

THREE INTERESTING HAMPSHIRE BRASSES.

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Excluding the City of Winchester, Hampshire has but few old memorial brasses of note. This is mainly accounted for by the fact that in mediæval days, stone suitable for memorials was readily obtainable in the Isle of Wight, and in addition the marble quarries at Purbeck were close at hand.

Two of the finest brasses outside the cathedral city are those at Thruxton and Ringwood. In the chancel of the former church is the figure of a knight, 5ft. 1in. in height. It was laid down to the memory of Sir John Lysle, Lord of the Manor of Wodynton, Isle of Wight, who died in 1407, but it was possibly not engraved until some years after his death. It is the earliest English brass showing armour of the *Complete Plate* period.

Sir John is represented wearing *Bascinet*, *Gorget*—the latter decorated with a trefoil ornament—*Cuirass*, *Epaulieres*, and fan-shape *Cotes*, whilst circular *Palletes* protect the arm-pits; *Gauntlets*—enriched with the same ornamentation as on the *Gorget*—protect the wrists and hands, the leather fingers of which are reinforced with steel bosses (*Gadlings*). Steel plates protect the backs of the hands. Attached to the breastplate is a skirt of eight *Taces*. The sword is supported by a diagonal belt, and an *Anelace* depends on the right side. The legs are protected by plate armour. The *Sollarets* are pointed; a lion, the emblem of courage, supports the feet, and the spurs are guarded—a feature usually considered to indicate that the wearer held some office at Court.

¹ Oxford University Press. 1913. 3/6 net.

Round the figure are arranged four shields with coats of arms. The upper dexter bears that of the Lysle family, viz., Or, on a chief, az, three lions rampant of the first. The lower dexter displays Lysle, impaling Courtney—"Lysle imp. or, 3 Torteaux, a label of three points az. (Courtney)." The upper sinister has the Heath (?) arms, viz: a chevron between three heathcocks, and the lower, the Lysle impaling a shield bearing a chevron between three tudor roses; the whole is surmounted by a rich triple canopy of three Cinquefoiled arches with traceried and crocketed finials supported by side shafts. The entire composition, which measures 8ft. 6ins., is enclosed by a band of latten with the following inscription: "Sub lapide isto jacent pie memorie Dominus Johannes Lysle Miles Dominus de Wodynton in insula vecta et Domina Elizabeth Lysle uxor eius, Idem Dominus Johannes obiit ultimo die mensis Januarii Anno Domini millesimo cccc.^o vii.^o eorum anime pace fruuntur eterna. Amen. The memorial is in an excellent state of preservation, having suffered but little from the ravages of time.

In the Church of S. Peter and S. Paul at Ringwood is a brass commemorating John Prophete, c. 1416. He was prebendary of Wareham, 1349, Dean of Hereford, 1393, Dean of York, 1407, Keeper of the King's Seal and one of the executors of Henry V.

The figure is 5ft. 3ins. in height and is surmounted with a canopy, which is badly mutilated; the whole was enclosed by a marginal inscription, which is now lost. The brass is a good example of an ecclesiastic in processional vestments; these include the cassock, surplice, hood, almuce and cope.

The orphreys on the cope bear figures of saints, a usual form of enrichment at that period. On the dexter side, commencing at the top, a dove is depicted hovering over the head of S. Michael, who bears a shield charged with one of the oldest emblems of the Trinity (see illustration). In his right hand S. Michael grasps a spear with which he is attacking a dragon (Rev. xii., 7). Beneath is a representation of S. John the Baptist carrying a lamb in his arm,



JOHN PROPHETE, 1416, RINGWOOD.

whilst S. Peter with a key, and S. Paul bearing a sword complete the ornamentation. On the sinister side is S. Winifred—the only one whose name is inscribed; S. Catherine, with sword, but without the wheel; S. Barbara with chalice; S. Margaret of Antioch, trampling on a dragon and holding in her right hand a cross, the lower arm of which rises out of the dragon's mouth. The cope is fastened by a morse, which bears the Sacred Face. In the illustration the long pendent ends of the almuze are well displayed. The head rests on a handsome cushion, which is tasselled at the corners.

Possibly the most interesting of the smaller brasses in the county is that of William and Annes Complyn, 1498, S. Mary's Week. It is mounted on a slab of Purbeck marble and is fixed on the north wall of the nave. S. Christopher is represented with a rude staff in his hands, crossing a stream in which a fish is swimming. On his right shoulder he bears the infant Saviour; the latter holds a cross in his right hand, and the left hand is raised in the act of benediction. This is the traditional method of illustrating this event in the life of this saint.

“Offero! the voice repeated,
I must seek the other side,
Yet before Me flows yon river,
Deep and strong in swollen tide.

Trust in me, the giant answered,
I have heard Thy anxious plea;
I will bear Thee on my shoulder
Through this wild and stormy sea.”¹

In the “*Legenda Aurea*,” Vol. II., written in 1275 by Jacobus de Voragine in Latin afterwards translated into English from the French and printed by Master William Caxton, MCCCCLXXXIII., the incident is described as follows:—“Thenne went Cristofer to this Ryuer and made there his Habitable for Hym, and Bare a Grete Pool in his hand in Stede of a Staf, by which he Susteyned Hym in the water, and Bare Ouer Al Maner of Peple without Cessyng. And there he abode, thus Doyng, many dayes.

¹ Fryer's vision of Christopher. Mowbrays.

“ And in a tyme as he Slepte in his lodge he Herd the Voys of a Childe whiche called Hym and Sayd : Cristofer, come out and Bere me over. Thenne he awoke and went out, but he Fond no man. And whan he was Agayn in his Hous, he Herd the same Voys and he ran out and Fond no body. The Thyrd time he was called and cam Theder and Fond a Chylde Bysyde the Ryuage of the Ryuer, whiche prayed Hym Goodly to Bere him ouer the water. And Thenne Cristofer Lyft vp the Chylde on his Sholdres, and Toke Hys Staffe and Entred in to the Ryuer for to passe. And the water of the Ryuer Aroos and Swellyd more and more, and the Chyld was Heuy as Leed ; and alway as he went Ferther the water Encresed and Grewe more, and the Chyld more and more Wexyd Heuy, in so Moche that Cristofre had Grete Anguysse and was Aferd to be Drowned And whan he was escaped with Grete Payne and Passyd the water, and Sette the Chyld a Grounde, he said to the chyld : Chylde, thou has put me in Grete Peryl, thou Wayest Alle Most as I had alle the world vpon me. I myght Bere no Greter Burdon. And the childe Answerd : Crystofre Merueyle the Nothyng, for thou hast not only born alle the world upon thee, but thou hast born Hym that created and made all the world vpon thy Sholdres. I am Jhesu Cryste the Kyng to whom thou Seruest in Thys Werke. And Bycause that thou knowe that I saye to the Trouthe, Sette Thy Staf in the Erthe by thy Hous and thou shalt see to Morne that it shal Bere Floures and Fruyte, and anon he Vanysshed from his Eyen. And thenne Cristofre Sette his Staf in Therthe and Whan he Aroos on the morn, he Fond his Staf Lyke a Palmyer Beryng Floures, Leues and Dates.”

In the Middle Ages this subject was often depicted on the walls of churches, generally opposite the south door, as there was a prevalent belief that, on the day on which any one looked upon a figure of the saint, he would neither meet with sudden death nor suffer any ill fortune. For this reason Chaucer¹ describes “the Yeman” as wearing a “Cristofre on his Brest of silver shene.” The earliest

¹ Canterbury Tales, Prologue 115.



here be the willin Complyn
 & Annes his wyfe y^e whiche
 William Complyn y^e xxij day of
 may y^e yere of oure lord
 MCCCCXLVIII. In this be
 ze redys y^e saw is altho batty
 doles to this Church of Wake
 y^e is to lay fete dedycacion
 of y^e Church xliij to make
 make helth to y^e same Church
 & also gave to y^e halloprug
 of y^e vertue bell in y^e wood
 & in y^e b^e standwall of the
 wincacyn of y^e same Church
 in y^e wood on whos soules
 whu haue mercy Amen.

WILLIAM & ANNES COMPLYN, 1498, WEEKE.

existing woodcut, dated 1423,¹ which was discovered in a convent near Augsburg, bears, in a rhyming Latin couplet, the same promise ; it reads as follows :—

“ Cristofori faciem die quacumque tueris † millesimo
cccc.²

Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris -:-/ xx.²,
tertio

This has been translated—

“ Each day that thou the likeness of S. Christopher
shalt see,

That day no frightful form of death shall make an end
of thee.”

At Aix la Chapelle, there is a very similar brass ; and at Morley in Derbyshire, 1470, and Tattershall, Lincolnshire, 1479 and 1497, the same subject is illustrated, but in these instances the Saviour and Saint form only a portion of the enrichment of the memorial.

The 16-line inscription, recording the generosity of the deceased to the church recites that—

“ Here lieth Willm Complyn
And Annes his wife Ye whiche
Willm decessid ye xxi. day of
May, ye yere of oure Lord
MCCCCLXXXVIII. Also this be
Ye dedis Yt Ye said Willm. hath
Down to this church of Wike
Yt is to say frest dedycacion
Of ye church xl.s. and to make
Nawe Bellis to Ye sam church
X.l also gave to ye Halloyeng
Of Ye Grettest bell vi.s. viii.d.
And for Ye Testimonyall of the
Dedicacion of ye sam church
vi.s. viii.d., on whose Soules
Jhu have mercy. Amen.”

¹ Illustrated in Jackson's "Treatise on Wood Engraving," p. 46.

The writer is unaware of any complete work dealing with Hampshire brasses, similar to those by Prideaux on Dorsetshire, Belcher on Kentish and Thorneley on Lancashire and Cheshire brasses, together with various authors who have undertaken other English counties. Perhaps this short article may lead some member of the Hampshire Field Club to take up the subject and thereby render a distinct service to this interesting branch of ecclesiology.