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Title: The Book of Coniston

Author: W. G. Collingwood

Release date: October 17, 2013 [EBook #43968]

Language: English

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BOOK OF CONISTON \*\*\*

## THE BOOK OF CONISTON

BY  
W. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.,  
*Editor to the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and  
Archæological Society;*  
*Author of "The Life of John Ruskin," etc.*

THIRD EDITION—REVISED AND ENLARGED.

Kendal:  
Titus Wilson, Publisher.  
1906.

### PRESS NOTICES OF THE EARLIER EDITIONS.

"A capital little guide book."—*Daily News*.

"It is an interesting little volume."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"The ideal of a guide book."—*Carlisle Patriot*.

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"Confidently recommended."—*Ulverston Advertiser*.

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## I.—THE OLD MAN.

Our first walk is naturally to climb the Coniston Old Man. By the easiest route, which fortunately is the most interesting, there is a path to the top; good as paths go on mountains—that is, plain to find—and by its very steepness and stoniness all the more of a change from the town pavement and the hard high road. It is quite worth while making the ascent on a cloudy day. The loss of the panorama is amply compensated by the increased grandeur of the effects of gloom and mystery on the higher crags, and with care and attention to directions there need be no fear of losing the way.

About an hour and a half, not counting rests, is enough for the climb; and rather more than an hour for the descent. From the village, for the first ten minutes, we can take two alternative routes. Leaving the Black Bull on the left, one road goes up past a wooden bridge which leads to the Old Forge, and by Holywath Cottage and the gate of Holywath (J. W. H. Barratt, Esq., J.P.) and the cottages of Silverbank, through a gate opening upon the fell. Turn to the left, past sandpits in a fragment of moraine left by the ancient glacier which, at the end of the Ice Age, must once have filled the copper-mines valley and broken off here, with toppling pinnacles and blue cavern, just like a glacier in Switzerland. Note an ice-smoothed rock on the right, showing basalt in section. Among the crannies of Lang Crags, which tower above, broken hexagonal pillars of basalt may be found in the screes, not too large to carry off as specimens. In ten minutes the miniature Alpine road, high above a deep ravine, leads to the Gillhead Waterfall and Bridge.

An alternative start may be made to the right of the Post Office, and up the lane to left of the Sun Hotel; through the gate at Dixon Ground, and over a wooden bridge beneath the mineral siding which forms the actual terminus of the railway. Another wooden bridge leads only to the grounds of Holywath, but affords a fine sight of the rocky torrent bed with Coniston limestone exposed on the Holywath side. The Coniston limestone is a narrow band of dark blue rock, with black holes in it, made by the weathering-out of nodules. It lies between the softer blue clay-slates we have left, which form the lower undulating hills and moorlands, and the hard volcanic rocks which form the higher crags and mountains.

The cartroad to the right, over the Gillhead Bridge, leads to the copper mines and up to Leverswater, from which the Old Man can be climbed, but by a much longer route. We take the gate and rough path to the left, after a look at the fine glaciated rocks across the bridge, apparently fresh from the chisel of the sculpturing ice; the long grooves betray the direction in which the glacier slid over them in its fall down the ravine. From a stile over the wall the copper mines become visible above the flat valley-bottom, filled with sand from the crushing of the ore. The path leads up to the back of the Scrow among parsley fern and club moss, and fifteen minutes from the bridge bring us through a sheepfold to another stile from which Weatherlam is finely seen on the right, and on the left the tall cascade from Lowwater. A short ten minutes more, and we reach the hause (*håls* or neck) joining the crag of the Bell (to the left) with the ridge of the Old Man up which our way winds.

Here we strike the quarry road leading from the Railway Station over Banniside Moor, a smoother route, practicable (as ours is not) for ponies, but longer. Here are slate-sheds, and the *step* where the sledges that come down the steep upper road are slid upon wheels. The sledge-road winds round the trap rocks of Crowberry haws (the grass-grown old road rejoins it a little higher) and affords views, looking backwards, of Coniston Hall and the lake behind. Five minutes above the slate-sheds the road finally crosses Crowberry haws, and Lowwater Fall comes into view—a broken gush of foam down a cleft 500 feet from brow to base.

A shepherd's track leads to the foot of the fall and to the Pudding Stone, a huge boulder—not unlike the famous Bowder Stone of Borrowdale—a fragment from the "hard breccia" cliffs rising behind it, namely, Raven Tor high above; Grey Crag beneath, with the disused millrace along its flank; and Kernel Crag, the lion-like rock over the copper mines. Dr. Gibson, the author of *The Old Man, or Ravings and Ramblings round Conistone*, writing half-a-century ago, says:—"On this crag, probably for ages, a pair of ravens have annually had their nest, and though their young have again and again been destroyed by the shepherds they always return to the favourite spot."

He goes on to tell that once, when the parent birds were shot, a couple of strange ravens attended to the wants of the orphan brood, until they were fit to forage for themselves. On this suggestion, Dr. John Pagen White has written his poem in *Lays and Legends of the English Lake Country*, fancifully describing the raven on Kernel Crag watching from prehistoric antiquity the changes of the world around it, through past, present and future, to the crack of doom!

From the Pudding Stone experienced climbers can find their way up the ledges of Raven Tor to the top of Lowwater Fall. We follow the sledge road, and in five minutes reach Saddlestones Quarry, with its tram-lines and tunnelled level, and continually increasing platform of "rid" or débris.

Ten minutes' walk from the quarries brings us to Lowwater, with glimpses of Windermere in the distance, and Leverswater nearer at hand under the summit of Weatherlam. It is worth while turning off to the right hand to see the great blocks of stone that lie in the margin of the tarn, and at the head of the fall.

As we climb the zigzags to the highest quarries, over the slate which stands out in slabs from the sward, the crags of Brimfell and Buckbarrow opposite seem to rise with us. It is here, on a cloudy day when the tops are covered, that the finest impressions of mountain gloom may be found; under the cloud and the precipices a dark green tarn, savage rocks, and tumbling streams; and out, beyond, the tossing sea of mountain forms.

From the platform of the highest quarry, reached in ten minutes from the tarn, a rough and steep path to the left leads in five minutes more to the ridge, and the view of the lowland bursts upon us with the Westmorland and Yorkshire hills in the distance. Below, as Ruskin wrote when he first climbed here in 1867, "the two lakes of Coniston and Windermere, lying in the vastest space of sweet cultivated country I have ever looked over,—a great part of the view from the Rigi being merely over black pine-forest, even on the plains."

Fifteen minutes more take us up this steep arête to the top, 2626 feet above the sea.

There used to be three ancient cairns—the "Old Man" himself, his "Wife" and his "Son":—*man*, the Celtic *maen*, being the local name for a pile of stones, and the *Old Man* simply the name of the cairn, not of the whole mountain. These were destroyed to build the present landmark. The circle of stones we have passed marks the place of the Jubilee bonfire of 1887; the flare-lights of King Edward's coronation were shown from the top of the cairn, where in the days of fire signals was a regular beacon station.

The view on a clear day commands Ingleborough to the east, Snowdon to the south, the Isle of Man to the west, and to the north, Scafell and Bowfell, Glaramara and Skiddaw, Blencathra and Helvellyn: and beneath these all the country spread out like a raised model, with toy hills and lakes and villages. It is so easy to identify the different points with the help of the map, that it is hardly necessary to name them in detail. Under the distant Pennines of Yorkshire lie Windermere, Esthwaite Water, and Coniston with Monk Coniston Tarns at its head. Southward,—over Walney Scar, Blind Tarn and Dow Crags close at hand,—are the shores of Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary, with Black Combe rising dark against the sea. Westward, across the Duddon Valley, the steep rocky summits of Harter Fell and Hard Knott. The group close under our feet to the north includes Brimfell, Woolcrags, and the Carrs, with Grey Friar on the left and Weatherlam on the right, and in their hollows Lowwater and Leverswater. To the east of Helvellyn are Fairfield, Red Screes and Ill Bell, above the russet sides of Loughrigg and the distant detail of Ambleside.

At any time it is a fine panorama; but for grandeur of mountain line Weatherlam is the better standpoint. To walk along the ridge over springy turf is easy and exhilarating after the toil of the stony climb; and the excursion is often made. A mile to the depression of Levers Hause, another mile past Wool Crags and the Carrs, down Prison Band (the arête running eastward from the nearer side of the Carrs) to the dip at Swirl Hause; and a third mile over Blacksail, would bring you to Weatherlam Cairn. And a red sunset there, with a full moon to light you down the ridge to Hole Rake and the copper mines and home, is an experience to remember.

But for most of us enough is as good as a feast; and Weatherlam deserves a day to itself, and respectful approach by Tilberthwaite Gill. This walk leads from the village past Far End up Yewdale, turning to left at the sign post, and up between Raven Crag, opposite, and Yewdale Crag. At the next sign post turn up the path to the left, passing Pennyrigg Quarries, and then keep the path down into the Gill. The bridges, put up by Mr. Marshall, and kept in repair by the Lake District Association, lead through the ravine to the force at its head. Thence Weatherlam can be ascended either by Steel Edge, the ridge to the left, or breasting the steep slope from the hollow of the cove.

From the top of the Old Man we have choice of many descents. By Levers Hause we can scramble down—it looks perilous but is easy to a wary walker,—to Leverswater; and thence by a stony road to the copper mines and civilization.

By Gaits Hause, a little to the west of the Old Man, we can reach Gaits Water, and so across Bannside Moor to the village: or we can take the grassy ridge and conquer Dow Crags with a cheap victory, which the ardent climber will scorn. He will attack the crags from below, finding his own way up the great screes that border the tarn, and attack the couloirs,—those great chasms that furrow the precipice. Only, he should not go alone. Here and there the chimney is barred by boulders wedged into its narrow gorge: which to surmount needs either a "leg up," or

risky scrambling and some nasty jumps to evade them. These chimneys are described with due detail in the books on rock-climbing, but should not be rashly attempted by inexperienced tourists.

The simplest way down is along Little Arrow Edge. The route can be found, even if clouds blot out bearings and landmarks, thus. In the cairn on the top of the Old Man there is a kind of doorway. You leave that doorway square behind you, and walk as straight as you can forward into the fog—not rapidly enough to go over the edge by mistake, but confidently. Your natural instincts will make you trend a trifle to the left, which is right and proper. If you have a compass, steer south south-east. In five minutes by the watch you will be well on the grass-grown arête, thinly set with slate-slabs, but affording easy walking. Keep the grass on a slightly increasing downward slope; do not go down steep places either to right or to left, and in ten minutes more you will strike a ledge or shelf which runs all across the breast of the Old Man mountain, with a boggy stream running through it—not straight down the mountain, but across it. If you strike this shelf at its highest point, where there is no definite stream but only a narrow bit of bog from which the stream flows, you are right. If you find the stream flowing to your right hand, bear more to the left after crossing it. Five minutes more of jolting down over grass, among rough rocks which can easily be avoided, and you see Bursting Stone Quarry—into which there is no fear of falling if you keep your eyes open and note the time. By the watch you should be twenty minutes—a little more if you have hesitated or rested—from the top. Long before this the ordinary cloud-cap has been left aloft, and you see your way, even by moonlight, without the least difficulty towards the village; but though mist may settle down, from this quarry a distinct though disused road leads you safe home.

In ten minutes from the quarry the road brings you to Booth Tarn, through some extremely picturesque broken ground, from which under an ordinary sunset the views of the nearer hills are fine, with grand foreground. Booth Crag itself stands over the tarn, probably named from a little bield or shelter in ruins in a nook beneath it; and where the quarry road comes out upon Bannside Moss, the Coniston limestone appears, easily recognisable with its pitted and curved bands, contrasting with the bulkier volcanic breccia just above.

Beyond the tarn to the right are the volunteers' rifle-butts with their flagstaff. Take the path to the left, and in five minutes reach the gate of the intake, with lovely sunset and moonlight views of the Bell and the Scrow to the left, and Yewdale beyond; Red Screes and Ill Bell in the distance. Hence the road is plain, and twenty minutes more bring you past the Railway Station to Coniston village.

To give a good idea of the lie of the land there is nothing like a raised map. A careful and detailed coloured model of the neighbourhood (six inches to the mile, with the same vertical scale, so that the slopes and heights are not exaggerated, but true to nature) was made in 1882 under the direction of Professor Ruskin, who presented it to the Coniston Institute, where it has been placed in the Museum.

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## II.—THE LAKE.

Coniston Water it is called by the public now-a-days, but its proper name is Thurston Water. So it is written in all old documents, maps, and books up to the modern tourist period. In the deed of 1196 setting forth the boundaries of Furness Fells it is called *Thorstanes Watter*, and in lawyer's Latin *Turstini Watra*, which proves that the lake got its title from some early owner whose Norse name was Thorstein; in Latin, Turstinus; in English, Thurston. In the same way Ullswater was Ulf's water, and Thirlmere was Thorolf's mere, renamed in later times from a new owner Leathes water—though in the end the older title finally prevailed.

As a first rough survey it will be convenient to take the steam gondola, and check off the landmarks seen on her trip, an all too short half-hour, down to the waterfoot.

The start is from the pier near the head of the lake, at the quaint boathouse built seventy years ago, in what was then called the Gothic style, for the late Mr. John Beever of the Thwaite—the house on the slope of the Guards Wood above the Waterhead Hotel. The boathouse stands on a promontory made by Yewdale Beck, which falls into the lake close at hand, and brings down with every flood fresh material to build its embankment farther and farther into the lake. So rapidly is its work done that a boulder is pointed out, twenty yards inland, which was always surrounded by water twenty or thirty years ago.

Another cause helps to hasten their work, for it is in this part that the waves under the prevailing south-west winds attain their greatest size and strength. The steamer captain who lives here says that he has measured waves 65 feet long from crest to crest, five feet high from trough to crest. These great waves dash back the stones and gravel brought down by the becks and spread it northwards, embanking it in a ridge under the water from this point to Fir Point opposite. Dr. H. R. Mill, by his soundings in 1893, found the deepest part of the little northern reach to be hardly more than 25 feet; this was close to the actual head of the water, showing that it is the débris brought down by the Yewdale and Church Becks which is silting up the bed.

Looking round this northern reach, which the gondola does not traverse in her voyage, opposite

is Fir Point, with the boathouse of Low Bank; a little higher up in a bay, the twin boathouses of Lanehead and Bank Ground; then the landings for Tent Lodge and Tent Cottage, and the bathing house and boathouse belonging to Victor Marshall, Esq., of Monk Coniston Hall, in the woods at the head of the lake. At the true waterhead, where the road from Hawkshead joins the road round the lake, used to stand the Old Waterhead Inn. Nearer us are the boathouses at Kirkby Quay, and the pier of the (new) Waterhead Hotel.

Leaving the steamer pier we are at once in deep water. The soundings increase rapidly off the mouth of Church Beck, just below Mason and Thwaites' boathouse; the bottom, gently shelving for a few yards out, suddenly goes over a bank, and down at a steep angle to a depth of 125 feet. On the evening of August 5th, 1896, a boy named George Gill sank there out of reach of his companion, and was drowned before help could be got. At the very moment the Parish Council in the village was discussing regulations for boating and bathing. The sad news brought the members down to the waterside for a painful object-lesson in the necessity of life-saving apparatus. By private effort, in the absence of public authority, life buoys and lines have now been provided at the boathouses and piers, and it is hoped that all will co-operate in the proper use of such means in case of need.

We have now passed the boathouse of Coniston Bank on the left, and Coniston Hall on the right. Between the two the lake is at its broadest—nearly half-a-mile. Land's Point on the right narrows the lake to a third of a mile. Looking back, Yewdale Crag stands finely over the waterhead; Brantwood is opposite. Between Coniston Bank and Brantwood (fishermen and boat sailors may note) there is a shoal nearly rising to the surface in low water—a bank of stiff clay, about 50 yards off the east shore. On the right hand, in the second field below Land's Point, the dark-looking bank just above the foreshore is a mass of slag, the remains of an ancient bloomery or smelting furnace; and in the next field called the "Springs," half a mile below Land Point, there is another bloomery site, marked by a tree-grown hillock. Behind these, plantations cover the site of the ancient deer park of Coniston Hall. Exactly opposite the "Springs" bloomery is a promontory formed by Beck Leven, on which Ruskin's seat marks a favourite point of view embracing the whole of the waterhead and the crags around. Across the road from this seat and close to the beck are the slag mounds of another bloomery.

We are now crossing the deepest part of the northern basin of the lake, where Dr. Mill found over 150 feet of water. The bottom rises, when we pass Hoathwaite boathouse on the right, to little more than 125 feet, and off Fir Island deepens again, attaining 184 feet half a mile farther down—making this the deepest of the lakes after Wastwater, Windermere, and Ullswater, as its 5-1/2 miles of length makes it the longest except Windermere and Ullswater. Its normal level is 143 feet above the sea, though it rises and falls in drought and damp weather as much as six feet. Of the form of its bed Dr. Mill says:—"If the water were reduced to sea level, there would remain two small lakes, the southern measuring one mile and a half in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth, and having a maximum depth of 42 feet; the northern one, separated by a quarter of a mile, being only 9 feet deep, three-quarters of a mile long, and perhaps 200 yards wide at the most. Quite possibly the two might be connected by a channel, and give a long shallow lake of two and a half miles" (*Bathymetrical Survey of the English Lakes*, p. 39). This bank or dam between the two deeps is not caused by filling up from any stream like that at the steamer pier; it points to the fact, more strikingly seen in Windermere, that these long lakes, like most of the long valleys, are not mere troughs or grooves ploughed in the rock, but a series of basins, partly filled up with glacial débris, and partly joined together by glacial erosion, which broke and planed away the dividing barriers.

Fir Island (formerly from its owner called Knott Island, now the property of Arthur Severn, Esq., R.I., J.P.) is low and close to the water's edge, hardly distinguishable except by its grove of Scotch firs from the rest of the coast. In very dry weather it becomes a peninsula, but usually a boat can make the circumnavigation, though there is risk of shipwreck on the sharp rocks to the landward side. Near it, beyond the road which winds prettily along the uneven and craggy shore, are the ruins of Copland's Barn; and above it the great larch woods of the Heald, on a noble slope of nearly 700 feet from the brow of the fell to the lake. The western shore is formed by the long and varied slope of Torver Common, down which runs the Moor Gill. At its foot, exactly opposite Copland's Barn, is the most extensive of the bloomeries, with the ruins of an old hearth still to be found.

At last the continuous skylines are broken. On the left, a steep dingle runs up among rocks and woods to Parkamoor, a lonely farm on a bleak brow top; and on the right, the valley of Torver begins to open out, with glimpses of Dow Crags and the Old Man in a new aspect, showing their precipices boldly against the sky, and beneath them Sunny Bank and Oxness at the mouth of Torver Beck.

Peel Island is now before us, a crag standing romantically out of the water, and rich with varied foliage. From its western brink the bed of the lake runs rapidly down to a depth of more than 100 feet.

The island itself was for a while known as Montague Island, from its owner. It was sometimes called the "Gridiron," for it is made up of a series of bars of rock, so to say, with a long projecting "calf rock" that stood for the handle. It might as well be called the ship, with the cockboat astern. But the old original name was Peel Island, which to a student of place-names indicated that it once was used as a fortress; and permission being asked from the agent of the owner, the Duke of Buccleugh, some little excavations were made, which revealed ancient buildings and walls,

with pottery of an early mediæval type and other remains, which can be seen in the Coniston Museum. But Peel Island is such a jewel of natural beauty that antiquarian curiosity hardly justified more than the most respectful disturbance of its bluebells and heather.

Below this, the shores become more indented and more picturesque; the hills around do not fall off into tameness, as at the feet of some of the lakes. On the right is the Beacon, with its cairn conspicuous at 835 feet above sea; on the left, Selside rises to 1,015 feet. Opposite is Brown How, or Brown Hall, prettily built at the water's edge; and on the long nab that stretches half-way across the lake is the old mansion of Water Park (A. P. Bridson, Esq.).

The gondola slows down and rounds to the little pier, on one of the loveliest bits of all our lakeland scenery. Five minutes' walk takes you up to the Lakebank Hotel, and from its terrace—still better from the knoll above it when the surrounding trees are bare or lopped—the view embraces (beginning from the left) the Beacon, Dow Crag, the Old Man, and Weatherlam; Helvellyn, with Yewdale Crag and Raven Crag beneath; Fairfield and Scandale Head, with Loughrigg below (Red Screes and Ill Bell are not visible), and the lake's whole length with all its wooded promontories. To the right, across the water, the village of Nibthwaite, with cottages nestling under the steep and rocky mountain edge, and ruined quay which formed, before the railway tapped the traffic of Coniston, the terminus of its ancient waterway.

Formerly this lake, like Derwentwater, boasted a floating island—a mass of weeds and water plants detached from the bottom, and carrying enough solid matter to make it a kind of natural raft. In the floods and storms of October, 1846, it was stranded near Nibthwaite, and remained thenceforward indistinguishable from the rest of the shore.

Thurston Water used to be famous for its char, which were thought to be even finer and better than those of Windermere. Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal notes in his account book, under the date February 19th, 1662 (1663, new style):—"Given unto Adam Fleming for bringing eleven dozen of charres from Conistone, for four pies 1s. 6d.;" and he used to send presents of Coniston char pies, as the most acceptable of delicacies, to his distinguished friends in London. In the middle part of the nineteenth century the turbid or poisonous matter washed into the lake by the streams from the copper mines, then in full work, is said to have killed off both char and trout; but it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good, and the cessation of copper mining has left the water pure again. The Angling Association has restocked the lake from Windermere, and is breeding fish by thousands from spawn in its pond near Coniston Hall. Both the red char (the larger sort, with red bellies and red pectoral fins) and the silver char (with silvery backs and orange bellies) are now caught, and opportunities for fishermen are increasing with every year.

Pike, the natural enemies of char and trout, are kept down by netting, but are often taken with the line; for example, two of 16 lbs. each were caught by Mr. Rylands in August and September, 1897, with yellow phantom and red wagtail. Perch abound, and afford exciting sport to less ambitious amateurs of the gentle craft. There are eels, too, and minnows in abundance, and an occasional stray salmon. Otters are hunted in the summer. Along the shore a quiet observer may sometimes startle one from his repose, and in bowery nooks or up the mouths of the becks may note the blue gleam of the flitting kingfisher.

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### III.—THE MOORLANDS AND THEIR ANCIENT SETTLEMENTS.

The moors around Coniston are full of curious and interesting remains—cairns, circles, camps and settlements—of the remotest age in which this country was inhabited. Lying away from the high roads they are comparatively little known, but can easily be reached in the course of a day's walk or on horseback, or else by cycling—so far as the cycle will go, which is usually within a short distance of the spots to be sought—and leaving the cycle to the honesty of the country folk.

These remains are described by Mr. H. Swainson Cowper, F.S.A., in "The Ancient Settlements, Cemeteries, and Earthworks of Furness" (*Archæologia*, vol. liii., 1893, with plans), and some of them have passing notice in books relating to the district. Their very rudeness is a source of interest, and the mystery of their origin offers a fresh field for antiquarian research. To the unlearned visitor they are no less interesting—if he can throw his imagination back to wild days of ancient Britain, and repeople the heather and rocks with Children of the Mist. In their day the valleys were choked with matted forest or undrained swamp; the moorlands alone were healthy and habitable; not so bare and bleak as now, but partly sheltered, in their hollows and watercourses, by groves of rowan and birch, holly and yew, and the native forest trees of the north. Around these settlements the wilderness swarmed with red deer and roe, wild swine and cattle, capercailzie and moor fowl of every kind—good hunting, with only the wolf pack to dispute the spoil; for there is no reason to suppose that war, in our sense of the word, has ever invaded these homesteads and cattle-garths of primitive hunting and pastoral folk, whose chief foes were the wild beasts of the fells. Nor should we suppose that the circles are Druid temples where human sacrifices were offered. Some are the fences built around graves, and others are the foundations of round houses like the huts which wood-cutters still make for their temporary lodging when they are at work in a coppice. Others may have been sacred places; but let us withhold our fancies until we have seen the facts.

## 1.—THE BLAWITH AND KIRKBY MOORS.

The Beacon of Blawith, already noticed, can be climbed in about half-an-hour from Lakebank Hotel. South of the cairn on the top is Beacon Tarn, and two miles south-west over the heather (in which are various unimportant cairns and platforms, perhaps ancient, but more probably "tries" for slate) rises Blawith Knott, and beyond, at its foot where four roads meet, the Giant's Grave. The Giant's Grave can be easily reached by road; 2-1/2 miles from Woodland Station, or 4 miles (*via* Blawith and Subberthwaite) from Lakebank. This walk, as described, is well under 10 miles by cross roads. The story, still current in the neighbourhood, tells that in the Heathwaite "British settlement" (half a mile south of the cross roads) lived a race of giants, of whom the last was shot with an arrow on the Knott and buried in the grave; and, on opening it, the Rev. Francis Evans found calcined bones and charcoal.

The Heathwaite settlement consists of the foundations of ancient dwellings, just to the north of Pewit Tarn, and surrounded by extensive ruined stone walls, and a great number of cairns. Many of these are mere heaps of stones thrown together by the farmers to clear the land, in order to mow the bracken which they carry away for litter. Some of the cairns and walls, however, appear to be ancient.

A mile and a half south of this, on the headland to the right-hand side of the road, just before we reach Burney Farm, is the ruined enclosure, roughly square, with a party wall across the middle of it, known as the "Stone Rings." The walls are of a type seen in the British settlement near High Borrans, Windermere, and at Urswick Stone Walls—that is to say, flanked by big slabs set on edge, as though the builders were rudely trying to imitate the Roman walls of rubble thrown into an outer casing of masonry.

Following the road for a mile to south-east, shortly before coming to the Goathwaite Quarries, in the heather on the left may be found a small ring embankment; and about a mile as the crow flies south-east of this, across a little valley and only to be reached by a somewhat roundabout road, is the remnant of what was once a fine stone circle (quarter of a mile north of Knapperthaw).

Looking south-west from here we see a pass across Kirkby Moor, to the left of the rounded summit (over 1,000 feet) opposite. From the top of that pass, a short mile to the west, is a conspicuous grey cairn of loose stones, which was opened by Mr. Jopling (author of *A Sketch of Furness and Cartmel*, 1843), and found to contain burnt bones in a prehistoric "kist" of flagstones.

Turning south from this, by a grassy track through the heather, five minutes' walk brings us to the "Kirk," a ring embankment on the brink of the gill which encloses the site on two sides, probably sepulchral, and perhaps connected with the great cairn, as there are the remains of an avenue of standing stones leading in that direction. A field near this is called "Kirk Sinkings," with which compare "Kirk Sunken," the name of the Swinside Circle, and of other similar sites. *Kirk* or *Currock* does not imply a consecrated spot, but is the common word (surviving from the "Cumbrian" or Welsh) for stone monuments.

From this, twenty minutes westward down a steep road through the picturesque gill brings us to Kirkby Watermill and Church (Norman door and font, and a tombstone in the chancel which combines the simple cross with rudimentary effigy). Kirkby Hall, a mile to the north, is a fine specimen of the ancient manor house. Another mile northward is Grizebeck, with remains of a ring embankment, unimportant, behind the cottages. Hence it is a little over two miles to Foxfield, or three to Broughton; or, omitting Grizebeck, from Kirkby Church ten minutes' walk brings us down to Kirkby station.

## 2.—BETHECAR AND MONK CONISTON MOORS.

South of Lakebank, turning to left down a narrow lane through the hamlet of Water Yeat, we reach Bouthray (Bouldery) Bridge over the Crake, and see, half a mile further down, the new Blawith Church on the site of an old Elizabethan chapel. Opposite it, across the river by a footbridge, is Low Nibthwaite bobbin mill—in the eighteenth century an important "forge" where iron was smelted with charcoal.

Crossing the bridge, and leaving Arklid Farm on the right, 1-1/2 mile from Lakebank brings us to Nibthwaite, whence the lakeside road leads in about 7-1/2 miles to Coniston Church, past Brantwood and Waterhead; the path to the moors strikes up to the right hand and across the breast of Selside. Another path leads to the Top of Selside, 1,015 feet, with Arnsbarrow Tarn and Bell Beck descending from it, to the south-west, with several good waterfalls. Bethacar Moor is between Bell Beck and Nibthwaite—fine broken ground, which seems to have been less inhabited than the other moors, for no remains except a cairn (1-1/4 mile due west of Waterpark) have been reported.

Two miles north of Nibthwaite is Parkamoor, which in the Middle Ages was a sheep cote belonging to Furness Abbey. Recently, walled up in an outbuilding, on a deserted farm near at hand, part of a woman's skeleton was found. There is an obscure story of an old lady who disappeared after residence at Parkamoor some generations ago, but nothing has been proved as to the supposed murder; nor is there any reason to connect this with an alleged ghost at Coniston Bank, several miles distant.

Hence the path to the right goes to Satterthwaite, down Farragrain Gill; northward, a track leads over the Heald, with magnificent views, to the lonely hill farm of Lawson Park, another Furness Abbey sheep cote (2-1/2 miles), and down to Lanehead and Coniston (3-1/4 miles); or by a cart track met 1/4 mile above Lawson Park, and leading upward and northward, we can traverse Monk Coniston Moor, and descend to civilisation by the lane that crosses from Grizedale to Lanehead. Along the ridge which forms the boundary between Monk Coniston and Hawkshead is High Man (922 feet), where in a cairn is a stone with the initials "J. W., 1771" and "E. D., 1817," and on the west side of the stone "T. F., 1817"—evidently a *merestone* or boundary mark. A circle and other cairns have been noted near this summit; the circle may be comparatively modern, the ruins of a hut such as charcoal-burners make for temporary lodgings in the woods.

High Cross, where the Coniston, Ambleside, and Hawkshead roads meet, is close at hand, 2-1/2 miles from Coniston Church.

### 3.—BANNISIDE AND TORVER MOORS.

Up the road behind the Railway Station, in twenty-five minutes you reach the gate of Banniside Moor, which we passed in descending the Old Man. Along the quarry road to the right towards Crowberry Haws, about a third of a mile from the gate, below you on the right-hand side is an ancient garth of irregular rectangular shape, with a circular dwelling in the middle of the highest side. A small outlying building is just to the south-east. This seems more modern in type than some of the remains we find in the moors, but it is difficult to classify and impossible to date.

Returning to the gate, follow the Walna Scar path over Banniside to the south-west for ten minutes; 300 yards west of the flagstaff is a ring-mound on a levelled platform at the edge of Banniside Mire, formerly a tarn, but now almost peated up.

Rather more than half a mile south-west of the flagstaff you strike Torver Beck, after passing many clearing-heaps among the bracken beds—the subject of Dr. Gibson's dialect sketch of "Bannasyde Cairns" in *The Folk-speech of Cumberland*.

Clearings and tries for slate, old limekilns and pitsteads and sheepfolds and so forth, are traps for the amateur antiquary. But in many cases, as we have seen, and shall find in the course of our day's walk, digging has proved that the cairns on these moors were actually the graves of prehistoric people, or forgotten sites of ancient habitation. Much remains to be explored; and the "enclosure" we come to, a few steps down Torver Beck, is a case in point.

It is a ruined stone wall forming an irregular quadrangle, through which a cart-track now runs. Within it is what looks like a hut circle on the brink of the ravine, from which water could be got by simply letting a bucket down into the stream beneath. Across the beck, about 100 yards to the south-west, Mr. Cowper notes another ring-mound "badly preserved, without entrance or trenches."

Going due south to the footbridge across Tranearth Beck (or the Black Beck of Torver), and then striking up Hare Craggs to the south-east (about two-thirds of a mile from the last), we come to a large ring-mound with double ditch, intrenching the top of the hill. From this, descending to the south-west and crossing the beck by another footbridge, we strike a path leading north-west in half a mile to Ashgill Bridge and Quarry.

Along the ridge of Bleaberry Haws (1/4 mile south-west) is yet another ring-mound on the edge of a lake basin, now peat moss; and 200 yards farther we find the northern angle of the Bleaberry Haws dyke, a more important example of the kind seen on Hawkshead Moor.

Following the dyke to the south-west and turning to the left where it disappears, we find a circle of seven stones, into which Mr. Cowper dug, and found a rough pavement of cobble-stones at a depth of two to three feet resting upon the natural rock. Many cairns are passed on going a few steps eastward to strike the main line of the dyke, which runs down into Bull Haw Moss, making a curious fold or fork at the farther side of the valley, and then climbing the steep bank and running over the top due south, until it loses itself among a group of cairns in which Mr. Cowper found prehistoric interments. The dyke is altogether over a mile long, partly a stone wall, partly an earthwork. Antiquaries have been much divided over its possible use and object; the late W. Jackson, F.S.A., thought it might be a kind of deer trap. The deer would be driven from the south-west along the moorland valley, and *cornered* in the fork of the wall.

From the southern extremity of the dyke a path leads down to the road from Broughton Mills to Torver. Two miles south-west along this road, and between it and Appletreeworth Beck, Dr. Kendall of Coniston has noticed a similar dyke. The name of a neighbouring farm, Burnmoor, suggests the recognition of "borrans" or stone heaps of more than usual importance. In the Burnmoor above Eskdale are important stone circles.

Torver Station is rather more than a mile from the point where we struck this road, and Coniston 2-1/2 miles more by road or rail.

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Coniston is a good centre for further excursions in search of moorland antiquities. From Woodland station a day's round might be made by Broughton Mills to the cairns and enclosures on the south side of Stickle Pike and above Stonestar; across the Duddon to the ruins of Ulpha



Old Hall, Seathwaite, the home of "Wonderful Walker" (born at Undercrag, 1709; died at Seathwaite, 1802, in the 67th year of his curacy there); then back by Walna Scar, passing ancient remains of undetermined age. The first group is found by turning to the right below the intake wall until a stile is reached, below which, and beyond, are traces of rude building. On rejoining the road up Walna Scar, a gate is seen across the beck; through it and about a quarter of a mile horizontally along the breast of the hill are extensive ruined walls, and many outlying remains on a shelf of the mountains about 1,000 feet above the sea. Hence the way to the top of the Scar is plain, and Coniston is about an hour's easy walking by a well-marked path from the summit.

Swinside Circle is about 4-1/2 miles from Broughton station, and is little inferior to the great circle near Keswick. On digging it we found nothing at all; we learnt, however, that the place was not used for interments or sacrifices, and its origin remains a mystery.

Other prehistoric sites within reach of Coniston are Barnscar and Burnmoor (by the Eskdale railway); Urswick Stone Walls, Foula, Sunbrick Circle and Appleby Slack, Pennington Castle Hill and Ellabarow in Low Furness; and Hugill British Settlement near Windermere station.

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## IV.—EARLY HISTORY.

### ROMAN PERIOD.

There are no Roman remains at Coniston; but a great Roman road passed just to the north of the township from the camp, still visible, at Ambleside, through Little Langdale, over Wrynose and Hardknott to the camp at Hardknott Castle, and so down Eskdale to the port of Ravenglass, where at Walls Castle there are the site of a camp and the ruin of a Roman villa. It is possible that a trackway used in Roman times passed through Hawkshead, for fragments of Roman brick have been found at Hawkshead Hall and a coin at Colthouse (see Mrs. H. S. Cowper's *Hawkshead and its Neighbourhood*: Titus Wilson, Kendal, sixpence).

There is a tradition that the Coniston coppermines were worked by the Romans; but there is no evidence to prove it. One point that tends to suggest the possibility of such a belief is that about the year 85 A.D., soon after Agricola had overcome all this part of the country, a certain savant, Demetrius of Tarsus, fellow-townsmen of St. Paul and not much his junior, was sent by the Emperor Domitian to Britain, it would seem for the purpose of enquiring into its products, especially in metals (Canon Raine, *York*, p. 17). Two bronze tablets, dedicated by this Demetrius to the gods Oceanus and Tethys, were found at York, and are now in the museum there; and on his return from these savage regions he went to Delphi and told his traveller's tales to Plutarch, who mentions the fact in his treatise *On the Cessation of Oracles*. It might be said that these rich copper mines could hardly fail to attract the notice of the conquerors; of whom their own Tacitus says, speaking of their disappointment in the pearl fishery of Britain—"I could more easily believe that the pearls are amiss, than that we Romans are wanting in 'commercial enterprise.'" *Avaritia* is the old cynic's word, in the life of Agricola, chap. 12.

### BRITISH PERIOD.

After the Romans left, until the middle of the seventh century this district remained in the hands of the Cumbri or Welsh, who probably dwelt in some of the ancient moorland settlements we have already visited. They have perhaps left traces in the language, but less than is often asserted.

Some have thought "Old Man" to be a corruption of the Welsh *Allt Maen*, "high stone" or "stone of the slope." But even if it be more reasonably explained as we have suggested, the word "man" for a stone or cairn is Welsh. Dow Crags are sometimes dignified into Dhu Crags; but though both "dow" and "crag" have passed into our dialect, both are of Celtic origin. The mountain crest over Greenburn called Carrs cannot be explained as Norse *Kjarr*; a "wood;" but being castle-like rocks, may be from the Welsh *caer*. There are many "combes" and "tors," "pens" and "benns" (the last Gaelic, for some of the hill tribes may well have been survivors of the kindred race of Celts). Of the rivers hereabouts—Kent, Leven, Duddon, Esk, and perhaps Crake are Celtic.

### ANGLIAN PERIOD.

When the Angles or English settled in the country, as they did in the seventh century, they came in by two routes, which can be traced by their place-names and their grave monuments. One was by Stainmoor and the Cumberland coast, round to Ravenglass; and the other by Craven to the coast of Morecambe Bay. There is no evidence of their settlement in the Lake District fells, except in the Keswick neighbourhood, where the story of St. Herbert gives us a hint that though the fell country might not be fully occupied, it was not unexplored in the seventh century. The mention of the murder of Alf and Alfwine, sons of King Alfwald, in 789 at Wonwaldremere cannot be located at Windermere with any certainty; but still it is possible that the Angles penetrated to Coniston.

The Anglian settlements are known by their names—Pennington, the *tun* of the Pennings in Furness; Workington, the *tun* of the Weorcingas, and so on. Among the mountains there is only

one *ton*—Coniston, or as it was anciently spelt Cuninges-tun, Koninges-ton. Conishead in Low Furness was Cuninges-heved, the headland of the King, where perhaps Ecgrith or his successors had a customs-house to take toll of the traders crossing the sands to the iron mines. So Cynings-tun (the y pronounced like a French u, and making in later English Cunnings-tun) might mean King's-town; in Norse, Konungs-tun, whence we get the alternative pronunciations of the modern spelling, Coniston or Cuniston. What the Norse had to do with it we shall soon see.

Now it is unlikely that kings lived in so out-of-the-way a place; but possible that they appropriated the copper mines. The ancient claim of kings to all minerals is still kept in mind by the word "royalty." And if the king's miners lived here under his reeve or officer, their stockaded village would be rightly known as Cynings-tun, the King's-town.

It is right to add that some antiquaries make the names beginning with Coning-or Coni-to mean the Rabbits'-town, Rabbits'-head, Rabbits'-garth, and so forth, and yet even in Iceland, which was always republican, there is a Kongsbakki, King's-bank, at which no king ever lived. In ancient times, as now, sentiment counted for something in the naming of places; and many names, otherwise without meaning, may have been simply given by the settler in remembrance of his old home. We cannot say for certain that Coniston was not so called by an immigrant of the Viking Age, much later than the invasion of the Angles; possibly he came from a place of similar name in Craven or Holderness or elsewhere and brought the name with him.

The Welsh appear to have remained under Teutonic (or later, Scandinavian) masters, and one relic of their tongue seems to show how they were treated. They seem to have been employed as shepherds, and they counted their flocks:—

Un, dau, tri, y pedwar, y pimp;  
Chwech, y saith, y wyth, y nau, y dec;  
Un-ar-dec, deu-ar-dec, tri-ar-dec, pedwar-ar-dec, pemthec;  
Un-ar-pymthec, deu-ar-pymthec, tri-ar-pymthec, pedwar-ar-pymthec, ucent;

or in the ancient equivalent form of these Welsh numerals, which their masters learned from them, and used ever after in a garbled form as the right way to count sheep. The Coniston count-out runs—

Yan, taen, tedderte, medderte, pimp;  
Sethera, lethera, hovera, dovera, dick;  
Yan-a-dick, taen-a-dick, tedder-a-dick, medder-a-dick, mimph;  
Yan-a-mimph, taen-a-mimph, tedder-a-mimph, medder-a-mimph, gigget.

And from these north-country dales the Anglo-Cymric score has spread, with their roaming sons and daughters, pretty nearly all the world over. (See the Rev. T. Ellwood's papers on the subject in Cumb. and West. Antiq. Soc. *Transactions*, vol. iii.)

During the ninth century the Anglian power declined. Welsh Cumbria regained some measure of independence with kings or kinglets of its own, under the dominant over-lordship of the Scottish crown. But the Anglian settlers still held their tuns, though their influence and interests so diminished that it was impossible for them to continue and complete the colonization of Lakeland. It remained a no-man's-land, a debateable border country, hardly inhabited and quite uncivilised.

### NORSE PERIOD.

Who then settled the dales, cleared the forest, drained the swamps, and made the wilderness into fields and farms?

Let us walk to-day through the valleys to the north of the village, and ask by the way what the country can tell us of its history.

Leaving the church we come in a few minutes to Yewdale Beck. Why "beck?" Nobody here calls it "brook," as in the Saxon south, nor "burn," as in the Anglian north. In the twelfth century, as now, the name was "Ywedallbec," showing that it had been named neither in Anglian nor in Saxon, but by inhabitants who talked the language of the Vikings.

The house on the hill before us, above fields sloping to the flats, is the Thwaite house. *Thveit* in Iceland, which the Norsemen colonized, means a field sloping to a flat. On the wooded hill behind it are enclosures called the high and low Guards—"yard" would be the Saxon word; *gardhr* is the Norse, becoming in our dialect sometimes "garth" and sometimes "gard" or "guard."

At the Waterhead the signpost tells us to follow the road to Hawkshead, anciently Hawkensheved or Hawkenside—*Hauk's* or *Hákon's* headland or seat.

Taking the second turn to the left we go up the ravine of Tarn Hows Gill (*Tjarn-haugsgil*), and reach a favourite spot for mountain views. Above and around the moorland lake rise the Langdale Pikes (*Langidalr* there is also in Iceland), Lingmoor (*lyng-mor*), Silver How (*Sölva-haugr*), Loughrigg (*loch-hryggr*), Fairfield (*fær-fjall*), Red Screes (*raud-skridhur*), and on the left Weatherlam (*vedhr-hjalmr*) and all the *fell*s and *dales*, *moors* and *meres*, which cannot be named without talking Norse.

Descending to the weir which was built by the late Mr. Marshall, to throw into one the three Monk Coniston Tarns, as the sheet of water is still called, a broken path leads us down past the

waterfall of Tom or Tarn Gill, romantically renamed Glen Mary, and now even "St. Mary's Glen," and out upon the road opposite Yewtree House, behind which stood the famous old yew blown down in the storm of 22nd December, 1894. Turning to the right, we pass Arnside (*Arna-sidha* or *setr*, Ami's fellside or dairy) and Oxenfell (*öxna-fell*), and soon look down upon Colwith (*Koll-vidhr*, "peak-wood" from the peaked rocks rising to the left above it; or *Kol-vidhr*, wood in which charcoal was made). We quit the road to Skelwith (*skál-vidhr*, the wood of the scale or shed) and descend to Colwith Feet (*fit*, meadow on the bank of a river or lake), and ascend again to Colwith Force (*fors*, waterfall), and pass the *Tarn to Fell Foot*, an old manor house, bought in 1707 by Sir Daniel Fleming's youngest son Fletcher, ancestor of the Flemings of Rayrigg, who placed his coat of arms over the door (as Mr. George Browne of Troutbeck says—Cumb. and West. Antiq. Soc. *Transactions*, vol. xi., p. 5).

Permission is readily given to view the terraced mound behind the house, in which Dr. Gibson and Mr. H. S. Cowper have recognized a Thingmount such as the Vikings used for the ceremonies of their Thing or Parliament. There was one in Dublin, the Thingmote; the Manx Tynwald is still in use; and the name *Thingvöllr* (thing-field) survives at Thingwall in Cheshire, South Lancashire, and Dumfriesshire. On the steps of the mound the people stood in their various ranks while the Law-speaker proclaimed from the top the laws or judgments decreed by the Council. Eastward from the mount, to make the site complete, a straight path should lead (as in the Isle of Man) to a temple by a stream or well; and around should be flat ground enough for the people to camp out, for they met at midsummer and spent several days in passing laws, trying suits, talking gossip, driving bargains, and holding games—as if it were Grasmere Sports and Wakefield Competition, hiring fair and cattle market, County Council and Assizes, all rolled into one. These requirements are perfectly met by this site, which is also in a conveniently central position, with Roman roads and ancient paths leading to it in all directions through Lakeland.

From other sources than place-names—from Norse words in the present dialect as analysed by Mr. Ellwood, we learn that the Vikings settled here as farmers. The words they have handed down to their descendants are not fighting words, but farming words—names of agricultural tools and usages, and the homely objects of domestic life.

The Norse settlement appears, therefore, to be an immigration, not of invaders, but of refugees; and the event which first caused it was perhaps the raid of King Harald Fairhair, about 880-890, on the Vikings of the Hebrides, Galloway, and the Isle of Man.

Gradually they spread from the coast into the fells, until they had filled all the hill country; and if we set down their first arrival as about 890, we find that for no less than three hundred years they were left in possession of the lands they settled, and in enjoyment of liberty to make their own laws and to rule their own commonwealth at the Thingmount on which we are standing.

### NORMAN PERIOD.

The Norman Conquest, it must be understood, did not touch the Lake District. William the Conqueror and his men never entered Cumbria, nor even High Furness. The dales are not surveyed in *Domesday*, and the few landowners mentioned on the fringe of the fells are obviously of Norse or Celtic origin—Duvan and Thorolf, and Ornulf and Orm, Gospatric and Gillemichael. After William Rufus had seized Carlisle, the territory of Cumbria and Westmorland was granted to various lords; but the dales were the *hinterland* of their claim. In the *Pipe Rolls* we have full accounts of the inhabitants and proceedings of the lowlands during the twelfth century, but not a word about the Lakeland. And in the disturbed and disputed condition of affairs—the lordship was even in the hands of the King of Scots from 1135 to 1157—it is easy to understand that it was worth nobody's while to attempt the difficult task of reducing to servitude a body of hardy freeholders, secure in their mountain fastnesses.

In the later part of the twelfth century, the baron of Kendal and the abbot of Furness began to take steps towards asserting their claim.

Thirty men, for the most part residents in the surrounding lowlands and already retainers of the abbot and the baron, were sworn in to survey the debateable ground. Half of these men, to judge by their names or pedigrees, were of Viking origin. In the list are Swein, Ravenkell, Frostolf, Siward (Sigurd), Bernulf (Brynjolf), Ketel, and several Dolfins, Ulfs and Orms, with the Irish Gospatrick and Gillemichael. Of the other half, several are Anglo-Saxon and the rest Norman.

Their starting-point, in beating the boundaries, was Little Langdale—as if they had met, by old use and wont of the countryside, at the Thingmount; and they enclosed the district by Brathay, Windermere, and Leven, eastward; Wrynose and Duddon, westward; and then halved it by a line, along which we may follow them, to Tilberthwaite and by Yewdale Beck to Thurston Water. Thence their division line ran along the shore of the lake to the Waterhead and down the eastern side, and so along the Crake to Greenodd.

The western half was taken by the baron of Kendal to hold of the abbot by paying a rent of 20s. yearly on the Vigil of the Assumption (old Lammass Day). The baron also got right of way and of hunting and hawking through the abbey's lands, thence called Furness Fells. The valley of Coniston was thus divided into two separate parts—the eastern side, but including the Guards, was Monk Coniston; and the western side, including also the lake, became known from the village church as Church Coniston.

Though this arrangement was proposed about 1160, it was not finally settled until 1196; after

which the two owners could proceed to reduce the old Norse freeholders to the condition of feudal tenants. A charter of John, afterwards king, at the end of the twelfth century, directs the removal of all tenants in Furness Fells who have not rendered due fealty to the abbot. By what threats or promises or actual violence this was accomplished we have no record; but we can see that it was a slow process, and we can infer that it was not done by way of extermination. For the Norse families, with their language and customs, remained in Coniston. They were a canny race, and knew how to adapt themselves to circumstances. Throughout Lakeland they evidently made good terms with the Norman lords, and kept a degree of independence which was afterwards explained away as the border tenant-right—but really must have been in its origin nothing less than a compromise between nominal feudalism and a proud reminiscence of their Norse allodial practice—the free ownership of the soil they had taken, and reclaimed, and inhabited for three centuries of liberty.

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## V.—MONK CONISTON.

The Furness monks were of the Cistercian order; which is to say, they were farmers rather than scholars or mere recluses and devotees. To understand them in the days of their power, we must put aside all the vulgar nonsense about fat friars or visionary fakirs, and see them as a company of shareholders or college of gentlemen from the best landowning families, whose object in their association was, of course, the service of God in their abbey church; but, outside of it, the development of agriculture and industries. They devoted their property and their lives to the work, getting nothing in return except mere board and lodging, and—for interest on their capital—the means of grace and the hope of glory.

Some of the brothers lived continually at the abbey, fully occupied in the service of the household, in hospitality to the poor and to travellers, in teaching the school, in various arts and crafts, and especially in the office work necessary for the management of their estates. Their method was to acquire land, sometimes by purchase or exchange, more often by gift from those who had entered the community, or had received services from them; and then to improve these lands, which were generally of the poorest when they came into the abbey's possession. As the plots were widely scattered over Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cumberland, it must have been no light labour to manage them. For this purpose a brother was sent to act as steward or bailiff at a grange or cell on the outlying estate.

One such manor house of the monks we may see at Hawkshead Old Hall (see the sixpenny *Guide to Hawkshead*, by Mr. H. S. Cowper). This was built more than two centuries later than the division of High Furness; and though there was probably an earlier building, the list of abbey possessions in 1292 makes no mention of it. The monks, energetic as they were, had plenty to do in improving their lands in Low Furness, and made little impression at first upon the wild woods and moors of the fells, thinly dotted with the old Norse thwaites and steads.

On the other hand, they provided almost immediately for the spiritual needs of their new flock. There was already a chapel at Hawkshead, which is mentioned in 1200, but no consecrated burial ground; and if anyone wished for Christian burial, his body had to be carried on horseback or on a sledge some twenty miles to Dalton. In 1219 the monks amended this by making Hawkshead Chapel into a parish church, greatly against the will of the vicar of Dalton, who was the loser by the reform; and Monk Coniston has ever since been in the ecclesiastical parish of Hawkshead.

Church Coniston got no share in this advantage. Up to the time of Elizabeth, its people had to take their dead to Ulverston. As you go through the village, just beyond the Baptist Chapel, is a stream known as Jenkin Syke; and the story goes that a Jenkins of Yewdale or Tilberthwaite was being carried, uncoffined, on a sledge to Dalton or Ulverston for burial, but when the procession reached Torver they found that the body was gone. They tried back, and discovered it in the beck, which bears the name to this day.

The first and most obvious use of the fells to the monks was as a forest of unlimited timber. One purpose for which they wanted this was for charcoal to smelt the iron ore of the mines in Low Furness. They needed the waterway of the lake, which was the baron's, who, in 1240, allowed them to have "one boat competent to carry what might be necessary upon the lake of Thurstainwater, and another moderate sized boat for fishing in it, at their will, with 20 nets," and a similar privilege on Windermere. The baron bargained that if any of the monks' men damaged his property it should be "reasonably amended"—as much as to say there was really nothing of value along the western side of our lake in 1240.

Now that the monks had the waterway and could get at their forests, they pushed the industry. By the end of the century (1292) they could return a considerable income from their ironworks, while making nothing out of the agriculture of High Furness.

There was good hunting, however, and in 1281 the abbot got free warren in Haukesheved, Satirthwait, Grisedale, Neburthwaite, (Monk) Kunyngeston, and other parts of the fells—the old Norse names alone are mentioned. But in 1338 he was allowed by Government to impark woods in Fournes fells; not to create deer parks in a cultivated country, for that was not done until much later, when the bad Abbot Banks in 1516 "of the tenements of Richard Myellner and others at a place called Gryesdale in Furness fells made another park" (beside those he had just made in Low

Furness) "to put deer into, which park is about five miles in compass" (*Pleadings and Depositions*, Duchy of Lancaster, quoted by Dr. T. K. Fell; Mr. H. S. Cowper supposes this site to have been Dale Park.) These fourteenth century parks or parrockes were simply enclosures from the wild woods, and among them were Waterpark, Parkamoor, and Lawson Park which we have passed. So it was a century and a half before the monks got their woods cleared enough to settle their shepherds on the lands given them by the thirty sworn men's division.

Even then it was notoriously a wild place. In 1346 (as we gather from a ballad and pedigrees printed in Whitaker's *Loidis and Elmete*, 1816, vol. ii., p. 396) it was, like Sherwood and Inglewood, the resort of outlaws. Adam of Beaumont (near Leeds) with his brother, and Will Lockwood, Lacy, Dawson and Haigh, came hither after slaying Sir John Elland in revenge for the murder of Sir Robert Beaumont.

In Furness Fells long time they were  
Boasting of their misdeed,  
In more mischief contriving there  
How they might yet proceed.

They seem to have been here until 1363 or later—a gang of brigands; which shows how little grip the abbey had so far laid upon its *hinterland*.

But gradually new farms were created and held by native families who acknowledged the abbot as their lord, and provided men for military duty or for various "boons," such as a day's work in harvest. These new farms are now known as "grounds." In Monk Coniston we find Rawlinson, Atkinson, Knipe, Bank, and Holme Grounds; and in the list of abbey "tenants" of 1532, "from the Ravenstie upwards" (the path from Dale Park by Ravencrag to Hawkshead), are Robert Atkyns, Robert Knype, Robert Bank, Rainold and Robert Holme. The Kirkbys of the Thwaite and the Pennys of Penny House also signed. Rawlinson is not on this list, but on that of 1509 giving the "tenants" "from the Ravenstie downwards," *i. e.*, south part of High Furness. The lists do not state that, for example, the Bankes lived at Bank Ground, but prove that the families were then in the immediate neighbourhood.

At Bank Ground are the ruins of a house which was of some pretensions, judging from carved stones lying there. Local tradition makes it the site of a religious house, with a healing well. Dr. Gibson supplies a monk, "Father Brian," and tells a tradition of a witch living opposite (where the gondola station is) who came to the monk and confessed that she had sold herself to the devil. The monk set her a penance, and promised absolution. So when the devil came to claim his own she fled up Yewdale Beck, calling on "Father Brian and St. Herbert," and the devil's hoof stuck fast in the Bannockstone, a rock below the wooden bridge in Mr. George Fleming's field. The hole is there. Many rocks have such holes, from the weathering out of nodules. Mediævals may have called them devil's footprints; moderns often call them "cup-markings," in equal error.

It may be that a hermit lived where the Bankes afterwards built their homestead; it is possible that there was a "cell" for the abbey's Monk Coniston representative at the Waterhead. But the final list of abbey estates (1535), while mentioning Watsyde Parke, Lawson Parke, and Parkamore among granges and parks, puts "Watterhed et (Monk) Connyngston, £10-19-5-1/4" in the rental of tenants, as if the farm were then let to a tenant, as Hawkshead Hall was in 1512. The old Waterhead mansion, however, is known as Monk Coniston *par excellence*, and behind the modern Gothic front are ancient rooms with thick walls and massive beams, said by Mr. Marshall, the owner, to be part of the original monks' house.

There are few actual relics of this period in the way of archæological finds, so that the discovery of a tiny key of lead, with trefles on the ring, cast in a double mould, at Tent Cottage, where it was found under a stone, is worth remark. Mr. H. S. Cowper thought it a pilgrim's badge of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and the site was one of the "grounds" of the abbey "tenants."

The list of "tenants" referred to is in an agreement of 1532 to prevent "improvement." They had "inclosed common pasture more largelie than they ought to doe, under the colour of one bargaine called Bounding of the pasture," and this sort of "improvement" was thenceforth forbidden. But five years later the abbey was dissolved, to the great harm and regret of the country side. Though a bad abbot did, for a time, give trouble by making deer parks, the abbey rule, on the whole, was good. Monk Coniston made slow but sure progress, and reached a point beyond which it did not advance for the next three hundred years.

What it was like when the abbey gave it up may be gathered from the report of Henry VIII.'s commissioners:—"There is moche wood growing in Furneysfelles in the mounteynes there, as Byrk, Holey, Asshe, Ellers, Lyng, lytell short Okes, and other Undrewood, but no Tymber of any valewe;" they mention also "Hasells." That there *had* been timber is proved by the massive oak beams of many a farmhouse and old hall, but the forests were all by this time cleared, and coppice had taken their place. "There is another yerely profytte comming and growing of the said woods, called Grenehewe, Bastyng, Bleching, bynding, making of Sadeltrees, Cartwheles, cuppes, disshes, and many other thynges wrought by Cowpers and Turners" (the beginning of well-known local industries) "with making of Coles (charcoal) and pannage of Hoggs."

After the dissolution the manor remained in the Crown until 1662, when Charles II. granted it to General Monk, Duke of Albemarle, whose descendant Elizabeth, daughter of George, Duke of Montague (whence the other name of Peel Island), married Henry, third Duke of Buccleugh, whose representative is now lord of the manor.

Monk Coniston remained separate from Church Coniston, both ecclesiastically and politically, until the Local Government Act of 1894 establishing Parish Councils gave occasion for the union of the two shores of the lake into one civil parish. But Monk Coniston is still in the ecclesiastical parish of Hawkshead.

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## VI.—THE FLEMINGS OF CONISTON HALL.

In 1196 the baron of Kendal was Gilbert fitz Roger fitz Reinfrid, who had got his lordship by marriage with Heloise, granddaughter of William I. de Lancaster. In her right he claimed Furness as well. So did the abbey, and the result of this dispute we have seen in the division of the fells.

There was a family at Urswick who, to judge by their name, might have been descendants of the old Norse settlers. Adam fitz Bernulf held land there of Sir Michael le Fleming about 1150; Orm fitz Bernulf was one of the thirty sworn men; Stephen of Urswick was another. Stephen was doubtless christened after the king, who had founded the abbey; for fashions in names followed royalty then as now. Gilbert fitz Bernulf was another of the family—a Normanised Norseman, it would seem. To him Coniston was let or assigned by Baron Gilbert of Kendal.

His son Adam was living in 1227. Adam's daughter Elizabeth was his heiress, and married Sir Richard le Fleming.

Le Fleming, or *the Fleming*, meant simply "the man from Flanders." William Rufus had invited many Flemings to settle as "buffer" colonies in Cumberland and Wales, and Sir Richard's ancestor Michael had received Aldingham in Low Furness. Sir Richard's grandfather, being a younger son, had got a Cumbrian estate with headquarters at a place called by the Cumbrian-Welsh Caernarvon. *Ar mhon* (arfon) means "over against Mona;" in Wales *Caer-n-arfon* is "the castle over against Anglesey (Mona);" in Cumbria the same name had been given to the castle over against Man (Mona). It was an oblong base-court with a ditch, and a round artificial hill (later known as Coney-garth or King's-garth, cop) exactly like the Mote at Aldingham. There Sir Richard's father lived, and dying was buried at Calder Abbey.

But when Sir Richard married Elizabeth of Urswick, and got with her the manors of Urswick, Coniston, Carnforth, and Claughton, they chose to live at Coniston; and being wealthy, they probably built a mansion which, rebuilt two hundred years later, became the Coniston Hall we now see. Their settlement here would be about 1250 or later.

Sir Richard, being a knight, must have brought his men with him, and let them have farms near at hand on condition of following him to the wars. No doubt he turned out the Norse holders of Heathwaite and Bleathwaite, Little Arrow (Ayrey, "moor") and Yewdale, or took on them as his men. Billmen and bowmen he would need, and we find a Bowmanstead in the village.

These tenants followed his son, Sir John, to Scotland in 1299 to fight Wallace; and got, with him, special protection and privileges from Edward I. for bravery at the siege of Caerlaverock. John's son, Sir Rayner, was in favour at Court, and held the office of King's Steward, *Dapifer*, for these parts, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. So West says.

His son, Sir John, had three children. The daughter Joan married John le Towers of Lowick; his eldest son William died without children; and so Coniston Hall fell to the younger brother, Sir John, who lived there in Edward III.'s time, while Adam of Beaumont and his fellows were outlaws in the fells, and doubtless shot the Coniston deer. Sir John died in 1353, and was succeeded by Sir Richard, who married Catharine of Kirkby, and died about 1392. Of his three sons, Sir Thomas, the eldest, succeeded him. He married (1371) Margaret of Bardsey, then Elayn Laybourn (1390), and then his deceased wife's sister Isabel (1396). His elder son was Thomas, for whom in his childhood his father arranged a marriage with an heiress, Isabel de Lancaster. She brought Rydal into the family.

Up to this time the knights "le Fleming" had lived for 150 years at old Coniston Hall; during Sir Thomas' life (he died about 1481) the Hall seems to have been rebuilt, so far as can be gathered from the architecture of the remains. Part of his time he spent at Rydal, perhaps while rebuilding Coniston Hall.

After him there are no more knights "le Fleming," but a series of Squires Fleming, keeping up both the Coniston and Rydal Halls.

Squire John, son of Sir Thomas, was a retainer of the lord of Greystoke, a fighting man in the wars of the Roses. He married Joan Broughton, and his son John in 1484-5 moved to Rydal, leaving Coniston Hall as dower-house for his stepmother Anne. He died about 1532. His son Hugh lived at Coniston, and married Jane Huddleston of Millom Castle. He died in 1557, and his son Anthony died young; and so his grandson William succeeded him in the last year of Queen Mary.

West says:—"This William Fleming resided at Coniston Hall, which he enlarged and repaired, as some of the carving, bearing the date and initial letters of his and his lady's name, plainly shows; he died about 40 Elizabeth (1598), and was buried in Grasmere Church. The said William Fleming was a gentleman of great pomp and expence, by which he injured an opulent fortune; but his widow Agnes (a Bindloss of Borwick) surviving him about 33 years, and being a lady of

extraordinary spirit and conduct, so much improved and advanced her family affairs, that she not only provided for, and married well, all her daughters, but also repurchased many things that had been sold off.... This Agnes established a younger branch of the family in the person of Daniel, her then second son. When her son John married and resided at Coniston Hall, she retired to Rydal Hall, where she died 16 August, 7 Car. I. (1641)."

There is a tradition that Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) visited at Coniston Hall. There used to be an old book with his name in it and "Fulke Greville is a good boy" scribbled in an antique hand on a fly-leaf. It is probable that Squire William, the "gentleman of great pomp," invited many visitors, especially young men of distinction, for hunting parties in his deer park; and Sidney is said to have stayed at Brougham Castle, so that he may well have been, once in a while, in the Lake District.

Dr. Gibson tells a legend, which he says he collected at Coniston, of Girt Will o' t' Tarns—"one of the Troutbeck giants." (Hugh Hird, the chief of them, flourished in this period.) Girt Will is represented as carrying off "the Lady Eva's" bowermaiden, and being caught and killed at Caldron Dub on Yewdale Beck (a little above the sawmills), where his grave was shown, still haunted, they said. There is no "Lady Eva" in the records, but (allowing for distortion) there may be a grain of truth in the story, if it really was a tradition.

Squire John lived at Coniston. He was twenty-three at his father's death. His first wife was Alice Duckett of Grayrigg (died 1617); his second, the widow of Sir Thomas Bold, and daughter of Sir William Norris of Speke, the famous old timbered hall near Liverpool. She died at Coniston Hall, and was buried in Coniston Church, which Squire William had built. His third was Dorothy Strickland of Sizergh, for whose sake he became a Roman Catholic at a time when Roman Catholics were persecuted; and consequently, after being J.P. and High Sheriff, he was heavily fined, and had to get a special licence to travel five miles from home. He had a turn for literature; we find in the Rydal letters one enclosing the latest playbook and (Massinger's new work) the *Virgin Martir*.

His son William was only fourteen at his father's death in 1643, and soon afterwards died of smallpox in London. Consequently the Hall went to his cousin William (son of the Daniel before mentioned), born there in 1610, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was one of Charles I.'s cavaliers, and suffered severely in pocket for his loyalty. He married Alice Kirkby in 1632, and died at the hall in 1653.

His eldest son Daniel, born in 1633, studied at Queen's College, Oxford, and Gray's Inn. He married, in 1655, Barbara Fletcher of Hutton (who died 1670), and they had a large family. He was a cavalier, heavily fined by Cromwell's sequestrators, and living in retirement until the Restoration, busied in improving his estates and his mind. He became a famous scholar and antiquary, corresponding with many learned men, and distinguished, among other things, for his knowledge of Runic inscriptions. Under Charles II. he took a very active share in public business; was knighted at Windsor in 1681, and elected M.P. for Cockermouth, 1685. He died 1701.

This Sir Daniel finally forsook Coniston for Rydal. In his lifetime the Hall was held by his bachelor brothers, Roger and William, lieut.-colonel of cavalry and D.L. for Lancashire. In the Rydal MSS. there are many letters to and from them; for instance, Major W. Fleming writes (July 1st, 1674) to the constables of Coniston about arming the men of Colonel Kirkby's regiment—the pikemen to have an ashen pike not under sixteen feet in length, the musketeers to have a well-fixed "musquet" with a barrel not under three feet in length, and a bore for twelve bullets to the pound, with "collar of bandealers" and a good sword and belt.

Other relatives of the family lived at the Hall, which was kept up as a sort of general establishment. In September, 1680, Sir Daniel notes that his bachelor uncle, John Kirkby, "did fall sick Sept. 15, and he died at Coniston Hall, Sept. 28. I had not the happ to see him dureing his sickness." But Sir Daniel was sometimes there, and speaking of one visit, he says (December 14th, 1680), "my tenants there and I did see a blazing starr with a very long tail—reaching almost to the middle of the sky from the place of the sun setting—a little after the sun setting, near the place where the sun did set. Lord, have mercy upon us, pardon all our sins, and bless the King and these Kingdomes." He got over it by Christmas, and "paid the Applethwait players for acting here, Dec. 27th 00-05-00" (5s).

On February 26th, 1681, his mother died at Coniston Hall, and was buried in Lady Bold's grave, close by her brother, John Kirkby—"Mr. John Braithwait preaching her funeral sermon upon 1 Tim. 5, 9, and 10, and applying it very well to her." Her three sons put up the brass in the church to her memory.

There was no intention then of letting the Hall go to ruin. Sir Daniel notes (March 20th, 1688), "This day was laid the foundation of the great barn at Coniston Hall"—not the new barn to the south of it, which is a much later building.

We get a glimpse of the friendly relations of hall and village in a letter of November 16th, 1689, from George Holmes at Strabane to the colonel at the Hall, describing the famous siege of Derry, and adding—"Pray do me the favour to present my humble service to Mr. Rodger and all the good familie, to the everlasting constable, and to my noble friend the vitlar."

Dr. Gibson, about 1845, was told by an aged inhabitant of Haws Bank that one of the cottages in that hamlet (pulled down to build Mr. John Bell's house) was formerly an alehouse, and that a neighbour who died at a great age when the doctor's informant was a boy, used to relate that he

remembered having seen two brothers of the Fleming family, who were staying at the Hall, go there for ale, and make a scramble with their change amongst the children round the door, of whom the relater was one. The names of the brothers, he stated, were "Major and Roger."

This must have been in Queen Anne's days, when perhaps Colonel William and his brother Roger were gone. But of Sir Daniel's sons, one was Major Michael, M.P. for Westmorland in 1706, died before George I. (his daughter married Michael Knott, Esq., of Rydal, whose family afterwards came to Coniston Waterhead); and another was Roger, afterwards vicar of Brigham.

So we bring "the good familie" at the Hall down to the second decade of the eighteenth century, after which they seem to have deserted Coniston and left it to decay. Fifty years later it was an ivy-covered ruin.

A novel by the Rev. W. Gresley, M.A., Prebendary of Lichfield, called *Coniston Hall: or, The Jacobites* (1846), professes to recount the fortunes of "Sir Charles Dalton" of the hall, in the rising of 1715. But the local colour is inaccurate, and the circumstances impossible.

About 1815 it was patched up into a farmhouse; the ruined wing was left to the ivy, and an inclined way was built up to the old oriel window of the dining-hall to make it into a barn. Later, the old oak was carried off. Quite recently the dwelling-house and the chimneys have been newly cemented, which, necessary as it was, takes away from the picturesqueness. The main features of the interior can be traced; we can make out the daïs, the great fireplace, the carved screen through which doors led to the stairs going down to buttery and kitchen, and the fine old roof with its great oak beams. From the middle beam, in which the grooves for planking are still seen, a wainscot partition was fixed to the back of the daïs, and behind it was the withdrawing room. There you see its large fireplace and windows on both sides, and in the corner is a spiral staircase, leading down to a door opening on the garden, and up to the loft or solar, in mediæval times the best bedroom, of which we can see the footing of the flooring joists up in the wall, and the little window looking east to catch the morning sun. That was no drawback; folk were early risers when they had only candles to sit up by.

In its old state the Hall must have been a fine place on a fine site; damp, it might be thought, but you note that its dwelling rooms are not on the ground floor, and in those big fireplaces you can imagine the roaring fires that were kept when wood was plentiful. The lake is close at hand for fishing, and along the shore towards Torver extended the deer park, still a lovely bit of park scenery. That they kept deer even after the head of the family had settled at Rydal, Sir Daniel's accounts testify. On December 22nd, 1659, he notes, "given unto George Fleming's boy for bringing a doe from Coniston, 2s.;" and on Christmas Day, "given unto Thomas Brockbanck for killing the doe at Coniston, 1s. 6d." It was not only at Christmas that they indulged in venison. On July 11th, 1660 (King Charles had just come home, so cavaliers could feast), George Fleming brought two deer from Coniston to Rydal, and got 2s.; and on September 11th, 1661, Sir Daniel treated his brother-in-law, Sir George Fletcher, to a hunt, and gave the tenants 1s. for drinks, "and next day more for the hunters to drink, 2s. 6d." It sounds little, but money was more valuable then, and he did not always kill a deer so cheaply. On July 27th, 1672, "paid my brother Roger which had spent in killing the buck at Coniston, 6s. 6d.;" and August 12th, 1677, "delivered to my son William when he went to Coniston to kill a buck, 5s."

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The following useful bit of topography is taken from the old copy kindly lent by Dr. Kendall:—

"The ancient bounds of the manor of Coniston, besides the Water or Lake of Coniston, and certain tenements in Torver, Blawith, and Woodland thereunto belonging, are in these terms, namely:—

"Beginning at Coniston otherwise Thurston Water and so by the Eastern bank of Yewdale Beck up the same on to the low end of the close called the Stubbing and so upwards round the said close by the hedge that parts it from Waters Head Grounds into Yewdale Beck, and so up Yewdale Beck into the foot of Yewdale Field and so upwards by the hedge which parts the several Allans<sup>[A]</sup> belonging to Yewdale from Furness Fell grounds unto Yewdale Beck and so up Yewdale Beck unto the foot of a close called Lineyards (otherwise Lang Gards) and so upwards round the said close by the hedge thereof betwixt it and Holme Ground unto Yewdale Beck and so up the said beck unto Mickle Gill head, and from thence ascending to the height of Dry Cove over against Green Burn and from thence by the Lile Wall to the height between Levers Water and Green Burn and so to the head of Green Burn and from thence by the Rear or Ray Cragg<sup>[B]</sup> and Bounders of Seathwaite unto Gaites Hause and so by the south side of Gaites Water and so down by Torver Beck to the foot of Fittess,<sup>[C]</sup> and so straight over to Brighthouse Crag Yate and from thence to the Moss Yate and so down by a little Syke unto Brundale Beck and so down to the Broadmyre Beck and so down the same to Coniston Water aforesaid."

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## VII.—THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.



There was probably no church at Coniston before the time of Queen Elizabeth, though services may have been held by the squire's chaplain. Monk Coniston was, and still is ecclesiastically, in the parish of Hawkshead.

Coniston Church was built in 1586 by William Fleming, the "gentleman of great pomp and expence." It was consecrated and made parochial by Bishop Chaderton; the original dedication is not known. In 1650 the Parliamentary enquiry shows that there was no maintenance but the £1 19s. 10d. which the people raised for their "reader," Sir Richard Roule—"Sir" meaning "Rev." in those days. With liberal squires at the Hall, no doubt the "priest," as they called him, was not badly off, though Colonel Fleming, writing to his brother (November 27th, 1688), says:—"Tell the constable the same hearth man (hearth-tax collector) is coming again. Tell him to be as kind as his conscience will permit to his neighbours, and play the fool no more. The priest and he doth not know how happy they are." The income was eked out by the old custom of "whittlegate," right to have his meals at various houses in turn; and it is said that the Priest Stile opposite Mount Cottage was so called because he was so often seen crossing it on the way to his accustomed seat at the squire's table.

Until the end of the eighteenth century the curate was also schoolmaster, and as late as 1761 was nominated to the dual office by the six men or sidesmen representing the inhabitants. The patronage was afterwards in the hands of the Braddylls of Conishead Priory; eventually it passed into the possession of the Rev. A. Peache, and the living is now in the gift of the Peache trustees. Its net value is £220.

The original church, for we do not know that it was rebuilt between 1586 and 1818, was a small oblong structure with lattice windows and a western belfry tower.

In the Coniston Museum there is a mutilated document (found by Mr. Herbert Bownass among some old deeds) which not only shows the quaint arrangement of seats in the church separating the sexes, but also gives what is practically a directory of the parish in the time of Charles II.

Coniston Church	A Devison of men's and women's fforms made by the Minister, six men & churchwardens in the year of our Lord 1684.
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Imp<sup>s</sup> Seats in the Quier:

In the seat with the Minister, one for Silverbank & one for ffarr end.

2 The next seat above:

One for Silverbank for Robert Vickers, for Robert Dixon Bridge End & Jno. Atkinson de Catbank & for Holywarth.

3 The second fform above:

Edward Tyson, Rich. Hodgson, John Holms, Wm. Hobson de Huthw<sup>t</sup>, Wm. Atkinson de Gateside.

The third fform above:

Wm. ffleming jun<sup>f</sup> de Littlearrow, Jam. Robinson, Tho. Cowerd, Park Yeat.

The fourth fform above:

Tho. Dixon de Littlearrow, Mich. Atkinson, Huthw<sup>t</sup>, Geo. Towers, Hows bank.

The fform next the wall or the highest fform:

David Tyson de Tilb<sup>f</sup>thw<sup>t</sup>, Wm. ffleming de Catbank, one for ffarr end.

The back fform next Quier door:

Jo. ffleming, Low Littlearrow, Henry Dover de Brow, Wm. Harrison de Holywarth, Wm. Atkinson, Above beck, Myles Dixon & Robt. Dixon de Tilb<sup>f</sup>thwaite.

The fform above it:

Wm. ffleming de Park Yeat, Geo

The fform under the Pulpit:

Jo. Harrison de Bowmansteads

Men's fforms ith church:

ffirst Jo. Dixon, Wm. Dixon, Tho. Dix ffleming of Bowmansteads.

The second fform beneath:

One seat for ffarr end, Wm. Towers

The third fform

Smartfield, Jo. Tyson, Low House Low Udale, Wm. Denison

The ffourth fform:

One for Silverbank, Rob. Walker Parks.

Womens fforms

The Highest Church:  
Wm ffleming wife de Upper  
Sam<sup>s</sup>. Henry Dover wife de Brow  
Hallgarth and Myles Dixon wi[fe]

2 The second fform Beneath:

David Tyson wife de Tilberthw<sup>t</sup>  
wife, Dixon Ground, Wm. Dixon, Geo

3 The third fform:

Outrake, Gill, Howsbank wives, Jo. ffleming wife, Low Littlearrow, & Park Yeat.

4 The ffourth form:

Silverbank, ffarr end, Ed. Tyson de Nook, Tho. Dixon de Littlearrow, Wm. Atkinson,  
Above beck, their wives.

5 The ffifth fform:

Smartfield, Wm. Atkinson, Wm. Cowerd, Wm. Hobson de Huthw<sup>t</sup>, Jo. Atkinson and Wm.  
Atkinson, Catbank, their wives.

6 The sixth fform:

Jo. Harrison & Tho. ffleming de Bowmanstead, [—] Dixon ground, Ed. Park, Wm  
Denison, Upper Udale, their wives.

7 The seventh fform:

Myles Dixon, Upper Udale, Rob. Walker & Wm. Addison, Low Udale, Wm. Walker, Wm.  
Harrison & Elizabeth Parks.

To this devison we the Minister, six men and churchwardens have set our hands the  
year ffirst written, Anno Dnî 1684

Jo. Birkett cur.  
Wm. ffleming }  
Wm. ffleming }  
Christo. Dixon } Sidemen  
Wm. Harrison }  
Wm. ffleming }  
Myles Dixon }  
Mich. Atkinson } Churchwardens  
Myles Dixon }

In 1817 the curate in charge, John Douglas, and the churchwardens, Joseph Barrow and William Townson, obtained a faculty to rebuild the church. A sum of £325 was raised by subscription, a further sum by assessment, and the Incorporated Church Building Society made a grant of £125. The new church was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester on November 20th, 1819—Coniston being still within the diocese of Chester, not yet transferred to that of Carlisle.

In 1835 a faculty of confirmation was issued from the Consistory Court of Chester by which pews were assigned to the contributors of the building fund and other parishioners. In 1849, Dr. Gibson described the building as "oblong and barn-like, with a few blunt-arched windows in its dirty yellow walls, and overtopped at its western extremity by an unsightly black superstructure of rough stone, which some might call a small square tower badly proportioned, and others, with apparently equal correctness, the stump of a large square chimney."

In 1866 the same writer, in a paper read to the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, said:—"The church of Coniston, which occupies a position central to the village, is a chapel of ease under Ulverston, with a stipend of £146, recently augmented, derived from land, houses, bounty, dividends and fees. It was rebuilt in 1819 on the site of an older edifice. The only part of the former church that remains is the belfry tower, which, being out of keeping and small in proportion to the body of the present building, confers but little ecclesiastical and no architectural distinction upon it."

The late Mr. Roger Bownass, in marginal pencillings on this paper, noted:—"This is an error. The Belfry Tower was wholly rebuilt at the same time as the church, i.e., in 1818-19; the writer of this note having seen the old Tower pulled down, and new Foundations laid; One reason for the Landowners rebuilding the Church (which they did chiefly at their own expense) being the alleged state of the old Tower, the Bells of which, the Sexton pretended he durst not ring for fear he should bring the Tower down about his ears, though it was so difficult to get it down. So strongly was it built and cemented together that it had to be cut through nearly, near its base, before it could be brought down." Mr. Bownass goes on to say that his father, as one of the guarantees, contributed nearly £50, "which his widow had to pay, he himself dying before it was finished, and was the first person carried into the Church while the shavings, etc., lay on the floor, as the writer, his son, of 6 years of age, can well remember."

To resume Dr. Gibson's account:—"The new building is plain even to meanness; but being now

well screened by trees and flourishing evergreens—and I may state that evergreens grow here with a luxuriance that I have not seen elsewhere—it is not so offensive to the eye as formerly. The interior has been greatly beautified by improvements made in 1857, the cost being defrayed by subscription. The addition of a reading desk, pulpit, reredos and altar rail in handsomely carved oak, the painting of what used to be an unsightly expanse of white ceiling, in imitation of oak panelling, and the spare but tasteful introduction of tinted glass into the windows, have made the inside as handsome as it is likely to be whilst the pews are allowed to remain. The parish register dates back to 1594. In the vestry is stored a library, chiefly of works in divinity, sermons, etc., which have been purchased from time to time with the interest of different sums left by the Fleming family, commencing with £5 under the will of Roger Fleming of Coniston, dated February, 1699. In the vestibule of the southern entrance to the church is kept one of those curious old chests, made from a solid block of oak, like that containing the muniments of the Grammar School at Hawkshead. The only contents of this are a number of slips of paper, each bearing the almost illegible affidavit of two women that the corpse of each person interred was shrouded in cloth only made of woollen material. These worn and fragile evidences of a curious old protective law—for I infer it could only be enacted to support the landed interest—serve, if they do nothing else, to explain the line in Pope which has puzzled many modern readers—

Odious!—in woollen!—'twould a saint provoke.

The following is a copy of one of the most legible of these fugitive records:—

Lancr. P.ociall Cappell de Coniston.

We Jennet Dickson wife of Thomas Dickson and Isabell Fleming widow—doe severally make oath that the Corps of Isabel Dickson widow was buried March y<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> An<sup>o</sup> Dmj 1692. And was not putt in, wrapt or wound up in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet or Shroud, Made or mingled w<sup>th</sup> fflax, Hemp, Hair, Gold or Silver, etc: nor in any coffin lined or faced w<sup>th</sup> cloath etc: nor in any other material but sheeps wooll onely According to Act of Parlyment. In Testimony whereof we y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Jennet Dickson and Isabel Fleming have hereunto putt our Hands and Seales the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, An<sup>o</sup> Dmj 1692.

Cap <sup>t</sup> et Jur <sup>t</sup> coram me	Jennet Dickson
Henri Mattinson Cur <sup>t</sup>	her x m <sup>k</sup>
de Torver decimo nono	Isabel Fleming
die Martij Anno dom 1693	her x m <sup>k</sup>

So far Dr. Gibson on the "new" church, now the "old" church, and already of the past.

On November 17th, 1891, the church was reopened by Bishop Goodwin after a "restoration" which almost amounted to renovation. The Rev. C. Chapman, in his pamphlet on *The ancient Parochial Church of Coniston*, 1888, had already been able to announce that £600 had been gathered for the Building Fund, beside about the same amount spent in buying the old schoolhouse and playground in order to improve the site. But the money did not suffice for entire rebuilding; the ceiling and pews were removed, a chancel and vestry added, a clock placed in the tower, the roughcast of the exterior was cleared away, and stained glass windows have since been inserted, of which the best is the little west window by Kempe to the memory of the Beevers of the Thwaite. But few objects of antiquarian interest remain. The old oak chest with a curious padlock, the parish registers beginning 1594 and recommencing 1695, the old library, and the little brass on the south wall are all that is left to record the ancient family of the Hall. The brass is inscribed:—

To the Liveing Memory of ALICE FLEMING of Coningston-Hall in the County Palatine of Lancaster Widow (late Wife of William Fleming of Coningston-Hall aforesaid Esq<sup>r</sup>; and eldest daughter of Roger Kirkby of Kirkby in the said County Esq<sup>re</sup>) and of John Kirkby Gentleman her second brother was this Monument by her three sorrowful sons S<sup>r</sup> Daniel Fleming Knight Roger Fleming and William Fleming gentlemen, for their dear Mother and Uncle here erected. The said John Kirkby (having lived above 30 yeares with his sister aforesaid, and having given to the Churches and Poor of Kirkby and Coningston aforesaid 150£) died a Bachelor at Coningston-Hall aforementioned September 28 A.D. 1680, and was buried near unto this place the next day: And the said Alice Fleming died also (having outlived her late Husband above 27 yeares and survived 5 of her 8 children) at Coningston-Hall aforesaid Febr 26 A.D. 1680, and was buried in this Church, close by her said Brother Febr 28, 1680, in the same Grave where ye Lady Bold (second wife of John Fleming Esq<sup>re</sup> deceased, uncle to ye said William Fleming Esq<sup>r</sup>) had about 55 yeares before been interred.

Epitaph

Spectator stay, and view this sacred ground  
See it contains such Loue, on Earth scarce found,  
A BROTHER and a SISTER, and you see  
She seeks to find him in Mortality—  
First he did leave us; then she stay'd & try'd

To live without him, lik'd it not and dy'd  
 Here they ly buried, whose Religious Zeal  
 Appeard sincere to Prince, Church, Commonweal;  
 Kind to their Kindred, Faithful to their Friends,  
 Clear in their Lives and Chearful to their ends.  
 They both were Dear to them whose good intent  
 Makes them both liue in this one Monument.  
 So Dear in Cordial Loue, tho' th' outward part.  
 Turne Dust it holds impression to the Heart.

The churchyard is first mentioned as a burying ground in 1594, and until 1841 was very small: indeed, the population it had to serve was small up to the nineteenth century. But by 1841 the population of the parish had grown, and Lady le Fleming made an addition to the churchyard. Subsequent additions were made in 1845, 1865, and 1878, the last by the removal of the old Institute, formerly the Boys' School. This used to stand between the church and the road, as shown in the photograph exhibited, with other views and relics of the neighbourhood, in the museum at the Coniston Institute.

In Coniston Churchyard the centre of general interest is Ruskin's grave, marked by the tall sculptured cross of gray Tilberthwaite stone, which stands under the fir trees near the wall separating the churchyard from the schoolyard. Near it are the white crosses of the Beevers, and the railed-in space is reserved for the family of Brantwood. The sculptures on the east face are intended to suggest Ruskin's earlier writings—the lower panel his juvenile poems; above, the young artist with a hint of sunrise over Mont Blanc in the background, for "Modern Painters;" the Lion of St. Mark, for "Stones of Venice," and the candlestick of the Tabernacle for "Seven Lamps." On the west face below is the parable of the labourers in the vineyard—"Unto this Last," then "Sesame and Lilies," the Angel of Fate with club, key and nail for "Fors Clavigera," the "Crown of Wild Olive," and St. George, symbolizing his later work. On the south edge are the Squirrel, the Robin and the Kingfisher in a scroll of wild rose to suggest Ruskin's favourite studies in natural history. On the north edge is a simple interlaced plait. The cross was carved by the late H. T. Miles of Ulverston from designs by W. G. Collingwood.

Since the restoration the clergymen have been:—

Richard Rawling	May, 1676	d. June, 1682
John Birkett	June, 1683	d. Feb., 1716
John Stoup	1716	d. Oct., 1760
John Strickland	1761	d. Sep., 1796

There seems then to have been an interregnum until William Tyson is recorded as assistant curate in 1805. The incumbent in 1809 was Jonas Lindow, who died 1826, under whom officiated as assistant curates:—

John Hodgson, June, 1809.  
 John Kendal (occasional).  
 Matthew Inman Carter, of Torver (occasional).  
 John Douglas, May, 1816, to November, 1821.  
 W. T. Sandys, February, 1825 (afterwards incumbent, assisted by P. Fraser).  
 H. Siree, February, 1835, to April, 1837 (assistant or incumbent?).  
 J. W. Harden, incumbent, 1837 to November, 1839 (to whom S. Boutflower, afterwards archdeacon of Carlisle, was assistant).  
 Thomas Tolming, incumbent, December, 1839; resigned April, 1870.  
 Charles Chapman, incumbent, 1870; died 1905.  
 H. E. Wood, curate in charge, 1905 to April, 1906.  
 F. T. Wilcox, incumbent, April, 1906.

The school used to be held in the church, an arrangement common in this district when the clergyman was also schoolmaster. Later, a small building was put up, within the area of the present churchyard; this was turned into a Mechanics' Institute in 1854, as already noted, when new schools were built. The site of the Boys' School and master's house, with adjacent ground, was conveyed by a deed dated December 6th, 1853, from Lady Le Fleming to the incumbent and chapel-wardens of Coniston and their successors. The buildings were to be erected as approved by Lady Le Fleming, and the school was always to be conducted on the principles of the Established Church of England. There is no deed extant for the Girls' (now the Infants') School. It was probably built at the same time as the old Boys' School, being similar in construction, especially in the chimneys (as Mr. Herbert Bownass notes). Dr. Gibson says in *The Old Man* (1849) that both schools had been conducted for the previous three or four years on the Home and Colonial School system.

The schoolmasters since the building of the new schools have been:—

Mr. Diddams, 1854-1858.  
 Mr. Ryder, 1858-1859.  
 S. K. Thompson, 1859-1864.  
 W. Brocklebank, 1864-1887.  
 C. J. Fox, 1887-1891.  
 John Morris, 1891-1902.

The mistress of the Infants' School since 1876 has been Miss Agnes Walker.

The Mechanics' Institute in 1877 was found to be inadequate and inconvenient, and in 1878 a new building was made on the Yewdale road. This in its turn was outgrown, and in 1896 the committee, under the presidency of Dr. Kendall, resolved to enlarge it. A library and reading room, billiard and recreation rooms, room for meetings and classes, bath, museum, concert hall and caretaker's house were planned, and built in 1897 with the proceeds of various exhibitions and bazaars, added to private subscriptions. This enlarged Institute or village clubhouse was opened by Mrs. Arthur Severn on April 15th, 1896.

In 1900 an exhibition of drawings by the late Prof. Ruskin was held, and visited by over 10,000 people. From the proceeds of this a room for a museum was added, to supersede the little room formerly allotted for the purpose; and the Ruskin Museum was opened in August, 1901, Canon Rawnsley giving the inaugural address. The collection shown in the Museum is confined under two headings—"Ruskin" and "Coniston." It comprises (a) local history and antiquities, with a few illustrative specimens of general antiquities; (b) local minerals, to which it is hoped some day to add other branches of the natural history of Coniston: of this division Mr. Ruskin laid the foundation by his gift in 1884 of a collection of minerals and the model of the neighbourhood; (c) Ruskin drawings and relics, given or lent by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Severn; (d) books by and about Ruskin, with autographs, etc., in illustration; (e) engravings after Ruskin's drawings, and portraits of him; (f) copies and prints from pictures which have formed the subject of his writing. The collection is still growing, and an enlarged edition of the Catalogue (3d.) was brought out at Easter, 1906; copies can be had of the caretaker at the Institute. The Museum is open every week-day from 10 till dusk, admission one penny in the slot of the turnstile. Eight to ten thousand pennies have been taken yearly since the opening. The hon. curator is Mr. Herbert Bownass.

In the summer an exhibition, usually of pictures, is held during August and September in the large hall adjoining. Since the new Museum was built, the room formerly occupied by the collections has been used as a Ladies' Reading Room; and in 1905 a workshop for wood carving and other art crafts was added to the premises. The subscription to the Institute for residents over 16 years of age is 1s. 3d. a quarter; for boys, 9d.; for visitors 1s. a week, or 2s. 6d. a month. The management is in the hands of a committee elected by the members, non-sectarian and non-political; Dr. Kendall has been president since 1884, and Mr. Edmund Todd hon. secretary since 1902.

The Baptist Chapel was built in 1837, the youngest of many chapels described in a booklet entitled *Old Baptist Meeting-houses in Furness*, by F. N. Richardson (1904). Tottlebank, the oldest, was founded in 1669. Sunnybank, in Torver, 1678, and Hawkshead Hill, founded a few years later, no doubt took the early Baptists of Coniston; one of whom, William Atkinson of Monk Coniston, tanner, was fined in 1683 for attending a conventicle. These three chapels are now open, though Sunnybank and Hawkshead Hill were closed for some years before 1905. The seventeenth century chapel at Scroggs, between Broughton and Coniston, was dilapidated in 1842, and is now a cattle shed. The Coniston Chapel ministers were Mr. Kirkbride, Mr. Myers, and then for twenty-one years from about 1865 the Rev. George Howells; he was succeeded by Rev. Arthur Johnson. For nine years before 1904 there was no Baptist congregation, and the chapel was let to the "Brethren," who built a place of worship for themselves and opened it 1903. The Baptist Sunday School had been carried on all the while by Mr. William Shaw, and on regaining possession of the chapel a congregation was once more formed with Rev. R. Jardine as pastor.

A Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1859, but some years ago was converted into a Masonic Hall. A Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1875, but there is no settled minister.

The Roman Catholic Chapel was built in 1872 by Miss Aglionby of Wigton; Prof. Ruskin gave a window to this chapel. It was served for many years by Father Gibson; on his removal he was succeeded by Father Laverty, at whose death in 1905 Father Bradshaw was appointed to the cure.

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## VIII.—CONISTON INDUSTRIES.

### COPPER.

That the copper mines were worked by the Romans and the Saxons is only a surmise. Dr. A. C. Gibson, F.S.A., writing in 1866, said:—"Recent operations have from time to time disclosed old workings which have obviously been made at a very early period, by the primitive method of lighting great fires upon the veins containing ore and, when sufficiently heated, pouring cold water upon the rock, and so, by the sudden abstraction of caloric, rending, cracking and making a circumscribed portion workable by the rude implements then in use, specimens of which are still found occasionally in the very ancient parts of the mines, especially small quadrangular wedges perforated for the reception of a handle."

The mines of Cumberland were worked throughout the Middle Ages, and it is not impossible that

these rich veins in the Coniston Fells were tried for ore; but we have no proof of the local assertion that they have been worked continuously since the days of the Romans. On the contrary, there seem to have been only two periods, of about a century each, during which mining was actively pushed. In the time of Queen Elizabeth we reach firm ground of history.

In 1561 a company was formed by several lords and London merchants to work the minerals of the kingdom under a patent from the Crown. They invited two German mining experts, Thomas Thurland and Daniel Hechstetter, who coming to England opened mines, and built smelting works at Keswick in 1565; and in spite of strong local opposition soon made a great success. (Their proceedings are described in a paper by J. Fisher Crosthwaite, F.S.A., in *Transactions* of the now defunct Cumberland Association, viii.)

They also took over the Coniston mines, and worked them with energy and profit. They opened out no less than nine new workings beside the old mine—the New or White Work, Tongue Brow (in Front of Kernel Crag), Thurlhead, Hencrag, Semy Work, Brimfell, Gray Crag, the Wide Work, and the Three Kings in Tilberthwaite; employing about 140 men. The ore was raised at a cost of 2s. 6d. to 8s. a kibble, each kibble being about a horse load, for it was carried on pack-horses to Keswick for smelting. To avoid this they proposed building a smelting house at Coniston, which was, they said, well supplied with wood and peat, and an iron forge was already there. It would be easy to boat the manufactured copper down the water, and ship it at Penny Bridge.

But in the civil wars the Corporation of "Governors, Assistants, and Commonalty of the Mines Royal" came to an end. The Parliament soldiers wrecked the works at Keswick, and operations at Coniston were stopped.

After the civil wars, Sir Daniel Fleming was several times approached on the subject of reopening the mines. He seems to have been willing. He notes on January 21st, 1658, "given unto the miller of Conistone for going along with me on to the fell, 1s.;" and on March 22nd, "given to Parce Corrats when hee came to looke at the blacke lead mine at Conistone, 2/6." This turned out a disappointment, for on May 2nd, 1665, he says, "given unto a Newlands man who came to look at the *supposed* wadd-mine at Coniston, 5/-." And so nothing seems to have been done.

In 1684 Roger Fleming at the Hall sent his brother, Sir Daniel, a report of the mines "which were first wrought by the Dutchmen" (Keswick Germans) and others discovered more recently. Only three of the old workmen were living, but from their evidence we get the details given above. On May 25th, 1686, John Blackwall wrote from Patterdale to Sir Daniel that he had examined the ground at Coniston and studied the evidence of the three old miners, and was prepared with a company to open the mines, if they could agree upon terms.

Sir Daniel died in 1701; and the Rev. Thomas Robinson's *Natural History of Cumberland, &c.*, published in 1709, mentions that copper had been formerly got at Cunningson, by the Germans, and taken to Keswick, but says nothing about a revival of the industry. It was, however, prosecuted in a small way throughout the eighteenth century. A Company of Miners at Ulpha is mentioned in George Bownass' account for tools in 1772. West says, in 1774, merely, "the fells of Coniston have produced great quantities of copper ore," nothing of mining in his time; and the smith's accounts from 1770 to 1774 do not mention it. There must have been a revival shortly afterwards. Captain Budworth, about 1790, tells the story of the devil and the miner, retold by Dr. Gibson from local tradition, to the effect that Simon the miner found a paying vein in the crag—it is called Simon Nick to this day, and the cleft he made is seen yet on the left hand as you go up to Leverswater; but one night at the Black Bull he boasted of his luck, and said the fairies, or the devil, were his partners, upon which he found no more copper, and lost his life soon after in blasting.

In 1802 the mines were going. In 1820 the *Lonsdale Magazine* says that they had been worked at intervals for many centuries, and had lately been in the hands of "spirited adventurers," but were then discontinued.

About 1835 a new era of prosperity began, in which Mr. John Barratt became the leader. His skill and energy brought about such success that in 1849 they employed 400 men, and yielded 250 tons of ore monthly. In 1855 the monthly wage list amounted to £2,000. In 1866 Dr. Gibson said:—"For many years their shipments averaged 300 tons per month, and employed from five to six hundred people," but "the number of hands employed do not now exceed two hundred."

Up to this time the ore had been boated down the lake, and carted to Greenodd. Now the Coppermining Company promoted a railway connecting Coniston with Broughton and the Furness line. It was a separate concern when it was opened in 1859, but absorbed into the Furness system in 1862.

The mines, as they were in his days, are described at length by Dr. Gibson in *The Old Man, or Ravings and Ramblings around Conistone*. Alexander Craig Gibson, M.R.C.S., F.S.A., was born at Harrington, 1813, the son of a ship's captain, who died early. He was taken by his mother to her home at Lockerbie, and brought up there; afterwards apprenticed to a surgeon at Whitehaven. In 1844 he came to Coniston as medical officer to the mining company, and lived for seven years at Yewdale Bridge, where he wrote his "Ravings and Ramblings" as articles for the *Kendal Mercury*, afterwards collected into a volume, and subsequently republished with considerable revision. He left Coniston in January, 1851, and remained at Hawkshead for some years; then removed southward, and finally settled at Bebington in Cheshire, where he died in 1874. A collection of sketches in prose and verse, *The Folk-speech of Cumberland, &c.* (Coward, Carlisle, 1869; ed. ii.,

1872), shows him to be master of the dialect of the north-west in various forms—Furness, Cumbrian, and Dumfriesshire; and his book on Coniston remains a valuable contribution to local anecdote. (I owe the data of his life to the Rev. T. Ellwood.)

After the middle of the nineteenth century the copper mines became less and less profitable, owing to the competition of foreign imports. During the "eighties," they were only just kept open, until the Coniston Mining Syndicate, under the energetic management of Mr. Thomas Warsop, tried to put new life into the old business. Mr. Warsop attempted to introduce a new system of smelting, but this smelting house was blown away by the storm of December 22nd, 1894. He took the watercourse from Leverswater to work a turbine, which superseded the old waterwheels for pumping, and also supplied power for boring in the mines, and for crushing and mixing the material from the old rubbish heaps, with which he made excellent concrete slabs, much in demand for pavements. But the development came to an end with Mr. Warsop's removal in 1905, and when the mines were offered for sale there was no purchaser.

### IRON.

In our tour of the lake we have noticed that there are remains of old iron works along its margin, now difficult to trace.

In High Furness, the district of which Coniston Lake is the centre, and the most northern part of Lancashire, there are about thirty known sites where iron was smelted in the ancient way with charcoal, producing a *bloom*—the lump of metal made by *blowing* in the furnace—whence the name *bloomeries*. Of these sites about half are in the valley of Coniston, and eight are actually on the shore of the lake:—

Beck-leven (below Brantwood)	East side.
Parkamoor Beck (below Fir Island)	"
Selside Beck (below Peel Island)	"
Moor-gill (above Sunny-bank)	West side.
Harrison Coppice (opposite Fir Island)	"
Knapping-tree (opposite Fir Island)	"
Springs (opposite Beck-leven)	"
Waterpark (below Coniston Hall)	"

All these have been bloomeries of a somewhat similar kind, and on Peel Island some iron works have been carried on of a rather different type, and perhaps at a different period. Small bloomeries have also been in blast at Tom-gill (the beck coming down from the Monk Coniston Tarns, often called Glen Mary), and at Stable Harvey in Blawith. One is said to be at the limekiln in Yewdale. There were two bloomeries of the later and larger type at Coniston Forge (up stream from the church) and at Low Nibthwaite, and two others further down the Crake, making sixteen in all the valley now known. There are, of course, many beside in the Lake District, as in other parts of the country.

That there were iron works before the Conquest in Furness appears from the place-name of "Ouregrave" in *Domesday*, which must be identical with Orgrave. At this place, early in the thirteenth century, Roger of Orgrave gave Furness Abbey the mine "cum ... aquæ cursu ad illam scil. mineriam lavandum," a grant confirmed by his son Hamo in 1235 (*Coucher Book of Furness*, p. 229). About 1230 Thomas le Fleming gave them iron mines in Elliscales. By 1292 a great part of their income was derived from iron works.

Canon Atkinson, in his introduction to the *Coucher Book of Furness*, c. xviii., reckoned that they must have had some forty hearths to produce the iron they made. When the wood near the mines was exhausted, it became easier to carry the ore to the place where charcoal was burned than to bring the charcoal—so much greater in bulk—to the ore. An acre of forest was not enough to supply charcoal for smelting two tons of metal, and so the woods were gradually devastated over a wider and wider area.

In 1240 the abbey, which owned the eastern side of the lake, but not the lake itself, got leave from the baron of Kendal to put boats on the lake of Coniston for fishing and carrying. The carrying was chiefly of timber for building, but the tops and branches were no doubt used for charcoal. That on the other shore the smelting works were creeping up the valley is seen from the grant, before 1282, of William de Lancaster to Conishead Priory of the dead wood in Blawith for charcoal to supply the canons' bloomeries—for it was not only Furness Abbey that dealt in iron; and, indeed, more bloomeries exist on the side that did not belong to the abbey than on the shore that did. Thus in the thirteenth century we infer that smelting went on by Coniston Lake shore well up the west side.

On the east side there is a remarkable coincidence between the sites of Furness Abbey "parks" (or early clearings for sheep farms) and the bloomeries we find there. Near Selside Beck, where slag has been found, is Waterpark—anciently Water-side-park, apparently the earliest of the abbey sheep farms. Above Parkamoor Beck bloomery is Parkamoor—the sheep farm on the moor. Above Beck-leven bloomery is Lawson Park, the latest of the Furness Abbey sheep farms. I think the inference is that when the land was cleared they put sheep on it, and went up the lake to the next beck for the site of their bloomery. What we know for certain is that in early times the valley of Coniston was thickly wooded, but by the time of the dissolution of the monastery, High

Furness had been nearly denuded of timber.

After the dissolution of the monastery, the commissioners of Henry VIII. let part of the woods of Furness Fells to William Sandys and John Sawrey, to maintain three smithies, or combined smelting and hammering works, for which the rent was £20. Less than thirty years later, in 1564-5, these were suppressed, because it was represented that the woods were being wasted, and the £20 rent was thenceforward paid to the lord of the manor by the customary tenants as "bloomsmithy rent."

The tenants of High Furness were allowed to make iron for themselves with the loppings and underwood, which may account for some of the small bloomeries. But by this time an improved and larger furnace was beginning to come into fashion, and in the seventeenth century we find that one such existed at Coniston at the Forge, between the Black Bull and Dixon Ground. It is mentioned in 1650 by the German miners, and by Sir Daniel Fleming in 1675. In 1750 it was turning out eighty tons of bar iron a year, and in 1771 Thomas Tyson is mentioned as the ironmaster (George Bownass' accounts). This would suffice for the needs of the neighbourhood, while at the same time the Deerpark, which we know was stocked in the seventeenth century and probably was preserved in the sixteenth, would make impossible the carrying on of smelting at Waterpark bloomery, which is within it, and at Springs, close to it. The relics from Peel Island, associated with iron works, seem to be mediæval, and the isolation of a forge on an island, as at Rampsholme in Derwentwater, implies that protection was sought, which would hardly be needed in Elizabethan and later times hereabouts. The conclusion seems to be that many of the little bloomeries are mediæval; that at Stable Harvey, perhaps the work of Conishead Priory after the grant of 1282, and those in Monk Coniston, the work of Furness Abbey.

The iron ore came from Low Furness, but there was an iron mine at the Red-dell head under Weatherlam. The Rev. Thomas Robinson, in his *Natural History of Westmorland and Cumberland*, 1709, says "Langdale & Cunningston mountains do abound most with iron veins; which supplies with Ore & keeps constantly going a Furnace in Langdale, where great plenty of good and malleable iron is made, not much inferior to that of Dantzick."

### SLATE.

Roofing slabs have been found in the ruins of Calder Abbey and the Well Chapel at Gosforth, both mediæval; in the mansion on Lord's Island, Derwentwater, destroyed before the end of the seventeenth century, we found green Borrowdale roofing slates. Purple Skiddaw roofing slates were also found in the ruins of a seventeenth and eighteenth century cottage at Causeway Head near Keswick. But it was not until the eighteenth century that quarrying began to develop. Mr. H. S. Cowper, in his *History of Hawkshead*, says that the Swainsons, from about 1720, worked a quarry in the Coniston flag formation near the Monk Coniston Tarns, and sent out their flags even as far as Ulverston Church. Fifty years later George Bownass, the Coniston blacksmith, was the great purveyor and repairer of tools, and from his ledger the names of his customers, gathered by Mr. Herbert Bownass, throw light on the history of the industry in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In 1770 appear William Jackson & Co. and Edward Jackson, no doubt of Tilberthwaite. In 1771, the Company of Slate-getters at Pennyrigg, Saddlestones, Cove and Hodge Close; Zachias Walker & Co., at Cove; George Tyson & Co., quarry owners; William Atkinson & Co., at Soadcop Quarry; John Masacks & Co., at Cove; John Atkinson, slate merchant, Torver Fell Quarry; Wm. Fleming and Thomas Callan, Stang End Quarry; Matthew Carter, Stang End Quarry; also George Thompson and Wm. Vickers at a quarry with an unreadable name, and John Johnson, Jonathan Youdale, Wm. Wilson, Anthony Rigg and Wm. Stopart, slate-getters. In 1772, William Atkinson, Broadscop Quarry; John Speding & Co., quarry owners; slate-getters at Bove Beck or Gatecrag Quarries; Wm. Parker, slate merchant, Langdale; Wm. Fleming, Bessy Crag Quarry; Wm. Johnson, Pennyrigg Quarry; and John Vickers, Thomas and Rowland Wilson, John Casson, and George Bownass, slate-getters.

Of the quarries here mentioned as working 130 years ago Stang End and Bessy Crag are in Little Langdale, Pennyrigg and Hodge Close on opposite sides of the Tilberthwaite valley; Cove is on the flank of the Old Man above Gaitswater; Soadcop and Broadscop look like variants of the name Goldscope, the quarry opposite Cove, and near Blind Tarn, to the right hand as you go up Walna Scar; Torverfell Quarry may be Ashgill; Saddlestones is the quarry seen on the way up the Old Man (page 3).

Father West in 1774 said that "the most considerable slate quarries in the kingdom" were in the Coniston Fells; the slate was shipped from Penny Bridge "for different parts of the kingdom." In 1780, Green saw the quarry near the top of the Old Man "in high working condition." W. Rigge & Son of Hawkshead, who worked some of them, exported 1,100 tons and upward a year, and the carriage to Penny Bridge was 6s. 10d. to 7s. 10d. a ton. The slate was shipped at Kirkby Quay upon sailing boats, of which there were enough upon the water in 1819 to furnish the subject of a paragraph in Green's *Guide* describing a scene of "bustle and animation."

From papers given by Mr. John Gunson of Ulpha to the Coniston Museum, we can gather a few particulars of the slate trade in the early part of the nineteenth century. John Atkinson of Ivytree, Blawith, in 1803 was interested in the Tilberthwaite Quarries, and in 1804 applied for leave to redeem the Land Tax on the ground they covered, the annual sum being £2 13s. 4d. From 1820 we find John Atkinson & Co. working seven quarries—Ashgill (to the left hand as you go up Walna



Scar) the most important, occupying usually about a dozen men, and worked at considerable profit until 1830, when it began to show a deficit; Tilberthwaite, after 1820 giving employment to about seven men, with fair profit until 1826, when the men seem to have been withdrawn to work a quarry at Wood in Tilberthwaite for a year and a half; Goldscope, employing from nine to fifteen men between 1821 and 1826, when the Cove Quarry seems to have been run with no great profit or energy until 1832; and Mosshead, on the north-east side of the Old Man, at the head of Scrow Moss, was worked in 1829 and at a loss. The Outcast Quarry, near Slater's Bridge (now Little Langdale Quarries), is mentioned only in 1830. The best workmen were paid 3s. 6d. a day; lads seem to have started at 6d. There are notes of indentures, in Atkinson's account-book, from which it seems that apprentices at the riving and dressing began at 1s. or 1s. 6d., with a yearly rise to 2s. 6d., before they were out of their time. The profits were fluctuating—Goldscope in two years (1821-23) produced £1,072 17s. worth of slates, and paid £719 18s. 10d. in wages; Ashgill in 1826 made £381 less powder, tools, candles, &c.; but these were good years. The royalties to Lady le Fleming on Cove and Mosshead for 1827-32 amounted to £33 6s.

Tilberthwaite was the old possession of the Jacksons. Their ancestor had come from Gosforth, Cumberland, about 1690, and is said to have acquired it by marriage from the Walkers, who held the land in freehold, not, as usual hereabouts, in customary tenure under a lord of the manor. The Jacksons held most of Tilberthwaite, Holm Ground, and Yewdale until their estates were bought by Mr. James Garth Marshall, and it was by marriage with an Elizabeth Jackson that John Woodburn of Kirkby Quarries came to have an interest in the slate trade here. His name appears in John Atkinson's account books after 1832, and he seems to have taken over the actual working of the quarries. In 1904 the total output of the Coniston quarries (Cove, High Fellside, Mossrigg and Klondyke, Parrock, Saddlestone, and Walna Scar) was 3438 tons; value at the quarries, £12,251.

### WOOD.

In spite of local production, iron was not plentiful in the eighteenth century. Iron nails were too valuable for common use, though they are found in quantities at the old furnaces on Peel Island and elsewhere, which must date from an earlier period. Wooden pegs were substituted in making kists and other furniture, house roofs, doors and boats. The trade in woodwork of many kinds flourished in Coniston and its neighbourhood.

We have already mentioned the sixteenth century "Cowpers and Turners, with makyng of Coles," and the Baptist tanner of Monk Coniston in the seventeenth century; his tannery was, no doubt, that at Bank Ground. Another old tannery was at Dixon Ground in Church Coniston. Bark peeling and charcoal burning are among the most ancient and continuous industries; the round huts of the charcoal burners and their circular pitsteads can be traced, though overgrown and so nearly obliterated as to resemble prehistoric remains, in many of the woods, or places which once were wooded.

In George Bownass' ledger, already quoted, John Bell & Co. are named as wood-mongers in 1771, and in 1772 the same smith repaired the "coal boate" owned by the executors of William Ford.

In 1820 the old *Lonsdale Magazine* says that the woods were cut every fifteen or sixteen years, and brought in the same value as if the land had been under cultivation. The wood was used for charcoal in smelting (and later in gunpowder making), for poles, hoops, and birch besoms; bird-lime was made from the bark of the holly, and exported to the West Indies.

As the Lancashire spinning increased there was a great demand for bobbins, and large quantities of small copse wood went to the turning mills. There was one near the Forge at Coniston, and a later bobbin mill farther down stream at Low Beck. Others were worked at Hawkshead Hill by W. F. Walker, and more recently at Sunnybank in Torver. But this industry has now died out.

An agreement in possession of Mr. H. Bownass, dated February 13th, 1798, between John Jackson of Bank Ground, gent. (landlord), and Robert Townson of the Gill, yeoman (tenant), of the one part, and T. Mackreth of Bank Ground, tanner, and John Gaskerth of Mattson Ground, Windermere, woollen manufacturer, of the other, authorises the building of a watermill for spinning and carding on the land called the Becks and Lowlands in Church Coniston. The carding mill near Holywath was owned early in the nineteenth century by Mr. Gandy of Kendal, and managed by Mrs. Robinson of the Black Bull.

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The rise of Coniston trade is shown pretty accurately by the returns of population in this period. In 1801 Church Coniston contained 338 persons; in 1811, 460; in 1821, 566; and in 1831, 587. At this last date there were 101 houses inhabited and 9 empty, none building; and there were 102 families of which 25 were employed in agriculture, 65 in trade, mining, &c., and 12 beside. In Monk Coniston with Skelwith the population in 1801 was 286; in 1811, 386; in 1821, 426; and in 1831 it had dropped to 397. There were then 78 houses occupied and 12 empty; 36 families lived by agriculture, 2 by trade or manufacture, and 41 otherwise. This means that the village was always the home of the miners and quarrymen, while "at the back of the water" there was a gradually increasing settlement of gentlefolk attracted to the place by its scenery. In the later half of the century the population of Church Coniston, after reaching 1324 in 1861, fell to 1106 in 1871, 965 in 1881, and 964 in 1891; showing the decline of the once flourishing industrial

enterprises. During the next decade the slate trade increased, and in 1901 the population had risen to 1111, whence the new rows of houses which, if not picturesque, were much needed. It is no longer possible to crowd the cottages as in mid-Victorian days when, it is said, the miners coming down from their work took the beds *warm* from the men on the other shift. And yet, granting the necessity, one cannot help regretting the meanness and ugliness of much recent building in the village. A pleasant exception is the new office for the Bank of Liverpool at the bridge, which is a clever adaptation of the old cottage, making a pretty effect without pretentiousness; and perhaps, with this example, local enterprise may still create—what is far from impossible—a little town among the mountains worthy of its environment.

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## IX.—OLD CONISTON.

The poet Gray, author of *The Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, in his tour of 1769, and Gilpin, in search of the picturesque, in 1772, did not seem to hear of Coniston as worth seeing. The earliest literary description is that of Thomas West, the Scotch Roman-Catholic priest, who wrote the *Antiquities of Furness* in 1774. He illustrated his book with a map "As Survey'd by Wm. Brasier 1745," in which are marked Coniston Kirk, Hall, Waterhead, Townend, Thurston Water, Piel I., Nibthwaite, Furnace, Nibthwaite Grange, Blawith Chap., Waterycot (by obvious error for "yeat"), Oxenhouse, Torver Kirk, Torver Wood (Hoathwaite), New Brig (the old pack-horse bridge), White Maidens, Blind Tarn, Goat's Tarn, Low Water, Lever Water, and so on, giving names in use 150 years ago.

West says:—"The village of Coniston consists of scattered houses; many of them have a most romantic appearance owing to the ground they stand on being extremely steep." Later editions add:—"Some are snow white, others grey ... they are all neatly covered with blue slate, the produce of the mountains, beautified with ornamental yews, hollies, and tall pines or firs."

Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, author of the *Mysteries of Udolpho* and other romantic novels, came here in 1794 or earlier; and after describing the Rhine, and all the other lakes, found Thurston Lake "one of the most interesting, and perhaps the most beautiful," though she took the Hall for a Priory, and sentimentalised about the "solemn vesper that once swelled along the lake from these consecrated walls, and awakened, perhaps, the enthusiasm of the voyager, while evening stole upon the scene." Conishead, not Coniston, was the Priory; the confusion between the two has been often made.

With fuller knowledge and from no hasty glance, Wordsworth soon afterwards described the same spot (*Prelude*, VIII.):—

A grove there is whose boughs  
Stretch from the western marge of Thurston mere  
With length of shade so thick that whoso glides  
Along the line of low-roofed water, moves  
As in a cloister. Once—while in that shade  
Loitering I watched the golden beams of light  
Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed  
In silent beauty on the naked ridge  
Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts  
In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart:  
Dear native regions, wheresoe'er shall close  
My mortal course, there will I think on you....

Need I quote farther the famous outburst of patriotism?—it was our lake that roused it. And another great enthusiasm was stirred by our Coniston Fells.

In 1797 the landscape painter Turner came here as a youth of 23 on his first tour through the north. After his pilgrimage among the Yorkshire abbeys, so finely described by Ruskin in *Modern Painters*, vol. v., the young artist seems to have arrived among the fells one autumn evening, and sketched the Old Man from the Half-penny Alehouse. Then—I piece this together from the drawings and circumstances—he went round to spend the night at the Black Bull with old Tom Robinson and his wife, the daughter of Wonderful Walker. She was a wonderful woman herself; had been first a miner's wife, helping him to rise to a clerkship at the Leadhill Mines in Dumfriesshire, and on his death returning to Seathwaite; then, sorely against her old father's will, taking up with Tom, and settling at Townend to farm; afterwards for many years at the Black Bull, keeping the inn, managing the carding mill, and acting as parish officer in her turn; a notable figure, in mob cap and bedgown and brat; sharp tongued and shrewd of judgment. What did she make, I wonder, of the sunburnt, broad-shouldered lile cockney, with his long brown curls, his big nose and eagle eyes, and his sketch-book, "spying fancies?" Early in the morning he was out and scrambling up Lang Crag. It was one of the magical, misty autumnal sunrises we know so well. There had been rain, and Whitegill was full, thundering down the precipice at his feet. The fog was breaking away from the valley beneath, and rising in drifts and swirls among the clefts of Raven Crag, and the woods of Tilberthwaite. Far away, serene in the morning light, stood Helvellyn. It was his earliest sight of the mountain glory; the thrill of emotions never to be forgotten. Going home to London, he painted his first great mountain subject, afterwards in the

National Gallery—the first picture for which he was moved to quote poetry in the Academy catalogue, and this from *Paradise Lost*—"Morning on Coniston Fells:—

Ye mists and exhalations that now rise  
From hill or streaming lake, dusky or grey,  
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold  
In honour to the world's Great Author rise."

By this time the fashion of visiting the lakes was coming in, enough to give employment to a guide—Creighton, whom Captain Budworth, about 1790, described as a self-taught scholar, claiming descent from a noble family in Scotland, and fond of bragging about the nobility he had taken up the fells. His son William was something of a genius; he was found here by John Southern of Soho drawing a map of the world with home-made mathematical instruments, but using them with immense skill. Mr. Southern took him into his drawing office, and young Creighton, by hard study, became a considerable linguist, astronomer, and cartographer.

To the old Black Bull, De Quincey came from Oxford in 1806 to see Wordsworth. Next year William Green, the artist and guide-book writer, was there, and went up Walna Scar with Robinson. Mrs. Robinson died in extreme old age, and afterwards Adam Bell was landlord (1849); in 1855, Edward Barrow.

The tourist business made more hotels necessary. In 1819 the old Waterhead Inn was called the New Inn as distinguished from the Black Bull. It stood at the head of the lake, where now is the plantation between the letter-box and the sign-post. In Holland's aquatint view (1792), a rambling farmhouse is shown there, but not called an inn. This became a favourite stopping place for tourists. John Ruskin's father was fond of it, and often stayed there alone or with his family. But John Ruskin, returning in 1867, wrote—"Our old Waterhead Inn, where I was so happy playing in the boats, *exists* no more." The present hotel was built by Mr. Marshall in 1848-49, and tenanted by Mr. Atkinson, afterwards by Mr. and Mrs. Sly, and now by Mr. Joseph Tyson.

In 1849 the landlord of the Crown was Isaac Massicks. The Ship, in 1849, was kept by John Aitkin; the Rising Sun, in 1855, by James Harker. The old Half-penny Alehouse was pulled down in 1848 to build Lanehead.

To tell the story of the many "worthies" of Coniston, and to trace the fortunes of 'statesman families often wandering far into the world, and winning a fair share of renown, would need a volume to itself. One or two names we can hardly omit—such as Lieut. Oldfield of Haws Bank, who piloted the fleet into Copenhagen, and received his commission from Nelson for that deed; and Sailor Dixon, who fought under Howe on the first of June and under Duncan at Camperdown; twice taken prisoner, once retaken and once escaping from Dunkirk; implicated in the great mutiny of 1797, and yet acquitted by court martial, he lived at Coniston to the age of 71.

With these might be mentioned the soldier John Jackson, whose records of foreign service in the Crimea and elsewhere are still extant. His cousin, the late Roger Bownass, left many papers of interest to the student of Old Coniston. The first of his family came in 1710 from Little Langdale, and bought from William Fleming of Catbank for thirteen pounds odd the smith's shop at the place called Chapel Syke, *i.e.*, where the Crown Inn bar is now; a stream rising above the Parsonage used to cross the road there, whence the name. He bought also the old Catbank Farmhouse and its land now covered with cottages. His son was about twelve or fourteen in 1745, and told the writer of the manuscript history of the family that he remembered taking a cartload of cannon balls, forged at the smithy, to Kendal for the Duke of Cumberland's army.

By 1773 a new site was needed for the smithy, and it was moved to Bridge End, where the Post Office now stands, on land bought from William Pennington of Kendal, wool comber, by George Bownass, son of the original blacksmith who by this time had died at the age of 87. Here a large business was carried on in quarry and edge tools, employing a number of men and apprentices; and profitable enough to enable the owner to buy many plots of land round about, to which his son William, who inherited the business, added other purchases, and still managed to save £100 a year. William Bownass died in 1818, and was the first person buried after the rebuilding of the church; of his seven children, Isaac, of Queen's College, Cambridge, became a successful schoolmaster, but died at the age of 28, and Roger, for 45 years postmaster at Coniston, died in 1889. Old George Bownass, the second of the name, died a year later than his son William; one of his daughters married a Coniston man, William Gelderd, who became the first mayor of Kendal after the passing of the new Municipal Act.

In the Christmas number, 1864, of the old Liverpool *Porcupine* is a short story by Dr. Gibson which, if we read *Bownass* for "Forness," *Spedding* for "Pedder," and *Coniston* for "Odinsmere," as the writer certainly intended, becomes a very vivid and interesting picture of Coniston folk and their surroundings at the beginning of the last century. It describes the smith "George Forness" as the well-to-do and industrious craftsman, in his busy workshop, surrounded by the village gossips at Candlemas. To him enters "old Matthew Pedder," bound next morning for Ulverston, to settle accounts. The smith entrusts him with money to pay his iron bill at Newlands, and save himself a journey. The next scene shows us a lane through the deerpark before dawn; Matthew on his half-broken mare attacked by a wastrel who has overheard the conversation, and now tries his unaccustomed hand at highway robbery. The mare throws him down, and Matthew gallops away believing his unknown assailant to be dead. Ten months later Matthew is called from his house in Tilberthwaite to the death-bed of Tom Bratton, and comes back subdued and silent.

"What did he want wi' yee?" his family clamoured. "To ex me to forgive him." "Then it *was* him 'at tried to rob ye?" "Niver ye mind wha tried to rob me—neahbody *did* rob me!" "And what did ye say till him?" "I ext him to forgive me, and we yan forgev t'udder."

The slackness of anything like police in those days is illustrated by a document in possession of Mr. John Bell, which is an agreement dated 1791 on the part of leading villagers to form a sort of Trades Defence Association to preserve their property from "the Depredation of Highwaymen, Robbers, Housebreakers and other Offenders." It is signed by Edward Jackson, Isaac Tubman, Geo. Bownas (the smith), James Robinson, George Dixon, John Gelderd, David Kirkby, John Dawson, and by Thomas Dixon for Mr. John Armstrong, each of whom subscribed eighteen pence to found the association, and resolves in strictly legal form to stand by his neighbours in all manner of eventualities.

The smith's ledger, already quoted, gives also a number of farmer's names in 1770-74, which may be worth recording as a contribution to the history of Coniston folk. At Littlearrow lived John Fleming and Wm. Ion; at Spone How (Spoon Hall), Geo. Dixon; at Heathwaite, John Fleming; at Bowmanstead, T. Dixon and T. Parke; at Dixon Ground, John Ashburner; at Catbank, Roger Tyson; at Brow, T. Bainbridge; at Bove Beck, Wm. Dixon; at Far End, Wm. Parke; at Tarnhouse (Tarn Hows), John Johnson; at "Utree," Geo. Walker; at Oxenfell, Christopher Huertson; at Tilberthwaite, John Jackson; at Holme Ground, Wm. Jackson; at Lane End, Henry Dawson; at Waterhead, Anthony Sawrey; at Hollin Bank, John Suert; at Bank Ground, John Wilson; at Howhead, Eliz. Harrison; at Town End (Coniston Bank), Ed. Barrow and Wm. Edrington; at Lowsanparke (Lawson Park), Wm. Adinson. Other well-known names are Adam Bell (Black Bull), John Bell, John Geldart, T. Gasketh, G. Knott, David Kirkby, Matthew Spedding, T. and W. Towers. Many of these names are still represented in the neighbourhood, but the old 'statesman holdings have nearly all passed into alien hands.

A list dated between 1830 and 1840 enumerates the acreage of fifty-three separate estates in Church Coniston, ranging from the Hall (Lady le Fleming's), over 397 acres, and Tilberthwaite (John Jackson's), over 135 acres, to Henry Braithwaite's plot of 15 perches. But of the whole number only twenty-five, or less than half, are smaller than ten acres. In 1841 the list of Parliamentary voters for Church Coniston gives twenty owners of house and land in their own occupation out of forty-six voters. In this list, James Garth Marshall of Leeds appears as owner of High Yewdale, occupied—no longer owned—by a Jackson; but there are very few non-resident landlords on the list.

So late as 1849 the directory mentions as 'statesmen owning their farms in Monk Coniston and Skelwith, Matthew Wilson of Hollin Bank, John Creighton of Low Park, and William Burns of Hodge Close; in Church Coniston, William Barrow of Little Arrow, William Dixon of Dixon Ground, Benjamin Dixon of Spoonhall, James Sanders of Outhwaite, and William Wilson of Low Beck.

But after the "discovery" of the lakes, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Coniston began to be the resort of strangers in search of retirement and scenery.

In 1801, Colonel George Smith, after losing a fortune in a bank failure, settled at Townson Ground, and some years later built Tent Lodge, so called from the tent his family had pitched on the spot before the house was built, as a kind of "station," as it was then called, for admiring the view. Here in the tent, they say, his daughter used to sit, dying of consumption, and looking her last on the favourite scene. Elizabeth Smith was a girl of great charm and unusual genius. Born in 1776, at thirteen she had learnt French, Italian, and mathematics; at fifteen, she taught herself German; at seventeen, she studied Arabic, Persian, and Spanish; and at eighteen, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. While living here she wrote much verse and many translations, of which her *Book of Job* was highly commended by scholars; the manuscript in her handwriting, with a copy of her portrait, may be seen in the Coniston Museum. She died in 1806, and is buried at Hawkshead.

After the death of Mrs. Smith, Tent Lodge was bought by Mr. Marshall, and occupied by Tennyson the poet on his honeymoon. His favourite point of view is still marked in the wood above by a seat now hidden among the trees. Later, the Misses Romney, descendants of the famous painter, lived at Tent Lodge; then it was taken by the late George Holt, Esq., of Liverpool.

At Colonel Smith's removal to the Lodge, Tent Cottage, as it is now called, was taken by Mrs. Fletcher, one of whose daughters became Lady Richardson and another married Dr. Davy, brother of Sir Humphrey Davy. Dr. Townson succeeded them at the Cottage; then Mr. Oxley of the sawmills; then the Gasgarths, on their removal from the Hall; then Mr. Evennett, agent to Mr. Marshall. Afterwards it was taken by Mr. Laurence Jermyn Hilliard, secretary to Mr. Ruskin. Mr. Hilliard died in 1887 just as he was beginning to be well known as an artist; he is commemorated in a brass tablet in the church, and some examples of his work are to be seen in the Museum. Since his death Tent Cottage has been tenanted by his brother and sister.

In 1819 Mr. Thomas Woodville bought from Sir D. Fleming a house called Yewdale Grove at Yewdale Bridge. In 1821 Mr. Binns of Bristol built the Thwaite House, and let it in 1827 to Mr. William Beever, a Manchester merchant, who died four years later, leaving two sons and four daughters, whose memory is very closely associated with Coniston. John, the eldest son, was a sportsman and naturalist; the author of a little volume entitled *Practical Fly-fishing*, published in 1849, and republished 1893, a memoir of the author (now again out of print). The pond behind the Thwaite was made by him, and stocked with fish; once a year he used to catch every member of his water colony, and examine it to note its growth. The picturesque "Gothic" boat house, now

the gondola house, was built for his use. One of his hobbies was the improvement of fishing-rods, and Mr. William Bell (afterwards J.P. of Hawes Bank, who died in 1896) remembered helping Mr. Beever in this and other carpentering, turning, carving, and mosaic works, and in the construction of the printing press used for his sister's little books. John Beever died in 1859, aged 64. His brother Henry was a Manchester lawyer, and died 1840.

Of the four ladies of the Thwaite, Miss Anne Beever died in 1858, and is buried with her brothers at Hawkshead. Miss Margaret (d. 1874), Miss Mary (d. 1883), and Miss Susanna (d. 1893) are buried at Coniston; their graves are marked by white marble crosses close to Ruskin's. Indeed, though their local influence and studies, especially in botany (see, for example, Baxter's *British Flowering Plants* and Baker's *Flora of the Lake District*, to which they contributed, and the Rev. W. Tuckwell's *Tongues in Trees and Sermons in Stones*, describing their home), give them a claim to remembrance, their name is most widely known through Miss Susanna Beever's popular *Frondees Agrestes, readings in "Modern Painters,"* and through the correspondence of Ruskin with Miss Mary and Miss Susanna published as *Hortus Inclusus*. In his preface to the last he spoke of them as "at once sources and loadstones of all good to the village in which they had their home, and to all loving people who cared for the village and its vale and secluded lake, and whatever remained in them, or around, of the former peace, beauty, and pride of English Shepherd Land."

The old Thwaite Cottage, below the house, was tenanted by the Gaskarths after the death of David Kirkby, Esq., the last of the former owners, in 1814; and then for many years it was the home of Miss Harriette S. Rigbye, daughter of Major E. W. Rigbye of Bank Ground, and an accomplished amateur of landscape painting. She died in 1894, aged 82, and is buried beside her friends the Beevers in Coniston Churchyard. The Thwaite Cottage was then let to Professor J. B. Cohen of the Leeds University, whose works on organic chemistry are well known.

The Waterhead estate was bought in the eighteenth century from the Thompsons by William Ford of Monk Coniston (see Mr. H. S. Cowper's *History of Hawkshead*, p. xvi.), and came to George Knott (d. 1784) by marriage with a Miss Ford. Mr. Knott was mentioned by Father West as having "made many beautiful improvements on his estate." In 1822 a view of the modern "Gothic" front of the house, now called Monk Coniston Hall, was given in the *Lonsdale Magazine*. The poet Wordsworth is said to have advised in the laying out of the gardens. From Mr. Michael Knott the place was bought by James Garth Marshall, Esq., M.P. for Leeds, whose son, Victor Marshall, Esq., J.P., still holds it.

Holywath was built by Mr. John Barratt, the manager of the mines in their prosperous days, and afterwards held by his daughter, the wife of Colonel Bousfield. Mr. William Barratt, his cousin, built Holly How on the site of an old cottage; it was afterwards tenanted by Mrs. Benson, and is now occupied by Mrs. Kennington. Mr. William Barratt's son, James W. H. Barratt, Esq., J.P., now lives at Holywath.

In 1848 Miss Creighton of Bank Ground built Lanehead, on the site of the old Half-penny Alehouse, for Dr. Bywater, who tenanted it for many years. Miss Creighton left the estate to the Rev. H. A. Starkie; the house was occupied later by Mrs. Melly, and since 1892 by W. G. Collingwood.

Coniston Bank replaces the old homestead of Townend. It was held in 1819 by Thomas North, Esq.; in 1849, by Henry Smith, Esq.; in 1855, by Wordsworth Smith, Esq.; subsequently by Major Benson Harrison, who let it for a time to George W. Goodison, Esq., C.E., J.P., and then to Thomas Docksey, Esq. In 1897 it was sold to Mrs. Arthur Severn, who sold it to its present occupant, H. P. Kershaw, Esq.

Brantwood, that is to say the nucleus of the present house, was built at the end of the eighteenth century by Mr. Woodville on a site bought from the Gaskarths. It was sold to Edward Copley, Esq., of Doncaster, whose widow died there in 1830. In 1849 it was in the occupation of Josiah Hudson, Esq., and the early home of his son, the Rev. Charles Hudson, a founder of the Alpine Club, and one of the party of young Englishmen who first climbed Mont Blanc without guides. He joined in the first ascent of the Matterhorn, 1865, and was killed in the accident on the descent.

The next resident was an artist, poet, and politician. Mr. William James Linton was born at Mile-End Road in the east of London in 1812; his father was of Scotch extraction. After apprenticeship to a wood engraver at Kennington, he worked for the *Illustrated London News*, and mixed with artists and authors of the Liberal and advanced party, becoming known as a writer, editor, and lecturer of much energy on the Radical side. In 1849 he left London for Miteside in West Cumberland, and in May, 1852, moved to Brantwood; after a year's tenancy he bought the little house and estate of ten acres, to which on the enclosure of the common six acres more were added. At Brantwood he also rented the garden and field between the house and the lake, and kept cows, sheep, and poultry; he anticipated Ruskin in clearing part of the land and cultivating it; in his volume of *Memories* (Lawrence & Bullen, 1895) he records the pleasures of his country life, as well as some of the trials of that period. He had been editing, and publishing at his own expense, a monthly magazine called *The English Republic*, and this was taken up again in 1854. Two young printers and a gardener came to Brantwood and offered their services, as assistants in this work; and with their help the magazine was printed in the outhouse, which he decorated with mottoes, such as "God and the People"—still to be traced in the roughcast on the wall. But its cost, however economically produced, was more than he could afford, and the magazine was dropped in April, 1855, after which he was employed on the woodcuts for the edition of Tennyson's poems illustrated by Rossetti, Millais, and other artists of the period. He tells how

Moxon came to call on him and hasten the work, but could not be received into the house owing to serious illness; and how thankful he was for a ten-pound note put into his hand by the considerate publisher as they stood at the gate. At Brantwood Miss Eliza Lynn came to nurse the first Mrs. Linton in her fatal illness, and married Mr. Linton in 1858. At Brantwood she wrote her novels *Lizzie Lorton*, *Sowing the Wind*, and *Grasp your Nettle*; also *The Lake Country*, published in 1864. Mr. Linton, in 1865, published *The Ferns of the Lake Country*, but for some years he had not lived continuously at Brantwood, and in 1866 he went to America, where he died in 1898. Mrs. Lynn Linton's best known work was *Joshua Davidson*, written later than her Coniston period; she died in London in 1898, and was buried at Crosthwaite, Keswick. Portraits and relics of the Lintons are to be seen in the Museum at Coniston.

Another poet, Gerald Massey, lived for a time at Brantwood, and dated the dedication of a volume of his poems from that address in May, 1860. He, like Linton, is known for his advocacy of democratic opinions; indeed, it is said that George Eliot took him for model in *Felix Holt the Radical*.

During the later years of Mr. Linton's ownership, Brantwood was taken for the summer by the Rev. G. W. Kitchin, now Dean of Durham. In 1871, however, Mr. Linton sold the house to Prof. Ruskin.

Ruskin as a child often visited Coniston, and in 1830 at the age of eleven made his first written mention of the place in a MS. journal now in the Museum. In his *Ileriad*, a rhymed description of the tour of that date, he gave the first hint of his wish to live in the Lake District, and in the winter of 1832-33, at the age of nearly fourteen, he wrote the well-known verses which stood first in the earliest collection of his poems:—

I weary for the torrent foaming,  
For shady holm and hill;  
My mind is on the mountain roaming,  
My spirit's voice is still.  
The crags are lone on Coniston ...

remembering first and foremost, not Snowdon or Scotland, but Coniston. In 1837, as an Oxford man, he was here again, making notes for his earliest prose work, *The Poetry of Architecture*; and one of the illustrations was a sketch of the Old Hall from the water, the view which became so familiar afterwards from his windows at Brantwood.

Then for a while his interests turned to the cathedrals of France, the palaces and pictures of Italy, and to the loftier scenery of the Alps; but curiously enough he did not like the Matterhorn at first—it was too unlike "Cumberland," he said. In 1847, already a well-known author, he was looking out for a house in the Lake District, and staying at Ambleside. But the March weather was dull, and he had many causes for depression. As he rowed on Windermere he pined for the light and colour of southern skies. "The lake," he wrote home, "when it is quite calm, is wonderfully sad and quiet; no bright colour, no snowy peaks. Black water, as still as death; lonely, rocky islets; leafless woods, or worse than leafless; the brown oak foliage hanging dead upon them; gray sky; far-off, wild, dark, dismal moorlands; no sound except the rustling of the boat among the reeds." Next year he revisited the lakes in spring, and wrote soon after about a wild place he had found:—"Ever since I passed Shap Fells, when a child, I have had an excessive love for this kind of desolation."

It was not, however, until 1867 that he revisited the Lakes. He came to Coniston on August 10th and went up the Old Man, delighted with the ascent. We have already quoted his description of the view.

At last (it was in 1871, at the age of 52, being then Slade Professor at Oxford) he fell into a dangerous illness, and lay between life and death at Matlock. He was heard to say and repeat:—"If only I could lie down beneath the crags of Coniston!"

Before he was fairly well again he heard through his old friend, Mr. T. Richmond, that a house and land at Coniston were for sale. The owner, W. J. Linton, asked £1,500 for the estate, and he bought it at once. In September he travelled here to see his bargain and found the cottage, as it then was, in poor condition; but, as he wrote, some acres "of rock and moor and streamlet, and, I think, the finest view I know in Cumberland—or Lancashire, with the sunset visible over the same."

Next summer the house was ready for him, and thenceforward became his headquarters. From June, 1889, till his death he never left it for a night; indeed, the last time he went so far as the village was on April 7th, 1893, when he attended our Choral Society's concert.

It is needless to tell over again the story of his life at Brantwood; to describe the house that he found a rickety cottage, and left a mansion and a museum of treasures; the gardens, woods, and moor he tended; the surroundings of mountain and streamlet, bird and beast, child-pet and peasant acquaintance, now familiar to the readers of his later books and of the many books that have been written about him. But here it must not be left unsaid that Coniston folk knew him less as the famous author than as the kind and generous friend; eccentric and not easily understood, but always to be trusted for help; giving with equal readiness to all the churches, to the schools and Institute; and to these last giving not only his money, but his strength and sympathy. It was he who started the first carving classes, and promoted the linen industry; he lectured in the

village (December, 1883) for local charities, and—what was perhaps most effective of all—carried out in practice his principle of employing neighbours rather than strangers, of giving the tradesfolk and labourers of the valley a share in his fortunes and interests. And perhaps in his death he did them almost a greater service. It was in obedience to his wishes that the offer of a funeral in Westminster Abbey was refused, and he was laid to rest—January 25th, 1900—"beneath the crags of Coniston," so linking his name for ever with the place he loved.

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and Slate Merchant.**

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*Titus Wilson, Printer, Kendal.*

**FOOTNOTES:**

- [A] *Allans*, land bordering water, like *holme*; and supposed to be from the Celtic *Eilean*, island.
- [B] *Rear* or *Ray Crag*, like *Rear* or *Ray Cross* upon Stainmoor, from the old Norse *Rá*, "boundary."
- [C] *Fittess*, like *Fitz* at Keswick, Colwith *Feet*, Mint's *Feet*, &c., seems to be akin to the Icelandic *Fit* (plu. *fitjar*), "meadow near a river or lake;" not found in Anglo-Saxon.

Transcriber's Notes

Very few changes have been made to the published text.

Obvious inconsistencies of punctuation have been resolved.

Inconsistencies of hyphenation have been retained except those between text and index which have been resolved.

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