

THE
SOCIETY
OF THE
HORSEMAN'S
WORD

The Society of the Horseman's Word
has been accused of:-

Criminality
Diabolism
Blasphemy
Being a working class Hell Fire Club
Witchcraft
Superstition
Sabotage
Superstition
Supernatural control of horses
Supernatural control of women
Tomfoolery

The truth is far more complex and
also more surprising. In the ritual
and lore of the Society we will
encounter such personages as:-

Adam
Cain
Gabriel
Tubal Cain
Hercules
Lucifer
Old Nick
Selene
Pegasus
Apollo
Helios
Perseus

This book enables the readership
to judge for itself the truth, or
otherwise, of these allegations.



A Scottish Ploughman and his "Pullers"

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PREAMBLE

1

You hold in your hand the one of the 1000 copies of the first edition of this book that have been printed. If you have one of the 100 special copies there will be an envelope attached to the inside of the front board and inside this you will find hair from the tail of a horse. A young Scottish ploughman would find such an envelope laid upon his bed when he was invited to join the Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word. The horsehair has been knotted in a very particular fashion, so that one can tell that it truly is an invitation from the Society and it has been placed in exactly the style of envelope that was traditionally used, the same kind in which the horsemen would have received their weekly wages. This, we shall see, is appropriate and we shall also realise the form of the horsehair is significant too. This is your invitation to follow the tale of this secretive brotherhood, to learn the arcana of its initiation ceremonies and the nature of its mysteries.

But not yet.

Before the lad entered the place of initiation he was asked how he came there. His guide would whisper in his ear what he was required to say "By the hooks and crooks of the road" We too will follow the "Crooked Path" on our way to understanding the mysteries of the Society. In truth, as we shall see, this is the best way.

The Life of the Ploughmen

If we were to look straight at the initiation ritual used by the ploughmen of Scotland then we might try to fit the surprising things that were said and done with common conceptions of what rural life was then. This might be imagined as rather devout and austere, being a time when traditional Christian morals were unchallenged by modern secular liberalism. Such notions, we will learn, are misplaced. To understand the culture in which the Society of the Horsemans's Word flourished it is best that we read how the ploughmen themselves described their life. However, on the whole, they were not a bookish lot. We are fortunate that one man, and it is only one, did write and publish a substantial account. *Eleven Years at Farm Work, Being a True Tale of Farm Servant Life* was issued in Aberdeen in 1879. Nowadays, it is very rare; even the British Library does not possess a copy. The author was probably James S. Monro. By the time of publication he had become a grocer in Aberdeen.

One senses that Monro was never really one of the lads. Perhaps he considered himself a bit better than his workmates. Apparently he never found an envelope containing a horse's hair on his bed; or, if he did, he declined the invitation. He does mention the Society of the Horsemen's Word but only to deride it as folly. He also associates the Horseman's Word with cruelty towards horses. This is wrong. We will learn that a member of the Society is repeatedly exhorted to treat his horses well and was expected to challenge a brother who did not. Empathy for the animals was a component of its teachings. One wonders whether any other organisation operating in Britain over a hundred years before the founding of the R.S.P.C.A. incorporated similar concerns for animal welfare? The answer is probably 'No'. In modern society organisations have very specialist functions whereas we shall see that the Society of

the Horsemen's Word had a variety of purposes. We should not let this complexity, or its secrecy, obscure the fact that the Society may be the first organisation in the U.K. that had an animal welfare agenda. Despite this slur, Eleven Years at Farm Work provides an informative, if very disapproving, account of the culture of the ploughmen. Unmarried ploughmen lived hard lives, drank hard, played rough and chased women. It is worth noting that it was widely believed that the possession of the Horsemen's Word gave power over both horses and women; to the extent it was less shaming for a young unmarried woman to become pregnant by a ploughman. He was thought to have mysterious powers that she could not be expected to resist.

Surprisingly, Munro associates the Horseman's Word with beliefs in supernatural powers unconnected with horses. He tells us about a dying ploughman who feared for his soul, as he believed he had sold himself to the Devil for the power of invisibility. This is an enigma, when we encounter the full ceremony of the Society we shall find no mention of such outrageous magical abilities. However, Munro is not the only source to condemn members for having such superstitious ideas and we even find some reference to them in well informed accounts friendly to the Society. The suspicion arises that the practices of the Society, or at least the talk of some members of it, may have been influenced by allegations against it. A complex situation, hence the need to reproduce the original material to enable the reader to make their own judgement.

The extracts from Munro's work presented here have been selected to best serve our purpose, that of giving the context in which the Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word flourished. They are embellished with the original decorations and title page has been replicated so as the original flavour of the publication can be appreciated.

An Early Exposure

The crooked path that we are taking towards our goal, understanding the Society of the Horseman's Word, now takes another turn. Mr. Monro's criticism of the Horseman's Word is nothing compared to the ranting (though amusingly phrased) condemnation of William Singer. Around the middle of the 19th Century a number of editions of his *An Exposition of the Miller & Horseman's Word, or the True System of Raising the Devil* were published in Aberdeen. He confounds the Horseman's Word with another tradition, the Miller's Word, and mostly he talks about the latter. There are similarities; both show a great penchant for practical jokes, which, Munro tells us, was part of the ploughmen's culture. Both involve an adaptation of Masonic ritual for the purpose of making an initiation appropriate to the specific occupation. However, if the information given concerning the nature of the ritual of the Miller's Word is correct, then those who first formulated the Horsemen's ritual were wiser than their miller counterparts. In due course we shall see that the ceremony developed by the Society of the Horseman's Word contained curious lore not found in freemasonry. It has a unique conception of the Craft's mysteries that was elegantly applied to the trade of ploughing with horses and expressed through a different mythology. The very brief Horseman's ritual given by Singer is very different to the full ritual given towards the end of this book, being far simpler.

We should note one quote from the ritual as given by Singer:

Question:- Who caught the first horse.

Answer:- It was Adam.

Q. Where did he catch him

A. At the east side of the garden of Eden, in the way of the Land of Nod.

This, of course, is reference to the Fall of Man and the consequences of eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, she and her daughters were afflicted with the pain of childbirth and he and his sons would henceforth have to work to live and it is implied here that he domesticated horses to assist him. It was to the east of the garden that Adam and Eve went when Eden was closed to them. The Land of Nod was in that direction but it is generally associated not with Adam but his first son whom we shall encounter in due course.

These words mark a departure from the view of the author of *Eleven Years of Farmwork*. He condemns the men for their vulgarity, but talk of Adam, Eden and the Land of Nod seems strikingly poetic with religious resonances. There is more of this to come, and also cunning classical references. Clear evidence that intriguing vectors were in operation when the Society was formulated.

In the horseman's ritual given by Singer, the mysteries of the Society are clearly associated with the Holy Trinity and are sharply distinguished from the "three great enemies of Man - DEVILS, WITCHES and FAIRIES". To the modern ear the world-view evinced by these words seems very dated. By the 19th Century fairies were no longer considered scary, potentially malevolent denizens of another dimension, the Land of Faery, which might intersect with ours. Rather they had come to be considered quaint characters to amuse children. Except in very isolated areas fear of witchcraft receded from the 18th Century onwards and the ploughmen in North-eastern Scotland were surprisingly cosmopolitan. Their folk-songs (of which more later) signal knowledge of European wars and Imperial affairs. The King's shilling, emigration and even transportation were all career options that were considered, or feared. We shall see that the ritual as worked by the horsemen towards the end of the 19th Century

6. displays a far more ambiguous relationship with the Devil than stated here. Singer does not give the source of this simple Horseman's ritual. However, it has a 17th Century feel to it. This century saw witch persecutions and so there were powerful reasons why people engaged in any clandestine activity would distinguish their endeavours from diabolism or witchcraft. Also horsemen and the smiths and farriers who shoed their horses and who were, we will learn, allowed to join the Society, were regarded as particularly well armed in the fight against these 'three great enemies of man'. From the *Magic of the Horse-Shoe* by Robert Means Lawrence(1898) we know smiths and their patron saints had a knack for tricking the Devil, horseshoes provided protection against witches and, being iron, also faeries. It seems too that horsemen were on the front line in this battle, both witches and faeries being peculiarly attracted to horses.

Most fortunately it seems that Singer has probably recorded a very early form of the ritual that proved to be an important influence upon more elaborate ceremony that came to be operated in the hey day of ploughing by horses. The actual Horseman's Word as given by Singer confirms this as we will find that the full ploughmen's ritual gives a somewhat different form of the secret Word and a very different version of the Grip which both better match the practice of drawing a plough using two horses. Singer's version seems applicable to horsemanship generally. The full ploughmen's ritual states that it is incorporated with that of the 'Antient Horsemen'. Perhaps Singer's ritual is that of the 'Antient Horsemen'.

Having considered the possible date of the ritual given by Singer we should also note that the language it uses is certainly Scottish. "Girn", north of the border, means a noose or snare. "Hie" is the Scottish instruction for calling a horse to turn left. And "Hip" is the regional command for calling the horse to the right.

Freemasons will see the similarity of the form of the ritual (questions and answers; lettering of the Word; the handshake) with Masonic rituals. Certainly there is a connection. However, we should remember that at one time many trades marked a man's entrance into their ranks with a ceremony that imparted secret signs of recognition. There were broad similarities between these other trade initiations, now largely forgotten, and those of the stonemasons which were transformed into Freemasonry.

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Now Singer also describes magic spells to control horses, mills and women and make oneself invisible etc. They are often morbid, for instance involving the use of human bones purloined from graveyards, acts of grotesque cruelty to animals and ignoble intents. Singer derides them as superstitious nonsense but the fact that he encountered such beliefs makes this text a significant documentation of folk magic; the secret nature of such practices making any records scarce. They are part of a wider European tradition and cognate spells are found in some grimoires, the clandestine magical books that gave instructions for using utilising infernal powers. Such practices are rooted in a world-view very different from the scientific rationalism rather quaintly espoused by Singer and dominant now.

It has to be said that there is little evidence that the Scottish Society of the Horseman's Word was in any way associated with the folk magic practices Singer outlines. However, it is interesting though that he makes the association as, in England, the very different Society of Horsemen were connected with just such activities. It was widely believed in East Anglia that horsemen controlled their animals using a toad bone, the extraction of which involved a grim magical ceremony. Singer describes the use of a ritually obtained bone of a murderer. Related traditions in Europe and in the Americas ascribe magical powers to bones from black cats. The

8 commonality is that the ritually obtained bone is extracted from an animal (or human) locally considered evil and is used to control animals or other magical purposes. The modern reader, familiar with the placebo effect, will pause before embracing Singer's scornful dismissal of any effectiveness. Having a talisman or spell that you believe gives you command over animals will make you more assured and the animal responds to that confidence. Moreover, horsemen all over Britain did indeed employ secret methods of guiding their animals. The smell of essential oils, herbs and animal products such as moleskins and different kinds of dung would be used to encourage a horse to move or make it stop still. The toad bone, "horse whispering" and, to some degree, possession of the Word, were masks for these secret techniques.

When our path takes us there, we will learn from an newspaper article published in the 1920's that Singer was a farmer in that part of Aberdeenshire where the Society of Horsemen flourished. His hostility to the Society is no suprise. One of its functions was the promotion and protection of the interests of the ploughmen, and this might bring them into conflict with their bosses, the farmers who were explicitly excluded from membership. Singer may have felt inclined to deride and dismiss an organisation that empowered his workforce. However, reality is rarely simple and straightforward. When we encounter the full 19th Century ritual we shall find it, for understandable reasons, names and warmly applauds another employer, a laird and a major landowner, no less.

So there is a fork in the crooked road we are taking. To the south, horsemen used the glamours of folk magic to generate the mystique that masked their secret techniques. Whilst we turn north, to Scotland, where the glamours of freemasonry were imaginatively transformed and fused, it would appear, with folk traditions relating to the mystery of horse taming.

We can now listen to the voices of the ploughmen themselves. As previously mentioned only one man wrote a substantial account of their life but the others sang about it. At the beginning of the last century a prominent Glasgow policeman recorded about 300 songs sung by the ploughmen in the "bothies" (ie their communal lodgings). Some songs were shared with other Scots, and some were imported from Ireland and England revealing the movement of people in the past. Others are music hall songs which the ploughmen adopted. However, many clearly originated with the ploughmen themselves and a sub-genre of these speak eloquently of their pride in their craft and its central importance compared to other trades. An example is given called "the Painful Plough"; in this context the word "painful" means "laborious". We note that the ploughman's trade is particularly contrasted with that of the gardener. The competition is not just between different modes of making a living but also different esoteric societies. The Order of Free Gardeners originated in Scotland in the 17th Century and flourished, even forming lodges and attracting wealthy speculative members, until it faded in the early 20th Century. Like freemasonry it had three degrees, passwords, words of the degrees, gestures and rituals and a far higher public profile than the Society of the Horsemen's Word. Its mystery appears to be that Man must strive against his sinful nature and that thorns, weeds and pests are a manifestation of Original Sin and the esoteric task of the gardener is to try to re-establish the perfection of the Garden of Eden. We shall see that the initiation ritual as practised by the ploughmen sharply contrasts with the sobriety and conventional piety of the ceremonies and teachings of the Free Gardeners.

We note that this song, the Painful Plough, again names Adam (after expulsion from Eden) as the first ploughman, a reasonable assumption based on a careful reading of Genesis. In Chapter 3 verse 19 God tells Adam that "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..." and bread is a product of ploughing. Adam's first son, Cain, is explicitly described as "a tiller of the ground" so he too was an arable farmer. However, some may observe that Cain is an unlikely hero for ploughmen. He was, of course, the first murderer and, in punishment he was banished to the Land of Nod (Nod being Hebrew for "to wander") and was cursed by God that "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength" (Genesis 4 12) An interesting point and one which we will discuss further when we encounter a descendent Cain in the horsemen's initiation ritual. For now, suffice to say, the ploughmen considered their trade noble and the foundation upon which all strata of strata depended. The ploughmen considered themselves a fine catch and they sang of girls expressing that sentiment; to give a snippet from "A Ploughman Lad For Me":-

I am but a country servant lass,
 And have but little gear,
 But I would not wed a lord or duke
 Wi' ten thousand pounds a year.
 Give me a humble country cot,
 Wi' plenty wark to do;
 Wi' my heart's delight in my arms at night,
 Young Jock that hauds the plough,
 So a ploughman lad for me,
 And I hope before I dee,
 To milk my cow while he hauds the plough,
 For a ploughman's bride I 'll be.

This is just one example of ploughmen celebrating their marital eligibility. A number of the songs share a pattern; mirroring the ploughboy's comparisons a lass lists different trades and the problems of being married to a member of that occupation before happily embracing the charms of the ploughman. At this point we may remind ourselves that it was generally believed that possession of the Horseman's Word was considered to give men power over women. Might the songs relate to this belief? – certainly they would reinforce it and a reasonable confidence can help in encounters with the opposite sex. Of course it is true that the unmarried men of other trades, such as carpenters, smiths, cobblers and so forth, did not live together communally and so had less opportunity to create songs expressing their collective viewpoint but there seems more to it than that. In the corpus of songs collected by Ord, there are three that are exceptions; three songs celebrate the attractiveness of other occupations instead of ploughmen. We shall recall these songs after we have reached our destination; the Ritual of the Horsemen's Grip and Word. The reason for this delay is that once we reach the ritual it will become clear that it was devised with considerable input from freemasonry, which was originally the trade organisation of stoneworkers and also an intellectual with a good grasp of Greek classics. Interestingly we find two songs that celebrate the attractiveness to women of bonnie mason laddies in their aprons and one in which the lass chooses to marry a man who makes his living by the pen. These three songs, as they distract a little from our central purpose, may be found as an appendix, after the ritual of the ploughmen. There also will be found some other ploughmens' songs dealing with their trade and mentioning others.

In these, the songs the ploughmen sang in the bothies and kitchens of farms, and probably also in pubs and at fairs, there is not the slightest reference to the Society as such. An indication of the secrecy of its operation.

A Music Hall Song

Reference the Horseman's Society is made in a more recent music hall song titled "*A Pair of Nicky Tams*" written by George Morris at the beginning of the 20th Century. Nicky Tams are straps with buckles worn to keep trouser legs out of the mud and were the sign of a rural working man. Morris was the son of a blacksmith and a farrier himself who took to the stage under the name as "the Buchan Chiel"¹. It is a light-hearted ditty but the reference to the initiation, of taking a loaf of bread and a bottle of whiskey to the chaff house door (i.e. the building was where chaff from the mill was stored) does ring true. The song has the sub-text of a boy growing into a man and, we shall see, membership of the brotherhood did have that significance. Morris was never a ploughman, his family had a successful blacksmith and veterinary business in Aberdeen and owned land, part farmed and part used for breeding horses. However, it is by no means impossible that the Buchan Chiel was a member of the Society, a number of sources explicitly state that some farriers could be initiated and George was a fully trained blacksmith. We must ask his spirit's forgiveness as here, and that of all speakers of Scotch tongues; as here his words have been Englished. This is an inherently disfiguring process undertaken for the benefit of a wider readership and motivated by respect for what he had to say. The original Doric² is given in an appendix.

1. Buchan is an area of Aberdeenshire in Eastern Scotland where the Society of the Horseman's Word flourished. "Chiel" is the dialect word for "Lad".
2. Doric is the dialect of rural Eastern Scotland. The name derives from Greek. Its etymology is relevant to the ceremony of the Society of the Horseman's Word and will be discussed in later sections. Broadest Doric, phonetically transcribed, is quite unintelligible to most English readers.

To return to John Ord, the collector of the bothy ballads, it seems that he was actually initiated into the Society of Horseman's Word. This must have been unusual as he was neither a horseman, nor a farrier and membership was restricted to those two trades with not too many of the latter. Ord was a senior policeman, but no doubt his efforts in recording their folksong earned him the trust of the ploughmen. In 1920 Ord wrote an article in a Glasgow newspaper describing something of what he learnt from the brotherhood. This notes some information that would otherwise be unrecorded. However, John Ord is quite mistaken when he suggests that the Society was founded in the time of serfdom. Prior to the 18th Century ploughing was largely done with oxen using a heavy wooden plough. In 1730 a lighter metal plough was introduced which was designed for horses. This was quickly adopted as now a man and two horses could plough the same area in a day as two men and up to twelve oxen. So the trade of horse ploughmen flourished in the latter half of the 18th Century and the Society would probably have been formulated around then. That said, we will learn that the ceremony of the Buchan ploughmen explicitly states that it incorporates the ritual of the "Antient Horsemen" and is likely that an older body working the mystery of horse taming existed and its traces may be found in the ritual and lore of the Horsemen's Word. Ord's article makes some telling observations. He refers to there being two schools of Horsemen's Society, the 'Marshall' and 'Johnstone' traditions. This sounds like different lineages and we may think back to the writer of Eleven Years of Farmwork recounting how a work colleague of his paid to receive initiation into the Society on six different occasions, in an attempt to acquire all the secrets. Though Ord was informed that the oath and ritual was very much the same, we shall see that there was also a great deal of lore contained in toasts and catechisms. Perhaps this lore varied somewhat in the different branches of the Society.

It is curious that Ord should have been told that some horsemen were members of the Society of Millers which taught the Black Arts and, some even suggested, this formed an inner circle of the Society of Horsemen. He also states that in the early 1870s a farmer published a purported exposure of the ritual of the Society of the Horseman's Word. He is certainly referring here to the Singer booklet previously reproduced. The thought occurs that the horsemen read with interest Singer's publication and then adopted some of the information therein to provide glamour for yarns of further secrets beyond those explained to the new initiate. One may also wonder if some components of the miller's ritual as described by Singer may have been adopted by horsemen as part of their ceremony in the latter part of the 19th Century. If this were the case it would be another example of the folly of authors in thinking they can plan the effects of their books, as this would have been the exact opposite of Singer's intentions!

Other Newspaper Reports

Ord says nothing as to the nature of the ritual itself. It would be of interest to hear accounts from people who have been initiated as to what they, in fact, experienced. Given the exhortations to secrecy it seems unlikely that any such statement will have been published. However some will listen carefully to the vows of secrecy, find that they refer in fact to only certain components of the ritual and feel free to discuss other parts. We find that in 1902 a young horseman did just this when an anonymous article appeared in the Aberdeen edition of the People's Journal on March 29th with a second article a week later. Both are reproduced as they do give some surprising information as to the nature of the ritual.

It has already been stated that the Society of Horsemen was multifunctional. The author of these reports is very explicit in stating that it should be the foundation for a trade union of horsemen. This indicates an important context for the Society which, being very different from modern practice, can be easily overlooked. We should not forget that the trade organisations that are the modern forerunners of our unions often had initiation rituals whereby secret passwords and signs of recognition were communicated. There were powerful reasons for this. Laws in existence at the beginning of the 19th Century made trade union activity illegal. Workers had to organise themselves secretly and so readily adopted the familiar forms of other secret societies such as freemasonry. It was for their vows of secrecy that the agricultural workers known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs were sentenced to transportation in 1834. By this period Freemasonry had been taken over by the "Speculatives" and was no longer a trade organisation and its leaders successfully negotiated with the government to ensure an exemption for itself. No such immunity existed for the horsemen and it should be borne in mind that in the earlier part of the 19th Century their Society was an illegal criminal conspiracy. Denied the opportunity for collective bargaining no wonder they had recourse to secret methods of activism. It has already been mentioned that the Horseman's Word, or in England the Toad Bone, was a mask to hide the secret use of scents that, apparently mysteriously, controlled a horse. Thus horsemen could ensure that a farmer or a black-leg labourer would be literally unable to get horses from the stable or into harness. The ploughmen did not own the land, the horses, the harness, the ploughs or their homes but they took control of the new technology, the horses, and ensured that only a brother of the Society of the Horseman's Word might work them. It must be said that a ritual encounter with his Satanic Majesty, or rather someone playing that role, does appear to be unique amongst trade organisations. However,

the rituals of other trades were intended to induce a feeling of awe and could be frightening. In the 1820's a new branch of the Friendly Union of Mechanics required a pistol for its initiations. Around 1830 an actual trade organisation of stoneworkers, the Friendly Society of Operative Masons flourished. It was quite unconnected with freemasonry. The labourer wishing to join the trade organisation had his blindfold removed for him to see an officer wielding a gilded axe bearing down upon him. In another component of their ritual they would encounter, not Satan but a skeletal figure of death, which is then described to the candidate in gruesome detail. Other trades had a similar meditation upon the image of a skeleton, or a human skull. Thus the Society of the Horsemen's Word does have some similarities with other trade organisations of the day.

A Witness to the Ritual?

Turning from those very few accounts by people who were members of the Society we can listen to one who apparently witnessed the ceremony but is evidently not a member. In 1954 the eminent American folk song collector, Alan Lomax, recorded an interview with Scottish folk singer Jimmy MacBeath. A transcript of MacBeath's account is presented here as it gives a detail concerning costume not mentioned elsewhere. It should be noted that, as already mentioned, enactments of the ritual clearly varied, as this practice is unrecognisable to a living member of the Society. Such costume is not unknown in British folk ritual. Entrance into certain fraternities that existed at traditional fairs in East Anglia was marked by an initiation in which the presiding ritualist was likewise attired. In that case the proximity of the University of Cambridge may have provided the cultural references. For the ploughment of Scotland, Edinburgh University may have provided the inspiration.

A Poem Concerning the Horsemen's Word

17

This poem was supplied by a living member of the Society. It was written by Jimmy Stewart and was published in *Ugieside and Other Poems by a Strichen Loon* which was self published about sixty years ago and is now very rare, there being no copy in either the British Library or the National Library of Scotland. It may be an older poem, perhaps adapted and added to by Stewart, but it suggests real knowledge of the ritual and communicates some sense of how it was experienced by the participants. It gives some sense of how important one brief component of the ritual came to be for those experiencing the ceremony, that is the diabolical handshake!

ELEVEN YEARS

AT

FARM WORK ;

BEING

A TRUE TALE OF FARM SERVANT
LIFE



FROM 1863 ONWARDS



ABERDEEN :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR AT THE FREE
PRESS OFFICE

1879.

Extracts concerning the hardship of the life

The bothy is an old, dirty-looking thatched house, joined on to the end of a cow byre, and from its gable an old diminutive-looking chimney projects itself, which serves to carry off the smoke. The bothy is entered by a ricketty, weather-worn door, and scarcely one yard from said door there is a large dung-hill, a pig sty, and a poultry house. And about three yards from the back of it there is another dung-hill. On entering the bothy one has at once exhibited to his view an empty, dark, filthy, sooty place ; and an odour meets the unaccustomed nose that is nowise pleasant. Beside the door, inside, there is generally a heap of sticks and rubbish, and along the back of the house stands a long chest looking structure called the "meal bunks." It does not consist of one chest only, but a number of them joined together. At time end of the house is the fire-place, about which there is generally a large heap of ashes - at times more than two barrowfulls. In the front side of the house is a window, below which there is an old table ; and at the end of it is a press fastened to the wall for holding the milk pails. The bothy is very often in a terrible state of filth. Along the floor there lie strewn pieces of sticks, potato skins, ashes, mid other miscellaneous debris. It does occasionally get a clean out, however, the same as a byre does by means of a graip, scraper, and barrow, only not so regularly or frequently. The roof is coated all over with soot, which hangs in tangles, the character and ponderosity of which the reader may form some idea of when we mention that on one occasion a shot was fired at the door, and the vibrations it caused in the air brought such a shower of soot from the roof that it coated a newspaper that was lying on the table with soot so that one could not see to read the print. Such was the place where the men cooked and ate their meals, and where any leisure time might be spent indoors.

The sleeping place at the farm we are here referring to is worthy of a little notice. The entrance to it was by a nasty kind of stair in the stable, behind the horses. It was situated partly above the stable and cow byre. The place was always in a mass of filth, and in consequence it was stinking ; part of it was used for holding hay for the horses, and the gas of the hay added a good deal to the pollution of the air in it. The beds were crushed in below the penting couples of the roof, and the person who lay at the back of the bed could scarcely turn without knocking himself on the sharp edges of the couples. And the points of the slater's nails were so stuck through, that he was in danger of tearing himself on them. In the cold winter mornings, these latter hung white with frost. The chaff-bed in one of the beds (if such it can be called), was a rather strange article. It was so old and torn that it did not hold the chaff ! A sheet was spread over it, upon which the servants lay ; in the morning they were commonly covered with loose chaff, and before dressing they had to shake themselves clear of it.



Extracts concerning the morality of horsemen

This farm was also noted for midnight brawlers ; considerable attraction, to tell the plain truth, being caused by the females referred to ; and the fact was well known that the mistress sat up watching her daughters till the small hours of the morning. This midnight brawling was not of course so common in the clear summer nights as in the dark winter evenings, because on summer nights, the brawlers were more likely to be seen and known. Toward the end of the month of August, when the dark nights begin to be of increased length, "mobs" of brawlers were to be seen lurking about the farm-houses, and when any one made their appearance who was not wanted, stones were at once showered on him. One servant, on returning quietly home one evening about nine o'clock, got one of his hands injured by a knock from a large stone which was thrown at him. The run of things was this - When the night becomes more advanced they begin to make some noise about the windows of the farm-houses, which brings forth the mistress, who is sometimes armed with a stick, and not uncommonly with a gig whip. Any noise heralding her approach is, of course, the signal for a temporary skeddadle. The brawlers, however, don't always get off with flying colours. They often receive severe blows with her stick, or stripes round the ears with the whip. They are more successful when the lady comes on them accompanied by her daughters, ostensibly to aid her. The daughters seem to enjoy the presence of the brawlers, and often have a chat with them when out of the old lady's sight. They are by no means in haste to send them away, and the mother does not secure the victory even with the aid of her stick or gig whip. The nocturnal disturbers in truth at times assail her, and her position is that of second best. On one occasion of the sort, she arose and sallied out in her

night-dress and was captured by a strong muscular man, who dragged her a considerable distance on a dark, cold, wintry night, and, when she was seemingly senseless, left her lying on the ground to regain her consciousness.

23

It is a common saying among bothiers that they have a right to steal anything that will do for a diet within a radius of three miles from the bothy. And this saying is not held as a mere saying, but is very often brought into use. The regular bothier, in his midnight rambles about neighbouring "towns," if he meets with a nest of eggs, takes its contents along with him without scruple, and when he calls on the servant girl he begs of her a bit of bread. If refused, the consequence not seldom is abusive or filthy language. This conduct may be described as mild and orderly when compared with some of their other doings. Though not applicable to the set of bothiers directly under our notice, it is not an uncommon thing for one to make a profession of courting some neighbouring servant girl (one does not suffice ; sometimes a score of different ones are visited in six months), and when the man enters the kitchen he takes another bothier with him, unknown to the young woman, and while he is professing courtship to her, the other quietly ransacks the house as far as he can, carrying off as plunder cakes, butter, cheese, or such other edibles as he can lay his hands on. And in addition, the poultry are often fated to form part of their plunder. They are taken, killed, and roasted in the bothy fire ; and hares and rabbits meet with the same fate. The poultry house on the farm is sometimes ransacked for eggs in this wise :- One man carries in his neighbour on his back, and the one who is carried lifts the eggs and is carried out with them ; their logic for this being, if they be taken to the law each can swear that they did not go into the poultry house and take out the eggs !

“Scenes from the bothy” form a theme almost at every fire-side among farm-servants. I have heard many precise narrations given of the shockingly profane practices indulged in ; but need not go on to repeat them at second hand, having witnessed enough personally of what was rude and revolting. To hear the talk and see the scenes, that are to be heard and seen in the bothy, one is at once put in mind of the old rhyme,

“Some sang like drunkards at their cup,
And some like cut-throats swore ;
Some challenged Satan to come up,
But he was there before.”

In the social talk, so to speak, in many bothies there is an oath at almost every word, and the language used is terribly libidinous. The stories told are often narrations of some case of triumphant stealing, or adventure among the “lasses”.

The bothiers when sitting around the fire present a somewhat peculiar appearance, they being not infrequently begrimed more or less with soot and dust. Their seats are an old piece of a “form,” and perhaps a block or two of wood. In the bothy of which I chiefly speak one of the seats was called the “throne.” It was a seat cut out of a large log of wood, with a back at it. When any of the bothiers’ comrades paid them a visit they were seated on this seat ; and were told it was the seat set apart for the greatest liar or story teller. It sat pretty near the fire, and being heavy it was not easily moved ; when a stranger was seated in it an extra fire was put on to give him a right good heat, sometimes not a little to his discomfort ; and we may add that many huge lies and incredible stories were told off the “throne.”

In the bothy every one had a nickname. Going among the "lasses" was a very common thing, and when they returned in the morning an account of the night's proceedings had to be given, and it was roughly written on a card and placed in the window, so that every one who passed might know the deeds that were done during the night. Adventures among the "lasses" was a common game. The confession of one was that he had visited or courted twenty-one different lasses during the six months. One night two of the bothiers were in a house among the lasses, and another band of men had watched them entering. When they were in the watchers raised a great noise, and aroused the master, who got greatly infuriated, and, taking his gun, went outside to the terror of his disturbers. The two who had entered the house had to make their escape, head foremost, by a window eight feet from the ground! Two of the bothiers were great midnight brawlers, and one farmer was so annoyed with them that he wrote a letter to the owner of the bothy to keep them at home. The owner of the bothy made excellent fun of the letter, and it gave great amusement to the bothiers, who often cursed at each other till the firing brander hanging from the roof actually rang.

On Saturday night they stand and lounge listlessly about for some time, and then in companies they enter the public-house to treat each other. After a round or so of the fiery liquor to which they treat themselves, its poisonous nature begins to tell on them. "Wine, is a mocker, and strong drink is raging," says the wisest of kings ; and truly the liquid which farm-servants swallow is absolutely potential in stirring up the passions, including fierce, hot-headed wrath, and vapouring boastfulness. They first begin to talk with greater loudness than usual ; bragging of the most outrageous sort at times follows. They are transformed into men capable of accomplishing great feats ; of working

horses with natures ever so infuriated or vicious ; able to withstand every master, however notoriously wicked, and likewise as successful in going and gaining the favour of the lasses, as well as boasting of the many with whom they have cohabited. The idea of such boasting seems harsh and uncouth in the last degree, but it is the case ; and although I have called it boasting much of it is a reality, as is but too painfully demonstrated, alas by the many young females who are to be seen nursing their illegitimate children. And there, in the alehouse, we hear the heartless villain boasting of his shame and mischief, while his unfortunate female partner may be sitting at home nursing an unwanted child ; and oh, how sad and bitter must her reflections be if any feeling of modesty and duty yet remains. She sits an unwelcome presence nursing in her father's house, she feels herself a burden there, and feels she should have been at her service earning wages. What a dark and blighted prospect there is before her. Her self-respect gone, while she knows the heartless partner of her guilt cares for neither her nor her child. What wonder, if, in despair at the dark prospect of life before her, she is even tempted to rush into the presence of death ; or, as more frequently happens, seeks to stifle out the young life that has been put in her unwilling and despairing charge.

But as we listen to the talk of the company met in the public-house, what else do we hear but talk of the sort indicated? Nothing? - Yes, oh yes - singing begins, and various, as well as curious, airs strike on the ears of the drinking men. On entering the drinking room the reader can fancy such as the following striking on his ear :-



Satan sits in his dark neuk,
Rivin' sticks to roast a duke,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Charlie he'll be here himself,
My bonnie Highland laddie.

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As the evening advances the singing gets louder and louder. It is often roaring instead of singing, and the would-be songs often of a very indecent nature. If there is any one who can give instrumental music among their number, dancing begins, which is carried on in a somewhat staggering manner, without any regard to keeping time to the music, and some of those whose heads have become so giddy that they cannot dance, sit down and make wagers about working horses, cursing mightily at every word ; as well as wagers that they will gain the favour of some well-known young and handsome female. As the evening advances the noise increases. The bells, to summon the waiter, get an extra pull to make them ring properly, and they are rung so often that their noise seems to be one continuous tolling, though somewhat irregular. The sound of the fiddle and bagpipes gets louder and louder, and roaring - intended for singing - increases. The heavy pattering of the staggering dancers' feet becomes so mingled, that the house is wholly filled with sound. When any of the room doors are opened for the lassie to enter with drink, the noise bursts forth in full, and the boasting sound of the drunkard is to be heard above all.

I have already referred to this indirectly, but I must not pass the matter without dwelling upon it. In looking over my eleven years I can only recall four visits of the Established Church minister among farm servants! I never saw one in a farm servants' chaumer or bothy - never! But I heard of one being at the door of one, who called regularly and

asked for a farm servant who was lying sick in it. I have only heard two special sermons preached to farm servants, notwithstanding that farm servants form a very large proportion of the rural population, and there were eleven years between these. In 1867 I knew of one being preached, for, the minister having told the truth concerning farm servants, a farm servant who was at church and heard it spent a few oaths upon him in my hearing. I also heard of another being preached in 1868, and of another to farm servants in harvest. In the parish where this latter sermon was preached the minister visited farm servants after the terms, and in the winter time he had a class, and taught them reading, writing, and arithmetic, and he had also a library, from which all the year round he circulated books to farm servants who were disposed to read them. To this minister's credit, and as the fruit of his labours, I may say that I was at two places in his parish, and in this tale I have had nothing bad to say of farm servants in his parish. On the other hand, in the districts where I have had to record the most outrageous behaviour of farm servants, I never saw the minister among farm servants—no, not for *three years!*



The "horseman's meetin'" and the "horseman's word" are topics I have next to refer to.

By the "horseman's word" the reader may perhaps have suggested to him the idea of some cabalistic utterance ; as if by the use of it, or by a single wave of the hand or bonnet, one may make the most docile horse unmanageable, and the wildest horse as quiet as a lamb. The reality is greatly different from all this, however, be it said.

It is at the "horsemen's meetin's" that the "word" is given to the young novice, and the "horsemen's meetin'" is generally held at midnight in the barn or stable. The young horsemen who are to have the "word" imparted to them, are strictly sworn that they will tell it to none but sworn horsemen, and under no circumstances to a woman, a boy, or a fool ; and true to say, the lads keep the secret - such as it is - wonderfully well. They have also to pay smartly for it by the supply of whisky and "fite bread." I know one young man who reckoned his expenses, having attended six meetings to have every particular about horsemanship and the "word" given him, at eighteen shillings a night, which, for the six nights, amounted to £5 8s sterling, being the sum expended upon whisky and loaf bread! And suppose there had been four young lads who had attended this meeting (for there are often more than that), the sum expended would have been over £20. And to what end is this waste of money ? Sometimes the thing takes the form of pure and intentional farce of the grossest sort ; as in a case I knew of where a soft young fellow wished to have "the cattleman's word." To that end he was instructed to go out carrying a board, with by no means a savoury offering upon it, and to kneel down under a certain tree till Auld Nick

should come and impart the desiderated secret! And this the idiot actually did, while his companions, who had befouled him, were tumbling about "blin' fou". How far there is anything of real value in the "horseman's word" (the cattleman's at least may be taken as pure "bosh," since the days of the "twal owsen" team), this is not the place to discuss ; but certainly the adjuncts in the way of gross drinking of abominable whisky, and the like, at untimorous hours, are bad enough. Not long ago we had the case of the horseman's word being applied to a refractory mare in the Aberdeen Sheriff Court. It was to this effect, namely :—Some ploughmen lads had met at midnight, and having partaken freely of "King Alcohol," they took the mare from the stable and went to the stack yard with her, and were giving her a freely good thrashing with broom sticks some 18 inches in length ; a pretty smart fine, of course, was the result in Court. So far of the horseman's word in the hands of a set of rude awkward fellows. Without betraying any secret, it may be said the real philosophy of the horseman's word, consists in the thorough, careful, and kind treatment of the animals, combined with a reasonable amount of knowledge of their anatomical and physiological structure.

In giving some samples of those who profess to be in possession of the horseman's or cattleman's word, take the following case of one, a great blusterer, who had got both the horseman's and cattleman's word. He was in charge of a herd of cattle, about the time they were first put out to the grass in the spring, and were being taken in all night. The herd, as herds will do in such cases, took a jolly scamper, and fairly got beyond his control, when the pretentious blockhead could meet the raillery of his fellow-servants about his boasted skill only by the lame excuse that he could not get his bonnet waved without being seen! The lad made up in his mind that at night he would give the cattle a good sound

thrashing for their depredations, and between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, as the men were retiring to bed, he partook of a cold water bath, and put on a suit of clean working "claes," which were about white, remarking to his companions that tomorrow he would have the cattle in thorough good subjection ; and that meantime he was going a little from home. He then left the "chaumer." His companions, thinking there was something up with him, went and watched him. He did not seek to go from the "toon," but took shelter in the cart shed, and when it was about midnight, he came from the shed armed with a good cudgel, entered the byre, and shut the door after him. And then in a very little the rapid and vigorous application of his cudgel on the dumb brutes' rumps was distinctly to be heard. A few of the poor brutes had got a belabouring, when a fierce "gullar" was heard, followed by another and another, intermingled with the blows of the cudgel, and then the staggering of a man's tacketed boots were heard in the "creep," followed by silence. One of the byre doors having been forced open, the lad appeared so well besmeared that his white suit seemed about black. He began uttering fierce oaths, when those who were watching him outside cried, "Is that the cattleman's word?" The bull was the animal that "gullared," it may be said. Having disliked the operation of his midnight discipline, he kicked, and laid his mad disturber all his length in the "creep" drain.

In connection with some of these pretended secrets I give the following, as showing to what extent such folly has a hold upon the minds of the ignorant. I knew a young man very well, and in the prime of his youth he fell under disease, and on his death-bed I had a conversation with him. He then related to me his anxiety about his future state, and stated what concern he was in, and farther that he had no hopes of getting better. I pointed to him the only way, but he

said, "Ah man, I sell't mysel' tae the devil!" and the poor fellow sobbed and cried like a child. After coming to himself a little he said, "I went that far a-length wi' it that I cud pass afore ye invisible, and do mischief to fa I liket," and another fresh flood of tears streamed down the poor lad's cheeks.

"Did you ever make yourself pass invisible before any one?" I asked, seeing that this extravagant fancy was the poor man's stumbling-block. "No," was his reply.

Then I said "I don't think you can make yourself pass invisible before anyone ; you should try it till you see."

"Ah, na," he said, "I winna, for ante the devil had me in the invisible form he michtna lat me oot o't!"

Doubtless the lad was ignorant ; but it will hardly be credited by many even of those - ministers as well as others - who ought to know the class, how far ignorance, quite as gross, still exists among farm servants ; still less will they believe the mischief actually accruing therefrom so near themselves.

Other absurdities connected with the horsman's word and the yet more potent and diabolical "miller's word," belief in which still lingers among the more ignorant, could be dilated upon at length ; but probably enough has been said.



AN EXPOSITION
OF THE
**MILLER & HORSEMAN'S
WORD,**

OR THE TRUE
SYSTEm OF RAISING THE DEVIL
NINTH EDITION
CONTAINING

**SOME OF THE MOST APPROVED RECEIPTS FOR
MAKING BLACKING FOR HARNESS, &c.**

BY THE LATE
WILLIAM SINGER
DISBLAIR, FINTRAY.

ABERDEEN :
JAMES DANIEL AND SON,
46 AND 48 CASTLE STREET
MDCCCLXXXI

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STEAM PRINTERS
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MDCCCLXXXI



In a former Edition I made some allusion to the apathy, which prevails among the heritors, the farmers, and the clergy with regard to the education and the intellectual culture of the rural population. These remarks were made in rather a sarcastic manner ; but apart from that I am now glad to see one of their number who writes to the Aberdeen Journal, signing himself a "Country Parson," and asking the same view of the matter, and fortify his argument by the sentiment expressed by Sir John Stuart Forbes, of Fettercairn who, it is well known, takes a lively interest in the welfare of the working classes. The clergy have made praiseworthy exertions in the cause of education for a number of years past, Sabbath Schools and Free Libraries being now established in almost every parish ; but the tender years and short period of time which the youth of the labouring population can afford to remain under the tuition of the schoolmaster or minister, entirely preclude them from being able to do more than, as it were, plant a tree of knowledge ; but what avails their labours in this case when more than two thirds of this knowledge so carefully planted, is allowed to run wild for lack of cultivation ? I would therefore, earnestly impress upon the heritors and farmers, if Limy wish to see a virtuous and intelligent community around them, that they bestir themselves, and have libraries established stored with books of useful knowledge, but the books which the school masters and ministers must of necessity use for the instruction of the youthful mind are by no means applicable in after life.. The mind is not then sufficiently developed for the comprehension of the intellectual and scientific books necessary in after life. It is now fifty-seven years since I was engaged as a farm servant, and great and many are the improvements that have been made in almost every department of agriculture and social science during

that long period of time. Amongst other so-called improvements are the existing Poor Laws, which have had the effect, along with other causes, of banishing the Crofters and Cottars from the country, causing them to congregate in large towns or emigrate and thus impoverishing the country of men suitable for soldiers, sailors, and general servants.

A remedy for this state of matters would be to have a General Poor Law for all Scotland. This would save an immense sum annually spent in litigation. Then there would be encouraging times for Millers, Horsemen, and Farm Servants in general giving to all a chance of rising in the world, which is denied them in the existing state of things.

We have seen enough of the mischief of Mystery, Sectarianism, Secret Societies and even the Puritans, who, in Cromwell's time,

"Hanged a cat on Monday
For catching a mouse on Sunday."

Let us now be open be inquisitive, and be equal in knowledge I rejoice in having no secrets, I rejoice in being able to expose to the world the professed secrets of others. I am sure that secrecy is a vice and I therefore expose and explain the Miller and Horseman's Word to the public.

WILLIAM SINGER,

DISBLAIR, 3rd August, 1850,

THE MILLER'S WORD, ESTIMATED AT ITS TRUE VALUE

In the first edition of this little book, I devoted a few pages as an Introduction, in which I laboured hard, in language as intelligible as I was able, to impress upon my youthful readers the absurdity of believing in such supernatural stuff as will hereafter be told, and warning them against associating with such company as would have the audacity to palm it upon the ignorant and unwary youth as genuine ; for those who practise it for only those who have a thirst after intoxicating liquors, which are dealt freely upon such occasions ; and I know of no better school for teaching habits of intemperance than masons' and millers meetings, and none but a knave or an idiot would be induced to attend them ; for, of all the absurdities that have been hocus-pocused together, and swallowed by gaping idiots, certainly the Miller's Word bears the bell ; and no pen can write, nor tongue can speak, in language sufficient to make it so ridiculous as it deserves. But owing to the little attention that was paid to the introductory address in my first edition, especially by those whom I intended should be most benefited by it, I had at one time determined on publishing my second without one comment ; but on reflecting a little upon the subject, I came to the conclusion that it would be dangerous to circulate such an abominable document among ignorant and uneducated youth, without making such comments upon it as might convince those who are not willingly blind that it is the most senseless, useless and impudent piece of fe-fa-fum-ry that ever

was dealt out to an ignorant multitude. But as I must be brief, I shall therefore conclude this part of the subject in the words which I made use of on a former occasion, by stating that the whole art of millery and horsemanship is of no more value, in the estimation of an educated and intelligent man, than the explosion of a quantity of air, when the rectum of an old horse has been the condenser ; but as this way of expressing myself does not appear to have been intelligible, at least to that portion of my readers which I intended should be benefited by it, I therefore shall give it in true horseman style, by declaring, without the least fear of being contradicted by any but ignorant idiots, that the miller and horseman word is of no more use than an old HORSE FART.

BUT TO PROCEED

It would be highly ungrateful on my part, were I to let the present opportunity slip without, in the most public manner thanking a number of individuals but for whose apathy and lukewarmness towards the education of youth and the diffusion of useful knowledge my second edition, had never seen the light of day - I mean the heritors, the farmers, and the clergy. For, on the appearance of my first edition I had to congratulate my readers upon the establishment of a circulating library in our parish, in connection with a mutual instruction society for the diffusion of useful knowledge - the library being established solely by the exertions and at the expense of a few labourers and tradesmen ; **BUT TO THE IMMORTAL PRAISE** of the heritors, the clergy and farmers, be it, spoken, it has been allowed to dwindle into nothing the want of support ; the books belonging to it - some hundreds of volumes - among which were some of the most useful and entertaining works in existence, being now divided among a few selfish individuals, for their own private use, and consigned to damp recesses, sooty shelves and

and smokey smithies, there quietly to moulder into dust, apart from the uncultivated gazze of an ignorant multitude. I was one of the original founders of said library. To you then O generous souls, do I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the fatherly care with which you have watched over the works off those eminent philosophers which have been committed to your care, hawing consigned them to oblivion, lest the dirty fingers of the rustic sons of toil should have soiled their hallowed pages ; and here be it recorded, thatt future generations may reverence your philanthropy.

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AND AGAIN

I have been accused by a number, deeply versed in legerdemain lore, of having garbled the subject in my first publication ; but this I deny, for although I did not give the whole what I have was a true sample ; and if what I have given be useless and absurd, what I have omitted was useless and obscene. But I made one grand omission, which was by no means voluntary, which was that of giving the secret, but forgot to give the key wherewith to put it in practise.

BUT TAKE NOTICE, HERE IT IS

He that wishes to qualify himself for being able to put the whole in practice, must fíirst absent himself three years from church, read the Bible three times, that is to say, once every year, during that time ; and it must be read backwards, beginning at the last chapter of Revelations, and concluding at the first chapter of Genesis ; and he must, during that time make lhimself so far master of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages as to be able to pronounce the words FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. For, as will be seen here, after having stopped the mill, in order to set her agoing again, you must

give three steps forward, give three knocks with a mallet, in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost ; but these words must be pronounced in the languages in which the inscriptions were written upon Christ at his crucifixion which were HEBREW, GREEK and LATIN ; and, if pronounced in any other language it will have no effect. Now my young friends you will see that the Horseman Word is not so easy to catch as you suppose. It is bad to catch ; and, like the man's horse of no earthly use when it is caught. You MUST TAKE NOTICE, all young millers and horsemen, you must perform three years of an apprenticeship before you can become an accomplished miller or horseman, after being initiated into the secret.

But let us now proceed to the method of initiation ; for the mode of initiation is applicable to horsemen as well as to millers.

MODE OF INITIATION.

He that wants to be made a Miller signifies his intention to some individual who has been previously taught the art, and that individual makes it known to three or four of his brethren in the neighbourhood that there is a miller in the mill, when the most convenient time and place for meeting is appointed. Three or four of the brethren assemble about half an hour before the apparent brother shall come, to get what they call their credentials in order ; for they must be provided with light, some phosphorus, a cow's foot ; a leather apron, an iron tether, a corn firlot, a little oatmeal, a bucketful of water and a chair. The corn firlot is to be turned bottom upper-most and a small stick put under the back of the chair to prevent it falling down when weight is placed on it. One of the brethren is placed at the door as sentry to give warning of the arrival of the expected brother, which he does by giving three knocks at

the door. This is the signal to those inside to put on the mill. To do this, one of them takes a metal weight, or some heavy thing and squeezes round upon the bottom of the fillet, to imitate the motion of the stones ; and another keeps knocking with a small stick, imitating the clap. Another pulls the iron tether backwards and forwards over the joists or couples. This produces a noise as if the whole machinery of the mill were at work to those standing outside. The sentry then gives three knocks at the door when the mill is stopped. Those inside give three knocks again (three at every time), the door is opened and the question asked, Who comes there? The sentry answers, a blind brother, for by this time the sentry has the apparent brother hood-winked. They then enter, and the door is made fast, lest any one should intrude during the rest of the proceedings He is then ordered to empty his pockets, when the first thing presented is two bottles of good alcohol. He is then made to pay five shillings, for no other purpose than to have himself made a fool of. He is then offered a tasting of the meal which they pretend was ground during the time he was getting himself hood-winked at the door. He is then made to pull the stocking and shoe off his right foot, and the sleeve of his coat from off his right arm. He is then made to mount the crubs and take the oath. He is then mounted on the back of the chair, with a small stick standing on end supporting the bank of the chair from falling ; and standing upon one foot and kneeling upon the bare knee with the other the leather apron is put on round his neck, and he gets hold of the iron tether in his right hand and one of the brethren commences rubbing himself all over with phosphorus not forgetting to give the cows foot a good dose and then the smell of the phosphorus begins to fill the house. The young brother begins a snuffing. He is told not to be afraid, as nothing can harm him so long as he holds on by the iron tether. He is then asked if he came here of his own free will and accord.

He answers, Yes. He is then asked his name, and having answered, one of the brethren desires him to say after him. He then goes on nearly as follows :-

“I, A. B., of my own free will and accord, and in the presence of God and these witnesses, do hereby and hereon most solemnly vow, swear, and engage to keep counsel, and never reveal art nor part of this art that shall be given to me at this time, or at any time hereafter, except to a true and faithful brother, after finding him to be so, after just trial and due examination. I further swear that I shall not make, nor be present at the making of a miller, unless there be present three or more lawful-made brethren. I further swear that I shall not assist at the making of any one for a smaller sum than five shillings, except one that follows the art of milling, half-price. I further swear that I shall not make, nor be at the making of one of nonage, or dotage, or one whose intellectual faculties or generative faculties are weak. I further swear that I shall not write it, cut it, print it, paint it, stain it, engrave it, or cause it to be done upon anything moveable or immovable, under the canopy of heaven, whereby it may be legible or intelligible, or the least appearance or character of a letter, whereby this art may be unlawfully obtained. All this I swear, with a strong resolution to perform the same, without any hesitation in my mind whatever ; under no less penalty than to have my heart taken out at my left breast, and my body to be ground between two mill stones, and to be thrown like dust in the air, that there may be no more remembrance of me among true brethren, So help me, God to keep this solemn obligation.”

The brethren then put their hands upon his head and pronounce him brother. The bucketful of water is then emptied into the brother's apron, and the brethren come round to drink health to the young brother out of the apronful of water. The young brother is desired to drink the brethren's health, but the candle at this time is put under the bushel or firelot, and as soon as the young brother stoops down his head to drink the brethren's health, one of them pulls the stick that supported the back of the chair from falling, while another is busy raising it behind, and another taking care that none of the water shall get out of the apron, and by these means he is turned heels over head in the apronful of water. He then makes a terrible struggle to get upon his stumps again, but they make every effort to entangle him in the tether, and, ten to one, but he is laid sprawling a second time upon all fours, like a beast. At last he gets upon his legs again and, by this time, is beginning to make every effort to obtain his eyesight. At last he is assisted, and he gets once more the use of his "glimorerors" but, behold, he can see no earthly thing, but he that has himself besmeared with phosphorus, capering through the house, apparently all on fire, rattling the iron tether, while the rest are endeavouring to get hold of it. At last he is asked if he prefers a shake to a sight of old Cloutie. If he says be would rather not see him a shake then becomes unavoidable. He is bid go forward and shake hands with his friend, and then begone, as they can note dispense with him and his service, as by keeping him any longer he might turn more unruly. The young brother then advances trembling, for by this time every nerve begins to shake, to held out his hand to get a shake, when a cow's cloven foot is presented to him, and put in his hand well rubbed with phosphorous. Having given the shake, the brother with the cloven foot gets hold of the tether again, and begins a capering through the house as before, kicking everything that comes in his way, and one of the brethren throws a napkin over the young brother's head, while another

is active in bringing the candle from under the bushel or firlot ; but, on its re-appearance his phosphorus brother disappears, as the light puts out the apparent fire. The in brethren congratulate themselves upon receiving so little harm at this critical part of the proceedings and propose having a suck from long craig as now that the danger is over having each taken a draught to strengthen their nerves, they then proceed to give him instruction in the ART. And by this time with the assistance of long craig the young brother begins to have a little more fortitude. Be begins to have his eye on every corner of the house to see if he discover the cloven-footed brothers retreat but to no purpose for there is no hole nor corner that any human being could be concealed in. This rivets the idea in his brains that it could be nothing but the devil himself that he saw cutting all the capers and overturning all the things in the house and apparently in a flame of fire. But they must now proceed to instruct him in the ART. He is desired to pronounce the letter A, and then the letter R, and the letter T. He is then asked what these three letters spell. He says art: The miller word is ART. If asked if you have got it, answer; yes. Can you letter it ? Yes. Begin. One say T, other R, last A, then the miller word is ART. They then ask a shake of his hand and giving him three shakes down to signify the hunker iron or bedding of the stones and then three shakes up to signify the drawing of the sluice. Three strokes of your right hand upon your left arm signifies the driving the dust from your coat. Three shakes on your forehead with your right hand signifies the same thing. He is then told

How to Stop a Mill.

To do this, he must go to the churchyard in the evening, between sun and sky going three steps backwards in the name of the devil, take some earth from a grave, and not allowing it to touch the ground till used,

and when you cross the water above the mill, you put it upon your shoe, and giving it three shakes into the Water, repeating the same words as when you took it up and when the water amongst which been been thrown reaches the wheel of the mill she will stop. But if he that works the mill be taught the art he takes his mallet and gives her three knocks in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost and she immediately sets to work again.

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To stop a Mill and a Horse and to become Invisible.

Go between sun and sky to a spot where a person has been buried, that, for certain has committed the crime of murder, and take out of his grave one of his bones, going three steps backwards in the same name as before, never let the bone touch the ground, and when you want to stop a mill, take it with you and dip it into the water above the mill, and as soon as the water comes to the wheel the machinery will stop.

If you want to stop a horse, go in before him, between sun and sky and as soon as he is within smell of you he will go no further. To astonish your neighbours, go betwixt sun and sky with your bone always about you, which makes you invisible and you can clod them without them knowing where the clods come from. Be sure to return before sky set. If you want to stop a horse upon the road, you must get a screw with a nut to screw upon it against the sun ; and to procure the nut you must go to the churchyard between sun and sky and take the crown of a skull that has been in the grave and make one, taking care that it shall not touch the ground till used and when you see a horse in the road which you wish to stop, you put the screw into the print of the horse's foot saying your lesson as before and turning the screw and he immediately stops and by turning the screw the other way sets him a going again.

If you wish to procure a coat of darkness you must load a gun on Sunday morning between sun and sky and go out and fire the gun over your left shoulder and on looking behind you, you will see a black crow that has fallen by the shot. Take this crow and cut the crown of his head and there you will find three peas ; go to a looking-glass and taking one in your mouth, if you see your face in the glass, throw it away ; if you see yourself with the second throw it away likewise ; but with one of the three you will not see yourself. If you must keep ; and while you, carry it about you, you may enter a room and hear all that passes without being heard by the inmates. If you wish to bring the virtues of this pea to perfection, you must take it to where two roads cross each other, dividing four lairds lands and four ministers' parishes and there you must dig a hole and bury that pea and allow it to remain for three nights those three nights being the last three nights of the third quarter of the moon and on going after the third night, you will find it sprung through the ground. Cut of the bud that has sprung and keep it from touching the ground and while you keep this about you, you have only to wish to which of the four corners of the earth you would be at and you would be there in a twinkling and back at the same rapidity if desired. He that believes that the earth has four corners might with of much propriety believe that the moon is a Dutch cheese. Both are round like a ball. The crows themselves are better taught than to believe such stuff. They fear no danger but from those whom nature has taught to regard as enemies. And although hundreds of them congregate together, there are always sentinels upon the watch to give due warning of the approach of enemies. They regard their neighbours' safety the same as their own. And if any of them gets lazy and pilfers from the rest, either food or building materials, they are immediately assailed, not only by those from whom they pilfered, but by the whole community and driven out of the society. If human societies were to take a lesson from their laws, it would be of more use than coats of darkness, were it possible to procure them.

Take a frog at spawning time, in the month of March and cut out her tongue with an edge tool, not made with hands such as a piece of broken bottle. You must give three cuts and the frog must give three leaps after the tongue is cut out or it looses the virtue. You carefully keep than tongue and when you go to your sweetheart you carry it along with you, and put it into her breast, or press it to her hand until it heated by her and she will tell you every thing you wish to know.

To make a Person Dance.

Provide yourself with an elfin dart. It is a piece of flint pointed in the shape of an arrow sometimes to be got in the fields ; but if this cannot be got you must go to the churchyard between sun and sky, and take one from the boards of a coffin that has been in the grave, and make in the shape before described, saying your lesson the same as before on taking it from the grave. This you must likewise keep from touching the ground until you want to use it, and on going into a house where there is one that you would like to see take a dance, place the dart above the door, and give them their orders in the name of your standing friend, and they will immediately set to work, as if old Satan were blowing up the strathspeys and reels to them with might and main ; you must look to where you put up your dart, or they would dance till they fall down dead.

To make a Girl follow you.

Go out in the dew of the morning, between sun and sky and look for what the millers term connection-worms - long red worms - and you will find two of these joined together. Cut them through with a knife,

taking care that you must say your lesson as before, and you must require three cuts, then put the knife in your pocket, and be sure to cut nothing with it until you cut an apple with it, giving the girl you wish to follow you the first piece you cut off; and when she has eaten it she will follow you as long as you please, and when you want to put her back you must cut her apron strings, and when it falls off she sees her folly, and then you had better look to yourself, for she will have no mercy. If you go into a house where women are making grave clothes, take a needle and thread that has been drawn through the grave clothes and draw it through a young woman's apron and she will follow you and when you want her to go back cut her apron string. If you want to procure the Second Sight you must gather the female fern seed on Midsummer evening, but take care that his Satanic Majesty does not come past, or he will whip your eye-sight with his tale. The fern seed must be shaken down upon a white neckcloth.

To Detect a Thief.

Take a meal sieve and stab the points of a pair of scissors into the rim of the sieve, while yourself and another put one forefinger under the eyes of the scissors, and by this you hang the sieve from the ground, and wetting your forefinger in your mouth, first touch one of the eyes of the scissors and, then the other, saying at the same time Bunger Peter and Bungaree Paul, repeating in your mind the name of the supposed thief. If he is the guilty party the sieve will immediately turn round of itself.

To Lame a Horse.

Go to the churchyard, doing and saying as on former occasions and take a nail from a coffin that has served its time in the grave. And when you see a horse, which you wish to be lamed go to where the horse has

passed and stab the nail into the print mark of his foot, and it will take the same effect as if stubbed the same distance in the frog of the foot, and he immediately becomes lame.

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Whoever it was that invented these absurdities at first made sure work that the roguery of the thing should not be found out at once ; for they begin to tell him that, before he can accomplish any of those great feats, he must absent himself three years from the church, and during that time, when he reads his Bible he must read it backwards. This is a great insult upon the all-wise Creator of the universe, to believe that he would allow nature to alter its course, merely because a foolish young man had taken it into his head to read his Bible backwards. But if they would advise every young man to read the sixth chapter of Micah eighth verse, and impress upon his mind the necessity of acting up to the precepts there laid down, it would not only tend to his benefit in this world, but also in the world that is to come.

They then begin telling a number of tricks of easy accomplishment, that they might play upon the ignorant, to make them believe that the rest is genuine ; such as putting a piece of tallow into the eye of a millstone to prevent it from grinding. Or putting a piece of lead into a blacksmith's fire when you see that he wants to weld two pieces of iron together. Or putting some essence of peppermint among the good wife's milk, that you see she has prepared for yerning, or a piece of white sugar or soap into the churn among the cream that you see she has prepared to make butter. This may prove effective but still proves nothing supernatural. It only shows that some bodies have the effect of making others unite, whilst others have the power of making them separate. It is well known that oil and water will not unite, but by adding some soda or ashes they immediately become as one body. Gun-powder is as

inoffensive a commodity as you can have in a house, but by putting fire amongst it the bodies of which it is composed will quickly return from whence it came, which is from earth, air, fire and water, of which all bodies whatever are composed. Any young man that would put himself to the trouble to gain a little knowledge of chemistry, will shortly discover in the science a hundred things more wonderful than those without the aid of supernatural power. But if any one begins to try tricks of this kind, I am not prepared to say how he might escape the vengeance of the miller and the smith ; but I will confidently assert, without the least fear of being contradicted, that if he meddles with the goodwives treasure which her ain auld doddy has rendered her, he had ten times better take a shake of old hornie again. He is shown some more tricks, that prove nothing farther than that although the eyesight is the quickest of all our bodily faculties it is the most easily deceived. They pretend to he able to blow a piece of cord or tape together with their month, after being cut asunder with a knife. To do this, they show a piece of tape or cord to him upon whom they mean to impose the trick, taking care to have about two inches cut from it before presenting it, and he is desired to measure it exactly, to satisfy himself that it shall be no shorter after being cut and blown together again. This done, they pretend that it must be wetted with their month before being cut, or it would not have the desired effect, but during the time they do this they contrive to place the two inches that they have cut from the end of it between their hands, allowing the two ends of the other piece to hung down and presenting the small piece as the middle. He is then desired to cut it, and they than put it hastily to their mouth, and commence blowing and biting it with their teeth, and during this manoeuvre contrive to get the small piece that has been cut put into their mouth, and present the other piece to him again, and which he examines minutely but can find no difference, only being wet in the middle. He is

then told how he may have the benefit of the art; by using some of the signs, and they begin a-teaching him :- If you have occasion to be at church where you have no right to a seat, you enter as far as be seen by those who am seated before, and pulling off your hat with your left hand, give three strokes upon your brow with the three first fingers of your right hand as in the act of driving the dust from your face, and if a brother miller is seated in sight of you, he will immediately rise and make room for you. If you sit in a company to drink till your money is all spent, you take up your glass and move it three times round before putting it to your mouth, and having drunk it up, if you want to borrow a shilling place the fore finger of your right hand upon the back of your left ; and if two shillings, two fingers ; and if three shillings, three fingers; and if four shillings, four fingers and if five shillings, the whole hand. If no limited sum, but what they can spare, turn the loof of your right hand upper-most upon the back of your left ; and if there be a brother miller in the company, that has it in his power to lend you, he will do so without exposing your poverty to the company.

To prevent a Cow from giving Milk.

This can be done, but not without using stuff that has undergone a chemical process, and he that would use such stuff upon a cow would poison the owner if he thought to escape the punishment that the laws of his country would inflict upon him. But as none but the ignorant would have any inclination for trying such pranks, they had as well be ignorant of the stuff that would take the effect.

By filling a crystal bottle with water, and putting a tea-spoonful of sugar of lead amongst it, and fixing a piece of zinc to a piece of wire twisted in the form of a screw putting the piece of zinc into the bottle and putting the other end of the wire through a cork and put the cork

into the mouth of the bottle, and you will see its effects if you hang it in a window for eight or ten days.

Then follows a long list of pranks to be performed, which could neither edify nor divert. Such as getting a stone that has stuck between the culter and sock of the plough, and throwing it over a house where the churn is at work, and it will take away the butter. And this is likewise followed by a train of stuff, which, if seen in print, would be hurtful to the feelings of the most abandoned prostitute. I shall wish that part of the subject a sound sleep.

During the days of superstition and priestcraft when the Romans bore the sway in the south of Britain, the witch creeds were believed and taught openly but on the Protestants gaining the ascendancy, they punished with relentless cruelty all who dealt in the art, and not a few expired in the flames, for their credulity. It then became necessary that those who were taught should be sworn to secrecy. But it is not by threats and punishments that a man is kept at his post. Mild laws and good instruction to youth will induce a man to do his duty more than all the cruelties ever invented. Yet I am not unfrequently told, when I argue for a more strict attention to the training of youth, that education has done much mischief and that none are fitted to be real blackguards those of a good education. If a bogie that has been set up to scare the crows could be made to speak, it would be to better purpose than this. It would be easy to find a man who has gotten a good school education whose moral training has been entirely neglected. But if the seeds of morality and industry be carefully sown upon the youthful mind, he will seldom be seen to swerve from the duty to God and his fellow-men. And although some individuals might do so it would be no criterion to society at large. The only Christian sect, with which I am acquainted,

that pay anything like due attention to the moral and religious training of their youthful friends is the Quakers yet who will dare to say that they are the only sect of men suited to be blackguards. Arouse you, then, ye young cultivators of the soil whose bodies are not yet bent with hard labour, nor your minds bewildered with the cares of this world. Cultivate your intellectual faculties, as you can vie with every other class of men on every other point, why should you be wanting in that? Why should you have it said that you are as ignorant as the cattle you drive. By employing your leisure hours in the diligent perusal of useful books you may partly become your own physician, your own veterinary surgeon, your own carpenter, your own gardener - in a word be able to procure for yourself a part of every domestic comfort for which you may have occasion through life. For recollect had it not been for the educated mechanic, you had at this day been carrying the dung to the fields with the creel and the spigot, or driving a cart, the axle and wheels revolving at the same time, and the squeaking noise of every revolution making the sliver trickle over your beard, But although you now reap the benefit of these and many other things do not rest satisfied with that : the stores of nature are by no means exhausted : the mind that is versed in science is ever young - new ideas arise and divert the imagination, like flowers in everlasting spring.

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QUESTION. When were you, made a miller ?

ANSWER. In a regular mill among a regular corps of regular made brethren,

Q. What did it cost you ?

A. A piece of money and a pledge of my soul.

Q. How were you prepared to be made a miller ?

A. I was neither naked nor clothed, barefoot nor shod, neither sitting nor standing, leaning nor lying, but in a stooping position, and a leather apron tied round my neck, and blindfolded with a neckcloth and deprived of all my money.

Q. Why were you neither naked nor clothed ?

A. To teach me that if I see a half naked brother I must clothe him if I can.

Q. Why were you neither allowed to sit nor stand ?

A. It teaches me that if I see a brother stooping down from age and misfortune, I must give him assistance if it be in my power.

Q. Why were you deprived of all your money ?

A. To teach me as I was poor when I was made a brother to assist a brother in poverty.

Q. Why were you blindfolded with a neckcloth ?

A. To teach me that if I see a brother that has wandered out of his way, I should put him into it again.

Q. Why was the apron tied round your neck ?

A. To teach me that it should not reach below the knee and thereby avoid a misfortune that had befallen before me.

Q. What was that misfortune, brother ?

A. Once upon a time a brother had occasion to ease himself, and the devil, coming behind him unawares, pulled him backwards amongst his own filth.

Q. How could a short apron assist you in avoiding that misfortune ?

A. Because when stooping down to obey nature, the apron not reaching below the knee, I could see out between my legs and by this means be apprised of the old knave before he could accomplish his nefarious purpose.

By this time the brethren begin to know whether they have been dealing with a blateface. For this purpose they are sometimes provided with some sal ammoniac, some camphor, some spirit of wine, and a little salt. The sal ammoniac and the camphor are put into a small decanter and the spirit of wine poured upon them and well mixed together, and set in a place where it may not be seen but in such a position as when it is lighted its light may reflect through the house and on its being lighted, all other lights being extinguished, it produces a light as if the whole house was on fire. The brethren seem to be afraid, and make the young brother believe that the light is issuing from the hole into which his satanic majesty has descended, and some of them propose leaving the house, a proposal which is readily seconded by the young brother, and he with one or two more retires leaving the rest to the mercy of the devouring elements, proceeding at a slow pace until some of those left behind call out for assistance. During the time that they have been absent the brethren within have the salt with which they had been provided put upon a plate or saucer and having poured upon it a glass of whiskey, mixing them together, and twisting a piece paper and soaking it among the contents, lay it upon the plate, light it with the candle, and put the candle under the bushel or firlot and on those who return entering the house, the brethren have themselves seated before the lighted torch having their mouths wide open and their eyes shut, the torch making their countenances as if they had been dead for days, and immediately to all appearance tumble down lifeless while those unhurt go to the assistance of the pretended dead brethren, and endeavour to raise them up, and pouring a glass of whisky into each of their mouths to restore animation, it shortly produces the desired effect. The candle being taken from under the bushel, their countenances regain their wonted appearance, and on recovering the faculty of speech they begin telling

the young brother that what has happened was owing to making a mistake raising old cloutie from his sulphuric abode, and when it is done he is seldom got back without carrying something along with him which is generally the young brother if nothing else can he got to give him alive.

By this time our brethren, by dealing pretty freely with nansey whisky, are every one inclined to speak and no one inclined to hear. Each boasts of the great feats he could perform, till, at last, they come to high words, and sometimes to blows and thus the scene ends in what I shall term a real coclesnorum. And now patient reader, for patient he must be that has read page after page, looking with breathless expectation for something like instruction or amusement, and arrived at the conclusion without seeing anything in the shape of either. But oh ! what a train of disappointments seem woven in one's journey through life, and he that has read my book will doubtless mark it in this list as one of no mean magnitude.

AND THE ONLY PART THAT MAY BE PUT IN PRACTICE TO BE OF ANY BENEFIT

The practical horseman word is ONE, that is to say to make two or more go as ONE.

OF HORSES THAT DO NOT AGREE. — Some horses are so refractory that they are no sooner put together than they begin to kick and rear upon each other. To remedy this, after you have given them their corn, and allowed each to eat from his own crib for some time, take the corn from the one and give it to the other.

IF TROUBLESOME IN GETTING SHOD. — Take a leaf of tobacco and tie it round the bit that goes in his mouth with a thread. It will so take up his attention that he will, in general, try to clear himself of it, and he will give no trouble to the black-smith afterwards.

TO MAKE A HORSE FOLLOW THE WHIP. — Take a small short whip and go before the horse and crack it in his face, but be sure not to let it strike him or it will startle him from following you. Practice this for some time, and when he feels it does him no harm you may then apply the common whip. He will follow that likewise.

TO PUT AWAY OFFENSIVE SMELLS. — If any person has rubbed your horse collar with toad's guts or swine's grease, rub the collar with burnt oatmeal or leaves of balm.

IF REASTING OR SETTING. — Take the horse by the nostril and press him gently, then press them harder until you stop his breathing and he will push forward to obtain breath.

ANOTHER PLAN.— Put, salt upon his ears and whip it off with the whip. This does more mischief than good depend upon it.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HORSES AND MARES.— Owing to the mildness the generality of mares it is reckoned that two-thirds of the nurture that a horse may require will be sufficient for a mare.

A HORSE THAT IS UNWILLING TO GO INTO THE SHAFTS OF A CART.— Take two long spars or trees and lay one end to the trams of the cart, allowing the other end to be at some distance from each other, and put the horse between them, putting him backwards until he comes to the cart.

Some horses when you go up beside them will turn round and press you hard to the traves. To a horse that does this get a stick about a foot or fourteen inches long, and cut a pin or break a needle, and put in one of the end of it, and when you go up beside the horse take it in your hand, keeping the end which has the prog next the horse, setting the other to the traves, and if he comes round upon them a few times he will soon refrain. Be sure that the prog shall not be above a quarter of an inch long as it might injure him.



Who caught the first horse ? It was Adam.
Where did he catch him ? At the east side of the garden
of Eden, in the way of the Land of Nod.

By what means did he snare him ?

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Some say a pit,
Some say a girn,
Some say a net,

Either of three.

What did he teach him first ? First to stand, Next to go
from, Next to come.

What are the four points of horsemanship ?

To make him stand. To make him hip.
To make him hie. To make him lie.

Were you ever at school ? Yes.

What did you learn ? To read and spell and count some,
but write none,

What is the first letter of your alphabet ? O.

Tell me the second ? N.

What is the third ? E.

What does that spell? ONE.

How are you to know a horseman by his whip? By having
three knots upon his cracker.

How are you to know a horseman by a shake of his hand? By
his pressing his thumb upon the uppermost joint of the second
fingers, giving three shakes down at the same time.

How are there three letters in the horseman's word ? Because
these three make ONE, as do the three Deities that govern the affairs
of the universe, and to distinguish ONE from the three great enemies
of Man - DEVILS WITCHES and FAIRIES.

Receipts for making Blacking, &c.

No. 1.

Take one pound of ivory black, one gill vinegar, one gill green oil, four ounces molasses or sugar, one common bottle small beer. Mix all together. Then add about half an ounce bees' wax and four ounces oil of vitriol to make it boil. You can add or diminish the articles according to the quantity of blacking required, and if to be used for shoes the wax to be dispensed with.

No. 2

Take one ounce of peach wood, and put it among cold water in a pot, put it upon the fire until it comes to the boil, than let it boil two or three minutes containing a Scotch pint, then take it off the fire and add to it one ounce of sulphate of iron, and about one ounce bees' wax ; let it cool and then strain it through a thin cloth, and put it in bottles for use. This liquid put upon harness with a sponge requires no labour with the brush as other blackings do

No. 3, - A Paste Blacking.

Four ounces turpentine, two ounces bees' wax ; cut down the wax amongst the turpentine into a flagon, and let it stand until dissolved, then add one ounce Prussian blue, one ounce gall nuts, one pennyworth of gum arabic; then add four ounces ivory black, stirring for some time, then let it settle, and it will be ready for use. Clean the harness well before applying it, and a small quantity will be sufficient to make the harness have a brilliant appearance. I have seldom seen it fail in carrying off the prizes at ploughing matches when proper attention was paid to its preparation and application.

No. 4.

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Half pound ivory black, two ounces wax, half ounce indigo blue, half gill turpentine, half gill good ink.

No. 5.

Two ounces soft soap, two ounces wax, four ounces ivory black, two ounces turpentine, half an ounce indigo blue.

No. 6. - To make a Dye for Harness.

Take four ounces shumac, four ounces of logwood, one ounce gall nuts, for 1 ounces copperas ; put it in two Scotch pints of water, and boil it for two hours and a half, and then sponge the harness with it.

No. 7. - A Paste Blacking. To make it polish after the die.

Half pound bees' wax, half pound soft soap, four ounces ivory black, two ounces indigo blue, one gill of turpentine, one gill of water ; put it on the fire till it bolt, and then take it off and it will be ready for using.

No 8.- To make Varnish.

Take one bottle of vinegar, four ounces ground logwood, four ounces indigo blue, one ounce isinglass, one ounce soft soap, one ounce green vitriol ; put it on a slow fire, let it boil into an English pint, end let it cool, then put it upon the harness with a sponge.

No. 9.- To clean Brass.

Take half an ounce soft soap, one ounce rottenstone, quarter ounce acid of vitriol, half ounce green oil, mix.

No. 10.- A Receipt for Feeding Weak Bees.

Twelve ounces of sugar to a half bottle of porter, warm it so as to melt the sugar, let it cool, and bottle it again.

No. 11.- Cattle Receipt.

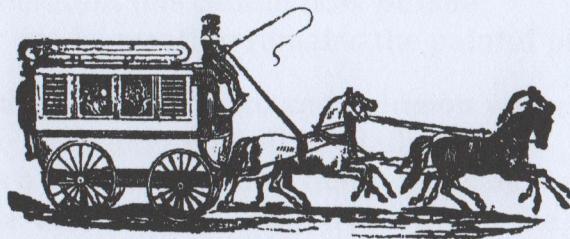
It may be of consequence to farmers and others to know that cattle blown or swelled by eating clover or turnips may be relieved by giving them a table-spoonful of spirit of hartshorn, which immediately allays the fermentation and swelling. It is generally given from a bottle, in a little water. We know some extensive farmers and leaders who have always a supply on hand having need it for several years and never saw it fail. Care must be taken to procure it of the best quality.

No. 12. Louisville's Far-Famed Cure for Rheumatism.

One dram of cayenne pepper, two ounces of whisky or spirits of wine, one dram of dry mustard, one dram of opodeldoc. Mix and shake together for a few minutes, when it will be ready for use. A little camphor may be added.

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The Painful Plough

65

Come all the jolly ploughmen, of courage stout and bold,
That labour all the winter in stormy winds and cold,
To clothe the fields with plenty, your farmyards to renew,
To crown them with contentment, behold the painful plough.

“Hold, ploughman” said the gardener, “don’t count your trade with ours,
Walk through the garden and view the early flowers,
Also the curious border and pleasant walks go view,
There’s none such peace and plenty performed by the plough.”

“Hold, gardener” said the ploughman, “my calling don’t despise,
Each man for his living upon his trade relies;
Were it not for the ploughman, both rich and poor would rue,
For we are all dependent upon the painful plough.

“Adam in the garden was sent to keep it right,
But the length of time he stayed there, I believe it was one night,
Yet of his own labour, I call it not his due,
Soon he lost his garden and went to hold the plough.

“For Adam was a ploughman when ploughing first began,
The next that did succeed him was Cain, the eldest son;
Some of this generation this calling now pursue,
That bread may not be wanting remains the painful plough.

“Sampson was the strongest man, and Solomon was wise,
Alexander for to conquer, ‘twas all his daily prize;
King David was a valiant man, and many thousands slew,
Yet none of these brave heroes could live without the plough.

"Behold the wealthy merchant that trades in foreign seas,
And brings home gold and treasure for those who live at ease,
With fine silks and spices, and delicious fruits also,
They all are brought from India by virtue of the plough.

"For they must have bread and biscuits, rice pudding, flour and peas,
To feed the jolly sailors as they sail o'er the seas;
And the man that brings them will own to what is true,
He cannot sail the ocean without the painful plough.

"I hope there's none offended at me for singing this,
For it is not intended for anything amiss;
If you consider rightly, you'll find that it is true,
That all that you can mention depends upon the plough."

A Pair o' Nicky Tams

67

When I was only ten years old I left the parish school
My father hired me to the farms to chew his milk and meal
I first put on my narrow trousers to cover spindly legs
Then buckled below my knobbly knees a pair o' nicky tams

First I got on for cow hand and then I got on for third¹
And then, of course, I had to get the horseman's gripping word
A loaf of bread be my piece, a bottle for drinking drams
But you can't go through the chaff house door without your nicky tams

The farmer I am with now, he's wealthy but he's mean
Though corn is cheap, his horse is thin, his harness fairly worn
He makes us load our carts well full, his conscience has no qualms
When harness straps break there's nothing like a pair of nicky tams

I'm courting bonnie Annie now, Rob Tamson's kitchen cook
She is five-and-forty and I am seventeen
She spread a large slice for me with different kinds of jam
And tells me every night that she admires my nicky tams

I started out on Sunday to the church for to go
My collar it was very tight, my trousers were not over long
I had my Bible in my pouch, likewise my book of Psalms
The Annie roared: "You big idiot, take off your nicky tams"

Though very tight, I took them off, the lassie for to please
But then my trousers they rose up around about my knees
A wasp began crawling up my leg in the middle of the Psalms
And never again will I dress for church without my nicky tams

I often thought I'd like to be a bobby on the force
But maybe I'll get on the cars² to drive a pair of horse
Wherever it's my lot to be, the bobbies or the trams
I'll never forget the happy days I wore my nicky tams

George Morris, "The Buchan Chiel"

This version being Englished. The original, as sung in Doric and spelt phonetically, is to be found in the appendix.

ANCIENT SCOTTISH HORSEMAN.

By Superintendent JOHN ORD, F.S.A. (Scot.).

At the trial of five young men on a charge of cruelty to a horse at Dundee recently, questions were put to the witnesses by the Procurator-Fiscal for the purpose of ascertaining whether the accused were members of the Horsemen's Society, but the witnesses were unable to enlighten him or even to establish the fact that such a society existed.

The Horsemen's Society is better known amongst ploughmen as the "Horseman's Word," and is probably the most secret of all secret societies in this country, owing to the fact that there is no record of its meetings kept. It has no executive or other officials to manage its affairs, nor does any document exist giving the number of its members. In the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin at one time - and that not very long ago - the membership must have amounted to several thousands. Membership being strictly confined to operative horsemen and country blacksmiths, the political agitator has so far been unable to make use of the society for his own ends.

An Early "Exposure."

Although the society probably dates back to the time when farm servants were chattel slaves, bought and sold with the land, little has been either written or printed concerning it, and the bothy songs, which touch upon almost every matter relating to the daily life of the Scottish farm-servant, do not even hint at the existence of such a society. In the early "seventies" of the last century a farmer in the neighbourhood of Insch, Aberdeenshire, published a pamphlet purporting to be an exposure of the "Horseman's Word," and the late Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, in his "History of Strathbogie" published about thirty years ago, tells us that:-

Throughout the North-eastern counties there exists among farm-servants a secret society, with extraordinary pretensions to antiquity, called the "Horsemen", whose mysteries are as carefully guarded as the Freemasons, and restricted to those who gain their livelihood by the care and management of horses. Small farmers

who assist to labour their own land may be allowed into membership, but the more affluent probably the better educated are jealously excluded. Its presumed object is impart useful and necessary instruction in the management of horses and in the virtue of herbs and simples, and it is maintained that Rarey's tricks in horse-taming were the common property of the "Horsemen." Although many farmers entertain a prejudice against members of the society, it is admitted that a "Horseman" is always very capable in managing his team and will often be asked by the uninitiated to break in a stubborn animal or to act the part of a veterinary surgeon

The "Horsemen" hold their meeting at night, and in the clear moonlight engage in some sort of circus performance, with horses purloined for the occasion from their masters' stables.

There is, however, said to be an inner circle in the society, where black art and all the spells and charms of the Dark Ages are all still the subjects of study and whose votaries can reist horses, deprive kye of their milk, bewitch meal mills and churns, and smite cattle with mysterious sickness, and cast an unholy glamour over "weak womankind."

From details given by those whop profess to have seen some of these

occult manifestations, one is inclined to think that the would be sorcerers had exercised hypnotic influence both on men and animals. This mysterious power is known amongst Red Indians and to some of the jungle tribes of Hindustan, and perhaps these disciples of diablerie were also a acquainted with it long before the days of Mesmer. Although unaware of its nature or origin (and who is?), they naturally ascribed it to the influence of the evil power whose aid they sought.

Colonel Anderson either overlooks or did not know that members of one trade - the blacksmiths - were eligible for membership in the "Horsemen," owing to their having, as part of their occupation, to shoe the farmers' horses. The shoeing of a young horse for the first time is a dangerous job.



SUPT. JOHN ORD

The "Millers."

The inner circle to which he refers is not in reality part of the "Horsemen," but is a different body altogether - namely the "Millers," who taught their members nothing but evil.

In his "Hydrostatics," published in 1671, and also in another book entitled "Satan's Invisible World Discovered," published a few years later, Mr George Sinclair, Professor of Philosophy in the College of Glasgow, in relating the story of "The Devil of Glenluce" says:-

About the middle of November the foul fiend came on with new and extraordinary assaults by throwing stones in at the doors and windows, and down the chimney head, which were of great quantity, and thrown with force; yet, by God's providence, there was no one person in the family that was hurt.

Phenomena of this kind, it was alleged, was not uncommon at farmhouses in Aberdeenshire during the first half of the last century, and members of the "Millers" society claimed the power to raise and stop such proceedings at will.

Upwards of forty years ago I was initiated into the Horsemen's Society, and I attended several of their meetings for the purpose of collecting folk-lore. After the leading members had consumed a considerable quantity of whisky their tongues were loosened, and I have heard them discussing the mysteries of the

"Millers" society, of which some of them were also members. So far as I could learn, there was nothing in their senseless ands mischievous tricks that could be attributed to the supernatural.

Lately, when reading in the newspapers reports of "ghostly manifestations and supposed spirit rappings," it occurred to me that some member of the "Millers" society was at work - and that history was simply repeating itself, as witness the case of "the Devil of Glenluce," referred to by Professor Sinclair, and similar stories related by other writers of the seventeenth century.

To return to the Horsemen's society or guild, about half a century ago it was divided into two schools or divisions, known amongst ploughmen as the "Marshall" and "Johnston" Horsemen respectively. The former was looked upon as the most important and influential, and young men were not admitted to its membership until they attained the age of 18 years. On the other hand, lads of 16 were admitted to the "Johnston" branch, which, it was alleged, only possessed some of the minor secrets. So far as I could ascertain, the oath and ritual of both branches were very much alike.

Midnight Initiations.

General meetings only take place when new members are to be admitted, and the modus operandi is as follows:- a few of the leading members arrange the date and place of meeting, which is usually held

about midnight in some farmer's barn. Members and candidates are verbally warned to be present, and each candidate is instructed to bring with him a bottle of whisky, a loaf of bread, and, in some cases, a jar of jam, which are consumed by those in attendance after the initiation ceremony is over. Two or more "known and proved" "Horsemen" act as sponsors to each candidate, and each candidate is sworn and initiated separately. Having taken the obligation, I am not at liberty to disclose the secrets of the society. Suffice it to say that in some parts the oath resembles in a marked degree than of the Freemasons. A "Horseman" who fulfils his obligation will never wilfully ill-treat a horse. On the other hand, I have known a member of the society to appropriate some of his master's corn to feed his team when he thought the animals were not receiving sufficient nourishment; and it is alleged by some that a number of farmers gave short supplies not only to their horses but also to their servants. In many cases the food supplied to the farm servants was of the very poorest quality, but if the skim milk and oatmeal cakes were fairly good a complaint was seldom made. With regard to the allegations that the "Horsemen" deprived the farmers' cows of their milk, bewitched the churns, etc. it should be remembered that occasionally the milk was kept several days before being skimmed, so that the last particle of fatty matter could be extracted from it (there

were no machines for separating milk in those days), and by the time it reached the servants' table in the form of skim milk it was undrinkable. If, following upon repeated complaints and no improvement, the farmer's best milch cow suddenly went dry or the goodwife's churn became "bewitched" and the butter would not come, there would be a strong suspicion on the part of the farmer that a member of the Horsemen's society, had been at work. But here again let me say that such tricks were neither taught nor practised by the "Horsemen" as such, but were part of the secrets given along with the "Miller's Word," and farmers and others may rest assured that it the Horsemen's society is a protection and not a menace to their horses.

Glasgow Weekly Herald

December 13th, 1920

THE HORSEMAN'S WORD.

A RED LETTER DAY FOR A YOUNG PLOUGHMAN.

The long wished for day had at last arrived. I had reached the ago of eighteen, and being otherwise duly qualified, I was about to be initiated into the mysteries of horsemanship. In the North of Scotland this is a most important epoch in the life of a young farm servant. The man who has not got the horseman's word jocked upon as the "ootlin" (outcast) about, the toon, farm He is made to feel uncomfortable at every turn. At kirk or market, marriage, kirsnin, christening, raffle the non-horseman is shunned, whispered about, pointed at, and otherwise made to feel uncomfortable. The doings have very seldom to be resorted to, as young ploughmen are as a rule eager to pass through the mysteries of horsemanship, so much so that they will endeavour to falsify their age if possible in order that they may sooner attain the much coveted diploma. Like the rest I was

ANXIOUS TO BE COUNTED A MAN. Had I not driven the orra beast (spare horse used for odd jobs) for twelve months at "The Maines," main farmhouse and had now got charge of the second pair at "Mossies" (Moorside, a particular farm). Moreover, the lan'

side horse was a biter, and the foreman could give me no information as to how I was to best manage him because I was not a brother. As I have already indicated, candidates must be at least eighteen years of age, and must either be engaged at farm work, blacksmith, or veterinary surgeon, coachman, or carter. Farmers are not eligible. The meetings which are held at night, and generally after the usual retiring hour, are held in some barn or other convenient outhouse, where they can be carried on safe from intrusion and in absolute secrecy. Our meeting was to be held in the Auld Old Castle at Gight, and nine o'clock saw a gathering of about a score carefully collected under the shadow of the castle wall, the owlets sending up some pitiful howls at being disturbed from their favourite resting-place. Four apprentices turned up - namely, myself, the apprentice blacksmith from the Howe, and two young horsemen from St John's. The meeting having been duly constituted, with a "foreman" and door-keeper appointed, we were duly brought forward for initiation. Coming up to the, door each presents his initiation fee (a bottle of whisky and a big loaf). We are now carefully blindfolded and led forward to the "foreman," who occupies an elevated position, and who at once proceeds to administer the oath of secrecy. One by one we

TAKE A SOLEMN OATH

that we will "Heal, conceal, and never reveal all or part of this great secret of horsemanship we are about to receive. We are to neither write it, nor indite it, cut it or carve it on wood or stone sand, or snow, nor on anything moveable or immoveable under the canopy of heaven." . Then follow the penalties for transgression, which, I may safely say, would terrify any one but a horseman. Before the "word" is actually given us we are each asked to produce a further guarantee of good faith by handing over £5 or value thereof, and my watch having been duly handed over to the keeping of the foreman, the long wished for "horseman's" word is calmly whispered in my ear. The question is then put - What we consider our greatest want, and here some difference of opinion creeps in. I frankly stated mine to be want of help with the biting horse. Another wanted to know how to make the housemaid at the manse fall love with him, and so on, but it being put before us that in the opinion of the meeting "light" might be the more useful meantime, we are unanimous in requesting to be unbandaged. In the meantime lights have been extinguished, and we have each in turn to shake hands with his "Satanic Majesty" the 'cloven hoof glowing in the darkness amid the rattling of chains, presenting a weird spectacle. Lights are

then put up, bottles drawn, and our healths pledged in the wine of the country contributed, as before stated, by ourselves. The foreman and leading members follow with words of advice and general instructions as to harnessing and yoking, and driving young horses. Application is then made to the nearest stable for a horse, with which some practical demonstrations are made in the old courtyard of the castle. Towards morning the spirits began to get, somewhat the better of the good senses of the brothers, but, on the whole, we have reason to be pleased with our initiation into the Horsemen's Society.

People's Journal

March 29th, 1900

THE HORSEMAN'S SOCIETY.

WHAT IT COULD EFFECT.

REDRESS THE PLOUGHMEN'S WRONGS.

Most people unacquainted with the routine of a farm have a notion, I believe, that, the duties of a ploughman are of the simplest description. To these I would say - Let them try any one of them, even the easiest, and I think they will change their views. There is no single operation on the land that does not require a very considerable amount skill to perform it properly; nor is the subjugation of the horse to man the easy thing which many people suppose it to be. Much, indeed, depends on whether the animal has been rightly or wrongly treated in its youth. If it turns out vicious the probability is that it has not been properly handled in the "breaking." One often hears of a ploughman letting his horses "ower him" which being interpreted means that he has lost control of or become unable to manage them. These horses may have been quite docile previous to him taking them in charge. What is the reason for this? You may ask.

"Oh he hasna got the 'word" is the invariable reply.

The "Horseman's Word," as was explained in the "People's Journal" last week, is the result of a series of instructions imparted to the initiated member of the Horseman's Society. This Society is one of the most secret in existence. Even in the country, where it might be supposed a tolerably clear knowledge would be found prevailing in regard to it, only among those who are initiated into its mysteries are its true aims and aspirations understood.

One member of the brotherhood is bound to assist another in any way he can. Not only so, but he is at the same time obliged to report the matter to the Society in event of his seeing any member illtreating a horse. Proper punishment he may administer, and he is taught how to do it, but nothing akin to cruelty or bad usage is tolerated. From this it may be seen that the objects and aims of the Association are many and manifold. In short, the obligations are carried out by the members doing their best to treat the animals they are working with kindness, and by preventing cruelty in others. They are taught only such knowledge concerning the management of horses as has been acquired and handed down through centuries of practical experience.

True, there are many quips, and cranks, and riddles, and so called test questions associated with the secrets of

the Society. But these little affect it objects and aims. They are rather employed as a means of communication that tickles and excites curiosity in the outsider.

Properly understood, the Society is a very important and a very humane institution, and calls for the attention of better educated men rather than the unwarrantable abuse it too often receives. Like all other kindred Associations this secret Society certainly has its drawbacks and its foolish irregularities, but if properly conducted by capable men, it might be made the basis of a great and prudential institution both for the welfare and betterment of its members.

Its constitution needs reconstructing on more scientific and elevating principles; and the intemperate orgies that too often attend each celebration ought to be stopped. For such as these are things which only bring it to disgrace; and its members with it.

Farm servants have long been crying for redress for their grievances. Why not man this Society the foundation-stone of a great progressive Association - a Horsemen's Union that by combination they may right those wrongs which otherwise might so remain for ages?

The average Scottish ploughman is certainly a patient, plodding and comparatively well-contented fellow, but he is no longer the ignorant bumpkin he is traditionally said or supposed to

be. His grievances are real, not imaginary. There is no nonsense about eight hours a day with him. With brief intervals for food he works from six to six, or more. As a rule his hours are longer, and when foals are expected he has often to sit up all night perhaps for the greater part of week, and this, too, in the busy season of spring, when his work in the fields is both long and laborious. And this be done without extra pay or any thought of such.

Holidays for him are practically non-existent, and if the weather should become such that it is impossible to continue longer out of doors without disastrous results to the land or the horses he hides himself away home more like a half-drowned rat than a human being. And yet the farmers are consternation-struck that so many have left their service for more congenial if not more auspicious employment in town or abroad!

People's Journal

April 5th, 1900

THE HORSEMAN'S GRIP AND WORD Interview

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Jimmy MacBeath: *Some'd call it a lot a nonsense, ye see. But – eh eh, some people believed in it, it was – it was quite facts. It was organised by the fairm servants themselves.*

Alan Lomax: *What was the purpose of that?*

Jimmy MacBeath: *It was tae get proper horsemen, tae get proper trained horsemen to hanle a horse right. There's some o them couldna hanle a horse withoot this Horseman's Word. An ifn they got this Horseman's Word, they'd power over that horse, ye see. They would, some men says, "Well, ah'll make it you winna work that horse," cos he had the Horseman's, he had the power, an the fella hadn't, ye see – he he he spoke tae the horse.*

Alan Lomax: *What would he say to the horse? Do you mean they had a language for talking to horses?*

Jimmy MacBeath: *No, he'd a different t – s – like it – he would – used tae – speak tae the horse like, quietly, an tell the horse not tae – tae kick against that fella, ye see. It was aa that trickery work, it was all trickery work, ye see. Well, they would get a collar, they would say till a – they would say till a fella, "Well, you winna collar that horse." Well, he would try it, an when they put the collar tee tae the horse's, tae get it over his head, the horse would sneer, an go back, because they did something tae the collar, it was not tae the horse that they did something, it was something tae the collar they did. The holla – the horse smelt something that was putten onto the collar, that there's nobody kens what really was putten onto the collar. They – they – they had the collar, I think the collar was covered with some kind a – eh, some kind a mineral stuffs that they had workin with, an the horse went sneerin over its on, ye see. But if the collar wasna tampered with, you'd*

collar the horse right an the horse would — you'd collar the horse right enough. But they did something to the collar that the horse would sneer, ye see. It was aa trickery work — more trickery than onythin else. That was the way the Horseman's Word was done.

Alan Lomax: *But they — they knew, they did — you — you've seen that they did know how to handle the horses, did you? You believe they do know how to handle the horses, these men who had the Horse's Word?*

Jimmy MacBeath: *Yes, they could hanle horses. It was — eh, a matter a a time an perseverance with a horse. There wis some horse that you couldna hanle because they was young an never been carted, ye see. Ye'd tae cart the horse an ye'd tae — ye'd tae back them — never been backit. That means a fella never been on a top o its back. Well, it was a terrible thing tae get the horse, tae break in that horse, tae get it tae — tae get it intill a cart, reared an sprung an everythin. Well, they had tae, they had tae train it in, an maybe two men, a man at that side an then a man at this side wi tr — wi the reins. They'd take it into their — the busiest part of the streets for tae get it acquainted wi the traffic, ye see. That's the way they break in a horse.*

Alan Lomax: *And then — uh, how did they initiate the people into the Horseman's Word, Jimmy, would you tell me? Jimmy MacBeath: What's that?*

Alan Lomax: *How did they bring them into the Horseman's Word, the young fellers?*

Jimmy MacBeath: *Oh, they just told them that — eh, "Well, if you got tae go, if you got tae work that horse, lad, ye be — We better put you through."*

Alan Lomax: *No. But you know they'd bring em at night and they'd do these various things.*

Jimmy MacBeath: *Yes, at night. It was always at night, an it always in the middle of the night. At twelve an one o'clock. An then it was quiet an that. They'd aa*

gather aboot from different farms, all into this farm an they would — eh, put em through

the the Horseman's Word.

He recites:-

"What way did you — what wye did you come, by the — what road did you come be? What was your light?"

"By the light of the moon."

"Was the road crookit or or or straight?"

"The road was dark an crookit. I come by the light of the moon."

Alan Lomax: But before that, they'd do — they do somethin about — takin em upstairs.

Jimmy MacBeath: Aye. up up — eh, they gied them the horseman's cowp. They'd f...l up the Tedder an give them a horseman's cowp — that was through the couplins. Aan let them — let them faa among the ca — the chaff. Then they would — they would pull them through all the chaff, ye see. An then they would they would make em shake hans with a ca — a young beast, a young calf, an rattle the chains. That was old Nick coming to shake hans with him. An this foreman that did this, he'd on a a parson's clock, an a three cornered hat, a three cornered hat wi a tossle hangin doon, what they call a a a a a college hat, three cornered hat, flat on on at the top o his head. He would read oot of this book — whatever he was reading — a lot of muck — we didna ken what he was reading. It was aa gibberish o some kind, an the sight o this garb sometimes put the fear of death on them, when they saw this with the collar on an everything, ye see.

Alan Lomax: Sounds like witchcraft to me.

Jimmy MacBeath: It is partly witchcraft — partly witchcraft, it wis.

The Horseman's Meeting

81

Jimmy Stewart, Ugieside & Other Poems by a Strichen Loon

It was somewhere up the country where the wind it shakes the tree.
When the nights were very dark, as dark as they could be,
Some horsemen held a meeting, to initiate young men,
To the mystery of the horseman word, a thing they needed then.
The word was quite a secret, and was guarded like a king,
And the ones who didn't have it just didn't know a thing
Of how to yoke a rowdy colt to make it stand or go,
But at this meeting they'd be told on paying the price, you know.

They were told to meet at a lonely barn at 12 o'clock at night,
There would be a guard upon the door but there wouldn't be a light,
A bottle of whisky each must bring, a loaf and jar of jam,
And when the guard he said to halt to give the password tam.
He would collect their whisky and present it to old Nick,
As 'twas him they'd get the word from, it was sure to take a trick.
He will introduce you to him just as quickly as he can,
You will go in to see him singly and shake him by the han'.

Well. The young lads did gather at the appointed time and place,
They mustly all had taunted nerves with somewhat haggard face.
The barn was full of fellows who were members of the sect,
And to play the part of devil they the tallest did elect,
They dressed him up in a hairy hide with horns upon his head,
And for a hand now understand he'd a cloven hoof instead.
To see this awful person would make the boldest hold their breath,
Yet these boys all did face him though frightened unto death.

The stage was set with devilish skill to give the boys a fright,
 Men would wail from all around like lost souls in the night,
 In the dark chains would be rattled till it really seemed like hell,
 And when a chap was brought in there no difference could he tell.
 The devil sat upon his throne, for a desk he had a box
 On which there stood a small blue light to magnify the hoax.
 The guard now got the order to bring the first one in,
 As all were hidden in their place they were ready to begin.
 Now one was there a stripling who was somewhat undersized,
 So when he said that he'd go first the rest were quite surprised.
 But he was tough and wiry, just the sort that wont say die,
 And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye,
 He was led up to the devil and he shook his cloven hand,
 As chains did trail to the awful wail as already had been planned.
 Yet he stood there and didn't flinch, he firmly held his ground
 Though the weird noise and devils's voice was a really fearsome sound.

The horseman's meeting continued, they faced the devil one by one,
 As they were led in there had they not been held they would have run.
 For they got an awful scare yet they really were brave boys,
 As I'm sure you'll understand, it takes a man to face such noise,
 And shake the devils's hand, but when the word they had received
 They were treated by their mates, in a way they could not have believed.
 On the whisky, loaf and jam, they all got very tight,
 And became as frisky as a lamb, upon that horseman's night.

Now somewhere down the country, in a city's smoke and steam,
 Of the old days and their lively ways a few men think and dream,
 About the time they worked a pair upon some well know farm.
 They wish they could go back there, where life seemed such a charm,
 But alas, these days have passed away and all the ways they knew
 And they long now for that bygone day with a regret that turns them blue,
 They speak about the night they had when horseman they were made.
 And hear their children saying, "Dad, you must have been afraid".

And finally we find ourselves at the barn door, summoned by the horse's hair in the envelope, with a bottle of whiskey and a loaf of bread in hand. What now follows is a composite form of the ritual, information being drawn from various sources under the guidance of Mr. William Rennie, an initiated member of the Society of the Horseman's Grip & Word.

Incorporated with the Antient Horsemen

Preparation

When the lad is twenty-one years of age (eighteen if his father is a horseman) he is summoned to the meeting by means of an envelope containing horse hair that is left on his bed.

Taking a bottle of whiskey and a loaf of bread he walks to the appointed place. He is blindfolded. His mentor takes him to the chaff house (where the dried husks of corn used for bedding and so forth are stored). Here the initiation will commence.

Entrance

The mentor knocks three times upon the chaff house door in the manner of a horse striking its stall. Then he whinnies like a horse. From inside a voice asks two questions to which the mentor replies:-

Question:- Who is there?

Answer:- A brother and a blind man.

Q. And what do you want with your blind man?

A. To be made a horseman the same as myself.

Then the lad answers, prompted by his guide:-

Q. What way came you here?

A. Through crooks and straights as the way led me.

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Q. What age are you?
A. Twenty one.

Q. What brought you here?
A. To find the Secret.

Q. Did anyone send you here?
A. No.

The voice from inside:- "Come In!"

Another form of the admittance, for those who are already members:-

Q. Who told you to come here?
A. The Devil.

Q. Which way did you come?
A. By the hooks and crooks of the road.

Q. By what light did you come?
A. By the stars and the light of the moon.

Q. Where were you made a horseman?
A. In a horseman's hall where the sun never shone, the wind never blew, a cock never crowed and the feet of a woman never trod.

Q. How do you know that you are a horseman?"
A. Because I have been tried and retried and ready to be tried again by you.

The ploughboy hears an authoritative voice, in due course he will learn that this is Brother Hercules.¹ "For be it well known to everyone that this young man has since the age of fourteen years of age, laboured and worked hard as orragoad² or ploughboy. Now, on this September night, being twenty-one years of age, he has passed the three ages of youth and is now to be taken and anointed into the seven ages of man. Seven times seven is nine and forty to make you seventy."

The lad is taken to a small adjacent field. Hercules invites him to take note of a full bucket saying:-

"Now lad, would you be knowing what a 'hospice'³ is? It is not a hospital it is about two gallons and if you look into this bucket you will see something we got from a horse for you this day". The candidate will no doubt wonder what part the urine is going to play in the proceedings.

The lad is taken outside. By the light of the harvest moon the lad is stripped to the waist and straw is stuffed down the back of his trousers and into his nicky tams. His body is smeared with dubbin⁴ and a horse collar is placed over his head. He is blindfolded, a hood wink being placed over his head. He is hobbled by having his hands tied to his feet and is made to drag a harrow.⁵ Thus all apprentices are prepared for travelling to the land of the seven labours of Man.

1. Hercules is the Roman name for the Greek hero Heracles whom the Dorians of ancient Greece regarded as their ancestor.
2. Spare man, odd job man.
3. There is a pun, the *hospice* is horse pee.
4. A mixture of tallow and cod liver oil used to dress leather harness.
5. A heavy farm implement for breaking up soil

The lad is whipped by Brother Lucifer with switches of sauchen (i.e. birch-wood), the straw down his trousers providing some protection. Brother Gabriel guides him.

First he is driven to the North East corner of the where Brother Apollo offers him "Cold Pee" Understandably, he does not drink.

Thence he is driven to the South East where Brother Parnussus likewise offers him "Cold Pee" which of course he refuses.

Next he is driven to the South West corner where Brother Perseus wets his lips with the liquid.

Finally, he is taken to the North West corner where Brother Pegasus attempts to pour it down his throat, again it is refused.

In fact at each corner the lad has been offered good ale.

The Greeting

He is brought to the centre and Lucifer (or Hercules) stands in front of him. He is instructed to reach out and shake the hand of Lucifer or "Auld Nick" or "Old Clootie". He reaches out to find not a human hand but a cloven hoof.¹

1 It would appear that this component of the ritual came to be given a great deal of prominence – see the poem written (or possibly rewritten) by Jimmy Stewart. The cloven hoof is that of a stag set upon a stick. In some recent enactments of the ritual the ritualist holding the cloven hoof also bears stag horns upon his head and wears an animal skin. This is a manifestation of the animal mask, the varied and widely spread folk ceremonies where ritualists embody animals. In Britain, the most common animal is the horse (the Padstow Hobby Horse being just one example) but stags are found in such celebrations as the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance and in Dorset a horned mask known as the Ooser which survived into the twentieth century. It may be that such folk-custom was an influence upon the Ploughman's ritual.

He is then instructed as to the oath, his hand placed upon a Bible.

"The Oath is a very solemn one which we make of you is to hold up your right hand and place yourself in a position that is neither sitting, walking nor swinging, lying, flying, standing clothed nor unclothed, boots on or boots off and Blind" ¹

In this position he takes the oath:-

"I do most solemnly take upon me the vows and secrets of horsemanship before God and these witnesses. May God help me to keep my vow and the secrets of which I will have to give an account of at the last day. I swear that I will always conceal and never reveal these secrets, to father nor mother, sister or brother, wife or wench or to the babe that sitteth on my knee or show any of my signs of horsemanship.

I Hereby Solemnly Vow that I will not give it or see it given under the sum of £1 and a bottle of whiskey paid down as I did myself.

I Hereby Solemnly Swear that I will not give it or see it given under the number of 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 sworn brethren being present and strictly proven to be the same as myself. ²

1. A similar state of neither-nor or in-betweeness is required of the candidate in the first degree of freemasonry "The preparation (of the candidate) consists.... of having the right arm, left breast, and left knee bare, the right heel slipshod."

2. This is enigmatic. It would appear that there was a feeling that an odd number of brethren should be present. Perhaps there were different traditions as to what odd number was the minimum requisite and these different traditions were recorded in the manuscript from which this clause is drawn.

I Hereby Solemnly Vow that I will not give it or see it given on the Lord's day or on a fast day or on a market day or on a town day

I Further Solemnly Vow that I will not give it or see it given to a drunkard or a liar or a swearer or to reveal the secrets to anyone I think will abuse horses or see them abused without telling off them they are.

I Hereby Solemnly Vow that I will attend all meetings and summons within a distance of 5 miles and warning of 24 hours except in five cases: my wife in child-bed; sickness in the family; going for a doctor; a house on fire or my master's time.

I Further Solemnly Vow that I will not ill use or abuse my own horses or woman's horses or man's horses or see them abused without telling them they are doing so if I know him to be a brother of mine.

I Further Solemnly Vow that I will not give nor see it given to a farmer or to a farmer's son unless he is serving a farmer the same as myself or to a greave that does not work horses or to a woman at all.

I Further Solemnly Vow that I will not give it to any man under 18 or above 45 or to any tradesman except a blacksmith and very few of them.

I Further Solemnly Vow that I shall not cut it out nor carve it, write it or engrave it upon paper or parchment, snow or stone or sand or anything moveable or unmoveable under the canopy of heaven or do as much as wave a single letter with my finger to cause it to be known.¹

1. The equivalent Masonic oath states:- "I further solemnly promise, that I will not write these secrets, print, carve, engrave, or otherwise them delineate, of cause or suffer them to be done so by others, if in my power to prevent it, on any thing moveable or immovable under the canopy of heaven, whereby or whereon any letter, character, or figure may become legible or intelligible to myself, or to any one in the world, so that our secrets, arts, and hidden mysteries, may improperly become known through my unworthiness".

O Help my God to perform all my vows as a horseman and if I shall break any of them I wish no less a punishment to fall upon me than to be torn between two wild horses and my body to be quartered and thrown to the four winds of heaven and hell to be taken and buried into the sands of the sea where the tide ebbs and flows twice a day to show that I have been a deceiver of the faith.¹

Amen

The Password

Then his blindfold is removed. The lad is then led by brother Lucifer playing "Old Nick's Birlin Box"² to the stable and the horse trough where he washed and dried with straw. He is dressed in his own clothes and given the password "C... P..."³ meaning "Firm as Rock". Brother Lucifer shows him a flagon of good ale which the lad is encouraged to drink.

1. The freemasonic equivalent:- "These several points I solemnly swear to observe, without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind, under no less a penalty, on the violation of any one of them, than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out, by the root, and my body buried in the sand of the sea at low water mark, or a cable's length from the shore, where the tide regularly ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours..."

2. A hurdy-gurdy, *birlin* meaning to turn or vibrate.

3. *Calpe* - The outcrop in Southern Spain regarded as the northern Pillar of Hercules. An alternate suggestion is *Constans Petros*, a Latin translation of *Firm as Rock*.

The Legend

The lad is returned to the chaff house where he is addressed by Hercules:-

No doubt my hearty lad you will have thought that we have been very wicked to you tonight and so we have. In the words of the ploughmen we have given a "Gweed Annintin" just like all the men who have travelled this road before you. This represents the Seven Labours of Heracles or Hercules. That is the man that I represent tonight and I do not think that you will have a rougher or more difficult road to travel in your next forty nine years, until you are seventy if the Almighty spares you that long.

You poor brute! If you ever be wicked to a poor dumb animal, be it a horse or an ox, or treat them as we have treated you tonight may the Almighty hand you over to Old Nick himself.

You will now be given the grip, reach out both hands just as you are gripping a plough and your mare's name shall be P....., the winged horse, and you harness the pair of A... and when together P..... the F..... H..... to speed you on your way. The everyday word is C....., my right hand puller, and the word A..., my left hand puller.¹

Now young man you have the right to take your own white stone to the horse on Mormond Hill,² a fitting token to the fine animals that have given us the power to live off the land. You are now a brother among brothers and you can join with us and together we will have a right jovial night.

1. Perhaps:- "... your mare's name shall be *Pegasus* (or *Peg*), the winged horse, and you harness the pair of *Asses* and when together *Pull the First Harrow* to speed you on your way. The everyday word is *Calpe*, my right hand puller (there is a pun with the word "pillar") and the word *Abyla*, a mountain in North Africa near the Gibraltar Straits regarded as the southern Pillar of Hercules

2. Mormond Hill has a giant white horse upon it, made of white stone, see appendices.

"Let us give the old birlin box a dirl whirl and we will all sing *Ploughing the Flagstones of Aberdeen*" The lad is encouraged to drink ale at every chorus.

Ill prepared horses always have slack habits
And always pull to one side
But the Buchan oxen keep their stride and pull and struggle on.

You cannot match the oxen plough
Such steady beasts they are
They neither battle in the bog
Nor are noisy on the hillsides
And when the plough hits a stone
They bend their necks and pull
And always take their time with a steady stride
And pull and struggle on

As Barclay, laird of Ury says
As he approached his plough
At the flagstones of Aberdeen
He early, began to plough

Take the plough to Brockie
We will make the flagstones fly
And here is the provost's honest man
And a gruesome look has he

How are you provost? Are you well?
And this is your good looking lady
I haven't time to shake your hand
Until the oxen stand and pant

Your flagstones are one nice place
And dry as any bun
But I have a mind to plough them up
And make them into cornfields

The oxen pulled and the stones did fly
On end and edge they always lay
And Barclay left it cornfields
Bar one rough and stony field

No doubt the work was hard and laborious
And might be better worn
But where will you get such a job?
Our lads like Ury's laird? ¹

1. This ballad is a remarkable survival. The description of ploughing by oxen seems out of place in a Horsemen's Ritual but the references to Barclay, Laird of Ury explains the relevance. We learn from *Duncan Fraser, Portrait of a Parish*, Standard Press 1979 that prior to the introduction of ploughing with horses large areas around Ury and St. Cyrus went untilled. Horsepower greatly increased ploughing capacity and, around the end of the 18th Century these areas were made into cornfields. This was a massive undertaking. It has been estimated that 100,000 cartloads of stones were removed from Barclay's land, clearly some being transported 30 miles for use in Aberdeen. The only way to locate stones below the surface would be to plough and it would make sense to risk the old ox ploughs for this rather than the new horse ploughs. It would be a task that men would remember. When a plough hits an underground rock the handles slew round in a manner that can easily break a wrist or thumb. Oxen plough slower than horses which would lessen the danger. Hence this ballad records an undertaking that changed the landscape and set up the horsemen in their trade until the arrival of the tractor. Even the name of the tune to which this ballad would be sung has been recorded. It might be Englished as the "Odd Job Man's March to the Dung Heap".

Hercules, standing in the centre, calls all to order: "Good brothers, does anyone know of any reason why this newly anointed brother should not be admitted? Then him be taken to the Ploughman's Court for the roll of the stone ball or the ballot, whatever is the choice of the brothers."

There is ominous murmuring amongst the assembled men.

Hercules: "Brother ploughmen, it gives me no pleasure to come before you tonight. You know why we are here but I shall tell you anyway"

Turning to the newly made brother: "You are here because you had no trust in you brothers. You were offered good sustenance to quench your thirst, that sustenance being cold pee. We will now hear the evidence."

North East. Brother Apollo: "Yes Hercules I offered the good Brother cold pee but he didn't want it then."

South East. Brother Parnassus: "Yes Hercules and I offered the good Brother a drink of cold pee and still he didn't want it."

South West. Brother Perseus: "Yes Hercules, I even wetted his lips with cold pee but no, he would not take it."

North West. Brother Selene: "Yes Hercules. "I went so far as to pour a wee drop of cold pee into his mouth but he spat it out"

South. Brother Gabriel: "Yes Hercules I was very good to our fine Brother. It was I who guided him round the road of Helios and showed him every comfort. But no, he would not take the smallest drop and I know not the reason why for I am known to all as a good soul."

North. Brother Lucifer: "Yes Hercules. I guided this brother of mine with sauchen rod, hitting him with it and I was wicked to him. It was I who first

96 went to him. When he saw the cold pee by the light Selene he quenched his thirst, drank it all and not a drop was left. He even asked for more. That is why he is a proud mannie this night."

Hercules: "Brother ploughmen you have all rolled the ball stone and none of you have had cold feet. I wager that we all knew that Lucifer would not take off his hob-nailed books and socks tonight. There is no fear of him having cold feet. That is why he is in our minds on nights like this. We listen to him but that is about all. The rest of you are commended for playing your part."

To the newly made Brother: "Anointed Brother. Who would have thought that your sojourn amongst us would have been done and over so fast. The ball stone or ballot has been found against you, not just for lack of trust but also for giving us such a thirst, making us drink cold pee and for making us sing and dance to Lucifer's tune and listen to his hurdy-gurdy. Hercules who is represented tonight was sentenced to twelve labours for murdering his wife and children. That is more than you can stand so you will go a far quicker way. Good Brothers, take him away and show him the way to eternity and may the Almighty have mercy on his soul."

The new Brother is grabbed, bound hand and foot and taken into a loft above the stable and shown a trap door and is made to look over the edge at the cobbled floor below. By the light of a candle Lucifer shows him a rope hanging from the rafters. Lucifer makes a noose and shows it to the Anointed Brother who is then blindfolded, a hoodwink being put over his head. The noose is then placed around his neck.

Gabriel: "Lord have mercy on our good Brother who has ploughed his last furrow. There is no doubt that he has worked hard and well in the three ages of youth but he has now been found wanting. Take him into your arms O Mighty Father and guide him on the path of Helios by day and Selene

by night. May he soldier through Eternity. May he be a lot better than he has been on his first journey through the first age of man. So be it."

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The Anointed Brother is pushed so that he falls through the trap door.

But it is a mock execution. His neck is not broken, nor is he strangled. The noose around his neck is just a small length of rope and not the one tied to the rafter. He hurtles towards the cobbled floor but finds his fall is broken by straw that has been hastily set in place after he was blindfolded. The straw stuffed down his trousers provides some protection in case the experience causes his bowels to empty.

Lucifer: "Did the fall work? Next Ale and food till the morning!"

Hercules: "Well, well my good brother. Without a doubt you may have thought this to be your last night but it is a pleasure for me to shake your hand and to hear you give me the words. Now you are well and truly a Ploughman amongst us."

Lecture by Gabriel

Hundreds of years before now your ancient Brothers first ploughed the land using beast of burden. Now, on this land, your twelve cows must take the strain.¹ Your anointing as a Brother Ploughmen has been to teach you to never mistreat any living creature. You might have been told before now that Mankind was made in the image of the almighty but his horsemen know that all creatures, great and small, were also made in the Almighty's image.

1. Again, a reference to ploughing with oxen, in a horsemen's ritual.

You might know that the letter 'G' that surrounds your Leeven Board¹ is emblematic for the Almighty. You will know that there are nine and forty years ahead of you with the last three being the right hand puller "Calpe" and the left hand puller "Abyla" and Hercules in the centre. Your travels being over, you have completed the Seven Ages of Man, then in the next years you have to be thankful to the Almighty who allowed you to walk on the Earth for so long.

If you take the time to look you will see other emblems representing the Seven Deadly Sins, the Twelve Labours of Hercules with Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer all there. However, you will have to work a plough for seven long years before you are told much more. However I can tell you now that in the mythology of ancient Greece Calpe was Gibralter (Firm as Rock) and "Abyla" was Africa, the Dark Continent.²

1. The ritual here refers to a *Leeven* or *Living Board* which appears to be equivalent to the Masonic Tracing Board. The actual board has not survived and the earlier part of the twentieth century the illustration reproduced here as an appendix was utilised. However, it cannot be entirely reconciled with this version of the speech.

2. The horses, or pullers, are by pun identified with the the light and dark Pillars of Hercules. These can be identified with Jachim and Boaz, the light and dark pillars of the Masonic temple. Masonic lore has it in Solomon's Temple the twin pillars symbolised the presence of God. The Israelites imported this conception of Temple building from the city of Tyre, now in Lebanon and then capital of Phoenicia. It was communicated by Hiram Abiff, a figure who is central to the third degree of Craft Freemasonry. Tyre had colonies in southern Spain and Calpe and Abyla, the Pillars of Hercules were, for the Phoenicians, the twin pillars in the outer world that were cognate with the twin pillars in their temples. Thus those who formulated this ritual may have considered that they were identifying with the essential and most ancient mystery of freemasonry. A Masonic mystery that predates the building of Solomon's Temple! Moreover, most Freemasons would have little opportunity to contemplate the Masonic pillars outside the Masonic temple. A horseman guided the power of their pillars, or pullers, every working day of his life.

Pegasus – The Flying Horse – (Peg – Asses)
Apollo – Caring for animals and crops
Lucifer – The Devil, Auld Nick. Winter
Parnassus – Mountain, Strength, Endurance
Perseus – Gallant, Brave, Heroic
Gabriel – Saviour, Good Soul, Summer
Selene – Moon, Dim light, Night, West
Helios – Sun, Bright Light, East
Abyla – Ancient Brother, You are long gone, Africa, Dark Continent, Eternity
Calpe – Youth, Silly Thoughts, Deadly Sins

1. It is a surprise to find that farm servants in rural Scotland should be making reference to figures from Ancient Greek mythology in secret ceremonies. The nature of each divinity as described here is given in the ritual. The context for this is that in the 18th Century Edinburgh was a famous centre of learning, such that it was associated with the ancient Greek city state most noted for its philosophers and was called "the Athens of the North". Classical scholarship was so prevalent in Edinburgh that its nickname "Old Reekie" (from the smell of the coal and wood fires that heated its homes) was adapted to "Old Greekie". The rural lowlands of Aberdeenshire were considered rustic and backward, with a dialect that confounds the understanding of visitors. Hence this tongue was named "Doric" after the part of ancient Greece, which the Athenians considered provincial and unsophisticated where people spoke a dialect they could not understand. This identification seems to have been embraced by the formulators of the horsemen's ceremony as Heracles was considered an ancestor by the Dorians of ancient Greece and Parnassus was their local holy mountain. We should note that the named of two of the officers, Gabriel and Lucifer, do not derive from Greek mythology. In the ritual Gabriel, the Good Angel, guides and advises the candidate whilst Lucifer tricks and punishes. It was a 17th Century occult belief that we each had a good angel that we could contact for guidance however if we acted sinfully his position could be usurped by an infernal daemon. See *Anon, Conjuration and an Excellent Discourse of the Nature and Substance of Devils and Spirits*, Society of Esoteric Endeavour (originally published in 1665 as appendices to Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*).

Three men approached the ford of a river in their ox carts. The river was wide and the current strong. Upon the bank they met a woman who asked to be carried across the water. The first refused, as did the second. The third was named Tubal Cain¹ and he agreed. The woman saw that he was kind, and in return for his good deed she offered him either the secret of horses or the secret of women and invited him to choose which. Tubal Cain considered her offer and then replied, saying that he would prefer to have half of each. She agreed. They were in the middle of the river and she was half way through explaining the secrets of horsemanship when the river rose and she was washed off the cart and drowned. So half of horsemanship and all the secrets of women were lost. If we had all the secrets of horsemanship we could make horses speak.

The Four Rules of Horsemanship ²

To make stand

To make lie

To make hip

To make high

1. Concerning the nature of Mr. Tubal Cain, please see appendices.
2. These are the Doric dialect versions of the four basic horse commands:-

Stand = Stop

lie = go forward

hip = go right

high = go left.

The first letter of the Horseman's Alphabet is

O

The second letter is

N

The third letter is

E

The Word is ONE

The Practice is BOTH AS ONE ¹

Hercules:- "To test that you have fully understood what you have been told now write the word with this paper and pen"

Anxious to please the lad commences to do so. Lucifer brings a heavy chain down hard on his knuckles.

Hercules:- "You took a vow never write the Horseman's Word nor communicate record it in any way. May you sore hands be a reminder to keep this oath.

1. This portion of the ritual relates directly to that given in the Singer booklet. The word of the horsemen as *Both as One* is tailored to ploughing with two horses; a practice which, we have learned, commenced in the latter part of the 18th Century. The ritual as given by Singer may predate this and may be the ritual of the *Antient Horsemen* which, the title of the text provided by Kennung (see acknowledgements), was incorporated into the ceremony of the Buchan ploughmen.

Which path do they travel?

Some travel a broad and easy road
Where they can always save their breath
The Almighty gives us all one life
And He wants to make us men

If I were wise I would go his speed
And no other would I dare
Those who heed not his word
Will have to fear the worst

The hard school he will put you through
Until every folly flies to the highest hills
He will drive them down and break them all to pieces
The wise will not confuse his teachings
Nor holy house for hole
But idiots let his invitation pass
Which they will sorely rue

Father, we have plenty of meat
Or never get our share
Father, we dress in finery
Or go in clothes worn bare
Father we be healthy and handsome
Or waning like the river Dee
Father we are in the haunt of sorrow
Or in the houses of glee

Our work is to be with the Almighty
And with it, upon thy will
To boldly take the narrow road
Straight up to the holy hall

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Gabriel: "The good soul will lead us to the pillar of Calpe where we will be standing for the rest of the night".

So happy to meet
So melancholy to part
So happy to meet again
Your road is never long
When you have been with Brothers

Horses Petition

Going up hill, whip me not
Going down hill, hurry me not
Loose in the stable, forget me not
Of hay or corn, rob me not
With sponge and brush, neglect me not
Tired or hot, wash me not
If sick or cold, chill me not
With bit or reins, jerk me not
And when you are angry, strike me not

These protocols permit a brother to establish whether another is also a member of the Society.

1st Ploughman: "Ancient Brother" reaching out both hands with thumbs up, as if grasping a plough.

2nd Ploughman: "You're long away" grasping the first ploughman's hands with his thumbs pointing down.¹

1st Ploughman: "I yoke a mare by the name of Peg"

2nd Ploughman: "I yoke a pair of *asses*"

To make "Pegasus"

1st Ploughman: "Will you stand me a dram"

2nd Ploughman: "Are you for whiskey or Cold Pee?"²

1. This grip is specifically relevant to ploughing. The grip given in Singer's version of the ritual, which appears to be an earlier form which pre-dates ploughing with horses, is to press with ones thumb upon the uppermost joint of the second finger and give three shakes. This is very close to the grip of the second degree of freemasonry, where pressure is applied by the thumb to the spare between the uppermost joints of the second and third fingers. The fact that the Singer grip is not relevant to ploughing adds to the impression that this version of the ritual predates the introduction of ploughing with horses.

2. Punned with *Calpe*.

These sayings, which take the form of a question and answer, test a brother's knowledge of the Society and will have served to inculcate the Society's teachings among the membership.

Some refer to the ritual itself:-

Q. Who made you a man?

A. God made me and man made me, therefore the Devil hath no business to interfere.

Q. How do you know that you are a horseman?

A. It was revealed to me that which was never revealed to a woman or a boy and because I have been tried and retried and I am ready to be tried again by you.

Q. Who is the author of your oath?

A. Harohall, Marshall and Mac'Neil.¹

Q. What is the stance of your oath?

A. Heal, Conceal and never Reveal.²

Q. When is a horseman dressed?

A. When his whip is round his neck.

1. This may be a pun. In the ploughman's hall (harrow hall), in front of the Marshall (foreman, boss, Hercules) you must (*must* in Doric, is pronounced *mac*) kneel (..Neil). However, we learn from the Ord article that Marshall appears to be the name of one of the lineages within the Horsman's Word. Perhaps this catechism does indeed record the names of those who formulated the ritual for the ploughmen

2. The equivalent in Masonic ritual is "Hele, conceal and never reveal". *Hele* an archaic word for *hide*.

Q. How many virls should be on a horseman's whip.¹
 A. Three.

Q. How many knots should be on a horseman's whip?
 A. Three.

Concerning the place of initiation :-

Q. Where are the keys of the horseman's hall kept?
 A. We have the hall and no keys are needed.

Q. What is the hall floored with?
 A. Nothing but the feet of good horsemen.

Q. What is it furnished with?
 A. Bread and Whiskey.

Q. What is it roofed with?
 A. The blue canopy of heaven.

Q. Where were you made a horseman?
 A. In the four corners of a room, a horseman's hall or any other suitable place for the occasion or between two hills and two waters.²

1. *Vrils* means *rings*. This and the following maxim are probably straight forward recognitions signals. The horseman would personally own his whip, unlike harness and so forth. Thus at hiring fairs he could indicate his status by the number of rings or knots on his whip. Just the same method of recognition is given in the Singer booklet which may reveal the ritual of the older *Antient Horsemen*.

2. It is interesting to note that as Freemasons were starting to gather in purpose made temples the horsemen met out of doors or in improvised temples (i.e. barns and other farm buildings used surreptitiously). This maxim seems to preserve the idea that a site between two hills and two rivers (or other bodies of water) was considered particularly auspicious.

Q. Where were you made a horseman?

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A. In a horseman's hall where the sun never shone, the wind never blew, a cock never crowed and the feet of a woman never trod.¹

or

A. In the horseman's hall in yonder three-cornered field where the foot of a woman never trod.²

Q. Where were you made a man?

A. Down in the valley where the cock never crowed and where they wouldn't keep an impudent bugger like you.

1. Reference can be found in a side degrees of Scottish Rite freemasonry to the first lodge being held upon a hill in the North of Scotland where "... a cock never crowed, a lion never roared and a women never tattled". Other Masonic traditions do not have this turn of phrase. The exclusion of women from a trade mystery will grate to the modern ear but then was the norm. A place where a cock never crowed might suggest a distance from any farmyard. However, there is nowhere in Scotland that the wind has never blown or the sun shone. It seems that the ritual imagines a space transcendent of every day reality.

2. Folklorist and author Nigel Pennick advises that there are traditions in Germany, England and Scotland of small triangular plots of land being special, sacred. Sometimes they were called 'No Man's land'. A living member of the Society of the horsemen's Grip and Sign knows of a three cornered field near the village of Strichen at the base of Mormond Hill which was used for part of the initiation. It is known that the last ritual held there attracted several hundred men. The horsemen were not the only initiatory body to hold rituals in the open air. On March 21st 1792 the radical newspaper Northern Star published in Belfast carried a letter stating that "Hedge Masons" who met thus were responsible for various acts of mischief and disorder. It is, perhaps, significant that the "Work Book" of the Aberdeen Freemasons for the year 1670 states:- "No Lodge be holden within a dwelling house where there is people living in but in the open fields, except it be ill weather, and then let there be a house chosen that no person shall hear nor see us.... We ordain likewise that all entering Prentices be entered in our ancient out-field Lodge in the Mearns in the parish of Nigg at the sources (i.e, piers) at the point of the Ness."

Q. Where were you schooled?

A. In the green fields of winter where the grass grows green for the young ponies in spring or the same old place between brechen and haims, a damn tight fit.¹

Q. What was in your school?

A. A candle, a three-legged stool and a cabye.²

Q. Was you ever at the school.

A. No, but I met the scholars.³

Catchisms concerning the Word:-

Q. How many horses do you work?

A. Two but both go as one.

Q. Spell my name and your name and churn the name in three letters.

A. O.N.E.

Q. If you are the man I take you to be telling me where your secret word lies and answer that without a word?

Response - the ploughman places his hand upon his heart.

1. *Brechen* is part of the harness for stopping, *haims* are the parts used for pulling.

2. The meaning of this is obscure. Frances Grose in his Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue informs us that *three-legged stool* was slang for the gallows, perhaps a reference to the mock execution component of the ritual. *Cabye* sounds like *cable tow* and may be a miss hearing of this term which is applied to the noose in a conventional Masonic initiation and which, of course, occurs in a more extreme form in the ritual of the ploughmen where candidate is led to believe that he is going to be hung. The candle, bringing light, is present when the blindfold is removed.

3. This catechism is a further suggestion that the horsemen did indeed engage with scholars to formulate ceremonies appropriate to the craft of ploughing with horses.

Q. This is a letter. I give it to thee. If you are a horseman give it to me.

A. This one is too short. It is of no use. This one is longer; it has been oftenest in use. This one is longest, the longest is best since Tubal Cain said "stand down", came the horse and was conquered by man.¹

Q. In which or where, a horse or mare, does your secret letters lie?

A. A mare in foal.²

Q. What do you call your horse?

A. One.

Q. Why do you call your horse?

A. One.

Q. Why do you call them One?

A. Because they're Both as One.

Origins of horsemanship:-

Q. Where was the first horse caught?

A. It was caught in the sandy deserts of Arabia.³

Q. How was the first horse caught?

A. It was taking a drink of water and sucked the regulator⁴ into its mouth.

1. This may refer to a lost instruction concerning letters.

2. Presumably a mare with a foal is considered the union of both sexes. Both as ONE, the foal being created by the combination. If foal is male both sexes are present too. This is suggestive of a further dimension to the mystery as the horsemen identifying their Word with the procreative process.

3. This would have been popularly considered east of Eden and therefore consistent with the form of the ritual given by Singer.

4. The "regulator" is the bit, the part of the bridle which goes into the horse's mouth.

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Q. What was the first horse named?
A. The first horse was named Star.

Q. Why was he named Star?
A. Because he had a Star on his brow.

Q. What was the first mare named?
A. Bell.

Q. Why was she named Bell?
A. Because there was a bell upon her brow.

Q. Who was the first horseman.
A. The first horseman was Tubal Cain.

Q. What was the first bridle made with?
A. It was made with Tubal Cain's waistcoat.

Q. What was the first collar made with?
A. The first collar was Tubal Cain's trousers stuffed with saigs.¹

Q. What was the haims made with?
A. His wife's old pot feet.

Q. Who first revealed the horseman's word?
A. A woman.

Q. Where was the horseman's word first revealed?
A. In the middle of water.

Q. What are your horses' names?
A. Dange and Destructions

1. Yellow Iris or similar plants with swordlike leaves

2. Means *Damned* and *Wasteful*, the significance of the maxim is obscure.

Q. What are your horses' names?

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A. Star and Bell.

Q. Why name them that?

A. Because there was a star on his brow and a bell on her brow.¹

1. A white star upon the forehead of a stallion was widely regarded as auspicious, to the extent that elderly horse manuals gave recipes for dyeing a horse's coat thus, to assist in making a sale. Folk musician & author Nigel Pennick sings this traditional East Anglian song which has a haunting melody in the minor key:-

Of all the horses in the merry green wood
The bob-tail mare bears the bell away.
Of all the horses in the merry green wood
The bob-tail mare bears the bell away.
With a Hey!, With a Reel!, With a Ho!, With a Gee!
And the bob-tail mare bears the bell away.
Hey! Ree! Ho! Gee!
And the bob-tail mare bears the bell away.
Hey! Ree! Ho! Gee!
And the bob-tail mare bears the bell away.

Horses in the *merry green wood* may be semi-wild, as with New Forest, Exmoor and Dartmoor ponies. But *bob-tail* means her tail has been trimmed, a sign she has been domesticated. The words *Hey! Ree! Ho! Gee!* are the local versions of the basic horse instructions for Left, Right, Stop and Go respectively. Their Scottish equivalent form the four rules of horsemanship given in the rituals. Gorse, *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, gives this definition of "bear the bell":- To excel or surpass all competitors, to be the principal in a body or society; an allusion to the fore horse or leader of a team, whose harness is commonly ornamented with a bell or bells. Some suppose it a term borrowed from an ancient tournament, where the victorious knights bore away the BELLE or FAIR LADY. Others derive it from a horse-race, or other rural contentions, where bells were frequently given as prizes. It would appear that the Scottish Society inherits notions of horse domestication that manifest in other British folk traditions. Perhaps the sense that the young horseman was now party to the earliest domestication of horses, and knew the names of the first ancestors of all domesticated horses gave him a feeling of authority over the horse, to which the animal might respond.

Miscellaneous Catechisms:-

Q. Your horse has a shoe off.

A. It will be along time before it wears to the knee.

Q. Your horse's shoe is slack.

A. The smith is not dead yet.

Q. What are the three C's of horsemanship?

A. Corn well, Clap well and Comb well.

Q. What are the three parts of horsemanship?

A. Patience, Practice and Perseverance

or

A. Patience, Perseverance and a good temper.

Q. How was the first horse known to draw?

A. There was a mare next box to him and he carried away the door on his shoulders to get in beside her.

Q. How many links are in a horseman's chain?

A. 9. The horse, the man, the whip, the hand, my life, my love, my liberty, place and opportunity.

or

A. 7. The man, the whip, the horse, the plough, time, patience and perseverance.

Q. What is the hairiest side of a horse?

A. The side the mane lies to.

Q. How could you get a mare in foal and not cover her with a horse?

A. Cover her with a *cuddie*.¹

1. A *cuddie* is a donkey.

Q. What is the right end of a whip?

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A. The end that comes handiest.

Q. How many nails does a horseman's whip hang on.

A. Five

or

A. Whiles one and whiles five.

Q. How do you hang up your bridle?

A. By the bits.

Q. Whether bolans was rat tailed or docked?

A. It was neither, it had a tail like a cow.¹

Q. Your horse is a cripple.

A. If you had as many nails in your foot, you would be too.

Q. How many poles do you furr (furrow, plough) with?

A. Seven. The four horses ears and three poles.

or

A. Seven. The three poles, the two horses, the plough and the man.

Q. Where do you tie your horse's garter?

A. From the point of the shoulder to the sole of the foot.

Q. What is the length of your whip?

A. Seven by nine and by three, one.

Q. What are the principal things about a horse?

A. Action, Attraction and Attention.

1. *Bolans* may be bowlegged, the term "rat tailed" might be used to describe the appearance of an untrimmed horses tail as opposed to one that has been docked. This may be a light hearted description of an unattractive horse

Q. Why is your horse like a top?

A. Because he is shod with iron.

Q. Your horse has an awful white face.

A. He is like myself. He is spotted.

Q. Your horse is blind.

A. He can see as far through a hill as you can see up its hole.

Q. How would you know a horse from a mare in the dark?

A. Stick your nose in its hole and find if there is another for your tongue.

Q. How is your horse like a clock?

A. Because he has to be regulated.

Q. Your horse has an awful hollowed back.

A. When the saddle is on he is complete.

Q. How high is your stable door?

A. As high as the lintel or as high as a cow can kick.

Q. What does your horse like better than corn?

A. Myself.

Q. What is better for your horse than corn?

A. The sweat of my body.¹

1. One East Anglian tradition concerning the use of a toad bone to control horses has it that the bone should be carried in the horseman's armpit, to imbue it with his body odour. If not that specific this catechism evokes man and horse working together.

Q. How many tags does your saddle hang on?

A. Four, the four legs of the horse.

Q. How are you three getting on today?

A. That is where you are wrong, we all go as one.

Q. How does a donkey smell the East?

A. When its ass is in the West.

Q. When did you get the last ride on the black horse?

A. (Unanswerable.)

Q. How many hairs are in a horses tail?

A. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11.

or

A. 25, 27, 29 and the rest.¹

Q. How did you hang up your bridle tonight?

A. So as a man like myself could take them down.

Q. How were your horses tonight when you came away?

A. Heads to the wall, tails to the wall, both eating when I came away.

Q. What time of year were you made a horseman?

A. When the whins² were in bloom and the snow on the ground.

Q. Who was daft enough to make you a horseman?

A. An older and wiser man than myself.

Q. Who was your father?

A. An older and wiser man than myself and wiser than a fool.

1. It is perhaps relevant that it was thought in Masonic circles that Pythagoras considered odd numbers symbolically male and sacred and even numbers female.

2. Gorse, or furze.

Q. How many hours does a well-humbled horse have?

A. Twelve¹

Q. What is the clearest bit in a horse's head?

A. The eye.

Q. Where are two poles that stand in a line, the dead in the middle and soul behind?

A. Plough.

Q. Where did you loose your plough last?

A. Where a brother would yoke it.

Q. Where did you leave your plough tonight?

A. Below the moon on top of a stone at the end of a well ploughed rig.

Q. Where did you leave your swingle-trees tonight?

A. In the letter A.²

Q. Your horse is blind in one eye.

A. He shall see as far through a whinstone³ as you will see up a dog's arse.

Q. What was you learned.

A. Neither to write nor read but to count and spell well.

Q. What is that a horse does not have and every other four-legged animal has?

A. Teats.

Q. What is the most important word in horsemanship?

A. Ho!

1. A horse was expected to work up to twelve hours a day.

2. In the Scottish form of the harness the swingle (or swivel) tree has the appearance of the horizontal cross of a capital 'A'.

Q. How would you know a horse from a mare coming out of the stable door? 117
A. A horse has two ears forward and a mare has only one.

Q. What is the difference between the hair of a horse's tail and that of a mare's?

A. The horse's hair is square and the mare's is round.¹

Q. What is the length of your lines?

A. From mouth to hand.

Q. How many sides does a horse have?

A. 10. The backside, the foreside, the up side, the down side, the right side, the left side, the outside, the inside, the red side, the white side.

or

A. 11. Inside, outside, aftside, nearside, backside, foreside, plain side, rough side, upside, downside and a hairy side.

Society Toasts referring to the origins of horsemanship

Heres to the horse with the three white feet.²

The high coloured tail and mane.

And heres to him that broke him in

And his name was Tubal Cain.

1. Apparently, when cut in section this is, in fact, true. Accordingly the different hairs handle differently. The hairs tied in the special horseman's manner as invitation to the Society will probably be that of a mare as that is more amenable to the task.

2. There was considerable body of European traditional opinion concerning the merits of horses with particular colouration. Three white feet was generally considered a bad sign for a workhorse.

Heres to the horse with the horse with the three white feet
The chestnut tail and mane

Heres to the man that caught the first horse
His name was Tubal Cain

Heres to oak the best of wood
The wildest horse that ever stood
The wildest mare that ever ran
Was managed both by men or man

Heres to the horse with four white feet¹
The chestnut mane and tail
A star on his face and a spot on his breast
And his master's name was Cain

Heres to the horse with the star on his face
The bell upon his breast
He's easy to harness and easy to yoke
He's a tight wee horse that keeps time to the clock

Heres to him that brought me here
And for his sake I'll taste of this
And heres to him that brought me here
And changed my name from friend to brother
And for his sake I'll take another
Heres to Tubal Cain
That crowned the root
And for his sake I'll drink her out

Heres to those two lovely animals
That go before man
I'll take them and try them
And make them go as One

Heres to the BH that was brought here for show
Heres to the BH, the HM and J¹
If you tell me the meaning of that
I'll trust you with all I know

When the sun does set in the west
And our horse begins to slumber
Since we are together met
Who can tell our number?
ENO

Convivial Toasts:-

Heres to the lips that can keep a secret
Heres to the man that broke me in
Theres to him and to others
And heres to the man that broke me in
And changed my name from friend to brother.

1. This cypher is obscure. Suggestions have been:- BH = Brother; HM = Horseman; J = Johndal (a contemptuous name for a young ploughman or bothy lad). Another speculation is BH = Brother Horseman; HM = Harohall Marshal and/or MacNeil; J = Johnstone. Thus referring to different lineages within the Society.

Heres to them that brought me here
 Heres to them that brought me hither
 Heres to them that changed my name from friend to brother
 For there sake I will drink this glass
 And for the companies sake I will drink another

Heres to the horse that I dive oft times against me
 They do strive
 But if they do
 They are sure to rue
 Little do they know what a man can do

Heres to our backband and our bridle, the hobbles and safety rope
 Heres to all the young ploughman lads that can tie a horseman's knot.

Heres to them that can work horses
 Bad luck to them that is cruel
 Let perseverance be their guide
 And nature be their rule

Heres to the two beautiful animals that go before man.
 Teach them and train them till they Both go as One.

As I came out this moonlit night
 To view your meetings early
 I came to try and be tried
 And hope you will try me fairly
 (Response) Young man no doubt you are a stranger here
 Your name I'll not deny
 But before we part this moonlit night
 Your courage I will try

Heres to the yoke our forefathers broke
And heres to the plough that was hidden ¹
Heres to the horse that can pull
And stand like a stone when bidden

Heres to the three C's
Corn, Clean, Clap

Heres to the four on land
And six on the dun
And all goes as one ²

Heres to the bee that makes the honey
The poor man works the work
And the Masters pocket the money³

Heres to the horse with the three white feet that stands well up to his manger.
He hears the voice of his masters feet but cares not a dand for a stranger.

Heres to him that's kind to them
I hope that one is thee
Heres a health to me and mine
And that's my horse and me

1. One wonders what yoke is being referred to here, that it was broken by their forefathers? might it be feudal attachment to a particular master? Also what plough is it that was hidden? One suggestion is that it is the Great Plough, the constellation that is hidden during the day, we are reminded that the name of the first horse ever tamed is given as *Star*. It is an oral tradition, supplied by Billy Rennie, that members of the Society of Horsemen associated the seven nail holes that fix the classic form of the horseshoe to the hoof are associated with the seven stars of the Plough constellation.

2. This appears to be a reference to ploughing with oxen, stating that six are needed for going up a hill and four required for going on the flat.

3. A politically radical maxim that survives in other contexts too

Heres to the man that never abuses
 Heres to the horse that never refuses
 He is willing to go
 He is willing to stand
 By the crack of the whip
 Or the wave of the hand.

Heres to the horse, the braw black horse
 And heres to the cords that bind him
 And heres to the brother that meets a brother
 And conquers and combines him¹

Heres to all the horseman lads
 That are bound by horseman ties
 Never abuse nor yet bad use
 The horses that you drive
 Heres to those high mountains
 And these dreary plains
 Where we train our horses
 And teach young men

Heres to the horse and the horseman's rig that sets his plough for the 9 inches
 broad and 6 inches deep and the horse that comes to his master's whip.

Heres to the two dandy animals
 Made for the use of man
 The stretch their thaits²
 And tread again and pull both as one

1. *Braw* means handsome. *Combine* here means *unionise*, the use of the word *conquer* suggests an insistence that someone join. It seems the ploughmen liked a closed shop.

2. *Thaits* are leather bands for assisting a horse pull.

A selection of ploughmen's songs

These Bothy Ballads (also known as "kerrs cornkisters") collected by John Ord record their pride in the importance of their trade. Songs of women finding ploughmen especially attractive, regularly sung, might reinforce sexual confidence in a way that would be helpful in amorous intrigues. Traditional Scottish belief in the hypnotic allure of ploughmen might reflect the success of libidinous young men whose confidence has been fuelled by alcohol and song. The attractiveness of ploughmen is contrasted with problems of a husband in other trades. There are some exceptions, but these trades are the very exceptions had an input upon the Society of Horseman's Grip and Word, namely masons, an intellectual who lives by the pen.

The Bonnie Lad That Handles The Plough

Success and flourish to a' barley rigs,
Here's a health unto the farmer, likewise unto his lads,
Wishin' them to prosper by the handlin' o' the plough,
An' the kissin' o' a bonnie lass when there's nothing else to do.

(Note – these lines repeated after each verse)

The tailor he's a laddie that sews at a cloot,
He'll tak' an aul' coat an' he'll turn't inside oot,
He'll turn't inside oot an' he'll mak' it look like new,
But he's far frae like the bonnie lad that handles the plough.

The mason he's a laddie that's prood o' his post,
Gin it werena for the mason we wad a' dee wi' frost;
But the mason's like the rest he'd hae little for to do,
Gin it werena for the bonnie lad that handles the plough.

The smith he's a laddie that's a' owre wi' brook,
But when he sees a bonnie lass sae blythesome he does look,
He kisses her an' claps her an' ca's her his doo;
But he's far frae like the bonnie lad that handles the plough.

The souter he's a laddie that works wi' his awl,
Gin it werena for the souter we wad a' doe wi' caul';
But the souter's like the rest, he'd hae little for to do,
Gin it werena for the bonnie lad that handles the plough.

The wricht he's a laddie that handles the plane,
Gin it werena for the wright we wad a' dee, wi' rain;
But he like a' the rest wad get little for to do,
Gin it werena for the bonnie lad that handles the plough.

The ploughman he's a bonnie lad,
And does his wark at leisure,
And when that he comes hame at e'en
He kisses me wi' pleasure.

Then up wi't noo, my ploughman lad,
And hey, my merry ploughman;
Of a' the lads that I do ken,
Commen' me to the ploughman.

Now that the blooming Spring comes on,
He tak's his yokin' early,
And whistling owre the furrowed field,
He goes to fallow fairly.

Then up wi't noo, etc.

When my ploughman lad comes hame at e'en,
He's often wat and weary;
Cast all the wet, put on the dry,
Come to your bed, my dearie.

Then up wi't noo, etc.

I will wash my ploughman's hose,
And I will brush his o'erlay;
I will mak' my ploughman's bed,
And cheer him late and early.

Merry but, an' merry ben,
Merry is my ploughman,
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commen' me to the ploughman.

Plough yon hill, and plough yon dale,
And plough yon faugh an' fallow;
Wha winna drink the ploughman's health
Is but a dirty fellow.

Merry but, and merry ben, etc.

Wi' His Apron On

Come all ye young lovers, I pray give attention,
And listen a wee, wee whilie to me;
I'll sing ye a sang concerning twa lovers
A bonnie mason laddie comin' frae Lochee.

Singin', Fal the reedle airie, rodi, rodi, Singin',
Fal de reedle airie, rodi, O.

Oh, lang has he courted the bloomin' young lassie.
And oft to her father's dwellin' he cam';
She was not afraid to go out in the gloamin'
And meet her mason lad wi' his apron on.
Singin', Fal the reedle airie, etc.

One evening they walked out the road togither,
And wandered till daylight was almost gone:
They sat them down on a bank together,
And he kissed his lass wi' his apron on.
Aye as he rolled her into his arms
The charms of love began to flow;
He said, "Bonnie lass, will ye marry a mason?
It's my intention this night to know."

"Indeed, bonnie laddie, I'll be plain and tell you,
My heart and affections from others are gone,
You'll be welcome to wed me and then to bed me,
And kiss me aye wi' your apron on."

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Now this couple they hae got married,
And he has brought her safely home,
And now they sit at the fireside together,
And he kisses her aye wi' her apron on.

Singin', Fal the reedle airie, rodi, rodi,
Fal al de eddle airie, rodi, O.

The Bonnie Mason Laddie

Simmer's gaun awa',
And the winter's comin' on,
And the bonnie mason laddies
They'll be comin' home
Wi' their pockets fu' o' siller,
And their lasses for to see;
And the bonnie mason laddie
He will marry me.

I winna hae the sailor
That sails on the sea;
Nor yet will I the ploughman
That ploughs on the lea;
But I will hae the mason,
For he's a bonnie lad,
And I'll wash the mason's apron,
And think it nae degrade.

I winna hae the blacksmith
That burns a' the aim;
Nor yet will I the weaver
That works the creeshy yarn;
But I will hae the mason
And the mason he'll hae me,
And the bonnie mason laddie
I'll mount the scaffold wi'.

Oh, But I'm Weary

"Oh, but I'm weary, weary waitin',
Oh, but I'm weary nicht and day;
Oh, mither, gie me the man
Will tak' this weariness away."

"O daughter dear, wad ye marry a man
Wha mak's his livin' by the ploo?"
"Oh, no, mother," she says,
"The ploughman's wife has much to do."
 Oh, but I'm weary, etc.

"O daughter, dear, wad ye marry a man
That mak's his livin' building stanes?"
"Oh, no, mither," she says,
"He might fall to the earth and brak' his banes."
 Oh, but I'm weary, etc.

"O daughter, dear, wad ye marry a man
That mak's his livin' by the mill?"
"Oh, no, mither," she says,
"The smell o' the dust wad mak' me ill."
 Oh, but I'm weary, etc.

"O daughter, dear, wad ye marry a man
That mak's his livin' by the gun?"
"Oh, no, mither," she says,
"He mith go out and never come in."
 Oh, but I'm weary, etc.

"O daughter, dear, wad ye marry a man
That mak's his livin' by the sea?" "
Oh, no, mither," she says,
"The ship might wreck and ruin me.-
 Oh, but I'm weary, etc.

"O daughter, dear, wad ye marry a man
That mak's his livin' by the pen?"
"Oh, yes, mither," she says,
"My heart delights in gentlemen."
 Oh, but I'm weary, weary waitin',
 Oh, but I'm weary nicht and day;
 Oh, mither, gie me the man
 Will tak' this weariness away.

Plooman Laddie

MY love's, a plooman and follows the ploo,
I promised to him, and I'll keep it true,
I promised to him, and I'll never rue
The lovin' o' the plooman laddie.

Then it's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh,
To hear him cry hup, hi, and wo,
And mak' his horses straight to go;
What's better than a plooman?

As my plooman lad gangs roon the toon
Wi' a' his irons ringin' roon,
And oh, he is a bonnie loon,
And he whistles when he sees me.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

I might hae got the miller in yonder mill,
But the smell o' the dust wad hae dune me ill;
I love my plooman, I love him still,
I'm for a plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

I might hae got the gairdner o' yonder tree,
But the smell o' thyme wad hae sickened me,
I'll love my plooman until I dee,
He's my bonnie plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

To hear him cry hup, hi, and wo,
And mak' his horses straight to go;
What's better than a plooman?

I might hae got the merchant in yonder shop,
But a' his goods they're nae worth a grot,
And for himsel' he's a drunken sot,
He's nae like my plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

When I gang oot and gang to the stack,
I hear his whip gie the ither crack,
My very hert is like to Brack
For the love o' my ploornan laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

When I gang oot and look owre the burn
And see the ploo gie the ither turn;
My very heart is like to burn
For my bonnie plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

I hae a father and mither good,
And o' my beauty they are prood,
But unto me they are very rude
'Cause I love my plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

The plooman lad, being nae far away,
Heard a' his bonnie lass did say;
Cheer up your hert, love, and come away
And be the plooman's dearie.

Then it's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh,
To hear him cry hup, hi, and wo,
And mak' his horses straight to go;
He's a bonnie plooman laddie.

It's I'll tak' all' my goon o' green,
 And I'll put on my goon o' broon,
 On a bed o' strae we'll baith lie doon,
 And I'll clap my plooman laddie.

It's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh, etc.

Gin that day week she was a bride,
 And gin that day fortnicht she was wed,
 And happy were they when in ae bed laid,
 And she got her plooman laddie.

Then it's oh, oh, oh, it's bonnie oh,
 To hear him cry hup, hi, and wo,
 And mak' his horses straight to go;
 He's a bonnie plooman laddie.

The Praise of Ploughmen

Ye lads and lasses a' draw near,
 I'm sure it will delight your ear,
 And as for me I'll no be weir
 To sing the praise o' ploughmen.
 The very King that wears the crown,
 The brethren of the sacred gown,
 And Dukes and Lords of high renown,
 Depend upon the ploughmen.

Oh, happy is the ploughman's joe
 To hear the ploughman cry, Hie, wo,
 And make his horse so straight to go,
 The gallant, merry ploughman.

The gardener he cries out wi' speed,
I'm sure I was the first man made,
And I was learned the gardener trade

 Before there was a ploughman.

Oh gardener, lad, it's true you say;
But how long gardener did you stay?
I'm sure it was just scarce a day

 Ere ye became a ploughman.

The blacksmith he says, I hear news,
Do I not make you iron ploughs,
And fit the coulter for it's use,

 Or there would be nae ploughmen?

Oh, blacksmith, we must all allow
That you can mak' an iron plough,
But you would ne'er got that to do
 If it were not for the ploughmen.

The mason he cries, Ho, ho, fie,
Do I not build your castles high
The wind and rain for to defy,

 Far better than the ploughman?

Oh, mason, ye may build a house,
And fit it for its proper use,
But from the King unto the mouse
 Depends upon the ploughmen.

The miller he speaks out wi' glee
Do I not sit at the mill e'e,
And grind the corn food for thee
 Far better than the ploughman?
Oh, miller, ye may haud your jaw,
And sit and look at your mill wa',
And see if dust frae it wad fa'
 If it were not for the ploughmen.

The souter he cries out, Hurrah,
Do I not make boots and shoes richt braw
For to defend baith frost and snaw.
 That's worn by the ploughmen?
You may mak' boots and shoes wi' speed,
Wi' last and leather, birse and thread,
But where's the meal for to mak' breid,
 If it were not for the ploughmen?

The tailor he cries out wi' haste
I pray of this don't make a jest;
Oh, I can make coat, trews, and vest
 Far better than a ploughman.
Oh, tailor, ye may mak' braw clothes,
But where's the meal for to be brose?
Ye might close up baith mouth and nose,
 If it were not for the ploughmen.

Success thee ploughmen's wages crown;
 Let ploughmen's wages ne'er come down,
 And plenty in Scotland aye abound,

By the labour o' the ploughmen.

For the very King that wears the crown,
 And the brethren o' the sacred gown,
 And Dukess and Lords of high renown,

Depend upon the ploughmen.

Oh, happy is the ploughman's joe
 To hear the ploughman cry, Hie, wo,
 And make his horse so straight to go,
 The gallant, merry ploughman.

The Braes 'O' Broo

GET up, gëet up, ye lazy loons,
 Get up,, and waur them a', man,
 For the braes o' Broo are ill to ploo,
 They'ree roch and reesky a', man.

But: the plooman laddie's my delight,
 'The plooman laddie lo'es me;
 Wh'en a' the lave gang to their bed
 'The plooman comes and sees me.

The braes o' Broo they're ill to toil,
 They're Roch and reesky a', man,
 And they haena left but ae auld horse
 To toil and tear them a', man.

But the plooman laddie's my delight,

Oh, he's taen up his owsen gaud,
 And it sets him weel to ca', man,
 He's laid it owre the owsen bow,
 Says, " Scurry, come awa', man.

But the plooman laddie's, etc.

It's I will wash the plooman's hose,
 And dry them owre the door, man;
 I'll maybe be the plooman's wife,
 I've been his lass before, man.

For the plooman laddie's, etc.

It's I will wash the plooman's hose,
 And I will brush his sheen, man,
 I'll maybe be the plooman's wife
 Or a' thae days be deen, man.

For the plooman laddie's my delight.,
 The plooman laddie lo'es me;
 When a' the lave gang to their bed
 The plooman comes and sees me.

Cold winter it is noo awa,
And spring has come again;
And the cauld, dry winds o' March month
Has driven awa the rain,

Has driven awa the dreary rain,
Likewise the frost and snaw;
So our foreman in the mornin'
He's ordered out to saw.

The rest o' us merry ploughboys
We a' maun follow fast;
We're told by our hard master
There is no time to rest.

We're told that we must be a-yoke
Each mornin' sharp by five;
And quickly owre and owre the rigs
Our horses we maun drive.

We drive them on to twelve o'clock,
Syne home to dinner go;
And before the end of one short hour
The farmer cries, "Hello!"

Till the farmer cries, "Hello, boys,
It's time to yoke again,
See that ye get it harrowed oot,
For fear that it comes rain."

So on we drive until the sun
Ahint yon hill does hide;
And syne we loose our horses tired,
And homewards we do ride.

Then homewards we do ride fu' keen
To get our horses fed;
We kaim them weel, baith back and heel,
Their tails and manes we redd.

When that is done we supper get,
And after that we hie
Awa' to see our pretty girls,
A-milkin' o' their kye.

Each one to see his sweetheart,
And Pree hre cherry mou',
Then tak' a daffin' oor or twa
Shak' hands and bid adieu.

So now I mean to end my song,
And I will end wi this -
May the ploughman get mair wages
That is my earnest wish.

That is my heartfelt wish, I say,
It is the ploughman's due;
For he sustains both rich and poor
By the handling o' the plough.

Where first I saw my Jockie
Was at Huntly feeing fair,
Wi' his rosy cheeks and dimpled chin,
And bonnie curly hair.
When he looked at me so slyly
Wi' his bonnie e'en o' blue,
I found my heart from me depart
To the lad that hauds the plough.

So a ploughman lad for me,
For he's aye so frank and free;
At kirk or fair none can compare
Wi' my ploughman lad so free.

The ploughman lad's a jolly lad,
He spends his money free,
And when he meets a bonnie lass
He tak's her on his knee.
He puts his arms around her neck,
And prees her bonnie mou',
Wi' kisses sweet he does her treat,
The lad that hauds the plough.

So the ploughman lad for me,
And there's nane so blythe as he,
Though my minnie and dad should baith gang mad,
A ploughman's bride I'll be.

So briskly every morning
To the fields he does repair,
To plough and sow and reap and mow,
It is his constant care,
While the feathered, warbling songsters
Round him sing the whole day through.
Thus every day is passed so gay
By the lad that hauds the plough.

So the ploughman lad for me,
For the blythe blink o' his e'e,
It is bright, baith morn and night,
A ploughman's bride I'll be.

I'm but a country servant lass,
And have but little gear,
But I would not wed a lord nor duke
Wi' ten thousand pounds a year.
Give me a humble country cot,
Wi' plenty wark to do;
Wi' my hearts delight in my arms at night,
Young Jock that hauds the plough

So a ploughman lad for me,
And I hop, before I dee,
To milk my cow while he hauds the plough,
For a ploughman's bride I'll be.

A Pair of Nicky Tams

Fan I was only ten year auld, I left the pairish schweel.
My faither he fee'd me tae the Mains tae chaw his milk and meal.
I first pit on my narrow breek's tae hap my spinnel trams,
Syne buckled roon my knappin' knees, a pair o' Nicky Tams.

It's first I gaed for baillie loon and syne I gaed on for third,
An' syne, of course, I had tae get the horseman's grippin' wird,
A loaf o' breed tae be my piece, a bottle for drinkin' drams,
Bit ye canna gyang thro' the caffhouse door without yer Nicky Tams.

The fairmer I am wi' eynoo he's wealthy, bit he's mean,
Though corn's cheap, his horse is thin, his harness fairly deen.
He gars us load oor cairts owre fou, his conscience has nae qualms,
Bit fan briest-straps brak there's naething like a pair o' Nicky Tams.

I'm coortin' Bonnie Annie noo, Rob Tamson's kitchie deem,
She is five-and-forty an' I am siveteen,
She clorts a muckle piece tae me, wi' different kinds o'jam,
An' tells me ilka nicht that she admires my Nicky Tams.

I startit oot, ae Sunday, tae the kirkie for tae gyang,
My collar it wis unco ticht, my breek's were nane owre lang.
I had my Bible in my pouch, likewise my Book o' Psalms,
Fan Annie roared, "Ye muckle gype, tak' af yer Nicky Tams!"

George Morris

A Poem by Robert Burns.

Burns (1759-1796) is a Scottish cultural hero and was an enthusiastic Freemason. This poem, written c.1785 suggests that the Masonic word and grip with raising the Devil. The relevant verse can be Englished thus:-

When Masons' mystic word and grip
In storms and tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage must stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother you would whip
 Off straight to hell!

Masonic commentators would instance this as an example of the poet's congenial good humour, a jest upon himself and his brothers. This is, no doubt, true. But, at the very least, it is an important truth. The Society of the Horseman's Grip and Word incorporated much from freemasonry into their ritual and lore. They also seemed to acquire the notion, apparently joked about by Masons, that the Devil attended their meetings. It might be noted that Burns was called "the Ploughman Poet" (though he was from modest yeoman stock, rather than being a farm labourer). Also, aside from giving Masonic mysteries infernal associations he also describes the Devil whipping the youngest brother. This is exactly what Lucifer does in the rituals, where the youngest brother is the candidate. There is also reference to mystic knots and we may note the secret knot in which the horsehair was tied in the envelope left on the ploughboy's bed. Also, the poem mentions butter not setting in the churn due to infernal intervention and interfering with such processes was one allegation made against the millers and horsemen.

*O Prince, O chief of many throned pow'rs!
That led th' embattled seraphim to war!*
(Milton, *Paradise Lost*)

O thou! whatever title suit thee,—
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie!
Wha in yon cavern, grim an' sootie,
 Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie
 To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, Auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far ken'd an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
 Tirlin' the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or whare auld ruin'd castles gray
 Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
 Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my graunie summon
To say her pray'rs, douce honest woman!
Aft yont the dike she's heard you bummin,
 Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin thro' the boortrees comin,
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you mysel I gat a fright,
 Ayont the lough;
Ye like a rash-buss stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor "Quaick, quaick,"
 Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim an' wither'd hags
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howket dead.

Thence, countra wives wi' toil an' pain
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin skill;
An' dawtet, twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's the bill.

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young guidmen, fond, keen, an' croose;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantraip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies
 Decoy the wight that late an drunk is:
 The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

When Masons' mystic word an grip
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest brither ye wad whip
 Aff straught to hell!

Lang syne, in Eden'd bonie yard,
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
 In shady bow'r;

Then you, ye auld snick-drawin dog!
 Ye cam to Paradise incog,
 And play'd on man a cursed brogue,
 (Black be your fa'!)

An gied the infant warld a shog,
 Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
 Wi' reeket duds an reestet gizz,
 Ye did present your smoutie phiz

Mang better folk,
 An' sklented on the man of Uzz
 Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
 An' brak him out o' house and hal',
 While scabs and blotches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw,
 An' lows'd his ill-tongued, wiċċed scaul,
 Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' fechtin fiērce,
 Sin' that day Michael did you] pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or I Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken yee're thinkin,
 A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
 To your black pit;
 But faith! he'll turn a corner jirnkin,
 An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, Auld Nickiie-ben!
 O wad ye tak a thought an' mæen'!
 Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake:
 I'm wae to think upo' yon dem,
 Ev'n for your sake!

Concerning Tubal Cain

In, what appears to be, the earliest form of the ritual the first horseman is named as Adam, after he has been expelled from the Garden of Eden and has to work to live. In the song titled the Painful Plough it is Adam, followed by his son Cain, who are given as the original ploughmen. During the initiation ritual the ploughboy receives a lecture in which it is Tubal Cain, a descendent of Cain, who is described as the first to obtain knowledge of horsemanship. His role is also related in the toasts and catechisms of the Society of Horseman's Word.

It has to be said that Cain and his family are unexpected figures to be eulogised. For orthodox traditional ideas concerning the Cain clan we can look at Oliver Emerson's authoritative study, *Legends of Cain, especially in Old and Middle English*, *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 1906, pp831-930. Here we learn that some traditions of Rabbinical lore that stated that Cain was not the son of Adam but the secret progeny of Satan! The Reverend Baring-Gould summarises the same traditions in *Legends of the Patriarchs and Prophets*, 1884, pp80:- "According to some Rabbis, all good souls are derived from Abel and all bad souls from Cain. Cain's soul was derived from Satan, his body alone was from Eve ; for the Evil Spirit Sammael, according to some, Satan, according to others, deceived Eve, and thus Cain was the son of the Evil One. All the children of Cain also became demons of darkness and nightmares..." However most Church fathers considered Cain to be the son of the Devil only in a metaphorical sense. Indeed, literal belief in his diabolical parentage was a Manichaean heresy. However Cain was certainly considered to specially partake of Adam and Eve's sin, being the first child conceived after their Fall.

It was not only Cain's parentage that was dubious; Emerson gives considerable lore concerning his children. The sons of God (angels, or according to some, descendants of Seth who was Eve's third son, a godly man) found the daughters of Cain comely and fathered monsters and giants described in the *Caedmonian Genesis*, as "...guilty in deed, hateful to God, mighty evil doers, hostile to the Creator". Fragments of the Old Saxon Genesis were discovered by Professor Zangemeister which states "Then descended from Cain a powerful people, hard hearted heroes, who had in them a strong mind, evil purpose ; they would not follow the counsels of the Lord but had in them hostile strife ; grew to giant size ; that was the worst offspring that came from Cain. Then began men to marry among them, and by this were Seth's sons at once corrupted, the folk was stained with evil, and the children of men became a hostile people toward him who created light." This idea was became so dominant that in the Anglo Saxon epic Beowulf, the monster Grendal and his mother are identified as descendants of Cain.

A curious tradition concerning Cain is recorded in the Book of Jasher, which first appeared in Italy in 1625. Its origins are obscure but it certainly records Jewish legend. The Cain family indulged in various sins but one contradicted Gods instruction to go forth and multiply. Men encouraged women to drink a poison that made them sterile so they would keep nubile figures by avoiding childbirth and also thus avoid God's curse upon Eve and all women. Tubal's mother Zillah had drunk the poison and was infertile and, also, now old. God "opened her womb" and she conceived Tubal Cain saying "After I had withered away have I obtained him from the Almighty God".

It is not just his sinful nature that makes Cain an unlikely craft hero for ploughmen. Adam, having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, was expelled with Eve from the Garden of Eden and cursed with having to obtain bread by his own labour, which presumably was primarily ploughing. Cain tilled the ground and was too, therefore, a

ploughman. God's response to his crime was to banish him and his offspring the land of Nod and curse him that "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield up her strength..." It is a wonder how this destiny may be reconciled with the celebration by the ploughmen of his descendent, Tubal Cain. We can only speculate. Might it have been thought that the taming of horses side stepped God's curse? The horses now pulled the plough and it was their labour, rather than that of the sons of Cain, which made the crops grow. Or perhaps Tubal Cain redeemed the curse. It can be noted that is an ancient Jewish tradition, known also in the West, that Tubal Cain once led his father, Lamech, out hunting. Age dulled Lamech's eyes so he asked his son for guidance when aiming at an animal. Under Tubal's instruction Lamech loosed the arrow and they advanced to retrieve their kill. To their horror they found not a wild beast but Cain, their forefather, lying slain by their actions. Some authorities considered that the curse of Cain was to last for seven generations and that Tubal Cain was the seventh. By Tubal's inadvertent act his father unintentionally slew the first murderer. When Lamech realised what he had done he thrashed around and clapped his hands together in uncontrollable grief; striking his son dead. According to this account, it might be felt that Tubal Cain had liberated his clan from God's curse.

The dominant traditions concerning the iniquitous nature of the clan sharply contrast with the horsemen's esteem for Cain and Tubal Cain. It would appear that there are only two other traditions that similarly eulogise Tubal. Freemasonry champions him, his name being the password that permits the candidate to proceed from the second to the third degree of Master Mason. The password is accompanied by a pass grip, which is given by a distinct pressure between the joints of the middle and ring fingers. We may remind ourselves that in the ritual given by Singer the horseman's grip of recognition is very similar; it involves pressing the thumb down on the upper most joint

of the second finger. Interesting that the grips are so similar. Masonic ritual gives the meaning of the name Tubal Cain as “worldly possessions” perhaps following the Jewish scholar Josephus who gives a similar interpretation in *Antiquities of the Jews*. Of course all material goods are products of craft and in Genesis 4 22 Tubal is described as the “..instructor of every artificer of brass and iron” so he was the first blacksmith. Other Cain kin originated other crafts, Tubal’s sister Namaah devised weaving, his brother Jabal was the first musician and the clan father Cain built the first cities so may be considered the earliest mason. One wonders if in some sense, all forms of craft, whereby the world as created by God is manipulated and changed by human hands and human cunning, might have seemed somewhat hubristic?

Josephus relates another legend, whereby the goodly descendants of Adam and Eve’s third son, the virtuous Seth became skilled in astronomy. He continues (as translated by William Whiston and published in 1737:-

And that their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam’s prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, they made two pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit those discoveries to mankind...

Freemasonry inherits a related, but significantly different tradition in the *Old Charges*. Dozens of these manuscripts survive, the earliest dating from c1400. Each copy is variant but from the middle of the 15th Century they usually give the Masonic version of the legend of the two pillars, which are distinguished from the two pillars of Solomon’s temple. This commences by outlining the seven liberal sciences:- grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. It notes that all are subject to one, geometry, upon which the science of all work is grounded. Some versions of the text give

ploughmen and tillers of the soil as examples whose work especially require the science of geometry The Watson manuscript published in West Yorkshire Masonic Reprints 1891 gives a typical example of the legend:-

How this science was first begun I will now tell you. Before Noah's flood there was a man called Lamech, as it is written in the Bible in the 4th chapter of Genesis. And this Lamech had two wives, the one called Adah by whom he had two sons, one called Jabal and the other Jubal. And his other wife was called Zillah, by whom he had one son Tubal-Cain, and one daughter named Naamah; and these four children founded the beginning of all the sciences in the world. Jabal, the eldest son, found out the science of Geometry; he kept flocks of sheep and lambs in the fields, as it is noted in the chapter aforesaid. His brother Jubal founded the science of Music, in song of tongue, harp, and organ, and trumpet. And the third brother Tubal Cain found the science of smith's craft, in gold, silver, copper, and iron. And their sister Naamah found the craft of weaving. And these persons knowing right well that God would take vengeance for sin, either by fire or water, therefore they writ their several sciences that they had found in two pillars of stone, that they might be found after Noah's flood. The one stone was marble that would not burn with fire, and the other called "latres" (latens, laterns, lacerus, &c.) because it would not drown with water. Our intent is now to tell you, how and in what manner these stones were found in which were written these sciences. After the destruction of the world by Noah's flood, as histories affirm, a great clerk called Pythagoras found the one, and Hermes the philosopher (who was Cush's son, who was Shem's son, who was Noah's son) found the other, and was called the Father of wise men. These two found the two pillars in which the sciences were written, and taught them to other men.

Thus we find Freemasonry inherits a tradition whereby Tubal Cain and his kin are the noble and selfless saviours of human knowledge.

In 1897 Redway published the new edition of "*The Secret Societies of all Ages and Countries*" by Charles Heckethorne. This gives a remarkable account of the Cain's clan influence that is at variance with the mainstream Masonic legend. The text is worth quoting at length (Volume II pp3-6):-

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Solomon having determined on the erection of the temple, collected artificers, divided them into companies, and put them under the command of Adoniram or Hiram Abiff, the architect sent to him by his friend and ally Hiram, king of Tyre. According to mythical tradition, the ancestry of the builders of the mystical temple was as follows : One of the Elohim, or primitive genii, married Eve and had a son called Cain whilst Jehovah or Adonai, another of the Elohim, created Adam and united him with Eve to bring forth the family of Abel, to whom were subjected the sons of Cain, as a punishment for the transgression of Eve. Cain, though industriously cultivating the soil, yet derived little produce from it, whilst Abel leisurely tended his flocks. Adonai rejected the gifts and sacrifices of Cain, and stirred up strife between the sons of the Elohim, generated out of fire, and the sons formed out of the earth only. Cain killed Abel, and Adonai, pursuing his sons, subjected to the sons of Abel the noble family that invented the arts and diffused science. Enoch, a son of Cain, taught men to hew stones, construct edifices, and form civil societies. Had and Mehujael, his son and grandson, set boundaries to the waters and fashioned cedars into beams. Methusael, another of his descendants, invented the sacred characters, the books of Tau and the symbolic T, by which the workers descended from the genii of fire recognised each other. Lamech, whose prophecies are inexplicable to the profane, was the father of Jabal, who first taught men how to dress camels' skins ; of Jubal, who discovered the harp ; of Naamah, who discovered the arts of spinning and weaving ; of Tubal-Cain, who

first constructed a furnace, worked in metals, and dug subterranean caves in the mountains to save his race during the Deluge ; but it perished nevertheless, and only Tubal-Cain and his son, the sole survivors of the glorious and gigantic family, came out alive. The wife of Ham, second son of Noah, thought the son of Tubal-Cain handsomer than the sons of men, and he became progenitor of Nimrod, who taught his brethren the art of hunting, and founded Babylon. Adoniram, the descendant of Tubal- Cain, seemed called by God to lead the militia of the free men, connecting the sons of fire with the sons of thought, progress, and truth.

Heckethorn also gives an embellished account of Hiram Abiff, the builder of Solomon's Temple. It describes how a work of metal casting for the Temple provoked jealousy from subordinate workers as yet denied master status, and also from Solomon who saw how the Queen of Sheba was impressed by Hiram's craftiness. The casting was sabotaged and molten metal overflowed the moulds. Others fled but Hiram stood transfixed. Heckethorn continues:-

Suddenly he heard he heard a strange voice coming from above, and crying "Hiram, Hiram, Hiram!" He raised his eyes and beheld a gigantic human figure. The apparition continued, "Come my son, be without fear, I have rendered thee incombustable; cast thyself into the flames." Hiram threw himself into the furnace, and where others would have found death, he tasted ineffable delights; nor could he, drawn by an irresistible force, leave it, and asked him that drew him into the abyss, "Whither do you take me?" "Into the centre of the earth, into the soul of the world, into the kingdom of great Cain, where liberty reigns with him. There the tyrannous envy of Adonai ceases; there can we, despising his anger, taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge; there is the home of our fathers." Who then am I, and who art thou?" "I am the father of your fathers, I am the son of Lamech, I am Tubal Cain.

Tubal Cain introduced Hiram to the sanctuary of fire, where he expounded upon him the weakness of Adonai and the base passions of that god, the enemy of his own creation whom he condemned to the inexorable law of death, to avenge the benefits the genii of fire had bestowed on him. Hiram was led to into the presence of the author of his race, Cain. The angel of light that begat Cain was reflected in the beauty of this son of love, whose noble and generous mind roused the envy of Adonai. Cain related to Hiram his experiences, his sufferings and misfortunes, brought upon him by the implacable Adonai. Presently he heard the voice of him who was the offspring of Tubal Cain and his sister Namaah: "A son shall be born unto thee whom thou shalt indeed not see, but whose numerous descendants shall perpetuate thy race, which, superior to that of Adam, shall acquire the empire of the world; for many centuries they shall consecrate their courage and genius to the ever-ungrateful race of Adam, but at last the best shall become the strongest, and restore on earth the worship of fire. Thy sons, invincible in thy name, shall destroy the power of kings, the ministers of Adonai's tyranny. "Go my son, the genii of the fire are with thee!" Hiram was restored to the earth. Tubal Cain, before quitting him, gave him the hammer with which he himself had wrought great things and said to him "Thanks to this hammer and the help of the genii of the fire, though shalt speedily accomplish the work left unfinished through man's stupidity and malignity". Hiram did not hesitate to test the wonderful efficacy of the precious instrument, and the dawn saw the great mass of bronze cast. The artist felt the most lively joy, the queen exulted. The people came running up, astounded at this secret power which in one night had repaired everything.

Lest there be any confusion it should be stated that the name Adonai in this remarkable legend refers to the God of the Bible. It states that the Cain family

are fathered by a divine fire spirit that is in opposition to the Biblical God. The Cain ancestors reside in the furnaces and that greater fire, glimpsed through volcanoes, that resides in the centre of the earth. Also, in this version, the race of Cain is not annihilated by the Deluge, Tubal Cain having secretly inseminated Noah's daughter in law, and ultimately he is the ancestor of Hiram Abiff, builder of Solomon's Temple, whose travails the Masonic candidate experiences in the degree of Master Mason.

Pre-Christian cultures venerated figures that may be related to Tubal Cain.¹ Some have associated his name with Vulcan, the Roman God of Fire. "Tu", it is argued, means "the"; "..bal" is the same as the Biblical "Baal" and simply means "Lord". "Vul.." is regarded as linguistically equivalent to the sound "...bal" so both names have been considered to mean (the) Lord Cain. Others have noted the similarity of 'Cain' with 'Qayan' who was the god of smithing in pre-Islamic Arabia. He can also be associated the Wayland of Germanic lore, and Volund in Scandanavia.²

Vulcan (Hephaestus in Greek mythology) was the great artisan of the Universe. It was he who fashioned the shield for Hercules and also Neptune's trident, Jove's thunderbolts and Pluto's helmet. Monsters assisted him; it was the single eyed Cyclops who invented the art of forging. The peculiar nature of iron was said to have been discovered by the Dactyls, dwarves resident in Asia Minor who were thought of as wizards with awesome magical powers, so much so that their very names were protective charms.

1. Frederick Robins, *The Smith, Traditions and Lore of an Ancient Craft*, Rider 1953, provides a useful summary of these traditions.

2. On the subject of Etymology, which can be an imaginative art as much as historical tool, it may be noted that the the Jewish philosopher Philo, a contemporary of Jesus , stated in *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile* that the name Tubal means "All in One", reminiscent of the ploughmen's word "Both as One".

At the beginning of the 20th Century it was believed that in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa could be found families of dwarves who were metal workers, healers and magicians. They made little books that were used as portable amulets. Local tribes accorded them with great respect, but dare not say their names. They wore a haik, or outer garment, which bore the glyph of a single eye, suggestive of the mythical Cyclops.

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An association of metal craft with diabolical cunning is by no means unknown. A Ukraine legend tells of some men acquiring knowledge of casting from infernal sources. They happened upon some iron and made vain attempts to work it by boiling it in water, roasting it, beating it with stones and suchlike. "What are you doing there?" asked the Devil to which they replied "Making a hammer to beat the Evil One". When he asked them whether they had the requisite sand they at once realised sand was required for casting and mastered the art of manufacturing tools.

In Christian times certain saints became patrons of blacksmithing, replacing pagan gods and heroes. English blacksmiths regarded St. Clement as the originator of the practical art of farriery and on his feast day the smith's apprentices had one of their number impersonate him, with masked face, wig and false beard. He announced "I am the real Saint Clement, the first founder of brass, iron and steel from the ore. I have been to Mount Etna, where the God Vulcan first built his forge, and forged the armour and thunderbolts for the God Jupiter". Another Saint associated with smithing was Saint Dunstan; legends of whom, interestingly, indicating peculiar abilities in recognising and foiling Satan. An Englishman of the 10th Century, Dunstan was a skilled farrier and the owner of a forge. He was requested by the Devil to shoe his "single hoof" (we are reminded here of the apprentice ploughboy's meeting with "Old Clootie"). He recognised his customer and drove a nail into the soft part of his foot. The Devil was in such pain that he begged to be released. This Dunstan did upon extracting

from his Satanic Majesty the promise that he would never enter any place displaying a horseshoe. Hence, the story goes, this emblem's use as a protective symbol.

In fact the horseshoe is probably the most ubiquitous symbol of protection and good luck. George Means Lawrence in *Magic of the Horse-shoe* published in 1868 surveys horseshoe and related lore and certain aspects of the symbol emerge as foundations for this belief. Curiously, these aspects resonate with the nature of Tubal Cain. Most straight forward is the simple nature of the object itself. The horseshoe is a fine example of the blacksmith's skill. To our modern eyes it may seem quaint, even archaic. However, when belief in its power as a symbol of good fortune and protection from evil first arose, the horseshoe was a product of the cutting edge of modern technology. That man, by his skill, knowledge and strength might fashion such an object from the reddish brown rock that is iron ore seemed incredible. Tubal Cain was regarded as the originator of the strange and powerful skill of the smith. No wonder too, then, that numerous traditions arose that accorded smiths with supernatural powers and a special status. Such traditions are universal and can be found wherever man has worked iron from early times. To give a taste, some that occur in Scotland and the north of England are as follows:-

To cure a child from rickets the tot is bathed in the water trough of the smithy and then laid upon the anvil and the iron tools are passed over it, the use of each being asked. This is followed by a second bath. Ideally three blacksmiths of the same name should participate in this ritual.

Another folk ritual requires a blacksmith whose ancestors have plied that trade back for seven generations. We might note some consider Tubal to have been the seventh generation of the Cain clan. Early in the morning the child is laid naked on the anvil. The smith raises his hammer and brings it down on the child three times, each time resting his arm mid swing so the hammer just gently touches the babe

Unlike Scottish law, anyone in England or Wales who is aged between 16 and 18 requires parental permission to marry. Many couples have eloped and for Gretna Green, just north of the English border, weddings continue to be a local industry. It is interesting to note that blacksmiths were considered suitable authority figures to apply the vows over the anvil, and some were known as "anvil priests".

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Iron is universally regarded as talismanic but we shall concentrate upon those traditions that may have informed the founders of the Society in Scotland. The areas from which the expanded ploughman's ritual arose are lowlands close to the coast. Fishermen on that coast were understandably wary of any unfortunate influences as they plied their highly dangerous trade. It was felt that any blaspheming or profanity on board could lead to tragedy. In response crewmembers would shout "Cold Steel" and grasp some metal for protection. One might wonder about the implications of this practice. Might steel made by man save them from divine retribution. Or was it other sources of malevolence that were to be feared if God's protection was jeopardised by careless oaths; and steel was felt to have power over these infernal influences.

The apparently early form of the ritual given by Singer tells us that the three greatest enemies of man are witches, devils and fairies. Belief concerning the latter was particularly sophisticated in Scotland. These examples come from the Gaelic speaking highlands rather than the Doric speaking lowlands but are, never-the-less, instructive. Though it was not published until many years later (*Commonwealth of Elves and Fauns and Fairies*, David Nutt 1893), towards the end of the 17th Century the Rev. Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle, described the world of Fairy as a subterranean counterpart of our own. Its denizens might assist humans, for example by helping seers foretell the future, but were uncertain allies. They could enter the mundane human world and humans could enter theirs. Kirk died in 1692 his body found

atop a fairy hill. His shade appeared to a relative informing him that his corpse was that of a fairy double and he was trapped in Fairyland. He could be released though, as his wife was pregnant when he died, and his spirit could appear at the baptism. If an iron bladed knife were thrown above his head he would be liberated and could return to the human world. As predicted his shade appeared at the baptism however his relatives were too stunned and frightened to react, and the moment was lost. It is said that, to this day, Robert Kirk remains in the land of Faery. An iron bladed knife was successfully thrown by Ewen Macdonald, a farmer of Duldreggan, to free his wife when she was seized by faeries, probably to act as a wet nurse for their own children. She was at home and he crossing a nearby stream when he was alerted to the situation by a strange rushing sound accompanied by a sigh. He threw the knife in the air in the name of the Trinity. Thus we find that the steel from which a horseshoe was made, was in itself a protection against the fairies.

The horseshoe portrayed on the cover of this book has holes for seven nails to secure it to the hoof. Horseshoes also used different numbers of nails but seven is the classic design and has special significance. During the day, we see the sun circle the heaven. On a clear night we see the whole canopy of stars turn around the Pole star. This is generally located by reference to its nearest constellation, the Plough. The seven nails that fix the iron shoe to the horse's hoof are associated with the seven stars in the Plough. Ploughing commences in the autumn and finishes in the spring, an activity associated with the dark of the year. So, it is fit that the central pattern of stars of the night sky is perceived as a plough and that the horseshoes that mark the ability of men to direct the step of horses have seven holes. Seven too, stands for the visible planets and the days of the week, to which the planets are attributed. We will find suggestions in the ritual too, that the Horsemen considered the period of seven years a significant cycle in the life of a man.

Means Lawrence explores other aspects to the symbolism of the horse-shoe. Horns have an ambiguous glamour. In some traditions they are seen as divine; the Jewish altar had horns and the concept survives into Christian usage as the name of stations around the altar. However, more generally, horns were seen as diabolic. Their use in British folk custom is instanced by the Dorset Ooser, the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance and, of course, the horns of Old Clootie as he meets the candidate in the horseman's ritual. Some see the horseshoe as representing horns. When God banished and cursed Cain He also gave him the mark of Cain, the intent of which was to mark the clan out as God's chosen but cursed, so they might wander but strangers would know not to slay them. The Bible does not state what the mark was but there is an ancient Jewish tradition, sufficiently known in the west for it to appear in a British mystery play, that the Mark of Cain was horns. Hence Tubal mistook his forefather for an animal when hunting with Lamech. A further irony, the very mark given by God to protect Cain from strangers led to his accidental death by the hand of own family. Interesting that horns, the Mark of Cain, intended to protect the Cain clan, are seen in the prongs of the horseshoe, the protective symbol of blacksmiths, who follow his craft.

Another facet of the horseshoe's symbolism discussed by Means Lawrence is the similarity to the crescent of the moon. An auspicious sign especially in the Middle East where it has become a symbol of the dominant religion, Islam. In *Legends of Cain*, Emerson recounts legends that suggest the reason for God's rejection of Cain's sacrifice was that Cain shied away from giving the Lord good corn as a sacrifice and instead presented thorns. In the past, when people looked up to the moon, some perceived in the Man in the Moon, Cain carrying the thorns. We reproduce a fourteenth century seal illustrating such a figure, accompanied by a dog. Which Emerson also associates with Cain p873:- "Another Hebrew legend doubtless accounts for the dog which accompanies the man in the moon. Such a dog is the 'mark' of Cain in

Genesis Rabbah, 18. 2 It was given him by God in order to watch over him, and some say it was the dog that watched over Abel's body at his death." The design of this English seal (c.1320) also conveniently illustrates the similarity between the horseshoe and the crescent moon:-



We may consider another dimension of the power of the horseshoe. It is the iron shoes, which mark out the tamed horse from those that are wild or as yet untrained. Indeed, no other object, born of man's ingenuity and industry, so ideally represents the domestication of animals and, therefore, the direction of natural forces to man's will. A fitting symbol, therefore, of protection and good fortune.

It is natural that we complete this examination of those that have eulogized Tubal Cain with the traditions that have most recently emerged into the public eye. In earlier centuries witchcraft was a label applied to what were seen as acts of malevolent magic by one's enemies. In previous centuries, whilst it was not unheard of for people to describe themselves as witches, it was rare. Autonomic witches are particularly a phenomena of the 20th Century, Gerald Gardner being the most prominent, publishing books, running a museum of witchcraft and appearing in numerous newspaper articles. He initiated people into Wicca, a mystery religion which he, himself,

formulated and which has flourished since his death in 1964. At around the same time Roy Bowers, better known as Robert Cochrane, established a far quieter tradition, which avoided publicity. This was known as the Clan of Tubal Cain and, as the name suggests, this tradition paid homage to the legendary founder of smith craft. Resonances of this tradition, with similar emphasis upon Tubal Cain, are found in the works of others, including Evan John Jones, Nigel Aldcroft Jackson, Andrew Chumbley and Daniel A. Schulke. Mr. Chumbley headed (and Mr. Schulke heads) the "Cultus Sabbati" which preserves much older traditions, some of which are termed the "Crooked Path" a turn of phrase curiously akin to that of the Scottish ploughmen. In order to distinguish them from Gardner's Wicca, these currents are sometimes referred to as "Traditional Witchcraft". We may wonder how these expressions of the mysteries of the Cain clan may relate to the rituals and lore of the Society of the Horseman's Word.

A Poem by Charles Mackey

Charles Mackey (1818-1889) had a particular affinity for the lowland Scotch, publishing a dictionary of their dialect. He was the author of "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds" which casts a sceptical eye upon some popular esoteric movements. Freemasons regard him as a brother. Though this poem may have been adopted by, rather than be written for, the Craft; its Masonic popularity attests to how masons liked to consider Tubal Cain. A hero of human craft, party to the glorious flaws of human nature. This may be relevant to his significance in the lore of the horsemen. Two versions occur, both are given here. Interesting that we should find a poet associated with the lowlands of Scotland writing of Tubal Cain and how his followers turned to ploughing the land!

Tubal Cain

Old Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when Earth was young;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
The strokes of his hammer rung;
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron glowing clear,
Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
As he fashioned the sword and spear.
And he sang, "Hurrah for my handiwork!
Hurrah for the spear and sword!
Hurrah for the hand that shall wield them well,
For he shall be king and lord!"

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
As he wrought by his roaring fire,
And each one prayed for a strong steel blade
As the crown of his desire:
And he made them weapons sharp and' strong,
Till they shouted loud for glee,
And gave him gifts of pearl and gold,
And spoils of the forest free.
And they sang, "Hurrah for Tubal Cain,
Who hath given us strength anew!
Hurrah for the smith, hurrah for the fire,
And hurrah for the metal true!"

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But a sudden change came o'er his heart
Ere the setting of the sun,
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain
For the evil he had done;
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind,
That the land was red with the blood they shed
In their lust for carnage blind.
And he said, "Alas! that ever I made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man.

And for many a day old Tubal Cain
Sat brooding o'er his woe;
And his hand forbore to smite the ore,
And his furnace smoldered low.
But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
And a bright, courageous eye,
And bared his strong right arm for work,
While the quick flames mounted high.
And he sang, "Hurrah for my handicraft!"
And the red sparks lit the air;
"Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made";
And he fashioned the first ploughshare.

Tubal Cain

Old Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when the earth was young;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
The strokes of his anvil rung ;
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron growing clear,
Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
As he fashioned the sword and spear.
And he sang, " Hurrah for my handiwork !
Hurrah for the spear and the sword !
Hurrah for the hand that shall wield them well,

But a sudden change came o'er his heart
Ere the setting of the sun ;
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain
For the evil he had done.
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind ;
That the land was red with the blood they shed
In their lust for carnage blind.
And he said, "Alas ! that I ever made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man!"

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And men, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands,
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And ploughed the willing lands ;
And sang, "Hurrah for Tubal Cain !
Our stanch good friend is he ;
And for the ploughshare and the plough,
To him our praise shall be.
But while oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the plough,
We'll not forget the sword!"

Appendix VI

"Himself", concerning Cain

The paucity of records of how the ploughmen themselves regarded the ceremonies and lore of the Society has already been noted. The voice of a countryman in East Anglia, recorded by his own hand, is presented here as it chronicles relevant ideas. The politically radical author was not a ploughman or a horseman, by trade he was a poacher! His remarkable memoir was published in 1935 as *Himself, I Walked by Night, Being the Life and History of the Norfolk Poacher*, Nicholson and Watson. The following extract falls on p106 of the 1947 reprint. It is significant to note that cognate ideas concerning Cain appear in East Anglia and that elsewhere in the same book "Himself" shows knowledge of the folk magic, that concerning the acquisition of the toad bone, that forms one current in the lore of horsemanship in England. The spelling is exactly as "Himself" wrote, and, being faithfully reproduced by the publisher, preserves his pronunciation.

"Well dear Reader as I have said I am not a religus man, but if you go back to earliest histry you will se there that the Bible tell us some thing about this. It says that the first tiller of the Earth was cursed by God. We find, the two Brothers, Able and Cain. Able was a keeper of Sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. Both of those Brothers worked at there occupations as was meant, and both Brothers ofered up a sacrifice to the Lord, no doubt to thank him for his goodness to them. The one brought the firstlings of his flock, and Cain the first fruits of the Earth.

We are not told what those fruits were that Cain ofered, or why God did not like them, but we are told that Cain's sacrifice was not axcepted by God. No wonder he was angry haven done his best, and he rose up and killed his Brother and became the first Murderer.

His Punishment was severe, he was told that from hence forth the Earth should not bring forth her fullness, thorns and thistles should come up, and by the sweat of his brow he should eat bread. Beside that a mark was put upon him, and it seem to me as if the mark of Cain have been put upon the tiller of the Soil to this day, and the curse dwelt on the Earth.

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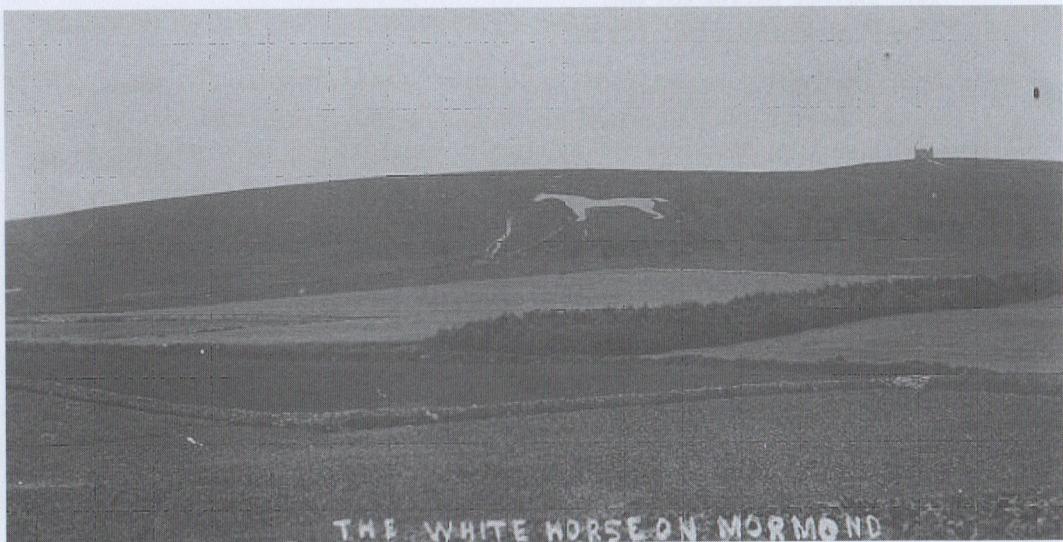
But I think that the Tiller of the soil is the highest and oldest work-man of all. No one can do without him and the product of his hands. The Gold miner canot eat his gold, nor the Coal miner his coal, nor the Iron miner his Iron. All and every one is dependent upon the tiller of the Soil. He is the Father of all Workers, like the old saying has it:

The King he governs all,
The Parson pray for all,
The Lawer plead for all,
The Ploughman pay for all
And feed all!

The Land is the Mother of all from beginning to end—as was promised—from dust thou came and to dust thou shalt return.”

The White Horse of Mormond Hill.

A large hill in Aberdeenshire not far from Fraserburgh. The village of Strichen is located at its base. Around the end of the 18th Century a Captain Fraser had a large hill figure of a horse cut on its side which was then filled with native white quartz stones. This is the only white horse hill figure in Scotland. It was built to commemorate a soldier who gladly gave his mount to the captain in battle and was killed as a result. It appears that was given a different significance by the horsemen, In the ritual it is described as "..., a fitting token to the fine animals that have given us the power to live off the land" and having been made a brother of the Society a young man had the right to contribute a white stone to the figure. Thus a monument created for one purpose is used by the horseman for altogether different function.



Appendix VIII

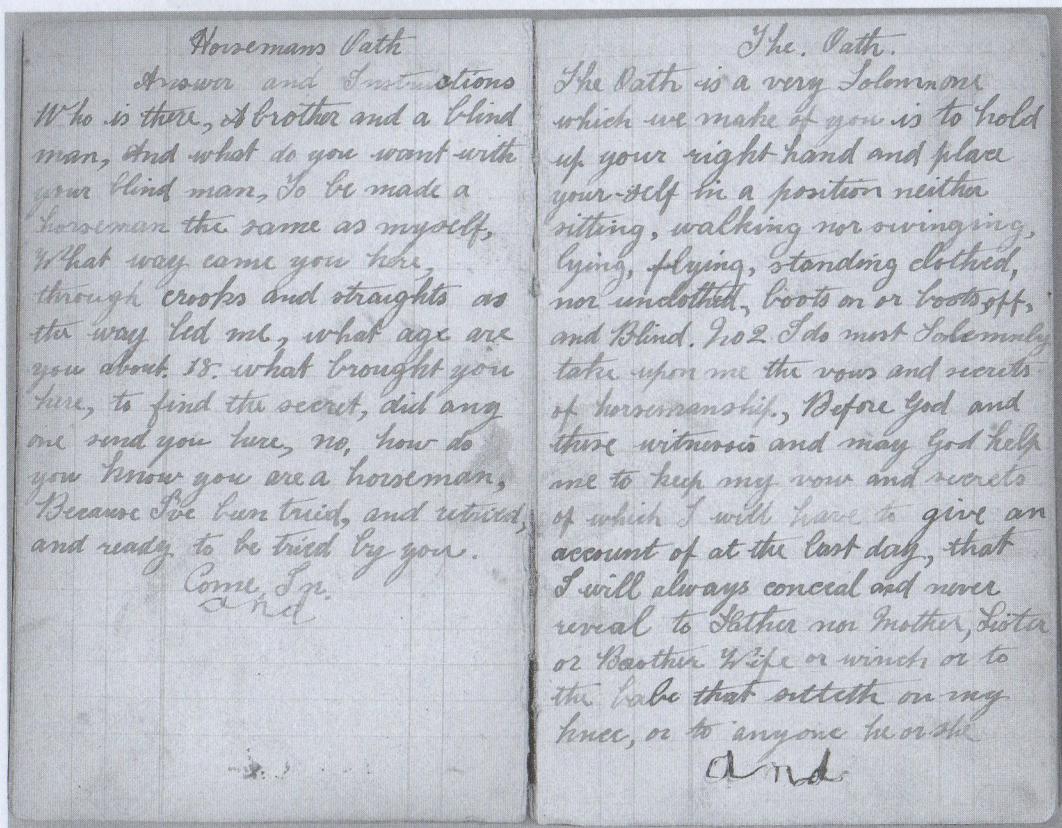
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The Living Board, apparently printed at Peterhead Sentinel Offices, 1866.

Manuscript Book

The book, which appears to be 19th Century, is an important source of information concerning the Society of Horsemen.



Quotations and Answers

Q. Who made you a man
A. God made man and man
made me therefore the devil hath
no business to interfere

(2)

Q. How do you know you are a
horseman

A. Because I've been tried and
tried and ready to be tried by you

(3)

Q. Who is the Authors of your Oath
A. Marshall, Marshall, and Mac nul

(4)

Q. What is the tance of your oath

A. Heal, Conceal, and never reveal

(5)

Q. What is the three C. of horseman

A. Corn will, Clap will, and
Comb will.

(6)

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(6)

Q. What is the three parts of
horsemanship
A. Patience, Practice, and Power

(7)

Q. Where was the first horse caught
A. It was caught in the sandy
deserts of Arabia

(8)

Q. How was the first horse caught
A. It was taking a drink of
water and is sucked the regulator
up into its mouth

(9)

Q. What was the first horse named
A. The first horse was named Star
why was he named Star
because he had a Star in his brow

17.18

K 20

This manuscript is written in English, but we should not assume that the writer was not a speaker of Doric or another Scottish tongue. Many were taught to write in English so were effectively bi-lingual; speaking Doric but when writing down what had been said, would translate it into English.

<p>Q. Spell my name, and your name, and your chums name in three letters) A. P. H. G. (30)</p> <p>Q. How high is your stable door. A. As high as the cattle or as high as a cow can kick (31)</p> <p>Q. Where was you schooled A. In the green fields of winter when the grass grows green for the young ponies in springs, or the same old place between the buckum and haines as danl tight fit (32)</p> <p>Q. Was you ever at the school. A. No, but I met the scholars (33)</p>	<p>Q. What dose your horse like better than evn) A. Myself (34)</p> <p>Q. Your horse has a shoe off A. Yes, but it will be a long time untill it wears to the nunc. (35)</p> <p>Q. If you are the man I take you to be tell me where in your pocket word lies and answer that without a word A. Your hand on your heart. (36)</p> <p>Q. How many tags dose you saddle hang on. A. 4, the fore horses legs. (37)</p> <p>Q. How are you three getting on to day A. that is where you are wrong we all go as one (38)</p>
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In 1847 William Singer, author of the early exposure, anonymously published a booklet entitled *An Allegorical Tale, being the History of Gill Binklets*. A copy was secured just prior to publishing the book you hold. Unsurprisingly it becomes clear that the central character is Singer himself and it is an account of his life in rural Aberdeenshire, the identities of those mentioned being shrouded by pseudonyms. He states that he "has taken special care to insert nothing which the narrator has not been an actor in the case, or had it by information of eye or ear witnesses". However Singer does admit that some of the paragraphs have been "a little scented, in order to make them more congenial to some palates". The modern reader will be cautioned by a more pungent smell of invention than might be suggested by the words "a little scented" but it is, never-the-less, another source and in it Singer claims to have surreptitiously witnessed a ritual and that this was a highly significant experience in his life:-

But it was a glorious night for Binklets, and, for the first time in his life, he prayed and gave thanks to his maker for having brought him into existence without his consent, that he might enjoy such lasting pleasure, for lasting he was sure they would be, for death was always doing his work, and as he had now got as much of the art of horsemanship upon his memory as would enable him to be present on any occasion that they met, he was so proud he actually leapt for joy.

Singer (or Binklets) learns of the meeting at a wake, where people had gathered following the death of a neighbour. It would appear that word of the proposed ritual had got out causing some consternation amongst the villagers, many of whom are heavily criticised by the writer for their superstition and credulousness. The account follows:-

Binklets had been but a short time in the house till the people began to assemble, and the house was very soon full. Among the last came Tibby Totler, seemingly much agitated, and looking like a cat that had been pur-sued by a snarling tyke. She gazed wildly round the house for a few minutes, but at last stammered out,—" Guede guide's a' ! what hae I been tauld coming here, think ye, sirs ? just that the devil is gaun to be raised in Comahown's auld barren the night, to help to gie some puir deluded creature o' a laddie the horseman's word. Ten to ane but he'll cast his blinkers o'er something mair before he hae dene wi' them." Dickies, who had been sitting by the fire ever since Mattie's death, neither eating nor drinking, and refusing to be comforted for the great loss he had sustained, no sooner heard of the devil being at work so near his dwelling than he gathered to his feet, at the sometime bawling out, " Licht a fir, and lat me see to my bed as quick as possible !" This was immediately done, and the foolish body jumped into bed, and covered himself completely with the blankets, where he lay shaking with perfect horror.

Binklets heard with pleasure of what was to take place, in Comahown's barn, and slipped out from the company without being perceived. But how to gain admittance to the barn, without being seen, was a question that he could not solve, as he knew that at these meetings there was always placed sentries to prevent the entrance of any person not initiated into the mysteries of the art. How-ever, he recollect ed that there was a drying kiln at the end of the barn, which had been stripped of its cover-ing, nothing remaining but the joists, upon which was laid a quantity of unmanufactured lint, and the thought struck him that, by using caution, he might get into it, and, when once in, he was aware that lie could see what was passing in the barn. About four or five feet from the ground there was a hole in the wall, for the purpose of

admitting light and air when necessary into the kiln, and at this time only stopt up with straw ; this he soon pulled out, and creeping quietly through the hole got into the kiln without being observed. Having crept to the mouth of the furnace, he could perceive, by the light of a rush dipt in greese, which served as a candle in the barn, all that took place there.

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The first object that attracted his attention was Coma-hown's youngest son tying a rope to the bow of a bucket which his father had used for carrying water for his mortar ; he then filled the bucket full of dirty water, and threw one end of the rope over the cupples, and so drew the bucket up to the height of about four or five feet from the ground. While young Comahown was thus employed, another person, whom Binklets could not re-cognise, was busy in turning the bottom of an old firlot uppermost, and upon which he placed the backdoor of an old cart ; while another person approached the kiln and took a bunch of half-manufactured lint and tied it upon a stick. All the articles, such as the lint, bucket, and firlot belonged to old Comahown, who had left them in the barn when he removed to a possession on the estate of Sir Henry Spendthrift, till a convenient time might occur for having them taken away. Now, the old barn being at some distance from any of the houses left in the village, and also stored with articles fitted for their purpose, and which they could use without any person know-ing anything of, rendered the old barn a fit place for being converted into a lodge room.

The ceremony now commenced by the person who had placed the backdoor of the cart upon the bottom of the firlot giving three knocks upon it with a stick; some person outside the door gave three knocks in return, and then the door was opened when some words passed, the purport of which Binklets could not catch, but thought he heard

something about "Blind, brothers." - A young man was then led forward towards the firlot, having his eyes blindfolded with a napkin. He was here asked his name, and having told that it was Blotface, he was ordered to pull the shoe from off his right foot, and the sleeve of his coat from off his right arm. By this time there were assembled around the young man about half-a-dozen men, none of whom were known to Binklets except young Comahown and Snippie Sensible. They then desired him to kneel upon his knees, in a stooping position, upon the board that was laid upon the bottom of the firlot, and having administered to him the oath common at making masons, wrights, millers, and such like fa-fumery, one of the party came behind him and up-set the board upon which he was kneeling, while another capsized the bucketful of dirty water about him ; and having set him upon his stumps again, they began to in-struct him in the art of horsemanship, according to the ceremonies used, with a little variation, at the dispensing of the millers' word, the absurdities of which are too well known to need to be here repeated. He was next told that he must now take a sight of the devil or a shake of his hand, either of which he might prefer, but he roared out "For guede sake, dinna lat me see him," He that had tied the rough lint upon the stick now came forward and put it into the young man's hand, while he shook and trembled like a quacking ash. They now asked him what he was most in want of, and being answered that it was his "eyes opened," they immediately took off the napkin from his eyes, and shook hands with him as a token of brotherhood.

The ceremony of initiation being now thus concluded, Snippie Sensible proceeded to the end of the barn, where lay an old plough, from the bosom of which he took a black jar of whiskey, and being provided with a horn from which to drink it, the jar was placed on the floor,

around which they seated themselves and quaffed a bumper to the health of their new made brother. Snippie Sensible then rose and went towards an old trough, which had been used for making mortar, from which he took a black crow, which he said he had brought for the purpose of giving to the devil, if it should happen that he required a reward for his services that night ; asserting, at the same time, that it was invariably his custom, if they did not go scientifically to work, never to retire without depriving the youngest member of some of his faculties, such as sight, smell of hearing, when unprovided with something to appease him

Singer/Binklets goes on to tell how he blackens his face and covers himself with lint, rushing out to frighten the initiators by himself pretending to be the devil. They flee, falling into a pond. We all know better than to believe a man's account of such a victory over other men. However, it may well be true that Singer, in his youth, did witness a secret ceremony. Whilst he and others, perhaps even the participants too, may have considered it to be the ritual of the horsemen, he instead describes the ritual of the miller's word. Indeed, earlier in the text we learn that the initiator, who is given the name of "Snippie Sensible", does not appear to be a horseman at all but was a tailor who was elected provost of the village.

Curious that Binklets/Singer should be so enthusiastic about being able to attend horsemen's secret meetings, yet also so contemptuous of their mysteries. One theme that emerges from his account of rural Scottish life is the degree to which illicit distilling was an issue. With candidates being required to bring a bottle and the numerous toasts clearly the consumption of whiskey was a central component of the horsemen's rituals. One wonders what proportion of this whisky was purchased from often distant shops compared to that surreptitiously sourced. The suspicion arises that the horsemen's meetings may have provided a useful opportunity for the

distribution and consumption of illegal alcohol. Membership of the society might have had the powerful attraction to a young lad of offering access to cheap intoxication and even the chance for a bit of profit should he decide to retail the product. We learn from Gill Binklets that Singer was, for awhile, the servant of the local excise man so his fierce desire to attend secret horsemen's meetings may have been fuelled by a preparedness to inform upon those whom he was wished to infiltrate.

It might be noted that in *Exposition of the Miller and Horseman's Word* Singer does give what he considers the "Real Horseman's Word". These are a brief series of tips for working with horses and do show some knowledge of the horsemen's practical secrets such as using smells to "reist" or stop a horse, or make it refuse harness. He also gives counter measures, some of which probably would be effective. Despite his hostility to the Society of the Horseman's Word, we should not dismiss everything that he wrote!