

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
TALBOT VILLAGE,  
DORSETSHIRE.

THIS LITTLE ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
LABOUR OF SO MANY YEARS  
IS INSCRIBED  
TO THE MEMORY OF ONE WHO WAS DEAR TO  
THE WRITER.

SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1873.



THE HISTORY  
OF  
TALBOT VILLAGE.

---

**T**HIS noble institution for the working and labouring poorer classes was the work of a lady of independent fortune—spending not only fortune but occupying all her time and thoughts with this charity from the year 1850 to 1870, when her sudden and untimely death stopped the prosecution of this great usefulness to one particular class of persons ; for she was against alms-giving and against relieving idleness.

Talbot Village lies on very high ground in Dorsetshire, on the confines of Hampshire. The village consists of a church and three acres of churchyard, commanding a fine view of great extent. The church, of solid form and graceful

effect, was designed by Messrs. Evans and Fletcher, and built by Mr. M'William, barely now holding the population of the village; amounting—men, women, and children, to 126 persons. The church was nearly completed in 1870, having a tower with chimes and clock; and the sister of the foundress completed what remained to be done, and added, as gifts to the interior of the building, a pulpit of graceful proportions; an ancient font, procured at Rome many years ago; an organ; a complete musical service; and the furniture, in benches, chairs, &c. On the walls are inscribed texts from Scripture, revised and approved by Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, and by Stanley, Dean of Westminster.

Not far from the church is a range of very beautiful Almshouses, the design by Mr. Creeke, carried out by Mr. M'William. It was built and endowed by the founder of the village in 1862. It is built of Portland stone, of seven separate lodgments; that is to lodge, should they be married, fourteen persons. Before it lies a flower-garden and an ornamental wall, the whole open to the east and south sun, having a glorious view over the country; and behind the building is a garden for vegetables, with the means of keeping

pigs and poultry for those old ones who have health and strength left to attend to those things.

The building is endowed in perpetuity for fourteen persons, with allowance of six shillings a-week to each of the seven lodgments, two tons of coal, and a doctor to attend. The almshouses are intended for the old and infirm of the labouring classes not able to earn a livelihood, the whole under certain regulations from the trustees or landlords of the institution; and here all has been done to afford peace and security to old age, and to alleviate the misery of want at the end of life.

Not far from the church is a School-house, having a spacious school-room, lighted north and south, and lodging for the family of the school-master, with an acre of garden-ground. The school was built in 1862, and endowed in 1873 by the sister of the foundress.

The village consists of twenty-two habitations, having five farms and sixteen cottages, a seventeenth cottage having been added in 1872 for the organist of the church. The whole of these buildings are well drained, and with wells of water, each cottage having a garden and acre of ground.

They are let at the low rents of 4*l.*, 5*l.*, 6*l.*, and 7*l.*, paying neither taxes or repairs. The cottages are of graceful and picturesque form, without affectation of foreign ornament, built as habitations should be for the working-classes of carpenters, bricklayers, &c. It is understood that these cottages must be inhabited by those who have to earn their living, and should those persons by chance or inheritance come to independence, they are requested to leave the village and give place to other persons.

There is a tract of uncultivated heath-land, of 150 acres, for the cattle of the farms and cottages to roam over.

The whole inclosure of the village covers a tract of land of 465 acres.

It is governed by Trustees or Landlords, and kept in order by printed rules on each habitation; and on the infringement of these rules a short notice is given to leave the village by the agent.

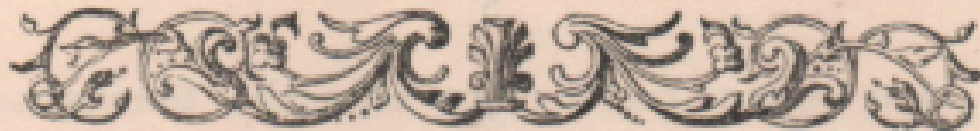
The farms, five in number, are:—

One farm of 111 acres.

One farm of 30 acres.

One farm of 22 acres.

Two farms of 15 acres each.



## VIEWS OF THE FOUNDER

OF

## TALBOT VILLAGE.

---

THE leading point on which all was to turn was self-support—no charity demanded, no fear of the workhouse in view. The experiment had to be tried of whether a comfortable house with an acre of land could support a family, paying a low rent and having neither repairs or taxes to pay. A settled rule for the village was, to have no crowding in the houses, and no lodgers permitted; and no trade carried on in the village but selling poultry, eggs, and bacon. A Church ultimately was provided without expense to the parishioners, and a School for education.

The great stumbling-block of all institutions of this nature has always been on religious points. The Founder determined not to draw the cords of doctrines too tight, as to which mode of service

a man might prefer ; but that the foundation should be, ' Love God, keep the Commandments, honour the Queen.' A great writer has said, ' A forced religion sours a man's temper,' and nothing is more true. The Founder took a wide view of things, hoping that time would awaken a sense of religion, of which, at setting out, few persons know anything about.

The whole thoughts of the Founder for many years was how she could ameliorate the lot of a class she thought better of, with all their disadvantages, than of any other class of persons. All her reading tended to give information on these points. It soon became her determination to banish public-houses from the place, and to try and persuade each householder to look after his family. Also, not to allow Church service after dark—very admirable in places having a good police, but nowise advisable in winter on a dark heath, calling the master from his children and family, and injurious to the very young and to the very old persons. A little German book of Zschokke's made a great impression on her ; it is called in English *The Gold-makers' Village*, and Chambers has placed it in his *Miscellany*.

The outset of the scheme began with buying

land, some of which was at a low price ; other pieces, when they were found to be wanted, at a high price. Afterwards, some roads and plantations were commenced. In 1862 the almshouses and the school were finished, and then service was given on a Sunday in the school-room (the idea of building a church came long afterwards).

The outset of this village was anything but encouraging or cheerful. The first inhabitants were unused to any restraints ; the women, many of them, very lax in their behaviour ; the surrounding gentlemen and clergy having no sympathy with improvements or amelioration for the lower classes. After a few years everything mended, but not without many troubles and vexations to the pains-taking and laborious lady.

It remains now only to state what could induce a woman of independent fortune, accustomed all her life to live in London, or in Italy, Paris, or Germany, to make such sacrifices as this Institution demanded—in time, thought, and money ; or to spend on persons she knew nothing of what might have been given to friends, or spent on property in other parts of England. For this scheme she sacrificed everything ; and as soon as it became clear what she was doing, and that with

an energy and clearness of head that was found to be admirable, she had the support and advice of many very wise persons : amongst whom were Mr. Glyn (late Lord Wolverton); Lord Portman; Sir Eardley Wilmot, and the excellent man and great preacher, Mr. Leybourne Popham, who was most particularly of use in the village, giving his eloquence on Sundays in the school-room to a population not unworthy, and on his visits to Bournemouth taking the strongest interest in the whole concern.

Some autumns previous to 1850 the family of the Founder and herself had exchanged the grey climate of Grosvenor Square for the clearer atmosphere of Bournemouth. All round the neighbourhood the distress and suffering of the poor was dreadful. The people used to come in crowds, calling out, 'Give us work, give us work ; we are starving !' Men, women, and children came in numbers—sometimes in alarming numbers—with spades and sticks, under the windows,—and the few sovereigns given away did more harm than good.

At last a piece of ground was hired on the Moor from Sir George Gervis, and the people were set to work under the superintendence

of Mr. David Tuck, the farmer; and it answered so perfectly, the people coming miles and miles off for work, and so grateful for the work, that the whole scheme of the village gradually developed itself in 1850.

