

Charles Fryer Eastburn, Rector of Medbourne; Captain Worswick, Normanton Hall; and Captain Pearson of Walcott.

The CHAIRMAN remarked with reference to the two mediæval glass vials found at Lutterworth and South Kilworth, and exhibited by him at the January (1872) meeting of the Society, that a similar vessel (though apparently more modern) had lately been found in a church in Hertfordshire.

The following antiquities &c., were exhibited :

By MR. JOHN HUNT: Two encaustic tiles from Beeby Church, Leicestershire. A Tradesman's Token, issued in Leicester, by David Deakin in 1657. A Denarius of Gratian and other Roman Coins, found in Leicester.

By MR. TRAYLIN: A fine collection of Roman remains from Castor, Northamptonshire, including a mould for casting a small mask, two inches in height; vases of various sizes and patterns; bone pins, and bodkins; an Aurius of Vespasian, and other coins.

By the REV. J. H. HILL, F.S.A.: Pedigrees of the Wentworth and De Insula families, written by Blore, the historian of Rutland.

By the REV. A. POWNALL, F.S.A.: A tetradrachm of Smyrna, with turreted head, the impersonation of the city; but the genuineness of the coin was doubted by the exhibitor.

The REV. A. POWNALL also exhibited an object in bronze, found at East Farndon, almost on the surface of the soil. In form it was of an elongated diamond shape, measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the widest part, with a thickness of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. The sides were both of them ornamented—one with the figure of a bird, marked by incised lines, and displayed much as the spread eagle is in heraldry—the other with a pattern of a simple kind which may be described as combining cross and circle, in variations. This pattern was in low relief, and the incised parts had been filled in with a pigment or enamel of a pale blue colour; the lines of the ornament on the other side having been likewise picked out with a similar substance, only in colour not blue, but white. There was reason for supposing this object once formed the pommel of a sword or dagger such as might have been used on state occasions and its date was probably that of the thirteenth century.

MR. NORTH exhibited and described a portion of the ancient stained glass lately acquired by this Society, and now adds the following prefatory remarks :

LEICESTER ANCIENT STAINED GLASS.

BEFORE proceeding to call your attention to the extremely interesting and valuable series of Ancient Glass Paintings which have recently become the property of this Society, I will attempt to give a description of the glass itself, and, then, after describing from time to time, as opportunity offers, and to the best of my ability,

the subjects depicted upon it, I may have something to say as to the probable use of the building in which it was originally placed.

At the close of the last century this glass formed a series of lights in the hall and kitchen (formerly one room,) of a house in the Highcross Street, Leicester, then occupied by Mr. Stephens. The subjects, as described by the local historians, Throsby and Nichols, were :

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| 1. S. Margaret. | 15. Marriage. |
| 2. S. Christopher. | 16. Baptism. |
| 3. S. Catherine. | 17. Confirmation. |
| 4. S. George. | 18. Ordination, |
| 5. The Annunciation. | 19. Penance. |
| 6. The Birth of the Virgin Mary. | 20. Extreme Unction. |
| 7. The Wise Men's Offering. | 21. Visiting the Sick. |
| 8. The Presentation in the Temple. | 22. Burial of the Dead. |
| 9. The Resurrection. | 23. The Trinity. |
| 10. The Ascension. | 24. Releasing the Prisoner. |
| 11. The Transfiguration. | 25. Relieving the Hungry and Thirsty. |
| 12. The Elevation of the Host. | 26. Clothing the Naked. |
| 13. The Assumption. | 27. Crest of the Town Arms. |
| 14. Part of the same. | 28. The Town Arms. |

The subjects probably then appeared in the order in which they are here given.

Upon the death of Mr. Stephens, the then owner, the house became the property of his son, the late Rev. Richard Stephens, who was for many years Vicar of Belgrave. In a note written to me by that gentleman, dated 11th October, 1864, he says "I sold it to Mr. Harris" (Mr. Samuel Harris, formerly a surgeon in Leicester) "and I believe it now belongs to Mr. Harris of Westcotes. . . . The painted glass I removed before I sold the house, and I have it still." The house in question is now occupied by, and is, I believe, the property of Mr. Wingate, Surgeon. The range of lights, filled with ordinary glass, are still remaining.

Upon the death of the Rev. R. Stephens, I—as related by Mr. Thompson at the January (1872) meeting of this Society—purchased the glass, wishing to prevent its being dispersed, and it has since, very properly, become the property of this Society. It will, I trust, be eventually placed in a position of safety, but of easy access, as a valuable specimen of glass painting of its period, and as a curious series of illustrations of subjects which must always be of much interest to the ecclesiologist, and to the general antiquary.

Upon carefully removing the glass from the box in which it had been kept by Mr. Stephens, I found some of the "lights" damaged, but they were in as good a condition as could well be expected. "The Wise Men's Offering" was missing, as was also No. 14 on Throsby's list, whatever that subject may have been, for it was not likely to have been what he describes it. An examination of the subjects led me to assign one or two as depicting scenes

different from those mentioned by our local historians. For instance "The Transfiguration" is, I think, Our Lord in Glory; "The Trinity" is clearly The Coronation of the Virgin; "Releasing the Prisoners" is evidently Sheltering the Strangers; "Relieving the Hungry and Thirsty" is Giving Drink to the Thirsty only—a fragment of a former painting depicting "Relieving the Hungry" being now incorporated in the one showing the Eucharist.

For the purpose of better describing the various subjects depicted, I arranged them more in their natural sequence thus:

1. THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.
2. THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.
3. THE RESURRECTION.
4. THE ASCENSION.
5. OUR LORD IN GLORY.
6. THE BIRTH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.
7. THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.
8. THE CORONATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.
9. HOLY BAPTISM.
10. THE HOLY EUCHARIST and a portion of FEEDING THE HUNGRY.
11. CONFIRMATION.
12. PENANCE.
13. ORDERS.
14. MATRIMONY.
15. EXTREME UNCTION.
16. BURIAL OF THE DEAD.
17. VISITING THE SICK.
18. SHELTERING THE STRANGER.
19. GIVING DRINK TO THE THIRSTY.
20. CLOTHING THE NAKED.
21. S. MARGARET.
22. S. KATHARINE.
23. S. CHRISTOPHER.
24. S. GEORGE.
25. THE TOWN CREST. (?)
26. THE TOWN ARMS.

Each subject (excepting the four Saints, which each occupy a space nine inches by four inches) is depicted upon a circular piece of glass six inches and a half in diameter. The ornamental accessories surrounding each picture have suffered much from various causes, and are in a far worse state of preservation than the more important portions.

Apart from the strong evidence afforded by the costume shown in the various scenes, (and which will be pointed out as each subject is hereafter described,) the mode of executing his work adopted by the artist, the colours employed, and the accessories

surrounding the main subjects of his pictures, all clearly point to the date when they were produced.

The late Mr. Charles Winston (so well known for his researches into the art of glass painting) divided the periods or styles of the art into five sections. "In the fourth period (the *Cinque Cento*, from 1500 to 1550)—the early part of which Mr. Winston describes as 'the golden age of glass painting'—the pictorial treatment predominates; the colouring is of a most rich and splendid nature; perfect brilliancy and effect are aimed at, and obtained; the figures and draperies are well drawn; the architecture and ornament become of secondary consideration, and the whole subject is distinguished by a profuse employment of rich yellow glass of varied tints; the accessories are of the Renaissance school."*

It is to this period that our Leicester glass may safely (apart from the evidence afforded by the costume) be assigned. The English glass of the time of Henry VII. (writes Mr. J. Fowler, F.S.A., who has devoted much attention to the subject) is very often both painted and shaded on both sides, but the side to be fixed inside—namely to the eye of the spectator—is *invariably* that on which the outline is executed in opaque brown paint.

An inspection of the Leicester glass shows that its characteristics exactly accord with the peculiarities just mentioned. The accessories are clearly of the Renaissance school, and I cannot describe the colours employed, and the mode of laying them on the glass better than in the words of Mr. Traylin. To that gentleman we are all indebted for the excellent tracings he has gratuitously taken of the subjects, and for the great care he has bestowed upon the printing in colours of the sheets which will illustrate my descriptions in our Transactions. Mr. Traylin says in answer to my enquiries:—"The outline of the subjects is painted in a rich brown colour on the *face* of the glass. The colour of the drapery and ornamental parts is a bright yellow laid on the back of the glass, and varied in depth (in some cases approaching a sienna) by the fullness or thinness of the colour laid on. In some cases—as in the figure of S. George, and in the water under the feet of S. Christopher—a thin 'scrambling' of brown is thrown over the yellow. The small pieces of ruby and of blue—especially observable, with quatrefoil tracery thereon, in the case of S. Christopher—are probably modern introductions."

It must be a matter of surprise that this glass representing, as it does, many pictures relating to subjects of great religious controversy, should have been allowed to remain comparatively uninjured in a private house for over three centuries. And this surprise must be increased when we remember that in almost every

* See J. B. Waring's Notes on Mr. Winston's Drawings of Stained and Painted Glass Windows, p. 9.

instance such subjects, at one time undoubtedly common in England, have been destroyed, and so have disappeared. There is good reason for thinking that, however such a preservation was effected during the stormy days of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the later owners of the property preserved the glass with an apparent appreciation of its antiquarian value. On the "light" on which the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is depicted may be seen written with the glazier's diamond "Saml Walker Glazed these windows for Mr. John Stephens, Feb. 14, 1764," thus showing that care was then taken of the glass. It was probably at that time that the fragment of one of the Acts of Mercy, as already mentioned, found its way into the "light" containing the Holy Eucharist. Again, after the death of Mr. John Stephens, and when the property passed from the possession of his son the Rev. R. Stephens, that gentleman evidently prized the glass too much to leave it in the hands of strangers.

Without following the classification adopted by some writers upon similar scenes in the life of our Lord, and of the Blessed Virgin, I will call the first five

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

Some idea may be formed of the manner in which this subject was treated by mediæval artists in this country, and also of the way in which even our village churches were decorated during the middle ages, by a study of the extremely interesting series of mural paintings preserved on the walls of the Chancel of the church of Chalgrove, Oxfordshire. Beside other paintings there preserved, there are twenty-eight specially devoted to illustrate the scripture narrative of our Lord's Life. Mr. Burges speaking of these paintings says they "are certainly some of the most perfect, if not the most perfect, we have remaining in this country. The chancel of Chalgrove Church is probably the only place where an idea can be formed of the general effect of the more humble class of paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."*

The Leicester glass gives five subjects, if the Annunciation may be included, relating to our Blessed Lord.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,

Has been treated by artists in two ways—first, as a mystery symbolizing the Incarnation of the Deity, and secondly as a historical event. It may also be accepted in either of two ways, according to the sequence in which it is placed by the artist—as

* Archæologia, Vol. xxxviii. The Rev. R. F. Lawrence, Vicar of Chalgrove to whom I am much indebted for a sketch of Mr. Burges' description of these paintings adds: "I am sorry to say that the paintings have faded *very much* since the above was written."



J.C. Trayler. Del.



Fleming & Co. Lith.

one of a series of events in the Life of the Virgin, or as an important and beautiful prelude connected with the Life of our Saviour upon earth. When it is remembered how touchingly simple and beautiful is S. Luke's chronicle of the Annunciation, it will not be a matter of surprise that the event was not only eagerly appropriated by the artists of Mediæval times, but that it is one of the Scriptural narratives most frequently sought to be illustrated in modern attempts to beautify and adorn our churches.

Calling attention to the Leicester glass, I may remind you that the event depicted took place in "A city of Galilee named Nazareth," and that the angel holding a sceptre (the attribute of a herald), and clothed in a robe which is fastened at the throat by a rich clasp or morse, is the angel Gabriel, who was sent from God to make the wondrous announcement to Mary. The artist of the Leicester glass, following the reading of S. Luke's narrative, shows this event as taking place within the house; tradition says, at about sunset. Mary is represented as having been either reading the volume open on the table or desk beside her, or as having been engaged in her devotions, when the angel appeared. This is in accordance with the description of S. Bernard, who says that the Virgin was studying the prophecies of Isaiah, and having read the words "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," thought within herself "How blessed the woman of whom these words are written! Would I might be but her handmaid to serve her, and allowed to kiss her feet;" when the heavenly message was delivered to her. The message (in Latin) of the angel is given on the ribbon or label above his head "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Over the Virgin's head is her simple and trustful reply, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." By the side of the Virgin stands her special attribute, the lily. Over all, surrounded by rays of light, is a demi-figure representing God the Father, sending forth upon a beam of light the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

An interesting example of this subject, as a mural painting, was uncovered on the east wall of the chancel of South Leigh Church, near Oxford, during restoration, in the year 1872. The Virgin stands looking upwards with her symbol, the lily, in her hands. The Dove, as a symbol of the Holy Ghost, descends upon her. Another mural painting depicting the Annunciation is preserved among the valuable series existing in the chancel of Chalgrove Church, Oxfordshire: on a jamb of a window on the north side stands a large figure of the angel Gabriel, on the corresponding jamb is given a large figure of the Blessed Virgin.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

The event depicted upon the second portion of the Leicester glass is that styled in the book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly

called the Purification of the Virgin Mary." The origin and meaning of the ceremony are given in Lev. xii. 4, Exod. xxii, 29, Num. viii. 17, and the actual event here represented is described by S. Luke in the second chapter of his Gospel, verses 22 to 40. Although there is little doubt that this was the first Festival instituted in honour or memory of the Blessed Virgin, and that in later times it constituted in works of art, the first of what are called her Seven Sorrows, still, in ancient, and specially in Greek art, the act of Simeon embracing our Saviour in his arms is made so far a prominent subject, as to cause the event to be called the *Nunc Dimittis*.* In Mediæval, and indeed in our own times, the day of this Festival was, and still is, popularly known as Candlemas-day, and explanatory of this, Blunt, in his *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*,† says:—"The popular name of this festival (Candlemas-day) perpetuates the memory of a very ancient custom, that of walking in procession with tapers and singing hymns. In a homily on the Purification, Alcuin says (A.D. 790): 'The whole multitude of the city collecting together devoutly celebrate the solemnity of the Mass, bearing a vast number of wax lights; and no one enters any public place in the city without a taper in his hand.' S. Bernard also (A.D. 1153) gives the following description of the practice, as carried out in his day: 'We go in procession, two by two, carrying candles in our hands, which are lighted, not at a common fire, but at a fire first blessed in the church by a Bishop. They that go out first return last; and in the way we sing 'Great is the glory of the Lord.' We go two by two in commendation of charity and a social life, for so our Saviour sent out His disciples. We carry lights in our hands; first, to signify that our light should shine before men; secondly, this we do this day especially in memory of the Wise Virgins (of whom this blessed Virgin is the chief) that went to meet their Lord with their lamps lit and burning. And from this usage and the many lights set up in the church this day, it is called Candelaria, or Candlemas. Because our works should be all done in the holy fire of charity, therefore the candles are lit with holy fire. They that go first return last, to teach humility, 'in honour preferring one another.' Because God loveth a cheerful giver, therefore all sing in the way. The procession itself is to teach us that we should not stand idle in the way of life, but 'go from strength to strength,' not looking back to that which is behind, but reaching forward to that which is before.'" It may be added that the use of a profusion of light, on this day arose, it is said, from a desire to commemorate the fact that our Saviour was this day declared to be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." There are a few ancient examples of this subject still

* Simeon as embracing our Saviour, was considered the type of the Gentiles; Anna as that of the Jews; who prophesied great things of the Saviour, but did not embrace Him when He appeared.

† pp. 131-2.

preserved in our English Churches; they are however far from being numerous. In the large series of mural paintings preserved in the Chancel of Chalgrove Church, Oxfordshire, relating to the Life of our Lord, the Presentation in the Temple is given in its proper place. The artist of the Leicester glass treats the subject very simply. The priest, standing under a canopy and behind an altar-shaped table, is about to receive the Infant Saviour from His mother, who is in the act of so presenting Him to the Lord. Behind her stands Joseph, carrying in a basket the enjoined offering of the poor—two turtle doves or two young pigeons—wherewith to redeem the first-born. Near at hand are two female figures bearing tapers, thus mixing up in a characteristic manner the modern custom of the day with the Levitical ceremonies. Joseph is properly represented as an old, bald-headed, but by no means a weakly man. In ancient art the woman Salome is usually represented as in attendance upon the Virgin Mary; one of the two female figures here given may be intended for her.

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

CHURCH VANDALISM.

It is a painful, but necessary, business which devolves on our Society to describe with exactness,* and to register in the volumes of the "Transactions," injuries perpetrated on ancient structures; for by this means, should better times arrive, redintegration may possibly be practicable—the following paper is written accordingly:—

At the west end of Melton Mowbray Church there is a large Galilee Porch with its piscina and other relics. It is gorgeous with sculpture of the very best description of the periods of Henry III. and Edward II. And, precious as it is to the artist, it is equally so to the ecclesiologist and antiquary. It is a special object of interest, as having, amongst other things, the unusual number of *four* All Comers' Apertures. We give this name suggestively: for *Lychnoscope*, *Low Side Window*, etc., is not satisfactory nomenclature; and as it may be proved that these mysterious openings were used for various purposes—such as witnessing mass, receiving the host, confession, doles, etc., in connexion with *solitarii*, or lepers, or persons inadmissible to the

* This critique it was imperative on the Honorary Local Secretary to write, and it is necessarily satirical to be useful as a deterrent in other cases; which consideration, in conjunction with the deservedly favourable remarks contained in it, will obviate any charge of bitterness. It has been borne in mind for precaution, that on the one hand such mischief would ordinarily betray into exaggeration, whilst on the other the mortification of this exposure would sharpen, if it excited, reproach; and consequently, in every particular, accuracy has been very carefully considered: future generations, therefore, may rely upon exactness in guidance obtained from this contribution to the Society's records.