

## V.—A SIXTEENTH CENTURY JOURNEY TO DURHAM.

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The University of Durham has the custody of a large number of MSS. which represent the long labours of Mr. Christopher Mickleton, a Durham lawyer who made large collections in the 17th century for a history of the city which he never lived to write. Hutchinson, Surtees, and other local antiquaries have been greatly indebted to the industry of Mickleton. In one of the volumes in which Mickleton bound up his papers he copied out without note or preface a Latin poem of about 600 hexameters under the title *Iter Boreale*. The verses seem to have escaped the notice of those who have consulted the collection or, more probably, they have repelled the reader by the small crabbed and rather ill-written characters in which Mickleton hastily copied them down in some brief visit, as I should judge, to the original document from which various transcripts have been made. That original is probably in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, but there are other copies; more than one in the Bodleian, one at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and a good early one, which indeed may be the original, now included with the Additional MSS. in the British Museum. For the purposes of my paper to-night I have collated the Mickleton and British Museum codices, and, as the museum exemplar was itself collated with the Ashmolean by Sir W. C. Trevelyan, I have been enabled to base my account upon three manuscripts.

The writer of these fluent, but often rather careless hexameters was a certain Dr. Eedes, who ultimately became dean of Worcester in 1597, and was appointed one of the board of revisers who issued the authorized version in 1611, but he died before

commencing his work. He was a royal chaplain to queen Elizabeth during part of what he himself described as 'the religious reign of the peerless queen of the world, my many ways most gracious lady and mistress.' He was much admired in those later days of his career as a preacher. But all these distinctions came to him when he was a very different person from the academic poetaster who wrote the *Iter Boreale*, and other trifles, as a young Oxford man. He was a Westminster student of Christ Church, and delighted in giving vent to his powers of versification. At Oxford he was a great friend of Toby Matthew, first, president of St. John's and then dean of Christ Church. As Wood says 'they entirely loved each other for virtue and ingenuity sake.'

From this cheerful friendship dean Toby Matthew was called in the summer of 1583 to undertake the duties of dean of Durham, and to begin that north country career as dean and then as bishop of Durham, and later as archbishop of York, which left a permanent mark in many ways on the church in the northern province. At the moment he was a young man of 37, older by some seven years than his friend Eedes, with a great Oxford reputation for learning and brilliance which he adorned with a ready and amusing wit and a real genius for friendship. He had a handsome presence to which his portraits do scant justice, and there can be no doubt that this not unimportant gift of nature set off his conversation and his preaching in a very pleasant way to which he was not wholly indebted for his rapid advancement, at a time when, it must be confessed, the most prominent ecclesiastics were not, as a body, particularly attractive.

The new dean set out on his journey from Oxford to Durham in the month of August, 1583. He was to be accompanied on horseback by Anthony Blencowe, provost of Oriel, and by his faithful butler Harrison, with perhaps one or two others in his retinue. Matthew extracted a promise from his special friend

Eedes to ride with him for a day before returning to Christ Church. As it turned out, the provost was delayed in starting, and so the dean prevailed on Eedes to go on with him, listening to no excuses of other duties or of insufficient equipment. Thus the two friends fared northwards, Matthew beguiling the way by his charming company, and Eedes daily dictating in Latin hexameters a metrical diary of the journey. To this lucky chance we are indebted for a poem which gives an interesting sidelight upon Elizabethan England, and incidentally pictures Durham and its cathedral establishment when it was on the eve of settling down after the unsettlement and feuds of earlier days.

Instead of making their way to the Great North Road which was the usual means of communication with Durham, and could have been reached by turning, I suppose, to the nearest point near Peterborough, the travellers adopted the midland route, and only joined the main road at York. Their first day's journey took them as far as Northampton some forty miles from Oxford, and thence they passed to Leicester, Nottingham and Mansfield. At each place the more noteworthy objects are mentioned, but these, I think, need not detain us. Rotherham was the first halt in Yorkshire, and they were much scandalised by host and hostess who tempted them to try their luck at some game of chance. At Wakefield they were received with real hospitality—excellent food and fish and strong March beer. Thence their road lay past Aberford to Tadcaster, and so they reached the palace of archbishop Sandys at Bishopthorpe. The archbishop's name gave Eedes an opportunity for indulging his inveterate and sometimes obscure love of playing on words; and when he contrasts the charm of resting on the sands with the inhospitable cliffs of the north and their treacherous character, we are introduced to that half-serious half-playful want of confidence in these northern counties which modern railways have mitigated even if they have not yet entirely banished it. Certainly it crops up again and

again in this poem. Archbishop Sandys appears in a rather different character from that which he assumes in the pages of Elizabethan church history, where he comes before us as a kind of ecclesiastical policeman whose main business seems to be to coerce unwilling or reluctant conformists. To Eedes he is the kindly entertainer who makes elaborate arrangements for a deer-stalking expedition at Ryther park, at Thorp, and at Rest near Cawood. York did not strike the party very strongly; the city was large but badly built. Eedes tells us that the canons' houses were not used by the canons, as a rule, but were let off for various purposes. Before leaving Bishopthorpe some fifty of the more intellectual clergy were asked to meet the dean and hear him preach. It was a gathering which made a great impression upon Eedes as he looked upon the assembly and thought of the real spiritual power which they represented.

The travellers now passed on, for more than a week had elapsed since they left Oxford. They made their way along the road to Topcliffe and Northallerton. And now at last they had really entered the north, for Northallerton was a part of the bishopric. A cattle-fair was being held, and the market-place was full of large herds of beasts, with their great horns, lowing forth a welcome to the southerners. The noise, and the dirt of the one inn, and the hard beds, made the poet recall every scrap of rumour that he had ever heard about the north. They could feel that they were in the north now. But the beds and what was in the beds made him long to substitute lashing iambics for his stately hexameters! At last they rose, after the longest of all nights, Eedes feeling that he would have preferred three days in prison to a single night on the unimpressionable bed he had just left.

From Northallerton they planned a detour for the sake of visiting bishop Barnes at Stockton castle. Here the poem is not only interesting and picturesque but important, for we get a

little side-light on one of the bishop's residences concerning which very little description has survived. At that time Stockton barely existed, and Norton was the chief place of residence in the neighbourhood so that Stockton castle was a retired manor-house on the banks of the Tees, a charming retreat for the bishops of Durham. Eedes had no respect for bishop Barnes, and takes more than one opportunity of cheap criticism. On this occasion he sneers at his host for thus living in retirement at the moment when the earl of Huntingdon is about to preside over a meeting of the High Commission in Durham, and when Walsingham is on the eve of returning from an embassy to Scotland, and intends to stay with the bishop. Eedes can only believe that he has gone to Stockton from motives of economy. The dean's party, however, was surprised to be received with some pomp. Immanuel, the bishop's son, who had received a doctor's degree at Basle a year before, comes in here and again for some notice from Eedes. He satirises the doctor's want of erudition, and his ungainly personal appearance. Nor will he let the daughters off. They take too much on them and sit on their father's right-hand side as though they were so many wives.

Barnes has been credited with the repair of the see-houses, and Eedes introduces us to Stockton castle, though he does not describe the fabric but its furniture. The bishop was, it seems, something of an artist. The house was full of things that he had done. In particular, there was in the hall an emblematic picture of the pope, on which Barnes much prided himself. It represented, in the execrable style of protestant controversialism, the pontiff as an old sow emerging from the labouring mountains, whilst a train of persons, all begrimed with farm-yard filth, hauled it along by its tail. The caricature so angered the poet that he has no time to tell us of the many other things at Stockton which displayed the bishop's own handiwork.

The visit over, the party hasten onwards. After about a

mile's ride the dean is greeted by an unexpected gathering of his tenants. These are, no doubt, the farmers of Billingham, who walk down, we may take it, to the cross-roads at Norton to meet their new master. This is an interesting touch, for it exhibits the personal relation between dean, prebendaries, and the tenants of their corps-lands which the arrangements of later days, in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commission or of agents, have tended to obliterate. And so they passed on, after this friendly salutation, through Sedgfield, no doubt, until another concourse meets them. The point at which they met, it can scarcely be questioned, was Farewell hall on the south road, a mile from Durham, the scene of many a historic greeting and farewell which has been recorded. On this occasion, besides the ordinary crowd drawn together from curiosity, the prebendaries are present. Whether this was customary in the case of a dean I do not know, but when a new bishop came to Durham such a greeting was constantly observed with great formality.

There have been many descriptions of a first view of Durham. Eedes is much impressed, of course, by the position of the cathedral. As for the city, he says, it is impossible to take it in because of the buildings: the streets radiating like spokes of a wheel from a central hub are so narrow and lengthy. The only thing to do is to climb to the top of the cathedral and get a general impression. From this point of vantage he sees the river like a bent bow below him and takes in the situation. The deanery strikes Eedes as a royal house with its flight of steps leading up to its imposing fabric. He questions whether it is not too large for use, but that, I may add, Mrs. Matthew when she appeared on the scene soon remedied, for she was one of the famous housewives of Durham, much sought by mothers who wished to place their daughters under a good mistress. The poet wishes that the revenues of the deanery were equal to its size, a fault which was not mended, I think, until after the Restoration. At

all events, I do not know of any reference to its wealth until the late 17th century. An installation banquet was prepared, and the cavalcade passed into the house. Next day the installation proper took place, when Dr. Bellamy, one of the prebendaries, and presumably sub-dean, undertook the ceremony and preached. Great interest had been made with the queen on his behalf during the vacancy of the deanery, but in vain.

At this point a digression takes place which incidentally gives us what, so far as I know, is the most complete picture that we possess of the charms of Bearpark. This place, distant about three miles from Durham, was the chief material asset of the deanery, as in earlier days it had been of the priory of Durham. A monastic head often possessed a *refugium*, or country seat. Bearpark, a corruption of Beaurepaire, was the Durham summer residence. There are many early references to it and its amenities. Eedes describes it as a particularly charming place, with its green meadowland, its pretty peaceful river (which is the Browney, of course), its general fruitfulness, and above all its thick grove of oak trees. This wood was to dean and chapter what the now nearly defunct Frankland wood near Finchale was to the bishop, the reservoir, so to speak, from which all supplies of timber were drawn. To Bearpark the south country poet gives the greatest praise he can when he says that the south has no spot quite so rich and charming. We can scarcely doubt that the expedition to Bearpark was carried out on one of those golden and bracing September days, with clear light and thick shadows of which we have had so many this year. At all events Eedes outdoes himself in the praise he gives. He tells us that there was a noble house. Both site and use were delightful. The visitor can please himself whether he prefers the music of the spring-head, or to survey the rich grassy meads, or to smell the sweetly-scented air, or to ramble through the woods, or to climb the hills. Alas, the glories of Bearpark have departed! Its trees are

attenuated, its green meadows are smirched with coal-dust, its river is polluted. Eighty years ago it was the chief asset in the gift made by dean and chapter for the endowment of the University of Durham, and is to-day the scene of the activities of the Bearpark Colliery Company.

And now Sunday arrived, and with it the dean's first sermon in the cathedral. As we have seen, Toby Matthews had a great reputation as a preacher. To Eedes, indeed, he was a standard. An expectant congregation filled the church, and they were not disappointed. He had long surpassed others, and now he surpassed even himself. If he is happy in his surroundings, his hearers are still more happy in the rich mine that they now possess. But the dean does not feed their souls alone. Service over, he keeps open house. We have, of course, other references to this comfortable hospitality when dean or prebendary asked in to dinner those whom he wished to invite.

After a stay of five days in the north, and so far from home, a real longing seized Eedes, and Blencowe, who had now arrived, to return to Oxford. But the dean would not hear of it. Grateful as he was to them for coming he would be proportionately hurt if his friend left him before he had really settled down. So the weeks went by, and the party amused themselves in various ways. An expedition to Newcastle was proposed, and Blencowe urged it, but Eedes was afraid. The Borders at that time were in a state of restlessness, and travelling was not too safe. In particular a certain outlaw called 'Jocky' was then a terror to the wayfarer, and stories were afloat of travellers murdered in their beds. At all events the excursion was never undertaken in the four weeks that the visitors were at Durham. So the most that Eedes heard of the dialect of Scots outlaws was the delightful singing of the choir-boy at the dean's table, who would sing Scottish songs in Scottish fashion.

Eedes took much interest in the sermons that he heard in the north, and generally presents us with an outline or criticism. Tunstall, the sub-dean, is described as Tall Dunce. Taking the great text 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden,' he gave an astonishing application to the words, explaining 'all who labour' to mean labourers. - 'He might as well have interpreted the heavy-laden to be porters bearing burdens,' is the sarcastic comment of his critic. But this is not the only sermon passed in review, for something is said of each Sunday preacher. And these comments would be without point for us to-day save for the fact that here for a moment we see probably all the prebendaries in residence during those few weeks passing before us in procession, not as mere names in chapter acts, or in lists of the holders of the various stalls, but as flesh-and-blood men who thought and spoke and tried to influence their fellows. There is simple Adam Holiday begging his hearers to forgive and forget; Naunton, of the honeyed-tongue, a Tully of the north, best of all the prebendaries as a preacher; Robson, the bishop's chaplain, aping the plumage of a peacock—a pitiful performance, pretentious and over-decorated; Browne, smaller in person, greater in matter, flowing on like water, quiet when deep, noisy when shallow; archdeacon Bunny, who had an Oxford reputation, and is certainly the most learned of all the prebendaries; Ewbank, described as the dean's chaplain, which probably means the precentor, who preached on the text 'Have fervent charity among yourselves,' but rather fails to convey its force by his own cold bearing. Well they did not know that there was 'a chiel amang them taking notes,' still less did they think that the notes would be reproduced after a lapse of more than 330 years!

The new dean had visitors during these weeks. Dr. Lougher, regius professor of civil law at Oxford, a Welshman, and one of the original Fellows of Jesus College; also Mistress Young, the widow of the first Elizabethan archbishop of York, who was also

of Welsh origin. These two were special friends of Eedes and, as he says, to him and to others Wales had given chief cause of gratitude in rearing Dr. Lougher and Mistress Young. When they came, Eedes and Blencowe could not tear themselves away. But a compelling cause of delay soon manifested itself when news came that Walsingham was really returning from Scotland and would shortly arrive.

With this incident, which does not seem to have been recorded by Durham historians, our poet reaches a higher level, if not of poetry, at all events of record. The dean once more prevailed upon his Oxford friends to await the coming of Walsingham. Eedes had his own reasons for wishing to pay his respects to the great man, whatever they were. Time-tables were not easily kept with the uncertainties of the road in those days, but luckily the ambassador arrived on the third day. His journey was one of considerable historical interest. In Scotland, at a time when the difficulties connected with Mary queen of Scots had reached an acute stage, and the diplomacy which ultimately brought the unfortunate lady to the scaffold was maturing, all the endeavours of the English statesmen were being directed towards diverting Mary's son James VI of Scotland from Spanish influence. In the summer of 1583 James was drawing nearer and nearer to Spain, and was negotiating, it was believed, direct intervention on his mother's behalf. In other words, James was engaged in trying to anticipate, during his mother's life-time, the work of the Spanish armada. To England the menace was great, and for that reason Elizabeth had persuaded Walsingham, her secretary of state, to undertake an embassy to Scotland very much about the time that our Oxford party were starting on their northern tour. The mission was not an unqualified success, and, as we find in his correspondence, Walsingham determined to break his journey back to London at some convenient spot, not too far from the Borders, where he might be able to receive reports from his

emissaries in Scotland. His choice fell on Durham, whether by the dean's direct invitation or by his own proposal. The real object of the stay was probably unknown to Eedes: at all events his verse betrays no consciousness of the ambassador's ulterior motive in staying for some five days at the deanery. It occurred to me that the State papers of queen Elizabeth might throw some light upon this interesting visit, and I was lucky enough to find in the Scottish series five different important letters written by Walsingham in the deanery of Durham. In one of them Walsingham says to the English agent at Edinburgh: 'I have occasion for four or five days further stay here at Durham to confer with my Lord President about Border causes and some other matters for her Majesty's service.' What this meant he had previously explained without ambiguity in a letter to the queen, written at Berwick on his way to Durham, in which after stating that he must somehow circumvent James he proceeds: 'It was resolved betwixt Mr. Bowes and me that the same (scheme) might be performed with less suspicion, and as sufficiently, by staying some few days at Durham to which place there will either be some sent from the well-affected in that realm (Scotland) to treat with me in secret, or I shall understand from Mr. Bowes the impediment and what is to be looked for from thence.'

Such was the position in September, 1583, as we recover it from the State papers of the time. Now let us return to Eedes and his account of those five days at the deanery of Durham. The corpulent bishop of Durham, anxious to anticipate the dean who had been joined by the earl of Huntingdon, lord president of the council of the north, stole out early on horseback, taking up his position, no doubt, by the 'Blue Stone' on Newcastle bridge. Here he braved the equinoctial rain from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. After some hours he was joined by the large party from the deanery who had an excellent recep-

tion. At last Walsingham's retinue arrived, and amongst them lord Essex, the wardens of the East and Middle Marches, lord Scrope, two of the Russells, sons of the earl of Bedford, Sir Walter Mildmay, Nevill the scholar, and representatives of northern families like the Musgraves and the Fenwicks. So they rode on into Durham and overfilled the city. The first night Walsingham spent at the house of Mr. Heath, a mile or so from Durham. This Heath was the founder of the Durham family of that name, and built Kepier house on the site of the ruins of the old hospital. His effigy can still be seen at the east end of St. Giles's church. He died in 1596 and eventually his family was merged in that of the Tempests of Old Durham ancestors of lord Londonderry.

The next day was the festival of St. Matthew, and the dean celebrated his name day in the cathedral. There was a large concourse, even the Roman catholics coming up to hear his sermon. The earl, who was obviously staying at the castle, entertained the ambassador at breakfast, and then Walsingham went to the deanery for dinner, when Eedes received him with a complimentary speech. The visit lasted until the 26th, during which time the deanery became a kind of court. Flying messengers arrive from all parts and bring fresh news. I have traced several of the letters that they bore to and fro—the first to Bowes at Edinburgh written on the day of the secretary's arrival at the deanery; the second to James VI of Scotland, written on the same day, interceding for the abbot of Dunfermline; the third bearing date next day to Lord Burleigh acknowledging a communication despatched from London on the 18th; a fourth to Bowes on the eve of departure; a fifth from Bowes telling Walsingham of the position in Edinburgh; a sixth to Burleigh; and a seventh to the Privy Council on the day he left, telling them of the Border troubles in progress, and of the petitions he received, going and returning, for the suppression of such dis-

orders. Five of the series were actually written by Walsingham in the deanery, but no doubt some, at all events, of the September letters in the Foreign Calendar reached him at that house, letters which deal with places strangely familiar to us, for Parma was riding rough-shod over Flanders; and Bruges, Nieupoort, and Ypres were all in peril.

But Eedes did not wait for the departure of the ambassador. He had already been turned out of his bedroom to give place to the more honourable man, the ground-floor bedroom, no doubt, which has always been the guest-chamber at the deanery. Before the five days were over, he sallied forth with his friend Blencowe after taking leave of Walsingham and the dean, with the assurance of the ambassador's goodwill. Their first stage, as they rode on together towards Oxford, was Bishop Auckland, whither bishop Barnes had betaken himself, to pay their respects to the bishop. After dining there, and being pledged by the bishop and by Dr. Immanuel, who lifted to his friends a cup certainly larger than the ancients used, the two travellers took the southern road, and made for Northallerton. They remembered the Northallerton beds, and did not draw rein until they arrived at Richmond. Here Ewbank, whom they had met at Durham, entertained them. The next morning, rising betimes, they pushed on to Topcliffe, where the weather broke, and thence through torrents of rain to York, where the second night was spent in the sumptuous and hospitable house of Mistress Young, whom they had already encountered at Durham. Here they broke their journey, going again to Bishopthorpe to see the archbishop, but returning to the house of Mistress Young. From York they took the road again by way of Tadcaster, Wakefield, Pontefract, Rotherham, Mansfield, and Nottingham. Hence they rode on by devious ways to Aston-le-Walls, a small village in Northamptonshire, where Blencowe had friends who had promised him some sport. Here they had one whole day for hawking partridges and for coursing

hares. From Aston Eedes rode on next day alone, and soon reached the towers of Oxford. But at his first glimpse of the city his muse, as though born in the north, suddenly felt herself strangely out of sympathy with her more polished surroundings. Try as he might to detain her she deserted him and spread her wings for her native north, and thus the very day his journey ended his poem likewise came to an end.

*Obverse.**Reverse.*

DURHAM SEALS: NO. 3043.

(See p. 133.)