

An Itinerary of Nottingham.

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*Being information as to the history of the Streets, Buildings, etc.,
of the City, collected from many sources by*

J. HOLLAND WALKER, F.S.A., F.R.HIST.S.

This itinerary was prepared before modern conditions altered the lay-out of the streets of Nottingham, It has been thought better to leave the itinerary as it was when written so as to preserve some record of many streets and houses now destroyed.

THE POULTRY.

THE Poultry was called the Women's Market in 1396 and the Hen Cross in 1416, and got its present name about 1800, but from 1332 to 1799 it is frequently referred to as Cuckstool Row, because presumably, the cucking stool or ducking stool was kept there. This implement of torture was removed and more or less abandoned in 1731 consequent upon the death of a woman who had been ducked as a scold.

The interesting house in this row is the "Flying Horse" Hotel which bears on its signboard the year 1483. Its architecture, however, seems to point to a little later date than then and I should assign it to Elizabeth's reign, probably contemporary with the Spanish Armada. Mysteriously enough this interesting house can supply very little gossip, all that is known about it is that in the 18th century it was called the "Travellers Inn." But all it lacks in gossip it makes up in architectural interest for it is a most excellent

example of the filching of public land from the streets which took place all through the Middle Ages. The timbers carrying overhanging upper stories were apt to become weak and were strengthened by posts extending from their outer ends to the ground and these posts curiously enough have been suffered to remain for centuries and are now represented by pillars which intrude very much upon what centuries ago must have been the public roadway. Its modern name of "The Flying Horse" is interesting. The Flying Horse is Pegasus, the steed of the Muses, upon whose back Bellerophon mounted when he went to destroy the Chimera. But it has a more interesting origin than this reference to classic myth for the Flying Horse was the badge of the Knights Templars who were suppressed in 1309. This order of military monks undertook to protect the Temple at Jerusalem from the assaults of the infidel and in order better to perform their work they vowed themselves to poverty and to emphasize how poor they were they took for their badge a picture of two men mounted upon one horse, showing that they were too poverty stricken to adequately horse their knights. This badge was copied and re-copied and although it always remained evident what the horse was meant to represent the two human figures upon its back seemed to have mystified the copyists and they became less and less like men and more and more like wings so that when the Renaissance came along and men's minds were filled with all sorts of classic stories they recognised in this weird, winged horse Pegasus the Flying Horse of the Muses.

VICTORIA STREET.

Victoria Street is quite modern and the whole of this part of the town has been so re-modelled that its

ancient lay-out has been completely lost. Originally a narrow lane called Chandler or Chandlers Lane ran more or less parallel with Bottle Lane. Bottle Lane and Chandlers Lane joined and after a few yards debouched upon Bridlesmith Gate about where the County Club now stands. But in 1863 this ancient road was cleared away and widened into the modern Victoria Street, which is only noticeable because underneath it runs the first subway for conducting sewers, gas pipes and so forth that was ever constructed out of London. It was illuminated in 1875 in celebration of a visit of an engineering society, for it was a great step in public work and our forefathers were justly very proud of it and desired to show it to their contemporaries.

The old Post Office at the corner of Old Queen Street and Victoria Street was built in 1868 from the designs of a certain Mr. Williams, a London architect, and the only other object which reminds us of the past is the Journal Buildings on the northern side which are now occupied for purposes other than that of newspaper production.

The first newspaper to be published in Nottingham appears to have been *The Weekly Courant*, which was issued by William Ayscough in August, 1712, and its price was three halfpence. It was succeeded by *The Nottingham Post*, commenced in 1716. In 1723 *The Nottingham Post* came into Mr. Ayscough's hands, and we find him publishing in that year *The Nottingham Weekly Courant*. Its price was twopence, which was raised eventually to twopence-halfpenny. This *Courant* lasted until 1769, when it was bought by a Mr. Cresswell, who changed its name once more into *The Nottingham Journal*. There was a rival publication *The Nottingham Mercury*, in existence some time about

1723, and in 1772 George Burbage started *The Nottingham Chronicle*, but this was not a success and only lasted for three years. *The Nottingham Journal* passed through various hands and eventually in 1841 became the property of Mr. Bradshaw. In 1780 Henry Cox commenced *The Nottingham Gazette*, but this only lasted a few weeks, and in 1808 Charles Sutton established *The Nottingham Review*. There were various papers which had an ephemeral existence such as *The Nottingham Herald*, but none of them were of great importance until *The Nottinghamshire Guardian* was established in 1846. It was first published by B. S. Oliver of Long Row, and eventually came into the hands of the Forman family, with whom it still remains.

HIGH STREET.

High Street is a narrow and short thoroughfare, but it has always been of very great importance in the polity of Nottingham. Its very name—High Street—means the principal street. It is part of a secondary route which in very early times was constructed to pass the western end of the Enclosure of ancient Nottingham and during the earlier part of the Middle Ages it formed a link in the thoroughfare through the town represented to-day by Narrow Marsh, Drury Hill, Bridlesmith Gate, High Street and Clumber Street. This importance remained with it when wheeled traffic was introduced and the main way through Nottingham passed up Hollowstone and Low Pavement to Bridlesmith Gate. But it is curious that it always has remained so narrow and it must have been an extremely difficult bottle neck at the zenith of coaching in the early part of last century.

The district at its southern end has been so much modified in modern times that its ancient topography is somewhat difficult to make out, for as we have seen Victoria Street has completely changed the run of the old Chandlers Lane. In olden times there appears to have been a sort of square round about the Hen Cross, and the portion we now call Bridlesmith Gate extending from Bottle Lane to Victoria Street was called Hen Cross Row, but all this was completely changed when the thoroughfare was widened and the houses set back in 1870.

High Street was called Sadler Gate in 1677 by Dr. Thoroton, and its exceeding narrowness remained until about 1900 when it was set back on its eastern side in the course of which alterations a series of shops of no great antiquity were done away with and a piazza similar to those still remaining on Long Row was destroyed for the erection of Messrs. Boots Ltd., central premises.

There are few remains of antiquity in High Street, but its memories have a great deal of interest. Messrs. Armitage, grocers, premises (number 2) were erected about sixty or seventy years ago (?) and the widening of High Street in front of them is due to the perspicuity of Samuel Fox who founded the business. Samuel Fox was an extremely fine character. He was a member of the Society of Friends and was born in 1781 and died in 1868, but although a member of so exclusive a religious body, any good work which would ameliorate the condition of his contemporaries was fish for his net. In 1798 he assisted Mr. Singleton in founding the Adult School in East Street. This was the first establishment of its kind and its value cannot be over estimated. In those days reading and writing, at any rate amongst

the labouring classes, were rare accomplishments. The provision for education amongst the poor was of the most elementary and unsatisfactory description, and the only opportunity that a workman had of learning something of the pleasures of culture came to him through voluntary efforts of such institutions as the adult school, where devoted amateur teachers attended week by week to teach the rudiments of education to adult pupils who would otherwise have been left in the slough of ignorance.

Then Fox was associated with that excellent body The Nottingham Board of Health which was purely unofficial, but which was called into being, or at any rate provided with its main activities, by the terrible outbreak of cholera in the town in 1832. In that year there were 800 cases of this terrible disease in Nottingham of which 300 proved fatal. The burial ground accommodation of the town was utterly inadequate to deal with the situation, and further than this the Barker Gate burial ground was completely surrounded by houses, the inhabitants of which were terrified at the prospect of infected bodies being interred so close to their place of residence. Attempts were made to provide new and more suitable burial grounds, but this required permission from government headquarters and the wheels of the government revolved slowly even in emergencies. The situation became desperate and at last Fox provided a close of ground in Bath Street free of charge for the interments of these unfortunate bodies and then arose a curious situation. The two men who did most for the town during this awful visitation were Samuel Fox, the Quaker, and the Rev. R. W. Willson, the Roman Catholic Priest, who afterwards became Bishop of Nottingham and built St. Barnabas Cathedral. Fox consented to the consecration of his burial ground by

the Archbishop of Canterbury and by doing so he quite unwittingly passed the control into the hands of the Church of England and excluded all dissenting ministers, so that both he and Mr. Willson and their friends were unable to hold burial services within these quarters. The position was felt to be ridiculous and so a strong committee was formed in the town, of which Fox was the most active member, which obtained an Act of Parliament incorporating them for the establishment of a cemetery in Nottingham. They agreed that part of the cemetery might be consecrated by the Archbishop if so desired, but that the other part should not be consecrated by him and should consequently be opened for the ministration of other denominations than the Anglicans and hence arose the Nottingham General Cemetery at the top of Derby Road. Fox was full of all good works. During the famine years 1847-48-49 he obtained great stocks of maize flour which was a cheap substitute for other cereals and which was hitherto unknown in the town. This he retailed to all comers at 2d. a stone less than it cost him and so he saved many lives. Crowds of folk besieged his premises to obtain this boon and a pleasant story is told of Fox's conduct upon this occasion. He insisted that everybody should be served in the order in which they arrived, high or low, rich or poor, all had to take their place in the queue. This system was quite foreign to the feeling of the times for in those days the possession of wealth and position always gave people precedence. It is related that upon one occasion a well-dressed and affluent lady, availing herself of this custom, pushed in before her humbler fellow customers, some of whom had been waiting a considerable time. Fox watched her and when she reached the counter he touched her on the shoulder and

said "Thee get back and take thy place at the end of the queue else thou wilt get no flour." But I think the most delightful story that I know of Fox's practical charity is the one concerning an unfortunate coster whose barrow full of trade stuff was upset in front of Fox's shop. The poor man's goods were scattered hither and thither in the mud, his barrow was ruined and his stock-in-trade completely destroyed. Passers-by paused to look at the ruin and noticing the coster's despondent looks began to express their sympathy for him. Fox coming out of his shop saw the disaster and the sympathetic looks of the bystanders one of whom said "Oh, I am sorry!" Fox took this up and said, "Art thou so, friend, so am I, I am sorry 5/-, how much art thou?" His shop was always crowded with customers, for in those days Quaker honesty was a byword and everybody got the fairest of terms in his shop. Mrs. Gilbert tells us of its arrangements, and it really must have been a very charming sight, for the two long counters were divided between the men and the women, the one being served by men in Quaker costume, while at the other counter the women were served by Quakeresses dressed in lavender gowns with white shawls, low shoes and tunnel bonnets. All the assistants were teetotallers and all were serious-minded people.

But this site of Fox's shop has still older associations and a very romantic story to tell. In 1754, when George II. was on the throne, the site was occupied by the stately home of Alderman Trigge who was the wealthiest Alderman that Nottingham had known. His house was set well back from the street and in front of it was a row of discreetly clipped elms and there was a great gate of beautiful wrought ironwork leading from the street into the forecourt. A verandah raised a foot

or two above the ground stood in front of the house and there is a pleasant description preserved of how Alderman Trigge and his wife were wont to sit in their high-backed chairs on this veranda, he dressed in his plum-coloured velvet suit with diamond knee buckles and great silver shoe buckles and she in her gown of rich brocade with hooped petticoat and toupeed head-dress for an hour or two each afternoon when the weather was suitable, talking to their friends and watching the busy traffic of the High Street. They were blessed with two children, a boy and a girl, but the boy died in early manhood leaving his sister the sole heiress to Alderman Trigge's vast wealth. The worthy Alderman was enlightened beyond his times and provided his daughter with the most liberal education that the day could offer, this in itself being a miracle for his times, for in those days the idea that a commoner's daughter should want or should receive any education was not to be thought of. The girl seems to have added to her attractions extreme good looks and in due course she was courted by a certain Colonel Benton who was a scion of the aristocracy and was very wealthy. The whole arrangement was extremely happy and looked like making for a life of usefulness and pleasure for the two. But death stepped in and Colonel Benton died in tragic circumstances in his 22nd year, on the very day which had been selected as his wedding day. He left all his fortune to Miss Trigge, and the curious legacy of a new carriage which had been prepared for their wedding journey, and he showed his fondness for her by expressing a wish that when she married, as he felt sure she would, she would use this carriage on her wedding day. The poor girl was heart-broken, for the match

was entirely a love match, and for months she secluded herself, but time is a wonderful healer and youth must have its fling so by degrees she took up her broken life and became some faint reflection of her former self. She must have been very charming for she attracted the attention of Lord Lyttleton an able and excellent man of great wealth and of considerable literary pretension. He was the friend and patron, for instance, of the poet Thompson. Eventually a marriage was arranged between these two and was celebrated with a tremendous amount of public rejoicing, for Miss Trigge was no less popular in the town than was the worthy old Alderman. Streets were decorated, true lover's knots were worn by high and low, and everybody was full of joy at the happy union of this girl whose tragedy had won the sympathy of everybody. The wedding procession to and from the church was a magnificent spectacle, but true to her first love Miss Trigge made the journey in the coach that he had left to her. It was drawn by four horses who wore great mourning cloths, the coachmen and coachman's box were dressed in the deepest mourning. Still this sad skeleton at the feast did not temper the ardour of the joy of the happy consummation, but perhaps only tended to emphasize it. Lady Lyttleton's after life was happy, so much so that she lived to be over 100 years old and in the course of her long and useful life saw no less than five Lord Lyttletons.

Just by this site stood until the alterations a great gabled house which our grandfathers knew as "The Elizabethan House." It is interesting because it was within its walls that 100 years ago a certain man called Josiah Corbett traded in toys. He took into partnership a young man called Beecroft and the business was afterwards removed to the corner of the Exchange and

Smithy Row and has become a household word in the neighbourhood.

Of the postal history of High Street we said enough when we were considering Bridlesmith Gate, but High Street Place still remains and Messrs. Armitage Bros. still use the premises at the end of that little cul-de-sac which was erected for a Post Office in the early days of Nottingham's postal activities.

Messrs. Boots premises occupy the site of the "Blackamore's Head," which was probably the most aristocratic inn in Nottingham although I do not think that it did the most business. It must have been a great rambling place extending from what we call Pelham Street to High Street Place in the one direction and right up Pelham Street to opposite where Thurland Street now stands in the other direction. It had great folding doors leading into each of these streets and was complete with a great courtyard and all the appointments of a typical ancient inn. It has a certain coaching history, but we shall be able to consider the coaching story of Nottingham more fully when we get to the principal coaching inn of the town which stood elsewhere. The "Blackamore's Head" seems to have had a penchant for funerals. In 1778 the body of Mrs. Elizabeth Chaworth rested here for one night on its journey from London to Annesley. In 1787 the Duke of Rutland's body spent a night here en route from Dublin to Bottesford. Two years later in 1789 the Duke of Leeds's body lay for a night in one of its rooms on its way to Kniverton, near Rotherham, while, best known of all, in 1825 Lord Byron's body rested here for a night before interment at Hucknall, and these funerals of the aristocracy were by no means quiet affairs which could be conducted without disturbing the rest of the business

of the inn. They included innumerable professional mourners, pall bearers, hearses and other panoply of woe which must have cast a sad gloom over the old inn.

But there are other memories of the "Blackamore's Head" which are not so gloomy. In 1763 it was within its walls that a meeting was held, at which it was decided to construct a turnpike from Nottingham to Belper, then an important manufacturing town, passing through Wollaton, Trowell and Ilkeston, and this meeting must have been attended by very wealthy individuals for no less a sum than £3,000, a huge amount for those days, was subscribed before the meeting broke up.

Of course Tobias must be reckoned with when considering the "Blackamore's Head," and sure enough we find him there in 1731. It was an important occasion in his life, for Coney with whom he was already acquainted fetched him from his inn one night and took him to the "King's Head" in Narrow Marsh where he was introduced to Turpin. This was the first meeting of the two scoundrels and led to all manner of evil. But the first night appears to have been spent in revelry which was cut short by the ominous fact that Turpin "had to mount at dawn."

In 1830 the old inn was sold by the Duke of Newcastle who was its owner, and has now completely disappeared, leaving nothing but the shadow of its name behind.

PELHAM STREET.

Pelham Street is a modern name for a very ancient thoroughfare. In olden days it was called Gridlesmith Gate or sometimes Girdlesmith Gate. The derivation

of this name is rather obscure, but I think that it probably means Great Smith Gate. The name Smith does not necessarily mean a worker in metal although in modern times it has come to have that particular meaning, but anciently the term of Smith was applied to any artificer, so that Great Smith Gate possibly means that at some time or other this was the chief manufacturing district of Nottingham. The name was dropped about 1800 possibly because it was frequently confused with Bridlesmith Gate and the name of Pelham Street was adopted out of compliment to the Duke of Newcastle.

Like all other Nottingham streets it was extremely narrow, but in 1844 it was widened at the bottom and up to about where Thurland Street now is, but it remained a bottle neck at the top for ten years longer, and it was not until 1854 that this inconvenience was rectified and the street was widened to its present width at its entrance to Carlton Street. There is not much of interest remaining in the modern street for the property in the centre of the town was too valuable to remain unmodernised so that the houses and shops abutting this street are mostly of recent construction, but although there is little tangible remaining of the great past of this street there are many memories still clinging to it. At the south-east corner stood the small house which was the town house of the Byron family, and it was here that Lady Byron, the last of that historic family to live in Nottingham, died about 1820.

Just opposite this point there is a curious break in the footway on the other side of the road, the house suddenly projecting a couple of feet. This break has an interesting history for in 1674 George Gregory, the representative of the well known Gregory family, built

for himself a town mansion fronting upon Carlton Street, and quite unconcernedly he filched a couple of feet from the public thoroughfare and advanced his forecourt so that it projected into the already constricted entrance from Gridlesmith Gate into Carlton Street. It is a curious comment upon the times that such was the power of the family nobody seemed to have the courage, even if they had the inclination, to protest against this outrage.

The "Blackamore's Head" as we have seen extended up the south side of Pelham Street and had courtyard gates opposite where is now Thurland Street, but that inn has completely disappeared as have also several other interesting inns which in times past were situated in this street. It was from the "Durham Ox" which was in Gridlesmith Gate that the post-gigs started to Lincoln and Newark and it was at the "Sun Inn," kept by Mr. Carter hereabouts, that in 1792 the Democrats established their headquarters. These Democrats were by no means popular in their day and generation for their avowed sympathies with the French Revolution and the American Independence led them into constant conflict with their fellow-countrymen which was reflected in Nottingham by a threat to burn down Mr. Carter's premises.

Another old inn which has disappeared from Pelham Street is the "Red Lion" which afterwards became known as "The Old Ship." In 1763 a very curious association was formed within its walls, for at a meeting of the aristocracy and gentry of the neighbourhood it was decided to form an association for the protection of fighting cocks. This association was the outcome of a strange outrage which had recently taken place at the "White Lion" in Clumber Street. That inn was

one of the best known cocking centres in the whole of the Midlands and a great match had been arranged between cocks representing London and those representing Nottingham. Huge sums had been staked on the success of one side or the other and a great gathering of aristocracy and sportsmen was expected. However, just before the great match somebody gained access to the walks attached to the "White Lion" where the cocks were being trained and succeeded in poisoning so many of them that the match had to be declared off, and although £50, which was a huge sum in those days probably equal to £500 nowadays, was offered for information as to the perpetrator of this deed, no information was ever obtained.

(To be continued.)