

A 16TH-CENTURY MAP OF THE RIVER TRENT NEAR SHELFORD

by

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I

INTRODUCTION

The following paper is not the result of original research. Information concerning the Fletcher family is, for instance, set out in more detail in Charles Gerring's *History of Gedling* (1908), where a fairly full abstract of Robert Fletcher's will may be found.¹ The matter of Sir Thomas Stanhope's weir is taken from the published Acts of the Privy Council for the relevant years.

The map, however, a find of Professor Barley's, seemed worth publishing in its own right. An attempt, therefore, to establish its provenance was obviously necessary, and this enquiry led inevitably to a consideration of the various disputes along the river which probably occasioned the making of the map in the first place, as is explained later. Again, the Fletcher house, long since vanished, was, so to speak, re-erected by the map, and the involvement of Francis Fletcher in the disturbances of 1592–93, culminating in his appearance before Star Chamber, seemed to set people into the landscape of the map and to justify trying to pull the scattered details into something of a connected story.

This map² has been referred to already in the report of the Gibbet Hill excavations. It is a drawing on paper, rather less than 15 inches wide by 10½ inches long. It is badly damaged in the folds, and in two places has fallen into holes which fortunately do not, as far as can be seen, materially affect its value. It deals with that section of the Trent valley which includes the village of Stoke Bardolph on the west bank, and the east bank is shown almost to Shelford. It is damaged by one of the holes at the point where Stoke Bardolph would have been drawn. It is difficult to estimate the scale to which the map was set out, as there are no feature shown on its right-hand side by which it can be compared with the modern 6-inch Ordnance Survey, but, as far as can be judged, it is about 9½ inches to the mile.

The date of the map, for reasons to be explained later, is almost certainly about 1592, and it is surprising to find how little the landscape has changed in this area, and how many of the features shown on the map may still be traced on the ground. Of these features, the less important may perhaps be referred to briefly at this point, starting from the left-hand side of the map. The island, 'Prier Hoult', is now divided from the east bank of the river only by a marshy depression, within which lies presumably the site of the locks shown on the drawing. 'Cherrye Hoult' on the opposite bank was later known as Castle Field, and the manor house of the Bardolph family stood here until, probably, about 1400. Beyond the damaged section of the map lie what the cartographer seems to have intended as the open fields of Stoke Bardolph. The line of the road which follows the river is still

¹pp. 187-191. ²P.R.O., M.R.P. 10.

that of the modern road to the point at which a fork is shown. The eastern arm continued, as today, to Stoke Ferry and thence towards Bulcote; the western branch is now masked by the Corporation Sewage Farm buildings.

Assuming a fair degree of accuracy for the map, the road from the ferry to Shelford can scarcely have followed the present line on the eastern bank of the river. However, it seems likely that at some time before the date of the map the Trent either followed the course of the mill dam which was to cause so much trouble or, more probably, ran in at least two main channels, of which the future dam was one. Some confirmation of this is to be found in the fact that the area between the dam and the present course of the river is known as 'The Holmes', a word meaning 'an island'. Moreover, Shelford would in that case have been about one-third of a mile nearer to the river than it is today, and the name of the village would be rather more appropriate to its situation. Finally, there is the interesting entry in the Nottinghamshire Coroners' Rolls:¹

About 5 p.m. on 22nd of January 1541 when William Johnson intended to go from Burton Joyce to his house in Shelford he crossed the R. Trent in Stoke ferry. When he left the ferry he forgot the usual path which was covered with a large amount of snow and fell into a pit, which was covered with ice and snow, in a stream called 'the old Trent' within the lordship of Shelford and was drowned.

The implication of this is that the 'old Trent' here referred to can hardly have been other than the dam, since the unfortunate man had already crossed the river by the ferry, though which of the branches of the road shown on the map he followed to disaster it is, of course, impossible to know. At all events, it suggests a change in the course of the river within the folk memory of the mid-16th century, similar perhaps to that which occurred in 1600, when a heavy flood left Holme by Newark on the eastern side of the river, whereas it had been previously on the western.²

The mill dam itself, although now blocked at various points in its course, was clearly unusually wide and deep. An air photograph taken recently by Mr. J. Pickering shows it very plainly to be a canalised stream whose original meanders are to be seen on either side of its present bed. As to the mills, drawn on the map with their two water wheels, no trace remains, except for the name of the field track and the bridge over the dam. Nor is there any indication that they survived until the publishing of the earliest maps giving any indication of the existence of buildings, that is Bowen's map of 1785, to the O.S. edition of 1836.

The remaining feature of interest on the map is the house, against which is written 'The erl of Shrewsbury Stoke Bardolfe'. The drawing shows what appears to be substantially a two-storey building, but with dormer windows indicating an attic range. It has a slightly projecting entrance and two wings on the conventional 16th-century pattern. It is surrounded by a low, enclosing wall. This house stood within the area of the sewage farm buildings, and its existence had apparently left no trace. Some years ago, however, Mr. A. R. Stone, at that time Farm Manager, called attention to a flight of substantial stone steps descending well below the present ground level, which had been exposed during the putting up of new farm buildings. In the side of the steps was still a large iron ring, probably

¹Thoroton Record Series, XXV, 199.

²T. Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire* (1853) p. 537.

for horse tethering. It seems likely that here were the only remaining traces of the house, for which the map has provided the evidence.

It is now possible to consider the provenance of this very interesting record, and see where various aspects of it touched briefly on matters of state and occupied the attention of even the Elizabethan Council itself.

II

The existence of the map and its presence among the State Papers in the Public Record Office connects it with one of the recurrent quarrels between the riparian owners along this part of the river Trent which disturbed the peace of the locality on a number of occasions. The extremely high cost of road transport made river traffic very important, and any interference with passage on the Trent by, as in this case, the building of weirs could cause widespread complaint at the interruption and danger to shipping. Damage to fishing was also alleged in most of these disputes. This particular quarrel has been referred to briefly by the late Professor A. C. Wood in a paper, 'The history of trade and transport on the River Trent'.¹ The map gives a good deal more point to the record, and, although many aspects are far from clear, the whole story seems worth a more detailed examination.

In the Gedling parish registers there is recorded the marriage of Robert Fletcher to Alice Ayre on 18th October 1559. She was Robert's second wife, and the entry suggests that Fletcher was already established at Stoke Bardolph by 1560. His home was this house shown on the map, soon to pass into the possession of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Fletcher family also claimed a manorial lordship in Gedling and Stoke Bardolph, which led to many complications and disputes. This appears to have been the lordship called the Everingham Fee, the more important part of the ancient Alselin barony having by this time passed into the hands of the Stanhopes of Shelford.

Robert Fletcher died in 1578. In his will, to which reference has already been made, he is described as 'gentleman, of Chesterfield'. The will is a long and interesting document. It was apparently drawn up by himself; at any rate, much discursive and revealing information appears in it which hints at, if it does not clearly explain, some of the difficulties in which both Robert and his family were involved. Of these difficulties the will makes a direct comment on 'the longe and tedious suites between Sir Thomas Stonehop [Stanhope] and me' which 'now are at anie end', and continues:

I shall most humblie and hartelie desire for him to forgive me as I from the bottome of my harte have forgiven him and where I have putt to his owne consience and worshippes consideracon not onlie the two hundreth and four poundes tenn shillings which he recovered of me in the Accon [action?] of the case against all equitie but also in all other matters I trust his worship will have some remorse of consience

all of which suggests that Fletcher's deathbed forgiveness was still a little qualified. The testator also states:

And my trust is that the person [parson] of gedlinge shalbe by order of lawe compelled to sett up my monument againe which by all good order and humanitie he uncurteously by the comaundement of an hard hatred man caused to be pulled and defaced

¹*Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, LIV (1950) 7.

The syntax is confused but the meaning is plain, and the 'hard hatred man' must have been the same Sir Thomas Stanhope whose pursuit of his rights of lordship in the Shelford barony were embroiling him in quarrels with other of his neighbours than the Fletchers. It is probable that in this last instance trouble had arisen over patronage rights in Gedling church, where there had been a very early division between the Shelford and the Everingham fees. The parson's behaviour, if Fletcher's version is to be believed, leaves no doubt as to which was the stronger party. This Sir Thomas Stanhope was the son of Sir Michael Stanhope, who had come into possession of Shelford in 1538, and whose widow continued to hold it despite the attainder and execution of her husband in 1552. Sir Thomas was indeed, as later events were to show, a hard man, intent on exacting every possible profit from his lordships, and, one may assume, assiduous in using the influences which he could bring to bear in London, where his brothers and eldest son were well established in official posts during Elizabeth's reign.

The heir to Robert Fletcher was his son Francis. The will was lavish with small bequests, and references to sheep, cattle and rents in Chesterfield imply that the inheritance was substantial, and give no suggestion of financial difficulties, yet before the end of the century Francis Fletcher was to die intestate and in debt. Whether the injunctions in the will,

And I charge my heire that he be good and louinge to my Tenants and to paie them such money
as I have borowed of them and neither take fine of them nor reise there Rentes and in so doinge
I doubt not but that god will prosper him

may be read as showing some concern for Francis' character and intentions it is impossible to tell, but a Chancery hearing of 1614, also extensively quoted in Gerring,¹ gives some indication of the troubles into which Francis had fallen by 1592, and explains why the house on the map is referred to as the Earl of Shrewsbury's. By this action of 1614, Molineux Fletcher, eldest son of Francis, sought to recover from the Earl of Shrewsbury the house and property in Stoke Bardolph of which he claimed he had been unjustly deprived as long before as 1592. He cited John Hacker and John Bowne, who had acted as attorneys in the transfer of Francis Fletcher's rights in Stoke and Gedling to 'Gilbert, Earle of Shrewburie and the Ladye Mary his wiff'. This sale took place in October 1592, and, although the facts were disputed, the Fletcher fortunes were by this time clearly in a desperate condition. Molineux stated that his mother had married a Richard Motley, a Shrewsbury tenant and a defendant to the action of 1614, and although he, Molineux, had continued to live at the manor he had been brought up there 'meanely and moste poorlie with his mother', and his implication was that Mrs. Fletcher and her young children, of whom Molineux, the eldest, was at that time no more than six or seven years old, had been 'persuaded' into accepting the Earl's protection with disastrous results, since the Earl, through Motley, had driven 'this poore complainant to great want and necessitie'. It appears in fact that Francis had by 1592 got his affairs into such a condition that he had exchanged his ownership for some kind of leasehold as part of the terms of a mortgage from the Earl, and on his death the Earl had taken possession of the rents and properties whilst allowing the widow and her young family to continue in some kind of occupation there, but in poverty.

¹Gerring, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

By the November of 1592, then, Francis Fletcher was dispossessed in title of his house and prominent position in Gedling and Stoke Bardolph, and reduced to a 21-year tenancy of his family home, with even this and the land exchange promised (if the Earl's case was correctly stated) dependent on his meeting the payment of an agreed sum and a rent of £100 annually. At this same time he appears to have become involved once more in disputes with Sir Thomas Stanhope. These were not entirely concerned with riparian issues, but ranged over a much wider field initially involving rights of lordship in Fletcher's manor, and they were probably in many cases quarrels inherited from his father, and to which Robert Fletcher's will made reference. However, the antagonism eventually centred on Sir Thomas's weir and mills, and Francis Fletcher must be assumed to have become the spokesman for local opposition on a considerable scale; or else was instrumental in using some public protest as a cover for his own disagreements with Stanhope. It is a not unusual situation.

The map shows clearly the reason for the protests. It will be seen that the island of 'Prier Hoult' was at the time part of a long narrow strip of land stretching upstream for nearly 400 yards, and connected with the west bank of the river by Sir Thomas's weir. This weir forced the main stream into the narrow channel between 'Prier Hoult' and the east bank, where were the locks, built presumably as part of Sir Thomas's operations. It would be interesting to know what the situation in the river was before, as the map puts it, 'the earth was digged to bringe the streame to the Lockes', and whether Sir Thomas simply re-opened a former channel blocked, perhaps, by an earth fall from the cliffs, in order to drive the mills which he had newly erected. The depth and width of the mill dam certainly suggest this.

Quarrels with his neighbours were a common activity of Sir Thomas Stanhope. He had already appeared before the Privy Council in 1575 on a charge of taking corn and other goods from the house of Henry Sacheverell. In 1578 he was again summoned to answer an accusation that he had called Lady Zouche 'an dishonest woman', thereby provoking a long-drawn-out quarrel with her husband. Between 1578 and 1580 the Council was pestered with complaints that, among other matters, 'he had defaced the church of Saxondale', over a disputed patronage. His enmity towards Robert Fletcher has already been mentioned, and there are, further, echoes of disputes with John Byron and others about this same time. He was clearly a quarrelsome and unquiet neighbour.

This apart, any kind of obstruction of the river was liable to cause trouble, and the local records show plenty of evidence of this from the Middle Ages down to fairly recent times. It could have caused no surprise therefore when Sir Thomas's weir was petitioned against before Lord Willoughby, the Chief Justice, ostensibly by 500 inhabitants of 39 villages from the Humber to Nottingham. Willoughby forwarded the petition to the Council, and his covering letter must have shown some sympathy with the complaints, since he apparently stated that 'the informacions are partlie true'. At any rate, on 3rd July 1592 the Council acted on his report by sending a peremptory letter to Sir Thomas Stanhope, reciting a series of complaints

made not longe sithence to Lord Willoughby and other chief gentlemen of these partes, against certain weares latelie erected. By these, they said the trade of fysinge is greatly decayed whereby divers poore men did gett their livinge—that nowe are broaghte to greate povertie and utterly

undone, and the passages of the river are so straightened that divers of them, as they alledge, have lost their boates and themselves often tymes indangered and put in hazarde of their lyves.

Stanhope was therefore ordered either to dismantle the weir, or else satisfy the Council that the protests against it were unjustified. Unwisely, perhaps, the Council seems to have enclosed a copy of the petition, and, presumably, the signatures to it.

The next letter, dated 22nd August 1592, was to Lord Willoughby. This outlined by way of preamble the substances of the complaints: that 'there was notable spoil made of the frey and broode of fishes'; that there was 'daungerous passage of the boates through the streightnes of the river occasioned by those weares'. Meanwhile, however, Stanhope's answer had arrived. In it, he must have expressed hurt surprise and indignation, since both Earls of Shrewsbury, Gilbert, that is, and his father George, the 6th Earl, who had died in November 1590, had agreed to the building of the weir, and Stanhope was able to exhibit a 'parchment' to this effect. But one may guess that he had not relied merely on the Shrewsburys' support, for he went on to prove that there had been, as the rest of the Council's letter to Willoughby put it,

subornacion and bad practize used by some in procuring the handes to the petition and exhibiting it to youre Lordship—in the names of a multitude of persons whereof the most parte of them do denye that ever they were made priveye thereunto

and who went on to assert in a somewhat contradictory fashion, that they had been suborned by one Nicholas Taylor of Gainsborough. 'We myslike' added the Council's letter, 'these sinister and indirect practizes unfit to be used to any base person, much les to a gentleman of quallitie and calling' and concluded with a demand to Willoughby 'to advertize us furthwith what did move you to put your hand to the certificat' 'We do verilie thinck that your Lordship hath been verie much abused here', they said. Probably Stanhope had been very active. Local lobbying, and, one imagines, blackmailing pressures of one kind and another had presumably been applied, not a difficult thing to do in a closely-knit, hierarchical local community of landlord and tenant, master and man. Besides which, Stanhope almost certainly had the names of the signatories available to him.

Even so, the Council was uneasy. On 26th August it wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury in reply to a letter from him. In this, the Earl had, it seems, referred quite unambiguously to 'indirect courses taken by Sir Thomas Stanhope for the disproofe of the certificat and petition exhibited by the boatmen and fishermen'. Clearly the Earl had his doubts about Sir Thomas, but the Council tried to reassure him by repeating its suspicions of subornation, and telling him that the lords of the Council had seen his signature approving of the weir. Their opinion was in addition, they said, 'grounded also upon a view taken of the saide river of Trent', a view which, it may be surmised, is the very map under consideration. The Earl of Shrewsbury was, in fact, on the point of being more deeply concerned in the affairs of the district, since, as has been already stated, he was to get possession of Stoke Bardolph in the November of this year 1592, and Francis Fletcher was henceforth to be simply a tenant in his former property.

Even so, the Council must have thought, despite its suspicions of the entire genuineness of the petition, that Stanhope had a case to answer, since it goes on to announce that all this is really not its affair, and that it proposes to appoint a Commission of Sewers to examine the whole matter; and on 14th September a letter to the Lord Keeper instructed

him to name members to the Commission 'such as maie be indifferent between the parties and not inclinable in the affections to the one side or the other'. The Council was really trying very hard.

Now, however, events on the Trent began to outrun the Council's attempts at even-handedness, and to touch the government in its most sensitive spot, that of civil disorder, the need to suppress which would, in a Tudor context, take precedence over any considerations of equity. On 21st February 1592–93 came official indignation in the form of a letter to the Justices which reveals what had been happening in the meantime:

Whereas there hath been most lewd and foule partes and disorders committed in that county both against our verie good lord the Earl of Shrewburie and Sir Thomas Stanhope, K.T., as to deserve speciall and exemplar punishment—we have thought good to pray you—to finde out those lewd persons that did deface the coach of Sir Thomas Stanhope and likewise those or anie of them that did set up certain vile pictures of the Talbot

The Talbot was, of course, the hound named after the Shrewsbury family, and it is likely that the imagination of the perpetrators had worked on unflattering lines. It is also plain that by now Shrewsbury and Stanhope had in the popular opinion struck up an alliance. The dates, too, are suggestive. Shrewsbury had just acquired the Fletcher house.

But local opposition must have been considerable, and may well have had sympathisers amongst the gentry. The magistrates seem to have dragged their feet, and on 19th March another letter from the Council reproved them for their slowness in finding any offenders. Again, events were ahead of the Council, for on Easter Eve, which would have been Saturday, 14th April, Shelford weir was pulled down, and in another letter to the High Sheriff, John Basset of Fledborough, and his fellow magistrates, the Council refers to the offenders 'whereof some few have been discovered unto us whom we have sent for up hether'. Amongst these was Francis Fletcher, to be brought by force if need be. He appeared before the Council on 30th April, and with him Williamson, and George Blunt of Eckington. In addition, a proper local inquiry was to be set up. And finally, 'we requyre you also to see the peace better kept hereafter'.

On 19th May the unfortunate High Sheriff himself was summoned to the Council, appeared, and was ordered to cool his heels in London during the Council's pleasure, and meanwhile a thoroughly daunting scolding reached the rest of the magistracy:

Her Majestie doth take it very offensively that you, being appointed officers for the preservacion of the peace have so much neglected your duties as not to have repressed and punished the offenders Howbeyt the wilfull negligence and partiality hath been such in sondry of you (as it seemeth) that it rather tended to the manifest contempt of justice than yealded to any show of care in you to perform your duties, whereat her Highness doth not a little merveill

Clearly, not all Sir Thomas's neighbours were to be counted as amongst his friends. It also appears from this letter, as from none of the others, that the old Queen was herself taking a wrathful interest. The letter concludes by warning the magistrates that

if Sir Thomas Stanhope shall go about by any work in the said river wherein he claymeth the soile under the said water, to knit or joyn his wear now decaied to any grownd of his own on the side of the water of Stockbardolf whereby the new cut shall not draw the water out of the main river, we commanded you that he be not impeached so to do

At least, the letter ended, until a decision be made by the Court of Sewers.

With whatever reluctance, the magistrates now had to move, and they arrested Nicholas Bulby of Scarrington and clapped him into Nottingham gaol, only to be ordered on 5th June to set him free in order that he might present himself before the Council. Williamson, however, was not chastened by his visit to London, for on 2nd July a letter from the Council states that a Queen's Messenger had been sent to arrest a man named Knott or Nott, on suspicion of his having been a leader in the attack on the weir, and the Council was anxious to see him. Cobham, the Messenger, was driven off by Williamson and his wife, to whose house at Sawley Knott had been traced. For this, Williamson and his wife were both to appear in London.

The disturbances lingered on at least until the autumn of 1593, for on 4th August a letter referred to new attempts 'riotouslie made against the said weare by certen persons purpozellie hired from sondrie remote partes thereunto', and there the Council record ends.

III

So much for the involvement of the Privy Council proper. There are, however, the dealings of the Star Chamber with the matter, voluminous in bulk and forbiddingly verbose.¹ They do, nevertheless, throw some light on both Fletcher and Stanhope, and others who became involved in their quarrels.²

They begin with a complaint by Fletcher for assault against William Brownell, a tenant of Stanhope's, whom Fletcher claimed as a man owing suit to Fletcher's Court Leet. Brownell not only refused to pay fines for non-attendance himself, but threatened both Fletcher's bailiff and later Fletcher himself: 'That if he offered to distraine anie thyng that was his, for that distraint he woulde breake his heade for his laboure'. Fletcher then secured a warrant for the arrest of two other defaulters who were also Stanhope's tenants, but when an attempt was made to execute the warrant outside Gedling church on Sunday, 28th May, according to Fletcher's bill of complaint, Brownell, with the cry 'you raskell slaves goo fetch out staves and weapons and knock down these villeynes for they shall not goo out of the towne alyve', led an attack which caused one special bailiff, Henry Greene, 'to flie away to his house, for the sayffegarde of his liff'. But worse befell the other bailiff, Nicholas Leeson. William Brownell called out:

"Heare is another of the villans", and cominge behinde him then and ther ffelled him with a staff downe to the grownde wheare he lay a longe tyme together for deade havinge his heade sore brused insomuch that thee blodd ran out of his eares and hath since that tyme bledd more at the mouth and nose continuinge in greate extremytie so that it is thoughte he cannot lyve longe.

Brownell's reply is a masterpiece of special pleading, full of circumstantial and vivid touches of incidental detail, and filling out admirably the picture of an outraged and innocent bystander caught up in a riot out of his sympathy with an arrested neighbour, he 'beinge a man of good yeares as this defendant supposeth verye neare three score and a bowed weake person of bodye and nature'. And, oddly enough, the only head broken in Brownell's version is his own, since Greene gave him 'a verye greate stroke on the lyfte

¹The material is chiefly claims, counter-claims, and interrogatories, all submitted by the parties to the case, and therefore of dubious reliability, but giving nevertheless a lively picture of the local scene.

²P.R.O., STAC 5 F4/13.

syde of his head whereat the bloud ranne downen in great aboudance'. One need scarcely add that, in all this, Brownell was carrying no staff or weapon, but only his gloves, a reassuring, domestic touch.

All the men mentioned by name in Fletcher's complaint, 30 or more, as he says, are described as tenants and servants, or tenants and labourers, of Sir Thomas Stanhope. Stanhope need not himself have been directly concerned in challenging Fletcher's jurisdictions. Plainly, his tenants, who proclaim their relationship with him at every opportunity, were doing it for him. One of them, indeed, goes so far as to deny Fletcher's right to hold a Court Leet, which is clearly wrong. Even so, it suggests that Fletcher had perhaps been attempting to resume rights which had fallen into disuse.

Thus the Star Chamber records do in fact suggest that Fletcher's enmity towards Stanhope may have had an origin in matters other than the quarrel over the weir, yet this was itself sufficiently serious to have produced an interrogatory of 29 questions¹ to be put to witnesses concerning the damage done by the weir, as well as the behaviour of Sir Thomas. The questions are more revealing than the answers, which are in general exceedingly circumspect, most witnesses denying all connection with the events, or pleading a bland ignorance of them. This does not dispel the implications of some of the questions. Item 15, for instance, refers to Stanhope's new mills, after the building of which he 'purposely' caused neighbouring windmills to become decayed or to be pulled down. Further, he had 'maltequernes of dyvers inhabitantes thireabouts (with which they used to grynde) to be broken in peeces or defaced', as well as forcing men to come to his mills rather than to others, an unusually late application of this feudal right.

The destruction of the weir in the April of 1593 brought matters to a head, as the interrogatory makes clear, for in its later articles Stanhope's men, on one occasion to the number of 200, are charged with a variety of offences. It was said that they were 'to be readie with armour or weapons at the ringing of the belles backwarde' at Shelford church. They had had 'a sponce or peece of grounde entrenched or made defensible neare to the saide weare' to cover its rebuilding. They broke open the door of Shelford church in the night to ring the bell for an assembly there, and then went 'in ryotous maner shooting of their gones to the feare of the people thereaboute and', asks the inquiry, 'with what were those peeces or gones charged and at what marke did they discharge them at?'.²

Thereafter, the worst of the uproar seems to have died down. Whether the weir was officially destroyed, or whether, as seems more likely, Sir Thomas Stanhope triumphed over his adversaries, one cannot say. It is perhaps no coincidence, however, that by the end of 1593 Francis Fletcher was imprisoned in York Castle, perhaps by order of the Council, perhaps for debt, but more probably for recusancy, for his family had strong Catholic connections.

Sir Thomas Stanhope flourished for a few more years at least. He died in 1596, 'after many years worshipfully spent', says Thoroton,² 'in his house called Stoke, and was from thence conveyed to his manor house of Shelford aforesaid', thereafter to be buried in

¹P.R.O., STAC 5 F2/27.

²Thoroton, *History of Nottinghamshire*, (Throsby) 1, 292.

Shelford church, with his heir and his other sons in attendance, the heralds, and the full customary pompous honours. Was the 'house called Stoke' the Fletcher house, at the end of it all, one wonders? It would seem in character for Stanhope to have bought it from Shrewsbury as a last vindication of his rights.

As for Francis Fletcher, he died a prisoner still in York Castle before 2nd February 1594, and shortly afterwards his widow married again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are owed in the preparation of this article to Professor M. W. Barley, who called my attention to the map, to Miss R. Meredith, City Archivist, Sheffield, and to Mr. K. S. S. Train for valuable help in matters of detail.

