

MAN DID THE HOUSEWORK WHILE THE WOMAN MADE MONEY.

Strange Career of a Brother and Sister in Yorkshire, in Which There is Both Humor and Pathos—The Woman Subdued the Man But Only On His Death Bed.

When Mr. Baring-Gould was a curate in Yorkshire many years ago he collected a good many anecdotes and stories of the odd characters and eccentric folk in which the country of broad acres is curiously rich, and he eventually published the results of his labors, in that interesting volume, "Yorkshire Oddities," writes J. S. Fletcher in The London Daily Times.

But all, or nearly all, the beings Mr. Baring-Gould there treats of were folks of fame—such men as Blind Jack of Knaresborough, Jimmy Hirst of Rawcliffe, and Old Mealy-face—and had been of great repute for long years. They, as it were, are the giants of their race—many another Yorkshire man and Yorkshire woman has been as singular for eccentricity as they in only a lesser degree without being made subject matter for literature.

Of two such—two quaint, old-world figures whose counterparts we shall never see again—I have been thinking today. Nobody ever wrote about them in their lives, and the probability is that their memory is kept green by scarcely anyone. But they were characters—and Yorkshire characters.

THIRTY YEARS TOGETHER.

Thirty years ago these two old folks were living in a little stone built cottage house near the old parish church at Bradford. They were brother and sister. The brother was Joseph Wright (locally known as Joa) and the sister Elizabeth Wright commonly styled as Betty. At that time each was about seventy years of age. They had what Yorkshire people call a bit of money, probably very little indeed, but it was enough to make Joseph a gentleman. He had never done a day's work in his life. Betty, on the contrary, worked in the mill. When I said that Joseph never worked I mean that he never worked outside of his cottage. He certainly worked there, for he did all the scrubbing, washing and cleaning-up. He also did all the marketing, his part, in fact, in the domestic economy was the woman's; Betty's the man's.

The cottage in which the two lived was one of the gray, grim little places so common in that part of Yorkshire. It consisted of two rooms, the house place below and the sleeping chamber above. The house place had a stone floor and lined walls. One of its most conspicuous features was an ancient dresser, on whose shelves Joseph and Betty proudly set out their chief possessions—old pewter plates and pots, rows of delftware and the like. In a corner cupboard was a fine collection of old china. On Sundays and great days they put the fender and fire irons—especially polished by Joseph—upon the hearth; on all other days they should on a chair in the corner. The ceiling was an open one, spanned by old oak beams, from hooks driven into these they used to hang their Sunday shoes, bunches of onions, and sometimes a piece of bacon. On a long table under the window stood the porringers—earthenware pots, out of which they ate their usual meal of boiled milk and bread. It was rarely that they touched any other kind of food.

A SPARTAN'S BED.

In this house place Betty had her bed. It was a bed fitted upon hinges to the wall, and the daytime it was turned bodily up and hidden by a blue and white check curtain. Joseph slept in the sleeping apartment. It was unadorned, and the slated roof was not in too good a condition. Very often the rain came in; sometimes a snowdrift gathered over the bed and Joseph.

On one occasion a neighbor remarked to Betty:

"A wonder 'at yer Joa doesn't wed."

Betty turned up her nose.

"Him get wed!" she exclaimed. "Who'd wed him when it snaws in the bed?"

Although those two lived together all their long lives they scarcely ever held any conversation. They were of the cat-and-dog nature as regards their intercourse. Joseph growled, and Betty spat and scratched. She was very fond of treating him to long scoldings and lectures, and she possessed an uncommonly sharp tongue. Now and then Joseph went "on the spree," and Betty would remark: "Ahr Joa's gone on t' rant ageen," but I'll let him hear my tongue when he's sober!

Joseph, like most Yorkshire men, had a queer humor, shown chiefly in sardonic remarks about other people. He also had a trick of never calling people by their right names, but by some peculiarity which they showed, or by the name of the place they hailed from. One of his neighbors, a big, bouncing woman, who was badly knock-kneed, he styled Owd Jowllegs; a female money lender, who did business in that district, he labelled Bank. Others were spoken of by their native places as Sal Greengates, Jim Leeds, Tom Dewsbury, and so on.

THE CHURCH PROCESSION.

It was a great sight in those days to see Joseph and Betty proceed to church on Sundays. In point of fact Joseph was really driven there by Betty, who was very precise and proper and old fashioned in her ideas. Such a picture as the two made in their Sunday finery would now be impossible to find. Joseph was a tall, thin, lanky man, hatchet-faced, and big of nose, and of a rather fiery complexion. On his head he

carried a very old-fashioned top hat, slightly tapering (but not so sharply as the Welch hat) to the crown; its brim was very wide and flat, and he wore this ancient headgear set far back. His coat was of the shape now finally adopted for evening dress, its tails, for some reason, stuck out straight behind, and the waist was set much higher than nature suggested. The cloth was blue, and decorated down the front, at the waist behind, and on the tails with brass buttons. He wore knee-breeches, open at the knee, gray knitted stockings and hand-made low shoes. Round his neck was knotted a white handkerchief in the shape of a stock. Under his arm he carried an umbrella of the Mrs. Gamp order; and in the other hand a large prayer-book.

Betty followed Joseph at a distance which enabled her to keep a safe eye on him. She was as little a woman as he was a tall man—a little woman of sharp features and fierce eyes, and a quick, watching manner. Her Sunday attire was a black satin gown—the pride of her eye and wardrobe—a very fine plaid shawl folded across her shoulders and hanging down her back in a triangle, and a Tuscan cottage bonnet, trimmed with blue and white plaid ribbon. She, like her brother, wore low hand-made shoes and gray stockings.

There was a third member of those Sunday processions. Betty possessed and treasured a huge black tomcat which she christened Rogor. When his mistress set out for church Rogor followed—and waited patiently in the churchyard until the black sat in gown and Tuscan bonnet emerged from the porch.

"THE RULING PASSION."

During the whole of their joint lives Betty had always endeavored to get the upper hand of Joseph. But she never succeeded in finally subjugating him until the last days of their lives were at hand. Then she got her chance, and seized upon it. Joseph was cowed and humbled.

He fell sick and was perforce obliged to keep his bed, in the sleeping chamber. Now Betty had him at a disadvantage. She had all her life been endeavoring to teach him to "behave," and had never succeeded. Now that he could do nothing for himself she would do nothing for him unless he called her Elizabeth instead of Betty, and said "If you please, Elizabeth," and "Thank you, Elizabeth," in respect of services asked and given. She also made him say his prayers every night, and morning, and repeat a grace-before-meals whenever she brought his meals.

There was a quaint touch of Yorkshire character in Betty's history at this period. The old doctor who had attended her and Joseph whenever they needed medical aid could not come to see her brother one day and sent his assistant instead. Betty promptly marched the assistant out of the house—"a deal quicker than he came in!"

Joseph never left the sleeping chamber until he was carried out of it to his grave. He had a very respectable funeral, and Betty openly regretted that he was not able to see it. She said it would have pleased him. Within a very short time—having him no longer to scold—she followed him herself.

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McMASTER AND RUSSL.

Montreal Lawyer Answers Promoters Recent Charges.

Mr. Donald MacMaster, barrister of Montreal, has issued the following reply, to the letter of Mr. David Russell, which appeared in the St. John Telegraph, on Thursday:

The facts are these: In the early part of March last I was suffering from a slight attack of rheumatism. I inquired of Mr. Russell whether the hotel at Caledonia Springs was open, as I wished to take the waters, get a couple of days rest, and give some study in quiet to the Gaynor and Greene, and other cases.

Mr. Russell informed me that both hotels were closed, but very kindly said that I was welcome to go to the Cottage. As the hotels were closed, I was very glad to accept his hospitality, and, accordingly remained at the Cottage about two and a half days—from the 8th to the 10th of March—when I returned to Montreal.

Mr. Russell's charge is that while there I was not studying the Gaynor and Greene case, but examining the title deeds of the Caledonia Springs property, etc.—and consequently abusing his hospitality.

The misfortune of this charge is that it is not true. There is not

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a word of truth in it. Mr. Russell is completely mistaken. The only work I did there was examining the Gaynor and Greene case, and studying the Privy Council Record in the case of Whitney and Joyce. Neither then nor at any time before or since have I examined the title deeds of the Caledonia Springs property. I never saw the title deeds—or any other deeds or records of the property. They certainly were not at the Springs when I was there, nor were they ever spoken of or discussed then.

On my return to Montreal I said nothing about the title deeds to the property. I know nothing about the title deeds. Later, in consequence of certain communications made to me professionally, I instructed Mr. Maxwell, K. C., of L'Orignal, where the registrar's office is situated, to search the records, and let me know in whose name the Caledonia Springs property stood. Mr. Maxwell reported on the 14th of March, among other things, that the Grand Hotel property—that is, the part of the property containing the Grand Hotel and the springs immediately adjacent—stood in the name of an old company called the "Grand Hotel Company of Caledonia Springs," and not in the name of the present company, viz., the Caledonia Springs Company Ltd. As the latter company had issued scrip to the extent of \$250,000, based, no doubt, on ostensible assets, I pointed out to Mr. Russell, its president, that these assets should stand in the name of the new company, whose credit was pledged to its shareholders. This is my whole connection with the title, the law suits are separate matters. They are before the courts, and will be there decided. We cannot settle them by discussion in the newspapers.

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Thomas Duncanson, R. N., an old resident of Halifax and a prominent member and officer of the North British Society, who died Sunday in his 83rd year, was chief engineer on H. M. S. Diadem when she was on that station thirty years ago. He was in the siege at Sebastopol, and also served on the China station.

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The annual meeting of the stockholders of this company, will be held at their office, Carleton street, Fredericton, N. B., on Tuesday, the thirteenth day of June next, at eight o'clock p. m., for the election of directors and transaction of other business.

W. E. SMITH,
Secretary.

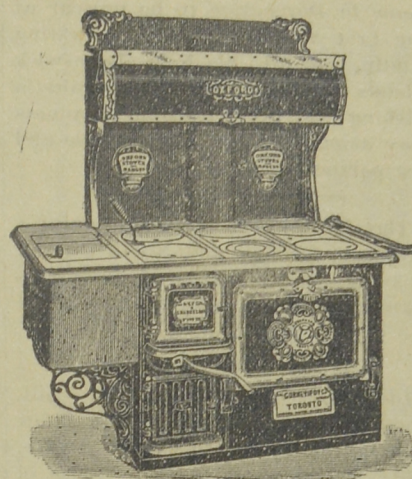
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