

# HISTORY OF MADELEY,

INCLUDING

## IRONBRIDGE, COALBROOKDALE, AND COALPORT,

From the earliest times to the present,

WITH NOTICES OF

Remarkable Events, Inventions,

AND

PHENOMENA, MANUFACTURES, &c.

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**I L L U S T R A T E D**

With twelve wood-cut illustrations, and photographs.

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The work will be found to contain a copious Index,  
and list of old family names.

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BY

John Randall, F.G.S., Author of "The Severn Valley," "Old Sports  
and Sportsmen," "History of Broseley," &c., &c.

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Published at "The Wrekin Echo" Office, Madeley, Salop, 1880.

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MADELEY \*\*\*

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE delay which has arisen in the publication of this work since it was first announced needs some apology. It arose from two causes; one the hope that fuller information might be forthcoming on some obscure points, the other that the book is chiefly made up of matter reprinted from the *Salopian and West Midland Illustrated Magazine*. It is therefore, to some extent, fragmentary, and not one for which the author can hope to receive the meed of praise bestowed upon his "Severn Valley," "Old Sports," &c. Notwithstanding this, the author believes the work will be found to be a satisfactory compendium of historical facts connected with the parish; and now that they are known it would be a comparatively easy task to produce a more creditable literary work. Johnson says we never do anything conscientiously for the last time without sadness of heart; the only sadness here arises from the consciousness that the opportunity, however much desired, of reproducing the work in an improved form is scarcely likely to occur in the lifetime of the author.

*Madeley, 1880.*

## PREFACE.

THE field of history is a wide one, but, in addition to its well-beaten track, there yet remains less frequented paths to explore in connection with our smaller villages and towns.

The design of the present work may be stated in a few words. It is simply to place before the inhabitants of Madeley, and those interested in its history, the various phases through which it has passed in its progress from feudal times to the present. Strangers often come and seek for information which they do not always get: and much that is known by old people of Madeley and its traditions would be lost unless noted down at once.

It will be seen that our information extends from the notice we get in Norman times, when tillers of the soil, swineherds, fishermen, a miller or two, and foresters, composed the population, the profits of whose labours were reaped by a priest and the monks of Wenlock Priory.

After the Dissolution it will be seen that the mansion was sold to the Brooke family, particulars of which we have given, both in the earlier and later parts of the work.

## MADELEY.

There is a touch alike of poetry and of meaning in the name. Our ancestors were delineators of natural scenery, verbally, and by the use of names. Taking possession of primeval lands and uncleared forests, driving their aboriginal owners before them—in one or more syllables they were wont to give the history of a place, or the more distinguishing features of a country, and word-pictures then current come down to us little altered, having coiled up within them considerable sense and by-gone meaning. Tradition, no less than the popular and generally accepted etymology of the name, informs us that Shrewsbury was originally the place of shrubs; that the dusky crow croaked at Crawley, and the chattering daw built its nest at Dawley. The broc or brag—Anglo-Saxon terms for the badger, once numerous along the Severn Valley—gave us the Brocholes. To reynard we are indebted, in like manner, for the modern name of Foxholes—a place near to the latter, where this animal flourished when Madeley Wood, now covered with cottages, was what its name implied.

Little local or archæological lore is required to know that Madeley Wood was the wood bordering on the meadow, or that Madeley is a name derived from meadowly, or mead—a term still used in poetical productions of the day. In like manner, Mad-brook, a little stream on the borders of the village, meandering through meadow land, was Mead or Meadow-brook—as one of our smaller English rivers is called the Medway, from like circumstances, and as Brockton on Madbrook was formerly Brook-town—the town or enclosure on the brook. A tolerable estimate of Madeley, in one of its early phases, and as it appeared to the commissioners appointed to carry out the Domesday Survey, at the time it formed part of the manor belonging to the Abbey of Much Wenlock, may be gleaned from the following extract:—

“The same (St. Milburg’s) holds Madeley, and held it in the time of King Edward. Here is one hide (100 or 120 acres) not geldable (not liable to pay taxes) and three other hides geldable. In demesne are eleven ox teams, and six villiens (those employed in ignoble service) and (there are) III. boors (peasants) with III. teams. Here are III. serfs (slaves of the lower class) and there might yet be VI. teams more here. There is a wood sufficient to fatten 400 swine. In the time of King Edward the manor was worth £4 per annum; now it is worth £5 per annum.”

England at that time was covered over with such manors; they had overgrown the free peasant proprietors which previously existed in Saxon times. On each manor was the house of the lord with the Court yard and garden, &c., comprising several acres. The manor land was for the use of the lord, but portions were let off. Some doubt now exists as to the true meaning of a hide of land, as both hides and virgates on adjoining lands differed, but the conclusion that the hide was a land measure of 33 English acres has been received by some, whilst others hold that it meant a measure of land sufficient for the support of a family. The most important agricultural operation of the period was ploughing, and a peasant rarely undertook this for himself on his own little plot, which was not sufficient for separate or independent management, with his own team and plough. The team of a plough consisted then as a rule of not less than 8 draught cattle, and this continued to be the case, as recorded by Arthur Young. The bad fodder of that period diminished the labour power of the draught cattle, especially during winter ploughing, which was on straw feeding alone. Madeley is undoubtedly derived from terms still in use, Meadow and ley, or lia; meadows having sometimes been subjected for a whole year to common pasturage whilst the adjoining land lay fallow, in order not to exhaust it by constant hay crops.

Such was Madeley in the olden time, when men were goods and chattels, subject to the rapacity and oppression of their owners, when laws were enacted by which to kill wild animals was a crime equal in enormity to killing human beings, and punished with the same rigour; when the right to hunt was in the hands of kings and those holding tenure to whom they thought proper to delegate it. The park, to which the modern names of Park, Rough Park, and Park Street, now apply—names that serve to recall

former features of the surface—was enclosed from the forest, mentioned in the above extract. Its origin was this; November 28th, 1283, King Edward (1st) being petitioned that it would not be detrimental to his forest of Mount Gilbert if the Prior and Convent of Wenlock should enclose their Wood of Madeley (though within the limits of the forest) with a ditch, and fence, (haia) and make a park there—allowed them to do so. The same park is alluded to in a valuation taken 1390; together with one at Oxenbold, which—including the meadows—was said to be scarcely sufficient to maintain the live stock of the Priory. The Prior, who appears to have built houses within the boundary of the forest, in 1259 was ordered to pull them down; but having offered a fine to the king a charter was granted the following year, stating that, “for £100 now paid the Prior and Convent may have the houses in peace, although within the forest.”

The Court House, formerly surrounded by this park, and near to the station now called by its name—on the Great Western line—is an exceedingly interesting building, and one claiming the attention of the visitor. The present structure is in the Elizabethan style of architecture; but the grounds present traces of earlier buildings. In the years 1167, 1224, 1250, and again in 1255, mention is made of the Madeley Manor. In 1379 the estimated value of pleas and perquisites of the court is entered at two shillings.

Near the old mansion is the Manor-mill, formerly worked by a steam called Washbrook, which formerly supplied the extensive vivaries or fishponds that furnished the kitchen of the establishment with the necessary means of observing fast-days. Interesting traces of former pools and fisheries are observable. Under date 1379, we find the water-mill at the Court or Manor house “fermed” for 10s. per annum, and at a valuation taken of the prior’s temporalities at an earlier period, viz., 1291, the same mill is mentioned. Mills, then, were invariably the possession of the lord of the manor, lay or ecclesiastical, and tenants were compelled to grind there. They were therefore an important source of profit, and carefully enumerated, and it is worthy of remark that where a mill is described as being at a particular place, even at an earlier period—as in the Domesday survey of the country—there, as in the case of the Manor mill at the Court, one is now generally to be found in ruins or otherwise. In the garden, which is still highly walled, and which was probably originally an enclosed court, upon an elegant basement, approached by a circular flight of steps—the outer one

being seven feet in diameter and the inner one about three—is a very curious planetarium, an horological instrument serving the purpose of a sundial, and that of finding the position of the moon in relation to the planets. It is a square block of stone three feet high, having three of its sides engraved, and the fourth or north side blank. Over this is a semicircular slab of stone so pierced that the eye rests upon the polar star.

Although little of the original building where festivals were held, suitors heard, or penalties inflicted, remains, the present edifice has many points of interest. The substantial, roomy, and well-panelled apartments, upon the ground floor, and the solid trees, one upon the other, forming a spiral staircase to the chambers above, are objects of no little interest. Ascending these stairs the visitor finds himself in the chapel, the ceiling of which is of fine oak, richly carved, having the arms of various ancient families in panels. The arms of the Ferrars family may be seen in a shield over the principal doorway,—indicating the proprietorship at one time of some member of that family. It was also the residence of Sir Basil Brooke, fourth in descent from a noble knight of that name, a zealous royalist in the time of Charles I.

This family appears to have been resident at Claverley in the fourteenth century. Mr. Brooke, of Haughton, near Shifnal, has deeds in his possession showing the purchase of certain arable and pasture lands at Beobridge, by Richard de la Broke, of Claverley, in 1316, and again in 1318, where he is described as Richard de la Broke, clerk, son of Richard de la Broke, Claverley.

Mailed and full-length fine stone figures of this highly-distinguished family, who lived here, and shed a lustre on the place, formerly reposed in the church, to whose sacred keeping they bequeathed their dust. Equally vain, however, were their bequests and hopes, for when the originals were no longer able to put a copper on the plate their very tombs were destroyed, and their stone effigies ruthlessly turned out of doors, and placed in niches outside the church, where, shorn of a portion of their limbs, they still do penance in pleading attitudes, and look as though they implored a bit of paint to prevent the inscriptions beneath from being lost for ever. The stone in one case has lost its outer coating, and the artifice of the sculptor in tipping nose and chin with a whiter material has been disclosed, and thick

coats of paint are peeling off the defaced epitaphs which set forth the merits of their originals. The inscriptions are in Latin, but the following is, we believe, a free, if not an exact, translation:—

“Here lieth interred John Brooke, Esquire, the son of Robert Brooke, Knight, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. He was a zealous and loyal subject of Queen Mary, and assisted her in securing her rights in opposition to the violent factions of the time. He published an excellent commentary on the English Law in several volumes. After a study of jurisprudence and science, being of an extensively liberal mind and universally beloved, he made a Christian-like end, October the 20th, in the year of our Lord, 1598, in the 62nd year of his age.”

The following is another:—

“Here lieth the remains of Etheldreda, the wife of Basil Brooke, Knight, a woman not only well-skilled in the knowledge of the Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish languages, and in the science of music, but also exemplary for piety, faith, prudence, courage, chastity, and gentle manners. She left to lament her loss a husband, with an only son, named Thomas, and five daughters, namely—Anne, the wife of William Fitzherbert, Esquire, the grandson of Henry, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, eminent for his commentary on our laws; Mary, the wife of Thomas More, a descendant of that renowned character, Thomas More, formerly Lord High Chancellor of England, a man in his life and death universally esteemed; Dorothy, Agatha, and Catherine, all of whom were of amiable dispositions. She died in the year of our Lord —” (the date is defaced).

The original is in Latin. The pillared arches and backs of the recesses are elaborately carved.

In “Villages and Village Churches,” published a few years ago, in describing Claverley, we stated that the present vicarage was supposed at one time to have been the residence of the Lord Chief Justice, whose likeness is carved upon one of the timbers. We also described a magnificent tomb of Lord Chief Justice Brooke, in the north-east corner of the Gatacre

chancel, which is both elaborate and imposing. On the top are recumbent figures of the Lord Chief Justice in his official robes, and of his two wives, with ornamental head-gear, mantles, ruffs, ruffles, &c., of the period; and round the tomb are their eighteen children, also in the respective costumes of their time. On the outside is the following inscription, in Old English characters:—

“Here lyeth the body off Robert Brooke, famous in his time for virtue and learning; advanced to be com'on Serjaunt of the Citie of London, Recorder of London, Serjaunt at Law, Speaker of P'lyament, and Cheife Justice of the Com'en Pleace, who visiting his frendes and country, deceasd the 6th day of September 1558, after he had begotton of Anne and Dorothee, his wiefs, XVIII children. Upon whose sowles God have mercy.”

Jukes, in his Antiquities of Shropshire, says:—

“This Robert was the son of Thomas Brooke de Claverley, in this county, and was made Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in the first year of Queen Mary, when he received the honour of Knighthood. He died in the communion of the church of Rome, A.D. 1558, and left his zeal for his religion to posterity, and his excellent performance of the Abridgment of the Common Law to the Students of that Profession. 36th Hen. VIII. William Astun did homage for a shop here. 38th Hen. VIII, the said Robert Brooke likewise did homage pro shopa in Madalie. Recorda Paschæ, 2d Edw. VI rot. 11, de Roberto Brooke, Armigero, et Dorothea uxore ejus occasionalis ad ostendendum qualiter ingressi sunt et tenent unam shopam et dimid. acræ terræ in Madeley. 3d. Edw. VI, the king grants to Edward Molyneux and Robert Brooke, of London, Esqrs. all that annual rent of £4 13s. 9½d. reserved to the crown out of this manor, together with the demenses of the same, and other lands therein specified, in fee simple. John Brooke, Esq. 27th Eliz. made a settlement of Madeley on Richard Prince, Esq. Sir Basil Brooke, Knight, 3d James I, sold lands here to David Stilgo, Robert and Edward Stilgo. Matthew Fowler, Gent. son and heir of Roger Fowler, had general livery 17th James for his lands in Madeley.”

Mr. Brooke had the reputation of being a great lawyer, and whilst a barrister we find him engaged by the Corporation of Shrewsbury to examine a petition from the town “for the discharge of the subsidies.” According to the entry in the Corporation books (1542) he and Serjeant Molyneux were paid 15s. for their services. He is described as Recorder of London whilst visiting the town, with Roger Townesende, Chief Justice of Wales, and Richard Hasshall, Esqr., “one of the Commissioners of our Lord the King,” and as being presented with “wayffers and torts,” at the expense of the corporation.

With regard to Basil Brooke, we find by an indenture of release, dated the 29th of May, 1706, that he, Basil Brooke, Esq., of Madeley, deceased, by his will bequeathed to the poor of the parish of Madeley the sum of £40, which the churchwardens and parishioners of the parish desired might be laid out in the purchase of lands and tenements for the use of the poor. And it was witnessed that Comerford Brooke, in consideration of the said £40, and also a further sum of £30 paid to him by Audley Bowdler and eight other parties to the said indenture, granted to the said Audley Bowdler and others, their heirs and assigns, three several cottages or tenements, with gardens and yards thereto belonging, situated in Madeley Wood, in the said parish, and in the said indenture, more particularly described, on trust to employ the rents and profits thereof for the use of the poor of the said parish in such manner as the grantees, with the consent of the vicar and parish officers, should think fit.

Near one of the fields adjoining the Court House, called the “Slang,” a man, while clearing a piece of rough ground, which appeared not previously to have been cultivated, a few years ago, came upon a large number of gold coins, chiefly of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, and of the modern value altogether of between three and four hundred pounds.

Looking at what the place now is, and calling to mind what it must have been when the spacious rooms rang with the joyous laugh, and echoed the minstrel songs of bygone days, one is reminded of Southey’s Eclogues, in one of which he seeks to connect the past and present by an old man’s memory, only that in this case more than one generation has gone to rest since the old Court House was complete with park, and moat, and fish-

ponds. The old stonebreaker bemoans the change in some old mansion-house thus—

“If my old lady could rise up—  
God rest her soul!—’twould grieve her to behold  
What wicked work is here.

\* \* \* \*

Aye, master, fine old trees.  
Lord bless us! I have heard my father say  
His grandfather could just remember back  
When they were planted there. It was my task  
To keep them trimmed, and ’twas a pleasure to me;  
My poor old lady many a time would come  
And tell me where to clip, for she had played  
In childhood under them, and ’twas her pride  
To keep them in their beauty.

\* \* \* \* \*

I could as soon  
Have ploughed my father’s grave as cut them down.  
Then those old dark windows—  
They’re demolished too;  
The very redbreasts that so regular  
Came to my lady for her morning crumbs  
Won’t know those windows now.  
There was a sweet briar, too, that grew beside;  
My lady loved at evening to sit there  
And knit, and her old dog lay at her feet,  
And slept in the sun; ’twas an old favourite dog.  
She did not love him less that he was old  
And feeble, and he always had a place  
By the fireside; and when he died at last,  
She made me dig a grave in the garden for him,  
For she was good to all: a woeful day  
’Twas for the poor when to the grave she went.  
—At Christmas, sir!

It would have warmed your heart if you had seen  
Her Christmas kitchen—how the blazing fire  
Made her fine pewter shine, and holly boughs  
So cheerful red; and as for mistletoe,  
The finest bush that grew in the country round  
Was marked for madam. Then her old ale went  
So bountiful about! A Christmas cask,  
And 'twas a noble one. God help me, sir,  
But I shall never see such days.”

Still greater changes than those described in the lines quoted above are witnessed at the old Court House and in its immediate vicinity,—changes so great that were it possible for one of its former feudal owners to revisit the scene he would fail to recognise the place. Ugly pit-mounds are seen surrounding the building; the place is illumined by the blaze of the blast-furnace, the screech of machinery is heard around it, and the snort of the iron horse sounds across the park, where the hounds were wont to

“Rend the air, and with a lusty cry  
Awake the echo, and confound  
Their perfect language in a mingled voice.”

The fashions and manners here represented have passed away, and these relics of antiquity look like fossils of old formations, or like dismantled wrecks cast up by the ever-moving current of time. They contrast strangely enough—these trophies of times gone by—with the visible emblems of man’s altered genius around. Modes of life have changed; every age has turned some new page as it passed. Instead of monasteries and moated manor-houses, with country waste and wood, thistled and isolated, whose wild possessors neglected even to till the surface, we have men of active mould, who do daily battle with the stubborn elements of the earth, while flashing fires flicker round their stolid effigies, telling of wealth-producing agencies that make millions happy. Ideas begotten of time, not then dreamt of, have leaped over moat and rampart, re-constituted society, converted parks into pit-mounds, and around the habitations of knighted warriors reared forges and constructed railways.

We are tempted to dwell a little longer here in connection with the Old Court, because considerable interest attaches to features, memorials, and traditions of such places. Viewed from the position we now occupy, a position the culminating result of past efforts and past struggles, they remind us of less favourable phases of society, and picture to the mind ideas, manners, and institutions—the cradle of our present privileges. Manor houses, many of which were destroyed during the Civil War, were held by the Church, and by distinguished personages, lay or clerical, who granted or leased land they did not themselves require. Hence the rise of copyholds—estates held by copy of the roll of the Court of the Manor. Courts were held within these manors and jurisdiction was had of misdemeanours and disputes. On forest borders, on grassy plains, amid fat meadow lands, by rivers, on rocky spurs and projections, these mansions or castelled structures stood, whilst their occupiers, with little industrial or political activity to escape the *ennui* of their position, were often driven upon the high road of adventure. One can scarcely conceive the privileged owners of such mansions to do otherwise than despise the dependent population—boors, serfs, and villeins, who cultivated their domains. Salient and strongly marked were the two classes—knowledge and power paramount with the one, ignorance and incapacity characterising the other: a proud supremacy and subserviency—claimed and admitted. Priors, bishops, and lay proprietors moved from manor to manor, taking their seats in these feudal courts, receiving homage and inflicting penalties. Woe to the bondsmen of the estate—doomed from the cradle to the grave to slavery—found guilty of an attempt to “steal himself,” as the old Roman law had it, from his lawful owner. Even tenants under these proud holders were subject to great exactions,—the cattle of the manor, boar or bull, by the condition of the tenure being free to roam at night through standing corn or grass: a provision as just as that with which in this the nineteenth century the lord of the manor has power, after purchase, to mine under and throw down the house one has built, in this same manor of Madeley, without one farthing compensation. Sturdy radicals, troublesome fellows, then as now held up at times the glass by means of political squibs to perpetrators of such injustice. One quaint old Shropshire satirist in the 14th century lashes severely the vices of the times. Another in a political song colours his picture deeply. The church at times interfered to mitigate the condition of the people, but the spiritual overseers of the poor, as a rule, thought more of

the sports of the field than of their flocks except, indeed, at shearing time. Chaucer in estimating their qualifications was of opinion that “in hunting and riding they were more skilled than in divinity.”

We need not wonder, then, to find in the thirteenth century the Rector of Madeley a sportsman. Henry III, being in Shrewsbury, in Sept. 1267, at which time he concluded a treaty with Llewellyn, and settled sundry little differences with the monks and burgesses respecting a monopoly claimed by the former, of grinding all corn used in the town, and possessing all mills within its limits, granted through Peter de Neville to Richard de Castillon the rector, licence to hunt in the royal forest of Madeley. In such sport the clergy were borne out by their prelates. Of one Walter, bishop of Rochester, it is recorded that he was so fond of the sport that at the age of four score he made hunting his sole employment, to the total neglect of other duties. There were jolly churchmen in those days, for

“The Archdeacon of Richmond, we are told, in his initiation to the Priory of Bridlington, came attended by ninety-seven horses, twenty-one dogs, and three hawks. Walter de Suffield, Bishop of Norwich, bequeathed by will his pack of hounds to the king; whilst the Abbot of Tavistock, who had also a pack, was commanded by his bishop, about the same time, to break it up. A famous hunter, contemporary with Chaucer, was the Abbot of Leicester, whose skill in the sport of hare hunting was so great, that the king himself, his son Edward, and certain noblemen, paid him an annual pension that they might hunt with him.”

The faithful portraits Chaucer drew of the Sumptner and Pardoner, agents of ecclesiastical courts—one to hunt out delinquents who were wealthy, the other to make them pay well for their sins—are familiar to most. The prior of the Madeley manor carried this so far that he drew down upon him one bright day in April, 1243, before he was aware of it, a king’s writ for exacting “toll,” “on beer, seizing the third of widows’ goods who died within the *vill* of any deceased tenant, before his debts were paid, and otherwise oppressing those within the limits of the priory.” As the author of the “Antiquities of Shropshire” has said,

“The prior ground down the vicar, the vicar in turn impoverished his subordinates, and they (the chaplains) either starved their flocks or were themselves paupers. The bishops moreover, doubtless for certain considerations, connived at, nay, prominently aided the whole system of extortion.”

This had been carried so far as to require the presence of Bishop Swinfield, who held the See, in 1285, to rectify misappropriations of tithe in sheep and corn, and to arrange disputes respecting them within the boundaries of the Priory. In April, 1290, the bishop paid another visit, being by invitation the guest of the Prior; we do not get the expenses of the feast, but he is known to have been a jovial soul, well to do, with two palaces in the country, and three in London, constantly moving about, taking care to carry about with him his brass pots, earthen jugs, and other domestic utensils for his retainers, who were littered down in the great halls of the manors, at each stage of the journey. He had numerous manor houses of his own, a farm at each, stables for many horses, kennels for his hounds, and mews for his hawks. His kitchens reeked with every kind of food; his cellars were filled with wine, and his spiceries with foreign luxuries. Take a glance at the bishop's feast after a fast at his residence on the Teme. On Sunday, October the second, at the bishop's generous board, the consumption was, three quarters of beef, three sheep, half a pig, eight geese, ten fowls, twelve pigeons, nine partridges, and larks too numerous to mention, the whole accompanied with a due proportion of wine.

Madeley not being a “fat living,” there was great shuffling on the part of the incumbents, none of them caring to hold it very long. One, master Odo de Horbosio, who was instituted March 14, 1299, on presentation of the Convent and Prior of Much Wenlock; and again, June 4th, 1300, has license to study, and to attend to business of himself and friends. August 2nd, 1300; William de Fonehope, who was presented by the Bishop of Hereford, (by lapse,) on March 18th, 1318, we find exchanging in 1322, with Sir William Hoynet, rector of Westbury; the said William the fifth of August, the same year, exchanged with James de Tifford, who exchanged with another, John Aron, who resigned it in November, 1319.

The oftener these changes occurred the better for the priors, who held the right of presentation to the bishop, and exacted fealty and fees. In Madeley,

being lords of the manor, they nominated and presented the vicars: and in Badger, Beckbury, and elsewhere, where there were lay lords who nominated, they held the right of presenting such as were nominated to the bishop, and of exacting fees for their mediate offices between the nominators and the bishop.

As the land came to be cultivated, and the population engaged in agricultural and other pursuits increased in number, the living, we imagine, improved in value, and the advowson in importance. We have shown from the commissioners' description in Domesday what was the state of Madeley just subsequent to the Norman conquest, and Madeley being still within the limits of the forest of the Wrekin, which surrounded it on three sides, little progress was made in the way of cultivation. From the "Survey of Shropshire Forests" in 1235, it appears that the following woods, besides those of Madeley, were subject to its jurisdiction:—Leegomery, Wrockwardine Wood, Eyton-on-the-Weald Moors, Lilleshall, Sheriffhales, the Lizard, Stirchley, and Great Dawley. Forest laws were rigorously enforced, and encroachments, either by cultivation or building without royal license to do so, were severely punished.

Prior Imbert was fined for three such trespasses, in 1250, in the heavy sum of £126 13s. 4d., chiefly in connection with Madeley. In 1390 the park and meadows the prior had been permitted to enclose with those at Madeley, Oxenbold, and other manors, were estimated as barely capable of maintaining the livestock of the priory.

A perambulation of forests in the reign of Edward I. shows the village of Madeley, with its bosc and two plains, to be disforested, as well as Coalbrookdale, one half of Sutton Maddock, and some other places. Coming down, however, to a much later period,—to the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Henry VIII., when he sold the Madeley manor,—cultivation had made considerable progress, and the property of the priory had very much increased in value. The last of the Wenlock priors, Sir John Bailey, *alias* Cressage, gave up possession on the morrow of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1539, *with his own free will and consent*, according to the deed, together with that of the sub-prior, and eleven monks. Take

“The fourth part of the Close Rolls of the 31st King Hen. VIII. 26th January, 31st Hen. VIII. Deed of Surrender to the Crown of the Monastery of Wenlock.

“To all faithful christians to whom the present writing shall come, we, John Cressege, Prior of the monastery of St. Milburgh the Virgin, of Wenlock, in the county of Salop, and the Convent of the same place, greeting in the Lord everlasting, know ye that we the aforesaid Prior and Convent, with our unanimous assent and consent, and with our deliberate purpose, certain knowledge and mere motion for certain just and reasonable causes, as our mind and consciences specially moving, have freely and spontaneously given and granted, and by these presents do give, grant, and yield up, and deliver and confirm to our most illustrious and invincible prince and lord Henry the Eighth, by the grace of God of England and France king, defender of the faith, lord of Ireland and on earth of the church of England supreme head, all that our said monastery, and also all the scite, ground, circuit, and precinct, and church of the same monastery, with all our movable debts, chattels, and goods to us or our said monastery belonging or appertaining, as well those which we at present possess, as those which by bond or any other cause whatsoever to us and our said monastery are due in any manner; and also all and singular our manors, lordships, messuages, gardens, curtilages, tofts, lands, and tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, woods, and underwoods, rents, reversions, and services, mills, passages, knights’ fees, wards, marriages, bondmen, villains, with their sequels, commons, liberties, franchises, privileges, jurisdictions, offices, courts leet, hundred courts, views of frankpledge, fairs, markets, parks, warrens, vivaries, waters, fisheries, ways, paths, wharfs, void grounds, advowsons, nominations, presentations, and donations of churches, vicarages, chapels, chanteries, hospitals, and other ecclesiastical benefices whatsoever, rectories, vicarages, chanteries, pensions, portions, annuities, tithes, oblations, and all and singular other our emoluments, profits, possessions, hereditaments, and rights whatsoever, as well within the said county of Salop, and in the liberties’ of London, Sussex, Chester, and Stafford, as elsewhere in the kingdom of England and Wales, and the marches of the same, to our same monastery aforesaid, in any manner belonging, appertaining,

appended, or incumbent, and all and all manner of our charters, evidences, obligations, writings, and muniments whatsoever to us or our said monastery, lands, or tenements, or other the premises with their appurtenances, or to any part thereof in any manner belonging or appertaining, to have, hold, and enjoy our said monastery and the aforesaid scite, ground, circuit, and precinct, and our church aforesaid, with all our debts, goods, and chattels, and also all and singular manors, lordships, messuages, lands, and tenements, rectories, pensions, and other premises whatsoever, with all and singular their appurtenances, to our aforesaid most invincible prince and king aforesaid, his heirs, successors, and assigns for ever; and in this behalf, to all effects of law, which shall or can result therefrom, we subject and submit ourselves and our said monastery, with all and singular the premises, and all rights to us in any wise howsoever acquired (as is fitting), giving and granting, and by these presents we do give and grant, yield up, deliver, and confirm to the same king's majesty, his heirs, successors, and assigns, all and all manner of full and free faculty, authority and power to dispose of us and our said monastery, together with all and singular manors, lands, and tenements, rents, reversions, and services, and every of the premises, with all their rights and appurtenances whatsoever, and according to his free and royal will and pleasure to be alienated, given, exchanged, or transferred to any uses whatsoever agreeable to his majesty, and we ratify such dispositions, alienations, donations, conversions, and appropriations by his aforesaid majesty henceforth in any wise however to be made, promising, moreover by these presents that we will hold firm and valid all and singular the premises for ever; and that moreover all and singular the premises may have due effect we publicly, openly, and expressly, and of our certain knowledge and spontaneously will, renounce and withdraw all elections from us and our successors, and also all complaints, challenges, appeals, actions, suits, and other processes whatsoever, rights, remedies, and benefits, to us and our successors in that behalf by pretext of the disposition, alienation, donation, conversion, and translation aforesaid, and other the premises in any wise howsoever competent and to be competent, and laying aside and altogether putting away all objections, exceptions, and allegations of deceit, error, fear, ignorance, or of any other matter or disposition,

whatsoever as by these presents we have renounced and withdrawn and from the same do recede by these presents: and we the aforesaid prior and convent, our successors, our said monastery, and also all the scite, ground, circuit, precinct, mansion, and our church aforesaid, and all and singular our manors, lordships, messuages, gardens, curtilages, tofts, lands, and tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, woods, and underwoods, rents, reversions, and services, and all and singular other the premises, with all their rights and appurtenances, to our aforesaid lord the king, his heirs, successors and assigns, to the use aforesaid, against all men will warrant and for ever defend by these presents. In testimony aforesaid, we the aforesaid prior and convent to this our present writing have subscribed our names and put our common seal. Given at our chapter house the twenty-sixth day of the month of January, in the thirty-first year of the reign of our aforesaid most invincible prince and lord Henry the Eighth.”

At any rate the prior, sub-prior, and eleven monks retired upon a pension of £100, which was divided between them thus:—

	£	s.	d.
Extranni Baylie (alias Cressage) nuper priori ibidem	30	0	0
Willielmus Corfeld nuper sub prior ibidem	6	13	4
Richard Fishewyke presbitero	6	0	0
Thomas Acton presbitero	6	0	0
Johanni Caslett presbitero	6	0	0
Richardo Fenymo presbitero	6	0	0
Richardo Benge presbitero	6	0	0
Richardo Norgrave presbitero	6	0	0
Thomas Ball presbitero	6	0	0
Willielmo Morthowe presbitero	5	6	8
Johanni Lee presbitero	5	6	8

Willielmo Chamberlain presbitero	5	6	8
Johanni Hopkins presbitero	5	6	8
Summa	100	0	0

Sir John, the last of the long list of Wenlock priors,—many of them noble and distinguished men,—retired upon his life-pension of £30 to the old Court House, Madeley, where he resided till his death, which took place in 1552. Mr. Eyton says he died on Christmas-day, at the Madeley manor-house, and was buried next day in Madeley church. The Wenlock register, at Wynnstay, contains the following entry by Sir Thomas Butler, the then vicar:—

“1549. 25 Decr departed and dyed in the manor place of Madeley about IX of the clock in the nyght Sir John Baily Clercke the last Prior of Moncks that was in the Monastre of Moch Wenlock prior ther at the tyme of the Surrender thereof, whose bodie was buryed on the morrow, vz fest of St. Stephan in the parish church of Madeley aforesaid.”

The same authority, Sir Thomas Butler, who seems to have been a most painstaking recorder of events, under date of February 20, 1539, has the following entry a little higher up:

“Edwd Browne Servant to my Lord Prior was married in Madeley and the Certf. entered in the book of the parish Church of Madeley.”

Unfortunately that register has been lost, if it existed. It may be that it did not, as many existing churches were then chapels, that is affiliations without a baptistery or a cemetery.

Madeley was subject to the mother-church of Wenlock, and we know how zealously the vicars of that church guarded their privileges. Broseley was in the same position, and in our “Tourists’ Guide to Wenlock” we quoted a memorandum made in the Wenlock register, in which the vicar says:—

“1542. Feb. 3rd Mem. at the same time in this Chancel of the Holy Trinity that I went to bury the Corpse of the sd John, Sir Edmund Mychell Parson of Browardesley aforesaid, in the presence of Rowland

Wilcocks of the same Browardesley, willed me to give my consent that they of Browardesley might have their chapel there dedicate for the Burial there so to be had unto whom I answered (if the law would so bear me) I would not consent to the dedicating of that their Chapel of Browardesley nor of none other annexed and depending unto this the mother Church of the Holy Trinity of Moch Wenlock.”

These privileges were not strictly regarded, we believe, but as a rule the dead had to be carried to Wenlock to be buried, excepting in the case of persons of distinction, like lords of the manor or wealthy tenants of the prior, who were buried in the church.

The king having got possession of the property of the Wenlock priory, proceeded to dispose of it; and Madeley was sold to Robert Broke for what must have seemed a good round sum in those days. The following translation, which a friend has been kind enough to make for us, from a Latin copy of the original deed preserved in the archives of Madeley church, may be of interest.

Patent Roll, 36 Henry VIII., Part V. Grant to Robert Broke, Esquire, of the title and advowson of Madeley, co. Salop.

“The king to all whom it may concern, etc. salutation.

“Be it known to you all that we, in consideration of the sum of £946 3s. 8d., of our own legal English money, delivered over for our use into the hands of our legal treasurer, for the increase of the common revenue of our crown, by our beloved subject, Robert Broke, Knight, the sureties having been paid on the said sum of £946 3s. 8d., we declare that we shall be satisfied, contented, and fully indemnified, and that thenceforward Robert Broke, his heirs and executors, are to be exonerated and free from molestation, by force of these present letters, which we have given and conceded from our own special goodwill, certain knowledge, and of our own accord; and by these same present letters we give and concede to the aforesaid Robert Broke the whole of that manor named Madeley, with all and each of its rights, connections, and patronages, in our county of Salop, enjoyed lately over the priory of Wenlock, lately suppressed, in the abovementioned

county, and all the belongings formerly attached to the lately existing monastery. Likewise all the other revenues of ours whatsoever, with their patronages in the above-named Madeley, and elsewhere in the above-named county, which have been part members or subject to the above-named manor, either by acknowledgment, acceptance, enjoyment, reputation, localization, or even by forcible separation.

“Likewise the advowson, the free enjoyment and the right of patronage of our vicariate parish-church of the above-named Madeley, in the above-mentioned county, as well as the rights attached to the whole of the place and buildings that go under the one name of the Smithy Place, and Newhouse called Calbrooke Smithy, with its patronages in the aforesaid Madeley.

“Likewise all our tithes of all fruits and grain annually growing, being renewed or produced in Madeley the afore mentioned, and now or lately in the possession of Richard Charleton; also the whole of that yearly and perpetual endowment of ours, viz., of three shillings annually, coming to us from the vicarage or church of the aforesaid Madeley; and the whole of that annual and perpetual pension of ours of 3s. 4d. annually, due from the rectory or church of Badger, in the above-named county.

“Likewise the messuages, tofts, houses, dwellings, stables, dovecots, stagnant ponds, and vivaries, springs, gardens and orchards, lands, tenements, incomes, revenues, dues, meadows, pasturages, woods, shrubberies, and trees.

“Likewise all the permanent feudal rights and customs, the permanent dues, endowments, tithes, offerings, belongings, annuities, products, revenues, and the annual result of engagements entered into by whomsoever such engagements and provisions were made . . . common fisheries, ways, paths, void grounds, as well, moreover, as the liberties, franchises, and jurisdictions, profits, emoluments, rights, possessions, and the rest of our heraditaments, both spiritual and temporal, with all their rights, situated, lying, within, and existing in the manor of the above-named Madeley, over the late priory, whether belonging to the possessions or revenues of the late existing. . . .

“This manor, in truth, with its tenements, and the other things premised, reaching the clear annual value of £46 17s. 7d., not considering the tithes. The aforesaid manor, its advowson, rents, revenues, services, and all and each of the other of its rights, are to be possessed and held by the aforesaid Robert Broke, his heirs and assigns, for the personal use of the said Robert Broke, his heirs and assigns in perpetuity.

“In consideration of the military service due in taxation to us, our heirs and successors, viz., the twentieth part of the value of one feudal knight, £4 13s. 9¼d. of our legal English money are to be paid to our legal treasurer, for the increase of the common revenues of our crown, on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, each year, for all the rents, services, and demands whatsoever . . .

“We also wish, and by these presents we concede, to the aforesaid Robert Broke that the said Robert Broke shall have and retain these letters patent of ours, drawn up in the usual manner, under our great seal of England, and signed without fine or tax, heavy or light, to be paid into our revenue office, or in any other way to be demanded or paid to the use of us, our heirs, or successors.

“Therefore express mention of this our will has been made, etc. In testimony of which, etc., T. R. Signed at Westminster, 23 July [1544]. On behalf of the king himself, in virtue of the royal commission.”

The MS. breaks off abruptly in places, probably from the copyist not being able to decipher the original. Of the Richard Charleton here mentioned we have no account in connection with Madeley, but a Richard Charlton is mentioned some ten years earlier, in the accounts of the first-fruits office, as the king’s bailiff or collector at the Marshe, near Barrow, where the Wenlock priors had one of their principal granges, and held a manorial court.

This was in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Henry VIII., and shortly after the very subservient parliament of 1534–35 had requested the king “to be pleased, as their most gracious sovereign lord, upon whom and in whom depended all their joy and wealth, to receive the first-fruits of all spiritual dignities and promotions.” An earlier member of this family is also

mentioned as Bishop of Hereford, examining the titles of the prior to certain privileges in Madeley, during one of his Visitations. We have also heard it said, but are not aware on what authority, that one of this very ancient and distinguished family at one time lived at the Hay, in the parish of Madeley.

The deed is further interesting from its mention of the ironworks at Coalbrookdale, described as Smithy Place and New House. It is earlier by a century than any notice previously met with, and we shall further allude to it when we come to speak of these works. The patronages spoken of, probably, were the rights exercised over the minerals by the Wenlock priors, one of whom, in the exercise of such rights, had, in 1322, for the sum of six shillings, granted a license to Walter de Caldebroke to dig for coals in the Brockholes, for the term of one year.

Some light is thrown upon the advowson and tithes of Madeley by interesting old documents carefully preserved in the vestry of Madeley church. The following copy of the "Terrier," kindly lent by Joseph Yate, Esq., made March 14th, 1710, shows the kind of tithes then collected:

"True copy of the Terrier of the parish of Madeley, in the county of Salop. For the vicar and clerks' fees, tythes, offerings, and minister's fees, &c.

"Imprimis. The court demesnes pays Easter offerings for master and servants, but no other tythes, except eight shillings at Easter, in lieu of tythes. The general way of tything within the parish is: hay and clover is due throughout the whole of the parish, except the demesnes, and is to be gathered at every eleventh cock; grass at the tenth cock; every pig and goose pay at the tenth, but for want of that number pay at the seventh; wool and lambs pay at the tenth, but in case they are set, is twopence a fleece and threepence a lamb, and for what lambs are fallen in wintering the owner pays twopence; calves are gathered in like kind, at the tenth, but for want of ten, at sixpence per calf. One penny a cow, in lieu of milk. Tythes of orchards or fruit-trees are gathered in kind throughout the parish, except the demesnes. The parishioners pay twopence for every stall of bees they put down, in lieu of tythe-money. Twopence for every colt, and two eggs for every hen or duck. Three eggs for every cock or drake at Easter. Surplice

fees are paid after this manner: every marriage solemnized by banns, three shillings and sixpence; if by license, five shillings (let the parishioner be man or woman). For churching every woman, sixpence. Easter dues are: every man pays threepence, every woman pays twopence; one penny smoke, and one penny garden, clerks fees. Every hen at Easter, one egg; every marriage by banns, sixpence; if by license, one shilling. Churching every woman, twopence. Every burial without a coffin and ringing the bell, twopence; if with a coffin, one shilling and sixpence. Fourpence for every plough land; twopence every householder; double fees for all strangers (and likewise the minister). Ten shillings per year for looking after the clock. Tythes of corn-mills are due in all parishes except demesnes.

“Taken 14 March, 1710. Jeremy Taylor, vicar. John Stringer and William Wood, churchwardens.”

It would appear from this that the dead were sometimes buried without a coffin, in which case a coarse cloth was, we believe substituted. The “smoke penny” was a penny collected for every chimney emitting smoke, or rather a tithe paid to the vicar upon the wood burnt. A dispute having arisen in the earlier part of the last century between the vicar and impropriator, respecting the right of the former to tithe on woods, a parish meeting was called and a case got up by the vicar and churchwardens for the opinion of counsel, in which the payment of the smoke-penny was quoted to establish the vicar’s claim. We give the queries put and counsel’s replies in the Appendix.

Tithe and Easter offerings were occasionally paid in kind, as appears from the churchwardens’ accounts. In one case two heifers are mentioned, which it is added, produced forty shillings.

In the churchwarden’s accounts of Easter offerings to the vicar of Madeley, in 1693, we get an insight of the household of the Court. The sums given are not stated, but the entry is as follows:—

“Basil Brooke and wife gave —, John Brooke gave —, John Bowdler gave —, John the butler gave —, Dennis — gave —, Joseph Littlehales gave —, Thomas gave — Francis, — gave —, Anthony —

gave —, Edward — gave —, Mrs. Lawson gave —, Margaret — gave —.”

We have already referred to this distinguished family in connection with Madeley and Claverley, where one branch continued to reside for many generations, whilst another was seated at Blacklands, in the neighbouring parish of Bobbington. Dukes says:—

“The family of Brooke, formerly of Lapley, in Staffordshire, and afterwards of Bobbington, and subsequently of Haughton, in Shropshire, had possessions in this parish, in whose family it continued until 1800, when the capital mansion and estates belonging thereto were sold by George Brooke, Esq. to different purchasers.”

In Claverley the name of John de la Broke occurs in 1242, and that of Thomas de la Bruche, in 1260, both of whom are supposed to have resided there. In 1268 a Geoffrey de la Broke is mentioned as having been on an inquest at Kinver. From 1299 to 1338 Richard de Broke, of Claverley, is sometimes called Richard atte <sup>[35]</sup> Broke, in connection with juries on which he sat, and in attesting deeds at Claverley, Bridgnorth, and elsewhere. In 1316 he was a grantee of land at Beobridge, whilst his son Richard is mentioned as a clerk in 1318, and the same son is again mentioned with his father in 1324. In 1342 and 1343 this succession, Mr. Eyton thinks, continues in Thomas atte Broke, of Claverley; but Randolf atte Broke, who was at Enville, in 1347, he takes to have been an ancestor of Brooke of Blacklands, one of whom (deceased in 1385) seems to have married a co-heiress of the Gravenors.

We have already noticed the very magnificent alabaster tomb, in the N.E. corner of the Gatacre chancel, on which are the recumbent figures of Lord Chief Justice Brooke, in his official robes, and his two wives, one on each side; and a subsequent visit enables us to add some additional particulars. The female-figures have ornamental head-gear, flowing mantles, single ruffs round their necks, three rows of chain necklaces hanging loose, and ruffles with braid at the hands. On the three sides of the tomb are figures of their eighteen children, in the dresses of the time. This tomb must have been a gorgeous one, for a close inspection shows traces of gold and colour, which once adorned the principal figures. It is to be regretted that the arms

of this distinguished family, like those of the Gatacre, the Beauchamp, the Talbot, the Ferrers, and some others, which, about the end of the seventeenth century adorned this church, have disappeared. Among others Mr. Eyton, in his "Antiquities of Shropshire," gives the following:—

"Quarterly—first and fourth, Chequy \* \*, and \* \*, a crescent for difference; second and third, \* \* a Cross Flory \* \*. ('Thomas Broke' written over this Coat.)

"Quarterly—first and fourth, Chequy \* \* and \* \*, on a Chief \* \*, a Brock \* \*; second and third, Arg, a Cross Flory Sa.

"Brooke (quarterly) empaling—Paly of six, Or and Az, a Canton Erm.

"Quarterly—first and four, Chequy Arg and Sa; second and third, Arg a Cross Flory Sa."

Over each of the doors, forming an entrance to, or egress from, the gardens, at the old Court House, Madeley, are massive stones, with the arms of the Brooke family, but without the crest. These correspond, too, with the arms of the Rev. John Brooke, of Haughton, near Shifnal, who represents another branch of the family of the Brookes, of Claverley. They are as follows:—

Parted per pale first Chequy \* \* and \* \*, second, Paly of six \* \* and \* \*, a Canton Ermine.

Parted per pale first Chequy \* \* and \* \*, second \* \* a Chevron, \* \* between three Helmets.

ARMS ON CEILING OF CHAPEL.—Quarterly—first and fourth, Chequy \* \* and \* \*, second and third, \* \* a cross Flory \* \*.

SHIELD OF ARMS IN WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY THE LARGE DINING HALL BELOW.—Quarterly—first Chequy, \* \* and \* \*, second \* \*, a cross Flory \* \*, third \* \*, a fess Chequy \* \* and \* \*, between ten Billets \* \*, fourth \* \*, a fess \* \*, thereon three Bugle Horns \* \*, stringed \* \*, garnished \* \*, between three Bucks' Heads cabossed \* \*.

Crest: Ostrich.

There are also coats of arms over the gatehouse of the Brooke family, <sup>[37]</sup> those over the window and doorway being—

Party per pale. First Chequy \* \* \* and \* \* \*. Second paly of Six, and a Canton Ermine.

On the right tower—

Paly of Six \* \* \* and \* \* \* with Canton Ermine.

On this tower also is an heraldic rose, and on the left \* \*, a Cross Pommee, \* \*.

The first entry of an interment in the register at Claverley, the vicar tells us, is that of a Brooke, and the second entry in the register at Madeley is also the interment of a member of the same family.

Subsequent and more detailed examinations of the arms in various parts of the Court House and adjacent buildings throw a doubt upon the statement in a previous page, as to the proprietorship or occupation at one time of the Ferrers family. These arms differ, it will be seen, as may be expected, from marriages and inter-marriages, but we are not sufficiently acquainted with the arms of other old families of the time to say with what or whose arms they were incorporated, and it would be overloading our pages with genealogical lore to go into details. A family, some of the members of which had two wives and eighteen children, would naturally soon spread itself about the country.

The Rev. C. Brooke, of Brackley, Northants, as these pages are going through the press, writes to say:—

“From the similiarity in the arms it would seem that there was a connection between Robert Brooke of Madeley Court, and Brooke of Blacklands, whose arms are given by Dr. Plot, in his ‘History of Staffordshire,’ as ‘Chequy, arg. and sable;’ but it does not appear to be so by the pedigree in the Visitation taken 1623, or by the pedigree of Brooke of Blacklands, compiled by Mr. Eyton, for the Rev. J. Brooke, from original deeds at Haughton, which he did as well as the scanty records would allow.”

A contributor to “Salopian Shreds and Patches” (Feb. 9, 1876) says one of the bells of Church Stretton church has the following inscription:—

“Donatum pro avi Edwardo Brooke de Stretton Generoso. 1711.”

And adds—

“Assuming that this is a correct reading of the abbreviated words on the bell, the following is a literal translation:—‘Given for luck by Edward Brooke, of Stretton, gentleman. 1711.’”

The Rev. John Brooke, of Haughton, unwilling that one of the family should have been supposed to have associated the word “luck” with things so sacred, writes to say:—

“On referring to the copies of the Claverley registers, as I have, I find that ‘Avis’ was the Christian name of one of his wives, 1636; therefore, after all, Edward Brooke probably gave the bell in memory of either his wife or a daughter of that name.”

One of the Brookes, residing or having property, or both, at Coalbrookdale, went to Ireland, taking the name of the place with him, and calling it “Colebrook.”

In a work published on distinguished Shropshire families is the following, which is interesting from its bearing upon an important historical fact:—

“Robert Brooke Miles married three wives; one, Anne, d. and heir of Michael Warringe de Salop. He died 1558.

↓

John B. died 1598, aged 60. + Anne, d. of Francis Shirley, of Staniton, co. Leicester.

↓

Sir Basil Brooke Miles, 1623, died 1646. + Etheldreda, d. and sole heir of Edmund Boudendil.”

Sir Basil was one of the sporting friends whom Giffard of Chillington drew around him at his housewarming on the border of Brewood Forest, a house which subsequently gave shelter to the Earl of Derby and King Charles the First. It was built nominally as a hunting-seat, but really for purposes of concealment; and the site on the border of two counties, deep in the recesses of woods, traversed by no public roads, was exceedingly suitable. It is said that on the completion of the building the owner invited a few friends to dinner, to celebrate the occasion, and amongst them Sir Basil Brooke, of the Court House, Madeley, who had recently returned from Italy, and who on being requested by his host to supply a name for the place, suggested Boscobel, or Bos co Bello; and this was considered so appropriate, from the prospect it commanded of the beautiful woods around, that it is said to have been at once adopted.

It will be seen from what we have previously stated that the family of Brooke continued to reside at Madeley till 1706, when, according to the benefaction-table in the church, Basil Brooke by will bequeathed the sum of £40, and for a further sum of £30, paid him by Audley Bowdler and eight other parties, sold three several cottages or tenements, with gardens and yards, at Madeley Wood, for the use of the poor. <sup>[40]</sup>

The next tenant of the Court appears to have been the first Abraham Darby, for we find that he died there, after which time we find no tenants of more importance than the Purtons and the Triggers, who were farmers, and held the land around.

Thus early, even in Madeley, did the great owners of the soil—who merely tilled the surface, and scarcely that—give place to miners and ironmakers who knew how to win wealth from beneath.

With regard to this fine old mansion itself, having about it the symbols of ancient and distinguished Shropshire families, and associated at still earlier periods with the history of the wealthy monastery of St. Milburgh, it is fast going to decay. The last of the long and distinguished line of Wenlock priors lived and died here, as did the first great Shropshire ironmaster, the first Abraham Darby, afterwards, and one almost regrets that the wish of the late James Foster, who purchased the property, to repair and restore it, was not carried out. The temptation to get the mines underneath it, however,

proved too strong: the whole has been undermined, and from attacks below and above, with all the usual elements of decay at work, must ere long disappear, rich as it is in associations of the past.

It is one of that class of buildings the country can ill afford to spare, for it speaks not to the antiquarian or the historian merely, but to all who take an interest in the manners, customs, and domestic arrangements of the past. It is difficult to say which are the original portions, but the vaults and cellaring, and some other parts appear to have belonged to a building which has undergone many changes. The windows, walls, and doorways of that portion of the building occupied by Mr. Round, and the substantial foundations that gentleman found beneath the surface in cutting a drain in the same direction, with a well 15 yards deep, indicate pretty clearly an extension of the buildings formerly on that side.

On going inside, and descending a spiral stone staircase to the basement story of the building, visitors will have opportunities of seeing how substantially the walls are built. They are a yard and a half in thickness, and have narrow openings, each growing narrower towards the outside, every two converging towards a point similar to what the reader has witnessed in many a fortress of bygone times, and designed no doubt for the same purpose, for defence. This staircase did not then as now terminate in what was the large hall, but in the adjoining apartment, now used as a brewhouse. The partition, too, which shuts off the entrance to another pair of stairs near the coat of arms on the north did not exist, nor the stairs either. The room is now 38½ feet long; then it would be 40, by 22 feet wide, and 14 feet high. Beneath these arms, on a dais, probably, the head of the house would sit dispensing hospitality. The chief staircase was near the other end of the hall, and composed of immense blocks of solid oak. The spiral stone staircase from the base of the building to the chapel at the top of the house was for the use, it is supposed, either of the dependents or the officiating priest. A further examination of the arms on the ceiling and a comparison with those in other parts of the building show them to be those of the Brooke family. An oak screen divides the chapel, which is wainscoted to the ceiling with oak. On the eastern side of this screen is a piscina, which has been cut out of the solid brickwork, and which at a subsequent period must have been concealed by the wainscoating. In the western division, behind the wainscoating, is a secret chamber, a yard

square; probably for concealment in times of danger. It is communicated with by a panel in the wainscoat just large enough to admit a man, who, once inside, had the means of bolting and barring himself in behind the oak panel, which would look in no respect different to the others. This is called king Charles's hole, but there is no evidence or well-founded tradition that he occupied it. There are a number of other curious nooks and small chambers which might have served purposes of concealment in troubled times, and probably did so, when the votaries of the two dominant religions, fired with a zeal inspired by their positions, alternately persecuted each other, as in the times of James, Mary, and Elizabeth. It is an error however, and one which Harrison Ainsworth among others appears to have fallen into, to suppose that the unfortunate king Charles either came to the Court House or was secreted in it. It is probable enough that, from the well known loyalty of the owner, the house would be searched by the Parliamentarians for the king, and the fact that they were likely to do so would lead to more discretion in selecting a place of concealment. The fine old wainscoating is falling from the rooms, and the whole place presents a scene of utter desolation.

From the upper portion of the building a pit, said to be without a bottom, and leading to a subterranean passage to Buildwas Abbey, may be seen. There is of course no ground for either tradition: a house which belonged to the priors of Wenlock would want no communication with a rival monastery, which was looked upon with jealousy, and the more abstemious habits of the inmates of which were in some measure a reflection upon their own. The pit or well has no bottom, inasmuch as it slants when it gets below the building in the direction of the pool in which it terminates.

Outside the building are some of the grotesque, nondescript stone figures which builders of the Gothic age indulged in. On this side, too, is a handsome stone porch, which, like some other portions of the same building is more modern than others. The gate-house, like the porch, is both more modern, and more Elizabethan than the other. It is a well-proportioned and beautiful building, exciting the admiration of all who see it. It possesses several heraldic embellishments, relating to the Brooke family.

It is a pity that the memorials of a family so ancient and distinguished, and so connected with the early history of Madeley, have not been better

preserved. There must, one would think, have been mural monuments of a costly kind in the old church, seeing that the family lived at the Court for two centuries and a half at the least.

The stone of which the house was built was quarried near the spot, but the shelly limestone covering for the roof must have been brought from Acton Burnell, or somewhere near. It is from the pentamerous beds of the Caradoc sandstone. The house is supplied with spring-water by pipes from an ancient reservoir on the high ground near where the stone used was probably quarried.

### **KING CHARLES'S VISIT TO, AND CONCEALMENT AT, MADELEY.**

The first indication we find at Madeley of the troubled times which ushered in the most remarkable episode in the history of the 17th century is an entry in the church register, under date of April 14, 1645, informing us that on the above date one William Caroloso was buried, the church at the time being garrisoned by a Parliamentary regiment, commanded by Captain Harrington. A page of history was being written which in all future times would be read with interest; agencies, the growth of centuries, had been developed; struggles for political and polemical equality had disturbed the stagnation of ages. The injustice of the courts, the persecutions, pillorings, and beheadings of reformers and standard-bearers of truth, and the weakness and insincerity of monarchs, had culminated in revolution, and six years later the weak vacillating monarch, Charles II., after the battle of Worcester, where 3,000 of his army had been left upon the field, came a fugitive to Madeley. The story of his flight, his disguise, and of his lodging in "Wolfe's bam," is an episode in history that illustrates the vicissitudes of life, affords a startling lesson to royalty, and brings into relief the devotion and faithfulness of those in humble spheres to others when in misfortune. Having ridden in hot haste from Worcester, and fallen in with the Earls Buckingham, Derby, Wilmot, and others, "I strove," he tells us, "as soon as it was dark, to get them to stand by me against the enemy, I could not get rid of them now I had a mind to it, having, afterwards slipt away from them by a by-road when it was dark."

The story of his retreat through Kidderminster, where Richard Baxter describes the balls flying all night, and the hurried northward flight under

the trusty scout, Master Walker; then the second pause of terror on Kinver Heath; the stolen and breathless flight through Stourbridge; the short and poor refreshment at Kingswinford; and the long gallop to the White Ladies;—the whole flight being certainly forty miles—has been so often told as to be familiar to the reader.

These and other incidents of the flight have been worked up in a drama, in five acts, by Mr. George Griffiths, of Bewdley. Scene 2 is laid at the White Ladies (nine miles from Wolverhampton and one from Brewood, now occupied by Mr. Wilson).

*“Enter* Col. Roscarrock, Richard Penderell, of Hobbal Grange, Edward Martin, a servant, and Bartholemew Martin, a boy in the house.

*“Col. Roscarrock* (to the boy Martin):  
Come hither, boy, canst thou do an errand,  
And speak to no one on the road to Boscobel?

*“Boy.*—That I can, Sir, without reward or fee;  
Trust me, I will not say one word  
To any he or she, so tell me what’s my duty.

*“Col. Roscarrock.*—Go off to Boscobel the nearest road,  
And one that fewest folks do travel by.  
Tell William Penderell to hasten hither,  
Without a minute’s stopping,  
And should he ask thee why and wherefore,  
Tell him Good Master Giffard wants him here  
Without delay, and see thou com’st back with him;  
And shouldst thou meet or pass folks on the road,  
Say nought unto them as to where thou’rt going  
Or what thy errand is. Haste, and some coin  
Shall warm thy pocket if thou mind’st my words.

*“Boy.*—Aye, aye, sir, humble boys have sharpish wits.  
Because their simple food keeps them in health;  
I’se warrant the Squire’s son, though so well fed,  
Cannot leap gates like I, or ride a horse  
Barebacked across the hedges of our farm.

Aye, aye, sir, I can keep my counsel, too;  
I know a hay-fork from a noble's sword,  
And I do feel that with my harvest fork  
I could defend a king as stoutly  
As those who carry golden-handled swords.  
I go, and no man, no, nor woman either,  
Shall coax one word from off my faithful tongue.

[*Exit.*

“*Col. Roscarrock.*—See now, how this young varlet guesses all,  
His eye alone told all I thought unknown;  
Well, trusty friends dwell oft in rustic hearts  
With more sincerity than in the breasts  
Of those who fill the highest offices.”

Boscobel was selected upon the suggestion of the Earl of Derby, who, defeated and wounded on the 25th of August, 1651, at the battle of Wigan, by the Parliamentary forces under Colonel Lilburn, found his way hither whilst seeking to join Charles at Worcester, and who, after four or five days rest here, went on, and reached Worcester on the eve of the famous battle.

Boscobel, so named, as we have seen, by Sir Basil Brooke, of the Court House, Madeley, on account of its beautiful and well-wooded situation, and built ostensibly as a hunting-lodge, but in reality as a hiding-place for priests, amid the sombre forest of Brewood, was often used for the purpose for which it was designed, as well as a shelter for distressed Cavaliers.

The story of the disfigurement of Charles, and his crouching wet and weary in the woods, has been often told in prose and verse. We quote Griffiths again:—

“*W. Penderell* (to the King).—Sire, disguise is your first need,  
henceforth your title must not pass  
Our lips; here in this chimney rub your hands  
And then transfer the blackness to your face.  
We must in, and clothe you in a rustic suit  
Of green, with leathern doublet and a noggain shirt  
For we have heard that troops have come to Codsall

But three miles off, under the traitor Ashenhurst.  
Haste! Haste! and when your rough disguise is donned  
We must take shelter in the thick Spring Coppice,  
The darkest covert Boscobel doth claim.

“SCENE 4. Richard Penderell’s house at Hobbal Grange. Enter the King, old Mrs. Penderell, and her son Richard.

“*The King*.—We must not stop here long, the air is full of spies,  
The night now favours us; no moon nor stars  
Shine out to show us to our enemies.  
Let’s hence to Wales, fidelity lives there  
More than on English soil. Oft have I read  
Of their unvarying faith to those they served,  
What straits and stratagems they felt and wrought,  
To save misfortune’s sons from grievous fates.

“*R. Penderell*.—We must disguise you more;  
Rub well your hands in the wet dirt,  
Here, take this bill, a woodman you must be,  
And for a name let William Jones suffice;  
Shew no dread, but speak few words,  
For fear they should betray your better teaching.  
Come, let’s away, I have a friend at Madeley,  
Wolfe by name, faithful and trusty.”

William Penderell acting as barber, the king was eased of his royal locks, his hands and face were toned down to that of a country labourer, and he sallied forth, wood-bill in hand, in the direction of Madeley, with “a country-fellow,” whose borrowed suit he travelled in. To understand his majesty’s toilet the reader must conceive the royal person in a pair of ordinary grey cloth breeches—“more holy than the wearer”—rather roomy in the slack; a leathern doublet, greasy about the collar; hose much darned; shoes that let in dirt and wet to the royal feet—ventilators in their way; and above all a sugar-loaf hat, rain proof by reason of grease, turned up at the sides, the corners acting as water-spouts. Thus disguised, the rain pouring in torrents, on a dark night, along a rough by-road, “guided by the rustling sound of Richard’s calf-skin breeches,” through mud and mire, over ruts,

plunging now and then into swollen streams, the king and his guide travelled in the direction of Madeley. Slamming the gate at Evelyth bridge, in the middle of the night, brought out the miller, who ordered them to stand, and raised an outcry of "Rogues, rogues." Foot-sore and weary, resolving sometimes to go no farther, then plucking up their spirits and trudging on, the house of Mr. Wolfe, who had "hiding holes for priests," was reached, where the king slept in a barn.

Hearing from Mr. Wolfe's son, who had escaped from Shrewsbury, that every bridge and boat were in the possession of the Roundheads, so that escape in that direction was hopeless, it was decided to advise his majesty to return. Mr. Wolfe, according to Pepys, persuaded the king to put on "a pair of old green yarn stockings, all worn and darned at the knees, with their feet cut off, to hide his white ones, for fear of being observed;" and Mrs. Wolfe having again had recourse to walnut-juice for the purpose of deepening the tone upon the royal face, he again set out in the direction of Boscobel. The king, in the diary above quoted, is made to say:—

"So we set out as soon as it was dark. But, as we came by the mill again, we had no mind to be questioned a second time there; and therefore asking Richard Penderell whether he could swim or no, and how deep the river was, he told me it was a scurvy river, not easy to be past in all places, and that he could not swim. So I told him, that the river being a little one, I would undertake to help him over. Upon which we went over some closes to the river side, and I, entering the river first, to see whether I could myself go over, who knew how to swim, found it was but a little above my middle; and thereupon taking Richard Penderell by the hand, I helped him over."

They reached Boscobel at five o'clock on the morning of Saturday, September 6th. Penderell, leaving the king in the wood, went to the house to reconnoitre. All was secure, and he found Colonel Carless, who was also hiding at Boscobel. He had been an active soldier throughout the war. His presence cheered the tired and wandering monarch, who now for the first time was brought into the house, and sitting by the fire was refreshed with bread and cheese and a warm posset of beer, prepared by W. Penderell's wife, Joan, who also brought him warm water to bathe his feet, and dried his shoes by placing in them hot embers. After a short slumber the king

was aroused by his anxious attendants, he not being safe in the house in the daylight. With Colonel Carless he then climbed into an oak tree that stood a few yards from the house, at some distance from the other trees. It had been lopped or pollarded, some years before, and in consequence had grown very bushy, and afforded a good hiding-place. They took provisions for the day with them. Screened from view, the king, resting his head on the knees of Carless, slept soundly for some time. The king, in his narrative, as recorded by Pepys, says:—"While we were in the tree we saw soldiers going up and down in the thickets of the wood, searching for persons escaped, we seeing them now and then peeping out of the wood."

Saturday evening brought darkness, of which the fugitives availed themselves by going into the house, and Penderell's wife, Dame Joan, provided a dainty dish of roast chickens for the king's supper. That being over, the king retired to a hiding-hole at the top of the stairs, where a pallet was laid ready, and there he passed the night. On Sunday morning the king arose refreshed, and passed the day partly at his devotions, partly in watching, and partly reading in the garden. We must not forget to mention that he cooked his meat, frying some collops of mutton. Meanwhile, John Penderell had gone in search of Lord Wilmot, whom he found at Moseley Hall with Mr. Whitgreave, and in the evening he returned, bringing tidings that the king could be received at Moseley. Whereupon Charles, taking leave of Carless, set out on Humphrey Penderell's (the miller's) horse, attended by the five Penderells and their brother-in-law, Yates, well armed with bills and pike-staves, as well as pistols. The king complained of the rough motion of the horse. "Can you blame the horse, my liege," said the honest miller, "to go heavily, when he has the weight of three kingdoms on his back?" At Moseley Hall the king remained from Sunday night till Tuesday evening, when Colonel Lane came from Bentley, bringing a horse for him. Being dressed in a suit of grey hose, and with the name of Jackson, he acted as serving-man to Miss Jane Lane, rode before her, and eventually embarked for France, which country after many narrow escapes, he reached safely on the 16th of October.

To Mr. Wolfe, of Madeley, the king presented a very handsome silver tankard with the inscription, "Given by Charles the Second, at the Restoration, to F. Wolfe, of Madeley, in whose barn he was secreted after the defeat at Worcester, 1651." The tankard is now in the possession of W.

Rathbone, Esq., of Liverpool, but a print of it hangs in the old house. The tankard has upon the cover a coat of arms: the crest is a demi-wolf supporting a crown. In the hall there is an old panel, which was cut out of the wainscoating of the dining-room, with the initials, thus:—

F. W. M.  
1621.

In the church register we find the burial of Barbara Wolfe, January 13th, 1660; of Ann Wolfe, September 19th, 1672; of Francis Wolfe, December 7th, 1665; and of Sarah Wolfe, late wife of Francis Wolfe, January 10th, 1698.

The house is a very old one, and Mr. Joseph Yate, of the Hall, close by, says he remembers his father telling him that in former times it was “a house of entertainment.” The barn which is not more than twenty feet from the house, afterwards became the Market House, the butchers’ shambles being still discernible. The upper portion was rebuilt, or cased, a few years ago, but the old timber skeleton remains.

It is pleasant to find that Charles, at the restoration, further remembered his preservers, and settled pensions on their survivors; but not till 1675 was permanent provision made. Certain rents from estates in Stafford, Salop, Hereford, &c., were intrusted to Sir Walter Wollesley, John Giffard, of Black Ladies, and Richard Congreve, of Congreve, to pay the yearly proceeds to the Penderell family, the sum amounting to about £450 per annum, thus:—

£100 a-year to Richard Penderell or his heirs,

£100 a-year to William or his heirs.

100 marks, or £66 13s. 4d. a-year to Humphrey or his heirs.

100 marks to John or his heirs.

100 marks to George or his heirs.

£50 a-year to Elizabeth Yates or her heirs.

The surviving trustee is John Giffard, of Black Ladies, and his lineal descendants, the present squire of Chillington, who is now sole trustee. <sup>[54]</sup>

### **THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.**

Another notable event noticed by an old book in the vestry of Madeley Church already quoted, is the Great Fire of London, September, 1666, sixteen years subsequent to the stirring drama previously recorded. It comes before us in a house-to-house visitation, by the vicar and churchwardens, for the purpose of raising subscriptions “in aid of a fund to relieve the sufferings by the Great Fire.”

In this account nine sugar-refiners are said to have lost £20,000; but, notwithstanding the house-to-house visitation, only £1 2s. 10d. was raised, which speaks little for the sympathy or wealth of the inhabitants at that time.

### **ASSESSMENTS IN MADELEY, AND ABOLITION OF THE CHIMNEY TAX OR SMOKE-PENNY.**

The Smoke-Penny, Chimney Tax, or Hearth-Money, previously alluded to, so oppressive to the poor, and so obnoxious generally, by exposing every man’s house to be entered and searched at pleasure, had become so unpopular that one of the earliest proceedings of the first Parliament of William and Mary was to substitute a grant in “aid,” of £68,820 per month, for six months, payable in proportions; the entire assessment for Shropshire being £1203, and those for the several parishes in the allotment of Madeley, at 12d. in the £, as under:—

	£	s.	d.
Madeley	17	02	04
Little Wenlock	10	04	06
Huntington	03	11	10
Beckbury	05	09	02

Badger	03	13	06½
	£40	01	7½

The principle ever since continued of specific annual grants to the king by votes of Parliament, partially acted upon by Charles II., but wholly disregarded by the Parliament of the succeeding reign, was now fully established.

### **THE LAW OF SETTLEMENT.**

From an order given to the constables of the parish of Madeley in 1690, we get an insight of the laws of Settlement which imposed such restrictions upon our ancestors, compelling a labourer to remain in the place where he was born to the end of his days, and preventing him bettering his condition. The order was that whereas Thomas Richardson had endeavoured to make a settlement in Madeley contrary to the law, &c., that they, the constables, bring his body to the serjeant's house, Much Wenlock, to answer all matters brought against him by the overseers of the poor of the parish of Madeley. The constables were also to bring John York, smith, before some justice of the peace to give sureties for his own and his wife's good behaviour.

### **VAGRANTS AND STURDY BEGGARS.**

Paupers having been created by restraints preventing them seeking employ where work was to be had, of course became troublesome. Hence the serjeant-at-mace orders the constables at Madeley upon oath to report what felonies have been committed, and what vagrants and sturdy beggars have passed through.

The same constables were to ascertain how many persons of the age of sixteen absented themselves from church, and for how many Sabbaths. Also who destroyed hawks, hares, pheasants, &c.; and who bought by greater and sold by lesser weights.

### **THE OATHS OF SUPREMACY.**

In the fifth year of William and Mary (1691) constables were to give notice to all above sixteen and under sixty, whom they believed to be disaffected, to appear before the serjeant-at-mace to take the oaths, &c.: but a goodly number of the Madeley and Little Wenlock allotment appear to have been guilty of contempt, and were ordered to pay the sum of 40s. by them forfeited. Having been guilty of further contempt, the constables are ordered to seize and bring the bodies of the delinquents. (See Appendix.)

### **THE POLL TAX.**

In the same year, 1692, constables are instructed to look-up all loose seamen and watermen, and bring them before one of the justices of the peace; and to collect 4s. in the £, towards carrying on a vigorous war with France. An order (September, 1693), signed “George Weld, Bart.,” addressed to Mr. Brooke, of Madeley, calls upon the constables to summons the Militia to appear at Shrewsbury &c., &c. Under the act passed for collecting 4s. in the £, for carrying on the war, constables were instructed to charge papists and all who had not taken the oaths of supremacy double.

### **ASSESSMENT FOR CARRYING ON A VIGOROUS WAR.**

The assessment for Madeley for three months, on the allotment of Little Wenlock by the commissioners, towards the raising of £1,651,702, as granted by Parliament to the king for carrying on a vigorous war against France, was £8 2s.

### **PRESS LAWS.**

In the same year constables were commanded to make diligent search for all straggling seamen and watermen who were of able bodies, fit for service at sea, and, to impress them, giving them one shilling. The assessment in Madeley of 4s. in the £, for 1694, produced, on land, works, &c., £149 1s. 4d., “one pound having been abated on the lime-works.”

### **TAX UPON MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, BURIALS, &c.**

In 1695 the Madeley constables were to collect duties upon “marriages, births, and burials, and upon bachelors and widows,” for carrying on the war with France, according to the rank of the individuals.

In 1696, and 1697, we find constables have various duties assigned them; and in 1698, they are required to carry out an act for preventing frauds and abuses in the charging and collecting, and paying of duties upon marriages, births, and burials, bachelors and widows. Also for collecting a quarterly poll for the year.

In 1702 instructions are given to constables to present all papists, Jesuits, and all others that have received orders from the see of Rome. Also all popish recusants and others that do not come to their several parish churches within the divisions.

In 1703 they were to collect subsidies for her majesty (Queen Anne), for carrying on the war with France and Spain, and to charge those who had not taken the oath of allegiance double.

In 1708 constables were to ascertain what masters or servants gave or took greater wages than were allowed by law.

Our account of instructions to constables continues to 1714, but nothing to merit comment occurs. Many names of old Madeley families occur, which we shall notice hereafter.

### **RENT AND VALUE OF LANDS IN THE LORDSHIP OF MADELEY, in 1702.**

Demesne lands in Madeley, (537a. 3r. 33p.) or those attached to the Court House, with the 770 trees upon it, valued at twenty years purchase, was said to be £6,459 10s. 4d.; yearly rent, £289 13s. 6d. The whole acreage of Madeley, including the above, was 2073 acres, the yearly value of which was £1,021; trees, 3369; loads of wood, 160; purchase, £17,366 9s. 4d. For names of proprietors, see Appendix.

We find from a survey of the lordship of Madeley, that the demesne lands of the Court in 1786, belonged to Richard Dyett, Esq., one of an old

Shropshire family, from whom it was purchased by William Orme Foster, Esq., about the year 1830.

### **THE COAL AND IRON INDUSTRIES OF MADELEY.**

During the period events previously recorded were being enacted, the coal and iron industries now employing so many hands, and which have brought so much wealth to individual proprietors, were being developed. Francis Wolfe, who gave shelter to King Charles, is supposed to have been a shareholder in some ironworks at Leighton, and probably at Coalbrookdale, from the fact that an iron plate, bearing date 1609, has the initials "T.R.W.," and another with the date 1658 (the latter removed here from Leighton), also bears a "W" among other initials. We read also of a clerk of a Shropshire ironworks being the first to convey the news of the disastrous defeat of the royal army at Worcester. We find, too, that as early as 1332 Walter de Caldbroke obtained from the Wenlock monks license to dig for coals at the outcrop at the Brockholes. We also learn from Fuller, who lived and wrote in the seventeenth century, that what he calls "fresh-water coal" was dug out at such a distance from the Severn as to be easily ported by boat into other shires.

Iron, too, was made as we have seen from the Patent Roll, 36 Henry VIII., part v., where the grant of the manor of Madeley to Robert Brooke, Esq. is expressly said to include "the rights attached to the whole of the place and buildings that go under the one name of the Smithy Place, and Newhouse called Caldbrooke Smithy, with its patronages in the aforesaid Madeley."

### **THE FIRST IRONWORKS.—THE REYNOLDSSES.**

The first ironworks were of course of a very humble description; the outcrop of the mines did not then determine the situation so much as the presence of a powerful stream which supplied a force to work the leathern bellows which blew the fires. The first Abraham Darby came to the Dale in 1709, and in 1713 the make was but from five to ten tons per week. In 1712 he used coal in smelting iron. He died at the Court House, Madeley, in 1717, and was succeeded by his son, the second Abraham Darby, who in 1760 is said to have laid the first rails of iron for carriages with axles having

fixed wheels. The third Abraham Darby effected another great achievement, the casting and erecting the first iron bridge, for which he obtained the medal of the Society of Arts. The credit of having laid the first iron rails is claimed for Richard Reynolds, who succeeded the second Abraham Darby in the management of these works in 1763, and who, according to Sir Robert Stephenson, who examined the books of the works, cast six tons of iron rails for the use of the works in 1767. It was at these works, too, that the brothers Cranege anticipated Henry Cort by seventeen years by the discovery of the process of puddling in a reverberatory furnace, by the use of pit-coal, in 1766, under the management of Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Reynolds also took a warm interest in the success and introduction of the steam engine, which he adopted in 1778. "For no one," observes his daughter, "did he entertain sentiments of more affectionate esteem than for James Watt," with whom, as well as with Wedgwood and Wilkinson, he was associated in several public movements of the time. Being a Friend he was opposed to war and refused Government orders for cannon; and he was stung to the quick when Pitt's ministry proposed to lay a war tax upon coal. The country had been carrying on wars—wars everywhere, and with everybody, and to meet the lavish expenditure, the popular minister of the day, on whom Walpole tells us, "it rained gold boxes" for weeks running, "the pilot that weathered the storm," sought to replenish the exchequer by a tax of 2s. per ton, to be paid on all coal without exception raised to the pit's mouth. The iron-masters of Shropshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire, as well as those of other English and Scottish counties were alarmed; it was felt to be an important crisis in the history of the trade. Deputations and petitions were sent up, but the wily premier had so carefully yet quietly surrounded himself with facts, that he knew of every pound of iron made and of every ton of coal that was raised. Pitt received the gentlemen connected with the trade with the greatest freedom and affability; bowed them in and out; appointed hours and places to meet their convenience, and left them dumbfounded at his knowledge of details of their own business. Mr. Reynolds entered the field in opposition to the tax, gave evidence before the Privy Council, and by petitions to the House and letters to members of the Cabinet, materially aided in defeating the attempt. The gravity of the occasion is, perhaps, even more evident to us, on whom the advantages of a cheap and plentiful supply of iron have fallen. We can

better measure the consequences that must have followed. A tax upon coal at that period would have paralysed the trade, checked its development in this country, and thrown into the lap of others benefits we ourselves have derived; would have disendowed the island of advantages in which it is peculiarly rich,—upon which it is mainly dependent for its wealth, its progress, and its civilization. A tax upon coal would have been a tax upon iron, upon the manufacture of iron, upon its consumption, and its use in the arts and manufactures of the kingdom,—a tax upon spinning, weaving, and printing,—a tax upon the genius of Watt and Arkwright, whose improvements it would have thrown back and thwarted,—upon the extension of commerce at home and abroad. The immense advantages possessed by the manufacturers of the New World would then have given them the lead in a race in which, even now, it is as much as we can do to keep up. Our energies, just at a time when the iron nerves of England were put to their greatest strain, would have been paralysed, and we should have been deprived of our railways, our locomotives, our steam-fleets, and much of our commerce, and prosperity. Mr. Reynolds saw the evil in prospective, and in a letter to Earl Gower, President of the Council, dated the 7th month, 1784, takes a very just review of the past history of the trade and the improvements then about to be adopted. He says:—

“The advancement of the iron trade within these few years have been prodigious; it was thought, and justly, that the making of pig iron with pit coal was a great acquisition to the nation by saving the woods and supplying a material to manufactories, the make of which, by the consumption of all the wood the country produced, was unequal to the demand; and the nail trade, perhaps the most considerable of any one article of manufactured iron, would have been lost to this country, had it not been found practicable to make nails of iron made with pit coal; and it is for that purpose we have made, or rather are making, the alterations at Donnington-Wood, Ketley, &c., which we expect to complete in the present year, but not at a less expense than twenty thousand pounds, which will be lost to us and gained by nobody if this tax is laid on our coals. The only chance we have of making iron as cheap as it can be imported from Russia, is the low price of our fuel, and unless we can do that there will not be consumption equal to half the quantity that can be made, and when we consider how many people

are employed on a ton of iron, and the several trades dependent thereupon, we shall be convinced the Revenue is much more benefited even by the consumption of excisable articles, &c., than by the duty on a ton of foreign iron; nor will it, I believe, escape observation that the iron trade, so fatally affected by this absurd tax, is only of the second, if indeed, on some account, it is not of the first importance to the nation. The preference I know is given, and I believe justly, as to the number of hands employed, to the woollen manufactory; but when it is remembered that all that is produced by making of iron with pit coal is absolutely so much gained to the nation, and which, without its being so applied, would be perfectly useless, it will evince its superior importance, for the land grazed by sheep might be converted with whatever loss to other purposes of agriculture or pasturage; but coal and iron stone have no value in their natural state, produce nothing till they are consumed or manufactured, and a tax upon coal, which, as I said, is the only article that in any degree compensates for our high price of labour, &c., or can be substituted in the stead of water for our wheels, and bellows, would entirely ruin this very populous country, and throw its labouring poor upon the parishes, till the emigration of those of them who are able to work shall strengthen our opponents, and leave the desolated wastes, at present occupied by their cottages, to the lords of the soil.”

In the year following (1785) the interests of the iron trade were again considered to be endangered from commercial arrangements proposed by the Irish House of Commons for the consideration of Parliament. Mr. Reynolds, Messrs. Boulton, Watt, Wedgwood, Wilkinson, and others, united in forming an association for the protection of the trade, under the title of “The United Chamber of Manufacturers of Great Britain.” The Shropshire iron and coal masters petitioned the House, and Mr. Reynolds again wielded the pen in defence of the trade. We extract sufficient to show the extent of the works. He says, addressing Earl Gower, under date 28th of the third month, 1785,—

“We solicit thy effectual interposition against a measure so injurious to us and to the many hundreds of poor people employed by us in working and carrying on mines, &c., for the supply of a large sale of

coals by land and water, and of coals and mine for sixteen fire-engines, eight blast furnaces, and nine forges, besides the air furnaces, mills, &c., at the foundry at Coalbrookdale, and which, with the levels, roads, and more than twenty miles of railways, &c., still employs a capital of upwards of £100,000, though the declension of our trade has, as stated in a former letter, obliged us to stop two blast furnaces, which are not included in the number before mentioned. Nor have we ever considered ourselves as the first of many others employed in iron or coal works in this kingdom.”

We have considered the subject of our present sketch chiefly under one aspect only—as a man of action—and that mainly in connection with the iron trade, and in providing against those reverses to which not only that but other branches of industry were peculiarly liable, more particularly during the latter end of the last and the commencement of the present centuries. Mr. Reynolds, however, has claims no less distinguished under a classification beneath which is frequently found another division of human benefactors. He was not only a man of action—great in dealing with things tangible,—but he was a man of thought and of genius—as quick to devise and to plan as to execute. What is still more rare, he possessed those qualities in proportions so finely balanced, that their happy combination, during a long and active life, gave birth to schemes of noble enterprise, valuable to the district, and important to the nation. That which merited, from vulgar shortsightedness, the epithet of eccentricity, a state of deep and penetrating thought, was oftentimes the conceiving energy of a vigorous mind mastering in the mental laboratory of the brain, plans and schemes of which the noblest movements of the day are the just and legitimate offspring. The schemes he inaugurated were victories won, the improvements he effected were triumphs gained to the nation or for humanity.

That quality of mind which too often runs waste or evaporates in wild impracticable ideality, with him found an object of utility on which to alight, and under the magic of a more than ordinary genius difficulties disappeared, formidable obstacles melted into air, and the useful and the true were fused into one. He never felt the fluttering of a noble thought but he held it by the skirts, and made it do duty in this work-day world of ours, if it had relation to the tangible realities of time. “Though I do not adopt,”

he writes to a friend, “all the notions of Swedenbourg, I have believed that the spiritual world is nearer to us than many suppose, and that our communication with it would be more frequent than many of us experience, did we attain to that degree of purity of heart and abstraction from worldly thoughts and tempers which qualify for such communion or intercourse.” He was not a man whose soul ran dry in solitude, or that grew melancholy the moment the click of money-making machinery no longer sounded in his ears. He was one of the old iron-kings, ’tis true, but with a soul in harmony with the silvery music of the universe. Often with no companion but his pipe, he retired to some retreat, consecrated perhaps by many a happy thought, and watched the declining sun, bathing in liquid glory the Ercall woods, the majestic Wrekin, the Briedden hills, and the still more distant Cader Idris. A deep vein of genuine religious feeling often appeared upon the surface, and seemed to penetrate reflections of the kind. Speaking of a new harbour he had made, he says—

“From thence I have seen three or four as fine sunsets as I at any time have seen, and if the gradual going down, and last, last twinkle of the once radiant orb, the instant when it was, and was not, to be seen—made me think of that awful moment when the last sigh consigns the departing soul to different if not distant scenes, the glorious effulgence gilding the western horizon with inimitable magnificence, naturally suggested the idea of celestial splendour, and inspired the wish that (through the assistance of His grace) a faithful obedience to the requirings of our great Maker and Master, may in that solemn season justify the hope of my being admitted into that city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

The Wrekin was a favourite object; to its summit he made his annual pilgrimage, together with his family, his Dale relations, his clerks, and most of the members of the little Society of Friends. The following bit of landscape painting betrays a master hand, and is so faithful in itself, depicting no less the features of the country than the genius of his mind, that we incorporate it with our present sketch:—

“We went upon the Wrekin,” he writes, “sooner than usual this year, that my children might partake of the pleasure. The weather was pleasant, though rather windy. From the top of that hill the prospect is so rich, so extensive, so various, that, considered as a landscape only, it beggars all description; and yet I cannot forbear, as thou desirest it, mentioning the tufted trees in the adjoining woods, upon which, occasioned perhaps by the uncommonness of the scene, I always *look down* with a particular pleasure, as well as survey those more distant, which are interspersed among the corn and meadows, contrasted with the new-ploughed fallow-grounds and pastures with cattle; the towns and villages, gentlemen’s seats, farm-houses, enrich and diversify the prospect, whilst the various companies of harvest men in the different farms within view enliven the scene. Nor are the rivers that glitter among the laughing meadows, or the stupendous mountains which, though distant, appear awfully dreary without their effect considered part of the landscape only. But not to confine the entertainment to visual enjoyment, what an intellectual feast does the prospect from that hill afford when beheld, ‘or with the curious or pious eye.’ Is not infinite power exerted, and infinite goodness displayed, in the various as well as plentiful provision for our several wants. Should not the consideration expand over hearts with desires to contribute to the relief of those whose indigence, excluding them from an equal participation of the general feast, is for a trial of their faith and patience and of our gratitude and obedience! Whilst with an appropriation of sentiment which receives propriety from the consciousness of our unworthiness, we substitute a particular for the general exclamation of humble admiration, in the word of the psalmist—‘Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou (thus) visitest him?’ The romantic scenes of Benthall Edge,—its rocks and precipices, its sides and top covered with wood; the navigable Severn, in which its feet are immersed; the populousness of the opposite shore; the motion, noise, and life on the river; the adjoining wharves and manufactories, are capable of affording a high entertainment, and I should willingly devote one day in the year to a repetition of the enjoyments of the pleasures I have heretofore received from them: though equally near, and equally desirable, a jaunt to Benthall Edge is not equally facile with one to the Wrekin. It seems more out of my province.”

Our readers, ere this, must have discovered a power of description, a grace and polish, blended with a masculine force of thought, in the correspondence of Mr. Reynolds, of a more than common order; and would still more, could we feel at liberty to quote more copiously from numerous letters to his friends. If we follow him more closely into private life, and lift the veil that too often hides a dualism of character from the unsuspecting public eye, we find the sterling elements of the gentleman and the Christian.

Take the experience of the past as recorded, or the traditions of the present, as found among a generation second in remove from Richard Reynolds's time, and they bring out into relief still more striking traits of character, that do honour to our common nature. The guiding principle of his life, in all cases of bargain and of sale, Mrs. Rathbone tells us, were in accordance with the old adage—"Live and let live;" and as an instance of the consistency with which he acted up to his motto she adds that, at the breaking out of the American war, when bar-iron rose to an extravagant price, and the makers of pig-iron could obtain their own terms, instead of taking an unreasonable advantage of the opportunity, he proposed to his customers that it should be left to one of themselves to name a fair price for pig-iron in the *then state* of the trade, and to determine the scale of proportionate reduction which should take place when the price of bar-iron should fall, as he foresaw that it would follow the *then* great and unsatisfied demand. The proposal was accepted, and by the scale which was then fixed his conduct was governed.

Order and punctuality were exemplified in his dealings. "A place for everything and everything in its place"—a maxim for which he confessed his obligation to De Witt—was not only his rule, but was painted in large characters in the kitchen, over the fireplace, for the benefit of the servants. The appellation "honest," given to his father, was a term equally applicable to the son, who at the outset and in after life made it a rule to regulate his affairs by that principle of prudence and of equity.

He yielded to every man his own, not only as concerned demands upon his purse, but in what are usually deemed small matters, such as those of respect which one man owes to another. He would follow a poor person to his or her home to apologise if he had spoken warmly or unbecomingly in the heat of temper. It was painful, his granddaughter tells us, for him to see

waste. "I cannot bear to see sweeping on the ground that which would clothe a poor shivering child" was his remark made respecting the long dresses of the time.

Mrs. Rathbone, in her memoir, says:—

"My grandfather had great respect and regard for a very amiable and excellent minister of the Gospel, who lived in his neighbourhood, the Rev. Joshua Gilpin; and it was mainly through his exertions and personal interest that Mr. Gilpin was presented to the living of Wrockwardine. He also enjoyed the acquaintance of many scientific and well-informed men. His manners, as a host, were courteous and dignified, and his conversation, when he was perfectly at ease, animated, and often diversified with a quaint wit and humorous satire. His fine countenance beamed with intelligence and kindness; his eyes were piercing, and were remarkable for the brightness which seemed literally to flash from them under strong emotion. It was something almost fearful to meet their glance in anger or indignation, whilst equally striking was their beautiful expression under the excitement of admiration or affection."

In the short sketch we gave of Mr. Reynolds in the "Severn Valley," we said, "the stamp of heaven's nobility was visible in his face, and the free and open features with which nature had endowed his person were not dwarfed by the uniform look and expression sometimes demanded by sects. Eyes of liquid blue, full-orbed, gave back the azure tint of heaven, and lighted up a manly face, fair and ruddy. To these indications of a Saxon type were added others, such as light brown hair, that in flowing curls fell upon the shoulders of a tall and full-developed figure."

The portrait we have hereafter described was obtained with some difficulty, as Mr. Reynolds refused for a long time to concede to the wishes of his friends on the subject; and the first attempt made was by a miniature-painter, who made a sketch from the garden as he sat reading by candle-light. This was not successful, and a second attempt, made as he sat at meeting, being no better, he was induced to sit to Mr. Hobday. The books shown in the background were favourites of his, and they are arranged in the order in which he regarded them.

In a letter to his son, dated 8th of 12th month, 1808, he says:—

“John Birtell has paid £48 4s. 7d. for the pictures, frames and cases, which should be repaid to him. I understood from S. A. it was thy wish to make thy sister a present of one of them, and in that case please to remit the amount to John Birtell; if she (S. A.) is mistaken, remit the money to J. B. nevertheless, and I will repay thee the half of it; but I insist upon one condition both from thee and thy sister: that as long as I live, the pictures be nowhere but in your bed-chambers. The first was begun without my knowledge, and indirect means used to accomplish it; at length I was candidly told it was determined to have it, and when I saw what was done, I thought it better to sit for the finishing than to have it a mere caricature; but I think it a very moderate performance at last. I was willing too, to avail myself of the opportunity, if such a one must be presented, of exhibiting my belief of Christianity as exhibited in the 5th chapter of the Romans; and my estimation of certain authors, by affixing their names to the books delineated in the back ground.”

In reference to this subject (his portrait), some twelve months after, in a letter to his son, he says:—

“This reminds me to mention what I intended to have mentioned before; that is, an alteration I propose to be made in the one here, and if this could be done in the others, I should like it; and which, I suppose, would be best effected by obliterating the books, and arranging them differently, according to the estimation in which their writings or character may be supposed to be held; with the addition of Kempis and Fenelon, not only for their intrinsic merits, but to show that our good opinion was not confined to our own countrymen. They would then stand thus:—

“Fox and Penn.  
Woolman and Clarkson.  
Hanway and Howard.  
Milton and Cowper.  
Addison and Watts.  
Barclay and Locke.

Sir W. Jones and Sir W. Blackstone.  
Kempis and Fenelon.

“I do not know whether I gave thee my reasons, as I did to thy sister, for the original selection. She may shew thee my letter to her, and thou may communicate the above to her, with my dear love to all, repeated from

“Thy affectionate father,  
“RICHARD REYNOLDS.”

It was the custom when Mr. Reynolds had charge of the Coalbrookdale works to perform long journeys on horseback, and we have heard it said that on one occasion, being mounted on the back of an old trooper, near Windsor, where George III. was reviewing some troops, the horse, on hearing martial music, pricked up his ears, and carried Mr. Reynolds into the midst of them before he could be reined up. He was a good horseman, and a grandson of Mr. Reynolds writes:—

“We also enjoyed very much our grandfather’s account of a visit paid to the Ketley Iron Works by Lord Thurlow, the then Lord Chancellor. My grandfather, having gone through the works with his lordship, and given him all requisite information and needful refreshment, proposed to accompany him part of the way on his return, which offer his lordship gratefully accepted, and the horses were ordered to the door accordingly. They were, both of them, good riders, and were, both of them, well mounted. The Lord Chancellor’s horse, no doubt a little instigated thereto by his owner, took the lead, and my grandfather’s horse, nothing loth to follow the example, kept as nearly neck and neck with his rival as *his* owner considered respectful. The speed was alternately increased, until they found themselves getting on at a very dashing pace indeed! and they became aware that the steeds were as nearly matched as possible. At last, the Chancellor pulled up, and complimenting my grandfather upon his ‘very fine horse’ confessed that he had never expected to meet with one who could trot so fast as his own. My grandfather acknowledged to a similar impression on his part; and his lordship, heartily shaking hands with him, and thanking him for his great attention, laughed, and said, ‘I think, Mr. Reynolds,

this is probably the first time that ever a Lord Chancellor and a Quaker rode a race together.’”

The years 1774, 1782, and 1796 were periods of great distress. Haggard hunger, despairing wretchedness, and ignorant force were banded to trample down the safeguards of civil right, and armed ruffians took the initiative in scrambles for food. The gravity of the occasion, in the latter case, may be estimated by the subscriptions for the purchase of food for the starving population. We give those of the iron companies of this district only: Messrs. Bishton and Co. gave £1,500; Mr. Botfield, for the Old Park Company, £1,500; Mr. Joseph Reynolds, for the Ketley Company, £2,000; Mr. R. Dearman, for the Coalbrookdale Company, £1,500; Mr. William Reynolds, for the Madeley-Wood Company, £1000. Mr. Richard Reynolds gave £500 as his individual subscription. Applications, in times of distress, from far and near were made to Mr. Reynolds for assistance. Taking a general view of the distress existing in the beginning of the year 1811, he says, in reply to a letter from a clergyman, “I am thankful I am not altogether without sympathy with my fellow-men, or compassion for the sufferings to which the want of employment subjects the poor, or the sufferings still more severe of some of their former employers. Thou mentions Rochdale, Bolton, Leeds, and Halifax. Wilt thou apply the enclosed towards the relief of some of them, at thy discretion? Those who want it most and deserve it best should have the preference,—the aged, honest, sober, and industrious. I am sensible how limited the benefits from such a sum in so populous a district must be, and of the difficulty of personal investigation before distribution. If it could be made subservient to the procuring an extensive contribution it would be of more important service. If it cannot I think it would be best to commit it to some judicious person or persons in each place, to distribute with the utmost privacy, and (that) for their own sakes, were it only to avoid applications from more than they could supply, and yet the refusal would subject them to abuse. But in whatever manner thou shalt dispose of it, I send it upon the express condition that nobody living knows thou ever had it from me; this is matter of conscience with me. In places where we are known, and on public occasions, when one’s example would have an influence, it may be as much a duty to give up one’s name as one’s money; but otherwise I think we cannot too strictly follow the injunction:—‘Take heed that ye do not your

alms before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.””

If some poor tradesman in London or elsewhere was tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, and a friend was found to write to Richard Reynolds, he was put upon his legs again. Poor debtors found themselves relieved from the King’s Bench by an unknown hand. Unwilling to be known as the giver of large sums, he would sometimes forward his subscriptions with his name, and send a larger contribution anonymously afterwards. In this way he gave a sum in his own name on behalf of the distress in Germany, and then forwarded a further sum of £500 privately. For years he had almoners in London and elsewhere, dispensing sums to meet distress, and on behalf of public and private charities, scrupulously enacting that his name should not appear in the transactions. To one party he sent £20,000 during the distress of 1795. He had four distributors of his bounty constantly employed in Bristol alone. They brought in their accounts weekly, giving the names of persons or families, the sums given, and the circumstances under which they were relieved. Not the least to be appreciated was the consideration and delicacy with which he assisted persons not ostensibly objects of charity (to use the word in its common sense) and many who, through relationship, personal interest, or estimable conduct were felt to have claims on his kindness and generosity.

He solicited in Bristol subscriptions on a large scale for augmenting the fund for the payment of a weekly sum to the inhabitants of the almshouses, going from house to house,—his own zeal kindling that of others. One gentleman to whom he applied, of acknowledged wealth and importance in the city, having given him a cheque for £500, he said he would give him back the cheque, as such a sum from *him* would do more harm than good. The gentleman immediately wrote another for £1000. He himself gave £2000 (one of his friends says £4000), and £4000 to the Trinity almshouses. In 1808 he placed in the hands of the trustees the sum of £10,500 to be invested in land, the rent of which was to be devoted to seven charitable institutions in Bristol, named in the deed and trust, in such manner and proportion, either to one alone, or between any, as should at the time appear expedient to the trustees. An addition to the infirmary being needed, he devoted much of his time to that object, subscribing £2,600. The committee also received an anonymous donation of £1000, entertaining

no doubt who was the giver; and on the following day one of their number happening to meet Richard Reynolds, thanked him in the name of the committee for his acceptable donation. He said—"Thou hast no authority for saying I sent the money," and the gentleman repeating the acknowledgment of the committee, Mr. Reynolds quietly said—"Well, I see thou art determined that I should give thee a thousand pounds," and the next day they received a donation of that sum with his name attached, thus doubling his first contribution. To these gifts may be added (besides his annual subscription) donations:—£1,260 to the Stranger's Friend; £900 to the Misericordia; £500 to the Refuge, and the same to the Orphan Asylum; and to the Bible Society, £900. Of several other small amounts one need only be mentioned, from his purse,—that of £300 to the Temple parish, towards providing a better supply of water to the poor.

Mr. Reynolds's last visit to Ketley, the scene of his labours, and the source of his vast income, was in June, 1816. His funeral took place on the 18th of September, amidst a manifestation of respect, as marked and profound as ever was paid to the remains of mortal man. The city of Bristol offered spontaneously to his memory that signal tribute of general regard that a name embalmed by good deeds alone can win. Columns of schoolboys, with mournful recollections of the good man's smile, formed a melancholy passage to the dwelling of their benefactor. These were flanked by vast crowds of sympathising poor, who felt they had lost a friend. The clergy of the Church of England, ministers of dissenting congregations, gentlemen forming the committees of various societies, and other leading men, besides a large body of the Society of Friends, followed the several members and relatives of the family in procession. So great was public curiosity excited on this occasion, and such the eagerness manifested by the poor, who had lost their best friend, to pay their last respect to his remains, that not only was the spacious burial-ground filled with spectators and mourners, but the very tops of walls and houses surrounding the area were covered. The behaviour of the vast concourse of people was in the highest degree decent, orderly and respectful, the poor, considering it a favour to be permitted in their turn to approach the grave of their departed friend, and to drop the silent tear as a mark of their regard for the man whose life had been spent in doing good.

Montgomery, in verses from which we extract the following, paid a just tribute to his memory:

Strike a louder, loftier lyre;  
Bolder, sweeter strains employ;  
Wake remembrance! and inspire  
Sorrow with the song of joy.

Who was he for whom our tears  
Flowed, and will not cease to flow?  
Full of honours and of years,  
In the dust his head lies low.

.....

He was one whose open face  
Did his inmost heart reveal;  
One who wore with meekest grace  
On his forehead heaven's broad seal.

Kindness all his looks express'd,  
Charity was every word;  
Him the eye beheld and bless'd,  
And the ear rejoiced and heard.

Like a patriarchal sage,  
Holy, humble, courteous, mild,  
He could blend the awe of age  
With the sweetness of a child.

.....

Oft his silent spirit went,  
Like an angel from the throne,  
On benign commission bent,  
In the fear of God alone.

Then the widow's heart would sing,  
As she turned her wheel, for joy;

Then the bliss of hope would spring  
On the outcast orphan boy.

To the blind, the deaf, the lame,  
To the ignorant and vile,  
Stranger, captive, slave, he came,  
With a welcome and a smile.

Help to all he did dispense.  
Gold, instruction, raiment, food,  
Like the gifts of Providence,  
To the evil and the good.

Deeds of mercy, deeds unknown,  
Shall eternity record,  
Which he durst not call his own,  
For he did them for the Lord.

As the earth puts forth her flowers,  
Heaven-ward breathing from below;  
As the clouds descend in showers,  
When the southern breezes glow.

.....

Full of faith, at length he died,  
And victorious in the race,  
Wore the crown for which he died,  
Not of merit but of grace.

### **WILLIAM REYNOLDS.**

The father, Richard Reynolds, as will be seen from our sketch, managed to realize immense wealth at Ketley, and, what is more, to remain superior to the influence wealth too often has upon its possessor. The finer feelings of the man never succumbed to the vulgar circumstances of his position, but maintained their freshness, and graduated to maturity by the mastering force of a resolute will and a well-disciplined and highly enlightened mind. Never so completely absorbed in the arts and intricacies of money-making

as to lose sight of higher and worthier aims, he sought an opportunity earlier than men in his circumstances usually do of enjoying the well-earned fruits of an active life; of indulging in that repose and retirement congenial to minds similarly constituted to his own. Accordingly, his shares in the works were turned over to his two sons, William and Joseph. William was the more distinguished of the two in carrying out improvements connected with the works. Like his father, he possessed an active mind, an elevated taste, and a desire for knowledge; to which were added a mechanical genius, and an aptitude for turning to account resources within his reach. He saw the necessity of uniting science with practice in developing the rich resources of the district; and that knowledge and discovery must keep pace with aptitude in their use.

“An equal appreciation of all parts of knowledge,” it was remarked by Humboldt, “is an especial requirement of an epoch in which the material wealth and the increasing prosperity of nations are in a great measure based on a more enlightened employment of natural products and forces. The most superficial glance at the present condition of European states shows that those which linger in the race cannot hope to escape the partial diminution, and perhaps the final annihilation, of their resources. It is with nations as with nature, which, according to a happy expression of Goethe, knows no pause in ever-increasing movement, development, and production—a curse, still cleaving to a standstill. Nothing but serious occupation with chemistry and physical and natural science can defend a state from the consequences of competition. Man can produce no effect upon nature, or appropriate her powers, unless he is conversant with her laws, and with their relations to material objects according to measures and numbers. And in this lies the power of popular intelligence, which rises or falls as it encourages or neglects this study. Science and information are the joy and justification of mankind. They form the spring of a nation’s wealth, being often indeed substitutes for those material riches which nature has in many cases distributed with so partial a hand. Those nations which remain behind in manufacturing activity, by neglecting the practical application of the mechanical arts, and of industrial chemistry, to the transmission, growth, or manufacture of raw materials—those nations amongst whom respect for such activity does

not pervade all classes—must inevitably fall from prosperity they have attained; and this so much the more certainly and speedily as neighbouring states, instinct with the power of renovation, in which science and the arts of industry operate or lend each other mutual assistance, are seen pressing forward in the race.”

Upon this principle Mr. Reynolds placed himself under the teaching of Dr. Black, the discoverer of latent heat, a gentleman who by his eminent ability and teaching did so much to inspire a love for the science in England during the latter part of the last century. He was thus enabled to bring the knowledge he possessed of elementary substances and of their peculiar qualities, gained in the laboratory, to bear upon the manufacture of iron in the furnace and the forge, and to anticipate some of the discoveries of later times.

Steel and iron have long been manufactured at Ulverstone, and the quality or fitness of the ore for the purpose is attributed to the presence of manganese in the ore, which since the establishment of railways has come into general use. In Mr. Reynolds’s time we imported large quantities of iron and steel; and ignorant of what constituted the difference between our own and that of foreign markets, had with some humiliation to confess our dependence. In no case had a uniform quality of bar-iron with the superior marks of Sweden and Russia been produced. A great variety of processes had been tried, and makers were not wanting who made laudable efforts for the accomplishment of the object, feeling that in so doing they devoted their time to the service of their country, and that in a national as well as a commercial point of view no experiments were fraught with more important consequences.

Mr. Reynolds thought he saw the solution of the problem how to produce metal equal to that made from the magnetic and richer ores of the Swedish and Siberian mines, when Bergman published his analysis of Swedish iron, showing the large percentage of manganese it contained. The analysis showed the following results:

CAST IRON.	
	Parts.

Plumbago	2.20
Manganese	15.25
Silicious Earth	2.25
Iron	80.30
	100
STEEL.	
Plumbago	.50
Manganese	15.25
Silicious Earth	.60
Iron	83.65
	100
BAR-IRON.	
Plumbago	.50
Manganese	15.25
Silicious Earth	1.75
Iron	84.78
	100

In order to effect a combination corresponding with this analysis of the French chemist he introduced manganese into the refinery during the re-smelting process, and succeeded in producing bar-iron capable of conversion into steel of better quality than had previously been made from coke-iron. From subsequent experiments the per-centage introduced of metallic manganese could be traced into bar-iron, the inference being that the purpose served was the additional supply of oxygen it gave to burn out the impurities—a result the Bessemer process has since attained in another way. When it is remembered that the end to be attained in these processes is to consume the impurities of the metal, and that those impurities are of such a nature as to unite with oxygen at a high temperature and form

separate compounds, also that this boiling and bubbling up of the liquid metal was carefully watched and tended formerly, one can understand how near the iron-kings of a past age were to the Bessemer discovery of the present.

“The old men,” as they are frequently called in the works, appear to have had an inkling of the real nature of the process: The rising impurities and combination of opposite gases indicated by bubbles were called the “Soldier’s coming.” At any rate the Bessemer invention is an adaptation of a principle acted upon during the past century in the Shropshire ironworks. Mr. Reynolds’s patent was obtained December 6, 1799, and was stated to be for “preparing iron for the conversion thereof into steel.” In his specification he described his invention to consist in the employment of oxide of manganese in the conversion of pig-iron into malleable iron or steel, but did not enter into details as to the method he employed for carrying his invention into effect.

John Wilkinson obtained a patent January 23, 1801, for making “Pig or cast metal from ore, which when manufactured into bar-iron will be found equal in quality to any that is imported from Russia or Sweden.” The patentee states his invention to consist “in making use of manganese, or ores containing manganese, in addition to ironstone and other materials used in making iron, and in certain proportions, to be varied by the nature of such ironstone and other materials.”

Mr. Reynolds was not only a chemist, but a geologist. He succeeded in forming a collection of carboniferous fossils to which modern professors acknowledge their obligations, and which, with the additions made by Mr. William Anstice, Dean Buckland pronounced one of the finest in Europe. Other manufacturers, every day dealing with subterranean treasures that give iron in abundance, were as dwellers amid the ruins of some ancient city, taking down structures of the builders of which and of the history of which they were ignorant. With him minerals had an interest beyond their market value. Coal and ore from the dusky mine, raised at so much per ton, were not minerals merely, but materials prepared to his hand by Nature. He detected traces of that venerable dame’s cast-off garments in one; the others were fabrics, the result of processes as varied as his own, the produce of machinery more wonderful and powerful than that he was about to employ

in converting them to the general uses and purposes of mankind. His pit-shafts to him were mere inlets to the deep storehouse of the globe where Providence had treasured means whereby to enrich future inhabitants of the surface. Geology as a science, 'tis true, was but beginning to shed its light on the cosmogony of the world; endeavours to make out a connected history of the earth from examinations of the structure itself were deemed strange; and the more intelligent of his contemporaries, who without hesitation adopted speculations daring and beyond the province of human intellect, looked coldly upon his labours. The old workmen to whom he offered premiums for the best specimens could not for the life of them make out the meaning of his morning visits to the mines, his constant inquiries respecting fossils, his frequent hammering at ironstone nodules, his looking inside them and loading his pockets with them—seeing that he did not confine attention to those that seemed likely to make good iron. Some considered it to be one of the good old Quaker's eccentricities, and did not forget when he turned his back to point to their heads, intimating that "all was not right in his upper garrets." Others, knowing that he sometimes used the blow-pipe and tried experiments in his laboratory, believed his aim to be to extract "goold," as they said, from the stone—a supposition to which the presence of iron pyrites gave some degree of colouring. One fine morning, in particular, as flitting gleams of sunshine came down to brighten young green patches of copse and meadow, telling of returning spring, a group of his men were seated with bottle and tot, drinking the cuckoo's foot-ale, when, "Here comes Measter William, here comes Old Broadbrim," it was said, "with his pecker in his pocket, fatch the curiosities from the crit." Mr. Reynolds was not very well pleased, for large orders were in the books unexecuted, and coal and ore could not be got fast enough. Every engine had its steam up; but not a beam-head or pulley creaked or stirred. One or two bands of workmen had gone down, but had come up again. The cuckoo's voice that morning for the first time had been heard, and it was more potent than the master's; for it was the custom, and had been from time immemorial, to drink his foot-ale, and to drink it out of doors; and the man was fined, who proposed to deviate from custom by drinking it in-doors. On May Day too it was the custom, as it now is, to gather boughs or sprigs of the birch, with its young and graceful fronds, and mount them on the engines, the pit heads, and cabins, and on the heads of horses, to proclaim the fact that we had entered upon the merry, merry month of May.

Mr. Reynolds was generally pleased with meeting his men, and would readily enter into their whims, and turn such interviews to account. By such means he often obtained from them a knowledge of their wants, and received hints and suggestions that aided him in carrying out improvements in the works. The same disruption of social ties did not then exist as now; that mutual relation that beautified the olden time, and gave men and master an interest in each others welfare existed. A master, then, was more like the chief of a tribe, the father of a family; he had generally sprung from the ranks, he felt himself to be of the same flesh and blood, removed only a little by circumstances, and bound by a community of interest. Money-making had not then been reduced to a science, nor men to machines. With some degree of pride the men laid their stony treasures at the master's feet. There were amongst them what the colliers call millers' thumbs, horses' hoofs, snails' houses, "shining scales," "crucked screws," "things-like-leaves, and rotten wood." "You should have heard," said an old sage, "Mr. Reynolds give a description of them, and have seen the effect upon his audience. If I remember rightly, millers' thumbs were orthoceratites, shells—as the name implies—like horns, but not pointed, and having several air-chambers. Horses' hoofs, were portions of others, coiled, and spiral—that could float on the water, sink to the bottom, or rise to the surface, by a peculiar mechanical apparatus—like the forcing pump of a steam engine. The shining scales, were scales of fish coated with armour, hard as flint, and furnished with carvers to cut up the smaller fry on which they fed." He showed that the nodules of ironstone contained exact impressions of leaves and fruits that grew beneath the golden beams of a tropical sun; that the bits called rotten wood were really wood, showing the beautiful anatomy of the tree, that it had been water-worn by being carried down the dancing stream into the soft and yielding mud in which it ultimately sank and was preserved. Coal, he explained, was nothing more than the vegetation of former periods, which accumulated where it grew, or was swept down by rains or streams into beds where it was hermetically sealed, fermented, and converted into mineral fuel for future use. "Lord, sir," said our informant, "you should have seen how they all stared. Flukey F'lyd, one of the butties of Whimsey pit, said he little thought they were working in the gutters, or grubbing in the mud-banks of slimy lakes of a former world; he had seen stems of trees and trunks in the roof, but he thought they had got there at the Flood, and turned to stone. Gambler Baugh, of the Sulphur pit, said he

thought the coal had been put there at the creation, and was intended to be used to burn up the world at the last day; and that he sometimes considered it a wrong thing to get it, believing they ought to use wood, and concluded by inviting the Governor to 'wet,' as he said, 'the other eye, by taking another tot.' The company drank his health, his long life and happiness, and exclaimed—'who'd have thought it.'" "Aye, who would have thought it," continued Mr. Reynolds, warming with his subject, "when the first iron mine was tapped that in the slime and mud of those early times, now hardened into stone lay coiled up a thousand conveniences of mankind; that in that ore lay concealed the steam-engines, the tramways, the popular and universal metal that in peace and war should keep pace with and contribute to the highest triumphs of the world." Upon such occasions questions of improvement, invention, adaptation, &c., &c., would often be freely discussed, and we have it upon the authority of some of the old workmen that many of the achievements in engineering we applaud in the present day, were the result of such suggestions in part.

Nothing, in fact, was known about iron ore, iron making and machinery, but what he knew or else took steps to acquaint himself with, if he had the opportunity. We have a number of large foolscap MS. volumes of experiments and extracts neatly copied, with pen and ink drawings of machines, parts of machines, &c.; shewing that whilst Smeaton and Watt were engaged in perfecting the construction of the steam engine, Mr. Reynolds was endeavouring to apply it to purposes similar to those to which it is now applied as a locomotive. Thus he constructed a locomotive with a waggon attached, the cylinder and boiler of which are still preserved. An accident, we believe a fatal one, which happened to one of the men upon starting the engine led Mr. Reynolds to abandon the machine; but he by no means lost faith in the invention. On the contrary, he was wont to say to his nephew, the late William Anstice, father of the present Mr. Reynolds Anstice, "I may never live to see the time, but thee may, William, when towns will be lighted by gas instead of oil and candles, when vessels will be driven without sails, and when carriages will travel without horses."

This was before Trevithic invented a machine which travelled at a slow rate with heavy loads on a railway at Merthyr. It was prior to 1787, when

Symington exhibited his model steam carriage in Edinburgh, and to the time when Darwin, (1793), with equal poetry and prophecy, wrote—

“Soon shall thy arm, unconquered steam afar  
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car.”

Mr. Reynolds indeed contemplated, it is believed, a subterranean tram road from the banks of the Severn right up into the heart of the iron districts of Ketley and Donnington Wood, upon which his engine was to travel, but the prejudice against the scheme was so great, and the jury empanelled to inquire into the nature of the accident inflicted such an enormous fine to be enforced every time the engine was used, that it was abandoned. There are also a pair of partially rotatory brass cylinders in existence which Mr. Reynolds intended as models for a boat on the Severn. This was before Shropshire generally, and the iron districts more particularly, had begun to participate in the advantages of still-water communication. With the superior advantages of railways, it is difficult to appreciate the full benefit of such communication for manufacturing and agricultural purposes at that time in inland counties like our own. Mr. Reynolds however, with full faith in the future development of the powers of steam by means of improved machinery, took great pains to extend and perfect canal navigation, and his name is associated with every important work of improvement in the district during the latter end of the last and the beginning of the present centuries, and especially with a very ingenious contrivance by means of which the inequalities of surface were overcome, and the old-fashioned locks were dispensed with.

Mr. Reynolds commenced his canal for the conveyance of minerals from Oakengates and Ketley in 1788; and shortly after its completion an Act of Parliament was obtained for one from Donnington Wood which, forming a junction therewith, was to proceed along the high ground above Coalbrookdale, on one hand, and Madeley and Coalport on the other. The difference of level was 73 feet in one case and 207 feet in the other. Telford, speaking of the difficulties to be encountered from the nature of the country, says:

“The inequality of the ground and the want of sufficient water seemed insuperable, and might probably have been so for ages to come had not

Mr. William Reynolds, of Ketley, whose character is too well known to need any eulogium, discovered the means of overcoming them. Having occasion to improve the method of conveying ironstone and coals from the neighbourhood of Oakengates to the ironworks at Ketley, these materials lying generally about the distance of a mile and a half from the ironworks, and 73 feet above their level, he made a navigable canal, and instead of descending in the usual way by locks, contrived to bring the canal forward to an abrupt part of the bank, the skirts of which terminated on a level with the ironworks. At the top of this bank he built a small lock, and from the bottom of the lock, and down the face of the bank, he constructed an *inclined plane*, with a double iron railway. He then erected an upright frame of timber, in which was fixed a large wooden barrel. Round the latter a rope was passed that led to a moveable frame, the frame being of a sufficient size to receive a canal boat, resting and preserved in nearly a horizontal position, by having two large wheels before and two small ones behind—varying as much in the diameters as the inclined plane varied from a horizontal plane. This frame being placed in the lock, the loaded boat was brought to rest upon it. The lock gates were shut, the water was drawn from the lock into a side-pond, the boat settled upon a horizontal wooden frame, and—as the bottom of the lock was formed with nearly the same declivity as the inclined plane—upon the lower gates being opened, the frame with the boat passed down the iron railway into the lower canal, which had been formed on a level with the Ketley ironworks, being a fall of 73 feet. A double railway having been laid upon the inclined plane, the loaded boat in passing down brought up another boat containing a load nearly equal to one-third part of that which passed down. The velocity of the boats was regulated by a break acting upon a large wheel, placed upon the axis on which the ropes connected with the carriages were coiled.”

This contrivance has been in use up to the present time. During Mr. Reynolds’s life a representation of it figured upon copper tokens, one of the first iron bridge being upon the opposite or obverse side.

Another of these contrivances is still in use near the Hay, in the parish of Madeley, called the Coalport Incline. This is 207 feet in length, and the gradient is much greater, being about one in three. So great indeed that on

the chain snapping we have known a canal boat with five tons of iron pigs on board gain such velocity that on coming in contact with the water in the lower canal it has broken away from the iron chains which held it to the carriage, bounded into the air, clearing two other boats moored on the side, together with the embankment, and alighted in the Severn, close to the ferry-boat, into which it pitched some of the iron-pigs it contained. At the foot of this incline Mr. Reynolds drove a level to the shaft of the Blissers Hill pits, to bring down the coals to the lower canal for loading into barges on the Severn. This was the famous Tar Tunnel from which petroleum was formerly exported in large quantities to all parts of Europe.

William Reynolds removed from Ketley to a large house formerly occupied by Lord Dundonald, at the Tuckies, where he continued to superintend the ironworks he had leased at Madeley Wood, familiarly known as Bedlam Furnaces, and was succeeded by his brother, Mr. Joseph Reynolds, who continued to carry on the Ketley Works till the recurrence of one of those fearful revulsions that have marked the history of the trade. For a quarter of a century we had been carrying on wars, levying troops, and interfering with everybody's business but that which properly belonged to ourselves. We had obtained our object of ambition by bribery, strategy, and force of arms combined. We had restored the ancient families of France, reduced that country to its ancient limits, and annihilated its commerce. With glorious victory came fearful collapse, and the country awoke to find that a fallacy which it had been taught to regard as truth—that war brings commercial advantages that compensate for fearful waste and lavish expenditure. To add to the calamity, a succession of bad harvests was experienced, and the reduction of the army served to swell the poor's-rates upon which working men and their families had been thrown for a bare support. Iron from £18 had gone down to £7 per ton, carriage paid from Ketley to Stourport. Mr. Reynolds believed the trade would never again rally, and resolved to blow out the furnaces at Ketley. This was in 1817. In 1818, at an immense sacrifice of property, consisting of the usual apparatus for making and manufacturing iron, he sold off at an immense loss, and removed to Bristol. Language cannot paint the deep distress which accompanied and followed this step. Men, with wives and families dependent upon them, saw their only ground of hope taken from them. Starving by thousands, and yoked like horses, they might be seen drawing

materials for the repair of the roads, or conveying coal into Staffordshire. One third of the Shropshire banks failed. Disturbances were frequent; mobs of men collected in bodies and went about taking food where they could find it, and the militia had often to be called out to quell disturbances. Not only ironmasters, but manufacturers generally were reduced to despair. The parish authorities of Wellington advertised in the public journals for persons to come forward and take the Ketley works; and a company, consisting of the Messrs. Montford, Shakeshaft, Ogle, Williams, Hombersley, and others, was formed.

From what we have written, it will be seen that Mr. William Reynolds was on familiar terms with his men. In severe weather and distressed times, he made soup to give away three times a week, and he generally kept “open-house” for his workmen and friends; of the latter he had a large circle. He did not like idleness or indiscriminate almsgiving. A number of men thrown out of employ came to him in a body for relief during a deep snow. He set them to clear an entire field, and to make him a snow-stack; which they did of large proportions, receiving daily wages for the same. He allowed a house and garden rent-free to “Sniggy Oakes,” as he was called—heaven knows what his right name was, for in that day it was seldom known in the mining districts—on condition that the said Sniggy ferry’d him and his family across the river when they required it. One evening Sniggy, knowing he was out on the other side, went to bed instead of sitting up, which he found a deal more comfortable on a cold wet night, and Mr. Reynolds, after calling him first one name and then another, ringing the changes upon every alias, and changing it for “boat! boat!” “ferry! ferry!” had to go round by the bridge. Coming opposite the cottage where Sniggy was snug in bed, he smashed every window, shouting “boat” at every blow of his huge stick. Sniggy roared with fright, and promised better things another time. “On another occasion,” says our informant, “while having a balcony put up in front of the Tuckies, he gave strict injunctions that the martins’ nests should not by any means be disturbed, threatening to shoot the man who violated his instruction. They all obeyed him but one man, and he—.” “What, you don’t mean to say he was going to carry out his threat?” said we. “But he was,” it was replied, “and did.” “What shoot him?” “Yes; shot him, sir—shot him with a pop-gun!” Being a Quaker, many anecdotes are told of him not paying church-rates, and what are called

Easter offerings, showing a rich vein of genuine humour running through a warm and generous nature. Old people too tell with much glee of a grand illumination they remember to celebrate one of those interludes of war, termed “a peace rejoicing,” when the bridge across the river, and a large revolving wheel, were lighted up with lamps, and the manufactory, in which—together with Messrs. Horton and Rose—he was a shareholder, was illuminated.

“He is a wise son who knows his own father,” it is said, but it is sometimes more difficult to trace the paternity of an anecdote, and we tell the following as it was told to us.

“Mr. Reynolds was kind and generous to a fault, but he did not like to be tricked. Returning late from a party on horseback, he was requested to pay again at a turnpike gate. Old Roberts, who having been in the army, looked with contempt upon all but a red uniform, and hated Quakers’ plain suits in particular, the more so as the wearers were known to be averse to war, now found himself, as he imagined, in a position to ‘take the small change,’ out of the Quaker. Mr. Reynolds disputed the charge, knowing from the time he left his friend’s house that he must be in the right; but, as the other insisted upon being paid, he paid him. When the latter had opened the gate, Mr. Reynolds remarked, ‘Well, friend, having paid, I suppose I am at liberty to pass through as often as I like?’ ‘Certainly, sir,’ said the old robber—as the juveniles would persist in calling the old man, adding an additional ‘b’ to his name, and clipping it of the two terminating letters. Mr. Reynolds had not travelled far on the home-side of the gate—sufficiently far however to allow the other to get into bed, before he returned, and called up the gatekeeper; having occasion, as he said, to go back. By the time he had again got into bed back came his tormentor at an easy jog-trot pace; and as he again passed through the gate he begged to be accommodated with a light. ‘Thou art sure it is past twelve o’clock, friend?’ said Mr. Reynolds. ‘Quite sure,’ said the other, adding ‘I thought I had done with you for to-night.’ ‘Thou art mistaken,’ said Mr. Reynolds, ‘it is a fine night, and I intend to make the most of it.’ In about ten minutes time the hated sound of ‘Gate, gate,’ brought old Roberts to his post, muttering curses between his teeth. ‘Thou art quite sure it is past twelve, art thou?’ was the question

asked, and asked again, till at last the gatekeeper begged of his tormentor to take back the toll. ‘It cured him, though,’ said our informant, ‘and made him civil; but they called him ‘Past Twelve’ for the rest of his days.’”

When Mr. Reynolds removed from Ketley to Madeley Wood, he also removed from the former to the latter place some very primitive steam engines, from the fact that they were constructed by a man named Adam Hyslop, and differed from the ordinary condensing engines of Boulton and Watt in having a cylinder at each end of the beam: one a steam cylinder and condensing box; the other a condensing cylinder only, into which the steam, having done duty in the steam cylinder is conveyed. They were invented prior to Boulton and Watt’s final improvements. Three of these singular looking engines are still used in the field, and work most economically, with five pounds of steam to the square inch.

Of the early history of the Madeley Wood Works, we have been able to glean little satisfactory, beyond the fact that Richard Reynolds, who bought the manor in 1781 or 1782, granted a lease in June 1794 of the Bedlam or Madeley Wood furnaces to his son William, and Richard Rathbone, who very shortly after gave up his interest to William Reynolds, who afterwards carried them on himself. The site was a good one at that time, being at the base of the outcrop of the lowest seams of coal and ironstone, which could thus be obtained by levels driven into the hills, or by shallow shafts, from either of which they were let down inclined planes to the furnaces, close by which flowed the Severn, to take away either coal or iron.

It was on the side of this hill on which the Madeley Wood works were situated, at a place called the Brockholes (*broc*, or badger-holes), that in 1332 Walter de Caldbrook obtained a license from the prior of Wenlock to dig for coal. Speaking of coal found in this or similar situations in Shropshire, we find, too, that quaint old writer, Thomas Fuller, two centuries ago, as quoted by W. O. Foster Esq., at the meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute at Coalbrookdale, in 1871, giving his opinion thus:—

“One may see a three-fold difference in our English coal—(1) the sea coal brought from Newcastle; (2) the land coal at Mendip, Bedworth, &c., and carried into other counties; (3) what one may call river and

fresh water coal, digged out in this county at such a distance from Severn that they are easily ported by boat into other shires. Oh, if this coal could be so charmed as to make iron melt out of the stone, as it maketh it in smiths' forges to be wrought in the bars. But Rome was not built all in one day; and a new world of experiments is left to the discovery of posterity."

It seems probable, therefore, that for five hundred years coal has been gotten out of the sides of these hills at Madeley Wood, either for use in local forges or for export by the river Severn, or both; and the more so that old levels are numerous along their side where coal crops out, and that wooden shovels, wooden rails, and other primitive implements have been found in them.

Some of the shafts sunk by Mr. Reynolds came down upon old workings for smiths, or furnace coal, as at the Lodge Pit, as shown by the section.

This shaft, after passing through five yards of sand, six of brick and tile clays, thirteen of rough rock, and thirteen of other measures, came upon the Penneystone, the Sulphur coal, the Vigor coal, the Two-foot coal, the Ganey coal, the Best coal, and the Middle coal, which, like the Penney measure, were all entire; but instead of the Clod coal they found Clod-coal gob (the refuse thrown into the space from which the coal had been removed).

William Reynolds, the proprietor of these works, died at the Tuckies House, in 1803, and was followed to his grave in the burial-ground adjoining the Quaker's chapel, in the Dale, by a very large concourse of friends and old neighbours. His son, Joseph Reynolds, and Mr. William Anstice succeeded to the works, the latter being the managing partner; and in consequence of the mines being exhausted on the Madeley Wood side of the field, new shafts were sunk to the east, the first of importance being the Hill's Lane pits. The Halesfield, and then the Kemberton, followed; and the mines having been thus proved on that side, the idea first suggested by William Reynolds, of removing the works to that side, was acted upon by Mr. William Anstice, who built his first furnace at Blisser's Hill in 1832. A second was built in 1840, and a third in 1844. Of these and other works we propose to speak in connection with events of a later period.

**EVENTS RELATING TO THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF  
MADELEY, FROM THE 13TH TO THE 19TH CENTURIES, NOT  
PREVIOUSLY NOTICED.**

We have no means at command for giving anything like such a consecutive account of Madeley as would show its growth and progress from the feudal times, when first noticed in the Domesday Survey, to the present time; and the facts that we have to offer on this head must necessarily appear disjointed and isolated.

The next notice we find succeeding that in Domesday is one in 1291, when it was taxed to the *Ninth*, twelve merks, but whether of gold or silver we cannot say, probably the latter, as one merk of gold was equal to five of silver—to £3 16s. 8d.

Land was being gradually won from the forests, but it was as yet of small value. Thus we read, under date of March 28th, 1322, of a man named Bercar and his wife, who, for the payment (or fine) of three shillings, bought small parcels of *new* land in the fields of Madeley and of Caldbrook (Coalbrookdale), of William, the bailiff, to hold for their lives.

In the year 1341 the parish was assessed at £2 16s. 0d., but the reason assigned for the low assessment was that there had been great storms, want of sheep-stock, and a surrender of the land held by tenants. In 1379 a valuation of the manor is thus mentioned:—"Capital messuage, nothing (this would be the Court, or manor-house); water-mill (the old manor or Court mill), ten shillings; fisheries of two vivaries, three shillings; three caracutes of land (or as much as three teams of oxen could plough in the year), as averaging £1 18s." Three acres of meadow is set down as worth, when carried, three shillings. The verbiage of the park was valued at three shillings and fourpence. The assized rents of free tenements amounted to £6 16s. 2d., and the pleas and perquisites of the Court (held by the prior at the Court-house) at two shillings. In 1390 the rents of Madeley, including a *ferm* of coals, and the pleas and fines of the Court, were said to yield £22 18s. 0d. This *ferm* of coals was probably that granted by the prior in 1322 to Walter de Caldbrook for six shillings.

In the sixteenth century the rental of the manor was returned at £39 18s. 8½d. At the same time—that is in 1534–5—the rectorial tithes are set down at £2, and the vicar’s income at £5 5s. In 1693 an assessment made for Madeley, by order of the justices of the peace, James Lewis, balf., George Weld, and Thos. Crompton, of 4s. 6d. in the £, from sixty-four persons, produced £149 1s. 4d. In this assessment the name of Sarah Wolfe occurs sixth on the list. In 1698 an assessment of 3s. 6d. in the £, by order of Richard Littlehales, balf., and Ralph Browne, from fifty-two persons, produced £112 5s. 0d. In this assessment the iron, coal, and lime works paid £55 14s. 0d. of the above sum. In 1704 an assessment of 4s. 6d. in the £, from forty-six persons, paid £149 to which the iron, coal, and lime works contributed £84. The sum paid in on the 27th of March of the same year for 1697, for window-tax, was £8 14s.; the tax for births, deaths, &c., for the same year, was £4 18s. 4d., for 1698, £4 1s. 7d., and for the following year, £3 5s. 6d. In the same year the land-tax produced £27 14s. 6d. In 1670 the window-tax was £8 6s. 0d. In 1671 the land-tax produced £55 0s. 0d. In 1672 the window-tax was £8 0s. 2d. In 1704 the sum realized for windows had risen to £10 17s. 6d., and that for births, deaths, and marriages to £5 12s. 0d. In 1676 the land-tax paid £36 19s. 4d., for the first quarter, 24th July; for the second quarter, 23rd October, the same; and for the third quarter (paid March 27, 1675), the same; the sum for the fourth quarter was also the same. In 1675 two sums, £31 9s. 8d., and £63 8s. 6d., were paid in for land-tax, and £16 2s. 2d. the following March. On the 4th of May, 1706, “John Boden paid in full of ye last year’s land-tax, £36 17s. 0d.” The fourth quarterly payment of the poll for Madeley, made April 15, 1695, was £14 14s. 6d.

We pass over payments for intervening years, and come to 1709. In July of that year the first and second quarterly payments of the land-tax were each £36 19s. 4d.; for the third quarter, £37 8s. 4d., and for the last quarter, £36 10s. 4d. The first and second quarterly payments in full amounted to £73 18s. 8d. In 1702 a survey of the lordship of Madeley showed there were twenty-seven tenants, holding 2073 acres; that the yearly value was £1021 10s. 0d.; also that there were upon the land 3369 trees, and sixteen loads of wood, the value of which by purchase was set down at £17,366 9s. 4d. In 1725 a case was prepared by the vicar and churchwardens, after a vestry-meeting had been held, for the opinion of counsel on the question of the

right of the vicar to receive tithe of wood cut down by the lay impropiator. The case set forth that “the vicars of the other twenty-two parishes in the franchise of the priory enjoyed tithes of wood as small tithes, excepting in a few instances, and that the vicar of Madeley has from time to time received the tithes of hay, clover, &c., which are usually esteemed great tithes. But hitherto no tithes of wood have been paid at Madeley within memory of living witnesses, except that about thirty years since the late vicar received one shilling as a composition from the tenant of the impropiator.”

Counsel (Thos. Browne, of the Inner Temple), in reply, says Madeley was appropriated to the priory of Wenlock at the same time as Stoke St. Milburgh—22nd March, 1343—and yet the vicar of Stoke receives tithe-wood, and thinks that the smoke-penny to the vicar is strong evidence in favour of his being entitled to the tithe of wood so used, because that payment comes in lieu of such wood; but it must be admitted that the impropiator is entitled to all the tithes of a vicar, unless such vicar shows usage or endowment to support the demand as to such great tithe.

The counsel’s opinion seems to have left the question pretty much in the same state as before, and that the vicar and churchwardens did not establish their claim is shown by subsequent assessments and by the report of the Tithe Commissioners (1848), who said all woodlands are by prescription or other lawful means exempt from tithe.

The appropriation of the rent-charge in lieu of tithes in the parish took effect in 1847, and it may be interesting to add that after various meetings and inquiries it was found that by prescription or other lawful means all the woodlands, containing in estimated statute measure 200 acres, well known by metes and bounds, were absolutely free from tithes; also all gardens annexed to houses.

It was also found that 267 acres of the Court Farm were covered from render of small tithes in kind by prescriptive or customary payments in lieu thereof to the vicar, and 233 acres of the Windmill Farm by payment of 5s. 3½d.; the Broad Meadow, containing twenty-two acres, by payment of ninepence; the Hales, seventeen acres, by payment of fivepence; the Bough Park, twenty acres, and Rushton Farm (Park House), twenty-six acres, by payment of 10½d.; part of Court Farm (J. and F. Yates, proprietors), and six

other acres, by payment of twopence. The quantity subject to tithes amounted to 2800 acres, 2000 being arable, and 800 as meadow or pasture.

Finding also that the average value of tithes for the seven years preceding Christmas, 1835, did not represent the sum which ought to be the basis for a permanent commutation, the Tithe Commissioner awarded as follows: to Sir Joseph H. Hawley, impropiator, of Leybourn Grange, Kent, £115 10s., by way of rent-charge; and £226 to the vicar for the time being, instead of all the remaining unmerged tithes of hay and small tithes, arising from the lands of the said parish. The valuation was by William Wyley, upon wheat, barley, and oats, as under:—

Wheat	7s. 0¼d.	32,427,300.
Barley	3s. 11½d.	57,517,590.
Oats	2s. 9d.	82,787,879.

The great-tithes have since been purchased from Sir Joseph Hawley for Ironbridge church, now a rectory.

### **SCARCITY OF WHEAT IN MADELEY IN 1795.**

The system of farming and the state of the laws regarding the importation of grain were such down to the period we refer to that the country was at the mercy of the viscusitude of the seasons, and if these were adverse nothing less than a partial or a general famine was the result, and it sometimes happened that the use of an extra ounce or two of bread was grudged if not considered sinful. Thus, an old writer commenting upon the scarcity of grain in the above year, censured the use of tea on the ground that it led to the use of bread and butter. He says:—

“I find, July 29th, that ‘in the parish of Madeley, Salop, there are 924 families; and since the use of Tea is becoming so prevalent, on a moderate calculation each family consumes three and a half pounds of flour each week more than formerly, by instituting a fourth meal each day. In days of yore, Breakfast, Dinner and Supper were esteemed sufficient, but now it must be Breakfast, Dinner, *Tea* and Supper,

which wastes both Meal and Time, and makes a difference each week in the parish of Madeley of 3234 lbs. of flour.”

In that same year, on the ninth of July, a meeting of numerous gentlemen, farmers, millers, and tradesmen was held at the Tontine, on “the alarming occasion of the scarcity of corn and dearness of all kinds of other provisions,” and a committee was appointed for the immediate collection of contributions and the purchase of such grain as could be procured, to be distributed to the necessitous at a reduction of one fourth, or nine shillings for twelve. The wants of the poor were described as being beyond what they had at any former time experienced, and according to the best accounts that could be collected the quantity of grain of all sorts in the country was very far short of the consumption before harvest. Many families in Madeley were short of bread, and the colliers were only prevented rising by assurances that gentlemen of property were disposed to contribute liberally to their relief as well as to adopt measures for obtaining from distant parts, such aid as could be procured. The committee directed 2,000 bushels of Indian corn to be sent for from Liverpool, to meet immediate requirements, but such were the murmurs of the poor according to a letter from Richard Reynolds to Mr. Smitheman, that it was impossible to say what would be the consequences, and the writer adds:—

“I should not be surprised if they applied in a body at those houses where they expected to find provisions, or from which they thought they ought to be relieved. They already begin to make distinctions between those whom they consider as their benefactors, and those whom (as George Forester expresses it in the annexed letter) are at war with their landlords; and I fear those whom they consider as deserting them in their distress, would not only incur their disapprobation, but might be the next to suffer from their resentment. I therefore the more readily attempt to fulfil my appointment by recommending thee in the most earnest manner to send by the return of the post to Richard Dearman at this place, who is appointed treasurer on the present occasion, a bill for such a sum as thou shalt think proper to contribute, and at the same time to write to thy servant at the West Coppice to give notice to thy tenants, (as G. Forester has to his) and especially to William Parton of Little Wenlock, that it is thy desire that he and they

should conform to the general practice and deliver immediately all his wheat to the committee, at twelve shillings per bushel, for the use of the poor. And if there is any wheat, barley, beans, or peas, at the West Coppice, or elsewhere in thy possession or power, I recommend thee to order it to be sent without delay to the Committee; and then if the colliers, &c., should go in a body, or send, as I think more likely a deputation to thy house, thy having so done, and thy servant shewing them thy order for so doing, as well as thy contributing liberally as above proposed, will be the most likely means to prevent the commencement of mischief, the end of which, if once began, it is impossible to ascertain.”

The letter goes on to state that the following sums had been subscribed: George Forester, £105. Cecil Forester, £105. J. H. Browne, £105. the Coalbrookdale Company, £105. and John Wilkinson, £50. In addition to this the writer, Richard Reynolds, and J. H. Browne had consented to advance £700. each to be repaid out of the corn sold at the reduced price.

Mr. Reynolds concludes by saying, “such is the urgency of the temper of the people, that there is not a day to lose if we are desirous to preserve the poor from outrage, and most likely the country from plunder, if not from blood.”

Periods of distress and panic arising from scarcity were not unfrequent when wages were stationary, or comparatively so. Great changes had taken place during the periods previously described. First, during feudal times, here and elsewhere the great body of peasantry was composed of persons who rented *small farms*, seldom exceeding twenty or thirty acres, and who paid their rent either in kind or in agricultural labour and services performed on the demesne of the landlord: secondly, of *cottagers*, each of whom had a small croft or parcel of land attached to his dwelling, and the privilege of turning out a cow, or pigs, or a few sheep, into the woods, commons, and wastes of the manor. During this period, the population derived its subsistence immediately from the land;—the landowner from the produce of his demesne, cultivated partly by his domestic slaves, but principally by the labour of the tenants and cottiers attached to the manor; the tenants from the produce of their little farms; and the cottiers from that of their cows and crofts, except while working upon the demesne, when

they were generally fed by the landlord. The mechanics of the village, not having time to cultivate a sufficient quantity of land, received a fixed allowance of agricultural produce from each tenant.

Under the above system, not only the little farmer, but also the humblest cottager, drew a very considerable portion of his subsistence directly from the land. His cow furnished him with what is invaluable to a labourer,—a store of milk in the summer months; his pig, fattened upon the common and with the refuse vegetables of his garden, supplied him with bacon for his winter consumption—and there were poultry besides.

Gradually the labourer and small cultivator lost the use they had made of the road-side and other waste which were assigned under inclosure acts, not to the occupier, but *the owner* of the cottage; few cottages were in the occupation of their owners; they generally, indeed we may say universally, belonged to the proprietors of the neighbouring farms, and the allotments granted in lieu of the extinguished common rights were generally added to the large farms, and seldom attached to the cottages. The cottages which were occupied by their owners had of course allotments attached to them; but these by degrees passed by sale into the hands of some large proprietor in the neighbourhood, *De facto*, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the allotment has been detached from the cottage, and thrown into the occupation of some adjoining farmer.

That such a change should have been attended with important consequences, can excite no surprise, a complete severance was effected between the peasantry and the soil; the little farmers and cottiers were converted into day-labourers, depending entirely upon daily earnings which may, and frequently did, in point of fact, fail them. They had no land upon the produce of which to fall as a reserve when the demand for labour happened to be slack. This revolution became unquestionably the cause of the heavy and increasing burdens upon parishes in the form of poor-rates, and jail rates.

It has been well said that from the moment when any man begins to think that

‘The world is not his friend, nor the world’s law,’

the world and the world's law are likely to have that man for their enemy; and if he does not commence direct hostilities against them, he abandons himself to despair, and becomes a useless if not a hurtful member of the community.

If we go back to the time of the great plague, about the middle of the reign of Edward III., which gave occasion to the first attempt to regulate wages by law, corn rose from 5s. 4d., the average the first twenty-five years to 11s. 9d., the average of the twenty-five years following. In this reign the pound of silver was coined into 25s., and at the end of the reign of Henry IV., into 30s. In 1444, other statutes regulating wages were passed probably owing to the high price of corn, which had risen on an average of the ten preceding years to 10s. 8d., without any further alterations in the coin; and for this reason there seems no adequate cause but a succession of scanty crops; as a continuance of low prices afterwards prevailed for sixty years. The average price of wheat from 1444 to the end of the reign of Henry VII. (1509) returned to 6s., while the pound of silver was coined into £1 17s. 6d. instead of £1 2s. 6d., as at the passing of the first statute of labourers in 1350, thus indicating a continuance of favourable seasons, and probably, an improved system of agriculture. The rise in the price of corn during the next century was owing probably to other causes. From 1646 to 1665 the price of the quarter of wheat was £2 10s. 0d. During the wars of the Roses, and subsequently it was cheap; but during the civil wars under Charles I., and for some time subsequently it was dear. The harvests of 1794 and 1795 were deficient, but the rise in the price of grain, occasioned by the deficiency of these two years, which is supposed to have been about one eighth, threw into the hands of the agricultural interest, in 1795 and 1796, when prices were at the highest, from 24 to 28 millions for the two years, the farmers with a deficiency of one eighth, having sold their crops for nearly a third more than the usual price before labour had risen.

Mr. Reynolds saw the evils we have been describing, and when he purchased the manor of Madeley from Mr. Smitheman he made it a point to encourage small allotments and leases of copyholds.

## **THE CHURCH, AND THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PEOPLE OF MADELEY.**

We have previously given the names of some of the early rectors of the church, when the whole mind of the people here, as elsewhere, by education, if not conviction, was Roman Catholic. There was undoubtedly a pleasant kind of poetry about the older system of religion, which no man, from the peasant to the peer, thought of questioning, but which, from the cradle to the grave, governed and regulated, as far as its influences went, the thoughts and actions of all men. They were the high days of ecclesiastical power, when the Church could smite with excommunication and civil disability obnoxious families or individuals, and when monarchs could be cut off from the allegiance of their subjects, and made to appear as lepers among their brethren.

We know little of the moral or social condition of the inhabitants, or how far they were influenced by the rude discipline to which they were subject. Delusion, we know, by the traces it has left, then and for a long time after among the uneducated classes, formed the basis often of belief. It was a time when man, equally deceived by the imperfections of his senses and the illusions of self-love, long considered himself to be the centre of the movements of the stars, and his vanity was punished by the terrors to which they gave rise. It may not have had a corrupting tendency, and may even have been a beneficial fallacy, for it must have tended much to the accomplishment of any undertaking to believe that it was within the range of possibility. We can now view the planets as they circle, without supposing that they are impelled by intelligences who exercise either a benign or a hostile influence over our action. Ages of labour have removed the veil which concealed the true nature of the planets, and man now finds himself on the surface of one which he has reason to suppose is so small as to be scarcely perceptible in that great solar system which formerly appeared so mysterious. Then it was not so: astrologers and conjurors were looked up to as wielding even more terrific powers than the priest, and horoscopes, nativities, and the most ordinary events were traced to influences of the planets. Dust and cobwebs now cover the tombs of the authors of works on astrology; the staff on which they leaned is broken; their brazen instruments are green and cankered.

In an old book on this subject, disinterred among certain other contents of an old chest in the vestry of the church, entitled "Astrological Predictions for 1652," we find, as was not unusual, awful prognostications concerning

Church and State, and threatenings of troubles, violent distempers, and great slaughters. There appears to have been a court of astrologers, for we find a notice in a foot-note of “a learned sermon composed for the Society of Astrologers.” Predictions and assertions of interference with men’s actions and the most ordinary course of events not being read to advantage except in the language of their authors, we purpose giving an extract or two. Like relics, which seem to lose their venerable sanctity when removed from an old tomb to a museum, extracts in modern type lose the charm the well-thumbed old yellow work has as it is lifted from the old church chest, mellow and mouldy. It appears from the numerous notes and memorandums on the blank leaves to have been used by the clergyman as a sort of pocket-book, and some of the notes appear to be intended attestations of the predictions so earnestly given. Here are some of the predictions bearing chiefly upon passing events of the times, or such as were likely to arise:—

“England is subject to that Sign of the Zodiac, viz. Aries, wherein Mars at present is placed, & therefore we English, & in Engla. must expect some, or many of those misfortuns which he generally signifieth, and which even now we repeated: but the same sign pointeth out also many Cities & places in the upper Germany, so also in Austria and its Territories, the Eastern and Southeast parts of France and the Cities and Townes therein scituated, also the North East or more Easterly parts of Denmark, that or those parts of the Polonian Countries or Provinces which are bordering or adjacent unto the unruly Cossacks, and those Cities and Towns in the upper Silesia, which lye neer unto the Borders or Confines of the Turks Dominions, the Dukedom of Burgundy; the Swedish Nation and Souldiery are also more or lesse, and many of their Towns subject unto the Sign Aries, and therefore in all or most of these Countries by us nominated, there will be some violent distempers in the people, some slaughter of men, and casually by one accident or other much damage in many of their principal Cities or Sea-towns by Fire, War, inroads of Pyrates or souldiers, &c.”

“When Venus shall be Lady of the yeare and unfortunate, as now she is in the seventh house; Women will more than ordinary scold with their Husbands, and run twatling and scolding out of their houses: many

Men will depart, or run, separate or divorce themselves from their Wives. This unnaturall Department of Women unto their Husbands and Men unto their Wives, is increased by the nearnesse of Venus unto Mars, and his positure in the seventh House, which signifieth Women, their loves and affections either unto their Husbands or others. In that House he is ‘*Damnofus & malus, quia significat inimicitias & discordias magnas, & accident hominibus furta interfectiones & contentiones multæ & rixæ in illo anno maximeq in gent illius Climatis.*’ Mars is very unfortunately placed in the seventh house, signifying there will be many controversies, Law-suits, Duels, much enmity, many Thefts by Sea & Land, much robbing of Houses; and these shall most apparantly manifest themselves in the Country, City or Towne subject unto the sign he is in, of which we have formerly treated.”

The eclipse of the sun, 29th March, 1652, 9-56 a.m., is announced with hieroglyphic figures, followed by these remarks:—

“We intended to write a particular Treatise concerning the effects of this Eclipse, which is the greatest this Age hath beheld, and in that Booke to have delivered unto Posterity a Method whereby they might have judged what manner of Effects should have been signified by any Defect of either of the two Luminaries; but our time at this present being otherwise taken up, we are confined to a narrow scantling of Paper: we hope some well-wishers unto Astrology will perfect what we intended on that Subject, being desirous to see the Labours of other Men abroad, the whole burthen hereof being too heavy for one Anglicus.”

The idlest tales were believed and credited as facts, and men more cunning than the common herd thrived by magical and cabalistic spells they were supposed to cast upon evil spirits. The clergy dealt in exorcisms, and in surplice and stole performed the rites of the Church. They condemned witchcraft, however, as heresy; and as early as the reign of Henry VIII. a statute was passed which enacted that any person, after the day therein named, devising, practising, or exercising “any invocations, or conjurations of spirits, witchcrafts, enchantments, or sorceries, to the intent to get or find

money or treasure, or to waste, consume, or destroy any person in his body, members, or goods, or to provoke any person to unlawful love, or for any other unlawful intent or purpose, or by occasion or colour of such things or any of them, or for despite of Christ, or lucre of money, dig up or pull down any cross, or crosses, or by such invocations or conjurations of spirits, witchcrafts, enchantments, or sorcery, or any of them, take upon them to tell or declare where goods stolen or lost shall be come—that then all and every person or persons offending as before is mentioned, shall be deemed, accepted, and adjudged a felon or felons, without benefit of clergy.” This act was carefully worded, inasmuch as it only extends to witchcraft or enchantment practised with a criminal or unlawful intent.

Men with very much less learning than the author quoted, lived by their wits, from their supposed knowledge of the stars, and from being able, as they professed, to consult the planets and to restore lost property. Men, and women too, would take long journeys to consult one who could “read the stars,” or “rule the planets.” From a conversation recorded by a close observer of men and manners in the beginning of the present century, for instance, we learn that one of these wise men who lived as far off as Oswestry was occasionally consulted by the inhabitants here. Of course it was easy with a little tact for the wife to worm out the main facts in one room whilst the husband listened and gathered them up for use in another. Tom Bowlegs having missed a five-pound note from his cupboard holds the following conversation with a friend, who tells him he cannot help thinking that the note has been mislaid, not stolen, and says:—

“The five-pound peaper is not stolen but lost, and thee’lt be sartin to find it.

No sich thing Yedart, replies Bowlegs; for I went to the wise-mons and he tow’d me all about it.

The wise-mon! what wise-mon?

Dick Spot that lives slip side Hodgistry the yed of aw the conjurors in Shropshire.

Aye, and what did he tell thee?

Well, thee shalt hear:

As a five-pound paper was a jell for a poor mon to lose, I determined to know all about it, so off I set for Dick Spot's house. After knocking at the door it was opened by an owd woman, as ugly as the divil himself, with a face as black as the easter. At first seet I thought I was tean to, and was for bowting; but wishing to know all about the paper, I mustered aw my courage, and went in. Pray, said I, is the Wise-mon a-whoam. No, said she, but he will directly; sit down; I suppose you have lost something, and wants to know where it is. Yes, said I, you bin reet. What is it that you have lost? So I up and tow'd her, aw about it. Just as I had finished, in comes the wise-mon; and he (to my great surprise) said—follow me into this room; while I was scraping wi mi foot, dewking mi yed, and stroking my yarr down, amounting altogether to a nation fine beawe, he said—I was consulting the planets this morning and found that a £5 Shiffnal bank note had been stolen from under a sugar bason in your cupboard on Wednesday morning last, between the hours of nine and ten o'clock, by a tall mon, with a long visage marked by the small pox, gray eyes, and black beard. (Wonderful! said I, that is the very mon I suspect!) You will therefore, on your return home, make it known in his neighbourhood that if the bill is not returned in one week from this day, that he will lose one of his legs in a few weeks after. If this comes to his ears I have no doubt the bill will be returned immediately, but if he does not, he shall be marked as I have told you, and in that case the bill will be irrecoverable. I knew by the planets that you would be here at 12 o'clock to-day, and having overstaid my time at Hodgistry (here he wiped the sweat from his face). I ran all the way to be in time to meet you."

The devil, or "divil," seems to have been an important personage, often making bargains, in which he not unfrequently got worsted. There were too familiar imps or demons, according to John Heywood's homely rhymes,—

“Such as we  
PUGS and HOBGOBLINS call; their dwellings be  
In corners of old houses least frequented,  
Or beneath stacks of wood; and these convented

Make fearful noise in butteries and in dairies,  
ROBIN GOODFELLOWS some, some call them FAIRIES.  
In solitarie rooms these uproars keep,  
And beat at doors to wake men from their sleep,  
Seeming to force locks be they ne're so strong  
And keeping Christmase gambols all night long.”

That merry wanderer, Puck, even as late as the present century, was common to our fields, where he seems to have had a partiality for simple countrymen, market-fresh, whom he led many a weary dance in fields out of which they could not find their way. He was occasionally domiciled in the kitchen, and was useful in sweeping up the hearth while housewives snored in bed. Farmhouses were favourite residences; but woe to the dairymaid who happened to offend them! Her milk was sure to turn sour. They haunted mines sometimes, and used the pick to help forward the midnight task, or became malignant and caused inundations of water, or let loose noxious vapours to destroy both mine and miners. On one occasion a miner named Bagley, who preferred being let down when all the rest had ascended the shaft, in order to have the assistance of an imp, was watched by another, who concealed himself for the purpose. But the imp, who was working whilst the man rested, discovered him and called upon his friend to bump him against the timber for his intrusion. On being caught a second time, the imp raised an alarm—“He peeps again, Bagley; bump him!” showing that the sprite or whatever he was could speak English. As a supposed proof of the truth of this, Bagley was called “Bump him, Bagley!” to his dying day.

An old inhabitant of Madeley who believed thoroughly in such things told us that he once looked through a hole into an old building on a moonlight night, and saw a score of spirits of this kind dancing right merrily! He also assured us that an old woman, whose name he gave us, but which we do not remember, was accounted a witch, and had the power to change herself into a hare; and that on one occasion she was hunted by the hounds, who ran her to her cottage, on the Brockton road, where she took the chimney, and was found sitting by the fire, her hands and feet bleeding from the run. <sup>[121]</sup>

If the clergy of those days believed in evil eyes, witchcraft, and ghosts, it was to be expected that the people would do so, too. They stood alone on a

mental as on a religious eminence. The knell of ecclesiastical authority had not then been rung; civil incapacity and inferiority was the tacit proscription of all outside the pale of the Church; and what we glean of morals and manners under the rigid system of godly discipline then prevailing is not much in its favour.

Madeley, towards the latter end of the past and beginning of the present century was favoured above many neighbouring parishes in its clergy. It had men who led tranquil, holy lives, and some who proclaimed the conscience of the individual to be the only judge in matters of the soul,—men who were, it is true, ill-rewarded for their pains, but who lived beneficent lives, and rendered disinterested service.

Such were John William de la Fletcher and Melville Horne, the latter of whom went out as a missionary, and established the colony of Sierra Leone; and others who succeeded them. Let us speak first, however, of the former.

### **REV. JOHN W. FLETCHER, VICAR OF MADELEY.**

No sketch of Madeley would be complete which did not include a copious notice of Mr. Fletcher. So many “Lives” of Mr. Fletcher have, however been written, and are so readily attainable, that we need not enter into those details appertaining to his parentage, birth, youth, education, etc., which belong properly to the biographer who writes a book; and we shall content ourselves therefore with a summary of such matters, in order the more fully to bring out those traits of character which distinguished him whilst vicar of this parish.

Jean Guilhaume de la Flechere, to give his proper Swiss name, was born at Nyon, fifteen miles from Geneva, in the year 1729. He received his education first in his native town, and then at Geneva, at which latter place he distinguished himself by his abilities, his thirst for knowledge, and intense application to study. His biographers relate boyish incidents and hairbreadth escapes, communicated by himself. His father before marriage was an officer in the French army, and afterwards in that of his own country, and young Fletcher on arriving at maturity resolved to enter the army too, but in consequence of some disappointments he came to London to learn the English language, and having done so he obtained a situation as

tutor in the family of Mr. Hill, M.P. for Shrewsbury, who resided at Tern Hall, near Atcham. He was ordained 1757, and occasionally preached at Atcham, Wroxeter, and the Abbey church at Shrewsbury, and at St. Alkmunds.

Two years after he was ordained, he was in the habit of occasionally coming to preach at Madeley, and the year following, through the influence of Mr. Hill, he was appointed vicar, having chosen it in preference to a smaller parish with a larger income. Mr. Chambray, the then vicar, gladly accepting the living Mr. Fletcher declined, thereby making way for him. One of Mr. Fletcher's pupils died, the other became M P. for Shrewsbury; afterwards he represented the county, and finally was made a peer, under the title of Baron Berwick of Attingham, the name the house now bears. He appears to have received his appointment to Madeley in March, 1759.

The Rev. Robert Cox, M.A., one of Mr. Fletcher's biographers, says:—

“Previous to Mr. Fletcher's presentation to the living, its inhabitants, with some honourable exceptions, were notorious for their ignorance and impiety. They openly profaned the sabbath, treated the most holy things with contempt, disregarded the restraints of decency, and ridiculed the very name of religion. It is to the reproach of England that such a description is but too frequently applicable to places where mines and manufactories have collected together a crowded population.”

A desire to be extensively useful soon induced Mr. Fletcher to undertake extra-parochial duties, but in every way, indignities were offered by those on whom by contrast his piety, temperance, humility, and example more strongly reflected. The clergy went into titters and cried “Enthusiast!” The half-gentry chalked up “Schismatic!” and the magistrates sought to set the world on a grin by ticketing him a “Jesuit!” Need we be surprised to hear that Mr. Fletcher was seized, as he tells us, with the spirit of Jonah—and tempted to quit his charge! It was a passing temptation, yet such was his tenderness of conscience that the shadow of a doubt—intruded rather than entertained—disquieted him.

About this time he had some doubts respecting a passage in the service for the baptism of infants, and also in that for the burial of the dead. He received much comfort however from his correspondence and interviews with John and Charles Wesley, whose preachers he welcomed into his parish.

In a letter dated May, 1767, we find him inviting Whitfield to his parish for the same purpose. In this letter, May 18th, 1767, he speaks of Capt. Scott having preached from his horse-block, which seems to mark the first introduction of Wesleyan Methodism into Madeley. The Roman Catholics too, gave him trouble, by opening a mission in Madeley, and drawing over to them two of his converts. This appears to have been in March 1769, for in a letter to his friend Mr. Ireland dated the 26th, he says:—

“The (Popish) Priest at Madeley is going to open his Mass-house, and I have declared war on that account last Sunday, and propose to strip the Whore of Babylon, and expose her nakedness to-morrow. All the Papists are in a great ferment, and they have held meetings to consult on the occasion.”

An odour now hangs and will hang about the name of Fletcher, and turning to his example for encouragement, amid the more sterile tracts of labour, the weary and desponding will get refreshed. As mountains pierce the clouds and bring down rains upon the parched and shrivelled plains, so men now and then tower high above their fellows, and privileged with a greater significance, sunned and bathed in a purer light, they become a medium of it to others. It was so with Fletcher. In his presence men of coarser mould and ruder habits, as well as those distinguished for their attainments, felt the force and purity of his life. It has taken the Church of which he was so distinguished a member nearly a whole century to come up to plans by which he extended the sphere of his usefulness: we mean those outdoor meetings, cottage-lectures, Scripture readings, catechisings, and similar means whereby in every corner of the parish he contrived to stir men up and to create among them a concern for their higher interests. These are his words:—

“Soon after coming to Madeley, I have frequently had a desire to exhort in Madeley Wood and Coalbrookdale, two villages of my

parish, but I have not dared to run before I saw an open door. It now, I think, begins to open, as two small societies of twenty persons have formed themselves in those places.”

But for a large soul like Mr. Fletcher’s the parish even is too limited, and we find accordingly that he gathered a small society sixteen miles off, riding that distance in order to preach at five o’clock in the morning two or three times a-week. Of course a man could not do this without treading on someone’s toes. It was the way to get opposition, and he got it. The churchwardens, clergy, archdeacon, bishop, and magistrates were dead against him. Magistrates threatened him and the whole of his flock with imprisonment; and the bishop preached against him before his brethren at the general visitation. He writes to Charles Wesley—“A young clergyman who lives at Madeley Wood, where he has great influence, has openly declared war against me by pasting on the church-door a paper, in which he charges me with rebellion, schism, and being a disturber of the public peace. He puts himself at the head of the gentlemen of the parish (as they term themselves), and supported by the recorder of Wenlock he is determined to put in force the Conventicle Act against me. A few weeks ago the widow who lives in the Rock Church and a young man who read and prayed in my absence were taken up.” He tells us he appeared at Wenlock and bearded the justices, who denounced him as a Jesuit!

Times have changed, and what was deemed in Mr Fletcher an indiscretion and even a crime, is now universally applauded. If persecution to Mr. Fletcher arose from those who by influence and position should have seconded his plans, we need scarcely feel surprised to find that, setting himself against the commoner and coarser vices of the times, he was opposed by those who thrived thereby. In a letter to Mr. Charles Wesley he says—“You cannot well imagine how much the animosity of my parishioners is heightened, and with what boldness it discovers itself against me, because I preach against drunkenness, shows, and bull-baiting. The publicans and the maltmen will not forgive me: they think that to preach against drunkenness and to cut their purse is the same thing.”

It is difficult to imagine a man of education, taste, and refined feeling in the midst of elements more discordant, or so totally out of character with what he had been used to. Unvisited by those influences that from a thousand

sources now combine to smooth the path of the country clergy, mining districts, like others where the physical energies of the body are developed to the utmost stretch by the nature of the employment, presented the greatest obstacles to progress; the most dogged indifference to efforts made for their advancement; and, where attempts were made to put a check upon the brutal amusements of the population, they offered the most determined resistance. At out-door or in-door services, in such semi-civilized portions of the parish, the sound of prayer, both on Sundays and week-evenings, would ascend mingled with the yells and cries and curses of drunken colliers, the barking of dogs, the roar of a bull, or some indulgence of the kind with which publicans seasoned their attractions. The Green, at Madeley Wood, was a favourite spot for such games, and narrowly upon one occasion did this zealous and pious man escape being pulled from his horse and made the victim of a party of infuriated colliers, who made the bargain to “bait the parson.”

Mr. Fletcher, with a view of further promoting his mission of usefulness in 1767 visited Yorkshire, Bristol, Bath, and Wales, and subsequently his native country, Rome, &c. He returned to England in 1770; and some time after undertook the charge of a college founded by the Countess of Huntingdon, at Trevecca, in South Wales, but resigned the appointment, in consequence of his repugnance to Calvinistic views. This brought out Mr. Fletcher as a controversialist, with Toplady and others. At the breaking out of the American War Mr. Fletcher took up his pen in defence of the Government, and the right divine of kings, contending that “if once legislation was affirmed to belong to the people, as such, all government would be overturned,” and that such a scheme ought to be totally extirpated; doctrines which so pleased the King that the Lord Chancellor was commissioned to offer him preferment, which he declined.

Poor human nature at best goes on crutches; and one infirmity he had to struggle with when young, Mr. Benson tells us, “was temper. He was a man of strong passions, and prone to anger in particular, insomuch that he has frequently thrown himself on the floor, and laid there most of the night, bathed in tears, imploring victory over his spirit.” He obtained it, and by the means employed—by earnest wrestling, by prayer articulate at times—voiceless, waiting prayer at others. Holiness to be realised in man—holiness incarnate on earth, eternal in the heavens—and the annihilation of

all that would bar it out from the soul was his motto. But the man that would tremble before the suspicion of a fault, on the other hand, could beard a gamester armed, and pour an avalanche of indignation upon his head—aye, while the infuriated duellist held a pistol to his breast. There was a combination of earnestness, sincerity, and, withal, humiliation, about the man that won its way and fused all before it. There was a primitive simplicity and singleness of purpose, an enthusiasm unmixed with bitterness, and that heavenly temper about Mr. Fletcher which reminds one of the sublimated virtues and graces of the early Christians. Like the old fathers, he accommodated himself to his hearers, suiting his exhortations to their modes of thought, and seizing opportunities for imparting instruction and advice, so as to secure for both the most favourable reception. His parishioners soon began not only to perceive but to appreciate these excellent features of his character. Unmoved by storm and tumult, actuated by the purest motives, with a grace and sweetness that shone through every look and gave value to every action, his visits, wherever he went, brought with them influences like the reviving breath of spring. If he overtook on the road a poor woman, wearied with a load, he assisted her to carry it, meanwhile taking care to exhort her to relieve herself of that more intolerable one of sin. If he saw a man fetch down a bird with his gun, he complimented him upon his aim and called his attention to the mark for the prize of his high calling—thus tempering and interweaving with things and pursuits of this life those relating to that which is to come. A very atmosphere of good surrounded him, from whence distilled heavenly and refreshing dew. To meet the objections of his parishioners to early Sunday morning meetings, on the ground of their being unable to rise so early, he was accustomed to go round the village himself, tinkling a bell; “thus, though free from all men,” as the Apostle said to the Corinthians, he made himself the servant of all, giving himself up to the work as practically and devotedly as though each particular department had been his special duty. If a poor man was ill and lacked attendance he sat by the sickbed and tended him; if he needed clothes to keep him warm he stripped himself; if he needed money he gave it; and even the furniture in his house was at the service of the poorest. He was not only a servant, but a “servant of servants,” therefore, unto his brethren; and upon the well-recognised principle of true greatness laid down by his divine Master—“Whomsoever would be chief amongst you, let him be your servant”—he obtained that

reverence and regard with which, even now, his name is spoken of both in the cottages of the poor and houses of the rich.

There was in Mr. Fletcher a combination of distinguished virtues seldom found in one man, and those so marked and developed that each by itself would have been sufficient to confer distinction upon any individual possessing it in an equal degree. Of his ministrations in the pulpit of the old church none now left can speak. By the children, however, of those who have listened to him we have often heard it said—"Never were hearers more riveted and enrapt by lips of a fellow-mortal." Every topic received at his hand a fresh bloom—a brilliancy, a fascination, a fragrance that entranced. Christ the Saviour, Christ in the garden, and upon the cross; now at the right hand of the Father, and again coming in great glory to judge the world; man regenerated; the benediction and the curse; the two hemispheres of the one truth needful for man to know, were themes upon which he began, continued, and ended.

The "Rock Church," previously spoken of, at Madeley Wood, was a cottage built on a spur of one of the sandstones of the lower coal measures, and it still stands, overlooking the valley of the Severn. Mr. Fletcher exerted himself, however, to erect a place of better accommodation in 1776, and succeeded in building what now forms part of the old Wesleyan chapel, a short distance from the Rock Church; and we find him devoting £25, being a balance of £105 received as the annual income from his estate in Switzerland, to its completion: the remainder previously appears to have been devoted to other charitable purposes. He was unable then, however, to clear off the whole, for in the following year he wrote to Thomas York and Daniel Edmunds, who assisted him in the secular concerns of the vicarage, saying:—

"I have attempted to build a house in Madeley-Wood, about the centre of the parish, where I should be glad if the children might be taught to read and write in the day, and the grown-up people might hear the word of God in the evening, when they can get an Evangelist to preach it to them; and where the serious people might assemble for social worship, when they have no teacher.

“This has involved me in some difficulties about discharging the expense of that building, and paying for the ground it stands upon; especially, as my ill health has put me on the additional expense of an assistant. If I had strength, I would serve my church alone, board as cheap as I could, and save what I could from the produce of the living to clear the debt, and leave that little token of my love, free from encumbrances, to my parishioners. But as Providence orders things otherwise, I have another object which is, to secure a faithful Minister to serve the church while I live. Providence has sent me dear Mr. Greaves, who loves the people, and is loved by them. I should be glad to make him comfortable; but as all the care of the flock, by my illness, devolves upon him, I would not hesitate for a moment to let him have all the profit of the living, if it were not for the debt contracted about the room. My difficulty lies, then, between what I owe to my fellow-labourer, and what I owe to my parishioners, whom I should be sorry to have burdened with a debt contracted for the room.

“I beg you will let me know how the balance of my account stands, that, some way or other, I may order it to be paid immediately: for if the balance is against me, I could not leave England comfortably without having settled the payment. A letter will settle this business, as well as if twenty friends were at the trouble of taking a journey; and talking is far worse for me than reading or writing. I do not say this to put a slight upon my dear friends. I should rejoice to see them, if it would answer any end.

“Ten thousand pardons of my dear friends, for troubling them with this scrawl about worldly matters. May God help us all, so to settle all our eternal concerns, that when we shall be called to go to our long home and heavenly country, we may be ready, and have our acquittance along with us. I am quite tired with writing; nevertheless, I cannot lay by my pen, without desiring my best Christian love to all my dear companions in tribulation, and neighbours in Shropshire.”

Mr. Fletcher was now, as will be seen, in ill-health, and being ordered by his physician to a warmer climate, he wrote before leaving Bristol, another and longer pastoral letter to his Madeley parishioners. In 1778 we find him writing other letters from Nyon, in Switzerland, detailing information he had collected in passing through France, concerning the deaths of Voltaire and Rousseau, and inclosing notes to be read to societies at Madeley, Dawley, The Bank, &c.

The building at Madeley Wood cost more than he expected, and we find him saying:—

“I am sorry the building has come to so much more than I intended; but as the mischief is done, it is a matter to exercise patience, resignation, and self-denial; and it will be a caution in future. I am going to sell part of my little estate here, to discharge the debt. I had laid by fifty pounds to print a small work, which I wanted to distribute here; but as I must be just before I presume to offer that mite to ‘the God of truth,’ I lay by the design, and shall send that sum to Mr. York. Money is so scarce here, at this time, that I shall sell at a very great loss; but necessity and justice are two great laws, which must be obeyed. As I design, on my return to England, to pinch until I have got rid of this debt, I may go and live in one of the cottages belonging to the Vicar, if we could let the vicarage for a few pounds; and in that case, I dare say, Mr. Greaves would be so good as to take the other little house.”

Mr. Fletcher returned to England in the spring of 1781, better, but without having regained his health; and in the course of the summer he had an interview with Miss Bosanquet, at Cross Hall, Yorkshire, which led to marriage in November, and both arrived at Madeley in January, 1782. With good nursing his health returned, so that he was able to write to Mr. Wesley in December of that year, to say—“I have strength enough to do my parish work without the help of a curate.” This was one of those years of bad harvests and scarcity of provisions, which usually led to disturbances, and we find him in the same letter saying:—“The colliers began to rise in this neighbourhood: happily, the cockatrice’s egg was crushed before the

serpent came out. However, I got many a hearty curse from the colliers for the plain words I spoke on the occasion.”

Acting upon the proposals of Mrs. Darby, he established a Sunday-school in Madeley Wood. These proposals were:—

“I.—It is proposed that Sunday-schools be set up in this parish for such children as are employed all the week, and for those whose education has been hitherto totally neglected.

“II.—That the children admitted into these be taught reading, writing, and the principles of religion.

“III.—That there be a school for boys, and another for girls, in Madeley, Madeley-Wood, and Coalbrook-Dale: six in all.

“IV.—That a subscription be opened, to pay each Teacher one shilling per Sunday, and to buy tables, forms, books, pens, and ink.

“V.—That two Treasurers be appointed to ask and receive the contributions of the subscribers.

“VI.—That whosoever subscribes one guinea a year shall be a Governor.

“VII.—That three or four Inspectors be appointed, who are to visit the schools once a week, to see that the children attend regularly, and the masters do their duty.

“VIII.—That a book be provided for setting down all receipts and expenses; and another for the names of the Teachers and the scholars.

“IX.—That the schools be solemnly visited once or twice a year; and a premium given to the children that have made the greatest improvement.”

Three hundred children were soon gathered together whom Mr. Fletcher took every opportunity of instructing, by regular meetings, which he attended with the utmost diligence. In order to encourage the children he gave them little hymn-books, pointing them to some friend or neighbour, who would teach them the hymns and instruct them to sing. They were

greatly taken with this new employment, insomuch that it is said many would scarce allow themselves time to eat or sleep, for the desire they had of learning their lessons. At every meeting, after inquiring who had made the greatest proficiency, he distinguished them by some little reward. He also urged upon his more wealthy parishioners the importance of establishing such schools at Coalbrookdale and Madeley.

#### **MR. FLETCHER AS HEAD OF LADY HUNTINGDON'S COLLEGE.**

Mr. Fletcher was for some time at the head of a college founded by the Countess of Huntingdon for young men preparing for the ministry, at Trevecca, in South Wales. His attachment to his flock at Madeley, however, prevented him paying more than occasional visits and giving advice with regard to the appointment of masters, and the admission or exclusion of students. Mr. Benson, one of the tutors, tells us that he here gave numberless proofs of his amiable disposition. To mention but one instance, two of the students were bitterly prejudiced against each other, and he took them into a room by themselves, reasoned with them, wept over them, and at last prevailed. Their hearts were broken; they were melted down; they fell upon each others' necks and wept aloud.

The long journeys on horseback, in all seasons and in all weathers, from Madeley to Trevecca and back again to Madeley, however, told upon his constitution, and much impaired his health.

#### **MR. FLETCHER AS A CONTROVERSIALIST.**

Mr. Fletcher's connection with Trevecca College terminated in his resigning, in consequence of a dispute which arose out of certain minutes by the Wesleyan Conference in opposition to the doctrine of predestination, first brought into prominence by the great Geneva reformer, Calvin. Lady Huntingdon invited all in connection with the college to write their sentiments respecting them, adding a strong hint that all who did not repudiate the views contained in Mr. Wesley's minutes must prepare to quit. Mr. Fletcher wrote strongly in favour of his friend Wesley, and resigned his appointment. These expressions of his views brought him in opposition to his patrons, the Hills, two of whom, Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) and Rowland, used their pens in defence of Mr. Fletcher's

opponent, a brother-clergyman named Toplady, then the great champion of Calvinism. Mr. Wesley, who had laid the train which led to the explosion, either from want of time or inclination to remain on the field, left two of his preachers to sustain the shock, and these proving unequal to the task, Mr. Fletcher was left to fight the battle single-handed. This he did in a series of cleverly-written works, entitled "Checks to Antinomianism," in speaking of one of which in a letter to a friend, dated March 20, 1774:, he says:—"I do not repent of my having engaged in this controversy; for though I doubt my little publication cannot reclaim those who are confirmed in believing the lie of the day, yet it may here and there stop one from swallowing it all, or at least from swallowing it so deeply." Two years after he says—"I have almost run my race of scribbling; and I have preached as much as I could, though to little purpose; but I must not complain. If one person has received good by my ten years' labour it is an honour for which I cannot be too thankful, if my mind were as low as it should be."

A not very friendly critic, the *Christian Observer*, speaking some time afterwards of this discussion, says:—

"We have no hesitation in saying that we believe Mr. Fletcher's motives in writing them to have been pure and upright. We also think that in his manner of conducting the controversy, now happily almost forgotten, he had decidedly the advantage of his antagonists. He was an acute and animated disputant; a brilliant imagination rendered his argumentation imposing, splendid, and dazzling, while it enabled him to paint the doctrines of his adversaries in the darkest and most odious colours; and whatever may have been the merits of the cause which he defended,—into these we do not mean to enter,—he was undoubtedly superior in talents and learning to all his opponents."

Mr. Wesley says:—"One knows not which to admire most, the *purity* of the language (such as scarce any foreigner wrote before); the *strength* and *clearness* of the argument; or the *mildness* and *sweetness* of the spirit that breathes throughout the whole." Those who read these discussions in the present day feel surprised at the warmth and bitterness exhibited by the antagonists, but allowance must be made for the temper of the times.

#### **MR. FLETCHER AS A POLITICIAN.**

As in the religious controversy, so in the political dispute which arose out of the American War of Independence, Mr. Fletcher came forth as the champion of his friend Mr. Wesley, who having provoked his antagonists, deputed the task of answering them to the Madeley vicar, and the friends of both must now, we imagine, regret that either of them took up their pens in such a cause. It is not too much to say that both entered the lists, if not on the side of the oppressor, at any rate as against that spirit of liberty for which a Washington and a Franklin fought, and which had been implanted on New England soil by colonists to whom a Stuart king had made the old country unsafe longer to live in. The mistake was perhaps the result of that harsh-drawn line by which intensely devout minds like those of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher are apt to separate things religious and political, and which not unfrequently leads to an insensibility to public injustice and crime, even, strangely disproportioned to the zeal displayed in behalf of some dogmatic and invisible subtleties of creed. Dr. Arnold and others since Mr. Fletcher's day have done much to correct the notion which removes religion and God from politics, and which sets up in sharp opposition the earthly and heavenly relations of men.

#### **MR. FLETCHER AS A DESCRIPTIVE WRITER.**

It may afford a fair specimen of Mr. Fletcher's dispassionate descriptive style of writing, and at the same time serve to commemorate a notable phenomenon much talked of at that time, to quote his account of the great landslip at the Birches, just on the borders of the parishes of Madeley and Buildwas.

“When I went to the spot,” says Mr. Fletcher, “the first thing that struck me was the destruction of the little bridge that separated the parish of Madeley from that of Buildwas, and the total disappearing of the turnpike road to Buildwas bridge, instead of which nothing presented itself to my view but a confused heap of bushes, and huge clods of earth tumbled one over another. The river also wore a different aspect; it was shallow, turbid, noisy, boisterous, and came down from a different point. Whether I considered the water or the land the scene appeared to me entirely new, and as I could not fancy myself in another part of the country, I concluded that the God of

nature had shaken his providential iron rod over the subverted spot before me. Following the track made by a great number of spectators, who came already from the neighbouring parishes, I climbed over the ruins and came to a field well grown with rye-grass, where the ground was greatly cracked in several places, and where large turfs, some entirely, others half turned up exhibited the appearance of straight or crooked furrows, imperfectly formed by a plough drawn at a venture. Getting from that field over the hedge, into a part of the road which was yet visible, I found it raised in one place, sunk in another, concave in a third, hanging on one side in a fourth, and contracted as if some uncommon force had pressed the two hedges together. But the higher part of it surprised me most, and brought directly to my remembrance those places of mount Vesuvius where the solid stony lava has been strongly marked by repeated earthquakes, for the hard-beaten gravel that formed the surface of the road was broken every way into huge masses, partly detached from each other, with deep apertures between them exactly like the shattered lava. This striking likeness of circumstances made me conclude that the similar effect might proceed from the same cause, namely, a strong convulsion on the surface if not in the bowels of the earth. Going a little farther towards Buildwas I found that the road was again totally lost for a considerable space, having been overturned, absorbed, or tumbled with the hedges' that bounded it to a considerable distance towards the river; this part of the desolation appeared then to me inexpressibly dreadful. Between a shattered field and the river there was on that morning a bank on which besides a great deal of underwood grew twenty fine large oaks, this wood shot with such violence into the Severn before it that it forced the water in great columns a considerable height, like mighty fountains, and gave the overflowing river a retrograde motion. This is not the only accident that happened to the Severn; for near the Grove the channel which was chiefly of a soft blue rock burst in ten thousand pieces, and rose perpendicularly about ten yards, heaving up the immense quantity of water and the shoals of fishes that were therein. Among the rubbish at the bottom of the river, which was very deep in that place, there were one or two huge stones and a large piece of timber, or an oak tree, which from time immemorial had lain partly buried in the mud, I suppose in consequence of some flood; the stones

and tree were thrown up as if they had been only a pebble and a stick, and are now at some distance from the river, many feet higher than the surface of it. Ascending from the ruins of the road I came to those of a barn, which after travelling many yards towards the river had been absorbed in a chasm where the shattered roof was yet visible. Next to these remains of the barn, and partly parallel with the river, was a long hedge which had been torn from a part of it yet adjoining the garden hedge, and had been removed above forty yards downward together with some large trees that were in it and the land that it enclosed. The tossing, tearing, and shifting of so many acres of land below, was attended with the formation of stupendous chasms above. At some distance above, near the wood which crowns that desolated spot, another chasm, or rather a complication of chasms excited my admiration; it is an assemblage of chasms, one of which that seems to terminate the desolation to the north-east, runs some hundred yards towards the river and Madeley Wood; it looked like the deep channel of some great serpentine river dried up, whose little islands, fords, and hollows appear without a watery veil. This long chasm at the top seems to be made up of two or three that run into each other, and their conjunction when it is viewed from a particular point exhibits the appearance of a ruined fortress whose ramparts have been blown up by mines that have done dreadful execution, and yet have spared here and there a pyramid of earth, or a shattered tower by which the spectators can judge of the nature and solidity of the demolished bulwark. Fortunately there was on the devoted spot but one house, inhabited by two poor countrymen and their families; it stands yet, though it has removed about a yard from its former situation. The morning in which the desolation happened, Samuel Wilcocks, one of those countrymen, got up about four o'clock, and opening the window to see if the weather was fair he took notice of a small crack in the earth about four or five inches wide, and observed the above mentioned field of corn heaving up and rolling about like the waves of the sea; the trees by the motion of the ground waved also, as if they had been blown with the wind, though the air was calm and serene; the river Severn, which for some days had overflowed its banks, was also very much agitated and seemed to turn back to its source. The man being astonished at such a sight, rubbed his eyes, supposing himself not quite awake, and being

soon convinced that destruction stalked about he alarmed his wife, and taking the children in their arms they went out of the house as fast as they could, accompanied by the other man and his wife. A kind Providence directed their flight, for instead of running eastward across the fields that were just going to be overthrown, they fled westward into a wood that had little share in the destruction. When they were about twenty yards from the house they perceived a great crack run very quick up the ground from the river; immediately the land behind them with the trees and hedges moved towards the Severn with great swiftness and an uncommon noise, which Samuel Wilcocks compared to a large flock of sheep running swiftly by him. It was then chiefly that desolation expanded her wings over the devoted spot and the Birches saw a momentary representation of a partial chaos! then nature seemed to have forgotten her laws: trees became itinerant!—those that were at a distance from the river advanced towards it, while the submerged oak broke out of its watery confinements and by rising many feet recovered a place on dry land; the solid road was swept away as its dust had been on a stormy day;—then probably the rocky bottom of the Severn emerged, pushing towards heaven astonished shoals of fishes and hogsheads of water innumerable;—the wood like an embattled body of vegetable combatants stormed the bed of the overflowing river, and triumphantly waved its green colours over its recoiling flood;—fields became moveable,—nay, they fled when none pursued, and as they fled they rent the green carpets that covered them in a thousand pieces;—in a word, dry land exhibited the dreadful appearance of a sea-storm. Solid earth as if it had acquired the fluidity of water tossed itself into massy waves, which rose or sunk at the beck of him who raised the tempest; and what is most astonishing, the stupendous hollow of one of those waves ran for nearly a quarter of a mile through rocks and a stony soil with as much ease as if dry earth, stones, and rocks had been a part of the liquid element. Soon after the river was stopt, Samuel Cookson, a farmer who lives a quarter of a mile below the Birches, on the same side of the river, was much terrified by a dust of wind that beat against his windows as if shot had been thrown against it, but his fright greatly increased when getting up to see if the flood that was over his ground had abated he perceived that all the water was from his fields, and that scarce any remained in

the Severn. He called up his family, ran to the river, and finding that the river was dammed up, he made the best of his way to alarm the inhabitants of Buildwas, the next village above, which he supposed would soon be under water. He was happily mistaken, providence just prepared a way for their escape; the Severn, notwithstanding a considerable flood which at that time rendered it doubly rapid and powerful, having met with two dreadful shocks, the one from her rising bed and the other from the intruding wood, could do nothing but foam and turn back with impetuosity. The ascending and descending streams conflicted about Buildwas bridge; the river sensibly rose for some miles back, and continued rising till just as it was near entering the houses at Buildwas it got a vent through the fields on the right, and after spreading far and near over them collected all its might to assault its powerful aggressor, I mean the Grove, that had so unexpectedly turned it out of the bed which it had enjoyed for countless ages. Sharp was the attack, but the resistance was yet more vigorous, and the Severn, repelled again and again, was obliged to seek its old empty bed, by going the shortest way to the right, and the moment it found it again it precipitated therein with a dreadful roar, and for a time formed a considerable cataract with inconceivable fury, as if it wanted to be avenged on the first thing that came in its way, began to tear and wash away a fine rich meadow opposite to the Grove, and there in a few hours worked itself a new channel about three hundred yards long, through which a barge from Shrewsbury ventured three or four days after, all wonder at the strangement of the overthrow.”

Mr. Fletcher added:—“My employment and taste leading me more to search out the mysteries of heaven than to scrutinize the phenomena of the earth, and to point at the wonders of grace rather than those of nature; I leave the decision of the question about the slip and the earthquake to some abler philosopher.”

The phenomenon was nothing more nor less than a landslip, such as has occurred time after time alongside the banks of the Severn, only upon a larger scale than usual; and Mr. Fletcher, as was his wont, turned the event to account by addressing the large number who had assembled to witness what had taken place, in words of earnest and solemn import, and by preaching again to them on the same spot the following evening.

## MR. FLETCHER IN THE PULPIT.

In person Mr. Fletcher was above the middle stature. He had a pleasing face, a penetrating eye, and a slightly aquiline nose. His manners were courteous and graceful, and he displayed a dignity and humility of character rarely associated in the same person. In the pulpit, it is said, the liveliest fancy could not frame for any of the ancient saints an aspect more venerable or apostolic.

Of Mr. Fletcher's preaching, the author of a letter quoted by Mr. Gilpin says:—

“I would rather have heard one sermon from Mr. Fletcher, *viva voce*, than read a volume of his works. His words were clothed with power, and entered with effect. His writings are arrayed in all the garb of human literature. But his living word soared an eagle's flight above humanity. He basked in the sun, carried his young ones on his wings, and seized the prey, for his Master. In short, his preaching was apostolic; while his writings, tho' enlightened, are but human.”

His aim was not to captivate his hearers by artificial means, but by simple and sincere scriptural arguments; and his language, gesture, voice, and pleasing expression of countenance aided much in fixing the attention and affecting the heart. Many walked long distances and brought their dinners with them, that they might attend morning and afternoon services; and deep indentations in the stone pillars of the vicarage gate exist to show where some sharpened their knives. He sometimes provided dinners for them in his own house.

The clerk at one of the churches Mr. Fletcher served for some time sought to turn his popularity to account by charging for admission to all not belonging to the parish, to which practice Mr. Fletcher soon put an end upon its coming to his knowledge, and compelled him to return the money.

Mr. Fletcher preached *extempore*, but generally used notes, or heads of the divisions and subdivisions of his subjects. We have eight of these (given us by Miss Tooth, Mrs. Fletcher's adopted daughter). They are very neatly written, each one occupying a space of about seven inches by five. In preaching at Bristol on one occasion he said:—

“One Sunday when I had done reading prayers at Madeley, I went up into the pulpit, intending to preach a sermon, which I had prepared for that purpose. But my mind was so confused that I could not recollect either my text or any part of my sermon. I was afraid I should be obliged to come down without saying anything. But having recollected myself a little, I thought I would say something on the first lesson, which was the third chapter of Daniel, containing the account of the three children cast into the fiery furnace: I found in doing so such an extraordinary assistance from God, and such a peculiar enlargement of the heart, that I supposed there must be some peculiar cause for it. I therefore desired, if any of the congregation found anything particular, they would acquaint me with it in the ensuing week.

“In consequence of this, the Wednesday after, a woman came and gave me the following account: ‘I have been for some time much concerned about my soul. I have attended the church at all opportunities, and have spent much time in private prayer. At this my husband (who is a baker) has been exceedingly enraged, and threatened me severely what he would do if I did not leave off going to John Fletcher’s church: yea, if I dared to go to any more religious meetings whatsoever. When I told him I could not, in conscience, refrain from going at least to our parish church, he grew quite outrageous, and swore dreadfully if I went any more he would cut my throat as soon as I came home. This made me cry mightily to God that He would support me in the trying hour. And though I did not feel any great degree of comfort, yet having a sure confidence in God, I determined to go on in my duty, and leave the event to Him. Last Sunday, after many struggles with the devil and my own heart, I came down stairs ready for church. My husband asked me whether I was resolved to go thither. I told him I was. ‘Well then,’ said he, ‘I shall not (as I intended) cut your throat, but I will heat the oven, and throw you into it the moment you come home.’ Notwithstanding this threatening, which he enforced with many bitter oaths, I went to church, praying all the way that God would strengthen me to suffer whatever might befall me. While you were speaking of the three children whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the burning fiery furnace, I found it all belonged to *me*, and God

applied every word to my heart. And when the sermon was ended I thought if I had a thousand lives I could lay them all down for God. I felt my whole soul so filled with His love that I hastened home, fully determined to give myself to whatsoever God pleased: nothing doubting but that either He would take me to heaven if He suffered me to be burnt to death, or that He would some way or other deliver me, even as He did his three *servants that trusted in Him*. When I got almost to our own door I saw the flames issuing out of the mouth of the oven; and I expected nothing else but that I should be thrown into it immediately. I felt my heart rejoice that, if it were so, the will of the Lord would be done. I opened the door, and to my utter astonishment saw my husband upon his knees, wrestling with God in prayer for the forgiveness of his sins. He caught me in his arms, earnestly begging my pardon, and has continued diligently seeking God ever since.’

“I now know why my sermon was taken from me—namely, that God might thus magnify His mercy.”

#### **MR. FLETCHER’S CHARITY AND LOVE OF THE POOR.**

Mr. Fletcher’s income from his living was not more on an average, Mrs. Fletcher says, than £100 per annum; and many of the wealthy people of the Dale objected to pay tythe, which he equally objected to enforce.

“But whether he had less or more, it was the same thing upon his own account (Mrs. Fletcher remarks): as he had no other use for it, after frugally supplying his own wants and the wants of those dependent on him, but to spread the gospel and assist the poor. And he frequently said he was never happier than when he had given away the last penny he had in the house. If at any time I had gold in my drawers it seemed to afford him no comfort. But if he could find a handful of small silver when he was going out to see the sick he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a pan of hid treasure. He was never better pleased with my employment than when he had set me to prepare food or physic for the poor. He was hardly able to relish his dinner if some sick neighbour had not a part of it; and sometimes when any one of them was in want I could not keep the linen in his drawers. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people

who came from a distance to hear the word; and his house as well as his heart was devoted to their convenience. To relieve them that were afflicted in body or mind was the delight of his heart. Once a poor man who feared God, being brought into great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen shelves, saying—'This will help *you*, and I can do without it: a wooden trencher will serve *me* just as well.' In epidemic and contagious distempers, when the neighbours were afraid to nurse the sick, he has gone from house to house, seeking some that were willing to undertake that office. And when none could be found he has offered his service, to sit up with them himself. But this was at his first coming to Madeley. At present there is in many (and has been for many years) a most ready mind to visit and relieve the distressed.

“He thoroughly complied with that advice—

‘Give to all something: to a good poor man,  
Till thou change hands, and be where he began.’

“I have heard him say that when he lived alone in his house the tears have come into his eyes when five or six insignificant letters have been brought him, at three or four pence a-piece; and perhaps he had only a single shilling in the house to distribute among the poor to whom he was going. He frequently said to me—'O, Polly, can we not do without beer? Let us drink water, and eat less meat. Let our necessities give way to the extremities of the poor.’

“But with all his generosity and charity he was strictly careful to follow the advice of the apostle, *Owe no man any thing*. He contracted no debt. While he gave all he had he made it a rule to pay ready-money for everything, believing this was the best way to keep the mind unencumbered and free from care. Meanwhile his substance, his time, his strength, his life, were devoted to the service of the poor. And last of all he gave *me* to them. For when we were married he asked me solemnly ‘whether I was willing to marry his parish?’ And the first time he led me among his people in this place he said—‘I have not married this wife only for myself, but for *you*. I asked her of the Lord for *your* comfort as well as my own.’”

## MR. FLETCHER'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Mr. Fletcher's wish was to live as he would be likely to wish he had lived when he came to die, a holy life rather than a triumphant death being his main object. A Godly life was the way to a happy death, he stated in one of his sermons; nevertheless, he continued, this rule like many others might have exceptions, as the partial or entire derangement of the human machine, or the self-chastisement of a tender conscience on account of former infidelities might determine.

During the ravages of an infectious fever in the parish he reproved a portion of his flock who from fear of death refrained from rendering assistance to the sick and the dying. "Use every precaution prudence can suggest," he said, "and meekly but confidently commit yourselves to the gracious Power in whom you live, and then without fear stand firm to the calls of duty. . . . For myself, whenever I shall have numbered the days He may appoint, I shall deem it an additional honour and blessing if He should appoint me to meet my death while I am engaged in the kind offices of humanity and mercy."

Mr. Fletcher may be said to have had his wish, for he was engaged in visiting the sick and duties of a like kind on the Thursday, (August 4, 1785), from three in the afternoon till nine at night, when on returning home he found he had taken cold. On Friday and Saturday he suffered from fever, and on Sunday he began the service apparently with his usual strength; but he soon faltered. The congregation was alarmed, and Mrs. Fletcher earnestly entreated him to discontinue a task clearly beyond his strength. He recovered on the windows being opened, and preached with remarkable energy and effect. "As soon as he had finished his sermon," one of his biographers says, "he walked to the communion-table. Here the same affecting scene was renewed with additional solemnity. Tears started from every eye and sighs escaped from every breast, while his people beheld their minister offering up the last languid remains of a life that had been lavishly spent in their service. In going through this last part of his duty he was frequently exhausted, but his spiritual vigour triumphed over his bodily weakness. At length, after having struggled through a service of some hours' continuance, he was supported, with blessings in his mouth, from the altar to his chamber, where he lay some time in a swoon, and from whence

he never walked into the world again. Mr. Fletcher's friends entered so entirely into his devotional feelings that, they were spared the bitter pang which they would otherwise have experienced from the reflection that these imprudent exertions exasperated his disorder, and proved an acceleration of his death."

He lingered till the following Sunday, at times greatly edifying his friends with accounts of his experience. Mr. Cox says:—

"After evening service several of the poor who came from a distance, and were usually entertained under his roof, lingered about the house, and at length expressed an earnest desire to be permitted once more to behold their expiring pastor. Their request was granted. The door of his chamber was set open, directly opposite to which he was sitting upright in bed, unaltered in his appearance; and as they slowly passed along the gallery, one by one, they paused at the door, with a look of mingled supplication and anguish.

"A few hours after this affecting scene he breathed his last, without a struggle or a groan. At the moment of his departure Mrs. Fletcher was kneeling by his side; a domestic, who had attended him with uncommon assiduity, was seated at his head; and his respected friend, Mr. Gilpin, was sorrowfully standing near his feet. Uncertain whether he had actually expired, they pressed near, and hung over his bed in the attitude of listening attention. His lips had ceased to move, and his head was gently sinking upon his bosom. They stretched out their hands: but his warfare was accomplished, and his happy spirit had taken its everlasting flight. Such was the end of this eminently holy and laborious servant of God, who entered into rest on the evening of Sunday, August 14, 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

"Mr. Fletcher had frequently expressed an earnest desire that he might be buried in the plainest manner possible. 'Let there be no pomp,' he would say, 'no expense, no ceremony, at my funeral. The coffin of the parish poor will suit me best.' To these instructions his affectionate widow religiously adhered. A plain oak coffin, with a brass plate, conveyed his honoured remains to their long home, without a pall, pall-bearers, scarf, or hat-band. But two thousand of his parishioners

followed him to the grave, who manifested by all the signs of unaffected sorrow their affliction for their irreparable loss.”

### **TESTIMONIES OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER.**

Posthumous literature usually carries little weight. It often assumes virtues to which the deceased were strangers, and not unfrequently libels the dead. The simple epitaph on the plain iron plate which covers Mr. Fletcher’s remains in the Madeley churchyard is not of this class, but is so modest an expression of facts that it requires to be read by the light which the records of contemporaries throw upon it, and which will be found to be more on a level with the merits and virtues of the deceased.

The *Shrewsbury Chronicle* of August, 1785, in recording the death of Mr. Fletcher had the following:—

“On the 14th instant, departed this life, the Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, in this county, to the inexpressible grief and concern of his parishioners, and of all who had the happiness of knowing him. If we speak of him as a man, and a gentleman, he was possessed of every virtue and every accomplishment, which adorns and dignifies human nature. If we attempt to speak of him as a Minister of the Gospel, it will be extremely difficult to give the world a just idea of *this great Character*. His deep learning, his exalted piety, his never-ceasing labours to discharge the important duties of his function, together with the abilities and good effect with which he discharged those duties are best known, and will never be forgotten, in that vineyard in which he laboured. His charity, his universal benevolence, his meekness, and exemplary goodness, are scarcely equalled amongst the sons of men. Anxious, to the last moment of his life, to discharge the sacred duties of his office, he performed the service of the church, and administered the holy sacrament to upwards of two hundred communicants, the Sunday preceding his death, confiding in that Almighty Power, which had given him life, and resigning that life into the hands of Him who gave it, with that composure of mind, and those joyful hopes of a happy resurrection, which ever accompany the last moments of the just.”

“Fletcher is a seraph who burns with the ardour of divine love; and spurning the fetters of mortality, he almost habitually seems to have anticipated the rapture of the beatific vision.”—*Robert Hall*.

“A pattern of holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century.”—*Minutes of Wesleyan Conference, 7, 183*.

“I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years. I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do any improper action. So unblamable a character, in every respect, I have not found, and I scarce expect to find such another on this side of eternity.”—*John Wesley*.

“Fletcher, I conceive to be the most holy man who has been upon earth since the apostolic age.”—*Dr. Dixon*.

“No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervid piety, or more perfect charity; no Church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister.”—*Robert Southey*.

“He was a saint, a saint such as the Church of every age has produced a few samples, as unearthly a being as could tread the earth at all.”—*Isaac Taylor*.

“Almost an angel in human flesh, prayer, praise, love, and zeal were the element in which he lived. His one employment was to call, entreat, and urge others to ascend with him to the glorious Source of being and blessedness.”—*Joseph Benson*.

The following is a copy of the entry in the parish register:—

“John Fletcher, clerk, died on Sunday evening, August 14th, 1785. He was one of the most apostolic men of the age in which he lived. His abilities were extraordinary, and his labours unparalleled. He was a burning and shining light, and as his life had been a common blessing to the inhabitants of this parish, so the death of this great man was lamented by them as a common and irreparable loss. This little testimony was inserted by one who sincerely loved and honoured him. Joshua Gilpin, vicar of Wrockwardine.”

## EPITAPH ON GRAVESTONE.

“Here lies the Body of  
the REV. JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLECHERE,  
Vicar of Madeley.

He was born at Nyon, in Switzerland,  
September 12th, MDCCXXIX,  
and finished his Course in this Village,  
August 14th, MDCCLXXXV, where his  
unexampled labours will be long remembered.

He exercised his Ministry for the Space  
of Twenty five Years in this Parish,  
with uncommon Zeal and Ability.  
Many believed his Report and became his Joy  
and Crown of Rejoicing:

While others constrained him to take up  
the Lamentation of the Prophet,  
‘All the Day long have I stretched out my Hands  
unto a disobedient and gainsaying People;  
yet surely my Judgment is with the Lord,  
and my Work with my God.  
(He being dead yet speaketh.)’”

## MRS. FLETCHER,

OF MADELEY.

Long before the question of woman's mission came to be debated, there were useful and pious women who quite came up to the standard modern champions of the sex have raised. History brings before us the names of many whose thoughts and doings had a vital influence upon the society in the midst of which they moved. The fidelity, zeal, and usefulness of some appear as a silver-thread woven into the past, showing that there is no sex in piety or in intellect. When the down trodden vine of Christianity had to be raised, tended, and made to entwine around the sceptre of the Cæsars, there were “fellow-helpers” of the apostles, “honourable women, not a few,” who distinguished themselves. So in the days of the Wesleys and Fletcher, there were women who greatly aided in the work of christian revival. Mrs.

Fletcher was one of these. She was born at Forest House, once the residence of the Earl of Norwich, on the 1st September, 1739. The Cedars, another fine old mansion in Leytonstone, built by Charles II., was her property. She was therefore a Lady by birth and fortune; and she chose to be useful in her day and generation. She was the subject of early religious impressions, which gave tone and character to her life. The first use she made of her wealth and influence upon coming into possession of her property was to convert the spacious building she inherited into an Orphanage, and her income was devoted to the support of this and similar institutions. She held religious meetings, and exhorted among the Wesleyans, of which body she became a member. She heard frequently of Mr. Fletcher, and Mr. Fletcher of her, through the Wesleys; and a presentiment seems to have been felt by each that they were designed for each other. Twenty-six years however elapsed before proposals were made or an intimacy sprung up. They were married on the 12th of November, 1781, at Batley church, near Cross Hall, at that time the residence of Miss Bosanquet, and in January, 1782 she says in one of her letters:—

“On January 2nd, 1782, we set out for Madeley. But O! where shall I begin my song of praise! What a turn is there in all my affairs! What a depth of sorrow, distress, and perplexity, am I delivered from! How shall I find language to express the goodness of the Lord! Not one of the good things have failed me of all the Lord my God hath spoken. Now I know no want but that of more grace. I have such a husband as is in everything suited to me. He bears with all my faults and failings, in a manner that continually reminds me of that word, ‘Love your wives as Christ loved the church.’ His constant endeavour is to make me happy; his strongest desire, my spiritual growth. He is, in every sense of the word, the man my highest reason chooses to obey. I am also happy in a servant, whom I took from the side of her mother’s coffin, when she was four years old. She loves us as if we were her parents, and is also truly devoted to God.”

Married life however with them was a short one. The seeds of disease which had previously shewn themselves became in course of time more fully developed, and in three years and nine months she was left a widow. She survived her husband 30 years; and was permitted to continue to live at

the vicarage; and she frequently held meetings at the Rough Park, at Coalbrookdale, Madeley, and Madeley Wood; having first taken counsel of Mr. Wesley, who approved of the steps she had taken.

“The Old Barn” was one of the places long associated with her labours and her name, and was a place long endeared to Mr. Wesley’s early ministers, who used it for preaching and exhortation. It was a heavy half-timbered building, in the fashion of former times, a lithograph representation of which by a friend of ours, Mr. Philip Ballard, may be seen in the houses of many of the inhabitants of Madeley.

Sarah Lawrence, whom Mr. Fletcher took as a child from the side of her mother’s coffin, and adopted as a daughter, was a faithful friend, and of considerable assistance in visiting and conversing with the sick; but she died some years before Mrs. Fletcher, who built a chapel at Coalport to her memory, in consequence of a dream Miss Lawrence had had, that great good would result from the erection of a place of worship there. The lease, we believe, has now expired.

Miss Tooth, another adopted daughter, survived Mrs. Fletcher, and for many years continued the Sunday morning meetings in a large upper room of her house, which is now converted into a public house. The Rev. George Perks who now holds a distinguished position among the Wesleyans, the present writer, and many others, attended these meetings. Miss Tooth took care that they did not interfere with the services of the Established church, which she set the example of attending punctually. She usually read one of Mrs. Fletcher’s papers, such as she had formerly read herself at her meetings. Speaking of Mrs. Fletcher, soon after her death Miss Tooth said:

“Her whole life was one of self-sacrificing endeavour to do good to the souls and bodies of men. She lived not for herself but for others. She was one of a thousand, as of mercy, so of economy; always sparing of expense upon herself, that she might have more to give to ‘the household of faith.’ She would often say, ‘God’s receivers upon earth are Christ’s Church and His poor.’ When I have proposed the purchasing of some article of clothing for her, she would ask, ‘Is it quite necessary? If not do not buy it: it will be much better to give the money to some of our poor neighbours than to lay it out upon me.’

Nor was this once only; it was invariably her conduct; and with great truth it might be constantly said of her also, that

““What her charity impairs,  
She saves by prudence in affairs.’

“She was remarkably exact in setting down every penny she expended. She kept four different accounts, in which all she spent was included. These four were the house, sundries, clothes, and poor. We have often at the end of the year been astonished to find the house expenses so small, considering how many had shared with us. At such times she has said, ‘It is the Lord who has blessed our bread and water.’”

### **RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF MADELEY IN MR. AND MRS. FLETCHER’S DAY.**

Having given sketches of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher at some length, we now proceed to notice the religious aspect of Madeley at that period. In order to do this more fully we notice, first, that Mr. Fletcher during the three years which elapsed between his ordination and presentation to the living at Madeley, in 1760, occasionally visited the parish and officiated for Mr. Chambers, the then vicar, as his curate. He was therefore acquainted with the nature of the charge he was about to undertake, and with the character of the people among whom he was about to labour, a tolerable estimate of which may be gleaned from the description given by one of Mr. Fletcher’s biographers, the Rev. J. Benson, who says:—

“Celebrated for the extensive works carried on within its limits, Madeley was remarkable for little else than the ignorance and profaneness of its inhabitants, among whom respect to man was as rarely to be observed, as piety towards God. In this benighted place the Sabbath was openly profaned, and the most holy things contemptuously trampled under foot; even the restraints of decency were violently broken through, and the external form of religion held up as a subject of ridicule. This general description of the inhabitants of Madeley, must not, however, be indiscriminately applied to every individual among them: exceptions there were to this prevailing

character, but they were comparatively few indeed. Such was the place where Mr. Fletcher was called to stand forth, as a preacher of righteousness, and in which he appeared, for the space of five-and-twenty years as a burning and shining light.”

How he laboured is best described by the same writer, who says:—

“Not content with discharging the stated duties of the Sabbath, he counted that day as lost, in which he was not actually employed in the service of the church. As often as a small congregation could be collected, which was usually every evening, he joyfully proclaimed to them the acceptable year of the Lord, whether it were in the place set apart for public worship, in a private house, or in the open air. And, on these occasions, the affectionate and fervent manner in which he addressed his hearers, was an affecting proof of the interest he took in their spiritual concerns. As the varying circumstances of his people required, he assumed a different appearance among them: at one season he would open his mouth in blessings: and, at another, he would appear, like his Lord amid the buyers and sellers, with the lash of righteous severity in his hand. But, in whatever way he exercised his ministry, it was evident that his labours were influenced by love, and tended immediately, either to the extirpation of sin, or the increase of holiness.”

And Mr. Wesley, speaking of his friend’s conduct and labours to spread the truth and to repress vice in every possible way, says:—

“Those sinners, who endeavoured to hide themselves from him, he pursued to every corner of his parish: by all sorts of means, public and private, early and late, in season and out of season, entreating and warning them to flee from the wrath to come. Some made it an excuse for not attending the church service on a Sunday morning, that they could not awake early enough to get their families ready. He provided for this also. Taking a bell in his hand, he set out every Sunday for some months, at five in the morning, and went round the most distant parts of the parish, inviting all the inhabitants to the house of God.”

So stubborn and unyielding were the materials, that for some time he saw so little fruit of his labours that he tells us he was more than once in doubt, whether he had not mistaken his place, and that he was violently, as he tells Mr. Charles Wesley, tempted to quit the place. After a little time his church became crowded; excitement then died away, and strong opposition sprang up; but there was an energy about his preaching and exhortations which was irresistible, and he succeeded in his work. The change effected in the whole tone and character, of thought and feeling among the inhabitants was obvious, and perceptible to the most prejudiced. That a life of surpassing purity and self-sacrifice to the highest ends should produce such effects shewed that even low and carnal nature when honestly appealed to is not wholly insensible to true and genuine piety. He laboured and others entered into his labours.

Under the fostering care of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Methodism, planted on ground watered by them, found a congenial soil, on which it has flourished to the present day. As early as May, 1767, as we find from a letter to the Rev. George Whitfield, dated Madeley, Mr. Fletcher had invited Captain Scott, then a great preacher among the Wesleyans, to preach to his congregation, and that he had done so from his horse-block, for Mr. Fletcher adds, that his sermon did more good than a hundred preached by himself from his own pulpit. In this letter we find him inviting Whitfield to follow the Captain's example, and to come down and preach too. Others succeeded, whose ministrations, aided by the meetings of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, meetings which were attended by the piously disposed from the Broseley side of the Severn, from Wellington and neighbouring parishes, raised up a pious and efficient body of men who became prayer leaders, class leaders, local preachers, and centres of societies which spread far and wide. Fortunately, that good man Melville Horne, who succeeded Mr. Fletcher, and who after labouring in Madeley for some years went out to Africa and founded the Mission of Sierra Leone, on being appointed curate after the death of Mr. Fletcher favoured this state of things, which continued for some years, with the sanction of the vicar. Mrs. Fletcher in her Journal, August 3, 1815, says, "I have been joined to the people united to Mr. Wesley for threescore years, and I trust to die amongst them. The life of true religion is amongst them, and the work increases." At the same time she says, "I have always considered myself a member of the church, and so

have the united friends in Madeley.” When Mr. Horne left to go out as a missionary to Africa, the vicar, Mr. Burton, desirous of promoting the same kind of harmony, left it to Mrs. Fletcher to recommend a successor. Writing to the one who succeeded Mr. Horne, she says:—“Those who are religious in the parish, as well as those who attend from a distance, go to hear the Wesleyan ministers, and also attended the Church Services.”

### **RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF MADELEY IN 1777 AND 1877.**

It is, of course, difficult to arrive at strictly accurate statistics by which to determine the complete state of religious feeling at any given time; but taking well ascertained facts for our guide we may at least get an approximate result. The moral ground and receptacle of religious truth upon which Mr. Fletcher had to work was the same as now; but that ground may be, and is, we imagine, in a more favourable condition for the reception of the seed now than it was in Mr. Fletcher’s day: facts also tend to shew that men are less indifferent and supercilious now than then, and that the means of influencing them are vastly increased, probably as a natural consequence whilst the fruits are in proportion. The channel of truth is wider and deeper, and the climate of thought and feeling is more favourable, and although diversities may have increased, there are collateral benign and ameliorating influences in operation, producing mutual reverence for the good and the true, and a growing tolerance of opinion where such diversity exists.

In Mr. Fletcher’s time, Protestantism, as represented by the Church of England, and Catholicism as represented by a small body which does not seem, so far as Madeley itself is concerned to have increased, stood alone, if we except the Friends or Quakers, also small as regards numbers. From the time of the Reformation, a few Catholic families of influence lingered here. They worshipped first in a room fitted up as a Chapel in the house of Mr. Wolfe, who gave shelter to King Charles. Afterwards the Giffards of Chillington, gave some ground on which was erected a house and chapel about the year 1760. Mr. Fletcher in one of his letters mentions the disquietude the erection of this Chapel gave him, and describes it as the new mass-house. The present Church of St. Mary was not built till 1853. It consists of nave, side aisles, and gallery, and will accommodate 500

persons, but if we except those who attend from other parishes we question whether the congregation is greater now than in Mr. Fletcher's time. This however is not to be taken as shewing the state of Catholicism in the neighbourhood, inasmuch as missions have been established from this in Bridgnorth, Shifnal, Wellington, and other places.

On the other hand, the Church of England has made great progress. It has more than kept abreast of the increasing population, whether we consider the accommodation it affords or its efficiency, its activity, or the varied machinery by which it works. Not only has the mother church been enlarged to twice the size of the one in which Mr. Fletcher preached, but two others have been added in other parts of the parish, each of which has become a separate ecclesiastical division. The population of Madeley in the time of Mr. Fletcher may be judged of from the fact that there were 900 families which, upon the usual calculation of five to a family, would give 4,500 inhabitants. In 1801, when the first census was taken, it had only increased to 4,758; and in 1831 to 5,822. In 1841 it was 7,267; in 1857, 8,524, in 1861 it was 9,461; and in 1871 it was 9,475; of which number 4,345, are in the electoral and ecclesiastical division of Madeley. The population therefore of the entire parish has little more than doubled itself during the past century.

In Mr. Fletcher's time, then, if we except the out places then being opened for the convenience of small societies, there was church accommodation only for 500, leaving 4,000 unprovided for. We have now a church capable of holding 1000; and a chapel of Ease at the Aqueduct holding 200; in addition to places of meeting at Lower Madeley, Blissers Hill, Coalport, and the Lloyds.

In addition to this, a church has been erected at Ironbridge capable of holding 900; and one at Coalbrookdale seating 850 persons. We thus get Church accommodation alone for over three thousand, or nearly one third of the population, as against 500 formerly. But the best criterion is the activity and co-operation of workers and helpers, the machinery called into play by those who, having themselves been indoctrinated, come willingly forward to carry on the work of benevolence, education, and religion, and who give evidence to their faith by their works.

At least one hundred more persons than the old church would hold now attend service at 11 a.m. and 300 more than it could have held attend at 6 p.m. A Service is also held on the 1st Sunday in every month at 3-15 p.m. at which children are catechised, and the Sacrament of Baptism administered.

At the Aqueduct Church, which was built in the year 1851, and enlarged in 1864, there is a service every Sunday evening, at which from 150 to 200 persons attend.

### **IRONBRIDGE CHURCH.**

We are not so well informed with regard to the Church at Ironbridge. It was built in 1836, and consists of nave, chancel, and side aisles, with a tower in which is a clock and one bell; it has a fine east window of stained glass, with full length figures of St. James and St. John. It will accommodate about a thousand hearers, but at present the number attending is small. In addition to the cost of the erection, which was defrayed chiefly by local subscriptions, £1000 was contributed towards the endowment by one firm, that of Madeley Wood; the great, or rectorial, tithes have since been added, and the rector receives an income of £250 per annum.

There are Sunday Schools and other institutions but we are without the precise information as to the amount of money raised. The population in the year 1871 was 3,605.

### **COALBROOKDALE.**

A beautiful little Church dedicated to the Holy Trinity was erected here by the munificence of the Darby family, who endowed it, and gave to the Incumbent a handsome house as a residence. It is in the Decorated Gothic style. It consists of nave, chancel, and aisles, and has a handsome tower, with illuminated clock, and a peal of eight fine-toned bells. It will accommodate 850 persons, and is generally well filled.

The number of communicants averages 60. The Sacrament is administered monthly, and on the usual festivals. The offerings for the poor are about

£25 yearly; for the expenses of the Church, somewhere about £2 weekly, i.e., £104 annually. There is a good state of religious feeling.

### WESLEYAN METHODISM.

In Mr. Fletcher's day Wesleyan Methodism was but struggling into existence. Societies were formed at Madeley, Madeley Wood, Coalbrookdale, and other places in adjoining parishes, and Mr. Fletcher, and his curate subsequently, preached there alternately with the preachers of Mr. Wesley. These societies were attached to the Shrewsbury Circuit, and preachers came fortnightly, travelling on horseback. In or about the year 1764 we find him inviting the Rev. A. Mather, then an eminent preacher in Mr. Wesley's connection, and his fellow labourer to call at the Bank, Coalbrookdale, and other places. He adds:—"And I hope, that my stepping, as Providence directs, to any of your places, (leaving to you the management of the Societies,) will be deemed no encroachment. In short, we need not make two parties: I know but *one* heaven below, and that is Jesus's love; let us both go and abide in it, and when we have gathered as many as we can to go with us, too many will still stay behind." May 27, 1766, he says to a friend, "The coming of Mr. Wesley's Preachers into my parish gives me no uneasiness. As I am sensible that every body does better, and of course, is more acceptable than myself, I should be sorry to deprive any one of a blessing; and I rejoice that the work of God goes on by any instrument or in any place."

It was under auspices such as these that the early preachers of Methodism commenced their labours. It had an able lay agency in its local preachers, like William Smith, Samuel Onions, Thomas Owen, Thomas Mollineaux, Richard Williams, and others, with class leaders, like the Smiths, Robertses, Milners, and Joneses, men and women who lived lives of faith and purity, and laid a firm substratum on which to erect the general edifice.

For many years the "Old Barn" and "Miss Tooth's Room" sufficed for the Wesleyans in Madeley. They then erected the building now used as the Infant School by the Church party. This proving too small, they built in 1841, the present place of worship in Court Street, which will hold 800 persons or more. It is calculated that Madeley Wood chapel will hold 900 persons, Coalbrookdale chapel about 400, and Coalport about 200, or 2,200

altogether. The usual number of hearers at these places is over 1,500, and the number of members 300. Collections are made at each chapel for pretty much the same purposes, such as colleges, and schools for training young ministers, ministers sons, and teachers for day schools. For home missions and circuit purposes there is raised altogether £447. In addition to this there is raised for Foreign Missions a further sum of £100; thus making a total of £547.

### **PRIMITIVE METHODISTS.**

The Primitive Methodists established themselves in Madeley about 50 years ago. They have a chapel at Madeley with an attendance upon an average of 220.

Members	53
Sunday School scholars	136
Monies raised for various purposes during the year	£131 19 0
Ironbridge Chapel attendance	150
Members	37
Sunday School scholars	93
Monies raised for various purposes during the year	£50 12 4
Aqueduct Chapel attendance	60
Members	6
Sunday School scholars	43
Monies raised for various purposes during the year	£31 10 7
TOTAL	£211 11 0

### **THE NEW CONNEXION.**

This body established themselves in Madeley about half a century ago, and they have two chapels, one at Madeley and another at Madeley Wood, each

capable of holding 200 hearers. At the Bethesda chapel, Madeley, about 60 attend, and there are 18 members. There is a Sunday School, with 60 scholars and 8 teachers. For Home objects, including the Sunday School, £26 is raised yearly and for Foreign Missions a further sum of £2. TOTAL £28 0 0.

At Zion chapel, Madeley Wood, there is an average attendance of 70, and about 20 members. There is a Sunday School, with about 60 scholars. We are without definite statistics as to the amount of monies raised, which probably amount altogether to £20, or upwards. The Connexion has 8 chapels, nine societies, 25 local preachers, and 136 members.

### **BAPTISTS.**

The Baptists erected a chapel here in 1858 at a cost of £650, which holds 250 persons. There are 30 members, and the congregation averages 100. There is a Sunday School, with 60 children. The sum raised for various objects amounts to £60.

### **CONGREGATIONALISTS.**

The Congregationalists erected a church here in 1874, at a cost of £1,400. It was opened in January 1875, and has an average congregation—Morning, 50; Evening 100. Sunday School 80 on the books. Mothers service 20 attend. Two weekly services; average attendance 30. Amount raised for all purposes in connection with the Church £130.

Besides these well recognised institutions in connection with various religious bodies there are other useful institutions, some of a religious, and others of an educational but unsectarian character, such as Union Prayer Meetings at Ironbridge, the Severn side School, various Literary Societies and Reading Rooms, in connection with which large sums are annually raised; and by means of which at Madeley, and Coalbrookdale more particularly, a large amount of information is disseminated.

### **THE MADELEY WOOD WORKS.**

William Reynolds having at his death left a share in the Madeley Wood works to his nephew, William Anstice (father of the present William Reynolds Anstice) whom he also appointed one of his executors, and by whom, in partnership with William Reynolds's surviving son, the late Joseph Reynolds, the works were carried on until the decease of Mr. Anstice in the year 1850.

Mr. Anstice was a young man, not more than twenty-one, when he succeeded to the management of these works, and although he possessed little practical knowledge gained in connection with this branch of industry, he possessed a mind well stored with knowledge. He was a fair amateur chemist of the school of Dr. Black and his contemporaries, under whom Mr. Reynolds had previously studied, and the friend of the late Sir Humphrey Davy, then a young man, with whom he spent some time with Dr. Beddows, at one time of Shifnal, but then of Bristol, assisting him in a course of experiments he was conducting on pneumatic chemistry and galvanism. He was also a fair amateur geologist, and his early studies led him, on succeeding to the management of the works, to observe, and to apply his knowledge to account. The old hearths and "bears," as accumulations in the blast-furnaces were called, on occasions of renewal, were carefully scrutinized and searched by him for metallic substances and salts not usually known to exist in iron-ores; and we remember him giving us some remarkably fine cubes of titanium, taken from one he had had blown to pieces. He inherited the very fine collection of fossils Mr. Reynolds had collected, and added thereto by encouraging his men to bring anything they found of a rare character in the clay ironstones. Sir R. Murchison, Mr. Buckland, and Mr. Prestwich occasionally came down to Madeley Wood Hall to study this collection, and derived much information. Mr. Buckland pronounced them at that time the finest collection of fossils of the coal-measures in the kingdom, and nearly the whole of the figures found in Mr. Prestwich's paper, prepared with great care and research, on the coalfield, were from specimens in this collection.

In consequence of the mines being exhausted on the Madeley Wood side of the field he had new shafts sunk to the east, the first of importance being the Hills Lane pits. The Halesfield pair of pits followed, and the mines having been thus proved on that side, the idea first suggested by William Reynolds, of removing the works to that place, was acted upon by Mr. William

Anstice, who built his first furnace at Blisser's Hill, in 1832. A second was built in 1840 and a third in 1844.

The offices of the Madeley Wood Works were at the Lloyds, but a land-slip, or series of slips rather, which have been going on for years, bringing down rocks and trees from the high ground, have swept away these, and also some houses and orchards near them. In these offices on one occasion an explosion took place, occasioned by recklessness on the part of a youth entrusted with the task of giving out powder for blasting, candles, &c., for the pits. A lad named Brown had filled a horn of powder and was crossing the office to go to play at marbles, when finding the fire did not burn brightly, he stooped to poke out the ashes with the horn under his arm, and some grains igniting, he was blown a black and apparently lifeless mass against the door, whilst the windows went flying as far as the water-engine. Although shorn of his arms above the elbows, and with only two short stumps remaining, "Stumpy Brown," as the boys still call him, managed to learn to write a good clear hand, became a schoolmaster, a Sunday-school teacher, a preacher, and a capital wood-turner of bedsteads and children's dolls, which at the present moment are in great request in very many towns in the Midland Counties, where they are well known as "John Brown's Dolls." <sup>[175]</sup>

Upon the death of Mr. Anstice he was succeeded by his son John, who, having been brought up under his father, in close proximity to the works, was in every respect well qualified for the task; and to him his partner, Joseph Reynolds, at his death left his shares of the works, and the general residue of his property. John Anstice at once generously transferred to his brother, William Reynolds Anstice, a share in the Madeley Wood concern, but retained the sole management of the works during his life. He entered on no great new enterprise beyond sinking a new pair of pits to the east of the field, an enterprise on which he several times consulted the writer long before the men had headed to prove the mines in that direction. He was a man whose amiable qualities and generous nature won for him general admiration.

As an employer Mr. Anstice was on good terms with his workpeople. He aimed at being so, and in bad times he kept his men employed whether others did or not. He had a fellow-feeling with them, and tried to

understand and to be understood by them; he knew them by their names, and generally had a joke, a kind word, or a cheerful recognition for each. We believe he spared no expense to secure the safety of life and limb in his works; and if by some unforeseen circumstances, or some act of carelessness on their part, accidents did occur, his grief knew no bounds, and he would often weep like a child with the bereaved. Equally liberal with his means and time, he was accessible to all those who sought aid, counsel, or protection; and his good sense and timely aid availed in lightening many cares, in drying many tears, and in allaying many sorrows. The county though benefited by his philanthropy, but daily-occurring acts of kindness and usefulness less widely known taxed still more his talents and his means. Nor did his acts partake of ostentation, or seem selfishly aimed to win the tribute of applause. On the contrary he dedicated his energies less to the service of his peers than to those in a condition to require them.

Mr. Anstice was seldom free for long periods from that physical suffering which fills up so large a space in human experience; but he knew how to enjoy life, and did so more than most men, but he never quailed before its sternest duties. His sun may be said to have gone down at noon: he died in the zenith of his fame, and people mourned as for a father or a friend; for with that great tenderness and Christian generosity which distinguished him, he made many his debtors. Others at a riper age, not less laden with the goods of life, whose cup equally overflowed with prosperity, have lived and passed away, and as the grave closed over them the little world in which they moved scarcely missed them or thought of them after the funeral-bell had ceased to toll; but it was felt that such a man could not pass away without his memory being perpetuated in some form, and the present handsome building called the Anstice Memorial Institute was the result of a deep and wide-spreading feeling to do honour to his name. A brother ironmaster, the present Mr. W. O. Foster, who presided at the inauguration, said they had erected that building to one very much respected and beloved amongst them, but who had been removed from their midst. He would not attempt to pourtray the many virtues of his character in the presence of his family, nor dwell upon his many merits. He enjoyed his acquaintance for many years. He must say to know him was to love him, and whilst his virtue was fresh in their recollection it was their high privilege to dedicate

that building to his memory, and to hand down to posterity his name in association with it.

The Madeley Wood works are now carried on by William Reynolds Anstice and two of John Anstice's sons, Captain John Arthur Anstice, J.P., and Lieut. Edmund Anstice.

With regard to William Reynolds, previously alluded to, it may be well to add the following, together with some interesting notes and additions, kindly supplied by his nephew, William Reynolds Anstice, Esq., the senior partner in the Madeley Wood Works.

William Reynolds, the proprietor of these works, died at the Tuckies House, in 1803, and was followed to his grave in the burial-ground adjoining the Quakers' chapel, in the Dale, by a very large concourse of friends and old neighbours, thousands lining the way and following in the procession.

It may here be mentioned that the first use to which Watt's fire engine as it was called, was put at Bedlam, as at Coalbrookdale, Benthall, Ketley, and many other places, was not to blow the furnaces direct, but to pump water to drive the water-wheel, which at Bedlam, worked a pair of leather-bellows, which themselves supplied the blast. The race in which the old wheel worked is still observable, as also are the arches which supported the reservoir into which water was pumped from the Severn.

With regard to the prophetic utterances of Mr. Reynolds, already given, we have received the following from W. Reynolds Anstice, Esq.

“The exact words, as I have often heard them repeated by my father, were ‘The time will come, &c: when all our principal towns will be lighted with Coal Gas—all our main roads will be railroads worked by steam locomotive engines, and all our *coasting* navigation will be performed by steam vessels.’ He had no idea, evidently that steam navigation would extend beyond this, but steam locomotion was an idea at that time not unfamiliar to engineers. William Murdock, Watt's right-hand man, had made a working model of a road-locomotive as early as 1784. Trevithick had constructed working models much resembling modern locomotives in construction, in and before the year 1800. In 1802, the Coalbrookdale Company were building for him a

*railway-locomotive*, the engine of which was tried first in pumping water, and its performance astonished everyone. In a letter of his to Mr. D. Giddy, dated from Coalbrookdale, 22nd August, 1802, he says: ‘The Dale Company have begun a carriage at their own cost *for the railroads*, and are forcing it with all expedition. There was a beautifully executed wooden model of this locomotive engine in my Uncle, William Reynolds’ possession, which was given me by his Widow, the late Mrs. Reynolds, of Severn House, after his death. I was then a boy, fond of making model engines of my own, and I broke up the priceless relic to convert it to my own base purposes, an act which I now repent, as if it had been a *sin*.’

“The Coalbrookdale engine is, I believe, the first locomotive engine on record, intended to be used *on a railroad*. The boiler of it is now to be seen in use as a water tank, at the Lloyds’ Crawstone Pit, and the fire-tube and a few other portions of it are now in the yard at the Madeley Wood Works. I never heard how it came to be disused and broken up.”

Shortly before William Reynolds’s decease, he had had a large pleasure boat built, which was intended to be propelled by steam, and the cylinders of the engines intended for it, beautifully executed by the late James Glazebrook of Ironbridge, are now at the Madeley Wood Offices, but the engines were not finished at his (W. Reynolds’s) death, in 1804, and I never saw any drawing or model of them. The boat lay within my recollection, moored in the river Severn, just above Mr. Brodie’s Boring Mill, at the Calcutts, in a state of much disrepair, and I believe, ultimately fell to pieces or was carried away by a flood.

William Reynolds had a very complete private Laboratory at his residence, at Bank House, which was lighted with gas. William Murdock had, however, as early as 1794, applied gas to the lighting of his own house, in Cornwall, and in 1798, a portion of the Soho Works were lit with gas of his making.—In 1803, the whole of the Works were thus lighted, and from that time its use gradually extended.

Mr. Miller, of Darswinton, had a steam pleasure boat at work in 1788, and in 1801, the “Charlotte Dundas” steam boat was built at Glasgow by

Symmington, and this is the first authentic case of steam-boat navigation on record.

### **THE CLAY INDUSTRIES OF THE DISTRICT.**

The very excellent coal-measure clays found on both banks of the Severn, and turned to such good account by the Coalbrookdale Co., by Mr. Legge at the Woodlands, by neighbours too on the opposite bank of the Severn, as well as the celebrity attained by the Coalport works, renders it necessary that we should take a somewhat comprehensive view of the subject. Bricks and tiles and pottery of various kinds appear to have been made from a very early period, but the manufacture of Salopian porcelain dates from the latter end of the last century. The sites of the old pot works were at the outcrops of the coal-measure clays; and it was the advantages the fire-clays and accompanying coals afforded which led to the manufacture of porcelain. The former were situate at Benthall and Jackfield, where advantage is still taken of them, flourishing works being still carried on in places where these very excellent materials are readily procurable; and before noticing the introduction and very successful manufacture of the former at Caughley and Coalport, it may be desirable to devote a few pages to a description of the old pot-works, at Haybrook, the Pitchyard, and at Jackfield.

The art of moulding a plastic substance like clay is, of course, as old as the world, and on the banks of the Severn, as shewn by specimens ascribed to early British and Roman periods, it must not only have existed but been carried to some perfection there. These clays are said to have been used by the Romans, as evinced by the red and grey pottery and tiles discovered at Uriconinum. Jacquemart, in his "History of Ceramic Art," says that Jackfield is the most ancient site of pottery in Shropshire. And it is added that from a period so early as 1453, the valley of the Severn was famous for ornamental tiles, many specimens bearing that date having been found in Cathedrals and Churches. We have no reliable authority however for fixing the date at which the art was first practised in Shropshire, but it appears tolerably clear that the articles made were of the simplest kind, being almost uniformly domestic: those in daily use, such as milk-pans, dishes, tea-pots, jugs, and mugs. The latter were substitutes for the drinking horns, which later improvements in the plastic and ceramic arts have driven out of use.

We have an ancient specimen of one made at the Pitchyard, and a drawing of another made at Haybrook, well *potted*, and elegant in shape. The latter is the best manipulated, and probably it was from this circumstance that the latter work was called “The Mug-House.”

In evidence adduced sometime since in an Election Scrutiny at Bewdley, a public-house referred to was called the “Mughouse,” which house is situated on the Severn, at a point where the bargemen, who formerly drew the vessels up the river instead of horses, were in the habit of stopping to get mugs of ale. “Tots” were made out of the same kind of clay, but smaller, and were used when the men drank in company; hence a person who had drunk too much was supposed to have been with a convivial party, and was said to have been “totty,” a word often found in old works. Tots had no handles, and some of the old drinking cups, more particularly those of glass of Anglo Saxon make, were rounded at the bottom that they should not stand upright, and that a man may empty them at a draught,—the custom continuing till later times gave rise to our modern name of tumbler. The small tots had no handles; the mug had a “stouk,” as it is called, consisting of a single piece of clay, flattened and bent over into a loop. The ware was similar to the famous “Rockingham ware” made on the estate of Earl Fitzwilliam, near Wentworth.

The discovery of a salt glaze took place in 1690, and the manufacture of that kind of ware must have commenced here soon after, as traces of works of the kind are abundant. This method consisted in throwing salt into the kiln when the ware had attained a great heat, holes being left in the clay boxes that contained it in order that the fumes may enter and vitrify the surface. Evidences of the manufacture of these old mugs and tots, together with milk-pans and washing-pans, having been made at an early period, are numerous; and the old seggars in which they were burnt often form walls of the oldest cottages in Benthall and Broseley Wood.

A considerable number of old jars, mugs, and other articles, have from time to time been found in places and under circumstances sufficient to indicate great antiquity; as in mounds overgrown with trees, and in old pits which for time immemorial have not been worked. One large earthen jar, with “George Weld,” in light clay, was found in an old drain at Willey, and is

now in the possession of Lord Forester. Mr. John Thursfield, who lived at Benthall hall, was at one time proprietor of these works.

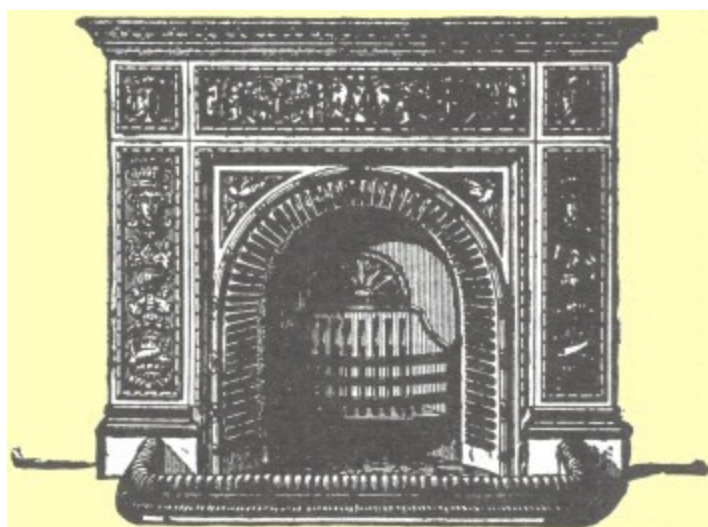
Three quarters of a century ago these works were carried on by a Messrs. Bell & Lloyd; afterwards by Mr. John Lloyd, one of the best and most truly pious men we ever knew, who some time before his death transferred them to a nephew, Mr. E. Bathurst. His son succeeded him, and after a time sold them to the present proprietor, Mr. Allen, who to the ordinary red and yellow ware, which finds a ready sale in North and South Wales, has added articles of use and ornament in other ways, including forcing pots, garden vases, and various terra cotta articles.

Of the Pitchyard works we know little, only that they stood where the late Mr. E. Southorn carried on his Pipe Works, and where we remember them in ruins more than fifty years ago; but the numerous seggars, now found in cottage garden walls, shew that they must have been continued for some considerable time.

But, besides the manufacture of bricks, tiles, and pottery, these clays have been raised to a trade within the past few years in this district which is every day increasing, and which is capable of much further expansion: we refer now to the important department of encaustic or inlaid tiles and mosaics. The art of producing tiles of this description is only recently revived in this country, and is one which in point of antiquity is not to be compared with its sister branches. The first attempt, so far as we are aware, to revive the art in Shropshire, was at Jackfield; but the first designs were crude, quaint, and spiritless, and altogether wanting in those nicer distinctions and qualities which, not being perceived by the mind of the producer, could not be wrought by the hand. In this as in many other branches of fictile art *insight* into the principles as well as eyesight is required, and the mistake—as in many other instances—was committed of attempting something which, with the expenditure of thought and time, might catch the uneducated eye—the object being to produce *quantity* rather than *quality*. But the call made upon the art by the enlightened demands of the age soon gave a wonderful impetus to the improvement, and men of educated artistic taste—like the Mintons and the Maws—soon called to their aid the assistance of the greatest genius and the highest designing talent at command; at the same time that they directed their

efforts to definite points in which utility might be made the instrument of beauty, and by which originality and intelligible design might be made to rise out of the most common-place wants. But although the modern manufacture of geometric and encaustic tiles is recent, it already far surpasses the ancients in variety and arrangement, in geometric patterns, and in beauty of design in encaustics as well as in mechanical finish; although it may be doubted whether the same breadth of general effect is studied as in many ancient examples. Mintons, of Stoke, Maw and Co., of Benthall, Hargraves and Craven, of Jackfield, and Mr. Bathurst, of Broseley, have each produced beautiful encaustic tiles for pavements—both for ecclesiastical and domestic use; and there is yet a large field for development of the use of similar tiles to colour and enrich the details of our street architecture, as well as in that of more elaborate and important structures.

The Coalbrookdale Co., have recently manufactured some admirable terracotta entablatures, with historical subjects for costly buildings in the metropolis. The erection of the Literary and Scientific Institution also, of different coloured clays shews their adaptation to works of great architectural beauty.



### **MAW AND CO'S TESSELATED, MOSAIC, AND MAJOLICA WORKS.**

It was the excellency of the Broseley and Benthall clays, above referred to, which attracted the Messrs. Maw to the spot and led them to remove from

Worcester, to where they had been in the habit, first of all, of having them conveyed by barges on the river, to the present site of their works, fashioned out of the old Benthall Iron Works, carried on a century ago by Mr. Harries, then owner of the Benthall estate. Notwithstanding the additions made by them, the trade has so wonderfully developed itself that after building upon or in some way occupying every inch of ground, they are cramped for room, and are on the look out for more commodious premises. In addition to those classical and other adjuncts of architectural comfort and embellishment, embracing encaustic tiles—the reproduction of an art limited in mediæval times to church decoration, but now having a much more extended application, and the manufacture of tesserae, used in the construction of geometrical mosaic pavements, similar in character to those found in the mediæval buildings of Italy, also moresque mosaics, like those occurring in Roman remains in this country and on the continent, they now manufacture a superior majolica, and faience of great purity, in both of which departments they have recently received first class medals at the Philadelphia exhibition. The accompanying engraving will convey an idea of the adaptation of faience to articles of domestic utility.

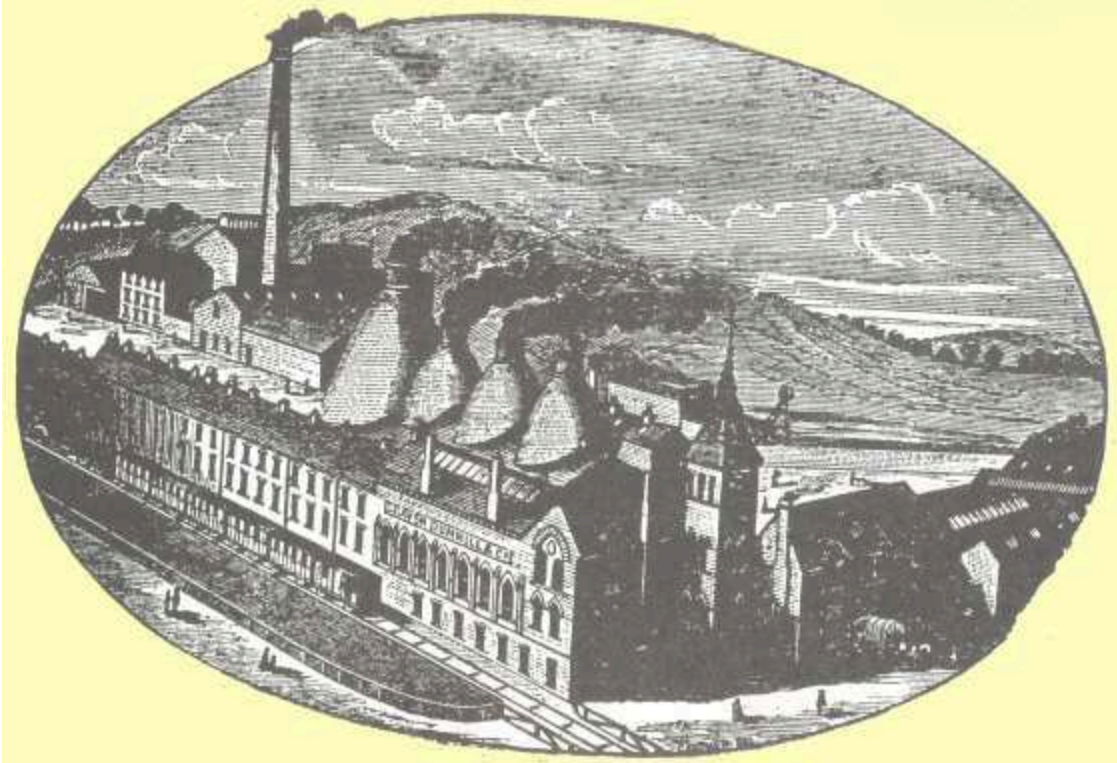
### **JACKFIELD POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.**

Older even than the Haybrook Mug House are the Pot Works of Jackfield, which, according to the parish register of Stoke-upon-Trent, quoted by Mr. Jewitt and Mr. Chaffers, supplied a race of potters to that great centre of early pot-making in the year 1560. Excavations made too, some years ago, brought to light on a spot near which the present works of Craven, Dunnill & Co., now stand, an oven, or kiln, with unbaked ware, which appeared to have been buried by a land-slip; and in an old pit, which it was said had not been opened for two centuries, a brown mug was discovered, which had upon it the date 1634. If Jackfield supplied early potters for Stoke, Stoke sent pot masters to Jackfield. One of these was Mr. Richard Thursfield, an ancestor of Greville T. Thursfield M.D., who took these works and carried them on in 1713. He was succeeded by his son John, of whom we have spoken as afterwards living at Benthall and carrying on works there. The late Richard Thursfield, Esq., had in his possession some good examples of Jackfield ware. Among them was a handsome jug, gilt, having on it, we believe, the name of one of the family.

In 1772, or soon after, Mr. Simpson carried on the works; and he appears to have further improved the manufacture, for in addition to the “black decanters,” as his mugs were called, he made various articles of superior quality, which prior to the breaking out of the war with America found a ready sale there. The old mill turned by the waters of the Severn, where he ground his materials, has just been taken down.

Mr. Blakeway afterwards carried on the works, and was joined by Mr. John Rose, upon leaving Caughley, and, after carrying them on a short time by himself, he removed them, as he did the Caughley Works, to Coalport, on the opposite bank of the river.

The site of the old pottery was on the ground which is now occupied by the Jackfield Encaustic Tile Works, the clays of which are specially adapted for geometrical and encaustic tiles; and such tiles have been made here for a number of years; but since the old works came into the possession of the present firm of Messrs. Craven Dunnill and Co., great changes have taken place. The firm took a lease of about four acres of ground, and adjoining the old works built a large and commodious manufactory, which has been in operation for nearly two years. They have since taken down all the buildings of the old works, and have erected on their site and joining up to the new works, large warehouses, show room, offices, and entrance lodge. The plan of the works is very complete, so as in every way to economise in the process of manufacture, and they are now among the most complete works of the kind.



As shewn in the accompanying engraving, the buildings consist of four blocks, one detached and the others connected, each block accommodating a separate branch of the manufacture.

In the detached block the raw materials are reduced to a state ready for the workman.

The second block contains the damping places, where the clays are kept in a certain degree of moisture; pressers' shops for the various colours of geometrical tiles, and the encaustic tile makers' shops, with their stoves.

The next block provides for the drying and firing of the goods and decorating shops.

On the first floor are workshops employed for painting, printing and enamelling, or other decorative purposes.

The fourth block provides for the sorting and stocking of goods and for packing them for despatch; also the offices and showroom.

Near to the detached block first described a small gas-works has been erected, which supplies the whole of the buildings.

## COALPORT PORCELAIN WORKS.

The first works at Coalport were we believe founded and carried on by William Reynolds, Thomas Rose, Robert Horton, and Robert Anstice; the former William Reynolds, being then Lord of the Manor. The buildings, or a good portion occupied by them are still standing.

Mr. Thomas Rose, and Mr. John Rose, were sons of a respectable farmer living at Sweeney. The latter was a clerk under Mr. Turner, at Caughley, and left him to take the Jackfield works about the year, it is said, 1780. Having carried them on for a few years, in conjunction with Mr. Blakeway, during which time he greatly improved the quality of the article manufactured there, he established the present Coalport works on the side of the canal, then recently opened, and opposite to those of Reynolds, Horton, Thomas Rose, and Robert Anstice. On Mr. Turner retiring from the Caughley works in 1799, Mr. Rose and the new company he had formed purchased them, and by means of increased capital shortly afterwards removed both plant and materials from Caughley and Jackfield to the more advantageous position they now occupy, on the banks of the canal and the Severn. Even the buildings were pulled down and the bricks and timber removed to the opposite side of the Severn, where they were used in constructing the cottages now standing opposite to the present Coalport Works.

A staff of excellent work-people had been obtained from Caughley and Jackfield works combined, but an accident occurred on the night of the 23rd of October in that year by the capsizing of the ferry, as the work-people were crossing the Severn, by which twenty-eight were drowned, some among them being the best hands employed at the works. It was a dark night, the boat was crowded, and the man at the helm, not having been accustomed to put the boat over allowed the vessel to swing round in the channel where, with a strong tide running, it was drawn under by the rope which went from the mast to a rock in the bed of the river. Some managed to scramble out on the Broseley side of the stream; but the following were lost, notwithstanding the efforts of those who rushed to the river side on hearing the despairing cries raised to save them. Jane Burns, Sarah Burns, Ann Burns, Mary Burgess, Elizabeth Fletcher, Mary Fletcher, Elizabeth Beard, Jane Boden, Elizabeth Ward, Sarah Bagnall, Sophia Banks, Mary

Miles, Elizabeth Evans, Catherine Lowe, Jane Leigh, Charles Walker, George Lynn, James Farnworth, George Sheat, John Chell, Robert Lowe, William Beard, John Jones, Benjamin Gosnall, Benjamin Wyld, Richard Mountford, Joseph Poole.

The event, as may be expected, created a great sensation at the time, and was thus commemorated by Mr. Dyas, one of the Coalport workmen.

Alas! Alas! the fated night  
Of cold October twenty third,  
In seventeen hundred ninety-nine;  
What cries, what lamentation heard,  
The hour nine, when from yon pile,  
Where fair porcelain takes her form,  
Where energy with genius joins,  
To robe her in those matchless charms,  
A wearied band of artists rose,  
Males and females, old and young,  
Their toil suspend, to seek repose,  
Their homes to gain, they bent along.  
Sabrina's stream was near to pass,  
And she her frowning waves upraised,  
Her mist condensed to darksome haze  
Which mocked the light; no star appeared.  
Yon boat, which o'er her bosom rides,  
Enveloped in the heavy gloom,  
Convulsive stretch'd along her sides,  
To snatch the victims to their doom.  
Soon e'er on board their faltering feet  
A monster fell who grasped the helm,  
Hove from the shore the distressed crew,  
And so the dreadful overwhelm,  
Swift horror's wings o'er spread the tides,  
They sink! they rise! they shriek! they cling!  
Again they sink; alarm soon flies,  
Along their shores dread clamours rise,  
But Oh, the bleakest night preventing  
Every means to save their breath,

Helpless, hopeless, life despairing  
Twenty-eight sunk down in death.  
Alas small time for Heaven's implorings,  
Quick sealed their everlasting state,  
Or, in misery, or in glory.  
The last tribunal will relate,  
Here fold, O muse thy feeble wings,  
Hope where thou canst, but not decide,  
Dare not approach those hidden things,  
With mercy, justice, these abide.  
Return with sympathetic breath,  
See yon distracted mother stands,  
Three daughters lost, to heaven she lifts  
Her streaming eyes and wringing hands,  
Hark! from those dells how deep the wailings,  
Fathers, Mothers, join their moans,  
Widows, orphans, friends and lovers,  
Swell the air with poignant groans;  
Recluse in grief, those worthy masters  
Silent drop the mournful tear.  
Distress pervades surrounding hamlets,  
Sorrow weeps to every ear,  
Sleepless sighings hail the morning,  
Morning brings no soothing ray.

The author of these verses, Mr. Dyas, was a very clever carver on stone and on wood. He engraved the blocks for a work printed by Mr. Edmonds at Madeley, entitled "Alexander's Expedition down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Indian Ocean." He was the author too of an invention world-wide in its benefits, that of the printers' roller; an invention second only to the art of printing itself, and infinitely superior to thousands of others out of which vast fortunes have been made.

In 1804 the company consisted of Cuthbert Johnson, William Clarke, John Wootton, and John Rose. In 1811 it was John Rose, William Clarke and Charles Maddison. In 1820 they bought the famous Swansea works and entered into an agreement with Messrs. Billingsley and Walker to make a superior kind of porcelain made by them, first at Nantgarw in

Glamorganshire, and afterwards at the Cambrian Pottery, Swansea, in the same county. This was a pure soft paste porcelain, superior to any at present produced in the kingdom, and second only to the famous *pate tendre* of Sevres at the very best period of its manufacture. This china was first made in 1813 by Billingsley, who went from Derby to Worcester, and from there to South Wales. He was an artist, and understood the manufacture in all its branches. He produced a fret body, by mixing the materials, firing them in order to blend them together, then reducing the vitrified substance into clay—a process which was carried on at Old Sevres during the reign of Louis XV.—and thereby produced an article fine in texture, beautifully transparent, and of a delicate waxy hue, very superior to the dingy blue tinge given to much of the best china of that day. Connoisseurs were at once attracted by it, and Mr. Mortlock went down and entered into an engagement to purchase all that Billingsley and his son-in-law could make. Mr. John Rose finding he had lost a customer, whilst orders he was wont to receive were going to South Wales, went over, bought the plant, moulds, and everything, and entered into an agreement with Walker and Billingsley for a period of seven years to make the same quality of china at Coalport. The process however was an expensive one, from the difficulty of working the clay, which wanted plasticity, and also from the loss in the burning, as being a soft body it was apt to melt or warp, and to go out of shape, if it had a little too much fire in the biscuit kiln. About that time, too, Mr. Ryan discovered a very pure felspar in the Middleton, one of the Briedden hills, the true *Kaolin*, to which the Chinese were indebted for the quality of their egg-shell and other first class china. The fret body was therefore abandoned, the *pate tendre* for a *pate dure*, as the French say, and by adding pure felspar to the Cornish stone and clay which contains a large percentage, a good transparent body was obtained at a less cost than by using a *fret body*. About this time also the Society of Arts offered a prize to any one who should find a substitute for lead in the glaze, the deleterious effects of which told upon the dippers, and produced paralysis; and Mr. Rose by applying felspar to the glaze succeeded in obtaining it. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society; and from that time following, for some years, a badge was either attached to the ware or engraved upon it as follows:—“Coalport Felspar Porcelain, J. Rose & Co: the Gold Medal awarded May 30, 1820; Patronised by the Society of Arts.” The Devonports and other manufacturers competed for the prize.

The felspar porcelain however never equalled the original Nantgarw fret body ware for purity and transparency, a white plate of which would at the present time fetch a couple of guineas. It cannot be said that any new element was introduced by using felspar, because the kaolin, contained in Cornish stone and day, as discovered by Cookworthy in 1768, had been, and was now used at Plymouth, Derby, Worcester, Caughley, and Coalport; and by a judicious admixture of this and a free use of bone (phosphate of lime) a good serviceable china was produced. The former gave mellowness, and the latter whiteness, which approached in a degree the qualities of old and Oriental china. In fact Mr. Rose, who had the sole management of the works, spared neither pains nor expense in raising the character of the productions of the Coalport Works, which were now by far the largest porcelain works in the kingdom, if not in the world. Like Minton, he was a man of wonderful energy, being strong in body, having a clear head, a cool judgment, and gifted with remarkable perseverance.

The works were now in a state of prosperity; warehouses were opened in Manchester, London, Sheffield, and Shrewsbury, and a large trade was being done with dealers all over the kingdom. There was plenty of employment, and a good understanding generally prevailed between masters and their work people. Both before and after the strike there were at Coalport, as at other works of the kind elsewhere, an intelligent class of men, among potters and painters, as well as in other departments. Painters, especially, had good opportunities for mental culture and obtaining information. Numbers worked together in a room, one sometimes reading for the benefit of the others, daily papers were taken, discussions were often raised, and in politics the sharp features of party were as defined as in the House of Commons itself. The rooms were nicely warmed, and a woman appointed to sweep up, to bring coals, to keep the tables clean, to wash up dishes, peel potatoes, and fetch water for those who, not living near, brought their meals with them. It is not surprising, therefore, that men, having such advantages, should sometimes rise to higher situations. Some became linguists, some schoolmasters, engineers, and contractors; one, breakfasting with a bishop, whose daughter he afterwards married, saw upon the table, some time since, a service painted by himself when a workman at Coalport. Some were singular characters: old Jocky Hill kept his hunter; John Crowther, a very amiable fellow, exceedingly good

natured, and always ready to do a favour to any one who asked him, lived quite a recluse, studying algebra and mechanics. He has suggested many improvements in locomotives, steam paddles, breaks, &c., &c., and had the honour of submitting to the Government the plan of terminating annuities, by which money at that time was raised to carry on the war, and by which we have been saved the burden—so far—of a permanent debt; also of making other suggestions, which have been likewise adopted. He also invented a most ingenious almanack applicable to all time.

Coalport men were usually great politicians; Hunt, Hethrington, Richard Carlile, Sir Francis Burdett, and Cobbett, had their disciples and admirers; and such was the eagerness to get the Register, with its familiar gridiron on the cover, that a man has been despatched to Birmingham for it from one of the rooms, his shopmates undertaking to do his work for him whilst he was away.

The works themselves are ill designed and badly constructed, the greater portion of them having been put up at the latter end of the past and beginning of the present centuries, whilst other portions were added from time to time, with no regard to ventilation or other requirements of health. Consequently there are the most curious ins and outs, dropsical looking roofs, bulging walls, and drooping floors, which have to be propped underneath, to support half a century's accumulations of china, accumulations amounting to hundreds and hundreds of tons in weight. In entering some of these unhealthy *ateliers* and passages strangers have to look well to their craniums. Some work-rooms have very stifling atmospheres, charged with clay or flint; the biscuit room notably so. We have said that a good understanding prevailed generally between masters and workmen. There was one notable exception, the great "strike" as it was called, which occurred somewhere in November, 1833; a memorable event in the history of the works, so much so that in speaking of occurrences it is usual to the present time to ask in case of doubt if it happened before or subsequent to the strike. The men had their "Pitcher," a well conducted sick society; and a "Travelling Society," for assisting those in search of employment, with branches in all centres of the trade. Trades unions, however, were just then coming to the front. The Combination Laws had been repealed eleven years previously; otherwise, such was the temper of the Shropshire magistrates, and the feeling generally in relation to the trades

unions, that had they existed on the statute book not a few would have had to have experienced the penal consequences of their acts. With the men who still adhered to the masters the works continued to be carried on to a limited extent; after much suffering and privation some of the hands returned, whilst some obtained employment elsewhere. The course taken by Mr. John Rose, in resisting the men was warmly approved of by his neighbours, who subscribed for a handsome silver cup, which is now in the possession of Mr. Charles Pugh, who married Miss Martha Rose, daughter of Mr. Thomas, and niece of Mr. John Rose. It is a large and massive piece of plate. A vine stem entwines around the foot and forms the handles, a vine border with grapes also forms a border round the rim of the cover. On one side is the following inscription:

Presented to John Rose Esqr.,  
of  
Coalport China Manufactory,  
By his  
Friends and Neighbours  
March 3rd  
1834.

On the reverse side is the following:

Tribute of respect  
to his  
Public and Private Character  
and to the  
uncompromising firmness  
with which  
he has recently resisted the  
demands of an illegal  
conspiracy.

We have lived to see trades unions legalized, and trade combinations adopted by masters as well as men.

Mr. Walker had invented a maroon colour dip for grounds, which was used with much success. A good deal was done too about this time in imitation

of the *Sevres* style of decoration, and thousands of pounds were spent in endeavouring to make the famous turquoise of the French; but a pale imitation, called celest, only was obtained; some years afterwards however a much better colour was produced, first by Mr. Harvey, secondly by Mr. Bagshaw, thirdly by Mr. Hancock.

In 1839 the late William Pugh became one of the firm, it then being John Rose, Charles Maddison, and William Pugh. In 1841 it was Charles Maddison, William Pugh, Thomas Rose, and William Frederick Rose. In 1843 William Pugh, and William F. Rose were the proprietors. In 1845 the Messrs. Daniell received the command of the Queen to prepare a dessert service as a present by herself to the Emperor Nicholas, and it was manufactured at the works. It was a magnificent service of *bleu de roi*, and had the various orders of the Russian Empire enamelled, in compartments, with the order of St. Nicholas, and the Russian and Polish eagles in the centre. In 1850 the famous Rose-du-Barry was discovered. The attempt to do so had been suggested by the Messrs. Daniell, in 1849; and after repeated experiments by Mr. George Hancock, who is still the colour-maker at the works, it was produced. This colour, so named after Mdme du Barry, one of the mistresses of Louis XV, had been formerly made at the Sevres Works, but the art had been lost, and its reproduction created a demand for very rich dessert services and ornaments of the colour. Very costly services of it were produced for the Messrs. Daniell, Mortlock, Phillips, Goode, and other London dealers, which attracted considerable attention at the Exhibition of 1851. One splendid dessert service of it was purchased by Lord Ashburton; others also, after special models and designs, of this colour were subsequently produced for the head of the State, for the Emperor of the French, and for noblemen like the duke of Northumberland, the Marquis of Lansdowne and others.

The following are the remarks of the Jurors on that occasion:—Rose J., and Co., Coalbrook Dale, Shropshire (47, p. 727), have exhibited porcelain services and other articles, which have attracted special attention of the Jury. A dessert service of a rose ground is in particular remarkable, not only as being the nearest approach we have seen to the famous colour which it is designed to imitate, but for the excellence of the flower-painting, gilding, and other decorations, and the hardness and transparency of glaze. The same observation applies to other porcelain articles exhibited by this firm.

The Jury have awarded to Messrs. Rose and Co. a Prize Medal. The company also attained medals at the French Exhibition in 1855, and at that of London in 1862.

A good deal has been done of late years in the Sevres style of decoration on vases, the moulds of which came direct from Sevres manufactory. It is a pleasing incident, and one worth mentioning, that some years ago Mr. W. F. Rose in company with Mr. Daniell visited Paris, and of course went to Sevres. Mr. Daniell was at once taken round the works, but Mr. Rose feeling some delicacy remained outside. Mr. Daniell mentioned the delicacy of his friend, and the manager at once sent for him in, and shewed him the greatest respect. He told him he might send his best artists to copy any thing he saw, or employ theirs to do so: and sometime after he sent over the moulds themselves to Coalport.

In 1862 Mr. Pugh became sole proprietor of the works, and continued so to his death, in June 1875. Mr. Charles Pugh, brother of the deceased, and Mr. Edmund Ratcliff, brother-in-law, were left executors; and for an adjustment of claims by them and others the estate was thrown into Chancery and a receiver and manager, Mr. Gelson was appointed. The stock which is immense and had been accumulating for half a century is being brought into the market. Hundreds of dozens of one pattern, "India tree," for example, which had remained out of sight for forty years, are being brought to light. In some instances a hundred dozen or so of saucers, (printed,) are found stowed away, without cups to match; whilst scores of piles of plates and dishes, sixteen or eighteen feet high, may be seen (white) in others, which had been sorted and put on one side from some defect or other. It speaks well for the quality of the china that the biscuit and glazed are both sound and good. In some cases the floors are literally giving way from the immense weight of stock they have to sustain. In one place a quantity of old Caughley China was discovered; whilst in another were found a number of Caughley copper plates engraved by the late Herbert Minton's father.

It may excite surprise that so large a stock should have been allowed to accumulate, but much was the result of a wish to keep the men employed. The fact of a number of copper plates being found with his name on, confirms what we have previously said about Thomas Minton, who founded the important commercial house bearing his name and that of his son at

Stoke, having been employed as an engraver at Caughley. M. Digby Wyatt, also, in his paper read before the Society of Arts and reported in the Society's Journal, May 28th, 1858, on the influence exercised on ceramic art by the late Herbert Minton, says:—"Mr. Thomas Minton was a native of Shropshire, and he was brought up at the Caughley works, near Broseley, as an engraver. He then went to town and worked for Spode, at his London House of business." In 1788 he went to Stoke, bought land, and built the house and works which have since become so celebrated. Up to 1798 however he only made earthenware which was printed and ornamented in blue, similar to that at Caughley.

Mr. Wyatt, in the paper just quoted, speaking of John Rose and of the late Herbert Minton admitted that in the excellent, rapid, and cheap production of porcelain for Mr. Minton to have stood still for a moment would have been to have lost his lead in the trade. And Mr. Daniell, in the discussion which followed, said:—

"With reference to Mr. Minton's predecessors in this branch of art, he might remind the society of one whose name was upon their records as the recipient of the society's gold medal for china and porcelain manufactures long before Mr. Herbert Minton's time. He referred to John Rose, of Coalport, who made more china in his day than all those who were mentioned in the paper."

It will be seen from what we have written that Thomas Turner, of Caughley, and J. Rose, of Coalport, were the creators, so to speak, of new industries which drew around them large populations and gave employment to thousands who otherwise might have sought for it in vain, or have found it under less advantageous circumstances. It will be seen also that not only were they benefactors contributing materially to the common stock of national prosperity themselves, but that their energies and abilities inspired others who in turn became industrial organisers, and through various channels carried on the work of progress.

## **MADELEY CHINA WORKS.**

Excepting to the trade, and to some of the old inhabitants, it is not generally known that Martin Randall established China Works at Madeley, and made

porcelain similar to that of Nantgarw and little if at all inferior to old Sevres porcelain. He and his brother Edward were Caughley men; he left there to go to Derby. He afterwards went to Pinxton, and thence with Mr. Robins, a Pinxton man, to London, where they entered into partnership and carried on business. They were supplied with Nantgarw white china by Mr. Mortlock, till Mr. Rose cut off the supply from the Welsh Works, by engaging Billingsley and Walker to make it for himself alone at the Coalport Works. They still continued to carry on business at Islington, where they erected buildings suitable, and fired the ware in box kilns with charcoal.

About this time the demand was great with connoisseurs among the aristocracy for old Sevres china; and the London dealers, finding that it was not obtainable in sufficient quantities to meet the demand for highly decorated specimens, hit upon the expedient of employing agents in Paris to buy up Sevres china in white for the purpose of having it painted in London, as Nantgarw had been, and selling it to their customers as the bona fide productions of Sevres. Slightly painted patterns too were procured, and the colours got off with fluoric acid, and rich and expensive paintings, grounds, and gilding substituted.

About the year 1826 they dissolved partnership and Mr. Randall came to Madeley, where he occupied a house in Park Lane, now the residence of the Wesleyan minister. He then took more commodious premises at the lower end of Madeley, where he erected enamelling, biscuit, and other kilns, and made and finished his own ware. Thomas Wheeler, William Roberts, and F. Brewer, were his potters; Philip Ballard, Robert Grey, and the present writer, were painters there, and Enos Raby was ground layer. John Fox of Coalbrookdale, William Dorsett, of Madeley, also were with Mr. Randall for a short time. Not having had experience in the making of china, great mistakes were committed, and heavy losses sustained. We have known a biscuit kiln fired till tea-pots and cups and saucers were melted into a mass before a trial was drawn, crow bars being necessary to remove them; in some instances they assumed the most fantastic forms. At other times the ware would be short fired in the biscuit kiln and would take up so much glaze that on coming out of the glaze kiln it would fly off in splinters. These wasters were buried, broken up, or thrown into the canal, to be out of sight.

Mr. Randall however, as the result of repeated and persevering experiments, succeeded in producing a fret body with a rich glaze which bore so close a resemblance to old Sevres china that connoisseurs and famous judges failed to distinguish them. He refused however, from conscientious motives, to put the Sevres mark, the initials of Louis Louis, crossed at the bottom, which was done with less hesitation at Coalport with much more feeble imitations. When introduced on one occasion to a London dealer, of the name of Frost, who had a shop in the Strand, as Mr. Martin Randall's nephew, the dealer in old china observed that the old Quaker made the best imitation of Sevres that ever was made, but added, "he never could be got to put the double L on it, and we cannot sell it as Sevres." We remarked that he was "too conscientious to do so," upon which he replied, "O, d—n conscience; there is no conscience in business."

Mr. Randall had less hesitation however in putting the Sevres mark on what was known to be Sevres; and he did very much for Mortlock, Jarman, and Baldock, who had agents in Paris, attending all sales where old Sevres was to be sold, in redecorating it in the most elaborate and costly manner. The less scrupulous London agents however did not hesitate to pass it off as being really the work throughout of Sevres artists. Indeed they have been known to have boxes of china going up from Madeley, sent on to Dover, to be redirected as coming from France, inviting connoisseurs to come and witness them being unpacked on their arrival, as they represented, from Paris. A little entertainment would be got up, and supposing themselves to be the first whose eyes looked on the rich goods after they left the French capital, where it would be represented, perhaps, that they had been bought of the Duc-de—or of Madame some one, after having been in the possession of royalty, they would buy freely.

Sevres porcelain fetched high prices then, but it has risen higher in the market, even since, and has gone on rising to the present time. In 1850 cups and saucers fetched from £25 to £30 each, and bowls £66 or £70. Three oval vases and covers at Lord Pembroke's sale fetched £1020. Prices have however since gone up; and at Mr. Bernal's sale a pair of rose Dubarry vases sold for 1850 guineas; and cups and saucers for £100. Single plates have since sold for £200; vases for 500 or 600 guineas each, and cups and saucers for 150, guineas. A year ago a set of three Jardiniers fetched at Christie's, by auction, £10,000!

We remember seeing an ornament at the Marquis of Anglesey's at *Beau Desert* which we were assured was old Sevres, and had been purchased at a great price on the continent, but which we recognised as one of our own painting at Madeley. A man can always tell his own painting; but it is not an easy matter for another however experienced sometimes to do so. An amusing instance occurred at Coalport. Mr. F. W. Rose who had been conversant from a child with china, on one occasion bought a vase, painted with birds, believing it to be old Sevres, but which was made at the Coalport Works and painted by the present writer at Madeley. Mr. Rose, sending for us down to the office said, "here, Randall, is a vase I have given a good price for, which is the right thing; can you do anything like it?" Our reply was, it would be strange if we could not, as we did that when a lad, adding that it was made at his own manufactory, that it was modelled by George Aston, and purchased out of the warehouse, in the white, by T. Martin Randall. We need scarcely say that he was very much astonished on finding he had been duped by a London china dealer with a piece of his own ware. It was put out of sight; but the late Mr. Pugh did not forget occasionally to remind his partner of the incident.

Mr. Randall removed from Madeley to Shelton, in the Potteries, for the greater convenience of carrying on his works. He was invited by the late Herbert Minton to become a partner, and to make his ware for the benefit of both at his extensive works at Stoke. Age however, and a longing for retirement led him to decline, and he soon afterwards retired to a cottage at Barleston, where he died, and was buried, in a sunny spot of his own choosing, within sound of the murmuring waters of the Trent. He was a good man; one holding large and liberal views, and one who took an active part in various social and religious movements of the day, being an active promoter more particularly of Temperance Societies, when first established in this country. Specimens of his ware are much prized and sought after by collectors. A fine specimen with turquoise ground is in the possession of Henry Dickinson Esq.

The chief beauty of Mr. Randall's porcelain, like that of other fret bodies, or *pate tendre* china, was that it admitted of a complete amalgamation of the painting with the glaze, and also of a richness and depth of colour, as in the case of turquoise, not to be produced on ordinary china. It had too that

waxy whiteness and mellow transparency for which old porcelain was distinguished.

## MADELEY CHURCH.

Much interest attaches to the old church in which Mr. Fletcher preached, but little that is definite and satisfactory appears to be known. In one of the topographies of Shropshire it is said to have been in the Norman style of architecture, but nothing so early is shewn in the engravings of the windows and tower. It was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and a Chantry is said to have been added in the 11th of the reign of Richard II. It was small, damp, and dilapidated, in 1794, when it was taken down. It appears to have contained some handsome altar-tombs and other mural monuments, some of which we have already noticed as having been in part removed at the building of the present edifice, as the well sculptured figures representing the Brooke family. A number of tablets were again placed in position in the present church, which, as they refer to old Madeley families, some of which have either died out or removed, we give, together with others of a later date.

The following occur on the Eastern side of the church:—

On the left hand side is the following:—

In memory of Walter and Lucy Astley,  
who died of the small-pox.  
He died Dec. 11th, 1721, aged 30 years.  
She died Dec. 30th, 1721, aged 24 years.

Also of  
Matthias Astley, brother to the above,  
Who died June 23rd, 1747, aged 53 years.

In the chancel

Near this place  
lye the bodys of William Ashwood,  
late of this parish, Esqr.,

And Elizabeth his wife,  
daughter of William Adams,  
of Longden, in this county, Esqr.

To whose memory John, their son  
and heir, erected this monument,  
in testimony of his duty to such  
affectionate parents.

He died October 27, 1730, in his 47th year;  
She March 22nd, 1740,  
in her 50th year.

Another is as follows:—

In memory of  
John Ashwood of this parish, Esq.,  
Who died 31st Jan., 1750,  
In the 30th year of his age.  
And of Thomas Porter Ashwood,  
His only son, by Dorothy his wife,  
second daughter of Henry Spron,  
late of the Marsh in this county, Esq.,  
Who died 31st March, 1769, in his 19th year.

Also  
In memory of the said  
Dorothy, wife of the above  
John Ashwood Esq.,  
Who died 13th May, 1785,  
In the 59th year of her age.

This family lived in the old hall, the remains of which now form part of the  
stabling of Joseph Yate, Esq.

In the chancel is a handsome monument, surmounted by the arms of the  
Smitheman and Brooke families, as follows:—

In this chancel are interred the remains of  
Catherine

The wife of John Unett Smitheman Esq.,  
late of Little Wenlock, in this county,  
By whom she had five children, (viz.)  
Catherine, Catherine, Brooke, John, and Rose,  
of whom, one daughter  
Catherine, and John, only survived her.  
The other 3 children died in their infancy.

CATHERINE

Died Oct. 1, 1741 at Willey in this county,  
where she was buried.

She was the daughter and co-heir of  
Cumberford Brooke Esq.,  
Of this parish and Cumberford in Staffordshire,  
By Rose his wife, daughter of Sir John Austin Bart.  
of Boxley in Kent.

She was descended from  
Sir Robert Brooke Knight,  
Speaker of the House of Commons and afterwards  
Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in the reign of  
Queen Mary,  
And through a long line of ancestors was allied to  
many a noble and illustrious family in this kingdom  
She departed this life May 1st, 1737.  
To whose memory  
Her son John Smitheman erected this  
little monument.

At the top of this monument is the following coat of arms:—

QUARTERLY: first chequy arg. and sa.

Second arg. a chevron gu. between Three Helmets

Third gu. a Talbot passant, arg.

Fourth az. a lion rampant, between six fleur-de-lis, or,  
Crest, an Eagle with two heads, displayed, arg. collared, or.

In the chancel is the following:—

In a vault  
near this place are interred the remains  
of Mr. George Goodwin,  
late of this parish,  
who died Nov. 3rd 1773,  
in the 54th year of his age.

He was a man of great worth, good sense and integrity, was most deservedly esteemed and respected by all who knew him, more particularly by the industrious inhabitants of this populous and extensive parish.

To perpetuate the remembrance of so worthy a man, his son William Goodwin hath with gratitude and respect erected this little monument.

“An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

Also in the same vault is interred the body of  
Mr. John Goodwin,  
(son of the above) who died Feb. 21st, 1774,  
In the 28th year of his age.

Likewise in the same vault is interred  
the body of  
Mr. Edward Reding,  
(brother-in-law to the above Mr. Wm. Goodwin)  
who died Jan. 19th, 1797, aged 39.

And also the remains of  
Mr. William Goodwin,  
who departed this life Feb. 25th, 1797,  
in the 48th year of his age.

Here is another.

Near this place lie the remains of  
Benjamin Nicholls, late of this parish,

who died 27th May, 1775,  
in the 75th year of his age.

He was a good husband, a tender father,  
A good neighbour and sincere friend.

Also

Elizabeth his wife who died 27th Dec., 1779,  
in the 73rd year of her age.

And also of

Benjamin, son of William and Lydia Nicholls,  
of the parish of Stirchley,  
who died 7th Sept., 1761,  
in the 4th year of his age.

Near the entrance are the following:—

Mary Yate,  
aged 45,  
Died 20th May, 1779.

Præivit.

Fanny Yate,  
relict of Timothy Yate, Esq., of this parish,  
died August 21st, 1834,  
aged 53 years,  
and was interred in the family vault in this  
church yard.

The sad affliction which befel the family of the Rev. J. H. A. Gwyther when vicar of Madeley, by the successive illness and death of his children, has been commemorated by sympathising friends and neighbours by means of a white marble tablet, on which are a group of well executed crushed lilies, at the base, and another erected by the family of Mr. Gwyther. The following are the inscriptions:—

As  
A Solemn  
Memorial

Of the affecting death within nine days  
of five children  
of the Rev. J. H. A. Gwyther, M.A.,  
Vicar of this parish,  
And in testimony of respectful sympathy  
with the bereaved parents  
This tablet is erected by  
friends and neighbours, parishoners of Madeley.

Hephzibah Mary, born Nov. 28th, 1845,  
died April 12th, 1856.

Emily Maria, born August 17th, 1847,  
died April 13th, 1856.

Phœbe Catharine, born August 10th, 1848,  
died April 14th, 1856.

James Bulkley Phillips, born Aug. 7th, 1850,  
died April 16th, 1856.

Clara Artemisia, born Oct. 10th, 1852,  
died April 21st, 1856.

“The voice said cry, and he said what shall I cry? all flesh is grass, and  
all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass  
withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for  
ever.”

ISAIAH XL. 6–8.

It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

I. SAMUEL III. 18.

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

GENESIS XVIII. 25.

In Affectionate Memory of  
Richard Cecil Henry,  
The second beloved son of  
James Henry Gwyther, M.A., Vicar of this Parish,

And Mary Catharine his wife.  
Born Sep. 21st, 1851. Died April 4th, 1855.

Yes, Thou art fled and saints a welcome sing,  
Thine infant spirit soars on angels' wing,  
Our dark affection might have hop'd thy stay,  
The voice of God has called his child away.  
Sweet Rose of Sharon, plant of holy ground,  
Like Samuel early in the temple found;  
Oh; more than Samuel blest, to thee 'tis given,  
The God he served on earth, to serve in heaven.

### **BENEFACTIONS.**

1706. May 28th, Basil Brooke, Esq. of Madeley gave by will £40, to which an addition of £60 was made by unknown Benefactors, wherewith certain Cottages and Premises were purchased and conveyed to Trustees for the benefit of the Poor of this Parish.

1800. The yearly sum of five shillings was given to the Poor of this Parish to be paid out of the Rates of the Premises lately belonging to Mr. Richard Beddoes, but now in the possession of Walter Bowdler, of Madeley.

1825. Joseph Reynolds, Esq., of the Bank House, presented a Service of Communion Plate for the use of this Church, of the value of £100.

1810. Sept. 6th, Mr. William Yate, of this Parish, gave by will to the Churchwardens for the time being in Trust, four kneelings in his Pew, No. 13 in the Gallery, for the benefit of the Sunday Schools of this Parish.

1852. Thomas Lister, Esq., of Broseley, gave £100 to the Sunday and National Schools connected with the Parish Church of Madeley, which sum was invested in the three per cent Consolidated Annuities, on the 19th day of January, 1853, in the names of Rev. J. H. A. Gwyther, John Anstice, and Thomas Smith, Vicar and Churchwardens, Managers of the said Schools.

The Foundation Stone of this Church  
was laid by the Rev. George Patrick, L.L.B.,  
September 22nd, 1794.

Divine Worship first performed therein by the Rev. Samuel Walter, A. M.,  
Curate of this parish, on Easter Day, being

April 16th, 1797.

William Purton, Thomas Wheatly, } Churchwardens.

## **MADELEY.**

### **EXTINCT AND ANCIENT NAMES.**

An old book containing tithes charges has names of places now no longer known. In 1786, for instance, Mr. Botfield is stated to occupy under the family of the late Sir Joseph Hawley some pieces of land called the Hoar Stones. The Rev. Charles Hartshorne in his *Salopia Antiqua* describes hoar stones at some length and quotes passages from sacred and profane writers to shew that they were in some cases memorial, and in others division marks between property. They occur at a place called Hoar, or “Whure Edge,” on the Titterstone Clee, and in several other places in Shropshire and neighbouring counties, whilst in Wales, both north and south, they are still more numerous.

Among old names of places applying to portions of Madeley Court property we find the Hopyard, adjoining “the slang,” a piece of 11 acres, 2 perches, and 16 roods, formerly in the occupation of Mr. W. Purton, and belonging to Richard Dyott Esq.; and the Coneberry, and Coneygrey; Deer Close, and Battlefield, all belonging to the same in 1787.

### **MADELEY MARKET.**

Grants of markets and fairs appear to have been made by kings in former times by way of favour to the holders of manors, rather than from a wish to accommodate the people who shared the privileges. Madeley market was granted by the necessitous king, Henry III., to the Prior of Wenlock, July 6, 1269. He also granted an annual fair, to be held on three days; namely, on the vigil, the day, and the morrow of St. Matthew the apostle. The market was to be held on Tuesdays, but it fell into disuetude, and was either removed to or revived in another portion of the same manor; and the inhabitants of the village for many years, had no market nearer than

Ironbridge or Dawley. The old market was at one time held at Cross Hill, in an open space where a group of cottages now divide the roads. It was also held at one time in a building which served as a market hall, now the property of Mr. Legge, adjoining the barn in which king Charles was lodged. Subsequently it was removed to Madeley Wood; and afterwards to Ironbridge, which was at that time a rising place. Ineffectual attempts were made in 1857 to re-establish a market, but nothing effectual was done till 1869, when an energetic committee was appointed, of which Mr. Legge was Treasurer and the writer of this article was Sec., which succeeded in establishing the market, first in the open street and secondly in treating with the lord of the manor, through his agent, W. R. Anstice, Esq., for the erection of a suitable building, on condition that a scale of tolls was adopted sufficient to cover the outlay. The market has proved of great advantage to the town; not only to purchasers but to tradesmen, by causing more ready money to be spent in the town than formerly.

#### **MADELEY AS A PART OF THE FRANCHISE OF WENLOCK.**

Madeley for the last 900 years has been associated with Wenlock. It formed part of the possessions of the Church of St. Milburgh in the time of King Edward (son of the Great Alfred) at the commencement of the tenth century, and is mentioned as such in Domesday. It shared the privileges which the many franchises obtained by the Prior of Wenlock conferred. These privileges and exemptions from taxation gave, Mr. Eyton observes, to each acre of land a two-fold value. On the other hand it suffered from the occasional extortions of the Priors, and inconveniences from being subject, as all lands of the Borough were, to the Mother Church of Holy Trinity, Wenlock. It was subject to the Courts of Wenlock, and as early as 1267 a case is mentioned in which the Provost of Wenlock and the Prior were engaged in *disseizen* one of the tenants of the Prior at Madeley.

The Bailiff and his peers, together with the Recorder, were Justice of the Peace, with a Jurisdiction co-extensive with the Borough.

These officers had Constables in the several divisions of the Borough, termed Allotments, sometimes Constablewicks. The men selected for the office appear to have been men of substance, standing, and integrity; and

upon them devolved the duties of maintaining the laws, of collecting monies for the king &c.

Here, for instance, are the “Articles which the constables” of Madeley and Little Wenlock were called upon “to present upon oath.”

1.—What felonies have been committed and what default . and by and in-whom.

2.—What vagrant p’sns. and sturdy beggars have passed through yo’r. limitts unpunished, and whether the same and impotent poor of yo’r. p’ share provided for, and poor children bound apprentices according to Law.

3.—What Recusants of about the age of sixteen are in yo:e limitts, and who absent themselves from church on ye Lord’s Day, and how many sabbaths.

4.—Who have profaned the Sabbath by swearing, labouring or otherwise.

5.—What Ingrossers, forestalled, or . . . of the market, of cow or cattle, or other dead victuals are within yo’r limitts, or any Badgers or Drovers of cow or cattle.

6.—Who make mault to sell of corn or grain or tythe or tylth not being their own . and are not licensed thereunto.

7.—What Masters or Servants give or take greater wages than is appointed by Justices of the Peace according to Law.

8.—What cottagers or inmates are evicted, removed or maintained, and by whom, and how long.

9.—What unlawful games, drunkenness, tipling other evil rule or disorder hath been in Inns, ale houses &c. and by whom.

10.—What Servants have departed from their masters, and what masters have put away their servants within the compass of their time.

11.—Who use gunns, or take or destroy hawks or hawk's eggs, of pheasants, partridges, younge deer, hares, snipes, fish, or fowl, with snares or other engines whatsoever for that purpose against the Law.

12.—Who use unlawful weights or measures or buy by a greater and sell by a lesser weight or measure.

13.—Whether watch and ward be duly observed and kept according to ye statute; that is to say, between Ascension Day and Michaelmas in convenient places, and who has made default therein.

14.—What highways have been repaired and what have been neglected.

15.—Who have sold beer, or syder, or perry, &c. unlicensed, or who hath evaded ye assize of bread and drink unlawfully, either the bakers or assizers.

16.—What butchers have killed or sold meate on the Lord's Day, or sold any unwholesome flesh at any other time.

17.—Who have any assault, battery, or bloodshed.

18.—Who have profanely sworn or cursed, and how often.

19.—What common brawlers, drunkards, scoulds, eavesdroppers, talebearers, and such disordered p'sns are within y're limits.

20.—Who have sold ale or beer on the Sabbath day, or who have been drinking or tipling in any alehouse on that day.

As the reader may surmise, from references to recusants and others who refused or neglected to attend church, or to acknowledge the supremacy of the King as the head, these instructions were drawn up and submitted by the Bailiff to the Constables of Madeley, Little Wenlock, Beckbury, and Badger, in the early part of reign of William and Mary.

Vagrants and sturdy beggars, it appears, were to be strictly looked after; they swarmed through the country, giving themselves up to pilfering; the women breeding children whom they brought up to the same idle way of living, so that, according to a writer about that period, (1677) there were

100,000 paupers in England. Harsh measures were therefore resorted to: the law of Settlement was passed, and once more the poor were reduced to bondage to the soil from which they had been emancipated a century or two before. By this law, which remained in force 130 years, and which was not repealed till the close of the last century, the poor were imprisoned within their allotments; and upon the complaints of the Churchwardens or Overseers, any two Justices of the Peace had power to lay hold of the new comer and within forty days remove him to the Parish in which he was last settled, unless he could prove that he was neither a pauper nor a vagabond, or that he rented a tenement of the value of £10 per annum.

Here, for instance, is a copy of a letter addressed to the constables of Madeley.

Wenlock

To the Constables of the p sh. of Madeley,  
Greeting.

Whereas I have been informed yt. Thomas Richasson doth endeavour to make a settlement within the s'd p'ish of Madeley, contrary to the laws &c. I am therefore in the King and Queen's Ma'ties names, of England that now are, to will and require you the said Constables, or one of you that you bring before me or some other of their Ma'ties Justices of the Peace for the said Town and lib'ties, the body of the said Thomas Richasson, to the Serjeant's House in Much Wenlock, upon Tuesday the tenth day of this instant month of March, to answer to such matters as shall be objected against him by the overseers of the poor of the parish of Madeley. And you, the said constables, are required to give notice to John York of yo'r p'sh, Smith, that he be and appear before me &c. at the time and place above said, by nine o'clock in the morning, to put in sureties for his and his wife's good behaviour towards Elinor Alnord, Widdy, and all their Ma'ties loyal people. And you are to make due returns of this warrant at the time above stated &c. Given under my hand and seal this second day of March, Anno domini 1690.

You must give notice to Thomas Cope, Anne Cludd, and Elizabeth Morris to appear to testify the truth of their knowledge.

Lan. Stephens.

Probably there were other reasons for these strict enquiries, as the feudal bondage to which the poor were reduced was closely interwoven with another evil, the thriving-traffic of Shipping likely young paupers to American Plantations, as was done by the Bristol Corporation, which held out to the poor wretches the alternative of leaving England or being flogged or imprisoned.

It may perhaps be a redeeming feature in the character of that “ermined iniquity and prince of legal oppressors,” as Judge Jeffreys, who was not unconnected with Shropshire, was called, to say that as Lord Chief-Justice he exerted himself successfully to put down this abomination.

Another summons from Wenlock to the constables requires them by virtue of an Act of Parliament (fifth of William and Mary) to give notice to all householders, and to all others they may believe to be disaffected, inhabiting within their “Constablewick,” being sixteen years of age and above sixteen, to appear at the house of, Humphrey Powell, Sergent-at-mace, at Wenlock &c. to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to their Ma’ties, and to subscribe the declaration in the Act &c. Dated 16th June, 1692.

Signed Thos. Crompton, Bailf.  
Chas. Rindar. Recorder.  
Lan. Stephens.  
John Mason.

This summons does not appear to have brought the parties to book, for we find a large number charged with contempt, and again summonsed under a fine of 40s. to appear before the Sergeant-at-mace.

In 1693, William Hayward, Roger Brooke, Gent., and John Smytheman, Gent., and others are applied to, as assessors for Madeley, Beckbury and Little Wenlock, in carrying out the Act passed in the fifth year of the reign of William and Mary, entitled “an Act for granting to their Majesties an aid of Four Shillings in ye pound for one year, for carrying on a vigorous War against France.” After giving the nature of the property to be taxed, the Bailiff and his Officers call upon the assessors to levy a double tax upon

“every papist, or reputed papist, of ye age of 16 years or upwards, who hath not taken the oath mentioned and required to be observed in an Act of Parliament passed in the first year of that reign, entitled an Act for abrogating the oaths of Supremacy and allegiance,” unless they then take the oath they shall administer. The papists however were not alone in this respect; others who had not taken the oaths, or who refused to take those tendered, were to be similarly rated or assessed.

In some cases the Constables were required to look after and to report upon all young men of a certain age and height, likely to be of use to his Majesty in war times, &c.

Here is a specimen.

(To the Constables of Madeley.)

“We whose names” &c., His Ma’ties Justices of the Peace, having received a summons from the Deputy Lieutenant of the county, together with a copy of a letter from the Lords of the Privy Council &c., Command you to make diligent search for all straggling seamen, watermen, or seafaring men, and to impress all such, giving each one shilling, impressment money, and to bring the same before us, to the intent that they may be sworn and provided for, as by the said letter directed; and You, the sd. Constables are not to impress any very old, crazy, or unhealthy men, but such as are younge, and of able healthy bodies, fit for se’vice; and herein you are to use yo’e: best endeavours as you and any of you will answer the contrary. Given under our hands &c.

“You are to take notice that what monye you shall lay out of yo’e: purse upon this service we will take care the same shall be speedily repaid you according to the order of their Majesties Privy Council.”

Jas: Lewis, Balf.  
Geo: Weld.  
Tho: Compton.

Turning back to the period when great political, religious, and moral changes were taking place in the country, when Royalists and Republicans

had been struggling for the mastery, and the latter were victorious, to ascertain their reflex and influence upon the little local parliaments sitting in the Guildhall at Wenlock, we found some characteristic presentments by those then important officers the constables, from the several constablewicks within the franchise, with other matters coming before the bailiffs and Justices of the Peace, and instructions issued by them such as may be of interest in shewing the intermeddling spirit of Puritanism in its then rampant attitude, when the neglect of public worship, and the walking out of sweethearts, and even husbands and wives, during sermon time, was punished with fines, imprisonments or the stocks. The stocks in fact appear to have been in frequent requisition, and fines as frequently imposed for such trivial offences as hanging out clothes on a Sunday, being seen in an ale house on the Sabbath, and for the very mildest form of swearing, or for the least utterance of disaffection or disrespect of the Commonwealth. Here, for instance, is the presentment of

“Articles of evil behaviour of Edward Jeames, of Long Stanton Clee, in the Liberties of Much Wenlock, xiiiith day of September, 1652, John Warham, gent., Bailiff.

“First, that the said Edward Jeames is a common disturber of the Publike Peace, of this Commonwealth, by stirring up strife and sedition among his neighbours.”

The presentment then proceeds to state that the said Edward Jeames doth often quarrel with his owne wife and family.

“Secondly That the said Edward Jeames doth take abroad wh. him a Welsh servt. Lad wch. he keepeth, to the end yat if any neighbour being by him abused by opprobrious and unseemely language and word of provocation, doe make any answeare or reply to him, out of which any advantage may be taken, the said Lad shall verify ye same upon oath on purpose to vex and molest the same neighbour and to gaine revenge against him. Thirdly that the said Edward Jeames, in September, 1651, when the titular king of Scotte invaded yis land wh. an army, saied openly in ye heareing of divse persons yt he was glad yt ye kinge was comen into ye land, for if he had not come he thought yt

ye present. government would have altered religion & turned all unto Popery.”

We did not turn to other old parchments containing the decisions of the Justices to see what punishment, if any, was meted out to Mr. Jeames for his evil behaviour, but turned to note some of the Informations laid against ale house keepers, and persons frequenting ale houses on the Sabbath. Here is one from Barrow, not from the Constable, or from one living within the franchise; but from a gentleman who first proclaims his own goodness by telling us that he himself had attended service twice on the Sunday, but who, like many others just then, felt it to be his duty to look after others. He commences by saying

“that yesterday, being Lord’s Day, I was at Wenlock morning and evening prayer, and going home by the house of John Thompson of Barrow, ale seller, both the doors being open I saw both hall and parlour full of people, both men and women drinkeinge and some drinkeinge forth of dores. There is a private house standing farr from any rode and hath the report to bee a verye rude house on ye Lord’s Day. I am Louth to be the informer, because I doe nott live wthin ye franchise, but leave yt to ye worshps. consideration hoping yo<sup>u</sup> will take som course whereby God may bee better honoured, and his Sabbathes less defamed in that house. What I can speke of that man further I forbear, for ye present.

Yours to command,  
WILLIAM LEGG, senr.”

“Sworn before the Bailiff, John Warham, gent.”

The above John Thompson appeared, and we find

“& is ordered to appear at any tyme hereafter when Mr. Bailiff shall requyer.

6th September, 1652.”

The next is an information against John Aston, of Madeley, in the county of Salop, in which the said John is summonsed to appear before the Bailiff,

John Warham, gent., and Justices of the Peace of the said town and liberties. The information appears to have been sworn to by Thomas Smytheman, of Madeley, husbandman, who states that Lawrence Benthall, and William Davies, of Madeley, were seen drinking on the Lord's Day, at Aston's ale-house. The summons appears to have been issued by John Weld the younger, of Willey. The case is now brought before the Bailiff who says:

“Let a warrant issue forth to the officers for the leviing of the monies forfeited for the said offence, according to the Act of Parliament in that behalf; signed, John Warham, Bailiff.”

We find similar informations as to ale-houses from Broseley and other parts of the franchise about the same time.

### **SHEEP STEALING IN SHIRLETT: CUNNING DEVICE.**

“The information upon oath of John Eabs of Shurlett, taken upon oath the xxvth day of May, 1648, conserninge some Sheepe stolne from him of late.

“Deposeth that upon ffriday night last he had a Lamb feloniously stolne from him either out of his yearde or out of the pasture, and alsoe upon Wensday night he had likewise a weather sheepe stolne, and upon search made for the same yeasterday being Saturday he wh. Edward Buckley the Deputy Constable, found in the house of Willm. Wakeley in Shurlett a qter. of lambe hyd in a Milkepan, wh. a brest and halfe a brest, a neck not cutt from the brest of lambe, all covered upon wh. flower, yis said Edward Wakeleye's Wife denyng soundly yat there was any Mutton or lambe in the house or whin. yat Milkepane, and desieringe ye searchers not to shead her flower in ye pan wh. ye meate was hyd in, and indeavouringe to obscure ye place, beinge a Cobard, in wh. ye lambe was, and further cannot informe but yat he verily beleiveth in his conscience ye said meate was feloniously stolne by ye said Wakely or his people.

Sworn before Audley Bowdler.

Edw. Wakeley upon being examined says that the lambe was one of his own which he killed on *Friday* night, and that parte of it was eaten by his own

people before search was made next morne; “being demanded why it was hid and hid over with flower in such obscurity in his house, he says he knoweth not whether it was hid or not, but if it was it was wht. ye privity of ye said Examind, and done by his people unknown to him.”

This puts us in mind of another famous old sheep stealer of Shirlett, who having stolen a sheep hid it in the baby’s cradle, and when the Constables called to search his house, with the greatest *nonchalance* told them they might search away; but added, “don’t make a noise or else you’ll wake the baby”; and he continued to smoke his pipe and rock the cradle till the search was completed, and the officers departed *without* finding any “meate.”

The Constables appointed by the Corporation of Wenlock, were officers who within the Constablewicks or allotments into which the Borough was divided, were entrusted, under the Bailiffs with very many important duties, such as collecting monies for the king, and carrying into execution acts of parliament, as well as executing summonses and bringing up defaulters. They were a superior class of men, selected from such as held land, or were persons of property. Later on quite a different class of men were appointed; still, sometimes from small tradesmen, but at others from men who sought the office for the sake of its emoluments, and who often became the tools of unscrupulous men in office, whether Bailiffs or Justices of the Peace; as in the case of Samuel Walters, a broken-down tradesman, whose doings at last, together with that of the Justices, attracted the attention of parliament. Walters, was the son of the Rev. Mr. Walters, incumbent of Madeley, and it may serve to give an idea of the estimation in which he was held in the parish to mention, that he on one occasion attempted to enlist his own father, by giving him the shilling in the dark.

The powers exercised by the borough justices were often most arbitrary, especially when the individual who came within their power happened to be a dissenter, or “a dangerous radical.” On the merest pretence blank warrants were issued, which unscrupulous constables, like “Sammy Walters,” as he was called, carried in their pockets, and filled as occasion required. One notorious instance was that of three Dutch girls, (Buy-a-Brooms, as they were called), whom Walters overtook in his “Teazer,” between Wenlock and Shrewsbury, and invited to ride with him. Calling at

a public-house on the road he went in, filled up three of his warrants, and then drove them straight to Shrewsbury gaol. This case came before the House of Commons, and was inquired into by the Home Secretary, and the system of granting blank warrants was abolished throughout the kingdom. Madeley is one of the three Wards into which the borough is divided. For parliamentary purposes Beckbury and Badger are included, these having been, like Madeley, part of the extensive possessions of the church of St. Milburgh. Madeley also formed part of the wide extending parish of Holy Trinity of Wenlock, a parish which embraced Broseley, and was not limited even by the Severn. The words of the charter granted by Edward IV. to Sir John Wenlock were these:—

“That the Liberty of the Town or Borough shall extend to the Parish of the Holy Trinity, and through all the limits, motes, and bounds of the same parish, and not to any other Towns or Hamlets which are not of the Parish aforesaid.”

The charter granted by Charles I., in the seventh year of his reign, added somewhat to the privileges previously possessed, and either gave or confirmed the right of the burgesses to send *one* member to parliament. Originally it seems to have been the prior who had the right of attending parliament; for we find in 1308 Sir John Weld holding Willey by doing homage to the prior by “carrying his frock to parliament.” How the burgesses obtained the further privilege of sending two members to parliament no one seems to know, and there is no document, we believe, in the archives of the corporation tending to throw light on the subject; but they appear to have enjoyed that privilege as far back as Henry VIII’s time.

The burgesses of Madeley were not numerous, we fancy; some well known Madeley names, however, occur, both as burgesses and as bailiffs, like those of Audley Bowdler and Ffosbrooke de Madeley; the former was “Bailiff of the town and liberties” in 1655 and 1678. In 1661 Thomas Kinnersley de Badger, Armiger, was bailiff, which would seem to indicate that the burgesses of Badger at that time shared in the municipal duties and privileges of the borough. In 1732 Mathew Astley de Madeley, Gent, was bailiff. The Astleys lived in the old hall, a stone building partly on the site of Madeley Hall, now the residence of Joseph Yate, Esq., a portion of which building is supposed now to form the stable. The names of the

Smithemans, one of whom married the co-heir of Cumberford Brooke, Esq., of Madeley Court and Cumberford in Staffordshire, occur among the bailiffs. Later on we get that of George Goodwin, of Coalbrookdale and the Fatlands.

At the passing of the Municipal Reform Act in 1835–6 mayors were substituted for bailiffs; the last elected under the old title and the first elected as chief magistrate under the new title was likewise a Madeley gentleman, William Anstice, Esq., father of the present William Reynolds Anstice, Esq., of Ironbridge. Mr. Anstice was elected bailiff in 1834; in 1835 there appears to have been no election, but in 1836 he was the first gentleman elected, as we have just said, under the new title. Subsequently the names of other parishioners, as Henry Dickinson, Charles James Ferriday, John Anstice, Charles Pugh, John Arthur Anstice, and Richard Edmund Anstice, Esquires, occur. The present (1879) Aldermen and Councillors for the Ward are Egerton W. Smith, first elected Alderman 1871, and John Fox elected Alderman 1879; John Arthur Anstice first elected Councillor 1869; Alfred Jones 1873; John Randall 1874; Richard Edmund Anstice 1876; Andrew Beacall Dyas 1878; <sup>[235]</sup> and William Yate Owen 1879.

The electors for parliamentary purposes prior to the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 were few in number so far as Madeley was concerned. They consisted of freemen, men who acquired the right to vote for members of parliament either by birth, servitude, or purchase. Such freemen however could live many miles distant; they were often brought at a closely contested election even from the continent, at considerable expense; and the poll was kept open for weeks.

The Act of 1832, 2 William IV., limited this right to persons resident within the borough for six calendar months, or within seven statute miles from the place where the poll was taken, and this was uniformly taken at Wenlock. It limited the right of making freemen to those whose fathers were already burgesses, or who were entitled to become such prior to the 31st March, 1831. The twenty-seventh clause of the act, which conferred the right to vote upon ten-pound occupiers of houses or portions of buildings, added greatly to the franchise in Madeley as compared with other portions of the borough. The alterations effected by the act of 1867 in the borough

franchise were, of course, very much greater, as it gave the right of voting to every inhabitant occupier as owner or tenant of any dwelling house within the borough, subject to the ratings and payment of poors rates; also to occupiers of parts of houses where rating was sufficient and separate.

Contests were not very frequent under the old state of things; when they did occur they arose more out of rivalry or jealousy on the part of neighbouring families than from anything else. The most fiercely fought contests that we remember, under the old limited constituency, were those of 1820 and 1826; when Beilby Lawley and Beilby Thompson put up. The most memorable under the ten pound franchise were those when Bridges put up in 1832; and on a subsequent occasion Sir William Sommerville, in 1835. Bridges and Sommerville came forward in the liberal interest, and the numbers polled from Madeley, were—

Sommerville	111
Forester	67
Gaskell	45

Among Sommerville's supporters were many plumpers.

The more recent contests under the extended franchise were when C. G. M. Gaskell, Esq. came forward, and only polled 846 votes against 1,708 polled by the Right Hon. General Forester, and 1,575 by A. H. Brown, Esq., and the more recent of 1874, when Sir Beilby Lawley came forward.

### **PETTY SESSIONS.**

Madeley with its two sister wards has Petty Sessions once in six weeks, which are held in the large room built for that purpose over the Police Office at Ironbridge. In the lower story are cells for prisoners, very different indeed as regards cleanliness and conveniences of all kinds to the old Lock-up, which many may remember near the potato market. The justices for the borough generally sit here, the Mayor being chief magistrate presiding. The first batch of magistrates, in the place of the borough justices, took place in the 6th year of the reign of William IV., those for Madeley being William Anstice, Esq., of Madeley Wood, and John Rose,

Esq., of the Hay. Others have been appointed from time to time as circumstances seemed to require.

The borough from the first period of incorporation had its General Sessions, and its Recorder, who, being a lawyer or other fit person, was chosen by the burgesses to sit with the Bailiff to be justices of the peace, to hear and determine felonies, trespasses, &c., and to punish delinquents therein; and King Charles's Charter fixed this court to be held once in two weeks. There was also a General Sessions. The same charter states

“That there shall be a General Sessions of Peace to be holden by the said Bailiff and Justices in any place convenient within the Borough aforesaid, from time to time for ever; so that they do not proceed to any matter touching the loss of life or member in the said Borough, without the presence, assistance, and assent of the Recorder of the said Borough. That they shall have all fines, &c., imposed as well in the said Sessions aforesaid as in all other Courts to be held within the said Borough.”

In our “History of Broseley,” p.p. 38 and 39, we have given the names of the bailiff, recorder, justices of the peace, those of the constables, and grand jury, who sat in cases heard at Wenlock July 21st, 1653. The right to hold such Sessions was originally granted by Edward IV. in 1468. When the reconstruction of the borough courts took place in consequence of the changes effected by the passing of the Municipal Act in 1836, this institution of General Sessions appears to have been overlooked: but the privilege was afterwards granted upon petition by the council, in the 6th year of the reign of her present majesty.

The magistrates resident in the parish at present are—

	Appointed.
John Arthur Anstice, Esq.	1869
William Gregory Norris, Esq.	1869
Charles Pugh, Esq.	1871
Richard Edmund Anstice, Esq.	1877

## **COURTS FOR THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS, COUNTY COURT, &c.**

A County Court or sciremote was instituted by Alfred the Great, and gradually fell into disuse after the appointment of Justices of Assize in the reign of Henry II. Courts of Request were afterwards created. The charter already quoted, for instance, speaking of the burgesses says:—

“That they may have a Court of Record upon Tuesday for ever, once in two weeks, wherein they may hold by plaint in the same court all kinds of pleas whatsoever, whether they shall amount to the sum of forty shillings; the persons against whom the plaints shall be moved or levied, to be brought into plea by summons, attachment, or distress.”

This court was held at Broseley, before Commissioners, of whom there were eight chosen, to represent the eight parishes over which it had jurisdiction. It was held at the Hole-in-the-Wall public house, and Jeremiah Perry (Jerry the Bum as he was called) was bailiff, and after him Henry Booth, when we remember it. It was abolished when the Act for the recovery of small debts was passed and the present system of County Courts established in 1847. The books and documents, three tons in weight, were transferred to the court at Madeley, afterwards to London, and were sent to the Government paper mills, we believe.

The County Court at Madeley was formerly held in the Club Room of the Royal Oak Inn; but a county court house was erected in 1858. The building is in the Grecian style, and comprises a large court room, registrar's and bailiffs office, and dwelling house for the court keeper. The present judge of the circuit, which comprises twelve courts, is Arundel Rogers, Esq.; Registrar and High Bailiff, E. B. Potts, Esq.; Chief Clerk, Mr. E. A. Hicks, with an efficient staff of bailiffs. The court has jurisdiction in ordinary cases up to £50, in equity to £500; and divides with Shrewsbury the whole bankruptcy business of the county. A bill has already passed the House of Lords proposing to greatly increase the jurisdiction of all county courts. Scale of fees: summary—

Under £2	1s. in the £.
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Above £2	1s., and 1s. extra.
Hearing Fees	2s. in the £.
Executions	1/6 do. do.

There are between 2000 and 3000 new cases annually.

### **MANORIAL COURT.**

This court was originally held at the Court House, by the Prior of Wenlock, as lord of the manor of Madeley, as shewn on page 9, where the pleas and perquisites of the said court are mentioned as being entered in 1379 at 2s. The right to hold such court, a Court Leet, as it was called, was transferred, together with other privileges, by Henry VIII. to Robert Brooke when he sold the manor. It passed to John Unett Smitheman, Esq., who married Catherine Brooke, daughter and co-heir of Cumberford Brooke, Esq., of Madeley, and Cumberford in Staffordshire. The Smitheman's sold the manor to Richard Reynolds, from whom it passed to his son William. The property belongs now to the devisees of the late Joseph Gulson Reynolds, and those of his brother William Reynolds, M.D.. Esq.

The Court Leet has not been held of late years. It had jurisdiction over various offences, extending from nuisances, eaves dropping, and various irregularities and offences against the public peace.

### **THE DISPENSARY.**

This useful and valued institution was established in 1828. At its fiftieth anniversary, held July, 1878, the president was the Right Hon. Lord Forester. The vice-presidents: the Hon. and Rev. Canon Forester; W. O. Foster, Esq.; the Rev. G. Edmonds; C. T. W. Forester, Esq., M.P.; A. H. Brown, Esq., M.P.; C. G. M. Gaskell, Esq.; and the treasurer, John Pritchard, Esq. The surgeons include E. G. Bartlam, Esq., Broseley; T. L. Webb, Esq., Ironbridge; C. B. H. Soame, Esq., Dawley; J. Procter, Esq., Ironbridge; Dr. Thursfield, Broseley; H. Stubbs, Esq., Madeley; and J. J. Saville, Esq., Cressage.

At this meeting the following subscribers, together with the president, vice-presidents, and treasurer, were appointed a committee for the ensuing year:

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William Reynolds Anstice, Esq.

Mr. Alexander Grant.

Mr. Edward Burton.

Mr. Egerton W. Smith.

W. Gregory Norris, Esq.

Arthur Maw, Esq.

John Arthur Anstice, Esq.

Richard Edmund Anstice, Esq.

Edward Roden, Esq.

Rev. Frederick Robert Ellis.

Rev. George Fleming Lamb.

Mr. Francis G. Yates, (since deceased).

George Burd, Esq.

John Pritchard, Esq., Chairman.

### **MADELEY UNION.**

Prior to the passing of the New Poor Law in 1836 each parish maintained its own poor, a system which had been acted upon, we suppose, from the time of Queen Elizabeth. But how the Madeley poor were housed or treated prior to the erection of the Old “House of Industry,” or “Workhouse,” which stood on the hill overlooking the valley of the Severn, now in course of demolition and conversion into cottages, we are unable to say. <sup>[242]</sup> In all probability out-door relief alone was administered. At all times there have been kind and open hearted men of means who out of their

worldly store have taken care to make some provision for their less fortunate brethren, either during their lifetime or by way of devise at their death. In this way, as we have seen on page 217, there were two principal charities, called the Brooke and Beddow charities which amounted altogether to £100. At the latter end of the last century the trustees appear to have invested this in the purchase of several small leasehold cottages and lands, chiefly at Madeley Wood. When it was resolved to build a house of industry in 1787 these properties were sold by the trustees for that purpose. They consisted of two messuages and 15 perches of land situate at the Foxholes, which produced £45. One messuage and garden containing 6¼ perches in the possession of Samuel Hodgkiss, which produced £24. An old messuage and garden in Madeley Wood containing 17 perches and a piece of garden ground containing 2½ perches, which produced £53 10s. A stable in Madeley Wood which produced £10. And two messuages and gardens in Madeley Wood containing a quarter of an acre, and a piece of garden ground containing five perches, which produced £83; also another which fetched £23; making a total of £235 10s.

The investment itself seems to have been so far a good one; the value of the property having increased, owing to the works springing up in the neighbourhood; and it was resolved to raise a subscription in the parish to be added to this £235. The further amount of £806 13s. 6d. was thus raised, making altogether £1,042 3s. 6d., which sum was applied in the erection on a part of the charity land of a house of industry, the cost of which was £1,086 13s. 7¼d.; and a lease of that piece of land, with the house so erected upon it, containing 3r. 12p. or thereabouts, was at the 2nd of January, 1797, granted by the vicar and the major part of the trustees to the then churchwardens and overseers for the use of the parish for a term of 999 years, at the yearly rent of £18. The Charity Commissioners say that the premises described in the leases do not appear to tally exactly with the parcels contained in the two deeds of purchase; and add:—

“Nor are we able to trace the variations of the property which have taken place; as far as we can judge, however, nothing has been lost to the charity. It appears indeed to us that in former times there must have been considerable inattention in the trustees of the affairs of the charity, for we find that previously to the leases granted in 1797, the holders of the tenements claimed the property in them on payment of

the interest of the £100 which had been vested in the purchase, and the trustees were obliged to establish their right by an action of ejectment, a state of things which could scarcely have taken place without much previous remissness on their part. Whether the trustees were strictly justified in making the disposal of the property which they did in 1797 may be questionable. In effect they have sold original property of the charity, and have purchased a rent-charge on the house of industry. Under the circumstances of the case, however, it does not at present appear to us that they could have made a more beneficial arrangement. The income of these premises, amounting to £18 4s. 6½d., together with 5s. a year derived from another fund, has been for many years applied in providing clothing for the poor. At Christmas 1818, tickets of 5s. value were distributed to 71 poor persons, which were received in payment by the different tradesmen for such articles of clothing as were wanted. In 1817 the distribution was wholly suspended, and in the preceding year partially, in order to raise a fund for defraying the expense of a new trust deed. This had occasioned a balance in hand at the time of our inquiry of £23 15s. The deed was prepared and paid for, and it was intended that the whole of the remaining balance with the accruing rents should be given away at the ensuing Christmas.”

For some years the proceeds of the charity were given away to the poor—blankets were bought and distributed; but for over forty years, prior to the last distribution in 1879, it had been accumulating, excepting that on the first and second visitations of the cholera, it was made use of for the purpose of alleviating the distress then existing; and it had been thought advisable to permit its accumulation for the purpose of forming a reserve fund on which to fall back in times of urgent distress, whether arising from contagious disease or depression of trade.

The charge of £18 per annum upon the old poor-house was transferred to the new, and is still paid to the trustees; and to the sum accumulated has been added the £750 which the old workhouse sold for, and it was out of the interest of the whole that the last distribution of the funds of the charity took place in 1879, when blankets to the value of £70 or thereabouts were given away.

The union of parishes was formed in 1836, and Wm. Anstice, Esq. was chosen chairman. He held office for fifteen years, and was succeeded by G. Pritchard, Esq. who held it for eleven years. At his death W. Layton Lowndes, Esq. was elected, and held the office for seventeen years. John Arthur Anstice, Esq., who succeeded Mr. Lowndes on his retirement in April 25th, 1879, now discharges the duties of the office.

A building erected and designed for the poor of one parish was scarcely likely to be suited to the wants of a number of parishes, like Barrow, Benthall, Broseley, Buildwas, Dawley, Linley, Little Wenlock, Madeley, Posenhall, Stirchley, and Willey, which formed the new Union; and although additions were made from time to time the building was evidently inadequate for the accommodation of the number of paupers, tramps, &c., who sought aid or refuge within its walls. It was some time however after the subject was broached before anything was decided. Some Guardians advocated the further enlargement of the old building, whilst others were for a new one entirely; but these even differed among themselves, some being in favour of a new building on the old site, whilst others advocated another site and a new plan altogether. The Poor Law Commissioners at Somerset House accelerated the issue by threatening to close the old building, as unfit for the uses to which it was put; the result being that a site was purchased and the present extensive and well arranged suite of rooms, wards, &c., with their various conveniences, were erected. The original loan of £6,000 obtained in 1870 towards the purchase of the site and the erection of the building was to be paid back by instalments out of the rates levied in the several parishes of the Union, according to the proportions of the rating. The loan altogether has been £10,000, and, with interest, the cost of the erection may be said to have been £13,800; but a further sum of £600 is required for the erection of tramp wards. The building stands upon  $7\frac{3}{4}$  acres, which was purchased at a cost of £1,700; and six acres, previously very rough ground, is under cultivation, and made productive, and in part highly ornamental, by the judicious labour of the inmates of the house. Altogether the grounds and building have a pleasing rather than that forbidding appearance such institutions sometimes have. The building consists of a front range, with central entrance, with master's sitting room, board room, and clerk's offices, on the right; whilst on the left are the

visitor's rooms, and one for the porter, with male and female receiving wards, bath room &c.

Inside the quadrangle we get central offices of various kinds, cooking and dining rooms, pantry, clothing room, master and matron's offices. On the right are the laundry, the washhouse, work rooms, able bodied women's rooms, children's room, old infirm women's room, and three small apartments for married couples. There is also a dormitory on the ground floor for old and infirm women; and over the whole of the offices and rooms mentioned are bedrooms. On the left are similar arrangements to those we have mentioned for the men, but with workshops for carpenters and tailors. On the east is the infirmary, a detached building, with male and female apartments, nurses, &c.; and below this a fever hospital. The whole building is capable of giving accommodation to 225 inmates; but at the time we write 88 are the total number, notwithstanding the very depressed state of trade; and 90, we learn, is about the average.

We visited many of the rooms, that in describing the building we may be able to give our own impressions of the appearance of the inmates. The bedrooms were tenantless, but clean, well lighted and airy; we could not say however what they would be from the breath of so many sleeping in them at night time. Many of the old people we saw in the day rooms were very old, and a large number imbecile, several having been recently brought here from Bicton Heath Asylum. And although this was the case with the women there seemed something about the internal domestic arrangements, which, in giving them employment, seemed to create interest. There was a cheerful alacrity among the female workers, in washing, ironing, mending, making, and scrubbing, and a readiness in replying to questions put by the matron which seemed to speak favourably of the way in which she discharges her duties amongst them. In the "day-rooms" of the men too, although we saw feebleness and age, we saw little of that torpid inanimateness, helplessness, and hopeless looking withered faces one is apt to look for in workhouses. Some were dim-eyed with age, but others were reading books, and more would read no doubt if they had something to read which was interesting. And why should they not have? Here were old men 75, 80, and "going of 85," sitting round a good cheerful fire in a snug room to whom a few illustrated books or newspapers, which everybody could spare, would be a godsend. If all cannot read some can, and they would be

pleased to amuse or interest their fellows. We suggested as much to Mrs. Hayes, the matron, who approved of the suggestion of these and of a few prints hung up in the bedrooms, as well as the day and school rooms; as also did the Rev. H. Wayne, one of the Guardians, who wished we had been in time to make the suggestion to the board. We mention it here that it may be acted upon by others, if the board, or to the master, to whom all such books, prints, or papers should be submitted, approve. Age and infirmity require as much commiseration as childhood, and in very many respects the same means will comfort and solace the aged and impotent as the young child. We ought at any rate to try to make old age endurable. If we do not do this we but add to the weight of old age already bent down with infirmities, and—

‘We furnish feathers for the wing of death.’

One thoughtful lady had, we found, kindly furnished the school-room with some really good prints and drawings. On sunny and suitable days Mr. Hayes employs the men in the grounds, and by the growth of vegetables contributes to the maintenance of the establishment, of which we might say much more if space permitted.

The amount administered in out-door relief at present is a little over that of in-door maintenance, which for the half year ending Michaelmas, 1878, was £544 11s. 2¼d

We have already mentioned Master and Matron: Clerk to the Board Mr. H. Boycott; Chaplain Rev. G. Wintour. Relieving officers Mr. W. Morris and Mr. W. T. Jones.

## **THE CHOLERA.**

If some memorable occurrences in local history may be termed ‘red lettered,’ the fearful visitations of this epidemic in 1832 and 1848 may be said to have been black, and very black lettered events indeed. The steady march of this dire disease from Asia over the continent of Europe towards our shores in 1831 created the utmost alarm of approaching danger, and led to precautionary measures being taken. Medical science however was at fault; contradictory advice was given; orders in council were issued and

withdrawn; and people were at their wits' end what steps to take. A rigid system of quarantine was at first enforced; and when the enemy did arrive it was ordered that each infected district or house was to be isolated and shut up within itself, and the inhabitants cut off from communication with other parts of the country; and 'all articles of food or other necessaries were to be placed in front of the house, and received by the inhabitants after the person delivering them had retired.' It was in fact the exploit over again of the gallant gentleman who proposed, as Milton says, to 'pound up the crows by shutting his park gate.' Clinging to the belief that the disease was imported and spread by contagion, few really remedial measures founded on the hypothesis of the low sanitary condition of the population—as bad drainage, ill-ventilated and overcrowded dwellings, offensive sewers, unwholesome water, and the thousand other kindred abominations which afflict the poor, were suggested. But feelings and sympathies were naturally with the patient and against the unchristian edict which said to him—'Thou art sick, and we visit thee not; thou art in prison, and we come not unto thee'. Gradually too it dawned upon the minds of the authorities—as the result of observation and experience—that it was not so much from direct communication that persons were affected, as from bad sanitary conditions;—for persons were not consecutively affected who lived in the same house or slept in the same bed with the sick; and that children even suckled by mothers labouring under the disease escaped. On Wednesday, the 21st of March, 1832, there was a general fast for deliverance from the plague, as it was called, but it was pretty much the same as Æsop's case of the carter who prayed Jupiter to get his cart wheel out of the rut; and the answer vouchsafed by Providence was similar—'put your own shoulder to the wheel', do what you can first to make the people clean and wholesome. We have no statistics or recorded facts to fall back upon, but so far as our knowledge and experience serves us we should say that the first victims in this neighbourhood were among men and women who led irregular lives, and who lived in dirty ill-ventilated homes, and in the decks and cabins of barges going long voyages, in which men slept and ate their meals; and persons on the banks of the Severn, who drank the polluted water of the river. A case occurred at Coalport, on the 21st of July, 1832, on board a barge on the Severn, which belonged to owner Jones; and it was thought prudent to sink the vessel to destroy the contagion. A man named Richard Evans also was taken with the cholera on board a Shrewsbury barge, and

was removed to the “Big House,” as it was called, at the Calcutts, which had been hired and set apart by Mr. George Pritchard and others for the reception of victims. On the 23rd, Thomas Oakes, son of John Oakes, died on board Dillon Lloyd’s vessel, and during that month and the next the plague continued its ravages by the Severn. From an old diary we learn that a man named Goosetree, his wife, and three children, were seized on the 14th of August at the Coalport Manufactory, and died the same day; as also did a Mrs. Baugh and her mother.

The more ignorant of the people were suspicious of the doctors; Mr. Thursfield on the 23rd of July visited a house at Coalford, and offered a draught to a woman whom he suspected of shewing symptoms of the disease, but was beaten off by her daughter Kitty, who said her mother wanted food and not medicine. The doctor does not appear to have been popular judging from doggerel lines in circulation at the time—

‘The cholera morbus is begun  
And Dr. Thursfield is the mon  
To carry the cholera morbus on.’

A man named William Titley, whilst drinking, dancing, and singing this to a public house company, was taken with the disease, and died next day. William Fletcher, a carpenter, whilst employed in making the coffin intended for Titley, was seized, and died next day, and was buried in the coffin he had made for another. A few days after, on the 14th of September, Israel Weager, a barge block-maker, who wore dirty and greasy clothes, who was grimy and dirty also in his person, and worked in a wretched shed by the Robin Hood public house, was another taken about the same time who died. During the remainder of the same month, and those of October, November, and December, the cholera continued to find victims. Men drank hard to ward off the disease and sowed the seeds which brought it on. Men and women were taken ill, died, and were buried the same day; and some were probably buried before they were dead. One man, a well known cock-fighter at Broseley, was attacked with the disease, and so stupefied by brandy that he was supposed to be dead. He was taken to the cholera ground adjoining Jackfield church on the hill, and the rattle of the soil upon the coffin which accompanied the words “ashes to ashes” &c., roused him from his stupor, when the bystanders hearing a noise lifted the

lid and the old cocker came forth. <sup>[253]</sup> We believe his name was William Roberts, judging from the diary before mentioned, and that the event occurred on the 14th of September; and that on the 1st of October his wife and two children died of the plague, and were buried the same day. At many places it was much worse than it was here. At Bilston, for instance, it raged so fiercely that forty-five victims died in one day; and not less than twenty for several days running; and their neighbours at Birmingham presented a waggon load of coffins, as being the most acceptable present they could make. It was bad enough here; church bells were tolling, hearses and cholera carts were in motion often, and at untimely hours, early and late, by torch light, or accompanied by the feeble light of a lantern; and a melancholy sadness settled upon all. Many journeys were made by the "cholera cart from the Workhouse" to Madeley church-yard, with just sufficient of the inmates of the house to convey the corpse to the hole dug for it. It must not be supposed however that the victims to this terrible plague were confined to the lower classes, many of the well-to-do were stricken and died: the sister of the present Lord Forester, we are informed by the diary referred to, died on the 23rd of July of cholera in London. At last the evil spent itself and subsided; it was a fearful curse, but it had the effect of convincing us that something more than fasts and well-seasoned sermons were needed to prevent or remove the epidemic: and so much was done by public attention being called to the effects bad sanitary conditions had on the physical causes of sickness and mortality, by Dr. Southwood Smith in 1838, and by evidence by Mr. Slaney, M.P., for Shrewsbury, who obtained a select committee to enquire into the circumstances affecting the health of the inhabitants of large towns, with a view to improved sanitary regulations for their benefit, in 1840, that the knowledge gained enabled medical men successfully to grapple with the epidemic when it again threatened to spread itself over the country in 1848.

## **THE SEVERN.**

The Severn at present is of little service to the parishioners of Madeley, either as a source of food or a means of transit, compared with what it was in former times. Yet washing as it does the whole of the western side of the parish, from Marnwood brook to the brook which separates Madeley and Sutton parishes, it deserves notice. There was a time when it supplied a

considerable portion of food to those living upon its banks; and when, whilst other parts of the country, less favoured, were labouring under the disadvantages of land conveyance, over roads scarcely passable, and by machines but imperfectly constructed, its navigation conferred superior privileges; both by the importation of hay, corn, groceries &c., and the exportation of mines and metals produced along the valley through which it runs. The river, inconsiderable in its origin, is indebted for its navigable importance to physical peculiarities of country that constitute its basins. An extensive water-shed of hills, whose azure tops court the clouds, brings down a large amount of rain to swell the volume of its stream. From its source to its estuary in the Bristol Channel it gathers as it rolls from rivers and brooks, which, after irrigating rich pasture lands along their banks, pour their waters into its channel. The Teme, augmented by the Clun, the Ony, the Corve, the Avon, and the Wye, having each performed similar pilgrimages through flower-dotted fields, also pay tribute of their waters. Here weaving its way through a carpet of the richest green it visits sheep-downs, cattle-pastures, orchards, hop-plantations, and hay-producing fields, as it sweeps along, conferring benefit upon the soil, increasing the fertility of fields, aiding in the development of mines, linking important wealth producing districts, bringing materials for manufacturing purposes together, and transporting their products to the sea.

This formerly more than now, so that Agriculture, and commerce felt its quickening influence and bore witness to its sway. Feeders, which capital with talismanic touch opened up by cuttings on the plain, aqueducts or embankments across the vale, tunnels, locks, and other contrivances among the hills to overcome inequalities of surface ran miles through inland districts to collect its traffic. The Shropshire, the Shrewsbury, and the Ellesmere Canals, united the Severn, the Mersey, and the Dee, and the rival ports, Liverpool and Bristol. Shrewsbury, Coalbrookdale, Coalport, Bridgnorth, Bewdley, Stourport, Worcester, and Gloucester, were centres from which its traffic flowed; iron crude and malleable, brick and tile, earthenware and pipes, were sent, the former in large quantities from wharfs at Coalbrookdale, and from others between Ironbridge and Coalport. The Shropshire trade was carried on by means of vessels from 40 to 78 and 80 tons burthen, drawing from three to four feet, which went down with the stream, and were drawn back by horses, or men or both. In consequence of

the rapidity of the current over the fords not more than 20, 30, or 40 tons were usually carried up the river. About 20 voyages in the year were usually made by regular traders, but vessels carrying iron made more. The time occupied for full cargoes to get down to Gloucester was about 24 hours.

In 1756, there were at Madeley-Wood, 21 owners of vessels of 39 vessels. But many more than these came to the Meadow, and Coalport wharves. Hulbert, writing about half a century ago says: "standing upon Coalport bridge I have counted seventy barges standing at Coalport Wharf, some laden and others loading with coal and iron." Madeley-Wood supplied fire-clay and fire-bricks for many years to the porcelain and other works at Worcester. Originally, when Fuller speaks of coals being exported by barges, and when during the Civil Wars the Parliamentary forces planted a garrison at Benthall to prevent the barges carrying coal down the river, vessels were drawn against the stream by strings of men linked to ropes by loops or bows, who were called bow-haulers. It was slavish work; and Richard Reynolds was so struck with the hardship and unfitness of the practice that he exerted himself to obtain an Act of Parliament for the construction of a road by the side of the river, now called the towing path, by which horses were substituted. Sometimes, when a favourable wind blew against the stream, vessels with all sails set would make good progress without further assistance; and it was a pleasing sight to see these and the larger ones, the trows, sailing along the valley. Had means been taken to improve the channel of the Severn, this noble river, navigable for 180 miles, may have been in a much more flourishing condition than at present.

Like opposing interests for and against improvements in the channel, between which the battle of locks and weirs was fought, two opposing forces have been striving for mastery in the tideway of the channel. One contending for an estuary, the other for a delta. Draining a district six thousand square miles in extent, having a fall of two hundred and twenty feet in its descent from its source on Plynlymmon, (1,500 feet above the sea line), to its tideway in the Bristol Channel, and being fed by boisterous brooks and precipitous streams that cut their way through shales and clays and sand-rocks, it is not surprising that the Severn should bring down a vast amount of silt to raise its bed. To correct these irregularities along a portion of the river, improvements, projected by Sir William Cubitt, some years

since, were completed at very considerable outlay, after an expenditure of £70,000 before the sanction of Parliament could be obtained. Above Stourport, where these improvements terminate, the river is still in a state of nature. Except some pedling attempts by means of earth, loose stones, or sinking some dilapidated boats along the side, nothing has been done to improve the channel. The scouring action of the stream constantly undermines the banks. These give way after every flood, and come down to choke the river, or to change the channel, and every newly-formed shoal sends the stream at right angles to its bed to make fresh attempts upon its banks. Fords that served our painted ancestors to make incursions beyond their boundaries, bends almost amounting to circles around which they paddled their canoes, impede navigation still. Attempts to overcome these natural obstacles to its navigation were made as early as 1784, when Mr. Jessop proposed to render the river navigable for vessels drawing four feet at all seasons of the year from Worcester to Coalbrookdale. He proposed to obtain a sufficient depth for that purpose at all seasons of the year by the erection of 13 or 14 weirs between those places; he also recommended that that depth should be obtained below Diglis by dredging and correcting the natural channel of the river, and the Stafford and Worcester Canal Company, joined by the iron manufacturers of Shropshire, applied in the year 1786 to parliament for powers to carry out Mr. Jessop's recommendations, so far as they related to the portion of the river described in the title of the bill, as from Meadow-wharf, Coalbrookdale, to the deep water at Diglis, below the city of Worcester. The bill was lost owing to the objections on the part of the public to the erection of locks and weirs, and owing to the dislike of the carriers to pay toll at all seasons of the year. As it is, there are often three, four, and five months when barges cannot navigate the river with a freight equal to defray the expenses of working them; indeed, instances have occurred in which in only two months of the twelve the river could be advantageously worked. Besides the additional wear and tear, more strength is required to work the vessel, and it takes treble the time to convey 15 tons at low water as it does four times that weight at other times.

To improvements that affect only a portion of the river, and that the lower portion, the Shropshire traders very naturally took objection. They saw that for any benefit to be derived from navigating the lower portion of the

Severn they would be taxed, without being able themselves to participate in it, and at a meeting of iron and coal masters, Severn carriers, and others, held at the Tontine Inn, Ironbridge, on the 2nd of December, 1836, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of opposing the project of the Worcester Severn Navigation Company, for the introduction of locks and weirs upon the river, Richard Darby, Esq., in the chair, it was resolved,

“That having attentively considered the plan proposed by the Worcester Severn Navigation Company, for effecting alterations in the channel of that river, it is of opinion that, whilst the execution of that plan affords no stable prospect of extensive advantage to the public at large, its effects upon a variety, of important local interests, and particularly upon the trading community of this neighbourhood, will be in the highest degree injurious. That the introduction of these works, even if Shropshire vessels were permitted to pass them free of any impost, would be injurious to the traders of this county, but that the exaction from that body of a toll or tonage for such passage would inflict on them a burden of the most unjust and oppressive character. That a petition or petitions in opposition be accordingly at the proper stage presented, and supported by evidence, according to the course of Parliamentary proceeding, and that every exertion be used to obtain the support of members of both houses to the prayer of such petitions.”

The following gentlemen were appointed a committee:—Mr. Botfield, Mr. Mountford, Mr. John Horton, Mr. Richard Darby, Mr. Abraham Darby, Mr. Alfred Darby, Mr. Anstice, Mr. Hombersley, Mr. Rose, Mr. William Pugh, Mr. William James, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. George Pritchard, Mr. John Owen, Mr. Samuel Roden, Mr. John Burton, Mr. John Anstice, Mr. Francis Yates, Mr. John Dyer Doughty, Mr. Edward Edwards, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. George Chune. The agitation proved so far successful that a clause was inserted in the bill exempting the Shropshire traders coming down with full cargoes from toll. This exemption was subject to the qualification that if in descending the river they took in, or in ascending it they took out any goods whatever within the improved portions of the river, their whole cargoes should be subject to toll. This concession cost the Shropshire interest a long and expensive opposition before a committee of the House of Commons. At subsequent periods the Shropshire iron and coal masters and Severn

traders have had similar battles to fight in order to maintain the exemption clause. The commissioners appointed by the act of 1842, who, in 1847, sought powers to erect the weir at Tewkesbury, claimed the repeal of the qualified exemption from toll granted to the Shropshire trade, on the ground that the system of dredging below Worcester had been ineffectual in maintaining an uniform depth of six feet of water. This was complained of as an act of injustice and bad faith on their part towards the Shropshire interest. The slight assistance which, in certain states of the river, they derived from the diminished force of the stream in ascending, was more than neutralised by the loss of aid on their downward voyage and by the detention of the locks. Again the Shropshire traders, through the indefatigable exertions of W. R. Anstice, Esq., were successful in maintaining the free navigation of the river, so far as they were concerned, and subject to conditions above stated.

Traffic upon the Severn, it as been said, costs less than on any other river in the kingdom; and at the present time, notwithstanding the facilities railways afford, the river is preferred for some kind of goods, as for the fine castings of Coalbrookdale, such as grates, which are still carried cheaper and better by means of barges, than by any other.

## THE SEVERN AS A SOURCE OF FOOD.

So much importance has been attached to the Severn as the means both of supplying food and innocent recreation, that many Acts of parliament have at various times been passed for its protection. One sets forth that:

“The King our Sovereign lord James, &c., &c. Having certain knowledge that in his stream and river of Severn and in other rivers, streams, creeks, brooks, waters and ditches thereinto running or descending, the spawn and brood of trout, salmon and salmon-eggs and other fish is yearly greatly destroyed by the inordinate and unlawful taking of the same by the common fishers using and occupying unsized and unlawful nets and other engines,” &c., &c.

We have already said in our “History of Broseley” that—

The earlier acts of parliament were designed with a view to discourage rod-and-line fishing, anglers, who, according to Holinshead ranked third among the rogues and vagabonds, being subject to a fine of £5; and although recent legislation has been intended to encourage this harmless amusement, and to increase the growth of fish, the best efforts of both legislators and conservators have been frustrated hitherto by the Navigation Company, whose locks and weirs turn back the most prolific breeding fish seeking their spawning grounds. The first of these were erected in 1842; and four more have since been added. By the 158th and 159th sections of the Severn Navigation Act the Company were to construct fish passes; and although attempts have been made at various times to do this, no efficient means have been adopted. Not only salmon decreased since their erection but shad, flounders, and lampreys, never now visit this portion of the river. Formerly Owners of barges and their men, when they were unemployed, could spend their time profitably in fishing, and could half keep their families with what they caught.

Of the one hundred and fifteen tons of salmon taken in the Severn in 1877, 16,000 fish were supposed to have been taken in the lower or tidal portion

of the river, and 1.800 in the upper or non tidal portions; but the latter proportion was larger that year than usual. Salmon in the Severn have been still further reduced by the too common practice of taking samlets, on their downward course to the sea, and we are glad to find that more stringent measures are being taken by the conservators and the water-bailiffs to prevent this. Amateur fishermen, gentlemen of intelligence, have not only contributed to this by their own acts but by encouraging others to do likewise under the pretence or excuse that they were not the young of salmon. It is a well ascertained fact, however, not only that they are young salmon, but that when grown to a proper size they come up the river they go down. We heard the Duke of Sutherland say, in his grounds at Dunrobin, where he rears hundreds of thousands of young salmon to turn into the Brora and other rivers, that he had marked their fins and found that they invariably came up the same river they go down, and the author of "Book of the Salmon," says:—

“Take a salmon bred in the Shin, (one of the duke’s salmon rivers) in Sutherland, and set it at liberty in the Tweed, at Berwick, and it will not ascend the Tweed, but will if not slain in transitu, return to its native river, the Shin, traversing hundreds of miles of ocean to do so. Is this wonderful! No more wonderful than,—

“The swallow twittering from its straw-built shed,”

migrating, on the first appearance of winter from these shores, to the warm atmosphere, yielding insect food, of Africa, and returning to its natal locality in the spring, to live and give life in the temperate summer of a temperate zone.”

It is owing to this unconquerable instinct we are indebted for the few salmon we get in the upper Severn. At the spawning season they make their appearance in the estuary, and, so long as they meet with no insurmountable obstruction to their progress, will traverse miles for the deposition of their ova. Slight obstacles in the way will not deter them, and it is only after repeated failures they give up; they swim through rapids, leap from seven to ten feet high, and push on to their destination through powerful floods of descending water; and it is only at insurmountable barriers to their progress

that they fall a prey to the rapacity of poachers, who have been known at one time to have taken cart loads with spears.

Since the above was in type Mr. Frank Buckland and Mr. S. Walpole, as Inspectors of Salmon fisheries, have issued their report, wherein we learn that the Severn is much polluted in its upper waters by refuse from mines, and in the middle and lower waters by the refuse from manufactories and town sewage; and that out of the 290 miles of spawning ground which the Severn possesses, only 75 are accessible to the fish. Mr. Willis Bund, the chairman of the Severn Board, supplied Mr. Buckland with the following figures as to the value of the Severn salmon fisheries. The figures show the value of the fish caught:

1869	£8,006
1870	13,000
1871	11,200
1872	8,000
1873	10,000
1874	10,500
1875	10,590
1876	14,560
1877	12,880
1878	8,978

As regards the future prospects of the Severn, Mr. Buckland confesses he does not feel quite happy, but adds that the exact cause of the non-increase of the produce of the river during recent years may possibly depend upon the peculiar conditions of the river between the first navigation weir and the sea. The fish having such a long estuary to traverse before they can get beyond the tidal nets are often unable to pass the lower weirs, and being obliged to fall back with the tide, run a *second chance* of being caught by the nets. The fish taken in the Severn are usually very large. For the last five years the average has been over 14 lbs. each; last year a great many

varying between 30 and 40 lbs. were captured, and some even exceeding the latter weight. The largest recorded, weighing 50 lb., was taken in a draft net on the 18th March, 1878, by Mr. Browning, of Longney, Gloucestershire. The fish spawn in the Severn as early as, if not earlier than, in any other river. During the past year, 1878, Mr. Buckland says fishing was not prosperous, and he gives the number of salmon taken as 12,450, and the weight as 86 tons, against the 16,000 fish, weighing 115 tons, given on a former page, as being the take in 1877. Mr. Buckland adds that the Severn is the largest salmon river in England, and he enumerates the weirs which greatly obstruct the lower part of the river.

Shad were formerly taken in considerable numbers at the fords, by bargemen chiefly, who caught more than they could consume, and sold them to others; and in a commercial point of view, in this portion of the river, they were even more important than salmon. They were caught at night, generally by moonlight, by men who stood at the fords, watching for them as they ascended the river. Their approach was marked by a phosphorescent light, or "loom" in the water. They were difficult to catch in the daytime, as they would either go over or under the net, and fix themselves with their heads in the bed of the river, tail upwards. When in proper condition they were well flavoured fish, and attained a large size, sometimes two and three feet in length.

The flounder was another fine fish, and was as abundant as any in the Severn, affording good sport to "bottom fishers," with rod and line. Since the locks and weirs were made they have, like the shad, ceased altogether. Lampreys too, which formerly were considered even of more importance than salmon, and which also were caught in this part of the Severn, are fish which have altogether ceased to visit us since the erection of the first weir in 1842.

Again, the rich and oily flesh of the eel formed the staple diet of dwellers along the river banks; and even the well-to-do, whose roomy chimney corners were hung with salted swine flesh, and on whose tables fresh meat appeared only at intervals, esteemed eels a luxury. Eels, like shad, were migratory, and before locks and weirs were placed upon the river myriads of minute eels in spring made their way from the brackish waters of the estuary of the Severn, keeping close to the shore. They formed a dark dense

mass, like a sunken rope, and were called Elvers, a word said to be of Saxon origin, and a corruption, it is supposed, of Eelfare, meaning to travel, as in wayfare, thoroughfare, and seafaring. In this state they were caught, bushels of them, and sold at a small sum, whilst the remainder were used for manure or pig-wash. Vast numbers of these eels, when left to their instinct, found their way into the upper Severn and its tributaries.

An Act of the 30th of Charles II. for the preservation of fishing in the river Severn, imposed a penalty on all persons taking elvers; an Act of George III., but repealed so much of the former, as related to the penalty on persons taking elvers for their own use only, and not for sale; whilst the Salmon Act of 1861, repealed the 30th of Charles II. altogether; and left no law to prevent the destruction of young eels, which was carried on in Gloucestershire in what was called the elver season on a large scale.

The Severn Board of conservators, under the powers granted by Mr. Mundella's Fresh Water Fishing Act, (41 and 42 Vic. Cap. 39) passed a resolution in March, 1879, making it the duty of eel fishermen to pay a sum of ten shillings for an annual license to use their lines. Considerable opposition was offered to this on the part of the Ironbridge and other fishermen; a memorial was drawn up and signed at a meeting of these and others from Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury, and a deputation appointed to present it to the Severn Board of Conservators at their meeting at Shrewsbury.

Mr. Yale who presented the memorial said: One complaint was in regard to the license put upon the rod-and-line. It was only 1s., it was true, and that was not much, but it involved a principle which they thought might be carried further at some future day, and to a very oppressive extent. The greatest grievance, however, was the imposition of licenses upon the use of night lines. He did not believe that the scarcity of fish was owing to the anglers or to the netters, for it was a matter of experience that when men were allowed to go and catch as many as they thought proper there were plenty of fish, but it was not so now. He used to think it a very bad day if he could not catch 20 lbs. of fish, and now, perhaps he would not take 10 ozs. That was not caused by the rod-and-line, or by the use of nets, upon which it is now sought to place these restrictions. He believed, as Mr. George

had told him the other day, that the scarcity of fish was owing to the pollutions, and not to the taking of fish.

SAMUEL SANDALS, made a statement to the effect that he worked all the hours he could at his usual work and spent the rest in fishing, and he thought it very hard to put a license upon the night lines. As to the trout taken with night lines, it was very rare indeed that they could take a trout in that way, except in the spring when the water was muddy: he believed the ducks destroyed “a sight” of the spawn on the fords.

Mr. WATTON said he did not for a moment dispute what the last speaker had said with respect to his not catching trout on night lines. There might possibly be some very good local reasons for his non-success, but, speaking from his own observation, he knew well enough that the night lines were the destruction of the trout. They were laid zig-zag fashion for a great distance down the river, and swept every trout off the fords at night, and they were most destructive engines.

Mr. H. SHAW said he quite agreed with what Mr. Watton had said, and he could bring evidence to prove that an immense quantity of trout was taken upon night lines, and a very large number of small fish were destroyed in baiting the lines. To take these baits stones were rooted up and the young salmon were frequently disturbed and got devoured by large fish. No less than 3,000 or 4,000 bait were caught each day in and around Shrewsbury to supply the night lines, and that must be a very serious drawback to the stock of fish in the river.

The CHAIRMAN said it seemed to him that the gentlemen who had attended the meeting of the Board objected to the principle of issuing licenses, and if it was so, so far as he understood the matter, that Board could do nothing.

Petitions were also presented to the Home Secretary; one from the fishermen themselves and another from the inhabitants. Of course these were from fishermen’s point of view. Those who are anxious that fish in the river should be increased, who think the protective provisions of the Act favour such increase, and who follow fishing more by way of sport and pastime, take very different views; they naturally look upon professional fishermen, men who lay night lines, and fish as a means of obtaining a

livelihood, as enemies of legitimate sport. The object of protection is a laudable one, namely, that the means of innocent recreation, and the food of the people, may be increased; and eels are, there is no question, a more important article of food, so far as the people on the banks of the Severn are concerned, than Salmon, and that ten times over. Salmon can never be multiplied so as to come within the reach of the people generally. Eels, on the contrary, are an article of food with the poor, the middle classes, and the rich themselves. Moreover, they will bear comparison with any well-flavoured fish the Severn produces.

It is chiefly for eel fishing, by means of night lines, but sometimes also for fly-fishing for trout and other fish, that the coracle, that ancient British vessel, is still retained on the Severn. The men go down with the stream to lay their lines, and then carry their coracles over their heads and shoulders; so that looking at them from behind they look like huge beetles walking along the road.

Of fish unaffected by the obstructions enumerated may be mentioned the river's pride—

“The crimson spotted trout  
And beauty of the stream.”

But it must be sought for higher up or lower down the river, generally at the fords, and the embouchers of streams which come down to join the Severn, as Cound and Linley brooks. In deeper parts of the river too, near these places, good sized chub are found. But the chub is not much esteemed, although a fine fish, and, according to Izaak Walton, “proves excellent meat.” It grows to a large size, and may be caught in holes near Sweyney, where the bushes overhang such holes. Pike too are found here, but are more common about Buildwas and Cressage.

That handsome fish the roach, known by the dusky bluish green on head and back, with lighter shades on sides, its silvery white belly, and dorsal and caudal fins tinged with red, is also to be caught.

Dace, grayling, and perch, are met with, the latter congregating in holes of the river, or seen herding together hunting its prey. As Drayton says of—

“The dainty gudgeon, loche, the minnow, and the bleak,  
Since they are little, I little need but speak.”

The former makes up for its small size by the daintiness of “meat.” Its favourite haunts are the swift flowing portions of the river, with pebbly and sandy bottoms. It is a ground feeder, greedy, and rushes at once to seek its prey, if you stir up the bed of the river. The bleak is about the size of the gudgeon, and is a quick biter.

From the peculiarities of its watershed the Severn is subject to sudden and unlooked for

## **FLOODS.**

To quote from our “History of Broseley”:—

In modern times these can to some extent be guarded against, as the news of any sudden extraordinary rise in the upper basin may be communicated to those living lower down. Formerly this could not be done; a flood would then travel faster than a letter, and coming down upon the villagers suddenly, perhaps in the night time, people would find the enemy had entered their households unawares. It was no unusual thing to see haystacks, cattle, timber, furniture, and, in one instance, we have heard old people tell of a child in a cradle, floating down the stream. Many of these floods are matters of tradition; others being associated with special events have been recorded. Shakespeare has commemorated one called “Buckingham’s Flood,” in his Richard III., thus:—

“The news I have to tell your majesty  
Is,—that, by sudden floods and fall of waters  
Buckingham’s army is dispersed and scatter’d  
And he himself wandered away alone,  
No man knows whither.”

Proclaimed a traitor, and forsaken by his army, he concealed himself in the woods on the banks of the Severn and was betrayed and taken in Banister’s Coppice, near Belswardine.

The newspapers of 1785 record a sudden rise in the Severn and its disastrous results. It appears that on the 17th of December, 1794, the season was so mild that fruit-trees were in blossom, whilst early in January, 1795, so much ice filled the Severn after a rapid thaw as to do great damage. The river rose at Coalbrookdale 25¼ inches higher than it did in November, 1770. The rise in the night was so rapid that a number of the inhabitants were obliged to fly from their tenements, leaving their goods at the mercy of the floods. The publicans were great sufferers, the barrels being floated and the bungs giving way. In the Swan and White Hart, Ironbridge, the water was several feet deep. Two houses were washed away below the bridge, but the bridge itself stood the pressure, although Buildwas bridge blew up, the river having risen above the keystone in the centre of the main arch. Crowds visited the locality to see the flood and the ruins it had made.

On the Coalbrookdale Warehouse, and on a house by the side of the brook, the height of these floods are to be seen recorded. At Worcester, a little above the bridge, a brass plate has the following inscription:—"On the 12th February, 1795, the Flood rose to the lower edge of this plate." The lower edge measures just three feet from the pavement level. Another plate at the archway opposite the Cathedral bears the following:—"On the 18th November, 1770, the Flood rose to the lower edge of this Brass Plate, being ten inches higher than the Flood which happened on December 23rd, 1672." This measures seven feet from the ground immediately underneath.

There are three other marks which have been cut out the stonework on the wall adjacent to the archway referred to, which are as follows:—

"Feb. 8th, 1852.  
Nov. 15th, 1852.  
Aug. 5th, 1839."

The one in February measures from the ground six feet two inches; November, 1852, eight feet two inches; and the one August 5th, 1839, six feet two inches.

## **COALBROOKDALE.**

As an important part of the parish of Madeley, still more as a locality famous on account of its fine castings and other productions, Coalbrookdale is deserving of a much further notice than has incidentally been given on previous pages in speaking of the Darbys and Reynoldses. There are few people perhaps in the kingdom who have not heard or who do not know something of Coalbrookdale; and there are none, probably, who pass through it by rail who do not peer through the windows of the carriage to catch a passing glimpse of its more prominent features. These may be readily grouped, for the benefit of those who have not seen them, but who may read this book, as follows. In the trough of the valley lie the works, stretching along in the direction of the stream, formerly of more importance to the operations carried on in the various workshops than it is at present. Upon the slope of the hill on the south-eastern side the Church, the palatial looking Literary and Scientific Institute, built for the benefit of the workmen, meet the eye, and the more humble looking Methodist chapel. On both sides are goodly looking houses and villa-like residences, where dwell the men of directing minds; whilst here and there are thin sprinklings of workmen's cottages—few in number compared with the hands employed. A few strips of grass land intervene, whilst above are wooded ridges with pleasant walks, and to the west some curiously rounded knolls, between which the Wellington and Craven Arms branch railway runs, sending down a siding for the accommodation of the works.

These are the chief features which strike the eye, and which would come out into prominence in photographic views taken to shew what Coalbrookdale now is. The buildings are comparatively of modern construction, but quaint half-timbered houses, rejoicing in the whitewash livery of former times, suggest a phase of Coalbrookdale history much anterior to that other buildings indicate. It is not difficult indeed to depict the earlier stages of the progress the little valley has passed through from its first primitive aspect to the present; there are, for instance, in some of its many windings green nooks and pleasant corners where nature yet reigns, and where lovers of a quiet ramble may feast their eyes and indulge their imaginations, undisturbed by the hammering, and whirl of wheels, lower down. Such a spot is that to which the visitor is led by following the stream above the pool, crossed by a footbridge. To the left of the path is Dale House, Sunnyside, the Friends Meeting House, and the road to Little

Wenlock. Little is seen of the brook on the right of the path, but its presence on the margin of the slope is made known beneath over-hanging bushes by prattlings over stones, and a waterfall from some ledges of rock. Following it higher up it is found to be partially fed by droppings from rocks dyed by mineral colours of varying hue, and to present curious petrifications, rarely permitted however to attain any great proportions. The place is variously called *La Mole* and Lum Hole, and speculations have been indulged in as to each derivation. The former would, of course, suggest a French origin. Lum is Welsh, and signifies a point, as in Pumlummon, now ordinarily called Plinlimmon, or the hill with five points. It is quite certain that the valley here terminates in a point, but whether this has anything to do with it or not we cannot say. All we say of it is that it is a quiet little sylvan retreat, with wooded heights, green slopes, and precipitous yellow rocks, at the foot of which the stream is treasured up and forms a glassy lakelet. But this stream, in which six centuries since "Lovekin" the fisherman set his baited lines, long ago was made to do other service than that of soothing the listening ear, or paying tribute of its trout to the abbot of Wenlock. The choice of the situation for manufacturing operations was no doubt due to woods like these, which supplied the needed fuel; but much more to the motive power furnished by the stream, for turning the great wheels required to produce the blast, and work the ponderous hammers which shaped the metal.

Brave and strong as these Dale men were, their muscles were too weak for the work demanded. As Vulcan found he needed stronger journeymen than those of flesh and blood to forge the thunderbolts of Jove, so an imperative necessity, a growing demand, led men here to seek a more compelling force to blow their leathern bellows, to lift their huge forge hammers, than animal force could supply. Woods were no longer estimated by *pannage* yielded for swine, but by the fuel supplied for reducing the stubborn ore to pigs of another kind. Brooks were pounded up, streams were turned back upon themselves, and their treasured waters husbanded as a capital of force to be disposed of as occasion required. Dryads now fled the woods and Naiads the streams,—as beams and shafts and cranks were reared or creaked beneath the labours they performed.

The presence of coal and iron ore could not have been inducements for the first ironworkers to settle here; neither tradition nor facts warrant the

supposition that either were ever found in the valley. The first syllable of the name is deceptive, and the probability is that it was neither *Coal* nor *Cole*-brook originally, although coal appears to have been brought here for use more than five centuries ago from places just outside. Wood fuel seems to have been growing scarce as far back as the first quarter of the fourteenth century, judging from an application on the part of a Walter de Caldbrook to the Prior of Wenlock, to whom the manor belonged, for a license to have a man to dig coals in “Le Brockholes” for one year. It is not unlikely that this Walter de Caldbrook had a forge or smithy in the Dale; a situation chosen on account of the stream, which served to furnish him with motive power for his machinery. This seems all the more probable from the fact that distinct mention of such smithy is made in Henry the Eighth’s time, and that it is called “Smithy Place,” and “Caldbrooke Smithy,”<sup>[277]</sup> in the deed or grant by which the manor was conveyed by the King to Robert Brook, signed at Westminster and dated July 23, 1544. (See page 59). The fact too that this smithy was still called Caldbrook Smithy strengthens the supposition, both as to the name and as to the fact that the Caldbrookes used the Brockholes coal for their smithy in the Dale. For smith’s work coal has always been preferred to wood; but the word smithy did not then strictly mean what it now does; that is a smith’s shop; but a place where iron was made in blooms. Thus the “Smithies,” near Willey, at present so called, was a place where there were small iron-making forges, as heaps of slag there now testify; which forges were blown with leathern bellows, by means of water power, a man having to tread them to increase the pressure.

Again, the word “Place,” which is a Saxon term for locality, situation, or a particular portion of space, itself indicates an establishment on a scale greater than a modern smithy. The words in the deed are “Smithy Place and New House.” And again, “the rights and privileges attached to the whole of the place and buildings that go under the name of The Smithy Place, and Newhouse, called Caldbrooke Smithy, with its privileges” &c. This Newhouse long ago, no doubt, had become an old house. At any rate we know of no house answering to this description at present, unless it is the half-timbered house near the Lower Forge; and if so this house must be about 100 years older than the one which has the date upon it at the forge higher up, shewing it to have been built a century later, or in 1642: and both forges no doubt were then in existence. The latter would be about the

period when the flame of Civil War was bursting forth in various parts of the kingdom, and when Richard Baxter, whose old house still stands at Eaton Constantine, was witnessing the battle of Edgehill and others. This old house is such a fair specimen of the half-timbered structures of two centuries and a half or three centuries ago that we add a representation.

There are a number of square iron plates at the Lower Forge supposed to have been hearth-plates, with the following dates and initials:—

I. H. 1602.	T. K. W. 1609.	I. E. R. 1627.
T. A. 1653.	I. A. 1654.	B. S. 1693.
T. E. 1706.		

The one with the date 1609 has a head cast upon it, and the ‘W’ was for the surname of one of the early proprietors or partners named Wolfe, a member of the same family that gave shelter to King Charles at Madeley: and ‘B’ may have signified Brooke, the family who resided at the Court House, Madeley, and to whom the manor belonged at that time. There is too a beam with the date 1658, being a bearer in an old blast furnace, which is known to have been renewed by Abraham Darby in 1777. This is supposed to have been brought from Leighton, where there was a furnace in blast in 1707. Thus for long periods, during deadly feuds and troubled times, absorbed in the simple arts of industry, these men appear to have toiled on. During the Civil Wars, when Cromwell and his Ironsides were preparing for the pages of history one of its most striking passages, they worked their bloomeries, taking no part, save that a clerk in the Shropshire Ironworks was found to bear to the Protector news of the successes of his troops.



It may therefore be supposed that when the first Abraham Darby came to the Dale he found works already in existence. Mr. Smiles says “he took the lease of a little furnace which had existed at the place for over a century”; and, fortunately, since his time, the commencement of the 18th century, (1709), records of the proceedings have been carefully kept, so that there is little difficulty in tracing the progress of the art, or in giving prominence to important points which may serve to mark such progress. On page 60 are enumerated some of these discoveries, one being the successful use of coal in iron-making, another the adaptability of iron in bridge making, and a third to railroads. To these three starting points in the history of the iron trade was added that of the discovery of puddling by means of pit coal, by the Craneges; a discovery which preceded that of Henry Cort by seventeen years. It will be seen also from what has been already stated, that whilst Richard Reynolds laid down the first iron rails his son William and the Coalbrookdale Co. as early as 1800 were engaged upon locomotives to run on railways.

These stages in the history of the works down to the commencement of the present century have been enumerated thus:—

“Abraham Darby. 1707. Letters patent for a new way of casting iron pots, and other iron ware, in sand only, without loam or clay.”

“Ditto. 1712. First successfully superseded the use of charcoal by that of coke in the blast furnace.”

“Abraham Darby (son of above). 1737. First used coal instead of charcoal for converting pig iron into bar iron at the forge.”

“Ditto. 1760–63. First laid down rails of cast iron, with carriages having axles with fixed wheels.”

“Abraham Darby (the third). The first *iron* bridge erected over the Severn in 1777.”

“Richard Reynolds. Letters patent to Thomas and George Cranage, for a method of puddling, 1766.”

William, son of Richard Reynolds, invented a locomotive, upon the plans for which the Coalbrookdale Company were engaged in 1800. This was a *locomotive* for *railroads*, as we have shewn on page 179. We have also on a previous page spoken of Mr. W. Reynolds as a chemist, a fact which is borne out by an original letter of James Watt to his friend William Reynolds, a copy of which, being too long to insert here, will be given on a subsequent page. Facts like these, recorded in various publications, added to the intrinsic merits of the high class productions of the works, naturally served to give to the establishment in the Dale a very high position in the trade. To these too were to be added the high integrity of the proprietors and managers of the works, a guarantee of which was to be found in the fact that they were Quakers. In our “History of Broseley” page 219, we have shewn that the Friends had established themselves there as early as 1673; that a Meeting house was erected there in 1692; and that the Darbys, the Roses, the Reynoldses, the Fords, the Hortons and others were buried there, prior to the Meeting house at Sunnyside being built. The fact of a man being a Quaker was a tolerable guarantee of his being a fair dealer; and the utterance of the name of Darby or Reynolds was sufficient to command respect.

Speaking of these works at an early stage, Mr. Smiles in his “Industrial Biography” says:—

“By the exertions and enterprise of the Darbys, the Coalbrookdale Works had become greatly enlarged, giving remunerative employment to a large and increasing population. The firm had extended their operations far beyond the boundaries of the Dale: they had established foundries at London, Bristol, and Liverpool, and agencies at Newcastle and Truro for the disposal of steam-engines and other iron machinery used in the deep mines of those districts. Watt had not yet perfected his steam-engine; but there was considerable demand for pumping-engines of Newcomen’s construction, many of which were made at the Coalbrookdale Works.”

One of these engines having the date 1747 was seen at Bilston in 1812. Castings for Watt’s engines also were made here; but the first use to which the steam-engine itself was put was the undignified one of pumping the water which had once gone over the water-wheel back, that it may go over it a second time.

It is not our intention to give a detailed description of the present productions of the Coalbrookdale Works; modern castings like those of the Albert Edward bridge, and those high art ornamental ones of a lighter kind with which the public are familiar by means of various international exhibitions, afford sufficient evidence that the firm occupy a position not unworthy of their ancient renown.

It will be seen from what has been said that the religious no less than the inventive element seems to have distinguished these men, who, so far as we have gone were Quakers; but the brothers Cranege, who anticipated Cort in the discovery of puddling were Wesleyans. Little seems to be known of these men or of their families; but Dr. Edward Cranege, of the Old Hall, Wellington is, we believe, of the same family. Another descendant of the family writes us to say that—

“George Cranege, one of the patentees, and Thomas his brother, the other, both married daughters of John Ward, of Eye Manor Farm, near Leighton; the writer’s grandfather on his mother’s side. Thomas and

his wife died without issue, but George Cranage who married Ann Ward, left two sons and five daughters; William, the elder of the sons, was manager or in some such position at Coalbrookdale, and was concerned in the construction of the Iron Bridge. From a small manuscript volume of religious verses and paraphrases into verse of the Psalms composed by him, and now in my possession, he appears to have had some taste for literature. I have his copy of *Coke and Moore's life of Wesley, and Paradise Lost*, the latter containing his autograph. He was, I have heard, a Wesleyan of the true type; worshipping at his chapel regularly, but always communicating at Madeley Parish Church on Sacrament Sundays. He lived in the house where Mr. Moses now lives, opposite the church, which house, we believe was built for him. He died in 1823, one son having died previously. The following notice appeared in a Shrewsbury paper of his death:

“Suddenly, at Coalbrookdale, aged 63, Mr. Wm. Cranage, a man whose truly benevolent nature and friendly disposition secured him the respect and esteem of all who knew him, and whose loss as a member of society will be much felt by his neighbours. In him the poor man recognised a friend, the world an honest man, and the church a steady and useful member.”

John the younger, and only other son of George, died in infancy, while the five daughters all married in Bridgnorth or the neighbourhood.

Whilst upon the subject of old workmen at the Dale it may be well here to introduce a notice of the Luccucks, some of whom were Quakers, but two of whom, Benjamin and Thomas, became clergymen of the church of England. Benjamin was apprenticed at Coalport, where he painted a set of china, which whilst breakfasting with an English prelate he was surprised to see produced at table. When a lad he was of a daring disposition. He would lie down, for instance, between the rails of the Incline Plane and allow the carriage and a boat with five tons of iron in it to pass over him, notwithstanding the risk run of being caught and drawn over the rollers by the hook dangling at the end of the carriage. The mother of Mr. W. G. Norris, the present manager, and one of the proprietors, was a Luccock; and other members of the same family are still employed in the works. The

grandfather of the former was apprenticed to the first Abraham Darby soon after he came to the Dale. A copy of the indenture or agreement between the parties may not be without interest at the present day. It commences thus:

“Abraham Darby and Thomas Luccuck, concluded and made this 13 day of June, 1714, between Abraham Darby, of the city of Bristol, Smith, in behalf of himself and rest of his co-partners in the ironworks of Coalbrookdale, in the County of Salop, on the one part; and Thomas Luccuck, of the parish of Norfield, in the County of Worcester, who agrees to serve in the art and mystery of making or casting of iron pots and kettles, &c.”

It then proceeds to state that

“Abraham Darby promises to pay the said Thomas Luccuck the *sum of 6s. per week* during the said term of the year. Thomas Luccuck also covenants not to divulge or make known the mystery of the art of moulding in sand, tools, or utensils, belonging to the said works; and that if he divulges he will agree to pay the sum of £5 for every pot or kettle made by another, &c., through him.”

The mystery alluded to, and which it was deemed then so important not to divulge, was an improvement introduced by one of the Thomases, an ancestor of the Bristol merchants of that name, which consisted in the substitution of *green sand* for the more expensive and laborious method of using clay and loam in the manufacture of cast pots. By this means, not only was the article cheapened, and the number multiplied, but a more suitable and economical form was obtained; the old one being now rarely seen, except in museums, or as an antiquated heir-loom in some remote cottage. One of the old pots with a neat border has the date 1717. These domestic utensils appear to have formed the staple manufacture at the time that the first Abraham Darby removed here from Bristol, in the year 1709.

One member of this old family of Dale workmen lived to the extraordinary age of 103; and an allusion to the venerable patriarch may serve to introduce at this stage of our history a notice of two local circumstances: the extreme age of an old Coalbrookdale workman of the above name, and the

“Great Land Flood” of the Dale. An account of the latter appeared in the Philosophical Transactions of the time; but we prefer following the example of Southey who on an occasion we remember makes use of an old man’s memory to set forth his views of certain changes which had taken place; but at the same time with such toning down as becometh the thoughts of more sober age. Every village has incidents and events associated with it, which some old inhabitant is usually privileged to expound.

Beyond the venerable grey-beards and wrinkled grand-dames there is the village sage—vested with the dignity of a last appeal, and whose version of matters local is deemed truthful as the current coin. Age as a rule commands respect; and the wider the span that measures intervening space between the present and the past the greater the esteem. Coalbrookdale within our recollection boasted, not an octogenarian merely, or one whose claim to the honour was weakened by that of half-a-dozen others—but one, the “oldest inhabitant,” by being a quarter of a century in advance of the whole of the Coalbrookdale elders. He not only lived to celebrate the centenary of his natal day but—like a tree blanched by the storms of ages yet putting forth its leaves afresh—as showing the stamina that still remained—cut, at a still riper age his second set of wisdom teeth. Envy never sought to dim the lustre of his fame. At local festivals, when, unfettered for the day, the members of a club with flags and band met in gay summer time, he was brought to crown the presidential chair. Old Adam—such was his name—a name truly suggestive of the past and well fitted for a village sage—old Adam Luccock was widely known. He was a specimen of archæology in himself—the solitary link of a patriarchal chain that had fallen one by one—he the only one remaining. And old Adam’s cottage—perched upon a rock beneath the Rotunda, quaint, ancient, and impressed by the storms of passing time,—odorous from a narrow strip of garden sheltered by a grey limestone pile, catching the last lingering rays of the setting sun as it mantled with deep shadow the Dale below, and flooded with mellow light the uplands of the river’s western bank—was a counterpart of himself. Like the little vine that girdled its frail and wattled walls—tapping with wiry fingers at the diamond leaded window-panes—old Adam clung to the place long after his friends began to fear the two would disappear together. White as were these white-washed walls, Adam’s locks were whiter, and the accessories of dress and minor details of person

and of place were in perfect keeping. A curious net-work of wrinkled smiles accompanied the delivery of one of the old man's homilies; and amusing enough were the landmarks which memory set up for giving to each event its place in point of time. Of red-lettered ever-to-be-remembered occurrences in the village the more prominent were the phenomena of the land-slip at the Birches, and the land-flood at the Dale. We still see the old man drawing slowly from his mouth a long pipe, still more slowly letting out a wreath of fragrant smoke, as speaking of the latter he would say:—

“I remember well; it was autumn, the berries were ripe on the hedge, and fruits were mellow in the field; we had a funeral that day at Madeley, it was on the 6th of September, 1801. The air was close. A thin steamy vapour swam along the valley, and a dense, fog-looking cloud hung in the sky. The mist spread, and drops like ripe fruit when you shake a tree came down suddenly. The leaves on every tree trembled, we could hear them quake; and the cattle hung down their heads to their fetlocks. The wind blew by fits and starts in different directions, and waves of cold air succeeded warm. Dull rushing sounds, sharp crackling thunderclaps were heard, and streams of fire could be seen—like molten iron at casting time—running in and out among the clouds. Up the valley, driving dust and sticks and stones, came on a roaring wind with pelting rain. Another current moved in a different direction; they met where the black cloud stood, and striking it both sides at once, it dropped like a sponge filled with water, but large as the Wrekin. In a moment houses and fields and woods were flooded by a deluge, and a rushing torrent from the hills came driving everything before it with a roar louder than the great blast or the splash of the great wheel. Lightnings flashed, thunders roared, and before the echo of one peal died you heard another—as if it were the crack of doom. Down came the brooks, the louder where they met, snapping trees, carrying bridges, stones, and stacks of wood. Houses were inundated in an instant, gardens were swept away, and women and children were carried from windows through the boiling flood. Fiercer came the rush and higher swelled the stream, forcing the dam of the great pool; timber snapped like glass, stones were tossed like corks, and driven against buildings that in turn gave way. Steam then came

hissing up from the furnace as the water neared and sought entrance to the works. The elements met; it was a battle for a time; the water driven with great force from behind was soon brought into contact with the liquid iron, and then came the climax! Thunders from below answered to those above; water converted into gas caused one loud terrific explosion that burst the strongest bars, shattered the stoutest walls, drove back the furious flood, and filled the air with heated cinders and red-hot scoria. The horrid lurid light and heat and noise were dreadful. Many said ‘The day of God’s wrath is come;’ ‘Let us fly to the rocks and to the hills.’”

After a pause, and re-lighting his pipe, he added:

“I think I forgot to say it was Sunday, and that the Darbys were at meeting; the Meeting-house was in Tea-kettle-row, it was before the neat little chapel at Sunnyside was built. It was a silent meeting,—outside among the elements there was noise enough—I mean among the members there had been no speaking, and if there had they may have heard plain enough what was going on outside. Well, when the furnace blew up they broke up and came down to see what was the matter. They never appear in a hurry, Quakers don’t, and did not then, though thousands of pounds of their property were going to rack every minute. ‘Is any one hurt?’ that was the first question by Miss Darby; she is now Mrs Rathbone. She was an angel of a woman; indeed, every one of the Miss Darbys have been. ‘Is there any one hurt, Adam;’ she said. I said ‘no, ma’am, there’s nobody hurt, but the furnace, and blowing mill, the pool dam, and the buildings are all gone.’ ‘Oh, I am so thankful,’ she said; ‘never mind the building, so no one’s hurt’; and they all looked as pleased—if you’ll believe—as if they had found a new vein of coal in the Dawley Field, instead of having lost an estate at Coalbrookdale.”

Old age sat as fittingly on Adam as glory upon the sun, or as autumnal bloom upon the mellow fruit ripened by the summer’s heat. Nature, in the old man, had completed her work, religion had not left him without its blessings; and, while lingering or waiting, rather, upon the verge of another world, he liked to live again the active past, and to amuse himself by talking

of scenes with which he had been associated. He had none of the garrulous tendencies of age; and when once upon his favourite topic, he was all smiles immediately.

“We used,” he said, “to bring the mine for the Dale on pack-horses; and Horsehay being one of the halting places, was, as I believe, called Horsehay in consequence. We used, also, to take minerals on horse-back all the way to Leighton, where there was plenty of wood and charcoal, and water to blow the bellows. Strings of horses, the first having a bell to tell of their coming, used to go; they called them ‘Crickers’—and a very pretty sight it was to see them winding through upland, wood, and meadow, the little bells tinkling as they went.”

“Aye, aye, sir,” said our ancient friend, “Pedlars and pack-horses were the means of locomotion and the medium of news in my day; and if we travelled, it was in the four-wheeled covered waggon, over roads with three or four feet ruts. Lord, sir, I remember, in good old George the Third’s time, when turnpike gates were first put up, there was a great outcry against them. Before that, roads went just where they liked, and there was a blacksmith’s shop at every corner to repair the damage done in bumping over the large stones. Why, sir, in this ere Dale, I can remember when there was no road through it but the tram-road. The road then was over rocks and along the brow of the hill—a bridle road only. There never was such a thing as a one-horse cart seen in the Dale till just before the road was made to Wellington; and then, as I can remember, the road was so narrow that every carter carried a mattock to stock the road wider, in order to pass, if he met another.”

The old man described the construction of those primitive forerunners of that iron network which now spreads its meshes over the entire kingdom, one of which, much worn on the one side by the flange of the wheels is before us. It has a square hole at the end, for the purpose of being pegged to the sleeper. Down the steep banks that enclose the Dale inclined planes were laid with rails of plain oblong pieces of wood, six feet in length, eight inches in width, and four inches in depth, and down these, by means of ropes, waggons by their superior gravity brought up the empty ones to be refilled with minerals which were conveyed for the use of the works. The speed was regulated by a brake made to press, not as now upon the barrel at

the top, but upon the wheels of the descending waggons. The man thus regulating their speed, was the jigger, and the hill leading from Coalbrookdale to Wellington, where one of these inclines was situate, became “The Jigger’s Bank.” (Sometimes called the Jig-house Bank, because, of a house there.) In addition to this railway for the purpose of supplying the furnaces, there was another, by which the furnaces at the top were connected with the foundry at the centre; and rails, first of wood, and then of iron, continued for many years to be used, facilitating the transport of heavy materials from place to place.

On the last occasion on which we saw him we were sent by a good old aunt, a Quaker lady who loaded us with presents for the old man, when he had gone to live in “Charity Row,” as it was called. Speaking upon matters connected with the history of the Dale—more particularly in reference to the Darbys and Reynoldses—the old man would grow eloquent; and the effect of a little present—a basket of strawberries or a packet of tobacco—had a wonderful effect in stimulating memory. Nothing was “open sesame,” however, like a drop of “Barnaby Spruce’s old Beer.”<sup>[292]</sup> Say you had sent for half-a-gallon of Spruce’s best October brewing, and he grew loquacious at once.

“Remember him,” speaking of Richard Reynolds, he would say, arching his eye-brows, and growing animated, as recollections of the past came tripping upon the heels of each other. “I knew him well; all the poor knew him; the robins and the sparrows knew him, for he would carry crumbs a hundred miles in his pockets ‘for his robins.’ He made a vast fortune, and then everybody knew him; books, and tracts, and newspapers all talked about him. He was a Quaker—not a thin, withered, crotchety disciple of George Fox, but a full-fed Quaker, fair and ruddy, with eyes of blue that gave back the bright azure of the sky and lighted up a fine and manly face. I see him now—his light hair flowing in curls beneath his broad brimmed hat upon his shoulders. He yielded to every man his own, not only as concerned money, but in demands upon his respect. I have known him when in a fit of temper he thought he had spoken harshly or slightly to any one, follow him home and apologise for his warmth. He loved everybody and was beloved by everybody in return. There’s my neighbour, she will tell you how when she was a child he would run into their shop in a

morning, put half-a-crown into her hand, saying, ‘There, thee be a good child all day.’ He could not do with the colliers, though; he built schools for their children, but the mothers would not let them go unless he would pay them so much a day for allowing them to attend. They were curious schoolmasters in my day. Old John Share made nails and kept a school in the Dale; he was one of the most learned about these parts for a schoolmaster, but he never would believe that the earth turned round, because, as he said, the Wrekin was always in the same place. Then, there was old Carter, the chairmaker, of Madeley Wood; he always spelt bacon with a ‘k,’ and I remember him giving Charles Clayton a souce on the side of the head that sent him reeling, because he insisted upon it that it should be bacon. The Wrekin, sir, was always an object of admiration to Mr. Reynolds. He had an arbour made from which he could see the sun going down behind it (he used to revel in a good sunset), and with no companion but his pipe was often used to watch it. Every year he treated his clerks and most of the members of the Society of Friends to the Wrekin. Benthall Edge was another favourite resort, and he would revel at such times in the scene.”

“I could tell you many more anecdotes (the old man continued) of the Quakers; I mean the Darbys. They all liked a joke right well; and as for kindness, it seemed as if they thought it a favour to be allowed to assist you. They allow me a weekly pension, have done for years, and pay a woman to wait upon me. They are people that never like to be done, however.”

“You knew old Solomon, the Sexton. Well he once went to the haunted house, as they call it, for an Easter offering. The servants were ordered to attend him, and he sat for some time and eat and drank, and smoked his pipe—but not a word was said about Easter dues. He knocked the ashes out of his third pipe, and feeling muddled a bit about the head thought it time to be moving. At last Mr. Darby entered the room, and Solomon made bold to ask for the Easter offering. ‘Friend,’ said Mr. Darby, throwing up the sash, and assuming a determined attitude, ‘thou hast had a meat-offering and a drink-offering; thou hast even had a burnt offering—as I judge from the fumes of this room, and unless thou chooseth to go about thy business,

thou shalt have an *heave-offering*.' As Solomon had no wish to be pitched head-foremost out of the window, you may imagine (said the old man) that he quickly disappeared."

The old village sage, whose venerable form and long white locks rise before us like some vision of the past—is gone; he died, as his friends assert, at the advanced age of 107, or, as his headstone more modestly states (and modesty is not a fault common with posthumous records) at the age of 103. He died January 27, 1831, and his gravestone may be seen near the southwest door of Madeley Church, under the wall; but as the inscription is near to the grave, being below those of the Parkers, and that of Samuel Luckock, it will, we fear, be soon obliterated by the damp acting on the stone.

Among other servants of the Darbys who succeeded each other and held important positions in the works were the Fords. Richard married Miss Darby, daughter of Abraham, and was manager of the works in 1747. He also was a Quaker; and to him really is due the credit ascribed to Mr. Darby, of the successful use of coal in iron smelting. In the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1747, for instance, the year Mr. Ford was manager, it is stated that—

"Several attempts have been made to run iron-ore with pit-coal: he (the Rev. Mr. Mason, Woodwardian Professor at Cambridge) thinks it has not succeeded anywhere, as we have had no account of its being practised; but Mr. Ford, of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, from iron-ore and coal, both got in the same dale, makes iron brittle or tough as he pleases, there being cannon thus cast so soft as to bear turning like wrought-iron."

A son or grandson of this Richard Ford was foreman and manager in the engine department of the works, which flourished greatly till he resigned his office, nearly half a century since. The late John Cox Ford was a son, and A. J. Ford, recently of Madeley, a grandson.

Of later members of the Darby family we may speak in part from personal knowledge. Like their ancestors, they were members of the Society of Friends, although not by any means the strictest of the sect. Whilst

adhering to the grand cardinal doctrine of the Inner Light, they indulged their own ideas of the extent to which the strict discipline of the body should control their tastes. They were birth-members, but lax in their opinions, and did not live by strict Quaker rule. On one occasion, when a disciple of the old school got up as was his wont to deliver himself in meeting, one of the younger and more lax of the members rose and said, "Friend N—y, it would be more agreeable to this meeting if thou wouldst sit down."

Francis Darby, of the White House, had great taste, loved high art, and filled his rooms with costly paintings, which he felt a pride in shewing to his friends. Others indulged a forbidden love of music and luxury, contrary to the faith and discipline of their fathers, without otherwise breaking through bounds or committing faults to justify the advocates of the truest code of Quaker rule to disown them.

Richard Darby, like his brother Francis, did not adhere to the Quaker style of dress, either in the cut of his coat or the shape of his hat, the latter being usually a white one of the most approved fashion. He was a popular public man; one whose services were sought, and whose sympathies were readily enlisted in public movements of the day, such as the emancipation of the slaves, and others relating to questions of civil and religious progress. His name was well known through the length and breadth of the borough, and we have seen small farmers and labourers around the Clee Hills brighten up at the mention of his name. William Henry and Charles Darby, the sons of Richard, are proprietors of the Brymbo iron works, and their sister, Miss Rebecca Darby, who resides at the house her father lived in, is the only one of the name now living in the Dale.

The late Abraham and Alfred Darby, sons of Edmund, and cousins of Francis and Richard, were young when their father died. We have elsewhere said that they became managers of the extensive and important works of Coalbrookdale, Horsehay, Lighmnoor, and the Castle, at critical periods of their history, and when, to maintain their existence, it was essential to do battle with lax discipline, old customs, and deep-rooted prejudices. They found men resting on their oars, trusting to the *prestige* of a fame won by a former generation, and standing still while others around them were advancing. They determined to prove themselves worthy of

their predecessors by advancing to the front of the foremost in the rise. Surrounding themselves by energetic agents, intelligent operatives, and introducing new modes of manufacture, they succeeded. With clear views of political economy, they zealously aided in battering down barriers to a free exchange of the world's productions, which misconceived interest had erected. Penetrated with a lofty sense of duty, and comprehending their positions rightly, they pursued the even tenor of their way, sowing seed and scattering blessings which refreshed and brightened the scenes of their labours. They worked harmoniously together, in their studies, in the laboratory, in their works, and at their books, making themselves acquainted with every detail and minutiae of their great undertakings. Order and regularity everywhere were observable, others under them being imbued with the spirit of their employers. The church on the hill side, and its sweet and silvery bells as their music floats along the valley and over the wooded boundaries of the Dale, tell of their large-hearted benevolence and open handed munificence, and that of their sister, Miss Mary Darby, and their mother, Mrs. Lucy Darby.

Abraham, the elder, married his cousin, Miss Darby, daughter of Francis Darby, on the 8th of August, 1839, on which occasion a kindly demonstration was made, and 1,000 work-people dined at his expense. He removed from the Dale to Stoke Court, near Slough; and afterwards to South Wales, to be near the extensive works of Ebbw Vale, which he, and some of his partners, purchased for the sum of £360,000. He died, was brought to the Dale and buried in the cemetery of the church which he chiefly had built and endowed, amid deep demonstrations of feeling on the part of thousands of spectators.

Alfred, the younger brother, married Miss Christy, sister to the well-known collector of pre-historic relics of man in an uncivilized state, with which he stored his mansion at Westminster, and afterwards bequeathed to the British Museum. Alfred died in the golden meridian of age and usefulness, and his loss was deeply felt by all who knew him. He left issue, and his son Alfred, of Ness, to which place his mother removed from Stanley Hall, is a magistrate, and is now old enough to discharge the duties of a country gentleman.

Of other partners in the works we may mention Mr. Henry Dickinson, who married a sister of Abraham and Alfred Darby, for some years chairman of the Shropshire Banking Company, and who in a most distinguished and disinterested way lent (but on such terms as amounted to a gift) the princely sum of £100,000 at a critical period of its existence, to save it from falling, and numbers dependent upon it from ruin. But for extending our remarks too far, we might say something of men like Mr. Thomas Graham, a former cashier in the works, of Mr. William Norris, who succeeded him in that office; men useful in their day and generation, being foremost in good works and words, as many now living will remember. For the same reason we refrain from speaking of the late Mr. C. Crookes, formerly the enterprising manager of these works; and of the gentleman who has succeeded him, and is himself a proprietor of these extensive works, and in the commission of the peace for the borough. For similar reasons, but much more because of the difficulty of rightly discriminating and equally awarding a just meed of praise where so much is due, we find ourselves prevented from speaking of many trustworthy and clever men now engaged in various departments of these important works, whose names occur to our minds, but whose merits we commend not less heartily to some future local historian, for whose labours the present work will, we flatter ourselves, smooth the way.

It would be unpardonable not to say something here of the means of education and mental culture provided by the proprietors of the Coalbrookdale works for their workpeople. Before the present system of national education was established, and whilst hostile sects and parties were indulging in bitter feuds <sup>[300]</sup> as to the kind of education to be given, this Company under the direction of Abraham and Alfred Darby in the most noble and generous way came forward and at great cost erected roomy and capacious Schools here and at Horsehay, with every convenience and appliance possible to further education.

We purpose speaking of education, with respect to the schools, in connection with others at Madeley, Ironbridge, and Madeley Wood; and will only add here a word or two on the subject of other and more advanced institutions provided for the use of the men and inhabitants generally of the Dale. First and foremost amongst them comes, of course, the Literary and Scientific Institute, with its library, its reading room, its school of art, its

high class lectures and entertainments, so judiciously arranged and carried on under the management of Mr. E. L. Squire, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. Isaac Dunbar, the librarian. The School of Art too, of which Mr. Squires is also Hon. Secretary, and Mr. Gibbons master, is admirably adapted for developing and furthering a taste for drawing and decoration, so essential among artizans engaged in the more ornamental and decorative portions of the company's productions. Nor are the benefits of this admirable institution limited either to the works or to the Dale: the day classes are attended by ladies of the neighbourhood, desirous of pursuing an æsthetic course of study, and who, following the examples of ladies whose works merit such high approval in the Art Galleries of London and Paris, have really achieved great success in painting birds, flowers, and figures, in enamel colours, on plaques, tazzas, &c., both for use and for drawing room decoration.

Nor must we omit, whilst on the subject of this institution, to mention the splendid collection of British and foreign birds lent by Mrs. Alfred Darby, which have adorned the lecture room for so many years; or the very fine collection of coal-measure fossils, which the late Dean Buckland pronounced in his time the finest private collection of the kind in England, and so liberally given by the late John Anstice, Esq.

Recently a "British Workman" has been added to other institutions, at the room formerly occupied as a British School, under the patronage of Mrs. Norris, who is ever active in promoting similar works, and the present incumbent, the Rev. H. S. Wood, who, it is only justice to say, spares no pains to make himself useful to the inhabitants of the Dale.

## **COALBROOKDALE BRICK, TILE, AND TERRA COTTA WORKS.**

Under the management of Mr. John Fox the clay-works of the Coalbrookdale Company have become so expanded and improved, that they now form an important department of the Company's undertakings, and are at the present juncture, no doubt, among the more profitable of their industries. Since sanitary science has so successfully called public attention to the importance of the use of good bricks impervious to damp, the

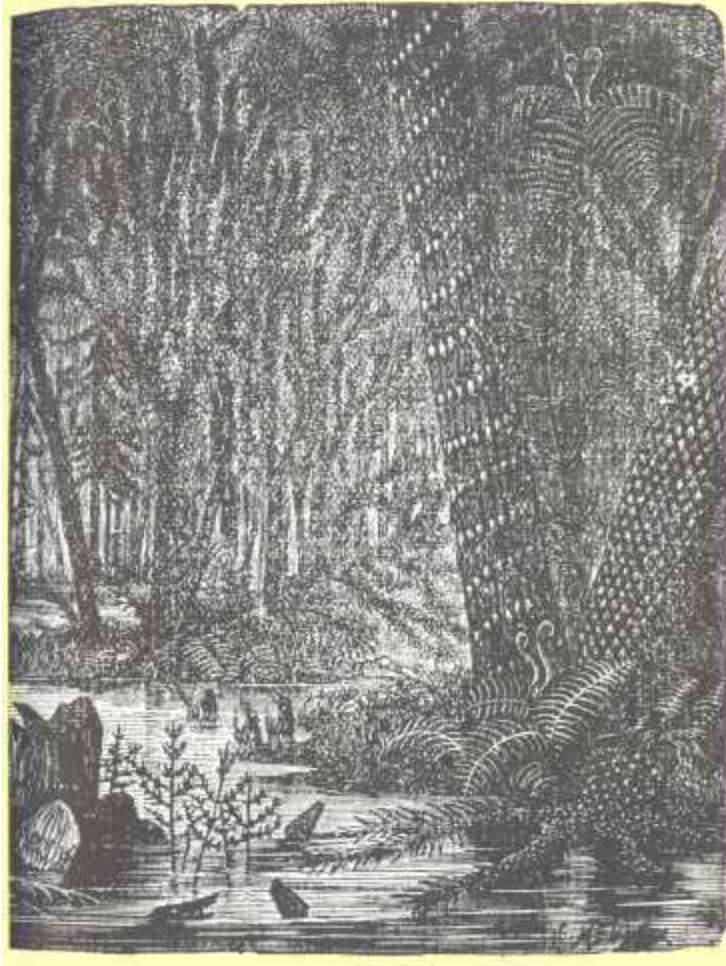
productions from these excellent coal-measure clays have been more in demand. Clays, as commonly understood, mean earth of sufficient ductility to allow of being kneaded into some useful shape or form, and rank as raw materials. Some are soft, others are indurated, or hard and rocky; but all have in one sense been prepared by certain poundings, grindings, washings, and mixings, carried on by Nature on a larger scale than that on which they are now still further fitted for use. They differ in quality, in degree of fineness, and in colour, and show certain relationships by which it is clear that they are descended from sand, just as sands are descended from a hardy race of pebbles, which in turn bear close relationship to rocks, from which undoubtedly they have been derived. Surface clays used for making inferior bricks and tiles, whose earthy odour gives evidence of alumina, are generally derived from red sandstone rocks, ground down into mud by the machinery of waves or streams whilst our deeper coal-measures clunches, and clays were originally the sediment thrown by rivers at their embouchures into inland lakes or seas, and are usually much more free from lime, iron, grit, and other foreign substances and impurities.

When brought to the surface, these clays are hard as a rock. Formerly they were allowed to lie during the winter to weather, as it is called; and a statute now obsolete required, under a heavy penalty, that bricks should not be made unless the clay for making them had been turned over at intervals, three times at least before the first of March. But brickmakers, not having patience to wait for the action of the weather, have invented machinery to do the work, and the clay is taken direct from the pit to be crushed by iron rollers, and then conveyed by coarse canvas-screens to tanks to be moistened, and afterwards to the pug mill. This is an upright cylinder, with a revolving vertical shaft, fitted up with horizontal knives following each other at an angle so as to cut, amalgamate, and temper the material, and which also acts as a screw to deliver it.

Ornamental bricks of elaborate design for architectural purposes require more delicate manipulation, and the clays for these undergo a more careful preparation. Machines in some instances are used, which take the clay, temper, thoroughly amalgamate it, and convert it into the finished article, and at the brick-yards of the Coalbrookdale Company presses have been erected by which bricks may be stamped at once from the semi-dry clay.

This company, too, have been at great pains to turn their clays to account by copying the Italian and Lombard style of making bricks of various forms and colours; and the buildings erected with these bricks, and others, with white facings of the same material, of which the present Literary and Scientific Institute is an example, possess great architectural beauty. Still further examples of the æsthetic treatment of these admirable clays were made a short time ago by Monsieur Kremer, who modelled and prepared at the company's Lightmoor clay works, in relief, and on a large scale, an historical subject, connected with Scottish history in the time of King James, as a facade for a house in London; also some noble groups, life size, of figures representing the four seasons, for a gentleman's grounds and park near London. The reader may judge of the adaptability of these clays for such purposes by inspecting a group of a similar kind in front of the Institute.

We exhibited ourselves in 1851 specimens of these and other coal-measure clays, with articles manufactured from them on both sides the river, and we had the satisfaction of hearing from distinguished judges, familiar with their merits, such as presidents of foreign Academics of Science, speak of them as superior to any they had ever seen. <sup>[306]</sup>



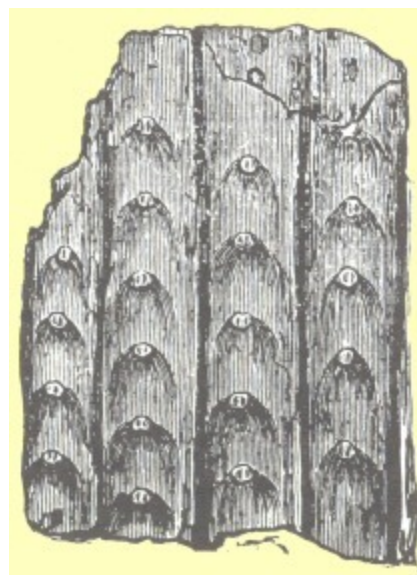
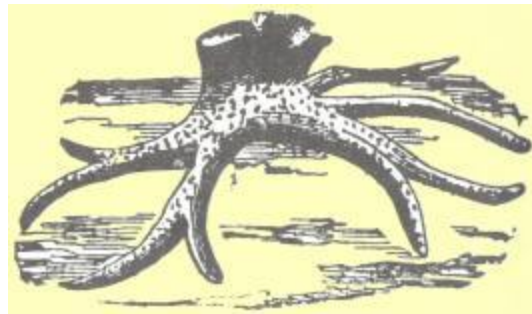
### **COALBROOKDALE COALFIELD.**

The works of the company in the Dale, at Lightmoor, Horsehay, the Castle, and other parts of Dawley, are so intimately connected and so entirely dependent upon the mineral resources of the district, that some further notice is needed to complete this stretch. We said at the commencement that neither iron nor coal were found here, but in the quotation from the Philosophical Transactions it is stated that Mr. Ford made iron either hard or soft from ore and coal got in the dale; and it may perhaps without being considered a sketch of language be said that the opening into the Lightmoor valley, where coals were undoubtedly worked at an early period, is a northern lip or extension of the Dale itself. Indeed the whole of the rich mineral tract extending from Broseley to the extreme limits of the Lilleshall Company's works, some seven miles in length, and terminating in a Symon Fault on the south-east of Madeley parish, about four miles in breadth, is

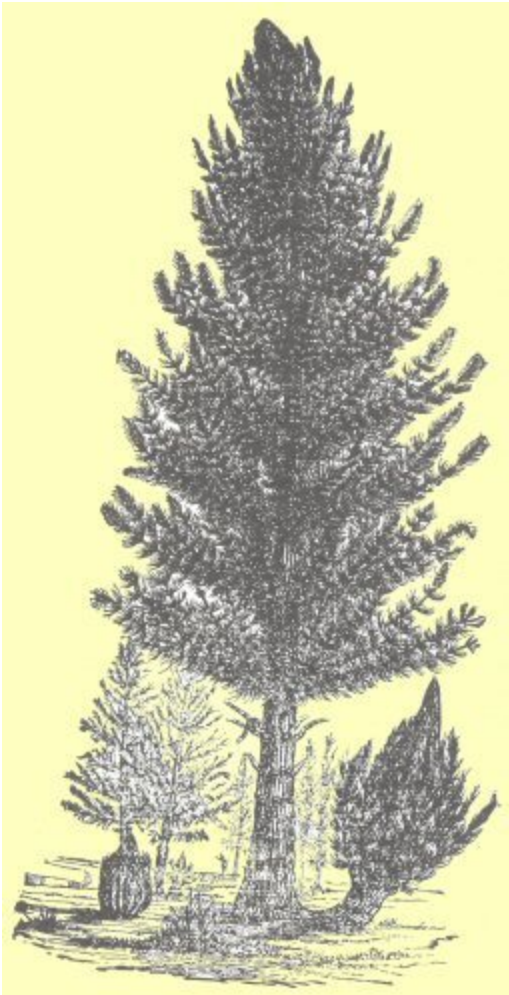
universally known as the Coalbrookdale Coalfield; but the Dale proper is a hollow scooped out of soft Silurian shale, which shews itself at the railway station, by the viaduct, on the road to Lightmoor, and in various other places. Here two great faults or rents in the coalfield meet; one coming down from the Dunge at Broseley, and the other from the direction of Lilleshall, causing a difference of level varying from fifty to seven hundred feet. The coal-measures approach the northern extremity of the Dale on three sides, forming a fringe which rises from a few feet above the Dale to three hundred feet above the Severn at Ironbridge, and to over seven hundred feet at the highest points. It was this outside fringe of lower coals which tempted early miners, who by means of levels in the hill sides got their "Smith's Coal," leaving others, which they did not then need for house fuel. Interesting instances of the outcrops of these coals are to be seen at the surface on high grounds overlooking the Dale, also on the side of the railway opposite to Black Rock quarry, where an instructive section of the Best, Middle, and Clod Coals are visible, with a slight fault displacing them. They crop out on the side of the Lincoln Hill walks; and on sinking a trial pit at Castle Green near there, many years ago, it was found that the Middle and Clod coals had been removed, and the space filled up with gob. The upper coals here, and also the pennystone, as at the Lodge Pit, remained; but at the latter the clod coal, the best coal for iron-making purposes, was removed, and the space filled up with refuse.

When quarrying stone at the Black Rock, on the right hand side of the tramroad leading to Lightmoor, for the purpose of constructing the viaduct for the Wellington and Severn Junction Railroad, an interesting discovery was made of a number of fossil trees. Some were still clinging to the soil from which they originally derived their nourishment, as here shewn, somewhat imperfectly, by the accompanying engraving. One was twelve feet in circumference at the point at which the roots, which were eight in number, and two feet ten inches in their thickest part, diverged and spread, at a distance of eighteen inches from the trunk, and divided into two, and at a distance of four feet dipped into ground. The tree appeared to have been buried in mud before decay commenced, and to that circumstance was due probably its preservation from further decay, portions of trunks and branches were strewn around. We obtained a photograph and forwarded it to the Illustrated London News, in which paper an engraving appeared at

the time. It was, we believe, a sigillaria, but was smooth, and shewed few of the marks common to the genus, such as appear on the accompanying enlarged section of the upper part of trees of a like kind. The roots also were smooth as far as exposed. The rock in which the roots were embedded was the Crawstone crust, and the sandrock which surrounded it was highly charged with oil or petroleum, derived from the vegetation which had produced the seam of coal, (the little flint coal) above, or from the decaying trees and branches of trees which now lie prostrate, and are embedded in the rock itself. There is one of considerable size at the time we write, five feet of which is exposed to view, the other part is obscured by the rock; and at the upper end where it enters the rock is a soft brown substance, about an inch thick, with impressions of the woody fibre of the tree itself. It is just that kind of fleshy substance one would suppose to belong to such trees, and one can scarcely resist the impression that it is the bark. Examined by the lens it appears to be thickly studded with small white crystals, strewed about.



Interlacing each other are Calamites, the giant representatives of our mares-tail which still flourishes near in damp places on the surface. The following representation will afford an idea of the gigantic proportions they then attained. They are to be found at all stages of growth; sometimes with their central pith, surrounded by a ligneous cylinder, divided by medullary rays, and having a thick bark. These reed-like plants were of course suited to the moist condition then prevailing, and assumed magnificent proportions.



The following is the section as it now appears, commencing at the surface and taking the measures in a descending order.

Below the turf,—

		ft.	in.
1	Yellow clay	4	0

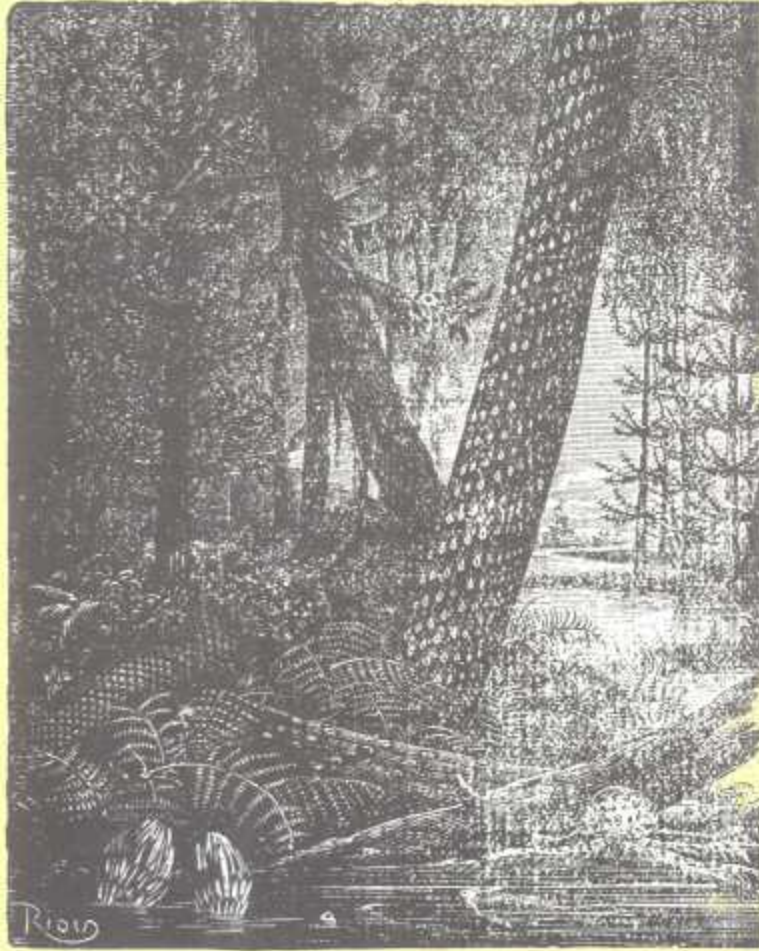
2	Coal Smut; (might represent Sill, coal)	1	0
3	Clunch	1	0
4	Vigor coal	0	10
5	Ganey coal rock (shale)	1	0
6	Ganey coal	1	3
7	Linseed earth (A brown soapy kind of clay)	1	0
8	Best coal and middle coal (These are separated by a parting which diminishes from 10 inches on the west to 2 in. on the east.)	2	0
9	Fine clunch	1	0
10	Clod coal	2	0
11	Clunch with roots and plants, and nodules of ironstone at bottom	5	0
12	Little flint coal	2	0
13	Little flint rock (with prostratetrees and petroleum)	27	0
14	Crawstone crust, with upright trees and roots embedded.		
	Total	49	11

Beds of underclay so invariably accompany seams of coal that some have come to the conclusion that there was no exception to the rule. Here however is one, in the case of the Little Flint coal, which lies immediately upon a sand rock. Evidently it was not formed like peat from vegetation which grew and accumulated on the spot. There is no underclay to support the roots of ordinary coal-measure plants, but the coal follows closely the contour of the rock on which it lies; as though it had flowed over it and had been laid down upon it like a sheet of bituminous matter. And there is not the least doubt but that this was the case. Sigillarias, Lepidodendrons, Calamites, and tree-ferns flourished on the slime now hardened into shale, and which shows sun-cracks, and worm-burrowings, indicative of the then surface, with tracks of locomotive mullusca, as they dragged their shells along the soft impressionable slime. Heavy tropical rains then falling upon some upraised and exposed Caradoc or perhaps Millstone grit lands, the latter scarcely yet consolidated, brought down and held in suspension a

quantity of sand which, as it settled down, formed a bed varying from three to thirty feet in thickness. The body of water which contained so much sand must, of course, have been much greater, and would probably cover the whole of the vegetation. The result was that the lower parts of the largest trees which were buried first were preserved in situ. The upper parts toppled over and lay embedded in the sand, as we find them. In both cases the vegetable matter decayed and was replaced atom by atom with fine sand; but the vegetable tissues, oil, and seeds, being lightest, rose above the sand, forming a pulpy bituminous plastic bed, which first fermented, and then crystalized into coal. Even the little disc-like seeds of the sigillaria, which make up a considerable portion of the coal, and which floated with other matter, lie flat and parallel with the lamina of the coal itself.

Nor is this the only instance of the kind. The Top coal of Halesfield and Kemberton shews signs of liquefaction; portions of fish, such as teeth, bones, and scales being embedded in the coal.

We ought to add in connection with the Black Rock section that the five feet of clunch over the Little Flint Coal is the underclay for the Clod Coal, and is full of roots and rootlets.



The descent from the Crawstone crust to the Silurian shale of the Dale cannot be traced. As passed through at the Limestone pit at Lincoln Hill, it was as follows:—

	Ft.	In.
1. Crawstone Measure Crust	1	8
2. Rock	10	6
3. Coal Smut	0	9
4. Clunch with balls of Sandstone	12	0
5. Lancashire Ladies' Coal	0	6
6. Strong Clunch with Sandstone balls	19	0
7. Sandstone Rock	10	6

8.	Chalkstone	12	0
9.	Limestone (Silurian)	28	6
Total		95	5

This then may be considered a fair representation of the remainder of the measures which occur below those seen on the surface at the Black Rock Quarry; but the passage from the carboniferous to the Silurian formations is *no where conformable*, and no mention is made of the Millstone grit, a portion of which certainly intervenes, and which is to be seen in small patches near, but which might possibly be represented by the three or four last measures in the section of the Lincoln Hill Limestone Shaft.

Excellent opportunities occur in this immediate neighbourhood of studying the junction of the Silurian and Carboniferous formations, and of the evidences afforded of the denudation of the one prior to the formation of the other. To the general reader these words may convey little meaning, but the scientific student who studies the evidences here made clear cannot fail to comprehend the fact that he has before him not only an old sea-bed, rich in relics of the fauna which inhabited its waters, but a sea-bed which had become a cliff, and had in turn been gradually cut down and wasted during successive ages prior to that at which a carboniferous flora had begun to flourish. Two series of rocks are here in juxtaposition, yet so widely separated by time, as to indicate a gap in the consecutive history of the earth as great as if we were to blot out the intermediate history of this country from the close of the Heptarchy to the reign of George III.; only that the period of time in the latter case would bear no manner of comparison with the former. If we suppose the Wenlock limestone to have been once covered at these points by the Ludlow limestone, and this again by the old red sandstone—as is the case to the south, to say nothing of the carboniferous limestone and millstone grit, we are forced to the conclusion that thousands of vertical feet, and hundreds of cubic miles of solid ground were first piled up and then cut down and carried away by the sea. Creation itself in the interval of their formation passed through many phases, during which new species came slowly into being and disappeared, and were again replaced by others. To fill up the gap that succeeds this great silurian flooring of the coal-measures, to study the intermediate links of the missing

strata we must go to the millstone grit in its undenuded or partially denuded state, as it occurs beneath the coal-measures of Little Wenlock, or at the bend of the road, called "The Turn," in going from Coalbrookdale to Wellington.

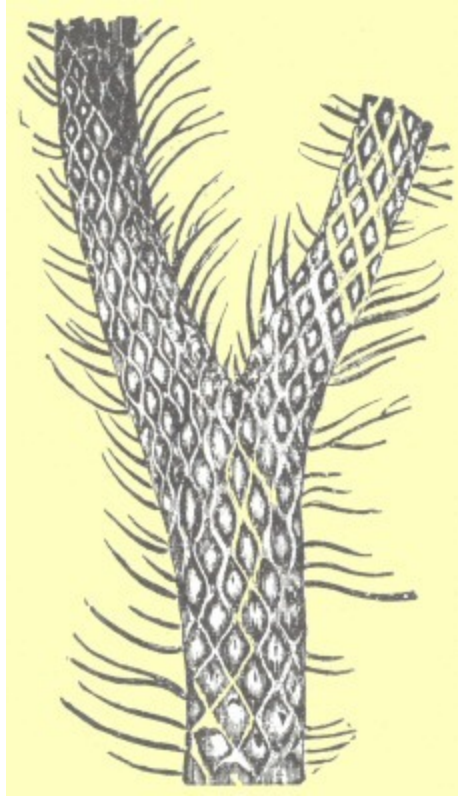
The first thing striking the attention is a buff coloured shale, weathered on the surface to clay, at the base of the bold bluff cliff of gritty sandstone so conspicuous on the brow of the hill. Whilst examining this member of the Silurian series a man from a neighbouring cottage remarked, "That is fuller's earth; persons fetch it when they are galled, and it is good for the eyes; large quantities are fetched away and sent to Manchester."

The fossils it contains show that it belongs to the lowest member of the Ludlow group, and that the whole of the Aymestry and Upper Ludlow have been stripped off and washed away before either the millstone grit or the coal-measures were formed.

Among the fossils yielded by this shale, in addition to bivalves and corals, are those interesting forms of crustaceans called pen fossils, from their resemblance to a quill pen. The species we found was *Graptolithus priodon*, described in the early works of Murchison as *Graptolithus Ludensis*. The trilobites, from the fineness of the material, are so sharply and beautifully preserved that the visual organs of the little creatures are clearly discernible, even to the optical tubes, elongated cones, or crystalline lens such as are to be seen so marvellously distinct on the eyes of the dragon-fly of the present day. The beautiful markings too on the shield of these wondrous little creatures which flourished in these seas, in such numbers that they may be got out in groups—forms which died out and perished before the close of the carboniferous formation represented above it—are so delicate and fine as to equal if not to defy imitation in ordinary materials in use at the Dale Works; and it is we fancy at least worth the experiment whether with this shale reduced to powder it might not be made to produce delicate impressions after the example here set by nature. We also found here some beautiful *Lingula*, a *Patella*, an *Orbicula*, a *Leptæna*, a *Lituites*, a *Fienestella*, and other fossils. To inhabitants of the Dale, here is a field of research open which they may make their own, close to their own doors.

This fine earth is known by various names where it occurs in Shropshire and the adjoining county of Herefordshire. In the latter county it is said to be used by country people for cleansing purposes, in which case it is called “Walker’s earth or soap.”

If the reader will follow this soft soapy shale, as we did, higher up into the coppice, he will find large masses of rock which have been toppled over through the shale giving way. A slip on the side of the narrow path discloses a bed of it, and immediately above it, consequent upon a former slip, we come upon a sandstone rock from twelve to fourteen feet thick, with quartz pebbles, representing the millstone-grit. Then a bed of black shale occurs, about six inches thick, which is chiefly made up of coal-plants, some of which are converted into charcoal. These plants do not appear to have grown on the spot, but to have been drifted into their present position. They were evidently in a soft and yielding state, some of them being pressed quite flat. <sup>[318]</sup> One good sized slab opened with a cast of a *Lepidodendron*, and we met with another cast, clearly of the same tree, a short distance west of it. Another, a *Sigillaria*, was much more distinct, the leaf scars being quite sharp, and the fibres of the inner bark very clear. This interesting band of coal shale is succeeded by another of yellowish clay, of about equal thickness; and these are followed by a second and a third band of black shale, with alternate ones of yellowish clay. Above these are thick sandstone rocks, some white, and some coloured red by iron, which here and there occurs in the form of hematite.

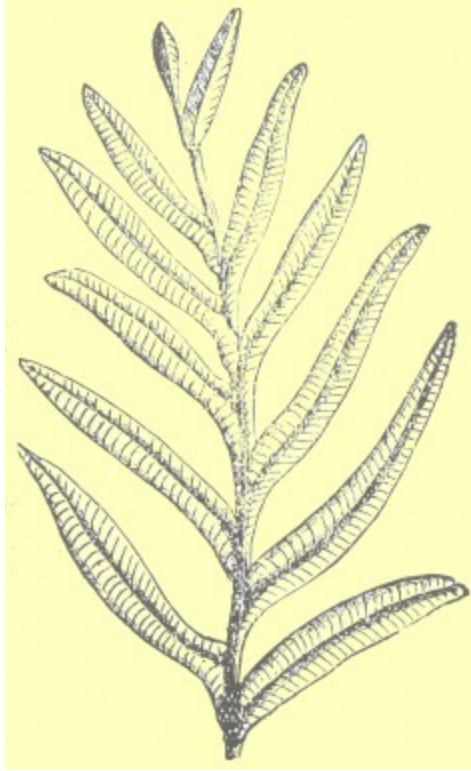


The whole of these rocks, from the surface to the soft Lower Ludlow shale here described would better represent the series of connecting links conducting us down from the Crawstone Crust at the Black Rock Quarry than any shaft section we could find described, and the whole may properly be classified as Millstone grit, which is known to attain a thickness of 80 feet in this locality, and to increase to 120 and 150 at a short distance from here, whilst in Derbyshire it thickens to 350 feet, and elsewhere to a maximum of 1,000 feet, and includes, as here, shales and thin coals. Colliers recognise the ironstone which crops out here as the Poor Robin of the Dawley Deep field pit, which occurs 60 feet below the Little Flint Coal; which affords another key to the series of measures which underlie the same coal at the Black Rock Quarry. The Poor Robin however here described must not be confounded with the one of the same name in south Staffordshire, which occurs higher up in the series.

We have given a few, and those the lower coals only, such as are found in the vicinity of Coalbrookdale; it would require more space than we can devote to it to enter upon a description of the measures occurring higher up in the series, in what is called the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. The ideal

representation given of coal producing plants at the head of this article and in subsequent pages, and the one given p. 213, will convey a tolerable idea of the surface as it occurs to the minds of geologists during successive periods of the coal formation, and upon which we purpose offering some remarks, condensed and as brief as is consistent with a due explanation of the circumstances. We have already spoken of the oil which exudes from the rock described. It is the same which oozed from a similar rock at the "Tar Tunnel" at Coalport, at the rate, it is said, of 1,000 barrels per week. We extract from it naphtha, rectified naphtha, gas to illumine our houses, and those magnificent colours derived from the sun's rays when the earth was young and green, mauve, magenta and a hundred medium tints.

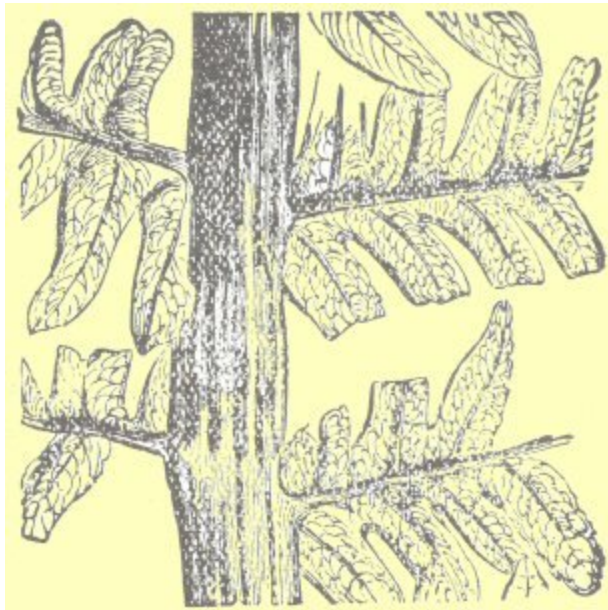
Coal itself rarely contains well preserved specimens of plants, but Sporangia (*Flemingites gracilis*) may be found in the Lancashire Ladies', the Flint coal, and most if not all others, the tough little seed cases having resisted the effects of fermentation and crystallization, which destroyed the cellular tissues of plants, but which may sometimes be seen in a carbonised state. If the reader will be at the trouble to split open a piece of coal where he finds brown streaks at the edge, he may detect with the naked eye thousands of little discs clustered and heaped together so thick as to constitute one third at least of the coal; and if he applies a lens he will find some open, with bright amber coloured matter inside; and others closed and imbricated. We have found them in all the coals we have yet examined. Let any one doubtful of the vegetable origin of coal take a bass burnt white from the grate, tap it on the edge, and he will find between the laminated plates numerous impressions of plants. Lindley and Hutton, from experiments instituted by them, state that plants such as are represented on pages 305 and 313, were peculiarly adapted for preservation under water.



Many hundreds of species of plants have been made out, two thirds being ferns. Very beautiful and clear impressions of the accompanying one, *Alethopteris lonchitica*, or true fern, are obtained, the finest impressions being generally in the Ballstone. It was in fact the great age of ferns: as many as 250 having been described, according to form, structure, &c. Thus, we get:—*Asterophyllites* (star leaf fern), *Cyclopteris* (round fern) chiefly in the Ballstone, *Caulopteris* (star fern); *Sphenopteris* (wedge shape fern); also *Newropteris*, or nerved winged fern, which are given on the two following pages:—

Many bear strong resemblances at a first glance to others cultivated in our greenhouses, or growing wild in their favourite habitats, and some approximate so closely to living forms as to make it a question whether they should be classified with different genera or not. The number is remarkable, considering that not more than sixty distinct species are at present indigenous to Europe. The tree ferns of modern horticultural gardens, with their scar-marked trunks and branching fronds, like those from the Mauritius, Brazil, and the Isle of Bourbon, convey tolerable ideas of those of the coal-measure period. We have already spoken of the mare's-tail of antediluvian times; it is seen in the full page representation, with its

glorious head towering high, and the young shoots peering above the slime. Deep in the forest is a species sending forth silky streamers; and prostrate is a species of *Lepidodendron*, or scaly tree, with branches feathered to the end and bearing cones as scaly as the tree. Others also shoot out their leaves; the *Ulodendron* staggers beneath its large arm-bearing cones, whilst the seal-impressioned *Sigillaria* towers high and overtops the whole with its noble crown of foliage. The roots of the latter lie by thousands on our coal-banks, showing distinctly whence the smaller fibres started; some are still connected, being protected by a matrix that formed the sandy soil in which they grew. Water-reeds and forest trees, green parasitic plants, ribbed and jointed, sending forth long-entangling feelers, must have woven a mantle of vegetation rank, matted, and dense in shadow, over the marshy platform where reptiles lurked at intervals. Of the inhabitants of those newly-formed forest lands, scorpions, beetles, flies, and a few reptiles, are all that have yet been found among the relics of the Shropshire coalfields. Saving the buzzing of a beetle and the whirring flight of a scorpion, the shaking of great fronds and fruits, and the sighings of the forest as hot breezes shook the giant pines and rung the pendant catkins, or the sudden splash of some strange fish seizing upon its prey, no sounds were heard. Unlike our woods and copses, all was silence: no songs of birds, no carolling of larks, no warbling of thrushes, no lowing of cattle, no bleating of sheep, and no human voice to break the stillness.





There were inequalities of surface then as now. The country had its uplands and its valleys, its rivers and its lakes, its dry and damp soils, its cool and sunny spots, but with one general genial climate reigning over all.

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We have said on page 284 that Mr. Cranege lived in the house Mr. Moses now lives in. It should have been, where Mr. W. Hughes now lives, opposite the Wesleyan chapel.

In mentioning this chapel we might add that the Rev. John Fletcher assisted in its erection, working and carrying stones like another man, with his coat off.

The lease for the ground was obtained by John Share from Mr. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds told Share he might make out the lease for 99 years. Share made it out for 99 years and added "and one year more." Mr. Reynolds said "Share thou art deep, but I'll sign it." The lease has recently expired and the building has been handed over to the Conference.

## **IRONBRIDGE.**

Ironbridge is a part of Madeley which, like Coalbrookdale, has risen to an independent ecclesiastical division, and its church now enjoys the unmerged rectorial tithes, valued at about £115 yearly, which formerly belonged to the mother church. In other respects also it enjoys privileges which formerly

belonged to Madeley proper, such as markets and fairs. When the grants of these privileges were made, and indeed for centuries afterwards, the slopes now covered with houses, and the streets which show a busy population, not only had no existence but the germs, even, which were to call them forth did not exist. The Fox had not become the object of sport it now is, but reared its young undisturbed in holes and burrowings on the hill side which bears its name; and the Brock or Badger shared with its brother burrower undisturbed dominion along the face of the same slope. There was indeed higher sport just then on this side of the Severn. Madeley-Wood was in reality what its name implied. It stretched its green unbroken mantle in front of the river from Coalbrookdale to the Lees or Lay, where the young wood was beat down and an open space kept for grazing. <sup>[325]</sup> It then followed the declivity where Madeley-Wood Hall now stands, and swept round the high ground of the Haye, where it joined on to Sutton-Wood, which continued a wood till a century or three quarters of a century ago. The Hay, opposite and on a level with the Lay, was another clearing, but one fenced round, into which deer or swine were driven. They could not well be hunted along the rough ground on the slope, but men with dogs rose early and drove them to the enclosures. High up at Lincoln Hill is Lodge Farm, formerly the keeper's, or the Hunting Lodge—

“Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew his wreathed bugle  
horn.”

Any one who examines the building for himself will at once see that it was erected for some very different purpose than that to which it has been devoted of late years. On approaching it you find substantially built old stables covered by thick heavy tiles, and an ancient barn, with thick walls and heavy timber. The house is of stone, and the windows appear to be of the same date and style as those at the Court. On going inside and ascending by winding stairs to what is called the watch-tower, you find four projections, at the extremity of each of which was a circular opening for a look-out; and beams inside, which are supposed to have formed seats for the watchmen or warders. These are now stopped up, and one, which is said to have had a date is also plastered over. The view would embrace the forest to the point where it united with that of Sutton in one direction, to the Severn in another, the country in the direction of Madeley in a third, and

fourthly that reaching beyond Leighton to beyond the Breidden Hills, as you see over the high ground of Lincoln Hill. The thick oak doors and their middle age hinges shew that it has been intended as a place of some strength. The distance from the Park, the Rough Park, and the Court House, render it probable that it was erected for the protection of the forest in this direction. And if its walls could speak they might tell of the visits of many a noble steward or forest-ranger, who whilst hunting the wild boar or stag, here rested and hung up his spear and horn, and received refreshment. Dukes in his Antiquities says that when many of the tenures dependent upon the forest grew useless and obsolete, the king appointed stewards and rangers to take care of the deer. Drayton has thus described these forest-keepers:

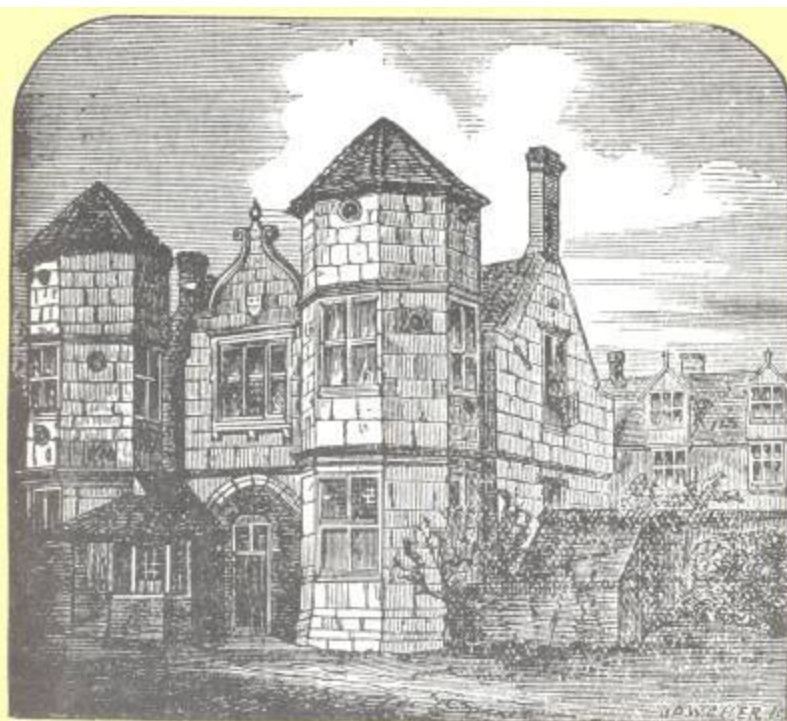
“I am clad in youthful green, I other colours scorn,  
My silken bauldrick bears my bugle or my horn,  
Which, setting to my lips, I wind so loud and shrill,  
As makes the echoes shout from every neighbouring hill;  
My dog-hook at my belt, to which my thong is tied,  
My sheaf of arrows by, my wood-knife by my side,  
My cross-bow in my hand, my gaffle on my rack,  
To bend it when I please, or if I list to slack;  
My hound when in my thong, I, by the woodman’s art,  
Forecast where I may lodge the goodly hie-palm’d hart.”

Drayton then describes how by the loftiest head he chooses his deer, unherds him from the rest, and either hunts him down with dogs, or stalks it underneath his horse to strike or take alive.

Hawking too must have been a favourite sport among the gentle-born long after this Lodge was built.

The Peregrene falcon, the Gerfalcon, and the Goshawk were used (of the former we give a representation) as well as dogs, and King John’s Forest Charter allowed all freemen the privilege of using them. One old writer says “every degree had its peculiar hawk, from the emperor down to the holy-water clerk.” This probably applied to river-hawking, pond-hawking and field-hawking. At any rate in 1267, the then rector of Madeley, Richard de Castillon, found it necessary to obtain from Henry III., then at

Shrewsbury, a license “to hunt in the Royal Forest of Madeley,” then reaching to the Severn; and in 1283 we find the rector’s superior, the Prior of Wenlock, obtaining permission to have a park there; to fence out a portion of the forest, and to have a Haia (Hay) for his deer. The Prior had no doubt by this time learnt a lesson, for he had been fined in the heavy sum £126 13s. 4d. in 1250 for three trespasses within the forest; and again in 1259, as shewn p. 8, he was again fined £100 for building houses within the forest boundary, and ordered to pull them down; but having the following year paid another £100, a grant was made that he and convent may have their houses in peace. The first perambulation of Edward the I.’s time shews that “the Vill. of Madeleye, with its bosc (wood) and two plains,” with “the bosc of Little Caldebroc” were disaforested, and so freed from the severe forest laws of the period. And again, the final perambulation of 1300 in speaking of the jurisdiction abandoned, again mentions Madeley, Capsi, and Caldebroc. Where Capsi was, and to what place the name applied is a puzzle.



Capsi or Capsey is still the surname of families in Wellington, and it is the christian name of a man in Bridgnorth, Capsey, Cristie or Cristey. It is mentioned after Madeley and before Coalbrookdale; might it not have been what is now called the Castle, and Castle Green. This seems probable enough, as there are no traces or traditions of anything approaching to a castle having existed there since the Conquest.

In a survey of the Lordship of Madeley in 1772, we find no mention of Capsi; but we do of Conygray, Dove House Meadow, Doer close, &c. The lords of the manor after the woods were disforested succeeded to all absolute authority to hunt, course, hawk, fish, and fowl; and to authority to grant power to others at their will and pleasure to do the same. Before altogether quitting this forest it may be well to notice a circumstance which goes to illustrate what we sometimes hear of places of sanctuary in former times. There were poachers then as now; and at the forest assizes in 1209 it is stated that two men, named Hugh le Scot, and Roger de Welinton had taken a doe. Hugh took refuge in a church, and lived a month there; but admitted to the Foresters and Verderers his guilt. He escaped at last, having disguised himself in woman's clothes; and both were then declared fugitives. In 1235, the bosc of Madeley, with those of Kemberton, Sutton, Stirchley, and Dawley were said to be in the Bailiwick, of Wombridge: subject to officers such as Foresters, Verderers, or Stewards there. It is not improbable therefore that the chief officer of Wombridge may have had a Lodge where we find one. It might have been one of the houses which the Wenlock Prior had built, and which he was only permitted to retain by payment of £100 fine to the king; or again, it might have been built by him when, as Dukes says, he obtained leave of Edward I., in the 11th year of his reign, to "convert Madeley-Wood, within the perlieu of the forest of Mount Gilbert," as the Wrekin then was called in honour of a monk resident there, into a park.

Any way, if the reader compares the styles of architecture and the materials of which this Lodge and the Gateway or Lodge of the Court are built he will find strong reasons for coming to the conclusion that the latter are from the same quarry, and that the former also correspond. Both have unglazed circular openings at the top; but the one is covered with heavy shelly limestone slabs, and the other with thick old fashioned tiles. The windows of the Madeley-Wood Lodge are smaller, for protection; the doors are of

thick oak, studded with nails driven in when the wood was green; portions of the old oak floors only remain. A paved yard has at one time extended beyond and under the stables, if not the barn, we are told by one of the occupants. Domesday also says there was a wood capable of fattening 400 swine, so that there must have been a good many beeches, ancestors of those near the Lodge, to supply mast, or oaks to furnish acorns.

The Old Court and these Lodges, almost the last relics of the feudal times in Madeley and Madeley Wood, have had their ends hastened by rents and cracks made by undermining, in search of minerals, and will soon disappear. But for iron cramps and strong buttresses of bricks the old Lodge would have gone down long ago.

There is one other relic, and one even of greater antiquity.

The oldest building of all in the parish is the old Mill by the Court house. It is mentioned in Domesday; and looking at the thickness and hardness of some of the beams they seem calculated to last as long as they have done; and even they seem to have done duty in some former building. The old wheel is gone and the one which succeeded it, and the pool, originally a fishpond, which supplied water power has gone too; it was, when we remember it on the upper side the old granary or barn.

The Hay House also must be ranked among the oldest buildings of its class, as one which comes down to us from forest times, and in connection with this *bosc* or Madeley-Wood we have been describing. The house stood here no doubt in forest times, and in its capacious cellars good venison and wine have ere now been stored.

Among the oldest houses in Madeley now standing must be mentioned that belonging to and occupied by Mr. George Legge, where Mr. Wolfe entertained King Charles. Also the house belonging to Mr. John Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox informs us that in the writings it was originally called "Little Hay;" having been built for the son of the proprietor of the Hay house; and that in front was the fold-yard, with a house or two at the outside for farm servants. The interior of the house bears marks of great antiquity; and one room appeals to have been used as a chapel. In what was originally a field was found a well formed with circular stones; on the top ranges are figures, 12 in number, probably representing saints of the Roman Calendar.

Some of the old heavily timbered cottages have been pulled down to make way for modern structures. Freed from exacting forest laws openings in woods began to be made; and during the next two centuries houses of timber, half timber, and wattle-and-dab, and timber and bricks, began to rise up here and there, at Madeley, along the Severn side, and at the Lloyds. Some houses were fitted together, so far as their frame-work was concerned, in woods where the timber grew, and the parts being afterwards removed were pegged together: among them may have been the New house mentioned in Henry the VIII's grant of 1544, that bearing the date 1612, in the Dale, Bedlam Hall, and the Blockhouse. <sup>[333]</sup>

Nothing whatever is known, so far as we could learn, about the history of Bedlam Hall; and little beyond conjecture concerning the Block-house, which formerly meant a place to defend a harbor, a passage, or station for vessels. That the ford above was a passage at a very early time there can be no doubt; and it might have been erected by the lords of the manor to protect such a pass. (The date upon the old house nearly opposite is 1654; and this was built by Adam Crumpton, who owned the ferry and paid duty to the lords of the manor (we presume) on each side.) Some say it was a store for barge tackle; and others that it owes its name to the fact that bargemen here put on a block and reeved their lines to get up the ford. It is quite certain that Madeley Wood bargemen had now begun to carry coals, got by levels driven into the hill side under the Brockholes and Foxholes, and to export them, as old Fuller speaks of more than 200 years ago. The monks of Buildwas however had vessels in the 13th century, as we have shewn in "our History of Broseley" (p.p. 14 and 15); and as early as 1220 obtained a grant of a right of road, through Broseley-Wood to the Severn, over which to carry stone to their barges, which they loaded near what is now Ironbridge.

In 1756 there were 39 barges belonging to 21 owners at Madeley-Wood; now there are not half a dozen. From an early period there seems to have been a ferry here; probably boats were kept on either side by the owners of the two old houses which existed near. At any rate there were means of crossing the river when king Charles came down for that purpose and found the passage guarded, during the progress of his flight after his defeat at Worcester. Of roads on this side we fancy there were none, excepting the beds of brooks up which the Wenlock monks scrambled to reach their

granary, their mill, their park, and fishponds at Madeley, but of these we shall speak presently.

The present town may be said to owe its creation to the construction of the far-famed iron bridge which here spans the Severn, and from which it derives its name. The iron works established at Madeley Wood, together with the flourishing works of Coalbrookdale, and the communication the bridge opened up with those of iron and clay at Broseley, so fostered its trade that it soon sprang into importance as a town. John Locke, the well-known author of the work on “The Understanding,” has somewhere said that he who first made known the use of iron “may be styled the father of arts and the author of plenty.” Next to the discovery of the material, in point of importance, is its adaptation to the uses and conveniences of mankind. No bridge crossed the river between Buildwas and Bridgnorth, and to the noble arch which crosses the Severn the place is indebted alike for its population, its importance, and its name. It has the credit of having been the first of its kind, and in design and construction was a triumph of engineering skill rarely witnessed at the period at which it was built. A great advance upon the rickety wooden structures, affected by wind and rain, it was no less so upon those clumsy-looking ones of stone higher up and lower down the river, which, choking up the stream and impeding navigation, caused apprehensions at every flood for their safety. The design originated at a period interesting from the expansion of the iron trade and the progress of road making; and was opposed by the ferry men, who thought boats a sufficient accommodation in connecting both banks of the river. But as stone succeeded more primitive formations—logs, single or planked, thrown across a stream—so iron from its strength and lightness triumphed over other materials. It may add to the triumph of the achievement to remark, that both French and Italian engineers who, during the last century took the lead in engineering works of this kind, had made attempts in this particular department, but failed—chiefly from the inability of their iron founders to cast large masses of metal. The first attempt, we believe, was made at Lyons, in 1775. One of the arches was put together, but the project was afterwards abandoned as too costly, timber being substituted in its stead.

The second Abraham Darby had looked at the place and thought how it was to be done. The third Abraham Darby, who on arriving at man’s estate

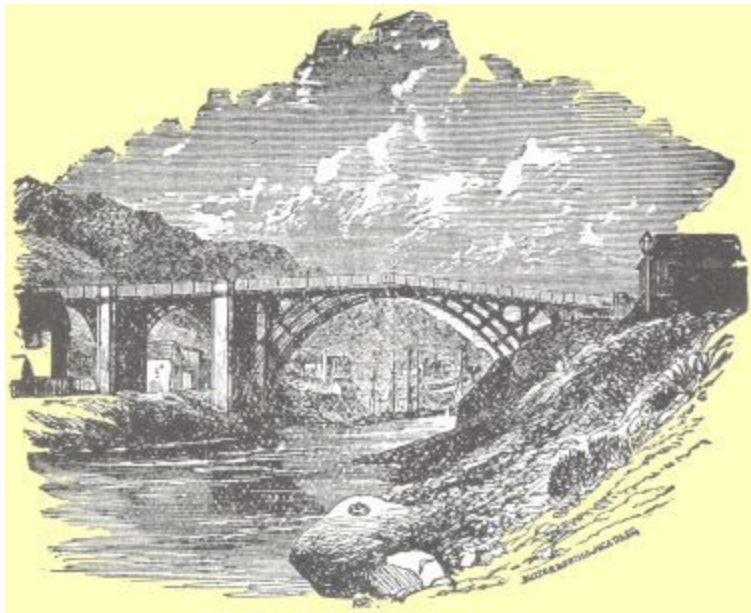
showed himself possessed of the same spirit of enterprise as had distinguished his father and grandfather, resolved to carry out the idea, and to erect a bridge which should unite the parishes of Broseley and Madeley, the former then in the full tide of its prosperity as an iron making, pot making, and brick making district. The time was favourable for the experiment, not only on account of the expansion of the iron trade, but from the progress just then taking place in road making; and the owners of the adjoining land as well as those at the head of local industries were found favourable to the scheme. A company was formed, and an Act of Parliament was obtained, the provisions of which were so drawn as to provide against failure, the terms being that the bridge should be of "cast iron, stone, brick, or timber." Like some members of the company, the architect, Mr. Pritchard, of Shrewsbury, does not seem to have had full faith in the new material, as in the first plans prepared by him iron was to be used but sparingly, and in the crown of the arch only. This did not satisfy Abraham Darby, John Wilkinson, and others; and Mr. Darby's principal pattern maker, Thomas Gregory, made other plans.

Wilkinson had made and launched his iron barge down at the Roving, he had made "iron men" to get the coal, he had made an iron pulpit, he had made himself an iron coffin, which he kept in his greenhouse, besides one or two to give away to his friends. He had faith in iron, in iron only, and he insisted upon the employment of his favourite metal.

Telford described him as the king of Ironmasters, in himself a host; the others said he was iron mad, but submitted; and the bridge was commenced. The stone abutments were laid in 1777, during which time the castings were being made at the Dale. The ironwork took but three months to erect. The following particulars may be interest.

On the abutments of the stone works are placed iron plates, with mortices, in which stand two upright pillars of the same. Against the foot of the inner pillar the bottom of the main rib bears on a base plate. This rib consists of two pieces connected by a dovetail joint in an iron key, and fastened by screws; each is seventy feet long. The shorter ribs pass through the pillar, the back rib in like manner, without coming down to the plate. The cross-stays, braces, circles in spandrils, and the brackets, connect the larger pieces, so as to keep the bridge

perfectly steady, while the diagonal and cross-stays and top plates connect the pillars and ribs together in opposite directions. The whole bridge is covered with top plates, projecting over the ribs on each side, and on this projection stands the balustrade of cast iron. The road over the bridge, made generally of iron slag, is twenty-four feet wide, and one foot deep. The span of the arch is one hundred feet six inches, and the height from the base line to the centre is forty feet. The weight of iron in the whole is three hundred and seventy-eight tons, ten hundred-weight. Each piece of the long ribs weighs five tons, fifteen hundred. On the largest or exterior rib is inscribed in capitals—“This bridge was cast at Coalbrookdale, and erected in the year 1779.”



During the construction of the bridge a model was prepared and sent up to the Society of Arts, who presented Mr. Darby with their gold medal in recognition of his merits as designer and erector; and a model and an engraving of the bridge may still be seen in the Society's rooms, John Street, Adelphi. Mr. Robert Stephenson has said of the structure: “If we consider that the manipulation of cast-iron was then completely in its infancy, a bridge of such dimensions was doubtless *a bold as well as an original undertaking*, and the efficiency of the details is worthy of the boldness of the conception.” Mr. Stephenson adds “*that from a defect in the construction* the abutments were thrust inwards at the approaches and the ribs partially fractured.” This was not the case. It arose from the nature of

the land and its exterior pressure which was obviated by sinking and underbuilding the foundation, and to remedy the supposed defect, two small land arches were, in the year 1800, substituted for the stone approach on the Broseley side. While the work was in progress, Mr. Telford carefully examined the bridge, and thus spoke of its condition at the time:—

“The great improvement of erecting upon a navigable river a bridge of cast-iron of one arch only was first put in practice near Coalbrookdale. The bridge was executed in 1777 by Mr. Abraham Darby, and the ironwork is now quite as perfect as when it was first put up. Drawings of this bridge have long been before the public, and have been much and justly admired.”

Mr. Smiles in speaking of the bridge quotes a Coalbrookdale correspondent who, writing in May, 1862, says that

“at the present time the bridge is undergoing repair; and, special examination having been made, there is no appearance either that the abutments have moved, or that the ribs have been broken in the centre or are out of their proper right line. There has, it is true, been a strain on the land arches, and on the roadway plates, which, however, the main arch has been able effectually to resist.”

It is a pleasing object in the landscape, and passed its centenary this year, 1879, with no other display than a few small flags which Mr. Frisby placed on the balustrades. It has paid for itself over, and over again; and the excessive toll is at present severely felt. Those sharing the benefits of the monopoly of course protest against attempts to make it a free bridge, and being private property there is no other means of effecting the object than by buying them out, or by obtaining an Act of Parliament. There is, it is true, one other: and that the suicidal one of letting it rust to its own destruction—a course the monopolists seem resolved to take. <sup>[340]</sup>

The Severn formerly was a great liquid highway for heavy goods; people took their boats to Shrewsbury to the fairs for butter, cheese, and groceries, and came down with the stream, others were carried on pack-horses; a strong enduring race now extinct.

Roads were made pretty much at will, and were repaired at pleasure. Covered waggons, like Crowley's, drawn by 4 or 6 heavy horses, crept along the rough circuitous roads. It was not till 1763 that turnpike-gates were established, to raise money to keep roads in repair. Stage coaches then ventured into districts they had not visited before. Previous to a road being made along the Wharfage, coaches had to toil up the hill at the back of the Swan, but after the bridge was built they went under it and turned up by the stables to the front of the Company's Inn, the Tontine. Afterwards they ran somewhere at the back and came into the old road at Lincoln Hill.

Ultimately the present road was made by Styches pit to the top of the bank. At one time four coaches ran through the town; two from Shrewsbury to Cheltenham, L'Hirondelle and the Hibernia; and two from Shrewsbury to Birmingham; the Salopian and, we think, the Emerald. The two latter belonged to the brothers Hemmings, who drove them; but who afterwards quarrelled and ran in opposition to each other. Taylor of the Lion started the "Young Salopian" in opposition; and Hemmings then called his the "Old Salopian." When the Birmingham and London railway opened, Taylor got a petition numerously signed to the Post Master General, asking in an apparently disinterested way to be allowed to carry the mail bags gratuitously to Birmingham, at the same time binding himself to forfeit a heavy sum if he failed to be in time. He obtained his wish and immediately called his coach the Royal Mail; which not only brought him custom but saved him £1 4s. 0d. per week at Tern Gate, 18s. at Watling street, £1 4s. 0d. at Priorslee, 12s. at Shifnal, and tolls at all the other gates to Birmingham.

John Peters took a fancy for driving the Hibernia, thinking he could take it down the steep hills between Shrewsbury and Ironbridge without stopping to have the wheels looked. The first steep descent was the Wyle-cop, and this he managed to get down without accident; but in trying the experiment down Leighton Bank, shortly before the first change of horses, the coach, driver, and passengers came to grief, and were pitched right over into a field at the bottom of the hill. Peters was seriously injured, and some of the passengers were badly hurt; but Peters never tried a similar experiment to the end of his days.

In those days it was a strange sight for a stranger coming down the bank towards Bedlam for the first time in the dusk of a winter's evening, when

the works were in full operation. We remember Hemmings once telling of a Cockney coming down into the country for the first time, and waking up from a snooze, unable to conjecture the true character of the scene, and insisting upon going no farther. To him the mazy river was the Styx; and had he been able to see the ferry unpaddled moving slowly to and fro in mid-channel, he might have imagined it was Charon's boat; and the bellowing blast-furnaces and coke-fires the entrance to Inferno. These fires have long been extinguished, and the supply of mineral riches being exhausted, labour has migrated to places where nature had similar gifts in store to stimulate wealth-creating industry. You may yet perceive the crumbling outlines of the ruins, abrupt and massive, like the tottering walls of some dismantled castle. Mr. Glazebrook, Mr. E. Edwards, and others horsed some of the coaches from Ironbridge, and the stopping and changing usually drew a group of tradesmen and others to witness the sight. L'Hirondelle was horsed from Shrewsbury by Jobson of the Talbot, who took a special pride in his team. When Hemmings left the road we had some few attempts at running Omnibuses by the Rushtons, and by Walters; first to Wolverhampton, and next to Wellington; but railways coming nearer drove them from the road.

The tradesmen of Ironbridge naturally took great interest in the various schemes proposed to bring railways within their reach, and assisted manfully in meeting the difficulties which for a long time delayed the execution of the works on the part of interested landowners, and others who advocated rival schemes; and it may be interesting here to place on record facts bearing on the subject.

## **THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY WAS AUTHORIZED IN 1853.**

FIRST by the 16th and 17th Vict. Ch. 227, entitled "An Act for making a Railway from the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway near Hartlebury, in the County of Worcester, to the Borough of Shrewsbury, in the County of Salop, WITH A BRANCH to be called the Severn Valley Railway, and for other purposes."

2NDLY, in 1855. By the 18th. and 19th. Vict. Ch. 188 entitled “An Act for making and maintaining the Severn Valley Railway, and for other purposes.”

3RDLY. in 1856. By the 19th. and 20th. Vic. Ch. 111 entitled “An Act for authorizing deviations from the authorized line of the Severn Valley Railway, and for making further provisions with respect to Shares in the Capital of the Severn Valley Company, and for facilitating the completion of their undertaking, and other purposes.”

4THLY in 1858. By the 21st. and 22nd. Vic. Ch. — entitled “An Act for making further provisions with respect to the Severn Valley Railway in order to the completion thereof, and for other purposes.”

5THLY in 1860. By the Severn Valley Railway Leasing Act 1860 to the West-Midland.

## **THE WELLINGTON AND SEVERN JUNCTION RAILWAY**

Was authorized in 1853, but a portion only of this Railway (from Wellington to Lightmoor) was constructed and the powers of the Act lapsed. It was worked by the Great Western Company in connexion with their line from Lightmoor to Shifnal and Wolverhampton.

The Great Western Company and the West Midland and Severn Valley Railway Companies promoted Bills for Leasing this Railway in the Session of 1861. The Great Western Bill also proposed for the extension of their existing Line ending at Lightmoor, from Lightmoor to Coalbrookdale. The West Midland and Severn Valley (joint) bill in addition to its provisions for leasing the Wellington line to Lightmoor provided for the construction of a Railway from the Ironbridge Station on the Severn Valley Railway over the river Severn through Coalbrookdale to the Lightmoor Station of the Wellington line at Lightmoor. There were in fact three Bills before Parliament for constructing Railways from Lightmoor to Coalbrookdale, two crossing the river Severn, one joining the Severn Valley Railway at Ironbridge, and the other joining the Severn Valley and the Much Wenlock and Severn Junction Railway at New Barn. The Much Wenlock & Severn Junction Railway was authorized in 1859 by 22nd. and 23rd. Vict. entitled

“An Act for making a Railway from Much Wenlock, in the County of Salop to communicate with the Severn Valley Railway and the River Severn in the same County.”

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These railways conferred great advantages upon the town of Ironbridge both as a means of sending and receiving goods, and also as enabling tradesmen to economise time in attending markets or fairs, and in bringing men of business into the neighbourhood.

They also bring numerous visitors in summer time, who are attracted by the scenery in the neighbourhood. It may indeed be taken as a fact, as we have said before, that there are nooks and corners just outside and along the Severn Valley now better known to strangers than to the inhabitants; and which natives themselves have never seen. With eyes to watch the till and see their way along the beaten track of business, men not unfrequently lose sight of intellectual pleasures within their reach; in their hurry to secure gain they forget items that might serve much to swell the sum of human happiness at which they aim. Like Wordsworth’s clay, cold, potter; to whom

A primrose by a river’s brim,  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more,—

so, insensible to the life that is within them and the glories which surround them, they feel not that flow of which Milton speaks, that—

Vernal joy, able to drive  
All sadness but despair!

Coleridge too has said,

In Nature there is nothing melancholy.

And some one else, speaking lovingly of the Author of Nature, has written:

“Not content with every kind of food to nourish man,  
Thou makest all Nature beauty to his eye

And music to his ear.”

There are no bolts, bars, or boundary walls, and there need be

“No calling left, no duty broke,”

in making ourselves more acquainted than we are, by holiday rambles and dignifying investigations, with wonders which constantly surround us.



Few more interesting spots could be chosen than Ironbridge, with its woods, and cliffs, and river, which from tourists, and all lovers of the beautiful, never fail at once to secure attention and admiration. You may travel far and not meet a page so interesting in nature’s history. Many are the occasional visits—many are the stated pilgrimages, made from distances—by devotees of science, desirous of here reading the “testimony of the rocks.” To such, this natural rent in the earth’s crust; this rocky cleft, the severed sides of which, like simple sections of a puzzle, afford the clue to its original outline and primæval features, and prove full of interest. Like some excavated ruin, flooring above flooring, there are platforms and stages where in rearing the old world’s structure the workers rested. Coins of that far off period are plentiful where human habitations now stand, terrace above terrace. Other than these, the little town has no antiquities older than its bridge; other than the hunting lodge and half-timber-houses previously mentioned; there are no castle keeps, cathedral aisles, or moss-crowned

ruins; no suggestive monuments of the past save those already noticed and such as nature furnishes. 'Tis rich in these; these it has mature and undecayed: and in such mute eloquence as no work of man can boast. Massive and motionless there are around the most interesting and instructive specimens of the world's architecture. Not a winding path threads the hill side but conducts to some such memorial, but opens some page written within and without. Take the favourite summer's walk of the inhabitants, that leading to the Rotunda, on the crest of the hill; and you stand upon the mute relics of a former world! Beneath is the upturned bed of a former sea, and around is the storied mausoleum where hundreds of the world's lost species lie entombed. Few places boast a more suggestive or more romantic scene. Lower still, just at

“The swelling instep of the hill,”

winds the silvery thread woven by the Severn through the valley, interlacing meads, woods, upland swells, and round-topped grassy knolls. Amid pasture land sloping to the water's edge and relieved by grazing cattle, rise the ivy-topped ruins of Buildwas Abbey; beyond is a pleasing interchange of land and water, the whole bounded by hills scarcely distinguishable from the azure sky. Mingled sounds of birds and men and running water strike strangely on the ear; and often in the calm twilight fogs move slowly on the river. How these rocks and caverns echo and reverberate during a thunder-peal, when loud and long-continued. The inhabitants tell, too, of curious acoustic effects produced along the valley; how in under tones from one side the river to a point of equal elevation on the other neighbours may whisper to each other, the atmosphere acting as a sounding-board for the voice. This is so in a rent in the rocks above the Bower-yard, known to natives as the *Bower Yord*.

“Up the bower, and through the Edge,  
That's the way to Buildwas bridge,”

is a local ditty with no other merit than antiquity; but it has served as a lullaby to generations cradled long ere the bridge below was reared. Over-looking the Bower is Bath-wood—minus now the bath. Tych's-nest comes next, where the kite formerly squealed, and had its eyrie; and still later—as

the oldest inhabitant is ready to testify—where badgers were caught, and made sport of at Ironbridge Wake.

Ironbridge abounds in pleasant walks and sunny spots; and right pleasant 'tis to view from some eminence on the opposite bank—Lady-wood or Benthall-edge, the prospect spread out before you. Clustering cottages are seen to perch themselves on ridges, or to nestle pleasantly in shady nooks half hid by rocks and knolls and trees; while bits of nature's carpet, garden plots and orchards, add interest to the scene. On points commanding panoramic sweeps of country, of winding dales and wooded hills, have sprung up villa-looking residences and verandahed cottages that tell of competence, retirement, and those calm sweet joys that fringe the eventide of prosperous life. There are no formal streets or rigid red brick lines to offend the eye: but that pleasing irregularity an artist would desire.

Looking east or west, fronting or turning their backs upon each other, many gabled, tall chimneyed, just as their owners pleased; there is a freedom and rusticity of style that gratifies the sight and harmonises well with the winding roads that meets the poet's fancy and goes beyond the limner's skill. To mention severally these suburban hill or tree-embosomed retreats would be sufficient by the name itself to indicate the faithful picture we have drawn. From the Severn to the summit, the hill is dotted over with villas, Gothic and fanciful, fronted by grottoed gardens, flanked by castellated walls and orchards, with ornamental hedge-rows and shady sycamores; whilst in mid-air, lower down, like a gossamer on a November morn, appears the iron net-work of the bridge. We have written so much and so often of these scenes that we are tempted here to hand in *copy* to the printer of what we have previously said on the subject.

However beautiful these rocks and hills are by day, the view of Ironbridge assumes a character equally sublime when the glare of the sun is gone, when the hills cast their shadows deep and the river gathering the few rays left of the straggling light gives them back in feeble pencils to the eye. At sunset when the hills are bathed in purple light, and the god of day before his final exit between Lincoln Hill and Benthall-edge a second time appears; by moonlight, when rosy tints have given way to hues of misty grey, when familiar objects grow grotesque and queer, and minor features melt away amid the deep calm quiet that reigns below, serial pictures of quaint perspective and inspiring beauty present themselves. To the stranger

entering the valley at night for the first time the scene is novel and impressive. Silence,

Faithful attendant on the ebon throne,

sways her sceptre over dim outlines which imagination shapes at will, and the river, toned down to the duskiest hue, whispers mournfully to each smooth pebble as it passes.

### **ST. LUKE'S CHURCH.**

The church occupies a picturesque situation on the side of the hill, opposite to the bridge, from which it is approached by a long flight of steps on one side, and a circuitous path winding round the hill on the other. It was built in 1836, and like the bridge, is of a material with which the district abounds. It would however have been equally in character with the place, and more pleasing to the eye, had it been built of stone. It has a tower, a nave, a chancel, and side aisles, and a richly stained glass window, with full length figures of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John. The endowment has been augmented very much of late years through the munificence of the Madeley Wood Company, who subscribed £1,000, and the liberality of the late Rev. John Bartlett, and others. Also by the purchase of the unredeemed rectorial tithes. The sum of upwards of £1,000 was raised too for better school accommodation for the place.

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Ironbridge is one of the polling districts for municipal and parliamentary purposes; and has about 450 electors for the borough franchise. The Mayor and Borough Magistrates hold here alternately with Broseley and Wenlock Petty Sessions, every six weeks. Its central position gives it advantages which outside towns cannot lay claim to; both in point of trade, and as the seat of various local institutions.

It is the head quarters of the Sixth Shropshire Rifle Corps, of which John A. Anstice, Esq., is Captain, and R. E. Anstice, Esq., Lieutenant, and Searj. Johnson drill instructor.

The corps was first formed on the 20th of February, 1860, when the first batch of recruits (fifty in number) were sworn in, in the Guildhall at Wenlock, by Mr. Nicholas, of Broseley, (then Mayor for the borough), Captain Lowndes, Lieutenant Blakeway, and Ensign W. R. Anstice were amongst that number. Only three of the old hands now remain in the corps, Cr. Sergeant W. Y. Owen, Sergeant W. Roberts, and Sergeant Walton. Up to the present time 453 men have passed through the ranks: the last recruit that joined in 1879 being No. 453.

The company stands well in the battalion as a shooting company, having won the county challenge cup twice, viz: in 1876 and 1878. Cr. Sergeant Owen has also twice placed himself in the first sixty at Wimbleton, and consequently has two Queen's Badges, as well as the St. George's Cross. He has also been the winner of the Martin's Challenge Cup. The company are in possession of four of Major Owen's Memorial Cups out of nine that have been shot for at Berwick since 1870.

William Reynolds Anstice, Esq., uncle of the present captain, on the retirement of W. L. Lowndes, Esq., commanded the corps, and his name is still revered among the men.

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The Shropshire Banking Company, which was formed by the union of the Coalbrookdale, Wellington, and Newport Banks, for many years had an office here in the Market Square. The Dale Bank was in the hands of the Coalbrookdale Company. The Wellington Bank stood in the names of Reynolds, Charlton, and Shakeshaft, the former being Joseph Reynolds, late

of Bristol, who received his interest in it from his father, Richard Reynolds; and Mr. Eyton, grandfather of the present T. C. Eyton, Esq., was at one time, we believe, another partner.

The Shropshire Company, which embraced a large number of shareholders, underwent great strain in consequence of delinquencies to the extent of £120,000 by the manager, Mr. Allen, of Shifnal. The noble act of Henry Dickinson, one of the directors at the time, who felt it his duty personally to stave off the ruin, which threatened so many, has already been recorded under the head of Coalbrookdale; he first lent and then gave £100,000. The appalling discovery of these frauds practised by the absconding manager spread the utmost alarm through the parish, and the county generally, and gave hundreds of widows, old maiden ladies, and others, reason to fear that the investments on which they depended were irretrievably gone. The generous act of Henry Dickinson however—who like the heroic Roman of old threw himself into the gap—restored confidence; the bank rallied, soon regained its position, and continued in existence till the shares and business were purchased by Lloyd's Banking Company, Limited, in 1874. This enterprising and wealthy company purchased the two houses belonging to Mr. William Hartshorne, chemist and druggist, who for many years carried on business in one, and Mrs. Aston in the other, and erected the present commodious building, where they do a large business, half-yearly paying a handsome dividend to shareholders. The subscribed capital of the company is £2,750,000; in 55,000 shares of £50 each. Capital paid up (55,000 shares, £8 paid) £440,000. It has thirty-one other branches, and twelve sub-branches and agencies.

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Of that valued institution the Dispensary we have spoken ante p.p. 240–1. The 51st annual meeting has since been held; at which meeting

“the committee desired to place on record their acknowledgments of the considerate feeling which prompted the late Edward Edwards, Esq., of Coalbrookdale, to bequeath the sum of £50 for the general purposes of the institution, which sum, less legacy duty of £5, has been invested in the purchase of £42 Midland Railway 4 per cent. debentures stock, in addition to the sum of £880 of the game stock already standing in the names of the Rev. W. H. Wayne, W. Nicholas,

W. G. Norris, and B. B. Potts, Esqrs., on behalf of the society. It was also stated that from the opening of the Dispensary the number of cases has been 57,105. In the last year the number was 1,019, of which 843 had been cured, 78 relieved, 32 renewed, 2 sent to the Salop Infirmary, and 38 remained under treatment.”

The Temperance Society and Good Templars have branches here and in other parts of the parish. Members of the former can date back their conversion to its principles from the commencement of the movement, forty or more years ago. We have mentioned the “British Workman” at Coalbrookdale; there is one also at Madeley Wood. And besides the regular religious services at the various places of worship, and means of instruction carried on through the established schools, others might be mentioned, on Sundays and week-days, the active promoters of which are Mr. D. White, Mr. A. Maw, Mr. W. R. Bradshaw, Mr. G. Baugh, &c., &c.

Ironbridge too is the head quarters of the Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale Building and Land Society, which has since its establishment been uniformly progressive, and led very many to become not only investors but owners of the houses they live in.

We may here give details of other means of promoting providence and thrift, such as Benefit Societies and Sick Clubs, which are numerous in the parish, and place on record the amounts raised in ways so creditable to the industrial portion of the population, and which added to those raised annually for various religious and other purposes reaches a very large amount indeed.

Let us take first the Coalbrookdale and Madeley Temperance Benefit Society.—This Society was founded during the infancy of the Temperance movement, before total abstinence societies were established. Spirits were forbidden to members, and beer was only to be taken in moderation, rules which have not been strictly adhered to. The members at one time fell away, but they have since increased, and the annual statement just issued for 1879 shews them to be 123 in number. The amount received in monthly contributions for the year ending midsummer was £115 13s. 3d. From interest of money invested £61 5s. 4d., which with the balance of the previous year £1239 10s. 4d. made £1416 8s. 11d.

Shropshire Provident Society.—Number of members 74; contributions £92 18s. 11½d.; Secretary Mr. Walter Sharpe; Surgeons M. Webb, Esq., and H. Stubbs, Esq.; endowment £10. Annual subscribers to the General Fund:

	£	s.	d.
W. R. Anstice, Esq., Ironbridge	1	1	0
John Arthur Anstice, Esq., Madeley	1	1	0
George Anstice, Esq., Madeley	1	1	0
Richard Edmund Anstice, Esq., Madeley	1	1	0
Charles Pugh, Esq.,	1	0	0

Meets in one of the rooms of the Anstice Memorial Institute.

Loyal Royal Oak Lodge, No. 3665, of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity, Friendly Society.—The place of business is the Royal Oak Inn. Number of members 159. Annual subscriptions £137 16s. 0d. Nett worth of the society £1267 1s. 9½d. Secretary Mr. Joseph Haynes; Treasurer Mr. Henry Ray.

Rose of the Vale Lodge.—This lodge is held at the Tontine Hotel, Ironbridge, and numbers 175 members, who pay into the funds on an average £360 per annum. They have standing to their credit the sum of £781 12s. 7d. Of this sum £400 has been lent on mortgage; £220 has been invested in the Building Society, and the remainder is in Lloyd's Bank and the treasurer's hands. Secretary Mr. E. Good; Treasurer Mr. William Skelton.

The Free Masons also meet at the Tontine; but as this does not strictly come under the head either of a sick or benefit society it does not come within the above category.

Ancient Order of Foresters, Pride of the District, No. 4345.—This lodge was founded in 1864, and meets in one of the rooms in the Anstice Memorial Institute on alternate Saturdays. Secretary Mr. T. Beddow, Bridge Street; Treasurer Mr. J. W. Fletcher. Number of members 265; average age 31; amount of funds £872. Annual Subscriptions £341 5s.

Ironbridge, Royal George, meets at the Robin Hood Inn, Madeley Wood, fortnightly. F. Johnson, Secretary; J. Page, Treasurer. It has 114 members of the average age of 34; and £444 in the court fund. Annual Subscriptions £143 2s.

Honourable Order of Modern Masons.—Meets at the Barley Mow Inn, Court Street, Madeley. Number of members 75; contributions per month 2s.; funeral levy per quarter 9d.; sick pay per week 8s.; member's death £10; member's wife £5; amount of sick funds £40 3s. 2d. William Instone, secretary.

In addition to these societies there is the United Brothers, but we did not obtain particulars. Also others in connection with the Coalbrookdale and Madeley Wood works. The object of the former society, as stated in the rules, is to secure to its members weekly allowance and medical aid in sickness, and an allowance at the decease of a member or member's wife. The cashier of the company is treasurer, and Mr. John Hewitt is secretary. Each man and boy employed in the Company's works at Coalbrookdale, is required to be a member of this society, and to pay his contribution through the work's office. Every member above the age of eighteen pays one shilling per month; under the age of eighteen, sixpence per month; and any workman entering this society at the age of forty-five years, or upwards, one shilling and sixpence per month. Every workman is considered a member until he has a regular discharge from the Coalbrookdale Company or their agent, provided that he continues paying his contribution and resides in the neighbourhood. The number employed are from 700 to 800; and the income of the society is from £32 to £33 per month. About 440 of the members pay 9d. per quarter to the surgeon, Mr. James Proctor. One of the rules is that should the funds of the society at any time attain £200, the money shall be divided; such divisions of money took place at Christmas 1868, 1870, and 1872; since which dates the society has not been so fortunate in its surplus.

There is a similar society in connection with the Madeley Wood Company's Works, from which we get no particulars, but the annual subscriptions to which may probably be put at about the same as those at Coalbrookdale.

There is also a similar institution in connection with the Madeley Court Works, with about 350 members, who pay annually £113 15s.

Adding all these together we find that, without taking the United Brothers and a sick society at Coalport called the Pitcher into account, there are 2985 members of clubs, subscribing a total of £2380 1s. 10d. annually, and possessing a capital of £4721 6s. 5d.!!

These facts may be considered as a reply in a great measure to the charge sometimes made against the working classes of an utter want of thrift and forethought, and suggest the question whether men making so much provision for the future for themselves and families ought not to be excused to some extent the payment of poor rates.

### **THE SANITARY STATE OF THE PARISH.**

The sanitary state of Madeley and Ironbridge is far from what it ought to be. There is not only a sad deficiency of water, but much that is used is impure. Severn water is carried and sold at Madeley Wood and Lincoln Hill at 1d., 1½., and sometimes 2d. per pail, or 6d. for a small barrel. Again, any one who knows the turbid tale of Severn-water after rain, or is acquainted with the amount of sewage thrown into the river, will question the quality of such water for drinking purposes. Just above one of the lading places a sewer comes down near the back of the Police Office and empties its black sludge into the river. Some use filters; but high authorities on the subject assert that although mechanical impurities may be got rid of those which are chemical or organic remain.

Let persons who undervalue an abundant supply of good water ask their wives or some medical man as to its importance; or let them beg it or buy it, and fetch it from long distances, often waiting their turns at the well, or count the cost which impure water entails. Let them look at the sickness, the pain and distress of parents watching day by day the fevered or pallid cheeks and withered forms of their household treasures. Perhaps the mother herself is struck down, or the bread-winner of the family; and in case death ensues, added to the crushing force of the blow, there are doctor's bills, and excessive funeral expenses, which lie as a dead-weight from which the family scarcely ever recovers!

“When,” as the Times newspaper put it some time ago, “it is considered that **water constitutes nearly three-fourths of the entire weight of the animal body**, that it is the basis of all beverages, and the solvent by means of which all food is assimilated and all secretion is performed, the importance of obtaining it in a state of purity would seem to require no further demonstration. Unfortunately, however, although the facts have for a long time been universally admitted, the practical conclusions to which they would lead have comparatively seldom been acted upon. Not only do we obtain the greater part of our supply of water from that which has already washed the earth, but we have permitted water flowing in its natural channels to be everywhere utilised as a carrier of the worst descriptions of filth.”

All in fact must see on a little reflection that however excusable certain things might have been at one time they are no longer so under the light thrown upon them by deep and long-continued investigations by scientific men who have devoted much study to the subject. All must know that no proper supervision has up to the present been taken, and nothing like proper compulsion has been applied to the removal of glaring evils.

Let those who are apathetic on this subject ponder the following, taken from a paper read a short time since before the Society of Arts by J. J. Pope, Professor of Hygiene to the Birkbeck Institution. The author said:—

**“it is a startling fact that one-fourth of the children born into this world to endure for threescore years and ten, die before they attain the age of five years.** This is a sad truth, and the more lamentable when we know that these deaths mostly arise from causes that are **quite preventible.**”

The same author said, and said truly, that:

**“Very few people, indeed, consider the subject of their own health, until warned by a present attack of sickness,** through failing to acknowledge the true worth of science and medicine, which is far more preventive than remedial. **Can it be doubted that it is better and wiser to abolish the cause of disease,** to prevent its appearance, than to wait for its attack and cure the result?”

As regards houses: some have been built without reference either to light, air, or dryness. Some have been made out of cattle-sheds, cabins, and stables, and are far worse than prison cells or workhouse wards. These damp dark dungeons lower the temperature of the body, decrease the strength, generate disease, cause rheumatism, and predispose to other evils, not the least of which is consumption. We have it on the authority of the highest medical men that with proper sanitary objects attained a reduction of nearly half the present premature disability from sickness, and mortality due to conditions about their dwellings may be obtained.

Let the people ponder these things; let them balance such heavy items against the trivial cost a better sanitary state of things would entail.

Whatever such cost might be it is for them to consider what they would save by the removal of causes of disease, and the concomitant advantages arising from improved health and prolonged life. Again, it is only fair for them to consider the amount they pay and the precautions they take to mitigate the evils of sickness.

And the question naturally arises whether whilst providing so liberally for sickness, it is not worth while paying a slight rate for the enforcement of such sanitary regulations as may prevent sickness—especially if the statement made on the highest medical authority, to the effect that a reduction of nearly half the present sickness and premature mortality might be prevented, be correct.

## **THE STEAM ENGINE IN ITS INFANCY.**

It will be seen from what has already been written how much this parish has been associated with various improvements and matters connected with the early history of the steam engine, and although the subject might not be of universal interest, we might mention here a correspondence between the Commissioners of Patents and W. R. Anstice, Esq., senior partner of the Madeley Wood Company. On the 24th of May, 1879, an article appeared in the *Times* under the head of

**PATENT MUSEUM,**

Stating that a very interesting old engine, the last of its kind which remained at work, had been removed from and re-erected in this museum, having been presented for that purpose to the Commissioners of Patents; and giving the following description issued by the curator, Colonel Stuart Wortley.—

“Heslop’s Winding and Pumping Engine. Letters Patent, A.D. 1790, No. 1760.—This engine was erected at Kell’s Pit, for raising coals, about the year 1795, afterwards removed to Castlerigg Pit, in 1847, to Wreah Pit, all near Whitehaven. At the latter place it continued to raise coals, also to work a pump, by means of a cast-iron beam placed above the main beam, until the summer of 1878, when it was removed here. Presented to the Commissioner of Patents by the Earl of Lonsdale, through Mr. H. A. Fletcher, M. Inst. C.E. Transmitted from Whitehaven to the Patent Museum by the London and North-Western Railway Company, at half rate. It will seem that this engine has two open-topped cylinders, one on each side of the main centre beam, and both single acting. The cylinders are respectively the ‘hot cylinder’ and the ‘cold cylinder.’ The steam, on being admitted into the first, or ‘hot’ cylinder, raises the piston by its pressure underneath; the return stroke is then made by the weight of the connecting rod and by the momentum given to the fly-wheel. The eduction valve being now open, the steam passes from this cylinder to the second or ‘cold’ cylinder by means of the connecting pipe, which, being constantly immersed in cold water, produces sufficient condensation to ‘kill’ or reduce it to atmospheric pressure as it enters and fills the cold cylinder. The cold piston having arrived at the top of its stroke, and its cylinder being thus filled with steam and the injection valve being now open, a jet of water is admitted, thus bringing a vacuum into play. By this arrangement of two cylinders Heslop obtained advantages closely approaching those of the separate condenser, and effected a signal superiority over the atmospheric engine of Newcomen, even as it then existed with all the structural improvements introduced by Smeaton, who was compelled to admit that, in its best state, 60 per cent, of steam was wasted by alternate heating and cooling of the cylinder. No other engine of this type now remains in existence, and it is therefore appropriate that this one, the last worked, should be preserved.”

On seeing the above W. E. Anstice, Esq., at once wrote to say they had three of the same engines now at work, and which had been at work for the past eighty years in the Madeley Wood Co.'s Field; that they still had five, and had had eight. This led to an interesting correspondence in the course of which Mr. Anstice sent up an original drawing, which proved to be one of an earlier engine even than the one they had, and the one for which the original specification was taken out.

The fact is that about Heslop's time, and whilst Smeaton was at work effecting improvements in Newcomen's engines, and whilst Watt, with the experience of those who went before him, was to some extent endeavouring to strike out a course for himself and preparing to eclipse the productions of his predecessors, there were a number of minor geniuses engaged in carrying into effect their own or others suggestions: men whose names are little known in consequence of having been thrust aside by greater or more favoured inventors than themselves. Heslop, Murdock, and Cartwright appear have been among these; also Avery and Sadler, and other local schemers and inventors like the Glazebrooks, the Williamses, and Hornblowers. During the latter half of the last century the inventive faculty, stimulated by what had already been achieved, appears to have been in great activity. The iron-making and mining interests were undergoing great expansion, and men like the Darbys, the Reynoldses, Wilkinsons, Guests, and others, were just then prepared to avail themselves of means which would enable them to clear out the water from their mines, that they might bring up minerals from a greater depth, or add to the force of the blast in their smelting operations; and several of these in return rendered Watt and others great services. Wilkinson gave the order for the first engine Watt made at Soho to blow his furnaces at Broseley, where it was erected and ready for use early in 1776. Watt's first rotary engine was made for Mr. Reynolds, of Ketley, in 1782, to drive a corn mill. The "Philosophical Transactions," and Urban's Magazine seem to have been mediums of correspondence, and the means of communicating so much of the discoveries and inventions of the authors as they deemed fit to the public. We have thirty or more volumes of extracts from original communications in these, commencing about 1736, which Mr. William Reynolds had written out, most of them beautiful, and many remarkable specimens of that ornate style of calligraphy so much cultivated at that time.

Also a large folio volume of original drawings and designs, admirably executed. Some by Hornblower, Glazebrook, Sadler, Reynolds, Wilkinson, Banks, Anstice, Chinn, Price, Rogerson, Emerson, Telford, and others. The Hornblowers appear to have trodden closely upon the heels of Watt at one time, and so closely that Watt wrote to Boulton saying, "If they have really found a prize it will ruin us." We add a list of these drawings, with dates attached.

No. 1 is a small steam engine made by James Sadler which was at work on the hill at the Dale in 1792.

No. 2 Drawing shews Sadler's plan of rotary motion, with crank for winding engine, dated, 1793.

No. 3 S. Venables' drawing of Sadler's engine as it stood when T. Griffiths was putting it up at the Bank 1793.

No. 4 Is a plan of Sadler's engine sent by Dr. Beddows, May, 1793.

No. 5 Are Drawings of an engine from J. Sadler's, but which was never completed, 1794.

No. 6 Drawings and description of Thos. Savory's Engine for raising water by the help of fire, June 14th, 1799; the description states that the inventor entertained the Royal Society by shewing a small model which he made to work before them.

No. 7 Is a plan of Watt's steam wheel in all parts, but no date.

No. 8 Plan of a substitute for ropes, being an iron chain of novel construction to be used for coal mines, by Bingley, 1795.

No. 9 Glazebrook's scheme to effect a perpendicular motion, 1794.

No. 10 Plan of Adam Hislop's engine to work without a beam, scale 1 in. to ft. Drawn by S. Venables.

No. 11 Side view.

No. 12 Ground plan of an engine without a beam erected at Wombridge, Dec. 5, 1794.

No. 13 General section of an engine for winding coal. Scale about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to ft. July 23, 1793.

No. 14 Outside front view of Horsehay forge engine Feb 21, 1793. Scale one third in. to ft.

No. 15 Section of Hollins Wood Blast Engine. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. to the ft. William Minor No. 84 Sept. 12, 1793.

No. 16 General section for winding engine, 1 in. to ft. no date.

No. 17 Samuel Venables, Sept 1, 1793, No. 6 differs in construction from the former ones, two cylinders.

No. 18 William Reynolds' idea of the application of Sadler's engine to a rotatable motion, the lower cylinder communicating with the boiler; this method is applicable to rowing boats with circular oars, 1795, drawn by Venables.

No. 18 Drawing of blast engine of the same period but no date or description.

No. 18 Ditto, winding engine.

No. 19 One Richard Banks 1796.

No. 20 Drawing of old incline engine.

No. 21 Elaborate drawing of an engine for winding coals, sun and moon motion, 30 strokes per minute, proper speed.

Nos. 22–34 Thirteen other engines.

No. 35 Sketch of Hornblowers' air pump.

No. 36 Plan of Jinney for conveying wheeled corves down descents.

No. 38 Calculation of Mr. Anstices' rotative engine by D. Rose March 17, 1799.

No. 39 Brick machines April, 1794.

No. 40 Sketch of a river Mill by W. R. improved by—

- No. 41 A new method of boring as used by T. Price at the Brownhill Colliery.
- No. 42 Original letter by R. Reynolds describing Blakey's fire engine for raising water for furnaces at Horsehay and Ketley, and one of which had been erected at the Dale, with Sketch. Letter dated Dale 6, 1st month, 1767.
- No. 43 Prospective view of Donnington Wood incline plane and engine by William Minor Sept. 12 1793
- No. 44 Engine with crank, Richard Speed, June 4, 1796.
- No. 45 Plan for an Aqueduct over a river, Thomas Telford, March, 1794, with span of 100 feet.
- No. 46 Copy for Fire engine from Emerson's Engine for raising water.
- No. 47 J. Wilkinson's Idea of Chimney Boiler given by him to W. R. November, 1799.
- No. 48 Drawings of an engine under James Glazebrooks' patent Feb. 24th, 1799. beautifully drawn and coloured.
- No. 49 Outside front view of Horsehay large Engine Feb. 21, 1793.
- No. 50 Principal arch, 100 ft. for an iron bridge for level crossing (no date).
- No. 51 Plans and Drawings of ribs &c., for an Aqueduct, by Thomas Telford. With William Reynolds' name signed to it.

And a number of others.

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CLAY INDUSTRIES.—We have in earlier pages of this work spoken of some of these. There are still the White Brick-works of the Madeley Wood Company, near Ironbridge; the red brick-works of the same company at Blissers Hill; the clay works of W. O. Foster, Esq., at the Court; and those of Messrs. George Legge & Son at Madeley Wood and the Woodlands; works which from the excellence of their varied productions, no less than from the number of persons employed, are of considerable importance to the district.

## CAPTAIN WEBB.

We have in the course of these pages given prominence to the names of men who have in different ways merited distinction, and whose deeds are deserving of record in a local history of this kind; and we cannot omit a passing recognition of the unparalleled feats of this distinguished Salopian, whose early life is so closely associated with this parish. We had prepared copious extracts from our "Life of Captain Webb," in which is detailed his extraordinary performances, but can only give here a brief summary.

Before he was seven years old he had learnt to swim in the Severn; and in his case the adage that "the boy is father to the man" held good, for when a boy he and his elder brother succeeded in saving from a watery grave another brother, whose strength, in attempting to cross the Severn, failed him, so that he had already sunk beneath the surface when he was rescued. As shewing his pluck and daring it may be mentioned that going along the Severn banks to Buildwas, where boys usually go to bathe, he took off his shoes and walked along the top of the bridge, with his hands in his pockets, his third brother standing by not daring to look up lest he should fall and be killed; but the chief actor stood calm and unmoved when they afterwards met.

His second life-saving feat was performed on the Mersey, when he succeeded in rescuing a comrade who had fallen overboard into the river. The services he rendered to the owners of the *Silver Craig* in the Suez Canal; but much more his performance on board the *Russia* in his daring attempt to save a seaman who fell overboard, shewed him to possess qualities of the highest order as a man. He swam the English Channel, Tuesday, August 24th, 1875, at the age of 27. Being weighed and measured it was found that his height was five feet eight inches; his weight when stripped, before starting, 14 st. 8 lbs.; and his girth round the chest 40½ in.

Webb's subsequent feat in distancing all competitors in his six days swim adds another laurel to his crown as the champion swimmer of the world!

**HOTELS, INNS, PUBLIC HOUSES, AND BEERSHOPS, IN THE PARISH  
—THEIR SIGNS, &c.**

Signboards are scarcely so significant or important now as formerly: yet an interest attaches to them still, and there is some pleasure in pondering over their designs, as significant of olden times and manners—the old ones especially. One easily imagines too the jovial tenants of taverns in former years, the noisy chafferings, the political discussions carried on by those who sought recreation and enjoyment in them.

THE THREE HORSE SHOES is the oldest Sign in Madeley; it swings over the door of one of the oldest houses in Madeley, the walls being of rubble, mud, and plaster: and the Sign itself, no doubt, is one of the oldest in the kingdom. A horse shoe, when found and nailed over the door was supposed to bring good luck—hence the single shoe, which is uppermost. The HORSE SHOES is kept by Mr. J. H. Robinson.

The HAMMER, in Park Lane, kept by Mrs. Lloyd, is the next in point of age. It was a trade emblem when the house was much more used than at present by ironworkers, particularly by forgermen.

The ROYAL OAK was the first newly-licensed house for many years in Madeley. The license for it was very adroitly obtained by Mr. Charles Dyas. The Sign is a universal favourite, as emblematic of our old ships and seamen. The house is kept by Mrs. Shingler.

The HEART OF OAK, in Court Street, kept by Mr. Joseph Currier, is another popular Sign, indicative of character, and illustrative of old national songs.

The BARLEY MOW, in Court Street, is kept by Mr. Pitchford.

The CROWN, Court Street, now void, is one of the oldest English signs.

ALL NATIONS, kept by Mrs. Baguley, is the only Sign of its name we know of.

The SIX BELLS, kept by Mr. Ward, near the Church, is a Sign significant of the number of bells in the Church tower.

The ROYAL EXCHANGE, kept by Mr. Goodwin, is a modern house, with an ancient Sign; whilst the RAILWAY INN, kept by Mr. Taylor, is modern in both respects.

The COOPERS' ARMS is now down, but another house has been built, which has not yet been christened.

The PRINCE OF WALES'S FEATHERS, Lower Madeley, kept by Mr. Daniel Adams, as the name implies, is a royal badge.

THE MINERS' ARMS, kept by Mr. Kearsley, is so sufficiently significant, as not to need comment. Also The TURNERS' ARMS, kept by Mr. John Brown; and the THREE FURNACES, kept by Mr. Biddulph.

The TWEEDALE is kept by Mr. G. Ray.

The CUCKOO-OAK Inn, by Mr. H. Wilkes, takes its name from the place.

The BRITANNIA, kept by Mr. E. Hopley, Aqueduct, and the ANCHOR, by Mr. Evans, Court Street, are modern houses with ancient signs.

There are also the COMMERCIAL INN, kept by Mrs. Heighway, and a Beershop in Church Street, kept by Mr. Durnall.

Then there is the CHESTNUTS, formerly the Red Lion, which fakes its name from the tree in front, and is kept by Mr. James Hancock.

The PARK INN, by Mr. Reynolds, and the NEW INN kept by Mr. Jones, Park Lane, with the PHEASANT, kept by Mr. Francis, complete the list of houses at Madeley, where, within our recollection, there were formerly but two.

At Coalport we have the SHAKESPEARE, kept by Mr. Beard, and the JUG, we presume of Toby Philpot fame, of whom it is said,

His body, when long in the ground it had lain,  
And time into clay had resolved it again,  
A potter found out, in his covert so snug,  
And with part of old Toby he made this brown jug.

There is also the BREWERY INN, kept by Mr. George Gough.

The PIT'S HEAD, formerly a noted house for old beer, kept by Barnabas Spruce, has long since disappeared; also the TURK'S HEAD. Then there is the ROBIN HOOD, by Mr. J. Roe; the BLOCK HOUSE, by Mr. Dunbar, come

next; and near to these is the BIRD IN HAND, the motto of which (more truthful than grammatical) is—

A bird in the hand far better 'tis  
Than two that in the bushes is.

The LAKE HEAD, by G. Barrat, takes its name from a small reach of the Severn.

In Madeley Wood we get the UNICORN, kept by Mr. Fiddler; The Old House by Astbury, and the GOLDEN BALL (formerly a silk mercer's sign) by Mr. T. Bailey.

The HORSE AND JOCKEY, by Mrs. Davies, and the FOX, by Mr. Curzon, come next, to remind us of old English sports.

The GEORGE & DRAGON also, by Mr. Granger, reminding us of still more ancient times.

HODGE BOWER, by Mr. Wilson, is a sign which takes its name from the place.

The WHITE HORSE, kept by Mrs. Edwards, at Lincoln Hill is a very old Sign.

The CROWN, the QUEEN'S HEAD (by Mr. Nevitt), the OAK by Ketley, the SEVERN BREWERY and the TONTINE (erected by the Bridge Company), and THREE TUNS are all well-known Inns,

The BATH TAVERN, the SETTERS' INN, the ROEBUCK, and BELLE VUE, are extinct.

The WHEAT SHEAF by Aaron Lloyd, the WHITE HART, by Woolstein; the TALBOT, by Toddington; the SWAN by Bailey; the RODNEY, by Griffiths; the MEADOW and the COMMERCIAL INN, Coalbrookdale, complete the list of *Houses of Refreshment* for the parish.

## **THE BROOKE FAMILY.**

From the time that Lord Chief Justice Brooke purchased the manor of Madeley, the names of members of the Brooke family constantly figure in the ecclesiastical and civil records of the parish of Madeley. Until the year 1706 they continued to occupy the Elizabethan mansion known as the Old Court House, now unhappily fallen into decay, the habitable portions being converted into cottages, and the chapel in which they once worshipped being, on the occasion of our last visit, occupied by poultry, whose cackling takes the place of the chant and psalm, which once rose to heaven from voices long ago silenced by the grim king Death. In this, the most important house of the parish, surrounded by a pleasant park, with moat, pleasure grounds, and fish ponds, dwelt Ann Brooke with John her husband, performing her duties as a wife and mother, as well as those social duties pertaining to her station, with honour to herself and profit to her family and neighbours. She died on the attainment of the allotted three score years and ten, having been ten years a widow.

Etheldreda was the daughter-in-law of Mrs. Ann Brooke, being the wife of Sir Basil Brooke, of whose knighthood we have no account. She was a woman richly endowed with mental and moral qualities, and had received an education far in advance of that acquired by most women of her day, having been conversant with four languages in addition to her mother tongue, as well as skilled in music.

The dust of these ladies was laid with that of their husbands in the Old Parish Church of Madeley, their tombs being adorned with their effigies. On the erection of the present edifice, they were placed in the niches they now occupy outside the church. We give below the Latin inscriptions and the English translations, for which latter we are indebted to the kindness and courtesy of the Rev. C. Brooke, of Haughton, himself a descendant of a branch of this honoured family.

## **MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.**

Madeley Church, 1815.

(British Museum) 21, 181.

Hic jacet Johannes Brooke, Arm: filius Roberti Brooke: equitis aurati Justiciarii, capitalis de communi Banco (qui equestriam reginam Mariam in obtinendo avito regno contra improborum machinationes navavit operam, et jus Anglicanum pluribus editis voluminibus mirifice illustravit) et Elizabethæ filia et hæredis Francisci Waring armig: qui postquam vixerat jurisprudentiæ doctrinæque ceteræ fama insignis, pluribus beneficis omnibus charus diem summum sancti pie-que obiit Anno Dom: 1598, Oct. 20, ætat sua 60.

Hic jacet Anna uxor Johann: Brooke armig: et familia Shirleyonis celeberrima et antiquissima oriunda viro suo filios duos Basilium et Franciscum filias item tres Dorotheam Priscillam et Milburgam peperit, prisca disciplina matrona, avitæ fidei tenacissima, omnis officii quæ uxor, qua mater singulare exemplum obiit, Anno Dom: 1608, September 29. Ætat sua 70, viduitatis 10.

Basilii Brooke equitis aurati fil: Johan: Brooke armig: et Ann uxoris filia Francisci Shirley armigeri de Staunton Harold com. Leicest: et nepotis Roberti Brooke equitis aurati Justiciarii Capitalis de Communi Banco, duxit duas uxores (viz) Etheldredam filiam et hæredem unicam Edmundi Brudenell equitis aurati de Dene com Northam: et Frances filiam Henrici Baronis Mordaunt et sororem Joannis Comitis de Peterborough. Obiit Decem. 31. Anno 1646.

Hic jacet Etheldreda uxor Basilii Brooke equitis aurati, filia et hæres unica Edmundi Brudenell eq: aurati, fæmina pariter Latina, Gallica, Hispanica et musica perita, pietate fide et prudentia maquamitate pudicitata et mansuetudine instructissima. Reliquit viro suo inaritissimo filium unicum Thomam, filias quinque—Annam Wilhelmo Fitzherbert armig: Antonii Fitzherbert eq: aurati Justiciarii Capitalis de Communi Banco legum nostratium interpretis clarissimi pronepoti. Mariam Tho: Moro armig: illustrissimi et sancti illius Thomæ Mari summi olim Angliæ Cancellarii (cujus vita et mors in omnium est ore) abnepoti et hæredi nuptam—Dorotheam Agatham et Catharinam, singularis materæ indolis (id est) optimam obiit anno Domini.

The following is the English translation:—

Here lieth interred John Brooke, Esquire, the son of Robert Brooke, Knight Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (which said Robert assisted the illustrious Queen Mary in obtaining her rights to the crown in opposition to the violent factions of that time, and published an excellent Commentary on the English Law in several volumes), and of Elizabeth the daughter and heir of Francis Waring, Esquire. After he had lived, distinguished for his knowledge in the Science of Law and other learning, being of an extensively liberal mind, and universally beloved, he made a pious and Christianlike end, Oct. 20th, in the year of our Lord, 1598, in the 60th year of his age.

Here lieth Arm, the wife of John Brooke, Esquire, descended from the very ancient and renowned family of the Shirleys. She had by her husband two sons, Basil and Francis, and also three daughters, Dorothy, Priscilla and Milburga. She was a lady of strict discipline, a rigid adherent to her ancestral faith, and as a wife and mother most exemplary in the discharge of every duty. She died September 19th, in the year of our Lord 1608, in the 70th year of her age, and in the 10th year of her widowhood.

Sacred to the memory of Basil Brooke Knight, the son of John Brooke, Esquire, and Ann, his wife, who was the daughter of Francis Shirley, of Staunton Harold, in the County of Leicester, Esquire, and the grandson of Robert Brooke Knight, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. He had two wives, Etheldreda the daughter and sole heiress of Edmund Brudenell, of Dean, in the County of Northampton, Knight, and Francis, the daughter of Henry, Baron Mordaunt, and the sister of John, Earl of Peterborough. He departed this life the 31st of December, in the year 1646.

Here lieth Etheldreda, the wife of Basil Brooke Knight. She was the daughter and sole heiress of Edmund Brudenell Knight—a woman not only well-skilled in the knowledge of the Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish languages, and in the science of music, but also exemplary for piety, faith, prudence, courage, chastity, and gentle manners. She left to lament her loss an husband with an only son, named Thomas, and five daughters—namely Ann, the wife of William Fitzwilliam, Esquire, the grandson of Anthony Fitzherbert Knight, Lord Chief Justice of the

Common Pleas, eminent for his Commentary on the Laws. Mary, the wife of Thomas More, Esquire, a descendant of that renowned and upright character, Thomas More, formerly Lord High Chancellor of England, a man in his life and death universally esteemed. Also Dorothy, Agatha, and Catharine, of dispositions the most motherly, the best of all. She died in the year of our Lord . . (the date is defaced).

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## APPENDIX.

### KING CHARLES'S OAK.

It is still a matter of dispute whether the oak tree still standing is the original tree which gave shelter to the king, or one grown from an acorn planted where the old tree stood. An old work says:—

“King Charles II. took refuge in the Boscobel Oak in September, 1651. The tidings of his majesty’s restoration, and of his entry into London on the 29th of May, 1660, reached this county early in June. ‘Hundreds of people’ now flocked to see the oak; and such was the destruction of ‘its young boughs’ during the summer that within six months after the mischief commenced the proprietor, Mr. Fitzherbert, judiciously pruned it ‘for its preservation’, and fenced it with a ‘high’ paling. (Blount’s ‘Boscobel’, printed in 1660.) Thirty years afterwards it is recorded by the Rev. G. Plaxton, rector of Donington, that the paling had been superseded—he does not say in what year—by a handsome brick wall, built also at the charge of Mr. Fitzherbert (Basil and Jane), which brings us to the year 1690. Twenty-one years later, in 1711, Dr. Stukeley visited the oak; and again, thirteen years afterwards, Dr. Stukeley says—‘The tree is now inclosed with a brick wall,’ bringing the safe custody of the tree down to 1724. Sixty-three years later we learn from the old inscription that Basil and Eliza Fitzherbert rebuilt the old wall of their ancestors, recording that ‘*Felicissimam Arborem Muro cinctam posteris commendarunt Basilins et Jana Fitzherbert,*’ bringing us to the year 1787. This wall was eight or nine feet high, and injuriously close to the tree; and after thirty years, that is in the year 1817, the present palisades were erected, freely admitting light and air to the hole, and affording a clear view of

the whole tree, with the holes in it carefully covered to keep out the wet.”

The king’s account of his visit to Madeley from “an authentic edition of Pepys’ narrative,” published from the original MS. in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, as given in the Boscobel Tracts, is as follows:—

“As soon as I was disguised I took with me a country fellow, whose name was Richard Penderell, whom Mr. Giffard had undertaken to answer for to be an honest man. He was a Roman Catholic, and I chose to trust them, because I knew they had hiding holes for priests, that I thought I might make use of in case of need.

“I was no sooner gone (being the next morning after the battle, and then broad day) out of the house with this country fellow, but being in a great wood, I set myself at the edge of the wood, near the highway that was there, the better to see who came after us, and whether they made any search after the runaways, and I immediately saw a troop of horse coming by, which I conceived to be the same troop that beat our three thousand horse; but it did not look like a troop of the army’s, but of the militia, for the fellow before it did not look at all like a soldier.

“In this wood I staid all day, without meat or drink; and by great good fortune it rained all the time, which hindered them, as I believe, from coming into the wood to search for men that might be fled thither. And one thing is remarkable enough, that those with whom I have since spoken, of them that joined with the horse upon the heath, did say that it rained little or nothing with them all the day, but only in the wood where I was, this contributing to my safety.

“As I was in the wood I talked with the fellow about getting towards London: and asking him many questions about what gentlemen he knew, I did not find he knew any man of quality in the way towards London. And the truth is, my mind changed as I lay in the wood, and I resolved of another way of making my escape; which was, to get over the Severn into Wales, and so to get either to Swansey, or some other of the sea-towns that I knew had commerce with France, to the end I

might get over that way as being a way that I thought none would suspect my taking; besides that, I remembered several honest gentlemen that were of my acquaintance in Wales.

“So that night, as soon as it was dark, Richard Penderell and I took our journey on foot towards the Severn, intending to pass over a ferry, halfway between Bridgenorth and Shrewsbury. But as we were going in the night, we came by a mill where I heard some people talking (memorandum, that I had got some bread and cheese the night before at one of the Penderell’s houses, I not going in), and as we conceived it was about twelve or one o’clock at night; and the country fellow desired me not to answer if any body should ask me any questions, because I had not the accent of the country.

“Just as we came to the mill, we could see the miller, as I believe, sitting at the mill door, he being in white clothes, it being a very dark night. He called out, “Who goes there?” Upon which Richard Penderell answered, “Neighbours going home,” or some such-like words. Whereupon the miller cried out, “If you be neighbours, stand, or I will knock you down.” Upon which, we believing there was company in the house, the fellow bade me follow him close, and he run to a gate that went up a dirty lane, up a hill, and opening the gate, the miller cried out, “Rogues! rogues!” And thereupon some men came out of the mill after us, which I believe were soldiers; so we fell a-running, both of us up the lane, as long as we could run, it being very deep and very dirty, till at last I bade him leap over a hedge, and lie still to hear if anybody followed us; which we did, and continued lying down upon the ground about half an hour, when, hearing nobody come, we continued our way on to the village upon the Severn, where the fellow told me there was an honest gentleman, one Mr. Woolfe, that lived in that town, where I might be with great safety, for that he had hiding-holes for priests. But I would not go in till I knew a little of his mind, whether he would receive so dangerous a guest as me, and therefore stayed in a field, under a hedge by a great tree, commanding him not to say it was I, but only to ask Mr. Woolfe whether he would receive an English gentleman, a person of quality, to hide him the next day, till we could travel again by night, for I durst not go but by night.

“Mr. Woolfe, when the country fellow told him that it was one that had escaped from the battle of Worcester, said that, for his part, it was so dangerous a thing to harbour any body that was known, that he would not venture his neck for any man, unless it were the king himself. Upon which, Richard Penderell, very indiscreetly, and without any leave, told him that it was I. Upon which Mr. Woolfe replied, that he should be very ready to venture all he had in the world to secure me. Upon which Richard Penderell came and told me what he had done, at which I was a little troubled; but then there was no remedy, the day being just coming on, and I must either venture that or run some greater danger.

“So I came into the house a back way, where I found Mr. Woolfe, an old gentleman, who told me he was very sorry to see me there, because there was two companies of the militia foot at that time in arms in the town, and kept a guard at the ferry, to examine every body that came that way, in expectation of catching some that might be making their escape that way; and that he durst not put me into any of the hiding-holes of his house, because they had been discovered, and consequently, if any search should be made, they would certainly repair to these holes; and that therefore I had no other way of security but to go into his barn, and there lie behind his corn and hay. So after he had given us some cold meat that was ready, we, without making any bustle in the house, went and lay in the barn all the next day; when, towards evening, his son, who had been prisoner at Shrewsbury, an honest man, was released, and came home to his father’s house. And as soon as ever it began to be a little darkish, Mr. Woolfe and his son brought us meat into the barn; and there we discoursed with them whether we might safely get over the Severn into Wales, which they advised me by no means to adventure upon, because of the strict guards that were kept all along the Severn, where any passage could be found, for preventing any body’s escaping that way into Wales.”

In Harrison Ainsworth’s “Boscobel” several inaccuracies occur, so far as the description of the king’s visit to Madeley is concerned. He speaks of the Court as the place of retreat, and of a moat and drawbridge, all of which is incorrect.

In the old house, now the property of Mr. Eastwick, where Mr. Wolfe lived, is a portrait of Dame Joan, in the curious head-dress of the period; and among the tombstones in the chapel of White Ladies, which has been converted into a burying-place, is, or was, one bearing the following inscription:—

“Here lyeth The bodie of a Friende The King did call  
Dame Joan But now she is Deceast and gone  
Interr’d Anno: Do. 1669.”

The *Gentleman’s Magazine* for 1809, p. 809, contains a description of this headstone at the White Ladies, by the late Rev. T. Dale, who says:—

“The stone stood on the north side of the chancel of the chapel, on the left as you entered the chancel door. When, however, I became curate of Donnington, in the year 1811, it had disappeared. I made frequent inquiries, afterwards, at intervals, of the cottagers and others, as to the disappearance of the monument, but without obtaining any satisfactory information.”

The writer then describes his researches, and says:—

“Dame Joan was the wife of William Penderell, one of the five brethren who, at the time of the King’s escape, lived at Boscobel, then rather a new house. In the ‘Harleian Miscellany’ (8vo., edit. 1810, vol. vi., p. 251) it will be seen that William’s wife ‘stripped off the stockings, cut the blisters, and washed the feet of the King,’ after his night’s march from Madeley, in company with Richard Penderell (p. 251), and that whilst the King and Colonel Carless were in the oak, William and his wife Joan were on the watch, still freaking up and down, and she commonly near the place with a nut hook in her hand, gathering up sticks (p. 252), and when Charles awoke from his nap in the oak, ‘very hungry,’ and wished he had something to eat, the Colonel plucked out of his pocket a good luncheon of bread and cheese, which Joan Penderell had given him for provant that day.”

## OLD FAMILY NAMES.

It is interesting to notice that as early as 1694 many names of old Madeley families occur. Ashwood, Easthope, Brooke, Lloyd, Smytheman, Bowdler, Glazebrook, Boden, Bartlam, Hodgkiss, occur from 1689 to 1711, either as proprietors, or collectors of the Poll tax, Land tax, Window tax, or the tax on Births, &c. The following were holders of the 2073 acres mentioned on p. 58:—

Tenants' Names.	Quantity.			Yearly Value.		
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
Demesne Lands	547	2	39	294	3	2
Mr. Purcell	256	0	11	129	0	1
Mr. Heatherley	149	2	28	87	17	6
Mr. Wm Ashwood	111	9	24	72	11	11
Mr. Twyford	109	1	33	45	9	5
W. Ashwood, Ground	91	1	39	5	2	6
Stanley's Old Park land	76	3	15	24	2	6
Fra. Knight's Ten., and Old Park Lands	38	0	36	13	14	9
Duddell's Ten. and do.	21	2	25	6	13	10
Mrs. Webb	46	3	13	23	7	3
Widdow Cooper	31	2	16	11	18	0
Mrs. Smitheman	38	3	12	22	5	2
Audley Bowdler	118	0	11	54	18	5
Thos. Roberts	7	1	14	4	0	9
Mr. Farmer	112	2	31	46	3	2
Giles Goodman	27	0	13	14	5	2
Eliz. Garbett	10	3	39	6	6	5
Mrs. Evans	7	2	17	5	1	10

Fra. Glazebrooke	9	3	22	6	15	2
Jno. Hutchinson	4	0	16	2	11	10
Hum. Prices	14	0	37	6	14	8
Wid. Turnars	84	3	3	40	15	0
Roger Fosbrooke	54	2	8	28	19	1
Mr. Stanley	92	1	38	36	3	9
Wid. Roberts	36	0	4	20	7	8
Thos. Easthope	11	3	1	3	6	11
Geor. Glasebrache	42	2	11	8	14	1
Total	2073	2	36	£1021	10	0

## FOOTNOTES.

[35] Did this designation—arising, we presume, from making frequent attestations—give rise to “Attenbrooke,” “Addenbrook,” and similar surnames?

[37] On another page we have spoken of a later member of this family, who, by indenture, dated 29th of May, 1706, bequeathed a sum of money to the poor of Madeley, and of Comerford Brooks, who, in consideration of the said sum, £40, and a further sum of £30 paid him by Audley Bowdler and others, granted three several cottages in Madeley Wood, the rent and profits of which were to be devoted to the use of the poor of the parish of Madeley, in such manner as the grantees, with the consent of the vicar and parish officers, should think lit. This is the latest notice we have obtained. The Basil Brooke here spoken of is the one also previously referred to in our introduction, as fourth in descent from a gallant knight in the reign of King Charles, and who is said to have secreted his Majesty in a square hole behind the wainscoating of the chapel, which the inmates of the Court-house describe as “King Charles’s Hole.” Of the charity we shall speak under the head of “Benefactions,” later on.

[40] It was from a subsequent sale of this property that the old Poor-House was built.

[54] For further particulars relating to King Charles’s Visit, see Appendix.

[121] We have before us an octavo book, of a hundred pages, written as late as 1820, by James Heaton, entitled “The Demon Expelled.” In his introduction he laments that Christians have of late years “lightly ridiculed the existence of apparitions, witches, and demoniacs.” In the days of our fathers, venerable divines and “learned men, ornaments of the church and the state,” he tells us, believed in these things, and he quotes Wesley, Samuel Clarke, and others in support of his views. He commences by

gravely telling us that the boy “had been frightened by being shut up by himself in a school, that he had been blistered all over the head, bled repeatedly, and was taking medicines, and that these produced fainting, profuse perspiration, and sickness. They prayed and sang around him for four or five hours at a stretch, twenty or thirty of them at a time, the boy being tied down to prevent him running away, till at last the lad refused to hold a testament in his hands, and the sight of a hymn-book put him into convulsions. Although seven preachers and thirty other people were present, praying and singing did not avail till they adjured the evil spirit, mentally, telling him to depart, and after arguing and talking to them for some time through the lad’s nose the demon finally took his departure.”

[175] Mr. Brown is an innkeeper; the sign is the “Turner’s Arms,” and over a glass of his home-brewed the following conversation with the author ensued. He said, “I turned all the wood-work which required turning for the Anstice Memorial, both when it was first built and when it was restored.” Author: “Well, and you tried another art Mr. Brown,”—this with a look at Mrs. Brown, who sat on the opposite side of the fire—“You tried the art of match-making; and really Mrs. B. must have been a courageous woman to allow you to succeed.”

This remark brought out Mrs. B., who now joined in the conversation, and under a little gentle pressure, gave us some particulars as to how the marriage came about, and how after sundry visits of her armless suitor, to Birmingham, she was wooed and won.

“But how did you manage to put the ring on, Mr. Brown?”

“Oh,” said Brown laughing, “I could have managed that if they had given me time, but the clergyman, mind you, was a good sort of man, and he said, ‘Allow me to help you,’ and he slipped on the ring.”

Mrs. Brown, who is a comely-looking woman, proceeded to tell how the parson called upon her former mistress, and related the circumstance with great glee.

[235] Mr. Dyas had previously had a seat at the Board.

[242] Among the papers met with in the old building was one dated April 29th, 1805, entitled, an assessment of fivepence in the pound for the

purpose of raising part of the sum of £100 levied on this parish of Madeley for deficiency of the Army of Reserve, and Regiments of the Militia, 5th of February, 1805. The following names and sums occur:—

Rev. Mr. Burton (then rector)	£2	03
Firmstone, Mrs.		
Homfray and Addenbrooke	5	90
Rev. Saml. Walter (then curate)	0	90
Anstice, Horton, and Rose	0	84
Horton, William	0	60
George Pugh	0	18
John Rose & Co.	9	168
J. Luckcock	0	06

[253] A still greater fright was experienced by the driver of a hearse from the Tontine. A man named Holyoake, a sort of half-witted fellow, who had a fancy for attending funerals on both sides the Severn, got into the hearse after the coffin had been removed, and it being a hot day went to sleep. Poor “Billy” did not wake till the hearse had been put in the coach-house, when one of the establishment going in, Billy called out from his retreat “How go mon,” and the man rushed from the place in a fright that is said to have turned his hair white.

[277] Sometimes called Culbrok.

[292] Barnabas Spruce had been Cashier at the Bedlam Works under William Reynolds; he kept a public house near the old water engine in the Lloyds, which was known and patronised for miles round for old beer. William Reynolds, Benjamin Edge, and others of that class were accustomed to meet there. The sign was “the Newhill Pit.” Barnabus died Jan. 1833. At the funeral on the 24th, as a last and fitting tribute to so worthy a brewer of good beer, a large number assembled. There were 37 horsemen, who had hatbands and gloves; and 40 gallons of ale were drank before starting to Madeley Church.

[300] It would be impossible for those not then old enough to take cognizance of what was passing around them to conceive the bitterness of the controversy, or the unfair advantage some of the sects sought to take of the educational-movement. Among others, the Rev. Mr. Tilley, Baptist Minister of Bridgnorth, made it his business to make the circuit of this district to publicly warn the people against what he described as a Jesuitical scheme on the part of Government to entrap and enslave the people, by subsidising the teachers. His statements being challenged by the present writer, at a meeting in the Wesleyan Chapel, Coalbrookdale, a public discussion was held in the Boys School-room, Mr. Crookes in the chair.

[306] These, with their associated fossils, were sold to the Government: some were exchanged with the representative of a French Museum; others are still to be seen in the National Museum, Jermyn Street.

[318] When W. Anstice, Esq., father of the present W. R. Anstice, Esq., was adding to his collection, one of the men brought him one of these fossils, remarking, "well measter, I've brought something at last." Mr. A.—"Well Baugh, what is it?" Baugh, drawing it slowly from his flannel; "well I dunno know, but I'll tell you my opinion. My opinion is that it is a piece of the seat of Noah's breeches; or else Noah must of sat down on a soft piece of rock after the Flood and left the impression of his corduroys!" We need scarcely say that the story excited a roar at the time, or that its repetition when well told has raised many a broad grin since.

[325] It was a lay too in another sense; for some forty years ago the share of a plough, held by a man named Palmer, drove through the end of a leaden pipe, which had been closed at each end and which on being opened was found to contain a number of gold coins piled closely together; the larger ones, the size of half-crowns, in the centre; others the size of shillings at each end of them; and others the size of sixpences at each end of these. Singularly enough there was neither date nor inscription on either; so that who laid them by is uncertain.

[333] A chest was found in this house a few years ago with an ancient date, and is now in possession of Mrs. Beckett, Nee Edge, of Sheffield.

[340] See appendix.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HISTORY OF  
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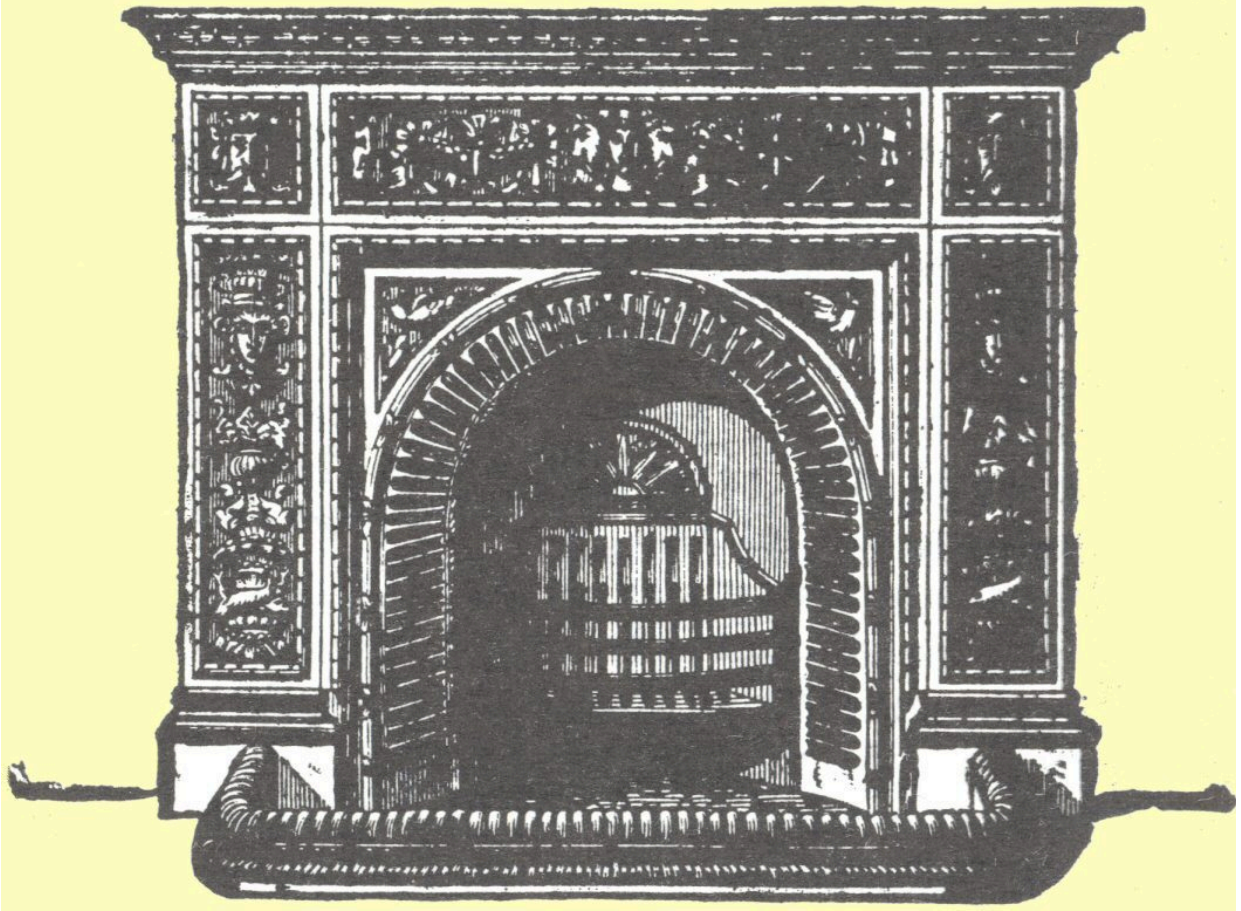
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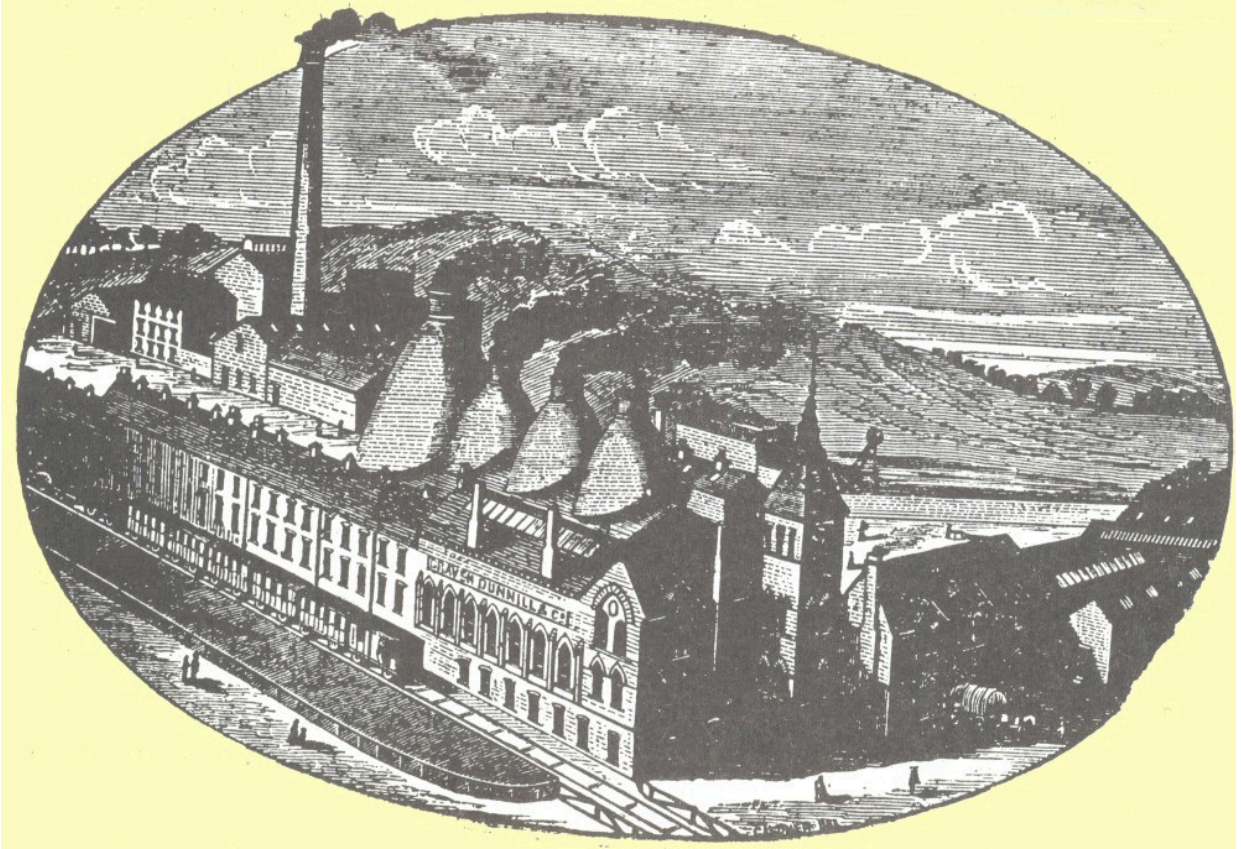
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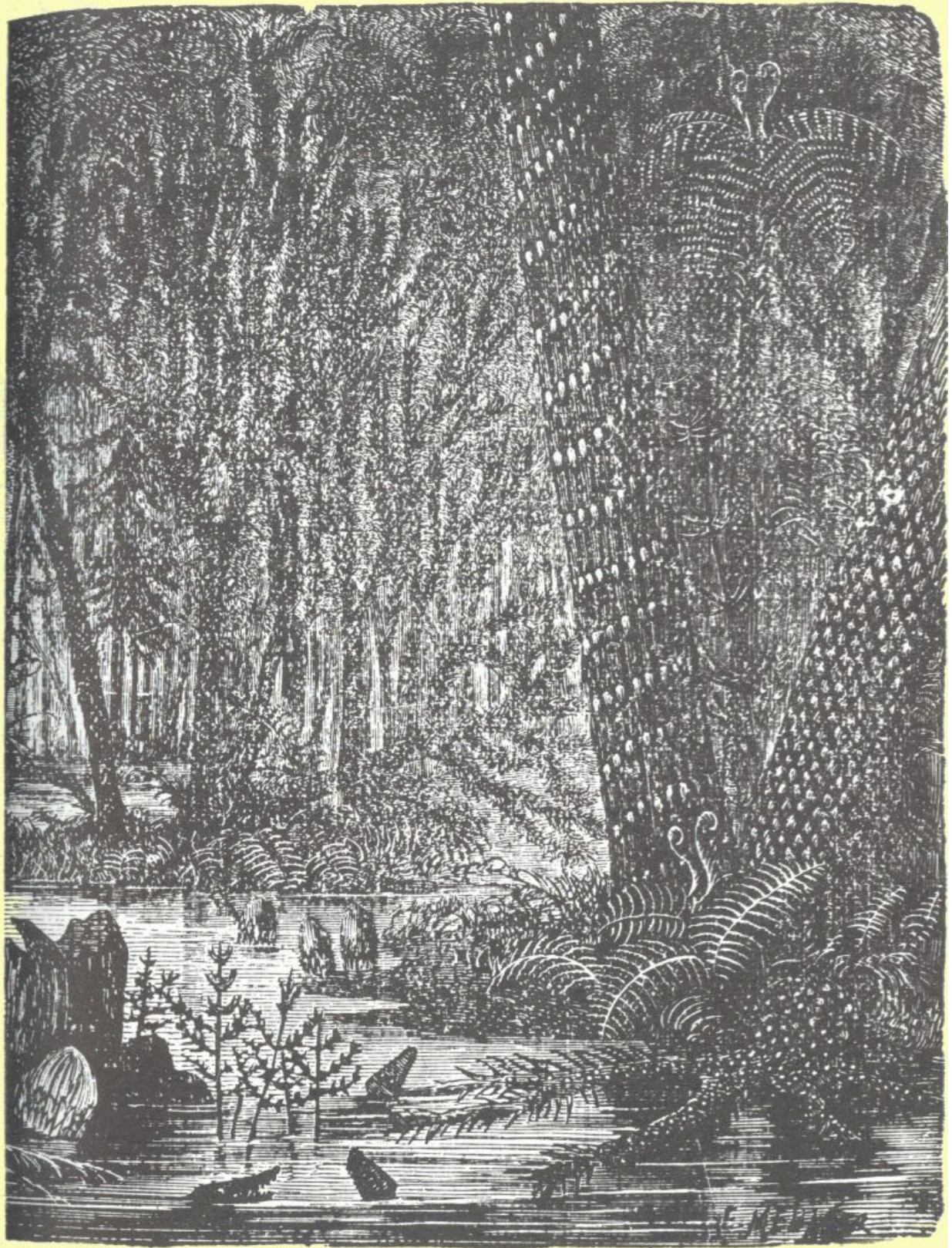
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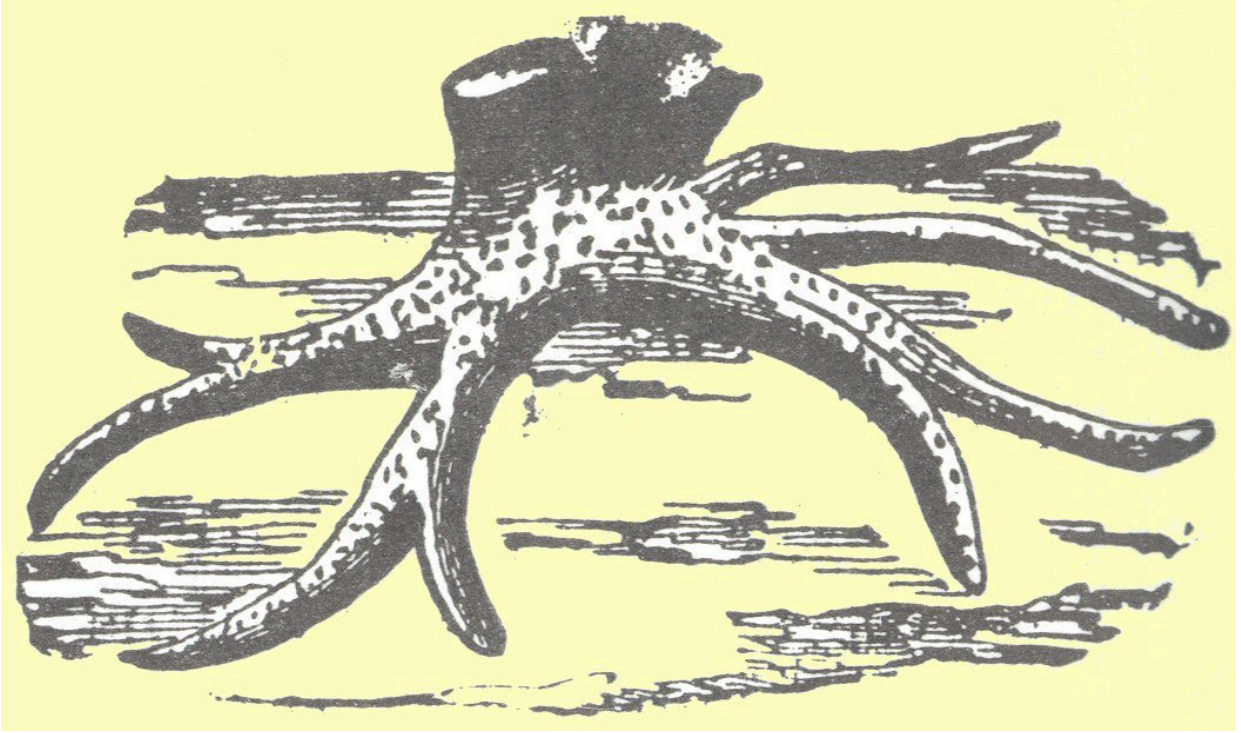
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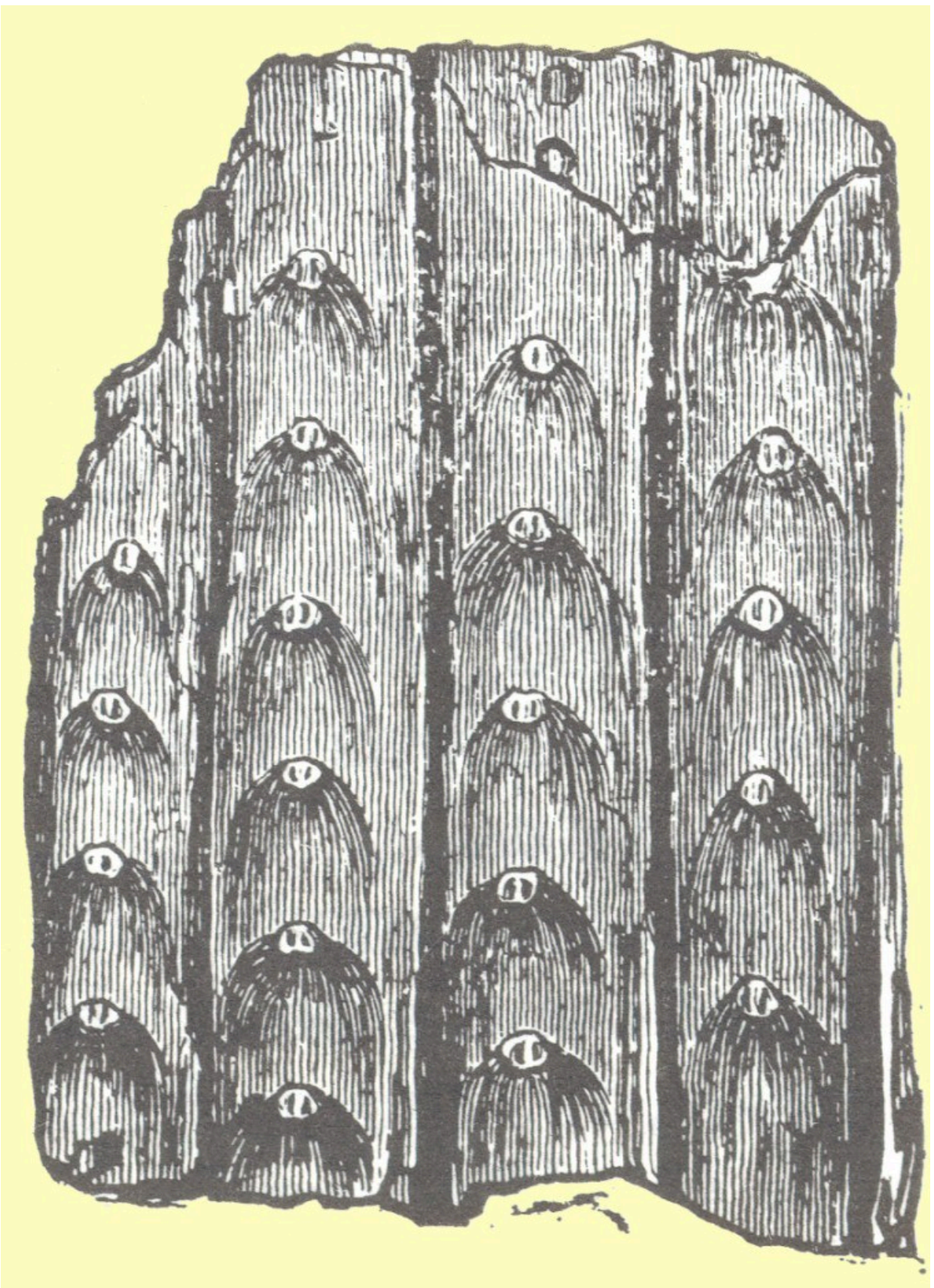
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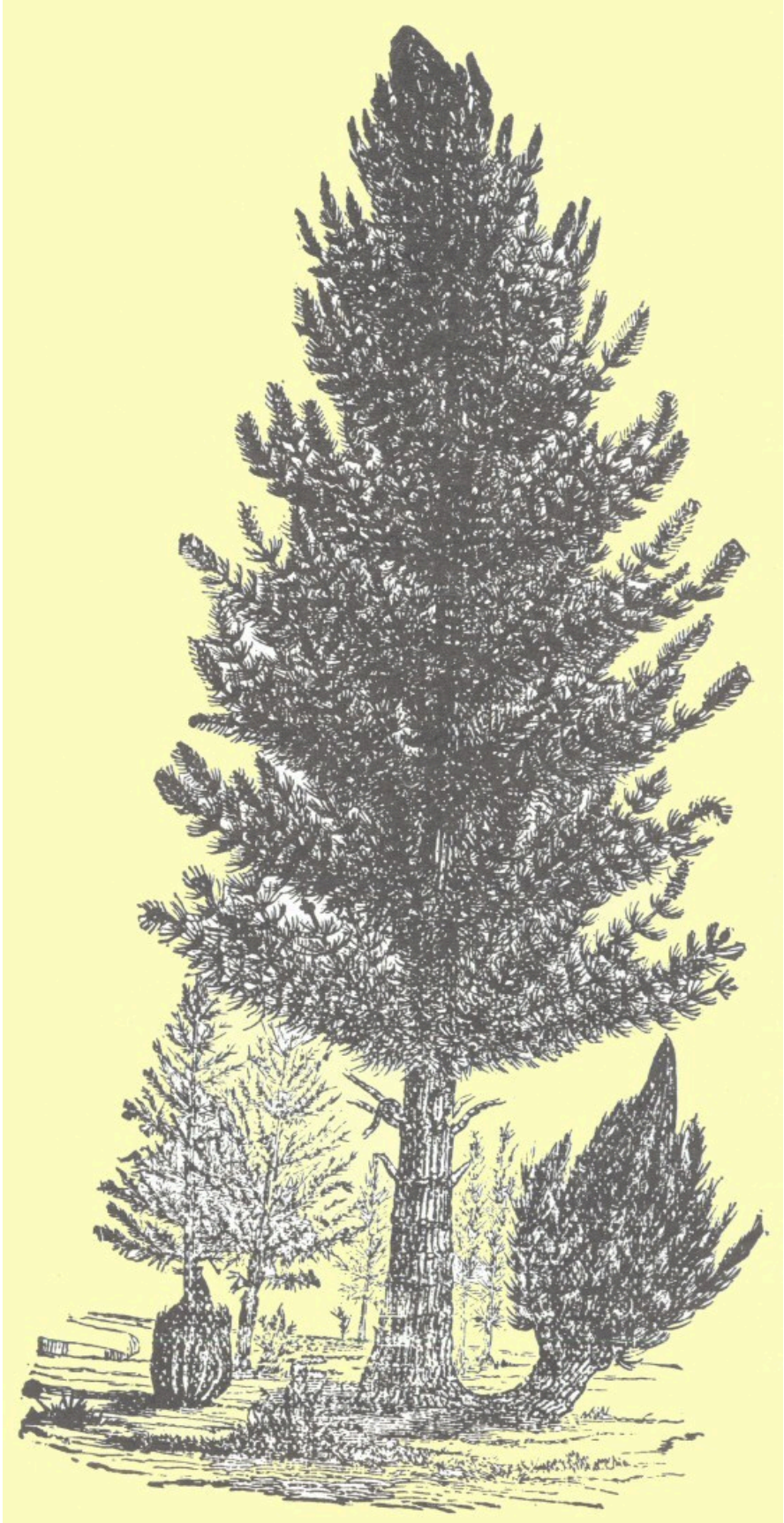
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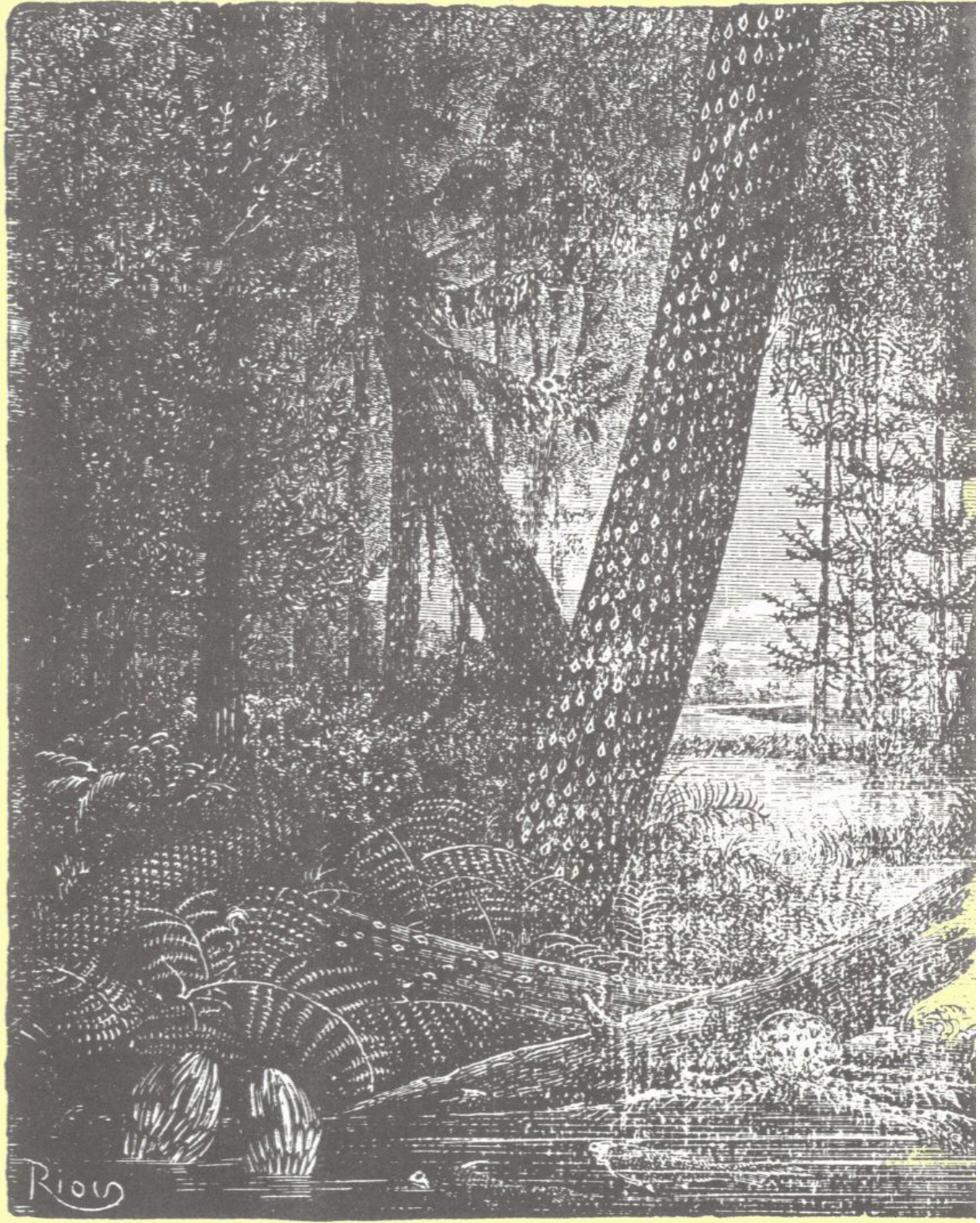
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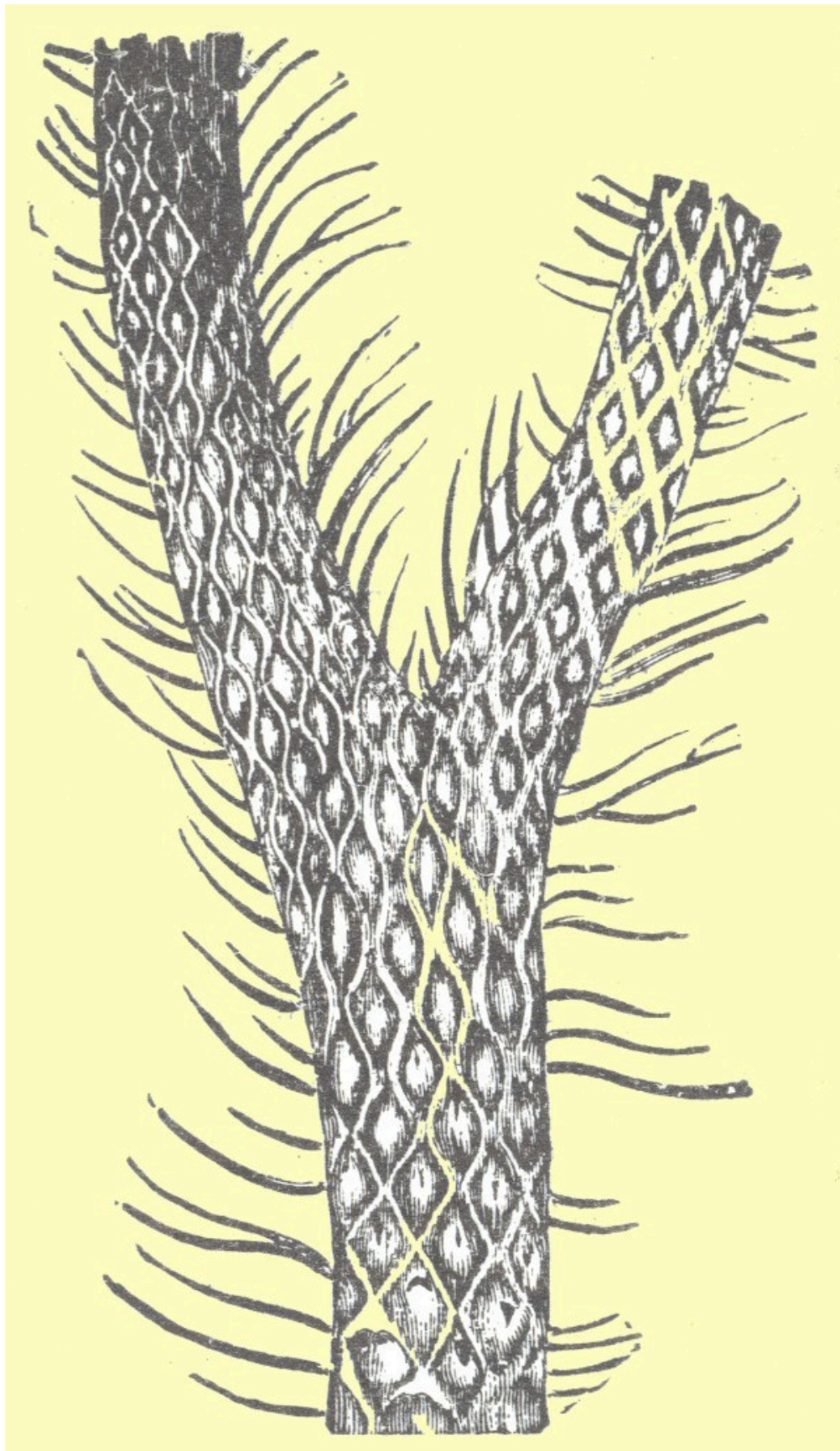
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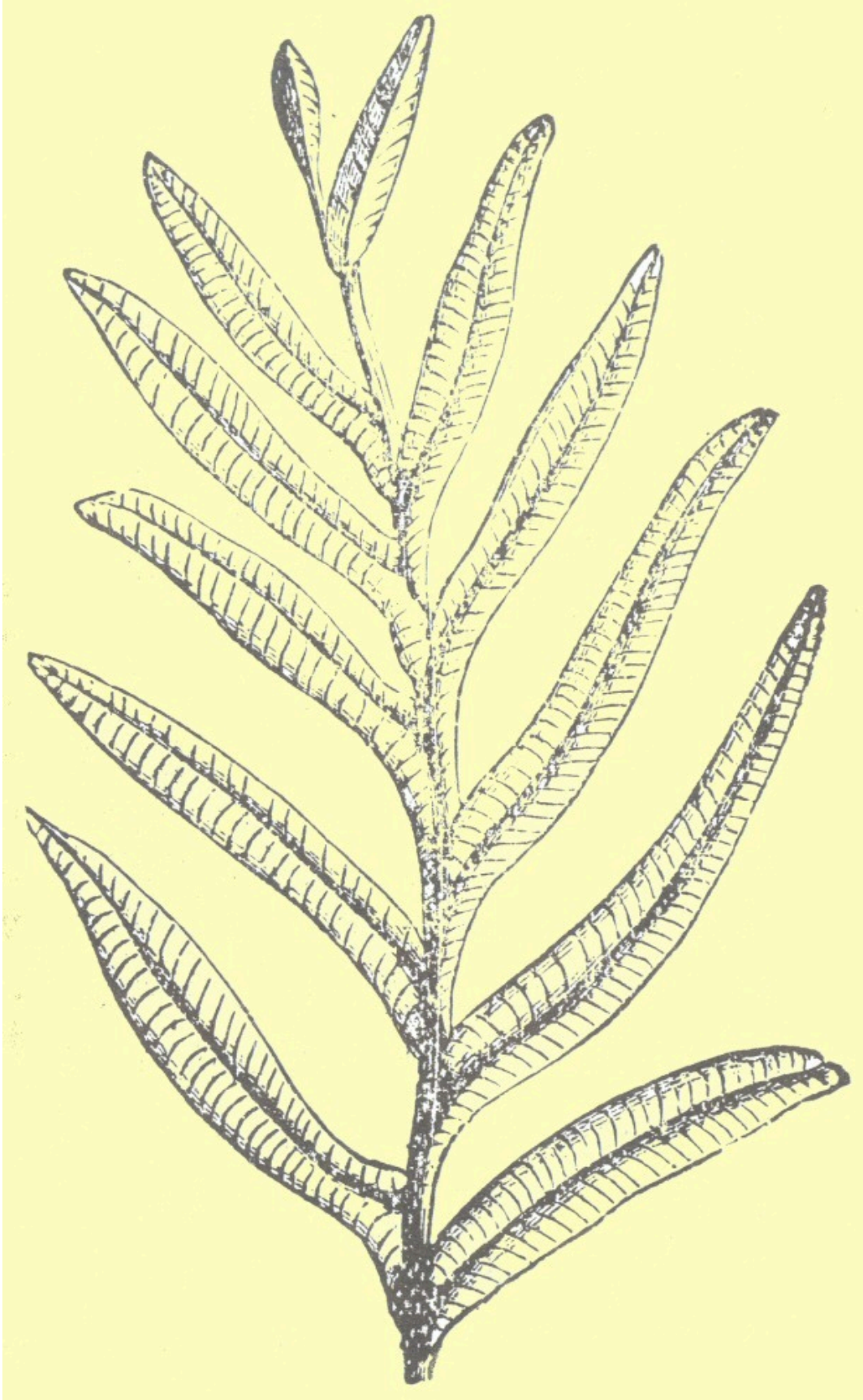
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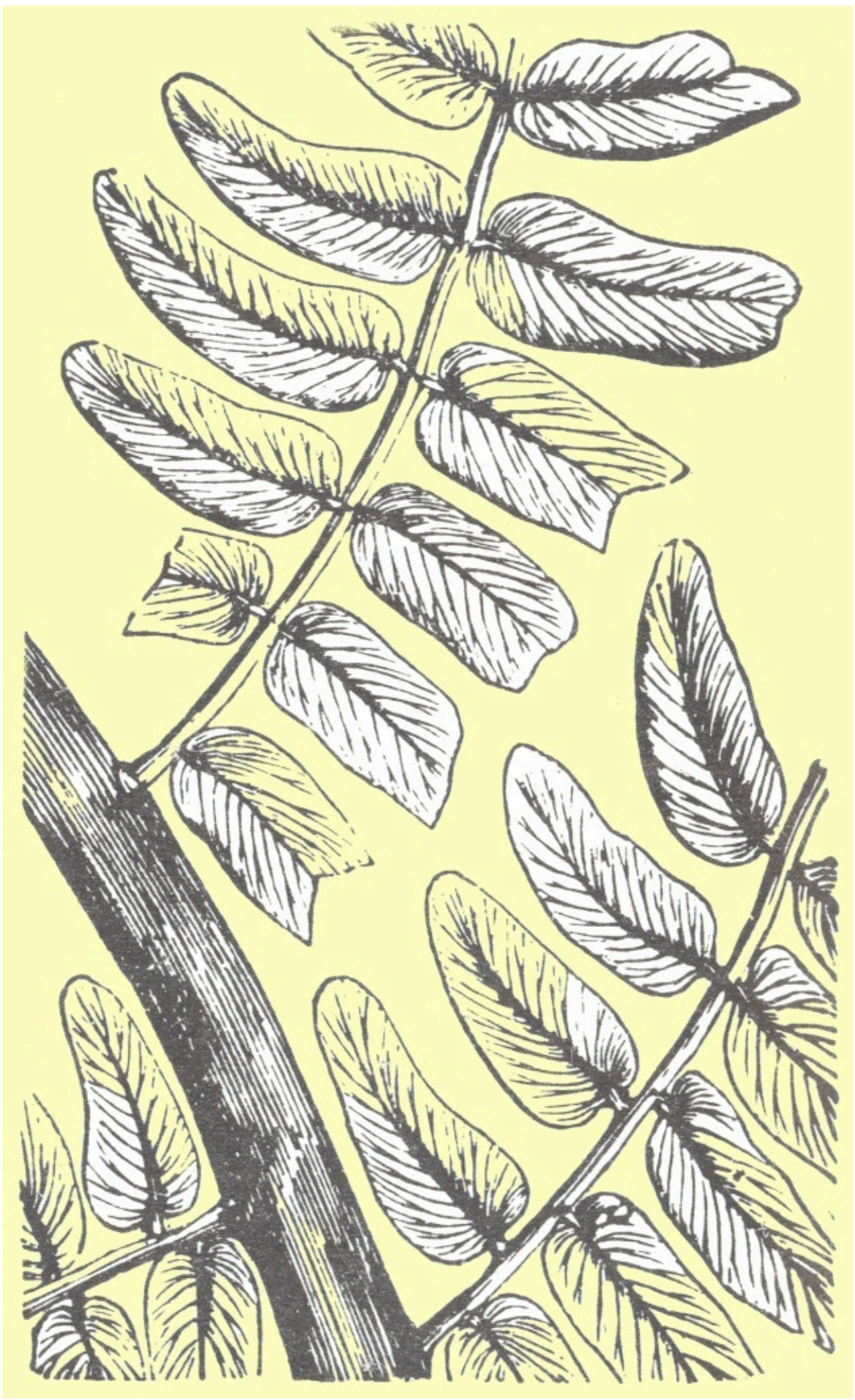
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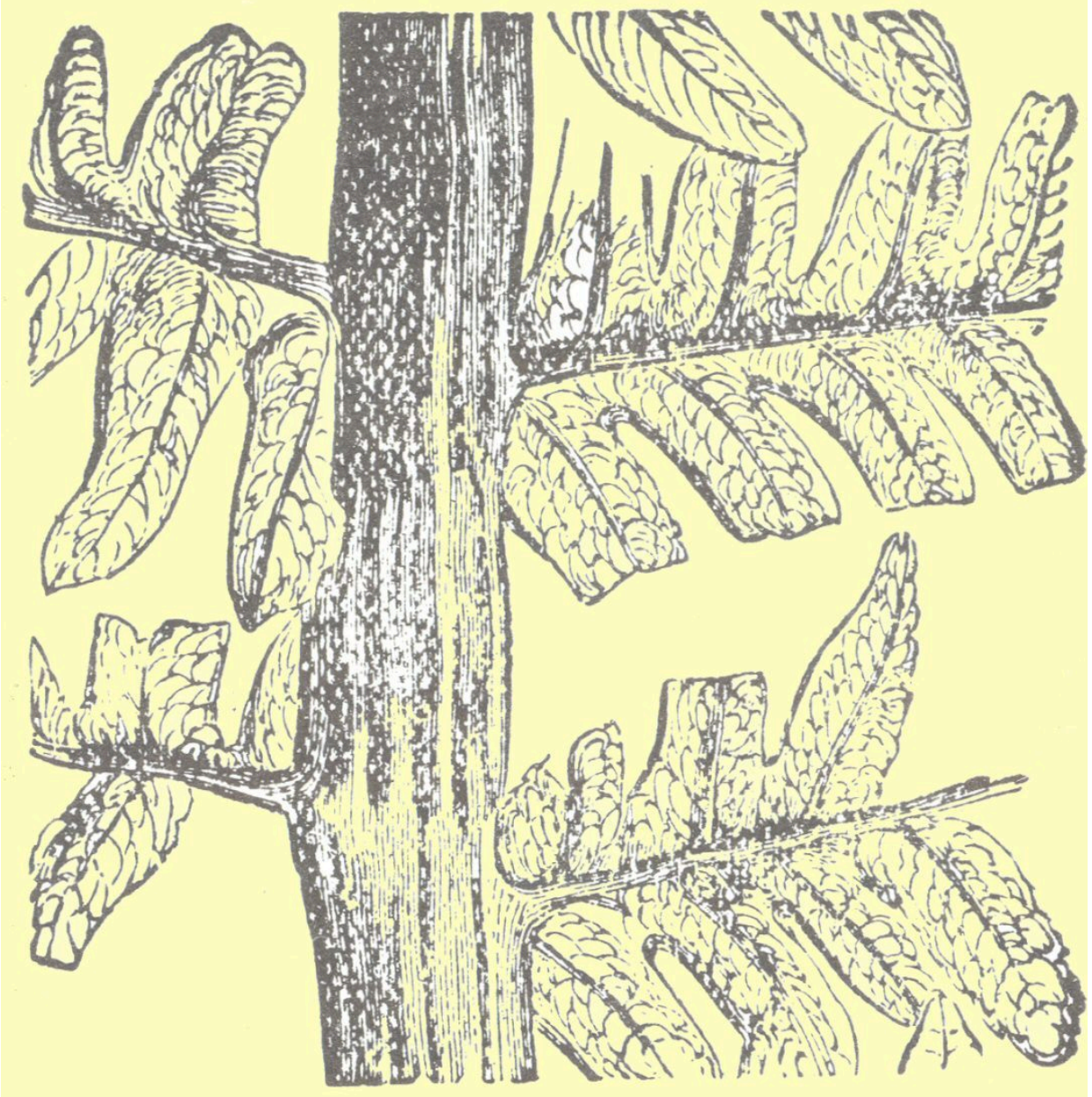
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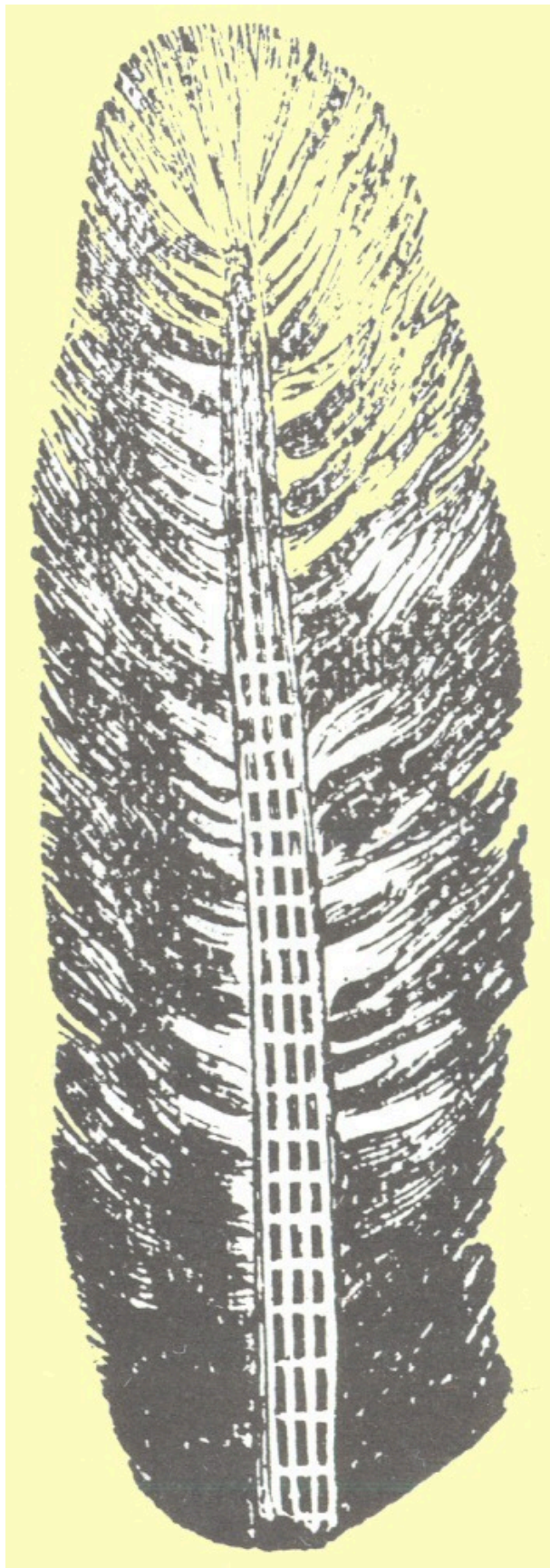
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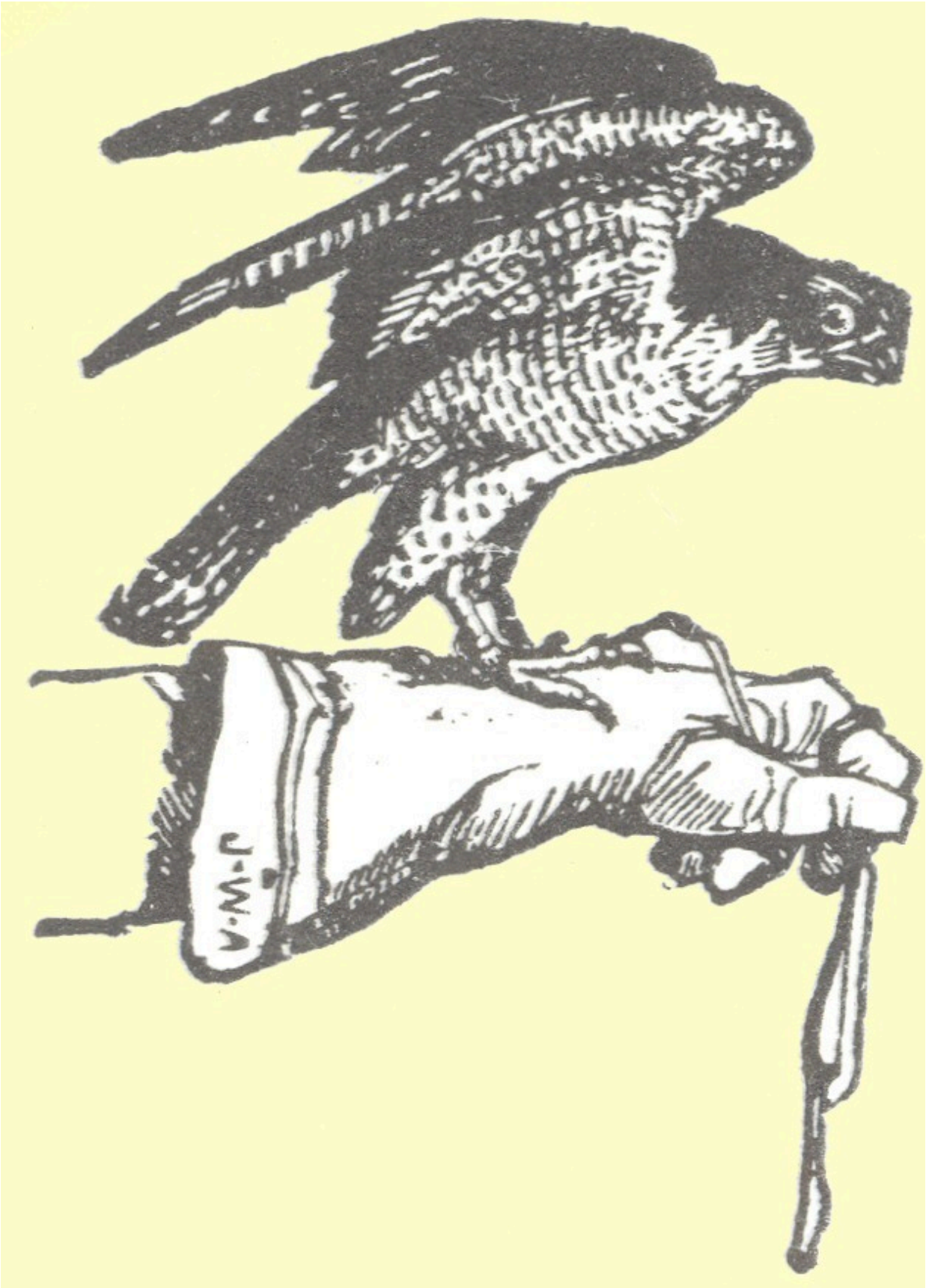
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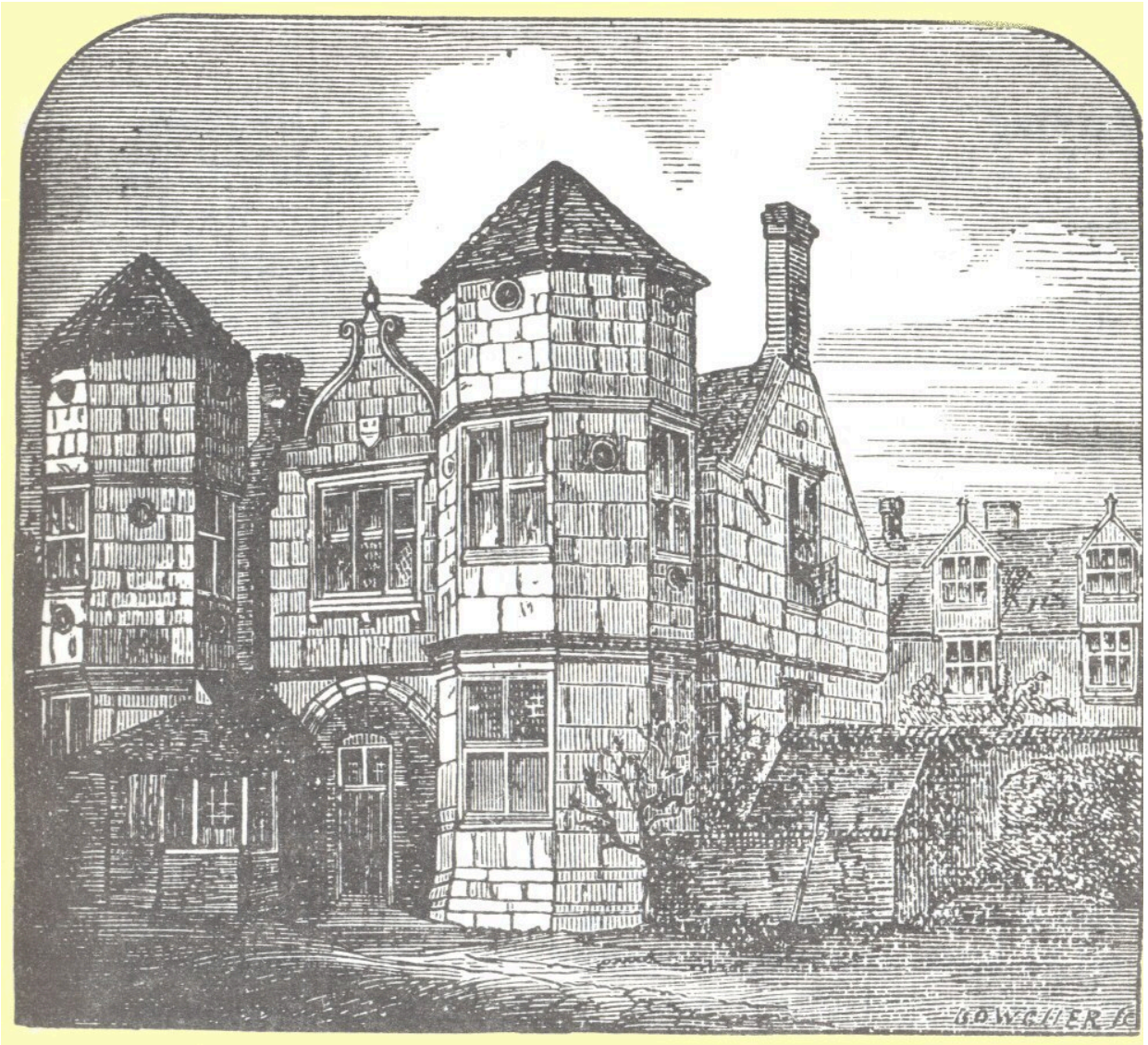
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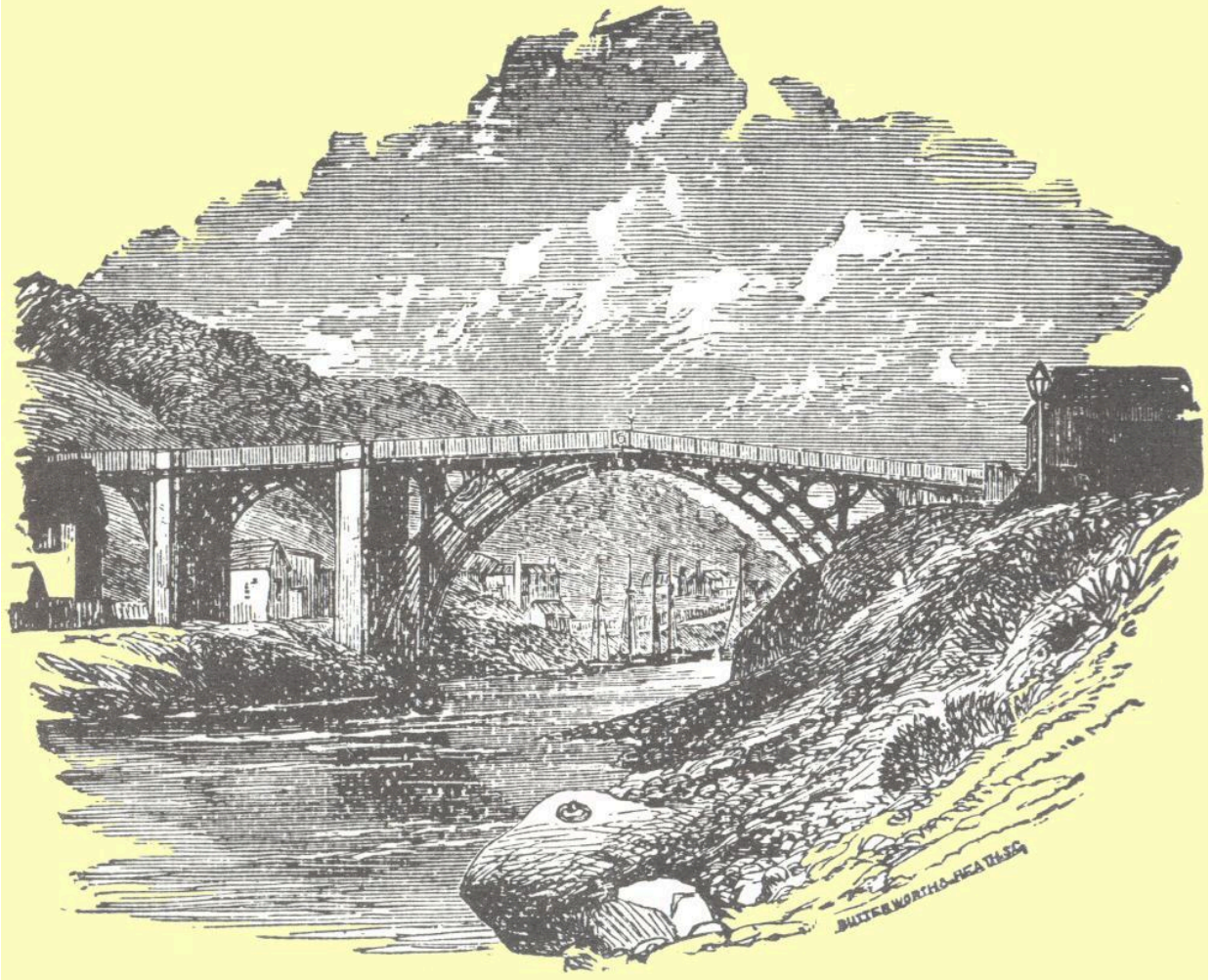
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