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WINDLESHAW ARBEY

1855/1856
ST. HELENS.

WINDLESHAW CHANTRY AND CEMETERY.

By the Rev. Austin Powell.

(Read 10th February, 1887.)

AT a distance of a little more than a mile from St. Helens is "Windleshaw Abbey." To English, and especially to Lancashire, Catholics it is a place of surpassing interest. They cannot be otherwise than deeply impressed when they gaze on the tower, hoary with age, on the few remaining stones of the chapel walls, on the vacant spot where erst stood the altar. But it is not to view the ruins of the little chapel that thither hie them, of a summer afternoon, groups formed of old and young, groups from near and afar. It is the graves within the ancient sanctuary and around it which are the chief objects of interest and regard. "To man alone of all animals," says Pliny, "is given the care of sepulture," "uni, sepulturae curia." His soul being immortal, he cannot be indifferent to the spot where his body is to rest, until "this mortal must put on immortality."

Hence the interest which a ramble through a cemetery begets in the mind of a thoughtful man. "I doubt," says Longfellow, on visiting a beautiful Catholic cemetery, "whether any one can enter this enclosure without feeling the religion of the place steal over him, and seeing something of the dark and gloomy expression pass off from the stern countenance of death."

In his "Lines written beneath an elm in the churchyard of Harrow," Byron sings—

"Oft have I thought 't would soothe my dying hour,
If aught may soothe when life resigns her power ;
To know some humble grave, some narrow cell
Would hide my bosom where it loved to dwell.
With this fond dream methinks 't were sweet to die."

And Shelley in his preface to "Adonais, an elegy on the death of "John Keats," after picturing the romantic and lovely cemetery hard by the pyramid of Caius Cestius, adds—"It might make "one in love with death to think one should be buried in so "sweet a place." Far be it from me to pretend to apply this beautiful though fanciful utterance to the subject of the theme on which I am engaged. And yet I have known some whose dying hour has been soothed, when they have been assured that the old graveyard at Windleshaw would receive their remains. It is but a few months ago, that a youth, whose life was on the wane, pleaded passionately for a last resting-place there, and grew calm and resigned when his petition was granted. Not that there is anything grand or imposing or even beautiful in this quiet spot, where sleep the *ἔθνεα νεκρῶν*. Of granite there is but little, of marble there is none. Around one or two graves only is there iron railing; for pyramids and obelisks, vases and broken pillars, you may look in vain.

When Mr. Barrett, the antiquary of Manchester, who visited Windleshaw in 1780, wrote "the priests lie buried within the now "fallen chapel walls under handsome gravestones," his imaginative powers must have tinged with roseate hue the results of his observation. As with the priests, so with the laity, there is nothing obtrusive, nothing pompous.

"Two grey stones at their head and feet,
And the daisied turf between."

It is this modesty and simplicity which lends a charm to the place. To this we must add the feeling of veneration which is engendered when we look on anything ancient. Especially is this true when there is a connection between the past and the dead. Hence Cicero observes—"Statuæ intereunt tempestate, . . . "sepulchrorum autem sanctitas in ipso solo est, quod nulla vi "moveri neque deleri potest; atque ut cetera extinguuntur, sic "sepulchra fiunt sanctiora vetustate."—*Orationes Philipp.* ix., c. 6.

The old cemetery at Windleshaw is in extent merely 39 yards from east to west, by 47 yards from north to south, thus contain-

ing 1830 square yards, that is somewhat less than two-fifths of an acre. A belt of chesnuts and elms encircled the little spot, some fourteen of which are still remaining. The number of graves is 615, nineteen of which are within the chapel walls.

Within this plot are the remains of the ancient Chantry. The tower at the west end is still standing. It is 36 feet high, and 12 feet square. The doorway is somewhat buried, as the earth has been gradually raised through the making of graves. In each side of the tower there is a window 5 feet high by some 3 feet in width. The mullion in the window on the east side has perished. There is also a second window on the west front, midway between the upper one and the doorway. It has also lost its mullion. Although small, the tower is strongly built, the walls being 3 feet 6 inches thick. Access was gained to the chantry from the tower, through a lofty archway, which thus allowed the rays of the evening sun to penetrate the chapel.

The chapel itself is 34 feet long by 13 feet wide, internal measurement. Including the tower, the total length, external measurement, is 50 feet. There are no remains of any windows in the chapel, the walls having been levelled to within 18 inches of the ground. The traces of the Sanctuary arch however are still perceptible. The sanctuary is a foot narrower than the nave, and is 14 feet in length, thus comprising nearly one half of the chapel. The north wall has been built up again with the old stones to the height of about 14 feet, nearest the tower, and gradually stepped down towards the east. A piece of more recent stone-work connects the portion rebuilt with the east end. The archway has been built up so as to strengthen the tower, the approach to the chantry being now at the west end of the south wall, which has been levelled with the ground. The material of the building is a yellowish sandstone, quarried in the neighbourhood. The plinth stones appear to have been brought from some distance, being red sandstone without the yellowish intermixture which is characteristic of the immediate neighbourhood. These latter stones are 3 feet long, by 18 inches in depth. There is a massive stone occupying the place of the

altar. It is 6 feet in length and 2 feet 6 inches in width. The material is red sandstone. Whether this stone formed the original altar-slab, or whether it served for a reardos, and falling forward assumed a horizontal position, it is now impossible to say. On the Gospel side, the impressions in the stone of a human hand and foot in their nude state are distinctly visible. The architecture is Early English. Such is the ruin as it is now to be seen.

A little to the south of the chantry is a cross of Calvary. Hallowed by the centuries which have passed over it, furrowed by storm and rain, by the biting frost and the chilly blast, it stands a true relic of the past. There are the usual three steps from the ground to the base of the cross, covering a space of some 12 feet square. The base is 2 feet 4 inches in height and of a like width. On it is the date 1627. The west side of the socket is completely worn down, so that the cross looks as though it were placed in a stone seat. The shaft is 3 feet 4 inches in height, and is in the form of an obelisk. There are no arms to the cross, but on each of the four sides of the upright is carved in relief a small cross, some 16 inches in height.

I mentioned that the old grave-yard was but two-fifths of an acre in extent. As now seen, however, the cemetery comprises nearly an acre. For in 1835 Sir John Gerard gave an additional plot, to the extent of nearly three-fifths of an acre. The earlier boundary wall was then thrown down, the two portions of land joined together, and the wall which enclosed the old portion extended so as to include the new. Room for 700 additional graves was thus obtained, so that the enclosure now contains 1300 graves. The most conspicuous object in this new portion is a remarkably handsome cross, the gift of Messrs. William, Thomas, and James Tasker, of Greenfield House, Billinge. The material is Billinge stone, from the quarry which Mr. Thomas Tasker worked. The shaft of the cross is 10 feet in height, the base resting on a flight of three steps. The Gerard vault is in this new portion of the cemetery. It is plain and massive. A flight of stone steps conducts to the iron door which closes it. Sir John Gerard, who died February 21st, 1854, was the first whose

remains were laid there, his ancestors being buried in the Gerard chantry at Winwick. Here also repose the bodies of Mrs. Clifton, mother of the present Lady Gerard, and of Mrs. Frederick Gerard, of Aspull house, who died March 28th, 1883.

Having thus briefly described the chantry and burial-ground, it is time to devote some attention to their historical aspect.

Windle, or according to the ancient spelling "Wyndhull," is probably so called on account of the eastern portion of the township being hilly, and consequently exposed to the wind. The word "Shaw" is derived from the Saxon "Scutha," a shadow; and hence, by metonymy, a tuft of trees, a wood, which creates a shadow. Thus Windleshaw means a wood on a windy hill.

Before the reign of King John, Windhull gave name to a family, of whom was Edusa, the widow of Alan de Windhull, who gave one mark to the king for a writ of summons for her dower, against another Alan de Windhull (Baines' *Lancashire*). The latter Alan was son of the former, and, I surmise, step-son to the claimant.

In the reign of Edward the Third, Peter de Burnehulle held the manor of Windhull of William Boteler, and performed for it suit and service to the county and wapentake. The Gerards acquired the manor of Windle, together with that of Bryn, by marriage with the heiress of Peter de Brynhill (Baines' *Lancashire*).

Wyndell Shae is termed a manor in 4 Edward VI. when it belonged to Sir Thomas Gerarde, in pleadings of that date respecting the title to common of pasture in the waste called Blakehyll Moss, in the lordship of Wyndhull, and the common waste called Withinsha Mosse, in the lordship of Eccleston (*Cal. Pl. Duc. Lanc.*, vol. ii., p. 106). The manor house of Windle is situate on Moss Bank, and is visible from the city of Liverpool. Blakehyll Moss is still recalled to one's mind by Bleak Hill farm.

It is a mistake to call the ruins at Windleshaw, "Windleshaw Abbey." The popular error evidently arose from a little false reasoning. Seeing that abbeys were in ruins, the *profanum vulgus* inferred that the converse was also true, that ecclesiastical ruins must have been abbeys. Thus, on this principle, the Domestic

Chapel of St. Catherine at Lydiate is called "Lydiate Abbey." So also the old chantry at Windleshaw has, from time immemorial, been designated "The Abbey."

A chantry is a chapel, sometimes attached to a church, sometimes an aisle or part of an aisle in a church, but more frequently in olden times a separate building, set apart for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice for the especial benefit of the soul of a particular person, generally the founder, and for the souls of the members of his family, and all the faithful.

The chantry at Windleshaw was founded by Sir Thomas Gerard, of Bryn, Knight, who was living in 1435, the 13th year of the reign of King Henry VI. Like his father before him he possessed the confidence and regard of King Henry V., his high military skill and valour, in the wars against France, being subjects of public commendation. It is of him that Père Daniel has recorded (*Hist. of France*, vol. vi.) that in 1437, at the siege of Montereau, when the king of France attended in person, the garrison behaved with great valour, having at their head an English knight named Thomas Gerard. The king of France here alluded to was Charles VII., who owed his crown to the heroism of the immortal Joan of Arc.

The chapel was probably dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Mr. Barrett, the Manchester antiquary, so suspects, because a famous well in the neighbourhood takes its name from that saint. Canon Raines (*Lanc. Chantries*, p. 79.) says, "This chantry, said to be dedicated to St. Thomas." Mr. Baines (*Lancashire*) rather too authoritatively says, "It was "an old chantry chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas." Of course the proximity of St. Thomas' well to the old chapel is a reason for surmising that St. Thomas was honoured by the latter being dedicated to him, but is certainly insufficient to lead to a conclusion. The best argument in favour of the chantry having been placed under the patronage of St. Thomas is that the donor's name was Thomas. So was his father's, so also his grandfather's, and so his great-grandfather's. It is almost certain, then, that a

saint, who gave his name to so many of the family, would be adopted as the patron of the little chapel.

The endowment, as certified in 1548 to Edward VI.'s Commissioners, was £4 16s., going out of the lands of the founder lying in the lordship of Wyndle, and paid at two times equally. The obligation of the priest was "to celebrate for the souls of "the founder's antecessors for ever." Chantry priests in the country were not wealthy men. It would appear otherwise with their brethren who ministered at St. Paul's in London; for Chaucer, in commending his "Persone," says—

"He did not run unto London unto Saint Poules
To seeken him a chanterie for soules."

Still our ideas of the value of money must be considerably modified, to enable us to estimate correctly the income of the chantry priest at Windleshaw. At the time of the dissolution there were in all about a thousand chantries in the country, and some ninety in Lancashire. Where religious houses were many, chantries were few; where the former were but sparsely planted, the latter were more plentiful. Thus Lancashire, having but a small number of religious foundations, had more than the ordinary proportion of chantries.

The income of these chantries ranged from 30s. to £10, the average being £5 6s. 8d. In Lancashire the total income was £500 15s. 8d., thus giving an average of £5 11s. 3d. Canon Raines, in accordance with Stillingfleet's principle, triples the amount, on account of the diminished standard of money, and further multiplies the product by eight. Following his course, and multiplying the £4 16s. by twenty-four, we find that the priest at Windleshaw received the equivalent to £115 4s. of our money.

From the date of the foundation of Windleshaw chantry to 1535 we have no notice respecting it. In that year, the 26th of the reign of Henry VIII. and the first after his rebellion from the Holy See, the Subsidy Commissioner for the Deanery of Warrington assessed the "Cantaria apud Wyndell infra parochiam "praedictam (Pryscotte) ex fundatione Thomae Gerard de Bryn "for tenths 9s. 7¼d. and for the subsidy 8s. 7¾d." (*Lanc. MSS.*,

Vol. xxii.) The money thus obtained was handed over to the new supreme head, for the augmentation of the royal estate and the maintenance of the supremacy.

In 1545 Windleshaw was in danger. In November of that year Parliament gave to the king, for the term of his natural life, all chantries, colleges, hospitals, and free chapels, with the lands thereunto belonging. The number of all these religious establishments is said to have been 2374, and they were erected by the ancestors of those whose property was thus invaded by a power against which there was no appeal. As, however, Henry died a little more than a year after this act of spoliation was passed, many of these establishments, and more especially the poorer ones, escaped. In his case, moreover, the object was merely greed. There was no religious animus on his part against such foundations. This is abundantly evident from the monarch's own Will, wherein, amid many prescriptions of a like nature, he orders that there "be provided an honorable tombe, and a convenient aulter honourably prepared and apparailled with all maner of things requisite and necessary for dayly masses, there to be said perpetually while the world shall endure." When, then, on January 28th, 1547, the king went to his account, in Windleshaw Chantry

"The hymn of the priest was still heard the while,
Sung low in the deep mysterious aisle."

But sadder times were at hand. By an Act passed in 1547, the first of King Edward VI. (1 E. VI., c. 14), there were given to him all the colleges, free chapels, chauntries, hospitals, fraternities or guilds, which were not in the actual and real possession of the late King Henry VIII., to whom the Parliament had made a grant thereof in the 37th year of his reign, nor in the possession of the then king. There are several points to be remarked on with reference to this Act. Cranmer, knowing that the Court harpies would get the lion's share of the spoil, spoke against it at first, though he afterwards deemed it prudent to withdraw his opposition. In the Commons a strong objection was made to that clause, which went to deprive the guilds of their lands, but the leaders of the Opposition, the members for Lynn and Coventry, were silenced by a

promise that the Crown would restore to those towns the lands of which the Act might deprive them. It is singular that it is in virtue of the statute passed on this occasion, that lands and goods subsequently given for what are termed superstitious uses, are forfeited to the Crown, although there is nothing in the Act to make it prospective.* Owing to this Act it was that Windleshaw chantry became deserted, and subsequently fell into decay.

In the following year, 1548, the Chantry Commissioners reported as follows :—

“The Chauntrie within the Chapell of Wyndell Richard ffordsham preist incumbent ther̄ of the ffoundacion of Thomas Gerard Knight to celebrate ther̄ for the soules of his antecessors. The sam̄ is within the Paroshe of Prescottt and distant from the Church II [IV] myles and the said preist is remanyng ther̄ and doth celebrate accordingle.”

“Plate, none. The same preist hayth and receyveth yerlie one annuall rent goinge furth of the lordship of Wyndell of iiiii^b xvi^s payd at two termes equallie. Sum total of the rental iiiii^b xvi^s. Reprises, none.”

As there was no plate to plunder, and as the foundation was not a reprise, that is a rent charge, it seems probable that the Commissioners could seize on nothing except the building, which being in an out-of-the-way place, and of small dimensions, surrounded moreover by the Gerard property, would probably be restored to them for a small consideration.†

The words, “the said preist is remanyng there and doth “celebrate accordingle,” certainly seem to imply that he was not then disturbed. The priest was at that time 54 years of age, and he may have continued in the exercise of his sacred ministry at Windleshaw until his earthly course was consummated.

The Act of 1549, enjoining the use of the Book of Common Prayer, he would have little difficulty in eluding. In July, 1553, King Edward died, and the chantry priest, during the next five

* See, however, in this connection the statute 23 H. VIII., c. 10.

† On the one hand we have it stated by the Commissioners that “upon the examynacion of this foundation of Sir Thomas Gerarde, Knight, to celebrate for the soules of his “auncestors for ever, it could not appear that any lands were assessed for the intent above “said” (*Ex libro B. Duch. Lau.*). On the other, however, under date of 9 Elizabeth, there is mention of a decree of the Court of the Duchy of Lancaster, in proceedings “*Inter Reginam and Gerard,*” concerning “the discharge of Lands in Wyndle supposed to be “Chantry Lands, from paying rent to the Queen” (*Lanc. and Chesh. Records*, p. 253). It would appear, therefore, that this matter was subsequently further inquired into, with the result that the conclusion at which the Commissioners of Edward VI. arrived was ratified.

years of Mary's reign, would be left unmolested. With the accession of Elizabeth his trials would be renewed. He would be then 65 years of age. In the first Parliament of Queen Elizabeth, it was enacted that the Book of Common Prayer should alone be used by the ministers in all churches, under the penalties of forfeiture, deprivation, and death. It is probable, however, that the chantry priest would not be affected by this enactment, and that he would continue the old service to the end. He would, however, be the last priest to offer up the Holy Sacrifice within the ancient walls; at least to offer it regularly. The priests sent forth from the seminaries abroad, to keep alive the dying embers of the ancient Faith, carried their lives in their hands. As a rule, they moved about from place to place, receiving hospitality in the houses of the nobility and gentry. It is not improbable that the inmates of Windle Hall often thus harboured priests, and it may be that on such occasions the little chantry hard by served for its ancient purpose. And this leads me to the legend of St. Thomas's Well.

The Well is some 300 yards from the chantry ruins. It is far larger than any ordinary well, being some 9 yards long by six yards wide. At present the water is but 2 feet deep, and there is a fall of some 7 feet before the surface of the water is reached. The sides are built up with stone, and the place would appear to have been suited for bathing purposes. Barrett speaks of it "being bathed in oft in summer in regard of "extraordinary virtues being credited to the water." This may have been true at the time that he wrote, but since the sides were built up it would be impossible. At the head of the well there is the inscription: "ST. THOMAS'S WELL W. H E. 1798." The initials represent William and Elizabeth Hill, the then proprietors of the adjacent land, the date referring to the building up of the sides of the well. Since the above date the water was obtained by letting down cans into it. It was said to be very efficacious for the curing of sore eyes. Formerly a footpath passed through the old graveyard and led to the well, and thence onward to Windle Smithy. When, however, the present cemetery at

Windle was formed, the footpath was closed, and the public debarred from access to the well. Thus the recollection of the virtues formerly ascribed to its waters is passing away. The tradition with regard to the well—a tradition which comes from ancient sources, but does not appear to have been widely circulated—is, that a priest saying mass at Windleshaw was discovered by the pursuivants; that he fled, was pursued, overtaken at the spot where the well is, cut down and his head struck off, and that where his head fell, the spring gushed forth. There are of course numberless legends touching the origin of wells, and this one has a remarkable resemblance to many better authenticated stories. It is not the supposed origin of the well, but the tradition that a priest was put to death in the neighbourhood, that I would call attention to. Now this tradition is confirmed by another, which in its circumstances must be erroneous, but which may very probably have some foundation in fact. This second tradition is to the effect that, a priest fleeing from his persecutors, was captured whilst endeavouring to leap over the wall which bounds the graveyard, and that the mark of his hand was left on the coping stone. As regards this last wonderful circumstance there can be no truth, for the wall was not built until 1778, the very year in which the first relaxation from the penal laws was granted. Still, setting aside the marvellous in each of these cases, we have the tradition that a priest was captured and slain in the neighbourhood of the old chantry. This tradition, especially as in the one case the priest is said to have been discovered whilst saying mass in the old chapel, would lead one to infer that the chapel was possibly made use of occasionally during the time of persecution. I have already mentioned the fact that the impression of a hand and foot is distinctly to be seen on the large stone occupying the place of the altar. Whether such impression suggested the origin of the tradition, or whether some one, hearing of the tradition, exercised his ingenuity by carving the above resemblances, it is impossible now to say.

As to its final destruction, Barrett, writing in 1780, says—"the place said to be demolished during the wars of Charles I." This

seems to be the general tradition, but there is no documentary evidence to confirm it. There is a fond story amongst the people that Oliver Cromwell planted his guns on Billinge Hill, and from that position battered down the chapel. Had his artillery been furnished by Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, or Krupp, the task would have been feasible. But as the balls would have a little more than three miles to travel, without making any allowance for parabolic curves, we may safely dismiss this feature of the story. Still the tradition in its substance helps to point out the time when the old chantry fell beneath the destroyer's hand. We know certainly that if either Cromwell or any of his troops had known of the existence of such a place, and had been near to it, its fate would have been sealed. Now, in 1644, Lathom House, distant some nine miles from Windleshaw, was besieged during eighty-eight days, by three thousand troops under Fairfax. In the following year it was again invested, and eventually captured by General Egerton, who had four thousand men under his command. It is pretty certain that bands of marauders would divert the monotony of the siege by making excursions in the neighbourhood, and pillaging the property of so-called malignants. It is far from unlikely that some such band tore off the roof and broke down the walls of this ancient sanctuary. As far then as may be conjectured, the date of the destruction may be said to be 1644 or thereabouts.

The first written notice regarding the chantry since the visit of Edward VI.'s commissioners is that of the antiquary Barrett, above alluded to. He visited Windleshaw in 1780, made a drawing of the ruins, and gave a description thereof, which description, allowing for lesser inaccuracies, is applicable at the present day. Mr. Baines has copied Barrett's description. The ivy, however, which the antiquary so graphically pictured, no longer clothes the tower. Three elderberry trees within the chantry walls are now the sole living things.

Mr. Foley (*Records of the English Province*, series xii., p. 407,) publishes a letter on the subject from Rev. Henry Beeston, of Portico, to Dr. Oliver, dated Sept. 3, 1834. The letter contains no

information, but mentions a tradition "that Windleshaw Priory," as he calls it, "was dependent on the Abbey at Upholland, not "far distant to the north-west." This mistake arose from calling Windleshaw an Abbey. There was no connection at all between the places, and they are seven miles asunder. Mr. Foley adds some comments of his own, which are more erroneous than the text which he is endeavouring to elucidate. He ends by saying that the public cemetery for St. Helens being opened, the ancient burial-ground, being quite full, was finally closed. There is not a word of truth in this statement. The old burial-ground was never closed. No fewer than sixty-six people were laid therein during the last year. But when was it opened? Here again there is nothing definitely known. The old cross is of the pre-Reformation period. It is similar in form to a number of crosses which stood in the neighbourhood. Such were Marshall's Cross, Peasley Cross, a cross at Cronton, another at Eccleston Hill, and a third at Rainhill, the last alone now standing, though removed to a less exposed position. Now the crosses here mentioned occupied conspicuous situations, and could not therefore have been erected during any post-Reformation period. The form of the Windleshaw Cross resembling the above, the inference that they were all made about the same time is clear. But, on the other hand, it does not seem probable that the ground was made use of for interments before the Reformation. Prescott was the Parish Church, and the Vicar would probably assert his rights. Then there is the date on the base of the cross, 1627. Now in 1611, as we learn from a letter of William Blundell, the cavalier, "a bitter storm of persecution extended its fury in these parts to "y^e bodies of deceased Catholics. The Churches in all places "denied them buriall; some were layd in y^e fields, some in gardens, and others in high-wayes as it chanced. One of thes "being interred in a common land had her Corps pulled out by "y^e hoggs and used accordingly" (*Trans. Hist. Soc.*, vol. xxxi., p. 51). He then goes on to say that his grandfather enclosed a piece of ground for the burial of Catholics, to prevent the like for the future. It is most probable, then, that the same reason, the

refusal to bury Catholics in the old parish yards, led to the opening of the grave-yard at Windleshaw. The "Harkirke," the little cemetery formed by Mr. Blundell, was opened in 1611, that is, only sixteen years before the date on the Windleshaw Cross.

My conclusion, then, is that the latter date, 1627, marks the time when the cemetery began to be generally used. A few interments probably took place before that date, but the date must have been inscribed for some purpose. It cannot mark the time when the cross was made, as we have already seen. It must then denote the opening of the grave-yard. Whether the cross always stood in its present position, or whether it was removed thither when the cemetery was formed, cannot be determined. If the latter were the case, there would be more reason for affixing the date; but whether originally erected there or brought from elsewhere, the date 1627 seems to denote the opening of the cemetery.

But little light can be thrown on this question by referring to the gravestones. It is well known that many of the stones have, like those who slept beneath them, crumbled into dust. The oldest inscription is within the chantry walls. It is written on one of the blocks of red-sandstone which formed the plinth of the Chapel, and which now rests where the altar once stood, and is as follows:—"Here lieth the body of Thomas Parkenson, P.C., who departed this life March 7th, 1751. Etatis 38. Requiescat in pace." P.C. stands for "Presbyter Catholicus" (Catholic Priest). A reference to the *Douay Diary* shows a Thomas Parkenson born July 27, 1713: evidently the same person. Bishop Dicconson's List of Priests, compiled in 1741, represents him as serving Black Brook and St. Helens.

The oldest stone in the open yard records the name of John Fletcher of Denton's Green, who departed January 3, 1757.

I must, however, add that there is a single inscription which appears to be much older than either of the above. It is as follows:—"Here lieth the body of James the son of James and Alice Banks, who departed this life Oct. 3, 1700. Aged one year." If the date be really 1700, there is no disputing the

fact that this is the oldest stone in the graveyard. The first cipher is not, however, very plain, and it may be a nine. If the figure be a cipher there is a gap of 57 years between the first and the second mortuary inscription, which would seem very improbable.

As to the tract of country for the inhabitants of which Windleshaw was the burying-place, it may be said to comprise all between Warrington and Ormskirk, and between Wigan and Liverpool. Until the grave-yard and the vaults at St. Nicholas's, Copperas Hill, were opened, there were many interments from Liverpool.

As a place of sepulture for the Clergy, Windleshaw holds a unique position. I doubt if there be any cemetery in the country where, since the Reformation, so many priests have been buried. One can still read the inscriptions on the tombs of one bishop and nineteen priests; but many more are known to have been buried there. The number probably exceeds sixty. As to the laity, though most of these were natives of Lancashire, yet in the old ground repose the remains of Edward John, son of William Thomas Salvin, Esq., of Croxdale, in the county of Durham, as a representative of the north; and of Elizabeth Varco, of Truro, in the county of Cornwall, for the south.

Unfortunately, the Catholics were not always in undisputed possession of their cemetery. About the year 1760, the Quakers became possessed of the adjoining land, and as there was no wall to divide the burial-ground from their possession, they pretended to have a claim over the cemetery itself. They made themselves very disagreeable, maintained that there was no right of road for funerals, insisted on levying heavy charges, and were the cause of constant heart-burnings and endless disputes. About 1778, they sold their property to Mr. William Hill, the gentleman above alluded to in connection with St. Thomas' Well. The wall round the little plot was then built by the Catholics. Mr. Hill was of the Presbyterian persuasion: he was charitable and kind-hearted, and all troubles ceased when he became possessed of the adjoining land. He took a great interest in the old ruin and grave-yard,

and used to spend hours on the spot. On one occasion, when dining with Thomas Basil Eccleston, Esq., of Eccleston Hall, Charles Orrell, Esq., of Blackbrook, and Thomas West, Esq., of Croppers Hill, he resigned all right and title which might be his to the grave-yard, bestowing it on the Catholics for ever. He further conceded a right of road to the grave-yard. This road is now included in the ground purchased by the St. Helens Cemetery. Mr. Hill at the same time expressed a strong desire to be buried at Windleshaw, and described the spot he had selected for his grave. Seeing, however, that the ideas of his friends did not coincide with his own on this latter point, he exclaimed—"Well, I will be buried in my own field, close to the wall, and will creep under to you". The Rev. Henry Beeston, in the letter above noticed, says that "Mr. Hill left directions in his will that his body should be interred in accordance with this expression of his wish". Whether his will contained such a clause or not I am unable to say. His executors, if it did, did not pay any attention to it, for the old gentleman was buried at Prescott, and thus had no opportunity of testing his capabilities for *post-mortem* excavations.

About the year 1824, Mr. Hill's son sold his estate to Sir William Gerard for the sum of £11,000. As before mentioned, in 1835 Sir John Gerard, successor to Sir William, gave an additional plot of ground, which was then incorporated with the old grave-yard. The ground was given to the Catholics worshipping at the Churches of Birchley, Ashton, Lowe House, Blackbrook, and Portico. The above congregations then erected the sexton's lodge, hearse-house, and gateway, and enclosed the newly-obtained ground with a wall.

In 1861, the adjoining land was purchased from Lord Gerard by the Burial Board of St. Helens, and the Windle Cemetery laid out. Iron gates, erected by the administrators of the Windleshaw grave-yard, allow of communication between the latter and the new cemetery.

A few remarks with reference to those interred at Windleshaw,

who occupied a more prominent position whilst running their earthly course, may now be added.

Firstly, as to the Bishop. The inscription is brief: "Also of the Rt. Rev^d Dr. Thomas Penswick, Bishop of Europum, who died January 28th, 1836, aged 63 years." It is worthy of remark that the Bishop's memorial notice is just half the length of that of his niece, Elizabeth Mary Talbot, a girl of nine years of age. The Bishop was born at the Manor House, Ashton; his father, Mr. Thomas Penswick, being the agent of Sir Thomas Gerard. When the College at Douai was invaded by the Republicans, in 1793, Thomas Penswick was one of those chosen by the President to secrete the plate from their rapacity. It was a task which demanded skill and courage. Entering on the Mission, he was, after some time, appointed to St. Nicholas's, Copperas Hill, of which church he was the first Incumbent. A tablet to his memory may there be seen. Selected by Dr. Smith, Bishop of the Northern District, as his coadjutor, Dr. Penswick was consecrated June 29th, 1824. On the death of the above-named Bishop, he succeeded him July 30th, 1831. Suffering from dropsy and heart disease, he betook himself to the house of his brother, Randolph Penswick, situate in Lower Lane, Ashton, where he ended his days.

The Bishop's brother, the Rev. John Penswick, was, from the year 1804 to 1849, the pastor at Birchley. He then took up his abode near Ashton Cross, becoming private chaplain to Sir John Gerard; and on the death of the latter, to his successor, Sir Robert, now Lord, Gerard. He died on the 30th of October, 1864, aged 86 years, during 66 of which he had been a priest. He was the last of the Douai priests, a College which, founded on Michaelmas Day in 1568, continued to send forth priests to England until October 12th, 1793, when it was seized by the soldiers of the French Republic. In the beginning of the same year Daniel O'Connell had bid adieu to his *alma mater* (Douai), the ship in which he sailed taking the news to England of the execution of Louis XVI. Mr. Penswick, at the request of Canon John Walker, then of Blackbrook, wrote an account of the downfall

of the great College, of which he was the last, though not least worthy, son. Mr. Penswick's last resting place adjoins the vault of his friend and kind patron, Lord Gerard. The inscription on his tomb is as follows:—"Pray for the soul of the Rev. John "Penswick, who died at Garswood, October 30th, 1864. Aged "86 years, in the 62nd year of his priesthood. R.I.P." There is a marble tablet at the base of the Cemetery Cross of Birchley to the memory of this venerable man, on which is recorded the fact that he was the last of the Douai priests.

"Rev. Marmaduke Stone, S.J., died August 21st, 1834, aged "85." These lines call to mind one who was in his day great amongst his brethren—"clarum et venerabile nomen". Born at Draycot, co. Staff., November 28th, 1748, he, in co-operation with Father Strickland, worked successfully for the restoration of the English Province of the Jesuits. May 19th, 1803, he was named the first Provincial since the dissolution of the Society, in 1773, by virtue of the famous Constitution of Clement XIV., "*Dominus ac Redemptor Noster*". In 1829 he removed to Lowe House, where he became perfectly blind, and died as above stated. At Stonyhurst College a marble tablet records his distinguished services. Mr. Sheil, M.P., who was at Stonyhurst when Father Stone was Superior, speaks, in his *Recollections of the Jesuits*, in eulogistic terms of his many virtues.

"To the memory of Philip Butler, C.A.D., who lived 26 years "at Blackbrook, and died there the 9th day of December, 1777, "aged 52 years." The initials C.A.D. stand for *Collegii Anglorum Duaci*—"of the College of the English at Douai". From the College Diary we learn that he was born December 8th, 1724, his parents being William and Dorothy Butler, *née* Ashton. He was a member of the distinguished but now extinct family of the Butlers of Rawcliffe. Being a person of means, he was the chief contributor to the erection of the first chapel at Blackbrook, "with two chambers over it, and a cellar under it," and likewise secured the site from Mr. Orrell for 500 years, paying the yearly rent of one shilling on the 29th September. He was the Vicar-General of Bishop Francis Petre.

On a handsome elevated stone, to the east of the chantry ruins, one reads: "Here lie the remains of Jean Bapt. Fran. Graux de la Bruyere. He was the first who brought to perfection "a work of very considerable magnitude and importance to the "commercial interest of the British nation, the Cast Plate Glass "manufactory (*sic.*) In memory of the distinguished abilities "of so deserving a man these lines are inscribed." He was born at St. Gaubain, in Picardie, in France. He died at Ravenhead, December 5th, 1787, in the 48th year of his age. How much does not the town of St. Helens, with its 60,000 inhabitants, owe to this man; and how few there are who know it. The British Plate Glass Company was established in 1773, and erected their manufactory at Ravenhead, near St. Helens. It occupied thirty acres of land, and was enclosed by a wall, round which were placed the houses of the workmen, so that it was a sort of distinct colony. The buildings cost £40,000, and gave employment to 300 workmen. The manufacture was introduced by workmen from France, Monsieur de la Bruyere being at their head. Within the chantry lies a relative of the above, Mr. Angeliqne Graux, of Picardie, in France, who died "apud Ravenhead, April 10th, 1786, ætatis 26. R.I.P."

"Here lieth the body of Mrs. Elizabeth Low, of Cowley Hill, "Widow, who departed this life the 18th of November, 1766, "ætatis suae 96." The husband of this lady was Anthony Low, M.D., of an ancient family in Derbyshire. His name appears in the list of those who complied with an Act of Parliament (1 Geo. I.) entitled "An Act to oblige Papists to register their "names and real Estates".

Winifred, daughter of Anthony and Elizabeth Low, married John Gorsuch Eccleston, Esq., of Eccleston Hall; and on his demise retired to Cowley Hill, where she lived with her mother. She was fifty-one years a widow, and dying June 15th, 1793, ætatis 81, was buried within Lowe House Church, St. Helens. To the mission of Lowe House she was the principal benefactress, in fact the mission owes its existence to her generosity. Hence its name. She herself, being the widow of Mr. Eccleston, was always

known as Dame Eccleston, but she wished the name of her own family to designate the place which her charity founded.

Within the chantry walls there is the following epitaph :—
“ Here lies interred the body of the Revd. Francis Crathorne,
“ of Garswood. He was born at Scarborough, the 21st of
“ October, 1762, and was unfortunately drowned off Southport,
“ the 23rd of May, 1822.” He was most probably a member of
the distinguished family of Crathorne of East Ness, in Yorkshire.
He was the priest at Garswood, or Hollin Hey. In addition to
exercising his priestly functions, he practised medicine with
signal success. The writer possesses a letter directed to Mr.
Crathorne from Fishwick, beyond the Ribble, and asking for his
advice respecting corporal ailments. On the fatal day named
above, viz., Thursday, May 23rd, he, Mr. John Gerard, of Windle
Hall, father of the present Lord Gerard ; Mr. Adamson, a manu-
facturer, of Ashton ; his son Roger ; and a boatman named Ball,
went out for a sail in Mr. Gerard’s yacht. The latter gentleman
was of a very venturesome disposition, and gloried in carrying as
much canvas as possible. The result was that the boat capsized.
Mr. Crathorne was an excellent swimmer, and though 60 years
of age, and encumbered with a thick overcoat and heavy top-
boots, he could have saved his own life. But he knew his duty
better. Not for an instant did his presence of mind forsake him.
The excited throng on the beach could plainly descry how with
one hand he bore up the sinking form of Mr. Gerard, whilst with
the other he made the sign of the Cross over his drowning
comrades ; pronouncing, doubtless, at the same time, the words
of absolution, and exhorting them to fervent acts of repentance.
At last the weight of water bore down the dauntless priest, and
when, on the Sunday morning, his body was discovered near the
spot where he sank, his hands were grasping the ill-fated boots,
from which he had striven in vain to free himself. The remains
of Mr. Gerard were washed up on the shore at Cockerham, on
Saturday, June 1st. Intense was the excitement caused by this
sad accident, and probably it was the gravest catastrophe which
Southport had witnessed up to the late loss of the lifeboat.

The handsomest monument within the walls of the chantry is that of the Thicknesse family. This family, late of Beech Hill, near Wigan, but formerly of Barterley Hall, in the County of Stafford, was one of great antiquity. It descended from Robert Thicknesse, who was Lord of Barterley in 1274, the second year of the reign of Edward I. The estate descended from father to son for five hundred years, in unbroken succession. Later on, by marriage with Elizabeth Stockton, daughter of Thomas Stockton, of London, and of The Oaks, Cheshire, the latter property fell to the Thicknesses. Ralph Thicknesse, born in 1693, married Alethea, daughter of Richard Bostock, M.D., of Whiscall. This Alethea was a Catholic, her father, Richard Bostock, being one who registered his name and estates, in accordance with the Act above-mentioned. He died in 1747, and there is a monumental inscription to his memory in Bath Abbey Church. The Alethea above-named is buried at Windleshaw. She is described as widow of Ralph Thicknesse, Esq., of Barterley Hall, in the County of Stafford. It is probable that her husband did not become a Catholic, and that he died and was buried at Barterley. The date of Alethea's death is not inscribed on the tomb at Windleshaw. But the Thicknesses have also a burying place in the Parish Churchyard at Wigan. A handsome cross—now, alas! perishing—rises over their vault; and on the cross are recorded the deaths, not of those only who sleep below, but of those also who rest at Windleshaw. It is worthy of remark that whereas in the Catholic cemetery English is the language written on the monuments, in the Protestant burial ground Latin is adopted. From the Wigan inscription we learn that “Alethea conjux Radulphi Thicknesse de Barterley Armigeri, ex prosapia Bostock de Bostock, obiit die 11. Mensis Martii Anno Domini MDCLXXII. apud Wigan. Sepulta apud “Windleshaw”.

The next inscription is as follows:—“Also the body of Ralph Thicknesse, M.D. He departed this life in the 72nd year of “his age, on the 10th Day of February, A.D. 1790.” The Wigan inscription adds the day of his birth—October 28th, 1718. This

Ralph, the only Catholic male of the family, sold the Staffordshire and Cheshire estates in 1747, and bought Beech Hill, near Wigan. He was a distinguished physician, and author of many medical works of repute.

The next inscription is: "And his wife, whose remains are also deposited here, died November 8th, A.D. 1804, aged 76." Her name, as we learn from the Wigan record, was Anne Dorothy, also of the Bostock family—"ex prosapia Bostock de Bostock".

The tombstone at Windleshaw also records the name of Winifred Monypenny, daughter of Ralph and Dorothy Thicknesse, and widow of John Monypenny, Esq. She died on the 20th of July, 1836, aged 72 years.

The mortal remains likewise are interred here of Roda Thicknesse, who died on the 8th of May, 1837, aged 79. This beautiful name, Roda, recalls to one's mind the damsel who came to hearken when Peter, delivered by the angel out of prison, knocked at the door of the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark.

The girls, then, continued in the Catholic Faith. It was otherwise with the son. I said that Alethea Bostock had brought the Catholic Religion into the Thicknesse family; but as James the Fifth of Scotland said of his crown, when he heard that a daughter was born to his house, "It cam wi' a lass, and it'll gang wi' a lass," so was it with the Thicknesse religion. For Ralph Thicknesse, Esq., son of the above Ralph and Anne Dorothy, married Sarah, daughter of John and Mary Anne Woodcock, of Newborough House, and conformed to the established church. Wealth and honours were his. In 1792, in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Thomas Woodcock, Esq., he founded the Wigan Bank. The Bank was firstly in the names of Thicknesse and Woodcock, subsequently of Woodcock, Son, and Eckersley, and latterly was merged in the well-known Parr's Banking Company. Mr. Thicknesse had likewise the honour of representing the borough of Wigan in Parliament. He died October 6th, 1842, and was interred in the grave-yard of the

Parish Church at Wigan. His son, Ralph Anthony Thicknesse, Esq., of Beech Hill, married his cousin Mary Anne, daughter of Thomas Woodcock, Esq., of Newborough. He also was member of Parliament for Wigan, and was likewise Deputy-Lieutenant for Lancashire. His son Ralph was born April 15, 1833. The tourist, as he passes from Bowness to Ambleside, cannot fail to notice a plain cross standing on the water's edge. If he draw near he will read—

Ralph Thicknesse, 13th Sept., 1853. Aged 20 years.

Thomas Woodcock, 13th Sept., 1853. Aged 19 years.

Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.

Opposite the cross, the waters of Windermere closed over the struggling forms of the youthful cousins. Thus ended the race of Thicknesse. The final story is told pathetically on a marble tablet erected in Wigan Parish Church:—"Sacred to the memory
"of Ralph Anthony Thicknesse, some years a Member for this
"Town, who died at Harrogate, August 22, 1854. Aged 54. He
"was suddenly cut off, the last of his name and race, having fol-
"lowed his only son to an untimely grave but a few months
"before."

"Here lieth the body of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Weldon, of
"Scholes. Obiit 26th of April, 1786. Aetatis 75." Of him we read (*Records of the English Province*, vol. v.) that in 1736, being 25 years old, he was invited by Colonel Pippard, his maternal uncle, commanding Walshe's Regiment in the Irish Brigade, to accept a commission under him. He was an officer at the siege of Philipsburgh, when, June 12, 1734, he saw the head of his commander, Marshal the Duke of Berwick,* carried off by a cannon ball. After the above incident, Mr. Weldon chose the ecclesiastical state. His military proclivities do not seem, however, to have been utterly uprooted, for to the end of his life, the sword which he wore at the siege of Philipsburgh hung over his head whilst he slept. This priest was also perhaps the last, in these parts, who was subjected to annoyance on account of his

* The Duke of Berwick was a natural son of the Duke of York, afterwards James II., his mother being Arabella Churchill, sister of the famous Duke of Marlborough. He had the military genius of his uncle. He was, moreover, a man of honour and a true Christian. "Never," says his biographer, "did man practise religion so much, and speak of it so little".

profession. Down to 1778, the law of William III., awarding a hundred pounds to any successful informer who discovered a priest, was in full force. Some base fellow, in hopes of obtaining the reward, had Father Weldon arrested and taken before Mr. Hughes, J.P., of Sheardley Hall, on the charge of exercising faculties as a priest. The informer was, however, disappointed. Mr. Hughes, being a Christian gentleman, declined to hear the case, saying that Mr. Weldon was a quiet, amiable neighbour.

I cannot do better than conclude with the following verses, which, to my mind, are far superior to the ordinary poetic effusions which one reads on tombstones.

There is a handsome Gothic tablet placed against the South wall of the chapel. The inscription is as follows:—"I.H.S. Sacred
"to the memory of John Barnes, Esq., Attorney-at-Law, who died
"on the 30th December, 1811. Aged 32 years. He was a dis-
"tinguished member of his profession and a man of strict honour,
"a sincere Christian, and a kind friend to his numerous acquaint-
"ances and to the poor. R.I.P." Then follow these lines, which I copied down some years ago, before the rude elements had rendered them illegible:—

" Stranger, tread lightly here this hallowed earth,
Here lie the ashes of departed worth.
True to his God, a friend sincere he proved,
And died lamented, as he lived beloved.
His virtues with his eager spirit flew
To realms of light, where joys are ever new.
There, resting from its toils and mortal strife,
From heaven-born springs it drinks eternal life.
Generous pilgrim, whilst you're lingering here,
Shed o'er this grave one tributary tear,
And learn of him, o'er whose remains you sigh,
To live for heaven, that you like him may die."





THE DOMESDAY RECORD OF THE LAND BETWEEN
RIBBLE AND MERSEY.

By *Andrew E. P. Gray, M.A., F.S.A.*,

RECTOR OF WALLASEY.

(Read 1st December, 1887.)

A REALLY critical edition of the *Liber de Wintoniâ* (as Domesday Book is technically called)—one which would bring the full resources of modern scholarship to bear upon all the points suggested by it,—is still a desideratum, and, as Professor Freeman says, it is an object which ought to be taken up as a national work. A considerable amount of Domesday literature has appeared since the royal order in 1767 for the publication of this amongst other records; but much remains to be done, for a great deal of that which has been given to the world on the subject is deficient in breadth of treatment and in accuracy of criticism. We in this part of the country are greatly indebted to Mr. Beamont for his Introduction and Notes to the photozincographic facsimile of the Domesday Record of the two north-western counties palatine. Mr. Beamont has been a member of this society almost ever since its foundation 40 years ago, and is one of whom the society is justly proud. It seems, indeed, rash for me to venture upon the subject which I have chosen, lest I should be supposed to be putting myself in competition with him, or setting myself up as a critic upon his Introduction; but

I thought that perhaps we might be led over some new ground to-night, if we turned to the Domesday account of the land *Inter Ripam et Mersham*, and considered, firstly, the history of that territory, and then its hundreds, the townships mentioned, the landlords, and the churches. Into general points affecting the whole country (as, for example, the differences between radmen and drenges, or the dimensions of the carcate and hide of land), we need not enter this evening; but perhaps we may find time, at the end of the paper, for a momentary glance into the bye-laws (so to call them) and customs which were then in force in this particular neighbourhood.

I. As to the history of the territory. Whilst our heathen English forefathers were gradually first devastating, and then themselves settling down in, the eastern and southern parts of the country, to which they gave their name, the British principalities in the north-west drew together into the kingdom of Strathclyde—a kingdom which stretched from the Clyde to the Mersey, and from the sea to the hills that form the watershed. The capital of this kingdom was Alclwyd, or Dumbarton, which was strongly fortified to protect the British from the incursions of the Scots and Picts of the north; the hills guarded them on the east from the Northumbrian English and the Britons of Elmet (which, roughly speaking, answered to the West Riding); south of the Mersey was another British kingdom, Gwynedd, of which the capital was Chester. It was not until the seventh century that the southern portion of the kingdom of Strathclyde, that part which now forms the county of Lancaster, became English territory; it was gradually dismembered by the Northumbrian English. In the year 613, Æthelfrith, the King of Northumberland, whose grandfather Ida had founded the Bernician kingdom, advanced over the moors at the head of Ribblesdale into our south Lancashire, and, crossing the Mersey, marched on to Chester, where his rival, Eadwine, had taken refuge. The battle of Chester need not detain us; it has been fully described by Mr. Green in his *Making of England*. It was a decisive

victory, and marked an important step in the English conquest of Britain, for it thrust a wedge of English territory between the Britons of what we now call Wales and their kinsmen of Strathclyde; and amongst other results of the battle was the transference of the land between Ribble and Mersey from the kingdom of Strathclyde to that of Northumberland. Elmet, thus cut off from other British principalities, yielded to Eadwine thirteen years later; and Leeds (which was then called Loidis or Lothene, and which it is consequently difficult to distinguish sometimes from the Lothian which stretched from the Forth to the Tweed)—Leeds had become Northumbrian before 655; and about twelve years later, lands on the Ribble and in Amounderness were granted to St. Wilfrith, so that part (at any rate) of Lancashire north of the Ribble must have become English by that time. It would be interesting to enquire into the further dismemberment of Strathclyde, and speak of the long-continued independence or semi-independence of Galloway and Cumberland; but to do so would lead us too far from the subject in hand.

Lancashire south of the Ribble became Northumbrian, then, in 613, and seems to have continued to belong to Northumberland until the arrangement made in 877 between the Danish host and Ceolwulf, the under-king of that part of the Marchland, which the English still retained: in the previous year Yorkshire had been parted amongst Danish landholders, and then, in 877, the eastern half of the Marchland was in the same way parcelled out amongst the Danes; but a long strip of territory, embracing the valleys of the Mersey and the Severn, was handed over to Ceolwulf ("an unwise Thegn," as the Chronicle calls him), and the name of Marchland was afterwards confined to this territory, stretching from the Ribble to the Bristol Avon, and shut in east and west by the Danes and the British. This was the first connection between South Lancashire and the Mercian kingdom—a connection, that we may regard as having become an incorporation, when the great King Eadward, who was almost the peer of his father Ælfred, set about, in 923, the building of a fort at Thelwall (a township near Warrington, partly in Lancashire and

partly in Cheshire, for the Mersey runs through the township), and despatched thence a Mercian force to garrison the old Roman town of Manchester, which had probably lain desolate since the days of Æthelrith. These fortresses of Manchester and Thelwall, together with two built a few years before by King Eadward's sister at Chester and Runcorn, were intended no doubt to render any effective alliance between the Danes and the Britons impossible.

South Lancashire from that time was part and parcel of the Mercian Ealdernanry, or earldom, as it was afterwards called; and, although not absolutely incorporated with Cheshire, it was regarded as an appendage to that county, which at the time of Domesday Book embraced also a considerable portion of Flintshire and Denbighshire, the Hundreds of Atiscross and Exestan being afterwards handed over to Wales: it will be an interesting question for those who advocate Home Rule or Disestablishment for Wales to decide what the boundary of Wales is; will they go by Domesday Book, or will they prefer Henry VIII.'s *ipse dixit* in 1536 as to what is Wales, and what is England? It is of course commonly said that South Lancashire appears in Domesday Book under the head of Cheshire, but this is not strictly true; the account of it is given on two pages, *after* the account of Cheshire, and just as each page of the portion about Cheshire is headed by the word *Cestrescire* in red ink, so these two pages relating to South Lancashire have their own separate heading, also in red ink, *Inter Ripam et Merham*. This anomalous district was granted to Roger of Poitou, of whom we shall speak later on; and, after his second forfeiture, the greater portion of it was given by Henry I. to Ranulf, the third palatine Earl of Chester, though it never became part of the palatinate. On the extinction of the male line of these Earls of Chester in 1232, the land between Ribble and Mersey was inherited by the great house of Ferrers; and either in that year, or in 1266, at the downfall of that restless family (which had shared in every intrigue and conspiracy since the reign of Stephen), it must have been incorporated with the newly-formed county of Lancaster. That county

had previously consisted of the Honor of Lancaster and the Hundred of Amounderness, and it was shortly to be augmented by the Liberty of Furness, taken from Westmoreland in 1295, and again seemingly in 1312 by that portion of South Lancashire which had not been granted to the Earls of Chester, viz., the Honor of Clitheroe, which Thomas Earl of Lancaster inherited in right of his wife.

Such is a sketch of the vicissitudes which the land between Ribble and Mersey went through before it finally became part of the county of Lancaster.

II. And now we will turn to its Hundreds. This of course is not the place to enquire into the history of the division of the country into hundreds; the Bishop of Chester in the first volume of his *Constitutional History* has said (I suppose) all that can be said on the subject. But one can not forbear quoting the delightfully naïve remark of Baines, which is (I am sorry to see) repeated in the edition now being issued in monthly parts: "There are evidently no sufficient data to determine into how many hundreds South Lancashire was divided in the Roman period, and still less in the time of the aborigines," which is very much the same sort of thing as if one were to wonder into how many bishoprics Asia Minor was divided at the time of the Trojan War. Between the Ribble and Mersey there are now four Hundreds—West Derby, Leyland, Blackburn, and Salford; the last three of these are the same now as they were in the days of Edward the Confessor; but, where we have now the one Hundred of West Derby, Domesday gives us three—Derby, Newton, and Warrington: when were these three condensed into one? It would appear that various changes in local boundaries were made either slightly before, or very early in, the reign of Henry III.: the Lancaster, that appears in the Pipe Rolls from 1165 onwards, is not the County but the Honor, and we can not be sure of the existence of the county of Lancaster before 1221. A year or two after that date the Hundreds of Newton and Warrington had certainly been condensed into the

Hundred of West Derby ; it may be that whatever year saw the amalgamation of Amounderness and the Lancaster Honor into the county of Lancaster (the germ of the present county), saw also the amalgamation of these three Hundreds into one.

It would be interesting if some one with local knowledge could point out why it is that the boundary between Newton and Derby Hundreds runs through the middle of the parish of Wigan ; the townships of Holland, Dalton, Winstanley, and Orrell being in the latter Hundred. The boundary of the Hundred of Newton is here very nearly, but not exactly, the same as that of the later Fee of Makerfield, which included the greater part of Wigan parish. At the present time there is one township in that parish—Aspull by name—which is in Salford Hundred, all the other townships being in West Derby. This fact had escaped the notice of the lawyers who drafted the Act by which the Liverpool Bishopric was founded ; and the Bill had made some progress, before I caused it to be pointed out to Lord Beauchamp (who had charge of it in the Upper House) that the Bill, if its wording remained unaltered, would leave the one township of Aspull in the middle of Lancashire, as an island (so to call it), under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Chester.

We may notice in passing that there have been many changes in the Hundreds of Cheshire also. Wirrall appears in Domesday as Wilaveston, Macclesfield as Hamestan, and other names are changed, and not only that, but the present Hundreds of Buckland and Edisbury each contain two of the Hundreds of Domesday Book.

III. As to the Townships mentioned in South Lancashire. It is well known that Domesday is here much more meagre than in most parts of England. Newton and Warrington are the only places spoken of by name in their respective Hundreds. In Blackburn Hundred we have the names of Blackburn, Whalley, Huncoat near Accrington, Walton-le-Dale, and Pendleton near Clitheroe ; in Salford Hundred those of Salford, Ratcliff, Manchester, and Rochdale ; whilst Leyland and Penwortham are the

only names given in Leyland Hundred. On the other hand, in Derby Hundred we have the names of more than 40 townships or hamlets; but this is all out of the 188 manors which Domesday itself says existed between Ribble and Mersey.

Every one knows that amongst these manors Liverpool is not mentioned, or at least only appears under the name of *Esmedune* or *Smithdown*, a place mentioned in documents of the 13th century in connection sometimes with *Toxteth* and sometimes with the forest of *West Derby*. Four hundred years later, we find receivers appointed for the crown-rents of *Toxteth*, *Smithdown Moss*, and *Liverpool*; and the name is still perpetuated in *Smithdown Road*, that runs towards *Liverpool* along the boundary of the townships of *Toxteth* and *West Derby*. *Smithdown* then probably lay west of *Derby* and north of *Toxteth*, and contiguous to both, and therefore occupied the site of, at any rate, a considerable portion of *Liverpool*, which latter name was perhaps confined at the time of *Domesday* to the well-known pool or inlet of the *Mersey*, now built over, answering to *Wallasey Pool* on the opposite side of the river. If this be so, the transference of the name from the inlet to the group of houses on its banks is exactly paralleled by the instance of the modern village in *Cheshire*, which is now called *Hoyle*, a name formerly applied to the tidal channel washing the coast at that spot. This theory would of course account for the name *Liverpool* not appearing in *Domesday Book*. Our learned Secretary, however, believes in an ingenious and probable derivation of the word from a British source, which would make it the name of a place, and not of a pool, from the very first,

Judging from the scantiness of the information, it would certainly seem as if the *Domesday Commissioners* had contented themselves with crossing over from *Chester* to the king's manor of *Derby*, and there had gathered sworn information about that Hundred, and gleaned further pieces of knowledge about the five other Hundreds (especially about the king's land in them), without troubling themselves to penetrate into a part of the country so wild and desolate, and inhabited by people full of a sturdy independence.

IV. When we pass on to the Landlords, we naturally take first those with whom our sympathies lie—the Englishmen, who are spoken of in the past tense, some of whom were dead and gone before the Domesday survey, but many of whom must have been living on, dispossessed of their lands for no other crime than love for England. The first and foremost of these is, of course, King Eadward, who (besides being, as it seems, Lord of the Hundreds of Warrington, Blackburn, Salford, and Leyland) owned West Derby and six unnamed berewicks or hamlets dependent on that manor, Warrington and three hamlets in that neighbourhood, Blackburn Huncoat and Pendleton in the north-east, Salford and Ratcliffe in the east, Walton-le-dale Leyland and Penwortham in the north. These 19 townships belonged to the Confessor, and passed at his death to his nobler successor King Harold, whom the compilers of Domesday Book mention as seldom as possible; indeed, when they have to speak of the nine months of his reign, they generally use some periphrasis, such as, “after the death of King Eadward, before that King William had come into England.” We, who have been born between Ribble and Mersey, may be proud to think that our native district must thus have contributed largely to the assistance of the one king of the English who has died fighting in defence of his country,—helped him (we will hope) by both men and means in his struggle against the Norwegian King and the Norman Duke.

The dispossessed Englishmen of lower degree are not named, excepting those in the Hundred of West Derby, and one, Gamel of Rochdale, in the Hundred of Salford. There were many different landholders in the Derby Hundred. One of them was a lady, Godgitu by name, frenchified into Godiva, but no doubt a different person from Earl Leofric's famous wife; whether the name of Teos, the owner of Barton, is feminine or not, I am not scholar enough to say; it is no doubt the French clerk's ignorant way of pronouncing some good old English name. Of one of these landholders we would gladly know more—Uhtred, a great man in the district, for he held more than 15 townships in the Hundred, viz., Kirkby, Roby, Knowsley, Crosby, Maghull,

Aughton, Kirkdale, Little Woolton, Speke, Litherland, Dalton, Skelmersdale, Lathom, Lydiate, and Altcar, together with part of Scarisbrick and Marton. We would gladly identify him, if we could, with one of the Uhtreds of the great House of Eadwulf, which held the northern counties against all the inroads of the Danes, and for generations ruled Northumberland so independently that up to the eve of the Norman Conquest the writs of the king at Winchester did not run north of the Humber—a House which was so famous, that Scotch kings and Galwegian princes and Cumbrian lords were proud of their descent from it, and which still exists in the direct male line, the head of it bearing the surname of Nevill, which an ancestor of his took from his Norman mother in the twelfth century. Such identification, however, would be mere guess-work. Gamel of Rochdale may have been a kinsman of Uhtred, for his name, too, was not unknown amongst the descendants of Eadwulf of Bamborough, and he and Uhtred appear to have had rights and liberties not possessed by all the landlords of the district. We may notice, before we pass on, that the Uhtred of whom we have been speaking owned Wallasey, and Wallasey only, on the south bank of the Mersey; this connection between Wallasey and the land between Ribble and Mersey may allow us to conjecture that the time was not then far distant when Wallasey had been an island, and when the more important of the two mouths of the Mersey had been where Leasowe Castle now stands, thus leaving Wallasey a part of the Hundred of West Derby rather than of the peninsula of Wirrall.

It is with a certain malicious satisfaction that an Englishman finds that “held,” and not “holds,” is used of Roger of Poitou himself, to whom the Conqueror had granted the whole land between Ribble and Mersey, together with 210 other manors—398 in all. Roger “of Poitou” was so called from his residence (one would suppose) at his wife’s castle in Poitou rather than at his own at Lancaster, or at the one, which he had himself built at Penwortham,—the only castle then existing between Ribble and Mersey,—and doubtless the abode of such oppression and

cruelty as he and his knew well how to exercise. Roger had married Almodis, Countess, in her own right, of La Marche, in Poitou. He was the third son of Roger of Montgomery, who was the head of a house connected by "the spindle side" with the dukes of Normandy, and who, at the great battle of 1066, had been in command of the right wing, which consisted of Frenchmen and other "soldiers," *i.e.* (for the word was then used in its strict sense) mercenaries,—the same Roger of Montgomery, who, when Earl of Shrewsbury, became the one Norman robber that left his surname to be borne in future ages by a county in this island. Roger of Poitou's mother was Mabel Talvas, the heiress of the chiefest of all Norman families in power and in wickedness, "small in stature, talkative, clever, and witty" (as the old chronicler calls her), guilty of fearful crimes and doomed to a fearful end; she passed on her evil nature to her eldest son, the famous or infamous Robert of Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel in England, Count of Ponthieu and Alencon in France, a horrible tyrant of the worst feudal type, who drew down upon himself the hatred of our English forefathers in a more abundant measure than did any other Norman oppressor. But, if the wickedness of the family culminated in Robert of Belesme, we cannot say much to the credit of his younger brother, Roger of Poitou. In 1077, forgetful of what he owed to the Conqueror, he espoused the cause of King William's rebellious son Robert, and was deprived of his English possessions, the revenues of which William, with characteristic grim pleasantry, employed in hiring mercenaries to fight against their former owner.

Thus, when Domesday Book was compiled, the King himself held the land between Ribble and Mersey; and the names of the few tenants mentioned as having received lands from Roger of Poitou (Ralph, Tetbald, Osmund, Adelard, and others,) are too insignificant to detain us, with the exception of two, who apparently held between them the Hundred of Blackburn, and whose descendants still own estates between Ribble and Mersey. The first of these is Roger de Busli or Bussel, afterwards Baron

of Penwortham, whose descendant, Avice Bussel, just before the year 1279, brought to her husband, William ffarington, as her marriage-portion half the manor of Leyland, which is still held by her descendants in the male line ; and the second is Albert Greslet or Gresley, the founder of a family which held Manchester from the days of the Conqueror to those of Edward II., when Joan, its heiress, carried that barony into the house of De la Warr ; it was from these Gresleys that the great Lancashire family of Assheton received that carucate of land in Ashton-under-Lyne, which gave them their surname, when Emma Gresley became the bride of the Englishman, Orm, the son of Eadward.

To return, however, to Roger of Poitou. He was afterwards reinstated in his lordships by William the Red, but, joining in the insurrection of his elder brother against Henry I., he once more lost all his English fiefs in 1103, and England finally got rid of the house of Montgomery, though both Robert and Roger left children to inherit in France the lands, the power, and the evil name, of their forefathers.

V. I have already tried your patience too much, and can only allow myself a word about the churches. The only two churches alluded to in the Derby Hundred are Childwall, under which name we read "there was a priest, having half a carucate "of land," and Walton-on-the-Hill with twice that amount of glebe. Newton Hundred was much smaller than Derby, but we hear of two churches there also, Wigan and Winwick ; "the "church of the same manor had one carucate of land, and "S. Oswald of the same vill had two carucates ;" it is well known that the rectors of those two churches are still considerable owners of glebe-land. In Warrington Hundred, Warrington church is the only one mentioned, and was called then, as now, S. Elphin. Blackburn and Whalley were the churches of the north-eastern Hundred ; Leyland Church stood alone in its Hundred ; whilst in Salford Hundred we find "the church of "S. Mary and the church of S. Michael ;" the former of these is the "old church " at Manchester ; as to the latter, Mr. Beamont

hesitatingly identifies it with the ancient church of S. Michael, Ashton-under-Lyne, which was within the original parish of Manchester. There can, I should think, be little doubt about the truth of this conjecture; it is certainly preferable to Mr. Whitaker's idea of a S. Michael's Church at Aldport, in Manchester,—a church, the very existence of which remains to be proved. Mr. Whitaker adduces the two Manchester fairs to demonstrate the existence of two Manchester churches, and, because neither of these fairs coincides with the Feast of S. Michael, he attempts to shew that Michaelmas day was at one time held in April; the great thing, that he *does* prove, is the length, to which a man will go *θέσειν διαφυλάττων*, in support of a favourite theory.

It is pleasant to think that at any rate there were ten times as many churches as there were castles in this district, and indeed it is possible that, besides these ten, other churches may have existed; but still the parishes between Ribble and Mersey in the eleventh century must have been very much like what South African parishes are now, and, where we have in these days the busy hum of huge towns and overgrown villages without number, in those days there seems to have been nothing but the silence of a vast solitude. Indeed we know that great tracts were uninhabited, for we read of a forest in the Manor of Derby, (the predecessor probably of the extra-parochial district of Croxteth,) two more in connection with some of Uhtred's manors, (one of which is now perhaps represented by Simonswood, which is also extra-parochial,) a fourth at Lathom, two more at Melling and Lydiate, and another at Woolton,—seven in the Derby Hundred alone. In the little Hundred of Newton there was a forest 15 miles long and 9 broad, and another almost as large in Salford Hundred, whilst two are mentioned in each of the Hundreds of Leyland and Blackburn.

The country had indeed been more civilized a short time before than it was at the time of the Domesday survey. "In King "Eadward's time" the six Hundreds were "worth £145 2s. 2d.; "when Roger of Poitou received it from the king, it was worth

“£120”; in the same way the fifteen drenghes of Newton Hundred had been diminished to six; though all this, of course, is as nothing compared with the terrible devastation that had fallen upon Yorkshire, which then included Lancashire north of the Ribble. The accounts that we have of William’s harrying of the country in 1069 are graphic enough, but they are outdone by the passionless witness of Domesday, where the significant word “waste” is attached to Yorkshire manors through page after page. To take the Lancashire Hundred of Amounderness as an instance, for it, as I have just said, in those days belonged to Yorkshire; the Survey reckons up 62 manors in that Hundred, which had belonged to Earl Tostig, King Harold’s brother, and had afterwards been granted by the Conqueror to Roger of Poitou, and then it quietly adds:—“Sixteen of these have a few people living “in them, but we do not know how many; the rest are waste”! Perhaps the missing drenghes of Newton Hundred, and many another valiant man from the land between Ribble and Mersey, were amongst the large body of Englishmen who made their way to Constantinople, and there, in the service of the eastern Emperors of the House of Komnénos, they not uncommonly had the satisfaction of meeting in open battle the kinsmen of their conquerors, for the Norman invader in the eleventh century found the shores of Epeiros guarded by the axes of Englishmen no less than the hills of Sussex; and the strangely abiding tie, which the Waring (or Varangian) Guard thus formed between England and the New Rome, lasted until the death-throes of the Byzantine empire, when Harold, the son of Godwine at length found a worthy compeer in Constantine Palaiologos.

Under such a ruler as Roger of Poitou the value of the district would rapidly decline still further, and civilisation would go backward, and even Christianity relax a little of its former hold upon the people. So indeed we may gather from the startling fact that the fine for violence against the weaker sex was, between the Ribble and Mersey, only one quarter of what it was in Cheshire, no more, in fact, than the fine imposed on one who wilfully absented himself from the shire-moot; thus, too, in Cheshire

certain offenders paid a double fine if the offence was committed on a Sunday or during a holy season ; but all days were esteemed alike in the wilder district north of the Mersey.

With this rather dreary view of the churchmanship and of the prosperity of our predecessors here in the eleventh century, I must conclude. I have kept you long enough, and must abstain from touching upon further points of interest. But may I ask whether any Liverpool man can prove himself the heir of a certain Æthelmund, of whom Domesday speaks ? for, if so, he might lay claim to a property which has considerably increased in value during the last 800 years. " Æthelmund," we are told, " held " Smithdown," *i.e.*, as we have already seen, Liverpool ; " it was " worth 32d." !

