

A Brief Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society,

FROM JANUARY 1, 1856, TO JULY 1, 1857.

1856.

THE first ordinary meeting of this Society since the death of the Rev. W. H. Massie, its Clerical Secretary, was held on Thursday evening, March 27, 1856, at the City Library.

On the motion of the Rev. J. WATSON, Major Egerton Leigh, of the First Royal Cheshire Militia, was called to the chair.

After some feeling remarks on the loss sustained by the Society in the death of Mr. Massie, the gallant CHAIRMAN introduced to the meeting the Rev. ROBERT TEMPLE, who had been charged by the Council with a special resolution on that melancholy subject. The resolution was to the following effect:—

“The Members of the Council, in discharging the melancholy duty of recording the death of the Ecclesiastical Secretary, the Rev. W. H. Massie, take occasion to express their sincere sorrow on the mournful event, which has deprived them of the important services of a friend who was mainly instrumental in founding the Society and promoting its interests, by his extensive knowledge of historical and antiquarian subjects, and the remarkably intelligent and pleasing manner in which he communicated the results of his researches. The Council feel assured that all the Members of the Society will deeply sympathise with this testimony of respect for the memory of the late Mr. Massie, who was endeared to all with whom he was associated; and the loss of whose zeal and talent in the pursuits of archæology must be generally admitted.”

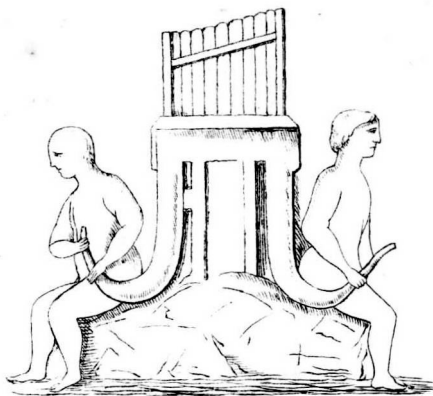
With an earnestness worthy of the occasion, Mr. TEMPLE descanted upon the many admirable traits in the character of their departed friend, on his urbanity and courtesy, his devotion to his flock, his amiable simplicity, his care for the poor, his abnegation of self, his intelligent zeal, his extraordinary mental and physical exertions, and last, not least, his services to this Society,—and then, with the general sympathy and approbation of the meeting, formally proposed that the resolution be adopted.

The Rev. J. WATSON seconded the motion, which was put from the chair, and carried unanimously. The CHAIRMAN now called on

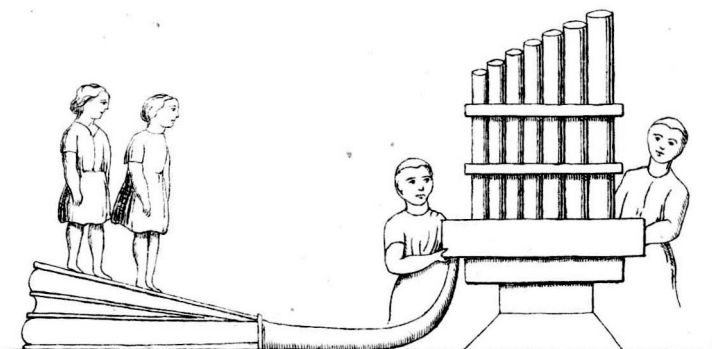
The Rev. WILLIAM E. DICKSON, the immediate successor of Mr. Massie at the village cure of Goostrey, to deliver his promised lecture on "The History of Organs." The Rev. gentleman, in a remarkably easy and fluent style, then addressed himself to his subject, tracing the invention of the instrument to the earliest times, dimly foreshadowed, it might be, in Jubal, the father of music. The Pandæan pipes were, perhaps, the first recognisable type of the organ; and these were to be met with in the primitive history of almost every country, the South Sea Islands not excepted. Virgil, Vitruvius, and Tertullian,—all spoke of an instrument analagous to the present organ. The lecturer exhibited several drawings of ancient organs, taken from sculptures preserved in the museum at Arles; and alluded particularly to one known as the Hydraulic Organ, then (1150) existing at Rheims; which appeared, by the following quotation from William of Malmesbury, "*aquæ calefactæ violentiâ ventus emergens*," &c., to have been played with the help of *steam*! A Saxon writer of eminence mentions organs with gilt pipes as being common in English churches in his day. The Byzantine Emperor, in 757, sent an organ as a present to the French Church of St. Compiegne. William of Malmesbury and Wolstan the deacon tell us of two great organs of their acquaintance,—one at Glastonbury, and the other at Winchester. Mr. Dickson exhibited the sketch of an organ from the Psalter of Eadwine, preserved in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. In the 11th century, Theophilus, a monk, describes an organ, which appears, however, to have been destitute of keys. The first notice of the instrument having a key-board complete was 'towards the latter part of that century, when we hear of one at Magdeburg, the scale of which ascended from the right hand to the left of the player, or just the reverse of the organ of our day. In the 14th century pedals were added. From a MS. Psalter of the 15th century, Mr. Dickson was enabled to afford a good general notion of the instruments prevalent at that period. The organ at Exeter Cathedral, by Loosemoore, was of the 17th century, and was still a rich and noble instrument. Handel, on first visiting England, was agreeably struck with the rich tone of English-made organs. The old organ of Chester Cathedral was built by Father Schmidt, and some of the pipes, &c. still remained, it was said, within the walls of the Cathedral. The "echo," which was the precursor of the "swell," was invented by Jordan, in 1712. The lecturer then proceeded to decry the wretched instruments constructed in England in the early part of the present century, a disgrace which the last few years, thanks to such men as Dr. Gauntlett and Mr. Hill, had considerably modified; and, after complimenting the builder of the organ lately erected in the Chester Music Hall, made some pertinent remarks on the true character



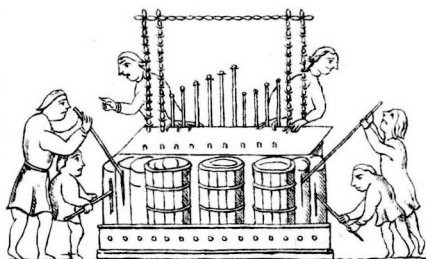
FROM A COIN OF NERO, A.D. 54.



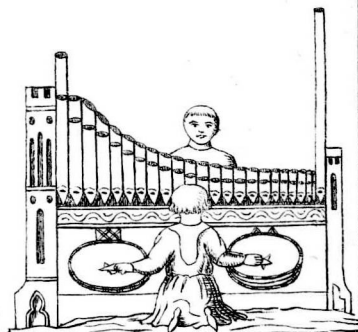
FROM A MEDAL OF VALENTINIAN, A.D. 364.



FROM AN OBELISK ERECTED AT CONSTANTINOPLE BY THEODOSIUS, A.D. 379-395.



FROM A MS. PSALTER OF EADWINE, CIRC. A.D. 988.



FROM A PSALTER OF THE 15TH CENT.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF ANCIENT ORGANS.

of an organ, and the position it should rightly occupy in a Christian church. Mr. Dickson afterwards read a series of rules for the building and management of these pieces of ecclesiastical furniture; and so concluded a lecture which was listened to throughout with marked attention, and which afforded evident pleasure and instruction to a select audience.

An illustrated chronological chart, shewing the gradual development of the instrument, was exhibited by the lecturer; and to this reliable document the Society is indebted for the accompanying plate.

A short discussion ensued, in the course of which Mr. Hughes stated that the old Cathedral organ was removed thence to Madeira, having been purchased by the late Queen Adelaide, for use in the new English Chapel erected by her Majesty in that island. He further observed, that in the parish books of St. Mary's, Chester, mention was made of an organ existing in that church as early as the year 1530. The entry referred to ran thus:—

“Item, we gedderd for y^e mendynge of y^e organ.....vj^s. vij^½d.”

Other entries also occurred about the same period relative to the salary of the organist, &c.*

On the motion of Major LEIGH, the thanks of the Society were voted by acclamation to the lecturer, and the meeting separated.—Mr. Dickson has recently been appointed to the Precentorship of Ely Cathedral.

The usual monthly meeting was held at the City Library on Monday, May 10, the Rev. George Salt, M.A., Rector of St. Bridget's, in the chair. The attendance of Members was more numerous than usual, in anticipation of the memoir on “Cheshire Words and Proverbs,” which had been kindly promised by Major Egerton Leigh, of the First Royal Cheshire Militia. Owing, however, to the death of his aunt, Miss Egerton Leigh, the gallant Major was, at the last moment, reluctantly compelled to postpone his lecture unto a future day. To supply the gap thus unavoidably and suddenly occasioned,

Mr. T. HUGHES volunteered a short Paper on the “Ancient British Corslet,” discovered in 1833 in the vicinity of Mold, on the high road to Chester. This splendid ornament, which was of pure gold, was found beneath a cairn, or artificial mound of stones, known in that

* “In Great Budworth Church,” says Sir Peter Leycester, at p. 227 of his *Antiquities of Bucklow Hundred, Cheshire*, “is yet the case of a fair Organ, having the coats of arms of Warburton of Arley, Leycester of Tabley, and Merbury of Merbury, carved thereon. These organs (as tradition hath it) came from Norton, bought after the Dissolution of that Priory, and were in good order, till the pipes thereof were taken out and spoiled by the Parliament Soldiers in the late War, 1647, which some Scotchmen among them called—*Whistles in a box*.”

locality as Bryn-yr-Ellyllon, or the Goblin's Hill. The noble wearer of the corslet, apparelled as in life, had been laid in a rude sort of cist-vaen on the natural soil, and upon this an immense cairn of stones had been religiously piled by his faithful followers. The corslet was comparatively entire when first discovered, but the workmen, either from rapacity or ignorance, had broken off certain portions and got rid of them to strangers, ere its real value was ascertained. The relic is now in the British Museum; and Mr. Edward Hawkins, Keeper of the Antiquities in that establishment, having learned that a small fragment had found its way to Chester, requested Mr. Hughes to purchase it for the Museum. This fragment, which had suggested the Paper of the evening, was exhibited to the meeting, and seemed to attract considerable interest. The precise date of the corslet could never be determined; though, from the character of the ornamentation, it had been generally assigned to a period not far from the commencement of the Christian era.

After the reading of the Paper, a discussion ensued, in which the Chairman, Messrs. Hicklin, Harrison, Hughes, and others, took part. Several drawings were exhibited, in further illustration of the subject, one being a *fac-simile* representation of the corslet of its full size.—(This Paper was printed *in extenso* in Vol. I. of the Society's *Journal*, pp. 365—373.)

Mr. HICKLIN read some Notes on the Excursion of the Society the previous summer to Hope, Caergwrle, Mold, and Hawarden; and incorporated with his own remarks the substance of two communications of local and historic interest, with which he had been favoured by Dr. Moffatt, of Hawarden, whose statements elicited observations from the Rev. James Harris, Mr. J. Williams (of the Old Bank), and other Members. Mr. Hicklin also exhibited the publications of the Anas-tatic Drawing Society, and explained its objects and constitution.

On Monday evening, June 2, there was a numerous attendance of Members and their friends at the monthly meeting, which was held in the News Room adjoining the City Library, the Rev. Canon Slade in the chair.

Major EGERTON LEIGH read a clever, interesting, and entertaining Paper on "Cheshire Words and Proverbs." The subject was treated with great ability, and evinced a patient spirit of intelligent research, as well as a comprehensive acquaintance with local traditions and general history. It is printed at large in the present Volume of this *Journal*, pp. 61—90.

At the close, the thanks of the meeting were gracefully expressed by the Rev. Chairman to Major Leigh; and an amusing discussion

arose, in which the Very Rev. the Dean of Bangor, Mr. Williams (of the Old Bank), the Revds. George Salt, R. Temple, Messrs. Wynne Ffoulkes, Hicklin, Ayrton, Hughes, the Rev. Canon Slade, and the gallant author of the Paper took part.

On Friday, August 1, the Members of the Chester Archæological Society proceeded on an excursion to Norton and Halton. In addition to the interest which is attached to the spot, on account of its having formerly been the scene of so many events celebrated in history, the exquisitely picturesque beauty of the neighbourhood formed another source of enjoyment. The day was delightfully fine, the sun shone forth gloriously, lighting up hill and dale with his summer splendour. On arriving at Norton Station (which was reached about ten o'clock), the party was joined by several ladies and gentlemen from Warrington. They then proceeded on foot along Norton Brook Lane, which was very pleasantly sheltered from the heat by the trees which grew on either side, to the wood in front of Norton Priory, where an old bower, said to have been erected by the late Lady Brooke, afforded a very welcome resting-place for a short time. The scene from this spot was very interesting; to the right could be seen, through an opening in the wood, Norton Priory, the seat of Sir Richard Brooke, Bart., and to the left the ruins of Halton Castle, with the Church of Halton, on the crest of Halton Hill. While seated in the bower, the conversation turned upon the habits and instincts of birds and animals, and, as a consequence, a variety of anecdotes were told. One related by the Rector of Warrington, who seemed to have at command an inexhaustible store of illustrations of natural history, was very striking. Once, while officiating in a village in Somersetshire, he discovered that a robin had built her nest between the Bible and Prayer Book: during the service he covered it with his surplice, and in a few days afterwards he had the pleasure of finding that it had hatched three eggs. After a short repose, the party again sallied forth, and ascending a few steps to the right, and passing under a low stone archway, found themselves in a secluded retreat of solemn beauty, formed by the embowering shades of majestic trees. In the centre of this sequestered spot stands a marble column, surmounted with an urn, after a design by Westmacott, and bearing this inscription:—

To the memory of
HARRIOTT,
on a spot where she passed many happy hours
in the bosom of her family,
This pillar is erected by a husband who
had loved her from childhood.

1825.

The monument is alike unworthy of the scene and the subject ; and we flatter ourselves that, in these days of improved taste, a more appropriate and suggestive memorial would be erected. Thence the party proceeded to the house of Dr. Wilson, Sir Richard Brooke's steward, catching sight on the way of Runcorn and Warrington, and the beautifully undulating vale between. After lingering a few minutes in the gardens of Dr. Wilson, the party returned, passed through the remainder of the wood, and across the bridge over the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal to the Witch Elm, a noble example of "the greenwood tree." They then proceeded through the lovely grounds and gardens of Sir Richard to the Priory. The first object of interest was a stone coffin, which was found in 1823, while digging a drain close by. The bottom of the coffin was in an excellent state of preservation, and had been hollowed out ; the lid was not found. Near the head was reared an old stone with a fine cross sculptured on it, supposed to have been cut about 1350. Several other stones or slabs, apparently of great age, were lying about, which had been dug up some years ago at Weston Point. While examining these, a singular discovery was made. Imprinted on the slabs, Mr. Rylands, of Warrington, traced the foot-prints of a small reptile, which he supposed to have been one of the Iguanodon tribe. The mark of the claws, and the course the animal had taken, were distinctly traced. The gardens were then inspected, their order and beauty, with the many interesting plants and flowers which they contain, being greatly admired. An "*antient gigantic*" figure of St. Christopher was then examined. It is a relic of the old Priory, and in a fine state of preservation. The legend of St. Christopher is admirably told in a lecture by our deceased friend, the Rev. W. H. Massie, on the "Ancient Paintings of Gawsorth Church," which was published a few years before his death.

Norton Priory (as Ormerod describes it) "is a spacious quadrangular building, situated in low ground near the Mersey, occupying the site of the former Priory ; the estuary of the river forms a fine object on the right, and to the left of the view in front are the Castle and rocks of Halton, which form a very striking feature in the prospect. Some of the ancient vaults of the Priory, and an ornamented doorway leading to them, are preserved in the present edifice. The arches of the doorway are semi-circular, resting on pillars with sculptured capitals, and enriched with chevrons, foliage, and other ornaments. The vaults are much altered and sub-divided, but consisted originally of groined arches springing from short octagonal columns with capitals."

The following list of the Priors and Abbots of Norton, which is more complete than any before published, was produced by Mr. Beaumont :—

1. *Henry*, Prior about 1159, was a witness to the foundation of Burscough, and also to a charter of Richard de Mora to John, Constable of Chester, respecting Stanlaw.

2. *Roger*, Prior, as Mr. Beaumont believes, *tempore* Henry II.

3. *Egidius*, Prior, *tempore* Richard I. and John, was a witness to a charter of Warburton Priory.

4. *Ranulph*, Prior about 1210.

5. *John*, Prior at the time of the grants by Earl Randle and Henry III.

6. *Andrew*, Prior in 1223, 1227, 1230, 1233, and 1237, when Richard Phyton was Justice of Chester.

7. *Roger de Mamcestre*, Prior of Northton, occurs in a grant by Peter de Dutton to Adam Fitz-William Fitz-Hamund de Waleton, between 1249 and 1261.—(*Whalley Coucher Book*, p. 397.)

8. *Roger de Lincoln*, Prior in 1285.

9. *John de Olton*, Prior, occurs in a dispute respecting a lamp and a chaplain at Poosey, in 1315.

10. *Robert Bernard*, Prior, presents to Runcorn Church, in 1345.

11. *John de Wevirkham*, Prior in 1350.

12. *Thomas*, Prior in 1368. (Mr. Ormerod seems to think there is a mistake about this person.)

13. *Richard*, Prior, was a witness to the grant of the Dutton chantry at Warrington, in 1379.

14. *Thomas Westbury*, Abbot of Norton. The Priory was raised to an Abbey between 1399 and 1433, as appears by the presentations to Budworth. Thomas Westbury occurs as Abbot in a record of 29th of August, 24th Henry IV., 1446.

15. *Roger Plemouth*, Abbot in 1453.

16. *Robert Leftwich*, Abbot, 13th August, 31st Henry VI., 1453.

17. *Richard Malborn*, Abbot, 1495.

18. *John*, Abbot, pleaded to a *quo warranto*, 14th Henry VII., 1498.

19. *Robert*, Abbot of Norton, was one of the overseers of Robert Reddish's will in 1503.

20. *Roger Hall*, Abbot of Norton. (Mr. Ormerod thinks this Abbot's place in the series is uncertain.)

21. *Thomas Barkett*, said to be the last Abbot, and to have surrendered the Abbey. The Abbey was dissolved with the lesser Monasteries in 1536, and the last Abbot was taken into custody and ordered to be hanged. But if Barkett was the last Abbot, he escaped the fate intended for him, and, after living through the troubles of the Reformation, died an old man.

By the kindness of Sir Richard Brooke, the vaults, or cloisters, were opened, and the whole party permitted to inspect them. It was

supposed that the date of them would be *circa* 1133—56, and the style Norman or Early English. These remains of ancient days were examined with lively interest, and suggested much discussion. In the finest of the vaults the visitors were kindly provided with refreshments. Luncheon over, they proceeded through another part of the grounds to Halton Castle, a distance of one mile. The principal portion of this walk lay through open fields, occasionally shaded with trees, whose boughs formed a welcome shelter from the noon-tide heat. At length the Castle was reached, and the "Castle Inn" proved a very acceptable retreat.

In the drawing-room of the Hotel, Mr. BEAMONT, of Warrington, read an excellent Paper on "The History of Halton Castle," which will be found at pp. 1—16 of our present Volume.

The interior of the Castle was then visited, and the buttresses, bastions, loop-holes, and arches, carefully examined. From the walls a remarkably fine prospect of the surrounding country is obtained; Helsby Hills to the right, dark and frowning as of yore; in front, the glittering waters of the Mersey and the town of Runcorn; while to the left stretch the remains of those magnificent forests which

"Have survived the Druid's faith,
And the Roman eagle's fall,
And the thrilling blast of the bugle's breath
From the Norman's knightly hall."

Many parts of the Castle have been built of late years; some portions of necessity to support the crumbling ruins, and others to supply a picture in the scene. Near the Castle stands the beautiful Church erected by the liberality of Sir Richard Brooke and his family, from a design by the eminent architect, Mr. Scott. The interior of the Church is admirably arranged and fitted up; it has a nave, aisles, and chancel; is built in the decorated style of architecture; and has several remarkably fine painted windows. The Church is one of Scott's best works—a beautiful and characteristic house of prayer, which every ecclesiologist will feel a delight in visiting. Near the Church stands a public library, founded in 1733 by Sir John Chesshyre, of Hallwood. The contents of the library amount to several hundred volumes; the original part, selected by the donor, consists of Rymer's *Fœdera*, the *Monasticon*, Walton's *Polyglot*, and a large body of ecclesiastical writers; the modern additions are of a more popular description. The Curate is perpetual librarian. Over the door of the library, which is a small detached building of stone near the Curate's house, is inscribed:—
"Hanc Bibliothecam, pro communi literatorum usu, sub cura curati capellæ de Halton proventibus ter feliciter argumentatæ, Johannes

Chesshyre miles serviens D' in regis ad legem. D. D. D. Anno MDCCXXXIII."

The time had now arrived (three o'clock) for dinner; and, weary with the ramble, the party adjourned to the "Halton Castle Inn," where an excellent cold collation was provided by the worthy hostess. Mr. HICKLIN, of Chester, was requested to preside. Mr P. RYLANDS, of Warrington, officiated as vice-president; and amongst those present were:—The Rev. W. Queckett, Rector of Warrington, and Mrs. Queckett; the Rev. W. Pollock and Mrs. Pollock; the Rev. J. Whitley and Mrs. Whitley; the Rev. R. A. Mould; the Rev. John Watson, of Chester; Messrs. Beamont, Urmson, G. Rylands, J. F. Marsh, Robson, and Williams, of Warrington; Mr. Edgar Garston, of Liverpool; Messrs. Ayrton, C. Brown, James Harrison, J. B. Marsh, and others from Chester; and some ladies and gentlemen whose names we had not the pleasure of knowing, making a party of about 30 in number.

A few toasts, appropriate to the occasion, were introduced; and speeches delivered by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Rev. W. Queckett, Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Beamont, Mr. Marsh (of Warrington), the Rev. W. Pollock, and others. After two hours of social and intellectual recreation, the party descended the slopes of Halton Castle, and proceeded along a picturesque lane to Norton Station, where the Chester and Warrington parties separated for their respective homes, in a cordial spirit of fraternity, and with pleasant recollections of an instructive and most enjoyable meeting.

On Friday, September 5th, a deputation from the Council of the Society, consisting of Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Hicklin, Mr. James Harrison, and Dr. McEwen, took a pleasant excursion into Denbighshire.

The party proceeded by railway from Chester to Rhyl, and thence drove past Rhuddlan Castle and St. Asaph to the new Church at Trefnant, lately erected by the pious munificence of two sisters, Mrs. Mainwaring, of Oteley Park, and Mrs. Townshend Mainwaring, as a memorial of their parents. The church is an exceedingly beautiful structure, of the decorated style, and its interior is one of the finest examples of ecclesiastical architecture which the genius of Mr. Scott has produced; all the fittings and decorations are of the same handsome character, and harmonize in their details with the general effect of the building, which in every respect is most admirable. We advise those of our friends who take pleasure in examining such edifices to visit Trefnant Church; which we are glad to find is not merely attractive to passing strangers as an elegant work of human skill, but is answering the devout desires of its founders in gathering within its walls numerous congregations of worshippers, to benefit by its scriptural ministrations.

The Rev. D. Lewis, the respected Incumbent, and the Rev. H. P. Ffoulkes, late of Buckley, but now Rector of Llandyssil, Montgomeryshire, kindly explained to the excursionists every matter of local interest; and we were glad to observe that preparations were making for building a Parsonage and Schools near the Church.

From Trefnant the party proceeded by invitation to Galltfaenan, where they were entertained with most hospitable courtesy by Mr. and Mrs. Townshend Mainwaring. The interval before luncheon was spent in exploring the picturesque beauties of that charming residence, the pleasure grounds of which command a series of views of surpassing loveliness and majesty. The shady walk, which, leading along an avenue of trees, discloses glorious glimpses of the surrounding country, and opens through a verdant vista upon a really grand panorama of natural scenery, is one of the most delightful spots we ever visited, even in that romantic "land of the mountain and the flood,"—a beautiful combination of green vales, wooded glens, majestic hills, and tranquil streams; while the Cefn rocks, which have excited so much interest among geologists, lift their grey heads as memorials of an antedeluvian age, and form a sublime feature in the landscape. The interior of the mansion contains the usual indications of cultivated taste; and among the many pictures which elicited admiring observation, were two bold paintings by a young artist named Morris, whom Mr. Townshend Mainwaring is kindly assisting to struggle into fame; one representing Jonathan clothing David with the royal armour, immediately after his conquest of the Philistine giant; and the other, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac; both of which gave evidence of rising genius, intellectual power, and skilful handling.

From Galltfaenan the party drove to Denbigh, and spent some time in examining the remarkable ruins of that extensive Castle, which once frowned in feudal grandeur on its rocky steeps over the subject vale below, which now lies stretched beneath the hill in all the glowing luxuriance of autumnal fertility. Mr. R. Williams, of Bron-y-pare, with a party, Mr. Harrison, of Denbigh, and others, there joined the archæological tourists, who were conducted through the mouldering remains of ancient pomp and power by Mr. Williams, the intelligent compiler and publisher of a work, entitled "Ancient and Modern Denbigh," which contains much valuable information. In exploring the ruins many discoveries of a singular character were made; and as the history of Denbigh Castle forms a record of national importance, further researches were ordered to be prosecuted under the direction of the Society.

From Denbigh the party drove by another route to Rhyl, beguiling the way with observations and discussions on the various natural and

historic objects which abound in that district ; and returned to Chester with a pleasing recollection of a thoroughly enjoyable and improving excursion.

The winter session was opened on Monday, December 1, in a most auspicious and entertaining manner. The attendance of Members, both ladies and gentlemen, was numerous and influential, and it afforded us sincere pleasure to see so many old and valued friends of the Society present on the occasion. For greater convenience, the meeting was held in the City News Room, St. Peter's Church-yard, by the courteous permission of the committee of that institution. Shortly after seven o'clock, the Rev. CANON EATON was called to the chair, when

Mr. HICKLIN, the Society's Secretary, gave an interesting account of the visit paid by the Council, in September last, to Trefnant Church and Galltfaenan, already referred to. Mr. Hicklin descanted at some length on the various objects of historic interest between Chester and Rhyl,—Hawarden and Flint Castles, and the secluded Abbey of Basingwerk,—rapidly passing to that glorious relic of Edwardian glory, the ivy-clad ruins of Rhuddlan. Trefnant Church and Galltfaenan were, of course, duly honoured, and especially that frank and hospitable reception which awaited the Council at the hands of their kind hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Townshend Mainwaring. Thence the Council repaired to Denbigh, and at the gates of that fortress, which constitute the ancient glory of the county town, Mr. Hicklin concluded his observations by introducing to the meeting his friend and coadjutor in the affairs of the Society,

Mr. AYRTON, who had prepared a Paper on the majestic ruins and interesting history of Denbigh Castle. This interesting treatise will be found at length at pp. 49—60 of our present Volume, accompanied by a plan of the fortress, surveyed and laid down from existing remains, by the Society's Architectural Secretary, Mr. James Harrison, Chester.

Mr. WILLIAMS, the historian of Denbigh, who had come over from thence on purpose to be present, favoured the meeting with some curious and interesting matter, mainly called forth by the reading of Mr. Ayrton's Paper.

Mr. WYNNE FFOULKES, the newly-elected Historic Secretary of the Society, followed with a learned dissertation on the immediate locality and name of Denbigh ; Messrs. E. G. Salisbury, M.P., Hicklin, Harrison, and others, taking part in the discussion.

A special vote of thanks to Mr. Ayrton, not only for his present Paper, but for his long and valuable services to the Society as Historic and Financial Secretary, both which offices he had lately resigned, was proposed by Mr. HICKLIN, and carried by acclamation.—A vote of

thanks to the Rev. Chairman then closed a meeting full of promise for the future success of the Society.

The Marquess of Westminster, who was then staying at Eaton, addressed a note the following day to Mr. Hicklin, stating that his Lordship had fully intended to be present at the meeting, and was only prevented by the inclemency of the weather.

1857.

The second monthly meeting for the session was held in the Commercial News Room, on Monday evening, the 5th of January. W. WYNNE FFOULKES, Esq. the Historic Secretary to the Society, occupied the chair, and introduced to the meeting Dr. Moffat, of Hawarden, who had provided a paper on the "Antiquity of the Arch."

Dr. MOFFAT commenced by stating that the merit of the discovery of the Arch was generally given to the Greeks or Romans, but he endeavoured to trace its use to far higher antiquity. With regard to the Roman claim, he stated that the arched dome originated in Etruria; which was at the height of its glory when Rome was only in building. The claim of the Greeks he disposed of in a similar manner; stating, on the authority of Niebuhr, that the Etruscans were in a high state of civilization when the Greeks were in a state of semi-barbarism; and that the arched dome was not observed in Greece, except on one building of very recent date; and further, that no trace of the Arch was to be found in that country until after the period of the Roman conquest. The lecturer next discussed the claim of the Tyrians to the discovery, stating that that people communicated all they knew to the Egyptians; who, in their turn taught the nations of Asia on the one side of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and the Greeks on the other. It did not appear to the author, however, that they had taught the Egyptians the use of the Arch; for it was not only *not* found in any ruins in that country, but a form of masonry was employed in forming the galleries of the Pyramids, which proved that the Arch was quite unknown at the time of their erection. (A diagram of this form was exhibited and explained by Dr. Moffat.) He was of opinion, nevertheless, that the Tyrians knew the use of the Arch; and he believed that the massive vaults in the substructure of the Temple at Jerusalem were the work of "the skilful men of Tyre." These vaults might, by some, be attributed to the Romans; but by a careful train of reasoning, commencing with the date of Pompey's siege of Jerusalem, he made it clear that these vaults must have existed long before Jerusalem became subject to the Roman rule, during the reign of Herod. Not that he believed the Tyrians were the inventors of the Arch; on the contrary, the vaults



THOMAS COWPER, ESQ. OF OVERLEIGH.
MAYOR OF CHESTER, 1641.

From the original painting in the Water Tower Museum, Chester

discovered at Jerusalem were by no means the first specimens of the arched style of architecture ; for, according to Strabo and Diodorus, the " hanging gardens of Babylon " were on terraces, supported by " vast arches ; " and the latter author stated that there was a vaulted tunnel from the Euphrates at Babylon, constructed by Semiramis, a queen of Assyria. The lecturer next referred to the excavations at Nineveh, where the Arch had been found, and representations of it detected on the bas-reliefs. In conclusion, it would appear that the Arch was known 700 years, at least, before Athens was founded ; 1500 years before Rome was thought of ; and that massive vaults existed in Jerusalem 950 years before the Romans set foot in Palestine. Some historians gave the Greeks the merit of the discovery, by suggesting that the Greek pediment gave the idea of the Arch, through showing that two bodies leaning against each other gave mutual support ; but the lecturer could not believe that this simple mechanical principle could have escaped the master minds who raised Shushan or Persepolis. He would very much rather say, that when man first issued from the primeval forest shades, and constructed a more durable habitation than he had before required, he observed that two rafters from opposite walls gave mutual support ; and that on forming a drain round his humble dwelling, he found that two flat stones not only gave mutual support, but formed also a durable bridge, at the same time giving to the drain a substantial covering. Drawings, showing how a complete arch might be thus formed, were exhibited by the lecturer, who then concluded a Paper listened to with no ordinary interest.

After a few remarks from the Chairman, Mr. Hicklin, and others, the thanks of the Society were cordially awarded to Dr. Moffat for his valuable Paper.

Mr. T. HUGHES volunteered some remarks on the Cowper Family of Overleigh ; and especially on those members of it connected with the siege of Chester. He exhibited an old portrait, in oil colour, of Alderman Thomas Cowper, Mayor of Chester in 1641, which had been recently presented by Mr. J. Edisbury, of Bersham, near Wrexham, to the Water Tower Museum, Chester. Mr. Cowper was Mayor of this city the very year in which a drum was beaten for the Parliament, at the instigation of Sir William Brereton ; and Mr. Hughes quoted the following passage from Hemingway's *History of Chester*, to show how boldly and bravely his Worship put down the first symptom of rebellion.

" Information of this treason having been given to the Mayor, Mr. Thomas Cowper, this intrepid magistrate immediately directed some constables to apprehend the leaders of the tumult, but the latter forcibly resisted, and compelled the constables to retire ; upon which the Mayor stepped forward in person to expostulate with them on their conduct,

and upon being disrespectfully treated, he boldly advanced up to one of the Parliamentarians, and seizing him by the collar, delivered him to the civil officers; at the same time wresting a broad sword from another of the party, with which he instantly cut the drum to pieces, securing the drummer and several others. This firm and manly demeanour, on the part of the Mayor, effectually put an end to the tumult, and finally repressed it. During this affray, the common bell was rung, the citizens lent their cheerful aid to the chief magistrate, and when they had seen him in a state of personal security, the city was restored to peace. Sir William Brereton, a gentleman of competent fortune in the county, and knight for the shire, and who was a strong partizan for the Parliament, was brought before the magistrates at the Pentice, to answer for the part he had taken in the above disturbance, though he owed his rescue from the popular fury to the personal interference of the Mayor; he was, however, discharged. It appears from the law documents in the Harleian Collection, that there were personal animosities between Sir William and the city, arising from the assessment of his estate (the Nunnery lands, supposed to be rate-free) for the contribution of ship-money. His subsequent severities are stated to have proceeded from his resentment on this occasion, and it has been a subject of regret to many of his political opponents, that the active interposition of the Mayor had rescued from the popular fury a man who afterwards proved to be so severe a scourge to the city." With the long siege that followed, all who know anything of the city's history are sufficiently acquainted. On the 27th of September, 1645, King Charles a second time entered the city, and after the disasters of that unfortunate day, "marched over Dee Bridge with 500 horse, and, not without some danger, passed into Wales, and arrived that evening at Denbigh Castle, attended by Sir Francis Gamull, Captain Thropp, and Alderman Cowper. They remained with the King two days, when these loyal citizens took a sad and final leave of their royal master, and so returned to Chester."

As before stated, the original picture is preserved in the Water Tower, and is one of the most interesting relics in that curious Museum. The Committee of the Chester Mechanics' Institution, who are the custodians of the Tower collection, having obligingly permitted a copy of it to be made, the Members of the Society are here presented with an authentic portrait of a man whom King Charles in his misfortunes delighted to honour, and of whom the city itself has every reason to feel proud. It is deserving of remark here, that this portrait, and that of Roger Wilbraham, at page 61, are the maiden productions of a young man named James Webster, a native of Chester, and at present an apprentice to Messrs. Evans and Gresty, of Eastgate Row.

It was this gentleman who, in company with Sir Francis Gamull and Charles Walley, the then Mayor, stood side by side with King Charles on the leads of the Phoenix Tower, and saw the Royalists defeated on Rowton Moor. Mr. Cowper was one of the six chief citizens who refused to sign the Articles of Surrender, when Chester capitulated to the Parliament in 1646. For his steadfast loyalty, his ill-fated Sovereign made him a special grant of a new coat of arms, in lieu of the coat he had inherited from his ancestors; which new arms, with the expressive motto, "*Fide et fortitudine*," appear on the proper left of the picture. The loyal Alderman wears his official gown, carries an embroidered cap or bag, and bears upon his breast the Carolus medal, on which is a faithful profile of his unfortunate prince. On the third finger of his left hand is a ring, bearing the expressive emblem of a "death's head," the favourite Cavalier memorial of the martyr-King. An inscription to the right of the painting shews that he was 61 years of age when the portrait was taken, in 1657, and that he was consequently born in 1596.

Mr. HUGHES then drew attention to an ancient rapier and two cannon-balls, one of wrought iron and the other of stone, all found in the vicinity of Hawarden Castle. The relics were exhibited by Dr. Moffat; and it is probable they were all used during the Civil War, while Hawarden Castle was besieged by the Royalist forces.

Mr. HICKLIN followed with some historic sketches relating to the foundation of "St. Werburgh's Abbey, at Chester," tracing it in detail from its Saxon origin to its re-edification by the Norman Earl, Hugh Lupus. Thence through the long line of distinguished Abbots, foremost among whom stood Simon of Whitechurch and Simon Ripley, he passed along to the dissolution of the Abbey by "bluff King Hal." He quoted freely from Mrs. Jameson and other writers, to show that despite the many and glaring evils of the conventual system as then existing, the monasteries of England were ever the source and centre of learning, as well as the scene where many an invention, which has proved a blessing to mankind, was first known and fostered. He announced his intention, at some future day, of favouring the Society with some more extended remarks on the monastic institutions of the twelfth and nineteenth centuries.

An old painting, on panel, was exhibited by Mr. Hughes, through the courtesy of its owner, Mr. W. Latham, of Sandbach. The painting represented an old hall of the period of Charles I., with a fine domestic chapel on its right side, and was taken by Mr. Latham from a house in Sandbach, which he had recently pulled down. A vague opinion seems to have prevailed in Sandbach, that the picture represented old Torbuck Hall, in Lancashire; but in order if possible to establish its identity,

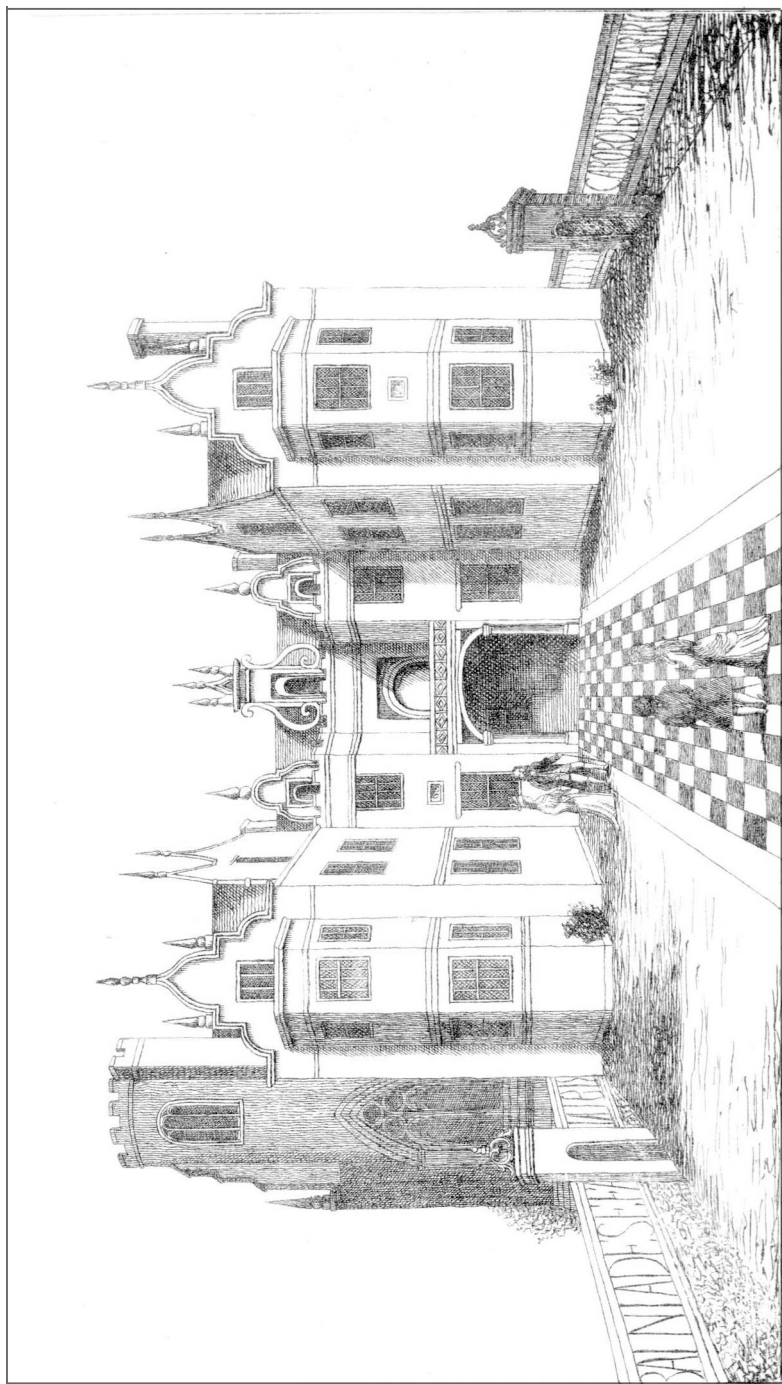
an engraving of the mansion accompanies this notice. Stereoscopic pictures of the house in which the painting was found, which was a noble specimen of a wood and plaster mansion of the 16th century, were handed round for inspection, having been kindly sent for that purpose by Dr. Gwynne, of Sandbach. To that gentleman, as also to Mr. Latham, and to the Officers of the Chester Mechanics' Institution, for the loan of the Cowper portrait, the thanks of the Society were cordially voted.

Mr. WYNNE FFOULKES, Historic Secretary, exhibited a few bronze remains of the Celtic period, taken from a funereal urn in Carnarvonshire, and explained their use to the meeting; after which a vote of thanks was accorded to him as Chairman, and the meeting separated.

The Society held its third monthly meeting for the session in the City News Room, St. Peter's Church-yard, on Monday evening, the 2nd of February. Despite the adverse raging of the elements,—for snow and sleet fell incessantly during the day, and indeed to the very hour of meeting,—there was still a goodly muster of the Members. The chair was occupied by C. T. W. PARRY, Esq., who, in short but fitting terms, introduced the lecturer of the evening, W. BEAMONT, Esq. of Warrington.

“Halton Castle and Rocksavage,” were the subjects chosen by Mr. Beamont, and these were of course treated in his usually free and comprehensive manner. Of the lecture itself,—which was, in effect, an enlargement of the highly interesting Paper read by that gentleman at the Society's Excursion to Halton in August, 1856,—it is unnecessary here to speak in detail, as Mr. Beamont has assented to its being printed at large in the present number of the *Journal*. Suffice it to say, that it omitted no one salient point of interest in the history of the Castle, from its first foundation by Nigel, Baron of Halton, during the earldom of Hugh Lupus, to the final dismantling of the fortress, at the close of the Civil War. Rocksavage, also, the once elegant seat of the Savages, Earls Rivers, came in for its fair share of attention at the hands of the lecturer; who, to show the rapid progress of decay in that luckless mansion, exhibited a photograph, recently taken, of a low ruined wall, the only relic now existing of a house in which King James was once right royally entertained.

The lecture was admirably composed, as might be expected from a gentleman of Mr. Beamont's antiquarian tastes, and was listened to with the most marked attention by a select and discriminating audience. The illustrations, which were upon an unusually large scale, embraced several views of Halton Castle, in different stages of its existence,



W. J. Bell del.

ANCIENT HALL AND DOMESTIC CHAPEL,

From a painting on panel found in an Old Mansion at

SANDBACH, CHESHIRE.

together with the Hall of Rocksavage, Norton Priory, &c., and reflected great credit on the artists employed.

A handsomely-bound folio MS. volume, which he had recently picked up on a London book-stall, was exhibited by Mr. Hughes. It contained an elaborately tricked armorial pedigree of the Savages, of Rocksavage, deducing their descent from twenty common ancestors—"Cheshire's chief of men,"—and concluding with the then living representative in the reign of Charles I. Two original letters, one from Lady Eleanor Stanley, and the other from Sir William Stanley, of the Holt, to Piers Warburton, Keeper of Halton Castle, in the 15th century, were brought forward and read by Mr. Beamont, having been obligingly lent for that purpose by Rowland Eyles Egerton Warburton, Esq. of Arley. These letters excited great interest, and were carefully scrutinized, especially by the fairer portion of the audience.

Mr. J. PEACOCK exhibited a bronze *fibula*, or brooch, of Roman workmanship, dug up only a week or two previously, opposite the Blue Coat Hospital, some six feet beneath the surface. It presented a striking resemblance to the one engraved opposite page 424 of the first Volume of the *Journal*. This relic was broken into two parts, through the carelessness of the workmen, but is otherwise a very perfect specimen.

Mr. FREDERICK POTTS produced several most curious documents, one bearing a splendid seal of the Palatinate Earldom, and another referring to the Skinners or Wool-dressers of Chester, of the 16th century. Mr. Potts likewise exhibited a richly illuminated roll pedigree of the Bavand family, of Chester, consisting of twenty-one descents, fully and carefully emblazoned, and introducing the names of numerous citizens of worship and renown in by-gone days.

The thanks of the Society were then cordially voted to Mr. Beamont for his intelligent Paper, and to Mr. Parry for his courteous and able conduct in the chair, and the meeting separated.

The ordinary monthly meeting of this Society was held on Monday evening, April 6th, at the City News Room, the Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP in the chair.

The Ven. ARCHDEACON WOOD read a learned and curious Paper on the "Dialect of Cheshire," prefacing his subject with a few remarks on the nature and composition of the English language generally, tracing it from its several sources,—the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Anglo-Norman tongues. The lecturer then, in an amusing strain, proceeded to treat the dialect peculiar to our own immediate county, explaining the derivation of many of the names given to our principal Cheshire towns and villages, and entering at some length into the original meaning of those words and phrases only to be met with in

the very heart of this county. The Paper itself will probably appear in a future number of the *Journal*.

Among the company present who, in addition to the Lord Bishop, took part in the proceedings, were the Most Noble the Marquess of Westminster, the Revds. Canon Hillyard, J. Watson, J. Harris, Dr. Davies, &c.

LORD WESTMINSTER, in moving the thanks of the Society to Archdeacon Wood for his able Paper, gave some happy illustrations of his own intimate acquaintance with the vernacular of the county, interspersing his remarks with many of the phrases alluded to by the lecturer. His Lordship jocosely observed, that he was glad to find the worthy Archdeacon in such "good fettle," and that he had "insensed" the meeting completely with his subject.

MR. ROBERT READY, of Shrewsbury, exhibited a large series of gutta percha casts from ancient ecclesiastical and corporate seals: among them we noticed several connected with the neighbouring county, Salop, all of which were examined with interest by the ladies and gentlemen present. The intelligent zeal displayed by Mr. Ready in the collection of these rare *fac-similes* of the engraver's art, and the beautiful sharpness of his casts, whether in sulphur or gutta percha, cannot be too highly spoken of. There is scarcely an early English seal, royal or baronial, monastic or private, that, if it exists at all, is not to be obtained from the stores of Mr. Ready.

A vote of thanks to the Lord Bishop, who, with Lord Westminster, had contributed largely to the interest and enjoyment of the meeting by several most amusing and apposite remarks, closed the proceedings of the evening.

It was intended here to have given a short summary of the Annual Meeting of the British Archæological Institute, which was held at Chester during the month of July, 1857:—it will be found at a future page of the current Volume.