



Rev. R. S. Hawker. Drawing by J. T. Blight, 1856 (photo., *Society of Antiquaries*).

A HAWKER MANUSCRIPT AND PORTRAIT

In 1975 the Institution received an author's manuscript copy of *The Song of the Western Men*, better known as *Trelawny*, by Robert Stephen Hawker of Morwenstow (1803-75). It is not the author's original draft of the ballad, written in 1824, but a fair copy with a bibliographical note, written probably many years later. In 1867 Hawker prepared a copy for a friend, Dr. Bloxam,¹ which could be the present MS, but there may well have been several such copies.

The MS was bought at Sotheby's in May 1968 by Miss Emily Driscoll of Shepherdstown, West Virginia, U.S.A., being then part of an album formed by Theophilia Gwatkin, the niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It had been added to the album by her heirs, a clerical family named Haddow. Miss Driscoll extracted it and re-sold it at Sotheby's in February 1975, when it was bought by Mr. Bruce Burley, bookseller of Truro, from whom it was bought by public subscription for presentation to the Institution.

The MS sets out the ballad in six verses, differing in a few minor respects from Hawker's final version printed in his collected poems:²

- verse 1 line 3 King James *his* men
- verse 3 line 4 *We'll* set Trelawny free
- verse 4 line 3 *All side by side*, and hand *to* hand
- verse 6 line 3 But here's twenty thousand bold (*Cornish* omitted)

The following is added:

NOTE

With the exception of the refrain (Here's &c) this Ballad was written by me under Sir Bevil's Oak, in Stowe Wood, in Novr. 1824. It was soon after inserted in a Plymouth Paper without my Signature. It fell into the hands of Mr. Davies Gilbert, who sent a Copy to the Gentleman's Magazine, under the impression that he had stumbled on the original Song. It is also a matter of pride to me, that it received the Praise of Sir W. Scott, as 'a spirited Ballad of the Seventeenth Century'. Many other Critics, and among them Macaulay, the Percy Society, and Charles Dickens, have recorded their mistaken but complimentary persuasion that it was the antique offspring of the Stuart age.

R.S.H.

Another note states:

This Song of the Western Men was accidentally omitted in "The Echoes of Old Cornwall" which I published in 1846.

Much information on the origin and history of the ballad is contained in the biography of Hawker by his son-in-law, C. E. Byles.³ Following Hawker's first, anonymous, publication in the *Royal Devonport Telegraph and Plymouth Chronicle* on 2 September 1826, and Davies Gilbert's publication in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in November 1827,⁴ Hawker first claimed the ballad as his own by including it in *Records of the Western Shore* (1832); it has since achieved fame as the national refrain of Cornwall, and it is fitting that this MS should have come into the Institution's keeping in the year of the centenary of Hawker's death.

We mark this occasion also by publishing a portrait sketch of Hawker by J. T. Blight, dated 1856 and referred to by Hawker in a letter of 6 August 1858 in these terms:

¹ C. E. Byles, *Life and Letters of R. S. Hawker* (1905), 561.

² *Cornish Ballads* (1904 edn.), 1.

³ Byles, *op. cit.* chap. 3.

⁴ Vol. 67, Pt. 2, 409.

I did for him what I have hitherto steadfastly refused to all, and that is, I stood to him for a sketch of myself in cassock and hat, and this, if he can engrave it satisfactorily, he intends to publish. He objects to my name for the outline, which is, 'A Shadow from the Wall [*sic*,? for Well] of Morwenna'. But this, I think, will be the title it will bear.⁵

Blight actually included a much smaller engraved version of the sketch in his published illustration of St. John's Well on Morwenstow Glebe,⁶ but the original sketch has not previously been published. On Blight's illness it was given in 1879 by his father to William Copeland Borlase, and it is now inserted in an important volume of sketches and notes by Blight, Borlase and others in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.

Thanks are due to Mr. Bruce Burley for information as to the provenance of the manuscript, and to the Society of Antiquaries for permission to publish the sketch.

P.A.S.P.

⁵ Byles, *op. cit.* 263.

⁶ J. T. Blight, *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall* (1858), 82.