

burning our sacred edifices. That the church was taken down and rebuilt some time towards the latter end of the twelfth, or early in the beginning of the thirteenth century, is almost incontestibly proved by the pointed arches of the tower (having as a base the pillars), which were first introduced about this period. The church was pulled down a second time, and rebuilt about the middle or latter end of the thirteenth century, as shown by the Early English fragments of windows, caps, and arch-stone; also an apex found in the course of pulling down lately. The mural paintings found on these various fragments point unquestionably to the Early English date; these fragments being refaced, reworked, and reused in the structure. A third time the church has been pulled down, as indicated by the bases of the nave arcade columns; these being of the Early Perpendicular period, sometime in the fifteenth century. In conclusion I may say, that although the registers belonging to Thurnby Church do not possess any special interest, being almost devoid of those curious notes upon local and national events so often found recorded in similar documents, still it should be noted that the parish was not slow in obeying the injunctions of Henry VIII., issued in 1538, which enjoined that such records of baptisms, marriages and burials should be kept in every parish. The most ancient book belonging to Thurnby Church, which I have seen—and which down to about the year 1603 is apparently a transcript of earlier books—is headed “Thurnbie. A Register booke made by the commdment of Kinge Henrie the eight in the xxix. yeare of his Raigne the xxx. daye of Noveember Ao 1538.” This book contains entries of baptisms and burials only, until 13th August, 1564, when we find “Ao 1564 Willm Jaram and Barbara Burrett were joynd together in matrimonie the xiii. daye of August.” From the commencement of the book to the year 1624 each paper is signed “By me Roger Crosley.” The first marriage by licence appears under this date, “1628 Thomas Broughton and Agnes Pennie—were married wth a licence—Aug. 16—Malachia Crosley—Curat. Ibid.” During the latter years of the Commonwealth, and occasionally afterwards, the date of birth and not of baptism is given: indeed, so late as 17th August, 1702, I find the following curious entry:—“Joseph Veasy of Bushby (a ffanaticke dissenter) did then inform me y^t his child which *he calls* Elizabeth was born y^e first day of June last.” Joseph Veasey had other children of whose birth he informed the Vicar, but he does not appear to have brought them to the font for holy baptism.

MR. VINCENT WING of Melton Mowbray contributed the following Paper on

GRIMSTON CHURCH, LEICESTERSHIRE.

GRIMSTON Church, which is named St. John's, is in the soke, or jurisdiction peculiar, of Rothley. The Knights Templars, from

whom it originated, with their usual display of the symbol of their faith, built it cruciform. The plan was that of a Roman cross, the three upper limbs of which are nearly equal, and the lower one somewhat longer. The church seems to have been first erected about the beginning of the thirteenth century, which is not long after the time when Rothley, with its chapelries and appurtenances, was presented by Henry II. to that military religious order. At this period, the Templars were in possession of vast and extraordinary privileges and immunities, in addition to their amazing wealth, and their advantages under the Papal bulls. The Master of the Temple ranked as a sovereign prince; they had their courts, with authority to try the gravest offences; the privilege of sanctuary was thrown around their dwellings, and protected both person and property; they were not only freed from the payment of tithes, but, with the consent of the bishop, might receive them; they could even confer upon their tenants freedom from many duties. These, and other prerogatives, will account for the legal eccentricities which partly found their way to us in the peculiar and extraparochial, and they make it no wonder that the little chapelry of Grimston eventually came in for its modest share of splendour in this ecclesiastical structure. The edifice, however, as first erected by the Templars, was of the simplest character. The early portions show scarcely any ornament; nevertheless they are sufficient to guide to the date of erection. In the chancel, and likewise in the transept, the lancet window may be referred to as decisive. It is true that the lancet form was in vogue nearly a century; but a small peculiarity here, namely, the dogtooth carved along the label, is found in this district amongst details ample to prove date, and we may, with the help of Kettleby and other examples, conclude Grimston to be from 1200 to 1220. The north transept has disappeared, but the evidence of its past existence cannot be questioned. The walls of the nave were refaced four or five centuries ago; and, as a clerestory was then to be built above them, no openings were made for the lower windows, which, with the inside plastering, has left nothing even to show where these were; the arrangement is odd, and not very suitable to the present purer mode of worship. The hood moulding of the north doorway is still visible, as are some traces of the arch of the north transept. The font is very plain, and so are the piscinas, and the many brackets. The lavatory in the transept is a double one. These appurtenances of an altar prove that this part of the church was a mortuary chapel, or chantry, in which masses for the dead were sung; where superstition plied its craft in the dark ages, till arrested by the light of the great Reformation. The north transept would most likely be appropriated in the same way. The church, with the exception of some trifling changes in the doorways, of the time of Edward II., seems to have continued in this state of "beauty unadorned" till about

1400; when the Knights Hospitallers, who had supplanted the Templars in their possession, totally changed the appearance by additions and enrichments; the absorbing demands of the crusades having long ceased, any rigid economy in their churches became unnecessary. The plain west wall, we suppose, with bell-gable surmounted by a large Templar's cross, was pulled down, the present lofty archway erected in its place, and the tower added, which for architecture and general effect may be esteemed the pride of the village; and from whose overtopping belfry would now be heard the lively peal, instead of the more gloomy monotone of the crusaders. Additional height was given to the nave, whilst more light was obtained by a clerestory and by the insertion of a large window in each of the four quarters. The screen, which formerly carried the rood, or crucifixion imagery, is of the same date, and has been very ornamental, it requires considerable repairs if, as a chancel screen, it is to be re-erected. Each of the two chapels would have its screen, or parclose. As it was at this time completed, the church was by no means wanting or ineffective. At present the loss of the north transept is a mutilation which can only be atoned for by its being brought again into existence. The stone pulpit, when its carving is finished, will be a valuable decoration. The communion fittings and the reading desk are consistently ornamental. The old font, which has an honoured age of some six centuries, is the only one of the appointments, as they are called, that is very plain, it is a bone of contention between the antiquary and the artist: if the question of toleration for its extreme plainness be raised, the former would endeavour to pacify the latter with the remark, that any ancient Gothic font, if well placed, is always effective. The neat benches and the warming apparatus afford a look and a feeling of comfort unknown to our hardy forefathers. And the porch entrance presents great improvement. This house of God, though in its previous appearance somewhat cheerless, is now made very inviting; but the best assurance of its securing a full attendance upon public worship is happily afforded by the respected pastor, who is so justly accepted with much affection in the hearts of his parishioners. The inhabitants and subscribers may be congratulated upon these results; which do credit to their liberality, and are, under the circumstances, a great success. They may hereafter, possibly, from this step in advance, be excited to other efforts; and we trust some munificent contributors will be again, in the providence of God, raised up, to aid them to carry further their improvements, so well initiated by this church restoration. Visions, perhaps, of coming realities, may be conceived, to present the church, also, quite complete: its lost limb restored, the lower windows of the nave recovered, and the proportions of the archways regained—which are at present too low; all of which to be accomplished demands the lowering of the floor to

its first level, with an expensive plan of drainage. Then with its richly carved screen, together with its church furniture, that which so recently appeared to be scarcely convertible, may boast of symmetry and real beauty in the interior as well as exterior appearance: nor should the historic interest that attaches be forgotten in the pleasure of the survey. It is a proper pride that moves any one to call attention to what is worthy of notice in his own locality; or the something interesting that Old England possesses even in her most retired hamlet. And if we be permitted to indulge in visions, and, as fancy paints it, look at the Grimston of the future—her church beautified and completed; the village green in nice order; the schools erected; the acquisition of a parsonage, and increased endowment; the churchyard, with its lichgate, its trees and greensward, its picturesque cross ruin—which, by the way, should be made secure, but still left a ruin; and in the midst a building, whose aspiring tower with its pinnacles is a delightful feature, wooing contemplation to those higher and exceeding glories; all, too, in a district where the views are extensive and the natural scenery good—we may conclude our remarks by pronouncing, that Grimston shall not be last and least amongst the pleasing rural homes of England.

29th January, 1872.

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE REV. ASSHETON POWNALL, F.S.A., in the chair.

After the transaction of business in Committee Mr. NORTH (Hon. Secretary), at the request of the chairman, read the following

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1871.

A PERUSAL of the minute book of the Society for the past year will show that its meetings and proceedings have lost none of their interest, although its work must from various causes be somewhat curtailed. There is now no longer, in this county the necessity to urge upon archæologists and lovers of architectural antiquities, the duty of restoring our ancient parish churches to decency and order. That was once a prominent feature in the work of this and similar societies. Now, however, Christian liberality and a more thorough appreciation of what is at least comely and decent, not to say necessary, in the condition of our ecclesiastical edifices, is so thoroughly felt by the community generally, that our duty as archæologists is rather to take care that the necessity of preserving the original features of our ancient fabrics is not forgotten.

Whilst commending the new ecclesiastical structures now erecting, or lately completed, in Leicester, to your notice, as containing within them many points testifying to the skill and inventive genius of the architects employed, and as showing, perhaps,