

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, THE SUFFOLK POET.

[NOTE.—This paper was originally read as a lecture to the Ipswich Literary Society, on December 12th, 1913. It consists of extracts, copied for the most part verbatim, because of their value as contemporary matter, or because their writers had intimate relations with Robert Bloomfield, which they described in letters of singular charm.

For the sake of any one who may some day be tempted to give a more worthy account of the author of the "Farmer's Boy," the sources of information here drawn upon are indicated:—

- (1) The Bloomfield MSS. in the British Museum.
- (2) A selection from Bloomfield's Correspondence, made, in 1870, by W. H. Hart, a relative of Bloomfield on the maternal side. This selection was published as a pamphlet; there is a copy in the Library of Moyses Hall, Bury St. Edmunds. Most of the originals are in the Bloomfield MSS. in the British Museum, referred to in (1).
- (3) A MS. Life of Robert Bloomfield, written by his grandson, the Rev. Walter Bloomfield, and presented by him in 1891 to H.R.H. Prince Frederick Duleep Singh, whose courteous kindness in lending it for the afore-mentioned lecture is hereby acknowledged.
- (4) The Prefaces to the many early editions of the "Farmer's Boy."
- (5) The "Remains of Robert Bloomfield," in two volumes, published in 1824, "for the exclusive benefit of the family of Mr. Bloomfield."]

Robert Bloomfield was born December 3rd, 1766, at Honington, a small village eight miles north-east of Bury St. Edmunds, and close to Euston, the estate of his patron, the Duke of Grafton. He died on August 19th, 1823. His life thus covered almost exactly the reign of George III. His birth-year, 1766, is three years before Watts took out his patent for the steam engine; and 1823, the year of his death, is eight years after Waterloo—between those two fateful dates occurred the industrial revolution of England, the political revolutions of the Napoleonic Wars, the spiritual revolution associated with John Wesley, and the revolution in poetry represented by Pope's "Essay on Man" on the one hand and Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads" on the other. Of those 60 years or so, Bloomfield lived the first 15 as a village child and "Farmer's Boy" at Honington; the next 30 in London alleys or in his London City Road cottage, working as a shoemaker and composing his poetry; and the remainder in a country-cottage at Shefford, in Bedfordshire, where he died. These three periods may serve as convenient divisions for a sketch of Bloomfield's life.

The first Bloomfield of whom we appear to have a record which is both interesting and reliable, was Isaac, a butcher at Melton, who died at Mildenhall in 1722, leaving a legacy to S. Peter's Church, Ipswich.* His son, another Isaac, was born at Melton, and apprenticed as a tailor in Framlingham. This Isaac considered himself "a descendant of a family of note who were ruined by their loyalty to Charles the First. He talked of plate and money in moats, . . . and of old traditional tales learned of his aunt. . . . When his aunt died he did not know he had a relation in

* This fact was communicated to the writer by Mr. Vincent B. Redstone.

the world ; he have now a thousand."† This Isaac married twice ; from the first wife descended our Robert Bloomfield, and from the second wife—Susan Clift, a well-to-do widow—descended Charles James Blomfield, Bishop of London. The different spellings of the family name—Bloomfield and Blomfield—are not so trivial a detail as may be supposed. One of the sons by the first marriage—and there were sixteen children living when Isaac married again—was George, the grandfather of our Robert. This George was a tailor, like his father, settled at Pakenham ; he is described by his grandson George—Robert's brother—as being "entirely destitute of prudence and temperance ; he had every advantage of fortune, but—he took in Magazines ! He had a most pleasing address, was famous good company, had a fine musical tenor voice of unusual strength and compass, and his company was courted by all the dashing boys of the day." His father had to drop him, and in an angry fit the son altered the spelling of the family name from Blomfield to Bloomfield. "I won't," he said, "be of the same name as old Grypus."‡ ". . . the old man would to the last join his sons if they could raise the wind for a spree, and would be the gayest of the gay. And his descendants became famous fiddlers, poets, fine singers, and rare toppers."§ etc., etc.

We can scarcely be surprised that "Old Grypus" left his money to the son by the second marriage—the marriage, indeed, which had brought most of the money—and, of course, that branch of the family was satisfied to retain the old spelling.

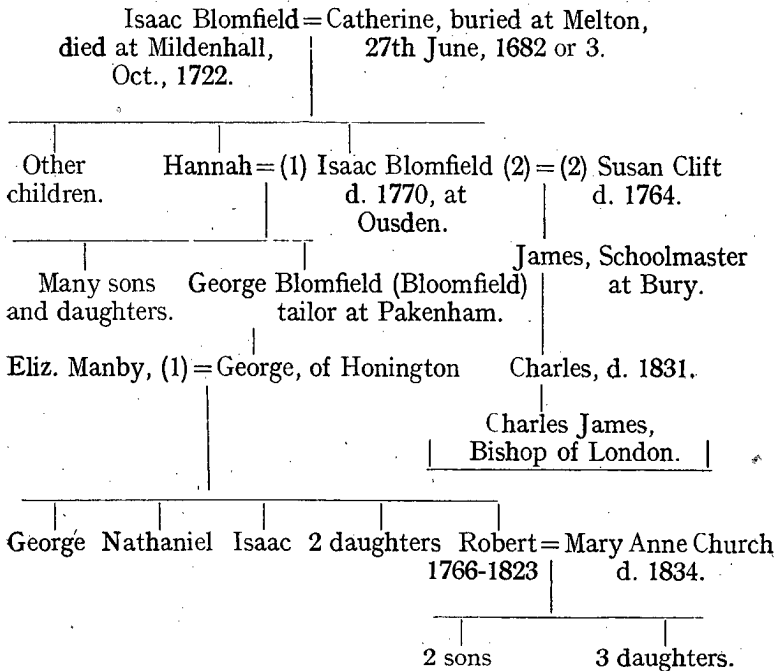
† Bloomfield MSS., Brit. Mus., part of a statement written by George Bloomfield, Robert's brother.

Another version of this story is given in "Views illustrative of the Works of Robert Bloomfield," London, 1806.

‡ See the rare pamphlet (1870) by W. H. Hart, a relation of Bloomfield on the maternal side, giving a selection from Bloomfield's correspondence.

§ Bloomfield MSS. Brit. Mus.

A simple pedigree inserted here will make what follows clearer :—



To return to George Blomfield, or Bloomfield—this gifted and spirited and imprudent and impudent grandfather of our Robert is an ancestor to be remembered, and his qualities will reappear in his descendants, as we shall see. His son, George, was Robert's father, who was also a tailor; he married Elizabeth Manby, of Brandon, and they settled in a cottage at Honington on Honington Green.* They had six children, four sons and two daughters, and in every one of the sons there are marked characteristics traceable to a gifted

* The Frontispiece to Nathaniel Bloomfield's "Essay on War," "Honington Green," etc. (1803), is a view of Honington Green, showing the church and the Bloomfield's cottage. The sketch was made by another Bloomfield, a young relative of the family.

mother no less than an uncommon grandfather. George, the eldest, a shoemaker, has written in vigorous and moving letters the story of his more famous brother Robert's early life; there are also other letters of his dealing with contemporary affairs, in a singularly original and readable fashion; the following is a typical specimen (he was then living at 2, High Baxter Street, Bury St. Edmunds, and the date is Jan. 28th, 1830):—

“Our politicians are all at loggerheads. The farmers want protecting duties, *a high and steady price for corn*. The poor with open mouths demand cheap bread. The machienests say were they but encouriaged *steam* would do all the work allmost without cost. The labouring poor think every engine throw them out of employ by thousands. The rich clamour for the repeal of the Malt Duty, the poor say take the tax off beer, for, sais they, we pay the Beer Duty, while the rich escape it. The poor say (as they have no property) lay on a property tax; this throws the rich into strong fits.”†

Nathaniel, the second brother, composed a philosophical poem on War, and an elegy on the Enclosure of Honington Green (see footnote to p. 48), poems which caused Byron to write—

“if Phœbus smiled on you
Bloomfield, why not on brother Nathan, too?
Him, too, the mania, not the muse, has seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no boor can seek his last abode,
No common be enclosed without an ode.”‡

† Bloomfield MSS., Brit. Mus. All George's letters have these touches of racy shrewdness, and are worth printing. There are at least three in the Library of Moyses' Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

‡ *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1808.

In Isaac, the third brother, appeared more of the qualities of the erratic grandfather—he composed anthems, he set to music Robert's "Rosy Hannah,"* and he depended on Robert for the expenses connected with the engraving and publishing of this music; he made researches into that elusive problem, perpetual motion, and again Robert had both to maintain him and to find the means for the experiments; for years he lived rent-free in the family cottage which Robert had bought from the rest of the family.

And now we come to Robert himself—born, as has been said, in December, 1766. His life opened sadly. Before he was a year old his father died of small-pox, and the mother was left with six children; the incidents connected with this death, described, as the years went on, to the young lad, moved him deeply, and when Jenner's remedy of inoculation became well known, Bloomfield took this very unpromising topic as the subject of a long poem, published in 1804, which he called "Good Tidings, or News from the Farm." In this poem he describes with power the small-pox epidemic in his own village, and the loss of his father as a consequence of it.†

Such was the entry into life for little Robert Bloomfield. George shall continue their story:—"Though the mother was left a widow with six small children, yet with the help of friends she managed to give each of them a little schooling. She was herself the Village Schoolmistress, and instructed her own children with the others.‡ Robert thus learned to

* For a copy of this setting see "Remains of Robert Bloomfield," Vol. 1, London, 1824.

† See especially, "Good Tidings," lines 161 and following, beginning "There dwelt beside a brook that creeps along."

‡ Bloomfield's "History of Little Davy's New Hat," published in 1801, and republished so recently as 1878, by Messrs. Routledge, was dedicated to his mother in these words—"To whom can a child's book be dedicated with greater propriety than to a Village Schoolmistress," etc., etc.

read as soon as he learned to speak. For two or three months he was sent to Mr. Rodwell, of Ixworth, to be improved in writing; this, with his mother's teaching, was the only schooling he ever had. When Robert was seven years old his mother married again and had another family. At about the age of eleven, his uncle, Mr. William Austin, a farmer in the adjoining village of Sapiston, took him. And though it is customary for farmers to pay such boys only 1/6 a week, yet he generously took him into his house. This relieved his mother of any other expenses than only of finding him a few things to wear, and this was more than she well knew how to do. She wrote therefore to me and my brother Nat (then in London) to assist her, mentioning that Robert was so small of his age that Mr. Austin said he was not likely to get his living by hard labour."‡ It was agreed, therefore, that Robert, then between the age of 14 and 15, should go up to London, George agreeing to teach him shoemaking, and Nathaniel, who was a tailor, promising to clothe him. The arrival in London in June, 1781, whither he was taken by his mother to be met by George, is described by the two brothers from their respective points of view. George says "I have in my mind's eye a little boy, not bigger than boys generally are at 12 years old [he was 14½]. When I met him and his mother at the inn he strutted before us, dressed just as he came from keeping sheep and hogs—his shoes filled full of stumps in the heels. Looking about him, he slipt up—his nails were unused to a flat pavement. I remember viewing him as he scampered up; how small he was, I little thought that fatherless boy would be one day known and esteemed by the most learned, the most respectable, the wisest, and the best men of the kingdom." That is George's picture. Robert

‡ From George Bloomfield's letter to Mr. Capel Lofft, of Troston Hall, the patron whose energy and influence ensured the success of the "Farmer Boy."

corrected it some years later in one or two details—“Now the strict truth of the case is this—that I came (on the 29th June, 1781) in my Sunday clothes, such as they were; for I well remember the palpitation of my heart on receiving his proposals to come to town, and how incessantly I thought of the change I was going to experience; remember well selling my smock frock for a shilling, and slyly washing my best hat in the horse pond to give it a gloss fit to appear in the meridian of London. On entering Whitechapel riding backwards in the coach, a long line of carriages in the centre of the street attracted my particular notice, and I anxiously looked for the principal object in that procession of which I conceived them to be a part, little dreaming they were all stood for hire!”* And so comes to an end the first period of Bloomfield’s life, the period of the experiences and emotions he was to describe twenty years later in the “Farmer’s Boy,” while working in a London garret as a shoemaker.

We come now to the long middle period of Bloomfield’s life, the thirty years in London. The descriptions of that life, which he and George have given us, are extraordinarily interesting as showing how the poor lived and worked in London at the end of the eighteenth century. George was then living at a Mr. Simm’s, No. 7, Pitcher’s Court, Bell Alley, Coleman St., close to Cheapside. “It is customary,” he says, “in such houses as are let to poor people in London to have light garrets for mechanics to work in. In the garrét, where we had two turn-up beds and five of us worked, I received little Robert. As we were all single men, lodgers at a shilling per week each, our beds were coarse, and all things far from being clean and snug, like what Robert had left at Sapiston. Robert was

* From the Preface to the stereotyped edition of the “Farmer’s Boy,” signed by Robert Bloomfield, and dated June, 1808, at City Road, London.

our man to fetch all things to hand. Every day when the boy from the public house came for the pewter pots and to hear what porter was wanted he always brought the yesterday's newspaper. The reading of the paper we had been used to take by turns; but after Robert came he mostly read for us, because his time was of least value. He frequently met with words that he was unacquainted with; of this he often complained. I one day happened at a bookstall to see a small dictionary which had been very ill-used. I bought it for him for fourpence. By the help of this he in a little time could read and comprehend the long and beautiful speeches of Burke, Fox, or North. . . . As to books, he had an History of England, a British Traveller, and a Geography, but he always read them as a task or to oblige us who bought them. And as they came in sixpenny numbers weekly, he had about as many hours to read as other boys spend in play. I at that time read the London Magazine, and in that work about two sheets were set apart for a Review. Robert seemed always eager to read this Review. . . . I observed that he always looked at the Poet's Corner. And one day he repeated a song which he composed to an old tune. I was much surprised that he should make so smooth verses; so I persuaded him to try whether the editor of our paper would give them a place in Poet's Corner. He succeeded, and they were printed."

And so we get Robert Bloomfield in print for the first time in 1786, with a poem styled "A Village Girl,"* whom he places in scenes like those in the day-dream of Wordsworth's "Poor Susan:" the village maid who was also an exile from the country and who lived "at the corner of Wood Street," a few streets away from the rural shoemaker.

* The poem appeared in Say's Gazette for Wednesday, May 24th, 1786.

Soon after, the brothers fell in with a singular character living in the same alley. "He was a native of Dundee, a middle-aged man, of a good understanding, and yet a furious Calvinist." He had many books, such as Thomson's "Seasons," "Paradise Lost," and some novels. These books he lent to Robert, who spent all his leisure hours in reading the "Seasons." "I never heard him give so much praise to any book as to that," says George.

One more picture of this period of self-education ought not to be omitted:—"One Sunday, after a whole day's stroll in the country, we, by accident, went into a dissenting meeting-house in the Old Jewry, where a gentleman was lecturing. This man filled Robert with astonishment. The house was amazingly crowded with the most genteel people; and though we were forced to stand in the aisle and were much pressed, yet Robert always quickened his steps to get into the town on a Sunday evening soon enough to attend this lecture. The preacher's name was Fawcett. His language was just such as the *Rambler* is written in; his action like a person acting a tragedy; his discourse rational, and free from the cant of Methodism. Of him Robert learned to accent what he called *hard* words, and otherwise improved himself, and gained the most enlarged notions of Providence.

He went sometimes with me to a Debating Society, at Coachmaker's Hall, but not often, and a few times to Covent Garden Theatre."

It was just at this period, when the young Bloomfield's inner life was thus developing, that a check came. His fellow workmen discovered that he was learning the mystery of shoemaking without having been regularly apprenticed. They threatened to prosecute

his master for employing him and his brother for teaching him. Master and brother were a stiff-necked pair, and told them to do their worst; George added some spirited references to the bad character of one of their committee-men.* A serious labour dispute was only avoided by the milder Robert's begging to be allowed to retire from the storm. He returned for two months to Suffolk to his old master at Sapiston. And here, "with his mind glowing with the fine descriptions of rural scenery which he found in Thomson's "Seasons," he again re-traced the very fields where he first began to think. Here, free from the smoke, the noise, the contention of the city, he imbibed that love of rural simplicity and rural innocence which fitted him in a great degree to be the writer of the 'Farmer's Boy.'" †

On returning to London, Robert agreed to fall in with his fellow-workmen's demands, and went through a form of apprenticeship, becoming in due course a journeyman shoemaker.

We now hear of him studying music and learning the violin, and in 1790, at the age of 24, he marries Mary Ann Church, the daughter of a Woolwich boat-builder. He tells his brother George, who had now settled at Bury, that he had sold his fiddle and got a wife. Like most poor men, he got a wife first and household furniture afterwards, and the pair settled in a court on the east side of Moor-gate Street, near to the spot where he lodged on first coming to London. The landlord of his hired room kindly gave him leave to sit and work in the light garret two pair of stairs higher. In this garret, amid six or seven other workmen, his active

* This is the second time we have seen George's interest in contemporary industry and economics; see his letter, p. 49.

† From Capel Lofft's Preface to the "Farmer's Boy."

mind employed itself in composing the "Farmer's Boy." Bloomfield himself described afterwards to an enquirer, with characteristic modesty, the composition of this—his first and best and best-known poem. The enquirer thus tells the story: "Either from the contracted state of his pecuniary resources to purchase paper, or from other reasons, Mr. Bloomfield composed the latter part of his "Autumn" [which contains 360 lines] and the whole of his "Winter" [which contains 400 lines] in his head, without committing one line to paper. But this is not all. He not only composed and committed that part of his work to his faithful and retentive memory, but he corrected it in his head, and, as he said, "I had nothing to do but to write it down." By this new and wonderful mode of composition, he studied and completed his 'Farmer's Boy' in a garrett, among six or seven of his fellow-workmen, without their ever once suspecting or knowing anything of the matter!"

The possibility of publishing the "Farmer's Boy" does not seem to have troubled its auther much—apparently he thought it no uncommon production, and his main wish, as regards its publication, was to get it printed, without expense, in order to be able to send a copy to his mother. As he was entirely unknown to any one acquainted with the publishing of such matter, he approached three or four publishers, only to be met with coldness and even with snubs. He then sent his one copy of the poem to his brother George, at Bury, asking for his frank opinion, and adding "I have no copy of it except in my memory. Having never been instructed in grammar, it may abound in faults of that kind which I am not aware of. †

† It contained many examples of the well-known peculiarity of the East Anglian verb. One example may be given:—

"Boy, bring the harrows, try how deep the rain
Have forced its way." "Farmer's Boy," "Summer," lines 33-34.

The management of stops I don't pretend to. As I could not send my mother a printed copy, I don't trouble much to know whether it was want of merit or want of patronage that made me fail.—Your affectionate brother, R.B.”

George at once wrote one of his arrestingly frank, human letters to Mr. Capel Lofft, the squire of Troston, a parish adjoining Honington, Bloomfield's birthplace. Mr. Lofft was one of those typical eighteenth century characters who, to the cultivation of law, letters, and politics, added the activities of the Whig type of country gentleman.* He was at once struck by this strangely-acquired MS. and by the ingenious letter with which George introduced it. It was submitted to critics of like gifts, and its good fortune was assured. All this occurred in November, 1798. In March, 1800, fifteen months later, the "Farmer's Boy" appeared in all the glory of fine type, and with Bewick wood-cuts. But during the whole of those fifteen months Bloomfield was told nothing of the progress of his patron's plans as to printing and publication. "I knew it to be in good hands," he says, "yet . . . I felt much anxiety; and (having the poem then perfect in my memory) after a hard day's work, with my back to the fire, and in the stillness of the night, I have often repeated aloud the whole or greater part of the poem, until my wife was fast asleep, before I could find resolution to put out the candle. . . . At length, in March, 1800, my brother Nathaniel (with whom I wish the world was better acquainted) called to say that he had seen in a shop window a book called

* Boswell met Capel Lofft at dinner at Mr. Dilly's on May 17th, 1784. Johnson and others were present. This is Boswell's picture of Bloomfield's patron—"Mr. Capel Lofft, who, though a most zealous Whig, has a mind so full of learning and knowledge, and so much exercised in various departments, and withal so much liberality, that the stupendous powers of the literary Goliath, though they did not frighten this little David of popular spirit, could not but excite his admiration."

'The Farmer's Boy,' with a motto. I told him I supposed it must be mine, but I knew nothing of the motto, and I the more believed it to be mine, having just received, through the hands of Mr. Lofft, a request to wait on the Duke of Grafton in Piccadilly. I had a very slight personal remembrance of the Duke from my childhood; and I felt as most men would feel in my circumstances on a similar occasion. I met with condescension in its noblest features, and even with congratulations, and amongst the conversation was very naturally asked "How I liked the execution of the work? Was it not beautifully printed?" I replied that I had not seen it. The Duke himself then brought from the Library one of the large paper copies* and spread it on the table. Giles never was so hard put to it in his life to keep his face in order as at that moment. At that moment the Preface was as new to me as the Poem was to the world. I could not read it there, but on my return home, I saw the high praise which my brother had given me, and which had been so advantageously laid before the public by Mr. Lofft. I thanked them both for having spared me the task of telling my own story, thanked God for his providential interposition, and felt my heart at ease." It is a moving story, perfectly told. To realise exactly what it all meant to Robert Bloomfield one must know that he was just then depressed in spirits, in ill-health, in extreme poverty, and enduring daily the sight of a sick wife and two sick children, without the means of relieving their ills.†

*It was issued in three sizes:—

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|--------------------|-------------|
| (1) Royal Quarto, | price 18/-. |
| (2) Octavo, | " 10/6 |
| (3) Smaller octavo | " 7/6 |

and was published by Messrs. Vernon, Hood, Poultry, London.

† All this Bloomfield described subsequently in his poem "To my old oak table," the second poem in his "Wild Flowers, or Pastoral and Local Poetry," published in 1806.

The sale of the "Farmer's Boy" is an equally amazing story. Its publication had been entrusted, on the half-profits system, to a London firm of good standing, Messrs. Vernon and Hood.* For the last nine months of 1800 Bloomfield's share of the profits was over £600, in the next twelve months it was over £500. In this connexion one recalls Wordsworth's account of his own early earnings; he told Matthew Arnold that "for he knew not how many years his poetry had never brought him in enough to buy his shoe-strings."† The demand for the "Farmer's Boy" was such that the hand-printing presses of the period were scarcely equal to the task of supplying the public. Large numbers were shipped to America where the book was pirated wholesale. In England alone, 26,000 copies were sold in two years, a circulation of poetry said not to have been equalled until the publication some years later of Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage."‡

Bloomfield is now at the apex of his fortune, and his story is at the climax of its interest. This obscure shoemaker received invitations to become the guest of the Duke of Grafton,§ and of the gentry of Suffolk and Norfolk. Pitt and Fox wrote their congratulations to him; he was introduced to Coleridge, Wordsworth, Campbell, and Rogers; George Morland painted a "Giles, the Farmer's Boy;" distinguished people began to call on Giles in his alley lodgings.

* Mr. Hood was the father of Tom Hood, the poet.

† The "Lyrical Ballads" appeared in 1798, the "Farmers' Boy" in 1800.

‡ All these details in reference to the first issues of the "Farmer's Boy" are taken from the MS. "Life," in the possession of H.R.H. Prince Frederick Duleep Singh.

§ See the "Lines occasioned by a Visit to Whittleburg Forest in August, 1800," in "Rural Tales, Ballads, and Songs," first published in 1802.

The Duke of Grafton's generosity deserves mention: to the end of his life Bloomfield received an annuity from the Duke who also secured his appointment as Under-sealer of Writs at Somerset' House—an office which Bloomfield resigned after a few weeks

To a man of Bloomfield's shy temperament the embarrassments of such fame were very real. Among other results it caused him to leave his alley for a cottage in the City Road, at the spot where Shepherdess Walk joins that road, and where the Eagle Tavern now stands. Here he lived until 1812—when he removed to Shefford, in Bedfordshire—writing and publishing poetry at fairly frequent intervals, poetry which was still popular, but which never equalled, in popular success, that of the "Farmer's Boy." In 1802 appeared the "Rural Tales," the first of which, "Richard and Kate," was a great favourite at the time; in 1804 came "Good Tidings, or News from the Farm," mentioned already on page 50, and in 1806, "Wild Flowers," another series of pastoral and local poems. With these comes to an end the true Bloomfield note, though he published in 1811 the "Banks of Wye," a record, in verse, of a tour down the Wye made in 1807. "May Day with the Muses" was published in 1822, and in 1823 an appallingly feeble play, "Hazlewood Hall," written when he was utterly broken down mentally and physically, and issued just before his sad end in 1823.

In the last years, thus rapidly sketched, Bloomfield experienced changes in his personal conditions as violent as those which preceded these years. The "Remains,"* published after his death, show him to have had a mind of considerable activity; he read much standard poetry, he was interested in the facts of natural history—he made observations for example, on the formation of the spider's web, and wrote for his children what he called "The Bird and Insects' Post Office," which consists of a series of imaginary letters, some of them in verse, sent by the common birds and insects to each other; he kept up the study

* "The Remains of Robert Bloomfield," London, 1824; two volumes.

and practice of music ; he made Æolian harps*, and wrote a pamphlet on the history of this kind of harp ; he took lessons in drawing, and some of his sketches are preserved amongst the Bloomfield MSS. in the British Museum.

The one quality it is not possible to find in him is worldly prudence. Although he must have received for some years, from his various publications, an income of £500, we know of no investment of any kind made by him, nor any provision for the time when his powers must fail and the sale of his books decline. Moreover, as has been mentioned above, he was extremely generous to his relatives, who were too poor to repay him.† When, therefore, his publishers failed in 1812, he lost some £300 at a time when his income did not exceed £200, and when his family consisted of three daughters and two sons. From this period onwards his story is as sad and depressing as it had been during the period immediately preceding the publication of the "Farmer's Boy"—again there is poverty, chronic ill-health, involving loss of sight, and loss also of his wonderful memory.

Public subscriptions were asked-for on his behalf, the Literary Fund made him a grant of £40, and Lord Liverpool promised to put him on the State's Annuity List as soon as the Funds would allow. But before that period arrived the end came on August 19th, 1823. He was buried in the churchyard of Campton, a small village in Bedfordshire, adjoining Shefford, where he had lived for nearly twelve years.

* At Moyses' Hall, Bury, is the Æolian harp which Bloomfield presented to Capel Lofft. This harp was given by Mr. Lofft's son to Prince Frederick Duleep Singh, and by him to the Bury Museum.

† See the comment on this, by Bloomfield's contemporary Crabbe, in Crabbe's "Life and Letters," vol. 1, p. 245, under the date, July 3rd, 1817.

In the "Remains," referred to above, is a collection of "Poetical Tributes to Robert Bloomfield." The one which will appeal to Suffolk readers was written by Bernard Barton, of Woodbridge, and a quotation from it will fittingly close this sketch of Bloomfield's life:—

"Peace to the Bard whose artless store
 Was spread for Nature's humblest child;
 Whose song, well meet for peasant lore,
 Was simple, lowly, undefiled.

Yet long may guileless hearts preserve
 The memory of thy verse, and thee;
 While Nature's healthful feelings nerve
 The arm of labour toiling free,
 While *Suffolk Peasantry* may be
 Such as thy sweetest tales make known,
 By cottage hearth, by greenwood tree,
 Be *Bloomfield* call'd, with pride, *their own!*"