

**YORKSHIRE LEGENDS AND
TRADITIONS, AS TOLD BY HER
ANCIENT CHRONICLERS, HER
POETS, AND JOURNALISTS**

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Yorkshire legends and traditions, as told by her ancient chroniclers, her poets, and journalists by
Thomas Parkinson

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THOMAS PARKINSON

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YORKSHIRE

Legends and Traditions

*AS TOLD BY HER ANCIENT CHRONICLERS,
HER POETS, AND JOURNALISTS.*

BY THE
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THE YORKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION,
VICAR OF NORTH OTTERINGTON.

'History hath no page
More brightly lettered of heroic dust,
Or manly worth, or woman's nobleness,
Than thou may'st show; thou hast nor hill nor dale,
But lives in legend.'



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1888.

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GENERAL

*' We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between ;
Nor hill nor brook we paced along,
But had its legend or its song'*

SCOTT.



INTRODUCTION.

LEGEND, from the Latin *legendum*, a thing to be read, is a word which covers a wide field (even when limited by the bounds of a single county) for a writer to undertake to reap, and present the harvest to his readers. The ordinary acceptance, however, of the term somewhat further limits it to those stories and narratives which hang between history and fable,—to tales of superstition, of marvel, and of credulity.

Very closely connected with legend is another field of much interest—viz., that of tradition (*traditum*, a thing handed down); and to avoid having to draw a line where the one continually runs into the other, and so to distinguish between legend and tradition—where the distinction is often very slight indeed—the author has joined the two in the title given to this collection, 'Yorkshire Legends and Traditions.' Under this title the reader will, therefore, find stories and narratives ranging from those which border upon authentic history, and have undoubtedly fact for their foundation, to others whose origin can only have been superstition or fable, and many of them handed down from the mythical gods and heroes of heathen days.

While there will be also found a middle class, consisting of relations in which it is possible to perceive a centre of fact or historical truth, but rendered indefinite and indistinct by the halo of mystery or perversion with which time, or ingenuity, has surrounded it.

Many of the mythical legends, and legends and traditions of the marvellous, found in Yorkshire, are, of course, by no means peculiar to the county. On the contrary, they are—some or other of them—found related of places and of persons far apart in situation and time.

Such stories, wherever found, have always had a fascination for the young; and, told from father to son, in the long evenings of winter, in the farmhouses of remote valleys and moorsides, they have formed an *unwritten* literature, long before they found embodiments in more permanent forms. They have seized upon the fancy, and given scope to the imagination, of men in all ages. Poets and painters especially have revelled amid the fields of legend and tradition. In every art-gallery—whether of ancient or modern works—legends and traditions of every kind are found embodied on canvas of every size; while many of the finest poems of our language—such as ‘The Idylls of the King,’ or ‘The White Doe of Rylstone’—owe their inspiration to Arthurian or local legends or traditions. The extent to which art and poetry are thus indebted to legend and tradition will appear to the reader as he turns over the pages of this collection. In a great majority of instances, either references are made to poems, to which the subjects have given

rise, or, as is often the case, the author has allowed the story to be told in the words of the poets themselves.

The writer is not aware of any similar collection of legends and traditions of his native county having been made before. He has laid under contribution almost every variety of source of information. Especially is he indebted to Dixon's 'Stories of Craven Dales,' and to several local weekly journals—the *Yorkshire Post*, *Leeds Mercury*, and others. The collection has been growing under his hand for several years, and by no means exhausts the field. Should a reading public appreciate and encourage this effort of bringing together these sheaves from the romance and the marvellous of this county of 'broad acres,' another wain-load of the same kind, already collected, will probably be sent forth in due time.







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