

LETTER FROM VICE-ADMIRAL W. H. SMYTH, ON A
"DOUBLE-FACED" BRASS IN STONE CHURCH; WITH A
FEW GENERAL REMARKS ON THE DESECRATION AND
ROBBERIES IN SACRED EDIFICES.

St. John's Lodge, 10—7—'60.

MY DEAR SIR,

An antiquarian acquaintance, who had seen my notice of the Hedgerley palimpsest Brass (*Records of Buckinghamshire, Vol. II., page 17*), thinks that I might also have made mention of a similar relic in my own immediate neighbourhood, namely, one in the ancient Church at Stone which was excellently lithographed, and widely distributed by the Rev. J. B. Reade, the Vicar, a few years ago: it was accompanied by a representation of the circular Norman font, curiously sculptured in low relief of somewhat unusual character, consisting of interlaced squares and circles, with various fishes, animals; and strange devices introduced in the intervening spaces, and two human figures holding weapons.

In reply to this charge I observed, that there was no parity in the examples: by the word palimpsest is strictly understood a sort of parchment from which whatever was inscribed thereon might be erased, so as to admit of its being written on anew, the precise sense being *repeatedly prepared for writing upon*. From Cicero's letter to Trebatius (*Ad Fam. VII. 18*), we find that it was an ancient practice; but the wide re-introduction of the term (*παλιψηφιστος*) was by the celebrated Angelo Mai, in his sagacious gleanings among the old manuscripts of the Vatican Library; and especially in his discovery of the long lost books of Cicero's treatise *De Reipublica*, about forty years ago. Sometimes the readings on the front and the back related to different periods; and by transferring such an incident from the parchment to brass, the designation has obtained, of which the Hedgerley instance is a notable specimen in point. The two faces, however, of the monumental tablet in Stone Church are altogether different in style and intention from palimpsests, since they vary but little in age, and not at all in execution. The upper

one is inscribed to Thomas Gorney and his Wife in the year 1520, while the under surface is to the memory of Christopher Tharpe. Now this latter, though a whole line is lost from the brass having been shortened, bears characters and phraseology so similar to Gorney's, as to make it clear that the dates of both must be nearly contemporaneous—though certainly those on the Tharpe side from being rather coarser, would seem to be a little—and very little—older.

This brings us upon a point which, to unpractised eyes, would appear to be an insuperable obstacle; namely, the recovery of the second date—Tharpe's death—in order to confirm or repulse conjecture. Now we are free to confess that in the instance before us, at a first glimpse, there seemed to be but little clue, the vestiges of another line to the epitaph being so slight as hardly to arrest notice. But where there are marks there is hope. The monumental inscriptions of the time in question were incised with a mannerism for conveying information in a brief and conventional form; and they were generally so worded that there was no great or conflicting variety either in their object or meaning—names and dates being the principal distinctive differences. This was eminently the case during the latter part of the mediæval ages, insomuch that on marbles where words had been abraded, the *absentees* could be readily restored—under able readers—by means of those in preservation: and so fragments of letters can be put into their pristine form and arrangement, by a careful and proportionate estimate of their several parts. Thus the last line in the case before us, on the undermost inscription, as just stated, having been cut away—perhaps to shape the upper face to order—is not so readily made out: but by a scrupulous comparison of the few bits or tops of the letters accidentally left by the cutter, with those on the upper lines, under the critical tutelage of my friend Mr. John Williams, we gather that Christopher Tharpe died on the 28th of September, 1514. Now during the six elapsed years, it is more reasonable to suppose that the tablet had remained in the workman's shop unpaid for, than that it was so soon torn from the tombstone. However, here we submit the two inscriptions for the reader's own unravelment, with our assumed restoration of the missing line in open characters:—

THE UPPER INSCRIPTION.

Here lyeth Thomas Gomer & Agnes his wyf which thoms
died the vij day of may. An̄m̄ d̄ xx. Du is her soule ih̄u herre m̄cy

ON THE UNDER SIDE.

Of y^e chastyte pray for the soule of xpofer Thaxpe
whiche deceased the xxvij day of Septembre y^e viij
of our lorde m̄c^o xxvij. Du is hōle soule ih̄u herre m̄cy

In those troublous and detestable times—the civil wars of the Roses—instances of this kind were very frequent: a brass might be ordered for one of the red side, but before it could be supplied by the maker, the property of the ordering party might be estreated, and the artist having the plate left on his hand, would brush it up afresh for any one of the white division. In like manner, it must be repeated, in the instance before us—though cast in more stable times—the dates of the two inscriptions being so near each other, renders the supposition that the earlier one was never set up, almost a certainty. Moreover it is well known that certain worthy persons had brasses prepared during their life-time, and under their own direction, with blanks left for the date of decease: and such spaces are found still remaining, since too often it happened that no one was forthcoming who cared to fill them in.

In these strictures, it should be observed that by the term “brass,” antiquaries mean a commemorative record of a person or persons—sometimes the tribute of a parish or of individuals to worth and merit, but more frequently family tokens. In either case we can rely pretty confidently on the good faith with which they exhibit the names and dates relative to the defunct; but the suspicion of palimpsest, or even double-face, has considerably shaken a portion of the reliance upon identity, and opened a road to mere inference. It is true that for verifying epochs brasses display all the varieties of male costume—ecclesiastic, knightly, academic, and civil—while those sacred to Ladies shew costly robes, pearl embroidery, and vestments powdered with ornaments so extravagantly as to prove that fashion then, as now, entertains no sympathy with taste: but the meddling with monuments thus complained of weakens faith—since the vital essence which renders history valuable is TRUTH, of which the mainspring is a free discussion of all reliable means—nor does she even despise the evidence to be drawn from vain marbles. This however does not interdict the exercise of scepticism on costly preservatives of infamous characters: every inducted son of Linus will agree with Bishop Hall, that—

Small honour can be got with gaudie grave,
A rotten name from death it cannot save:
The fairer tombe, the fouler is thy name,
The greater pompe procuring greater shame.

Yet under all the disadvantages, there is a mine of in-

formation to be still worked in our monumental remains ; and surely every good subject ought to be interested in the preservation of all the memorials of our illustrious dead, for the satisfaction and instruction of the living. Unhappily this has not been the case, especially in recent times ; and although we must angrily deplore the wanton mutilations of consecrated places, and the desecration of Churches, by the puritanical hordes of Cromwell, we are wrong in supposing that they were the only Vandals who injured our country, and tarnished its character by such spoliation. Ignorance and prejudice, to be sure, may have been more to blame than malice prepense or desire of gain, but in either case the motive can be no palliation of the public injury. Even in our own tolerant times, what flagrant assaults (*archæologically speaking*) have been waged against public decency and feeling by men of respectability and pretension to good education. In my last letter I alluded to the wanton destruction of the Felbrigge* monument at Playford, an act which a valued correspondent informs me was "perpetrated by the *ipsis manibus* of two clergymen—no ploughman, street-sweeper, or marine-store dealer, would have done such a thing." And in a recent letter from Mr. Albert Way, that energetic antiquary says—"When I offered, some twelve or fifteen years ago, to have the figure and canopy of the founder of Playford Church, which had been most violently torn from its resting place, made good at my own expense, the incumbent declined to permit anything of the kind to be done." The excuse was truly iconoclastic, that "if the brass of Sir George were fixed up in the Chancel, it would distract the attention of his hearers during the service !" Were not the bellicose Lion and Unicorn of the Royal Arms, liable to this barbarous objection ?

It will readily be conceded that many Churches have been exceedingly well attended to—as Cockayne Hatley in Bedfordshire, St. Mary's in Warwick, and a few others—but they almost form exceptions to the general rule : instances of callous neglect, or reckless remodelling, are common over the length and breadth of the land, to an extent

* Sir George Felbrigge, founder of the Church, was Esquire of the body to Edward III. He was Knighted in the Scotch wars in 1385, and died in 1400.

which would astonish the respective actors themselves. Two or three unquestionable facts will illustrate this: and the deeds, without perpetrator's names, will show that personality is not the object of our remarks.

In a later letter to me, Mr. Way observes—"loose broken brasses in Church chests, are very apt to go astray. I made a long pilgrimage to Mildenhall, Suffolk, in 1836. There was a noble brass there of life size, which I knew only by the drawings of Mr. Kerrich, now in the British Museum. To my vexation, the sexton only produced the feet—a fine pair of sollerets resting on a lion. He assured me that he had seen the head, and another piece about twenty inches long, within two months—but he supposed the ringers had stolen it, or that some gentleman from the 'Great House' who had been looking at the head, had taken a fancy to it. Had this grand figure been fixed anywhere, or even screwed up against the wall, it had not thus fared with one of the most curious engraved memorials in the Eastern Counties. It seems to have been perfect in 1829." Another intelligent correspondent, Mr. H. W. King, in a letter of last September, is indignant at the spoliation which the Churches in Essex have undergone; in one of which, Downham, he actually saw a fine old helmet—torn apparently from Judge Rainsford's tomb—being used as a mortar hod. He endeavoured to raise a hue-and-cry respecting the robbery of brasses from Chingford Church, also, about two years ago: and his wrath is both warmly and justly excited by the treatment of the mortuary memorials of Admiral Haddock and his family at Leigh. This is the more galling, as my late worthy friend Admiral Otway, passing the spot and seeing the monumental tablet of so celebrated a brother-officer lying in fragments, requested it might be replaced at his cost; but it was not done. On this insult to the meritorious dead, Mr. King thus indignantly perorates:—

"We have traced the Haddock family, with some interruptions, from the reign of Edward III., till the commencement of the XIXth century. For nearly five hundred years the successive descendants have been born at Leigh, and their remains have found a last resting-place in that Church and the Church-yard. We may well believe that, irrespectively of the feeling which has induced men in all times and all nations, to desire that their bones should rest 'in the sepulchre of their fathers,' the Haddocks might very naturally wish that their remains should repose among a sea-faring people, by the sea side, and upon an eminence overlooking the ocean, upon which they had passed the greater part of their lives, and

upon which they had won renown. But their sepulchral memorials have well nigh perished. The most antient monument does not now cover the bodies of those whose names it commemorates; and while the destroying hand of time has nearly obliterated the inscriptions upon the vaults, the ruder and more destructive hand of man has demolished the mural tablet intended as a more especial, prominent, and enduring memorial of one who had conferred much honour upon his native place and county, and served his country with fidelity and bravery."

We need not, however, travel quite so far as Essex for examples of the non-conservation which is here deplored. Having lately read a statement in the work called "England Displayed," published in 1769, that many curious coins and medals, dug out of the ruins of old Verulam, were to be seen in St. Alban's Abbey Church, I was particularly desirous of ascertaining whether any evidences of Cunobeline or Offa were among them. I therefore lost no time in delaying to consult my friend the Rev. Dr. Nicholson, Rector of the Abbey Church, on the subject. In a prompt reply, that excellent antiquary observes—"I well remember, fifty to fifty-five years ago, that there were several coins—keys—spurs—a chalice taken out of a coffin, &c., which were in one of the lockers in the presbitery of our Abbey Church; but which have all, with the exception of the spur, disappeared. The spur is from Key Field, where one of our two great battles between York and Lancaster took place. And nothing less could result from the circumstance that, for years, the shewing of the Church was the perquisite of the clerk, who frequently sent his little fag of a boy to attend the visitors." And while speaking of our immediate neighbours, it must not be forgotten that the astute authorities of Luton wilfully melted down their old epitaphial metals for the construction of a new chandelier—the which saith Gough, the feeling narrator, was a "cruel thing." Well may the axiom obtain, that literary records are more durable than monuments of marble or brass!

Every man of wholesome principle warmly regards his *natale solum*, whether it be in torrid, temperate, or arctic climes; a feeling which combines some of the best affections of human nature. Indeed a strong local interest naturally attaches itself to every habitat, whether fertile or sterile; for even the Laplander supposes the bleak district of his birth may have been the site of the Garden of Eden—and so it is written. In recognition therefore of so

pleasing an attachment to birth-place, the leading object of Provincial Societies is to enhance that interest by a careful preservation of its memorials, and disengaging its recollections from doubt. Such is, and ought heretofore to have been, an acknowledged duty; and although much may yet be done in so good a cause, the delay has been hopelessly ruinous. It is true that we have had many excellent conservators and topographers, whose doings evince both diligence and taste; yet it is patent that apathy and neglect have been stalking about unmolested, to the premature loss of monuments and muniments, and the degradation of tradition by ignorance. A spirit at present, however, is abroad, which may arrest the further progress of this disreputable evil: and I again insist, that an organic fulcrum of truth will be found in placing greater responsibility on our parish magnates. Nor would such a step be difficult, since all might readily be effected by the Churchwarden under the eye of the Incumbent; and when once adopted, could be very easily continued. All sculpture, brasses, records, books, registers, arms, relics, and paintings—whether on stucco, wood, canvas, copper, or glass—should be borne on charge by each successive individual, under a stock-taking survey: and a further measure of securing them from danger, and foiling the robbers of the dead, will be found in collecting accurate drawings, plans, and descriptions thereof. Good rubbings of all remarkable inscriptions should be taken, in preference to transcribing them, since there never can be correct copying of such memorials by passing the matter to be copied through the mind. It were also well, if manageable, to institute a due supervision of funereal emblems and epitaphs; in order that the nuisance of turgid little monsters and risible rhymes may be abated.

But it is not parish officials alone who ought to be blamed, for the public in general have manifested a stolid indifference the while; and in some individuals this has been carried to an amount almost criminal. For example, about thirty years ago, when a worthy friend of mine was directing some repairs in Turvey Church, on the confines of this county, he wrote to the representative of the Mordaunt property (*honours?*) respecting the fine family tombs there,—Sir John and the three first Barons, with the gallant Earl of Peterborough, two of whom repose under

rich open canopies, supported by columns of the Doric order. To this courteous and obliging application, Mr. Higgins received for answer (*piget meminisse*), that he might mend the roads with them! And who can tell how the earnest intreaty now in hand, begging the "improvers" to spare Guesten Hall, that very valuable memorial of ancient hospitality at Worcester, will be met!—Be it again remembered that it is the measures, not the men, of which we are speaking.

These exposures relate to places beyond our borders; but have the Buckinghamshire authorities done their duty any better? The late shameful demolition of Quarrendon Chapel and its interesting historiological monuments, as well as the existing state of many local structures, and the apathetical neglect of our vetustæ, form a disagreeable reply to that question. Not only has there been a laxity in the higher administrative departments, but the deputy-assistant officials—even to vergers and sextons—have so slumbered at their posts, that the sacrilegious pilferer has broken the VIIIth commandment in open day, and committed his depredations with comparative impunity. It is not that books and brasses only have unwarrantably disappeared, but old arms and armour—as helmets, corslets, spears, swords, suits of mail, hauberks, and other relics—deposited piously in Churches for conservation, have mostly found their course to the knick-nackaterian shops of London. Mr. Albert Way, who is a diligent cruizer through that noted mart, Wardour-street, was credibly informed that a great proportion of the articles here exhibited for sale, had been supplied by chapmen from the Buckinghamshire Churches, while those sacred fanes were being repaired, or rather "done up." A relic-loving friend, at once a literary veteran and an elder in the F. S. A. corps, has the walls of a staircase decorated with sepulchral brasses. Assuredly this is blameable: though a man of unimpeachable integrity in general dealings himself, he ought to have been aware that he bought them of those who unquestionably must have obtained such relics with the left hand—cattiffs who got them by means "not worshipful." This is saying the least of such dealings morally, but the legal axiom as to receiver and supplier expresses the matter more pointedly.

Now and then—albeit very rarely—it is ordered other-

wise ; for I have heard of a votive sword being replaced in a Church near Aylsham, in Norfolk, after having been absent without leave for a considerable time : and my earnest correspondent Mr. H. W. King, in a letter dated the 23rd of last month, says—" The engraving I send herewith represents a magnificent though sadly mutilated brass effigy, about life size, which I fortunately discovered and recovered in the year 1854, after it had been lost thirty years or more. It exhibits Sir John Gifford, who was buried in Bowers-Gifford Church, in the Essex Marshes, A. D. 1348. I first learned of its existence from Dr. Salmon's *History of Essex*, published in 1740 ; and I also found a notice of it in a manuscript in the Lansdowne library (*circa temp. Eliz.*). On enquiry I found one person who had seen it in situ ; but, for the space of ten years, I could gain no further tidings of it. I subsequently ascertained that it had been actually GIVEN AWAY by the Churchwarden of the parish, there being a resident Rector at the time the sacrilegious robbery was perpetrated. The individual to whom it was thus made over, was the Lord of the Manor, who lived some sixteen miles away. On application to this gentleman, he immediately restored the spoil ; and I regard it as a most fortunate circumstance that it fell into such hands, for had it been left to the tender mercies of the Churchwarden, I dare say it would have found its way into the melting-pot. I believe that this fine specimen of military panoply, in the best period of mediæval art, is now securely preserved in the hands of the present rector ; and it will be described in the forthcoming "*Monumental Brasses of England*, by the Rev. Herbert Haines." This account is the more gratifying, inasmuch as it so seldom happens that lost or stolen things of the kind are ever restored to their proper places. We have happily, however, another instance which is even now in the course of operation, and is at once meritorious and graceful : on the 30th of last March, the following advertisement was published :—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LEICESTER JOURNAL.

SIR,—Can any of your readers inform me where the brass, with the inscription given below, is taken from ? I found it on a broker's stall in our market a few weeks ago ; and should be happy to restore it to its legitimate locality.

Your's respectfully,
THOS. F. SARSON.

Here lyeth bvyred Ye bodie of Rob.
 Le Grys Esqr. sometimes Lord and Pa-
 tron of this CHVRCH, sone to Christo-
 pher Le Grys Esqr. He marryed Svsan,
 Daughter & Coheir to Tho. Ayre Esqr,
 by whom he had issue Christopher.
 Dyed the 9th of Febrvarie, 158—

The last figure in the year is too much defaced to be distinguished.

That the desecration of many Churches of this interesting county is as much assignable to parochial negligence and individual cupidity as to any other cause, or causes, is admitted by their historian, the Rev. W. H. Kelke—in the narratives recently published in our RECORDS. There has been, assuredly, a greedy removal of sepulchral relics and other memorials during the repairs of sacred edifices; nor has the marauding appetite even yet been satiated. In the church of this parish—Stone—a number of graven brasses having become loose, were piled up against the wall of the vestry-room; but the present clerk told me that “after the new roof was put on, he never saw them again.” Common cases of sacrilege and coarse theft, we know, can be punished on conviction; but there are other acts equally offensive to propriety and the strict observance of *meum* and *tuum*, which are permitted to pass unscathed. Several years ago, the incumbent of a Church in the north, built a new house in the country, and flagged his kitchen with tombstones taken from the Church-yard. This, in all conscience, seemed to be bad enough; but as if to out-Herod Herod, the Minister of another Church, in the same goodly town, took up a number of tombstones from the consecrated place of burial, about two years since, and sold them for eighteen pence and two shillings a-piece, to a neighbouring stone-mason.* This was treating the memorials of regard and affection, as rubbish of their own, notwithstanding they had been paid for by others: but sometimes such removals have occurred, because the monuments were considered to be obstacles in the way of improvement—as in many of the London funereal grounds: yet in such cases, surely they might be placed in assigned

* In the Navy, the stones used with sand for rubbing and scouring the decks, are called *holy stones*. This name is said to have been assigned many years ago, when a large supply of those articles was received on board the Channel Fleet, of which a great proportion was found to consist of broken tombstones.

spots of the precincts, as is done at the Church of Stratford—truly Shakspeare's mausoleum. Even now, in the work-yard of a respectable mason at Aylesbury, are some old tombstones torn (*con permesso*) from a neighbouring Church-yard; one of which shews that, about one hundred and fifty years ago, Jacob Dell deceased at the ripe age of seventy-eight, and that on the 16th of January 1717, his wife died also aged exactly seventy-eight.

How far law or usage can authorise parochial officials—clerical or lay—to demolish or eject tombs and sacred memorials, or to transfer intra and extra-mural inscriptions in their charge, is matter for very serious inquiry. At all events, such acts cannot be justified in principle; for however unintentional of evil the motive may be, the deed at once insults the dead and injures the quick.

This matter is not so light or fanciful as superficial observers may suppose, since such silent memorials have often legally decided points of consanguinity, and facts in dates, with consequent claims to inheritance of property and titles. This was strikingly evinced about forty years ago, when Mr. Henry Nugent Bell, by the evidence of the fragments of an old tombstone, hunted up the Huntingdon dignity, and obtained the restoration of that noble Earldom for Lieutenant Hastings, of the Royal Navy. Moreover the recent investigation by the House of Lords, in the hotly-contested and really great case of the Shrewsbury peerage, aroused attention to the insecurity of our Churches for the preservation of monumental remains; as well as to the startling fact, that many lapidary and other inscriptions are annually destroyed, or tampered with. In the course of the proceedings in this grave inquiry, it was proved that a colossal act of Vandalism and knavery had been perpetrated in Bromsgrove Church, Worcestershire, in that the alabaster Talbot monument had its raised letters designedly pared down and painted over, to efface all the evidence of lineage. This wilful felony was clearly established, before the Lords, by Messrs. Roach Smith and Walker; and though the obliteration had been made with infinite pains, both these able gentlemen succeeded in decyphering it independently of each other; and, fortunately for the ends of justice, their respective readings accorded—a damaging shot upon the fraud. Another occurrence which took place, also in the House of Lords, during the inquiry into the

Tracy Peerage claim, was related to me on the evening of the day on which it happened, by Sir Charles Young, *Garter*, who was officially present. It appears that on this investigation, a copy of the funereal inscription which promised "to do the deed" was produced; and then, to clinch the bolt, the very tombstone itself. All now seemed to be quite convincing: but most provokingly for the claimants, after the eleventh hour, the opposing party brought forward the identical person himself who had been hired to execute the cited epitaph, and who made oath that he had graven the whole with his own hands. On this unexpected imbroglio, he was directed to make a fac-simile on the spot: a flat free-stone, and the necessary implements, being brought into court before the assembled Peers. The old mason proceeded about his business with methodical coolness, to the dismay of the taken-aback party; and being offered a suggestion while at work, by one of them, as to an alteration of form in one of the letters, gruffly replied—"No, I shall cut this as I cut that," pointing the tool at his first performance, which was lying beside him. The case was, of course, lost.

While the purity of necrological records have been thus tampered with for corrupt purposes, they have also been altered at times in a mere tricksome spirit, but with equal injury to public confidence; both of which evils had been impracticable under a better order of supervision. I may illustrate the latter charge by a pretty strong instance, in the which it was my lot to impinge on a curious allegation which had obtained general credence for many years. In a late visit to Hull, so justly famous for its whalers and other traders, among its various *lions* I was taken to see a remarkable tombstone in the pavement of a very noble edifice, Trinity Church. Upon this memorial is a shield inscribed with the distinguishing Merchants' Marks of that day, around which is graven—

HERE LYETH IN PEACE WALTER PECKE MARCHANT
ADVENYRER WHO DEPARTED THIS LYFE IN THE
FAITHE OF CHRIST THE 8 OF IVLY ANO D 1528.

and I was surprised at finding these words across the stone—

AND CATHERINE HIS WIFE WHO DIED 31 OF
IANVARY 1628.

In the last, the absence of ligatured letters, wife instead

of wyf, and the general appearance of the characters, betoken a later date than the first inscription, but not the lapse of a whole century. Although unused to tilt at reasonable tradition, I could not but be shaken: and on closely scrutinizing the above numerals—1528—the 2 has a most suspicious and untrusty aspect. At length, to the chagrin of my town-born hearers, I ventured to presume that some wag—one just capable of displaying wit on the first of April—by scraping a dash to the lower part of an ill-formed 9, has added 70 years to the time of Pecke's death. This indeed seems to be somewhat countenanced on a reference to the *History of Hull*, by my friend and local pilot Charles Frost, F. S. A., wherein it appears that the Company of Merchant Adventurers for that port, of which Pecke is designated a member in the above inscription, was not chartered until the year 1577 (11th May, IX Elizabeth). This alteration may have been made in mere pleasantry; but the place and the object render practical joking at once improper and mischievous, such matters being difficult of detection where time has silenced the voice of tradition. The quaint observation made by Fuller bears upon the like acts, though the old worthy aimed it at ostentatious eulogics on the interred—"He was a witty man who first taught a stone to speak, but he was a wicked man that taught it first to lie."

Shortly afterwards, while still labouring under the above-mentioned ugly suspicion, I visited Manchester, where an opportunity was kindly offered me, of examining the registers preserved in the Cathedral. In these truly authentic archives I found a notice—under date Julie 6, 1665, which awakened my scruples and mistrust; yet, after a rigorous examination, I cannot but pronounce it to be perfectly genuine. It runs thus—"Elizabeth daughter to Ffrancis Lyndley of Manchester Esq. whose mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and grandmother's grandmother were all borne and are now living in this parish."

These instances are merely brought forward in justification of the main argument, and to intimate the care and inviolability with which our time-vestigia ought to be preserved, in order to their conveying truth to futurity; the course to be taken being neither troublesome, onerous, nor expensive. Had the local Archæological Associations

recently formed, but been embodied even a century ago, what ravages, now irreparable, might have been averted! The important design of such Societies is not only to preserve memorials of interest, but also to collect substantiated facts and documents relating to County history and County families—to elucidate what is obscure—and to verify what is doubtful. It is therefore to be hoped, that the excellent and useful spirit of conservatism which is now fairly afloat respecting records and relics, will operate in keeping them from unhallowed clutches for the future—leaving ruthless Old Time as the only destroyer.

I beg to subscribe myself, &c.,

W. H. SMYTH.

The Rev. Charles Lowndes, F. R. A. S., &c.

P. S. While writing the above, I received a letter from the zealous Mr. W. H. Huffam, F.S.A., a part of which is so much in keeping with what is brought forward, that a mention may be added. This gentleman, in examining the old Gothic Church at Hessele, near Beverley—once the head-quarters of the potent Percies—found a remarkable brass removed from its original place; it is inscribed

*Here under lieth Dame An Percy,
Wif to Syr Henri Percy: to him bair
xvi] children. Which An departed
the XIX day of December, the yeare of
our Lorde MDXI, on wchis
soullis J'hu hab merci.*

As my Correspondent was desirous of learning something more respecting "Syr Henri" and "Dame An," I applied to the Duke of Northumberland; who kindly directed a search to be made among the documents at Syon House, but without success. However, his Grace forwarded the only statement of pedigree which seemed to bear upon an otherwise silent case; but it is one from which information may yet be derived.