# The Stone Bridge

## BY THE HORSE FAIR IN ST. FAITH'S LANE, NORWICH;

WITH

## Some Account of the Ancient History and Topography of the Adjoining District.

COMMUNICATED BY

THE REV. W. HUDSON, M.A.,

VICAR OF ST. PETER PERMOUNTERGATE, NORWICH.

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THE Stone Bridge, which is the central subject of this paper, is a curious survival of antiquity in the very midst of modern progress. The road-maker and builder have advanced to within a few yards of the spot; but, by good fortune rather than design, have hitherto left it untouched.

Of the hundreds who in the course of a year make their way from Prince of Wales' Road by St. Faith's Lane into the Lower Close, probably nearly all could at once call to mind the old wall which skirts the road on their left; but scarcely one, perhaps, is aware that if he keeps close to the wall, at a point not far from where the wall bends round towards the open space called the Horse Fair, the ground is hollow under his feet, and he is in fact crossing over a bridge which once spanned a dyke that here passed under the road.

**Plan** of a portion of the **City of Norwich**, between the **Castle** and the **River** Shewing Old Names and Sites in upright letters and hard lines - Modern Do in sloping letters and dotted lines. Modern Buildings are coloured Pink. The parts coloured Brown were almost all, at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, in the possession of St Giles', now St Helen's, or the Great Hospital.

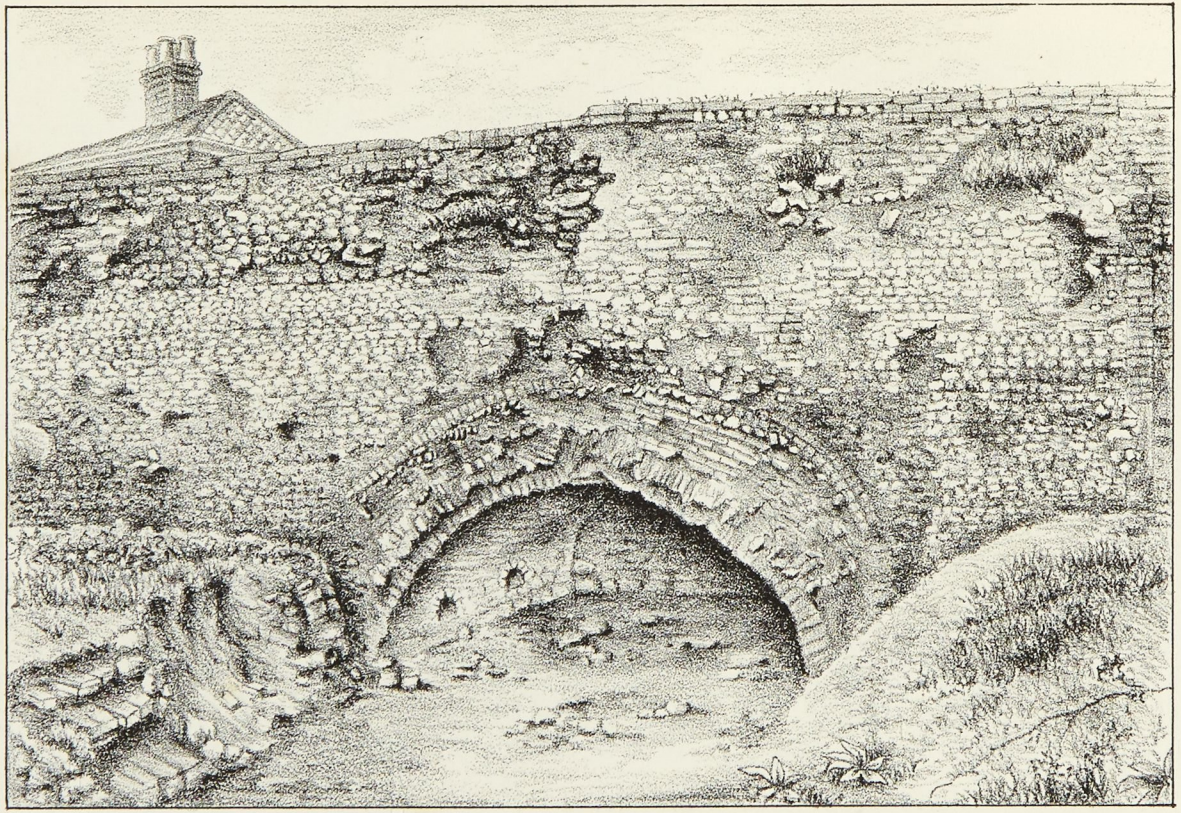

Cleer S. Alger Litho. Diss.

In this old wall is a doorway, on entering which the visitor finds himself in a small plantation now the property of F. J. Underwood, Esq., the proprietor of the adjoining vinegar works, but formerly the end of a large piece of meadow or garden attached to the house in St. Faith's Lane now used as the Boys' Home. This piece was cut off from the rest by the formation of Cathedral Street North. The enclosure may be described as an irregular triangle, one side formed by the backs of the houses in Cathedral Street, another rather curved by the old wall as it skirts the road, the third by the same wall which, instead of continuing along St. Faith's Lane to Prince of Wales' Road, takes a sharp turn at right angles to the lane.

The bridge at once attracts attention almost in the middle of the curved side, and being blocked up at the back has the appearance of a great cave hollowed out under the wall at a depression of several feet below the surface of the surrounding ground. It is marked as "The Stone Bridge" in King's Map of Norwich, published in 1766. The following is a probable account of its origin and purpose :—

The old wall under which the bridge is made was originally the boundary wall of the Precincts of the Grey Friars, in speaking of whom Blomefield[1] says, "Roger Virley licensed them to carry and re-carry their goods through a creke of his to their site, which was confirmed by Elizabeth Elmham, widow of Sir John Ingaldesthorp, Knt., in 1404, and by Thos. Skipwith, Esq., in 1464, with license for the Warden to fish in that creke to the Stone-bridge." Besides containing some inaccuracies in the names, this statement would seem to imply that the stone bridge is mentioned in Mr. Skipwith's deed. Such, however, is not the case, as may be seen by referring to Kirkpatrick's *History of the Religious Orders*

[1] Vol. ii. p. 108; Miller, 1806.



The Stone Bridge, St. Faith's Lane, Norwich.

*in Norwich*, p. 115, where a full account of these grants is given.

It appears that "Roger Verly, citizen of Norwich, granted to the warden and convent of the Order of the Friars Minors, in the City of Norwich, a certain easement of carrying and re-carrying corn and other victuals, and also other their goods and chattels, by a certain ditch of water of the same Roger in Norwich, in Nether Conesforde; which said ditch extends itself from the king's river towards the east, unto the king's way towards the west." No date is assigned to Roger Verly's grant; but he could hardly be other than the citizen of that name who was five times bailiff between 1335 and 1344.[2]

This grant was ratified and confirmed on the Tuesday after the feast of Gregory the Pope, in the sixth year of King Henry VI. (1404), by Elizabeth Elmham,[3] widow, John Ingaldesthorp, Knt., John Carbonel, Esq., and seven others, and leave was added for the friars to "fish freely in the aforesaid ditch."

Finally, the grant was once more confirmed in 1464, by William Skipwith, Esq., then the sole owner of the ditch and the adjoining property. He describes the site as being "in the parish of St. Vedast," and gives leave to use eight feet of land on either side for the purpose of fishing.

After recording this grant, Kirkpatrick[4] adds the following note: "This was the creek over which the

[2] A Roger Verly is mentioned as a feoffee for "lands and tenements *in Norwich*" in 3rd Edward III. (1330).—Rye's *Materials for a History of the Hundred of North Erpingham*, p. 32.

[3] Elizabeth Elmham was widow of Sir William Elmham of Westhorpe, Suffolk. He died in 1403, leaving his widow his executrix, in conjunction with Sir John Ingaldesthorpe. She was not "widow of Sir John Ingaldesthorpe," as stated in Blomefield, no doubt originally by a clerical error. The manor was afterwards in possession of Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter.

[4] Page 118.

Stone Bridge lies in St. Vedast's Lane, near to the place where the horse-fair is kept." [5]

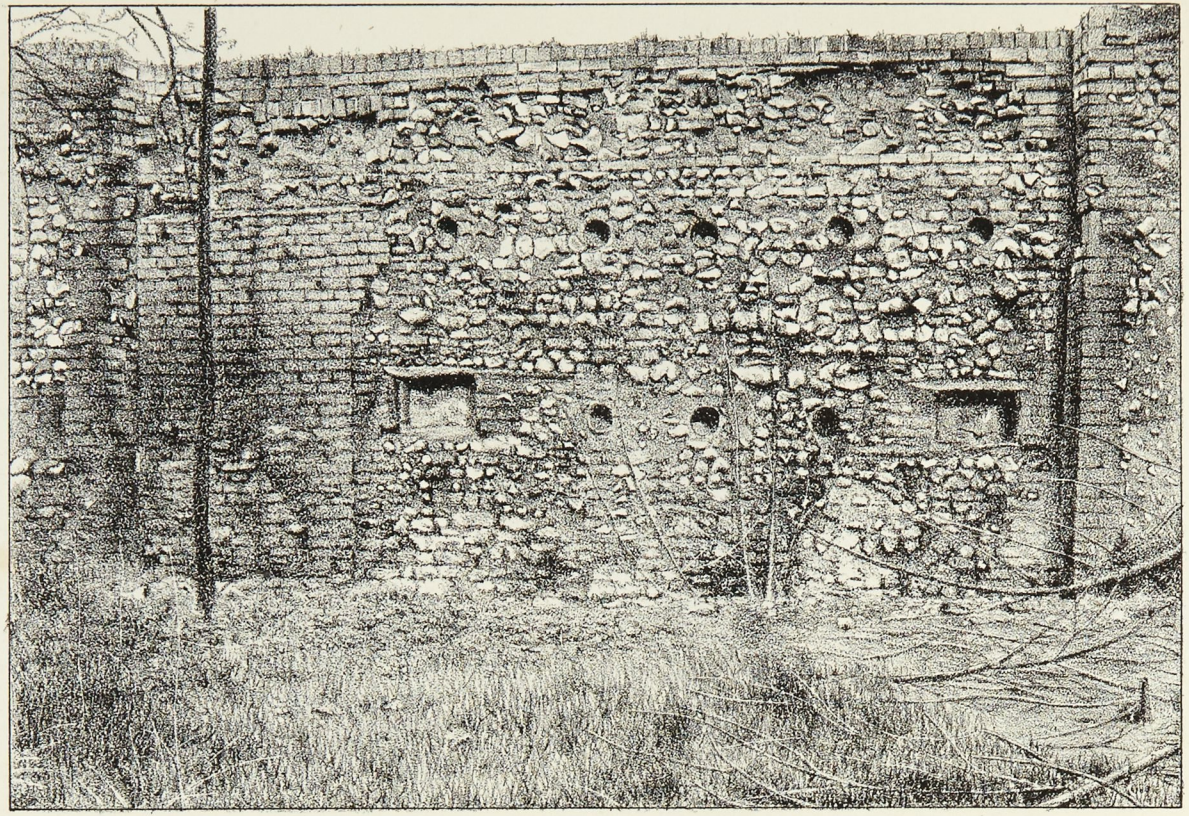
The creek ran across the meadow behind Messrs. Hills and Underwood's works, in the direction marked by a line of trees. It is shewn in King's Map. It was an open dyke within the memory of persons still living; and a portion of it was uncovered at the time of Millard's Map of 1834.

The Greyfriars would no doubt have been glad to extend their possessions as far as the river, as the Austin Friars succeeded in doing a little further to the south. But, either Roger Verly, or those who preceded him, would not part with the land, or more probably they found their further approach to the river barred by the "King's Way," or street of "Nether Conisford" (now St. Faith's Lane) which was then probably a more important thoroughfare than it became in after years. How the lane had previously crossed the creek, whether by a bridge or by a ford, it is impossible to say. The present bridge must certainly have been the work of the Greyfriars when they built their wall, for the wall and the bridge are evidently of one construction, the face of the arch being flush with the wall which is built on it.

In assigning a date for the work, it may be assumed from the considerable dimensions of the bridge, that the grant to use the creek had first been obtained. This would harmonize with the time when the wall would be built. The latest date mentioned by Kirkpatrick for the acquisition of any of the Greyfriars' property is 1294. Blomefield mentions an enlargement of their site in 1299, which was confirmed in 1330.[6]

[5] The name of "the Horse Fair" is still given to the triangular space outside the passage into the Close. Kirkpatrick writes as though the fair were held in his time. The meadows were then open from the lane to the river.

[6] An enlargement mentioned by Blomefield in 1345, really took place in 1292 (20th Edward I.)--See Kirkpatrick, *Religious Orders*, p. 110.



PART OF THE GREYFRIARS' WALL, NORWICH.

We may therefore conclude that, soon after that date, leave to use the creek was obtained, and the bridge was built.

The bridge has a span of no less than 15 feet. It is now blocked up at the back by a stone wall built to support the road, for which purpose there are also two beams of wood let into the road, which is wider by several feet than the bridge. The thickness of the wall being about 3 feet, the bridge extends (to its apparent termination) 10 feet under the road; this would be the width of the road at the time the bridge was built. The wall inside the plantation is $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the apex of the arch; and $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the roadway outside, making the roadway 2 feet above the bridge. Inside the bridge and low down on either side are some small niches of an arched shape, apparently intended for the reception of wooden bars, to answer perhaps the same purpose of obstruction as the boom across the river.

The bridge is not the only object of interest in the plantation.

About 10 feet south of the bridge is a recess in the wall, about 18 feet wide, distinguished by a double row of earthenware jars embedded in the wall, with their mouths outwards. The upper row contains five, the lower three, with a small locker or cupboard at either end. It is reasonable to suppose that this was the inside of some building, which, from its position, might well have been a porter's lodge. There are however no visible indications of any such building having been attached to the wall, nor has a search along the wall below the surface of the ground been rewarded with the discovery of the side walls of any building. At the northern end of the recess is a doorway, now closed up with modern bricks. This was certainly an ancient entrance into the Greyfriars' enclosure, if not into a house. In the lane outside are still remaining the stone

jambs.[7] The wooden lintel, which has at some time given way under the weight of the superincumbent masonry, is still traceable both inside and outside. The stone threshold is also to be seen a little below the surface on the inside, and its northern end rests on a very large foundation stone, which evidently played an important part in the construction of this part of the wall or perhaps of the bridge. This was doubtless the exit used by the friars when they exercised their right of fishing in the dyke from the bank on either side. The road was then 3 feet lower than at present, and this would also be the measure of the ascent from the doorway to the crown of the bridge, a distance of about 18 feet.

This plantation also furnishes us with a clear piece of evidence for the determination of the course of the Grey-friars' boundary. Their wall may still be traced for nearly half its circuit. It begins in King Street, north of Mr. Lowe's School, and goes straight to St. Faith's Lane. It then skirts the lane in its zig-zag course till it comes to this enclosure. At the southern end of the enclosure it leaves the lane and strikes off, at right angles, to the east, forming one side of the plantation, and it terminates as it is bending slightly southwards, as if about to cross Prince of Wales' Road. It must have crossed the line of that road further up on the other side of Cathedral Street North, for the object of this divergence from St. Faith's Lane was to avoid St. Vedast's Church and Churchyard, which never came into their possession. This churchyard occupied the site of Capon's stableyard and the greatest part of Cathedral Street South, as far as about the middle of Prince of Wales' Road. The church stood at the back of the stableyard, in the angle formed by these two streets. After skirting St. Vedast's churchyard, the Greyfriars' wall (here entirely destroyed), proceeded to Rose Lane, including Cook's

[7] This observation is due to J. Gunn, Esq., who has taken a great interest in the investigation of the bridge and its surroundings.

Hospital, which was built on their ground. It then went up Rose Lane as far as King Street, the line of which it followed to the point where we started.

Mr. Skipwith, who finally confirmed the grant to the Greyfriars in 1464, lived in a house which, with its surrounding grounds, was called after him Skipwith's Place. His property lay[8] "in the parish of St. Vedast, in the street [*vico*] of Nether Conesforde, and abutted on the king's way towards the west, and on the king's river [*ripam*] called Wenson towards the east." Towards the north it included the dyke which passed under the stone bridge, but did not, I think, extend so far as the cathedral priory wall.[9] Southwards, according to the description in a lease of 1737, quoted by the Charity Commissioners,[1] it abutted on land on which was afterwards made the road leading to the Foundry Bridge.[2] It thus occupied an area of four or five acres, nearly corresponding to the ground at present in possession of Messrs. Hills and Underwood, excluding a strip of ground under the cathedral wall on the north, and including the lower part of Prince of Wales' Road on the south.

Where the house stood is uncertain. It could hardly have been far to the south of the house in St. Faith's Lane belonging to the Vinegar Works, and now occupied by Mr. Sutton.[3] The Great Hospital lease of this property to James

[8] *Brit. Mus. Add. Charter*, No. 14792.

[9] The ground immediately under the cathedral wall is that called "Osyar Yard" in the Great Hospital Charter, and is distinguished from Skipwith's Place, as being in the occupation of a different tenant.

[1] *Further Report*, p. 510.

[2] That is, the continuation of Rose Lane from St. Faith's Lane to the Foundry Bridge.

[3] The deed referred to above, which relates to this property after Mr. Skipwith's death, recites its conveyance by him to feoffees in two portions, one to the south of the other. A "messuage with buildings and gardens" is mentioned as comprised in the southern portion. The garden lay to the south of the house.

Poole in 1777, gives the lessee permission to "take down the messuage then standing," or binds him to keep "the old buildings" in repair, if not pulled down.

Before Mr. Skipwith's time, the house, says Blomefield, had been "the City House of the *Duke of Exeter*,[4] of Sir William Elmham, Knt., Sir John Carbonel, Knt., after that of the family of the Morleys, and then of the Lord Bardolph." Of this list of apparently successive owners only one can certainly be identified with the property, Sir William Elmham, whose widow confirmed the use of the dyke to the Greyfriars in 1404. She died at her husband's manor of Westhorpe in Suffolk in 1419. Sir William Elmham himself died in 1403. If the Duke of Exeter preceded him, it must have been the first of the four who held the title, viz., John Holland, son of Sir Thomas Holland and Joan Plantagenet the Fair Maid of Kent, who, afterwards marrying the Black Prince, became the mother of Richard II., to whom therefore the duke was half-brother. He was beheaded in 1400. But while there is nothing to connect him with Norwich or Norfolk, there is evidence that the second holder of the title, Thomas Beaufort, was not only possessed of property both in the county and the city, but was also connected with all the four owners mentioned in Blomefield's list. Thomas Beaufort was son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Catherine Swinford. On the attainder of Thomas, Lord Bardolf, in 1408, he received from his half-brother, King Henry IV., a grant of the forfeited Honour of Wormegay, with all the property of the Bardolf family in West Norfolk. He was created Duke of Exeter in 1416, and died in 1426. In his will[5] he constitutes, with others, William Philip, Knight, and William Morley, "my treasurer," his executors. He speaks

[4] It is so marked in Taylor's plan of Norwich in the *Index Monasticus*.

[5] Nicholas' *Testamenta Vetusta*, i. 207, 210, 211; Nichols' *Collection of Royal Wills*, p. 250.

of his manor of Westhorp atte Marshall at Westhorpe in the county of Suffolk, and the reversion of his messuages, lands, &c., in the city of Norwich. He wills that William Morley should have for his life all his tenements within the city of Norwich, and leaves a doublet to Richard Carbonel, Knight, and a cup to William Philip, Knight. Thus it appears, that besides having property in Norwich, he was in possession of Sir William Elmham's manor of Westhorp, and was bound by ties of friendship or service with Richard, son of Sir John Carbonel; with one of the Morley family, and especially with Sir William Phelip, the Lord Bardolf of Blomefield. We can hardly doubt that he was the Duke of Exeter who owned Skipwith's Place, though it may be questioned whether he ever occupied it. Perhaps Blomefield's list of occupiers after Sir William Elmham may be explained as follows:—Sir John Carbonel was one of the feoffees who signed the grant to the Grey-friars in conjunction with Elizabeth Elmham, and in that capacity he may have acted as owner of the house, or even occupied it. The Duke of Exeter then coming into possession of it granted it to his treasurer, William Morley, and finally it passed into the hands of Sir William Phelip of Dennington in Suffolk, who, having married Joan, daughter of Thomas, Lord Bardolf, and being a favourite at court, had the title and all the property of the Bardolfs restored to him. He died in 1441, and probably did not occupy this place, for he inherited also from his uncle, Sir Thomas Erpingham, another similar place called Berney's Place in St. Martin at Palace, which was sold by his widow in 1448.

Mr. Skipwith, from whom the place derived its name, was Burgess or Member for the city of Norwich in 1462, and was, as we have seen, possessor of the property in 1464. From the place having received his name, we may conclude that he long resided here. He was also lord of the manor of

Fordham near Downham Market, where his family continued for several generations.

Either at his death in 1480 or not very long after, Skipwith's Place must have passed into the possession of St. Giles' Hospital. When that hospital was dissolved and re-founded by King Edward VI. under the title of St. Helen's Hospital, Skipwith's Place was transferred under this name to the new foundation. The Vinegar Works were first established on it about 1760, by James Poole, Esq., Mayor, and the freehold has now been purchased by Messrs. Hills and Underwood.

The following description of Skipwith's Place, taken from the original Charter of the Great Hospital in 1547, contains many points of interest:—"and also that whole messuage and one place (*placeam*) of ground called Skipwithe's Place as it lies within the Mote (*intra le Mote*); one piece of pasture lying on the west side of the said Messuage,.... and one garden lying on the south side of the said Messuage, and one pond (*stagnum*) in the middle of the said garden, and one sluice (*unum le sluce*) running to the same pond, and all the fishings and fishing-rights in the same waters, and the aforesaid Messuage belonging, that is to say in the Mote, and Estkirke and Southkirke, commonly called Est Crick and South Crick, with all and singular their appurtenances lying and being in the parish of St. Vedastus within our City of Norwich, now or late in the tenure or occupation of Thomas Burman." This description furnishes evidence of the abundance of water and watercourses in this locality. Its most interesting feature is the names given to certain spots included in Skipwith's Place. For these names the Charity Commissioners,[5] professing to quote from the letters patent, substitute "and the east and south creek." Evidently, however, these words do not describe things then existing; but are old place-names, the original significance of which had long been lost. The common pronunciation

[5] Report, p. 484.

of them is certainly preferable.[6] *East kirk* or church might have a meaning there in reference to St. Vedast's Church, but *South kirk* could not. On the other hand, crick is the old Saxon or Danish form of creek, and these names may well be thought to have preserved the memory of two inlets or coves, so named by the first settlers on this spot. There is other evidence that the river bank in this immediate locality was unsettled until quite recently. Between the dyke and the cathedral wall was an island[7] called the Swan Bank, and just here several pieces of land are said by Blomefield to have been gained from the river.

It is possible that in these inlets and coves, so suitable for landing from the opposite side of the river, we may find a clue to the name "Conesford" belonging to this district. The "ford" must have been a passage by boat,[8] and not on foot, and was most likely in this locality, since these meadows were at a very early time closely connected with the opposite manor of Thorpe.

At all events, at an early period in the history of the city there was in this locality a well-known staithe, and perhaps there were two. One was Lovell's Staithe, the other is called Rushmere or Rustlin Staithe by Blomefield, who states that Sir Thomas Roscelyn built a house near it in Edward II.'s time, and describes the situation as being "on the north side of Skipwith's Place," that is, in St. Faith's Lane, near the cathedral wall. The author of the MS. additions to Cleer's Map of Norwich in the Norwich Museum (traditionally said to be Kirkpatrick), has written on the river bank in this position, "Roscelyn Staithe, called corruptly Russhworth Staithe," perhaps supposing Russhworth and the other

[6] Further on in the Charter a well-known street is described as "Bred Street alias Bear Street." In this case the popular pronunciation of "Burgh" Street, which has survived to the present day, was far more correct than the spelling of those who framed the charter.

[7] Blomefield, ii, 106; Charity Commissioners' Report, 530.

[8] See Taylor's *Words and Places*, p. 167.

similar names to be corruptions of "Roscelyn." He has first placed "Lovell's Staithe" by Sandling's Ferry,[9] but has afterwards erased it and written it in between the two lines just quoted relating to Roscelyn Staithe. All which shews that he had no means of identifying the position of Lovell's Staithe, and thought it might be the same as Roscelyn's Staithe. The reason why Lovell's Staithe is placed just outside the wall of the Cathedral Precincts is that it defined the southern limit of the Prior's Fee[1] along the river bank, and it is assumed that the boundary of the fee coincided with the line of the wall as far at least as the first bend after the Horse Fair. But it is obvious to remark that in that case the wall would naturally have been used to define the boundary, as it is so used in one of the descriptions. Though the existing descriptions clearly mark the point where the boundary entered King Street at Newgate Lane, they give no clue to determine where it left the river at Lovell's Staithe. Blomefield seems to assign quite a different position to Lovell's Staithe, for in speaking of St. Vedast's parish[2] he says, "The fee of the Prior of Norwich extended over this whole parish to Lovell's Staithe, which is at its extremity,[3] and took its name from Roger

[9] Harrod, in *Norfolk Archæology*, ii., p. 6 (note) says Lovell's Staithe was "adjoining south to Sandling's Ferry." He must mean just outside the wall of the Close, for the staithe would hardly be inside the monastery precincts. There was a lane leading from it to the street of Nether Conisford.

[1] Two descriptions, very similar to each other, of the limits of the Prior's Fee will be found in Harrod's *Castles and Convents*, p. 25, and in *Norfolk Archæology*, ii. p. 6.

[2] Blomefield, ii. p. 106.

[3] St. Vedast's parish must have extended along the river for some distance. At the time of the issue of the Great Hospital Charter (1547) no less than nine separate holdings of property are specified as being in St. Vedast's parish. From the Charity Commissioners' Report it appears that, in their opinion, all the property of the Great Hospital in that parish (with the exception of one tenement purchased in 1617) was part of the original grant

Luvell, its owner in 1249." This would place the staithe considerably lower down the river.

The existence of this staithe, perhaps even of these two staithes, at so early a period indicates that in those days this locality was the seat of a good deal of commercial activity, and probably, therefore, of a busy population. This is confirmed by the fact of two of the great orders of friars having settled here, for they sought their spheres of labour, not in lonely spots, like the monks, but in populous quarters of large towns. Moreover, in the Norman period there were in the district under review four parochial churches, St. Vedast, St. John the Evangelist (enclosed by the Grey-friars), St. Michael-in-Conisford (enclosed by the Austin Friars), and St. Peter Permountergate, to which the other three were finally united.

This evidence of an early activity is still further strengthened by a consideration of the natural character of the locality.

The district through which the dyke passed is spoken of

of Edward VI. A map shewing the property of the Great Hospital and other Trusts was prepared by Mr. Millard in 1827, and is now in possession of Mr. Millard of Prince of Wales' Road. From that map (which is copied so far as relates to St. Vedast's parish in the plan accompanying this paper) it will be seen that the Great Hospital possessed the whole river bank, from the cathedral wall to the Austin Friars, near St. Ann's Staithe, except one piece of freehold now held by Mr. Hotblack. The piece between St. Faith's Lane and Rose Lane was almost certainly in St. Peter Permountergate, for Seaman's and Peterson's estates adjoining were partly in one of these parishes and partly in the other. This leaves only one piece of property (viz., the one between St. Vedast's Churchyard and St. Faith's Lane) besides those on the river side, to make up the nine described in the charter. It follows, therefore, that nearly all the nine holdings were by the river side, and since they were all in St. Vedast's parish, if Lovell's Staithe were at the southern extremity of that parish, it must have been considerably to the south of the Foundry Bridge. The Commissioners (p. 510) distinguish the parishes, but on examination their distinction is found to be of no value.

The original charter is in the office of Mr. E. S. Bignold, Clerk to the Great Hospital Trustees.

in Roger Verly's grant as "Nether Conesforde." The explanation of this and the corresponding term "Over Conisford," given by Blomefield, is that "all the parishes on the east of Conisford Street were said to be in Lower or Nether Conisford; those on the west in Over or Upper Conisford." This definition, though on the whole correct, is misleading. Upper and Nether Conisford were two districts, each with its "common" street. King Street was the street or way of Over Conisford; St. Faith's Lane was the street of Nether Conisford.[5] One or two examples of this use of the terms will suffice. When, for instance, the Austin Friars were fined for interfering with "the Cokeye Well in the street of Nether Conisford,"[6] this took place in St. Faith's Lane, near where the Synagogue now stands. On the same page we read that they obtained possession of a messuage which "abutted on the king's way of Upper Conesford." This must have been in King Street, between St. Faith's and St. Ann's Lanes. Again, the southern boundary of the Prior's Fee is described[7] as passing (in part of its course) along the "common way of Nether Cunesford," *i.e.*, St. Faith's Lane, probably by the Horse Fair; and as issuing "onto Over Consford wey,"[8] *i.e.*, King Street, north of Mr. Lowe's School. Once more, in 2nd Richard II., a messuage on the right or north of that portion of the now demolished Pump Street which went from the top of Rose Lane in the direction of the Shirehall, is described as abutting on

[5] It is likely that the street of Nether Conisford originally parted from that of Over Conisford at the top of St. Ann's Lane, and that its present point of departure from King Street is due to the Austin Friars, who obtained leave to enclose more than one lane. Such an alteration seems intended by Woodward in the change introduced into his plan of Norwich between 1300 and 1500 (*History of Norwich Castle*—Series of Historical Plans.)

[6] Kirkpatrick, *Religious Orders*, p. 132.

[7] Harrod's *Castles and Convents of Norfolk*, p. 247.

[8] *Norfolk Archæology*, ii. p. 6.

"Upper Conesford east,"[9] *i.e.*, on King Street, while the messuage next adjoining the former on the Castle side is described as being "in Upper Conesford," the spot indicated being at no great distance from the south-west corner of the Agricultural Hall.

It is evident that the origin of the terms is to be sought in the natural features of the districts thus described. Over or Upper Conisford was the high ground which sloped down from the Castle Hill and Ber Street. Nether Conisford was the low-lying ground by the river side. From the city boundary at Carrow to St. Ann's Lane, this is only a narrow strip, but at that point the river makes a bend, forming the great plain which extends from there to St. Martin at Palace. The northern and larger half of this plain is occupied by the Cathedral Precincts and the parishes of St. Helen and St. Martin at Palace. We are now concerned only with the southern half, between the wall of the Cathedral Close on the north, and St. Ann's Lane on the south. It extended inland almost as far as King Street. The natural level of the ground remained to a great extent unaltered till the beginning of the present century, but since then the district has undergone so many changes that its original features are quite lost to a casual observer. The making of the Foundry Bridge and its approaches; the formation of Synagogue Street, St. John's Street, and most of all, Prince of Wales' Road and the two Cathedral Streets, have produced more alteration in the natural features of this quarter of the city in the last eighty years than was effected in the preceding eight centuries. Still it is even now possible to trace some of the ancient levels at several points: in the plantation where the stone bridge is situated; in the other part of the same ground attached to the Boys' Home on the other side of Cathedral Street; and in the garden between Prince of Wales' Road and St. Faith's Lane (at the back of Nos. 42 to 54) the ground will

[9] Harrod's *Castles and Convents of Norfolk*, p. 140.

be found to lie several feet below the adjoining roads. This is still more visible at Cook's Hospital in Rose Lane, built in 1692, the descent to which is by six steps, and that this was on the level of the road when it was built is clear from some houses on the opposite side of the road being built on the same level, which is also the level of the lower part of Capon's stableyard adjoining the hospital.

The former steepness of the descent from King Street towards the river may be observed by any one who enters the yards or passages on that side of the street, particularly Watson's Yard, opposite St. Peter Permountergate Church, leading through to St. John's Street.

In considering the primitive condition of this portion of the great plain we are speaking of, it must not be forgotten that it would appear to an observer as lying distinctively *between the river and the Castle.* All authorities agree that before Norwich became more than a village, there was a fortification of some sort on the Castle Hill, defended by earthworks; and further, that these earthworks approached very closely to King Street, between the top of Rose Lane and the Post Office. It is true there is considerable divergence of opinion as to the exact nature and direction of these earthworks. Probably Harrod's suggestion of a separate horseshoe-shaped enclosure round the Castle Meadow would find more general acceptance at the present time than Wilkins' theory of a triple rampart and ditch. In regard however to this particular part of the circuit, both theories agree in recognizing such a bank and ditch as almost touching King Street by the Castle Meadow, for some considerable distance. That at this point the Castle Hill projected most into the meadow of Nether Conisford appears from a consideration of the watercourses which crossed it, as far as they can be traced.

The creek or ditch which the Greyfriars obtained leave to use was, no doubt, a natural dyke formed originally by a

stream of water descending from the Castle Hill. The depression in which it lies may be traced as far as the garden of the Boys' Home. Philip Browne in his *History of Norwich* (p. 139) supposes it to have occupied an important position in the primitive topography of the city: "Here," he says, "is likewise a small brook communicating with the river, which now terminates at Stone Bridge. This was the ancient boundary which separated the lands of the King to the south and those of the Bishop to the north of it."

In King's Map is also marked a similar creek, parallel with the first and more to the south. This, like the other, was an open dyke till between fifty and sixty years ago, when it was drained and filled up. It began near some iron gates leading to what was lately best known as Messrs. Ketton's oilcake mill, and entered the river between that property on the north and what is now Mr. Ranson's timber yard on the south. This dyke is marked in Cleer's Map[1] of 1693, in the Norwich Museum, which does not shew the first; and an interesting mention of it at the same date is, I believe, to be found in St. Peter Permountergate Church. On a stone, half covered by the font, is recorded a bequest of £5 annually to the poor of the parish by John Seaman in 1696, "for the performance whereof," he says, "I do devise y^e^ two tenements and ground pertaining to y^e^ same in S^t^ Faith's Lane right over against the pump *near y^e^ creek*." The property thus devised stands opposite to Mr. Hotblack's shoe factory, and, therefore, at some little distance from the dyke. At that time the pump[2] and the creek must have been the most prominent landmarks in that immediate neighbourhood. Assuming that this dyke was the relic of

[1] It is, however, marked in a wrong direction. The position of the place where it issues into the river as compared with St. Ann's Lane shews what dyke is meant.

[2] An old disused pump still exists at the back of the three cottages on the opposite side of the road, adjoining Ranson's timber yard.

a stream from the higher ground it would seem to have come from the direction of Rose Lane. A little doubt is thrown upon this by the fact that a smaller copy of Cleer's Map, undated, makes the creek commence in a little stream coming from the north. Millard's Map also makes the dyke commence from that direction. On the other hand, Cleer's large Map and King's so distinctly make it terminate abruptly landwards just short of St. Faith's Lane, and this is so entirely corroborated by the testimony of persons who remember it, that I conclude the addition in the other maps was an artificial piece of drainage, and not part of the original watercourse.

There still remains a third stream, the direction of which may be traced with tolerable accuracy. It passed through the grounds of the Austin Friars. Mention has already been made of their interference with the "Cokeye Well" in the street of Nether Conesford. After the dissolution of the Monasteries a "cockey or drain" is spoken of in 1594 as passing through the "ground called the Augustine Freres." The Austin Friars occupied the southern part of the meadow of Nether Conesford, as the Greyfriars occupied the northern portion. Their property included that part of King Street between St. Faith's Lane and St. Ann's Lane, ran down the north side of St. Ann's Lane, then after a short river frontage near St. Ann's Staithe, it struck straight across, at the bend of the river, to St. Faith's Lane, so as to include the present site of the Hop Pole Gardens.[3] The fourth side of the square was formed by St. Faith's Lane, between these gardens and King Street. This compact enclosure remained unbroken till 1849, when Synagogue Street was cut through the middle of it. In the construction of the Synagogue the builders encountered what is

[3] Taylor, in the *Index Monasticus*, gives these boundaries correctly. Kirkpatrick incorrectly describes the river as the western boundary; and Blomefield extends their property indefinitely along St. Faith's Lane.

described as a very large ancient drain, running in a rather more south-easterly direction than the street, as though intended to issue in the river at the bottom of St. Ann's Lane. In the line thus indicated, on the other side of St. Faith's Lane, a ditch is stated to have existed not very long ago, starting not far from William Street, opposite the back entrance to Messrs. Boulton and Paul's works.[4] This ditch and drain no doubt marked the line of the cockey that ran through the grounds of the Austin Friars.

If the foregoing account of these three streams is correct, it will be observed that they all diverge from a common centre. Somewhere about the upper part of Rose Lane a spur of the Castle Hill projected into the low ground at a sufficient elevation to determine the course of the streams throughout the meadow.

The suitability of such a situation for the settlement of a fishing community, such as that which formed the earliest population of Norwich, is obvious. It would be the last part of the meadow to be affected by a flood. The two creeks were navigable for boats almost to the very spot; and if Harrod's theory be accepted, that the principal approach to the Castle passed from King Street by the side of the Castle Meadow opposite Rose Lane to the present bridge over the moat, this spot lay exactly on the nearest route between the Castle and the river.

It was either just on this slightly elevated ground or just at its foot that the Church of St. Vedast stood, having been founded, as I venture to suggest, for some of the earliest inhabitants of Norwich, before Yarmouth had supplanted it as the readiest market for the sale of fish, and probably also

[4] In the MS. annotations on Cleer's Map is marked, on the site of this ditch, something almost illegible, but which seems to be "Kyng's Kockey." The same words are also written between two parallel lines at right angles to the former, which would form a continuation of the second dyke just mentioned if it were drawn in a right direction on the map.

prior to the time when herrings were landed on the site of St. Lawrence's Church.

Tradition assigns to St. Vedast's Church a place in *Domesday Book*, though it is not mentioned by name. It is there stated that in Norwich, in the time of King Edward the Confessor, a certain Edstan held two churches and the *sixth part* of a third. This last is identified as the Church of St. Vedast, because at a later time the *sixth part* of that church was given to the almoner of Norwich Priory. Though it can scarcely be said that the identity of the church is thus established, the presumption is generally held to be reasonable. Some confirmation of it may be found in the fact that Edstan's property in Norwich included twelve acres of *meadow*, and to one of his three churches was attached six acres of *meadow*. As Edstan held under the King and the Earl, *i.e.*, in that portion of the burgh which contained the districts of Ber Street and King Street, and was distinguished from the Bishop's portion, now occupied by the Cathedral Precincts, it seems almost certain that these eighteen acres of meadow must have formed part of the river-side meadow of Nether Conisford, in which the parish of St. Vedast lay.

Assuming, then, the existence of St. Vedast's Church in the time of King Edward the Confessor, it might be further argued, from the subdivision of the endowment, that it had even at that date passed through several hands since the first foundation of the church. But those were unsettled times, when the tenure of property was most insecure.

A more interesting field of enquiry, bearing on the probable origin of this church, is suggested by the name of the saint to whom it was dedicated. St. Vedast was a contemporary and coadjutor of the more famous St. Remigius, Archbishop of Rheims, who baptized Clovis I., founder of the French monarchy. In the preparation of Clovis for baptism St. Vedast is said to have assisted. He became Bishop of Arras

in the north-west of France, and dying in 539, was buried in the cathedral there. After the lapse of more than a century, in 667, in the days of Theodoric or Thierri III. one of the most unfortunate of the degenerate successors of Clovis, the bones of St. Vedast were removed from the cathedral to a monastery dedicated to his memory outside the walls. The monastery was endowed by Theodoric, who with his wife Clotilde was buried there, and it became one of the most notable monastic foundations in France.

It is plain that the occurrence of a dedication to St. Vedast in Norwich at so early a period is to be traced to foreign influence. The existence of that influence is not difficult to discover, though it may not be possible to determine exactly when it led to the dedication of the church. Tracing back from the reign of King Edward the Confessor we find that in his time the predominant ecclesiastical influence at work in England was Norman, and not Flemish or French. Previous to that, under Sweyn and Canute, it was Danish. But still earlier we come to a long period of a hundred years, from the establishment of King Alfred's kingdom to the death of Edgar and his great minister Dunstan (from 880 to 980), during which there is abundant evidence of intercourse between England and Flanders, as that part of France in which Arras is situated came about that time to be called. Alfred's step-mother, Judith, was the daughter of Charles the Bald, King of France. In her widowhood at her father's court she contracted a marriage with Baldwin, a Flemish noble, who was afterwards created the first Count of Flanders. Their son, Baldwin II., married Alfred's daughter Elfrida. His son and successor, Arnulf, Count of Flanders, rebuilt the abbeys of St. Bertin and St. Vedast in Flanders at the very time when in England, Edred, another grandson of Alfred's, was reforming the abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon, under the influence of Dunstan. On Dunstan's death the abbot of St. Vedast wrote to his

successor, speaking of his friendship with the great Archbishop; and the earliest Life of St. Dunstan was for a long time in the possession of the Abbey of St. Vedast, having possibly been sent there not many years after his death.[5]

Although, however, this intimacy between England and Flanders undoubtedly existed during this period, it must be remembered that the ties which then united East Anglia with the rulers of the country politically, and still more ecclesiastically, were always of the loosest, and frequently severed altogether. For more than eighty years after 839 there was no East Anglian bishop, and it is doubtful how far the Danish settlers had renounced their paganism.[6] There were, in fact, only two intervals during which it might be thought probable that the name and knowledge of this Flemish saint would have penetrated to Norwich: the few years which followed the baptism of Guthrum and his settlement in East Anglia, and those which followed the subjugation of East Anglia by Edward the Elder until the death of Athelstan, when this part of England was again left under Danish control. In favour of the latter of these intervals is the fact that by that time the Christian Church in East Anglia had begun to re-assert itself, whereas at the earlier its organization had well-nigh perished. In spite of this, however, there is much to be said in favour of the earlier epoch as affording a fit opportunity for the introduction of St. Vedast's name into the city. The conversion of Guthrum and his followers may have been the result of policy rather than conviction; still, by profession they became Christians, and if Paganism was openly avowed in country places, the Christian religion would certainly be professed by the inhabitants of such a place as Norwich Castle and its

[5] Stubbs' *Memorials of St. Dunstan*, P.R.O., Intro. pp. 120 and 121. Jubilee Edition of the *Works of Alfred the Great*, Bosworth and Harrison, 1858, vol. i. pp. 282, 302, &c.

[6] *Report of the Archæol. Institute's Visit to Norwich*, 1847, p. 47.

immediate neighbourhood. And there is distinct evidence to connect the instruction by which their faith would be fostered with a Flemish source. Unable to find scholars in his own country, Alfred applied to Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, and the most eminent man of learning who accepted the invitation was Grimbald, a monk of St. Bertin at St. Omer, a place at no great distance from Arras. The lives of St. Vedast and St. Remigius had both been written by Alcuin, whose work in the foundation of learning in the French Church Hincmar had revived and continued. As the lives and acts of saints occupied a prominent place in the religious teaching of those days, the name of St. Vedast may well have been brought to Norwich by some disciple of Grimbald sent from his school at Winchester to assist in the conversion or instruction of Guthrum's subjects in East Anglia. It is, indeed, within our knowledge that the name of St. Vedast was not only known, but deemed worthy of special honour by the Church at Winchester within less than a century after Grimbald's arrival in England. In the *Benedictional of St. Athelwulf*, Bishop of Winchester,[7] prepared about A.D. 975, St. Vedast is one of only fifteen saints for whose festivals a special form of benediction is appointed. The supposition that the original introduction of the name was due to Grimbald is, perhaps, somewhat strengthened by the fact that in two Anglo-Saxon[8] Martyrologies of the same century in which unfortunately the month of February, when St. Vedast was commemorated, is lost, we find in September the names of St. Bertin and St. Omer, two saints with whom Grimbald was specially associated.

I would suggest therefore that the Church of St. Vedast may have been originally founded for a settlement of Danish fishermen and other dependents on the lord of Norwich

[7] See *Archæologia*, xxxiv. 66.

[8] Quoted by Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 513.

Castle, whoever he may have been, who established themselves in Guthrum's time on the meadow between the river and the Castle Hill. A church in such a situation would of course share in the destruction which fell upon the city in 1004, when Sweyn "came with his fleet to Norwich," landing perhaps near this very spot, to avenge the massacre of St. Brice's Day. But Canute afterwards ordered that the churches destroyed in his father's time should be rebuilt, and to that date we may assign the foundation of the church, which did not entirely cease to exist till the present generation.[9]

One point of difficulty remains to be stated. For at least three hundred years St. Vedast's parish has been "commonly called St. Faith's," and the name of St. Faith's Lane has for more than two hundred years been given to the street of Nether Conisford.[1] What is the connection between these two names? There is a popular impression that the two names, "Vedastus" and "Faith," are both derivatives of "Fides." In his *Index Monasticus*, Taylor gives "Vedast" as another name of St. Faith the Virgin, to whom the Benedictine monastery at Horsham St. Faith's was dedicated. And it is most remarkable that the same association of the

[9] In the angle of the house attached to Capon's stable, at the corner of Cathedral Street South and Rose Lane, is a large stone which was formerly built into St. Vedast's churchyard wall. It is supposed to have been taken originally from the church, and to have marks on it of Saxon origin.

[1] In Peter Peterson's will (temp. Elizabeth) land at the junction of Rose Lane and St. Faith's Lane is described as "in the parish of S$^{t}$ Vedast als. S. ffaith's."

On the back of the Deed of Consolidation between the parishes of St. Vedast and St. Peter Permountergate is endorsed "The Union of S$^{t}$ ffaith's parish," &c. This was in 1564, but the endorsement may be later.

In an Indenture of Isaac Girling in 1666, part of his property is said to abut on the "Common Highway called S$^{t}$ ffaith's Lane."

These three documents are in St. Peter Permountergate parish chest.

Quite recently the name of part of St. Faith's Lane, between King Street and Rose Lane, has been changed to Mountergate Street.

two words should be found in the *Benedictional of St. Athelwulf* just referred to. In the form for St. Vedast's Day[2] the word "fides" occurs three times, twice as specifying the peculiar virtue of St. Vedast. But even supposing that this is the etymology of the word "Vedastus," it is very far from explaining the use of "Faith" for "Vedast" by the common people of Norwich several centuries after the dedication. The corruptions which the name Vedastus has undergone are into "Vaast" and "Foster," which last is an English mode of pronunciation; hence, in London we find St. Vedast's Church in Foster Lane.[3] But how St. Vedast's Church in Norwich came to be called St. Faith's and associated with St. Faith's Lane is a difficulty for which I am unable to offer any satisfactory solution.

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## NOTE ON THE TERMINATION "GATE" IN THE KING STREET DISTRICT.

THE little lane which marked the southern limit of the Prior's Liberty in King Street, as mentioned on p. 128, was called *Newgate*. It led from King Street to St. Faith's Lane between St. Cuthbert's Churchyard on the north and the Greyfriars on the south, and was afterwards enclosed within their wall. The latter part of the word is, no doubt, to be taken in its meaning of "way," and it is interesting to observe how frequently this termination occurs in the names of the lanes entering or issuing from King Street. The three lanes

[2] "Deus fundator *fidei* .... qui beatum Vedastum ad hoc armasti virtute ut tibi militaret in *fide*, concede. . . . . Ut te retribuente populus crescat in numero pro quo sacerdos sudavit in *fide*." Full information concerning St. Vedast will be found in Butler's *Lives of the Saints* and *The Bollandists' Acta Sanctorum*, on February 6th.

[3] To Dr. Simpson, F.S.A., the present Rector of this Church, I am indebted for some of the above references.

I may also take this opportunity of expressing my obligation to Alderman Underwood, of Chapel Field, a native and for many years an inhabitant of St. Peter Permountergate parish, for the benefit of his early recollections of the locality.

which lead from Ber Street to King Street were all formerly called "gates." Mariners' Lane was *Hollgate*, Horn's Lane *Skeygate*, Thorn Lane *Sandgate*. There is also some reason to suppose that the upper part of Rose Lane was at one time called *Southgate*. Blomefield gives the name of the church which stood near to where the Rose Tavern now stands as St. John the Evangelist *in Southgate*. His authority is an entry in Tanner's MS. collections in the Norwich Diocesan Registry (p. 38), which runs thus: "Placea in Southgate ubi fuit aliquando Ecclesia S. Johannis Evangelistæ, ubi nunc taberna (Tax. Walt. Ep. Norw.)"[4] It is difficult to account for this statement, except by supposing Southgate to be an old name for Rose Lane. Another name with the same termination still survives in the district, though not associated with any lane, *Permountergate*. The old explanation of this name, "by the gate of the (castle) mount," is untenable, because it is certain that in the earliest records, both civil[5] and ecclesiastical, the name is described as St. Peter "*de Parmentergate*," which could only mean "in the way or lane of the Parmenter," an old word for a merchant[6] tailor. The lane so called may possibly have been Stepping Lane, though in that case the name was exchanged at a very early period for Tofts' Lane, or it may have been a lane which ceased to exist after it had given its name to the church.

There were thus certainly four, and most probably six, lanes in King Street all called "gates"; and it is further to be noticed that they all partook of the same character, being all steep and narrow passages from a higher level to a lower. Three of them descended from the high level of Ber Street to the street of Over Conisford, where it is only slightly elevated above the river; one, Parmentergate, (whether Stepping Lane or not) was almost similarly situated; while the two others passed from the street of Over Conisford where it attained its highest elevation (now greatly reduced) in crossing over the outstanding spurs of the Castle Hill to the street of Nether Conisford, by a short and rapid descent, as appears from the observations made on pp. 131 and 132.

[4] I give this entry as I find it. I have been unable to ascertain whether the words are really a quotation from the document referred to, the ecclesiastical assessment called the "Norwich Taxation," made in 1254.

[5] See note by Harrod in *Norfolk Archæology*, ii. 260.

[6] *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, Pref., p. xi. (Camden Soc. 1846.)