

have the opportunity of reading them, without being able to carry them away, or steal them, Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" was secured in Lutterworth Church by a chain, and a fragment of the identical chain which was used was still attached to one of the volumes. Another volume contained the constables' accounts for the parish of Lutterworth, from the middle of the seventeenth century, while a third contained the churchwardens' accounts from about the same period, or a little earlier. These documents were not mere statements of dry figures, inasmuch as there were a great many interesting allusions to curious matters in the private history of individuals, in their parochial history, and also in the history of England. The first page of the constables' accounts showed the manner in which vagrants were treated, viz., whipped, and sent on their way. Then again they had another entry which fixed the date of the remarkable attempt of John Lambert, and also that of the defeat of the design to restore King Charles. They had an entry of a payment of money for sack for the High Sheriff on the occasion of the Proclamation of the King. They had entries of payments to the bell-ringers on the accession of the Prince of Orange and Mary, and subsequently on the accession of Queen Anne, the victory in Germany, the battle of Blenheim. There were also many other entries, which Mr. Thompson might investigate and publish in connection with his paper on the "Secular History of Lutterworth," and which could not but prove interesting to all, but more especially to those connected with the town and neighbourhood. The Rev. gentleman then went on to congratulate them on the auspicious circumstances under which they had inaugurated their meeting, both in respect of the weather and the number and quality of the company then assembled. In conclusion, he trusted that what might follow would fully correspond to the very satisfactory character of that which had preceded.

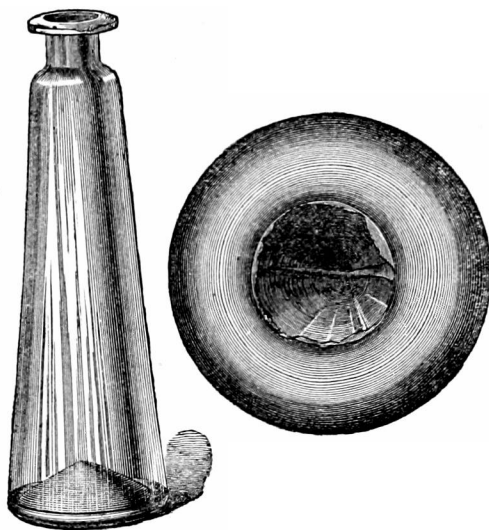
The Rev. N. F. LIGHTFOOT, on behalf of both Societies, thanked the President and the inhabitants of Lutterworth for the hearty welcome given to them, and the local committee for the excellent arrangements they had made for their reception.

### MEDIÆVAL GLASS VIALS.

The Rev. ASHETON POWNALL, F.S.A., then read a paper on "Mediæval Glass Vials found at Lutterworth and South Kilworth." That gentleman, after producing the vials, and making a few introductory remarks, proceeded to say: "In the autumn of the year 1868, while the church at South Kilworth was being restored, there was found among the foundations of the east wall of the chancel a little 'vial' of glass, about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height. From the account given by the young labourer who found it, the vial seems to have been lying, bottom upwards, among the stones and

earthy rubbish of the foundation, not less than from three to four feet below the then existing surface. In shape the glass tapers gradually, as a horn does, from its flattened base, where its diameter is  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches, towards the point where a short neck begins (unfortunately much broken); at which point its diameter does not exceed an inch. It cannot be affirmed that its mouth had held a stopper, for the broken lip stays assertion, nor can it be determined what may have been its contents, for all that was to be made out, was a film of some substance lining the bottom, which has never been analysed, and which only presented to the eye the appearance of the dried sediment of some fluid. The dull surface of the glass exhibits some iridescent colouring, from partial disintegration of its substance. In the following spring this glass vessel was exhibited at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, and a description of it, together with a short account of the circumstances under which it was found, appeared in that Society's *Proceedings* (2nd Series, vol. iv., p. 284). Various conjectures were offered at the time, as to the probable use of the vessel, and of the causes which may have led to its being deposited in the foundations of a fourteenth century chancel. None, however, appeared to have much weight, or to be capable of proof; and two Fellows of the Society, whose opinion would have been listened to with deference everywhere, Mr. Albert Way and Mr. Augustus Franks, candidly confessed their inability to express any decided opinion on the subject. For the moment, therefore, the whole question dropped, and in the entire absence of mediæval English glass, in utensil form—glass vessels which, with certainty, can be assigned to the Middle Age, a reluctance to express any decided opinion was not unreasonable. That glass vessels were in use then, for church purposes, was perfectly well known, through the inventories of church goods which are in our hands; nay, it was not outside the bounds of probability to suppose that such vessels have come down to our times, and are existing at this moment unrecognised, as regards their true character, in modern collections; but no antiquary has been able to lay his hand on any particular piece, and say, 'This is glass of the thirteenth, or fourteenth, or fifteenth century.' The earliest English glass (excluding, of course, from the remark church window glass) to which a date can be assigned, lies in the Jermyn-street Museum, and goes back no further than Charles II. time; and the earliest English glass, in the form of an utensil, dates only from the time of the Georges. This fact invested with some interest, if not importance, the object discovered at South Kilworth, if it could with safety be regarded as mediæval, because it appeared before us as a unique specimen of ancient English vitreous ware. Further discovery of the same kind has since confirmed the goodness of conjectures, which were then so cautiously advanced: for it appeared that during the

restoration of the parish church at Lutterworth (1867-9) two vials of a similar description had been found. My first attempt to obtain particulars, and to see them, was not successful. Two had certainly been found, but they had been lying so long unnoticed in a chest or cupboard in the Vestry, while the work was going on, that they were not at once forthcoming; and indeed one only have I succeeded in recovering. I have the pleasure now of exhibiting it, together with that which was found at South Kilworth. On



ANCIENT GLASS "VIAL" FOUND IN LUTTERWORTH CHURCH, LEICESTERSHIRE.

comparing the two together, it will be seen they are alike in shape and size, except a very trifling difference of form at the base; and that the one found at Lutterworth is happily quite perfect. The two 'vials' evidently belong to the same period, and the same manufacture. After obtaining the possession of the glass No. 2, I wrote to Mr. E. C. Morgan, who, at the restoration of Lutterworth Church, was employed as Clerk of the Works, and from him I had the satisfaction of receiving the following letter: 'Ban-

gor Cathedral. Feb. 14,—Rev. Sir,—I received a note yesterday from Mr. Tomlinson desiring me to describe to you the position in which we found a very antique bottle containing the oil of origanum (or described to be the oil of origanum by Mr. Gulliver, chemist, at Lutterworth). The bottle was rather more than half full and its contents were very little injured, and it smelt nearly as strongly as the same kind of oil in the chemist's shop. The bottle was found in the foundation of the west wall of the north aisle of Lutterworth Church. The foundation was composed of stone and earth, instead of mortar, and the bottle was *nearly at the outside*,—as in rough sketch.—I am, &c., E. M. Morgan.' Concerning the discovery of these two Lutterworth vials little more need be said: the one before us no longer contains any oil, but the scent of oil was very perceptible when it first came into my possession. The one which unfortunately is missing, appears from the description I have received to have been rather globular in form, but in other

respects to have resembled its companion. It remains for us to enquire whether anything can be determined as to the use of these glass vials in ancient times, which may stand on a footing firmer than that of mere conjecture. The enquiry which I have entered into myself leads me to dismiss altogether the idea that they contained one of the sacred oils of the church in pre-reformation days."

After referring at some length to the oils which were said to exude from the bones of some saints, and their supposed virtue, Mr. Pownall went on to say the same healing virtue was ascribed to the oil of other saints; and so near our own day has this custom approached, that until the period of the French Revolution, the relic treasuries of Cologne, Douay, and Tournay contained each a vial of S. Katharine's oil.

"Here then we have distinct proof of the use of glass vials, of the special purpose to which they were put, and mention made of the particular saints, whose remains were imagined to give out a sacred oil. Among them you will observe have occurred the names of S. Mary and S. Nicolas. When therefore I am able to add that the dedication of the church at South Kilworth was to one of these two, and that of Lutterworth church to the other, a link worth welding has been attached to our chain of evidence. Have not we now ground for supposing that the purpose to which these vials were devoted in former days is by these things indicated? But another question remains for consideration. Discovered in the foundations of the church, are we to suppose they were placed there at the time those foundations were laid, or, at some period subsequently? The custom which exists now of placing glass vessels, containing coin and records, under the corner stone of a new building, as one form of dedication, and for the purpose of dating it, might suggest the idea that the vials in question once served a similar purpose in the fourteenth century; but it is an idea which cannot stand unsupported by testimony, and it has none. True, a kindred practice prevailed; but we have distinct knowledge as to a difference regarding one important particular. These vials were found, one, at the west end of the north aisle; the other, among the rubble stone-work of the east chancel wall; now, whenever at the dedication of a church, in ancient times, the consecrated wafer, or the relics of the saint were deposited, they were invariably deposited *beneath the altar*. More than this, the exact situation of the Lutterworth vial has been pointed out by Mr. Morgan's letter, and that position was *nearly outside the building*; a position little likely to be chosen, unless the deposit had to be made quickly, and with secrecy, as in this case I conceive it to have been. For, this fact, taken in connection with what has been advanced before, inclines me to believe that it was in a period subsequent to the founding of the structure that we must look for the date of these deposits.

"In the days when many things, holy in the estimation of pious souls, were being shamefully desecrated; when 'the crismatory, the pax, with the graile,' were 'defaced and made away;' when the rood-loft was taken down and 'put to profane use;' when the very altar stones 'defacid,' were 'laid in high waies, serving as bridges for sheepe and cattal;' when the cross itself was taken down to be 'sold to a tinker' (Peacock's *Church Furniture, passim*); then unquestionably were some men's minds revolting from acts, horridly sacrilegious in their eyes. And under the influence of a desire to save from similar desecration a long-prized relic of the parish church, can I conceive those men to have acted who placed these two vials some feet below the ground. The stowing away of one led probably to a like concealment of the other, for the two churches are not wide apart, where they lay hid; and being stowed away, there it was hoped they would lie, safe under the soil, until Protesting zeal relaxed, and ancient sympathies revived. So, at least I think, the hiders of them thought; though their mind's fond expectation, affecting Reformer and anti-Reformer alike, was a dream not then destined to be realized, '*cæsis visus, timidis quies.*'"

Mr. Pownall concluded by reading two letters, one from Mr. Bloxam, whose absence they would regret, and another from a second well-known antiquary, reporting the discovery of two other vials, one in Hertfordshire, and the other in Warwickshire.

By the kind permission of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries the accompanying woodcut of the "Vial" found at Lutterworth is given to illustrate Mr. Pownall's remarks.

At the close of this opening meeting a large party walked to

### MISTERTON CHURCH.

This ancient edifice, which consists of a chancel, nave, two aisles, gallery, and broach spire, dates as far back as the fourteenth century, and was completely repaired and restored in the Perpendicular period. The arcade arches are, like but few others in the country, destitute of capitals, and there are also sedilia, and a nice octagonal piscina. Some of the pews, more especially at the west end of the church, are adorned with very old carved work, while upon the side of the reading-desk there is another piece of fine carving, supposed to have been a portion of the old screen of Lutterworth Church. On the right is the entrance into the rood loft bricked up. Among the monuments which adorn the church, there are the remains of those of two members of the Poultney family. Over the porch and window there are canopied niches, the roof of the porch is very nicely groined, and some of the buttresses are beautifully decorated.