

abroad he distinguished himself in the public service; and in the year 1333 he was made Bishop of Durham, entertaining the King and Queen and a noble company at his installation.

"One of the learnedest men of his time, and also a very great patron and encourager of learning," his employments afforded him frequent and favourable opportunities for the acquirement of books. These he had judiciously improved wherever he went, so that it is said of him he possessed a larger collection of books than all the rest of the bishops of England put together. His love of literature was intense, and is commemorated for all time in his *Philobiblon*, a manuscript copy of which is comprised in Bishop Cosin's bequest at Durham, "extremely curious as affording one of the earliest accounts of the collection and arrangement of a library." (Surtees's "History of Durham.")

It was in the year 1333, when the meridian of his days had been attained, that he was made Bishop of Durham, and seated on the Wear, with all his treasures about him. The common apartment of his palace would seem, by description, to have resembled the study of Monkbarons in the "Antiquary." So littered was the floor with books, papers, and other possessions of the kind, that the officers of his establishment could not get at him with due reverence and ceremony—a perplexity as to which his lordship probably troubled himself very little. He had transcribers, illuminators, and binders in his service; and the sons of the Northern gentry were members of his household, and educated under his roof. When the seasons came round at which the customary offerings were presented to the Count Palatine, they never came to him with warmer welcome than in the form of books; and yet he largely valued other riches for the means they gave him of doing good, and works of charity accompanied his daily steps. It was his wont, in going to and fro, to distribute stated sums:—Between Durham and Newcastle, £8; Durham and Stockton, £5; Durham and Auckland, 5 marks (£3 16s. 8d.); Durham and Middlesbrough, £5; amounts bearing due proportion, no doubt, to the then population between the respective places.

But what gives him his peculiar claim to our notice, just now, is his foundation of a public library in Oxford. The students of the hall in which the books were lodged had the free use of them, under "a provident arrangement," drawn up by the donor; who enacted, besides, "that books might be lent to strangers," being students of the university not belonging to the hall, the keepers taking as security a sum exceeding the value of the loan. ("Biographia Britannica," Surtees's "Durham," and Chambers's "Book of Days.")

Thus do we see that a Public Lending Library, the first in the kingdom, was the benefaction of this Bishop of Durham, who died at Auckland on the 14th of April, 1345, and was buried in the Cathedral. Sumptuous was

the ceremony: and the Sacrist vindicated his claim to the funeral furniture, with the horses that drew the hearse, and a mule that played a less prominent part in the train.
JAMES CLEPHAN (THE LATE).

The Morning Star of the Reformation.



SOME few miles to the north-east of Barnard Castle, by the tree-shaded banks of the river Tees, as it forces its way over its rocky bed, one comes upon a few small cottages and an old ivy-covered church, half-hidden from sight by trees, and secluded by high surrounding cliffs and lack of roads from the busy world of toil and pleasure. Here is a lonely, forgotten hamlet, which, by tradition of the best authorities, gave birth and name to one of the most prominent men in English history. Wycliffe, for that is the name of the village, calls up rich associations, and takes the memory back to the middle of that long period of history which we commonly brand with the title of the Dark Ages. Not Dark; Mediæval were better, or the Awakening; for was it not the time that gave us Dante, and Petrarch, and Boccaccio? And did it not bequeath to us that priceless boon which has inextinguishably lighted up the whole world as no other discovery of man has done—I mean the invention of printing? It is, indeed, a period rich in the names of great men—Erigena, Roger Bacon, John of Salisbury, Sir Thomas More, Dean Colet, Melancthon, and our own father of English literature, Chaucer, to mention only a few. Not Dark, at least.

About 1324, then, at Wycliffe, though some say it was at or near Richmond, John de Wycliffe, called by his admirers the Morning Star of the Reformation, was born. John Leland, the antiquary, claims for the Reformer's birthplace a small village near Richmond, some ten miles to the south; but it seems more pleasant to think that he was one of the family that took its name from, or gave its name to, the estate of Wycliffe, and had held it from very early times—from the Norman Conquest, perhaps—and continued there till 1606, when the lands passed to the Tunstalls by marriage.

Wycliffe Church, as we look at it now, has probably not changed greatly since the days when Wycliffe worshipped there, and when his mind would perhaps receive that seed which afterwards grew into so stout a tree. The building has an ancient and worn-out look, and its dilapidated appearance certainly impresses us with its venerable age. The outer walls are nothing but a patchwork of irregular masonry, reminding one of nothing so much as an old worsted stocking that has been darned and darned until there is none of the original fabric left, and it will bear darning no more. The church, not a large one, is a long, low building, consisting of chancel and

nave, the former of which has been added at a later date, and is not built on the same line as the nave. The roof is flat, and at one end is an old bell-turret. Entering by the porch, it is seen at a glance that the windows are the most interesting part of the interior, for they contain some fragments of what were formerly fine stained glass lights. Some of them have kept the Early English arches with graceful mullions and traceries. The interior of the church is quaint rather than attractive, and certainly is not ornate. The nave, except for its windows, the double row of seats, and the font and oaken beams of the roof, is singularly plain.

The village of Wycliffe contains only two other buildings of any size, or that demand anything more than passing notice. Wycliffe Hall of to-day is a comparatively modern structure. It is a well-built, handsome mansion of stone, regularly planned, and in its walls are incorporated portions of the old home of the Wycliffes, but these are for the most part out of sight. The rectory, close to the church, is pleasantly situated, and, seen from the river, seems greatly out of proportion to the diminutive village wedged in between its back wall and the Tees. Within its walls is a valuable relic of the great Reformer—a portrait of John Wycliffe, painted by Sir Antonio More—which was presented as an heirloom to future rectors of Wycliffe by the Rev. Thomas Zouch, A.M., a former incumbent. It is from an engraving by Edward Finden of this portrait that the accompanying illustration is taken.

Only the most meagre record has come down to us of the early years of Wycliffe—almost nothing, indeed, and that so uncertain as to be of no more value than interesting traditions. Of his later life, the important part of his history, we have, fortunately, ample details. Such accounts as have been preserved speak of his life as one of spotless purity, and the early part of it was probably spent in pious seclusion and diligent study. He was already past middle age when he was appointed Master of Balliol College, Oxford, which had been founded by the Balliols, of Barnard Castle, close by his old home. At that time the University of Oxford was the centre of learning in Europe, preceding even Paris. Amongst the thirty thousand students then at Oxford he was recognised as the first of the schoolmen of his day. Lyons, Paris, and Cologne borrowed their professors from Oxford; and in Oxford Wycliffe stood foremost. Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham had been his predecessors, and from the last he borrowed the principles of his earliest efforts at Church reform, whilst to a former Master of Balliol, Bradwardine, he owed the tendency, shown in the speculative treatises he published at this time, to a predestinarian Augustinianism which formed the basis of his later theological revolt from Rome. Add to this that he was "the founder of our later English prose, a master of popular invective and irony and persuasion, a dexterous politician, a daring partisan, the

organiser of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of Christendom around him."

The history of the second half of Wycliffe's life forms a notable page in European history. The Church had sunk to its lowest point of spiritual decay. The Black and Grey Friars of Dominic and Francis had grown corrupt, and his collision with these Mendicants in violently opposing their encroachments has often been adduced as the first notable achievement which marked out the future tenour of his life. But the real throwing down of the gauntlet was his action in opposition to Urban V., whose demand in 1365 for the thirty-three years' arrears of the tribute promised by King John



John de Wycliffe.

From engraving by Edw. Finden, after original picture by Sir Antonio More, now an heirloom in the Rectory of Wycliffe, Richmondshire. Presented by Thomas Zouch, A.M., a former rector of this church.

brought matters to a crisis. The English king and Parliament returned such an answer that the Pope's lordship over England was never afterwards put forward. Then it became evident that the thin, retired student was also a man of dauntless spirit and indomitable energy, jealous of the liberties of his country, and always indignant at the corruptions of the Church, Wycliffe's treatise, "*De Dominio Divino*," roused against him the anger of the hierarchy. Doubtless the English Parliament was wearied at this time with the exactions of the Papal Court at Avignon, exactions which had existed long, but were still waxing worse; and so England was in a condition of revolt. But it was no small

matter—indeed, a very great help—that the most learned doctor at Oxford, the most accomplished schoolman of his age, with a reputation in which the most piercing eyes of his foes could not detect a flaw, should be ranged on the side of the liberties of England. This conduct of his strengthened the favour in which he was held at Court, mainly held before through his friendship with John of Gaunt. And he was not forgotten in high quarters; for, in 1375, he was presented by the Crown to the living of Lutterworth. But he still retained his position at Oxford.

Wycliffe was looked upon as the theological bulwark of the Lancastrian party, and the clergy resolved to strike a blow, summoning him before Bishop Courtenay of London for his heretical propositions concerning the wealth of the Church. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, accepted the challenge as given to himself, and stood by the side of Wycliffe in the Consistory Court at St. Paul's. The trial, however, did not take place, for John of Gaunt was a man of acts, not satisfied with words.

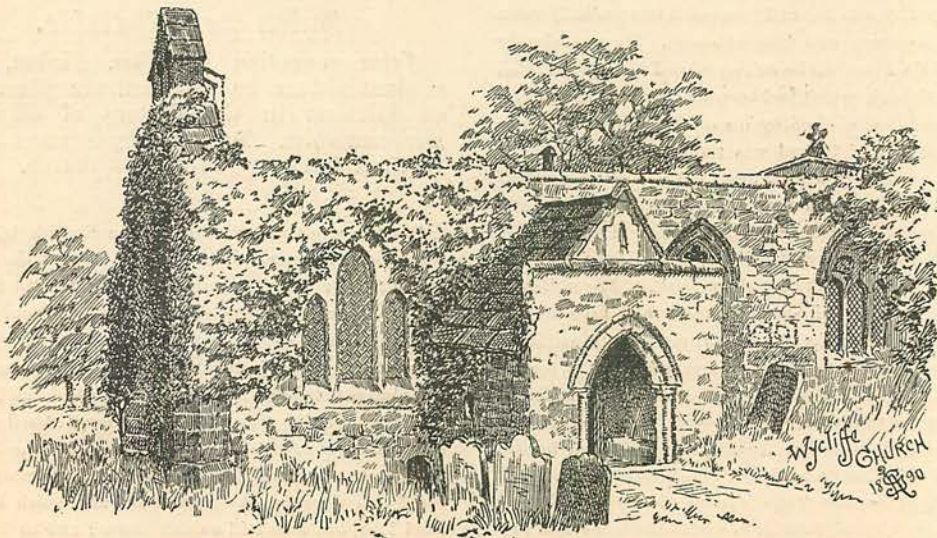
It is not difficult to understand the close friendship between Wycliffe and this man of intrigue and ambition. The glorious part of the reign of Edward III., the wars with France and Scotland, the battles of Sluys, of Crescy, and of Poitiers, and of Halidon Hill and Neville's Cross in this North-Country, were forgotten amid the terrors of the Black Death and the poverty entailed on the one hand by the demands of an impoverished King and Parliament, and on the other by the claims of the Church. The older religious orders were sunk into mere landowners, and were surfeited with luxury, while the higher prelates and wealthy clergy were too much occupied by the noise of their own dissensions to notice anything that occurred outside their own pale, however much it might concern them. Yet

here were the daring and avaricious barons under John of Gaunt eager to drive the prelates from office and seize on their wealth. Wycliffe, though far from being animated by the same motives as the Duke of Lancaster, joined his party because he saw that in part at least they were striving to attain the same end. At present Wycliffe's quarrel was not with the doctrine, but with the practice of the Church.

At St. Paul's, then, it is not out of keeping *with the* character of John of Gaunt when he undertakes to settle the dispute in his own way by threatening to drag the Bishop of London out of the church by the hair of his head. His violence was so great that the populace of London had to burst in and rescue their bishop, and they in their turn placed Wycliffe's life in danger, for he was only with difficulty saved by the soldiery.

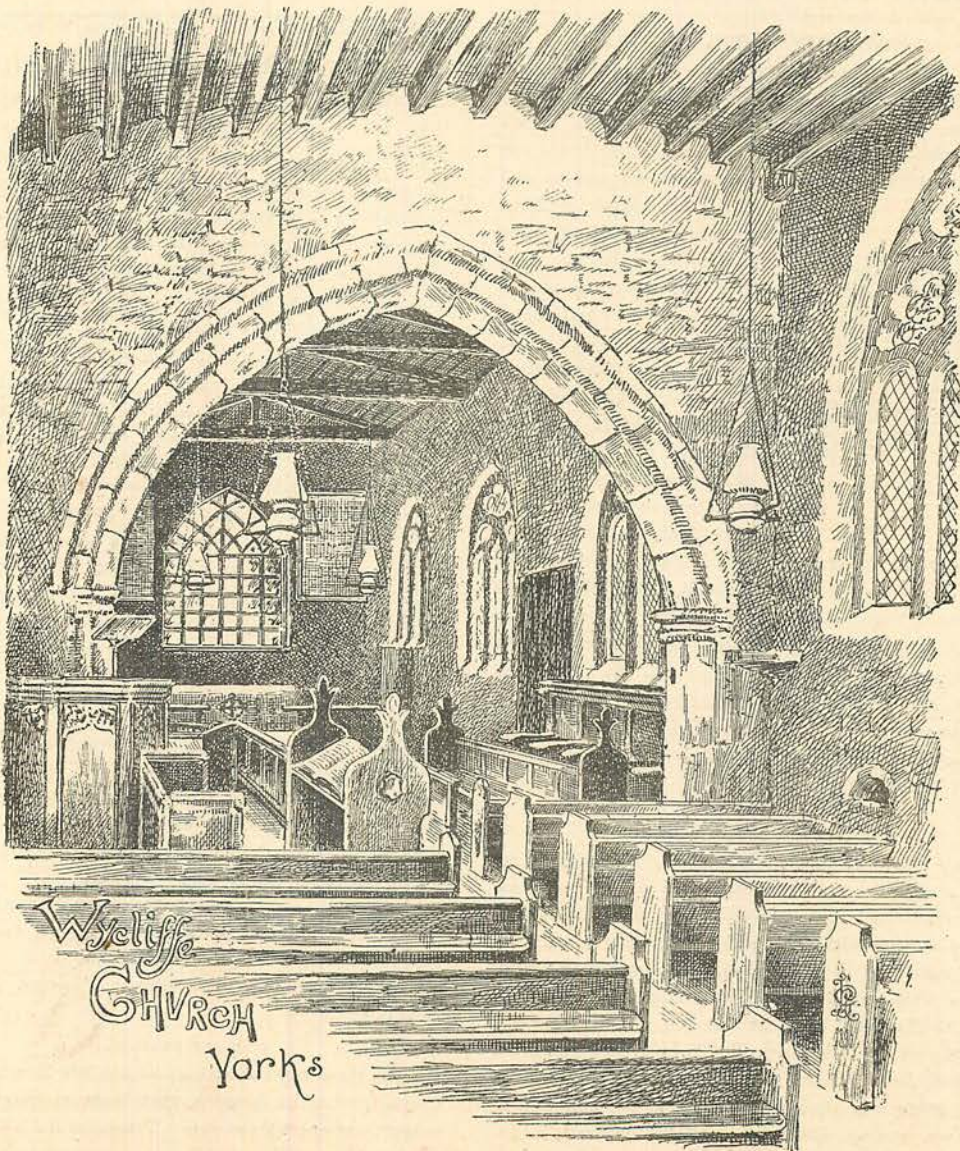
Then came the revolt of the peasants under Wat Tyler and John Ball, and in a few months all Wycliffe's work of Church reform was undone. The Lancastrian party lost all its power, the quarrel between the Church and the baronage was quelled in the presence of a common danger, and much of the odium of the outbreak fell on the Reformer. His enemies the Friars charged Wycliffe with being a sower of strife; and, though he rejected the charge disdainfully, he had to bear the weight of a suspicion that some of his followers justified. Apart from the ill effects of this rising, he now alienated himself from all his friends by taking up a new position; literally a novel one, for he became by his action the First Protestant. Hitherto he had posed as a reformer of the discipline and political relations of the Church. Now he protested against one of its cardinal beliefs, the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The monks and friars were unceasing in their persecution of Wycliffe, and bulls were sent from Pope Gregory



XI., the last in Avignon before the Great Schism, calling for action against the Reformer. In the midst of this Edward III. died, and the widow of the Black Prince, the mother of the young King Richard II., was friendly to Wycliffe. But letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury at last compelled the Chancellor of Oxford University to send the offender to London. The support of the Crown paralysed all action against him, and he returned home, only to be summoned once more to the capital to meet his accusers. But the people rallied round him, and raised such a tumult that the bishop broke up the court, and he again returned unharmed, his course thenceforward being more determined than ever.

On the death of Gregory (1378) followed the double election to the Papal throne, and the Great Schism of the West. This exercised a profound influence on Wycliffe, and when he beheld two who called themselves by the holiest name on earth hurling anathemas at each other he no longer saw in them a true Pope and a false between whom to choose, but rather two that were false alike—two halves of anti-Christ. Then Wycliffe announced in the pulpit at Oxford his belief that the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation was anti-Scriptural, and immediately (1382) followed the latest attempt to suppress him. Probably, however, the Schism occupying men's thoughts, as it must have done, and



Wycliffe
Church
Yorks

weakening the Church's central authority, may have prevented the searching out of heretics for due punishment with the same energy as before; hence Wycliffe, the object of so keen a hatred, was suffered to die in his bed instead of at the stake. At any rate, though he found it prudent to withdraw from Oxford, he was allowed to spend the two remaining years of his life unmolested at Lutterworth.

The great Reformer was seized with a stroke of paralysis while he was hearing mass in his parish church, and he died the next day at the close of 1384. V.

Notes and Commentaries.

A NEWBROUGH CENTENARIAN.

Mrs. Mary Teasdale, of Nun's Bush, Newbrough, near Hexham, who was born at Kirkharle, near Alston, completed her 101st year on August 12, 1890. Nun's Bush, which is supposed to have been formerly the site of a nunnery, is about a mile from the ancient and salubrious village of Newbrough.



MRS. MARY TEASDALE.

The old lady, who lives with her son, Mr. John Teasdale, a lead miner, is still tolerably hale and hearty. She can enjoy her pipe, too, for, like many another old woman, she indulges in tobacco smoking. She has the use of her eyesight, her memory is still pretty good, and she can "drive a good crack" about olden times. Mrs. Teasdale lost her husband when her family—a tolerably large one—were very young. So she had to do such farm work as "shearing," in order to maintain her children. In short, all through life she has had to work hard. The old lady's grandfather and grandmother lived to upwards of a hundred years of age. The accompanying portrait has been taken from a photograph by Mr. Brown, of Newbrough. M. H.

"HENWIFE JACK."

Many old residents in Newcastle will remember the familiar figure and voice of an oyster vendor who, some forty years back, perambulated the streets at nights, calling oysters with a voice so loud that it could be heard nearly all over the town. On a still night, when he was in the neighbourhood of Westgate Hill, his voice could be distinctly heard at Dunston, which is upwards of a mile off, as "the crow flies." His name was John Turnbull, better known as "Henwife Jack." Jack for many years was almost constantly in the company of fishwives, among whom he spent his happiest hours.

Hence the nickname. This Newcastle worthy was rather tall, lank, and lean, and as straight as a drill sergeant. He was also an expert walker, and went over the ground at a rapid pace with his basket on his head. I knew Jack fifty years back. At that time, and for many years afterwards, he hawked fish in Dunston and the adjacent villages. But, I regret to say, this poor creature was much persecuted by the villagers, who delighted to call him foul names. He got so accustomed to these insults, however, that he seldom took any notice of them. Poor Jack, like other mortals, got his time over. He took an illness nearly twenty years ago, and "shuffled off this mortal coil."

VILLAGE BLACKSMITH, Dunston.

North-Country Wit & Humour.

A TEST OF RESPECTABILITY.

One "pay" Saturday, two pitman who had been "on the drink" for an hour or two, met in the Bigg Market, Newcastle, and commenced to argue as to which of the twain was the more respectable. "Noo," observed one of the thirsty souls, "aa tell thoo that aa's mair respectable than thoo; for aa could git strap for a gallon, whor thoo could oney git put doon for a gill!"

NATURAL HISTORY.

Some few years ago a bottlemaker, whom we shall call Bob, had been out for a walk in the neighbourhood of West Hartlepool. Bob came home sorely puzzled. Meeting one of his fellow-workmen, he said to him, "Man, aa hev had a waak in the country, an' aa seed the curiousest thing thoo ivor seed. It was like a cuddy, an' it wasint a cuddy; it was like a horse, an' it wasint a horse. Aa'm blowed if aa knaa whaat it was." "Oo," says Bob's mate, "aa knaa whaat it's been; it's been a mule, Bob." "A whaat?" returned Bob; "it's ne use ye taaking that way. Aa tell ye it wasint a bord at aall, man!"

THE BOY AND THE BEER.

A bricklayer called to a lad, "Bring me a quairt of beer?" "Aall reet," replied the boy, "but whor's the money?" "Wey," remarked the man, "onnybody can get beer wi' money, but it wad show hoo clivvor ye wor if ye got it wivoot." The youth said no more, but went and brought an empty jug. "What's this?" said the thirsty son of toil, "a jug—but ne beer!" "Aye," was the observation, "ne beer. Onnybody can drink beer out of a pot that's full; but ye'd be mighty clivvor if ye could drink beer, or owt else, out of a pot that hes nowt in't!"

COCKNEY ENGLISH.

Some three months ago, a steamer left Newcastle for China, having on board a very large number of passengers. Amongst them were a Tynesider and a Cockney.