smelly rooms with liquor store signs haunting the windows all night? What lines enclose or remove tramphood? Is it a figure of speech to one's own condition, used to describe other than yourself? Is it a state of mind or body? Is it a style of walking? Does the idea of it hit you suddenly at a particular age? *[87]*

Tramping is to walking what poetry is to prose. It is walking, if you like, in an intenser air. Breasting a hill on boisterous days; the fun of being swept off one's feet and being hurled forward over open moor… the beauty of easy rhythmical movement, mile after mile… the sudden sight and smell of the sea… tramping is an active delight, and every man who tramps will find his own crock of gold. *[13]*

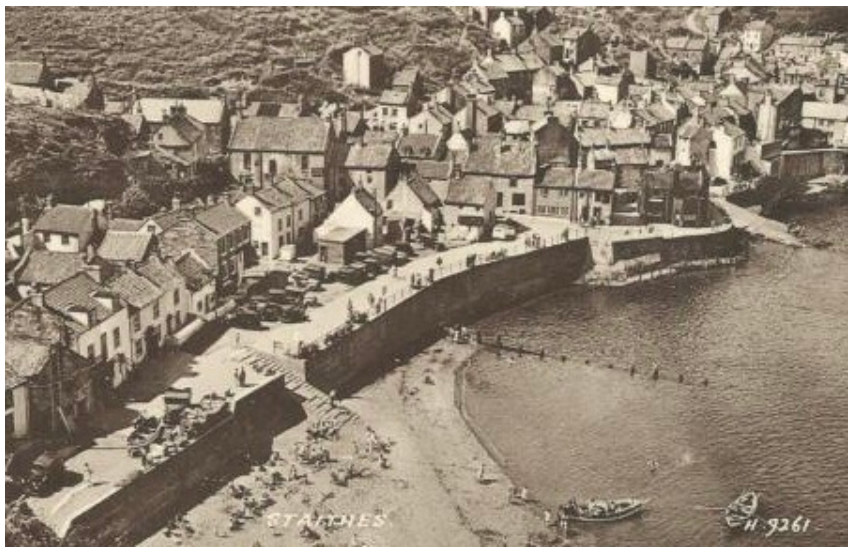
Much beer and blood began to flow in the street on Saturday nights and Sundays. Drunken brawls, revellings and revilings, drink-sodden navvies sprawling in the gutter, tramps sleeping in barns, tramps threatening housewives for a crust, and tramps massaging their stinking feet at the village drinking trough… Never since the time of the Danes had our village suffered such an invasion. *[38]*

TRIPSDALE

The scene before us is wild and grand. Large lichen-covered boulders, rolled down centuries ago, have their summits and sides partly covered with heather, in full bloom. Not a blade of grass is to be seen in the valley, as the bracken, heather and bilberries carpet it o'er. *[36]*

Professor Ekwall suggests that the first element may be connected with OE *pripel* 'instrument of torture,' which has yielded dial. *thripple* 'movable framework fitted on a cart.' In that case we have a genitival compound and the meaning of the whole name would be 'valley marked by a *pripel*,' whatever the exact sense of the word in this context may be. *[67]*

The place-name Tripsdale means 'rack valley' and derives from threpel - a gruesome wooden contraption upon which the body of a convicted man was fixed, prior to execution. *[84]*


STAITHES
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VALLEYS

The wanderer in the glen - and there are many paths through its woods - may hear the beck rolling over its stony bed, as he goes forward mid the trees and by gray scars, whereon ivy and lichens cling; and when the sun shines athwart the trembling leaves in the spring-time, they will gleam like living gold against the dark background of the further unsunned hill. *[44]*

The barrenness of the mountain valley is gradually exchanged for the plenty of the plain. Each dale has its own ruined abbey; its own grim castle; its own little group of waterfalls - if we credit Wordsworth, its own little patch of sky; its own little lot of stars. Each dale in itself is a microcosm - a little world complete in itself; yet severed by ridges of impracticable moor from the next little world, its neighbour. *[49]*

I seemed to live in a basin, wide and shallow like the milkpans in the dairy; but the even bed of it was checkered with pastures and cornfields, and the rims were the soft blues and purples of the moorlands. This basin was my world, and I had no inkling of any larger world, for no strangers came to us out of it, and we never went into it. *[16]*

WEDDINGS

There is certainly less of the exuberant festivity on the occasion of a wedding than there used to be - festivity which so continually degenerated into downright drunkenness and debauchery - and the people generally have learnt to respect decency of expression and conduct. In the old days a spade was a spade, and there was no affectation of reticence about naming it. *[3]*

I only wish these people had more sense of honour and chivalry and that the women had some notion of virtue. There is rarely a proper marriage here and it is perfectly disgusting. *[25]*

The sun may "come forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoice as a giant to run his course," but, of a surety, this Dales country of ours with its mighty moorbanks, when draped and veiled in the marvellous garments of pure, undriven snow, may be the image of the bride ready to respond to his first smiles in the coming morning. *[3]*

WENSLEYDALE

On the side of the county next to Lancashire is such a dreary waste and horrid, silent wilderness amongst the mountains, that certain little rivulets that creep here are called by the neighbourhood 'Hell-becks', rivers or streams of hell, and especially that at the head of the Ure, which runs under a bridge of a single rock in so deep a channel as to strike beholders with terror. In this part the goats, deer, and stags of extraordinary size, with branching horns, find a secure retreat. *[27]*

It is a wild, solitary land, with great fells rising above the sparsely wooded valleys and great ravines dividing mountain from mountain. But wild and lonely as it is, it is not without its charm and its association. It is full of beauty indeed, to those who love great stretches of hilly country across which the shadows may come and go on bright, sunlit days. From its high places the traveller may look forth across vast prospects of hill and dale and on the lonely farmsteads and cottages where the dalesmen live out of the world. *[27]*

Wensleydale men are not usually tall, loose-limbed and wiry. They are broad-shouldered, dour, strong, and not at all given to exhibitionism. The womenfolk are often dumpy. Wensleydale men are not much given to the townsman's conception of sport. They have shotguns but no football boots or hockey sticks, and their wives are not crazy on dancing. *[34]*

Near the waterfall there is a gorge with convex sides, and the stranger is surprised to find at the bottom of it a large bandstand in a partial state of decay. This was built in the 'eighties of the last century when band-contests were at the height of their fashion, and the gorge was said to have perfect acoustics. At one of those gatherings the famous

French tight-rope walker Blondin appeared, had his line stretched across the gorge over the heads of bandsmen and spectators, and there in mid-air cooked an omelette. *[78]*

Here up among the gloomy purple moors, like mighty billows rolling on the ocean, ever and anon the mists creep and hide the mountain crest, and curl around the lonely traveller, like an apparition of night, or a funeral shroud of death. At other times the scene is strangely enchanting, when waves of sunlight tinge the heathery hills with gold and purple. *[11]*

Scoresby put his trust in exceptionally heavy ballast. Once the ship was moving, the ballast tended to impel the vessel forward under her own momentum. It also helped Scoresby's ship to sail more successfully against the wind than any other vessel. Rival skippers feared that heavy ballast would worsen any collision with the ice. Their timidity meant that on one occasion Scoresby caught fourteen whales before his fellow whalers arrived. In 1806 he had enough time to pursue the whales to within 510 miles of the North Pole, the furthest point ever reached by a whaling ship. *[47]*

More men waded out from the harbour-head, lunging and thrusting with their lances as the stricken whales sheered by. Men and beasts seemed inextricably confused in the bloody, quaking turmoil of the sea. The spear-thrusts sank deep, viciously biting into blubber and flesh. Within a few minutes of the start of the kill the harbour was a scene of gory madness and carnage, and the strong smell of blood was in the air. *[86]*

The land at this time surveyed and projected (including fifteen miles of coast to the southward and twenty-five to the northward) is mountainous, dark, and sterile in the extreme. Nothing can be conceived more rugged than it is; yet nothing that I have ever seen equals it in bold grandeur, and interesting character. There is nothing in it that is tame, smooth, or insignificant. *[64]*

They saw a fine inlet, but did not enter it, for fear of the cannibals, which are said to live in that place, and of which all Greenlanders have a dread from former times. In the opinion of Kojake they became cannibals at first out of necessity, because once, in a great famine in

winter, they had nothing but human flesh to eat; and, as they relished it, they had now inured themselves to this strange and unnatural food. "They do not like to slaughter middle aged people, even in a time of dearth, but only old people and forsaken orphans; and they will preferably spare their dogs at such a time, because of their usefulness, and slay some unnecessary person, in their stead." *[64]*

WHEATEARS

The wheatear is essentially an inhabitant of the wilds, ascending to the summits of the highest hill. It is the object of curious superstitious ideas, which may originate from its habit of frequenting old churchyards, ruins and sepulchral cairns. Its presence is considered in some localities to foretell the death of the spectator; in others the evil fortune is only considered likely to ensue if the bird be first seen on a stone; but should its appearance be first observed whilst sitting on turf or grass, good luck may be expected. *[52]*

When they fly they flash the white rump that gave them their name, a bowdlerised form of 'white-arse'; their soft sun-bleached shades of pink and buff are topped with a black bandit's mask. Weighing just two tablespoons of sugar, the wheatear makes one of the longest journeys of any small bird, crossing ocean, ice and desert from sub-Saharan Africa. *[79]*

They have an abundance of wildfowl such as pheasant, partridge, woodcock, snipe, quails, also duck and mallard. Particularly they have a bird called a wheatear or alternatively, the English Ortolan, the most delicious taste that can be imagined for a creature of one mouthful, for 'tis little more. *[21]*

WHITBY

Heavy waves, overlapping one another in their fruitless bombardment of the smooth shelving sand, are filling the air with a ceaseless thunder. The sun, shining from a sky of burnished gold, throws into silhouette the twin lighthouses at the entrance to Whitby Harbour, and turns the foaming wave-tops into a dazzling white, accentuated by the long shadows of the early day. Away to the north-west is Sandsend Ness, a bold headland full of purple and blue shadows, and straight out to sea, across the white-capped waves, are two tramp steamers, making, no doubt, for South Shields or some port where a cargo of coal can be picked up. They are plunging heavily, and every moment their bows seem to go down too far to recover. *[41]*

They land their crabs and their blue-black lobsters and their salmon. Women, with shawls over their heads and baskets over their arms, bargain for the fish. Here and there is a slim sturdy blonde beauty, whose hair has never known scissors, and who, I am willing to bet, has never smoked a cigarette in her life. Beside her stand old toothless women with the kindest eyes set in a million fine wrinkles. *[51]*

In summer the harbour would be crowded with Scotch, and East Anglian, and Cornish herring boats, their brown sails unfurled and hanging limp from their masts to dry, their nets draped over the quay-side rails, their crews standing about the fish market, speaking what was for the local fishermen, and for me, an almost foreign tongue. All these men wore differently patterned guernseys, according to the ports they hailed from. Some wore hard-felted sou'westers, others Tam-o'-Shanters, and brightly coloured scarves. And many of the older men had gold rings in their ears and long hair, so that to me they looked like pirates. *[76]*

Looking on to the harbour, the town, veiled in smoke, chiefly caused by herring-kippering, reaches for some distance; green hills show above the forest of masts in the inner harbour closed by the bridge; far away are the boundless moors which once made Whitby an almost inaccessible town, scarcely to be reached except by sea. *[46]*

WINTER

Yes, I have seen some winter weather in this out-of-the-way place. I have seen the snow gathered in drifts of fifteen, eighteen, twenty feet in thickness; I have seen it gathering, piling itself up in fantastic wreaths, sometimes busy only in accumulating substance and solidity, like a yeoman of the elder days, and gathering at the rate of six feet or seven feet in thickness in from twelve hours to twenty-four. *[3]*

In winter, moorland bird life falls to a very low ebb. Except for the presence of an occasional grey-backed crow and the ever present grouse, no birds are to be seen. With the return of spring the marsh birds revisit their breeding haunts and enliven the bleak uplands with their cheerful notes throughout the summer. Cuckoos will be heard calling over moor and dale; and when evening approaches the "churr" of the ghostly nightjar resounds over the wild moorlands. All leave towards the autumn, when, however, blackbirds and thrushes quit the valleys to feed on the bilberries and impart a flickering touch of avian life to the moors before the desolation of winter. *[23]*

This is grim, fierce country when the wind lashes across it or mist rolls over and accentuates its vastness, cruel when the sun blazes and the only shade is a small round sheep-fold, but it is always exhilarating. Cold grey days, bringing mystery to the dark ravines and hollows, and exaggerating the bulk and solidity of the hills, suit it best. *[58]*

WISE MEN

Imposters who feed and live on the superstitions of the lower orders are still to be found in Yorkshire. These are called Wise Men, and are believed to possess the most extraordinary power in remedying all diseases incidental to the brute creation, as well as the human race; to discover lost or stolen property, and to foretell future events. *[3]*

The Wise Man was seated in his consulting room, dressed in some sort of long robe or gown, girdled round him with a noticeable girdle, and with a strange-looking head-covering on. There were some of the accustomed paraphernalia of the character assumed and its pretensions - a skull, a globe, some mysterious-looking preparations, dried herbs, etc. etc. *[3]*

WITCHES

I have no doubt at all of the very real and the very deep-seated existence of a belief in the actuality and the power of the witch. Nay, I make no doubt whatever that the witch herself, in multitudes if instances, believed in her own power quite as firmly as any of those who had learned to look upon her with a dread almost reminding one of the African dread of fetish. Fifty years ago the whole atmosphere of the folklore firmament in this district was so surcharged with the being and the works of the witch, that one seemed able to trace her presence and her activity in almost every nook and corner of the neighbourhood. *[3]*

Among the other witches are Awd Kathy of Pieburn, Awd Nan Scaife who used a magic cube, Sally Craggs who could change into a cat, Esther Mudd who used the evil eye, Emma Todd who was well versed in the black arts, Nancy Nairs who used a crystal, Peggy Devell who used a magic book, Awd Jennie who terrified local people with her spells and incantations, and Awd Mally who could turn into a hare. *[81]*

There are lonely farms in Farndale, and parts of the dale are so little frequented that you can readily appreciate the many strange legends and folklore of the district. Here the elfmen hold sway and the district is alive with hobgoblins, witches, bewitched cattle, and goblin-haunted mounds. *[12]*

WOLVES

The wolves were very numerous and very fierce and dangerous. And you can think for yourselves how, in the dreary winter time when the snow lay all about, in many places even yards deep, and quite commonly two or three feet thick, when food was hard to get, they must have been very savage and bold in their terrible hunger. And these deep valleys, full of trees and jungle and swamps, as they were then, would just be the almost inaccessible lurking places to suit them. *[4]*

That day I looked high and low for the terrible wolf pit above Fryup, but there was nothing: just the sunlight coming and going over the purple moors, the honeyed scent of the heather flowers that were coming out, the sound of curlews and below, the lush, tumbling landscape of Fryup Dale. I had the disturbing sense that the place was fobbing me off with beauty and waiting for me to leave. *[19]*

Below Danby, the place of the Danes, lies Wolf Pit Slacks, a hummocky waste as wild as any in the Riding. Here, perhaps, they slew the last of the gaunt grey killers that roamed the moors. Even up to a hundred years ago a few families lived in hovels that cannot have been much worse in the days of Norman serfdom. The floors were of clay; the doors about five feet high led into gloomy cells under a yard-thick roof of thatch. Whole families cooked their food, ate it and slept in one room whilst in the other, divided off only by a low partition, they kept their calves and a flock of hens. *[39]*

WOMEN

Though the moorlanders were jealous enough about their sheep and stock rights, and quarrelled incessantly about them, they never seemed to be jealous of their women folk. There were alien children everywhere, and everybody knew who their fathers were except the children themselves. I was repeatedly asked by the mothers whom these children resembled, and they were evidently very proud to enlighten me. *[9]*

The women were no less heroical than the men; they had an invincible detestation of cowardice; they accompanied their husbands to the field of battle, partaking of all their perils, urging them onwards with the most inspiriting appeals; and when repulsed, their death was as glorious as their martial spirit was undaunted. *[55]*

If your rural women may now whistle a little more, and are expected to work a little less hard in the fields and amongst the stock than their mothers, the emancipating evolution of the town has not yet reached them in its fullness. I am inclined to think they are happier, more contented and certainly more purposeful and useful because of this fact. If they do not enjoy "the company" at the inn, they have far more opportunities for social intercourse than their mothers had, for they have their Women's Institutes, their more frequent visits to town, and the round of local whist drives and other "do's." *[25]*

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