

Hermits, Fords, and Bridge-Chapels.

BY REV. CHAS. KERRY.



FEW can have seen the early representations of S. Christopher in his struggle through the turgid ford with the Holy Child, without noticing a figure on the bank of the river holding a lantern or torch for the direction and assistance of the saint. This individual represents the mediæval hermit of the ford. The circumstances attending the legendary life of S. Christopher—his direction by a hermit to devote his strength to the service of Christ by carrying travellers or pilgrims over dangerous streams, his solitary life, his devotion to his labours, and finally his high and singular reward—seem to have powerfully influenced the hermitical devotees of the middle ages. Bridges were few and far between, fords treacherous and perilous, and pilgrims bent on holy errands were many; what work could commend itself to the benevolent-minded Christian more than the guardianship of a ford? Indeed, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was hardly a ford, causeway, or bridge, without such an attendant; and when, by the liberality of travellers, or the munificence of the wealthy, bridges were made to span the old ford or ferry, the services of the hermit and his primitive oratory were not discarded. As late as 1488, some centuries after the bridge of S. Mary's, Derby, had been erected, there was a resident "hermit" in charge of it, and a chapel, too, with its chaplain, to pray for the king, for the benefactors of the bridge, and the God-speed of the travellers.

(I was strangely reminded some time ago of this old-world state of things when crossing the fields between Wallingford and Bensington ; the footpath led me to the side of the Thames ; the ferry-boat was moored on the other side ; there was no visible attendant, and the cottages were at some distance beyond the boat. After straining my voice in vain, and beginning to think of returning to Wallingford, I saw a large *iron* cow-bell (much the shape of the old four-sided saints' bells of Ireland), suspended by a chain to a post by the river side. A vigorous peal had the desired effect ; a cottage door opened, and in a few more minutes I was safely landed on the Bensington shore by the modern " hermit " of the ferry.)

S. Christopher was considered an efficacious medium against fire and *flood* ; and if his frescoes were so common in our parish churches in the middle ages, and placed in the most conspicuous position on the walls (very frequently on the north wall, opposite the main entrance), how much more must his stalwart figure—so potent against disasters by *water*—have confronted the traveller in the old ford chapels. The monitory legend usually painted beneath ran thus :—

" Cristofori faciem die quacunque tueris,"

" Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris." i.e.,

"On whatsoever day thou dost behold the face of Christopher
E'en so upon that day thou shalt not die an evil death."

The duties of the hermit of a ford seem to have been undertaken "ad majorem Dei gloriam," and the office was accordingly assumed with much solemnity. The Pontifical of Abp. Bainbridge of York, A.D. 1508—14, gives a special office for the benediction of a recluse and his dwelling. Perhaps the following extract from the Episcopal archives of Ely, which have been recently indexed at the charge of Lord Alwyn Compton, the present Bishop, (would that others would follow his most laudable example !), will give a better insight into the mediæval management of bridges than any words of mine could convey.

Translation.

“ We make known to all by these presents that on the 23rd day of the month of June, 1491, in the cathedral church of Ely, the Divine Office having been solemnly celebrated, we received the Profession of John Thomson, hermit of the causeway of Erith (Cambridgeshire), and have invested him with the hermitical habit, and laid upon the same John, then and there, our injunctions, charges, and agreements. And whereas the same John hath nothing of his own whereby he is able to live, except he be succoured by the faithful in Christ, devoted to God, and to gifts and alms of charity. And whereas we believe that as often as we stir up the minds of the faithful to the exercise of this kind of piety by the alluring gifts of indulgences, they are the more inclined to do them, ‘ De Dei igitur,’ etc. ‘ Cunctis Christi fidelibus de peccatis, suis,’ etc. Therefore they who shall contribute food or any other things for the sustenance of the said John shall have ten days of indulgence ; but to them who shall contribute silver, or any of their goods, or who shall assign or bequeath a subsidy of charity towards the reparation of the bridge and common way there, we, by these presents, graciously grant forty days of indulgence as often as they shall perform the same during the life of the said John. In testimony of which, etc. Given in our palace of Ely, on the day, month, and year above written, and in the fifth year of our translation.”—(Bp. Alcock’s Register, p. 72.)

Another extract from the same Register gives us the exact form of words used by the hermit in making his Profession.

Translation.

“ The 25th day of the month of February, A.D. 1493, the same lord bishop, in the Hall of Gonvyll, Cambridge, dedicating or consecrating a certain chapel there, and in Pontificals celebrating a solemn mass there, Robert Mitchell and John Smith, neither of them being joined in matrimony, were professed under the form of words following :—‘ I, Robert Michyll, not joined in matrimony, promise and vow to God and the Blessed Mary, and to all saints,

in the presence of the Reverend Father and Lord, John, by the grace of God, Bishop and ordinary of this diocese of Ely, that I will lead a life of perpetual chastity, according to the rule of Saint Paul, the first hermit. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And in sign of this my profession, I here subscribe. ✠ “Et ego Johannes Smyth non jungatus, etc., ut supra ✠.”

The following may serve to throw a little light upon the policy which seems to have given *some* impetus at least to the ecclesiastical authorities in the encouragement of bridge building, etc., but considering the belief of the period in the availing merits of the saints and the virtue of their relics, they must certainly be accredited with the best of motives.

12 Sep. 1458. (Reg. Gray, fo. 35. Ely.)

“Universis Episcopis, &c. Pium obsequium et Deo gratum tociens impendere opinamur quociens mentes fidelium ad caritatis vel alterius pie devocionis opera allectivis indulgentiarum numeribus propensius excitamus. Cum igitur ecclesie nostra Eliensis aquis et paludibus sit circumdata adeo quod reliquis sanctarum virginum in ea quiescentium not valet a devotis ut debetur exhiberi visitacio nisi per pontes et calcet’ quorum difficilis est reparacio et ad quos reparandos propter eorum cotidianam reparacionem cotidiana beneficiorum necessaria est largitio. Inde est quod Willielmum Grene heremitam latorem presertium virum fidelem qui precepto nostro et communi consilio ecclesie nostre Eliensis pro salute anime sue curam reparacionis calcetorum de Stanteneye et Soham et pontium in eisdem suscepit ad vestre caritatis destinamus subsidium Vos in Domino exhortantes ut eum favourabiliter exadiautis; De Dei igitur, &c., qui ad reparacionem poncium calcetorum de Stantenye et Some—manus porresciunt adjutentes quadraginta dies,” etc.*

Having referred to these archives, which abound with similar information with regard to bridges and hermits in the Fen districts,

For these extracts we are indebted to the courtesy of the Rev. J. H. Crosby, The College, Ely.

there can be no doubt that the Registers of other dioceses throughout England teem with matter equally interesting relative to their particular sees.

Surely something might be done by the authorities in the way of epitomizing or fully indexing these invaluable evidences of local history and the religious life of the kingdom in the middle ages ; it seems so sad that these priceless tomes belonging to the ancient Church of England should not, in the presence of the restored life of that Church, be made to reveal something of the spirit which pervaded her inner life, and which led to such wondrous results, instead of being buried in the musty oblivion of our Episcopal Registries.

From the Registers of Ely chiefly, then, with regard to the status of a hermit of a ford, we may learn—

1st. That the hermit elect made a religious profession before the Bishop, and was then invested by the Bishop in a particular dress to be worn by him.

2nd. That the recluse and his dwelling received a special benediction.

3rd. That they were not (necessarily) in Holy Orders, special chaplains being appointed to say the offices in the bridge-chapels.

4th. That they were not always celibates ; for in 1488 the hermit of St. Mary's Bridge, Derby, was a married man.

5th. The bailiffs or other local authorities inducted the hermit into his office on receipt of the Bishop's letters.

6th. That a Royal Licence was required to empower them to *demand* tolls for the repair and sustentation of their bridges, and that this licence usually expired after a lapse of three or four years.

7th. The hermit was usually sustained by the alms and donations of travellers, moved to this good work in times of special necessity by episcopal indulgencies.

8th. That the bridge hermitages were under the special control of the Bishop of the diocese.

In Bishop Fordham's Register (Ely), in the year 1400, is recorded an indulgence to all who shall contribute to the road from Milton to Sydyngbourne, and to the support of William Fayreford,

poor hermit, diligently labouring for the repair of the same, and for Waterbech and Denny and Denny and Stretham causeways, and William Rogere, hermit; and for Jo. Oblyn. (Is this name derived from his '*hobbling*' gait, because it is stated that he "*in tibia sua sinistra maculat?*" Evidently a case of "The right man in the right place.")

Anno 1401—Indulgence for Wittlesford-brigge chapel, and Jo. Lucas, hermit there.

In Bishop Grey's Register, anno 1454-79, we have a mandate from the Bishop to the Bailiff of Brandon, requiring him, "whereas Thomas Passshelaw, lately the occupant of *our Hermitage* upon the bridge of Brandon was dead," to admit John Herryman to be hermit there for his life '*si bene se gesserit*' (if he behave himself well), the said hermit to keep the buildings of the hermitage in due repair out of the offerings received of those who should cross the bridge. (Gibbon's "*Ely Epis. Records.*")

With this preface, let us now turn to the Bridge of St. Mary at Derby. The Rev. Dr. Cox in his "*Churches of Derbyshire*," iv., 102-6, gives a most interesting account of this structure, with an inventory of the ornaments and valuables contained in the Chapel in 1488. This latter is very curious and valuable, as being probably the only inventory extant of a *Hermitage* chapel, and the more so, because it was taken before any danger of confiscation was apprehended, and before the era of embezzlement had commenced.

"And the saide John and Thos. Oxle the same tyme made accompt to the saide auditors of all juels and ornamentes beyinge att the Mary of Brigge that be in the custody of John Shenton, Armett (*hermit*) and his wyffe—Syr John Dale then their pste (priest).

Inpr̄m one cote of crymyson velvett endented with golde that my lady Gray gaffe, and opon hytt y^s lxvj penyes, ij gilte penies, one gilte ob (farthing), ij penese of ij^d, one grotte, an Be of silver, ij shelles of sylver, one herte of silver, a mounde of silver, one broche of copur, and gylte, ij shaftes of silver, one cristall stone inclosed in silver.

Also one cote of blewe velvett y^t my lady Chamburlayne gaffe; Thereupon y^s a crowen of sylver and gylte that John Boroës gaffe. Item a grette broche of siluer and gylte with a stonne in hytt. Also one case of Redde satten with buttons of siluer and gylte. Itm' lx penes, iij gylt penes, one peny of ij^d, one crosse of syluer. Item a casse of veluett, one broche, and one peny of hytt, and a crystall stonne.

Itm' one garment y^t my lady Longforth gaff of blewe veluett and Rede. And on y^t ys a crucifix of siluer and gylte, with a rynge of golde that maistres Bonynton gaffe, Also a a rynge of siluer and gilte, another of cop^r, vj stey^d a iiij^d and vj halfe pens, iij grotes, iij pens of ij^d, vj flewes (flowers) of siluer and gilte, Itm' x Curall bedes with ij siluer gawdyse.

Itm' one cote to o^r Lorde of Crymysyn veluett furred with manyver' (minever) y^t my lady Longforth gaff. Opon hytt y^s a shyld of syluer with v bende pens, Itm xi pens, and v gylte pens, a peny of ij^d, Itm one payr of bedes of siluer gaudied with corall y^t Oxlee wyff gaff. Itm' one stone closed in siluer, with one cross of siluer, one broch of siluer, ij other broches of siluer and gilte, with one colar of blak perle with xvij belles of siluer and gylte.

Itm one payre of bedes of corall, gaudede, havynge gaudeses of siluer and gilte, with iiij ringes, and ij not fixed of siluer, and gilte, with a cristall stone set in siluer, and a stone of corall that Richard Baker wyfe gaffe.

Itm' another payre of bedes of corall, with gaudese of siluer and gylte, with one golde rynge, and ij rengs of siluer and gilte, with ij crucifixes of syluer and gylte, that Richard Sale wyffe gaffe.

Itm one payre of bedes of corall, gaudede with syluer, y^t Richard Colyar wyffe gaffe.

Itm' one payre of bedes of blak jette.

Itm' one payre of bedes of corall, with a crose stone, with xxv gaudies of siluer, with a tufte set with perles y^t Roger Justice wyfe gaffe.

Itm' one gylte gyrdel y^t maistress Entwysel gaffe.

Itm' one purpulle gyrdel y^t Edmund Dey wyffe gaffe.

Itm' one blewe gyrdell herness with vij studdes on hytt, y^t John Hyll wyffe gaffe.

Itē one whyte vestemente of damaske, with ale thynges that longeth to y^t, and ij corporaxes of Rede veluett.

It' v alt' clothes, ij of, them twille. It v towells, one of them of twylle, and ij pax bredes.

Itm iij frontels, one of blew say with sterres on hytt, y^t S^r James Blounte Knyght gaffe.

Item in the Chapelle y^s ij masbokes, j sawter, one chalice of silver and gylte, ij cruettes—one coper; ij cushens of tapstre wark that Alesome Sonkye gaffe, one pyloe of corall, ij cappes to o^r Lorde, one blewe velvett, with one peyre of bedes gaudede with perle, with iij stones of corall, and one peny of hytt.

Itm' another of blak with crowned . . . of y^{tt} and one flower of siluer and gylte. Itm ij candelstikkes of latten, and xix tapurs of wax."

It seems somewhat remarkable that out of the fourteen benefactors recorded in this Inventory, no less than twelve of them should be *women*; from which it may be almost safely concluded that there was a guild of sisters of "Our Lady of the Bridge" in connection with the hermitage chapel—as there was at Chesterfield in connection with the chapel of St. James by the Bridge there.*

That there was a famous image of the Virgin and Child in the chapel is quite clear from the foregoing inventory. Two "coats "

* The formation of guilds for the maintenance of bridges was very common in the middle ages, e.g., "In the year 1452 Thomas Mettingham, priest of the chauntry founded by John Hosebonde in Maidenhead Chapel, petitioned Henry VI. to grant his licence for the establishment of a Guild in the said chapel, to be called the "Overseer, Wardens, Brethren and Sisters of the Fraternity or Guild of S. Andrew and S. Mary Magdalen of Madenhuth," for the following purposes:—First, The maintenance, etc., of the chauntry; and secondly, for the continual reparation and keeping up of the bridge over the Thames, which had then gone far into decay, and was exceedingly dangerous."—(Gorham.)

By the exertions of the brethren of the Holy Cross at Abingdon the bridges at Burford and Culhamford with the causeway between them were erected. This guild was first incorporated in 1442, when they were empowered to possess lands of £40 a year. In 1457 they supported two chaplains, one of whom was called the "Bridge-priest," who was to pray for the benefactors to the bridge and road. Their salary was £6 13s. 4d. each per annum. The guild was dissolved in 1547, when their rental amounted to £85 15s. 6d.—(Lyson)

and a "garment" (undefined as to their use, but from their trappings obviously designed for an image) are named with another coat *appropriated* to "*o' Lorde*," from which it may be inferred that the first-named were intended for "*o' lady*." Two of them were of *blue*, the colour usually selected for the Virgin's apparel. By '*cote*' we may understand a kirtle or gown, and by "*garment*" an outer cope or mantle.

The quaint appearance of the images (the Sacred Infant wearing a little cap)—arrayed in costly velvets, covered with rings, rosaries with "*gaudies*" (the larger beads for Ave Marias), shells, arrows, flowers, brooches, all of silver, and some gilt—with numbers of bent or lucky pennies, all stitched securely on, presents a charming picture of the display of the votive offerings of the middle ages.

The hermit was a married man, and therefore a secular, whose duty it was to collect the tolls; no very agreeable task at any time, but particularly so in these times—judging at least from the tolls defined by the pontages. One of these for St. Mary's Bridge is dated 19 Edward II., A.D. 1326. The following is a translation of a portion of it:—"The King, etc., Know ye that in aid of the reparation and emendation of the bridge of the town of Derby, which as we are given to understand is broken and ruinous, we grant to you for the term of three years from the date hereof, that ye may take by the hands of those in whom ye may confide, and for whom ye wish to be responsible, the following tolls or customs on account of those things coming and passing over:—

"For any load of grass, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For any horse, mare, and cow, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For any skin of horse, ox, or cow,—fresh, salt, or tanned, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For any cart carrying meat—salt or fresh, $\frac{3}{4}^d$.

"For 5 'bacons,' $\frac{1}{4}^d$. ('Baconibus.')

"For any Salmon—fresh or salt, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For any '*centena mulvellorum congrorum et sticarum angul-larium sallicarum ven unū denar.*' (A centena contained $13\frac{1}{2}$ stones of 8 lbs. each, *i.e.*, 108 lbs. The "*mulvel*" was a fish taken plentifully in the North Sea in summer, and called by the

Londoners, "Green fleb," and by the men of Lancashire, "milwen,"—probably the mullet. "Congrorum"—designed for the church."—(Du Cange "Gloss.")

Or for any salted Eels, 1^d.

For ten boars or pigs, 1^d.

For a centena of Aberdeen fish, $\frac{1}{4}$ ^d., etc., etc."

(*See under Swarkeston.*)

Disputes must often have occurred between the hermit and his passengers with regard to the tolls: the pigs would certainly be a difficult problem according to numbers, as money was then—there being no halfpence and farthings; and it was no doubt owing to something of this kind that the hermit of St. Mary's on one occasion found himself in trouble at Nottingham, A.D. 1467-8. "The tithingman of Middle Pavement present that Robert Allen and William Thurkell, goldsmith, made an assault upon the hermit of the bridge of the town of Derby: fined 6^d."—"Nottingham Borough Records," ii., 270.

Three Pontages for St. Mary's Bridge may be found in the Patent Rolls: 1st Pat., 19 Edward II., m. 26—just quoted. 2nd Pat., 2 Edward III., m. 22, and 1st Pat., 3 Edward III., m. 27. As these pontages, however, are merely grants to the burgesses to collect tolls at specified rates for limited periods, for the repairs of the bridge, I have not copied them at length.

SWARKESTON.

The most famous bridge in Derbyshire is that of Swarkeston, crossing the Trent in the vicinity of Stanton, in which parish the greater part of the structure is situated. This bridge, with its contiguous causeways, is said to be nearly a mile in length. Upon it, and in the middle of the river, stood an ancient chauntry chapel.

A legend is current that this bridge was first erected at the sole expense of two maiden sisters, who had the misfortune to lose their lovers when attempting to ford the swollen waters of the Trent together at that point, on an intended visit to their betrothed. It is said that the disconsolate ladies expended the

whole of their fortunes on this large undertaking, and lived the remainder of their days together in poverty.

The earliest reference to this bridge that I have yet discovered is in the Hundred Rolls. It is as follows :—"Inquisition held at Derby on the Feast of S. Hilary, in the Church of S. James, Anno 3 Edward I. (Oct. 1, A.D. 1275). The jury reported that the merchants of the soke of Melbourne passing over the bridge of Swarkeston and other places within the limits of the liberty (concerning receipt of passage money and toll of our lord the king pertaining to his borough of Derby) are always accustomed to withhold passage and toll on their own power and authority to the prejudice of our lord the king and the Borough of Derby. Three years have elapsed already since they have withheld the said passage money and tolls, unjustly and without warrant."

The Patent Rolls give three pontages for Swarkeston; viz. :—
2nd Pat., 18 Edward II., m. 31.; 1st Pat., 12 Edward III., m. 26.
This latter was granted to the men of Swarkeston for four years; the collectors of the bridge tolls being Hugo del Calke, and John the son of Adam. Given at Westminster, March 1st, 1338.
The next will be found on the 3rd Pat., 20 Edward III., and is as follows :—

"Concerning the receiving of customs for the reparation of the Bridge of Swarkeston."—"The King to his beloved bailiffs and approved men of the town of Derby, saluting: Know ye that in aid of the bridge of Swerkeston, which to a great extent is ruinous and broken, and especially dangerous to men passing over, and manifestly injurious to the neighbourhood, We grant for the reparation, etc., unto you from the day of the date hereof, to the end of three years next following, that ye may take by the hands John the son of Adam de Melbourne, senior, and John the son of Adam de Melbourne, junior, for the things crossing by the bridge aforesaid, the following customs :—

"For any load of grass, hay, brush, or brushwood ('brasia'), $\frac{1}{4}$ ^d.

"For any horse, mare, ox, or cow, $\frac{1}{4}$ ^d.

"For any cask ('dolium') of wine, 2^d. For any pipe of wine, 1^d.

"For any skin of horse, mare, ox, or cow, fresh, salt, or tanned, $\frac{1}{4}$ ^d

"For 5 flitches of bacon ('baconibus'), salted or dried, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every ten pigs, 1^d . For ten fleeces, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For a centena of clothing of wool, or goats' hair, 1^d .

"For a centena (108 lbs.) of skins of lambs, goats, hares, squirrels, foxes, cats, $\frac{1}{2}^d$.

"For every centena of dressed fur (vairé, very costly), 6^d .

"For every quarter of salt, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every pack saddle load ('sumagio') of cloth,—or drawn by cart, 3^d .

"For every centena of cloth of worsted, 2^d . For every texture of 'wostede' which is called 'coverlit,' of the value of 40^s , 1^d .

"For every centena of linsey, 1^d .

"'De chieff de cendallo affoyciato,' 1^d . [Probably veils or coverings for the head, of pure thin silk—*vide*, Dr. Rock's "Textile Fabrics" and "Cendalum," Du Cange.]

"For other cendal, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every centena of mulvel—salt, or hard baked, 2^d .

"'De centena pristis marini,' $\frac{1}{2}^d$.

"For every sumpter load of sea fish. For every salmon, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every 12 lampreys, 1^d .

"For every cask of sturgeons, $\frac{1}{2}^d$.

"For every last of 'Allecis' (little fish fit for salting) 6^d .

"For every cart load of tan, by the week, 1^d .

"For moveables of weight, viz., every 108 lbs., 1^d .

"For every quarter of 'Waide' 2^d . (a herb used by fullers, of detergent properties) ? Woad.

"For every bale of Cordovan 3^d . (very soft leather prepared at Cordova from goat skins).

"For every load of Brushwood or charcoal, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every centena of faggots, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

"For every thousand of turf, $\frac{1}{4}^d$. For every cart load of ashes or timber, by the week, $\frac{1}{2}^d$.

"For every centena of tin, brass, or copper, 2^d .

"For every burden of ale (Batella carcato), burnt turf, or any other things not here specified of the value of 5^s . and more, $\frac{1}{4}^d$.

“And we command you that ye take the aforesaid tolls and customs for three years in the form aforesaid, and the pence arising therefrom ye use for the reparation, &c., of the bridge aforesaid, and for no other purposes. Given at Reading the 28th of December, 1347.”

From an inquisition held at Newark, October 26th, 1503, we learn that a parcel of meadow land lying between the bridge and Ingleby had been given in early days to the Priory of Repton, on the tenure of supplying a priest to sing mass in the chapel on Swarkeston Bridge; but that there was then no such priest, nor had one been appointed for the space of 20 years. The Churchwardens of Stanton in 1552 reported, “We have a chapell edified and buylded uppon Trent in y^e mydest of the greate streme anexed to Swerston bregge the whiche had certayne stuffe belongyng to it, ij desks to knele in, a Table of wode, and certayne barres of yron and glasse in the wyndos, whiche Mr. Edward Beamont of Arleston hath taken away to his owne use, and we saye that if the Chapell dekeye, the brydge wyll not stonde.”—“Churches of Derbyshire.” iii., 471.

The third bridge in Derbyshire, which seems to have had an oratory and a hermitage connected therewith, is

CROMFORD,

although hitherto I have not been able to find any original corroborative evidence. “Tradition has it (writes Rev. Dr. Cox) that this (the old chapel near Cromford Bridge) was an oratory for the use of those who were about to cross the ford of Cromford, and that fees were paid to the priest in charge by the travellers.” (“Churches of Derbyshire,” ii., 573.) This bridge, apparently cœval with those of Duffield and Matlock, was constructed in the early half of the 14th century, and all of them were widened on the north or upper side about the beginning of the present century. At its south western corner, near the cottage, are the remains of a small rectangular building with a Gothic doorway, clearly cœval with

the oldest portions of the bridge, and this I take to have been the residence of the hermit. The episcopal registers of Lichfield, if consulted, might give a satisfactory solution, and throw much light, not only on this, but on others in the county—Swarkeston especially, which, *from its size*, must have been a continual drain on the charity of the country.

The following interesting inscription appears on a coping stone of Cromford Bridge above the remains of the hermitage:—

“THE LEAP OF M^R.”

“B. H. MARE IVNE, 1697.”

No one, unfortunately, seems to know anything of this remarkable circumstance; but certain it is that from this spot the mare must have fallen nearly 25 feet into the river below. The bridge then was very narrow, the parapet high, and it would seem that the mare, probably coming at full speed from Cromford, upon turning the corner of the bridge, found the narrow passage blocked—perhaps by sheep or cattle—and so to escape collision bounded over the side into the river. Whether she had a rider, or whether any loss of life occurred, there seems to be no means of ascertaining, but it appears to have created some sensation at the time, for the inscription is well and deeply engraven.

CHESTERFIELD.

Glover in his “History of Derbyshire” mentions the chapel of St. James, formerly standing by Lordsmill Bridge. This must be the chapel in which Richard Nevill, Earl of Salisbury, who became possessed of the manor of Chesterfield in right of his wife Alice, one of the coheiresses of Edmund, Earl of Woodstock, founded a chantry by royal licence in 1446. The licence taken from the Patent Ro. (25 Hen. VI. p. 2, No. 462, m. 10) is as follows:—

(Translation.) “The King to all to whom, &c. Know ye that we for us and our heirs, as much as in us lies give and grant licence to our most dear cousin Richard Earl of Salisbury that he, his heirs, or executors, may found a chantry for one chaplain in a

certain chapel at Chesterfield, constructed near (juxta) the bridge there, in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed and Glorious Virgin Mary, to celebrate divine service every day in the said chapel for the health and good estate of us, and of our Consort Margaret Queen of England, and for the aforesaid Earl, and Alice his wife, whilst we live, and for our soul, and the soul of the aforesaid Queen, when she shall have departed from this life, and for the souls of all the faithful departed for ever, *and of the five women sisters perpetually devoted*, in the chapel aforesaid, &c., according to the appointment of the said Earl. And to make, found, and erect houses and edifices near the same chapel, for the station or lodging of the said chaplain, and sisters, and that he may be able to reconstruct them and build them '*de novo*.' And that the chauntry thus founded and established, shall for ever be called 'The Chauntry of the Earl of Salisbury of Chesterfield,' and that the chaplain of the aforesaid chauntry and the sisters of the same and their successors, when so founded, erected, and established, shall form one body; and that they shall be able to obtain and appropriate to themselves and their successors, any lands, tenements, rents, and possessions whatsoever, both temporal and spiritual, to the value of 20 marks per annum; which is not held of us in chief of any person or persons, &c., &c. Teste R. apud Westm. viij die Julii. (A.D. 1446.)"

I have not the means of ascertaining the number of bridge chapels once existing in England. A few still remain in their time-honoured positions, but by far the majority have perished with the old bridges they once so quaintly adorned. Of those which remain, perhaps the chapel on Wakefield Bridge is the best known. Others were—

THE CHAPEL ON LONDON BRIDGE. The following story given by John Stowe of the origin of this, is *typical of the early history of others whose origin is unknown*. "A ferry being kept in the place where now the Bridge is builded, at length the ferryman and his wife deceasing, left the same ferry to their onely daughter, a maiden named Mary, which, with the goods left her by her parents, as also with the profits rising of the said ferry, *builded an house*

of *Sisters*, in place where now standeth the East part of S. Mary Overees Church above the Queer, where she was buried, unto which house she gave the oversight and profits of the Ferry. But afterward, the said house of Sisters being converted into a college of Priests, the Priests builded the Bridge of Timber as all other the great Bridges of this Land were, and from time to time kept the same in good reparation, till at length, considering the great charges which were bestowed in the repairing the same, there was (by ayd of the Citizens and others) a Bridge builded with stone. The arches, chappell and Stone Bridge over the Thames at London having been 33 yeers in building was in the year 1209 finished. . . . Peter Colechurch, Priest and chaplain (by whom the bridge a few years previously—1163—had been not only repaired but new made of timber) was buried in the chapel of S. Thomas on the Bridge in the year 1205." (Stowe's "Survey," Edit. 1633, p. 27.)

YORK.—Chapel of S. William on Ouse Bridge.

READING.—Chapel of the Holy Ghost on Caversham Bridge.

BEDFORD BRIDGE.—Chapel of S. Thomas—William Averbury, chaplain in 1343. To it pertained 2 messuages, 17 shops, 3 acres of ploughland, and seven shillings rent in Bedford. (2 Pat. 16 Ed. III.)

WORCESTER.—Chapel of S. Clement on the old Bridge.

At GLOUCESTER, Walred, *a chaplain*, began to construct a bridge in the time of Henry II.

DROITWICH.—"Churches of Derbyshire," iv., 102.

RAVENS CROSS - BOURNE HERMITAGE. — Matthew Danthorpe hermit, rebuilt the chapel 1 Henry IV. The king gave him the place of the hermitage wth the chapel with wreckage of the sea and waifs and other advantages for "*trias leucas*"* round about that place, reserving to the chief lords of the fee the profits of fishing and royalties there. Rot. pat. 1 Hen. IV.

WAREHAM, a chauntry within the hermitage of S. Guthlac.

* "*Leuca*," "*Leuga*."—A measure of 1,500 yards or paces (Du Cange). So the hermit would have a sea-board or coast of more than five miles upon which he might exercise his claims.

SHALFLEET HAVEN HERMITAGE. 3 Pat. 2 Ed. III. m. 17.

LEICESTER.—West Bridge. In the "Topographical Cabinet," vol. ix., is a view of the remains of a chapel existing on the bridge c. 1800, then converted into a dwelling house.

BRADFORD, WILTS. In the same work, vol. vi., is a fine engraving of the old bridge, with remains of the chapel or hermitage in the middle of it, apparently then used for a toll house. (c. 1800.)

HUNTINGDON.—Chantry on the Bridge here, mentioned 1 Pat. 3 Ed. III. m. 24. An indulgence was granted by Fordham, Bishop of Ely, in 1401, for building the chapel of S. Thomas the Martyr and S. Catharine on Huntingdon Bridge.

KILKENNY, IRELAND, Bennett's Bridge. 3 Pat. 16 Ric. II. m. 2. "A grant was made to *the chaplain* by the king, that he might erect and crenellate a certain stone tower *upon his bridge* there."

WALLINGFORD, BERKS., Chapel of "Mary of Grace" (*vide Hedges*' "Wallingford," ii., 253.)

Much might be said about these, but as the object of this journal is to elucidate the history of Derbyshire especially, we must leave them for the archæologists of other counties to unfold their separate histories.

I cannot conclude this paper better than by giving a very apposite illustration from Mrs. Jamieson's "Sacred and Legendary Art." In her account of the hermit saints, she relates an interesting legend (p. 449) of S. Julian—"Hospitator," who, having slain his parents unwittingly in a fit of jealous suspicion of his wife's infidelity, on discovering his error "wept bitterly, and wrung his hands, and said, 'Alas! by what evil fortune is this that what I sought to avoid (alluding to a prophecy of ill omen to his parents at his hand) has come to pass? Farewell, my sweet sister (to his wife), I can never again live with thee until I have been pardoned this great sin.' And she answered him, 'Nay, my brother, can I allow thee to depart, and without me? Thy grief is my grief, and whither thou goest, I will go.' So they departed together and travelled, till they came to the bank of a great river, which was often swollen by torrents from the mountains, so that

many, in endeavouring to pass it, perished miserably. And there did Julian found a cell of penance for himself, and near to it an hospital for the poor: and by day and by night, in summer and winter, he ferried travellers across this torrent without fee or reward.

“One night, in the depth of winter, when the flood had broken its icy bounds, and was raging horribly, he heard in the pauses of the storm a mournful voice, which called to him across the stream. And he arose immediately, and found on the opposite bank a youth who was a leper, and who appeared to be dying from fatigue and cold. He brought him over the river and carried him in his arms, and laid him in his own bed, and he and his wife watched by him till the morning. When it dawned, the leper rose up in the bed, and his face was transformed, and appeared to them as that of an angel of light; and he said, ‘Julian, the Lord hath sent me to thee, for thy penitence is accepted, and thy rest is near at hand,’ and then vanished from their sight. Then Julian and his wife fell on their faces, and thanked God for all His mercies; and shortly afterwards, being full of years and good works, they slept in the Lord.

“This legend is often found as a series of subjects in ecclesiastical decoration. It is beautifully told in a series of subjects on one of the windows of the Cathedral of Rouen, presented by the *company of boatmen* of that city in the fourteenth century.”