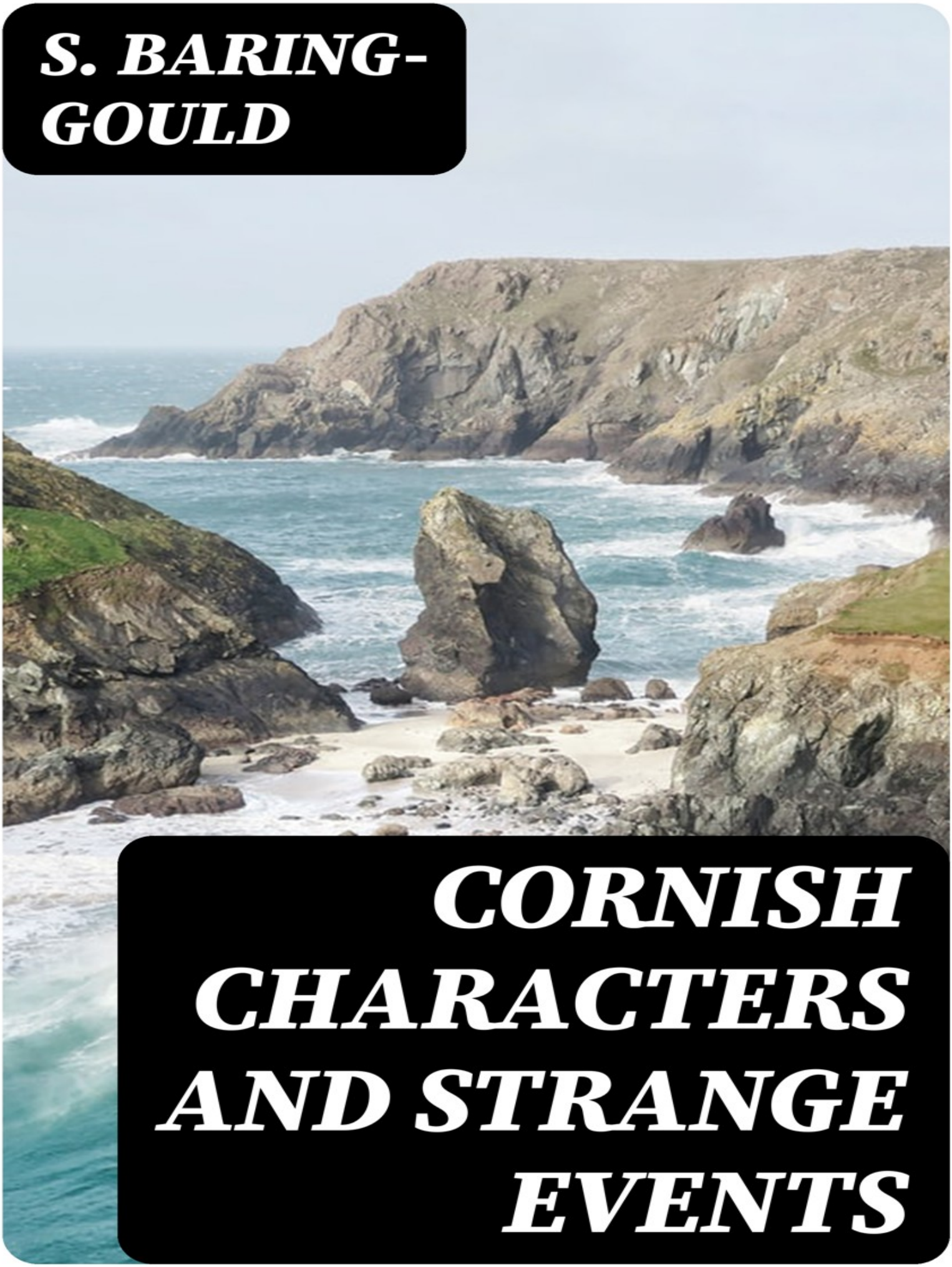
S. BARING-GOULD



CORNISH CHARACTERS AND STRANGE EVENTS

S. Baring-Gould

Cornish Characters and Strange Events

EAN 8596547240617

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

Table of Contents

PREFACE
ILLUSTRATIONS
CORNISH CHARACTERS AND STRANGE EVENTS
CORNISH CHARACTERS
AND STRANGE EVENTS
WILLIAM PENGELLY, GEOLOGIST
SIR CHARLES WILLS, K.B.
LIEUTENANT GOLDSMITH AND THE LOGAN ROCK
HUGH PETERS, THE REGICIDE
JAMES POLKINGHORNE, THE WRESTLER
HENRY TRENGROUSE, INVENTOR
THE BOTATHAN GHOST
JOHN COUCH ADAMS, ASTRONOMER
DANIEL GUMB
LAURENCE BRADDON
THOMASINE BONAVENTURA
THE MURDER OF NEVILL NORWAY
SIR WILLIAM LOWER, KNT.
THE PIRATES AT PENZANCE
DAME KILLIGREW
TWO NATURALISTS IN CORNWALL
SIR JOHN CALL, BART.
JOHN KNILL
THOMAS TREGOSS
ANTHONY PAYNE
NEVIL NORTHEY BURNARD

SIR GOLDSWORTHY GURNEY, KNT., INVENTOR
THE JANES
THE PENNINGTONS
DOCTOR GLYNN-CLOBERY
THREE MEN OF MOUSEHOLE
DOLLY PENTREATH
ROBERT JEFFERY OF POLPERRO
ADMIRAL RICHARD DARTON THOMAS
COMMANDER JOHN POLLARD
THE CASE OF BOSAVERN PENLEZ
SAMUEL FOOTE
THE LAST LORD MOHUN
THE LAST LORD CAMELFORD
WILLIAM NOYE
WILLIAM LEMON
SAMUEL DREW
THE SIEGE OF SKEWIS
THE VOYAGE OF JOHN SANDS
CHARLES INCLEDON
THE MURDER OF RICHARD CORYTON
SIR JAMES TILLIE, KNT.
LIEUTENANT JOHN HAWKEY
DR. DANIEL LOMBARD
THE DREAM OF MR. WILLIAMS
SIR ROBERT TRESILIAN
PIRATE TRELAWNY
JAMES SILK BUCKINGHAM
MARY ANN DAVENPORT, ACTRESS
THE ROYAL FAMILY OF PRUSSIA

CAPTAIN RICHARD KEIGWIN
THE LOSS OF THE "KENT"
VICE-ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES V. PENROSE
SIR CHRISTOPHER HAWKINS, BART.
ANNE JEFFERIES
THOMAS KILLIGREW, THE KING'S JESTER
NICOLAS ROSCARROCK
LIEUTENANT PHILIP G. KING
HICKS OF BODMIN
CAPTAIN TOBIAS MARTIN
THE MAYOR OF BODMIN
JOHN NICHOLS TOM,
THE BOHELLAND TRAGEDY
MARY KELYNACK
CAPTAIN WILLIAM ROGERS
JOHN BURTON, OF FALMOUTH
THE FATE OF SIR CLOUDESLEY SHOVEL
FRANCIS TREGIAN
ANN GLANVILLE
JONATHAN SIMPSON, HIGHWAYMAN
DAVIES GILBERT
JAMES HOSKIN, FARMER
JOHN HARRIS, THE MINER POET
EDWARD CHAPMAN
JOHN COKE, OF TRERICE
THOMAS PELLOW, OF PENRYN
THE ORIGIN OF THE ROBARTES FAMILY
THEODORE PALEOLOGUS
INDEX

THE WORKS OF ANATOLE FRANCE
NOTICE
LIVING MASTERS OF MUSIC
A CATALOGUE OF MEMOIRS, BIOGRAPHIES, ETC.

PREFACE

Table of Contents

Cornwall, peopled mainly by Celts, but with an infusion of English blood, stands and always has stood apart from the rest of England, much, but in a less degree, as has Wales. That which brought it into more intimate association with English thought, interests, and progress was the loss of the old Cornish tongue.

The isolation in which Cornwall had stood has tended to develop in it much originality of character; and the wildness of the coast has bred a hardy race of seamen and smugglers; the mineral wealth, moreover, drew thousands of men underground, and the underground life of the mines has a peculiar effect on mind and character: it is cramping in many ways, but it tends to develop a good deal of religious enthusiasm, that occasionally breaks forth in wild forms of fanaticism. Cornwall has produced admirable sailors, men who have won deathless renown in warfare at sea, as "Old Dreadnought" Boscawen, Pellew, Lord Exmouth, etc., and daring and adventurous smugglers, like "The King of Prussia," who combined great religious fervour with entire absence of scruple in the matter of defrauding the king's revenue. It has produced men of science who have made for themselves a world-fame, as Adams the astronomer, and Sir Humphry Davy the chemist; men who have been benefactors to their race, as Henry Trengrouse, Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, and Trevithick. It has sent forth at least one notable painter, the miner's boy Opie, and a dramatist, Samuel Foote, and a great singer in his day, Incledon. But it

has not given to literature a great poet. Minor rhymes have been produced in great quantities, but none of great worth. Philosophers have issued from the mines, as Samuel Drew, eccentrics many, as Sir James Tillie, John Knill, and Daniel Gumb. And Cornwall has contributed a certain number of rascals—but fewer in number than almost any other county, if we exclude wreckers and smugglers from the catalogue of rascality.

Strange superstitions have lingered on, and one very curious story of a girl fed for years by fairies has been put on record.

It is somewhat remarkable that Cornwall has produced no musical genius of any note; and yet the Cornishman is akin to the Welshman and the Irishman.

Cornwall has certainly sent up to London and Westminster very able politicians, as Godolphin, Sir William Molesworth, and Sir John Eliot. It furnished Tyburn with a victim—Hugh Peters, the chaplain of Oliver Cromwell, a strange mixture of money-grasping, enthusiasm, and humour.

It has been the object of the author, not to retell the lives of the greatest of the sons of Cornwall, for these lives may be read in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, but to chronicle the stories of lesser luminaries concerning whom less is known and little is easily accessible. In this way it serves as a companion volume to *Devonshire Characters*; and Cornwall in no particular falls short of Devonshire in the variety of characters it has sent forth, nor are their stories of less interest.

The author and publisher have to thank many for kind help: Mr. Percy Bate, Mr. T. R. Bolitho, Rev. A. T. Boscawen, Mr. J. A. Bridger, Mr. T. Walter Brimacombe, Mr. A. M. Broadley, Mr. R. P. Chope, Mr. Digby Collins, Mr. J. B. Cornish, Mrs. Coryton of Pentillie Castle, Miss Loveday E. Drake, Mr. E. H. W. Dunkin, F.S.A., Mr. J. D. Enys of Enys, the Rev. Wm. Iago, Mrs. H. Forbes Julian, Mrs. de Lacy Lacy, the Rev. A. H. Malan, Mr. Lewis Melville, Mr. A. H. Norway, Captain Rogers of Penrose, Mr. Thomas Seccombe, Mr. Henry Trengrouse, Mr. W. H. K. Wright, and Mr. Henry Young of Liverpool—and last, but not least, Miss Windeatt Roberts for her admirable Index to the volume.

The publisher wishes me to say that he would much like to discover the whereabouts of a full-length portrait of Sir John Call, with a view of Bodmin Gaol in the background.

S. BARING-GOULD.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Table of Contents

THOMAS PITT, LORD CAMELFORD	Frontispiece
	TO FACE PAGE
WILLIAM PENGELLY	2

From a painting by A. S. Cope, reproduced by

permission of Mrs. H. Forbes Julian

Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Wills 12

From an engraving by Simon, after a picture by M. Dahl

A View of the Celebrated Logan Rock, near Land's End in Cornwall 18

Taken after the Rock was displaced on the 8th of April, 1824. From a lithograph by Vibert, after a drawing by Tonkin

A View of the Southern Part of Castle Treryn, showing the Machinery erected for the purpose of replacing the Logan Rock 22

From a lithograph by Vibert, after a drawing by Tonkin

Hugh Peters 26

From an old engraving

JAMES POLKINGHORNE, THE FAMOUS CORNISH WRESTLER 54

From a drawing as he appeared in the Ring at Devonport on Monday, 23 October, 1826, when he threw Ab. Cann, the Champion of Devonshire, for a stake of 200 sovereigns

HENRY TRENGROUSE, THE INVENTOR OF THE ROCKET APPARATUS FOR SAVING LIFE AT SEA 60

From an oil painting by Opie the younger, reproduced by permission of Mr. H. Trengrouse

THE WRECK OF THE "ANSON" 66

From a sketch by Mr. H. Trengrouse

"Parson Rudall" 72

From a painting in the possession of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould

John Couch Adams 84

From a mezzotint by Samuel Cousins, a.r.a., after a picture by Thomas Mogford. From the collection of Mrs. Lewis Lane

John Couch Adams 88

The Cheese-wring 92

From an etching by Letitia Byrne, after a drawing by J. Farington, r.a.

Nevill Norway 118

From a painting in the possession of Miss A. T. Norway

Sir William Lower 126

The Killygrew Cup 134

"1633. from maior to maior to the towne of permarin, where they received mee that was in great misery"
Jane Killygrew
This cup has been recently valued at the sum of £4000. It measures just two feet in height

George Carter Bignell 142

From a photograph

John Ralfs 146

Reproduced by permission of Miss Loveday E. Drake

Sir John Call, Bart. 154

From a portrait (by A. Hickle) in the possession of

his great-granddaughter, Mrs. de Lacy Lacy

WHITEFORD—THE RESIDENCE OF SIR JOHN CALL 164

From a drawing in the possession of Mrs. de Lacy Lacy

JOHN KNILL 170

After a picture by Opie in the possession of Captain Rogers, of Penrose

GLASS INSCRIBED "SUCCESS TO THE EAGLE FRIGATE, JOHN KNILL, COMMANDER" 172

From the collection of Percy Bate, Esq., of Glasgow

ANTHONY PAYNE 182

From a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, purchased by Sir Robert Harvey, High

Sheriff of Cornwall, 1901, and presented to the Institute of Cornwall

NEVIL NORTHEY BURNARD 186

From a bas-relief by the sculptor himself, in the possession of S. Pearn, Esq., Altarnon

WESLEY'S HEAD OVER THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE, PENPONT, ALTARNON. Cut by Burnard when 16 years of age 188

TOMBSTONES CUT BY BURNARD 188

That on the right is upon the grave of his grandfather in Altarnon Churchyard, and was cut when the sculptor was only 14 years old; the one on the left is in Bodmin Churchyard

TOMBSTONES IN ALTARNON CHURCHYARD. Cut by Burnard 190

Sir Goldsworthy Gurney 192

From a lithograph by W. Sharp, after a drawing by S. C. Smith

Dorothy Pentreath of Mousehole in Cornwall. The last Person who could Converse in the Cornish Language 232

From a drawing by R. Scadden

Monschole, in Mount's Bay, from the Island 238

From a drawing by Captain Tremenhere

Samuel Foote 280

The Last Lord Mohun 298

From a mezzotint by I. Faber, after a picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller

The Duel between Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton 312

From a contemporary mezzotint in the British Museum

Sir William Noye, Attorney-General to King Charles the First 330

Sir William Lemon, Bart., M.P. for Cornwall 342

From an engraving by J. H. Meyer

Samuel Drew 346

From an engraving by R. Hicks, after a painting by F. Moore

Henry Rogers, Pewterer 364

Charles Incledon, as Macheath 376

From an engraving by J. Thomson, after a painting

by Singleton

Sir James Tillie, Knt. 400

Sir James Tillie's Monument at Pentillie 406

Edward John Trelawny 442

From a drawing by D. Lucas

James Silk Buckingham 456

Mrs. Davenport, in the Character of Mrs. Grundy 466

From an engraving by Ridley, after a picture by De Wilde

At Prussia Cove. "Bessy's" Cove from Battery Point 470

From a drawing in the possession of J. B. Cornish, Esq.

John Carter's House at Prussia Cove. (Demolished in 1906) 476

From a photograph by Gibson & Sons, Penzance

Vice-Admiral Sir Charles V. Penrose, k.c.b. 500

From a picture by Allingham

Thomas Killigrew, Groom of the Bedchamber to King Charles the Second 544

From an engraving by I. Vander vaart, after a picture by W. Wissens

Lieutenant Philip Gidley King 560

From an engraving by W. Skelton, after a drawing by J. Wright

William R. Hicks 570

William R. Hicks of Bodmin 576

From a Caricature

John Thomas, otherwise Sir William Courtenay, who shot Lieutenant Bennet in Basenden Wood, Boughton, near Canterbury, and the Constable Mears, on Thursday, May 31st, 1838. 594

Percy Honeywood Courtenay, Knight of Malta, etc. etc., as he appeared at the Election in 1832 608

Mary Kelynack 620

Captain W. Rogers 624

From an engraving by Ridley and Blood, after a picture by Drummond

John Burton of Falmouth 628

Sir Cloudesley Shovel 638

Ann Glanville 664

DAVIES GILBERT 676

From a mezzotint by Samuel Cousins, A.R.A., after a picture by Henry Howard, R.A. From the collection of Mrs. Lewis Lane

JOHN HARRIS, THE MINER POET 692

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN EARL OF RADNOR: BARON ROBERTS OF TRURO 718

After Sir Godfrey Kneller

MEMORIAL BRASS IN THE CHURCH OF LANDULPH 728

Reproduced by permission of E. H. W. Dunkin, Esq., F.S.A., from his book on Cornish Brasses

CORNISH CHARACTERS AND STRANGE EVENTS

Table of Contents

CORNISH CHARACTERS

Table of Contents

AND STRANGE EVENTS

WILLIAM PENGELLY, GEOLOGIST

Table of Contents

William Pengelly was born at East Looe on January 12th, 1812, and was the son of the captain of a small coasting vessel and nephew of a notorious smuggler. The Pengellys had, in fact, been connected with the sea for several generations. His mother was a Prout of the same family as the famous water-colour artist.

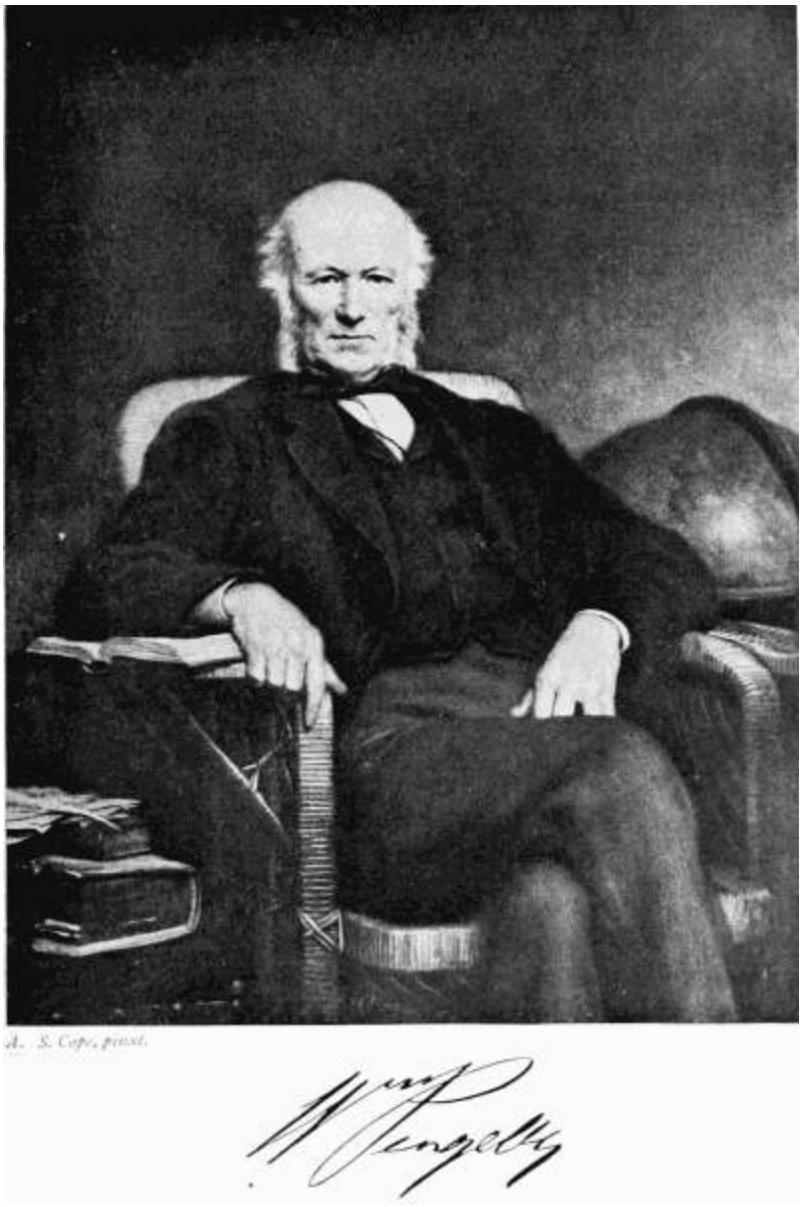
As a child his career was almost cut short by fire. An aunt came to stay with the Pengellys, arriving a day before she was expected. Early on the following morning, when sitting in her bedroom window, wrapped in a thick woollen shawl, she saw her little nephew William rush out of the house enveloped in flames. She hurried after him, and managed to smother the fire with her woollen garment, and thus saved the child's life, though she was herself so badly burnt that she carried the scars to her dying day. The little boy had risen early, and had kindled a fire so that he might go on with his lessons before any one else was astir in the house, with the result that he set light to his clothes, and except for the premature arrival of his aunt, must certainly have been burnt to death.

At the age of twelve he went to sea. He says:—

"Our voyages were short. I do not remember an instance of being at sea more than three consecutive days; so that, except when windbound, we were almost always taking in or taking out cargo. The work was hard, but the food was abundant, and on the whole the life, though rough, was not unpleasant.

"To me—thinking nothing of the pecuniary aspects of the question—the most enjoyable occasions were those which fierce contrary winds brought us, when we had to seek some harbour of refuge. These were by no means necessarily holidays, for, if the weather were dry, advantage was taken of the enforced leisure to give our craft a thorough cleaning, or to repair her rigging, or to make up the books. Moreover, the crew employed me to write letters to their wives from their dictation. These epistles were generally of a remarkable character, and some of them remain firmly fixed in my memory. The foregoing labours disposed of, and foul winds still prevailing, we had a washing day, or, better than all, a bout of tailoring, which did not generally get beyond repairing, though occasionally the ambitious flight of making a pair of trousers was attempted. On tailoring days it was understood that my clothes should be repaired for me, in order that I might read aloud for the general benefit. We assembled in our little cabin, where the stitching and smoking went on simultaneously, and with great vigour. My poor library consisted of a Bible, the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, Johnson's *English Dictionary*, a volume of the *Weekly Miscellany*, the *History of John Gilpin*, *Baron Munchausen's*

Travels, Walkinghame's *Arithmetic*, and a book of songs. My hearers were not very fastidious, but allowed me to read pretty much what I pleased, though, truth to tell, the *Spectator* was not a favourite; some portions of it were held to be nonsensical, and others were considered to be so lacking in truthfulness that it was generally termed the 'lying book.' This ill repute was largely due to the story of Fadlallah (No. 578). Walkinghame was by no means unpopular. I occasionally read some of the questions, and my shipmates endeavoured to solve them mentally; and as the answers were all given by the author, I had to declare who had made the nearest guess, for it was very often but little more. Of all the questions, none excited so much interest as that which asks, What will be the cost of shoeing a horse at a farthing for the first nail, two for the second, and so on in geometrical progression for thirty-two nails, and which gives for the answer a sum but little short of four and a half million pounds sterling. This was so utterly unexpected that it went far to confer on Walkinghame the same name that Fadlallah had given to the *Spectator*."



Reproduced by permission of Mrs. H. Forbes Julian

William Pengelly tells a curious story of his father, Richard Pengelly:—

"After completing his fifteenth year he was thinking of going to sea. When he was sixteen, his father, who was a sailor, was drowned almost within sight of his home. The effect on the boy was to make him pause, and on his friends, to urge him to give up the idea. For some months these influences kept him quiet, but at length his

restlessness returned so strongly, that he would have gone to sea at once, had he felt satisfied that his father would have approved the step. To ascertain this point he prayed frequently and earnestly that his father's spirit might be allowed to appear to him, with a pleasing or frowning aspect, according as he might approve or disapprove. At length he believed his prayer to have been answered, and that when in the field ploughing he saw his father, who passed by looking intently and smilingly at him. This decided him. He became a sailor at seventeen, and as such died at a good old age."

One bitterly cold night at sea, young Pengelly and some other of his shipmates having closed the cabin door, lit a charcoal fire, and speedily fell asleep, succumbing to the fumes of carbonic acid. Happily one of the crew who had been on deck entered the cabin. He found the greatest difficulty in awakening his comrades to sufficient consciousness to enable them to stumble up the ladder to get a breath of fresh air, for their sleep had well-nigh become that of death. The strong and hardy seamen soon recovered, but the boy was so seriously affected that, long after he had been carried upon deck, he could not be roused, and was only restored to consciousness by means of prolonged exertions on the part of his shipmates. His earliest geological experience was made when a sailor-boy weather-bound on the Dorsetshire coast, and he was wont to relate it thus:—

"I received my first lesson in geology at Lyme Regis, very soon after I had entered my teens. A labourer, whom I was observing, accidentally broke a large stone of blue lias and

thus disclosed a fine ammonite —the first fossil of any kind that I had ever seen or heard of.

"In reply to my exclamation, 'What's that?' the workman said, with a sneer, 'If you had read your Bible you'd know what 'tis.' 'I *have* read my Bible. But what has that to do with it?'

"'In the Bible we're told there was once a flood that covered all the world. At that time all the rocks were mud, and the different things that were drowned were buried in it, and there's a snake that was buried that way. There are lots of 'em, and other things besides, in the rocks and stones hereabouts.'

"'A snake! But where's his head?'

"'You must read the Bible, I tell 'ee, and then you'll find out why 'tis that some of the snakes in the rocks ain't got no heads. We're told there, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, that's how 'tis.'"

When in his sixteenth year William Pengelly lost his younger brother, and after that his mother would not suffer him to go to sea. Some years were spent at Looe in self-education.

While still quite young he was induced by a relative of his mother to settle at Torquay, at that time a small place, but rapidly growing and attracting residents to it. Here he opened a small day-school on the Pestalozzian system, and was one of the first to introduce the use of the blackboard and chalk. The school opened with six scholars, but rapidly increased to about seventy.

It was now that scientific studies began to occupy Pengelly's attention, and above all, geology.

In 1837 he married Mary Anne Mudge, whose health was always delicate.

Little by little his renown as a geologist spread, and he did not confine himself to the deposits in Devonshire, but travelled to Scotland and elsewhere to examine the rocks, and to meet and consult with eminent scientists.

In 1846 his private pupils had grown so numerous that he was able to give up his school altogether and become a tutor of mathematics and the natural sciences. He tells a very amusing story of a visit made during holiday time to an old friend.

"I one day learned that my road lay within a couple of miles of the rectory of my old mathematical friend D——. We had been great friends when he was a curate in a distant part of the country, but had not met for several years, during which he had been advanced from a curacy of about £80 to a rectory of £200 per year, and a residence, in a very secluded district. My time was very short, but for 'auld lang syne' I decided to sacrifice a few hours. On reaching the house Mr. and Mrs. D—— were fortunately at home, and received me with their wonted kindness.

"The salutations were barely over, when I said—

"'It is now six o'clock; I must reach Wellington tonight, and as it is said to be fully eight miles off, and I am utterly unacquainted with the road, and with the town when I reach it, I cannot remain with you one minute after eight o'clock.'

"'Oh, very well,' said D——, 'then we must improve the shining hour. Jane, my dear, be so good as to order tea.'

"Having said this he left the room. In a few minutes he returned with a book under his arm and his hands filled with

writing materials, which he placed on the table. Opening the book, he said—

"'This is Hind's *Trigonometry*, and here's a lot of examples for practice. Let us see which can do the greatest number of them by eight o'clock. I did most of them many years ago, but I have not looked at them since. Suppose we begin at this one'—which he pointed out—'and take them as they come. We can drink our tea as we work, so as to lose no time.'

"'All right,' said I; though it was certainly not the object for which I had come out of my road.

"Accordingly we set to work. No words passed between us; the servant brought in the tray, Mrs. D—— handed us our tea, which we drank now and then, and the time flew on rapidly. At length, finding it to be a quarter to eight—

"'We must stop,' said I, 'for in a quarter of an hour I must be on my road.'

"'Very well. Let us see how our answers agree with those of the author.'

"It proved that he had correctly solved one more than I had. This point settled, I said 'Good-bye.'

"'Good-bye. Do come again as soon as you can. The farmers know nothing whatever about Trigonometry.'

"We parted at the rectory door, and have never met since; nor shall we ever do so more, as his decease occurred several years ago. During my long walk to Wellington my mind was chiefly occupied with the mental isolation of a rural clergyman."

In 1851 he lost his wife, and some years after both his children by her.