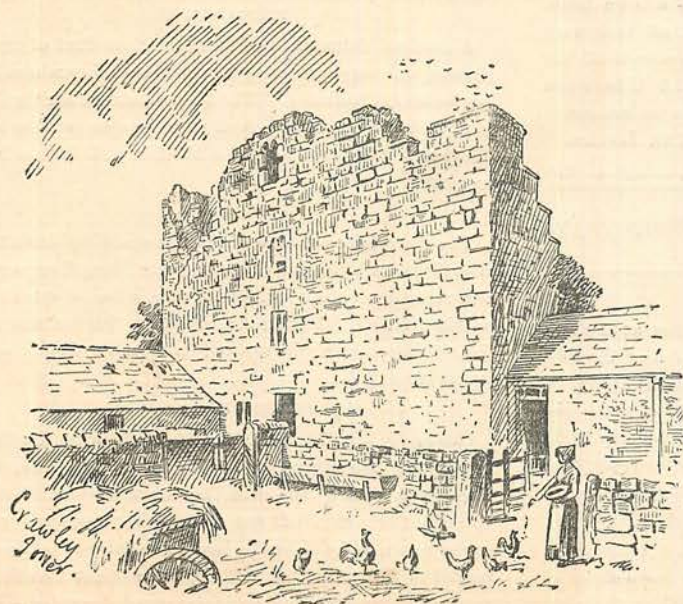


steer on to the bridge by a wide turn so as to clear the corner of the right hand parapet. Unfortunately for Mr. Parker's tactics, the horse was not sufficiently eased when he reached the bridge, and the result was that the near wheel of the trap struck the left hand parapet with such force that Mr. Parker shot up almost perpendicularly to a considerable height into the air, and dropped about forty-five feet into the river. He alighted outstretched on his back in about two feet of water, and about a yard from the land. His escape from the water was so quickly effected that his clothing was only superficially wet, and he was unharmed, not having sustained the slightest injury. Singular to relate, the horse did not fall, but galloped off homewards with the shafts dangling at his heels. In commemoration of Mr. Parker's miraculous feat, my son cut the words "Parker's Leap" on the stone coping of the parapet of the bridge at or about the place where the accident happened.

### Crawley Tower.

ONE of the oldest and most interesting of Northumbrian peles is Crawley Tower, which is situate about half-a-dozen miles to the west of Alnwick. It occupies the east angle of a Roman camp, and appears to have been constructed out of the ruined masonry of the ramparts. The camp is 290 feet long and 160 feet broad, and is surrounded by a fosse 20 feet wide, and an agger 20 feet thick. As the Devil's Causeway—a branch from the Watling Street—crossed the Breamish just below, this strong military station was, no doubt, says Mr. Tomlinson, intended to guard the passage and keep in subjection the tribes who occupied the numerous camps of the district. Crawley was anciently spelt *Crawlawe*, supposed to be a corruption of *caer*, a fort, and *law*, a hill.



### Notes and Commentaries.

#### THE OAK-TREE COFFINS OF FEATHERSTONE.

About three miles to the south-west of Haltwhistle, close by the river Tyne, stands the historic castle of Featherstone. In a field or haugh, on the Wydon Eals Farm, have been found, from time to time coffins, of great antiquarian interest. This field has a history. A deed exists bearing date A.D. 1223, relating to what is called "Temple Land." The field is part of it, and, until recently, from time immemorial, the owner of Featherstone has had to pay a charge of nineteen shillings per annum on account of it to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle, being the only property that that body possessed in Northumberland. They had no title to it but prescription. It is situated about 200 yards from the river, and in it have been found the foundations of ancient buildings.

In the year 1825 some drainers came upon what they took to be buried trees of the olden time. They lay mostly east and west, and were from five to six feet from the surface. The wood, however, sounded hollow, and on unearthing one they found that it was in two halves, and hollowed out in the middle to the extent of about the size of a man's body. Some bones were also found in it, which, on being exposed to the air, crumbled away. The cavity had evidently been made by human hands with rough implements. Other coffins were brought to the surface, one of which contained a human skull. All the coffins were similarly fashioned.

Several similar coffins have been found since. In Aug., 1869, Mr. T. W. Snagge and Mr. Clark, the land steward, made a systematic exploration of the whole field. A boring-rod was driven down in various parts, and almost constantly touched coffins five or six feet below the surface. In one place a trench was made fifteen feet long and four feet wide, where many coffins lay together, one of which was bared and brought to the surface. It contained a few bones, and had evidently never been disturbed before. It was similar to all the others, being a huge bole of an oak tree, split or riven from end to end by rough wedges, hollowed out sufficiently to receive a human body, and fastened together again by oaken pegs driven into holes made with hot irons. The outside of the coffin was roughly rounded off at the ends, and a wooden "patch" had been fastened on to a knot-hole in the same way. It measured as follows:—Length, 7ft. 4in.; girth, 5ft. 4in.; inside hollow, 5ft.

10½ in. by 1ft. 7 in. ; depth of hollow, including the lid, 1ft. 1 in. The foot of the hollow space was indented, apparently to receive the feet.

Antiquaries are by no means agreed as to the age of the coffins. From two centuries B.C. to two or three centuries A.D. appears to be about the date fixed.

THOMAS CARRICK, Keswick.

#### CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE LAKE DISTRICT.

One remarkable custom in the Lake District, in which I spent many years of my youth, is not mentioned in the article that appears in the *Monthly Chronicle*, page 130. I allude to that of firing guns over the house of the bride and bridegroom on the night of their marriage. It is (or at least in my day used to be) a common thing for a party of young men, friends of the bridal pair, to go to the house about ten o'clock, or later, and give them this noisy salute. I suppose good fellowship, coupled with drink, is the anticipated result. The same custom prevails in Norway, the birth-place of the Cumberland race. But since its origin must date later than that of the invention of powder, and Norwegians seem to have had possession of our mountain country quite 800 years ago, it would seem that the custom in Cumberland has little or nothing to do with our Scandinavian descent.

J. R. C., Charing, Kent.

#### FAIRY PIPES.

Fairy pipes seem to be pretty well distributed in these islands wherever there are old mounds, old rubbish heaps, or undisturbed foundations. Some years ago, in pulling down the Leadenhall Press buildings, at the back of which once ran a purling trout stream through a large farm, many ancient tobacco (?) pipes were found, all broken off short as described by previous correspondents of the *Monthly Chronicle*. (See vol. iii., page 561.) I have met with them elsewhere, but have never seen a perfect one.

ANDREW W. TUER, London.

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### North-Country Wit & Humour.

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#### THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

Several workmen met in a public-house at Felling Shore, and conversed on various topics. One of the sons of toil described the various important jobs at which he had assisted, and added :—"Aa helped te myek the Atlantic cable." "When and whor did ye help te de that?" asked a companion. "Wey," was the reply, "aa struck te the chainmakor that myed it at Haaks's!"

#### THE INFLUENZA.

A working man of mature age went into a tradesman's shop in Sunderland the other day. As he had a glove on one of his hands, the shopkeeper said to him, "Hollo! what's the matter with your hand?" "Oh! aa dinnet

knaa," was the reply, in a dull dispirited way, "aa've lost aall poo'er in't; aa think its that new thing gannin' about; influenzy, or whativvor they caall't!"

#### THE PITMAN AND HIS FRIENDS.

A pitman went to visit some friends. As he was coming away, it began to rain, and his friends asked him to stay all night. He said he would, but was soon afterwards missed by his friends. About an hour later he returned, his clothes being wet through with rain. Asked where he had been, he replied :—"Aa've been telling ma wife that aa's ganning te stay from hyem the neet!"

#### ARMSTRONG'S MEN.

Not many mornings ago, as Armstrong, Mitchell, and Company's night-shift men were coming out, one of them went for a refresher to a public-house, where he encountered two pitmen, one of whom said :—"Whaat a lot o' men, mistor! Whaat plyece is that?" "Oh! de ye not knaa? That's Armstrong's." "Ist? Wey, aa nivvor seed se mony men i' ma life." "Oh! them's nowt te what ye see at neets." "De ye say se? By gox, then, whaat a row thor wad be if she wes laid in!"

#### THE EIGHT-DAY CLOCK.

A good story is told of an old Newcastle gentleman who sometimes went home happy. The staircase of the house he occupied had a wide well and an eight-day clock on the landing. One night, as the master of the mansion, after letting himself in with a latch key, was struggling up the stairs, he was startled by an ominous "Ugh!" from above. He stared about in a dazed fashion for a few minutes, and then, throwing his arms around the clock, exclaimed, "Dear Bella, how your heart is beating!"

#### PERPLEXED.

A good old dame who resides in the East End of Sunderland was perplexed as to what she should purchase for her better-half's dinner. The thought struck her that he might like a "bit fish." And then she ejaculated to her daughter: "If aa cannot get a bit fish, aa'll hev a few haddocks!"

#### WATERPROOF.

The other day as some workmen were coming down the river Tyne on board one of the General Ferry Company's steamers, one of them lighted his pipe, when a spark fell on his trousers. A comrade told him that he was on fire. "Hoots, man," he replied, "aa'll not tyek fire; aa's wettorproof!"

#### THE UBIQUITOUS TYNESIDER.

One lovely evening, in Melbourne Harbour, as Captain Walker, of the clipper ship Waverley, hailing from the Tyne, was pacing the deck, he heard the sound of a splash not far away. It was evident that somebody was in the water, so he ordered a boat to be lowered, and proceeded to the spot where he thought he might be able to render assistance to anyone in danger of drowning. He was not surprised when he found a man struggling in the