Sententious fragments of verse and proverbial sayings, in which names of places occur, have been at all times in high favour, and in frequent conversational use amongst the people of the districts wherein the localities they distinguish are situated. They are much sought after, also, by collectors of minor popular antiquities, of which they form an important and, to most of us, a deeply interesting division.

The contributors to that useful repertory, "Notes and Queries," have gathered up nearly all the relics of this kind that are to be found in most of the provinces of England; and the Messrs. Chambers, of Edinburgh, have published a very full collection of those current in their own country, where they would appear to be more abundant than in other parts of the kingdom.

There is one district, however, with which I happen to be intimately acquainted, wherein many of these scraps of folklore still circulate, and where they have escaped, hitherto, the researches of all collectors. I allude to the western division of the county of Cumberland; and it is from this district that, with a few exceptions picked up in parts immediately adjacent to it, all the examples I propose to adduce in this paper are derived. With one or two exceptions, also, they have never before been published, and those only in works or publications of a local character. I give them a place here, because, either
from my knowledge of the localities they refer to, or from information acquired by intercourse with the class by whom they are principally used, I am able to give some account of their signification, and to throw some light upon their probable origin. I may state, however, that by far the major part of my gatherings is drawn from recollection of quotations by the country people, including persons of all ages, from the great-grandsire to the school-boy. With regard to the character of these scraps of the people's wisdom, I may also state that some relate to local or popular peculiarities—some record fragments of local history, otherwise little known—some predict events still in the future—some contain predictions that have been duly fulfilled, and it is probable that of these some may have had an *ex post facto* origin—some bear reference to topographical, to social, or to meteorological conditions—some to the details of household economy—some to those of agricultural management—some convey a sarcasm, a jibe, or a reproach—some tend to perpetuate an ancient grudge—some hold out a warning—some are meant to be facetious—and some are merely enumerative.

For the sake of topographical arrangement, I shall begin with one or two of the exceptional instances I have referred to above.

In an ethnological paper which I had the honour to read to this Society in a former session, I said that since the time of the great civil war, in which they were largely engaged, the people of the Lake country have shown more than once that the old fighting spirit, formerly kept in activity by the national disturbances and by their proximity to Scotland, has not wholly died out during a long period of disuse. Perhaps the most noteworthy and (except the corn and militia émeutes in 1801, when the men of Coniston and the adjacent dales rose in their anger and fell upon and took possession of the town of Ulverston) the most recent development of their ancient combative
propensities, at least to any extent, occurred in 1688, when, on the report of a rising among the adherents of the fugitive King James, the *posse comitatus* of Westmoreland mustered at Kendal, marched upon Kirkby Lonsdale, and there, on the discovery that the alarm was groundless, and after receiving what was needful of rest and refreshment, were disbanded. A contemporary Westmoreland poet has placed on record the leading events of this bloodless campaign, thus—

"In eighty-eight wor Kirkby feight,  
Whaar niver a man wor slain;  
We yatt our meeat, we drank our drink,  
An' than com' merrily heeam again."*

The manner in which this demonstration has been treated is characteristic of the indifference of the English mountaineers to considerations of mere glory or fame. They have always been ready to fight, and always steady and stubborn when engaged in fighting, but have never thought of making these qualities, or any special manifestation of them, the subject of self-laudatory comment, whether in prose or verse. In this respect, as in most others, their character differs from that of their neighbours to the northward, in whom the opposite tendency is marked, as has been shown, amongst other instances, in the manner in which the readiness of the Lowland Volunteers and Yeomanry Cavalry to appear at their mustering places, on the false alarm of invasion in 1804, was extolled as a wonderful manifestation of devoted patriotism, and the most trivial incident arising out of it recorded by various Scottish writers, from Sir Walter Scott downwards;† whilst the gathering of the Westmoreland men, on a precisely similar occasion, and of like if of more limited character, is celebrated only in this jeering verse.

On the eastern confines of Westmoreland the ruins of a very

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* See "Westmoreland and Cumberland Dialects." Published by J. Russell Smith, London.
† See Notes to the "Antiquary;" Ballad of Simon and Janet, &c.
ancient Hold, called Pendragon Castle, are to be seen, and
around these, as is said, the vestiges of a wide moat may
still be traced, which, according to tradition, the royal founder
of the Castle tried to supply with water by diverting upon it
the course of the river Eden. His failure is yet noted in the
following couplet:

"Let Uther Pendragon do what he can,
Eden will run where Eden ran!"

The old British monarch whose name lives in this homely
Westmerian rhyme was the famous sire of a still more famous
son,—the king whose semi-fabulous history has furnished
themes to poets of every century, from the sixth, when he
lived and died, to the nineteenth, when he has lived again in
"The Idylls of the King;" and died again in the "Morte
d'Arthur" of Alfred Tennyson.

Thomas Hoggart of Troutbeck, who died in 1730, has pre­served in his "testament," a manuscript collection, still extant,
of his own poems and those of some earlier writers, a concise
description of the now prosperous and beautiful village of
Bowness-on-Windermere, which runs thus—

"New church, old steeple,
Poor town and proud people!"

"Old Hoggart" appends to this an equally terse and still
more libellous rhyming commentary, in which he favours us
with his notion of the inevitable moral condition of a place
with these attributes, but as it applies even less than the old
rhyme itself to the Bowness of our day, it is unnecessary to
reproduce it here.

The vale of Troutbeck, where, during the greater part
of a long life, this Thomas Hoggart discharged the
rather incongruous functions of cart-wright and play-

* I have heard a verse somewhat similar to this, but still less complimentary applied to Lockerbie, in Dumfriesshire; and Dr. Hume says that there is also one attached to Dromore, in Ireland.
wright, song-writer and censor-general, opens upon Windermere, about midway between Bowness and Ambleside, and, like the counties palatine of Lancaster and Chester, is divided into Hundreds. Each of these, three in number, maintains, or did maintain, a bridge over the stream, a bull for breeding purposes, and a constable for the preservation of order, severally known as the Hundred bridge, &c.; hence the men of Troutbeck have always been given to astonishing strangers by boasting that their little chapelry possessed three hundred bridges, three hundred bulls, and three hundred constables. It is probable that some revengeful victim of this quibble perpetrated the following:

"There's three hundred brigs i' Troutbeck,
Three hundred bulls,
Three hundred constables,
And many hundred feuls!"

meaning, I suppose, many fools in each hundred, as the whole population will hardly amount to many hundreds.

In a district where the mountains attract to it more than its due proportion of rain, it may be supposed that the weather has given rise to more than one proverbial saying; and in very wet weather I have heard the dales-people say, "We'll hev to borrow Langden lid!" This, I believe, arose from the reply of an old Langdale statesman to the inquiry made by a stranger, of "How can you live in this incessant rain?" "Why, badly enough sometimes; but we're thinking of having a lid!" To those who know the district well, the appearance of the deep mountain recess called Little Langdale, "paled in" as it is by lofty, steep-sided fells, the idea of "a lid" or canopy over it may not appear so very unfeasible.

In that portion of Lancashire called Furness, which lies surrounded by Westmoreland, Cumberland and the sea, the character of the people, their habits and modes of speech are more like those of the two Lake counties than of that with which it is connected. A modification of a well-known school
rhyme, said to have been executed by an old farmer, who in his worldly goods had been subjected to the tender mercies of the law, is frequently quoted there.

"God made man—man made money;  
"God made bees—bees made honey."

So far the old school rhyme: the Furnesian variation runs thus—

"But the divel hit-set made lawyers and 'turnies,  
"And placed them at U'ston and Dawton in Furness!"

Many of the performances of this rustic genius, who had the faculty and habit of answering all questions in impromptu rhyme, are still afloat in his own locality, but as, with the above exception, I never heard any that refer to places, they may not be quoted here. The following, however, may indicate their general character. On being asked, on one occasion, how he had contrived to upset his cart, he replied with exemplary candour,—

"Carelessly, thou may depend,  
"Pu'ing away at t' helter end!"*

My reason for thus bringing into notice the humble author of these rude scraps is, that I hold him to be one of those, probably the last of his kind, who in their every-day talk have originated those unwritten adages, in prose or verse, some of which, handed down by successive generations, I am thus endeavouring to preserve.

In High Furness, which a favourite old topographer happily tells us, "mounteth up aloft, with high-topped hilles and huge fels standing thick together,"† it is said that "the towns are finished and the country un-finished!" The first part of this paradoxical adage has arisen from the custom of distinguishing Hawkshead, the only town the district boasts, as "a finished town," because it has

* See the "Lonsdale Magazine."
† Camden's Britannia—edition of 1610.
shown no increase, either in extent or population, probably for centuries. The second part refers chiefly to the western border of High Furness, where the chapelry of Seathwaite extends along the Lancashire side of the river Duddon, in the upper part of its course, and the scenery is remarkably wild, so that the arrangement, or rather the non-arrangement, of

"Craggs, knolls and mounds confusedly hurled—
"The fragments of an earlier world,"*

has given to the minds of certain imaginative observers the impression that the fair work of creation has been left somewhat incomplete there. Wordsworth has favoured us with an anecdote illustrative of this idea. A traveller who had arrived at Seathwaite over night, walked out before breakfast, and being asked, on his return to the little public house, how far he had been, replied, "as far as it is finished!"†

A romantic district is rarely fertile, and the soil and climate of Seathwaite are not favourable to the production of the finer varieties of grain. The high grounds are all sheep pastures, and the "few small crofts of stone-encumbered "ground," divided by dry walls and attached to each tenement, are devoted to the growth of summer grass and winter fodder for the hardy cattle, and of oats and potatoes for the equally hardy families. This limited range of agricultural produce is remarked upon in two jingling verses, wherein nearly all the farms in Seathwaite are mentioned:

"Newfield and Nettleslack,
Hollinhouse and Longhouse,
Turner Hall and Under Crag,
Beckhouse, Thrag and Tonguehouse,
Browside, Troutwell, Hinginghouse,
Dalehead and Cockley Beck—
Yan may gedder o' wheeat they growe,
And niver fill a peck!"

The seclusion from the world enjoyed by the inhabitants of

* The Lady of the Lake.
† See Notes on "The Sonnets."
this valley may account for the retention in their domestic economy of some primitive customs that I have not found elsewhere. Thus, in the fall of the year, a caller at any Seathwaite farmhouse will notice upon a hanging shelf, or some such repository, certain bundles of what looks like rather dirty straw, but which on examination turn out to be half-peeled rushes saturated with fat, and are the principal if not the sole provision made for the supply of light to the household in the evenings of winter. This means of obtaining light is very ancient; and in Tusser's husbandry may be found instructions for the manufacture of these greased rushes. It has, however, been so long in disuse elsewhere, that in the dales around Seathwaite a proverbial saying may be heard to the effect that "A Seathwaite candle is a greased seeve:" seeve being Cumbrian for rush.

Another domestic custom in Seathwaite has given rise to another proverb. Readers of Wordsworth will remember that in the notes to his "Sonnets on the river Duddon" he has immortalized a clergyman named Walker, recording many circumstances that tend to elevate that remarkable individual in the estimation of all readers, and, I fear, suppressing others that might have had a contrary tendency. Thus, he relates that Mr. Walker was in the habit of boiling on Sunday all the meat his family should consume during the week, that he might supply messes of broth to those members of his congregation whose homes lay at some distance. For thus reducing himself and family to the necessity of eating their meat cold during the remaining six days of the week, our great moral poet claims for his reverend hero the credit of transcendent generosity and self-sacrifice. He might have told us, however, that this habit of boiling the week's meat on Sunday was then the practice in all the households of Seathwaite, and in many is so still. Their meat, being dried mutton, is not very nice eaten hot, but when cold, is excellent, as I can well testify,
while the broth is simply detestable, so much so that people in
the neighbouring dales, when they find their soup watery, their
tea washy, their porridge thin or their toddy weak, will say—
"It's hot and wet, like Seathwaite broth!"—implying, of
course, that this is all that can be said in its praise. So that
the broth dispensed so liberally, and at such a cost, to the
distant hearers of "Wonderful Walker," may be said to be,
like its chief constituent, "weak to a proverb."

"We've no back doors in Seathwaite" indicates the primeval
character of their domestic arrangements, as well as their
intolerance of modern household conventionalities. It is
quoted by their neighbours to illustrate these traits, and is
used, also, when any person of homely manners and habits is
expected to observe some unaccustomed requirement of a more
advanced state of civilization. It had its birth in a Seathwaite
youth taking a basket of provisions to the front door of a
gentleman at Coniston, and on being desired by a servant to
go to the back, replying in a tone of remonstrance, "We've
"neah back dooars i' Seathet!" This supplies us with a
proverb which applying well to the district it specifies, and
being in common use, is yet of very recent origin. Its author
is still living, and is, or was, a rather prominent member of
the Birkenhead police force.

A saying that may be heard both in Cumberland and West-
moreland contains curious evidence of the inimical feeling
that often exists between the people of adjoining counties even
when they so closely resemble each other as do the inhabitants
of these. The main line of communication between the central
parts of both counties runs over the pass which, from the huge
cairn upon its highest part, marking the spot where king
Dunmail was defeated by the Saxons, is known as Dunmail
Raise, also as the Raise Gap, or simply the Raise. On both
sides of this pass old people still aver that "Nought good
"comes ower t' Raise." A similar axiom is current near the
coast where the road from Cumberland to Furness winds sharply round the foot of the mountain called Black Combe. The people of Broughton in Furness and of Bootle in Cumberland hold that nothing good ever came round that nook.

The old rhyme claiming pre-eminence of altitude for certain hills on the confines of Lancashire and Yorkshire is well known and often quoted. One of equal antiquity, but less known, though adduced in the "Britannia," pays a similar compliment, and, as has been proved by the Ordnance Survey, with better reason, to three of the Cumbrian fells, and may be heard still in their vicinity.

"Skiddaw, Helvellyn and Catstye Cam*
"Are the highest hills in all England!"

Camden's notice (as given in his first English edition) of another old adage connected with our northern mountains, and current on either side of the Scottish border, is worthy of transcription were it but for its quaintness. He says—"As for that mountain Skiddaw aforesaid, it riseth up to such an heighth with two heads like Parnassus, and with a kind of emulation beholdeth Scruffell hill before it in Anandale within Scotland, that from these two mountains, according as the misty clouds arise or fall, the people thereby dwelling make their prognostication of the change of weather, and commonly sing this note—

"If Skiddaw hath a cap

"Scruffell wots full well of that!"

At the present day they vary "this note," especially in Scotland, and rhyme it thus—

"When Skiddaw fell puts on a cap

"Criefell hill begins to drap."

The traditional origin of the formation of Criefell, which

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* Catsteeecam, signifying the top of a ladder, or track available only to cats, is the proper name of this height. The old rhymster has altered it to make it meet a rhyming emergency. Sir W. Scott has done so to make it suit his metre and calls it Catchedecam.
rises in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and not in Annandale, is well known to the people on both shores of the Solway, and formerly was pretty generally accepted by them as an indubitable verity. They relate that one of the great works assigned to Satan by the wizard, Michael Scott, who was bound under a terrible penalty to keep the "Prince of the powers of the air" in constant occupation, was to form a causeway or viaduct from Scotland to Ireland. Satan was carrying from Cumberland, where the formation of the country suited his purpose, the first creel or pannierful of material for the earth-work, along the northern side of the Solway Firth, and had just strided across the mouth of the river Nith, when the straps supporting the load gave way, the laden creel fell and refused to be lifted, and with its cargo still remains there as the mountain. With this account of its formation in view, the name of Criffel is said, with apparent reason, to be a self-evident modification of Creel fell. The children on either side of the Firth often set as "a capper" a short sentence in which this fine hill figures, thus, "Climb Criffel, clever cripple," the rapidly reiterated pronunciation of which is perhaps the most difficult exercise to which even a well practised organ of speech can be subjected.

The tract lying between the foot of Skiddaw and the town of Keswick, and known as the township of Under-Skiddaw, is said to be one of the most rainy localities in England, and bears an unsavoury sobriquet on that account. Its moist reputation has given rise to this catch-saying, frequently used when rain is prognosticated—"If it rains we mun dee as "they dee under Skiddaw." Should one of the unenlightened ask how they do there, he will be favoured with the satisfactory information that "they let it come down!" Perhaps this is what is now called "a sell" rather than a proverb, but no doubt it had existence long before "sells" were invented.

On the northern side of Skiddaw we find the parish and
village of Caldbeck, long famous for its richness in minerals. This underground wealth has given rise, at some remote period, to the following distich:—

"Caldbeck and Caldbeck falls
Are worth all England else!"

The defective rhyme in this modest assumption may be taken as a proof of its antiquity.

"A Borrowdale cuckoo" is the proverbial title conferred by their neighbours upon the natives of perhaps the most picturesque of all the Cumbrian vales. It is said to derive its origin from an unsuccessful attempt made by the people of Borrowdale, in emulation of the wise men of Gotham, to detain the cuckoo for the whole year by erecting a high wall across the narrow gorge of their dale. However acquired, it is not patiently borne; and I should prepare for unpleasant consequences ere I ventured upon any allusion to the harbinger of summer in presence of a Borrowdale man. Of somewhat similar character, or at least conveying a similar imputation of wisdom, is the saying, "It's a big world when yan sees it o', as t' Loweswater lad said when he got on Mowerkin How!"

The beautiful little vale of Loweswater, unlike most of its neighbours, has its highest hills at its foot, whilst its upper or western extremity is closed in by the comparatively trifling elevation called Mockerkin How, which commands a rather extensive prospect, comprising the fertile undulated slope spread out between the mountains and the sea,—the broad and beautiful Solway, and beyond it the far-stretching heights of Galloway and Dumfries-shire. So that the youth who established this bye-saying, and so conferred upon his native valley the permanent repute of transcendent greenness, might be held excusable for committing himself to some extent on first emerging from its depths.

In the parish of Lamplugh, which lies adjacent to Loweswater, and immediately outside the mountain range, the
residents are called "Lamplugh Hawkies," after a peculiar breed of cattle on which they formerly prided themselves, but which is now extinct, being superseded by races of more profitable qualities.

The name of Forest still applied to many tracts of country now all but destitute of trees, is sufficient evidence of the vastly greater extent of territory covered with timber in ancient times than in our own; and besides this, we everywhere find traditions bearing upon the same fact. Thus in Annan-dale it is said that the Hallidays, who had their head-quarters at Corehead, near Moffat, could, once upon a time, ride upon their own land, in a "contiguity of shade" reaching from the De'il's Beef-tub, where the river Annan has its rise, to the point where it runs into the sea. As the beautiful stream that gives its name to central Dumfries-shire runs a course of nearly forty miles, this is no trifling boast even for a Border clan to make. The more modest as well as the more common form assumed by this tradition, however, is to the effect that a squirrel could formerly traverse the space, generally considerable, between two given places without touching the ground. In Lamplugh they have poetized this saying, and aver that

"From Lamplugh fell to Moresbee
A squirrel could hop from tree to tree."

This was probably true, however unlike the present state of the squirrel's supposed line of march. It is, at any rate, certain that Lamplugh could anciently boast of having arboreal giants in the land, for in Lamplugh Hall is preserved a large and massive table of oak, the top without joint or seam, but consisting of one broad plank, said to have been cut from the last tree that remained of the Forest of Lamplugh. It is very rare indeed that an oak is seen of such dimensions as to afford a breadth of sound timber like this.

These two lines—

"At Peel of Fouldrey we come in,
At Wheels of Whillimoor we begin."
are all that I have been able to recover of an ancient prophesy said to relate to the landing and subsequent proceedings of an invading army. "Martin Swart and his men," in the reign of Henry the Seventh, fulfilled the first half of the prediction only, for though they landed at Peel of Fouldrey, they did not approach the Wheels of Whillimoor. These so called wheels were certain circles of brighter verdure, three in number, as I have been told, apparent on the face of a high-lying moor near Whitehaven. They have now, I believe, disappeared, though held to be unerasable, and were probably what are elsewhere known as fairy rings, and here, as elsewhere, were regarded with a considerable amount of superstitious awe. Amongst other traditions attached to these rings, and probably forming part of the rhyme that contained the lines given above, is one to the effect that at the Wheels of Whillimoor, England will be three times lost and won in one day, and that a king's horse will be held there by a miller with three thumbs. This is one of the many instances of localization of the same tradition in different parts of the country, for a prophesy nearly identical with this is current in the south of Scotland, and ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer.

The district called Whillimoor, being perhaps the coldest and most sterile portion of agricultural Cumberland, gives a proverbial designation to the poor skim-milk cheese made in the country,—called also, with more aptness than elegance, on account of its tough and impenetrable nature, "leather hungry." When exposed for sale at the annual cheese fair at Keswick, the farmers' wives were wont to announce its presence and its properties thus—"Whillimoor cheese,—clear breath of durt "and butter!" While, as Anderson tells us, at Carlisle fair the proclamation ran thus—"Here's your Whillimoor cheese,—"lank and lean but cheap and clean!" The Cumbrian minnesinger also says in one of his ballads that

"The Whillimoor ate tough and tasty."
An animal not generally supposed to be endowed with any leonine attributes is called "a Whillimoor lion."

Considerably to the westward of these localities we find the parishes distinguished in this old saw—"Let us gang together "like t' lads of Drigg and t' lasses of Beckermet!" Mr. Robert Ferguson in his able and most interesting work—"The "Northmen in Cumberland and Westmorland,"—says that tradition ascribes the origin of this adage to a sort of double Sabine rape, perpetrated by the Norsemen, who built the still traceable Danish city of Barn-scar, and then carried off the young men of Drigg and the young women of Beckermet to people it. Whether the lasses of Drigg and the lads of the other parish consoled each other under this bereavement we are not told. I never heard of this tradition, and would not accept it if I had, for I believe the saying to have sprung from the arrangements observed on some festive occasion; or possibly from some infraction of a rule that was, and perhaps is still observed in the Church of Drigg, as well as in those of some of the neighbouring parishes, where the sexes are seated on different sides of the central aisle, as in Quaker meeting houses.

On the coast of Cumberland, within a range of some twelve miles, there are four sea-ports, the shipping belonging to which is mainly employed in carrying the produce of the great Cumbrian coal-field to the opposite coast of Ireland. The supposed, not the real effect of their staple article of commerce upon the complexion of these ports, is indicated in a popular distich which runs thus:—

"Whitehaven blackbirds, Harrington crows,
"Workington sweeps, and Maryport beaux."

The strongly-contrasted epithet applied to the last may only be accounted for by (besides the exigency of rhyme) the possibility that Maryport formerly was engaged less extensively in the grimy coal-trade than her sister ports, an exception that may not, at the present day, be claimed for that stirring little
town, which is described by Charles Dickens as “a bit of water-side Bristol, with a slice of Wapping, a seasoning of Wolverhampton, and a garnish of Portsmouth—a great deal too vaporous, and a great deal too rusty, and a great deal too muddy, and a great deal too dirty altogether”—with ships to load and pitch and tar to boil, and iron to hammer and steam to get up, and smoke to make, and stone to quarry, and fifty other disagreeable things to do.”* The rhyme cannot be supposed to be of very ancient date, as Maryport only received its present name during the last century.

At each of these seaside towns the following scrap of weather wisdom is quoted by the ancient mariners who are always to be seen lounging about the piers and the watch-houses there—

"The Isle of Man seen fair and clear,
"Is a sign of westerly breezes here."

Saint Bees' Head being substituted occasionally for the Isle of Man.

A rhyming invocation is sometimes chanted by young people of both sexes; the chant being accompanied by the act of throwing an apple pip into the air, and a response found in the direction assumed by the point of the seed when it falls. The charm is a common one everywhere,—the rhyme, as I think, is peculiar to Cumberland.

"Pippin, pippin Paradise,
"Tell me where my love lies—
"East, west, north, south;
"Carlisle or Cockermouth."

Workington Hall, the grand old seat of the Curwen family, is said to have been the scene of a curious traditional incident, which has given rise to a popular rhyme. One of the lords of Workington Hall in the olden time is stated to have discovered accidentally a handmaid of the house parading before a mirror her rustic charms, decked out in the garments of her

* In “The lazy tour of two idle Apprentices.”
deceased lady and continuously reciting this couplet, since become proverbial—

“Whatever may hap, or whatever befal,
“I'll be lady of Workington Hall.”

The tradition goes on to relate that a younger son of the family returning from abroad, fell in love with this ambitious and far-seeing damsel, married her, and ultimately succeeding to the family possessions, fulfilled her somewhat audacious prognostication. I believe there is no trace of any such legend as this in the real history of this very ancient family, of whom Camden, in that pleasant manner that makes Dr. Philemon Holland’s translation of the Britannia such delightful reading, says “They fetch their descent from Gospatric Earle of Northumberland, and their surname they tooke by covenant and composition from Culwen, a family in Galloway, the heire whereof they had married; and here have they a stately house built castle like, and from whom (without offence or vanity be it spoken) myselfe am descended by the mother’s side.”*

One of the minor halls of Cumberland called Warthole, not far from Cockermouth, has a rhyming saying attached to it which aptly illustrates one of the evil habits of the county. The yeomanry and well-to-do farmers in certain parts of Cumberland are still much given to card-playing between Michaelmas and Candlemas, when farming operations are comparatively suspended; and this propensity not unfrequently leads to rather reckless gambling, the favourite game there being unlimited Loo, or, as they call it, Running Lant, though the still less reputable game of Put is also frequently played, and for high stakes. It is said that a former proprietor of Warthole staked the whole of his possessions upon a game at Put, and at a critical point of the game exclaimed—

“Up a deuce or else a tray,
“Or Warthole’s lost for ever and aye!”

* Camden’s Britannia, edition of 1610.
The tray, I may explain, in the best card in this low game. It is said that the cards thus invoked turned up as called for, and so for the time, saved the desperate gambler from beggary. The rhyme is still quoted when heavy stakes happen to depend upon a single card.

At Harrington they localize the common exaggerative adage "As old as the hills," and say that very old people or things are "As old as Walker Brow!"—an instance of the proneness of men to avail themselves of familiar objects in illustrating their every-day talk.

"Three in a gig, Workington fashion," is a common form of reference to over-crowding of any kind.

"In by the Floss to Carlisle!" is used in commenting upon a person's taking "the longest way round for the nearest way home." The proverbial "Whitehaven fortune" will hardly admit of explanation here.

A very resonant kiss is commonly said to "sound like the snecK of Pardshaw yatt!" Pardshaw being an ancient village near to Cockermouth. When I knew it, the latches of its gates sounded much like those of its neighbours.

Allonby, a pleasant little sea-bathing place, formerly sent a vast crowd of boats to the herring fishery. These, on account of their small size and great numbers, used to be known along shore as "The Allonby Midge Fleet."

There are a few proverbs that have been suggested originally by the mountainous character of the country, and one or two of these are worth preserving. Remark upon the compensatory principle pervading human affairs, the old-fashioned fell folk will say—"If there were neah fells there would be neah deahls!" leading to the inference that even with the wild mountains, the sheltered and generally fertile valleys render their rugged country, to themselves at least, preferable to a more level district.

In every part of the country we may hear persons or animals,
of peculiarly stout and hardy nature, spoken of as being "as hard as a fell teadh;" a mountain bred toad being evidently the dalesmen's type of endurance and hardihood.

"He breaks bands* like a Herdwick tip" I have heard applied to a rustic scapegrace. The sheep called Herdwick are the small, active, restless breed of the mountain district, which my friend, Mr. William Dickinson, in his admirable and comprehensive "Glossary of the words and phrases of Cumberland,"—a copy of which is in the Society's library—says "are reputed to have originated in about forty, which swam ashore from a wrecked Norwegian vessel. They were taken possession of by the lord of the manor, and on their increase, being found to be hardy and suitable to the mountains, were let out in herds or flocks with the farms." These sheep are so liable to stray, that the farmers and shepherds hold a meeting annually at the little inn on Kirkstone, above Ambleside, the highest inhabited house in England, for the sole purpose of recovering and restoring those that have been found in the neighbouring herds; and they sometimes stray to great distances, passing through many flocks before they end their rambles.†

Verses of modern date, when they are "aw about Cumberland folk and kenned pleaces,"—as the ballad goes,—are invested with an amount of popular interest quite equal to that attaching to any relic of antiquity. Hence certain scraps of rhyme, dating from the end of last and beginning of this century, and consisting of little more than a mere string of names, are familiar as household words in Cumbrian mouths; and as they come perfectly within the category of popular rhymes, I may conclude this rather loose dissertation with a few of the

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* Band, a boundary on high and unenclosed land. See Dickinson's Glossary.
† In the Southern Lake district an illustrated octavo volume is published, giving pictorial representations and letter-press descriptions of the marks distinguishing all the herds of the district.
more prominent of these. The first I shall adduce is part of a well known rhyming invitation, addressed to the residents in most places within a circuit of a dozen miles, to one of the famous bidden-weddings or bridewains peculiar to the country, which was celebrated at Lamplugh, on the 30th of May, 1786:

——“Come one, come all,

From Whitehaven, Workington, Harrington, Dean,
Haile, Ponsonby, Bleng, and all places between;
From Egremont, Cockermouth, Parton, Saint Bees,
Dent, Kinneyside, Calder, and parts such as these.”
&c., &c., &c.

The next is a verse from one of Anderson’s ballads, which, besides standing high in popular favour, possesses some interest to the ethnologist, inasmuch as the places named afford one proof amongst others that this province was first of all occupied by a race of Cambro-Britons.

“There’s Cumwhitton, Cumwhinton, Cumrantan,
Cumrangan, Cumrew and Cumcacht;
And monie mair Cums in the country;
But nin wi’ Cumdivock can match.”

Another, from the same source, similarly indicates the Danish settlements, which were very numerous in Cumberland.

“We’ve Harraby and Tarraby,
And Wigganby beside;
We’ve Outerby and Souterby,
And Byes beath far and wide:
Of strapping, sonsy, rwosey queens
They aw may brag a few,
But Thursby for a bonnie lass
Can cap them aw, I trow!”

The name of the first of these villages was, in the old riding times, a word of evil import to the moss-trooping clans across the Borders—Harraby being the famous place of execution on the eminence just south of Carlisle. Sir Walter Scott puts into the mouth of one of his favourite heroes the characteristic admission, or perhaps boast,—

“Letter or line know I never a one,
“Were ’t my neck-verse at Hairibee.”
The neck-verse was the *miserere mei* read of old by criminals who claimed the benefit of clergy. The place last named in these verses, Thursby, bears the name of the great Scandinavian god, Thor. Everard, the Abbot of Holm-Cultram, in the time of Henry II, relates that at this village there formerly stood a temple, containing an image of Thor. And the foundations of this Pagan temple are said to have been dug up and removed only within the last hundred years.*

A versified list of surnames is sure to be popular in the district where the names it contains are common, and in a poem called "Branthwaite Hall," by William Hetherington, such a list is given, purporting to record the names of those who followed Skelton of Branthwaite Hall on an expedition of reprisals into Scotland. It gives nearly all the names to be found at the present day in the villages and farms immediately circumjacent to the ancestral home of the leader, which consists now of a massive square battlemented tower, in good preservation, and still roofed in, with a modern farm house attached. This list of Cumbrian heroes the poet has arranged thus:—

"A valiant band the warrior chieftain led,
Inured to war, and all to battle bred.
The Robinsons, with big John at their head;
Watsons and Woods fought without fear or dread;
Ritsons and Rudds, the Hinds and Fishers too;
Wilson and Walkers went—a valiant crew;
The Steels and Thompsons followed Skelton's tent;
Fearons and Fawcetts, Greens and Normans went;
Sanetons and Sims, the Allinsons and Dions;
The Tomlinsons and Nichols and Nixons;
Leathes took Lancaster to battle field;
Kendals and Coopers, never known to yield;
The Harrisons, with Harris for their chief, All went, tall heroes, from their mountain fief;
The Sandersons and all the Pows and Drape Sallied from Clifton—few could them escape;
Tom Sparks and Emerson, renowned for speed, With old Bill Mayson, oft made Scotsmen bleed;"

* Traces of the Pagan Worship, &c., in Ferguson's Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland.
Fletchers and Flemings, Dickinsons went too;  
Bankses and Blacks, or killed or scared a few.  
The Heads were never hindmost, and Smith Tom  
(Swainson his name) was never absent from  
The field of fight, where honour might be won—  
He had his share with Miles, his younger son.  
The Bells and Bowmans full-yard arrows drew,  
And Scotsmen fell where'er their weapons flew."

I would remark if some of the specimens of folk-lore that
I have considered worthy of preservation be thought too homely
or trivial for the transactions of this Society, that sayings
or sentences, expressing the every-day wisdom, the ideas and
habits of thought of an unlettered and primitive class, must of
necessity be homely, but that homeliness, if decent and un-
affected, does not imply vulgarity; that trifles form the sum
of human history, and of our knowledge of human nature as
well as of "human bliss;" and that every trifle which extends
our acquaintance with any distinct portion of our fellow-subjects
enlarges our sympathies and conduces to the increase and main-
tenance of kindly feelings between class and class, the rarity
or absence of which, deplored by some of our truest philan-
thropists, is mainly due to the mutual non-appreciation arising
from non-acquaintance. These convictions, and the example
of distinguished fellow-workers in the same humble field,
induce me to hope that the preservation of even the rude
fragmentary remains I have here raked together may not be
considered at all derogatory to the dignity of a learned Society.