

calash, lace collars and cuffs, heart-shape stomachers, circular cloaks.

Conclusion.

No excursion has taken place this year; one which had been arranged was postponed on account of the King's death, and since that time the unfavourable weather and then the long vacation have prevented any arrangements being made for excursions.

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—EXCURSION TO BISHAM ABBEY AND COOKHAM.—On Friday, September 30th, the Berks Archæological Society visited the eastern portion of the County, where lies the picturesque village of Cookham and the historic house Bisham Abbey. No more attractive objectives could have been suggested, and the Society was favoured with brilliant weather for this their last excursion of the season. It may be here stated that few County antiquarian associations show the industry which animates our own society. Many of them are quite content to make one excursion in the year and to rest comfortably for the next twelve months until summer invites them once more to a pilgrimage. The Berks Society usually has three excursions every year, and occupies itself during the winter season with monthly lectures and meetings which afford a large amount of instruction and enjoyment to the large number of members who assemble on these occasions. They have this year visited the interesting Roman town of Cirencester, and also the charming region of the Vale of the White Horse; and this excursion to Cookham Bisham concludes their programme for the summer, the labour of the society being resumed in the winter with a course of lectures. This last excursion proved particularly attractive, and there were nearly 70 ladies and gentlemen who availed themselves of the kind hospitality of Sir Henry and Lady Vansittart Neale at Bisham Abbey, and enjoyed the welcome they received at Cookham by Sir George Young, Bart.

The archæologists were favoured with delightful weather, and never did the beautiful region of the Thames Valley look more attractive than in this late autumn season, when the sun shone on lovely river scenery, the old half-timbered cottages clad with Virginia creeper that had assumed its autumnal tint, and above all on the mellow beauty of Bisham Abbey.

The party left Reading by the 12.58 train, journeying to Maidenhead, and thence to Cookham, where three breaks were in readiness to convey them to the church. Several members and friends in motor-cars met them there, and Sir George Young led them to the church, where he read a paper on the history of the fabric, pointing out its many beauties and attractions. This paper is published in this number of the journal. Reference was made in it to a recently-published chapter in Mr. Stephen Darby's excellent work on Cookham by Mr. Gordon Hills on the history of the church, who, though agreeing with Sir George Young in many details, upon some points takes a different view. Mr. Hills was present and stated the opinions he held with regard to the architectural story of the building. This reply also appears. Mr. Keyser added some remarks upon the subject, and Mr. Ditchfield expressed the regrets of the Society that Mr. Darby was unable to be present on that occasion. Mr. Darby, he said, had produced an admirable work, "Chapters in the History of Cookham," which was a notable example of careful and painstaking research, a book that would ever be a memorial of the antiquities and history of the village and of the industry and learning of the writer. Mr. Darby had for many years been an active member of the Berks Society, and they regretted extremely that ill-health prevented him from being present among them.

The party then left the church, examined the outside walls, especially that portion of the chancel which had been conjectured to be Saxon work, and then drove through Marlow to Bisham Abbey, where they were kindly welcomed by Sir Henry and Lady Vansittart Neale. Assembled in the dining-room, the walls of which are covered with family portraits, they had the satisfaction of hearing a learned paper read by Sir Henry upon the story of the home of his ancestors, tracing its history back to its successive monastic foundations, and recording the memories of the interesting families who had been connected with it. We hope that this valuable record of the history of Bisham may shortly be published. After the reading of the paper Mr. Keyser thanked Sir Henry and accorded to him and Lady Vansittart Neale the most cordial thanks of the Society for their welcome to Bisham, and for their most kind and hospitable reception of the Berks Society. The antiquaries were then conducted through the principal chambers of the house, and partook of tea in the beautiful hall of the Abbey, remarkable for its fine timber room, its magnificent fireplace, and for the interesting tapestry that lines its walls. All too soon it was necessary to start in order to catch the train, and with renewed thanks to their kind host and hostess the party left the Abbey, of which they will ever retain pleasant recollections. As the time was short for the return drive to Cookham, the train was boarded at Bourne End, and the return to Reading was safely accomplished.

Notes and Queries

RELATING TO BERKS, BUCKS AND OXON.

Communications are invited upon all subjects of Antiquarian or Architectural interest relating to the three counties. Correspondents are requested to write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only, with REPLIES, QUERIES and NOTES on SEPARATE SHEETS, and the name of the writer appended to each communication.

Notes.

EXCAVATIONS AT CHOLSEY CHURCH.—Dr. F. J. Cole has succeeded in making an interesting discovery relative to the plan of the Church of St. Mary, Cholsey, near Wallingford. The interest of this church rests mainly in its ground plan. It is a simple cruciform church, of chancel, north and south transepts, and nave, and obviously corresponding to two architectural periods—the so-called Norman and Early English. The latter is represented by the eastern extremity of the chancel, which was extended, judging from the mouldings, at the end of the 13th century. The remainder of the walls of the church are generally supposed to belong to the Norman 12th century church, and if this be so, the church, so far as its planning is concerned, and omitting such ephemeral structures as windows, has come down to us in its original form. It is possible, although improbable, that the eastern limb of the church had an apsidal termination—destroyed by the early Gothic builders when they lengthened the chancel, and it is greatly to be regretted that the old foundations of this portion of the church were not looked for when the floor was up in 1877, and when the present incongruous tiling was substituted for the flag-stones which formerly, and appropriately, formed the floor. The statement, so often made, that the tower of Cholsey is a Saxon Tower (of course as regards its lower portion only) rests on no evidence