

Biographical Sketch
of
James Proudfoot
Armourer
to the
Breadalbin Fencibles, &c.
By his Son
W. J. Proudfoot.
May, 1852.

Biographical Sketch of James Proudfoot, Armourer, &c.

In the vicinity of the village of Methven, Perthshire, the name of Proudfoot was formerly common, comprising 2 distinct branches or families. Of the Dingal branch, James Proudfoot was the proprietor of a small estate in Methven, and a man of sober, careful, and industrious habits. His wife's name was Grizel Chapman, and they had an only son. The father lived to be pretty well up in years, and on his death bed is said to have declared - "I'm as wise as Solomon, for I know I'm leaving my effects to a fool." It is certain that Peter, for that was the son's name, proved a very capricious person. Anxious to rise in the world, he embarked in various schemes without judgement, and got involved in pecuniary difficulties. When 60 years of age, he married a Fifeshire woman of the name of Margaret Elder, then housekeeper to the minister of Methven. At this period, Peter Proudfoot was following the business of a brewer upon his own premises, but not succeeding to his expectations, he sold out his patrimony, and turned cattle dealer. In this, too, he was unsuccessful, and continued to sink till all his money was gone. Shortly after selling his property, he left Methven, and went into Fifeshire, but finally settled in Edinburgh, where he died in great poverty, leaving 3 children, James, Jean, and Alexander, all very young. The mother then removed to her relations at Strathmiglo,

Biographical Sketch, &c.

in Fifeshire, where the children were brought up. James, the eldest, and the subject of this sketch, was born at Methven, in October, 1773. The earliest accounts represent him as looking after the cattle on the estate of a land owner, named Christy, adjoining Strathmiglo, and he is further represented as of a sprightly disposition, but prone to mischievous pranks on younger children, particularly girls. It appears he was a terror to them, and that he took great delight in inspiring this feeling to see them run away. At a proper age, he was bound apprentice to a weaver of the name of Peat, in Strathmiglo. Weaving was then, and is still, the chief support of the poorer inhabitants of this part of the country, and their work is furnished from Dundee and Glasgow. This trade, however, accorded ill with the feelings of the lad, who was forced to it against his will, and the consequence was continual quarrels with his employer, which however, originated generally with Mrs. Peat, who deemed dreams of turning her apprentice into a servant of all-work. After some 2 years servitude he grew so unmanageable that his mother and countrymen were sent for to see what could be done. Great complaints were laid before them, while James sat and listened patiently to the conclusion. He then related on the ill-usage he had received, particularly from the Mrs. on whom he spent such a shower of abuse that the master could stand it no longer. In a rage, he ordered ~~he ordered~~ his apprentice out of the house, "never to enter it again." This was only what the apprentice wanted. Close to his loom, a window opened inwards, and, on getting the word of command,

to save time going round by the door, he pulled open the window, and jumped out, rejoicing in being a pug agent one more. Ungovernable he may have been, but the treatment he received was allowed to have been very improper; and this little bit of spirit rather created a feeling in his favor throughout the village. Of the immediate succeeding history of James Proudfoot it is only known that he had no regular or constant work, but was frequently employed about Smiths and joiners shops, which clearly accorded more with the bent of his mind. Even at this time filing traps and iron became his hobby. Though quick of apprehension, he was wholly unlettered, having never been to school. In company with another young man, named Scott, about a year older, but tradeslike and penniless like himself, he left Strathmings and went to Perth in search of something to do - but they did not succeed and both enlisted into a fencible regiment then lying in the "fair city." As appears from his future correspondence, he was but 19 years of age, with such a boyish appearance as to be barely admissible.

Now fairly launched upon the world, James Proudfoot began to make good use of his leisure time. Following the mechanical bent of his mind he collected tools, and applied himself diligently to gun-making. In a few months the Breadalbin Fencibles, for such was the name of the regiment, removed to Dumfriesshire. Here it lay upwards of 2 years, during which the young soldier perfected himself in his adopted business. When about to be sent into Ireland, the situation of Armourer became vacant, and Proudfoot had the good

Biographical Sketch, &c.

luck to succeed to the office. His knowledge of guns, already known to his comrades, reached the ears of his superior officers, before whom he was called at this fortunate juncture; and having given proof of his abilities received the appointment, which he kept during his subsequent sojourn in Ireland. It is stated that a handsome scow, lately made, had no small share in this promotion; but however that may be, it is not only creditable, but remarkable that a young man, unable to read a write, and without having any apprenticeship, should thus qualify himself to fill important situations. It is probable he may have derived considerable assistance from his predecessor in office.

In Dumfries, Fife, he became acquainted with, and married Ann Dimiddie, the natural and only child of Dr. James Dimiddie, then in Calcutta. At the period of his marriage he was still short of 22 years. Immediately after, the regiment was sent into Ireland, where, during the troublesome times of the rebellion, it continued to shift from place to place for the term of $7\frac{1}{2}$ years. These journeyings brought him into conversation with most of our country in the sister kingdom, where he was accompanied by his wife, who gave birth to 3 children, the 2 eldest of which, girls, were very short lived. The society he met seems to have been of a very lively description; his travels, too, full of adventure, and altogether leaving a lasting and favorable impression on his mind. Sticking to his duties as an armourer, he never donned the regimentsals, except on field days, and the only

occasion in which he appeared in the battle-field was when the French landed at Killybegs. Even here the action was almost over when the percibles arrived.

At the restoration of peace, the regiment returned to Scotland, and was disembodied at Ayr, August 28, 1802, when James Prindfoot went to Glasgow, in search of employment as a gunsmith. On leaving Ireland he had to part with all his tools, being unable to get them conveyed across to Scotland, and in Glasgow trade was not very encouraging. While here, he was offered an appointment as sergeant, and armourer in the Fifeshire Militia, then about to be raised; and he left Glasgow on the 8th February following, to join this new regiment at Cupar. He had no intention of entering the army again, and accepted this offer, in expectation of being in the peace establishment, at a time when there was no prospect of being called out to service. But it happened otherwise: war was renewed and the regiment, in the course of events, marched into England, pitching camp successively at Newcastle, Sunderland, Spawick, Yarmouth, Dover, &c. Several years were spent in this series of journeys.

From Yarmouth, he wrote the first letter with his own hand to Dr. Dinwiddie, still in Calcutta. By this time he had greatly improved himself. Previously, however, the want of education had been a great drawback, and he not infrequently mentioned in after life that he was the father of 3 children before he could read. The times in which he lived were stirring, and to get at correct particulars of remarkable events, as

Biographical Sketch, &c.

well as to get initiated into the art of reading, he used to pay a comrade to read the newspapers for him. Applying himself with great assiduity, he eventually conquered this difficulty, and was enabled to do that for others which had been done for himself-- that is to read the newspapers. The first edition of Walker's Dictionary came out when he was in Ireland: this he purchased, and never rested till he was taught to pronounce and to know the meaning of every word it contained. Even after, this dictionary was at his right hand; and he became not only a good English scholar, but an able literary critic.

In April, 1807, Dr. Dinwiddie landed in England, and opened up a correspondence with his son-in-law, then at Silverhill barracks in Sussex, with a view to effect the discharge of the latter. It was the Doctor's desire to make provision for his grandchildren, and he did not consider the life of a soldier calculated to improve their morals. His son-in-law was no less desirous to leave the army, and start in business for himself; and the assistance which Dr. Dinwiddie was offered was very tempting. The discharge, however, was attended with great difficulty; besides a satisfactory substitute was insisted on; but this was over-ruled as Prudfoot served the regiment without "bounty money." He finally got his discharge in the 3^d June following, and immediately left Beahill barracks, where the regiment now lay, proceeding direct to London, with his wife and family consisting of 3 children, James, Alexander, and William.

Sailing soon after for Scotland, he landed at Leith, reached Cupar in
Fife, and settled down in business. When last here, the town had no gun-
maker, but now he found a person had started in that line, and what
was still less encouraging - had got the regimental orders to keep in order by
contract. This Proudfoot confidently expected to get, and it was the prin-
cipal reason why he preferred Cupar to Dumfries, in opposition to the wish-
es of Dr. Dinwiddie. In Cupar, Col. Wemyss took great interest in the new
gunsmith, but in spite of every effort trade continued very dull; and to
add to his troubles, long and severe illness afflicted the family, to which
his daughter Ann was added January 25, 1809.

For some time previous to this event arrangements were in progress
to remove to Dumfries as a place more likely to suit the business of a
gunmaker, and on the 10th May, following ~~the~~ whole family, now in good
health, started on their journey southwards, which occupied 4 days. Two gun-
makers were already in the field, and had the militia guns between them
by contract: however, in a great measure through Dr. Dinwiddie's influence
Proudfoot became known to the neighboring gentlemen, and soon found
a deal of employment, which was not altogether confined to gun-making.
He got tools to make in great numbers and variety; executed orders
for turning-lathes, steam-engines, galvanic batteries, and even electrical
machines. Lately much attention had been given to scientific machinery.
A quantity of philosophical apparatus, long neglected and out of repair,

Biographical Sketch, &c.

in the Dumfries Academy, and on which Dr. Dinwiddie had lectured in former years, was, at the Doctor's suggestion, put into good order by his son-in-law. Several of the instruments, indeed, the latter had never seen before. From merely seeing a hint in a chemical work, he lighted up the ware-rooms of Hannah, Newell, and Reid, with gas, and even proposed lighting the whole town of Dumfries with same material. An air-gun of his own manufacture, if not the very first in Dumfries, was at least the first seen by the great bulk of the inhabitants, to whom it was a remarkable curiosity. Hundreds both in town and country flocked to see and enjoy air-gun practice. In a few words, James Proudfoot became quite a philosophic workman, in which he derived no little assistance from the correspondence of his father-in-law.

Dr. Dinwiddie arrived in Dumfries, August 11, 1812, with the intention of spending his few remaining years among his friends, in his native country. The comforts he expected, however, were not realized, and a year afterwards he moved back to London, leaving behind a library of several thousand volumes, chiefly scientific, and an excellent philosophical apparatus, which became the property of James Proudfoot. Dr. Dinwiddie survived his return to London, only a few years. He died on the 19 March, 1815, leaving a handsome income of £500 a year to his son-in-law, who now gave up business, and retired to the enjoyments of a country life. Since his arrival at Dumfries, the fa-

mily had been increased by another son, John, born January 1, 1812, and another daughter, Catharine, born May 25, 1816, just after he had settled in the country. Comparatively speaking, he was still a young man, and had almost everything to render life happy. While yet in business he conducted himself with much propriety, but now with ample means, & a large circle of acquaintances, he gave way to intemperate habits. Of a kind disposition, well informed, and full of anecdote and adventure picked up in his travels, his society was much courted; and to avoid intemperance was not an easy matter. His generosity, too, often involved him in pecuniary troubles, which always ended in loss to the family. Notwithstanding this, James Proutfoot lived much respected, and continued to be visited by people of influence and education, for whose amusement he wrought experiments in various branches of natural philosophy. Frequently he has been applied to and successfully, in cases of medical electricity and galvanism: he has even attended at the infirmary, and other places to render similar assistance, always gratuitously. And when the Dampier and Maxwelltairn Mechanic Institute was started, he kindly lent the greater part of his apparatus and library to assist in its consolidation, till, by its own resources, enabled to supply their places.

On retiring from business, James Proutfoot resided successively at Green-Brae, near the Stroup; at Poplar Cottage, in Holywood; at Kettle-

Biographical Sketch, &c.

Hill, in Kirkmahoe; and again in Holywood, at Birkhall. By this time the family was springing up, when it occurred to him to find something for them to do. With this intent, he took the farm of Newbridge, Terregles, chiefly as an inheritance for his eldest son James but generally as a field where all might be useful. This farm was entered upon May 26, 1822: his disposition for Company, however, remained undiminished, and, no doubt from his habits, his health began to suffer. During the winter of 1825-'6, he was close confined to bed, but in the following summer he so far recovered as to be enabled to walk out apparently as usual. Unfortunately, this was of short duration: a relapse followed, and he continued gradually to sink till the 6th November, 1826, when he expired without a struggle or even any symptom of pain, in the 54th year of his age. His death was so remarkably calm that it was difficult to say when the moment of departure arrived. He retained his senses to the last minute, and carried to the grave the liberal opinions he was well known to entertain both in religion and politics. Agreeably to his own wishes, he was buried in Holywood Church yard, and his funeral, attended by upwards of 200 individuals, was one of the very largest ever witnessed in that part of the country. As an evidence of the respect in which he was held, several of the attendants came at great inconvenience from remote districts; and one, Robert Shaw,

from Kirkcubbin, in the borders of Ayrshire. This gentleman, who had used every exertion to get forward, arrived only in time to join the funeral train just as it entered the grave yard.

Doctor Dimwiddie's Watch

When Dr. Dimwiddie was in India, in 1796, he received from Alexander Hare of London, a case of new gold watches on commission, from which he selected the subject of this memoir. The price was 27 guineas. On the old verge principle, it moves on 2 diamonds, which are the only jewels. It is capped, has the name of Alexander Hare London, and is numbered 853.

Becoming the property of the Doctor, No. 853 was set agoing, when its career of usefulness commenced; and so well did it behave that we learn for the space of 7 years it never once stopped. Confined to Calcutta and its vicinity, it moved in a respectable sphere, attending the Doctor's lectures in the College of St. William, sitting with him on Committees on the Asiatic Society, accompanying him to the levees of the Governor General, to Nautches and other important festivals of the Hindoos. After a residence of 10 years, it took leave of the burning climes of India, September 15, 1806, and on board the St. William Putteny set sail in its return to England. Spending a few weeks at the Cape, it reached St. Helena; and after crossing the line for the 4th time, landed in the country that gave it birth. It reached its native city London to find the author of its existence gone the way of all living. On the other hand, London had

Doct^r Dinwiddie's Watch.

greatly improved, and was full of attractions particularly of a scientific nature. Among them, it was regularly drawn to the brilliant exhibitions of Professor Davy, then astonishing the philosophic world.

During the summer of 1808, the gold verge paid its first visit to Scotland, a country it was destined often and long to reside in. On the present occasion it went by sea to Leith, and divided its time between Edinburgh and Dumfries. At the latter place, it accompanied its master, who had the honor of dining in public with the Presbytery, and on a similar occasion with the magistrates of the Antient burgh. In Edinburgh, it attended a meeting of great novelty and interest—the national competition on the bagpipes, which took place July 26. 1808. Another voyage to the same localities in Scotland, followed the next summer, returning in a few months, as before, to the metropolis, where its career was one of continued science. No lecture on any important subject appears to have been delivered which 853 did not attend: always those of the Royal Institution, of which Dr. Dinwiddie was now elected a member. In consequence of this, it has sat upon Committees on many scientific subjects. The greater portion of the months of July and August, 1810, were spent at the fashionable sea-side of Margate, from which it returned to London, by coach, paying a visit to the Antient Cathedral of Canterbury. Hitherto, the career of 853 may be called one of pleasure and

exercise, but on the evening of June 24, 1811, a startling adventure occurred by which it had nearly parted for ever from its master and fellow traveller. Returning late from a party, the Doctor had just reached his own door, when he was attacked and robbed by 3 men. Singular to relate, from the position in which he was held, the watch escaped, for the sound of footsteps, in a few minutes, caused the robbers to decamp. This circumstance induced the Doctor to purchase and carry a less valuable watch when out after dark; but it was only then, for the subject of this memoir continued to be his monitor at all other times.

In August, 1812, Dr. Dinwiddie again went to Dumfries, accompanied by his faithful monitor, and travelling on this occasion by coach, they visited the classic halls of Oxford, the muses seat at Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Manufactures of Birmingham and Manchester. In Dumfries, it resided one year, and returned to ^{its} native London, there to be separated from its first owner and constant fellow-traveller. Dr. Dinwiddie died March 19, 1815, and No. 853 passed into the hands of James Pindfoot, the Doctor's son-in-law, who brought it to Dumfries, in which vicinity it was now destined to enjoy a quiet country life. The only instance in which it travelled abroad was in 1820, when it accompanied its second Lord, coaching it to and from London.

During the professorship of James Pindfoot, 853 underwent

Doctor Dinwiddie's Watch

an important change. Some 27 years had tried the outer case so hard that it was deemed advisable to have the works covered with a new case, composed of the old one and additional materials. In appearance, the new case was much like the old one, the chief difference being in the ring which was made round instead of swivel pattern. It was also less fine, but more durable. The alteration was executed through the medium of Macadam, watchmaker, Dumfries.

When it came into the possession of James Prindfoot, the watch had a massive gold fob chain and several seals; but the chain also became the worse for the wear - was one day lost; and though found again, was never afterwards attached. A plain black, silk ribbon afterwards performed the duties of a chain. Thus, though greatly improved in itself, No 853 was much lessened by its appendage.

James Prindfoot departed this life November 6, 1826. On his death bed, shortly before, he handed the hinc com to his third son, Wil. J. Prindfoot. While living, the father often remarked - "It came by philosophy, and shall go by philosophy." However, his eldest son, James Prindfoot Junr., had got the notion that the watch was left to him by his grandfather, Dr. Dinwiddie. For many years the elder brother made a bother, but never any serious attempt to get possession of it, which was now established as the property of Wm. J. Prindfoot.

The new owner, a young man just 20 years of age, much devoted

to science, but unacquainted with the world, looked upon the new connexion with admiration, and his only endeavor was to prove himself a worthy successor to a relic already famous in the neighborhood. The monotony of the last 11 years gave way. By coach, the monitor started for London, September 1, 1828, and returning through Coventry had a peep at the celebrated "Peeping Tom." The following year, August 27, it sailed in the Jane and Margaret, trader, for Liverpool, which was life again on the 6 proximo. In returning, it sailed for the first time aboard a steam vessel: the Countess of Lonsdale brought it to Whitehaven, and another steamer, the St. Andrew, to Dumfries. It reached Liverpool a second time to attend the inauguration of the first railway ever opened to public traffic; the event which proved fatal to Hushipon. On this occasion, he it remembered, 853 was not in the job of its owner, but that of his brother Alexander, who had continued to borrow it. Being the first, the owner decided it should also be the last time he would be separated from his monitor in such conditions. Accompanied, however, by its proper lord, it had, up to 1833, traversed much both of the county of Dumfries and Netherby of Kirkcubright - visiting for the first time the towns of Shumbale, Songuhar, Mmichie, Castle Douglas, Kirkcubright, Newton Stewart, &c. the wild scenery at the source of the Dee, the granite quarries at Dalbeattie, the ruins of New-abbey and Carlavrock castle, and though last not least, climbing the hill of Cuffel-

wandered amid the ruins of Inceora, Dryburgh, Poolin, and Dunstaffnage; sailed in the Cave of Fingal, and meditated on the graves of Lona; viewed the falls of Honeybyres and the Grey-mare's Tail, the rugged scenery of the Rumbling and Bracklin bridges; and stood upon the "Long bridge of Belfast." This was the first time it ever was in Ireland; and during this tour, for the first too, it sailed on a canal and travelled on a railway.

In the early part of October, just 2 months after its return, No. 853 reached the famous sister villages Wanlockhead and Leadhills; the former the highest human habitations in S. Scotland, and the latter containing the deepest mine, 133 fathoms. Down to the bottom it went, keeping correct time, both ascending and descending. During the winter which followed - its master became the victim of singularly irritating muscular convulsions, which induced him to walk much about for exercise; and on July 9, 1834, he started to spend a month on the seacoast at Crowland. Here, 853 visited the fine ruin of Dardreunan Abbey, and visited Kirkcubright for the 3^d time. In August, 1835, it sailed on a pleasure excursion, by way of Whitehaven, to Liverpool, and after spending a few days took the railroad to Manchester. Returning again by rail to Liverpool - it sailed for Annan, and there got the coach for Dumfries.

Still suffering from the muscular irritations, the owner of

853 was nevertheless devoting his energies to a very different life than formerly - no less than a home on the other side of the Atlantic. Having business in London, he started April 4, 1836, coaching it to Edinburgh where, in company with his watch, he had an interview with the celebrated Dr. Abercrombie. From Edinburgh, the watch was now carried by sea to London, and here it got into the presence of the great Socialist Robert Owen, with whom its owner had the pleasure of drinking tea. To oblige a friend in Scotland, the journey was extended through Tunbridge Wells to Battle and Hastings, in all of which places 853 had the satisfaction of tick-ticking. Leaving London via Ruthampton and Tamworth, it came again to Liverpool, whence it sailed direct to Dumfries, landing on the 21st.

The long looked for morning June 1, 1836, arrived. On that day both watch and master bade farewell to Dumfries, and sailed to Liverpool. From Liverpool on the 9, they sailed in the Cornithran and crossed the Atlantic, experiencing all the vicissitudes of calms and storms. Spending a few days on the busy streets of New York, 853 found its way by steamboat and rail to the Quaker city of Philadelphia; and still further by rail reached Columbia on the Susquehanna River. Here, it got aboard a canal boat, which led to the slopes of the Allegany Mountains. Over these mountains it was carried by a succession of stupendous inclined planes to Solon's

Town, where the rail was again changed for the canal, which in turn brought it to the smoking city of Pittsburg, at the head of the Ohio River. Up to this juncture, it had threaded through wonderful scenery, and had come into contact with the most gigantic wooden structures in the shape of bridges, viaducts, and aqueducts. In the Cutaw, an entire new class of steamboats, it descended the Ohio, calling at Wheeling, Patemouth, Cincinnati, and Louisville. At the last mentioned place, 853, for the first time, came into contact with that most degraded of human beings—a slave. Taking on, however, it left the Ohio at Evansville, following its master to New Harmony of Social fame, experiencing on the journey to and fro the accommodations of an American Stage coach—i.e. one moment dancing over rough rails—the next sinking ankle deep in mud. At N. H. however, it got into the presence of the Owen family, with whom its master tea, and spent the evening. Again on the Ohio, and making various, 853 reached the junction where its fair waters are mingled with the turbid torrents of the Mississippi the Father of Rivers. Stemming now the mighty Mississippi, it eventually arrived at St. Louis, the ne-plus-ultra of its American travels. Containing the most, here, honor of honors, it found black men exposed to sale.

From Memphis to St. Louis, the owner of 853 had been accom-

panied by his youngest brother, but now they parted; the latter to Peoria in Illinois—the former down the Mississippi, back again to Louisville. Here the watch crossed the Ohio to Jeffersonville, in Indiana, and after a long stage ride through primeval forests, arrived at Indianapolis, the capital of the State, September 1, 1836.

Settling now down as draughtsman to the Chief Engineer of Indiana, the owner of 853 found its service of great value in regulating office time. For upwards of 3 years, only one journey of importance occurred in the summer of 1837, and that was to the city of Madison on the Ohio, where its owner met, and saw for the last time, his brother returning to Scotland. During so settled a life, however, the gold verge ranged the neighborhood round for miles: it frequently spent days in the legislative hall during debates; occasionally attended governor's levees, 4th July rejoicings, State and presidential elections, Camp meetings, &c. It lived through broiling summers, and through winters with the cold 20 degrees below zero.

Towards the close of 1839, the grand system of internal improvements in Indiana came to a stand, and this with other circumstances, induced the owner of 1853 to prepare for his return to England. Leaving Indianapolis, then, as early as 4 in the morning, Nov. 28, 1839, Master and Watch started by stage, and next day at noon reached Lawrenceburg on the Ohio. Here an unfortunate accident

occurred: in an awkward moment the stage resumed the journey to Cincinnati, leaving the 2 companions behind; and what was worse separating them from their property. The only alternative was to wait a steamboat upwards, and we arrived next day, but, alas! it was in a sinking state, rotten in bottom, and intending passengers were cautioned not to come on board. Resolving, however to run all risk; master and watch jumped aboard, reached Cincinnati, and found the boxes all right, but some lesser articles gone.

Steaming it from Cincinnati, 853 reached and left Wheeling on December 3 - crossing the Allegany mountains in a stage coach, to Frederick - thence by rail to Baltimore, which was reached as early as 3 in the morning of the 6th. By rail, again, it started at 9. A.M. reached Philadelphia, and eventually New York at 11 P.M. - being thus in the space of one day in the 3 largest cities of the Union.

After 9 days residence in the Empire City, 853 set sail in the Liverpool steamship, and encountered one of the most violent storms that ever lashed the Atlantic in rage. Two of the men were thrown down from above - one smashed on deck - the other into a wild ocean, where long and painful exertions were made before he was rescued. But worse than this - an intoxicated fireman actually jumped over board, and floating awhile, sunk, never to rise again. Even more distressing - it was the lot of 853 to approach a vessel with

ruined colms, almost a total wreck, destitute of provisions, and only 3 exhausted men left of the crew. Anxiously they implored assistance but received none: the Captain of the Liverpool would not risk the lives of his own men, and sailed on to the Azores when he was compelled from the want of coal and the state of the ship. At Fayal, 4 days elapsed, during 3 of which 853 was ashore, wandering about the strange island, and among its strange people - descendants of the Portuguese; but resuming the voyage it was in 8 more days landed in Liverpool, January 11, 1840. On the 15, it was put ashore at Carleton, and by coach reached Dumfries, where many former friends smiled to see its familiar face once more.

Spending thus a few months among old associations, the travelled watch sailed back to Liverpool, on its way to the metropolis. The great North Western Railway was now opened, and along this line it was wheeled for the first time. In reaching London its owner had important business - a settlement with his trustees; and circumstances induced him to visit his native county, Kent, which gave 853 an opportunity of seeing the ancient cathedral of Canterbury and the celebrated castle of Dover. A few months only passed when it was rolled back to the great shipping port of the Mersey; and thence by way of Amman to Dumfries.

A lasting home, in Dumfries, was however not the destiny of 853, which early in January, 1841, was once more thrudding "the crowded streets of busy London." Its owner was now prosecuting his claims against his trustees, one of whom had become a bankrupt. During the interval, he became a surveyor and draughtsman in the office of architect, which brought him into contact with the country round for miles. For the space of 4 years then, the wanderings of the gold ruge ceased, or rather were confined to the streets and vicinity of this enormous city, in every part of which it continued to tick-tick. During former visits, not to speak of long residence, it had seen many important places, and had attended many important occasions. With its present owner - it has enjoyed the prospect from Richmond and Primrose hills: has rolled down Greenwich Park, and seen the pinnacles arise both at Chelsea and Greenwich: has visited Westminster abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, and gazed from the top of the Duke of York's Column; has been to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, spent months in the British Museum, and feasted in the Royal Academy, in the East India, United Service, and Lincoln's Inn Museums; has been in the Polytechnic and Adelaide Galleries, in the annoucies of the Tower and Greenwich Pavillion; has listened to Peel, Home, and O'Connell in the House of Commons, and to Wellington in the House

of Lords: has studied in the Gardens of Kew, and been lost in the
maze of Kensale Green; has rammed among the tombs of Kensale
Green, Highgate, and Nunwood, passed through the Thames Tunnel,
and sat upon Whittington's Stone.

Having got his business settled, the owner left the metropolis
July 13, 1844, one more for Dumfries, journeying on this occasion by
sea to Newcastle, where for the first time both he and his companion
were landed. Having seen the peculiarities of the place, and been
up and down the famous stairs, they departed by rail to Carlisle,
and thence by coach to Dumfries, in the vicinity of which a perma-
nent residence was now anticipated. But it was not to be so. On
the 26 March, the following year, it sailed one more for the busy port
of Liverpool, where something like a fixed abode at last arose in view.
It proved so for a number of years, varied only by occasional pleas-
ure excursions chiefly in the neighbourhood. It took, besides, a run
to see old friends about Dumfries, and for the first time paid a
visit to Hull, travelling on both occasions by rail. On the 29 July
1848, it also sailed for North Wales, landing for the first time in
the Principality. It was inside the Britannia Tube, not yet completed
and upon the great Suspension bridge at Menai. While on the latter
gazing at the vast depth below, it was "ticking" over the topmast of a
rebel, in full sail, passing underneath.

Soon after it became the property of its third master—the gold verge was content to be suspended by a silver guard, which was stolen on the homeward journey from America. Reaching England, another silver guard was attached, and continued till May 1, 1848, when one of gold was substituted, as being more in harmony with the watch itself.

At the sick beds of both its former possessors 853 had ticked and seen them laid in their graves; and it was now about, apparently, to perform a similar office to its present owner, who in 1849, became the victim of long and dangerous illness. During this period, he was removed to Hull, and altogether was upwards of 2 years confined to bed with very hope of recovery given up—Still his end was not yet come. He began to recruit, walked about on crutches, and with the faithful monitor round his neck was carried to the sea coast of Lincolnshire, at Clethorpes. Residing here for a short time, 853 returned with its master to Hull, and eventually to Liverpool, October 18, 1851, after one year's absence.

Great as some of the voyages of the gold verge had been—a greater was yet in store, and was never dreamed of till within a few weeks of its commencement. The startling news which now arrived from Australia actually influenced the possessor of 853, and induced him, feeble cripple as he was, to risk an ad-

venture to the regions of gold. Of course the companions of his travels could not be left behind, so they went aboard the Great Britain, S.S.S. which sailed August 21, 1852, on her first voyage to the Antipodes. In the largest ship either of ancient or modern times, 853 again crossed the line, and again called at St. Helena. On this occasion, it climbed the celebrated Jacob's Ladder, and stood by the grave which has rendered the island immortal. Sailing on - it again called at the Cape, October 10, and for the first time ascended the summit of Table Mountain, after a terrible struggle to its owner, who, however, eventually gathered strength therefrom.

Thus far, the verge had behaved well, but leaving the Cape and sailing direct in the face of the rising sun, - it fell rapidly rapidly behind, being unable to contend against fate. It was therefore allowed to rest in peace till the voyage terminated in Hobson's Bay, November 12. Landing next day in Melbourne, it resumed its duties, not a bit the worse of a month's sleep. Owing to the disorganised state of society, however, it became the source of much uneasiness to its passengers, whose attachment to the unwearied monitor and constant companion was now more than ever cemented. It was in short regarded with an anxiety never before deemed necessary.

Unable to procure employment the owner, after some months experience of Melbourne, decided on visiting the Diggings, in the company

of some associates; but what to do with 853 was the source of great solicitude till it was fixed in the drift Ann-pit. In this position, silent and unknown to all the world, it sailed January 31 to Geelong. Starting next morn, and after a most distressing journey of 4 days through primeval forests, it reached the famous gold fields of Ballarat, witnessing scenes unknown in former ages of the world. Eight days terminated the visit, and back thro' the forests it found its way to Geelong, sailing thence to Melbourne which it reached after an absence of 17 days. Escaping from its hiding place, it once more resumed its duties - counting the silent moments as they pass.

After vain endeavors, and when about to return to England, the owner of 853 was at last successful in finding employment. In the latter part of April, he entered on his duties as draughtsman, and 853 to regulate the office hours as formerly. Settled now in Melbourne, it lost no opportunity, however, in scouring the country round with its master botanizing along the strange creeks or picking up shells on the sea-shore. Matters went on quietly enough till April, 1855, when the owner of 853 was thrown into an awkward fix by the strange conduct of his employer deserting the office, which was eventually broke up. The strange man, indeed, vanished for a time, leaving behind many victims

including his two-confiding draughtsman; and at least 2 months elapsed before the business was settled. In the mean time 853 accompanied its owner on a 16 days excursion into the Parish of Berwick. Excepting the journey to Ballarat, this was the longest since the first arrival in Melbourne.

Again out of employment, the owner of the verge was about engaging his passage for England, when he accepted an appointment in the government service, at a distance in the country. Having laid his companion to sleep, secured in a bag, but still attached to his person, he started, via Williamstown, across the open unsheltered plains to Glenmore, some 40 odd miles, westwards of Melbourne. In this beautiful wilderness a large body of surveyors were busy locating roads, railroads, &c. The party to which he was attached was in time transferred to Mt. Blackwood to lay out the country there into farms and townships. On the same business the camp was successively, to Guendale, Korjammunip, and again to Glenmore, in which there were several stations: next to Ballan and then via Bacchus Marsh and Bullinbrook to Gisborne and several other stations. Moving thus from one wilderness to another in a country not only beset by bushrangers, but where all society was more or less debilitated with thieves and scoundrels, the owner of 853 deemed it his duty to look carefully after his charge, which followed him

station to station unknown to all but himself. At an early period it was sewed up in a bag formed from an opossum skin, and was always buried in the ground or otherwise hidden. In this manner it dragged out an ignoble existence for nearly 2 years. It never now accompanied its owner in his private excursions - threading the most romantic of creeks, exploring mountain recesses, and climbing every elevated summit within range. Even for several days in succession they have been separated sometimes 40 or 50 miles apart; and its futurity has often been the subject of serious reflection should any unfortunate casualty befall the owner. On one occasion indeed when returning from a visit to the Blackwood Diggings, he met with a sad and painful accident, which at the time seemed to be the last. Lonely, powerless, and suffering from excruciating agony he yet thought upon his fellow traveller sleeping all unconscious in the dust many miles away.

In 1857, the owner, greatly improved in health and a little in purse, determined to leave the Australian shores in the same vessel which had brought him hither - the Great Britain, then on her 4th homeward voyage. Leaving the Camp near Gisborne, he started at the unseasonable hour of 2 in the morning of May 14, for Melbourne, and never before with a mind so agitated. Besides

his gold verge, he had on his person about £80 and other valuable property, and the road before him was the most famous in the annals of bushranging. At one moment it seemed as if it was all up with him, and his mind was not at rest till daylight came. All, however, turned out well: he reached Melbourne, and on the 21st following went on board the Great Britain. Still in cog, in its young evening, 853 set sail, and, moving towards the rising sun, it passed the opposite meridian on a day which has no place in the calendar: it was neither Sunday, May 31, nor Monday, June 1. but a day between the two. On the 24, it reached the latitude of 59°, being 2 degrees further south than it ever had been north.

Doubling Cape Horn, it recrossed the line for the 6th time, spent several days at the island of St. Vincent, and having completed the circumnavigation of the globe, landed in England, on Monday August the 22^d. after an absence of 5 years and a day.

Having been over 2 years motionless, 853 was now brot out to the light, and put into the hands of William of Elliot Street, who set it agoing with a new face and new hands, the former bearing a strong resemblance to the original. Though upwards of 60 years of age, it was as brisk as ever, and as true to the duties imposed on it.

Remarks of different watchmakers through whose hands
853 has passed.

Monro, London. Upon May 19, 1843, the mainspring broke, and I was recommended to this tradesman, who had springs of 3 different qualities. I preferred one at the middle price; but on examination, he said - "this is too good a watch to put in a secondary article." He strongly advised me to get one of the best springs, valued $7/6$, assuring me it would be the cheapest in the long run, and that he would uphold it for 7 years. I agreed to this, and the same spring runs, nearly 15 years afterwards, keeps 853 in motion.

Richardson, Liverpool. In 1846, this tradesman cleans 853. When I went for it, he said - "That watch has never been abused." Being desirous to know something of its history, - I gave him a few particulars, when he observed again - "There's not many such watches made now a days."

Medcalf, Liverpool. This was a watchmaker, but a stranger, I once met in a bar parlor. Speaking of watches - he was induced to look at mine, and observed - "It's a good old watch and has been well taken care of." He also added - "If the same care continue to be taken, it will be going long after you are in the grave."

William, Liverpool. When last put into Quillemis hands, after my return from Australia, I asked if he thought it was not getting too old to be of much longer service, observing at the same time it was over 60 years of age. "Its likely to go for 60 years more, and not be done then," was the reply.

W. J. Proudfoot

January, 1858.

Returned to Liverpool, - this great seat of Commerce became the general residence of 853, which, however, occasionally diverged to visit old and new associations. Upon Sept. 1, 1857, it sailed for Manxport, landing there for the first time; and for the first time reached and spent the night in Wigton. His owner had a letter and parcel from Australia which brought him into this out-of-the-way spot, which otherwise, in all probability he would never have seen. Hence by way of Carlisle it got to Dumfries, after an absence of 8 years. On this occasion, the master ventured among the scenes and friends of early life like one risen from the grave, where, in reality, he was believed to be. Even in so short a period, great alterations had taken place. He had no relations there now, while some intimate friends were dead, and others left for ever: but such is the state of human

society which is ever on the change. Though embracing the Haugh of Orr, the visit lasted only a few weeks, when 853, retracing the steps by which it left, was again ticking in Liverpool.

The most important journey occurred December 26, when it went to London by the Great Western R.R. from Birkenhead. The chief object was the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, and in this delightful retreat, where it had never been before, it spent one entire day. Before leaving London, its owner had an adventure with 2 sharpers, who tried cunningly enough to take him in; and no doubt would willingly have carried off his gold ring; but he was too wide awake, and they, eventually, found themselves taken in to the extent of one glass of ale, at least. Having secured this - the master left them to practise on some queer subject.

Restored to Liverpool, 853 accompanied its owner, shifting from one lodging to another till August 10, 1858, when he became for the first time a householder. March, the following year, saw him also a house-owner, and his mind at rest on a subject which had greatly taken up his attention. Shortly after he commenced the study of photography, finding 853 a useful assistant in fixing the time. During this year, also, it paid 2 visits to Dumfries, August 2^d, and November 29, going

and returning all the way by water. On the first of these occasions it ventured out to Greenbrae, the residence of its second owner, when he retired from business in Dumfries. A few months after its last return to Liverpool - it took up its residence, permanently, at 6 Blythe, Everton, the property of its master.

At this period, the master commenced in earnest, a work he had had long in view - An Investigation of Darnley's Travels in connection with the Chinese embassy of 1792. The year 1860 was chiefly devoted to this purpose, and 853 accompanied him in all his inquiries, &c, till the work was brought to completion, and published. Before this, however, could take place, a journey to London was necessary, which occurred December 10. It then sat with its master in the spacious reading room of the British Museum Library, and also accompanied him to the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, to call on the Astronomer Royal. The journey was extended to Tunbridge Wells, where 853 spent one night, and met relatives of its master unseen for 9 years.

For the first time in the pocket of its present owner, 853, on November 9, 1860, sat in the jury-box of a coroner's Court: on July 9, 1861, it was in the crowd when Blodwin made his first appearance, wheeling blindfolded a man on the tight rope: August 17, it accompanied its owner to give his first vote in a county election:

and 3 days after, was with him on board the Great Eastern, the greatest ship by far of ancient or modern times. Upon August 26 it started on yet another journey to Carlisle and Dumfries, returning as it went by rail; and upon October 2, it went up to London, passing on to Farnbridge Wells - spending upwards of a week in visiting the town of Farnbridge, all the surrounding villages, and places of attraction.

Resuming its *statu quo* at 6 Blythe Street, 853 was, April 12, 1862, suddenly called on to go once more to Dumfries. W. Dinwiddie the friend and relative of its owner, in Liverpool, died in a fit, and was then removed per rail to be buried with his father in the Church-yard of Tinwald. The travelled watch was thus once more on the spot where its original owner, Dr. Dinwiddie was born.

In August the same year (1862) the master began his collection of English shells, as a healthy and amusing recreation. This led him to visit the neighborhood everywhere round Liverpool for miles, always accompanied by his never-failing monitor to give notice how time fled. When the cold, short winter days put a stop to these journeys, the traveller remained at home devoting their time to the composition of a rhyming dictionary to assist the owner in his occasional musings.

Early in the spring of 1863, the sea-side recreations were re-

summed. The month of May produced 3 important outs. On the 6th the gold rige went to Chester races, crossing for the first time the famous river Dee, and travelling all round the Curious rampart of this ancient city. On the 24, it made its second voyage to the suspension and tubular bridges over the Menai straits: and on the 28 paid its first visit to the rapidly rising watering place of Southport. Exactly 4 weeks after, the owner travelling inland on foot and back by the sea coast.

The recreations of summer ceased, and winter came round when new and strange occurrences happened. On ^{Nov.} December 5, a peculiar trouble attacked the owner, lasting something like 3 weeks. This was a muscular affection by which by which he was unable to raise his arms; and as he ^{could not} was unable put the guard chain round his watch, 853 in consequence was allowed to remain ticking in loneliness by the bedside. Scarcely had this singular affection ceased when the 2 companions encountered a most unexpected adventure, being no less than thrown down by the violent hurricane of December. The owner only, however, was slightly injured. In April following (1864) another strange occurrence took place - the Master being actually struck stone-deaf, and unable, of course, to hear the beat of his faithful servant though pressed to either ear. Fortunately, this sad state of things did not last longer than 10 or 12

days, and welcome, indeed, was the sound of 853 when it again became manifest. In Capital health through the summer, the 2 Companions resumed their town and country excursions. As regards distance, only one occurred of any importance, and that was on the 8 September, when they sailed and landed for the first time at the new and fashionable watering place of Llandudno. The Great Ormshead was then climbed, and high on the top - there was 853 ticking while its master enjoyed the wide prospect around.

Beyond the ordinary excursions in and near Liverpool, the only others standing out in relief, in 1865, were the first visit to Montyn, in N. Wales, June 20, and the second visit to Southport, July 27. On the former occasion, though 853 was as lively as a cricket, it was otherwise with its master, who searched in vain for Montyn after he had landed there.

Up to the close of 1865, 853 has undergone the following alterations or repairs. On December 15, 1859, the mainspring fixed by Mous of London broke after the long period of 16 years and 7 months. The spring which followed lasted only 4 years and 5 months, though equally expensive. Such was the difference. A link in the movement chain broke January 22, 1864, through a speck of moisture which had got inside and rusted. Another

small mishap occurred October 27, 1865, by which one of the diamonds became loose. But these trifles put right, 853 resumed its duties, and ticked away as if nothing had occurred.

When writing the concluding sentence as above, I little dreamed the history of 853 was about to cease. On the contrary, I was anticipating a brilliant future, and had arranged, in my life time, at least, that the old traveller should visit numerous places famous in the history of this country. I expected it to be my companion to the graves of Shakespeare, Newton, and Burns - to Stonehenge and the Cumberland lakes - to climb with me the Peak of Derbyshire and the lofty Snowden. Excursions were also projected to the Isle of Man: now was Ireland, and even France overlooked; but, alas! the only new locality we were destined to see together was the handsome modern town of Rhyl in N. Wales. This we reached May 22, travelling to and fro by rail. Only 4 days after, Saturday the 26, we parted company and forever. On the evening of that ill-starred day, I wandered out as I not infrequently did for our hour's amusement in the streets, and passing through the Old Hay Market my attention was drawn to a group of people surrounding a man selling pictures. While gazing on the pictures, I felt something like an electric shock at my breast, and looking down saw the grand chain hanging loose

and the watch gone. In a state of great excitement, I seized
the only individual in a position to commit the theft, and raised
the alarm - bawling out "police"; but no police came, nor would any
one lend a helping hand. The time passing long, I got tired of
office and let go my grip, believing however the fellow would keep
his ground, as he coolly denied having the watch, and expressed
himself willing to be searched by a policeman. No sooner did I
let go than he bolted, followed by the crowd, now shouting "stop
thief". Still no one tried to stop him, and he escaped into a
low street called Spitalfields. Information was at once lodged
at the Detective office, Dale Street, where I offered a reward, and
paid for the printing of bills to be distributed among pawnbrokers.
This matter settled, I wandered home with a sorrowful heart,
while a policeman in plain clothes was put upon the beat.
Soon after midnight the villain was captured, but he had no
watch, nor could any trace of it be discovered. On the Monday, I
attended the police office - first to identify the prisoner, whom I
picked out from among some 8 others; and secondly - to give my
evidence before the Magistrate. The case was remanded to Monday
Some 2^o to see if the watch turned up, but it did not. A further
remand then ensued, with no better success, till Thursday, the 5^o,
when the prisoner, who gave the name of Charles Mitchell, was

committed for trial. In the mean time, attempts continued to be made to trace out the whereabouts of 853, but all to no purpose. One rumour intimated that it was purchased by a well-known receiver of stolen property, the keeper of a beerhouse frequented by thieves but there was no evidence to lay hands on. Another rumour was that 853 was sold to a Jew, who melted down the case the very night of the robbery. In these inquiries, time fled with painful anxiety till I received a summons to attend the Sejmik on Monday July 23. Upon that day, the prisoner, Charles Mitchell, was arraigned; and though he pleaded not guilty, the jury without hesitation found him guilty. Sentence was deferred to see whether the villain would yet confess, but he would not. On the 25, he received "7 years penal servitude;" he proved, in short, to be a returned convict. Thus closed for ever the history of 853.

W. J. P.