

DERBYSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

Some Notes on Old Belper and Old Belper Books.

By T. R. DERRY, Hon. Sec. of the Belper Natural History
and Philosophical Society.

IT is stated by the Rev. Dr. Cox that he has found the name Belper spelt in about forty different ways. This eccentricity is perhaps the most distinguished feature in the history of Belper. In the 16th century the town was of some slight importance, as the general musters of the county for the hundreds of Appletree, Morleston, and Litchurch, met at Belper on several occasions for review by the Lord-Lieutenant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Belper at this time possessed five ale houses, and it may fairly be supposed plenty of accommodation for the Queen's loyal subjects. These ale houses were kept by John Bradshaw, Widow Streete, John Gyte, Edmund Andrew, and Thomas Smyth.* At this period Belper is described as "Bealper," and also "Belper Chapell" in various documents. A charter is in

* Domestic State Papers; D. A. and N. H. S. Journal, Vol. i., p. 76.
W. H. Hart, F.S.A.

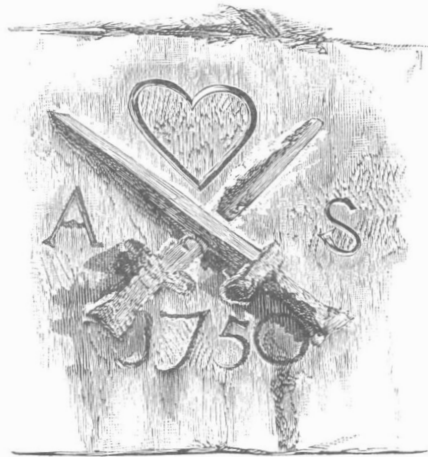
existence dating as early as 1473, Sept. 1st, whereby Thomas Whittington, of Belper, in the county of Derby, and Margaret, his wife, granted a messuage and seven acres of land in that place to John Whytington, their eldest son.* One of the witnesses of this charter subsequently became the owner of Alderwasley. The prosperity of the 15th and 16th centuries appears to have died away in the 17th, as will be seen from the Parliamentary Commissioners' Report of 1650, in which Belper is described "As a hamlet appertayning to Duffield and hath a Chapell two myles distant." It is in the quaint old chapel dedicated to St. John Baptist that the antiquity of Belper centres; a full and interesting description will be found in the "Churches of Derbyshire." The chapel dates from the 13th century. Since the building of the "New Church" it became somewhat dilapidated from disuse and neglect. A few years ago, whilst the late Canon Hey was vicar, the old place was carefully restored by the Rev. F. A. Friend. The chapel yard had become a happy hunting ground for the youngsters of Chapel Hollow. The vestry now in use was built at the beginning of the present century, and was utilised, in addition to its sacred offices, as a savings bank and a boys' school, under the guidance of the Rev. Matthew Tunstall. The church contains a small two-handled chalice, date 1685-6.†

It is said that about the year 1800 a small gold coin of the reign of Augustus Cæsar was found in the neighbourhood of Belper, and that on several occasions military weapons have been dug up. The Manor Farm House situated in the Coppice is said to adjoin the site of the old Manor, and several silver coins have been found here, including one of the reign of Edward I. and one of the reign of Stephen.‡ These different discoveries tend to confirm the statement that John of Gaunt once resided here. The contour of the land pointed out as

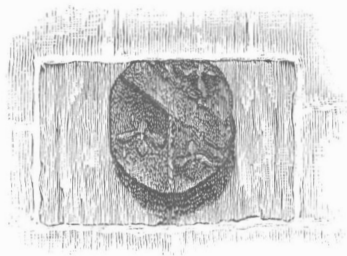
* Major Lowe, F.S.A., D. A. and N. H. S. Journal, Vol. iii., p. 161.

† "Eucharistic Plate," Dr. Cox.

‡ "New View of Derbyshire," D. P. Davis, Vol. i., p. 344.



CARVED STONE FROM THE OLD MANOR HOUSE, BELPER.



ARMORIAL STONE TAKEN FROM THE OLD BRIDGE, BELPER.

the original site, suggests brilliant possibilities to the antiquary. Old walls of immense thickness, buried in the ground, are quite discoverable to a practised eye, and whenever the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society require a field for operations, here is one close at hand, and one that will probably prove immensely profitable. It is said that stones of the old manor are incorporated in the present farm house, and that a house in the Fleet has over the lintel a carved stone, carried away from the site. Of this stone is given an engraving; the crossed swords, in relief, are obviously of medieval date; whilst the incised heart, date, and initials were probably cut in 1750, when the stone was moved here. It is difficult to obtain information respecting this old manor house, as Belper was over-shadowed for centuries by Duffield, which was the mother church of Belper, Heage, Turnditch, and other chapelries.

The advent of Mr. Jedediah Strutt to Belper was the turning point in the fortunes of the town. The romance of trade has no more interesting chapter than the history of the firm of W. G. & J. Strutt. It was about the year 1775 that Mr. Jedediah Strutt commenced upon his own account the great Cotton Mills at Belper, and laid the foundations of his own fortune. Four years previously he had entered into partnership with the celebrated Sir Richard Arkwright, only to be dissolved by the prejudice of the Manchester manufacturers who could not be prevailed upon to weave machine-spun cotton into calico. In an interesting paper read before the Belper Natural History and Philosophical Society, by the late Rev. Robert Hey, Vicar of Belper, in 1878, the statement was made that the cotton industry was introduced into Belper prior to Mr. Jedediah Strutt taking up his residence in the town. The Mill was situated at Chapel Hollow, on the Denby Road, and belonged to a person named Robinson. Cotton was brought to the town on the backs of pack horses. The old mill had deep cellars in which two horses worked the machinery by the familiar method still to be seen at well-to-do farm houses. The work was very heavy, and every few hours fresh relays of

horses were taken into the cellar and the others brought up covered with foam. "Paddlewell Yard" remains to mark the site of the old mill.

"The Pottery" was established further along the same road at a place known as the Gutter. Here the ordinary brown ware was produced by Messrs. Blood, Webster, and Simpson.* The ware was made of a vitreous clay found on the spot, and consisted of bowls, pancheons, dishes, pitchers, and all the commoner variety of domestic ware. These were of an excellent and durable quality, as may be seen by examples still to be found in the locality. The names of "Belper Pottery," "The Gutter," together with "Pothouse Lane," another street in the vicinity, will always assist the student of nomenclature in his investigations as to the site of the manufactory. About the year 1800 the Pottery was removed to Denby, where Messrs. Bourne continue to carry on a large and lucrative business at the present time.

From the building of the new Cotton Mills, Belper began to put on a prosperous appearance, and the population, which in 1741 had been only 532 persons, residing in 113 houses, at the beginning of the present century leaped to 5,000, and Belper was considered to be the second town in the county.

The great Volunteer movement of 1803 found Belper all aglow with enthusiasm. In his forthcoming work, "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," Rev. Dr. Cox gives a large amount of interesting information, from which a few quotations in advance are here given by his permission. "A large meeting was held on October 10th, 1803, of the inhabitants of the townships of Belper, Shottle, and Holbrooke, when they engaged themselves to form four Volunteer companies for the three townships. The number of the men was to be 240, and they were to be armed with firelocks at the expense of the Government with 20/- per man towards the uniform. Among the officers were Joseph Strutt, Lieut.-Col.; Francis Bradshaw,

* "Ceramic Art," p. 354, Llewellyn Jewitt.

Major; and G. H. Strutt, John Spencer, John Radford, and Joseph Bradshaw, Captains; Captain Joseph Bradshaw became Major in 1804. He was the Perpetual Curate of Holbrooke. Drill often being on Sunday, Major Bradshaw would arrange his service an hour earlier, afterwards ride to Belper Market Place and read the Church Prayers from horseback. The corps would then proceed to the Derwent Meadows for drill." It may be noted that a Mr. G. H. Strutt is at this time Captain, and that the Volunteers of the present day are still drilled in the Derwent Meadows. The original Deed Roll of the old Volunteer Corps is in the possession of Mr. Joseph Pym, whose family has long been connected with Belper.

With the increase of population in Belper the printing press was introduced. Derby had for some time been famous for its printing and publishing, and it was only natural that the example so well set should be followed. The earliest productions were of an ephemeral nature, such as ballad sheets, public notices, and hand bills. It is only after experience that a printer will venture to introduce more important work to a critical public, and it is probable that no book of importance was printed in Belper until the year 1809. In this year was issued a well-printed octavo volume of 126 pages, bound in mottled sheepskin, entitled:—"Forms | of | Devotion | for | the use of families; | with | a preface | recommending the practice | of | Family Religion | By the Rev. Dr. Leland, and others | Belper: Printed for J. Hicking, by S. Mason | 1809." At the conclusion of a heavy introduction which takes up 33 pages, there is a small woodcut said to be "Bewick's" by some enthusiast who has marked it accordingly in the copy possessed by the writer. It is a tailpiece of considerable merit, depicting a clergyman walking up a winding path to the village church in the distance. The clergyman is respectfully followed by a dog, and he bears aloft either an umbrella or a parachute to keep off the rays of the sun, for no rain is suggested by the artist. The type is excellent, but at times the orthography is weak, and the last

page is consequently entitled "Errata." The book was printed for James Hicking who worked at Messrs. W. G. & J. Strutt's. He was also a sort of house agent and steward to Mr. G. B. Strutt, and he attended the Calvinist Chapel. His home was at Cross Roads, one of the two cottages existing on the site now occupied by the farm house. He had a son, John Hicking, said to have considerable literary taste, and who was a draughtsman and surveyor, many of his plans being still in existence.

Another book published in the same year is entitled, "Letters | on | The Miraculous Conception | A | vindication | of | The Doctrine | maintained in | a Sermon | Preached at Belper in Derbyshire; | in | answer | To the Rev. Mr. Alliot and the Rev. | Mr. Taylor | By David Davies | Belper | Printed and sold by S. Mason; | Sold also by Wilkins & Stenson, Derby; Dunn, Nottingham; Cotes, Wirksworth; Bradley, Chesterfield; A. & E. Gales, Sheffield; Swinney & Ferral, Birmingham; Rowbotham, Loughborough; and Eaton, 187, High Holborn, London | 1809." The interesting copy owned by the writer bears the autograph of Mrs. Davies, and also the author's initials, "D. P. D." The book is octavo, in paper covers, 84 pages, and was issued at the price of 1/6. As usual the last page is devoted to an interesting chapter of "Errata." The contents consist of nine vigorously written letters dated from "Milford, Sept. 5th, 1809." The Mr. Alliot referred to in the title was a Church of England clergyman of Nottingham, and Mr. Taylor, a clergyman of Mile End Road, London.

A further work printed and published in this year, and a more ambitious one, was "The Interesting Narrative | of | the Life | of | Orlando | Equiano, | or | Gustavus Vassa, | the African, | written by himself. | 'Am I not a man and a brother.' | A New Edition, | Belper, | Printed and Published by S. Mason; sold by Tipper and Crosby, London; Wilkins, Derby; and Dunn, Nottingham; | 1809." This very interesting work is octavo, bound in boards, and contains 310 pages. The frontispiece is a

portrait of the amiable African. The only copy known to the writer is in the collection of the late Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, purchased and presented by the Duke of Devonshire to Derby.

At this period, Samuel Mason, the printer, occupied the shop at the corner of Queen Street, and the New Road, now in the occupation of Mr. Joseph Pegg. In the year 1811, he printed a more pretentious and important work, "A | New | Historical and Descriptive | View | of | Derbyshire, | from the | remotest period to the present time, | by the Rev. D. P. Davies, | in two volumes. | *Antiquam exquirite matrem—Virgil.* | Belper, | Printed and Published by and for S. Mason; | Sold also by Drury, Wilkins, Pritchard, and Stenson, Derby; Bradley, and Ford, Chesterfield; Parkes, Ashbourn; Cotes, Wirksworth; Dunn, Nottingham; Gales, Sheffield; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row, and B. Crosby & Co., Stationers, Court, London; 1811." Neither the type nor the paper are of the very best, yet the book is a remarkable monument of local skill and patience. It was issued at the price of sixteen shillings. It is neatly dedicated to the Rev. David Peter, Tutor of the Dissenting College, Carmarthen, under date, "Makeney, April 10th, 1811." The Rev. David Peter was uncle to the author. The size of the work is octavo, and it is sometimes to be found bound up in one volume, and sometimes in two volumes. Mr. Alfred Wallis* refers to it as having been issued in quarto, but the writer has never met with a copy, and believes that none were issued. The illustrations are from copper plates, and curiously all placed in the first volume. A view of Belper taken from the west side of the Derwent is well executed and interesting, as is also a view of Derby, specially engraved for the work, in which the chimneys of the old china works are prominent features. Both views are engraved by "H. Moore, Sculpt., Derby." Facing the title page of volume 1 is an excellent map of Derbyshire, published January 1st, 1811, by J. Cary, Mapseller, Strand, London.

* D. A. & N. H. S. Journal, Vol. iii., page 155.

On the title-page is a wood-cut of armorial bearings, supposed to have belonged to John of Gaunt. They are well drawn, and taken from an old carved stone obtained from the old bridge over the Derwent, taken down in the year 1791. This bridge is said to have been founded by John of Gaunt, at the same time as the old chapel of St. John the Baptist. Both statements must be regarded with considerable doubt.* In the case of the bridge, a century at least after John of Gaunt had passed away, a warrant was issued in the reign of Henry VI., "to pay twenty pounds towards building a new bridge over the Derwent for the benefit of the tenants of Beaurepaire." This bridge subsequently became a county bridge, and in the year 1714, it is recorded in the county archives that repairs were executed by Mr. John Low, at a cost to the county of £31 17s. 2d. The armorial stone, a drawing of which is here shown, is still to be seen in the gable of a house in Belper Lane. The old bridge, after its centuries of useful work, was replaced by the present strong and handsome structure, the builder being Mr. Benjamin Marshall, who resided, in his later years, in the largest of the houses just beyond the East Lodge in Belper Lane. Mr. Marshall, being the builder of the bridge, will easily explain the stone coming into his possession.

Among the County Records is a note book of Thomas Sykes, who held the office of surveyor of bridges and other public works for the county from 1786 to 1816. It contains the following curiously spelt copy of the specification for the building of the new bridge at Belper :—

* The chapel is, beyond any question, of far older date than John of Gaunt, being of 13th century date. It may possibly have been built by Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, second son of Henry IV., who died in 1296, seized *inter-alia* of the manor of Beaurepaire (Belper), where he had a capital mansion. It has been conjectured that he built both manor house and chapel, and gave to what is said to have been a favourite hunting resort the name of Beaurepaire from its beautiful situation. The arms on the stone from the old bridge, whatever they may be, have no kind of connection with John of Gaunt. The carving seems to be of 15th century date; the stone was probably placed there when the bridge was rebuilt *temp.* 1 Henry VI., being the arms of its chief benefactor. A bend between three quatrefoils might pertain to so many families that conjectures are useless.—EDITOR.

Spesefycation of the maner the Masons work of Belper bridge is intended to be executed.

The Bridge to Consist of three Elliptical arches, the centre arch 45 ft wide, 13 ft. 6 in in hight from the springing & 17 feet from low water, the other two 42 feet wide, 12 ft. 7 in. high from the springing, and 16 ft. 1 in. from the low water ; 21 ft 6 in wide betwixt the plints of the battlements, 24 ft. under the arches—the wing walls on the southwardly side shall extend in a line with the bridge 50 ft., & those on the opposite or northwardly side 49 ft. in a circular forme as described in the plan—that both the land & water peors shall be sunk to the debth of 7 ft. 9 in. from low water, that they shall be 7 ft. 6 in. in width at the springing & shall increas 4 Inches in length & bredth every foot in debth, that the masonry of the peors shall rest upon a grating of two thicknesses of Fir planks the over 6 in. thick, the other three inches thick, laid across and pined togeather with oak pins & laid at the above debth as level & solid as posable upon and pined to the piles, Each pile of Fir or Elm containing on an average 43½ feet of timber and drove 8 ft into the bed of the river if posable, or more if necessary and 110 of such piles at each peor—that the peors shall be done externely with stoon exactly squared & fited & the stones shall be from 1 ft 3 in. to 1 ft 6in. in hight & from 2 ft to 3 ft in bed, that the binding coourses shall not be less than 2 ft 4 in in width & the same thickness as the outer coourses, that the Masonry shall be as high as the springing of the Arches & shall be solidly set in borrow lime properly prepaired, the spase in the middle shall be solidly filed up with sward stoon laid in mortar and the Joints well run with fine gravil & Lime, that the Archstoons shall be 22 in in height at the Crown of the arch & increase to 2 ft 2 in towards the springing & none less than 2 ft. long, and no quoin to have a less tye than 1 ft., that the wool of these stoons shall be squared throughout the joints from front to back & wrought as true as posable from as many moulds as there are different stoons drawn in the Arches in the plan, & shall be truly & solidly set upon there own beds with an equal thickness of Mortar, & every coorse well run with proper gravel—that the foundations of the Wing walls shall be sunk as low as indicated in the plan or lower if necessary & laid with strong & sufficient stoons, that the walls shall be 7 ft 6 in in thickness adjoining to the abutments & diminish upwards to a proper thickness for supporting the foot paths which shall rest upon the solid walls—that a counter Arch of masonry shall be placed at the backs of the low peors & that it shall rise 8 ft. above the springing of the Arches & shall be continued up to the height of the Cornish with rubble walling—that the spandrils & wing walls shall be done with Ashlor not less than 12 inches in w^d & 12 inches in height & in every coors shall have binders from 3 to 4 feet long at every 8 ft. distance—that the whoale of the spandrils as high as the top of the Arch & the wing walls as high as the foot path shall be solidly backed up with strong rubble stoons laid in good

mortar & well graveled—That the Battlements shall be 3 ft. 10 inches high & there shall be no stoon in the coaping less than 3 ft. long & no stoons in the plint less than 2 ft. 6 inches—That the coping shall be well doweld with Iron dowels within the joints & run with lead, that woal Battlements shall be secureley & properley fixed—That the footpaths shall be flagged with Yorkshire stoons & have a Curb of hewn stoons 12 in. square, that the flags shall be well laid & not less than 1 ft inches long 2 ft wide & 3 inches thick, that the curbs & flags shall be well & properley laid down upon the rubble backing, That the quoins of the Arches shall be continued up to the Cornish & meet the Ashlor of the spandrils with square joints as is expressed in the drawing hereto anexed—That the Cornice shall be 14 inches high & project 10 inches, that the string to the Wings shall be the same height & project 7 inches, that there shall be a good road formed over the s^d bridge with hard stoons & gravil at least 18 inches thick—That the beds & joints of the Arch stoons the blocks for the peors & the Ashlar for the spandrils & wing walls shall be well broached & knatted with a tool & shall be wrought straight & square & shall not be left hollow or twisted but be finished as true as to rest solid with little or no fixing upon their own beds—That the battlements strings Cornish & every other part of the bridge & wings shall be neatly tooled except the breakwaters which shall have a tool work round the joints & the remainder shall be left rough from the pick & punch—That the two water peors shall be serounded before the arches are turned with long & small rubble stoons & gravil to the height of 7 ft. from the foundations & 2 ft. distance from the peors, that the two land peors shall be done in the same maner at the face & ends & the same height & distance & that the whoal of this work shall be executed in a substansial & workmanlike maner according to the true intent & mening of the anexed plan for the sum of Two Thousand one hundred & eighty pounds by us

Isaac Marshall—Benj^m Marshall.

Referred to Mr. Manard M^r. Sykes with the approbation of M^r. Poort.

F. N. C. Mundy, Markeaton, 16 Aug^t 1795.

The contractors agree to suppoort the present Tempory bridge in repairs till the other is passable to be at the expence of providing & paying damage to the owners of grounds adjoining for laying down materials to be Borrow lime below the water.

Other entries in the same book tell us that the first stone of Belper bridge was laid in the south bank pier, at 8 ft. 2 in. deep from low water mark, on May 25th, 1796. It was not finished till towards the close of 1798. The contract was exceeded by the sum of £40 os. 5d., for extra work on the south side of the bridge, making the total cost £2,220 os. 5d.

To revert to the "New View of Derbyshire," it has been suggested that this work and others were probably printed at Derby, but it may be accepted as certain that to Belper belongs the credit of printing these volumes. The presses owned by Mr. Samuel Mason at this period were capable of printing four pages crown octavo on a single forme. The sheets were sent to Derby to have the illustrations bound in. Mr. Samuel Mason also printed a number of children's and educational books. "Mason's | Improved | Reading made Easy; | containing | a great variety of | Spelling and Easy Lessons | Chiefly in Monosyllables | Likewise | a number of new and | instructive pieces | adapted to the | capacities of children | Ornamented with Twenty Six Engravings in Wood | Belper; | Printed for S. Mason, Queen Street | Price



Sixpence." was a 12mo. volume containing 72 pages. It had a large circulation, and in 1826 copies then printed were marked "Eighteenth Edition." The frontispiece, a woodcut after the style of Bewick, has the artist's name, "Green," in the left hand corner. Some of the blocks used in the production of this volume are still in existence, in the possession of Mr. Pegg at the old printing office.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Pegg, one of these blocks is here given. Irrespective of the degree of merit that it possesses, the carefully rendered costume of the school boys of the time gives this engraving a real value. There is far more artistic merit in the pose of the lad walking by the sea shore, also lent by Mr. Pegg, which appears as a tail piece to this article.

The year 1813 was an important one, a newspaper being printed in Belper under the modest title of "The Derbyshire Chronicle and Universal Weekly Advertiser." It was printed and published by Samuel Mason, but its existence was brought, after a few months, to an untimely and premature close. The editor was the Rev. D. P. Davies, who in his way was a very remarkable man. He resided at this time at Makeney, where he kept a boys' school, among the scholars being Mr. Henry Lomas, Surgeon, of Belper, still happily able to continue in the practice of his profession. In the weekly issue of the "Derby Mercury," December 26th, 1826, there is a prospectus of the school of Mr. Davies, dated from Makeney House, in which the inclusive boarding terms are given at £40 per annum. Among the references the name of Mr. G. B. Strutt is to be found. It is said that the Rev. D. P. Davies, Mr. David Evans, and the Rev. Evan Owen Jones, left their native Wales at the same time, and sought a home in the neighbourhood of Belper together. As an instance of the powers of imagination, the story is told, that on their arrival at Derby, the trio put up at the Bell Inn, Sadler Gate. Refreshments were sought, a pigeon pie was placed before the travellers, and enjoyed with a relish engendered by the keen Derbyshire air. A short time afterwards, the waiter, in clearing away the remains of the feast,

apologised for the fact that he had made a mistake, the pie, which they had so much enjoyed as a pigeon pie, was not a pigeon pie, but a rook pie. Upon hearing this, Mr. Jones became greatly agitated, and declared that he could never eat rook pie as it always made him ill, and he became at once so sick and ill as to require the services of a medical man. The story to be complete should conclude with the fact that the pie was after all a pigeon pie.

The Rev. D. P. Davies married a Miss Harrison, of Duffield, sister of the wife of Mr. David Evans. The fourth son of Mr. David Evans, who resided in Market Street Lane, and described himself as a "Surgeon and Oculist," became Canon Evans, of Durham, and Professor of Greek at that University. He received his early education in the Vestry of the old Chapel, at the hands of the Rev. Matthew Tunstall. Canon Evans, whose recent death was greatly mourned, was full of gentle humour and a possessor of marked individuality. On one occasion whilst examining a class of boys, the Canon asked for the character of George the Fourth. No response. He simplified the question. Still no reply. At length a small boy at the bottom of the class put up his hand, all eagerness, lest the answer he knew so well might be taken from him. "Well, my little man!" said the Canon, "what have you got to say about George the Fourth." "Oh, please, sir, he was given to immortality and vice." "Right to a 'T,'" smiled the Canon; "Go up."

The Rev. D. P. Davies and the Rev. Evan Owen Jones, who kept a boys' school at Duffield, alternately occupied the pulpit of the Unitarian Chapel in Belper. This form of religion found its birth, in the town, in the year 1689, when John Taylor, of Belper, obtained a license to have a Presbyterian service in his dwelling house.* Thirty years afterwards a meeting house was erected in Market Street Lane. The Unitarian Chapel at the end of last century and the beginning of this formed a prominent feature in the religious and social life of Belper.

* "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," Vol. i., p. 367, Dr. Cox.

It had been substantially endowed by members of the chief family of the neighbourhood, and many of the principal inhabitants worshipped there. It is probable that Nonconformity was introduced from the Peak after the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. In North Derbyshire, the Rev. William Bagshawe, dissenting from the Act, laboured for fifty years, attracting large congregations. It is recorded that he visited Wirksworth,* which at this period was frequented by Belper people for marketing purposes. Until the year 1716, there was no chapel or other place of dissenting worship in Belper, but in the year 1709, George Webster, and in 1714, Joseph Statham, had their dwelling houses licensed for worship. In cases where the form of worship was other than Presbyterian or Quaker, the term "Protestant Dissenters" was invariably used. A conjecture may be made that Joseph Statham, licensed in 1714, was an Independent, as on the same date a similar license was granted to William Statham, of Shottle, who is known to have been of that form of religion.

The first market was held in Belper on October 10th, 1739, previously to which the market place was a complete waste and overgrown with rank grass. Under the shade of one of the largest trees, John Wesley preached to about 2,000 people, in the year 1762. In his journal, Mr. Wesley states that "the people were well-behaved, and heard the word with attention." Mr. Wesley preached in Belper several times, and his ministrations resulted in the establishment of the first Methodist chapel in the neighbourhood. The increase of membership of this body must have been very rapid, for in 1826 Belper circuit had no less than 1,048 members, 30 local preachers, and 13 chapels.† This increase was greatly due to the efforts of the Rev. Eliot Jones, who resided in Belper from 1814 to 1818. Mr. Jones miraculously, and he believed under inspiration, saved the life of a young bed-ridden girl whom he afterwards married. She died at Belper, in the year 1815.‡ The earliest record of resident Wesleyan ministers

* "A Memoir of the Apostle of the Peak," p. 15, W. H. Greaves Bagshawe.

† "Chronicles of Wesleyan Methodism, 1826."

‡ "Memoirs of the Rev. Eliot Jones."

is in the year 1803, when William McAllum and William France had charge of the Belper circuit.

The Congregational chapel was erected in 1789, but the members worshipped for some years previously in the Unitarian school-room. Mr. Gawthorne, one of the early ministers, kept a grocer's shop, and was fond of a gossip over his pipe and glass with his neighbours.

Although, to quote a writer of the day, "The Unitarians, the Independents, and the Methodists, have their respective meeting houses, in which some 700 children are receiving Sunday school instruction," the home of the Established Church still remained concentrated in the old chapel of St. John, the resident curate being the Rev. Matthew Tunstall, who, after a long and useful life, died in 1844, and was buried in front of the remarkable and ancient stone altar still existing in the old chapel. He resided in the bottom house in Long Row, and after officiating in the old chapel, would ride off to Turnditch to conduct service there. Dr. Cox, in his "Churches," gives a long and interesting list of the vicars of Duffield from 1253, whose duties would include the provision for the spiritual welfare of the Belper chapelry. Samuel Charles, M.A., a native of Chesterfield, and educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, one of the ejected of 1662, took up his residence in Belper shortly after his ejection.* From the diary of Mr. James Harrison, referred to by Canon Hey in his lecture at Belper, it appears that a Mr. Christie was the first parson in Belper, about the year 1740. It is stated that Mr. Christie was unfortunate enough to break his leg on the morning of his marriage. The name of Mr. Nadauld is next found on the Belper register. He is said to have been "Incumbent of Belper and Turnditch for over fifty years."† The victims of the plague in 1609 were buried in the yard of the old chapel. The plague was brought from Chesterfield, and between May 1st and September 30th, no less than 53 persons were buried.

* "Minute Book of the Wirksworth Classes." D. A. & N. H. S. Journal, Vol. iii., page 180.

† "Sunday at Home," February, 1879.

Mr. Henry Lomas states that sixty years ago there was a headstone near to the entrance of the porch conveying this information. The stone has since been restored to its position. At the time of the plague the old churchyard was not consecrated, and as a matter of fact, the ceremony of consecration did not take place until 1793.

In 1823, Mr. Samuel Mason printed "Forms | of | Prayer | for the use of a | Congregation | of | Protestant Dissenters | in | Belper. | Belper; | printed at the office of S. Mason, | 1823. It is a fine octavo volume of 106 pages, beautifully printed in pica type for the use of the Unitarians. The copy possessed by the writer, bears the imprint of "G. B. Strutt" on the front cover in gold letters. The editor again was the Rev. D. P. Davies. On page 16 is pointed out in a quaint foot-note, "All high titles or appellations of the king, queen, etc., should be left out of the prayers, such as *most illustrious, religious, mighty*, etc., and only the word sovereign retained for the king and queen." The absence of capital letters and the italics are as in the original.

The Rev. D. P. Davies a few years after the issue of the volume of prayers, came to reside permanently in Belper, where he continued his academy. In 1821, Mr. Samuel Mason commenced the printing of the reports of the Bible Society, with which Mr. Henry Lomas has been connected so many years. The printing of these reports was continued by Mr. Samuel Mason until the year 1825, when he was succeeded at his death by his son, Mr. George Mason.

It is curious to find that early in the present century a Mr. John Mason, publisher and bookseller, resided at 14, City Road, London. It is just possible that a relationship existed between the two families. It is of more general interest to note that the founder of the "Daily News," the "Field," and the publisher of "Punch," came from an old Derbyshire family, the Bradburys of Bakewell.

It may be said of Samuel Mason, that he was the pioneer of the printing press in Belper. He exercised considerable influence for

good in the town and neighbourhood. During his life, the population of Belper was at its greatest increase, and houses and shops showed a proportionate improvement. At the time of the first market in Belper, there was only one grocer's shop and not a single draper's shop in the town; Derby and Wirksworth being chiefly relied upon for finery and provisions. Coal was obtained from the Dally, and at an earlier period from Dunge Wood. Mr. Henry Lomas remembers seeing working men returning to their homes from the Dally Pits carrying the coal (called Dally Puffers) on their heads. Mr. John Strutt purchased the land and shut down the pit, converting the water from them to the use of the neighbouring farms. Mr. Mason saw the mills of W. G. & J. Strutt being erected, and the firm finding 1,300 hands a daily occupation. Nail-making then, as now, was on the downward grade. The postmaster of Belper was Mr. Thomas Haslem, and the letters for Derby, Wirksworth, Matlock, and other places were forwarded by horse-post. Carriers for goods and passengers were despatched to all the neighbouring towns. The "Peveril of the Peak" coach from Manchester called at the George and Dragon Inn, in Bridge Street, then the chief inn of the town, at six o'clock in the evening. The Royal Bruce, in connection with the London coaches, called on its way to Manchester at the same hostelry, whilst the Telegraph carried passengers from Birmingham to Sheffield, and gave its patronage to the Lower Black Swan Inn, near the Market Place. In such days, the opportunities of a man like Samuel Mason were many, and it is to his credit that he in no way abused his position and responsibilities.

George Mason, succeeded his father in the business in 1825. He continued printing the reports of the Belper Bible Society until the year 1834, when they were alternately printed with John Rosewarne, who came to reside in Belper about that time. Several hymn-books were printed by the Masons, one for St. Peter's Church.—"A new selection of | hymns | from various authors. | Belper; | printed and published by George Mason." A volume of hymns, compiled by and printed for Mr. George H.

Strutt, and in use at Hazlewood up to the time of the death of the late vicar, Mr. Jenkins, was issued by Mr. Pegg.

It may, perhaps, be noted in this gossiping paper, that in 1826 a Mrs. Whysall died on the Belper Laund. She and her daughter married two brothers, John and Abraham Whysall.

In the year of Reform, 1832, George Mason printed a small pamphlet, "The | Tories Defeated : | Facts | against Fiction : | or, | A statement of facts | Connected with the visit of | Sir Roger Greisley | to Belper, | on Tuesday, December 4th, 1832 | . Belper ; | Printed by G. Mason, Queen Street | Price One Penny. | " This long titled though small book was of twelve pages, 12mo. It contains an interesting account of the visit of Sir Roger Greisley, who was contesting the division. We are informed that " Sir Roger was greeted by a few groans uttered by the multitude that had gathered together." Sir Roger and his party proceeded to the George and Dragon Inn, and after a vigorous address by Sir Roger, and more vigorous replies from Mr. Kerry, Mr. Palmer, and others, in favour of the Reform candidates, a show of hands was demanded. A vast forest of hands appeared for Reform, but not a single hand was held up in favour of Sir Roger, although it was his own meeting. Mr. John Mellor, of Belper, now close upon eighty years of age, was a special constable at this election.

In the same year, George Mason printed a pamphlet, entitled " The | American Giant | patronized | by the Royal Family | J. H. Lambier | Late a Captain | In the French Imperial Mameluke Horse Guards | One of the | largest men in the world. | From the | United States of America | . Belper ; | Printed by Geo. Mason, Queen Street | 1832." It is 12mo., and contains fourteen pages. The pamphlet was evidently printed for one of the numerous showmen who largely patronised Belper at this period, as they still continue to do. The book was sold by the royally patronised giant in the intervals of his performances. The giant also dabbled in the mysteries of medicine. On page 11, a cure for toothache is elaborately advertised. The public are informed that " this medicine has received the sanction and support of the

most distinguished personages in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, together with the united testimony of the first Physicians in Europe, etc. Price One shilling per bottle."

In the year 1833, there was printed by George Mason a small book of words—"New Church | Belper; | Grand Selection—of Sacred Music | to be performed | in | Belper Church | on | Wednesday Feby 27, 1833. In aid of the funds | for erecting and establishing an | Infants School | in that town. | To Commence at Two O'clock precisely | Price Three pence." The new church will be better recognised as St. Peter's Church, the foundation stone of which was laid in great state by the Duke of Devonshire in 1822. The church was consecrated by Bishop Ryder, and opened for Divine service in 1824. Only one service a day was held for sometime, and it may be noted that in 1826 the collection at the Sunday school sermons amounted to over £25. In the same year, the Belper Bible Society paid the parent society the sum of £110.

Mr. George Mason, in addition to his business as a printer and stationer, sold ale and beer at the Queen Street entrance to his establishment. He also dealt in matters considerably outside his calling. On his counter at one time might have been seen an electric plating bath in full operation. The small field opposite the old corner shop has since the time of the Masons been always known as the "Masons' Croft." Mr. George Mason was succeeded in the tenancy by Mr. Barber, who held the freehold of the shop. In 1844, Mr. Barber was succeeded by Mr. Lowe, who for some years consecutively printed the Bible Society reports. Mr. E. Lowe becoming interested in the gold fever of the day, emigrated to the Australian diggings, handing over the business to Mr. Joseph Pegg, who had served an apprenticeship at Caxton House, Nottingham.

In Bridge Street, in 1819, there lived a printer and bookseller named Ogle. He printed a small book entitled, "History | of | Poor Joe | the | Belper Nailor | . Price One Penny." It only contains eight pages, and the hero is a lachrymose individual, like Mr. Micawber, always waiting for something to turn up. The

first page is embellished by a woodcut, "Joe's Cottage, from a drawing taken on the spot," from the hands of that prince of local illustration, Mr. Orlando Jewitt. The little pamphlet is rare, the only copy known to the writer belonging to Mr. T. H. Godbehere, cashier at Messrs. W. G. & J. Strutt's.

Mr. Ogle was succeeded by Mr. Rosewarne, who originally came from Wirksworth. Mr. Rosewarne was a teacher in the Wesleyan Sunday school, and had a weakness for toffee. It was his duty to take away the toffee from the Sunday school scholars when in class, which duty he carried out faithfully, but his fatal taste often prevented him in carrying out his duty as faithfully in returning it at the close of school. In 1836, he printed the *Miner's Arithmetic*, issued at the price of sixpence. In size it is 12mo., and somewhat insignificant in appearance; it was probably the result of his acquaintance with the mining district of Wirksworth. About the same time Mr. Rosewarne printed a pamphlet, "Important to Young People | An | Interesting and authentic account | of | Henry Shooter | a Young Surgeon | lately residing in Belper Derbyshire | who committed | Parricide and Suicide | on September 7th 1830 | at Sutton in Ashfield | near Mansfield | in the county of Nottingham | Belper: | Printed and Published by J. Rosewarne, Bridge Street | Price Threepence." It is twenty-four pages octavo, in addition to a blue paper cover. The copy owned by the writer bears the autograph "Dr. Dolman, Derby." In 1838, he also published a volume entitled, "Short Poems | on | various Religious Subjects | by | the Rev. B. Gregory | Wesleyan Minister | Belper: | Printed for the Author | by J. Rosewarne, Bridge Street | 1838." The book is 12mo., of one hundred pages, and contains a well-executed portrait of the author by Mr. C. J. Williams, of Derby. The author, a son of whom became a president of the Wesleyan Conference in recent years, was a somewhat eccentric man. On one occasion after giving out his text, he paused long with hesitation, and at last exclaimed, "It won't go, and I can't make it go." He resided in the neighbourhood of Field Head. The poems, which Mr. Gregory avows in his preface to be the mere recrea-

tions of a few moments' leisure, are of a devotional character. A hymn "composed on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Victoria" is a deeply religious expression of the author's hopes and wishes for the Queen's future.

A printer named Vickers lived in Bridge Street in the year 1832. He was a Wesleyan, and in only a small way of business. Another printer named Riley lived in the neighbourhood of Church Street about the year 1840. He was responsible for the issue of a poem by Mr. Thomas Crofts, on the occasion of the first dressing of the Manor Well in Belper. In Queen Street at the same period a Mr. Moss resided. He had a small connection, chiefly for posters and circulars, and was said, like Mr. Rosewarne, to have come from Wirksworth.

On September 11th, 1854, a second newspaper saw the light in Belper, under the conductorship of Mr. John Kiddy, who resided at the shop in Bridge Street, lately occupied by Mr. Talbot. The new venture was called "The Belper Journal and General Advertiser for Belper, Ripley, Duffield, Milford, Wirksworth, etc." The inside of the journal, consisting of general news and information, was printed by Messrs. Cassell, of London. These pages were adorned with illustrations of contemporary events. The first page of the publication was printed in Belper, and signs are not wanting in even the limited space given to local news of very careful editing. The paper was issued monthly, and the first number contained an interesting poem from the pen of Mr. Thomas Crofts, an old and respected inhabitant of Belper.

In No. 2 of the Belper Journal, dated October, 1854, is a careful report (quite equal to any work in this direction to-day) of a lecture upon "Human Character," delivered in Belper by Dr. Spencer T. Hall, the author of several interesting Derbyshire books.

In No. 4, the building of a large chimney at Messrs. Strutt's is recorded, and also the fact that the chimney contains half a million bricks.

In No. 5 is mentioned a most successful and interesting lecture

delivered by Mr. George Henry Strutt, on the "Poetry of the Day," in Belper, on December 21st, 1854. The selections are stated to have been delivered with great feeling. The lecturer frequently elicited warm applause by his critical and humorous remarks.

In the number for July, 1855, a reference is made to some postal irregularity in Belper, and the curious and interesting information is given that in 1855 letters could be posted up to ten o'clock at night, an hour later than can be done at the present time.

The Newspaper Stamp Act coming into operation, the "Belper Journal" was converted into a weekly paper, and started again with No. 1 on Saturday, July 7th, 1855. The size was increased and the local matter doubled, the front page being devoted to news and the last page to advertisements. The first number contains a woodcut illustration of the Arboretum anniversary festival at Derby. The inside matter still continued being printed in London, so that the obtaining of this block would be a special feature.

From No. 2 of this series, the following conundrum is extracted from amongst others, the work of a Belper wag of that day:— "Why are the two yew trees in the old chapel yard like jolly old toppers?" "Because they are always at the Butts."

No. 23 records the death of Mr. John Brownson, aged 100, at Belper.

Just at this time the paper was evidently in a bad way, for a fresh attempt to secure popular favour was made with No. 28, which appeared in an enlarged form under the simple heading, "The Belper Journal," and bore date January 5th, 1856. The following week's number, by a singular error, bears also the same number—28, and also a curious error in the date. The front page was only printed locally.

The name of the present occupier of Samuel Mason's shop has been mentioned earlier. In Mr. Pegg that pioneer of printing in Belper had a successor worthy of himself.

Mr. Pegg issued a volume in 1866, printed for private circulation only—"Poems, chiefly Lyrical, composed and arranged by Geo Henry Strutt." The volume, two hundred and forty pages octavo, is a delightful compilation of some of the finest poems in our language. The book is also enriched by five original poems by Mr. Strutt, not unworthy of the other contents. The literary style is of a high order, and the poems are marked by good taste and feeling. This interesting volume is prettily bound in blue cloth, and is a credit not only to Mr. Pegg but to Belper.

Among the minor productions of the press in Belper is a small book, entitled "Padge Barber, a Derbyshire tale of jealousy; a true story which occurred in the neighbourhood of the Depth of Lumb." This book is mentioned, as it has every appearance of being a revival of an older work. It was published at one penny, and the last paragraph is worthy of reproduction: "The inhabitants of Shottle, as they pass the spot, heave a sigh, or shed a tear, as they think of the unhappy end of Anne and William; and when any neighbour dares to utter a slander, or asperse the character of any individual they mark their disapprobation by exclaiming, 'Tis as bad as Padge Barber.'" Like the inhabitants of Shottle, let us drop a silent tear over this affecting picture.

