

Some Items of Historic Interest.

By J. B. TAYLOR.

“Other men laboured, and ye are entered
into their labours.”

FOREWORD.

I have been asked to write a preliminary chapter to this History of the Pittington Co-operative Society, which it is intended to present to the members as a Souvenir of its Jubilee, whose celebration takes place in the year 1924.

I was not living at Pittington in the year 1874, when the Society came into existence ; but I can claim to have known it since its early infancy, for I became a resident of the village in 1876, and have lived here continuously since. My knowledge is not merely that of an outsider and on-looker ; I was intimately acquainted with the Pioneers of the Society, and, until they passed away, worked with them for many years in seeking to establish and build up the Society on sound lines.

It would have been a great delight to me to have written the History, but my age, the uncertain state of my health, and my many other interests and duties precluded me from having the pleasure. That privilege belongs to my young friend, Mr. Arnold B. Ross, whose abilities, energy, enthusiasm, and co-operative associations give good guarantee that the work will be ably done.

There was, however, a strong desire expressed by the Committee that I should write some sort of historical account of the village in ancient and modern times, with special reference to the condition of things in the early seventies, when the Society commenced its operations.

This I have attempted to do in the following notes, which could have been filled in with greater detail ; but enough, perhaps, has been given to show that we have indeed "a goodly heritage." "Other men laboured, and *we* are entered into their labours."

J. B. TAYLOR.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

PITTINGTON—SITUATION.

Old (or Low) Pittington is a small village, lying on the lower slope of a hill of the same name, and facing the city of Durham, from which it is distant about four miles north by east.

HILL.

The hill (one of the "beacon" hills of old) is a conspicuous object in this eastern part of the county, and from its summit the most extensive and varied views may be obtained in nearly all directions. Plainly visible are the towers of the cathedral:—"A dim and mighty minster of old time! A temple shadowy with remembrances of the majestic past!" Across the shoulders of the hill, and along its sides are pleasant walks, much used by the inhabitants of the whole neighbourhood. Though private property, it may almost be looked upon as a public park, for children are allowed to play freely on its sides, and people sit and lie about on it, especially in hot weather, drinking in the fresh life-giving air, and so renewing their health and vigour of body and mind, and at the same time enjoying the delightful scenery stretched out before them.

HISTORY.

Pittington, though a place of small importance, has a long and interesting history behind it, its foundation being laid in the far past, in what are called Anglo-Saxon times, by a band of invaders from across the North Sea.

ORIGIN.

Its ancient name, Pittingdun, tells the story of its origin. The last syllable of the word, *dune*, *dun*, or *don* (not *ton*) is the Saxon word for *hill*, not *town*; and *Pitting* denotes the *clan of the Pitts*, the people who first reclaimed and occupied the "land at the Dune"; so that *Pittington* really means *the hill-side settlement of the Pitts*.

DATE.

The date of the first settlement cannot be determined, but it may be conjectured that it was about thirteen hundred years ago (more or less). It is not difficult, however, to guess why such a situation was selected; its secure and commanding position, the nature of the soil in the near neighbourhood, and a perennial spring of water (which is still running), on the hill-side above afford ample reasons.

SITE.

The higher portion of Old (or Low) Pittington stands on or near the original site, and it is interesting to note that, to this day, the inhabitants refer to this part of the village as "up the toon."

LITTLETOWN.

Later on, a second village (the "littletown" presumably), called South Pittington to distinguish it from North (or Old) Pittington, sprang up on the spot where Littletown Farm now stands. When Bishop Carileph began to re-build the cathedral in early Norman times, he made a grant of these two Pittingtons to the newly-constituted Abbey, proving conclusively that Pittington was in existence before Durham.

THE CHURCH.

Dr. Barmby (from whose pamphlet, "Pittington and its Church," the writer has drawn largely), makes the pleasing conjecture that St. Aidan, the Great Apostle of the North, may have visited the village. Bede says that from his consecration as Bishop of Lindisfarne (Holy Island) in A.D. 635 till his death in 651, he was ever on the move, travelling on foot, with his bands of Scottish missionaries, through towns and country places in Northumbria, which then extended to the Humber in the south of Yorkshire, and that, wherever he went he put up chambers and chapels (doubtless rough wooden buildings), as centres of missionary work in the surrounding districts. He may thus have passed this way and visited the settlement at the Pitting Dune; and to him, or some of his followers, may probably be due our earliest log-built church.

STONE (SAXON).

The dedication of the church to St. Lawrence suggests a later stone building, after intercourse with Rome had been established by St. Wilfred, when the Pope (about 667) sent the relics of St. Lawrence to Northumbria; and of this, the sun-dial (said to be Saxon from its peculiar markings) on the outside of the south wall, may be one of the remains.

NORMAN, 1070.

The present church, built about 1070, is one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in the diocese, and, in certain portions of it, in the Kingdom.

AISLELESS.

Originally it was an aisleless church, the nave of which extended as far as the fourth pillar on each side, the flat surfaces of which were the terminations of the original wall, while the small early windows above the present arches were its external lights.

MURAL PAINTINGS.

In the splay of the westernmost of these old windows opposite the doorway are to be seen fragments of mural paintings. These are the sole surviving portions of a complete series of paintings occupying the whole interior of the first Norman Church.

ENLARGEMENTS—FIRST, 1150.

The first enlargement was made by Bishop Pudsey (1153-1195), who broke through the north wall, added the north aisle, and inserted the four rounded arches, forming what is called the Norman (or North) Arcade, the most beautiful part of the building.

SECOND, 1230.

The next addition was the south aisle, with the formation of the Early English Arcade, consisting of plain pointed arches.

1846.

The church was lengthened and many alterations were made in the year 1846, and other extensions and improvements have been made in more recent times. Nothing, however, has been done to destroy any of its characteristic features, or to detract from its harmonious beauty, and it is now like a miniature cathedral. The people of the parish are justly proud of their beautiful church, which attracts visitors from all parts to see and admire it.

FONT.

The handsome font of white marble now in use came from Durham Cathedral, having been given to the church by the Dean and Chapter in 1847. The bowl of the ancient font of the first Norman Church was discovered by Dr. Barmby at Belmont Farm, where it was being used as a cattle trough. It was recovered by him, and now lies under the Tower, where also are to be found other relics of the church.

ANCIENT VESTRY BOOK.

One of the most treasured possessions of the church is its ancient vestry book, a small volume bound in leather, six inches by eight in size. It contains the yearly parish accounts, etc., from the year 1584 to 1699 inclusive, and throws much light on days gone by, their manners and customs.

It appears from this book that the ancient way of raising funds for parochial purposes was not as in later times, by rates, but by the profits from a flock of sheep called "the Church Shepe," which were pastured on the several farms in the parish. This system, suggestive of a simple pastoral community, was continued till 1624, when the Church Flock, being then decayed, was sold, and the parishioners began to be regularly rated as in modern times.

The Rev. Arthur Shepherd (1730-70), anxious to provide for the safe custody of the book, deposited it in a cupboard of the vicarage, but he does not say where he got it from. This clergyman had strange views with regard to the future. By his own desire a hatchet, a

candle, and a penny were deposited with him in his coffin, and a plate of looking-glass in the lid opposite to his face, in order to *facilitate his resurrection*. His remains lie almost opposite the church door, and are covered by a flat tombstone.

The position of the church has often puzzled strangers, who have wondered why it was built at such a distance from the population. Had they been acquainted with the history of the place, they would have known the reason.

OLD PARISH BOUNDARIES.

The present villages of High Pittington and Littleton are quite modern pit villages, while the church has been standing for hundreds of years. It must be remembered, too, that it served a much wider area than now, the old boundaries being the parishes of St. Oswald's and St. Giles's, Durham, on the west; Houghton-le-Spring on the north; Easington on the east; and Kelloe on the south. It was thus more central than at first sight appears.

HALLGARTH.

Hallgarth, where the church stands, lies between the two original villages of North and South Pittington granted to the monks of Durham. Here in course of time a Priory was built, surrounded by extensive buildings, and furnished with chambers for the monks on duty at the church and others resident on the manor. It was a large and important establishment, in which the Prior held his manorial courts, exercising jurisdiction over all culprits found on his Pittington territory.

GREAT HALL.

At least four halls were erected at different times from 1258 to 1524, the latest by the last Prior and first Dean of Durham, Hugh Whitehead (1524-40). When this building was destroyed by Ralph Tunstall (1580-1618), a Prebendary of the cathedral to whom it had been assigned, the stones were sold to a Mr. Anderson, probably for the purpose of building a new house on the adjoining site of the present Manor-house, now known as Hallgarth Farm House.

REMAINS.

The remains of Whitehead's building were standing till almost within living memory, having been pulled down, Dr. Barmby believed, when the present Vicarage was built. They were on the opposite side of the road from the Vicarage, in the garth (garden) called "Prior's Garth," adjoining the churchyard, north-west of the church, which was the site of the "Great Hall."

HALLGARTH MILL.

The mill belonging to the monks stood where the beck to the south of the church is crossed by the footpath through the fields between Hallgarth and Sherburn. The position of the mill-dam is still evident in the swampy ground above the wooden bridge. Its present successor, Hallgarth Mill, has been removed to the side of the main road further down the stream, in a secluded position, about half-a-mile west of the church.

HALLGARTH TRAGEDY.

This was the scene of what is known as the "Hallgarth tragedy." A plain tablet on the wall of the north aisle

of the church, bearing the following inscription, gives the chief details of the crime :—

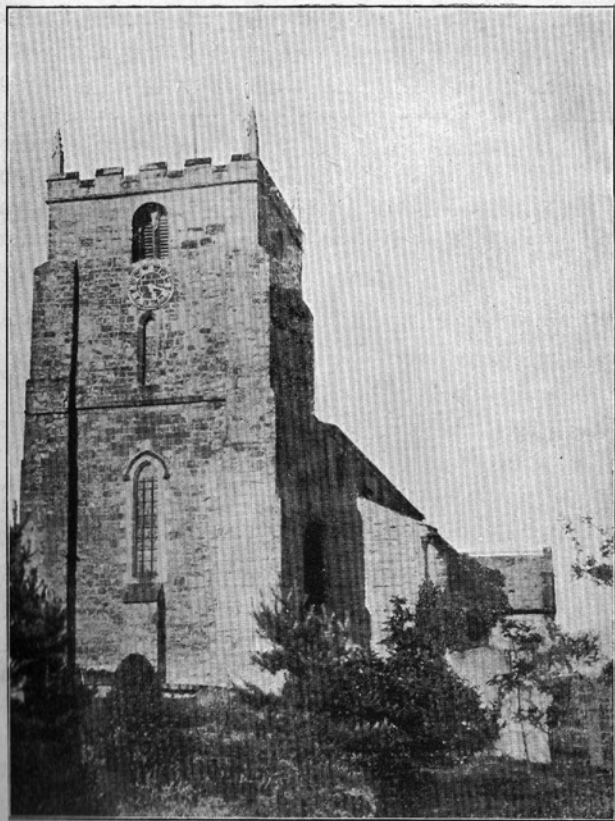
“ In memory of Mary Ann Westrop, who, in the 18th year of her age, on the evening of Sunday, the 8th of August, 1830 (during the absence of her master and mistress) was cruelly murdered at Hallgarth Mill in this parish by a man, her fellow-servant, who was executed for the offence at Durham, on Monday, the 28th of February, 1831.”

To the last the man protested his innocence. Addressing the crowd assembled at his execution, he said, “ Gentlemen, I am innocent ; I am going to suffer for another man’s crime.”

THE GHOST.

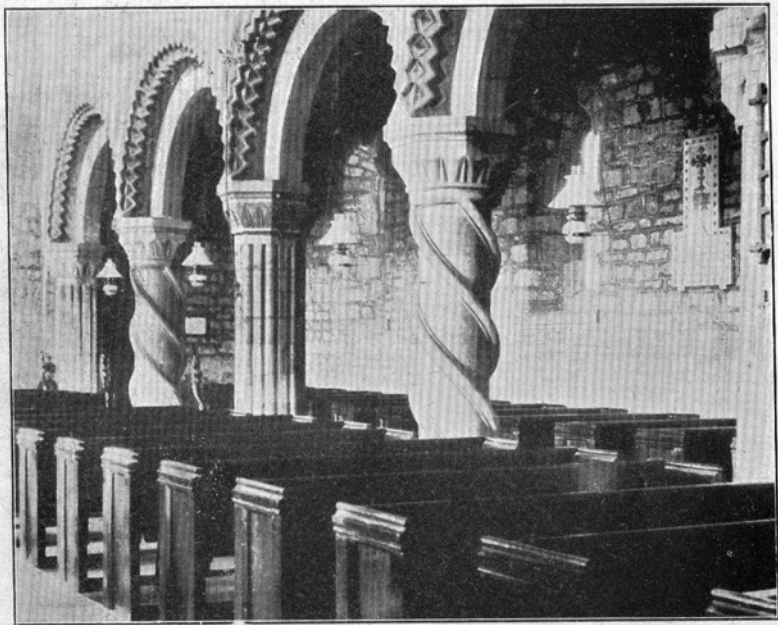
Like most old places, Pittington had its “ Ghost,” which was said to haunt the Lady Peace Lane, a cross road leading from the Sherburn Road to Low Pittington.

The story goes that a young lady, a daughter of the Manor House, at Hallgarth, used to meet her lover surreptitiously in this lane ; but one evening she did not return home, having been foully murdered, and buried beneath a large stone in the lane. From that time onward she haunted the lane, and her cries were frequently heard at nights, even as far as the High Village. Old inhabitants firmly believed this, and all shunned the lane as soon as it became dusk, and some were afraid to venture along it, even in daylight. The following tale was told about an old friend of mine. His father lived at Fatfield Farm, and, like all the farmers in the neighbourhood round, used to send his corn to be ground at



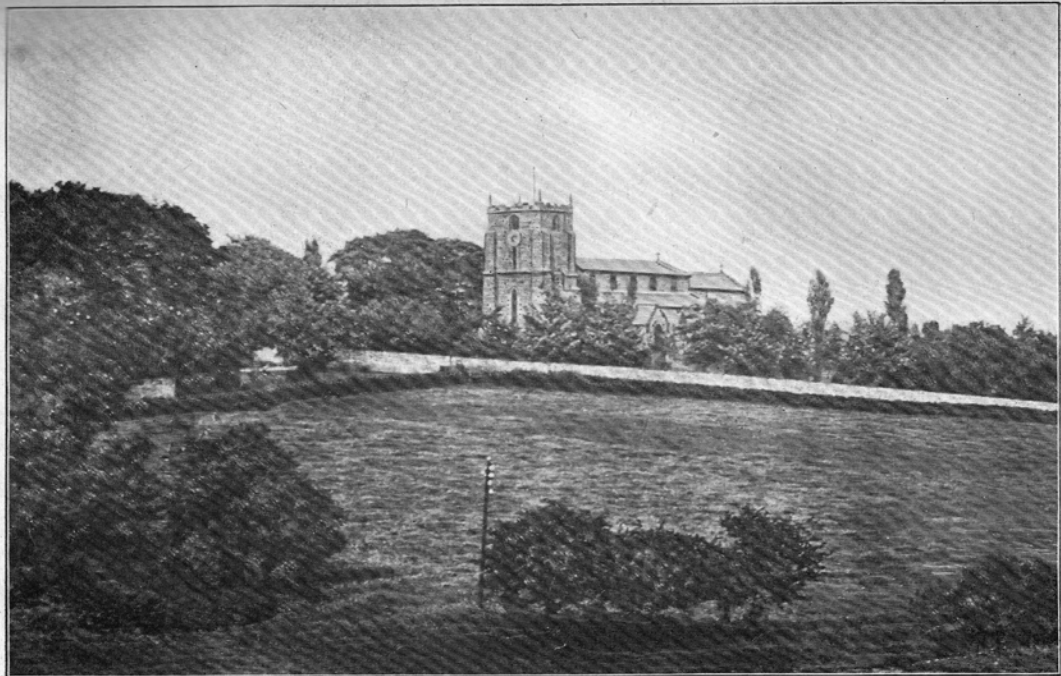
HALLGARTH CHURCH, PITTINGTON.—THE ANCIENT TOWER.

(By kind permission of the Vicar, the Rev. A. A. BODDY.)



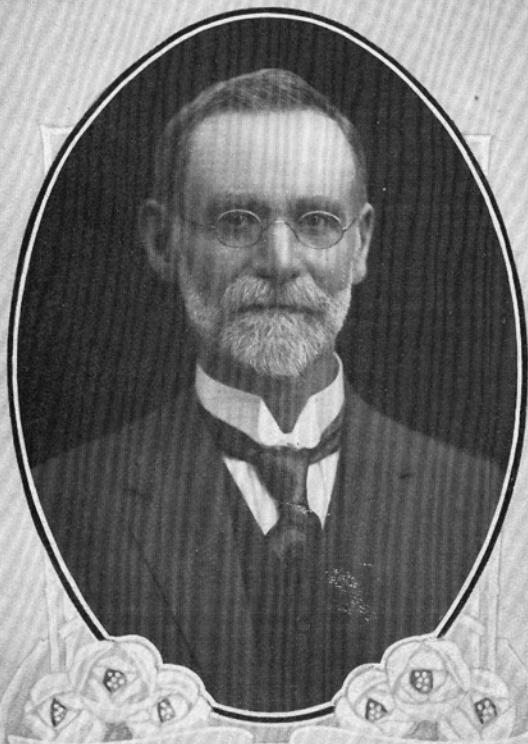
HALLGARTH CHURCH, PITTINGTON.—THE NORMAN ARCADE.

By kind permission of the Vicar, the Rev. A. A. BODDY.)



HALLGARTH CHURCH, PITTINGTON.

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J. B. TAYLOR,
Writer of "Some Items of Historic Interest."

Hallgarth Mill. It was the duty of my friend, when young, to go to the Mill for the flour, and his direct route was by the haunted lane. As soon as he neared its entrance, he lay flat down on his face in the cart, covered himself over with his sacks, and trusted to Providence and his good horse to carry him safely to his journey's end

I never came across anyone who had actually seen the ghost; but many were ready to swear they had heard her cries. There seems to be no foundation, in fact, for the story told, and in all probability the cries heard were those of owls which had taken up their abode in the wood about half-way along the lane.

MODES OF LIVING.

The old village has seen many changes in the habits and modes of living of the surrounding population.

RELIGION.

The original settlers, worshippers of Woden, Thor, and other heathen deities, of which the names of the days of the week remind us, belonged to a race of reckless warriors, who delighted in plunder and battle.

DWELLINGS.

Their houses were mostly mere huts of sticks and mud, thatched with straw. Through a hole in the roof passed the smoke, which escaped from the fire placed in the middle of the room, after it had blackened the faces of all sitting around. Another hole in the wall served as a window. The earthen floors were strewn with rushes or sacks of straw, over which were thrown coarse coverings of skin, which served as beds for the night.

EMPLOYMENT.

Men's energies in these early days were mainly directed to making provision for their bodily needs and protection from wild beasts and their still more deadly human foes. Thus hunting, fishing, and fighting formed the chief employment of their lives.

AGRICULTURE.

In process of time agriculture became their most important business, and this was carried on in Saxon days not by individual enterprise, as a rule, but each village community was, as a whole, responsible for the performance of agricultural operations in fields, most of which were not permanently enclosed. So that, even in these far-off times men were learning to co-operate for the common good, "each (labouring) for all, and all for each."

COMING OF CHRISTIANITY.

The coming of Christianity, with its up-lifting and civilising influence raised the people to a higher plane of existence and gave them nobler ideals of life, teaching them that "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

THE CHURCH'S WORK.

The Church became a centre of light, of union, and of co-operative effort. Its ministers, mostly monks, not only studied and prayed, but tended the sick and poor, and taught the people reading, writing, and other useful arts of peace. In this way the work of the carpenter, weaver, smith, mason, gardener, painter, and miller became known. No doubt many of these occupations

were carried on in connection with the Priory at Hallgarth, resulting in a higher standard of living, with better homes, better clothes, and better food for the common people.

MODERN TIMES.

Agriculture remained the principal industry until the first half of the nineteenth century, when the discovery and working of coal changed the whole aspect and life of the parish. It was at this time that High Pittington and Littletown were built, and a busy mining population took the place of the simpler agricultural community, which henceforth depended largely for its existence on the former, and was partly absorbed by it.

PITS IN THE PARISH.

When the first pit was sunk in the parish I have not been able to ascertain ; but at least six have been worked during the last hundred years, namely :—*Old Belmont Pit*, about half-a-mile N. by W. of Low Pittington ; *Broomside Colliery*, about a mile west of Low Pittington ; the *Buddle* and *Londonderry Pits*, a little to the south and east of High Pittington ; *Littletown Colliery*, a mile south-east of Pittington ; and *Elemore Colliery*, near to Easington Lane, three miles away, and out of sight of the rest of the parish. All of these, with the exception of *Old Belmont* and the *Buddle*, were working in 1874, when Pittington Society was founded. Now only *Elemore* is going, the rest having been closed—*Broomside* in 1889, *Pittington* in 1891, and *Littletown* in 1913. They have been remarkably free from accidents, the only serious one being the Explosion at *Elemore* in 1886, when twenty-eight lives were lost.

OLD BELMONT.

The pit village of Old Belmont, a little to the east of the Rift Farm, was still standing and partly inhabited in the late seventies; but it gradually ceased to be occupied, and fell into ruins, and now not a vestige of it remains.

LADY SEAHAM PIT.

The Lady Seaham Pit, dismantled many years ago, was just outside the boundary of the parish, but many of its workers lived at Pittington.

YEARLY BOND.

Until the year 1872, there was a method of hiring in vogue at the pits, known as the Yearly Bond. It was a system of partial slavery, for men bound themselves to work at one particular colliery for a whole year, and whatever grievances they might have, they could not obtain a remedy for them, nor could they escape from them, as work was debarred them at other pits, and they could be imprisoned for breach of agreement if they went on strike and refused to work.

The binding took place on a Saturday near to the 20th March. On that day all the workmen were summoned to the colliery office. There, the manager read over the conditions of work for the next twelve months. Few heard them, for the reading was only audible to those very close to the reader. To induce the men to sign, a sum of money, say a sovereign, was given to the first man bound, ten shillings to the second, five to the third, and half-a-crown to every man after that. Without any thought of what they were doing, men would rush to sign in order to obtain the bribe ("earles") offered, and "sold" themselves in more senses than one.

Later the bond was for a month, then for a fortnight, and finally only for a week, as now.

HIGH PITTINGTON.

High (or *New*) *Pittington* was built for the accommodation of the men working at the *Buddle* or the *London-derry* (commonly called "*The Derry*") *Pit*. It was placed about a quarter of a mile up the bank from *Low Pittington*, and occupied a fine open position, sheltered from the cold north and east winds by the hill behind it. It was triangular in shape, and consisted of rows of single-storied houses, placed back-to-back, with hardly any space between. They contained two or three rooms; in the latter case, the third was only a low attic. Similar houses were added to the bottom end of the *Old Village*, and those at *Littletown* were of the same type. They were hardly fitted for human beings to live in, and were, as the late *John Wilson* said, "a standing witness of the opinion those who built them had of the workmen."

LARGE FAMILIES.

Families were much larger in those days, and it is really marvellous how such large and respectable families were brought up in such hovels; but it could only have been by the grace of God. Environment may be helpful, but is not everything; it is the spirit within us that determines what we make of our lives.

CLEANLY HABITS.

One redeeming feature was the cleanliness of the houses and of those inhabiting them. The women folk took great pride in their homes, poor as they were, and made them as sweet and nice-looking as possible with

the means at their disposal ; and a cleaner race than the pitmen it would be difficult to find, for they bathe every day on returning from the mine.

HOUSING REFORM.

It stands to the credit of the Pittington Society that it led the way in Housing Reform. It built the Pioneer Cottages in 1894, in Low Pittington, and Coronation Crescent in the same village in 1902 ; and as time went on these were sold to the people inhabiting them. Most of the superior houses, too, at the south end of High Pittington were erected with the help of mortgages obtained from the Society, and these are, in nearly all cases, occupied by the owners themselves. Thus the Society has left its mark for good on both villages, and its action had the further beneficial effect of setting up a higher standard of houses, and of stimulating other owners to make improvements in their properties, some of which have been improved out of all recognition. It is almost certain that if there had been no Store, there would have been no new and better houses.

SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

In the early seventies, sanitary arrangements were few and of a most primitive nature. The scavenging was done by the neighbouring farmers at their leisure, free of cost. Indeed, they were glad to do it, in order to obtain refuse matter for their land. Needless to say, the work was often neglected in busy times, the result being great nuisances in the villages. Still it is remarkable how seldom Pittington was then visited by epidemics, not nearly so often as the neighbouring villages. This may have been due to its position on the hillside, the cleanly

habits of the people, and to the fact that they lived with their doors open to the wholesome breezes which sweep for the greater part of the year from a westerly direction.

ROADS.

The roads, too, were (supposed to be) kept in order by the farmers, and their condition at times, as may be imagined, left much to be desired.

WATER SUPPLY.

Water for drinking was obtained from wells on the sides of the hill, and had to be carried to people's homes in pails, etc. When there was a shortage, as sometimes happened in hot and dry weather, the carriers—often women—had long waits, and gossip flowed freely round the well, if the water trickled slowly into it. There are people still living in the place who used to go regularly to a well near the Hillside Farm with a donkey-cart, fill a barrel with water, and retail it from door to door, thus adding a little to the income of the home.

For household purposes, water was pumped from the *Derry Pit* into a pond close by, and was conveyed by metal pipes to taps in the streets, from which it was drawn when needed. The supply was not very regular, and it was no common thing for there to be a shortage when the pit was very busy, or the officials neglected or forgot to keep the pond full.

SIZE OF PARISH.

In 1871, the parish contained 2,618 acres; but this has since been reduced to 2,371 acres by the transfer of the new houses at Broomside Lane and land adjoining Belmont Parish.

POPULATION.

It is interesting to note the growth of the population after the advent of mining, and for purposes of comparison I append some statistics. The number of the inhabitants of the parish according to the census was as follows:—In 1801, 220 ; in 1811, 277 ; in 1821, 304 ; in 1831, 1,632 ; in 1841, 2,295 ; in 1851, 2,530 ; in 1861, 2,155 ; in 1871, 2,107 ; in 1881, 2,231 ; in 1891, 2,092 ; in 1901, 1,983 ; and in 1911, 2,130. At the last census (1921) it was 2,081.

The great increase between 1821 and 1831 was evidently due to the opening of the collieries near to High Pittington. *Littletown* was sunk in 1834, and that will account for the further increase at the next census. In 1844, there was a great strike in Durham and Northumberland, which lasted nineteen weeks. At that time the Marquis of Londonderry visited his collieries (Pittington among them), and threatened that, if his men would not return to work, he would bring over workmen from Ireland to take their place. This led to the settlement of a large number of Ulstermen in the village, which has a fair sprinkling of their descendants at the present day. The increase in 1851 was probably the result of the influx of these Irishmen. The closing of the *Broomside* and *Elemore Pits* (the latter temporarily) caused the population to decrease between 1881 and 1891, and a further fall took place in the next decade, during which the *Londonderry Pit* ceased working. Many of the discharged men found employment at mines in neighbouring parishes, and still continued to reside at Pittington.

POPULATION STATIONARY.

The Yearly Bond tended to make the population stationary, and even after it was done away with, there was not nearly so much moving about as now

TRAVELLING FACILITIES.

Facilities for travelling were fewer, and there was no direct communication with Durham, the line from Pitlington ending at Shincliffe, two miles from the city. For a time both passengers and goods were drawn by means of standing engines along this route, and the remains of the engine-houses used for this purpose were to be seen here and there along the railway side as far as Murton until quite recent times. One stood in the field behind the station. People thought nothing of walking to Durham and back, and even further. They preferred to do so, since they thus saved the railway fare, an important matter when money was not very plentiful. In 1874, there were men working for half-a-crown a day, and frugality had perforce to be practised. It was possible to find individuals who had never been further than Durham, and some who had not ventured their lives on a railway journey, while odd ones had not gone beyond their native village.

WOMEN'S WORK.

Looking back, it seems to me much more work was done at home by women than in these days. Laundry and bakers' vans were unknown. Nothing was sent out to be washed, and the women folk would have felt it a disgrace to themselves to have had their ironing done for them. Besides, they could not afford it. Large brick ovens heated with wood were placed here and there in

the streets, and in these the bread (often large, round loaves, like cart wheels) was baked. It was not white, like what we eat nowadays, but it was much sweeter, and more wholesome and nourishing. Most women, with the help of their daughters (if they had any) made all underclothing and knit all the stockings for the family, and some even did their own dressmaking. In this way the girls of a household received a thorough training in all branches of domestic work.

It is to the credit of the county that women were never allowed to be employed at the mines, as in Lancashire.

EDUCATION BACKWARD.

Large numbers of adults could neither read nor write, and night schools were much prized and used by the more serious minded, who were anxious to make good this deficiency. Even Sunday schools were employed for this purpose, and it was no uncommon sight to find fathers of families sitting side by side with children learning the elements of education. I remember, when I first came to Pittington, taking a night school which was composed almost entirely of adults, groping in darkness in more senses than one, for the room was lighted by means of candles in tin sconces (made at the pit, I believe) stuck into holes in the desk. Electric light was unknown, and oil lamps were little used, either in public buildings or in the homes of the people.

HALF-TIMERS.

Boys began work at an earlier age than is now allowed, and the half-time system was in vogue, by which lads ten years of age were permitted to work half the day at

bank, and spend the other half at school. It was a system which was most unsatisfactory both for schools and scholars.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Attendance at day school was not compulsory for all, and moral (and sometimes more forcible) suasion had to be resorted to in order to get the children into school. What is called Free Education had not been introduced, and there was often great difficulty in collecting the school pence from a certain section of the parents, and this was the cause of much irregularity.

SCHOOLS—PITTINGTON.

The first schools were situated in Low Pittington, one in what is now known as the Lecture Hall (the present Infant School) and, later, one in the building now occupied by the Salvation Army. The latter was erected by the Marquis of Londonderry, and opened in January, 1853.

The school at High Pittington was built by the Church in 1867. The Rev. Henry Stoker was Vicar at the time. He was succeeded by the Rev. James Barmby, D.D., in 1875, and, when he moved to Northallerton, by the Rev. S. B. Guest Williams, who died in December, 1920. All of these were deeply interested in the welfare of the school, and did much to further its success. The next Vicar, the Rev. H. D. Hughes, owing to a break down in health, was obliged to resign after a very short stay in the parish. The Rev. A. A. Boddy, the present incumbent, took up office in December, 1922, and has always shown that he appreciates highly the good work done in both schools, especially that part of it devoted to the building up of Christian character.

In passing it may be noted that all the Vicars, from Dr. Barmby onward, were members of the Store.

HEAD MASTERS.

Mr. Mudd was the first Head Master, leaving at the end of 1875. His successor, Mr. Hawkswell, a young man straight from college, took charge in January, 1876, but died suddenly after only six months work. He was a young man of truly Christian character, and of great promise in his profession. The school was carried on with temporary assistance till I took up duties as Head in September, 1876. It was my happy privilege to help in forming the characters of many who have had a share in building up the Society, and I have had the satisfaction of working side by side with them, both at its general and committee meetings, in seeking to promote its progress. Mr. Box, my successor, is carrying on the good work of the school, and upholding its traditions, especially with regard to placing in the forefront the building up of character as the chief object of education.

LITTLETOWN.

The school at Littleton was built by Lord Durham for the children of the workmen employed there. It was taught by a mistress (Miss Aitcheson), and the elder children frequently came to Pittington School "to finish off their education." When she left, a master took her place, and in turn Mr. Wylam, Mr. Frank Taylor, and Mr. Ross, the writer of the Society's History, have occupied that position, with credit to themselves, and to the great benefit of the children.

INSTITUTES.

The Reading Institute attached to the Lecture Hall at Low Pittington was established in 1842, and contributed to the good influences at work in the village. A room in a cottage at High Pittington also answered the same purpose.

DRUNKENNESS.

It is not surprising that there was much drunkenness, when we consider the dull, drab lives led by the men. They spent the greater part of their waking hours under ground, buried in darkness, and had scanty leisure. Searching for some brightness to be brought into their lives, they found it in the wrong way. They had no resources in themselves. Many were unable to read, and those who could had few opportunities for intellectual occupations. Thank God, drunkenness has greatly decreased. Education, the easier access to books, music, and pictures, and the more comfortable homes of the people, have done, and are doing, much to promote temperance.

RECREATION—INDOOR.

Some provision was made for the recreation of the people. Lectures, concerts, penny readings, spelling bees, which were all tried in turns, brought a little light and refreshment to old and young, and helped to keep them away from places and things that would do them harm.

OUTDOOR.

Of outdoor games there were not so many. Their value in giving moral as well as physical health was not so clearly recognised as now. So long as they are carried on for recreation, and do not occupy the whole thoughts

and become the sole staple of conversation, they serve a useful purpose. Cricket was indulged in; but football was not the rage it has become in these days, and was hardly known in this parish. The cruel sport of rabbit-coursing was common, and pigeon flying, harmless when not associated with gambling, afforded pleasure to many.

GARDENING.

Fortunately, each miner was provided with a plot of ground, in which he could spend his leisure hours in that most delightful and useful recreation—gardening. The whole of the field purchased later by the Society was taken up with potato plots, and the steep south-western slope of the hill above High Pittington was covered with kitchen and flower gardens to the summit, traces of which are still to be seen in the zigzag paths near the top.

THE HILL.

The Hill is a great acquisition to the two Pittington villages, which it dominates. Near its lofty summit the bare rock protrudes itself in ragged perpendicular cliffs, and its western extremity is a bold promontory visible for many miles around.

Its value from a health point of view is almost inestimable. Strangers who have climbed its slopes or wandered along its sides have been charmed with the extent and variety of its views, the purity of its atmosphere, and its cool, refreshing breezes, especially on hot summer days.

LIMESTONE QUARRIES.

It is composed entirely of limestone, which has been quarried on each side in days gone by. The quarry on the higher part of the hill facing Low Pittington was in

full operation till 1879, when the strike of that year caused it to be finally closed. The remains of its old kilns are still to be seen. Most of the disused quarries along the upper side of the Elemore Road have been planted with trees and bushes, adding greatly to the loveliness of the scenery. The plantation above the old Derry Pit, called the Rabbit Warren, affords ample shelter for game and other wild life. Elemore Road is one of the favourite walks of the parish and neighbourhood, and this is not to be wondered at; its truly rural aspect, and its fine views of Elemore Park and Hall, the seat of the Baker-Bakers, a well-known county family, present a scene of surpassing beauty not easily forgotten.

MEETINGS ON HILL.

The Hill was used as a central meeting place during strikes, and witnessed many stirring scenes at such times. The old quarry, high up its side, formed a fine amphitheatre, round which the audience was ranged, the speakers standing on a platform near the centre. I have a vivid recollection of being present at one such meeting during the strike of 1879, when the late John Wilson proved himself to be an honest man and true leader by bravely standing alone in opposition to the general opinion of the meeting, led by an Irish demagogue, named Jackson, an opportunist, who simply swam with the stream.

Here it may be noted that the Pittington Society has always been a source of strength and a refuge in such times of trouble, and a helper of the needy and suffering. It contributed to their funds, and placed its premises at the disposal of Distress Committees, and in the strikes of 1879 and 1892 these Committees were enabled to keep

many people from starvation by distributing soup daily from the Store as a centre. It will be within the recollection of all that during the strike of 1921, its large hall was used for the feeding of the school children.

CAMP MEETINGS.

The lower grassy slope of the Hill just outside High Pittington was frequently used for Camp Meetings. I don't know whether these have gone out of date ; it is a pity if they have, for it was a pleasant and inspiring sight on a warm summer day to see large numbers of the inhabitants of the villages around, sitting in companies, listening to the glad message of salvation simply but plainly delivered by some "local brothers," or to hear them joining in prayer and praise to the "God from whom all blessings flow." It brought to mind Him, Who, "seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when He was set, He opened His mouth and taught them."

TRIBUTE TO METHODISM.

The work of the Church in civilising and uplifting the people of the parish has already been referred to. It continued all down the ages ; but in the early part of the nineteenth century the Church, becoming cold and lifeless, lost its hold on the people, especially the new inhabitants of the pit villages. Many of these led rough, wild lives, and were much given to drinking and fighting at the fortnightly pays and the bindings. Riotous scenes were often witnessed in the streets in those days. Fortunately Methodism was alive, and set up places of worship : the Primitives at High Pittington, and the

Wesleyans at High Pittington and Littletown. These became centres of light and life, and it is impossible to estimate the value of the work done by them. They kept the lamp of life burning ; they plucked brands from the burning ; they set the feet of those who had gone out of the way upon the Rock, and established their goings ; they taught men to think—and a thinking man is the enemy of the devil—and they trained them to speak and to work for their Master.

MEN'S LEADERS.

It was very largely from this source that the leaders in every movement for the betterment of the working classes sprang. Three of the best known and most highly respected agents of the Miners' Union in recent years, who at one time worked in our parish, owed all that was best in them to Methodism, which helped to develop their talents, and set them to seek the good of their fellows.

JOHN WILSON.

John Wilson worked at Littletown, Broomside, and Lady Seaham Pits in his younger days. Even then he showed signs of leadership in seeking the redress of grievances, so much so that Mr. Crawford, one of the most autocratic of colliery managers, would not allow him to remain at Littletown Colliery. He was converted at Haswell, became a local preacher of the Primitive Methodist body, and to the last kept up his connection with Pittington, preaching here regularly according to plan.

"SAMMY" GALBRAITH.

Samuel Galbraith worked at the Derry. Like John Wilson before him, he rose to be an Alderman of the

Durham County Council, and M.P. for our Division (Mid-Durham). His parents came from Ulster, and lived in Wellington Street, High Pittington. He never forgets this, and comes out occasionally to visit his old home. His love and reverence for his mother are most striking and noble traits in his character, and it is very touching to listen to the tribute he never ceases to pay to her memory. I have had the pleasure of entertaining him on these occasions, and a visit to the old church is usually part of our programme. "Sammy" (as he is familiarly and lovingly called by his friends) is also a local Methodist preacher.

PETER LEE.

Peter Lee, too, worked at the Derry, and lived at Low Pittington. He is another fine product of Methodism, of whom it has every reason to be proud. He has shared with John Wilson the honour of being chairman of the Durham County Council, and there is no doubt that his character and abilities will bring him higher honours and place him in a position of greater usefulness in the future. He is a Primitive Methodist local preacher, and visits Pittington chiefly when he is planned here.

PIONEERS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Pioneers of the *Pittington Amicable* (I like that word, it breathes such a spirit of love and friendliness) *Industrial Society* were nearly all members of one or other branch of the Church, the greatest of all co-operative societies for the unifying and uplifting of the race, and whose mission it was to bring "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

THEIR CHARACTER.

A glance through the original minute book of the Society is enough to recall these simple-minded, homely, kindly, well-intentioned men, with their honesty of purpose and sincere desire to help those around them. Most of their time was spent in the darkness of the mine ; but their little leisure was willingly given as an offering in the service of their fellow men. If they were not glib of speech, they were ready enough in good deeds.

THEIR POSITION.

Some of them had joined the Moorsley Store ; but, becoming dissatisfied at the way in which they were being treated, they determined to commence a Society of their own at Pittington. They were mostly workmen at the Derry Pit, which, at that time, was under the same management as the Moorsley Colliery.

SEEMING UNFITNESS.

For the great enterprise on which they were about to embark they seemed to be ill-equipped, if not absolutely unfitted. Lowly and of humble degree, " unlearned and ignorant men," with no capacity, apparently, for business and no experience of it, unable to keep accounts or compile a balance sheet properly, it looked like madness for them to risk their small savings in setting up in opposition to private businesses with their accumulated experience and long training. But they had had high ideals set before them, and had received glimpses of " a new heaven and a new earth," in which " each was for all, and all for each," and they set out with strong faith and good courage to enter in and possess this promised

land. Fortunately, many of them lived long enough, not merely to see, but to partake of, the fruit of their labours, and be satisfied.

THE SOCIETY'S GROWTH.

This book, unlike histories in general, is not a record of the achievements of the high and mighty ; it is just " the short and simple annals of the poor." It tells the life-story of the Pittington Society, with more or less detail, from its birth in 1874 up to the time of its Jubilee in 1924. The following chapters will show its growth and development, step by step, from lowly beginnings in a humble cottage in a back street at High Pittington to commodious premises on and near the original site, and also a fine pile of buildings on the front street, with important branches at Carrville, Rainton Gate, and Hetton.

FOUNDATION STONES.

The foundation stones on which they reared such a noble structure (I refer not only to the business premises, but also to the combination of human beings with its potentialities and tremendous possibilities) were frugality, self-denial, thrift, and manly independence. These simple, homely, old-fashioned virtues are not so much prized and, therefore, not so much practised by the present generation, which is too much given to spending its resources without thought on the pleasures or wants of the moment, and looking to others for help in the " rainy day," which sooner or later comes to us all. One of the greatest services which the Co-operative Movement has rendered to the community has been to teach men the habit of wise spending and, therefore, of saving. " It's

what thee'll spend, my son," said an old Quaker, "not what thee'll make, which will decide whether thee's to be rich or not." Let me also quote some words of Cobden, which we will do well to ponder carefully:—"The world," he said, "has always been divided into two classes—those who saved and those who have spent—the thrifty and the extravagant. The building of all the houses, the mills, the bridges, and the ships, and the accomplishment of all other great works which have rendered man civilised and happy, have been done by the savers, the thrifty; and those who have wasted their resources have always been their slaves. It has been the law of nature and of Providence that this should be so; and I were an imposter if I promised any class that they should advance themselves if they were improvident, thoughtless, and idle."

THE PIONEERS' LEGACY.

It is well to review the past in order that we may profit by its experiences, and receive fresh stimulus and courage from the lives and labours of those who have lived before us. The efforts of the pioneers to better their conditions and to help others as well as themselves succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of their imagination. What ought we be able to do, or rather what ought we not be able to do with our ~~ampl~~er knowledge, our enlarged resources, and the accumulated experience of fifty years? It has been said that the great business of life is so to live that something helpful may live after us. Truly the pioneers built better than they knew, and have left behind them a legacy of inspiration and blessing, which it should be our privilege as well as our duty to pass on with greater fulness and added power to those who come after us.