**The Norton family and the Rising of the North**

**Richard Norton** was the head of his illustrious house, which remained faithful to the Catholic religion even though the Church of England was the official state religion and Catholics were banned and persecuted.

Despite this fact he held positions of influence during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. He was Governor of Norham Castle under Mary, and in 1568-69 was sheriff of Yorkshire. He had been pardoned for joining in the Pilgrimage of Grace, but he and his brother Thomas, his nine sons and many of their relatives hastened to take part in the northern upris were the leaders of the insurrection. Their aim was to re-establish the Roman Catholicism and to remove Evil Counsellors, and to restore the Duke of Norfolk and other peers to their liberty and to the Queen's favour. The two Earls published a manifesto in which they declared that they intended to attempt nothing against the Queen to whom they avowed unshaken allegiance but that their only object was as just stated. There can be no doubt whatever however that one of their objects was to carry off Mary Queen of Scots from her prison at Tutbury. Queen Elizabeth received repeated intimations of the Earls' disaffection and summoned them to Court to answer for their conduct, but they dared not trust themselves in her hands and they consequently disobeyed the mandate. The summons sent to the two Earls, however, precipitated the rising before they were fully prepared.

Among the disaffected Richard Norton was one of the most eager for immediate action together with several of his sons, his brother Thomas and other relations. When the uprising failed, Richard Norton, his sons, Christopher and Marmaduke, and his brother Thomas Norton, and about fifty others of noble extraction or of other distinction were tainted of high treason 7th Nov. 1569 and their possessions forfeited.

Richard Norton fled to Flanders where doubtless he rejoined the Earl of Westmorland, and died there in poverty 9th April 1585 (aged 91), the "Patriarch of the Rebellion."

His brother Thomas was hanged and quartered in the presence of his nephew Christopher at Tyburn on 27th May 1570.

The fate on the sons of Richard Norton was as follows:-

* **Francis**, the eldest, was a fugitive with his father;
* **John**, the second, was of Ripon, was not implicated;
* **Edmund**, the third, was ancestor of the Lords Grantly. He was of Clowbeck, Co. York, and died there in 1610. He was not implicated;
* **William**, the fourth, was tried with his uncle Thomas and Brother Christopher but was pardoned;
* **George**, the fifth, was a fugitive with his father;
* **Thomas**, the sixth, died without issue, was not implicated;
* **Christopher**, the seventh, was hanged and quartered with his uncle Thomas, at Tyburn, 27 May 1570;
* **Marmaduke**, the eighth, pleaded guilty but was pardoned and died at Stranton where he was buried 4th Nov. 1594. He was kept a prisoner in the Tower, however, until 1572.
* **Sampson**, the ninth, and youngest son, was a fugitive with his father and was at Mechlin in 1571, then a pensioner of the King of Spain.

Richard Norton had seven daughters, all well married.

The tale is told in the poem The White Doe of Rylstone by William Wordswoth