

chosen to illustrate the custom and to show the rate of pay then prevalent, 11/3 per week. It was the evil system that was at fault. The employers were compelled, in self-defence, to take advantage of it, because, through heavy levies, they themselves indirectly paid that part of the wages given in Poor Relief. Instances are here given of the annual levies made :

“ 1821. Recd. by Five Levies
at 2/- in the Pound £680 6 10½.”
“ 1823. Recd. by four Levies
at 2/- & one Levy at 1/- in
the pound £612 6 2¼.”

Five levies at 2/- each yearly were of course equal to a rate of 10/- in the £.

As may well be imagined, there was an eager desire to assist the migration of those most likely to become a charge on the parish, combined with a strict investigation of a poor man's settlement, i.e. his right to claim that particular parish as his own for the purpose of Poor Relief.

“ 1823. Jan. 25th. Paid expences at the Record Room for having Wm. D——'s Settlement tried, when it appeared he belonged to this Parish. 3/-

“ 1824. Feb. 5th. Thomas G—— being distressed is to have Relief & his Settlement tried.”

“ 1825. Nov. 17th. Several persons reside in the Parish who do not belong to it: to be inquired after to know where they do belong.”

“ 1826. Thursday, Oct. 26th. William A—— who has been residing in London for upwards of ten years, applied to the Vestry for money to

pay one quarter's rent for a house, to Michaelmas day last and informed the Gentlemen present that he had three stamped receipts, for the former Quarters, and it was agreed that if he produced them the Overseer was to send him the money for the quarter above named, which would (he said) gain him a settlement.

Qr's Rent	£3	5	0.
Gave him to take him to London						5	0."

It will be seen from this that a period of residence and paying rent would qualify a man for his settlement in a parish. Birth, of course, always conferred that right, but in the case of such birds of passage as tramps it was necessary to take every precaution that the place of birth should be properly recorded, since there were no Registrars of Births in those days except the clergy. Hence we have such an entry as the following in the church register :

“ 1711. John the son of Tho. Wright & Mary his wife a travelling woman, it was brought to bed in our parish, was baptiz'd Jan. 1.”

The parish looked after its own poor, but was by no means charitable to strangers. When a man and his family were destitute, and the magistrates decided they belonged to some other parish, it was ordered that they should be removed thither. Several copies of such orders are preserved in the Parish Chest, some directed to the Constables and Thirdboroughs of Milton, others to the Churchwardens and Overseers. The cost of the removal in those days was, of course, great, as travelling was not accom-

plished with present-day ease and rapidity. There is an account of the expenses incurred in removing a family from Milton to Halesowen, where they "belonged." It takes up the first page of one of the Overseer's books.

1814. April 25. set off with John M—— & is wife & two Children to Hales Owen			
Expences attending the same Orders	6	0	
Surtevicate of the marage	1	0	
two Days at the Sessions & Expences	1	0	0
Coach fair & Expences at Northton .	3	12	6
Weedon & Dunchurch	1	2	
Coventry	1	4	
Coachman at Birmingham	5	0	
Supper & breakfast at Do.	1	15	6
hackney Coach to Hales Owen	1	0	0
Expence at Hales Owen	4	6	
Coach from Birm'g : to Hayford	19	0	
Expence at Birmingham Coming back	3	0	
Coachman	2	6	
banbury Lane	4	6	
Pd. John Gleed garding M—— 3 Days & 3 Nights	7	6	
Pd. Hill for going with me	1	0	0
M——'s Wife & Children came back & May 7 sent to Gail the Commitment	2	0	
Expences at North'ton	2	0	
my Time &c. to Hales owen	1	10	0
Pd. Richd Robinson for mending the woman's shoes	1	6	
Expences with the Overseer of Hales owen when he came to recind the Order	10	0	
Pd. for the Order coming by Post	1	4	
Pd. the Overseers Expences coming to Milton & not to appeal against the Order	9	9	0

Pd Nichols expence of M—— & is	
Wife	2 12 6
August 6. Warrant & examination for	
M——'s Wif	<u>3 0</u>
Total	<u>£25 14 10</u>

The Act of 1837, which is still the guiding principle of our Poor Law Administration, has brought about a much more satisfactory, though by no means perfect, state of affairs. Families need not now be removed, but the place of settlement is responsible for the relief paid by the parish in which they live.

With regard to its own poor, Milton seems to have done its best, and there is a quaint resolution to obtain medical attendance for two men, but the wording would imply that the Vestry had little faith in the doctor's skill or ability :

“ 1827, March 28th. Edward Southam to try to cure B——'s leg, and also to try what he can do with William F——.”

Possibly this did not prove satisfactory, for on April 3rd, 1828, it was resolved :

“ That application should be made to some professional gentleman to attend the poor of the Parish upon an annual salary.”

In one brief entry a lurid light is thrown on prison conditions :

“ 1825, March 17th. Thomas I—— expected out of Gaol in a few days, and being almost naked, to have one shirt purchased for him.”

Another entry is of a more placid description, being of a pastoral nature :

“ 1828, Nov. 13th., John T—— to have a Smock frock given him from the charitable fund.”

In 1821 was held the second Census, the returns of which are fully copied out in the Vestry Book for that period, together with a general summary, which is here given :

Number of Males	. 227
,, ,, Females	. 265
Total	. <u>492</u>
Inhabited Houses	. 105
Uninhabited Houses.	. <u>3</u>
Occupied by	. <u>108 Families.</u>
Occupations {	Chiefly Employed in
	Agriculture . . . 82
	Chiefly Employed in
	Trade &c. . . . 19
	Remaining Families . . . 7
	. <u>108</u>

One hundred years later, in 1921, the population of Milton was :

Number of Males	. 280
,, Females	. 293
Total.	. <u>573</u>
Inhabited Houses	. 143
Occupied by 145 families.

Milton, even in the early part of last century, was far-seeing and philanthropic. Receipts are preserved showing subscriptions from our parish

of two guineas each year from 1814 to 1818 “ towards the Establishment and Support of the *General Infirmary*, in the Town of *Northampton*, for the Relief of the Sick and Lame Poor of all Counties.” Also, at a Public Vestry, on March 28th, 1825, it was agreed “ to subscribe to the Northampton Fire Engine,” a wise precautionary step.

This was a time of great distress and unrest throughout the country, and we find the Rector of Milton, Dr. Miller, opening a subscription list for the poor of his parish. Rioting seems to have taken place, and the Vestry Minutes show that another subscription list was opened to pay men who were to keep watch at night in the village :

“ 1831. January 6th. It was ordered this Vestry that the men who keep watch in the night shall have two shillings and sixpence each, and that the same be defrayed from the subscription entered into, on the tenth day of December last, in consequence of a threatening letter directed to Mr. J—— D——.”

Again, another entry :

“ 1831. Feb. 10th., The men who kept watch in the night, to receive 2 shills. each per night and their expences of eating and drinking to be paid for them.”

In the year 1827, the present Baptist Chapel was erected in the village. It is a commodious building, with a good-sized vestry, and has seating accommodation in the gallery and below for about 170 worshippers in all. The stone with which it was built is from the local “ stone-pit

close," and was given by Mr. Joseph Dent of Milton Manor.

This chapel probably replaced an earlier one, registered in 1820 (see below), to which there is a reference in the Parish Vestry Minutes for July 29th, 1824. A meeting of the Vestry was summoned "for the purpose of Awarding the Pews &c lately erected in the Church to the Proper Claimants," and amongst the awards is the following :

" No. 5 Middle Aisle to Mr. Joseph Dent for his House, now occupied by Thomas Tomalin, and Meeting House."

However, the Baptists had begun to make their appearance in the village more than a hundred years before this. The first intimation of this we have from the church register :

" — the son of Thomas Green, Dissenter & Carpenter, & Anne his wife, was born Feb. 16th. 1701/2 but unbaptised."

From the fact that his four children were unbaptised there is some reason for concluding that Thomas Green was a Baptist, probably the first one in Milton.

Nonconformist Chapels, or Meeting Houses as they were called in those days, were registered and certified as places of worship by the Bishop of the Diocese up to 1852, after which this power was vested by statute in the Registrar-General. The following is a list of the Meeting Houses registered for the Parish of Milton, extracted from the register of the Bishop of Peterborough :

Description of place of meeting.	When certified and registered.
The house of William Collier .	16 Janry. 1819.
A Building	13th. July 1820.
(Probably the Baptist Chapel prior to that built in 1827).	
A certain Outhouse the property of William Black and in the occupation of Joseph Hodges	7th. July 1821.
A Building on a plot of ground adjoining the Principal Street	21 July 1827.
(This was the present Baptist Chapel.)	
A House in the occupation of Simon Twistleton	13 Janry. 1836.
A House in the occupation of James Couch	19 Febry. 1838.
A House and premises in the occupation of Joseph Hodge	22nd Octr. 1847

Later on, the Primitive Methodists built a small chapel near Stockwell in 1865, which has seen many ups and downs, and I understand that the Wesleyan Methodists about the same date hired a cottage in which to hold services in Milton.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, the usual conveyance for long journeys was the stage coach, but the tentacles of modern progress were now reaching across the country. Feelers in the direction of means of transport other than by road had been put forth in the latter part of the previous century. William Pitt, who wrote a *Survey of the County of Northampton*, published in 1809, visited the county in

1797 and found that the Grand Junction Canal had by then been completed from Braunston to Blisworth. It was intended to make a cut from Gayton to Northampton. Nine years later, in 1806, Pitt again visited the county, and found that the new cut had not been made to the town, but that from the canal "the communication with Northampton is by a railway." This was, of course, a tramway for trucks drawn by horses.

Near Mr. W. T. Asplin's brickyard, close to the bridge, the canal widens and a landing-place has been built. At this point was undoubtedly the wharf where goods from Northampton were loaded on to the waiting barges, and near this spot the tramway from the town had its terminus. It must be remembered there was no railway bridge in the way then. From the wharf, the tramway ran along the straight piece of the Milton road, which was levelled, for about a quarter of a mile up to the turn by the next bridge, then it ran along the site of the present canal. Parts of the old tramlines and sleepers were found in position when the canal to Northampton was drained in 1824.

This method of transport did not meet with the approval of the Corporation of Northampton, owing to the extra loading and unloading from tram to barge, so the present canal was eventually cut, joining the other by the "Navigation Inn." Where it joins is locally called the "Arm," owing of course to its branching off. The canal to Northampton was made some time after William Pitt's visit in 1806, and before 1824, when this branch was drained.

A more formidable rival in methods of transport soon appeared in the field. On September 17th, 1838, was opened the London and Birmingham Railway, afterwards the London and North-Western Railway, and now, through amalgamation with others in 1923, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. This passed through the south-east corner of the parish. The station was at first more conveniently situated for Milton than it is now, the booking office being in the houses south of the bridge spanning the road between Milton and Blisworth, with a covered flight of steps leading up to the platform on the railway embankment. Some few years afterwards the station was moved to its present position, its name being changed to Gayton Station, and afterwards Blisworth Junction.

On June 2nd, 1845, was opened the branch line from Blisworth to Peterborough, through Bridge Street Station, Northampton. A Public Vestry was held on October 9th, 1845, "to consider the propriety of assessing the Northampton and Peterborough branch of the London and Birmingham Railway passing through the parish of Milton." Eventually the assessment for this piece of railway was as follows :

	£	s.	d.
Rateable Value	253	3	7½
Former Annual Value of Land before Railway was formed	11	1	10½

George Borrow, in his *Wild Wales*, describes his journey from Peterborough to "Blissworth" by this railway in 1854.

At a Parish Vestry, on December 15th, 1853, it was resolved to build a seven-foot arch over the brook that runs across the road below the churchyard. The work was done in 1854, and the road levelled up for a length of forty yards, the material for filling up being taken from the crown of the Church Hill. In 1855 a culvert was turned between the drain and the brook at Stockwell. About this time, too, the bridge over the stream crossing Gayton Road was built. This was once known as "Croxford's Bridge." The bridge over the stream at the east end of Pluck's Lane was also built. As the road running past Milton House to the top of Pluck's Lane was being lowered, soil was taken thence to level up the road by these two bridges as well as to fill up the three Fishpools. Further measures for the safety and comfort of wayfarers, especially on dark nights, were taken in 1875 when the brook near Stockwell was covered with an arch.

Sanitary conditions were by no means satisfactory, for in 1863 smallpox was again rife in the village, and in the autumn of 1884 typhoid fever raged. The outbreak was evidently traced to the public water supply, for in December the water in the town well was condemned as unfit. The arch of the old well can still be seen in the wall of the garden facing the War Memorial. Eventually, a parish well was sunk in 1887 on the site of the old Pound, a few yards away. Nor had the sanitary state of the village been neglected. Since 1885 it had been continually under discussion, and at last the work of

draining was begun in 1890, the drain being taken into "Mr. Manning's second meadow." The drainage system was further extended in 1892. Microbes and bacilli had one more fling in 1893, when several cases of cholera occurred in the village.

Meanwhile the railway was not idle. In 1875 an Act was passed for making a new line from Roade through Northampton to Rugby, called the Bletchley, Northampton and Rugby line. This runs through the parish, east of the church. In 1877, a field on the glebe farm was acquired for a few years by the Railway Company on which to deposit spoil, hence this field has been given the name of "Spoil Bank." As the line approaches the parish, after branching off from the old main line to Blisworth, it quickly dips deeper into the ground, owing to the lower levels to be met. The cutting had to be made not only through the rock but also into the Lias clay beneath. In course of time the clay was so affected after heavy rain that the rock lost its support. A serious slip occurred in November, 1891, and the new line was buried under thousands of tons of fallen rock. To strengthen the enormous walls that were then built, massive iron girders were fixed above the line, stretching from side to side, as a support.

It may here be mentioned that in 1922 the rateable value of the three sections of railway in the parish was £3360, but in 1923 it was reduced to £3057 on appeal.

The Local Government Act of 1894 brought into being the Parish Council, practically putting

an end to the old-time Public Vestry, which now only meets once a year at Easter. With its extremely limited powers, the Parish Council is, as it were, but the feeble ghost of the vestries of old, most of whose civil powers are now distributed amongst the County Council, the District Council and the Board of Guardians.

In 1913, Sir W. Ryland D. Adkins generously presented oil lamps, with the posts and brackets necessary, for lighting the village streets at night. The first rate for this purpose was made on December 20th, 1913. However, owing to the abnormal rise in the price of oil and other charges during the War, the lighting of the streets had to be temporarily abandoned. Since then, both the Electric Light and Gas Companies of Northampton have canvassed the village, but so far our hopes of enjoying these benefits have not been realised.

No further event of importance occurred until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, when the men and lads of the village, with very few exceptions, took their gallant share in the grim task. Nor were the women of Milton without their part to perform, for a Red Cross Working Party was formed and met at the Rectory under the presidency, first of Mrs. A. C. Neely, and from 1917 of Mrs. B. E. Evans who, until her removal to Milton with her husband, had been Managing Secretary of the Great Eastern Railway Rest Room for Sailors and Soldiers at Peterborough. Various articles were knitted and sewn for men on service, and Christmas parcels were despatched to Milton

men and lads. The people at home were not to remain in any feeling of security in their Midland village. About 10.30 on Friday night, October 19th, 1917, a Zeppelin airship passed over, dropping four bombs as near to the parish as Hunsbury Hill, much to the surprise of two men who had returned that same night to Milton on leave from the trenches in Flanders. This airship had come from the direction of Northampton, where it had dropped bombs and killed a woman and two children in a house near Castle Station.

For the first time in history since the cessation of the Curfew, no lights were allowed to be seen at night. Windows were shrouded with thick blinds or curtains, and gardeners had to be careful that bonfires were extinguished at dusk.

At last, on Monday, November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed. The bells of the old parish church rang out a joyous peal—to some, alas, coming too late—and a united Service of Thanksgiving was held in church on the following Thursday morning. Peace Day was celebrated the next year on the official date, Saturday, July 19th, the festivities consisting of an open-air meat tea on the Green for adults, and a tea for children in the schoolroom, followed by sports and a display of fireworks in the field to the east of the church. A year later, the War Memorial on the Little Green to those Milton men who died on service, was unveiled by General Lord Horne on Saturday, July 17th, 1920. There was a short service, opened with

the hymn, "O God, our help in ages past." Prayers were offered by the Rector and by the Rev. W. Wyatt, the local acting Baptist Minister. Afterwards the Rector asked Sir W. Ryland D. Adkins, K.C., M.P., Chairman of the Parish Council, to take charge of the Memorial on behalf of the Parish Council. Sir Ryland accepted the charge in the name of the Council and then asked General Lord Horne to unveil it. When this had been done, the hymn, "How bright those glorious spirits shine," was sung, at the close of which buglers from the Northampton Barracks sounded the "Last Post" and the "Reveille." Amongst those present were the Boy Scouts, of which Milton then possessed a troop, the schoolchildren, the ex-service men, who mustered well to do honour to their fallen comrades, and Brigadier-General H. E. Stockdale, D.S.O., C.B., who had recently taken Milton Manor for a few years.

The Memorial was designed by J. A. Gotch, Esq., F.R.I.B.A. The cost was subscribed by people of the parish, and amounted to £100, with a few extras. The Memorial is a slender stone shaft, terminating in a cross. On each side of the base from which it springs are panels, bearing the following inscriptions :

SOUTH : To keep in mind those who from this place gave their lives in the Great War, 1914-1919.

EAST : James William Collar, Ernest Richard East, Noel Legard Alexander, Frederick Ryland Digby.

NORTH : William Munn, William Frank Hanwell, Harry Cherry, Reuben John Morton.

WEST : William Thomas Clark, Francis James Turner, Frederick George Yates, George Twiselton.

In the above, the points of the compass are given approximately.

During the Great War, so many medical men joined the Army that the number left at home was very small. Unfortunately the winter of 1917-1918 and that of 1918-1919 are to be remembered for the severe epidemics of diphtheria and influenza. With our resident doctor at the Front, and with no nurse, no telegraph, no telephone, we had to do the best we could, but Dr. Ryan, of Roade, who looked after Dr. Jeaffreson's practice, worked untiringly and, one may almost say, unceasingly. The Rectory became something like a Medical Stores, where almost everything could be obtained for sick cases.

After such an experience, the Rector endeavoured to obtain a District Nurse and, although there were a few disappointments, he was able at last to form a District Nursing Committee for Milton and to have one formed at Collingtree. With these the Committee already existing at Blisworth was amalgamated to form one Joint Association affiliated to that of the County. This was inaugurated on March 5th, 1919.

On December 6th, 1923, there were 285 names on the List of Parliamentary Voters for Milton. We may compare this with the "Copies of the Polls taken at Northampton for the Election of

Knights of the Shire, in the years 1702, 1705, 1730, 1748, and 1806." The numbers of Milton people who voted in those years were respectively 11, 13, 22, 20, and 7.

This chapter would not be complete without some reference to the Free Gardeners. One of the oldest of Friendly Societies, it is of Scottish origin, and there is evidence that lodges existed in Scotland about 1680. Among the different federations are the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners, the British Order of Ancient Free Gardeners, the National United Order of Free Gardeners and the Saint Andrew's Order of Free Gardeners.

The "Lord of the Manor Lodge" of Milton, of which the writer is an honorary member, is No. 1138 in the National United Order of Free Gardeners. It was duly opened for the first time in January, 1873, and now, fifty years after, it has a membership of 320 adults and about 100 juveniles. The "Club Parade" is held on Whit-Sunday, when the members make a house-to-house collection for the Northampton Hospital, and in the evening march to church, headed by a band.

It remains to add that Milton is well served with motor-bus facilities, being on the Northampton to Towcester route. First in the field were Messrs. F. and E. Beeden, who ran a bus in 1912. Afterwards came the "Midland Motor Bus Company," which was discontinued in 1922. In January, 1921, Messrs. Nightingale and Son put their first bus on the route. Beside these there are now several smaller motor

conveyances that ply on market days between Northampton and the villages beyond Milton.

Since writing the above a " silver " band has been formed in the village, silver-plated instruments having been obtained. This, it is hoped, will prove of benefit to the men and lads of the village.