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THE HALLS OF THE NORTH.*

CHAPTER IX.

CRUEL as hell * * *
 A tyrant entertained
 With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
 Was, to encourage mortal fight
 'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

COOPER.

Mr. HUDSON, the attorney-at-law, or Burley Hudson, as he was more frequently designated, was by no means an honour to his profession. He loved to associate with the vulgar at cock-fights, bull-baitings, and other amusements of an equally refined and moralizing character; amusements disgracefully prevalent in our native land half a century ago. This Hudson, as the reader has already been informed, was the only functionary of the kind in the whole County of Westmoreland. Strange as it may appear to any one living in this country of lawyers and lawsuits, that the inhabitants of a whole county should not fall together by the ears sufficiently often to enable two attorneys at least to pick out of their quarrels and disputes a comfortable livelihood; such, notwithstanding, was the fact at the time and place of which I speak. He was consequently not unfrequently placed in rather an anomalous, and, to any lawyer of principle, an embarrassing dilemma, from the circumstance of both sides of a case being committed to his management. This, however, with him was no difficulty. He always clung to the horn most heavily tipped with gold.

The lawsuit which is so intimately connected with our tale, was of such importance, however, that it would neither have been prudent nor safe for both parties to have employed the same attorney. When, therefore, this great "tug of war" commenced, Hudson was engaged by Mr. Northery, while the defendant had to seek his legal adviser from a neighbouring county. The latter, to his great disadvantage, came to the contest

without the same preparatory knowledge that his opponent possessed, who knew what evidence could be adduced against the claim of his client better than did the defendant himself. He was aware, for instance, of the existence of a certain document, having so important a bearing upon the probable issue of the trial as to endanger, if not entirely destroy, the claim of his client. The exact nature of this document I never could understand, and consequently, as it never saw the light, some confusion must necessarily rest upon this portion of my narrative; not so, however, as regards the means he made use of to obtain possession of it.

At Crosby Ravensworth, in the centre of the town gate, as every village green in that part of the country is called, is still to be distinctly traced, the circular spot of green sward, with the uniform little hollow surrounding it, from whence doubtless the soil had originally been dug to level it. This constituted the cock-pit—one of the two *last sad and humiliating mementos of those cruel and demoralising pastimes of an age which has but just gone by.* The bull-ring, in almost every market place, is the other. On Easter Monday, 1743, in this village was to be fought a grand *main*, or, in plain English, there was to be a great cock-fight. A crowd was accordingly collected from all the surrounding villages as well as from the deepest recesses of the Fells. Many of the surrounding gentry were also there, whose descendants would now feel sadly scandalised were I to mention their names; but these took no part