

measurements impossible. The skull of a Saxon found by Dr. Stevens with a pewter pendant, at King's-road Cemetery, is almost identical in all measurements with the Forbury specimens. Two Norman skulls in the Museum are more globular, being wider but not so long. Romano-British skulls are also of a larger size. It is interesting to note that the bone of both the Norman skulls—one is of a Knight Templar from Brimpton (period 1300-1320)—is full of gelatine, while those from the Forbury show no trace of it.

## Bisham Abbey.

*By Ernest W. Dormer.*

*(Continued from page 117, Vol. 12.)*

There is a legend attached to the house dating from the early days. William, Earl of Salisbury, going to the Holy Land, came to Bisham Abbey to take leave of his friends, when his daughter, a nun at the Convent de Fontibus at Little Marlow met him. The squire, who had been in love with her before, on this occasion persuaded her to elope with him, and they escaped in a boat, but were taken at Marlow. She was sent back to her convent, and he was shut up in the Abbey tower—the predecessor of the Hobys' turret—whence he tried to escape by means of a rope made from his clothes torn into shreds. The rope broke, and he, terribly injured, was taken into the Abbey, where he afterwards became a monk.

There have been many royal visits to Bisham. Even Kings and Queens, accustomed as they are to everything of the most lavish description, found Bisham a spot of surpassing loveliness and a wondrous balm for the troubles which are supposed always to be the assets of the head that wears a crown. From papers in the Record and other Offices the following information has been extracted :—

1516. A letter from Cardinal Tace to Cardinal Wolsey, dated 14th July, at Wallingford, contains the following passage :—

“Morrow in the morning the King departeth to Bisham as it is time for they do die in these partes in every place not only of the small pocks and mezils but also of the great sickness.”

1518. A letter from Tace to Wolsey, dated at the More (? Rickmansworth) 18th July, mentions the "King's commands for the Princess (Mary) to go to Bisham and remain there Tuesday, and then to go to the More." Tace was Archbishop of Dorset and in the Diplomatic Service.

1529. "Thos. Meverell, Groome of the bedd charges going before with the Queen's grace's Staff from Bissham for the space of three days at xd. per day."

Henry again visited Bisham, and a letter among the Domestic State papers is dated at Bisham, 1st December, 1543.

1592. Elizabeth visited Bisham, and a record exists of the cost of making ready my lady Russell's house at Bisham for her Majesty. The bill, cxviiiis., is signed by the Lord Chamberlain.

In the Exchequer accounts of the reign of James I., 1616, it is recorded that the cost of making ready Bisham for eight days for his Majesty was £7 17s. 3d.

Many buildings that have stood for centuries have been the happy hunting ground of so-called architectural improvers, who with the taste they considered of the best pulled down and reconstructed different parts of the building. Apart from giving no material advantage, these alterations did not enhance the beauty and design of the place, but on the contrary tended to excite regret that the uniformity of the style so admired in these days of modernity should have been at all disturbed. Bisham has been fortunate in possessing owners of antiquarian tastes, and although the age of the building and the lack of foundations of a very substantial character have in the course of time called for partial renovations and slight reconstructions, almost the whole of the erection of the Hoby family has been preserved to us in its entirety.

It has all those beauties which the period, and the hand of time and nature and the old architects can give to it. Its lack of classical regularity lends a charm of quaintness to both interior and exterior, and when seen under the influence and advantages of a real old English summer evening its beauties can be fully realised. Many indeed are the pleasure-seekers who rest upon their oars and gaze with thoughtful eyes towards one of the sweetest homes in the valley of the Thames. Long may it stand.