Record of life of

HENRY BODDINGTON

Born 1813
Died 1886

The Record of an Unimportant Life

Set down at the request of my children: Henry Boddington[1]

I was born on the 18th of December, 1813 at Thame, a market town in Oxfordshire. My father occupied the water-mill there, being by trade a miller. To that trade he annexed the business of corn dealer and farmer. (All the children were born in the cottage adjoining the mill). He occupied and owned the windmill in Thame fields and was also the tenant of the small farm.

My father was a man of more than ordinary intelligence and was a great Bible student. As a concordance was unknown to most people he was often appealed to for the situation of certain texts and meaning of such passages as seem to present a difficulty to the understandings of less intelligent people than himself. My father was in his Creed a most decided follower of John Calvin.

His belief in the doctrines of Calvin was greatly fostered by a firm friendship he held with the Rev. Thomas Scott. Mr. Scott was the rector of Aston Sanforth. The church is of the smallest accommodation. The rector had a large following of enthusiastic friends and a tent in summer time was set up at an open window of the church in which those who could not find room in the church stood or sat and listened to the service. My remembrance of the Rev. Thomas Scott is most distinct. He was the author of a voluminous commentary commonly called 'Scott's Bible' in six quartos at the period of my youth much read but now fallen into neglect. It is a most laborious monument to the patience of Mr. Scott and may well be looked upon with some wonder in the present day. My recollection of Mr. Scott is most distinct. He was not very old but was weakly and infirm. He used to lean over his cushion and preach in the most colloquial style, very quiet in manner and delivery but tremendous in his denunciations - quite beyond anything that could be listened to now. How thoughtless of me to say this when very recently I have listened to the denunciations of the Reverend William Gadsby, but of him anon.

I shall have to mention the Rev. Thomas Scott from time to time because he was very influential in moulding the beliefs of my parents.

Mr. Scott used to take great pains in guarding his hearers on presuming on the Love of God. He firmly believed that the great mass of mankind were pre-ordained from ever-lasting to be doomed to everlasting burnings.

The Almighty was to Mr. Scott a God of judgement whose Justice was the constant theme of his discourses.

I think the Love of God was hardly recognised. As I shall have to mention Mr. Scott again I will now dismiss the subject.

When you, my children, read this you will be unwilling to believe that such monstrous doctrines could ever have had currency. I wonder whether the sermon on the mount ever received attention at all. Mr. Scott's commentary

[1] This version is presented by Michael A B Boddington MBE, great grandson of Henry Boddington. It is my understanding that the original was written in handwriting by Henry Boddington and that it came into the hands of his grand-daughter, Ruth Olive Boddington, daughter of Henry's son Henry II, of Pownall Hall, Wilmslow, Cheshire. She married to a Mr. Irving-Fortescue, and later typed up her grandfather's diary. I have a photocopy of that transcript and this edition was made, largely, by scanning that into Microsoft Word and editing the resultant file manually. It is as accurate a representation of the transcript as possible, although a very few corrections have been made where they are quite apparent or can be checked against other sources. Footnotes in the following pages record these changes.

was most popular with the followers of Calvin. It is now but little read and yet there is a good deal of valuable reading in it to which I often turn and not, I hope, without regard[2].

The doctrines of Calvin were not such as had much influence in our Protestant church. In many of our churches a very sound 'humane' view prevailed. The Love of God was proclaimed and the religion of the sinless one who went about doing good was constantly taught; unfortunately many of the clergy had little influence because their lives were irregular and often grossly immoral.

To recount such immoralities can do no good. There were of course some more conscientious ones.

Parson Long of Cuddington was often heard to say, "You must do as I say and not as I do." Near to his village there was a Ladies' school, and at this place one of my aunts was educated. I remember this aunt telling us in after years that one afternoon the ladies who kept this school were going to church when they met Parson Long riding in the contrary direction. He pulled up his horse and said, "Tomorrow is the 1st, and as my best shooting is 15 miles away I am going there to be ready for the partridges in the morning, and therefore there will be no service at the church this afternoon." And on he went while my aunt's school returned home - strange doings, but perfectly true!

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I now pass on to a very painful passage. Our house, so damp and subject to floods, was visited by a fever. Two of our family died, and my mother lay long at, or as supposed at, death's door. I was a troublesome boy, often getting into the brook which was called the Mill-tail. In this brook I spent a good deal of time, in the summer getting dew-berries which grew on the banks and hung over the stream. Here too I occupied myself in groping for craw-fish, a kind of fresh water lobster, by thrusting my hands up the holes in the river banks. Very often they fastened on my hands. I pulled them off, filling a small bag I carried. I brought them home where they were boiled, becoming quite red and they were very fine eating.

My dear mother who was anxious about safety caused me to be sent to Dame Marriot to school. Now Dame Marriot was, as described on a board painted by her husband Dickey Marriot, a 'Manty Maker', for she took in plain sewing, she also kept a little school. The scholars were all girls except myself.

There was a form to sit upon without back and as we sat there for several hours 'twas very backbreaking. At one end of this said form there was an upright post fastened at the top into a beam in the ceiling and into the floor of the house. The one seated against the post could rest against it. To this coveted post I used to aspire, pushing off the girl who sat there so snugly. I sat down leaning with much satisfaction against the post. In this situation when on the return from a temporary absence Mrs. Marriot at once proceeded to her customary punishment of 'Thimble Pie'. This was by the application of her heavy thimble on the crown of my head. Mrs. Marriot was at times engaged in making fustian clothes; her thimble was of formidable size. And as she sharply applied it to my crown the pain was great and the subsequent soreness was most painful. However, such was the ease got by leaning on the post that I repeatedly threw off the little girl there placed and enjoyed during Mrs. Marriot's absence the rest so pleasant. Mrs. Marriot had held out sundry threats of death and punishment but I acquired the coveted position by force. Presently, being again discovered by her in this place she concluded to make an end of me by hanging. Going upstairs she returned with an armful of tailors' list -- she was busy at the time in making a hearthrug -- she looked up at a hook from the beam above and proceeded to arrange the means of my death by hanging. I saw the imminence of my danger and made a rush for the door. She caught me in the doorway and I struggled. Now Mrs. Marriot had a 'bad leg', or what you will. I, by design or accident, kicked this leg, giving her great pain. She did not relinquish her hold though, but pushed me into the garden where there was a 'drawwell'. She suddenly changed her purpose from hanging to drowning me, -- yes, she would put me into the well, and thus by drowning end my school career. I kicked hard without doubt - aimed at the 'bad leg'. She lost her hold of me and away I ran, picked up a piece of brick which I aimed at her as she stood in the doorway. It missed the object aimed at but struck the window demolishing Dickey's 'Manty Maker'.

I ran off just as fast as I could, and one of my father's men, Harry Johnson, was returning with a horse from the smithy; he at once complied with my request to have a ride. He lifted me on to the horse. Now just below was a piece of water called 'lash-lake'. Into this old Jack the horse bolted, and when he had got above his knees he began to scrape, an indication that he intended to take a bath. Harry Johnson rushed into the water and brought old Jack out and I was thus saved a ducking or drowning.

[2] The typescript says ‘regret’ but there is a faint marginal correction which, I think, suggests the adopted spelling.

Very unadvised I headed my first chapter 'a record of an uneventful life'. This was indeed a mistake, for on my first week at school I escaped, as it were by a miracle, death by hanging and twice by drowning. Thus ended my first week at school. It might have ended tragically and then this history would never have been penned.

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In my last chapter I showed how narrow my escape from hanging and drowning my first week at school.

Dame Marriot visited my mother the same evening and expressed some very strong opinions on my iniquities. I did hurt her 'bad leg' and I intended to hurt it.

My mother was angry with Dame Marriot for threatening me with such fearful deaths and said it was no wonder that I made my escape. She, however, paid for the broken window.

I had made myself scarce, expecting this visit of Dame Marriot's, and scarcely liking to meet my dear mother. However, her reproof was not so vehement, and I was sent to Dame Marriot's school no more. I may mention that we had only one book to learn from. It was made to fold up, and was stiff paper. On the outside at the beginning it had a picture of the Cross, and it had got the name of the 'Criss-cross Book', a common way of expressing 'Christ's Cross'. Inside the fold of this simple bit of stationary was the alphabet, great and small; and one began, great A, little a, and so on. Such were the simple first lessons of my childhood. I think I must have been 5 or 6 years old. Soon after this time I was promoted to a school in the Town Hall, a room over the Market house. There we received the usual sort of teaching in classes.

The circumstances of this part of my life which most vividly remains with me was that of an old gentleman who used to come into the room at nine o'clock; and he taught us to sing always in the same tune, the morning hymn or 'Awake my soul' as it was called. The tune was 'Islington'. At the time of closing the school Mr. Umfrey was again there, and now it was Bishop Ken's evening hymn, 'Glory to Thee, my God, this night', then a short prayer and we were dismissed. I feel now, after an interval of sixty-five years, greatly obliged to Mr. Umfrey. He used to lift up his gold-headed cane and stop us, calling by name to those boys who did not sing from the chest. "Now open your mouths, don't try to sing through your teeth." And he leading in a loud voice we learned in this way to sing very tolerably, and my dear mother would get me to sing the young ones to sleep.

We lived on the plainest food for the money for house-keeping was scarce. We had for the morning meal skimmed milk with bread and this again, or such a mess, in the evening. For dinner we often had broth or soup and seldom tasted meat. The potatoes of that day were inferior to the quality now used but we had excellent green vegetables. My father was fond of gardening and kept the table well supplied and we grew up strong and well.

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The Mill House in which I was born and there lived until I was eleven years old (1825 or 6) was situated on the stream and was liable to be flooded in a rainy season. I don't think the water got into the house every winter but it came in rainy seasons, and to young children it was nice fun to live upstairs and steal down and sail about in tubs or on planks. From the bedroom windows we could watch our father and his men going about in the water, getting pigs and other animals away; and it was fine fun to see the rats perched up on rails, trees, etc. to get a shelter from drowning. I have known the flood come up to the stairs and stop the clock which stood there. Sometimes we heard of people and often animals being drowned. After the flood subsided the house was in a most unhealthy state, and several times fever ensued, by one of these we lost two children by death. My dear mother grieved a lot and had the fever and was reduced to the lowest ebb of life. Oh, what a sorrowful life was hers! The very careless and in many cases immoral lifes led by the clergy had a most disastrous effect on the laity. Our Vicar's sons, of whom two were in the church, were very accomplished readers and preachers. But alas, their lives had no correspondence! The eldest son one-day being at the church, a newly married couple came to look over. They, like many newly married people, went very lovingly up the High Street. This said clergyman passed them, and as he was banished from the Vicarage he had lodging in this district. He hastened to his lodging, and as the newly married came up the street he furnished himself with a bowl of filthy water, opened the window, and as the strangers were walking by from his bedroom window emptied the foul water on the poor bride. Her husband, mad with rage, rushed into the house and ran up the stairs to find the offender. The Reverend wretch got into the cockloft of the roof, and saved himself. The gentlemen in

after life often expressed his thankfulness, "For," said he, "I should have killed him if I could have got hold of him," as indeed he would have thrown him from the window. A tragedy it would have been, and, as it was, it was long remembered. Fancy a large congregation at the church listening to the eloquence of the Rev. Frederick and then the remembrance of this filthy and atrocious action.

The High Street of Thame is very pretty in appearance. It is wide, open, clean, and pleasant-looking. In it is situated the Greyhound Inn, and that is the house in which John Hampden died of the wound he got at the skirmish at Chalgrove Field, a place within a few miles of Thame.

Thame is famous for its endowed Grammar School. It may seem incredible when I state that during my youth-hood and for many subsequent years not a boy received instruction there. The parson took the endowment and not a jot did he do for the revenue received from it. This perversion lasted until very lately when an investigation was made, and since then an amendment has taken place - never could there be a more shameful perversion of funds, a perfect fraud. God forgive the perpetrators!

In this Grammar School Anthony Wood and his brother were educated, John Hampden, Lord Chief Justice Holt and many other celebrated men.

How strange that with such antecedents it should have sunk out of remembrance! Anthony A. Wood gives to me pleasing and graphic descriptions of the Civil War, great courtesy was exercised between the contending parties.

It is a pity that some exact chronicler had given a more detailed account, though Anthony Wood's account is often very graphic and his reputation for truth imperturbable. We now hunger for more information and what would we not give for some sketches of streets and buildings. Alas, the people were too busy and also quite unconscious of the value that they could have imparted to their successors. How very meagre is the record that comes to us and even that small amount we do not owe to the historian but rather to the poet, the dramatist and the writer of what is often miscalled fiction.

When not in actual conflict Anthony Wood describes a sharp skirmish between the King's troops and Cromwell's. This skirmish happened just below the church on the road leading to the village of Crendon. The little river Tame with the then swampy, undrained meadows was during the winter season a sufficient barrier to keep the troops asunder. Thame was then a rather important place.

In the very house (since then pulled down or rebuilt) from whence Anthony Wood watched the skirmish he so well describes I slept when at school, the boys being removed there as fever prevailed in our school.

From the window of the room in which I slept I got out in the moonlight night to steal some apples. I escaped detection or should have caught it preciously.

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Before I give you further account of my childhood and youth (a most painful story) let me take you up the stream to the pretty little water mill near to the village of Cuddington. To this place my ancestors came in about 1762. They had been, and still were, occupants of Steeple Barton Mill in Oxfordshire, the second son of Thomas, son of John Boddington, being furnished with money by his father, took Cuddington Mill and the farm which adjoined it and was let with it. The farm was a small one, only 84 acres, but of very superior quality – “as good land as ever lay out of doors.” No land in the fertile Vale of Aylesbury was of better quality. The farm was, and still is, celebrated for the quality of its butter. The place now belongs to Wm. Boddington, he having bought the mill and the farm of which my grandfather was but a tenant, though he owned a field adjoining it in which he had built a windmill and also at a part near the village a small house. My grandfather was born at Cuddington Mill House. I will refer to register and give the dates further on. I now give the names and times of entry of the vicars of Cuddington from

1690	Francis Coston	Vicar
1732	George Topping	"
1754	Thomas Brougham	"
1784	Thomas Phelps	"
1816	Joseph Hollis	"
1827	John Wilks	"
1855	James Mansell-Price	"

This latter is still the vicar in 1885.

Here let me relate an incident in my father's life which is significant in marking the customs and manners of the time. My grandfather wanted to increase the stock at Cuddington and for that purpose journeyed to Northampton fair. My grandmother had stitched up £100 in notes in the top coats of my grandfather and his eldest son, my father, who was then (1795) about 18 years old. The custom was then as so graphically described in "Joseph Andrews", where the good parson Adams and Joesph agreed to "ride and tie". One started upon the horse, rode a few miles and then tied the animal to a gate or secure place, and he, the first rider, went on. His companion, as he reached the horse, mounted and rode a distance as agreed upon when the steed was again tied up until the other reached the place. And so they alternatley rode and tied through the day's journey.

My grandfather bought ten in-calf heifers, and these cost about £100 or £10 each. Much admired they were. I have heard my father say they turned out exceedingly well, and the Cuddington dairy became quite famous in after years.

My grandfather rode home and my father brought home the heifers. I believe it took four days' time to drive them home. This was a great venture for my father for people did not leave the hearthstone often for any distance. I even remember old Nanny Pratt – she lived in a cottage near grandmother's – when in old age she was asked if ever she had travelled much, she said, "I once went to Aylesbury in Mr. Boddington's 'waggon' (that would be about six miles). I axed the wagginer many a time if we warnt near there. I was so afeared he would go too far, and that we should fall over on t'other side. I never thought the world was so woundy wide as 'tis."

This aforesaid Nanny Pratt lived to be very old. Her age was unknown for the parish registers were ill-kept and often leaves were torn to light the candles; but of Nanny it used to be said that she one day addressing her daughter with whom she lived said, "Arise, daughter, and go to your daughter, for your daughter's daughter has got a daughter!"

Many people make a mistake in supposing that the poor were formerly worse off than they are now. My father, than whom there could hardly be a more truthful man used to say that in his youth the poor were much better off than they have now become. Of course such an opinion will be discredited and a lot of statistics quoted to prove that such an assertion is not a fact. My father used to say that in Cuddington Parish or in the adjoining township every labourer[3] had his 'grunter' in the sty and another in the chimney corner, and doubtless this was so, and yet wages were only nine shillings a week except for carters and those who attended on the cattle. These last drivers had usually an extra shilling for the Sunday work and often a meal in addition. Many of the carters and cowmen lived in the farmer's house and were hired in October for the ensuing 51 weeks - 51 weeks being short of a year the labourer did not acquire a parish settlement. Though nine shillings a week seems but a small sum to feed on and clothe a family yet the extra pickings made it a very comfortable income. In the first place a cottage was only one and three pence a week rent and this rent included a garden of sufficient size to grow vegetables. Then each man of family had potato ground free of rent. The labourer cleaning and manuring the land was a satisfactory equivalent to the farmer. The farmers permitted, indeed it was a custom never questioned, the poor people to glean the odds and ends dropped in the field in carting away the crop. In this way a quick industrious woman with her children would often pick up as much as from a bushel and a half to three or four bushels of wheat. This supplied bread for several weeks. They could also pick up two or three bushels of barley and other corn which helped to fatten the pig, the small potatoes boiled during the rest. Then the young children often in the seed-time got a shilling a week to scare away the birds. All these things helped the general income if the family. The labourers were fairly well off until the close of the war. Then many of the disbanded soldiers came home to their several parishes and the poor rates greatly increased the normal condition. The new Poor Law a very hard measure, was passed in 1834. Thus many, to avoid the workhouses of which with its harsh regulations they had a great dread fled into the towns and suffered from want of employment - very great misery. Grievous indeed was the suffering. Emigration to America was encouraged, and out of evil came some good. Speaking of emigration, my father being overseer of the parish, I sometimes attended the 'Select Vestry' which was then the operative power in each parish. A certain Joe Whitnall, a parishioner of Thame, presented himself, claiming relief for himself and family, a wife and eight children. Joe had been a British soldier, was taken prisoner by the French who made him useful. He was employed in making nitre, and at the close of the war while the English were in possession of Paris he was sent home. He had married a French woman. She was a tall, gaunt, trollopsing, trapesing piece, and they came to the Vestry. I was present to write the minutes of the Vestry. Joe presented himself and family. A Mr. Thomas Hedges was the elected chairman. Though a man of wealth and living on his own farm he was commonly called 'Tommy Hedges'. When Joe made his claim our chairman,

[3] The typescript says laboure

addressing the man with asperity, "What do you come here for? Haven't we got paupers enough to keep?" "Why," said the poor fellow, "we can't starve and I had no means of living in France."

"Why, blame it," said Mr. Hedges, "when you was in France why didn't you go to America. You weren't far off America, I expect, when you was in France!"

Geography for ever!

("Blame it!" was a common prefix to anything Mr. Hedges had to say.)

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In my last chapter I lead to explain the hiring for 51 weeks and not for a year. In explanation or comment I may say that at Thame October Statute Hiring a friend of my father's, a Mr. Wm. Moore, had hired a man as carter. This man was especially capable , but was plagued with a bad temper and was unprincipled. As the Spring season came on this man began to behave in a very bad way. At length it got so bad that Mr. Moore felt sure he should get no good out of him, and told him, "You have been here through the short winter days when there has been little to do. Now the work is coming. I see you want to get away. You'll do me no good, I see. So you may go."

"I must be paid my wages first, I suppose?"

"What wages do you expect?"

"I expect half a year."

"No," said his master, "that won't do. You have had the short days and nothing to do. Now the hay and harvest are coming you leave. I shan't pay you half a year or anything like it. If you like I am going to Thame market, and if you meet me there we will go before the Justice, and what he says is right I will pay."

The man agreed to this and the two met in Thame. Mr. Moore found the Justice in, was admitted to his room where he sat at breakfast with his daughter, Miss Julia. Now this was the only magistrate in the place. Indeed there would scarcely have been room for another. He was a little man with a short crop of stiff hair; he spoke 'through his nose' and was very impetuous and excitable. When Mr. Moore entered his room he said, "Well, Moore, what brings you here?" Mr. Moore then recounted his difficulty and then said to Mr. Justice Smith, "Whatever you think is right I will give to the man." Raising his eyebrows he said, "Give him - give him - give him nothing."

"Oh," said Mr. Moore, "I should like to pay him anything you think right."

"Pay him - pay him - pay him nothing. Where is the villain?"

"He is at your back-door."

"Ring the bell, Julia."

The man was ordered in. Now while at a distance from the Justice he was unconcerned, but being ordered into the presence of a magistrate - he had never seen one before - he was seized with nervous trepidation, and stood, hat in one hand while with the other he twitched his smock frock. The Justice looked hard at him without speaking. He began with his face and looked him very slowly down to his feet. The nervousness greatly increased. At length he spoke.

"What do you mean, you villain? Have you been living upon your master all through the short winter days, and the work coming in you want to run away?"

The poor fellow tried to speak, but the words failed to come.

"Now, sir," said the Justice, "I'll send you to Hell. What so you mean, you villain?"

Then, turning to his daughter, said, "Make out his for three months, Miss Smith?" The latter seemed occupied in doing so. At length poor Hodge in very fear exclaimed, "Let me go back to Mr. Moore, and I will do all I can to please him."

"Oh," said Justice Smith, "you will go back, will you, and serve your master truly and faithfully? You will do as master requires you to do? Obey and serve him, will you? Go back to your work at once, and if you are idle or neglectful Mr. Moore will bring you here again and I will make an end of you. Go back at once, you villain, and do your duty or you shall be hanged, drawn and quartered."

Mr. Moore used to say that the man's conduct was excellent after this interview with Justice Smith. Of this magistrate's administration of justice other instances could be given. Strange manners, strange justice, and, I may say, strange society that could be so conducted.

This same Justice Smith should have a Richardson or a Smollett to do anything like justice to his eccentricities.

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A Richardson or a Smollett would have failed to convey to posterity any adequate character of Justice Smith.

He had the habit of speaking through his nasal organ. He was so impetuous, so vehement in his expressions. Then his strange oaths and varied imprecations given out so as to provoke laughter rather than to shock. All his actions, gesticulations and words were so characteristic of the man that they could not be soon forgotten by those who were his hearers.

My mother, who visited at his house, used to tell us, minus the oaths, how if a frost set in or snow came - how he would rage. Perhaps he expected to go out with his greyhounds. The weather preventing, he would order the window shutter closed and send for a neighbour or two to come in, and they would sit down to whist by ten o'clock in the morning, play through the day and the succeeding night very often. If his partner made what he considered a mistake then he would fly into a passion and express in vehement language his anger. When he had cooled and was asked why he was so vehement, "Whatever, Mr. Smith, do you go on in that way for when you know we are trying our best?" "What do I do it for? I do it to confound you," said he.

My most dear mother was at a school at South Weston. Miss Smith, the eldest daughter of the aforesaid Justice, was there and with my mother contracted a friendship.

In the holidays Miss Smith paid a visit to my grandfather's house so that the girls were much in each other's company. This led to other visits. Miss Smith was about two years my mother's senior. They had contracted an acquaintance with a Revd. young gentleman who was Curate at Thame church. The same Curate persuaded Miss Smith to elope with him. He had a chaise in waiting and in the early morning she took flight with him. One of her shoes was found in the garden near to the wall which she, with her lover's assistance, had climbed over. When her flight was discovered the Ladies who kept this school were in a sad way. They sent off their man on horseback to Ladsden House, the residence of Justice Smith. When he received the news he cried out for his pistol and vowed he would shoot the offending parson. To prevent her husband leaving the house Mrs. Smith clung to him and tried to pacify her irascible husband.

"Madam," he said, "I'll follow him to the world's end. I'll kill him if he is above ground. I'll never rest while the villain lives."

The young people contrived to get married and they returned to Ladsden. At an opportune moment when his passion had exploded the door of his room opened and in rushed the recreants and prostrated themselves before the offended Justice. He looked uncertain but for a moment. Then, seizing his daughter, he raised her up and blubbering himself said, "Get up. I forgive you." He then smothered his daughter with kisses and all his fierce anger vanished. He soon after bought the next presentation to the living, the Vicar, a very ancient man died and the offending curate succeeded and was Vicar for about fifty years, christening and burying three generations.

I may mention that Thame church is a fine structure built upon the site of a former church. The present building is, I think, of the 15th century.

There are some monuments of old families. Of these I will say nothing, but there is an epitaph attached to the wall outside the church near the West end on a certain John Kent, and is set forth in language something like the following:-

> "Here lyeth the body of John Kent, of peace, probity, sobriety and modesty an example worthy of imitation. Having acquired a suitable competency he retired from business, allowing himself those necessaries too sparingly which he bountifully bestowed upon his friends and relations. Seduced by false glosses and wrong notions he for some time joined a dissenting congregation till awakened and convinced of his errors he returned to the church of whose most excellent doctrines, devotions and sacraments he continued a constant and zealous attendant."

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My readers will be good enough to remember the venerable church at Thame. I will now recount a few amusing incidents which happened there in my own day. I have mentioned the fact that the two eldest sons of the Vicar became in succession their father's curates. They were men of ability with fine voices and they took pains to read and preach with effect. The improvement in the services was so great that the church was very well attended, it became the custom to go to church. A number of the pew-owners had locked up these pews which they claimed as their own. When the church began to fill under the new attractions I have mentioned short steps were placed near to the locked pews and persons got over to sit in the unoccupied sittings. A curious incident happened one Sunday afternoon. At the little outlying hamlet of Moreton - it being about a mile and a half from Thame church - there lived a family named Looseley. This family lived on their own small freehold and consisted of a brother and sister with their niece. This excellent man was exceedingly fat, ten or twenty times as fat as any other man could get. He was irreverently called 'hog-fat'. Joe Looseley, the name of Looseley being a very common one in that neighbourhood. Miss Molly Looseley was also exceedingly fat, and why should not this well-to-do brother and sister be fat? They had nothing to do and they did it. They had abundance to eat and to drink, and they ate and drank all they could; the victuals and drink told upon them; they were as fat as butter, aye, fatter than butter they were. Well, Miss Molly heard that somebody was occupying the Looseley pew. "Bless their impertinence!" said the lady. "They'll be coming into our beds next." Miss Molly arranged to take their niece, Miss Betsey. Oh, she was a full-blown rose, I knew her well. These two ladies managed to walk from their residence to the church. The day was hot, the season midsummer; the dinner had been good. Miss Molly, as the Americans say, was 'crowded'. Oh, how she shone and gave off a copious stream of oil and company! She reached the church just about as service was going to begin, but ere the parson uttered a word Miss Molly's voice was heard throughout the church. She had reached her pew; it was full; with undue acerbity she called out to the intruders, "Come out!" The intruders sat firmly still; again Miss Molly Looseley called, "Come out. It's my reditary rights and I'll have them." The term 'reditary' was a word certainly not understood but, by its very mystery, a terror. The seat was vacated, and Miss Molly still pouring off oil and butter entered the pew and with Miss Betsey her niece and heir presumptive took possession. While I am on church matters I may remind you that the fierce storm of passionate hatred between Church Tories and Dissenting Radicals was especially illustrated at Easter time. The vicar appointed his Church Warden and the Parish Warden was elected by popular vote. Often squabbles and fights took place. The Radicals sometimes carried in a rabid Dissenter who did all he could do to obstruct the Church or parish business. A certain Mr. Philip Burnard, a terrible Nonconformist Radical had been elected as Parish Warden. It was well known that he would not be found in church except for some fractious purpose. A rare old Tory named Dick Stone was the Vicar's Warden, and on one Sunday morning just before the concluding prayer he, Stone, called out in a loud voice in a sing-song tone, "This here is to give notice that Philip Burnard being one of the Church Wardens of this parish church has absented himself from Church for three Sundays successfully." Hurrah successfully he were!"

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It is time for me to return to my personal narrative. From the school over the market-house I was, when nine or ten years old, transferred to a school newly built near the end of the High Street opposite to the way leading to the Church. Here a new era was begun. I daresay I was for my age about as quick a scholar as any boy. I was, however, kept back as much as Mr. Burnard could restrain me. The reason was, as I then believed and still believe, because there were boys of a much better position with whom my schoolmaster associated who were much better dressed than I was, boys whose parents often sent presents to the master, and he was often invited by these parents to their houses. They were genteely dressed while my clothes were mended and worn and were far too small for my growing limbs. I must say that if these swells treated me with insult I was ready to punch their heads, though I may honestly say I never struck a boy less than myself and resolutely

stuck up for the little boys with whom I was as popular as I was disliked by those who were given to put down the small boys.

Our master Burnard was a cripple. He hobbled about with two sticks . His legs were positively shocking but his heads and arms were muscular and could strike with dreadful force. The flogging was dreadful. Cowardly boys with the first strokes of his cane would bawl out, "Oh pray, sir," and he then desisted. I refused to cry out and as he exhausted himself he would exclaim, "You diabolical villain, I will cut you to atoms." Oh, how he flogged me! Enough of this. I then thought, and my mind is unaltered, I thought he deserved hanging. I was the librarian, and if a book was found out of its place I was caned unmercifully. One day a quarto dictionary was found on the desk instead of being in its place. My punishment was fiercely savage. I was made to lie flat on my back on a school form, my hands raised over my head, the book laid on my chest. I was black in the face and almost gone when I was released. I was then ordered to stand on one leg when I tremulously put the other foot down to steady myself he jumped off his desk which was close to where I was set up, and oh, how he caned me !

I lived through all, and here I am. I continued at school until I was near 14 years old. Through an illness of my father's I was taken away to do what I could to perform his duties.

What these duties were and how done I will set forth in my next chapter. The beginning of a better life dawned though my difficulties were not brought to a very favourable end.

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My father at the time of his illness was assistant overseer. That was the office which carried all of the work, or nearly so, for the nominal or parish overseers. For this office he received £30 a year. He had also the survey and making of the roads[4] within the parish. He also contracted for the keep of the roof in the workhouse. I think he was so just and compassionate a man that he did not get much profit, but he had a capital residence which added to the comfort of my mother and her family. I was taken from school to attend to my sick father's duties in the year 1826, being at the time nearly 14 years old.

How very inadequate to the work may be inferred. However, I had much kindness expressed towards me and the greatest indulgence.

My dear mother was as much respected and loved as any woman could be, and I, her son, was a great favourite, I do believe.

My difficulties were great but daily my experience gained ground upon my difficulties and I was considered rather wiser than my years. Just at this time I acquired a friendship which exercised a very happy, improving effect upon my character and my conduct too.

Before I go into the particulars of this friendship allow me to say that there were some very immoral youths about my age, and if I had become acquainted with, or attached to, these youths my course of life might have been vitiated and stained with moral guilt.

I can never sufficiently thank God for His watchful care over me at this period of my life. "By bad courses may be understood, that their events can never turn out good."

My way of life had been moral, and at this, the turning point in my life, life might have become base and sinful.

In my next chapter I will give some particulars of my new friendship and its results.

"Now, 'tis spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted."
"Suffer them now and they'll o'ergrow the garden
"And choke the herbs for want of husbandry."

There was at the time of which this is a record a Mr. David Moore who was surveyor of the roads leading out of the Parish. This jurisdiction extended from about five to six or seven miles each way.

[4] The typescript says 'rounds' but 'roads' fits much better with subsequent narrative

He was getting on in years and suffered very much from a disease called gravel. With this exception he was a very robust man, most genial in manners and of a quick, witty disposition. He was a man pretty much self-educated; he possessed a considerable library which he read in an apprehensive way, and was so very intelligent and diverting that it was a delight to be in his company.

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I will now try to describe my newfound friend. He was about five feet six in height, rather bulky in person, with a face always radiant.

He was without whiskers, which were kept closely shaved; he was bald except a little quite white hair on the sides of his head; to my recollection he seemed to be the most handsome man, one of those very scarce pleasant, well-looking men who would be noticed in any company.

He took to me, furnished me with books and directed my reading, and became a sort of idol to my admiring attention.

He was always dressed in a blue coat, buff waistcoat and kerseymere small clothes with gaiters of the same colour; his dress was perfect; another thing, he was so perfectly clean in his linen, wearing a frilled shirt; he looked, as indeed he was, a man of mark.

He drove a gig, a scarce vehicle in those days. His great object seemed to be to get me to his side in the gig. He taught me the art of roadmaking, and it was generally supposed that I should succeed him in the surveyorship of the roads.

I went out every day in his visits to his men. To me this was very delightful and such a change from my miserable schooldays. My dear mother contrived to dress me in an improved way and thus I ceased to suffer shame from any deficiency in dress.

When he was suffering from his prevalent disease I drove and, as I had always been used to horses, I became as a boy driver very skilful. Mr. Moore was given as was not uncommon in those days, to the use of strong expletives. The roads we had to pass over were in many places rutty, and he desired me to quarter to avoid the shaking which gave him pain. He used to call out "Quarter you villain, you'll shake my liver out." These reporoofs were frequently enforced by D…s and double D…s. These reproofs had such good effect that I could soon drive with much greater nicety than he had ever attained to. Oh, those drives were indeed a delight. He was so well known and so well-liked that he often stopped to speak with the best people we met. I got quite an adept at pulling up so as not to disturb my dear old friend. If by a chance I drove over a stone he called out "O, you villain, don't shake my "lights" out." These expletions I received in good part, for I knew they meant no harm, and the driving, the scenery, the beauty of the country to which he would call my attention made up such a sum of happiness as filled my whole nature with delight. He made the road, about five miles in length, up to the "Three Pigeons", a little roadside inn at the turn of the road to Oxford and London; but this little hostel was so remarkable a place that I must give a chapter to it.

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"THE THREE PIGEONS"

In 1882 Dr. Pearson read a paper before the Cambridge Antiquarian Society to show that the inn called the "Three Pigeons" at the crossroads between Thame and Abingdon was probably the scene of Tony Simpkins' revels.

When he and his boon companions were met Goldsmith says in "She Stoops to Conquer" one of his company gives a knock on the table and says, "Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The squire is going to knock himself down for a song."

Then said Tony, "I'll sing you a song I made on this alehouse, the "Three Pigeons":-

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brains
With grammars and nonsense and learning,
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,

Gives genius[5] a better discerning.
Let them brag of their heathenish goods,
Their Lethes, their Styxes, their Stygians
Their "quis", their "quaes" and their "quods",
They're all but a parcel of pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, torel.

When methodist preachers come down
A preaching that drinking is sinful
I'll wager the rascals a crown
They always preach best with a skinful;
But when you come down with your pence
For a slice of their scurvey religion
I'll leave it to all men of sense
But you, my good friend, are the pigeon.
Toroddle, toroddle, torel.

Then come, put the joram about
And let us be merry and clever
Our hearts and our liquors are stout
Here's the "Three Jolly Pigeons" for ever.
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your duck, or your wigeons,
But of all the gay birds of the air
Here's a health to the "Three Jolly Pigeons".
Toroddle, toroddle, torel.

Omnes: "Bravo!"

Second fellow: "I loves to hear him sing
"because he never gives us anything that's low."

I end this chapter with Tony the First – on the other side I will give you my Tony.

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In my youth I was on very friendly terms with two boys who were cousins, their respective mothers being sisters. These two boys were greatly indulged and were constantly causing their affectionate mothers great worry. I believe the mothers were glad to get me to their houses. I was a year or two older then either of these boys. Their circumstances were much superior to mine. They always had plenty of pocket money and they were good-natured. On one occasion I went to Little Milton, within about 2 miles of the "Three Pigeons". There, a Mr. and Mrs. Wells lived, who were the parents of one of the cousins of whom I write. The event to commemorate was the birthday of Alfred Wells. The dinner as was in that day (long before the "A la Rousse" was in vogue) very abundant, and the joints, however many in number, were all placed upon the table at once. At the end where Mr. Wells, the father, sat was placed a roasted pig; the indulged Alfred insisted on getting onto the table and placing one leg over the roasted pig; he stood like the Colossus of Rhodes; it caused a good deal of laughter and fun and when the execution was finished we began dinner.

I used to highly approve of my visits to Little Milton. This village is very near to another called Great Milton where tradition says the author of "Paradise Lost" was born. Within a few miles is "Forest-Hill" where Ann Powell was born; she was so unfortunate to marry the great poet and a very unsatisfactory husband he was.

My Tony Simpkin had neither the wit nor the vulgarity of the original Tony but he did, besides bestriding the roasted pig, many little exploits.

In the snug walled garden of the Wells' there were very good fruit trees, and very delicious were the plums, peaches, apricots, etc. We used to visit the garden pretty often.

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[5] The typed copy of the manuscript has "genus"; Goldsmith's original is genius.

The "Three Pigeons" was remarkable in many ways. I will relate one incident.

Lord Chief Justice Holt who was educated at Thame endowed the Grammar School, afterwards becoming an undergraduate at Oxford University, was on one occasion in an impecunious state, and to be quiet until his friends could find and send him some funds secluded himself at this Inn.

One day there came a poor woman having with her a daughter, a young girl who was afflicted with epilepsy – or as it was then commonly called "falling sickness".

The mother applied to Holt to prescribe for her daughter. He at once said he was no doctor.

"No," she said, "but you be an Oxford scholar and they be better nor doctors." The mother was so importunate and so full of faith that Holt complied with the request. He said that he could give the girl a charm which, if she would promise to wear and never remove from her person, she would recover from the falling sickness.

He then wrote in Greek characters a sentence. This was most carefully folded, the final cover being silk and most carefully stitched. This was suspended from the neck and was on no account to be removed. 'Tis said the girl recovered.

Many years elapsed and Holt by very great ability was Chief Justice.

He was holding a court and in the callender there was a woman accused of witchcraft, a rather prevailing crime at that time of day. The Chief Justice was tinged with infidelity. He did not think that all were witches who were thus accused.

The evidence, however, of the witch finders and triers was very conclusive and escape seemed very unlikely. Before the evidence was quite concluded one of the witnesses swore that at the present moment the witch wore a charm on her bosom. The judge ordered it be removed and brought to him. He looked at it after all its long years of service. There was a suspicion in his mind that this was not his first acquaintance with it. He took up his penknife and got to the contents. There was the very sentence he had provided and which had proved so efficacious a cure. The Chief Justice with an amused face and addressing the Jury and Court related the incident of the "Three Pigeons". Many years ago he owned the writing in a youthful frolick to satisfy the unhappy mother. No conviction took place. The unhappy woman was dismissed and protected by order of the Judge.

The little hotel was a house of call for persons passing through Oxford to London, and many singular scenes happened there.

The tramp called and generally got his cup of ale gratis; and this often supplemented with food. One day a tramp looked into the much used room and, not having any money, proposed a feat of necromancy. "If," said he, "any gentleman will pay for a pot of beer and place it at the end of the table, I will stand at the other end of the table and command the beer to come to me." The guests not probably acquainted with Glendower's boast immediately ordered the beer. It was placed at the end of a long tap-room table, the conjuror standing at the other end from whence in a loud voice he commanded the pot of beer to come to him. The beer remained impassive. After several commands being disregarded he, the conjuror, said "Oh, oh, if you won't come to me I must go to you." He seized the pot of beer and drank it off, had his wit applauded and passed on his way.

About two miles from "The Pigeons" was the village of Tetsworth and Mr. Moore used frequently to drive there to see a family called West – when I say a family I confuse matters for there were but two members, a mother and a sister. They were most kind and Maria their servant made the thinnest and best buttered toast and bread and butter you ever saw. Oh, it was good! Then the talk with Miss West or "Molly" as she was commonly called by her familiars was most amusing. There were some reports that Miss West has been solicited in marriage. Mr. Moore took up the current report which Miss West repudiated, and I remember her saying with great naivety that she would not marry out of her sphere.

How delightful it was to listen to her dear mistakes in words and grammar! Ah, those days are gone, never to return! Dick West, as Mr. Moore called him, was a sort of retired butcher and cattle dealer but he could not forget his old occupation; he used to sit at his projecting sitting-room window and watch the sheep and cattle on their way to London market, London being distant from Tetswoth a little over 30 miles. He was always ready to buy such as were by long travel unable to finish the journey. These sheep and cattle so bought his men killed, carefully packed in hampers and sent off to some trusted salesman in London who would send down an account

deducting sales commission. It was said that Mr. West continued to make a good deal of money from this way of trading.

My rather frequent visits to this hospitable house were very pleasant. Mr. West's man used to, if the weather was uncertain, take the horse out of the chaise and we regaled at leisure. I still remember those drives with pleasure on our return if Mrs. Moore was gone into town, to sit with her three maiden sisters. Mr. Moore would send Nanny Eales the servant home, and then even in the summer season we would adjourn to the kitchen. Mr. Moore had more than a childish delight in seeing the wood fire blaze. We got some nice bits prepared for lighting the morning fire and had soon a pretty blazing fire. "Now, Harry," he would say, "when her gracious majesty comes in we shall catch it," and indeed we did get pretty well scolded. This good lady, Mrs. Moore, was a second mother to me.

Her father had been a common brewer but had always been unfortunate so that his numerous daughters had only about £300 each. Four of these daughters lived together and did some millinery or other genteel work. Mr. Moore used to deal out to me his experiences and the results of his experiences. "Harry," he would say "if ever you get money you must remember that your poor relations will be quite certain that they have a greater right to your money than you can have." Another of his maxims was "One half of the world are born to plague the other half."

One day Mr. Moore and I drove to Oxford to get money from the Bank to pay off a club which, having saved a considerable sum of money, determined to break up the club and divide the money. Mr. Moore opposed this prodigal scheme as long as he could but could not resist longer.

We got the money – over £400 – and in driving out of Oxford called at the house of one of his relations – a sister, I think. She was from home and a niece who lived there would have no denial. We must have a cup of tea. When the tea was brought Mr. Moore said, "Have you put any green tea in the pot?" She said, "Oh, no, Uncle, I know you can't drink green."

We drank the tea and ate some very fine bread and butter and, all apparently well pleased with each other, started for home.

Now, there is a rather steep hill in driving out of Oxford towards Thame. Mr. Moore was driving and in a little while he handed me the reins. Mr. Moore began to be poorly with colic always resulting from drinking green tea; he groaned and was so ill that I was alarmed. He called out, "Drive on, get to the 'Three Pigeons'." And as we went he groaned and cried out, "The lying young Beesom, there was green in it! D--- her, I'll cut her throat from ear to ear." With such and many other exclamations we proceeded. Presently we reached the inn. Here he with great difficulty got out, bent double, and called for a brandy which he swallowed freely going about the room still doubled up. "Repeat me the dose of brandy several times," he ordered. Indeed he was very ill. At length having got some ease I drove home. He went to bed and had hot applications and in the night recovered.

He continued to vow dire vengeance against her, often saying, "I'll be the death of her, I'll cut her throat from ear to ear," etc.

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I will now return to my parents. First, my Father. He, when about fourteen years old went to London to the 'Saint Pancras' Hospital to be inoculated with Small Pox. That dreadful disease attacked many and the deaths were numerous, and those who survived were generally disfigured. My grandfather paid five pounds into the Hospital funds and at a certain time the boy was sent for. He travelled to London by a road waggon.

Road waggons, as they were called, were the means of communication between the country for many miles round and the Metropolis.

These waggons took London the butter and a great deal of the dead meat, bringing on their return journey the groceries, wines, spirits and any other articles required. Besides carrying goods the waggons, being provided with an awning, carried passengers, such few as travelled. The Hospital of St. Pancras consisted of two divisions, one for girls and the other for boys. The Hospital must have been a very roughly conducted place. When my father was set down in a large yard there were many boys there. The young rascals crowded round my father crying, "Garnish." Now my grandmother had carefully stitched in my father's clothes, one shilling and a few coppers.

My father tried to keep the shilling and offered the coppers. However, these heroes dispoiled him of his shilling which was speedily spent in sweets of which he was allowed to take a small share.

Then he was required to sing a song for their amusement. My father was shy in complying, when they called out, "If he will not sing at all, we'll bump his bum against the wall." Seizing him for this purpose they swung him with all their force against the wall, which was my father's introduction to the small pox Hospital. When the customary bumps had been given he was released.

For a certain number of days he was first through a course of medicine, and when that process was completed he was inoculated. If the patient recovered then when he might be safely removed he was called for by the waggoner and returned home. My father got through very well and went home by the waggon. When he got home the secreted half-crown was safely disclosed. I may mention that when the waggon had got clear of London the driver said to my father, "You can drive." "Yes," said he. Then handing him a long whip much ornamented with brass ferrals he said, "I will take a snooze and you drive."

The roads were in places very soft. There were five or six horses attached to the waggon and my father was directed how to drive. "And mind," said the waggoner, "when you come to a soft place pitch into them and get through but don't touch the black colt."

Now this said black colt was a fiery drawer and instead was fastened by a halter to the traces to prevent his too eager drawing. My father got into a soft place, the waggon was almost at a standstill. My father saw the imminence, and he fetched the colt a slashing hit. He bounced almost out of harness, and as he could not forget the blow he continued to strain himself and was soon in a lather.

The old man waked up seeing the state of the case said "You young rascal, you've hit him!" At the next place of call he had to be taken out and scraped - my father's driving was ended.

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I don't know of anything in the past ages which has brought mankind so great a blessing as Jenner's discovery. The noisome disease of smallpox by it was almost exterminated and yet not a hundred years has witnessed its beneficent effects, and the whirligig Gladstone and followers are for repealing the statute which compels parents to have their children inoculated.

This backward move of ignorance and prejudice will surely find people of sense enough to prevent such a disaster as the repeal of a law so justly compulsory.

Quackery and quack doctors now greatly prevail, but even in past times there lived a shoe-maker named Baverstock. To mend shoes required a good deal of force and the returns in profit were small. Baverstock took to the profession of a doctor and he succeeded in acquiring a large connection in important cases. He used to take up permanent quarters for a time in the house of his patient. Many a time have I seen him shoulder his remedies, for he delivered and administered his own medicines. These medicines he carried in two two-gallon bottles made of wood. These bottles or casks were slung over his shoulder, the one hung in front the other behind. I believe his medicines were nauseous to the superlative degree of nastiness. He administered about a quart or three pints at a dose. How his victims survived is a marvel. However, his course lasted for years when from age he became disabled he was succeeded by a son-in-law.

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Ghosts and witches were very numerous in our locality. I have run, when a boy, many a day with Squire Fane's harriers. When they got so far as our parish it became an universal holiday. Now at my father's windmill there were two cottages. In one lived the miller and in the other the carter. The carter's mother lived with him and kept his house. She was a witch, that's certain. I knew her well. Granny Tiggle was her name. Now the harriers had many a run about the windmill fields. They chased there a fine hare, and when several times the dogs seemed close upon her she was lost in a very unaccountable fashion. One day the hounds were very close upon her and it was close to the aforesaid cottages. Being so closely pressed the hare made a dash at the windows of Granny's cottage. The huntsman who was close up, and so was old Squire Lowndes, both saw the hare dash through the window. They determined to open the door and let in the dogs. No sooner was the door opened but there sat old Nanny by the fire and holding her shawl to her face. They found that she bled profusely from her face, having been cut in forcing herself through

the window. Suspicion was converted into proof. Nanny had failed to make the transformation this time without accident. She was accused and owned to have been the lost hare!

I knew the spot well and the old woman too, so you need have no doubt about witches.

In my boyish days, going to see some relations, I passes through the villages of Lower Winchendon and noticed a large farmhouse which had fallen into decay. The roof was partly removed and it seemed uninhabitable. Upon enquiry I found it had been haunted. My father remembered the time. The dishes came off the shelves; the loaves of bread walked about the house. Things were got into a sad state. The family living there were religious people and they procured nine Methodist preachers to attend and keep up continuous prayer. This they did, relieving each other, but the prayers went on day after day - night and day - till at length the dishes ceased to fly about, but somehow the house got a dreadful name and became deserted. I could recount many other circumstances quite as well authenticated but fear to tire my patient readers.

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I may now recount a few of the incidents in my father's life.

When growing towards manhood he was assisting to carry hay from the meadow on the Chearsley[6] side of the river. A young sister was returning from school by a footpath running through this meadow. She ran up to my father and begged him for a ride. She was a greatly loved sister. He at once lifted her up on the middle horse of the team. In going over a hollow place which was in wet weather a water course the horse on which she rode shied and she fell. The waggon loaded with hay went over the poor child. She was taken up dead or dying. This was indeed a lasting grief to my father who never alluded to it.[7]

My father and some of my uncles were fond of ringing and the church bells were in his care. One night when he with my uncle Hollyman came from the church they heard singing in the little inn adjoining the church yard. "That's Doctor Scott singing," said they, "let's show him the devil." They agreed and waiting till the Doctor, as he was called, though only a superannuated labourer, came with a skinful out of the Public. He lived in one of several cottages in the church yard called the "Poors' Cottages", for they were appropriated to such poor as were unable to pay rent.

Now these lads had caught the foal of a donkey belonging to the Revd. ---, which grazed the church yard. This donkey foal was black. The boys carried it up to Doctor Scott's bed. The foal was stroked, petted and made very comfortable in the Doctor's bed. My father and uncle then concealed themselves and waited the victim's approach. He came out of the public with a skinful, climbed up to his room - for the stairs were on the outside, took off his clothes, and then got into bed, kicking the donkey which bounded out of the bed. He supposed Satan - who else? - and out he ran in his shirt screaming at the top of his lungs. When he had run into the village my father and uncle appeared. They were very sympathetic and quite fell into the belief that it was the Devil he was so much frightened by that for weeks or months he kept sober. At length the truth came out which put an end to the Doctor's sobriety.

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My father used to tell an amusing story. He and his friend Wm. Hollyman were in the village. A man was trying to ring his pig, but could not mange to hold the beast. My uncle Hollyman, seeing the difficulty, got into the sty and, seizing the rebel pig, grasped it between his knees. The ring was fastened and then the pig was released. It fell down quite dead, filling them all with consternation. The young men gave a bushel of beans and all the money they had, I think about eight shillings, so that the poor man was pretty well repaid.

Another incident dwelt in my father's mind. He together with his two brothers had each a gun. One of my brothers, whose gun was foul, took down my father's gun and, having charged it, went out to shoot a duck. Of these birds great numbers frequented the waters about Cuddington. He did not get a chance of a shot as expected, returned and hung up the gun in its usual place. My father coming in took down his gun believing it to be unloaded. In passing out through the wash-house he pointed it at the servant-girl, drew the trigger without

[6] Rendered as Chearstey in the typescript, but as Chearsley in the second telling below: the OS Map has Chearsley.

[7] This story is repeated on the following page. I have left it in, twice, because it obviously weighed heavily on Henry Boddington's mind

effect and passed on. In a moment the gun went off. The escape of the girl was owing, probably, to the powder being damp. My father never ceased to call to my mind this marvellous escape.

I may now mention an incident which, so far as I know, was never alluded to in my father's presence. He was engaged in carrying hay from a meadow on the Chearsley side of the river and a young sister was returning by a pathway through this meadow. As she came up to the waggon loaded with hay she said to my father, "Oh, John, do let me ride." She was about eight years old. My father, the eldest of his family was about eighteen years old. He took up his young sister, put her on the back of the middle horse in a team of three. In going over a dry ditch the horse shied; the poor girl fell off, the waggon went over and she was taken up dying or dead. My father was appalled. He never alluded to this sad accident nor was it ever spoken of in his presence.

When a youth, there were after an assize five men sentenced to be hung. My father got away secretly from home and went to Aylesbury to the hanging. He saw the poor wretches turned off, was so shocked by the sight that he ran all the way home and so terrified was he that he could not rest alone for several days. When the public exhibition of hanging was abolished this circumstance was very forcibly recalled to my mind and I was thankful the public was spared so demoralising a scene, and one attended with such terror to youth as first seen.

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The tythe was collected in Cuddington, and on a certain time the Parson, the Reverend Thomas Phelps, the then Vicar of Cuddington, determined to increase the payments of tythe. The Cows paid a certain number of shillings per head. Mr. Phelps gave notice of a rise of two shillings a head. My grandfather hearing of this advance was greatly indignant. On the Sunday morning he appeared dressed in a Sunday suit. My Grandmother said, "Are you going to Church?" "Yes," he said, "I am, and I'll give that parson such a rowing as he's never had." "Don't be foolish," said Grandma, "you will get yourself into the Consistory Court as so-and-so did." He went off, vowing how he would make the parson ashamed of himself. When the people were leaving the church my father waited for the Reverent Mr. Phelps. This latter received my grandfather's charge very mildly. Then he said, "If you, Mr. Boddington, the principal inhabitant, object I don't see what I can do. You see I have had one son at Oxford for two years and now I am sending another for I want to support church and King. The Methodists are got so far to Aylesbury, and if we don't support church and King these Methodists will soon be in Cuddington." "Oh," said Granddad, "if that's it I'll pay sooner than have that rubbish come to ride over us." My grandfather, though he would not have his churchmanship impugned, lived an irregular life at time.

One Sunday afternoon he was comfortably enjoying his pot and pipe at the 'Lion', a 'public' which was near to the church. The clergyman who served Haddingham church together with Cuddington had ridden over from the former place to do a service at Cuddington and he came into the 'Lion' to deposit his whip and coat. Seeing my grandfather he said, "Very well, I'll go," and at once went into church I am afraid not quite as composed and sober as he should have been, While there the singing greatly pleased him, there was a solo part sung by a young girl, who excelled in singing. My grandfather called out looking at the singing loft, "Well done, Alice, you sing better every time I hear you." The clergyman, extremely angry, said to his clerk, "Turn him out of the church." "No," said my grandfather, "you ordered me here or I should not have come." My grandfather was exceedingly vexed at his own behaviour and expected to be called for brawling in church. However the parson took no notice. My grandfather kept out of his way till one day the parson dropped upon him near the Vicarage. He was most polite to my grandfather and said presently, "You like a good glass of ale. I think mine is as good as any in the parish or the next. He went in, regaled himself with some excellent beer and bread and cheese and they were ever after the best of friends, and his recusant parishioner was for years most regular in attending church and had a great deal of good to say for his parson.

My grandfather was considered a rich man, a man of such means would not be thought so now. He gave his daughters £300 each when they married and to each of his sons the like amount. Cuddington Mill House was looked upon as a kind of bank. My grandfather used to give guineas for motes, the people paying him a gratuity for the accommodation.

I think I have already told you that my grandmother only used tea on the Sunday. Other days the breakfast was milk and small beer. A very primitive way of living was observed. They always used a tablecloth at dinnertime but not at other times except when having company. It is said that there is a black sheep in every flock. A nephew of my grandfather was the black sheep or doubtful sheep. He was a Windsor chair maker and during the summer months employed a number in the woods on the Chiltern Hills in making these chairs. With the return of autumn the work came to an end. This nephew called Will Boddington used without ceremony or invitation to come down to Cuddington Mill to pass the winter months. My grandfather said on one of these occasions to his

wife, "I see that Will Boddington is here again. I'll set that fellow to work." Now near to the dairy window grew two walnut trees and they darkened too much the dairy. My grandfather had caused one to be cut down, so said he, "I'll set that fellow to work." He told Will to make him some furniture out of the walnut tree. He made a bureau which I now have - quite a tidy piece of furniture. But there is a story to be told about this work which will put Mr. Will Boddington in a rather queer light. But for this story I reserve myself for the next chapter.

The ground was very likely to grow warm for Mr. W.B., and like a good tactician he was skilful in retreat. He said to my grandmother, "Aunt, I think it is about time for me to get up the hill and get my men together." "Very well, Will," she said. "I should like to take," said he, "a pound of your good butter to my land lady." "Very well," she said, "you can have some." "Oh," he said, "I shall pay for it." Pay indeed, there must be no paying, so she put up two pounds of butter. Now the use he made of butter was as follows. He had been out with a gun in the early forenoon and at the 'far low house' there was a hen which had strayed and had made her nest near the above place and had brought out a fine brood of eleven chickens. Mr. William saw these chickens gather about something they had found. They were very close together, he let fly and killed ten of the brood and gathered them up, and had them. Returning to the house he said good-bye to his aunt and walked off: he recovered his chickens which were indeed of the size of such as are killed as 'spring chickens', and when he got to near Haddenham he called at a wayside little inn called the 'Cyder House'. There he found a set of genial companions. Producing the chickens or young fowls he placed them on the table. Then producing a shilling sent off for bread. Now, lads, be plucking the fowls. This done they were cooked on the taproom fire. The butter and bread made ready, a plentiful supply of beer produced and never was a more jolly feast enjoyed. They not only pleased their appetites but the joke, may be the owner of these prime fowls, would have seen the joke from another point of view. I will finish this chapter by recounting another exploit of this imperfect individual and I believe my last anecdote of him will certainly determine his colour and you, my readers, will without hesitation put him down a decidedly black sheep. Be good enough to remember my grandfather had set Mr. Will to work on some walnut wood he had. Will made a bureau and two stools during the winter months. These completed and other matters arranged he departed under the circumstances I have named. He had not been gone many days when the landlord of the 'Lion' came down to my grandfather, and pulling his forelock he says, "Mr. Boddington, I have got a little bit of paper for you," and then producing a bill handed it. It was an account for beer had by Mr. William during his making the furniture and its amount was over £20. I have the bureau and keep it as a dear relic of other times. My grandfather, though greatly vexed, paid the money.

My father met my mother at a wedding of his friend, a Mr. Gurney, when she was bridesmaid for a young lady who had been at Weston School with my father. They were married in 1803 and settled at Thame Mill as already recounted. My mother quite improved the house and its gardens. She made a most charming garden opposite the house and leading through a pretty arbour to a log bridge over the Mill stream. This led to a very excellent fruit and vegetable garden. The apple trees trained as espaliers were of most excellent sorts - golden pippins, non-pareils and others as good. My dear mother had much to mortify her. The vicar's wife, her schoolmate, came once to see her as did our landlord's wife, and then they cut her. One pleasing incident I may name. A certain Miss Humfrey who had been at Weston School always did her best to keep my mother in Society. She never forsook her when poverty came but was the true friend under adversity. I always think of my mother's life as a very sad one.

Mr and Mrs. Moore waited on my father and my mother and obtained their consent to my sleeping at their house. This of course led to my passing my evenings at Mrs. Moore's. He taught me to play cribbage at which I became an adept. "Come, Harry," he would say, "get out Noah's Ark." This cribbage board is a great curiosity. He (Mr. M.) left it to me and I hope to leave it to my son[8]. Mr. Moore was at all times ready to take his Bible Oath. That it was made of the wood of Noah's Ark I have no certain knowledge. It was given to Mr. Moore by his grandfather who possessed it for many years. It is a relic which I value for I have now had it in my possession for 45 years. I hope my son Harry will keep it with care and transmit it to his son Henry. This was a much happier time with me though I had a great deal of parish business which was not at all pleasant work. Yet the enjoyment of my evenings with so intelligent a companion as Mr. Moore compensated. Before we went to bed Mr. Moore would drink a glass of beer and usually had a good supply of apples for me. We talked over our drive for the next day and played cribbage. At this game I

[8] A marginal statement in handwriting at this point is very faint: it appears to state that Henry Boddington of Pownall Hall had the cribbage board from his father.

was become a proficient player. Mrs. Moore was a second mother to me. She always came to "tuck me up" and usually gave me a lovely kiss. Mr. Moore's books were always within my reach and I well remember Fontenelle's 'Plurality of Worlds' which gave me an enlarged idea of the heavenly bodies. Then Voltaire's 'Charles the Twelfth' and his most delightful letters on the English nation. I was often greatly disgusted at the way in which dissenting ministers spoke of Voltaire. They used to represent his death in the most abominable way. According to their theory Voltaire's death was a terrible scene as they described it, full of terror of a future state, for they had the sincerest belief that the poor fellow expected to go into everlasting fire and that he died in terror. I am glad to say that his death was a peaceful one. So much for the pulpit teachings which I had to listen to Robert Burns sarcastically says, "Some great books are lies from end to end, and some great lies were never penned. Even ministers they have been kenned, a rousing which at times to vend and nail it with scripture." When I now recall the things said in the pulpit I marvel how people could be so wickedly ignorant as to listen to such blasphemous statements. I sometimes wonder what ignorant ministers make of it now. However I am speaking of what was given out 60 years ago. I am sure a youth could not, of fair intelligence, listen to such teachings without receiving much harm. What with such sermons and the predestination theory poor children when old enough to think suffered torments. I never then heard the blessed truth that Christ had made "a full and sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Some pages back I mentioned a man called the Reverend William Gadsby. This preacher used to collect the largest possible congregation when he periodically went to London. His own chapel was fully attended, but in London he could always fill the largest procurable building. One day I found myself in his chapel the occasion of my being there that I had to escort some Americans[9] who were of the Calvin order of beings, and by reason great admirers of Gadsby. The text Romans 9th to 15th, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." After this he shewed what he believed and they proceeded to describe other beliefs. Such and such things are preached "by your men made parsons, your learned college men, who say that they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach. Then there be your free grace parsons. They invite sinners to come and believe on Christ and be saved. How can they come except they be drawed. If I could go down into Hell and draw up a damned sinner,"... here he went through the pantomime form, reaching with his tall person and long arms over the pulpit, he brought up the supposed wretch and called upon him to believe on Christ and be saved, would he believe. "Would he believe I say no. He'd be damned again and again." Here again in dumb show he was put back into the fire. Such was the blasphemous parody enacted by Mr. Gadsby and this man even so late as 1840 or some years after could fill the largest building in London to listen to him through long services.

I was once tempted to go to a small Baptist chapel in Cuddington with Mr. William Clarke. When we came out Clarke said, "I wish, Master Beddin would talk only his own talk." This preacher had asked quite as a startling interrogatory, "Can you maintain the Law in every punctillion?" I once went to Wadson Hill Chapel with some of Uncle Moore's family. There was a ruling spirit in the chapel a Mr. Cox, for those times a very rich man, who was about as conceited and ignorant as he as rich. Twice during the sermon this Mr. Cox walked out of his pew and passed some time outside. I enquired onto this seemingly irregularity, and was told that if ever Mr. Butcher the parson said something which Mr. Cox disapproved he always walked out and expressed his opinion very audibly outside. How queer these things seem now to me.

I got a good deal into my head from 14 years of age. A Mr. Page gave me Pliny's 'Letters' and in these delightful epistles I gloried. When about 15 I bought my first book, 'Dr Franklin's Life.' I gave for it 6/6. It took a long time to save up for this book. I committed a good deal to memory. I feel greatly indebted to its prudential maxims ' the way to wealth'. I indoctrinated my children with Pliny's 'Letters'. I have the book yet and have carried the book thousands of miles, taking it out many times a day when a moments interval happened. At Mr. Moore's I got the Percy relics of old English poetry and a book in which I was much interested was Elkington on land drainage. It gave me correct ideas on the subject and showed very conspicuously how water was conveyed through porous strata and how water was obstructed by clay.

I began when about 16 years old to go to our friend Mr. Howland the auctioneer to make out his Excise Return and sometimes to catalogue the furniture of a house which was appointed to be sold up. Mr. Howland used to slip into my hand £2 or £3 occasionally. I marked his butter-cloths for he carried all the butter of the district etc, and found cloths and hampers. The butter etc was consigned to a salesman in London, who remitted the money after deducting his commission. There you will learn how various my employments, and these enabled me to pick up a good deal of miscellaneous knowledge of the ways of the world as well as the practical details of social life. On the whole I must say that I acquired the good will and respect of many people.

In my next chapter I will return to my school days which were in many respects painful.

[9] The typescript says ‘American’

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My schooldays were indeed painful. I was a much better scholar than some of the smartly dressed young gentlemen, but their friends made presents of fruit or vegetables, game or fish. I had none to give: I was dressed in patched clothes. But why repeat all this? I was flogged terribly as I have before reported. Many of the old boys encouraged me by giving pence because old 'Pinkey' could not make me call out, "Oh pity, Sir!" No, I usually stood my drubbing until he was tired. Oh, how he flogged! I am sure I felt then, as I now do, that he deserved hanging. After my father's furniture was sold he went to London and lived for a time, he and my mother, with a relation who kept an inn. My brother got a situation to keep the books of a man who was making a drain.

My brother kept the books and paid the wages. For this duty he received a pound a week, and with the help of this relation they lived. When this work was coming to an end he advertised for a situation in a mill as foreman. He succeeded in getting in Lancashire, or rather in Cheshire. My father returned to Thame and became, as I afore stated, an overseer and surveyor of the parish roads. Between assisting my father, my work with Mr. Moore and with Mr. Howland, my time was fully occupied. Thus I went on until 1831 when the first general and circumstantial census was ordered to be made. The parish vestry appointed me to this office. I made the census in so satisfactory a way that the vestry praised my correctness and assiduity and voted me a payment of five pounds. This was pleasant to me and when my report of the population went before the magistrates it was complimented as being well done. This again raised me into importance and brought me to other work, which sometimes was to assist in making out the accounts of tradesmen. Altogether my education for getting a living went on.

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I may now mention an incident which very much impressed my father and mother.

My father used to go often alone to Aston Sandford Church, my mother being tired at home with babies and very young children. One Sunday morning he had started and when he got to a place called the double hedges he returned home by an impulse. He opened the room door where my mother sat and said, "Mother, be sure to look after the children well today, for I dreamt that John was drowned." My mother smiled at his earnestness and especially at his return. He attended the service and walked home. When nearing home he met a girl who said, "Mr. Boddington, do you know what has happened at your house? Your John is drowned in the Mill head." My father hurried on and arrived as white as a sheet. There he found my mother, her servant, and the nurse girl all busy. The boy had fallen into the water. The nurse shrieked. My mother ran out to see what had happened. There she saw the boy in the water. He had sunk but just then rose. My mother rushed into the water which was eight or nine feet deep. She seized the child and, I suppose partly supported by her spreading clothes, managed to get out. It was accounted a very narrow escape and indeed only to estimated by a mother's love. My mother took the popular in cases of supposed drowning. She held the boy up by the feet to let the water out of him, then his clothes were stripped off him, he was wrapped in warm blankets by the fire. Presently he breathed, the treatment continued and Master John recovered.

I continued to go to school and suffered terrible floggings but these terrible canings were as nothing compared to the agony of mortification I was made to suffer. Mr. Ayres[10], one of the schoolmasters and a humane man, went over to receive his account from my grandmother. He then offered to take me for half price until my parents had got settled. This was arranged and Mr. Burnard from that time took me to walk beside his pony, and when seeing the parents of his pupils he took the opportunity of explaining that in charity they took me without pay. This he certainly did (for one quarter only). He got very much applauded for his kindness while I glowed with shame. It was so cruel of the wretched man to gain applause out of my shame and mortification. He took most frequent opportunity of telling me how grateful my mother was to his friends and then contrasted my conduct. Oh, how I hated that man at the time! There was another source of discomfort. Mrs. Ayres took two or three girls to educate with her own daughters. There was a Miss Arundale and she fell in love with me, and didn't I fall in ditto with her! We used to correspond. I pricked a vein in my hand and wrote in my blood. This I supposed would be very taking. This girl came from near Great Milton. I think on two occasions I walked over in the holidays into the neighbourhood of her home, but could not muster courage to call so came back in low spirits.

[10] The typescript has ‘Mr Ayre’ but the name appears twice thereafter as ‘Ayres’

There was a certain 'Adelaide' with Mrs. Ayres. Oh, how I hated that girl! She established a peephole through which she should command part of our playground and used to report to Mr. Burnard our misdemeanours, and many a flogging I got through that hussy's reports.

You will think that flogging was the main part of the duty of a schoolmaster, and indeed it was very important, I believe the master enjoyed the sport as much as the boys disliked it.

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A SERIOUS TROUBLE

A very good neighbour of the name of Cooper had two sons who were older than I by 2 and 4 years. They had a sister who was, I think, ten months older than I. I looked and loved but could not speak. I was very miserable and very happy. Miserable enough if Arabella, that was her name, smiled upon another, and most happy when I obtained a look, which being interpreted seemed to say to me, "I love." Time went on in this way until I was eighteen. I never spoke of love but we understood each other, though I must say I don't think she cared a bit for me. When I left Thame to go to Strangeways I was troubled about Miss Cooper. I had an excellent friend in her brother Frank who would have given all he had to have got his sister to incline to me. Alas, she took up with a fellow a little older than myself. He was brought up by an uncle whom it was expected would leave him a good business and money. This fellow, Frank her brother knew and so did I, was a wretchedly unchaste and immoral fellow. Oh, how I grieved that the girl I worshipped should be so married. Frank and I were so grieved. Frank conveyed some information to his mother, and she became my warm friend, but all could not save her. She is still living a wretched life for her husband was every way depraved. Spent all her little fortune, displeased his uncle, and was discarded by him, and has since lived to have a family and to lead his poor devoted wife a miserable existence. Her brothers have for years made her a weekly allowance which the wretched husband who is living an abandoned life sometimes has the meanness to force from her, poor thing! Hers has been a dreadfully hard case. I have never seen her since I was 21 years old.

Her brothers, very prosperous, and both dead, and have left her a living to receive weekly. Sad indeed her life has been, and still continues though she is now over seventy years old. Life is indeed a mingled yarn of good and evil, but in the lives of the most amiable woman the evil seems to predominate.

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I may mention that for a year or two before I left my native place for Manchester I had attained to considerable narrowness and conceit. For many months I ate no meat nor did I drink anything but water. I was a vegetarian not in the sense which the people calling themselves vegetarians ate more animal food than any others. Many of these surreptitious vegetarians ate from two to three to seven to eight eggs daily and a great deal of butter and milk, so that did the people generally use as much the whole family of birds and beasts would soon be exterminated. The trappists takes away our speech, the adamite our clothes, and there is nothing which God has given us but fanatics would deprive us of. I remember a sect who used to meet at a house near where I was born who effected to live religiously. They were familiarly known as White Quakers and they proposed that the Scriptures were no longer necessary to our spiritual life. The innumerable sects in America surprise us but we may remember that their oddities find their origin in every country in the world. Soon after I began to live in Manchester I found a sect of jumpers near the end of Bury St Salford. I went in one Sunday night. I sat down in an obscure corner. They were dancing, or rather jumping about, in sets, and some were praying, some on their knees, some standing or jumping in the exercise prayer, some shouting that they had found the Saviour. Presently a youth about 15 or so came up and gave me a slap on the back, saying, "Dostu believe?" I hardly knew what to do and spoke doubtfully. He then knelt down by me and said with vehemence, "I'll pray with thee." He then poured forth a stream of words with great rapidity, pausing at times and saying, "Hast thou found Him?" Presently he left me and I slipt out and took care to keep out for I was more shocked then edified.

On other occasions I went to the Hall of Science. Then I saw strange sights, sad and sickening sights of deceiver and deceived. Such places were crowded while some of the churches were almost without congregation. I had many sad thoughts over such scenes but knew not how a remedy could be found.

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In the year 1828, in October, a man whom I knew remarkably well was murdered. He was a market gardener and at times, when such work was to be had, a sawyer. His name was Edden (pronounced Eden). He was called from his fine station and very handsome face and person 'Noble Edden'. He lived at a little shop about three doors from Friday Street in what was called Middle Row. This small shop had sometimes some needlework by Edden's wife, and generally he displayed cabbage or other plants, or small shrubs or pots containing flowers which he either had sold or wished to sell.

Edden kept a pony and small cart, and every Saturday he drove to Aylesbury, taking plants, shrubs, etc. On the day above mentioned he was there and was seen to leave the town at his usual time. In his cart were some parcels which he carried for a small gratuity, and some unsold remains[11] of the stock he had taken. Edden was a man of most regular habits and his time of getting home was usually about seven or eight o'clock, the distance from Thame to Aylesbury being ten miles. On the night in question his wife had got some food ready for his supper and was anxious about her husband's return. She was ironing a cap at the end of the room furthest from the window; in a moment she gave a great scream and ran into the street. It was Saturday night and people were out shopping. Some of these people enquired as to the cause of terrorism in Mrs. Edden. She replied with exceeding agitation, "Our Noble is murdered. I saw a man in a long green coat strike him with a hammer." To reason with her had no effect in allaying her terror. Her sons lived at the Posting Inn near at hand. Ned, a post boy, was sent for to his frantic mother. He said, not unkindly for he was one of the best sons, "Mother, don't be a fool. Father will be here directly." After trying in an unavailing manner to quiet his mother he, together with another man, started off to meet his father. They found his cart tilted up in a fence in Staddenham field and the pony was grazing on the road near. Continuing their search they soon came upon the body of poor Edden. They heard a faint groan and all was over. His body was brought home; his wife, though distressed, expected the result, so strong was her belief in the vision she had seen.

Now the description of the dress, a green top coat, was so singular that after the usual wonderment it was mentioned that 'Ben Tyler' had been seen draped in a green top coat. Ben was altogether a loose fish, a fighting man, a dealer in fish which he brought from London (45 miles). For this purpose he had a scarecrow of a horse, but thoroughbred and wonderful goer. He would bring down from London a quantity of pickled salmon and salt fish and some fresh fish if ordered. Fish at this time long before the opening of the railways was in the country a very rare food, and Ben Tyler's supplies were appreciated. An after discovery, however, upset the bile of many who were customers. It was brought about in a singular manner.

A man whom I well knew, for he used to mow our hay grass, his name being James Harvey, was passing through Thame church in the grey of the morning and he saw something white lying beside a newly made grave. It was the grave of a young woman who had died in a rather singular way soon after marriage. Harvey went to the grave and found a piece of calico torn off the shroud. The grave was imperfectly made up, having been hastily filled. This was talked of and an investigation proved that the body had been stolen. It caused quite a consternation. Other graves were examined and three or four others were found untenanted. Who could the delinquent be? Ben Tyler was suspected for a high wheeled cart had been seen by a man belated standing under the shelter of the churchyard wall. The reasons for his frequent journeys to and from London were now apparent. The bodies went up to be sold to the hospitals, and the fish came down to be eaten by Ben's customers. A very pretty trade was thus carried on. Ben received usually 8 or 9 pounds for his subject. At this time the surgeons had great difficulty in getting bodies to illustrate their lectures to students. 'Bodysnatching', as it was called, became a common occupation. Presently the church yards were watched nightly at the Parish expense and then the thing took a very frightful form. Many destitute and friendless persons were murdered and these murders were so skilfully performed that they would pass as death from natural causes. The bribe of 8 or 9 pounds stimulated the necessary supply, and several detected murderers were hanged, notoriously Burke and Hare and subsequently a wretch named Goodacre. It came to be called Burking from this wretched Burke. The murders were usually done by placing a pitch plaster over the nose and mouth. After, when death ensued, the plaster was removed, and as no marks of violence appeared it was supposed a case of sudden death from apoplexy. There was a popular song. One verse runs thus, "Oh, 'tis a sad disaster to see a handsome, dashing girl and over her mouth a plaster."

After this an Act of Parliament provided that the bodies of paupers who had no friends were handed over to the hospitals on the interests of surgery and anatomy. The murder of Noble Edden caused a great scare. Ben Tyler did wear a green coat. He was seen to be on the road near Scots Grove Hill within about three miles of where Edden was found. He was afterwards seen in company with a young man named Solomon Sewell. A man named Howlett was out in a lane near to his house and a man in passing said to him, "Have you heard that Noble Edden has been murdered?" How Solomon Sewell's father had said to Howlett, "I wonder what our Solomon has been up to. He came home about midnight and he would come into bed with his mother and me. He shook like aspen

[11] The typescript has ‘some remains unsold’

and was in a muck sweat. I expect the keepers had been upon him." Solomon was notoriously a poacher. The mean Howlett told what he had heard. Circumstances followed. He was taken up together with Tyler. The evidence was insufficient. However, soon afterwards it came out that Tyler had borrowed a long-handled coal hammer. Edden's drab top-coat was marked with a round black mark which seemed to correspond with the head of the coal hammer. Other circumstances came out, and eventually these men were hanged at Aylesbury. Edden was greatly regretted and the just vengeance of the Law was considered a proper end of the dreadful crime. It was supposed that Tyler intended to take the body to London but was disturbed. But murder will out.

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I may now relate something of my Manchester experience. I went to Strangeways Brewery in December, 1832. My brother John was already there and held an important post. I had only been in the office and in the Brewery a few weeks when a Mr. Lockwood, a salesman, who had only been there a few weeks before I had come, was discovered to be a defaulter. He had received some sums of money which he took to himself and made no entry in the Cash Book. He bolted. I was at once sent out to discover how far his defalcations extended and, as I was young and most anxious to make good impressions on the customers and my employers, I did very well consider how and the best way to this good end.

I gained the confidence of my customers and, what was of the greatest consequence, the confidence of my employers. One remarkable instance I may recount. I had been on my Radcliffe journey. It was a long day's work for I went on to Cocky-moor and Turton. It had been an exceedingly wet day, a day in a thousand, for it rained without ceasing. I got back about seven o'clock. Mr. Harrison was in the office waiting to see me. He said, "I fear you are very wet." "Yes," I said, "my very shirt is sopping wet." "Why," said he, "I wanted you to go to Nottingham tonight to take the cash to Mr. Hole." "Very well," I said, "when does the coach start?" "At half-past eight o'clock." I went home to change and get ready, and when he returned he had got the cash ready.

Banks and cheques were not much used at that time, about 1834 or 5. He gave me a little canvas bag. It contained 200 sovereigns. He said, "Put it into your waistcoat pocket." I put another bag, and similarly lined, into my other waistcoat pocket. He then gave me two larger bags containing 400 sovereigns each. These were carefully stowed in my trouser pockets, making a thousand pounds in gold. He then gave me £4000 in Bank notes. These I put into two note cases and deposit in the back pockets of my coat. I was about to get a ticket for an outside seat. Mr. H. would not allow me to do this. I must travel as an inside passenger. I did so, arriving at Derby about half-past four o'clock. I was too much afraid for my money to go into any house, so when the coach reached the 'Tiger' I would not venture in but determined to walk about until the coach for Nottingham started at seven o'clock. Thus I kept walking about for 2 and a half hours, only stopping once to enter St Alman's Church where some repairs were going on. I sat there for a few, very few, moments. I got up with the driver of the coach for Nottingham. He was a most pleasant man and gave me many particulars on the road. He little suspected that the lad beside him had the thousands about him. I got down at the 'Flying Horse Inn' where Mr. Hole usually put up. I enquired for him and found he usually arrived about ten o'clock as he had 20 miles or more to ride or drive from his home. I went to a bedroom, locked the door, and ascertained my state of cash. I then washed and put my clothes straight. This little incident happened, I rang the bell and when the chambermaid appeared I put on my most pleasant look and said, "Can you be so obliging as to let me have the use of a hairbrush and comb?" She departed and presently brought me her articles of toilet, a very poor little brush and comb. However, she showed a willingness to oblige and I was grateful for though but a young one I remembered Shakespeare that travellers meet with strange bed-fellows.

The inn of fifty years ago was very inferior to ours. No table napkin was then used in the best inns and the table cloth frequently showed the wash-tub and it were not of recent acquaintance. To keep the commercial room to the occupants it was reserved for, a set of rules were enforced. At dinner a pint of wine generally charged 2/6 only was expected to be had. If not, it was put into the bill. Smoking was permitted: tales, songs and often a good deal of wit was exhibited and funny sayings of the customers repeated.

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I may for a bit return to my early boyhood. I had a godfather, one Thomas Monday. He had three daughters. The elder ones were very healthy, strong young women and they married while young. The youngest daughter was in ill-health for two or three years, and then she died at about 19 or 20 years old. During her consumptive illness she used to ride on fine days a very fine white donkey her father had bought for her use. Mary rode on a well-padded side-saddle and I was perched behind on a pad. A band or sash went round Mary's waist and a loop was there for me to put my hand through so that I might retain my balance. Thus I had many a happy ride. I knew not that my dear friend Mary was near her end. She died and the father sent the

donkey for my use. I was proud. By getting on to a stool I could lift my little saddle to its back and then fasten its girth. I frequently used to ride to my grandmother's at Cuddington and met with many troubles from boys throwing stones etc. I however never had any serious accidents and was greatly envied by other boys. One day I realised a strange belief which greatly prevailed. I was riding down Friday Street, Thame, going from Mr. Monday's who lived about opposite the white house pond, going, I say, down to my home at Thame Mill. In passing some cottages three or four women came out. One seized my donkey's bridle saying, "We won't hurt you nor him, Master Henry." One woman on each side of my donkey began to clip off some of the dark hairs which run across the shoulders of a donkey. When they had cut what they required I was suffered to pass on. The black stripe across the shoulders of an ass was, so 'tis believed, left by the Saviour whose legs crossed the "foal where on man never sat". The Saviour's legs left this distinctive mark. The children of these women were suffering from fever and the hairs thus procured were a sovereign and never-failing cure to certain dangerous fevers. This belief and many others then prevailed - among others the nailing of a horseshoe on the stable door. This precaution prevented witches from riding the animals at night.

There lived near to our school a very wicked old man. His name was, I think, Oliver. He could raise the Devil and make him visible. He used to make a large circle of chalk on the floor. Then he deposited his magic glass and conjuring book. When all was prepared he began to say the Lord's Prayer backward. Before he had got halfway through his audience fled in terror, and none that I ever heard of ever saw his Infernal Majesty.

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In my last I recounted some of the superstitious beliefs. I may now name some customs which prevailed.

There was a fair held in October at Thame. To this fair the young people who desired a service came to be hired. The farmers and others came to select such servants as they required. This fair was called the Statute Fair. The servants stood in rows near to the 'Greyhound Inn.' The young men dressed in clean white smock frocks. Those who were shepherds had in their hat bands a piece of wool as denoting that they were desiring a situation as shepherds. Others who offered themselves as carters or team men had a piece of whipcord in their hats, and others a bit of cow-hair to show that they were milkers. The farmers looked these men over and having selected one took that one aside and enquired with whom he had lived, what wages he wanted, where he came from, and many other questions, and if supposed sensible hired the young man. The wages were about eight to twelve pounds for five weeks. The day was appointed for him to come.

These young men lived and slept in the master's house. They had for breakfast a bowl of milk or a small beer, some bread and cheese or bread and bacon, commonly cold boiled bacon. At noon they came in and had bacon and cabbage. Few potatoes were then used. This food was washed down with an unlimited supply of small beer in harvest, and very busy times they sat in what was usually called the men's kitchen. They had bread and cheese and small beer for supper and usually went to bed at about eight or nine o'clock.

They were never allowed to go upstairs in their shoes. These were left at the stair foot ready to put on in the morning. These working shoes were brushed about once a week and then oiled or greased. Most of them had a lighter pair of shoes blacked and put on when they prepared after breakfast to go to church or chapel. On Sunday they commonly had beef mutton, or pork for dinner with a good supply of cabbage. Sometimes they had soup or broth with their meat. They helped themselves to the small beer in many houses. In some others a fixed quantity was placed for them. The servant maid or maids waited upon them and dined there after the family had finished. Then the maids washed, went upstairs and came down to walk out with their sweethearts to church, or for a walk and a gossip with their other friends.

A good dairy maid who was experienced in making up butter would get from seven to nine pounds, and a young girl to work in the house had four or five pounds. On such wages they managed to clothe themselves very tidily. These servants could read, taught often by a kind mistress, but writing was an art not often known. My father used to tell a laughable story. One of these girls got a message conveyed to her young man by a friend. She desired to know if she was to engage herself at Michaelmas or whether he intended to marry. Poor Hodge scrupled to let anybody know his secret intention. However, he, a shepherd, had lost a sheep by death. He took out one of the sheep's eyes and made a small parcel of it with a lock of the sheep's wool. Thus he managed to convey his intention. It read 'eye wool', which she read as an affirmative answer, "I will." This sounds vastly funny in these days of the fourth standard but was as true as literal.

How these things show the changed tide of affairs. I am not going back beyond my own father's days and even in my own life, going back sixty or seventy years, things were about the same.

We had a man in Thame who was deaf and almost unable to articulate. He could make himself understood a little to those used to his chopping way of trying to imitate speech. He was standing by a little public house called the 'Red Cow' kept by an old woman named Burham. She considered herself indebted to this man whose name was Derrick. They were in a difficulty and as my father was passing Molly Burham, addressing him, said, "I want to give him a duck for his dinner." She had chalked in a rude way 'Doc for u'. This had completely puzzled poor Derrick. He was a man in very good circumstances and had great pains taken with him to teach him reading and writing. Molly's spelling had mixed him. He was very much excited and gobbled out, "Doc, doc!" My father discovered the difficulty and rubbing out 'Doc for u' he wrote 'Duck for you.' His mirth was grotesque as he kept exclaiming "Doc for u."

This old Molly Burham was a curiosity, such a little stout old dame and so perfectly innocent.

She was very poor and could only get one cask of beer at a time. From this she managed to draw two qualities of beer and one porter!!

There were two shops I frequented when I had a penny given to me. At one of these Kitty Treadwell lived. She sold stewed pears. They were a large coarse sort which were cut into pieces and when well stewed in treacle and water were very good .

I often for a ha'worth, and if I looked longingly through the window being without the coin dear old Kitty would call me in and trust me a ha'worth. I believe I was always careful to pay with the first coin I got.

NANNY TULEY

Oh, Nanny, how well I remember you! Whichever way the wind blew, North, South, East or West it was always on its destination to Nanny Tuley. She heard everything, and having a lively imagination she could embellish her news. Barber Simon lived close to Nanny's cottage. He used to take two apprentices.

Nanny sold sweets, and to get these apprentices to supply her with news she gave them large ha'worths.

Of course, in their course of business their business was to lather the would be shaved and to sweep up the clippings of hair from the heads of those who came to have their hair cut.

All the gossip of the district was sure to filter into Barber Simon's place of business, and the filtration received such additions as the lively imaginations of the hearers and retailers could invent. No little quarrel between man and wife happened but it got to Nanny's ears. If the husband put an extra piece of sugar in his cup or spread an extravagant quantity of butter on his bread Nanny was sure some day the husband would go off and leave his wife and serve her right, said Nanny, for it is her spending that keeps them poor. Why she has three flounces to that last gown of hers and it is the fourth gown she has had since Easter. That is the way the money goes and she drives her husband to the public house. So the gossip went and everybody was brought under censure or praise. Nanny Tuley used in fair weather to sit outside. She had a little table on which on summer she made gooseberry pies.

This was the process. She out a bit of dough, then turned up the edge of the dough and crimped with her fingers, pit in six or eight little gooseberries, poured in from a suitable jug a few drops of treacle and water, put a cover of dough on the top, making a stab with her closed scissors to leave an orifice for the boiling interior and then placed the savoury pie in the oven. In putting on the top crust Nanny dipped her finger into a teacup held so much water, sometimes the water was used and then Nanny would set her finger at her mouth and this finish. These little pies were sold at a half penny each and I used often to indulge in a pie and thought them excellent.

As time went on I began to take exception to Nanny Tuley's pies. There was a very good shop kept by a Mrs. Munday. Her husband was a wool-sorter at Miss Payne's, Lashlake. The wife made tea cakes and especially tartlets which were most delicate and sold at a penny, and larger ones at two pence each.

My father had a lock-up shop in the town for the convenience of serving his customers with flour, provender, etc. It was open on Tuesday and Saturday. I was often on duty here and was instructed to fetch my father or any other member of the family when customers came. A certain Mr. Thomas Palmer West owned this shop and lived in a

small house adjoining. He was a man of estate. Beside the sop and house in which he lived he had also a nice little farm of excellent land about 50 to 60 acres. It was on these rents he lived.

He lived a recluse kind of life and hardly ever entered into talk with others. Such was our distant cousin Thomas Palmer West. I seemed to attract him. He used to pat me on the head and he very often brought me a nice tartlet from Mrs. Munday.

Let me more fully describe Mr. West. He was a tall man, always was dressed in black, wearing black knee-breeches and black stockings. His hands attracted my attention. They were so yellow looking. His nails were three or four times as long as any others I had seen. Under those nails there appeared a most repulsive black deposit. He usually used to bring the little tart in a bit of paper supplied at the shop. One day he brought it in those fingers. I took it from him and as he turned to go away I did not expect to see him again. For some cause or fancy as ill luck would have it he returned and I had just deposited his present under the fire grate. He was most angry and from that time until his death a year or two later he never took any notice of me. It was usually said that by this wasteful trick I had lost the estate. I could not fancy eating my pick of dirt all at once. It was a very sad business. However, youth is hopeful and I got over it much easier than some of my relations. Perhaps it was all supposition.

I remember my father's cousin the Peer and Solomon Piggott used to come pretty frequently and rest his horse as he journeyed to Oxford where he had a son at the university. He always promised to find a place for me in London. I have sometimes, after he had gone, heard my father and mother talking and I found my father thought him quite insincere as indeed he was.

People who are poor seem to have an especial idea that somebody will push the fortunes of their children.

LACE MAKING

To make lace on an oblong pillow the pillow was inside a package of straw, therefore very light and handy to hold, the exterior brown holland.

A quantity of pins were placed near the head of the pillow, it was held in the girls lap as she sat. The pattern on a yellow-coloured piece of cardboard was fastened onto the pillow. This pattern was pierced with holes and a pin was inserted in each hole. As the work went on the pattern was removed forward as the pattern was worked out. The girls who were lacemakers usually assembled together at some neighbour's house. This person superintended the work for a small fee.

A custom prevailed in the winter in which each girl took with her a small brown porringer, in this was placed some wood ashes and some live embers upon these ashes. The girls when they sat down placed these subdued fires between their feet and thus counteracted the cold effect of the cold brick floors, for in these days such a thing as a drain to keep the floor dry was not yet established.

I used as a child to go into the cottage of a Mrs. Ecles where I think, guessing from memory, about thirty girls were closely wedged into a cottage. The work then went on and a most pleasant sound was produced by the little bobbins as they were constantly removed down the pattern card.

The earnings of these girls was a very small sum weekly, about 1/6 to 2/6. These small earnings were got by young girls who made a narrow lace such as was used for edging. The older girls who made much more elaborate patterns earned from 2/- or 3/- up to 5/- or 7/-, but those who made broad black or white lace the black lace commanded the highest price.

The lace man, the buyer, came periodically about every two or three weeks. He usually found the pattern cards and the fine thread of which the lace was made. He deducted his charge for these things and paid a balance to the workers.

These very small wages were a help in poor families where the means of living were difficult to be obtained, for after the close of the war times were very bad for the farmers and trades people and fell more grievously still on the labourer.

People remembered with regretful bitterness the past good times.

I may mention that at the end of the pillow bobbins or as some of them were fastened with a bit of thread or a hair a little circlet of glass beads and these with the sound of the bobbins gave out quite a charming sound.[12]

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The games and amusements most popular were cricket, football and baseball or tennis. Running races among boys was a popular amusement. Fighting was a very common custom, and this often not from anger or malice but for manhood. And boys were matched in size, age and inches with great care, and often learnt the art of boxing in padded gloves.

I think the fighting of boys was looked on with approval by their seniors. A field called the Hogfair, a piece of free ground was the place most used for the purpose of settling matters. Why it was called the above name I know not for pigs were not exhibited there.

The bull-baits were begun in this field but they sometimes continued into the High Street. These exhibitions had in my days begun to be thought low and brutal but I have heard Mr. Moore say that they used to be looked on with great approval. "Ah, Harry," he would say, "I have seen all the parsons and doctors and the lawyers at the bull-baits."

The bull-baits began to be voted vulgar and cruel about 1825 to 1830 and were suppressed. The last bull-bait in Lancashire were at Eccles of which I give below copy of the printer's bill, and one year later at Ratcliffe Bridge.

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I have said that Ratcliffe held out one year longer than Eccles with its bull-baiting. I was riding through Ratcliffe on business on this last bull-baiting. The sport was held on the gravel bed just below the bridge, the river being very low. I sat on my horse by the bridge to see the sport. The bull, a very magnificent animal probably four years old, seemed to match the bull-dog as he closed in on him and several times tossed a dog high in the air. Presently the blackguards set two dogs on at the same time. One enormous dog held the bull by the nose while the other was hanging on the poor fellow's dewlap. The bull in his torture made a furious rush. Snap went the rope, and the bull rushed out of the ring. The people in their fear and hurry to get away fell down and many others fell over the first - it was a sight! The bull rushed on trampling on some the farther he came up the steep bank on to the road. I kept my horse as I could. He passed me almost brushing me off and up the hill he went. The people cried to shut the gate for at that day the turnpikes were still there. The gate-keeper shut the gates. The bull struck out onto the footpath where some posts were placed to keep vehicles off it. The bull with great ease jumped these and passed on to his home. Now I wish to relate a circumstance which marks the change which has occurred. This very animal belonged to the Lady Bountiful of the district, a Mrs. Rossbottom, a woman quite above the common in every good social quality, a woman of devoted piety too and yet she had lent her bull to be baited.

If as it has been said religion and morality are matters of latitude surely this incident in recent times, about 1834, proclaims the fact that time works strange changes in our way of thinking and acting.

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I can't say I ever saw a cock-fight, but such things were and very large sums were risked on cock battles.

The sports and amusements of ordinary people were of a rude and often vulgar sort. They were however all tending to rude manhood.

On Easter Monday the throwing at cocks was a common practise and a very cruel custom it was. The cock's leg was fastened by a string to a peg and then at a distance of about twenty yards the throwers aimed at the poor tethered cock. Often his limbs were broken and he was killed, the notion being that killed in that way he was better eating than when killed in the ordinary way.

There is, I am glad to say, much less coarseness, much less profane swearing, much less vulgar joking, less prurient language, but I fear there is something more of lying and insincerity, more tricks in trade.

[12] As written in the typescript: no doubt, some words were omitted.

The aspect is changed certainly, but man is very frail. When I first came to Lancashire the one thing above all which disgusted and repelled me was the Lancashire mode of what they called fighting. This was what was done or attempted:- to get hold of your adversary, to wrestle and get him down, and then to battle, the one on the top beating about the head his opponent and what was called kneading, a process of pressing the knees into your adversary's stomach, the underlying man being quiet and withstanding his powers till the top man had lost some of his power, then the under man having gained his wind and powers turned his man and became uppermost. When the process was repeated and thus with alternative force until one was too much exhausted to continue and his backers seeing their man had no chance threw up the sponge, or sometimes the beaten man got a hand loose to hold it up which was a sign of defeat.

THE WAR

During the time when the British Navy were so successful in taking the French ships the prisoners became so numerous as to become difficult of disposal. The prison ships were crowded and so was every other available place of durance. Now Thame being an inland town far away from the coast many of the superior prisoners who had some means, or friends, obtained liberty on their 'parole of honour'. This their engagement was to the effect that if relieved from durance they would not attempt to escape. These French prisoners, principally soldiers, engaged with the English authorities to confine themselves within a prescribed limit at Thame. Their boundaries were fixed at about one mile from the market-place. If found straying beyond this fixed limit their parole was forfeited. Of course the longing for home did lead many to risk the danger of escape and the desire to be again in military employment. For though they would not incur the fatal punishment for acting against the English the French government put them on garrison duty in distant places or otherwise used their services. These French prisoners retaining their native gallantry and moreover not much restrained by moral considerations sometimes used the English 'fair' as a means of escape. Some English women and girls gave their confidence to French soldiers and with, as we may suppose, very bad results to themselves.

Of such importunate results Thame yielded some very painful instances. Neither the happiness nor the virtue of our country escaped damage. The French prisoners were, many of them, without the means of living and our authorities allowed them a small sum to live on, discriminating between the 'line' and those of higher rank. Many of the Frenchmen were adepts as making small toys and ornaments, and by such means kept themselves above starvation point. The men who were able to work in hay and harvest times usually got rations and a small fee for their services. I cannot state with any certainty of being exact how many of these French prisoners were located at Thame but I have heard about 140 as the number there fixed, but this number must be received as mere report. I believe as a rule the behaviour of both sides was tolerably decorous, and disputes and quarrels were not common.

In my next chapter I will recount and amusing incident which happened in my own family connections.

Before I tell you the incident which arose out of the narrative I may say that during the long French war the most extravagant notions were promulgated about 'Boney'. He was said to breakfast on children, and ignorant mothers and nurses told their children these dreadful things to keep them good.

Very recently I saw the death of a Miss Sexton at the ripe age of 82. This was the Nanny Sexton, the nurse of my childhood. When I was a very young child I together with two or three others was taken by Nanny into some attic rooms where two millers slept. Pitt's window tax was on, and the windows, to avoid the tax, which was, I think, about seven shillings a window, were stopped up and a very small wood slide shutter opened to admit so much light as to warn the men of the dawn. We were taken up to these attics by our nurse. She drew aside the slide light, and pulling a bed forward showed us a door which she opened behind the bed. "There," she said, "children, that is where we shall hide "when Boney comes." This was, I suppose, during the hundred days subsequent to the escape from Elba. I remember every object now, this shows how intense was the feeling held about Napoleon by children. The bed in which the two millers slept was hung with curtains of blue and white, a very usual style of bed hanging at that time. The men's clothes-boxes are in my sight and indeed after an interval of seventy years things I then saw remain with me precisely as they were.

In my next I will try to relate the anecdote I have alluded to - it deserves to be chronicled.

"THEY BE COME."

My uncle Hollyman held a farm in Cuddington and on a certain day it was found that one of his cows was ill. He called up a rustic youth who worked on the farm and desired him to go to a druggist in Thame and bring a "drink". This remedy, commonly called a "drink", was a remedy for the ailment by which the animal was suffering. The youth started and had got to the turn in the road of Scots-grove Hill. Now the French officer there was a M. Fole, a man of most unusual height. He was a good way up into the third yard, being six foot five inches in height. Fole in full costume with four others was walking out the prisoner's mile. The unusual height and fine appearance of Fole was a sight in company with his companions. They had just reached the turn in the road of Scots-grove Hill when the rustic, sent by my uncle, reached the turn of this road. He looked at the French officers, then turned and ran with the greatest speed back home to the farm. He had fully three miles to run and he kept up his speed, and rushing into the farm kitchen were taking a pipe after doing some offices for the sick cow the rustic exhausted be fear and the long flight cried out, "They be come," and fell down on the kitchen floor in a convulsion. For a time the observers thought the youth dying. Presently some remedies having been used the youth fell into a relapse on questions being put to him. Convulsion succeeded convulsion, in lucid intervals he again and again exclaimed, "They be come."

The poor young fellow just catching sight of these officers supposed them to be the advance guard of the French army and probably he believed M. Fole to be the veritable Boney the terror of whose name and exploits caused such fear. Poor fellow, he had to endure the questions sometimes in the subjunctive, "Be they come," sometimes in the positive "They be come, Jack." How easily the vulgar take up and nurse a saying. It was no joke to this poor fellow, "They be come."

In my next chapter I have a tragedy to record.

I dare say if a true account could be given no town, village or hamlet would be without its story of sorrow and wonder. Cuddington was a small and very insignificant place, the community below in intelligence that of many other places for the reason that the place lay off from the great highways. To the people of this day it may seem very strange that its people were much less intelligent. They were so isolated as to see nothing out of their narrow circle. In this little village, remote from ordinary society, there lived a young man whose criminal exploits were the wonders of his neighbours. His neighbours knew pretty much the desolate life he led. I will first try to recount to you so much of his history as will give a general idea of his life and daring ventures, the end being a sad one.

The subject of the sad story and some of its more daring incidents I will now proceed to give my readers.

There lived about the close of the last century a family of the name of 'Plater'. The father of this family had died a comparatively young man, leaving a widow and several children. The eldest son, Tim Plater, was a very handsome, well-formed man and good at all sports of the times. He had got through an indulgent mother a very beautiful black mare. With this most excellent mare he withheld the worlds with daring deeds of horsemanship. My father, a youth of this time, used to speak in terms of admiration of Plater's mare. The young man early in life, had got into wild, dissolute company. He was often heard returning home in the little hours of the morning. How his extravagant habits were kept up caused a good deal of gossiping wonder.

Presently Plater showed decided signs of vice. After the period when he was no longer a youth some robberies were committed. However Plater was not suspected. He kept up his riotous course and had got himself associated with some loose, poaching fellows. Several robberies had been done. At length a bold stroke was planned. At Ridgbarn Farm, then and for many years occupied by a Mr. Hill, after his tenancy my uncle succeeded him. During Hill's tenancy he lived in the village, for at this time no house was at Ridgbarn but only the usual farm buildings. One night a fire broke out and the whole of the farm standing was destroyed. Eleven horses were burned or smothered in this terrible fire. It also happened that some stacks of wheat, having been thrashed, winnowed and put into sacks with the purpose of the owner of selling the wheat were there - I have been told by my father fifteen quarters of wheat so prepared. This wheat was set up close together on the floor of one of the barns. When the debris came to be examined one sack was found partially burned. The question arose, what has become of the other twenty-nine sacks. Speculation was rife. The one sack partially burned was

covered over with charred wheat. What, said the people, has become of the twenty-nine sacks and the wheat. Evidently it had been removed. Search warrants were got and in a dry well the sacks were found empty, and in Plater's barn a very large quantity of wheat found mixed with earing or the chaff of wheat. This, when examined, looked very like Mr. Hill's wheat. The robbery was plain enough but no sufficient proof could be got and all ended in more suspicion. How strongly this illustrates the lack of police, but it certainly more fully indicates the general absence of crime. Mr. Thomas Plater's course was continued. Still his mare's foot was heard returning in the early hours. However successfully a course of crime may come for a time run the day usually comes which brings on detection and exposure followed by punishment.

Mr. Plater's detection occurred in a very singular way. He had gone down from London in an Oxford coach. He left the coach at the Three Pigeons, for at that little inn his famous black mare was in readiness for him. He rode to Oxford[13] down the Abingdon Road when his mare flung a shoe and he was obliged to stop. It was after the usual hours of work with the blacksmith. By the offer of extra pay the smith was induced to blow up his fire. In the meantime Plater asked the innkeeper if he kept a riding horse. Being answered in the affirmative Plater hired the horse saying that he had a business appointment a few miles down the Abingdon Road. Plater had not left the inn more than an hour when a man rode into the yard in great disorder. He was a commercial traveller, well known at their inn. He said to the landlord, "Where is your horse?" He said, "The owner is gone down the Abingdon Road." "Well," said the commercial traveller, "Whoever is riding your horse has robbed me. He rode up to me, presented a pistol, and to save my life I delivered my purse containing about eight pounds."

Very soon Mr. Plater rode into the inn yard. He was charged with the robbery. The plunder was found on his person. He was committed to the Assizes. Before the trial he was seized with that terrible fever known as the black fever or jail fever and he died. Some of his wealthy friends procured him to be buried outside the precincts of the jail which they saw done. A good many ill-informed people spread a report that he was saved, that he was disguised and then sent into exile. Both these theories had their believers, and I offer you the benefit of selecting one.

I will now relate a little affair in which my grandfather bore a part, and not a very creditable part. His father, you will remember, was a clever practical man but also a superior scholar, superior, I mean, to most at the middle of the eighteenth century. He, like a good father, was very anxious that his son should receive the same instruction at the best school he knew of. My grandfather as a boy was placed at a boarding school for the purpose of improvement for he was slow and backward. He took a dislike to this school and having made some preparations left his bedroom stealthily at night and ran away.

His absence was discovered and a messenger was sent off to Cuddington. Search was made, every enquiry instituted, but without discerning the boy. The incident shows how very slowly the news circulated in those times I am speaking of. He was absent for four or five months, then his father discovered his retreat. He was employed in a small mill on one of the tributaries of the Thames. He was brought home and his father said if he would not go to work he would set him to work. To work he had no great dislike. He was employed in the mills. He could start or stop either water or wind mills. In the early morn as in the evening he assisted with the milking. He became quite an adept at these employments and was most useful to his father.

I have given you in my narrative a picture of the very free and easy terms on which servants and their masters lived. My grandfather, of whom I am now speaking, slept with a servant youth, by name Tom Frost. Tom was a 'nointed' bad one. He was three or four years older than my grandfather. There was a great difference in the two physically and mentally. My grandfather was a stout, compactly made youth, short in stature, but as strong as a cart horse. He was in all his combats renowned for being hard to beat. Tom Frost was a very fine specimen of a man, tall and straight as a poplar tree and withal good-looking too. He was a great favourite with the village girls, but he was idle and good for nothing. He knew there was no chance of his being hired for a further term when October came round. It was now early in June. My grandfather, hail, rain or shine, always began mowing on the eighteenth of June unless that date fell on a Sunday. Tom Frost had no idea of staying to work through hay and corn harvest. He plied my grandfather with agreeable accounts of the pleasures of liberty. To go 'up-pards' was a great and pleasant trip or exploit and he persuaded the boy; and they sleeping in the same bed had little difficulty in escaping unobserved. They pushed on with haste through the early hours of morning and when they had got, as they supposed, beyond pursuit they sat down to rest and consider how they should breakfast. "What money have you brought?" said the politic Mr. Frost. My grandfather exhibited his store, one shilling and sixpence in silver and two pence half penny in copper. "What, is that all, and I thought you always carried

[13] The typescript says ‘he rode the Oxford down the Abingdon Road’

ten or fifteen shillings!" However, they agreed to breakfast at the next little roadside inn they came to. Very soon they reached one they thought would do. It had now got to about nine o'clock. The innkeeper united his employment with that of a small farmer. He had been mowing his hay crop and he and his wife and daughter had gone into the hayfield to shake out the swathes, and old grand-dame was alone in the house when they entered. Tom boldly asked for bread and cheese and a pint of beer. These were brought by the old lady whom they noticed was lame and walked with the help of a stick. She brought the cheese and the beer which the most hungry boys highly relished. "Let us have another pint," said Tom. This was brought and with more bread and cheese was soon dispatched. "Now," said Mr. Frost, "give us another pint and tell us what we have to pay." Frost had noticed that the old woman was lame and went down the cellar steps with difficulty by the help of her stick. He had also noticed that the entrance door to the cellar had on the outside a wooden button to make the door fast. So soon as the old dame had gone down a few steps Frost shut the door and fastened it. He then said to my grandfather, "Come along, we have no time to lose." My grandfather scared by the roguish effrontery of Frost went off at a double quick, nor did they lessen their pace till they had got miles away from the old dame's place of durance. They then sat down on a bank in a field and here my grandfather cried and declared he would find his way back and release the old woman and pay for their refreshments. Frost silenced him by saying, "If you go back they will take you up, put you in jail and send you into exile where you will never see your mother and father again." Thus frightened he continued to go on with Frost. This was his first dishonest act. Let us hope it may be his only one.

They journeyed on. It was getting towards the close of the day. As they went through a part of the country almost without inhabitants they began to be in some anxiety as to where they should spend the night, when turning the corner of a lane they suddenly came upon a nice snug little cottage, and sitting at the door smoking a pipe was an oldish man to whom they addressed themselves. He said it was five or six miles to the next village. They complained of being tired and asked if he could allow them to sleep in a shed or outhouse. To this he replied by showing them some clean straw in a shed. He said, "I will fetch you a couple of sacks." This he did. They got into these. The old man brought them some milk and a slice of bread and my grandfather said he never passed a night more pleasantly. They offered to pay their host in such of the money as they had which he refused to receive, and they journeyed on by his directions. Before they had gone many miles they came upon a water-mill on a branch of the Thames, and there my grandfather, being a skilled miller, got employment: his wages 7s. a week and his dinner. Now Mr. Frost had suggested that the one that got into work first should keep his fellow until he too had procured employment.

If my reader will remember, Mr. Frost was one of those people whose office it is said to be that they tempt the Devil - the Devil tempts every kind of sinner except the idle man and it is the business of the idle man to tempt the Devil. Mr. Frost was such a man and his solution to his young companion was an act of policy.

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MY MOTHER

My mother was the only daughter of John and Sarah Moore. She was born in the year 1778 at Lane-ends Farm, Little Marlow, Bucks. This farm, and together with it in subsequent years Little Marlow Abbey Farm, was occupied by my grandfather, John Moore. He also had a large business as purveyor of wood to Windsor Castle. His Gracious Majesty, George the 3rd, used wood fires. My grandfather might, if he had been a prudent man have died rich. He was very imprudent and died in 1818 very poor.

My grandmother's maiden name was Wynch and she was first married to Mr. Thomas Medwin. They lived together five years. She was then a childless widow five years. She then married my grandfather John Moore, and she died April 27, 1802, aged 58 years, when my mother, the subject of this memoir was twenty-four years old.

My mother was educated at South Weston school by[14].....

The piece of needle work, the 'Young Lavinia', was executed at that school, and does great credit to the establishment. Indeed the school was very competently managed and turned out very well educated and some very accomplished women. My mother was in person rather small and very slight in figure, but remarkably well made with very pretty hands and feet. My father used jokingly to say that he fell in love with her 'lark-heels'.

[14] The typed transcript contains just that. Either the original handwritten version was illegible, or Henry Boddington omitted to complete the sentence.

Ladies dresses were in that day worn short and doubtless a pretty foot and neatly turned ankle were no inconsiderable attraction. She was, in face and feature, remarkably pretty, so much so that I have been told by old ladies who were the friends of her youth that she was the prettiest girl they had ever seen. For refinement, for every good and amiable and true womanly quality she was indescribable, so lovely, so kind, so good. Brought up in the English Church she was as nearly sinless as human nature ever attained to. The clergyman of her parish was a very inconsistent character. He had the habits and characteristics which were lamentably common in the Church in the period of her young life (born 1778). When she attained to womanhood she grieved over the dreadfully low state of religious feeling in her parish and the locality. Every sort of immorality was with little or no attempt to concealment practised by the clergy and their parishioners. About the end of the last and beginning of the present century the Methodists put in a claim to attention, and my mother, subdued by the loss of their good mother, -- she so tender-hearted and so truly religious in feeling -- grieved and borne down by the coarse drunkenness of the clergyman who profanely was heard to remark in his excesses with his cogregation in their social doings -- "Mind you go by the light and not by the lant-horn." At this time it was that my mother was induced to go to a service held by an itinerant Methodist in a cottage at Little Marlow. She heard with breathless attention the preacher, his wildly impassioned earnestness, the fanatical fervour with which he called on his hearers to accept salvation through the merits of the Redeemer, his gesticulations and voice loud, passionate and varied produced effects such as are commonly produced. My mother, suffering and sorrowful by her bereavements was rendered more unhappy by what she had now heard. Much too refined by nature and association and educated in a superior manner she could not find the comfort and relief she so much needed among the Methodists. For a time she attended all such offices of the Church as were open to her with earnest assiduity. Her tender conscience caused her to grieve over the daily irregularity she was the witness of. About this time her father contracted a second marriage, introducing a young and vulgar woman to his home. Only a few weeks after my mother left home on a visit to her only brother, and from his house she went to stay with a Mrs. Gurney, who had a short time before been married, my mother being her first bridesmaid.

Mrs. Gurney had been at South Weston school with my mother. It was at this time that returning home from the Church she first saw my father. They met in a footway leading to Winchendon. My father returning with my uncle, Mr. Hollyman, from a walk met Mrs. Gurney, the bride, and being known to my uncle and my father she introduced my mother. After they had chatted a little while they went on their several ways. My father was silent for a while, presently he said, "Will, if ever I am to be married that Miss Moore is to be my wife." And so it turned out. They were married, my father having a few months before taken the water mill and some land at Thame in Oxfordshire. This mill was situated about four miles down the Thames[15] from Cuddington where my father was born and brought up. Thame Mill is not on the same branch as Cuddington Mill but both are on tributaries of the noble Thames.

My mother was a most devoted daughter. Her life and that of her mother was rendered most unhappy by the restless life led by my grandfather. He was good-looking and deemed excellent company up to a certain stage, but giving himself up to a desultory life on what is falsely called a life of pleasure he passed his days in hunting coursing and betting and the frequent result of such a life is, as is proven in his case, drunkenness. Often have these two sweet women paced the house expecting his return. On several occasions his horse reached the gate with an empty saddle. All this from a man whose circumstances were good, position excellent, and manners and appearance earned for him the cognomen of 'Gentleman Moore' by which he was distinguished from some others of that name. He married a short time after my grandmother's death, and my mother's wretchedness was complete. She was married at Upper Winchendon, Bucks, the parish in which her only brother lived.

Here I may appropriately mention some events which my mother has related to me. When she was about twelve years old on a particular night she had gone to bed. My grandmother and the servants were surprised by a knock at the door of the farm where they lived and which was called the Abbey Farm. The arrival proved to be a cousin of my mother's, a son of a farmer at some distance from Little Marlow. He was accompanied by a young lady, 17 or 18 years old. These two young people contemplated a clandestine marriage and the Adonis hoped to persuade my grandmother to keep the young lady through a time sufficient to get the thing legally done. My grandfather was exceedingly angry with her nephew, sent him home and put the young maid to bed in my mother's bed. About two o'clock in the morning the household was aroused by a violent knocking, and the arrival proved to be the recusant's mother, a lady of birth and position. She was accompanied by a maid and some men servants. My grandmother related what had taken place and the Mama was taken upstairs, the young deceiver pretending to be in the fastest sleep, and when her incensed mother and the maid removed or tried to remove her form the bed she clung to it with such tenacity that it was with many violent efforts that they succeeded, the run-a-away uttering all the while the most piercing shrieks. She was taken home and soon placed beyond the reach of her lover. The

[15] The typescript has 'Thames' though the river at Cuddington and at Thame is the river Thame

lady-mother sometimes came to see my grandmother, and expressed the warmest thanks for the prudent care she exercised so thoughtfully.

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My mother while at school at South Weston won golden opinions. On one occasion she got into disgrace. Thus it happened.

With several young companions she had taken what was called a French leave. They had got out into the fields and had gathered a quantity of cowslips. These they had steeped in water and, adding sugar, had set up a wine manufacturing establishment. Discovery came and my poor mother was set as a task to learn and say off three of the penitential psalms. Fancy the poor innocent declaring in the language of David, "Against Thee only have I sinned." etc. This punishment seems to record a state of things hardly to be conceived of in these days of woman's rights. The strange doings we note in the girls of this period denote a strange change, progress it will be called in the cant language of the time - progress, indeed! Where to , I wonder?

One most disastrous event happened, while my mother was at Weston school, nothing less than an elopement and marriage of one of the girls. A certain Mr. Smith resident in Thame, and usually called 'Justice Smith', he being the only man in the Commission of the peace thereabouts, his daughter being at Weston school and being in the habit of visiting each other during the holidays, this Miss Smith was one morning missing as the family assembled for morning prayers. In her bedroom was found a note saying that she was gone away. She had escaped over the garden wall and one of her shoes was found on the garden side which in her hurried escape she had lost. She had gone off with a young curate of the neighbourhood and they were married. Now the misses who kept the school were in sad distress. As their school had deservedly been considered so safe and proper in every way. To lose their reputation by such an impropriety was indeed to one a calamity. Fortunately for my mother Miss Leccy Smith had not made my mother a confidant. A man was at once dispatched on horseback to convey the dire news to the Smiths. Now old Justice Smith was in my boyish days the very terror of the neighbourhood by reason of his passionate temper. This news of his daughter's disappearance and the report that the Curate was the aggressor raised the Justice's ire. He called for his pistols and declared, as his wife hung in passionate grief about him that he would be the death of the 'villain'. With strange oaths he doomed the offender to death and his daughter banishment from home and fortune for ever. The next morning, the old man having slept off some of his offending wrath, he was seated at breakfast with his wife when in rushed his daughter with the delinquent curate. Both fell on their knees before the Justice. He looked for a moment sternly at them, then, seizing his daughter, he said "Get up this minute," and smothering her with kisses he sobbed out, "I forgive you." A complete reconciliation ensued and the Justice having purchased the next presentation to the Vicarage of Thame, and the incumbent dying soon after the young people were provided for, our offending lived as Vicar for about sixty years, marrying and burying three generations.

My father and mother being married at Upper Winchendon Church, Bucks they began housekeeping in 1805 at Thame Mill, Oxon. Here they lived until 1825, my mother having eleven children, seven of whom survived until more than sixty years old, the others having died at birth or in early years. My father and mother used to travel about four and a half miles to Aston Sandford Church on a Sunday to attend the service of the Rev. Thomas Scott the commentator to whom they were greatly attached. My earliest recollections are connected with that service. Mounted on a donkey I used to go on fine Sundays and often my parents took sandwiches and having eaten them with using some neighbouring cottage or on fine Sundays in the churchyard. The little church was crowded and generally at the afternoon service a tent was placed outside the church and a window commanding the pulpit was opened and the outside hearers could thus join the service.

My mother's goodness, her virtues, her unaffected piety can never be adequately recorded.

One little incident I recall with mixed feelings, a feeling of grief after an interval of sixty years has passed, that as a child I should have wounded such a dear heart as that mother had. I say a mixed feeling because behind this feeling of sorrow there arises the thought of her nobleness, her gentleness in the treatment I received. The incident was as follows. I had told a wretched lie to my dear mother to conceal some disobedience. I altogether forget that part of the incident but I know I told a lie. My saintly mother, not displaying anger or expressing opinion of my offence, took me by the hand so gently - she was supreme in gentleness and self-possession - she took me by the hand, led me upstairs to her bedroom which was a place I should never have thought of entering for my father was express in keeping children out of this room. My mother led me into it closing the door, she said, "My dear, kneel down with me." My heart was almost bursting with passion, evil passion. My dear mother began to pray aloud in such earnest tones, begging God to spare her little boy. As she poured out in impassioned

words and in such pleading terms her supplication for me my heart began to soften, I ventured to look up to her face, that dear sweet face was looking up and as her words came forth with incomparable pathos while the tears fell from her eyes I was subdued, penitent and unhappy, but perhaps as I was about seven years old, perhaps my disposition to lie received a check. Never did she allude to that offence of mine and her reticence was an inexpressible comfort to me.

Good mother, devoted to her family and to God, she passed away in 1849 being a little over 71 years old. "Blessed be the pure in heart for they shall see our God." Never has that blessing been pronounced more justly. She lived a life mostly of suffering and sorrow. She died having a firm faith in Him who died to redeem. Her cup of sorrow over flowed in this life and she became one of that band who through much affliction entered into the joys provided for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

My wife and I visited the house at South Weston which had been the school where she spent some years in 1849, and we brought form the gardens there a large bunch of splendid roses. These roses by care were preserved for a week. My mother when we returned from a visit to the south, the day after we had gathered the roses from her old school house had taken to her bed. She died from exhaustion without pain a few days later and the roses still retained their beauty and fragrance when her speech was called away. As I looked upon her placid face, so calm and beautiful, I could not but be thankful that she had been called up to rest with God.

My mother was dutifully and affectionately attended in her decline and death by my sister Wiley who at that time kept a stationery shop in Chapel Street, Salford where my dear mother gave up her life.

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MY FATHER

My father was born at Cuddington Mill on January 22nd, 1777. He was the son of John Boddington and Anne his wife (her maiden name was West). He was their firstborn. He was christened at Cuddington Church February 2nd, 1777. My grandfather and grandmother were married at Cuddington on the 16th of November 1775. My grandparents were busy, industrious people and they were, as an almost certain consequence, successful. The farm attached to the Mill was small in extent but the quality of the land was and is most superior. Besides this farm of 84 acres my grandfather owned a little freehold on which he built a windmill. My cousin owns these mills and the farm and also rents an occupation adjoining. The land is of so good a quality that the large dairy kept there has been noted for generations as producing the best butter in the Vale of Aylesbury.

I find no Boddingtons in the church or parish register earlier than 1712, when Sarah daughter of Mrs. Ann Boddington my great-great-grandmother was christened there. The earliest date in the present register only extends to 1653. It is a very meagre record and has, as was often the case, not been very carefully kept until more recent years.

My ancestors came, the second son came from Steeple Barton in Oxfordshire in 1632[16]. The family had been for some generations settled in Northamptonshire.

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My great-grandfather had died 1795 at Cuddington. He occupied the Mill and Farm but in later years of his life gave up the business to my grandfather who, as recorded above died June 1814. My great grandfather died in 1795. I have always been told that he was a man of mark superior in education to the average middle-class man. His writing I have seen and it was certainly a very pronounced and beautified style of writing. He was quite the respected Sachem of the village and neighbourhood, making the wills or drawing up agreements for his neighbours and being quite a power and refuge to his neighbours. My grandfather, the eldest son of the above, was altogether another manner of man. His father designed to educate him and in early youth placed him in a school. From this school he managed to escape and for some time his parents could get no tidings of the run-a-away. When discovered he was found working in one of the numerous water-mills of Oxfordshire. He was brought home and after some interval he was put, I believe, to a school in Berkshire. Here after fighting a desperate battle with some boy who had given him a nickname he found his way back to Cuddington. His father, seriously offended with his son who was

[16] As written in the typescript.

fourteen years old, determined that as Jack would not go to school he should be made to work, and for a time he was kept very busily employed in the Mill or on farm labour. His habits were irregular and about the year 1759 or 1760 when he was sixteen he made up his mind to leave home without consulting or acquainting his parents.

He took the journey as previously described and found employment in one of the numerous watermills on the Thames, but being dissatisfied with the conduct of his friend Tom Frost he made up his mind to give him 'leg-bail' as he used to express it. Rising very early in the morning he decamped. Frost thinking that he had gone home and not relishing the idea of facing the angry master of Cuddington Mill, who would suspect him of decoying his eldest boy away just as labour was most required for the hay and corn harvest near at hand. Not quite satisfied that it would be good for his health or for his bones for Club Law was not uncommon in those days he, Frost, determined to go on to London. On his way he met a recruiting sergeant who seeing Frost to be a straight, strapping youngster of 19 years old enlisted him into a regiment of the footguards. In this service of His Majesty, George the Third, he soon got very tired and being oppressed with his old companion the 'fever-lurk', he was not very long in devising a means of escape from his drill and duty. His mode of proceeding was at once ingeniously successful. He made a scratch or cut his leg and upon this incision he bound a copper coin. Very soon he set up a gangrene which, when shown to the doctor, he was ordered into Hospital for special treatment. The treatment he got seemed only to aggravate the wound. It went on through its dangerous changes and in spite of all the treatment which the surgeon used, his leg became so enlarged and the wound so enflamed that he was discharged from the service. He had very artfully implored to be allowed to return to his native air, and being discharged he got back to Cuddington where all the angry symptoms soon subsided and he became comparatively sound. I have often seen this self-same Tom Frost as an aged man pretending to work for parish pay on the parish roads and he was for many years a costly pauper. I remember as an inquisitive boy saying to my father that old Tom Frost had odd legs, one being very much thicker than the other. My father then explained to me that Tom was a false-hearted rascal, that he took care to make the most of his bad leg by plenty of bandages, and a halting gait which latter had for a long period before my time settled into a permanent lameness. But that he had for a long time suffered pain from the inflammation he had by a very ingenious and probably original conception secured to himself a lifelong annuity and at the simple cost of a half penny. The explanation may now be given. When under treatment in the Military Hospital so soon as by direction of the surgeon the attendant nurse had dressed the wound in his leg an opportunity occurred Mr. Frost secretly undid the dressing and placed upon the wound one half penny. Thus the inflammation was kept up and the gangrene sore extended. He certainly damaged his limb and by consequence suffered some inconvenience and pain but to compensate such annoyance he had established a claim to parish relief. He was expected to be for certain hours on the highway on the presumption that to work there was his task. Precious little work was ever done. He was always able to gossip or talk with any idler who passed by and at a very early hour he returned to his cottage, having possessed himself of enough wood, broken rails or anything of that sort. These 'pickings and stealings' together with sundry cow clots being daily secured he trimmed his evening fire. Being a good shaver he picked up sundry pennies by scraping the chins of any neighbours who might require his services on Sunday forenoon. With strangers who came in his way he established the reputation of being a wounded soldier who had done his country service and failed to obtain the reward of such services. Yes, my father was right in setting down Tom as a false hearted rascal, and my grandfather who as a boy had left home in his company had the mortification, being the principal rate payer in the parish, to compulsorily maintain this old soldier.

But from this little digression I must now return to the family history.

My grandfather, having left his idle companion to shift for himself and wishing to keep out of his way, forsook the high road to London and by byeway reached a village where he found a little corn mill. Here he engaged himself to an old man, the miller, who now needed help and was willing to engage this youth. Now it so happened that his mill and a good part of the village belonged to an old lady who lived a quiet kind of life, and the miller was bound by the terms of his acceptancey to do suit and service to this old lady. These services were rendered in various ways, one of which was that he should send a servant man on each Saturday to do some work in the garden and about the premises at the direction of the proprietess. My grandfather was sent on Saturday to attend to the old lady's commands. He did not at all relish such duties. While he considered it manly and honourable to work in the mill he considered it quite a servile office to be at the beck and call of this lady. He was unwilling and made himself as awkward and unyielding as he could. The lady found fault with his manners, said he was rude because as she called to him to attend to some matter he replied by a short, "Coming." She corrected him for this rudeness. He asked what he should say. "When I call you should answer Madam." Now my grandfather inherited a voice of great power and when next the lady called to him he put the whole power of his lungs into work and answered by shouting, "Madam." This he did repeatedly if the old lady was within a yard or two of him. He called out "Madam" as if she had been a furlong off. She retired in disgust and in a day or two called at the Mill to report her feelings. My grandfather was sent no more. He continued to work in this mill for a good while undiscovered by his friends but as he left this service and engaged in a larger mill on the Thames

near Uxbridge he was heard of by his father who visited Uxbridge, recovered his son and took him home after an absence of over two years. The father and son seem after this to have got on better together, the junior having regular wages and the keep of one cow and some sheep. In about the year 1773 or 4 my great grandfather retired to live in the village and my grandfather came into the business and on the 16th of November 1775 he was married to Ann West a native of Long Crendon a village three or four miles distant from Cuddington. They lived together until 1814 when my grandfather died. My grandmother shortly afterwards retired and lived in the village till the year 1827.

My father was fond of talking of his father and uncles two of whom lived with him at Cuddington Mill. The family were very remarkable not only for their strength of lungs but for their singing and playing on the violin. Their physical strength and fighting qualities were so very remarkable that it was said a Boddington never knew when he was beaten. Their great strength showed itself on one occasion after the following remarkable manner. It was the animal feast or 'wakes' as it is called in the north. On one particular feast six of them started from the mill each laden with a sack of flour 14 score lbs. This load they carried about three quarters of a mile to a baker's shop in the village, my own grandfather and my father, the latter at that time only nineteen years old. They carried that burden ending by ascending several steps to the barnhouse. This was considered a marvellous exhibition of strength, almost incredible, but that was attested by many witnesses. I believe one of these stalwarts afterwards fought a desperate battle in the end beating his adversary. I may mention that these men never wore flannel. The masters wore linen shirts and the men also but of a coarser material. Their mode of living was to rise very early and to go to bed very early. The breakfast consisted of bread, bacon -- chiefly cold, boiled bacon --, milk or small beer was the fluid used. The breakfast was usually 6 to 6.20 so soon as the milking was done. At 10 o'clock lunch was eaten, this was usually of bread and cheese, or bacon with beer. At 12 o'clock, or from that to 1 o'clock, a hot dinner was served being of butcher's meat, varied with fresh water fish and vegetables, carrots, turnips, cabbage or greens of various kinds washed down with beer. The later or last meal at 6 or 7 o'clock was generally bread and milk or bread and cheese and beer as preferred.

My grandmother took tea on a Sunday only. The women in summer often drank milk or frequently home-made wine, of which latter a good deal was used. I remember well the precious draughts of wine and water given to me as a child. I think that I was never given tea until a grown man, or at any rate not as a child. Such a course of living was probably more conducive to health than tea, coffee and so much starch as the copious use if the potato gives. Mothers then universally suckled their children. The use, or rather the abuse of tea, as the late Mr. Cobbett predicted, has changed this, and now in 1881 not one mother in many has nature's nutriment to rear her child upon, and recourse is had to substitutes, often very imperfect substitutes, and the word 'Dyspepsia' is the name for most ailments that afflict humanity. The stomach weakened by the use of the dangerous stimulant tea has so impaired its power of digestion that a lamentable amount of misery follows and drams or opium, a sedative in the various forms in which opium is manipulated, chloral or chorodyne, abseinthe, and in many other forms the pain is aggravated. These results have been brought about in this nineteenth century.