

S. HELEN'S CHURCH, SEPHTON.

By the Rev. G. W. Wall, M.A.,

Rector of Sephton.

Read 7th March, 1895.

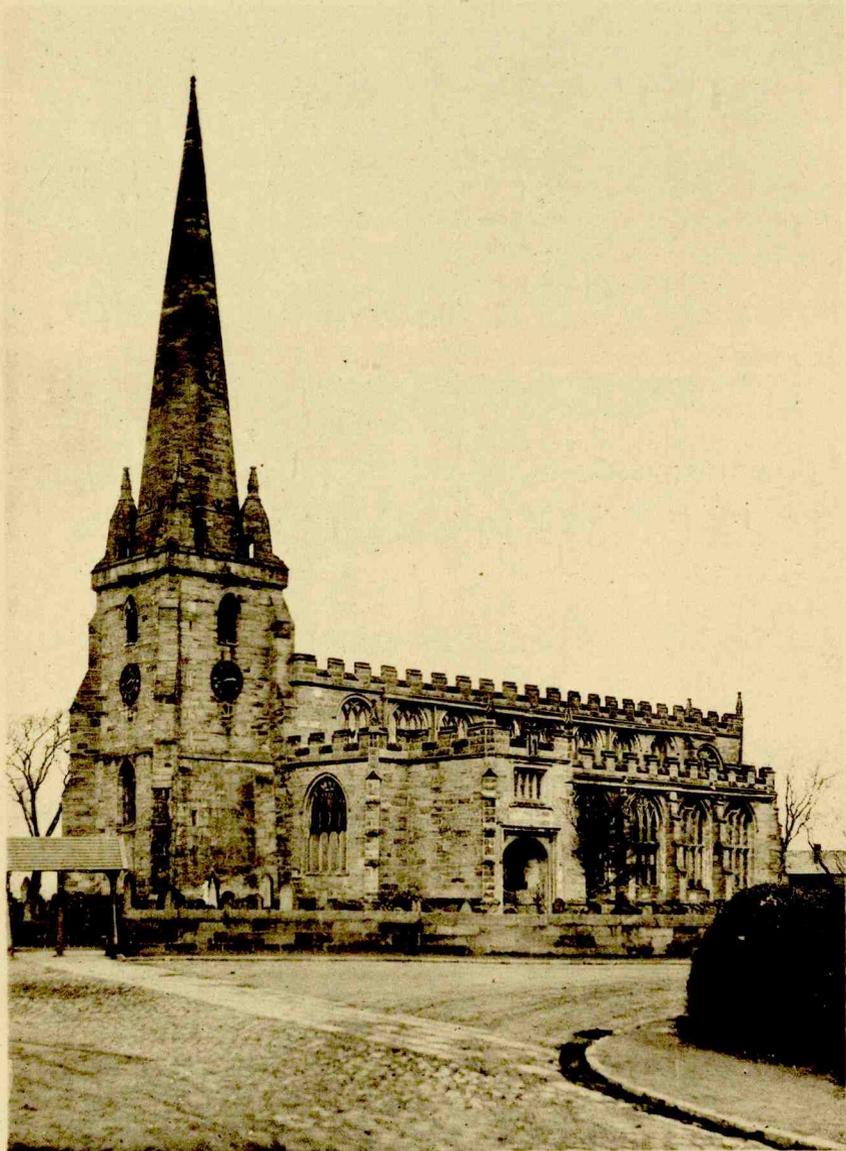
PREVIOUS LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT.

THOMAS PENNANT, the antiquary and "tourist," supplies in the year 1773 some brief information regarding Sephton. The church and parish are, of course, mentioned at some length in Baines' *History of Lancashire*; and some account is given of it in a small book styled *A brief Historical and Descriptive Account of Sefton Church*, published in 1819, and dedicated by its author, "Thomas Ashcroft, Esq., of Lydiate," to the Rev. R. R. Rothwell, Rector of the parish at the time.

In the year 1822, a certain R. Bridgens, an architect by profession, living for several years at Liverpool, published in London a large folio volume, dedicated "to the Rt. Hon^{ble} Earl Sefton." The work contains little letterpress, but consists of drawings of the interior and exterior of the church, and of the screens and bench ends and details of the carving, as they existed in the year 1818. The author remarks, that since the earlier date the church, so he had been informed, had undergone "considerable repairs and some alterations." This

work would possess more value if greater dependence could be placed upon its correctness; but in some instances the draughtsman appears to have trusted to a defective memory, and in others to have drawn upon his imagination. His ground plan does not indicate any northern opening either of door or window in the "revestre," though the exterior view shows a south window; nor does it place any window in the tower, or at the west end of the south aisle. His interior view shews the Molyneux brass in a position which it does not at present occupy. He places at its foot a brass of three children, of which no trace remains, and omits the coats of arms, at present sufficiently obvious. His drawing shews no side galleries, but a blocked-up tower arch with a western gallery, in which it is probably correct. A small square-headed window is shewn in the north aisle, which is probably a misplacement of the square-headed one now existing. It shews the stalls as if paved with stone, and a flight of steps descending from a nave at a higher level into the chancel. The present levels would seem to put such steps out of the question. His concluding plate is styled "a composition." In it two knights in armour, standing amidst the ruins of the church, anxiously contemplate one of the mailed effigies which it contains. The oak tracery of a screen is standing, but the font and a bench-end, with its "poppy," lie uncared for on the ground. The work is painstaking and interesting, but it cannot be relied upon as an authority.

A more extended history of the church and parish appeared in the year 1893. This "descriptive and historical account" is the joint work of "W. D. Caröe, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., and "E. J. A. Gordon," and is copiously illustrated by engravings. It contains an account of S. Helen's



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ST. HELEN'S CHURCH, SEPHTON.

Church, and of many matters of antiquarian and archæological interest connected with the parish and neighbourhood of Sephton; and not only quotes, but in many instances reproduces the contents of ancient documents and charters calculated to throw light on the working of the social machinery in by-gone centuries. In matters of more recent date, this volume supplies full information as to the proceedings of a body which styled itself "The ancient and loyal Corporation of Sephton," more commonly known as "The Mock Corporation." The late Rev. Engelbert Horley, M.A., Rector 1871-1883, took a lively interest in the records of the sayings and doings of this association, and, by collecting and editing them as they are now presented in print, has preserved a very life-like picture of a curious phase of social life, and of men and manners as they appeared between the year 1780 and the cessation of the chronicles, if not of the existence, of this jocose and merry-making self-styled corporation, in 1798.

SUCCESSIVE CHURCHES ON THE SITE.

Whether or no a Norman church formerly stood at Sephton, on any portion of the site of the present building, is a matter only to be inferred from a few traces which seemingly exist. Our great Norman cathedrals were built much about the dates 1150-1180, and Norman work was followed by Early English before the close of the twelfth century. A certain "Richard, parson of "Sephton," is mentioned in a deed which internal evidence assigns to the year 1204 or thereabouts. It goes without saying that this "parson of Sephton," who seems to have had a taste for litigation, must have had a church in which to officiate; and as his dispute with the monks of S. Mary's, Lancaster, was arranged in the year just named, that building

must have been in existence at Sephton some twenty or thirty years only after the date of the erection of some of our finest examples of Norman architecture. The remains of a Norman doorway at Aughton, and of a Norman window at Ormskirk, render it perfectly possible that a Norman building stood at Sephton also, at an early date. The tradition locally current, that it was founded in 1111, may be dismissed as unauthenticated, and rests probably on a misinterpretation of an I.H.S. carved above the arch of the south porch. It is most improbable that the builders of the sixteenth century porch would place upon their work the merely traditional date of a vanished building.

The Norman church at Sephton has disappeared, but in the angle formed by the junction of the western wall of the porch with the wall of the south aisle, a stone is built into the wall which evidently formed at one time part of a diapered surface, wrought by the hands of a Norman mason. The shape and diagonal tooling of many of the stones built into the east wall of the north aisle seem also to indicate a Norman origin, and another fragment of diaper occurs in the interior, high up in the wall of the south aisle, to the east of the parvise door. Some large blocks of red sandstone in two courses—the lower one squared and tooled, the upper one much injured—are visible at the base of the interior of the tower, beneath its west window. These appear to be anterior to the Decorated work, and are possibly the remains of a stone bench, and are certainly evidence of some description of an early building.

As no trace of Early English work exists in the church, it may be assumed that the Norman church stood through the Early English period, until it was supplanted towards the end of the thirteenth century by a Decorated building, which in its turn

gave place to the work of late fifteenth century masons. The relaying of some flags near the western face of the chancel screen, in the year 1893, disclosed a red sandstone wall of considerable thickness running north and south, at some little depth below the present surface. The similarity of material would seem to point to some connection as regards date and builders between this wall and the courses in the tower. A sandstone floor is also to be found lying at some depth below the oaken flooring of the choir stalls, and presents the appearance of having formed the floor of some early building.

The place of the Norman church was taken by a Decorated building, of which some substantial portions still remain. The tower, and a portion of the north aisle at its western, and more especially at its eastern end, enable us to conjecture what manner of building the whole structure was. It probably occupied much the same site as the existing church, but had not quite the same axis. It had a high-pitched roof, the slope of which is indicated by the weather moulding, visible from the interior on the eastern wall of the tower, and which also shows that the present nave stands rather more to the south than did the earlier one. The spire, where it rises from the tower, had the same turrets at its base as now, but they are shewn in old drawings as simple cones, devoid of the crocketed pinnacles placed upon them by later hands. An examination of the plinth and base mouldings of the tower where they appear in the church at the west end of the south aisle, leads to the conclusion that they were originally carried straight onward to the east, and that the Decorated church had no south aisle; but that its high-pitched roof, starting from the tower, terminated eastward by the nave and chancel gables, resting upon

a south nave and chancel wall. This wall was probably pierced by either arched or square-headed windows, having flowing tracery, and filled with yellow stained and *grisaille* glass. The north aisle formed a part of the original design, and was erected at the same time as the Decorated nave, and, as it would seem, with stones taken from a preceding Norman building.

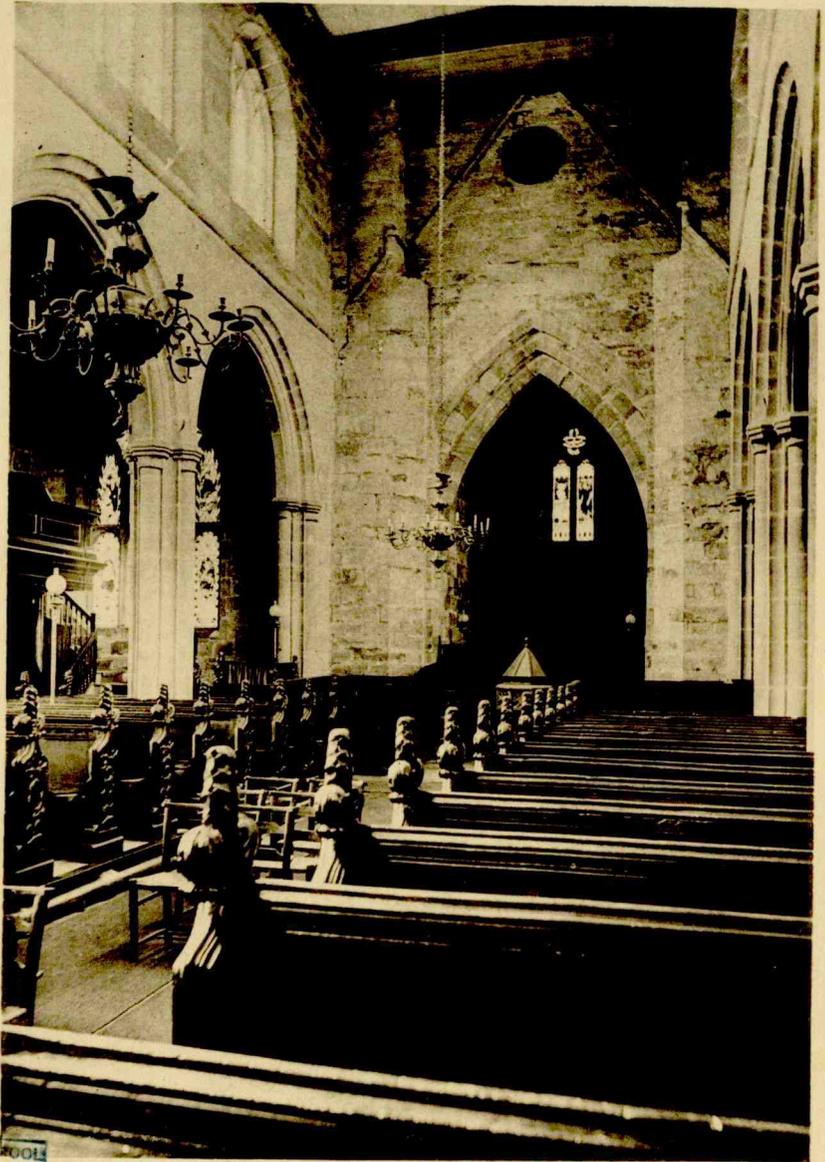
But if the Norman church was swept away by the builder of Decorated date, his work in turn fared nearly as badly at the hands of the Perpendicular architect. The carrying of the weather-moulding of the nave roof slightly beyond the northern limit of the tower wall, is an indication that the north aisle had a gabled roof of its own, which is confirmed by the height of its eastern window. Some corbels in the northern wall, above the square-headed window, were evidently intended to carry the roof timbers; but whether they were designed to be simple blocks, or, like the corner one, to have a step-like form, is not so clear, though the latter appears most probable. This north aisle exhibits an architectural declension as its construction is carried westward. It has been repaired with Perpendicular work of an earlier period than that of the nave, consequently, it may be inferred, while the Decorated nave was still standing. Beyond the square-headed window westward, it has apparently undergone successive and intermittent repair, rather than systematic reconstruction. The east window is an interesting example of Decorated work, as is also the square-headed one; but the latter has undergone some unskilful repair, while the former stands urgently in need of careful restoration. The next window was evidently also square-headed, as probably were all the windows, but the lintel has been removed, and replaced by a fifteenth century arch. An

inspection of the exterior of the north aisle wall will shew, by the alteration in the courses of the stones, and by their size and materials, how far the existing walls date from the Decorated period, and where the late Perpendicular work commences. The plinth from the tower eastward was seemingly spared by the Perpendicular rebuilders, who either raised their walls upon it, or reset it upon a new foundation. The corner buttress eastward is Decorated, the next very recent, the next fifteenth century work, the next two modern, and the western corner one late fifteenth century. The parapet and flat roof are also of the same date.

Modern builders and restorers only are generally credited with a destructive vandalism, but a slight examination will shew that here the fifteenth century masons shared the same failing. A filleted fragment, probably of a mullion, and of Early English character, is built into the cill of the second window of the north aisle; while another fragment of tracery, taken either from a window or, possibly, from the canopy of a niche, is embedded in the south aisle, in the cill of the third window. The destruction of the body of the Decorated church was complete, and the builders of the existing nave and chancel utilized its stones in their rising walls. A portion of a window label, identical in shape with the label of the windows of the topmost stage of the tower, appears upon the exterior of the western wall of the north aisle, probably in its original position; but the window itself has been replaced by one of far later date, not quite in the same position. The stone-work of this window had become so decayed, that it was found needful to insert an exact *replica* in new stone, in 1895. The western window of the tower, although of the Decorated period, may yet not be the original one, as the tracery, carved out of a

single stone, which fills its head, has not been planned to fit the mullion with which it is connected.

A square recess is to be found in the western wall of the tower. This may have been an aumbrey or cupboard, intended to receive the requisites for the administration of baptism. Two other recesses—the one in the northern, the other in the southern wall—extend within the thickness of the wall for some distance eastward beyond their openings. These recesses have been grooved, as if to receive a shelf, but no satisfactory explanation has ever been brought forward, either of their peculiar formation or of the purpose which they were intended to serve. In the present clock room, where some massive corbels support the belfry floor, a curious funnel-shaped opening, of square section, pierces the eastern wall. This, now blocked up, would, if open, command a view of the chancel, and may have been intended to enable an occupant of the chamber to observe the celebration of the Mass, so that he might sound one of the bells at the fitting moment. On the southern side of the tower, between the tower arch and the recess, some faint vestiges were found, on the removal of the whitewash, of a flowing foliage pattern executed with some red material, and may yet be indistinctly traced. At some recent period a sloping mass of stone has been raised against the whole width of the south side of the tower, apparently as a buttress. A portion of the spire was blown down in the year 1802, and rebuilt. Its eyelet holes, and the initials of the churchwardens at the time, graven in a lofty position, may be referred to the same date. On the northern side of the tower is a gargoyle, one of the grotesque imaginings in which the old masons occasionally indulged with a free hand.



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SEPHTON CHURCH : THE TOWER ARCH.

The north aisle, in the eastern and Decorated portion of its interior, contains in its eastern wall a piscina, or water drain, into which the ablutions of the vessels employed in the Mass were poured. This possesses two peculiarities; the one that its basins are not pierced nor connected with any drainage, the other that it presents the unusual feature of having two basins instead of one. It possibly had a shelf at the back, which has disappeared. Two holes in the wall above it—the one plugged with the remains of a piece of oak, the other with a stone—suggest the existence at one time of a bracket, possibly supporting the image of a saint. A few faint lines, scarcely visible, still remain upon a thin coat of plaster on the wall above the piscina, and indicate the former existence of a fresco painting. They suggest the folds of a trailing robe, but nothing further is decipherable.

Immediately below the eastern window cill, two other holes appear to have received the supports of an altar slab or shelf. On the removal of the whitewash, two loose stones were found to conceal a cavity hewn out of the thickness of the eastern wall on its northern side. This cavity, which was filled with loose fragments of clay, may have had a wooden aumbrey inserted in it. A recess in the northern wall contains the effigy of a knight, but the connection between the two is evidently accidental; the effigy is of far earlier date than the arch, which has been cut into in order to admit the figure. This recess, which has some peculiar mouldings, may have been intended either to cover a founder's tomb, or to serve as an Easter sepulchre, in which the Host was deposited from Good Friday until Easter Morning.

It is questionable whether the small doorway in the north aisle occupied its present place when

the Decorated aisle was built. It certainly was a doorway in some part of the Decorated church, possibly the "priest's" door in its chancel; but the severance of the Decorated plinth without any return of its mouldings, suggests that the insertion of this doorway in the northern wall was an afterthought of later builders. Viewed from the interior, it seems to form an integral portion of the walling, which strengthens the surmise that the Perpendicular builders raised their new walls upon the old plinth; but having cut through it to form an entrance, proceeded to build in the jambs and arch of a doorway taken from some other site. The intended purpose of several tunnel-like openings, some inches square, carried through the thickness of the north wall, closed at the exterior but still open within, is not obvious. The remains of some interior cornice shew that the north wall has undergone several alterations, the nature of which it is difficult to define.

THE PERPENDICULAR CHURCH.

While the existing portions of the Decorated building seem to have had incorporated into them fragments of work possibly of Norman origin, the sixteenth century Perpendicular nave, aisle, and chancel shew evidence of having been very largely constructed out of the materials of an immediately preceding church. It is perhaps easier to form a notion of the general aspect of the Decorated church, although it has all but disappeared, than to solve some puzzles which present themselves in the later building. Anthony Molyneux, a Rector, is of opinion, in his will, dated the 13th of October, 1553, that his "successors cannot in consequence requyer any dylapidac'one ffor Sefton," owing to the fact that he had "made so greatt coste of ye "chauncell and revestre." The "dilapidac'one"

may refer to the north aisle, but the restrictive phrase is hardly the language of a man who had raised the whole building. Probably he found the arcades already erected by some unrecorded builder of the early part of the sixteenth century, and, by the addition of the sacarium and "revestre," only completed a church which had at least a south aisle in the year 1528. The appearance of the interior of the church must in his day have been more imposing than at present, inasmuch as it was loftier, and probably unobstructed.

The soil of the south chapel was shewn, by an excavation made in 1893, in connection with the erection of the organ, to be made ground, loose and sandy, in which the bases of the pillars were buried to a depth of two feet. In connection with the question of earlier and later floor levels, it must again be noticed that a sandstone paving lies beneath the stalls on either side of the chancel, at a depth of two feet six inches below the present level of the chancel pavement, and one foot beneath the base of the columns of its arcade. No trace of the pavement on which the columns stood remains, unless it is in the present floor uplifted from an earlier level. The cavity below the stalls forms a narrow passage-way. The one on the north is walled on either side with dressed ashlar blocks, loosely set in courses; and the stone step in the chancel at the division of the stalls is supported from below by blocks of stone, placed in a manner which bears the appearance of a hasty and rough temporary expedient, and is by no means suggestive of the hand of a skilled workman. The pavement was, until very recently, concealed by soil some inches in depth, which has now been cleared away.

Ashlar walls are found only on the south and west sides of the corresponding passage on the

south side of the chancel. Of these nearly every stone bears a sharply cut arrow head as a mason's mark; but upon the lowest course, which is apparently older work, either an X or a right angle—marks found on the walls of the south aisle—occur. The base of one of the chancel columns is to be seen at the eastern end of the passage, far below the level of the present floor. From its northern side, and resting upon the pavement, springs a large brick arch, which runs east and west and covers a large vault, its crown lying immediately beneath the flags of the chancel floor. A layer of bricks upon the passage floor, between it and the ashlar wall to the south, is evidently intended to receive and transmit its thrust. Three dates are here indicated: the date of the pavement, of the ashlar that was subsequently raised upon it, and of the arch abutting upon the wall. The pierced quatrefoils beneath the stalls have been set upon the curve of the arch, and are wedged up by a rough stone walling.

It is difficult to imagine what the condition of the chancel could have been when the bases of these columns were visible. It is only evident that the floor of the sixteenth century church lay at a considerably lower level than the present one, and this again above an earlier floor; but no information has been handed down as to who it was who raised the containing walls, or brought in the mass of soil now between them, or utilized it for interments. The present level of the piscina in relation to the floor of the north chapel, and the stunted appearance of the arch over the recumbent figure in the north aisle, both supply additional evidence of the raising of the floor, at some unknown date, above its earlier level. The three steps up to the sanctuary must either have been raised to their present position simultaneously with the raising of the chancel floor, or

their continuations downward have been either removed or buried in the soil ; but the comparatively recent formation of vaults below the sacrarium causes its original level and condition to be now a matter of the merest conjecture.

In the south wall of the sacrarium four niches are placed beneath a linear moulding, which is higher than the cill of the window. The labels of the arches above the niches terminate in carved heads, which bear a strong appearance of being portrait sculpture. A block of stone having slight mouldings is placed in the easternmost niche, and forms a credence. Near, and above it, a small hole or recess is to be found in the wall, the character and purpose of which is uncertain. On the removal of the whitewash, in 1891, the back of each niche was found to be thickly coated with a black and hard cement, while the sandstone wall had been roughly hacked with a pick, in order that the cement might hold. It is inexplicable why it was applied at all, but the damage done was so glaring and unsightly, that the back of each niche had to be refaced ; the solitary instance in the removal of the whitewash in which a new surface was put upon the walls. It will be observed that the moulding at the back of each niche stops short at the spring of the arch.

The sedilia are now placed at so high a level above the sanctuary floor, that as seats they are practically useless. If only three steps originally led to the sanctuary from the early level of the chancel floor, they would have been more useless still. That the existing three steps are only the remains of a longer flight, continued both upwards and downwards, appears improbable ; and the inference remains that the sedilia are not now in the position which they originally occupied. Some curious grooving upon a stone near, and to the

west of the sedilia, is said to have resulted from the sharpening by archers of their arrow-heads. In some other churches there is a strong presumption that stones on the exterior have been so employed. The stone in question may have been on the outside of the earlier church, and have been built-in in its present position. Other stones in the church seem to have been transferred from the exterior, as traces of ivy-roots are to be found within their hollows. A square aumbry has been formed in the thickness of the wall on the north side of the chancel. Externally, some mouldings of an unusual character form a kind of canopy, of which the finial has been destroyed. These mouldings, however, bear masons' marks which occur on the inner west wall of the porch. Another instance of the transference of a stone to another position, is afforded by a stone now placed high up in the clerestory wall, above the westernmost column. It bears a rudely frescoed face, which probably formed a portion of some large design. Traces remain which have been conjectured to represent part of a coif of mail.

The existing nave stands rather more to the south than, and its axis somewhat diverges from that of, the Decorated church, and an examination of its apparently temporary juncture on the south side with the tower, against which its arcade merely abuts, will lead to the conclusion that the removal of the tower was contemplated, had not the work of rebuilding come to a sudden standstill. The lines of the string-courses shew a slight convergence of the arcades towards the west.

A small room or parvise, possibly intended to be used as a chamber by a chantry priest, is situated in the upper storey of the porch. Access would appear to have been gained by means of a wooden staircase in the south-west angle of the aisle,

ending at a platform before the door. The sockets of the joists which carried this landing still remain. The bases of the pillars of the nave arcade are concealed, as in the chancel, by the raising of the floor level. The ceiling of the porch, which forms the floor of the parvise, is formed of massive beams of oak, enclosing panelled spaces. It probably is a type of what was, or was intended to be, the ceiling of the nave, aisles, and chancel, but a whitewashed boarding conceals the nature of their construction. An examination of the wall of the arcade in the south aisle has disclosed holes to receive the ends of beams, but now filled up with brick: an evidence of a change in the formation of the roof.

Whatever other portion of the church may have been built or completed by Anthony Molyneux, he distinctly claims the vestry as his own work. The only access to it from within the church is by a doorway on the south side of the east wall of the sacrarium, which does not appear to be in its original condition. The present outer door is toward the south, and has taken the place of a window, similar to the one in the porch, while the old doorway, strangely placed to the north, has been partially blocked up, and a window inserted in its stead. The window in the east wall of the vestry is both modern and unsightly.

The original mullions and transoms of the east window of the chancel were removed in 1870, and replaced by modern tracery, in which stained glass has been inserted, as a memorial to a former rector, the Rev. R. R. Rothwell. The old cill and the lower portion of the old mullions still remain, but are concealed behind the modern classic paneling. The lofty windows to the north and south of the sacrarium, although of late workmanship, are not devoid of a measure of sober dignity. The

two windows toward the east in the south aisle retain their original stonework and iron saddle-bars, but the stonework of the remaining windows has been renewed. A comparison of the old and new small lights in the top compartments of the aisle windows will shew how completely the modern workman has failed to grasp the niceties of form which give a distinctive character to the work of the earlier mason. The tower appears at one time to have been floored across at no great height from the ground, and its arch was boarded up, and further blocked by an organ and organ gallery, until the year 1893, when the tower was opened out to the church, its walls cleaned and restored, stained glass placed in the western window, and a panelled roof of English oak upon the old corbels put in as a memorial of Mrs. S. Rothwell, the cost being defrayed by Mrs. Birchall and Mr. R. R. Rothwell, the plans being most kindly prepared by Mr. Edward W. Cox.

In the year 1891, a commencement was made of the removal of the whitewash, which had disfigured the church probably from the seventeenth century; and the work was carried on until the unsightly coating had entirely disappeared. The pulpit originally stood against the middle pillar of the north arcade, where the marks left by its removal are still visible. Other marks upon the pillar immediately opposite may indicate the former existence of a bracket for the support of an image, but this, in the absence of any record, is a matter of surmise.

No doubt can exist that the church, and more especially the chancel, has been much despoiled. Its hangings have been torn down, its frescoes obliterated, its stained glass demolished, its brasses broken, its monuments defaced, the fabric itself in places injured; yet notwithstanding the handiwork

of the iconoclast, and of the soldiers of the Commonwealth, it still remains a noble witness to the piety and liberality of an age gone by.

MASONS' MARKS.

Various small devices cut upon the face of many of the stones of a mediæval building are generally passed by unnoticed by the majority of those who visit it, or, if observed, are regarded as the meaningless work of some idle hand. These incised figures have, nevertheless, been intentionally made, for a purpose, and possibly with a meaning, which has long been closely investigated by the students of "masons' marks." These marks are to be found on buildings of every age, and in every country. With a strange continuity and similarity of form, they have been cut upon their handiwork by known and unknown, by Egyptian, Oriental, Greek, Roman, and mediæval masons. Modern masons still employ them, but with a prosaic object, in a different position, and, though with a vague respect, in ignorance of any secret meaning which they may have heretofore conveyed.

The earliest regular use in this country of masons' marks began about the eleventh century; and as the various styles of architecture succeeded one another, these marks increased in number, and underwent corresponding variations. The marks appear to have had differing origins. Some bear a resemblance to various religious symbols; some appear to be alphabetical in character, some numeral, many geometrical; and others rude representations of various objects, among others of masons' tools. Their dimensions range from one to three inches, and frequently vary in accordance with their position. The same mark will be found of full size upon a stone in the wall, but of much smaller dimensions upon another in a

moulding. An inspection of *Euclid's Elements* will give a general notion of their appearance, and some of them are identical with the figures of some of his propositions. The circle is conspicuous, however, by its absence; a curve is of rare occurrence, but an angle is invariably introduced.

Examples of these marks occur in abundance at Sephton, and may be described as the simple angle, either right, obtuse, or acute; two triangles placed in hour-glass position; the five-pointed star; portions of the pentagon; a bisected angle or arrow head; the same with the bisecting line produced upwards or downwards, or upwards and crossed by a short line, forming a kind of gable cross; a triangle with each side produced in one direction, forming three external obtuse angles; two triangles on a common base; two parallel lines bisected diagonally by a third; a simple X; two figures of X, the one above and resting on the other; an X placed upon its side in the inner angle of an obtuse angle; a W; a W with its upper points touching a perpendicular line; a W with its inner lines produced above and cutting each other; an N or Z; a figure resembling the letter A, with concave sides and the apex flattened; a bisected inverted U, the three points touching a base line and resembling a mediæval M; two curves, their convex sides facing each other and joined by a double bar, in the fashion of an H; a peculiar mark on the wall of the north aisle, in the shape of an horizontal line with a curved line resting upon it on its extremities, having at one end a reversed C, and at the other a crook or hook. An anchor is also to be found.

These various marks can be easily identified by a careful inspection of the jambs of the two Decorated windows of the north wall, the piscina, the mouldings of the chancel aumbry, the wall

above the sedilia, the east wall of the south aisle, the arches of both nave and chancel, and the porch. Masons' marks can also, with the help of a glass, be seen in abundance upon the clerestory walls; where, as they usually occur most frequently on the lower courses of a building, they supply an indication that the existing nave and chancel have been constructed largely out of material furnished by the demolition of an earlier church. It has already been noticed that they occur distinctly on the stones beneath the chancel stalls. These marks sometimes appear to be inverted, which may be accounted for either by the position of the mason with regard to his stone, or by the stone having been placed upside down when built into the wall.

Such being the characteristics of these marks, the question presents itself, For what purpose were they made? The saying will here apply, "Many men, many minds." Some would assert that they form the alphabet, or, like the Chinese characters, are the verbal signs of a universal geometric language, intelligible to the craftsmen of every nationality; or that they express some secrets of construction. Others hold that they merely serve to identify the work of the members of some particular lodge or community of masons, or of some individual mason. The marks appear in many instances to have been handed down from father to son, which will account for the same mark occurring on parts of a building which belong to different periods. Documents are in existence, dating from the seventeenth century, which record the appropriation of certain marks by different individuals.

As the periods when various forms of marks came into use are approximately known, the expert is furnished with a key as to the date of the

workmanship on which they occur, and is able to trace the handiwork of the owner of a mark as he journeyed through the country from building to building. English mediæval masons placed their marks invariably at the centre of the face of a stone; modern masons make them, but merely as a means by which each man may identify his work, on the upper surface of the "bed." Straight lines, like the Roman numerals up to three, sometimes occur. Such are to be found near the sedilia, on the chancel wall, but these strokes probably only indicated to the builder the proper position of the stone. If the observer does not in these marks find "sermons in stones," he may at least conclude that they are not without a meaning, whether occult or practical.

MEMORIAL BRASSES.

Engraved plates of brass or latten came into use as memorials of the dead in the thirteenth century. The continental brasses exhibit both the figure and the background engraved upon a quadrangular plate; the English workers adopted the plan of inlaying the figure and any tabernacle work surrounding it, separately into the stone, or, very commonly, Purbeck marble slab, which supplied a background in itself. An illustration of this latter method is to be seen at Sephton, in the memorial brass of Margaret Bulkeley.

These memorial brasses furnish representations of ecclesiastics in their vestments, of knights in their armour, of ladies in the costume of their day, and of all sorts and conditions of men, of merchants and burghers, in their habits as they lived. Great pains were evidently taken to represent correctly even minute details of vestment, armour, or robe; the fashion of wearing the hair or beard; and the

general personal appearance of the person commemorated. Nevertheless, brasses occur in which individuals are arrayed in dress or armour worn at a period much earlier than the one in which they lived and died. It is difficult now to assign any valid reason for this departure from accepted custom and actual truth. It would be equally difficult to say why, in a day not long gone by, our sculptors chose to clothe their marble effigies of our warriors or our statesmen in the garb of ancient Rome.

A puzzling example of this anachronism is to be found in the brass on the south side of the chancel, which commemorates Sir William Molyneux. While the lower portion of the figure is encased in armour of the time of Henry VIII, the head, neck, and chest are covered with a coif and shirt of mail such as were worn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹

Sir William is represented with his two wives—the first, Jane, the only daughter and heiress of Richard Rugge, by whom he had a son and two daughters; the second, Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Cuthbert Clifton, by whom he had two sons and one daughter. Bridgens, in his drawing, places a brass beneath the figures, on which three children are represented. This has disappeared, if its insertion was not an error on his part. A shield, with twelve quarterings, is also beneath the figures. The *cross moline* is also engraved upon the knight's breastplate, which is an unusual position. Another plate above the central figure has upon it the *cross moline*, a cap of maintenance with peacock plumes, the motto *En droit devant*, and a representation of the banner or pennon of the Earl of Huntly, taken at Flodden by Sir

¹ See paper by Mr. J. G. Wailer, F.S.A., in the Society's *Transactions*, vol. ii, p. 249.

William. Part of the plate has been taken away. On the part which remains are engraved the staves of two banners crossed behind a cap of maintenance; the second banner has disappeared. As no hollow to receive the missing part is found upon the slab, it is evident that the brasses have been relaid. The words *Clanc tout* appear among the heraldic devices upon the banner which remains, and near its point. This, doubtless, was a battle-cry, but its meaning is far from obvious. The knight wears a collar of SS, and both sword and dagger; the ladies wear the "pedimental" head-dress of the period, and each has an ornament hanging from her waist by a lengthy chain. The feet of the left-hand figure are placed in an awkward position, as though by an unskilful artist. Beneath the figures lies a plate with a Latin inscription, which may be rendered as follows:—"William Molyneux, Knight, Lord of Sefton, bore himself bravely when thrice sent to battle against the Scots, during the reign in England of King Henry VIII. In peace, dear to everyone, he aided his friends by counsel, the needy by alms. He had two wives, the first Jane, the only daughter and heiress of Richard Rugge, Knight, of the County of Salop, by whom he had Richard, Jane, and Anne; the second, Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Cuthbert Clifton, Esq., by whom he had Thomas, William, and Anne. He lived 65 years. He rests here with his forefathers, in hope of the Resurrection. In the year of our Lord 1548, in the month of July." This date appears to have been altered from 1546 to 1548.

The brasses of Sir Richard Molyneux, son of Sir William by his first wife, Jane, and of his two wives and children, are placed upon an altar-tomb of uncertain date, beneath the south-east chancel

screen, which rests upon the slab, and separates one of the figures from the rest. Sir Richard's first wife was Eleanor, daughter of Sir Alexander Radcliffe, by whom he is said to have had eight daughters and five sons, represented upon a separate brass. His second wife was Eleanor, daughter of Robert Maghull, by whom he had a second family of five sons and one daughter. A defective and misplaced strip of brass contains an epitaph, which, if restored to its proper sequence, would read: "Ye bodyes of Richarde . . . ghte
"and Dame Elenore his wyffe." According to Baines, a further strip was until recently in existence, which added, "whose soules God p'don." A plate at the feet of the figures contains the following quaint inscription:—

“ Dame Worshope was my guide in lyfe
and did my doinges guyde
Dame Wertue left me not alone
whan soule from bodye hyed
And thoughe that Deathe with dinte of darte
hath brought my corps on sleape
The eternall god my eternall soule
Eternally doethe kepe ”

Sir Richard Molyneux was knighted on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Mary, and died in 1568. He is represented as bare-headed, and in the armour of the period. His wives wear long robes beneath long over-gowns, puffed at the shoulders. The sleeves are tight, and probably belong to the under-robe. They wear frills and ruffles, and the head-dress known as "Paris heads," depressed in the centre. This brass marks a decline in the art. The early brasses represented their figures as recumbent, frequently with the feet resting against an animal; the later ones represent a pavement or soil at the feet of the figures; if the latter, often, as in the present instance, with flowers

growing out of it, conveying the idea of an upright and standing position. If Thomas Ashcroft, of Lydiate, was an accurate observer in 1819, the slab on which the brasses are now placed can scarcely be the original one; as he writes of one the surface of which was "nearly covered with "brass ornaments and devices, and round the "border it is evident there have been inscriptions "in brass inlaid."

A brass commemorating Margaret Bulkley lies upon the floor of the church, beneath a window in the south aisle. She was the daughter of Sir Richard Molyneux, who was slain at Bloreheath in 1459. Her elder brother was Sir Thomas, father of Sir William Molyneux, of Flodden fame; and her younger brother, James Molyneux, was Rector of Sephton in 1489. She is represented upon the brass, which is in a good state of preservation, beneath a pinnacled and crocketed double canopy. On either side of it are two shields: of those on the right hand, the upper one is charged with the *cross moline* (Molyneux), the lower with a *chevron between three bulls' heads* (Bulkley); of those on the left, the upper one has quarterly the arms of her first husband (Dutton), the lower a *cross moline*. At each corner of the slab is a circular hollow, which evidently at one time contained a brass, of which the device must remain a matter of conjecture—possibly the symbols of the four Evangelists, in token that the departed died in the communion of the Church. An inscription beneath the canopy and feet of the figure runs as follows:—

"Orate p aīa Margarete filie Ricī Molyneux mili^{ti} q̄dam uī Iohīs Dutton Armig^o dñi de dutton et postea ux^o Willmi Bulcley Armig^o que hic cātarīam p̄tuam fūdavit ac reddi^t 't terras sufficē p uno capellāo imp̄petū dīa celebratur^o ac p aīab^o eiusdem Margarete parētū 't benefactor^o suor^o exoraturum stabiliūt 't dotavit que obiit xxi die februarii a^o dñi xv^c xxviii cui^o aīe p̄ficietur deus."

[Pray for the soul of Margaret, daughter of Richard Molyneux, Knight, at one time wife of John Dutton, Esq., lord of Dutton, and afterwards wife of William Bulkley, Esq.; who founded here a perpetual chantry, and established and endowed it with rents and lands sufficing for one chaplain to celebrate for ever; and that he should pray for the souls of the said Margaret, her parents and benefactors, who died the 21st of February, 1528; on whose soul may God have mercy.]

In the window is an inscription—

“ of yor Charity pray for the soul of Marg^oett Bulcley daughter of Ric Molyne^x knyght and Wiff unto Joh^e dutton & Wiffm Buleley Esqere Whose goodness caused this window to be made of the will of Sr Rob Pkynson executor^o to the said Marg^oett the yere of or lord MDXLIIIⁱⁱⁱⁱ Which said Marg^oett decessed the xxi^o daye of ffebruar^o the yere of or lord MDXVII of Whose saule Jhu have m^{ey}. Am^e ”

The erroneous date is a later insertion. The executor was “ Robert Parkynson,” whom she had appointed “ chapellayn ” and priest of the chantry which she founded. Margaret Bulkley is represented as wearing a “ pedimental ” head-dress; a long robe, falling in ample folds around the feet, the sleeves wide at the wrist and with cuffs of fur; a girdle, apparently clasped with three roses, from which hangs a chain, having at the end an ornament or tassel; and round her neck a shorter chain, to which is attached a S. Anthony or T-shaped cross, seemingly with jewelled arms. In the neighbouring church of Childwall, on the brass of Henry Norris, 1524, the figure of Clemence, his wife, is attired in a manner strikingly similar, except that she wears an outer cloak, the girdle being identical in fashion.

Some other rectangular brass plates are to be found in various parts of the pavement of the church. On a brass plate at the east end of the south aisle is the following inscription :—

“ Here lyeth Elizabeth the fift daughter of Sr Ric^o Mollinex Knight & Barronett who married Richard Sherbyrne son and

heyre apparant of Richard Sherbyrne of Stonihurst in the Countie of Lancaster Esq^r the 19th of October 1613 and was delivered of a daughter the 30th of June 1615 and died in childbed the 3 of July next ensving which daught^r was named Elizabeth who died on Christmas daye in the same yeare 1615."

On a plate in the south aisle, near the brass of Sir Richard Molyneux, is the following inscription:—

"Hic jacet corpus Dñae Mariae filiae Domini Alexandri Barlow de Barlow in comitatu Lancastriae Equitis Aurati uxoris Prænobilis Do Dñi Carill Vicecomitis Molyneux Quae obiit vii^o Idus Feb St^{ae} Dorotheae Sacro Año Domini MDCLXI Cujus animae misereatur omnipotens De⁹"

On a small brass plate affixed to a slab on the north side of the chancel, commemorating Alice Morton, is inscribed—

"Marg^t: the daught^r: of Joⁿ: Torbocke late Curate of Sephton, died the 16th Jan: 1676."

"Here lyeth y^e body of Jo
hn Torbocke clerke M^r
of Arts & late Curate
of Sephton who depar
ted this life June y^e 12
1675."

And on the adjoining slab, one inscribed—

"Here lyeth y^e body of y^e Reverend Edward Moreton D^r in Divinity & late Rector of Sephton who departed this life Feb^{ri} y^e 28: 1674."

This plate is affixed to the slab which covers the grave of his widow, Margaret Moreton, who died in 1699, and was, no doubt, replaced upon the stone after the inscription had been cut which records her death.

THE CHANTRIES.

The wording of the inscription upon the brass of Margaret Bulkley calls attention to a matter connected with the church, and more especially

with her name. A parish church in mediæval times frequently had dependant upon it one or more minor foundations, commonly known as chantries. The purpose which these chantries was intended to serve was the celebration of Mass for the repose of the soul of the founder, and often of the souls of his or her kinsfolk. They were supported either by a permanent and assured endowment, or by payments liable to be withheld or altogether withdrawn, at the will of the founder or of his representatives. They were localized, sometimes in separate buildings, sometimes in chapels forming part of the structure of the church, sometimes in portions of it separated off from the rest of the building by a screen or parvise. Their endowments, in addition to the stipend of the chantry priest, usually provided them with the vessels and vestments required for the celebration of Mass.

Two chantries were founded at Sephton, one of them by Margaret Bulkley. By a deed of enfeoffment she empowered certain "full trusty fryndes" to receive the rents and profits of all her lands, applying them to her own use during her lifetime, and after her death to discharge with them all her debts, and, this done, to apply them to the "fynding and kepyng of an able and honest prist to say and celebrate Mass and other Dyvyne s'uyce in the pöche Church of Sefton at the Alter of our blessyd Ladye of petye." He was further to pray, she directs, "for the saule of the seid Margaret, and for the saules of John Dutton and Will Bulcley Esq. my husbands, for the saules of my ffader and moder, brethren and susters, my uncles, the saule of Sr Wyll'm Leyland Kngyht, my neuwe, and all other my p'genyte and good frynds, and for all Cristen saules for evermore." The deed shews her anxiety that the service of an

able priest should be secured, and not of one of the "Sir Johns" and "Jack Latins," who too frequently discredited their calling in her day. Her choice, made in her lifetime, fell on Robert Parkynson, at the time of her foundation about forty-two years of age. His duties also included the saying of "Mass upon Saynt Margaretts day" "yerey for evir afore the ymage of Saynt Margaret" "within the said church." Where this "ymage" was situated is uncertain; the altar of Our Lady of Pity was probably in the south aisle. Another qualification which the chantry priest was to possess, was that he should be "lerned to syng his" "playn song," and be able "to helpe to syng in" "the quere at Matyns, Masse, Evensong, and" "other dyvyne S'uyce on festful days." He was provided with a chalice weighing six ounces, a mass-book, and two vestments. The intentions of Margaret Bulkley were, however, frustrated by the suppression of all chantries in 1548; but Robert Parkynson, although deprived, was allowed an annuity from the king of very nearly the full value of his stipend, although the sundry tenements and acres, and the "wynde mylle standing in Thornton," passed into other hands.

The other chantry was founded by Edward Molyneux, Rector of Sephton 1509-1535, in order that the priest should "celebrate ther for his soule." Its first and only priest was Thomas Kyrkeby, who held it until the suppression of the chantries, and was granted "a certain annuity or yearly pension" from the king "to the determination of his life," of somewhat less value than his previous stipend. Both he and Robert Parkynson received a sum equivalent in the present day to about £130 apiece. The Commissioners of Edward VI were unable to lay their hands on either the plate or vestments of the Molyneux chantry.

THE MONUMENTS.

The two effigies of knights which lie in the north chapel are the earliest and most interesting of the monuments in the church. Of these, the one beneath the niche is the earlier, as well as the least injured of the two. Their cross-legged attitude is not a distinctive mark of a crusader, but one commonly used in the effigies of the founders and benefactors of churches, in no way connected with the crusades. Whatever purpose the niche may have been designed to serve, it was not originally that of receiving the figure now placed within it, as its mouldings have been cut away in order to admit the slab. The *cross moline* upon the shield of the figure beneath the canopy, points out that its bearer was a member of the Molyneux family; but an approximate decision as to his identification can be obtained only by the consideration of some other points. The figure is that of a beardless and clean-shaven recumbent knight, having his head supported by cushions, and his feet resting against a lion. He is attired from head to foot in a suit of mail, his head is covered by a hood or *coiffe de maille*, his hands are encased in mailed gloves, having well-defined and separated fingers, and to his heels are fastened "pryck" or single-pointed spurs. He wears over his mail hauberk a surcoat reaching to the knees, which are protected by *genouilleres* or knee-plates. There is an opening in the mail *chausses* on the inner side of the thighs, probably made up with leather, for greater ease in riding. His shield is by his side, and a belt girt around him supports the cross-headed sword which he is in the act of drawing. The shield is triangular, with curved sides, of the later fashion, reaching only to the middle of the thighs. The *cross moline* is not pierced at the centre.

It was a knightly fashion, lasting from the first quarter of the fourteenth century until the first quarter of the fifteenth, to wear both beard and moustache, or what might be called an "imperial." If the clean-shaven effigy is assumed to be a portrait one, the lifetime of its original is consequently excluded from the period lying between 1325 and 1420, and must be placed either before or after it. That it cannot be placed after it, is indicated by the fashion of the armour. Plate armour, towards which *genouilleres* were the first step, came into use about 1310; and as the knight is clad in mail, he may be safely assumed to have lived before that date. It is true that the mailed gauntlet with separated fingers is not generally seen until late in the thirteenth century, but an incised slab at Bitton, representing Sir John de Bitton, with the date 1227, shews the back of the open hand with the fingers both mailed and separate; so that the fingered gauntlet would not appear to absolutely require a late thirteenth century date, or to negative an earlier one. The personal appearance of the knight, conjointly with the fashion of his armour, seem to point to a period ranging from about 1227 to 1310. A Sir William de Molineux was knighted in 1255, and another Sir William de Molineux was also knighted in 1289, by Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. To one of the two the effigy must be assigned, and a nearer approach to identification is perhaps impossible.²

The triangular shield of the more westward figure bears no device, nor any trace of one having been erased. It is consequently a matter of conjecture

² The pedigree in Baines' *History of Lancashire* states that Sir William Molyneux, sixth in descent from the original grantee of Sefpton, was knighted in 1255. He had a son, Richard, whose son William was knighted in 1289. His son, Sir Richard, had a son Sir William, who had Sir William, knighted at Navarret, by Edward the Black Prince, in 1367.—EDITOR.

whether the effigy, which is much defaced, is one of a Molyneux or not.³ The effigy lies cross-legged, with the head resting on two cushions, and the feet upon a small crouching, robed and girded human figure, of which the head has disappeared. The armour is of mail, but the head is covered by a conical bonnet or *bascinet*, the visor of which is raised. The thighs are encased in a gamboised or quilted defence, reaching to the knees, which are protected with *genouilleres*, and the lower part of the legs, before and behind, by iron plates or jambarts. The feet are covered with chain mail, and "pryck" spurs are worn. The hands are in fingered gloves of mail. A short surcoat reaching to the knees covers the body. The figure is represented as drawing his sword. Both beard and moustache are worn, and this circumstance places the date of the personage represented somewhat after 1325—a time when the use of plate armour was extending.

Upon the east wall of the north chapel, and above the piscina, a marble monument is affixed to the wall, as a memorial of Charles William, third Earl of Sefton, who died on the 2nd of August, 1855, aged 59. On the opposite and south side of the church, in what was probably the Bulkley Chantry, a tomb, somewhat raised above the floor, is covered by a slab of white marble, on which the Molyneux arms—with supporters, coronet, and motto *Vivere sat vincere*—together with a skull, cross-bones, and hour-glass, are cut in relief. This tomb bears the names of the Right Hon. Caryll, Viscount Molyneux, who died on the 2nd of February, 1699-1700, aged 77; and also of his son, the Right Hon. William, Lord Viscount Molyneux, who died on the 8th of March, 1717-18, in the 62nd year of his

³ Both effigies are drawn on the vellum pedigree at Croxteth, the earliest part of which was written in Queen Elizabeth's time.—EDITOR.

age. After each inscription, the words, "May his soul rest in peace. Amen," occur. A further inscription commemorates the Right Hon. Richard, Lord Viscount Molyneux, who died on the 12th of December, 1738, aged 60; and Mary, Lady Molyneux, his wife, who died on the 19th of March, 1766.

Another adjoining monument of black marble, of similar character, is to the memory of the Right Hon. Bridget, Lady Viscountess Molyneux, daughter and heiress of Robert Lucy, of Charlcote, co. Warwick, Esq., wife of William, Lord Molyneux, who died on the 23rd of April, 1713, bearing also the words *Requiescat in pace*. On the same slab is commemorated Caryll, Lord Viscount Molyneux, who died on the 11th of November, 1745, in his 62nd year. A small stone on the floor bears the name of William Molyneux, son of the Hon. Richard and Mary Molyneux, who died on the 15th of February, 1706-7. Another flat stone marks the grave of the Hon. Bridget Molyneux, youngest daughter of William, Lord Viscount Molyneux, who died on the 16th of October, 1733; with the words, "May her soul for ever rest in peace." Near to this is a flat stone, bearing in low relief, on a shield surrounded by an incised line, the arms of Sherburne and Bayley quarterly, impaling Molyneux.⁴ The inscription on a brass plate let into this stone is given at the foot of page 61. This stone was discovered on the removal of a pew floor in 1893, and was moved to its present position, within the rails at the east end of the south aisle, by order of the Right Hon. the Earl of Sefton, K.G., for its greater security, and to avoid its being concealed by a portion of the organ.

⁴ First and fourth—[*Argent*] a lion rampant guardant [*Vert*], Sherburne; second and third—[*Argent*] an eagle displayed [*Vert*], Bayley; impaling—[*Azure*] a cross moline pierced in the centre [*Or*].—EDITOR.

The portion of the church known as the Blundell Chapel lies west of the Molyneux Chapel in the north aisle, from which, and from the more westerly portion of the aisle, it is separated by screens. A stone, inscribed "Robart Blundell, 1656,"⁵ lies just within the doorway. Another Robert Blundell⁵ died in March, 1616, and was buried at Sephton on the 23rd of that month. He left precise directions in his will with regard to the position of his grave, desiring that he should "be buried at Sephton in the usual place where my ancestors have been buried, that is to say under or near unto the form where I do usually sit, standing in the north aisle of the said church." This may refer to the seat forming three sides of a square which is still standing in the chapel. In this chapel also William Blundell,⁶ known as "the Cavalier," who died on the 24th of May, 1698, was buried. Here besides are the graves of Robert Blundell,⁵ who died at Liverpool, on the 9th of August, 1807; and of Henry Blundell, Esq.,⁵ who died on the 28th August, 1810, aged 86, to whose memory a marble monument of elaborate sculpture is placed above the north door.

This monument, depicting the deceased relieving Genius and Poverty, was designed and executed by John Gibson, R.A., during his apprenticeship to Messrs. Franceys, of Liverpool, before he had gone to study in Rome. The inscription, said to be from the pen of William Roscoe, runs as follows:—

"O! Blest with all that life to man endears,
Belov'd, respected, crown'd with length of years;
Form'd to enjoy what taste could e'er impart
From scenes of nature or from works of art:
Works that e'er while in polish'd Athens known,
Yet live in lasting brass, or breathing stone:

5 Of the Ince family. 6 Of the Crosby family.

But those no more now charm his cultur'd eye,
 Frail flowers of earth that only bloom to die!
 'Tis Charity survives the general doom,
 Springs with perennial growth, and triumphs o'er the tomb."

A tablet on the north wall of the chapel commemorates Elizabeth, wife of Henry Blundell,⁵ who died on the 25th of February, 1767, in the 33rd year of her age; Robert Blundell,⁵ her husband's father, who died on the 5th August, 1773, aged 78; Catharine, his mother, who died on the 1st of October, 1749, aged 52; and Margaret, his father's second wife. It was with reference to this chapel, in which so many members of the Blundell family are laid, that Nicholas Blundell,⁶ who died in 1631, complained that Sir Edward Molyneux, Parson of Sephton, among other "wrongs and ingerys" done by him, had taken away his "right of the church, "that is to say of knely'g and tary'g in a chapel "y^e north side of the said church." On an altar tomb on the south side of the chapel are inscribed the names of Mary Coppinger, who died on the 6th of August, 1734, aged 30; Nicholas Blundell, of Crosby, died on the 21st of April, 1737, aged 66; William Blundell, died on the 20th of May, 1740, aged 6 months; Christopher Pippard, died on the 6th of May, 1771, aged 35; Henry Pippard, died on the 29th of November, 1771, aged 79; Frances Pippard, his wife, died on the 17th of April, 1773, aged 67; Nicholas Blundell, their son, died on the 6th of January, 1795, aged 55. On a flat stone are the names of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Esq., who died on the 21st of April, 1737, aged 68; and of Mary Coppinger, his daughter, who died on the 6th of August, 1734, aged 20.

A marble slab is affixed to the south wall of the chancel, in memory of the Rev. Antony Halsall, Master of the Free School, Crosby, a Manxman,

⁵ Of the Ince family.

⁶ Of the Crosby family.

who died in 1755, aged 63; and also of his sister Catharine. A flat stone in the chancel floor further records that he was "singularly beloved" by his "truly Christian Diocesan, Dr. Thomas Wilson." On the north wall of the chancel, and near to the aumbry, is the monument of Edward Moreton, Rector of Sefton in 1639, dispossessed in 1643, and reinstated in 1662. The inscription runs:—

"Piæ Memoriam S. Edwardi Morton, S. T. P. Guil. Morton de Moreton in agro Cest. Armig. Filii tandemq. Hæredis. Collegii Regal. apud Cantabrigienses quondam Socii. atq. Eccles. Cathedr. Cestr. Prebendarii. Qui per triginta sex plus-minus annos, (nec iis quidem Exceptis quibus quasi Exul Bonisq. Omnibus spoliatus vixit.) Hanc sollicitè regebat Ecclesiam. utriusque Fortunæ hand equidem æque particeps. At Vtriq. par. Qui bene novit secundis rebus sobrie uti. Atq. adversis fortiter, Primitivæ Pietatis atq. etiam Disciplinæ Perpetuus Vindex. Tantum non Martyr fuit. Illustre certe et rarum Exemplar. Obiit Feb. xxviii Anno Domini MDCLXXIV. Atque Ætatis suæ lxxvi."

[Sacred to the pious memory of Edward Morton, S.T.P., son, and at length heir, of William Morton, Esq., of Moreton, in the county of Chester, formerly a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and also a Prebendary of the Cathedral Church at Chester, who, for thirty-six years more or less, not even those being left out in which he lived as if a banished man, despoiled of all his goods, was wont anxiously to rule this church. Of fortune, by no means equally a sharer, but to either equal. One who well knew how to use prosperity soberly, and, more, adversity bravely. A constant maintainer of primitive piety, and, moreover, learning. He was all but a martyr. Assuredly a bright and rare example. He died February 28th, in the year of our Lord 1674, and in the year of his age 76.]

Upon the plinth is added—

"Mœstissima Conjux Margareta, Guil. Web Eq. Aur. filia, hoc Monumentum dilectissimo Marito poui curavit."

[His most sorrowful wife Margaret, daughter of Sir William Webb, caused this monument to be placed to her most beloved husband.]

Another marble monument in memory of a former Rector, the Rev. Richard Rothwell, his wife, and several of his children, has been placed on the north wall of the chancel by his son and

successor, the Rev. Richard Rainshaw Rothwell. The Rev. Richard Rothwell was Rector for 40 years, from 1761 until 1801. His son held the rectorship from 1801 until 1880, a period of 62 years; the total tenure of the father and son added together amounting to 102 years. The latter is buried in the chancel, having reached the age of 92.

Beneath the north-eastern screen of the chancel a much-defaced alabaster slab rests upon an altar tomb. This latter, and also the one facing it on the south, may possibly be old, but have been at some time "restored," to the obliteration in consequence of all traces of antiquity. The chapel is said to have been used at some period as a school; if such were the case, it would account for the injuries which the slab has received. Its surface is incised with some elaborate tabernacle work, and has an inscription running round it. The incised lines have been originally filled with some black material, which has so largely disappeared that the inscription is with difficulty legible. It commemorates Johanna, wife of the Sir Richard Molyneux who was knighted on the field of Agincourt, 1415. It appears to run as follows, when the blanks have been filled up:—

"*Hic iacet dña Iohāna quondam ux^o Petri Legh militis et postea ux^o Molineux militis que fuit dña de Bradley Haydik et lib^o ten partis villa^r de Weryngton Mykill Sanky 't Burtonwod de infra villa^s de Newton Goldbñe Lowton Bolde 't Walton in le dale que obiit in sō sēi Sulpicii epī a^o dñi. m^olmo cccc^{mo} tricesimo nono cuius aīe ppicietur Deus. Amen.*"

This inscription, which furnishes a fair example of the abbreviations adopted by the old inscribers when pressed for space, reads as follows:—

"Here lies the Lady Johanna, formerly wife of Peter Legh, Knight, and afterwards wife of Molyneux, Knight, who was Lady of Bradley Haydock, and freeholder of part of the townships

of Warrington, Great Sankey, and Burton Wood.
of within the townships of
Newton, Golbourne, Lowton, Bold, and Walton in the Dale.
Who died on the festival of S. Sulpice the Bishop, in the year of
our Lord 1439. To whose soul may God be gracious. Amen."

STAINED GLASS.

Some remains of *grisaille* work will be found in a corner of the eastern light of the square-headed window in the north aisle, though the devices, consisting of oak leaves, acorns, and roses, have become nearly corroded away. The quarries do not appear to occupy their original positions. Upon a lower one appears an inverted three-fold stem, whence, probably the foliage branched, which is now neither continuous nor connected. A ruby and a green quarry, each bearing a device, probably fragments of a coloured border, still remain in a nook of the upper portion of the tracery. The eastern light of the next window towards the west is made up of fragments of yellow-stained glass, with here and there a coloured piece. Traces of a straight-lined gable, having beneath it a series in steps of round-topped arches and the outline of a canopy, are just distinguishable in the upper portion. Two pinnacles in yellow stain, edged with black, adjoin the mullion, and in the centre is more yellow arcading; beneath are the remains of some scroll-work. A black-letter inscription runs across the centre of the glass, in which the words "Sact" "Nicola" are decipherable. This window-opening has sometime undergone structural alteration.

Robert Parkinson, the chaplain, chantry priest, and executor of Margaret Bulckley, appears, from inscriptions still remaining, to have inserted a window in the south aisle. On the next window is also an inscription—

"Orate p bono statu gulielmi [a later and mistaken insertion for Lawrentii] Ireland de Lydyat^e armigeri et Elene año dñi m^occcccxl^o tercii."

[Pray for the good estate of William Ireland, Esq., of Lydiate, and of Ellen. A.D. 1543.]

Another inscription in the east window of the same aisle runs thus—

"Orate pro bono statu Gulielmi Molyn^u militis qui istã fieri fecit anno dni Mill^moccccxlii."

[Pray for the good estate of William Molyneux, who caused this to be made. 1542.]

On scattered quarries the instruments of the Passion appear—the hammer, nails, pincers, the pillar, the ladder, a cock, either a paten and chalice or basin and ewer, a sword with an ear attached to it, and heads of Judas, Pilate, and the High Priest.⁷ Here also are to be found the remains of two seemingly identical examples of a "Trinity" window, a crowned head representing the Heavenly Father, while below the hands of our Lord are affixed to the Cross, on which rests a Dove, symbolical of the Holy Spirit. In a lower corner some bones have apparently formed part of a Golgotha. In this window are two coats of arms, the one *Sable, a lion rampant Argent, crowned Or, impaling Gules, a lion rampant lozengy Ermine and Sable, crowned Or.* Another shield bears, quarterly, *Gules and Argent*, in the first and fourth quarters *a fret Or*, being the arms of Dutton.

Some curious and interesting details are to be found in the windows of the sanctuary. In the upper part of the lights of the south window are indications of groined canopies, probably in their original position. In one, the canopy, supported by

⁷ A small quarry, on which was depicted a lantern, was found by Mr. W. E. Gregson in the parvise, and placed on the cill of this window, whence it was abstracted in the year 1895.—EDITOR.



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SEPHTON CHURCH : SCREEN, BULKLEY CHAPEL.

a centre and two side-pillars, forms a background to three heads, each wearing the pilgrim's cockleshell, all that is left of a group of figures. Above them, on a label, are the words, "O stulti et tardi corde ad credendum." ["O fools," &c., S. Luke xxiv, 25.] The word "apparuit" is also legible, probably part of "apparuit Simoni," from verse 34 of the same chapter. On portions of other labels occur "Benedictus Deus," S. Luke i, 68, "Sanctus," and "Oliveti." All that remains of a figure holding a staff are the two feet, which appear beneath a fragment of a white robe, covered by a blue mantle lined with yellow and embroidered with gold. Portions of a green and lavender robe are also discoverable. The upper portion of the sanctuary window on the north side contains fragments of labels in black-letter, large and small, among which the word "quotidianum" is discernible; probably the breviary rendering of "daily" (bread) in the Lord's Prayer.

With these are mixed up, in utter confusion, fragments of canopies, the remains of a pavement and steps, part of a white robe with a gold border, a small hand, and a gold cross. Upon some loose pieces of glass, said at one time to have formed part of an early east window, two female figures are depicted, evidently a representation of the Salutation, S. Luke i, 36, 39, 40; the emblems also of three of the Evangelists, and two circular pieces of glass, bearing the letters respectively A and M. The east window of the chancel and the three windows at the west end of the church have been filled with modern glass.

THE SCREEN, BENCH-ENDS, AND WOODWORK.

The central chancel screen is the chief object which attracts attention upon entering the church, but its history is, unfortunately, both scanty and

obscure. A writer named Rasbotham describes a screen in existence in 1774 as "a canopy of extraordinary beauty, now going to decay," yet still retaining some indications of its early "splendoer." The history, however, of the chancel screen may be traced back much further, if reliance can be placed on the detail given in Bridgens' plates, in which the letters I.M., carved upon the adjoining stall-end, are represented as occurring also in the carved woodwork of the doors. If these are the initials of James Molyneux, and the doors the original ones, it may be inferred that the screen was in existence, or was erected, during his rectorship, which extended from 1489 until 1509. Between the latter date and 1774 the screen seems to have sustained some injury, either from neglect or violence, but was still standing in 1818 in its original shape. It had, however, been somewhat blocked up, as a faculty was issued in that year, authorising the removal of a pew on the north side "occupied by the wardens," in order that the pulpit might be removed from the nave and placed upon this site; and also the removal of another pew allotted to Lord Sefton, in order to "make room for a commodious staircase thereto." A clerk's desk stood on the south side of the screen, and also a pew originally intended for the wardens, and which they were to re-occupy when a Mr. Hill, who was in possession, had obtained a pew in the south aisle, where Lord Sefton's pew was also to be placed. No mention is made of a reading-desk, and the position of a book in Bridgens' view of the chancel would seem to indicate that the reader occupied a "cantor's" western stall.

A comparison of Bridgens' plates with the screen as it now stands, shows that in 1818 and the following years some extensive structural changes were effected. After that date the original doors,

with their traceried panels and elaborate pendants, entirely disappeared. Plain panels and framework were substituted in the lower portion of the screen, in place of carving similar to that at Lydiate, which dates from 1515; and the shapely octagonal pendants in the bays were replaced by others, the work of the turner. The tracery beneath the canopy underwent much alteration, and the original canopy itself gave place to one of modern and inferior workmanship; fortunately the elaborate cornice of the western front was allowed to remain to a great extent untouched. On its eastern face the appearance of the screen was entirely altered. According to Bridgens' representation of it, which can hardly be utterly misleading, it had above its bays an overhanging slope, panelled by ribs and bosses. This has been replaced by a canopy, similar to the one upon the western side. The cornice was repaired with sham carving, formed of lead or composition, while the deception was concealed by a coat of paint. A skeleton framework, some altered tracery, the western cornice, and part of the eastern one form nearly the whole of the actually remaining original material of the pre-Reformation screen. That structure, if it occupied the same position, may have been intended for a rood-loft, but so entirely did the "restorers" of 1818 lose sight of that possible intention, that they built up, with cumbrous timbers and abundant ironwork, a gabled roof stretching from wall to wall. In 1842-3 some further work was carried out, and the bay at the back of the pulpit was filled up with modern carved work. Some light seems to be thrown upon the subject by the churchwardens' accounts for 1819-20. The faculty cost £13, the sum of £188 1s. 4d. was laid out on timber, £124 9s. 8d. was spent on "carveing," a joiner received £120, and a blacksmith £19 3s. Much

was done, or rather undone, by this outlay, which reached the total of £451 14s. It might yet be possible to reproduce a fair representation, in honest workmanship and sound material, of the form and richness of the sixteenth century structure, but it would not be the original, and would widely differ from the present screen.

A fine screen, extending across the east end of the south aisle, separates it from what was formerly the chantry founded by Margaret Bulckley. It retains its original features nearly intact, but stands possibly in an altered position, having been evidently cut and damaged in order to adapt it to its present place. The easternmost pillar, and the south wall opposite, show traces of holes cut to receive the ends of a beam; whether of a rood-beam or of the screen itself in its first position, must remain uncertain; if of the latter, the chapel would have been of somewhat smaller dimensions than the one on the opposite side of the church.

The woodwork of Lord Sefton's pew, placed, in accordance with the faculty of 1818, in the south aisle, probably formed at an earlier date a portion of a screen standing on the north side of the church, as it corresponds in character and detail with the one which separates the Blundell Chapel from the northern aisle. In this chapel an oak panelling is now affixed to that portion of the wall which adjoins the screen, while another screen separates the Blundell from the Molyneux Chapel. Between these screens stands a curious three-sided desk-like erection, having its open side to the south and a bench along the wall and sides. Its benches, with their rounded tops, are of a later period than those in the chancel and body of the church; on the western one the Tudor rose, and the squirrel *sejant*, the crest of the Blundells of Ince, are conspicuous. The screen and panelling are ornamented

with bands of vine leaves. The removal of some baize on the western side of the screen disclosed some similar carving, sharp and fresh as when the craftsman ceased from his work, but in which, it may be noted, the vermilion background introduced elsewhere is wanting. The screen which separates the Blundell from the Molyneux Chapel has been much injured, but the details of the ornament on all these screens furnish evidence that they and the carvings at Lydiat Hall were probably the work of the same hand.

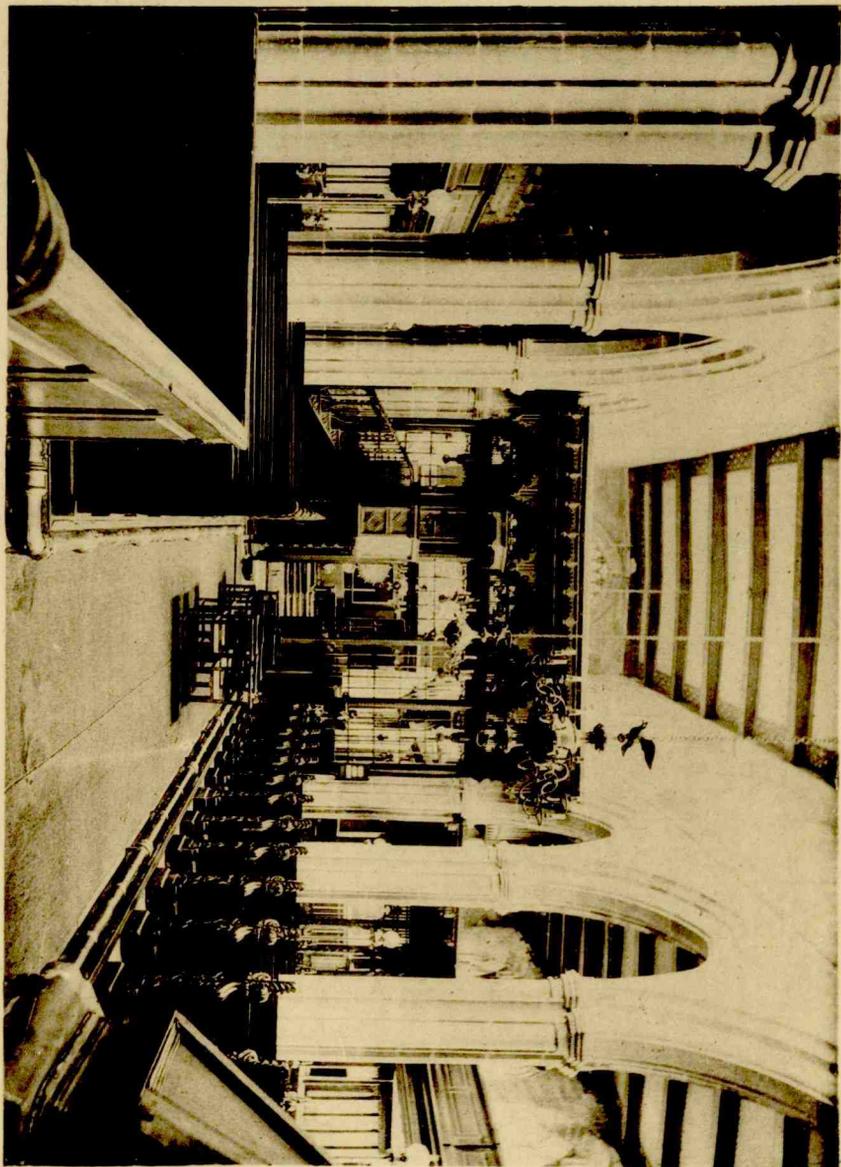
The screens which divide the chancel from the chapels are fine specimens of open-work carving, but are surmounted by crestings of comparatively very recent date. Holes, now plugged with stone, can be seen at the spring of each arch, immediately above the capitals of the pillars. They, no doubt, received the ends of beams, and indicate either that the screenwork itself was originally higher than at present, or that they received the supports of canopies which have disappeared. Wooden stanchions and saddlebars are now to be found in the compartments of the screens. It has been conjectured that they replaced others originally of iron (figures of which have even been published), but an examination of the woodwork does not give much support to the theory. The existing bars have, nevertheless, a very imitative character.

It would appear probable that at some time a screen or rood-beam crossed the chancel at the end of the arcade, as two holes, now filled with clay, are to be found in the wall on either side, close to the Morton and the opposite tablet. A border of oaken carved work still remains within the opening of the arch of the aumbry in the north wall of the chancel, but is of a different style and character to the other carved work in the church. A prominent feature is the frequent introduction of tendrils

into the design of vine leaves and grapes. Traces of old hinges indicate the existence of an earlier door, but this has disappeared, and is replaced by a panel door of modern workmanship.

A classical structure in oak, covering the east wall and rising above the level of the window sill, represents the outcome of the bequest of Mrs. Ann Molyneux, in 1729, for the erection of an "altar-piece." This instance of good intentions and disastrous results, although a fair example of the taste of its period, yet utterly incongruous with its surroundings, appears to have received further ornamentation in 1820, when a gilded representation of the Host, surrounded by rays, was affixed to the centre panel; and a certain Mr. Loyen, according to the wardens' accounts, received £14, "for a new carpet and fixing the Glory." This classical altarpiece bears a strong resemblance to the one in the University Church of S. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford.

The bench-ends in both chancel and nave form one of the most remarkable features of the building. In the chancel, those attached to both the "decani" and "cantori" stalls bear the initials I.M. with a twisted cord or "ceinture" between them. If these letters stand for James Molyneux, they fix the date of the stalls at about the concluding years of the fifteenth century. The bench-ends on the south side of the nave and in the south aisle severally display each a letter of an elaborately designed alphabet, wanting, however, w, x, and z. The "poppy-heads" of the whole are of bold design, and the carving on the ends shows the work of a skilful hand. The vine, the pomegranate, the rose, and the lily, the latter sometimes crowned, are favourite subjects frequently repeated. The grotesque element, rarely absent in such work, finds expression in the chancel in the figures of an owl



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attacked by two smaller birds; in two strange figures beneath a crown or canopy each playing upon a pipe; in the figure of a feeding goat, over which a second is taking a flying leap; while a goat, a griffin, an unicorn, and an eagle "displayed" are also represented. A curious example of a figure-subject occurs on a bench-end now near the door in the south aisle, on which a man or youth brandishing a scimitar is represented as seated upon a dromedary. The "points" of the animal could hardly have been so accurately rendered had not the carver seen a living specimen, and the temptation to connect his work with an entry in *A Cavalier's Note-Book* is strong. "A man," writes William Blundell, of Crosby, "who shewed a dromedary" LIVERPOOL
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LIBRARY. "in most parts of England, told me (1662) that "he found more profit thereby in Lancashire than "in any other county." On the stall-ends of a seat appropriated to the wardens are carved the lion and the unicorn, and a shepherd's or pastoral crook crossed by a spear or goad. The material is old, but has been put together in its present form at a recent date. "The linen pattern" on the panels is another indication that the date of the seating is to be placed in the fifteenth century.

In the north aisle several of the bench-ends bear representations of the instruments of the Passion, the pillar of scourging, on which a cock is conspicuous, the nails, hammer, and pincers, crown of thorns, and reed and spear. Two bench-ends at the east end of this aisle are somewhat enigmatical. On one appears a mitre, and beneath it either a chalice or a covered cup. The latter was a device of the Masy family, and the name of James Molyneux, as a witness, appears on a Masy deed of 1501. The other bench-end has upon it a head and shoulders, the face bearing somewhat of the expression of the usual representations of our

Lord. The head is covered by a peculiarly formed plumed cap, and the shoulders are protected, apparently by a breastplate. Beneath are two objects, variously described as caps, as corn, or as flames. The intention of the designer of the whole is by no means obvious. Two isolated seats remain in the south aisle; the remainder were possibly removed at the introduction of the square pews. Two others have at some time been placed in the north chapel, one of which, facing a substantial desk, has had its "linen pattern" panels reversed, and conceals a massive seat of earlier date. Fragments of bench-ends, of far smaller dimensions and of totally different patterns, have been found among the timbers of the roof of the clock-room. A portion of one of these bench-ends is now in the north chapel.

The roof of the porch probably furnishes an indication of the general character of the roof of the whole church, but as the timbers of the nave, chancel, and aisles are hidden by boarding, its real nature is uncertain. The roof of the south aisle has evidently undergone alteration, as holes intended for beams are bricked-up in the south arcade. In 1754, £9 1s. was expended on "timber for the Portal"—probably the inner porch. In 1801, the wardens' accounts record, "letting" and "finishing the new roof," and William Parr received £199 for "completing the new roof." How or where this sum was expended is uncertain. It may refer to the deal boarding, which is now all that meets the eye.

CHURCH FURNITURE, ETC.

Many matters, ranging from the communion plate to the bells, may be conveniently noticed under the head of the furniture of the church. The church plate consists of a paten, 8½ inches in

diameter, standing upon a low foot, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height. Engraved upon it are the letters E.M., separated by a star, and having another M placed above, together with the following inscription:—
 “The gift of Mrs. Ann Jackson and Mrs. Alice Morton to the Church of Sephton, 1695.” The flagon, also of silver, is 15 inches in height, and $5\frac{1}{4}$ in diameter at the lid, and is of plain workmanship. An inscription on the side runs thus:—“The gift of Mrs. Ann Jackson, of Sephton, 1715.” Alice Morton had died in 1712, and is buried on the north side of the chancel, not far from her father's monument. The cost of this gift appears to have been £17 10s.

In 1729, Mrs. Ann Molyneux left £40, for the purpose of erecting an altar-piece and of purchasing a chalice. The latter is a plain silver, flat-bottomed cup, with nearly upright sides, 10 inches in height, of which the cup portion measures 6, and $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter at the lip. On one side is engraved—
 “The gift of Mrs. Ann Molyneux to the Parish Church of Sephton, 1729.” Inserted among the plate-marks upon a shield are the initials (B.B.) of Benjamin Branker, a Liverpool silversmith of good repute, to whom reference is made in the extracts from Blundell's diary published in the *Transactions of the Historic Society*.⁸ The church also possesses two smaller pieces of plate, the one a small cylindrical cup, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, with a handle. Engraved upon it is a crest of three arrows, the points resting on a wreath, having the shafts tied together with a ribbon at their crossing. The other is a small thin silver paten, 5 inches in diameter, which exactly fits and forms a cover to an old silver chalice, now among the church plate at S. Luke's, Great Crosby.

⁸ Vol. xxxiv, p. 8, *Diary of Nicholas Blundell of Crosby*.

A new organ, built by Messrs. Hill, the cost of which was defrayed by subscriptions and collections, was opened on the 14th of September, 1893. It partly stands above the screen, beneath the easternmost arch on the south side of the chancel, and has two manuals and a pedal organ. The latter is placed in the south chapel, where the old organ case has been utilised to protect both its pipes and so vulnerable a portion of the instrument as the bellows from the risk of injury, until such time as the new case may be carried out in its entirety. The swell and great organ are cased towards the chancel and the west in English oak, at the cost of the Earl of Sefton, K.G. The designs of the old carving in the screens have been skilfully copied in this elaborate case, designed by Mr. W. D. Carøe. with a slight introduction of Renaissance ornament, sufficient to mark the case as the work of a later period.

A book, commonly spoken of as "the chained Bible," is secured by a chain to the desk of the stall on the north side of the chancel. The accounts of the churchwardens of Sefton for 1802 contain an entry of the sale of the "old Bible" for the sum of £2 7s. Why, or to whom it was sold does not appear, but it is not altogether unreasonable to entertain a suspicion that at this date the original black-letter chained Bible disappeared from the church. The existing book, the title-page of which is missing, is a copy of the *Expository Notes and Practical Observations on the New Testament*, by William Burkitt, M.A., a work published in the eighteenth century, and of which several editions subsequently appeared.

Three brass chandeliers, each adapted to carry numerous candles, are suspended from the roof down the centre of the church. They bear the inscription—"Richard Rothwell, M.A., Rector and

“Parson. John Whalley, Richard Goore, Church-wardens, 1773.” The wardens accounts for that year contain an entry for “candlesticks”—probably these chandeliers—costing £18 12s.; and in 1807, “repairing the candlesticks and lackering” cost £13 15s. 6d.

A brass “eagle” lectern, designed by Mr. W. D. Carøe, stands in the nave, on the south side of the chancel door. The following inscription runs around its base—“To the greater glory of God, and in token of regard for the well-beloved Rector of Sephton, Edward Horley, M.A. The gift of his parishioners and friends. 1889.”

The font, which stands below the tower arch, is of sandstone, and octagonal in shape, having a quatrefoil enclosing a plain shield on each face of its upper portion. It is probably contemporaneous with the existing nave, if not of later date. It shews traces of having had at one time a flat cover; this has been replaced by a pyramidal one of oak, with a lettering and date at the base—“R.R. H.M. C.W. 1688.” Indication of colour, white, vermilion, and gold, were found upon the cover on the removal of the thick coats of paint which had been laid upon it.

Under the authority of a faculty issued in 1818, the pulpit, which was originally affixed to the central pillar of the north arcade, was removed to its present position on the north side of the screen, where it is now supported on four carved pillars. Its panels are filled with a scroll pattern, in low relief, of the Renaissance period. Traces of blue and gold yet remain upon its mouldings. It bears the date 1635, and an inscription in gold letters on a blue ground runs round its upper portion: “He that covereth his sinne shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Happy is the m . .” The continuation

is now hidden, but probably ran, "man that feareth
 "alway." (*Proverbs* xxviii, 13, 14.) A sounding-
 board of a similar character, now attached to the
 screen, bears the inscription—"My sonne feare
 "thou the Lorde and the Kinge and medle not
 "with them that are given to change."

A series of inscriptions in black-letter upon the
 spandrils of the arches of the nave, executed in
 distemper colour, and surrounded by a scroll-
 pattern border in black and red, were disclosed
 by the removal, in 1892, of the thick coatings of
 whitewash which disfigured the church. These
 inscriptions were not made upon the stone itself,
 but on a thin coat of colour-wash, and probably
 date from the year 1611, when an injunction was
 issued directing that churches should be ornamented
 after this fashion. The inscriptions on the north
 wall, beginning with the one nearest to the screen,
 succeed each other as follows:—II *Timothy* i, 13,
 "Hold fast," &c.; II *Corinthians* v, 20, "Now
 "then," &c.; I *Timothy* i, 15, "This is a faithful,"
 &c. On the south wall: S. *Matthew* v, 20, "Except
 "your righteousness," &c., and an illegible text,
 apparently taken from *Proverbs* iii. Traces of the
 Lord's Prayer, surrounded by scroll-work, are to
 be found upon the wall of the north aisle, near the
 upper portion, toward the east, of its westernmost
 window.

Six bells now hang in the upper stage of the
 tower; of these, four were cast and placed in the
 bell-chamber in 1601, and two in 1815. An entry
 in the churchwardens' accounts, dated the 17th of
 March in that year, records a vestry meeting, at
 which it was ordered that "two new additional
 "bells shall be hung in the steeple, and that Mr.
 "Dobson of Downham-Market furnish the same."
 Further on, under the same year, is an entry, "Paid
 "Mr. Dobson for the bells £199 11s. 4d." The

expenses incurred "at opening the bells," on the 26th of December, 1815, amounted to £16 16s. 10d., and a Mr. Fisher received for "engraveinge" and examining the bells £5. William Parr, a builder, was paid at the same time, "as by bill," £39 12s. Some re-arrangement of the position of the peal was evidently made when the two bells were added, and the existing beams, which are clumsily adapted to the old massive corbels, which project from the walls, were probably inserted at that period. The old Hall of Sephton once stood in a field to the south of the church, but after it had ceased to be the residence of the Molyneux family gradually fell into decay, and was dismantled early in the eighteenth century. The beams now in the tower are full of mortice and other holes, and have plainly been used elsewhere, possibly in the old hall. Each bell bears an inscription,⁹ which severally run as follows:—

1. "✠ GOD BLES THE FOUNDER HEAREOF 1601."
2. "✠ NOS SUMUS CONSTRUCTI AD LAWNUM DOMINI 1601."
3. "☩ Hec Campana Beata Trinitate Sacra Fiat," and, on a small medallion, "+ Fere God Henri Oldfelde made thys Beyl."
4. "Hec Campana Trinitate Sacra Fiat," and the same medallion and legend.
5. "Richard Rainshaw Rothwell Rector Tho^s Johnson Curate Peter Blackburn Christopher Richmond Churchwardens elect W. Eccleston and R. Rose Chwdns 1815 William Dobson Founder."
6. "Richard Rainshaw Rothwell Rector Tho^s Johnson Curate Peter Blackburn Christopher Richmond Churchwardens 1815
"Our voices shall with joyful sound
make Hills and vallies Echo round."

The clock was procured in 1818, to replace an older one, and cost £167.

⁹ These were copied, on the 2nd of May, 1896, by Mr. W. E. Gregson and Mr. R. H. Kirk.—EDITOR.

RECTORS OF SEPHTON.

	NAME.		INSTITUTED.
1224	Richard . . .	(1)	
1281	Richard . . .	(2)	
1292	William de Kirkdale.	(3)	
1297	Richard . . .		
1316	Richard Molyneux.	(4)	
1360	John de Mascy.	(5)	
1364	Jordan de Holme.	(6)	
1366	Richard Molyneux.		
1380	Richard Molyneux.		
1425	John Totty.		
1450	Jchn Molyneux.	(7)	
1489	James Molyneux.	(8)	
1509	Edward Molyneux.	(9)	15th October, 1509.
1535	Anthony Molyneux.	(10)	
1557	Robert Ballard.		2nd September, 1557.
1564	John Finche.	(11)	
1568	John Nutter.	(12)	
1602	Gregory Turner.		17th July, 1602.
1633	Thomas Legh.		
1639	Edward Morton.	(13)	21st June, 1639, and 3rd April, 1640.
1643	Joseph Tompson.	(14)	
1662	Edward Morton.	(13)	
1675	John Bradford.	(15)	8th September, 1675.
1678	Jonathan Brideoake.	(16)	3rd August, 1678.
1684	Richard Richmond.	(17)	30th August, 1684.
1722	Thomas Egerton.	(18)	13th April, 1722.
1763	Richard Rothwell.		12th January, 1763.
1801	Richard Rainshaw Rothwell.	(19)	
1862	R. D. Dawson-Duffield.		
1871	Englebert Horley.		
1883	Edward Horley.		
1890	George William Wall.		

The names of the earlier rectors in the foregoing list are, from the nature of things, in several instances, names only, and nothing more. The Christian name is followed in early documents by the designation "Parson of Sefton," and the same description is added even when the surname has been given. A period of fifty-seven years elapsed between the first Richard of 1224 and the second Richard of 1281. It may be that another rector,

of whom no trace has been found, intervened between them, but the supposition is not absolutely necessary. The earlier names occur in legal documents, in which their owners figure either as principals or witnesses.¹⁰

Some further brief information is appended in reference to some of the rectors.

(1) Richard, 1024, is mentioned in a deed of that date.

(2) Richard, 1281, is mentioned in a document of the tenth year of Edward I.

(3) William de Kirkdale, 1292, appears to have been rector, from his description as such in his will.

(4) Richard Molyneux, 1315, is mentioned in a document of the tenth year of Edward II.

(5) The name of John de Mascy, 1310, occurs at that date.

(6) Jordan de Holme, 1364, was previously Rector of Stockport, and became Rector of Sephton by exchange.

(7) John Molyneux, 1450, uncle of Margaret Bulckley, was also a Prebendary of Lichfield.

(8) James Molyneux, 1489, was inducted on the 22nd of March of that year. His name occurs in a deed relating to the Mascy family, 1501. He was also Archdeacon of Richmond, and resigned the rectory of Sephton. He was the brother of Margaret Bulckley, and died about 1516.

(9) Edward Molyneux, 1509, was also Prebendary of Farndon, Sarum. He founded the Molyneux Chantry, Sefton, 1535.

(10) Anthony Molyneux, 1535, was the builder of the "revestry," and possibly of a portion of

¹⁰ Many of the names have been supplied by Mrs. Arthur Tempest, Mr. T. N. Morton, Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine, and Mr. W. E. Gregson, from the Bishop's Registry, Chester, the archives of the Liverpool Corporation, and the muniment rooms at Croxteth, Crosby, Ince Blundell, and Broughton Hall in Craven.—EDITOR.

the church. He was also Rector of Walton, and apparently resigned in 1557, and died in 1558.

(11) John Finche, 1564, was a priest at Walton in 1554, and paid "first-fruits" at Sefton on the 23rd of November, 1564.

(12) John Nutter, 1568, was also Rector of Bebington and of Aughton, and also Dean of Chester in 1589. Queen Elizabeth, possibly, borrowed from Apuleius the title of "The Golden Ass," which she bestowed upon him as appropriate to his wealth. He died suddenly at Sephton.

(13) Records remain of two institutions of Rector Edward Morton, the one on the 21st of June, 1639, the other on the 3rd of April, 1640. Whether the earlier one was invalidated by any informality, which rendered the second necessary, is not stated. He was a Prebendary of Chester, and Rector of Tattenhall in 1637, and was ejected from Sephton in 1643, and re-instated in 1662. His son became Bishop of Kildare and Meath.

(14) Joseph Tompson, 1643, said by the Parliamentary Commissioners to be "an able and godly minister, painfull in his cure," was inducted into the rectorship in place of "Doctor Moreton a Delinquent, late Rector." His ministrations do not appear to have been in request, as in the year 1648 he appends his name to a note—"None married by the Minister of the Parish, but divers were married out of the parish."

(15) John Bradford, 1675, exchanged from Sefton to Bexhill, 1678.

(16) Jonathan Brideoake, 1678, exchanged from Bexhill. He was also Rector of S. Wilfrid and S. Mary, Mobberley.

(17) Richard Richmond died at Walton, and was buried there on the 19th of September, 1721.

(18) Thomas Egerton, 1722. The following note, evidently shown, by comparison with entries

in the register, to be in the handwriting of Mr. Egerton, has been made on the inside of the cover at the end of an early register book, 1717-1780 :—" Jus patronatus, held in this chancel upon Wednesday ye 17th day of March 1721 betwixt Mr. Egerton of Warrington and Mr. Hartley of Irland for this x^h and living, but Mr. Egerton obtained it." The "jus patronatus" was an ecclesiastical procedure, to which recourse was had when the right of patronage was disputed. If two different presentations were made on the occasion of one and the same vacancy, the church was said to be litigious, and the Bishop issued a commission, usually addressed to his Chancellor, by which a jury, consisting of an equal number of clergymen and laymen, was summoned to make inquiry and decide as to the right of patronage. Mr. Richard Hartley, in the year 1721, received a presentation to the rectory of Sephton, and the document is yet preserved in the diocesan registry at Chester, endorsed—"Hartley's Presentation to the Church at Sefton, which had not effect." Mr. Thomas Egerton also received a presentation, from the Earl of Cardigan, and recourse was had in consequence to the process of "Jus patronatus." In the *Diary of Nicholas Blundell*, 1702-28, printed for private circulation, the following entry occurs :—

"1722. March 7. I was in Sefton Church where there should have been a trial between Parson Egerton and Parson Hartley, but Parson Hartley soon gave it up. Lawyer Blundell and Lawyer Starkey were there. There were nine clergymen and nine laymen on the jury. They gave the cause to Parson Egerton. So that he is now to be Rector of Sefton."

"Parson Egerton" evidently made a mistake as to the year in his entry at the end of the register book. The diary gives 1722, and the record at Chester of his institution places it on the 13th of April, 1722. The preceding rector did not die

until the 19th of September, 1721, and a Mr. Acton subsequently appears as "Curate and Sequestrator." Thomas Egerton held the living for forty-one years, but, whatever may have been the cause, entries in the registers in his handwriting cease after a short period from his institution, and no entry occurs of his burial at Sephton. The churchwardens' accounts from 1746 until 1763, are invariably signed "Thos. Mercer Curate."

(19) The Rev. Richard Rainshaw Rothwell, 1801, held the rectorship for the lengthy period of sixty-two years, and died, somewhat suddenly, on Easter Sunday morning, 1863, at the advanced age of ninety-two. His marked and vigorous personality made an impression on those around him, which cannot yet be fairly said to have passed away.

THE PARISH REGISTERS.

The earliest volume of the parish registers contains entries headed respectively *Baptizate*, *Connubia*, *Sepulti*. The first entry under the heading of *Baptizate*, occurs on the 7th of February, 1597, and records a baptism "de Crosbia magna." In the year four baptisms are recorded; in the following year two only are entered, and in 1599 nine. The entries in the register, seemingly, do not fairly begin until July 1600, when, from that date until the close of the year, thirty-nine occur. In 1601, thirty-three are entered, and in subsequent years much the same ratio prevails. The localities specified are various, such as "de Crosbie magna" and "de Crosbie parva," "de Lunt," "de Thorne-ton," "de Maygull." These baptismal entries come to a sudden close on the 25th of April, 1604, when two blank pages follow, and a third page contains only three entries for 1614. The rector during this period was Gregory Turner. From

1615 the regular course of entry is resumed and continued. From 1644 until 1666 the Latin form of entry is superseded by the use of "son" or "daughter" of such and such a father. This period coincides with the rectorship of the Non-conformist Joseph Tompson, together with four years of the restored rectorship of Edward Moreton. Latin entries again follow from 1666 until 1687, after which date the two forms are intermingled for a year or two, with an occasional lapse in the spelling of "filliai" and "fillia," until the use of the vernacular finally prevails. In some early instances the name of the father of the baptized child is entered with an added *alias*: an intimation, probably, of some uncertainty as to his descent.

The entries of *Connubia* commence in the year 1600, but are discontinued from 1603 until 1615, when they reappear in the form, for example, of "Paulus Lunt et Margareta Pinnington, conjugate." In 1630 an *honorabilis vir* marries a *generosa femina*. In 1639 the form obtains that such an one *uxorem duxit*, and is continued until 1645. In 1641-2 only one marriage took place in each year; in 1643-4 none occurred; in 1645 one only. In 1646-7 the note is entered, "None made by the minister," with the addition, in 1648, of, "but divers were "married out of the parish." One marriage occurs in 1649, and no further entries are made until 1657, but a note informs us that, "Anno 1653, 1654, 1655, all marriages made by justices of peace." In 1665 a note is inserted, "that act of marrying "by justices was to continue but six months after "the first sessions of the Pliant ended in Decem-ber." The phrase "duxit uxorem" reappears until 1701, with the occasional derangement of language of "ambo of this parish." From 1685 some pains were taken to specify whether the marriage was by licence or "after bands," and to

notify that it took place "according to y^e Rubricke" and "within the canonical houres," or, as otherwise expressed, "according to y^e Cannons of our "Church."

The entries of *Sepulti* commence with the 13th of June, 1600, and continue until 1605, when a gap occurs. A few entries are recommenced in 1613 and 1614, but the register is not fully kept until the year 1615. In the year 1645 no entries occur, but a note appears, "a time of warr, neglected"; and under 1646, "a time of warr nothing found," a statement which seems to infer that the register was compiled from memoranda subsequently missing. From 1647 until 1659, "Joseph Tompson, "Rector," is inscribed at the foot of each page, but a later hand has crossed out the "Rector" in a very decided manner. On the 6th of, apparently, September, 1654, an entry records, without further note or comment, "Anne Rothwell widy (widow) "of Much Crosbee, hanged and buried." Descriptions are rarely added at this period, though widows are particularised, and here and there "a young "man" and "a little wench." After 1666 the entries relapse into Latin, as, for example, "Thomas "fil Jacob Roberts peregrini," with an occasional admixture of English in the same sentence, which in the opening of the eighteenth century asserts itself more fully, until the whole register is written in the vernacular. At the latter end of the seventeenth century a curious addition to the entries is not unfrequently found—"Jur," or "Jurat exhib "fuit," or "Jur de sepult in san exhib fuit." An English rendering, here and there to be met with, explains that "Jur exhib" means that a certificate had been produced that the corpse had been buried in a woollen shroud. The desire that the body should be wrapped in linen (*S. Mark* xv, 46) was very common, but an Act of Charles II, in 1678,

designed to benefit the woollen industry, made the custom punishable by fine; and the "Jurat" was to be tendered to the parson within eight days after the interment, as a proof of compliance with the Act.

The later register books present no remarkable features, but under the burials the very frequent entry may be noted of the interment of the bodies of various persons unknown "found on the shore," from which it may be inferred that a lack of lights and buoys in past years added very considerably during stormy weather to the perils of the navigation of the Mersey.

At the end of the earliest volume of the register a list of churchwardens and overseers from 1654 until 1660 has been entered, and notes of various collections made under the authority of a Royal brief or letter for various charitable purposes, either to aid distress in various localities or for affording personal relief. The minutes are also entered of various meetings held from 1656 until 1669, for the consideration of the repairs of the church. In some circumstances some of those present have made their "mark" in a manner which would rival a mediæval mason. It is a curious circumstance that until 1669, or seven years after the re-instatement of Rector Moreton, these minutes are signed by the nonconformist "Jos. Tompson," with, however, the significant omission of "Rector." As it is evident that "Jos. Tompson" remained on the spot after his deposition from office, it may have been that besides being an "able minister" he was a capable business man, and that, possibly, a friendly division of labour was made between him and Rector Morton, who, while he was wont to "anxiously rule the church," committed to Joseph Tompson the supervision of some of the more secular parochial work, such as presiding

over meetings summoned "to view the decays of
"the church and to provide money for repairs."

THE CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS.

The parchment-covered volume which contains the earliest churchwardens' accounts, records their expenditure only from the year 1746. The book ends with the year 1820, and affords only very fragmentary indications bearing upon the history of the church. Entries of payments, often of considerable amount, made to the mason, the plumber, or the glazier, as "per his bill," frequently occur, but as no such documents are now in existence, the details of their work must remain unknown. The frequent employment of the glazier is noticeable, and it would be interesting to have a more definite explanation of such an entry as £9 paid in 1773 to a mason for "work and stones for top, and raising foundations." "Levelling the flags" is a constant item of expenditure, rendered necessary, no doubt, by intra-mural burials, and having, perhaps, a bearing on the change of floor-level. An entry made in the year 1761, "Paid for mugs for whitewashing 1s., rearing the ladders 2s. 10d., two bushels of lime 2s. 2d., white-washer's bill £2 15s. 3d.," tells its own story. Fragments of such "mugs," encrusted with the limewash, were found in the loose soil of the south chapel, at the erection of the organ, in 1893. The tantalising hints as to the "roof" in 1801, and the destination of much of the "timber" so largely bought in 1819, have already been made the subject of comment.

But these records, although they throw but little light on the history of the building, are in other respects by no means devoid of interest. The bells were well looked after; "oil for the bells" is a constant entry, and the amount of new rope which

they required is surprising. One entry states a sum "spent when bought 'em." Another is invariably to be found from 1748 onwards, "spent when stretched the bell-ropes"; elsewhere with the significant addition "spent that night"; and in one instance it runs, "splicing the bell-ropes," a phrase which has a distinctly nautical flavour. Whenever "a strange parson preacht," or if his name is given, a sum of from two to three shillings was expended, in what manner is left unexplained. The wardens, with a commendable desire to keep the parson dry, bought in 1782, probably for use at funerals, "a new umbrello." This was superseded in 1803 by a second "new umbrella," which, however, required repairing in the following year.

The singers, who evidently were a "mixed choir" as in 1768 a sum is discreetly recorded as "spent on the male singers," were not uncared for, but were paid, and liberally supplied with "candles." A payment for "a singing master," by no means illiberal in amount, is entered in 1763 and in subsequent years. A bassoon was purchased in 1768, at a cost of £5 12s.; the number of reeds which that instrument constantly required is worthy of remark. "To playing the hautboy" is an entry which frequently recurs, and "stringe for the "base viol" cost four shillings in 1816. Beside these three, no mention is made of any other instruments. Singers from "Duglass," Kirkby, Aughton, Altcar, and elsewhere, who seem to have occasionally visited the church, did not return home empty-handed, nor were instrumental performers unrewarded. In 1776, five shillings were "spent when Auldrey Wilkenson played the double "base," and the same sum "when Mr. Segar "played the Clarenett." In 1808, William Rushton received three shillings "for pricking tunes," and in the following year earned £2 11s. 6d. for

"wrighting music, and reeds for the bassoon." Edward Parr was also paid for "pricking tunes," and, in 1817, £1 7s. for "wrighting music 81 pages "at 4^d a page."

In connection with the word "spent," a modest entry recurs again and again, "spent on ourselves," but it rarely exceeds 2s. When the wardens were occasionally hospitably inclined, "spent on ourselves "and some of the Parish" runs to a higher sum. At Easter, "Nelly Barker," of the "Punch Bowl," has been paid as much as £7 4s. 8d., and larger sums at other times. The occasions on which varying sums were "spent" did not lack variety, as the following entries show:—1751, "Spent "when the writings were laid up in the chest," 2s. 1d. 1752, "Spent when agreed what to give "towards propagating the Gospel in forreign parts," 2s. 1759, "Spent on a 2^d rejoicing day for the "taking of Quebec," £1. 1801, "Spent on letting "the Church roof," 19s. 4d. But the parochial feast-day was pre-eminently the 5th of November, when considerable sums, such as £8 3s. 7d. in 1810, were expended. The quantity of wine procured appears to have been three gallons each quarter.

Some of the entries are of a curious description. In 1746, various expenses were incurred in connection with the Militia, such as for "ale and "cockades" 1s. 9d., "for part of a new gun and "Bayonett for Odd-man" 11s. 6d. In the preceding year the "Odd-man" had received "a cartridge "box." In the year 1781 the wardens enter their "Expenses to Liverpool with a Bill of Damage in "the Vestry, done by the Press-Gang." The "dog-whipper" received ten shillings yearly until 1820. In the year 1865, 5s. 6d. was "paide for "shot and powder for the use of the church," and an entry occurs in 1811, "Disburst, paid John

"Lurtin his expenses for standing up for the school at Crosby, by the order of the Parish," £15 4s. 7d. A not infrequent item is "for cleaning S. Helen's Well." An entry occurs at intervals, "gave to the children when said catechism," 5s.

EDITORIAL ADDENDA.

On two red sandstone slabs, now concealed by the new organ, in the south aisle, are the following inscriptions,¹¹ rudely cut. On one, below a *cross moline* :—

" I M Gent :

1649

R M

1686

I M

1692

M M

1693

Here Lyeth y^e Body
of Mr Richard Moly
neux of Altgrange
who departed this Life
the 27 of January 1712
in the 50 year of his
Age."¹²

On the other, below a *cross moline* pierced at the centre :—

¹¹ Copied by the Editor, in August, 1893.

¹² See *Diary of Nicholas Blundell of Crosby*, 1895, p. 110, under date 29th of January, 1713:—"I went to ye Funerall of Mr. Moline[x]: of ye Grange, there was Mr. Wofold [Wolfall] of More-hall, Mr. Harington, Coz: Molin[ex]: of Mosburgh, Parson Letus, Mr. Nicho: Fazak[erley]: Mr. Formby &c. I lent Capt: Rob; Faz[akerley]: a Mare to ride on to ye Buriall."

S. Helen's Church, Sephton.

" Here Lyeth interr'd the Body
of Rich^d Molyneux Esq of New hall
in West Derby who departed
this life the twenty-sixth of Feb

1734

Likewise his son Rich^d died
the first of March following

17" ¹³

In the Blundell Chapel is a mural tablet,
inscribed :—

" This
Monument
was erected to
the memory of
Robert Blundell Esq^r
of Liverpool
who died in his 53^d year
as a tribute
of grateful remembrance
by
Stephen Tempest Esq^r
of
Broughton Hall
In the County of York
Aug^t 9th 1807."

On a stone, now cut in two, and the pieces laid
apart in the floor of the Molyneux Chapel, in the
north aisle, is the following :—

" Here lieth y^e Body
of Mrs. Teresa Booth
who went to Wigaⁿ
upon y^e 28th of Octbr^r
being S^t Simon and
Judes day to have
her Breast cut for
a Cancer which was
taken off y^e 9th of
Novbr^r and she died

" y^e 30th of Decbr^r 1717
in y^e 42^d year of
her age
Requiescat in Pace
She was House
keeper at Croxteth."

¹³ The following entries appear in the parish registers :—

- " 1648. Mr. John Mollineux of Grange, bur. 3 Mar.
- " 1686. Rich^d Molineux, gentl. de West Derby, bur. 7 May.
- " 1692. John Mollinex de West Derby gentl. bur. 28 Jan.
- " 1693. Mrs. Margaret Mollinex de Ince Blundell, bur. 5 June.
- " 1712. Mr. Richard Mollineux de Grange bur. 29 Jan.
- " 1734. Mr. Richard Molyneux of Grange died at New Hall in Darby
bur. 28 Feb.
- " 1734. Rich^d son of ye above Rich^d Molyneux bur. 3 Mar."

On the east wall of the north aisle is a tablet inscribed:—

“ Here is buried
Charles William 3rd Earl of Sefton.
This Tablet is placed here by
his sorrowing Wife and Children
who love to cherish the memory
of his warm and noble heart.
He died
August 2, 1855.
Aged 59.

In or about the year 1756, the art of printing on pottery from engraved copper plates was discovered by John Sadler, of Liverpool, whose father, Adam Sadler, said to have served under Marlborough, established the Print House in Liverpool. They and other members of the family are commemorated by inscriptions on two gravestones, lying in the angle between the chancel and the south aisle on the exterior of Sephton Church, as follows:—

[GRAVESTONE NO. 1.]

“ Here lies the Body
of Elizabeth Sadler
wife of Adam Sadler
who departed this life
the 10th of May 1760
aged 87.

“ Here lieth the body of John Adam
Sadler Lieut in the Royal Navy
who departed this life 30th Jan^y
1816 aged 37 years.
May he rest in peace.

“ Here are deposited the remains
of the Rev^d James Parker Catholic
Priest who departed this life on the
29th day of October 1822 in the 75th
Year of his age.
Requiscant in pace.

(sic)

“ No more to be interred in this grave.”

S. Helen's Church, Sephton.

[GRAVESTONE NO. 2.]

"Here lies the body
of Adam Sadler who
departed this Life
the 7th of October 1765
aged 83.

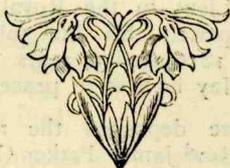
"Here also lies the Body of Mr
John Sadler from Liverpool who
departed this life the 10th of
December 1789 aged 69.

"Here also lies the Body of James
son of the said Mr John Sadler
who departed this Life the 27th
of December 1794 aged 8½ years.

"Also the body of Elizabeth widow of
Mr John Sadler who departed this life
the 25th of May 1842 aged 88 years.

"Also of Elizabeth Mary Sadler
of Aintree Daughter of the above
who departed this life the 19th of
June 1857 aged 75 years.
Requiescant in Pace.

"No more to be buried in this grave."



"No more to be buried in this grave."