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Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire
Archæological Society.

TRANSACTIONS. VOL. I.

THE ALDRETH CAUSEWAY, ITS BRIDGE
AND SURROUNDINGS.

It need cause little surprise that few known British trackways are familiar to us, seeing that in most cases they have passed into disuse consequent upon long neglect and the opening out of new ways. In a few instances, *e.g.* the Icknield Way in Norfolk and Suffolk touching the borders of Cambridgeshire, the road remains wholly or in part as a recognized highway, but generally speaking such a course is now little more than a name even where there is evidence of its existence. Instances are not wanting where it would be manifestly advantageous to utilize an old British trackway. Those who planned such courses were eminently practical men, gifted with a foresight with which I often think we are slow to credit them. They not merely concerned themselves with the necessities of the moment but provided against any likely emergency. The conditions of life now may be different, and the requirements of the present not what they were, but it will be often found

difficult to improve upon the settled and deliberate plan adopted by the ancient British in the choice of sites and formation of their roads. It is incumbent upon us as far as possible to safeguard such parts of the country as the unique locality selected for a visit on the occasion of the first Excursion of the newly-formed Cambridge-shire and Huntingdonshire Archæological Society.

In point of interest I venture to think that there are few spots calculated to interest us more than the ancient Aldreth Causeway, (with its continuation, the *Mere* or *Mare Way*), the historical associations of the Aldreth High Bridge that spanned the water of the Old West River, and the circular fortified Camp called "Belsar's Hills" situate in the immediate neighbourhood. Such hill-forts would be of special importance in the maintenance of a free passage that meant supremacy, and probably formed only a part of a series of like military occupations. Here the fort, which I shall characterize as a British earthwork, guarded the bridge that forded the stream, and kept the way. To the S.E., further evidence of a series of earthworks occur in some important elevations at Rampton and Cottenham which if of less pronounced British construction must undoubtedly at one time have formed part of a similar line of defence. The Aldreth Way was consequently from the early days of its construction greatly valued as a highway, and if maintained at one time for strictly military purposes, came in process of time to be used as a common means for facility of intercourse between the Isle and the County.

In regard to the several matters which these subjects suggest to us let me remind you of the character of the immediate neighbourhood, in those far off days when the vast Fenland was a watery waste, covered with sedge and reed, and the uplands more or less wood and forest through which outlets would be made with difficulty. The present aspect of the broad and level expanse of the black peat land, only relieved here and there by willows near the water courses, or scanty rows of poplar trees, with the opening out of some well nigh

disused road, gives but the faintest idea of the former condition of the country, when the Fens were "like a great inland sea in the winter and a noxious bog in the summer." Even a road like the Aldreth Causeway would be subject to periodical inundations before the days of systematic embanking and drainage, and owing to the violence of the waters such visitations would make short work of any but the hardest and best of roads. It is this which leads me to the opinion that the Aldreth Causeway was until comparatively recent times an excellent road, and if I am not much mistaken it would prove on investigation to be of superior construction, and formed of good material, although its surface appearance and the neglect it has suffered may scarcely seem to be confirmatory of this impression. It is however highly probable that the somewhat narrow water course at Aldreth was kept well in bounds, and in a measure this natural advantage, strengthened by human appliances, may have led to its selection as a spot eminently fitted for the passage across the stream.

In the Fen country and other out-of-the-way spots, touched in former days by bridges that forded a stream, and causeways that led to convenient centres, the want is frequently felt of these old-time conveniences which have been allowed to fall away, and which the authorities (brought into existence by recent legislation for this very purpose of settling *inter alia* the particular question of roads and bridges) are negligently slow to re-instate. It was not always that landed proprietors and their subordinates responded to the call of duty, during troublous and trying times, in the matter of bridge maintenance and road repair, and it frequently happened, as in the case of the old Aldreth bridge, that for a long period, bridges were allowed to remain broken down or dilapidated. Or, as was often the case, it devolved upon tenants to carry out the repairs (in a superficial manner) in respect of a structure or way, which however essential to their well-being, was by reason of poverty and inefficient workmanship being irretrievably ruined to the great loss of the neighbourhood. But generally speaking the oblig-

ation was respected. It seems to be most essential, as the twentieth century opens, supplying us with a network of parochial, district and county organization, that care should be taken to develop and open up the country which in numerous districts has been allowed to deteriorate in consequence of the lack of ready communication caused mainly by its worn-out and neglected bye-ways and broken down or completely destroyed bridges. While the main roads are generally in an excellent state, what are commonly designated 'private roads' or 'bridle-ways' and the like (often of the greatest convenience and importance), are allowed to remain in such a deplorable state, that under the most favourable circumstances they are well-nigh impassable, and sources of discomfort and danger. Yet very frequently these are ancient ways, at one time maintained in an efficient and becoming manner, supplying means of communication and transport, the restoration of which to their proper use and condition would exercise an influence, in every way good and salutary. If disused roads, in some cases once spanned by bridges that served to connect village and township to their mutual advantage, have become so many causes of strife and contention, either in regard to the authorities themselves or in respect of the question of the status and liability of supposed owners (thereby delaying most vexatiously the execution of necessary work), it is high time the obligation, wherever it may chance to rest should be recognized, and if need be, enforced.

The Fen district has peculiar needs in this direction, Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely specially so. The latter in former times was chiefly entered by the causeways at Aldreth and Stuntney, and seeing that the safety of the monks largely depended on the difficulty of getting to Ely across the fens, we can well understand the desire to maintain an isolation more or less complete and to preserve the Isle as a "Camp of Refuge." The other entrances into the Isle were at Littleport and Earhith (or Earith) bridge respectively. Consequently little was done in those early days in the way of developing

uninterrupted intercourse with the County, and roads remained unformed and bridges were not placed. A commission issued as early as *temp.* Henry V., to view "the several causeys . . . Haddenham and Wyvelingham (Willingham) then broken and decayed, and to take order for their repair"* seem to point to a disposition to allow these common ways to pass out of use.

We have passed (shall I say unfortunately?) out of the period when men vied with each other in the business of bridge-erection and road-making as a *religious duty*, when work of this character was esteemed a privilege that brought its own reward, when side by side with a well-directed effort to further and sustain the work of the Church, men would bequeath their worldly goods for the purpose of making or repairing a causeway or fashioning and mending a bridge. We have fallen upon times wholly different it is true to the days when facilities for travel were extremely few and hazardous, but it is mainly in the centres of large populations and business enterprize that opportunities exist for easy and convenient passage from one place to another.

I may mention, as affording some evidence of business communication being facilitated between such a village as Rampton and the Isle owing to the then existence of the High Bridge and a passable road, that on a quarry in one of the windows of the South Aisle of that Church there is scratched

*William | Brown | Glazier | haddenham |
March 11 | '27†*

Now that the bridge has wholly disappeared and the way neglected, I do not for a moment suppose that Rampton would go to Haddenham for a Glazier! It would mean a circuit of many miles.

The Isle of Ely afforded the security of a safe retreat being only accessible by water; consequently after the defeat of Harold and the exercise of William's tyranny

* Dugdale History of Embanking, 1st Ed., p. 360.

† 1827, Dec. 10. Pd. a Glazier's Bill for Church £1 13 8. (*Rampton Book of Church Accounts.*)

towards the English nobles, many fled to this harbour of refuge. A leader was found in the person of Hereward to resist the King in his attempt to force a passage into the Isle where the people held out stoutly against him. To accomplish this end it became necessary to construct a bridge or causeway across the fen, some two miles in length, but the work was so far hindered that William's attempt again and again proved futile. Early in the following year (A.D. 1070) William took up the position at a point opposite to Aldreth, and formed a dam across the river, which however was soon broken down by the weight of water.

It has been assumed that the cause of such tardy movements on the part of William the Norman at the time of his invasion, when an army of sixty thousand were engaged for more than seven years in reducing the Isle of Ely, were owing to the Causeway having been partially destroyed by floods. But although periodical inundations may have caused considerable trouble it is far more likely that the road and its several approaches being very strongly garrisoned, the Conqueror's troops were kept at bay simply by strategetic means. Touching William's choice of Aldreth as the point of attack the *Liber Eliensis* (ii. 104) however has the following:—

“Nimium commotus, ad Alrethete, ubi aque insulæ minus latæ sunt, per pontum quem pridie paraverat suum iterum adplicuit exercitum; tamen ad spatium quatuor stadorum earum illic extenditur latitudo.”

The Fenland stoutly resisted the Norman intrusion, and was the last to yield to the usurpation of the invaders of England. The natural features and peculiar conditions of life were such, that so far as the Isle of Ely was concerned the advance of an enemy had been hitherto effectually warded off. In fact the fen waters were veritable barriers, and constantly stayed the progress of a mighty force of armed and determined men. In the reign of Henry III the Isle was conjectured to be one of the strongest military positions in England, and this opinion had likely enough been formed long before as the result of practical experience.

The late Professor Babington in his *Ancient Cambridgeshire* (2nd Ed. 1883 p. 79), thus refers to the causeway, and his words will be sufficient to introduce the several points that will come before us in this paper :—

“Aldreth Causeway is an ancient road . . . almost parallel with *Akeman Street*, and served like it, as a way from the drier lands near Cambridge to the islands in the fen . . . the Mare Way is probably first seen about half way between Rampton and Willingham at a spot marked by a sort of square on the ordnance map . . . it may be faintly traced as a raised road (but with two singular breaks in its continuity . . .) until it reaches Belsar's Hill. This is a large nearly circular Camp inclosing about six acres, the ramparts of which have been much lowered since the enclosure of the district, and seem to be gradually disappearing under the plough. This Camp is supposed to derive its name from Belisarius the Roman General, and to have been occupied by him in his War with the Vandals whom Probus had planted in Cambridgeshire. It seems improbable that he made it ; and if Aldreth Causeway and the Mare Way are Roman as some reasonably believe, the Belsar's Hill was probably a British fort, altered and occupied by the Roman troops. From Belsar's Hill to Aldreth the Mare Way is more distinct. It crosses the Old Ouse River at High Bridge, which is now in a very dilapidated state, for I learn that it has not been repaired since I was there a few years since, when both abutments of the wooden bridge were gone, and it was with much difficulty that it could be crossed. I was informed by the late Mr. C. H. Cooper that a piece of land near the bridge is legally charged with its repair. . . . It would be a misfortune if this ancient and valuable means of access to the Isle of Ely was totally destroyed, as seems not improbable. From the High Bridge the road is continued under the name of Aldreth Causeway. It need scarcely be added that the name is a corruption of Etheldreda, the foundress of the Abbey of Ely. The existence of this name adds, in my opinion, to the probability of William I. having found a road here, and not made it, as some have supposed. His chief attack upon the Isle in his war with Hereward seems to have been made there (see *Freeman's Norman Conquest*, IV. 472). This causeway, although now but little used, was once of such importance that various parishes in the Fens were liable for its repair. It is nearly certain that this line of communication was connected at its southern end with Cambridge along what is called Cuckoo Lane, and through the village of Histon.”

Further on Mr. Babington refers to “the great wooden bridge upon the Audrey Causeway.”

It is usually taken for granted that the name *Aldreth* is in some way a corruption of *Etheldreda*, and there can I think be very little doubt of this. But I am not so

confident that the *original* form of the word had any such close connection. 'Aldreth' is variously written, and in relation to the different forms it has assumed, I may suggest the following :—

- (1) *Alre—hythe*=the Alder shore
- (2) *Ald—reche*=the old 'reach' of the Ouse or West River, which run close by.
- (3) *Ald—vidr*=old Wood.

The termination 'reth' appears in other place-names in the County viz. in Shep-reth, and Meld-reth, and again in the Huntingdonshire Ea-rith; in some way these *hithes* or *reths* (landing or fortified places), qualified for their particular endings but how, I must leave.* We are familiar also with the cognate term *Aldyr-Kyr* (*Aldercar*), signifying a wood of alder or other trees in a moist boggy place. In the *Hundred Rolls*† the name is given as 'Aldreheth.' Another early form is 'Alherede' In A.D. 1272 one Geoffrey de Alderheth was Incumbent of the Holy Sepulchre Church at Cambridge, his name appearing in this form in a deed at S. John's College, relating to property in the town. In the Chesterton *Inquisitiones Nonarum* we have the name of Joh'is de Alderheth. The following extract furnishes the only early instance I have found of the name rendered '*Etheldredæ*' or '*S. Audreyes*' "Eo sedente strata est illa via Etherdredæ quæ vulgo vocatur S. Audreyes causeye."‡ If we are to content ourselves with the one meaning, *Audrey's-hythe*, or landing place (near which in Haddenham parish there is I believe a 'Holy Well' known as 'St. Audrey's Well'), there is no reason why we may not associate the actual landing place in A.D. 673 of S. Ætheldrythe and her companions, with this spot. They travelled southward it would seem through lanes and bye-ways to avoid

* The position &c. of Erith and Greenhithe in Kent will occur to the reader's mind. An *earthen fort* or *mound* may be signified in the ending, or, (A.S.) *running water*.

† Exchequer Inquisitions (7 Ed. I.) respecting rights of manor, warren, waters, pontage &c., forming a general survey of all such matters relating to Cambs., Hunts., etc.

‡ Br: Mus: *Vesp.* B. xv. f. 48.

pursuit, and perhaps directing their steps along the causeway, crossed the old channel of the Ouse, and landed in the fen that surrounded their island home, where on marshy ground the feet of the future Abbess at least stood firm in the faith of Christ. At all events we shall not be far wrong when we indulge the surmise that the Aldreth Way was a famous crossing to and from the stately shrine that commemorated the saintly Queen, the foundress of the magnificent Church and Convent of Ely.

The earliest mention I can find of the Aldreth bridge is in connection with the appointment of the first Bishop Hervey of Ely (A.D. 1109). In his care to maintain the rights and privileges of his See, the Bishop found that several estates and manors had fallen into the hands of tenants who held (*inter alia*) the custody of this bridge (the chief way of access into the Isle), and that, against his will and approval. By certain of the King's Charters subsequently granted, all such rights were restored to the Bishop and consequently we find the bridge and (it is reasonable to conjecture) its approaches, in the possession of the Bishop. Later on we see his successor, Nigellus (A.D. 1133), repairing the Castle at Aldreth wherein he had placed a garrison. The defences at Aldreth were repaired at the time when Ely was fortified consequent on the death of Henry I. (A.D. 1135) and the state of anarchy into which the Country was thrown:—

“Contra regem munitionem in Ely ex lapide et cæmento statuerat firmissimum quod virtute S. Etheldredæ crebro dissolvebatur Unde ad aquam prope machinas construxit munitionem de lignis factam, aggere cinxit et Alderde nihilominus reparatum custodie mancipavit.*

Stephen marched his troops into the fen, and passing the river close to Aldreth by means of a bridge of boats and hurdles seized Aldreth (the Earl of Essex having charge of the Castle) and became master of the Isle. Nigel the Bishop, who sided with the disaffected nobles fled to Matilda at Gloucester, and the Bishop's soldiers were compelled to surrender Aldreth to the King.

* Ang. Sac. I. 620.

It seems that the Aldreth causeway was at this time the most convenient approach to the Isle, and here Nigel had an 'agger' which was doubtless in connection with the Castle at Ely, and known to have been adjacent to the river having a bridge called Castelbrigge.

It was in the year 1071 that William returned to carry on the seige, when the Causeway near Aldreth was skilfully laid down and all impeding causes removed. The army however had to contend with innumerable difficulties, mainly owing to the treacherous nature of the soil, but in no slight degree augmented by the valour of the fenmen, who used every means in their power to repel the attack. The end of the struggle was brought about, not so much by a failure on the part of the dauntless Hereward and his brave companions in arms, as by the yielding of the monks, who were at length induced, probably by sheer force of circumstances, to open a way of entrance to the invading army. A strong desire for peace is much more likely to have led to the monks' submission than the treachery that has been imputed to them. I am much inclined to think that the collapse of the once vigorous repulse of the Conqueror may be attributed less even to temerity and lack of resources than to a weariness born of an ardent desire to pursue the occupations of the cloister life.

We find the bridge at Aldreth (7 Hen. V.) in the charge of the Sacrist of Ely (*vide* Sacrist's Rolls):—

"De piscaria iii partis in alta ripa in Strethamere et alti pontis de Alderheth voc' Almanywater:—nichil."

This entry is repeated (5 Hen. VI.) Possibly a Toll-keeper paid over to the Sacrist annually the tolls collected or paid a yearly rent in respect of the same. The repair of the bridges owing to heavy traffic must have required a considerable outlay. Bishop Northwold made over to the Sacrist of Ely a part of the revenues of Wentworth Church by way of provision for the repair of the bridges between Ely and Soham, and probably some such course may have been adopted in respect of other bridges, Aldreth among them. In this way, too, the burden of bridge maintenance, etc., got shifted.

To repair the bridges that appertained to the Convent of Ely, Henry III. gave oaks from his forest of Warboys, Hunts. This doubtless was some special gift. The Sacrist's Rolls are sufficient to show that Aldreth bridge and causeway were regularly repaired 'at the charge of the Church of Ely. In 1348, notwithstanding the necessities of the mother Church owing to the fall of the Great Tower money was set apart for the repair of all the bridges around Ely.

The *Hundred Rolls* (*temp.* Edw. I.), contain the following:—

“Dicūt q' calcet' & pons de *Alderheth* est regal' via & fuit facta & dissolut' jam p' sexdecim annos elapsos & debet repari p' Ep'us Eliens' & p' tenentes suos & ibidem pasiag' suo ob' & homo sine Equo q'” & aliquid illa passag' fuit ad firma dimissa p' ball'os Epi p' xx^s p. annu' & modo dca calcet' & pons repata est de novo p' Ep' Eliens'.

“*Alderheth Pons*. Dicu't sicut p' dixēnt Itm dicūt qd' mariscā de COTEHAM incipit ad CLAYBREGG & extend' usq' ad magnā ponte de HALDERHETH & de d'co ponte p' magnam ripam usq' ad CHAR' and de la CHAR' extend' usq' ad Tyllinge.”*

It is here clearly stated that the Bishop, and his tenants were then answerable for the repair of both the causeway and the bridge and the sixteen years neglect was not held to relieve them of the responsibility. The bridge tolls presumably were paid to the farmer or his officers, who rendered to the Bishop's servants the annual payment or rent of twenty shillings.

In the *Abbreviatio Placitorum* (*temp.* Edw. I.), is the following:—

Lib'tas epi' Eliens' allocatur p' Aldreth in insula Ely et dictum est ei q'd fac' p'tibus justiciam alioquin q'd redeant &c. et record testatur q'd idem conceditur (Term' Pasche Anno 33 Rol. 58).

In pli'to p' pace Reg' fracta in Aldreth existen' infra libtatem Epi Eliens' senescall Epi' vend' & petit & ei allocatur quorisq' &c. (Rot. 56)

* The Tyllinge (a broad and deep canal running through Waterbeach, Landbeach and Cottenham) really forms the southern extension of the Car Dyke and connects the Cam with the Old Ouse. (*Vide* the papers in this Vol. on *The recently discovered earthworks at Cottenham*, and *The Car-dyke*.)

Not only in respect of the maintenance of bridges and causeways, but in the actual cleansing of streams, the responsibility also rested with the Bishop or the Church officials. By an inquisition (21 Hen: viii.) the stream "from Earith Bridge to Parkhall Weare" was found "to be cleansed and scoured by the Bp. of Ely," and there can I think be little doubt but that in such a case the obligation carried with it the sustentation and repair of any bridge or bridges found in the course of the waters. Before the dissolution of the monasteries the passage of the water in the Fens was kept clear and the banks maintained at the cost and charge of the religious houses. It is interesting, if saddening, to note what has hitherto been unnoticed by writers on the subject of the draining of the Fens, that in the great pillage during the short reign of Edward VI. drainage work was occasionally carried out by means of funds obtained on the confiscation and sale of the Church goods. The efforts of the privileged (!) laymen into whose hands so much Church property passed to maintain its rights inviolate was clearly of a very restricted character, and the Church of the Reformation in the person of its dignitaries had a poor conception of its responsibilities, leaving the cost of making a common way into the Fens and the reparation of banks and the restraint of waters as in the case of the parishes of Wilburton and Downham in the Isle of Ely to be borne out of a fund wickedly acquired from the sale of Church goods.* In the case of Wilburton, out of the net result of the Church plate (£14 15s. 10d.) the sum of £9 3s. 2d. was

"payd for the rep'acon of our banks to defende and kepe the wayter fro' surrowndyng of o' ffenes."

At Downham £6 was expended

"for the cariage of viii. hundreth loods of gravell for making a com'on Way Into our ffennes called Westmore."

In the Diary of Celia Fiennes, (written in the time of William and Mary,)† she mentions the tediousness of the

* *Inventories of Church Goods, Temp.*, Ed. VI. (*East Anglian*, Vol. ix.)

† *Through England on a Side-saddle in the time of William and Mary*. (London, 1888.)

last eight miles of her journey to Ely "ye wayes being very deep, etc., etc. A mile distant from ye town etc. . . . a Bridge . . . a Causey . . . ye Bishop is at ye charge to repaire, etc., (pp. 127—131). In view of the great lapse of time, change in respect of property obligations and ownership, etc., the responsibility that at one time rested upon ecclesiastical dignitaries and Cathedral Chapters, has largely ceased; where such liability now remains it is with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but generally speaking it may be assumed that it has no longer any force of law, certainly not in respect of Aldreth, *vide* p. 16. The owners of a farm in Aldreth are or were supposed to be liable for the repair of this ancient public bridge, and the Lord of the Manor of Haddenham and occupiers of land copyhold of the Manor have also been accounted responsible, but amidst so much uncertainty and vain speculation it may be taken for granted that in the present state of things the duty now devolves upon the District and County Councils. It is at all events for these bodies, without adopting a do-nothing policy of delay, which is all too frequent, to proceed with the business of re-erecting a bridge in place of the one that has disappeared, and re-making the causeway rendering it passable on both sides of the river.

In Wells' *History of the Drainage of the Bedford Level* (1830) Vol. I. p. 27., we read concerning the liability to repair both bridge and causeway:—

"This river is crossed by a Bridge called Aldreth High Bridge, which connects the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely. The Bridge is repaired by the owner of lands in Haddenham Parish, which lands in the year 1766, were the property of Mr. Micah Coulson. In early times this was the only entrance into the Isle of Ely, and was much contested during the time William the Conqueror laid siege to that place. The bridge is approached by a celebrated Causeway, called Aldreth Causeway, which was heretofore repaired by certain parishes and individuals within the Isle, but is now wholly neglected."

The repair of the causeway it is said became in some way a charge upon the tenants of Downham and other Manors, but I can find no verification of this and similar assertions.

The following document preserved among Cole's MSS., in the British Museum is presumably authoritative. In it appears the name of Mr. Coulson probably the same mentioned in the extract taken from Mr. Wells' history, as possessed of the Haddenham property:—

“A copy of the places and length, where towns, people, and places are obliged to repair of Aldreth Causeway.

	Poles or Roods.	Feet.
Doddington Parish (begins at Aldreth End)	20	
Mr. Castle, now Mr. Gifford		20
March parish, with the heads and coffens of the team bridge	30	
Whittlesea bridge	30	
Mr. Castle, now Mr. Coulson, Cheesemonger of Peter- borough	15	
Chatteris parish, deep whells, coffens and heads, and then part of causeway	7	
Thomas Castle, Esq., beyond deep wheel	15	
Tidd St Giles parish	7	
Leverington do.	12	
Wisbech do.	12	
Elme parish, causeway with Mr. Coulson of Peter- borough's pole-bridge, heads and coffens and other parts interfere, Elm Causeway, 33 feet.....	12	
Lord Hardwick for Hinton	40	
Newton Parish.....	9	
William Drury, Esq., now Farrin	2	
Stuntney Parish	11	
Haddenham End.....	8	
Ralph March, Esq., for the Manor of Gray's	2	
————— for Manor of Chewells	3	
Heads and Coffens of High Bridge to Mr. Coulson ..	5	

Chains 60 1 3½

I am unable to say from what source Mr. Cole acquired this information, but it is difficult to account for the liability resting upon the particular parishes and persons named. It was customary in many districts for persons receiving direct benefit from the convenience offered by a bridge to be charged with 'Pontage' in respect of their holding. This impost was usually payable by the Lord of the Manor and not by his tenants, but disagreement as to apportionment and the endeavour to lay part of the charge upon the tenantry, frequently led to pontage money remaining unpaid and various compli-

cations resulted. The maintenance and repair of causeways in like manner must have given rise to frequent disagreement.

The late Mr. E. A. Freeman* referring to the last bridge at Aldreth says "when I was there it looked very much as if it had been broken down by Hereward and not mended since" so dilapidated was its then condition. Ordinary wear and tear, accelerated by want of attention to the structure have done their work. It has now for several years been a thing of the past, and not a vestige of it remains in sight, the place however where it once and always since its existence as a bridge has stood, ought to be worth investigation. I shall be surprised, when the time comes for rebuilding, provided the work be carried through under qualified guidance, if discoveries then made do not more than compensate for all the trouble and expense involved in fitting up a new bridge. The ancient piles at any rate upon which the original bridge was built are in all probability there and may as likely as not be found in good condition. I have myself taken from the watery soil of the Lake Dwelling near Glastonbury, fragments of perfectly sound oak piles that had been driven in by the ancient British. Excavations in the neighbourhood of the Aldreth Bridge would most certainly result, sooner or later, in a rich harvest of archæological treasure. It is much to be hoped that these suggestions may not be forgotten.

A great cattle market which was formerly held at Aldreth had to be abandoned, in consequence it is said of the decay of the bridge. The inhabitants of the Isle petitioned Dr. Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely, to lay the case before Charles I. Clearly the See of Ely was in no way held responsible at that time for the maintenance of the bridge for it was alleged in the petition that the Lord of the Manor of Haddenham (the Earl of Suffolk) was liable for the repair. Among those signing the petition to have the bridge mended and the market re-instated was Oliver Cromwell.

* *Norman Conquest*, Vol. iv., p. 465.

In the visitation of Archbishop Laud, A.D. 1638, the following presentment was made relating to

“The State of Ye Bishoprick of Ely^e concerning Audy and Erith Causeys.

“Ever since ye reigne of King William the Conqueror there hath bene a long causey over the Fenns and other low grounds, called Alderhec, vulgo Audy Causey, whereby ye King’s highway for horses and foot from ye town and county of Cambridge into ye Isle of Ely hath been maintained. At ye East end of Audy Causey there was a great bridge over ye River Ouse with sundry smaller bridges in severall parts of ye said Causey over other deep places and passages for water. These Causeys and Bridges were anciently all maintained by ye Bp. of Ely by right of sundry great manors belonging to ye said see; and the said bishoprick lying void Elizab. 23, for 20 years together, ye same were repaired by ye Queen’s officers.

“Elizab. 40 The Queen had taken away 15 great Manors from ye same bprick, and upon a second alienation of 33 great Manors more, made Eliz. 43 under ye great seale of England, it was covenanted with Bp. Heaton to acquit and save harmless ye Bp. of Ely for ever from ye new making or repairing ye two great bridges of Audry Bridge and Erith Bridge, and of Audrey Causey and Erith Causey, and all ye smaller bridges in or upon either of ye said Causeys.

“Eliz. 44^o: Thomas, then Lo. Howard, purchasing from ye Queen ye Manor of Haddenham, upon wch ye reparation of all those bridges of Audrey Causey was charged, had an abatement of £300 allowed on ye purchase, and so covenanted to discharge ye Crown from reparation of ye said bridges for ever. But about 25 years ago ye high bridge over ye River Ouse called Audry Bridge, for want of due reparations, fell down and there is yet no new bridge erected for his Ma’y’s subjects to passe by.”

This sufficiently explains why the Bishop of Ely is no longer liable for repairs either in respect of bridge or causeway. We are without information as to whether or no the Lord of the Manor has in any way rendered satisfaction in respect of his abatement, but we presume not.

In a report upon the condition of the highways of Haddenham, published recently, it is stated, in respect of the Aldreth road, that the repair is very bad, but that, many years back, this was a metalled public carriage road leading to the Old West River and to Aldreth Bridge, traces of Lakenheath shingle and Sutton gravel being still visible. Having been a public highway before

1835 the duty of repair devolves upon the Haddenham Highway Committee.

“Approaching danger” (the advance of a horde of “plunderers” from the North) led to a proclamation being issued in 1643 to fortify the castle and town of Cambridge “for preventing of y^e enemies inroade” by making provision for securing all the passages (bridges) upon the river Ouse, and this was duly published with a view of raising £5,000, in the parish Churches in order to effect the desired object.* This “proclamation” gives some idea of the disturbances of the Commonwealth period and the stir that would be caused in guarding the approaches in this district, the Aldreth way among them.

In an old book of Church accounts in the custody of the Rector of Rampton mention is made (A.D. 1832) of the “Portway, Cam-end,” the “Portway, Aldreth end,” the “Isle end,” and “Haddenham end,” all lying in “Bellsier’s Field;”† also “Sand Pond Haven Aldreth end” and the “Cam end.” These several designations, which I cannot pretend to exactly identify (for they occur at a time previous to the Enclosure Award), give some indication of the recognition of prominent points in connection with the causeway. On the Ordnance Map the road leading S. from the Cottenham side of the river at the Aldreth Bridge site is called “The Causeway”; it runs in almost a straight line through Willingham parish, but now in its altered course completely dividing the site of Belsar’s Hill Camp in two. From a point beyond, it passes in a twisted direction as far as the house on the Rampton road in that parish, known as “The Fox and Hounds,” under the name of “The Haven Drove” through what is familiar as “Belsar’s Fields,” ‡ partly in Willingham and partly in Rampton Parish. At this second ‘break in its continuity’

* *The East Anglian*, Vol. vii. 117.

† There are, as may be supposed, quite a number of ways in which ‘Belsar’s’ is spelt in these accounts—‘Bolcher’s,’ ‘Bellsess,’ ‘Belcher’s,’ ‘Bellers,’ etc., etc. Several of the place-names occurring here are interesting.

‡ These fields are so called in a Manorial Survey of the time of Henry III. and would I imagine be included as appertaining to the Camp proper, the whole forming ‘Belasisse.’ (*Rot. Hund. Ed. I.*)

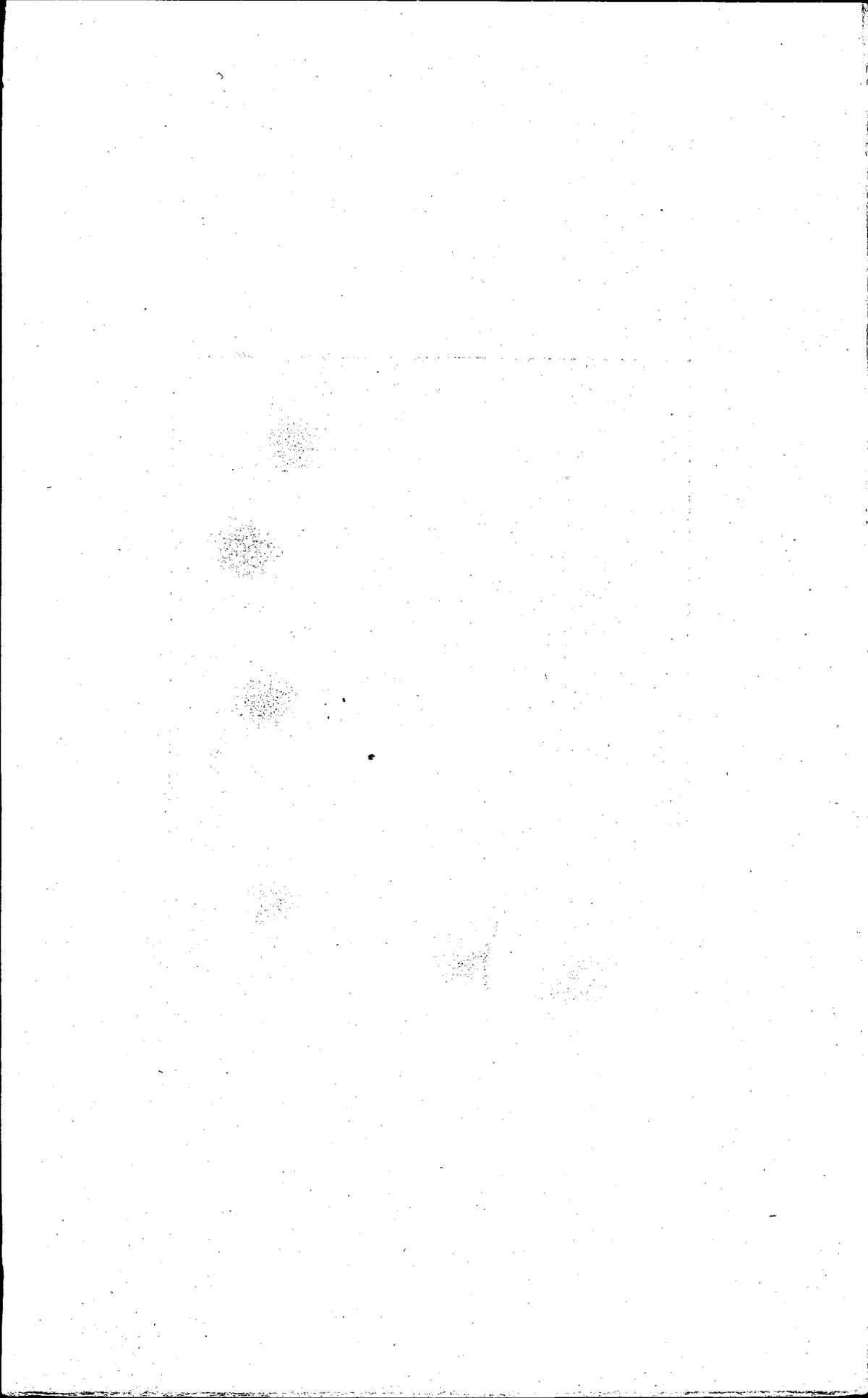
caused undoubtedly by the ramifications necessitated by the Enclosure Act) we have some difficulty in following its circuitous course, and the only thing that can be said with any degree of certainty is that a way passed through "Mill Field" along Cuckoo Lane' and what is known as the "Rampton Drift," as far as "Lamb's Cross"; from thence the line of communication went through the village of Histon to Cambridge. The difficulty of tracing ancient ways of this character, especially in the Fen country, as I have already intimated, is considerable, but in the case of this southern prolongation of the Aldreth Causeway we have sufficient data to guide us to approximate conclusions. We may at all events conclude that the road in question was a *direct* route, a military thoroughfare in fact even before the days of the Roman conquest, of which the British earthworks (*Belsar's Hill*) standing in the regular line, gives sufficient proof, if necessary, to establish the assertion. As to the antiquity of this causeway there can be no doubt, and possibly Britons, Romans and Normans, to say nothing of later military enterprize, down to the commonwealth disturbance, traversed the way and often made good an escape to the stronghold that was at hand, or found ready access to one of the several well-fortified positions or hiding places in the neighbourhood.

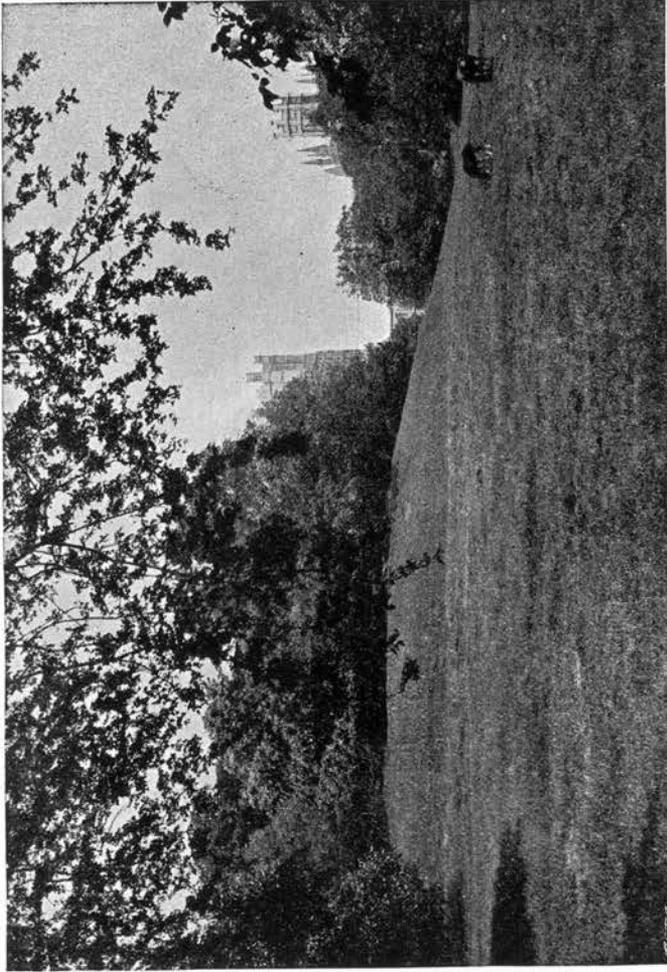
It is now time to take some notice of the hero of the fens, Hereward, whose remarkable exploits are largely associated with the Aldreth bridge and causeway. An eminently historical personage is Hereward, in himself most certainly no fictitious character, but surrounded with so much which is legendary that it is hopeless to disassociate the false from the true except as a mere matter of opinion.

The *Gesta Herewardi Saxonis*, a Latin MS. of the twelfth century* and the *Historia Eliensis*,† which furnish us with accounts of Hereward, have alike a mythical

* Printed in a Caxton Society volume by Mr. T. Wright, who has also given us in his *Essays on the Middle Ages* (Vol. ii.) something of a free translation.

† Edited by Rev. D. J. Stewart, (there is no English translation of this book.)





HEREWARD'S MOUND AT ELY, THE SUPPOSED SITE OF THE LAST STAND.

tendency. In conjunction with certain of the chroniclers we mainly owe to these several sources the information we possess relating to the leader of the gallant stand made against William in the defence of Ely. The *Gesta* (xxv.) introduces Aldreth to our notice in the following passage:—

“Rex autem . . . omnem suum exercitum conducens ad Alreheche; fecit quoque illo etiam advehi multam struem lignorum et lapidum, atque ex omni materia aggerationem et omnes piscatores provinciæ cum naviculis ad Cotingelade* adesse jussit ut illuc quæ adduxerant transfretarent unde globos et montanas eis Alreheche facerent, super quos bellare deberent. . . . At illi qui ex insula erant antemuralia et propugnacula contra statuentes valde rebellabant.”

The mounds thus thrown up on this side of Aldreth, on the heights of which William's men were to fight, and the resistance offered by the men of the Isle, is strong confirmation of what we know of the course of events, and history was but repeating itself. The mounds and bulwarks raised by the inhabitants of the Isle may now perhaps be only discerned in the solitary instance of the mound at Ely* where on the summit of Cherry-hill within the confines of the monastery, Hereward is supposed to have taken his last stand,† but the entire line through which the attack had to be met was more or less a garrisoned way, stoutly defended until the Norman gained complete mastery and possessed the Isle, although it was not until the reign of Henry I., that the invaders acquired undisturbed possession. There is not very much remaining in the way of relics of the past, but from the peat of the Fen at Aldreth, either in the vicinity of the bridge, or where some sharp encounter took place, a leaf-shaped bronze sword, $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, now in the Museum at Cambridge, was some time since taken. There may have been numerous finds of this character from time to time of which we have no exact account; ‡

* Cottenham.

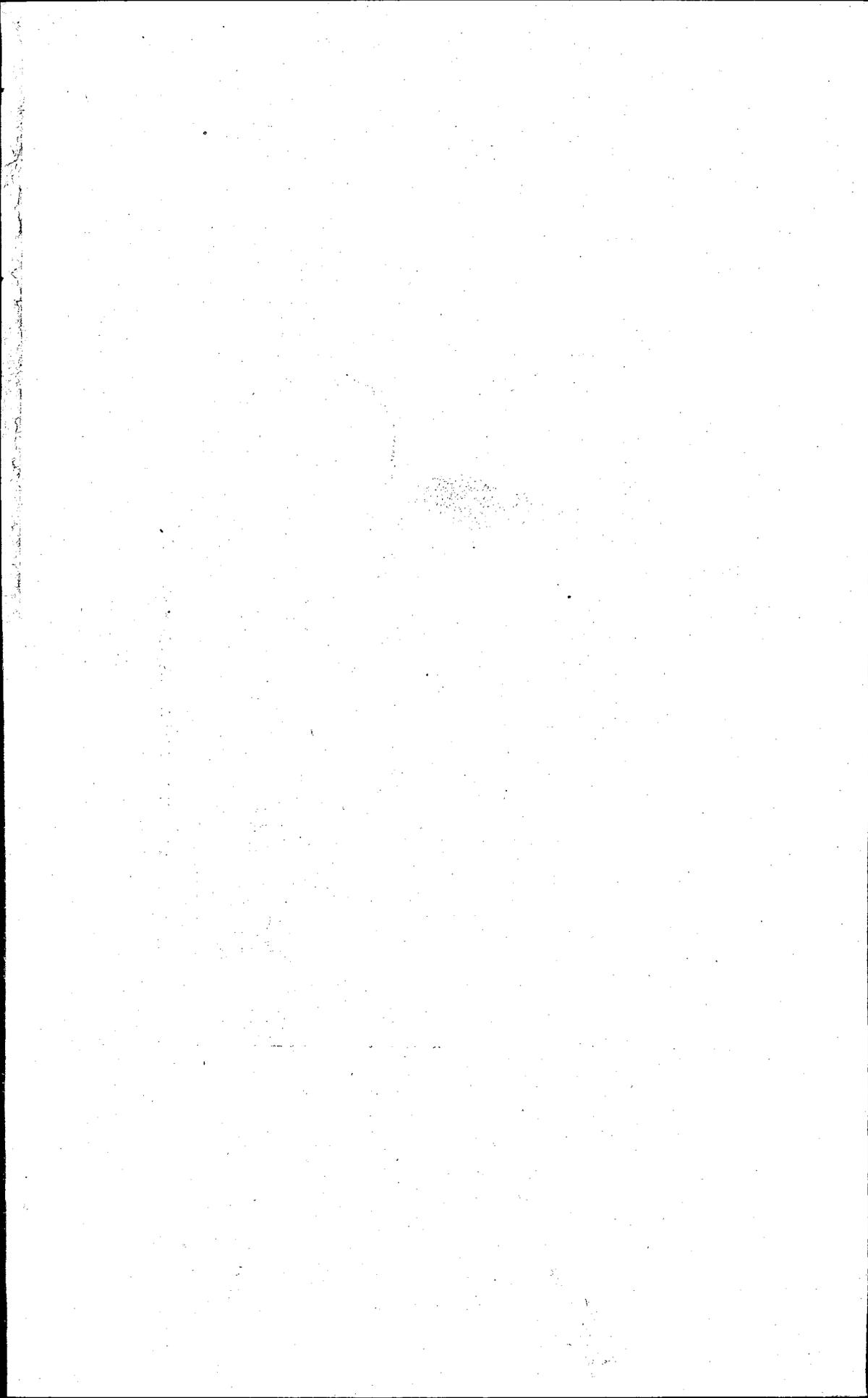
† In all probability an earthwork of much earlier date. We are indebted for the illustrations in this paper to the kindness of Messrs. Constable.

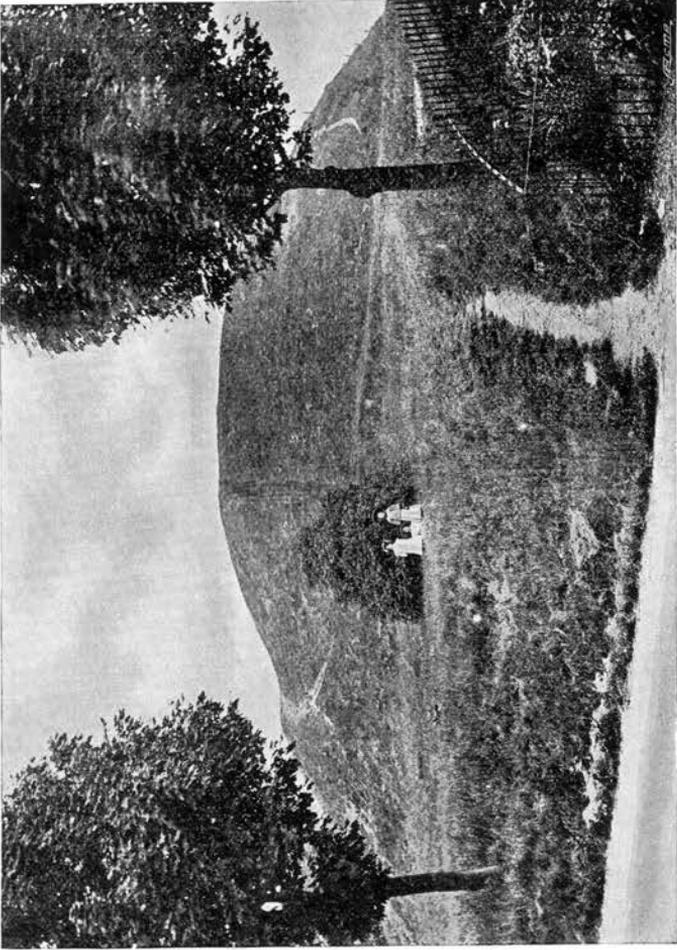
‡ The Rev. J. G. Cheshire, Vicar of Witcham, tells me that he has been informed that a former Haddenham farmer had some such finds in his possession.

Kingsley's allusion to the find of weapons* and armour in the Old West River and parts adjacent as continuous to his own time is wanting in preciseness and can have no real bearing on Hereward's conflict, for such objects as the leaf-shaped sword would in all probability belong to the British period. However at Wilburton Fen, close to Haddenham and Aldreth, several interesting specimens of bronze swords, spear heads, etc., now in the possession of Mr. A. J. Pell, have been found; we may certainly conclude that the struggle between opposing forces for mastery in the Fens was at different periods of a fierce and sanguinary character. It was in this district that the powerful tribe of the Iceni dwelt, and being driven from the woodlands by the Romans under Ostorius they were at length defeated with immense slaughter; consequently we should expect to find indications of this early warfare.

Of Hereward's exploits little need be said here, they are at hand, in every variety of literary work, chronicled, not so much, it must be said, in the page of history as in that of story and song, but the incidents in which the bridge at Aldreth figures must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. At the time during which the English nobles held the Isle against the Conqueror two unsuccessful attempts were made, it is said, to carry a bridge or ford over the stream at a point where the Fen waters were half a mile in breadth. The bridge (or what I suppose we might call a fen passage) was formed of wood, stone and faggots, with great baulks of timber fastened by cowhides. As the soldiers were crossing, the entire structure gave way and a large number of men were drowned. This is recorded in the *Liber Eliensis* of the monk, Thomas, and it is further added "in testimonium hujus rei ex ipsis fundaminibus sæpius arma extrahi cernimus." A second bridge was afterwards constructed of material conveyed as we have seen in boats by fishermen, among whom was Hereward in disguise. When the erection was nearing completion Hereward set light to it

* *Hereward the Wake*, ("How they fought at Aldreth.")





CASTLE MOUND AT CAMBRIDGE. (I.)

and the men fired the reeds, with the result that the enemy's forts were destroyed and their assailants were completely awed and put to confusion. The King greatly disconcerted at this disaster, retired to the Castle at Cambridge. Much doubtless that has come down to us concerning Hereward is pure fiction, but the statements relating to bridge and causeway need give us little or no such concern. The myths of an age that delighted in recounting legend regardless of facts, developing mere shadows of truth into substantial fabrications, and encouraging flights of fancy, irrespective of the restrictions of surroundings, invariably leave a substratum of truth in the prominence given to localities in the mention of place names. Matthew Paris who lived in the reign of Henry III. informs us that a wooden fortress existed in the Fens at Aldreth which was in his time known as "Hereward's Castle." At all events a Castle as we have seen built by Nigellus, Bishop of Ely (who was attached to the cause of Matilda) at Aldreth, was sufficiently garrisoned to withstand King Stephen's assault. Stephen is known to have sailed with a fleet of small vessels to Aldreth, and having made a temporary bridge, passed over with his horses and obliged the Bishop's soldiers to leave Aldreth Castle which he garrisoned with his own men; thus he made his way to Ely. The Bishop escaped and for some two years or more the Isle was in a state of revolt and the vicinity of the bridge in no small commotion. Ultimately the Bishop returned, and with the help of his people once again possessed himself of Aldreth Castle.*

We have now to deal with another 'famous General,' but how far he had any real existence I must leave. For

* I cannot refrain, now that I am speaking of bridges and of Matilda, from referring to a note in the Life and Letters of Herbert Losinga first Bishop and Founder of the Cathedral at Norwich, (Vol. i., p. 300, 1.) The Queen was a great bridge-builder, and erected it is said *the first arched bridge ever known in England*, she directed special attention "to making new roads and repairing the ancient highways, and generally facilitating communication between different parts of the country, one great condition this" adds the writer of the note "of civilization." It is not unlikely that this spirit may have possessed the Bishop in an eminent degree and led to bridges and roads in the Fen district being specially cared for.

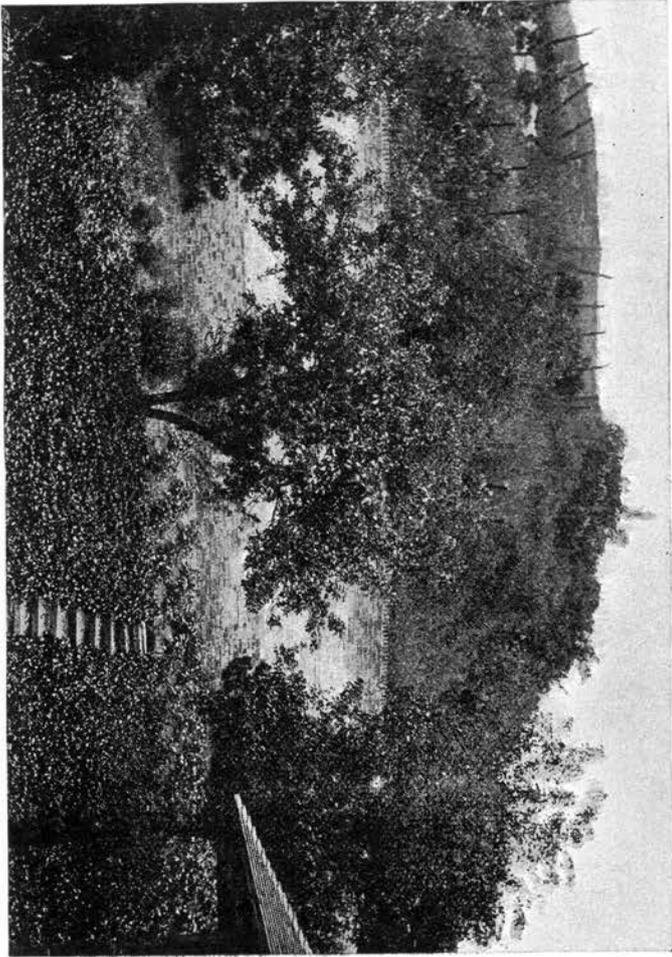
my own part I doubt if the 'Belsar' we commemorate in connection with the camp near Aldreth ever lived, at all events we have no historical or other reliable proof that such an individual was *ipso facto* ever among us in the flesh. Respecting 'Belsar,' or more properly 'Belisarius' very little is known, and as I have intimated much uncertainty surrounds his personality. While one writer says of him that he was "famous among the rebels in the Conqueror's time when he built Cambridge Castle," it is alleged of him that he was "an unknown person."* Thus Belisarius a conjectural Roman General becomes the Norman officer in the difficulty experienced in suitably placing him. I can find nothing that satisfies me on the point that such a person as our Belisarius ever existed. In the Hundred Rolls (*temp.* Ed. I.) I find the following:—

"Dicūt q' dns Rex h't warenn p'tinente ad Castell' Cantebr' in manu sua q' warenn Rex Johes p'mo p'cepit & incipit ad Castellu' Cantebrig' & extend' p'regale via' Huntingdon usq' Serebrige & de Serebrige usq' Westwychebrige & de Westwychebrige p' via' de Bompton (Rampton) usq' *Belasisse* & de *Belasisse* usq' ad magna ripam & rev'tit p' illa ripam usq' Squasselode & de Squasselode p' magnā ripā usq' ad ponte Cantelbrig'."

This extract while introducing us to other localities of interest in connection with our investigation, mentions *Belasisse*; this reference is made not as I conceive to the bare six acres covered by the camp, but to the larger area. This spot presumably formed the *rendezvous* of the Conqueror's army at the time of the Norman intrusion, and up to this point, at any rate, the approach towards Ely had been unopposed and so far successful. What more natural at that time than the application of the no-meaningless epithet (*Bellasise* = de bello situ, the Norman character of the name is clear) to designate the place where the army rested so long, the Conqueror too, bent upon success, which however much delayed was regarded as eventually sure and certain? Here in all probability was the field of council, where after frequent attacks had been persistently made upon the Isle to no purpose, and all other means

* Carter *History of Cambridge*.





CASTLE MOUND AT CAMBRIDGE. (II.)

of access found unavailing, resource was had to a successful and unimpeded march from the castle at Cambridge to this fine situation *Bellassise*. I venture also, to think that the glowing description given to William of the country by one of his soldiers, as related in the *Liber Eliensis* ought to strengthen this contention as to the excellent impression made upon the not too impressionable minds of the Norman soldiery. I have somewhere seen it stated that the supposed Belisarius probably obtained the estate designated *Belsar's Fields &c.* as a reward from his royal master, but of course this is purely conjectural and in the then condition of things unlikely. Camden* thus refers to the name and place:—

“There is a rampart nigh Audre, not high, but very large, called Belsar's Hills from one Belisar; but what he was I know not.”

Stukeley refers to the earthwork as “a Roman Camp, repaired by the Conqueror's soldiers,” and the ‘Audrey Causey’ “a Roman way originally into the Isle of Ely.” To this, says Bentham:—†

“I have nothing to object, but that no authority is cited to support it, I should rather think from the account given [of the Conqueror's invasion] that Aldrey causey was first made during the seige and that it has been from time to time occasionally repaired, and so continues a common way into the Isle to this day.”

Neither Stukeley or Bentham weighed the best possible form of evidence in coming to a conclusion respecting the origin of the Camp, which is clearly a work of British construction. That it was utilized by the Romans is undoubtedly true, for in the immediate neighbourhood are traces of an extensive Roman settlement. If any doubt exists on this point, the discoveries in the district of Roman remains‡ should go far to obliterate any hesitancy to accept a pre-Norman origin. The ancient character of the causeway as an old British road is on all sides in evidence, and long before the great Roman roads

* Camden's *Brit.* Ed. Gibson, 409. † History of Ely, Vol. i., p. 104.

‡ Vide the writer's paper in this Vol. on “The supposed site of a Roman Encampment at Cottenham.”

(*Akeman Street* and *via Devana*) were formed, this was the principal, if not the only land approach from Cambridge to the Isle. Even in the attack made by William, the Roman way to Ely through Stretham was for some cause or another inaccessible, and the old 'war path' with its military adjuncts, was deemed the better way. This may surprise us a little as we regard either the long neglected and somewhat circuitous and distorted passage today as it runs from, say, what is known as Gunn's Lane in the parish of Histon to Belsar's Camp in Willingham parish, or the line of direct advance along the Aldreth causeway* on the Haddenham side, now almost wholly disused and inaccessible from the county side. But it needs very little discrimination to understand the wisdom of following a way that offered among other advantages that of the security of cover, and the distinct gain found in traversing a kept and tried way that had before proved the path of military success. The way doubtless needed re-making, and the bridge possibly required to be newly constructed, for we must remember that between the period of the Romans leaving the country and the coming of the Normans, the fens became greatly neglected and this was followed by the overflowing of the waters, with its consequent results. The old fen roads where they exist will be generally found, on the removal of surface soil that has been allowed to accumulate, exceedingly well made. They were largely built up of alternate layers of clay and gravel forming a hard substance similar to concrete, beneath was a thick bed of brushwood, possibly not less than three feet in thickness. I cannot gather that the last Aldreth bridge was of any special interest, a mean wooden structure tottering to its fall is all that the memory of man can recall of its state and condition, but the foundations would undoubtedly disclose important features for upon the original and subsequent piers the later bridge had doubtless been raised.

* Causeway=*Chaussee* (Norman Fr.) a way constructed across a watery marsh. As the word (sometimes *Causey*) is now used, it means an extension from an highway.

Fuller* refers to Belasyus "one of the knights quartered in the monastery of Ely." This statement is of course founded on the famous *Tabula Eliensis* in the Palace at Ely (*said* to be a copy of the ancient one formerly in the monastery hall) which appears to commemorate the departure of the Norman knights who had been placed by William in the monastery after its surrender. In this *Tabula* the name, &c., of a Belisarius occurs, but it is not improbable, that this curious and interesting work of art (I trust I may be pardoned for adding, and legend) is founded upon monastic story as incorporated in the *Liber Eliensis*. The designation attached to the assumed arms, *Bellasius Preces Militum versus Elye* may be thought at any rate to establish the existence of the Norman General and point to his particular achievement, but the painting which is probably not older than the early part of the 16th century is without doubt quite an original work and of no value as historical evidence. The Rev. Wm. Cole in his remarks on the *Tabula* appended to Bentham's *History and Antiquities of Ely Cathedral*,† says

"The arms sufficiently intimate that they belonged to the name of *Bellesis*, the famous General who gave his name to the works south of Aldreth Causey, still retaining the name of Belsar's Hills; though against every authority Dr. Stukeley‡ has given the honour of that achievement to a phantom of his own raising, a mere ideal or imaginary person, who never was heard of before in this manner '*Ursois, Master of the Conqueror's military Engines, bore Argent, a Cross Sable; (Ely Tablet;) he repaired the Roman Camp South of Audrey Causey.*' Why he chooses to call his hero, *Ursois*, instead of his true name *Opsal* or *Opsalus*, I know not: sure I am, that the family of Opsall bear the aforesaid arms."

In an inquisition of the manors of the see of Ely

* Church History, Cent. xi. p. 168. Bentham also quotes from the MS., referred to by Fuller, called the *Story found in the Isle of Ely* (Br. Mus.) It is of no historical value and only to be regarded as 'curious, ingenious and interesting!' The extract bearing on this is as follows:—"We endured the violent threats of the Normans 7 years together, untill such tyme as Belasyus Generall of the King's Army in thys service, of whom certain Hylls, which at the South-end of Aldreth Causey were built for the Safety of the Armyes, took their names, which we nowe by corrupt speech call Belsars Hills, getting a great company of boats, passed the waters on a soddayn, and set us at our wit's end, &c." *MS. Tiberius*, Br. Mus. B. II.

† Vol. i. app. p. 8. ‡ Palæograph. Britan. *ut supra*. p. 38, 129.

made in the thirteenth century are the following references to Belsar's fields :—

“Dominicum hujus manerii distinguitur in tres partes; scilicet in campo de belasise quarterviginti una acre mensur per parc' septendecim pedes et dimid * * *

“Preterea sunt ibi sexdecim acre que qu' arantur et sec'antur qu' propter nimiam pluviam jacent in pratium et pasturam. Scilicet infra Belasise sex acras.”

A few words remain to be said relating to the guardianship and care of bridges in these parts and of Aldreth bridge in particular. A bridge-reeve or guardian of the bridges was formerly appointed by the authorities at Ely, and if I have been correctly informed the organist of that Church still holds that office or rather I suppose receives the emoluments. Travelling in the Fens it must be remembered was in former days attended with many obstacles and dangers, and the neighbourhood of a bridge was frequently the scene of robbery and violence, and necessitated good government. To mitigate in some degree vicissitudes of this kind, hermitages were placed at spots likely to prove advantageous to the wayfaring man, and sometimes the tolls received at an adjacent bridge would go to the support of the hermit and the maintenance of his Chapel. Earith causeway had its hermitage, the site and name of which are familiar enough. An indulgence for Richard de Grymston, a poor hermit, and for repair of Earith causeway was granted in 1397 during the Bishop's pleasure. One Henry Bourne was hermit there in 1401. Aldreth had its hermitage under the care of John Spencer the “poor hermit of Haddenham” to whom a year's indulgence was granted in 1406, for all contributing towards “the repair of ‘Herhith’” causeway. The hermitages on Swavesey highway, at Roucehill (Ely), that between the two Shelford's (“for repairs of bridge and causeway”), were similarly benefitted, while for repairs of causeway between Howes and Cambridge Castle, for the repair of Hauxton bridge and causeway, for repair of Brandon ferry bridge, are a few other instances in which indulgences were granted with the object of benefitting directly

or indirectly those travelling in the neighbourhood of the fens. The tolls taken at the ancient bridge of Ballingdon hamlet in Sudbury in the diocese of Ely went to the adjacent hospital of the Order of S. John of Jerusalem.* The bridge was repaired at the cost of the town, the borough being responsible for one half and the County for the other. The piles of this old wooden bridge are still visible below the water level.

In closing these brief notices relating to the Aldreth way and its surroundings, I am conscious of having very imperfectly accomplished what I originally intended; I think however I have succeeded in bringing together a number of details of some interest and importance, and of having treated the subject for the first time in a connected form. Although in a paper of this character one is concerned more with the antiquarian side of the subject, yet I am not disposed to dismiss from my mind a broader view in face of the fact that the much needed bridge has disappeared and the ancient but convenient way of St. Audrey and its extension is a neglected waste. The authorities are lamentably slow in dealing energetically with the subject, which is being continually discussed in their councils to no useful purpose. Local prejudice and personal feeling are endangering the opportunity that presents itself of renewing the road and erecting the bridge. With an utter disregard for plain and historical facts it is urged that the roads on both sides of the river at the site of the Aldreth bridge are merely peat roads, but long neglect and disuse can scarcely reduce roads of this character to the consistency of a quagmire, certainly not at the behest of a few theorists. The roads are now in a bad condition, that on the Haddenham side (some fifty-nine chains in length) is I am told particularly so, but it is a well-established fact, whatever its present state, that it is really a thoroughly good road and only requires making

* This I doubt not was the case in regard to the very beautiful but sadly desecrated Chapel by Whittlesford bridge, now used as a barn and appendant to the "Red Lion" Inn, but, as a part of St. John's Hospital, of Sir William Colville's foundation, once apparently possessed by the Knights Templars.

up. The remark of a County councillor after having visited the spot, that it seemed "very little short of a scandal that there was such defective communication with the county from that part" should not be allowed to remain an utterance only. It is but too evident that repeated delays in dealing vigorously with the subject will prove disadvantageous to any scheme calculated to remedy this glaring defect in county government, and thereby further the ends of an hostile or indifferent opposition.

C. H. EVELYN-WHITE, F.S.A.

[Since this paper was written the *Cambridge Antiquarian Society* has issued the Rev. Dr. Skeat's "Place-Names of Cambridgeshire." I observe respecting the derivation of the name *Aldreth* that no allusion is made to any connection with St. Etheldreda, which omission is not without significance.]

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