



## Miscellanea

(CONTRIBUTED BY THE VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON OF CHESTER)

THE Society have had mounted and framed an interesting old banner belonging to the Smiths, Cutlers and Plumbers' Company, which has been handed over to them, together with a javelin head, or head of the banner-pole, for preservation in the Grosvenor Museum. The relics were formally presented by the Guild at their annual meeting on July 10th to Mr. Frank Simpson, as representative of the Archæological Society. The Archdeacon, on behalf of the Society, sent a letter to the Secretary of the Company, expressing warm thanks, and trusting that it was an evidence of the cordial relations existing between the City Companies and the Society, whose only desire was to preserve for future generations these interesting relics of the past. The mounting of the banner has been skilfully executed, and it has been inspected with much interest at the Museum by the members of the Guilds. The records of the Company shew that the silk for the banner was purchased from a Mr. Duke, November 12th, 1772. On August 25th, 1773, Mr. Edward Orme was paid £6 6s. for painting the colours, and on May 29th, 1783, Mr. William Bowcock was paid 10s. 6d. for a javelin head for the colours, ornamented with a figure of Vulcan in gold and silver, and for a new painting of the staff. The making of a new plate for Vulcan, and a socket for the staff, cost the Company 2s. 6d. It is hoped that other Companies may be led to place their records and relics in the custody of the Society for safe keeping, and for the instruction and information of the public generally.

Mr. T. Arthur Acton has continued the excavations at Holt, and has given an account of the results before the Cymmrodorion Society in London, and also at Wrexham and elsewhere. Though our Society was unable to arrange for another paper or lecture by him last Session, we had the advantage of his presence when Professor Bosanquet gave his, and he pointed out the important part which pottery plays in the fixing of dates for the historical student; being, in this respect, more reliable than coins. The excavations at Holt have confirmed the opinion of experts previously expressed, that the Roman settlement there was not a military station, but a manufactory, the tile and pottery works of the Twentieth Legion. The waterway for carriage from Holt to Chester would be easy and expeditious. Mr. Acton is of opinion that the pottery found belonged to the second and not to the first century. Besides the manufactory proper, traces of other buildings have been found, including a bath-house and a villa.

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The issue of Vol. VIII. of "The Cheshire Sheaf," third series, shows how much we are indebted to its able Editors, Mr. F. C. Beazley, F.S.A., and Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine, M.A., F.S.A., members of our Society; and also to the Editor of the "Chester Courant" for admitting the various items to its columns, week by week. The interest aroused by this means in objects and subjects antiquarian and historical cannot but be productive of much good, and must lead to their preservation, and to a more intelligent study of local history.

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It is a satisfaction to know that His Grace the Duke of Westminster has had the front elevation of the Arcade in Bridge Street, Chester, altered in accordance with the original design of the Architect, Mr. W. T. Lockwood. The façade is of half-timber construction, and presents a pleasing appearance quite in character with Chester work, though its great height has the effect of dwarfing the adjacent buildings. It is, however, no higher than the modern structure which it supersedes. The alteration must have cost our Patron a large sum.

In the person of Mr. John Douglas, Architect, of Walmer Hill, Boughton, the Society has lost one of its oldest members, for he joined it in 1861, so that his membership lasted half-a-century. Though of late years he was seldom, if ever, at our meetings, in former days he was often present, or sent for display drawings or photographs of works executed by him in and about the City and County. Thus, on January 3rd, 1872, he sent three choice and elaborate drawings of the new Churches at Tattenhall and Dodleston, and of the interior of S. Mary's, Warrington; whilst photographs were shown of Oakmere Mansion, of the restored Vale Royal Abbey, and of other buildings. Mr. Douglas has left behind him many proofs of his artistic skill, and of his conservative care for ancient edifices, and his reproductions of the *Cheshire style* in both City and County are a pleasing monument to his memory.

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It is much to be feared that many interesting brasses have disappeared from our Churches, both in Cheshire and in other parts of the country. Great care ought to be exercised to preserve such memorials of the past. They have, it is true, often suffered from the position in which they were originally placed on the floor of the Church; sometimes, too, in places where the constant tread of feet must have been injurious to them. In such cases it would be well to remove them, and fasten them carefully to the wall, retaining, if possible, the original stone. Recently, in the Church of S. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester, an old brass, which had become loosened from the tombstone to which it was affixed, has been carefully cleaned by Mr. C. D. Ranson, and placed on the wall near the Rector's Stall. It consists only of a coat-of-arms, and belongs to the Prescott family. The original tombstone bore the following inscription (which was nearly illegible in 1893):—

“ Susanna daughter of George & Anne Prescott, died  
3 Feb 1722

Gregory, son of the same, died Oct 4, 1745.

Anne, wife of the said George, died 12 Sept 1740, aged  
59 years

George Prescott, Merchant, died March 10, 1747 aged 67.

Thomas Prescott of Eardshaw Co Cest. Esq died 29 Oct  
1768 aged 63 ”

Whether the tombstone was laid at the earliest of these dates, in which case the brass is nearly 200 years old, it is not now possible to say. From *Randle Holme's* "Academy of Armoury" we gather that the same coat-of-arms (argent, a chevron between three owls, sable) was borne also by Wood, by Griffith ap Jenkin, and by Madock de la Holme.

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We have been deprived for some months of the advice and services of our Honorary Curator, Professor Newstead. His duties at the University of Liverpool generally are sufficiently exacting, and take up most of his time. This year he has been out to Africa, having been appointed one of the Commissioners to investigate on the spot the origin of "the sleeping sickness," and to report, so that means may be adopted to counteract its ravages. The Society is honoured by this selection. We congratulate Professor Newstead on his safe return, and no doubt we shall soon hear something of the result of his investigations. In his absence the duties of the Curatorship devolve upon Mr. Alfred Newstead, whose tastes and instruction by his brother render him particularly well fitted to discharge them.

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Whilst going to press, a book, by one of the members of our Society, Mr. John Henry Cooke, of Winsford, has been published. The large quarto edition is limited to 300 copies, each of which is signed by the author. The title is "Ida; or the Mystery of the Nun's Grave at Vale Royal Abbey, Cheshire." The book is beautifully got up, and embellished with over thirty illustrations of a very interesting character. It is styled "An Historical Novel," and it purports to give a pictorial account of the life of the Monks and Nuns of Vale Royal Abbey, Norton Priory, and S. Mary's Nunnery, Chester. It is full of historical details, and though a complete review of a volume of nearly 400 pages is manifestly impossible here, it seems only right that the fact of the publication of the work should find a mention in the pages of our Journal.