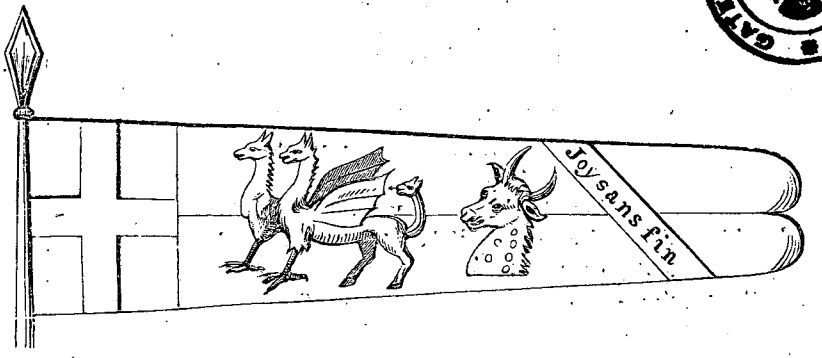

SOME NOTES ON WIDDRINGTON AND THE WIDDRINGTONS.

The chapelry of Widdrington is supposed by Mr. Hodgson to have been included in the appendages of the vill of Warkworth, as given in 738 by Ceolwulf to Lindisfarne Monastery. The name "Wdringtuna" first occurs in the middle of the twelfth century. John de Widdrington is stated to have been a witness to documents of 30 Hen. I., 1139-40,[1] and Bertram de Wdringtuna had a confirmation of the vill of Wdrington which his father had previously held from Walter fitz-William, the baron of Whalton.[2] In 1267 or 1268, Robert fitz-Roger, Lord of Warkworth, gave to John de Wodrington for his homage and service a moiety of the vill of Linton, and afterwards conferred on him the whole manor of that place. In the feudal relation here springing up we have unquestionably the source of the arms born by the grateful Widdringtons. The lords of Warkworth wore the coat, Quarterly Or and Gules, a bend Sable. The Widdringtons did not difference the shield further than by changing the gold to silver. Two medieval seals of the family are given by Mr. Surtees, plate xi., fig. 17, 18. One has the arms surrounded by dragons in the vacancies of the circle, SIGILL' ROGERI DE WIDERINGTON. The other, also of one Roger de Woderington, presents the shield slinging under a helmet surmounted by a bull's head, from which flows a mantle already spotted with plates. Latterly the crest has been blazoned as a bull's head, couped, Sable platée, horned Argent: but in drawings as late as the sixteenth century[3] the mantle flows direct from and looks like part of the bull's head, both objects being covered with the plates. The

[1] Vincent in Harl. MS. 5808, per 2 Hod. ii. 230.
[2] The charter is printed in 2 Hod. ii. 248.
[3] Visit. 1575.

name of Bertram in the Widdringtons will no doubt recall the bulls' heads of the Bertrams, Bulmers, and Nevils who descended from Bertram de Bulmer, but no illustrative connection between the families has struck me.[4]

In the early part of the fourteenth century the Widdringtons were enriched by a coheiress of Swinburne, and in the next generation by one of Acton. Before 1480 the family wealth was again increased by the marriage of Sir Ralph Widdrington with *Felicia*, the youngest daughter and coheiress of Sir Robert Claxton of Horden, Claxton, and Dilston, and in her right her descendants enjoyed Haswell and Pespool in the palatinate. To a prudent race, fond of indulging feudal pomp within their means, a wealthy heiress is a joy for ever, and she of Claxton, with such a name as *Felicia*, was doubly so. The age which followed her delighted in wiredrawn and double meanings. Yet put the matter as favorably as I may, my courage half fails me in suggesting the bare possibility that the motto of the Widdringtons alluded to Felicia and her acres. It was *Joy sans fin*. That it was of a date reaching up to her time is proved by an interesting ring which was found by an old woman near Washington, and by her taken to Robert Davis Esq., of Wrekenton House, who obligingly submitted it to the notice of this Society. Its exterior engraving is shewn below, and it will be observed that the ring is of small, almost lady's size. It is a

plain circle of gold, inscribed *Joye sanz fyn*. The same motto is found on the standard of the family in the Visitation of 1575. The badge occurs in Heraldric Dictionaries as another crest, and is described as "a two headed

[4] At the present day, heraldry is too often a mockery. The Heralds' College is powerless; and families, instead of adopting new arms, which would be innocent, are suffered to usurp the inheritance of their betters of the same name. But in old time, heraldry was a living proof of descent in blood or lands, and only lacks a rational treatment to present something more than a dry list of isolated coats. I take it to be one of the most interesting means of ascertaining the rationalè and details of tenures —of the honours and baronies into which our land was split up, and of which we still in everyday life feel the influence. We may consider it pretty certain, from what we know of the arrangements at Richmond Castle and other places, that when a barony or manor changed hands, the family succeeding generally waved the banner of their predecessors in preference to the other arms they were entitled to; but it may be difficult to find what particular line of owners originated this favourite local bearing. The main step to ascertain them will be to gather the arms of the tenants into groups according to their superior lords. The prevailing bearing of each group will doubtless establish the coat of that tenancy *in capite*, and, in doing so, show the origin of many other families which had removed to other fees. Such an investigation cannot, I think, be termed trifling or unimportant to society, and certainly it is not uninteresting.

wivern Argent, winged Or." The tail is headed as is that of the Clifford wyvern in a collection of standards temp. Hen. VIII., Harl. MS. 4632.

After these slight observations on the armorial insignia of the Widdringtons, I pass to their monuments, and the very singular altar arrangements in Widdrington chapel. And first let me sum the matters of record touching them.

In 1281, John de Woderington, knt., and Margaret his wife, had licence from Pope Martin IV. to have a portable altar in places suitable for the purpose. In 1307, John, lord of Widrington, gave to Sir Henry de Thornton, chaplain, all that land with the edifices, &c., which Sir Roger de Hartwayton, chaplain, formerly had by the gift of Sir John de Wydrington his grandfather, and two marks of annual rent in the mill of Lynton. For this donation Sir Henry was to celebrate divine offices at the altar of St. Edmund, in the church of Wydrington, *or elsewhere* within the parish, if there be necessity, for the souls of all the ancestors of the donor. Mr. Hodgson's supposition that St. Edmund's altar was the portable altar of 1281 can hardly be supported. Gerard de Woderyngton had licence in 1341 to give seven marks of rent issuing from the vills of Est Chyvunton, Wodryngton, and Dririg, to a certain chaplain to celebrate in the chapel of Wodryngton, and forty shillings of rent issuing from those vills in aid of the same chaplain's sustenance. In 1370, Roger de Wodryngton had permission to secure ten marks per annum out of Dryrigge and Wydrington for a chaplain officiating here. After the dissolution Robert Hedley occurs under "Witherington chapel" as the incumbent of the Holy Trinity chapel, receiving a yearly pension of 4*l.* 11*s.*

So far the documents given by Mr. Hodgson. An important addition is found in the Surveys of 2 Edw. VI., printed by the Surtees Society in the Barnes Proceedings.

Woodrington. Two chantries of the Trinity, founded in the chapel of Wodrington, appending to the parish church of Woodhorne. Edward Thompson, of 54 years of age, and Thomas Hedely, of the age of 36 years, incumbents there, meanly learned, of honest conversation and qualities, having no other living than the same. The said chantry is distant from the parish church four miles. And there is no lands or tenements sold sith the 24 Nov., 38 Hen. VIII. And there is of houseling people [*i. e.* communicants] within the same parish 1020. Yearly value of the same chantries with 66*s.* 8*d.* given towards the finding of the incumbent's meat and drink, yearly, by Sir John Wydrington, knight, as he ledgeth, is 10*l.* 4*s.*; reprises 20*s.*; clear 9*l.* 4*s.* Plate six ounces. Goods unpraised.

Ornaments and goods. The chantry of the Trinity in Wederington.

One vest of red satin, one vest of white fustian, one old cope of red say, and one old mass book.

In 1723, Archdeacon Sharp found "an old surplice, a quarto bible, and a prayer book, old pulpit, font, and communion table, scarce any of them fit for use, and two old pews. But the roof is tumbling down, and all the chapel in other respects is in a lamentable condition." Archdeacon Sharp's son found matters still worse in 1764, and proposed that Sir George Warren, the lord, should rebuild the chapel, and he would try to raise an endowment. Sir George accordingly repaired the fabric in 1766, and in 1768 the vicar of Woodhorn formally relinquished the claim to presentation and the ecclesiastical profits within the chapelry.[5] In 1826, Dr. Singleton found a porch in the chapel, which is repaired by Mr. Askew [who purchased the township of Linton and part of Ellington after Lord Widdrington's attainder] in bad condition. He went into the Widdrington vault, and saw the dust of a male and female, and a child, in decayed coffins, and was told they were Lord and Lady Widdrington.[6]

The church of Widdrington is a modest building, without a tower, and sunk below an accumulation of graves. There are a nave and south aisle divided by octagonal piers, a chancel, and a chantry chapel on its south side, opening by arches to the chancel and south aisle of the nave. A modern vestry is attached to the east end of the chantry, and blocks a window of the chancel. In the north wall of the nave are blocked arches, simply chamfered, and resting on cylindrical pillars with square capitals. They are perhaps Early English, and the coping at the east end of the chantry ends with a stone bearing the dog-tooth ornament. The windows in the blocked arches and elsewhere are square Decorated. It is difficult to discriminate between early and late transpositions and repairs in a building having such a history as this, yet the working of Early English tombstones in the north wall seems ancient. Above the north door of the chancel is one with a cross and sword: another forms the sill of a window, and in the head of *four* trefoiled lights in the blocked arches is a pair of shears. I understood that this window was partly made up of the south-east window of the chancel when the vestry was made. The south doorway of the nave is good Decorated, and there is a porch.

The chantry porch in the south aisle exhibits tokens of a screen between it and the choir, and this feature seems to have been remaining in Hodgson's time. There is a piscina under the easternmost window

[5] The registers commence in 1698. [6] 2 Hod. ii.


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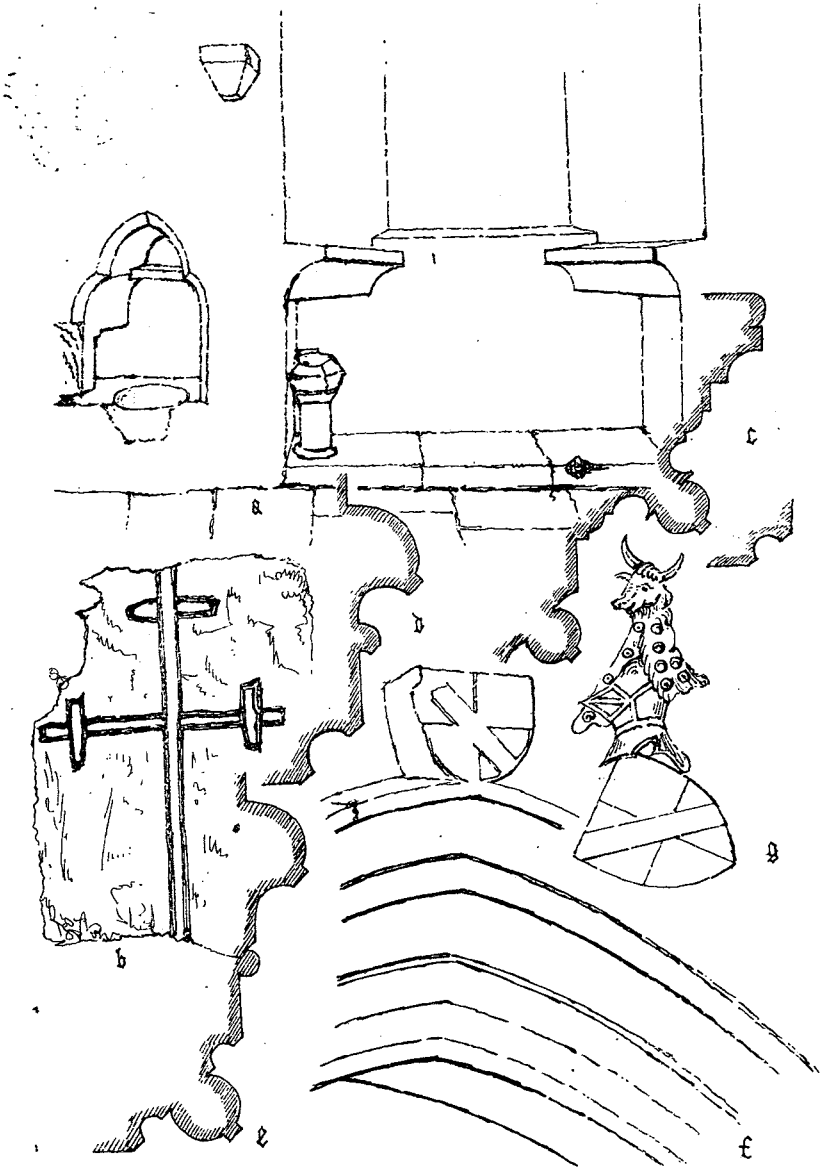

Widdrington.

a. Arrangements in the south wall of the chancel. b. Slab (15 in. long) under the western sepulchral niche. c. Moulding of south doorway. d Moulding of the western sepulchral niche. e. The like of the eastern one. f. Head of the eastern niche. g. Widdrington insignia from the Visitation of Northumberland. The mouldings are not to scale.

of the south wall, and the person who showed us the church believed there was formerly another under the next window to the west. If this was the case, it may explain the occurrence of a bracket between those windows, and we should have the "*two* chantries of the Trinity" of the Survey, for it is clear that this porch—the only one of the kind in the building—must be the Holy Trinity *Chapel* of the List of Pensions. There was, in 1307, an altar of St. Edmund, and probably only one of these chantries was dedicated to the Trinity, and it seems likely that one of them was removed hither from a singular position in the chancel, near the high altar, and opposite the monuments of the Widdringtons, which will next engage our attention. It may be observed that the seats in the chantry chapel belong to Linton, out of the mill of which vill the altar of St. Edmund was supported, and the porch, as mentioned by Dr. Singleton, was repairable by Mr. Askew, the purchaser of Linton.

In the north wall of the chancel, are two sepulchral niches. That to the east is pointed, and is curiously surmounted by the Widdrington coat as a finial. That to the west, next to the north door, is lower in level, being below the altar steps, and its arch is segmental. In the flagging below it a very rude incised slab, bearing what is heraldrically termed a cross-crosslet is inserted. The labels of these monuments do not much differ. The moulding of the eastern one resembles that of the arch of the south door; that of the western one corresponds with its jamb. Between the recesses are the remains of some object of iron. The mouldings of these tombs, and the square form of the windows, which are doubtless of the same date as the doorway, do not bespeak a very early phase of the Decorated style, and it is not probable that two separate niches would be made for man and wife. I cannot but notice the coincidence between these contemporary memorials and the two brothers, Sir Gerard and Roger de Widdrington, who witness deeds together till 1361. Roger was heir to Gerard, and died in 1372. Both gave money out of Driridge and Widdrington for a chaplain.

If to these brothers the monuments relate, the altar of St. Edmund, and probably the tombs of those ancestors whose souls were remembered in 1307, would be in what was afterwards the Holy Trinity Chapel. The new chantry seems to have been opposite the tombs, and a most curious junction with the arrangements for the high altar do those for the chantry altar present under the blocked window of the chancel, just within the altar rails. The piscina for the high altar, as will be observed by the drawing, is furnished with a shelf high up in it, and a recess at each side of the bason. The existence of a chantry so close to it must have

been highly inconvenient, and any change in it is not to be wondered at.

Under the east window is a considerable sunken space, as if for some tablet or canopy, and, indeed, Hodgson saw three corbels there, which he observes probably supported the canopy of the altar. Between the nave and chancel is the mark of the rood-beam. Before the altar-rails is a slab marked SOPHIA . WIDRINGTON. The letters may be of the seventeenth century, but I do not see the name in the pedigree at any date.

For a history of the family, I must refer to Mr. Hodgson's elaborate collections, (2 Hist. Nd. ii. 223, &c.) When the picturesque old castle was standing north-east of and nearer to the church than its ugly successor, and when "the church-yard had no very clear boundary from the lands of the castle," the grouping of buildings must have been interesting. The village of Widdrington still bears an air of the olden time, but the ground round the chapel-yard is bare and desolate.

Since Mr. Hodgson's period, however, some very curious facts have been elicited about Sir Henry Widdrington of James I.'s time, and his brother Roger. Sir Henry is exhibited to advantage by Taylor the Water-poet on his "Penniless Pilgrimage" from Scotland by Newcastle, where he arrived on 1 Oct. 1618, and where, says he, "I found the noble knight Sir Henry Witherington; who, because I would have no gold nor silver, gave me a bay mare, in requitall of a loafe of bread that I had given him two and twenty yeares before, at the Iland of Flores, [in the Azores] of the which I have spoken before [in the Penniless Pilgrimage, p. 131.] I overtooke at Newcastle a great many of my worthy friends, which were all comming for London, namely, Master Robert Hay and Master David Drummond, where I was welcomed at Master Nicholas Tempest's house. From Newcastle I rode with those gentlemen to Durham, to Darington, to Northallerton, and to Topcliffe in Yorkeshire, where I tooke my leave of them, and would needs try my pennilesse fortunes by myselfe and see the City of Yorke."

Dr. Morton, Archdeacon of Durham and Vicar of Newcastle, viewed Sir Henry in a very different light. There are not, writes he to Winwood in 1617, more than twelve preaching ministers in Northumberland. The people follow their masters, who are papists or atheists. The great thieves are supported by Lord Howard of Walden, and under him by Sir Henry and Roger Wodrington and Sir John Fenwick. The archdeacon suggests that Lord Sheffield, should be Lord Lieutenant, to reside and rule with a strong hand, for Lord William Howard has so much power that he would have more partizans than the king himself.[7]

[7] 92 Domestic State Papers, t. James I., 17.

Such complaints of Roger's tyranny and protection of robbers had been common in former correspondence. The judges look on, "bite their lips and scratch their heads, and say in private, See you not what a pass we are come in Northumberland?" In 1616 Roger Wodrington was accused of complicity in the Powder Plot, arrested and examined. Morton was glad of this, but writes that the prisoner was confident of escape from the accusation of making a collection for catholics. Hundreds would complain of his oppressions, but they "fear his letting loose again, and his brother Sir Harry's heavy hand."[8] Roger in religion, and Sir Henry in matters of justice, are the roots of all the evil in the North parts.[9] Mr. Smaithwaite, the parson of Elsdon, also reports the impunity of the outlaws, who scour the country by thirties and fifties, and the tyranny of Roger Wodrington, to procure the liberty of whom, and of Francis Radclyffe, the papists meet and subscribe money to bribe some great man to that end. Several other interesting details about these matters are given in the invaluable calendars of State Papers now in course of publication. In 1626, Roger Widdrington was still in custody for some reason, and prays for a countermand of the order for his confinement at Northampton, and that he may repair home or be confined in London. He appeals to the Council's recollection of his employment and behaviour under Queen Elizabeth and King James, and his defence by writing and otherwise against the dangerous positions of the adversaries of his majesty's government in causes temporal. Thomas Ogle has an hereditary malice against the petitioner and his house.[10]

Mr. Thomas Chaytor of Butterby, in his amusing diary, speaks once of Roger Widdrington. "1616, May. This moneth it was said Roger Woddrington was comited at London, for suspicion of the Powder Treason, as the rumour went, but I suppose he was never so madd." In 1613, we have an entry exhibiting Sir Henry as a jockey.

"This yeare: Sir George Conyers did winne the golden cupp att Rainton, and Turk my brother Henry Tempest' the silver. Att Gaterly, Sir William Gascoyn wonne. Att Hambleton, Sir George Conyers' mare bett a mare of Sir William Blaxton. Puppie, a horse of Sir John Fenwick, bett a horse of the L. Kethe's in Scotland. Afterward a challendge was maid for 200*li.* att Laugerby betwixt Puppie and a horse of Sir Willm. Webbe's. Puppie lost the wager preter omnium opinionem. The same day a match of 6 that rune for 20*li.* a peace, where Sir George Conyers' mare was one, and, for a revenge, Sir Willm. Blaxeston' mare, that was bett as above is said, followed and bett all that rune there, emongest which a horse of my lo. Scrope's called Gregory that cost

[8] 87 Domestic State Papers, t. James I., 14. [9] Ibid. Vol. 86, p. 96.
[10] Ibid. Vol. 27, t. Cha. I., 114.

him a great price, and x^{li} he gave that he might runne emongest them for one he lost: and for a reveng challenged that mare of Sir William Blaxton which Sir William Webb had for a great sume bought, to run for 200*li.* *Sir Henry Woddrington ranne the maire, and my lord Scrop, Gregorie,* and 5 staffes beinge placed in the race, 20*li.* everie staffe, the maire won them all and there in y^{t} the wager, and Gregorie holden for a jade, and my lord an unfortunate man in buyinge him. Sic transit gloria mundi."

W. H. D. LONGSTAFFE, F.S.A.