

**A NARRATIVE OF THE
PROCEEDINGS AT THE
CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY
OF ACKWORTH SCHOOL, 26TH
AND 27TH OF SIXTH MONTH, 1879**

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A Narrative of the Proceedings at the Celebration of the Centenary of Ackworth School, 26th and 27th of Sixth Month, 1879 by James Henry Barber & James Hack Tuke & John S. Rowntree

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JAMES HENRY BARBER & JAMES HACK TUKE & JOHN S. ROWNTREE

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A NARRATIVE
OF
THE PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY
OF
ACKWORTH SCHOOL,

26th and 27th of Sixth Month, 1879,

EDITED BY

JAMES HENRY BARBER.

ALSO

A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Lothergill,

By JAMES HACK TUKE;

AND

A short Sketch of the History of Ackworth School,

By JOHN S. ROWNTREE;

WITH

*A nearly verbatim report of the Speeches delivered at the
two Meetings.*

PUBLISHED BY

THE CENTENARY COMMITTEE, ACKWORTH SCHOOL.

1879.

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LONDON.

PREFACE.

I THINK it is Hugh Miller who records that, when a farmer's boy, he was sent by his master to a pond or stream, with a litter of puppies judged to belong to the superfluous canine multitude.

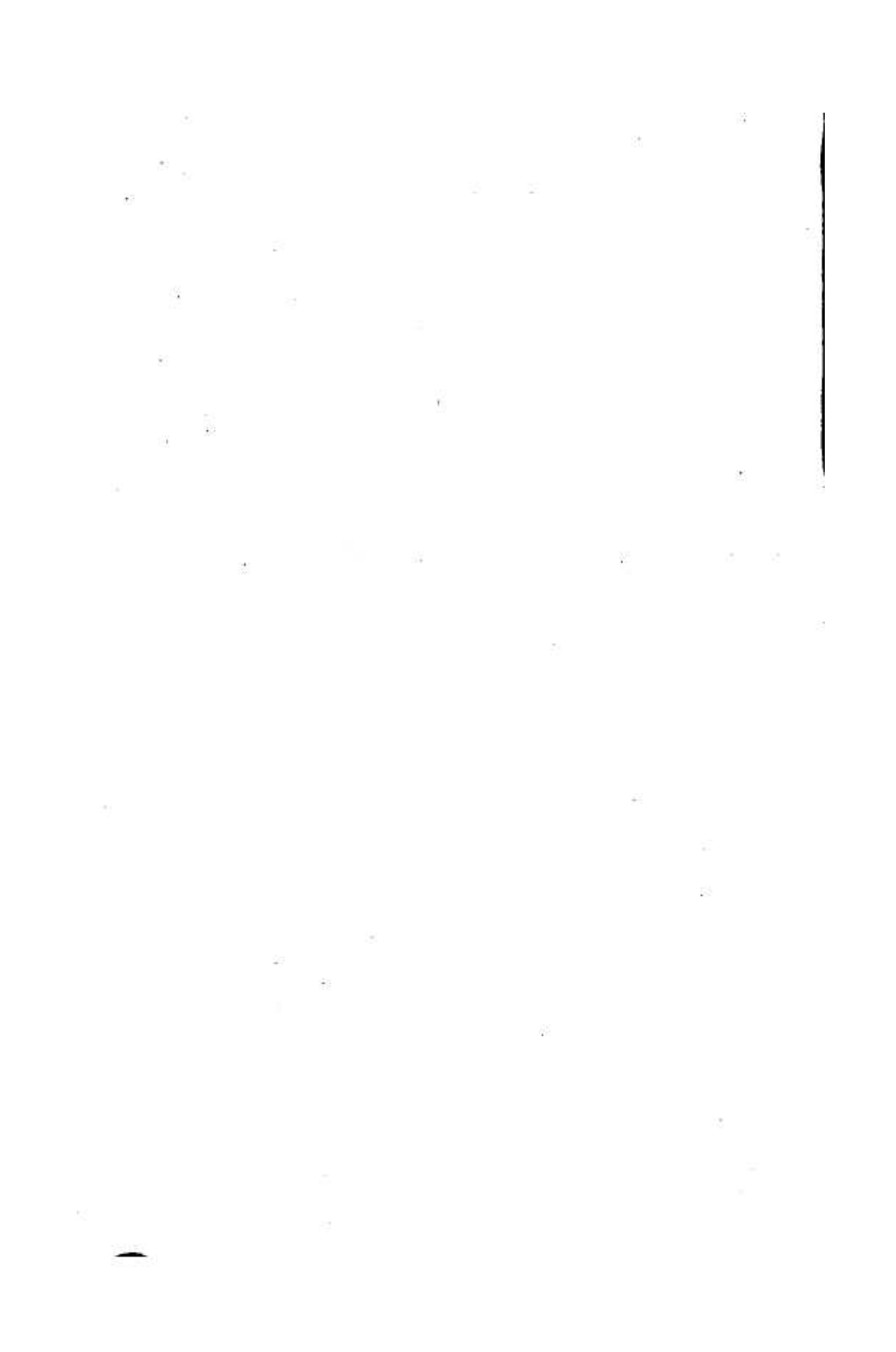
Instead of executing his commission, or rather charge, he straightway ran home, explaining his arrival there to his father's household, by exclaiming, "I could na droon the wee doggies."

I have been reminded of the story whilst tenderly regarding my superfluous reminiscences of our recent happy festival at Ackworth, and should have been glad to escape from the situation by casting on some one else the task of putting an end to them.

Alas! they have been permitted to survive, and hence the prolixity of the following narrative.

J. H. B.

12th August, 1879.



THE NARRATIVE.

THE 26th and 27th of Sixth Month, 1879, were joyful and memorable days in the annals of Ackworth School! For Ackworth had collected around her her sons and daughters from far and near, to keep holiday, and commemorate her Hundredth Anniversary. With the many years of her past, with her future, as we fondly trust, to be still more successful than the past, she met the present with a smile of hope, as she welcomed the throng of her children of every age. And truly they were of almost every age, from the venerable old man in his ninth decade, to the young scholar not yet emerged from the first. Joyous youth, active manhood, womanhood, and grey-headed age were there, all claiming the kindred tie of Ackworth scholarship. Yet, large as were the numbers of those assembled, they were but the few compared with the full muster-roll of her vast peaceful army—nearly 10,000 in all—100 a-year pouring in and out for 100 years. And how many, the vast majority indeed, of Ackworth scholars, have already been gathered to their fathers! May we not humbly trust that a large proportion of these have realised the full, the eternal, value of the religious lessons, and the Christian training of Ackworth's faithful preceptors? How many distant Friends were thinking of these days who were unable to form part of the assembly: for Ackworth scholars are scattered over the face of the earth in almost every land where the Anglo-Saxon race has wandered, and its colonists are found.

There had been many months of careful preparation and anxious thought, for it was not easy to foresee the number who would be present, or fitly to provide for their comfort. It was also desired that the Centenary days might be marked with a "white stone," some memento of the love and interest of the old scholars, which should benefit the scholars of to-day, and of the years to come.

THE GENERAL MEETING GATHERING.

Ackworth General Meeting is eminently a joyous gathering. Occurring at Midsummer, when days are at the longest, attracting as it does so many young people; the anticipation of the coming holidays giving a bright tone to the scholars; with not a few happy re-unions of parents and children, brothers, sisters, and relatives, some of the last-named reviving the pleasant cousinships of school-days, wherein "distance lends enchantment to the view;" the General Meeting, despite its formal examinations, is at all times a lively anniversary. But there was a Centenary atmosphere around this General Meeting manifest from the first. It was larger than usual. It also, as a whole, looked younger. Nevertheless its personal appearance had undergone a marked change on the evening of Fifth-day, the 26th. Omnibuses, wagonettes, and carriages of every description, had come pouring in from Normanton, Pontefract, Featherstone, and Hemsworth stations, laden with closely-packed passengers—and all available lodgings were at least fully occupied.

There was one circumstance deserving a passing notice. Some disappointment was felt that the new line of railway from Swinton to York, which has a station at Ackworth, had not been opened for general traffic, for it was about to be so in a few days ; but the Company ran trains from York, and one from Sheffield, to this General Meeting, the first passenger trains which had ever reached the village. It was interesting thus to associate with the hundredth anniversary of the School the direct railway communication so long greatly needed, and pleasant to consider that it would be available to convey the children to their homes at the approaching and future vacations.

The thoughts of Friends went back to the far-off days when the journey of a child from Cornwall, or Scotland, was made under circumstances so different. For the early days of the school (before those of MacAdam) not only long preceded the first railway train, but the first of those swift and well-appointed coaches which, though we are apt to compare them disparagingly with present facilities, were nevertheless a wonderful advance on the lumbering vehicles, traversing bad roads, which conveyed the first Ackworth scholars from their homes. And not a few of these homes were distant ones. The first two scholars on the list came from Poole, in Dorsetshire, the fifty-ninth and sixtieth were from Montrose, in the far North. Swansea, Redruth, Marazion, and Aberdeen, each contributed its quota within the next three or four years. Fifteen years after this, a traveller tells us that he "left the town of Gosport at one o'clock in the morning in the 'Telegraph,' then considered a fast coach, arriving at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, at eight in the evening, thus occupying nineteen hours in

travelling eighty miles, being at the rate of rather more than four miles an hour." Let us imagine our little Quaker boy or girl then travelling the 300 or 400 miles from Scotland or Cornwall, first by one conveyance and then another. Still, in this world of compensations, the clouds not unfrequently have a silver lining. When a journey took three or four days and nights, how abounding were the hospitalities and the fatherly and motherly love of the good Friends on the route; how warm the sympathy for the low-spirited boy or girl leaving a far-off home and its dear associations, to enter in amongst a large community of strangers, and to be at school probably for several years without one vacation, sometimes without even a visit from kinsfolk, in many cases with a very rare one. Letters, too, were expensive, and carefully read over by the School authorities. Truly, in many respects, our forefathers were an enduring race compared with this generation.

We are tempted to glance at the proceedings of the General Meeting, apart from the special anniversary, for we hope this period may have an interest for future scholars, and generations of Friends.

THE MEETING OF THE FRIENDS' PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

The prelude to the other meetings is, with some apparent singularity, the annual gathering of the Directors and members of a national business Institution. Friends have always been provident in character, laying up for their children, and minding the proverb about a "rainy day," hence