

## ADDRESSES AND EXCURSIONS, 1935.

## LECTURE ON RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE.

On October 25th Mr. Francis C. Eeles, F.S.A. (Scot.), addressed the Society on Renaissance Architecture in England, illustrating a delightfully delivered discourse with seventy-four beautiful lantern slides, kindly manipulated by Mr. Williamson.

There was a large and appreciative membership present, under the Chairmanship of Prebendary Clark-Maxwell, F.S.A., who, before calling on the speaker, read an apology for absence from Brigadier-General Godfrey Meynell, C.M.G., which, he said, would be received with sympathetic understanding.

Mr. Eeles is an enthusiast on his subject, and it will be remembered has written a eulogistic guide to Derby Cathedral which, of its style, he places second only to St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

The lecturer opened with a brief sketch of the revival in Italy of the humanities—Greek culture transmitted through Rome—in its thought, art and science as well as in its social and philosophical or religious aspects, and discussed its influence, especially on sculpture architecture and painting. Thence he turned to the dawn of the Renaissance spirit in England under the Tudors. For some time plan and general scheme retain their gothic character, he said, and only in detail, minor decoration, is classic ornament imported. Cupids, fauns, and satyrs are playfully handled, acanthus and palm, strap and cartouche applied to old motives with the quaintest results in gradually developing planes continued well up

to the Puritan Revolution, a blend of traditional plan and form with Italian detail and decoration; the one exception in the period to the foregoing being the work of the first English Palladian master, by some counted our greatest architect—Inigo Jones. He is best known by his fragment of the immense projected palace for Charles I, Whitehall. Of this period the best work, illustrated on the screen, were tombs, organ-cases, paneling generally, choir-screens (to which the lecturer said the protestant worship had no antipathy) pulpits, stalls and pews, most objects elaborately carved and constructed. Gothic, he stated, never quite died out and Staunton Harold (1654) visited recently by the Society was shown in exemplification.

With the Restoration and the Great Fire of London came the opportunity of one of the world's great geniuses, Sir Christopher Wren, and the establishing of a pure type of "classic" building. St. Paul's Cathedral was dealt with in detail, and extensively illustrated from the work of the astonishing community of fine craftsmen brought out by the great opportunity: Jean Tijou in ironwork (of whom our Robert Bakewell was a worthy follower), Grinling Gibbons in woodcraft, and so on. The classical fonts and altars were specially noted with a diversion on proportions of the latter (illustrated) originally short and box-like, and so still in the Eastern church, developed with us into the long narrow form in the fourteenth century. Wren's astonishing versatility was brought out by his very numerous London churches, while his successors, Hawksmoor, Gibbs (architect of our own cathedral and Wren's worthiest disciple) and the bearers of the tradition down to Smirke and Grecian Young right on to the eve of the Oxford Movement, which, said Mr. Eeles, was not favourable to the Renaissance spirit, were dealt with and their works thrown on the screen.

Candlesticks, immense reredoses, great metal candelabra, mainly developed in the 17th century and receiving their inspiration from the rococo of France and the Low Countries were illustrated and eulogised with an enthusiasm which in a few cases did not carry universal assent and a fine tribute to the surviving portion of old St. Werburgh's church and its distinguished iron font-cover (rescued from the lumber pile) almost certainly the work of our fine artist-smith, Robert Bakewell, led on to the placing of the Cathedral of Derby as second only in the quality of its style to that of St. Paul's itself.

So concluded an address of outstanding value. The Provost of Derby proposed, Canon Farmer seconded and Mr. Walton supported a very hearty vote of thanks.

Responding, Mr. Eeles suggested that many of the Renaissance monuments were often brought into unmerited contempt by their dirty, neglected condition, which led Provost Ham to make a special appeal for some forty or fifty pounds with the express object of cleaning our Cathedral memorials.

#### LECTURE ON THE VENERABLE BEDE.

On Dec. 13th Mr. T. L. Tudor gave an address on "The Venerable Bede." Brigadier-General Godfrey Meynell, C.M.G., in the chair. Before calling on the speaker the Chairman commented on the loss the Society had suffered by the death two days previously of the Reverend Prebendary Clark-Maxwell, F.S.A., an antiquary of outstanding attainments, the company standing in respectful sympathy.

Mr. Tudor, in opening, spoke of the gentle sunny nature of Bede, reared from earliest childhood amid the monastic community of Monk Wearmouth and Jarrow, which there is no adequate evidence of his ever leaving, though tradition tells of a visit to Rome; of the importance of his work as a primary source, not only of the earliest

ecclesiastical, but also of the secular history of the English people, of his attitude to miracles and his anecdotes, with quotations and references to the well-known stories of the English Children in the Roman slave market, of the pagan English thane's likening of man's life to the flight of a sparrow into and out of the firelit hall, etc., etc. He dealt with the scanty record of the conversion of the Mercian English by missionaries from the North, the Keltic church and their regularisation in conformity with Roman practice by Theodore of Tarsus, the Primate. The easy accessibility of Bede's History in various editions, both in the original Latin and in good English translations makes quotation here unnecessary. Other points emphasized related to the essential unity between Bede and his age in artistic and literary expression; the evidence gathered from various sources, that history was indebted to his writings for the adoption of the Christian era as a method of universal reckoning (in Christendom) and the high probability that the names England and English were adopted in aftertime through the influence of his writings, as against the possibility of our country being called after the Saxon elements on its constitution. Mr. Tudor concluded with the statement by Professor Hamilton Thompson that Bede's period represented the peak of the earliest English monastic vigour and devotion, soon to be followed by a rapid decline.

There was a good attendance of members, the address was attentively followed and Canon Farmer proposed a hearty vote of thanks.

#### EXCURSION TO LICHFIELD, &C.

The first excursion of the year took place on Wednesday, June 26th, to Lichfield Cathedral, the Roman camp at Wall, and Tamworth castle and church.

At Lichfield the party was met by the Dean, who gave

a long account of the history of the foundation of the see in the second half of the 7th century under Bishop Chad, and also pointed out some of the more interesting features of the interior architecture.

Wall was next visited, and the remains of the Roman camp, the ancient Letocetum, were inspected, under the able guidance of Mr. J. W. Brooks, who acts as curator on behalf of the National Trust. Wall lies on Watling Street, near the spot where the latter is joined by the Rykneld, or Ickneld Street, and is a good example of a fair-sized posting station on an important road.

At Tamworth the party was very graciously received by the Mayor, who extended a hearty welcome in a way which was much appreciated. Mr. H. C. Mitchell spoke on the history of the castle and its site, and also conducted the party through the castle and afterwards through the church, which is dedicated to St. Editha, a daughter of King Alfred. Mr. Mitchell pointed out some herring-bone work outside on the curtain wall across the inner moat which he attributed to Saxon times, but this is an impossible date as the Saxons never constructed moats with baileys. Nor did they raise defensive mounds like that on which the keep stands at Tamworth, attributed by Mr. Mitchell to Ethelflaeda, c. 915. This feature in defensive architecture was introduced into England by the Normans.

The most interesting features of the church are the double-spiral staircase on the tower, two sets of stairs round one newel-post, and the remarkable chambers on the walls of the tower, the walls being almost completely cut up into passages.

The best thanks of those present was conveyed to the Dean of Lichfield and to Mr. H. C. Mitchell by the Rev. Preb. Clark-Maxwell, F.S.A.

(Owing to the absence of the Society's official honorary reporter this report is unusually brief.—Ed.).

## EXCURSION TO EYAM, &amp;C.

The second excursion was arranged by Mr. W. H. Walton, clerical assistance being given by Mr. W. E. L. Hodson; a somewhat ambitious sweep in the wide field covered, including Eyam, Tideswell, Wheston, Castleton and Hope. The weather was close with occasional fine atmospheric effects, and needless to say the route involved much of the finest scenery in the High Peak.

The Rev. Prebendary Clark-Maxwell, F.S.A., was leader and chairman for the occasion, and the principal officials, with a good attendance of members, made up an attendance of about fifty.

The company mustered about 11-30 a.m. at Eyam, and, on a threat of rain, entered the church where the leader called on Mr. Tudor to give a brief survey of the church. A structure of much re-handling, it is mainly of the fourteenth century, the north arcade seems of a century earlier, and the clerestory of Tudor days. The speaker, extending his theme, referred to the original rather attenuated wooden entrance gates to the old hall, and enlarged on the familiar story of the great plague. Mr. Walton, called on, in passing, drew attention to the pulpit from which the saintly Mompesson and his equally worthy dispossessed predecessor in the rectory, Thomas Stanley, had preached, as well as the presumed Mompesson chair. But the descent of the manor, originally royal, was his main subject. This passed thro' the famous de Staffords to a branch of the well-known Bradshaws, of Bradshaw. Their home, of which a fragment remains in the N.W. of the village, had no connection with the surviving beautiful old hall, and was deserted by the family early in the plague visitation. This estate was purchased by a member of the old Longstone family of Wrights in 1670, and the present hall is said to have been re-fronted in 1676 with stones taken from the old Bradshaw hall, a statement for which the speaker found no confirmation. Anyway, he

considered this old house in its simple lines and fine proportions one of the most engaging of our county's similar treasures.

The widely known early cross, the primary object of the visit, was then visited, and Mr. T. E. Routh, who has given special study to the subject, gave a brief history of the decorative and symbolic art of these structures in England. He said it derived largely from the East, and referred to the Renfrew, Bewcastle and other Northumbrian examples, including the fine Easby fragment, presumably as early as the seventh century, with admirable figure work and sacred vine motive; holding that, though the Peakland examples were in Mercia, they should be counted as of the Northumbrian school. The workmanship here has degenerated from the highest Northern standard, but is still good; the scrolls well cut and still enfolding the grapes of the ancient vine, the knotwork clean and ingenious and the figure work of merit, particularly the angels in the arms of the cross. He would date the Eyam cross round about 790 A.D.

A smart run to Tideswell followed, where, after lunch, the vicar was secured to expound the history and character of "The Cathedral of the Peak"—a light and spacious structure of the fourteenth century, "Decorated" of two periods c. 1330-1360 or later, the nave preceding, the rest succeeding the terrible "Black Death" (1347-9). The monuments and fittings of exceptional interest; most of the fine wood carving by a local genius, the late Advent Hunstone. Foljambes, Meverills, Lyttons (originally of Litton in this parish), Pursglove, de Bower, etc., here have their fine memorials, generally bathed in the soft light of a lofty lantern-like structure. The heavy tower impressive rather than beautiful.

Thence the more venturesome motorists sped by straitened byways to inspect the highly interesting Wheston wayside cross, a rare but dilapidated fourteenth century structure,

retaining its weathered original foliated head with the Crucifix on one side and Our Lady on the other. The shaft was restored in 1776 and again 1841, but the head escaped such attentions. Mr. Tudor told how he had endeavoured to get the Board of Works to undertake its repair, which they stated they could undertake only if it was handed over to their keeping. He suggested the only security for its preservation was its purchase by subscription and transfer to their custody. By wildly impressive ways the party moved thence to Peak Castle, where Mr. Tudor dealt with the history of the region with glances at the magnificently placed structure, once impregnable, unconscious that two ladies of the party had just sealed the precipitous South! Founded soon after the Conquest, it was early surrounded by a rough stone wall, the primitive keep, probably of timber, replaced by the present stone structure from c. 1170 (Henry II), the Exchequer Accounts of 1176 showing payments for work then in progress. It was of three storeys, the basement accessible only by a newel from above in the thickness of the wall, the sole communication between the various stages. There seems to have been a drawbridge over the hair-raising chasm approaching Peak Cavern, and excavations now proceeding in the court or "bailey" indicate early guardrooms and domestic buildings. The only important subsequent work on this keep seems to have consisted of a reconditioning of the roof and parapet. Mr. W. H. Hanbury briefly dealt with the geology of the district, its 4,000 ft. of limestone with the intercalated "toadstones" or sub-marine volcanic material, the destruction of the lime-depositing animals by the encroaching mud from an ancient Scandinavian continent—forming the shales, then laying down of the several grits, the shallowing seas and the swamp vegetation which built the coal-measures; in each case indicating regions more or less in view which illustrated his theme.



After tea the church with good Norman chancel-arch and much fine panelling was examined, and thence the last stage taken for Hope. Here the church is a light pleasant structure well kept and possessed of an exceptionally interesting series of sepulchral slabs, but its main attraction is the early cross in the churchyard whose features Mr. T. E. Routh expounded. The knotwork panels with superposed rings, the braided interlace, and a peculiar whip-like convolution in the base panel, suggested to him Anglo-Norse influence, though not of the pronounced character of the St. Alkmund's cross in the Derby Museum. He would place it about the second half of the tenth century.

Mr. Walton, in the absence of the Chairman, cordially thanked Mr. Routh, who, he said, must be ranked with the foremost experts on this subject in the country, for the concise, lucid and informing quality of his expositions of the problems of these early objects of religious art; and so concluded a highly successful excursion.

#### EXCURSION TO TISSINGTON, &C.

The third excursion, and in point of numbers the most popular of the season, took place on Saturday, September 7th, and, like the first, was arranged by Mrs. Vincent Evans. Tissington church and hall were visited in beautiful weather, the latter by the kind invitation of Sir William FitzHerbert, Bart., and, after tea at New Inns, the church at Alstonfield claimed the attention of the company, numbering about a hundred members and friends.

Owing to the unavoidable absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, Mrs. Evans herself led the party in the earlier part of the excursion, but, being convalescent from a recent serious illness, she asked to be excused the visit to Alstonfield, Mr. W. H. Walton deputising there.

The very picturesque Tissington church, representing several building periods, by no means least that of 1853-4, was first visited. It stands delightfully in its noble churchyard, of which a late vicar, the Rev. James Fitz-Herbert, M.A., some years ago wrote an amusing and affectionate account, dominating the delightful village with its broad green, famous avenue and wells, the long low restful lines of its ancient hall, its soft-toned grey stone cottages, and its general verdure and quietness. The company was received by the vicar, the Rev. T. Williams, who indicated the general features of the structure, largely early Norman—chancel arch, massive squat tower, supported by later buttresses, south doorway with grotesquely carved tympanum and equally grotesquely decorated Norman font. The aisle is modern Norman, quaint but ill-informed. There are Fitz-Herbert monuments to Robert FitzHerbert and his two wives (1595), and Francis FitzHerbert and his two wives ("Two Loyall Friends") 1619, and (above the latter) two kneeling figures commemorating Sir John FitzHerbert, obiit 1642. Quotations were given from the Parish Register showing the charitable liberality of the parishioners in the 17-18 centuries. Mr. A. Merivale tendered the company's thanks.

Sir William Fitz-Herbert then led the assembly to the Hall, where he and Lady FitzHerbert gave them a hearty welcome—a real privilege for he told this recorder he believed the Society's last visit was forty-five or more years ago.

There are but two or three families in the county whose local associations go back so far as the FitzHerberts, who first appear in documentary history about 1125 at Norbury. A century later the name also occurs at Somersal Herbert, but the late Dr. Cox believed this holding was probably theirs as early as that of Norbury. Tissington was early in the Meynell family but passed

out through females in "moities" to Clinton and Francis (of Foremark). The heiress of the latter c. Edward III carried her share to a Somersal FitzHerbert, while the other portion went to Cokayne. About 1590 Francis FitzHerbert bought the Cokayne holding and so re-united the ancient manor . . . A William FitzHerbert, barrister, of this family was recorder of Derby, spending much of his time at his house of St. Helen's in the borough where his grandson, the distinguished diplomat, was born in 1753. He died in 1839.

Sir William and Lady FitzHerbert showed their guests over the house without reservation, but no history or description was given, and those elements I have derived from other sources and deductions from the features of the beautiful old structure. Probably the earliest visible work was raised by the Francis who united the manor about 1590. The type is "Elizabethan" which often means Jacobean, and it was very considerably renovated and extended, we were told, about forty years ago. The long low façade is set back in a spacious forecourt, entered by an archway in which a simple, beautiful iron gate of Bakewell's workmanship—say 1715-20—is set. The hall (much restored) is oak panelled, the style suggesting well on in the first half of the 17th century, tho' more than one period is suggested. There is some good plastering, probably restored. The beautiful stateroom, with fine old furniture and many portraits, is also panelled, apparently of "Restoration" period, while staircases, bedrooms and the fine "Long Gallery" retain much woodwork which seems contemporary with the earliest masonry. Their upper rooms gave delightful glimpses of the terraced garden, warm in line and tone under the soft September sunlight.

The Hon. Sec., the Rev. R. F. Borough, was deputed to thank the generous owner for the privileges enjoyed, but at the special request of Sir William, the formality but not the spirit was omitted.

Thence the party proceeded to New Inns, Alsop-en-le-Dale, for tea, where Mrs. Evans was thanked very heartily for her careful and gratifying arrangements, and from there followed Mr. W. H. Walton to Alstonfield church, where they were received by the vicar, the Rev. Samuel Beresford, who disclaiming much antiquarian knowledge suggested a guest of his should deal with the main points of the church and Mr. Walton should complete the record.

It was pointed out that early Christianity must have been very active in the district, there being several pre-Conquest fragments of sculpture at hand, Mr. Walton specially emphasising the beauty of one in the South porch. The chancel arch was Norman c. 1100, the South arcade decorated a little before the Black Death (1349), and the North arcade later, say 1450. The first speaker thought the S. aisle wall was nevertheless later than that of the chequered North wall. The chancel was said to have been re-built in 1591 by Laurence Beresford, but, though some restoration probably had been undertaken at that time, re-building was certainly too strong a term for it. The piscina and lancet windows were Early English and other windows decorated.

Mr. Walton then dealt with the person history. A William de Malbanc was in possession from the Conquest, and in 1133 a descendant founded Combermere abbey, Cheshire, giving this church with the manors of Gateham and Newton Grange to the foundation. In 1519 a lease for 120 years of the old rectory was obtained by a Canon Beresford from the abbey, which in 1538 went under in the general dissolution; Harpurs and Mundys making bids for the Alstonfield rectorial properties. The latter held for some time and their initials appear on some of the church glass, but they were ultimately displaced, and John Harpur (of Swarkeston) re-built the rectory which he re-named The Hall, which survives with his

initials J.H. and date, 1587. But the Beresford lease did not expire until 1639 and the family continued in possession, John Beresford re-pewing the nave, his initials and the dates 1637 and 1639 appearing on the delightful woodwork, which, with the even more ornate two-decker pulpit, form the outstanding attraction of the church. Probably a little later in time is the "Cotton Pew" with its high back and elaborate carving, made hideous according to our tastes by a thick coat of green paint, which, according to an expert chemist present, became famous about a century ago. It is believed this pew was used by Charles Cotton and Izaak Walton when they were collaborating on "The Compleat Angler."

Edward Beresford, the head of that stem, left Alstonfield about 1604 for Fenny Bentley hall with his daughter, who became Lady Stanhope, whose daughter eloped with Charles Cotton, senior, a friend of Izaak Walton, and their son, also Charles, was born in 1630 at Beresford hall (now destroyed) above the famous dale of that name. This youngster became a typical cavalier, brilliant and light hearted, most of his days in debt, but a competent literary man, who must have possessed attractive qualities to hold the affections of the saintly Izaak. Their associations with the Dove and the picturesque Fishing House is known to all.

With Mr. Walton's hearty thanks to the vicar and his friend, the antiquary, a beautiful and popular excursion was concluded.

W. H. WALTON.