

**THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY FOR COLLECTING
AND PRINTING RELICS OF POPULAR
ANTIQUITIES, &C., ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR
MDCCCLXXVIII; COUNTY FOLK-LORE, VOL.
IV, NO. 6: EXAMPLES OF PRINTED FOLK-
LORE CONCERNING NORTHUMBERLAND**

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M. C. BALFOUR & NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS

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The Folk-Lore Society

FOR COLLECTING AND PRINTING

RELICS OF POPULAR ANTIQUITIES, &c.

ESTABLISHED IN

THE YEAR MDCCCLXXVIII.



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VOL. IV.

PRINTED EXTRACTS No. 6

EXAMPLES OF PRINTED FOLK-LORE

CONCERNING

NORTHUMBERLAND

COLLECTED BY

M. C. BALFOUR

AND EDITED BY

NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS

"Saffle, spur, and spear!"

DRAYTON, *Polyolbion*, xxiv.

Published for the Folk-Lore Society by

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1904

PREFACE.

THIS, the sixth number (and fourth volume) of the *County Folklore* series, is the result of the painstaking collection made some years ago by Mrs. M. C. Balfour, formerly of Belford, Northumberland, which has now been revised and edited by Mr. N. W. Thomas. The thanks of the Society are due to both these workers, and also to Mr. R. O. Heslop for much kind help in facilitating research, to the publishers of Brockie's *Legends and Superstitions* for permission to quote extracts from that work, and to Mr. D. D. Dixon for similar permission with regard to his *Whittingham Vale*. The last-named gentleman's *Upper Coquetdale* (Redpath, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1903) is naturally of too recent a date to be included among the works quoted.

The smallness of the present volume, as compared with the second and third of the series, is due, not to the paucity of Northumberland Folklore to be recorded, but to the fact that so much of it has already seen the light in the publications of the Society. Besides numerous items in Henderson's *Northern Counties* (1879), one third of the first volume of the *Denham Tracts* (1891) and nearly the whole of the second volume (1895) deal with Northumberland, and it would obviously be foolish in the

Society to repeat itself. Some marked features of Northumberland folklore are therefore only slightly represented in the present collection. For the war-cries and slogans, for the local proverbs, nicknames, and legends, in which the county is peculiarly rich, we must for the most part refer readers to Mr. Denham's pages. One speciality of Border folklore, the ceremony of the Petting Stone at weddings (*infra* pp. 94, 95), has furnished the text for Mr. Crooke's study of "The Lifting of the Bride," read before the Society, 23rd April, 1902, and published in *Folklore*, vol. XIII, p. 226, while some interesting brief notes on this and other country customs, especially the hiring-system mentioned *infra*, p. 123, will be found in *Folklore*, vol. XV, pp. 341, 351.

With these few words of explanation, the following brief notes of the old-fashioned country life of the Northumberland Border, its rough gaiety, its bonfire festivals, its harvest homes, its boisterous weddings, are commended to the notice of members of the Folklore Society.

By Order of the Council.

W. H. D. ROUSE, *President.*

November, 1904.

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