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EXTRACT FROM MEMORIALS OF COUNTIES OF ENGLAND

MEMORIALS OF OLD NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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CHAPTER ON SOUTHWELL by W E HODGSON

Priest Vicar of Wells Cathedral, and late Assistant Curate of Southwell Minster

We draw your attention to page 249, second paragraph.

It will be noticed: This refers to the Pilgrimage to Southwell Minster for the chrism and to pay parish dues.

It was called the Whitsuntide procession.

We think this may be the forerunner to the 'Gate to Southwell'

John Meredith 09.06.2017

SOUTHWELL

By W. E. HODGSON,

Priest Vicar of Wells Cathedral, and late assistant curate of Southwell Minster

Hidden in a hollow amidst the undulating downs which skirt the Vale of Trent, Southwell has escaped the notice which it deserves from both the antiquary and the historian. Its annals are not wildly exciting, for the streets of the little township have not often resounded to the clash of arms, nor its halls been the scene of statesmen's high debate; but its history is really interesting to the serious student, for in some ways it is unique. And above all, the lover of our church architecture finds in the stones of the Minster a majesty of conception, mixed with an extreme delicacy of detail, which it is not easy to excel.

The best way to approach Southwell is to travel by the road from Nottingham which passes through Thurgarton, the low road the natives call it, for when the pilgrim has breasted Brackenhurst Hill, he is greeted by a truly artistic view: the sight of Southwell Minster nestling in the valley below, framed in a plentiful surrounding of trees, and banked with a pleasing profusion of red-tiled roofs. It is the south side of the church which is thus seen, and the picture of the cathedral standing in the midst of green fields, once the Archbishop of York's park, seems the very ideal of peace and tranquillity. It is indeed a true epitome of the whole story of the church and town.

The history of Southwell is known to reach back to the year 956, but like many other places whose origins are uncertain, that history has been extended still further back into the past, till it rests on the very weakest of foundations. The mistake arose partly, no doubt, from a desire to attach tothe church the well-known name of some pioneer of Christianity in this land, and partly from the mistaken identity of the locality of Tiovulfingater, the place near which, so Bede tells us, Paulinus baptized large numbers of converts in the Trent. Camden, who is followed by all the local historians, describes Paulinus as the founder of the first church at Southwell, but there is no real evidence to support this assertion, and we must be content to admit that the origin of the place is unknown. The locality, however, was inhabited during the Roman occupation of Britain, for undoubted Roman remains have been discovered. A piece of pavement can be seen beneath some old wooden stalls in the south limb of the transept of the Minster, and when some digging was in progress a few years ago in the garden of the Residence House, to the east of the Minster, the remains of a Roman wall were discovered. These remains were photographed before they were covered up again, and it is quite possible in the summer to trace the course of the masonry beneath the lawn by the lighter shade of green which it causes the grass above it to assume. Experts, to whom the fragments of pottery and other things which have been dug up in the garden have been shown, are convinced of their genuineness. Whether the Roman occupation took the form of a villa or an encampment we can’t tell; but the sheltered hollow in which Southwell lies is one that would have taken the fancy of some magnate seeking a site for his

country house, for it would have been easily accessible from the Trent, and was also within a few miles of the Fosse way. But this is all conjecture, and though at any time the spade may reveal direct evidence of earlier history, yet at present we can only start with certainty at the year 956 AD.

There is no direct evidence to show in what diocese Southwell lay before 956, for it is uncertain whether that part of Nottinghamshire belonged to Lindsey or Mercia. If the boundary lay to the west of Southwell, then it was in Lindsey and in the diocese of Sidnaceaster, and the province of York, but if to the east, it was in Mercia, and so in the diocese of Lichfield and the province of Canterbury. Nottingham itself was in Mercia, but Newark seems always to have belonged to the Archbishops of York, and so was probably in Lindsey. There is ample evidence to suppose that the boundary lay between Southwell and Newark, a supposition to which the connection of the former with St. Eadburg lends weight. This connection of St. Eadburg is unfortunately not at all clear. In a tractate on the burial places of English saints, which was apparently a kind of pilgrims' guide to famous shrines (the oldest extant copy is assigned to the year 1015), there is the following entry: "There resteth St. Eadburg in the Minster near the water which is called Trent." St. Eadburg, abbess of the monastery of Repton, died at the beginning of the eighth century; she was a lady of Mercian royal descent, and the friend of St. Guthlac, the founder of Croyland, to whom on one occasion she sent a coffin and a winding sheet, with a request that he should use them when the proper time arrived. These strange gifts St. Guthlac is said to have ordered to be used after his death.

St. Eadburg of Repton is generally considered to be the saint of that name whose shrine was mentioned in the pilgrims' guide as being at Southwell. But why was she buried at Southwell? It has been conjectured that she founded a monastery there; but there is no evidence of this, and as far as we have any certain knowledge there does not seem to have ever been a time when any regular Order was established at Southwell. Tradition also is silent on the point. Before 956 Southwell was probably a royal estate, and perhaps one of the least disturbed parts of Mercia. Besides, in those days, the peregrinations of the bones of saints were not infrequent, and St. Eadburg's must have been moved to Southwell some-time after her death, as it appears that St. Eadburg's body lay at the Monastery of Limming or Lyminge in Kent for over 150 years. For there are references to her in two charters in Birch's *Cartularium Saxonicum.*

1. A grant of land in Canterbury, A.O. 804, by Coenulph, King of the Mercians, and Cuthred, King of the Cantuarii, to Selethryth, Abbess of the Convent at Limming, "ubi pausal corpus beatae Eadburgae." (B.C.S. 317, Cod. Dip. 188.)
2. A grant by Athelstan to the church of St. Mary, Lyminge, of land at Vlaham or Elham in Kent, A.O. 964. Lo this charter Lyminge is described as the place "ubi sepulta est sancta Eadburga." (B.C.S. II 26.)

If these charters are genuine, an interesting question is raised. What was the connection of St. Eadburg with Lyminge, and why was her body moved, so long after her death, to Southwell? A possible answer to the second question is that her bones were moved to Southwell by order of King Edgar, to enhance by their presence, the gift of land at Southwell, which King Eadwig had made to Oskytel of York in 956.

If this was so, the body was probably moved to Southwell very shortly after 964.

In my essay on Thomas II. Of York, I have tried to outline the reasons which would induce Edgar to confirm the gift of his brother, and also the reasons the King would have for making the gift as valuable as possible in the eyes of the Archbishop (pp. 13,14).

This grant of land by King Eadwig to Archbishop Oskytel of York, in 956, is the first real fact in the history of Southwell. The genuineness of the charter which embodies this gift has been called in question, but the balance of evidence seems distinctly in favour of its authenticity. The extent of the lands granted to the archbishop, as far as can be made out from the charter,[1] corresponds roughly to the territory now belonging to the two parishes of Southwell, St. Mary and Holy Trinity.

It is not meant to infer that there was no church at Southwell before 956, but that up till then it had most probably been one of the numerous minsters or parochial churches distributed over the county. Some people still think, because the church at Southwell is called " the Minster," that it was once served by monks. Such was not the case, and it is a noticeable fact that the churches to which this name has clung were none of them monastic- York, Lincoln, Beverley, and Southwell. The word "Monasterium," the Bishop of Bristol says, "is used in the Middle Ages for a parish church in the country. 'Minster' has always been a special Yorkshire word, York Minster, Beverley Minster."

An interesting fact about this grant of land by Eadwig to Oskytel is that it seems to be the first recorded instance of a grant of private jurisdiction, the archbishop being given sac and soc over his new estate. Oskytel did not, in all probability, leave the church purely parochial, but established a college of Secular Canons there, whose duty it was to serve the Minster, and also to look after the neighbouring churches. If he founded the college he would also most likely rebuild and enlarge the church to make it more worthy of its higher position. Though at this period the history of Southwell seems to consist only of probabilities, yet we do know for certain that by the Norman Conquest there was a College of Canons there who were prebendaries, for Domesday Book, in speaking of the lands which the archbishop possessed at Southwell, describes two bovates as being "in a prebend." This is very interesting, for very few, if any, other canons held their land as prebendaries before the Conquest, those of the great church at York not reaching that status till the episcopate of Thomas of Bayeux [2] (1070-1100). Also, Arch- bishop Ealdred (1060-1070) is recorded as having bought land to "found prebends" at Southwell.

1 The part of the charter which defines the boundaries of the land is written in Anglo-Saxon and is obscure.
Southwell was all one parish up to about sixty years ago.
Alcuin of York,* p. 82, *n11tt.

2 Leach, Memorials of Southwell Minster p. xxii.

This College of Secular Canons had a remarkable career. At the time of the Conquest, they were seven in number, and by the end of the thirteenth century they had grown to sixteen, at which number they remained until the dissolution of the Chapter seventy years ago. The history of this college may not be exciting, but its career is most interesting, for it lasted from before the eleventh century until the year 1840. No other ecclesiastical corporation in the country had such a long existence, surviving the storms of the Reformation to be swept away by the almost fanatical wave of reform which raged over England during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

But we must return to earlier days. Even after the first real fact of 956 the history of Southwell remains very incomplete, nothing but a few scraps of information rewarding the most diligent search, and the reader must bear in mind that the meagre scraps that are to be picked up are almost entirely ecclesiastical, for the history of Southwell consists simply of the history of the Chapter and their church.

Aelfric Puttoc, Archbishop of York (1023- 1050), is said, like many of his successors, to have lived at Southwell, and to have died there. He was a very worldly-minded prelate and bears a bad reputation, though he is said to have been a great benefactor to Southwell, which is quite likely as he particularly favoured the great secular churches of his diocese, and among other things organised the College of Canons at Beverley. He was, however, a magnificent patron of the abbey of Peterborough where he was buried. His successor Kinsi (1050-1060), gave large bells to Southwell, and Ealdred, who succeeded him. bought lands to found prebends there, and also built. both at Southwell and York, a refectory.[1] Ealdred was fated to be the last Saxon archbishop, and he seems to link the Saxon and Norman races together by the fact that he crowned both Harold and William the Conqueror, We know of little intercourse between Thomas of Bayeux, the first Archbishop of York, and Southwell, but his successor Gerard, a man of great learning and one who played a curious part the political and ecclesiastical life of William II.'s reign, is supposed to have rebuilt the palace. He is a man who has not had justice done him in contemporary history. He held very advanced views on Church matters, and was in great disfavour because his studies were far too secular for those days, being devoted to mathematics and astronomy. His zeal for these subjects drew suspicion of dabbling in magic and evil practices, and he was verily believed to have sold himself to the devil for the sake of forbidden knowledge.[2] Gerard spent most of his time at Southwell, where he died, and the story of his death is worth recording. On May 21, 1108, the archbishop had been dining and went for a walk in the garden "near to the dormitory." Lying down to rest on a bank with head on a cushion he not unnaturally fell asleep, but it in the words of the chronicler, [3] "a fatal sleep" for he never woke again.

1 Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops: Edited by Canon Riane (Rolls Series), vol.ii p.35

2 England under the Normans and Angevins: H.W.C.Davis p190

3 William of Newburgh, Historia Revarus Anglicanum, book ii Chap. 3 (In Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I Rolls Series)

His end was regarded as most shocking, not so much for the way of his death, but because underneath the cushion on which head had rested was found a book by Julius Firmicus, a writer on mathematics and astrology. His last moments had thus been given to the study of the black arts, and his sudden end was regarded as the righteous judgment of Heaven for indulging in such a sin. His body was carried from Southwell to York by an "unfrequented road," and on its arrival was not met, as was usual, by the citizens and clergy of the cathedral, but by noisy boys who irreverently pelted the bier with stones. He was buried outside the cathedral without any funeral rites, and it was left to his successor to transfer his body from this unhallowed grave to a more fitting resting place within the Minster church. Perhaps it was not only his secular studies and untimely end that caused the canons of York to treat his body with such disrespect, for it is probable that they bore him no good will because he had zealously tried to reform their morals and discipline, which were very lax. Another reason why Gerard's body was treated with such indignity, and which made his contemporaries feel so sure that his life beyond the grave would be anything but happy, was the fact that be had died without making a will, and so had made no bequests to the Church or to the poor which might have atoned for his evil life.

Gerard was succeeded by another Thomas, nephew to Thomas of Bayeux, who had been made by his uncle the first Provost of the College of Canons at Beverley. He is of no importance in history except for the not very noble part he played in the long dispute between the Sees of Canterbury and York concerning the right of allegiance which the former demanded from the latter. But for our purpose Thomas of Beverley is famous, "for be may be regarded as the builder of the present nave of Southwell Minster."[1] Though Thomas, who died in 1114, would not have seen his church rise much above the ground, yet to him is due the initiation of the scheme which other men carried through, the result of which we of these latter days still wonder at and enjoy. Forty years at least would such a church take in building, and it was probably not half completed when the troubles of Stephen's reign began. A chance entry in the continuation by John of Hexham of the *Historia Regum,* of Symeon of Durham helps us to suggest a date by which the church was almost if not quite finished. Under the year 1143 is the following remark: "William Painel, commander of the troops in Nottingham, moved a band of soldiers to Southwell, wishing to break down the wall by which the precincts *(consepta)* of the church of St. Mary were protected, in order to pillage. A number of the inhabitants who had gathered in the neighbourhood of the place manfully defended it." This entry is interesting, for it not only tells us that even the peace of Southwell was disturbed by the upheavals of the Civil War, and that the common people were zealous to defend their church, but it also gives us reason to believe that the church itself was probably finished by then, for it is not likely that time would be spent in building a wall capable of being defended round the precincts until the church inside was completed, for it was not till the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the corporate bodies which controlled our greater churches looked to their own homes first and largely left the houses of God, which were under their charge, to look after themselves.

1 The Visitation Charge of the Archdeacon of Nottingham, delivered at Southwell in May 1909,

We may also note an incident recorded in the continuation of the Chronicle of Florence of Worcester (*sub ano* 1137), for it is interesting as being a case of the miraculous. "At Southwell, an archiepiscopal town, while a grave was being prepared for interment, the relics of some saints and a glass vessel containing some very clear water, supported on uprights, which apparently protected it from being broken, were found; this being given to the sick and taken by them, they were restored to health." Perhaps these were the relics of St. Eadburg which, after the Conquest, may have been removed from the church and buried in an unknown grave, for the Normans did all they could, for political reasons, to discourage the veneration of the Saxon saints.

But to return to Thomas of Beverley and the Minster he set a building. We can imagine, then, that the first part to be constructed was the choir and the lower stages of the central tower, and as much of the nave and transepts as would be required to give abutment to the tower arches; [1] and experts tell us that the western part of the nave is distinctly later in character. Mr. J. Bilson attributes the aisle vaults of the nave to *c.* 1130, and also gives as his opinion that the Norman choir of the Minster did not have a square east end, but that what has been taken for traces of such an end probably indicate a broad sleeper wall across the chord of the apse, as at St. Mary's, York, and Selby Abbey. Of this church the nave and transepts remain to-day as a fitting memorial to Thomas of Beverley.

The choir of the Norman church which was pulled down to make room for the present one consisted probably only of three bays, and would, in fact, form but the presbytery and sanctuary of the church, the ritual choir being extended westwards as far as the first or second bay of the nave. Our authority for saying that Thomas of Beverley was the archbishop who started building the Norman Minster depends on a letter which is preserved in the *Libre Albus* of Southwell -the oldest manuscript book preserved in the library. The commencement of the compilation of the White Book dates from about the beginning of the fourteenth century, but it contains copies of documents dating back as far as the beginning of the twelfth century. The White Book consists of Papal Bulls, Royal and Episcopal Letters, and charters and other documents connected with the privileges and property of the collegiate church. The letter in question runs, when translated into English, thus: "Thomas, by the grace of God (Archbishop of York) to all his parishioners of Nottinghamshire, greeting in the blessing of God. We pray you, as most beloved sons, that for the forgiveness of your sins you will help, by the blessing of your alms towards the building of the church of St. Mary of Southwell. And whosoever, even in the least degree, shall give the smallest assistance shall be to the end of time a participator in all the prayers and benefactions that shall be done in that and all our other churches. And this ye ought to do more willingly that we release you from the need of visiting each year the church of York, as all our other parishioners do, but instead (you shall visit) the church of Southwell, and there have the same pardon that ye have at York."

1 Mr. Francis Bond's opinion, quoted in Life of Thomas II*, by* W. E. *Hodgson, p. 86.*

It will be noticed that the letter does not say which Thomas is the author, but all the evidence we can gather, and the style of the Minster itself, make it certain that it was Thomas of Beverley (1108-1114). This letter also tells us of something else that Thomas did for Southwell. He made that church a pro-cathedral for the county of Nottingham by allowing the parishes to send their representatives there instead of to York Minster, on the annual pilgrimage to fetch the chrism required by each parish for the year, and also to pay at the same time their accustomed dues. The chrism, which as a rule was consecrated by the bishop in his cathedral on Easter Eve, was used in baptism, confirmation, and extreme unction. It was consecrated at York, and a portion sufficient for the parishes of Nottinghamshire was sent to Southwell, and distributed on the morrow of Whitsunday to the representatives of the parishes who had journeyed there. Thus, it was called the Whitsuntide procession. To be the goal of the Whitsuntide procession was a great privilege, for it brought honour and profit to the church and town. This custom continued down till the time of Archbishop Drummond, towards the close of the eighteenth century, by whose mere fiat it was abolished, though of course, through the changes in the value of money the dues then paid were of no material advantage. The chrism, needless to say, had not been distributed subsequent to the Reformation. The church of York had at one time tried to take the Pentecostal offerings away from Southwell, and a warm dispute ensued, which was only terminated by Pope Innocent Ill. This Whitsuntide procession, which was started by Thomas of Beverley to encourage the county of Nottingham to help in building the church, became the great event of the year in the little country town. Shilton, in his *History of Southwell* (published in 1818), quoting from an older book, tells us that the Mayor and Corporation of Nottingham, With the Justices of the Peace, till quite recent times kept up the custom of riding to Southwell on Whit Monday, all decked in their best clothes, and bringing with them their “Pentecostals” or “Whitsun farthings.” Apparently, the Mayor was allowed a certain discretion, and sometimes did not come “because of the foulness of the way or destemperance of the weder." The money used to be paid in the north porch of the Minster, and even after the procession was given up for a long time the Chapter clerk attended for form's sake in the porch on Monday in Whit Week, although the money was collected by the apparitor at the Chapter's visitation in the county. The payment of this money long before it was given up had become a mere form, so trifling were the amounts— Nottingham itself only paying 13s, 4d. and Southwell 5s.— yet at one time this must have meant large sum of money and have been a great help towards the upkeep of the fabric of the church. Southwell was very gay on Whit Monday with the representatives of two hundred and five odd parishes riding into the little town. Whit Week was long regarded as Southwell Feast week, when merry village sports and other pastimes made a welcome break in the peaceful progress of the year. The greatest attraction were the donkey and pony races from Burgage Green to the top of Hockerton Hill and back. Nothing is left of all these enjoyments now, and the whole feast has degenerated into Southwell Races, which are held at Rolleston.

It must have been a real blessing for the inhabitants of Nottinghamshire to have been excused the tiresome journey to York once a year; yet irksome as that duty was we can well believe that in those days it was regarded as a sacred obligation and as such was faithfully fulfilled. Yet the hearts of Nottingham men must have swelled with gladness when they heard the letter read which gave them leave to go to Southwell instead, and

they blessed the goodness of Thomas of Beverley. Besides this, Thomas is thought to have added two more to the number of prebends, and altogether he may be counted as one of the greatest benefactors the church of Southwell ever had.

In the few pages allotted to the history of Southwell in this volume it is impossible to give a complete or consecutive account of even the little that we know about the place. We must therefore be content with an item here and there, remembering that much interesting matter has had to be omitted for want of space.

The Minster was enlarged and made more beautiful as time went on, and the Chapter was increased by successive archbishops and its privileges multiplied, but it never became a very wealthy body, and at times we hear of complaints of poverty, and even of inability to keep up the style of worship expected in so great a church. Statutes were given to the church by Archbishops Walter de Grey (1216-1256), John le Romeyne (1286-1295) and Thomas de Corbridge (1300-1304) either to reform abuses or to make better provision for the service of God and the welfare of the church and its ministers. By the days of le Romeyne the Chapter reached the number (16) at which it remained till its dissolution. The canons were all technically equal, for there was no dean, except apparently for a short time in the days of Walter de Grey, who perhaps tried the experiment of appointing one in order to improve the discipline of the college. Several charters in the White Book are signed by “Hugh, Dean,” who generally, though not always, put his name first. There is also one signature of a “Henry, Dean," but this is most likely a mistake, because if Walter de Grey did once appoint a dean there seems little evidence that the experiment was repeated, and it is doubtful if the one appointed was able to exercise much authority. So, the college remained a corporate body of sixteen canons, all equal in rank, though the Prebendary of Normanton (near Southwell) seems to have had more privileges than the others, as he appointed the parish vicar of Southwell, and as chancellor had the appointment of the master-ship of the grammar schools throughout the County. Besides the sixteen canons, there were sixteen vicars, mostly in priests' orders, connected with the Minster, one being presented for institution to the Chapter by each canon. These vicars were the representatives of the canons in the Minster; and they were needed, as the evil of non-residence was felt at a very early date, and none of the steps taken to check it had any permanent effect. Besides the vicars there grew up in time a large college of chantry priests, and at the time of the Reformation the number of clergy attached to the church was quite fifty. The vicars had lodgings in the Vicars’ Close, and a common hall where the present Residence House stands, which was taken from the vicars about the beginning of the seventeenth century. The vicars of Southwell, though a numerous body, with their rights and privileges, never became so numerous or important and independent a body as the college of vicars at Wells.

On rare occasions Southwell creeps into the history of the nation, only, however, to retire once more into seclusion amidst the peace of its undulating hills. At the end of August 1189, the town witnessed an ecclesiastical function of some importance. Geoffrey Plantagenet, the natural and only faithful son of Henry had been appointed by his brother, Richard I., to the see of York at the great council held at Pipewell, in Northamptonshire, about a week before. But Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, claimed the right of consecrating him, and forbade him either to receive priests' orders or consecration from anybody but himself, and appealed to the Pope to support his rights, reminding the King and Court of the old dispute between

Canterbury and York, which had continued so long in the days of the first three Norman kings. Geoffrey had meanwhile got into trouble with the King, who cancelled his appointment to York. Nothing daunted, Geoffrey set out for Southwell, the nearest church of importance in the diocese of York, taking with him John, Bishop of Whithern, his suffragan, who himself had only been consecrated at the recent council at Pipewell by John, Archbishop of Dublin. At Southwell, on August 29th, the Bishop of Whithern ordained Geoffrey priest.[1] Though Geoffrey was soon reconciled to the King, yet Richard had no intention of allowing him to be consecrated, and insisted on his promising to remain out of England while the King Went on a crusade. Poor Geoffrey is one of most pitiable characters of this period. Misfortune seemed to dog his footsteps, while he had the unfortunate knack of quarrelling with every one with whom he had to deal. In 1190 Richard sent Hugh, Bishop of Durham, back to England with letters in which he appointed him Justiciary north of the Humber. Hugh met William of Ely, the Chancellor and Regent of the kingdom, at Ely, and showed him the letters. The Chancellor said he was willing to obey the King's orders, and in a friendly way travelled with Hugh as far Southwell, where he suddenly arrested him, and kept him in custody till he had surrendered to him the castle of Windsor and made other concessions.[2] On April 4th 1194, the Monday in Holy week, a more distinguished pair met at Southwell -Richard of England and William of Scotland and there debated on the differences between them, departing together the next day to Melton.' But these were isolated events, and the comings and goings of kings and rulers did not often disturb the peace of the little town. Besides the doings at Whitsuntide, the visits of the different archbishops would be the greatest excitement, for when in England they would spend, no doubt, some part of each year at their manor of Southwell, for it was commodious and near to London; besides, in those days it was customary for great men to travel from manor to manor, and stay long enough to consume the provisions and stores laid up, for it was not possible for one manor to support a great dignitary and all his retinue for more than three weeks or a month at a time.

The old Norman choir in which Geoffrey had been ordained was not destined to stand much longer, for about the year 1220 or 1230 Walter de Grey started to build the present choir. We know for certain that in 1233 he issued an indulgence of thirty days to all who should help by their alms towards the completion of this new work. For the description of the choir, as of the other parts of the building, the reader must refer to the excellent guide-books to the Minster; yet we may say here that the choir is as good an example of thirteenth century work as can be found. Its lightness and elegance, in contrast to the heavy if majestic solidity of the nave, is most pleasing. Next in order of time comes the chapel in the east side of the north transept of the nave, now used as the vestry. This chapel formerly contained two altars of different chantries, but has since been put to various uses; even becoming a song school before the abolition of the chantries. In later years it was the vicar's vestry, then it became the library until the books were moved to their present home above the chapel in question.

1 Roger de Hoveden (sub anno 1189)

2 *Ibid* (sub anno 1190)

The next addition to the Minster was the vestibule to the Chapter House, which was at one time an open cloister; and though the closing up of its eastern side may have added to the comfort not only of the vestibule but of the whole church, it certainly has not improved its appearance. This vestibule leads to the goal of all lovers of Gothic art who visit Southwell—the Chapter House, with its incomparable doorway, which has often been described in words of unstinted praise, and indeed it would be impossible for such praise to be exaggerated. The present writer will not attempt to describe this building, but will quote the words of Mr. G. E. Street, who says: "What either Cologne Cathedral, or Ratisbon, or Weisen Kirche are to Germany, Amiens Cathedral and the Sainte Chapelle are to France, the Scalegere in Verona to Italy, are the Choir of Westminster and the Chapter House at Southwell to England."[1] Mr. A. F. Leach is of the same opinion when he says: "It is the most perfect work of the most perfect style of Gothic architecture." It is not only the doorway with its exquisite carving, but the beautiful proportions of the whole Chapter House, and the extreme lightness and delicacy of all its parts and details, that arouses the enthusiasm of the most casual visitor, and holds the expert spell-bound with its charm.

Archbishop John le Romeyne (1286-1296) is the man who set on foot this work. He it was who initiated the rebuilding of the nave and Chapter House at York. For the same man to have started three such beautiful examples of Gothic architecture as the Chapter Houses at Southwell and York, and the nave at York, is indeed to lay posterity under a debt which can never be paid. But his interests were not only architectural, His first care was the moral and spiritual discipline and welfare of the great Churches in his diocese. He established, among other things, his right of visitation over his cathedral Chapter, and gave Statutes to Southwell which he based on those of York. The next addition of importance to the Minster was the choir screen or pulpitum. Here, again, it does not seem an exaggeration to say that in this feature also Southwell is very hard to beat; for though, unfortunately, the greater number of the carved heads are not the original ones at all, yet as a whole the pulpitum stands unrivalled for its beauty and elegance of design. It was built towards the end of the first half of the fourteenth century. In the White Book there is a copy of a license granted by Edward III. in 1337, to the Chapter, allowing them the free transit of stone from Mansfield through Sherwood Forest. This license, which was granted as a result of complaints made by the Chapter that their earls had been unduly made to pay toll by the King's foresters, is generally supposed to refer to the cartage of material required for building the screen. And therefore, the screen has been dated from the year of this license, 1337; but the present writer is bound to confess that, from an impartial reading of the license in question, it does not seem to infer that any special work was in progress, but only refers to the stone that would be continually needed for the repair and support of such a fabric as the Minster, and of all the buildings and houses depending on it. Southwell, it must be remembered, had to fetch all its stone from Mansfield, no durable material being found in the neighborhood. The screen is built in the fully developed Decorated style, and must have been erected somewhere about this time, yet this license is not nearly explicit enough to warrant any one taking its date as the precise date of the screen itself. The sedilia, remarkable both for their beauty and for the unusual number of seats five were built a little later than the screen, and are the last addition of importance which can be entirely praised.

1 Quoted from the Rev. A. Dimock's Guide to Southwell Cathedral p.91

As regards the great west window, which is fifteenth- century work, much as it is needed for the illumination of what would otherwise have been a very dark interior, one cannot help feeling that it is out of keeping with its surroundings, and does not harmonise with the rest of the nave.

So uneventful was life at Southwell during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that a recent student of the Chapter records of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries could find nothing else to publish, except the peccadilloes and moral lapses of the vicars choral and chantry priests which came up before the Chapter for punishment. It is of course, no excuse to say that the clergy at Southwell were no worse than other like bodies, and it must be admitted that many things happened that ought not to have occurred.

In 1530 a very important person came to Southwell. Cardinal Wolsey had never visited this house of his during the years of his greatness, but after his fall he spent the summer of 1530 there. In Passion Week he travelled from London to Peterborough, and "upon Easter Day in the morning he rode to the resurrection, and that day he went in procession in his vesture cardinal, with his hat and hood upon his head, and be himself sang the high mass there very devoutly; and granted clean remission to all the hearers." [1] He stayed at Peterborough till the Thursday in Easter Week when he removed to the house, near the town, belonging to Sir William Fitzwilliam, an old friend of his. Here he remained a few days, and then went north, staying nights at Stamford, Grantham, and Newark, and reaching Southwell in the middle of the week after Low Sunday. He could not go to the palace for it wanted repairing, so he lodged in the house of an absent prebendary, removing to the palace about Whitsuntide.

Mr. Dimock, in his book quoted above, gives an extract from a pamphlet, published about fifteen years ago, which starts as follows: "Who was less beloved in the north than my Lord Cardinal before he was amongst them? Who better beloved after he had been there awhile? He gave bishops a right good example bow they might win men's hearts." On the eve of Corpus Christi be decided to sing high mass in the Minster on the following day, and ordered Cavendish to make all due preparations. Nor was he prevented of his purpose by the fact that during the night two gentlemen arrived from the King, and caused him to be roused, and after some private speech made him sign some paper. At the close of the summer, "at the latter end of grease time," so Cavendish puts it, he removed to Scrooby, and by departing in the middle of the night disappointed many gentlemen lodging in Southwell, who came to accompany him on his journey through the forest, intending "to lodge great stag or twain for him by the way." But he dares not indulge in such honours, for he feared what his enemies would make of such doings with the King, and so departed by night to Welbeck abbey, and was in his bed continuing his night's rest before his disappointed admirers at Southwell were awake. Greatly grieved were the people of Southwell when the Cardinal left them, for they had received nothing but kindness from him, as did all the people of the places in his dioceses where he stayed from that time till his arrest. From his behaviour during these few weeks, it is abundantly evident what a good and wise bishop Wolsey would have made if he had served his God as well as he served his King.

1 Cavendish, *Life of Wolsey* (Temple Classics, p. 181).

It was not to be expected that the Reformation and the church spoliation indulged in by Henry VIII and Cromwell would leave Southwell unharmed. The Chapter, perhaps wisely, surrendered their church and estates to the King in 1540. They possessed a kind friend in Cranmer, who was a Nottinghamshire man, and no doubt mainly through his influence Henry re-founded the Chapter in 1541. Southwell also was mentioned as one of the fifteen new sees which Henry professed his desire to create out of the spoils of the monasteries and one of the prebendaries a certain Dr. Cox- was even named as the first bishop. But Henry's cupidity got the better of his zeal, and the fifteen new dioceses dwindled down to six, and Southwell was not among the chosen few.

But the restored Chapter did not enjoy uninterrupted peace, for at the end of the White Book are copies of three letters from Sir Edward North, Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, in which he accuses the Chapter of disposing of some of their plate and ornaments, and after rebuking them for so doing, orders them to surrender the goods in question, and despatch them at once to London for the use of the King. Mr. A. F. Leach thinks these letters probably belong to the year 1546.[1]

Southwell does not seem to have been affected by the first passing of the Chantries and Colleges Act. Mr. Dimock says: " The Court of Augmentations, to which was entrusted the alienation of the different estates, left Southwell alone, as the list of 1547 shows that the prebendaries and other clergy were in full enjoyment of their benefices."[2] But this Act was renewed at the beginning of the reign of Edward VI., and the Chapter ceased to exist. "On the petition of the parishioners, the Minster was continued as the parish church ; and the sacrist prebendary, John Adams, was made vicar of Southwell at a stipend of £20 a year, with his vicar choral Matthew Fort, and the old parish vicar, Robert Salwyne, as 'assistants to the cure,' with £5 a year each."[3] The lands of the Chapter, after changing hands once or twice, eventually remained in the possession of John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, and at his attainder lapsed to the Crown. This gave Queen Mary the opportunity she did not often get of restoring church lands to their original owners, and the Chapter was reinstated. No doubt the cause of the Chapter was greatly helped by the influence of Heath, archbishop of York, whom the Queen had appointed on the deprivation of Holgate. But the position of the Chapter was still legally uncertain, the Act of Suppression had not been repealed. But it was safe during Mary's reign, and was left in possession by Elizabeth, who granted new statutes for the governance of the college which remained the foundation of its organisation until its dissolution in 1840. It was left to James l. to put the Chapter on a firm legal footing, during whose reign it was argued that the Chapter of St. Mary's, Southwell, is vested in the Crown by statute of Edward VI. "thus, enabling James I. in 1604 to make the magnanimous grant and confirmation to the Chapter or the collegiate church of Southwell of the site and precinct of the church, and the possessions belonging thereto."[4] James I.'s interest in the place may have been influenced by the fact that he passed through Southwell on his way to London to take possession of the throne. He was struck with surprise, we are told, at seeing such a church in so small a town. And when some of his Court remarked that York and Durham were more magnificent structures, James replied rather peevishly in his Scotch accent, "Vare wele, vare wele, but, by my blude, this kirk shall justle with York or Durham, or ony kirk in Christendom."

1 , *Memorials of Southwell Minster Introduction* p.

2 & 3 Dimock, Guide to Southwell Cathedral, p115

4 Livett, *ibid* : Quotation from State Papers, 1604, Ass. Ch. 15241 Brit. Mus.

Once more the Chapter started on its quiet course, and again its history is for the most part a peaceful blank. We get just a glimpse of the condition of things in 1635 from some odd papers of answers to the visitation articles of the archbishop in that year. The old faults are prominent; canons neglect to keep their residence and let their houses fall into disrepair, and the due amount of sermons and lectures do not seem to have been delivered. One canon in his answers complains that the organist is very negligent in his duties and especially in the management of the choristers, often only correcting them in service time to the great disturbance of the worshippers. “And besides all this," he goes on, “he is a great lyer as yr lordship knows if you please to remember him ... and as soon as he has made a boy fit for the quire he sells him to some gentleman and soe by this means the quire is impoverished." The selling and even kidnapping of solo boys seems to have been not uncommon at this time. The same prebendary says that the church needs a “paire of good organs which I wish your Grace would be pleased to contribute something towards and divers other gentlemen would be ready to follow in so good a worke.” He also says that the chimes and clock are much neglected. Another says that he believes “Copes and a decent Corporall and a Bason for offertory are required” and that “there have been writings taken out of the Treasury," A third tells the archbishop that in the Treasury “are divers writings, but so laid up that they are in danger of wette, by raine or snowe, if the leads should happen to be faulty, and so confused that it will be hard to finde what the church may stand suddenly in need of. The letters patent of Queen Elizabeth, King James, the authentique copy of the statutes, with divers other evidences and muniments of the church are not there but in the keeping of the Residentiaries. How they were taken out, or what caution taken for the returning of them, he knoweth not." After reading here how little care was taken for the preservation of the documents or the church it is a cause for thankfulness that as many remain as do.[1] This negligence amply accounts for the great losses the library has sustained, and there is no need to put the blame of their removal or destruction on the shoulders of Cromwell and his Ironsides, as is so commonly done, as if their shoulders had not enough to carry already. The Treasury was described in one of the papers of visitation answers, mentioned above, " by the Chapter House," and was probably the room now used as the library.

During the Civil War Southwell was the scene of much activity. King Charles stayed there on his way to hoist his standard at Nottingham, and he also spent some hours at The Saracen's Head " before he gave himself up to the Scottish Commissioners at Kelham. On one occasion he lodged at the palace, but it had been much damaged, for it had been occupied by the troops of both sides. The townspeople mostly favoured the Puritans. This may have been partly due to the fact that Mr. Edward Cludd, the most prominent layman in the town, was a great supporter of Cromwell. After the dispossession of the church he bought Norwood Park, close to Southwell, which had belonged to the archbishop, and built himself a house there. As a magistrate, it was his duty to perform marriages under the new regime, and there was a big oak in the park which was famous as the place where he had tied many couples together. Shilton, who published his history 1818, says the tree was still pointed out and was called Cludd’s Oak. After the Restoration Cludd continued to live at Norwood, leasing the property from the archbishop.

1 The important MSS. in the Library, besides the White Book, consist of Chapter Decree Books, which start about the middle of the fifteenth century, and with some considerable number years omitted, go down to 1840. There is also a book of leases and other documents.

Posterity owes a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Cludd, for it is said to have been due to his influence with Cromwell that the latter did not damage the Church nor nave, which he certainly intended to do, as he thought the choir large enough for the needs of the parish.

A quotation from Thoroton's *Nottinghamshire* is interesting. It refers to a visit of King Charles I. to the town, which took place during the period between the battle of Naseby and his subsequent residence at Oxford. "The King with a few faithful followers took refuge at Southwell after his arrival he walked about the town entered the shop of a shoemaker. whose name was Lee, who was a fanatic of the day. His Majesty, after some conversation with this man, bid take measure for a pair of shoes. Lee, on taking the King's foot in his hand and looking at him attentively, refused to proceed. The King, astonished at the man's behaviour, desired him to do what he had requested; but the shoemaker actually refused, giving the reason that the King was the customer he had been warned against in a dream the night before, in which he (the customer) was doomed to destruction, and those who worked for him would never thrive. The forlorn monarch whose misfortunes had opened his mind to impressions of superstitions, uttered an ejaculation expressive of his resignation to the will of providence, and returned to the palace, which was the place of his abode."[1]

There is also a story that during the Civil War a lady took refuge in the room over the north porch, and that during the time of her concealment she gave birth to a child. It is said that all the time she was hiding from the Puritans, a body of these men were camping in the church, and her terror at being discovered was not lessened by hearing their shouts and ribaldry so near at hand. She was kept alive by an old fried who crept in every night to bring her food and render her what other assistance was possible in her terrible predicament. The Commonwealth soldiers stayed for some time in Southwell, especially during the siege of Newark, and many skirmishes are reported to have taken place in the neighbourhood, but there seems to be no truth in the tradition that Cromwell bombarded the palace, although the so-called trenches which were made for his guns are pointed out on the neighbouring hill to the south. The unfortunate part of the story is that these trenches, which are really gravel pits, are situated at a much greater distance from the palace that any cannon of that period could carry; and also, that part of the palace which faces these very pits is today the best-preserved part of the ruins.

It may also be added that it would have been a marvellous thing that the church should have escaped if any considerable bombardment had taken place.

After the troubles of the Commonwealth a more profound peace than ever enveloped Southwell. Matters, of course, had to be put straight again, and there are extant two letters of Charles II. written just after the Restoration, one of which orders the Chapter to provide a sufficient maintenance for the ministers who officiate in the parochial churches appropriated to the Chapter, implying that the Chapter had rather starved such livings, and ordering them to increase the emoluments up to the value of £80 a year. The other letter is addressed to certain gentlemen directing them to "seize and secure into safe hands and places all the rents and revenues," together with all the woods and other property belonging to the Chapter in Nottinghamshire.

1 Quoted by Mr Dimock, *op.cit* p.129

Nothing much of interest happened during the last 180 years of the Chapter’s existence. On November 5, 1711, a fire, caused by lightning, broke out in the south-west tower of the nave and the flames destroyed the roof of the nave and the organ and melted the bells in the central tower. At the end of the eighteenth century the houses in the Vicars' Court had grown so old and dilapidated that they had to be pulled down and the present ones were erected in their stead. At the beginning of the nineteenth century fears, quite unfounded, were felt as to the safety of the spires on the western towers, and so the towers were literally beheaded and the tops battlemented instead. The spires were restored about thirty years ago, but after comparing them with old pictures of the former ones they do not seem nearly so shapely, and are even thought to be grotesque by some people.

The Chapter Decree Books, which from 1661-1840 are fairly complete, contain nothing of great moment. There are mentions of organ repairs and the duties of the ringing men, the prohibition of fives playing against the walls of the church, the regular entry of a decree "that the Dogg-whipper shall have a new coat as usual." This official was doubtless the man who wielded the dog-tongs, though such an instrument is not mentioned. His office is continued to this day in a certain verger who is on duty on Sundays and any special occasions, and marks his descent from the old dog-whipper by always carrying a long wand.
In 1798 there is an entry that the tradesmen shall be paid £61,9s. 2d. for putting up a new bed in the Residence House, which certainly seems a large sum for such an article. In 1820 it is decreed that an alteration be made in the wine cellars of the Residence House so as to furnish room for the accommodation for each prebendary. There were sixteen prebendaries supposed to keep a residence of three months each in turn, and it looks as if some of them did not wish their wines to get mixed up with those of their less fastidious colleagues. In 1805 the Chapter accepted the gift of the Brass-Eagle lectern, now in the choir, which had belonged to Newstead abbey, and had lain for more than 200 years at the bottom of the lake at Newstead, where it had been hidden by the monks at the dissolution of the monasteries.

There is one curious entry of which no explanation is given. On June 23, 1806, it is "decreed that the last seat in the South Side be allotted to the Prior of Thurgarton.” What this means it is impossible to say; this seat had always been given by courtesy to the Prior of Thurgarton, while such a dignitary existed, because he was head of the nearest important religious house.

In the history of the town itself there is nothing much to relate. Southwell seems to have been quite a gay little place at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There were archery meetings and a flourishing bachelors’ club and numerous dances—the Assembly Rooms being built in 1808 for this purpose—a theatre was built in 1816, and there was a billiard-room as well. Lord Byron, who lived with his mother during his school and college days in Burgage Manor House, described the place as being very pleasant and possessing “a very genteel society."

At the accession of Queen Victoria, the Chapter still continued, but the end was near. In 1835 a Royal Commission was appointed to look into the affairs of the church, for there was a general demand that the whole body ecclesiastical needed rousing to life. Reform was active in other branches of public life, and it was not possible, nor indeed desirable, that the church should go on in her old way and not stir herself to meet the changing needs of the

ever- moving life around her. It was felt that there was a great waste of time and money, and especially was this the case among cathedral and collegiate bodies. The Chapter of Southwell did not escape the keen scrutiny that was fixed on all such bodies; it was not any more effete or lazy than other capitular bodies, and it was by no means as wealthy as some Chapters were at that time, but there seemed little need for it, and it appeared to fulfill no useful purpose in the Church at large, for Southwell was not a cathedral city nor was it the centre of a large population, and as there was nothing for its canons, as such, to do, it was thought that its revenues ought to be diverted into some more useful channel.
We need here only mention the recommendations of the Commissioners so far as they affected Southwell. ln 1837 Nottinghamshire, except the Peculiar of the Chapter of Southwell, was transferred from the diocese of York to that of Lincoln. For three years longer the Chapter was suffered to remain, but "in 1840 a clause or two in a bill (3 and 4 Viet. c. 113), supplemented the next year by a special Act (4 and 5 Viet. c. 30), destroyed the Chapter, after making allowance for vested interests, as a useless waste of ecclesiastical revenues. The canonries as vacancies occurred were not filled up, the minor canons were to be reduced to two (eventually to none at all), and the property was to go to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to help in founding Ripon and Manchester, although these two dioceses were quite wealthy enough to endow their own bishoprics."[1] It is interesting to remember that Mr. Gladstone, then the young Tory member of Parliament for Newark (in which division Southwell lay), spoke very strongly in the House against the destruction of the Chapter.

In time Southwell became a simple rectory, with the Residence House as the official residence of the incumbent. The Commissioners pay the rector and two assistant curates, the organist, choir, and other officials of the church, and keep the fabric in repair.

The Chapter was not dissolved at once, the canons being allowed to keep their stalls and their incomes as long as they lived, but they were to have no successors; one of their number was to be appointed by themselves as perpetual residentiary. The Chapter thus died a lingering death. The policy which destroyed it was short-sighted, for it was evident that Nottinghamshire could not long remain in the diocese of Lincoln, for it was a district with a rapidly increasing population owing to the development of the coal trade. Indeed, the last prebendary of the old foundation was not dead before a project was on foot to make Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire a separate diocese in themselves. And that same last prebendary had scarcely been in his grave ten years when this project was carried out—the new see being constituted in 1884. But nothing had been done to stop the transference of the patronage of the Old Chapter to the Bishops of Ripon and Manchester, to whom it was allotted by the Act of 1840. The last prebendary, the Rev. T. H. Shepherd, had exercised all the patronage until his death in 1873, and then each living as it became vacant went in turn to the Bishops of Ripon and Manchester. It was in vain that the first Bishop of Southwell, Dr. Ridding, tried to secure this patronage, which consists chiefly of livings just round Southwell.

l Dimock,. p.. 12,f..

It was principally due to Bishop Wordsworth. of Lincoln, that Southwell Minster, was chosen as the cathedral of the new diocese, and he was also one of the largest subscribers to the funds needed to found the new bishopric, parting even with some of his official income. The Minster was a building worthy of the honour, and though by the foolishness and short-sighted policy of the previous generation the bishop found no Chapter at his cathedral church, yet this church possessed the advantage and privilege of two choral services daily, of the kind that rightly expected to be found in cathedral churches, for the Commissioners had not discontinued the revenues which supported the choral services, which had thus been sung daily in the church from time immemorial under the regime of the old College of Canons. It was left to the present bishop of Southwell to make the Palace, which the archbishop never used after the Great Rebellion, owing to its ruinous condition, once more the home of a bishop, and a place of generous hospitality to all who are concerned in the affairs of the Church.

There is now a chapter of twenty-four honorary canons of which there is nothing to say except that perhaps its members are more honorary than is usually the case; sixteen of them have taken the names of the old prebends for their stalls, and the other eight are called after places in the diocese. It seems a pity, perhaps, that the old names have been taken, for there is really no connection whatever between the old body and the new.

The little town does not grow very fast, but it is in no sense old-fashioned, the advent twenty years ago of a lace factory giving the place a modern appearance and helping to keep it up to date. There is also a silk mill and a flour mill and large nursery gardens to give employment to the people.

It is impossible to close this chapter without of one word of regret that Southwell, and indeed all Nottinghamshire, remain divorced from the ancient ties with the archbishopric of York. When the present archbishop visited in June 1909 on the occasion of the commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the building of the nave, he expressed the same regret; for, as he said, in the very place his long line of predecessors had worshipped and ruled and dwelt, he was himself only present by the sufferance, willingly granted, it was true, of his brother of Canterbury. He hoped that some day he would come again in his own right and not as a stranger, but as a metropolitan visiting one of the dioceses which formed part of the province over which he ruled. It is to be hoped that Nottinghamshire is made into a separate diocese, as the needs of the Church will soon demand, that it will be restored to its old province of York and once more acknowledge the overlordship of the archbishop of the northern see.