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Cirencester Castle

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CIRENCESTER CASTLE.

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WHEN Defoe, in 1724, wrote an account of his travels through Great Britain, he said "The learned writers on the subject of antiquity have so discharged themselves that we can never over-value their labours ; yet are there daily further discoveries made which give future ages room, perhaps not to mend, yet at least to add to what has been already done." Everyone will agree with Defoe, and echo the sentiments of respect which he expressed for the patient industry of the men of former days, and will be ready to give the same praise to any later authors of great county histories, the common sources from which more modern local historians have for so many years drawn their information. Circumstances, however, have changed very much since these earlier inquirers made their researches, and wrote their books. On the one hand many ancient earthworks were then as yet unlevelled, many ancient buildings or ruins were still then existing, which have since been destroyed, and there were some documents too, may be to which they had access, which have since disappeared. Herein they had the advantage of us. But on the other hand, the conditions under which ancient documents and records are now available for inquiry are much in our favour. In former days, the public records were dispersed in various places, and were kept in such a way that search was difficult ; there were few good calendars or indexes, no one hardly knowing really what the records contained ; while searches were jealously guarded by a system of fees. Fosbroke lamented with a sigh that he was not permitted to gut the office. Plenty of money was required as well as unlimited time. But now everything almost is open freely to public search ; and in every public repository of records the searcher finds courteous well-informed officials, who are

always ready to use their knowledge in directing any *bond fide* enquirer as to the best sources of information ; I were ungrateful, in connection with this subject, not to mention the kindness which I myself have received from the respective heads of the Literary Search Rooms at the Record Office, and the Registry of the Probate Court at Somerset House.

As a result of this newer condition of things, there is found a great deal of additional matter with which to enrich the old county histories. Indeed the very nature of such works, embracing so wide an area both of space and time, precluded much local detail, even if the writers had been so minded ; while the great object, which they set before themselves, seems to have been to record the regular descent of the tenure of land through a succession of owners. Fosbroke got very angry with the author of the *Pursuits of Literature* for saying that County Histories were not diverting ; he suggested that the satirical rogue had perhaps been dropped on the highroad, and therefore, as having no ancestry for county histories to record was sore upon the subject. Certainly no one would ordinarily look at an old county history with any idea of gaining much information as to what sort of people they were who had lived there, or how they had lived, or what they thought, or what they did.

Another result, contrary to Defoe's expectation, is that the works of previous writers are found to be very much in need of mending. Nor is this to be wondered at when the voluminous character of their work, and the conditions of research in earlier days, are considered. The scrappy information so often given with the references to records, are hardly intelligible history, but are more like rough calendars, pointing out where fuller information may be obtained ; and in the process of searching for it, it is sometimes found that the information was not in itself correct, records having been erroneously transcribed, or imperfectly comprehended from lack of local knowledge. So also local traditions, noted down by travellers, like Leland and Antony Wood, are now and again found to be untrustworthy when compared with actual contemporary records ; and sometimes it is plain that, as occasionally happens to reporters, even in our

days of shorthand, they failed to make correct notes of what they heard.

One great source of error in more modern times has been the desire to save trouble where it seemed possible to do so ; out of which has grown the habit of copying previous writers, who professed to have made use of older materials, without any enquiry as to whether their compilation was correct or not ; and worse than that, the habit of copying the first compiler at second or third hand through intermediate writers. This is not the habit of our great modern historians, and though not altogether unnatural, may be, where some extensive work is in preparation, still it is very fatal ; because the writer who thus copies without enquiry, is sometimes not averse to adding detail of his own ; and it is unpardonable in the writer of the more restricted local history. To read the first lecture in Dr. Arnold's Lectures on Modern History is a good preliminary to taking pen in hand.

No better illustration of how not to write history could be given than the story of Cirencester Castle as told by county and local historians. One of the prime sources of information for Stephen's reign is the *Gesta Stephani*, supposed to be written by a clerk of Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, the brother of Stephen. At the beginning of his second book, he takes up the history towards the latter portion of the year 1142, upon Stephen's recovery from the illness which had attacked him after Easter, while he was at Northampton. He says that Maud, who was then at Oxford, had been strengthening castles in many places, and he names four of them especially, the third being "at the city of Cirencester, near to the holy church of the Religious, like another Dagon near the ark of the Lord." He goes on to say that king Stephen came suddenly with a large force to Cirencester, and "the keepers of the castle having secretly escaped in different directions, he found it empty ; whereupon he gave it to the flames, and razed to the ground the rampart and the out-works."¹ No other contemporary chronicler mentions this fact, and

¹ "ignibus depascendum commisit vallóque et propugnaculis usque ad imum diruto.--*Gesta Stephani*, 958.

in these two short sentences is comprised the whole authentic history of Cirencester Castle. I have never met with any reference whatever to the castle or its site in any ancient documents, and but for the names Castle Street and Castle Ward, the very memory of its existence might have passed away. Before, however, we come to the modern story there are two other passages of English history that must be mentioned. In 1173, the eldest son of Henry II. who had been already crowned as Henry III., and had been associated in the government with his father, rebelled against him abroad with the aid of the French King. Several of the great English Earls of the old Norman families, who had their own causes of quarrel with the King, took his son's side, and so did the Scotch King. Among these Earls was Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester, who, however, was defeated by the royal forces; and he himself having been taken prisoner, was sent as a captive to the King in Normandy. In the summer of 1174, Henry II. came to England, and the Scotch King having been already defeated by the people of the northern counties, the rebellion collapsed. The rebel Earls gave up their castles; and Benedict of Peterborough, our primary authority for that period, says that to the King at Northampton "there came Anketill Mallory and William de Dive, the constables of the Earl of Leicester, and surrendered to him the Castles of Leicester, Mountsorel, and Groby," the two latter being a few miles respectively north and west of Leicester itself. Roger de Hoveden, another contemporary writer, who continued Benedict's chronicle through the reign of Richard, repeats Benedict's story; Ralph de Diceto, a third, mentions the surrender of the three castles, and adds that the constables were desirous of getting the Earl set free from his heavy chains. William of Newburgh, a fourth, while not naming the castles, professes to report the interview that had taken place between the King and the constables. We must now pass on to the first year of the reign of Henry III., the son of John. The English Barons, who had become disgusted with John's conduct, had called over to their assistance the son of the French King, the Dauphin Lewis. Upon John's death, however, in 1216, and the vigorous assertion of the young King Henry's position by the Earls of Pembroke

and Chester and others, the cause of the Barons began to decline ; and a great contemporary authority, the *Barnwell Chronicle*, best known as having been incorporated in the *Memoriale* of Walter of Coventry, tells us that in 1217 the King's forces "recovered the castles (*castellum*) of Marlborough and Farnham, the fortresses (*præsidium*) of Winchester and Chichester (*Cicestria*) with some others, nearly all of which (*fere omnia*) were demolished. We thus have three historical occurrences, in three different places, and happening in three different periods ; one relating to Cirencester Castle in 1142, a second relating to Leicester Castle, and Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester, in 1174, and a third relating to the fortress, *i.e.* the fortified city including the Castle of Chichester in 1217.

We now turn to modern compilers ; and here the prime origin of subsequent blunder is Holinshed. This industrious writer, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, compiled out of the old chroniclers a most interesting history of England, giving general references in the margin, from time to time, to the several earlier writers whom he had made use of. With regard to the question of exactness, he writes in his preface as follows :—"For the names of places, of persons, townes and places, as I have been diligent to reform the errours of others (which are to be ascribed more to the imperfect copies than to the authors) so it may be that I have somewhat committed the like faults either by negligence, or want of skill to restore them to their full integritee as I wished. But what I have performed as well in that behalfe as others, the skilful reader shall easily perceive, and withal consider (I trust) what travel I have bestowed to his behoofe in this huge volume ; craving onlie that in recompense thereof he will judge the best, and to make a friendlie construction of my meaning, where might seeme to have escaped my pen, or the printer's presse, otherwise than we could have wished for his better satisfaction." The correction of proofs is a laborious task, requiring strict attention ; but it would be hard to understand how certain mistakes could pass uncorrected, were it not, as everyone's experience shews, that an author's own knowledge of what the right reading should be, often makes his thought, as he reads over a proof, supply

unconsciously the correct word, and so not notice the printer's error. The author of an important work sometimes obtains the services of a friend to help in correcting proofs, and for this reason, among others, that a critic's eye will remark mistakes which the author might not notice. Mr. Justice Rastall gave some very good advice in the preface to his *Collection of the Statutes* published in 1595 :—" Although I have put the Statutes here at large, yet will I advise everie such of you, as shall have anie matter of importance, concerning anie Statute in this booke, not to trust altogether to this booke ; but reade you over diligently the Acte in the great bookes of Statutes out of which I tooke this. This advice I give you for that perhaps divers faultes be escaped in this worke, some from lacke of diligence of the Printer, and some by my default, for lacke of leisure to consider, and advisedly to peruse and oversee this worke after I had finished it."

Well, how does Holinshed stand for correctness with regard to Cirencester? The *Gesta Stephani* was then unknown, so there is no reference in Holinshed's history of the reign of Stephen to Cirencester Castle being razed in 1142. But in his history of Henry II., under the year 1174, referring to Hoveden and William of Newburgh, he has printed Cicester for Leicester, and in his history of Hen. III., under the year 1217, referring to the Barnwell Chronicle, he has printed Cicester for Chichester, naming the four places as castles, and saying that they were all razed. The latter error might well pass unnoticed in a proof sheet, for there is nothing in the context to point definitely to any part of the country ; but in the story of 1174 Cicester was utterly incongenious. The Earl of Leicester had no power in Gloucestershire, there was no connexion between Cirencester and his castles of Mountsorel and Groby ; while, under the year 1173, Holinshed had himself told how the rebels having been repulsed, the royal forces had captured the town of Leicester, but were unable to take the castle because of its strength ; and, again under the year 1176, he has reported the destruction by the King of the castles which had been held against him, naming Leicester as one.

He made, later on, another similar mistake to that in 1217, only with the names reversed. For the history of the period just before the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, Holinshed made use of a short chronicle of great interest, written in English, by a servant of Edward IV. The chronicle itself under the title "The Arrival of King Edward IV." was published from one of the Harleian MSS. by the Camden Society in 1838. The writer explains Edward's movements in great detail. He left London for Windsor on Friday, April 19th, went on from Windsor on the 24th, reaching Abingdon on Saturday, the 27th. He went thence on the Monday to "Cicestre," when, hearing that the Queen was approaching from the south through Bath, he lodged with his army three miles outside the town, and on the morrow went to Malmesbury to try and meet the Queen and give her battle. But the Queen had turned aside to Bristol. Well, here Holinshed printed Chichester, and this was not from ignorance, for at folio 796, speaking of Thomas Ruthall, he said that his place of his birth was "at Cirencester now Cicester."

Of course, no historian of repute has repeated these mistakes, for however much such persons may use Holinshed as a guide for reference, yet they never write without consulting the original chronicles. Accordingly, Lord Lyttleton, in his History of Hen. II., has Leicester correctly in 1174; Dr. Stubbs, in his Constitutional History, has Chichester in 1217; and Sharon Turner is correct as to Cirencester in 1471. Indeed, as to this last case, it would be impossible almost for anyone to be taken in by the blunder. But how has it fared with regard to the two earlier mistakes, at the hands of the local historians? Camden published his *Britannia* about ten years after the first edition of Holinshed, and under the head of Gloucestershire, when speaking of Cirencester, he said "that the Castle that it had was by a warrant of the King overthrown, in the first year of Henrie the Third his reigne." That is Philemon Holland's literal translation in 1610 from the last edition in Latin of 1607. One would suppose from the phrase that Camden had found the order to demolish Cirencester Castle in the Close Roll of 1st Henry III. At the beginning of the 18th century, Sir Robert Atkyns published his famous *Ancient*

and *Present State of Gloucestershire*, and seems to have copied Camden, for he said that "Cirencester Castle was demolished in the first year of Henry III.," adding for himself "in the year 1216." In 1779 appeared Rudder's great folio *History of the County*. Being a Cirencester man himself, he expatiated a little more about local events. The *Gesta Stephani* had now for a long time been known and printed; so Rudder told the story of the burning of Cirencester Castle by Stephen, and then summarized Holinshed as follows:—"It has just been observed that King Stephen surprised and burnt the castle at Cirencester: but it was repaired very soon afterwards, for we find it in the possession of the Earl of Leicester, whose constable William de Dive held it out against the King for some time, but at length surrendered it; to procure better terms for his master upon his submission." It will be noticed that he mentioned neither date nor name of King. He then proceeded "this castle was afterwards garrisoned by the barons who took up arms against Henry the Third; but the King soon recovered it, and by his warrant in the first year of his reign caused it to be entirely demolished." About that same period Bigland also was making his collections for a history of Gloucestershire, the first volume of which was published after his death in 1791. He did not profess to have had recourse to any chronicles, but mentioning the fact that Cirencester Castle had been razed by Stephen, quoted as his authority the first volume of the original edition of Lord Lyttleton's *Henry II*. For the rest of the history concerning the castle he professed to quote from Bishop Gibson's second edition of *Camden*, Vol. I., p. 253, but a reference to the place indicated shews that Gibson had made no alteration from Camden's simple original mistatement. In truth, Bigland seems, without acknowledging it, to have taken the outline of his story from Rudder, and then, having rolled two separate events into one, and as Rudder had named no special Earl of Leicester, he himself chose one out of his own imagination of what ought to be. For here is his account. "But this fortress being soon restored, the constable of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, detained it from King Henry III., who on gaining the town completed the total demolition of the Castle in the first of his reign, 1216."

Bigland has not been copied. Gough, in re-editing Gibson's edition of Camden, referred to Rudder's history, and said in a few words that Cirencester Castle had been destroyed by Stephen, and again by Henry III. in the first year of his reign. Rudder's became the accepted version ; it was reprinted when he published his History of Cirencester separately in 1800 ; and his history was re-edited, with some additions up to date, in 1842. Some three years ago, however, a new history of Cirencester appeared, which gave a fresh and more detailed version of Cirencester Castle. Summarised, it is as follows :—The Castle of Cirencester was with others garrisoned by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, in behalf of Maud about 1138, but Stephen being victorious over Earl Robert took Cirencester, and the Castle was then either partially or entirely burnt or razed to the ground. Cirencester Castle, however, was rebuilt and garrisoned in 1140, and in 1141, Maud, being at Oxford, reinforced the garrison. Stephen then marched to Cirencester, and burnt the place and its Castle during the temporary absence of the garrison. After this, at some period before 1152, which is not precisely named, the Castle of Cirencester was held for a considerable time by William de Dive, constable to the Earl of Leicester, on Maud's behalf, but he finally surrendered it to the King after obtaining advantageous terms for his master. Then again, later on, under the year 1216, we are told that Cirencester Castle had come into the hands of the Barons, but it was afterwards taken and razed to the ground. Thus fell the Castle of Cirencester, 1216-17, and there does not appear to have been any attempt made to rebuild it. The strange thing is that this last new history of Cirencester is said in the preface to be the result of "diligent study of several of the Public Records and Books in the British Museum." And there is in places such an apparent wealth of reference to ancient chronicles, &c., that the editor of the *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries* said in his criticism on the book : "Mr. Beecham has not failed to discharge his undertaking satisfactorily. He appears to have consulted the best authorities ancient and modern."

The following table first gives the actual historical facts, and then the modern variations :—

Historical Facts as told by Contemporary Writers.	MODERN VERSIONS ACCORDING TO				
	HOLINSHEAD.	CAMDEN AND ATKYNS.	RUDDER.	BIGLAND.	BEECHAM.
<p>1142.—Maud strengthens Cirencester Castle, but Stephen takes the Castle by surprise, burns and razes it.</p> <p>1174.—Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester, having rebelled against Henry II., and being a captive in the King's hands, his Castle of Leicester is surrendered to Henry II. by Anketil Mallory and William de Dive, his constables, to obtain better terms for their master.</p> <p>1217.—The fortress of Chichester, with other Castles recovered from the Barons and the French by a party of the young King Henry III., and some of them destroyed.</p>	<p>Has no reference to this event, as he does not quote from the <i>Gesta Stephani</i>.</p> <p>1174.—Misprints Cicester for Leicester.</p> <p>1217.—Misprints Cicester for Chichester.</p>	<p>1216. — Cirencester Castle demolished 1st Henry III.</p>	<p>Stephen surprized and burnt Cirencester Castle. The Castle soon restored. Cirencester held against the King by William de Dive, Constable of the Earl of Leicester, and surrendered to obtain better terms for his master.</p> <p>1216. — Cirencester Castle held against John and Hen. III. by the Barons, but taken and destroyed.</p>	<p>1142.—The Castle razed by Stephen, but soon restored.</p> <p>1216. — Cirencester Castle held by the Constables of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, against Henry III., but the town was taken and the Castle demolished.</p>	<p>1138-9.—The Castle garrisoned for Maud, but Stephen takes the town and partially or entirely burns and razes the Castle.</p> <p>1140-1.—The Castle rebuilt and garrisoned for Maud, but surprized and burned by Stephen. The Castle restored and held by William de Dive, Constable of the Earl of Leicester, for Maud against Stephen, but surrendered to gain better terms for his master. This before 1152.</p> <p>1216. — Cirencester Castle held by the Barons against Hen. III., but afterwards taken and razed to the ground.</p>

With regard to the site of the castle, it will have been at the end of Castle street, between the Museum and Lord Bathurst's house. This was the regular position of a castle in connection with a fortified town; it was on the line of the circumvallation, the Castle sometimes stretching both inside and outside the regular line of wall. This accounts for the bending in at that point of the boundary of the town; the castle itself, like the abbey on the opposite side of the town, being not included in any of the wards, and so outside the town boundary. This position too agrees with the phrase quoted above from the *Gesta Stephani*. The ancient name of Park Lane, Lawditch Lane, or the Lave-gutter, also points to this, the Lawditch means the water ditch; the name is a relic of the day when that was the ditch or moat outside the castle on the townside. It has indeed been suggested that the site of the castle is to be sought at the Querns, in the broken ground in front of the garden side of the dwelling house. But putting aside every other reason, the position itself disproves this; dominated as those mounds are within two hundred yards of much higher ground towards the south-west, no castle would have been likely to be built in such a situation.

Moreover, the history of the Querns is clear. It was originally common land, and in the earliest mention of it by name which I have found,¹ Jeffrey de Langley, in 1286, quitclaimed to the Abbot all right which he or his tenants might have in the close of Crundles by reason of common. The Abbot was Henry Clereband, or Henry de Hamptonel, as he is generally named in the list of Abbots, and among the accusations made against the abbey in 1343,² and repeated in 1400,³ was one to the effect, that in 1280, Abbot Henry Clereband had usurped and enclosed the common pasture of the Crondles or Cronnes against the rights of the townsmen. Abbot Hereward's answer was to produce the patent, which his predecessor, Adam Brokenbury, by payment of a fine, had obtained, 9th Edward II., *i.e.* in 1316, after an Inq. a.q.d., and by which that King had granted pardon for enclosing

¹ Reg. Abb. Cir., B. 559.

² Reg. Abb. Cir., A. 40 a.b. ³ Inq. a.q.d., 1 Hen. IV., 36.

the wood of Crundeles; while in his pleadings Abbot Hereward described it as a thorny wood.

This Crundles wood is the unknown Crinlewood, which Sir R. Atkyns said belonged to the abbey 9th Edward II., a mistake in transcription, one of sundry in connection with Cirencester; a mistake which has been copied without enquiry by subsequent historians of Cirencester even in modern times, although the printed calendars of the records for 9th Edw. II. would have shewn the proper name. The place was afterwards used largely as a rabbit warren, and among the Augmentation Office documents, is one by which the abbot in 1538 appointed Clement Rede, *alias* Clerk, Yeoman, of Cirencester, "Keper of the game of conyes being within the lese or pasture called Corners," the pasture itself, being in the occupation of Anthony Strainge.¹ With regard to the name itself, it was spelt in various ways, Crowdeles, Crudlus, Crunlus,² Crundeles, Crundles, Crondles, Cronnes, Cornedes, Corners, Cornes, Quernes. I have not found the present name till the 16th century. In the Particulars for Grants, 36th Hen. VIII., concerning a proposed sale to W. Bernes, it appears as "that enclosed pasture called Cornedes, otherwise called Cornes, otherwise called Quernes." And in the Ministers' Accounts for 2nd and 3rd Edward VI., a small parcel of land is described as lying under the wall of a certain close called "The Quernes," J. George, the bailiff, seems from his account to have lately enclosed this fresh parcel of land; but the commoners had thrown down the enclosure, and so he had been unable to make any profit from the land, and could pay no rent.

The word *Crondel*, or *Crondle*, or *Crundel*, does not appear in Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, nor is the equivalent Latin *Cronдела* in either Morell or Migne. But it appears frequently in the description of boundaries in Anglo-Saxon deeds in the Abingdon Cartulary. The late Rev. J. L. Stevenson, who edited that work for the Master of the Rolls, said, in his glossary of terms used, that *crundle* was equivalent to the Northumberland *laugh*, and meant a meadow by the water. I do not see how he

¹ Augm. Off. Decree Books, 14-96.

² Herleian MS. 7, 29a, 35a., 39a.

arrived at that meaning out of the fourteen separate descriptions of land where the word occurs. Twice the phrase is *stancrundle* i.e. a stone or stony crundle: in another the boundary runs "over the hill to *Buccan crundle*"; in another "up to Blackgrove, and thence to *Rinda crundel*;" and in more than one of the others the language points to upland and not to valley. The name occurs sundry times in connection with Cirencester. Besides The Crondles, there was also in Chesterton, Wolfcrondel.¹ There were Wide Crondles at Stratton;² Crondels at Thoreberuhe³ (Tarbarrow); Crundles in the Eastfield: and in connection with these last the name is explained. Four acres of land in the East field are described as stretching to the quarries of *lapidicina* of Alexander Doggevel, "which quarries are called Crundles."⁴ The Querns are what they appear to be, the remains of extensive quarries, the quarries in all probability used by the Romans when Corinium was built.⁵

This history of the Querns again disposes on other grounds of the idea that Cirencester Castle once stood there. The site of a royal castle up to 1142 could not have become open common, and had its original use been that of a fortification, some trace of this must have appeared in the townsmen's complaint to the King in 1342 about the abbot's encroachments in enclosing the Crondles. They were ready enough with their versions of what had happened in the time of Henry I. and John, but neither in the Inq. a.q.d. of 1316, nor elsewhere, is there any hint that at one time the King's castle had stood in that place; while in 1343 the statement made is that the land in question had always been open common pasture. Leland's suggestion that here must have been at some time a castle, and that what he had seen were the remains of its mounds and ditches was either his mistake in

¹ Harleian MS. 7, 27b.

⁸ Reg. Abb. Cir., A. 96b.

² Reg. Abb. Cir., A. 97a.

⁴ Reg. Abb. Cir., B. 522.

⁵ Upon the conclusion of the Paper, Dr. Beddoe remarked that he knew two localities called by the name of Crundles or Crundells. They are situated near Bewdley, in Worcestershire. They are known as the Upper and Lower Crundles. Both of them are on rising ground.

reminiscence, or his own imagination, of no more value, when compared with documentary evidence, than some other of his statements.

In connection with the pasture of the Crondles or Querns, there is always mention made of an adjacent meadow, Athelmede. The two were granted together to W. Berners after the Dissolution.¹ Athelmede, therefore, was the old name of a large meadow between the Querns and the town, and by the ecclesiastical valuation of 1535 would seem to have contained ten acres. If the name of the Castle Meads, attached, as it is said, at the end of last century in common parlance to some enclosures in that place, a name which I have never met with in ancient documents, even in apparently exhaustive lists of enclosures belonging to the abbey on that side of the town,—I am inclined to consider it merely as another instance of the common process of phonetic corruption so prevalent everywhere, and nowhere more so than in Cirencester.

A fresh instance of this, in connection with that side of Cirencester, has come before me since our Society made their perambulation of the town in 1877. I then mentioned the origin of the names now in use, of Dollar Street and Watermoor, which came from Dolehall Street, and Walter de Morá, known in English as Walt at More; but I could not then have explained the original of Sheep Street Lane, near the G.W.R. Station, which, however, I thought must be identical with the old Shoter Street, as I could find no other modern street with which the older locality could be identified. Still, I had no suggestion to make as to what connection there was between Shoter Street and Sheep Street Lane. But since that time, I have examined the Langley Cartulary (Harl. MS. 7), which contains a number of deeds relating to Chesterton Tithing. Among them are some old deeds of the reigns of Ed. III. and Rich. II.,¹ dealing with a curtilage and croft lying in the corner between the Crondles and the Fosse, and a road leading from the Fosse towards Shytshet, or Shyttstret, or Schyttstretre. Bosworth, in his Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon, translates Scytta by a

¹ Particulars for grants, 36 Henry VIII., W. Berners.

² Harleian MS. 7, 29a, 39a.

shooter, an archer. So we have here the explanation needed. Shoter Street is a later English equivalent for the older Schyttestrete, from whatever reason that name may have attached to that road, possibly from the archery butts being on that side of the town, though I have no other evidence for the suggestion. But if this were so, then it would seem that the name Shoter Street must have applied to the southern part of the road, and the northern end next the Fosse have been known as the road leading to Shoter Street, or Schyttestrete Lane. It is easy, then, to understand the process of phonetic corruption, though Schyttestrete, Shittestreet, Sheetstreet, to Sheep Street, the meaning of the original name being forgotten, and the pronunciation of the old name giving use in modern times to misapprehension.

In connection with Cirencester Castle, and the mistakes made by historians, it may be as well to put on record the correction of a mistatement made as to the way in which in olden time the name of the town was written. It has been said that "Cicester or Cicestria stands indiscriminately for Chicester or Cirencester, and there are many noteworthy instances of errors in consequence."¹ This is a complete mistake, which I do not think could have been made by any one fairly familiar with ancient documents and chronicles. Among the wills written in the 15th and 16th centuries by local scribes, who wrote phonetically according to uneducated local pronunciation the spelling is naturally very varied; from Cirecestre, Circitour, and many others through Ciscetre, Ciceter, and Cister to Syscestour, Sussetre, and Sussitar. In the will of Henry Tapper, 1530, the name is spelt six different ways.² But this was not the case with educated clerks and chroniclers. The older Anglo-Saxon Cyrnceaster, or Cyrenceastre, was softened by the Normans into Cirecestre, or Cirecestria, the form found in Domesday and the early chronicles and Pipe Rolls; but Cirencestre or Cirecestria was thenceforward the ordinary form used in all charters, &c. During the last twenty years I have come across the name many hundreds of times, but I have never noticed a single instance of Cicestria being intentionally

¹ Beecham's History of Cirencester, p. 10.

² Thower quat. xi.

used for Cirencester, nor have I ever been misled by meeting with the form Cicester, and finding afterwards that Chichester was meant by it. The experienced clerks at the Record Office seem to be equally unaware of this supposed confusion of nomenclatures. It may be taken for an absolute rule, that the Latin Cicestria never in the intention of the writer means Cirencester, and that the English Cicester never means Chichester. In French, *e.g.* in the original of the ordinance of the the staple, Cicestre stands for Chichester, but equally in French, *e.g.* in the Parliament Rolls, and Acts of the Privy Council, in the Year Books, and in Chancery Pleadings, Cireceestre or Cirenceestre appears for Cirencester. I do say that errors have never been made in transcription. To take the instance of *The Memoriale* of Walter of Coventry already referred to, in every case but one he is correct, Cicestra or Cicestria stands for Chichester; Cireceestria, Cirenceestria for Cirencester. But in telling the story of the consecration of Serlo, the first Abbot of Cirencester, in 1131, he appears to have written Cicestrensis, for Bishop Stubbs, in his edition of that Chronicle prints Ci[re]cestrensis. Here, however, the compiler was copying from the Continuator of Florence of Worcester, and a reference to that original Chronicle, where the name is rightly spelt, shews that the later chronicler had simply, in copying, made a clerical error. Holinshed's mistakes have already been referred to; but about the most glaring instance is of modern date. Some years ago there was published a transcription of the Issue Roll of the Exchequer at the beginning of the reign of Henry IV. as an interesting example of the varied payments made out of the Exchequer. It might have been supposed that an elementary knowledge of that period of English history, even if gained only from Shakspere's plays, would have saved the editor from making such a mistake as to misprint Chichester for Cirencester in matters relating to the rebellion of the Earls, when they "destroyed with fire our town of Cisiter in Gloucestershire," For all that, three several times in respect of payments made to J. Cosin and other men for expenses incurred in putting down that rebellion, Chichester was printed, and was allowed to pass uncorrected. A reference,

however, to the original Pell Rolls, as they are technically called, shews that it is simply a clerical error; the entries on the rolls are quite clear, *de villa Cirecestr'*, *John Cosin de Cirecestr'*, *apud Cirecestr'*. Any other instances in printed volumes of old records, I should expect, when traced out, would be found to be due to the same causes.

