

Note on the Inscription in Ashwell Church.

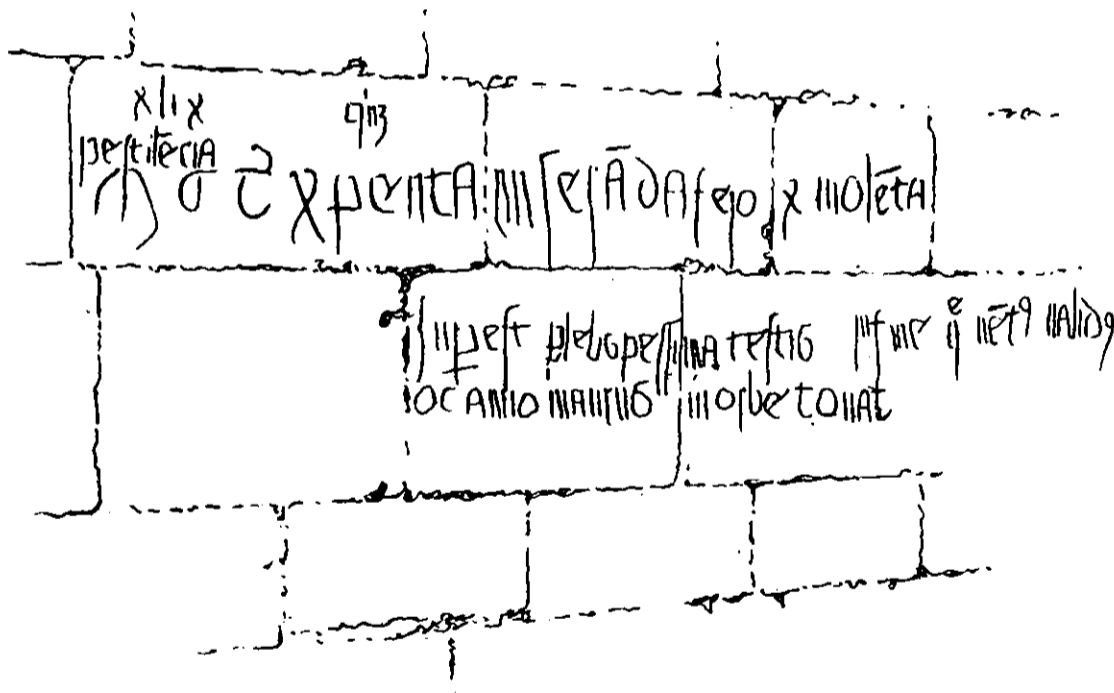
COMMUNICATED BY CHARLES JOHNSON.

This celebrated inscription which is on the north wall inside the tower, apart from its historical value, demands attention as having been misread by the late Mr. Cussans. The principal inscription in large letters, should read:—

M. C. ter. X. penta miseranda ferox violenta.
 [Atrocis pestis] superest plebs pessima testis.
 [h]oc anno Maurus in orbe tonat.

The subordinate inscriptions are to be regarded as glosses. Over the first line is "xlix." over "pestilencia," explaining the allusion of the line below. So also "penta" is glossed as "quinque." The first two lines will then translate—

1000, three times 100, five times 10, pitiable, savage, and violent.
 A wicked populace survives to witness [to the shocking plague]:



the allusion being to the scarcity of labour in 1350 produced by the "Black Death": and for the form of the lines compare the verse quoted in "Eulogium Historiarum" (Rolls Series) vol. iii. p. 228.

M. simplex. C. ter. X. triplex V. semel I. ter.
 Belligerans Ed. ter. trans mare cepit iter.

The gloss at the end of the second line appears to read "in fine Quadragesime(?) ventus validus," *i.e.*, "a great wind at the end of Lent" and may refer to the year 1350 (if it refers to 1361 Q^e cannot be "Quadragesime.")

The third line, as appears from the gloss at the end, relates to 1361, and to the great storm on St. Maur's Day (Jan. 15), alluded to by the author of "Eulogium Historiarum" (vol. iii. p. 229).

There are numerous other mediæval inscriptions here and on other parts of the Church, and an interesting sketch of what appears to be old St. Paul's Cathedral.