

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

20 OCT. 1905—28 MAY 1906.

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XLVII.

BEING No. 3 OF THE ELEVENTH VOLUME.

(FIFTH VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)



Cambridge :

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; MACMILLAN & BOWES.

LONDON : G. BELL AND SONS.

1907

Price Ten Shillings net.

By FRANK JAMES ALLEN, M.D., St John's Coll.:

ON THE SHAMBLES AT SHEPTON MALLET.

Most Englishmen are acquainted with the expression in the First Epistle to the Corinthians¹, "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles" (Πάν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον); but very few have seen a shamble, very few even know the meaning of the name. The word used by St Paul is the borrowed Latin *macellum*, meaning *provision market*; and the translation "shambles" is correct according to the usage of the time of the Authorised Version.

A shamble was a stall used for the sale of meat; and the application of the name exclusively to a meat-stall seems to imply that the shamble had some characteristic form, distinct from those of other market stalls. That this was actually the case, may be seen from the illustrations I have to show you. Sometimes the history of a word throws light on the history of its object: but the etymology of the word *shamble* tells of nothing extraordinary. From Prof. Skeat's dictionary we learn that the Anglo-Saxon form of the word was *scamel*, and that this was borrowed from the Latin *scamellum*, diminutive of *scamnum*, a bench. But the word is nearly obsolete in its medieval sense; it has got transferred to the place where the animals are slaughtered, and a slaughter-house is sometimes called by the ungrammatical name "a shambles."

In several towns, among which are Appleby, Biggleswade, Dublin, Leek, Lynn, Potton, and York, there are buildings or streets which retain the name of "Shambles"; but, as far as I can ascertain, these are not *real* shambles, either in form or in function. There is, however, at least one instance of shambles yet standing as they stood in the Middle Ages, having retained their name and usage until our own times,—and that is at Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

The first of my photographs (Plate XVI, fig. 1) shows a row of them along one side of the Market Place. They are not attached to the houses, but separated from them by a gangway

¹ 1 Corinth. x. 25.



FIG. 1. Medieval Shambles at Shepton Mallet: general view.



FIG. 2. The Shambles at Shepton Mallet: internal structure.



FIG. 3. Shepton Mallet: modern Shambles, with part of medieval ones.



FIG. 4. Shepton Mallet: part of market-cross, modern Shambles, &c.

some 10 or 15 feet wide. Although they are half ruinous, patched up, and loaded with lumber, you can see that they are built of wood, and that they consist of broad benches protected with pantile roofs. The second view (Plate XVI, fig. 2) shows their internal structure. The roof is supported by a row of median posts, and each post gives off two arms to carry the rafters. Some of these supports have been modernised, but in the original ones the arms consist of characteristic curved timbers. These curved timbers give a clue to the date of the shambles; timbers of this form are used freely in buildings of the 14th and 15th centuries in the neighbourhood; and I think we shall not be wide of the mark if we date these shambles somewhere about 1450.

In the background a part of the Market Cross is seen. This Cross bears an inscribed brass plate telling that it was built in 1500. It marks a time when the prosperity of the market enabled luxury to be added to utility. The Cross is used for the sale of butter, eggs, and poultry.

The shambles hitherto shown are medieval; but the next view (Plate XVII, fig. 3) shows some which are comparatively modern, possibly of the 18th century. They are attached to a house, and have no architectural quality.

No other shambles now remain: but some of the older inhabitants used to say that they remembered another row of them standing on the opposite side of the Market Place early in the 19th century.

Next to the later shambles is a building which seems to have been a market-house or public hall (Plate XVII, fig. 4). It has an arcade in front, the arches of which are used as market stalls. Some of the other houses on the Market Place have similar arcades, but they are disused and walled up, being visible only during alterations. It seems to me that in the Shambles, Market Cross, and the arcaded houses we have an interesting presentation of the arrangement of a medieval market.

I regret to say that this picturesque view is no longer to be seen. The old buildings have given way to the necessities of "Progress," and a new Council House, a veritable white elephant, stands in their place. The shambles also must

perish before long. They are rotten with age, and the inhabitants would like to sweep them away as an obstruction.

Because these shambles are apparently the last survivors of their species, and are on the verge of extinction, I have thought it worth while to bring them to your notice, though they are remote from Cambridge.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Dr F. J. ALLEN gave a short account of the work of the Photographic Record Committee, and exhibited the photographs which had been contributed to the collection.

By HERBERT GEORGE FORDHAM :

CAMBRIDGESHIRE MAPS.

Exhibition of Sir Jonas Moore's large-scale Map of the Great Level of the Fens (1684), and of a copy of Hayward's Map of the Fens (1604).

Mr Fordham exhibited (from his collection) :

1. A copy, in a bound volume, of the sixteen sheets, as originally issued, with the two-sheet index-map, of Sir Jonas Moore's great map of the Fens of 1684 described in 'Cambridgeshire Maps' (*Communications*, Vol. XI. pp. 161—163). The coat of arms in the bottom left-hand corner of the map is that granted to the "Governor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty of the Company of Conservators of the Great Level of the Fens, called Bedford Level" (a body which received Letters Patent of incorporation March 13th, 1634) by Sir William Le Neue, Clarencieux, on May 10th, 1636. The original grant, in a very fine state of preservation, is in the Fen Office at Ely. The map does not present any other adventitious features of interest.

From the records of the Bedford Level Corporation it appears that, if this particular map is properly ascribed to the date 1684, which is the date given in Gough's 'British Topography,' and which accords with the publication by Moore in

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