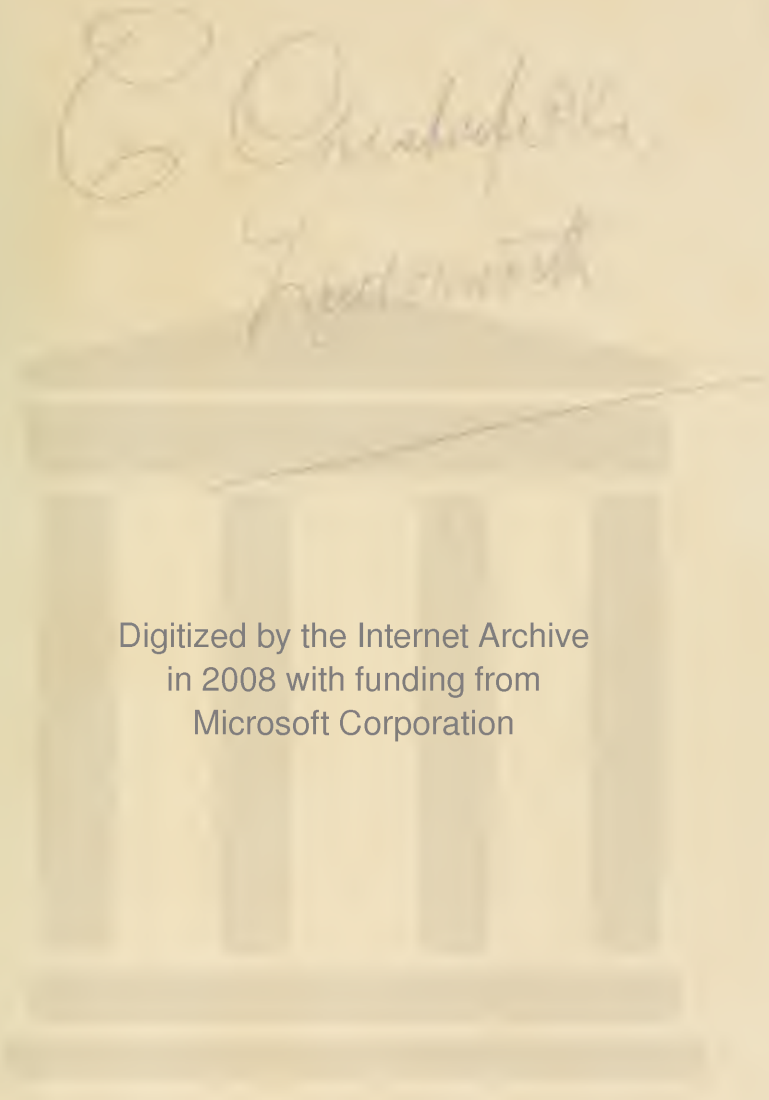
LUTTERWORTH

THE STORY OF JOHN WYCLIFFE'S TOWN

A. H. DYSON



LUTTERWORTH

VIEW OF LUTTERWORTH FROM BRIDGE

LUTTERWORTH

JOHN WYCLIFFE'S TOWN

BY

A. H. DYSON

EDITED BY

HUGH GOODACRE

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

ARCHÆOLOGY spreads a broad net, and much of its best spade-work has been done by men who owe their education entirely to their own industry and perseverance. We have had a notable instance of this in Leicestershire in the person of Richard Fowke of Elmsthorpe, the friend of Nichols, to whom the county historian was indebted for much valuable information. Another such a one we now possess in Mr. A. H. Dyson, one of the best respected tradesmen in Lutterworth. With an enthusiastic persistence he has accumulated such a mass of material connected with the history of his native town as to render the task of the editorial sieve by no means an easy one. Friends, however, have not been lacking, and I have to record my indebtedness to the Earl of Denbigh for permission to reproduce some of the valuable portraits in his collection at Newnham Paddox; to the Lady Agnes Feilding for the section dealing with the Feilding family; to Mr. S. Perkins Pick and Mr. C. Bassett-Smith for notes on the archi-

tectural features of the parish church; to Major Stoney-Smith for leave to reprint the interesting reminiscences of William Green; and to numerous other friends who have rendered me assistance in one way or another.

Both Mr. Bottrill and Mr. J. Abbott have already published excellent cheap handbooks to Lutterworth, but it has long been felt that the town offered ample material for a more ambitious work, and it is hoped that the present book will possess an interest, not merely for the inhabitants of Lutterworth, but for the general reading public and for the thousands of visitors to the shrine of Wycliffe who annually traverse the streets of this little midland town.

As far as my own work is concerned it has been a labour of love.

HUGH GOODACRE

Ullesthorpe Court
7th July 1913

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THE STORY OF JOHN WYCLIFFE'S TOWN

I

GEOGRAPHICAL AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

THE small Leicestershire market town of Lutterworth stands on an eminence especially marked as we approach it from the south, and forms a charming picture with its pinnacled church rising above the roofs of its houses and the little river Swift meandering through the meadows in the valley below.

In spite of the rush of express trains through its outskirts and the vibration of motor-cars through its streets, it wears to-day much the same air of somnolent respectability which it wore in the early days of the last century. It is the centre of a rich grazing district, 13 miles south by west of Leicester, 13 miles west of Market Harborough, 8 miles north of Rugby, and 89 miles north-west by north of London, with a station on the Great Central Railway.

In common with several other places, Lutterworth claims the distinction of being the central town of the kingdom; but, however debatable this may be, there is one point in connexion with its situation which

admits of no gainsaying: it stands upon one of the most important watersheds in the British Isles. This is a fact demonstrable every rainy day, when the water coursing down the High Street to the Swift is borne by the Avon to the Severn and out into the Atlantic, while within two miles north of the town the water finds its way by a small brooklet into the river Soar and thence by the Trent into the Humber and the German Ocean.

At Gilmorton, a neighbouring village, the situation is accentuated, for here the church stands at the parting of the ways and the waters on the north flow northwards, while those on the south follow the opposite direction.

This phenomenon was known to the poet Drayton (1563–1651), who described the Swift as "a little brook which, forsaking her sister the Soar, applies herself wholly to the Avon."

In olden days there was apparently a further natural phenomenon which distinguished our town, for in *British Curiosities in Nature and Art*, published in 1713, we are informed that Lutterworth was chiefly remarkable "for that near it is a water that petrifieth (or turneth to stone) wood and stubble." This apparently has reference to a spring of water in a field in the Woodmarket, opposite the residence of Dr. Fagge, and still known as "Spring Close." It would seem to have lost its petrifying properties, if in reality it ever had any.

Having thus defined the geographical situation of our town and referred to its principal physical features, we are now in a position to begin our story.

II

IN THE DAYS OF THE ROMANS

THERE are various ways of beginning a story. The antiquary sometimes begins at the end. This may savour somewhat of an Irishism, yet, for all that, it has much to recommend it when treating of the remote past, for by working back from the known to the unknown, and linking certainty to uncertainty, he is enabled to forge a stronger chain than by pursuing the reverse process.

But as our book makes no claim to be regarded as a learned antiquarian treatise, and as our soil has hitherto yielded no relic of primitive man, we shall make bold to commence exactly where it best suits our own convenience, neither at the beginning nor at the end, but at that moment in the history of our country when the legions of Imperial Rome had made themselves master of what are now known as "the Midlands." This was somewhere about the middle of the first century A.D.

It would be out of place here to enter into a lengthy consideration of the conditions of England under the Roman domination, as there is no evidence of Lutterworth's existence at that date; on the contrary, its very name suggests a later origin. At the same time, the proximity of the important town of

Ratae (Leicester) and the station Venonae at the hamlet of Bittesby, in the parish of Claybrook, make it permissible to picture to ourselves our primeval woods, still the haunt of wolf, of deer, and of wild boar, echoing the tread of some stroller from the great military roads which already traversed this part of the country.

And of these roads there are two of the first importance, passing now, as then, within a few miles of our town, the Watling Street and the Fosse Way. The former was the great north road of the Romans, starting at Richborough on the coast of Kent, passing through Canterbury, Rochester, and London, and reaching Leicestershire near the village of Catthorpe. From here it forms the boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire for about 18 miles, and then, crossing the Anker at Witherby, proceeds on its way to Tommen-y-Manor in Wales, where it divides into two branches, the one running by Beddgelert to Carnarvon and Holyhead, and the other by Chester and Manchester to Scotland. The other Roman road to which we have referred, the Fosse Way, was the great highway between the south-west and the north-east of Britain. It enters Leicestershire at High Cross, in the parish of Claybrook, $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles as the crow flies north-west of Lutterworth, and, crossing the Watling Street, proceeds in the direction of Leicester. At the point where the two roads intersect a monument was erected at the instance of Basil, Earl of Denbigh, in 1712.

It was long assumed that the station Venonae was situated at High Cross itself, but Mr. Barnett, in *Leicestershire and Rutland Notes and Queries* (vol. i.

p. 37), has given good reasons for believing that this assumption was incorrect. The Itinerary of Antonius, in the Second Iter, states the distance of Venonae from Manduessedo (Mancetta) as XII M.P., the Roman mile (*mille passus*) being about equal to our own. Now 12 miles along the Watling Street from Mancetta carries us to a spot about 2 miles beyond High Cross, and here, in a field still known as "the Old or Great Township," and which tradition asserts to be the site of a buried city, have been found indubitable traces of a Roman settlement. Corroborative evidence is also afforded by the Iter itself, which places the west station Beneventa at XVII M.P. from Venonae. Now at precisely this distance from the Old Township, between Norton and Whilton on the Watling Street, have been unearthed remains testifying to the former existence there of a Roman station of some importance.

These discoveries bring Venonae almost within the boundaries of the civil parish of Lutterworth, and make it allowable for us to include a visit to the Old Township in our history. Taking the Coventry Road, in about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles we reach the Watling Street at what is known as the Cross-in-hand. Turning abruptly to the right, we follow the ancient way for a little over a mile, when we come to a level crossing over the Midland Railway, and a little distance beyond to a gate on the right-hand side leading to a footpath to Ullesthorpe. Following this footpath, we soon find ourselves in a large grass field. This is the Old Township, and at the extreme corner, near the railway embankment, the unevenness of the ground discloses what is believed

to be the site of the ancient Venonae. When the line was in course of construction numerous objects were unearthed hereabouts; but unfortunately no record of their nature or the exact spot where they were found has been preserved. Many of these objects came into the hands of the late Mr. Simons of Ullesthorpe; but his son, who died a few years ago, was unable to state what had become of them, nor could he recall of what they consisted. From the fact that the railway travels over an embankment at the point indicated as the site of the buried city, it is probable that anything unearthed here was found in excavating for ballast at the side of the line. In an old newspaper we read that workmen engaged on the line came upon the foundations of a Roman villa at Bittesby (the hamlet in which the Old Township is situated). It disclosed a building of considerable dimensions, with a beautiful tessellated pavement and the remains of a bath.

In 1725 some men digging for clay in Lutterworth are reported to have unearthed sixty denarii and a few large brass coins. The former comprised coins of Julius Cæsar, Trajan, and Vespasian.

Evidence of the Roman occupation of this part of the country has also come to light, not merely in the Old Township, but in the neighbourhood of High Cross, and, quite recently, a well and part of a paved way have been discovered at Wibtoft on the Watling Street between Bittesby and High Cross. In the small museum at Ullesthorpe Court is a denarius of Domitian and a little brass imitation of a Roman coin such as was in circulation in this country after the withdrawal of the Romans. Both were ploughed

up at High Cross. Slightly farther afield, namely, at Ashby Parva, a first brass coin of Hadrian was found in the rectory garden a few years since. This, too, is preserved in the same collection. It bears on the obverse the laureate head of the Emperor with the legend HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS P.P., and on the reverse Hilaritas holding a palm branch and cornucopia, standing between two children, and reads HILARITAS P.R. COS. III S.C. In the *Lutterworth Parish Magazine* for April 1865 the late Archdeacon Pownall described a hoard of Roman coins said to have been found in Lutterworth itself in the previous year. Doubtless the insane laws of Treasure Trove which have wrought the destruction of countless treasures are responsible for the concealment of the precise provenance. The coins, which were all of the base metal known as "billon," consisted of—

NAME.	DATE.	NUMBER.
	A.D.	
Volusianus	252–254	1
Valerianus	253–260	3
Gallienus	254–268	33
Salonina (wife of Gallienus) .	—	1
Saloninus (son of Gallienus) .	—	1
Postumus	258–268	37
Victorinus	265–267	130
Marius	267	1
Tetricus, sen.	268–272	1
Tetricus, jun.	268–272	2
Claudius Gothicus . . .	168–270	16
Quintillus	270	5
Total . .		231

Throsby, the historian, has left the record of having himself seen a fine Roman urn found at

Bittesby, and the Rev. A. Macaulay, in his *History of Claybrook*, quoting from Gough's *Camden*, says that "Mr. Lee of Leicester had a Roman urn found in digging a vault (apparently at or near High Cross) for the late Lord Denbigh with eleven more, covered with Roman bricks."

III

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

NO history exists which tells of the commencement of our town. All that can be gathered must be inferred from the general history of the time to which its name leads us to assign its origin.

Of the three main Teutonic invasions of this country, that by the Angles was undoubtedly of the greatest moment, and yet, curiously enough, as Prof. Church points out, we know less of the Angles than of either of their forerunners, the Jutes and the Saxons. Ptolemy speaks of them as inhabiting part of the left bank of the river Elbe; but later on we find them living in that projecting piece of land known as the Cimbric peninsula containing Holstein, Schleswig, and Jutland. It is from this country that Bede speaks of them as migrating in such numbers that their own homes were left desolate. And just as we know less of the antecedents of the Angles than of the other stocks of Germanic conquerors, so there is no part of the Teutonic conquest of England more obscure than that of the Midlands by the Mercians. That these "Men of the Marshes" were Angles from the eastern parts of the country is certain; but it is probable that they contained an admixture of Saxons from

the west. Evidence of this is found in the lack of unity of feeling and action which characterized the other states, and may even be traced to a certain extent in the relics preserved in the district. Probably we shall not be far wrong in assigning the first settlement of our Anglo-Saxon predecessors in Lutterworth to about the close of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

The chronicler has preserved a terrible picture of the ruthless pagans who overran our land, plundering cities and country alike, spreading conflagration from east to west. Public as well as private structures were overturned, priests were slain before the altars, prelates and people, without respect of persons, were destroyed with fire and sword, nor was there any to bury them. Some, with sorrowful hearts, fled beyond the seas; others, continuing in their own country, led a miserable existence among the woods and mountains, with scarcely enough food to support life and expecting every moment to be their last.

But from this chaotic beginning was gradually evolved the civilization which has made the England of to-day. As these invaders took possession of the land their chiefs divided it amongst themselves and, settling on their possessions with their families and followers, turned their attention to the cultivation of the soil. As a rule they avoided the buildings and walled towns of the former civilization, preferring to make clearings for themselves in the primeval forests. These family settlements frequently became known by the name of the chief to whom they belonged, and with a termination descriptive of the nature

of the holding have remained with us to-day as memorials of our remote ancestors, more durable than any other which could have been devised. As was natural in the turbulent days in which they were erected, many of the dwellings were surrounded by a stockade, a feature preserved in the suffixes *yard*, *stoke*, and *worth* (Anglo-Saxon *worthig*).

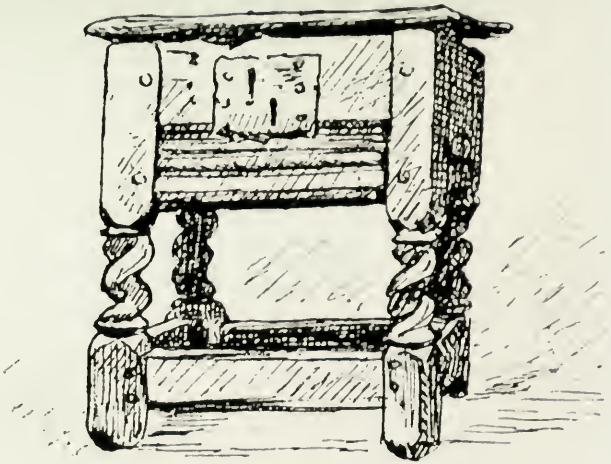
With this information at our disposal it is not difficult to see how our town originated. It was, in fact, none other than the fortified enclosure of a chieftain whose name, in all probability, is pronounced to-day as it was thirteen centuries ago, for it is interesting to note that the name Lutter also survives in the Duchy of Brunswick, where we find both a Lutter and a Lutterberg.

Of this Lutter who settled in Leicestershire in the sixth or seventh century we have no further record; but still to him we look with filial veneration as the first definite form emerging from the shadowland of our Past. And then, just as in nature after the promise of dispersion, the mists again collect and gloom once more settles down, so after this one faint rift in the clouds darkness again descends upon us—a darkness more intense than that which preceded it; and when the curtain next rises it is no longer the Saxon thane and earl who rule the land, but the Norman conqueror. Of the centuries which intervened between the coming of the Saxon and the coming of the Norman we have practically no trace in Lutterworth or its immediate neighbourhood, and we can only point to a jewel found at Wibtoft, and now preserved in the Rugby School Museum, as evidence of the Germanic occupation of these parts.

There is yet one other example of Saxon workmanship which, although it can hardly be said to have been found within the immediate neighbourhood of Lutterworth, may nevertheless, by reason of its destination, be mentioned here. It was found at Newton in Clifton-upon-Dunsmore in 1843 with other articles of the early Saxon period, and passed into the hands of Mr. Goodacre of Lutterworth, who owned the land upon which the discovery was made. This jewel, which was characterized by the late Sir Augustus Franks as "an exquisite specimen of Anglo-Saxon goldsmith's work," may be described as a semi-globe of dark coloured glass set in a circlet of gold with a plate of gold at the back and loop for suspension. The delicacy of the beading round the rim and the wreath-like ornamentation of the loop is unrivalled. We give an illustration of this object, which is now in the Ullesthorpe Court Museum.

ANGLO-SAXON JEWEL
FOUND AT NEWTON

GLASS VIAL FOUND AT
LUTTERWORTH CHURCH



CROMWELLIAN PLATE CHEST
FROM LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

IV

NORMAN LUTTERWORTH AND ITS EARLY LORDS

WITH the Norman period we come into touch with written history, and on turning to the Domesday Book we find that Ralph de Guader had been possessed of lands here, and this at once brings on to our stage an interesting personality of the days of the Conquest. Ralph de Guader, or, as some of the old chronicles call him, Raulf de Gaël, was a Breton seigneur who had become Earl of Norfolk. A marriage was arranged between him and Emma, sister of Roger Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford. For some reason or other this alliance was distasteful to the King, who was in Normandy at the time. He dispatched an express order forbidding the marriage to be concluded; but the parties paid no heed to it, and the wedding took place at Exning in Suffolk. Ralph then brought his bride to Norwich, and there, in the newly erected castle, was held a "bride-ale" which, as the Saxon chronicler says, proved fatal to all present. Wine flowed freely, the tongues of the guests became loosened, and Roger de Hereford loudly censured the refusal of King William to sanction the union of his sister with the Earl of

Norfolk. From this the guests proceeded to general invectives against the Conqueror, and in the end formed a plot to dispossess him of the crown. The conspirators were, however, speedily defeated, and Ralph, escaping to Brittany, left his gallant wife to sustain the siege of his castle at Norwich. This she did for three months, until obliged under pressure of famine to capitulate in exchange for the lives of herself and garrison. She subsequently joined her husband in Brittany, and they eventually ended their days in the Holy Land. Before returning to England William made an incursion into Brittany in pursuit of Earl Ralph, but after besieging the town of Dol was obliged to beat a retreat before the forces of the King of France. On his return to London for the Christmas of 1075 the King deprived Earl Ralph of all his estates, and so ended his connexion with Lutterworth, which, with his other possessions, reverted to the Crown.

From the Domesday Survey which was completed between the years 1081–86 we gather that the lands of which Ralph de Guader had formerly been possessed in Lutterworth (or Lutresurde, as it is spelt) were then held by one Maino, the Breton. We know nothing of him; but in the light of the tragic events just narrated, the nationality of Ralph's successor opens up a fruitful field for speculation.

According to the Survey, Maino held of the King thirteen carucates of land in Lutterworth, or, as Mr. Thompson in his valuable paper on "The Secular History of Lutterworth," from which we have freely borrowed, puts it, "Maino, the Breton, had a tract of land equivalent to 1500 or 1600 acres." We gather

that there was at the time a population of twenty-seven males, twelve of whom were of an inferior class of landowners called sokemen living under the jurisdiction of the lord of the Manor, seven cottagers holding small allotments in return for menial services performed for the lord, six peasant farmers, and two serfs who were at the arbitrary disposal of their lord. Besides these there was one bondswoman, a humble, pathetic figure to have travelled down the centuries! Mr. Thompson, whose paper was read at a meeting of the Leicestershire Archæological Society held at Lutterworth about forty years ago, proceeded to make an interesting comparison between the number of sokesmen in other market towns of similar position to Lutterworth, from which he concluded that Lutterworth appeared to have had a relatively larger proportion, pointing to a more numerous independent class than most of the other places. Altogether, assuming the twenty-seven male inhabitants to have been heads of families consisting of five individuals, the population of Lutterworth at the Conquest would have been about 135 souls.

Maino was succeeded in the ownershipof the Manor of Lutterworth by his son Hamo, who conveyed his inheritance here to Bertram de Verdun by a document, the contents of which are still extant and may be rendered into English as follows :—

"Hamo the son of Maino, to all his Frenchmen and Englishmen, as well present as to come, health! Know ye that I have rendered and granted to Bertram Verdun and his heirs, Lutterworth, with all the appurtenances, by hereditary law, to be held of me and my heirs, by one knight's fee. And, in considera-

tion of this Bertram has given to me thirteen marks of silver and a coat of mail, and greaves and three horses. These being witnesses: Henry the son of M., Alan his brother, and M. de Verdun, William Mansell and Alan son of Geoffrey and Roger the clerk."

The terms of this ancient deed give a vivid picture of the usages of the time shortly after the Conquest. The holding by a knight's fee meant that the new proprietor was under the obligation of providing his lord with a horse-soldier for forty days in each year when called upon so to do. It is difficult to estimate the value of the cash transaction. The mark was a money of account and represented about 120 pennies of that date; but of course the purchasing value of a penny in Norman times has little analogy to that of a penny of to-day.

Bertram de Verdun, who thus became connected with Lutterworth, was one of the earliest members of the great house of de Verdun whose castle was at Alveton, or Aulton, in Staffordshire. Here, generation after generation, the de Verduns, lords of the Manor of Lutterworth, lived in feudal grandeur, only knowing our town by an occasional visit or through the reports of their stewards, who presided in their courts and received the rents and service due from their tenants.

On the decease of Bertram de Verdun, in the year 1139, his son Norman became lord of the Manor, paying King Stephen 100 shillings for the transfer to him of his father's Leicestershire estates—an early instance of death-duties! He had a long tenure, not dying until 1192, when he was followed by

another Bertram, who was sheriff of the counties of Leicester and Warwick for several years. He was twice married, his second wife being Roesia, the foundress, jointly with her son, of the Hospital of St. John, near our own town.

Bertram de Verdun died in 1195, and was succeeded in turn by his two sons, Thomas and Nicholas, the latter of whom joined with his mother in the founding of the Hospital of St. John, which was built upon a piece of land known as the Warren, adjoining Misterton. It was intended to provide a house for one priest and six poor men and to keep hospitality for poor wayfarers. The following facts concerning this foundation are of interest. It was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and, as already seen, was built upon land called "the Warren." From the episcopal registers at Lincoln it is evident that the foundations were laid in the year 1218, during the reign of King John, but it was not until the following reign that it was endowed and consecrated.

A fourth part of sixteen marks was paid to the Hospital out of the revenue of the parish church in 1220.

The statutes for the Hospital's regulation were drawn up soon after the year 1310, under the sanction of the Bishop of Lincoln, and are still preserved among the episcopal records.

In addition to the endowments already specified the Hospital possessed lands at Hillmorton in 1329, and at Cotesbach, Shawell, and Bitteswell at different times.

In 1445 the patronage of the foundation belonged to Edward, Lord Grey of Groby, by virtue of his

marriage with Elizabeth, sole daughter and heir of Sir William Ferrers, Lord of Groby.

The following names of Masters of the Hospital have been preserved :—

William Vesey, 1420.
Simon Smith, resigned 1455.
Richard Walsee, Bishop of Down and Conner.
Hugh Leys, 1475.
Will. Rufus Clark, 1517.

The Duke of Suffolk bequeathed an annuity to the priest of this Hospital for prayers for the repose of his soul, and also made provision for the maintenance of the building; but this latter provision would not appear to have been very effectual seeing that in the reign of Queen Mary, to whom the Hospital passed upon the attainder of the Duke, the foundation is described as deserted and falling into ruin, while, early in the reign of her successor, it was completely demolished and the land which had formed its endowment sold.

During the making of the new road to Misterton, upon the construction of the G.C.R., the workmen came across quantities of rubble, evidently marking the site of the Hospital and showing that it had been built in the same manner as the church. A little farther on they unearthed a number of human bones, no doubt the remains of inmates of the Hospital buried in their own secluded graveyard more than five hundred years ago.

Nicholas de Verdun held the Manor (with a short interval of dispossession on his joining the insurgent barons in 1216) until the year 1230. In 1214 the King made him the grant of a market for Lutterworth.

He was succeeded by his only child, a daughter, named after her grandmother, Roesia. By command of Henry III her hand was given in marriage to Theobald le Butiller, but by reason of her exceptional position she retained the name and arms of her ancestors and passed on the name of de Verdun to her descendants. She died in 1247, and was succeeded by her son John, who remained lord of the Manor until 1273, when his brother Theobald, aged twenty-two, followed in the line of inheritance.

At this stage we are again in a position to take stock of our town. At an inquest it was reported that Lutterworth was of the fee of Verdun and held of the King by Theobald de Verdun, who had in domain three and a half virgates of land and one water-mill. He also had in villainage forty virgates held by thirty-six serfs, and in free tenure sixteen virgates held by six free tenants. We are further told that the Prior of the Hospital of Jerusalem held five virgates of land in perpetual alms and seven given by Nicholas de Verdun and Roesia, his wife. In addition, twenty-five burgesses held forty-three burgages, and one, William de Walcote, one toft, with the advowson of the church for the term of the life of Eleanor de Verdun. Theobald de Verdun also had six virgates, warren in the fields, a market and fairs, and royal and other liberties. The tenants did not pay scutage and were quit of suits of the county and hundred.

The virgate of land was an indefinite quantity, but, as in parts of Leicestershire it can be proved to have consisted of 15 acres, we may take this figure as the equivalent of a virgate in Lutterworth.

Scutage was the pecuniary commutation of military tenants for personal service.

We therefore gather from the Inquisition that Theobald de Verdun had in domain—in other words, in his own hands—142 acres. Besides these he had 600 worked by thirty-six serfs and 240 in the hands of six free tenants. The Prior of the Hospital had 75 acres for his maintenance and 105 for the poor wayfarers. But there were besides these twenty-five burgesses living upon their own plots of land, who had their own town court and were not compelled to seek justice in the county court or the hundred court. Hence Lutterworth was six hundred years ago a borough in the simplest form, with its market and its fairs.

At this date the population was composed of twenty-five burgesses, six free tenants, and thirty-six serfs, making with their wives and families a probable population of 350 persons.

Theobald de Verdun, the son of Theobald and Roesia, held the lordship until 1309, when another Theobald succeeded him. He was the last of this family in the male line, and died at Alton Towers in 1316.

He was twice married, his first wife being a daughter of Lord Mortimer of Wigmore, and by her he had three daughters. After her death he married as his second wife, in 1315, Elizabeth, daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, but he died the following year before the birth of their child, which event took place on the Feast of St. Benedict following. This child likewise proved to be a daughter. She was named Isabel, and when she

grew up she became the wife of Henry, Lord Ferrers of Groby, and succeeded to the Manor of Lutterworth, although it would appear that her mother retained some interest in it during her life.

To Lord Ferrers and the Lady Isabel succeeded their son William, who, in turn, was followed by his son Henry. It was during the minority of this latter that the presentation to the living of Lutterworth fell to the Crown and enabled the king to offer it to his chaplain, Wycliffe. Henry de Ferrers grew up to receive the honour of knighthood, and was succeeded by his son Henry, who likewise attained to the same distinction. He it was who obtained a grant for the holding of a weekly market in Lutterworth, and also of an annual Fair upon Ascension Day. This last has been discontinued, but the weekly market has been regularly held ever since the grant to Sir Henry de Ferrers in 1414. This knight was raised to the peerage under the title of Lord Ferrers of Groby, but, dying without issue in 1444, the Manor of Lutterworth passed to his cousin, Elizabeth Ferrers, who subsequently married Sir Edward Grey. From them the Manor passed to their son, Sir John Grey. He fell at the battle of St. Albans in 1460, when it descended to his son, Sir Thomas Grey, who in 1472 was created Earl of Huntingdon and in 1475 Marquis of Dorset.

With the son and successor of this first Marquis of Dorset an actor in one of our greatest national tragedies for a moment flits across our local stage. Henry, second Marquis of Dorset, married for his second wife Frances, eldest daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, by his wife Mary, Queen-

Dowager of France. On the death of the survivor of her two brothers the Marquis was, in right of his wife, created Duke of Suffolk. Then came the death of the boy-king, Edward VI, and the conspiracy to place the crown of England upon the head of his own daughter, Lady Jane Grey. The consequence of this rash act forms part of our national history and needs no repetition here. Although the gentle tool of the ambition of others expiated her lesser offence on the scaffold, her more guilty parent managed to save his head for the time being, but only to lay it upon the block at a later date for opposing the marriage of Queen Mary with Philip of Spain. He was beheaded on Tower Hill on the 23rd February 1554, when all his possessions were forfeited to the Crown, and it was not until the time of Charles I that the Manor of Lutterworth again became the property of a private subject.

Having regard to the fact that Lady Jane Grey was born and spent her girlhood at Bradgate, a few miles beyond Leicester, and that she was connected with the Feildings through the de Verduns, it is highly probable that she knew and was well known in Lutterworth, of which place her father was Lord of the Manor.

V

LUTTERWORTH FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

IT may be well to turn aside for a moment from what we may term the "main street" of our history to take a glance into its byways during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The great personages who have hitherto occupied our stage were not actual residents in Lutterworth, but there were nevertheless some of our own townspeople whose names have come down to us, and one family in particular whose descendants have equalled, if they have not surpassed, them in importance; while, to the fearless zeal of one of its inhabitants, Lutterworth owes to this day its place amongst the Meccas of Christendom.

Among those of lesser note may be mentioned William Cocks and William Pawley, who, in the reign of Henry VII, enriched the charities of the town by the gift of lands and tenements at Lutterworth. Very early, too, in the history of the town is to be found the name of Feilding, which has ever since been closely associated with it. Somewhere about the reign of Henry III, if not earlier, we meet with a Thomas Feilding. He had a daughter named Joan

or Joanna, who became the second wife of John de Colville. By his first wife, Cecilia de Verdun (the representative of a junior branch of the family we have already traced), he had a daughter named Matilda, and this daughter Joanna Feilding adopted as her own, conveying to her her own property in Lutterworth.

As we propose to treat of the Feilding family separately, it is only necessary here briefly to allude to those members who were immediately connected with Lutterworth in the centuries under review. This brings us to a Geffery de Felden or Feilding, who had won his spurs in the wars of Henry III. What his relationship was to the Thomas Feilding of Lutterworth already mentioned is uncertain, but doubtless it was in the intervals between his service with the king that he visited Lutterworth and courted and won Matilda de Colville. Through this alliance he regained possession of the Feilding property, which had passed through Joanna Feilding into the Colville family.

According to tradition the house occupied by Geffery and Matilda de Feilding was situate in Ely Lane at the spot where for many years the late Mr. Blunt carried on the business of a veterinary surgeon and which is now in the possession of Mr. E. W. Lavender. It is an interesting fact that the remains of ancient foundations are frequently met with in the ground hereabouts, and an avenue of old yew trees still stands beside what was once a bowling-green, overlooking the Misterton valley. With regard to the name "Ely Lane," it has been suggested that this is a corruption of "Hilly Lane," the Midland

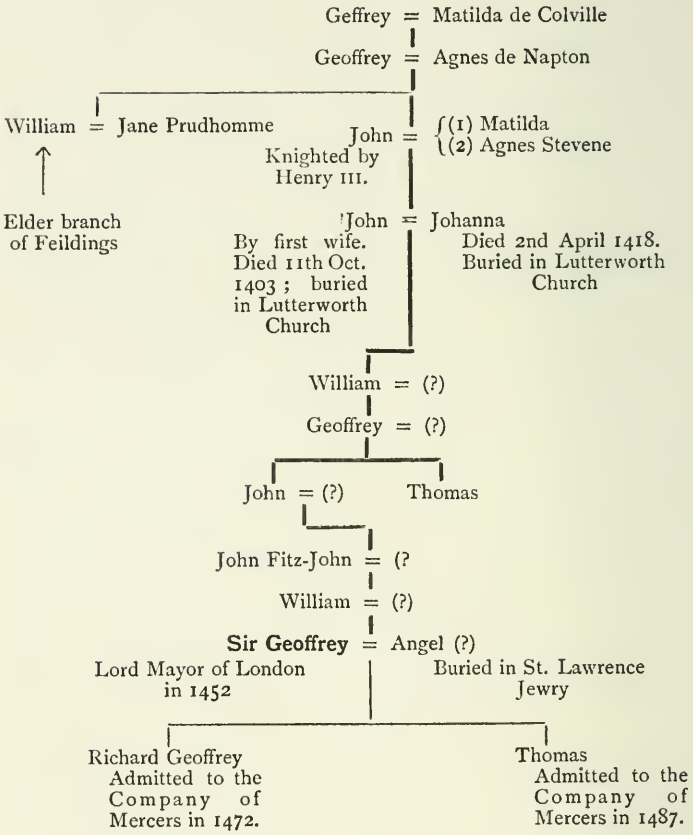
habit of dropping the aspirate leading to the distortion. Although this suggestion is supported by reference to the Parish Registers where the street is actually written "Hilly Lane" in several places, yet there is little doubt but that the word "Hilly" is itself in reality the corruption, and that the street took its name in the far-off past from the Feilding possessions in the Isle of Ely.

On the death of Sir Geffrey the Feilding property in Lutterworth passed to his son Geoffrey, who married Agnes, daughter of John de Napton. It is clear that there were other Feildings living in Lutterworth at this time, as we find mention of both a Thomas and a John Feilding. In the thirty-eighth year of Edward III (1365) a conveyance of a burgage was made which gives a glimpse into the past history of our town worthy of preservation. It was executed in the court of the lord of the Manor, in the presence of Walter Stephen, William Bonifaunts, and Thomas Baker of Lutterworth and Thomas Deskins of Poulteney and Roger of Thorpe, on Friday, the Feast of St. George. The property conveyed was a half-burgage built and lying in High Street between the burgage of John Feilding on the one side and the messuage of William Milner on the other, the persons to whom it was conveyed being John Feilding and Agnes his wife, and John, his son by his first wife Matilda. The person who conveyed the property was Thomas Feilding of Lutterworth, with the consent of Elizabeth his wife, and a rent of twelve shillings was reserved to him, he on his part being bound to render to the lords of the fee the services due and accustomed. It is interesting to

PEDIGREE

OF

SIR GEOFFREY FEILDING



note that not only do the Feildings remain with us to this day, but the family of one of the witnesses, namely that of Baker, have continued to reside amongst us.

From the John and Agnes Feilding mentioned in the above deed was descended the Sir Geoffrey Feilding who was Lord Mayor of London in the reign of Henry VII.

Sir Geoffrey was the son of William Feilding of Lutterworth and a member of the Mercers' Company. He lived in Milk Street, was a Privy Councillor to Henry VI and Edward IV, and Lord Mayor in 1452. Both he and his wife and three of his sons were buried in St. Lawrence Jewry, the epitaph on their tomb reading, "Here lyeth the body of Jefferey Feilding sometime maire of this citie and Angell his wife and Thomas, Richard and John, sonnes of Jefferey AN. DOM. 1517."

The old church of St. Lawrence Jewry was entirely destroyed in the fire of London, and the new church contains no monument to Sir Geoffrey other than the mention of his name on a brass plate inserted by the Mercers' Company in memory of members of that Company interred in the church.

During the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII Lutterworth became considerably enriched, its property appropriated to civic and public uses being extensive. When in 1510 Leland, the antiquary, visited it, the description he gave of the town was as follows: "From Leicester to Lutterworth, a market town, a ten miles towards Warwickshire. The town is scant half so big as Loughborough, but in it there is a hospital of the foundation of two of the Verduns

that were lords of ancient time of the town. . . . There riseth certain springs in the hills a mile from Lutterworth and so coming to a bottom they make a brook that passeth by Lutterworth."

Between the time of Theobald de Verdun in 1276 and the middle of the sixteenth century the population of Lutterworth had made some advance. It is recorded that in 1564 there were 106 families in the town, who, at an average of five a family, would muster—men, women, and children—530 persons, an increase of 180 in 286 years. The progress was slow, but it must be remembered that in the olden times the means of subsistence were limited and the chances of employment few in rural towns, both causes militating against rapid expansion.

VI

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

THE parish church of Lutterworth undoubtedly owes its origin to the liberality of the de Verdun family.

From very early times down to as late as 1838 Lutterworth belonged to the diocese of Lincoln.

The date of the building of the original church is unknown, but as three presentations to the living of Lutterworth are recorded during the episcopate of Hugh de Wells, who occupied the see of Lincoln from 1209 to 1235, it was probably somewhere towards the close of the twelfth or commencement of the thirteenth centuries.

At any rate there was undoubtedly in the thirteenth century a fine Early English church, consisting of tower, nave, and chancel, the same size as the present ones, but with a spire to the tower in place of the present top storey and parapets. It is also probable that the nave had aisles on both sides, but perhaps not so wide as the present south aisle nor when first built longer than the nave.

If this were so, the aisles were very soon lengthened and the arches cut through the north and south walls of the tower.

The early nave and chancel had high-pitched

roofs, as in all probability had the aisles. There was no clerestory to the nave, unless it were an extremely low one.

The east and south walls of the chancel are the old thirteenth-century walls, but have been increased in height, no doubt, when the larger windows were inserted.

The tower nearly up to the diaper-work is also thirteenth-century work, but the belfry windows are decidedly of later date than the window in the lower stage. Probably the tower was built very slowly or in stages, which would account for this difference, but the belfry windows are, nevertheless, good specimens of Early English work.

Portions of the north aisle and possibly some of the south aisle may also be thirteenth-century work, as the old masonry of the doorways and internal jambs to many of the windows certainly belong to that period.

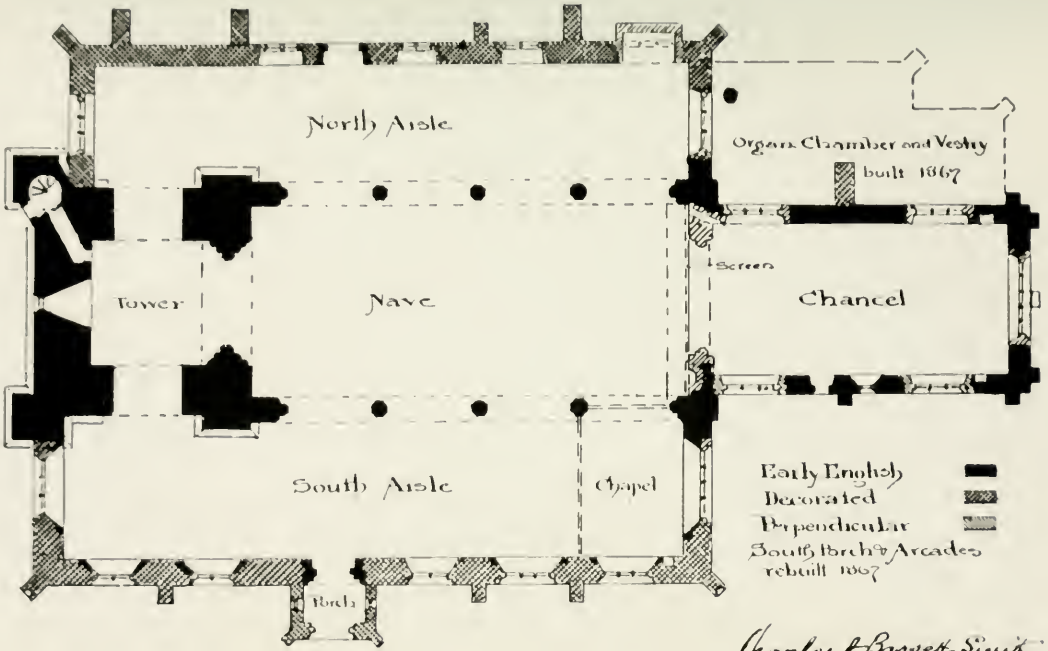
The nave arcades have been so much renewed that it is very doubtful if any of the thirteenth-century work still remains.

The aisles were considerably altered, if not rebuilt, in the fourteenth century, some of the windows being very good specimens of "Decorated" work. The old wide internal splays of the thirteenth-century windows have in many cases been retained, although the tracery is fourteenth-century work of very different dates. Portions of the present aisle roofs are probably fourteenth-century work, or early fifteenth century.

The remains of the steps to the rood loft on the south side of the chancel arch are probably

St Mary's Church. Lutterworth

Ground Plan in the 15th Century



fourteenth-century work, but the chancel arch itself is late fifteenth century.

The east window of the chancel is early fifteenth century, but the old jambs are probably fourteenth, if not thirteenth century work, perhaps still in their original position, but with the intermediate piers cleared away so as to form one large window instead of either two or three single light windows.

VII

JOHN WYCLIFFE

IN the year 1374 there happened an event which was to bring fame to Lutterworth and carry the name of the little market-town even beyond our own shores.

The rector of Lutterworth passed away, and the last of the noble family of de Verdun having also been gathered to his fathers, the Manor of Lutterworth descended to Lord Ferrers of Groby, but he being a minor and consequently incapable of exercising his right of presentation, the choice of the successor fell to the Crown.

At this time Edward III, who ruled over England, had attained a great age and took little interest in State affairs, the government of the country being practically in the hands of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Through his interest the royal favour fell upon John Wycliffe, who was at the time one of the royal chaplains. It is probable that the influence of the Duke in favour of Wycliffe was exerted more from political and selfish motives than from any personal sympathy with the doctrines of the Reformation of which Wycliffe has been styled "the Morning Star." He had acquired a reputation for unmatched proficiency in the scholastic learning of

JOHN WYCLIFFE.

his day, and in consequence was welcomed by the Duke of Lancaster as an influence to humble the Church.

Wycliffe was first brought to the notice of the Court, and more particularly of the Duke of Lancaster, by a pamphlet which he wrote in 1366 in opposition to the Pope's claim to feudal supremacy over England, founded on King John's act of resignation. Several of his works were afterwards dedicated to the Duke, who became closely allied with him.

John Wycliffe was born in the hamlet of Spreswell, near Old Richmond, in Yorkshire, in the year 1324. He was educated at Merton College, Oxford, of which college he became a Fellow, and in 1360 he became Master of Balliol. The same year he was appointed rector of Fillingham in Lincolnshire, and in 1368 he became rector of Ludgershal, Bucks. From here he passed, as we have seen, in 1374 to Lutterworth. Concurrently with this benefice he held the prebendal stall of Aust in the collegiate church of Westbury in the diocese of Worcester.

In the year in which Wycliffe became rector of Lutterworth he went as a member of a Royal Commission appointed by Edward III to confer with Pope Gregory XI, which met at Bruges. In this commission he ranked second to the Bishop of Bangor and received the princely allowance of twenty shillings *per diem*.

It is a remarkable fact that this glimpse of the papal Court is said to have had the same effect upon Wycliffe that the visit of Luther to Rome in later years had upon that reformer; both visits inspired the necessity for an immediate reform in

clerical matters. Being a teacher at Oxford, Wycliffe had ample opportunity for making public his ideas. From 1375 he spent most of his time between Lutterworth and Oxford, with frequent visits to London, where he became a popular preacher. For some years he was allowed to spread his doctrines without hindrance, but at length the papal wrath fell upon him, and he was cited to appear at St. Paul's on the 3rd of February 1377 to answer to the charge of being an enemy to Rome on account of his attacks on the inordinate arrogance, wealth, and power of the higher clergy. He was attended in this trial by the Duke of Lancaster, who sent the Earl Marshal, Lord Percy, to clear a way through the crowded assembly for him. The trial commenced, and the assembly waxed hot over the questions before them, until the Duke of Lancaster, conformably with the manners of the time, threatened to drag Courteney, the Bishop of London, out of the church by the hair of his head. Then the people, who were jealous of Lancaster's overgrown power and who resented the insult to their bishop, rose up and sacked the houses of both the Duke and Lord Percy, killing the latter's chaplain and doing immense damage to the former's residence. The matter ended in the Pope signing five bulls against Wycliffe, authorizing his imprisonment, but before they had reached England Edward III had died; and they do not appear to have had any material effect.

In 1380, Wycliffe opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation at Oxford and was condemned by the University, and two years later he and his

followers were opposed and prosecuted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Then he went back to Lutterworth where he wrote ceaselessly and fearlessly against the papal claims. Assisted by Nicholas de Hereford he made the first complete translation of the Vulgate in 1382, having himself previously translated the Gospels in 1360. The whole translation was afterwards revised by John Purvey.

But the great conflicts, dangers, and toil of his life had told heavily upon him, and upon the accomplishment of his great self-imposed task he was seized with paralysis. Recovering to some extent, he pursued his labours for two years more, and then on the 28th December 1384, while hearing mass in his own church at Lutterworth, he was again attacked. Borne to the adjoining rectory, he lingered until New Year's eve, and then passed away at the age of sixty years.

A few days later his mortal remains were laid to rest in the chancel of the church which was to be for ever after so inseparably wedded to his name, but, as we know, even here in death they were not to be free from molestation. The Council of Constance, assembled in the year 1414 under the presidency of the Emperor Sigismund and Pope John XXII, resolved to make a determined effort to stamp out the doctrines propagated by Wycliffe and his disciples, and on the 5th of June of this year summoned before them his great German follower, John Huss, whom they proceeded forthwith to commit to the flames. Following up the lead given by the Council of Constance, the Church of Sienna

next took upon itself to curse the memory of John Wycliffe, and to order his bones, if they could be discerned from those of the faithful, to be taken out of the ground and cast out of Christian burial. In obedience to this decree Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, the diocesan, sent his officers to exhume the body. Tradition has it that they came by night, and, breaking into the grave in the chancel, carried away every bone of the great rector, passing, as they went out, through the priests' door in the south wall of the chancel still known as "Wycliffe's door." Outside they formed a procession, and in this manner bore the bones to the side of the river at the south entrance to the town, where they burnt them, casting the ashes into the stream. As old Fuller puts it, "His ashes were cast into the river Swift, which conveyed them to the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. Thus the ashes of Wycliffe may be considered as the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

Of the personal appearance of Wycliffe we have no record other than that he was a spare man of frail health. None of the existing so-called portraits are contemporary, nor do they even conform to the style of the age in which he lived.

Of his character we have several interesting glimpses, which help us to get into closer touch with our great townsman of over five hundred years ago. We know that he was a man of great learning, indomitable energy, and unquestionable sanctity, with an uncommon gravity of manner and flaming zeal for God and love for his neighbour. At one time

in his life his health was so impaired by the labours of producing his numerous compositions and the excitement inseparable from the restless hostilities of his enemies that, being supposed to be in a dangerous condition, his old antagonists, the Mendicant Friars, conceived it next to impossible that so notorious a heretic should find himself near a future world without the most serious apprehensions of Divine wrath.

While they declared that the dogmas of the reformer had arisen from the suggestions of the arch-enemy of mankind, they nevertheless anticipated some advantage to their cause if they could induce the dying culprit to make recantation of his published opinions. Wycliffe was in Oxford when this sickness arrested his activity and confined him to his chamber. From the four orders of the friars, four doctors were gravely deputed to wait on their expiring enemy, and to these the same number of civil officers called senators of the city and aldermen of the ward were added. When this embassy entered the apartment of the sick man he was seen stretched on his bed. Some kind wishes were expressed as to his better health and the blessings of a speedy recovery. Then it was suggested that he must be aware of the many wrongs which the whole Mendicant brotherhood had sustained from his attacks, and as his death was apparently now about to remove him, it was sincerely hoped that he would not conceal his penitence, but distinctly revoke whatever he had preferred against them to their injury. Wycliffe lay silent and motionless until this address was concluded. He then beckoned his servants to raise him in bed, and,

fixing his eyes on the persons assembled and summoning all his remaining strength, exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars!" Thereat the embassy retreated, and Wycliffe kept his word.

The real object of Wycliffe's attack was the existing ecclesiastical system. The Roman Church, he argued, was no more the head of all the churches than any other. St. Peter was not more gifted than any other apostle. The Pope had no higher spiritual power than any other ordained minister. The State could disendow a delinquent church, and ought to do so. The rules of the monastic orders added no more intrinsic holiness to the profession of the monks than whitewash does solidity to a wall. He held that neither Pope nor Bishop should imprison men for conscience' sake, and that the excessive wealth of the clergy should be reduced. Nor did Wycliffe neglect to use his wit against the object of his hate. When one of his followers said that Scripture did not recognize the friars, "It does," replied Wycliffe, "in the text, 'I know you not.'"

Wycliffe's great work, the translation of the Bible into English, is a very liberal translation from the Latin. Besides the several works which have been printed he left a number of MSS., some of which are still in the Bodleian Library and others in the British Museum.

Such was the man to whom Lutterworth owes its fame. If we look round us at the present day there is but little left to which we can point as contemporary with his rectorship. Every stone of the rectory in which he lived and laboured has dis-

appeared, and but little even of the church, as he knew it, remains. It is true that for years certain objects have been exhibited at the church as "Wycliffe's," but the antiquary has ruthlessly disposed of their pretensions. The portraits are all a century and a half later, the chair and table are, according to the late Mr. Bloxam, of the seventeenth century, the pulpit, of the middle of the fifteenth century, no doubt inserted when the chancel was rebuilt, or when the clerestory was added to the nave and the present roof erected. The so-called "vestment" is probably part of a fifteenth-century altar frontal and the candlesticks of the time of Charles I.

During the last century a little local patriotism might have secured for our town a genuine Wycliffe relic, but unfortunately it was not forthcoming. On the 1st July 1861 there was sold at the dispersal of Archbishop Tenison's library a fourteenth-century MS. containing portions of the Old Testament translated by John Wycliffe, possibly in his own handwriting. It was bought by Mr. Lilly, a well-known London bookseller, for £150, a price which would compare favourably with the prices ruling at the present day.

VIII

THE LOLLARDS

IT was while living at Lutterworth that Wycliffe organized his body of men called "Poor Preachers." How many townsmen and local men were incorporated in these it is impossible to ascertain, but we can hardly believe that a man of Wycliffe's influence and persuasive powers could have failed to enlist some of his own parishioners and neighbours.

The history of Lollardism hardly comes within the scope of this book, but it may be mentioned that the name Lollard was given to the followers of Wycliffe. It was probably derived from the Low German verb "lollen" or "lullen," to sing, and applied to these people in consequence of their attributed fondness for psalm-singing. Wycliffe's views were accepted by many of the nobility, and Lollardy was most flourishing and most dangerous to ecclesiastical organization in England ten years after his death. Oxford University and many great personages supported the cause. Lord Montacute, Lord Salisbury, and Sir Thomas Latimer had Lollard chaplains.

The preachers were picturesque figures in long russet dress down to their heels, who, with staff in

hand, preached in the mother-tongue to the people in churches and graveyards, in streets and market-places, and wherever they could obtain a hearing. Leicester and Leicestershire became a stronghold of the new doctrines until it was stated that there was not a man or woman (except the priests and nuns) who did not openly profess their disbelief in the doctrines of the Church and their approval of the views of the Lollards.

Wycliffe's mantle fell upon the shoulders of a remarkable man, William of Swynderby, who had been living the life of a recluse in a cell made by himself in the woods which approached the western gateway of the town of Leicester. From this retreat he frequently issued to address the inhabitants of the town. On these occasions he spared neither the vanity of the women in their fondness for showy dress, nor the covetousness of the men, who then, as now, were absorbed in the making of money. Nor did he spare himself, for he refused the gifts which the townspeople continually pressed upon him and lived in all austerity the life of a hermit. In conjunction with an anchoress known as "Matilda," who had a hut in the graveyard adjoining the Church of St. Peter in Leicester, he preached the new doctrines openly and boldly.

IX

THE JOHN OF GAUNT FRESCO

ALTHOUGH the antiquary has wrought such sad havoc amongst the cherished mementoes of Lutterworth's golden age, yet he has not left us entirely without compensation.

The restoration of the church under Sir Gilbert Scott, some forty years ago, brought to light a fresco over the north porch of the highest interest. At first it was considered to be of earlier date than the rectorship of Wycliffe and to represent Edward II and Edward III, but Mr. E. W. Thursby, in a paper read before the Leicestershire Archæological Society in 1880, has given good reasons for believing that the fresco represents Richard II, his queen, Anne of Bohemia, and the great Duke of Lancaster, and that it was inserted in the church by Wycliffe himself. Here, then, is a relic of the great rector of Lutterworth more eloquent than any of those we have discarded, and as we stand before this fresco and endeavour to trace the, alas, fast-fading lines, we can feel pretty confident that we are standing where he stood and that our eyes are resting upon what his rested upon five and a quarter centuries ago. We will quote fully from Mr. Thursby's paper.

It was Mr. Bloxam, the well-known authority,

JOHN OF GAUNT FRESCO, LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

who first assigned the date of a little prior to Wycliffe's rectorship to this fresco, but in conjectural matters of this kind an error of a few years is quite excusable, and in the light of the advance which has been made in these last few years in scientific research we are now able to fix the date of the picture at some twenty years later than Mr. Bloxam's date. Looking at the fresco itself, we see that it contains three figures, two apparently representing kings and the third a queen. Naturally we turn to the history of our country at the time, and we find on the throne a king, whose portrait, preserved at Wilton House, the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, is said to resemble the beardless king in Lutterworth Church. The wavy hair is a general trait of the Plantagenet princes: an inspection of the national coinage shows that a crowned head with wavy locks was the accepted conventional representation of sovereignty in Plantagenet days. There is, therefore, a strong probability that one of the figures represents the reigning sovereign, and that the lady, evidently a queen, is his consort. If we are right in the date which we have assigned to the work, and in our assumption that two of the figures represent the reigning king and queen, then we have before us portraits—conventional, it is true—of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia, and we are enabled to add the important fact that the rector of Lutterworth at the time was John Wycliffe. With this information to hand let us look at the probabilities of portraits of Richard II and his queen being inserted in Lutterworth Church during the rectorship of the great Reformer. It is known that Anne of Bohemia was a staunch patroness

of Wycliffe, and, in conjunction with her mother-in-law, Joanna, Princess of Wales, was instrumental in saving his life when in danger at the Lambeth Council. What, then, is more likely than that Wycliffe should desire to commemorate his obligation and gratitude in a way which was common in the days in which he lived?

But there is the third figure to account for. We have already seen that in the days of Wycliffe one man was all-powerful in the land, namely, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. This man, too, was the notorious patron and protector of the rector of Lutterworth. If, as has been thought, the fresco covers some earlier painting, probably of a superstitious nature distasteful to Wycliffe, what is more natural than that he should have obliterated it with representations of his king and queen and powerful protector, just as in later times the royal arms superseded the crucifix? But the third figure appears also to be a king. Can we account for this? It may be that the crown on the head of the bearded figure is only a ducal coronet; in the present state of the fresco it is difficult to ascertain for certain. If this could be shown to be the case, the identification of the figure would amount to practical certainty.

But even if it proved to be a royal crown the presumption would not be seriously affected, for John of Gaunt married as his second wife, in 1368, Constance, daughter of Pedro the Cruel, and immediately claimed the title of King of Castile in her right. Nor did he renounce the claim until 1389, some years after Wycliffe's death, so that during the whole of the latter's incumbency of Lutterworth the Duke

would have been regarded as titular King of Castile, and his claim would have been a special subject of interest when Wycliffe first placed himself under his protection. This would account for the two crowned heads appearing side by side. The hawk on the wrist of the bearded figure is a symbol of dignity, and adds peculiar significance to our conjecture from the fact that John of Gaunt was passionately addicted to the chase and entertained Richard II and his queen at a magnificent hunting party in Leicester Forest, which then covered the district between Enderby and Earl Shilton, including Desford or Deersford. May not the Duke with his royal guests have visited their notorious protégé in his home at Lutterworth on this occasion, and the fresco which we have been considering commemorate the visit? The sceptre in the hand of the beardless figure may well mark the difference between the King *in esse* and the claimant to a foreign crown.

X

THE HOLY WELL OF ST. JOHN

THAT the name of Wycliffe was regarded with something more than veneration by the people of Lutterworth during the Middle Ages is proved by the story of the Holy Well of St. John.

The legend is that, as the bones of the holy man were being carried on a bier from the church to the riverside for burning, in accordance with the ecclesiastical decree, in passing down the steep slope at what is now the bottom of High Street a bone fell to the ground and was immediately trampled into the soft soil of the unmade roadway by the crowds which followed.

Some years afterwards a man working upon the spot brought to light the missing bone, and, upon taking it from its position, forthwith there issued from the hole where it had lain embedded a fountain of the purest water, which ceased not to flow day or night to the joy of the inhabitants of the town, who regarded it as a display of Divine favour upon the remains of their local saint.

The water was immediately looked upon as miraculous and was conveyed to a stone drinking-fount placed by the side of the way at the spot where the discovery was made.

It has been thought by some to have been called the Holy Well of St. John from its position within sight of the Hospital of that name, to which we have already alluded, but it seems to us, in the face of the above tradition, that the dedication to St. John was far more likely to have had reference to the Christian name of Lutterworth's great rector.

For ages the power to cure all manner of diseases, especially where the eyesight was affected, was attributed to this water, and the actual stone basin which received it is believed still to exist behind the brick wall which was built in front of it some sixty years ago. The spring itself was tapped a few years ago in excavating for a sewer, and was so strong that it had to be conveyed into the common drain.

XI

THE REBUILDING OF THE CHURCH

NOT many years after the dramatic scene enacted over Wycliffe's earthly remains, a great transformation was brought about in the construction of our church, involving its almost entire rebuilding.

This was the outcome of a great social movement which at that time was in progress throughout the whole country and happily extended to our own church. The crusaders, returning from the Holy Land enamoured of the frescoes and stained glass which adorned the continental and Eastern churches, aroused a desire for more light, and in many places the large "Decorated" windows, which gave scope for artistic treatment and stained glass, were as a result substituted for the Early English lancet windows. In our own Parish Church the restoration of forty years ago under Sir Gilbert Scott left us two of these lancet windows built during the reign of King John. One of these is in the south wall of the chancel, east of the priests' or "Wycliffe's" door. The other is in the west wall of the tower, exactly facing the central aisle of the nave.

As the church when first erected probably had no clerestory and had high-pitched roofs both to the

nave and chancel, and also probably to the aisles, it was necessary, in order to conform to the new idea, to practically rebuild some of the walls of the church, and this appears to have been done. The lancet lights in the east wall were displaced by the present window, which is a fine example of the Early Perpendicular style. Also new and more ornamental windows were inserted in the side walls. The high-pitched roof of the earlier nave and chancel were removed, the arches of the nave probably rebuilt, the clerestory windows inserted, and the present low-pitched and highly decorated roof constructed. It would appear as if the ancient rood screen and loft were destroyed when the present chancel arch was built.

The walls of the chancel were also raised and the roof brought into conformity with the nave. Some of the main timbers are of the fourteenth century, and are valuable examples of what (for woodwork) is a scarce period.

The aisle windows are nearly all late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century work.

The tower in its original state had a massive spire, in keeping with its early date. This was at a later period rebuilt in a taller and lighter form, and rose to a height of 47 feet higher than the present tower. This was the spire which was destroyed in the great storm of 1703.

In the time of the early Edwards, churchmen were nothing if they were not builders—it was the golden age of church architecture. When the building was completed the proud builder was accustomed to place his seal upon it, and so we find

the arms of the Lord Ferrers of Groby built in the gable of the east window. This gives a clue to the date at which this first restoration of our church took place.

The Manor of Lutterworth, together with the patronage of the living, came into the possession of the Ferrers family in the year 1316 upon the death of Theobald de Verdun, and the last lord of this family passed away in May 1444. They thus held the Manor close upon a hundred and fifty years, and it was no doubt during the latter part of this period that the rebuilding took place, the alteration in the chancel probably dating from the rectorship of Wycliffe.

It is almost certain that, in conformity with the custom of the age, the principal windows of the church were filled with stained glass, nearly every vestige of which has long since disappeared. To find an example of what this ancient glass was like we have only to visit the neighbouring church of Stanford-on-Avon, five miles distant, where there are carefully preserved specimens dating from 1327 to examples of fifteenth- or sixteenth-century work.

Of the interior fittings of our church at this date all have been lost with the exception of fragments of a screen, the main portion of which was many years ago removed to Stanford-on-Avon, where it is still to be seen. What small part is left to us now does duty as an organ screen. The pulpit dates from the middle of the fifteenth century and has been much restored. Pulpits, as Mr. Pick points out, were used in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. There are many examples of such on the Continent. There are a few fourteenth-century examples in

England, notably a stone one at Beaulieu in Hampshire. Pulpits were placed in the refectories of monasteries as well as in churches, and, indeed, sometimes on the outside walls of churches; but it was not until the fifteenth century that they came into general use in our churches. In many cases the original pulpits were among the furnishings which were destroyed by the Puritanical idealism which swept all our ecclesiastical buildings bare just after the Reformation.

The Lutterworth pulpit has acquired an undeserved world-renown under the mistaken notion that it was the identical pulpit from which the great Reformer promulgated his doctrines. Nichols says: "It is a sexagon made of thick oak planks with a seam of carved work in the joints, and is preserved and continued in memory of Wycliffe, whose pulpit it was, if constant tradition may be credited."

At one time the pulpit was surmounted by a large sounding-board. This suffered in the great disaster of the fall of the spire. Nichols says: "The sounding-board was beat to pieces, but many of the fragments were selected as could be removed from the rubbish, and are now fixed against the wall of the vestry" (date 1790).

As doubts were cast upon the authenticity of this relic it was sold about the year 1836, and is said to have been purchased by a member of the Fry family (of chocolate fame) and converted into a dining-table.

The fragments of the screen already alluded to were discovered in the gallery during the restoration of 1867, and, coming into the hands of the late Mr. George Binns, at that time headmaster of Sherrier's

School, were by him carefully restored and re-presented to the church. It is thought that this screen once surrounded the Lady Chapel which occupied the east end of the south aisle. A piscina dating from the fourteenth century may still be seen in the south wall.

In the chancel, close by the altar on the north side, is an aumbry, a square cupboard for keeping the sacramental vessels, and on the south side, exactly opposite, is an Early English piscina. These recesses were certainly used by the early rectors, and were probably there in the time of Wycliffe.

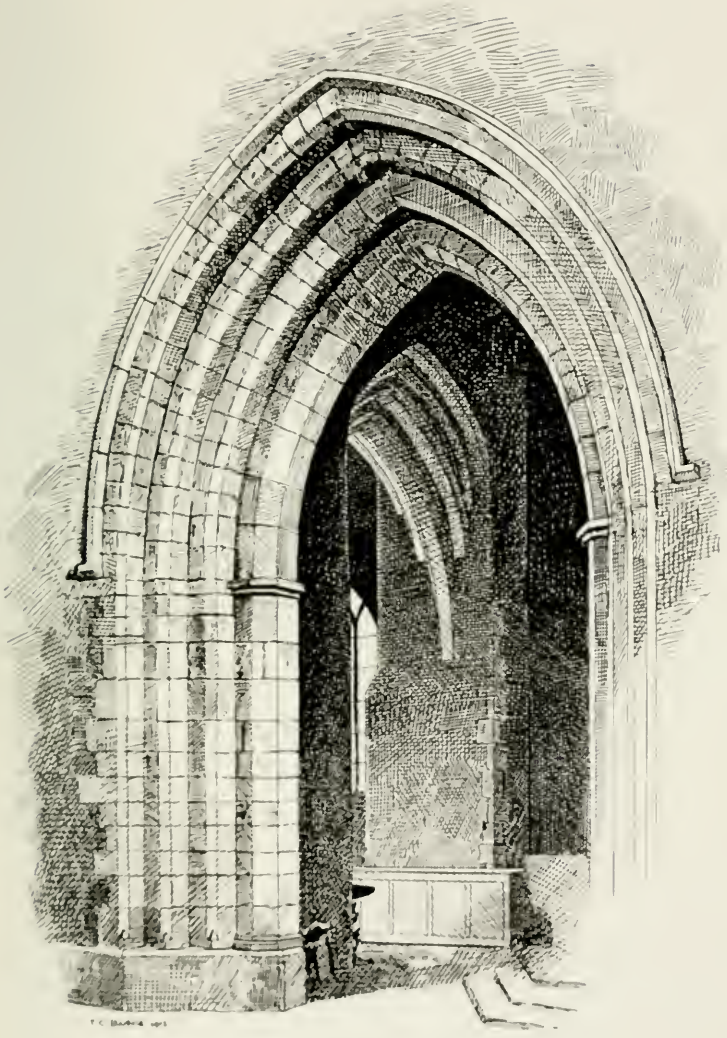
In the north arch of the chancel, close by where the pulpit now stands, is an opening called a Squint or Hagioscope. These were connexions between the High Altar and a less important one to enable the priest officiating at the side altar to witness the elevation of the Host.

In 1534–35 there was a chantry within this church, the state of which is thus reported :—

"The said Guild was founded by Edmund Muryall to find one priest called a Guild Priest to celebrate Divine Service within the Parish Church of Lutterworth and to pray for the soul of the said founder. And the said room is now void, and no priest there resides nor is there plate, jewels or any other article belonging" (Nichols).

On the dissolution of the lesser chantries in 1534 this, in all probability, fell into the public hands and was applied to secular purposes for the public benefit.

Shortly before the Reformation the property brought in, in the money of the period, 45s. 3d. yearly.



WEST ARCH, LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

XII

THE FRESCO OVER THE CHANCEL ARCH

THE upper part of the chancel arch is covered by a unique picture of the Day of Judgment.

As in the case of the fresco on the north wall, of which we have already written, this one was discovered under the plaster at the time of the restoration of the church in 1869 and attracted considerable attention. An account of the discovery was laid before the Society of Antiquaries in London.

In the fresco, Our Saviour is represented sitting in the centre of a rainbow which terminates on either side in an orb, supposed to represent the sun and moon. His feet rest upon clouds of glory, and on his right side and on his left are archangels sounding the last trump. Below is depicted a graveyard with the dead rising from their graves. Some are clothed as in life; others are destitute of clothing and some even of flesh. All classes of people are represented, from royalty with its crown to the humblest subject. From some of the graves fire is seen issuing, portraying the torment of hell. Strewn around the ground are skulls and bones. Some of

the beings rising from the graves are shown in a position as if supplicating mercy.

This picture is of great value on account of its undoubted antiquity. It was part of the decoration of the church placed there most likely after the rebuilding of the chancel arch in the fifteenth century. In all probability the church was at this period covered with frescoes, such being employed as a means of instruction for people entirely devoid of the art of reading.

Much akin to these frescoes were the Miracle Plays performed in the Middle Ages, and of which tradition says Lutterworth Church was frequently the scene. These plays were generally of a most impressive character—*The Passion of Christ*, *Flight into Egypt*, *Adoration of the Magi*, etc.—although it is said that at times they became almost blasphemous caricatures of scenes and incidents relating to Holy Writ. The prohibition by Bonner, Bishop of London, forbidding these plays was no doubt highly coloured, because it was given just at the most exciting moment of the Reformation of the Church.

Miracle Plays and others of dramatic character were continued in churches after the Reformation, until stringent measures were adopted by Queen Elizabeth against all exhibitions calculated to retard the progress of the Reformation. In spite of this Miracle Plays were performed in churches even as late as the seventeenth century.

INTERIOR OF LUTTERWORTH CHURCH, SHOWING FRESCO OVER CHANCEL ARCH

XIII

WYCLIFFE RELICS PRESERVED IN THE CHURCH

OF the Wycliffe relics preserved in the church, as has been already intimated, none are authentic. In a glass case in the vestry is the so-called Wycliffe's vestment. In bygone years it was an object of great veneration, and portions were frequently stolen, as it was supposed to have a miraculous power. It was to prevent this pillage that the relic was placed under glass and locked up.

The chair shown as the chair in which Wycliffe was carried from the church when smitten with paralysis, and the authenticity of which is vouched for by a brass plate, is unfortunately of unquestionably seventeenth-century work, as are also the wooden candlesticks long known as Wycliffe's. And no better fate awaits the most cherished of all Lutterworth's possessions—the actual table on which the great Reformer translated the Bible into English, and for which our American cousins are reported to have offered no less than £40,000! It is a most interesting and valuable object nevertheless, but is in no way associated with Wycliffe. In his time altars were constructed of stone, and it was not until

considerably later that they were displaced by communion tables of wood. During the reign of Queen Mary, for a short period altars of stone were again introduced; but in 1566 Elizabeth ordered communion tables to be set up in all the churches, and churchwardens were compelled to sign a declaration on oath that the stone ones had been destroyed.

The table in Lutterworth Church is undoubtedly a fine example of an Elizabethan communion table, and was introduced at a time when the Sacrament was administered to communicants sitting round the table as in the Last Supper of Our Lord, and for this reason is provided with sliding extensions.

ELIZABETHAN COMMUNION TABLE IN LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

XIV

LUTTERWORTH IN THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR

LUTTERWORTH found itself in the vortex of the storm of civil strife which swept the land in the seventeenth century and culminated in the defeat of the Royalist party at Naseby, a few miles across the Northamptonshire border.

In the *Churchwarden's Accounts*, under date May 1643, is the entry: "Paid to Prince Rupert's Trumpeters, £2," and again, "Paid to Wm. Pettifor for writing out the Covenant, 6d." Probably these incidents arose out of the siege of Leicester, for our district at that time swarmed with Royalist troops on their way south after the struggle for the mastery of that town.

On the 13th of June 1645 the King's army, after resting for several days at Rugby, marched to Market Harborough, passing through Swinford and the lovely avenue by Stanford Park which we now call the Beech Avenue. The King and his suite rested at the hall for the midday meal, and the bridge in this park over which he passed and repassed on this occasion is to this day known as "King Charles' Bridge."

Arrived at Market Harborough at night, tired out with the long march over hilly ground, the army was

ordered to proceed immediately to Northampton, where it was known Cromwell's army was stationed.

The two armies met at the village of Naseby on the following day, namely, the 14th June, and here was fought the battle which decided the fate of the Royalist cause. By sunset the King's army was utterly routed, and once more our little town was filled with refugees.

Tradition says that King Charles in his flight passed through Lutterworth and stayed to have his horse's shoes fastened there, but there is apparently no documentary corroboration of this story. After the battle he fled by Leicester to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and it is exceedingly probable that he took the route through Lutterworth.

The rector of Lutterworth at this time was the Rev. Nathaniel Tovey, B.D., a staunch Royalist, who doubtlessly ministered to the utmost of his powers to the wounded soldiers passing through his parish. There are also several inns still remaining which may well have harboured fugitives from Naseby.

Mr. Tovey suffered for his loyalty, being ejected from his living. He has a claim to remembrance as having at one time of his life been tutor to Milton. Son of a chaplain to Lord Harrington of Exton, and who afterwards became master of the Free School at Coventry, Nathaniel Tovey was at an early period of his life taken under the patronage of Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the only daughter of his father's patron, Lord Harrington. Under her auspices he was entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, and it was while here that he had the honour of becoming tutor to the immortal bard. Having taken the degree of

B.D., he was presented by King Charles I to the living of Lutterworth, but was dispossessed, as we have seen, in or before the year 1647 for his adherence to the royal cause.

From this period there is a hiatus in Mr. Tovey's career; but in June 1654 we find him, through the friendship of John Manners, Earl of Pentland, inducted to the living of Aylestone, near Leicester, where he died, apparently simultaneously with his wife, in 1658, an entry in the parish register at Aylestone reading: "1658, Mr. Nathaniel Tovey, minister of this parish and Elizabeth his wife were buryed the 9th day of Sept. 1658."

An entry in the *Churchwarden's Accounts*, dated the 10th April 1650, throws a lurid light upon ways prevailing in days which we have now grown accustomed (so softened by the haze of distance have they become) to regard with reverence and delight:—

"Given" (it reads) "4 shillings.'
"Agnes Griffen was nailed to a tree by hand and foot, having wounds on her head and her body cut, being forced to eat her own flesh and drink her own blood by the rebels."
"This letter of request was signed by Justices of the Peace. 4 shillings."

Surely no exaggerated compensation, even taking into account the purchasing power of four shillings in the seventeenth century! There is no further record of this outrage, but probably the unfortunate woman was one of the many victims of the victors of Naseby, and shows the length to which religious fanaticism can go in the hands of an irresponsible rabble.

Lutterworth supplied at least one soldier to the Royalist cause in the person of Col. William Cole. In the *Charity Commissioners' Report for 1837* is recorded the fact that by an Indenture of Lease and Release, dated 19th and 20th January 1693, Margaret Bent conveyed to William Cole of the Spittal, near Lutterworth, Thomas Morris, and ten others certain properties in trust for charities at Lutterworth. The "Spittal" named as the residence of the first-mentioned transferee clearly leads us to the site of the old Hospital of St. John, whose history we have already followed to its extinction. Apparently a later residence was erected, probably out of the old materials, upon the site of the Hospital, and it was this house, preserving in its name the memory of its forerunner, which was the home of Lutterworth's redoubtable warrior. William Cole was a son of Richard Cole of Hertfordshire. He married Barbara, daughter of George Halford, second son of Sir Henry Halford of Wistow, and acquired, apparently in her right, the lordship of Laughton in Leicestershire and the Spittal Estate at Lutterworth with its two water-mills. Col. Cole served under Charles I and his successors for fifty-seven years, and was one of the gentlemen whom King Charles II intended to honour as Knight of the Royal Oak, his estate being worth £600 a year.

He died in 1698 and was buried at Laughton, as appears from the following entry in the register of Lutterworth Church: "Wm. Cole Esq. was buried at Laughton 1st April 1698."

His only daughter married the Rev. Bailey Shuttleworth, rector of Laughton, carrying the

COLT ARMS, LAUGHTON CHURCH

Spittal property into the family whose representative, Robert Shuttleworth, Esq., was owner in 1758, when the celebrated mill trial, to be referred to later on, took place.

The family of Cole have remained in Lutterworth until the present time. They were active supporters of the Congregational Church established here in 1684, and the names of members of this family are found throughout the church records.

In a directory called the *Universal Directory*, published in London and dated 1793–94, we find under Lutterworth the name—

"Richard Cole, Woollen Manufacturer."

This Richard Cole was one of the founders of the old Gooseberry Show Society, whose records exist from the year 1818 and are in the earlier years in his handwriting.

A sword, which was formerly the property of Col. William Cole, is still in the possession of Mrs. King of Lutterworth, she being the last of the family, which with her is believed to become extinct.

In closing this section on the history of our town during the Civil War, we may here mention an interesting piece of furniture which was removed from our church at the time of the restoration under Sir Gilbert Scott, and has now found its way to Ullesthorpe Court. It is in the form of a small square box on spiral legs, and is evidently of the Cromwellian period. It would appear at one time to have been divided into one large and two small compartments, and in all probability was constructed to hold church plate—possibly a pewter service. The use of pewter

for altar vessels was by no means unknown; in fact, it became common when the vessels of the purer metal had been commandeered during the Civil War. We have no record that this was actually the case at Lutterworth, but its possibility is rendered not unlikely by the knowledge that Lutterworth was plundered by Hastings' troops from Ashby-de-la-Zouch on the 11th January 1644. It was also visited by the same troops at a later date, for in *Memorials of Old Leicestershire* we read (p. 211): "The English Roundheads, urged by the Parliament and the Puritan ministers, were flocking to the appointed centres to take the Covenant, the date fixed for Leicestershire being Sunday, 3rd March, and the place Leicester. Hastings, having notice thereof with four troops from Beaver Whorton House and another garrison, coursed about the country, laying hands on all the clergy, churchwardens, and other church officers whom he could catch and haling them to Ashby. Whitelock says that a hundred of them in all were captured, but the figures are not to be relied upon. Sweeping round Leicester through Lutterworth and Sutton, Hastings came to Hinckley on 3rd March with his prisoners and a large quantity of cattle and other plunder. The Leicester men, hearing of his whereabouts, mustered what horse and foot they could, and sallied forth under Lieut.-Col. Henry Grey, fell upon him in Hinckley market-place, drove him out into the fields, and beat him, capturing 50 prisoners, 140 horse, 80 head of cattle, with divers packs of ammunition, and recovering all the prisoners, who had been locked in Hinckley Church."

XV

THE FEILDINGS—LORDS OF THE MANOR OF LUTTERWORTH

WE left the Manor of Lutterworth in the hands of the Crown upon the attainder of the Duke of Suffolk in 1554, and it continued in the same hands until the reign of Charles I, when it was granted to the Mayor and Commonalty of the City of London, on the 4th June 1625, under the Great Seal of England, and also under the Seal of the Duchy of Lancaster. The new lords of the Manor, however, did not long continue to enjoy it, for we find that on Saturday, the 13th of June 1629, they conveyed the Manor of Lutterworth, with the royalties, toll of market, and all the rents belonging to the Manor, with certain specified exceptions, being then of the yearly rent of £38, 14s. 1d., to Basil Feilding, Esq., and George Vernam (or Farnham), gentleman, of the City of London, for the sum of £1650. From this time the Manor has remained in the hands of the Feilding family, the present Earl of Denbigh being now its lord.

Although it was not until 1629 that the Feildings became possessed of the actual Manor, yet, as we have seen, they had been connected with the place for centuries before, and the history of this ancient

house forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Lutterworth.

The Feildings have always claimed to be the only descendants in the direct male line of the House of Hapsburg—the elder but female branch now reigns in Austria. Modern researchers into antiquity, however, dispute this point, which has been the subject of much controversy.

It is a fact that as early as the middle of the eleventh century there was a family of the name of Feilding settled in the Isle of Ely. This has been proved by the existence of a grant to Bernard Feilding by William Rufus of the Manor of Donnington in the Isle of Ely—a grant afterwards confirmed to his son, Soland Feilding.

Then later, about the reign of Henry III, we find a Thomas Feilding resident in Lutterworth—probably a member of a younger branch of the Ely Feildings.

Sir Geoffrey Feilding, claimed by the family to be of Hapsburg descent, married Matilda de Colville. Her father, John de Colville, as we have already seen, took as his second wife Joan Feilding, the daughter of Thomas Feilding of Lutterworth mentioned above. Joan adopted her step-daughter Matilda as her heiress, conveying to her her property in Lutterworth. In this way the Feilding possessions, which had for a while passed into the de Colville family, were restored once more to the Feildings in the persons of Sir Geoffrey and Matilda. This was a turning-point in the fortunes of the Feildings of Lutterworth.

Sir Geoffrey Feilding served in Henry III's army,

and was renowned for his great valour and his brave deeds. As a reward for his services the King settled on him certain lands in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire to be handed on to his son and heirs for ever. His wife inherited also from her mother, Cecilia de Verdun, a certain portion of land round Lutterworth, as well as the mansion house in which they dwelt.

Their descendants continued to live there for many years, until towards the end of the fourteenth century they came by marriage into possession of Newnham Paddox in Warwickshire, where they dwell to this day.

Geoffrey, the son of Sir Geoffrey and Matilda, married Agnes de Napton. Through this marriage another large property round Lutterworth and Misterton came into the possession of the Feildings, and has belonged to them ever since.

It is from Geoffrey's second son, John, that was descended the Sir Geoffrey Feilding who became Lord Mayor of London in 1452.

William Feilding, eldest son and heir of Geoffrey and Agnes, was given the mansion house by his father. This old house is said by Nichols to have been in Ely Lane, now Station Road, in Lutterworth. It was afterwards sold by William's son, John Feilding, to Sir Rauf de Stanlow on 5th July 1319, and so it passed completely out of the possession of the Feildings.

William followed his grandfather's example and served in the English army, fighting under Edward III in the French War of 1339. He added Newnham Paddox to the family's growing posses-

sions by his marriage with Jane Prudhomme, the granddaughter of Robert de Newnham.

The succeeding generations of the Feildings were, we find, nearly all conspicuous for the part they took in the various wars. Five of them were knighted for services rendered to their country.

In the fifteenth century William Feilding, son of John and Margaret Purefoy, and grandson to William and Jane Prudhomme, was appointed by Henry VI sheriff of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. He fought for the Lancastrians in the Civil War of the Roses and was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471.

Everard, his son, fought at the battles of Stoke in 1487 and Blackheath in 1497, as a commander, and was rewarded by knighthood. He held several important posts in Leicestershire and Warwickshire, besides being a member of the Privy Council under Henry VIII. When he died in 1515 he possessed land in Rutland, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, and the Isle of Ely. Tradition has it that he was buried in the Church of Our Lady at the Blackfriars, Northampton, but no trace of his tomb can now be found.

Everard's son and heir, William, knighted for raising forces amongst his tenantry for the Scotch War, was held in great esteem at Court, especially by Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII, who, on the birth of Prince Edward, sent him a special message informing him of this event, and demanding his prayers and congratulations. He died in 1549, and he and his wife Elizabeth were the first to be buried in the church at Monks Kirby. His son

Basil, with Goodith Willington, his wife, is also buried there.

By this time the lands owned by the Feildings were of a fair proportion, each generation having, as we have seen, added its own share. Basil at his death possessed in and about Lutterworth "the mansion house, 24 cottages, 3 shops, 300 acres of arable land, 100 of pasture, and 40 of meadow," besides property in Rutland, Warwickshire, and Leicestershire.

Of the two following generations practically nothing is known save their names and the names of their wives. We find mention of a Sir William Feilding, sheriff of Warwickshire and Rutlandshire, who married Dorothy Lane. His son Basil was born in 1556 and died in 1605; he was also sheriff of Warwickshire. He took as his wife Elizabeth Aston.

Finally we come to William, the first Earl of Denbigh. He married Susan Villiers, sister of the Duke of Buckingham, and through his brother-in-law was introduced to the Court of James I, where he rapidly rose in rank until in 1623 he was created Earl of Denbigh. In the same year he is said to have accompanied the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham on the secret journey they made to Spain in the hopes of bringing about the marriage between the Prince and the Infanta Maria Ana, the daughter of Philip III of Spain. Her picture, which they brought to England to show to King James, was, on James' refusal of it, given by Buckingham to his sister Susan, Lady Denbigh, at Newnham, where it has remained ever since.

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was the

son of Sir George Villiers of Brokesby and Mary Beaumont. His mother, having great ambitions and high hopes, coupled with an exceedingly strong will, generally succeeded in getting what she wished. Left in sole charge of the boy after his father's death, she sent him to school at Billesdon. At the age of eighteen he went to France that he might learn to bear himself with the ease and grace of the French courtiers. Thus equipped, he entered the English Court at twenty-one, where his mother had purchased for him the appointment of cupbearer to the King, hoping that by his good looks he would soon attract James' attention. In this he was wholly successful, for the King refused thenceforth to allow the young man out of his sight. He proceeded to heap honours upon him, creating him first Viscount Villiers in 1616, then Earl, Marquis, and finally Duke of Buckingham in 1623. James kept his favourite well supplied with money, and Buckingham, who loved magnificence, took care to please his master by appearing before him in the most splendid costumes.

In 1620 he married the greatest heiress of the kingdom — Catherine, daughter of the Earl of Rutland.

Through Villiers dignities were showered on his family; his mother was made Countess of Buckingham in her own right, a privilege rarely granted in those days. One of his brothers was created Earl of Anglesey and the other Viscount Purbeck. The influence he possessed over the King was unbounded, and that friendship with the heir-apparent was already begun which in later years brought about Villiers' fatal and tragic end.

WILLIAM FIRST EARL OF DENBIGH

On this prince's accession he made George Villiers one of his ministers, and showered upon him even more favours than had his father, King James. The rapidity of these advancements naturally raised much jealousy among the noblemen at Court. But Villiers did not appear conscious of his unpopularity, or, if he were so, he disregarded it entirely and refused to take any measures to ensure his personal safety.

In the year 1625 the last link between the King and Parliament was strained almost to breaking-point, and Charles thought to appease his subjects by sending over an army to help the besieged Huguenots at La Rochelle. The French King, Louis XIII, was at that time engaged in a war with the Huguenots and had sent a petition to the English King for help. Charles replied by sending over some ships to La Rochelle, but the men refusing to fight against their co-religionists, instead of for them as they had been given to understand, Admiral Pennington, their commander, was obliged to sail home again. A second attempt being made, with William, Earl of Denbigh, in command, was as miserable a failure as the first.

The Duke of Buckingham, holding the office of Lord High Admiral of England, was consequently held responsible for these unnecessary blunders. In order to try and retrieve his reputation he decided to personally conduct a third fleet against La Rochelle. But the ill-feeling of the nation against this useless loss of precious life, labour, and money was intense, and on leaving his house at Portsmouth in August 1628 to embark, Buckingham was stabbed

by John Felton. When Felton, one of his former officers, was afterwards questioned regarding his motive, he replied that no one had instigated him to the deed; he believed that he could not sacrifice his life in a better cause than by ridding his country of one of her greatest and most powerful enemies.

The Duke of Buckingham is buried in Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster Abbey. Lord Clarendon describes him as a man of noble nature and generous disposition. He says: "His kindness and affection to his friends was vehement, and he was an enemy in the same excess. His flight, rather than his ascent to fortune, was a snare few could have resisted. He was a munificent patron of learning and of the fine arts in spite of his deficient education, and he formed a magnificent collection of pictures."

In the years that followed the Duke of Buckingham's death the old struggle between the King and Parliament grew fiercer. Charles was continually making promises in order to get money, and then he would break them immediately the supplies were granted him. Thus matters went from bad to worse, until at last in 1642 it was evident to all that the struggle could not be continued without war. Both parties collected troops, and then began that terrible Civil War which raged throughout England for so many years. Families were divided amongst themselves, and there are few sadder illustrations of the intense misery thus caused than that shown in the letters of Susan Villiers to her son Basil, who fought as a Roundhead against his Royalist father.

"It is to these letters," says Knowles, in his

introduction to the Denbigh Manuscripts, "that the deepest interest attaches, the letters of the first Countess of Denbigh—'Su Denbigh,' as she signs herself in a bold handwriting indicative of the strong and earnest character which her correspondence shows her to have possessed. They are addressed to her son Basil, on the outbreak of the Civil War, and in the impassioned and affecting eloquence with which she appeals to him not to take arms against the King, there is reflected the throes of grief which she shared in common with thousands of English mothers to whom the Civil War brought the distraction of divided households."

Basil Feilding was Su Denbigh's eldest son. His father was a staunch Royalist, adhering steadfastly to King Charles and serving him loyally during the Civil War. It was consequently the greatest of blows to such a father when his son joined the rebel camp. Though there is nothing amongst the family letters to show Basil's reasons for going against his father's wishes, there is equally no proof, nor hint, that he acted as he did from any personal ambition. His motives, indeed, appear to have been just and honourable.

It may be interesting to give here a few extracts from Lady Denbigh's letters written at this time to her son. Basil must evidently have made his inclination towards the parliamentary cause known to his parents before the war actually broke out, for we find the following undated letter from his mother to him: "I am informed that the Bishops will be inquestioned in the begening of next wicke for ther votes in the Hous; therefore I would intrete you to absent your

selfe at that tyme, that you make not the last error worse than the furst, to the perpetuell gref of the hearte of your poore mother."

Then on the 11th July 1642, after the declaration of war, there is an earnest appeal to Basil not to take arms against the King, but to go "to Nuenham (Newnham Paddox), and go not with them (the King's enemies) in any of these actions. . . . I cannot forget what a son I had once, and I hope to see him so agane."

Lady Denbigh wrote many other letters to this son. They are all in the same strain, begging him to return to the Royalist camp. They failed, however, in their purpose, as is proved by the following letter written shortly before the battle of Edgehill in which father and son fought on opposite sides. "The perpetuel fere I am in of hereing of wors and wors nuce (news) of my poor Master (the King) makes me abounde with sorroue, and I hope you will not be against him, for now it is plainly seene what is aimed at."

Then follow two more appeals to him not to fight against the person of the King. "I do intrete you to be kind to the King, for by this tyme you see howe much he is wronged. . . . Our Lord of His marci send an end to these descensions of these trobelsom tymes."

"I cannot refrane from righting (writing) to you, and withall to beg of you to have a care of your selfe and of your honner, and as you have ever professed to me and all your friends that you would not be against the person of the King, and noue it is planely declared what is intended to him and his royall

SUSAN COUNTESS OF DENBIGH

authority, so noue is the tyme to make your selfe and me happy by letting all the world see who have been deluded all this tyme by them that pretend to be of the commonwelth. It is more seene what ther ame is, but I hope you will leave them and go to the King to gane the reputation you have loust. Being with them you shall be well receved by the King, only let it be in tyme, for I do beleeve the King will have the better of his enymies."

Basil, however, still continued fighting for Parliament against the King. He soon 'gained the reputation of being one of the best commanders in the army, as well as the most humane, for his kindly treatment of those under him, a rare quality in those days. He rendered many great services to his cause; he helped to open again the main road to London from the north, by capturing Russell House in Staffordshire and Cholmondely House in Chester in 1644.

He was regarded by the other side as one of the ablest generals their enemy possessed, and there can be no doubt but that he contributed largely to the success of the parliamentary army.

In 1643 his father was severely wounded in a skirmish near Birmingham, and died shortly after of his injuries.

The Civil War continued to drag on until Oxford, where Charles had so long held his Court, surrendered to General Fairfax in June 1646. The King, being shortly after beaten in the field, decided in despair to trust himself to the Scotch army, which was then as far south as Nottinghamshire.

Charles' faithlessness had by this time deprived him of most of his friends, and, in spite of many

promises made to the country, the Scotch in January 1647 treacherously handed him over to his enemies for a large sum of money.

The King as a prisoner was moved about from place to place; once he escaped, but soon was recaptured. The Commonwealth was now victorious over all its enemies. After imprisoning those members of the House of Commons who had voted in favour of an agreement with the King, the Roundheads tried and condemned Charles himself on a charge of high treason, and executed him in 1649.

The widowed Queen Henrietta Maria, being exiled to France, was followed thither by many of her ladies, amongst whom was Su Denbigh. The latter was held in great esteem by the Queen, and remained with her till 1652, when she died, without the happiness of seeing her son reconciled once more to the Crown.

At the Restoration, Basil, Earl of Denbigh, tendered his submission, and was officially pardoned by Charles II. The pardon, with the Royal Seal attached to it, is preserved at Newnham. Basil, through the special favour of Charles II, was created Baron St. Liz in 1664. He married four times, but without issue, and died at Dunstable on his way to London in November 1675. His body was brought back to Newnham and buried in Monks Kirby Church.

From Basil's brother John is descended Henry Feilding, the famous novelist.

George Feilding, younger brother to Basil, was created Baron Feilding of Lecaghe and Viscount Callan. He was given later the reversion of the

title of Desmond on the death of the then Earl of that name, conditionally on his marrying Desmond's only daughter. But this lady, having a will of her own, objected to having her matrimonial affairs arranged for her, and refused to marry Lord Feilding. At her father's death George Feilding still kept his right to the title of Desmond, there being no direct male heir. Basil, dying without issue in 1675, the two titles became merged.

William, eldest son of George, succeeding his uncle in 1675, thus became third Earl of Denbigh, being already second Earl of Desmond. He was Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for Warwickshire in 1682 until 1685. He married first Mary, widow of Sir William Meredith, by whom he had two sons and a daughter; and after her death in 1669 he married Mary Carey, daughter of the Earl of Monmouth, but she died without issue on 9th December 1719. He died in 1685 at Canonbury House in Middlesex, and is buried in the old family vault in Monks Kirby Church, where lie the remains of the first and second Earls of Denbigh.

William was succeeded by his eldest son Basil, who, at the early age of seventeen, matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1694 he was Colonel of a regiment of Dragoons and Master of the Horse to Prince George of Denmark till 1695. He also held the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire for four years. He married Hester, the daughter and sole heir of Sir Basil Firebrace, son of the devoted Royalist, Sir Henry Firebrace, who attended Charles I on the scaffold, there receiving, as a mark of gratitude from the King, His Majesty's miniature

set in diamonds in a small ring. This ring is still in the possession of the present Earl of Denbigh, and is regarded as one of his greatest treasures.

Basil, Lord Denbigh, died about 1716 or 1717, leaving as his heir his eldest son William.

The fifth Earl also matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, at an early age. He married about 1718 Isabella de Yonge of Utrecht, and by her had one son, Basil, who succeeded him.

Basil was cupbearer to King George III at his Coronation in 1761, having also been a Privy Councillor to George II. He married in 1757 Mary, the daughter of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, the last male heir of the great antiquary, Sir Robert Cotton, who, at a vast expense and labour, procured that invaluable collection known as the Cottonian Library, now in the British Museum.

There is an interesting anecdote told concerning this Mary Cotton. She and Lord Denbigh, journeying up to London in a coach, stopped, as was their custom, at a wayside inn on the Watling Street Road. This inn was then, and still is, called "Denbigh Hall" by reason of its being the place where the family always changed horses. The innkeeper asked Lady Denbigh if she would allow his nephew, whose father kept an inn on the Bath Road, to do her portrait. She willingly, and we may imagine smilingly, consented. The portrait, in pastelle, excellently rendered, is now among the treasures at Newnham. The lad became celebrated afterwards as the great court painter, Sir Thomas Lawrence. This portrait of Lady Denbigh is one of his first recorded efforts.

She died on 14th October 1782, and Basil married again, in less than twelve months, Sarah, widow of Sir Edward Farnham of Quorndon House, in Leicestershire.

By his wife, Mary Cotton, Lord Denbigh had two sons. The elder, William, married Anne Powys of Berwick House, near Shrewsbury, where at the entrance to the drive there used to stand some magnificent old wrought-iron gates.

Berwick House and the property were left by Thomas Yelf Powys, the father of Anne, to her second son, Henry Wentworth (who took the name of Powys), for he did not wish that Berwick and Newnham should fall into the same hands. But both Henry and his younger brother Everard dying without issue, all the Powys possessions passed in 1876 to the eighth Earl of Denbigh. At the sale of Berwick in the following year the gates were erected on their present site at Newnham Paddox, after being restored at Norwich and having the Feilding arms added. These gates are the second best of their kind in England, the first place being held by those owned by the Duke of Westminster at Eaton; they were both made by the celebrated Roberts Brothers in the late seventeenth, or early eighteenth, century. The exact date of the Newnham Gates is uncertain, but there is a tradition that they were ordered by a French nobleman, and, he being unable to pay for them, they were then bought and erected at Berwick.

On entering the army Viscount Feilding was promoted rapidly, becoming eventually a major-general. He raised the 22nd Regiment of Dragoons,

but died during his father's lifetime, being seized with a severe malady while on a visit to Newcastle, of which he expired after a few days' illness. His body was brought to Monks Kirby for interment. In those days when there were no railways, it must have been a great undertaking to have brought a body such a long distance for burial. Years afterwards an old man who lived in Monks Kirby remarked to a member of the family that he remembered very well when the young lord was brought from "foreign parts" to be buried at his old home. This old man had never seen a railway train in his life, and was evidently convinced that the distance between his village, which he had never left, and Newcastle was great enough to constitute sufficient reason for the town being styled a "foreign part."

William and his father, who died in July 1800, were the last of the family to be buried in the old vault at Monks Kirby.

Basil was succeeded by his grandson, William, eldest surviving son of the above Viscount Feilding. Born at Berwick House and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he matriculated in 1816. Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide during the King's life, he was her Master of Horse during that period and during her widowhood, in which latter period the Queen paid a visit to Newnham Paddox. The room she used is, to this day, known as "the Queen's Room," and a large carpet, specially made, with the family arms, etc., which she presented to her host, is still preserved at Newnham.

Lord Denbigh married Mary, daughter of the first Earl of Ducie; she died twenty years after

GATES AT NEWNHAM PADDOX

their marriage, in the forty-fourth year of her age, leaving him with eleven children. Two of these, Percy and William, entered the Coldstream Guards and fought in the Crimean War, one as Lieutenant-General and the other as Major-General. Each in turn commanded the regiment.

The eldest son, Rudolph, succeeded to the title on his father's death in 1865. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1846 he had married Louisa Pennant, only daughter and heiress of David Pennant, son of Thomas, the famous naturalist and antiquary, and through her had come into possession of Thomas Pennant's beautiful home of Downing Hall, Flintshire.

Louisa Pennant died without issue seven years after their marriage, being only twenty-four years of age. Four years later Lord Feilding married Mary Berkeley, of Spetchley, Worcestershire. He succeeded his father in 1865 and died in 1892. Lady Denbigh survived him nine years, dying in Rome in the year 1901.

Their eldest son, Rudolph, the present and ninth Earl of Denbigh, inheriting the titles, home, and estates of the Feildings, brings this brief history of an old Lutterworth family up to date.

XVI

ADMINISTRATION OF LAW IN LUTTERWORTH

THERE are many persons who have resided all their lives in Lutterworth or its neighbourhood and yet have not the slightest idea that almost daily they pass and repass an ancient prison with cells and dungeons dating back possibly to mediæval times.

We have seen that five hundred years ago the burgesses of Lutterworth were free of suit of the County and the Hundred—in other words, were not compelled to seek justice in either the County or the Hundred Court, as they had their own independent tribunal. And here in our High Street is a court-house with prison still standing, although unrecognized, which no doubt carries us back to the days when rough justice was administered by this very tribunal.

At the bottom of High Street, where Regent Street branches off, will be observed a curiously constructed edifice. This was the Justice House of bygone years. The upper part of this ancient place was the Constable's house, and below are the prisons in which offenders were confined. Probably the largest room on the ground floor was the court-room, and here, no doubt, many a malefactor has re-

ceived his sentence. Some slight echo of a murder trial, the initial stages of which may have taken place in this room, is still to be found on a small slate gravestone in the churchyard which reads :—

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM BANBURY
KILLED BY ROBBERS
UPON OVER HEATH
NOV. 25 1676

The unfortunate man whose untimely death is here recorded was a Lutterworth tradesman who had journeyed to Rugby on business. As he was crossing Over Heath (a primeval heath, part of which still survives in Swinford Gorse) on his way home he was attacked by robbers, robbed, and murdered. His body was subsequently found in a field still called "Deadman's Field," which is close beside the Rugby Road, near the village of Churchover. Suspicion fell upon a man as implicated in the crime. He was tried, condemned, and executed, being gibbeted at the spot where the Rugby and Lutterworth Road crosses the Watling Street, and which is known as "the Gibbet" to this day. The prisons under the court-house consist of five separate dungeons, connected by an underground passage with a sixth known as "the Cage." They extend under Regent Street, and are now bricked up. "The Cage" itself was an important institution, being a vaulted cavern penetrating some way into the bank beneath Regent Street, and open to the front facing on to High Street, save for massive iron bars or railings,

through which the miserable occupants were exposed to the ridicule or execration of the not overrefined townsfolk. As late as the Peninsula War many of the soldiers who fell into our hands were distributed throughout the prisons of the land, Lutterworth receiving its quota. To the lasting disgrace of our town—and our country, for the matter of that—some of these unfortunate men were actually confined in "the Cage," where, it is related, those whom we blush to call our forefathers deemed it sport to jeer and throw stones at them!

The parish constable of olden days appears to have been a law in himself. He had power to arrest any man or woman, and to thrust them into prison at his own discretion. The Constable's Account Books of Lutterworth present a grim list of men and women whipped according to law; in fact, the very first entry preserved is the names of those vagrants who had been taken up and whipped in Lutterworth between the 15th October 1657 and the 30th September 1658 by Thomas Cattell and Henry Pope, constables.

Besides the cat-o'-nine-tails, Lutterworth rejoiced in the possession of a penal institution now long forgotten. It had a "cuck-stool," in which the constable ducked scolding and foul-mouthed women in the adjoining river. It is thus mentioned in the Account Book: "1654. For repairing the cuck-stool and for a new wheel to it, 11d."

The same accounts also contain an item for the repair of the cage, namely: "1656. Paid Carter for mending the cage and lock for same, 1s. 6d." The cage, it may here be remarked, remained in use until

somewhere about the year 1820, when a man named Childs, a member of an old-established Lutterworth family, was confined in it. Apparently finding the disgrace of his situation intolerable, he hanged himself during the night, upon which an order was issued by the Justices of the Peace that the cage be closed up and prisoners no longer confined in it. This order was carried out, and the cage, which had played such an important part in the civic life of Lutterworth, was bricked up and so remains to this day. Poor Childs! Who can gauge the terrors which he experienced during that last haunting night, with the clammy shades of centuries of Lutterworth's criminals for his sole companions? We know not with what offence he himself stood charged; but no matter how heinous, it seems to us that by his death he made ample amends, and that across the bricked-up entrance might well be carved, in letters plain to see, the name of the man who by his death freed Lutterworth from the last incubus of barbarism.

It was humorously observed by Sydney Smith that the existence of a gallows in any country was one of the signs of civilization. Judged by this standard, Lutterworth with its whip, its cuck-stool, and its cage may be said to have been fairly abreast of the times in the seventeenth century.

We have evidence of the use of the cuck-stool in 1657, when an entry in the Constable's Accounts records, under date 20th May: "Paid Warde for erecting the cuck-stool for labour, timber, and expenses, 10s."

Whipping was carried out as late as the early part of last century. The late Mr. James Yateman

used to tell how his father had witnessed an instance. A tramp had come into the town and, calling at the "Wheat Sheaf Inn," had asked for bread, cheese, and beer, telling the landlord that a well-known tradesman, whose name he gave, had authorized him to do this and would be responsible for payment. Suspecting the *bona fides* of this man, the landlord supplied him with a sufficient repast to keep him occupied while he himself slipped round to the tradesman in question, only to receive, as he had anticipated, an assurance that he had given no such authority. The parish constable was fetched and the impostor given into custody. This official seems to have immediately satisfied himself that the man was a rogue and a vagabond, and forthwith sentenced him to be publicly whipped.

Thereupon the culprit was marched to the Old Prison at the bottom of High Street, where he was stripped to the waist and chained to the tail of a cart drawn by a horse. Then the Town Crier going before, ringing his bell, and calling attention to the punishment meted out to idle men, the procession passed through the streets, the unfortunate offender being mercilessly whipped the while. At the conclusion of the ordeal he was turned out of the town.

Women, too, were sometimes publicly whipped, mostly for the offence of begging from door to door.

There is yet one other relic of old-time penal institutions in the remains of the Parish Stocks. This minor form of punishment was common in every village a century ago, mostly for drunkenness. In their palmiest days the Lutterworth stocks stood just at the back of the present Town Hall, but were

removed when this building was erected, to Bakehouse Lane (now Baker Street), and set up near the ancient Pound, where straying cattle were kept until the owner paid a fine. When this old place was demolished the stocks were condemned, and now all that remains of them are the two upright posts, which are doing duty as posts to a garden gate on the Bitteswell Road. The last man imprisoned in the stocks in Lutterworth was one John Moore, known as "Long John," a well-remembered inhabitant.

After the High Street prison was condemned, a temporary prison was constructed in the Old Workhouse Square, George Street, which at that time was enclosed by iron gates. This gave place to the present Police Station on the Leicester Road in 1838.

XVII

TRADE IN LUTTERWORTH

FROM the earliest times Lutterworth has been an agricultural centre, and agriculture has formed the staple industry of its inhabitants. There is no record to be found of art or craftsmanship in the town until we come to the year 1462, when we find that John Lee of Lutterworth, in consideration of 6s. 8d. paid to him annually in the south porch of Market Harboro' Church, bound himself to keep the chimes there "in good, sweet, and solemn tone of music." This record is of peculiar interest to us, as there is a possibility that the site of this artificer's workshop can still be pointed out in Lutterworth. On the west side of High Street, proceeding towards the river, there are at the back of a shop, about half-way down the street, premises which have beyond doubt at some time or other been occupied as a smith's workshop. The building, which bears evidence of age, contains a forge not in the least resembling a blacksmith's forge of the present day. It is built of the narrow bricks used in ancient buildings, and below it is a cellar built entirely of rubble, with shelving running round the room a few feet from the floor. Here, quite possibly, John Lee carried on his trade of bell-smith.

Lutterworth evidently prospered in the sixteenth century, as when Burton, the county historian, wrote of it at the commencement of the seventeenth century he said: "This town stands on exceedingly good soil and is very much frequented, standing not far from the street-way. Having also a very good market upon the Thursday, to which is brought exceedingly good corn in great abundance and all other commodities such as the country affordeth.

"It hath a fair upon Ascension or Holy Thursday called heretofore Lord Ferrers' Holiday, who sometime was lord of the town. It hath a very fair and large church with an high and neat spire steeple."

Such is the picture of Lutterworth soon after "Good Queen Bess" had passed away: a happy, prosperous community, one to be envied.

The historian gives the secret of its wealth when he writes of the fertility of the soil. The country all round was under cultivation until comparatively recent times, and some of the finest corn in the land was produced in the district. These were the days when wheat was grown at a profit, and when farmers became rich. From somewhere about the time of Wycliffe a duty existed on corn, and in years of great abundance the Government was accustomed to pay a bounty for its exportation, consequently its production was always remunerative. Now it has been said there is scarcely a cornfield within a mile of Lutterworth. This may not be strictly accurate, but the fact implied, namely, that the cultivation of corn has ceased to be the main industry of our district, is undoubtedly correct.

Lutterworth felt the distressing times of the Civil

War keenly in common with the rest of the nation. There was a shortage of coinage. To meet this difficulty many tradesmen issued small copper coins, known as tokens, of their own. In our own town tokens were issued by the following: Edward Revell at the "George Inn," Peter Mackarnes, H. E. W. Dyer, and George Tilley.

As these little objects are of such extreme interest, we give a description of all the known varieties:—

1. *Edward Revell—*
   Obv. ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.
   Rev. IN LVTTERWORTH—E.R.

2. *Peter Mackarnes—*
   Obv. PETER MACKARNES—P.A.M.
   Rev. IN LVTTERWORTH—1662.

A specimen of this token has recently been presented to Leicester Borough Museum by the author.

   Obv. PETER MACKARNES—P.A.M.
   Rev. IN LETERWORTH MERCER—1657.

3. *H. E. W. Dyer—*
   Obv. IN COVENTRY SOVTHAM—H.E.W.
   Rev. RVGBY LVTTERWORTH—DYER 1666.

4. *George Tilley—*
   Obv. GEORGE TILLEY MERCER—(The Royal Arms).
   Rev. HIS HALFE-PENNY-G.T.—LVTTERWORTH 1667.

This token, which is in the possession of the author, is unpublished and believed to be unique.

XVIII

THE MILLS

IN order to follow the records of the Lutterworth mills it is necessary to keep clearly in one's mind that there were two distinct mills, or rather groups of mills—the lord's mills and the Hospital mills.

The Hospital mills originated in special grants to the Hospital of St. John, but the lord's mills arose in this way. From the earliest times people were accustomed to grind their corn in querns or handmills in their own homes. With the introduction of water-power they naturally became desirous to relieve themselves of the labour entailed by the more primitive method; but being unable themselves to afford the construction of watermills, they petitioned the King to build them for them, binding themselves and their successors for ever in return to grind their corn at such mills upon certain terms. The mills so constructed were then farmed out by the Crown to private individuals.

Both groups of Lutterworth mills lighted upon evil days, and their monopolies were finally abolished in 1758, at which date they all appear to have been in the possession of a Mr. Robert Shuttleworth. The story of the Lodge Mill, the lord's mill, forms an interesting chapter in the history of Lutterworth.

About a mile and a half down the banks of the Swift from the Spital Bridge at Lutterworth, close to the old Roman Watling Street, may still be found the remains of the ancient Lodge Mill. It is an inaccessible place known as Moorbarns—the moor where the barns were—still the haunt of the heron and kingfisher, and where the brown owl builds its nest. So desolate a place is it, in fact, that when the Enclosure Act came into force in 1790, it had to be expressly enacted that this moor should not be exempt from the provisions of the Act.

It was to this mill that reference was made in the State Inquiry of 1273; but to what antiquity it goes back it is difficult to determine. It was to this mill, too, that the inhabitants of Lutterworth were under obligation to carry their corn for grinding. For many ages the people were content to abide by the arrangements which they or their forefathers had made; but in 1613, when probably the origin of the mill had become forgotten, the people first prayed to be relieved of what they had come to regard as an imposition. The case was heard in Westminster Hall; but the spirit of feudalism was not yet dead, and it was decided against the inhabitants. In the judgment given on this occasion it is set forth that King James was seised "in demesne as of fee in right of the Crown of England of the said mills, etc., and did grant them in fee farm unto Edward Ferrers and Fras. Phillips, gentlemen and their heirs and assigns together with all the suit of mills and benefit of grinding and mulcture, reserving unto his said late Majesty his heirs and successors for ever the yearly rent of £5."

The judgment, however, gave the inhabitants the option of going to the Spital mills if their corn, grist, or malt were not ground within twenty-four hours.

The people bowed to this decision with reluctance; but at length a patriot arose, whose name was Bickley, who not only roused his fellow-townsmen to resistance, but actually had the timerity to erect a mill of his own. His example was followed by others, and several mills raised their heads in defiance of the lord's rights. The owner of the manorial mills at the time was, as we have seen, a Mr. Shuttleworth, and he forthwith commenced proceedings against the offenders. All the inhabitants thereupon entered into a bond to defend the action. It was heard at the Leicester Assizes on the 14th July 1758, and the verdict was given in favour of the parishioners with £300 costs.

In consequence of this decision Mr. Shuttleworth destroyed an ancient malt mill called "the Horse Mill" and the Lodge Mill, and shortly afterwards severed his connexion with the neighbourhood. The Horse Mill stood near the church in Bakehouse Lane; the site of the latter we have already recorded.

To the old Lodge Mill attaches the following interesting story. One day, early in the seventeenth century, some one approaching the mill on business found the place silent and deserted. The sole occupants at the time were the miller and his man; but neither of these could be found. The matter was at once taken up by the constable and the local authorities, and, upon investigation, it was discovered that all money, of which there should have been a

considerable sum, had disappeared. No trace whatever could be found of the aged master, and the circumstances pointed to the commission of a brutal murder. Suspicion naturally at once fell upon the missing servant; but no clue to his whereabouts could be found. The matter attracted great attention at the time, the miller being a member of a well-known and highly respected family.

It was an easy thing for a criminal to escape from a lonely spot like the Lodge Mill in bygone days, and to reach a part of the country where no one would know anything about him. And so it happened in this case: nothing was discovered, and the matter became an unsolved mystery.

Twenty years passed, and one day men engaged in laying a drain through the garden of the mill came upon the remains of the old master who had been lost so many years. He had evidently been murdered by his servant and buried in the garden, all trace of the grave having been carefully concealed.

News of the discovery soon reached Lutterworth. It so happened that one of the fairs for which the town was noted was in progress, and the streets were thronged with people, many of them strangers; and the news was taken up and the story of the old crime recalled in every public-house. Amongst those attending the fair, by a curious coincidence, was the very man who had committed the dastardly deed twenty years before. He had fled to another part of the country, it subsequently transpired, where his crime was never likely to be known; but, thinking that all remembrance of it would now have faded, he had returned to Lutterworth that very day.

Everywhere he went people were talking of the crime, until at length he became so terrified that he went to the constable, confessed his guilt, and gave himself into custody. He was tried, condemned, and executed. The above story is preserved in a book of moral and religious anecdotes under the title, "Be sure your sins will find you out," in addition to having been handed down by local tradition.

XIX

THE GREAT STORM OF 1703 AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH SPIRE

LUTTERWORTH seems to have been tolerably immune, as old towns go, from disaster on an extensive scale. There is record of a fire in 1679 which destroyed nine bays of buildings; but it is stated that no dwelling-house was injured. The great storm which swept the land in 1703, however, did not leave the town unscathed, but robbed our church of the noble spire which for long had been one of its most cherished features.

Sir Thomas Cave of Stanford Hall, from whose park Lutterworth spire was visible, speaks of the loss as one mourning for a friend. Writing shortly after the event, he says: "The town of Lutterworth is situated on a pretty eminence, the church appearing over the houses in very agreeable manner, no other public building to give grace to this.

"Nor, indeed, is the church so great a decoration to the town as before it felt the severity of the dreadful and furious gale which happened in 1703, the violence of which blew down the remarkably fine and beautiful spire of the Parish Church, which at that time was 47 feet higher than the present turret; nor did it only give grandeur and dignity to

the town it belonged to, but even guided the steps of wandering travellers.

"Such was the enmity of this tempest that it blew the lofty spire directly on the roof of the nave, by which means the whole covering was beaten in and demolished, and great damage was done to the fabric of the church, for the repair of which a Brief was granted in order to procure a national collection."

The great storm here recorded was probably without parallel, and it is with feelings of relief that we remember that it occurred at a time when no Divine Service was being held in the Parish Church, or the consequences must have inevitably been too terrible for contemplation.

John Evelyn, in his Diary dated the 26th and 27th November 1703, thus speaks of this storm :—

"The effect of the hurricane and tempest of wind and rain and lightning through all the nation, especially London, were very dismal. Many houses were demolished and people killed. As to my own losses and the subversion of wood and timber, both ornamental and valuable, through my whole estate and about my house, the woods crowning the garden mounts and growing along the park meadows and damage done to my own dwelling, farm, and out-houses is almost tragical, not to be paralleled with anything happening in our age. I am not able to describe it, but submit it to the pleasure of God."

History says the same storm destroyed the spire of Monks Kirby Church, five miles distant, and that many more spires were blown down in the district the same night.

As Sir Thomas Cave mentions, a Brief was

obtained for the rebuilding of Lutterworth spire. We give the text of this Brief in the Appendix. A certain amount of money was collected, but the spire was never rebuilt, and the disposition of the money led to great unpleasantness and ultimately to Chancery proceedings. Nichols, in his *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, takes the matter up warmly, and, living within memory of the event, his testimony is of special value. He says: "The Rev. Henry Meriton was rector of the parish, and zealously laboured to secure the Brief and soliciting and collecting thereon. He was a man of known integrity and in great esteem among bishops and clergy of his time. And yet notwithstanding this public instance of regard for him, he was several years afterwards called to account in the Court of Chancery, not for embezzling, but for misapplying the contribution that had been collected, which (as informants pretended) was given for the repair of the steeple and body of the church, but had been laid out in new pewing and decorating the body of the church to a greater degree than was necessary."

Dr. Meriton in his justification produced a writing which was described to be a request for a contribution for the repair and beautifying of the church, in which he had met with much encouragement, and that he used two separate papers in the collection, one endorsed on the printed copy "Copy of the Brief," the other on the separate paper above mentioned.

The matter in controversy was after some time referred to arbitration, Sir Wolstan Dixie, Bart., and Dr. Wells, then rector of Cotesbach, being referees.

At length the award was made and the whole affair composed and ended; "but not (as Nichols

LUTTERWORTH CHURCH WITH SPIRE RESTORED

remarks) before the tempest of persecution had reduced the rector to a ruinous state of health, as the grief and trouble consequent on this litigation shortened the life of this industrious and exemplary divine."

Dr. Meriton died in 1710, and was buried in the north aisle of the church, his wife, who survived him but a short time, being buried by his side.

Notwithstanding the excellent testimony of the historian as to the virtue of Dr. Meriton, it is difficult to understand how far the church benefited by the national contribution expressly subscribed for its restoration. The only record we have is an item of £40 in the Churchwarden's Accounts for 1705 as payment for repairs to bells and belfry. Not until 1761 was the complete restoration taken in hand, and we then read that in this year "the church was beautified with a costly pavement of chequered stone, new pews of oak, and everything else both in church and chancel except the pulpit, which from its situation received no material injury when the roof was beat in by storm." It is the historian Nichols we are again quoting; but we think he must be including in this restoration the work ascribed to the unfortunate Dr. Meriton, who, as we have seen, was accused of expending the money obtained by public subscription upon new pews and decoration to the body of the church.

Whether the font in use in Wycliffe's time perished at the fall of the spire, or whether it was removed at the restoration which followed, is not clear: probably the former, for in 1704 we find the presentation to the church by Basil, Earl of Denbigh,

of a font consisting of a basin of Warwickshire marble on a pillar of the same, mounted on circular stone steps, the arms of the donor being engraved on a plate attached to the font. A wooden model of the lost spire formed a cover to this font until they were both superseded by the present font of Painswick stone.

It was in the year 1761 that the restoration of the tower as we see it now was completed. The cost is stated to have been £366, and the account is vouched by Thomas Billio, rector, R. Wilson, curate, and Thomas Coaton, clerk. The interior portion of the new tower is lined with brick, and is of very inferior workmanship to the ancient thirteenth-century work upon which it rests.

XX

LUTTERWORTH, 1750–1800

THOSE who are privileged to live in Lutterworth in these advanced times can scarcely realize the enormous improvement of the town and district which has taken place during the last century and a half.

The great battle of Naseby, fought within view of the tower of our church, had brought invaluable political and social advantages in its train. Nevertheless little progress seems to have been made in the opening up of the country or the development of trade during the first hundred and fifty years following that event. Much the same routine of life and labour prevailed at the commencement of the nineteenth century as existed in 1645.

One of the chief obstacles to advancement was the need of good roads. Those which extended throughout the country were of such inferior quality as to render rapid transit impossible. "Necessity," however, "is the mother of invention"; the country was ripe for improvement, and history therefore but repeats itself when it says that with the need came the inventors in the persons of Thomas Telford and John Metcalf. By the genius of these two men it is not too much to say that the trade and commerce of the whole realm was revolutionized.

Somewhere about the year 1750 Metcalf, who was a blind man, gave up his business as a carrier and devoted himself to the art of road-making. So well did he succeed that in Yorkshire, Cheshire, and in Derbyshire he constructed turnpike roads of lasting value. The fashion spread, and in 1789 we find in consequence a full service of daily coaches passing through Lutterworth.

Within the memory of residents still living the old Roman Watling Street was quite impracticable to loaded wagons during winter-time, and for that reason was studiously avoided. To-day it is the great motor route between London and Liverpool, and motor-cars are frequently to be seen dashing along its deserted reaches at paces sufficient to blanch the staid amble of legitimate speed.

In the year 1778 we have distinct evidence of advancement in our town roads, for in that year the ancient bridge which spanned the river Swift at the south entrance to the town, with its narrow opening and high walls, most likely dating back to Wycliffe's time, gave way to a new and enlarged structure erected by public subscription.

Next in importance to the construction of good roads we may place the Enclosure Act, which came into operation in 1790 and effected a great change in the appearance of the country. Our lordship was divided up into fields and planted with hedgerows as we see them to-day, and the whole district around (with the exception of one or two villages which had been enclosed at earlier dates) was at this date enclosed in like manner. Previous to the enclosure rights of pasture were often marked out by Boundary

Trees, and some of these are still standing. There is one in Misterton Park and another in Cotesbach Fields. Among the title-deeds to the land on which the present Congregational Church stands is one dated 1777, in which it is set out that the property is bounded on the western side by "the open fields of Lutterworth."

Much interesting information concerning the progress of Lutterworth is obtained from the *Universal Directory* published in London, 1793–94, to which reference has already been made. From this source we learn that in Lutterworth in 1789 there were 360 houses, which, on an average of 4½ persons to a house, gives a population of 1620. It records that—

"The Mail daily passes through here for Chester and Holyhead."

"The heavy coach passes through for Chester and Holyhead every Monday and Friday."

"A wagon from Lutterworth sets out from the 'Denbigh Arms' every Saturday morning early and arrives at the 'Windmill Inn,' St. John Street, on Tuesday morning, loads the same day and leaves London on Wednesday morning, and arrives at Lutterworth on Saturday."

In the *Directory* it is mentioned that most of the houses are "semi-fluid," that is, constructed with walls of mud and usually thatched with straw. During the last century all the dwellings on the east side of High Street, with two exceptions, were rebuilt, displacing humble structures of mud and thatch or brick and timber, two stories high and having small leaded window panes affording little opportunity for the display of merchandise in the tradesmen's shops.

The homes of the poorer people at this period were in a deplorable condition : sanitary arrangements there were none ; the floors of the lower stories were mother earth without brick or boards. A common ladder served as the only means for reaching the garrets which did duty for bedrooms above, and when in the first quarter of the nineteenth century brick and wooden floors and staircases came into common use, the people thought that at last they were really "coming to something."

The staple business of the town during the latter part of the years under review was undoubtedly innkeeping, for the streets were constantly thronged with visitors arriving by coach or being brought through in their own private carriages by posthorses hired by the stage. A large business was at one time done in the town by postmasters.

The principal inns at the commencement of the nineteenth century were the "Denbigh Arms" kept by William Mash and the "Hind" by William Smith. The "Denbigh Arms" was originally founded by one of the Earls of Denbigh, who kept much company at his seat at Newnham Paddox and, experiencing difficulty in accommodating the servants and horses of his guests, caused this house to be built for his own convenience. The first innkeeper was one who had been his lordship's butler at Newnham Paddox.

The "Hind" is of similar date, and in its day has seen equally flourishing business.

Besides these two surviving inns there was another of more ancient origin which has vanished. It, too, was situate in the High Street, opposite to the

"Hind," where now Messrs. E. Dalby & Co. have a large draper's establishment. It extended to the adjoining premises of Mr. A. Buswell, chemist, and below both of these houses there are still extensive beer and wine cellars recalling the fact that here once stood the "Black Swan Inn," as is proved by writings in Mr. Buswell's possession. To a population of about 1650 persons there were no less than twenty public-houses in Lutterworth some hundred and fifty years ago, and, as many of them still remain, it may be interesting to record their names. In addition to those we have already mentioned there were—

The "Board."	The "Angel."
,, "Fox."	,, "George."
,, "Queen's Head."	,, "Greyhound."
,, "Peacock."	,, "Stag and Pheasant."
,, "Bull."	,, "Ram."
,, "Bell."	,, "White Hart."
,, "Crown."	,, "King's Head."
,, "Lion."	,, "Wheat Sheaf."
,, "Coach and Horses."	,, "Unicorn."

Other businesses also flourished. Saddlers and harness-makers were always busy: one master saddler employed over twenty hands on the premises now occupied by Mr. J. K. Smith, and which is one of the few buildings in High Street which have been in existence more than a century.

In the year 1789 there is a record that there were seventeen teams of horses in the parish. These probably were used for purposes of agriculture and as coach-horses.

Then there were sixty worsted looms and thirty-one shoemakers. Ribbon-weaving and the weaving of linen sheeting also employed many hands in their own homes. It is stated that women working at the weaving trade could earn as much as £1 per week. The handloom has now quite disappeared.

From what we have stated above as to the insanitary state of the town, especially the homes of the poorer classes, it will surprise no one to learn that there were times when the health of the town was deplorable. High Street was paved with large boulders, and on either side of the street was an open ditch into which the occupiers of the houses were accustomed to cast whatever they no longer desired to retain within, trusting to the good offices of a scavenging dog or a heavy shower of rain to remove it. Between the years 1750 and 1778 Lutterworth was afflicted with visitations of smallpox and putrid fever which carried off many of its inhabitants.

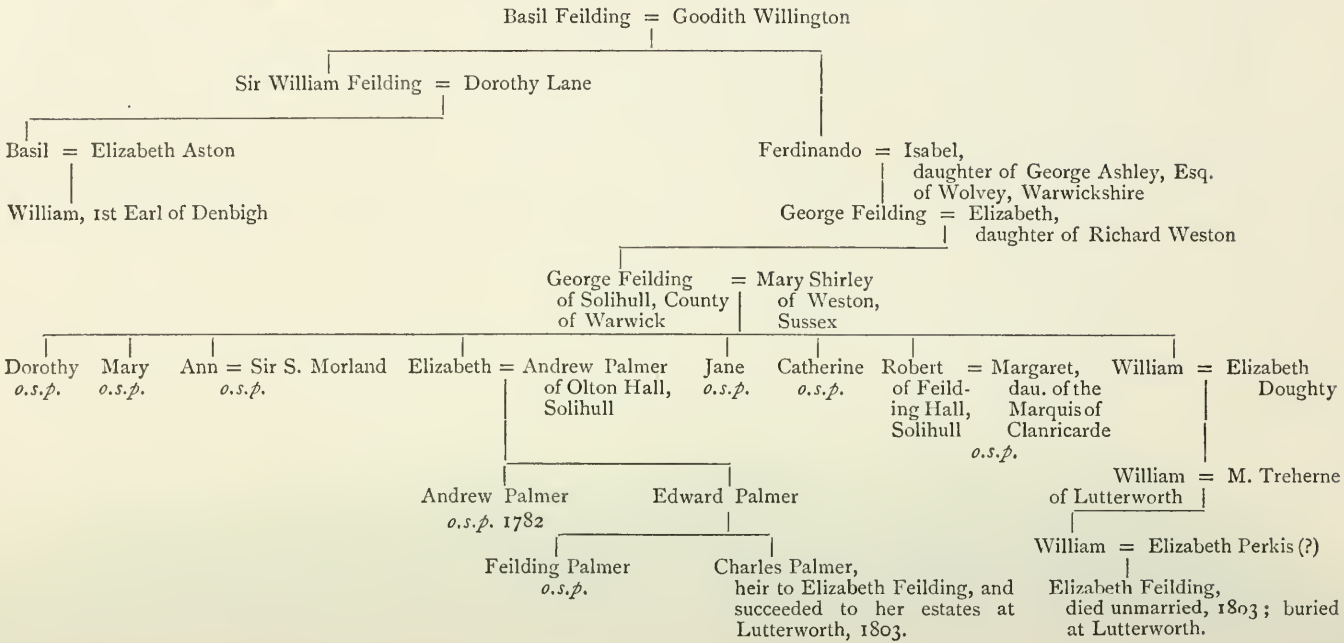
On the farms, however, prosperity was greatly in evidence. The growing of corn and rearing of cattle, horses, and sheep were exceedingly remunerative, and in consequence the demand for labour was great. Men and women and even quite young children were engaged in husbandry.

The common wage of an agricultural labourer a hundred years ago was a shilling a day, with hours timing from Vesper's bell to Curfew, *i.e.* from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in winter and from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. in summer. The offspring of the agricultural labourer had no time or opportunity for even the most elementary education, but the children of tradesmen were better provided for in that they had the old

Foundation School of Edward Sherrier and also certain benefits under Poole's Charity. The children of the very poor were allowed to grow up in the most gross ignorance.

It was to cope in some measure with this national disgrace that Sunday schools were first established. In Lutterworth the credit for their introduction is due to the Rev. Richard Wilson, who was headmaster of Sherrier's School and curate of Lutterworth from 1754 to 1794.

Pedigree of the Feilding-Palmers



XXI

THE LAST OF THE RESIDENT FEILDINGS

AFTER the senior branch of the Feildings had left Lutterworth and become established at Newnham Paddox the junior branch continued to reside in the town, and one at least of their old houses is still standing and was, until comparatively recent times, still spoken of as the "Manor House." Here, as far back as 1780, when Throsby visited the town, lived a Miss Feilding, whom the historian describes as one of the principal landed proprietors of the place.

This lady, whom the old townspeople used to speak of as "Lady Feilding," lived to an advanced age, and there is a sad story told of her death. Miss Feilding was accustomed to pay frequent visits to her relations at Newnham Paddox, and on one occasion, when being driven there by a man named Mash, who was at the time landlord of the "Denbigh Arms," her carriage was overturned and the shock of the accident proved fatal.

On her death in 1803 her property passed to her heir-at-law, Mr. Charles Palmer, who died about 1820. One of his sons, also named Charles, was a lieutenant in the navy, who went on an early

Arctic expedition. Another son, Edward, married and had a son named Feilding, who took Holy Orders and died on the 16th April 1897. His widow, in the year 1900, built the Cottage Hospital at Lutterworth on ground which she gave for the purpose in memory of her late husband. The name of Palmer appears in the history of Lutterworth from very early days. In the reign of Richard III Richard Palmer, Gent., gave land at Sapcote for the benefit of the town. Again, in an old deed preserved in Leicester Museum relating to Lutterworth Charities, and dated 1712, the names of Richard Palmer, Knight, and Edward Palmer, Knight, appear as trustees of Lutterworth Charities in the seventeenth century. Of the Manor House situate in the Old Cattle Market there is still a little more to relate. When this house was first converted into a private residence is not clear. At one time it was occupied as an inn known as the "George Inn." After Miss Feilding's death it became vacant, acquired the reputation of being haunted, and gradually fell into a ruinous condition. The windows were all broken with the exception of those belonging to one room on the top floor, where an old man, a pedlar, was permitted to live without rent or acknowledgment.

When things were in this state Mr. Edward Palmer (father of the Rev. Feilding Palmer) visited Lutterworth with a view to residing in the old home; but he found the house so decayed that he decided to build a new one for himself, and erected the high red-brick house standing on the Market Street almost opposite the "Ram Inn." The old Manor

House subsequently became the property of a solicitor living in Lutterworth named Stephen Mash, who, on taking possession, restored it to its present condition. The original oak staircase and fireplace in the entrance hall bearing the double-headed eagle were carefully preserved.

This house is now known as "The Elms," its past history having been more or less lost sight of. In recent times it has changed hands more than once.

XXII

THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH AND DISCOVERY OF GLASS VIAL, 1865–70

IN the winter of 1865 the roof of the nave became so unsafe that it was found necessary to close the church. Upon examination it was discovered that the unscientific manner in which galleries had been inserted had thrust the walls from the perpendicular, and pillars and arches had been injured.

As a result a Restoration Committee was formed, and the services of the great architect, Sir Gilbert Scott (then Mr. Scott), were engaged. He drew up an exhaustive report and approximately fixed the cost of restoration at £7000.

Armed with this report, the committee set to work, and a subscription list was started headed by the aged rector, the Rev. R. H. Johnson, with the munificent sum of a thousand guineas. The remainder of the money was secured and the work taken in hand, Divine Services in the meantime being conducted in the Town Hall.

In the chancel the windows were all restored; the north wall, which had inclined outward, was made straight; on the south side an ancient window which

had been blocked up was discovered and opened; and on the north side an aisle was added for the organ as well as a vestry. The roof was entirely renewed.

In the nave it was found practicable to repair thoroughly the handsome roof; every beam was removed, repaired, and restored to its original place. The lead was recast and the stonework overhauled, every pillar being placed on a more solid foundation of brick and concrete. The tower arch, formerly blocked up by the organ gallery, was exposed to view in all its original strength and beauty.

The north aisle, which had been in a scarcely less defective condition than the chancel, was restored, and the wall, which had acquired a considerable outward inclination, was straightened and made secure upon a concrete foundation.

As we have seen, frescoes of great archæological interest were disclosed during this restoration, and it may not be out of place to mention here the discovery of a small glass vial which has been described by Archdeacon Pownall. As the paper in which the discovery is reported deals also with a similar vial found at South Kilworth, and the conclusions arrived at by the learned author are based upon the double find, it is necessary to include the Kilworth glass here. The Archdeacon says: "In the autumn of the year 1868, whilst the church at South Kilworth was being restored, there was found among the foundations of the east wall of the chancel a little 'vial' of glass about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. From the account given by the young labourer who found it, the vial seems to have been lying, bottom upwards, among the stones and earthy rubbish of the

foundations, not less than from 3 to 4 feet below the then existing surface. In shape the glass tapers gradually, as a horn does, from its flattened base, where its diameter is $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches towards the point where a short neck begins (unfortunately much broken), at which point its diameter does not exceed an inch. It cannot be affirmed that its mouth had held a stopper, for the broken lip stays assertion; nor can it be determined what may have been its contents, for all that was made out was a film of some substance lining the bottom which has never been analysed, and which only presented to the eye the appearance of the dried sediment of some fluid. The dull surface of the glass exhibits some irridescent colouring from partial disintegration of its substance. In the following spring this glass vessel was exhibited at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, and a description of it, together with a short account of the circumstances under which it was found, appeared in the Society's *Proceedings* (2nd Ser., vol. iv. p. 284). Various conjectures were offered at the time as to the probable use of the vessel and the causes which may have led to its being deposited in the foundations of a fourteenth-century chancel. None, however, appeared to have much weight or to be capable of proof, and two Fellows of the Society, whose opinions would have been listened to with reference everywhere, Mr. Albert Wray and Mr. Augustus Franks, candidly confessed their inability to express any decided opinion on the subject.

For the moment, therefore, the whole question dropped, and in the entire absence of mediæval English glass in utensil form—glass vessels which

with certainty can be assigned to the Middle Age—a reluctance to express any decided opinion was not unreasonable. That glass vessels were in use then for church purposes was perfectly well known through the inventories of church goods which are in our hands; nay, it is not outside the bounds of probability to suppose that such vessels have come down to our times and are existing at the moment unrecognized, as regards their true character, in modern collections, but no antiquary has been able to lay his hand on any particular piece and say: "This is glass of the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth century."

The earliest English glass (excluding, of course, from the remark, church-window glass) to which a date can be assigned lies in the Jermyn Street Museum, and goes no further back than Charles the Second's time, and the earliest English glass in the form of a utensil dates only from the time of the Georges.

This fact invested with some interest, if not importance, the object discovered at South Kilworth if it could with safety be regarded as mediæval, because it appears before us as a unique specimen of ancient English vitreous ware. Further discovery of the same kind has since confirmed the goodness of conjectures which were then so cautiously advanced, for it appeared that during the restoration of the Parish Church at Lutterworth, 1867–69, two vials of similar description had been found. My first attempt to obtain particulars and to see them was unsuccessful. Two had certainly been found, but they had been lying so long unnoticed in a chest or cupboard in the vestry while the work was going on that they were not at first forthcoming; and indeed one only have

I succeeded in recovering. I have the pleasure now of exhibiting it [the paper from which we are quoting was read by the Archdeacon before the Architectural Societies of Leicester and Northampton], together with that found at South Kilworth.

On comparing the two it will be seen that they are alike in shape and size, except a very trifling difference of form at the base, and that the one found at Lutterworth is happily quite perfect. The two "vials" evidently belong to the same period and the same manufacture.

After obtaining the possession of the glass No. 2, I wrote to Mr. E. M. Morgan, who at the time of the restoration of Lutterworth Church was employed as Clerk of the Works, and from him I had the satisfaction of receiving the following letter :—

"BANGOR CATHEDRAL, 14*th February*.

"REV. SIR,—I received a note yesterday from Mr. Tomlinson desiring me to describe to you the position in which we found a very antique bottle containing the oil of organium (or described to be the oil of organium by Mr. Gulliver, chemist, at Lutterworth). The bottle was found in the foundation of the west wall of the north aisle of Lutterworth Church. The foundations were composed of stone and earth, instead of mortar, and the bottle was *nearly at the outside*, as in rough sketch.—I am, etc.,

"E. M. MORGAN."

Concerning the discovery of these two Lutterworth vials little more need be said; the one before us no longer contains any oil, but the scent of oil was very perceptible when it first came into my

possession. The one which, unfortunately, is missing appears from the description I have received to have been rather globular in form, but in other respects to have resembled its companion.

It remains for us to inquire whether anything can be determined as to the use of these glass vials in ancient times which may stand on a firmer footing than conjecture. The inquiry which I have entered into myself leads me to dismiss altogether that they contained one of the sacred oils of the church in pre-Reformation days.

After referring at some length to the oils which are said to exude from the bones of saints and their supposed virtues, Archdeacon Pownall points out that "the custom of preserving the alleged oil of saints has approached so near our own day that until the period of the French Revolution the treasuries of Cologne, Douay, and Tournay contained each a vial of St. Catherine's oil. Here, then, we have distinct proof of the use of glass vials and of the special purpose to which they were put." Archdeacon Pownall then points out that we have mention of particular saints whose remains were imagined to give out a sacred oil, and among them we find the names of St. Mary and St. Nicholas. "When, therefore," he proceeds, "I am able to add that the dedication of the church at S. Kilworth was to one of the two, and that of Lutterworth Church to the other, a link worth welding has been attached to our chain of evidence. Have not we ground for supposing that the purpose to which these vials were devoted in former days is by these indicated? But another question remains for consideration. Dis-

covered in the foundations of the church, are we to suppose they were placed there at the time those foundations were laid or at some period subsequently? The custom which exists now of placing glass vessels containing coin and records under the corner-stone of a new building as a form of dedication, and for the purpose of dating it, might suggest the idea that the vials in question once served a similar purpose in the fourteenth century, but it is an idea which cannot stand unsupported by testimony; and it has none. True, a kindred practice prevailed, but we have a distinct knowledge as to a difference regarding one important particular. These vials were found, one at the west end of the north aisle, the other among the rubble stone-work of the east chancel wall. Now, whenever at the dedication of a church in ancient times the consecrated wafer or the relics of the saint were deposited, they were invariably deposited *beneath the altar*. More than this, the exact situation of the Lutterworth vial has been pointed out by Mr. Morgan's letter, and that position was *nearly outside the building*—a position not likely to have been chosen unless the deposit had been made quickly and with secrecy, as in this case I conceive it to have been.

This fact, taken in connexion with what has been advanced before, inclines me to believe that it was in a period subsequent to the foundation of the structure that we must look for the date of these deposits.

In the days when many things, holy in the estimation of pious souls, were being shamefully desecrated, when "the chrismatory, the pax with the

graile" were defaced and made away; when the rood loft was taken down and put to profane use; when the very altar stones defaced were "laid in high wais, serving as bridges for sheepe and cattal"; when the cross itself was taken down to be "sold to a tinker" (Peacock's *Church Furniture*), "then unquestionably were some men's minds revolting from acts horridly sacrilegious in their eyes and under a desire to save from similar desecration a long-prized relic of the parish church, can I conceive those men to have acted who placed these two vials some feet below the ground. The stowing of one probably led to a like concealment of the other, for the two churches are not wide apart where they lay hid, and, being stowed away there, it was hoped they would lie safe under the soil until Protestant zeal relaxed and ancient sympathies revived. So at least I think the hiders of them thought."

We have dealt with these vials at such length on account of the extreme antiquarian interest attaching to their discovery, and also on account of the eminence of the author from whom we have borrowed the above description.

On Wednesday, the 9th June 1869, the church was reopened for public service.

The town was gay with flags, and a triumphal arch with suitable devices was erected at the entrance to High Street. The service commenced with the administration of Holy Communion at 8.30. At 10.30 there was morning prayer, with a sermon by the Rev. D. Wilkinson, Rector of Birmingham. At 1.30 there was a public luncheon in a tent in the rectory grounds, to which about two hundred and

fifty sat down. Among the company were Col. the Hon. Percy Feilding, who presided, the Bishop of the Diocese, the Rector of Lutterworth, Archdeacon Fearon, and others. Evening service was held at 3.30, the Bishop preaching on this occasion to an overflowing congregation. Over seventy clergy walked with the Bishop, and the collections at this service amounted to more than £200.

The day closed with a public tea, the singing of glees by the choir, and performances by the Rifle Corps Band.

Before closing this section we would like to add that the total cost of restoration came out at about £7500. The debt was extinguished within five years of commencement of the work.

The contract was entrusted to Messrs. Law & King of Lutterworth, who were noted church builders, and the majority of skilled workmen employed were natives of the town.

The Windows

Lancet Window in Chancel.—To the memory of the Rev. Richard Wilson, A.M., who was for many years head master of the Sherrier's School and Curate of Lutterworth. The subject is St. John, in allusion to the name by which he was affectionately known by his friends, and is the work of Messrs. Burlison & Grylls of London. It was erected by his granddaughter, Mrs. John Goodacre of Lutterworth House, and Miss Healy of Lutterworth.

Watts' Window, on the south side of the chancel, to the memory of Mr. Charles Watts of Lutterworth,

who died at Dresden, Staffordshire, 17th March 1867, aged sixty-seven years.

Mr. Watts left a sum of money by his will for the purpose of inserting a stained-glass window in the churches of Lutterworth, where he was born, and Dresden, where he died. The subject of the window in Lutterworth Church is the Three Maries in the main lights, and the Annunciation in the tracery.

This window was also executed by Messrs. Burlison & Grylls.

The East Window was presented by the Rev. Feilding Palmer, and was uncovered on Easter Sunday 1885.

The window, which is the work of Messrs. Clayton & Bell, represents in the five lower lights the figures of S. Mary the Virgin and four doctors of the Church, namely, the Venerable Bede, St. Augustine, Robert Grosseteste, and John Wycliffe. Below are the arms of Mr. Feilding Palmer and the inscription, "To the glory of God and in memory of Edward Feilding Palmer who died 15th Feb. 1869 and Sarah his wife who died 11th Oct. 1841."

The middle compartments contain: the Baptism, and under it, in Old English letters, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"; the Ascension, and under it, "I do it to prepare a place for you"; our Saviour in majesty giving the benediction, and under it, "Thou art the King of Glory"; the Crucifixion, and under it, "Behold the Lamb of God"; the Last Supper, and under it, "This do in remembrance of me." The upper divisions contain figures of four archangels, S. Raphael, S.

Gabriel, S. Michael, and S. Uriel. Above these are placed the Agnus Dei, with two small angels on either side.

The small window over the east window containing the sacred monogram was given by Mr. William Footman of Lutterworth in 1883.

The Lancet Window in the Tower, with subject, "Moses with the Tables of Stone," was presented by Mr. J. Hawke.

The Window in the East End of the South Aisle, to the memory of the late Mr. T. Evans of Lutterworth, is the work of Messrs. Burlison & Grylls. In the tracery are female figures, seated on thrones, representing various virtues—Faith, Hope, Charity, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice. The main lights show the parable of the Good Samaritan, and below these the passage St. Matthew xxv. 35–36 is depicted, wherein those who have been engaged in acts of humanity and charity during their lifetime are spoken of in the Last Day as having done these acts unto Christ Himself. "I was an hungred and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me."

The Canon Alderson Memorial Window.—The treatment of this three-light window in the south aisle is very simple, the artist having followed the style generally adopted in the fifteenth century when stained glass was at its zenith. In the centre is a figure of S. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin, who is shown as a child standing at her mother's side, holding a scroll on which is written the prophetic

words, "Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold thy king cometh." On either side, beneath architectural canopies, are figures of S. Peter and S. Paul. S. Peter is shown holding a book on which is written, "Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The keys are also shown. S. Paul in the third light is depicted holding the sword of martyrdom and a closed book. Below these standing figures are three small pictures as follows: "The Annunciation," "The Nativity," and the "Presentation in the Temple."

At the base of the window is the inscription, "Giving thanks to God for the life and work of Frederick Cecil Alderson Rector of Lutterworth 1894–1907 and Canon of Peterborough 1890–1907 who died 3rd December 1907 this window is dedicated by his parishioners and friends."

The beautiful tracery at the head of the window has suggested to the artist the idea of a tree, on the boughs of which are seen the following nine saints: S. Anselm, Bede, the four Latin Fathers, S. Aidan, S. Hilda, and at the top S. Guthlax, in reference to the fact that Canon Alderson was Rural Dean of Guthlaxton II. The trunk of the tree rises from the canopy of the central light, two kneeling angels holding a scroll bearing the words, *Arbor Ecclesiæ*.

Law Window in South Aisle.—The subject of this window is Faith and Charity, and the inscription reads, "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of George Law of this Town, died 5 May 1870. Also Frances Taylor his wife died 23 December 1863. This window was dedicated by their grandson, Arthur Law of Rugby, 1880."

The window is the work of Messrs. T. Holt & Co., Midland Stained Glass Works, Warwick.

Memorial Window to the Rev. T. H. Tarlton, M.A., who was Rector of Lutterworth from 1879 to 1888. This window, having for its subject the Sermon on the Mount, was placed in the chancel by parishioners and friends.

The Bells

There is an old tradition that a fine peal of bells was bodily carried away from Lutterworth Church by the monks of Monks Kirby, five miles away, but like many another tradition there is nothing to corroborate it.

At the present time the church possesses a sanctus bell, believed to be of the thirteenth century, and the oldest bell in Leicestershire.

Of the old peal of six the earliest are Nos. 5 and 6, dated 1640, the date of the outbreak of the Civil War. The date of No. 4 is significant. It was cast in the year 1705, and would seem to point to the fact that it replaced a bell destroyed when the spire was blown down two years earlier.

The bells were rehung and the peal of eight completed through the generosity of Mr. T. F. Blackwell of London in 1894, and were dedicated and first rung in the January of the following year. The work was entrusted to the well-known firm of Taylor of Loughborough, and to-day the peal is noted both for its tone and for the ease with which its bells are handled.

We give the following inscriptions on the bells as recorded in Bottrill's *Guide to Lutterworth* :—

No. 1.— GLORIA DEO SOLI.
F. C. ALDERSON : RECTOR :
W. FOOTMAN AND J. H. WATSON : CHURCHWARDENS :
J. F. BLACKWELL : GAVE ME :
J. TAYLOR : MADE ME : 1894

No. 2.— LAUS TIBI DOMINE
F. C. ALDERSON : RECTOR :
W. FOOTMAN AND J. H. WATSON : CHURCHWARDENS :
J. F. BLACKWELL : GAVE ME :
J. TAYLOR : MADE ME : 1894

No. 3.— J. BRIANT HERTFORD FECIT 1814

No. 4.— HENRY : MERTON : RECTOR :
ALEXANDER : RIGBY : MADE : ME : 1705
THOMAS : ILIFFE : AND : IOHN : WRIGHT :
CHVRCH : WARDENS :

No. 5.— MLKIIIG FEDCBA XWVT SRQPON MLKIIIG 1640

No. 6.— FEDCBA MLKIIIG SRQPON XWVT FEDCBA 1640

No. 7.— T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1828

No. 8.— THE HON^BLE AND REV^ND HENRY RYDER
RECTOR : W. MASH AND J. TILLY C : W
JOHN BRIANT HERTFORD FECIT 1812

The Fonts

There is little doubt but that the font having any claims to be called "Wycliffe's Font" was destroyed in the fall of the spire.

In 1704 a font of Warwickshire marble was given by Basil, Earl of Denbigh, and this font continued to do duty until after the restoration by Sir Gilbert Scott, whose description of it as surpassing in absurdity anything he had ever met with led to it being superseded by the present font in 1891.

After its removal the Denbigh font was for some

years used as a flower-stand in a garden at Lutterworth. It was in this position that it was seen by Mr. Savory, who at the time was in charge of the parish, and was by him secured and carried away when he left Lutterworth.

The present font was the gift of members of the Goodacre family. It is of Painswick stone and was designed by the son of Sir Gilbert Scott, who succeeded his father as architect to the church.

The so-called "font," formerly preserved in Leicester Museum and described as "Wycliffe's Font," and which has recently been restored to the church, is now thought to be an ancient corn measure.

The Organs

Up to the commencement of the nineteenth century the church was unprovided with an organ, a small band of instruments providing what music there was.

The first organ which the church acquired was a second-hand instrument purchased from Earl Shilton, and was originally a barrel-organ playing set pieces of music. This throws a side-light upon the musical culture of the period, those who could play an organ by any other means than by turning a handle being scarce and far between. But as the art of music became more general, an organist was at length forthcoming in the person of one Phillips, and the organ was thereupon subjected to reconstruction and came out a manual, and in this new guise did service until the year 1886. The organ was originally placed in the gallery at the west end

of the church, but upon the restoration in 1870 it was rebuilt and placed in the extended east end of the north aisle.

This organ was always, however, too small for the requirements of so large a church, and was therefore sold to the neighbouring church of Misterton, from which it was removed a few years later to Swinford, where it still remains, with every prospect of a lengthy tenure of office.

The present organ—the outcome of a long-felt want—was obtained with funds raised by public subscription in the year 1886. It cost £750, exclusive of the organ screen, the origin of which has been already traced. The town is mainly indebted to the exertions of the Rev. T. H. Tarlton, the then rector, and Mr. M. C. Buszard, K.C. (the present Recorder of Leicester), for a really fine instrument. It was built by M. Gern, a French organ-builder of great repute, and Lutterworth, for a short period during its erection, had the uncommon experience of a small band of foreign workmen quartered in its midst. In its construction it departs in several particulars from the ordinary English school of voicing. The best-known devices of both French and German makers have been employed, while the richness and full cathedral tone of the English diapasons have been preserved. The action throughout is tubular-pneumatic of an improved form invented by M. Gern, which dispenses with the more complicated system of *tracker* action, and admits of the console being placed in a position from which the organist can overlook and hear his choir with advantage. The organ has 1326 pipes.

At the opening service the sermon was preached by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and a recital was given by Mr. Stimpson, the organist of the Birmingham Town Hall. The offertory on this occasion amounted to nearly £25.

The Church Plate

The following is Archdeacon Bonney's description of the plate belonging to Lutterworth Church in the year 1832 :—

"Two silver cups, gilt, one of them with this inscription, 'The gift of Gabriell Abbott of Lutterworth,' the other old and handsome, with an ancient border. Two patens, one inscribed 'Poculum salutis,' the other small and gilt. A silver plate. A silver spoon. A pewter basin. Five pewter plates."

The silver plate and spoon still remain, also the five pewter plates. Both the old silver gilt cups (the older one probably Elizabethan) and the patens were given to Mrs. Wave as a contribution towards the present two silver cups, paten, and flagon given by her in 1840. The silversmith who took the ancient pieces either melted them down or sold them as antiques.

The Lectern

The solid brass lectern, an eagle with outstretched wings standing upon an orb, was presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. Topham of Lutterworth House. Upon the base, which is supported by three lions sejant guardant, is the inscription, "Ad

gloriam Dei. Presented to St. Mary's Church Lutterworth by Lupton and Joan Topham A.D. 1895." The lectern was specially cast by Messrs. Barkentin & Krall of Regent Street, London, and was dedicated and first used on Advent Sunday, 1895.

The Reredos

This was designed by the late Mr. Bassett-Smith, and is executed in marble and mosaic. It was the gift of Mr. Blackwell of London in the year 1897.

The Alderson Chair

The massive oak chair which now stands in the chancel was purchased with a sum of £50, being balance in hand from the fund subscribed for the memorial window to Canon Alderson. The chair was designed by Mr. Pick, and the carving was executed by the Leicester School of Art.

The Monuments

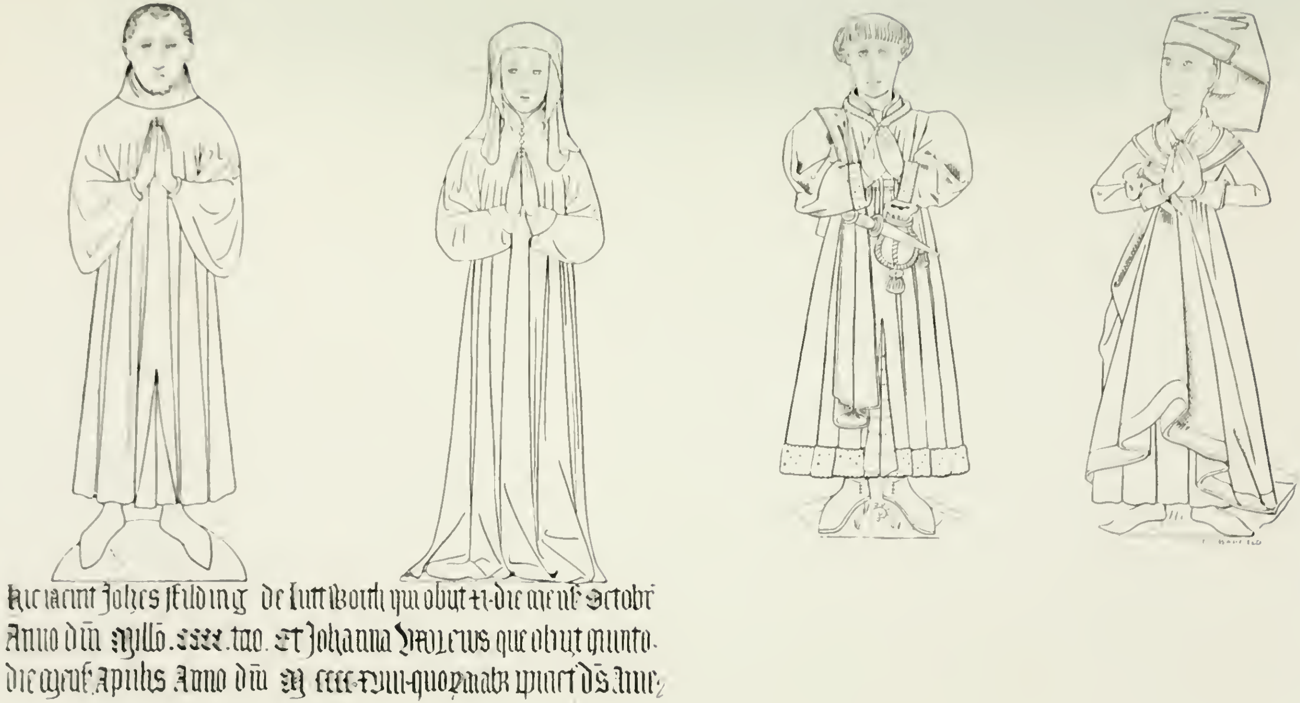
Lutterworth Church is not rich in monuments, but it nevertheless contains several of considerable archæological interest.

And first the handsome alabaster monument in the north aisle claims attention. Within a recess formed by a late fifteenth-century arch are the recumbent figures of a gentleman and his wife. The male figure is clad in armour, but covered with a mantle, and from the short hair and pointed toes would appear to represent a gentleman, possibly of

knightly rank, of the first half of the fifteenth century. Nichols assigns this tomb to William Feilding and Joan Prudhomme, but upon what authority is uncertain, and as this couple belonged to the fourteenth century the probabilities are against the correctness of the attribution. Unfortunately the shields with which the tomb is adorned have been defaced, and there is no longer any means of deciding definitely whom the monument represents. By the kindness of the Rev. R. M. B. Bryant of South Kilworth we are enabled to give an excellent illustration of this tomb.

Next in interest are a pair of brasses on the floor also in the north aisle. The male figure represents a man in civilian dress of about the year 1418, the lady's costume being of some few years later. Beneath the figures is an inscription recording that this is the burial-place of John Feilding of Lutterworth and Joanna, his wife, but the value of this inscription is somewhat diminished when we learn that the inscription is not contemporaneous, but the work of the Rev. Feilding Palmer, and was placed there within the last half-century. Mr. Palmer took the inscription from one recorded by Nichols, in whose day the original brass was apparently still in position.

On the south side of the church, beneath the reading-desk, will be found another pair of brasses, the lady wearing the characteristic "Butterfly" headdress of the time of Richard III. The male figure is that of a civilian wearing the anelace and gipciere, and may be assigned to about the year 1480. There is unfortunately nothing to throw any light upon whom these brasses represent, and it can only be conjectured



BRASSES IN LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

that they too represent members of the influential Feilding family.

There is a curious history attaching to these last two brasses. On the night of Sunday, 28th August 1854, they were stolen from the church. A hue and cry, however, resulted in the capture of the thief, but the brasses themselves had been broken to pieces. Thanks to the exertions of Supt. Deakins and his police, every piece was recovered, some being found at Atherstone, others at Nuneaton, Bedworth, Hinckley, and on the road near High Cross.

In the east wall of the south aisle is a marble tablet inserted by national subscription through the exertion of the Rev. John Hampden Gurney to the memory of John Wycliffe. The work is by R. Westmacott, jun. It was erected at a cost of £500 in 1837.

The only military tablet in the church is one to Lieut. Francis Burgess, to whom reference is made in the next section. He died on the 29th June 1825 in the thirtieth year of his age.

There is one tablet on the south wall which possesses some artistic merit. The inscription reads: "In memory of Ann, the wife of Mr. Richard Bridell, who departed this life the 8th day of February 1725 in the 35th year of her age. Also of Elizabeth their daughter who died y^e^ 11th of Aug^t^. 1719. Aged 8 weeks and four dayes." Two cherubs surmount the shield bearing the above inscription, while above them is an urn from which issues a gilt flame. Below the shield is a skull and cross-bones. The back of the skull rests upon a bat's or devil's wing, while the front rests upon a dove's—a pretty symbolism.

A tablet to the Rev. C. Powell, bearing a Latin

inscription, intimates that he was for twenty-four years "Master of the Games" in Lutterworth; but the reference is obscure. On the wall of the north aisle is a stone to the memory of the Rev. Henry Meriton and his wife. This was the rector whose life was believed to have been shortened by worry over the disposition of the funds collected for the restoration after the destruction of the spire. He died on the 9th February 1710, and his wife on the 15th November following.

Over the pulpit is a tablet to the memory of the Hon. and Rt. Rev. Henry Ryder, D.D., Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, who was rector of Lutterworth from 1801 to 1814.

And lastly we may mention the brass memorial tablet to the late Canon Alderson. It was designed by an artist named Gardner, and is a beautiful and artistic piece of metal-work of the Italian School. There is a facsimile of this tablet in Peterborough Cathedral, where Canon Alderson is buried.

LIST OF RECTORS

Rectors	Patrons
Magister Simon Capellanus, 1221 . .	Nicholas de Verdun.
[1] Philip Lovell, 1231–59	
Frater Hugo, 1262	John de Verdun.
Godfridus, 1274	Theobald de Verdun.
Henry Drax, 1287	
. . . 3 non. Aprillis, 1305 . . .	

[1] In the Calendar of Entries in the *Papal Registers*, vol. i. p. 364, 7 Kal., Feb. A.D. 1259, is a Confirmation to Philip Luvel, Papal Chaplain, of his Canonry of London, the Churches of Lutterwrc and Le, in the diocese of Lincoln, and all his other benefices with and without care of souls, which he has received with and without papal dispensation, supplying any defect there may have been in his

. . . 12 kal. Junnii, 1318 . . .	Sir Roger D'Amory, knt. *per dimissionem* Bertrami de Verdun.
John Wickliffe, 1374; died Dec. 31, 1384 .	King Edward III in the minority of Sir Henry de Ferrers lord of Groby.
John de Morhous, 8 kal., Feb., 1384–85 .	Sir Henry de Ferrers lord of Groby.
Robert Ashehurst; died 1420 . . .	
Gilbert Kymere, M.D., M.A., and LL.B., Dec. 16, 1420; resigned 1422. . .	Sir Wm. de Ferrers lord of Groby.
William Brook, 1422; exchanged with William Gissard, 1431	
Thomas Beale, 1589	Queen Elizabeth.
Nathaniel Tovey, M.A., 163–; ejected 1647 .	King Charles I.
John Moore, 1647	Parliamentary Sequestrators.
John St. Nicholas, about 1657; ejected 1662	
Samuel Bold, July 18, 1667; buried Sept. 11, 1677	King Charles II.
Thomas Pittis, D.D., Jan. 17, 1677–78; resigned 1678	
Robert Clarke, M.A., Nov., 1678 . .	
Francis Meres, M.A., inducted Nov. 19, 1678; died 1682–83	
Henry Meriton, Feb. 19, 1682–83; died 1710	
George Anderson, M.A., Feb. 21, 1710–11; died 1745.	Queen Anne.

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receiving and retaining the same and granting him whatever dispensation may be necessary to hold them.

Philip Lovel, Rector of Lutterworth, 1231–59, was Lord of the Manor of Snotescombe, Co. Northampton, etc., Canon of St. Paul's, Guardian of the Jews, and Treasurer of England. Like every one else in the times in which he lived, he enriched himself at the expense of the King and others, but committed the unpardonable error of "being found out." His property was confiscated, and he died of grief at his Rectory of Hanslope in Buckinghamshire. He was a kinsman of Roger de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, and, as such, appointed steward of his estates in Galloway, in which capacity he became an intimate friend of the King of Scotland and his young son, who married the daughter of Henry III. We are indebted for the above note on Philip Lovel to Mr. George Lovel Harrison, the well-known authority on the Lovel pedigree.

Thomas Billio, LL.B., Sept. 4, 1745 . .	King George II.
David Meyrick, Aug. 27, 1782 . . .	King George III.
[1] Hon. Henry Ryder, D.D., inducted Aug. 29, 1801	
Johnson, Rev. R. H., M.A., 1816 . .	
Wilkinson, Rev. W. F., M.A., 1870 . .	Queen Victoria.
Tarlton, Rev. T. H., M.A., 1879–88 . .	
Stokoe, Rev. T. H., D.D., 1889–93 . .	
Alderson, Rev. Canon, 1893–1907 . .	
Alderson, Rev. M. F., M.A., 1908 . .	King Edward VII.

[1] The Hon. Henry Ryder, D.D., who was rector of Lutterworth from 1801 to 1814, was the youngest son of Lord Harrowby. He was promoted to the see of Lichfield and Coventry. There is a tablet to his memory, as we have seen, over the pulpit in the church ; but in spite of the Christian virtues there ascribed to him, he is remembered as a man of somewhat pompous bearing, or rather of that assumed meekness which gives the impression of a conscious superiority. In this connexion an amusing incident is recorded of him. Prior to his departure from Lutterworth he went to pay a farewell visit to an old parishioner, then an inmate of the almshouses at Ashby Parva. The old woman was deploring his departure, but was met with the assurance that the bishop-designate was the recipient of a divine call which he had no alternative but to accept. "Well, sir," was the ingenuous retort, "if the Lord had called you to Little Ashby, I reckon you would have been a long time a-hearing Him ! "

Although not a rector of Lutterworth, we may add at the end of these notes that it was during his curacy of Lutterworth that the Rev. Hampden Gurney composed that well-known hymn, "We saw Thee not when Thou didst come to this poor world of sin and death."

XXIII

NOTABLE LUTTERWORTH FAMILIES

LIKE many another place, Lutterworth is rich in the record of families who, though perhaps never attaining to great wealth or influence, have remained on the spot for generations.

The earliest parish registers, which date back to 1653, disclose names still familiar to us. In point of antiquity, perhaps the Bakers take precedence. The name of Thomas Baker appears as witness to a conveyance of property in High Street as far back as 1314, and again in the reign of Richard II we find Jane, the wife of Thomas Baker, granting lands to William Filding (Feilding), Esq. The name of this family appears in the parish registers from their commencement, and in 1683 we find them amongst the founders of the Congregational Church. Mr. Thomas Baker is the present representative.

The Hudsons, too, have a most interesting connexion with the town extending over three hundred years. The earliest dated tombstone in the churchyard is to the memory of John Hudson, in 1628. The last member of the family passed away in 1910 in the person of Miss Hudson, who died at Leamington. A peculiar interest attaches to this family in the fact that for generations they held

(under the lord of the Manor) the sole right to sell corn and bread to the inhabitants of Lutterworth. The street or lane in which they resided, now known as Baker Street, was formerly called Bakehouse Lane because it was the place of the bakehouse, and there is a record in existence that in the reign of Charles II this family was supplying corn and flour to the Earl of Denbigh. To this family belonged the Mr. Thomas Hudson who, in the year 1859, presented what has long been described as the "Wycliffe Font" to the Leicester Museum. This is a singular fact in the light of the present antiquarian assertion that the so-called font is in reality an ancient corn measure.

From the family of Hudson we may turn to that of Cameron, the first member of which, a certain John Cameron, came to Lutterworth from Scotland in 1745. He died in 1793 at the advanced age of ninety-one years. His descendants still reside in the town and hold the belief that their ancestor was present at the siege of Carlisle. What may be corroboration of this has recently come to light in the discovery, during the construction of Lutterworth Railway Station, of a medal commemorating this siege dated 1745. In olden times the site of the station was Allotment Gardens, known as "Orange Hill," and it is possible that the medal may have belonged to the old soldier who lost it while working upon his allotment here. The medal has been sent to the Royal United Service Institution Museum, Whitehall, London.

We have already had occasion to mention the Rev. Richard Wilson. He was a member of an old

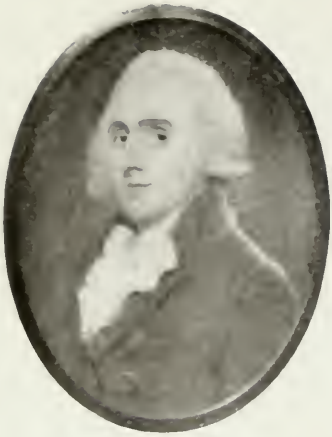
THE REV. RICHARD WILSON, A.M.

DOROTHY COLESON, WIFE OF THE REV. RICHARD WILSON

and well-known Westmoreland family, and in addition to being master of Sherrier's School and curate of Lutterworth was rector of Desford. He was a man of great piety and goodness, and was known as "the St. John" of his time—an incident commemorated in the small stained-glass window to his memory in the chancel of the church.

One of Mr. Wilson's daughters married Mr. Francis Burges, the representative of a very old Leicestershire family who were flourishing at Melton-Mowbray as far back as the reign of Richard II. This gentleman, who was son of Mr. Francis Burges of Atherstone, practised as an attorney in Lutterworth. He resided at the house in Church Street adjoining that now occupied by the Misses Buszard —one of the few houses in Lutterworth presenting any architectural features worthy of preservation. He had two children, a son and a daughter. The son, likewise named Francis, became a lieutenant in the 83rd Regiment and served in the Peninsular War under Wellington, but was wounded in an engagement prior to Waterloo. The surgery of those days was not what it is now, and although the bullet was extracted the effects of the wound remained with him for the rest of his life and in all probability shortened his days. A curious incident is related concerning his watch, chain, and seals. These he lost on the battle-field, but they were subsequently picked up and returned to him. On his death in 1825, unmarried, the Burges property passed to his sister, who had in the meantime married the eldest son of Mr. Goodacre of Ullesthorpe. It was this Mr. Burges who built Lutterworth House.

Although never himself actually a resident in Lutterworth, Mr. Goodacre of Ullesthorpe was intimately connected with the place, having established a banking firm here in partnership with Mr. Marston Buszard of Lutterworth. There is a story related of how Mr. Goodacre saved the bank from disaster upon the occasion of a panic. What brought about the run on the bank is not recorded; but that it took place is certain, and equally so is it that Mr. Goodacre was fetched post-haste from Ullesthorpe. As soon as he arrived he took up his stand at the entrance to the bank, greeting each depositor as he arrived with a hearty shake of the hand and expression of profound gratitude for the pains he had been at to come to personally testify his confidence in him. To no purpose the anxious depositor endeavoured to disabuse the banker's mind of the motive attributed to him; Mr. Goodacre persisted in his generous interpretation, and until at length for very shame, or perhaps from an ill-defined sense that he was in reality performing a praiseworthy action which it would ill become him to disown, the client desisted and returned to his home with more misgivings than cash. However, it is only fair to add that he was accorded a little more than words, for Mr. Goodacre caused a wheelbarrow full of guineas to be ostentatiously wheeled in at the front door of the bank—a performance which was repeated at intervals during the day, the same guineas doing duty on each occasion. The bank survived and continued to flourish for some years, until it again lighted upon evil days, when the hand which had steered it through the first storm was no longer at the helm, and it met



JOHN GOODACRE, ESQ., OF ULLESTHORPE

FIELDING TOMB IN LUTTERWORTH CHURCH

with disaster. On the death of his brother-in-law, Mr. Goodacre, the eldest son of the above gentleman, took up his residence at Lutterworth House, where he resided until his death in 1860. He was a man of somewhat eccentric habits, but in this respect was far surpassed by his brother, Mr. Robert Goodacre of Ullesthorpe, whose doubtful fame extended far beyond the confines of Leicestershire. Mr. Robert Goodacre, or "Bob Goodacre," as he was familiarly called, was a late example of that class which has happily now gone out of fashion—the rowdy country squire. The stories related of him are innumerable, but we can only here refer to two which have special connexion with Lutterworth.

It was a hot, thundery day. "Bob" was visiting his brother at Lutterworth House, and at his suggestion, to cope with the passing sultriness, the two walked into the town to the local barber's to reappear in a short time without a hair on their heads! It is difficult to conceive what the qualifications for the lunatic asylum were in the early part of the nineteenth century.

The other story relates to the visit of a worthy clergyman, who had ridden over from a distance to lunch at Lutterworth House. "Bob" was there and somehow contrived, unobserved, to anoint the hoofs of the guest's steed with aniseed. Mr. Goodacre of Lutterworth kept a pack of beagles at the time, and no sooner had the clergyman set forth on his homeward journey than he found himself pursued by the yelping pack. Unable to conceive the cause, he set spurs to his horse and is reported to have arrived in his parish in a desperate plight. Mr. Goodacre

served the office of High Sheriff for Leicestershire in the year 1849, and was the last High Sheriff of the county to have the whole complement of twenty-four javelin men. Owing to the escape of a debtor during the last week of his shrievalty, he became involved in extensive litigation, out of which the only satisfaction he derived was the providing his country with a leading case on sheriff law—a distinction he was by no means disposed to assess at a high value. Mrs. Goodacre continued to reside at Lutterworth for some years after her husband's death. Later she removed to London, and on her death in 1887 Lutterworth House was sold and eventually became the property of Mr. Lupton T. Topham, who now resides there the greater part of each year.

We have seen that Mr. Goodacre of Ullesthorpe had as his partner in the Lutterworth banking business Mr. Marston Buszard of Lutterworth. This revives the memory of an early member of a family to which Lutterworth has perhaps more reason to be attached than any other family of modern times. Dr. Buszard, son of Mr. Buszard the banker, resided in the house in Church Street still occupied by his daughters, and was in his day one of the best-known and most highly respected medical practioners for miles round. He had two sons, both of whom have risen to eminence in their respective professions—Mr. Marston Clarke Buszard, K.C., the present Recorder of Leicester, and Dr. Frank Buszard of Northampton.

Among other families whose connexion with Lutterworth dates back a hundred years may be mentioned those of Watson and Fox (solicitors

and attorneys), Cowdell (architect), Footman (wine merchant), Bosworth, Childs, Kilpack, Lea, Morris, Paddy, Sanders, Bottrill, Smart, Wormleighton, Iliffe, Granger, Buswell, Langham, and Rainbow.

Although there is but one name of the first rank to which Lutterworth can lay undisputed claim, yet its streets have been trod by one who has enthroned himself in the nation's heart, and within its immediate neighbourhood is a little-known and little-visited shrine. At Shawell Rectory the great Victorian bard penned his immortal "In Memoriam." Mr. Elmhirst, then rector of Shawell, was a native of Tennyson's Lincolnshire village, and it was to his boyhood's friend that the poet came with his burden of sorrow. The great puffs of tobacco smoke with which he mellowed his thoughts, however, proved insufferable to his host, and he was accordingly turned out into Mr. Elmhirst's workshop in the garden, which in consequence became the birthplace of one of the gems of English literature.

XXIV

WILLIAM GREEN

BY the kindness of Major Stoney-Smith we are enabled to reprint from *The Green Tiger* the following interesting recollections of a Lutterworth militiaman :—

"Mr. William Green was well known in Lutterworth and afterwards in Leicester, where he died at the advanced age of 96½ years, on the 27th of January 1881. He served seven and a half years in the Regular Army ; but as this period was in the height of the Peninsular War, his experiences were much varied and he saw much of the hardships of that arduous campaign. He first saw service at Copenhagen, for which in later years he received the sum of £3, 16s. 2d. as his share of prize money ; he subsequently took part in the retreat to Corunna, the battles of Talavera, Fuentes de Oñoro, and Busaco, the storming of Badajos (where he was twice wounded) and Ciudad Rodrigo, and (in 1849) received the silver Peninsular Medal with four bars—Badajos, Corunna, Busaco, and Ciudad Rodrigo.

"William Green was born in the parish of Lutterworth, on the 7th of June 1784, and enlisted in the Leicester Militia, at the age of 19, in June 1803, serving with them in their long embodiment on the

south coast of England until April 1805 at Dover Castle.

"In an account of his reminiscences, he states: While on the march northwards towards Harwich, I volunteered in the latter month (April) with 150 of my comrades at Chatham to join the old 95th (now the Rifle Brigade).

"Having completed my rifle drills I proceeded on active service. An expedition under the command of General Don was being fitted out for Germany, and we embarked and sailed from Ramsgate on the 5th of November. For fourteen days we had a pleasant voyage, and then a dreadful storm arose. Three or four vessels foundered with all hands, others were wrecked on the French coast, and some were driven back to England. The gale continued for two days. During the night a vessel fouled us and did considerable damage, the coppers were washed overboard, and when daylight broke we found we were close to the island of Heligoland, and next day landed at Cooks haven (? Cuxhaven) in Low Germany, from whence we marched to Bremen. After a short stay we again embarked at the latter end of January 1806 at Cuxhaven without having seen any fighting, and after a rough voyage reached Yarmouth Roads, where as a climax to our misfortunes the ship went down. The pilot who had come on board succeeded in running our ship on a sandbank. She soon began to fill with water, and not being copper bottomed soon went down. Signals were made with the shore for boats to come off for us, and eventually we were all safely landed. It happened that the transport was the personal property

of the captain, who, when the disaster happened, vowed he would hang the pilot from the yard-arm; but the latter eluded the wrathful sailor and managed to get put on shore in the first boat. We marched next morning to Lowestoft, and all we saw of our sunken ship was the masts rising above the level of the water. My first voyage was distinctly an eventful one.

"We stayed a few days in Lowestoft, and then marched on to Woodbridge and afterwards to Colchester. In April 1806 I made my second voyage, the company I belonged to (with two others) marching to Harwich and accompanying Sir John Moore to Sweden. We anchored in Gottenberg Harbour; but negotiations with the Swedes proving abortive, we returned to Colchester.

"My next trip was to Copenhagen in July 1807. We had a pleasant voyage across the North Sea and anchored off Elsinore Castle, and next day sailed up the sound towards Copenhagen and embarked in flat bottomed boats and landed without any opposition on the part of the enemy. The sailors were instructed to conform to our drill movements, in consequence of which we heard many novel and amusing impromptu words of command, such as 'come up starboard,' 'fall back larboard,' and 'come up both ends and go back in the middle.'

"On the 16th of August, when some 15 or 20 miles from the city, a guide was procured and entrusted to me and my comrade, and we were ordered to draw our swords by Sir Arthur Wellesley to persuade him to lead on. Eventually we reached Copenhagen, and the division to which I belonged

received orders to attack a strong force of the Militia which was up country. We found them at a place called 'Keogh' encamped about 14,000 strong. The Rifles attacked in extended order, and ultimately the charge of the Highlanders (79th and 92nd) completed their rout, and they dispersed. They could not run far as (except the officers) they were all shod with wooden shoes. I believe they were all taken prisoners. That night, while on sentry go at Rosskeel, I saw the light which announced that Copenhagen was on fire; at first I thought it was the rising moon.

"I embarked on board the *Agamemnon* (64 guns), which had been severely handled at Trafalgar and still showed signs of it, and landed at midnight in lighters at Dover. We could not get billets there, and in consequence marched to our old quarters—Hythe barracks—some 12 miles away. After a short stay we marched to Colchester.

"In April 1808 we marched to Portsmouth, and then sailed from Spithead for Spain. Fortune again did not favour us with a pleasant voyage, and we were forced by stress of weather to put into Vigo Bay in the north of Spain. We then sailed for the Burling Islands, and landed at a place called Vimiero on the 28th of August—seven days after the famous battle had taken place between Sir Arthur Wellesley and General Junot. An armistice had been declared, and ultimately Junot withdrew his troops to Lisbon and embarked on board our shipping and returned to France.

"After they had sailed we crossed the river Tagus in boats, and marched to Salamanca in Spain. The

army was about 25,000, under the command of General Sir John Moore. We lay in convents. After a stay of about two months we marched farther into Spain and were accommodated in the villages. One moonlight night we were ordered under arms and had marched some 7 or 8 miles when we were met by a Spanish guide, and orders were given to march to our respective cantonments. Thus commenced the ever-memorable retreat to Corunna. It commenced on the 23rd of December 1808; a lot of snow had fallen, and as one of the regiments of the Light Division, it fell to our lot to cover the retreat of the army.

"Soon the French Cavalry, pushed forward by Marshal Soult, were close up to our rear and teasing us from morning until night. Their cavalry had a rifleman mounted behind each dragoon, who dismounted from time to time when opportunity occurred or suitable cover (bushes, rocks, etc.) presented itself, and fired a few shots at our rear-guard, obliging us to do the same thing. We had used to laugh to see the rifleman run to the road, put his foot into the stirrup, mount behind the dragoon, and gallop off—for many days it was sport, and we served off several of these fellows; but it soon got tiring and monotonous, especially as afterwards we had to run to get up with the regiment.

"It was a long march to Corunna—a good 250 English miles. We had no tents; each man carried his own blanket; we always marched from daylight to dusk, and for rations bullocks were driven before us and slaughtered as they were needed, and consequently had little or no fat on them, and were very

tough. However, we counted more on the soup, if we had time to boil our mess well. It was not often we could do this, as we had no shelter and we seldom halted for more than two hours, and, having to seek wood and water, very often the order to get under arms would come before we had time to cook our victuals. Many days we had no bread, and our spirits got very low with hunger and fatigue.

"We had to muffle the gun wheels with grass, or anything else we could find, to prevent the enemy hearing us move, as well as lighting large fires, while we silently stole off in the darkness. This was the game we had to play many nights, as the French advance guard was seldom more than half a mile behind. Our captains were all mounted, but the lieutenants had to walk, and I have seen some of them moving along fast asleep until they jostled into some of the men and awoke. As the roads were very bad, our rate of progress was slow, I think not more than two miles per hour. Our colonel had orders for us to throw away our knapsacks, but we were to keep either the greatcoat or blanket as we preferred. We did not mind parting with our kits, which we left by the roadside. Even then we had enough to carry—fifty rounds of ball-cartridge, thirty loose balls in our waistbelt, a flask, and horn of powder, and a rifle and sword, the two weighing 14 lb. What with empty bellies and an enemy close on our heels thirsting for blood, many of our men sat down in the snow by the roadside and gave up. Those who could use tobacco held out the best.

"We arrived one morning at a place called Lugo, and before we had entered the place some of the

Foot Guards were cooking with their belts hanging on the bushes. It appeared that Sir John Moore had halted here with the object of offering to give Marshal Soult battle. Some of the Guards asked us if we had seen the French. Our answer was, 'Yes, and so will you soon! You had better get on your belts and lay by cooking.' However, they would not be convinced the enemy were so near, but before we reached our billets we and they heard plenty of shots fired. We got a good night's rest, with plenty of rations, bread, and meat, and wine. Soult declined to accept a general action, and twenty-four hours later we continued our march, after having destroyed by fire all remaining stores. There was still fourteen English leagues yet to cover before Corunna was reached.

"Two days later, at a place called Kankabella, the French Cavalry closed up and nearly took Sir John Moore and his staff prisoners. We retired through the town, and made a stand near the bridge, which checked the enemy. We extended in chain order as it was getting dark, and in the darkness missed the main road, and got amongst some grape vines. I fell into a well some five or six feet deep, which was fortunately free from water, and before I could get out two of my comrades fell on top of me. We were pulled out, but I had the misfortune to lose my hat, cap, and forage cap, and the lock-cap of my rifle, as well as breaking my sword in its scabbard in my fall. I was greatly stunned by the accident, and thought at first I had broken my thigh. I lay down a few minutes, and then tried to walk, and eventually struck the main road. The French advance guard

came so close that they were able to fire their pistols at our men. I was so lame that I soon fell behind, and dropped on the grass by the roadside. They rode past me, and, as my uniform was green, did not see me. Our men gave them a few shots, and they wheeled to the 'right-about.' I thought, 'Now my doom's a French prison,' but again they did not see me. I got up, but it was some time before I could overtake the party. Cold, capless, and lame, a sorry spectacle I must have looked as I told my misfortune to my captain, and all the sympathy I got was, 'It is a good thing you didn't break your neck.' Presently we overtook some mules loaded with some general's baggage, and I saw a glazed hat tied on one of the mules, which I promptly annexed and tried on, but it was so large that it came over my eyes. I padded it with some grass, and it did very well. About midnight we turned into a chapel already occupied by some Hussars and their horses. We were so jammed and crushed all could not lie down, but before daylight we were on the march again. We soon overtook a cart loaded with some English stores, including boots and shoes. The oxen drawing the carts were knocked up, and could go no farther, so the cargo was distributed amongst us. I got a pair of boots. I put them on, and threw my old ones away; but before I had walked four miles the bottom of one boot dropped off, the upper leather remaining laced round my ankle. Three or four miles farther on the other boot bottom dropped off, and I had to walk barefoot, as my stocking feet were soon all cut to pieces. I was not alone in this predicament: many of the men were served in a like

manner. The boots were manufactured in England, and we said that the soles had been glued or pegged on, as there could not have been any wax or hemp used. The person who contracted with the Government ought to have been tried by court martial, and awarded a good flogging with a cat-o'-nine-tails. Next morning some of our officers were offering the men a guinea for a pair of boots or shoes. As the baggage goods had been all thrown away, they had none, and were in as bad a plight as the privates.

"We had now arrived within four leagues of Corunna, and my company was on outlying picquet. When daylight broke we saw the French advance guard come into sight at full trot, and we retired and joined the regiment, blowing up the bridge behind us as we passed.

"On the 12th of January 1809 we came in sight of the city, and as the enemy had not yet made his appearance we made fires and cooked our meat, took off our belts, sponged out our rifles, and got a fresh supply of ammunition. As knapsacks, razors, and kits had been thrown away, some of the older men had beards like Jews, not having shaved during the whole of the retreat. And now another disaster awaited us to add to all our sufferings from hunger, cold, and the long march of 250 miles in the face of the enemy! The shipping could not get round from Vigo Bay to take us on board, the wind being contrary. (There were no steamers in 1809.) Marshal Soult's force increased, and on the morning of the 16th it was reported he had 70,000 men to our 20,000. The previous day, the wind having

slightly shifted, the vessels had been able to work round from Vigo Bay to Corunna Harbour, and Sir John Moore, having blown up his magazines, gave orders to embark. The afternoon passed quietly, and as evening approached we lit our fires and lay down in our cloaks to await for morning. At daybreak it was evident that Soult was preparing for an attack, and as we were attending with our camp kettles for our daily wine, a cannon-ball was fired at us from the French. Our bugles sounded the advance, away went the camp kettles, the command was given, 'Rifles in front, extend by lines in chain order.' We soon got in range, and began to pick off the enemy, who were double and treble our numbers, and held them in check until the Light Division formed into line. The roar of cannon and the roll of musketry was so loud that words of command could be scarcely given and the sound of the bugle hardly heard. We were about 14,000 to some 60,000 or 70,000, and fought most desperately, especially as the enemy had deprived us of our daily ration of wine. We were well supplied with powder and ball, and our sharpshooters were enabled to make use of the many enclosures of stone walls, which they loop-holed, and obtained good cover, behind which we fought from 2 till 6 p.m. It then became dark and the firing almost entirely ceased. We then made some fires for the night, and remained on the battle-field until five o'clock in the morning, when order came for us to move into Corunna. We were the last regiment to leave the battle-field. The French, noticing our fires getting low, were soon on the alert. We marched through the streets to the

harbour, the boats from the men-of-war and transports pushed off to the shore to take us on board. What confusion there was! Many of the Hussars' horses were galloping about like mad things on the beach; they had to be left, there not being time to embark them; several were shot, or we should have been ridden down or trodden to death.

"By this time Soult had got six pieces of cannon playing on the vessels which were at anchor and on the boats on which we were. We got into any ship or boat we could. The grape-shot from the French guns came through the rigging of the ships as well as among us in the boats. But presently a line of battleship weighed her anchor, and sailed within range of the French guns, and crippled four out of the six. I think this was the *Bellerophon.* At length a signal was made for the master of transports to cut their cables, leave the anchors, and get out of the harbour. We were mustered next morning—sixty-one men, rank and file, and one sergeant, belonging to the twenty-nine regiments.

"After a rough passage of eighteen days we arrived at Spithead on the 3rd of February, and marched next day to Hillsea barracks some three miles from Portsmouth, *en route* for our head-quarters —Hythe, in Kent. Such a lot of ragamuffins were surely never landed here before. Some of my comrades landed at different ports, and some—less fortunate—were wrecked off Plymouth. It was nearly three weeks later before we all assembled.

"Orders were now issued authorizing the Militia to volunteer, and we received a good share of them. We expected that we would have a long respite from

war, but it did not prove so, for the men who had joined us from the Militia had scarcely learned their rifle drill before the 'route' came for us to embark at Dover. On the 24th of May 1809 we went on board at Dover, and next morning sailed for Spithead, where we received from London our new knapsacks. We had previously received two guineas per man for loss of our kits in the Cǫrunna campaign.

"We again sailed, and after a good passage of only four days arrived off Lisbon. Our line of march was through Portugal into Spain, and as we had orders to join Lord Wellington as soon as we could, we had on some days to do double stages to accomplish this. It was in the month of July, and very hot; the open fields were our beds and our knapsacks our pillows, no tents being carried on this long march. At length we arrived some eighteen or twenty miles from Talavera, and heard the roaring of the cannon. We marched the whole of the night, with the exception of two hours' halting for rest and to cook our two days' meat, and arrived about 6 a.m. on the morning of the 29th, only to find the battle had been fought on the previous day. Lord Wellington came a mile or more to meet us, and we received orders to take the advance post amongst some olive trees on the other side of the river. . . . We could buy nothing to eat; our rations were scanty. We had been accustomed to a pint of red port served to each man daily, but here none could be had for love or money. It is true we could get meat every day, as the bullocks were driven before us, but neither bread nor wine could be obtained; we were six or seven days without tasting bread. We

sometimes encamped under 'acorn trees' after a long day's march. A certain number of men would be appointed to each tree to pluck the acorns, which were much larger than those at home; they were then boiled in the camp kettles, and, when the husks peeled off, tasted something like a potato.

. . . . . .

"We had now orders to march to storm Badajos, a frontier town in Spain. . . . The breaches were effected on the 5th of April (1812), and the following night we turned out to storm the town. The 'forlorn hope' consisted of 350 men, all volunteers, and six buglers, two from each regiment. Our bugle-major made us cast lots which two of us should go, and the lot fell on me and another lad (I had learned to bugle whilst at Torres Vedras to take the place of a bugler who had been killed. It must be understood we had no drums or fifes, two buglers to each company, and three to the two flank companies). Those who composed this forlorn hope were free from duty that day, so I went to the river and had a good bathe, as I thought I would have a clean skin whether killed or wounded. At nine o'clock, we paraded after dark, and each man received half a pound of bread and a gill of rum. We were told to go as still as possible, and every word of command was given in a whisper. I had been engaged in the field about twenty-six times, and had never previously got a wound. We had about a mile to go to the place of attack, and on the way bags filled with grass had been placed for each man to pick up as he passed along to throw into the ditch to jump on that we might not hurt or break our legs when we jumped

into the ditch, which was some eight or nine feet deep; a party followed in rear with short ladders to be put into the ditch and to be carried across to our men, to ascend to the surface near the wall.

"There was no firing from the enemy until we arrived at the ditch, and all had been still so far; but, as the bags were thrown and the men descended, the enemy threw up blue lights and poured a volley down upon us. I was in the act of throwing my bag when a ball struck me, going through the thick part of my thigh, and, having my bugle in my left hand, it entered my left wrist and I dropped, so I never got into the ditch. I scarcely felt the ball go through my thigh, but when it entered my wrist it was more like a six-pounder than a musket ball. It smashed the bone, and as I was bleeding from both wounds I soon began to feel very faint. Our men were in the ditch, and the enemy had taken the precaution to have loaded shells placed on the top of the wall about two yards apart. As these were fired they rolled into the ditch, and when they burst ten or twelve men were blown up in every direction. However, some of them arrived at the breach, but a great many both killed and wounded lay around me; the balls came very thick about us, and we were not able to move; at length the whole of the Light Division came past us and made for the breach. In a short time the firing from the wall slackened, and those who could move got up; I was enabled to hobble to the rear, holding my left hand with my right one, as the ball had entered the joint of my wrist. I thought I was safe and out of reach of shot from the enemy, but soon found out my error as a

shower of grape-shot came over my head and only just missed my cap. I had moved a short way from where I was at first, and had sat up for a short time, but through loss of blood from my wounds I was glad to lay down again. In a short while four bandsmen of some regiment came up, and, finding me wounded, carried me on stretcher to the doctor.

"On the 10th all the wounded were put into carts drawn by oxen, six in each cart, to be conveyed to Elvas in Portugal, some twelve miles distant; there we were put into convents, each man having a bed. This was the first night I had lain in a bed since 24th May 1809, nearly three years before. The ball in my hand was extracted on the 12th day. Eventually I got to Lisbon, and embarked on the 17th of July for England, from which I had been absent five years.

"We landed at Portsmouth on 3rd August after a voyage of seventeen days, the result of contrary winds. We were sent to Haslar Hospital, and after three weeks those of us who could march sailed over to Southampton, and from thence to Chelsea. Here I remained thirteen weeks before my turn came to pass the board at the Hospital: there was so much waiting. I received £3, 16s. 2d. as my share of prize-money for the capture of Copenhagen in 1807, and on the 9th of December 1812 passed the board and was pensioned off with 9d. a day.

"I returned to my native town, Lutterworth; but it was not until the year 1849 that I received the silver medal with four bars. In 1853 my pension was increased to 1s. a day."

XXV

AMOS DRAKE MILES, A.R.A.M.

IN the fields of literature, education, and music Lutterworth has made its mark on the outer world. Around the 'fifties, the Woodwards long maintained a high level, before removing to Darlington; and the descendants of Mr. Richard Seward are to-day a power in scholastic life. With such local exponents as Jarman, of Shawell, John Ball, of Walcote, and Charles Dones, with his genial smile and his "chello," the musical art could not languish. Then, the district provided, and preferred, its own interpretation of the "Masters." But one dominant personality attracted alike vocalists, instrumentalists, and audience. Yes; the memory of William Flude is still dear to many of the passing generation. Every inch a musician, eager, sometimes impetuous, his "verve" was an all-compelling force. He emigrated, and the gap seemed a wide one. But his mantle had fallen upon one pupil, destined to outrival the teacher.

For nearly two centuries the name of Miles has been known, hereabout, in this connexion. While yet a child, Amos Drake Miles, eldest son of Mr. George Miles, gave proof of no ordinary musical ability. At nine years of age his recitals on Broad-

wood's "grands" at the Great Exhibition of 1851 held hundreds entranced. Scarcely had he reached manhood when he was appointed organist and choirmaster of the parish church. Its restoration, in which Mr. A. D. Miles took an active interest, was followed by a marked improvement in the morale and ability of the choir, a spirit of healthy emulation being thus produced in the entire district. Very soon sixteen neighbouring church choirs were in training, under the superintendence of Mr. Miles; and the first District Festival of the Peterborough Choral Association, held at Lutterworth in October 1869 (nearly three hundred voices), was a distinct success. Anxious to encourage the organist in his work, the musical fraternity helped to meet the cost of improvements and re-erection of the organ, willing aid being also rendered by distant friends. A series of concerts of a high order of merit was given in the Town Hall, the "band" consisting of Mr. G. Frearson (leader), Messrs. G. Vears, sen. and jun., H. Vears, and T. Moreton. Until the autumn of 1871 the annual Choral Festivals well maintained their reputation. In the winter of that year, acting upon the suggestion of the Rev. A. R. Goodacre (formerly of Lutterworth House), then holding a curacy at St. Mark's, Grosvenor Square, London, Mr. Miles applied for the vacant post of organist and choirmaster of that church. The candidates included several eminent professors—quite an array of talent—for the organ is a splendid three-manual, by Bishop, with great traditions. The congregation, it need scarcely be said, is one of the most aristocratic in the West End. After a short trial Mr. Miles was selected for the

appointment. From the entire neighbourhood of Lutterworth came both congratulations and expressions of regret. Notably, the Mechanics Institute voiced this feeling at a farewell entertainment. Mr. Miles shortly entered the Royal Academy of Music, passing a searching examination by Sir W. Sterndale Bennett. His efficiency as a teacher of the organ, pianoforte, and singing ensured a connexion in the most select circles, while his engagements as conductor of Choral Classes, in and near London, left him little leisure. Nevertheless, love for his native town kept him in touch with its Choral Festivals for another two or three seasons. In 1874 the Rector and his friends pressed him to return, but without avail. The possibilities of London were too great; and with prospective structural alterations at St. Mark's came the promise of a still more responsive instrument.

On two occasions in 1876 Mr. Miles took part, by request, in private drawing-room concerts at Windsor Castle. At the first, the Prince and Princess of Wales (King Edward and his Queen) were present, and on 26th Dec. Queen Victoria, Princess Beatrice, and other members of the Royal family.

But, while honours were being showered, health was breaking. Myopia had doubtless accentuated a certain weakness of the lungs, and, all too soon, it was only by short periods of enforced rest that physical strength could be maintained. So busy a life left no reserve of vitality.

After an outlay of nearly £700 on the organ at St. Mark's, Mr. Miles had the gratification of display-

ing its powers at the reopening, in Jan. 1877, and for some months later. But the "white man's scourge" was inexorable, although sea air and treatment brought some alleviations. Under the care of eminent specialists, hope once more returned. At a benefit concert, arranged by musical friends to lessen pecuniary anxieties, the artists included such names as Terry and Bernhardt, a striking proof of the esteem in which Mr. Miles was held.

The end came peacefully on 28th Jan. 1878, in the Royal Sanatorium for Consumption, Ventnor, Isle of Wight. In the beautiful cemetery there, a suitable memorial stone briefly records the facts. It was erected by Mr. C. H. Gates, with whom Mr. Miles spent some early years.

XXVI

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

IT is difficult to say which form of sport enjoyed in Lutterworth takes precedence in point of antiquity. In the year 1257 John de Verdun obtained the King's charter of free-warren for all his demesne lands in Newbold Revel, Lutterworth, Bittesby, Cotesbach, and Kesington (Cossington) in the county of Leicester.

The privilege of free-warren was that "within that liberty no person should hunt or destroy the game of hare, partridge, or pheasant, or fish without the leave of him to whom the said privilege was granted, on forfeiture of ten pounds"—an exceedingly heavy penalty in those days.

A pastime which goes back to very ancient days is the game of bowls. This has been played in Lutterworth from time immemorial, and the old bowling-green attached to the "High House" of the first Feildings is still in existence at the back of High Street. Here, if we care for a moment to give the rein to fancy, we can picture Sir Geoffrey and his lady, in the strange modes of the thirteenth century, trundling the sapient ball, and later, perhaps, the austere rector himself watching with lenient eye the innocent recreation of his poor preachers, for were

not the priests of old devotees of the game? Perhaps, too, from his hospital across the river would occasionally stroll the Prior of St. John's, and many another one whom we have had occasion to mention in the course of these pages doubtless frequented the spot. Next to the Parish Church there is no more classic ground in Lutterworth than this old bowling-green with its ancient yews.

In more modern times the bowling-green became attached to the "Denbigh Arms," and was the scene of many social gatherings.

We now turn to football, a game with as ancient a lineage as the game of bowls. We have a clear record of its existence in Wycliffe's time. Writing of the death of Edward III in 1377, the historian laments the decline in the practice of archery amongst the people.

"Every man," he says, "in the feudal ages of England, who did not possess land of the value of 40s. a year, used to be required to qualify himself as a bowman, and the practice of archery in the villages from boyhood upwards produced the famous bowman that cleared the fields of Crécy and Poitiers of all opponents.

"That art is now neglected and the people spend their time in throwing stones, wood, or iron, in playing at handball, *football*, or club-ball, in bull-baiting and in cock-fighting, and in more or less useless and dishonest games."

For ages past football has been played at Lutterworth on what is known as "the Parson's Leys." A hundred and fifty years ago it was the custom to play football here every Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

It was a rough-and-tumble game that was played, and had little affinity to the scientific game of to-day. The football itself was the joint product of the shoemaker, who found the leather, and the butcher, who supplied the bladder.

Another sport held in great esteem by our forefathers was prize-fighting. Under this heading we may include pugilistic encounters of all sorts, whether for money or in settlement of some dispute. In Lutterworth certain fields were set apart for these encounters, which were conducted with something akin to legal sanction.

When the parish was enclosed in 1790 a parcel of land adjoining the Gilmorton Road was left unenclosed. This was the local arena. This piece of land, now converted into allotment ground, is situated exactly opposite the Police Station, and was in olden times called the "Bull Field" because a bull, the common property of the parishioners for breeding purposes, was kept there.

Prize-fights were frequently organized with champions of neighbouring villages, and at times the sport soared above the level of drunken fisticuffs into the realm of "the noble art of self-defence."

The Mill Meadow just over the Swift Bridge was the scene of memorable fights, as was also the top of the hill on the Rugby Road.

We of to-day have come to regard such exhibitions as brutal and degrading, but, for all that, they served a purpose in the history of our nation, and were the school in which was nurtured that "indomitable pluck" which, under Wellington, wiped out the Grand

Army of France and led to the peace of Europe and the predominance of Great Britain.

Thomas Winter, better known as "Tom Spring," the first great champion prize-fighter, was connected by marriage with, and well known in, Lutterworth, and was an ancestor of Mr. T. C. Bodycote, who possesses a fine portrait of him.

Lutterworth also enjoyed another sport now entirely vanished, namely, the hunting of ducks by trained dogs. This was carried on in the old mill stream. Duck-hunting meetings were of frequent occurrence here in the cold weather, and were largely attended. Both dogs and ducks were brought from the neighbouring districts. The former were confined in a yard on the banks of the stream known as the "Dog Yard," which continued in existence until the coming of the Great Central Railway and the diversion of the stream. The ducks were liberated and hunted by the dogs in *heats*, the dog killing the largest number being declared the winner of the first prize. As was usual in olden times, a convivial evening followed the gathering.

It is possible that the sport led to the establishment of a special breed of spaniel, for in a book published in 1906 called *The Sporting Spaniel*, by C. A. Phillips and R. Claude Crane, we read—

"In the early part of the last century Lord Rivers is spoken of as having a well-known strain of Black and White Cocker Spaniels, which were much prized on account of their working qualities: but of these unfortunately no further description is given from which we are enabled to form any opinion, and although the Black Spaniel is spoken of by Arcussia

in the sixteenth century, the first really authentic knowledge we have of a definite strain is that of the Lutterworth breed in Leicestershire, which was the possession of Mr. Footman. It was from this strain Mr. F. Burdett founded his kennel of Black Cockers, and from this foundation have sprung the various strains of the Cocker and Field Spaniels of the present time."

XXVII

CRICKET

TO such eminence in the realm of cricket has Lutterworth attained that the subject demands a section to itself.

Unfortunately no record has been preserved of the founding of the Lutterworth Cricket Club, but a diligent search of the files of the *Leicester Journal* discloses the fact that a match was played between Lutterworth and Rugby on the school ground at Rugby as far back as 1839, resulting in a victory to the home team.

Misterton Park, the "Hawk's Nest Meadow," on the Gilmorton Road, and "Illiff's Field," on the Coventry Road, were among the first playing-grounds of the Club, and it was not until about the year 1850 that it settled down in its present quarters near the Rectory. In its earlier days in its new home the field was let to one Tom West, who was accustomed annually to lay it to hay, and in consequence the commencement of the cricket season had to be deferred until the hay was carried—often not until the month of July. In the early 'seventies the Club itself became tenant of the field, and the game has

flourished there ever since on a well-kept ground all the season through.

In the year 1843 there came into the district a gentleman destined to have a great influence upon the cricket of the town and neighbourhood, in the person of the Rev. Edward Elmhirst, the friend of Tennyson, a fine all-round sportsman and rare example of the old English gentleman. Before coming to reside at Shawell Rectory Mr. Elmhirst had been a member of the Cambridge University Eleven, and in 1848 kept wicket for the Gentlemen of England *v.* the Players in their annual match at Lord's.

The accession of this stalwart player resulted in Lutterworth's memorable victory over Leicester in 1850, when, disposing of their opponents for 39 runs, they scored 248. Mr. Elmhirst played a fine innings of 106, supported by Tom Dickins with 47. On this occasion, according to a contemporary report, "the straight underhand bowling of Mr. Buswell and the slow over-hand—not to say 'over-shoulder'—of Mr. Read lowered the wickets of the Leicester Gentlemen for more than ordinary short score."

But, great as was this feat, it was to be outshone by the classic victory of 1859, when Lutterworth went forth and inflicted upon the whole county an almost equally crushing defeat. Fortunately we are able to furnish our readers with the full score of this remarkable match. It was played in the month of August 1859, upon Barker's ground in the Humberstone Road, Leicester (a site now long since covered with streets and houses), and

resulted in a victory for Lutterworth by an innings and 143 runs.

LUTTERWORTH

The Rev. E. Elmhirst, c Martin, b Storey, jun.	8
M. T. Martin, Esq., c Mitchell, b Davis	30
J. T. Beasley, Esq., b Mitchell	0
F. Watson, Esq., not out	170
J. Buswell, b Monson	24
F. W. Goodacre, Esq., c Storey, b Monson	4
W. H. Longhurst, Esq., c Mitchell, b Rowley	13
J. Fisher, Esq., c Lester, b Rowley	1
F. Buszard, Esq., b. Mitchell	5
T. H. Watson, Esq., b Rowley	0
W. Read, c Martin, b Mitchell	0
H. Watson, Esq., b Mitchell	2
Byes 6, Leg-byes 5, Wides 14	25
Total	282

LEICESTERSHIRE

First Innings

W. E. White, Esq., b Martin	17
The Rev. R. Rowley, b Read	4
H. J. Davis, Esq., run out	0
J. Storey, Esq., jun., ill	5
Hon. D. Monson, c Buswell, b Martin	4
R. A. H. Mitchell, Esq., b Martin	6
W. R. Martin, Esq., c and b Martin	4
A. L. Phillips, Esq., b Buswell	5
A. Lester, Esq., b Martin	0
J. Storey, Esq., run out	3
F. H. Paget, Esq., not out	16
The Rev. — Sharp, c T. H. Watson, b Martin	2
Bye 1, Wides 2	3
Total	69

Second Innings

W. E. White, Esq., c Martin, b Read	1
The Rev. R. Rowley, c Goodacre, b Read	15
H. J. Davis, Esq., not out	4
J. Storey, Esq., jun., ill	0
Hon. D. Monson, b Martin	2
R. A. H. Mitchell, Esq., c H. Watson, b Beasley	14
W. R. Martin, Esq., run out	18
A. L. Phillips, Esq., c F. Watson, b Read	5
A. Lester, Esq., absent	0
J. Storey, Esq., lbw, Read	3
F. H. Paget, Esq., b Read	0
Rev. — Sharp, b Martin	2
Byes 2, Leg-byes 2, Wides 2	6
Total	70

The correspondent of the *Leicester Journal*, who waxes facetious, tells how the County Hon. Secretary had to ransack, not merely the whole of the county to find a team worthy to meet the men of Lutterworth, but to go out into the adjacent counties to supplement his own. Surely there is material here for a local epic, and Lutterworth has risen to the occasion.

THE FLANNELLED "FLOWER OF LUTTERWORTH"

1

The golden moon had barely set,
And Night to Morning given birth,
When through the silent street there passed
The flannelled "Flower of Lutterworth."

2

No trumpet brayed; no tocsin rang;
No warrior gave his battle call:
Their arms in carpet-bag they bore—
A willow wand—a leather ball!

3

The day wore on from hour to hour,
And busy Rumour went and came,
But when the shades of evening fell
The quest was still "How goes the game?"

4

At length a mighty shout arose,
The news leapt forth from tongue to tongue;
It reached "The Fox"; it reached "The Hind,"
And high the rustic's cap was flung.

5

"The Denbigh" yard was all astir,
And Ely Lane was thronged with men:
Not oft, I trow, such crowds were seen
In Lutterworth from nine to ten.

6

Not oft, I trow, since laurelled coach
Brought tidings of the French defeat
Was there such joy in every house,
Was there such mirth in every street.

7

For low the County's stalwarts lay;—
A single innings wiped them out—
White, Rowley, Storey, Paget, Sharp—
'Twas meet that Lutterworth should shout!

8

And loud above the din at times
One heard the name of Watson lead,
And then the praise of Martin sung,
Of Elmhirst, Buswell, Buszard, Read.

9

And late in tavern and in inn
The bowl went round that night with mirth;
With thrice three cheers for those brave men,—
The flannelled "Flower of Lutterworth."

Between the years 1860–70 the Lutterworth Club was exceptionally strong. The advent of Dr. Fagge

to the town added a fine all-round cricketer, as did that of Canon Willes to Ashby Magna about the same time. The latter, an old University Blue, was reputed the fastest bowler in the country. Mr. T. P. Monnington, Captain of Marlborough College Eleven, the first cricketer to score over 400 runs in a single innings, was also a member of the Club at this time, but perhaps the best remembered of all is Mr. Charles Marriott. Born at Cotesbach Hall in 1848, much of his early cricket was learned at Lutterworth, and, proceeding to Oxford, he became a member of the University Eleven. Subsequently he captained many a fine match at Lord's for the M.C.C. In 1873 he was elected Captain of the Lutterworth Club and, with his late brothers, the Rev. G. S. Marriott and Mr. J. M. Marriott, Mr. R. W. Gillespie-Stainton, Alfred Buswell, T. Green, and others, formed an all-conquering team for many years. In 1873 Mr. Charles Marriott was elected Captain of the County Club, and continued to successfully fill that post for fourteen years, ranking as one of the finest batsmen in the county. For some years he and his brothers and Alfred Buswell formed the backbone of the county team.

Although it cannot be asserted that the Lutterworth Club has in recent years maintained its former high standard, yet it has produced more than one fine cricketer, and at the present day Lutterworth is proud to claim as one of its sons the well-known county and international cricketer J. H. King.

Among those whose names appear in the earlier records of the Club was Mr. John Parsons Cook, whose tragic end leads us to our next section.

XXVIII

THE MURDER OF JOHN PARSONS COOK

IT is a big drop from the heroics of the last section to the sordid crime which forms the subject of the present. But this world is full of contrasts, and the faithful historian knows no partiality.

Among the earlier members of the Town Cricket Club, as we have said, was John Parsons Cook, and between the years 1850 and 1855 the Club had few keener supporters. He was a native of Catthorpe, a village about five miles distant, and son of a land-owner there. Educated at Rugby, he was destined for the law, for which learned profession, however, he failed to qualify. Both his father and his mother died during his minority, and on attaining the age of twenty-one years he found himself possessed of a fortune of some £15,000. At this time he was making his home with Dr. William Henry Jones, a surgeon living in a house in Lutterworth at the bottom of High Street, now known as "The Springs" on account of an abundant supply of water which passes through the premises.

Mr. Cook took an active part in the social life of the town, and was widely known and respected. He

was a first-rate cricketer, a capital oar, and hunted regularly with the neighbouring packs. Stories of his liberality to working-men members of the Cricket Club are still remembered, and he had many friends. In person he was a fine, gentlemanly looking young fellow.

Remembering the circumstances in which he was placed, it is not perhaps surprising to find that he became connected with the turf, and at the time to which this section relates owned a few racehorses and betted rather heavily. Amongst the acquaintances which he formed in racing circles was a Dr. Palmer, a surgeon in practice at Rugeley, who also owned racehorses and was a most desperate gambler.

In the month of November 1855 Mr. Cook owned a horse named "Polestar," with which he had just won a race at Worcester and which he had entered to run at Shrewsbury on the 13th November. He was in high spirits about the forthcoming race, which he felt confident of winning, and he invited his friend Dr. Jones to accompany him to Shrewsbury. At the race meeting they were joined by Dr. Palmer and a Mr. Read, who acted as a sort of private secretary to Mr. Cook, settling his betting accounts when he did not do so himself. Mr. Fisher, a turf commission agent, was one of the party, as was also Mr. George Herring, who afterwards became the noted millionaire.

The race in which the party were interested came off about 3 o'clock, Polestar winning easily. This meant a good deal to Mr. Cook, who had betted heavily upon his own horse. His book showed £2200, and the stake won was of the value of £424.

Mr. Cook was naturally elated, and Dr. Jones records that for some moments after the race he was so overcome with emotion that he could not speak. Next day the party met again at the Raven Hotel, Shrewsbury, and dined there in celebration of the victory of the previous day, Dr. Jones leaving immediately afterwards for Lutterworth.

At the dinner Mr. Cook asked Dr. Palmer to have some brandy and soda, to which the latter replied, "I won't have mine until you've drunk yours." Cook thereupon answered, "I'll drink mine at once," which he proceeded to do.

A minute or two later he said, "There's something in it which burns my throat dreadfully."

Palmer examined the glass and declared that there had been nothing wrong with the contents, but subsequently Mr. Cook informed Mr. Read that he was feeling very ill and handed over to him the money he had on his person, some £700 or £800 in notes, with instructions to take care of it. Later the party proceeded to Rugeley, Mr. Cook staying at the "Talbot Arms" where he was well known. Here he continued seriously ill, and Dr. Palmer, whose house was opposite, tended him, affecting the greatest concern. It is true he called in another physician, an aged practitioner over eighty years of age, but, as the evidence subsequently taken clearly disclosed, he insisted upon administering all the medicines himself and into each dose placed a deadly poison, as he had done into the brandy and soda at Shrewsbury. Up to this point there appears to have been no suspicion of the diabolical plot to which the unfortunate young man was to fall a victim. Palmer

attended him and waited upon him with the greatest solicitude, but it was observed that after each fresh dose of medicine the patient became worse.

At this stage (Sunday the 18th November) Palmer wrote two urgent letters to Lutterworth, one addressed to Dr. Jones and the other to Mr. William Footman of High Street, an intimate friend of the prostrate man. The letter to Dr. Jones was produced at the great trial at the Old Bailey where the murderer was convicted, and that to Mr. Footman is still preserved, and by the kindness of Mrs. Footman we are enabled to give a copy of it.

After fifty years it is much faded. It is written on one side of a small piece of paper, now yellow with age, and reads as follows :—

"My dear Sir,—Mr. Cook was taken ill at Shrewsbury and obliged to call in a medical man. Since then he has been confined to his bed with a very severe bilious attack combined with diarrhœa, and I think it is advisable for you to come and see him as soon as possible.—Yours faithfully,

"Wm. Palmer

"Rugeley, *Nov.* 18, 1855.
"Mr. Footman"

Dr. Jones was ill on Monday, and consequently unable to go to Rugeley until Tuesday, when he found his young friend in bed at the "Talbot Arms" and apparently more comfortable than he had been for some time. The same evening, however, following the administration of two pills by Palmer, Cook was seized with sudden pains, and died in agony.

Palmer's conduct during the last days of his victim's life had an important bearing upon the result

of his trial. It subsequently transpired that on the Monday he had rushed up to London for "settling day," and by means of a forged letter had obtained all the bets and stakes which Mr. Cook had won at the Shrewsbury races. Then, taking express train, he had reached home the same night and at once purchased three grains of strychnine from one of the two local chemists, acquiring another six grains the next morning from the other. With these he completed his deadly work.

Palmer's behaviour at the inquest first brought suspicion to his door. The jar containing the organs for analysis was evidently a matter of concern to him, and he went the length of offering the postboy who drove the carriage containing it to Stafford £10 to upset and smash it. Further, between each adjournment of the inquest, he sent the Coroner presents of game and fish, but this device was of no avail, and the Coroner's jury found him guilty of the murder of his former friend. By a subsequent Coroner's jury Palmer was also found to have murdered his wife, Anne Palmer, in 1854, and his brother, Walter Palmer, in 1855.

He was brought to trial at the Stafford Assizes in March 1856, on the charge of murdering Mr. Cook, but so bitter was the local feeling against him that the trial was removed to the Old Bailey in London. It commenced on the 14th May 1856 and lasted a fortnight, and is one of the most celebrated criminal cases in the annals of the English Law.

Lord Chief Justice Campbell presided, the other judges being Baron Alderson (grandfather of the

present rector of Lutterworth) and Mr. Justice Cresswell. In the end the prisoner was found guilty, condemned to death, and executed in front of Stafford Gaol on the 14th of June 1856.

Such an unenviable notoriety did Rugeley acquire through this crime that Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, is reported to have been petitioned for leave to change 'the name of the place and to have returned the laconic suggestion that it should be renamed after himself.

Palmer is said to have been the son of a wood-cutter at Rugeley, but, on the other hand, we find it stated that he inherited an ample fortune. He was educated at the Grammar School there, and later walked St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

In addition to the murders actually brought home to him there was a strong suspicion that he contrived the deaths of his mother-in-law, a friend named Leonard Blandon, and four of his own infant children.

John Parsons Cook was buried at Rugeley, and an impressive sermon on the text, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James i. 15), was preached by the Rev. Charles Lee in St. Mary's Church, Bilston, on the Sunday following the execution of his murderer, and was afterwards printed and sold for the benefit of the Fund for Building Christ Church Parsonage, Leicester. What strange fowl laid the stones of some of our ecclesiastical buildings!

XXIX

MECHANICS INSTITUTION

THE record of the establishment of the Mechanics Institution has been preserved in a book published in London in the year 1852 by the Rev. John Hampden Gurney, the well-remembered poet-preacher who, at that time, was rector of St. Mary's, Mary-le-bone. The book in question is a book of historical sketches, and in the preface, addressed to his friend Thomas Edward Dicey, Esq., of Claybrook Hall, the author mentions how together they "helped to set up a Mechanics Institution in the little town where I was labouring as curate." This little town was Lutterworth, where Mr. Gurney left lasting record of his labour.

It appears that the Mechanics Institution was founded as far back as 1840, and when first formed had its earliest meeting-room and library in a house in High Street next to the present post office.

Mr. Dicey was its first president, and the object of the institution was "to provide healthful instruction and rational entertainment" for the town.

Mr. Dicey was a man of literary attainments and father of the Mr. Dicey who holds a high place amongst our present-day authors, and has held the important position of editor of the London *Daily News*.

When first established, Mr. Gurney strongly opposed the placing of newspapers upon the reading-room table, as he maintained that the information which they contained was not all good for public morals, but the *Times* and one or two local papers were eventually admitted. A library was gradually formed, and at one time contained no less than a thousand volumes. After a few years in High Street the reading-room was removed to the Sherrier's Schoolhouse, at that time occupied by Mr. George Binns, the head master. Here it continued for many years until it found a fresh home in an upstair room in a house at the corner of High and Church Streets.

Mainly owing to the influence of Mr. George Sale Wardley, the present Institution Building was erected by the Town Masters out of public funds and leased to the institute as tenant in 1877.

As a library it has long ceased to be of use, but as a meeting and recreation room it still does good work, and at the present time, under the presidency of Mr. L. T. Topham, is in a healthful condition.

XXX

THE HORTICULTURAL AND COTTAGE GARDENERS SOCIETY

LIKE most other public institutions in Lutterworth, this Society dates back many years, and after diligent inquiry at the time of its jubilee in 1910, so far as could be ascertained it was found to be one of the oldest, if not *the* oldest society of its kind in the country. Its shows have been held annually, without a break, since its foundation in 1860.

The Society was promoted by a small body of Lutterworth men, who felt that good would be done by raising the level of horticulture in the district. Their names were Dr. Charles Bond, Messrs. G. S. Wardley, W. Footman, and J. Gilbert, with Mr. Thomas Brown as hon. secretary and Mr. W. S. Ivens as treasurer.

For many years the annual show was held on the bowling-green, but this delightful spot proving too small, the venue was changed some twenty-five years ago to the cricket-ground on the Coventry Road, where it now forms one of the annual events of the district.

XXXI

THE GOOSEBERRY SHOW SOCIETY

CLOSELY allied to the Horticultural Society is the Gooseberry Show Society, the records of which have been carefully preserved since the year 1818. It is clear from the opening leaf of the earliest minute book that this book is itself the continuation of an earlier book, so to what date the Society goes back is unknown.

Apparently some of the Coles were among the earlier members, if not actual promoters, of the Society, Richard Cole being secretary at the commencement of the first preserved minute book.

All the early gatherings of the Society were held at the "Wheat Sheaf Inn," an ancient hostelry whose licence was taken away many years ago. It stood in the present Station Road, near the Town Hall. It was a two-storied thatched building of brick and timber, with bow windows facing the street, and standing a little way back from the roadway. Immediately in front stood the old public pump, now removed to a short distance.

In this house the gatherings of the Society were held from 1818 to 1842 without a break, but in 1843

we find the "Lion Hotel" appointed as the head-quarters of the Society. This old inn stood exactly opposite the "Denbigh Arms" in High Street. A few years later it was rebuilt, but its prosperity was short-lived, for it ceased to exist as an inn when the coaches were taken off the road.

After a year's absence the Society returned to the "Wheat Sheaf" and continued to hold their meetings there until 1847 when the inn would appear to have been closed.

Then followed a year at the "Denbigh Arms," after which the Society took up its quarters at the old "Ram Inn."

In the year 1826 carnations were added to the gooseberry show, and this was continued for a few years.

The early rules of the Society are enlightening as to the social habits of the time. Members absent from meetings were fined 1s. to be spent at the meeting. The amount spent on drink at each gathering is recorded, and the signatures of some of the members disclose very unsteady hands.

In the earlier years the heaviest gooseberry appears to have averaged about 18 to 20 dwt. (troy), but in later years this was easily surpassed.

In 1853 it is recorded that Mr. Richard Cole had a red gooseberry ("Wonderful") which weighed 33 dwt., but it unfortunately broke before the day of the show.

In recent years a fine average has been maintained, and it has come to the lot of Mr. William Granger to produce the heaviest berry in the country two years in succession. In 1901 he exhibited a

remarkable example of a "Leveller," which weighed 33 dwt. 10 grains, the heaviest gooseberry yet produced by the old Lutterworth Gooseberry Show Society, and (with one exception) the finest berry mentioned in the records of the National Gooseberry Society.

XXXII

LOCAL CHARITIES

IN the Appendix we give a copy of the Report of the Charity Commissioners on the Lutterworth Charities, dated the 17th November 1911. Here, therefore, it is only necessary to say a word or two about one or two of the more important.

And first we may take Sherrier's School, which has now been absorbed by the official educational establishment. This school was founded under the terms of a bequest in the will of the Rev. Edward Sherrier, of Shawell, dated the 25th January 1730. The income at one time amounted to £260 per annum.

Another Charity which has likewise been applied to other purposes was bequeathed by Robert Poole by will dated 2nd May 1699, and had for its object the excellent intention of apprenticing poor boys to specific trades.

And lastly we may mention here the magnificent gift to the town by Mrs. Feilding Palmer of the Cottage Hospital, which has so far, we rejoice to say, escaped confiscation. It was given in memory of her late husband, the Rev. Feilding Palmer, and was conveyed to a trustee upon trusts enabling the management trustees to use the premises as a

Cottage Hospital for the benefit of the poor inhabitants of parishes within the Lutterworth Petty Sessional Division.

In 1900 the late Mr. James Percival Cross, who was then a trustee, placed in the hands of the trustees £371, 15s. 1d., to be applied for the purposes of the Hospital, and the following pecuniary bequests have been received: Miss A. M. Clowes, £50, Miss Heap, £200, Mrs. Frances Emily Palmer, £500, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hough, £40.

In May 1909 Mr. James Darlington, D.L., J.P., conveyed to the Rector of Lutterworth for the time being two pieces of land adjoining the Hospital and containing together 1 acre, 1 rood, 4 perches, upon trust, to use the same or the income arising therefrom for the benefit of the Charity. This gift protects the Hospital from the risk of being surrounded by other buildings.

Mrs. Feilding Palmer, who died on the 27th of April 1910 at Eastcliffe, Tidenham, by her will, in addition to the legacy of £500 mentioned above, devised all her land at Lutterworth, comprising nearly 100 acres on the Gilmorton Road, to her trustees upon trust to sell the same and pay over the net proceeds to the Hospital trustees for investment for the benefit of the Hospital so long as it shall continue to be used as a Cottage Hospital, with a gift over in the event of its ceasing to be used as such to the poor members of the Church of England, inhabitants of Lutterworth.

Since October 1912 the Charity has been administered under a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners, which constituted a larger body of Trustees.

The present trustees are as follows: — Life Trustees: Messrs. B. H. C. Fox, J.P., W. G. B. Pulman, J. Darlington, J.P., D.L., and W. Abbott. Ex-officio Trustees: the Rev. M. F. Alderson and Messrs. L. T. Topham, J.P., and F. W. Bottrill as Rector and Churchwardens of Lutterworth. Representative Trustees: Mr. J. W. Sanders, County Council; Messrs. G. Spencer and J. G. Nickels, Rural District Council; and Mr. T. P. Buck, Parish Council: elected by subscribers of £1, 1s. each, Mrs. Pryce T. Taylor and Mrs. W. A. R. Young, Mr. J. L. Cross, J.P., and Mr. J. Blakeley.

A new wing to the Hospital was erected in 1911–12 by subscription, Mr. James Darlington bearing one-half of the cost.

The Hospital, which is under the patronage of H.R.H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, has proved a great benefit to the neighbourhood, the average number of in-patients admitted during the seven years 1906 to 1912 inclusive being 57 a year, and upwards of 200 out-patients receive treatment every year.

The object of the Charity is to provide skilled nursing and treatment, but not the services of physicians and surgeons, for all classes within the district, but all in-patients except the very poor are expected to pay at least a part of the cost of their maintenance and treatment.

Miss E. C. Alderson and Miss Clara Britton have been honorary secretary and matron respectively of the Hospital since its foundation.

APPENDIX A

BRIEF FOR REPAIRING THE CHURCH

32 GEO. 2ND A.V. 7

GEORGE THE SECOND, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, of Great Britain, ffrance & Ireland, King, Defender of the ffaith & so forth TO all and singular archbishops & bishops, archdeacons, deans, & their officials, parsons, vicars, curates & all other spiritual persons, & to all teachers & preachers of every separate congregation & also to all justices of the peace, mayors, sheriffs & bailiffs constables churchwardens chapelwardens & stadboroughs collectors for the poor & their overseers & also to all officers of cities boroughs & towns corporate & to all other Our Officers & Ministers & Subjects whosoever they be as well within liberties as without to whom these presents shall come Greeting. WHEREAS it hath been humbly represented unto US as well upon the humble petition of the Minister, Churchwardens & Principal Inhabitants of the Parish of Lutterworth in the County of Leicester as also by Certificate under the Hands of Our Trusty and Wellbeloved Charles Doctor in Divinity William Wright & William Cant John Harper John Simpson & Joseph Peppin Esquires Our Justices of the Peace for Our said County of Leicester made at their General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held at the Castle of Leicester in & for the said county on Tuesday the Third day of October last That the Parish Church of Lutterworth aforesaid is a very ancient structure and that Great Part of the Walls & Roof thereof are in so ruinous a condition by length of time that notwithstanding the Parishioners have

from time to time laid out and expended several large sums of Money in repairing the said Church the said Walls & Roof must be taken down That by the violence of the wind the steeple belonging to the said Church was some years ago blown down which the Parishioners have not been able to rebuild that the Truth of the Premises hath been made appear to Our said Justices in their open Sessions of the Peace not only by the said Petitioners but also by the oaths of several able and experienced workmen who have carefully examined the said Church and made an Estimate of the charge of repairing the same & rebuilding the said steeple which upon a moderate computation amounts to the sum of One Thousand One Hundred and Sixty Two Pounds & Upwards which sum the said Parishioners are not able to raise among themselves being chiefly Tenants at Rack Rents & Curt-houses with numerous poor therefore incapable of undertaking so great a work without the charitable assistance of well disposed Christians They have therefore most humbly besought US to grant unto them Our Most Gracious Letters Patent Licence & protection under Our Great Seal of Great Britain to impower them to ask collect & receive the alms & Benevolence & Charitable Contributions of all Our loving subjects throughout England Our Town of Berwick upon Tweed and the counties of fflint Denbigh & Radnor in Wales & from house to house throughout the counties of Leicester Northumberland & Warwick to enable them to repair their said Church & rebuild their said steeple UNTO which their humble request We have graciously condescended, not doubting but that when these Our inclinations for promoting so pious a work shall be made known to our loving subjects they will readily & chearfully contribute their endeavours for accomplishing the same KNOW YE therefore that of Our Especial Grace & ffavour We have given & granted & by these Our Letters Patent under Our Great Seal of Great Britain We do give and grant unto the said Minister Churchwardens and inhabitants of the Parish of Lutterworth aforesaid & to their deputy

& deputies the Bearer & Bearers here of (authorized as is herein afterwards directed) full power Licence & to you the Respective Ministers & Curates Churchwardens & Chapelwardens to the respective Teachers & Preachers of every separate Congregation, that you & every of you under the penalties to be inflicted by the said Act do receive the same And you the respective Ministers & Curates Teachers & Preachers are by all persuasive motives & arguments earnestly to exhort your respective Congregations & Assemblies to a liberal contribution of their charity for promoting so good a work And you the Churchwardens & Chapelwardens together with the Minister or some of the substantial inhabitants within the counties of Leicester Northampton & Warwick are hereby required to go from house to house upon the week days next following the publication of these presents to ask & receive from the parishioners as well as Masters & Mistresses & servants & others in their ffamilies their Christian & charitable contributions & to take the names in writing of all such as shall contribute thereunto & the sum & sums by them respectively given & to indorse the whole sums upon the said printed Briefs in words at length & subscribe the same with your own proper Hands together with the name of the Parish or Place where & the time when authority to ask collect & receive the alms Benevolences & charitable contributions of all Our Loving Subjects not only Masters & Mistresses but also Lodgers Servants & Strangers within all & every Our Counties Cities Towns Boroughs Hamlets Cinque Ports Districts Parishes Chapelries & all other places whatsoever throughout England Our town of Berwick upon Tweed & throughout the counties of fflint Denbigh & Radnor in the Principality of Wales & from house to house within the several counties of Leicester Northampton & Warwick for the good intent & purpose aforesaid And therefore in pursuance of the Tenor of an Act of Parliament made in the ffourth year of the Reign of Queen Anne instituted [?]

an Act for the better collecting charity & money on Briefs by Letters Patent and preventing abuses in relation to such charities Our Will & Pleasure is and We do hereby (for the better advancement of those Our pious Intentions) require & command all Ministers Teachers & Preachers Churchwardens Chapelwardens & the Collectors of this Brief & all others concerned that they & every of them observe the directions in the said Act contained & do in all things conform themselves thereunto & that when the printed copies of these presents shall be tendered collected & to enter the same in the Public Books of Account kept for each Parish & Chapelry respectively & the sum & sums collected together with the said printed books so indorsed you are to deliver to the Deputies & Agents Authorised to receive the same And We do by these presents nominate institute & appoint The Right Honourable Basil Earl of Denbigh The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Lincoln Sir Thomas Cave Baronet The Reverend Thomas Billio Rector of Lutterworth The Reverend John Hanshaw Charles Hutcheson Doctors in Divinity & Richard Wilson *Clerk*, William ffielding Esquire Matthew Cooper James Butler Richard Warner John Cooper Oliver Wright Thomas Holles John Hague John Adams Richard Tattam Thomas Stevenson & John Stevenson Gentlemen Robert Smith & Edward Neale Churchwardens & the Churchwardens of Lutterworth for the time being Trustees & Receivers of the Charity to be collected by virtue of these presents with power to them or any five or more of them to give Deputations to such collectors as shall be chosen by the said Petitioners or the major part of them & the said Trustees or any five or more of them are to make & sign all necessary orders & do all other reasonable acts for the due & regular collection of this Brief & Advancement of the said Charity & to see that the moneys when collected be effectually applied in repairing their said church and rebuilding their said steeple AND LASTLY Our Will & Pleasure is that no person or persons shall collect or receive

any the printed Briefs or Moneys collected thereon but such only as shall be deputed & made the Bearer or Bearers of these presents or duplicate thereof IN WITNESS whereof we have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent & to continue in force for one whole Year from Lady Day next & no longer.

WITNESS Ourself at Westminster the Twenty ffifth Day of January in the Thirty Second Year of Our Reign.

BILLINGSLEY

APPENDIX B

CHARITY COMMISSION REPORT, 17TH NOVEMBER 1911

IN THE MATTER OF THE FOLLOWING CHARITIES IN THE PARISH OF LUTTERWORTH, IN THE COUNTY OF LEICESTER

Cotes-Deville Payment, The	Foundation before 1674.
Heap, Emma, for Poor	Will proved in the Principal Register, 2nd February 1910.
Iliffe, Sarah	Will proved at Birmingham on 2nd May 1877.
Phillips, Dr.	
Ryder, Bishop	Foundation about 1809.
Smith, John, for the Poor	Will proved in Leicester on the 19th November 1866.
Smith, Martha, for Poor	Will proved at Leicester on the 16th September 1870.
Vernham, George	Gift before 1673.
Watts, Charles	Will proved at Lichfield on the 6th May 1867.
White, Henry	Will proved at Leicester on the 17th March 1855.
Wigley, Mary, and Others	Indenture of Lease and Release, dated respectively on the 24th and 25th March 1803.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

Description.	Extent of Amount.	Tenant, Person Liable, or Persons in whose Names Invested.	Gross Yearly Income.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
The Cotes-Deville Payment (rent charge issuing out of the manor of Cotes-Deville)	—	S. Pares	1 0 0
Charity of Emma Heap for Poor (India 3½ per cent. stock)	265 18 3	"The Official Trustees of Charitable Funds"	9 6 0

Description.	Extent of Amount.	Tenant, Person Liable, or Persons in whose Names Invested.	Gross Yearly Income.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Charity of Sarah Iliffe (Consols)	52 7 3	"The Official Trustees of Charitable Funds"	1 6 0
Charity of Dr. Phillips (Consols, part of a sum of £245, 5s. 11d. —like stock)	103 17 11	Rev. Robert Henry Johnson (deceased) Matthias Gregg (do.) William Footman (do.)	2 11 8
Bishop Ryder's Charity (two shares in the cottage and garden representing the Old Lutterworth Mill)	—	The Rector of Lutterworth	—
Cash	3 0 0	Do. do.	—
Charity of John Smith, for Poor (Consols)	322 0 3	"The Official Trustees of Charitable Funds"	8 1 0
Charity of Martha Smith, for Poor (Consols)	213 1 0	Do. do.	5 6 4
Charity of G. Vernham: Rent charges issuing out of six enclosures of land containing 40 a. 0 r. 17 p. at Lutterworth	—	Trustee, W. E. J. B. Farnham	1 0 7
Rent charges issuing out of gardens at Woodmarket, Lutterworth	—	Mrs. Kate Fox	0 4 6
Rent charges issuing out of a house in Church Street, Lutterworth	—	Messrs. M. C. and E. Buszard	0 4 6
Rent charges issuing out of the Valleyfield-Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth	—	Thomas Walter Dowell.	0 4 6
Charity of Charles Watts (Consols)	105 2 6	"The Official Trustees of Charitable Funds"	2 12 4
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1273	350
1550	530
1780	1784
1789	1800
1801	1652
1811	1845
1821	2102
1831	2262
1841	2531
1851	2446
1861	2289
1871	2080
1881	1965
1891	1800
1901	1734
1911	1896

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