

ALABASTER EFFIGY IN HANBURY CHURCH, STAFFS.

ON THE EARLY WORKING OF ALABASTER IN ENGLAND.¹

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Vice-President.

In *The Archaeological Journal* for 1853 is a paper by Mr. Edward Richardson entitled "Notices of Mediaeval Sculpture, and Workings in Alabaster in England,"² which includes practically all that was then known on the subject. Half a century has elapsed since Mr. Richardson read his paper, and meantime other evidence has come to hand which throws further light upon the industry. Since part of this evidence shows that Nottingham was for a considerable time an important centre of the alabaster trade, a fact unknown to Mr. Richardson, the present seems a fitting occasion for laying the new evidence before you.

The massive variety of sulphate of lime called gypsum, more popularly known as alabaster, is found in abundance in some localities in the red marl of the Upper Keuper beds in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, and elsewhere, where the same formation occurs. When first quarried, alabaster is soft and easily cut, but hardens somewhat on exposure to the air, and is then capable of being polished like marble.

The chief quarries during the middle ages seem to have been along the ridge to the south-west of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, and the well-known Chellaston Hill, about four miles south-east of Derby.³ The quarries near Tutbury were apparently the oldest, for the earliest

¹ Read at the Nottingham Meeting of the Institute, 24th July, 1901.

² Vol. x. 116-123.

³ Leland, writing of the Isle of Axholme, says: "The upper Part of the Isle hath plentiful Quarres of Alabaster, communely there caullid Plaster: but such stones as I saw of it were of no great thiknes and sold for a xij*d.* the lode. They ly yn the ground lyke a smothe Table: and be beddid

one flake under another: And at the Bottom of the Bedde of them be rough Stones to build withal." *Itinerary*, i. 39.

He also says: "There is a faire Quarre of Alabaster stone about a 4. or 5. Miles from *Leircester*, and not very far from *Beumaner*," *Ibid.* i. 21; and at Burton-on-Trent he noted "Many Marblers working in alabaster." *Ibid.* vii. 25.

use of alabaster that has been noticed in this country occurs in the Norman west doorway of Tutbury priory church, of a date *circa* 1160, which has one of the inner orders of mouldings wrought in this material. Further, just to the south of the ridge which yields the mineral, in the parish church of Hanbury, Staffs., is a cross-legged effigy of a knight, also wrought in alabaster.¹ Mr. Richardson thought the date of the Hanbury effigy to be not later than 1240, but I think it must be at least 70 or 80 years later, and in this Lord Dillon agrees. Even then it is considerably the earliest alabaster effigy that has been noticed.

The existence of these two works in the immediate neighbourhood of an important deposit of the mineral out of which they are wrought suggests the question whether they are the work of local carvers, or of itinerant sculptors who found a convenient material already to hand. There is nothing of a particularly local character about either the Tutbury doorway or the Hanbury figure, but there are so many excellent examples of monumental effigies in the surrounding district that the home of the school of carvers that produced them cannot have been far distant.

The Hanbury effigy is the precursor of a magnificent series of alabaster monuments, of which examples are to be found all over England.

Some of the earliest of these are of the most sumptuous character, through the happy combination of alabaster work with Purbeck marble or the foreign black marble called touch. Pre-eminent among them are the monuments of King Edward II. (*ob.* 1327) at Gloucester,² of his son the lord John of Eltham (*ob.* 1336) at Westminster,³ and of John of Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury (1333-1348), in his own cathedral church,

¹ Through the obliging kindness of our member, Mr. C. Lynam, F.S.A., I am able to exhibit two excellent photographs of this taken by his son, from one of which the accompanying illustration has been made.

- Engraved in John Britton's *History and Antiquities of the Abbey and Cathedral church of Gloucester* (London, 1836) pl. xvi. The effigy is figured in

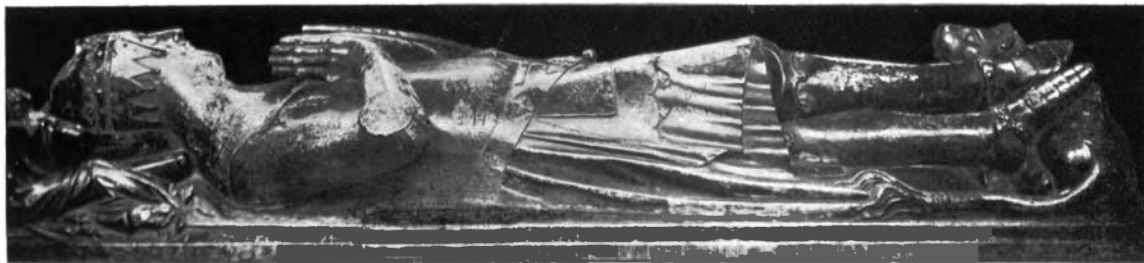
Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (ed. Hewitt, London, 1876), 79.

³ The complete monument, of which the canopy is now lost, is engraved in Sandford and Stebbing's *Genealogical History of the Kings and Queens of England, etc.* (London, 1707), 154. For the effigy, see Stothard (ed. 1876), 92.



HEAD OF KING EDWARD II. (*ob.* 1327) FROM HIS TOMB AT
GLOUCESTER.

(Photographed by Mr. Arthur Gardner.)



EFFIGY OF THE LORD JOHN OF ELTHAM (*ob.* 1336) AT WESTMINSTER.

(Photographed by Mr. Arthur Gardner.)



EFFIGIES OF THOMAS BEAUCHAMP, EARL OF WARWICK (*ob.* 1370), AND HIS COUNTESS, AT WARWICK.

(Photographed by Mr. Arthur Gardner.)

though this last has suffered greatly from wanton injury. Other fine and early examples of alabaster tombs and effigies are those of bishop John of Hotham (*ob.* 1337) at Ely; of bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury (*ob.* 1363) at Wells; of Queen Philippa (*ob.* 1369) at Westminster, an admixture of alabaster and touch;¹ of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (*ob.* 1370), and his countess, at Warwick, a grand example, with effigies hand in hand and weepers all round¹; of Thomas de Vere, earl of Oxford (*ob.* 1371), at Earl's Colne, with pairs of weepers under canopies; of archbishop Simon Langham (*ob.* 1376) in Westminster abbey church²; and of bishop John Harewell (*ob.* 1386) at Wells. The destroyed tomb of Queen Isabel, the consort of Edward II. (*ob.* 1358), formerly in the church of the Grey Friars in London, was another early example.

The tomb of Queen Philippa was the work during her lifetime of a Frenchman, Hawkin Liege, who was paid in January, 1366-7, 200 marks (or £133 6s. 8d.) due to him for making it.³ This tomb was not completed until ten years after, when John Orchard, of London, "latoner," was paid £5 for making divers figures of angels for it, and a month later he received another £5, the balance of £18 2s. due to him for various costs and expenses about the same tomb, including the carriage of an iron grate for it, bought second-hand from bishop Michael of Norbury's tomb at St. Paul's, for additional ironwork and painting the whole red, for six angels of copper for the corners, and "for two images of alabaster upon a little marble tomb for a son and a daughter of the King," which cost 20s.⁴

¹ See Blore's *Monumental Remains*.

² Brayley and Neale, *History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster* (London, 1823), ii. pl. xlvii.

³ Die Martis xx^o. die Januarii.

Haukino Liege de Francia In denariis sibi liberatis in persolucionem CC. marcarum quas dominus Rex sibi liberare mandavit pro factura Tumble Philippe Regine Anglie consortis sue per breve de privato sigillo inter mandatos de hoc termino cxxxij.li. vj.s. viij.d.

(Pells Issue Roll, 40 Edward III. Mich. (No. 243) m. 21).

I am indebted to Mr. M. S. Giuseppi, F.S.A., for the transcript of this entry.

⁴ Die Sabbati xxxj^o die Maii [1376].
Johanni Orchard latoner de London.

In denariis sibi liberatis per manus proprias super factura diversorum ymaginum ad similitudinem angelorum pro Tumba Philippe nuper Regine Anglie infra Abbatiam beati Petri Westmonasteriensis existente per breve de privati sigillo inter mandatos de hoc termino C.s.

These two images are clearly those of the little prince William of Windsor and his sister, the lady Blanche of the Tower, both of whom died in infancy, and whose tomb still remains next to that of their uncle, the lord John of Eltham.

By the same hand was probably wrought the effigy in York Minster of their brother, prince William of Hatfield, who was born in 1336 and also died young.¹

Although it is possible that some of the more sumptuous alabaster and marble tombs were being made, or at any rate put together, at this time by London craftsmen, it is unlikely that a latoner like John Orchard was also a carver of alabaster images. But there would not be any difficulty in his getting them carved elsewhere, and we know that works of another kind had already made famous the "alabastermen" of Nottingham.

In 42 Edward III. (1367-8—1368-9) a sum of £166 13s. 4d. was paid to Peter the mason for making an alabaster *tabula* or reredos for the chapel of the

(Pells Issue Roll, 50 Edward III. Easter, m. 8.)

Die Lune xxx^o die Junii [1376]

Stephano de Haddele vallecto hospicii Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis per manus Johannis Orchard latoñ C.s. per manus xiiij.li. ij.s. in persolucionem xvij.li. ij.s. quas dominus Rex sibi liberare mandavit pro diversis custubus et expensis in expensis factis circa Tumbam Philippe nuper Regine Anglie infra abbatiam beati Petri Westmonasterii existentem videlicet.

Pro portagio et cariagio cujusdam ferramenti de Ecclesia sancti Pauli London. usque eandem abbatiam x.s.

Pro octo barris et ij plateis ferri nam cum batellaments circa dictum ferramentum lxij.s.

Pro depincione eisdem [*sic*] ferramenti de colore rubio xxx.s.

Pro vj angelis pro vj angulis de cupro existentibus circa eandem Tumbam xij.li.

Et pro duabus ymaginibus de alabaustro super unam parvam Tumbam marmoriam pro uno filio et una filia Regis xx.s.

Per breve de privato sigillo inter mandatos de hoc termino . . . xvij.li. ij.s.

(Pells Issue Roll, 50 Edward III. Easter, m. 17.)

Die Veneris xxv^o die Januarii [1376-7]

Henrico de Wylughes Custodi veterum operacionum ecclesie cathedralis sancti Pauli London. In denariis sibi liberatis per manus proprias in persolucionem xl.li. quas Dominus Rex sibi liberare mandavit pro una tumba ferrea nuper existente supra tumbam venerabilis patris Michaelis nuper Episcopo [*sic*] London. extra hostium occidentale eju-dem ecclesie ab eodem Henrico empto ad opus Regis pro tumba Philippe nuper Regine Anglie infra abbatiam abbacie beati Petri Westmonasterii existente per breve de privato sigillo inter mandatos de hoc termino.

(Pells Issue Roll, 50 Edward III. Mich. m. 24.)

I am indebted to Mr. M. S. Giuseppi, F.S.A., for the transcript of the first of the above entries. In Mr. Frederick Devon's *Issues from the Exchequer* (London, 1837), where an English abstract of these entries is given, John Orchard is twice (p. 199) miscalled "stonemason," whereas the original unquestionably has "latoner."

¹ See the engravings of all three figures in Stothard, *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (ed. Hewitt, London 1876), 106, 111.



ALABASTER IMAGE OF OUR LADY AND CHILD.
FROM FLAWFORD, NOTTS.

Canons of Windsor. From the Issue Roll of 45 Edward III. (1370-1—1371-2) we learn that Peter Maceon, therein described as of Nottingham, was paid the further sum of 50 marks, or £33 6s. 8d., in discharge of 300 marks which the King owed to the same Peter "for a table of alabaster made by him and placed upon the high altar within the free chapel of St. George at Windsor." This great reredos, for such it was, cost, therefore, the huge sum (for that time) of £200, and if the Nottingham carvers could already command the royal patronage their work must have been of a high standard. Unfortunately, none of Peter's reredos now exists at Windsor. Some idea of its magnitude may be gathered from the fact that it required ten carts, each drawn by eight horses under the care of two men, to carry it from Nottingham to Windsor. The journey occupied seventeen days, from 20th October to 6th November, 1367, and the cost of the carriage came to £28 6s. 8d.¹

Much about the same date various works were being wrought in alabaster in the cathedral church of Durham.

In 1372 John lord Nevill of Raby "caused to be made the new work of marble and alabaster beneath the shrine of St. Cuthbert, for which he paid more than 200 pounds. And he caused it to be enclosed in boxes in London, and sent by sea to Newcastle, and the Prior to Durham."² The same benefactor also gave in 1380, at a cost of 500 pounds or marks, to which the prior and others added 200 marks, "the work above the altar which is called La Reredos." This, too, was brought by sea from London in boxes, and *Rites of Durham* tells us

¹ Pipe Roll, 41 Edward III. m. 41.

² "Post mortem patris sui Radulphi, dominus Johannes de Nevill . . . ad excitationem Ricardi de Byrtley terrarii et Johannis de Cornuale feretrarii fecit [circa festum Nativitatis Sancti Johannis Baptistæ anno Domini MCCCLXXII *added in the margin in a different hand*] novum opus marmoreum et alabastrinum sub feretro sancti Cuthberti; pro quo solvit plusquam 200 libras argenti. Et fecit Londoniæ in cistulis includi, et per mare usque ad Novum Castrum transferri, et Prior usque Dunelmum. Et hoc opere consumpto, iterum, ad excitationem

Johannis Prioris et prædictorum monachorum, dedit ad illud opus super altare quod vocatur La Reredos quincentesimas libras seu marcas, et Prior et officarii 200 marcas. Et fecit Londoniæ in cistulis includi, et suo sumptu usque ad Novum Castrum per mare in nave transnari; et Prior usque Dunelmum fecit illud carriari. *Historiæ Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres* (Surtees Society 9), 135, 136.

Among other gifts to the same church by Prior John Fossor, 1341-47, is: "Item imagines sanctæ Trinitatis et beatæ Virginis de alabastro, cum tabernaculis cum aliis ornamentis, pretium 22l." *Ibid.* 131.

that it was adorned with fair images of alabaster all finely gilded, "wherof, right over the said Hie Altar, were artificially placed, in very fine alabaster, the picture of OUR LADY standinge in the midst, and the picture of ST. CUTHBERT on the one side and the picture of ST. OSWALD on the other, beinge all richly gilded."¹

A little lower down the quire of Durham on the south side is the magnificent episcopal seat set up in his lifetime by bishop Thomas of Hatfield, who died in 1381. On his tomb, to which the throne above forms the canopy, is his effigy in alabaster.²

In the nave of the same church are the splendid but sadly defaced tombs, all wrought in alabaster, of Ralph lord Nevill, who died in 1367, and of his son, John lord Nevill, the donor of the shrine and reredos, who died in 1388. Beside the latter lies his first wife Matilda, who was living in 1368.

That the marble and stonework of these several monuments, like the shrine base and the reredos, came by sea from London is probable enough, and as the alabaster work did not come direct from the Midlands, it is possible that it was sent to London in the rough and carved there.

It is, however, equally possible that it was worked in Derbyshire or at Nottingham and sent thence to London to go by sea with the other stonework to Newcastle. This view receives support from a somewhat parallel case, that of the splendid tomb of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, at Warwick. In this instance (35 H. VI.) John Bourde of Corfe Castle, "marbler," covenanted to make the Purbeck marble tomb, and to bring it to Warwick and set it up there. The metal work was undertaken by John Essex, marbler, William Austen, founder, and Thomas Stevyns, coppersmith, all of London; and Bartholomew Lambespring, a Dutchman and goldsmith of London, undertook to hone, polish and gild all the metal work, etc.

Various documentary notices show that the use of alabaster for such tombs and monuments as those enumerated above speedily made it a fashionable material.

¹ *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society 15), 6.

² Engraved in Blome's *Monumental Remains*.



ALABASTER IMAGE OF ST. PETER, WITH KNEELING
PRIEST AT FOOT. FROM FLAWFORD, NOTTS.



ALABASTER IMAGE OF A BISHOP. FROM FLAWFORD,
NOTTS.

By his will, dated 1371, Sir Walter Manny, K.G., desires to be buried in the quire of the Charterhouse at London, of which he was founder :

Item je devise que une Tombe dalabastre soit fait ove un chivaler de mes armes tiele come est faite sur monsire Johan de Beauchamp a seint Poul en Londres en remembrance de moy et que home puisse prier pour moi.¹

This Sir John Beauchamp died in 1358, and, if his tomb was of alabaster, it was another early example.

Thomas Lord Poynings, in 1374, leaves a similar direction that he be buried in the quire of St. Radigund's abbey, near Dover, and that a tomb be made for him with the image of an armed knight thereon of alabaster.

In 1380, William lord Latimer desires to be buried in the priory church of Guisborough,

et que la tombe dalabaustre q'est en le dit esglise soit surmys come j'ay autrefois devise.

Item jeo voille que mez executours faceont et parfournent le dit tombe d'alibaustre en manere comme il est devise.²

The fame of such alabaster images as adorned the reredos at Durham was also beginning to spread abroad, and in May, 1382, the King by writ orders the customers at Southampton to allow Cosmato Gentilis, the pope's collector, to export *inter alia* :

Tres Ymages de alabaustro magnæ formæ : unam de Figura beatæ Mariæ ; aliam beati Petri ; et Tertiam Sancti Pauli ; cum una alia parva ymagine Sanctæ Trinitatis.³

Apparently these were a present or bought for the pope.

Three alabaster images of about the same date and probably of the same sort were found hidden under the floor of the old church at Flawford, Notts. They are now the property of Miss Percy, of Beeston,⁴ and are here figured. The smallest, which is 28 inches high, represents Our Lady and Child ; the second, which is 4 inches taller, is a figure of St. Peter as pope holding a church, with a priest (now headless) kneeling at his feet and holding a long scroll ; the third, which

¹ Reg. Whittlesey, f. 121.

² *Testamenta Eboracensia* (Surtees Society 4), i. 114.

³ T. Rymer, *Fœdera*, O. vii. 357.

⁴ Through the kindness of Miss Percy the three figures were exhibited in illustration of this paper.

is 38 inches high, represents a bishop in the act of blessing.

Another such figure, of Our Lady of Pity, probably from the same workshop, was found under the floor of Breadsall church, Derbyshire, in 1877, and is also here illustrated. It is 29 inches high, and retains traces of the original painting and gilding.

From the many references to them in wills, such images were evidently far from uncommon.

In 1392, Nicholas of Shirburn, chaplain, bequeathed 3s. 4d. "ad unum tabernaculum ymagine beatae Mariae de alabaustre," in St. Sampson's church, York¹; and in 1394 Sir Brian de Stapleton leaves to his niece "j bassyn rounde d'argent, ove un image de nostre Dame de alabauster, qui fuit al ankerer de Hampoll."²

In 1432 John Raventhorp, chaplain, leaves to St. Saviour's church, York, "ymaginem Pietatis de alabastro,"³ and in 1446 another York chaplain, William Revetour, bequeaths "quondam crucifixum in alabastro."⁴ In 1449 John Clerk of York, chaplain, leaves "Item una Trinitas de alabastro facta. Item j. ymago Beatae Mariae de Pietate in alabastro facta. Item una ymago Beatae Annae in alabastro facta."⁵ And in 1449 the will of Eufemia Langton mentions "unam ymaginem Beatae Mariae Virginis in alabastro."⁶

At the close of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth we meet with a fine series of figures of knights, which are characterized by an orle or roll of rich embroidery worn round the bascinet. In the earlier examples, as on Sir Hugh Calveley's effigy at Bunbury (Cheshire), 1394,⁷ and that of Sir Robert Marmion at Tanfield,⁸ this decoration takes the form of a jewelled band, but in the later figures it becomes a roll of very ornate character. Among them are the well-known effigies of Sir Thomas Arderne (*ob.* 1391) at Elford (Staffs.), of Sir Thomas Wendesley (*ob.* 1403) at Bakewell, Derbyshire, of William, lord Ros, K.G. (*ob.* 1414) and John, lord Ros (killed 1420-1), at Bottesford, Leicester-

¹ *Testamenta Eboracensia* (Surtees Society 4), i. 172.

² *Ibid.* i. 199.

³ *Ibid.* (Surtees Society 30), ii. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 117.

⁵ *Ibid.* ii. 151.

⁶ *Ibid.* ii. 258.
⁷ Engraved in Stothard's *Monumental Effigies* (ed. Hewitt), 135.

⁸ Engraved in T. and G. Hollis's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain*.



ALABASTER IMAGE OF OUR LADY OF PITY IN BREADSALL CHURCH,
DERBYSHIRE.



TOMB OF SIR JOHN COKAYNE (*ob.* 1447) AND LADY IN ASHBOURNE
CHURCH, DERBYSHIRE.

(Photographed by Mr. J. A. Gotch.)

shire, of Sir Humphrey Stafford (*ob.* 1420) at Bromsgrove,¹ of Ralph Nevill, earl of Westmorland (*ob.* 1425), at Staindrop, of Sir Edmund Thorpe (*ob.* 1418) at Ashwellthorpe,² of Sir William Phelip (*ob.* 1441), lord Bardolf (*ob.* 1441) at Dennington,³ of Sir John Cokayne (*ob.* 1447), at Ashbourn, Derbyshire, etc., etc.

There are fortunately included in this group two monuments whose history is known. The first is a tomb and effigy of John, duke of Brittany (who died in 1399), which was formerly in the church of St. Peter at Nantes.⁴ This man was the first husband of Joan of Navarre, afterwards Queen of our Henry IV., and the tomb and effigy were made in England under her direction. It was completed early in 1408, and a safe conduct was thereupon issued by the King to John Guychard, merchant, for its conveyance to Nantes.

The text of the writ is as follows :

Rex universis et singulis Admirallis etc. ad quos etc. salutem. Sciatis quod Nos ad supplicacionem Carissimæ Consortis nostræ, quæ ad quandam Tumbam Alabaustri, quam pro Duce Britannia defuncto, quondam viro suo, fieri fecit, in Bargea de Seynt Nicholas de Nantes in Britannia, una cum Tribus Ligeorum nostrorum Anglicorum, qui eandem Tumbam operati fuerunt, viz. Thoma Colyn, Thoma Holewell, et Thoma Poppehowe, ad Tumbam prædictam in Ecclesia de Nantes in Britannia assidendum et ponendum, ad præsens ordinavit mittendum, Suscepimus in salvum et securum conductum nostrum Johannem Guychard mercatorem magistrum Bargeæ prædictæ, ac decem Servitores suos marinarios in comitiva sua, ad Britanniam, ut prædictum est, transeundo, et exinde in Regnum nostrum Angliæ mercatoriæ redeundo, necnon Bargeam prædictam, ac Bona et Hernesia sua quæcumque; et ideo vobis Mandamus quod ipsum Johannem et servitores ac marinarios suos prædictos versus Britanniam transeundo et exinde in Regnum nostrum Angliæ mercatoriæ redeundo, necnon Bargeam prædictam ac Bona et Hernesia sua quæcumque Manuteneatis, Protegatis, et Defendatis non inferentes, etc. *ut in similibus de conductu literis.*

In cujus etc. usque Festum Nativitatis Sancti Johannis Baptistæ proximo futurum duraturas.

Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium, xxiiij. die Februarii [9. H. iv. 1407-8].

Per Breve de Private Sigillo.⁵

¹ Engraved in Hollis's *Monumental Effigies*.

² Engraved by Stothard, p. 155.

³ *Ibid.* 151.

⁴ Engraved in Lobineau's *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1707), ii. 498. The

monument was unfortunately destroyed in the French Revolution; it resembled closely that of King Henry and Queen Joan at Canterbury.

⁵ T. Rymer, *Fœdera*, O. viii. 510.

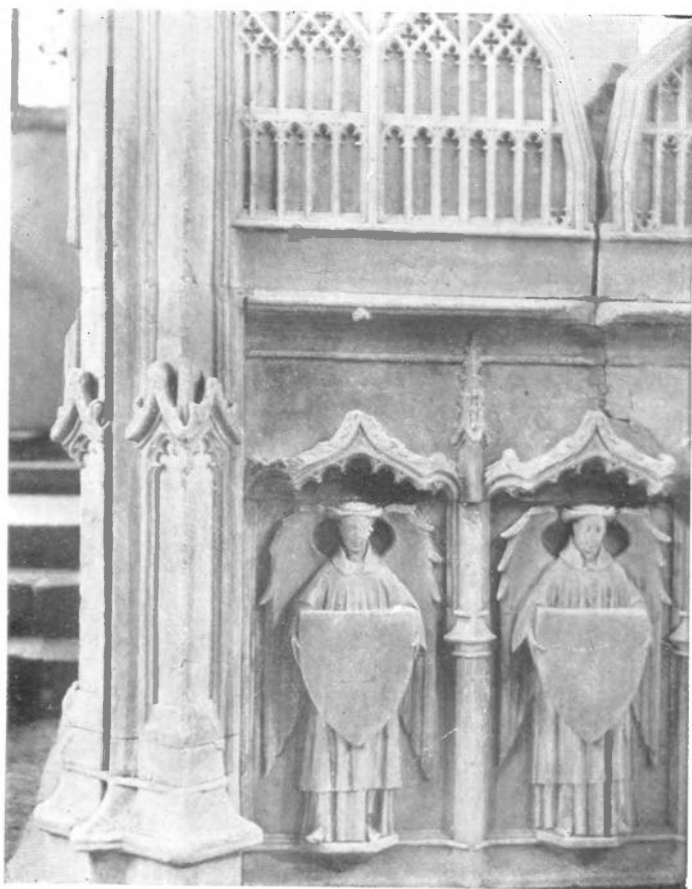
I have not at present been able to find anything further about Thomas Colyn, Thomas Holewell, and Thomas Poppehowe, and it has yet to be seen whether they were Londoners, or "alablastermen" from Derbyshire.

The other example of an effigy with the orle of which the story is known is that of Ralph Green, Esq., who died in 1418, and whose fine alabaster tomb, with images of himself and his wife, still exists at Lowick church, Northamptonshire. In this case the text of the contract for the making of the entire monument has most fortunately been preserved, and, as I shall hope to shew, it is a document of the highest importance in the history of our subject. The full text of the contract, which is in French, has been reprinted by Mr. Albert Hartshorne in the Appendix to his *Recumbent Monumental Effigies in Northamptonshire*, from that scarce work, Halstead's *Genealogies*. The original contract is at present lost. It is in the form of an indenture, dated 14th February, 6 Henry V. (1418-19), between Katharine, who was the wife of Ralph Greene, esquire, William Aldwynce and William Marshall, clerks, on the one part, and Thomas Prentys and Robert Sutton, of Chellaston, in the county of Derby "kervers," on the other part, witnessing that the said carvers have covenanted and agreed to make and carve well, honestly, and profitably, a tomb of stone called alabaster, good, fine, and pure, containing in length 9 feet and in breadth 4 feet 2 [inches], upon which tomb shall be made two images of alabaster, the one a counterfeit of an esquire armed at all points, containing in length 7 feet, with a helm under his head and a bear at his feet; and the other image shall be the counterfeit of a lady lying in her open surcoat with two angels holding a pillow under her head, and two little dogs at her feet, the one of the said images holding the other by the hand, with two tabernacles called *gabettes* at their heads, which tomb shall contain at the sides with the ledgerment three feet, on which sides shall be images of angels with tabernacles bearing shields according to the device of the said Katharine, William, and William. And also the said carvers shall make an arch of alabaster above all the said tomb in length and breadth, with pendants and knots and a crest of *faytes* and



ALABASTER TOMB OF RALPH GREEN (*ob.* 1418) AND WIFE AT LOWICK, NORTHANTS.

(*Photographed by Mr. J. A. Gotch.*)



DETAILS OF THE GREEN TOMB AT LOWICK, NORTHANTS.

(Photographed by Mr. J. A. Gotch.)

other works pertaining to such a tomb, the which images, tomb, and arch shall be proportioned, gilded, painted, and arrayed with colours well and sufficiently in the pure, honest, and profitable manner that pertains to such work. And all the said works shall be presently done and performed in all points in manner aforesaid, and set up and raised by the said Thomas and Robert in the parish church of Lowick, in the county of Northampton, at the costs and peril of the said Thomas and Robert in all such manners between now and the feast of Easter in the year of grace 1420. For doing and performing which works in manner aforesaid the said Katharine, William, and William shall pay or cause to be paid to the said Thomas and Robert or either of them £40 sterling, of which there shall be paid at the making of these (indentures) 10 marks, and at the feast of Easter next coming 10 marks, and at the feast of St. John Baptist then following 10 marks, and at the feast of St. Michael then following 10 marks, and the remaining 10 marks shall be paid when all the said works shall be done and set up in manner aforesaid, etc., etc.

It will be seen from this document, which I have tried to translate literally, that the tomb was to cost £40, and to be completed within a little more than a year. The whole was, moreover, to be decorated with painting and gilding. This was the usual practice; alabaster being valued by the medieval carvers not for the beauty of the material, but for the ease with which it could be delicately and minutely wrought. Only the faces and hands were left free from colour.

By the kindness of Mr. J. A. Gotch, F.S.A., I am able to give two illustrations of the Green monument at Lowick, and it is impossible to examine these and Mr. Hartshorne's drawings of the effigies without coming to the conclusion that the similarity in all the knightly effigies with orles can only be accounted for by their issue from such a common centre as the workshop of the Chellaston carvers, Thomas Prentys and Robert Sutton. They had the alabaster at their doors, as a deposit of considerable thickness covering several square miles, and they, their predecessors, and successors, must have done a great trade in monumental sculpture. It is

evident, too, that some of the most splendid alabaster tombs in England were sent out from these Chellaston works, for it is tolerably certain that the carvers of the Lowick tomb wrought also the grand memorials of Thomas, earl of Arundel (*ob.* 1416) and his countess at Arundel,¹ and of Henry IV. (*ob.* 1412-13) and Queen Joan at Canterbury,² both which tombs are distinguished by similar "gablets" over the heads of the effigies; as well as the great tomb at Staindrop, Durham, of the same design as King Henry's, with effigies of Ralph Nevill, earl of Westmorland (*ob.* 1425) and his two wives.³ This has however no "gablets."

So easy of identification is this work of the Chellaston school, that a comparison of a few careful drawings of well known alabaster effigies, such as are given in the works of Stothard or Hollis, will enable anyone to pick out with tolerable certainty from similar drawings or photographs other figures wrought in the same material and by the Derbyshire carvers.

Meanwhile, there are other groups of tombs that clearly emanated from a common centre, which may have been Chellaston. One group contains the three episcopal effigies of archbishop William Courtenay (*ob.* 1396) at Canterbury, William of Wykeham (*ob.* 1404) at Winchester, and archbishop Simon Langham (*ob.* 1376) at Westminster. Another includes the fine effigy of John, earl of Arundel (*ob.* 1434), at Arundel,⁴ and the tomb at Canterbury with effigies of Margaret Holland (*ob.* 1439) and her two husbands, John, earl of Somerset (*ob.* 1408-9), and Thomas, duke of Clarence (*ob.* 1421).

Another group comprises the tombs of Sir Thomas Green (*ob.* 1457) and lady at Greene's Norton (Northants), a knight of the Erdington family at Aston (Warw.),⁵ Sir Robert Harcourt, K.G. (*ob.* 1471), and lady at Stanton Harcourt,⁵ and Sir John Crosby (*ob.* 1475) and lady, now in St. Helen's Bishopsgate, London⁶

A further group, which includes the two fine monu-

¹ Engraved in Blore's *Monumental Remains*. The effigies are also given in Stothard's *Monumental Effigies* (ed. Hewitt), 147.

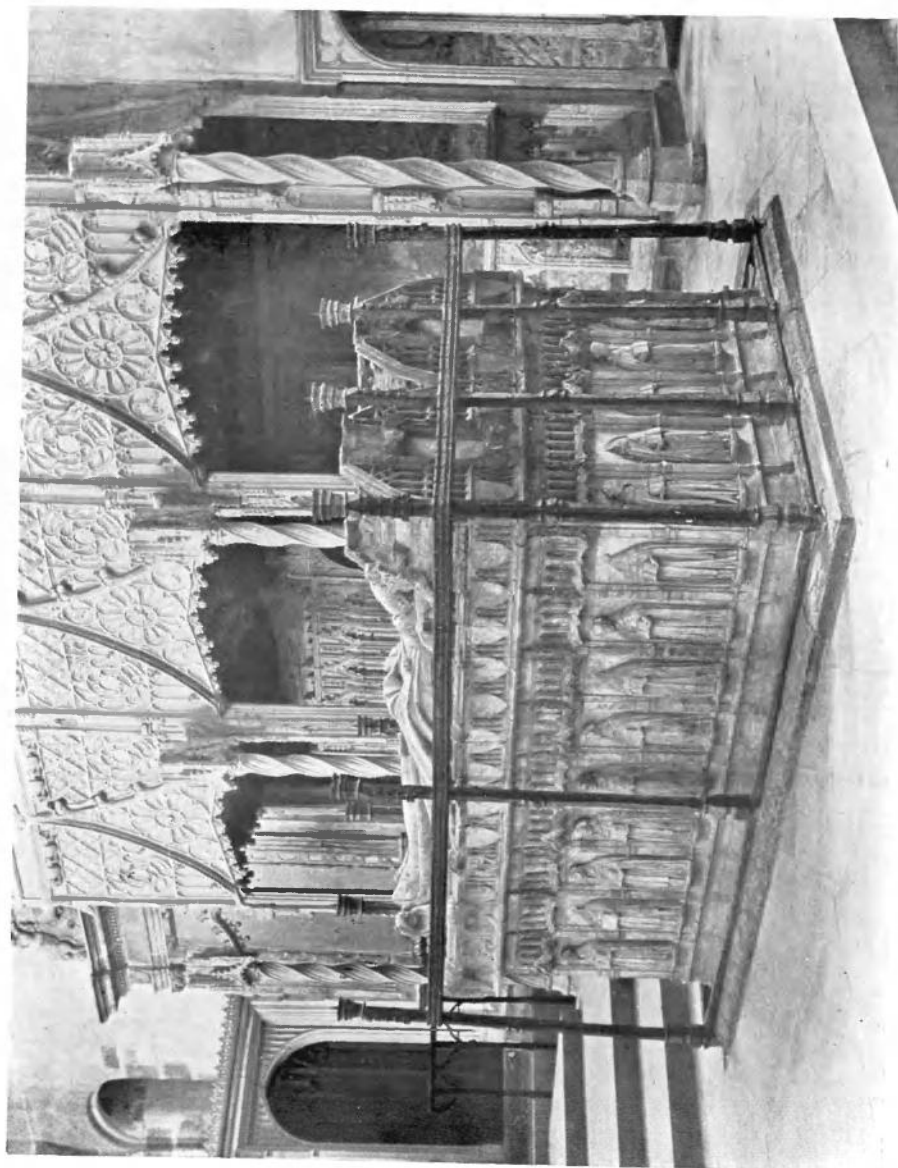
² Engraved by Blore (*op. cit.*), and by Stothard, p. 140.

³ The tomb is engraved by Blore (*op. cit.*), and the effigies by Stothard, p. 126.

⁴ Stothard, p. 162.

⁵ Both are engraved by Hollis.

⁶ Stothard, p. 180.

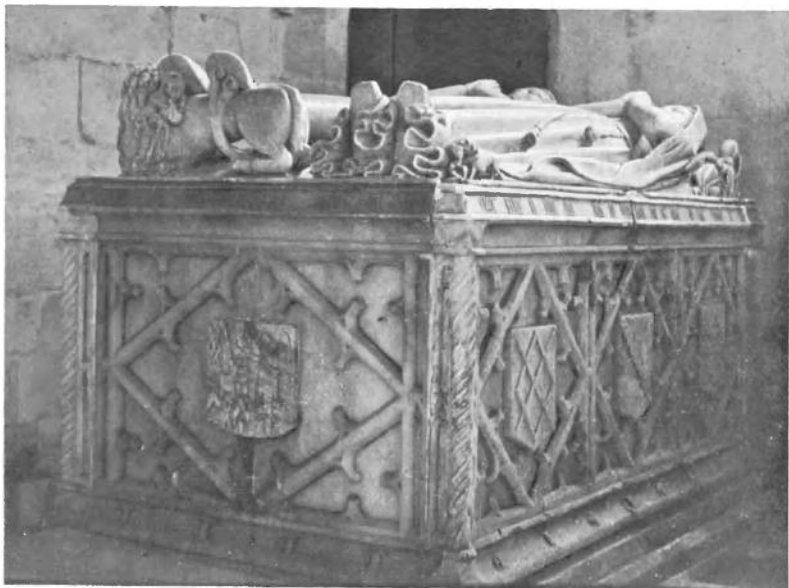


TOMB OF THOMAS EARL OF ARUNDEL (ob. 1416) AND COUNTESS, AT ARUNDEL.

(Photographed by Mr. J. A. Gatch.)



ALABASTER EFFIGY OF BISHOP WILLIAM OF
WYKEHAM. FROM HIS TOMB AT WINCHESTER.



TOMB OF JOHN HARRINGTON (*ob.* 1524) AND WIFE AT EXTON, RUTLAND.



TOMB OF EDWARD STAFFORD, EARL OF WILTSHIRE (*ob.* 1498),
AT LOWICK, NORTHANTS.

(Both photographed by Mr. J. A. Gatch.)

ments at Norbury, in Derbyshire, of Sir Nicholas Fitzherbert (*ob.* 1473) and lady, and Sir Ralph Fitzherbert (*ob.* 1483), and those of William Redmayne (*ob.* 1482), and widow at Harewood, Yorks., of Edward Stafford, earl of Wiltshire (*ob.* 1498), at Lowick, of Sir John Strelley and lady at Strelley, Notts (1501), of Giles, lord Daubeney (*ob.* 1508) and lady in Westminster Abbey, and John Harrington (*ob.* 1524), and wife at Exton, Rutland, is characterized by small figures of bedesmen crouched against the feet of the effigies.

Here, for the present, we must leave the tombs and effigies, and return to the works of the "alabastermen" of Nottingham. And perhaps I may at this point venture to submit for consideration as a working theory, that the monumental sculpture was, throughout the medieval period, the work of the carvers, first, perhaps, in or near Hanbury and Tutbury, but certainly later at Chellaston, and that the Nottingham alabastermen, as well as those of York, Burton, and Lincoln, of whom we likewise have evidence, wrought for the most part imagery and tables for reredoses and the like. The carving of the great blocks and slabs needed for tombs would thus be done at the quarries, while the lesser pieces of the material would be carried off to convenient centres. That one of these centres, Nottingham, was already famous for reredos work in the reign of Edward III. has already been shown, but there is not any further documentary evidence for quite a century later.

There is, however, interesting evidence of another sort. In January, 1890, I communicated to the Society of Antiquaries a paper "on the sculptured alabaster tablets called St. John's Heads," in which I tried to show (1) that certain sculptures of which the predominant feature was St. John's Head lying on a charger, accompanied by a figure denoting Our Lord's Pity, and usually flanked by figures of St. Peter and St. Thomas of Canterbury, and sometimes other saints, could be identified with the "St. John's Heads" mentioned in medieval wills and inventories, and (2) that towards the end of the fifteenth century and onwards these were made in large numbers at Nottingham.

The earliest reference to these particular tablets that

has been noted is in the will of Isabella Hamerton, of York, widow, who, in 1432, bequeathed to a certain chaplain "unum lapidem alabastris secundum formam capitis sancti Johannis Baptistæ." For further details as to these St. John's Heads, reference may be made to my paper in the 52nd vol. of *Archæologia*.

In the lately published *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* are many references to "alablastermen" and their works. In 1478-9 Nicholas Godeman "aleblasterer," paid a fine of 8*d.* for licence to traffic.¹ In 1482-3 an action was brought by Walter Hilton, alablasterman, against Emma Sherwood for 8*s.* 8*d.* "pro deauratione et penting unius tabernaculi de Sancto Philippo in Ecclesia Beati Petri"²; and one Edward Hilton, "imagemaker," is mentioned in a bond in 1488.

In 1491 an action was brought by Nicholas Hill, image-maker, against William Bott, his salesman, for value of "quinguaginta et octo capita Sancti Johannis Baptistæ, partim illorum in tabernaculis et in howsynges" of the value of 5 marks, which were delivered him to sell³; and some few weeks later the same Nicholas sued the said William for non-payment of 10*d.* "pro peynting et gilding de tres [*sic*] saltis de alabastur cum duobus ymagis peynting et gilding," etc.⁴ In 1494-5 the afore-said Nicholas Hill, here called "alablasterman," was the defendant in an action brought by Robert Tull, husbandman, for non-payment of 12*d.* still due to him out of his wage of 3*s.*, "ad carianda diversa imagia et capita Sancti Johannis Baptistæ a Nottingham usque London."⁵ Nicholas Hill also appears as defendant in 1499 in a suit brought against him by Thomas Grene of Beeston, "playsterer," for a St. John's Head, price 16*d.*⁶ Nicholas Hill was therefore making St. John's Heads, as well as other images and tables, for certainly eight years, and sending them all over the country.

In 1495-6 Elizabeth Spenser brought an action for detinue of goods against Emma Spenser, of Nottingham, widow apparently of John Spencer, image-maker. Among

¹ *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, ii. 302.

² *Ibid.* ii. 332.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.* iii. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.* iii. 28.

⁶ *Ibid.* iii. 499.

the goods are mentioned "diversas imagines de alablastre, pretij xxs.," which in a draft copy are set down as "Item cum tabulis et aliis imaginibus de alablastre in opella sua existentibus, pretii xxs."¹

In 1500-1 Thomas Hyll, image-maker, paid a fine of 4*d* for licence to traffic,² and another image-maker, John Lingherd, was enrolled a burgess in 1502-3.³

In May, 1530, John Nicholson, "steynour," brought an action against John Cottingham, image-maker, for a St. John's Head and half a quarter of gold, price 10*s.*, which he unjustly detains, and which St. John's Head was delivered to Cottingham to paint before Christmas then next following.⁴

In the same year John Nicholson was the defendant in a suit brought by William Walsh of Chellaston for 18*d.* "pro cariagio unius plaustrati lapidis de alabastar a Chelleston usque Notyngham."⁵

These extracts show that for certainly fifty years the image-makers and alabastermen of Nottingham were busily engaged upon images and tables of Chellaston alabaster, among which St. John's Heads are specially mentioned, and that they were sent away for sale in large numbers. Not improbably, they were also hawked about the country.

Interesting evidence of this latter fact is afforded by the churchwardens' accounts of Leverton, in Lincolnshire.

In the account for 1523 is a payment of £8, "Johann broke factori tabule alabastri in plena solucione pro eadem tabula"; and of a further sum of 6*s.* 8*d.*, "prefato Johanni brooke pro le vawte stante super summitatem tabule."⁶

There are further charges of 6*d.* "in expensis ad deliberaciones tabule predictæ," of 8*d.* "ad mawns lawhton pro le ook woode ad eandem tabulam," and of 2*s.* 8*d.* "sol. Nicholao fabro pro opere ferreo circa tabulam alabastri. Payments follow "pro factura curtine pendentis ante novam tabulam," and "pro tinxione predictæ curtine

¹ *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, iii. 38, 39.

² *Ibid.* iii. 82.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 84.

⁴ *Ibid.* iii. 180.

⁵ *Ibid.* iii. 182. Richard Starky, alabasterman, is mentioned in 1529. *Ibid.* iii. 482.

⁶ *Archæologia*, xli. 347.

pendentis ante tabulam super summum altare," which shows clearly that the *tabula* was a reredos.¹

Other items which precede these show that the *tabula* was made by contract :

sol. servo illius qui faciet tabulam alabastri quum veniebat	
huc pro labore suo	v <i>d</i>
sol. illi qui faciet tabulam alabastri quum veniebat pro	
expensis suis	x <i>ijd</i> .
sol. factori tabule alabastri in parte solucionis unius pacti	
pro facturam ejusdem tabule... ..	v <i>js</i> . vii <i>jd</i> . ²

In 1526 the Leverton folk again called in Robert Brook, this time to supply them with a set of little alabaster images for their rood-loft. The entries of this are as follow :³

to Robert Brook y ^t maid y ^e tabull of alybaster	
for y ^e vaute y ^t stande of y ^t	v <i>js</i> . vii <i>jd</i> .
to y ^e said Robert in erneste for y ^e xvij ymages of	
alybaster of y ^e Rood lofte	x <i>ijd</i> .
to y ^e said Robert Brooke in a full payment for xvj	
of y ^e ymages of alybaster that stand in y ^e for	
syede of y ^e rood lofte y ^t Wylliam Frankysch	
caussyd to be bought	xl <i>vjs</i> . vii <i>jd</i> .
to y ^e said Robert for on op' od ymage to be sett in	
y ^e same place y ^t ewery stage myght be fyld...	ii <i>js</i> . iii <i>jd</i> .
for C of iij. penny naylles and for lattyn wyer for	
y ^e ymages of alybaster	j <i>d</i> .

It is unfortunate that nothing is left of the Leverton work to show what Robert Brooke's work was like, and it would be interesting to know whether or not he hailed from Nottingham.

One other record of a similar kind has lately come to light in the churchwardens' accounts at Bramley in Hants. In 1531-2 occurs :

Item to the alablasterman in ernyste on a bargin	iii <i>jd</i> .
---	-----------------

Clearly he had come in search of orders, and no doubt he showed his samples. The result appears in the account for 1532-3 :

Item pai'd for the ymage in the Rodeloft out of the Churche	
boxe	xiii <i>js</i> .
Item pai'd to Thomas Watson for certen borde to fastyn	
the ymage to in the Rode lofte	vii <i>jd</i> .

Unfortunately the alablasterman's name is not given, nor

¹ *Archaeologia*, xli. 347.

³ *Ibid.* xli. 349, 350.

² *Ibid.* xli. 346.



ALABASTER TABLE OF THE HOLY TRINITY, BELONGING TO MR. T. H. FITZHENRY.

are there any remains of the images at Bramley, so we cannot say whence they came or what they were like.

There remains one other point concerning the Nottingham work, and that is the identification of it. I have laid some stress upon the St. John's Heads because the evidence is so cumulative that the examples that remain to us have come from a common centre, which was clearly Nottingham. These St. John's Heads not only present the same general characteristics of sculpture, but very many of them have all been painted to pattern, especially as regards the ground on which the figures are set or against which they stand. The former is almost invariably a bright green, with circular groups of white and red spots, and the backgrounds are usually gilded, with leaf-work painted white. Now this characteristic decoration is met with, not only on these St. John's Heads, but on a very large number of similar panels sculptured with an endless variety of other subjects. It is also evident from the numerous references to them in inventories, as well of parish as of monastic and cathedral churches, that reredoses formed of series of such tables, and even fronts of altars carved in alabaster, were extremely common throughout England. The Suppression inventories afford plenty of examples, and the many fragments that have come to light during "restorations" of churches all over the country are proof of their wide distribution. Occasionally, too, references to them occur in wills. Thus in 1505 Sir John Gilliot, alderman of York, directs :

I yeve to by a tabil of alblaster to the high awter in Sainct Saviour Kirk V marc.¹

And in 1506, John Colyns of Hunworth directs :

I woll that myn executors p^rvey a table of alabaster of the story of our lady and seint Anne her moder.²

In 1539, Anne Buckenham, of Bury St. Edmunds, also makes the following bequest :

I give and bequeathe to the chappell in the manner of Buckenham in Lyvermere Magna, my table of alablaster wth the imagies of the Trinitie, Sainte Peter, and Saynte Nicholas, there to remayne as long as yt may endure.³

¹ *Testamenta Eboracensia* (Surtees Society 79), v. 16.

² *Norfolk Archaeology*, i. 123.

³ S. Tymms, *Bury Wills and Inventories* (Camden Society 49), 138.

Extracts from one Suppression inventory, that of the London Charterhouse, 1538-9, will suffice as a good example :

High altar : "the nether fronte of the alter of alablastre wyth the Trinite and other Imagys."

St. John's chapel : "an alter and a table of the Resurrecyon of alablastre wyth ij imagys of saint John Evaungellyst and the other of saint Augustyne at eyther ende of the sayd alter."

The chapter house : "An altar wythe a table of alabaster wythe vij voyes of ow^r ladye."

And in a Visitation Book of Archbishop Young, under date 29th October, 1567, it is said with respect to Ripon Minster :

Ther is in a house within a vawte of the said Churche yet remaininge reserved vj great tables of alablastre full of images.¹

Several small tables of alabaster are still preserved in the vestry of the Minster.

Other examples are to be found here and there in many churches and museums of this country, and abroad they are so common and so widely dispersed as to show how large was the export trade in them.² One reredos formed of a number of these tables, together with the frame in which they are set, has actually travelled all the way from England to Iceland, where other examples also exist.³ Attention has lately been drawn to the numerous examples in France, by Mons. A. Bouillet, in a paper in the *Bulletin Monumental* for 1901,⁴ entitled "La fabrication industrielle des retables in albatre (xiv^e-xv^e siècles)." M. Bouillet has appended to his paper a list, which is manifestly incomplete, of nearly three hundred instances preserved in French museums. Many of them consist of groups of four, five, seven, nine, eleven and even of sixteen or eighteen "formant un retable." The writer concludes that all are of Flemish origin, but a typical example which forms his one illustration, a table of the Trinity, is of undoubted English work, with the characteristic painting found on the Nottingham panels.

¹ *Memorials of Ripon* (Surtees Society 81), iii. 344.

² Two fine examples of these tables were exhibited in illustration of this paper through the kindness of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and are shown in the accompanying plate. Three other excellent examples that were purchased in Italy were also

exhibited by the kindness of Mrs. Wickham Flower. Mr. Fitzhenry's fine table of the Trinity shown in the plate also came from Italy.

³ I am indebted to my friend Mr. T. M. Fallow, F.S.A., for information as to this, and for a photograph which places its identity beyond all doubt.

⁴ Vol. lxx. 45-62.



ALABASTER TABLES OF ST. CATHERINE, BELONGING TO THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

(Photographed by Mr. G. Cluck.)



ALABASTER TABLES OF (1) THE ADORATION OF THE THREE KINGS AND (2) THE ANNUNCIATION,
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

(Photographed by Mr. Arthur Gardner.)

The sets composing retables were no doubt exported in that form, like the example in Iceland, but many others must have found their way abroad during the iniquitous spoliations of our churches in the sixteenth century. Some light upon this point is afforded us by an entry in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Andrew's, Lewes, in 1548¹:

Item rec^d of Thomas Sentter who was put in trust by certen of the parish to make sale of thre aulters of alybaster to the frenche men in party^s of payment of xxxs. whereupon they dyd . . .

For all these tables may be assigned the same Nottingham origin as the St. John's Heads, for who can doubt on comparing them that they are the work of the same school of "alablastermen" and "steynours"?

There is also evidence that late in the fifteenth century "alablasturmen" were working at Burton-on-Trent. In 1481 Robert Bocher or Bochur of Burton-on-Trent "alablasturman," and Gilbert Twyst *alias* Twysse of the same town, "alablasturman," claimed £11 from William, abbot of St. Albans, £10 from Anthony, prior of the House and church of the Holy Trinity, Wallingford, and 8 marks (£5 6s. 8d.) from William Bray of Newbury in the county of Berks, clerk, keeper of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew in Newbury, all of which sums were owing and unjustly detained.² In each case, it will be seen the amount due was for work done in a religious house, and evidently for objects of no great size such as reredoses or tables for altars.

Of the York alablastermen it is not possible to say much, but the following names of some of them have been found among the York freemen:³

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Free 1457-8. | William Warde, aylblasterer. |
| | William Cowbrige, " |
| " 1463-4. | John Roper, ⁴ alblasterer. |
| " 1464-5. | John Aylde " |
| " 1467-8. | Henry Curteis, " |
| " 1473-4. | Richard Hurlbutt, " |
| " 1487-8. | Thomas Roper, alblasterman. |
| " 1524-5. | Edward Thomson, alblasterer. |

¹ *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, xlv. 51. I am indebted to Mr. H. M. Whitley for calling my attention to this entry.

² De Banco Roll, Easter, 21 Edward IV. m. 287. I am indebted to Mr. W.

Paley Baildon, F.S.A., for this important notice.

³ I have again to thank Mr. Fallow for this information.

⁴ He died in 1472.

There is, unfortunately, no record as to what they specially wrought, but there are certain alabaster sculptures in the British Museum, the Cambridge Museum, and elsewhere, that are clearly the work of a school different from that of Nottingham. The sculpture is finer and better, and may be somewhat earlier. Perhaps evidence may come to light in time that will enable us to identify this work more closely with that of the York carvers.

I have suggested elsewhere¹ that the St. John's Heads were devotional tablets popular amongst the members of the famous York Gild of Corpus Christi, and it is possible that the earliest examples were the work of York carvers, but at a later date they were certainly made in large numbers at Nottingham.

The Lincoln school is at present only known to us from the fact that there was a gild there of the painters, gilders, stainers, and alabastermen, founded 17 Henry VIII. [1525-6] in honour of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and All Saints, but principally in honour of St. Luke the Evangelist.²

I have now laid before you all that I have been able to learn, so far, as to the working of alabaster in this country down to the middle of the sixteenth century. After that time the supply of the fine alabaster from Chellaston appears to have given out, and the more streaky beds had to be worked. There is evidence, too, of the removal of the trade to Burton and other centres, and with the introduction of the coarser stuff monuments of new forms came into fashion, which enabled the "marblers" to use the alabaster for the sake of the material with a more sparing use of colour and gilding. By an interesting reversion it was again used in conjunction with touch and other marbles.

¹ *Archaeologia*, lii. 707.

² The charter and ordinances of the

gild are set forth in the City Register for the years 1541-64, f. clxxvij.