

Two Elizabethan Chamberlains of the Palatinate of Chester

BY J. H. E. BENNETT

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IN the year 1871 large accumulations of soil were removed from the ruins of the Choir and Choir Chapels of the Collegiate Church of St. John the Baptist, Chester, and, during the progress of the work, many interesting discoveries were made.¹

As a result of the excavation a bank now rises from the ground level to the foot of the east wall of the present Chancel, and, on the highest part of the bank, resting against the wall, are four flat free-stone slabs. They measure approximately from two to three feet in breadth, by two and a half feet in height, and eight inches in thickness, and on each is an achievement of arms in relief in a fair state of preservation. The stones stand in the order in which they are about to be described, the first one being the most southerly; and they are placed at fairly even distances along the wall.

So far as can be ascertained, no previous particular attention has been given to these objects, although

¹ Canon S. Cooper Scott's *History of St. John Baptist, Chester*, p. 241.

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Arms in the Churchyard of St. John the Baptist, Chester.

J. F. Weeks, Photo.

they bear witness of an association of two very notable men with this city. The description of the carving on each is as under:—

First stone. Quarterly of eight:—1. [Argent], on a bend [azure] three stags' heads caboshed [or]—Stanley. 2. [Or], on a chief indented [azure] three plates—Lathom. 3. [Gules], three legs conjoined in fess point [in armour proper, garnished and spurred or]—Isle of Man. 4. Chequy [or and azure]—Warren. 5. [Gules, two] lion[s] passant in pale [argent]—Strange. 6. [Argent], a fess and canton conjoined [gules]—Woodville. 7. [Or], a cross engrailed [sable]—Mohun. 8. [Azure], a lion rampant [argent]—Montalt. On an escutcheon of pretence no charges can now be discerned, but the Montalt lion is sometimes shewn on an escutcheon in the Stanley coat, and, it has been suggested that, by a mason's error, it may have been so shewn in this instance.² The shield is encircled by the Garter and surmounted by an earl's coronet. This appears to be intended for the achievement of William Stanley, fourth Earl of Derby, taking into consideration all the evidence; although, by the quarterings and garter, it might equally well apply to certain other members of his family.

Second stone. [Azure], a sword of state erect between three garbs [or]. These are the arms of Randle Blundeville, Earl of Chester, but with the

² There is a window in the North Aisle of Mold Parish Church with a quartered and garter encircled shield of an Earl of Derby, among other heraldry relating to his family. The shield is as under: Quarterly. First grand quarter—Quarterly. 1 and 4. Stanley. 2. Lathom. 3. Warren. Second and third grand quarters. The Isle of Man. Fourth grand quarter—Quarterly. 1 and 4. Montalt. 2. Woodville. 3. Mohun. On an escutcheon of pretence—Montalt.

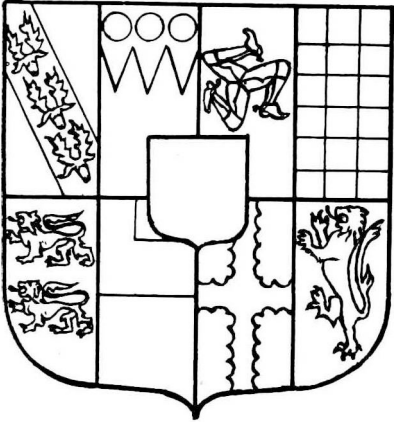
addition of the sword, and, although frequently used for Chester, as in this case, are not the correct arms of the city.³ The date 1585 is on this shield.

Third stone. Quarterly, 1 and 4. [Azure], three fleurs-de-lis [or]—France. 2 and 3. [Gules], three lions passant guardant in pale [or]—England. The shield is encircled by the Garter and surmounted by a crown. These are the arms of England, as borne by its sovereigns from Henry V. to Elizabeth, with the addition of the Garter. Henry VIII. was the first English monarch to encircle the Royal arms with the Garter, surmounted by the Crown, upon the Great Seal.⁴ As the year cut on the second stone was in the reign of his daughter Elizabeth, whose arms were borne in a similar manner, and as the two earls, to whom the shields on the first and fourth stones are ascribed, lived and also died during that reign, there is every reason to believe that the arms on the third stone are intended for those of Queen Elizabeth.

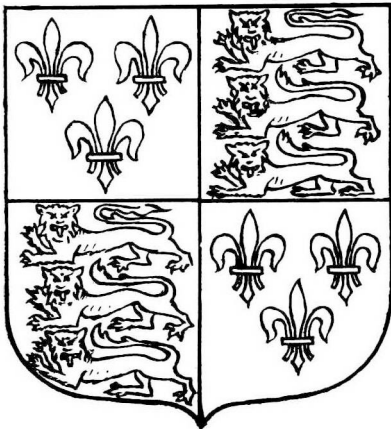
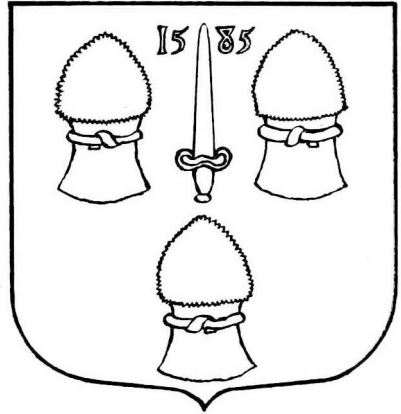
³ The correct arms are gules, three lions passant guardant in pale or (England), impaling azure, three garbs or, two and one (Blundeville), both dimidiated. One of the Randle Holmes hazarded an opinion that these arms were granted to the city when Henry III. assumed the earldom of Chester, and added that they certainly were in use as far back as the reign of Edward III. They were confirmed in 1580 and 1613, and in the earlier of these two confirmations, mention is made of the ancient arms having been nearly lost by time and negligence (Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, Helsby's edition, Vol. I., pp. 203 and 204). The third Randle Holme mentions a variation of the incorrect arms, as in use. "The auncient coate and signet or seale for petty matters" was azure, two garbs or, and a sword erect argent, hilt andommel of the second, "which vpon better Inquisition was altered and made a Sword betw : three garbs which now the Maior used to seale withall." He goes on to say that "afterwards by the gift of Henry the Seauenth when he made it a distinct county of it selfe, he gaue vs halfe England and halfe the Earldome conioyned" (Randle Holme's *Academy of Armory*, Vol. II., (Roxburgh Club, 1905), p. 369), apparently overlooking the fact that a namesake had assigned the grant of the arms to a much earlier period.

⁴ Burke's *General Armory* (1884 edition), p. lviii.

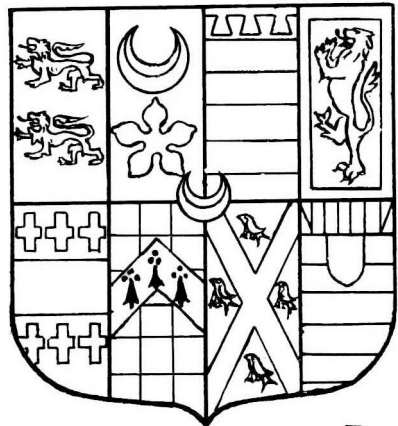
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Details of the Arms in the Churchyard of St. John the Baptist, Chester

Fourth stone. Quarterly of eight. 1. [Or], two lions passant in pale [azure]—Somery. 2. [Gules], a cinquefoil [ermine], in chief a crescent [. . .] for difference—Paganel, baron of Dudley.⁵ 3. Barry of six [argent and azure], in chief [three torteaux], a label of three points [ermine]—Grey, lord Lisle. 4. [Azure], a lion rampant within a bordure [or]—Belesme. 5. [Gules], a fesse between six crosses [crosslet or]—Beauchamp. 6. Chequy [or and azure], a chevron ermine—Newburgh. 7. [Or], a saltire between four martlets [sable]—Guildford. 8. Barry of six [or and gules], on a chief [of the first] three pallets [between two esquierres of the second] over all an inescutcheon [? argent]—Mortimer; in the fess point a crescent [. . .] for difference. This shield also is encircled by the Garter, and surmounted by an earl's coronet. The arms of Dudley do not appear, but there is no doubt that the shield is intended for that of the celebrated Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was descended from the Somerys, and whose father bore the arms of that family in the first quarter of his shield as his son did in this instance.⁶

The presence of the Royal arms and those of the city do not call for any explanation, and the following notes have been written with the intention of shewing that there was considerable reason why the shields of the two Earls should be included in the series.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, needs little introduction in these pages. Endowed with a goodly

⁵ Bank's *Dormant Peerage* (1807).

⁶ Blazons of the shields of the Dudleys (John, Duke of Northumberland; Ambrose, Earl of Warwick; and Robert, Earl of Leicester) with numerous quarterings are given in *The Official Baronage of England* by J. E. Doyle (London, 1886), and *Le Blason des Armoiries* by Hierome de Bara (Paris, 1581).

person, he was brought at the age of sixteen into the society of his future queen, and gained a permanent ascendancy over her heart, if not her head, which served him well throughout his life, and, perhaps, saved him from a fate similar to that which had overtaken his grandfather, father, and brother. There is little to admire in the character of Robert Dudley, and it may well be summed up in these few words: "Love of display and self-indulgence" were his "most striking personal characteristics. By his extravagant dress, his gluttony, and his cruel treatment of women, he was best known to his contemporaries."⁷

On the 2nd July, 1565, this favourite of fortune was appointed Chamberlain of Chester. The trade of the city was in a much depressed condition, and the citizens, apparently some time afterwards, appealed to Leicester for assistance. In response to this, on the 14th May, 1569, he addressed a letter to Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, Vice-President of Wales, Sir John Throckmorton, Justice of Chester, and others, pointing out the decayed and threatened state of the city, and directing them to confer with the Mayor and his brethren, at their best convenience. The commissioners do not appear to have exercised any undue haste, but, on the 27th April, 1571, nearly two years later, made a report confirming the state of affairs as reported by the citizens, and expressing an opinion that Leicester would "woorke an honorable and charitable deed to help to reforme their decaye."⁸

Another appeal was made to the Chamberlain by the Corporation of Chester in 1576 for a grant out of the

⁷ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Dudley, Robert.

⁸ Morris' *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*, p. 75.

Customs to help on the work in progress at the new haven, but with what success does not appear.⁹

Two years later the Earl had reason to remonstrate with the mayor and justices of Chester on their treatment of prisoners in the gaol. The letter was dated 28th June, 1578, and in it the writer drew a pitiful picture of the sufferings of the unfortunate people by starvation, and prayed that the matter might have "good consideracion."¹⁰

Shortly after this, Leicester figured in a case which cannot have increased any respect entertained for him by either party. The Cotton family, by an omission in the charter of Henry VIII. to the Cathedral, had obtained possession of a considerable portion of the endowment. At this time, the alienation was opposed, and the litigation which followed, and in which Leicester was officially concerned, was in favour of the cause of the Dean and Chapter. Tradition says very positively that, at this point, the Earl of Leicester was bribed with six years' rent of the lands in dispute, and he found means of bringing an award unfavourable to the plaintiffs.¹¹

According to Canon Raines, the Rev. Robert Rogers, the antiquary, was appointed Archdeacon of Chester in 1580; the presentation being in the hands of the Earl of Leicester.¹²

In the autumn of 1581 Leicester used his influence to procure the freedom of Chester and the office of

⁹ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 254, 255.

¹² *Cheshire Sheaf* (1st Series), Vol. II., p. 165.

swordbearer for his servant Robert Dod, and, at the assembly of the Corporation held on the 3rd November, the request was acceded to "in respect of his [Leicester's] contynuall countenance and goodness towards this citie."¹³

On the 3rd June, 1583, the Earl of Leicester visited Chester. He was accompanied by the Earls of Derby and Essex, and Lord North, and was attended by most of the gentlemen of the shire with their whole train, "and as it was thought they were in the whole 1,500 horse."¹⁴ At the official reception by the Mayor and Sheriffs, "in their scarlett and velvett coats," a speech, composed by William Knight, Clerk of the Pentice, was delivered at the High Cross¹⁵ by Thomas Thropp, a youth, who appears to have allowed his personal preference to overrule the requirement of the moment, for not only did he direct his address to my Lord of Derby, but ended it by saying "God blesse the Earle of Darby," and, naturally, "it was not well liked of" by the guest of the day. On the 4th "M^r Mayor did dyne them all at his howse," and afterwards banquetted "the iii yorles in pendis"; Leicester being presented with "a fayer standing silver duble-gilt cupp"¹⁶ containing forty angels. The visitors were lodged in the Bishop's Palace, and the almost regal honours with which the Queen's favourite was received created great excitement in the city and neighbourhood. "For more security of the cittie, because great resort was to see the earl," night watches "of honest citizens in har-

¹³ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

¹⁴ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 236.

¹⁵ Or from St. Bridget's Churchyard. (*Vide* Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 82).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

nesse" to the number of seventy-two were ordered, and the City Companies in their best apparel were instructed to wait upon the Mayor at the High Cross on the Wednesday.^{16a} The Dean and Chapter also expended "xvijs. ijd." on "boughes rishes and other thinges, at what time the Earle of Leicester came hither."¹⁷

Another recommendation for the freedom of the city from the Earl was considered by the Corporation on 26th June, 1584. In spite of the earnest request for the admission of Mr. John Edwards, of London, the assembly could not see their way to comply, as it was felt that Edwards "beinge a man of greate substaunce . . . would take all the wholle trade unto his owne haundes, & thereby undoe the reste of the sayde occupacions." A reply was accordingly sent "signefying the same & moste humblie beseeching his Ho[nour's] patience."¹⁸

About the same time, the Earl of Leicester wished the citizens to elect Mr. Peter Warburton as one of their members, but they shewed their independence by choosing "M^r Ric' Birkenhed and M^r Ric' Bavand, Ald', the ii citizens for this city."¹⁹

In this year an "Association for the Defence of her Majesty's person" was formed, Leicester being the instigator. It was chiefly aimed at the Romanist nobles, some of whom were entangling themselves in

^{16a} Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁷ Treasurers' Accounts, 1584 (*sic*). *Cheshire Sheaf* (1st Series), Vol. I., p. 117.

¹⁸ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

treasonable plots, owing to the treatment meted out to the exiled Scottish queen. In connection with this there is a letter, dated 6th November, 1584, in which the Earl of Derby, writing from Northwich to the Chamberlain, describes the "zeal and cheerfulness" with which the gentlemen of Lancashire and Cheshire joined the Association.²⁰

At this time, the anonymous pamphlet known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*, and portraying that noble in a very unflattering manner, caused much anxiety and indignation in high places, and, in June, 1585, the Queen issued an Order in Council forbidding the circulation of the work, and asserting on her own knowledge that the charges it contained were false.²¹ In the same month a letter was addressed by the Lords of the Privy Council to the Lord Strange, the Bishop of Chester, and the rest of the Justices of the Peace in the Counties of Lancaster and Chester, "somewhat blaming them for their Negligence in not strictly observing the Queen's Proclamation for suppressinge certen sedicious & traiterous Bookes & Labelles, and due Punishment of Aucthors, Spreaders abroad, and Deteyners of them. And moreover, requiring them to exert themselves to the utmost, upon occasion of the dispersing a mosté malicious, false, and sclaunderous Libel, published against the Earl of Leicester."²² Several months later, on the 14th February, 1586-7, Henry, Earl of Derby, wrote to the High Sheriff, his Deputy Lieutenants, and the rest of the Justices of the Peace in Cheshire, "requiring them to assemble themselves together, & take present

²⁰ *Cal. State Papers, Dom., 1581-90*, and *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series) Vol. V., p. 83.

²¹ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Dudley, Robert.

²² *Harleian MS.*, 1926, f. 59. (*Calendar*).

Course for suppressing false Rumours, & Punishment of the Aucthors thereof." A similar letter, dated twelve days later, was written to "divers of the principal Gentlemen in Cheshire."²³ The author of the article on the Earl of Leicester, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, points out that "as an historical authority it" [the pamphlet] "certainly has no weight, but as an indication of the hatred that Leicester had succeeded in exciting, it is of importance to his biographer."

Not very long after this, in 1588, "Robert, Earl of Leicester, Chief Chamberlain of Chester, died, and the Earl of Derby did succeed him in his place."²⁴

A representation of the "bear and billet" occupies a panel on the front of Bishop Lloyd's Palace in Watergate Street, and the same crest is the sign of a licensed house in Lower Bridge Street, Chester.²⁵ It seems to indicate some association with Robert Dudley or his family, as he himself bore the crest of a muzzled bear leaning on a ragged staff, and his brother, Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, did the same. Doubtless they adopted the device by reason of their claimed descent from the Newburghs, Norman Earls of Warwick, who are said to have adopted it from Turchil, a Saxon holder of the earldom, descended from the chivalrous Guy.²⁶

²³ *Harleian MS.*, 1926, ff. 75b and 76. (*Calendar*).

²⁴ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 237.

²⁵ The fine timber front of the "Bear and Billet" Inn bears the initials "H.H." and the date "1664," which is, of course, considerably after the time of Robert Dudley. The writer went over the whole of the house recently, but he was informed that the oak panelling had been removed some twenty years before, and there is now nothing worthy of special notice.

²⁶ Burke's *General Armory* (1884 edition), Greville, Earl of Brooke and Warwick.

A further sign of the association of the Dudleys with the neighbourhood may be seen on the walls of Trevalyn, Rossett, where sixteen quarterings of Robert Dudley appear in stone.

The Earls of Derby are, as is well known, descended from a younger branch of the ancient family seated at Storeton and Hooton, and have been intimately connected with Cheshire and its county town for a very long period. For several generations the Earls had the custody of the Water-gate at Chester;²⁷ the serjeanty of which appears to have passed to them with the barony of Montalt and the advowson of Holy Trinity. The association of the family with the western portion of the city is further recalled by the present day place-names of Stanley-street and Stanley-place, and also Atholl-place in Crook-street; the Dukes of Atholl being descendants in the female line, and successors to the lordship of Man. The name of Derby-place in Hoole may also be significant.

The Stanleys of Lathom and their descendants, the Earls of Derby, bore, as a crest, an eagle preying on a swaddled child; quite distinct from the crest of the Stanleys of Hooton. It was adopted from the Lathom family; the heiress of whom married an ancestor of the first Earl of Derby. A stone representation of this crest is carved on a boss, probably fixed about 1530, in the north walk of the Cathedral Cloisters.²⁸ Another sign of the connection of the Earls with the Abbey was "the Darby-chamber" in the Abbot's

²⁷ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 358.

²⁸ An illustration of this boss is given in this Society's Proceedings (New Series, Vol. IX., against p. 10), but the eagle is there erroneously called a pelican.



Armorial achievement of the Earls of Derby
on a boss at Boughton House, Chester

T. A. Williams, del.

house.²⁹ Both indications were probably due to the office of seneschal of the Abbey, at the time mentioned, being vested in the then Earl of Derby.³⁰

About 1540 there was a tavern in Northgate Street called the "Eagle and Child," at which the Duttons of Dutton held their court, and this seems to have been identical with the lath and plaster inn situated in Shoemakers-row, and known in 1856 as the "Legs of Man"; the connection between the two signs being obvious. At the later date the building had no external points of interest, but inside there was an open gallery running partially round the chief kitchen. The house was then in a very decayed condition, and shortly afterwards the licence was transferred, and the greater portion of the structure rebuilt and turned into a shop.³¹ An illustration in Hemingway's *History of Chester* shews the inn as it appeared in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.³²

Not far from the point at which the Christleton Road and Sandy Lane diverge, stands, in an extensive garden, the large and rambling old building known as Boughton House, and now divided into three residences. Some little time ago it was the property of the Cloughs, and previously had belonged to the Uniackes. The present owner, Mr. John Guy, told the writer that the entrance to the house was originally through a porch, on each side of which were stone seats, and that there was a coat of arms above the

²⁹ Lysons' *History of Cheshire*, p. 452, and *Harleian MS.* 2073.

³⁰ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 254.

³¹ This Society's Proceedings (Old Series), Vol. II., p. 97.

³² Vol. II., p. 13. In 1751 there was an "Eagle and Child" on the south side of Foregate Street (*Chester Courant*, 5th February, 1751).

porch. Within recent years, but before the property came into Mr. Guy's possession, the porch was demolished, and no doubt the shield shared the same fate, as a new front, and a number of additional rooms were then built. The house is another link between the Earls of Derby and Chester, as, on the ceiling of one of the passages, there is a carved and painted boss of oak, bearing a shield with the arms of Stanley, quartering Lathom, and the Isle of Man,³³ and, among elaborate mantling, on a helm, is the crest of the eagle and child. The workmanship of the achievement is probably much earlier than the time of Elizabeth. The house is said to have been built on or near the site of the old leper Hospital of St. Giles; the present burial ground having extended considerably further to the west in quite modern times. Several years ago, a "hidie hole" was found in the chimney of the dining room, and a long, low chamber, without any trace of door or window, above the kitchen. It has been suggested that the kitchen was the dining hall, and that some owner, considering it too lofty, cut off four feet of the height. Servants, it is said, would not venture along the passage that ran by this room after dark, even before the hidden chamber was discovered. The excuse given was, of course, fear of a ghost which, in this instance, took the form of a crying baby, and, when the chamber was found, the story went round that the baby had been bricked up therein. The representation of the swaddled child on the ceiling and imagination are, perhaps, quite sufficient to account for the ghost and the legend. There are cellars under the stables in

³³ Quarterly. First and fourth grand quarters—Quarterly: Stanley and Lathom; second and third grand quarters—The Isle of Man.



"Eagle and Child" on an oak panel
in St. John's Rectory, Chester

T. A. Williams, del.

Christleton-road, and under an adjoining house, and tradition tells of a wounded Cavalier officer hiding, or being hidden, in the stable cellar, and being brutally murdered there by the Parliamentarians, during the skirmish at Boughton which resulted in the Royalist outposts being driven in.³⁴

The presence of the armorial boss at Boughton House, and the implied connection between that building and the Earls of Derby is one worthy of some consideration. Tradition assigns the interesting old building in Watergate-street to the Earls as their town house, but the tradition lacks confirmation, and there is nothing in the house itself, with its date "1591," beyond its nearness to the Water-gate, to lend strength to this view. On the other hand, the size of the old house at Boughton seems much more consistent with the dignity of the Earls of Derby,³⁵ but it must not be overlooked that, during the Civil War, Spital Boughton chapel is said to have been pulled down, and "*all the houses thereabouts*; many other houses and barns in that neighbourhood were likewise destroyed to prevent the enemy from making lodgments in these buildings to the annoyance of the city."³⁶

A very interesting representation of the eagle and child is carved on one of twelve oak panels which form the overmantel of the present study in St. John's Rectory. The workmanship appears to be Flemish, and the carver's treatment of the crest is most uncon-

³⁴ Mr. F. N. Clough has supplied much of the information respecting Boughton House.

³⁵ At a later date the Earls of Derby built a house on land granted to them in 1627 below St. John's Church. *Cheshire Sheaf* (1st Series), Vol. I., p. 157, and III., p. 214.

³⁶ Hemingway's *History of Chester*, Vol. I., p. 170.

ventional. Three of the panels contain representations of male and female busts in clothing of the Tudor period, and variants of the "linen pattern" occupy the remainder.

In 1585 the representative of the Derbys was Henry Stanley, the fourth earl, a man closely connected with the Courts of the three children of Henry VIII., who occupied the throne. Stanley married a granddaughter of Mary Tudor, younger sister of Henry VIII. and successively wife to Louis XII. of France and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. It will thus be seen that Stanley's wife had, like her cousin, Lady Jane Grey, who was Robert Dudley's sister-in-law, some claim to the throne, but these claims were kept in the background, and the Earl of Derby and his wife never suffered any molestation on their account.³⁷

Henry Stanley, Lord Strange, succeeded his father to the earldom in 1572, and in the same year the Treasurers of Chester record eighteen and sixpence allowed "for a banket made for my Lord Strange at Shotwicke."³⁸

In July, 1577, the Earl, in company with Lord Monteaule,³⁹ Ferdinando, Lord Strange, and "many others, came to this city, and were honourably received by the mayor and citizens."⁴⁰ The Mayor "enterteyned the Earle of Darbie two nightes at his howse, he caused the Shepardes Playe to be played at the Hie Crosse"⁴¹

³⁷ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Stanley, Henry.

³⁸ Morris *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁹ Descended from another branch of the Stanleys.

⁴⁰ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 236.

⁴¹ *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series), Vol. IX., p. 7.

by the Painters' and Glaziers' Company,⁴² "with other triumphes on the Roode Deay."⁴¹

Apparently another visit was paid to the city in the following summer. On this occasion, the Mayor "entertained for 4 dayes together Lord Harrye, Earle of Darbie, the Earle of Wormwoode [*sic*],⁴³ the Earle of Killdare, the Lorde Strange and the Lord Montegle being very honorably received."⁴¹ In the Treasurer's Accounts under date 17th August, 1578, payment for a "banket to Lord Derbye and Mr Talbot" is recorded.⁴²

As already mentioned, the Earl of Derby visited Chester in 1583 in the company of the Earl of Leicester. On the 17th January following, the Secretary of State directed the Earl of Derby and the Bishop of Chester to apprehend a suspected recusant. The culprit appealed to the Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, and with some success, as he communicated with the Earl and the Bishop on the 23rd June, 1584, requesting them to shew some favour to the said recusant and to renew his bonds; a course with which they appear to have complied.⁴⁴

Another example of the interference of nobles with official appointments is that of the Earl of Derby, supported by Sir Francis Walsingham and the Lords of

⁴¹ *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series), Vol. IX., p. 7.

⁴² Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴³ Can this possibly be intended for "Ormonde," and, if so, is satire or ignorance responsible for the misnomer? This earldom was at the time in question held by Thomas, tenth in the succession, who was known as the "Black Earl" by reason of his dark complexion. He was the first of his family to adopt Protestantism, and was high in favour with the Queen.

⁴⁴ *Cheshire Sheaf* (1st Series), Vol. II., p. 320

the Privy Council, who unsuccessfully strove to force on the city the appointment of Peter Proby, as clerk of the Pentice.⁴⁵

Some reference has already been made of the Earl of Derby in the notes on the Earl of Leicester for the years 1584 and 1585. In the first year he is shewn to have supported Leicester's scheme for the protection of the Queen, and in the second he was called upon to carry out the Queen's will in the support of Leicester.

On 27th September, 1585, the Corporation of Chester declined to admit to the freedom of the city a nominee of the Earl of Derby who presented a letter from that noble.⁴⁶

In this year, Ferdinando, Lord Strange, was empowered by his father to act as deputy lieutenant for Lancashire and Cheshire, and in 1587 was admitted a freeman and chosen alderman, "who received the same very honourably and made a rich banquet in the Pentice."⁴⁷

In 1588, the office of Chamberlain of Chester devolved on Henry, Earl of Derby, and it is recorded that he "came to this Cittye and was most honorable received by the Cittizens"⁴⁸ in the same year, and also that a request was made by the Corporation through the Earl and Mr. Secretary Walsingham for the custom called "Dover Pier" towards "the finishinge of the New Haven and maintenance of the decaied walls."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

⁴⁷ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 237.

⁴⁸ *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series), Vol. IX., p. 15.

⁴⁹ Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

Henry, Earl of Derby, died in 1592, after having held office as Chamberlain for four years, and an annalist of Chester, recording his death, makes the remark: "he loved this Cittye verye much."⁵⁰

The Collegiate Church of St. John had hardly attained to its majestic dimensions when a series of disasters reduced the building by rapid stages to what was little more than a ruin. In 1470 the beautiful east end of the Church was destroyed by the fall of the Central Tower. Then followed the troubles of the Reformation, during which the establishment of the College was dissolved, its revenues confiscated, and a considerable portion of the Church dismantled. Finally, the west end was destroyed by falls of the North West Tower in 1572 and 1574.

In 1547 Dean Walker resigned, and the King's Commissioners, in the certificate of their survey, considered that the body of the Church was sufficient for the use of the parishioners, and that the Chancel with the two Aisles [? Transepts] might well be reserved for the King. In accordance with this recommendation, the Nave with its Aisles was devoted to parish use, but the fabric appears to have been retained by the Crown until 1581, when the Queen formally handed it over to the parishioners. Restoration was then taken in hand, and the parishioners "began to build up some part of it" [the Church] "again, and cut off all the Chappels above the Quire."⁵¹ Walls were built across the west end, across the two Transepts level with the Aisles, and across the east end, one bay to the east of the Transepts, practically reducing the Church to its

⁵⁰ *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series), Vol. IX., p. 17.

⁵¹ *King's Vale Royal*, p. 202.

present dimensions. This curtailment is shewn in a plan, dated 1589, in the British Museum, and in the references accompanying the plan the new work at the east end is specially mentioned: "The quire of the church, wherein standeth a very fair window lately built with all that east end of the wall." In 1585 Queen Elizabeth granted the impropriate rectory and the advowson of the Church to Sir Christopher Hatton, her vice-chamberlain, and afterwards Lord Chancellor, who, on the following day, conveyed the same to Alexander King, gentleman.

The foregoing notes are sufficient to shew that the Earls of Leicester and Derby not only held local official positions, but that they were more or less personally acquainted with the city. One instance only is given of a visit to it by Leicester, but it is probable this was by no means an isolated occasion, especially when his connection with the adjoining county of Denbigh is remembered. It therefore seems reasonable that the arms of the two Earls, with those of the Queen and this city, should figure on the new walls built at St. John's either in commemoration of the grant of the fabric or of the advowson. It is, of course, very possible that the Earls assisted in obtaining the grant. They were great people and possessed of much influence, and in the particular year, 1585, Stanley had been made a privy councillor, and Dudley appointed to the chief command of the army sent to the Low Countries. There was thus ample reason why some compliment should be paid to both. That to the Earl of Derby would, no doubt, be spontaneously rendered as a tribute to his personal popularity; while in the case of the Earl of Leicester, the expediency of the proceeding would deserve consideration, as no more acceptable way of

pleasing their Protestant sovereign could be devised than by honouring her favourite, especially at a time when he was under the cloud caused by the publication of *Leicester's Commonwealth*.

After the lapse of years it is perhaps impossible to determine satisfactorily the position originally occupied by the four stones, but it seems probable that they were built into the wall at the east end of the present Chancel, close to which they still remain. The wall built in the late years of the sixteenth century was not seriously interfered with until 1813, when the Chancel underwent a thorough repair, and a completely new east window was introduced at the expense of Earl Grosvenor. Hanshall very truly remarks: "It often occurs that repairs are attended with partial destruction to what is in existence; and it occurred so in this instance."⁵² The four stones may have been relegated to their present position on this occasion, or may have survived the upheaval until the present east window was inserted in 1863, when much of the east wall was rebuilt, but as those connected with the work have all since died, no enlightenment on this point now appears possible.

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² *History of the County Palatine of Chester*, p. 249.