

treading under his feet the spirits of evil and distortion. The apex of the recess or niche would seem to portray the shrined St. Alban, incensed by the church, others bearing musical symbols. On the left hand of this the figure of St. Peter, on the right hand that of St. Paul. Immediately under these are _____ and King David respectively. The lower portions represent the twelve apostles, and at the extreme corners the symbols of the Evangelists. The inscription is brief and significant. The slab is about eleven feet long and three feet wide, and I hope of sufficient interest to be preserved as a souvenir of the olden time. Mr. Ordish also exhibited a photograph of the rubbing, and the Committee resolved to purchase a copy for the Society.

MR. THOMAS CARTER, LL.B. contributed the following paper, (which was read for him by the Rev. W. G. Dimock Fletcher) on the

DANISH PLACE-NAMES OF LEICESTERSHIRE.

IN searching into the dimness of the distant past, that shadowy time when written history fails us and we grope our way uncertainly towards a knowledge of whence we come, some side-light is often thrown upon our path from a study of the names of rivers, mountains, towns, villages, and even fields and houses, brought down to us by earliest tradition. Just as in North America, when perhaps there will not remain a single Red man of all the tribes who were once undisputed masters of a vast tract of country, there will still be evidences of his existence in Susquehanna, Mississippi, Alabama, and other names so musically surpassing the harsh Pittsburgs, Bostons, Knoxville's of their European supplanters; so now in the place-names of our own country there can be found traces of the successive waves of migration that have rolled over these islands, and have left behind them the several deposits that have formed the crust of our nationality.

In this paper I propose to deal only with the county names that take us back to Danish period. These we find mostly in the towns and villages. It is the physical features which carry us farthest into the past. The few surviving Celtic names are of rivers, as Devon, Tweed, Sence, Avon, Leire, Soar, or of hills, as Bardon, Pelder, Nanpantan. These are not usually swept away by invaders. The towns, on the contrary, are ravaged and destroyed by the conquering foe, and their names often perish with them. The chieftain chooses perhaps a new site, rebuilds and calls the place after his own name.

The first settlement of the Danes seems to have been near the Wash or Humber. They advanced northward and eastward. They found there way into Leicestershire probably over the wolds

of Lincoln. Under cover of their five Burghs of Leicester, Lincoln, Stamford, Derby and Nottingham, they established themselves firmly, at least as far as Watling Street. Leicestershire being an outlying district towards the east boundary of the Danelagh, we should not expect to find in it such marked traces of Danish names as in the parts nearer the coast. Including the generally accepted Danish terminations, -by, -thorpe, -thwaite, -wick, -toft, -beck, -dale, there are in Leicester 87, in Lincoln 297, in Yorkshire 405; of these -by is well-known to be the most frequent. It is derived from the Icelandic root *bua*, to dwell, appears in the English by-law, is traced to an Aryan root *bhu*, to grow, from whence proceed be, build and other cognate words. "By," and "bö," another form of it, have the meaning of village in Denmark, Norway and Sweden at the present day. In Iceland, the same word in its altered form of *boer* indicates a farm. Possibly, therefore, the termination -by may originally have marked a dwelling-house, the original home of a single family, round which the village was formed. There are more than 60 villages ending in -by in Leicestershire, over 200 in Lincolnshire, and about 270 in Yorkshire. Leicester being in area less than one-third of Lincoln and one-seventh of Yorkshire, is not proportionately behind either of these counties in this feature. These villages are most numerous in the basin of the Wreake, in the hundred of East Goscote. The names, exclusively Danish, form one-sixth, *i.e.* about 16 per cent. of all the place-names in the county. There are others too, which, if not altogether Danish, seem certainly to have an admixture of this element. This result tends to show that the Danish immigration was not like that of the earlier Teutons, a war of extermination leaving no place for the dispossessed Celts, but was more like a conquest or supremacy of a more powerful kindred tribe establishing itself amidst and becoming fused with the people of the country.

Mr. Freeman divides the Danish influence upon England into three periods: first, the period of plunder (789-885); second, of settlement (855-897); third, of political conquest (897-1016). It is to the middle period that we must refer the origin of the names here are considering.

The fusion of the Angle and the Dane was not a difficult matter when once the fury of the struggle was spent, for they were sprung from the same stock, they spoke a kindred language, and had adopted many similar social customs. But when he first landed on these shores, the Dane was a fierce heathen, and this perhaps gave him an advantage over the English. The conversion to Christianity at first seems to have tended to enervate the Celtic tribes. The Romish ecclesiastical system was of too static a type, did not foster the spirit of individual freedom and independence, and so may in some measure be responsible for

the unsuccessful resistance they made against these ruthless Vikings. The old heathen worship was revived, and altars were again raised to Thor and Odin. Are there any traces of this reaction preserved in the names of these settlements? If we cannot trace Thor among the -bys, he seems only half concealed in our Thurcaston, Thurlaston and Thurmaston; and even if we suppose that these places were named after mortals named after these deities, the myth has still left its traces.

In Goadby, we may perhaps find Gautr, a poetical synonym for Odin, and signifying father, a common name among the northmen. *Vili*, sometimes in Norse mythology identified with Odin, may be preserved in Willoughby.

The name Ketil, common among the Danes, has some religious associations. It refers to the strange belief that Thor had seized a huge cauldron from the giant Hymir, that the gods might have a vessel large enough in which to brew their beer. Hence Kettleby; Thurcaston: in Domesday Book=Turchetel-stone.

Askr is another personal name that is mixed up with Norse mythology. The first man *Askr* was created by the gods out of the ash-tree. We may compare in passing Hesiod's account that Zeus created the third or brazen race out of ash-trees. Iggdrasil, the world-tree which spread itself through all the earth and into both upper and lower worlds, was an ash. This tree was much revered by the Norseman. To protect his ground from evil influence, he planted this around his dwelling as naturally as the Roman set up his sickle-bearing image of Priapus. Either the personal name or the tree has given rise to our numerous Ashbys.

Asfordby seems to suggest the name Asvard, *i.e.* holy guardian, unless the Domesday Book form Offerdebie forbids it.

Wyfordby may contain Vé, sanctuary, which occurs in many Scandinavian places, Vibory, Vilund, &c. In passing, too, may note that Launde is probably the Normanised form of Lun the sacred grove, which appears also in Lount wood, corresponding to Lundr in Iceland, and Lund in Sweden.

Amongst the Danish chieftains whose heroic deeds were handed down in story was Inguar, one of the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok king of Denmark, who in company with his brother Hubba headed an expedition against the Northumbrian coast. This name appears in Ingarsby. Some are inclined to trace it also in the neighbouring name of Hungerton, connecting Hunger with Inguar. It has been noted as a curious coincidence that there is a Hunger Hill close to a Humberstone in Lincolnshire, a Humberstone Gravel close to Hungerton near Grantham, and for a third time we have Hungarton, Humberstone, and Ingarsby in close neighbourhood in Leicestershire.

In Frisby and Saxby we can trace the comrades of other heroes who gained their reward for help in the enterprise of the N^{or}th^{umb}ers.

men. Among names which recall more especially the seafaring life of the Vikings, the most characteristic is Somerby, or Somerledebi as the Domesday Book has it. Sumarlidi means summer-farer. It is used in the Saxon Chronicle almost as synonymous with Viking. As soon as the winter was over, they began their raids, and throughout the summer spread themselves over the neighbouring seas, making their harvest of plunder. So regular were their voyages in one direction that the west became a synonym for Britain. So the westward farer, westerlidi, was another equivalent for Viking, and in Smeeton Westerby there is perhaps the record of one of these raiders.

As we have found traces of the Dane's heathen belief, so we can also find record of his change of faith. The numerous Kirbys or Kirkbys, four in Leicester and six in Lincolnshire, besides the interest of their Danish origin probably record the existence of mother churches at a time when churches were much rarer than in later times. It is the exception when Domesday Book mentions a church in connection with a village.

Turning next to political names, we have another reference to the Danelagh in Wapentake so commonly applied in Domesday Book to the divisions of the county. When a new chief of each division was appointed, the vapna-tak, or weapon-touching, was the sign of fealty at the assembly of the notables of the district. [The fact that Gartree is thrice applied to the hundred division in Lincolnshire, once in Leicester, and appears also as a place-name in Yorkshire, would seem to suggest a Danish origin. Geiri means a triangular piece of ground, so that it might mean a triangular clump of trees forming a conspicuous land-mark in the district. Gare is still used in Lincolnshire for a triangular piece of ground that has to be ploughed differently from the rest].

When so many place-names are derived from personal names and these in their turn are often taken from animals, it is difficult to say whether we have any real records of animal life; whether in Harby, Brooksby, Rearsby, Barsby, and Arnesby, we can trace the hare, the badger (brokr), the fox (refr), the bear, and the eagle, or whether they refer to heroes who resembled these animals in swiftness, cunning, strength or other qualities.

With reference to vegetable life, the Ashbys have already been mentioned. To them we can add Appleby, and perhaps Thurnby, and Barkby.

Of names which refer to the natural features of the county, the three Dalbys are obvious examples. Dal-by, or village in the Dale, does not seem quite applicable to the situation of all these villages, especially as one is known more familiarly as Dalby-on-the-Wolds. Is it possible that here, as often, the most obvious is not the right derivation, and that we may trace in this name the dæl, dole, or share of land parcelled out as the reward of some chieftain?

Ratby has one Domesday Book form Rodebie, resembling the Danish Rödby which Professor Worsae refers to rydde—to clear away. It would then mean the dwelling in the forest-clearing, a description which would be very appropriate to the situation of Ratby. Other suggestions are a reference either to the *red* colour of the soil, or to the Roman road running near.

The following complete list of place-names ending in -by, seventy-two in number, will show that in the above remarks on their origin the subject has been by no means exhausted.

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| Ab-Kettleby. | Goadby. |
| Appleby Parva. | Goadby Marwood. |
| Appleby Magna. | Harby. |
| Arnesby. | Hoby. |
| Asfordby. | Ingarsby. |
| Ashby-de-la-Zouch. | Kilby. |
| Ashby Folville. | Kilwardby. |
| Ashby Magna. | Kirkby Mallory. |
| Ashby Parva. | Kirby Bellars. |
| Ashby Scrubs (near | Kirby Frith. |
| Kirby Muxloe). | Kirby Muxloe. |
| Barkby. | Lowesby. |
| Barkby Thorpe. | Naenby. |
| Barkby Holt. | Oadby. |
| Barsby. | Quenby. |
| Beeby. | Ratby. |
| Bescaby. | Rotherby. |
| Bittesby. | Rearsby. |
| Blaby. | Saxby. |
| Brentingby. | Saxelby. |
| Brooksby. | Saltby. |
| Bushby. | Shearsby. |
| Blackfordby. | Shoby. |
| Cadeby. | Sileby. |
| Cosby. | Somerby. |
| Dalby Magna. | Stonesby. |
| Dalby Parva. | Sysonby. |
| Old Dalby. | Thurnby. |
| Enderby. | Tugby. |
| Eye-Kettleby. | Wartnaby. |
| Freeby. | Welby. |
| Frisby. | Willoughby Gorse. |
| Old Frisby. | Willoughby Waterless. |
| Gaddesby. | Wyfordby. |
| Galby. | (Smeeton) Westerby |
| Groby. | Witherley. |
