

that in 1365 "a cresset with 15 holes and four lamps" was maintained in the Church of Chalgrove, Oxon.

The examples brought forward in this paper all belong to mediæval times; but is it not probable that our forefathers of the Middle Ages derived their use of hollowed stones for light-holders from still earlier times? May it not be that the discovery of the use of cresset stones is a step (and a long one) towards the elucidation of the purposes to which those cup-marked stones were put, which have formed so long a puzzle to the pre-historic archæologist?

### LAMP NICHES.<sup>1</sup>

By SIR HENRY DRYDEN, BART.

(*Hon. Mem. Soc. Ant. Scot.*)

In several buildings are small niches or receptacles of lamps, and these are connected with cressets, inasmuch as several of them have in the floor or flat bottom single cups or cressets. Some have chimneys or flues which pass upwards—in some cases passing into the chimnies of fire-places. Others have conical hollows in the heads or roofs, which I suppose to have caught the soot and prevented its passing out into the room or church as the case was. The date of each must be decided not by the niche itself but by the structure in which it is.

The earliest niches which I know are those in the crypt at Hexham. These are four in number. In the floor of each is a single cresset, and in the roof of each is a conical hollow (see Plate). They are all rectangular, without any ornament, and are nearly alike except that one is in a party wall and open on both sides. Drawings of them have been kindly supplied me by Mr. Hodges, the author of the great work on "Hexham Priory," recently published. The one illustrated is 1 ft. 1 in. high,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide, and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. recessed. The cup is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  deep, and the conical hollow in the head is 5 in. diameter, and 5 in. high.

Probably the next in date is the curious one in a boss at Patrington. A drawing of it and measures have been procured for me by the rector, the Rev. F. Sheppard.

This boss is a cube about 11 ins. square and 1 ft. 5 ins. deep (see Plate). In it is a rectangular chamber. It has no cup in it, and has no chimney or conical hollow, but has a small aperture in the north side and a similar one in the south side, besides the opening in the east side of it to admit the lamp. This boss is next to the east end of the south transept, and the lamp in it shed light on the altar against the east wall. The boss (in this case a cube) is ornamented on the north-west and south with figures in low relief—the virgin, a figure with a sword, and a saint with a book. Probably originally these were painted, but repeated coats of white-wash have annihilated all traces of colour. The angles are fluted projections, with finials. The base is a large rose.

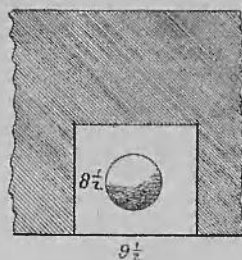
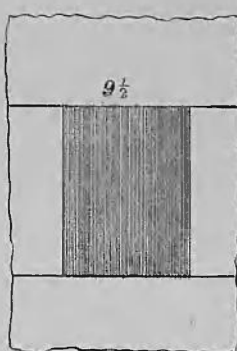
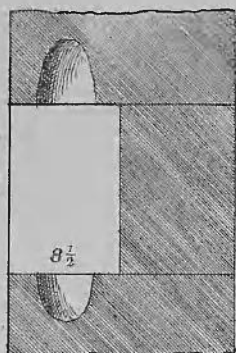
The sacrist must have had a ladder to get to this lamp, and why this curious position was chosen is a question.

Not far from the same date is an arched niche at Dorchester Abbey

<sup>1</sup> Read in the Section of Antiquities at the Carlisle Meeting, August 3rd, 1882.

# LAMP NICHES.

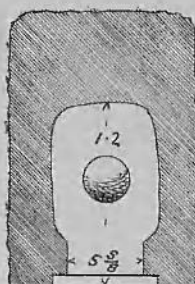
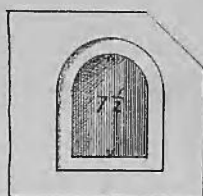
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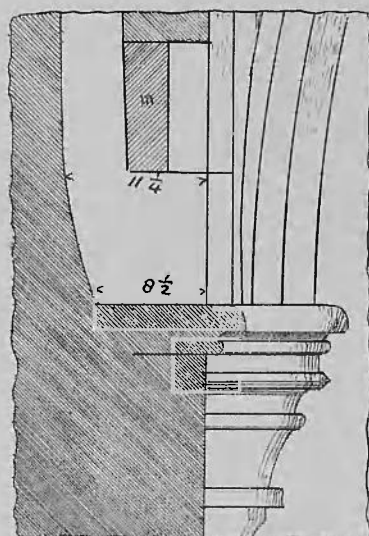
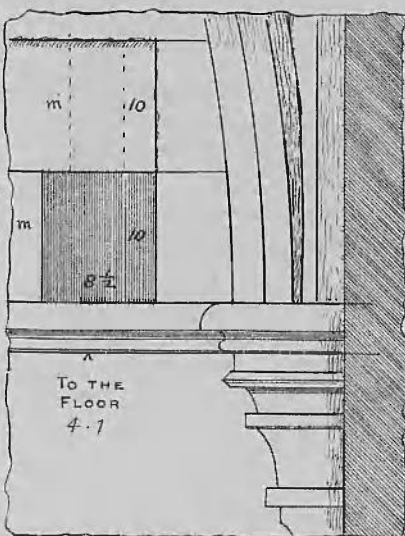
HEXHAM.



PATRINGTON.



WESTMINSTER.



LICHFIELD.

Scale of 0 1 2 Feet

H.D.

Church 2 ft.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. high, 1 ft.  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide, and 1 ft. 1 in. recess, in the north wall of the north aisle. This has no cup in its floor. It has a flue passing upwards and outwards with an oval aperture in the exterior wall of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. by 6 in. diameter of only 1 ft. 1 in. above the level of the floor of the niche. This arrangement is puzzling, as it appears likely when the wind blew against the wall the smoke would be blown into the church. The position of the exterior aperture, with regard to the niche, shows that it was not glazed and intended to give light on the outside of the aisle.

At Lichfield Cathedral in the west wall of what is now the Consistory court, attached to the south aisle of the choir, is a lamp niche, originally 10 in. high,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide, and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  recessed (see Plate.) A flue passes upwards from it to a point several feet above, where it has a vent 1 ft. 10 in. high and 5 in. wide. Above the vent is a projecting stone to shelter the vent. The wall is 3 ft.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick. At a time subsequent to the formation of the niche, which apparently was in the 14th century, a recess 3 ft.  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. wide and 1 ft. 8 in. high was rudely cut, including the said lamp niche. The purpose is not evident. A few years ago this cavity was mostly filled up, though the opening into the flue remains.

In the lobby of the Jerusalem chamber at Westminster is a recess evidently of Tudor date, which I suppose to have been made to hold a lamp. It has a four-centred arch, is 1 ft. 7 in. high, 11 in. wide, and  $8\frac{3}{4}$  recess. It has no cresset in the floor, or chimney, and in this case probably the lamp was to light the passage. It is not certain that it ever had a flue.

In the room now used for the choir practice in the cloisters at Westminster is an arched niche  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in. high,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide, and  $6\frac{3}{4}$  recess. This has in its floor a single cresset, and from the top a flue passes up the wall, but the exit is not now to be made out. It appears to have had a door or grating, which fitted into a rebate. This and such little niches must have been for the preservation of a light, and not for the purpose of lighting the room. Why these niches were preferred to the open room for the station of a light is a question. I can only suggest that a cheap smoky light, merely for the purpose of *preserving* a light, might burn better in a narrow space with a draught across it than in the open room, and be less likely to be blown out. In the building called "The Litlington Tower," now the organist's house, is a niche very similar to that in the choir practice room. The opening is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. high,  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in. wide and the recess 1 ft. 2 in. It is above and on the outside of a fire-place. It has now no cresset in its floor (though it is stated to have had one), but it has a flue passing upwards and having an exit into the chimney of the fire-place. (See Plate). The lamp niche has a rebate for a door or grate, and has marks of hinges and a bolt. Alongside the jamb of the fire-place is what was a hot-closet, now somewhat mutilated. The fire-place has a very flat four-centred arch under a rectangular moulding.

In the west wall of what was the south aisle of the chapel of the infirmary is a fire-place, much like that last mentioned; and in the side of the fire-place, within the recess, is a niche very similar to that last mentioned, 7 ins. high and  $6\frac{1}{4}$  wide, with a rebate as before. The bottom of the niche is 3 ft. above the hearth. This has a flue passing out of the top, but the upper part of the chimney has long been ruined; and the flue is stopped, as well as the main chimney.

It is evident that after the disuse of this chapel a floor was constructed

in, at least, this part of it, and the whole was used for domestic purposes. The fire-place is in the upper room.

In this niche there is no trace of hinges or bolt; but a shutter might have fitted the rebate and been kept in place by a bar. Possibly the shutter or door might be to check the draught, and might have a small opening in it.

I have been informed that there is another lamp niche in the abbey buildings, but have no particulars of it.

See Notes on the Abbey Buildings of Westminster by J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., in "The Archaeological Journal," vol. xxxiii.

It is stated that a lamp-niche with a flue exists in a chapel at Lynn.

What kind of lamps were used in those niches which have no cressets in them? Amongst Roman and Norman remains in this country are found numerous pottery lamps much resembling old fashioned salt cellars with a cup, a short thick stem and spreading base. These are distinct from the proper Roman pottery lamp like a flattish cup with a spout and fixed cover. I have not met with any so late as most of the niches above mentioned, but nevertheless suppose that lamps of this sort were used in these niches. (See plate of Cressets in the paper by the Rev. T. Lees.)