

ART. XV.—“*The Fatall Nuptiall*,” a tract (by Richard Brathwaite?) on the Windermere Ferry Accident of 1635. By W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

THE account given by Mr. H. S. Cowper, F.S.A., in his *Hawkshead* (pp. 243-246) of the great ferry disaster on October 19th, 1635, suggested recently to Mr. Charles Hughes of Manchester and Coniston, editor of Fynes Morison, etc., that farther search might be made for a lost book on the subject mentioned under the title of *The Fatall Nuptiall*. Mr. Hughes found a copy in the Bodleian among the Rawlinson collection, which had not been catalogued when Mr. Cowper wrote: and this is probably the identical copy described, as Mr. Cowper relates, in *The English Topographer* (1720), for that work was edited by Richard Rawlinson, LL.D., F.R.S., F.S.A. (1690-1755), grandson of Daniel Rawlinson of Grisedale and London, founder of the Anglo-Saxon professorship at Oxford, and donor of the collection to the Bodleian Library.

In the *Manchester City News* for October 26th, 1912, Mr. Hughes published a note pointing out, among other things, the special interest of one passage on the “curiously shaded, beauteously tufted” islands of Windermere as “probably the earliest picturesque description of the Lake District by more than one hundred years.” His transcript of the volume has now been presented to this Society by Mr. Hughes, for preservation at Tullie House: but in handing it over I feel that a few extracts and remarks may be not out of place in these *Transactions*.

The volume was described in Worrall's *Bibliotheca Legum* as “Octavo, 2s.” (Cowper's *Hawkshead*, p. 246). The page measures $5\frac{5}{8}$ by $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches, and there are 16

leaves (sigg. A and B). The Bodleian shelf-mark is “ 8° Rawl. 602.”

The title-page reads as follows :—

THE | FATALL NVPTIALL : | OR, | MOURNEFULL | MAR-
RIAGE, | Relating, | *The heavy and lamentable* | Accident lately
occurring, by | the drowning of 47. persons, and | some of those
of especial quality, | in the water of Windermere, | in the
NORTH. October 19 : | 1635 | *Nova piscibus urna parata est.* |
LONDON. | Imprinted by *Felix Kyngston*, and are | to be sold
by *Robert Bostocke*, at the | Kings head in *Pauls church-* | yard.
1636.

Leaf A2 is headed with a cut of a winged death's-head and motto “ SPES ADDIDIT ALAS ” (*hope has given wings to death*). The preamble of 8 pages is in italics ; the notes here placed at the foot of the page are in the margin. The text begins :—

A PREAMBLE, OR | INTRODUCTION | to this
Funerall | POEME.

FOR the quality of grieve, none knowes it, but hee who hath experimentally and personally felt it. That Place, which hath hitherto beene secured from the least perill, you shall now see personated a spectacle of Sorrow : where those, who vowed in a Sacred and Christian manner, their vowes to Hymen, the Sovereigne of Nuptialls, are now with Tethis to close in wat'ry Funeralls. The occasion of these sad Obits proceeded from a marriage and a market day, which begot to the Attendants a mournefull night ; yet from that Night (such was their assured expectance, and our undoubted affiance) a happy day. The place, where these drenched Soules were to take Boate, was that famous and renowned Mere of Windermere ; a Mere no less eminent and generously knowne for her Sole-breeding, and peculiar kinde of fishes (commonly called Chares) as for those windy and labyrinthian mazes, with those curiously shaded, beauteously tufted, naturally. fortifide, and impregnably seated Ilands in every part of the Mere interveined. To relate the severall windings of it, or more historically to describe it, were fruitles, being already explained by a genuine and learned

Relater.* To divert then from the Place, to the sad occasion of this Action, thus I proceed.

Windermere, or Winandermere, streaming, or rather staying in a continue Tract or Channell, without any visible or apparent Current, and dividing the Counties of Westmerland and Lancashire, hath ever constantly kept a Boat for Passengers ; especially those Inhabitants as remaine or reside in the Barronry of Kendall, (a place to her honour, antiently famous for Commerce and industrious Manufacture) as all others, who may have occasion to addresse their course by that passage, to the market of Hauke-side,† or other places adjoining. To this Boat, upon a nuptiall but fatal occasion, sundry Passengers, and these all Inhabitants within the Barronry of Kendall, (a Burrough as I formerly observed, highly eminent, by having such neare relation and generall correspondence with most places of trade or trafficke in this Kingdome) repaired ; hoping with a safe and secure gale to arrive, where no perill had ever yet approach'd. The Boat they enter'd, securely confident, with 47 in number, besides other carriages and horses, which (together with the roughnes of the water, and extremity of weather) occasioned this inevitable danger.

Lanch'd had these scarcely to the medth of the water, being scantly a mile broad, but the Boat, either through the pressure and weight which surcharg'd her, or some violent and impetuous windes and waves that surpriz'd her, with all her people, became drench'd in the depths.‡ No succour, no reliefe afforded, for Gods definite Will had so decreed : So as, not one person of all the number was saved : Amongst which, the Bride's Mother, and her Brother in this liquid regiment, equally perished.

The prose then continues in the strain of a funeral sermon, with quotations from Horace and Aristotle, Basil and Augustine, and concludes after eight pages with an apology for the length of this preamble. Then follows :—

* Cambd[en], in Brit[annia].:

† The Charter of which was procured by that industrious Agent for his Countrey, Mr. Allen Nicholson.

‡ Undæ sunt ossibus urnæ.

THE FATALL NVPTIALL :
OR, MOVRNEFVLL MARRIAGE.

Poeme.

HYmen, put out thy lights ; thy selfe confound
 With grieve, to see thy teare-swolne cōsorts drownd,
 Thy late Attendants : See of forty seven
 None rescued from death, but wholly driven
 From hope, helpe, harbour ! recollect it thus,
 And joyne in mournefull Elegies with us.
 Husbands of Wives, Wives of their Husbands reft,
 Parents of Babes, Babes of their Parents left.
 Heere Widdow's tears, and there poor Orphans cryes,
 These fill the Cesterns of distilling eyes
 With confluence of teares. What a sad Night
 Hath damp't the beauty of a Nuptiall light
 With universall sorrow ?—Pray thee stay,
 And sayle along with me in this same way,
 This wat'ry Region, where the curled waves
 Afford us teares, and to their bodies graves :
 —See, see the leeking Vessell how it strives
 And combats with the waves, to save their lives !
 It sighs and seekes for Land, but press'd with weather,
 And her surcharged burden both together,
 While surging billowes mount above the brinke,
 Shee's forc'd to yeeld, and with her fraught to sinke.
 To sinke ! O silence that perplexing word,
 It will a Deluge of new grieve afford
 To the relenting *Reader*, who with teares
 Will rinse each comme and period that he heares :
 And wooe th' intraged waves, and chide them too,
 When he in milder tearmes shall cease to woo ;
 And in such home bred Dialect as this,
 Taxe them and tell them, that they did amisse.
 ☞ O should you now see how Child clings on Mother,
 Husband on Wife, Wife Husband, one on other,
 Grasping the yeelding Streames, who in remorse
 With wat'ry veils shroud their inchannel'd coarse ;
 Should you conceit these Objects, you with me
 Would cloze in one-united *Lachrymæ*.

O WINDERMERE, who art renown'd afarre
 For thy sole-breeding there unvalued *Charre*,

And with thy spacious channell doest divide
 Two antient Counties seated on each side ;
~~Is~~ May thy fresh waters salt and brackish turne,
 And in their chang'd condition henceforth mourne ;
 May these distilling conduits of thine,
 Loosing their native sweetnesse flow with brine :
 Tuning each accent of this accident
 To Swanlike Odes of dying dreriment.
 What did incense thee thus ? what furious fate ?
Tethis and *Hymen* were they at debate ?
 Did any impious one this shipwracke cause,
 Some high Delinquent to Heav'ns sacred Lawes,
 Whose deepe-dyde sinne did so the State infest
 As it became a Scourge unto the rest
 That were his haplesse *Consorts* ? or some wretch,
 Some hideous *Hagge*, or *late-reprived* Witch
 Sprung from those desart Concaves, forlorne Cells,
 Raising these stormes with their infernall Spells ?
 No ; No ; nor this, nor that, nor any these
 Gave life to these expiring miseries.
 It was that fixt decree, to which 'tis fit
 That wee who are his Creatures should submit. . . .

But let me now divert my dolefull Scene,
 And pencyle these who now have drowned bene,
 In their owne native feature ! “ These were such
 Who, to relieve their Meniey, labour'd much
 In their industrious Wool-worke ; justly fam'd,
 And for their Manuall labour *Sheare-men* nam'd.
 An usefull mystery ! which though it make
 Course cloaths, and such as ne're did *Alnage* take,
 Yet 'tis commodious to the Common-weale,
 And fit for Sale, although unfit for Seale.
 For if th' poore work-man scarcely can supply
 With late and earely toile his Family
 Now when his Trading is exempt and freed,
 In paying *Alnage* how should hee succede ?
 But Heav'ns be blest for our dread Soveraigne,
 Who cheeres with freedome such an honest gaine.

Most then of these wract Passengers were such
 Whom never yet ambition did tutch,
 Grinding oppression, griping avarice,

" Conscience their praise, and competence their prize.
 Much comfort (stire) crowns such wheres'ere they dye,
 Though drencht below, their thoughts are fixt on hye.

But amongst these, both *love* and *blood* doe urge
 An higher straine of passion for my* GEORGE.
 Of pregnant ripe conceit, firme to his friends,
 And ne're soak't Clients purse with endlesse ends ;
 Young, yet well-read in houres ; fixing his love
 On *Lawes* Divine and on the *Land* above.
 Such dispositions make a good *Attorney*,
 And wing his passage for an heav'nly journey :
 Where he *this fee* may for his labourerne,
 Peaceful Eternity without a *Terme*.

☞ A just weeke after, and same houre o'th day,
 His Corpes was found, that hee was throwne away,
 Untouch't and undisfigur'd ; to imply
 Mans face i'th *Depths* reteines a Majesty.

Next Him, those nursing fosters of my Three,
 Three litle ones, whom they so carefullie
 Tender'd, exact of me their funerall teares,
 With such a Monument as *Vertue* reares
 On her true-meaning followers : for to show
 How their industrious Master and these two
 Exprest their love and zeale to me and mine,
 Would aske a lasting-living-loving-line :
 And Gratitude keeps somewhat to requite ;
 " To *Him* my love, to *Them* my last good-night.
 Yet recollect those latest words She said,
 When shee that fatall vessell enter'd,
 While thrice she lanch'd forward to the Maine,
 Thrice she step'd in, and thrice retyr'd againe,
 As one divining what would after fall,
 With trickling teares thus on the Oares did call ;

Oh stay thy Boat, secure me and my Mate !
 " One may foresee, but not prevent their fate.
 Next these, His losse, who at my Table fed,
 And as one of mine owne, was sometimes bred,
 I mone ; One may their duty farre forgit,

* Mr. George Wilson, Attorney in the Common Law : one of pregnant conceit, and sincere in the course of his practise.

Yet God forbid, wee should not this remit,
As wee hope for remission : Hee is dead,
And with him my distasts are buried.
To waft him o're (no doubt) it did Heav'ns please,
From th' waters of *Contention* unto *Peace*.

For th' rest, I knew them onely by report,
Of honest fame though of obscurer sort.
And these with those I confidently trust
Are now enrowl'd ith' number of the just.

The poem then continues :—

Now to our selves let something be applide,
and proceeds accordingly. By the way, we find

And *Archie* that rich foole, when he least dreames,
For purchast lands, must be possest of streames :

written two years before Archie Armstrong's disgrace at Court and retirement to Arthuret. There is some labouring of the point in dramatic speeches attributed to a father, a mother, and a child in the face of death ; but the rather rough verse and commonplace thought are redeemed, to my mind, by touches of nature and imagination, and the poem ends, not without nobility :—

Draw in thy sailes, my *Muse* : and muse on *Him*,
Who free from staine, assoiles our soules from sin.
Who, when the *Waters* compasse us halfe dead,
The *Depths* enclose us, *weedes* enwrappe our head,*
When wee to th' bottome of the *mountaines* go,
And th' *Earth* with *barres* immures our bodies too ;
Yet from the *Pit* will *Hee* our *Spirits* raise,
To whom bee still the sacrifice of Praise.

A " Sonnet " or lyric of twenty lines finishes the book.
Now, beside the remarkable description of Windermere as beautiful scenery, to which Mr. Charles Hughes has

* Jonah, 2. 5 : 6 [original note].

drawn attention, I think it worth while to note the statement of Windermere's immunity until that catastrophe from " the least perill." It is in harmony with all we gather as to the peace of the inner dales of our district at a time when other parts of England, not far away, were by no means free from strife (see *Elizabethan Keswick*, Tract series, viii., pp. iv., v.). The antiquity of the Ferry is discussed by Mr. Cowper in his *Hawkshead* (p. 247), but there is apparently only one mention of it before this date. The denial of any witchcraft in the cause of the accident shows our author as rising above the common belief of his age. His sympathy with Kendal industries is noteworthy, and his mention of Windermere char is interesting, though at first sight puzzling. His phrases " sole-breeding, and peculiar kinde of fishes (commonly called charres)" and " renowned afarre For thy sole-breeding there unvalued charre," I understand as " known for her unique production and peculiar kind of fish," and " renowned as the only breeding-place of char, not valued so highly at Windermere as elsewhere." He may have been mistaken* in supposing that Windermere was the sole place where char bred, for Sir Daniel Fleming, on February 19th, 1662-3, had " eleven dozen of charres from Conistone for four pies, 1s. 6d." (Hist. MSS. Com., xii., Rydal).

Another point on which he seems to differ from evidence already to hand is in the statement that none of 47 persons in the Great Boat escaped. The Grasmere parish register (quoted by Mr. Cowper, *Hawkshead*, p. 244) mentions " one that escaped." Our author, perhaps, rhetorically exaggerates the completeness of the catastrophe; but his testimony to the effect that not the married couple but the bride's mother and brother were drowned may correct the belief that the accident involved Thomas

* As Bishop Gibson points out that Camden was; see his edition of *Britannia*, 803.

Benson and Elizabeth Sawrey, married at Hawkshead October 15th, 1635, and buried at Bowness. The Grasmere list does not mention any couple named Benson; but it names “ Gervis Strickland’s wife, of Staveley,” and “ Rolland Strickland ”; the Hawkshead register gives the wedding of William Sawrey and Thomasin Strickland on October 18th, 1635. It was their wedding, probably, from which some of the party were returning to Staveley “ in the Barony of Kendal ” with others from Hawkshead market, on a squally night, overloading the boat. Looking farther into Hawkshead register I find that a still-born child to William Sawrey was buried July 12th, 1636, and that Thomasin his wife was buried in the church, July 25th. On June 10th, 1638, William Sawrey married Hester Sands.

Though these gleanings of local history are not without value to those who are interested in the neighbourhood, this tract may have a higher place accorded to it if I am right in suggesting that it was written by the famous Richard Brathwaite, author of many works in prose and verse between 1611 and 1665. In this period he was living at Burneside Hall, and aged about 47, a reformed and chastened character. Much of the change in his tone of thought was owing to his wife’s long illness, from consumption, and death on March 7th, 1633. His romping muse had been sobered, and for some time back his writings had been elegiac and religious, though as full of verbal quips and odd turns as before. His youngest child, John, was born February 19th, 1630; he and his sisters Alice and Agnes may have been the “ three little ones ” fostered by the worthy couple, as it seems, who were drowned at the Ferry. The Grasmere list names “ John Beck, his wife, his son, and a servant maide, of Kendall,” “ John Pearson and his wife of Skelsmore ” (Skelsmergh) “ and George Baxter and his wife ” as victims of the disaster. One or other pair may

have their anonymous epitaph in this poem, but the passage is not very lucid.

The inmate of the author's house, whom he had not liked, but regretted, can hardly be identified.

Mr. John F. Curwen kindly draws my attention to the entry in the *Kendal Boke off Recorde* (ed. R. S. Ferguson, p. 38), showing that a George Wilson was elected one of the 24 Assistants on April 18, 1633, and Chamberlain in 1634; but that he died and was replaced in 1635. This must surely be the George Wilson of the poem.

Some points in the printing of the book associate it with Richard Brathwaite. In 1630 he began to publish through Robert Bostock of the King's Head in St. Paul's churchyard, and in 1631 to have his books printed by Felix Kingston; in 1632 Kingston printed another book for him; in 1633 and 1634 two books of Brathwaite's and in 1635 two books more were printed by Kingston and sold by Bostock, and his third book in 1635, though printed by another, was published through Bostock. The *Nuptiall* must have been the next, and this, as the title shows, was printed by Felix Kyngston and sold by Robert Bostocke. Then, again, the hand in the margin, or "digit" as he called it, was a favourite mark of emphasis with Brathwaite, though in most cases the reason for its use is not obvious. It was perhaps some private allusion and personal fancy that suggested it to him, a whimsical writer. For example, in *Barnabee's Journal* it occurs on the mention of the man at Clapham (Yorks.) who invited him to a breakfast of one herring. In the *Nuptiall* it occurs thrice in Brathwaite's own style. His use of inverted commas at the beginning of a sentence, not always a quotation, without any close, is characteristic. His string of alliterative adjectives, joined by hyphens, as in

Would aske a lasting-living-loving-line,
resembles lines in *Barnabee* :—

Jovial-jocund-jolly Bowlers (part i.).
Chast-choice-chary-merry wenches (part ii.).
Secret-sacred thirst of treasure (part iv.).

The adjective with hyphen in "sole-breeding," seen also in "The Soules sole-harbour" (in a part of the Introduction to the *Nuptiall* not here printed), is paralleled by "The Soule's Sole-love" in *Essaies on the Five Senses* (1635). "One-united" for "combined" gives another unusual, though different, employment of the hyphen. These peculiarities are not to be attributed to the printer, for they occur in books printed by different persons; they are Brathwaite's.

In matters of style there are many resemblances between Brathwaite's known works and the *Nuptiall*. Beside the more general similarities of rhythm, diction, spontaneity, oddity, false rhymes, and a show of learning in Greek and Latin quotations (there is one Greek marginal note in the *Nuptiall*), the eye for natural scenery here shown is matched, for example, by

Topcliffe from tops of cliffs first tooke her name,
And her cliffe-mounted seat confirms the same:
Where streames with curled windings overflowne
Bestow a native beauty on the towne.

(Barnabee, part iii).

Not to go too far into detail, we can compare "Ilands in every part of the Mere *interveined*" with "Every one of which subjects you shall finde *interveined* with choice variety of pleasing tales" (*Ar't asleepe, Husband?* 1640).

Two or three points relating to the matter of the text seem to me finally convincing. Speaking of Kendal in *Barnabee*, part iv., Brathwaite says:—

Now to *Kendall*, for cloth-making,

and adds a note:—

A Towne so highly renoued for her commodious cloathing, and industrious Trading, as her name is become famous in that kind. Camb[den] in Brit[annia].

This shows his knowledge of Camden, to whom also the *Nuptiall* refers for further account of Windermere; and it indicates, as many other passages of Brathwaite indicate, his interest in the Kendal woollen industries. In verses addressed "to my Country-Cottoneers" (*Essaies*, 1620) he bids them

Droupe not, though dead, you may revive againe
By th' cheerful beams of such a Sovereigne, etc.,

referring to hopes which at last were fulfilled through the charter of 11 Charles I. (1636)—a charter no doubt known to be in preparation when our author was writing the passage in the *Nuptiall* ending

But Heav'ns be blest for our dread Sovereigne
Who cheeres with freedome such an honest gaine.

The most conclusive of all such parallels is the note, gratuitously dragged into the *Nuptiall*, on Hawkshead, "the Charter of which was procured by that industrious Agent for his Countrey, Mr. Allen Nicholson." It is Brathwaite only who attributed the charter to him (Cowper's *Hawkshead*, p. 385) in *Remains after Death* (1618) in an epitaph

Upon the late decease of his much-lamented friend and kinsman, Allen Nicholson, a zealous and industrious member both in Church and Commonweale.

. . . And well may Hauxide grieve at thy Departure,
Since shee receiv'd from thee her ancient charter.

If this reasoning be correct, we have to thank Mr. Charles Hughes not only for a rare tract of local interest, but for an unknown work by the first of the Lake poets, and one which, with all its drawbacks, has some literary value. Richard Brathwaite was a man of great talent and learning, if not a poet of the highest order. In the year following the publication of the *Nuptiall*, another

drowning accident happened. Another man, one of the Puritans whom Dapper Dick despised, wrote a poem upon it, curiously similar in some points of treatment, a product of the same Renaissance learning and the same literary movement, but touched with the strength of Milton and the music of *Lycidas* ; and it is no wonder that nothing more was heard of *The Fatall Nuptiall* except as a curiosity.
