



GEORGE MOORE

MERCHANT AND PHILANTHROPIST

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AUTHOR OF "LIVES OF THE ENGINEERS,"
"SELF-HELP," "THRIFT," ETC.

WITH A PORTRAIT

BY G. F. WATTS, R.A., ETCHED BY RAYON

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PREFACE.

I HAVE written this book at the earnest request of Mrs. Moore.

The subject was brought under my notice by the late Mr. William Longman and Mr. Murray, at the instance of Mrs. Moore. They both recommended me to write the book, though neither of them were to publish it.

I was at first unwilling to undertake the *Life*; my health not permitting me to undertake much brain work. Besides, I was far advanced with another book which had been advertised, and which I was unwilling to postpone.

I knew a great deal about Mr. Moore's benevolence towards the poor, the helpless, and the orphans; but I thought that some other person, who had known Mr. Moore intimately, might have done greater justice to the subject.

I called upon a leading City merchant to ask his opinion. He thought it impossible for anything interesting to be written about George Moore. As to his munificence, there were hundreds of

men in London as good as he! "What *can* you make," he asked, "out of the life of a London warehouseman?" This statement discouraged me, and I felt disposed to return to my former work.

It was not until Dr. Percival, Head Master of Clifton College, called upon me, that I ascertained something of the actual life and character of George Moore. He spoke of the Man, and not of the Warehouseman. He said, in a letter which I afterwards received from him, – "There is so much genuine character in the Cumberland Folk, that I feel sure you will be attracted by them; and I hope you will find that the incidents of Mr. Moore's boyhood and early life are sufficiently characteristic to enable you to use some of the excellent material furnished by the habits and traditions of the district. Then, I hope you may find sufficient illustrations in his middle life, of his really splendid pluck and energy; and again in his later life, of his rare liberality. This last trait ought to be very instructive, because of its extreme rarity among men who have had to struggle as he did. I don't think I have come across any other self-made man who had so entirely 'got the chill of poverty out of his bones.'"

I was also encouraged by the Rev. G. C. Bell, Master of Marlborough College, who wrote to Mrs. Moore as follows: - "I am rejoiced to hear that a memoir of your husband is to be published; for the example of his life, with its combination of 'self help' and unselfishness, well deserves a permanent record; and it may be full of stimulus and encouragement to many. I had indeed," he added, "good reason to be grateful to him for many substantial kindnesses, made all the more precious by the kind of fatherly interest that he took in those he cared for. He was, in truth, a large-hearted man, whose like I never knew."

This was, indeed, encouragement enough. I accordingly went down to Whitehall, George Moore's country seat in Cumberland, to look over his papers. I there found a story, a romance, followed, alas! by a tragedy. Mr. Moore had written out an account of his early life, which I have introduced in the course of the following

pages. He had also left a Diary, containing a daily entry during the last twenty years of his life. These, together with his numerous papers, have furnished abundant information for his history from its beginning to its end.

To show the respect and love with which George Moore was regarded by men of the highest influence and character in the Church and society, several reminiscences are given in the following memoir, – the principal of which are from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Dean of Carlisle, the Rev. Daniel Moore, and the Master of Marlborough College. These recollections cannot fail to be read with deep interest.

Biographers, like portrait-painters, are sometimes suspected of painting men as they ought to be, rather than as they are. To avoid this objection, I have quoted George Moore's own words from his Autobiographic notes, and from his Diary; and thus enabled the story to be told as much as possible in his own words and in his own way.

I have said that I began this work with unwillingness; but I can add that as I wrote I felt that I had to do with the life of no ordinary man. George Moore, in some ways, stands apart from other men. He yielded to no hindrances; he was overcome by no difficulties; he was consistent in his aims, in all the good work that he did. This, the story of his life will fully show.

I need scarcely say that I have been greatly helped by Mrs. Moore, who has furnished all the necessary information, and supplied many of the most interesting descriptions in the book.

I have also been much indebted to the Rev. W. M. Gunson, Cambridge; the Rev. Alfred Oates, Maryport; James Cropper, Esq., Ellergreen, Kendal; Alfred Chapman, Esq., and many others, for the information they have communicated as to the life, habits, manners, and character of their deceased friend.

Mrs. Moore desires me to state, in this Preface, that Mr. Moore's intimate friend, Mr. Bowker, formerly of Christ's

Hospital, took much trouble in arranging the materials for a sketch of the life; and that though these materials have not been used by me, her gratitude to him remains the same.

It has been the one wish of Mrs. Moore's heart that a proper memorial of her husband's life should be placed on permanent record. I hope that I have gratified her wish, and that the public will be satisfied with the result.

S. S.

LONDON, *May*, 1878.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MOORES - OLD TIMES IN CUMBERLAND.

GEORGE MOORE was born at Mealsgate, Cumberland, on the 9th of April, 1806. He was the third of a family of five. He had two brothers, Thomas and William and two sisters, Sarah and Mary.

George's father, John Moore, was a man of ancient, though of moderate means. He belonged to the rank of Statesman - a title held in as high regard in the North as that of the Order of the Garter. "I am prouder," says a well-known scholar, "of being a Cumberland Statesman than a Cambridge Don!" But the Cumberland statesmen, like the English yeomen, are fast passing away.

The old Moores lived at their paternal estate at Overgates for more than three hundred years. Overgates is in the parish of Torpenhow, a few miles to the south-west of the market-town of Wigton. The village of Torpenhow consists of a straggling street

of little old houses, grey or whitewashed, The ancient church, dedicated to St. Michael, stands at the south end of the village. The “pellitory from out the wall”¹ of Shakespeare grows luxuriantly near the churchyard gate. People still come from long distances to gather it for medicinal purposes.

Inside the churchyard we come upon the resting places of the old Moores. There they lie, generation after generation. The Moores of Overgates; the Moores of Bothel; the Moores of Highwood Nook; the Moores of Kirkland; and the Moores of Mealsgate. They seem to have been a long-lived race. Many of them lived to eighty and upwards. Thomas Moore of Mealsgate, grandfather of George Moore, was buried among his fathers in Torpenhow Church yard, aged seventy-eight.

The Archaeological Society of Cumberland held one of their meetings at Torpenhow² in 1876, when the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Gem, read a paper on the history of the parish. In the course of his observations, he noted the great changes which had taken place in the small landholders of the county. “Of the families now possessing land in the parish,” he said, “none can be traced back to

¹ *Officinalis frantaria.*

² There has been some discussion as to the origin of the word Torpenhow. Some say it is Danish, being the “How,” or hill, of Torpen, a Norse hero. Others say it is “Thorpe,” or the village on the “How” or “Hill.” But the most generally received view is, that the word represents the language of the various races who have successively occupied Cumberland. Thus the Britons (or Cumbrians) called the rising topped hill “Pen”: then the Saxons (or Anglians), not understanding the meaning of the word, called it “Tor-pen”; and lastly the Danes, who occupied the neighbourhood, called it “Torpenhow.” The same process of adding newer significations is still going on. Thus the neighbouring people speak of Torpenhow Brow. This last theory has the support of the late Dr. Donaldson, who, in his *New Cratylus*, quotes it in connection with Ham-ton-wick, all the three syllables of this name meaning the same thing. Another word might be suggested for the origin of Torpenhow - the word “Torpen” or “Terpen,” used in Friesland, meaning the mounds on which the old villages and churches were erected.

the year 1651 (when the register books commence), excepting the Plasketts of West House, the Railtons of the Smithy, the Dobsons of the Nook, the Fishers of Whittrigg, the Bushbys of Bothel, represented by the Rev. Edward Bushby, Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, and the Moores of Overgates and Kirkland, represented by Miss Moore of Kirkland, Mr. Thomas Moore of Mealsgate, and Mr. George Moore of Whitehall.”

Torpenhow parish is situated on the south bank of the river Ellen. The land rises gradually from the river until it reaches its highest points at Camphill, Caermote, and Binsey. From the high grounds a splendid view is obtained, southward, of the Cumberland mountains, Skiddaw towering high above all. Bassenthwaite Water lies quietly sleeping under the shadow of the majestic hills which surround it.

The high lands from which we look down remain very much as nature left them. The country hereabouts is wild and lonely. Scarcely a house or a person is to be seen. The land is poor and uncultivated. It is half moor, half inclosed pasture. A few Fell sheep and black Scotch cattle grub for grass among the roots of the whins and heather. Yet it is not without its beauties for the lover of nature. The glorious mountains, the far-off sweeps of gorse, the wild smell of the heather, the sea air from the west blowing fresh against your face, the large purple shadows dropped by the passing clouds upon the moor, the lark singing over-head, the bumble-bee humming close by; and above all, the infinite silence! That indeed is a picture to be remembered.

Looking towards the north, over Torpenhow, the view is altogether different. In the bottom of the valley lies the river Ellen. You see the little farmstead of Overgates, the original home of the Moores. Far away, over woods and pastures and cornfields, over grassy knolls and winding valleys, over clusters of farmhouses half hid in clumps of sycamores, over villages, mere specks of whiteness nestling among green fields, over stately

homes and ruined castles, you see the northern border of Cumberland. In the distance the Solway lies in the sunlight like a silver strip of brightness. Beyond the Firth, the lowlands of Dumfries and Kircudbright stretch away glimmering through the sunshine. Above and beyond them the Scottish mountains are seen, Criffel³ standing out boldly and alone.

The Solway Firth extends inland, between Scotland and England, from Maryport to Carlisle. It is in many places about twelve miles across. The tide runs up and down with great force, especially at neap tides. The Solway might be thought a sufficient protection for Cumberland during the troublous times which preceded the union of the crowns of England and Scotland. But it was no such protection against hungry and warlike people. The Solway can be crossed at low tide by horsemen who know the secrets of its depths and eddies. For this reason, amongst others, the northern part of Cumberland was constantly exposed to the depredations of the Scots. They waded the Solway, pillaged the villages and farmsteadings, and carried off to Annandale and Nithsdale all the cattle they could seize and drive before them.

For this reason the people of Cumberland, a few hundred years ago, always stood at arms. The entrances to the villages were defended by a double ditch, and by gates fastened with an iron chain. This was the case at Wigton. Those who could, fortified their houses, and left a space beneath, into which their cattle might be driven at night. A little beneath Overgates, in the valley of the Ellen, there are two border castles, or Peel towers, which afford a good example of the fortified houses of these days. One of these is

³ There is a local proverb -

“When Skiddaw wears a cap
Criffel wots full well of that,”

meaning that when clouds and mists gather about the brow of Skiddaw, in Cumberland, the people of Annandale, in Scotland, where Criffel is situated, may expect bad weather. Fuller, in his *Worthies of England*, says that the proverb “is spoken of such who must expect to sympathise in their sufferings, by reason of the vicinity of their habitations.”

called Harbybrow, now in ruins, and the other is Whitehall, recently renovated and enlarged, - the country-seat of the subject of this story. These border castles stand about a mile from each other. It is said that there was once an under ground road between them.

The original towers are lofty, square, and massive. The walls at the lower part are about nine feet thick. They are divided into three stories. Harby brow remains very much as it was. It has an arched chamber underneath - the old cattle keep. During the Scottish raids, the men and the cattle entered the tower by the same door. The cattle were driven into the arched chamber, while the men fastened the door and mounted to the higher stories. If assailed, they stood to arms, threw down huge stones, or poured boiling water or lead upon those who ventured to assail the little garrison. But when the cattle were secured, that was rarely done. The mosstroopers had no means of laying siege to fortified places.

In the meantime the country was up. During the border raids, people were stationed on the higher grounds to keep a strict look out. The names of "Watch-hill" and "Beacon-top" still point to such localities.⁴ The church towers were also used for the same purpose. The country was apt to be ravaged for twenty miles along the border. The tenants of the manors were obliged, by the firing of the beacons, to attend their lords in their border service. If requisite, their attendance might be prolonged for forty days. There was little or no cultivation of the land at that time. Indeed payment of rent was scarcely known until after the Union. All that the landlord gained from those residing upon his estate was per-

⁴ The Cumberland beacons that were lighted up to assemble the surrounding population to arms were Blackcombe, Mulcaster Fell, St. Bees Head, Workington Hill, Moothay, Skiddaw, Landale Top, Carlisle Castle, Lingy-close Head, Beacon Hill, Penrith, Dale Raughton, Brampton Mote, and Spade-adam Top.

sonal service in battle or in pursuit, and perhaps a share of the spoil taken by rapine from the Scotch side of the border.

The morality of those days was of a very wild description. Freebooting was considered a respectable profession on both sides of the border. It was like piracy at sea, of which neither Raleigh nor Drake were ashamed. To be a freebooter or a mosstrooper was not considered a term of reproach. The freebooter did not keep a "gig," but he kept a pricker, on which he scoured the neighbouring county for plunder. Every man fought for his own hand, like Harry-o'-the Wynd. If they could not steal from the neighbouring border, they stole from each other.⁵ They were quite as dangerous to their neighbours as to their enemies.

They were very valiant men too. Many were the instances of dash and daring among them. The Elliots, Armstrongs, and Scotts were as daring on the one side as the Graemes, Rutledges, and Howards were on the other. Their names have been alike immortalised in the ballad lore of the border.

The Scotch were, however, the hungriest of the two. Whenever their food fell short, they determined on a raid. Though they were ready, as the Armstrongs were, to rob each other, they preferred harrying their neighbours across the border.⁶ They could then combine their personal views of plunder with something like a spirit of patriotism. There was a portion of land between the two

⁵ There is a wild path across the mountains, far south in Cumber land, very unlikely. to be disturbed by the Scotch mosstroopers, for it is between Borrowdale and Ravenglass, -still called "The Thieves' Road." It must have been so called from the Lancashire and Cumberland reivers.

⁶ A saying is recorded of a Border mother to her son, "*Ride, Roley, ride; hough's i' the pot*" -meaning that the last fat sheep was being boiled and that it was high time for him to go and fetch more. An equally good story is told of a Cumberland matron. So long as her provisions lasted she set them regularly on the table, but as soon as they were finished, she brought forth two pairs of spurs and said, "Sons I have no meat for you ; go, seek for your dinner."

countries which was long known Debatable Land. It was long a source of contention. It was situated north of Carlisle, between the rivers Esk and Sark. It belonged neither to England nor Scotland. The land was infested by thieves and banditti, to whom, in its mossy, boggy, and uncultivated state, it afforded a desirable refuge. They robbed alike the English and the Scotch. Once, when a battle was going on, some of the men succeeded in robbing their fellow-troopers of their horses. The Inhabitants of the Middle or Western Marches were mosstroopers and cattle-stealers, "having no measure of law," says Camden, "but the length of their swords." When caught by their enemies, they were dealt with by Jeddart justice, - that is, they were hanged and then tried.

The Graemes were among the chief occupants of the Debatable Land. A document quoted in the *History of Cumberland* says, concerning the Graemes of Netherby and others of that clan, "They were all stark mosstroopers and arrant thieves, both to England and Scotland outlawed; yet sometimes connived at, because they gave intelligence forth of Scotland and would raise four hundred horse at any time upon a raid of the English into Scotland." And so it was of the Elliots and Armstrongs on the northern side of the border, which led to the popular saying, "Elliots and Armstrongs,⁷ ride thieves all." From these grim borderers have descended General Elliot, who so bravely defended Gibraltar; Sir James Graham one of our greatest statesmen; and Sir William Armstrong, the inventor of the Armstrong gun.

When the hungry Scots prepared to make a raid southward, they mounted their wiry horses, met at their appointed places, and either waded the Solway or forded the Liddel or the Esk. They crossed the border by secret by-ways known only to themselves.

⁷ In the sixteenth century the Armstrong clan, under the command of the English chief, Sir Ralph Evans, ravaged almost the whole of the west border of Scotland.

They knew every road across the mosses, and every ford across the rivers. They also knew every channel of escape from Cumberland to the north. The men were armed with long spears, a two-handed sword, a battle axe or a Jedburgh staff; and latterly with dags or pistols. Each trooper carried his own provisions which consisted for the most part of a bag of oatmeal. They trusted to the booty they seized for eking out their meals.

So soon as it was known that the reivers were abroad - that they had crossed the Solway from Annandale, or come down from Eskdale or Liddesdale - all Cumberland was roused. The beacons blazed out at Carlisle, Watch-hill, Torpenhow, Landale-top, Beacon-hill, and Skiddaw. The mounted troopers gathered appointed places, harnessed in jacks, and armed with spears and swords. Away they went in *hot trod!* as soon as they came upon the mosstroopers the sleuth-hounds⁸ were set upon their track, and wherever they went they blew their horns to summon their countrymen to their help. They also carried a burning wisp of straw or wood at their spears' point,⁹ and raised a cry similar to that of the Indian warwhoop. It appears that those who heard this cry were bound join in the chase under penalty of death.

The pursuit might last for days or for weeks. The regulations of the barony of Gilsland, still preserved by the Earl of Lonsdale, show the nature of the border-service of the tenants. Every tenant was required to keep a good, able, and sufficient horse - "such a

⁸ As late as 1616 there was an order from the King's Commissioners of the Northern counties that a certain number of sleuth-hounds (so called for their quality of tracing the slot, or track of men and animals) should be maintained in every district in Cumberland bordering on Scotland. The breed of this sagacious dog is nearly extinct.

⁹ A practice borrowed from the Norsemen, who formed large settlements round the Solway Firth, as is still indicated by the names of places and especially of headlands. The Highlanders also borrowed their fiery cross from the Norsemen, many of whom became chiefs of the Highland clans.

nagge as is able to beare a manne twentie miles within Scotlande and backe againe without a baite.”

They were to be provided with a “jacke, steale-cap, sword, bowe, or speare,” and were to be ready “to serve the Lord Warden or their officers upon sixe houres warninge, in anye place where they shall be appointed to serve.” They were also required to appoint a watch over their farms by day and by night; and when a foray occurs at night, the “partie that is harried to keepe a beaken burning of some height, of intente that notwithstandinge all the country be in a fraye, the fier may be a token where the hurt is done, that all menne may know which way to drawe.”¹⁰

The old statesmen held their lands by border service, as appears from the old title-deeds. They were required to be ready to follow the fray when the mosstroopers were abroad. They must be armed, horsed, and ready to fight. In the recital attached to a decree in the Court of Chancery¹¹ relating to the Woodvilles or Woodhalls, of Waterend, near Cockermouth, it is stated that the “plaintiffs (the statesmen) and the other tenants there, or their assigns, had *time out of mind* been seized to them and their heirs, by and according to the ancient and laudable custom of tenant-right then used, being within the West Marches of England over against Scotland;” and further, that they held “their several tenements by serving upon the said borders of England over against Scotland, at their own proper costs and charges, within the said West Marches, then and so often as thereunto they should be required by the Lord Warden of the said West Marches, for the time being, or his sufficient deputy or deputies, as well as defending the frontiers of the said Marches, as in offending the opposite Marches as occasion served.”

¹⁰ Lyson’s *Magna Britannia*, vol iv., Cumberland xi. xii.

¹¹ Dated the 25th April, 1597, Lonsdale’s *Worthies of Cumberland*: “Memoir of Dr. Woodville,” p. 231.

The freebooting raids between the borderers of the two countries continued long after the union of the crowns. Shortly after James I. came to the throne of England, he set up a claim to all the small estates in Cumberland and Westmoreland, on the plea that the statesmen were merely the tenants of the crown. The statesmen met to the number of two thousand, at Ratten Heath, between Kendal and Stavely, where they came to the resolution that "they had won the sword, and were able to hold them by the same." After that meeting, no further claim was made to their estates on the part of the crown.

But freebooting had not yet come to an end. The disposition to plunder had become part of the borderers' nature. Mosstrooping continued during the English Revolution and the Commonwealth; and after the Restoration it reached to such a height that it was found necessary to enact laws of great severity for the protection of the more peaceful bordermen.

The magistrates were authorised to raise bodies of armed men for the defence of property and order; and provision was made for supporting them by local taxation. Bloodhounds were again used to track the mosstroopers to their retreats among the hills. These measures, in the course of time, had their due effect. Yet it was not until some time after the union of England and Scotland in Queen Anne's reign, that the border hostilities died away, and the inhabitants were left to cultivate their land in peace.

Yet cattle-stealing and sheep-stealing - the survivals of the old freebooting system - still continued to be carried on. Juries were never found wanting when a cattle-stealer was to be tried. The punishment was short and sharp - hanging by the neck. Even in modern times it is difficult to induce a Carlisle jury to convict a man of murder; but when the offence is sheep-stealing, the conviction is certain. When the late Baron Martin crossed Shapfell, on his Northern Circuit, he used to say, "Now we have got into Cumberland, where we can scarcely get a jury to convict a

man of murder, even though he has killed his mother; but they will hang a man for sheep-stealing!”

The story is told of a stranger who visited Bewcastle - formerly the centre of a wild district - for the purpose of examining the Runic pillar in the churchyard. On looking round among the tombstones he was surprised to find that they commemorated none but female deaths. He made a remark to this effect to the old woman who accompanied him: “Ou Sir, do ye no ken what for? They’re a’ buried at that weary Caerl!” He found, in fact, that the male inhabitants of the district had either been transported or hanged at Carlisle!

The modern Cumberland Statesmen are the northern yeomen of England. They are men who work hard, live frugally, and enjoy an honest independence. They are neither squires nor labourers. They stand betwixt both. They till their own soil and consume their own produce. They sell the cattle and corn which they do not require, to buy the household articles which they cannot produce. They used to weave their own cloth. In olden times, the “Grey coats of Cumberland” was a common phrase. But all this has passed away; and statesmen are now sinking into the class of ordinary farmers, or even labourers.

The statesmen of the mountain districts - so many of them as still remain - are a very primitive class of people. They know nothing of the rate of discount or the price of gold. They have enough of the world’s gear to serve their purpose. They are uncorrupted by modern luxury. They are content; and happy to enjoy the golden mean of Agur. They pass a simple and inoffensive life amidst the lonely hills which surround them. “Go,” said one of these statesmen to a tourist, “go to the vale on the other side of yon mountain. You will find a house; enter it, and say you came from me. I know him not, but he will receive you kindly, for our sheep mingle upon the mountains!” These men have no inclination to change either in their life and customs, or in their sheep-farming.

“At Penraddock,” says an agricultural report on Cumberland, “we observed some singularly rough legged, ill-formed sheep, and on asking old farmer where the breed came from, he replied ‘Lord sir, they are sic as God set upon the land: we never change them!’” These are the people whom Wordsworth - himself a Cumberland man - has described with so much character and feeling.¹²

The statesmen of the low-lying districts towards the north are of a sturdier character. They have more mother wit and backbone. Their forefathers, being constantly on the alert to resist the inroads of the Scots, have handed down to their sons their fearless resolution and undaunted courage. They bear the greatest fatigue with patience. They live contented on humble fare, though their hospitality to strangers is open-handed and liberal. Though not rich in money or land, they are rich in character and healthful contentment. They are satisfied with their social position and are even proud of it. To be “an able and honest statesman” used to be one of the highest titles in Cumberland.

The statesman's household was a school of thrift and industry. The clothing was made at home. The women wore linsey-wolsey cloth of their own making. The young men and lads thought themselves well clad if they went to kirk in home spun hodden-gray. Stalwart sons and comely maidens were brought up on porridge, oatcakes, and milk; in fact there could be no better food. These were occasionally varied with barley bannocks, Whillimer cheese, potato-pot, a bit of bacon, and an occasional slice of salt-beef or mutton in winter. What could they require more? Their sharpness of appetite was whetted by the keen atmosphere of the mountain air.

¹² Close upon the border, the Cumberland men are rougher and readier than those towards the south. They have scarcely outgrown the mosstrooping life of their forefathers. Many of them are “Bworder Cowpers,” dealing in horses and cattle. One of them recommend himself to a travelling Scotsman by claiming kindred, affirming that he was a Border Scot. “Gude faith, I dinna doubt it” quoth the other; “for the selvage is aye the warst part o’ the web!”

“Come in,” said a tenant to his landlord one day “an hev a bit o’ dinner afwore ye gang.” The landlord went in amongst the family, the servants, and the labourers, who were about to “set to.” Near the end of the table was a large hot-pot, containing beef or mutton, cut into pieces, and put into a large dish along with potatoes, onions, pepper and salt. This was the famous Cumberland “taty-pot.” The farmer, after helping himself, thrust the dish towards the landlord and said, “Noo ye man help yersel, and *howk in!* Theer’s plenty meat at bottom, but its rayther het!”

Nor does this food disagree with the well-appetised Cumbrians. They are for the most part men of large stature. They are big-boned and broad-chested. Their firm muscles, well-knit joints, and vigorous hands give them great advantage as wrestlers. What they want in agility and suppleness they make up for in strength.

Although the Statesman worked hard and lived on humble fare, his wife was a Dame; his eldest son was the Laird; and when there was no son, his eldest daughter was the Lady, Thus, while the statesman himself was at the plough, the laird was driving the cattle to market, and the lady was working at the churn. Getting up in the morning was a great point. The Cumberland ballad-maker, when deploring the introduction of new customs fifty years ago, when the country was “puzzened round wi’ preyde,” goes on to say -

“We used to gan ta bed at dark,
An’ rose agean at four or five ;
The mworn’s the only time for wark
If fwok are healthy and wad thrive.”

The difference between one statesman and another consisted principally in character. Where the statesman was slow, sluggish, and inert, he gravitated rapidly downwards. No changes were made in the improvement of the farm. The old hive became filled with drones. The sons dropped down to the condition of farm servants and day-labourers. When the statesmen borrowed money

and got into the hands of lawyers, he never got out of them until the land was sold.

On the other hand, another statesman, of a better sort, would keep the roof-tree up by dint of energy and forethought. He would give his sons a fair education, set before them a good example, instil into them principles of independence and self help, and send them into the world braced with courage and the spirit of duty. The eldest son became the statesman, like his father before him. The second son sometimes became a "Priest" - the ordinary name for a clergy-man in Cumberland, while the others emigrated to the colonies or entered into the various avenues of business life at home.

On the whole, however, it must be confessed that the statesmen of Cumberland, like the yeomanry of England, have been rapidly disappearing during the last century. Sir James Graham spoke of the cavalcade of mounted statesmen who accompanied Mr. Blamire into Carlisle, on his appointment as High Sheriff in 1828, as "a body of men who could not be matched in any other part of the kingdom. The sight they had seen that day was such as they could never forget. The yeomanry of Cumberland were the finest and purest specimens of a set of men, who in all periods of its history had been the strength and pride of their country." But the fifty years that have passed away since then have seen great changes. Wealth is everywhere absorbing landed property. Small holdings are disappearing; small estates are blotted out; and the Cumberland statesman is already becoming a thing of the past.¹³

¹³ "One thing," says Dr. Lonsdale, "is manifest in the history of the yeomen, and that is, their gradual decadence, especially during the last thirty years. Many a 'canny house,' where yeomen had for centuries kept their yule, taught their sons and grandsons the traditions of their home, no longer shelter 'the weel-kent folk o' ither days.' Even the names of their founders are forgotten. This disappearance of names, if not of habitations, in many rural districts, brings about reflections of by no means an agreeable kind. Among many changes affecting both men and interests in these northern counties, there is no change more marked than that arising from the purchasing of real estates and the

During the long period that George Moore's fore-elders lived at Overgates, few records of their lives have been preserved. They had their part in the border raids. They were always ready to join in the fray when the mosstroopers were abroad. At the western end of Overgates house, there was a concealed place in which a nag or charger was kept; for in those days a nag was almost as good as a man. When the war-cry of "Snaffle, spur, and spear!" was raised, the Moores of Overgates mounted like the rest and galloped off to the meeting-place. The border towers and the cattle-keeps were in the valley below, almost within sight of the homestead; and when the muster took place, away they went after the "ruffian scots."

Thus the Moores lived until the troublous times had passed away, and peace fell upon the border lands. The young men and women intermarried with the sons and daughters of the neighbouring statesmen. For the most part they settled near the paternal home. Thus there were the Moores of Bothel the Moores of Highwood-Nook, and the Moores of Kirkland – all in the parish of Torpenhow. In the churchyard we read the names of the forgotten dead - sometimes on a broken gravestone covered with grey lichens. None of them seem to have come to any fame in the world's history. It was a little circle they lived in. Anxious thrift and carefulness were their portion. They lived their lives of joy and sorrow, of homely experience and of daily work - heedful of the troubles and turmoils of the outer world. They did their duty, and then went to rest.

Thomas Moore, a younger son of the statesman at Overgates, was born in 1733. He went to Bothel in his youth to assist his

absorption of small holdings of a few potato fields or share of pasturage, once the pride of decent folk content in their changeless life, by larger landed proprietors.

'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where Wealth accumulates and Men decay.'

brother in the work of the farm. In 1773 he went to Mealsgate, where he purchased a farm of sixty acres, recited in the deeds as "the Mealsgate tenement in the parishes of Bolton or Allhallows." There he lived a careful, frugal, and industrious life. Fair, market, and church, were the only breaks in his life of daily toil. He married, and had an only son - John Moore, the father of George. John did not marry until he was thirty-five. We learn from the family bible that on the 15th of February, 1800, he brought home Peggy Lowes, the daughter of a neighbouring statesman, as his wife. The register goes on to say that Thomas Moore was born on the 27th of January, 1802; Sarah on the 17th of January, 1804; George on the 9th of April, 1806; Mary on the 5th of March, 1808; and William on the 30th of March 1810. Thomas Moore was now getting an old man. He lived to see all his grandchildren born. Then he passed away, and was laid amongst his forefathers in Torpenhow churchyard, at the ripe age of seventy-eight.

The house at Mealsgate lies on the main road between Wigton and Cockermouth. It is a house of two stories, standing a little back from the road. A brook runs through the orchard before the house. It wanders along the valley through the Whitehall estate, and runs into the river Ellen, near Harbybrow. A few scattered cottages lie about the place, constituting the village of Mealsgate.

On entering the Moores' dwelling, you pass at once from the outer door into the general sitting-room. This, in Cumberland phrase, is known as "The House." A large old-fashioned fireplace occupies one end - the "ingle neuk," round which the family held their general conclave and told stories of the olden time during winter evenings. At the other end of the room, opposite the fireplace, is the Parlour, which is usually appropriated as a bedroom by the married pair. Behind is the kitchen and the other offices. A staircase of the simplest kind leads up to the four small low-roofed bedrooms above. Such is the house at Mealsgate in which the subject of the following story was born and brought up.

CHAPTER II.

GEORGE MOORE'S BOYHOOD.

AFTER the birth, the christening. George Moore of Bothel was to "stand for" the child. He was an old bachelor, a man of good means, and he meant to "do something" for his godson. A large party of Moores assembled at Mealsgate on the christening morning. It must have been regarded as a matter of considerable importance. A chaise was brought from Wigton to convey the mother and child up the hill to Bolton Church.

Chaises were very uncommon in Cumberland in those days. The roads were unsuitable for wheeled carriages. Chaises were called those "queer trundlin' kists on't roads." Horseback was the usual method of conveyance; and women went on pack-saddles. But on this occasion, as the mother was very delicate and the child was young, a postchaise was brought from Wigton to convey them to the Church. The child was baptised in the name of his great-

uncle and godfather, George Moore. His father afterwards said of him that "he had begun the world with a chaise, and he was likely to end it with a chaise.

Old George Moore of Bothel, the godfather of the child, was as good as his word. When he died in 1817 at the ripe age of eighty-two, he left his god-son a legacy of 100*l.*, together with a big hair-trunk. The 100*l.* was to be paid to him when he reached the age of twenty-one; but by the time it was paid it amounted, with accumulations of interest, to about 170*l.* It was then found very useful. The hair-trunk also had its history. It had the letters "G. M." marked in brass-nails on the top. The hair-trunk went to Wigton, to London, to America, and is still in the possession of the family at Mealsgate. It is more than 150 years old.

The earliest recollection of George Moore was a very painful one. He was about six years old when his mother died. She was laid in the parlour, next to the room known as "the house." The boy turned into the parlour as usual, went up to his mother, touched her, but she did not move! He saw the cold pale face, and the shrouded body. This was his first idea of Death, and it left a startling impression on his mind. He saw his mother taken away by men in black, followed by a long train of mourners; and he saw her no more.

The same night he was taken by his father to sleep with him in the same bed from which his mother had been taken in the morning. The boy was frightened, startled, almost horror-struck. He did not sleep; he was thinking of his departed mother. The recollection of that day and of that night haunted him all his life. It left in his mind a morbid horror of death. It was so strong that he could never afterwards see any dead person. His intense vitality recoiled from the terrible accompaniments of that mystery which we call Death.

And yet he had nearly his whole life before him. Such losses as these must soon be forgotten, or remembered only with sorrow; otherwise life would be intolerable. It might be thought that John

Moore, who took his boy to sleep with him that night, was a hard and unfeeling man. But this was not the case. Let George Moore himself speak of his father's character. "My father," he says, "was a fine specimen of the North Country yeoman, whose fore-elders had lived at the same place for generations. His integrity, generosity, and love of truth left influences on my life and character for which I can never be too thankful. I have often said that I think he never told a lie in his life. The only time he flogged me was for telling a lie; and I never felt sorry for anything as to have grieved him.

"His great failing was in believing others so implicitly. His generosity got the better of his judgement. He lost a great deal of money by becoming bound for friends at public sales of cattle. The purchaser being unable to pay, my father had to find the money. Very often it was never repaid. Had it not been for the thrifty and careful habits of the family, our estate would long ago have passed into strange hands. At the same time, my father was one of the most straight-forward of men. He had as great a moral courage as any man I ever knew. I can quite well remember his ordering a man out of his house who came in drunk, and reprimanding others who had done some bad deed. John Moore of Mealsgate was indeed a terror to evil-doers."

Some five years after his wife's death, John Moore married again. The children were growing up untrained and ill-tended. There wanted some clever woman about the house to look after the bairns while John was afield at his work. The consequence was that he married Mary Pattinson, sister of the Rev. Mr. Pattinson, of Caldbeck. She proved an active and managing housemate. She was a good wife as regarded her husband; but she did not get on very well with the elder children. They regarded her as an intruder, and were predisposed to resist her authority. "My step-mother," says George Moore, "was invariably kind to me, but the elder children probably had a strong prejudice against her. At all

events, as regarded the family, she did not add to the happiness of our household.”

At the age of eight, George Moore was sent to school. The school to which he went was situated at Boltongate, about two miles from Mealsgate. It used to lie at the corner of Bolton churchyard, separated from the church itself by the parish burying-ground. It has recently been pulled down to make room for more graves. To that school George Moore walked daily, wet or dry, to receive his miserable quatum of “education.”

Very little provision was made in those days for the education of the rising generation, Cumberland was no better than the other English counties. Any man who had a stick-leg, or a club-foot, or a claw-hand, thought himself fit to be a teacher. The three R's formed the amount of the accomplishment given. The teaching was altogether lifeless and humdrum. What was knocked into the boys was done for the most part by caning and whipping. In George Moore's case the teaching was given by a man addicted to drink. His name was Blackbird Wilson. He was called Blackbird because he could imitate the singing of any bird in the neighbourhood, and especially of the blackbird. Here is George Moore's account of him:

“The master, Blackbird Wilson, was an old man, fond of drink. The scholars were sent out to fetch it for him three or four times a day. He used to drive the learning into us with a thick ruler, which he brought down sharply upon our backs. He often sent the ruler flying amongst our heads. The wonder is that he did not break our skulls. Perhaps he calculated on their thickness. His rule was to drive reading, writing and arithmetic into us by brute force. He never attempted to make learning attractive. He did not cultivate the understanding or endeavour to teach us the good knowledge. Such being the case, I often played the truant, and rambled about whenever I could get away. Indeed I should have been much oftener absent, had it not been for the dread of the terrible floggings which were then as common in Cumberland as

elsewhere. My determination not to study followed me through my school-days; and often, indeed, have I repented of my folly in not learning as much as I could when at school, for I have often felt mortification of being ignorant. My faults were those of an energetic and wayward disposition, unhelped by a mother's sympathy and solace."

When Blackbird Wilson retired from the office of schoolmaster, he was succeeded by Mr. Allison, a humaneer and better teacher. The Rev. W. M. Gunson, M.A., has furnished the following information as to the teaching and routine of the school while he attended it. He says, "Dull tradition and immobility are very conservative in isolated country places like Bolton; and I believe that an account of my school time will accurately represent that of George Moore's. The curriculum consisted of the three R's, with spelling. I have no recollection of learning anything like grammar or parsing. One thing, however, was carefully taught, the Church Catechism. In Lent, every year, we spent much time in committing it to memory, and on the afternoon of Easter Sunday we were publicly examined in it by the clergyman in the church, in presence of the largest congregation that assembled on any day of the year; for the parents were there, wishing to hear their children acquit themselves well.

"The arrangements of the school itself were rude and rough enough. The fire was lighted in the mornings, and the school swept out by two of the boys in turn, specially told off for the purpose. Their duty lasted for a week, at the end of which they had the privilege of naming their successors for the following week. When coals were wanted, the money to buy them was raised by levying a tax of twopence or three-half pence each on all the scholars. Many of the children, who came from a distance, brought a cold dinner with them, and ate it in the school. The time that remained at the midday interval was mostly spent in bathing in the river Ellen, which runs about half a mile from the school. This

contributed to cleanliness and health, and gave the boys a love of cold water which clung to them through life.

“One of the holidays occurred in harvest time. It was secured by a process of *barring t’ maister oot*. As soon as any of the scholars announced that they had seen t’ first stook,¹⁴ a conspiracy was entered into; and during the midday interval the boys shut themselves up in the school, and barricaded the door and windows against outsiders. On the master returning from his dinner, entrance was denied him. He generally made a *show* of violence to break in, but of course he never succeeded. When he found his efforts vain, he called a parley. The first condition the boys insisted on was freedom from punishment for the *barring oot*; and when that was promised, they then proceeded to negotiate as to the length of the holiday that was to be given. Their rebellion being always successful, was, like other successful rebellions in wider spheres of action, regarded as an act of schoolboy loyalty and patriotism, and when it was over, all alike enjoyed its successful results.”

The amusements of the boys during play-hours were in some respects peculiar to the district. Wrestling, or worsling, was their famous sport. The boys tried their strength with each other. They got to know the best way of *takin’ hod*; the chips and the hypes; the buttocks and the cross-buttocks; the back-heeling, the hank and the click inside. The wrestling of Cumberland and Westmoreland is well known. The game, as practiced there, is not so savage as that of Cornwall. There is no hard kicking of the shins or legs, and the boys or men who have thrown each other continue the same good friends as ever. Men of all classes wrestle, - statesmen, ploughmen, cobblers, labourers and even clergymen. One of the most noted wrestlers in Cumberland was a curate - the Rev. Abraham Brown. William Richardson of Caldbeck, and George Irving, the publican at Bolton Gate (whose whisky Blackbird

¹⁴ The earliest shock of corn cut.

Wilson so much relished), were the most noted wrestlers in the neighbourhood.

The boys began to try their physical powers early. They wrestled with each other on the village greens. George Moore, like his schoolfellows, often tried his hand. He was strong and wiry; tenacious and persevering. He learnt various tricks of the art; and before he left school there were few boys who could stand before him. We shall afterwards find that he acquired some celebrity from his power of wrestling.

Another game of the schoolboys was *Scots and English*. This was doubtless a survival of the old border warfare. The boys form two parties, which respectively represent the Scots and English. They fix upon two strongholds, at the distance of from sixty to a hundred yards apart. A boundary line is drawn, and each party deposits their coats, waistcoats, and bonnets at the proper hold. The sport then begins. The boys run across the line, and endeavour to make prisoners of each other; at the same time that they plunder the enemy in the most dexterous manner, without becoming prisoners. If they are taken prisoners they are carried to a supposed place of confinement, though sometimes the prisoners are mutually permitted to pillage for the conquerors. The same game is played, with some slight variations, on the Scottish side of the Border.

Among George Moore's other amusements was that of bird-nesting. He was accustomed with other boys to search the bushes which overhung the Dowbeck burn and the trees which skirted the river Ellen. He climbed trees that no one else dared to climb. He searched the Peel Towers of Whitehall and Harby brow. They were haunted by jackdaws, whose eggs he wished to secure. They built their nests in the old wide chimneys of the towers. With his usual daring, he had himself let down by ropes from the top of the towers to the places where the nests were built. Thus he brought home lots of eggs, and when he had blown them and strung them, he hung them in long rows over the mantelpiece at Mealsgate.

George Moore was an excellent player at marbles. He was so successful, that the other boys thought that the merit was due to the marbles and not to the player. They consequently bought his marbles for a penny apiece, though they cost him only five for a halfpenny. As he was not allowed any pocket-money, the money thus earned was sometimes found very useful.

For instance, on one occasion, when eleven years old, he went from Mealsgate to Carlisle to see a man hanged who had passed a forged Scotch note. He was accompanied by another boy. They started early in the morning, and made their way to Carlisle, walking a distance of seventeen miles. They reached the Sands, where the execution was to take place. But the boys, being so little, could scarcely see over the heads of the people who crowded round the gallows. George, with his usual resolution, determined to push himself forward, and got as near to the gallows as possible. He pushed through amongst the people's legs, and when he got to the troop of dragoons who surrounded the scaffold, he passed under the horses' legs, and thus got to the front rank. He saw all that happened. When the man was hanged, George swooned away. When he came to himself, he found that some hot coffee was being poured into his mouth. He could never afterwards bear the taste of coffee. After the execution, he walked home again; thus doing thirty-four miles walking in a day - a remarkable proof of strength in so young a boy.

George Moore, though an unwilling scholar, enjoyed his truant days and his holidays very much. "Being passionately fond of horses," he says, "whenever I escaped from school, I spent the time in leading the horses with the carts of some farmer in the neighbourhood." He had also the ambition of following the hounds. One day got hold of his father's half blind mare and mounted her barebacked. He could not take the saddle, for that might be missed. But away he went in search of John Peel and his hounds, which he understood were to hunt that day over the adjoining fells:

*D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gray?
 D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day?
 D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
 With his hounds and his horn in the morning?
 'Twas the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
 An' the cry of his hounds has me ofttimes led;
 For Peel's view holloa would 'waken the dead,
 Or a fox from his lair in the morning.*

John Peel was an enthusiastic and hair-brained fox hunter. His name was very widely known. The song from which the above verses are taken is known all over the world, wherever English hunters have penetrated. It was heard in the soldiers' camps at the siege of Lucknow. It is well known in America. Boys whistle the tune, or sing the song, all over Cumberland.¹⁵

John Peel lived at Uldale, near Caldbeck, between Brocklebank Fell and the High Pike, not far from Bolton Church. Everybody knew him and his hounds. They knew where he was to meet, and

¹⁵ John Woodstock Graves, the author of *Dye ken John Peel*, gives the following account of its composition. Nearly forty years have passed since John Peel and I sat in a snug parlour at Caldbeck among the Cumbrian mountains. We were then both in the heyday of manhood, and hunters of the older fashion; meeting the night before to arrange the earth-stopping, and in the morning to take the best part of the hunt-the drag over the mountains in the mist-while fashionable hunters still lay in their blankets. Large flakes of snow fell that evening: We sat by the fireside hunting over again many a good run, and recalling the feats of each particular hound, or narrow breakneck escapes, when a flaxen-haired daughter of mine came in, saying, 'Father, what do you say to what Grannie sings?' Grannie was singing to sleep my eldest son - now a leading barrister in Hobart town - with an old rant called *Bonnie Annie*. The pen and ink for hunting appointments being on the table, the idea of writing a song to the old air forced itself upon me, and thus was produced, impromptu, *D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gray?* Immediately after, I sang it to poor Peel, who smiled through a stream of tears which fell down his manly cheeks: and I well remember saying to him in a joking style, 'By Jove, Peel, you'll be sung when we're both run to earth!'" - *Songs and Ballads of Cumberland and the Lake Country*, by S. Gilpin

where he was to hunt. He had a rare mongrel pack of hounds. They were of all sorts and sizes, yet they were good hunters. He had an immense affection for his dogs, as they had for him. A mutual feeling seemed to exist between them. One who knew him said, that if he threatened, or spoke sharply to a dog, he would be found wandering and hiding for two or three days together, unless he had previously expressed his always returning kindness. Whenever they came to a dead lock he was sure to be found talking to some favourite hound as if it had been a human being. The dogs seemed know all that he said relative to hunting as well as the best sportsman in the field.

John Peel hunted everything; from a rabbit to a fox. Even the sheep were not secure against his hounds. Boys used to assemble from all quarters to see the hunt start, and to follow it on foot for as far as they could. Happy were they who, like George Moore, could obtain a barebacked horse. For this they would endure any punishment. The first hunt of George Moore's with John Peel's hounds occurred about the year 1816; though the famous old huntsman lived on till 1854, and died full of honours at the ripe age of seventy-eight.¹⁶

There was another sort of hunt in which George Moore took a still keener interest than in the hunt with John Peel on a barebacked horse. This was a hunt with the Dalesmen, who are all keen hunters. The shepherds look upon the fox as their natural enemy. They are not like the low-country hunters, who cherish the fox, find covers for him, and regard the unhallowed man who kills him as a vulpicide. In Cumberland and Westmoreland the fox, in lambing time, takes to the hills. On his way he robs some auld

¹⁶ John Peel possessed a small estate near Caldbeck. He spent the greater part of his fortune in keeping up his hounds and harriers. He used to sell a bit of his land from time to time to carry on the hunt. At length he became much embarrassed. The Cumberland hunters then called a meet, and before parting they sang *John Peel* in full chorus, presenting him with a handsome gratuity, which enabled him to shake off his encumbrances and to die in peace and quiet.

wife's henroost; and when he reaches the higher grounds he begins worrying the lambs. The hue-and-cry is then got up against him. The shepherds collect their collies, and determine to hunt the fox and destroy him.

The cry goes abroad that there is to be a hunt. All the runners in the neighbourhood join the shepherds. They bring dogs of all sorts, Scotch terriers, retrievers, Dandie Dinmonts, Bedlington terriers, bulldogs, greyhounds, foxhounds, and everything that will run. All is done on foot, so that the fleetest is in at the death. The shepherds soon find out the fox. They know where he is by the remains of his last lamb-feast. They track him to the adjoining holes, and his smell soon betrays where he is. Sometimes he is drawn like a badger; and then he is worried where he is. At other times he hears the yelping of the dogs and the noise of his pursuers, and hastens away. "There he is! Yoicks!" There is a terrible run; up hill and down dale; through bogs and marshes; over the fell and down into the hollow beyond, where he is lost in some "borrant." But the shepherds are out again the next day, and they never cease their efforts until they have killed the fox or driven him away from the sheepwalks.

George Moore's schooldays were not yet over. Though he was fond of fun, frolic, wrestling, birds-nesting, and hunting, he was a general favourite; he was such a helpless boy. He thought nothing of getting up early in the morning and walking nine or ten miles over the fells to Over Water to get a basket of fish for the family. In the autumn, he would walk a long way up Binsey Hill for blaeberrys. During the war time, the necessaries of life were all very dear. Everything was taxed to the uttermost. Poor people could scarcely live. Salt was sixteen shillings a stone. This told very heavily on the statesmen; for salt was necessary for many things concerned with farming and cattle-keeping.

"I was much delighted," says George Moore in his autobiography, "when the harvest holidays came. As my brother did not pay me any wages, and as I only had my meat and clothes,

I hired myself out, when the home fields were cut, to the neighbouring farmers; and I was thus enabled to get some pocket-money which I could call my own. I started at sixpence a day, and by the time that I was ten years old I got eighteen pence a day. When I reached the age of twelve, being a very strong boy, I ‘carried my rig’ with the men. I sheared with the sickle, and kept time and pace with the full-grown shearers. For this I earned two shillings a day, with my food. This was considered unequalled for a boy of my age to accomplish.”

There were several customs peculiar to Cumberland and Westmoreland which were then always observed in harvest-time. At the finishing of the corn-cutting, the great object of each man was to shear the last shock of corn, as it was thought lucky to do so. Therefore each tried to hide beneath his feet or at “dyke back” a little shock of corn, so as to get the last cut. He who succeeded, plaited it at night and hung it up on the beams of the house, where it remained until Christmas morning, when it was given to the best milk cow. Before leaving the field, the shearers all clustered together, and one of them said :-

*“Blessed be that day that our Saviour was born,
Our maister’s got his hay housed and all his
corn shorn!”*

Then all shouted together “A Kurn! A Kurn! Halloo!” That night the Kurn-supper was provided of which butter-sops formed the indispensable part. This was composed of wheaten flour baked on a girdle, like oatcakes. It was then broken up into small fragments, and mixed with butter, sugar, and rum, and afterwards with half churned cream. Then followed songs, country-dances, and reels, danced to a neighbour's fiddle; sometimes even measure was kept to a tune given by a good singer, or, better still, by the best whistler of the party.

To return to George Moore’s early education. After leaving Blackbird Wilson’s school at Boltongate, for which his father paid six shillings and sixpence a quarter, he was sent to Pedler

Thommy's school at Crookdyke, near Leegate. Thommy had been a pedler, as his name indicated. Though he had broken down as a peddler, he was thought good enough to be a school master. He was not a good teacher, though he was much less cruel and drunken than the Blackbird.

About this time George Moore formed an acquaintance with the Daniels of Newland's Row, Mealsgate. One of the boys was a good wrestler, and George had many a hard struggle with him on the Leesrig pasture. In the evenings, he used to go into their house, and there he learnt to knit - Joseph Daniels seated at one end of the fender, and George Moore at the other, - the girls sitting by at their wheels. They all went to learn dancing together at the Appletree public house at Mealsgate.

By this time George had reached the age of twelve. His father sent him to a finishing school at Blennerhasset. He remained there for only a quarter: the cost was eight shillings. "The master," he says, "was a good writer and a superior man - indeed a sort of genius. For the first time I felt that there was some use in learning, and then I began to feel how ignorant I was. However, I never swerved from my resolve to go away from home. I had no tastes in common with my brother. I felt that I could not hang about half idle, with no better prospect before me than of being a farm-servant. So I determined that I would leave home at thirteen and fight the battle of life for myself."

CHAPTER III.

APPRENTICESHIP.

BUT how was the battle of life to be fought? How was George Moore to enter upon the struggle? Where was he to begin? In a very small way, as with all beginnings. A draper in Wigton called Messenger, having intimated to Daniel Wilkinson that he wanted an active boy, Wilkinson immediately answered, "I know the very boy for you!" The boy was George Moore.

Wilkinson, being a friend of the Moores, told them that Messenger would come out some day and see his proposed apprentice. John Moore did not welcome the suggestion. He did not wish the boy to be a draper, or anything of the sort. Why should he not "stick by the land," as his fathers had done before him? He thought it rather humiliating that either of his sons should enter the trade.

Nevertheless Messenger came out to Mealsgate to see the boy. Old Moore would not hear of George going to Wigton. "If you want a boy take Thomas but leave me George; he's the far better worker." Thomas, however, would not go. He was the eldest, and heir to the property. If anyone was to go, it must be George.

Mrs Moore, George's stepmother wished him to go. He was a favourite of hers, and seeing his eagerness, she strongly advised his father to let him go to Wigton. She did not think he could be of much use at Mealsgate. He would hang on to the estate; and after all he could never rise much above the rank of farm-servant. Besides, George reiterated his determination to leave home. He could not get even the wages that he earned on the farm. He wanted to do something for himself. He *would* go to Wigton.

In the meantime Messenger had been looking into the lad's face. "I like the look of him very much," said he to his father. "He is strong and active. He's just the boy for me. You must let me have him." At last John Moore, who was an easy, good-natured man, and perhaps somewhat under the control of his wife, gave way. "Well," said he, "I fear I maun part wi' him; God bless thee, my lad." It was at length arranged that George Moore should be bound apprentice to Messenger for four years.

George made the necessary arrangements to leave Mealsgate. He had to part with his donkey, his dearly beloved companion. He sold him to John Dobbins for sixteen shillings, though he had to wait long for the money. Then his clothes and his linen had to be arranged. After everything was ready, they were packed in the hair trunk bequeathed to him by his great-uncle, and sent on to Wigton by the cart. George and his stepmother rode thither on horseback, she clinging to him on the packsaddle behind. There were many things to be arranged at Wigton as to the boy's feeding and lodging.

Wigton is a small country town, about eleven miles west of Carlisle. It used to be celebrated for its hand-loom weaving and calico-printing; though these trades have now left the place and

become absorbed in the great manufacturing centres. It is now principally known for its weekly markets, and horse and cattle fairs. Its population is nearly stationary.

Mrs. Moore arranged that George should sleep in his master's house and get his meals in the adjoining public-house – the Half Moon Inn. It was a very bad arrangement for a boy brought from home without a friend in the place to have to go to a public-house for the purpose of getting his meals. It brought him in contact with the drinking part of the population, and put him in the way of joining them in their drinking habits. He himself says, "My apprenticeship will not bear reflection. My master was more thoughtless than myself. He gave way to drinking, and set before me a bad example. Unfortunately, I lodged in the public-house nearly all the time, and saw nothing but wickedness and drinking."

So far as the shop was concerned George got on very well. He was civil, attentive, and hard-working. He soon made friends with the customers. They preferred to be served by him rather than by his master or fellow-apprentice. He gives the following account of his work:- "I had to make the fire, clean the windows, groom my master's horse, and do many things that boys from our ragged schools nowadays think they are 'too good for.' I should have been happy enough but for the relentless persecution and oppression of my fellow-apprentice, who was some years older than myself. He lost no opportunity of being cruel to me. He once nearly throttled me. He tried to damage my character by spreading false reports about me, and telling untruths to my master. Even now, after so many years have passed, I can still feel the burden under which my life groaned from the wrongs and misrepresentations of that time.

"After about two years this tyrant left, and I became head apprentice. I had now to keep the books, serve the good customers, and borrow money to pay my master's debts; for by this time he had become very unsteady. The only marvel was that in God's good providence I did not become a victim to drink myself, as I saw nothing else before me. I slept at the shop, but

got my food at the Half-Moon public-house. Then I had to give a glass of spirits and water to all the good customers, even if a parcel was bought as small as a five-shilling waistcoat.

“I now considered myself of some importance, having an apprentice under me! He had lots of pocket money, and I had none. We therefore played at cards, and I won his money. I did it in fair play, having always luck at cards. This gave me a taste for play. I kept a pack of cards in my pocket. I played at cards almost every night. I went to the public-house and played with men for high stakes. I frequently lost all that I had, but I often gained a great deal. I sometimes played the whole night through. Gambling was my passion, and it might have been my ruin. I was however saved by the following circumstance:-

“I had arranged an easy method for getting into my master’s house at night, after my gambling bouts. I left a lower window unfastened; and by lifting the sash and pushing the shutters back, I climbed in, and went silently up to my bed in the attic. But my master having heard some strange reports as to my winnings and losings at cards, and fearing that it might at last end in some disaster to himself, he determined to put a stop to my gambling pursuits. One night, after I had gone out with my cards, he nailed down the window through which I usually got entrance to the house, and when I returned, and wished to get in, lo! the window was firmly closed against me.

“It was five o’clock in the morning of Christmas Eve. That morning proved the turning point in my life! After vainly trying to open the window, I went up the lane alongside the house. About a hundred yards up, I climbed to the ridge of the lowest house in the row. From thence I clambered my way up to the next highest house, and then managed to creep along the ridges of the intervening houses, until I reached the top of my master’s dwelling - the highest house of all. I slid down the slates until I reached the waterspout. I got hold of it, and hung suspended over the street. I managed to get my feet on to the window sill, and pushed up the