

A. Victor Haslam.

DARLEY DALE CHURCH.

SOME OF THE INCISED SLABS AND EARLY WORKED
STONES, NOW IN THE PORCH.

The Church of St. Helen's, Darley Dale.*

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DARLEY was a royal manor at the time of the taking of the Domesday Survey, and it was then possessed of a priest and a church. At a very early date the advowson of the rectory was conferred upon the cathedral church of Lincoln, probably by Henry I. Not only was the presentation to the living in the hands of the Dean of Lincoln, but he received a pension of 40s. from the endowments of the rectory. The first mention we have found of this pension of 40s. is in the Taxation Roll of Pope Nicholas IV., compiled in 1291, wherein the total value of the living—*Ecclesia de Derley in Pecco*—is estimated at £18. An inventory of the Derbyshire possessions of the Dean of Lincoln, taken in 1310, says that the church of Darley was divided into three portions, and that from each portion a mark was yearly due—*i.e.*, £2 in all. A dispute as to the patronage of Darley Church was brought into the courts in Easter term, 1285. The King sued the Dean and Chapter under a claim to this advowson which had been made by Henry III.; but

* At the request of the Editor it has been a pleasure to revise for this *Journal* the account that was published in 1876 (*Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. ii., 151-174), and to which certain additions were made in 1879 (*Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv., 500-502). Renewed careful search convinces me that there is not much more of the history of this church to be discovered beyond that already given; but this account—condensed and altered, and in some places expanded from that previously published—corrects a few architectural lapses, and supplies additional particulars as to the good treatment the church has received in quite recent times. For much of the corrected and additional matter I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Canon Atkinson, in whom the church has found so faithful a custodian since 1881, but the responsibility is entirely mine for the phrasing of all such material.

this attempt of the Crown was successfully resisted by pleading the length of time that had elapsed since the claim was made. A similar statement as to the pension, and as to the church or rectory being divided into three portions, is also made in like inventories drawn up in 1429, in the reign of Henry VI.

The early episcopal registers at Lichfield afford many instances of institution to the three different parts into which this rectory was divided, all made on the presentation of the Dean of Lincoln. The first instance occurs in January, 1301, when John de Brentingham was instituted to a third portion of Darley in the room of Walter de Fotheringye, who had accepted the rectory of Matlock, which was also in the gift of the Dean of Lincoln. In 1369 one of the three rectors of Darley effected an exchange of benefices with a prebend of All Saints', Derby. But in the year 1393 we find from the same registers that the Bishop's consent and that of the Dean of Lincoln were obtained to the amalgamation of the three portions into two. This was effected when one of the three portions was vacant through death, and the other two rectors pledged themselves to the due payment of the whole of the pension.

The reason given in the Episcopal Registers for the consolidation of the three medieties of Darley rectory into two, which was effected on March 29th, 1393, was because of the deterioration of property, "*propter pestilencias et sterilitates successivas et insolitas*," to which the parish had been subjected, so that the three rectors were scarcely able to keep life within their bodies, to say nothing of the accustomed duties of their position, which were always supposed to involve alms-giving to their poor parishioners.

The Parliamentary Commissioners of 1650 report of Darley that it was in two medieties, and that it "constantly had two parsons to officiate, each a distinct dwelling. South Mediety £70, Mr. Edward Payne, a hopeful minister, officiates. North Mediety £80, Mr. John Pott, incumbent."

The church, which is dedicated to St. Helen, underwent much restoration in 1854. It consists of nave with side aisles, south porch, north and south transepts, chancel with north vestry, and tower at the west end. Of the church that probably stood here for several centuries in the Saxon era, and which was extant when the Domesday Survey was compiled, there is apparently nothing now left standing. Nor is there much remaining of Norman work. There is a blocked up doorway of quite plain Norman style in the south wall of the chancel, with a simple hood-mould or dripstone over it, *circa* 1100. This entrance cannot have been used for the last five centuries, as a fourteenth century buttress hides one of the jambs. It also seems, from the masonry now within this doorway, as though a window with a semi-circular head had been inserted here after the entrance had lost its original use, but this also is now filled up. A doorway of somewhat similar description, but smaller, opens from the north side of the chancel into the small old vestry or sacristy. This sacristy, though much rebuilt and repaired at later dates, is coeval with the doorway, as is shown by the small Norman light in the east wall. A north chancel doorway is, we believe, unknown, save when it led into an adjunct. Any remains of a vestry to a parish church of so early a date is highly exceptional. All the paint and plaster were cleared away from this north doorway in 1885, and its early character is now made more apparent. There was another built-up doorway in the outer wall of the north aisle of the nave previous to the 1854 "restoration"; it is said to have been Norman. In the masonry of the south wall of the chancel may be noticed the reversed capital of a small Norman shaft, which probably formed part of the jamb mouldings of the chief entrance to the church in the eleventh or twelfth century.

The church appears to have undergone a thorough renovation when the Early English style was in vogue, about the end of the twelfth century. There are two lancet windows of this date in the east wall of the south transept, one of them

built up; and there is another of the same style in the south wall of the chancel. It also appears as if the east wall of the porch was built against another small window of this description; the doorway to the church, under the porch, is of Early English style, and though entirely renewed in 1854, is of the same design as that which was here previous to the restoration.

To the Decorated period of the fourteenth century belong the arches that separate the nave from the side aisles. Those on the north side are supported by circular pillars of an earlier date than those on the south, which are of octagon construction. The two narrow-pointed archways at the west end next to the tower are older than the rest. They spring from corbels, which are ornamented with the nail-head moulding, and seem to belong to the Early English style. The large north and south windows of the transepts are good examples of flowing Decorated tracery, *circa* 1330. The south aisle is lighted by two pointed Decorated windows in close juxtaposition; one of these is the old window from the west end of that aisle, and the other is a new one after the same model. The archway into the chancel is also of this period, as well as the external buttresses and general features of that part of the church. The east window of the chancel is now filled with Perpendicular tracery, and there is a south doorway, with a window over it, of the same character. The north aisle, too, is lighted with windows of the fifteenth century style, but these were inserted at the restoration in 1854. It had previously been lighted with square-headed windows of a debased style and destitute of tracery. There are two clerestory windows above the aisles on each side of the nave, of Perpendicular work; and the tower, though rather eccentric in some of its details, is also of the fifteenth century. The buttresses are unusually shallow for the style. The archway into the tower is now opened, and shows the large west window. Below this window was the wide west entrance, but about the year 1820 this doorway was converted into a window and glazed. The apex of the arch of this doorway is quaintly carved into an animal shape;

and a monster of superlative ugliness serves as the corbel in the inner north-west angle of the tower, upon which the projection of the turret staircase rests. The summit of the tower is embattled, and adorned with crocketed pinnacles at the angles.

The roof of the nave is a fair specimen of the style of roof that prevailed towards the close of the Perpendicular period. It is not the same roof, or, at all events, not at the same elevation, as that which covered the nave when the tower was first erected (as may be seen from the weather mouldings on the east front of the tower), and it cuts off a small portion of the apex of the tower archway. The roof is of a low pitch, formed by the curving of the large tie-beams, five in number. The tie-beams have well-carved bosses in the centre, and all the timbers are moulded, whilst the wall plate is embattled. The braces, also, that spring from corbel stones to give additional support to the tie-beams, are handsomely carved. These stone corbels are plainly moulded, except those at the west end, which take the form of a male and female head. The chancel roof was renewed in 1854, and is now of a high-pitch, but the supporting corbel stones are the old ones, those on the south being female heads with square head-dresses, and those on the north, men's heads with curled hair and beards.

The vestry is a narrow oblong building, lighted, as we before remarked, at the east end by a small Norman window. There are now two other windows in the north wall, and from the west end was a communication through the wall into the pulpit. But these are alterations of modern date. The old vestry used to be of a larger size, and was of two stories, the lower part being used as a school-room for the boys, and the upper room for the girls; this use was continued till about 1820.

Darley at the time of the Domesday Survey formed part of the royal demesne. At an early period it was held under the Crown by a family styled, after the manor, de Darley. The first member of this family of whom we have found record was Andreas de Darley, who died seized of this manor in 1249.

On his death the manor was divided into two parts, held, as we suppose, by two of his sons, for at the beginning of the reign of Edward I. half of Darley was held by Thomas de Darley and half by Henry de Darley. Both of them are described as holding under the Crown, by the service of an annual payment of 13s. 4d. towards the maintenance of Peak Castle. But within a year or two of this time Robert de Darley, who, we think, was the son of Thomas, died seized of a part of the manor; and it seems that this moiety passed to the family of Kendall. William de Kendall died seized of it in 1309. William Kendall left a daughter and heir married to Laurence Cotterell. The history of this moiety here becomes somewhat confused. John de Darley and his wife, Matilda, paid a fine to the King in 1310, of two marks, for holding a mediety of the manor of Darley, which they had acquired of William Cotterell without royal license. This was probably the mediety inherited by Laurence Cotterell, passed on to his son William, and held for his lifetime by John de Darley. But Cotterell died without issue, and the property reverted to the heirs of the widow of Laurence Cotterell, who had married Sir William Herberjour; for it appears that in 1391 William Roper conveyed this moiety to Nicholas atte Weld, one of the rectors of Darley, which had been the inheritance of Margaret, his mother, daughter and co-heir of Sir William Herberjour, of Chaddesden, by Alice, daughter and heir of William Kendall. This conveyance to Nicholas atte Weld seems to have been merely as a trustee, for the same person also had conveyed to him the manor of Ockbrook. But the real purchaser of both these manors was Sir Godfrey Foljambe, who settled them on his wife Avena, and on the heirs of his son Godfrey. The inquisition taken at his death says that the moiety of Darley was held by him of John Duke of Lancaster, as of his honour of the Castle of High Peak, by knight service. Sir Godfrey's son, Godfrey, had died before him, but his grandson, of the same name, inherited, being then nine years old. This would probably necessitate a renewal of the trust deeds of this moiety on his

coming of age, for, according to the inquisition, the moiety was previously held (in trust) by William atte Weld, and would thus account for the deed between William Roper and Nicholas atte Weld in 1391. Sir Godfrey Foljambe the third left a daughter and sole heiress, Alice, who was married to Sir Robert Plompton, of Yorkshire, who died in 1421. The son and heir of Robert and Alice was Sir William Plompton, who also died served of this moiety of Darley in 1480. His son William left the Darley property to his co-heiress, who married Sothill and Rocliff. The former moiety, after changing hands several times, came to the Duke of Rutland, whilst that inherited by Rocliff was purchased in 1507 by Roger Columbelle.

This moiety of the original manor of Darley, whose history has just been traced, seems in course of time to have acquired the privileges of a separate manor, and was distinguished by the title of the Old Hall Manor. The old Hall stood a little to the north of the church.

In one of the note-books of Mr. Reynolds, of Plaistow, that came into the hands of Mr. Woolley, is the following entry:—

“9th July, 1771. As I was going to Bakewell, I saw several workmen pulling down the ruins of Darleigh Old Hall (commonly called through mistake Darley Abbey), and others erecting within the area (for it had been moated round) a new Building with the Materials. Mr. Miles, gardener at Had-don, told me the said ruins, and close they stand in fell by allotment to the Duke of Rutland, and that by his Grace's order was pulling the same down, and building a barn for the tenant's use with the materials, so that now we may justly say—*Etiam ipsæ periere ruinae.*”

It now remains to follow up the history of the other moiety, which similarly became a separate manor, in later days termed Nether Hall, or Whitehall. About 1302 a second Robert de Darley, son of Henry, died seized of this moiety, and it then seems to have passed for his lifetime to John de Darley, whom we suppose to have been brother to Robert, for he also is described as a son of Henry. We know that he held this half of the manor (in addition to that half for which he had to pay a fine of two marks, as already related, from an inquisition of Edward II.), by which it appears that he

also then held the important command of the Castle of the Peak. The date of his death is not known, but Reynolds's notes on Darley Church say that he was living in 1321, and we also believe him to be the same John de Darley who was solemnly denounced (with other ecclesiastical offenders against certain rights of the rector of Whittington), and suspended from entrance to the church, by order of the Bishop, Roger de Norbury, in August, 1322. But this ban must have been removed before his death or he would not have obtained sepulture within consecrated walls. John seems to have left no heirs, and that part of the manor we are considering reverted to the family of Robert. The following account of the succession of the manor is taken from a manuscript pedigree written about 1650, formerly in the keeping of the parish clerk of Darley, which is entitled, "A true coppie of pedigree of Darley as it hath been in antient writings recorded":—

(1) Robert Darley, de Darley, Esq., had issue; (2) Sir Henery Darley married to Sir John Vernon's daughter and had issue; (3) Sir Nicholas Darley married to Thomas Harthill's daughter, of Harthill, Esq., and had issue; (4) Sir Robert Darley married to Sir John Fitzherbert's daughter and had issue; (5) Sir Ralph Darley, in ye green close, Esq., married Frechville, Baron of Crytche's daughter, and had issue a daughter, a sole heyre and married to Tho. Columbello of Darley, Esq.

This is an error, for Agnes, the wife of Thomas Columbello, was *sister* and heir to Sir Ralph Darley. Sir Ralph Darley died in 1370. The family of Columbello was previously of Sandiacre, but does not seem to have been of much importance prior to the marriage with Darley. The pedigree from which we have just quoted gives four generations previous to Thomas, and adds: "Just before these was Thomas Columbello, who had land in Codnor and deeds without date." The manor of Nether Hall remained with the Columbelloes for eleven generations in direct descent, when Roger Columbello, dying without issue, left the estate to his only sister, Katherine, who was married to William Marbury, of Marbury, Cheshire. Dying without issue in 1687, she bequeathed Nether Hall to Gilbert Thacker, who had married her late husband's sister. After passing through several hands (Greensmith's, Beard's, etc.),

it was purchased by Mr. Richard Arkwright in 1790, and the very ancient manor house of Nether Hall was pulled down some six years later, and the materials used in building a house a little lower down the hill. It had not been inhabited for several years, and was incapable of repair.*

The oldest monument within the church is that which tradition assigns to John de Darley. This tradition was current more than a hundred years ago, when Mr. Reynolds visited the church (1772), and we see no reason to doubt its accuracy, although the monument is uninscribed, for it exactly corresponds in style with the era in which John de Darley flourished, and there was no one at this period in the history of the Dale of greater eminence than this knight—Castellan of the Peak Castle and lord of the whole manor—whose effigy we should expect to meet with in the church of Darley. The effigy of Sir John now lies in a hollow, which has been cut out for its reception, immediately below the south window of the south transept. This is, of course, not its original position, but it has been there for a long period, probably from the date when pews were first placed in the church. Previous to the 1854 restoration of the church it was difficult to obtain a view of this monument, as it was concealed behind the back of a high pew, and could only be seen by looking down upon it from the gallery, which then occupied the south transept. The knight is represented clad in a surcoat over the suit of mail, with his legs crossed below the knee, a sword before him on the left thigh, and holding a heart between his hands, which are elevated on his breast. The sword is broken, and the figure otherwise mutilated, but, fortunately, the head is perfect and the features quite distinct. The head is uncovered, and has long curled hair and a short beard. The feet rest on a cushion.†

* Full references to the authorities for this outline sketch of manorial descent are given in the *Churches of Derbyshire*; this descent is necessary for a right understanding of the monuments.

† More information could be given about Sir John Darley, but it would be foreign to the purpose of this article.

Mr. Reynolds, in describing the monuments at Darley, speaks of this transept as being "commonly called Columbello's Quire," and there is no doubt that this was the part of the church appropriated to the manor of Nether Hall, and therefore first in the hands of the Darleys, and then of the Columbello's. A large alabaster incised slab pertaining to the Columbello family formerly stood in this quire. It was, unhappily, removed during the 1854 restoration to the churchyard, where it, unfortunately, remained exposed to the weather for some time, but it has now found a resting-place against the wall at the west end of the south aisle. It is to the memory of Thomas Columbello and Agnes, his wife. The man is represented in a long gown lined with fur, and the head, which is uncovered, has short hair. The woman wears a dress tightly girded at the waist. The figures are very indistinct, and quite worn away in places. There is an appearance of the children having been depicted below the principal figures. Some parts of the marginal inscription are now gone, and others illegible, but we are able to give it in its complete form from the notes taken by Bassano in 1710: "Hic jacent corpora Thome Columbello et Agnetis uxoris ejus, qui quidem Thomas obiit xi. die mensis Octobris MCCCCXXXX., quorum animabus propicietur Deus." It does not seem that this Thomas Columbello was one in the direct descent of the estate, but he would appear to have been the third son of Roger, who died in 1535, by the heiress of Sacheverell. Agnes, his wife, according to the parish registers, was buried at Darley on the 24th of June, 1540.

Reynolds, after describing this monument, says: "[The] following are painted on a pillar in a lozenge, sable, three doves, argent (Columbello) impaling a cross between four pheons. Crest, on a chapeau, a blackamore's head coupé at the shoulders." The arms that he fails to identify are those of Marbury of Cheshire, granted in the time of Edward II.—*Sa.*, a cross engrailed between four pheons, *arg.* The arms of Columbello in full are—*Sa.*, three doves, *arg.*, with ears of wheat in their beaks, *proper*. The marriage that this coat

commemorated has been described in the above account of the manor. There are memorials to the Greensmiths and Beards of a later date. The oldest of these is one to the memory of Herbert Greensmith and Ann his wife, who both died in 1750.

Of the early holders of the other moiety of the chief manor of Darley there are no monuments extant, nor is it likely that any of the Plomptons have been here interred, as their chief seat was in Yorkshire. But that part of the church which was specially appropriated to the Old Hall Manor is easily distinguishable, as it is still enclosed by a stone openwork screen or parclose of Perpendicular tracery, which seems to be of fifteenth century style. It most probably was erected here by the Plompton family when they succeeded to the estate. The screen shuts off the east portion of the south aisle between the south transept and the main entrance to the church. It was, unfortunately, set back a foot or two to give more room in the aisle in 1854, but otherwise remains as it was before the restoration. Stone parcloses, though of fairly frequent occurrence round chantry tombs in cathedrals, are very rarely met with in parish churches.

Besides the manor-in-chief, there were several other manors within the parish of Darley. One of these was the manor of Wendesley, or Wensley, which was a hamlet of the Royal Manor of Matlock at the time of the Domesday Survey; but in less than a century it seems to have been included in Darley parish. It was held directly under the Crown for about two centuries, but formed part of the estates of Edmund Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, in the reign of Edward I. Before the reign of King John the tenants of the Crown who held this manor were known by the title of the manor, "De Wendesley or De Wensley," and it remained with that ancient family till the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the heiress, Anne Wendesley, married Ralph Blackwall, of Blackwall. The visitation pedigrees give four generations previous to Anne Wendesley. Her father, Richard Wendesley (who was living in 1569), married

Letlice, daughter of Otwell Needham, of Snitterton. Anne was buried at Darley, 31st August, 1567. A few years later this manor was divided into four portions, and became, by marriage or purchase, the property of as many families, one of them being the Columbells. In the nave of the church there was an incised alabaster slab, noted by Mr. Suckling in 1825, on which he read the words, "Richard Wendesley." This stone is now fixed against the west wall of the south aisle, by the Columbell monument. Both inscription and effigy are almost completely erased, but there are traces of a central female figure, with three children below, two boys and one girl. The marginal inscription is in Roman characters, and but little more than "Daughter to Richard Wendesley of Wendesley Esq.," can now be read. The date, 1603, can also be just made out. According to the register, George Columbell married Cicely Wendesley in 1550. She is not mentioned in any of the pedigrees we have seen; but it seems that she was another daughter of Richard Wendesley, and therefore co-heiress with Anne. This is the more probable as it is stated in one pedigree that Anne only brought half of Wendesley manor to her husband. It is clear that this tomb must be either to the memory of Cicely or Anne, and as we learn from Mitchell's pedigree of Wendesley that Anne was buried at Darley on the 31st day of August, 1567, it may safely be assigned to Cicely, the wife of George Columbell. That the manor of Wendesley was of some importance appears from the fact that the Wendesleys supported a chaplain of their own at an early date, who probably officiated in a chapel for themselves and their tenantry attached to the manor house. In a charter of Edward II. mention is made of William de Bruggeton, who was chaplain to Roger de Wendesley on his manor of Wendesley.

Another ancient manor in this parish was that of Little Rowsley. It is said to have belonged to the ancient family of Rollesley or Rowsley, who took their name from this place, as early as the reign of Richard I. The north transept of Darley church was considered the "Rollesley Quire," and was



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MONUMENTAL SLAB IN ALABASTER TO JOHN ROLLESLEY
AND ELIZABETH HIS WIFE, 1513.

the burial-place of the family. Against the west wall of this transept there still remain two monument slabs of the Rollesleys that have formerly served as the upper stones of table tombs. They are both of considerable interest, and more highly finished and in better preservation than is usual in incised alabaster monuments of the beginning of the sixteenth century. The lines are filled in with pitch, which renders the designs very distinct. The largest of these has the full length effigies of a man and woman, and below them eight sons and four daughters. The man is clad in a long fur-lined robe, which reaches down to the feet, and a double-linked chain round the neck. The woman wears the diamond-shaped hood or head-dress, with long falling lappets, and a close-fitting gown with long embroidered girdle. The heads of both rest upon cushions, and are surmounted by canopies of the same style as appear over window effigies of this date. The inscription round the margin, which is a curious admixture of Latin and English, is to the following effect:—"Hic jacet corpus Johis Rollislei armigi, Elisabeith uxor ejus, the therde dei of Juni, the yere of owre Lorde a thousand v c and thritten (1513)." Between the heads of the effigies is an impaled coat of arms, Rollesley and Cheney, which has originally been filled up with pigments of the right tincture. John Rollesley here commemorated, married Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of John Cheney. The arms of Rollesley were—*gu* a fesse and bordure, *erm*; and the arms of Cheney—Chequy, *or* and *az.*, a fesse, *gu*, fretted, *arg*. See plate II.

The other slab is only about half the size of that already described. It also has a man and woman engraved on the surface, with ten sons and two daughters at their feet. The boys are crowded together; only the outline of the heads of those in the background is discernible. The man is clad in a gown or robe with wide sleeves, which only reaches just below the knees. The legs are clad in hose, and on the feet are low wide-toed shoes fastened with straps. The gown is slightly open in front, and shows the *gypciere*, or pouch-bag, attached to the girdle of the doublet. The dress of the lady is similar

to that on the other slab, but the gown is square cut at the breast, and the skirt is gathered up in folds in front by two short clasps or fasteners attached to each side of the girdle at a little distance from the centre buckle. The following is the marginal inscription:—"Hic jacet corpora Johis Rousley et Agnet ux ejus, qui quidem Johes obiit xxvi. die aprilis an dni MCCCCXXXV., et predict Agnes obiit—die—anno dni MCCCC.—quorum animabus propicietur Deus, Amen." A few words of this inscription are now lacking, but we have supplied them from Reynolds's copy, taken in 1758. The blanks left for the date of the death of Agnes prove that the monument was erected during her lifetime, and the particulars were subsequently omitted to be added. The John Rollesley of this monument was the eldest son and heir of the one previously mentioned. He married Agnes, daughter of — Hybald, of Ipsley, Warwickshire. Between their heads is a shield of Rollesley quartering Cheney, and at their feet, on another shield, two lions rampant, impaling Hybald. The arms of Hybald were: *sa.*, three leopards' heads, jessant-de-lis, *arg.* See plate III.

The heir of John and Agnes was John Rollesley, who was buried 16th February, 1557. He had issue by Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Eyre, of Holme, a son of the same name, who married Margaret, daughter of Robert Shakerley of Longstone, and was buried 18th November, 1562. John and Margaret had one son, who died in his infancy, a few days before his father. On the death of father and son the only daughter, Matilda, inherited the manor of Little Rowsley, which she brought by marriage to Sir William Kniveton, of Mercaston. Their son, Sir Gilbert Kniveton, who was baptized at Darley, 8th February, 1582, sold the manor to Sir John Manners.

Against the north wall of the chancel is a monument of a later date, but sufficiently remarkable and costly of its style to warrant a brief description. Two figures in marble are represented in the centre of the stone, kneeling opposite to each



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AND AGNES HIS WIFE, 1535.

other, with an escutcheon between them. Below them in bas-relief are representations of eight daughters of different sizes opposite to three sons. Three of the daughters and one of the sons are represented as holding skulls in their hands, indicating, we suppose, their decease at the time the monument was erected. At the foot of the monument are two tablets, one of them being blank, and the other bearing the following inscription:—"To the pious memory of Anne Millward, daughter of James Whitehalgh, of Whitehalgh, in the county of Stafford, gent., and wife of John Millward, of Snitterton, Esq., who had issue by her, three sons and eight daughters. She departed this life the 20 of June, in the yeare of our Lord 1658. The 49 year of her age." The arms on the monument are:—*Erm.*, on a fesse, *gu.*, three plates (Milward), impaling *arg.* a fesse chequy, *gu.* and *sa.*, between three helmets, *proper* (Whitehalgh). During the repairs of 1885 a slab came to light under the altar steps, on which was a brass plate recording that John, eldest son of John Milward, of Snitterton, married, for his second wife, Joyce, younger daughter of Henry Sacheverell of Morley, and died October 3rd, 1669. The rector removed the tablet, and, thoughtfully, had it fixed on a blank space which was left by the side of his mother's inscription on the base of the large monument.

The manor of Snitterton, in this parish, was originally held by a family of that name, whose heiress was married to William Sacheverell, of Ible, in the time of Henry VI. The Sacheverells held it for several generations, but it passed early in the seventeenth century to a younger branch of the Milwards, of Eaton Dovedale, six generations of whom are mentioned in the Visitation in 1611. John Milward died in 1670, and his surviving male issue in 1681, when his eldest ultimate co-heiress, Felicia, brought a moiety of the manor of Snitterton, including the ancient manor house, to her husband, Charles Adderley, who sold it to Henry Ferne.

There was formerly a chapel at Snitterton, but all traces of it are now lost, and whether it was attached to the manor

house or an independent building it is not possible now to say. In the year 1397 Roger de Wormhill had the Bishop's license to celebrate Divine Service in his oratory at Snitterton. In the third year of Queen Elizabeth Sir Edward Warner sold the chantry lands in Snitterton, Matlock, and Bonsall, that had formerly pertained to the Chantry of Snitterton, to Richard Wendesley, of Wendesley, Esq., and to Ralph Brown, gent. We cannot trace any ancient connection of the Warners with that manor, and probably these lands had been conferred on Sir Edward Warner by the Crown a short time previously, on the confiscation of the chantry property.

Near to the Milward monument is a quaint little brass, about six inches by nine, let into a stone with an ornamental border, upon which is the following inscription:—"Maria uxor John: Potts, theol: cujus piam memoriam maritus et liberi celebrare junxunt. Obiit Jan: 12, 1654. F. P. filius natu maxi: pie consecravit." John Potts, as has been already noticed, was rector of the north mediety of Darley.

A much less durable style of monument may be noticed in the splay of the Early English lancet window on the opposite side of the chancel, where is painted in black on the white-wash, with a deep funereal border, "John Edwards, Rector, 1685."

The only remnant of old wood-carving in the church is an oak "poppy-head," or stall finial, that now forms the end of a bench in the south aisle. It was brought to light in 1854. Another poppy-head from this church was in the Lomberdale Museum, probably the corresponding one, as well as several other carved fragments and panels.

Within the porch, against the south wall of the church, is the lower half of an alabaster monumental slab of sixteenth century work, showing the drapery of a female, and six girls and three boys below, but only a small portion of the marginal inscription now remains. The following can be deciphered:—" . . . is Edwardi qui qdam Elisabeith obiit xxvij. die Septembris." The valuable aid of the early parish

registers has enabled us to identify this fragmentary monument, for they contain an entry to the effect that Elizabeth Needham was buried on the 27th of September, 1540.

The Needhams were an ancient family of great repute in North Derbyshire. In researches I am now making into the history of the Peak Forest, I find that the Needhams were hereditary foresters of fee from the time of Henry III. to that of Elizabeth. Lysons makes a mistake in saying that they were an offshoot of the Cheshire family of the same name. The earliest in the pedigree is John Needham, of Needham, co. Derby, *temp.* Edward III. His eldest grandson, Thomas, married Maud, daughter of Roger Mellor, of Thornsett; and his younger grandson, William, settled in Cheshire. Otwell Needham, of Thornsett, of the sixth generation in direct descent from Thomas, married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Nicholas Cadman, of Cowley. She brought the manor of Cowley, in Darley parish, as well as certain lands in Snitterton, to her husband. William Needham, the eldest son of this marriage, took to wife the heiress of Garlick of Whitfield, and increased his property in this parish by the purchase of a moiety of Darley (Old Hall) Manor. William had no less than eleven brothers and six sisters, the deaths of several of whom are recorded in the parish registers. The name of one of these younger brothers was Edward, who was buried 25th August, 1562, and we have no doubt that the mutilated slab in the porch is to the memory of his wife. The Darley estates of the Needhams were sold at the beginning of the seventeenth century to the Seniors of Bridgetown.

Under the shelter of the porch is a large number of interesting specimens of ancient sepulchral slabs and crosses. See plate I. This number would have been considerably larger if a good many of those discovered in restoring the church in 1854 had not been removed to the local museum of the late Mr. Bateman. They are only second in interest to those found at Bakewell, and afford an evident proof of the importance of the Church of Darley both in the Saxon and Norman days. The

oldest of the relics that were transported to Lombardale was the fragment of an upright cross, carved with interlaced knotwork. The fragment is only nineteen inches high, but enough remains to show that it is part of a large upstanding cross of an early type, the medium breadth of the shaft being fifteen inches, and its thickness eleven. This relic was in Mr. Bateman's Lombardale Museum, and so also was a piece of slab with a diaper pattern, and one or two incised stones that may be as old as the cross, together with the lower part of a coped tomb of the twelfth century, and upwards of a dozen other sepulchral slabs, none more modern than the thirteenth century. In the porch there are either portions or complete specimens of about twelve more slabs. See Plate I. One of the most perfect of these bears a cross with floriated head, a sword on the sinister side of the stem, and a bugle-horn at the base; it has been engraved in Lysons' *Derbyshire*, and copied in several other works.* This slab, which is of thirteenth century work, commemorated the sepulture of a forester of fee, who were invariably men of position in the district, and whose distinctive emblem was a bugle-horn. The Gomfreys held one of these hereditary Peak forestships, and this is the true explanation of the presence of the bugle on the double Gomfrey brass of the fourteenth century in Dronfield Church. The suggestion of horn service offered in the first volume of *Churches of Derbyshire*, to account for the bugle on a priest's brass at that church, is incorrect. The elder of these two Gomfrey brothers, both of whom were priests, was an hereditary forester; he would appear at the Forest Pleas, and fulfil other duties of his position (which were by no means light) by deputy. I have found another case of a clerical forester in Yorkshire, and two of lady foresters. Compare also with this bugle slab the two early bugle slabs to foresters of fee found at Hope Church, and illustrated in the fourth volume of this *Journal*.

One of the memorial stones in the porch, which is simply marked with two incised straight lines forming a plain cross, is possibly of Saxon date; the remainder vary from the eleventh

* It is not, therefore, reproduced on Plate I.

to the thirteenth century. The cross with the bugle was here before the restoration, and one small specimen and a fragment having a quaint quadruped in high relief were found when digging graves in the churchyard about 1875. With these exceptions they were all brought to light in 1854.

In addition to those in the porch, there are portions of at least six more of these early sepulchral stones built into the masonry of the church in different parts of the exterior. On one above the string-course of the north-east buttress of the chancel can be noticed a chalice, the symbol of the interment of a priest. In the slabs, too, that form the lintels of the bell-chamber windows of the tower are three more specimens, one of them being of that simple early description noted in the porch, and another can be seen in the steps of the winding stairway.

At the west end of the tower, to the left-hand of the old entrance, is a square stone on which are quaintly carved two nondescript animals, described by Mr. Suckling in a style almost as quaint as the sculptures, as a wolf attacked by a "*pelican*, or some such bird of prey." This carving is probably of Norman date, and may have formed part of the tympanum over the Norman doorway. It was probably thought sufficiently remarkable to be preserved and built in here when the tower was re-constructed in the Perpendicular era. When the paving stones round the ancient yew trees were recently removed, the lower side of one of them was found to be carved after the same fashion, and showed the hind quarters and intricately-folded tail of another nondescript animal. This stone, which possibly formed part of the same sculpture as that by the west doorway, is now preserved in the porch.

At the dispersion of the Lomerdale Museum, the Weston Museum, Sheffield, secured most of the Derbyshire relics, including the Darley pre-Norman cross fragment. A face and an edge of this stone are depicted on Plate xv. of Vol. viii. of the Derbyshire Archæological Society's *Journal*, as part of the illustrations of the Bishop of Bristol's admirable article on "The Pre-Norman Sculptural Stones of Derbyshire." He there says:

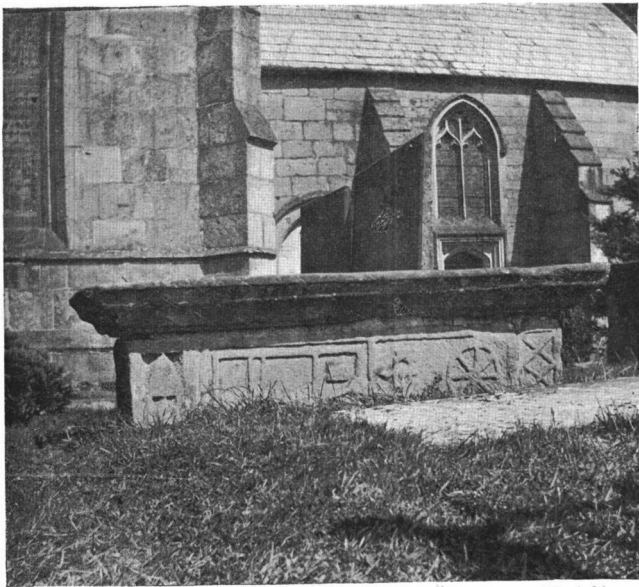
"This Darley stone is specially interesting, because it has a system of circular rings with interlacing bands, of which there are very few and partial examples out of Wigton and Galloway, except on a remarkable stone at Stapleford, just across the boundary of Derbyshire."

It is always an unhappy thing when an ancient relic of this kind gets divorced from its surroundings; but Mr. Bateman had no scruples in offering bribes and adopting almost any means to secure church relics of either stone or wood for his Lomberdale collection. When that collection was scattered, this stone, among a great store of Derbyshire relics of various ages, left this county for Yorkshire. It is passing strange that Derbyshire, a county that possesses a greater field of diversified archæological interest than any other shire of its size, seems quite content to let its antiquarian treasures pass right away, and to continue one of the very few shires that are destitute of anything worthy of the name of a county museum.

In the external wall of the church, near its south-west angle, between the porch and the tower, an unmistakable Saxon stone is used in one of the courses. It is part of the shaft of an early cross, with some traces of knot-work. It is not a little remarkable that in all my previous visits to this church I had never noticed it until in June, 1904, it was pointed out to me by Canon Atkinson, who was rector here for some years before it attracted his attention.

Against the projecting buttress to the left of the chancel doorway is fastened a circular stone, four feet in diameter, but only three inches thick. This stone was found about thirty inches below the surface on the south side of the churchyard in 1864. There was another stone of similar size at a like depth about six feet distant, but it broke up on removal. On each was a considerable deposit of charcoal ashes, and the ground around was much burnt. It has been conjectured that these stones had been used in connection with early cremation before this site was God's acre for Christian burial; but in the light of further knowledge, such a supposition now appears to me highly improbable.

Near the south chancel entrance are two stone coffins, each formed of a single block of stone, with hollowed insertions for the head. The smallest of these, which measures (inside) 5 ft. 10½ ins. by 1 ft. 6 ins. at the shoulders and 9 ins. at the feet, used to stand near the entrance of the old north doorway to catch the rain-water from the roof. It was removed many years ago from the south transept, and used to be known by tradition as "John o' Darley's coffin," and may possibly have



Janet M. Atkinson.
The Weaver's Tomb, Darley Dale.

been at one time covered by the stone effigy that now rests in the recess under the fourth window of the same transept. The other, which is of the unusual length of 6 ft. 8 ins. inside, was found in 1854 in the south aisle just in front of the transept chapel.

Over the south window of the south transept is a mural sundial, bearing the date of 1782. In the churchyard, very near the

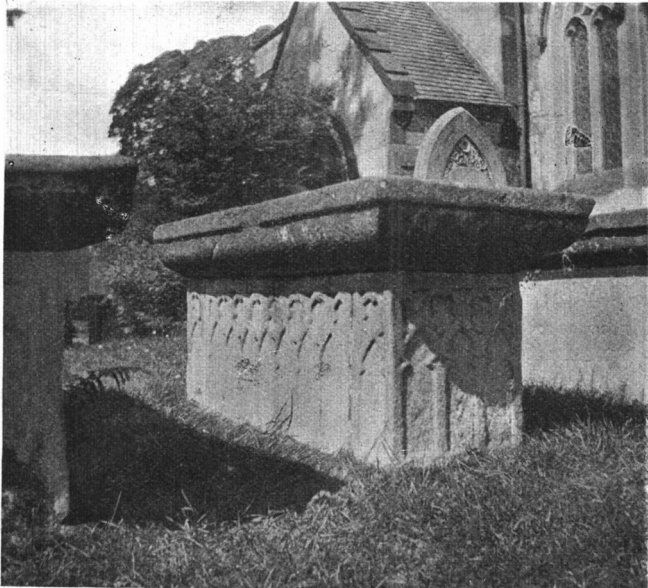
walls of this transept, are several table tombs of the first half of the seventeenth century, which are worthy of notice for the exceptional vigour and originality of the sculptures on their sides; they are nine in all. The most remarkable of these—it is undated—is to the memory of a weaver, and the sides are carved with figures supposed to represent the old hand-loom, shuttle, etc. (See p. 31.) A second example, dated 1631, is ornamented with several different symbols, including a chalice. A third, dated 1640, has all its sides covered with a bold tracery moulding, which has the appearance of being a century older than the date on the upper slab. (See p. 33.)

In 1704 the battlements and pinnacles of the tower were renewed. This was possibly necessitated as a result of the terrific storm that swept through England on November 27th, 1703, when the palace at Wells was wrecked and the bishop and his wife were killed in their beds. The mischief that it did to churches throughout England can be traced in almost all parishes where churchwardens' accounts of that date remain. The gale was long remembered as "the great storm."

There was considerable re-construction of the church in 1853, when both aisles were widened and slightly lengthened westwards, galleries removed, and the chancel roof raised. In 1877 the church was "renovated" on an extensive and costly scale. The cost, including an addition to the churchyard, amounted to £3,000, which was munificently borne by Mr. William Robert, who had left the dale some fifty years before as a poor lad. But though money was forthcoming, good taste was lacking; the interior was covered with wriggling texts, the fourteenth century pillars of the nave arcades were painted over and decorated with sham chevron mouldings, etc., with the result of vulgarising the ancient fabric.

But better days dawned after Canon Atkinson came to the parish. In 1885 the pews were removed from the chancel, being replaced with oak quire stalls; the old vestry was utilised as an organ chamber; the pulpit passage was closed up; a good deal of tawdry decoration was removed; a new altar and

altar furniture were provided; a low stone screen, such as once had stood there in mediæval days, was placed beneath the chancel arch; and a brass eagle lectern, etc., was purchased. The total cost was £850. Again, in 1902-3, when £1,480 was spent on the church, certain internal improvements were made, but the chief work was the rebuilding of the lower part of the west wall of the tower, which was found to be in a most dangerous condition. At the same time the ring of bells



Janet M. Atkinson.

Seventeenth Century Tomb, Darley Dale.

was increased from six to eight, the new tenor bearing the inscription:—"In memoriam Victoriæ Reginae reverendissimam, quæ in Christo obdormivit 22 Jan. 1901. Laus Deo." The battlements and pinnacles were rebuilt, the old stones being re-used as far as possible, and the tower roof re-leaded. In the course of repairing the wall abutting on the tower, the upper part of a Norman incised slab was found, which has been added

to the porch relics. The base of a pillar was found a little to the south of the south arcade of the nave, which seemed to correspond with those of the north arcade, thus confirming the supposition that the north arcade was the older. There was probably a similar one on the south side which required renewing in the fourteenth century. The one recent action with regard to this church that seems regrettable, is the removal of the good fifteenth century font to a sheltered position in the churchyard, to make way for its rude Norman predecessor, which has been recovered from the vicinity. It might have been better to retain the good font and to have merely kept the still older one beneath the tower as a relic.

It seems only right to reproduce the long list of Darley rectors from the Lichfield Episcopal Registers, from the fourth volume of *Derbyshire Churches*, as I am able to slightly amend it and supply four previously missing names:—

THREE RECTORS.

- (1279). Richard de Launcercombe (*Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, xiii., 76).
 „ Walter de Foderingye.
 1300. John de Brentingham. On the resignation of Walter de Foderingye.
 1304. Nicholas de Kinelworth. On the resignation of John de Brentingham.
 1313. Henry de Berleston. Dispensation for a year's absence for study.
 „ Marmaduke de Horungwoode.
 1316. Thomas de Ledenham. On the resignation of Marmaduke de Horungwoode.
 1317. Elyas Ponger.
 1325. Thomas de Podenham.
 1329. William de Hoticote.
 1332. John de Melton.
 1333. John de Scrubby. On the resignation of John de Melton.
 „ John Leghe.

1340. Robert de Haynton. On the resignation of John Leghe.
1341. Thomas Colyn de Cressyngham. On the resignation of Robert de Haynton.
- „ Elyas Ponger.
1347. William de Baliden, rector of Nuthall, Yorks, exchanges with Elyas Ponger, rector of mediety of Darley.
1348. Robert de Asshburne. On the death of Henry (de Berleston).
1349. Thomas, son of John Foljambe. On the resignation of William de Baliden. Re-instituted in the following year.
- „ Richard de Brokesburn, acolite. On the death of Robert de Asshburne.
- „ William Bulneys.
1350. Nicholas del Welde. On the resignation of Richard de Brokesburn.
1351. William de Bradewell. On the resignation of Thomas Foljambe.
1361. Thomas Hunte. On the death of William de Bradewell.
1369. Henry Spencer, prebend of All Saints', Derby, exchanges with Thomas Hunte, rector of mediety of Darley.
- „ Richard de Fentresper (?).
1372. John de Bynbroke. On the death of Richard de Fentresper. Collated by the Bishop, through lapse of time.
1374. Robert Attelowe, rector of Fenny Bentley, exchanges with Henry Spencer, rector of mediety of Darley.
- „ Nicholas Attewell.
1381. William Avoner. On the death of Robert Attelowe.
1382. Thomas de Bekyngham. On the death of John de Bynbroke.
- „ John Barber.
1388. Richard del Hay. On the resignation of William Avoner.

1388. Richard Sence. On the resignation of John Barber.
 1390. John Wyrkesworth. On the resignation of Thomas de Bekyngham.
 1391. John de Sebyston. On the resignation of Richard Sence.

TWO RECTORS.—SOUTH MEDIETY.

1406. Robert de Kybbeworth. On the resignation of John de Sebyston.
 1412. Robert Duffield. On the resignation of Robert de Kybbeworth.
 1422. Robert Stronge. On the resignation of Robert Duffield.
 1425. Richard Whitelombe. On the resignation of Robert Stronge.
 „ William Pylkynton.
 1432. John Ronynton. On the death of William Pylkynton.
 1469. Thomas Jakson. On the resignation of John Ronynton.
 „ Richard Balle.
 1514. Richard Rollisley. On the resignation of Richard Balle.
 1531. Robert Gamson. On the death of Richard Rollisley.
 1576. Richard Smithe. On the death of Robert Gamson.
 1602. Bryan Exton (Public Record Office).
 1629. James Holland. Collated by the Bishop, through lapse of time; but the First Fruits Books say, presented by the King, for the same reason.
 1639. November 26th, John Pott; patrons, Henry and Richard Moore.
 1647. Edward Payne. Re-instituted in 1662; patron, the King; but, according to the First Fruits Books, the Dean of Lincoln was the patron.
 1665. David Llewellynn.
 1671. John Edwards.
 1689. Richard Innett.
 1691. Stephen Masters.
 1694. Henry Aldrich. On the death of Stephen Masters.
 1720. John Garnston.

NORTH MEDIETY.

1407. Henry Scoortrede. On the resignation of Richard del Hay.
1424. William Huly. On the resignation of Henry Scoortrede.
1427. William Wethurby, dict. Derby.
1429. John Lawe. On the deprivation of William Wethurby.
1444. John Chapman. On the resignation of John Lawe.
- „ Richard Johnson. On the death of John Chapman.
1474. John Northampton. On the death of Richard Johnson.
1497. Stephen Surtas. On the death of John Northampton
1508. Walter Day.
- „ William Cretyng.
1547. Christopher North; patrons, Sir Henry and William Sacheverell, by grant from the Dean. On the death of William Cretyng.
1552. Martyn Lane. On the death of Christopher North.
1573. William Pollard. On the death of Martyn Lane.
1602. William Bagshawe (Public Record Office).
1640. February 14th. John Pott. On resigning the South Mediety.
1672. Thomas Mossley.
1685. John Edwards.
1689. Samuel Garmston.
1691. Stephen Masters.
1691. Henry Aldrich.
1720. John Garmston.

ONE RECTOR.

1744. Thomas Savage.
1764. Sir William Ulithorne Wray. On the death of Thomas Savage.
1808. Benjamin Lawrence. On the death of Sir William Ulithorne Wray.
1838. Richard Lee. On the death of Benjamin Lawrence.
1847. Daniel Vawdrey.
1881. Frederic Atkinson, Canon of Southwell,

Canon Atkinson kindly supplies an interesting note relative to Rector Bryan Exton. In the wall of what is now the rectory stable is a small stone tablet inscribed:—"Ne mihi invidens: hæc domus est structa, non mihi, sed musis." Above this puzzling inscription is the date 1607, and below, the initials "B. E."

It is impossible to bring any notice of the church of Darley Dale to an end without referring to the noble and ancient yew that is the glory of its churchyard. Since I wrote at length about it, after several visits paid in 1875-6, it has suffered much, having lost three considerable branches, including the well-known antler-like summit, seventeen feet of which were twisted off by a tremendous north-west blast in December, 1894. When writing about thirty years ago I claimed the Darley yew as the finest in the kingdom. Since then I have naturally learnt more of yews, and have closely examined them in various parts of England. Every one of the finest examples in Hampshire, the great county for yews, has been measured by me, and I have also carefully studied the long list and the not too careful measurements and accounts of yew trees in Dr. Lowe's work, published in 1897, and I adhere with perfect confidence to the statement that I then penned. There are two, possibly three, yews in England with slightly larger girth measurement, but they are far more of wrecks than the Derbyshire champion, even in its present condition. There are finer yews of a less age with a greater spread of branches, of which the two Hampshire examples at Corhampton and Brockenhurst are about the best. But, taking all in all, considering age, size, and comparative vigour, there is not the least doubt that the Darley yew is *facile princeps*.

Readers of this *Journal* will recollect the admirable critical paper as to this tree's age and history by the late Mr. Greaves, Q.C., in the second volume. Nothing better about it has been written in prose, but in poetry the present gifted rector has sung its praises in his Parish Magazine, and I hope to have his forgiveness for the transference of his stanzas to the more permanent pages of this *Journal*, where they are sure to give pleasure to a wide circle of those who love their county and its many beauties.

To the Darley Yew.

OLD yew, what thought can measure back thy years,
 Or guess whose hand within these hallowed bounds
 Planted and consecrated thee with tears
 Where slept his dead beneath their new-made mounds ?
 What generations of poor mortal man
 Since then have lain within thy eyeless gaze ;
 Who furthest had outstretched life's common span
 A very babe to thine unnumbered days !
 Thou king of yews ! yea, who disputes thy crown ?
 For though there be of more stupendous girth,
 Their walls are ruin : none of like renown
 With bole unmaimed survives in British earth :
 While dynasties have risen and decayed
 Here in God's acre thou hast silent stood
 Careless of time, by tempests undismayed.
 A tower impregnable of living wood.
 Majestic tree ! alas, to vulgar minds
 How unsuggestive of the ages flown !
 They come, and wonder, and pass by,—nor finds
 One thought a place but of thy bulk alone :
 Nor lingers in the annals of the Dale,
 Or in our people's legendary lore,
 Trustworthy hint whereon to build the tale,
 By safe conjecture of those days of yore.
 Yet may the imaginative soul create
 What various fortunes marked thine agelong growth—
 What meetings, partings, grief, and love, and hate,
 What secret crimes, what pangs of sundered troth.
 Beneath the welcome covert of thy boughs
 A thousand years of village life have passed ;
 Here childhood sported, youth made lovers' vows,
 Old age found rest, and all a grave at last.
 Sir John of Darley knew thee : in thy shade
 The Norman masons wrought their moulded stones :
 Here turned to dust gay foresters are laid :
 Thy roots have wandered among Saxon bones :
 Thy stubborn wood through many a Pagan shield
 Drove its resistless passage : thou perchance
 Didst arm the archers who on Crecy field
 Rained havoc on the chivalry of France.
 Fair Agnes Rollesley with thy leaves of gloom
 Wreathed her lord's bier. Thou heardest the last farewell
 Oft as they bore to his ancestral tomb
 Some Milward, Wendesley, or Collumbell.
 And through thy darkness moaned the heated air
 When death held carnival,* and one by one
 Who to the pit their hideous burden bare
 Themselves were borne ere sank another sun :—

* The Burial Register for the year 1551 records nine deaths in six days from "ye sweating sickness," or plague. And again in 1558, within a very short space, Alice Stafford, two Hayes, and three Mathers "dyed of the plague."—F.A.

Ah then, what sounds unwonted,—sudden vow,
 Mad laughter, blasphemous despairing cry,
 Vague prayer from lips that never prayed till now,—
 Went up discordant through the lurid sky !
 Full oft white-glistening choir and vested priest,
 With cross uplifted and low-chanted psalm
 Wending their Churchward way in fast or feast,
 Felt the dumb influence of thy changeless calm.
 Nor less, when beauty was divorced from awe,
 And factious zeal had humbled Church and Throne,
 In thy stern aspect the grim Roundhead saw
 The black and joyless image of his own.
 That sullen frenzy passed :—both Church and state
 Emerged triumphant from the civil strife ;
 And loyal minds once more could contemplate
 In thee our monarchy's perennial life :
 And anglers loitering late by Derwent's side
 Heard Darley bells ring in the happier times ;
 And up from Matlock, as the cadence died,
 And down from Winster came responsive chimes :
 Right gladly rang they ; for that day unmatched
 Restored our king, and healed our nation's sores :
 And dim with joy was many an eye that watched
 Its last light die behind the Stanton moors.
 And change on change has followed ; age on age,
 Each filled with circumstance, rolls slowly by :
 And ending here their shortlived pilgrimage
 The dalesfolk in their nameless myriads lie.
 Weak minds there are whose superstitious fear
 Peoples thy gloom with ghostly shapes of dread,
 Weird visitants from some malignant sphere,
 Or restless spirits of the untimely dead :
 Or morbid fancy sees at peep of morn
 Round thy huge trunk the fairies break their dance :—
 More solid truth be mine ! Thou hast outworn
 A hundred decades of the world's advance :
 To me thy patriarchal form brings thought
 Of ages linked in one historic bond ;
 Of men who lived and sorrowed, joyed and wrought,
 And still are living in some life beyond.
 How fit thy place hard by this ancient pile
 Where the one Faith through every chance and change
 Has held her lamp unquenched, though dimmed awhile,
 Far as the Christian thought can backward range ;—
 Has held, and shall hold ; for what powers of ill
 Can thwart the eternal ? Whatsoe'er betide,
 God's holy Ark, bearing her Pilot still,
 Shall the fell fury of all storms outride.
 Even so, old tree, thou standest sound and firm,
 Clothed in new green with each returning Spring ;
 Nor dare imagination fix the term
 When British yews shall own another king :
 Nay rather in her dreams she sees thee last
 A life unquenched, defiant of decay,
 Till o'er thy head rings out the final blast
 And every shattered grave gives up its prey.

F. ATKINSON.