

Secretaries, stating his inability, in consequence of ill-health and absence from Leicester, to give the same attention as heretofore to the interests of the Society. He offered to continue his services as Editorial Secretary and sub-Treasurer, and suggested—with the entire approval of his colleague, Major Bellairs—the appointment of a third Honorary Secretary, whose duty it should be to call and attend all the meetings, keep the Minute Book and papers of the Society, and to further its interests in every way in his power.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that the best thanks of the Society are due, and are hereby tendered, to Mr. North for his valuable services during the last thirteen years, and that he be requested to continue in office on the terms mentioned in his letter.

It was further RESOLVED that Mr. S. Bull, of Sparkenhoe Street, Leicester, be requested to undertake the office of Additional Secretary until the Annual Meeting of the Society, with the duties pointed out in Mr. North's letter.

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*July 27th, 1874.*

Mr. G. H. NEVINSON in the chair.

It was REPORTED that Mr. Bull had agreed to accept the appointment of Additional Secretary.

A Report of the sub-Committee was read relative to the preservation of Wyggeston's Hospital.

A LETTER from Mr. James Thompson was read relating to the Wyggeston's Hospital, and to the Summer Meeting and Excursion.

It was RESOLVED that the Summer Meeting be held in Leicester on the 8th and 9th of September next.

#### LEICESTER ANCIENT STAINED GLASS.

Mr. NORTH contributed the following descriptive notes upon the remaining portions of this glass (see p. 138).

Four Saints are depicted on the Leicester Glass, viz. :—

S. MARGARET,  
S. CATHARINE,  
S. CHRISTOPHER,  
AND  
S. GEORGE.

A few words upon each will suffice by way of explanation.

#### SAINT MARGARET,

One of the most popular of the mediæval Saints, is supposed to have been the daughter of Theodosius, a pagan priest of Antioch. Having embraced Christianity she suffered martyr-



*J.C. Traylor. Del.*



*J. Fleming & Co. Lith*

XXI. *S.* Margaret.

XXII. *S.* Catherine.

dom, by decapitation, under Diocletian, on 20th July, A.D. 306. She was considered the Patroness of Innocence and Meekness, and (from her supposed deliverance from the womb of the dragon) the Patron Saint whose help was sought by women in child-birth. Her popularity in this country is attested by the fact of there being no less than 238 Churches dedicated to her honour, and by frequently finding her represented in stained glass and mural painting. She is usually depicted wearing the crown of martyrdom; in one hand she carries a book symbolical of her learning, and in the other a long cross with which she pierces the dragon, which endeavoured to terrify her from her faith. Her name is retained in the Calendar of the English Church on 20th July.

The artist of the Leicester glass adheres to the conventional mode of treatment. S. Margaret—whose hair falls in rich profusion over her shoulders—is attired in a close fitting dress, over which she wears a loose robe fastened at the neck with a morse. She wears the martyr's crown, and her head is surrounded by a nimbus. In her left hand she carries a book symbolical of her learning, and in her right a handsome processional cross, with the end of which she has pierced a dragon at her feet.

#### SAINT CATHARINE

Was considered the Patroness of Secular Learning, and as such, she is represented on the Leicester glass as carrying a book in her left hand. She wears the crown both as a sovereign princess and also as a martyr. A nimbus surrounds her head. In her right hand she bears a sword (the instrument of her martyrdom) with the point downwards; whilst at her feet is a wheel armed with teeth, the intended instrument of her death.

Representations of S. Catharine are frequently to be met with in our ancient churches. A fine mural painting of her (very like the present example) was uncovered in Saint Martin's Church, Leicester, some years ago, and may be found figured in my "*Chronicle*" of that Church. Her name is also frequently found upon Pre-Reformation Church Bells. It is retained in the Calendar of the English Church on the 25th of November.

#### SAINT CHRISTOPHER.

The legend of S. Christopher, one of the most popular of the many allegories presented to churchmen in the middle ages, may be thus epitomized:—

S. Christopher was of great stature, and had a terrible and fearful countenance. While still a heathen, it came into his mind that he would seek the greatest prince in the world and obey him. Accordingly he travelled until he came to a sovereign who

was renowned as the greatest in the world, and in his service he stayed until, upon a certain day, a minstrel sang before him a song in which he often named the devil. The king, who was a Christian man, when he heard him name the devil made the sign of the cross in his visage, which induced Christopher to ask the reason of such an act. Upon hearing that it was done to protect him from the devil, he concluded that the devil was mightier far than the king he then served, and so left him, saying, "I commend thee to God, for I will go seek him (the devil) to be my lord and I his servant." In journeying over the desert he met with a great company of knights. One of them, a knight cruel and horrible, accosted him and told him he was the person he sought. They journeyed on till they came to a cross, at which the devil was frightened, left the direct road, and regained it by a circuitous way. This excited Christopher's curiosity, who at last obtained the true reason for the fear his companions evinced. He then exclaimed, "I have laboured in vain, and I will serve thee no longer; go thy way, for I will go seek the Christ." He travelled into a desert and met a hermit, who instructed him in Christianity and ultimately placed him beside a river, where many perished, to bear over travellers harmless, he being of gigantic stature and strength; at the same time assuring him that Christ would approve his work, and appear unto him. Christopher took up his abode there, bearing a great pole in his hand, instead of a staff, to support him in the water, and carried over people constantly for many days; until one night, as he slept in his bed, he heard the voice of a child calling him, and praying to be carried over the water. Then Christopher lifted up the child on his shoulders, and, taking his staff, entered into the river to pass, when the water arose, and swelled more and more, and the child was heavy as lead, and as he went further the water increased, and the child grew more and more heavy, insomuch that Christopher was afraid to be drowned. When he had passed the water, and set the child aground, he said, "Child, thou hast put me in great peril; thou weighest almost as if I had the world upon me." And the child answered, "Christopher, marvel thee nothing; for thou hast not only borne all the world upon thee; but Him also that created and made all the world; I am the Christ, the King, to whom thou servest in this work." And as a token of the truth, he told him that if he set his staff in the earth, by his house, it should grow. When he arose in the morning he found his staff like a palm, bearing flowers, leaves, and dates. Christopher then travelled to Lycia and converted many by exhibiting this miracle, until the king condemned him to death. He commanded that Christopher should be bound to a strong stake and shot through with arrows, but none of them could hit him, for the arrows hung in the air about him without touching him. Then the king, addressing himself to go to him, one of the arrows





*J.C. Traylen Del.*

XXIII \$ . Christopher.



*J. Fleming & Co. Lith*

XXIV. \$ . George.

suddenly smote him in the eye and blinded him. Christopher then told the king he might recover his sight by mixing his (Christopher's) blood with clay and anointing his eye therewith, which, after the decapitation of the saint, he did, and recovered to vindicate God and the martyr.

The teaching of this legend—that not ascetic lives only were acceptable, but that the simplest and most servile work rendered to Christ, and the performance of humble daily duties were accepted and acknowledged by Him—being what would be easily understood, and gratefully accepted, by the great mass of the people, rendered S. Christopher pre-eminently a layman's saint, and his name one of the most popular in the mediæval calendar. His figure is found still existing in the parish churches of this country more frequently than that of any other saint. Indeed it would be tedious to enumerate the vast number of representations still to be found in ancient stained glass and mural painting. It must suffice to say that in York alone there are six representations of him in ancient glass, exclusive of the gigantic figure in a window on the south side of the nave of the Minster; and that wherever mural paintings of large extent are uncovered in churches, S. Christopher is almost always a prominent figure. The most detailed painting of that kind I have seen exists in the church of S. Peter, Shorwell, Isle of Wight. It was fully described by me in "*The Midland Counties Historical Collector*,"\* in the year 1855. Nearly the whole legend, from the march with Satan to the martyrdom of the saint, is there given with minute detail.

It was thought in mediæval times that whoever looked upon the figure of S. Christopher would not weary throughout the day, but would have strength given him to go through his work. He was also thought to be a preserver against sudden and unnatural death. A few churches were dedicated to him in this country. "*The Christopher*" was a popular inn sign in the middle ages—his badge was worn by travellers on their breasts; Chaucer tells us the yeoman in the Canterbury Pilgrimage wore

"A Cristofre on his brest of silver,"

and an early, if not the first known, woodcut engraving represents Saint Christopher. So whether in church or at market, on a journey or in the study, the figure of this popular saint was constantly before the eye.

The representation on the Leicester glass is in very good preservation. The saint is represented as a powerful man with a profuse beard, and up to his ankles in water. His knees are bending under him with the weight of his burden. He supports himself by leaning heavily with both hands upon a rough staff, which already has miraculously burst forth into leaf. The Divine

\* Vol. i., p. 200.

Child, who is seated on his shoulder, bears in his left hand the Orb of Sovereignty surmounted by the Cross of Redemption: his right hand is held up in benediction. His head is surrounded by a nimbus, within which is a cross pattée.

### S. GEORGE

Was acknowledged as the Patron Saint of England in lieu of S. Edward the Confessor, at the synod of Oxford, held in the year 1220. His great popularity during the middle ages is attested by the very many representations of him still remaining in sculpture—chiefly in the tympana of Norman doorways and on fonts—in ancient stained glass and mural painting. The old battle-cry of the English soldier was “Saint George for England.” Under his name Edward the Third, in the year 1330, instituted what is now the most ancient, the most noble, and the grandest Order of Knighthood in Europe—the Order of the Garter. The stalls of the Knights of this Order in Saint George’s Chapel, Windsor, are gorgeous with their armorial bearings and insignia. Special prayers are there offered in the daily service for all members of the Order, and on “Obit-Sunday” there is a special service held on their behalf.\* So great was his popularity that in spite of the uncertainty attaching even to his existence, his name was retained in the Calendar of the Church of England, when so many “black-letter” saints were struck out in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His name will be found under date of 23rd of April.

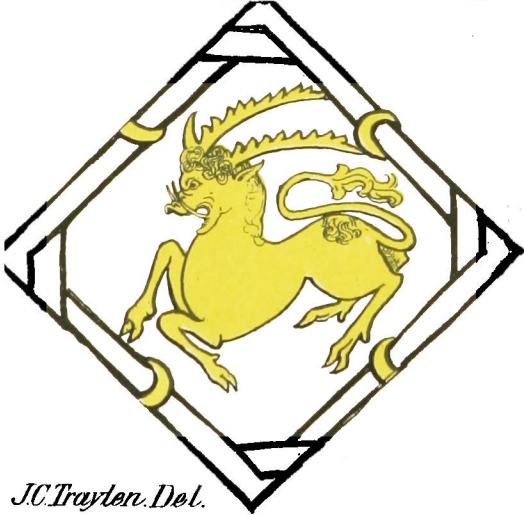
The “Union Jack” of England, which flies supreme on every sea of the world, is the Cross of S. George combined with that of S. Andrew, the Patron Saint of Scotland.

S. George was said to have been born in Cappadocia, but like other illustrious men the place of his birth has been disputed. An amusing instance of this came to light during the recent visit of this Society to Coventry, when it was stated that the city of the “three tall spires” claimed to be the birth-place of the saint. As a sequel to that claim it should be mentioned that when the renowned “Peeping Tom” was taken from the window where it has been for so long exhibited, and placed before our learned member, Mr. M. H. Bloxam, F.S.A., he at once gave it as his opinion that the figure was one of S. George of the time of Henry the Seventh, and that it had been probably taken from one of the city churches. Other ancient wooden figures of S. George are in existence, but they are rare.

In Leicester the Guild of Saint George had its chapel in S. Martin’s Church, where a richly caparisoned figure of the saint on horseback stood upon a platform, and “the Riding of the George” was one of the most popular holidays of the year. I have

\* Blunt’s *Annotated Prayer Book*, p. 45.





*J.C. Traylen. Del.*



*J. Fleming & Co Lith*



given a full description of this and of the Guild in my "*Chronicle of S. Martin's Church.*"

The artist of the Leicester glass represents S. George as equipped in a full suit of armour as it was worn during the latter half of the fifteenth century; showing the *salade* or skull cap, the collar of mail, the large elbow and knee pieces, the protuberant breast plate, &c. A nimbus surrounds the head. The saint, as type of the Christian soldier, is transfixing the huge dragon—the emblem of sin—upon which he is treading, with the spear in his left hand, whilst his right wields a large sword with which he is about to slay the monster. The winged dragon, with a head at each extremity, writhes in powerful, but vain, resistance beneath the firm tread of the saint.

#### "TOWN CREST" AND TOWN ARMS.

The two remaining portions of this Leicester ancient glass contain what have been described as "The Town Crest" and "The Town Arms." It is questionable whether the subject on the first is correctly designated. The crest of the Borough of Leicester has long been a Wyvern. The fabulous Wyvern is represented, heraldically, as a beast with two short legs; the animal here depicted has four, and so accords with the heraldic dragon: it has also a curious addition—it is carrying in its mouth what is apparently one of its own young, the wings of which are undeveloped.

I must leave those members of our Society who are more learned in heraldry than myself to discuss the meaning—if it has any—of the subject so depicted on this piece of glass.

The Town Arms of Leicester—*Gules, a cinquefoil ermine*—are clearly intended to be depicted on the second of these "lights." It may be worthy of notice that it has been for many years customary to depict the ermines as pointing not all downwards, but each from the centre of the cinquefoil to the point of each foil. They are so shown on the silver waits' badge preserved in the Town Museum; they have so appeared upon many, if not all, of the shields of arms upon various publications issued by the Corporation, and they have also appeared in that way at the head of local newspapers. This method, appearing to me to be incorrect, and my own impression being strengthened by the mode of depicting them on this ancient glass, where the ermines are all given as pointing downwards, I ventured to raise the question in the portion of a local newspaper set apart for such antiquarian matters of local interest. Our friend, Mr. Wm. Kelly, in order to answer my query, and to obtain the highest authority on the subject, appealed to Sir Albert Wood, Garter King at Arms, who very courteously sent him four tracings from different drawings of

the Borough Arms and Seals in the Old Register of the College of Arms, in which (in every instance) the ermine spots are shown as pointing downwards, and which mode, Sir Albert stated, was "quite correct."

As it is well to be "quite correct" in this as in everything else, I trust that our local authorities and all other persons will note this decision, and follow it in all future representations of the Town Arms.

There is preserved with this glass already described a further piece, square in form, upon which is depicted the nondescript animal here shown.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I have nothing more now to say with regard to this extremely interesting and valuable stained glass beyond offering a few remarks and suggestions as to the probable use of the building in which it was originally placed. Both Nichols and Throsby state that the house in Highcross Street in which this glass was originally placed was the Chantry House belonging to the Guild of Corpus Christi; but neither of them give any authority for the statement. Indeed Nichols speaks of the Guild Hall and four houses adjoining (which will be referred to presently) as belonging to the Guild of S. George, whereas the Hall of that Guild, although standing in Town Hall Lane, was a totally distinct building from the Hall of Corpus Christi.\*

My own impression is that the Chantry Houses occupied by the priests of Corpus Christi were in close proximity to the Hall.—that whilst the latter occupied one side of a court, the portion now known as the Mayor's Parlour another, the Chantry or residences of the priests occupied the third, or south side, where in later times were the kitchen and culinary offices of the Corporation, and where now stand the more modern residence and offices of the Chief Constable. The following facts may be mentioned in confirmation:—

The Guild Hall still stands. In the windows of the "Mayor's Parlour" are various fragments of stained glass, upon many of which is depicted the cognizance of the guild—the chalice and wafer.

In the account of the Rent Gatherers of the Guild for 1492-3, now preserved, are these entries:—

Repacions of the Chauntre : ffyrste paid to Ric. Bradfeld  
& his man for a day & a halfe ... .. xviij*d*.

This entry shows the existence of a Chantry.

In the account of the Stewards of the Guild for 1525-6 is found:—

\* See North's *Chronicle of S. Martin's Church*, p. 244.

It' for wedyng of the *Cort* & clensyng off the house  
 ageynst Corp<sup>s</sup>. Xpi dynar ... .. vij*d*.  
 This shows a Court Yard. Again:—  
 pd vnto a smyth at West Brygge ffor mendyng of the  
 Chantre Wykkett & iiij keys ... .. vid.

This entry points to the "four houses" mentioned by Nichols, a key being apparently provided for each of the chantry priests then occupying those houses. One of the houses was repaired at the same time:—

It' for mendyn of a wyndow in S<sup>r</sup>. Nycolas Chamb<sup>r</sup>. ... xij*d*.

It may I think, from these brief premises, be assumed that the Chantry of the Corpus Christi Guild stood where we might expect to find it, namely, close to the Hall of the Guild, and to S. Martin's Church—the Church in which the altar of the Guild stood.

If such be the case the house in which this ancient glass was originally placed was not a Chantry belonging to any fraternity belonging to S. Martin's parish. The glass itself does not lead us to infer that it was so, but rather the contrary. It is true almost all the subjects depicted are of a religious kind, but there is no cognizance of Corpus Christi Guild shown as is the case in the window of the Guild Hall already referred to, and which would almost certainly have been a prominent object had the priests of that Guild resided within its walls.

Indeed there is nothing beyond the fact of the character of the subjects depicted to have led to the inference that the building was anything beyond the house of a well-to-do citizen of the reign of Henry the Seventh, and we may not unfairly—in the presence of facts already mentioned, and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary—conclude that such was its original use. A religious man of that time with artistic tastes, and with money to indulge them, would not be doing a very strange thing in adorning and beautifying the principal room of his dwelling in the manner indicated. This conclusion is strengthened, and its owner guessed at, with some show of probability, by the presence of the initials R. W. immediately under the subject depicted upon several pieces of the glass.

As is well known several of the family of Wigston were eminent merchants and good citizens of Leicester at the time this glass was made. William of that family was the munificent builder and founder of the Hospital standing on the west side of S. Martin's Church. There were evidently several of the name living in Leicester towards the close of the fifteenth century, for in a Rent Roll of Corpus Christi Guild for the year 1476, preserved amongst the muniments of the Corporation of Leicester, are the following entries:—

