

NOTES.

RUNNYMEDE.

In August, 1921, it was announced that Runnymede meadows, the property of the Crown, were to be sold. The meadow, amounting to 99 acres, formed part of a large block of the Windsor Estate. A certain amount of public opposition was aroused, and eventually it was announced in Parliament by Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen that "the 99 acres referred to were not sold, and would be retained as Crown property" (10th August). The Minister of Agriculture said "he would not go into the historical questions as to precisely where Magna Carta was signed, or whether it was signed at all." This probably referred to letters which had appeared in the *Times* from Mr. H. E. Malden (8th August) and from Sir Alfred Robbins (9th August). Both these gentlemen pointed out that the Great Charter says itself that it was "given in the meadow called Runingmede," and the first-named thinks that the placing of the scene upon Magna Carta Island was "merely the fancy of an owner."

This will remind members that when our Society visited the district in 1876 the Rev. C. Lowndes (one of the honorary secretaries) read a paper upon the "Facts relating to the signing of Magna Carta" (printed in RECORDS IV., 384-391). He quoted the words "Dat'p' manum n'rum in prato quod vocat' Runimed'," but added "Surely there is something due to tradition, we may infer that the actual scene was upon this island." As the Society was at the moment enjoying the hospitality of the owner of the island, this expression may have been due to politeness rather than to conviction; probability supports the wording of the deed in favour of the meadow.

NORTH MARSTON CHURCH.

During the recent restoration of this Church a fresco was discovered immediately above the pointed tower arch. This consists of a crowned fleur de lys, the emblem of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church is dedicated. The fleur is executed boldly and with admirable proportion, as it is quite four feet wide, and more than that in height. The tower was built in the fifteenth century, and it is probable that the fresco was executed at the close of that century. Mr. Webb, the architect responsible for the restoration, is of opinion that "the whole nave is so decorated under many coats of whitewash. If funds allowed these could easily be uncovered."

It is a coincidence that in 1855 the "Records" (Vol. 1, p. 146) commented upon the east window to the memory of Camden Nield erected by Queen Victoria, together with coloured decorations in the chancel; in the last-named case it is asked: "Whether there is any other church in this county in which polychrome has been used in modern times?" There is no suggestion that the writer was aware of the fact that the church already contained "polychrome decorations" of a date which carries no early-Victorian associations.

The uncovering of this interesting fragment adds one more to the many points of interest in a church which certainly has a place among the four most interesting village churches in the county.