ART. VII.—*Torpenhow Church.* By the Rev. C. H. GEM, Vicar.

Read at Torpenhow, August 30th, 1876.

THE Parish of Torpenhow, containing an area of 9,001 acres, is situated on the south bank of the river Ellen, or Elne, as the original name seems to have been. The land rises gradually from the river till it reaches its highest points, Camp Hills, Caermote, and Binsey, and then descends to Bassenthwaite Lake. The Parish is divided into four "quarters," comprising the eight townships of Torpenhow and Whitrigg, Bewaldeth and Snittlegarth, Bothel and Threapland, Blennerhasset and Kirkland. The population is 1152, mostly employed in agriculture, though owing to the working of the coal mines in Aspatria and Mealsgate, an increasing number are devoting themselves to mining.

The origin of the names of places is always an interesting study; and the name of our parish will still "furnish much debate both to the learned and the great." Some authorities make the word entirely Danish, saying it is the "How" or hill of Torpen, some mythical Norse hero. Others maintain that it is the "Thorpe" or village on a hill. Others again, in the words of the Denton manuscript, say "it is called Torpenhow,

> Every syllable of which word, in several languages of the people, which did successively inhabit the place, signifies after a sort the same thing. The Britons, the first inhabitants, called a rising topped hill, (such a one as is there), Pen, *i.e.* head. The Saxons next succeeding, and not understanding the signification, Pen, called it Tor-pen: *i.e.* the hill Pen. They who came next (the Danes) understanding neither of the former names called it Tor-pen-how."

This same process is going on at this present day, the neighbouring people speaking of Torpenhow "brow." This theory has the support of the authority of Dr. Donaldson, who,

who, in his "New Cratylus" quotes it in connection with "*Hamptonwick*" near London, as the only instance in England of three syllables of a name, all meaning the same thing.*

Within the area of the parish are to be found the remains of two camps; the one on Camp Hill is Roman and commands the approach from Keswick (through the plain in which Bassenthwaite Lake is situated), towards the Roman road from old Carlisle by Papcastle, to the west. Close to this camp, when the neighbouring fields were broken up, two Roman hand-millstones were discovered, and are now in the possession of Mr. R. Fisher Irving, in whose land they were discovered. About half a mile westward there is another camp, erected by the Danes, on Caer Mote. This camp, like the other, from its lofty situation, commands a large tract of country from Bassenthwaite to the coast.

The Parish, notwithstanding its numerous townships, is singularly destitute of ancient seats. Torpenhow Hall, the seat of the Applebys, Moresbys, and Fletchers, which was situated about a hundred yards to the north-east of the church-yard, has entirely disappeared. Bothel Hall, a mean and poor house, is now a farm. Threapland Hall, a building of the seventeenth century, contains no features worthy of notice, is also a farm. Blennerhassett Hall, also a farm, is of rather earlier date, but small. There are two seventeenth century cottages on the other side of the road at Blennerhasset. On the turnpike road below Kirkland there may be noticed a public house with the initials and date over the door. This was "Low Wood Nook," the patrimonial seat of the Addisons, from whom sprang

* Since the above was written, "a Cumberland Parson," in the Carlisle Journal, in an extract from a pedigree of the Rev. Richard Mulcaster, master of Merchant Taylor's School, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, quotes the name of the Parish as "Torpenham." Not having seen the manuscript he quotes, I am unable to say whether he has mis-read the name in the manuscript, or whether the writer of the manuscript was guilty of a "clerical error," that it is an error, I am convinced from the fact that it is the *only* place in which it is so written, at least as far as evidence goes.

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the Addisons of Maulds Meaburn, in Westmorland, and the Addisons of Maryland, now a rich and influential family in the United States.

On the east side of Bothel* Beck is a large boulder stone, locally called Sampson. It is 21 feet long and 10 feet above the ground. It has evidently been carried by the ice, as I am informed by Professor Harkness, from the granite rocks of Dumfriesshire.

An examination of the Register Books, which, commencing in the year 1651, are perfect with the exception of the years 1685—1699, shews that a great change has taken place among the inhabitants. Of the families now possessing land in the parish, none can be traced back to the year 1651, excepting the Plasketts of West House, the Railtons of the Smithy, the Dobsons of the Nook, and Fishers of Whitrigg, now represented by Mr. Fisher Irving; the Bushbys of Bothal, represented by the Rev. Edward Bushby, Senior Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge; and the Moores of Kirkland, represented by Miss Moore of Kirkland, and Mr. George Moore of Whitehall.

An entry in the year 1651—"Johannes filius Johannes Whitehead de Kirkland Baptizatus"—gives rise to the conjecture that Whitehead Brow in the township of Kirkland, derives its name from that family, rather than, as is generally supposed, from the whiteness of the brow. And Borrowscale Hill may derive its name from the family of Borrowscale, mentioned in 1652. And perhaps it may be allowed us to conjecture that Addison's friend Tickell, the praise of whose translation of Homer gave rise to the famous quarrel between Addison and Pope, may, like the Essayist, be sprung from a family resident in Torpenhow, for we find the name "Tickell" in connection with that of "Addison" in the years about 1685, in the account

* Can Boald, which is the original name of this Township, be connected with the word Bal (Catbells) which occur in many villages in the coast of Scotland?

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books of this parish.* There are no amusing entries in these registers, like those at Penrith and Greystoke ; the only one approaching singularity is one in the year 1726, in which a man is ticketed, as we say now, as a Dissenter. On the first leaf of the register, under the date 1719, "J.H." has written the sarcastic hexameter, "Clericus applaudit, dum causam funeris audit:" a line which is deprived of its sting, as regards the vicar, when we consider the *very* small amount of the funeral fees.

The "Account Books" begin in the year 1672 and continue perfect to the present day. The affairs of the parish were managed by the "Sixteen Men" as they were called, elected from the householders in the four quarters into which the parish is divided, in addition to the vicar and churchwardens. The last nomination of these "Sixteen" took place about 1807.

It was by this parochial council of Sixteen that the first attempt to supply elementary education was made, for on May 12, 1686, a resolution was passed in favour of founding a free school at Bothel; and in pursuance of this resolution the sum of £40 was collected from the inhabitants, assisted by a donation from Mr. John Orfeur, of High Close, Plumbland. It says something for the public spirit of the parishioners that they should, with scarcely any extraneous aid, have laid the foundation of a school which has been of such great service to the place. The Sixteen from time to time drew up various rules for the conduct of the school, one of which would greatly astonish the present generation of certificated masters, for in 1689, the master was ordered "to keep school from six in the morning till eleven, and from one till six, from Lady day till Michaelmas. Fees for instruction in duties

* NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—Dr. Lonsdale, (Cumberland Worthies, vol. 4) states that Tickell was born in 1686, in the neighbouring parish of Bridekirk, and that a family connection existed between the Addisons and the Tickells. For the quarrel between Pope and Addison, see *Ibid*, and also Disraeli's Calamities and Quarrels of Authors.

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and arithmetic were allowed to the master, who also, with the permission of the Sixteen, might make his own terms for the instruction of children, not qualified by residence as free scholars. The most celebrated masters in late years were Mr. Hair, afterwards curate, Mr. Joseph Railton, and Mr. Richard Abbatt, F.R.A.S.

In our examination of the account books, we find, on passing from educational to general matters, that on July 6, 1701, it was ordered by the Sixteen that all intramural interments should cease, excepting a fee of one pound be paid for permission. Among the various items of church expenses, we may notice that, in 1759, an annual allowance of five shillings was made to the Sexton for whipping dogs out of the church, and that he might the more completely fulfil this order, he was allowed threepence for a whip, and twopence for a thong. With regard to the fabric of the Church, the Sixteen seem to have made liberal provision. In 1763 they paid eight shillings for binding the Bible, in 1784 they paid £8 7s. for Bible and Prayer Book, and in 1728 they granted an annual allowance of five shillings to Nathaniel Noble for the purchase of bell ropes. In 1789 their proceedings do not seem to have been marked with their usual acuteness, for then they altered the flat roofs of the side aisles, and sold the lead for £39 13s. 10½d., and the slate for £1 5s.; with the proceeds of this sale, augmented by a parish purvey of £13 19s. 3d., they reroofed the church in its present form; one item, by the way, in this year displays Falstaff's proportion of sack and bread, for in selling the old materials, they "expended in ale at Gunson's 19s. 3d."

The certificates for burial in woollen are numerous, and so far curious in that they are headed by the proper form of affidavit, which I have never met with in any parish registers, it runs as follows:—

"I, A.B. make oath as follows that C.D. lately deceased, was not put in, wrapt, wound, or buried, in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud, mad-

made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or other than what is made of sheep's wool only, nor in any coffin lined or or furnished with any cloth, stuff, or any other whatsoever, made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or any material but sheep's wool only."

The majority of the earlier certificates were sworn before Mr. John Orfeur, of High Close.

There are a few entries of "Briefs and Collections," some of which may be of interest. For the inhabitants of Russell Street, Westminster, 2s. 5d. was collected on Feb. 22, 1673, and for one John Smith of the same place, on Dec. 15, 1672, 2s. 7d. For losses in the Sugar Houses, London, 3s. on Nov. 17, 1672. For S. Katherine's College near the Tower of London, 3s. 1d. was collected on Feb. 27, 1674. For the repairs of S. Paul's London, Aug. 30, 1680, the sum of 7s. was contributed by the parish, and on the same day 6s. 3d. for the relief of the English captives in Algiers.

In turning from the parish in general to the church, we may state that the patronage is vested in the Bishop of Carlisle, having been previously in the hands of the Convent of Rosedale in the County of York, to the prioress of which the advowson had been given by Sibella de Valonois and Eustace D'Estotville, which gift was confirmed by Edward III. Of the various vicars who have from time to time ministered in the parish only one seems to have emerged from the mass of country parsons—William Nicholson, who held the living from 1681—1698, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle. The Church, as might be expected from its situation, is dedicated to St. Michael.

In all probability there was a church here before the Norman Conquest, but no part of the present building is older than the twelfth century. In William II. or early in Henry I. a church was erected here consisting of chancel and nave. We can easily gather from indications in the present building that this chancel was much shorter than usual, and the nave much wider. The

The windows were narrow and unglazed, and the church consequently very dark. This darkness would be be much increased in the time of Henry II. when the chancel was lengthened and the north aisle built. About the year 1260, Henry III., the north transept, or Lady Porch as the registers term it, was built, and the present east window inserted in place of the original Norman one, the remains of which can be clearly traced outside. Still later in the fifteenth century the west window was inserted, the south aisle added, and the old Norman south door removed to its present site. This, as far as the area is concerned, gives the present building. The roof of the nave was originally much higher, and the roofs of the aisles flat and much lower than at present. The alteration of the roof was in all probability made, when, in 1789, the lead was sold, new gutters made, and the ale drunk at Gunson's. The present ceiling in the chancel was the work of the Rev. J. Thexton, the last incumbent.

The chief feature worthy of a visitor's attention within the church are the north windows of the chancel, and the extremely fine chancel arch with grotesque figures on the capitals of the columns. The font, with its interlacing arches, like those in the Hospital of St. Cross, Winchester, an old piscina on the south wall of the chancel, and the massive northern pillars all call for attention. Over the west windows may be noticed an incised slab of the fourteenth century. All who enter the church will be most certainly struck with the ceiling of the nave. The ceiling is, I believe, unique, and is certainly not in keeping with the rest of the building, but it has an interest of its own, being associated with the memory of Mr. Thomas Addison, a great benefactor to the parish, as the following extract from Bishop Nicholson's visitation August 26, 1703 will shew:

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"The body of the church was lately beautified on a motion made by Mr. T. Addison, commissioner of sick and wounded, who having enlarged his paternal estate at Low Wood Nook, and wanting a seat answerable to his present quality, offered to cover the middle aisle with a fair painted canopy of fir, on condition of having leave to erect such a seat at his own charge. Both these covenants have been performed, and the parishioners to bring the rest of the church to somewhat of a harmony with these new improvements, have backed all the seats with wainscot, and floored the whole so decently, that this is the fairest inside of any parish church in the Diocese."

Mr. Addison's pew is gone, his ceiling remains; and I should be glad to have advice as to the retaining or removing it in the contemplated restoration. For my own part I confess I think it wrong to remove every trace of our forefathers' work, simply because it is not in accordance with the prevalent Canons of Restoration. A church has a living history, it grows, and never springs into perfect being at once. Each age adds what seems good to it; and though I am quite ready to admit that those excrescenses which were added when religion and art were at their lowest ebb, during the ages of the Georges, may legitimately and wisely be removed. I am reluctant to do away with every monument of our father's affection for their house of prayer. Any parish may posess a brand new church, few in these days possess a really *old* church. A parish possessing one should be loath to destroy what can never be replaced. Let us do what we can to make our old churches comely and worthy of the God by whom they are sanctified, but let us beware of destroying every memorial of our forefathers' piety, in the attempt to build a church with no hallowed association of the past.

Externally the chief objects of interest are the south doorway, which, though Norman, indicates an approaching change, the west pillar being slightly hexagonal. The north side of the chancel is a fine specimen of Norman walling, and the original east window can be easily traced by the side of the present one.

In the churchyard there is a stone figure which has evidently been removed from its recumbent position within the chancel: it is a female figure and may be the monument of one of the ladies who in early times possessed the Manor of Torpenhow. On entering the churchyard, there may be seen built into the wall a small incised slab, with sword and floriated cross, two feet by one, most probably the tombstone of a child. Before leaving the churchyard the visitor may observe a plant growing on the wall, which I believe is ouly to be found, in this diocese, here and at Furness Abbey, it is the "*officinalis parietaria*" or "pellitory from out the wall" of the poet, a plant which is eagerly sought after by persons, who come long distances to gather it for its medicinal powers.*

These are the only observations I have to bring before you to-day, and though naturally the subject is one very dear to me, I am conscious they are hardly worthy of your attention; and, after asking you for any corrections of any mistakes I may have unwittingly made, I feel I may crave your pardon for thus inflicting upon you the profusions of a tyro in archæology.

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* Note by the Editor.

"The pellitory healing fire contains
"That from a raging tooth the humour drains." —*Tate, Cowley*