Charles James Billson

Mediaeval Leicester

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to gather together some information, concerning the ancient City of Leicester, which is now scattered over many volumes and documents, some of which are not readily accessible to the ordinary reader. A chapter has been added, for the sake of the student, giving references to the original authorities.

The book had its beginning in a Lecture on "Leicester in the Fourteenth Century," which I gave in the year 1897, at the request of the Leicester Museum Committee. A few years ago, I happened to find the notes of this old harangue, with the plans and illustrations of mediæval Leicester then prepared, all of which had been lying undisturbed for some twenty years. This discovery re-kindled my interest in the subject, and led to the studies now printed under the name of "Mediæval Leicester."

The title is not, I fear, very accurate; for the period which it is intended to cover really begins with the Conquest, and comprises the next 500 years, or thereabouts. In the strict language of historians, the Middle Ages came to an end in England with the last of the Plantagenets. The word "mediæval," is often extended, however, in popular usage, to the Tudor period; and it is in this sense that I have ventured to use it—indeed, in some cases, I must plead guilty to trespassing yet further into the modern era.

To all those who have helped me in the preparation of this book I am deeply indebted.

Without the enthusiastic co-operation of Mr. S. H. Skillington, who has grudged no pains to further its production, it would never have been published. He has helped me in every possible way, with so much knowledge and with such good-will that I cannot adequately express my thanks. I feel as the Trojans felt of yore, when they received the royal Carthaginian bounty—

"Grates persolvere dignas
Non opis est nostrae."

I am most grateful also to Mr. A. B. McDonald, A.R.C.A. (Lond.), of the Leicester School of Art, who has been very generous and successful in preparing plans and drawings, and in supervising the illustrations contained in the volume. I wish also to thank Col. C. F. Oliver, D.L., T.D., and all others who have so kindly helped with these embellishments, or who have allowed me to publish them; and I take this opportunity of congratulating both Mr. Newton and Mr. Keene on the good results of the photographic work entrusted to them.

I am under considerable obligations to Mr. Henry Hartopp, of Leicester, who has assisted me from the vast stores of his local knowledge; to Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson, M.A., F.S.A., who has given me much-appreciated help, chiefly in matters ecclesiological; to Mr. G. E. Kendall, A.R.I.B.A., who most obligingly made searches at

the Public Record Office and elsewhere; to Mr. J. C. Challenor Smith, formerly Head of the Literary Department at Somerset House, who very kindly transcribed some original wills, and helped me in other ways; to the Mayor and Corporation of Leicester City, who readily gave me permission to print a translation of one of the unpublished documents preserved in their Muniment Room, and to publish an illustration of it; to the Venerable Archdeacon Stocks, D.D., who willingly transcribed and translated this document, and gave me other assistance; to Mr. H. A. Pritchard, the Town Clerk of Leicester; to Mr. T. H. Fosbrooke, F.S.A.; to Mr. H. M. Riley, of the Leicester Municipal Reference Library; to Mr. F. S. Herne, the Librarian of the Leicester Permanent Library, and to many others.

But those who are kind enough to help a lame dog over a stile are not answerable for his disability, and the mistakes and shortcomings of the book are all my own.

"Me, me, adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum!"

<div align="center">CHARLES JAMES BILLSON.</div>

33, SAINT ANNE'S ROAD,
EASTBOURNE,
October 14th, 1920.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

<div align="center">

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1. IN TRINITY HOSPITAL CHAPEL ------------------- *Frontispiece*

A composite drawing by A. B. McDonald

The recumbent effigy, which was removed from the Collegiate Church of the Newarke, was thought formerly to be that of Mary, Countess of Bohun, but is now believed to be that of Mary Hervey, the Nurse of King Henry V. The armour hanging on the walls appears to be mainly of the 16th century, and is generally thought to have belonged to the Town Watch, as it has the Town Arms painted upon the buckler and upon the staves of the halberds. The arrangement, however, is suggestive of funeral achievements.

2. PLAN OF MEDIÆVAL LEICESTER --------------- *to face page*

3. PLAN OF NORTH SUBURB ----------------- " "

4. PLAN OF EAST SUBURB ------------------ " "

Drawing by A. B. McDonald.

The relics comprise an Early English (13th century) Holy Water Stoup, and part of a grotesque, with a fragment of decorative carving, probably of the 15th century, and a 15th century Font, which is traditionally reported to have come from St. Peter's Church, and has been for many years in a garden at Guthlaxton Street. (By kind permission of Mr. Henry Hartopp and Mr. E. E. Ellis.) (See page 76.)

This handsome oak screen, now in Ockbrook Church, Derbyshire, was taken from the chapel of the old Wigston Hospital at Leicester. It will be noticed that the front of the screen, which originally faced the nave of the Hospital Chapel, now faces the chancel at Ockbrook. Mr. A. B. McDonald has no doubt that the upper part is of later date than the main structure, with which it does not form a consistent unity. When the Chapel was "restored" in 1807, the best parts of the discarded woodwork, including this screen and some carved oak stalls, together with the early 16th century glass from the West window described by Nichols, seem to have been saved from destruction by the good taste and influence of Mr. Thomas Pares, F.S.A., of the Grey Friars, Leicester. He caused all this woodwork and glass to be set up in Ockbrook Church, with some modern additions that can easily be distinguished. Thomas Pares was Patron of the Benefice, and his brother William, who died in 1809, was Vicar of Ockbrook. See Cox's Churches of Derbyshire,

vol. iv., pp. 207-208, and the Pares pedigree in Fletcher's *Leicestershire Pedigrees and Royal Descents*.

Photograph by Keene. (See page 87.)

From an old engraving.

Photograph by Newton. (See page 118.)

Photograph by George Hawes.

In the opinion of Mr. T. H. Fosbrooke, F.S.A., who has made a study of the subject, this wall originally formed part of the southern boundary of the Norman Castle. As at Lincoln and Oxford, and other castles, this defensive wall appears to have run up to the Keep, which stood on the Mound. The holes in the wall, about three feet from the ground on the East and eight feet on the West, are "put-log" holes, not embrasures, and were used for the erection of a platform, either for the building of the wall, or as a "hourd" in times of attack.

Photograph by Newton. (See page 203.)

Photograph by Newton. (See page 208.)

From a drawing by W. Parsons.

Photograph by Newton. (See page 203.)

Photograph by Newton. (See page 205.)

KEY TO THE PLAN OF MEDIÆVAL LEICESTER.

1. North Gate.
2. West Gate.
3. East Gate.
4. South Gate.
5. North Bridge.
6. Frogmire Bridge.
7. Bow Bridge.
8. West Bridge.
9. Braunston Bridge.
10. Cow Bridge.
11. All Saints' Church.
12. St. Michael's Church.
13. St. Peter's Church.
14. St. Martin's Church.
15. St. Margaret's Church.
16. Grey Friars' Church.
17. St. Mary's Church.
18. St. Nicholas' Church.
19. St. Clement's Church.
20. St. Sepulchre's Church.
21. Castle Hall.
22. Castle House.
23. Castle Mound.
24. Newarke Hospital.
25. Dean of Newarke's House.
26. Newarke College Church.
27. Wigston's Chantry House.
28. Newarke Grange.
29. The Austin Friars.
30. Hermitage.
31. St. Sepulchre's Well.
32. Newarke Mill.
33. Castle Mill.
34. North Mill.
35. Old Mayor's Hall.
36. Blue Boar Inn.
37. Lord's Place.
38. High Cross.
39. Guild Hall.
40. Wigston's Hospital.
41. Henry Costeyn's House.
42. The Grey Friars' Priory.
43. Grey Friars' Gateway.
44. do. do.
45. Shambles and Draperie.
46. The Gainsborough.
47. Elm Tree.
48. Green Dragon Inn.
49. Angel Inn.
50. Maiden Head Inn.
51. St. George's Guild Hall.
52. Rupert's Tower.
53. Newarke Main Gateway.
54. Bere Hill.
55. Old Barn.
56. Little Bow Bridge.
57. St. Austin's Well.
58. Roger Wigston's (?) House,
59. Free Grammar School.
60. Shirehall.
61. Prisona Regis.
62. St. John's Hospital.
63. Red Cross.
64. Mary Mill.

RIVER SOAR

WEST FIELDS

THE SKEYTH OR SENVY GATE

SOAR LANE

BLACK FRIARS

ST CLEMENTS GATE

FRIARS CAUSEWAY

ST JOHN'S LANE

ST MICHEL'S LANE

IDYLL LANE

ST PETER'S LANE

TOWN WALL ST GUILDHALL

DEAD LANE

SOAPER'S LANE

PARCHMENT LANE BUTT CLOSE

TORCHMERE

CHURCH GATE

TALBOT LANE

HOT GATE

SWINES' MARKET

KIRK GATE

THREE MARKET

THE DRAPE

RED CROSS ST

ST FRANCIS LANE

GREY FRIARS

ST MARTIN'S CHURCHYARD

FRIAR LANE

MILLSTONE LANE

HORSE FAIR LANE

HORSPOOL

THE SATURDAY MARKET

TOWN WALL CH.

WALLOWTREE GATE

BEDE HOUSE MEADOW

THE NEWARKE

HANGMAN LANE

MILL LANE

HORSE FAIR LEES

SOUTH FIELDS

COW LANE

A PLAN OF
MEDIAEVAL LEICESTER

MEDIÆVAL LEICESTER.

I.
THE STREETS.

THE little mediæval town of Leicester comprised about 130 acres. It was guarded on three sides by walls, which occupied, at least approximately, the site of the ancient Roman walls, or earthen ramparts. On the West lay the river Soar, and on that side no trace of any town wall has yet been found, although there was a gateway and a gate house, like the others, which stood in front of the West Bridge. The four gates of the town, over which, as early as 1322, hung the arms of the Sovereign, stood nearly at the North-West, North-East, South-East, and South-West points of the compass. The main road entered the town at the South Gate, and passed out at the North Gate, and the only other streets of importance were those which intersected the main road at the High Cross and ran to the East and West Gates. Other ways were mere lanes. The Borough Records sometimes describe the four chief streets leading to the four Gates as the four high streets, "quatuor altas stratas Leycestriae," but the High Street, *par excellence*, was that part of the King's highway which ran from the South Gate to the North. Of the two intersecting streets, that which led to the West Gate was called in part Hot-Gate, and in part Apple-Gate, and that which led to the East was known from an early date as the Swinesmarket. There were two suburbs beyond the walls, the North Suburb and the East. Outside the West Gate the Priory of the Austin Friars lay between the two arms of the river, and beyond it stretched the West Fields. The common lands of the town, known as the South Fields, or South Crofts, lay without the South Gate.

In the 13th century Leicester was divided into four Townships ships for police purposes, and these "vills" were known as the North, South, East and West Gates, The same division was also adopted in the collection of taxes, but as the population of one quarter would dwindle and that of another increase, changes were made from time to time in their names and boundaries. In a Pontage Roll of 1252, the division is E., N. & S. Gates, a blank (presumably W. Gate), and another blank (presumably East Suburb). In the Tallage Rolls from 1269 to 1280, the division into E., S., N. and W. quarters is regular, except

that the West quarter is sometimes omitted, and the Suburb is sometimes added. It is stated once that the collectors were elected by the community from each quarter. After 1280 the practice became irregular, and in the first half of the 14th century there are many rolls with no divisions indicated. From 1342 to 1356 the division into a S. and N. quarter, an E. suburb, a Swinesmarket quarter, and a Saturday Market quarter is fairly regular. No W. quarter is mentioned, and the Bishop's tenants living in the Bishop's Fee are sometimes given separately. The Auditors of Account (1477-1492) were chosen from the E., S. and N. quarters and from the Swinesmarket. After 1492 they were chosen from "the E. quarter without the Gate," "the E. quarter within the Gate," and the S. and N. quarters. The original quarters were marked out by the four streets leading to the four gates.

I. THE NORTH QUARTER.

The Northern, or North-western half of Leicester was so ruthlessly and completely destroyed after the siege of the town in the year 1173 that it remained for many centuries the least populous. In the latter half of the 13th century the following are the numbers of taxpayers recorded in seven tallage rolls.

	Year.	Quarter				E. Suburb.	Total.	Reference in The Records of The Borough of Leicester.	
		N.	W.	E.	S.				
									Box 3
1	1269	59	55	147	82	80	423	I.128-145	Roll 86
2	1270	66	62	123	62	79	392	"	26
3	1271	73	65	153	83	94	468	"	64
4	1274	57	47	100	82	75	361	I. 148.	68

5	1276	63	58	149	65	93	428	I. 150.	7(
6	1280	41	49	106	63	60	319	I. 184.	7⁵
7	1288	66	56	131	63	61	387	I.208-211	69

| | | 425 | 402 | 909 | 500 | 542 | $\overline{\overline{2778}}$ | | |

Averages: 60   57   130   71   78 $\overline{\overline{396}}$

——v——   ————v————

117   279 $\overline{\overline{396}}$

(The list of inhabitants of the Suburb is missing in the first roll, so the average of the six other rolls has been taken; and in the seventh roll the N. and W. quarters are lumped together, the taxpayers in the two quarters amounting to 132, half of whom have been here allotted to each quarter.)

It will be seen that there were only 117 taxpayers in the North-western half of the town out of a total of nearly 400. That is to say, not a third of the population lived in that large part of the town which lay above the High Cross, while more than two-thirds lived in the far smaller South-eastern part and the East Suburb. In later times calculations are more difficult on account of the altered arrangement for dividing the borough; but undoubtedly the North-western half remained all but empty, while the South-east was crowded.

The lanes in the upper part of the town, known as the "Back Lanes," where houses were once plentiful, became deserted for at least three centuries after the sack of 1173. They led chiefly to orchards and closes, and stretched so far south that St. Peter's Lane is described as one of them. The burial place of Roger Goldsmith, who was stated to have been buried in the "Back Lanes," was near Bond Street, formerly Parchment Lane. The Butt Close, where archery was practised, lay by the East Wall, and St. Margaret's Charity School was built on part of it. This piece of ground, which comprised $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres or more, was at one time rented from the Crown, and afterwards became town property. A strip of land, on which were two pairs of butts, and which lay East of the Wall, "stretching in width from the King's Highway to the wall of

Leicester," was taken on a 99 years' lease in 1458 at the rent of a barbed arrow.

Of the three Churches which once stood within this quarter, All Saints', St. Peter's, and St. Michael's, the two latter fell into disuse and decay, and were entirely demolished in or before the 16th century, when their parishes were absorbed in that of All Saints'.

The most important street in this quarter of the town for many centuries was the old HIGH STREET between the North Gate and the High Cross. "It was lined on both sides," writes Thompson, speaking of the 14th century, "by houses which presented their gable ends to the road. They were not always close together as in a row, but sometimes surrounded by a plot of ground, used either as an orchard, garden, or small field. The principal inns were situated here, and were distinguishable from their size, outward appearance, and rudely painted signboards. ... The better kinds of houses had windows; the poorer ones were supplied with lattice work in the openings. There was little, if any, pavement, and heaps of filth were frequently to be seen before the doors of the dwellings." The principal public buildings facing this street on the East side were the Church of All Saints, the Hospital of St. John, the prisona regis, or County Gaol, built in 1309, the Shire-hall, and later the Free Grammar School, built in 1573-4.

The Blue Boar Inn lay on the West side. On that side also stood the Cordwainers' Row, where the shoemakers carried on their trade, and nearly opposite to All Saints' Church, for more than three centuries, there was a Bell-foundry. Here, too, were many of the dwellings of the leading citizens, such as the house which John Reynold gave for the use of the Mayors of Leicester, and the "Stocks House," near the High Cross, with its orchard or garden lying on the north of Dead Lane, once occupied by Alderman William Morton. This house is stated by Miss Bateson to have been the original "stock house," or store house, which was once used to contain the Borough stores of coal and other materials. The Borough store house, however, to which she refers, was situated in the Saturday Market, and not at the High Cross. Another house belonging to the community which was used as a store house was in the Holy Bones, near the Mayor's Hall. But there was "a Barne in the Ded Lane called the store howse," which belonged in 1525 to the Corpus Christi Guild, and was then "in dekey." If Morton's house took its name from any "stock house," which seems doubtful, it may have derived it from this barn.

The Wednesday Market, which was held from time immemorial at the High Cross, seems to have extended north during Elizabethan times, and in

Speed's map of 1610 all that part of the High Street which lay between the Cross and the North Gate was designated "The Wednesday Market."

Leading East out of the High Street, below St. John's Hospital, and under the southern wall of its garden, was St. John's Lane, afterwards called Gaol Lane, or Bridewell Lane, and now known as Causeway Lane.

A few yards farther down, a lane left the High Street on the same side, which is described in a Coroner's Roll of 1303 as "venella que se extendit ab alta strata versus ecclesiam S. Petri et versus Torchemer," the lane stretching from the High Street towards St. Peter's Church and towards Torchmere. Nichols quotes a deed of 1586, which describes Torchmere as the old name of the Queen's Highway, "near to a place there where formerly stood a cross." It seems to have been named after a pond or watercourse, which at one time lay there, for in 1278 a man was fined for washing fells in Torchmere. The name also occurs in the form "Torchesmere," and may mean the pool where "torches" (*i.e.*, great mullein flowers) grow, as "Blabbs Mill," near Castle Bromwich, took its name from the May-blobs that flourish by the Mill pool. Torchmere seems to have been part of the long, winding highway which is shown on old maps of Leicester running down from near the North Gate in the general direction North-East by South, and which was known, in part of its course, as Elbow Lane.

St. Michael's Lane led west out of Torchmere towards the Church. It was described as "the common way which leads to St. Michael's Church," or "St. Michael's Lane," and in a deed of 1483 its position is indicated thus. There was a large piece of garden ground, which was bounded on the east by Torchmere, "near the Cross there," and it stretched from "a lane called Idyll Lane on the South in St. Peter's Parish to a lane called St. Michael's Lane in the Parish of St. Michael on the North." Idyll Lane seems to have been known later as Feill Lane, or Storehall Lane. St. Michael's Lane is also described as being parallel with "Blanchwell Lane."

The road leading from the High Street to St. Peter's Church is referred to in a Tallage Roll of 1354 in an abbreviated form as "Peter's" (Petri); in 1484 it was called "St. Peter's Church Yard Lane," and, according to Miss Watts, it was for some time known, at the beginning of the 19th century, as "Woman's Lane"; but in Cockshaw's plan of Leicester, published in 1828, it is marked "St. Peter's Lane." by which name it is still known. The Church is thought to have stood near the corner of St. Peter's Lane and the present West Bond Street.

There was a certain blind alley leading out of the High Street, known as the Dead Lane, a name found also at Nottingham. In the year 1307 nine taxpayers

were living in this "mortua venella," and in 1335 a byelaw was passed prohibiting unringed pigs in a certain part of the High Street, and "from the Church of St. Nicholas as far as the lane of Deadlane in the Swinesmarket." At the division of the town Wards in 1484, the second Ward began "in the High Street at the Mayor's Hall Lane and the Dead Lane end on both sides the street unto the North Gate." It seems, therefore, that the Dead Lane was on the Eastern side of the Old High Street, below St. Peter's Lane, and nearly opposite to Blue Boar's Lane (as the Mayor's Hall Lane was afterwards called), on or near the site of Freeschool Lane. In 1573 William Morton granted to the town a piece of land in the High Street extending northwards from Dead Lane 61 feet. The Elizabethan Grammar School was built partly upon this site. Hence it would seem that Dead Lane was merged in Freeschool Lane. This street must be distinguished from Deadman's Lane, a later name occurring in the West quarter of the town. Both Nichols and Thompson confused them. A way ran north out of Dead Lane to St. Peter's Church, which was known as Cross Lane.

SOAPERS' LANE, which was in the Parish of St. Peter's, was North of the Swinesmarket, and parallel to it. It was known as "the lane of the Soapers" as early as 1314, and doubtless the Soapmakers were settled in this quarter long before that date. Two sons of a member of this trade entered the Guild Merchant about 1200. The lane does not seem to have been thickly populated, as the Corpus Christi Guild for some hundred years owned a garden there, and another large garden lying in "Soaper Lane in St. Peter's Parish," was divided up between the members of a family in 1481.

PARCHMENT LANE was the old name of New Bond Street, running North out of the old Swinesmarket. The Parchmentmakers were settled in Leicester as members of the Guild Merchant at the beginning of the 13th century, and the "vicus parcamenorum," or "Parchmentmakers' way," is described in a deed of 1303. Lord de Grey owned four houses and six other tenements, gardens or crofts there, and the Corpus Christi Guild in the 15th and 16th centuries possessed a barn there, which had once belonged to the Grange of the Abbot of Crowland. Four gardens in St. Peter's Parish were described in 1478 as "stretching to the lane called Parchment Lane to the West as far as the wall of the town," *i.e.*, they lay between Parchment Lane and the East Wall by Churchgate. At the division of the Wards made in 1484, the sixth Ward ran "from the East Gate on both sides the street to Pexsall corner" (*i.e.*, Pexsall's house) "with Parchment Lane." In 1524 it was resolved at a common hall" that the Swinesmarket shall be kept from this day forth in the Parchment Lane, and no more in the High Street and in the East Gate." The street subsequently

acquired the name of the Swinesmarket, and is so called, as late as 1828, in Cockshaw's map. The change was not made, however, until long after 1524, for in the Borough rental of 1594 it was still described as Parchment Lane.

THE SWINESMARKET, the present High Street, running from the High Cross to the East Gate, was throughout the Middle Ages, a very populous and important thoroughfare, and gave its name to the district. Here once stood the King's Horse Mill. About midway down the street on the north side was the large dwelling house purchased by the Earl of Huntingdon in 1569 for £100, and thenceforth known as "Lord's Place." When Parchment Lane became the place of the market for pigs in the 16th century, the old Swinesmarket was rechristened High Street, as it appears in Speed's map of 1610, the former High Street then becoming High Cross Street. It will be remembered that the Swinesmarket was always one of the four "high streets" of the town. It was described, in 1523, as "the Hy Street which is in the Est yate," and in 1587 it was called "High Street, alias Swinesmarket."

II. THE EAST QUARTER.

The greater part of the land in this quarter of the town was occupied by the Saturday Market, which lay at the South-eastern corner, bounded by the town walls, and by the Monastery of the Grey Friars, whose house stood south of Peacock Lane, and whose grounds extended, according to Throsby, from the upper end of the Market Place to the Friar Lane meeting house, that is, within four chains of the old High Street.

The principal mediaeval thoroughfares were Kirk Gate, The Sheepmarket, St. Francis Lane, The Cank, Loseby Lane, and Friar Lane. The road which ran beyond the South wall was known in the middle of the 15th century by its present name of Millstone Lane. In Queen Elizabeth's Charter of 1589 this road, or the Eastern portion of it, is called Horse Fair Lane. Nichols followed Throsby in identifying Millstone Lane with Hangman Lane, a name which occurs as early as 1337. But Hangman Lane would seem rather to correspond with Newarke Street, as in Combe's plan of 1802. This is indicated by the terms of the extension of the Cattle Market, in 1783, "down the South Gate to the Horse Pool, and also along the Welford Road to St. Mary's Workhouse or across Hangman Lane if necessary."

KIRK GATE is now called Town Hall Lane. In 1354 it was described as "Venella Martini," "Martin's Lane." In 1458 it appears as "Kirk Lane," in 1478 as "Kirk Gate," in 1483 it is called "the church lane unto the High Street"; in 1493, "St, Martin's Church Lane"; and, in 1505, "Church Lane." In 1494 the Abbot of

Leicester paid rent to the Corpus Christi Guild for a house which he then occupied, called "The corner house" in the "Kyrke Lane End." It was also known as Holy Rood Lane. One of the objects of "squinting Pollard's" defalcations, in 1670, was a tenement described by Throsby as being in "Holy Rood Lane, now Town Hall Lane."

THE SHEEPMARKET is the modern Silver Street. It was described in 1352 as "the lane which leads from the East Gate to the Church of St. Martin." In the next century it was known as the Sheepmarket, being so named in 1458. It was afterwards known as "the lane at the backside of the Lion," because, says Nichols, "where now is the sign of the King's Arms there was formerly the sign of the Lion till about 1670." He was, however, mistaken in identifying it with *vicus calidus*, or Hot Gate, which was the old name of St. Nicholas Street. When the market for sheep ceased to be held in the old Sheepmarket, at the beginning of the 16th century, the street became known as Silver Street, and is so named in Hall papers of 1587. The name may have been an old one revived, suggested perhaps by the shops of silversmiths. There is a Silver Street, as well as a Gold Street, at Northampton, the latter being the place where the Goldsmiths worked, and the former, part of the old Jewry, the locality of the Silversmiths. That silversmiths worked at Leicester is indicated by the occurrence of the name Silver, or Silverun, a silverer or silversmith. The name is not so common as Goldsmith, but John Silver was one of the Town Chamberlains in 1500, and in the 13th century several Silveruns are mentioned, who, as might be expected, inter-married with the Aurifabers, or Goldsmiths.

In the 15th century there was a street leading out of, or close to, the Sheepmarket, which was known as Gentil Lane.

SAINT FRANCIS LANE was described in the Coroner's Pleas for the year 1300 as "the lane which leads to St. Martin's Church and towards the Church of the Friars Minors." A house conveyed in 1368, which had once belonged to the well-known Leicester merchant, Henry Costeyn, was said to be in the High Street, "at the corner of the lane leading to the Church of the Friars Minors," and the property extended from the High Street to the garden of the Friars Minors. This lane must be the "St. Francis Lane" referred to by Mr. Carte, the 18th century antiquarian Vicar of St. Martin's, as lying between Wigston Hospital and the Grey Friars. It was afterwards called Peacock Lane, taking its name probably from the piece of land known as the "Peacock," which lay "at the Red Cross," west of the old High Street. There was a Peacock Inn in Southgate Street, from which it might have taken its name, but it seems more likely that both Inn and Lane were christened after the old Peacock ground.

THE CANK, or CANK STREET, which still bears its old name, was named after the public well, the Cank well, which lay there. An apple-orchard (pomerium), which was situated in the "Cank," is mentioned in 1352. On the division of the Wards in 1484, the ninth Ward was to begin "in the Cank at Thomas Phelips on both sides the Saturday Market unto the East Gate." At the division into ten Wards in 1557, the eighth Ward comprised "all the market-place, Cank-well, and to the East Gate." A yearly payment was given in 1563 to St. Martin's Church "out of an house at the Cankwell." The site of the old well is still marked on the roadway at the junction of Cank Street and Hotel Street. The name might possibly be derived from the old word "canch," which is used in Yorkshire and Norfolk to denote "a sloping trench, a water channel, cut on a road." In Leicestershire this word is generally used in the form "kench," *e.g.*, to "kench" potatoes is to make a pit for them to lie in, to camp them. But there seems to be no evidence of an artificial conduit in the Cank. The conduit in the market-place was not put up till 1612.

LOSEBY LANE, the short street still so called, is said to date from the 13th century, and to derive its name from John de Loseby. It is perhaps more likely that it was named after Henry of Loseby, a Leicester burgess, who held a considerable quantity of land in the Parish of St. Martin and elsewhere in the Eastern quarter of Leicester about 1300. Loseby Lane bounded one of the 1484 Wards. In the days of Throsby and Nichols it was called the "Pig-market."

FRIAR LANE, as it is still called, ran east out of the old High Street, by the south side of the gate and walls of the Grey Friars' precincts into the Saturday Market. It was so named in 1392, when a messuage was described as being " at the corner opposite the gate of the Friars Preachers," and bounded on the north side by "a lane called Frere Lane." In 1484 it seems to have been known as the Grey Friars' Lane.

III. THE SOUTH QUARTER.

The South quarter of the mediaeval town was bounded on the North by the Hot Gate and Apple Gate leading to the West Gate and Bridge; and on the West by the river. On the East lay the old High Street, and on the South, until the middle of the 14th century, the South wall of the town, and after that time the Newarke.

There were few roads and few houses in this quarter, which comprised chiefly the Castle and its precincts, with St. Mary's Church, beyond which lay the 14th century Newarke, the whole enclosed by strong walls. Here too were butchers' shambles and bakers' ovens.

The mediaeval streets were the main intersecting highway, consisting of the Hot Gate and the Apple Gate, Red Cross Street, and Soar Lane or St. Mary's Church Lane. The lane running South of the Newarke from the High Road to the Mill on the River was called Mill Lane in the middle of the 14th century.

The HOT GATE is mentioned in 1297, when John the Noble belied his name by committing a burglary there. It was known as "vicus calidus," or Hot Gate, because the public ovens were situated in that locality. A conveyance, dated 1362, of a house in the Hot Gate to a baker, is extant. The memory of the ovens which once warmed this part of the town is still kept alive by the name of Bakehouse Lane, or Fosbrooke Bakehouse Lane, a street which was comprised under the same name in the eleventh Ward of 1484. In the year 1586 the Hot Gate was described in a Lease as "Hot Gate, late the lane of the common oven." Nichols and North erroneously identified it with Silver Street, but its position is clearly determined by the Ward division of 1484, wherein the tenth Ward began "at the High Cross southward on both sides the street unto the Grey Friars' Lane and the Soar Lane, the Hot Gate and so forth to the West Bridge." It is now called St. Nicholas Street.

APPLEGATE, the continuation of Hot Gate towards the West Bridge, still bears the same name. In the 14th century it was known as Apple Lane. In 1349 a house in "Apple Lane" was described as adjoining the bakehouse of the Earl and stretching from that lane to the Holy Bones. This identifies Apple Lane with Apple Gate. The same, or another house, described in 1471 as being in the Applegate and adjoining the King's bakehouse, also stretched to the Holy Bones. It would seem that the street was also known as Shambles Lane, and that the common shambles of the butchers lay there. There was another Butchers' Shambles in the Saturday Market, which in time superseded the Applegate. In a 16th century petition the Company of Leicester Butchers expressed a wish to confine their business to the Saturday Market shambles, as the shambles in St. Nicholas Parish were then "out of the way of trading and remote from the inns and shopkeepers." In 1594 both butchers and bakers were tenants of the Borough in Applegate. Throsby says that Shambles Lane led to the West Bridge, and Nichols identifies it with Applegate. It has been suggested that the first part of the name "Applegate" may be the French word "appeller," and that it refers to the watchtower on the adjacent Castle Wall, where the sentinel used to "call" the hour of the night. But it may be derived, perhaps more naturally, from the former presence of apple trees.

RED CROSS STREET, which runs west from the old High Street, opposite Peacock Lane, still retains its old name. This is said by some to be derived

from Rede, or Rood, quasi Rede or Rood Cross Street. But the Dean of St. Mary's de Castro in 1494 occupied a house belonging to the Corpus Christi Guild, which is described as being "ad rubiam crucem," and from other entries in the accounts of the Guild it may be inferred that this Red Cross was in Red Cross Street. It was called Red Cross Street in 1557, when the second of the ten town Wards was made to run from the South Gate unto the High Cross with the Soar Lane and Red Cross Street. In Speed's plan of Leicester a cross is shown at the junction of Red Cross Street and St. Mary's Church Lane.

The lane now called SOAR LANE, which ran from the North Bridge to the river, outside the town wall, was in mediaeval times generally called Walker Lane, after the Walkers, or Fullers who dwelt there. It was named Soar Lane as early as 1458. But there was, at that time, another Soar Lane, in the South quarter, and the two were distinguished in the Rental of the Corpus Christi Guild of that date as "Soar Lane extra portam borialem," Soar Lane without the North Gate, and "Soar Lane juxta Castrum," or "Sorelane que ducit ad Castrum," Soar Lane near, or leading to, the Castle. The latter street ran out of the High Street towards Castle and river from a point nearly opposite to Friar Lane, as we may conclude from the boundaries of the tenth Ward in 1484. It is the lane mentioned in 1325, when some brawlers, after a dispute in the High Street, are said to have gone quarrelling to "the lane which leads to the Castle." The modern road which answers to this old Soar Lane seems to be the present Castle Street, "one of the most narrow entrances of the town" in the time of Throsby, which was formerly known as St. Mary's Church Lane.

IV. THE WEST QUARTER.

The remaining quarter of the town is that contained by the Town Wall on the North, the river on the West, the High Street on the East, and Hot Gate and Applegate on the South.

It comprised the ancient Churches of St. Nicholas and St. Clement, and the Monastery of the Black Friars, which occupied 16 acres. There, too, lay the old Blue Boar Inn, and the earliest halls of the Guild Merchant.

Among the few lanes in this quarter were the Guildhall Lane, St. Clement's Lane, Friars' Causeway, Deadman's Lane, Jewry Wall Street, and Talbot Lane.

THE GUILDHALL LANE was described in 1301 as "the lane which leads from the High Street to the Moothall"; and in 1341, when it was paved, as "the lane towards the Guildhall." In the next century it was called "Mayor's Hall Lane." It ran out of the High Street by the side of the Blue Boar Inn, and has since been

known unto the present day as Blue Boar Lane — a name said by Hutton to have been at one time corrupted into "Blubber Lane."

Sᴛ. Cʟᴇᴍᴇɴᴛ's Lᴀɴᴇ was a long passage running from the North Gate westward to the Black Friars and St. Clement's Church, and afterwards turning south, and passing between the grounds of the Black Friars and the backs of the houses which stood facing the old High Street opposite All Saints' Church. It was also known as "The Black Friars Lane." Thus, the first Town Ward of 1484 beginning at the High Cross extended to "the Black Friars Lane." Another name was "the lane of the Friars Preachers." The parcels contained in a deed of 1498 throw some light upon the topography of this quarter. Four cottages were demised which lay together "in the lane of the Friars Preachers, between the land late William Here's on the East and the said lane on the West, and stretching from the tenement of Robert Metcalf, butcher, on the South, to the lane which leads to the house of the Friars on the North." It appears from this description that the "Lane of the Friars Preachers," *i.e.*, St. Clement's Lane, lay at right angles to another lane which led to the Friars' House, the Fʀɪᴀʀs' Cᴀᴜsᴇᴡᴀʏ, probably, of the present day. It is this path from the High Street to the Friars which was described in 1373 as "the lane leading to the Friars Preachers."

The Southern portion of St. Clement's Lane became known in later years as Dᴇᴀᴅᴍᴀɴ's Lᴀɴᴇ, and it is so called in Cockshaw's plan of Leicester dated 1828, But in Combes' map of 1802, which was published in Miss Watts' "Walk through Leicester," the whole of St. Clement's Lane is marked Deadman's Lane."

The ground containing the relic of Roman occupation known as the Jᴇᴡʀʏ Wᴀʟʟ, is frequently referred to in the 14th and 15th century Records as the Holy Bones. It is thought that the district in which it lies was known in the time of the Norman Earls as Jewry, or Jews' quarter, prior to the Charter of 1250 which provided that no Jew should remain in Leicester. Hence the Roman remains were called the Jewry Wall, and the continuation of Blue Boar Lane which passes it became known as Jᴇᴡʀʏ Wᴀʟʟ Sᴛʀᴇᴇᴛ.

The street still called Tᴀʟʙᴏᴛ Lᴀɴᴇ, which runs into Apple Gate from the North, was probably existing in mediæval times. The Talbot Inn, from which it may have taken its name, was standing at the end of the 15th century. Possibly both Lane and Inn were christened after a piece of ground known as the Talbot.

II.
THE SUBURBS.

I. THE NORTH SUBURB.

B EYOND the North Gate of mediæval Leicester a suburb was in existence from very early times. It contained the Hospital and Church of St. Leonard, and led up to the great Abbey of St. Mary in the Meadows.

The principal thoroughfares were Northgate, Wood Gate, Abbey Gate, The Skeyth or Senvey Gate, and Soar Lane or Walker Lane.

The road lying beyond the North Gate of Leicester, "the highway which leads to the North Bridge," as it is termed in several documents, was generally known as the NORTHGATE. The road so called was outside the walls of the town, for it was parallel with Buxton Lane, and Buxton Lane is stated to have been without the North Gate. In 1462 it was described as "the King's Highway called le Northgate." During the 13th and 14th centuries the district was occupied mainly by dyers and fullers.

After passing over the little North Bridge, the highroad ran through Frog Island, and crossed the main channel of the Soar by another bridge, which was generally known as the North Bridge. Beyond this point the road divided; one branch turning westwards to the Forest, and the other north towards the Abbey. At the point of divergence stood the

Church of St. Leonard. The westward road still retains its old name of WOODGATE, which it is said to have received because it was the; way by which wood was brought into the town from the forest; and the other road which led to the Abbey was, and still is called ABBEY GATE. About the year 1323 it was described as "the street of the Abbey of Leicester."

THE SKEYTH

, or

SENVEY GATE

, ran eastward outside the North Gate under the wall of the town. In 1322 it was called Le Skeyth, and in 1392 Senvey Gate, and in a late 15th century lease it was described as "Le Skeyth alias Senvey Gate." In the early years of the 18th century it was still known as

A PLAN OF THE
NORTH SUBURB OF
MEDIAEVAL LEICESTER
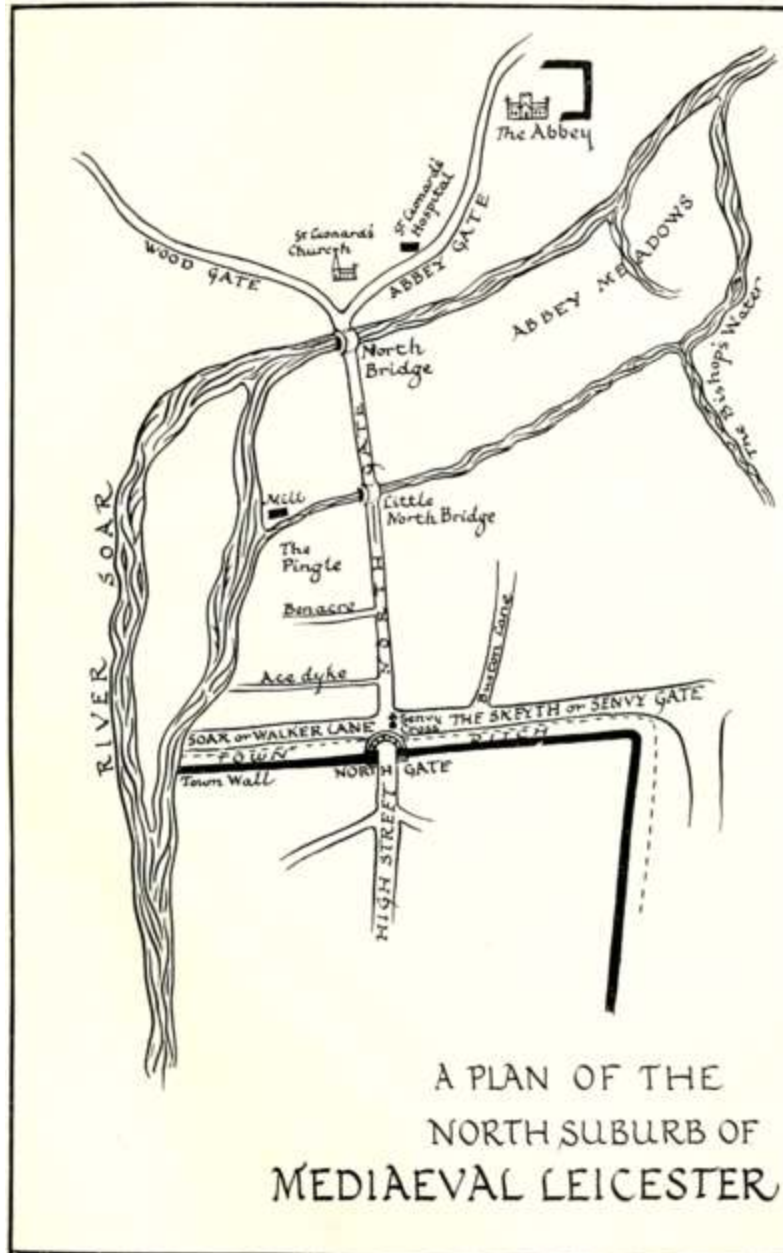
Senvey Gate, but it would seem that, in the course of that century, the name was altared to Sanvy Gate, and it appears as Sanvy Gate in maps of 1802 and 1828. Nichols rings the changes on Sanby, Sonvey and "Sanvy, quasi *sanda via*

," and endorses the questionable etymology of Bickerstaffe or Carte, who satisfied themselves that the word was a corruption of

sancta

or

sacra via

, denoting the sacred way by which, in pre-reformation years, the great religious processions used to go up to St. Margaret's Church. A stone cross, called Senvey Cross, was standing, in the 16th century, at the end of this road, near the North Gate. It has been suggested that this cross was one of those erected to mark the stages of Queen Eleanor's funeral progress, but the evidence seems against this. It is more likely to have been the Cross which Henry, the third Earl of Lancaster, is said to have put up for the soul of his brother, Thomas, "outside the town of Leicester," but this is mere conjecture.

THE SOAR LANE "extra portam borialem" ran west, outside the North Gate, down to the river. It was also called WALKER LANE, or Fullers' Street. In the year 1298 a member of the important family of Curlevache, when he was "amens et demens et ebrius," walked outside the North Gate down Fullers' Street ("invico Fullorum") into the river, and was drowned. In the 14th century it was still known as Walker Gate, or Walker Lane, and was so named in 1417, but, in the course of the 15th century, "Soar Lane" came into use. In 1594 it is referred to as "Soar Lane, or Walker Lane."

Soar Lane does not seem to have run immediately beside the town wall and its ditch; for in 1392 land was conveyed, which is described as being outside the North Gate in " Walkercrofts," and lying between the town ditch and the common footpath. The ditch and its environs were used as gardens; and part of this land belonged to the Priory of the

Black Friars, whose grounds were intersected by the town wall.

The land in this district was called "Walkercrofts," or "Crofts." It was divided by ditches, and dykes or raised paths, such as Acedyke, or Ash-lane, and the path called Benacre, both of which seem to have been parallel with Soar Lane, and to have run down towards the river. There was one large plot of land in Walkercrofts, bounded by these ditches and dykes, which lay between the Northgate and the river, known as the Pingle. Its memory is still preserved by Pingle Street. It was described by Nichols as "a large close on the side of Northgate Street, towards the bottom of Soar Lane, edging on the Soar westward not far from the North Gate," and is marked on most of the old plans of Leicester. The word was used in the Midland Counties to denote any small enclosure, and there were other "pingles" at or near Leicester. One at Nottingham was known as Friars' Pingle, "Le Frere Pyngile." On the eastern side of the North Gate in the Parish of St. Margaret, were other lanes and paths, among which were Buxton Lane, parallel with the highway, and perhaps corresponding in part with what was formerly known as Paradise Lane, and a path over a ridge or dyke, known in the 15th century as " Abbot's balk,"

II. THE EAST SUBURB.

The East Suburb, which was far the more important of the two, and was often referred to as "the Suburb," contained the Church of St. Margaret, which was annexed as a Prebend to the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, and the

populous districts of Belgravegate and Humberstonegate. Most of the land comprised in the Suburb was the fee of the Bishop of Lincoln, whose Grange lay south of St. Margaret's Church.

The main thoroughfares were Churchgate, Gosewellgate, Belgravegate, Gallowtreegate, and Humberstonegate. Archdeacon Lane, which runs east from Churchgate, a little south of St. Margaret's Church, is mentioned in 1465; and Plowman Lane, which also led out of Churchgate, is referred to at the beginning of the 14th century.
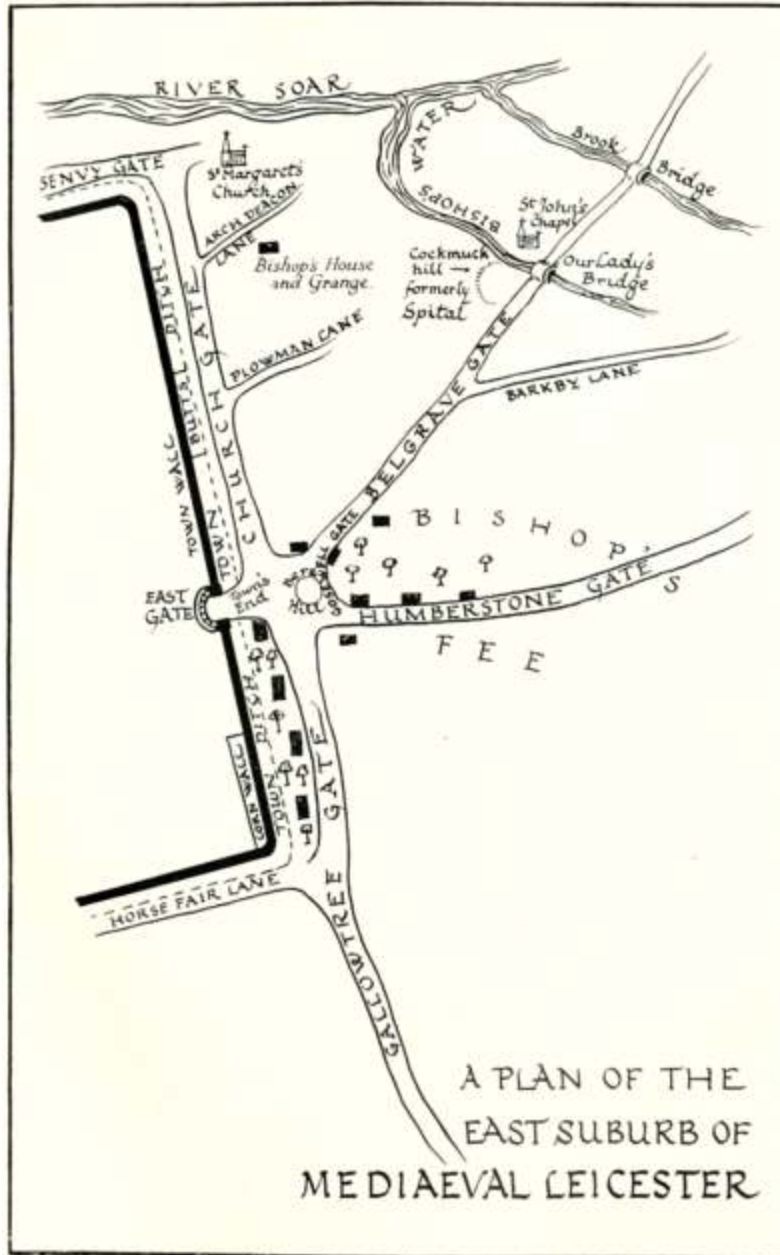
Most Churches had a lane of approach, sometimes called the "churchgate," as St. Martin's Lane was called; but the thoroughfare which came to be, and still is known as

CHURCHGATE

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par excellence

, is the road leading to St. Margaret's Church from the south outside the East Wall. A deed of the year 1478

A PLAN OF THE EAST SUBURB OF MEDIAEVAL LEICESTER

relates to land in St. Margaret's Parish, which lay on the west side of "the street called Kyrkegate"; and that the name was established at the beginning of the 16th century is shown by a benevolence roll of that time, in which the fourth Ward is defined as "Belgravegate on both sides street