

John Pepys, chaplain of the Gild of Holy Cross, appear as the only material reminders in church of gilds and chantries, so the "Bidding Prayer," recited each Sunday morning, may perchance be the sole spiritual legacy from the gilds. It has been found contained in the rules of a London gild, and has been used from time immemorial in Chesterfield church, and especially on the occasions when Mayor and Corporation have attended divine service in civic state.

## II.—GILDS AND CORPORATION INSIGNIA.

By W. JACQUES.

THE Bibliography of Gilds is now somewhat extensive and is still growing, but in spite of careful research and the opening up of previously unsuspected sources of information, our knowledge is by no means complete. These ancient gilds were of different kinds, Religious and Social Gilds, Merchant Gilds, Gilds of Merchant Adventurers, and Traders and Crafts Gilds, and Chesterfield supplies examples of at least the first and last of these.

The Gild of St. Mary was commenced on January 1st, 1218, and its members were required "to uphold the rights of the Church, and of the lord of the place, and to guard all their liberties within the town and without and to give trusty help thereto whenever it may be needed" The regulations of this gild are quoted *in extenso* by the late Dr. Cox in the account of Chesterfield Church in his work on "The Churches of Derbyshire,"<sup>1</sup> and it is not necessary, therefore, to refer to them at any length. The chief officials were the Alderman, the Dean and the

<sup>1</sup> See also Vol. VIII., p. 162 of this *Journal*.

Steward, and it was provided that "if any brother through age, or loss of limb, or leprosy comes to so great want that he cannot support himself the brethren should in turn, supply him with needful food; that if any brother wronged another in any way, by violence, with malice aforethought or through ignorance, or by backbiting, or by foul words" he should make amends "on the friendly suggestion of his brethren" or in default should "for his rash presumption" be put out of the gild; that on the death of a brother, twelve wax lights should be found by the gild to set round the body, and be kept burning until he be buried; and that the alderman with the counsel and help of his brethren should uphold and defend all the liberties belonging to the town against all disturbers and hinderers of those liberties. The gild was possessed of considerable landed property and amongst members of the distinguished local families who were enrolled as brethren were representatives of the Foljambes, the Frechevilles, the Eyres, the Barleys and the Linacres. It is perhaps worthy of note that although the regulations speak exclusively of "brethren" the term was permitted to include ladies, for the wives of most of these leading citizens joined their husbands as members of the fraternity.

The Gild of the Holy Cross was founded by royal licence in September, 1393, and its regulations followed pretty much on the lines of those of the Gild of St. Mary. There was a chantry in the Parish Church specially attached to this Gild. It is rather curious to find that there was an ancient Gild of Smiths in Chesterfield and that, according to Mr. Toulmin Smith, it was amalgamated with the Gild of the Holy Cross in 1387. There were very few cases in which smiths were exclusively associated together—they were usually joined with some other craftsmen such as farriers, braziers, cutlers, and even glaziers and armourers—and it is easy to understand that

the Chesterfield Gild was few in numbers and that this probably led to the amalgamation; but there appears to be something wrong about the date, for as already indicated Mr. Toulmin Smith gives it as 1387, whereas the licence to found the Gild of the Holy Cross was not issued until six years later—1393. A possible explanation is that the licence may refer to a re-founding.

There is some doubt as to whether a royal licence was necessary for the founding of a gild, and, if not, whether any licence was necessary. If it were, by whom was such licence to be granted? The introduction to the Early English Text Society's volume on Gilds states that the king's licence was not necessary, and Professor Freeman in an introduction to the series of handbooks on "Historic Towns" says that one of the duties of the Mayor and Council of a mediaeval borough was to incorporate gilds. We have already seen that the Gild of the Holy Cross was constituted by royal licence, but by an Act of Parliament passed in the 19th year of King Henry VII., it was enacted that no Masters, Wardens, and Fellowships of crafts and mysteries should take upon them to make any acts or ordinances, nor execute any in diminution of the prerogative of the king unless the ordinances were approved by the Chancellor Treasurer of England, or three Chief Justices of either Bench, or both the Justices of Assize in their circuits. Even so it seems to have been necessary to proceed first by way of a petition to the Mayor, and for the Mayor, Aldermen and Chief Burgesses to assist in framing the regulations. There is a record of a meeting held on March 6th, 1629, at the Chesterfield Guildhall—a building on the north side of the Bowling Green, demolished in 1849 to provide a site for the present Municipal Hall—of the Master Wardens, Fellowship and Company of Butchers within the Borough of Chesterfield upon their petition to George Dickons, Mayor, and the Aldermen and Chief

Burgesses for the purpose of "taking counsel and discerning of the statutes and ordinances touching and concerning the said borough, and the good ruling, estate and governance thereof" and finding it "very necessary to make certain laws for the better ordering and governance of the trade." Various ordinances were drawn up and were allowed and confirmed in June of the same year by two of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas. They provided, amongst other matters, that no butcher should kill any pork for sale between the feast day of St. Philip and Jacob, commonly called May Day, until the Feast of St. Martin the Bishop, commonly called Martlemas Day, upon forfeit for each offence for 10s. ; selling unwholesome meat the fine "for every such beef" was 10s., "for every such pork" 5s., and for "every such mutton" 2s. ; "foreign" butchers—that is, those who were not inhabitants of the town—were permitted to come in and sell between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. in winter and up to 5 p.m. in summer ; for dressing "any mutton after the manner of lamb whereby the buyer thereof might be deceived," there was a fine of 2s. ; and every butcher being made master or free of the said trade was required to pay to the mayor the sum of 6s. 8d. "towards the buying of a piece of plate to remain for the use of the Corporation of the said borough for ever."

Twenty years later the Company of Tailors and Saddlers petitioned the mayor (Richard Wood) that certain old customs and ordinances heretofore made might be renewed and confirmed. These provided that no one should exercise "the trades, mysteries, and occupations of tailors and saddlers without having first served as an apprentice, and that before being permitted to trade he should present to the mayor one silver spoon of twelve shilling price at least." Tailors were required after due notice, "to work at the several houses of any of the inhabitants" at the customary rate of wages, or,

in default, pay a fine of 13s. 4d. No tailor or saddler was permitted to exercise his trade by himself, his servants or his apprentices on the Sabbath Day under forfeit of 10s. ; and every journeyman was under the obligation to pay 4d. per quarter " towards the relief of the poor, sick, lame and impotent of the said mysteries within the borough."

In July, 1677, the Company of Mercers was established, and the preamble to the Orders then drawn up is interesting as throwing some light on the procedure recognised at the time. It reads :—" To all Christian people to whom this present writing shall come. We, the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Chesterfield send greeting. Whereas by several letters patent granted by several of His Majesty's progenitors and predecessors, Kings and Queens of this his Highness's realm of England, we, the Mayor, &c., of the Borough of Chesterfield aforesaid are authorised to make laws for the good ruling and government of the said borough, and finding by experience that the erecting of companies and societies for the regulating of trade and commerce, and avoiding frauds and deceits which are scandalous to tradesmen and tend to the impoverishing and damage of honest and just dealers ; we have, therefore thought fit, according to the laudable practice of the City of London and divers other cities, to ordain and constitute the mercers, drapers, grocers, apothecaries, dyers, hatters, cloth workers, hosiers and weavers of this borough into a company, society, fraternity, or brotherhood, to be governed and regulated by a steward, two wardens, and ten brothers, by the name of the Company of the Mercers." The wardens were empowered to enter the premises of all persons following any of the trades enumerated " to try their weights and measures, and their goods, wares and merchandise whether the same be good, merchantable and vendable." An apprenticeship of seven years had

to be served, and a handicraftsman or tradesman of the company was restricted to the trade to which he had been apprenticed ; though he was permitted by licence from the Mayor, to change his trade, provided that he still confined himself to "one trade, occupation or mystery."

There were also some general regulations affecting trade made at the Leet and Great Court Baron of the borough. Amongst these was one imposing a fine of 3s. 4d. on any one who conveyed or caused to be conveyed, any corn or cattle through their backyards to defraud the lord of the manor of his just toll, and another with a like penalty for selling corn other than in the place appointed in the market or before the market bell was rung at 11 o'clock in the forenoon. For carrying an open light in the streets, or into any barn or stable where hay or corn was near, there was also a fine ; and in order that everyone might know which of the butchers killed bull beef it was required that every bull before being killed should be baited in the Market Place, an intimation being given that the chain and collar could be had for fetching.

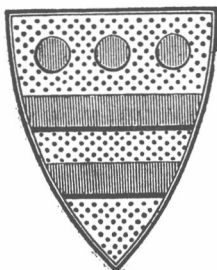
The transition from the Gilds to the Corporation plate is a natural and an easy one. It is stated above that on being admitted to some of the gilds on the completion of his apprenticeship a member had to present to the Mayor a piece of plate or a spoon. As time went on, these, of course, accumulated, and in October, 1671, the Corporation had an inventory made, and it was found that they possessed three or four bowls, a gilt salt with cover, and about thirty spoons, weighing altogether  $97\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, and valued at 4s. 11d. per ounce, or £23 19s. 5d. They decided to have the whole of them melted down and converted into a mace. It was found, however, that "to do the thing properly" more silver would be required, and eventually the mace was fashioned to contain

137 ounces, and the cost, at 10s. per ounce, came to £68 10s., carriage, postage, &c., bringing up the total to £70 19s. 4d. The sum of £23 19s. 5d. was allowed for the old silver, and the balance of £47 1s. 3d. was paid by the Corporation.

The mace—which by the kind permission of the Mayor—is here for inspection is 54 inches long, and the head, it will be seen, is divided into four compartments, bearing respectively, a rose, a thistle and portcullis, a harp, and a fleur-de-lis, each crowned and between the initials C.R. On the top are the royal arms, within the garter, and the initials repeated. As is pointed out in the valuable work on Corporation Plate and Insignia, partly compiled by the late Llewellyn Jewitt and, edited and completed with additions, by the late W. H. St. John Hope, the blazonry is curiously blundered. The shield is quarterly—first, quarterly, 1 and 4 three fleurs-de-lis for France, 2 and 3 four (instead of three) lions passant gardant for England; second, Scotland; third Ireland; fourth, quarterly, in *each* of the four quarters three lions passant gardant (instead of 1 and 4 France, and 2 and 3 England).

The loving-cup, or tankard, which the Mayor has also kindly allowed to be brought here, is of silver, with a domed lid, and a single handle. On the front, engraved on a shield, with mantling, are the arms of the Mercers' Company—a demi-*virgin* crowned within an orle of clouds. The hall-marks are those of London, 1730-31, and there are also the letters R.B.—the initials of the maker, Richard Bayley. As mentioned above, the Mercers' Company was established in Chesterfield in 1677, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the tankard was a gift from the members to the Corporation. It has only recently been pointed out by the writer that the cup is what is known as a "whistling-cup"—a fact of which the Corporation and the authors of the volume

referred to, appear to have been unaware. The bottom portion of the handle is so curved as to fit the lower lip, immediately below a perforation which enables a somewhat shrill whistle to be produced. It should be understood that it is only possible to operate the whistle when the tankard is turned upside down—in other words when it is empty and the need for replenishing it has become urgent! Another piece of Corporation plate, now no longer in possession of the Corporation but believed still to be in the town, is a silver race-ticket armed with which the mayor for the time being was enabled to secure free access to the “ Grand Stand ” at the Chesterfield Races. These races were formerly amongst the most attractive in the Midlands, and it was over the Chesterfield course that Fred Archer, the famous jockey, won his first race. As to their condition to-day, perhaps the less said the better. Certainly the mayor is not likely to be seriously concerned over the fact that the disappearance of the silver ticket has deprived him of the privilege of witnessing, in his official capacity, the class of “ sport ” now provided.



*Vigila et Ora.*

THE WAKE KNOT AND SHIELD.