Sandhurst, Berks.

By Major G. A. Kempthorne, Royal Army Medical Corps.

(Continued from page 118, Vol. 21.)

"Since the glacial age, when the Scotch fir was indigenous to England, and mingled with the larch stretched in one vast forest from Norfolk into Wales" the sandy tract in which Sandhurst lies had, except in the river valley, and in a few patches where the clay comes to the surface, been almost destitute of trees. The names of single trees marked in the old maps, such as "Crowthorn," "Hag thorn," "An Oke," testify to this. But now, "whether as we hold traditionally here, the Scotch fir was reintroduced by James the First when he built Bramshill for Raleigh's hapless pet, Henry the Prince, or whatever may have been the date of their reintroduction, here they are, and none can turn them out. In countless thousands the winged seeds float down the south-west gales from the older trees; and every seed which falls takes root in the ground, which, however unable to bear broad-leaved trees, is ready by long rest for the seeds of the needle-leaved ones. Thousands perish yearly; but the eastward march of the whole, up hill and down dale, is sure and steady as that of Lynceus' Goths in Gœthe's Helena . . . till, as you stand upon some eminence, you see stretching to the eastward of each tract of older trees a long cloud of younger ones like a green comet's tail."‡

Another result of the Great Inclosure was to bring more land for a time under cultivation. Much of this, however, returned later to pasture, as, for example, part of the Ravenswod estate, where on the waste the ridge and furrow can still be traced.

‡ Charles Kingsley—"My Winter Garden."

As the population increased and the iron pan was broken up by buildings, gardens, and drainage works, the birch, the holly, the chestnut, and the rowan appeared and began to reproduce themselves. The rhododendron was introduced on many estates, and avenues of deodars and Wellingtonias became a feature of the country.§ A marked effect was produced on the flora of the neighbourhood generally. Many species which had formerly been abundant now disappeared. It was pointed out by Mr. Penny in 1890 that certain plants abundant thirty years before were getting yearly more rare and some were quite extinct.*

Where we find oaks or beeches of any respectable age in the parish at the present time it is pretty safe to conjecture that they mark the site of some former habitation of man.

In 1849 the section of the South Eastern Railway between Farnborough and Reading was completed, though there was no station for Sandhurst until the days of Wellington College. This caused a large influx of workmen, and at least one public-house dated from this time. The men came for their pay to the house which is now called Rivermede. This encouraged the owner to take out a license, and it was for many years known as the "Railway Tavern."

About 1858 a small station was set up at the kiln bridge, the first overbridge on the London side of the present Wellington College Station, in connection with the College. The present Wellington College Station was opened on Feb. 10th, 1860, by a Mr. Tyler. "Sandhurst Halt" dates from 1909.

During the incumbency of the Rev. Henry Parsons, who succeeded to the living in 1852, the old church was practically re-built, the present rectory was built, the church schools were put up by Mr. Walter, Crowthorne was constituted an ecclesiastical district, and the living was made a rectory. The church was re-built in 1853 under the direction of Mr. Street. The cost, which was met by subscription and a grant from the Diocesan Church Building Society,

§ The Wellingtonia Avenue up the Finchampstead Ridges was planted 1863 and 1865 by Mr. John Walter.

* "Wellingtonian," Nov., 1890. The Rev. C. W. Penny at that time mentioned the following flowers previously common but then rarely found:—"Hottonia Palustris, Menyanthes Trifoliata, Potentilla Comarum, Lycopodium Inundatum, Gentiana Pneumsanthe, Ryncospora Alba, Habenaria Chlorantha, Anagallis Tenella, Hypericum Elodes, Narthecium Ossifragium, Achillœa Ptarmica, Myrica Gale, Epipactis Latifolia." Ferns:—"Osmunda Regalis (formerly common in Coxe's Wood), Botrychium Lunaria, Ophioglossum Vulgatum."

amounted to £1,400. In 1868 the building was further restored and enlarged with a new north aisle, chancel and side chapels. This cost £950 more, to which Mr. Walter made a generous contribution of £400. The walls of the new church were faced with Mansfield stone, but the general style of the old building was adhered to. The transition Norman mouldings of the south door are a reproduction of the original. The boarded belfry was replaced by the present beautiful tower and spire, roofed with oak shingles, and the six bells, by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, of Whitechapel, were hung in the years 1879 and 1880. The tenor bell was cast first and presented to the church by Mrs. Dumbleton, of Longdown Lodge. The west window was given at the time of the restoration by Dr. Chapman, of the Royal Military College, and the glass of the east window (Ward and Hughes) was subscribed for by friends of the Rev. Henry Parsons at a later date. The carving of the new font, pulpit, reredos, and other parts of the church was the work of Mrs. Monkton Jones, Mr. Parsons' youngest daughter.

In the year 1887 the porch at the north door was built as a memorial of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and at the same time the vestry was much enlarged.

The decorations of the interior walls of the church are entirely due to the munificence of Canon Parsons, the present rector. The frescoes over the altar represent the four Archangels, and beneath are the four Evangelists. On the north side is depicted Christ's Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the south the Annunciation. Over the chancel arch are adoring angels with the Lamb as the central figure. All these were completed in the year 1886, and were the work of Messrs. Heaton and Butler. The frescoe over the door leading to the south chapel, which shows angels guarding little children, was the work of the same firm, and dates from 1895.

The Geale memorial already referred to is now affixed to the wall of the south chapel. In the old church the brass was let into a blue stone beneath the east window (Ashmole). This was cast out into the churchyard when the walls were pulled down, and the recovery of the plates was due to Mr. Reuben Watts, a former parish clerk, who dug them up. There are four pieces. The figures of Richard Geale and his wife were inserted directly into the original matrix, but the sons and daughters are engraved respectively on two rectangular plates, while a fourth bears the inscription.

All the family are standing in the attitude of prayer. The father is clothed in a plain cloak reaching to the knees, peaked doublet,

breeches, stockings, and a ruff. The boys wear the same dress, but have plain turned-down collars. The ladies wear peaked bodices with plain sleeves, ruffs, French bonnets, and skirts distended at the hips with farthingales.

The inscription is as follows :—"Here lyeth buried the bodye of Richard Geale and Eliz: his wife who had issue 4 sonnes & 5 daughters. The saide Richard deceased the 18 Sept. Anno Dni. 1608."

In the centre of the south aisle is a slab with armorial bearings purporting to cover the grave of William Chislett, who died in 1671. He was undoubtedly buried in the church, but the stone may possibly have been moved during the restoration. Some account of this person will be given in the following chapter.

(To be continued.)

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On December 11th an extremely interesting lecture was given by Mr. Cator, F.S.A., illustrated by lantern slides, on "The Friars, with particular reference to the Austin Friars of London." Mr. Cator has promised to publish this lecture in one of this year's Journals, when our members will have the pleasure of reading it at length. Mr. Dawber, Fellow and Secretary of the Royal Institution of British Architects, on the 28th January took as his subject "Three Mountain Roads in Tyrol and Italy." This lecture was illustrated by slides from photographs which Mr. Dawber had taken when travelling in the district he so ably described in his lecture. At both these lectures, in the unavoidable absence of the President, the chair was taken by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield.

"Three Mountain Roads in Tyrol, Austria and Italy." After dealing with the importance of these as means of communication from the earliest ages, Mr. Dawber spoke of them in detail. The first, the great Brenner route from Southern Austria to Italy, perhaps the most important, as being the oldest and lowest route over the Alps. The second, the Stelvio route, the highest carriage road in Europe, 9,055 feet above sea level, used by the Austrians as a great military road in 1820. The third, the great St. Bernard route, crowned at the summit by the Hospice of St. Bernard—leading from Switzerland to the Val d'Aosta in Northern Italy. Referring to the importance of these roads as arteries of traffic between the north and south of Europe, the special characteristics of the countries through which they passed, the varied and interesting types of houses, the wealth of detail and lavish decoration of the buildings in the towns and cities, the districts through which the great tide of Italian craftsmen passed in the Middle Ages, and which are still stamped with their influence and artistic genius, were all mentioned. The methods of irrigation in the valleys and