

## SNOWDEN DUNHILL, THE CONVICT

The following life of a thief and housebreaker, written by himself, is curious and sad. The talent it exhibits, and the real feeling which peeps out here and there, show that the man, had he been better brought up, and subjected in early youth to religious influences, might have become something very superior to the ordinary agricultural labourer. The man cannot have been deficient in his secular education. His style is singularly good for one in his class, but of moral education he had none. The only religion he knew of was that of his wife, Sally Dunhill, a fanatic, who combined hysterical piety with gross dishonesty: —

“I was born at a small village on the Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The earliest circumstance of which I have any remembrance is that of following bareheaded and on foot, a waggon containing furniture belonging to a farmer who was removing to the village of Spaldington, near Howden. Of my parents I have but an indistinct remembrance, for I never returned to them, but continued to reside in the village of my adoption, and principally in the house of the family I had accompanied.

“Spaldington is a secluded and purely agricultural village. My earliest recollections are connected with the old hall at that place, a fine building, erected in the time of Queen Elizabeth. This house, with its peaked roof ornamented with large round stones, its moats, its rookery, and the reputation of being haunted by a fairy, is yet strongly impressed upon my memory. But the old seat of the De la Hayes, the Vescis, and the Vavasours totters to its fall.

“I well remember the tradition which prevailed in the village, that one of the De Vescis was a competitor for the crown of Scotland, he having married a daughter of the King of that country. The burthen of an old song, which is supposed to relate to some eventful battle in which De Vesci bore a conspicuous part, still clings to my memory, and now, with a world between me and the spot, I often catch myself humming the chorus —

“And the drums they did beat, and the trumpets did sound,  
And the cannons did roar fit to tear up the ground;  
For its oh! brave, gallant, and brave,  
For the honour of England’s crown.”

Snowden Dunhill’s youth was spent much as that of other rural bumpkins; he wrestled, played football, and was passionately fond of cock fighting.

One day, when only six years old, he saved the life of a little companion with whom he was playing by the side of the moat round the Old Hall at Spaldington. The child fell into the water, sank, and rose for the last time, when little Snowden, with great pluck, jumped in after his playmate, and caught him by

the dress. The two children struggled in the water, and the drowning boy nearly dragged little Snowden under. But Snowden maintained his hold, and succeeded in dragging his comrade to the bank.

At fourteen or fifteen Snowden Dunhill, being a strong lad, was taken into a small farmhouse to work for his food and clothes.

His master died shortly after, but his widow carried on the farm. She was very poor, the farm was small, and the widow took her meals with the farm servants in the kitchen.

Dunhill was given no pocket money, and, as he kept fighting cocks and liked occasionally to go to the public house to have a game of balls, he was driven to obtain money by theft.

“During this time I practised a variety of petty thefts without being suspected. I took apples, eggs, or anything I could lay my hands on, and the corn which ought to have been given to the horses found its way to my game cocks, of which I had several. These acts, which are generally practised by farmers’ servants, were confirmed into a habit before I had begun to think them wrong. The education of this class is so utterly neglected, and their morals so little attended to, that I have long been satisfied that the honesty of the rural districts is very much inferior to that of the towns.

“My next step in life — the most important one to all — was marriage, and mine assuredly deepened the darkest shades of my character. It was not a connection of the heart, but one almost of fear, for the woman to whom I paid my addresses was the being who ruled me from the first moment of our acquaintance. Had it been my fortune to have met with an honest and industrious woman, my destiny might have been different. But if, as the proverb says, ‘Marriages are made in heaven,’ it does not become me to complain.

“We lived a short time in the village of Spaldington, but one farmer missed his corn, the wife of another her poultry, a third her apples, and a fourth her bees; when the bees were missed I fancy they thought nothing could escape us. They were easily moved and carried into our cottage, but the buzzing, the stinging, and the bother of the business, determined me never again to attempt a similar undertaking. The proverb of running your head into a swarm of bees has ever since appeared to me the most forcible in the English language.

“We were then put into a house in the lanes of Spaldington, in the road between Howden and Market Weighton, apart from any other residence, and in the very best situation that could have been chosen if the farmers had wished us to continue our system of plunder. I had never been accustomed to work, and I had now very little wish to learn. The new connexions which I speedily formed put me in the way of obtaining a better though more precarious subsistence.

“I continued to live in the cottage above alluded to, and my family increasing rapidly, rendered it necessary to extend my operations. The farmers in the neighbourhood were at first the greatest sufferers, and there was scarcely a barn or granary within several miles which I had not the means of entering when I chose. Either from discarded servants, or from labourers who were daily about the farmhouses, I got all the information I wanted.

“At this time I was master of two good horses, and I had a numerous connexion among servants and labourers. But what I found most useful was a secret understanding with two or three millers, by whose means I got rid of all the corn which I stole. Millers are generally reputed to be great rogues, but in their dealings with me I found them quite the contrary. The most dishonest persons with whom I had dealings were the attorneys, and they stripped me of the fruits of my toil with most surprising expedition and facility. This, however, will be seen in the sequel.

“About this time I was concerned in a robbery at Bubwith, by which I obtained a considerable sum of money. After our arrangements were made, a comrade entered the house through a back window, by taking an iron bar out of the frame, the wood being quite rotten from age and damp. In scrambling in he kicked from the shelf a large earthenware vessel, and immediately after he himself tumbled head foremost into the pantry, a depth of six or seven feet. The uproar occasioned by his fall caused us to take to our heels and make to our horses, which were at no great distance, in a large field behind the house. We laid down and listened for a considerable time, and hearing nothing, we approached the house again by degrees, and eventually got up to the very window. A low whistle from me was instantly answered, which at once told us all went well. We found the back door open for us, and our comrade, no way alarmed, busy rummaging some drawers, and putting into a sack everything he took a fancy to.

“As I had formerly lived in the service of a near relation of the old lady to whom the house belonged (I had forgotten to say it was a widow lady’s house we took the liberty with), I found no difficulty in laying my hands upon the tinderbox, candles, and everything else. It was an exceedingly stormy night, or I think we must have been heard, for we carried a chest of drawers out of the house and actually beat them to pieces, not being able to open them. I knew that she had a considerable sum of money, and I hoped we had found it, but it turned out to be a box of farthings; and I was afterwards exceedingly provoked on learning that we had missed three hundred guineas in gold which the old lady had in her lodging room. I also learned that she had a presentiment that she would be robbed, and made an observation to that effect the day before — one of those curious anticipating feelings for which I know not how to account, but which have in several instances happened to myself when coming events, as it were, cast their shadows before.

“But to return to our adventure. After helping ourselves to such things as we thought of most value, and such as could be most easily conveyed away on our horses, and drinking the good old lady’s health in some excellent homemade

wine, we mounted our horses, with four sacks filled with many things of value. We took a route so as to avoid the toll bars and public roads, and reached my house just as the sun was beginning to chase away the darkness which had proved so propitious to us. Having instantly buried all the things, my companions departed, and all was soon ready for the reception of any of those enemies of my profession, the constables, should they pay us a visit. However, none came, and though I was generally supposed to be the person who did the deed, no steps were taken to make it out against me. This is one of the very few exploits of the kind I was ever engaged in, and as to highway robberies, I never dreamed of committing one.

“I had now accumulated a considerable sum of money, which I lent out on note to several farmers in the neighbourhood, most of whom, from fear or other considerations, were glad to be on good terms with me. Such occurrences as the following frequently happened: — ‘Well, Snowden, how do you do?’ would Farmer — say, meeting me in the street towards dusk on a market day. ‘Are you going home to-night?’ ‘Aye, my lad,’ was my general reply. ‘I wanted to see you,’ retorted the farmer; ‘I have just received fifty pounds for some oats; I wish you would take care of it for me, and I will ask you for it again some day when I meet you.’ I took charge of the money, and was ever most punctual in returning it. I could not help laughing, however, at the odd mixture of feelings that must have dictated such a choice of a banker. I dare say some of these very farmers have since met with bankers not quite so punctual in their payments as I was in mine.

“I was once busily employed in coursing a hare when I was pounced upon by a Mr. —. He came suddenly upon me, with so many violent denunciations that I was for a time really in a fright. However, I eventually recovered my recollection, and had the good sense to leave him without giving way to any abusive language in reply. I secretly, however, resolved to have my revenge, and that in a way at once in accordance with my profession and my own interest. I ordered two or three of the persons I could place the most reliance in to be ready to accompany me with their horses to Foggathorpe, the village in which I think the gentleman resided. I had long had a key of his granary, in which I knew he had recently stored a quantity of wheat of the finest quality, and for which the soil of that village is much famed.

“We had already been up to the granary once with our horses, having taken them loaded away, and secreted several sacks of wheat in a wood a little from the turnpike road, and about three miles from the house. We had filled our sacks a second time, and got them upon the horses, having previously placed everything in the granary as we found it, or as nearly so as we could. I had just thrown my legs over my horse, then standing near the steps of the granary, I being the last of the party, when I heard the gentleman’s voice, which I at once knew, for neither his early habit of rising nor the tone of his voice were unknown to me. It was quite dark, and I proceeded with great care on the way towards the high road till I reached a gate about seventy or eighty yards from his house. By some mismanagement on my part, I had no sooner passed through the gate than I fell back into its place with considerable noise. I again heard his voice,

but I made the best of my way with my load, and I felt no little relief when I found myself in the Market Weighton turnpike road. Though I had no very great opinion of the gentleman's courage, I felt quite sure he would have used every endeavour to make out the charge against me had his suspicions of what had taken place been once roused. As to his following me alone at that moment I had not the most distant fear, for I knew well the care he always took of himself. However, the whole affair passed over. I never heard that he missed what we took away, and the reason probably was, that he at that very time had a large stock of wheat on hand for the purpose of speculation, as I afterwards learned. I remember this wheat was of such singularly good quality that I sold it for the great sum of one guinea and ninepence the bushel, a price I scarcely ever remember to have equalled.

“The next thing that occurs to me worthy of remark, and which I had good cause to remember, nearly terminated fatally for myself. I expected a good booty from the information I had previously received. This was an attack upon the property of two bachelors who resided in the same house, in a village about a mile and a half from Howden. The house was very near the river Ouse, and we had prepared a boat to carry the gains of the night down the river as far as Swinefleet, this being considered, for many reasons, the readiest mode of moving it from the premises, and I had some friends in that place in whom I placed the greatest confidence. Between one and two o'clock we arrived at the house, and were preparing all things in readiness for the business in hand. I was crossing from the bank of the river over a garden, and so on to the back of the premises. In my way I came to a piece of dead fence, over which I was passing, and which gave a crackling sound under my tread. At that moment I heard a dog bark, and instantly after a shot was fired from the upper part of the eastern end of the house. I had my face at the time rather turned away from the place whence the shot proceeded, and I received the whole of the contents in my back and shoulders. I instantly fell; and I well remember that I thought all was over with me, as I lay for some time with my head in the ditch and my feet upon the dead thorns over which I had just passed, and to which I attributed my mishap; for the night was so dark I could not be seen, and the shot must have been directed by the noise I made in getting over the fence. As I lay there I could distinctly hear a whispering from a small door in the end of the house, and I greatly feared lest the inmates should sally forth and take me in my defenceless state. With my head laid upon the ground, the sensation produced upon me by the striking of two o'clock by the church of Howden, I well remember. All was now calm, quiet, and dark; and I actually felt the earth vibrate under my ear as the hollow bell threw over the land its sullen sound. I have understood, since I came here, that the savages in America always resort to this mode of listening for the approach of a friend or an enemy. But to return to myself again.

“I at length contrived with great difficulty to get upon my feet; and, with still greater exertion and much loss of blood, I reached the boat, where I found my men in great consternation and alarm. One of them pushed the boat adrift, and the tide soon carried it away with the waters. They then supported me at a slow pace to Howden, where I arrived almost in a state of insensibility, from the

combined effects of pain and loss of blood. By my desire they took me to the house of a medical man of my acquaintance, and knocked at his door. He soon came down, and without asking a single question, stripped me; and during the night he extracted no fewer than thirty eight large shot corns from my back and shoulders.

“I cannot even now recall the agony I suffered without a shudder; and my general health and strength never recovered from the shock I received. I remained secluded for a considerable time, but thanks to the attentive care of my wife, and my own sober habits, for I never was an habitual drunkard, I speedily was able to get out again. In all my night excursions after this adventure I employed the greatest circumspection.

“My inward disposition was accurately betokened by my countenance and outward appearance. I was tall and large limbed, but neither clumsily nor powerfully made, I speak now of forty years of age; for sufferings, mental and bodily, have entirely changed my face and figure. My hair was light, my eyes a bluish grey, my countenance round and somewhat florid. In my looks I always fancied that I resembled two men of no little celebrity — I mean Sir Walter Scott and William Cobbett, who certainly bear a considerable resemblance to each other. But this may be my vanity, for the best of us are not free from it.

“In my manners I was boisterous, and in tone familiar with all, and overbearing with most. However, my general appearance promised anything but cruelty and dishonesty; and, thank God, no one can charge me with the former, whatever may be said of the latter.

“I must, however, plead guilty to one or two acts of apparent cruelty, towards my horses, but which rather rose from the necessity of self preservation than from any other cause. It has often happened to me, for the purpose of reaching a given place by a certain hour of the night, to be compelled to strain my horse to the full extent of his speed. I knew so well the general opinion entertained towards me, that I felt I must find the greatest difficulty in clearing myself from anything like a reasonable suspicion of crime.

“I distinctly remember once having upon me a considerable sum of money, and I was riding at full speed upon a narrow strip of green sward by the road side, which was nearly covered by the extended branches of the trees. The moon was shining beautifully through them, and in contemplating her I felt a soothing calmness spread over my soul, which I cannot well account for or explain the cause of. My musings were suddenly cut short by a deep drawn sigh from my horse, then a slight shudder, and the next moment he was dead under me. I cried like a child. I raised his head, but all in vain, no trace of life remained.

“By the moon’s rays, which at that instant shot through an opening in a dark Scots fir immediately over his head, I saw the film of death rapidly spread over his eyes, and felt his limbs stiffen under my grasp. I had to travel several miles on foot, pretty well loaded, and through a very lonely and suspicious looking part of the country. However, I reached the house of one of my friends towards

morning, to his no small astonishment, he thinking me fifty miles distant in a different direction.

“My horse was soon recognised; and had any robbery been perpetrated within a reasonable distance of the place where he fell, of course it must have been done by me. The common question of the whole neighbourhood was ‘What had I been doing?’ However, this never transpired. I ever afterwards tied a piece of raw beef round the bit of my bridle when about to make hard use of my horse, and I always thought that it afforded him considerable help. I need not observe that this was done in imitation of poor Dick Turpin, whose history is infinitely better known than mine can ever pretend to be.

“On the night of the 25th of October, 1812, I felt a presentiment that something sinister was about to happen to me. Few men have passed through life, particularly those of an excitable temperament, who have not felt some boding of this kind. I was seated in my chair by the fire, taking my accustomed pipe — an indulgence I never omitted the last thing at night — when this sudden impression came over me. My wife observed that something was the matter, and questioned me on the subject. However, as I knew she would only laugh at me, I did not tell her the cause.

“In the middle of the forenoon, whilst I was listening to my daughter Rose, who was my favourite, she suddenly looked up and said, in a hurried tone, ‘Father, there are several men coming to the house.’ It instantly occurred to me that something had happened during the past night, and that my forebodings would not prove vain. However, as my whole family knew that I had not stirred out during the night, I had little fear; and this circumstance even led me to suppose that it might be some mistake.

“By this time the party had arrived at the door of the cottage, and one of them gave me to understand that he had a justice’s search warrant, and that I was their prisoner. I submitted at once to be taken into custody, and I was immediately secured. Some of the party then began to rummage every drawer and corner of the house, amidst the very voluble abuse of my wife. They, however, found nothing they came to search for, which, as I soon learned, was some wheat stolen during the last night from a neighbouring farmer.

“On this information I felt considerable relief, conscious of my innocence; but my wife became perfectly outrageous when the constable refused to take her word that I had never stirred over my threshold since six o’clock of the preceding evening. She, poor woman, swore she would take the law of them threatened writs, indictments, justices, and I know not what; and I verily believed she would have inflicted summary vengeance on the head of the constable with the poker, so furious had she become, from a consciousness that the accusation was without foundation.

“However, in spite of all her threats and rage, I was speedily conveyed before the justice who granted the warrant, and on the oath of a person, who swore that he was going along a road near my house and towards the farmhouse in

question, about two o'clock in the morning, that he saw a horse and two men returning from it, and that he was quite sure I was one of them, my commitment was made out for the House of Correction at Beverley.

“All this took so short a time that I scarcely attempted to defend myself; and indeed I scarcely even know now how I could effectually have done so. For I could only bring the members of my own family to prove that I had not been out of my cottage, and of course they would not have been believed against the positive evidence of the witness who swore to my person, though he was, according to his own statement, fifty yards distant from me — in addition to this, at two o'clock in the morning.”

The prosecutor of Snowden Dunhill was Mr. Barnard Clarkson, of Holme, at that time a partner in the Howden Bank.

The consciousness that her husband was ignorant of the robbery imputed to him caused Sally Dunhill to regard him as a martyr. Her ranting enthusiasm was excited, and she wrote a long letter to the prosecutor, denouncing him, in Biblical terms, as one who “compassed about” the righteous man “with words of hatred, and fought against him without a cause”; and announced to him that she had given herself up to prayer against him (Clarkson), and invoked the malediction of heaven upon his head — “Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generations following let their name be blotted out.” And she concluded this strange epistle with the words of the Psalmist: “Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine enemies be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.”

Snowden Dunhill continues in his Autobiography: —

“I now, for the first time, became an inmate of a prison, an event I had always held in the greatest horror. As it was well known that I had plenty of money, I had very soon the proffered and apparently disinterested assistance of an attorney. My situation was maturely considered, and it was soon determined that a writ of habeas corpus should be put in, for the purpose of taking my trial at the approaching Assizes at York, in preference to Beverley.

“I was in consequence taken up to London in custody, after the writ was obtained, and my trial was appointed to take place at York, principally on this ground, as urged by counsel, that my character was so notorious in the East Riding of Yorkshire that no unprejudiced jury could there be impannelled. The reader may be sure that all this was done at no slight expense; but perhaps he will not believe me when I assure him that by the time my counsel had received his fee for the approaching defence I had scarcely a shilling left in the world.

“The March Assizes of 1813 at length arrived, when I gave myself up to the gaoler of the Castle, and I was soon placed in the dock. My eyes were cast on

the ground, and I for a time felt stupefied. However, I at last raised them to the objects before me, and the first that caught them was the judge himself, then the counsel, and then the immense crowd of spectators who had assembled to hear my trial. I soon was calm enough to discover in the gallery the faces of many persons I knew, and I endeavoured to put on a forced courage by nodding familiarly at them, and by appearing to be utterly careless of what was going forward.

“The indictment was read over to me, and I was called upon to hold up my hand and plead guilty or not guilty; though I uttered the latter with a loud voice, it was with a full conviction that my doom was sealed. I felt — and I suppose all persons similarly circumstanced feel the same — that not only the assembled people, but that the whole world had combined to destroy me.

“The facts above narrated were stated shortly to the jury. The witness swore to my person, and accounted for his being there at that hour, naturally enough, by stating that he had been to visit his sweetheart. The farmer swore to having missed the corn on the night in question. Though my counsel tried to confound the first witness by fierce looks and bullying questions, and by dwelling upon the impossibility of his being able to swear to a person at the distance of fifty yards and at two in the morning, yet he stuck to his oath immovably. I was asked what I wished to say, and all that I could state was that I was innocent; that I was in bed at the time, and that all the family knew this to be the fact. My wife was anxious to speak for me, but my counsel insisted upon her holding her tongue, which she at last consented to do on his assuring her that she would do my case more harm than good. The jury without the slightest hesitation found me guilty, and the judge at once sentenced me to seven years’ transportation.

“I was immediately conveyed back to my cell, and a few days afterwards I was forwarded to the hulks. In this miserable banishment I passed six years, embittered by the most dreadful account of my family, every member of it, even in the remotest degree, having transgressed the laws of his country, and was then undergoing for his offences the punishment awarded to him. Could hope under any form have presented herself to me, I felt that I might yet be a reclaimed man, but I could not catch the most distant glimpse of her. My years passed on in the midst of misery the most distressing, till they at last came to an end. I obtained my discharge or pardon a short time before the expiration of my full term, for I had been guilty of no violence, or insolence, or excess, since my arrival.

“I left this abode of vice and misery without a friend on the face of the earth, and unconscious where to find even a momentary place of refuge. There are many unfortunate individuals who, had they a house or employment to fly to after having undergone their periods of punishment, would be glad to betake themselves to habits of honesty and industry. But, unluckily for them, they are turned out without a refuge to resort to, and necessity, and not inclination, drives them to the commission of fresh crimes.

“As to myself, I returned to Spaldington, but the change which my worldly prospects and circumstances had undergone was in the extreme overwhelming. Some of these misfortunes I well knew, but to others I was an entire stranger, and I cannot at this day lay blame to anyone but myself for them. My evil example pointed out the way of lawless depredation to my children, in characters so legible that they could not fail to read and study them.

“The farmers of the village had thought it right to clear my cottage of every one connected with me in name, relationship, or blood.

“I felt at a great loss where to fix, or to what object to turn myself for a livelihood and bare subsistence. As to my children and connections, they were scattered in every direction, and for the most part undergoing the punishment due to their crimes.

“My daughter, my favourite daughter, Rose, had been committed, and sentenced to confinement in York Castle. During her imprisonment she was delivered of a bastard child; what its fate may be, heaven alone can tell! She was visited in the Castle by a gentleman from Howden, for the purpose of proffering her some assistance in her necessitous situation. This I have understood she indignantly refused. Holding up her newborn babe to his gaze, she said, ‘See! He has hands to help himself, and if ever there was a true born rogue, here he is!’ Thus, like Hannibal towards Rome, was this poor child devoted from its earliest infancy to war against all the settled institutions of society.

“After her release from York the reader will readily imagine from this anecdote of her, that she would speedily fall into another scrape. This soon happened. She was committed to Wakefield House of Correction, again tried and found guilty, and I have never since heard of her. She had cohabited with two different men, both of whom passed as her husband. Their names were M’Dowel and Connor, and they both have been transported.

“My daughter, Sarah Dunhill, after having been confined in York Castle, was tried at the East Riding Sessions at Beverley, and imprisoned one year. She was subsequently tried at the Borough Sessions at Beverley for picking the pocket of a gentleman named Scholfield, and stealing from him a considerable sum of money.

“During her trial she made a moving appeal to the barristers present, stating that she had always found them her best friends; that their ingenuity had often assisted her in the hour of need, and she yet reposed faith in their kindness, and proudly left her honesty and honour in their keeping. The Recorder, startled into momentary confusion at the nature of this appeal, speedily recovered his dignity, and inflicted on her the doom of the law. She was at this time residing at Hull, and had come over to Beverley fair that morning for the purpose of depredation. For this offence she was transported for seven years. She had three husbands, named James Stanhope, William Rhodes, and James Crossland, all of whom were severally transported, one after the other.

“My son, William Dunhill, was transported at the York Assizes for the term of fourteen years. He, poor fellow, died immediately on his arrival in New South Wales. He was the most promising of my family, and with different examples before him, and good advice, would probably have proved an ornament to society.

“Robert Taylor, son of my wife by a former husband, and who lived under the same roof with us for several years, was also transported.

“I think I omitted to state that my wife at the time I married her was a widow, and her name was Taylor. Her husband was shot in attempting to commit a robbery shortly before I married her, a circumstance which was not known to me, and which she never mentioned.

“As to my wife, she was also transported, after having contrived innumerable depredations, and been the cause of those fatal events which befel herself, myself, and the rest of the family.

“A robbery committed at Howden was readily traced home to the inmates of our house; suspicion fell at once upon them, and the furniture, watches, coins, and many other stolen articles were found on my premises. But as this and many other things happened during my absence, and as I never again saw several members of my family, I am the less particular in narrating them, from my great anxiety that nothing should appear in this history of myself for which I cannot vouch the truth.”

Snowden returned to Spaldington, found his family dispersed, his cottage occupied by other tenants, and no one in the village disposed to receive him with open arms. The farmers naturally viewed his return with alarm, and he found none in the neighbourhood disposed to give him work, had he cared to take it. But steady work was distasteful to him. Had he sought it in other parts of Yorkshire he might readily have found it. Instead of this he loafed about, sulky and angry with society. By degrees he formed new connections, in Hull and Lincolnshire, and resumed his former dishonest practices in concert with them.

“I had heard much of the easy lives led by the convicts in New South Wales; and, moreover, some members of my family were already there, and I felt impelled to make an endeavour to join them.

“I had not long to wait for the gratification of this wish, for I was soon traced to the commission of a paltry crime. I was apprehended, tried, and convicted; my character did the rest, and readily procured for me that banishment from England on which I had set my heart. My trial took place at a district Quarter sessions in the north of Lincolnshire, in the gaol of which I was only detained a few days when, with several others, I was transmitted, pinioned and loaded with irons, to London, there to await a ship to convey me to Botany Bay.

“It was a cold, bleak morning when I was put upon the coach in the courtyard of the prison, before daylight, with the rain and sleet falling in abundance. The coach remained half an hour or more in the yard of the prison till all was in readiness, when the gates were thrown open and we commenced our inauspicious journey. I cannot at all describe the feelings of loneliness and of heartrending distress which came over me at this moment, in which I felt that I was rushing from certain misery to something that might be even still worse, and yet in my despair I felt a clinging to existence. I have never met with — nay, I have never heard of — a bad man who could look death unflinchingly in the face. On ascending the first rise of the ground in our journey towards London a breeze from the north suddenly sprung up, which scattered the loaded clouds, and the sun burst forth in all its glory. There appeared before me, as if a veil had been taken off the earth by magic power, a wide-spread picture. The Humber, glorying in its Scythian name, rolling to the ocean its mass of waters; and in the distance the winding Trent and Ouse, stealing onward like two wily serpents; and I could just discover the broad expanse where they became united.

“The beautiful Lincolnshire hills on my left, and the still more beautiful hills, dales, and woods of my own native Yorkshire to the north, lent their charms to form a landscape I never saw equalled, and in casting my last lingering gaze upon it I felt that the inanimate beauties of creation must now to me for ever be a blank. I strained my eyes to catch as much of it as I could, feeling the prospect, as it were, a part of myself, and necessary to my very existence, for there it had commenced, and little at one time did I think at how great a distance I was doomed to end it.

“Arrived at Botany Bay, I was soon disposed of, and commenced in good earnest the life of a slave. Hard worked, half-starved, ill-fed, and worse clothed, such is the fate of the hapless convict.”

Whilst in confinement, Snowden Dunhill wrote his Autobiography, and much wished to send it to his native village that it might be printed there for circulation. But it was some time before an opportunity presented itself.

One October day, 1830, as he was wheeling earth and stones near the pier of Sydney, in the harbour of Port Jackson, he rested for a moment to look at the beautiful bay before him, and compare it with one of the lake like reaches of the Humber, when he was roused from his musings by a tap on the shoulder, and the salutation of “Well, Snowden, how are you?”

He touched his cap, and looked up. Before him stood a sailor, who grasped his hand and shook it warmly. The sailor was the little boy whose life he had saved in the moat of Spaldington Old Hall so many years before.

The sailor gave him some money, and told him he was about to return to Hull. Dunhill at once produced his little Autobiography, and entreated him to take it back to Yorkshire, and get it printed there. The sailor readily promised

to do this, and to his fulfilment of the promise we owe the existence of the curious little memoir presented to the reader.

In August, 1833, Snowden Dunhill was seen by another Howden man, who was at Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land. His account of Dunhill is that he was "a tall, stout man, bent and stooping with suffering and privation more than from natural infirmity, but with the step and assurance of his old self."

The Howden man would not have known Dunhill had not the convict heard his name mentioned, and introduced himself to him: "Ye're one of ——'s sons i' Howden?" in the broadest East Riding Yorkshire. Then, when the stranger answered that he was, Dunhill's eyes filled with tears, and he began to sob.

"In external appearance he was not very much altered. The boisterous and overbearing manners of former years yet remained, unsoftened and unrepressed by the sufferings he had undergone. An habitual stoop had bent down his person, and somewhat taken away from the portly and blustering gait of early life. The small, grey, quick, and piercing eye still retained its cunning and prying character. His dress was much the same as he wore in England."

Dunhill had received his ticket of freedom at Sydney two or three years before this, and had then removed to Van Dieman's Land, where his wife and daughter were settled.

There is a strange irony in facts. Sally Dunhill, who had been unable to rear one of her own children in morality and honesty, so impressed on the people of Hobart Town that she was a saintly woman by her vociferous prayers and familiarity with Holy Scripture, that she was employed in teaching at a day school, and was entrusted with the education of children in those paths she had never trodden herself. The residue of her time was spent in making penny pies, which Snowden hawked about the town.

Snowden Dunhill gradually sank into habitual drunkenness, and was suspected of reverting to his old tricks of petty larceny. When he died is not known.

JAMES NAYLOR, THE QUAKER.

James Naylor was born at East Ardsley, near Wakefield, in 1616. He was the son of a small farmer, whose house was near the old church. He received a passable education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1628, when he was aged twenty two, he married, and settled in Wakefield parish. He was a diligent reader of the Scriptures, and zealous as an Independent. He spent about three years at Wakefield, and then joined the Parliamentary army as a private in 1641. He rose to become quartermaster of his regiment under Major-General Lambert, but in 1649, on account of ill-health, he was obliged to leave the army and return to Wakefield. The pulpits of the Established Church were now in the hands of Independent ministers, and that of Horbury, near Wakefield, was occupied by the "godly and painful Master Marshall," under whom James Naylor sat and groaned with unction.

But Naylor relaxed his religious exercises on visits to a Mrs. Roper at Horbury, a lady whose husband had been for some time absent. When this lady became a mother by James Naylor, the Rev. Mr. Marshall thought it necessary to expose him, and Naylor, indignant with his Independent minister, joined the sect of the Quakers, then founded by George Fox. In 1652 he went on a religious visitation to the West, and in 1655 he visited London, in which city a meeting of Quakers had been established by the ministry of Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, two men of Westmoreland.

Naylor prophesied in the meeting with so great applause that several women began to exalt him above Burrough and Howgill, and disturbed the latter when they attempted to speak. The two ministers reprov'd the women, and they in dudgeon complained to Naylor, and he encouraged them in their opposition to Burrough and Howgill. Two of these women, Martha Symonds and Hannah Stranger, became his most devoted adherents, and followed him in all his wanderings.

In 1656 he revisited the West, prophesied in Cornwall, and on passing through Exeter was arrested under the sweeping charge of vagrancy, and committed to gaol. There he was visited by many devout females, amongst others by one Dorcas Erbury, who fell into a swoon, and was revived by Naylor, who cried over her, "Tabitha, I say unto thee, arise!" She awoke, and the faithful believed that Naylor had restored her from death to life.

He was released at length by order of Council and then he travelled to Bristol at the head of six believers. On reaching Bedminster, a village a mile from Old Bristol, though now a suburb of the town, Naylor and his party formed in procession, intending to produce a scene in the streets of Bristol.

One of his disciples, a young man with bare head, led the horse by the bridle upon which Naylor was mounted; two men followed in single file on horseback, each with his wife on a pillion behind him; and one woman walked on the causeway. As they went forward the six shouted "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of

Sabaoth!" till they came to the almshouse in the suburbs of Bristol, "when one of the women alighted, and she, with the other of her own sex, lovingly marched on each side of Naylor's horse." The road was deep in mud and rain was falling, but neither mud nor rain damped the ardour of the enthusiasts. On reaching Redcliffe Gate, Timothy Wedlock, a Devonshire man of the company, bareheaded, and Martha Symonds holding the bridle on one side and Hannah Stranger holding it on the other, advanced, chanting their hymn of praise.

Naylor wore a broad brimmed hat and a long sad coloured mantle. He was of a moderate height, ruddy complexion, had a slightly arched nose, large brown eyes, was a remarkably handsome man, and was thought by many to resemble the traditional type of face attributed to our Lord. Martha Symonds was the wife of Thomas Symonds, bookbinder of London; and Hannah Stranger was the wife of John Stranger, combmaker in London. The two other women accompanying Naylor were Dorcas Erbury, whom he had raised from the dead, and her mother.

In this way the solemn procession advanced to the High Cross at Bristol, and after that to the White Hart, Broad Street, where lodged two Quakers, Dennis Hollister and Henry Row.

The magistrates at once apprehended the party, and committed them to prison.

The following is the examination of the prisoners, somewhat condensed: —

#### EXAMINATION OF JAMES NAYLOR.

Being asked his name, he replied, "The men of this world call me James Naylor."

Q. "Art not thou the man that rid on horseback into Bristol, a woman leading thy horse, and others saying before thee, 'Holy, holy, holy, Hosannah to the Son of David?'"

A. "I did ride into a town, but what its name was I know not; and by the Spirit a woman was commanded to hold my horse's bridle, and some there were that cast down clothes and sang praises to the Lord, such songs as the Lord put into their hearts; and it is like it might be the song, 'Holy, holy, holy,' etc."

Q. "Whether or no didst thou reprove these women?"

A. "Nay; but I bade them take heed that they say nothing but what they were moved to by the Lord."

Q. "Dost thou own this letter which Hannah Stranger sent unto thee?"

A. "Yes, I do own that letter."

Q. "Art thou (according to that letter) the fairest of ten thousand?"

A. "As to the visible, I deny any such attribute to be due unto me; but if as to that which the Father hath begotten in me, I shall own it."

Two letters were then produced and read; we need only give one: —

"JAMES NAYLOR,

"Oh! thou fairest of ten thousand, thou only begotten Son of God, how my heart panteth after thee! O stay me with flaggons and comfort me with wine. My beloved, thou art like a roe or young hart upon the mountains of spices, where thy beloved spouse hath long been calling thee to come away, but hath been but lately heard of thee. Now it lies something upon me that thou mindest to see her, for the spirit and power of God is with her, and there is given to her much of excellent and innocent wisdom arisen and arising in her, which will make all the honest-hearted to praise the Lord alone, and no more set up self. And therefore let not my lord and master have any jealousy against her, for she is highly beloved of the Lord, and that shall all see who come to know the Lord. And now He doth bless them that bless His, and curse them that curse His; for this hath the Lord showed me, that her portion is exceedingly large in the Lord, and as her sorrow hath been much, so shall her joy be much more; which rejoiceth my heart to see her walk so valiantly and so faithfully in the work of the Lord, in this time of so great trials as hath been upon her especially.

"And I am,  
"HANNAH STRANGER.

*"The Postscript.*

"Remember my dear love to thy master. Thy name is no more James, but Jesus.

"JOHN STRANGER."

"Remember my love to these friends with thee. The 17th day of 8<sup>th</sup> month, superscribed to the hands of James Naylor."

Q. "Art thou the only Son of God?"

A. "I am the son of God; but I have many brethren."

Q. "Have any called thee by the name of Jesus?"

A. "Not as unto the visible, but as Jesus, the Christ that is in me."

Q. "Dost thou own the name of the King of Israel?"

A. "Not as a creature; but if they gave it to Christ within, I own it, and have a kingdom, but not of this world; my kingdom is of another world, of which thou wotest not."

Q. "Whether or no art thou the prophet of the Most High?"

A. "Thou hast said I am a prophet."

Q. "By whom were you sent?"

A. "By Him who hath sent the Spirit of His Son in me to try, not as to carnal matters, but belonging to the kingdom of God, by the indwelling of the Father and the Son, to judge all spirits, to be guided by none."

Q. "Is not the written Word of God the guide?"

A. "The written Word declares of it, and what is not according to that is not true."

Q. "Who is thy mother? or whether or no is she a virgin?"

A. "Nay, according to the natural birth."

Q. "Who is thy mother according to thy spiritual birth?"

A. "No carnal creature."

Q. "Who, then?"

He returned no answer.

Q. "Art thou the everlasting Son of God?"

A. "When God is manifest in the flesh there is the everlasting Son; and I do witness God in the flesh. I am the Son of God, and the Son of God is but one."

Q. "Art thou the everlasting Son of God, the King of Righteousness?"

A. "I am; and the everlasting righteousness is wrought in me; if ye were acquainted with the Father ye would also be acquainted with me."

Q. "Do any kiss thy feet?"

A. "It might be they did, but I minded them not."

Q. "How dost thou provide for a livelihood?"

A. "As do the lilies, without care, being maintained of my Father."

Q. "What business hast thou at Bristol, or that way?"

A. "I was guided and directed by my Father."

Q. "Where were you born?"

A. "At Arderslow, in Yorkshire."

Q. "Where lives thy wife?"

A. "She whom thou callest my wife lives in Wakefield."

Q. "Why dost thou not live with her?"

A. "I did till I was called to the army."

Q. "Under whose command didst thou serve in the army?"

A. "First under him they call Lord Fairfax."

Q. "Who then?"

A. "Afterwards with that man called Colonel Lambert. And then I went into Scotland, where I was quartermaster, and returned sick to my earthly habitation."

Q. "What wentest thou for to Exeter?"

A. "I went to Launceston to see the Brethren."

Q. "What estate hast thou?"

A. "Take no care for that."

Q. "Wherefore camest thou in such an unusual posture as two women leading thy horse; others saying, 'Holy, holy, holy!' &c, with another before thee bareheaded, knee deep in the highway mud, when thou mightest have gone on the causey; and at such a time that, it raining, thy companions received the rain at their necks, and vented it at their hose and breeches?"

A. "It tended to my Father's praise and glory; and I ought not to slight anything which the Spirit of the Lord moves."

Q. "Wherefore didst thou call Marthy Symonds 'Mother,' as George Fox affirms?"

A. "George Fox is a liar and a firebrand of hell; for neither I, nor any with me, called her so."

Q. "Thou hast a wife at this time?"

A. "A woman I have, who by the world is called my wife, and some children I have, which according to the flesh are mine."

MARTHA SYMONDS' EXAMINATION.

"She contendeth she knew James Naylor formerly, for he is now no more James Naylor, but refined to a more excellent substance; and so she saith she came with him from Eccles to Bristol."

Q. "What made thee lead his horse into Bristol, and cry, 'Holy, holy, holy!' and to spread thy garment before him?"

A. "I was forced thereto by the power of the Lord."

Q. "Whether didst thou kneel before him?"

A. "I was forced thereto by the power of love."

Q. "Dost thou own him to be the Prince of Peace?"

A. "He is a perfect man; and he that is a perfect man is the Prince of Peace."

Q. "Hast thou a husband?"

A. "I have a man which thou callest my husband."

Q. "What made thee leave him, and to follow James Naylor?"

A. "It is our life to praise the Lord, and the Lord my strength is manifest in James Naylor."

Q. "Oughtest thou to worship James Naylor upon thy knees?"

A. "Yea, I ought so to do."

Hannah Stranger, Thomas Stranger, and Timothy Wedlock were next examined. It is not necessary to reproduce their interrogations; they much resemble what has been given above.

Dorcas Erbury was next called. She was widow of William Erbury, once a minister.

Q. "Where dost thou live?"

A. "With Margaret Thomas."

Q. "Wherefore dost thou sing, 'Holy, holy, holy'?"

A. "I did not at that time; but those that sang did it discharging of their duty."

Q. "Dost thou own him to be the Holy One of Israel?"

A. "I do, and with my blood will seal it."

Q. "And dost thou own him for the Son of God?"

A. "He is the only begotten son of God."

Q. "Wherefore didst thou pull off his stockings, and lay thy clothes beneath his feet?"

A. "He is worthy of it, for he is the Holy One of Israel."

Q. "Christ raised those that had been dead; so did not he?"

A. "He raised me."

Q. "In what manner?"

A. "He laid his hand on my head after I had been dead two days, and said, 'Dorcas, arise!' and I arose, and live, as thou seest."

Q. "Where did he this?"

A. "At the gaol in Exeter."

Q. "What witness hast thou for this?"

A. "My mother, who was present."

Q. "His power being so much, wherefore opened he not the prison doors and escaped?"

A. "The doors shall open when the Lord's wish is done."

The Bristol magistrates sent Naylor and his deluded followers to London, to be examined before Parliament.

On the 31st October it was ordered that a Committee should be appointed to consider the information given touching "the misdemeanour and blasphemies of James Naylor and others at Bristol and elsewhere, and to report thereon."

The Committee met next day, and on December 2nd it was resolved that the report of the Committee should be brought in and read on the following Friday,

December 5th. On that day it was read by the reporter — it consisted of thirteen sheets of paper — and the debate on the report began on the 6th, when James Naylor was called to the bar of the House. He came with his hat on, but it was removed by the Serjeant. The report was read to him, and he was demanded whether each particular was true, and he acknowledged that it was so.

The debate was adjourned to Monday, the 8th, and it occupied Parliament till the 20th December. The House resolved “that James Naylor was guilty of horrid blasphemy, and that he was a grand impostor and seducer of the people,” and his sentence was, “that he should be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, in the Palace Yard, Westminster, during the space of two hours, on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, London; and there, likewise, he should be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours, between the hours of eleven and one, on Saturday next, in each place wearing a paper containing an inscription of his crimes; and that at the Old Exchange his tongue should be bored through with a hot iron, and that he should be there also stigmatised in the forehead with the letter B; and that he should afterwards be sent to Bristol, to be conveyed into and through the city on horseback, with his face backwards, and there also should be whipped the next market day after he came thither; and that thence he should be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there be restrained from the society of all people, and there to labour hard till he should be released by Parliament; and during that time he should be debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and should have no relief but what he earned by his daily labour.”

The women were ordered to be kept in confinement. The severity of this atrocious sentence deserves notice. The Independents, who had suffered under Laud and the Star Chamber, now that they were in power, had no idea of tolerating the Quakers, who read their Bibles differently from themselves. Cromwell was especially prejudiced against them, and it is probable that the Protector had something to do with the severity of the sentence on Naylor.

One Robert Rich, a merchant of London, wrote to the Parliament, on December 15, a petition in favour of Naylor: “If I may have liberty of those that sit in Parliament, I do here attend at this door, and am now ready out of the Scriptures of truth to show that not anything that James Naylor hath said or done is blasphemy, etc.”

Sentence was pronounced by the Speaker, Sir Thomas Widdrington. Naylor on hearing it said, “I pray God He may not lay it to your charge.”

On December 20th, 1656, Naylor suffered a part of his sentence, standing two hours in the pillory, and receiving at the cart’s tail three hundred and ten stripes. “The executioner gave him three hundred and ten stripes,” says Sewell, “and would have given him one more, as he confessed to the Sheriff, but his foot slipping, the stroke fell upon his own hand, which hurt him much.

Naylor was hurt with the horses treading on his feet, whereon the prints of the nails were seen. His wounds were washed by R. Travers, who certified, 'there was not the space of a man's nail free from stripes and blood, from his shoulders near to his waist; his right arm sorely striped; his hands much hurt by the cords that they bled and were swelled: the blood and wounds of his back did very little appear at first sight, by reason of abundance of dirt that covered them, till it was washed off.'

Another petition in his favour was presented, signed by about a hundred persons, to Parliament, requesting the remission of the rest of his sentence, and as this was refused, appeal was made to Cromwell the Protector, with like want of success.

Five Independent ministers visited Naylor in prison, and vainly urged him to recant.

Rich besieged the doors of Parliament on December 27th, from eight o'clock till eleven, imploring a respite, but all in vain. Naylor was then brought out to undergo the rest of his sentence; he was again pilloried, his tongue bored through, and his forehead branded. Rich held the hand of the unhappy man whilst his tongue was pierced, and the red hot iron applied to his brow, and he licked the wounds to allay the pain. Thousands who witnessed the execution of the sentence exhibited their respect by removing their caps. There was no reviling, and nothing thrown at Naylor, but all stood silent and sympathetic.

James Naylor was then sent to Bristol, and whipped from the middle of St. Thomas' Street to the middle of Broad Street, and taken back to his prison in Bridewell. There he wrote his recantation, in epistles addressed to the Quakers. In one of these he says: "Dear brethren, my heart is broken this day for the offence which I have occasioned to God's truth and people, and especially to you, who in dear love followed me, seeking me in faithfulness to God, which I rejected, being bound wherein I could not come forth, till God's hand brought me, to whose love I now confess. And I beseech you forgive wherein I evil requited your love in that day. God knows my sorrow for it, since I see it, that ever I should offend that of God in any, or reject his counsel; and I greatly fear further to offend or do amiss, whereby the innocent truth or people of God should suffer, or that I should disobey therein."

He was confined about two years, and was then set at liberty. He thereupon went to Bristol, where in a public meeting he made confession of his offence and fall so movingly as to draw tears from most of those present; and he was then restored to the community of the Quakers, from which he had been excluded by George Fox at Exeter for his presumption and pride.

Charges of the most gross immorality have been brought against James Naylor, whether truly or falsely who can now decide? It is possible that the language of the women who followed him, in speaking of him, their letters to him, one of which has been quoted, may have given rise to these reports. Naylor, however, never would admit that there had been anything unseemly in his

behaviour towards the women who followed him from London into Cornwall, and from Cornwall to Bristol; and Sewell, who knew Hannah Stranger, repudiates the charge as utterly false. But it is curious to notice how that religious fanaticism and sensuality so frequently run together. It was so in that outburst of mysticism in the Middle Ages — the heresy of the Fraticelli; it was so with at least one branch of the Hussites in Bohemia; and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the great convulsion of the Reformation had set minds naturally predisposed to religious excitement in a ferment, this was most conspicuous, as in the ferocious licentiousness of John Bockelson, the Anabaptist King of Sion, or the more cautious profligacy, under a cloak of religion, of Ludwig Hetzer and David Joris.

James Naylor quitted London finally in 1660, intending to return to Wakefield; but was found by a countryman one evening in a field near Holm and King's Rippon, in Huntingdonshire, having been robbed and left bound. He was taken to Holm, and his clothes were changed. To those who kindly cared for him he said, "You have refreshed my body; the Lord refresh your souls."

He shortly after died there of the rough handling he had received from the highwaymen who had plundered him, and was buried in a Quaker's cemetery belonging to Thomas Parnel, a physician.

Two hours before he died he uttered the touching and eloquent speech: — "There is a spirit which I feel that delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exultation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring are the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness; its life is everlasting love, unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken; I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth; who through death obtained their resurrection, and eternal, holy life."

A more beautiful and true description of the Christian spirit was never uttered. It is a passage meriting a place beside the famous definition of charity by St. Paul. The man who used such words was no hypocrite when he used them. If he had erred greatly, he had also repented; if he had fallen, he had risen after his fall. One is glad to turn away the eye from the blemishes of the unfortunate Quaker's career to the spot of pure light that rests on his deathbed.

His writings were collected and published in an octavo volume in 1716. They are very unequal. Some passages of great beauty, almost comparable to that given above, may be found, but there is also much that is as involved in style and confused in thought as the specimen quoted earlier from his recantation.