

ART. II.—*Beggar's Breeches (Grange Fell) Cartmel.* By
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Read at Grange, June 17th, 1919.

THERE are four small fields of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres at Grange Fell, known locally by the above title, abutting on the main road from Grange to Cartmel and adjoining the road running to the High Farm, about which there is a curious history that, strange to say, is not referred to in Stockdale's erudite "*Annals of Cartmel.*"

The Report of the Endowed Charities, dated 1898, says this land is still distinguished by the name of "*Beggars Breeches*" and is said to have been purchased from the money found in the breeches of a beggar, and that the rent therefrom of £10 9s. 8d. is applied in aid of the Poor rate.

Anent the above a friend forwarded me a copy of the *Courier* published in London on the 28th day of January, 1799, which contains the following curious news paragraph:—

Last week, a person advanced in years, who had travelled in the country in the capacity of a common beggar for a long time, was found in a perishing state upon the high road about three miles from Cartmel (Lancashire) by Mr. Robinson, of Broughton Lodge, who humanely procured assistance to convey him to a neighbouring house, where all possible means were used to recover him, but without effect. He died the next day, when an obstinate dispute took place between the Overseers of the Poor for that division and the person employed to make his coffin; the Overseers alledging that ash or sycamore, would be cheaper than deal; and to put the parish to unnecessary expense was bad policy. However, whilst undressing the man, one observed that his breeches weighed very heavy, upon the examination of which (to the great surprise of all present) One hundred and eighty five guineas were found carefully sewed up in the waist-

band of the same. The contention then ceased between the Overseers and the coffin maker ; an oak coffin was then thought absolutely requisite, with an elegant plate, &c. The popular voice was, that as he died in a christian country, he ought to be buried in a christianlike manner ; in consequence of which warm ale, and other comfortable things were produced at the time of the interment, according to the custom of the country, when a person of property dies. It is said that an heir at law has appeared from a village called Condergreen.

Reading the above induced me to pursue enquiries and I found an old reprint made in 1852 by Mr. Soulby of Ulverston, of Report of Commissioners appointed to enquire concerning charities for the education of the poor so far as the same dealt with North Lonsdale charities. I append extracts from this Report which pertain to our subject matter.

About 5 acres of allotment adjoining (to two allotments which identify the fields) were bought by the inhabitants of Cartmel with the sum of 185½ guineas which were found in the pocket of a travelling beggar, who died in 1799, in a lodging house, in Upper Holker. The whole of the rent of the allotments is carried to the account of the poor rate and disposed of to poor house-keepers not receiving regular pensions. There is no particular time of distribution, but when any housekeeper applies for relief it is supposed to be supplied from funds of the Charity. It is to be observed however that there can be no charitable use affecting the land purchased with the money found in the pocket of the beggar which produces the greater portion of the funds. The following is a short account furnished by Mr. Field of Cartmel, of the person calling himself William Fearn, in whose possession was found the sum of 185½ guineas, and who died at Garrat House, in the township of Upper Holker, on January 8th, 1799. Mr. Robinson of the Backbarrow Cotton Works, on his return from Backbarrow to Broughton Lodge, found a poor man lying in the snow unable to travel. He called on William Muncaster, a farmer at Broughton, and desired him to take a cart and convey the person to the overseer's. When he arrived at Cartmel the man seemed very feeble. Some tea and other refreshments were given to him, and he was then taken to Richard Chapman's, who kept a lodging-house, where he was

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attended by Mr. Brockbank, surgeon. He complained of poverty, and said he had but a shilling, given to him by Mr. Robinson, and a few half pence ; and stated that he was going to Condergreen to see his son who resided there. He objected to having a letter sent, saying, he would be better in a day or two ; but if not, then it might be forwarded. He, however, died without any communication being made to Condergreen, and it was afterwards found that he had no son residing there, nor any person who knew him. On removing the clothes from off the body, there was found secreted in them the sum above named, all in gold. He travelled the country with a Certificate, purporting to having received it from St. Thomas's Hospital, London, certifying that he had undergone a painful surgical operation. This turned out to be a forgery. His death was advertised in the public journals of the day, and numerous letters were received from persons residing in various quarters claiming to be his next of kin, &c. ; but not one could give a satisfactory account of him, or describe his person, so as to become entitled to his property. He was a tall man, being upwards of six feet in stature.

Thus did the beggar's secret hoard procure him the interment of a man of property, with warm ale and other comfortable things for his mourners, but better still it has served for over a century to lighten the lot of many Cartmel poor housekeepers not in receipt of regular pensions.
