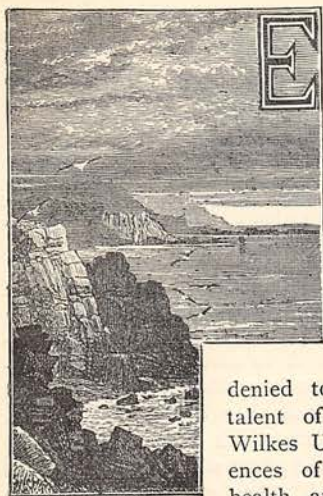


A NINETEENTH-CENTURY HOLIDAY RESORT



EVERY Englishman is supposed to be in quest of a new watering-place, just as our forefathers took ship and sought for unknown islands. Now, Filey is one of those quiet, self-enclosed, and lovable places any person might be proud to discover. But such a pleasure is denied to him by the local talent of the late Mr. John Wilkes Unett, and the experiences of many thousands of health and rest-seeking men

and women. As a health-resort, Filey is one of the discoveries of the present century. Previously, it was a collection of thatched one-storey houses, inhabited by fisher-folk, proud of their quaint old Church of St. Oswald, and as full of superstitions as simple and brave people sometimes are.

Mr. Unett, the maker of Filey—or New Filey, to be more accurate—was a local lawyer with a discerning mind. His good deeds are commemorated in the church, as they deserved to be, and he lived to the good age of eighty-six, by way of giving proof to others of the virtues he wished them to enjoy. “The deceased,” so runs a part of the inscription on the south transept, “was the original projector of New Filey, and by the spirited and liberal way in which he laid out his estate, in constructing a sea-wall, and in promoting to the utmost of his power every measure tending to improve and beautify the place, was the principal means of making New Filey what it became at the time of his death: a healthful, picturesque, and delightful watering-place.” The date of his death was November 12, 1856. We do not often find such an interesting personal memorial, or such a novel chapter outside the records of the books which profess to tell us everything we want to know about a watering-place.

Filey is singularly unpromising on the land side. The sea is invisible, for the place is on a cliff that slopes sea-ward, and you come at first upon the unfinished evidences of modern enterprise. The main street leads you to the sands, and once at the bottom of it, you are in another world—secluded, bright, and charming. The first view of the bay on a sunny morning, or in the early sunset, is a delicious experience. The expanse of water is considerable, and there are strong notes of colour to give pleasure to the eye. Northward, there are cliffs of bright red chalk and clay; southward, the colour of the gradually rising coast-line shades from red to a milky white; and between the cliffs and the sea, if the tide be out, there is a semi-circle, slightly flattened to the right hand, of

firm yellow sand. In front is the curling, crisping, ever-moving sea. Shape, sand, and sea will remind you—if you have seen it—of Portrush, in the north of Ireland, though Filey is more enclosed and the coast is bolder.

To the extreme left of the bay, if the tide be out, there is a dull brown line of low rocks—the Brig—up which an occasional fountain of snowy spray leaps with a glee that suggests coolness, sea-nymphs at play, and all manner of pleasant things. Sitting on one of the seats by the slight pebbled embankment, up to which the waves creep with a gentle murmur when the tide is full and the wind is low, or hiss and roar when the breeze is fresh and strong, watching the convolutions in the under-surfaces of the rollers caused by the curved shape of the bay, or the long creamy line of the Brig, a tumbled mass of gleaming spray, or the distant ships, green-hulled, white-sailed, or smoke-trailing, it is impossible not to feel a delicious sense of repose and easefulness. Thomson’s lines from the “Castle of Indolence” will come unbidden into the cultivated mind—

“A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass
For ever flushing round a summer sky.”

But you are not really idle. The air is full of ozone, the lungs act freely, the heart rejoices, the blood is “warmed in all its ways.” For the worn and weary seeking quiet and rest, wanting, as the doctors say, “a physiological holiday,” Filey has more virtues than space allows us to describe. Its gentle animations suggest no rivalry and occasion no disquiet. The walks over the Muston, Hunmanby, Reighton, and Speeton Sands are delightful. When their quiet charms pale, there is always the Brig.

Now, the Brig is not without its dangers. It is a rough-edged, broken, many-pointed file, as its name denotes, of eggstone, or oolite, so-called from its globules of stone, apparently cemented together. There are superstitions and real romances about it. According to local legend, it was built by the evil one to annoy and injure brave seamen. With a gigantic hammer he is represented as shaping it. In so doing, he dropped his hammer into the water. Clutching at it as it fell, his claws gripped a haddock, and hence the black marks still to be seen on the side of that fish! When Filey was a fisher-village, men may have believed the legend; when Mr. Unett made it a watering-place, it vanished. But old fisher-wives sometimes tell the story to their children still, with an eerie light in their bright eyes.

There have been many wrecks on the Brig. The Italian barque *Unico*, from Genoa, was lifted bodily upon it in January, 1871, as shown in the carving on a column in St. Oswald’s Churchyard. Twelve out of its thirteen men were drowned, including the pilot. The man who was saved on a piece of timber, seemed scared and afraid of being murdered at the time of

his rescue. His exclamations in Italian are described as wild and pitiful in the extreme. There is a still more romantic incident to be recorded. In December, 1799, Richard Richardson, a fisherman, went out in his coble, was caught in a storm, and drowned. Whether the mischief occurred in the bay or near the Brig is not known. But his wife was certain that some day she should find his body. Every night she wandered over the sands, or made her way to the rocky ledges to the north, or further on to the Brig itself. Weeks and months rolled away, and her search was unrewarded. "I shall find him yet," was her answer to the doubts and head-shakings of the fisher-folk. One night she dreamed she saw her husband's body lying on the Brig. She rose and dressed herself, and tore down to the rocks. After some searching, she found his corpse, stained, bruised, and almost naked. It had been "sand-warped" for twelve months, and lifted on to the rocks by one of those ground-swells so common at the spot. There is a tombstone in the churchyard to his memory, with the lines :—

"By sudden wind and boistorous (*sic*) sea,
The Lord did take my Life from me ;
But He to shore my Body brought,
Found by my Wife, who for it sought,
And here it rests in mother-clay
Until the Resurrection Day.

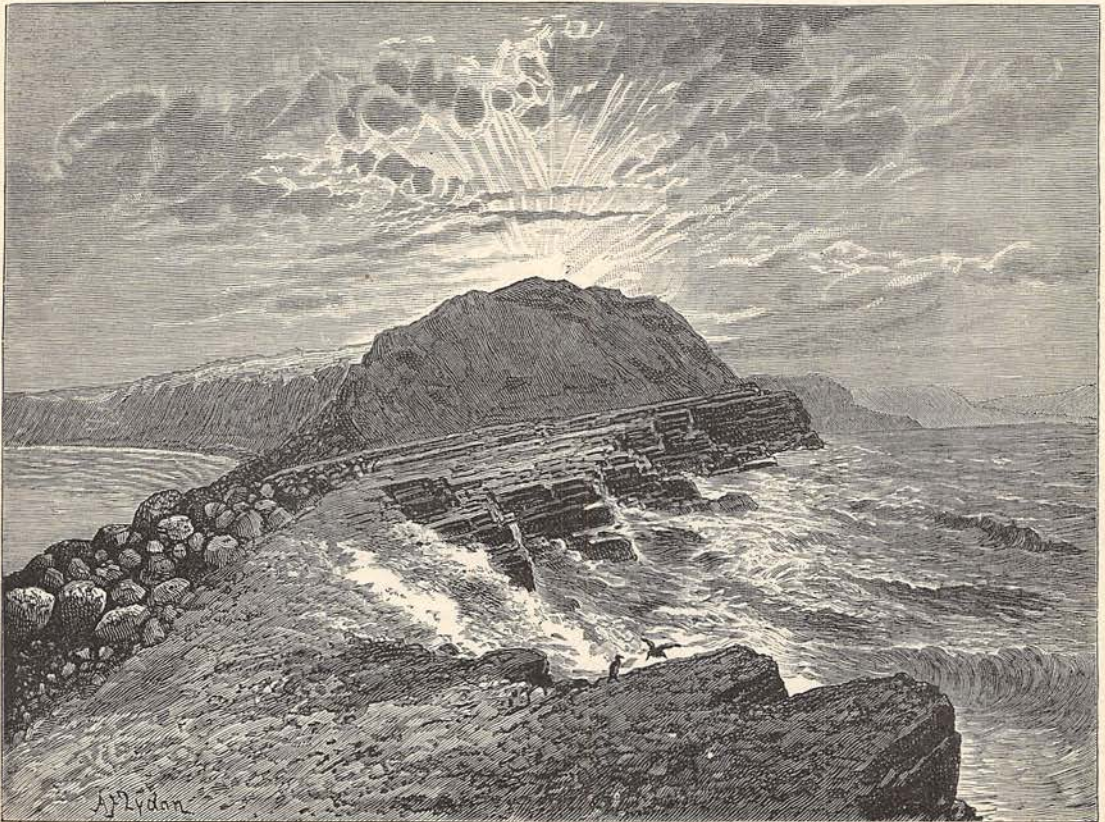
"Also of Elizabeth, wife of the above, who died Jan'y. 19, 1833. Aged 89 years."

The ground-swell that lifted this poor woman's husband on to the Brig has not always spared the living, as a slab in the rocks records before the Brig itself is reached. It is copied here without comment :—

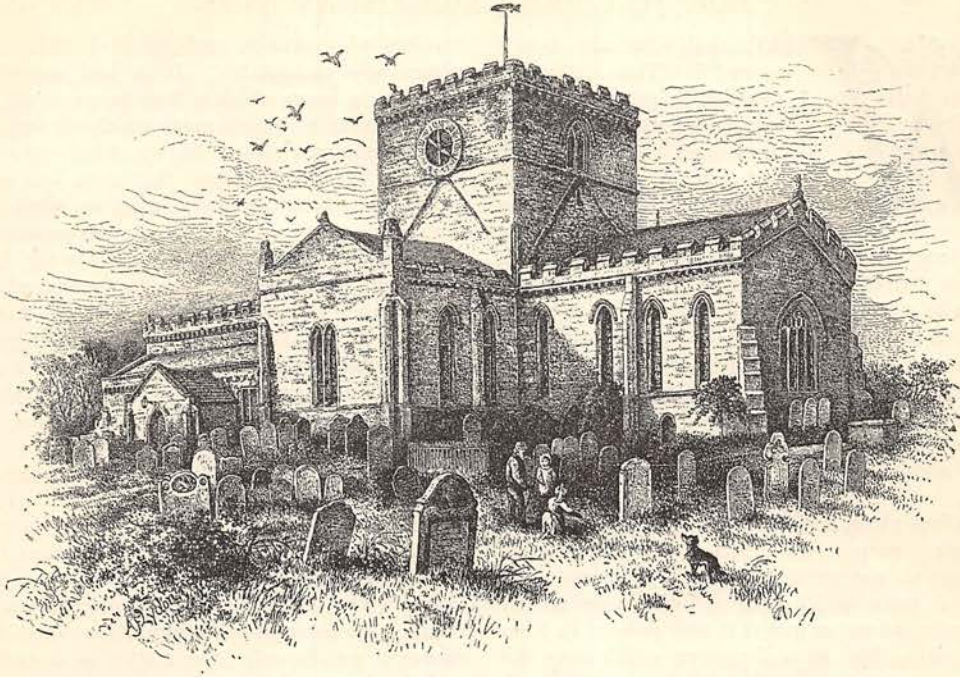
"In memory of Chas. Paget, Esq., of Ruddington Grange, Notts, J.P., formerly M.P. for Nottingham, and of Ellen, his wife, who were swept off Filey Rocks by a wave of extraordinary volume, and drowned, on the 13th of October, 1873. At the time of the fatal occurrence they were standing on the rocks near the second cave, where they had been in safety for more than a quarter of an hour. The spot in question is barely covered at high tides; and at the time it only wanted an hour and a half to low water. This slab is placed here by the members of the family to warn all persons against the danger of venturing on the rocks during a heavy ground-swell."

No advantage is to be gained by concealing such facts. At times, Filey Brig is dangerous; at other times it can be safely traversed as far as you can get. After stormy weather it is covered with curiosities from the sea such as rarely reach the sands. When you can safely visit it, or sit about it, unwet with spray, it is a delicious spot, from which Scarborough Castle and town are visible, and about which sea-birds wheel and flutter, and on which they rest, making many a pleasant scene for the eye. If you want to hear the waves *talk*, Filey Brig is almost as good a place as Land's End.

Old Filey is on the southern top of the ravine, through which it is thought an old lake emptied itself into the sea in distant geological days. At the end of the houses on the cliff-top is a wooden



FILEY BRIG.



FILEY CHURCH

seat where the fishermen watch, smoke, and spin yarns, in their picturesque costumes. Here the old folks used to congregate on Boat-Sunday, in living memory—that is, the day before the luggers went out to the Dogger Bank, or even farther north, for herrings—to say farewell.

On the north side of the ravine, behind the screen of trees, but reached by a bridge, is St. Oswald's Church, as shown in our engraving, which gives the southern side. It is a quaint building, with Early English and Norman characteristics; but the place has been patched and injured by inartistic repairs. The aisles have no pews, and there is no passage up the nave. On the south wall is a rudely-carved and very ancient figure of St. Oswald, the patron saint, who was King of Northumbria. Edward Bygod, in a testamentary burial deed, gave his body, A.D. 1526, "to be buried in ye Quire of the pish Ch. of Fyveley, before the image of St. Oswald." There is much in the interior of the church to interest. The register begins in 1525, and two of the bells are of the seventeenth century. There is a fine view, from the tower, of the Wold Hills, the Brig, and Flamborough Head.

Filey Bay has strong claims to be made a harbour of refuge. A committee has reported in its favour, not only as affording an easy access to the fishing-fleets of the Northern Sea, but as being "the key of the defence of the eastern ports." The Brig acts as a breakwater to the north, and with other protection from the south, of an artificial character, a splendid harbour could be made.

The adjacent rocks of Speeton, formed of glacier clay, are well worth visiting. There, and at Bempton, the sea-cliff is worn into longitudinal and horizontal fissures, and thousands of sea-birds nest in them. As they range themselves along these dirty-white ledges, holding their "chapels," they present a most novel and interesting sight. Peeping over at Bempton, the sea below is found to be alive with them, and varieties are noticed that cannot otherwise be seen by the landsman. The comical behaviour of the puffin will not escape attention. Boys used to be lowered over the cliff to collect eggs. Further away is Flamborough Head, with its old and its modern lighthouse.

The people hereabouts seem to still retain the dark hair and black fierce eyes of their ancestors, who drove out the Danes from this stronghold, dyked off from the mainland. The dyke can still be seen. A pleasant excursion to Burlington, or to Scarborough, will break any dulness that Filey may generate. A walk on the cliff-tops from the Brig to Scarborough is most enjoyable. The moorlands of the North Riding, and even Whitby itself, are accessible from Filey in a day's jaunt. Indeed, it is a quiet haven, a real resting-place. The Filey folk, in their more exalted moments, compare themselves with Scarborough, and talk of Lords and Commons, aristocrats and democrats. A visitor, or a passing artist, will forgive these local pleasantries, and inspire his daily ozone without caring to be contentious.

EDWIN GOADBY.