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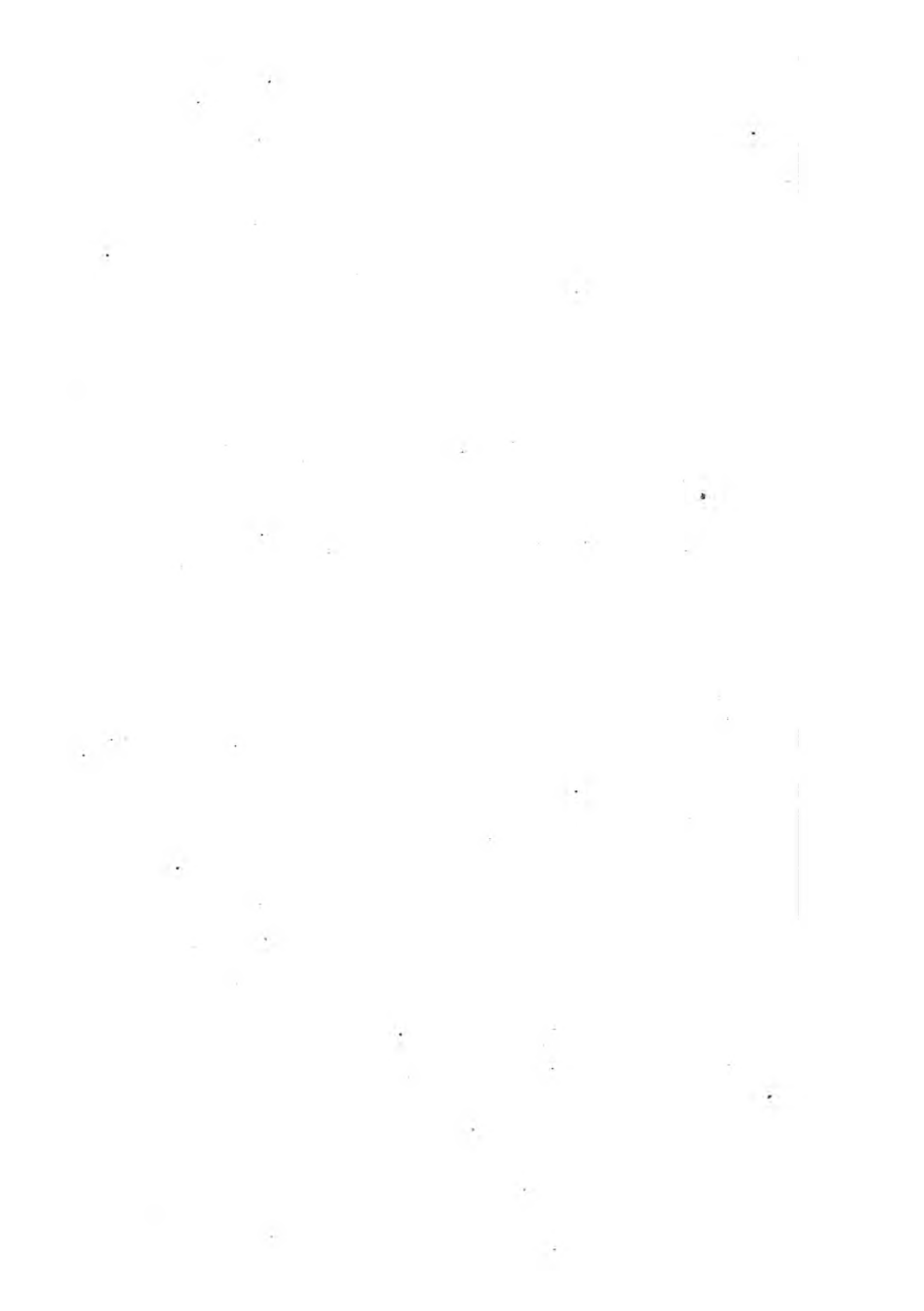
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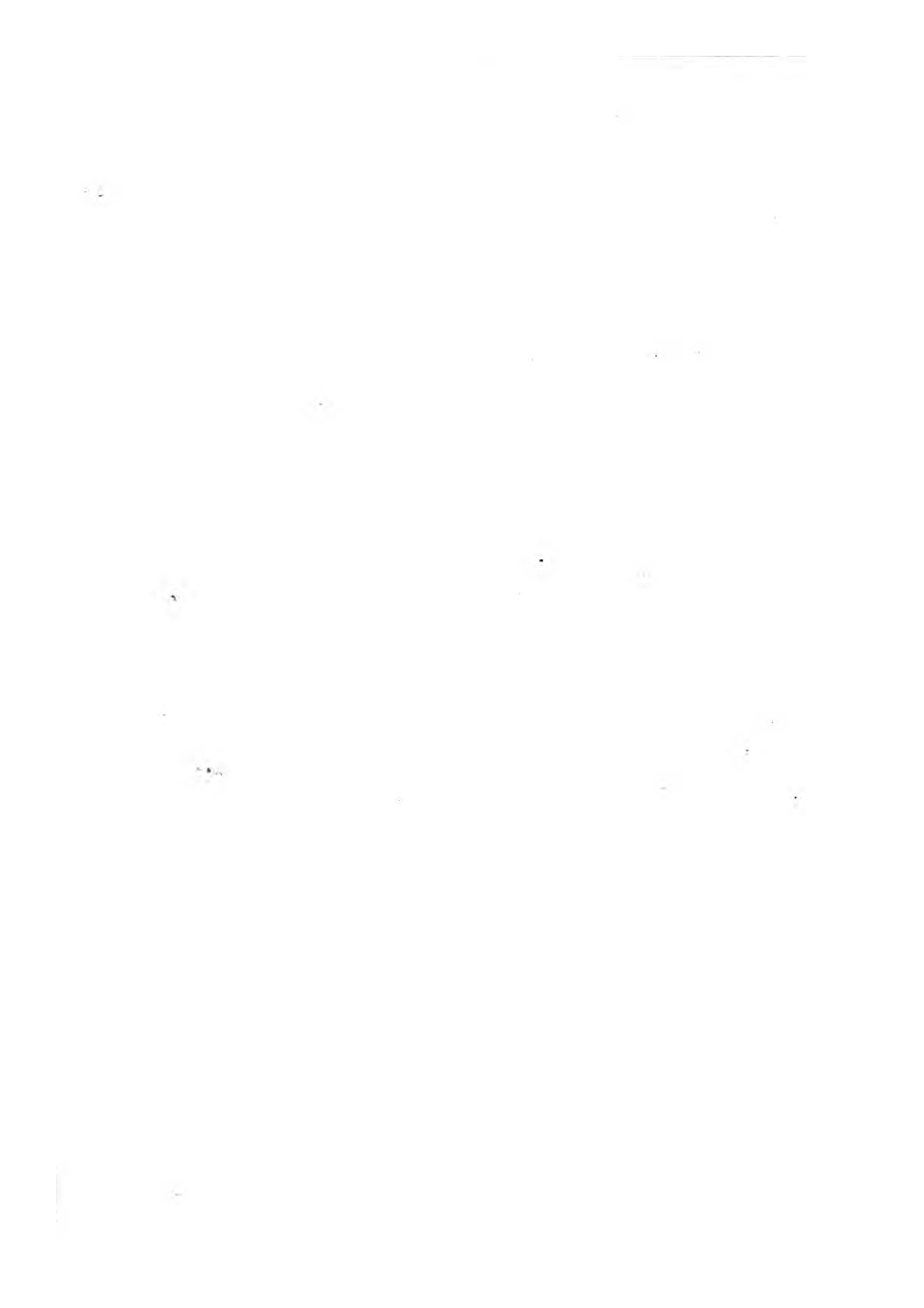
OUR VILLAGE.

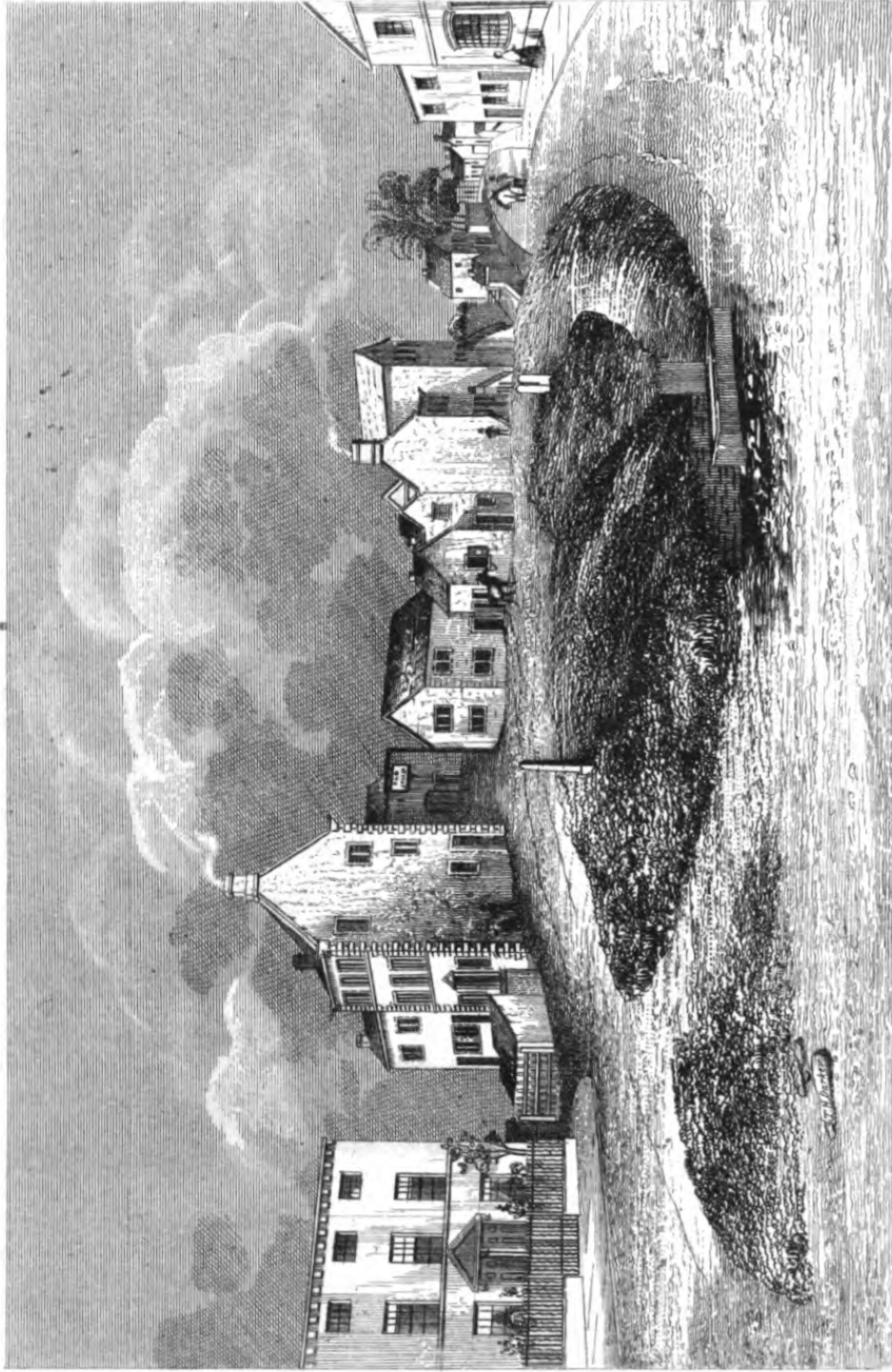
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J.H. Barker del.

Published by John Dawson, 1860.

C. Goodall, Engraver.

**STOCKS-Well, BRAMLILLY,**  
SIXTY YEARS AGO.

*With the Author's respects.*

# Our Village



A SKETCH OF  
THE  
HISTORY AND PROGRESS  
OF  
BRAMLEY  
DURING  
SEVEN CENTURIES.  
BY  
BENJAMIN WILSON, JUN.

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“And oft conducted by historic truth,  
We tread the long extent of backward time.”  
THOMSON.

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BRAMLEY :  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. DAWSON, POST OFFICE.  
—  
1860.



“Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
We love the (village) of our early days,  
The scene is touching,—and the heart is stone  
That feels not at that sight,—and feels at none.

“This fond attachment to the well known place,  
Where first we started into life’s long race ;  
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
We feel it e’en in age, and to our latest day.”

COWPER.

## P R E F A C E .

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It has been usual, until recently, with the compilers of Historical Directories of this Borough and Riding, to condense all they thought worthy of record with respect to Bramley into one brief paragraph. One of the best of them (Mr. Baines's) thus refers to our township:—  
“Bramley, a populous clothing village in the Borough of Leeds, Wapentake of Morley, and Honour of Pontefract, four miles west of Leeds.”

It is however the opinion of the writer, that his native village was deserving of more consideration than this summary dismissal implies; and he has for some years taken every opportunity of obtaining information relative to its past history.

These scattered fragments he has, to the best of his ability, arranged in one continuous narrative; and although sensible of its many defects, he ventures to hope that its perusal will gratify those who, like himself, feel a deep interest in all that concerns “the Town and Trade of Bramley.”

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This sketch was read in November, 1859, to the Members and Friends of the Mechanics' Institute, and again before the Sunday School Teachers, of Bramley: and in compliance with the request of many who heard it, is now published.

“ Say then, O ye who tell how authors speed,  
May Hope indulge her flight and I succeed ?

“ With candour judge, and (writer being new,)  
Allow for that, and judge with kindness too :

“ Laugh if you must, be candid as you can,  
And when you lash the (writer) spare the man.”

**CRABBE.**

# OUR VILLAGE.

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Our first enquiry, in reference to the early History of Bramley, will naturally be as to its origin and its name. On this subject there seems to have been some difference of opinion. Thoresby, the historian of Leeds, who is deservedly celebrated for his antiquarian research, says,\* “If we look on this place in its pristine state, it may remind us of the primitive curse, ‘Thorns and Brambles,’ (as our Saxon forefathers rendered Genesis iii. 18., Lee or Leigh ground bearing brambles :) but I rather suppose it received its name from one ‘BRAM,’ who seems to have been a very noted person in this part of the country, and to have had one of his habitations or ‘Hams’ at Bramham.” This latter view of its derivation is confirmed by a writer of more recent date, who says,† “The name of Bramley is no doubt derived from its first possessor, most probably in Saxon times, and is literally the field of ‘Bram.’ ‘Ley,’ the termination of the name, being universally understood to mean a field or meadow.”

\* *Ducatus Leodiensis* (1714) p. 175.

† *Parsons’ History of Leeds, &c.*, Vol. i. p. 194.

The earliest account of Bramley in the history of the country is to be found in "*Domesday Book*," where it is two or three times mentioned. This "incomparable record" was begun by order of William the Conqueror, in the year 1080, and completed in 1086, as a Register of the lands of which he had recently taken possession, their extent, occupation, and value, both past and present. The original, in Latin, is preserved in the Chapter-house at Westminster. A fac-simile of the work is, however, kept in the Library of the British Museum, from which the paragraphs referring to Bramley have been copied, as follows:—

TERRA ILBERTI DE LACI.

MORELEIA WAPENTAC.

**M** IN BRAMELEIA hb Archil. iiii.  
<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> car tre ad <sup>4</sup> gld. 7 ii. car <sup>4</sup> pofs̄ ibi.  
<sup>44</sup> ee. Ilbt ht <sup>q</sup> nc̄ 7 wast. ē. Silua <sup>4</sup> past.  
<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> dim leu lg. 7 <sup>4</sup> dim̄ lat. T.R.E. ual.  
 xx. sol.

TERRA GOSPATRIC.

WEST RĒDING:

**M** IN BRAMELEIA ii. <sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> car tre ad  
<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> gld. Tra. ad. i. car.

## (TRANSLATION.)

“LAND OF ILBERT DE LACI.

“MORLEIA WAPONTAKE.

“Manor. In Brameleia Archil had four carucates of land to be taxed, and there may be two ploughs there. Ilbert now has it, and it is waste. Wood pasture half a mile long, and half broad. Value, in King Edward’s time, twenty shillings.”

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“LAND OF GOSPATRIC.

“Manor. In Brameleia two carucates of land to be taxed. Land to one plough.”

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According to the “*Glossary of Domesday Book*” the carucate contained on an average about one hundred acres.

From this very brief but significant record we are, I think, warranted in supposing that during the reign of Edward the Confessor, some hundreds of acres of the lands of Bramley were under cultivation, and that some part of it at least was, with the assistance of the plough, prepared for growing corn for the sustenance of the people. But we may also justly conclude, that William the Norman Conqueror, with his licentious and devastating army, had passed over this district, and turned into

“desolation and waste” what had before been fertile and productive. Many other places in the neighbourhood suffered in a similar manner.

The account in Domesday further informs us to whom the Conqueror apportioned the lands contained in this township. The first in importance, Ilbert de Laci, was one of his principal supporters; to him was given nearly one hundred and fifty manors in the West-Riding of Yorkshire alone, and he became the founder of one of the most renowned families in the North of England.

With respect to Gospatric, the other person to whom a share of Bramley was allotted, very little information is to be met with. There was an individual thus named, “\*a powerful Northumbrian,” who was one of the leaders in an insurrection against the authority of the Normans, but who afterwards made his peace with the Conqueror, and, on payment of a sum of money as an atonement, was received into favour, and invested with the earldom of Northumberland. Whether this be the same person is not certain, but after the enumeration of many manors in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, it is said in Domesday,—“Gospatric has and occupies all these, but they are only waste.”

As to the population of Bramley at this early period, nothing definite can be ascertained. It is estimated† that Leeds then contained somewhat less

\* Hume's History of England (1828) Vol. i. p. 256.

† Parsons' History of Leeds, &c., Vol. i. p. 87.

than three hundred inhabitants, and that it partook more of the nature of a farming village than of a town. And if Leeds, with its fourteen ploughs,—its priest,—its church,—its mill,—contained so few, we may fairly suppose that “poor Bramley,” so recently visited by fire and sword, would be all but desolate.

Gospatric is no further mentioned in connection with the history of this district, and it is probable that his lands were transferred to other persons. Ilbert de Laci continued to hold his immense possessions in Yorkshire until his death, when he was succeeded by his son Robert, who added to them many others in Lancashire. Robert had two sons, Ilbert and Henri, the former of whom died, leaving Henri, the second son, to inherit the estates. It was this nobleman who was the founder and patron of Kirkstall Abbey; and as its history is so intimately interwoven with that of our own village, we may with propriety here state some particulars as to its foundation and subsequent progress.

Henri de Laci was taken dangerously ill, and fearing the consequences of his crimes, made a solemn vow that if permitted to recover, he would, by way of amends for his past misdeeds, establish an Abbey in honour of the Virgin Mary. Having recovered his health, he sent for the Abbot of Fountains, shewed him his vow in writing, and for its fulfilment, made over to him by charter, the village of Bernoldswick in Craven. The Arch-



bishop of York confirmed the grant, and on the 13th of June, 1147, Alexander, brother to the Abbot of Fountains, with twenty-two companions, proceeded to the new settlement, the name of which they changed to Mount St. Mary. For several reasons, however, which it is unnecessary to mention here, the establishment at Bernoldswick was a failure, and the monks were speedily obliged to arrange for quitting their unfortunate residence. While thus meditating a change to a more suitable situation, the abbot had occasion to travel on the business of his house, and to pass through the valley which was then, as now, called "Airedale." Dr. Whitaker\* gives a very humorous account of the results of this excursion. "The Abbot," he observes, "passing through Airedale, discovered a delicious retreat, surrounded by woods, and inhabited by a fraternity of poor and laborious hermits. The contrast between this situation and his own bleak and barren abode instantly struck him; the possibility of talking these simple men out of the exclusive possession of the place probably occurred to him at the same instant, and he began, with much address, to enquire into their way of life, their native country, their rule, and lastly, their title to the place. Accordingly, Seleth (the chief of the hermits) informed Alexander (the Abbot) that he was a native of the South of England, but had been admonished by a voice in his sleep,—'Arise, Seleth, go into

\* History of Craven, p. 62.

the province of York, seek for the valley called 'Airedale,' and the place which is called Kirkstall, and there provide an habitation for me and my Son.' Enquiring from whom the voice proceeded, he was answered,—' I am Mary, and my Son is Jesus of Nazareth.' Seleth added, that in obedience to this call he left his house and friends, and after many difficulties arrived at the place which, as he learned from the shepherds, was called 'Kirkstall;' that he remained many days alone, feeding on herbs and roots, assisted by the casual bounty of good people; but that after some time he was joined by a few brethren who put themselves under his government, and that they lived together according to the rules of the brethren of Lerath, having all things in common, and gaining a livelihood by the labour of their hands. During this reply," continues the learned antiquary, "the Abbot sent his eyes around to contemplate the site and advantages of the place; the beauty of the vale, with the river flowing through it, and the conveniency of the woods for building. His mind was now made up on the subject of a translation,—he repaired to his patron Henri de Laci, and laid before him the present state of their house, their poverty and distresses:—informing him also of the desirable spot he had found at Kirkstall, and the great benefits the order would derive by their removal thither. The Abbot's eloquence was not exercised in vain, and De Laci not only gave his consent for their re-

moval, but also by his influence obtained from William de Poitou, the owner of Kirkstall, his grant of that place and its appurtenances for the translation of the monastery. This being settled, the Abbot found no great difficulty in getting rid of the hermits; some of them he persuaded to become monks, and of the rest he purchased their habitations for a small sum of money." I must not omit to mention, that although giving this account, Dr. Whitaker questions the truth of one part of it, and says he has reason to believe, that for some time after the foundation it was called the "Abbey of Headingley," the township in which it stands. However, there is no doubt that Alexander, having secured the auspicious spot, forthwith erected a temporary church and such other buildings as were necessary for immediate accommodation, and that on the 14th kalend of June, in the year 1153, the whole fraternity of monks left Bernoldswick, and settled in their new habitation. It would be foreign to my purpose to trace at any length their subsequent history. We are informed that "the Lord saw and blessed these labours of his devout servants, and speedily multiplied both the numbers of the brethren and of their possessions." All the lands\* south of the river to the top of the opposite hill, were early incorporated with the grant of William de Poitou, which would of course bring a considerable portion of the Manor of Bramley into

\* Whitaker's Loidis and Elmete, p. 114.

the possession of the monks. The first grant of land which the abbey received from this township was by Adam de Reinville, who made over his whole lordship in Bramley, extending, probably, from Newlay to Armley Ridge.

The following is a translation of one out of several charters given by this person, and will serve to shew the manner of conveying property to "pious uses" at this period:—

"Know all men now and hereafter, that I, Adam de Reinville, for the love of God, and the salvation of my soul, my ancestors, and my heirs, have given, and by this charter have confirmed, to God, to Saint Marie, and to the monks of Kirkstall, two bovates\* of land with their appurtenances in Bramley, those which Robert my son formerly held from me, to be held and possessed from me and my heirs as perpetual alms, to be free and quit in honour both from taxes and all liberties and common uses. The aforesaid bovates of land in the same town with their appurtenances to return annually to me and my heirs four shillings, half to be paid regularly at Pentecost and half at the Feast of Saint Martin, for which as many workmen shall be provided as is necessary for the two bovates of land; but the produce of one plough and a half shall be for the maintenance of a soldier. And I the aforesaid Adam and my heirs have bestowed the aforesaid two bovates of land with the taxes and their appurtenances upon the monks of Kirkstall, and we will warrant and defend this charter everywhere against all men for ever."

**Witnesses:**—EUDONE DE LONGVILL, ROGER LE GROS,  
GALFRID DE REINVILL, WILLI PICTAVENSI,  
ADAM DE WIRKELAIE, HENRI LE GROS,  
PETROS DE HIL, SAMPSON DE FARNEL,  
SIMON DE ESHBUS, SIMON DE FERSLAYE,  
TENTE DE BRAMLEI, and others.

\* A "bovate" consisted of sixteen acres. Hunter.

The example thus set was followed by the owners of other lands, the names of nearly twenty of whom are preserved,\* so that the Abbot of Kirkstall was returned Lord of the Manor of Bramley in the 9th year of Edward I. (1280). With so fortunate a commencement, and such distinguished patronage, not only from their neighbours, but from distant friends as well, we can scarcely be surprised that the abbey increased greatly in wealth and importance; so much so, that in the year 1301 (although it had in the interval undergone many vicissitudes) the live stock of the house was stated as follows;— Draught oxen 216, cows 160, yearlings and bullocks, 152, calves 90, sheep and lambs 4,000. What quantity of pasturage they had for the maintenance of all these cattle cannot now be ascertained, but it must of necessity have been very considerable.

The last Abbot of Kirkstall was John Ripley, who surrendered the convent to the crown on the 22nd of November, 1540, nearly four hundred years after its foundation. It is believed by most competent authorities† that the revenues of the abbey at this period may be fairly estimated as equal to £8,000 or £10,000 per annum of our present currency.

Shortly after the dissolution, the site of the monastery, together with some of the adjoining

\* See Appendix.

† History of Kirkstall Abbey, ed. 1847, p. 121.

estates, in which Bramley was included, were granted in exchange to the celebrated Archbishop Cranmer, and were by that prelate settled upon a person named Peter Hammond, in trust for his grace's younger son. The lands in this township were then in a high state of cultivation, as is evident from the fact that several of its fields are expressly mentioned in the Royal Letters Patent to the Archbishop, such as Styefielde, Abbeyfielde, Dodeynge, &c. The estates appear shortly afterward to have reverted to the crown, for, in the year 1583, they were granted by Queen Elizabeth to Edmund Downynge and Peter Asheton and their heirs for ever. At a later period, in the reign of James I., both the Manor of Bramley, and the site and demesnes of the abbey were purchased by the Saviles of Howley, and they afterward passed, by marriage through the Duke of Montague to the Brudenels, Earls of Cardigan, in whose possession the chief portion has since continued.

Bramley has not, like some neighbouring places, been the scene of much military display. There is little doubt, however, that during the Civil Wars in 1642, when the forces of the Royalists and Parliamentarians so often traversed the district, Bramley would receive many passing visits from them, and would occasionally be selected as their resting-place. Lord Fairfax was commander of the Parliamentary army, his son, Sir Thomas Fairfax,

being general of horse. The King's troops were commanded by the Duke of Newcastle, and it is not unlikely that our "*Whitcoat*" received its name from the encampment there of his celebrated regiment bearing that name, and wearing that dress. These distinguished generals, with their troops, often travelled over the ground between Leeds and Bradford,—each time, probably, passing through some part of this township, to the great alarm of its peaceful inhabitants. In the autumn of 1642, Sir Thomas Fairfax signalized the comment of his brilliant services by driving a party of Royalists from Bradford to Leeds. This he with his valorous soldiers, followed up on the 23rd of January, 1643, by an attack on Leeds itself, which was then occupied by the forces of the King,—Sir William Saville being their commander under the Duke of Newcastle. Part of the Parliamentary forces approached the town on the south-west side, by way of Armley, and the other part on the north side of the river from Apperley Bridge, (Kirkstall Bridge, which was the nearest crossing, having been broken down by the enemy.) After two hours' hard fighting they took possession of the town, together with 460 prisoners.

Tradition, which is often founded on fact, says, that in 1644-5, during the time when the plague was raging so destructively in Leeds, (one-fifth of the population dying in six months,) the market was

occasionally held at Bramley, and that a Cross or Pillar eight feet high was set up on the Stocks-hill, as a memorial of the event. Its position on the hill is shewn in the frontispiece. At the widening of the street, in 1798, this pillar was broken in removal, so that only half of its original height remained, and in 1827, when the Stocks-hill was altered to its present form, such was the thoughtlessness of the parties who ought to have ensured its preservation as a relic of the past, that the stone was broken up and used in the erection of the wall, after standing one hundred and eighty years.

It may appear strange that so soon after the troublous times just referred to, the government of this country should have ventured to disband its regular military forces; but such was the case. Macaulay states that "shortly after the Restoration, the services of the standing army were dispensed with, and the militia is said to have been the only force which this country possessed for many years after the termination of the Civil Wars. Its strength was estimated at near one hundred and thirty thousand men, under the direction of the sovereign, and officered by the lords-lieutenant and their deputies, who fixed the time for drilling, which was not to exceed fourteen days in the year." The following document, copied from the original in the possession of the writer, shews the mode in



which this body was raised, and the proportion which Bramley had to contribute.

WEST-RIDING } We doe appoint John Wood to be  
COM. EBOR. } principall for one muskett for all his  
lands in Bramley, and the persons  
hereafter named to be his Bearers,  
according to their several propor-  
tions:—Samuell Ellison, Daniell  
Parker, James Snowden, Michael  
Middlebrooke, John Pollard, Wm.  
Spurr, Samuell Musgrave, James  
Cawthrey, Joseph Holdsworth.

Given under our Hands and Seales the 8th day  
of November, 1679.

Hen : Fairfax O

Jr : Kaye O

Jo : Ramsden O

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Among the distinguished worthies which the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced, two or three Bramley men are honourably mentioned. Christopher Saxton,\* who was a celebrated geographer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was born at Bramley. Camden, “the Prince of English Antiquaries,” speaks very highly of his works, and styles him “the most excellent chorographer.” He died in October, 1587, and was buried at Leeds. Peter Saxton, M.A.,† probably a kinsman of the person just named, was also born at, or

\* Scatcherd’s History of Morley, p. 213.

† Thoresby’s Vicaria Leodiensis, p. 86.

near Bramley. He was not only a distinguished Hebrew scholar but a devoted minister. After spending some years in preaching the gospel in the then dark regions of America, he returned to England, when he had the offer of a valuable living in Kent, which he declined, preferring to reside in his native county. He was appointed Vicar of Leeds in April, 1646, and immediately on assuming the charge of the parish, he re-opened the Old Church for divine worship, it having been closed during the ravages of the pestilence. He continued to occupy this position of usefulness until his death, which took place October 1st, 1651.

Another highly distinguished minister and scholar, born at Bramley, in October, 1625, was the Rev. Joseph Hill. He was son of the Rev. Joshua Hill, hereafter mentioned as one of the first curates of this township. Joseph "gave early proofs of his capacity by the progress he made in school learning, but the troubles which began at that time prevented his being sent to college until he was eighteen years old, when he was admitted to St. John's, at Cambridge, where by his diligence he soon recovered the time that he had lost."\* In a few years he was chosen Fellow of Magdalen College, and in 1659 was promoted to the office of Proctor (or Magistrate) of the University, and his conduct in that office proved him to be well worthy of the honour.

\* Palmer's Calamy, ed. 1775, Vol. i. p. 209.

In the following year he declared his judgment to be against conformity ; but that he might escape persecution on this account, the collegians out of kindness to him, cut his name out of their books. He retired to London, and soon afterward went abroad, travelled through several foreign countries, and then spent two or three years at the Leyden University. In 1667, he was called to be pastor of the English Church at Middleburgh, in Zealand, where he continued six years; when a work which he published gave some offence to the governor of that province, who obliged him to leave the place.

He then returned to England, when King Charles II., as a reward for writing the book, gave him a sinecure worth above £80 a year, and offered that if he would comply with the "Uniformity Act" he should receive a bishopric. But being altogether *dis*-satisfied with the terms of that enactment, even the offer of a mitre did not tempt him: he declined the promotion, and shortly afterward became minister of the English Church at Rotterdam, in Holland, where he continued until his death. Such was his devotion to study, that the infirmities of age did not prevent his spending many hours a day among his books, of which he had a very extensive collection. He died on the 5th of November, 1707, aged eighty-three, leaving his valuable library to the Free Grammar School at Leeds.

The next earliest accounts of the progress of our township are dated July 14th, 1663. In this year a

tax called "*hearth money*" was levied by Act of Parliament, at the rate of two shillings on every hearth or fire-place in houses paying to the church or poor. The returns relative to this subsidy have been preserved among the records of the Leeds Corporation, and shew that at that time the number of inhabitants of Bramley possessing hearths or stoves was fifty-six, the number of hearths being ninety-three. So that the number of householders being fifty-six, it is probable the entire population would not be more than two hundred and eighty. It is also very likely that there would be some householders who, through poverty, were not liable to the payment of church or poor-rates, and were consequently exempted from this subsidy. An eminent writer on English Antiquities says that the "hearth tax" was not levied on houses worth less than twenty shillings per annum. Suppose these to have amounted to one-fourth the number of rateable inhabitants, and the entire population of Bramley would then be about three hundred and fifty. It could, however boast a larger number than most of the out townships of the borough, Armley having (on the same principle of calculation) three hundred and twenty-five, Wortley two hundred and six, and Farnley two hundred and six.

The following list\* of the rateable inhabitants of Bramley at that time will be interesting, especially

\* Municipal History of Leeds. Appendix p. civ.

to those who can trace in it the names of their revered ancestors:—

	No. of Hearths.		No. of Hearths.
John Morley ... ..	4	Jane Thwaites ... ..	2
Michael Middlebrooke	5	Jonathan Squier ... ..	2
Christopher Snawden .	5	Christopher Buckle ... ..	1
Richard Elleson ... ..	3	William Dixon ... ..	1
John Greene ... ..	3	Thomas Harper . ... ..	1
Edward Smith ... ..	2	Lawrence Atkinson ... ..	1
Gervas Smith ... ..	1	Thomas Medcalf ... ..	1
Elias Inchball ... ..	2	Henry Haist ... ..	3
Thomas Brothericke .	1	Edward Pawson . ... ..	1
Andrew Shyers ... ..	1	Christopher Robinson .	1
Robert Baynes ... ..	1	Andrew Thompson ..	1
Christopher Jackson .	5	James Swainston ... ..	1
George Staineforth ...	1	William Naylor .. ...	1
Francis Bovill ... ..	2	William Vevers... ..	1
Samuell Wilkinson ...	1	Ralph Walker ... ..	1
John Wood ... ..	3	John Haw .. ...	2
Robert Greene ... ..	1	John Walker ... ..	1
Thomas Cozen ... ..	1	Joshua Wood ... ..	1
Christopher Tuton ...	1	Anne Dawson ... ..	1
Henry Musgrave ... ..	2	John Spurr .. ...	1
Widdow Hall ... ..	1	Jonas Rose... ..	2
John Hewitt ... ..	1	John Westerman ... ..	2
Mark Croasdall .. ...	1	John Musgrave... ..	1
William Bins ... ..	2	William Banckes. ... ..	1
Robert Smyth ... ..	1	Widdow Jarrett.. ...	1
William Spurr ... ..	2	Ellis Barry... ..	2
William Rose ... ..	1	Henry Appleby .. ...	1
Joseph Wood ... ..	3	Peter Banckes ... ..	1

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Bramley Church appears next to claim consideration in a narrative of the history of "Our Village."

It is dedicated to St. Margaret the Virgin, of Antioch. She is said to have been instructed in the faith by a Christian nurse ; to have been persecuted by her own father, who was a priest of the idols ; and, after enduring many torments, to have gloriously finished her martyrdom by the sword, in the year 278.\*

Whether our annual "Feast," like many in other places, had its origin in commemoration of the "patron saint" of the church, I am not able to say ; but if not, it is very singular that it always happens on the Sunday immediately before or after St. Margaret's day, the 20th of July.

At what time the church, (or as it would be more properly termed the "Episcopal Chapel") was erected, seems to be rather uncertain. An excellent authority, to whom I am under personal obligation for several interesting particulars relative to its history, states that the chapel was built in the 6th year of the reign of Charles I. (1631.) Another authority says that there was a small ancient chapel previous to this date, belonging to the Presbyterians ; and that in 1631 it fell into the hands of the Episcopalians, who rebuilt it. Dr. Whitaker mentions the names of two curates of still earlier date, —Sir William Swaine, curate until 1575, and Sir Richard Iveson until 1585. (These† were not

\* Butler's Lives of the Saints.

† Things Not Generally Known, p. 181.

knights, as we might suppose from the prefix to their names; the title "Sir" being at that time often given to persons in holy orders.) It is certain, however, that there was a chapel in 1632, and that the Rev. Joshua Hill was then, as Thoresby afterwards termed him, the "pious and painful" (*i.e.*, painstaking) minister. He\* did not in all points agree with the ritual of the Church of England. Some of his enemies had resolved to cause him trouble on this account, and obtained a "citation" for him to appear in the Court of the Archbishop of York, there to answer the charge of not wearing his surplice, and other acts of nonconformity. He *escaped* their malice, however, as he died a few hours before the summons reached Bramley, (on the 13th of December, 1632.†)

He was succeeded by the Rev. Francis Bovill, who was silenced in 1662, for non-compliance with the requirements of the "Act of Uniformity." Mr. Bovill continued to reside at Bramley for a few years after his ejection. He afterwards, acting probably on the advice of his friend and patron, Lord Howard, of Norfolk, agreed to the terms of conformity, and on the 11th of March, 1670, he was by that nobleman appointed Vicar of Rotherham. With respect to *his* successor here, Calamy's Nonconformists' Memorial says, that

\* Palmer's Calamy's Noncon. Memorials, Vol. i. p. 209.

† Ducatus Leodiensis, p. 210.

“one Mr. Etherington, who had conformed, left Morley, and succeeded one Mr. Bovill, at Bramley;” but this is not confirmed by any of the authorities before quoted, two of whom agree in stating that the Rev. Robert Hartley became Curate or Incumbent in 1663.

That distinguished nonconformist divine, the Rev. Oliver Heywood, visited Bramley on several occasions during the years 1666-7-8, where he appears to have been always very kindly treated, and his ministry eminently successful. One or two extracts from his diary will suffice to show the arduous, and at that time perilous, character of his labours:—“June 16th, 1666. Saturday night. On earnest solicitation I went to Bramley IN THE NIGHT, about seven miles, God mercifully preserved me: I preached there three times on the Lord’s-day, and was much refreshed; the hearts of the people were much affected,—I hope some good was done. Having visited friends by the way, on Monday night, June 18th, I returned home with safety.” —“January 24th, 1668. I went, according to appointment, towards Bramley, to preach there on the Lord’s day, but E. H—— came to my house to prevent me, because Mr. Hardcastle, (another ejected minister,) had been taken at a meeting at Leeds the Tuesday night before, and they were afraid of danger. Providence so ordered it that I had set off, and we missed each other. He found me at Pudsey, and we resolved to keep to our



purpose. I lodged at Mr. Sale's that night, and on Saturday went to Bramley. Preached there on the Lord's-day PUBLICLY, where was a numerous and crowded congregation. We had peace all day, and it was a pleasant day."

We who live in this age of "civil and religious liberty" are apt to wonder why this and other ministers of Christ were under the necessity of traversing the country in this apparently clandestine manner. It may be well, therefore, to mention here that in 1662 an "Act of Uniformity" was passed, which required from the ministers of the Church certain declarations that many of them could not truly and conscientiously make; and that two thousand ministers nobly relinquished their positions in the Church, rather than submit to hold them upon such terms. Francis Bovill, then minister of Bramley, was one of this faithful band, Oliver Heywood was another, and Elkanah Wales, (who was upwards of fifty years minister of Pudsey) was a third. Hundreds of these heroic men, with their wives and children, had neither houses nor bread. The people they left were not able to relieve them, nor durst they do it if they *had* been able. Some of these ministers preached in fields and private houses to such as would hear them, until they were apprehended, and cast into jails, where many of them died.\* The Elkanah Wales

\* Dr. Fawcett's Life of O. H., p. 28.

just mentioned, having on an especial occasion preached at Bramley Chapel, was taken before the justices, but he escaped imprisonment because some of them had a respect for his years.”\*

The promoters of this “ Act of Uniformity ” finding that it did not prevent these ministers from preaching the gospel,† passed another in 1664, called the “ Conventicle Act,” which contained the following wicked enactment:—“ If any person above the age of sixteen, after the 1st of July, 1664, shall be present at a meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy of the Church of England, where shall be five or more persons than the household, shall, for the first offence, suffer three months’ imprisonment, or pay a sum not exceeding five pounds; for the second offence, six months’ imprisonment, or ten pounds; for the third offence, the offender to be banished to some of the American plantations for seven years, or pay one hundred pounds: and in case they return, or make their escape, such persons are to be adjudged felons, and suffer death without benefit of clergy!”

When we remember that Oliver Heywood, in coming to preach at Bramley, was subject to such penalties as these, we cannot but admire the Christian heroism with which he ran all risks, in the performance of what he believed to be his duty.

\* Hutchinson’s *Memoirs of E. Wales*, p. xxiv.

† *Dr. Fawcett’s Life of O. H.*, p. 48.

The oldest gravestone in the Church burying-ground, with a legible inscription, is dated 1673, and reads as follows:—"Here lyeth the body of Catherine, the wife of William Vevers, of Bramley, who departed this life the 23rd day of March, 1673. 'House and riches are the inheritance of fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.' *Prov. xix. 14.*

'Who'e'er thov art that passeth by,  
To dvst thov mvst as well as I.'

This William Vevers was one of the persons included in the list of hearth-tax payers previously quoted.

In 1694 the Rev. James Metcalf succeeded Mr. Hartley in the curacy of Bramley, but he held the office only a few months, and was followed by the Rev. Thomas Clapham.

Before taking leave of the 17th century it may be worth while just to glance at the financial position of "our village" during that period. The first record of an assessment on the several townships in the borough, is one which Mr. Alderman Ibbitson, then treasurer, presented to the corporation on the 10th of February, 1680. The entire amount of the assessment upon the whole of the borough, was\* but £20 12s. 5d., and yet, I regret to state that the officials of our township were either

\* Wardell's Municipal History of Leeds.

unable or unwilling to pay its share, which would not be more than about £1 15s! So that Bramley has the unenviable position of being recorded as a defaulter in the earliest Borough-rate now existing!

About this date the records belonging to our own township become available. The first entry in them is as follows :—

“ November ye 17th, 1684.—Edward Terry, late Constable of Bramley, made his accounts, and he is found debtor to the towne of Bramley three shillings and fourpence, w<sup>ch</sup> he promiseth to pay to his successor John Yates:—besides seventeen shillings which he hath brought in as arrears from those persons w<sup>ch</sup> refuse to pay, w<sup>ch</sup> are as underwrit:— Sam. Ellison, Mr. Holdsworth, Tho. Musgrave, Jun., Christopher Broadbelt, Mr. Tho. Iles, 2s. 4d., John Spurr, George Brethericke, William Har, Tho. Johnson, Leonard Dixon, Mr. Wm. Weatherall, William Naylor, John and Emanuel Broadley, Mr. George Gamble, Occupiers of the Upper Rayles Close, Joseph Binns.

“ Taken by us, JOHN GREENE, MICH. MIDDLEBROOKE,  
JOSEPH WOOD, JOHN JACKSON,  
JOHN MUSGRAVE, WILLI BANKES.”

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The population of the town seems to have been on the increase, as a Poor-rate for 1690 contains the names of seventy-two rateable inhabitants. If we add to this one-fourth, as the number of heads of families who were not rateable, the entire population would amount to about four hundred and fifty, being an increase of twenty-eight per cent. in twenty years.

Two or three other Minutes entered about this time, shew what was the Income and Expenditure of the respective officers of the township one hundred and sixty years ago.

“December 1st, 1699.—Joshua Wood, Jun., and Christopher Clarke, Overseers for the Highways for the year 1699, made their accounts to the Inhabitants of the towne, and they have collected the sum of £6 3s. 10d., and they have disburst the sum of £6, and there resteth due to the towne 3s. 10d.”

“JOHN GREENE, MILES WALKER, JONAS THORNTON.”

“August ye fourth, 1700.—Abraham Musgrave, late Churchwarden for the year last past, made his accounts, and hath collected £7 13s. 6d., and disburst £8 5s. 6d., so remains due to him 7 shillings.

“JOHN GREENE, JOHN WOOD, JOS. MIDDLEBROOK.

“August ye fourth, 1700.—Mr. Joseph Middlebrook, late Overseer of the Poor, rec<sup>d</sup> for half a year £14 8s. 0d., and disburst £15 17s. 6d., so remains due to him £1 9s. 6d. Walter Farrah made his accounts the same day, for the latter half year, and rec<sup>d</sup> £19<sup>s</sup> 6s. 2d., and disburst £15 14s. 8d, so remains £3 11s. 6d.

“JOHN GREENE, JONAS THORNTON, JOSHUA WOOD.”

It is a somewhat singular coincidence that four of the five persons who held these offices in 1699, have still (1860) their representatives and namesakes resident in the township.

From a balance-sheet of one of the Overseers of the poor for 1709, Mr. Jo. (or Joseph) Wood, it appears there were only thirteen or fourteen persons in the receipt of relief from the Poor-rate. The most that any of them received was 5s. 6d. a month,

but a few were assisted in other ways, such as payment of rent, purchase of wearing apparel, &c., and one very satisfactory item of expenditure is the following :—

“To one Byble for Abraham Burn - - 2s. 0d.”

The Constables' accounts for June, 1710, contain the following singular entry :—

“For repairing the ‘Ducking Stool’ - - 3s. 4d.”

This was an article used in those days in the punishment of scolding women! as the following extract from the Orders of the Court of Quarter Sessions at Leeds will testify :—

“Vpon informa'con to the Corte given by seu'all substantiall Inhabitants of the East part of Leeds Mayne Rydeing against Anne, the wife of Philip Saule, that she is a person of leude behaviour, a comon scold, and daily maketh strife and discord amongst her neighbours. It is therefore ordered that the said Anne Saule be ducked!”

There is no record, however, of the Bramley instrument having ever being used, although, it must be admitted, the fact of its undergoing repairs has a very suspicious appearance!

Up to the year 1710 there seems to have been no special provision for the support of a Minister at Bramley, except that Mr. John Morley, gentleman, left by will, the house and croft now called “The Old Parsonage,” as a residence for the Curate. The necessity for some improvement in this respect appears at length to have become evident,

as, in 1714, it was agreed by the Lord of the Manor and the Freeholders, "to take and enclose from the commons or waste land" of the township, about forty-nine acres, and the same was settled upon trustees "for the better support and maintenance of an orthodox Curate, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England as by law established, to officiate in the ancient consecrated Chapel of Bramley, aforesaid, for ever." In the same year another enclosure of five acres was also made, "the rents thereof to be applied to the teaching of eight poor children to read." This is the "Ancient School Land" referred to in the General Enclosure Award, to be hereafter mentioned.

The oldest existing register of baptisms, marriages, and burials at our Church commences in 1717: the first baptism recorded is that of Sarah, daughter of John Parker, on July 8th. The first burial entered is that of Mr. Benjamin Green, on May 1st. This Gentleman appears to have generously cared for the wants of his poorer townsmen, as by his will he directed that the interest of £20 should be annually distributed among poor householders on Lady-day, the 25th of March; and also that the interest of £10 should be paid to the Curate of Bramley for a Charity Sermon to be preached on that day. The first marriage registered is dated February 4th, 1724, and the happy couple were named John Naylor and Mary Craven, of Bramley.

In July, 1728, the name of Joshua Burton occurs in melancholy and affecting succession. On the 24th of that month, his three sons, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were baptized, and Mary his wife was buried. On the 28th (four days later) two of the sons, Isaac and Jacob, were interred; and before the end of the month, Abraham, the eldest born, was also committed to the tomb!

The Churchwarden's accounts for 1728 contain some singular and amusing items:—

“Nov. 5th, (the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot.)

“Paid to John Elice, for letting  
y<sup>e</sup> Boys spoyle y<sup>e</sup> Bell - - - 0s. 6d.

“ To James Hair for making it ring  
again - - - - - 0s. 6d.

“Oct 1st. To Mr. Stanhope's huntsman for  
a fox - - - - - 1s. 0d.”

This latter payment is of frequent occurrence, but as to the mysterious connection between churchwardens and foxes, no information is given. Possibly, at that time, with so much unenclosed land in the neighbourhood, foxes were so numerous as to become a nuisance, and thus cause the officials of the township to offer a reward for their destruction.

On the 30th of January, 1728-9, the Rev. Saml. Exley, Minister of Bramley, died. He succeeded, in 1713, the Rev. Thomas Clapham, and thus held the curacy for about fifteen years. He was also for



some portion of the time at least, Minister of the Chapel at Farnley. Mr. Exley was followed by the Rev. Joseph Thomas, who, according to an entry in the register, (probably in his own handwriting,) commenced the curacy on the 24th of June, 1729. He seems to have been a careful observer of the seasons, and of important passing events, as the various memoranda in the Register Book will testify.

In 1729 a further enclosure of about twenty-five acres of common land was made in favour of the Chapel of Bramley. This was done in order to obtain a share in the distribution of the fund commonly known by the name of "Queen Anne's Bounty," but which grant could only be had as a "supplement" to the free offerings of the freeholders. Accordingly, in 1737, the value of the Curacy was again improved by an "augmentation" as it was called, from the "Queen Anne's Bounty" Fund; the grant, £200, being expended in the purchase of thirty-two acres of land at Collingham, near Wetherby.

In the early part of 1729 a sun-dial was placed in the church yard, and would doubtless be then, from the scarcity of clocks, a great public convenience. The same John Elice, who in the previous year had allowed "the boys" to play their mischievous pranks with the bell, was employed to do the work, and a statement of its cost will give us an idea of the rate of wages paid at that time:—

“Dial-stone cutting and leading - - - 7s. 0d.”

“John Elice for fixing same and plastering School-house, &c., 7 days - - 8s. 2d.”

Or only 1s. 2d. a day for an able-bodied workman !

In 1732, the Church was again rebuilt on a larger scale, and a gallery added at the west end. The cost of the new erection was £260 11s. 5d. The Chapelwarden during that and several previous and following years was Mr. Richard Horner ; and the builder of the Church was named John Lister.

At the foot of the entries for 1739, in the Old Register Book in the Church, is the following :—  
“In the year 1739 there was a very severe frost, from Christmas to February 16th,—in all seven weeks and three days.” This is corroborated by other accounts, one of which states that the river Thames was frozen over above London Bridge, and that a numerously-attended fair was held on the river during the frost.

The Scots Rebellion of 1745, when this kingdom was invaded by Prince Charles Edward, eldest son of the Pretender, naturally caused very considerable alarm in this neighbourhood. It was expected by some that the march of the Pretender’s army would be in the direction of Leeds, and many of the wealthier inhabitants fled, and others concealed their valuables. A great meeting of the nobility and gentry of the county was held at York on the

24th of September, at which upwards of £40,000 was subscribed for the purpose of raising troops to resist this invasion. An opposing army, under the command of Marshal Wade, was encamped between Leeds and Woodhouse, in the district now known as "Wade-lane," "Camp-road," &c. The "Watch and Ward" Act was put in force at Bramley,—the first house in the village, (which stood on the site of the one now occupied by the widow of the late Josiah Sutcliffe,) was made the Watch-house; and all persons who were not known to the guard, or who had no pass, were detained, and carried before the Magistrates. It was a false alarm, however, as the enemy for whom such preparations were made, came no nearer than Manchester.

It may not be much out of place to mention here that General Guest, who so ably commanded the King's troops at Edinbro', and whose spirited defence of the Castle considerably retarded the advance of the Pretender's army, was a Leeds man, and had during the early part of his life followed the business of a cloth dresser.

The inhabitants of Bramley were then, as now, loyal subjects of their Sovereign. The following curious entry in the Town's Book affords additional evidence of the fact:—

"August 13th, 1746. John Wood, John Musgrave, John Marshall, and John Carter, received each and every man for going to Wetherby, with the King's carriages, the King's pay, the Country's pay, 4s. 0d.; and, besides this, the Town allows to each one 16s. 0d."

In 1749, Bramley was honoured by a visit from the founder of Methodism, the Rev. John Wesley, a small Society having been formed a few years previous. The entry in his Journal states,—“Saturday, Oct. 7th, 1749. I rode in the afternoon to Bramley, and preached to a large and quiet congregation. Great attention appeared on every face, but no ‘shaking among the dry bones’ yet.” It appears, however, that there were some persons in Bramley who were determined to annoy and disturb this infant Church, as Mr. Wesley shortly afterward records in his Diary that, “At Whitecoat-hill, three miles from Leeds, as our Brother Maskew was preaching, a mob arose, broke the windows and doors, and struck the constable, Joseph Hawley (Haley) one of the Society.” This disturbance gave rise to a trial at the Leeds Sessions, Monday, July 15th, 1751, when the decision was given in favour of the Methodists.

On the 11th of October in this year, our Church was the scene of a grand wedding; when Walter Stanhope, Esq., of Eccleshill, was married to Susanna Greene, of Bramley, gentlewoman. There were not many marriages at Bramley in those days, only twenty-two having taken place at the Church during a period of nearly forty years, (from 1717 to 1753.)

In 1758 the Rev. Joseph Thomas, Curate of Bramley, was removed by death. A brass tablet, near the communion table in the Church, contains,

in Latin, a succinct account of his character and virtues. The following is a free translation :—  
 “ Sacred to the Memory of J. Thomas, for twenty-nine years the active and pious Minister of this place. The evangelical purity of his doctrines, his sincere regard for the welfare of his people, his diligence and assiduity in the performance of his duties, declare him a faithful Pastor. The integrity of his life, the simplicity of his manners, show the true Christian. He was a faithful friend, an eminent example of Christian charity ; among disputants the promoter of peace ; to the utmost of his ability the Patron of the poor : benevolent to all, but by those in his own flock he was especially beloved. In the prime of life he was suddenly called away. Well prepared for the change, he departed on the 7th of August, 1758, aged 59 years.”

This exemplary Minister was succeeded in the Curacy by the Rev. Thomas Faber, who continued in possession of the living for sixty-three years, and during the greater portion of the time was also Vicar of Calverley, and Incumbent of Idle. His duties at Bramley were mostly performed by deputy.

In 1761 the accommodation in Bramley Church was again considerably increased by the erection of the side Gallery, at a cost of £286 ls. 6d., which was defrayed by a rate. Mr. George Green was Chapelwarden. In this year the Registry of Burials in the Churchyard begins to state the “ cause of death ” as well as the name and age of

the person buried, and it appears that out of seventy-nine deaths, forty-four, or more than half of them, were caused by "small pox!"

On the 24th of July, 1761, Mr. Wesley again visited "our Village," where he heard a story so strange and mysterious, that he placed it on record in his Journal. "About one," says Mr. Wesley, "I preached at Bramley, where Jonas Rushford, about fourteen years of age, gave me the following relation:—'About this time last year I was desired by two of our neighbours to go with them to Mr. Crowther's at Skipton, who would not speak to *them*, about a man that had been missing twenty days, but bid them bring a boy twelve or thirteen years old. When we came in he stood reading a book. He put me into a bed, with a looking-glass in my hand, and covered me all over. Then he asked me whom I had a mind to see, and I said, 'My mother.' I presently saw her with a lock of wool in her hand, standing just in the place and the clothes she was in, as she told me afterwards. Then he bid me look again for the man that was missing, who was one of our neighbours. And I looked, and saw him riding towards Idle, but he was very drunk; he stopped at the alehouse and drank two pints more, and he pulled out a guinea to change. Two men stood by, a big man and a little man, and they went on before him, and got two hedge-stakes, and when he came up, on Windle Common, at the top of the hill, they pulled him off

his horse, and killed him, and threw him into a coal-pit. And I saw it all, as plain as if I was close to them! And if I saw the men I should know them again. We went back to Bradford that night, and the next day I went with our neighbours, and showed them the spot where he was killed, and the pit he was thrown into, and a man went down and brought him up; and it was as I had told them, his handkerchief was tied about his mouth, and fastened behind his neck!" Mr. Wesley, it is evident, could scarcely credit this marvellous narrative. Still the young man's clear and apparently honest statement seems to have produced a great impression on his mind, for he concludes his record of the circumstances by saying, "Is it improbable only, or flatly impossible, that all this should be pure fiction? They that can believe this, may believe a man's getting into a bottle!"

According to the Annual Statements of the "Bramley Loyal Friendly Society," it was formed in the year 1765; if so, it then bore another name. There *was* a society commenced in that year, called "The Union Society," and its Rules were registered with the Clerk of the Peace, Nov. 1st, 1765. I believe this society continued in existence until 1801, when a member who had been fined, and refused sick pay, for having worked while in receipt of it, summoned the committee before the

Magistrates, and obtained by some means or other a verdict against them. The members of the Society were so aggrieved at what they considered an unjust decision, that they also paid the man his Funeral-money, so as to be quit of him altogether. This was called "burying him wick!" They then dissolved the Society, and re-formed it under another title, (the "Friendly Society,") but without enrolment, thus exempting it for the future from magisterial interference. It was first termed the "Loyal Friendly Society" in 1822. The amount of good which this Society has done, in alleviating the distress arising from the sickness and death of its members, it is impossible to ascertain. On a moderate calculation, upwards of £10,000 have been thus distributed!

About the year 1766 a third Society for Religious Worship was formed in Bramley, principally through the instrumentality of Mr. Joseph Askwith. He was connected with the Independent denomination, and feeling anxious for the spiritual improvement of his friends and neighbours he began to preach, at first confining his ministry to private houses. A small Society soon gathered round him, and a barn was taken and fitted up for the purpose of public worship, which continued to be thus occupied for about nine years. At this time, a gentleman, who had watched with much interest, the progress of the infant church, built for them a



small Meeting-house in the Outgang-lane, which was first occupied in 1775. Soon after this, Mr. Askwith adopted the views of the Baptist denomination on the subject of immersion, and his congregation followed his example. In April, 1777, a Church was formed, of which he became the Pastor.

In the same year, the first Wesleyan Chapel at Bramley was erected, at a cost of £124 16s. 8d. which was all raised by subscription, at the time. It stood considerably nearer the street than the present building.

On the 17th of April, 1780, Mr. Wesley paid his third and last visit to Bramley. Although then seventy-seven years of age, he was very active and vigorous. His day's work would thoroughly tire many a young minister of the present day. Mr. Wesley says respecting it,—“ I left Leeds in one of the roughest mornings I have ever seen. We had rain, hail, snow, and wind in abundance. About nine I preached at Bramley ; between one and two at Pudsey. Afterwards I walked to Fulneck, the German settlement.—In the evening I preached at Bradford.”

Although in some measure a deviation from the chronological order, it may be proper at this period of our narrative, to sketch very briefly the rise and progress of the staple trade of “ our Village ”—the Cloth Manufacture. This branch of commerce was

introduced into the County of York during the reign of Edward III. (1327—77.) It *had* flourished before, in the time of Henry II. and Richard I., (1155—90,) but during the wars which followed the trade was all but lost. In the year 1336, Edward III. granted license to Willielmus and Hank-einus de Brabant, two Flemish artizans, to settle in York, and carry on the art of cloth-making in that city. He also offered his royal protection to any other weavers, dyers, or fullers, who were inclined to come over and settle in England. Thus fostered, the trade began to extend itself, so that England was soon able to send woollen cloth abroad, and in 1347 the duty on its exportation was repealed. During the next two or three centuries Acts of Parliament without number were passed for the encouragement, protection, and regulation of this important manufacture. Governments had not then learnt that the best way to ensure the prosperity of any branch of trade, is to leave it FREE from all unnecessary restriction or interference.

The first mention of Leeds in connection with cloth making is in the time of Henry VIII., when it is referred to, along with other neighbouring towns, by Leland, the distinguished antiquary, as “standing much by clothing.” The preamble of the Charter granted to Leeds by Charles II., in 1661, declares that the manufactures of that town and parish had begun to contribute greatly to the increase of the revenue, and one of its principal

objects was to protect the merchants and cloth-workers of Leeds and its vicinity from “the many great abuses, defects, and deceits” which had been discovered “in the making, selling, and dyeing of woollen cloths” by fraudulent persons, to the injury of the manufacture itself, as well as of the Royal customs and revenue.

The original Cloth-market at Leeds was held on the Bridge until 1684, when it was removed up into Briggate. Thoresby, who wrote about the year 1700, speaks of the market as a place “where several thousand pounds worth of broad cloth are bought, and generally speaking paid for, in a few hours time.” In 1711 the Cloth-market had so much increased, and the inconvenience of holding it in an open street, early in the morning, became so apparent, that a covered Hall was built. This was soon found too small, and the clothiers erected a larger one in Meadow-lane, in 1755; but this also speedily gave place to the two commodious Cloth Halls in which the markets are now held.

We have now arrived at the time when, by the application of Science to Manufactures, the various processes were greatly facilitated, and the productive power immensely increased. The progress of the manufacture thus far had been greatly impeded by mechanical difficulties. Every operation had to be performed by hand, and the labour of the workman (whether engaged as dyer, scribbler, spinner, or weaver) was very severe, and the hours of work

exceedingly protracted. The apprentices and labourers were aroused at five o'clock in the morning in summer, and at six in winter, by the blowing of a horn through the length of the village, and so shrill were its blasts that no excuse was allowed to the lazy on the plea of not having heard it. The master clothiers had all to "dye" their own wool, and notwithstanding the want of chemical knowledge many of them became, by practice, quite skilful in the art of dyeing. The wool had then to be "scribbled" and "carded" by hand, with implements which were both rude in their construction, and required great physical exertion. Then the "spinning" process, if not laborious, was exceedingly tedious; as the thread had to be drawn out of the "scribbled" wool by means of a distaff with one spindle, something like the plan adopted by a band-maker at the present day. The "weaver" also, had to propel the shuttle from one side of the loom to the other with his hands, which of course required a constant extension of the arms: the weaving of broad cloth employed two persons to throw the shuttle backward and forward to each other; and when fancy goods were woven, three persons were often necessary to attend to the various complications! Inventive genius was at work, however, and in the year 1738, Mr. John Kay, a native of Bury, in Lancashire, suggested the mode of passing the shuttle to and fro by means of "pickers" and cord. This simple contrivance was

a great saving both of time and labour, and enabled the weaver to make twice as much cloth as he could do before! Yet, strange to say, many of the weavers refused to adopt the improved method, and the inventor was exposed to such persecution and danger, that he left his native country to reside in Paris. This invention still further increased a difficulty which had been previously much felt. The processes of spinning and weaving were generally carried on in the same house; but one weaver could use more weft than several spinners, with their one-thread wheels could produce, so that the weaver's time was often wasted. Again, however, Genius stepped in to remove the hindrance, and a mechanical contrivance was invented, by which fifty or a hundred threads could be spun by a single pair of hands! A working weaver, named James Hargreave, who resided near Blackburn, constructed a machine in 1764, with which he and his family spun "weft" for his own weaving. He kept his invention as secret as possible, and used it only in his own business. But its powers soon became known, and instead of gaining for its author the honour he merited, the spinners raised a cry that it would throw them out of employment: a mob arose, broke into Hargreave's house, and destroyed his "Jenny"! So greatly was he persecuted that he also was compelled to leave his native county, as the inventor of the "fly-shuttle" had been before him.

Notwithstanding this violent and lawless opposition, the interest of both weavers and manufacturers soon brought these important inventions into general use. They broke down the barriers which had so long obstructed the progress of the manufacture. The motive power was also improved,—first to the horse-wheel, next the water-wheel, and then followed the wonderful appliances of steam. Benjamin Gott, Esq., of Armley, was the first in this neighbourhood to avail himself of these improvements on an enlarged scale, adding to them the “gig-mill” and “shearing-frame” worked also by power. The crowning invention of all was the steam or power-loom, which was patented by Dr. Edward Cartwright in 1787.

The cloth having been woven had next to be “fulled” or “milled,” as the process is now termed. For this purpose it had to be carried to Arthington, Harewood, or Poole, there being no fulling mills nearer than those distant places, until a comparatively recent period; and the machines used in the operation were equally rude and cumbersome with those employed in the earlier stages of the manufacture. Very amusing stories are told in illustration of the inexperience and mismanagement of some of the workmen engaged in this department. One or two of them may serve to enliven this somewhat dry detail.

A carter, who had taken some cloth to Arthington to “full,” took also with him a pair of home-

made stockings, which his good wife had knitted rather too large. Having to go a further distance, he left his stockings with the miller, desiring they might be put into the stocks along with some cloth until his return. When he called for them in a few hours, to his great astonishment the stockings were found to have shrunk so much, that he could scarcely get the yard-stick measure into the opening intended for his leg!

Another equally entertaining incident was related to me by a gentleman who was for a long time connected with one of our principal manufactories. "A master clothier residing in Bramley, sent his man John with a particular piece of cloth, to full at Harewood Mills, and as it was wanted immediately, he was to wait and bring it back with him. (These fulling mills were all driven by water, and it was common for the process to be carried on night and day.) John got the cloth put into work as soon as possible, consulted with the miller respecting it, and then agreed to join him and others in a treat with beer. The time soon came round when the piece should be examined, and well opened out, for cloth made so openly, and of longer wool by far than what is now used, milled very quickly, and if not properly attended to was apt to felt together. And so it turned out in this case. The miller told John it was time to look at his cloth, but the fumes of the beer had rather dulled his faculties, and *he* thought it would be time enough after awhile.

Time passed on,—John got more beer,—and soon neither cloth nor anything else were thought of by either John or the miller, both of them having fallen fast asleep. After a lengthened nap, they became alarmed for the cloth, and on going to the machine, found it so strangely felted together in one mass that it could not be opened! and when brought home it was utterly useless, and eventually was buried in the dung-heap!”

The machinery used in the fulling process continued to be of the same primitive construction until a comparatively recent period; less improvement having been made in this, than in any other department of the manufacture.

The rapid growth of the Woollen-cloth trade in Yorkshire during the last century may be gathered from the following statement of the quantity of cloth milled during various years:—1726, twenty-six thousand pieces; 1746, one hundred and twenty-five thousand; 1766, one hundred and fifty-one thousand; 1786, two hundred and eighty-one thousand; 1800, four hundred and fifty-five thousand pieces!

What share Bramley had in contributing to, or in receiving benefit from the progress thus briefly sketched, I am unable to ascertain, as all the cloths manufactured here were included in the aggregate Returns for the Parish of Leeds. The following particulars are extracted, by permission, from the note-book of a venerable friend who long resided in this township:—



“The first Mill erected in Bramley was ‘Ross Mill,’ it was then used for milling cloth only. The first Jenny that came into the town was one of eighteen spindles, and was spun by Thomas Clough, in a house at the Duck-cote, for John Hall, of Elms Grange. The first Scribbling-machine was at Ross Mill, a single one without breast or crank. The first Slubbing that came into Bramley that had been carded and slubbed by machinery, came from Mr. Copley’s, at Hunslet. The women rose in a mob when the cart came with the slubbing, pulled it out of the cart, and trod it under their feet in the street! About 1791 Horse-mills came up, and were used by Thomas Clough, Town-end; Thomas Cromack, in the Back-lane; Joseph Musgrave, in the town; and by Whitley and Haley, in the Farmer’s-fold.” Mr. John Haley, lately deceased, who for many years carried on an extensive business as a manufacturer, and whose services to the town deserve to be held in grateful remembrance, was one of the first to adopt these improved machines. They were worked by a “horse-wheel” in a similar manner to a “gin” used in drawing stones out of the quarry, which, by turning an upright shaft, gave motion to the machinery.

The first Manufactory in the township to which steam-power was applied, was Hough Mill, built by Messrs. Lister, Barker, and Haley, about 1798.

Another important branch of trade, which has carried the name of Bramley to distant parts of this

island, might be fittingly here referred to. Unfortunately but little information can be obtained as to when the "Bramley Fall" Quarries were first opened, or to what great Public Works the valuable stone there procured has been applied. It is certain, however, that the Abbey of Kirkstall was built with this stone, and that it has there endured, almost without decay, the storms and tempests of seven hundred years. The Castle Walls at York; the County Bridge at Stamford; the Central Market, and several other Public Buildings and Churches of Leeds, were erected with stone from "Bramley Fall." It has also been used for the piers and abutments of most of the London Bridges, and for some portions of the New Houses of Parliament. Many of the large Dock Works of England, including those at Dover and Grimsby, were constructed of this durable stone. The "Martello Towers" erected on the Kentish coast, as a means of defence against the threatened invasion of this country by the First Napoleon, were also erected with stone from "Bramley Fall."

The "Park" and "Park Spring" Quarries are only partially within our township, but are so far connected with it, as to justify a brief reference here. This stone is of a much finer grain, and not so durable as the "Bramley Fall," but is far better suited for ornamental purposes. The Commercial Buildings at Leeds; the Infirmary at Liverpool; the new Bank, and many of the splendid Ware-

houses of Bradford, were built with stone supplied from one or other of these Quarries.

“Our Village” appears to have been in 1783 very low in the scale of morality, so as to attract the attention of the officials of the township, who convened a Vestry Meeting for the purpose of considering “the many felonies, misdemeanors, and mischiefs committed and done in this township of Bramley; and also the great drunkenness and irregularity in this town:—at which time all the freeholders, tenants, and people that pay assessments are requested to attend.” The important meeting thus convened, was held July 7th, 1783, and passed several formidable resolutions for the prosecution and punishment of future offenders; and a second meeting, a few days later, decided upon a Public Appeal to the good sense of the Inhabitants. Our limited space will not allow us to quote more than the last of these resolutions, which, had it been duly attended to, would have prevented the necessity for any of the others. It was as follows:—“That it should be recommended to all and every the said inhabitants (of Bramley,) that they at all times hereafter behave themselves in a sober, decent, and orderly manner, which will greatly tend to their present and future happiness, and be of great service to society in general, and themselves in particular.” Unfortunately, this good advice seems to have soon been forgotten, as

before the end of the year, Mr. Samuel Barker, who was then Overseer, had to pay some shillings for the repair of windows “which were broke at a Town’s meeting!”

The accounts of the same Overseer contain the following singular payments :—

“Dec. 8th, 1783. Expenses on bargaining  
with Conjuror from Skipton to cure  
Matthew Hudson’s daughter - - 1s. 0d.

“Feb. 1st, 1784. Astrological Doctor for  
Hudson’s daughter - - - - 12s. 6d.”

Previous entries shew that this female was subject to fits, but the records do not state whether this very strange mode of treatment was successful.

During the year 1792, the irreligious and revolutionary doctrines propounded by Thomas Paine and his followers, caused great excitement in this district. At Bramley, on the 28th of December, his effigy was paraded through the streets, accompanied by a loyal crowd of the inhabitants, who manifested their devotion to the King, and their detestation of Paine’s infidel writings, by singing the National Anthem as they proceeded along. In the evening the effigy was burnt at the Market-cross, on the Stocks-hill. Either by accident or design, one of the stacks of Mr. Richard Waite, who was a distinguished loyalist, was the same evening destroyed by fire!

On the 16th of March, 1795, died the Rev. Joseph Askwith, who for twenty-nine years had been the Pastor, (as he was also the instrument of forming,) the Baptist Church at Bramley. Such was the attachment of the people to their venerated Pastor, that, having no burial-ground of their own, his body was interred in their rented place of worship in the Outgang, where it remained until 1808, when it was removed in the presence of an immense concourse of people, and re-interred in their own Chapel, then just erected in the Hough-lane.

Prior to the year 1799 there were about seven hundred and fifty acres of unenclosed and almost useless Common Land in this township. An Act of Parliament was obtained for its enclosure and division among the freeholders of the town, in proportion to their respective rights. The promoters, with commendable forethought, also set apart several plots for educational and charitable objects. About two acres were awarded to the "Master of Bramley Chapel School, to be applied for such uses and purposes as the ancient School Land is intended to be." A smaller plot, together with "a dwelling-house and other buildings thereon erected," were given to the Curate, Churchwarden, and Overseers, "the rents and profits thereof to be by them applied for teaching such number of poor girls to knit, sew, and read, as they shall direct." A considerably larger portion, containing upwards of nine acres,

was awarded to the same parties, with instructions “to pay and apply the rents and profits thereof, for the benefit of all such inhabitants of Bramley as belong thereto, but do not receive any relief from the assessments, and who do not occupy any land or tenements of more than the yearly value of five pounds.” The rents of this land, about £30 per annum, are expended in cotton, which is distributed on St. Thomas’s day.

It is matter for regret that the Commissioner and Freeholders did not extend their benevolent consideration one step further, and reserve a few acres more as a “Fresh Air and Recreation Ground” for the people of Bramley for ever!

I have now traced the history of “Our Village” and its varying fortunes, from the time of William the Norman Conqueror, to the close of the last century. Here my task is for the present ended. Perhaps at a future period some person with more leisure and greater ability may take up the narrative, and inform his readers or hearers of the still more wonderful progress which Bramley has *since* made, in civilization, in morality, in education, and in religion.

I venture, in conclusion, to suggest to my readers and friends, that upon them depends, in a great measure, the verdict which coming generations will have to give, respecting the position which “our Village” occupied in the nineteenth century.

Great as is the progress which has been made, there yet remains much room both for social, mental, and moral improvement, in the time to come. Let us each and all determine, by every means in our power, to promote the usefulness of Institutions such as these,\* in bringing Education within the reach of the humblest classes of our fellow-townsmen.

“Let us aid it all we can,  
Every woman, every man,  
The good time coming.”

The Bramley Worthies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose names have been brought before you, little thought that, after hundreds of years had passed away, they would be referred to with pride and pleasure as having reflected honour on their native village. But so it is, and so it should be:—

“Lives of great men all remind us  
We may make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Foot-prints on the sands of time:

Foot-prints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
Some forlorn and shipwrecked brother  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour, and to wait.”

\* Mechanics' Institutes and Sabbath Schools.

## A P P E N D I X .



### GRANTS OF LANDS IN BRAMLEY TO KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

(From the History of Kirkstall Abbey, 1847, p. 207.)



Richard Reinville gave half a carucate, and Adam Reinville two tofts, a croft, and two oxgangs of lands, to find washing cloaths for the Church.

William Reinville gave all his demesne lands, as described in the boundaries, with common pasture in the parish.

William, son of William Stapylton, gave a toft and croft, with one acre and a half of land; and Robert de Stapylton gave two oxgangs, one toft and croft, with two asserts of land.

Robert, son of William de Stapleton, confirmed the grant of his brother William giving lands here, which had belonged to Emma his mother.

Adam Norays gave one oxgang, a toft, croft, and an assert of land called Martin's-assert, or Martyn-rode.

Walter de Gales gave two asserts of meadow and wood, and two acres of land lying near the way to the mill, extending from Bramley-moor to the Fall.

Adam, son of Noras, gave a toft, croft, and one assert of land called Millingley.

Peter de Fersley, son of Roger de Leysing, gave a messuage, a toft, and one assert called Swayn-rode near Bellehus-gate, with the land and meadow lying between Swayn-rode, next to Bellehus-syke; he also gave that assert next to the moor, on the west part of the bridge of New-grange, (*novæ grangæ*) with the homage and service of Adam de Hales, and 5d. annual rent.



## APPENDIX.

Peter, son of William de Bramley, gave four oxgangs, with tofts and crofts. William, son of William Bech, gave thirty-one acres and a half. Henry Fraunces gave five acres with his native toe. Adam de Gales confirmed one messuage with a toft.

Robert Brade gave a toft and croft, and Robert, son of Robert, son of Thomas, gave two tofts, two crofts, and two oxgangs, with one assert of land near Mill-leys, and another called Le-Pykel, under Stayn-cliff.

John, son of Adam del Hole, of Bramley, gave one messuage, and one oxgang of land.

William Breacroft gave one rood of the wood called the Fall; and Robert, son of Elias de Bramley, gave one assert called Malyn-rode, three tofts, forty acres and a half of land, eight acres of wood, and a moiety of one acre of meadow, with 8d. yearly rent out of an assert called Ber-croft-rode; he also gave twenty-four acres and an half of land, four acres of wood land, four tofts, with a croft, and half an acre of meadow.

By a charter in the 21st year of Henry III. the Monks had free warren here.

Robert Passelowe, with King Richard II.'s licence, gave one toft, five acres of land, and an annual rent of 2s. 6d. in Bramley, with the reversion of nine messuages, seven oxgangs, and six acres and an half of land, after the decease of the tenants, viz. of John de Lepton, and Maud his wife; of William, son of William del Rhodes; John Roger; William de Wulsden or Wylsden, and Agnes his wife; William Caldbec; John Milner and Isabel his wife; Hugh Wulsden, or Wylsden, and Cecily his wife; and of John de Semer, and Cecily his wife; all which premises were valued at £4. 2s. 6d. per annum.

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