





Miscellanea

CHESTER MUSICAL FESTIVAL, 1829

IT has been known that a medal was struck to commemorate one of the Chester Musical Festivals; but it seems no person connected with the Festivals of recent years had seen one, or could find out who possessed such a medal.

A short time ago, Mr. J. T. Hughes, Assistant-Organist of Chester Cathedral, was informed by one of his pupils that a roadman, working in the neighbourhood of Flint, had a medal on which was something about a Chester Festival. Mr. Hughes at once took the necessary steps to procure the medal, and is now the possessor of this unique memento.

On the medal we read: "Chester First Grand Musical Festival." This is, perhaps, rather misleading; Musical Festivals, of several days duration, had been held in Chester Cathedral for a considerable number of years prior to this; and that of 1829 was the last of the earlier series of Festivals.

Robert Platt, Esq., as a boy, was present at the Musical Festival held in the Cathedral in 1814; and, as an old man, was also present at that held in 1882.

Catalani and Braham sang at that of 1814. In the course of the music, Lord Combermere and Lord Hill, heroes of the Peninsula, entered the church; and immediately these famous voices, with the chorus, burst out in the words, "See the conquering hero comes." It must have been an exciting moment. Dean Howson remarked, in 1885, that a Festival

in Chester Cathedral would not have admitted of such an occurrence now.

The medal measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches; is of lead; the lettering much rubbed on the reverse side. It is the only one, up to the present time, known to be in existence.

FRANK SIMPSON.

THE publication by "The Parish Register Society" of "The Registers of Chester Cathedral," cannot be without interest to the members of our Society. The extracts were transcribed many years ago, by our Secretary, the late Mr. Thomas Hughes, F.S.A.; and the book is edited by his son, Mr. T. Cann Hughes, M.A., F.S.A., the Town Clerk of Lancaster, and is printed with the permission of the Dean and Chapter.

There are, at the Cathedral, four volumes of Registers; the two first (from 1687 to 1721 and from 1723 to 1812, respectively) being general; and the other two are, one for Baptisms (from 1812 to 1904), and the other for Burials (from 1813 to 1896). It is the first two which have been printed. Naturally, they are not as extensive as many of our Parish Registers, but they are not without interest. We find, for instance, mention made of the following professions or trades: proctor (frequently), peruke-maker, pewterer, prothonotary, breechis-maker, dancing-master; whilst the men of the choir are almost invariably styled *Conducts*. Sometimes the actual place of interment is specified, *e.g.*, the choir of the Cathedral; the maiden aisle of the Cathedral; the south cloister, &c. Who was "the good old Lady Donnolan, who was buried in the Choire of Chester, Augt. 18, 1692"? and how did she earn the title of "good"? Why were certain weddings in 1739 and 1741 described as "according to ye style of England," or "English style"? Why, in some entries of burial (from 1699 to 1702), were the executors of the deceased named?

At a certain period (from 1772 to 1780) the disease which was the cause of death is generally stated; decay and consumption

occurring frequently. Sometimes the entry is a little fuller, as we read that the Rev. Obadiah Lane, who was buried January 28th, 1780, "died of a lingering disease, at or about the age of 47"; and the Rev. Edward Mainwaring, who was buried August 3rd, of the same year, "died of a decline, at or about the age of 72 years."

Other events are often noted down: as the election of Minor Canons, Conducts, or Virgers; the installation of Prebendaries; and the inthronement of Bishops. The last entry printed runs thus: "The Right Reverend George Henry Law, D.D., inthroned Lord Bishop of Chester, July 28th, 1812."

Occasionally, marriages were solemnized in the Chapel of the Lord Bishop, and are so entered. We learn that, in 1749, "the Cathedral was clean'd, painted, and beautified"; and that, in 1751, "the Choir was layd with Marble, and the Cloyster covered with a new Roof, by William Stradford, LL.D., Commissary of Richmond."

From 1784 to 1794 entry is made of the Duty paid on the Burials; whilst mention is made, in 1688, of a burial "in Linnen"; and, in the following year, that "The Ceste for bur: in Woolen is kept in St. Marie's Church."

There is something pathetic in the following: "Rev. John Cleaver, Clerk, A.M., Vicar of Frodsham, installed Prebendary, June 10, 1775 (*died very soon after*)."

Other items in the Registers might have been noted as having some special interest from a family or historical point of view. The above are given as fair specimens of what the Registers contain. In an appendix are added some notes made in the original transcript by the late Mr. Hughes, which bring out some details in the family history of the persons mentioned.

E. B.