

and his two principal agents, the Charnocks; but ultimately the affair was compromised, and ended in a record of *nolle prosequi*.

Lord Grey had his hands full enough of plots and risks, in addition to his disgraceful amour. In this very year, 1682, he had been indicted, with several others of better fame than his own, for a riotous interference with the election of sheriff for the city of London, and fined one thousand marks. Before many months had elapsed, he was involved in the celebrated Rye House Plot, wherein for a while he was associated with men who bore the honoured names of Sidney and Russell. But he was more wary or more fortunate than they. When on his way to the Tower, he contrived to get his guards intoxicated, and, leaving them peacefully slumbering in the carriage, betook himself to flight. Holland was the place he selected as a hiding place, and thither he went, accompanied by his mistress and her nominal husband. In 1685, he returned to England in the suite of the Duke of Monmouth, and took part in the rash enterprise which culminated in the battle of Sedgemoor. Both at Bridport and in the engagement of Sedgemoor, Lord Grey is said to have behaved in a dastardly fashion, thereby adding a fresh blot to his already sullied name. To crown his cowardice, he purchased his pardon by writing, when a prisoner in the Tower, a full confession, which was a designed justification of the severity with which Lord William Russell had been treated for the Rye House Plot, and a tissue of falsehoods against the Duke of Monmouth.

Subsequent to the Revolution of 1688, Lord Grey continued in the background for a time, but gradually recovered more than his old influence, and for services, supposed or real, was invested with the earldom of Tankerville. Macaulay, describing the debates in the Upper House on the insertion of the words "right and lawful" as applied to William of Orange in the Act of Succession, says:—"But no man distinguished himself more in the debate than one whose life, both public and private, had been one long series of faults and disasters, the incestuous lover of Henrietta Berkeley, the unfortunate lieutenant of the Duke of Monmouth. He had recently ceased to be called by the tarnished name of Grey of Wark, and was now Earl of Tankerville. He spoke on that day with great force and eloquence for the maintenance of the words 'right and lawful.'"

After this, it is not wonderful that he attained places of trust and power. During the absence of King William in 1700, he was appointed First Commissioner of the Treasury and one of the Lords Justices. Later in the same year he was made Lord Privy Seal.

Lord Grey died on Midsummer Day, 1701. The hapless victim of his passion spent the remnant of her days in obscurity abroad.

The Shilbottle Blue Bonnet.

FROM the very nature of his employment, mining, mole-like, far underground, with a constant liability to loss of limb or life, the uneducated pitman of every land is prone to superstition. The Northumberland coal-miner, such as he was less than a century since, was no exception to this rule. He believed in all sorts of omens, warnings, and signs. Many things, insignificant in themselves, had a weighty meaning to him. A rabbit, a hare, or a woman crossing the path on his way before daybreak to the pit, would cause him to return home and go to bed again, thereby losing a day's winning. Nightmare or other dreams were, of course, premonitory of sudden inroads of water, outgushings of gas, or fatal falls of stone. Knockings were heard occasionally down below, of which no account could be given: these were also ominous. And the pits were, moreover, haunted by mischievous goblins whose sole delight was to annoy and terrify the pit people, men and boys. One of these was that spiteful elf Cutty Soams, whose doings have already been recorded in these pages. (See *ante*, vol. i., p. 269.) Of another goblin—altogether a more sensible, and, indeed, an honest and hard-working bogle, much akin to the Scottish brownie—a writer in the *Colliery Guardian*, of May 23rd, 1863, wrote as follows:—

The supernatural person in question was no other than a ghostly putter, and his name was "Bluecap." Sometimes the miners would perceive a light-blue flame flicker through the air, and settle on a full coal-tub, which immediately moved towards the rolley-way as though impelled by the sturdiest sinews in the working. Industrious Bluecap required, and rightly, to be paid for his services, which he modestly rated as those of an ordinary average putter; therefore, once a fortnight Bluecap's wages were left for him in a solitary corner of the mine. If they were a farthing below his due, the indignant Bluecap would not pocket a stiver; if they were a farthing above his due, indignant Bluecap left the surplus revenue where he found it. The writer asked his informant, a heaver, whether, if Bluecap's wages were now-a-days to be left for him, he thought they would be appropriated; the man shrewdly answered, he thought they would be taken by Bluecap, or somebody else.

At Shilbottle Colliery, near Alnwick, Bluecap was better known as Blue Bonnet. But the Shilbottle pitmen no longer believe in any such unearthly diminutive imp as their forefathers used to think and say they saw, pushing the full tubs to the rolley-way, when there were no human putters there. They are now a well-educated, intelligent, orderly class of men. Seventy or eighty years ago, however, their parish minister thought it his duty to report concerning them to Parliament, that "most of the poor, being pitmen, are able to educate their children; but they are regardless of their receiving any instruction, or observance of the Sabbath, which is attributed," concludes the worthy man, "to the dissemination of atheistical and seditious pamphlets." This curious report was printed, by order of the House of Commons, on the

1st of April, 1819, in a blue book entitled "A Digest of Parochial Returns."

The Dutch or Flemings have a counterpart of our Blue Bonnet in a spirit whom they call Roodkep, that is Red Cap, and also "the little brisk boy," Kaboutermannetjes. Like the Scottish Brownie, he vanishes for ever on receiving a gift of new clothes; and, unlike the Northumberland sprite, he does not seem to expect any money wage.

All these dwarfish beings, according to Norse mythology, were bred in the mould of the earth, just as worms are in a dead body. "It was, in fact, in Ymir's flesh"—[Ymir, a giant whom the divine sons of Bor slew to form from his corpse this terraqueous globe]—"it was in Ymir's flesh that the dwarfs were engendered, and began to move and live. At first they were only maggots, but by the will of the gods they at length partook both of human shape and understanding, although they always dwell in rocks and caverns." So the illustrious Snorri Sturlason tells us; and if we do not believe his tale to be strictly true, we may perhaps still believe some things that are equally false.

Jeremiah Dixon, Mathematician.

MASON and Dixon's Line was more familiar to the general public during the old slavery days in the United States than it is now. The name was given to an imaginary line which, stretching across the continent of North America, separated the Free States from the Slave States. It gave rise to the well-known negro song, "Dixie's Land." The line got its name from two English astronomers and mathematicians—Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon—who in 1763-67 marked out the boundaries between the possessions of Lord Baltimore and the family of William Penn, then the rival proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania. But it is not generally known, even in the County Palatine, that the Dixie of the negro song, the Jeremiah Dixon of American history, was a native of Durham. A biographical sketch of this worthy and distinguished man was contributed by Mr. Matthew Richley to a Bishop Auckland magazine in 1854. What follows is copied with a few slight corrections from Mr. Richley's sketch.

Jeremiah Dixon, one of the greatest mathematicians as well as one of the most ingenious men of his age, was born in the out-of-the-way village of Cockfield, and was the son of an old and faithful servant of the Raby family, whose picture is still preserved in Raby castle, bearing the following inscription—"An Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile." Jeremiah received the first rudiments of his education under Mr. John Kipling, of Barnard Castle,

but was in a great measure self-taught. He was a contemporary, and on very intimate terms, with that celebrated and strange compound of genius and eccentricity, William Emmerson, of Hurworth; and also with John Bird, of Bishop Auckland, another ingenious and kindred spirit, who was an engraver and mathematical instrument maker, and who made an instrument for taking the latitude at sea which surpassed all others previously used.

There appears to be no record left, either written or oral, with respect to the early manifestations of Dixon's genius; but, if the history of the development of his peculiar turn for mathematics and mechanics could be traced from its first rude dawning up to the time when he came out a public character—to be entrusted with responsible tasks requiring abilities of the first order—there can be no doubt that there would be found in it, as in that of most men of genius, many pleasing incidents worthy of being preserved.

Jeremiah was selected by the Royal Academy of Woolwich as a fit person to be sent out to the island of St. Helena for the purpose of observing the transit of the planet Venus across the sun's disc; he was recommended by his friend, John Bird, who had some connection with that school. When Dixon was undergoing his examination by the learned of that establishment, with respect to his qualifications for the task, the first question put to him by them was, "Whether did you study mathematics at Cambridge or Oxford?" "At neither place," said Jeremiah. "Then at what public school did you get your rudiments?" "At no public school," was the reply. "Then at what particular seat of learning did you acquire it?" "In a pit cabin upon Cockfield Fell," said the humble scholar.

Dixon's abilities were tested, and found equal to the task; he was accordingly sent, and performed the work to the satisfaction of his employers. The Academy which sent him out was a military one; and from that time till the day of his death he wore its uniform—a red coat and a cocked hat. It was after the expedition to St. Helena that he was engaged to fix the boundaries of the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

It is known that Dixon was the originator of many of the mechanical contrivances and machines now used about coal works. There is even a belief that he was the original discoverer of coal gas, and that his own garden wall, on the edge of Cockfield Fell, was the first place ever lit up by that most useful article. This discovery is generally attributed to William Murdoch, a native of Cornwall, who, in the year 1792, employed it for lighting his own house and offices at Redruth, and in 1798 constructed the apparatus for the purpose of lighting Boulton and Watt's Works, Soho, near Birmingham. With respect to Dixon's claim to the discovery, the probability is that it was simultaneous with that of Murdoch, and that, living in an obscure