

**ANCIENT CROSSES, AND
OTHER ANTIQUITIES IN
THE EAST OF CORNWALL**

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Ancient Crosses, and Other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall by J. T. Blight

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J. T. BLIGHT

**ANCIENT CROSSES, AND
OTHER ANTIQUITIES IN
THE EAST OF CORNWALL**



TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,
ALBERT,
PRINCE OF WALES, AND DUKE OF CORNWALL,

THESE
ILLUSTRATIONS OF ANTIQUITIES

IN THE
Duchy of Cornwall,

ARE,
BY THE PERMISSION OF
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN,

HUMBLY DEDICATED,
BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S
LOYAL, FAITHFUL, AND DEVOTED SERVANT,

JOHN T. BLIGHT.

PENANCE,
September, 1858.



Tintadgel; locally called King Arthur's Castle.



ALL! Prince and Duke! no happier name
Thas thine, amid our hills can stand,
To blend Old England's antique fame,
With castled Cornwall's rocky land!
Thy Plume, our banner of the West,
The blind Bohemia's faithful crest!

II.

Void was the land in days of yore,
Of warrior-deed and minstrel-song:
The unknown rivers sought the shore,
The nameless billows roll'd along:—
Till Arthur, and the Table-round,
Made stern Tintadgel storied ground!

III.

Then shone the days of spear and shield:
When Cornwall's Duke was England's pride!
He won, on Creel's distant field,
The spurs that gleam'd on Tamar-side:
The wreath, at dark Poitiers he wore,
Was heather from our Cornish shore!

IV.

Spell of the past, thy knightly name,
 May well the thrilling days recall,
 When heroes fought their fields of fame,
 And minstrels chanted in the hall
 Till the last trophy stood, alone,
 Yon Syrian Cross in Cornish stone!

V.

But lo! the hills with grass are bright!
 The valleys flow with rippling corn:
 Tall cliffs that guard the couch of night,
 Greet with calm smile the lip of morn:
 And, revelling in his summer-caves,
 Old ocean laughs with all his waves!*

VI.

Hail! Heir of Thrones! beneath thy smile,
 We bend, where once our fathers bent:
 And gather, with a shadowy toil,
 Stones for a nation's monument!
 Our kindling spell for Hope and Fame,
 Duke of the West! thy native name!

12/6/11

* ποτιων τε κυματων
 ανεμβρον γλασπρα

Is not all the imagery of this striking passage drawn from the sea?



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The notes alluding to vol. 1, found on some pages of this book, refer to "Ancient Crosses, &c., in the West of Cornwall," published in 1856.



Introduction.

THE favourable reception of the Author's attempt to preserve, by means of pictorial representation, the Crosses and other Antiquities in West Cornwall, has induced him to prepare a similar illustration of those which—though comparatively less numerous—still exist in the eastern part of the county.

From the wooded banks of the Tamar to the rugged cliffs of the western shore, these monuments of primitive Christianity yet remain,—mute, but suggestive objects,—by the village well, in the churchyard, by the lonely wayside, on the barren moor, and near the sites of Druidic or Patriarchal worship. Connected as they are with the early introduction of the Christian faith into this land, they cannot fail to interest the secular as well as the ecclesiastical antiquary.

Introductory remarks relating to the purposes and uses of such monuments having been given in the former volume, it will be unnecessary to repeat them in this place; it may, however, be added, that Crosses were frequently placed at the meeting of four roads; “the cross roads of the idolstrous Cornish, were held sacred by the vulgar, for many ages after the introduction of Christianity;”* and for this reason, probably, when stone Crosses were erected as symbols of the new religion, they were fixed by the early Christians at places regarded sacred by the heathen. Crosses are also frequently to be met with in the vicinity of our ancient religious houses: in the neighbourhood of Bodmin they are particularly numerous, and seem to point to that place as having been a seat of ecclesiastical authority.† In no other portion

* *Pochele's Hist. of Cornwall*, vol. i., p. 65.

† “—the existence of the monastery of Saint Petrock at Bodmin can be traced back with almost absolute certainty to a period but little short of the reign of King Æthelstan, when the Cornish bishoprick is supposed to have originated, and traditionally even to a much higher date.”—*Pedler's Episcopate of Cornwall*, p. 63.

of the county are they equally numerous, except in West Penwith; indeed, the practice of erecting Crosses seems to have been more generally observed in the western parts of Cornwall, which were reclaimed from paganism by the Irish Missionaries;—but the inhabitants of the northern coast having been converted by the Welsh Saints, few of these ancient symbols of the Christian religion are found in that part of the county.

The form of the Cross most prevalent in Cornwall, is a shaft surmounted by a round head, on which a Greek Cross stands in relief. Another form consists of a round head with the extremities of three arms of the cross *patee* extending beyond the circular outlines of the head. Supposing the last mentioned variety pierced in the interspaces between the arms of the cross, we have the four-holed cross; see pp. 28, 29, and 30: this form is occasionally seen by the road-side, but more frequently in churchyards. Another form is a shaft surmounted by a cross *patee*, such as the four-holed variety would appear if deprived of the segments of the ring connecting the arms of the cross; the only example of the kind met with is in the churchyard, Lanhydrock; p. 34.

Crosses of the Latin form are less numerous.

Some of the Crosses are ornamented either with scroll-work, or with some symbolic device; thus the Cross in St. Columb churchyard bears the *trefoil*, a well-known symbol of the Trinity. The *fleur-de-lis* carved on the Cross at Washaway, near Bodmin (p. 36), is the invariable emblem of the Virgin: this is the only example in the county. The wayside Crosses in the west of Cornwall usually bear on one side a figure, intended to represent the crucified Christ,* this is not found on those in the eastern part.†

The ancient Baptisteries and Holy-wells also form an interesting class of Antiquities in Cornwall. Many springs, which from their principal ingredient, are called chalybeate, are said to have been recognised as possessing medicinal qualities and peculiar virtues at a very remote period; the modes of divination practised at these places originated before the introduction of Christianity, and some remnants of these customs

* In all the monuments where the figure of Christ is given, the head inclines towards the right.

† This declination of the head of our Blessed Lord toward the right shoulder, is in strict fulfilment of the unvarying tradition, that when he said, *τετελειωται*, it is finished, his head was bowed down towards this right shoulder, and the right hand of the Cross, and so in and with that gesture he rendered up his soul. It is in memorial of this well known fact, that so many ancient Churches are built with a bend of the chancel in that direction,—and this is very evident in Morwenstow Church.—MS., R.S.H.

† One exception only to this statement has been met with—the Cross by the wayside near Mawgan Church, p. 53.