

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

P A R T I .

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

THE BOYHOOD OF GENIUS.

“ I found Chantrey fond of talking of the humbleness of his own origin: the feeling that he took from it was one of pride, and not of shame: he felt what he was, and was proud of accompanying it with what he had been.”—*Sir Henry Russell.*

CHANTREY—a surname which has conferred lasting celebrity on the village of Norton, was undistinguished during the eighteenth century, even in that locality, amidst the mass of common appellatives borne by the rest of the rustic families of the parish. And whence did it originate? a question often asked,—and repeated here, not as the prelude to a learned answer, but, for the

B

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

purpose of mentioning a fanciful notion once entertained of some connection between the ancestors of the late eminent sculptor, and the existence of an ancient *Chantry* in their parish church. In the building just named, still exist the tomb and effigies, in alabaster, of William Blythe and his wife, of Norton Lees, the parents of two bishops who, towards the end of the fifteenth century, evinced their filial piety by the establishment of a service of perpetual orisons for the souls of their ancestors. The song for the dead ceased, on the abolition of all such offices, i. Edw. VI., but the ruins of the house formerly occupied by the officiating priest, existed under the appellation of *The Chantry*, adjacent to Norton Hall, almost to the time when sufficient interest began to attach to the name of *Francis Chantrey*, to lead persons to seek in merely synonymous sounds, something more than a mere accidental resemblance. It would be disingenuous on my part, not to confess

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

ITS SUPPOSED ORIGIN.

3

a sympathy with the popular desire thus to add the interest of old historic association to the local repute of a name so eminently distinguished: and could it be shewn that any family bore that name in this pleasant northern nook of the county of Derby,—immediately after the Reformation, the fanciful claim thus set up for the memory of the old *Canteria* might, perhaps, have passed unchallenged.

I am not about to exhibit, at length, the genealogy of CHANTREY—for *Genius*, whatever its origin, in this instance at least, was not hereditary—but it may be interesting to mention that, although I have not noticed any trace of the name in the parish of Norton, at an earlier period than about the middle of the eighteenth century, the family appears to have been long identified with other places in North Derbyshire. In the parish of Staveley, there was residing “George Chantry,” who died before 38 Elizabeth, leaving a widow,

B 2

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

who had been “Grace Lyllie:” she was dead in 1631, her son and heir being “Thomas Chantry,” who was living in 1634. These are, as we shall presently see, family names, as well as the following, viz.:—“Francis Chantrye,” who was dead in 1661, leaving a son and heir of the same name, who was alive in 1701. I take the latter to be the “Francis Chantry” who, along with “Godfrey Chantry,” is rated under the “Unston Quarter,” in an assessment for the parish of Dronfield, collected 1667. He was probably the father of the Rev. George Chantry, who was rector of Clown, in Derbyshire, from the beginning of June, 1693, to the 6th of November, 1721, when he died, leaving, by will, twenty shillings a-year—chargeable on nine acres of land, at Barlbrough—to be distributed to ten poor persons in the parish of Clown. His wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Phineas Mace, rector of the adjacent parish of Barlbrough—having previously, it would seem, been himself “Rectoriæ de

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
 Hallamshire and Elsewhere
 John Holland
 Excerpt
[More information](#)

ANN CHANTRY.

5

Clowne." They had one child, a daughter Margaret, who died in infancy, October 21, 1701. All three are commemorated on gravestones within the communion rails at Clown. In this church were married, February 16th, 1700-1, Francis Chantry and Ann Cooper, both of the parish of Dronfield. I have very lately had in my hand the little pocket Bible of this worthy woman, containing the following quaint inscription :—

“ANN CHANTRY—Her Book.

If it be lost, and you it find,
 I pray that you will be so kind
 As to restore it me again,
 And I'll reward you for your pain.”

I am informed by my friend, the Rev. W. C. Whiter, the present incumbent of Clown, that the foregoing comprise all the instances of the occurrence of this name in the register, or in the parish, and I believe, I may add, in the county of Derby.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
Hallamshire and Elsewhere
John Holland
Excerpt
[More information](#)

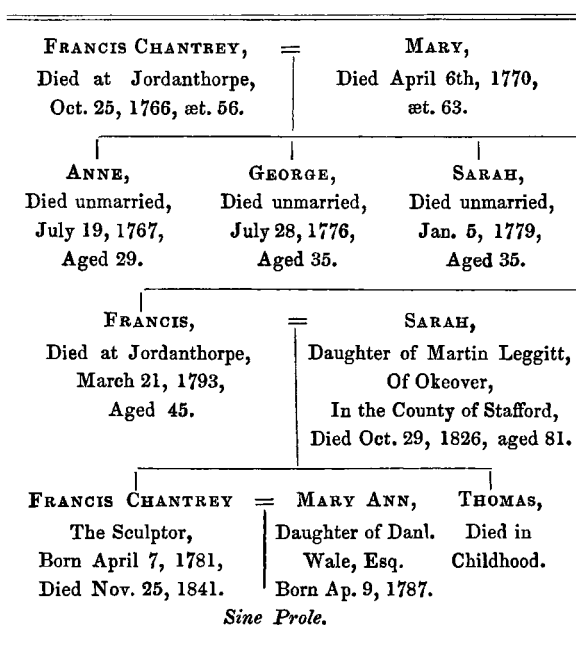
It was not, however, the individual above-named, but his cousin, Francis Chauntry, of Handsworth Woodhouse, who, on the 13th January, 1700, was married at Dronfield, to Sarah Mower, of Holmesfield, and went to live at High-gate House, who was the father of Francis Chantrey, (as the name is spelled,) joiner, who, with Mary his wife, were living at Backmoor in 1736, in which year their first child was born; they then removed to Sheephill,* where their second child was born; and, lastly, to Jordanthorpe, where they had two other children, including the father of the sculptor. The following is a brief tabular view of the descent of Chantrey of Jordanthorpe, in the parish of Norton—a spot which has to me the additional interest of having been the residence of my own paternal ancestors, about the Elizabethan era:—

* Adjacent places, on a bleak eminence near the village of Norton, on the north side.

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-06444-6 - Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey: Sculptor in
 Hallamshire and Elsewhere
 John Holland
 Excerpt
[More information](#)

RESIDENTS AT JORDANTHORPE.

7



Most of the writers of Memoirs of the late Sir Francis Chantrey have sought to convey the notion that he narrowly missed some valuable family patrimony. Mr. Rhodes says—"His ancestors were in respectable but not opulent circumstances,

and some heritable possessions still belong to the family. His father was involved in considerable pecuniary losses, chiefly by the conduct of a brother, whom he endeavoured to serve beyond the extent of his means. He saw the property which his forefathers had accumulated, progressively departing from him, his spirits became depressed, and he died in the prime of life." In the humblest yeoman family there usually floats some tradition, more or less vague, of the loss of heritable property, which the poor labourer or small copyholder would have enjoyed, "had right things gone forward." Some reckless ancestor squandered the freehold; some unprincipled cadet of the family supplanted the right heir in the patrimonial birthright; or some improvident uncle disappointed the hopes of a whole generation of expectants. Well or ill founded, these traditions are almost sure to form a sort of "peerage question," whenever a cottager's son happens to rise to extraordinary eminence in