

Raleigh's Cross on Brendon Hill.

BY SIR CHARLES E. TREVELYAN, BART.

ON pages 47-8 of the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Society* for 1883, Raleigh's Cross is stated to be "simply a land-mark dividing the manors of Nettlecombe, formerly owned by the Raleighs, and Clatworthy, the now properties of Trevelyan and Carew;" and then follows information to the effect that the Cross was fixed by the side of a dangerous bog as a mark of warning to travellers.

I venture to question both these accounts. Crosses were not ordinarily made to do duty as boundary stones, and still less were they erected as warnings against danger. I refer, of course, to stone crosses, with steps for prayer leading up to them. They have a distinctly religious character, and one common use of them was to mark the place where the dead body of some beloved person had been deposited on the way to burial, as in the case of the Eleanor Crosses.

The true explanation, I think, is to be found in our family tradition that Raleigh's Cross was erected by Simon Raleigh, who fought at Agincourt and was the last of the name at Nettlecombe, in affectionate memory of his first wife Joan, who died in Devonshire and was brought home to be buried at Nettlecombe. He married two Joans, whose decayed wooden effigies I remember on either side of his stone effigy under one of the arches in the Raleigh aisle in Nettlecombe church. The Cross was erected at the junction of four roads, at such a distance from the house and church as to render it likely the body would be deposited there, pending the completion of the preparations for the funeral. I recollect the Cross being removed about fifty yards, and set up in its pre-

sent place, the object of which was merely to restore it to its original position at the junction of "the Cross Roads," for when the enclosures were made on both sides, the lines of the old roads were so far departed from that the Cross was left under a hedge on the north side of the new road from Bampton to Watchet. All this is at least real tradition, which I got from my father and other of my elders, but I have no means here of verifying it. A woodcut is given in Pooley's *Crosses of Somerset*.
