Poems in the North Yorkshire Dialect

Castillo John
Title: Poems in the North Yorkshire Dialect

Author: Castillo John

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POEMS
IN THE
NORTH YORKSHIRE DIALECT,
BY THE LATE
JOHN CASTILLO,
JOURNEYMAN STONEMASON AND WESLEYAN REVIVALIST.

Edited, with a Memoir and Glossary, by
GEORGE MARKHAM TWEDDELL,

ROSE COTTAGE, STOKESLEY:
PUBLISHED BY THE EDITOR.
J. GOULD, PRINTER, MIDDLESBROUGH.
1878.
TO THE READER.

Persons having copies of Castillo's Poems in his own handwriting, will very much oblige the Editor by lending them to him for a time, that he may compare his own copy with them, and thus help to restore them to what Castillo intended them to be. They will be carefully returned.

Rose Cottage, Stokesley.
TO

Mr. Joseph Dale,

Yeoman,

Of Danby Head,

One of that fast-disappearing class in our English community—the farmers who cultivate their own land and their own brains—I Dedicate this humble attempt to do justice to the Memory of his departed friend, John Castillo; hoping soon to publish a correct edition of the Local Poems of the same Author, uniform for binding with the present pieces in the Dialect of the District.

George Markham Tweddell.

Rose Cottage, Stokesley, July, 1878.
TO CASTILLO.

Although our creeds might vary, Castillo,
And our amusements might not be the same,
(For thou wouldst look with horror on my love
For the fine dramas with which Sophocles,
Euripides, and Terence, moved the souls
Of Greeks and Romans in the days of old;
And those of Marlowe, Shakspere, and the rest
Of England's noblest dramatists; would scorn
To dance around the Maypole with a maid
Fair as the lily and as spotless too;
Yet as thou loved my Cleveland's hills and dales,
And had compassion for her people's souls,
And strove to win them from all wicked ways;
Though thou too oft might in confusion blend
Mere innocent enjoyments with their abuse;
I love thee, noble if mistaken soul!
And would much rather err with Puritans—
Earnest, though much too solemn—than defile
My spirit in the brutalizing pools
Of sensual debasements. And I would fain
Pay thee such honour as thou merited,
Among our Cleveland poets, though thy rank
Be not the highest: thou hast gain'd the hearts
Of numbers whom no other bard has won;
And as the vocal songsters of the grove
Vary in compass and in melody,
Yet all are welcome to the naturalist,
So in our poesy: not Homer's strains,
Nor Dante's visits to the nether realms,
Nor Milton's soaring to eternal day,
Are for all readers. Humble lays like thine
Solace the lab'ring dalesman in his toil,
Help him to bear the numerous ills of life,
And teach his soul to look from earth to heaven.

PETER PROLETARIUS.
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Tailpieces by Bewick, pages 40, 49, 61 and 76.
" " by Linton, pages 16 and 50,
Preparing for Publication, uniform for binding with the present work, the

**LOCAL POEMS**

of the late

**JOHN CASTILLO,**

Edited, with Historical and Topographical Notes,

**BY**

**GEORGE MARKHAM TWEDDELL,**

And Illustrated with several Engravings,

*Price One Shilling to Subscribers, and One Shilling and Sixpence to Non-Subscribers.*

Persons anxious to secure copies at Subscribers' price, must give in their names and addresses to the Editor, at Rose Cottage, Stokesley,
MEMOIR.

John Castillo was born at Rathfarnam, three miles from Dublin, in the year 1792; his parents, like the great majority of the people of Ireland, being Roman Catholics; an obnoxious state church doing more than anything else to retard the enlightenment of the people. Ireland at that time nominally possessed two houses of parliament of its own; but as the so-called representatives of the Irish people were exclusively elected by a handful of Protestants, and many of these members were in the pay of the British government, which for centuries ruled the Emerald Isle with a rod of iron, the entire extinction of that parliament eight years later was no great loss to the country. Sir Hercules Langrishe had, indeed, in the year of Castillo’s birth, succeeded in carrying a bill to allow Roman Catholics to practice the law, and removing certain restrictions on education, trade, and intermarriages; but when the Dublin merchants petitioned for the restoration of the elective franchise, and other civil rights, to Roman Catholics, a Mr. Latouche moved that their request be rejected, and his motion was carried by a large majority.

The mischievous interference of governments in theology has in all ages caused immense crime and misery; and until mankind come to regard religion as a thing entirely between themselves and their Heavenly Father, with which no human authority has the least right to interfere, and mere speculative opinions as matters for which no man is to be called to account by his fellowman, much less to be made to suffer pains and penalties, there can be no real civil and religious liberty; and without civil and religious liberty no people can be truly happy. Under the cloak of religion, spoliation and persecution, generation after generation, were perpetrated on the poor population of that noble island, whose savage kerns, under proper government, might have been developed into one of the finest peoples on this planet.

"'Tis well to cultivate each yard of soil
For corn, and fruits, and flowers; it is well
To probe the earth for minerals that may
Be fused to human use; but it is vain
To prize of 'wealth of nations' in our pride—
Yea, bloated ignorance—if we despise,
Neglect, or scorn, the meanest child that's born
Of meanest parents; for there is a wealth
To be developed by all nations yet,
In whose bright rays all other wealth will pale."

PETER PROLETARIUS.

Under such misgovernment, Irishmen could not entertain feelings of friendship for England, and many of them had enlisted into the armies of France, fighting against her for despotic kings, whilst others were amongst the best soldiers in the army of American Independence. And when Castillo was born there was a ferment throughout Europe. France, just risen, like a mighty giant, from eight centuries of cruel oppression, was bravely defying the world for that liberty which, when gotten, she knew not how best to use; so that in Ireland, as elsewhere, the oppressed looked to her for succour; whilst timid reformers in England were scared by some French excesses into bolstering up all the rottenness and wrong-doing of their own government, some of them, like Burke, becoming more rabid than those who had always been opposed to all reform. The history of Ireland at the time of Castillo's birth is a subject I would strongly recommend my readers to study, as we even yet know far too little of the sister kingdom. No wonder that Castillo's parents should leave their oppressed country, where tortures on the one hand, and secret conspiracies on the other, were the order of the day; a country of which an able Irishman, GEORGE HOLMES,* a few

* SKETCHES IN SOME OF THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES ON IRELAND, COLLECTED DURING A TOUR IN THE AUTUMN, 1797, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS, is a delightful octavo volume, published in London in 1801. The work is illustrated with beautiful views of the interior of the Abbey of Holy Cross, the cathedral-crowned Rock of Cashel, Cormac's Chapel on the south side of the said cathedral, Ross Castle, Mucrus Lake, and Lismore Castle, etc., from his own pencil; and the sixteen Letters of which the volume is composed are not only most pleasant reading, but are full of historical and archaeological information, both his father and himself being well versed in antiquities. The book was dedicated to the Duchess of Devonshire, and was the means of procuring for him the patronage of the Dukes of Leinster and of Devonshire, Viscount de Vesel, and others of the nobility, in his profession as an artist, which he came to England to practice in 1802, though, I believe, the rightful heir to an Irish peerage and to immense landed possessions. As a proof of George Holme's assertion, quoted above, of the general ignorance of readers regarding Ireland, I may mention that Sterne, who was born at Clonmel, November 24, 1713, but left the country in his boyhood, takes a Sentimental Journey to the foot of Mount Taurus, in France, for a pleasing picture of a peasant's dance after supper, which then, as I learn from good George Holmes's valuable volume, he might have found in his native country, and which the artist-author saw and described some thirty years after the body of Sterne had been stolen from its grave in "the new burying-ground near Tyburn," and dissected by Professor Collignon at the university of Cambridge, and his skeleton strung together with wires for the instruction of students in anatomy.
years later remarked:—“Strange to say, Ireland, which, for a
space of six hundred years and more, has been politically con-
ected with, and continues to be a powerful and valuable gem in,
the crown of Great Britain, is less known to the people of Eng-
land, in general, than the most remote regions.”

On their voyage from Ireland to England, the Castillo family
were shipwrecked at the Isle-of-Man; and, when the subject of
this memoir was in his second or third year, settled at the quiet
hamlet of Lealholm Bridge—nine miles from Whitby, thirteen
from Gisbro’, and eighteen from Stokesley. If, like Napper
Tandy, and others, he found it necessary to leave his country to
escape political prosecution, which is by no means unlikely, I do
not know how he could have chosen a safer or more sequestered
spot than the Lealholm of that day. Thus from his earliest re-
collections, though by birth and parentage Irish, John Castillo
was a resident of Lealholm Bridge; and, though often obliged to
leave his foster-valley, “to beg a brother of the earth to give
him leave to toil,” as Burns very pithily puts it, the principal
part of his life was spent in that rural hamlet, his residence being
the humble stone cottage adjoining the old papermill. Thus in
his “Lealholm Bridge—a Soliloquy during a Visit, after some
years’ absence,” we have:—

“In distant lands my father’s lot was cast,
And we were left to feel the bitter blast.
Death’s fatal hand its victim did arrest,
And tore him from the darlings of his breast.
I, by a mother’s care, when young, was led
Down by the river to yon primrose bed,
Where birds so sweetly sung the trees among,
I thought those days were happy, bright, and long.
Oft I, a boy, with others of my age,
Did eager here in youthful sports engage:
Oft in yon wood we roved when life was new,
The rocks, and trees, and rugged caves to view,
Where woodbines wild with sweets perfumed the air,
And all seem’d joyous, beautiful, and fair.”

Glaisdale, in which Lealholm Bridge is situated, was until re-
cently a chapelry to Danby, but is now, by an order in council,
erected into a separate vicarage. Between there and Whitby is a
population amongst which Protestants say the light of the Re-
formation has never fairly penetrated, but which the Castillo
would regard as remaining loyal to the only true church. It was
wise of his mother to lead him forth in childhood to see the
beauty of the green fields, and golden whins, and purple ling, in
their seasons; to listen to the song of birds, to gather wild
flowers on the banks of the Esk—a river whose Celtic name
carries one back to the times of the ancient Britons; and well
would it have been for poor Castillo if he had but possessed some kind and intelligent friend capable of leading him to commune with Nature, and of teaching him to despise that soul-blighting Superstition which is sacrificed to in all quarters, but has its most devoted worshippers in sequestered dales like the Danby* of Castillo's time. As it was, he had fearful dreams of "an ocean of troubled liquid fire," at a time when such deleterious teaching ought never to have reached his childish ears; and he "saw a number of tormented and tormenting beings, most of which were in human shape, rolling about, tossed by those dismal and furious waves, and as soon as some sunk, others arose, full of horror and dismal wailings," in visions which ought to have been redolent of the beauty and perfume of flowers, and the music of birds and brooks. The humblest psychologist who glances through the writings of poor Castillo will at once perceive the baleful effects which the popular superstitions have had on what, under proper culture, would have been a great intellect. Some day we may discover, that the true development of our future men and women, mentally, morally, and physically, is the only sound political economy, and the surest way to augment "the wealth of nations." For, as Sir William Jones has well sung, in his famous Ode in imitation of Alcaeus:—

"What constitutes a state?
Not high-rais'd battlement or labour'd mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crown'd;
Not bays and broad-arm'd ports,
Where, laughing at the stormy, rich navies ride;
Not starr'd and spangled courts,
Where low-brow'd baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No: men, high-minded men,
With powers as far above dull brutes endued
In forest, brake, or den,
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;
Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,

* Thank God, we have at last got a railroad through the dale; and I know of no pleasanter railway ride than on the line foolishly called North Yorkshire and Cleveland,—just as though Cleveland was not a portion of the North Riding. Danby and its neighbouring dales is a district rich in the remains of Scandinavian folk-lore. The following communication, from a late respected member for the North Riding, speaks for itself:—

"11, Dean's Yard, Westminster, May 7, 1861.

"Sir,—I shall be happy to be a subscriber to your work on Cleveland as described in your prospectus. I hope it may include the district of Danbydale, where I suspect the traditions must be curious, both in the way of language, customs, and sports.—Your faithful servant,

"G. M. Tweddell, Esq."    "E. S. CAYLEY."