

# Marston Quarterly Notes

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CHRISTMAS, 1906.

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## OUR PATRON SAINT, FATHER CHRISTMAS.

( *The following is the conclusion of the article on St. Nicholas, which appeared in last issue.* )

Another attribute of the saint is the protection he affords to sailors. The reason for this is that on one occasion, when he was making a voyage to the Holy Land and a tempest arose, his prayers assuaged it; while another time he is said to have appeared to and saved some mariners who implored his assistance. For this reason St. Nicholas is frequently seen with ships in the background.

In honour of St. Nicholas there are at the present, time close on, if not quite, four hundred churches dedicated to the saint in England, and there are few seaport towns throughout the world which have not one at least. The largest parish church in England is St. Nicholas at Yarmouth, which dates back to 1190, while another scarcely smaller is at Hull. In inland towns these St. Nicholas churches are rare, but when they do occur they are generally close to navigable rivers, and London boasts more than one. The most notable is probably St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, within a stone's throw of the Thames, and no one needs to have it pointed out that Cole is merely another way of writing Cola, which is a shortened form of Nicholas. St. Nicholas Cole Abbey is, therefore, nothing more than the Abbey Church of St. Nicholas, with the name written twice over.

After having lived a life of great piety and renown Nicholas died on December 6th, 326, and was buried with the most magnificent rites at Myra. There his relics were preserved until the end of the eleventh century, when certain merchants of Bari, on the Adriatic, went on an expedition to Lycia, broke open the coffin containing Nicholas's bones, and took them to Bari. The remains

were placed in the Church of St. Stephen in that town, and eventually a magnificent church was built for the purpose of containing them. This was consecrated by Pope Nicholas II.

In the old days the Prior of St. Nicholas claimed to rank with the Archbishop of Milan, the Bishop of Loretto, and the Cardinal of Capua, and even took precedence of the King of Naples when His Majesty was in the precincts of the church, another suggestive proof of the fact that at this season of the year even Kings have to yield place to the Lord of the Season, whose vicegerents, the children, crowned with Love with the magic sceptre of Imagination in one hand and the orb of Innocence in the other, give to our earth an added glory and a joy which it somehow lacks at other times. &•?

Lovers, young and old, of Santa Claus (says a writer in the *Daily Chronicle*) should not forget that to-day is the Eve of St. Nicholas. "The V. day of December," says Henry Machyn in his "Diary" under 1556, "was Sant Necolas evyn, and Sant Necolas (i.e., the boy Bishop's procession) whentt a-hrod in most partt in London syngyng after the old fassyon, and was reseyyvd with inony good pepulle in-to ther howses, and had myche good chere as ever they had, in many plasses." Naogeorgus, in his "Popish Kingdome" (1570), while denouncing the following custom, gives us unintentionally a pretty picture of the Santa Glaus of the Elizabethan children :—

" Saint Nicholas money usde to give to  
maydeus secretlie, Who, that he still  
may use his wonted  
liberalitie, The mothers all their  
children on the Eve  
do cause to fast, And, when they  
every one at night in  
senselesse sleepe are cast, Both Apples,  
Nutttes, and Peares they  
bring and other things beside.

As caps and shooes, aud petticoates, which  
secretly they hide, And in the morning  
found, they say, that  
this St. Nicholas brought: Thus tender  
mindes to worship saints and  
wicked things are taught."

\* \* \*

An interesting instance of a modern celebration of St. Nicholas day conies to us from a village in Essex—Berden, near Stansted—where a festival service of the children's Guild of St. Nicholas is held in church and a "mystery play" afterwards acted by the children. The vicar (the Rev. Hubert Kynaston Hudson) has kindly sent us the following account of the guild and festival:

"... The Guild of St. Nicholas is practically, an original idea of mine, as an attempt to improve on the ordinary parochial Band of Hope. The dedication to S. Nicholas suggested the idea of the Boy Bishop, a practice that Dean Colet strongly approved of. . . .

Each child in joining is a probationer till 7 years of age, on the following S. Nicholas day they read out the Guild Vow in church and sign it later.

Breaking the Guild Vow means that you throw yourself out of the Guild, but I find the children have been very satisfactory. . . .

The Guild Vow you see is on the lines of the 10 Commandments. Each boy comes through in due course to be Boy Bishop, and each girl to be May Queen. I enclose you a portrait of 'the first Boy Bishop\* since the Reformation'! You see the cope, mitre, and staff are the very plainest, but all the children have to know the meaning of the symbols which are explained each S. Nicholas day.

The "Mystery Play" is also of the very simplest, some verses I put together myself for the youngest children. My great idea was to put before them some definite ideas of courage, self sacrifice and trust in GOD; using the legend as a means. If there is any demand for it I may publish it, otherwise, if you would like to adopt it next year I could copy it out for you.

Bishop Testing spoke very kindly of the Guild."

I promise that as long as I am a Member of the Guild of St. Nicholas, (1) I will regularly say my prayers, and come to church. (2) I will be obedient, loving, temperate, honest, truthful and pure

Aelfric Hudson, 1901. • >>>

## HISTORICAL JOTTINGS.

### I.

A.D. 1082. The manor was given by the Conqueror to Miles Crispin.

A.D. 1132. It was granted by charter of Henry I. to the Priory of S. Frideswide.

A.D. 1156. Henry II. About this time Hugh de Plantagenet granted to the Priory of S. Frideswide the tithes of his own demesnes and of his tenants in this manor.

A branch of the CROKE family had a seat here, which seems to have been acquired by the marriage of UNTON CROKE, Esq., Sergeant-at-law, to Anne, **daughter** and heiress of Richard Hore, Esq., of Marston.

Unton Croke occupies a conspicuous place in the history of the civil wars, as a staunch supporter of the Parliament. In "Thurloe's State Papers" there is a letter of the 2nd of October, 1655, from Dr. John Owen, the Dean of Christ Church, to the Protector, in which he strongly intercedes in Sergeant Croke's favour that he might be made a judge: it seems however, that the recommendation was not attended to; but in 1656 he was appointed one of the Commissioners under the authority of an Act of Parliament for the security of the Lord Protector, with power to try offenders for high treason, without the intervention of a jury. He acted likewise as a justice of the peace, and there are some entries in the parish register of marriages **performed** by him in that capacity during the Great Rebellion. He resided chiefly here, and died in 1671, at the age of 77. His wife had died a few months previously, and they were both buried in the chancel, where there are inscriptions on a flat stone, and on a brass plate 10 their memory. They left 10 children. In May, 1640, this house was made use of by the Commissioners for the King and the Parliament Army in the treaty for the surrender of Oxford. This house was pulled down in 1843. The vicarage was valued in the time of Henry VIII. at £40. In the last century it was valued at £26; the present value is £145. Population, 668. The advowson of the vicarage was in the possession of the family of Whorwood from about the year 1600, when Sir W. Browne, of Holton, whose daughter and heiress married a Whorwood,

MARSTON QUARTERLY NOTES.

exchanged land at Haseley and Albury for the advowsons and parsonages of Headington and Marston, and the manor of Headington, Marston, and Bolshipton. In 1685, Dr. Edward •. Masters presented as trustee to Thomas Whorwood ; in 1705, Robert King presented (*hacvice*), and in 1718 the Bishop of Oxford collated.

The present patron is Mrs. Evans, widow of the late Master of Pembroke Coll., Oxford. •!• \*%.

II.'

From " *The Gentleman's Magazine*"  
Dec. 20, 1799.

Mr. UEBAV,

The parish of Marston. in Oxfordshire, is northward from the city of Oxford, and the Church is about a mile and a half from Magdalen bridge.

The church is a plain building, consisting of a nave and two aisles, a chancel and a square tower. . . .

The following epitaphs are the only existing memorials of eminent persons contained in the church.

On a flat stone in the chancel is the following inscription—

" O vir, quicumque, es, pusillu'  
Hoc terrae quo meum tegitur  
Corpiis mihi ne invidias ? "

*Ex. Luc. cap 6, vers 26.*

*Translation—*

O man, whoever thou art, dost thou not envy this clod of earth, with which my body is covered.

Vae vobis cum laudaverint Vos  
omnes homines, *Translation—*

Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of

UNTON CROKE

Serviens ad legem, obiit 28 die  
Januarii ano D'ni 1670, amioq.  
aetatis suae 77. *Translation—*

UNTON CROKE.

Sergeant-at-law, died 28 January, in the year of our Lord 1670, aged 77-

And on a small brass plate inserted in the same stone is the following—

My flesh shall rest in hope. *Ps. xiv. ver. 10*  
Hereunder resteth in hopes of resurrection the body of ANN, the wife of UNTON CROKE, Sergeant-at-law, who was married to him 8th of November, 1617, and left

him and 10 children the 10th day of June, 1670, and in the 69th year of her age. On a marble fixed against the wall, on the north side of the chancel, are the following inscriptions :—

M.S. RICHARDI

CROKE, equitis

Servientis ad legem per  
viginti annos Oxoiiii burgensis  
per triginta recordatoris  
virique Carolo dilectissimi

Deo et religioni verae Catholicae semper  
devotissimi  
Clientibus fidelis

et toti humans genero amicabilis

qui vixit omnibiis amandus Obiitq.

(15 die Septemberis, an D'ni 1683.

aetatis suae 60) omnibus flendus

praecipue filio suo maestissimo Wright Croke  
qui hoc erga paternam virtutem et ex amore  
sus

optimum parentum monumentum posuit  
Prope etiam WRIGHT CROKE, ariniger  
Praedicti Ricbardi Croke, equitis, filius  
haeresq.

qui ex hoc vita discessit 47 an. aetat Jun  
7th, 1705. Item WRIGHT CROKE,  
armigeri, filii tres

Qui teneris in annis defuncti ft.

Prope etiam jacet MARIA, uxor charissima  
Wright Croke, quae obiit 29 Martii 1717.  
aetat 61.

*Translation—*

Sacred to the Memory of  
RICHARD CROKE, Knight,  
Sergeant-at-law,

for twenty years citizen of Oxford,  
for thirty years recorder  
beloved by King Charles.

Always devoted to God and the true Catholic Faith.

Faithful to his clients

Amiable to all, and loved by all men

He died on the 15th September,  
in the year of our Lord, 1683,  
in the 60th year of his age

lamented by all  
especially by his sorrowful son Wright Croke,  
who in filial dut? and by reason of his love  
for the best of parents  
erected this monument.

By his side lies

RICHARD CROKE, Knight, his son and heir,  
who departed this life 7th June, 1705  
in the 47 year of his age.

Also

WRIGHT CROKE, Esquire, his third son  
who died in his infancy.

Also by his side lies

MARIA, the beloved wife of Wright Croke,  
Who died 29 March, 1717, aged 61.

On the floor on a small stone :

" CAROLINE CROKE, died 19th July in the yeare of our Lord 167, and the 36th of her age."

In the nave on a plain stone is the following short inscription :

" M.F.S.  
WALTERUS BARRY.  
de civit, Nov. Sarum  
Qui obiit Oxon  
die Aprilis 22  
1722."

On a stone in the south aisle, to the memory of Robert Loder, who died in 1768, is the following specimen of monumental poetry

" I would have my neighbours all be kind and mild,  
Quiet and civil to my dear wife and child."

This living is a vicarage of but small value, not, as I am informed, more than £26 per annum, which the present worthy incumbent, Dr. Curtis, of Magdalen College, distributes mostly, if not wholly, among the poor of his little flock.

The service of the church the Doctor performs every Sunday.

His sermons are well attended : and his parishioners are as much edified by his good example as by his excellent discourses.

Some of the young farmers have studied psalmody, and they attend the service very regularly.

The instrumental part of the divine harmony consists of a bassoon and two clarinets.

*Marston Church Goods delivered to the incoming Churchwardens.*

Anno 1531.

Itm dd. to the said Churchwardens  
one author clothe of holond. Itm one  
clothe called a vrle of holond  
conteyning iiij ells Itm one altar cloth of  
diaper It one vestment of grene dornix Item  
one cope of blew sateii of brudges Itm one  
chalice and patent Itm one chisabyll or  
vestment of grene sylke Itm one pall of red  
and russet velvet It" one canapy clothe of  
ffyne hollond  
hedgid wth red lace and taysells of red

It' iij old stoles of diu'se colors  
It' ij pixes of laten  
It' iij baner clothes  
It' one towell of diaper of ij ells  
lost by John bew It' a canapy case of  
laten and grene and red  
saye wt frengs  
It' a holy water boket and a senser  
A church cupp of silver It one hand  
bell It ij candlesticks of laten Itm  
vti of waxe It' one old crosse It' ij  
shurpleses It' a byble. A boke of  
servis

Anno 1570.

Stuffe. A

challis A cupp  
The churche fane and the brandwen  
The paten  
A great clothe and a table clothe A  
cope and iij vestments  
ij baner clothes and a stremer.