

Hawker of Morwenstow

By the Rev. H. HUGH BRETON, M.A.
Vicar of Morwenstow

Author of "BEAUTIFUL DARTMOOR," "THE BREEZY CORNISH MOORS,"
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*To the memory of  
Robert Stephen Hawker, B. A.,  
Vicar of Morwenstow,  
1834 to 1875.*

*This brief memoir is dedicated  
as a mark of appreciation of  
his manly character, and of  
the great work he did for  
Morwenstow Church and parish.*

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## PREFACE.

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I am writing this brief memoir of Hawker to give, however brief, an accurate sketch of his life, the facts of which have been so clouded and obscured by misrepresentation, satire, and ridicule. I have tried to sift the truth from falsehood but the cost of printing in these days necessitates brevity. This little book has two companions which touch on the same subject :-

--- MORWENSTOW --- and --- THE NORTH COAST OF CORNWALL ---  
(1/- each ; Postage 2d.)

All who are interested in Hawker and Morwenstow should read these two books, and also Byles' LIFE OF HAWKER published by John Lane, price 7/6. I recommend Byles' Life of Hawker to those interested in Morwenstow and his life and work here. I acknowledge with gratitude the help it has been to me as a work of reference in establishing the truth of many facts and stories about Hawker which are common talk in the district even to-day. As regards the list of short stories I have recounted, they are only a portion of those I have heard. Those which were untrue I have rejected.

H. H. B.

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## **CHAPTER I.**

### **HIS BIRTH.**

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER was born on December 3rd, 1803, at 6, Norley Street, Plymouth. He was the eldest son of Jacob Stephen Hawker, who at the time of Robert's birth was a doctor, and was afterwards ordained and became ultimately Vicar of Stratton. He was grandson of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D. D., for 43 years Vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth, and author of the once famous "Hawker Portions." Rev. John Hawker, Vicar of Stoke, was his uncle who baptized Robert on Dec. 29, 1803; he was son of the Vicar of Charles.

A few years after Robert's birth his father bade farewell to the medical profession and took Holy Orders. His first Curacy was at Altarnun on the Bodmin Moors. Next in 1813 he became Curate of Stratton, of which parish he became Vicar in 1833 and remained so until his death in 1845.

Hawker, after his father left Plymouth, for years lived with his grandfather, under whose great influence he came, which had momentous effects on his whole life.

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**His Education.** He was educated first at Liskeard Grammar School. At 16 he was sent to Cheltenham Grammar School. In 1823 he went on to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he took his degree. At Oxford he wrote his famous Oxford Prize Poem – "Pompeii."

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **HIS FAMILY.**

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Among his closest friends in the Bude district were Colonel Wrey I'ans and his family, who resided a part of the year at Whitstone House, and the other part at Efford Manor House, Bude, now the Vicarage. The Colonel at Waterloo was in command of the Cornwall Provisional Cavalry. He died in 1816, leaving four charming daughters. Robert spent a good deal of time in the company of these ladies, and ultimately on Nov. 6th, 1823, married one of them – Charlotte. This marriage, though the ground of much misrepresentation by his critics, was a marriage of real love, and not a mercenary one. The honeymoon was spent at Tintagel. While here, Hawker first became interested in "the Sangraal" which was the chalice in which Our Lord celebrated the First Eucharist.

In 1824 he returned to Oxford with his bride, and as married undergraduates were not admitted into Pembroke College, he migrated to Magdalen. Two of his wife's sisters came to live with him and Mrs. Hawker at Oxford.

In 1825 Hawker's eldest sister married Rev. Wm. Kingdon, Rector of Whitstone. Here, Hawker and his wife used to spend their vacations. Another favourite resort during his vacations was Coombe Cottage, in the Coombe Valley. This cottage with a cross-shaped window is still standing, and still it is remembered, that there it was he wrote his famous Trelawny ballad "The Song of the Western Men :- And shall Trelawny die?"

For 40 years Hawker and his first wife, Charlotte, lived very happily together, and after her death in 1863, he was almost a broken man. In the following year, 1864, he married his second wife – Pauline Anne Kuczynski – a Pole of good family, whose father, having been exiled from Poland for political reasons, had settled in England. He having lost his fortune, his daughter, Pauline, had to earn her own living, which brought her as a governess into the family of the Rev. W. Valentine, Vicar of Whixley, Yorks. In 1863 Mr Valentine bought Chapel House and the farm attached to it. A year later he re-sold it, left Morwenstow, and returned to Yorkshire. His brief sojourn was long enough to have a vast influence on the remainder of Hawker's life.

He fell in love with Pauline Kuczynski and she with him. At the end of 1864 they were married in London. She being only 21, the natural consequence was a young family for Hawker in his old age. Their names were *Morwenna* born Nov. 27, 1865; *Rosalind* born 1867; *Juliot* born 1869.

Hawker and his second wife lived very happily together for 10 years up to the time of his death, but they must have been trying years for her. Long before his death Hawker was fast breaking up. With young children to nurse, and this broken neurotic old man to look after, her's must have been a difficult task. But she bravely did her duty through sunshine and storm to the last. Hawker died at Plymouth on August 15th, 1875.

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **HIS CHARACTER.**

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Hawker had the blessings of a good father and mother, and the great influence of his grandfather, Dr. Hawker of Plymouth; these good people united in one common purpose to bequeath to Hawker the most priceless of all heritages :- "The Faith once for all delivered unto the Saints." He was, in consequence of these earlier influences, a man of sound principle and singular ability, whose learning, charity, kindness of heart and generosity of sentiment were known and treasured by many.

He was a very upright man and had a keen sense of right, and loathed all that is wrong. He was intensely kind to the poor and all who were in trouble, and he did much to redress the wrongs of the poor. He was endowed usually with good judgement, and had strong opinions and brooked no interference from unsolicited advisers. Fifteen years ago, a man (whose father was Hawker's man for years) told me that it did not do to run counter to him. That was quite true. He was, above all, a sound, devoted, zealous member of the Church of God. "Be

true to Church, be kind to poor," were maxims which he carried out to the letter in his daily life. His devotion to the fabric of the ancient shrine of St. Morwenna and to the services in the Sanctuary were exemplary, and he has left Morwenstow for all time a lofty example.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HIS ECCENTRICITIES.

Akin to the subject of the last chapter were his eccentricities. Many of these are well illustrated in the 46 "Hawker Stories" which form part of the final chapter of this small book. His second wife early in 1864 wrote that her future husband had lived a life made up of eccentricities. His eccentricities certainly showed themselves in his marriages – at 20 he married a woman of 40, and at 61 married a second wife aged 21. In his matrimonial affairs this eccentric man must have made a record. Yet all went well, except the burden of a young family during the closing years of his life.

His belief in demons which fairly haunted him was evidence of a strange mentality. His frequent extraordinary references to demons in his letters, had they been made by anyone but Hawker, we should have said he was on the border-line of insanity.

His living on the sea-shore with a wrecker (VII. 40) and his living alone in a log-hut at Whitstone (VII. 41) are evidences of a peculiar mind. He became latterly very eccentric in church; he would wander about the chancel reciting the service instead of taking the service in a dignified way. Latterly he ceased to use the pulpit at all, and delivered his sermons from the screen doorway. There is a persistent tradition that when going to church he had a body-guard of cats, and that he allowed these animals to enter the church. On one occasion he is said to have excommunicated a cat for killing a mouse on Sunday.

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His eccentric habit was the outward visible sign of his eccentric habits. He wore a bright blue fisherman's jersey which was always worked for him by a Clovelly woman. On the breast was worked a red Cross. He also wore enormous top boots like a real long-shoreman; a man who knew him told me recently that he was rarely seen out of doors without these great seaman's boots. Over his fisherman's jersey was a bright claret-coloured coat with neither shape nor fit. His head was crowned with a large wide-awake hat, like the modern Communist wears.

After his sale, subsequent to his death, one of these very remarkable hats was the only thing which was left (in an attic) in the house after the family had vacated it. I always think it was a pity it was never preserved.

He carried a walking stick with the handle shaped as a Cross; this is still preserved at Tonacombe.

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Hawker's own description of his curious seal (as illustrated) says the oval outline denotes the upper rim or border of an antique font of stone. The serpent, tail in mouth, is the Oriental emblem of eternity. The fish is the mullet of the sea of Galilee, and the very kind which filled the Apostles' nets and which came by command to Simon's hook with the double shekel in its mouth for the Church-

rate of him and his Lord. The fish must have been mullet because that is the only prevalent fish of the lake at the present time, and as there is no connection between the salt sea and the lake, no new kind of fish can have been brought there from our Lord's time till now. A fish is the oldest and most universal symbol of a baptized Christian all over the ancient world. The letters put together make the Greek word ICHTHUS, meaning a fish, and taken separately they form the initials of the words signifying the name and title of our Lord in Greek – Jesus, Christ, [of ] God, Son, Saviour. The letters IX, in English ICH, are placed between two Greek crosses and are the initials of the name Jesus Christ.

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## **CHAPTER V.**

### **HIS WORK.**

For 41 years Hawker worked steadily and devotedly for Morwenstow, he served the Church of God faithfully in his generation, and was an unfailing kind friend of the poor. On General Gordon's tomb are these words, "To the memory of General Charles Gordon who always gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor and his heart to God."

These words are also true of Hawker. He was a strong defender of the weak and the poor against the attacks of their oppressors, and in this and other matters where the path of duty lay he knew no fear. "He feared man so little, because he feared God so much."

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In 1836 he built King William's Bridge at Coombe, towards which the King gave £20. Hawker did the rest. During his long Vicariate at Morwenstow he worked quietly and thoroughly. Probably the greatest work he did was the building of the Vicarage in 1837. It is a very well-built house, and he built it with his own money and then presented it to the benefice. It proved very costly to build and in consequence Hawker was a poor man for the rest of his days.

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When he came to Morwenstow, the parish had not known a resident vicar for more than a century. The old Vicarage, which stood above the Church, was used partly as a barn, and was in a state of almost utter ruin – so bad that repair and restoration were impossible.

So he decided to build the new Vicarage on another site, and he chose the present one, because he said he always noticed that it was where the sheep and lambs lay down, suggesting that it must be a place of shelter. In many ways the site has proved a wise choice, for the water supply comes into the house by natural fall from St. John the Baptist's Well in the garden, and the drainage leaves the house by natural fall into the valley below.

The boards he used for flooring are thick pitch-pine of unusual width, the likes of which are not seen in these days; the doors are finely made and studded with great nails. He built the house regardless of expense, but he found out afterwards what was the cost of doing work so well. Over the front door he placed the inscription: -

"A house, a glebe, a pound a day;  
A pleasant place to watch and pray;

Be true to church, be kind to poor,  
O minister! For evermore."

Five of the chimneys are models of Towers of Parish Churches where he had lived before, and the kitchen chimney represents his Mother's tomb. Outside the back door he paved the walk with two large mill-stones.

The Church he also found sadly dilapidated – a dusty desolation, the Churchyard a wilderness, where weeds over-topped the broken grave-stones in wild and rank abundance. He set about to repair the church and to set in order God's Acre. He said that when he came he found a strange lot of people – a mixture of smugglers, wreckers, and dissenters of various hues. A few kindly-hearted farmers had clung to the old grey sanctuary of the Church and the tower that looked along the sea, but most of the people were Wesleyans.

Of Hawker it may truly be recorded: - "He repaired the House of God."

In 1843 he built the School and Teacher's House, and named it "St. Mark's" because, he said, he was not only an Apostle [the word 'Apostle' has been crossed through in my copy, in ink, and 'Evangelist' added alongside, in the page margin] and Teacher but was called in the old times "The Children's Saint." This School he maintained, often a good deal out of his own pocket, during his life-time. He chose as the site in the middle of the parish; near it are no less than eight cross roads. For 83 years this School has served right well the parish of Morwenstow, and may it continue to do so for many a generation to come.

Other great works of his were the originating the Harvest Festival in 1843. He speaks of a bountiful Harvest that year and called upon his people in these words to join with him in a Harvest Thanksgiving Service: - "Let us gather together in the chancel of our church on the first Sunday of next month, and there receive, in the bread of the new corn, that blessed sacrament which was ordained to strengthen and refresh our souls." So, on the first Sunday in October, 1843, Hawker inaugurated the Harvest Festival at Morwenstow, and the observance of it has become general now throughout the land. Hawker also revived the Rural Synods in 1844, and the first citation to the clergy of the Deanery to attend Synod is dated Feb., 1844. He then held the first Ruri-decanal Synod held in England.

Hawker disliked public meetings, the organisation and action of party societies; and the policy of rival missionary corporations; because they seemed to him based on a thoroughly false and bad principle. "Missionary Societies ought to take either a diocesan or provincial form. One diocese, old established, should aid another in God's Name, to plant the Faith; and your squabbling societies, riotous in dispute, should put up their shutters, and die quietly, and without any noise."

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Probably the work for which in coming generations he will be best remembered will be his kindness to Shipwrecked Sailors, and his care for the drowned, and for giving them Christian burial; he always insisted that each sailor should have his own grave; this brings us to our next Chapter.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WRECKS ALONG THE COAST IN HAWKER'S DAY.

For a full account of these, those interested should read Byles' LIFE OF



HAWKER (published by John Lane 7/6). he says in his earlier years, "so stern and pitiless is the iron-bound coast of North Cornwall that within the memory of one man, upwards of 80 wrecks have happened within a range of 15 miles with only the rescue here and there of a single living person."

With some of the cruel and greedy longshoremen, it was at one time a pastime to lure a ship ashore by a treacherous light, or to refuse help to seamen struggling for their lives in the sea.

"Pilot! they say when tempests rave,  
Dark Cornwall's sons will haunt the main,  
Watch the wild wreck, yet not to save,  
Oh! for Parana's sands again!"

A story is told of a tragedy that happened to one of these wreckers more than a century ago at Sennen Cove. A father had his son taken forcibly away from him by one of the old press-gangs and pressed into the service of the Royal Navy. Many years passed by, and the father never heard a word from his lost son, and he thought he would never see him again. One dark stormy night this old wrecker lured to its doom a gallant ship that was struggling for its life with the Atlantic waves.

When morning dawned the drowned were being washed ashore. This old wrecker awaited the incoming of a body which was approaching him. At last a large wave threw up the body at the wrecker's feet. He looked into the cold, rigid face of the drowned man – to his horror it was his long-lost son – he had lured to his doom his long-lost son.

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Between 1824 and 1874 (the year in which the lighthouse at Hartland Point was built) there were more than 80 shipwrecks in the neighbourhood of Bude. In 1832 an old man at Poughill wrote an account of 37 wrecks between Morwenstow and St. Gennys since 1756. It was called "The Book of Wracks at Bude," by W. Bray.

War! 'mid the Ocean and the Land!  
The battle-field Morwenna's strand,  
Where rock and ridge the bulwark keep,  
The giant-wardens of the deep.

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I now give the list of those which occurred in Hawker's time with dates: **Sept. 8, 1842, "The Caledonia,"** of Arbroath, came ashore right under Higher Sharpnose Point and was totally wrecked. She was a brig of 200 tons. All drowned except one, a Jersey man, Le Dain, who scrambled ashore. The wreck was caused by a sudden and violent storm of which the captain had no warning, the boy a day or two before having broken the ship's barometer.

In October 1924, we erected in the Churchyard a cross as a memorial of the many seamen who were shipwrecked and drowned on the wild rocky shore of the parish of Morwenstow. In the churchyard overlooking the Atlantic Ocean there are the graves of nearly 100 seamen. The only mark to indicate the resting place

of these gallant sailors is the wooden figurehead of the Arbroath brig *Caledonia*, which was wrecked on the rocks on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1842. So we placed above them a memorial cross of Cornish design with an appropriate inscription. The late Rev. R. S. Hawker, who was vicar of Morwenstow from 1834 to 1875, did a great work for shipwrecked sailors. The *Caledonia*, which was owned by Mr. J. S. Esplin, manufacturer, Arbroath, and under the command of Captain Peters, was a vessel of 200 tons. She was on a voyage from Odessa to Gloucester with a cargo of wheat and had called at Falmouth the day before she was overtaken by a storm and dashed to pieces on these rocks. She had a crew of ten men, of whom one was saved, Edward Le Dain, a native of Jersey. Those of the crew who belonged to Arbroath were:- Stevenson Peter, commander; James Wallace, mate; Stephen Jones, carpenter; David Wallace, Alexander Kent, and – Storrier, seamen; David M'Donald and William Tasker, apprentices; “and another seaman whose name we have not learnt.” “The mate and carpenter have, we understand, left families.” Not a vestige of the vessel was to be seen next day with the exception of the figurehead. In some verses written by Rev. R. S. Hawker, he says, with reference to the placing of the figure-head at the graves:-

“And there, the relic of the storm,  
We fixed fair Scotland's figured form.  
She watches by her bold, her brave,  
Her shield towards the fatal sea:  
Their cherished Lady of the wave  
Is guardian of their memory.”

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**1843.** The Schooner *Phoenix*, of St. Ives, foundered off Morwenstow. One body was covered, except for the foot, with a huge mass of rock, and Hawker had to send for a crane before the body could be rescued from the sea.

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**October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1843,** the *Alonzo*, of Stockton, went ashore a little further down the coast and was totally wrecked. From these three wrecks Hawker built his Hut on the cliffs.

Above – the ocean breezes sweep  
With foot-steps firm and free:  
Around – the mountains guard the deep;  
Beneath – the wide, wide sea.

Enter! The arching roofs expand  
Like vessels on the shore;  
Inverted, when the fisher band  
Might tread their planks no more.

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**1850.** The *Eliza*, of Liverpool. The cargo was of provisions, wine, and clothing.

“The *Eliza* of Liverpool came on shore  
To feed the hungry and clothe the poor.”

Connected with this wreck, a story is told of a woman, whom we will call Betsy, a local resident who has long since been dead.

A large bale of cloth had been washed up on to the top of a long stretch of shelving beach. Betsy lay down, wound the cloth round her, and rolled down the beach, the cloth winding as she went, till she had a very large quantity encasing her body. Those in charge considered the device so clever that they allowed her to go home with her unjustly gotten gains.

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**August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1852,** the schooner *Primrose*, of Truro, laden with copper ore, which was all salvaged and brought up the cliffs below the Hut on donkeys which Hawker used to feed at the dump behind the Hut. The crew had been taken off by a Bristol pilot boat. Hawker received from the owners, as an acknowledgment, a mahogany case of Cornish minerals with a suitable inscription.

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**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1853.** A ship went down “just by my Cliffs.” One body recovered.

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**February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1853.** Revenue cutter *Margaret* went down after firing guns of distress; crew of 3 drowned.

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**March, 1855.** A French vessel wrecked at Sandy Mouth.

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**May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1858.** Sloop *Temperance*, of Padstow, laden with coal, wrecked at Marsland Mouth. One body recovered. “I have laid out and shrouded and coffined now four and twenty dead Sailors!”

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**October, 1859.** A fierce hurricane caused several wrecks. “Full fifty years it is said since we had such a storm. Limbs are cast ashore every now and then, arms and legs, and at Hartland joining Welcombe, lumps of flesh have floated above High water, and been buried in the ground. Five out of Seven Corpses had no Heads – cut off by the jagged rocks!! Since 1843 I have taken up from the rocks and buried 27. But to me the great comfort is, that the souls of all these men are grateful to me for the respectful interment of their bodies, and that all they are permitted to do for me they fulfil. That they have brought me tokens of goodwill I am persuaded,”

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**October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1862.** The *Bencoolen* wrecked at Bude Haven. Out of a crew of 35 only 6 were saved. She was bound from Liverpool to Bombay, laden with iron, and telegraph poles and wires. The most terrible wreck that has occurred in recent times along this coast. The tragedy happened in the presence of hundreds

of people who were helpless to do anything to save life in such a sea.

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**Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1862.** *Mary Elizabeth* wrecked in Bude Bay, crew taken off by the lifeboat and landed at Widemouth.

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**Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1863.** *Margaret Quayle*, of Liverpool, 1050 tons, with a crew of 24, laden with salt, was abandoned off Hennacliff. The mate and four men got away in a boat and reached Clovelly. The Captain and the remainder “patched up an old boat on board full of holes – by a sail round her and tarred and tarred on and pieces nailed – oars made from broken wood – half the 19 bailed and half rowed, and reached Clovelly at 12 on Saturday night.” The boatswain was knocked overboard by the anchor and drowned. The ship was afterwards taken off by a steam tug from Bideford, and so is not included in the official list of wrecks.

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**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1865.** *Juanita*, a Spanish brig (200 tons), laden with sugar from Cardenas for Greenock, wrecked at Duckpool. A coast-guard boarded her and was met at the cabin by the Captain with a drawn sword. The former pointed to the crown on his buttons and they were soon friends. Crew of 11; one life lost. The coastguard officer received a sword of honour from the Queen of Spain, and the coxswain of the lifeboat a gold medal from the Spanish government.

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**June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1865.** The Queen *Adelaide* came ashore. The crew all saved themselves.

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**Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1865.** *Georgiana* wrecked at Sandy Mouth. Two lives lost – one by a dog placing its paws on his shoulders while swimming ashore.

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**Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1866.** *Enterprise* bound from Cork to Llanelly. Three drowned.

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**January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1867.** *Superior*, an old Dutch East Indiaman, only 3 saved out of 11, she was wrecked at Millook, below Widemouth.

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**June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1867.** *Uncle John* wrecked at Bude, laden with coal. Next day the ship broke up.

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**Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 1868.** Six vessels wrecked, three near Bude, two at Hartland Point, one under Higher Sharpnose – *Jeune Joseph* of Ridon in Brittany. All drowned. Cargo buckwheat.

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**Feb, 24<sup>th</sup>, 1868,** the steamer *Cornelia* (214 tons) of London wrecked above Nabor Point. Crew of 14 all saved. Cargo, coal tar from London for Swansea.

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**April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1868.** *Bonne Mère* wrecked at Bude Haven, crew of four saved.

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**Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1868.** *Pennelly* wrecked under Compass Point, Bude, and soon broke up. Crew saved.

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**Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1869.** The ship *Avonmore*, of Bristol (1158 tons) cargo of coal bound for Monte Video, wrecked at Morwenstow right below the Hut. Crew 22. The largest vessel that was ever wrecked along this coast. She had bravely stood out the terrible gale of Saturday night and Sunday although hard pressed and narrowly escaping being driven ashore. Her anchors were let go off Sharpnose and held some time before dragging; but in the teeth of such a storm it was manifest she must be driven onto the rocks. Bude and Clovelly rocket brigades were sent for. While the second mate and six of the crew were trying to cut away some of the rigging, a heavy sea swept them off and they were drowned. Bude apparatus happily arrived in time to rescue fifteen men who were clinging to the rigging. One man became jammed. Dr. King pluckily went out in the "breeches" in order to cut off his leg, should that be the only means of saving him. He was followed by Mr. Stapleton, who succeeded in releasing the man, and the remainder of the crew were hauled ashore. The ship soon broke up.

Hawker said "the scene is appalling. The wreck will not be cleared away for weeks or months. There is a vast heap of broken timber, sails, and pebbles, under which the men say by the fearful smell there is another corpse. But until the sea shall wash it low we cannot extricate the dead man. Four black men are still in the water and from the sharks that begin to haunt the scene we think they are rending and eating the dead: they come close to the shore with their great dorsal fins above water. May God have mercy on us all, for such scenes are harrowing close to one's own abode. There is not one consoling thought." The corpse of the second mate was not found till 17<sup>th</sup> October. The cargo was brought up the cliff path by donkeys.

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**Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1870.** *Modeste Eugine* wrecked on Bude sands, and soon broke up. Crew saved.

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**Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1873.** *Ellen Martin* wrecked at entrance of Bude Harbour. Crew saved by the rocket apparatus.

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**February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1873.** The *Kiloolah*, of Cork (128 tons), with a crew of 6, laden with coal from Lydney for Cork, was totally wrecked at Welcombe Mouth.

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**Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1873.** *Anna Gezina* totally wrecked on North side of Bude Harbour. Crew saved by the life-boat.

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**Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1874.** *Nancy*, a Padstow sloop (48 tons) with coal for Bude, wrecked at Welcombe Mouth. Three drowned.

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**Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1874.** *Charlotte* wrecked at Widemouth Bay. All saved by rocket apparatus.

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**February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1875.** The schooner, *Victor*, of St. Malo (150 tons), with a crew of 7, laden with pitwood from her home port for Cardiff, was totally wrecked half mile south-west of Marsland Mouth.

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Few realise the vast destruction of human life that has taken place on the Cornish coasts through the centuries. The churchyards on the coast tell only a small portion of the tale, as all bodies washed up on the shore were buried on the top of the cliffs before the passing of the Gilbert Act in 1808, which ordered all bodies of shipwrecked mariners to be buried in the churchyard of the parish in which they came ashore. On the Manacles during the last century there was a loss of 492 lives in four wrecks alone. The comparative freedom from these horrors on the Cornish coasts to-day is due mainly to the invention of steam, the knowledge of navigation, the advances of science, the electric telegraph, the wireless, and above all, the lighthouses.

Placing the lighthouse at Hartland Point in 1874 has stopped nearly all the wrecks on this coast line, and the Wolf Lighthouse quickly stopped the coast at Mullion being strewn with wrecks year after year.

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A book about Shipwrecks on the shores of this and neighbouring parishes during the past 100 years is in contemplation for this series. Anyone who can help with information, photos or sketches, please do. Many pictures expected.

## **Chapter VII.**

### **46 STORIES ABOUT HAWKER.**

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**1. The Demon at Marsland Mill.** One scorching hot August day, Hawker was returning home from Welcombe, and as he was descending into the Marsland Valley, near the mill, a brown animal glided out of the furze and slipped into the river. "A demon! cried Hawker; and making the sign of the Cross, he spurred up his horse and searched in vain the river where the animal disappeared, expecting to see it come to the surface.

Imagine the scene – Hawker seated on his steed, as white as a ghost and trembling with fear – all over a poor frightened, harmless otter. He says – it was a nameless, indescribable sensation. Had he known the habits of the otter, its disappearance need not have occasioned him any surprise; all who hunt the otter know that a frightened otter is a very difficult animal to find, and sometimes will give its pursuers hours of searching.

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**2. A Demon from the Sea at Marsland Mouth.** Hawker was struck by a sudden storm one day as he crossed the valley. Out of the sea leapt a demon, Hawker put his horse at a gallop and escaped from his demoniacal pursuer. Imagine him fleeing terror-stricken before a sudden squall of wind.

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**3. The Devil's Door at Welcombe.** In the north wall of Welcombe Church is a door, which Hawker had thrown open at every baptism, at the renunciation of the devil, for the escape of the demon, which had left the child. At every other time it was kept fast closed.

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**4. A Vision in Morwenstow Church of a Council of the Angels held in Heaven.** This extraordinary story was told me by Prebendary Chanter, Keeper of the Archives of Exeter Cathedral. One Sunday afternoon, Hawker was holding a baptismal service at the Church, at which Mr Chanter was present. Hawker stood in the doorway of the rood screen, and twined his arms around the two supports of the doorway. He drew a very vivid picture of a Court held in Heaven to elect the Guardian Angel who was to take charge of the soul of the child through life. After prolonged conference, at last an angel was elected, and was given a commission to be through life the child's Guardian Angel.

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**5. The purpose for which churches were built in the olden days.** The Rev. Barton Mills told me that not long before Hawker died, a festival was held at Morwenstow at which there was a large gathering of parishioners and neighbours. He said he remarked that it was a great pity that the Church was built on its present site, instead of in the centre of the parish, so that it could attract large congregations. Hawker thundered forth with great indignation - "In the day they built this church, they did not build for congregations, but DEI GLORIA."

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**6. Hawker and the Rooks in Morwenstow Churchyard.** In his day, as now, the colony of rooks suffered much from organised raids from great numbers of jackdaws which build in the cliffs. Even to-day when the rooks in the churchyard trees are nesting, jackdaws, like battalions of soldiers, raid the rookery, partly I think to try and drive the rooks out, and partly to tease the rooks. Hawker remonstrated with them. He said to them - "Jackdaws, leave my rooks in peace, and you shall have places to build your nests in my chimneys."

The pact was agreed to by both parties. For a time all went well. The jackdaws came to the Vicarage chimneys and nested here. One day the Bishop of Exeter, the redoubtable HENRY PHILPOTTS, was coming to pay an official visit to the church, and he had to stay the night. Mrs Hawker said it was absolutely necessary to have a fire in the spare room for it to be aired and made ready for his Lordship. Hawker pleaded that no fire should be lit, "I have given the jackdaws my promise on my word of honour, and they cannot be touched." The fire was lit, and the jackdaws were evicted, and they returned no more.

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**7. Hawker's rebuke to a rook-shooter.** His neighbour of those days at Rectory Farm - Mr Venning - had shot one or two of the rooks which had been reared in the rookery in the Churchyard. Next Sunday when his neighbour was seated in the front pew, Hawker went up to his pew and gave out the text - "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground

without your Father.” Then he gave him the dressing down of his life. He shot no more rooks.

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**8. A Night Escapade.** The silence of the night at the Vicarage is broken by footsteps on the landing, in the passage. Listen! they descend the stairs. Then on to the kitchen they go. Who is the night wanderer – a burglar? Stealthily one of the household moves downstairs to see who the intruder is, and what he is doing. Approaching the kitchen the dim light of a candle is seen flickering from the dairy – and what a sight – Hawker, spoon in hand, skimming off the beautiful thick cream from yesterday's milk, and greedily devouring it as fast as he could skim it off.

Hawker was fond of cream, especially at other people's expense. Next day the family would have their milk all right, but with the most nourishing properties extracted. There is no record that he afterwards stood the milk pans under the pump to make up the quantity he had consumed. The family had their milk next day, minus the cream, but that was better than having the joint product of the cow and the pump handle.

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**9. Hawker's Views.** On one occasion, a very pompous individual (one of the Archdeacons of Bodmin), when at the Vicarage, said “And what are your views Mr. Hawker?” He was taken to the Sitting Room window, and with a familiar waft of the hand:- “Those are my views; my opinions I keep to myself,” was the reply.

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**10. Tennyson's visit to Morwenstow Vicarage.** Tennyson was staying at the Falcon Hotel at Bude, and while he was there, he met with an accident and broke his leg. Dr. Dinham, of Stratton, who was a relative of Hawker's attended him, and when well enough, drove him over to Morwenstow to see his kinsman. Tennyson was surprised at being greeted with - “I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains.” Tennyson and Hawker were both great smokers. Tennyson was quite lost without his pipes (which he had left at the Falcon), so Hawker promptly supplied him with a full-length churchwarden clay pipe, which he much appreciated. Hawker described Tennyson as like a swarthy Spaniard with an eye like a sword.

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**11. Tennyson's Farewell to Hawker.** On the return journey to Bude, Hawker accompanied Tennyson and Dr. Dinham as far as Coombe Valley. There on King William Bridge these two remarkable men parted – Hawker returned to his parish and Tennyson to the wide, wide world. Never again did they meet on earth. Tennyson left with the words: “This is a day to be remembered; it is at least *one which I shall never again forget.*”

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**12. The Devil and the Barn.** Hawker built a barn to store his crops in on the edge of the cliff; in those days he farmed his glebe himself. His parishioners advised him to build it in a sheltered situation; but as usual he would have his own way. To protect it from the assaults of the devil and his violence he placed a Cross on it. As luck would have it, a mighty storm, not from the desert as



destroyed Job's family, but off the broad ocean smote the barn at midnight and blew off the roof. Hawker affirmed that the devil was so annoyed at seeing the cross that he hurled himself against it and rent it!

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**13. The Silent Bells of Bottreaux.** Hawker in early years picked up the old legend of the destruction of these bells. The story is that one of the lords of Bottreaux had a peal cast, and that they were being brought by ship to Boscastle Harbour to be placed in the silent tower of Bottreaux, now known as Forrabury Church. As the ship conveying the bells drew near the coast, the pilot caught the sound of the bells of his native parish, Tintagel, and thanked God for a safe voyage; the captain lost his temper, and swore, and told him to thank himself and the good ship.

Suddenly a tempest arose and smote the ship, and as she was entering the mouth of the harbour, an enormous sea overwhelmed her, and she went down under the headland which stands guard at the entrance. The pilot was the only man saved. The legend is that in storms ever since, the bells are heard tolling a muffled peal under the waves. Hawker made this the subject of his famous ballad. There is only space here to insert one verse.

“Still when the storm of Bottreaux' waves  
Is wakening in his weedy caves:  
Those bells, that sullen surges hide,  
Peal their deep tones beneath the tide:  
'Come to thy God in time!  
Thus saith the ocean chime:  
Storm, billow, whirlwind past,  
'Come to thy God at last!

The late Baring-Gould in his last book - “My few last words” - tells a touching story about the closing words of this ballad. He was visiting in London a Russian lady. To his great surprise she recited the last verse of Hawker's ballad - I will repeat his own words - “This Russian lady had been speaking with great animation; but all at once her face changed its expression, and as tears came into her eyes, she repeated almost in a whisper and to herself, rather than to me:-

“Storm, billow, whirlwind past,  
Come to thy God at last.”

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**14. Hawker and the herd of swine at Boscastle.** Hawker used to tell an excellent story of a short stay he made at Boscastle with a friend. In those days all down the hill which leads to the village the cottagers had their pig-sties by the roadside, with doors opening onto the road. Hawker and his friends stole out of their beds before dawn one morning and unfastened the pig-sty doors all down the hill, and then crept back to bed again. Not long had they returned before they heard most unearthly noises. The pigs had all escaped from their sties, and the whole herd had rushed violently down the steep - not into the sea, but into the gardens, backyards and lanes of the hamlet. The whole place was thrown into confusion; pigs yelled, men shouted, whips cracked, and Hawker summoned his landlady and enquired the cause of the tumult which had aroused him from his sleep. “*Why, maister,* she answered, “*the pegs is all mazed, and have a-rebelled*

*and be a-gwain to sea.”*

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**15. Dogs left alone on a wreck off Morwenstow Vicarage.** The crew had been taken off, but the two poor dogs left alone on board with only biscuit to eat. He says:- “last night sitting here at midnight with everything so still, the long howl of the dogs, coming over the sea, pleading for rescue, quite overcame me.”

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**16. Hawker raving at Clovelly Lifeboat-men.** At this wreck the men of Clovelly would not go out round Hartland Point and take the men from the wreck off Morwenstow. Hawker raved and shouted, the mate swore, and the friend Hawker had brought with him was offering untold gold, but all to no purpose. The Clovelly men refused on the ground that their boat could not live in such a sea. Go they did not; the ship was afterwards towed to Cardiff by a tug. This was in 1863.

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**16. Hawker the Mermaid.** There is a story told of him, but it belongs to his boyhood days, and it happened off Bude, not off Morwenstow. It is that he, night after night, sat on a rock, pretending to comb his hair, and uttering constant wails. No one could tell who the mermaid was until one evening a man appeared with a gun to shoot it. Then the mermaid disappeared to be heard and seen no more.

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**17. Hawker's Bathing Pool.** Some way beyond the beach under the cliff to the North of where St. Morwenna's Well is situated is a large pool hemmed in at low water by rocks, and at high by the sea; this is known as Hawker's Bathing Pool, where he used to take a morning dip. At low tide it is quite safe for bathing.

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**18. Hawker's Hut and his poems.** Recently Miss Laura Dinham (Hawker's niece), daughter of Dr. Dinham mentioned in No. 10 of this chapter, told me that in her young days, she used to stay with her Uncle Robert a great deal, and that many a time she has sat with her uncle in the Hut while he wrote his poems. This is worth mentioning as it places beyond doubt that many of his poems were written in the hut.

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**19. Hawker's Correspondence.** Hawker said his day was always mapped out, and that each fine evening he and his first wife used to wait till the post came in, which in those primitive days was about tea time, then they would go to the hut, open and read the letters and then answer them.

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**20. Hawker's Pipes.** Before he started out for a day's visiting in his parish, he had a large basket-full of churchwarden clays filled, and they lasted him all day, but he never started without them. He would some days take a basket-full down to the hut for the day.

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**21. Hawker's Post.** In his early days his letters had to be fetched from Shop, which is nearly two miles from the Vicarage. He used to pay a girl twopence a week for the task. This was in the days before Trades Unions.

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**22. The Postman's Visit.** It is on record that Hawker used to look out for his daily letters with the keenness of a child for its Christmas cards. When the postman passed without calling, anguish filled his soul to think that an ungrateful world had not thought of him.

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**23. Hawker and the Church Roofs.** He spent a great deal of money on the church roofs, much of which was wasted through his obstinacy to recognise facts. Instead of covering these large roofs with durable Delabole slate, as he was advised to do, he persisted in using the old oak shingle. This material is durable to a certain extent, but in time it rots and lets the wet in. Hawker said that wood was the material of which the Ark was built, and that of which the Cross was made, therefore he said it was the most suitable material for roofing the House of God. This, needless to say, is nonsense. In consequence of his obstinacy, he seems to have spent a lot of his time and money in repairing these roofs with oak shingles. As he was usually done over the oak, unseasoned wood being supplied, the work endured but a little while and it had to be done again.

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**24. Hawker at the Font.** (See 3.) His administration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism was most impressive. He was robed in beautiful vestments, and administered the rite with much dignity. This must at times have been somewhat rudely disturbed, as at a certain stage in the service, he used to pinch the child to make it squeal, to let the devil out of the child.

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**25. Tossing the Ring.** At a wedding his custom was to toss the ring into the air and catch it again, for luck for the happy pair.

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**26. Barley Sugar.** An elderly parishioner is still with us, whose duty it was at the beginning of the morning service on Sundays, to take up a paper with the number of the Hymns for the service written on it. The choir was then at the west end of the church. When this little girl handed the paper through the Screen to Hawker, she was each Sunday rewarded with a stick of barley sugar.

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**27. A Blasphemous Rogue and a Scoundrel.** A leading Church Newspaper, which is still published today, condemned Hawker in its columns as a *blasphemous rogue and a scoundrel*. This he certainly never was; he had his faults like other men, but he was without doubt a very godly man and a most loyal son of the Anglo-Catholic Church. This extraordinary statement seems to have arisen out of some misunderstanding on their part of something he had written.

It is recorded of Moses, that he on one occasion “spake unadvisedly with his lips;” and David was guilty of a similar indiscretion – he admits it himself - “I said in my haste all men are liars.” This well-known paper must have come to the same conclusions with regard to its defamation of Hawker; but unlike Esau, it has had ample opportunity of changing its mind, and no doubt it has done so, as its references to Hawker in recent years have always been kind, and have expressed real appreciation of the great work Hawker did for the Church at large, and for Morwenstow.

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**28. Burying Dissenters.** A dissenter came to him one day, who had lost a relative, and said to Hawker, “I suppose it is no use asking you to bury my friend.” “Bury a dissenter” - he said - “I shall be delighted; I should like to bury the lot!” (He was a keen Churchman.)

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**29. His indignation at unkindness to the poor.** Many instances are on record of this. He was all through his life a true friend to the poor. Over his front door he inscribed:-

“Be true to Church, be kind to poor,  
O minister! For evermore.”

and he really was. What fired his indignation most was when the aged poor were dragged off to the workhouse simply to save the charge which they were on the parish rates.

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**30. Ringing the Bell.** He had service on weekdays often, when it was time for the sexton to cease he would shout down the Church - “Now John, three for the Trinity, and one for the Blessed Virgin.” Then the service began.

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**31. Hawker's Appearance in London.** When he visited London he seemed to forget that he was visiting a civilised city, and appeared in the same strange, eccentric garb as he wore at Morwenstow – his fisherman's blue jersey, his wide-awake hat, and claret-coloured coat. On calling on one of his friends, he was received with amazement and was asked what on earth he was dressed in.

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**32. His reception in London.** His reception was cold, a sharp contrast to the warm-hearted reception which he had been accustomed from his own Cornish folk. It chilled him, and he said so. He complained bitterly of his reception. He was given introductions to three vicars of large London churches, with a view to preaching on behalf of the restoration of Morwenstow Church. He says - “The first was denied to me when I called, altho' he was confessedly at home, and in reply to a note from me, sent me a flat refusal. The second snubbed me. The third did not answer my letter.

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**33. Manning the Yards.** When the last body from the wreck of the *Phoenix* in 1843 was being brought up the cliff path from the shore, it was nearly dark, and the party of bearers with Hawker leading, threading their way up by the light of

torches and lanterns, they heard hearty cheers come in from the sea. A ship had neared the shore, and the crew seeing what had taken place, had *manned the yards* in honour of the dead.

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**34. Priest Ridden.** On hearing a parliamentary candidate at Stratton declare vehemently "I will never be priest-ridden!" Hawker scribbled the following quatrain:-

"Thou ridden! No! That should not be,  
By prophet or by priest!  
Balaam is dead, and none but he  
Could choose *thee* for his beast."

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**35. Feminine Admirers.** And he had an admirable way of dealing with too ardent feminine admirers, as he tells in a letter:- "Once we saw at Maerlake a lady writing with her parasol on the sand. When she was gone we went to the spot and read:-

On this soft sand thy name I trace,  
Which ocean's tide will soon efface;  
But vain the power of ocean's art  
To wash thine image from my heart.

She was watching, as we saw; so we wrote and went away. She came up to see, and read:-

On these soft sands we just have read  
The effusion of thy softer head:  
Old Ocean's power indeed is vain  
To wash the nonsense from thy brain.

So if she expected flattery, she was disappointed that day." - Perhaps his odd costume, brown cassock or purple coat over a fisherman's jersey had captivated her.

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**36. A Dangerous Anarchist.** In the sixties Hawker thought that after so many years as Vicar, that a change would be desirable for his flock, as well as for his own ministry. When the time came, the powers that be, who could have found him another benefice, decided that he was a dangerous anarchist, and that the safest place for such a dangerous member of society was Morwenstow, and there he stayed to the end of his life.

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**37. Hawker's impressions of Bishop Temple.** "The Bishop was civil but hard. A man without a tear." But he was mistaken. Bishop Temple, though he had a very stern exterior, had a heart so tender that it needed a crust. It has been said that, after scolding a priest for some fault, he would retire and have a good cry. Preb. Hingeston-Randolph said "He was easily moved. I have seen tears running down his cheeks often."

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**38. The man with three wives.** In his Oxford days he was married, and two of his wife's sisters came to live with him, and so he came to be known in Oxford as "the man with three wives." One can well imagine the fun the undergraduates made out of it.

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**39. A Woman that was a sinner.** Hawker writes:- "one person is added to my list for pastoral care, and she a mournful instance of the fact that "the wages of sin is death." She is a mother of three children although never a wife. She bitterly repented after her first fall, and abstained from evil until one of the farmers of the parish again led her into sin, and her second child was his. Now disease has assailed her; she is in rapid decline, and want and misery arrive. She is refused relief by the Guardians, both relatives of the man, and threatened with the Union House for her dying home."

I always consider it a tragedy that the last child Hawker baptized was an illegitimate child, date in the register: May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1875.

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**40. Living with a Wrecker on the Shore.** Before he was married he lived for several months in a kind of hut on the sea shore with a man who eked out his existence by wrecking and fishing. This man's house which he shared was built of wood he had gathered on the shore from time to time – the flotsam and jetsam of the sea. Here Hawker spent his time in study and watching the waves, and studying the habits of birds and insects. He said he never was happier in his life.

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**41. Living in a Log Cabin at Whitstone.** In his early days when staying at Whitstone he built a kind of log cabin in the middle of a wood, and there, where the quietude of the wood was broken only by the wind in the trees and the song of the birds, read for his Deacon's orders, only returning home for the night.

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**42. A faithful dog.** Hawker had a dog named Berg. When he went over to the Church this faithful animal preceded him with the key in his mouth which he delivered up into his master's hand on reaching the church door.

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**43. His horses.** Hawker lived in pre-motor days, and got about by riding or driving. He had two horses named Brychan and Gladys, after St. Morwenna's father and sister. He also had two ponies. Until late in life he usually rode over to Welcombe, which parish he held with Morwenstow from 1850 to the time of his death in 1875. During his declining years he drove a pair of ponies.

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**44. Church Robbers.** In the forties and fifties there were many church robberies in the neighbourhood. About 1847 Morwenstow Church was broken into during the night, and some shillings stolen from the alms-box. He says that the man was caught elsewhere soon after, with some of the marked coins in his pocket, and convicted for theft, and the sentence was "Transportation for 10 years." Hawker at this period slept with a revolver under his pillow.

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**45. Those Whipple-trees.** Three brothers, the youngest of whom was father of the printer of this book, worked together as carpenters. One day the parson sent a letter addressed to "John, Thomas, or Samuel Burrow." The message was "I want those \*whipple-trees, not to-morrow, next week, next month, nor next year, but Now, Now, Now," filling the paper to the bottom with "Nows." Morwenstow Registers record *this* Samuel was the youngest son of a Samuel, who was the youngest son of Samuel Burrow (carpenter) who was married Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 1795, to Sarah Galsworthy, "a minor with consent of parents."

\*For the benefit of those, who like myself, did not know what they were before coming to Morwenstow, I may explain that they are bars to the ends of which horse's traces are attached, the centre being locked to the implement towed. Sometimes called *whippen-trees*; at others for short, simply *whips*. The term *swingle-trees* is not used locally.

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**46. The abominable scandal of Hawker becoming a pervert to Rome.** In August and September 1925, these letters appeared in the *Western Morning News*, there being a revival of the controversy on this subject:-

Sir:- There is not a scrap of trustworthy evidence to show that Hawker was received into the Roman Church during his last hour of consciousness.

It has always seemed to me incredibly mean to impute to this loyal and valiant son of the English Church desertion in his dying hour of the Church he loved so well and served so faithfully. He was certainly not responsible for whatever may have happened after his tired mind lapsed into unconsciousness. It would be just as sensible to charge a dying man in his unconscious hours with recanting the Christian faith.

Hawker hated Romanism: his strong sympathies were with the great Orthodox Church of the East. How his great soul would have rejoiced to have joined in the welcome recently so cordially accorded to the great Orthodox prelates during their visit to Cornwall in June.

We have just commemorated at Morwenstow the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Hawker, who as a priest of the Most High God did so much to uphold the honour of God and to exalt before men God's holy laws.

H. HUGH BRETON,

August 18, 1925.

Vicar of Morwenstow

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Sir:- I have seen the letter by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth in the *Tablet*. These are the facts about Hawker's alleged reception into the Roman Communion.

As he was evidently dying, Hawker's lawyer was sent for to interview him and make final arrangements about his worldly affairs. His lawyer found poor Hawker not simply too ill to see him, but lying unconscious and dying, and nothing could be done. It was *after* this useless visit of the lawyer – readers note the sequence of events – that the alleged reception into the Roman Church took place; therefore at the time of his alleged reception he was an unconscious dying man.

What have your Roman correspondents to say in the face of these facts? Hawker can no longer defend himself, but I, one of his successors, will do so. The charge of his desertion in his dying hour of the Anglo-Catholic Church, which he loved so dearly and served so faithfully, is a slur on the honour of this loyal and valiant son of the English Church. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth in his letter careful avoids the point in dispute, viz., Hawker's condition of mind and

body at the time of his alleged reception, and his lordship dwells at length on the funeral, which was taken by the Roman Catholic authorities, a fact which no one disputes.

Many of us respect and admire the ministry of and the work done by the Italian Mission in England, but those in authority must not make preposterous claims which cannot be sustained when tested by the searching light of truth. One of your anonymous correspondents hurled a gratuitous insult at Hawker in denying the validity of his priesthood.

During the last half century by no other single action has the Roman Church done itself more lasting injury in England, than by the reckless and foolish bull in which his Holiness Leo XIII condemned Anglican orders as invalid. The pronouncement cannot be revoked without the abandonment of the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff.

Hawker died, as he had lived for 45 years, a faithful priest of the Most High God in communion with the Anglo-Catholic Church.

H. HUGH BRETON. Vicar of Morwenstow

Morwenstow Vicarage, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1925.

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Sir, - He is buried at Plymouth. Why? He was unconscious when he died! His spirit still hovers round the haunts of Hennacliff, where his favourite jackdaws and ravens cry "The Plaint of Morwenstow." "Why bring they not his body back to me?"

Bodmin, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1925. CORNISH CHOUGH.

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Sir, - One who saw Hawker of Morwenstow in extremis never put pen to paper, though I often asked him to do so; he is now at rest. I, Hawker's godchild (we loved one another well) have read most of the letters from time to time during 50 years written about him in your paper and others.

This is the first time I have put my pen to paper on this subject. When dying Hawker asked for a Catholic priest to be sent for. Fifty years ago it invariably meant a Roman Catholic to almost everyone, but not to him, who was so much in advance of his times. Everyone who knows the ways of a Roman Catholic priest in dealing with souls in extremis well understands what took place when the Roman priest arrived. His body rests in Roman Catholic ground. Let it rest. His soul is at peace with God. Jesu mercy, Mary Pray.

ANGLO-CATHOLIC PRIEST.

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This story was told me on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1925, by Prebendary Chanter, Keeper of the Archives at Exeter Cathedral.

Hawker the day before he left Morwenstow to go to Plymouth summoned his churchwardens to the Vicarage, and told that he would not return to Morwenstow alive. He then explained to them the spot in the Church where he wished to be buried, and he gave them the names of the bearers whom he had chosen to act at his funeral. Prebendary Chanter said to me:- "Does that sound like a man who was just going over to Rome?"

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From a letter Rev. J. C. D. Yule, rector of Bradford, N. Devon, to the Rev. Dr. F.



G. Lee. 7<sup>th</sup> Oct., 1875.

“John Olde, his man-servant, said:- 'Tho' master knew me and Mrs Hawker, he was quite past all power of distinguishing between one thing and another, such as Ch. of E. and Ch. of R., for some time before his death.'

At the time Olde said:- 'I had been watching by his bedside for many hours, and was desired to go down and take some refreshment, and while I was absent for about ½ hour, *whatever it was*, was done! It is the *truth*, and I wish it to be known.”

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All, all is gone – no longer roll  
Vision and dream around my soul;  
But in their stead float down the wind  
These fragments of a broken soul.

Still, home once more! For in this dell  
The dust of love will fondly dwell;  
And scenes so dear in life shall hide  
The hearts that death could not divide.

---

### **Chapter VIII.**

#### **Two Poems by Hawker**

*Hitherto unpublished*

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#### **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DAY, 1872.**

- 
- 1 In the caves of the lone wilderness thy youth  
Thou hidest, shunning the rude throng of men,  
And guarding the pure treasure of thy soul  
From the least touch of sin.

---

  - 2 There to thy sacred limbs the camel gave  
A garment coarse; the rock a bed supplied,  
The stream thy thirst, locusts and honey wild  
Thy hunger satisfied.

---

  - 3 Oh, blest beyond the Prophets of old time!  
They of the Saviour sang that was to be;  
Him present to announce, and shew to all,  
Was granted but to thee.

---

  - 4 Through the wide world was never mortal man  
Born holier than John; to whom was given

The guilty world's Baptized to baptize  
And ope the door of Heaven.

---

- 5 Immortal glory to the father be  
With His Almighty sole-begotten Son,  
And Thee, co-equal Spirit, one in Three  
While endless ages run.
- 

**HYMN.**

---

We are marching through the desert,  
Away from Egypt's strand;  
We are marching through the desert,  
To win the Promised Land.  
The land we leave behind us  
Is sin's abiding place;  
The land which lies beyond us -  
The Home of Jesu's grace.  
March, march from Egypt's strand,  
'Till we reach the Happy Land.

---

Before us goes a pillar,  
Still changing yet the same,  
It is the cloud in day-time,  
By night it is of flame.  
The cloud it is the Manhood  
Of Jesus Christ the Lord;  
The flame it is the Godhead  
Of Jesus Christ the Word.                      March, &c.

---

Two clear-toned silver trumpets  
Are pealing day by day.  
One trumpet calls the people,  
One cheers us on our way.  
The trumpet of the summons  
Is Christ's Baptismal Bath;  
Christ's Holy Altar-Service  
The trumpet for the path.                      March, &c.

---

The flag of royal Judah  
Is waving in the van;  
Behind us in the rear-ward  
Floats high the flag of Dan.  
Christ Jesus, Judah's Lion,  
Is Leader of the host;

Christ Jesus, Judge of all men  
Defends the rear-ward post.                      March, &c.

---

The raise aloud the war-cry,  
And wide your banners fling;  
A shout is heard among us,  
The shouting of a King.  
March on, march on straight forward,  
Look not to left nor right;  
Christ Jesus he will lead us,  
And we shall win the fight.                      March, &c.

---

### **Chapter IX.**

---

The verses reprinted below from the *Daily Chronicle*, were read by the author at a public tea which followed the unveiling of the Hawker Memorial Window, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>. 1904. The Earl of Rosebery was a large contributor to the cost of the window.

---

Nature bestows on every place  
A gloom, a glory, or a grace;  
But yet strange power belongs to Man  
The hill and vale to bless or ban.

---

Here, by this black, forbidding coast,  
Dwelt one who heard the heavenly host  
Singing in every wind that blows,  
In wave that breaks or stream that flows,

---

And surely deemed that love divine,  
Whose tendrils all his church entwine,  
Is not too distant to be won  
By Nature's humblest orison.

---

Wherefore amid these moors and steeps  
His spirit ever laughs and weeps,  
Weeps with the storm or laughs with glee  
For rhythmic laughter of the sea:

---

For who beside Morwenna's well  
The "former gladness" tries to tell,  
Or reads in Tidna-Combe's "mild" stream  
The pathos of the poet's dream, –

---

Who lingers by St. Nectan's Kieve,  
Watching the "foamy waters" leave  
Their mossy cave, to seek for rest  
In Severn Sea's unslumbering breast, –

---

Who strays where rushy Tamar spills  
Her new-born flood in slender rills,  
Unguessing in her modest source  
The "goodly channel" of her course, –

---

Who pauses reverently to con  
The sacred well-house of St. John,  
Whose fountain feeds the lustral bowl  
Wherein is laved each infant soul, –

---

What pilgrim, – sinner, saint, or sage, –  
Who ponders here a vanished age,  
By main or moor, by holy grot  
Or mystic knoll, remembers not

---

The name of Hawker? Honoured long  
In Cornwall for his life and song,  
And now in British hearts enshrined,  
A man at peace with God, in friendship with Mankind.

- *F. B. Money-Coutts.*

NOTE BY THE PRINTER. - I am specially interested in this book, for though I live in the adjoining parish of Hartland, my father was a Morwenstow man (*See Story No. 45*). We still have his Certificate of Confirmation with Hawker's bold signature. Father was a remarkably ingenious workman and jobs he did are even now to be seen although he died in 1890 after a long illness. From him I learnt to use most tools. In 1896 I commenced printing the *Hartland Chronicle*, 1d. Monthly, which still gives the local news including Morwenstow, but appears somewhat irregularly about 10 to 12 times per annum. Nearly 600 copies are sold, including over 130 posted (halfpenny stamps) and agents parcels. Early in 1913 the *Daily Mirror* did me the honour of printing 8 portraits of myself performing the different operations of producing "A One-Man Newspaper in Devonshire." In 1902 I got out the first book ever printed here:- THE STORY OF HARTLAND by R. PEARSE CHOPE, B.A., author of *The Dialect of Hartland*. It is a popular but exact and reliable history of the place from the earliest times. In his Preface, Mr Chope said "It is due to the Printer to say...that he combines the various functions of compositor, proof-reader, printer, binder, publisher, and bookseller, and that the press on which it has been printed is almost entirely his own handiwork." The 500 copies were sold within a few months, and I printed another such a lot; a few copies are still available at 1/1 post free.

THOS. CORY BURROW, Hartland, Devon.

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