

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.— ADMIRAL BLAKE'S PORTRAIT: A CORRECTION — A CHILTON POLDEN CELEBRATION — THE RUSSIAN GUN — A CORUNNA HERO — THE MARKET CROSSES — QUANTOCK HILLS — HOLYWELL CAVERN — CENTENARIANS — GUY FAWKES CARNIVAL — TERRIBLE STORM — ST. MATTHEW'S FAIR — WITCHCRAFT — A LOCAL HIGHWAYMAN — A JURY OF MATRONS — THE ARMADA — PHOTOGRAPHING FROM THE CLOUDS, &C., &C.

ADMIRAL BLAKE'S PORTRAIT.

ON page 71 we refer at some length to the various portraits of Admiral Blake in existence, stating that the one presented by Mr. Henry Westropp, now hanging in the Town Hall, is "generally regarded as copy of a spurious picture." Since that chapter was printed we have learnt that the portrait is undoubtedly an authentic one, and the town is to be congratulated on such a possession.

A CHILTON POLDEN CELEBRATION.

In a little work on "*Chilton Priory and its Contents*," Mr. Stradling refers to the celebration of the Coronation of Queen Victoria in the village, and states that three veterans assisted in hoisting the Union Jack on the Church tower. The first was Thomas Wilton, who served many years as a Marine, and who was carried into the cockpit of the *Victory* with a broken arm just before the immortal Nelson was doomed to join his wounded shipmates. The next, John Tagford, was in all the engagements in the expedition in Holland, under the command of his late Royal Highness the Duke of York. The third, Uriah Day, was in many engagements, particularly at the capture of the Cape of Good Hope, and served his country for 28 years.

THE RUSSIAN GUN.

After the gun was presented to the town it was allowed to occupy a somewhat degraded position for some four months. Some amusement was caused, in October, 1857, by a copy of the following verses being pasted on it:—

By gallant Englishmen was I
From Russian fortress captured ;
And when from Woolwich here I came,
The people seemed enraptured.
With rejoicings and with sweetest strains
Of music was I greeted ;
But now with gross neglect I grieve,
Most vilely am I treated.
I and my friends in the Redan,
Fine carriages reposed on ;

But now with filth and dirt I'm scorned,
And traitorously imposed on.

When Panmure gave me unto you,
He named as the condition,
That I should hereafter occupy
An honourable position.

When I belonged to Russian hosts,
English valour I respected.
And from British pride of British pluck
Good treatment I expected.

My fellow guns have elsewhere met
With flattering receptions;
But here I lie the victim of
The cruellest deceptions.

Alas! alas! I've got into
An unpatriotic quarter;
Brave Blake I'll swear was never born
In spiritless Bridgwater!

It is somewhat interesting to note that these verses drew public attention to the matter, and as a result the gun was soon afterwards placed in a more dignified position.

A CORUNNA HERO.

Thomas Palmer, who was supposed to be the last survivor of the 14,000 men who fought the memorable and glorious battle of Corunna, died early in the present year at Weston-super-Mare, and was accorded an imposing military funeral. Palmer was born at Stogursey on November 30th, 1789, and had therefore entered his hundredth year.

THE QUANTOCK HILLS.

The following selections are from an article which appeared in the *Bridgwater Guardian* in 1886, probably written by Mr. E. Jeboult:—

The Quantock hills are full of interest. A Roman camp was discovered on them a few years ago. This great people also worked mines on these hills. Some of their mining implements were discovered here a short time since, and were deposited in the Museum of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society at Taunton. Cave knives have also been found in hut circles in the same neighbourhood.

These are not all the curiosities that have been discovered on these beautiful heights. The teeth of the mammoth elephant have been gathered here, where they must have lain ever since the time when this country was occupied by these giant animals. These teeth may be seen at the Museum above referred to.

One of the glories and celebrities of the Quantocks is the wild red deer, now almost become extinct in England, except on these hills,

and at Exmoor and its neighbourhood.

Geologically the Quantocks are of igneous origin. When Lord Taunton was about to build his mansion, search was naturally made on the estate for a suitable building-stone. In a quarry close by was found this hard greyish green rock, capable of being worked by the chisel. Pillars from this stone were introduced into the new church at Buckland St. Mary. From the specimens there exhibited its capabilities would be readily admitted. The rock possesses such a marked character as compared with the more common forms occurring in the Devonian formation that a practised eye can find no difficulty in distinguishing it. Before its precise nature was known, some of the stone was forwarded to the Government Museum of Practical Geology, and on being examined by Sir Roderick Murchison it was pronounced by him to be a volcanic ash.

Some months after, that distinguished geologist stood in front of the quarry, and the whole history of the nature and origin of this igneous rock was discovered. The significance of the few bold lines of cleavage which appear on the surface, together with the mineralogical character of the stone, were sufficient to one of his knowledge and experience to prove that he not only stood before a volcanic rock, but that the very axis of the cone of elevation was before his eyes.*

The rupture thus occasioned might have assumed the form of a continuous break extending in a line from east to west, from Over Stowey to Luxborough, on Brendon; or, which may be more probable, several isolated volcanic craters may have been formed along this line, and the materials of the igneous rocks already known may have been poured forth, not continuously, but in masses, with considerable intervals of space intervening. The rocks brought from Quantock would be the produce of one of these volcanoes.

HOLYWELL CAVERN.

Here not a breath at hand, nor distant sound,
Nor insect's hum disturbs the calm around;
Silence, and sleep, and breathless, starless night,
Here claim unquestioned, an eternal right.
The sheep's rude bleating and its tinkling bell,
Pierce not the chasm, nor disenchant the spell.
The shepherd's whistle, and the watch-dog's bark.
The raven's croak, the rapture of the lark,
Hie on their passage, 'ere they reach the gloom,
Or wake the echoes of the mineral tomb.
Here whilst new realms arise, and old decay,
And centuries of crime are swept away,
The night-born filagree of ages gone,
Fenced from all living gaze, creeps slowly on.
Pendant from arching roof, the drops concrete,
Till the rude floor the growing crystals meet,
And arborescent shoots their branches twine,

Like the soft tendrils of the tangled vine,
The dazzling whiteness of whose stems might vie,
With drifted snows that on the mountain lie

A QUARTETTE OF CENTENARIANS.

We have heard of but four centenarians connected with Bridgwater. The first was William Hubber, a sailor, who died in Monmouth-street on November 7th, 1859, at the age of 103. He had fought at the Battle of Trafalgar, but when he died was in receipt of parish relief.

The second was James Hartnall, who died February 26th, 1866, aged 102 years and six months, a memorial stone to whom is inserted in the wall by the south entrance to St. Mary's Church.

On May 15th, 1887, a Bridgwater centenarian, named Sarah Tapson, died in a ward in Chelsea Workhouse. She had reached the age of 108.

James Boa, a retired travelling draper, of Bridgwater, died on Friday, December 27th, 1888, at the age of 105 years. He was a Scotchman by birth, and had never married, and it is stated that he was in full possession of his faculties till the last.

THE MARKET CROSSES.

There were formerly two Crosses in Bridgwater—one, known as the High Cross, on the Cornhill; and the other in the centre of the open space outside the present Cattle Market.

The High Cross occupied a conspicuous position in the history of the town. It was an octagonal building in the Perpendicular style of late Fourteenth Century, constructed of eight obtusely pointed arches springing from lateral piers, and a central pillar supporting a roof, round which ran a very deep embattled parapet, pierced with quatrefoils, and ornamented with pinnacles at the angles and centre of each face. The horizontal mouldings were vigorous, as were also those which adorned the spandril spaces, and the curved face of the arches. It was surmounted by a sort of dove-cote construction, which, together with the roof and the upper part were modern. Probably the central pillar was carried up, in the original design, two or three tiers higher, and finished with canopied niches, and sculptured figures and pinnacles, in harmony with the style of architecture of the base. The Cross was used as a market-place for the sale of many articles, especially of fish, and exhibited on one of its pillars the appropriate admonition "*MIND YOUR OWN*

BUSINESS. " In the reign of James II. a grant was made to supply the town with water, and a tank was accordingly erected on the building, which, being filled by an engine from the Queen's Well, was thence distributed to the town. The Cross was pulled down about sixty years ago.*

The spot where the old "*Mercat Crosse*" stood is a memorable one. For ages every Act of Parliament, every Royal Proclamation, was read there ; it was the centre round which the whole town gathered in war and in peace, in election excitement, and in public rejoicing. Here our forefathers gathered to buy and sell, to gossip, to take counsel, to hear the news. Here was the unfortunate Monmouth proclaimed King; and here, but a span later, did many of his even more unfortunate followers look their last on this world. Truly the High Cross witnessed some memorable scenes.

The Pig Cross was a structure of a more simple character, comprising a shaft, a socket, and two or three steps. Much speculation has been rife as to the origin of the name, but it is pretty generally believed to have been derived from "*Pigens*," an ancient manor of Bridgwater, mentioned in Domesday.

The Cross was removed about fifty years ago; the base of the centre pier in the Market House to-day is said to be the last remaining vestige of it.

TWO MONARCHS

The late Mr. Andrew Crosse has left on record that on one occasion a great storm at Broomfield blew down a beech tree in his grounds *that exceeded one hundred feet in height and contained nine tons of timber*. Also that in the Church-yard was a yew-tree supposed to be 1000 years old, having a circumference of over twenty-five feet.

A FOX STORY.

In *Southey's Common-place Book*, page 370, appears the following:— *A tame fox at the White Hart, Bridgwater, was brought up from a cub to run in the wheel at the turnspit. One day, through the neglect of his keeper, he escaped, got to Sedgmoor, and made wild work amongst the geese. The writer of this was out the next morning with Mr. Portman's dogs and going towards Borough Bridge found the glutton under Alfred's tump. The dogs being laid on Reynard presently passed the Parrot and taking by North Petherton, sought the woods above Moncton; but being driven from thence, dashed through the Tone, a mile below Newton, and turned northward,*

passed Kingston and was lost for a time in the thickets above Buncomb. The scent serving, Reynard was at length uncovered and mounted the Cutherstone hills, descended to Kenniton, and mounted the stone mountain in Lord Clifford's Park, from which he was presently driven by the staunch pack. Leaping the pales of Enmore, he took through Lord Egmont's grounds, and getting again in his old track, recrossed the Parret just below Petherton, and taking slowly along the banks of the river, with the pack in full cry, leaped the fence of Mrs. Francis' (his mistress's) garden, and immediately darted into the spit-wheel, and began to perform his domestic office with as much unconcern as if he had been placed there for that purpose. The fat cook, with whom he was a great favourite, spread the place of his retreat with her petticoats, at the same time beating off the eager hounds with all her might and main ; but this would have been unavailing if the huntsman had not whipped them off, and after a chase of nearly 30 miles left this unlicensed poulterer in his domestic occupation.

It may be mentioned that Southey, in relating his passage through the town, speaks of going oyer a "miserable iron bridge"!

OLD REVELS

Revels were formerly held on the Pig Cross and in Eastover, the fixtures being annual ones. They were frequently the occasion of drunkenness, fighting, dishonesty, and general horse-play, and fortunately were allowed to lapse. In the last century a very popular revel took place annually at Wembdon.

A LOCAL LAW CASE.

In November, 1608, George Worridge, of South Petherton, *deputy alnager*, laid a complaint against Margaret Rowe, of Bridgwater, in the Court of Exchequer, for refusing, on ten occasions, to allow him to enter her premises to inspect her woollen cloths and kersies. She was fined .£10 for each offence — £100 in all.

A SIEGE VERSE.

"When Fairfax lay camped on the green Castle Field,
And frightened our maidens and frightened our dames.
Not a soldier would spur, not a burgess would yield,
With High-street, and Fore-street, and Cornhill in
flames.

All the town was ablaze, and the soldiers strove hard,
To nourish the flames, and no mortal could turn 'em;
Some said those destructives came over from Chard,
But I know as a fact that they went out by *Burn 'em*.

E. H. BURREINGTON.

CURIOUS DELAY OF A LETTER.

In November, 1858, Mr. J. E. Poole, surgeon, of Huntspill, received a letter from the Dead Letter Office, which he had posted to his brother in India just thirty years previously. It had never been delivered, and was also unopened.

THE ROYAL CLARENCE HOTEL.

On the site of the present "*Royal Clarence*" Hotel there formerly stood two hostleries — "*The Angel*" and "*The Crown*." The present building was originally named "*The Royal Hotel*," but on the occasion of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) passing through the town and changing horses at the "*Royal*," permission was asked of "*the illustrious stranger*" to name it "*The Royal Clarence*" which was readily granted.

THE GUY FAWKES CARNIVAL

The town of Bridgwater has long been noted for the vigorous manner in which the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot is celebrated on November 5th. The usual course is to appoint a representative committee, who make the necessary arrangements for a public procession and a monster fire on the Cornhill, in addition to which numerous gangs are formed, the dresses as a rule being handsome and in good taste. After the procession has paraded the streets of the town the procession is dismissed, and the various gangs then give displays at various points with the large squibs for which the town is famous. Speaking generally the affair is carried off with the utmost good feeling and friendly enthusiasm.

The following parody is from the pen of Mr. A. J. Whitby, and was published in the *Bridgwater Independent* of November 10th, 1888: —

THE BRIDGWATER GUY FAWKES CARNIVAL.

[A Long Way after Macaulay],

Attend all ye who list to hear our Carnival's delight,
I tell of the thrice famous larks we had on Monday
night,
When our Bridgwater fireworks eclipsed in size again
The biggest blaze of Brock and Co., the stoutest squibs
of Pain.
It was about the lovely close of a bright November day,
There ran a troop of small boys round, exulting in their
play,
For they had seen the Bonfire Boys at their congenial
task,
From earliest twilight, on Cornhill, come heaving many
a cask;
And they escaped the School Board man, and hung

about the place,
And round the pile of wood enjoyed the pleasures of
the chase.
For all day long the Bonfire Boys were gathering fuel
galore,
All day from yard to yard they drove, they drove from
door to door,
Till sixty barrels filled the space within the market
gates,
Till packing cases towered aloft, with faggots, logs and
crates ;
And opposite the market house behold an iron-railed
space,
Wherein behoves them to set up the bonfire in its place.
The fisher lent his skiff to light the saturnalian sports,
The ragged urchins roared around, from West-street's
sunless courts.
The sun was shining joyously, and all along the line,
"We're going to have it fine," they said, "We're going
to have it fine!"
The freshening breeze of eve blew up, the afternoon
grew cold,
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed those railings
tipped with gold.
Forthwith a sail at every shop was placed along the
street,
And firemen played with hose and jet to wet each
flowing sheet;
Many a light errand-boy put out to pry along the way;
As fast from every village round they came to join the
fray.
Night sank upon the noisy streets, and on the gathering
spree,
Such night Bridgwater oft has seen, and oft again shall
see !
From Eastover to Taunton Road, from North-street to
the Quay,
That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day,
A "bobby" pacing Wembdon Hill looked forth into the
night,
And saw, o'erhanging Clarence roof a blood-red streak
of light.
'Twas four fair maidens caused the blaze on Cornhill's
open space,
Till broad and fierce the flames came forth and raged
and roared apace.
At once beside the station gates arose the answering
fire,
At once the tradesmen's trophies splashed along St.
John's-street mire.
And east and west and up and down the fiery message
flies,
To rouse in many an ancient "pub," the chattering
groups of guys.
Now from the farthest wards was heard the rush of
hurrying feet,
All making for the station yard, where all the guys
must meet.
The hobbler left his skiff to rock on Parret's slimy

Miscellaneous notes
Chapter 36 of Sydney Garnor Jarman, History of Bridgwater, 1889

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banks,

The brickies left their toil to join the great procession's ranks.
We look down Eastover and see, while shouts rise higher and higher,
Torch beyond torch, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.
With his grey charger well in hand, General Boulanger comes,
Behind him march the fire brigade, behind them sound the drums,
And lustily the Christies play, and gaily dance the belles,
As slowly up the street there rolls a carriage-load of swells.
Look how the effigy of Fawkes lifts up his ancient head,
As underneath him steadily his stalwart bearers tread;
So glared he, when at Westminster in wrath he turned to bay,
Where in the cellar of the House, the powder-barrels lay.
How gallantly the jockeys ride, and how the people stare
As streams in crimson on the wind the Chinese lanterns' glare.
The Admiral and sailor boys march on with swinging pace,
And the *Orlando* all the way has held them close in chase.
Then bugle's note and rattling drum the stately ship succeed,
And torch in hand, in red and white, the sojer-boys proceed.
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute, ho ! curate, wave your nose,
As high on horseback by the gun the dark Commandant *Rose*.
With his white wig unbonneted, a handsome courtier rides,
While by him sits a jester, with two foreigners besides.
And waving red along the route, the torchlight still appears,
High on the Mandarins it shines, it shines on Cavaliers ;
It streams o'er knight and lady fair, o'er nigger, Turk, and clown,
As slow the gay procession sweeps along the roaring town;
And all the different industries are represented here,
And as they pass the wondering crowd send up an answering cheer.
The " little Brown jug " rides aloft, the potter's wheel spins round,
And Thompson's tin pots clatter loud, sparks fly, and knives are ground.'
And see how Symon's, Major's, and Barham's bricks and tiles
Are being manufactured here in all the latest styles.
So work they when at Salmon Lane, or by the Castle

Field,

They turn to brick the native clay the local claypits yield.
Look how the car of Culverwell lifts up its massive cogs,
While underneath the engineers stand in their working togs,
Ho ! sling your type, compositors ; ho ! small boy, roll the forme,
For here the gallant printer lads their noble art perform;
Here Smith the saddler tells us all that " nothing is like leather " ;
Here boiler-makers banging loud, work with good *Wills* together;
And wood is carved, and marble chipped, and laths are rent asunder,
While Carver's ship-wrights in their craft make all the craftsmen wonder.
The carriage sheds have sent a dray, with forge in fiery blast,
And Cresser's valiant fire brigade brings up the rear at last.
And on and on, with many a pause, they rolled from street to street,
And through Northfield and round the Square the drums were heard to beat.
Then far and wide from bright Cornhill the gangs of guys dispersed,
And rockets soared, and crackers banged, and squibs careered and burst. *
And when we speak of squibs, you know, we mean them hot and strong,
Two inches in the bore, about, and eighteen inches long.
Once from the battery of one gun the Roman candles poured,
From H.M.S. *Orlando* quick an answering broadside roared,
And all the Naval Volunteers charged with a louder cheer,
The gun was won, with lots of fun, the gunners fled in fear!
Now swift to east and swift to west the masqueraders ran,
To squib the folks around, who try to dodge them all they can.
And broader still became the blaze, and louder still the din,
As folks from every village round enjoy the fun and grin!
The Christies tunefully discourse beneath the market dome,
Until eleven, but not till two do all the crowd go home.
The Carnival has ended now, in s, m, o, k, e,
And when they have another one, may we be there to see.

AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT A HISTORY.
It is stated in Gough's *British Topography*

that in 1684 some gentlemen undertook to write a history of Somerset, the Rev. Anthony Paschal, Rector of Chedzoy, being the principal.

BRIDGWATER CURIOSITIES AT CHILTON PRIORY.

Chilton Priory was built by the late Mr. W. Stradling, who was an enthusiastic collector of curiosities. It now contains several of interest to Bridgwater, among them being : — (1) A large stone ball, shot into the town of Bridgwater during the siege by General Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell. This ball lodged in the wall of the Old White Hart Inn in Eastover, since burnt. (2) An iron hook, which supported one of the eastern gates of the town of Bridgwater. (3) The top stone but one of the spire of St. Mary's, Bridgwater. The spire, after having braved the blasts of nearly six centuries, was so much injured by lightning as to be rendered dangerous. It was, therefore, partly taken down and restored. (4) The lower part of a figure clad in priestly robes, resting on a dead lion, found in the ruins of St. John's Chapel, Bridgwater, and supposed to have been part of the tomb of one of the family of the De Brewers, who were great benefactors to that hospital, and also founders of the Parish Church.

WITCHCRAFT IN SOMERSETSHIRE

Under this head, S.A.S. wrote from Bridgwater to *Notes and Queries* June 25th, 1853, as follows *Perhaps the following account of superstitions now entertained in some parts of Somersetshire, will be interesting to some of the enquirers into the history of witchcraft. I was lately informed by a member of my congregation that two children living near his house were bewitched. I made enquiry into the matter and found that witchcraft is far less uncommon than I imagined. I can hardly adduce the two children as an authenticated case, because the medical gentleman who attended them, pronounced their illness to be a kind of ague ; but I leave the two following cases on record as memorable cases of witchcraft in the 19th century.*

A cottager who does not live five minutes' walk from my house, found his pig seized with a strange unaccountable disorder. He, being a sensible man, instead of asking the advice of a veterinary surgeon, immediately went to the white witch (a gentleman who does a flourishing trade in this neighbourhood). He received his instructions and went home and implicitly followed them. In perfect silence he went to the pigsty ; and lancing each foot and both ears of the pig, he allowed the blood to run into a piece of common dowlas. Then taking two large pins, he

pierced the dowlas in opposite directions, and still keeping silence, entered his cottage, locked the door, placed the bloody rag on the fire, heaped up some turf over it, and reading a few verses of the Bible, waited till the dowlas was burned. As soon as this was done he returned to the pigsty, found his pig perfectly restored to health, and mirabile dictu ! as the white witch had predicted, the old woman who it was supposed had bewitched the pig, came and enquired after its health ! The animal never suffered a day's illness afterwards. My informant was the owner of the pig himself.

Perhaps when I heard this story there may have been a lurking expression of doubt upon my face so that my friend thought it necessary to give me further proof.

Some time ago a lane in this town began to be looked upon with mysterious awe, for every evening a strange white rabbit would appear in it, running up and down, and mysteriously disappear. Dogs were frequently put on the scent, but all to no purpose, the white rabbit would not be caught, and rumours soon began to assert pretty confidently that the white rabbit was nothing more or less than a witch. The man whose pig was bewitched was all the more confident, as every evening when the rabbit appeared he had noticed the bedroom window of his old enemy's house open ! At last a large party of bold-hearted men one evening were successful enough to find the white rabbit in a garden, the only egress from which is through a narrow passage between two cottages, all the rest of the garden being securely surrounded by brick walls. They placed a strong guard in this entry to let nothing pass, while the remainder advanced as skirmishers among the cabbages. One of these was successful and caught the white rabbit by the ears, and not without trepidation carried it towards the reserve in the entry. But as he came near to his friends his courage grew ; and gradually all the wrongs his poor pig had suffered took form and vigour in a powerful kick at that poor rabbit ! No sooner had he done this than, he cannot tell how, the rabbit was out of his grasp ; the people in the entry saw it come, but could not stop it, through them all it went and has never been seen again. But now to the proof of the witchcraft. The old woman whom all suspected, was laid up in her bed for three days afterwards unable to walk about ; all in consequence of the kick she had received while in the shape of a white rabbit !

A TERRIBLE STORM.

It is related that in 1703 a terrible storm occurred, during which a vessel which was in the river was driven ashore and left upon land, several hundred yards from the common high water mark ; and the country

people set up marks on their houses and trees showing how high the waters flowed in that violent tempest.

MONMOUTH TOUCHING FOR THE KING'S EVIL.

In *The Agreeable Historian*, published in 1746, the author quaintly remarks that when Monmouth was proclaimed King in Bridgwater he *touched* several people for the Evil *with as much effect, 'tis said, as any of his relations ever did, or any before or after him; and there are now living, or were very lately, persons who were touched and cured by him; so strong was the power of imagination in these people, so divine and indefeasible did they think his right to the Crown, and so hereditary and unalienable that virtue of healing the Evil, which descended to him, they said, from his royal ancestors, and to them from Edward the Confessor.*

A LOCAL HIGHWAYMAN.

Near Chilton Priory are the remains of a cave, once occupied by a formidable highwayman, named Pocock. It formerly consisted of three apartments — the outer one was called the stable, the next the hall, and the interior the bedroom. Some oak props, which supported a part of the roof of the stable, in time gave way, when the rock fell in and closed the entrance. Pocock was the Robin Hood of this part of England. He never robbed a woman or a child, but often led the benighted wanderer to a safe retreat, where a plentiful repast was provided. He also gave more gold broad pieces to the poor than all the squires in the neighbourhood. According to an old print, a quaint ballad used to be sung by peasants at the harvest home, somewhat as follows

Rynne, mye boyes, rynne, the moon shines bryte,
Pocock's yn hys cave, hys pyrse is lyte;
But whenne the nighte ys myrke and darke,
Hee's offe wyth hys steeds, blythe as a lark.

His favourite horse resided with him, and *legendes saye* that his shoes were made on a peculiar construction, so as to turn on a pivot, as occasion required, in order to deceive his pursuers. At length the cavern was discovered, and after a most determined resistance the brave brigand, who had been so long the terror of the rich and the friend of the poor, was taken, half dead and covered with blood, and ended his career on the gallows.

MRS. WYNDHAM.

In the chapter dealing with the Siege of Bridgwater there is repeated reference to Mrs. Wyndham, the wife of the Governor. Possibly

she is the Mrs. Wyndham respecting whom a strange tradition still exists. According to the story, she apparently died, and was duly coffined, carried to the church and buried. The cupidity of the sexton was aroused by the fact that she had her rings on her fingers at the time of her burial, and he visited the church at night and opened the coffin with the intention of despoiling the dead. Finding it impossible to get the rings off by reason of the swollen state of the fingers, he pulled out his knife and began to cut the flesh. No sooner was an incision made than the lady came to life again, doubtless to the great consternation of the sexton, who would look upon it that she had come to life again to punish him for his sacrilege. No further details are given beyond the bare announcement that she lived many years after this, and "*bare sons and a daughter.*"

A JURY OF MATRONS.

An interesting incident occurred on one occasion at the Assize Court. A woman charged with theft was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, whereupon she put in the plea that she was pregnant. The Judge thereupon ordered the doors of the Court to be closed, and a jury of matrons to be empannelled to examine the prisoner, which instructions were duly carried out, amid unwonted excitement.

A BRIDGWATER INVENTOR.

It is related that a man named Silver, *brother to Captain Silver, Master Gunner of England*, invented a machine which would discharge many barrels of muskets at once. He lived in High-street, near where the *Mansion House* now stands, and his poverty probably kept him from making anything of his invention.

THE ACARI CROSSII.

Broomfield a few years ago was a place much talked of in scientific circles, as the scene of the supposed creation of the *Acarus Crossii* by "*Philosopher*" Crosse (Mr. Andrew Crosse, of Fyne Court).

It is related that the poet Southey was walking over the Quantock Hills, when he met his friend Mr. Crosse, who told him that in the course of some experiments which he was making on electro-crystallization he had met with insect life under most extraordinary conditions. This was the first announcement of the so-called *Acarus Crossii*, whose appearance brought down upon the experimenter a torrent of scientific abuse. Southey exclaimed at the time "*Never was*

traveller stopped by so extraordinary an announcement!" Mr. Crosse was much misrepresented both in scientific and other circles, but his own version of the matter was simply this :—" *As to the appearance of the Acari, under long continued electrical action, I have never in thought, word, or deed given anyone a right to suppose that I considered them as a creation or even the formation from inorganic matter. I have never formed any theory sufficient to account for their appearance. It was a matter of chance. I was looking for silicious formations.*" The mystery was never solved.

ORIGIN OF CHANDOS -STREET.

About 1720 his Grace the Duke of Chandos built the Street which now bears his name ; the houses are described as having been very fine, with convenient warehouses.

THE ARMADA.

Bridgwater was represented at the overthrow of the Spanish Armada, when

The ragged miners poured to war from Mendip's sunless caves.

The *Bark*, 70 tons, John Smith, commander, and carrying 30 men, chartered from Bridgwater, is mentioned as *a coaster under the charge of the Lord Admirall, and paid by her Majestie.*

PHOTOGRAPHING FROM THE CLOUDS.

In 1887 some repairs were done to St. Mary's Church-tower and spire, and a small scaffold was erected on the summit. Our enterprising townsman, Mr. J. S. Brown, mounted the ladders with a camera, and took a photographic view of the town from the top of the spire, looking down Fore-street. A most interesting picture was the result.

A WATERLOO VETERAN.

A familiar figure in the streets of Bridgwater used to be Sergeant George David, who fought in the memorable battle of Waterloo, in 1815. His end was a sad one ; his mind became unhinged and he cut his throat in 1883.

A FAUNA ITEM.

Mr. W. Baker, of Bridgwater, who was regarded as an authority on local fauna, relates that the *web-footed smooth newt* (*Lissotriton Falmipes*) was first found, as British, at Clay-hill Farm, Cannington:

ST. MATTHEW'S FAIR.

Mr. Pike, an ex-Mayor, had some snuff thrown in his face on one occasion in the Fair-field, and in his temporary blindness the rascals who threw it stole his gold watch. Rowdyism and drunkenness and thieving

were regular occurrences at St. Matthew's Fair time. Previous to its being held in the field to which it gives its name it took place annually in a meadow called *The Friars*, in Friarn-street.

A GARLAND FOR SOMERSET

Mr. E. Jeboult, in his "*History of West Somerset*," quotes the following verse from an old ballad :—

" Go, look through Merrie Englande,
Of all the shires you there may see,
Oh, the fairest is green Somerset,
The flower of all the West Countrie."



* "*The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset*," by Charles Pooley, F.S.A.