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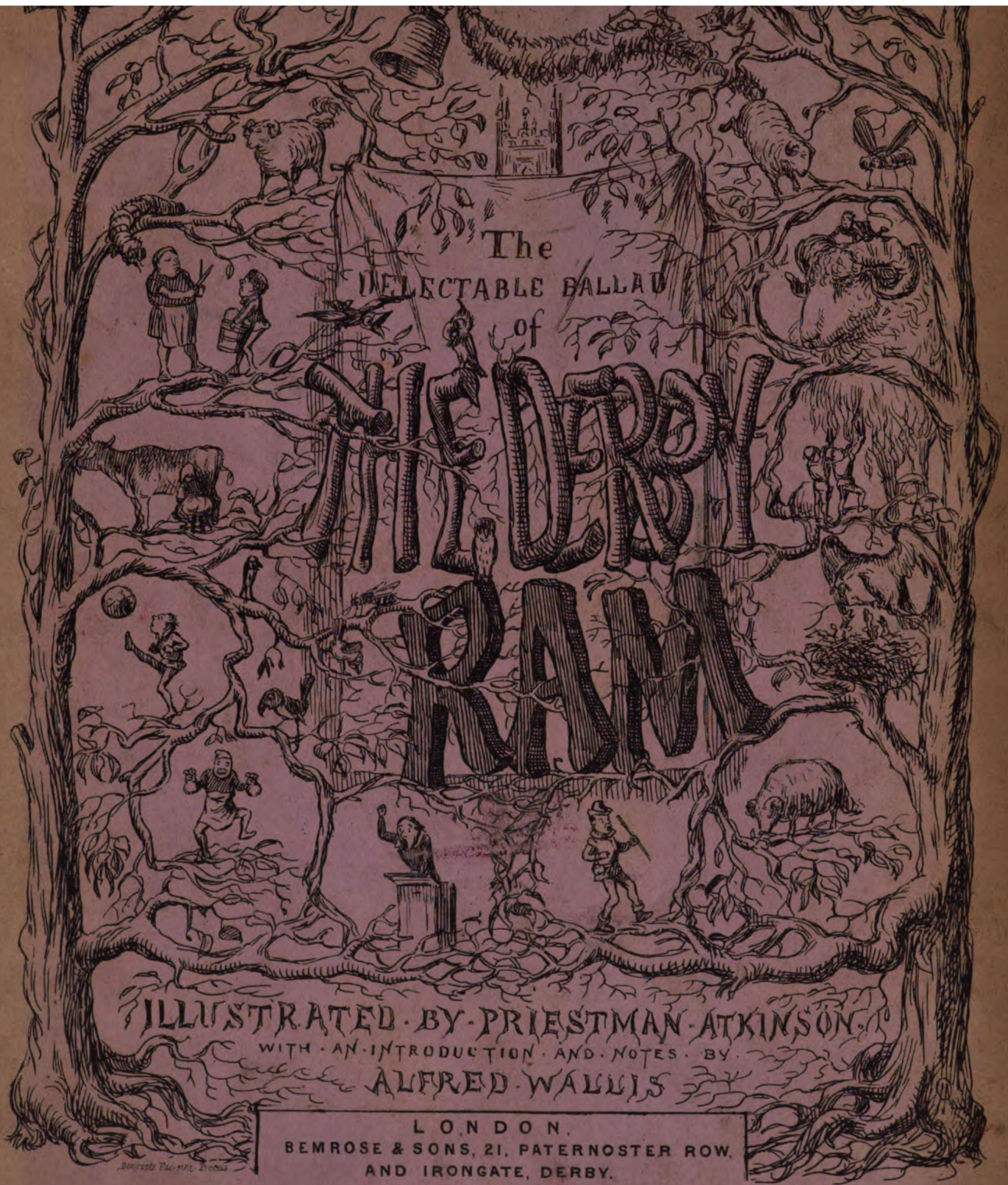
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ILLUSTRATED BY PRIESTMAN ATKINSON.
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
ALFRED WALLIS

LONDON,
BEMROSE & SONS, 21, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND IRONGATE, DERBY.

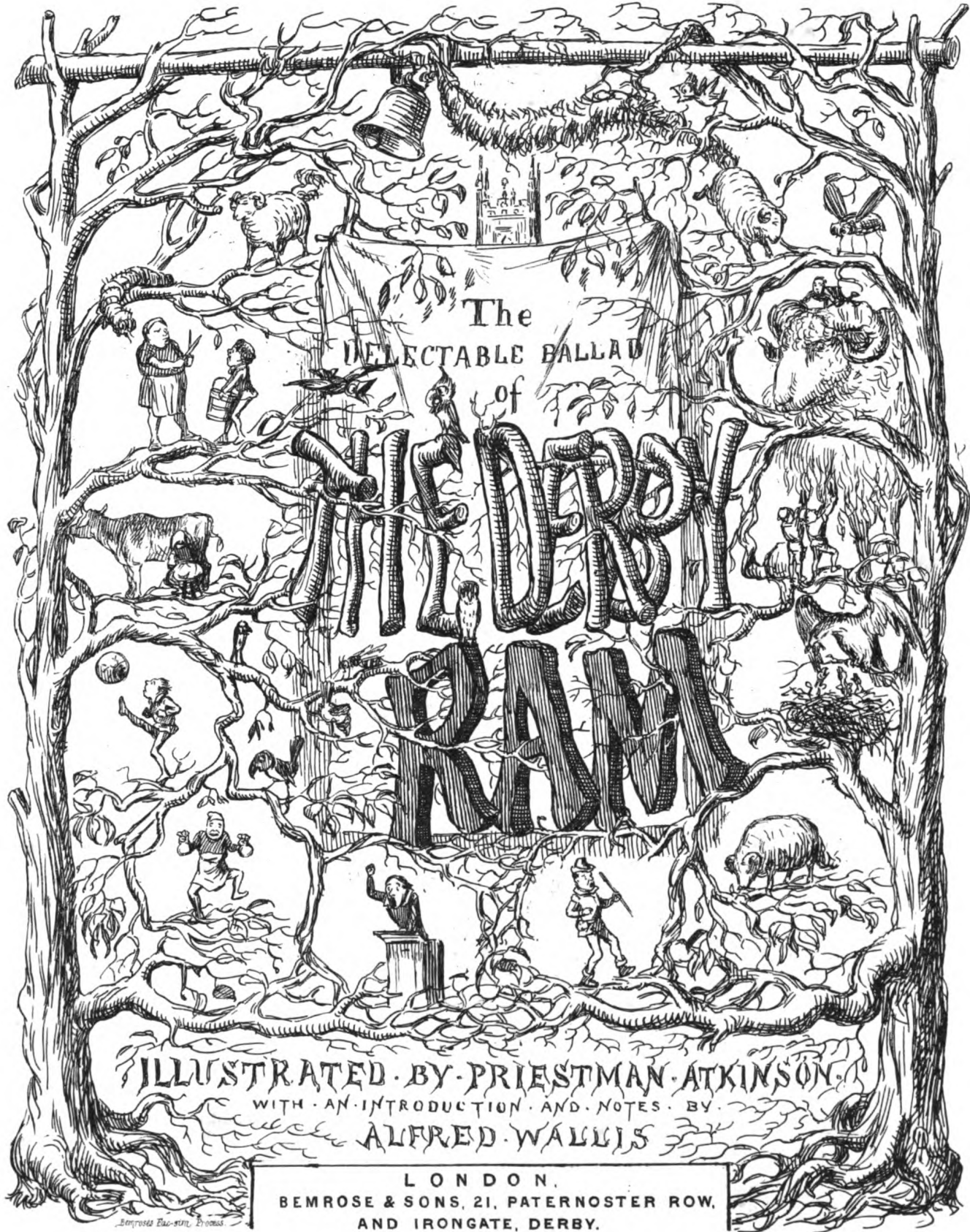
Bemrose & Sons, London



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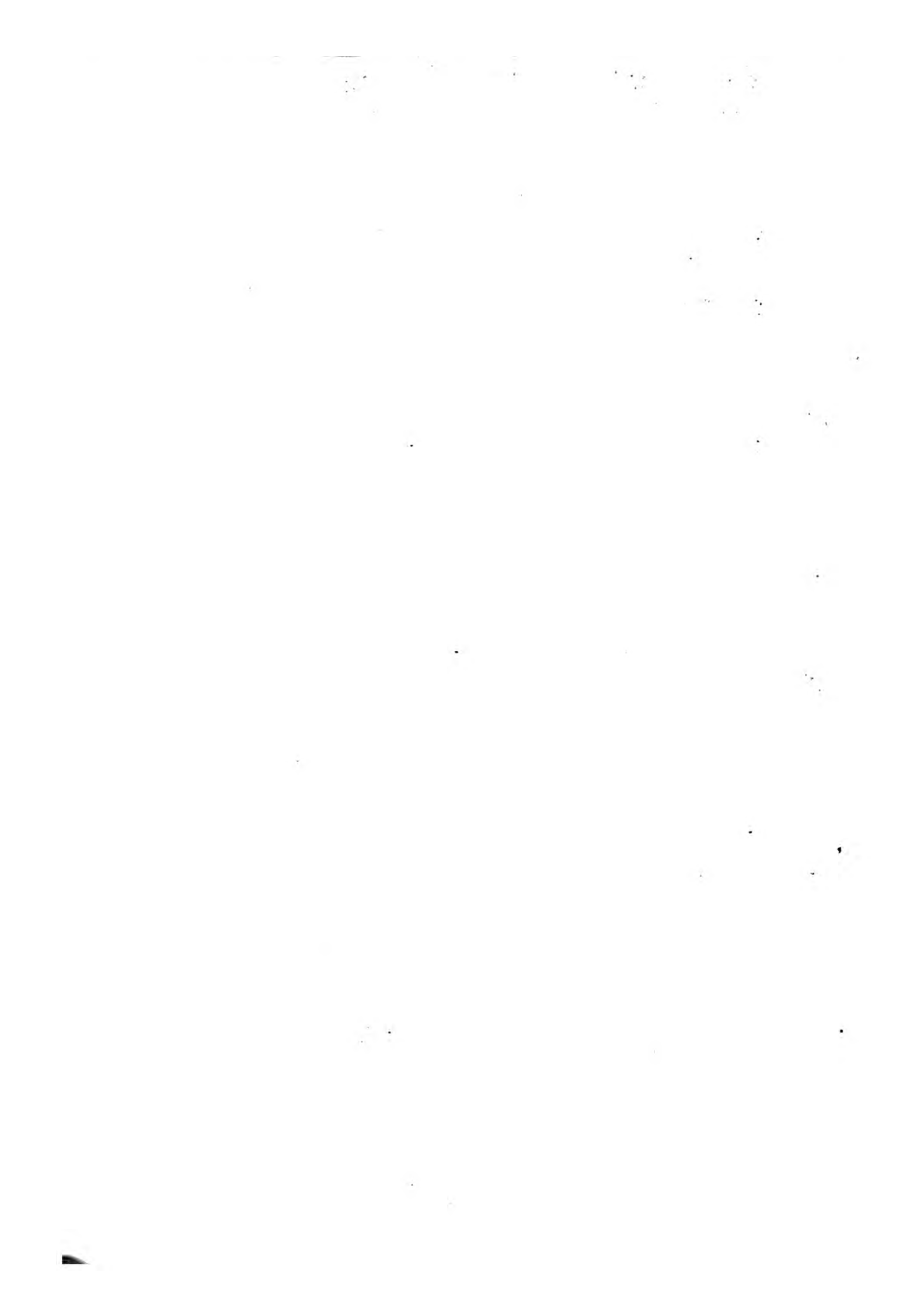
The
DELECTABLE BALLAD
of

HILVERBY RAM

ILLUSTRATED BY PRIESTMAN ATKINSON.
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Engraved by W. G. Thomas



THE
BALLAD-HISTORY
OF
"THE WONDERFUL DERBY RAM,"

DETAILED FROM ITS STUPENDOUS ORIGIN

TO ITS TRAGICAL TERMINATION;

IN A SERIES OF IMAGINATIVE SKETCHES,

BY PRIESTMAN ATKINSON;

AND

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY ALFRED WALLIS,

MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, ETC.;

(ARTIST AND EDITOR OF "THE DERBY RAM," COMIC PERIODICAL.)



LONDON:
BEMROSE AND SONS, 21, PATERNOSTER ROW; AND IRONGATE, DERBY.

280 l. 60.





The Veracious History of the Derby Ram.

INTRODUCTION.

SHAKESPEARE says, "I love a Ballad in print," echoing in that sentence a taste for the light infantry of poetical literature, which is no less conspicuous now-a-days in merrie England, than it was in the days of Good Queen Bess. There is, indeed, something about the genuine ballad which is, not exactly the divine essence of poesie, but so nearly allied to it as to partake of its immortal nature; just as fairies and gnomes, though very much unlike in personal appearance (if our story-books may be trusted) had the quality of never-fading existence in common with each other—the ugliest earth-demon being as independent of the "thousand natural shocks, that flesh is heir to," as the lightest and prettiest fairy that ever hovered in Titania's train as a maid of honour.

Beautiful as many of the old ballads are, there are, also, not a few which have but scanty claim to the deathless glory of immortality; but which, owing to local association, adaptability to passing events, or wild extravagance, have obtained a firm footing at the base of Helicon, from whence it would now be difficult, or impossible, to dislodge them; that is, should such an attempt be made by modern purists. Popularity is, after all, an essential element of success, whether the candidate for favourable public opinion be a prime minister or a "metre ballad monger;" and, if the votes of the many-headed were to be taken on a question of taste, Tennyson himself might be compelled to lower his crest before the

unknown authors of the choice productions of the Catnach press; which latter gems of verse will probably continue to delight succeeding generations of unwashed urchins, when the "Idyls of the King" are consigned to that literary limbo which has engulfed the "Faërie Queen." If this opinion be considered heretical, let the reader remember a host of other poems which were once thought beautiful, but have long since fallen into the *sere and yellow leaf*—the sad fate of books which have out-lived their day, and exist only in the memories of students, and the dust upon the topmost shelf in the bibliomaniac's library.

The library of the poor man is limited; his stock of literature is often confined to the Bible, a few tracts, books of divinity, and "ballads in print." More than all, no small stores of unwritten songs are garnered in his memory, ready to be produced as occasion may serve, at wakes and other village festivities, for the instruction and amusement of the guests. The number of ballads which have been *orally* transmitted from generation to generation is very considerable, and the fact that the main incidents of these metrical traditions are preserved, whilst their circumstances and phraseology are altered to suit the ever-varying customs of the day, gives a clue to the difficulties which beset the path of enquirers into the origin of the songs, and primary intentions of their authors. Many of the compositions to which we have listened with delight at country wakes in the days of our youth, have, so far as we are able to judge, never been committed even to writing, much less to print; and the assistance to be obtained from internal evidence, as to date of production, &c., is reduced to very small proportions, by the progressive corrections and emendations, mentioned above.

Derbyshire has always been noted for this species of traditional balladry; the Peakrials, in particular, have a vast stock of versified stories, told in quaint and primitive terms, which serve as chronicles to the villagers. The events thus narrated would have been forgotten long since but for the preserving and enduring properties of "the ballad;" and Mr. Ll. Jewitt has done good service to the cause of archæology, by enshrining many of these ancient gems in the *Reliquary*, and, more especially, by publishing a

luxurious little volume—" *The Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire*;" (Derby: Bemrose and Sons, 1867)—which ought to grace the shelves of every Derbyshire man who has any love for the traditionary history of his county.

Amongst these odds and ends, that famous fiction, THE DERBY RAM, occupies a prominent position, and we confess to feeling a pang of disappointment when told by Mr. Jewitt that his practised skill was at fault in pursuing the subject of this mythical monster's career, from the tragical ending pointed out in the story, to a satisfactory source. The present writer regrets that he is equally at a loss; and that, to him, the origin of the story is as great a mystery now as it was when the question of the authorship and object of the ballad first occupied his mind, long ago. Those who delight in searching after hidden satirical, or political meanings in our nursery jingles, will probably hesitate before finally affixing any such intention to the *Munchausenesque* string of rhymes and unreason, which has for so many years been a household word in Derby. The verses are simply grotesque exaggerations, and belong to a class which used to be familiar to the audiences of Charles Matthews, the elder, in the character of Major Longbow; who always finished his stories (in every sense of the word) with the exclamation—

"'Pon my soul, it's true!
What 'll you lay it's a lie?"

The ballad of the *Derby Ram* is given entire in a miscellany called "*Gimcrackiana*," published by Richardson, of Derby, in 1833. It is dragged into notice in the notes to an "Epistle from John to his late partner, Mark, at Derby," which commences thus:—

"Fellow silkworm! it is with the most sincere hope,
As a throwster, I ask 'pray, how are you for soap?'
Ah, Mark! 'twas no *red-letter day* when I left
The silk warps of Derby, for Manchester weft,
And took part of the building at th' head of this page,
For the rattling rooms in the Mill called MORLEGE.

But Derby, dear Derby's *desabre* to me,
 And its 'men and its manners' no more must I see,
 From the centre, All Saints, and arouud, my bold hearty,
 To each country village and Mr. PEET'S party."

And so on, until

"Farewell to your town and its wonderful *Ram*."

The note to which interesting line, is—

"The old song of the Ram of Darby is nearly forgotten ; but as we have alluded to it in the epistle to our friend, Mark, we subjoin as perfect a copy as we can gather from the *oral* chronicle of our great-grandmother."

And, accordingly, the ingenious author set to work, and extracted the verses from the "thin paper copy" which may frequently be had from among the fluttering miscellanies exposed upon an old clothes-horse at the corners of out-of-the-way places by vendors of street songs, and which differs in some trifling degree from Mr. Jewitt's model.

It is not at all improbable that the story, like many another exaggeration, may have been founded upon fact ; and that a local genius, at present unknown, desirous of commemorating the gigantic proportions of some ram, (bred, perchance, at Calke, or Longford, by a Harpur, or a Coke), gave to posterity this marvellous composition. The Ram has, undoubtedly, been looked upon, by courtesy, if not as the patron saint, certainly as the principal supporter of the Derby arms for a lengthened period ; Mr. Jewitt says for more than a hundred years : and papers in our own possession confirm the statement—a letter dated "Nun's Field, Derby, 10th June, 1739," written to his son by the Rev. Henry Cantrell (the first Vicar of St. Alkmund's), finishing in these words:—"And thus I conclude this long story ; almost as long a tale as that of the Derby Ram."

The fine ram adopted as a cognisance some years since by the officers of the First Derby Militia, will be remembered by most of our readers, on account of the stately manner in which he stepped at the head of the regiment, and the evident pride of place which characterised this much-

petted animal. We believe he became troublesome at last, if not dangerous, and that his end was mutton.

The following version of the ballad is that given by Mr. Jewitt in his *Ballads of Derbyshire*, to which are added such notes, suggestive, serious, historical, and comical, as the subject has inspired, including a series of *variorum* readings from other versions, and a comprehensive sketch of the game of football, formerly played at Derby.

If our readers find these illustrative remarks sometimes more absurd than instructive, they will also have no difficulty whatever in blowing away the "chaff" from the grains of information which they have a right to expect; and should any kind friend be able to assist in clearing up any of the knotty points raised, and will communicate with us, the favour shall be carefully acknowledged.

For the illustrations it is sufficient to say that they are from the pencil of the talented artist by whose assistance *The Derby Ram* has become the recognised vehicle in its native town for mirth without malice, and satire without sarcasm. The verses beneath them have been selected from the various ballads with a view to general uniformity.







THE BALLAD-HISTORY

OF

“THE WONDERFUL DERBY RAM.”







THE WONDERFUL DERBY RAM.

[The following version is from "*The Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire*" (Bemrose, 1867), p. 115. Other readings and illustrative anecdotes will be found in the Notes. Ed.]

I.

AS I was going to Darby,
All on a market day,
I met the finest Ram, Sir,
That ever was fed on hay.
Daddle-i-day, daddle-i-day,
Fal-de-ral, fal-de-ral, daddle-i-day.

II.

This Ram was fat behind, Sir,
This Ram was fat before,
This Ram was ten yards high, Sir,
Indeed he was no more.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

III.

The wool upon his back, Sir,
Reach'd up into the sky,
The eagles made their nests there,
For I heard the young ones cry.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

IV.

The wool upon his belly,
It dragg'd upon the ground,
It was sold in Darby town, Sir,
For forty thousand pound.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

V.

The space between his horns, Sir,
Was as far as a man could reach,
And there they built a pulpit,
For the parson there to preach.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

VI.

The teeth that were in his mouth, Sir,
Were like a regiment of men ;
And the tongue that hung between them, Sir,
Would have dined 'em twice and again.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

VII.

This Ram jump'd o'er a wall, Sir,
His tail caught on a briar,
It reached from Darby town, Sir,
All into Leicestershire.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

VIII.

And of this tail so long, Sir,
'Twas ten miles and an ell,
They made a goodly rope, Sir,
To toll the market-bell.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

IX.

This Ram had four legs to walk on, Sir,
This Ram had four legs to stand,
And every leg he had, Sir,
Stood on an acre of land.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

X.

The butcher that kill'd this Ram, Sir,
Was drowned in the blood,
And the boy that held the pail, Sir,
Was carried away in the flood.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

XI.

All the maids in Derby, Sir,
Came begging for his horns,
To take them to the coopers,
To make them milking gawns.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

XII.

The little boys of Darby, Sir,
They came to beg his eyes,
To kick about the streets, Sir,
For they were of football size.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

XIII.

The tanner that tann'd its hide, Sir,
Would never be poor any more,
For when he had tanned and retched it,
It covered all Sinfyn moor.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

XIV.

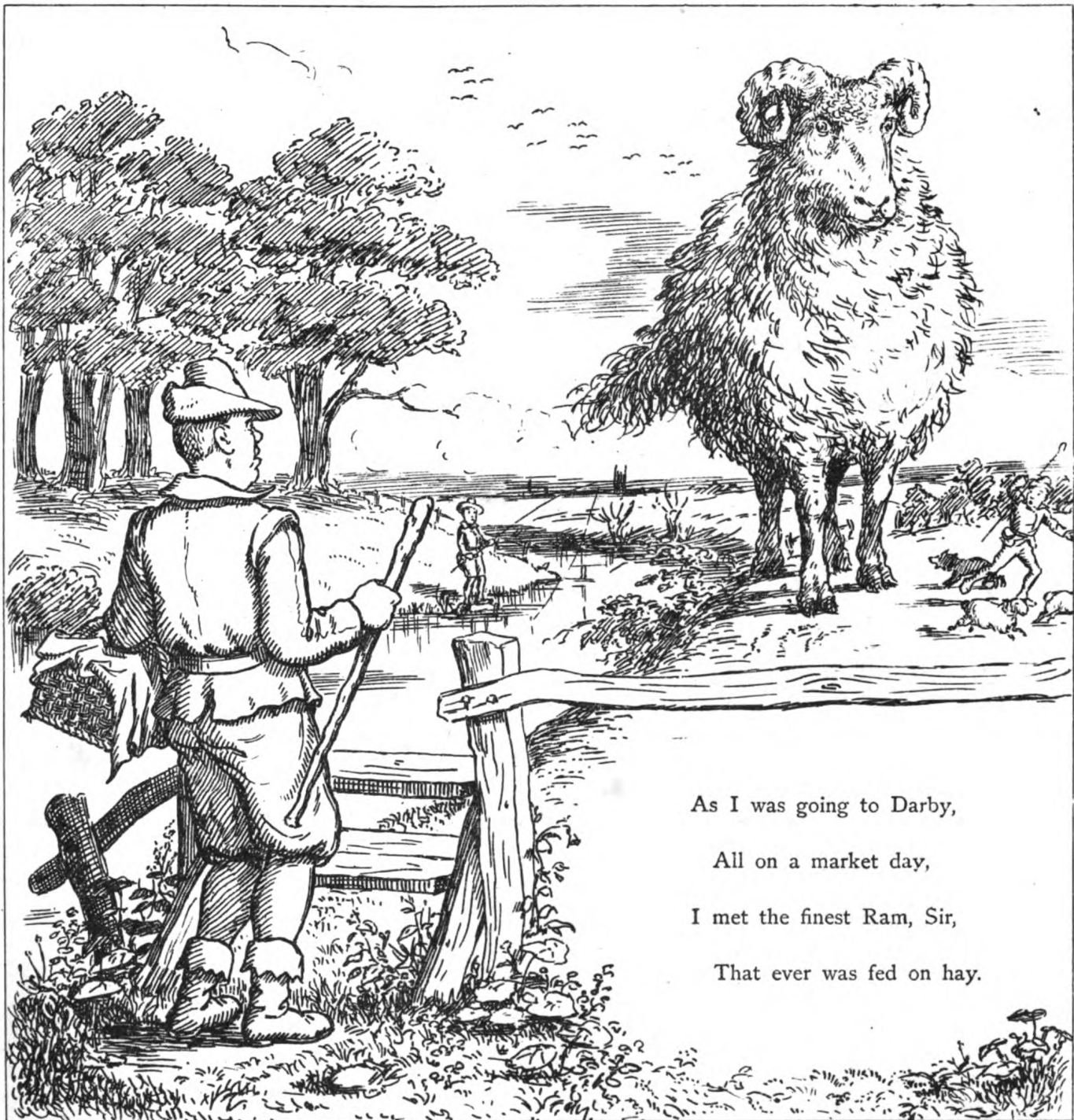
The jaws that were in his head, Sir,
They were so fine and thin,
They were sold to a Methodist parson,
For a pulpit to preach in.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

XV.

Indeed, Sir, this is true, Sir,
I never was taught to lie,
And had you been to Darby, Sir,
You'd have seen it as well as I.
Daddle-i-day, &c.

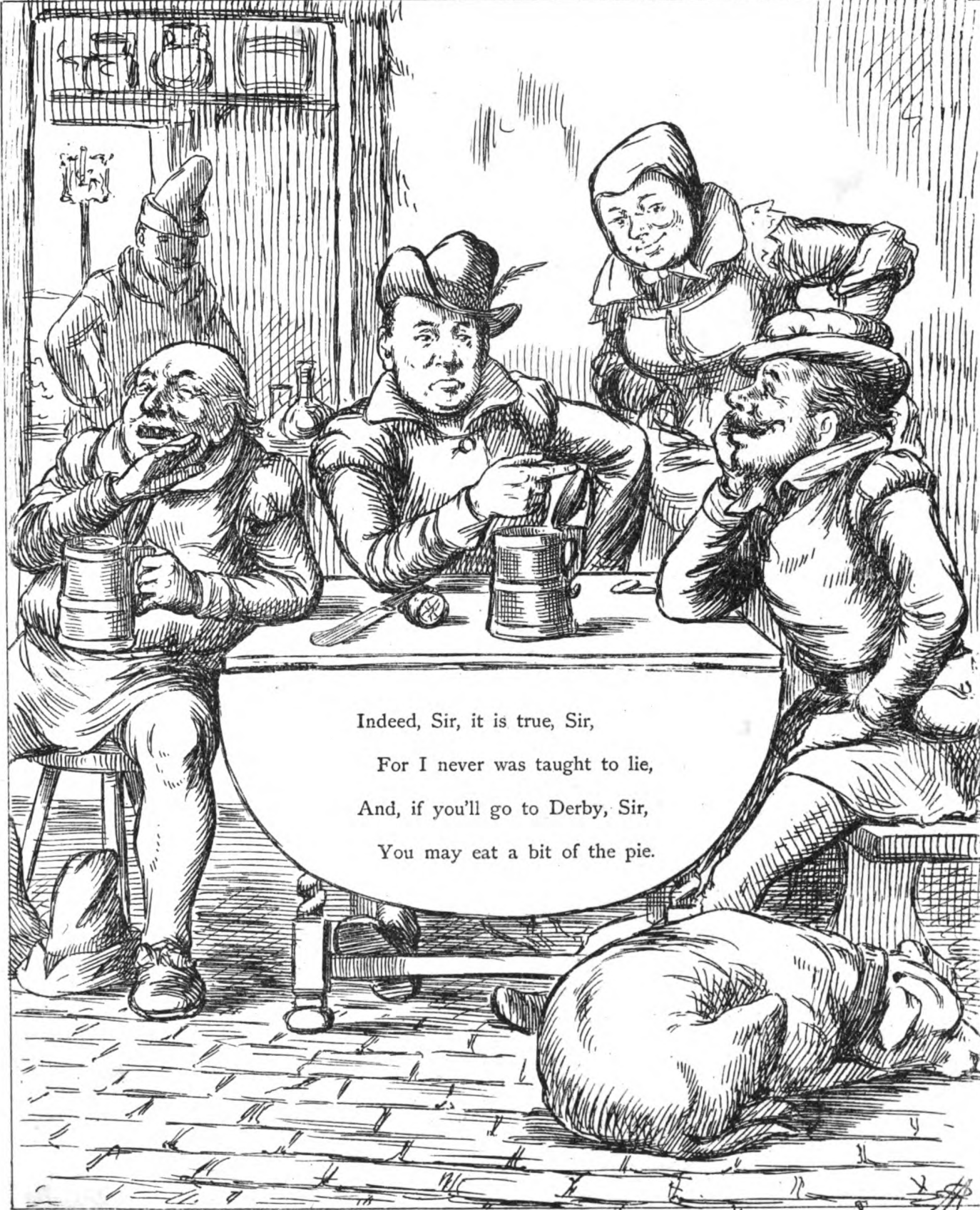




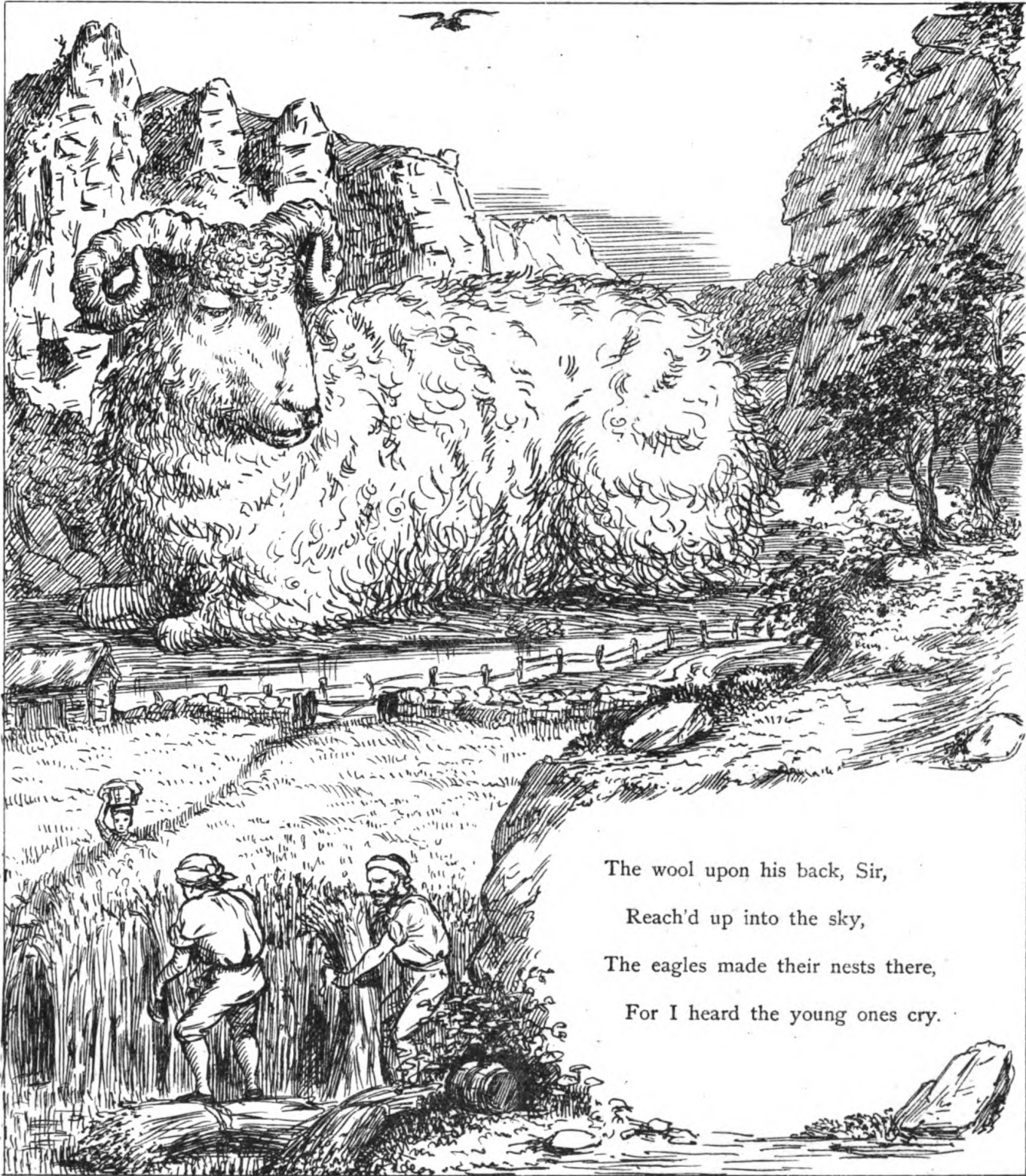


As I was going to Darby,
All on a market day,
I met the finest Ram, Sir,
That ever was fed on hay.

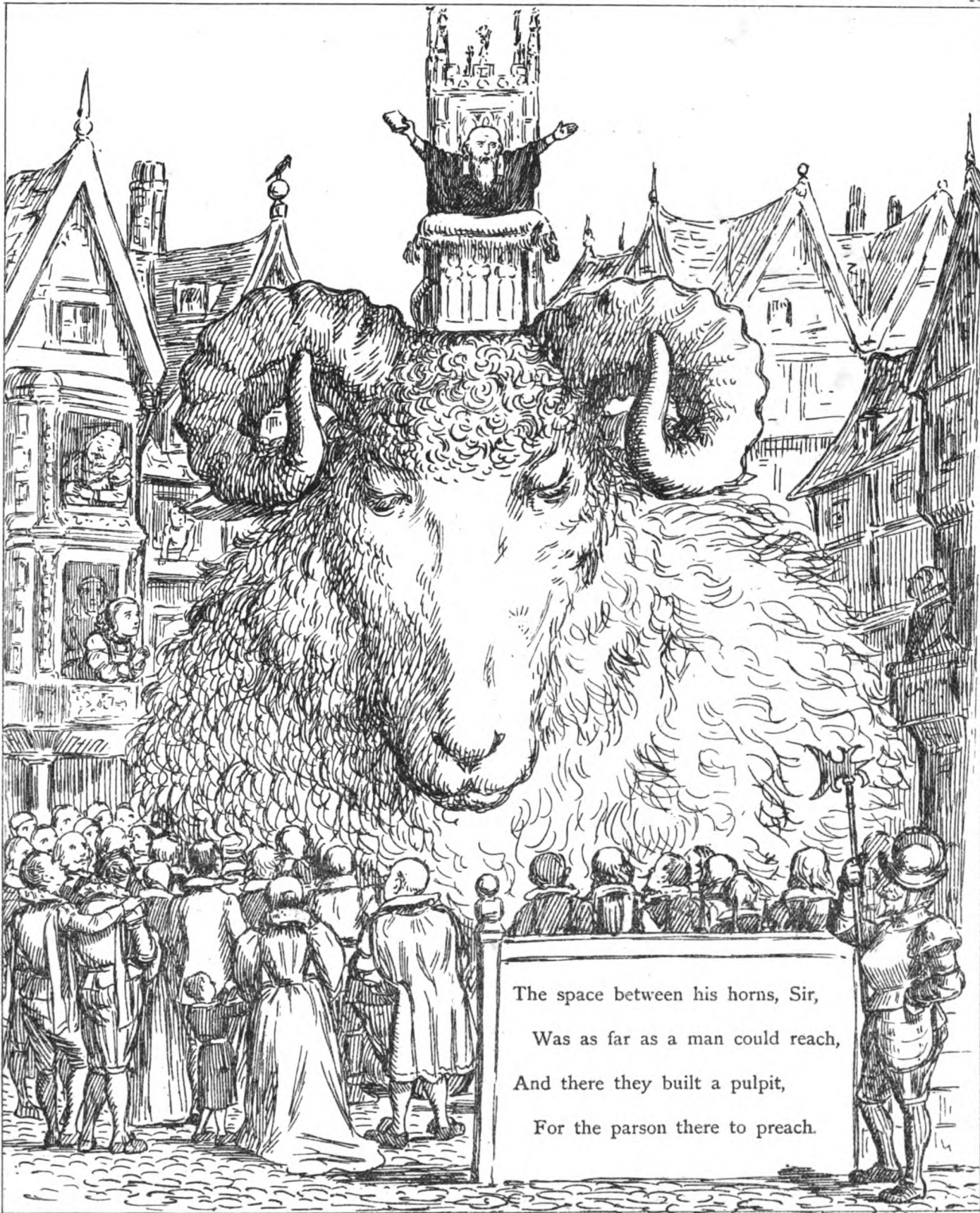




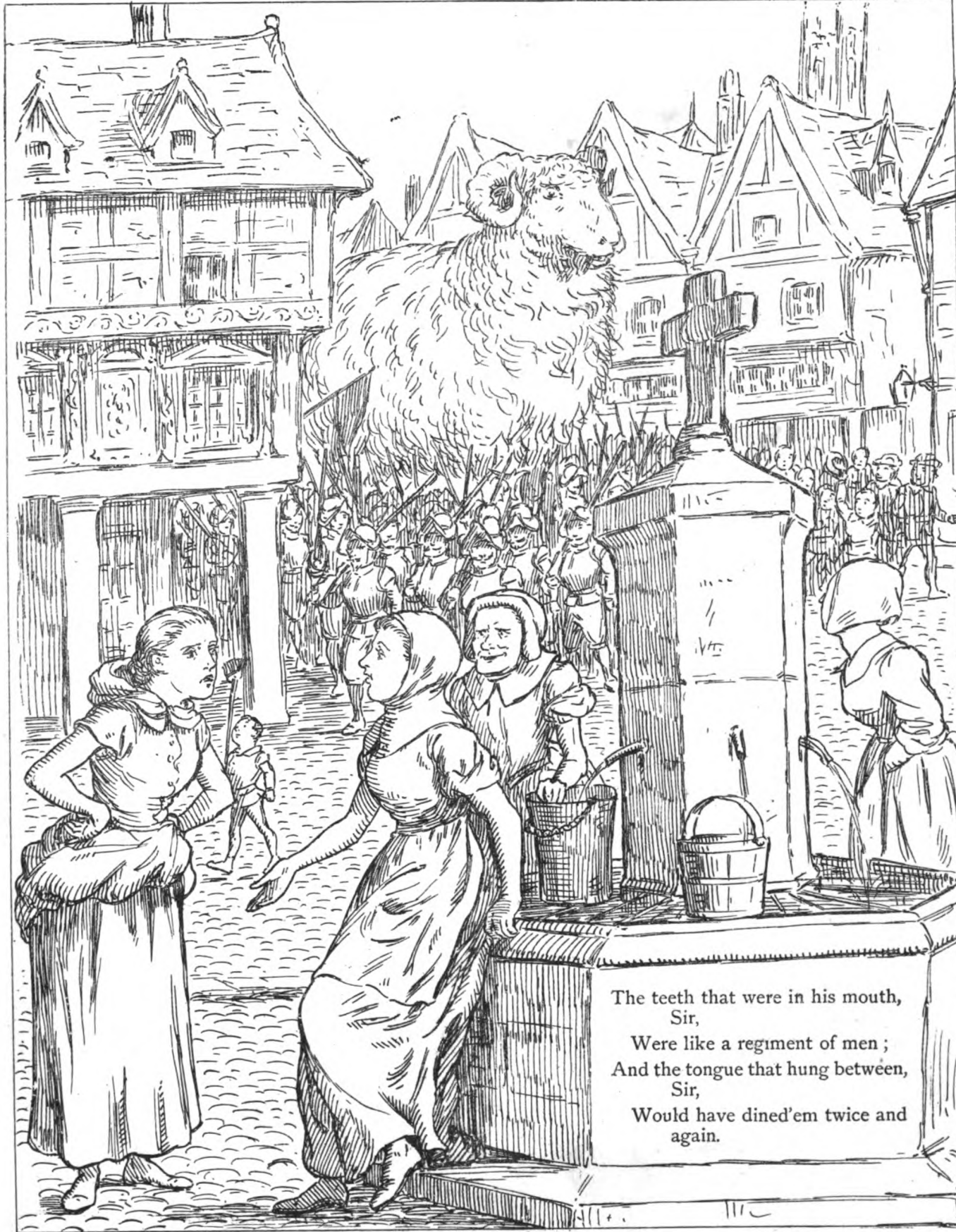
Indeed, Sir, it is true, Sir,
For I never was taught to lie,
And, if you'll go to Derby, Sir,
You may eat a bit of the pie.



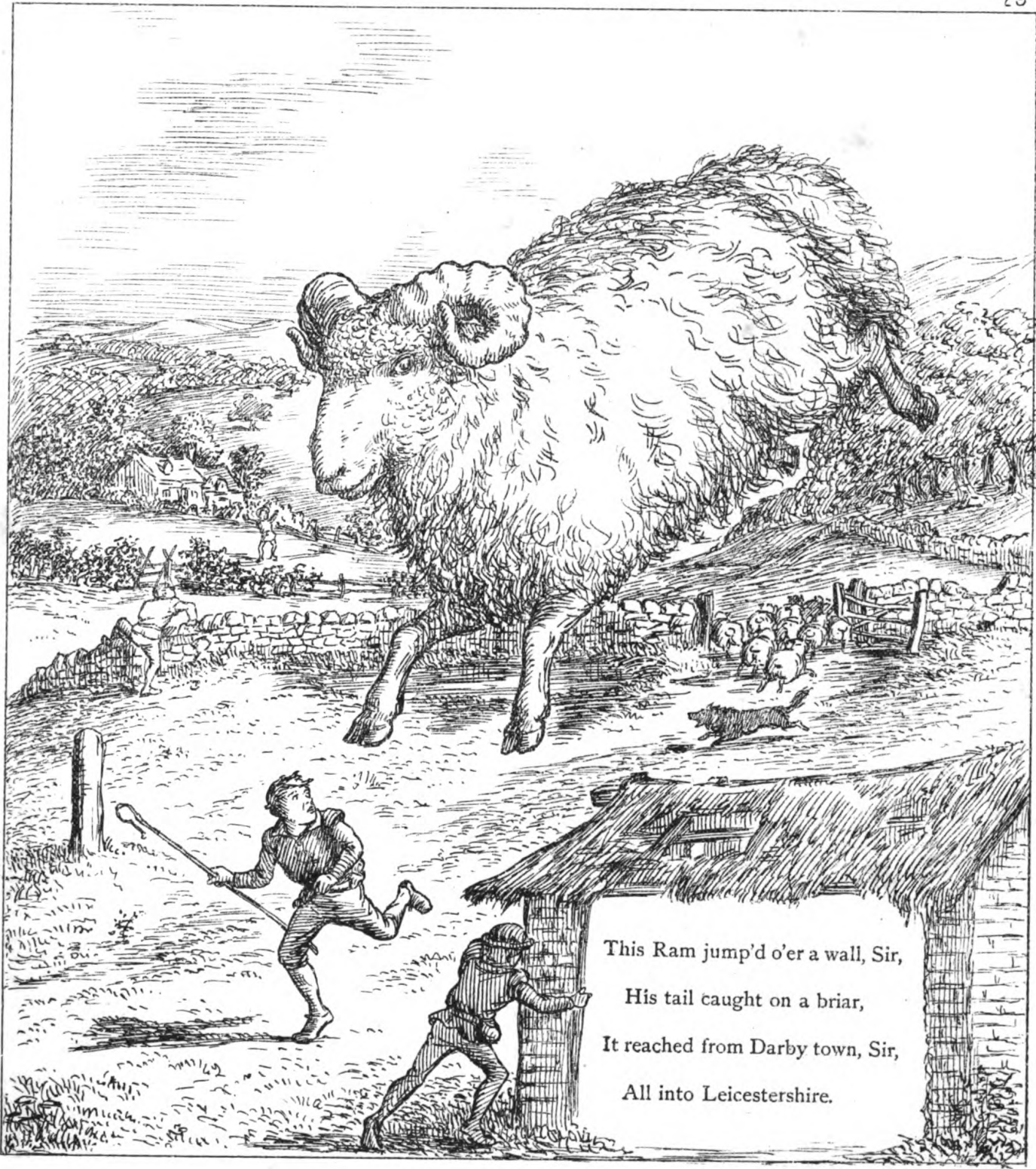
The wool upon his back, Sir,
Reach'd up into the sky,
The eagles made their nests there,
For I heard the young ones cry.



The space between his horns, Sir,
Was as far as a man could reach,
And there they built a pulpit,
For the parson there to preach.

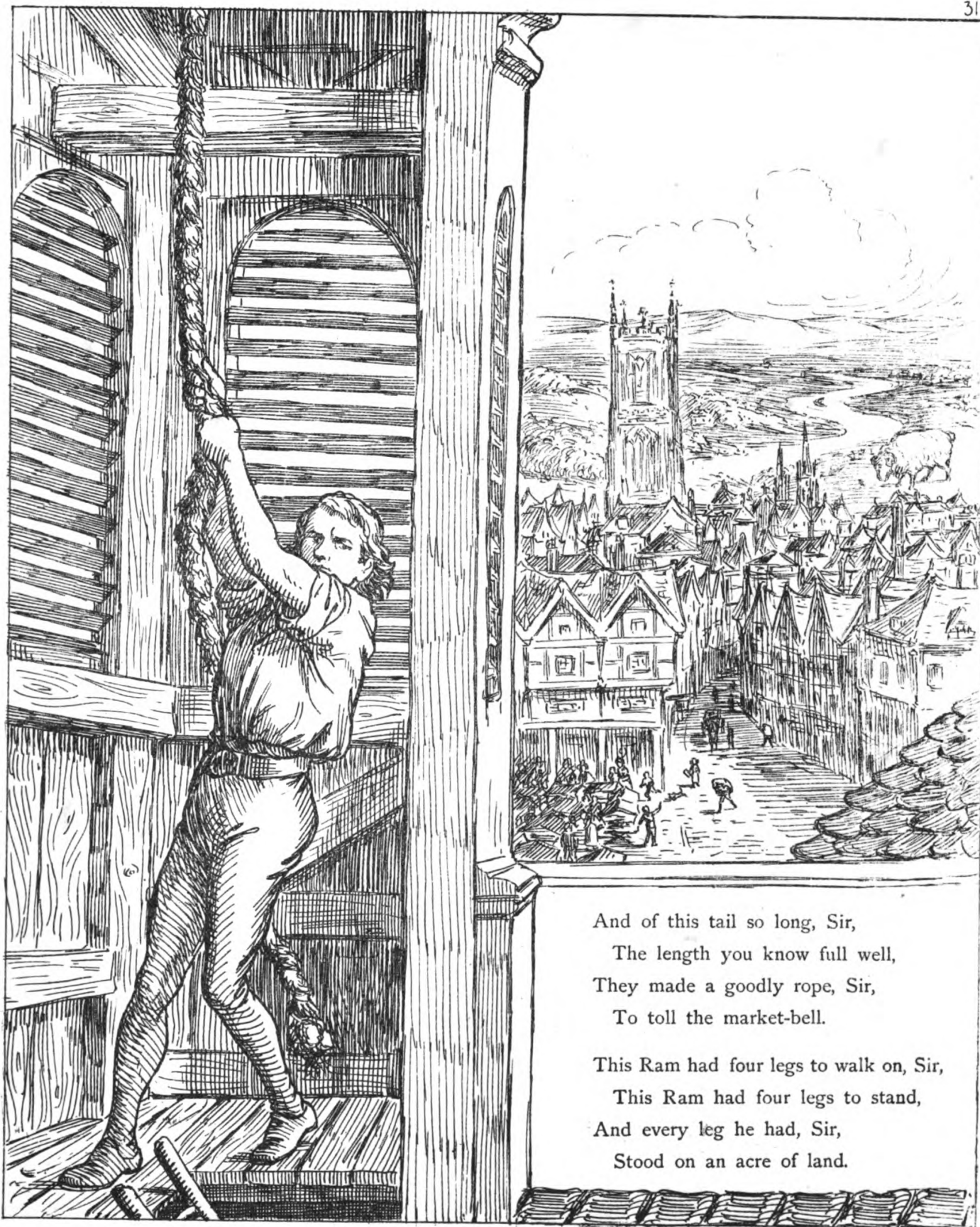


The teeth that were in his mouth,
Sir,
Were like a regiment of men ;
And the tongue that hung between,
Sir,
Would have dined'em twice and
again.



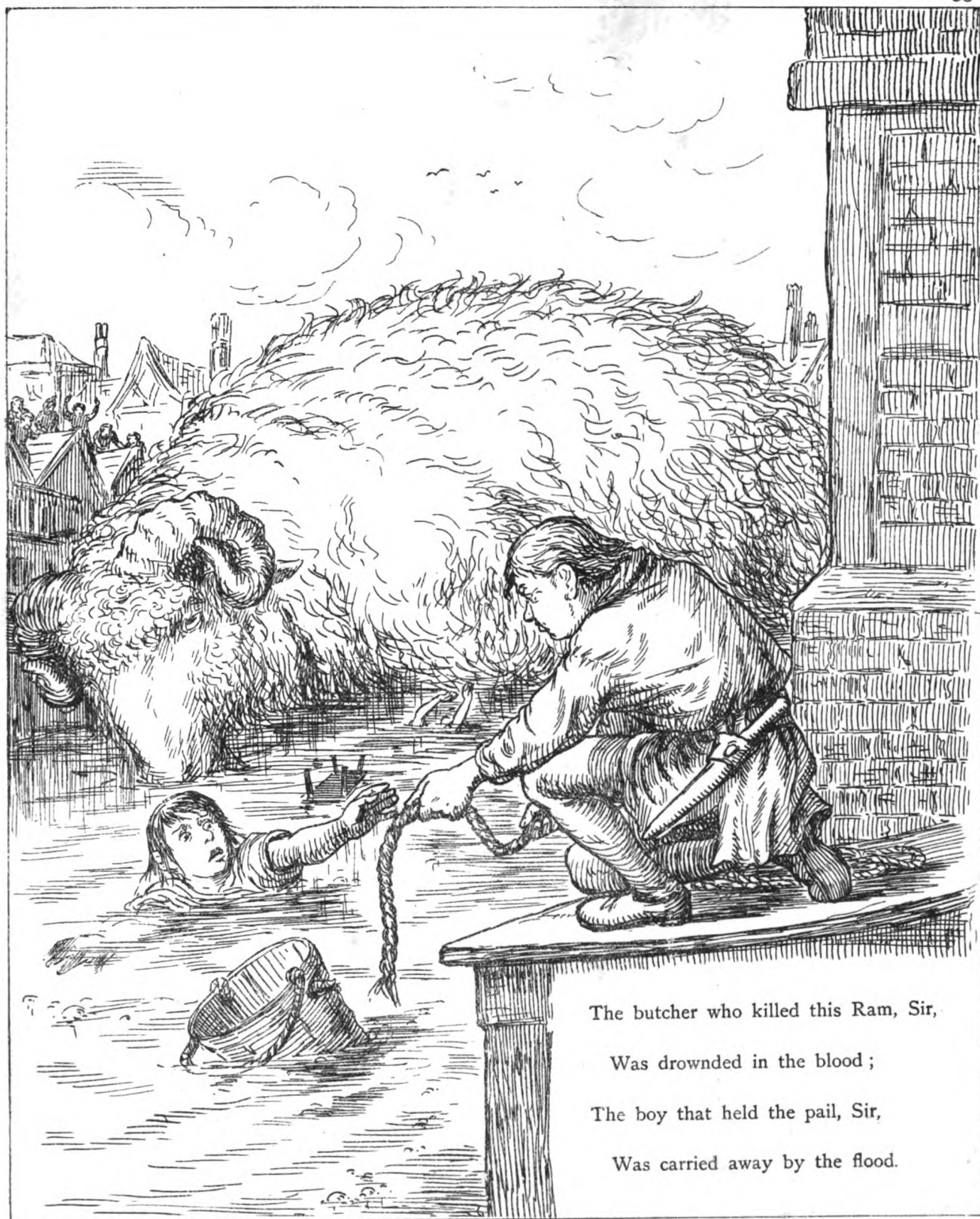
This Ram jump'd o'er a wall, Sir,
His tail caught on a briar,
It reached from Darby town, Sir,
All into Leicestershire.



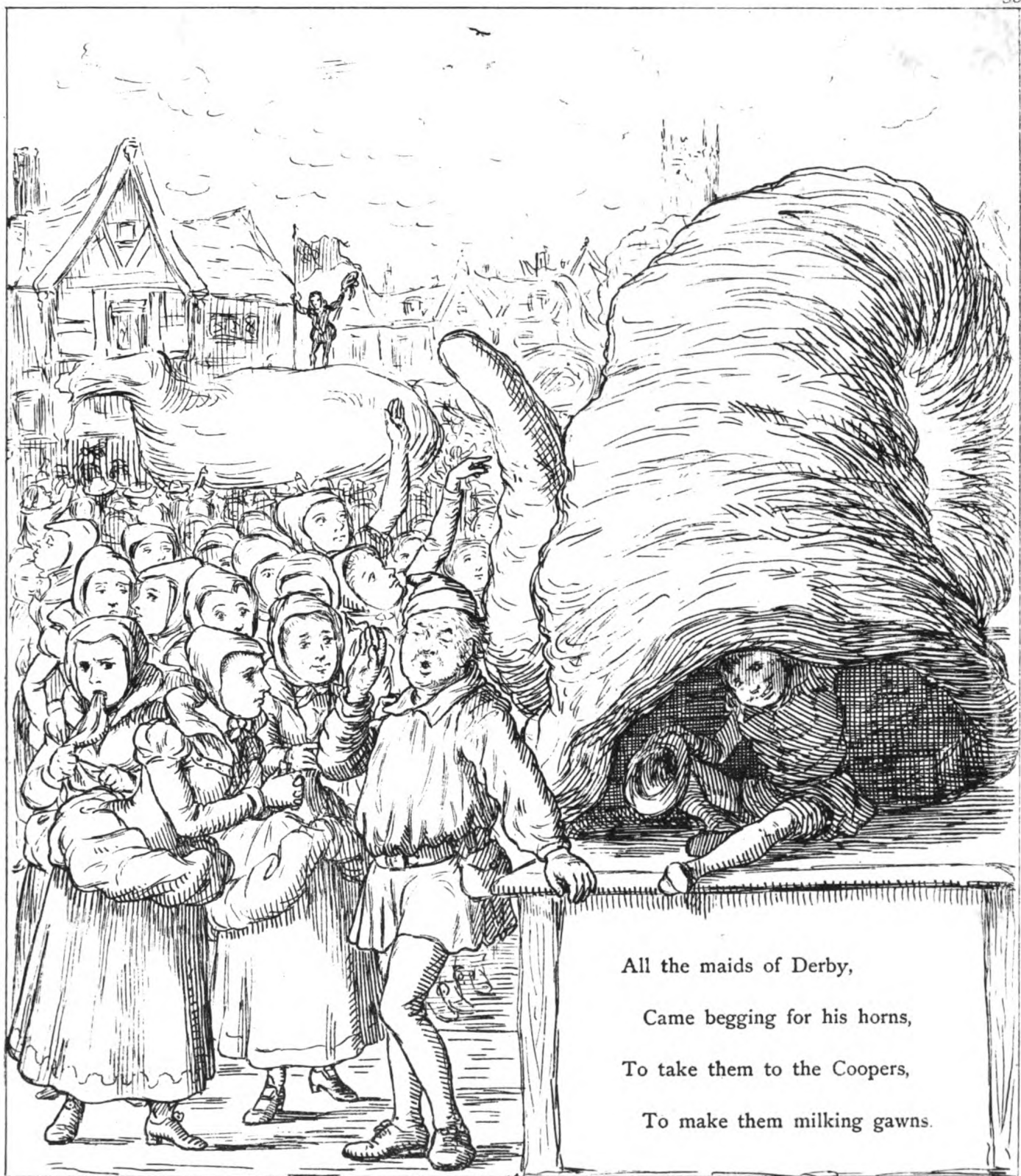


And of this tail so long, Sir,
The length you know full well,
They made a goodly rope, Sir,
To toll the market-bell.

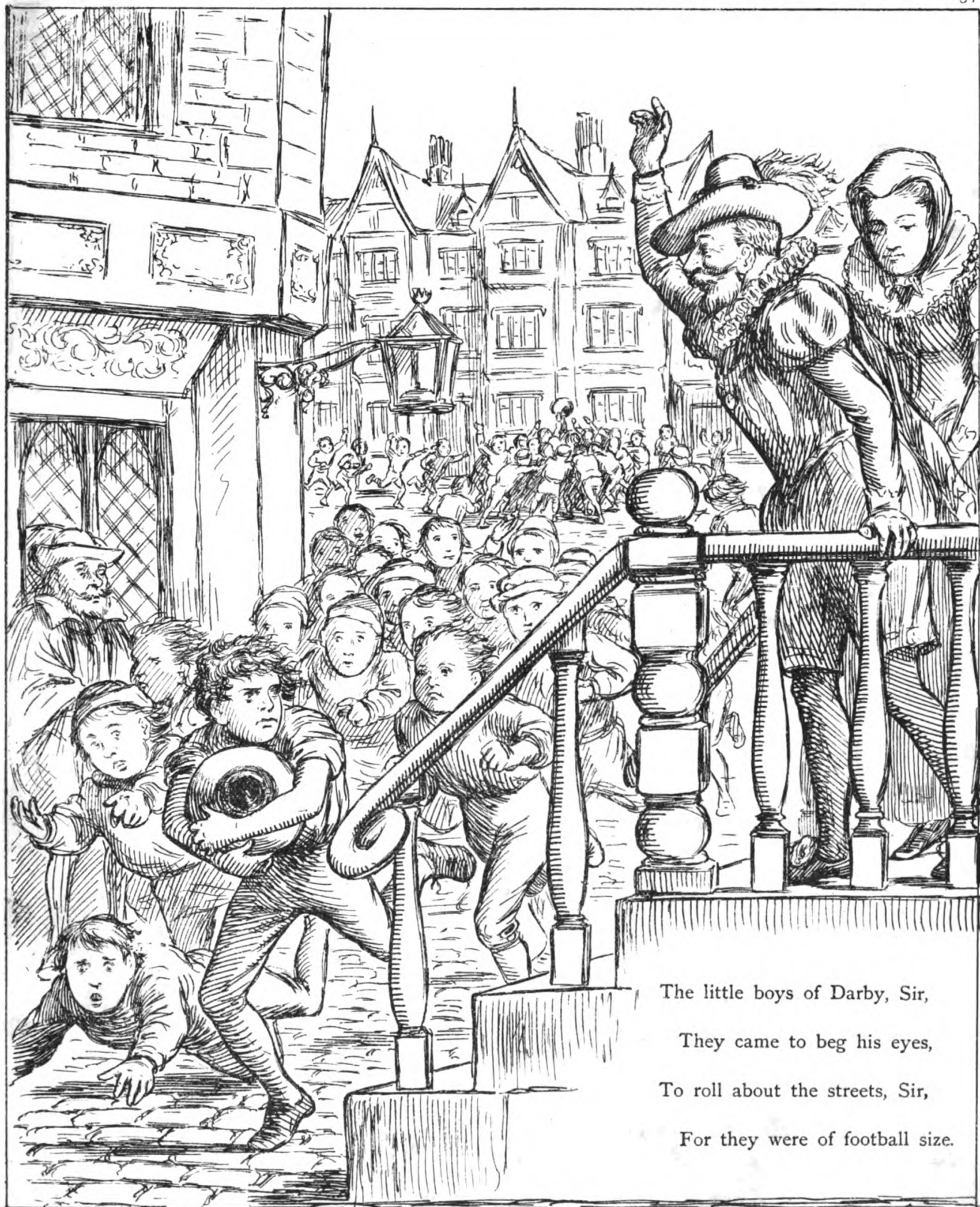
This Ram had four legs to walk on, Sir,
This Ram had four legs to stand,
And every leg he had, Sir,
Stood on an acre of land.



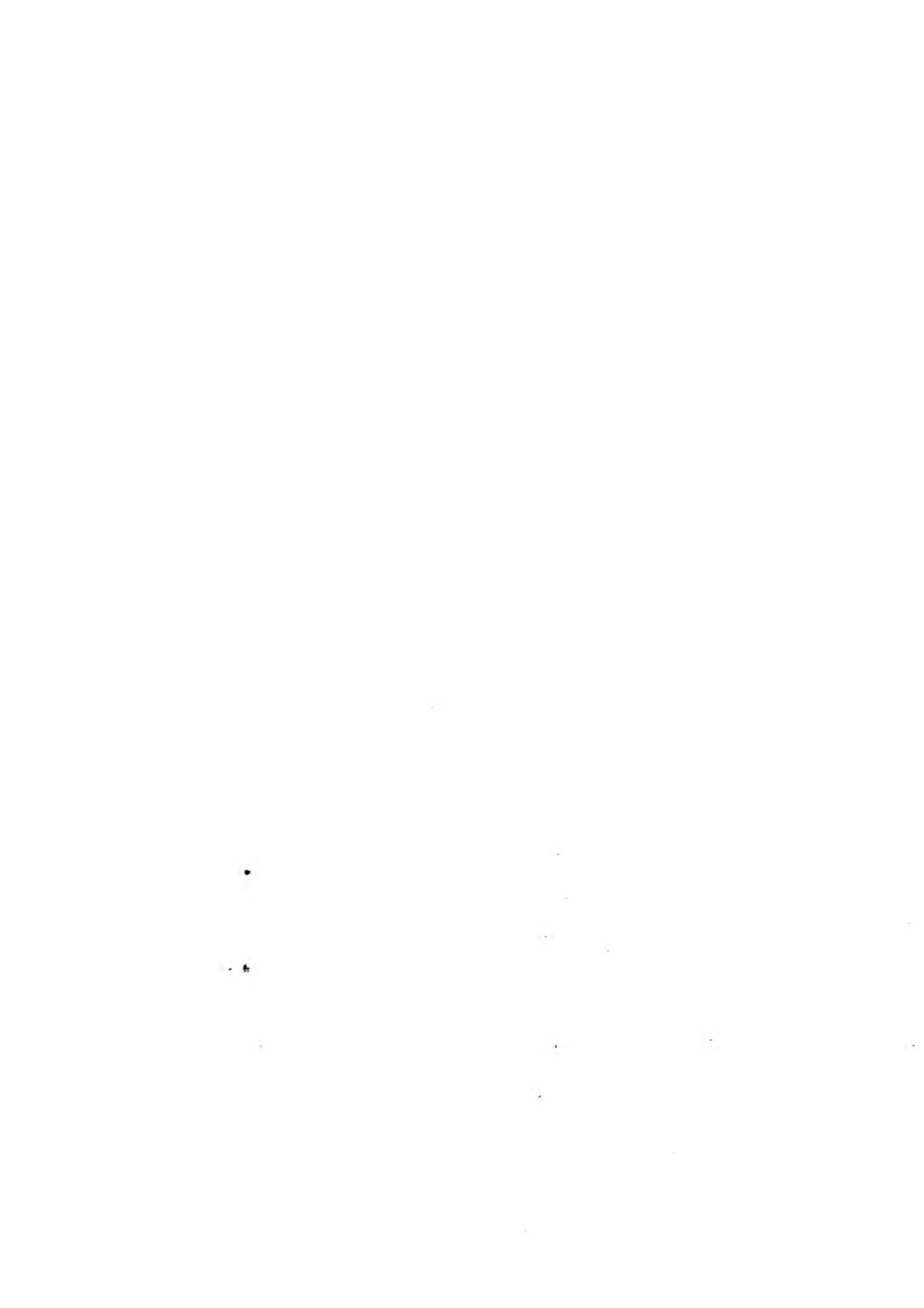
The butcher who killed this Ram, Sir,
Was drowned in the blood ;
The boy that held the pail, Sir,
Was carried away by the flood.

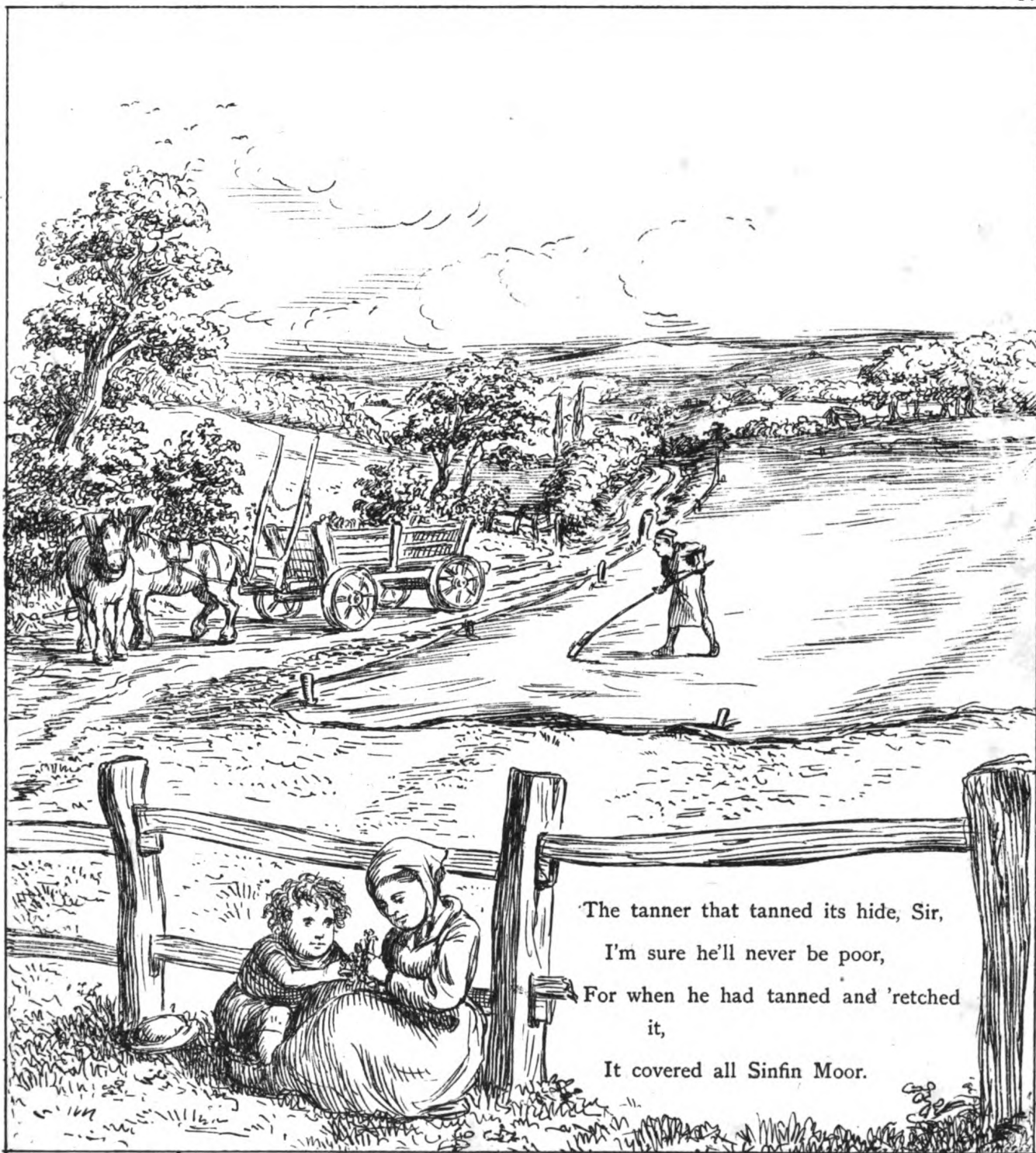


All the maids of Derby,
Came begging for his horns,
To take them to the Coopers,
To make them milking gawns.

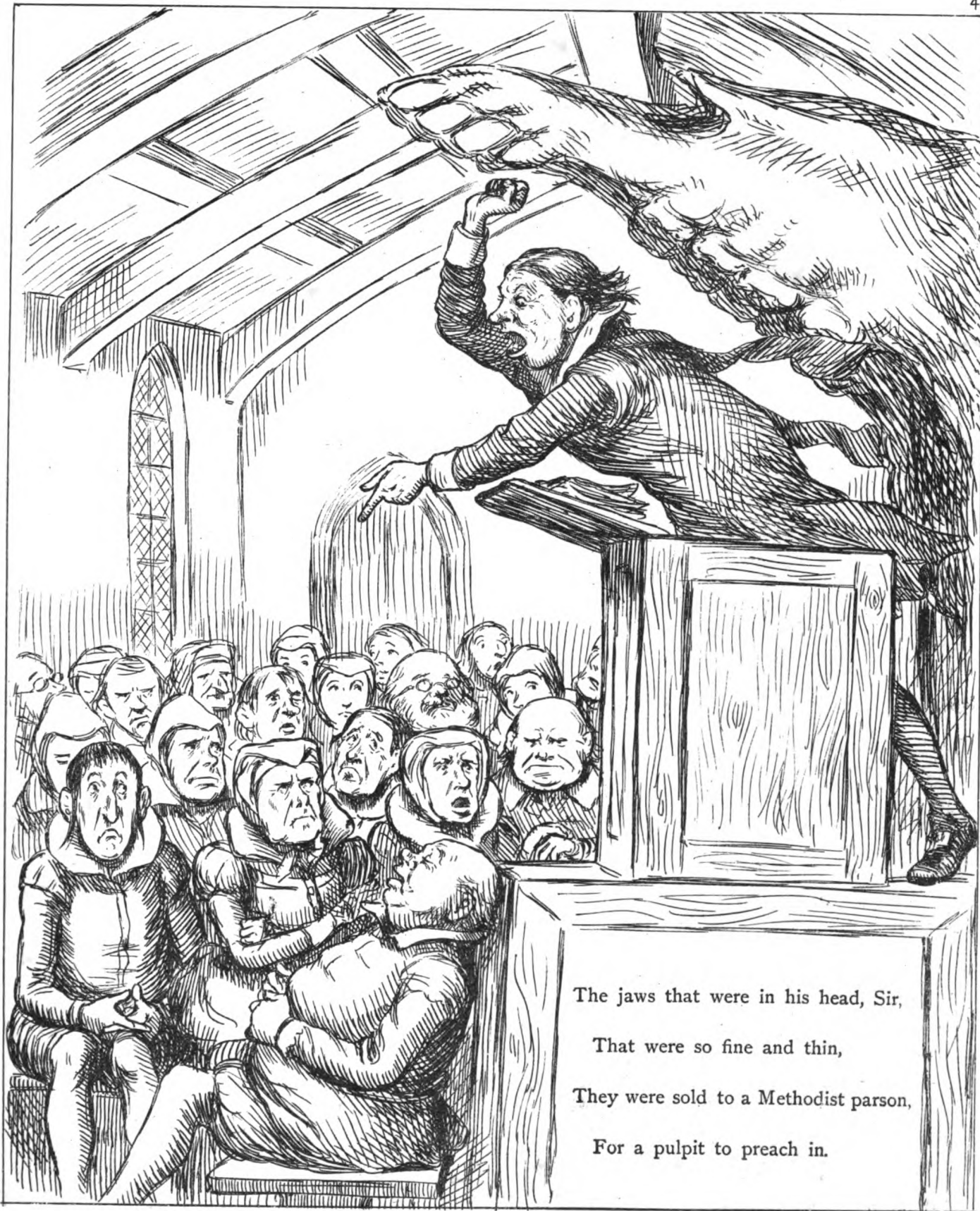


The little boys of Darby, Sir,
They came to beg his eyes,
To roll about the streets, Sir,
For they were of football size.





'The tanner that tanned its hide, Sir,
I'm sure he'll never be poor,
For when he had tanned and 'retched
it,
It covered all Sinfin Moor.



The jaws that were in his head, Sir,
That were so fine and thin,
They were sold to a Methodist parson,
For a pulpit to preach in.





NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND ELUCIDATORY.

[VERSE 1.] Blome, in his *Britannia*, (stolen from Camden and Speed) says, "Its Market is on Frydaies, which is *very great* for cattle, corn, and all provisions." The Ram, of immortal memory, must have been the *very greatest* of all cattle, and the conclusion of the verse proves that good sound *hay* is much more valuable, for feeding purposes, than all the trash which is vended in the shape of "Cattle Food" in our day. The narrator, who was probably on marketing business, seems to have arrived late; the Ram has been sold, and appears to be leaving Derby as the writer enters the town.

[VERSE 2.] This verse is omitted in the penny ballad, and in "Gimcrackiana;" it is an additional proof of the value of natural food, and of the exuberant imagination of the writer, who, however, cautiously guards against the imputation of falsehood. Another, oral, version substitutes for the two concluding lines of this stanza—

"And between this Ram's horns, Sir,
You *might* turn a coach and four."

Of course to do this feat the horns had to be removed from their original place of growth and put in some convenient locality for the purpose. It does not appear that the performance ever took place, its bare possibility only being hinted at above.

[VERSE 3.] The wool on the backs of most sheep has an upward tendency, (see also Trade Reports, "Wool is looking up") and a careful examination of the structure of this verse will show that the author, by a species of digression, not uncommon with him in this story, has wandered off into an uncalled-for

remark upon the habit of eagles, which is to build in the highest and most inaccessible places.

“The eagles made their nests *there*, Sir.”

(i.e. “the sky,” not the wool). The Gimcrack version has:—

“The eagles built their nests there.”

[VERSE 4.] Another reading of this verse is—

“The wool upon his back, Sir,
Was worth a thousand pound ;
The wool upon his belly, Sir,
It trail'd upon the ground.”

The text is correct. For “*it*,” read “*which*,” as the commencing word of line 3, and it will be at once evident that the strict veracity of the poet cannot be called in question—ground or land, in Derby, must be worth “forty thousand pound,” if a sufficient quantity be put up for sale.

[VERSE 5.] If the writer means the vertical “space” between the Ram’s horns he is within the measure, which would be rather more than a man could reach. The careful reader will again observe that the pulpit was built within the space of a man’s reach, or about six feet square.

The Gimcrack version reads:—

“But no one in it preached.”

On comparing these two versions the reader will arrive at an interesting discovery. The text points to the evident fact that some sensational preacher—the Spurgeon of his day—wishing to assemble a large congregation by addressing them from so novel a pulpit, had chosen the space between the Ram’s horns for that purpose. The version above-quoted alludes to the construction of the pulpit, but adds that “no one in it preached.” Here was some great disappointment! Perhaps “the authorities,” who were not so sympathetic with “demonstrations” formerly as at present, objected to the innovation, and dismissed the parson to a more decent rostrum; perhaps—but we may weary ourselves with conjecture. This eccentric history, unhappily, only furnishes

us with the bare story that a pulpit was erected between this celebrated Ram's horns for the use of some parson who did not preach there; of his name or sectarian denomination we are not informed.

[VERSE 6.] The meaning of this is evident: the animal's teeth were clean and even, "like a regiment of men"—the writer does not tell us what those teeth, which were *not in his mouth*, were like. As for the concluding lines, which some persons have erroneously conjectured to display the immense size of the Ram's tongue, let any one of them try the experiment of dining upon his own, and he will find that it will serve his teeth "twice and again" to dine upon. He will also prove the truth of the old saw, "Once bit, twice shy."

[VERSE 7.] Rams of even ordinary size have been known to jump over a wall. Derbyshire has long been famous for a breed of long tailed sheep: Glover says (*Hist. Derb.* vol. i. p. 213), "It is customary with the flock-masters to cut the tails of the ewes, but to leave those of the RAMS and wethers at *full length*." The poet means to convey the idea that this immortal Ram came from the stone wall, or moorland country into South Derbyshire, to be fattened in a tract of land between Derby and Leicestershire, where *briar* hedges abound.

[VERSE 8.] The *Gimcrack* version gives the second line of this verse thus:—

"The length you know full well."

Which accords more with the cautious spirit of the writer than does the bold assertion contained in the text of Mr. Jewitt. A Derby man would probably be acquainted with the fact above quoted—that *rams'* tails were of more than average length; and although to make a bell-rope of one of them seems at first sight to be a "stretcher," yet reference to Glover will dispel all doubts. He says, (*Op. cit.* p. 213), "The long tails of the males are separately sheared, and the wool, which is called *birling* or *belting*, is sold for carpet making." It is evident from this that the Corporation, desirous then as now to encourage home manufacturers, hit upon the novel expedient of having the town bell-rope made of these "beltings." Nothing, surely, could be more suitable for a bell-rope than one made of *bell-tings*; Ray, also, has a proverb, (Ed. 1678, p. 140)—

“As the fool thinks, so the *bell tink* ;”

the origin of which may be traced to this notable source. When the rope became useless for tolling purposes, the parish constable took toll of that which formerly told the country folk when the market was open, and also invited them to be further tolled by the clerk. He converted the fragments into what on board ship are called “monkey’s tails,” and armed with one of these (a Ram’s tail in this instance) and also with “a little brief authority,” was in the habit of giving the boys “*bell-tink*” for their thoughtless misdemeanours and foolish pranks. The expression, “I’ll give you a belting,” (i.e. a thrashing with a rope’s end), is common to this day, and is an additional proof of the historical value of this legend.

[VERSE 9.] One cannot sufficiently admire the simple truthfulness of the compiler of this veracious chronicle. He wishes to show that he saw the Ram alive ; it being a well ascertained fact that a dead sheep has only two *legs*, viz., the hind ones ; his upper extremities being *shoulders*. The following anecdote will amply illustrate this remark. Some clever genius was showing off his wit at the expense of a reputed softy (or idiot), and asked him, “Billy, how many legs has a sheep ?” Billy, laconically and quaker-like, questioned his querent—“Live or dead ?” “What does that matter ?” said his tormentor. “Why,” replied Billy, “every fool knows that a live sheep has four legs ; but the cleverest butcher of you all can only get two legs of mutton out of a dead one.” At first sight the remainder of the verse seems to border on the incredible, but a little consideration will show that each leg stood upon one and the same acre of land. The Gimcrack version,

“And every time he shifted them,
He covered an acre of land.”

is susceptible of the same interpretation.

[VERSE 10.] “Drowned in blood” is a hyperbolic provincialism, equivalent in intention to the more elegant expression, “drowned in tears.” The boy who held the pail appears to have subsequently fallen a victim to one of those

disastrous floods to which Derby was periodically subject. (*Vide* Hutton, "*Hist. Derby*," 1st Ed. p. 13.) Gimcrack, following the penny version, has:—

"And *all the people* of Darby
Were carried away in the flood."

a manifest interpolation of some less scrupulous follower of the original.

[VERSE 11.] Maids were proverbially plentiful in Derby. The tower of All Saints' records the existence of young ones in Old English characters upon a fillet on the north side, and Friar Gate was once known as the "Pussery," from the number of unmarried ladies of a certain age (*vulgo*, "old cats") who resided, in single blessedness, in that exclusive and aristocratic locality. The butcher's shop must have been besieged with thrifty damsels wishing to drive an advantageous bargain by *exchanging* the horns with the cooper for milking pails. The mention of rams' horns brings to mind a capital Derby tale of a man who having a thorough Xantippe for a wife, threatened to wreak some horrible vengeance upon her "if she said another *crooked word*." "RAM'S HORNS! then, you villain! if I die for it," was the immediate and consecutive reply; and the husband probably thought that he had got sufficient small change for that occasion.

[VERSE 12.] The Derby Ram deserves rescuing from oblivion if only for the mention of football in this verse. Old Stubbes, that ascetic and uncomfortable puritan, whose scarce black-letter volume, "*The Anatomie of Abuses*," 1584, lies before us, discourseth thus concerning football:—

"As concernyng Footeball playyng, I protest unto you it maie rather bee called a freendly kynde of fight, than a plaie or recreation. A bloudie and Murtheryng practyse, than a fellowlie sporte or pastyme. For, dooeth not euery one lye in waite for his aduersarie, seekyng to ouerthrow hym, and to picke hym on hys nose, though it bee upon harde stones, in ditche or dale, in valley or hill or what place so-euer it be, he careth not so he may haue hym downe. And he that can serue the moste of this fashion, he is counted the oulie fellow, and who but he! So that by this meanes sometymes their necks are broken, sometymes their backes, sometymes their legges, sometye their armes,

sometyme one parte thruste out of ioynte, sometymes another, sometyme their Noses gush out with blood, sometyme their eyes starte out, and sometymes hurt in one place, sometymes in another. But who so euer scapeth awaie the best goeth not scot-free, but is either sore wounded or bruized so as he dieth of it or scapeth verie hardlie. And no meruaile, for they have sleights to meete one betwixt twoo and dash hym against the harte with their elbowes, to hit hym under ye shorte Ribbes with their griped Fistes and with their Knees, to catche hym upon the hyp and to picke hym upon hys necke with an hundred such Murderyng deuises. And here of cometh enuey, malice, rancour, cholour, hatred, displeasure, enmitie, and what not els? And sometymes fighting, braulyng, contencyon, quarrel-pickyng, murther, homicide, and grete effusion of blood, as experience dailie teacheth." Philopomenos Stubbs must have seen football on a very stiffly contested occasion, or, perhaps, was too jaundiced in his views to see anything but evil in any game. Be this as it may, he has given us a lively description of this favourite game as it was played in the good old days of good Queen Bess, and we think our readers will not be angry with us for extracting it in its native deformity.

Years ago, the very name of football conjured up visions of home in the mind of a Derby emigrant, and a story is told of two settlers meeting in the backwoods of America and talking of England—"And where did you come from?" said one. "From Darby," said the other, "I dunna think as thee looks loike a Darby mon," replied the first, "but oi'l troy thee. 'All Saints' for ever!" "Peter's for ever!" was the instant response. And the rival players thus meeting on neutral ground, shook hands, as townsmen, with energy, upon the strength of so certain a test. For, be it known to the rising generation, to whom the departed glories of football read almost like a Homeric legend, that "Peter's Parish" in days of yore was strong enough to furnish as many stalwart players as the other four parishes collectively, who ranged under the banner of "All Saints'"; and the rallying cries, "All Saints' for ever," or "Peter's for ever," were the sounds which distinguished friend from foe, stimulating the one, and daunting the other, according to circumstances. Great were the preparations for these notable yearly Saturnalia, and dire was the

confusion into which the town was thrown during their continuance ; but so popular amongst all classes of the community was this rough game, that those whose position in society was held to be a barrier against indulging in football-play, might be seen hovering, as it were, upon the skirts of the fray, until in some cases instinct proved too strong for reason, and the well-to-do tradesman rushed into the throng, uttering one of the familiar faction cries. In most instances of this kind the hero was destined to emerge again with the loss of most of his clothing, and the unpleasant consciousness of having "made a bit of a fool of himself." What a scene it was! That forest of hands held up in the Market-place, where, at a window of the Town Hall, stood the champion of last year, waiting for the stroke of two, to "throw up the ball!" How eager every one looked as, stripped to the shirt and trowsers, with bared arms and well-shod feet he waited to take advantage of the "first rush," and to "make play," either for "the river" or "the brook," according to his *status* as an "All Saints'" or "Peter's" man. The "Peter's" faction always strove to get the ball into the river, because their "goal" was a gate upon the Osmaston road (at the corner of what is now Grove street) leading to Wilson's Nursery Gardens ; the "All Saints'" party, on the contrary, whose "goal" was the water-wheel of Nun's Mill, near the upper end of Friar gate, tried to get the play away from the river, and either along the streets or into the Markeaton brook. The ball, which was a stoutly-sewn leather case filled with cork scraps, made a first-rate life-preserver to buoy up the champion who "took the water" with it, and the fights for the trophy which took place in the river were not always devoid of danger to those who were daring enough to attack him. Sometimes, by the aid of outsiders who attached themselves to the rival parishes as mercenaries, the play would terminate by a strong party rushing in upon the tired combatants, and bearing away the prize from the very jaws of victory. One instance of this kind is worth recording. The Peter's men, having got the ball into the river, proceeded with it for a considerable distance below their goal before it could be got out again, and as it became evident that the great struggle would be at their end, the All Saint's goal was left entirely unguarded. The usual skirmishes took place, but "Peters'" did not seem inclined to bring the ball back until they

were strong enough to goal it in triumph. Time was getting on, and at last Mr. John Wallis, a most enthusiastic All Saints' leader, (he was the founder of the Derbyshire True Blue Club) sent off to Littleover for a detachment of the labourers and ploughmen of that classic district, giving instructions to harass the enemy and delay the final crisis. Gradually the All Saints' men began to disappear from the goal, and a number of post-chaises drew up in the vicinity, doubtless containing spectators favourable to the champions of St. Peter. At last the partizans of the latter interest thought, from the decreasing number of their rivals, that the time for action had arrived; and, bringing the ball in a species of ostentatious triumph before the carriages, were about to proceed up the steep slope to their goal, when, like another wooden horse of Troy, chaise after chaise disgorged its complement of fresh combatants, who seized the trophy from the hands of its tired holders, and rapidly bore it away to the deserted Nun's Mill, whither "Peter's" men were too exhausted to follow them. Numberless are the stories which are told of stratagems for gaining the day, when the strength of either party has been equally balanced. The ball has been smuggled, through a host of enemies surrounding a goal, by being emptied of its contents; and the water-wheel of All Saints' goal was once set going by Peter's men, so as to stop the process of "goaling" most effectually for a time; it is also recorded that once after a protracted struggle the ball was suddenly missed, and did not reappear until an unguarded moment at All Saints' goal, whither it had been secretly conveyed under the nether garments of a feminine enthusiast in football. If the "play" went through the town, all the shops were speedily closed, before the arrival of the combatants; but this seldom occurred, unless the All Saints' men were strong enough to keep the ball out of the river by main force, or the other side chose to attempt a direct course to their "goal," which, of course, was to brave the enemy in his own camp.

Whichever side won the victory, the champion who had been successful in "goaling the ball" was carried round the town on the shoulders of his fellows, and contributions were solicited by the party for the purpose of procuring refreshments. It was a common trick to throw the ball into the entrance of a house as soon as the door was opened; the action being accompanied with a

significant hint that if it were not *brought out* again with a suitable acknowledgement in money or drink, the party would "*step in and fetch it.*"

Ash Wednesday was devoted to training up the boys of Derby in football ways, and this verse of our ballad means, no doubt, that the boys who wanted to kick the Ram's eyes about the streets were big enough to take part in the "boys' day."

"For they (the boys) were of football size."

If the previous day had been distinguished for turbulence and determined energy, the "boys' day" was no less notable for the frequency of its free fights. The youngsters "went in to win" with no less spirit than their sires, and, very often, some great hulking fellow or other would mingle in the *melee* until dragged out by an indignant spectator, stronger than himself, with the contemptuous exclamation, "Call *yourself* a lad!" On these two days the consumption of oranges was remarkable; the non-combatants, who followed the fortunes of the fray with no less anxiety than those actually engaged in it, were wont to carry supplies of these portable and juicy refreshments, wherewith to comfort their thirsty friends in situations where it would have been difficult to have ministered otherwise to their wants; the orange merchants profiting accordingly. Hence, just before "football day," those astute dealers invariably raised the prices of their fruit, and although football is now extinct, we have good reason to believe that the Derby greengrocers still continue to observe *their* portion of *the performance*.

Another feature peculiar to Derby, was "dusting." This very unpleasant part of the day's amusement was perpetrated at the expense of on-lookers, who, whilst innocently watching the fray, found themselves surrounded by a set of yelling lads carrying bags of variously coloured powders, with which they belaboured the victim until he made his escape disguised as a harlequin. Sometimes a tradesman would be saluted with a dust-bag on the side of his face; turning in the direction of his foe, another would assault him until half blinded and well coloured he got back into his shop.

Even to the present time, so strong is the passion of Derby roughs for kick-

ing rolling masses of stuff about the streets, that no unlicensed festival is complete without one or more "fireballs" being made footballs of, to the no small danger of the town. For the information of the uninitiated, we beg to state that these offensive weapons are composed of tow, twisted into a thick rope with iron wire, then saturated with tar or petroleum, rolled into a ball, and thrown into the street at a point unguarded by a policeman.

The bells of the various parishes, which rang out on the morning of "Foot-ball Day," gave rise to this elegant string of verses!—

" 'Pancakes and Fritters,'
 Say All Saints' and Peter's;
 'When will the ball come,'
 Say the bells of St. Alkmund;
 'At two they will throw,'
 Says old Saint Werb'ro;
 'Very well—very well,'
 Says little Michaël.'"

Football is dead, and W. Eaton Mousley, Esq., the Mayor of Derby, who slew it, is dead also; but the memories of both will survive in Derby for many a long year to come.

[VERSE 13.] Gimcrack says—

"The tanner who tann'd his hide, Sir,
 I'm sure he'll never be poor,
 When he hanged it out to dry, Sir,
 It cover'd all Swinscoe Moor."

Swinscoe Moor is near Ashborne; Sinfin Moor is near Derby. The game of football was until very lately carried on with much vigour in Ashborne. The Ram's hide probably remains untanned to this day, and the words of the poet darkly allude to the supposition that the poor tanner, at last relieved from his poverty, died before the completion of his task. Sinfin Moor, where Derby races were once held, was always a favourite comparison with the town's folk, who often employ similies in conversation such as:—"As big as Sinfin;" "As

drear as Sinfin;" "I would na be seen wi' un upo' Sinfin" (spoken of an undesirable acquaintance); "His bed's big eno'! he's gotten a' Sinfin to lay on," (said of a houseless tramp); &c. Classical scholars may perhaps remember the dodge practised by that ancient party who, having slain some devouring beast, and being overwhelmed with the gratitude of those whom he had delivered from its clutches, chose for his reward as much land as would come within the compass of the monster's *hide*; which same hide, *upon being cut into thongs*, was found to encircle a good allowance of territory, to the surprise, and, perhaps, disgust, of those who had applauded the disinterestedness of the artful one. Our own recollections upon the subject are dim and hazy; but we fancy the above outline is somewhere near the hide-ntical story. At all events the old Saxon land measure, "a hide," was said to have been "about" 100 acres, and Littleton says the measure was an uncertain one—of course it was! It varied with the size of the animal whose hide was used for yard-measures. Now, according to an Act 42, George III., Sinfin Moor seems to have contained 497a. 1r. 37p., so that this must be considered the maximum of the hide measures, and the reader will be able to judge from these figures that the Ram who furnished the means of measurement must have been at least above the average size.

[VERSE 14.] This verse, as Mr. Jewitt says, is probably a late addition. We agree with him in this supposition, believing that the notion must have been suggested by the slang term, "jawing," as applied to the preaching of a Methodist; who, according to Rowland Hill, "splits the heads of his sermons into so many parts, that he almost splits the heads of his hearers."

[THE REFRAIN.] Gimcrack makes no mention of "Daddle-i-day," which, we believe, has no connection with the narrative. He and the editor of the penny ballad agree in giving this verse as the constant refrain after each stanza of the song:—

" Indeed, Sir, it's a truth, Sir,
 For I never was taught to lie—
 And if you'll go to Darby, Sir,
 You may see it as well as I."

This is finally varied by substituting,

“ And if you go to Darby, Sir,
You may eat a bit of the pie.”

The following lines from an old song bear upon the absence of falsehood, which the narrator of this history prides himself upon, with great justice :—

“ A hen is a hungry dish ;
A goose is hollow within ;
But there's no deceit in a pie,
And a pudding's a trusty thing.”

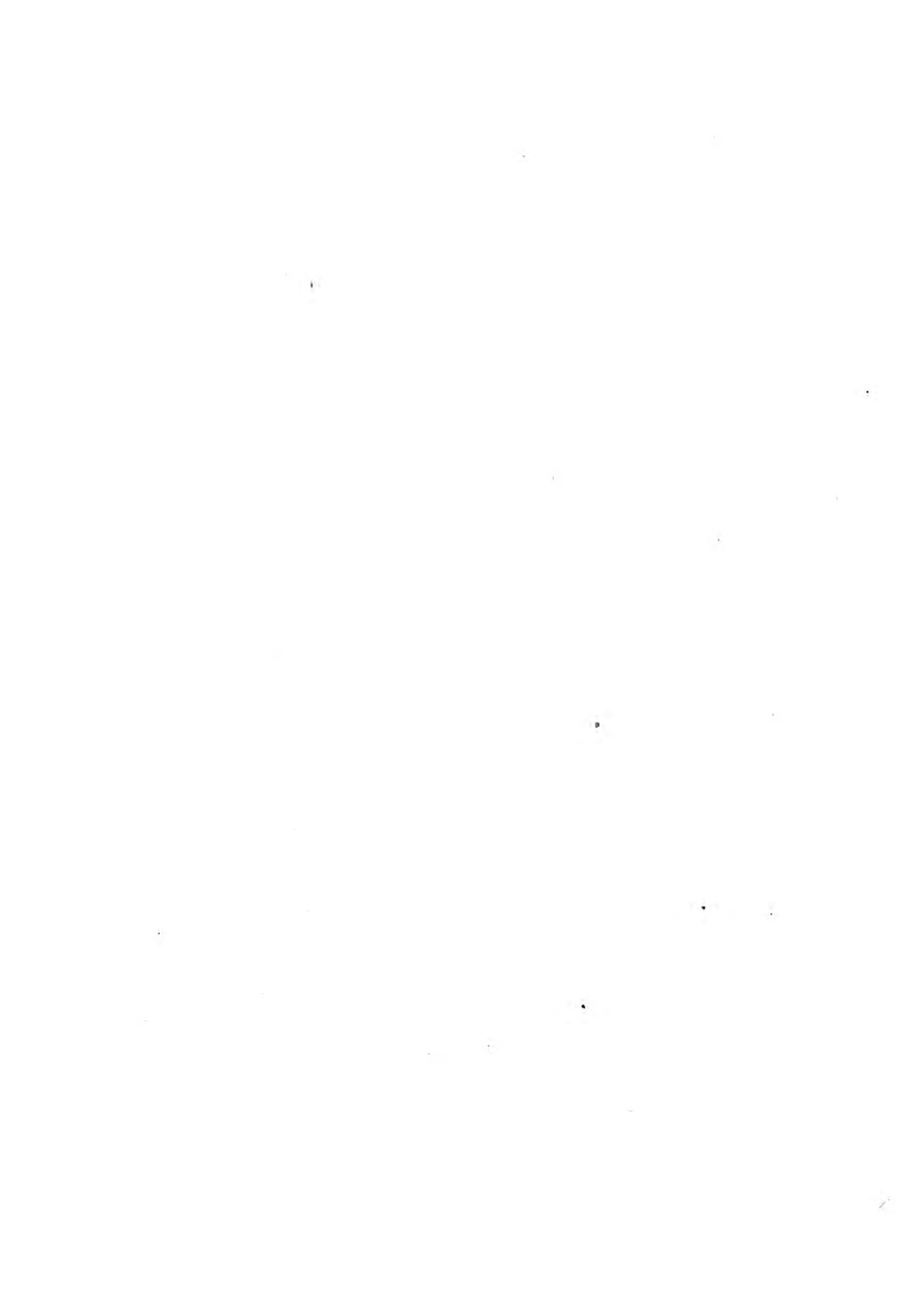
Our artist has caught the story-teller's triumphant expression of countenance as he deals this “clencher” to the incredulous party surrounding him. We can fancy him quoting the line—

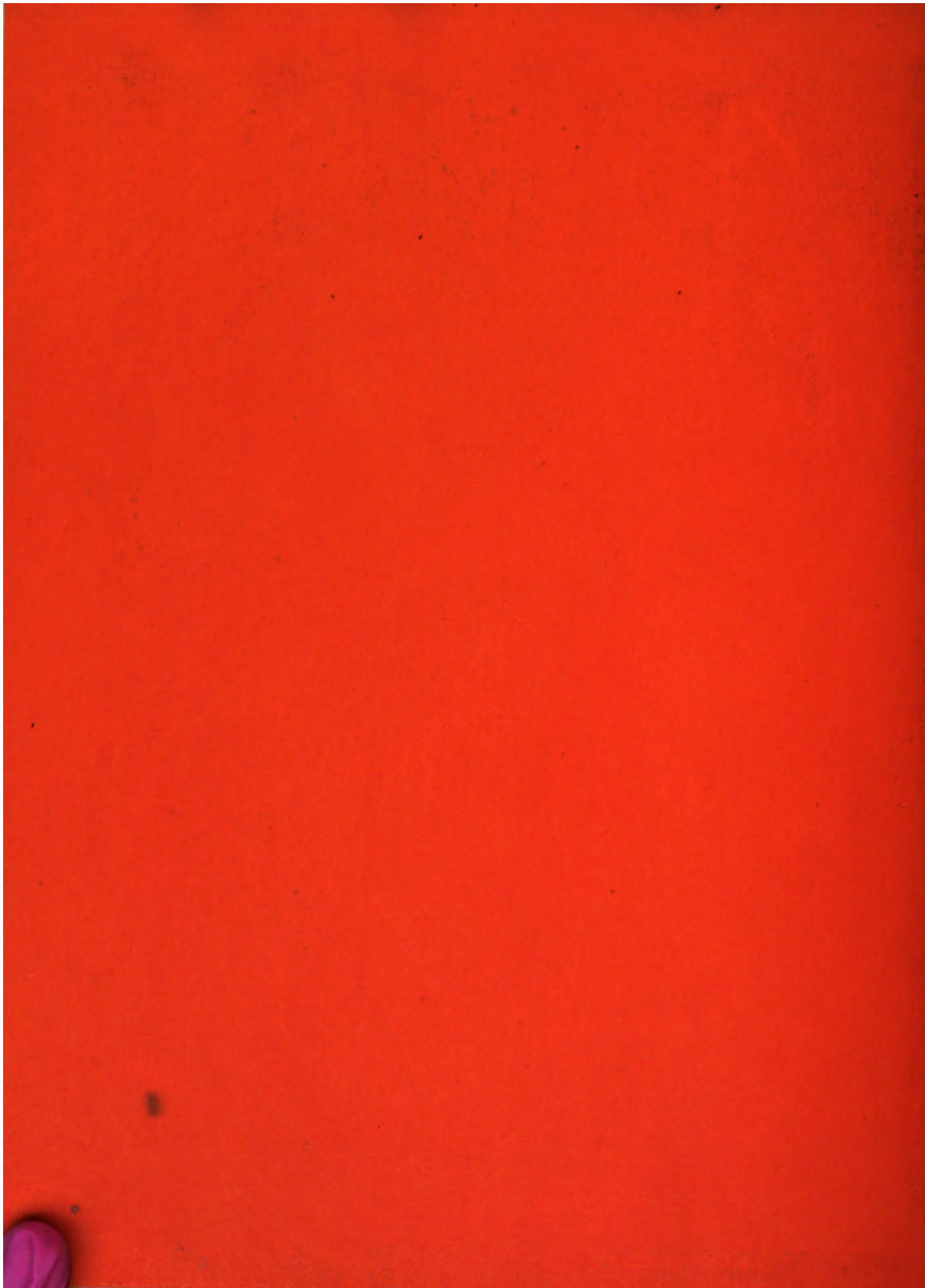
“ But there's no deceit in a pie,”

as positive proof of his truthfulness, whilst inviting his friends to go to Derby and taste the mutton pies which are occasionally sold at the corners of streets by itinerant merchants.

And so ends this most important local history, with which, if our readers have been entertained, both artist, editor, and publishers will have ample cause to be gratified.



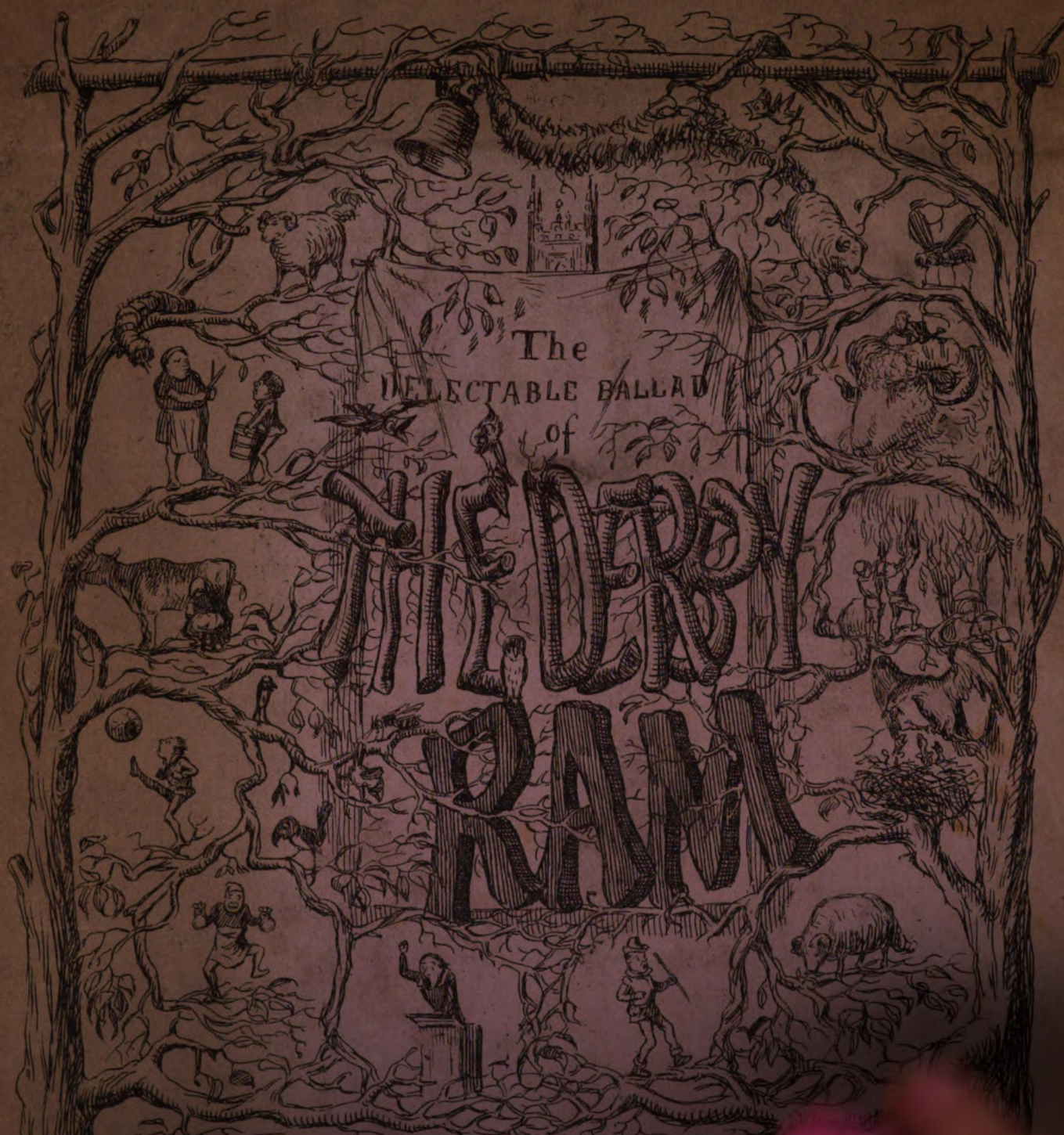












The
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of

THE VERY RAW

ILLUSTRATED BY PRIESTMAN AND
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
ALFRED WALLACE

LONDON,
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