

Sussex Archaeological Society.

STEYNING AND WESTGRINSTEAD CHURCHES, AND THE ANCIENT CASTLE OF KNEPP.

BY THE REV. EDWARD TURNER, M.A. AND V.P.

THE Sussex Archæological Society having visited most of the places of antiquarian interest—some of them more than once—in the southern part of the county, the Executive Committee were induced, in August last, to try, as an experiment, how far they could avail themselves of a particular line of railway, to spend a pleasant, and at the same time, an instructive day, in inspecting one or two of the more attractive churches, and other objects of antiquity, in the northern part. They, therefore, selected Knepp Castle, in Shipley (the property of Sir Percy Burrell, Bart., M.P., and formerly the residence of his father, but which at present he does not occupy himself, preferring as a residence the Park House, in the adjoining parish of Westgrinstead, late the seat of his uncle, Mr. Walter Burrell), as the place of the annual meeting of the society for that year, which held out the advantage of being easily reached by means of the Shoreham and Horsham Line, and which would enable the members and their friends to visit the interesting churches of Steyning and Westgrinstead, and the ruins of the ancient Knepp Castle on their way. And the following short sketches of the history of the different objects thus proposed to be visited were, at the request of the

Committee, prepared and read upon the occasion, for the purpose of directing the attention of those present on that day to such parts of the buildings inspected as were deemed most worthy of their attention; the time allowed for the inspection of each being necessarily very short: and they are now given to the Society more as records of what took place on that day, than from any peculiar merits they will be found to possess. The Society's marquee was erected on the eastern side of the lake in the Park of Knepp Castle, which is usually called "The Knepp Pond," and which is the largest piece of water, not in Sussex only, but south of the Thames; and here the dinner took place, which was admirably served by Mr. Bournier, of the "Black Horse," Horsham. At this dinner Sir Percy Burrell was to have presided; but this, much to the regret of the company present, he was prevented doing, partly by the fatigue incident to a protracted session of Parliament, and partly by the state of Lady Burrell's health, which made a visit to Germany necessary as soon as Sir Percy could be released from his Parliamentary duties.

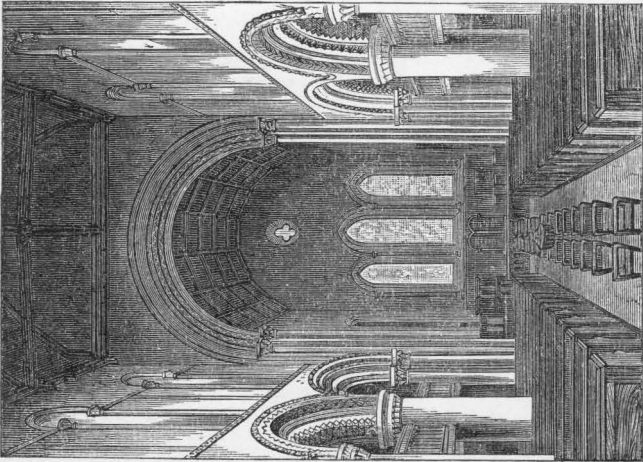
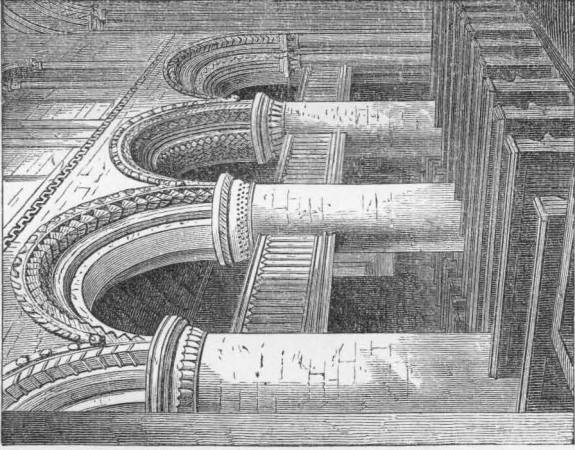
With these preliminary observations, then, I shall now proceed to the sketches, which I shall give in the order in which they were read.

STEYNING CHURCH.

To the inspection of this church an hour was devoted; and here the Society had to lament the absence of Mr. Medland, the incumbent, who was in Switzerland at the time. His place, however, was very ably supplied by Mr. Gordon Hills, the architect employed in the restoration of the church, which is not yet quite completed, and who, as a member of our Society, had kindly come down from London to receive us, and to point out to us the most interesting parts of the structure. As his assistance was wholly unexpected by the Committee, it was arranged that the sketch, prepared at the request of the Committee, should be read first, and that he should afterwards make a few *viva voce* observations upon it.

The sketch, then, was as follows:—

"There can, I think, be but little doubt, that what we now see is a portion only of a much larger church, which once



INTERIOR VIEWS OF STEYNING CHURCH.

stood here ;—the length of the nave and its height, as we now see it, being out of all proportion to its present width. This must be the impression made upon every one on first entering it. Cartwright, in speaking of its external appearance before its restoration, says, that, as it now stands, it may be described as a picturesque, rather than as a fine building; the alterations which it has undergone at different times having destroyed all regularity of style and symmetry on the outside. The tower, too, will be found to be rudely constructed of flint and stone;—and of a date, not perhaps, earlier than the reign of Elizabeth. And even this debased structure has been much disfigured by the addition of two clumsy buttresses—one on its north and the other on its south side. The chancel, which is about half the length of the nave, has, as cannot fail to be observed, at the east end of it, a good window of the pointed style of architecture. This has lately been fitted up with stained glass by the family of the late Hugh Ingram, Esq., of this town, and dedicated to his memory ; the principal divisions being of polished marble. On each side of the nave is an aisle, exhibiting in its construction no very striking architectural peculiarities. The only external indications of really good architecture of an ancient date are to be found in the upper story of the nave, which is of Caen stone, very neatly worked in small courses, and lighted by beautifully designed Norman windows, ornamented with equally good mouldings, and other appropriate details. He also alludes to a remarkable peculiarity connected with their construction. The northern windows, he says, appear deeply recessed on the inside; and they have only on the outside a single plain moulding around them, while the southern windows are different. They are deeply recessed on the outside, and have around them double courses of mouldings, with a single one only within. This he considers a wise contrivance of the builder ; the principal approach to the church being on its south side. He also mentions one or two original windows as remaining in his day unaltered in the north aisle. They were very narrow, and had semicircular arches. The arches of the doors are also semicircular.

“ That the fabric was originally cruciform, with a central tower of good proportions and workmanship, seems to be the

prevailing opinion. The side aisles are divided from the nave by eight semicircular arches—four on each side; and these are supported by cylindrical columns, the clerestory being lighted by similarly arched windows, corresponding in number and position with the arches below. That the nave once extended further to the westward, the position of the two western columns next the tower plainly indicates. Possibly there might have been an additional arch on each side. The limits, however, of the original nave cannot now be traced. The eastern end of the church, too, has been materially altered, as is shewn by the three arches which cross the nave and aisles. Here might have been, in its original cruciform state, a transept, or, perhaps, the central tower. Nor does the more modern chancel define the limits of the ancient choir. Fragments of foundations have been met with in digging graves, to the eastward of it, shewing that it was formerly of greater length than it is now.

“With regard to the architectural ornamentation of this church, that of the nave is very elaborately carried out, every part of it being beautifully executed; and the whole designed and finished with a studied variety in the selection of subjects.¹ The capitals of the eight columns, though differing from each other in the detail of their designs, will be found to be perfectly uniform in their size and proportions. The arches, we see, are profusely fretted in zig-zags, and other patterns, and the clerestory windows decorated with the same artistic care.

“The Elizabethan date of the present tower seems not inaptly to indicate the period when the original church was reduced to its present size. As the church was a part of the possessions of the richly-endowed Abbey of Fêcamp in Normandy, it was, doubtless, built by the monks of that establishment. It is dedicated to St. Andrew.

“A Saxon king is supposed to have been buried in this church; but the supposition is based upon very questionable authority.”

If it had been known at the time this statement was prepared that the eminent architect, Mr. Gordon Hills, would

¹ As a specimen of the capitals of these pillars, see one of those in the south aisle, figured in Vol. V., p. 120.

have been present upon the occasion of our visit of inspection to Steyning Church, the pointing out its most interesting parts would have been left entirely to him. As soon then as the reading what had been previously prepared at the request of the committee, in ignorance of Mr. Gordon Hills' intention to be present, was finished, he very kindly supplemented what had been said by some additional interesting statements—the result, for the most part, of his observations in carrying out the work of restoration, embracing a brief account of the religious establishment settled here at an early period, for whose use Steyning Church was originally built, and what was the position of the monastery they occupied. And in the course of his remarks he was able to refer to many things as established facts which had been previously advanced as suppositions only.

The Saxon king, he said, which had just been alluded to as buried in Steyning Church, was Ethelwulf,² the father of Alfred the Great. St. Cuthman, too, is also stated to have been interred here. Mr. Hills then went on to state that the church in which they were then assembled, and of which they had already heard something, was still under the process of restoration, the work not being yet quite completed. That it was originally monastic, and reduced in later times to a parochial standard, does not admit of any doubt. Where then was the monastery to which the church belonged? This point Mr. Hills was able satisfactorily to establish by the traces which he found of it on the north side of the church. This monastery was first a cell to the foreign Abbey of Fécamp, and afterwards a college of secular canons. The site was well adapted for the erection of a monastery, and such as was generally chosen for the establishment of such a religious society. For monasteries, as a rule, were usually built near to a stream of water, for the sanitary conveniences thus afforded to the household; and the Steyning monastery was not an exception to it. For though the monastery is gone, the babbling stream upon which it stood still flows on.

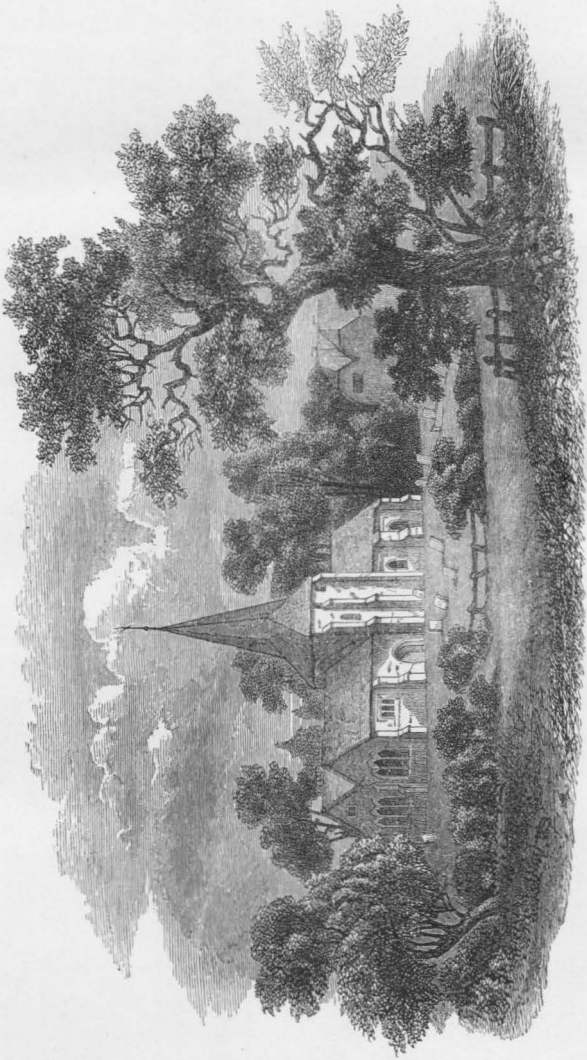
The position, then, of this monastery will satisfactorily account for the church being placed so peculiarly on the side

² See Postscript to a Letter of Mr. Thorpe, in Vol. XXI., p. 222.

of a hill, the ground rising considerably to the west, and burying the lower part of the tower some feet on its western and southern sides, while the eastern end of the chancel stands above the ground, and must have done much more so in ancient times, when the structure was larger than it is now. Mr. Hills supposes the nave to have been built about the year 1150, a period in church architecture when the elaborated style of Norman workmanship was adopted and fully carried out. In proof of Steyning Church having taken a considerable time to complete, Mr. Hills pointed out evidences of the work not having been in some places finished until some time after its erection, and where in others it is still unfinished. The great chancel arch is altogether plainer than other parts of the building, and from this he argued that the choir and transepts were built and finished before the nave was begun. That it was originally a cross church he had the opportunity of ascertaining, by some discoveries which he made during the progress of the work of restoration and reparation. It was found necessary to strengthen the chancel arch supports by means of abutments, and in digging out the earth to put these in the workmen came upon the foundations of the original transepts; and so solid and sound did Mr. Hills upon examination find them to be, that he erected his abutments upon them. And as he found them on both sides of the supporting columns, this at once showed that the church must have been square.

Mr. Hills referred to a curious piece of carving, which is to be found on the outside of one of the columns near the chancel, as earlier in appearance than any other in the church; on which account it has been supposed to be a genuine specimen of Saxon work. But this he thinks not to be the case. It was, in his opinion, nothing more than the whimsical display of an eccentric workman, who chose to carve oddly in an odd place; and its date is of about the same period as the rest of the carved work in the nave, and he then pointed out where the church had been reduced in size; which it was evident, from the style, must have taken place some time during the fifteenth century.

A plan was exhibited by Mr. Hills for the removal of the tablets under the east window, and for replacing them by an



WEST GRINSTEAD CHURCH.

elegant arcade of polished alabaster and marble, corresponding with the window above, the whole forming a reredos of much taste and beauty.

During his descriptive observations on this interesting church, Mr. Hills led his earnestly-attentive audience to different parts of the building, in which illustrations were to be found of what he wished to explain.

After the description of the inside of the church was completed, Mr. Gordon Hills took the company assembled round the outside of the building, which led to an interesting discussion on the peculiarity of the stone made use of in squared blocks, and built in alternately with corresponding squares formed of flints, in the construction of the tower. The stone is of a fine texture, and about the colour of that imported from Normandy; but evidently not Norman, and though much honeycombed, it is to all appearance very durable. As it is different from any other kind of stone now quarried in the county, Mr. Hills' opinion is that it was obtained from a quarry somewhere off Shoreham, but now covered by the sea.

STEYNING PARSONAGE

was next visited. This is a brick building, with mullion windows, the greater part of which is of the date of James I. The old entrance hall is now converted into the dining-room of the house, and is fitted up with carved oak pannelling and furniture, the latter collected, it is said, in the neighbourhood; but as these and some carved stones in the garden have been already described in Vol. xvi., p. 237, they need not be more particularly alluded to here.

WESTGRINSTEAD CHURCH,

which was next visited, is dedicated to St. George,³ and consists of two aisles of exactly the same length, running parallel to each other, and divided by arches. At the east end of the north aisle is the chancel, which is divided from the nave by what is called a tie beam, there being no chancel arch. The tower is in the middle of, and of the same width

³ See Vol. vii., p. 106.

as the south aisle, and finished off outwardly, as is the case with many of our Sussex churches, particularly such as are situated on or near what geologists designate "the oak tree clay" district, with a shingled spire. Its original windows were manifestly lancet-shaped; but these have been supplanted generally throughout the church by what are now seen; windows, that is, of a much later date. The font is—like many others in this part of the county—of Sussex marble. It is square, and its sides are ornamented by an arcade of the usual Norman type.

I must now direct your attention to the South Aisle, which is by far the most interesting part of the church. At the east end of this aisle is the Chapel of St. Mary, which is the private property of the Lord of the Manor, and is commonly called "The Manorial Burying Place," for as such it has been used from an early period. It was probably erected by one of the powerful Baronial family of Braoze, the Lords of Bramber, whose residence was Bramber Castle, and who were the early Lords of the Manor of Westgrinstead, and the great landowners in the Bramber Rape; and the remains of one of whose minor castles we shall presently see at Knepp. They probably held the manor until about the middle of the 14th century, when we find it in the possession of a family named Halsham, who resided at Clothalls—an old manor house, which stood where the house now stands on the north side of the Churchyard, and looking into it—and to which there was attached an estate of 400 acres, which is supposed to have belonged to the same family the longest of any property in the county. It is stated to have descended from father to son, by inheritance, for nearly, if not quite, 500 years. In 1411, John Halsham purchased 127 acres of arable and pasture land in Westgrinstead.

The earliest member of this family of whom we have any knowledge was John de Halsham, who was twice married—first to Philippa Mitchel, and secondly to Philippa, the daughter and heiress of David Strabolgy, the last Earl of Athol. At the time he married her she was a widow, having been previously married to Sir Henry Percy, whose father, Henry, Earl of Northumberland, was her guardian. Her tomb—a slab, with an inlaid figure of herself in brass, lying

under a canopy—still remains in this manorial chapel, and is deserving of notice. The inscription is nearly all of it gone; but among Sir William Burrell's Manuscripts in the British Museum, a copy of it is to be found, and she is there stated to be the wife of John Halsham, and to have died November 1st, 1395. Where her husband was buried does not appear; but probably it was in the same chapel. His name appears as a juror in the Nonæ Return for this parish as John de Clodhall.

They had three sons—Richard, Hugh, and John; and a daughter, Philippa. Richard probably died in his father's lifetime, as Hugh inherited, and he is called in a deed of John Homsey, releasing all his goods and chattels to him in 1419, "My venerable Lord, Sir Hugh Halsham, Knight." He was one of the Sussex Armigeri, who were present and fought at Agincourt. Besides that of Westgrinstead, he was Lord also of the Manor of Applesham. His brother Richard indented for himself at the same contest, and for three archers, for which he received £8 6s. 8d., prest money. The following also appears in the list of Agincourt Sussex Warriors: "John Michelgrove, puisne, per Halsham."⁴ Hugh Halsham's will is dated February 7th, 1441. Having no issue himself, he left legacies to his brother John, and to his sister Philippa Falconar, and to fifty-seven other persons, amounting in the whole to about £300, besides vestments to the churches of Westgrinstead, Shipley, and Combe. His monument, consisting of inlaid figures of himself and his wife Jocosa, under a Gothic canopy, is also in this chapel, beneath the eastern wall. It is a low altar-tomb. In his will he directs his body to be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Mary, at Westgrinstead. He is represented in armour, with a sword on one side of him, and a dagger on the other, and with his feet on a lion; and his wife in the usual costume of the period in which she lived. The inscription also of this tomb is nearly gone, and what remains of it is moved from its proper place. A copy, however, of this, too, is preserved among Sir William Burrell's papers; by which it appears that Sir Hugh died in 1441, and his wife in 1421. Who she was I have not been

⁴ See Vol. xv., p. 129.

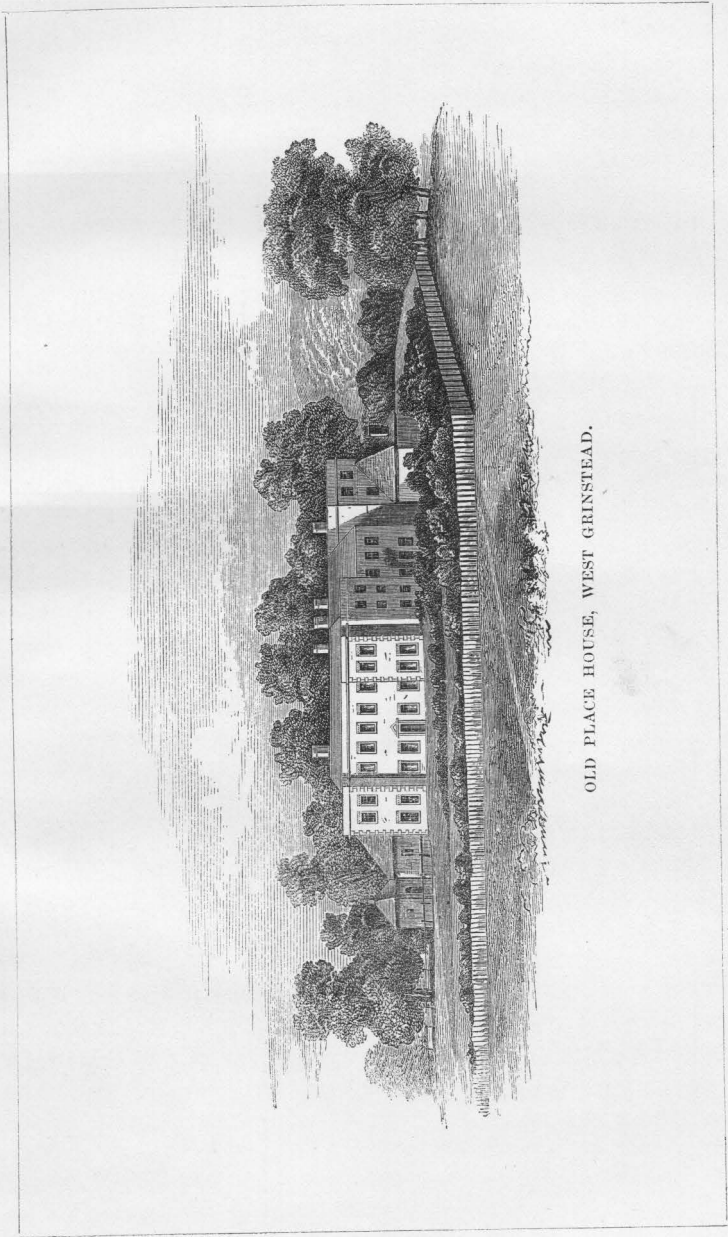
able to discover. This tomb is also deserving of minute inspection. These two interesting memorials are figured and described in Boutel's *Monumental Brasses*, Nos. 86, 92, 131, and 124. Joan, the daughter of Richard Halsham, and Sir Hugh's niece, married John Lewknor. For an account of the Lewknor family see Vol. iii., p. 89, where a Robert Halsham is mentioned as living 33rd Edward III. (1351). Although I feel pretty confident of the correctness of what I have said of the Halsham family, as far as it goes, still I am bound to confess that the result of my experience is, that the history of this ancient family is very confused and obscure.

A branch of the Shirleys of Wiston were also Lords of the Manor of Westgrinstead, by grant from the Crown, upon the attainder of Sir Thomas Seymour, to whom it had previously been granted. How it came into the possession of the Crown is not for a certainty known. Thomas Shirley, to whom the grant was made, was a younger son of Ralph Shirley, of Wiston. His son Francis was buried at Wiston, in 1559. In this family it continued until about the year 1607, when the Manor and Manorial Residence were purchased by Sir Edward Caryll, of Harting, through whose grand-daughter it passed to Thomas, Lord Morley; who, conjointly with his mother, settled it for the sum of £8,000, on Richard Caryll, Esq.; at whose death in 1701 it passed to his grandson, John Caryll, who was Secretary to Queen Mary, the wife of James II. He was a rigid Papist; and founded and endowed a Papistical Establishment, in a house standing in the Park, which is still kept up. The Carylls are supposed to have erected the large square brick mansion, which stood in Westgrinstead Park, previous to the erection of the present castellated mansion, by Mr. Walter Burrell, in 1806.

It was during the time that John Caryll held the estate that Alexander Pope spent much of his time here with him; and it is said that the incident happened here which led to his poem of "The Rape of the Lock." This he addressed to his Westgrinstead friend, at whose suggestion it was written. He says—

"This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due."

John Caryll was no mean poet himself, having written two plays, one called "The English Princess; or The Death of



OLD PLACE HOUSE, WEST GRINSTEAD.

We now come to the western, or remaining portion of the south aisle, which, though it now forms a part of the nave of the church, was originally a private chapel belonging to the Wards of Champions, an estate situated in the northern part of the parish, which this family held and resided upon for two centuries and more. The magnificent monument in this chapel, which is justly esteemed the great ornament of this church, is erected to the memory of William Powlett, Esq., of St. Leonard's Forest, who died in 1746. He was Captain of the Horse Grenadiers in the reign of George I. It also records the death of Elizabeth, his wife, who was a Ward of Champions. The sculptor of this beautiful work of art was Michael Rysbrack. It consists of two life-size figures in Roman costume, leaning over a funereal urn. The cost of this monument is said to have been £2000. The entrance to this chapel, if a chapel it may be called, is through a Norman-arched doorway in the south wall.

On the flooring are the remains of another brass, the figures of which are gone, but the inscription plate still remains. From this we learn that it was placed to the memory of Robert Ravencroft, and Joh'ne his wife. They both of them died in 1522. From the situation of the slab I am disposed to think the wife to have been a Ward. Another slab in the same aisle has been inlaid; but no part of the brass remains.

The principal entrance to the church is on the north side, through a large porch, built of oak. This porch is very perfect, and of much interest. In the gable of its roof is a beautiful little wooden niche for a statuette, which is much ornamented.

WESTGRINSTEAD PARSONAGE.

Of this the northern part is, like that of Steyning, of the date of James I. Like it, too, its windows are mullion. The dining-room was the original entrance hall. This, the late incumbent fitted up with old carved oak furniture, collected principally in his own parish and in the adjoining parishes. This, by his will, he bequeathed as heir-looms to his successors in the incumbency. By the additions he made to the

house on the south side it is now one of the best parsonages in the county. The advowson was purchased by an ancestor of the late rector in 1690, or about that time; and it was sold by the late rector to George O'Brien, Earl of Egremont, in 1826. Previous to 1677 the advowson was appurtenant to the Manor. In the hall window of the house are some curious specimens of ancient painted glass.

ON THE CASTLE OF KNEPP, OR CNAPP.

This castle, which stands in the part of Shipley bordering on Westgrinstead, may, from the smallness of its size, and from the manifest connexion which it will presently be seen it had with the Castle of Bramber, not inaptly be classed among the minor and subsidiary castles of Sussex. As the accounts of this ancient castle which have come down to us are very scanty and imperfect, it will be my endeavour, upon the occasion of this our Society's visit to it, to supply, in some measure, this deficiency. Its ruins, which are all that now remain of it, are well known to those who are familiar with the road from Worthing to Horsham, on which they are situated, and from which latter place they are distant about six miles. To the traveller on this road they cannot fail to be an interesting object of antiquity.

With regard to its name, Knepp, I find it variously written in ancient deeds and records. Although the initial letter is in later documents a K, in the more ancient it is a C; and though in later times it is written with two "p's," and sometimes *with* and at other times *without* a final "e," in older deeds we find it with one "p" only, and without an "e." Cnap, then, was, doubtless, the original name—the designation of this castle being manifestly derived from the Saxon Cnæp, the summit or crown of a hill. For, however applicable it may seem to be in more ways than one to the position and circumstances of this castle, I reject altogether its derivation from the Greek word *napos*—*locus montanus et silvokus*. Attached to the castle was a very extensive manor and park, called Cnap-ville, probably because this part of Shipley parish was a vill or township, separated from, and independent of, the parish generally.

With regard to the origin of the name of this castle, Cartwright, in his "History of the Rape of Bramber," in which it is situated, throws out a suggestion far more ingenious than convincing, namely, that as the term "der Knepp" in the German language is applied to a young nobleman who is not yet a knight, but under instruction in the accomplishment of chivalry, as a requisite qualification to enable him to become so, the name of this castle may, he thinks, have been derived from its having been occupied in Saxon times by a scion of the reigning family of the district, by whom, he adds, the Castle of Bramber, previous to the Norman Conquest, is recorded to have been erected, and the Castle of Cnap to have been built. Without entering on the question whether Cnap had a pre-Norman existence or not, to refute Cartwright's theory it is sufficient to observe, that the term Cnap, as applied to an elevated piece of ground, is by no means an unusual local designation in Sussex. In proof of this a reference to two instances must suffice. The rising ground on which the part of the town of Brighton, now called Brighton Place, is situated, was anciently known by the name of "The Knepp;" and the part of Findon which stands on elevated ground, about a quarter of a mile south of the village, is still called "Nep," or Knep "gate"—probably from its being situated on the high ground forming one side of "the gate"—the avenue, that is, or opening into the valley of the Southdowns in which Findon stands. The plebeian term "nab," as applied to the cope or top of an abrupt rise on the surface of the ground, is familiar to most Sussex ears.

From the origin of the name, we must now pass on to the history of the Castle itself. Like Bramber, a small portion only of the original structure is left. Grose, who professes to have visited and inspected its remains in 1775, says of them, that "so completely has been the work of demolition in the instance of this castle, that a reasonable conjecture cannot be hazarded from a view of the ruins themselves, as they then appeared, of its original form and extent. "Enough," he adds, "only remains to enable us to pronounce that here was once a castle." Grose's examination of this interesting archæological relic must, judging from his

observations upon it, have been very limited and superficial. For, so far from there being at the time he mentions no trace of its external size and form remaining, many traces of the outworks must then have been observable, the work of demolition to which he alludes not having been commenced until about the year 1762, twelve years, that is, before he visited the site, when the materials for the construction of that part of the present road from Steyning to Horsham, which lies in the immediate neighbourhood of this castle, were taken from its ruins, and when all was removed but that portion of the inner tower or keep, which still remains.

The information, however, necessary to enable us to form a judgment of what this castle once was, which Grose declared himself unable to obtain in 1775, has since been amply supplied from the more accurate observation of later historians, as well as from *indicia* still traceable on and about the mound on which it stood. 'Tis true there was not, at the time of which we are speaking, a sufficiency of the division walls remaining to enable Grose to say what was the *internal* arrangement of this castle, still its *external* size and form *might* then, for even now they may be inferred from the shape of the moat with which it was surrounded; sufficient traces of which are still visible to show that it was circular, and that it enclosed an area of about two acres. This moat must have been supplied with water from a branch of the Adur which flows near. A field adjoining *that* in which this castle stood is, or was until lately, called "the Town Field," and is said to have been connected with it by a causeway. The portion of the castle wall now standing is of very considerable thickness.

At what time this castle was erected it would be difficult to say, history throwing no positive light on the subject. But that it was built subsequent to the Norman Conquest may, I think, notwithstanding what Cartwright says of its Saxon origin, fairly be inferred from the circumstance of its not being mentioned in the Norman Survey, while that of Bramber is. Still the two circular arches observable in the remaining portion of wall—the one heading a doorway leading into the keep, and the other a window over it, seem to indicate an early Norman date. We know, too, that from a very

remote period, this castle formed part of the baronial possessions of William de Braoze, Lord of Bramber, and that it remained attached to, and passed by inheritance with, the Honour of Bramber, with but little interruption to its lineal descent, until the time of its destruction.

This castle, then, may fairly be conjectured to have been built by William de Braoze, soon after his attainment of the Barony of Bramber from the Conqueror; and his object in building it probably was, either as a hunting seat for the part of the barony in which it was situated—the Normans being much addicted to field sports, and more particularly to those of the chase; or as a place of retreat, of which the Lords of Bramber might at any time avail themselves in case of invasion, or any other danger which might arise from the nearness of Bramber Castle to the sea coast, and to the Port and Harbour of Shoreham.

But whatever may have been the date of the first erection of this Castle, and by whomsoever it was built, there can be no doubt of its having been made the occasional residence of this William de Braoze and his descendants for two centuries after the conquest; for we find many of the deeds executed by him and others of the family during that period, dated from the castle at Cnap.

The earliest interruption to their peaceable possession of this castle of which we have any record, seems to have arisen in the year 1208; when, as we learn from Matthew Paris, King John, suspecting the fidelity of many of the nobles of that day, and among them that of the possessor of Bramber Castle at that time, sent special messengers to him to demand the surrender of his children as hostages for his future allegiance to him. To this unlooked for and unreasonable request, Matilda, their mother, returned this spirited and indignant reply—that nothing should induce her to entrust her children to one, even though he were a king, who had so treacherously and basely murdered his own nephew, Prince Arthur, whom he was in honour bound to succour and protect. As was likely to be the case, this insulting answer so greatly incensed the king that he despatched soldiers clandestinely to Bramber Castle, with instructions to put the whole family under arrest. But in the accomplishment of

this stratagem he was disappointed; for Matilda, knowing full well John's malignant disposition and temper, and suspecting what might be the consequences of her message to him, did not await the result. Receiving the next day private intimation of the king's intentions towards her, she immediately fled with her children to Ireland, where for a time she was unmolested. But at the expiration of two years the place of her retreat was discovered; and being made prisoner with her children, she was brought to England, and incarcerated in Windsor Castle; where, if not by the king's order, certainly with his connivance and approval, they were cruelly starved to death. William de Braoze did not accompany his family to Ireland, but retired to France, where he shortly afterwards died. Of the opportunity which thus presented itself of seizing upon the barony and castle of Bramber, John was not long in availing himself; and having done so, he assigned them to the Earl of Cornwall, his second son. And it was during the time that this honour and its dependencies were so held that this king visited Cnap four times; first in April, 1206, upon the occasion of the rebellion raised against him during the time the kingdom was under the interdict of Pope Innocent III., and he himself was excommunicated for the opposition he offered to Langton in his appointment to the see of Canterbury.⁵ King John was a second time at Cnap in May, 1209. He was there a third time in 1211; for his confirmation of the grants of many benefactors to Bayham Abbey is dated from this castle. The deed concludes—"Data per manum de Marisco apud Cnap sexto die Aprilis, anno regni nostri xii."⁶ And he was at Cnap for the fourth time in January, 1215, at which time the confederated barons were assembled in London, to determine how best to check the career of this vicious king, and to maintain the public liberty with their swords. And Queen Isabella was at Cnap for eleven days in 1214—15.

It was while Cnap was in the king's hands that he appears to have kept up, as the Barons of Bramber had done before

⁵ See Inett's *Origines Anglicanae*, Vol. ii., p. 410, et seq; or Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*, Vol. i., p. 77, where a detailed account of this rebellion is given.

⁶ See Pat. 6, Edw^d III., p. 2, m.; or *Monast. Angl.*, Vol. vi., pt. 2, p. 914, where this deed is given.

him, a large hunting establishment there; its extensive park being well stocked with deer, wild hogs, &c.; the deeds and documents relating to Cnap, given in Vol. iii., pp. 2 to 12 of our Collections, having reference principally to the maintenance and management of this establishment. Much timber was also cut in this park at different times, and shipped off from Shoreham to different parts of the kingdom.

That at this eventful period Cnap was looked upon as an important post we may infer from the order which King John issued in 1214 for this castle to be fortified;⁷ and in 1216, after London had opened her gates to the insurgent Barons, Lewis, the King of France, who had been commissioned two years before by the Pope to carry his intentions against King John into effect, the Crown of England having been previously offered to, and accepted by him, landed an army, according to Stowe, near Sandwich, on the coast of Kent, May 21st;⁸ and having possessed himself of Canterbury, went on towards London, and not finding John there, from thence proceeded to Winchester, where he was; having previously taken possession of the castles of Ryegate, Guildford, and Farnham. These circumstances, Dallaway considers as adding weight to the conjecture, that the Western Weald of Surrey, Sussex, and Hampshire, was the scene of action of this contest.

Five days only previous to the landing of Lewis, the following letter, now among the Patent Rolls, was written by John to Roland Bloett, who is supposed to have been at the time Sheriff of Sussex, but who was probably the King's Agent in the management of affairs at Cnap, doubtless under the impression that his days, as the sovereign of this country, were numbered, and fast drawing to a close, and that he had no longer any chance of maintaining his crown; thereby making the order it contains *one* of the last, if not *the very last*, of this King; for Magna Charta, and the Charta de Foresta, were signed by this King June 19th of this year; and he fell a sacrifice to his own restless ambition the October following.

“The King to Roland Bloett greeting—

“Know ye that the Citizens of London gave up their

⁷ See Rymer's *Fœdera*, 16th of John.

See Chron., p. 173.

City to our enemies, quickly and of their own free will, on the Sunday after the Feast of St. Dunstan. Therefore we command you to carry away from Cnap, and elsewhere all that can be removed, and to take it without delay to Bramber, and secure it in the House there, unless you can better bestow it in the castle; but the House at Cnap you shall totally destroy.

“Signed by me at Fremantle, May 18th.”

A copy of this letter is given in Vol. iii., p. 8, and a view of the remains of the castle in Vol. v., p. 143.⁹

Of this Roland Bloett I have been unable to obtain any further information than I have already given. Other instances of the occurrence of the name, or of a name very similar to it, as it was connected with Sussex, are as follows: In the year 1090, during the time that William Rufus was detained at Hastings by contrary winds, previous to his embarkation for Normandy, Robert Bloett was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln in the Chapel of St. Mary-within-the-Castle. He had previously been Abbot of Evesham. In 1338 Robert Blote was Parson of Thakeham; and in 1570 Thomas Blewet was Prebendary of Gates in the Cathedral Church of Chichester.

But to return to Cnap. The execution of the King's order doubtless led to the destruction of this castle, as a fortified place only. For we have, I think, sufficient evidence to shew that the castle was not so entirely destroyed at that time, as to be no longer capable of being used as a place of residence; for soon after John's death we find Henry III. using this Barony and its dependencies as a means for detaching so powerful a Sussex Baron as De Braoze from the ranks of his enemies. With this view, and, as the grant states, “upon terms of peace and reformation,” he offered them to, and they were accepted by, Reginald de Braoze, though he was not the rightful heir to the property, who held them two years, and then assigned them over to his son and heir, William de Braoze. That Cnap was included in this grant and assignment, and that it was at that time the occasional residence

⁹ The reference to this letter is Rot. Pat., from the year 1201 to 1216,

of the Barons of Bramber, may be inferred from an order still in existence, (see Cartwright's Rape of Bramber, page 226, xvii.) which was issued by this William, April 13th, 1281, to one of his Bailiffs, and dated from his castle at Cnap. And in the year 1282 we find John de la Cnap and Emma his wife granting to Walter de Colvile, Prior of Sele, a meadow in Shipley called "Le Smithie." As this is the last notice we have of this castle, it was probably discontinued soon after as a residence, and it was then suffered to go to decay.

To King John's rapid progress through Sussex, upon the occasion of his visits to Knepp, Mr. Blaauw has alluded in his paper on Sussex Archæology, with which the first volume of our Collections commences, and again in Vol. iii., p. 2. In 1206 he appears to have been at Malling, in Kent on Friday the 7th of April, and on the following day at Cnap; and on the 9th he was at Arundel; and on the 10th at Southampton. And in 1215 he was at Guildford, on the 21st January, and at Cnap on the 22nd. This restless king must often have travelled, notwithstanding the badness of the roads and other impediments to quick progress at that time, fifty miles a day. This rapidity of locomotion seemed incredible to Matthew Paris, who, in speaking of it, says—" *Citius quam credi fas est.*" How different from this was the progress which the Earls of Northumberland made in travelling from London to Petworth some centuries later; for it took them two days to accomplish the journey from Guildford.

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or ancient receptacle for relics, for so Cartwright designates it; while Mr. Way calls it a feretory, or portable shrine. "These," he says, "were usually in the form of a small chapel, such as that preserved in Shipley Church." This, then, was the last object of antiquarian interest exhibited to us at our meeting at Knepp. But though this was the case, it was by no means the least deserving of our notice; and we are indebted to Mr. Cooper, the incumbent of the parish, for submitting it to our inspection in the marquee, after dinner. For, though we were in the parish of Shipley, the church was

too distant from Knepp to be brought within the possibility of a visit to it.

This curious vessel is of oak; and its sides and ends are elaborately covered with enamelled copper. Its length is seven inches, and its height six. The figures on its sides and ends are gilt, as well as the bordering of each compartment in which the figure is placed. The subject represented on it is our blessed Lord's crucifixion. In the centre compartment in front, our Saviour is represented as suspended on the cross, with small half-length figures of angels on each side of his head; and below are two other figures, which may possibly be intended for the two Marys; and in the outside compartments are similar figures, but larger, which may be representations of two of the Apostles. All are in an attitude of humility and reverence. At one end is a figure of a female, evidently intended for the Virgin Mary. The corresponding figure at the opposite end cannot be so satisfactorily identified. Over the cross are the Greek initial letters X. P. S. Its workmanship, which is very good, shows that its date is coeval with, if not anterior to, the gift of Shipley Church to the Knights Templars, which took place at the commencement of the twelfth century.

I cannot conclude without thanking, for myself and the members of the society generally, the Rev. Henry Law Cooper, of Shipley, and Mr. Richard Stotesbury, Sir Percy Burrell's agent, for the very excellent arrangements which they, acting as a local committee, made for us and our friends at Knepp on that day.
