

Memories of Malton and Some of Its Inhabitants in the 'Sixties and Onwards.

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By Thomas Baker
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RAILWAY STREET

This street is not now so important and busy as formerly owing to the competition of the 'buses with the railway. Structurally it has not altered much. Apart from the premises of Messrs. Yates & Sons, there has been no new building erected, though a few of the former buildings which were occupied as offices have now been converted into shops. Where Messrs. Yates & Sons have their offices and stores, was formerly a vacant space ad used as a storage for flags and stones in connection with the Local Board of Health. When the cobble stones were taken up prior to the laying of the water in the town, the cobbles were carted down there and also to another vacant space over the bridge, likewise occupied by Messrs. Yates & Sons, and dumped until such times as could be found some use for them. The mill now occupied by the Bransby Agricultural Trading Association was then in the hands of Messrs. Hurlley & Sons as a flour mill, and the railway lines ran up to the side of the mill. A new bridge was built across the Derwent to replace the old wooden one. The latter had a road for foot passengers, divided by a wooden structure from the road, and a similar structure separated the road and the rail on the other side of the bridge. On that portion of the bridge were several loose sleepers laid between the rail lines, and then when a truck of stones or coal was run over the loose sleepers, these were removed and the door underneath the truck released, and the contents were 'shut' through the aperture into the hold of the vessel lying immediately below the truck.

At that time there was quite a large number of vessels engaged in transporting flour, corn, stores, etc., to various places on the river Derwent, and were mostly propelled by horses. The river is navigable to York. When the North Eastern Railway Company became proprietors of the river, much of the navigable goods were transferred to the railway, hence the waterway is at present almost silted up through being in almost disuse for so long.

There is little doubt that the silting-up of the Derwent is one of the causes of the floods we often experience.

A HAUNCH OF VENISON

Between the station and the bridge where Messrs. Yates & Sons have their implement sheds, was a photographic studio occupied by a Mr. Froom, whose idiosyncrasy often laid him open to the practical joker, and there were a good many of these gentlemen in Malton at that time. They would not dare to do things now that were tolerated about the 'sixties or 'seventies. One of the jokes perpetrated on Mr. Froom was that he was to be presented with a haunch of venison, and this was purported to have been sent to him as a gift from a local landed proprietor who asked his acceptance for having done him a kindly action. Well, Mr. Froom sent out a few invitations to friends to join him at dinner on a certain evening, but one individual who was in the "know" became so conscience-stricken that he wrote a note and informed him of the joke, and said that it was not venison which had been sent, but part of a dressed goat. Consequently the dinner was very wisely cancelled.

Mrs. Mary Flint had a small sweet shop adjoining Messrs. Read & Sons' ironmongery warehouse, and she was often annoyed by boys clambering over the wall and dropping into her garden, and then running up some steps near to her house.

The office next door was used as a surgery and occupied by Mr. Charles Barker, veterinary surgeon, who had a fairly large practice amongst the training stables; he was also a noted

chess player and lived a very retired life. Mr. John Abbott, lime and coal merchant, occupied the office adjoining Mr. Barker's and on his decease his son Robert continued the business until his death. Mr. Tom Brand, brick and tile manufacturer, had an office nearby for many years.

GEORGE DINSDALE

Mr. George Dinsdale, the local poet, had charge of the public weigh and no doubt he had plenty of time on his hands to apply his poetical talents.

There is no doubt that George Dinsdale had exceptional talents as a writer of poems. Dr. Forshaw (Editor of "Yorkshire Poets, Past and Present") in a foreword of a book of poems written by George, says:-

"George Dinsdale – a friend of bygone days. How pleasant it is after a lapse of years to once more hear of and communicate with one, not only having a kindred soul, but one who still resides in a place in which were spent some of the happiest days of your life. Mr. Dinsdale was born in the dear old quaint town of Malton, on July 13th, 1818, and he is a poet who possesses the true *furor poeticus*. We feel certain that this curious coincidence in the life of Mr. Dinsdale will be interesting to all our readers. We therefore offer no apology for inserting it. We also give the letter received by Mr. Dinsdale from Cannon Kingsley, the author of 'Alton Locke.' "

"Alton Locke, tailor and poet, born in London, and at an early age left fatherless. A visit by his uncle results in his being placed with Mr. Smith, tailor, etc., in a street off Piccadilly, where he sat on the shop-board among the chartists and drunkards, himself being a teetotaller, weak and delicate; and whilst he sat there his cousin walked the university, a Cam-undergraduate. Alton falls in love with the daughter of a dean, and finding she has only been fooling him, he emigrates and dies on his passage."

"George Dinsdale, tailor and poet was born in Malton, and at an early age left fatherless. A visit by his uncle results in his being placed with Mr. Smith, tailor, etc., in Bold Street, Liverpool, where he sat on the shop-board among chartists and drunkards, himself a teetotaller, weak, and delicate; and whilst he sat there his cousin was preparing for his call to the Inner Temple, Lincoln's Inn. George falls in love, with the housekeeper of a rural dean, and they have made fools of each other. His family wished him to emigrate, but he did not do so, fearing he would die on the passage."

Eversley Rectory, Winchfield,
November 17th, 1871

Mr. DINSDALE,

Dear Sir, --- I was much interested in your letter and the enclosed verses. It is very gratifying to me to find one who has seen and experienced so much and can bear testimony to the correctness of my sketches in "Alton Locke." But it is more pleasant to me to find in the little poem you have sent me so hearty and cheerful a tome of manliness. –

Yours truly, C. KINGLSEY