

ART. XV.—*Little Strickland Chapel.* By the Rev. J. WHITESIDE, M.A., Vicar of Helsington.

*Communicated at Carlisle, June 20th, 1900.*

IN the ecclesiastical district of Thrimby, which is an offshoot of the ancient parish of Morland, are the two churches of Great and Little Strickland. The latter is a small hamlet about three miles north of Shap. Its chapel is a very plain and unattractive structure, whose exterior is devoid of any features of architectural interest. It has within the last few years undergone the process of "restoration."

Fixed in the wall of the new porch is a large slab with a Latin inscription, which is gradually becoming difficult to decipher through the perishing of the surface. It would be well if the decay were at once arrested.

The inscription is as follows :—

Exprimit unde Dei laudes locus hicce beatus?  
 Quis dedit huic formam, qui modo pulvis erat?  
 Armiger effecit Fletchar, Stricklandicus olim,  
 Praesidium patriae, legibus altus honos  
 Qui fuit, (heu) obiit: fatis concedimus omnes;  
 Fata at nulla premant hoc pietatis opus.

TD. LD. 1695. LS.

Contained in these lines is a valuable morsel of local church history, which ought to be secured in the *Transactions* before it crumbles away through the action of the atmosphere, or is defaced by mischievous boys, for whom such tablets are often a convenient target.

I give a plain translation :—

“How comes this House of Prayer to declare the praise of God?  
 Who has restored the dilapidated fabric?  
 It was the work of Fletcher, Squire of Strickland recently:  
 But he, who was a bulwark of his fatherland, a distinguished  
 ornament of the legal profession,  
 Alas! is dead. We all submit to the Fates,  
 But may no Fates efface this labour of love.”

The reference is to the pious munificence of Thomas Fletcher, whose son was Recorder of Appleby in 1692. In the time of Charles II. he resided at Little Strickland at the Hall. Sir Daniel Fleming, 1671, says, “Tho. Fletcher Esq hath a good house and estate.” I believe there is a Fletcher Hall near Maulds Meaburn.

The ancient chapel, whose reconstruction is commemorated, stood in a field now known as Chapel Garth. In the latter half of the seventeenth century it was almost in ruins, a sad commentary on the churchmanship of the day, but it was restored by the squire's zeal in 1681. This may be the allusion of *olim*, unless we translate “who recently lived at Strickland.”

After the benefactor's death the lines may have been composed in his honour by the curate-schoolmaster. An inspection of the parochial register would probably reveal the full names of the persons whose initials appear below the lines.

The touching prayer of the last line has not been answered if the *pietatis opus* was the old chapel itself, for it was demolished a century later, and the present fabric was built in the year 1814 at the expense of Lord Lonsdale and the curate, the farmers carting the materials. Let us, therefore, apply the prayer henceforth to the inscribed stone, and trust that the virtues of Squire Fletcher may never be unrecorded nor uncopied.

In 1684 he had bequeathed to the school, which he assisted to found, a yearly rent-charge of £10 to be paid out of High and Low Sandriggs and Bryam tene-



In the village are some interesting old houses, especially Strickland Hall and High Hall. Not far away are Thrimby Grange and Thrimby Hall.

The Greyhound Inn was once a place of some pretensions. Over the byre door is cut :—

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17                    11  
A    I

E B 1676 is over the stable door at Towcet House. These initials correspond with one of the chapel panels.

John Watson, of Thrimby, was a Quaker who suffered for his belief in 1664. His goods were taken by distress because he and his wife did not receive the sacrament in the chapel. His wife was dead at the time, but informers not seldom were guilty of such mistakes. He was also fined for attending religious meetings, and committed either to the common gaol or the House of Correction.

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