

face southward. As you approach the village of Knuzden Brook, lift your eyes towards the plantation which runs from west to east, and crowns that green upland. Behind that plantation lies Stanehill Moor, in one of the houses of which the spinning-jenny was invented. And that farmhouse—with cowsheds, barn and enclosure walls, all built of grey stone and roofed with the same—is Peel Fold. Forty acres of that cold, wet pasture land, with these buildings, formed the inheritance of the Peels.

With this view and knowledge of the estate, it will not surprise you to be told that the Robert Peel born in 1714, who married Elizabeth Howarth of Walmsley Fold, in 1744, and had a family of five sons and a daughter in 1755, was not, as some heraldic writers have written, a "yeoman, living on and cultivating his own estate." He did not cultivate it at all, except a garden for pot herbs; nor did he live on it in the sense indicated. He was a "yeoman," it is true, and sold the milk and butter of four or five cows in Blackburn; but he was a weaver also, and was too shrewd a man of the world not to educate his sons to industrial pursuits of a like kind. They, too, were weavers. In yonder house, to which our footsteps now tend, were at least two looms in 1765. His children were, William, born 1745; Edmund, born 1748; Robert, born April 25, 1750 (whose son, Sir Robert Peel, the eminent statesman, died one hundred years afterwards, July 2, 1850); Jonathan, born 1752; Anne, born 1753; Lawrence, born 1755; some others who died in infancy; Joseph, born 1766; and John, whose birth occurred after the family were driven out of Lancashire by the insurgent spinning women, probably at Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire.

Here it may be as well to remark, that, though the tradition which the reader is about to know is shaped somewhat like a story, I have not dared, for the sake of a story to falsify incidents so truly national and historical, though so little known. The incidents and domestic economy of Peel Fold about to be described are such as old people, with whom I became acquainted a few years ago, related. I have conversed with persons who had seen the Robert and Elizabeth Peel now under notice; who had also seen James Hargreaves, inventor of the spinning-jenny; and the fathers, and mothers of these aged persons were the neighbours of Robert Peel and James Hargreaves, and had often spoken of them to their sons and daughters.

Sometime in the year 1764, one of the boys, at Peel Fold, in weaving a piece of cloth of linen and cotton mixture, spoiled it for the Blackburn cloth market. It was taken to Bamber Bridge, near Preston, to be printed for kerchiefs, there being a small print-work at that place, the only one in Lancashire, and, except at Cray, near London, the only one in England. The real object of Robert Peel, in

taking this piece of cloth to be printed, was alleged, however, to be a desire to see the process. In this he was disappointed; the works were kept secret. Such being the case, he induced Mr. Harry Garland, son of the Manchester warehouseman, to take note of the Cray print-works when he next went to London with his father's pack-horses, and if possible to procure some of the patterns, colors, gums, and printing-blocks. The first visit of Harry Garland to Blackburn, after attending to this business, was on that day near Whitsuntide, 1765. On the afternoon of that day (I was told it was so, but it might have been on another day), James Hargreaves was "at play," as the weavers termed it, for want of work. His wife had given birth to an infant, and was still in bed, and could not spin. The spinning women were all too well employed to give him work, except as a very great favor, though highly paid; and, now that he was a married man, favors were not so readily obtained. Besides, under ordinary circumstances, his wife could spin more work than most other women. She was such an extraordinary spinner for diligence and speed, that people called her "Spinning Jenny."

James at last determined to step across "the waste" and the stone quarry to Peel Fold, and borrow work. Neighbour Peel he knew to be a careful man: doubtless he would have enough for the lads (Edmund, Robert, and Jonathan, who were on the loom—William was otherwise employed), and might have some to spare. True, he was a shade beyond being careful—he was narrow; but James Hargreaves had taught the boys how to use the fly-shuttle—a recent invention of the Brothers Kay of Bury. He hoped, therefore, they would not refuse a loan of some work.*

James reasoned rightly. He was accommodated with work, and invited to partake of their frugal supper. Had you been present while the rustic mess was preparing, and Hargreaves was employed in sorting out and counting the copes of work, you would have observed that the kitchen in which you sat was large enough to hold two looms, a carding stock, a reel, and other implements of in-door and out-door labour, with space still unoccupied. You would have seen the reeds and headles to be used in the looms when required, hanging from the joists; the oatmeal bannock, (the common bread in Lincolnshire in those days), hanging over spars like leather; bundles of yarn; bacon, for family use and for sale; some books, of which one was the Holy Bible, covered with untanned calf skin, the hair outside—a part of the same skin which Robert Peel wore for a waistcoat. You would have seen that he wore a coat of home-spun wool, undyed; breeches of the same, tied at the

*The work of a web is the cross threads wound into copes or "pims," and placed in the shuttle, the warp is the longitudinal threads.