

lay under or near the existing fishing lodge. The first chapel terminated at line A-C and an extension is shown A.C.B.D. on plan. These two periods are clearly shown on the site and I would recommend that these should be grassed down, but the foundation to be shown as stone, as we agreed on the site. I feel that F on plan, a rough stretch of masonry, should be covered and also the pit on the river side of wall K, as the amount of money which your committee has in hand will not cover any elaborate treatment."

After records had been made the exploratory holes were refilled. The ground inside the chapel has been left open for inspection. On three sides a "shelf" has been formed to indicate the level of the chapel floor.

[The first part of this account has been taken largely from the *Derbyshire Countryside* (No. 4, Vol. 19) where it appeared above the initials of Mr. K. Mantell, M.A. The notes of the discoveries are from Mr. B. Widdows.]

## THE EXECUTION OF CHARLES I.

### A newly discovered account.

By FRANCIS FISHER.

THE letter from which the following transcript has been made was discovered whilst sorting a second miscellaneous collection of papers from Radbourne Hall, Derbyshire. The previous letter mentioned in the second sentence has not been found.

The writer may fairly be identified as the Robert Cotchet of Mickleover (1611-1657) given in an account of the family of that name published in this *Journal* for 1939. The author, Mr. F. Williamson, says Robert was probably a parliamentarian, being described in the Mickleover register for 1657 as "Captain and Justice of the Peace."

It is on a single piece of paper, 6 ins. x  $7\frac{3}{4}$  ins., in a somewhat tattered state, and the letter is surprisingly legible in spite of the small writing and the obviously hurried penmanship. Only at one edge where the seal was broken to open the letter is perhaps one word missing, and the contractions and omissions common to the period are reasonably clear in their context:—

Sir,

Being an eye witness of the highest action which was ever acted on the English stage, I conceived, tho the relation may not be pleasing yet that the tidings may be desired as to be certified in the truth of the thing done, I gave you some slender account of the beginnings of the chief proceedings about the tryall of the king. Saturday last produced the rest and final sentence of death which I have transmitted to you this day being the day of execution.

The scaffold erected before Whitehall, the king about 2 of the clock came out of the banquetting house at a passage made through a window uppon the scaffold, where the block and axe lay, at which he smilingly looking found fault with the block for being made too lowe. The scaffold was covered with black cloth. His majestie turned about and spake something to the Bishop of London who replied to him and administered the Lords Supper. I think none heard what was said but only those few on the scaffold with him, being about 14. Haveing spoke a quarter of an hour he putt off his hatt and one of the executioners putt on his head a white capp and gathered upp his hair under it. Then he putt off his doublet and lay flatt downe on his belly with his neck on the block with his arms spread out giving the signe by spreading his hands wider. The executioner haveing on his knees asked him pardon cutt of his head at one blow and his mate tooke it upp and held it upp to the spectators which was very many. The executioners were disguised being masqued with great beards and I believe not known to many. The king seemed to dye resolutely. I heard he left a speech in writing to be published. It may be it will come forth the morrow. I shall send it as soon as I can gett it.

All the Army was uppon guard at their severall posts at Whitehall, Charing Cross, Westminster, St. James parke and fields, Covent Garden etc.

Two ambassadors at the importunity of the Prince are come from ye States of Holland to intercede but too late. They delivered the message yesterday in French and Dutch to the House, which the House not skilled at required the message in plain English, which is thought but a dilatory complaint on both sides. The Lord Loughborough is escaped from Windsor. There was much scrabbling for the kings blood . . .

I have no more but to present my service to your selfe and your Lady mother my ever honoured good friend, and so rest in post hast. London Jan. 30th

your most humble servant  
Ro Cotchett.

(Addressed) "To his ever hon'rd & worthy friend German Pole Esq. at Radburne theise"

The account adds little or nothing to existing knowledge of the tragic business, but is notable for the very accurate reporting. I have not collated all the printed versions, but it is certain that Cotchet actually witnessed the execution and was not copying from a news-letter or a pamphlet. On one point he is in error. The King had already received the sacrament from Bishop Juxon in the privacy of his room at St. James', and what Cotchet saw was probably the last act of comfort and blessing which Juxon gave his king. In every other detail concerning the lowness of the block, the number present on the scaffold and the disguise of the executioners, he is commendably accurate. The place from which he watched the proceedings must have been very close to enable him to see the King's expression when viewing the block. Charles is supposed to have smiled at the pulleys and staples which had been affixed to the block in case, as the rumour had been credited, he should shew forcible resistance on the scaffold.

[Note on the transcription: the usual abbreviations common to the period (e.g. *ye* for the, *yt* for that) have been extended. Punctuation and paragraphing are the author's but the spelling follows the original as closely as possible.]