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THE HISTORY OF
KIRBY UNDERDALE

BY THE

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PREFACE.

IN collecting and thus making available the existing records, Mr. Shepherd has laid those who love Kirby Underdale village and parish under a great debt of gratitude. We do not always appreciate how truly we are the creatures of history, or how the customs of the countryside, the very structure of the village, the objects and landscape which are so familiar, have all naturally grown from the doings of past generations of men whose homes were our homes, who worshipped where we worship, who owned and tilled the same soil, who scanned no less anxiously than we the signs of the weather, and whose general wisdom and experience is incorporated for us in a surviving body of folk-lore and local custom. It is pleasant to trace in these pages some of the old footprints that the centuries have stamped upon our parish, and to note the continuance of the same families, such as, for example, that of Boyes, serving the same trade in the same place for nearly 200 years. It is good too as we look forward to know what we may of that which lies behind, so that we view the procession of life, in which we now play our part, in more true perspective.

For me, and for all my family, Garrowby has always held a place peculiarly its own. My father and mother had always loved it, and I remember the delight with which as children we used to be taken out riding by my father, and how a gallop on our ponies down the dales by Wareham, Bradholme and Thixendale, turning our heads for home through Brown Moor and Hanging Grimston seemed the height of human happiness. And then back to tea to eat delicious moor honey which was provided by John Marshall of Buckthorpe, in days when bee-keeping was a more prosperous industry than it has been of later years, to be followed between tea and bedtime by my father reading to us one of the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Many of my Garrowby memories gather round the Wordsworth family, who still, in the person of Miss Wordsworth, continue in charge of the house; and who in those days and up to a few years ago, through the two Joseph Wordsworths, father and son, used to help the agent in the day-to-day work of the estate. I recall now how, when my sisters or I were turned

out of the school room by our governess for doing our sums wrong, young Joseph Wordsworth, who was clever at sums, used to help us to get them right, while his mother, the house keeper, comforted us with Garrowby-made ginger-nuts and cowslip wine. Or how my sister, Mrs. Lane-Fox, and I were chased by a bull of William Wood's, running in what is now the park, but was then grass land attached to Cheesecake Farm. But I could go on for ever, in the pleasure of letting my mind stray over the recollections of a life which seems to have been entirely happy, and which was enriched by countless friendships with tenants and cottagers in every part of the estate. It is therefore for personal reasons, no less than for those more general, that I welcome the permanent record that Mr. Shepherd has produced of a place, which by friendship and association holds my affections as no other ever can.

Many who will value this little book will perhaps do so for some such personal grounds as these. But a story of this kind is a real contribution to the wider history of the country. It helps us to realise something more of the way in which our predecessors thought and lived. We are reminded that industrial depression is no new phenomenon, as we see the efforts made by Government in the reign of Charles II. to give relief to the woollen industry, by enacting under pain of penalty that every corpse should be buried in pure woollen, and that the clergy should duly record in the register that the law had been observed. From an entry in the churchwardens' accounts of 1790 it was evidently then found necessary to take steps to maintain some sort of order among the dogs which accompanied the congregation to Church, for an item of 5/- appears on account of "Whipping dogs out of Church." And, as we read of one Richard Wood of Poppleton, farming at Garrowby, being buried at Kirby Underdale after dying from wounds received from highwaymen on his way back from York in the winter of 1813-1814, we can picture to ourselves the vicissitudes and dangers of travel in the early years of the 19th century.

Occasionally too we get glimpses through local spectacles of events in the great world. During the Civil wars of Charles I., when the cause of the King was at a low ebb, and the Scottish army was approaching York, an entry of 1644 shows that the parishioners, exhorted thereto by their pastor John Shelton,

PREFACE.

signed the Solemn League and Covenant. But after the Restoration they were not apparently without misgiving at having so formally identified themselves and their parish with a cause, which by 1660 could no longer protect its adherents, and accordingly in that year the incriminating record of their names was cut out, leaving in solitary consistency the name of the rector who had died thirteen years earlier, and was therefore beyond the reach of Royalist retribution. Through the person of Admiral Richardson we get echoes of the Napoleonic wars, and other naval engagements in which he had taken part, and of which he always solemnly commemorated the anniversaries. He had brought back to Painsthorpe some guns, and as a child I used to hear from old inhabitants that they could well remember his firing them off on suitable occasions, as described by Mr. Shepherd. Local legend, I believe, had it that one such bombardment had inflicted several casualties on sheep in Megdale.

But here all the time we seem conscious of the very slight effect these events must have had upon a village life, which no doubt went on much as it had ever done until the inventions of the last 40 years, assisted by education, came in to quicken the pace, and in some respects change the direction. Even so, those who may be disposed to regret these changes may console themselves with the reflexion that the country-side still preserves relics of its historic independence. One example of this, quoted by Mr. Shepherd, is that by the custom of the county the official regulation of the calendar by eleven days in 1752 is even now by no means generally recognised in East Yorkshire—or perhaps in many other country districts—where Lady Day and Michaelmas tenancies, Martinmas, Holy Cross Day or Holy Rood, are still fixed by local custom and tradition eleven days later than the modern almanack proclaims.

But much of this is a digression from my principal purpose, which is to emphasise the extent to which Mr. Shepherd has deserved our thanks. It would be a great gain to county and national history if other villages could find their chronicler, as we have been fortunate enough to do.

IRWIN.

Delhi, March, 1928.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

The history of a nation is really the history of the life of its people. This looks like a mere tautology; but it is not so. It means that it is to the social life—the habits, customs, work—of the people that we must look some times for the causes, and always for the effects, of the political history of the nation. Nowhere is the life of the people more stable and continuous than in our country parishes; and nowhere is there a fuller supply of materials for the study of that life. The records of the tenure of lands, the manorial rolls, the very place names, registers, Churchwardens' accounts, lists of parsons in the parish church, and the story of the parish church itself can all yield to the expert and sympathetic student a vivid picture of the past. Who can be a more fitted and sympathetic historian of the parish than its parson, if he has the needful historical instinct and care and enthusiasm? For he knows the people living there who are the heirs of their past history, and the families, homes and fields which clothe with life and colour the dry bones of historical record.

It is this task of writing a history of his own parish which the Rector of Kirby Underdale has undertaken. Most gladly do I commend his book not only to the people of his beautiful parish, but also to all who care for that very characteristic bit of England, the East Riding of Yorkshire, and indeed to all students of our English life.

COSMO EBOR :

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Over thirty years residence in a parish with much historic interest, and a small but beautiful church has been an incentive to put together what could be learnt of its past in an accessible form. Lord Irwin has been most helpful and encouraging in connection with it. I have to thank Lord Halifax for allowing me to consult the estate documents at Hickleton, and to reproduce the family portraits. Mr. Thomas White has allowed me to see the deeds of his property, and the Rev. W. A. Schofield his transcripts of documents of the Sledmere estate. The Rev. C. V. Collier, F.S.A., has given me most valuable help and advice throughout. Prof. W. G. Collingwood, F.S.A. and his son Mr. R. G. Collingwood, F.S.A., have given expert opinions on the carving on the Roman Stone, and Mr. C. N. Bromehead on its geological character. Mr. John Bilson, F.S.A., has been most helpful as to the date and architecture of the church, and Prof. Hamilton Thompson, F.S.A., on the Mediæval documents. Sir Robert Scott, F.S.A., has given me much information about Rectors who were Cambridge men, and Sir Michael Sadler about graduates of Oxford. The Rev. H. Lawrance has thrown light on the careers of many Rectors and Curates, from the Norecliffe papers in his possession. Mr. F. T. Penty made the ground plan of the church. The Rev. E. C. Peters has given various details from the Registers of Newton on Ouse of the Bouchiers. The Yorkshire Archæological Society lent the block of the Roman Stone, and the Caldey Community those of Painsthorpe and its Calvary. My son, the Rev. W. L. Shepherd, has supplied most of the photographs which have been reproduced.

I thank all these, and any others I may have omitted to mention, for the kind help and interest without which this book could not have been written.

W. R. SHEPHERD.

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