

## CLENT.

The Village of Clent consists of, at least, four separate parts, detached from each other, namely, Holy Cross, the most populous part, where the manufacture of nails is carried on; Lower Clent, a fertile tract lying below the south-west end of the Hills; Upper Clent; and Adam's Hill, at the rear of which is the "Bog," a valley containing many cottages and which deserves a better name as it naturally drains itself into the plain below. The last mentioned Hill is prettily dotted over with cottages and villas, some of which are in great request by summer visitors from the neighbouring mining and manufacturing district. This part is seen to advantage from the Hills above.

"I reached the nearest summit in the Clent range (Walton Hill) and found it an oblong grassy level, many acres in extent, bounded on the right by a secluded valley (Clatterbatch) that opens among the hills, with a small stream running through it. The green slopes on both sides of the hollow, for half their heights, from the summits downwards, retain all their old irregularities of surface, unscarred by plough or harrow; a few green fields, and a few picturesque cottages environed by hedgerows, with an old mill and millpond, occupy the lower declivities and the bottom; and just where the valley opens into the level country we find the ancient village of Clent, one of the prettiest and most characteristic of all old English villages. It stands half-enwrapped in tall wood, and half-embraced by the outstretched arms of the valley, with its ancient time-eaten church rising in the midst, and its old, venerable dwellings betimbered with dark oak and belatticed with lead, and much beshrouded in ivy and honeysuckle, scattered irregularly around. I saw no noisy workshops—no stir of business, —nothing doing, or like to be done. Clent, for the last nine hundred years, seems to have had a wonderfully easy life of it—a summer day sort of life."\*

### THE FORESTERS' CONVALESCENT HOME.

Walton Pool, Clent. Established in 1887, for the purpose of providing members of Foresters' Courts within 30 miles of Birmingham, who may, through a long or serious affliction require its aid; with home, food, attendance, cheerful surroundings, and fresh air, for a limited period. A temporary home was used up to 1894, when a fine new building was formally opened on Whit Tuesday. The new home stands in a singularly beautiful and healthy position. The dining room and recreation rooms are large, comfortable, and airy, and there is accommodation for 30 patients, though at present the maximum number at one time is limited to 20. Matron, Mrs. Hunt.

\*Hugh Miller.



### CLENT CHURCH,

dedicated to St. Leonard, consists of a nave with one small aisle to the south, a chancel, and a tower containing six bells. With the exception of the tower and chancel it was rebuilt in 1865, a few carvings and some interesting Norman work being retained. Vicar, the Rev. F. R. Lawson.

### ST. KENELM.

At the eastern side of Clent Hill, stands, in all its solitude, the Chapel of St. Kenelm. We give our readers a short account of its curious history.

One of the hunting palaces of the King of Mercia was situated on the eastern side of Clent Hill, near the farm-house called Pen-orchard. This palace, with its turrets high above the surrounding forests, must have been extremely beautiful, as the eye might travel over a tract of unbroken woodland till it met with the noble keep of the "Castle of the woods" at Dudley, then recently erected by Dodo the Saxon.

In this forest was perpetrated the murder of Kenelm. William of Malmesbury and Matthew of Westminster, the chief authorities concerning this history, relate that the infant King (who was about seven years old) had two sisters; the elder, to whom the care of his education was entrusted, was named Quendreda—the younger Dornemyll. Quendreda was cruel and



ambitious, whereas Dornemyll was beloved for her mild and amiable disposition. Quendreda coveting the throne, from which she thought her brother alone excluded her, planned with her lover Askobert, the destruction of the young prince. The story is told with more or less fulness by the historians above referred to, in a curious and scarce work, called "Legenda Aurea," or the Golden Legend, a copy of which, printed in 1503, is preserved in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford.

"Saynte Kenelme, marter, was Kynge of a part of Englonde, by Walys. His fader was kinge tofore hym and was named Kenulphe, and founded th' Abbaye of Wynchcombe, and sette theryn monkes. And when he was deed, he was beryed in the same Abbeye. Yt tyme Wynchcombe was the best toune of ye countre. This Kynge Kenelme was Kynge of Worcestershyre, Warrykshyre, and Gloucetreshyre. And the Byshop of Worcestre was Byshop of those thre shyres. And he was Kynge, also, of Derbyshyre, Cesshyre, Shropshyre, Herfordshyre, Notinghamshyre, Northamptonshyre, Bokinghamshyre, Oxfordshyre, Leycestreshyre, and Lincolnshyre; all this was called the Marche of Ways. And all those countrees Saynte Kenelme was kynge; and Wynchcombe yt time was chief cyte of all these shyres, and before Oswald hadde be Kynge of all Englonde."

"Ane after hym it was deprated, in Saynte Kenelme's dayse, Kenulfe, his fader, was a full holie man, and Dornemyll and Quendred weren susters of Saynte Kenelme. Kenulfe, his fader, deyed the yere of our Lorde heyght hundred and xix.

"Then was Kenelme made Kynge when he was seven yere of age. And his sister Dornemyll loved him moche; and they lyved holily togyder to theyre lyves end; but Quindre, ye other suster, torned her to wickednesse, and hadde grete envye at her broder Kenelme, bycause he was so ryche above her, and laboured wyth all her power to destroye him, bycause she wold be Queen, and regne after hym."

Having given what we consider the probable history of King Kenelm, we shall relate the further legend which proceeds to state, that his sister first attempted to destroy him by poison, but failing in her efforts he was taken out under pretence of hunting and cruelly murdered by Askobert, who severed the head from the body and buried his victim under a bush,—that this took place in a cow-pasture in the wood of Clent,—and that, shortly afterwards, a dove dropped a scroll of parchment upon the high altar of St. Peter's, in Rome, thus inscribed in Saxon characters:—

In Clent, in Caubage, Kenelme Kynge born,  
Lyethe under a thorn, his hede off shorne.

or, according to Milton's better version, in his History of England—

Low in a mead of kine, under a thorne,  
Of head bereft, li'th poor Kenelm, King-born.

In consequence of this supernatural discovery of the murder, the Archbishop of Canterbury was directed by the Pope to cause search to be made for the body, which being found, was removed with much funereal pomp to Winchcomb, for the purpose of interment in the church of the abbey. That Quendreda, inquiring the occasion of the bell-ringing which she heard, was told—"Howe her broder, Kenelme, was brought wyth processyon into th' Abbaye, and yt the belles rongen without manne's helpe; and thanne she sayd in grete scorne, 'that is as treue,' sayd she, 'as both myne eyen falle upon this booke,'—and anone both her eyen fell out of her hede, upon the booke."

Speed says—"Most true it is that an obscure sepulchre the body had at the first; and howsoever found out, was afterwards with great honour and ceremony translated to the Monastery of Winchcomb, which his father had founded. The murderesse, Quendred, for grieve and shame of so wicked an act, ended her life, without the attaining of her ambitious desire, and hath left her name indeleibly stained with his innocent blood." He also says:—"In the same yeere that he beganne his reigne, by the treason of his unnatural sister, hee was murdered and first obscurely buried; but afterwards solemnly removed and reposed neere to his father, in the Monasterie of Winchcombe."

The situation of the chapel is remarkably picturesque. It is built partly over a deep valley, and when viewed from the east, assumes an elevation superior to that of the opposite point, which is the site of the tower. A curious carving is to be seen on the south wall, which that eminent antiquary, Bishop Lyttelton, thus described: "A rude figure of a child, with two fingers of the right hand lifted in the form of a benediction; a crown of stone over his head, intended to represent Kenelm, accompanied by symbols of the Evangelist, as the eagle, the lion, bull, and angel."



The figure of a child, alluded to by the Bishop, is indeed rudely executed; the head is strangely disproportioned to the body, the left hand holds a book, and the crown is like a rude canopy. The adjoining sketch may give the reader an idea of it.

The arch over the door of the church is a beautiful specimen of Norman architecture. The greatest part of the fabric does not appear older than Henry III.'s time. The tower, which is the most beautiful feature of the building, is not earlier than the reign of Henry VII.

Tradition tells that the spot where the chapel stands is that in which the body of the prince was buried by his murderer. Suspicion having been awakened, and a search instituted, it is said that just on the site of the present chapel a cow was found lowing pitifully at the side of a newly laid sod; that on removing the earth, the body of the murdered prince was discovered, and instantly a beautiful spring of water burst forth, destined to be famous through many a following generation.



The well was situated at the east end of the chapel. It is at the present time filled up with earth and rubbish, but formerly it was a handsome structure, corresponding with the architecture of the chapel, and certain lands were given to the sacrist of Halesowen Abbey for the purpose of keeping it in repair. It was resorted to by pilgrims from all parts of the country, who believed that its waters were efficacious for the cure of various diseases. At the time of the Reformation, however, it was destroyed, and Bishop Latimer used every exertion to discourage the resort thither of pilgrims.

St. Kenelm's was an object of much respect in the olden time, and received many valuable presents. In the year 1464, Thomas Haywood, Dean of Lichfield, gave to the abbot and convent of Hales Owen two elegant basins of silver, with gilt eagles at the bottom, weighing sixty ounces,—“to be placed on the altar of St. Kenelm, the martyr,” on all solemn festival days. We have also an inventory of the sacramental plate, belonging to St. Kenelm's chapel in the year 1503.

A lytyll shryne with odor reliques therein.  
A hede of seynt Kenelme sylver and gyld.  
A crown of sylver and gilt with a cepter of sylver.  
A Pyx of sylver.  
A chalys gyld with pax-brede sylver and gyld.  
A Schypp of sylver for incense.

Near this chapel was oncè a town of considerable size, called Kenelmstowe, not a vestige of which now remains. Records remain to prove that in the eighth year of the reign of King Edward I. (A.D. 1247) it was still a populous hamlet. Its decline appears to have been owing partly to the main road between Bromsgrove and Dudley, which for a long time passed through it, taking another course; and partly to the cessation of pilgrimages to the shrine and holy well of St. Kenelm, after the Reformation. The site of this place is now called the Back Lane, and leads from St. Kenelm to Hunnington, &c.

The chapel survived the hamlet; but before certain alterations were made, its interior was extremely plain. The backs of some of the sittings more resembled the side of a horse trough than anything else. The floor was of brick, with a little straw for the feet in some of the seats. Along the aisles of the chapel stone seats were ranged, which served to support the ends of the benches. The gallery was but six feet six inches from the floor, and was approached by three separate staircases, each leading to a portion distinct from the others. The ancient way to the belfry, now used also as a means of access to the upper part of the gallery, consisted of seven solid pieces of wood, and a rude balustrade. There are some curious old frescoes at the east end of the church, which have for many years been plastered over. When the Church was restored, about 1845, Mr. Wills, now Mr. Justice Wills, made drawings of them and published an illustrated account in the Birmingham and Edgbaston Proprietary School Magazine, where he was a scholar.

In 1848 a thorough restoration was effected at the expense of the late Lord Lyttelton, the then Lord of the Manor, with due regard to the high antiquity and interesting associations of the place. The interior has been fitted up with open seats of oak; there is a hexagonal stone pulpit, supported on a shaft and pedestal; an octagonal stone font, ornamented with quatrefoils, and having a conical covering of wood, crocketed; a very convenient gallery has been constructed, and the old flat ceiling has been removed, the open roof being now supported by light truss work of oak. These and other improvements have rendered the little building suitable as a place for divine worship for the inhabitants.

See “A Short History of Clent,” by John Amphlett, Esq. *Parker.*

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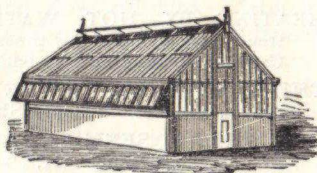
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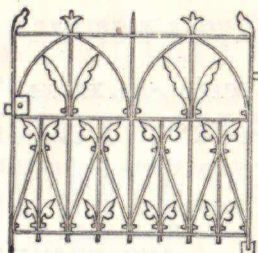
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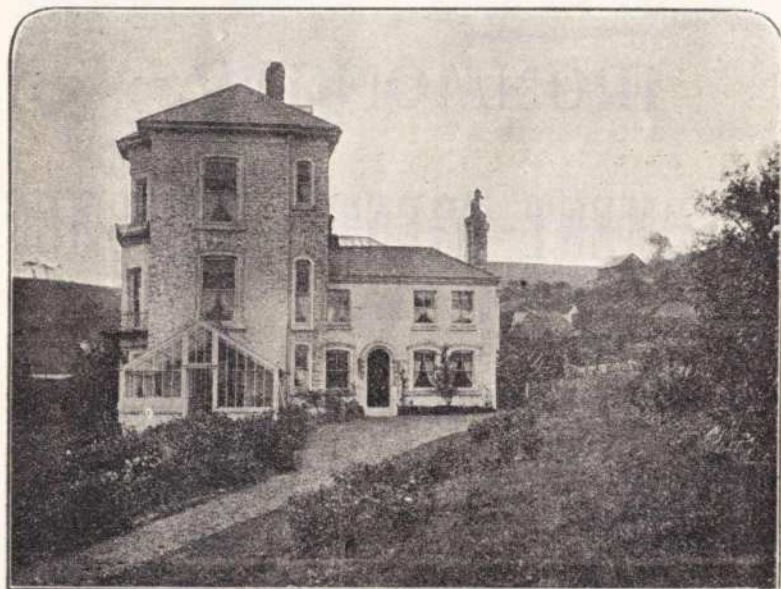
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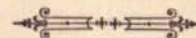
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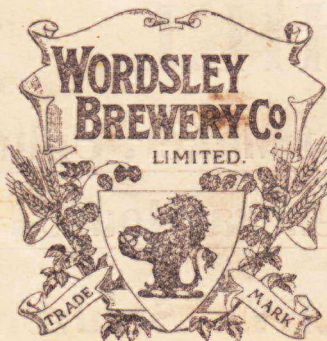
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