

Place-Names at or near Derby.

By WILLIAM SMITHARD.

DERBY, like most old towns, possesses place-names peculiar to itself, and the origin of some of these has frequently been the subject of speculation; but, so far as the writer is aware, no convincing explanation has been put forward hitherto for those now to be dealt with.

LITCHURCH.

Litchurch is a very good case to begin with; the common pronunciation of this word is "Lee" church, and probably this affords us a clue to its meaning.

Litchurch is a large district in the south-east quarter of Derby, and the greater portion of it was not incorporated in the borough until 1877; even after that it enjoyed preferential rating for a number of years.

Domesday records that Litchurch was a manor belonging to the King. The site of the manor-house has not been identified, but we know that Litchurch had a grange—*i.e.*, a monastic farm—and a park.

Until recent years Litchurch had no church of its own, but was included in the ancient parish of St. Peter, Derby, and the mother church of St. Peter had chapelries in the adjacent manors of Boulton, Osmaston, and Normanton, which are all south of the town. The intervening manor did not require a chapel of ease, as St. Peter's Church was at a convenient distance, and my idea is that at a very early period St. Peter's became known alternatively as the "Lea Church," because it was situated in the leas or meadows outside the boundary

of the original borough of Derby—*i.e.*, it was south of the Markeaton Brook—and that the manor of Litchurch was so-called because it comprised the land most intimately connected with St. Peter's.

THE SIDDALS.

Other quaint place-names in Derby hinge on this word "leas"; to wit, Siddals and Morledge.

The Siddals are (or were) meadows belonging to the burgesses or freemen of Derby, and they are situated in Litchurch, on the south bank of the Derwent. There is no doubt in my mind that "Siddals" means "Side Leas"—*i.e.*, the meadows at the side of the river. "Side" occurs twice more in Derby names, *viz.*, Brookside (now Victoria Street) and Cheapside.

A possible but not probable alternative, however, is that "Siddals" means "Sud-leas"—*i.e.*, the meadows south of the Markeaton Brook or the Derwent.

THE MORLEDGE.

As everybody knows, the Morledge is a wide open space where the pleasure fairs and some of the markets of Derby are held.

"Ley" forms the final syllable in a number of the names of manors and townships of Derbyshire, and in Domesday it is several times spelt "lege"—*e.g.*, Teneslege for Tansley, Henlege for Hanley in North Wingfield, Branlege for Bramley, and Benedlege for Bentley. On Speed's map Morledge appears as "Marleige," and my view is that it means the "moor leas." Many towns had moors in or adjacent to them, notably Sheffield and Doncaster. The word "moor" was frequently applied to a wide open space of land, uncultivated, or formerly so, and there are several such near to Derby, *viz.*, Sinfin Moor and Morley Moor, now both enclosed grazing land; and Bread-sall Moor, which is still rough, uncultivated upland. In this respect "moor" and "common" are practically interchangeable terms, and the words "moor ley" meant common grazing land. It is highly probable, therefore, that "Morledge" was originally "moor-ley," or "moor-leys."

THE HUNDRED OF MORLESTAN.

Apparently connected with Morledge is the word "Morleston." Domesday mentions, amongst others, a wapentake of Morleston.

Wapentake is, of course, the Danish equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon "hundred," and the hundred of Morleston and Litchurch is still to-day one of the administrative districts of Derbyshire for certain purposes. It contains the parishes of Aston, Barrow, Crich, Derby, Egginton, Elvaston, Kirk Hallam, West Hallam, Heanor, Horsley, Ilkeston, Kirk Langley, Mackworth, Mickleover, Morley, Pentrich, Sandiacre, Sawley, Stanton-by-Dale, and Willington.

It is notable that about half of these parishes are south of the Markeaton Brook—which was once called the Morledge Brook—and all of them are north of the Trent.

As all Derby is in the modern hundred of Morleston and Litchurch, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Morleston and Derby are one and the same place, and that the town we now know as Derby was then, partially at any rate, called Morleston—*i.e.*, the manor or township that owned the "moor leas," which we now call the Morledge.

VIOLENT CHANGES OF PLACE-NAMES.

At the present day it may seem rather startling to suggest that a town could be known by several names about the same time, but really this was quite likely during the confusion and numerous changes of ownership that occurred in the Dark Ages and the Age of Twilight that followed. We know, for instance, that in Anglo-Saxon times Derby was called Northworth, and that the Danes changed its name to Deoraby. This is recorded in the *Chronicle of Æthelweard*. Northworth meant the estate or demesne north of Repton, the latter being then much the more important place of the two.

It is hardly necessary to remind anyone that a number of places mentioned in the *Domesday Survey* of Derbyshire have not been identified at all. One of these is "Hammenstan" Wapentake, which included Darley and Burley, two well-known

places quite close to Derby. Other names which have never been located are Trangesby, Uluritune, Mers, to the sites of which there is no clue whatever; besides Muchedeswelle, a berewick of the manor of Hope, and Herdebi, part of the manor of Duffield. In these cases it is more likely there has been a violent alteration or complete change of the names, rather than that the places themselves have all disappeared.

CITY ROAD, BAG LANE, AND THE FOLLY.

City Road is the way from the site of the Roman fort (Derventio) at Little Chester, east of the Derwent, to St. Mary's Bridge. In one form or another the latter has always been the most important thoroughfare across the river, and until recent times it was probably the only one. Little Chester was part of the township of Derby before and after the Norman Conquest, and the Domesday Record states that in Derby there was a church (doubtless All Saints') with seven clerks, who held two carucates of land in Little Chester.

As there would be regular and frequent communication at that period between Little Chester and the principal part of the borough that lay west of the Derwent, it is reasonable to surmise that City Road got its name during the Norman domination, and is a rare case of a Latin or French place-name surviving in the town.

Bag Lane, now called East Street, possibly meant the way to the bog-land—*i.e.*, the low-lying, swampy ground in the neighbourhood of the islands of the Derwent.

About a third of a mile north of Little Chester are the Folly Houses. "Folly" may be from "Folk Lea"—*i.e.*, the land on which there were common rights of grazing, or the word may be a variation of "folkland"—*i.e.*, land which by ancient custom the head of a family had the privilege of using and bequeathing, subject to the will of the king, although he had no documentary evidence to support his claim.

"Folly" is a somewhat frequent place-name. There is a Folly near Castleton, in Derbyshire; and the towns of Hertford and Folkestone, if the writer may mention two cases

outside our own county which have come under his observation, have each a district known as the "Folly."

NORMANTON.

The village of Normanton, which adjoins Derby, has a particularly interesting place-name.

In vol. ii. of this *Journal* (1880), p. 57, Mr. Frederick Davis gave the meaning of Normanton as "the north man's, or the Normans', town"; and in *Derby: Its Rise and Progress*, p. 8, Mr. A. W. Davison says: "The Dane saw that to retain his prize he must command the heights to the southward, which still bear witness to the fact in the name Normanton, the Northmen's town."

The places occupied by the Danes in Derbyshire were so numerous that it would not have been worth while to specialise any of them by embodying the fact in a name, and any names that were altered, as Northworth was to Deoraby, for topographical and not for historical reasons, would be changed by the Danes themselves, whereas the termination of Normanton stamps it unmistakably as an Anglo-Saxon place-name.

My reading of it is the "North-hill-town," the second syllable having originally been "maen," the Welsh word for a stone or hill; and it appears to me that when the Angles named Northworth, the estate north of Repton, at the same time they named Normanton, the settlement on the hill (maen) north of Repton.

Normantons (sometimes abbreviated to Norton) are rather common in the shires that formed the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia, and there is usually a Sutton (south-town) to correspond with each of them.

Sometimes we get "bury" instead of "ton," as in Norbury and Sudbury, both on the Dove.

Starting in the north-east extremity of Derbyshire, we find Norton, three miles south of Sheffield, and the nearest Sutton is Sutton Scarsdale, two miles south-east of Chesterfield.

Close to Sutton Scarsdale is Temple Normanton, and its

corresponding Sutton appears to be Sutton-in-Ashfield, in Nottinghamshire, eight miles away south-east.

For South Normanton, near Alfreton, the writer has not observed a Sutton. It appears to be called South Normanton to distinguish it from Temple Normanton. Perhaps there never was in this case a corresponding Sutton.

The complementary Sutton for Normanton near Derby may be Sutton-on-the-Hill, about eight miles west of Normanton.

In Nottinghamshire we get some good instances, viz., Normanton-on-the-Wolds (eight miles south-east of Nottingham) and Sutton Bonington on the Soar (about four miles north-west of Loughborough).

There is a Sutton about three miles south-east of Bingham, and another four miles south-east of Newark, Norton Disney being four miles north thereof.

We find also a Normanton about eight miles north of Grantham, another Normanton ten miles south-east of Retford, and Sutton-on-Trent three miles south of Normanton.

In Leicestershire we have Normanton-le-Heath, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and Sutton Cheney, about eight miles south thereof.

Coming to the physical aspect of the question, Normanton-by-Derby is on a hill, and although it is not a lofty one, it is conspicuous for some miles as one walks towards it from the valley of the Trent. The situation of this village, therefore, suits my rendering of its name; and South Normanton, near Alfreton, is also on a hill. The writer is not familiar enough with the other Normantons to say what are their physical characteristics; and it is well to note that the Normantons and Sutttons coupled together in this paper are not always strictly north and south respectively of the presumed point from which one of them was named.