

JONATHAN MARTIN, THE INCENDIARY OF YORK MINSTER

Jonathan Martin was not a native of Yorkshire, but as it was in Yorkshire that he lived part of his time, and as his name is inseparably connected with the glorious Minster at York, which he partially burnt, he claims our notice in this volume.

He was born, according to his own account, at Hexham, in Northumberland, in 1782, of poor but honest parents, and by them, at a suitable age, was put apprentice to a tanner. He appears to have served his apprenticeship with steadiness, and on its expiration, when he was in his twenty second year, he removed to London, intending to travel. Soon after his arrival in the metropolis, as he was one day viewing the Monument, a man accosted him, and inquired if he wanted a situation. Martin told him he wished to go abroad, on which the man replied that he could suit him exactly, as a gentleman of his acquaintance had a son on board a frigate on the Indian station, who wanted a person of Martin's description, and would give him thirty two shillings per month, besides his chance of prize money.

Martin eagerly accepted this offer. But he soon found that he was in the hands of a press gang; and he was sent to the Nore, where he was placed on board the Hercules, 74 guns, which formed a part of the expedition against Copenhagen in 1804 under Lord Nelson. After the surrender of the Danish fleet he was drafted into one of the prizes, an 84 gun ship, which, with a squadron of seven other vessels, was ordered to proceed to Lisbon to blockade the Russian fleet in the Tagus, in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the French. These ships were taken by the British, and were brought to England.

The next affair Martin mentions in his biography as having been engaged in was in assisting to bring off the troops from Corunna in January, 1809. He says, setting sail from Vigo Bay —

“We reached Corunna in one day, and then approached the shore: the numerous carcasses of dead horses, all floating in the bay, showed us the toil our army had suffered. We could plainly see the French and English camps from our ships, each occupying a hill very near the other. We made every exertion to get close in, to cover the embarkation of our troops, who were sadly annoyed by the fire from the French artillery on the heights. Our ships replied to the French as well as the heavy sea then setting would allow. By great exertion the whole embarkation was completed. They then directed their batteries against our transports, who had to slip their cables, and stand out of the reach of their guns. During this scene of confusion and terror several boats were sunk by the fire of the enemy and some by the violence of the sea. Our vessels presented an awful spectacle, from the number and condition of the wounded, who occupied our cockpit, cable tier, and every spare place on board, and whose misery was rendered greater by the tempest which arose, and prevented that attention being paid to them which their situation required: a great number perished solely on this account. During the gale five transports

were lost, from which only few lives could be saved, owing to the state of the weather and the rocky nature of the coast.”

Having landed the wounded men in England, the ship on board which Martin was sailed for Lisbon. Of his adventures at sea Martin tells several remarkable incidents; but they are many of them connected with dreams, and if not wilful falsehoods, are most probably misrepresentations. Of such probably is what he relates as occurring whilst he was at Lisbon. He says that whilst in the Tagus the whole crew went on shore except himself, a young negro, and the captain's wife and daughter. The black, knowing the captain had a quantity of gold in his chest, proposed to Martin to murder the ladies, and take a boat and escape with it — to India, Martin says. To this he refused to accede, and ultimately succeeded in persuading the Indian (African?) to abandon his dreadful intention. About this time, he says —

“I began to see my lost and ruined state as a sinner, and to cry to God for mercy and salvation, hoping He would spare me to return to my native land, when I would join myself to the people of God. But alas! My vows, often repeated, were as often broken. Notwithstanding, the Lord heard my prayers, and restored me to my parents as safe and well as when I left them. My deliverance from on board a man-of-war was extraordinary, but the Lord having given me favour in the sight of the whole crew, when all hands were piped to breakfast, a boat appointed for the purpose was brought under our bows, and the soldiers formed a circle on the forecastle of the ship, to prevent the sentry seeing what was going forward; I dropped into the boat and got ashore, and remained in safety at the waterman's house until our ship sailed. I entered on board a transport going to Egypt for corn for our troops then lying at Messina. When I arrived in Egypt, I was filled with delight on beholding the place where our blessed Lord took refuge from the rage of Herod; and where the wisdom of Joseph (directed by Almighty God) saved the land of Egypt and his own father's house from the effects of the seven years' famine, of which I had so often read. A wide range of buildings was pointed out to me by the Turks, which they said formerly held the grain preserved by Joseph. Reflecting on these things, led me to review my misspent life, and to see how often God had preserved me in many dangers, and how ill I had requited Him; so that my thoughts troubled me sore, and I resolved anew to amend my life. I began to be comforted by reflecting that He preserved me for wise purposes, and that I should live to praise Him. Blessed be the name of the Lord, I was not disappointed.”

A Mr. Nicoll, a native of Peterhead, who was formerly in the navy, and was a messmate with Martin in two vessels, of which one was the “Hercules”, says —

“I remember Martin well, and sailed with him first about 1803. He was always skittish. We used to say that he was fitter for a parson than a sailor; nicknamed him Parson Saxe. He was often sulky and idle. He did not pray much, but was inclined to argue on religious subjects; he said he had a light that we had not, and that he held meetings in his dreams. He told extraordinary and unaccountable tales; but” said Mr. Nicoll “they have gone from me, as I treated them as fudge and palaver.” Mr. Nicoll adds that Martin was jolly as any at one

time, and would drink and dance and be merry as the rest; at another time he would weep bitterly. Some were angry with him, others ridiculed him; “but I” said Mr. Nicoll “thought him more rogue than fool. I remember his saying that a book was shot from his hands at Cadiz, and that he considered it a warning from heaven. Some one told him he should have been otherwise employed than in reading at such a time; in reply to which he abused the person who rebuked him. It was my opinion that he shammed a good deal for a sulk. He was particularly fond of viewing and conversing about the celestial bodies, but had a dread of any one pointing to a star, and would not believe that they were other worlds; and, indeed, grew quite angry at such an assertion. I have often said such things as a scot (jest), to draw him on, and he has abused me. He was hale enough, but used to complain of weakness, and, as I thought, sham sick.”

A Greenwich pensioner, who served with him, says: — “I knew Jonathan twenty three years ago and upwards; he was a good sailor, but had fits of melancholy, and then would talk of dying and a future state. I have often told him that our days were fixed, and he blamed me for saying so. I remember somebody larking in the top, and he, Martin, fell, catching the hair of the sailor in his way; he actually tore off a portion of his scalp; he saved himself by clinging to the cross trees. He quarrelled with and fought a man named Dobson, who died in Greenwich Hospital some years since. They sat across a bench and fought. Martin was beaten. He was laughed into this quarrel.”

Martin gives the following account of his escape: —

“Being on the main yard, and losing my balance, I found myself falling; there seemed nothing to save me from being dashed to pieces. The loose end of the tracing line, about an inch thick, was hanging near me. I got it round my left hand, and grasping it with my right, the swing of the rope, together with my weight, threw me overboard, and I remained suspended by my arm, within a few feet of the sea, until my shipmates came to my assistance; and I praised God that I received no material injury, except my arm being a little wrenched by my weight. Again, falling by accident out of a gunport, my shipmates succeeded in rescuing me when not able to help myself. And being on the topgallant yard, the topping lift broke, and the end I was on went down like the end of a beam. In my fall I grappled with the backstay, and brought myself up, and landed on the cross trees. Thus the Almighty preserved me from death when there was no other hope — the height from the deck being about eighty feet.”

He relates also the following circumstance, which was corroborated by a Greenwich pensioner: —

“After I was appointed to the gunners’ crew, when on our voyage to Cadiz, the gunners’ yeoman, who had charge of the stores and all the powder, shot himself through the head in the storeroom, where there were upwards of five hundred barrels of gunpowder, and joining the place where all our oakum and old ropes lay. When the report of the pistol was heard in that place, the consternation became general throughout the ship’s company, as an explosion was to be

dreaded. Some were for making to the boats; others, more desperate, were for leaping overboard, expecting the ship to blow up every moment. In the midst of the panic produced, I and four of my shipmates ran below, rushed into the storeroom amidst the smoke, and soon extinguished the little fire produced by the wadding of the pistol, and then we discovered the body of the unfortunate man lying bleeding, his brains literally strewed over the floor. Thus did God put in our hearts to risk our lives, and by that means save our ship's company, six hundred in number, from an awful death."

"Martin" says one of the Greenwich pensioners "went with a boat's crew to get water. In crossing some buoys he fell in; the accident was not perceived, but we at length missed him; when we got him out he was all but gone. He said we had conspired against him, but God had delivered him. I remember this, for Dobson threatened to thrash him if he repeated it. Martin was punished for drunkenness, and bore it in a very cowardly manner. When he was in the mortar boat he sang psalms, but when we were afterwards very near wrecked, he was as cool or cooler than any one on board. He fell overboard whilst assisting in hooking a shark, but was picked up almost immediately. He got hurt in falling, and would never assist in the hooking again. We had many sick and dying aboard, and the sharks often followed in our wake: we burnt bricks and covered them with tarpauling, etc., fixing a hook in the brick; this the fish would swallow. Martin was very active in this, until his accident. After that he said, 'The Lord was vexed at the guile.' He hated the Catholics."

Another pensioner, who corroborated a portion of the foregoing, added: "Martin was much noticed by the officers; but he told them many falsehoods, and at last was generally disliked. He was at one time in such favour with his superiors, that two men were punished for cutting the slings of his hammock whilst he was asleep, which is generally passed over as a joke; but he pretended to have been hurt with the fall. When angered, he would swear as much as anyone, and sometimes immediately afterwards would cry and pray. His dreams and stories would have filled a book. I saw him years afterwards at Portsmouth. Never knew that he had deserted; he was continually amongst the crews of the King's ships. Went to London with him, and he talked a good deal about religion when at Portsmouth, but lived very loosely in London. Martin told me a variety of his adventures — that he was nearly murdered by the Algerines, etc., etc., but that he was marvellously delivered, and that God had told him in his dreams to quit the sea. He had a good deal of prize money to receive, but there was a delay in his getting it. The day he was to have it finally, he was to meet me at Rotherhithe; he never came, and from that time (1810) I never saw nor heard of him."

Martin does not tell us how long he remained in the transport service; but when he was paid off, he proceeded to Newcastle to visit his parents, probably in 1810; and then went to work with Mr. Page, a farmer at Norton, in Durham.

"Here" he observes "commenced that series of trials which almost obliterated the remembrance of my former difficulties, and which, were they not well-known to many now living, might appear to border on romance." In reading his

life, however, we can find no traces of “trials” which were not brought upon himself; and there is very little of the “romantic” about them. A few months after his residence at Norton he married, and became the father of a son.

“I had him baptised Richard” he says. “I was deterred from giving him my own name on account of the sins of my youth, as I conceived if I did, the Lord might take him away.” Not long after, he dreamed that his mother came to see him, and told him he would be hanged; and his dream produced a strong impression upon his mind.

His thoughts became more directed than before to religious matters, but not without “manifold backslidings” as he himself confessed.

At Yarm, in Yorkshire, four miles from Norton, where he lived, was a Methodist chapel, and he used to attend church at Norton in the morning, and chapel at Yarm in the evening. One Sunday morning he received the Holy Communion in the church at Norton, and in the evening he was at a love feast at the Wesleyan chapel. This was his first formal reception into full membership with the Methodist body. He had obtained, as he calls it “perfect liberty.” He was converted, a new being, emancipated from obedience to the law, being justified by faith only.

He now began to feel strongly against the Church of England, which taught the necessity of obedience to the moral law even to those who walked in the Spirit. The laxity of the clergy in going to parties, balls, and plays, offended him.

“I knew also that I was not authorised by law to interfere with the Establishment. I betook myself to fasting and prayer, earnestly seeking direction of the Lord how I should proceed in this matter. I dreamed on Friday night that a man held out to me a piece of honeycomb, of which I did eat, and felt refreshed, and concluded this a gift divine. I felt greatly encouraged. On Saturday I gave away most of my working clothes among my shopmates, having fully resolved to confess my Lord and Saviour the next day before the congregation; not doubting but the step I was about to take would lead me into trouble. I spent that night chiefly in prayer, for strength to perform the task I had undertaken — of warning people of their dangerous state by their carnal security; the necessity of repentance and regeneration, by the operation of the Spirit; and finally of their having the witness of the Holy Ghost that their sins were blotted out through faith in a crucified Saviour.”

He accordingly entered the church with the clerk early in the morning, and whilst the latter went to ring the bell, Martin secreted himself in the pulpit, and remained hidden there till the end of the prayers, when he suddenly stood up, and gave forth as his text, St. Mark iv. 21-23, and began to preach, with violent gesticulations. He was at once removed by the churchwardens and constable, but was allowed to remain in the church, though dislodged from the pulpit.

About this time he was favoured, or deluded, with the following vision: —

“I dreamed that I was called to the city gates of London, and beheld the inhabitants tearing each other’s flesh in the most horrible manner, and I heard a voice speak to me — ‘In one day this city shall be burnt to the ground.’ And I was taken by the Spirit to the banks of a river, and I commenced digging the earth, and cast up several sharp edged weapons, in particular a large axe, stained with human blood. I took hold of it, and that instant there appeared, as I thought, St. James, and I struck off his head at one blow, and awoke out of my sleep. This strange concern opprest me in the spirit, and I said, ‘This is no other than Popery and persecution are intending to come forward amongst true Christians. Oh! England, Beware of Popery!’“

Martin now began to write letters to the clergy and other members of the Church, “entreating them, as they valued their souls, to amend their lives, and flee to the blood of sprinkling for mercy and pardon.” His conduct seems to have been so improper, so marked by a “zeal not according to knowledge”, that he was expelled by the Methodist Society; and he complains that his religious friends were afraid to own him — he was left alone in the world; and, to add to his troubles, he lost his employment. He then went to Whitby and worked for a few weeks, but soon returned to Norton, and from thence went to Bishop Auckland, where he obtained employment; and determined once more to attempt exhorting the people in the church. He was, however, taken out by a constable; and then he began that practice which he appears never afterwards to have abandoned, of posting papers on the church doors, as a warning to the clergy and congregation. The following is a copy of one of these singular productions: —

“Oh! hear the word of the Lord, you clergymen, for the mighty sword is expanded over your guilty heads; now shall you come to a complete dissolution; now shall your candlesticks be completely overthrown; now shall your blindness come to the light, and your shame before all the people, for the Lord will not suffer you to deceive the work of His hands any longer. Oh! prepare yourselves to meet your God, you double hearted sinners; cry aloud for mercy, and now shall my God make bare His arm and conquer the devil, your great master, for the monster of hell shall be completely overthrown, and you and him shall not deceive the nations any longer, for now shall God be worshipped in spirit and truth; now you shall and must throw away your little books you carry into the pulpits to deceive the people with; you now preach for wine and gluttonous living, and not for precious souls — will you not get your portion with the rich man in hell if you do not repent and find mercy?

“JONATHAN MARTIN,

“Your sincere friend.”

Martin continued for some time attending church, and disturbing the service by his groans and exclamations of assent to, or dissent from, what was enunciated from the pulpit. At Bishop Auckland one day he heard the preacher declare that no man could be absolutely certain that his sins were forgiven, and his happiness hereafter was assured, till he had put off mortality, and his eyes were opened in the light of eternity. This was too much for Martin to bear. He says: —

“The bitterness of my soul constrained me to call out — ‘Thou hast no business in that pulpit, thou whitened sepulchre, thou deceiver of the people, how canst thou escape the damnation of hell?’ I was determined to address the people on the following Sunday, and tell them the state they must be in under such a ministry, and of the justness of that God who will judge the world in righteousness. John Bunyan admonished his hearers to an upright and strict life, being assured if this were neglected they were void of religion, and Popery would again spread through England. Like poor John Bunyan, I was pulled out of the place as soon as I began to speak. The clergyman employed an attorney to write against me, and I was apprehended as a vagabond; and they wanted my master to swear that I was deranged. My master objected thereto, stating that I had been with him seven months, and had been a faithful servant. He inquired of my master and several neighbours at Norton if they were not afraid of me, but was answered in the negative.”

Martin mentions here that his wife had become a great enemy to him since he joined the Methodists; that she wanted him to leave them, and vowed to God that, unless he deserted them, she would disown him as a husband; and “from that period to the day of her death, eight years, she kept her word, but his firmness was not shaken.”

“About this time the Bishop (I think of Lincoln) was to hold a confirmation at Stockton, for the Bishop of Durham. I had heard that he was a good man, and that numbers attended his visitation. I was glad to hear so good a report of him, and concluded that if he were really so good a man and so eminent a Christian, he would not fear death, and resolved to try his faith by pretending to shoot him. I had been in Newcastle to see my brother, and recollecting he had an old pistol, I asked and obtained it, and brought it home with me. On my arrival, my wife, observing the pistol, inquired what I wanted with it. I replied with a smile that I got it to shoot the Bishop. I laid it down carelessly, determined, if she should remove it, and I should receive no encouragement by a dream, I would proceed no further in the matter. When I got up in the morning the pistol was not to be found, and there, as I thought, the matter dropped; but some officious person hearing of it, told the clergyman of Norton, and he laid a complaint before the magistrate against me. A vestry meeting was then called, to which I was summoned. My previous interference with the church was urged against me, and so much was I tormented with questions on the subject, before I went to the vestry, and while there, that I was considerably agitated and off my guard. However, the reverend gentleman was little better tempered than myself, and showed a degree of rancour that I did not expect. I was asked if I had a pistol to shoot the Bishop with; to which I replied ‘that I did not mean to injure the

man, although I considered they all deserved shooting, being blind leaders of the blind; consequently both must fall into the ditch.' I was then suffered to depart, but was next day taken into custody, and brought before the meeting of justices at Stockton, and examined very harshly. They asked me, if I had found the pistol, would I really have shot the Bishop? I replied 'It depended upon circumstances — I would ask him some questions out of the Creed, and if he did not answer me satisfactorily as to his conversion, and the evidence of the Spirit, he must be branded as a deceiver of the people.' For this I was sentenced to be confined in a madhouse for life, but glory be to God, they could not keep me an hour longer than my Lord and Saviour thought fit. I felt as happy under this trial, in the assurance of Jesus' love, as if I had been going to a palace."

He was at first confined in a lunatic asylum at West Auckland, but was afterwards removed to a similar establishment at Gateshead. His afflictions then and subsequently he relates thus: —

"I had not for a long time seen my wife and child, as during the time I was so rigorously confined they had been denied admittance. My poor wife had long been labouring under heavy affliction, having a cancer in her breast. When I began to work they were allowed to come and see me, and my wife at parting said — "Farewell, Jonathan, look to Jesus; pray for me; may God bless you; my strength is fast failing, and I feel that I shall not be able to come any more.' She spoke prophetically, for we met no more. A short time after, she took to her bed, from which she never rose. My readers may judge of my grief to think that my poor wife was a-dying, at no great distance, and when she requested to see me, even in custody and in chains, the keeper was so unfeeling as to refuse her dying request. She afterwards sent my son (little more than seven years old), hoping that his youth, innocence, and distress might soften their hearts, but his appeal was unheeded. She sent him again with her dying love to me, and the keeper's wife shut the door in his face, and the child was suffered to return weeping to his mother. His supplication, as I afterwards heard, would have melted any heart, crying, 'What will become of me? My mother is dying, and my father is shut up in a madhouse, where I am not so much as allowed to see him.'"

It must be remembered that Martin's account of things is not to be trusted in all particulars. At the same time it is certain that asylums were not conducted at that period with humanity and judgment.

Mrs. Orton, the keeper's wife alluded to, was examined at the trial of Martin, ten years later. She said: "When Martin was with me I thought him a really insane person. He would sit on the floor with two cross sticks as if he was fiddling, either singing hymns or whistling. He called his sticks an imitation of David's harp. I have known him fast four days — and say it was God Almighty's orders — in imitation of Christ fasting forty days on the Mount. He was often under restraint, and was bad to manage."

He succeeded in making his escape from the asylum on the 17th of June, 1820, but was caught at Norton and brought back. On the 1st of July, 1820,

he made his escape again by rubbing the rivets of his irons with freestone, which he managed to secrete in his room. He broke through the ceiling, got into a garret, and escaped through the tiles upon the roof. He thence descended cautiously and safely to the ground; and thus ended his captivity of three years.

With great difficulty — still with the rings of his chains on his ankles — he reached the house of Mr. Kell, an intimate friend, of the same way of thinking, at Cadlaw Hill. Mr. Kell freed him from the remains of his fetters — “the degrading emblem of slavery” as Jonathan termed them. Mr. Kell was a distant relation of Martin on his mother’s side; and he remained there a fortnight, till his strength was recruited, when he left him, designing to proceed to an uncle’s, a distance of sixteen miles, to assist him to get in his hay harvest. However, before he reached his uncle’s house, he was met by his cousin, who told him that Orton, the keeper, with a constable, had been there in search of him: he therefore escaped as fast as he could to Glasgow, where another uncle resided; and he reached it in safety. From Glasgow he went to Edinburgh; and was in that city at the rejoicings on account of the coronation of George IV. Martin stopped at Edinburgh only one day, being anxious to see his wife; and on returning to Norton he found his wife still alive, but in the last stage.

After remaining three weeks with his friend Mr. Kell, he determined to go to London to be near his brothers, one of whom was the celebrated imaginative painter so well known by his wonderful pictures “The Eve of the Deluge”, “The Plains of Heaven”, etc.

His friend having furnished him with money, he left Darlington for London on the 1st of August 1820, exactly a month after he had made his escape. He went, however, no farther than Boroughbridge, where, on September 8th, he received a letter informing him of his wife’s death, and of his having had his house robbed of money and goods to the amount of £24. He gives a pitiable account of the last illness and the distress of his poor wife: —

“I learned afterwards that my dear wife had to go through great tribulation. There was a woman allowed one shilling and sixpence per week to wait on her, but she always locked her in at night, without any attendant but the poor child to wait on his wretched mother; until my sister, hearing of their condition, came and took him away with her. So greatly neglected was he, that there was none to cut the bread for him; and when my sister came to see them he had the loaf picked out, as if eaten by mice, not being able to cut it himself. In this pitiable condition my poor boy sat up several nights with his mother, to hold the drink to her when she became too weak to do it for herself.”

He then went to Hull, where he began to preach to his mates in the tannery where he worked. “I was moved to speak to them of their drunken lives, what would be the consequence if they did not repent. One or two of them, more wicked than the rest, got above me with a bucket of bullock’s blood, which they heaved over me; but that did not move me from my stand: then they tried water. Then the devil put it into their minds to heave wet skins in my face, and that did not make me quit my stand until the hour was up.”

Notwithstanding these checks, which in Jonathan's description strongly remind the reader of the sufferings of Mawworm, he continued his exhortations in and out of the shop, and if we are to believe his own account, two hundred persons were converted by him.

From Hull he was driven by this treatment by his carnally minded shopmates, and went to Norton, where his old master, Mr. Page, having obtained the consent of the magistrates that Martin should not be again consigned to the asylum, employed him as a tanner. But he soon after (in 1822) removed to Darlington, where he also worked at his trade, and spent his evenings in preaching to and praying with those who would hear him. He boasts that through his labours in seven weeks "two hundred precious souls were set at liberty." He remained at Darlington apparently till 1827, and here he pretends to have had some remarkable visions.

"I should inform my readers how I was taken to the seaside in a vision, and beheld a countless army of men arising from the waves. As I stood gazing thereon a man advanced towards me, and said 'Where shall we find bread for so great a multitude?' He quickly answered 'Where they can.' They then advanced with great fury, and covered, as it were, the whole earth, and I thought England fled before them. This dream made great impression on my mind after I came to Darlington, and I determined to make known the things that will befall England, unless we all turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, for I dreamed of a great battle between Newcastle and Sunderland; and again, that the son of Buonaparte came and conversed with me, and having a musket, said he would shoot through the door of an Englishman. He tried three times, and the third was successful.

"I then left him, and was soon overtaken by some baggage waggons; all the French fired their muskets in the air. I was taken prisoner, and they shut me up with the Word of God and a Wesley hymn book in my hand. In the prison the sun shone upon me with all its splendour, and I rejoiced to see the mercy of God towards me."

He then bursts out into the following denunciation against clergymen: —

"Deceive not yourselves, oh, you clergymen, for my dream has been doubled, for you will have to fly to the mountains to hide yourselves from your enemies, for the son of Buonaparte has a second time appeared to me. The first time he stood before me, he stood with a firelock in his hand, and said to me, I will shoot through the door of an Englishman. The first time he tried to present, but he was too weak, but willing to avenge the death of his father, though but a child. The second time he levelled the firelock, but could not stand the force of powder. The third time he levelled and fired, and hit his mark, and said I will shoot through the door of an Englishman. The second dream was like unto the first: he broke through the door, and demolished the house before me with great dexterity and art. The youth appeared before me with a beautiful countenance, with a light complexion, and light curled hair; and as he passed before me

through the door, I held out my hand, and he shook hands with me. I have the honour of shaking hands with the son of Buonaparte, though I have not seen his father, and he vanished out of my sight. He came from Denmark to reside in England. O England! prepare for war, and to meet a hot reception; for as you surprised the Danes at Copenhagen, so will the son of Buonaparte surprise you and reign in England, and come off victoriously. The thing is certain, and will come to pass. You must not think the time long, for the youth will soon be ready to act the part of his father, and do valiantly; for he shall be a scourge to the wicked clergymen of England.”

At Darlington he was wont to declare that Prayer books had been the means of sending many souls to hell. He then wore a coat and boots of sealskin, with the hairy side outwards. Afterwards he procured an ass, which he rode upon, to be more like Christ; and he used to preach to a society of Oddfellows at the High Cross at Darlington. His son Richard he put with a pedlar Jew, as his assistant; and when remonstrated with, said that his reason was that little Dick might labour at the conversion of the Jews. He was a good workman.

“I came to Lincoln on one Saturday in September, 1827, and on the following Sunday went to view the Cathedral, as I was a stranger in the town. I heard the voice of singing close by the Cathedral; I drew near, and as I stood listening, a young man, a Methodist, opened the door and invited me in. Three violent young men (for piety), Sunday school teachers, pressed me hard to join them to assist them in instructing the rising generation, and pray that God would give a blessing to their labours. I told them I would as well as God would teach me. We had not been long together before the Lord put it in our minds to hold a short prayer meeting, that God would own our feeble efforts, and bless the children. Whilst I was at prayer it was impressed on my mind to pray that the Lord would fill the large Cathedral full of converted clergymen, and that He would distribute them amongst all the churches of Great Britain, that blind guides and the devil might not deceive the people any longer. I was fervent in prayer, and that prayer disturbed the devil out of his den. A public house being next door, the landlady and her company came into the room whilst I was on my knees, the landlady afraid of losing her company, and, as it were, hell broke loose upon me. The devil fiercely attacked me, but I stood to my arms: the powers of the bottomless pit could not make me rise from my knees until I had prayed for my enemies; then I arose and gave out a hymn to conclude the meeting. When the landlady could not turn us out, then she engaged her wicked company to attack me. They surrounded me, and flew upon me like fiery serpents from hell, gnashing their teeth, and crying out: ‘Out with him, head first! Break his neck over the stones!’ But I alighted on my feet, and the devil was conquered.”

At Lincoln, where Martin worked for a man named Weatherall, he compiled and printed his biography; two editions were soon disposed of, and he printed a third edition in 1828, of five thousand copies. A friend and fellow believer wrote his biography from his dictation, and it underwent some sort of supervision, for Martin was wholly ignorant of spelling, and had little idea of constructing a grammatical sentence.

By hawking his little book about the country, and by quartering occasionally in the houses of those who were willing to extend their hospitality to him on account of his gifts of prayer and the Word, he contrived to make a decent living. He frequented the Methodist chapel at Lincoln, and received his card of membership from the minister there. In 1828 he got acquainted with a young woman, twenty years his junior, named Maria Hodson, who lived at Boston. Martin visited her there, and they were married in Boston parish church. Shortly after the marriage they came together to York, on the day after Christmas Day, 1828, and obtained lodgings in the house of a shoemaker named William Lawn, No. 60, Aldwark.

During his stay in York he employed himself in vending his books, and was well known in the city from wearing a glazed, broad brimmed, low crowned hat, and a singular black leather cape, which came down to his elbows, with a square patch of fur sewn on the back, and extending from one corner to the other. At York he attended the Methodist meeting, but sometimes was with the Primitives, or Ranters. When he had any vacant time, he spent it in reading either the Bible or his hymn book. On Sunday afternoon he was wont to go to the Minster, and on the 6th of January the following letter was found tied to one of the iron gates of the Minster choir; it was fastened by a shoemaker's waxed thread, but was not directed. A verger, however, took it down and gave it to one of the canons or minor canons, who, however, thought it too absurd to deserve notice. The following is a verbatim copy of it: —

“York, Janrey the 5 — 1829.

“Hear the word of Lord, Oh you Dark and Lost Clergymen.

“Repent and cry for marcey for know is the day of vangens and your Cumplet Destruction is at Hand for the Lord will not sufer you and the Deveal and your blind Hellish Docketren to dseve the works of His Hands no longer.

“Oh, you Desevears will not milleons of the mighty and Rich men of the Earth have to Curs the Day that ever they gat under your blind Docketren know to be a shamd of your selvs and wepe for your Bottls of Wine and your downey Beds will be taken away from you I warn you to repent in the name of Jesuse and believe he is able on Earth to forgeve Sines, for there is no repenting in the greave. Oh you blind Gydes are you not like the man that bilt his Hous upon the Sands when the Thunder starmes of Gods Heavey vangens lites upon your Gildrys Heads a way gos your sandey Foundaytons and you to the deepest pet of Hell re Serve the Curses of millions that your blind Doctrens has Decevd and to reseve Gods Heve Curs and the Ward pronounst Depart you Carsit blind Gides in to the Hotist plase of Hell to be tormented with the Deveal and all his Eanguls for Ever and Ever

“Jona. Martin, a frind of the Sun of Boneypart Must Conclude By warning you again Oh Repent repent He will soon be able to act “the part of his Father

“Derect for Jonathan Martin
“Aldwark No. 60”

Another epistle was also found, on Wednesday, the 21st of January, by a sailor from Hull, who being at York, visited the Cathedral in company with his wife. When walking along the western aisle he saw on the ground near a pillar, a small packet, which he had the curiosity to open. It was tied with a shoemaker’s waxed thread, covered with old matting, and contained a stone, round which was wrapped a pamphlet, entitled “The Life of Jonathan Martin.” He also found in the parcel a letter, sealed with cobbler’s wax, and addressed to the Clergy of York. He read and exhibited both the letter and pamphlet at the house where he was stopping, but they were thought of no consequence. Fortunately, unimportant as they were considered, he did not destroy them. The letter was couched in the same strain as that already given.

In other MSS. dropped in or near the Minster, and bearing the signature of “M.,” the following expressions were found: —

“Your great churches and minsters will fall down on your guilty heads;” but no sort of suspicion was entertained that anyone was wicked or mad enough to cherish the determination of destroying one of the finest existing specimens of the munificence and piety of our ancestors; therefore no precautionary measures were taken.

On the 27th of January, Martin left York with his wife, stating that they were going to Leeds to reside, and his luggage was sent off accordingly to that place. They arrived in Leeds on the 28th, and Martin remained there till the Saturday following. They lodged at the house of John Quin, No. 6, Brick Street. His conduct is described as having been most orderly and decorous. He attended worship at a chapel of the Primitive Methodists one evening; his conversation was cheerful and perfectly rational; he appeared to be kind and affectionate to his wife, and spent the time while he was in the house chiefly in singing hymns, reading the Scriptures, and conversing on sacred subjects. The principal part of Thursday and Friday he was engaged in vending his pamphlet. When he left Quin’s house on Saturday morning, between nine and ten o’ clock, he seemed perfectly tranquil, and said he was going to fulfil an appointment that he had in the neighbourhood of Tadcaster, and that he should return to his wife at Leeds on Monday by dinnertime. Instead of stopping at Tadcaster, he came back to York, and went to his old lodgings in Aldwark. He told Mr. and Mrs. Lawn that he and his wife had been no further than Tadcaster, and that he was going to stop in that neighbourhood for the purpose of hawking books. He asked if he could sleep there that night, and on being answered in the affirmative, he took possession of the room he had before occupied. In the afternoon he went out and was observed perambulating the Minster yard, and taking special note of the building. His attention appeared particularly directed to the western towers.

He returned to Mr. Lawn's in the evening, and remained till eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when he went out — and returned no more.

This wretched incendiary had then, no doubt, laid all his plans for the destruction of the Minster; a project which, to judge from his subsequent communications to Mr. Wilson, a local preacher at the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion at Hexham, he seems to have entertained for some time. The motives which prompted him to attempt the destruction of this beautiful church were the fanatical antipathy he entertained towards the clergy of the Church, whom he condemned as "blind guides" — to whom, however, he said he felt no ill will, malice, or personal hostility, but he was sorry for them, as he believed they were leading the higher ranks in society astray; and the destruction of the Minster, he was of opinion, "was for the glory of God, the good of the people of England generally, and for the good of the inhabitants of York in particular, as when the Cathedral was destroyed they would be compelled to disperse themselves to other places of worship, where they would hear the Gospel preached." When he had fully made up his mind on the subject, he began to apprehend opposition from his wife; and he told Mr. Wilson that he adopted the following extraordinary mode of neutralising it: — "He took the ring from her finger whilst she slept, and though she manifested much concern at the loss of her ring, he allowed her to vent her feelings in unavailing regrets, until he thought her sufficiently moulded to his purpose. He then exacted a vow from her that she was to keep his secret, and he would restore her ring. This being agreed to, he told her his intention, on which she seemed greatly disturbed, and they went to Leeds."

After Martin left his lodgings on Sunday morning he went to the Minster and heard the sermon. In the afternoon he repaired there again, and entered the south transept as soon as the doors were open. He walked about till after the service began; and the sexton (Job Knowles) noticed him passing several times as he was ringing the bell for prayers. Before he entered the Minster in the afternoon he had provided himself with a "razor with a white haft, the back of which he used instead of a steel; a flint, tinder, matches, and a penny candle cut in two." This, however, soon burnt out, and he replaced it with one of the wax candles which had been used in the Minster the previous evening. During service he concealed himself behind a tomb — probably Archbishop Grinfield's, in the north transept — muttering to himself, as the organ played, "Buzz, buzz — I'll teach thee to stop thy buzzing." There he remained till all the people had left. He then quitted his place of concealment and walked about, looking where he could best make the fire. The ringers were in the belfry in the evening, and from behind a column he watched them go out. And here it may be remarked that very important consequences often result from apparent accidents. If the ringers had locked the door of the belfry after them, in all probability he could not have made his escape from the Minster, but would have been compelled to remain till the doors were opened in the morning; when mingling with the crowd, in the hurry and confusion, he might not have been noticed, and the calamity would always have been ascribed to accident.

After the ringers left, Martin went into the belfry and struck a light. A gentleman who was passing the Minster about half past eight o'clock, saw a light in the belfry at that time; but as the ringers had been there, he thought they were about ringing again, and took no notice of the circumstance. Two persons who were confined in Peter Prison also saw a light in the belfry after nine o'clock. At this time the incendiary was busy preparing his means of escape. He cut about ninety feet off the rope attached to the prayer bell, which passed through a hole in the floor of the belfry into the aisle below, and having pulled it up, he formed it into a ladder by doubling it and tying knots at regular distances. After he had worked some time, he put out his light, and finished his ladder in the dark. When this was completed he left the belfry, and having climbed over the iron gates which separate the nave from the north-east aisle, he used the rope-ladder to get over the gate leading from that aisle into the choir, which is usually kept fast. He then struck a light the second time, and with the razor cut three yards of gold fringe, two gold tassels, etc., from the pulpit, and the crimson velvet curtains from the dean's and precentor's seats at the bottom of the choir, and those from the archbishop's throne. He also took a small Bible, and as he expected to be taken and imprisoned, he brought away the Bible that it might be a comfort to him in his confinement. He then piled the cushions and Prayer books in two heaps, on each side near the carved work, and set them on fire by introducing matches among them.

Having done this, he set about making his escape. He had brought with him a pair of shoemaker's pincers, which Mr. Lawn had left in the room where he slept on Saturday night, and having tied one end of his rope to the machine used for cleaning the Minster, he dragged it under the window in the west aisle of the north transept, which he broke with the pincers; and having seen that one of the piles (that by the archbishop's throne) to which he had set fire was burning briskly, he descended, and left the Cathedral a little after three o'clock in the morning of the 2nd of February, taking with him the articles before mentioned, and also some purple silk — a part of one of the robes of the clergy.

During the time he was in the Minster he says he felt no fear, but was, "on the contrary, quite happy; sometimes he prayed, and sometimes he praised God, because, as he said, He had strengthened him to do so good a work!"

The incendiary had left the Minster several hours before the fire was discovered. The patrol left the Minster-yard about half past two o'clock, before he had made his escape, and they saw no indications of anything unusual when they left. About four o'clock a man going past saw a light in the Minster, but he thought the workmen were preparing a vault, and unfortunately passed on without endeavouring to ascertain what was really the cause of so unusual an occurrence as a light burning in the sacred edifice at that early hour.

At five o'clock a series of reports, resembling repeated explosions, were heard. The parties who heard them wondered what they meant, but never thought of tracing them to their source. The discovery at last took place in the following singular manner: — A lad named Swinbank, one of the younger choristers, whose duty it was to go and practise at the Minster early every morning, went

as usual a little before seven o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of February. He found the doors were not open, and began to slide on a piece of ice in the Minster yard to amuse himself. Whilst so doing he fell on his back, and before he recovered himself from that position he saw smoke issuing from the roof of the Minster. Alarmed at the sight, he went to Job Knowles, the sexton, for the keys. On his return he found the doors had been opened by some of the workmen, and Mr. Scott, the builder, entered the building at the south door, but had scarcely got in when he was compelled to retreat — so dense was the smoke that respiration was impossible. A gentleman with difficulty then made his way to the organ screen; but was compelled to retreat to avoid suffocation. By the vestry door, however, access was obtained to the choir — the gates from the vestry, and also those leading from the aisle into the choir, being fortunately open. The fire, which originated at one end of the stalls, had consumed the whole row, with all their tabernacle work; and about half an hour after it was first discovered, the flames had spread to the stalls on the other side. One of the Minster engines was kept in the vestry, and this was immediately placed in the aisle, where it played on the place where the communion plate was kept, and around which the flames were raging with great intensity: the tabernacle screen was in this spot burnt to the ground, and the plate was melted into one mass. As soon as this engine was got to work, several individuals succeeded in carrying out the whole of the cushions and books from the north side of the choir; the cushions and part of the hangings of the Cathedral were also saved, as was the curious old chair which stood within the rails. The next effort was to remove the brass eagle or lectern. This was effected with great difficulty, owing to its weight, by the few persons who had the courage to brave the suffocating effects of the smoke. They were driven back three times before they succeeded in carrying off the upper part of the eagle, which was taken into the vestry; the other portion was afterwards carried out at a door on the chapter house side. All this was the work of a few minutes; and at this time (perhaps about a quarter after seven), the organ screen, the north side of the choir, and the roof, were to all appearance untouched by the fire. At this period, if a few firemen had been present who understood their business, this part of the church might have been saved. Shortly after, however, the flames spread round the southwest corner of the choir and reached the organ; and when this noble instrument caught fire, an appalling noise — occasioned by the action of the air in the pipes upon the flames — resounded through the building, and struck with awe all who heard it.

Whilst this was passing in the interior of the building, the alarm had been spread through the city by the ringing of the bells of St. Michael-le-Belfry, and the Yorkshire Insurance Company's engine was soon on the spot. It was placed at the south door, and the pipes were carried into the Minster, and directed over the organ upon the fire which was then raging in the choir. The city engines arrived soon after, and were stationed at different parts of the building. An express was sent to the barracks, and the barrack engine arrived about eight o'clock. Major Clark and several officers accompanied it with a file of the 7th Dragoon Guards, who were of great use in facilitating the operations of the persons employed in extinguishing the flames.

About ten minutes before eight o'clock another engine was brought into the Minster; but the roof having caught fire from the organ — the flames from the latter igniting some of the bosses of the groining, which were of maple wood — the melted lead and pieces of burning timber began to fall so rapidly that the men were compelled to abandon their positions, and the engine was stationed further off, in the nave, whence it continued to play over the screen upon the burning ruins in the choir for several hours. Previous to the removal of this engine, an attempt was made by two or three gentlemen to cut down the great gates leading from the choir into the northeast aisle, with a view to cut off the communication with the altar: the molten lead and burning rafters, however, fell about them so rapidly that they were obliged to desist.

By eight o'clock, or a little later, the organ — one scarce equalled for tone and power by any instrument in the world — was totally consumed, together with the valuable collection of music which was deposited in the organ loft; and much of which, being in manuscript, could not be replaced.

By the exertions of Mr. Plows, stonemason, a number of men were about this time got upon the roof of the side aisle; by means of ropes, buckets and the pipe of an engine were hoisted up, and from this elevation a torrent of water was discharged upon the flames beneath. A number of men were also employed in cutting away the roof towards the east window, who continued their exertions as long as they were practicable. About a quarter past eight o'clock the flames burst through the roof, near the lantern tower, and the spectacle from the exterior was awful and impressive in the extreme, whilst the effect of the scene in the interior was magnificent beyond description. Immediately in front of the screen which divides the nave from the choir, the engine already alluded to was playing directly upon the fire, but with little effect, owing to the magnitude of the space over which the flames had spread themselves. From the screen to the altar the vast area had the appearance of an ignited furnace; and the men who were employed in working the engines, and in various other ways endeavouring to stop the progress of the flames, resembled beings of another world rather than inhabitants of this material globe. Their voices, as they shouted to their comrades for "water" or for more assistance, fell in harsh and discordant tones on the ear; they moved enveloped in an atmosphere so dense that it was scarcely possible to breathe in it, partially illumined by the flames and partly by the rays of the sun, which now streamed in through the painted windows, producing altogether an effect indescribably beautiful and grand. A number of bats and other birds, burnt out of their retreats, were now seen flitting about, unable to find an outlet, and many perished in the flames.

About half past eight o'clock an express was sent by Archdeacon Markham to the Mayor of Leeds, informing him that the Minster was on fire, and requesting that two of the largest engines belonging to that town might be sent off immediately. This was shortly followed by another express from Mr. Newman, the actuary of the Yorkshire Fire Office, requesting that two more engines might be immediately forwarded to York. At this period serious fears were entertained that the fire would extend over the whole of this immense fabric; the flames were rapidly gaining ground at the east end, and the engines

had not the least effect in allaying their progress. The lantern tower, and the whole of the roof of the nave appeared to be saturated with smoke, which also poured out of the windows of the western towers. The knotted rope having been discovered by which Martin made his escape, and not satisfactorily accounted for, and its being rumoured that a bunch of matches had also been found which had been lighted at both ends, the opinion that the fire was not caused by the gas, or by candles being left in the organ loft or in the clergymen's robing-room, which had at first been entertained, began to give way to the idea that this was the work of an incendiary; and when the smoke was seen issuing from the places we have mentioned, it was at once said that a train had been laid, and that it was breaking out in different places. This, providentially, was not the case; the smoke penetrating the roof, etc., was merely occasioned by the denseness of the volume of vapour collected in the church before the doors were opened, and which at last found vent in that manner; and the fire never extended beyond the lantern tower.

At ten minutes past nine a portion of the burning roof fell in with a tremendous crash. For an instant the whole area was illuminated, and the next moment a volume of smoke and ashes was sent forth which involved for a short time everything in darkness and obscurity. From that time till half past ten portions of the roof kept falling in, till from the lantern tower to the east window the blue vault of heaven was the only canopy. The molten lead from the roof during this period poured down in torrents.

Soon after ten o'clock an engine arrived from Escrick Park, near York, the seat of Paul Beilby Thompson, Esq., M.P. That no time might be lost, that gentleman's beautiful grey carriage horses were yoked to his engine, and it was driven into the city with the utmost promptitude. About half past ten another engine arrived from Tadcaster, and was immediately got to work. One of these engines was brought to the east end, and played into the choir through an aperture made in the lower department of the window; another also played for a short time through the farthest window at the northeast end.

As great alarm was felt lest the east end of the Minster should fall, a part of the staff of the 2nd West York Militia was placed to prevent the public from passing in that direction; the inmates of the opposite houses had previously removed their families. Providentially, however, this alarm turned out to be unfounded. This fine window — the largest, we believe, in England, if not in the world — was only very partially injured.

The floor of the choir was strewn with fierce burning timbers, and resembled a liquid lake of fire; it was heated completely through, and the vaults below glowed with a radiance that occasioned a general cry from those who could get near, of "The vaults are on fire." But the heat now began sensibly to abate, owing partly to the quantity of water poured upon the burning timbers which covered the floor of the choir and the Lady's Chapel behind the altar screen, and partly to the removal of the burning rubbish from the bases of the pillars, which latter being of limestone, were very much injured by the action of the fire.

The rafters of the roof, and other immense pieces of timber, were converted literally into charcoal, and were removed to the nave and into the Minster yard.

About noon the fears of the fire spreading any farther were removed; but the engines continued to play for hours after upon the mass of fire and flame on the floor of the church. Great efforts were also made to save the beautiful screen which divides the nave from the choir, and this was effected, for that ornament of the Minster was only very slightly injured.

About two o'clock the engine of the Norwich Union Company, with the requisite number of men, arrived from Leeds. They had been barely two hours on the road, and in less than three minutes after the engine stopped in the Minster yard it was at work. Two other engines arrived from Leeds shortly after. A fourth arrived about four o'clock.

When the fire was so far got under that no fears were apprehended of its extending beyond the choir and chancel, several parties were admitted into the nave to view the spectacle. Some ladies were amongst them, one of whom was heard to exclaim, on viewing the awfully splendid yet distressing scene "What a subject for Martin!" alluding to the celebrated painter. Little did she then think that Martin's brother had occasioned this terrible conflagration.

The crowds of people who flocked to the scene of this calamity continued to increase all the afternoon, and it was found necessary to place constables at the Minster doors, to prevent the influx of persons desirous of seeing the state of the edifice; many arrived from a considerable distance, and it was quite impossible that more intense feelings of anxiety and distress could have been evinced than were displayed by the inhabitants of York, who from their infant days had been accustomed to consider the Minster as their boast and glory.

A great-aunt of mine has often described to me the overwhelming sensation it caused. Her father, a man of remarkable self-restraint, wept like a child. The feeling in many a home was as if some accident had befallen and carried off a dearly loved relation.

There was gloom that day on every countenance, and in the early part of the day a sort of stupor appeared to pervade all ranks; people were overcome by the greatness of the unexpected calamity, and seemed scarcely to know whether to consider as real the events which were passing around them, or whether they were under the influence of a dream.

During the whole of the afternoon the workmen and others were busily employed in removing the fallen rafters and other rubbish from the choir. Most of these were carried out into the Minster yard, which was thickly strewed from the south door to the vestry with the fragments of the roof, blackened and reduced to charcoal. Within the nave a detachment of the Dragoon Guards was drawn up to prevent intrusion there, and a guard of the staff of the 2nd West York was mounted for the same purpose, as well as to secure the ornamental portions of that part of the structure from damage. The floor of the nave was

strewn with fragments of the roof which had been brought from the choir; and against one of the pillars lay the remains of the organ — a few fragments of the gilt pipes and a portion of the iron work. A dense mass of smoke still rose from the embers, on which several of the engines continued to play during the night. The fire was not totally extinguished when the shades of evening drew on, for occasionally a fitful flash of lambent flame was seen struggling with the gloom, but was quickly extinguished by the water from the engines directed to the spot.

During the evening the silence which reigned around, only broken at intervals by the tread of the sentinels or the occasional remarks of a passenger, formed a striking contrast to the bustle and confusion which had prevailed during the day. About ten o'clock men were observed with lanterns visiting every part of the roof, to see that all was safe; and the night was passed without any further alarm.

A word as to the extent of injury which the sacred building sustained. The roof of the central aisle, which was of exquisite workmanship, was entirely destroyed from the lantern tower to the east window; this roof occupied a space of 131 feet in length by 45 in breadth, and was 99 in height from the floor of the choir. In the interior, from the organ screen to the altar screen, all the beautiful tabernacle work, the stalls, galleries, bishop's throne, pulpit, etc., were entirely consumed. The altar screen was so much injured that it was obliged to be taken down. Of the monuments, several were damaged either from the effect of the fire or the falling of the timbers of the roof.

It is impossible to conclude this part of the subject without alluding to the remarkable circumstance that one of the lessons appointed to be read on the Sunday after this calamity at the evening service was the 64th chapter of Isaiah, being the Church's prayer to God. It was singularly applicable to the fire which destroyed the Cathedral; one verse especially — "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste." Few in the congregations assembled in the numerous churches of York on the Sunday evening heard it unmoved. Another thing, thought to be a coincidence, but which is certainly a very remote one, was that the Cathedral was fired by Martin on Candlemas Day, using one of the wax candles employed in the choir during evensong.

Various reports as to the origin of the fire circulated in York. Some supposed it originated from the gas, others attributed it to the candles left alight in the organ loft or in the vestry of the clergy. But others suspected it was the work of an incendiary, and they were confirmed in this belief by finding the knotted rope which had been left by Martin, and was discovered early in the morning.

On Monday evening a committee of inquiry was formed, consisting of clergy and gentlemen. They met at the Residence; and the vergers, workmen, and other individuals connected with the Minster, underwent a rigorous examination. The investigation was continued on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the strictest secrecy was observed in the proceedings; in the course of which it was ascertained that the rope was cut from the one which is attached to the

prayer bell, and that not with a knife, but by being chafed with a sharp stone. It was also ascertained that the window was opened from the interior; and a bunch of matches, burnt at both ends, was found among the rubbish, and afterwards a pair of shoemaker's pincers. The matches were found under the rubbish of the burnt organ; the pincers on the stool of the window out of which the knotted rope was suspended. The fact was also proved that several anonymous letters had been sent to the vergers; and also that the parcel, with the letter and pamphlet before alluded to, had been found in the Minster by a person from Hull. A gentleman was despatched to Hull to obtain possession of these documents; but in the meantime they had fallen into the hands of Mr. Isaac Wilson, of that place, who with great promptitude came to York and laid them before the committee.

Mr. Pardoe, the active police officer of York, was employed to ascertain to whom the shoemaker's pincers belonged, and they were owned by Mr. Lawn, at whose house Martin had lodged. Other circumstances formed a chain of evidence so complete and conclusive as to leave no doubt that Jonathan Martin was the incendiary, and handbills were issued on Thursday offering a reward for his apprehension. Pardoe had been despatched to Leeds in pursuit the previous day, with a warrant from Archdeacon Markham, which on his arrival was instantly backed by the Mayor of the borough. For the rest of the day and during the night Pardoe and the whole force of the police were employed in endeavouring to find a clue to the retreat of the incendiary. They were not successful; but on Thursday morning his wife was taken into custody while vending the "History of his Life." When discovered by the officers, she expressed her surprise at the charge against her husband; and after admitting that he left that town on Saturday morning, said that she understood, on his departure, he was going into the neighbourhood of Tadcaster; that she had not heard of him since; and that she had experienced great uneasiness at his long absence. She added that his place of concealment, or anything further connected with the affair, was totally unknown to her. She was kept in custody at Leeds, in her own house, in the charge of two constables, who obtained possession of all Martin's books and papers.

On Thursday morning information was received which caused an express to be sent off to the neighbourhood of Pontefract, where an active and diligent search was commenced. A clue was obtained, which led to the belief that the incendiary had passed through Pontefract on the road to Wakefield. The Mayor of Pontefract ordered the police of that town to afford every assistance to the gentlemen in pursuit, and he was traced to Polston tollgate. From the information there obtained it was supposed he had taken the direction to Heath; and the pursuit was immediately followed up in that direction, and continued through most of Friday. It was reported in the evening about seven o'clock that Martin had been captured about five miles from Bedale, and would be brought into York by the Carlisle Express coach. The coach was half an hour beyond its time, and the streets were filled with crowds of anxious spectators, who waited in the expectation that the incendiary would arrive by it. Many persons went out of Micklegate Bar, and ran alongside of the coach till it stopped in Coney

Street. It was then found that the report was an erroneous one, for Martin was not there; nor was it true that he had been captured.

On Saturday morning it was ascertained that the police had been on a wrong scent, as Martin had proceeded to the north instead of to the west; and about half past nine o'clock that morning an express was received stating that he had been arrested the previous evening near Hexham. The following are the particulars of his flight and capture:

Martin left the Minster, as has been stated, a little after three o'clock in the morning. He proceeded to Easingwold and got a pint of ale; from thence to Thirsk, at which place he arrived at eleven o'clock; from Thirsk he went to Northallerton, where he arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon in a state of apparent fatigue. He remained till evening with a brother in law who resided there, and expressed great anxiety to get on to Hexham to see a friend. At nine that evening he left Northallerton in a coal cart, in which he travelled all night till he arrived at Joft Hill pit, near West Auckland, on the Watling Street road. The next morning he proceeded to Alensford, on the Derwent, where he slept on the Tuesday evening. He left Alensford about eight o'clock on the Wednesday morning, and stopped at the Riding Mill, where he had a pint of ale; from thence he proceeded to Corbridge, where he arrived about twelve o'clock, and had half a pint of ale; and then went to Cadlaw Hill to his friend Mr. Kell, where he arrived about two the same afternoon, being the same place where he sought refuge when he escaped from the asylum at Gateshead. Martin remained there till eleven o'clock on Friday morning, and during his stay he expressed a great anxiety to see newspapers.

The handbills giving a description of Martin's person, and offering a reward for his apprehension, were circulated in all parts of the North; and one of them fell into the hands of Mr. Stainthorpe, a sheriff's officer, of Newcastle, who knew him. Mr. S., on Friday, the 6th, having to go to Corbridge, heard that Martin had returned home, but did not at that time know there was any charge against him. Returning to Hexham, where he kept a public house, Mr. S. found the handbill lying on the table; and he immediately saddled his pony and set off to Mr. Kell's, where he felt satisfied he would find him. The house, called Cadlaw Hill, is situated between Stagshaw Bank and Hexham, on the north side of the Tyne. It is a house situated by itself, and had Martin not been well known in the neighbourhood, it might have afforded concealment for some time. On alighting he inquired of a young woman who was standing at the door if Jonathan Martin had got home. The family, it would seem, were not aware of the crime he had committed, as the bailiff was readily answered in the affirmative. On receiving this information he bolted in, and found Mr. Kell and Martin sitting together, the latter engaged in reading a hymn book. They both rose on his entrance, and he, accosting Martin, asked "Is not your name Jonathan Martin?"

He immediately replied "Yes, it is."

On which Mr. Stainthorpe said "You are my prisoner."

Martin displayed very little emotion, nor did he even ask why he was made a prisoner. Mr. Kell was greatly surprised, and asked Mr. Stainthorpe what Martin was charged with. He replied he was not at liberty to tell him; but that he should require his assistance to convey the prisoner to Hexham, on reaching which place he would give him every information necessary. Mr. Kell readily agreed, and the prisoner as readily seemed disposed to take the road. The first question he asked Mr. Stainthorpe was "Do you belong to York?" Mr. Stainthorpe replied in the negative, and cautioned him not to say anything that might criminate himself. On their coming in sight of Hexham, from which Cadlaw Hill is distant nearly four miles, Martin, pointing to Highside House, two miles from Hexham, said "Yonder is the house in which I was born;" and seeing the church of Hexham, he exclaimed "That is a fine old church. Did the Catholics build that too?" On the way Martin asked if any York papers came to Hexham. And also he said to Mr. Stainthorpe "Am I advertised in the Newcastle papers?" On being told he was, and also that he was charged with burning York Cathedral, he readily said *he had done it*; and he added "As soon as I knew I was advertised, I intended to tell everything." On reaching the House of Correction, Martin's bundle was opened, when it was found to contain part of the valuable crimson fringe, etc., which he said he had cut away from the pulpit, or some part of the Minster, a small Bible which he had brought away at the same time, and a piece or two of the painted glass of the Minster. An old razor was found in his pocket, with which he said he cut the crimson fringe, etc., and with which also he struck the fatal light by which he was able to fire the Minster. There were found also seven copies of his Life, but only one penny of money. He appeared up to the moment of his apprehension to have been profoundly ignorant of the extent of the injury he had occasioned; but on a gentleman telling him he had totally destroyed the Cathedral, his countenance brightened, and the news seemed to exhilarate him. He exclaimed, seemingly pleased "Have I?" After he was lodged in the House of Correction an express was sent off to York with the intelligence.

It was whilst he was in the House of Correction at Hexham that Mr. Wilson (of whom mention has been made) visited him, in company with Mr. Stainthorpe. Mr. Wilson asked him whether his desire to see the newspapers at Cadlaw Hill arose from an anxiety for self preservation. He replied "None whatever;" but as he was ignorant what effects had been produced by the fires he had kindled, he was anxious to know; on which Mr. Stainthorpe said the damage was estimated at £100,000. He coolly said "If it were not for the glory of God, if that could be promoted, £200,000 would not have been too much, and that in his opinion it would have been well if all the Minster had gone together, as the worship carried on in it was idolatrous and superstitious." He declared that he was quite happy and fully resigned to his situation, and "would give himself up into the hands of the Lord."

Such had been the demonstration of popular feeling shown by the persons collected at different times to wait the coaches coming in when Martin was expected, that the magistrates very prudently arranged that he should arrive in York early on Monday morning, and that the examination should take place

immediately on his arrival. It was as near as possible half past three o'clock when Mr. Newstead and Pardoe arrived with their prisoner in a post chaise at the Session House in the Minster yard. He was taken into the room occupied by Harrison, the keeper of Peter Prison, where he seated himself on a chair with his hands clasped, his feet elevated on the fender, and his eyes closed. Mr. Pardoe asked him if his feet were cold; to which he replied "Yes"; and this was the only word he spoke till the examination commenced. He was dressed in a blue coat and trousers, with a drab greatcoat. He had by no means the appearance of a "stout man," as described in the bill; but the person where he lodged said he had fallen away very much in that short period.

It was half past four o'clock when everything was arranged for examination. The magistrates took their seats on the bench, and Martin was placed at the bar; the warrant under which he was apprehended was read over to him, and the depositions of witnesses were also read.

It is unnecessary here to give the evidence either on this occasion or at the subsequent trial. On being asked what he had to say for himself, he made the following confession in a firm tone of voice: —

"The reason that I set fire to the Cathedral was on account of two particular dreams. In the first dream I dreamed that a man stood by me with a bow and a sheath of arrows. He shot an arrow, and the arrow stuck in the Minster door. I then wished to shoot, and the man presented me the bow, and I took an arrow from the sheath and shot, and it struck on a stone and I lost it. In the second dream I dreamed that a cloud came down on the Cathedral, and came over to the house where I slept, and it made the whole house tremble. Then I woke; and I thought it was the hand of God pointing out that I was to set fire to the Cathedral. And those things which were found on me I took lest any one should be blamed wrongfully. I took them to bear witness against myself; I cut the hangings from the throne, or cathedra, or whatever you call it, and tore down the curtains."

Here he stopped rather abruptly, and being asked whether he had anything more to say, he replied "No."

During the whole of the proceedings Martin appeared perfectly calm, and stood with his eyes closed nearly the whole of the time, his head inclining over the right shoulder.

His committal was then made out, and signed by Mr. Dickens, the chairman, and the Rev. D. R. Currer, and he was removed to the City Gaol, and given into the custody of Mr. Kilby, to remain till the Assizes.

After Martin was committed to the charge of the gaoler on the morning of the 9th of February, he breakfasted and went to bed. His sleep was sound and tranquil, and he awoke much refreshed and in good spirits.

Strangers were not admitted to see him. Next day he appeared greatly depressed, and was very anxious to avoid public observation. He attended prayers in the chapel during the morning. The next day, however, he refused to attend the chapel. Subsequently he was visited by the Rev. G. Coopland, the chaplain, in his dayroom, who found that so deeply rooted was his aversion to the Liturgy of the Church of England as to leave him no reason to doubt that a forced attendance during the chapel service would be much more likely to prove injurious than beneficial to his own mind. Besides, he thought it not at all improbable that were he compelled to attend, he might consider it his duty to interrupt the service, and publicly to protest against a mode of worship which he deemed unscriptural. Under these circumstances his attendance at chapel was not enforced. He frequently prayed and sang hymns, and when the order was relaxed by which strangers were prohibited from seeing him, he entered very freely into conversation with them. He still pretended to be favoured with extraordinary visions. On one occasion he said he dreamed that two angels appeared to him in prison, one of whom told him to apply his lips to the tip of his wings, which he did, when he was immediately conveyed beyond the walls of his prison.

His brother arrived in York about ten days before the Assizes commenced, to make preparations for his defence. The defence intended to be set up was insanity; and a number of witnesses were collected with a view to support this plea. Dr. Wake, at the request of his brother, visited him on Friday, the 20th. Up to this period his conduct had been extremely mild, and his feelings composed; but a little change had been observed for a day or two previous, and that night, about twelve o'clock, he attempted to make his escape. He slept in what was called the Hospital Room — a room in which there were two beds, a person who was appointed as his guard sleeping in one of them, and Martin in the other. The guard fell asleep about half past eleven o'clock, and was soon after awoke by a knocking, apparently outside the room. Not apprehending anything, he went to sleep again; and Martin, having torn his bed rug into lengths, tied them together, and formed a rope about nine yards long. He fastened this round his ankles, and having on only his shirt and his drawers, he ascended the chimney. An iron grate which was fixed in near the top prevented him, however, from getting to the outside of the prison, and he was obliged to descend again. He then placed his sooty shirt under the bed, swept the soot into the same place, and put on his flannel dress, and retired to bed. The attendant, on awaking about two o'clock, found him up, but he soon lay down again; and both rose at half past six o'clock. Almost as soon as the door was opened Martin bolted out, and went into the yard. His attendant, alarmed, followed him, and found him washing himself. The state of the room and of his person, together with two bricks being laid in the fireplace, proved the fact that an escape had been attempted. Indeed, when charged with it, he did not deny it. He said, if he had been a smaller person he should have effected his escape; but that it was the "will of God" he should make the attempt, and be frustrated.

Of course, after this, a closer watch was kept upon the actions of the prisoner.

On Monday, March 23rd, he was brought before Mr. Justice Bayley at the Guildhall, and true bills were found against him for arson and sacrilege. He is described during the examination at the Guildhall as having been perfectly placid, and as having smiled occasionally.

When the Court adjourned for rest and refreshment to the Mansion House during the proceedings, he engaged in conversation with the parties near him, and laughed at their observations. A lady said to him — “In destroying that beautiful pile of buildings you inflicted no real punishment on its clergy.”

Martin laughed, and answered — “Eh, but it may mak’ them stand and consider their ways. All those who are really converted will think I’ve done reight enuff.”

The trumpets soon after sounded, heralding the approach of the judge. The prisoner said — “Hark, how the watchman cries. Oh! attend to the sound.” The crowd was so dense in the hall that it was with difficulty a passage could be made for his lordship. Martin laughed, and observed to Mr. Kilby “They’ll have t’ould man down.” A gentleman asked him if he was not afraid. He said “No, not at all.”

The populace entirely filled the hall and part of the yard; and Jonathan turned his face towards them, frequently laughing, and talking to those with whom he came immediately in contact. He said he “believed he was the most righteous man in court”; adding “I have made as much noise as Buonaparte ever did. I think this is a very throng day.” He then turned round to the counsel and reporters, and said “I keep them very busy; I have given them all a job. I’ll put their hands in by-and-bye.” When the judge returned he said “Here’s t’ould man coming again.” He seemed quite pleased at being the object of such universal interest, and repeatedly laughed at the attempts of the people to get a sight of him.

The trial of Jonathan Martin took place in the Crown Court of York Castle before Mr. Baron Hullock, on Monday, March 30. The Court was crowded. When placed at the bar, and the first charge, that of having feloniously set fire to the Cathedral Church of St. Peter’s, York, had been read to Martin by the clerk of arraigns, and he had been asked the usual question whether he were “guilty or not guilty”, he placed himself in a theatrical attitude, and said “It was not me, my lord, but my God did it. It is quite common to Him to punish to the third and fourth generation, and to show mercy to all that fear Him and keep His commandments.”

A plea of “Not guilty” was entered.

The second indictment was then read over to him, charging him with feloniously stealing a quantity of crimson velvet and gold fringe and two gold tassels, the property of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of York. He was asked whether he was guilty or not guilty. Throwing out his left hand, he replied —

“My God gave me that for my hire. The Lord gave the silk to mak’ a robe, like David the King, and the velvet to mak’ a cap, and the tassels I took from the pulpit to hang down over my right and left ear.”

THE CLERK OF INDICTMENTS — “Are you guilty or not guilty?”

MARTIN — “I had it given me for my hire.”

This was taken as a plea of “Not guilty;” and Mr. Baron Hullock addressing him, said “You will be tried tomorrow morning at nine o’clock.”

He bowed, and said, “Very well, my lord;” and was removed from the bar.

The crier of the Court then announced, at the desire of the judge, that the trial of Jonathan Martin would not take place till Tuesday morning at nine o’clock.

On Tuesday, March 31st, the Court was as crowded as on the preceding day, and great confusion was the result; this seemed to cause Martin much amusement, and he laughed repeatedly at the struggles of the crowd at the door, and leaped on a seat to observe it.

After the hearing of the evidence, the substance of which has been incorporated in the narrative, Jonathan Martin was called upon for his defence. Martin, who had become very listless during the examination, seemed at this moment full of animation, and in a very vehement manner uttered in broad Northern dialect the following words in his defence: —

“The first impression that I had was by two particular dreams, sir; and after I had written five letters to warn the clergy. I think the last I wrote was a very severe one. I believe I wrote in it all the curses of the Scripture to warn them, and likewise signed my name to every letter, and the place I lodged at, No. 60, Aldgate. I never received any letters, which I was anxious to have from these clergymen, to speak to them by mouth, but there was found none among them that dared to answer me. I prayed to the Lord what I was to do. The next night I dreamt that a wonderful thick cloud came from heaven and rested upon the Minster.” [Here the prisoner gave a long account of his dream, mentioned above, and about the cloud resting over the house.] He continued: — “The house was so shook that it awoke me from sleep. I was astonished, and began to ask the Lord what it meant. I felt a voice inwardly speak that the Lord had chosen me to destroy the Cathedral for the wrong that was doing by the clergy in going to plays, and balls, and card tables, and dinners. Different things impressed my mind that the Lord had chosen me, because the house shook and trembled. I thought it resembled the pillar of smoke, and fulfilled the prophecy of Joel, that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and the old men should see visions, and the young men dream dreams, and that there should be signs in the heavens, blood and fire, and vapour and smoke. I thought that I should be fulfilling the word of God, and it was so impressed on my mind I had no rest

night or day; for I found the Lord had determined to have me to show this people a warning to flee from the wrath to come. I was rather at a loss, and astonished about my wife lest she should attack me, for I could not do it without being all night from her. After I had considered a while and got everything in order, I began to think it was impossible for me to do it, as if I was away without my wife knowing where, she might conceive I was about the Cathedral, and come and put me out. Therefore I thought of this, to take my wife's ring off her finger, and tie her over to this concern, which I did, as I have mentioned before, and the circumstance of my wife's keeping the vow. After I told her the circumstance she was much grieved, and strove to get me away to Leeds, to get me from the purpose I had informed her of. We went to Leeds and stayed a few days there, but I could get no rest to my mind till I had accomplished the deed. I was obliged to take leave of her on the Saturday morning. I had a severe contest between flesh and blood. It was a sair contest, especially when she asked what was to become of her, and of my child Richard I had at school at Lincoln. I thought she would have nailed me to the spot; but after a moment a passage of Scripture struck my ears, and it cried out like a whisper 'What thou doest, do quickly.' I heard another — 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' And I heard a third whisper — 'Even thine own life.' I tore myself from her arms. I said — 'Lord, not my will, but thine be done.' I then felt the love of God in my heart. I thought I would go to Tadcaster, and took twenty books with me. When I got them the Spirit told me to go forward. I had no money to keep me over the Sunday. I had only fourpence halfpenny."

The prisoner then gave a minute detail of his proceedings, and the different expedients resorted to in order to set fire to the building, which he described as having been a work of great labour and difficulty. He said, at the evening service he was "very much vexed at hearing them sing the prayers and amens; he thought the prayer of the heart came from the heart, and that they had no call for prayer books." He observed — "The organ then made such a buzzing noise, I thought 'Thou shalt buzz no more — I'll have thee down to-night.' Well" he continued "they were all going out, and I lay me down aside of the bishop, round by the pillar." [The prisoner concealed himself behind a tomb.] "I lay here till all went out. I thought I heard the people coming down from ringing the bells; they all went out, and then it was so dark that I could not see my hand. Well, I left the bishop, and came out and fell upon my knees, and asked the Lord what I was to do first, and he said — 'Get thy way up into the belfry and cut a rope;' and I had never been there, and I went round and round; I had a sort of a guess of the place from hearing the men, as I thought, come down. Then the Spirit said, 'Strike a light.' And I then struck a light with a flint and razor that I had got, and some tinder that I had brought from my landlord's. I saw there were plenty of ropes: then I cut one, and then another; but I had no idea they were so long, and I kept draw, draw, and the rope came up till I daresay I had near 100 feet. I have been a sailor, and thought to myself, this will make a man rope, a sort of scaling rope, and I tied knots in it. Aye, this is it, I know it well enough (pointing to the rope which lay upon the table). So I went down to the body of the Cathedral, and bethought me how I should go inside. I thought if I did so, by throwing the rope over the organ, I might set it *ganging*, and that would spoil the job. So I made an end of the rope fast, and went hand-over-hand over the

gates, and got down on the other side, and fell on my knees, and prayed to the Lord, and He told me that do what I would they would take me. Then I asked the Lord what I was to do with the velvet, and He told me" (the prisoner here repeated what he had before stated in his plea about the robe, cap, and tassels.) "The fringe, I thought, would do for my hairy jacket that I have at Lincoln. I have a very good sealskin one there; I wish I had it with me, that I might show it you. Then I got all ready. Glory to God! I never felt so happy; but I had a hard night's work of it, particularly with a hungry belly. Well, I got a bit of wax candle, and I set fire to one heap, and with the matches I set fire to the other. I then tied up the things that the Lord had given me for my hire in this very handkerchief that I have in my hand." He then observed that he had "hard work" while engaged in making his preparations; "but" said he "I had a glorious time of it; and many a time I called 'Glory be to God' in a way which I wonder they did not hear on the outside." He left the pincers, he said, because the old man with whom he lodged could not afford to lose them, and he knew he would get them again. He thought it a work of merit to burn prayer books and music books, but not to burn the Word of God, and he appeared to regret that he could not save the large Bible by getting it over the gates and putting it outside. He detailed the particulars of his journey to the North; and described himself as having, from his arrival at York till he reached Northallerton, had very little food, but "t' Lord refreshed my soul on t' road wi' t' snow upon t' ground." He then went on with his story till he reached Mr. Kell's house, and "t' Hexham man came, tapped me on t' shoulder, and took me to t' lockup." He concluded, after speaking twenty minutes — "I am almost tired of talking, but I will afterwards tell ye a bit more."

A minute or two after, he said to the reporters — "An' you have been writing down what I said — I think I talked o'er fast for thee!" He then espied one of his publications, and said — "I see the'se gotten one of my bukes. I wrote mysen at different times, and have sold 10,000 copies."

The defence set up for the prisoner by Mr. Brougham, acting for Jonathan Martin's brother, was that Jonathan had perpetrated the deed when in an unsound state of mind. The jury returned the verdict — "We are of opinion that he set fire to the Cathedral, being at the time insane, or of unsound mind."

Baron Hulloch: — "Then your verdict must be *not guilty* on the ground of insanity; and the prisoner must remain in close custody during his Majesty's pleasure."

Martin was highly irritated at the line of defence adopted by Mr. Brougham; but that some suspicion of his lunacy was entertained by himself at an early period appears from his own words in his autobiography, written before he set fire to York Minster: — "The devil suggested to me that the people would think me mad. My wife endeavoured to comfort me, as she feared for my head."

After the sentence he was handcuffed and conveyed into the Castle. He made no observation, but was evidently disappointed and dejected at the result. For some days after this Martin seemed rather despondent, but he soon resumed

his activity, pacing up and down at the rate of five miles an hour, and at an average of twenty miles per day. He asked some one he knew, who visited him, after his son, who was at school at Lincoln, and said — “I’m thinking that God ha’ used me varry badly.”

He was removed from York Castle to St. Luke’s Hospital in London, where his conduct is described as having been generally rational. He seldom spoke on the subject of his crime. Towards his brother he entertained the bitterest enmity for having had him proved insane. But he consoled himself in his confinement with the thought “The Lord will take His own time to deliver me, and that will not be long, for He has a great work which cannot be done without me.”

When he heard of the death of Baron Hulloch, before whom he was tried, and which took place the same year, he seemed much agitated, walked about a while, as if talking to himself, but made no observation. It transpired afterwards that he looked on this as a signal instance of the Lord punishing one of his enemies.