



KILDWICK GRANGE

Restoration
A LEGEND OF THE ~~CIVIL WAR~~.

March 7th 1660

BY NELLIE K. BLISSETT.

This Ballad was written about 40 years ago, Miss Blissett was a school girl then, rather fired by the story. She afterwards wrote several novels and other things and gained a reputation.

(Signed) Herbert Swire, Capt. R.N.

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Herbert Swire, R.N.
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PREFACE

SAMUEL SWYRE or Swyer, who built the main block of Cononley Hall,^{*} was born in 1636 and died in 1701; he was son-in-law to Roger Coates, who was the son of John Coates of Kildwick, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Roger Swyre of Skipton, the son of Richard Swyre of Gargrave, Co. York.

*in 1680 - date shown
in Hutton's History
of the County -*

** appeared to have been built by his father Roger Swyre d 1651.*

25th December, 1932.

KILDWICK GRANGE

I.

It is night on the moors—the rising moon
Gleams cold and pale in the cloudy sky ;
The storm will be down in its wrath right soon,
The gusts of wind wail mournfully ;
Yet hoof beats ring through the misty light.
From Skipton Castle three horsemen come.
Swift must he ride on such a night
Who 'ere the morning would reach his home—
Yet, so no enemy ride behind,
Little care they for rain or wind.

Coates, of Kildwick Grange, is there,
And Samuel Swyer, of Cononley,
And the Lord of the Hall of Kildwick fair,
Hugh Curren, third of that desperate three ;
The malignants seek for them far and near,
But Skipton's Castle lies far behind—
Above, the sable pines appear,
Below, the Aire's bright waters wind.
In front, as over the stones they strain,
The lights of Cononley shine thro' the rain.

A hurried parley beside the gate
And Swyer rides in 'neath the pine boughs black,
The others speed on, for they dare not wait,
E'en now the foe may be on their track.
Far beneath lie the tassel'd pines,
Like ebon lance points rising tall.
Through the driving sleet a faint glare shines—
The distant lights of Farnhill Hall.
The wind is rising, the rain sweeps by,
Black with the storm in the starless sky.

Away! Away! Royd House is past,
Deep 'mid its shadowy yews embowered,
And Kildwick Bridge is near at last ;
The pebbles gleam, in thousands showered
From beneath the tread of each straining steed.
A hurried farewell is all they say,
They must not pause in that hour of need—
O'er the dark arched bridge Curren rides away,
The hoof-beats die out on the hollow stone,
And Roger Coates rides on—alone.

His helm is bright with frozen sleet,
His eyes are dimmed with the driving rain ;
He stays for a moment his charger fleet,
Then boldly urges him on again.
Away! there is surely a sound below,
A distant shout on the rising breeze,
Or is it the waters as they flow,
Or the crashing sound of the storm-filled trees ?
Away! they dash on fierce and fleet
To clatter in haste thro' Steeton's street.

The gabled house is reached at last ;
To earth the wearied horseman springs.
O'er the nearest post the rein is cast,
And a mighty blow on the portal rings ;
The door flies open—a burst of light—
Both horse and rider may rest at will,
And Roger Coates comes in from the night,
But his look is restless, and watchful still ;
Uneasily still his glance roves round—
And the shout of the foe is in every sound.

The door of the room is opened wide
And all spring up from the lighted board :
" The malignants are near—Ride, Roger, ride ! "
No rest for the Grange of Kildwick's Lord.
In haste he springs on the streaming steed
Wet with rain and white with foam—
May he not fail him now at need—
Away ! for the northern hills and home !
Down they rush, that fearless pair,
Down to the waves of the foaming Aire.

Poor wearied steed—the tide is deep,
Will this wild ride in the river end ?
Or doth his master's danger keep
The life in the breast of that dauntless friend ?
The Aire is forded—beneath the hill
To the left the Lang Kirk of Craven lies,
A mass of shadows, dark and still,
Unmoved by the wrath of the angry skies ;
And far above, now faint, now bright,
A changing radiance gleams thro' the night.

Onward they go—but now they hear,
Not far away, a clatter and stir—
The panting charger pricks his ear,
Then shudders beneath the stinging spur ;
Their foes are behind—up the hill they dash—
Oh welcome sight ! for bright and clear
The lights of the Grange of Kildwick flash,
And danger is past and home is near ;
And that reckless horseman, in sort most strange,
Rides into the court of Kildwick Grange.

II.

Darkly drove the wild March hail,
Darkly the gusty rain swept by.
The night lay dark upon hill and dale,
There was no light in the stormy sky ;
The wind arose and sank again,
Sweeping past with a sobbing cry,
With a shrieking sound, as of one in pain,
Or of demons in their revelry ;
With a sobbing and laughter weird and strange,
O'er the gabled roofs of Kildwick Grange.

Within, where the dying embers gleamed,
 Fann'd by the wind to sudden flame,
 Where the flick'ring taper's radiance streamed,
 Sat Rosamund, the Grange's dame ;
 On her white face the red light flashed
 As she listened there in the deep'ning night,
 Hearing the rain drops as they splashed
 A dreary song on the lattice bright.
 And the storm raged on without stay or change
 Over the gables of Kildwick Grange.

Out of the darkness came a sound
 Neither of wind nor yet of rain,
 Half by the eddyng hail-blasts drowned,
 Yet ringing nearer again and again ;
 Out of the darkness and the night,
 Out of the storm's deep sounding din,
 A horseman dashed to the lattice bright
 And called to her who sat within.
 Wherefore rides that wanderer strange,
 Under the walls of Kildwick Grange ?

She rose and swept thro' the ancient hall,
 Where sword and casque shone fair to see ;
 Within the court cried a Roundhead tall :
 " Unbar the door right speedily.
 Fast the malignants ride behind,
 From Skipton keep they have followed me.
 Far shall they ride before they find
 The Lord of the Grange of Kildwick free—
 Far may they ride before they range
 Thro' the time worn halls of Kildwick Grange."

III.

He followed her up the winding stair
 Into the secret chamber dim ;
 And out of the cold, grey shadows there
 Her eyes shone wide and wild on him.
 A stir, a shout in the court below,
 A rattle of horses over the stones,
 A clashing of swords that are drawn from sheath
 And voices upraised in angry tones ;
 A crashing of doors in the windy dark,
 And the deep, fierce din of the watch-dog's bark.

A voice beneath in the rain and wind :
" Whom seek ye, friends ? our master is away "—
" We have chased him here, riding fast behind,
He is in the Grange, whate'er ye say."
The heavy door on its hinges swung,
They heard steps entering fast below ;
The clatter of arms as they clashed and rung,
And voices speaking, fierce but low.
Steps dying away when the search seemed vain,
And, at last, but the drip of departing rain.

All was silent, the wind swept by
With a softer cadence ; the storm was o'er—
Then rose a sudden triumphant cry,
And the foe was back in the court once more.
" Ye lying Roundheads—why have ye said
That Roger Coates is far from home ?
There's a steed in the stable that far hath fled,
Wet with rain and white with foam ;
Let your Lord come forth, or by King and Crown,
Faggot and flame shall bring him down."

He bent and kissed her in her place
As the last words rang out loud and clear ;
Then turned away with stern, set face,
Like a man who knows nor hope or fear.
Once more the gate on its hinges swung,
He heard steps entering fast below ;
He lifted the sword from where it hung—
" They are in the Grange, now, dearest, go,
The battle is fought, and the fight is vain,
There's all to lose, and nought to gain."

Over the threshold's shattered ledge,
Into the oak carved hall they came ;
The moon shone forth from the black storm's edge
And silvered the face of that stately dame—
Lovely, and fearless, calm, and pale ;
Into the shadowy hall she came
And the leader felt his bold heart fail
As he looked on that face so fair to see.
" For whom do ye seek at hour so strange ? "—
" For Roger Coates of Kildwick Grange ?"

"He is not here!"—they looked askance,
"His steed's in the stable, lady fair;"
But they shrank 'neath the light of that calm glance,
Clear and fearless with despair.
Then rose those tones of hate once more:
"If he comes not forth the Grange shall burn!"
A sudden stain on the oaken floor.
And she answered nothing in return—
But the leader started in swift surprise,
With affrighted look, and uplifted eyes.

And every trooper looked up again,
Then stood there mute as the stone beside;
For high above every head a stain
Of darkest crimson the rafters dyed;
No stain was that of the soaking rain
No wine cup spilt on the rafter wide—
And all knew why they had searched in vain,
And how the Lord of Kildwick died.
And each one turned like a man afraid,
And followed his chief thro' the portal's shade.

But Rosamund's look, with horror filled,
Like avenging fire on those warriors fell,
Shuddering she spoke, yet iron will'd:
"Come, look on the work ye have wrought so well."
They stood there silent, and asked no more;
Again they followed her up the stair,
She opened wide the secret door
And left them mute in the torchlight there,
Voiceless and awed before that sight,
Hushed and still, in the silent night.

In the Lang Kirk, near the altar rail,
The Lord of the Grange lies calm, at rest;
Soft gleams the prisoned sunlight pale
On the arms of Craven upon his breast.
And to this day at the Grange they show
The stains of blood on the oaken floor.
And when the wild March breezes blow,
Sweeping fiercely o'er moss and moor,
They tell in their revelry, weird and strange,
Of Roger Coates of Kildwick Grange.