

NOTICES OF JOHN LOVEKYN,

FOUR TIMES LORD MAYOR OF LONDON,

AND THE MASTER OF SIR WILLIAM WALWORTH.

BY JOHN GOUGH NICHOLS, ESQ. F.S.A.

I BEG to bring before the notice of our Society a discovery which has been lately made in the church of Walkerne in Hertfordshire. It is a portion of the monumental inscription that once commemorated, in the church of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, one of the most eminent of the civic magnates that flourished in the reign of Edward III.

Upon a gravestone in Walkerne church was the following inscription in brass plate:—

Here Lyeth buried under this stone the body
of Rycharde Mumberstone, the sonne of John
Mumberstone, who Deceased the vijth day
of March in y^e yere of o^r Lord God 1581.

This plate having become loose, the following has been found on its reverse:—

[V]ermibus esca datur Lovekyn caro pulcra [Johannis]
[S]is fuit hic maior iterum bis Rege jube[n]te]
[A]nno milleno ter C. cum septuagena.

John Lovekyn was a Fishmonger, and the better-remembered Sir William Walworth was his apprentice. We meet with his name as early as 1338, when out of the sum of 20,000*l.* which the King borrowed of the City for his expedition to France, John Lovekyn contributed 200*l.* He was Alderman of Bridge Ward, and one of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex in 1343-4. In 1347-8 he was one of the citizens sent to Parliament for the City. He filled the office of Mayor in 1348-9, and a second time in 1358-9. In 1365 he was again one of the citizens sent to Parliament. In the same year he a third time became Mayor, and this was at the special command of the King,

who retained him in office for two years. This remarkable circumstance we find particularly recorded in the lines now recovered—

Bis fuit hic Major, iterum bis Rege jubente.

It appears that Lovekyn was substituted in the place of Adam Bury, who had been re-elected by his fellow-citizens, after having held the office during the previous year. The chronicler Fabyan mentions this occurrence, but does not record the reason for it: "And in this yere (he writes), at the Kynges comaundement, Adam Bury, thanne mayre of London, was dyscharged the xxviii daye of Januarii, and for hym electe and chosen mayre John Lovekyn, grocer." Also, thus in Arnold's Chronicle: "This yere, in Janiver, Adam Bury was discharged, and John Lowken chosen, by the Kingis comaundement."

In 1367 he built and endowed a hospital, called Magdalen's, at Kingston-upon-Thames, and in 1368 (or 1370, according to the inscription) was buried in the church of St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, which he had rebuilt.

The Lovekyns were a Surrey family. We find a Roger Lovekyn instituted to the rectory of East Clandon, in the hundred of Kingston, in 1301; and in 1313 he was collated by the Bishop of Winchester to the rectory of Esher, which he resigned in 1315.

Edward Lovekyn, citizen of London, but a native of Kingston, built a chapel in that parish, on the side adjoining to Norbiton, in 33 Edw. I. (1305), and the history of the foundation will be found detailed at full in the "History of Surrey," by Manning and Bray, vol. i. p. 350. For the endowment of this chapel the said Edward Lovekyn, and Robert Lovekyn (probably his brother) gave certain lands and rents for the support and maintenance of one chaplain to perform divine service every day for the souls of the said Edward and Robert, Matilda the mother of Robert, and Isabel the wife of Edward, as also for those of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and all the ancestors, heirs, and successors of the said Robert, and of all faithful people deceased, for all time to come.

Of this family chapel our John Lovekyn became the second founder, by giving lands for the endowment of a second chaplain, in the year 1352. His relationship to the original founders is uncertain, for in letters-patent of 26 Edw. III. he is called the son of Edward, but in the register of Bishop Stratford the son and heir of Robert. Part of the second endowment of the chapel at Kingston, conferred by John Lovekyn, consisted of "two messuages, with their appurtenances, in the parish of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, London, of the yearly value of £4."

By inquisition post mortem 22 Rich. II. (1398), *Johannes Lovekyn, civis et stock-fishmonger Londinensis*, was found to have died possessed, in London, of one tenement in Thames Street, in the parish of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, one tenement in the parish of St. Magnus, one tenement in the parish of the Blessed Mary atte Hille, one tenement in Candlewick Street, in the parish of the Blessed Mary of Abchurch, one tenement and a piece of land called Tregers Wharff in the parish of the Blessed Mary atte Hille, one tenement in Towre Street, and one tenement upon Oyster Hulle in the parish of St. Magnus.*

Lovekyn became the rich man he evidently was by his extensive merchandise in salted or stock-fish, an article then in universal request as provision for fast-days. He has the credit of having removed the traffic from the ancient Stocks-market, which was on the site of the present Mansion House, to the strand on the river side near the market of Eastcheap, at the foot of London Bridge towards the west. Here arose the Stock-fishmongers' Row, subsequently the site of Fishmongers' Hall. The descent of Lovekyn's own mansion has been traced. It became the residence of Sir William Walworth, afterwards of Sir William Askham twice Lord Mayor, of Thomas Botiller also an alderman and a stock-fishmonger like his predecessors, and, after it had been for a short time in the possession of Sir John Cornwall, Lord Fanhope, it finally became part of Fishmongers' Hall. Mr. Herbert, in his "History of the City Companies," has entered very fully into the history of these premises; and in p. 56

* Cal. Inquis. post Mortem, folio, 1821, p. 255.

he has given an abstract of Lovekyn's will, which is dated on Thursday next after the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, 42 Edw. III. (1368).

It happens that Stowe has left us an unusually particular account of the monument, or rather the two successive monuments, of John Lovekyn :

“ The parish church of this S. Michael's (he says) was sometime but a small and homely thing, standing upon part of that ground wherein now standeth the parsonage-house; and the ground thereof was a filthy plot, by reason of the butchers in Eastcheap, who made the same their lay-stall. John Loveken, stock-fishmonger, foure times Maior, builded (in the same ground) this faire Church of S. Michael, and was there buried in the quire, under a faire tombe, with the images of him and his wife in alabaster. The said church hath been since increased with a new quire and side chappels by Sir William Walworth, stock-fishmonger, sometime servant to the said John Loveken. Also the tombe of Loveken was removed, and a flat stone of grey marble garnished with plates of copper laid on him, as it yet remaineth in the body of the church:”—“ as it yet remaineth,” and yet, long before the first publication of Stowe's Survey, in 1598, the brass plate now exhibited must have been torn from Lovekyn's gravestone, because the epitaph upon its reverse, laid down in Hertfordshire, bears the date 1581.

It is very evident that it had shared the fate of Sir William Walworth's monument, which was also in St. Michael's church, and which Stowe tells us, was, “ *amongst others*, by bad people defaced in the reign of Edward the Sixth, and again renewed by the Fishmongers.”

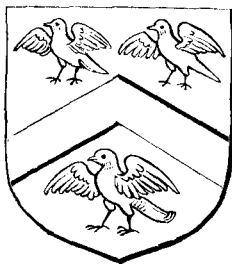
It was in the year 1562, according to a MS. in the Cottonian Library,* that both Walworth's and Lovekyn's monuments were restored by the Fishmongers' Company, William Purvis being then Master. For the Latin lines on the brass plate before us, the following English verses to the same effect were substituted, but giving the date of his death as 1368 instead of 1370:—

* History of St. Michael's Crooked Lane, p. 159.

Worthy John Lovekin stock-fishmonger of London here is leyd,
 Four times of this City Lord Maior bee was, if truth bee seyed.
 Twice he was by election of Citizens then being,
 And twice by the commandment of his good Lord the King.
 Cheif Founder of this Church in his lifetime was he,
 Such lovers of the Commonwealth too few ther be.
 On August the fourth thirteene hundryth sixty and eight
 His flesh to earth—His soul to God went streyght.

It is justly remarked by the historian of St. Michael's Crooked Lane, that the concluding words of this epitaph, "His soul to God went streyght," are characteristic of the post-Reformation period, as directly opposing the doctrine of purgatory.

The arms of Lovekyn have been often given, as Gules, on a chevron argent three escallops sable between as many eagles rising or; but William Smith, Rouge Dragon, in his MS. book of the arms of Lord Mayors, &c., in my possession, gives the coat engraved below, viz.: Gules, a chevron argent between three doves rising or: and the dove rather than the eagle appears to be the bird which would bear allusion to Lovekyn's name.



LOVEKYN.