

MR. WELLER'S COLLECTION OF BUCKS PRINTS AND DRAWINGS.

VIEW OF WOTTON HOUSE BY SIR JAMES THORNHILL.

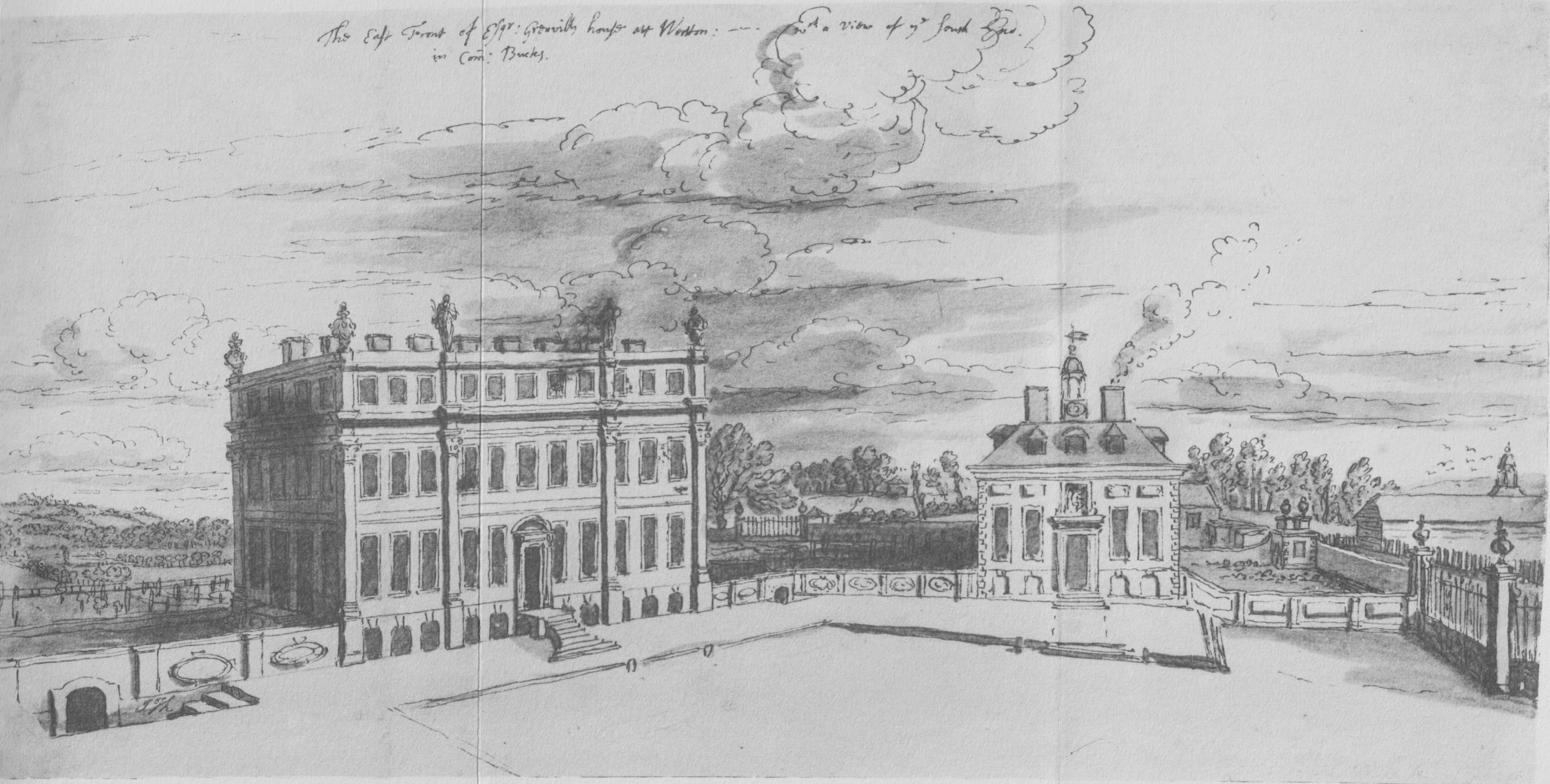
While staying last summer in his neighbourhood, Mr. George Weller very kindly showed me his collection and allowed me to carry off some drawings for re-production in "RECORDS." Of the three included in this issue the most interesting and important is a sepia wash drawing entitled "The East Front of Esqr. Grenville's house att Wootton in Co:m: Bucks—with a view of ye South End." Near the bottom left hand corner is the signature J.Th., and near the right hand bottom corner someone has subsequently written "Sir J^s. Thornhill fe." (now very indistinct). There can be no doubt that the *drawing* is by Thornhill himself. Is the *design* also by him? Biographical dictionaries tell us that "he was occasionally employed as an architect." I do not know of any architectural work by him, but Horace Walpole tells us * that "in 1724 he opened an academy for drawing at his house in Covent-Garden, and had before proposed to Lord Halifax to obtain the foundation of a royal academy at the upper end of the Mews, with apartments for the professors, which by an estimate he had made would have cost but £3,139, for Sir James dabbled in architecture, and stirred up much envy in that profession by announcing a design of taking it up, as he had before by thinking of applying himself to painting portraits." Walpole also says that he was employed at "More-park, Herts, as *surveyor of the building*," in addition to the decorations which he painted there and for which, after a law suit, he received £3,500. The Bucks histories tell us that Thornhill was employed here to decorate the saloon and staircase, and that some of the other apartments were enriched with carvings by Grinling Gibbons. † Of course while employed as noted above Thornhill might naturally have made this drawing of the outside architecture without having been the author of it. The paintings are said to have occupied

* Anecdotes of Painting in England, vol. IV., 2nd Edit.

† Gibbons died 1721.

*This East Front of Earl Grosvenor's house at Wotton:
in Conn. Bucks.*

(A view of 7th South Lane.)



WOTTON HOUSE

*Reproduction (slightly reduced) of a Drawing by
Sir James Thornhill.*

him for three years, during which he was paid £1,000 per annum "and his board."

Unfortunately the great central block of the mansion (1704-1714) with its valuable contents was destroyed by fire October 29th, 1820. Soon afterwards it was rebuilt, very much as before, as will appear by comparison of this drawing by Sir J. Thornhill with the excellent photo-views which appeared in *Country Life*, January 23rd, 1904. The chief variation being that the re-built house had no attic storey above the main cornice, windows being squeezed into the frieze instead. It will be seen that the stately row of chimneys appears again, that on the parapet vase replaces vase (which are shown much too large in the drawing) and sculptured figure over the intermediate pilasters. Happily the wings escaped the fire, and may be seen in the *Country Life* views just as shown by Thornhill, as also the beautiful wrought iron screen and gates and the superb piers (from which we should like to see the ivy removed) which are surmounted apparently by the same vases which are indicated in Thornhill's drawing,

TWO RIVER VIEWS AT MARLOW.

These small river views rather suggest that they may have been done as book illustrations, but if so I have not seen them in print, and at present my health will not allow me to go to London to search. They are water-colours in a low key—sepia, indigo, etc., and may be said to be superior to the ordinary run of topographical plates. They are unsigned.

At my request my friend Mr. Alfred Cocks has written some notes to accompany these reproductions. I begged him to make them as discursive as he pleased; so we are favoured with some interesting local notes and personal recollections.

W. N.

Plate I. (looking about W. by S.) represents The Complete Angler Inn (now called The Compleat Angler Hotel) on the Berks bank of the river, and on the W. side of the old bridge, which at its Bucks end joined Duck Lane, Great Marlow; having on its E.



MARLOW

Part of Weir and Old Bridge with Inn on Berks Side

C. 1810

side at that end the Waterman's Arms beerhouse; and on its W. side Church Passage, leading to the Church on the left hand, and the Causeway and High Street on the right. Behind (= E. of) The Waterman's Arms was a barge wharf; the lodge and entrance gates to my old home, Thames Bank, lay just N. of it, and the drive bounded the wharf on that side, and a further portion of our garden its E. side also. My father purchased the wharf and the Waterman's Arms, and threw the former into the garden, while the latter was adapted, from the plans of the late Richard D. Coad, an assistant of Sir Gilbert Scott, to form bachelors' quarters as an overflow from the house, and coachman's quarters; and the barge-horse stables were revolutionised into entrance lodge, the direction of the drive being slightly altered, and the old lodge pulled down.

In the Plate the bridge appears on the right side of the picture, but is nearly hidden behind the eel-bucks. The black mass in the extreme right foreground is the Lion's Mouth, near which as a boy I involuntarily spent an hour on one occasion when the river was high and the tackle out, being caught by the strong suck as I was crossing by punt to The Angler's; and only "by the skin of my teeth" escaped being drawn down it, getting away eventually very gradually, by gaining inch by inch. Many spectators assembled at the water side in Duck Lane, and a few at The Angler's, but nobody had sufficient pluck to come to my rescue.

The building appearing behind, and to the left of the picture, was, if I remember right, a barn, and marks the approximate position of the present "New Town."

In Ireland's "Picturesque Views of the River Thames," published in 1792* (Vol. I., opposite p. 195) is a view taken from some few yards further south, showing practically the whole length of the bridge. The portion of The Angler's, nearest to the foreground in Plate I., having the two small windows

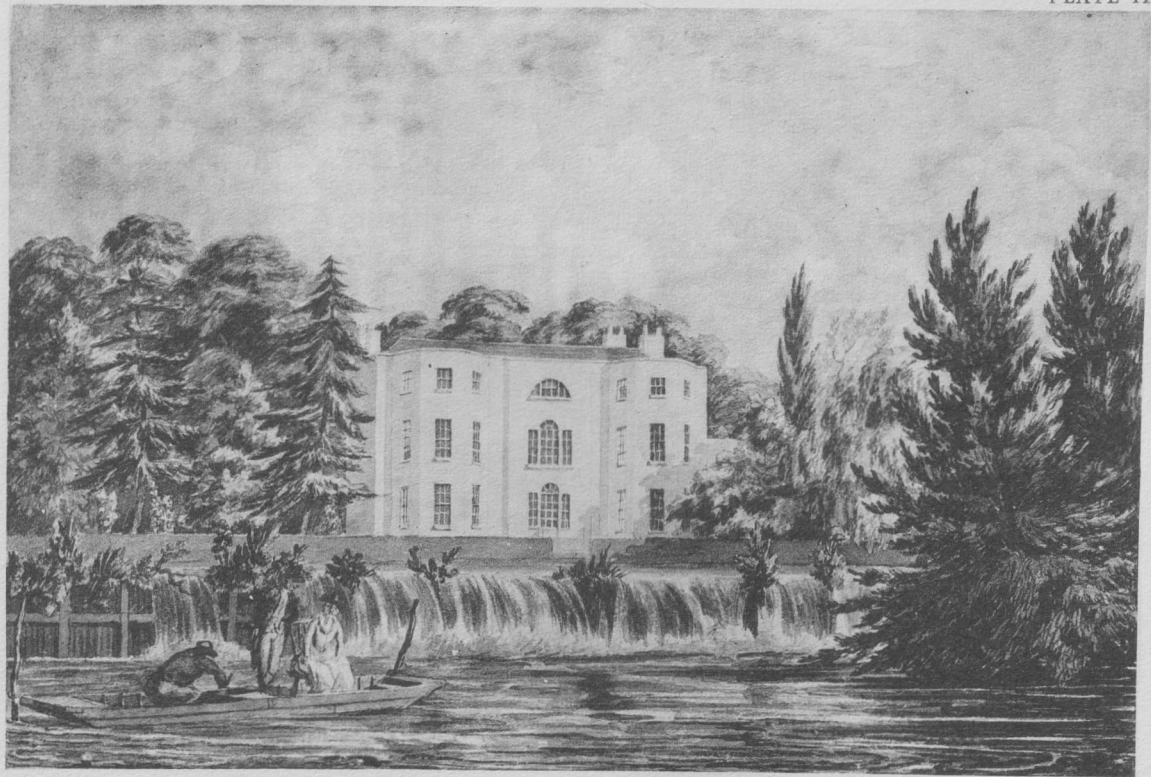
* Among numerous later illustrated works descriptive of the River, this, and especially Boydell's "Scenery and History of the River Thames," with 76 coloured plates, 2 vols. folio, published 1794-6, stand out pre-eminent.

on the first floor, with the sign-board at the angle to the right, is alone shown in Ireland's view; all the rest of the building is out of the picture, while just beyond the sign-board comes the Church on the Bucks side.* The tops of the cottages in and about Church Passage appear over the Bucks end of the bridge.

I possess a print, showing a very similar view to the last-mentioned, cut from a book, "Drawn by S. Owen, Esq.," "Engraved by W. Cooke." "London, Published Dec. 1, 1809 by Vernor Hood and Sharpe, Poultry, and W. Cooke. 2 Clarence Place, Pentonville." This must have been taken from a spot a few feet further south than Ireland's view; the sign-board angle of The Angler's is again the point nearest to the centre of the picture; all the remainder of the inn comes to the south, while the W. end of the church is, in this view, actually behind the sign-board gable. The greater part of the bridge is shown, and the upper parts of the pair of cottages formerly at the extreme S.W. corner of Duck Lane.

Plate II., Thames Bank and the weir, Great Marlow; probably taken from the old bridge, about the end of the 18th century; but the date is a little puzzling, as the house has still three storeys, and I have always been told that the upper one was removed by an old lady who was very nervous of fire (the idea no doubt being that while escape from a first-floor window would be fairly practicable, a second floor might present fatal difficulties). This lady I have always identified in my mind with Miss Winford, who lived here through the greater part of the second half of the 18th century. She is alluded to frequently in "Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys, of Hardwick House, Oxon, 1756—1808." Edited by Mrs. E. J. Climençon (of Shiplake), (Longmans, 1899). This interesting book is not at hand to refer to, but Miss Winford is not, I think, mentioned after 1798 or thereabouts; and I believe that she died before the close of that century. The house passed into the hands of a Mr. Foster, about whom I know nothing, except that he drove a team, and built the existing commodious stables. If he left

*The old Church projected about 15ft. further west than the present building.



MARLOW

The Weir and Thames bank as formerly.

a widow, and she happened to be nervous of fire, the difficulty is at an end!

In 1811 the property was purchased by a great uncle of mine, Vice-Admiral Sir James Nicoll Morris, K.C.B., who had commanded H.M.S. Colossus, 74, in the Action off Cape Trafalgar.* At any rate the third storey was gone before his time, but the tow-path then ran in front of the house, and did so until the level of the river at this point was raised some 5ft. by the construction of the lock † just below, the exact date of which, however, I have forgotten—if I ever knew it, but it must have been about 1830, or shortly before. In Plate II. a notch or gap appears in the river-wall opposite the centre of the house, and it is not unlikely there may have been a flight of steps here down to the tow-path. With a lens, I fancy a gate can be detected at the low level, but I know no other evidence for this detail. A somewhat irregular line just above the water level may—or may not—represent the tow-path.

A print in my collection (engraved surface 1ft. 6in. wide, by 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. high), lettered: "A View near Great Marlow, Bucks." "Published according to Act, April 5, 1810." (no artist's or engraver's name), shows the house almost precisely similar to Plate II. with the third storey, but certainly no tow-path. This print is interesting as showing a portion of the old mill buildings timbered perpendicularly, with picturesque cottages attached, instead of the hideous red brick villas that have replaced them. It is perfectly possible that this view may have been drawn several years before it was engraved; but the absence of the tow-path is a difficulty—perhaps its omission is a "poetic license" for the sake of appearance?

A coloured print in my collection (engraved surface 1ft. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, by 1ft. 2in. high), lettered: "The Weir from Marlow Bridge." "Drawn by Wm. Havell." "Engraved by R Havell." (The

* Another great uncle of mine, Admiral Sir William Hargood, G.C.B., G.C.H., commanded H.M.S. Belleisle, 74, in that action. When the Right Hon. W. H. Smith was First Lord of the Admiralty, at my father's request he re-introduced these two good old ships' names to the Navy.

† I.E. the modern *pound-lock*, the *flash-lock* in the weir had existed for centuries.

Christian name has probably been printed in full, but if so, it is now rubbed out.) "London, Published August 1, 1818, by Thomas McLean." The house has only two storeys as now; the still existing verandah is shown, and the shades to all the upper windows, which were removed within my recollection. Though the view is stated to have been taken from the bridge, it must have been from quite the furthest extremity of the approach on the Berks side, because the left foreground of the picture shows only the east edge of the campshedded ground outside the roadway alongside The Angler's, as far as the eel-bucks.

A barge and several punts are introduced, and men are repairing the weir. The growth of trees on the lawn of Thames Bank is even more luxuriant than in Plate II. A noticeable feature, more or less evident in all the prints here mentioned, but especially in this later one, is the high level of the water in the pool, though the river is not represented as in flood. The normal level of the pool was no doubt higher before the lock was made and the weir raised in correspondence; but the absence of the tow-path co-existent with the high level in the pool, is difficult to explain unless as an inaccuracy.

Thousands of persons have crossed the Thames by swimming, and hundreds have walked (or skated) across it on the ice. Though in most winters it is possible to find ice on the river that will bear for a few yards, it is only in exceptional seasons that persons can fairly walk on at one side and walk off again at the opposite side. But I am not aware that any other person has ever crossed the Thames by wading. On one occasion there had been a serious burst or "blow" of a lock or weir somewhere in the Windsor direction—I forget the exact particulars—and in order to repair the extensive damage, the river on an ensuing Sunday afternoon was run lower than it had been at any time during the last 50 years. The effect was very curious. Putting on a pair of high sea-boots, I started off from our lawn in the direction of the weir, but had not proceeded very far before I hopelessly "stuck in the mud," or rather I believe in an outcrop of very adhesive clay, and at the same time realised that the water

further on would be much too deep for my boots. It was only after a considerable struggle that I worked free again, and was able to retrace my steps. I then exchanged my sea-boots for salmon-waders, reaching to about the second button of one's waistcoat, or about the level of one's arm-pits, and having provided myself with a boat-hook, started afresh. Sounding continuously ahead with the boat-hook, I was fortunate enough to find a lane of hard, firm gravel, running directly across the river-bed. When I had gone about three-quarters of the way across, the water was only an inch or two below the tops of my waders, and a very slight increase in the depth would not only have filled my waders, but have carried me off my legs; water-weeds whose tops do not normally reach much above the water level were now lying in long festoons, and wrapped themselves round my body, and impeded progress to such an extent that it became doubtful whether further advance was possible; added to this it was the month of August, long subsequent to the date when steam-launches first became common, and I was a little nervous that some of them in their customary reckless style of navigation (at that time, though no doubt this is all quite right now!) would run me down, but luckily the larger ones at any rate ran aground one after another, just in time to keep clear of me; I was however passed by some smaller launches, and rowing boats.

The weir, when reached, towered high above me—quite a novel aspect—and entailed a climb to ascend. The return journey was eventually, thanks to the help of the boat-hook, successfully accomplished.

Living almost constantly actually in sight of the river, I made an original observation, and have never found anyone else to whom it had occurred, though those to whom I have mentioned it have assented to its truth. I learnt to recognize, simply by looking at the surface of the river, without reference to any landmark or other guide, whether the water (especially during floods) is rising or falling. When the water is rising, the surface appears convex; when falling, concave. Two or three of the friends to whom I have

mentioned this, thinking to be very sharp, have asked: "What about when the surface looks neither convex nor concave?" The answer is perfectly simple: When one cannot perceive that the water looks either convex or concave, the level is, for the time being, steady—neither rising nor falling.

A lithograph in my collection adds a little to the present subject. The actual picture measures 1ft. 4½in. wide, by 11½in. high, and is lettered: "View of the Suspension Bridge now erecting over the River Thames, at Great Marlow, Bucks, Under the direction of W. Tierney Clark, Esqr. Civil Engineer. Total Length 426 Feet.—Carriage-Way 20 Feet.—Foot-Paths 5 Feet.—Height above Water 12 Feet." "From a Drawing by A. Mee." "R. Martin, Lithog. 124, High Holborn." (Undated). Plate III. is a reduced reproduction of the more interesting portion of this view.

It gives probably the most accurate view extant of the western half of the old Church, and to a great extent indicates its position. The S. tower transept (= the Dead House), is unroofed and in ruins. A lamp-post stands (as I think is still the case) on the parapet of the bridge at the extreme N. end of the E. side; this appears to be less than 6ft. from the line of the S. wall of this transept, and barely so much as 15ft. to the W. of these transepts and the tower between them.

The spire apparently terminated in a point, without finial or vane. This view makes it rather squat and dumpy, instead of the well-proportioned, graceful form shown in most pictures. Shegmond's model (see RECORDS, VI. 326) measured without removal of the glass case, makes the tower (to lead flat) about as 14 to the spire's 13. Browne Willis records (*tom. cit.* 331) "a square Embattell'd Tower . . . supporting a low Wooden Spire ribbed with Lead, at the top a Weathercock," showing the dumpy representation to be correct, and that there was formerly a Weathercock, as shown in the older prints.

When writing the above quoted account of the old Church (*tom. cit.* 329) the date of the spire was unknown



GREAT MARLOW.

*View showing relative positions of present Bridge and Old Church.
From Mr. Cocks's Collection.*

to me, but Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, Vol. 1, Bucks, 1801 (some copies with additions, are dated 1813*) p. 600, mentions "a wooden spire, erected in 1627." This is likewise mentioned in a fragment consisting of three unpagcd 8vo. leaves, which are perhaps from *Ancient Reliques: or Delineations of Monastic (&c.) Architecture*. 2 vols. London 1812-13.* (Unseen).

Ireland's view, mentioned above, shows the "Impro-priators' Chancel," or "Town Chancel," or "Lady Chapel," extending several feet further E. than the "Parish Chancel," or "Communion Chancel," but in reality they were co-extensive. This is correctly shown in an old coloured print (9½in. by 6½in.), one of a framed pair I purchased many years ago from Wm. Smith, tailor, of Great Marlow, in whose possession they had been since 1818. This view is taken from the Long Meadow; from further to the east, and a little further towards the north, than Ireland's view: it shows the whole length of the old bridge, and the Church behind it; the cottage on the west side of the Bucks end of the bridge is shown plainly, and the beginning of Church Passage is visible, but the Water-man's Arms on the opposite side is just excluded. On the Berks side the sign-board angle is again the nearest point of the Angler's to the centre of the picture, while the rest of the inn rambles away with numerous gables, apparently covering a large extent of ground. Towards the foreground, four Cadets from the Royal Military College, wearing extremely tall shakoes, are introduced; two are sitting on the edge of the bank fishing, and the other two, also rods in hand, are talking to some ladies. Mr. Smith believed these sketches to be by J. C. Schetky, Drawing Master to the R.M. College, † and pasted on the back of this one, a newspaper cutting, announcing his death in 1874:—"SCHETKY.—Jan. 29, at Kent-terrace, Regent's Park, in his 96th year, John Christian Schetky, Esq."

The companion picture represents the exceptionally

** Gough's *Bibliotheca*.

† A later Drawing Master of the R.M.C. at Great Marlow is mentioned in my account of the old Church, in RECORDS VI., 326 (1890), and is buried in the Churchyard.

pretty view from "Miss Winford's Seat" in Quarry Wood, as the foreground, with the beautiful "riverscape" seen from it looking up stream; the river winding from immediately in front of the Seat past the eyots, the mill, the old bridge, and the Angler's, to the Church, surrounded by trees, the whole enclosed by the hills. The eyots have altered considerably in shape since the construction of the lock, and there is also considerable difference at Gosmer, just below, where a quantity of land has washed away within my recollection, especially of course, since the introduction of steam traffic. Half an acre is probably not an exaggerated estimate.

At Miss Winford's Seat are placed a table and a bench, the former spread with preparations for tea, which four ladies, two gentlemen, and a child are evidently expecting shortly to discuss. Near the opposite corner of the foreground, a man on his knees before a bonfire, is trying to induce the kettle, suspended from a tripod of rough sticks, to boil, and a large hamper lies near him.

The name "Miss Winford's Seat" was eventually corrupted into "St. Winifred's Seat." I knew the spot quite well, but it has long since been undermined and washed away.

On removing these two prints from their frames, their labels proved to be pasted on their backs, being respectively: "Great Marlow Bridge and Church." and: "View on the River Thames near Great Marlow, from Quarry Wood." And both were: "Published Oct. 28, 1811, by Tho. Palser, Surry side Westminster Bridge."

The well-known "View of Great Marlow." "Drawn by Josh. Farington R.A." "Engraved by Wm. Byrne F.S.A." "London, Published Janr. 1, 1803, by W. Byrne, Titchfield Street, and T. Cadell Junr. & W. Davies, Strand." is almost identical with the last, and must have been equally taken from Miss Winford's Seat. The old church, and bridge, the tithe-barn, the Angler's, and the old mill-buildings are recognizable in both; and in the latter the flat roof of Thames Bank, which from its height seems still to have the third storey; beyond it the roofs of the cottages in Church

Passage, and of the late Mr. Thos. Rolls's cottage between the Passage and the river. In both pictures, towards the lower end of the eyots, the passage to the backwater and pool is blocked by eel-bucks, which were probably done away with when the new lock lowered the level of the water there.

A third print in my collection taken from the same point, is a plate from "The Itinerant," "Great Marlow." "Engraved by I. Walker from an Original Drawing by T. Girtin." "Published Nov^r. 1st; 1797 by I. Walker N^o. 16, Rosomans Street, London." The buildings and bridge are drawn a little larger in proportion to their surroundings, and apparently with slightly less accuracy; the spire is shown rather squat.

ALFRED HENEAGE COCKS.