

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF AYLESBURY.

BY ARCHDEACON BICKERSTETH.

THE TOWN OF AYLESBURY is built upon an elevated portion of Portland rock, one of the members of the Upper Oolitic formation. It stands at its highest point about 300 feet above the level of the sea; and is surrounded by extensive clay beds, known to geologists as the Kimmeridge clay, and forming a considerable plain, called the Vale of Aylesbury. The rock on which Aylesbury stands, and that at Stone, were probably at some very remote period one continuous elevation. But primæval floods have washed away the immediate portions, and have laid bare the underlying stratum, the Kimmeridge clay above referred to, which forms the subsoil of a great part of the fertile districts around the town.

These accidents of the geological condition of the neighbourhood, doubtless contributed to give an early importance to Aylesbury, and have still a very direct bearing upon its prosperity. Its elevation above the surrounding plain made it an important stronghold in very early times; while the dark blue loamy clay of the Vale around, furnishes the staple of the rich soil which has made the district so famous in agriculture; contributing in no small degree to the material prosperity of the town.

The old British name of Aylesbury is lost to us. It is said to have been taken, together with other British strongholds, by Cuthwolf, the Saxon, in A.D. 571. It appears to have been known to the Saxons as *Æglesburge*. Tradition tells us that it derived great fame from two maiden sisters Edburg and Edith, daughters of Frewald, a Mercian Prince, said to have been "Lord of this Country." These sisters had a niece named St. Osyth, whose story is sometimes confused with theirs. St. Osyth (or Osith) is said

to have been born at Quarendon. She was the daughter of Frewald, a Mercian Prince, and was brought up with her aunt Editha, the possessor of the town and manor of Aylesbury. Having been early betrothed to an East Anglian Prince, she obtained permission from him to lead a life of perpetual virginity. She founded a Monastery at Chick in Essex, and having there lived an exemplary life, she is said to have been massacred by the Danes about A.D. 870. Her body was afterwards brought to Aylesbury, where great miracles are said to have been performed over her tomb. According to some accounts she was buried at Quarendon. It may be well to mention in passing, that Bierton, Quarendon, Stoke Mandeville, and Buckland, were all of them originally dependencies of Aylesbury. They were separated from Aylesbury, and made a district parish, with Bierton for the mother Church, in the 13th century.*

Leaving these early and traditional notices of Aylesbury, we find that at the time of the Norman survey the Manor of Aylesbury belonged to the Crown, the Bishop of Lincoln holding the Church with a manor belonging to it.

In the reign of Henry II., A.D. 1154, certain lands are described as belonging to 'William de St. Mary Church,' from which we may also infer that there was a Church at Aylesbury anterior to the present Early English structure. This view is confirmed by the fact that during the recent extensive restoration of the present building, some unquestionably Norman fragments were found buried in the foundations.

There is a curious record preserved to us, of the date of A.D. 1273, in which year it was returned that Robert Fitz-Richard, son of William of Aylesbury, who died in 1278, held a small estate here on condition of finding for the service of the King, as often as he should come to the town, "litter of straw for the King's bed, straw† or grass for the King's chamber; two geese in summer, or three eels in winter." So that though we do not read of Aylesbury

* See "Records of Buckinghamshire," vol. 1, p. 233, &c.

† A relic of this custom has been preserved to recent times, in the presentation of a truss of straw, on the occasion of the meeting of the High Sheriff with the Judges at the Assizes.

ducks at that early period, we know that for upwards of 500 years eels have inhabited the waters, and geese have been fed upon the banks of the brooks, which flow round the town.

The Manor continued a part of the Royal demesnes until the time of King John, when it was granted to Geoffery Fitz-Piers. From his family it passed to the Botelers, or Butlers, Earls of Ormond, who sold it in the 16th century to Sir John Baldwin, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a great favourite of Henry VIII., from whom he received grants of Abbey lands, and amongst others of the 'Grey Friars,' Aylesbury.—This Sir John Baldwin was a great benefactor to the town, adorning it with public edifices, and making "a passing faire causey" to it for three miles or thereabouts in length." Upon the death of Sir John Baldwin, Oct. 22, 1545, the Manor passed, by the marriage of his daughter, to Robert Pakington, Mercer of Cheapside, younger son of John Pakington, Esq., of Worcestershire. This family retained the Manor for about 250 years, enjoying the favour of successive Sovereigns, and receiving many honours from them. They suffered however, in common with so many other distinguished houses, during the civil wars, when the representative of the family was taken prisoner by the Parliamentary forces, and committed to the Tower, and fined £5000. His estates were sequestered to pay this fine, and though he recovered them after the troubles, the Manor House had been so ruined, that it ceased from that time to be the family residence. Amongst other interesting records connected with this family, there is an entry in the Register of Burials for the parish in the following words:—"Oct. 26, 1623—Sir John Pakington, Knight and Baronet, "the hopes of Aylesbury." This Sir John Pakington was Member for the Borough of Aylesbury, but died in his twenty-fourth year.*

Owing to the influence of several families, especially that of Hampden, the town of Aylesbury in those disastrous times took an active part on the Parliamentary side. The

* The Manor of Aylesbury passed in 1802 from Sir John Pakington, the eighth Baronet, to the Marquess of Buckingham. The present Lord of the Manor is Acton Tindal, Esq.

first decisive act was a petition on the part of the officers and soldiers assembled at Aylesbury under the direction of the Parliament, for the removal of Lord Paget from the Lord Lieutenancy of the County ; and by the request of the same persons Lord Wharton was appointed in the place of Lord Paget, June 17, 1642. But Aylesbury was destined in this year to experience more keenly the horrors of civil war. The battle of Edge-hill was fought Oct. 23rd of that year ; and on the 1st November, 1642 (nine days afterwards) a skirmish took place in the immediate vicinity of the town, which has been dignified with the name of the Battle of Aylesbury, and of which a detailed and somewhat bombastic account is preserved in a scarce tract published at the close of the same year, and entitled " Good and joyfull newes out of Buckinghamshire."*

It appears that after the conflict at Edge-hill the Royalist troops made their way towards their old quarters near Banbury, and having succeeded in taking Banbury, they marched onwards towards Oxford. It was, no doubt, in the course of this progress that the skirmish at Aylesbury took place.

The account to which I have referred states that Prince Rupert entered the town at six o'clock in the morning of Nov. 1st, with a force of 10,000 horse and foot. Colonel Bulstrode was then the Governor of the garrison at Aylesbury. The account goes on to say that the Militia at Aylesbury made a virtue of necessity, and entertained the new comers civilly. Meanwhile the news arrived that Sir William Balfour (Lieutenant-General of the forces under Lord Essex) was approaching the town with a force of 6,000 foot and horse, the foot under the command of Colonel Hampden. It proved, however, the account says, that they were not really more than 1,500 ;

* The title of this tract is as follows: " Good and Joyfull Newes out of Buckinghamshire, Being an exact and true Relation of a Battell, Stricken betwixt Prince Robert and Sir William Balfore, Lieutenant Generall to His Excellency, the Earle of Essex neer Alisbury in that County on Tuesday last, the first of November, wherein the said Sir William obtained a happy and glorious Victory."

" London : Printed for Francis Wright, 1642."

[A copy of this tract is in the possession of Mr. Thomas Field, silver-smith, of this town.]

and it is quite as probable that Prince Rupert's force was overstated.

However, the Prince thereupon went out (leaving a troop of horse and two companies of foot in the town) and met the Parliamentary troops at Holman's Bridge, where a sharp conflict took place, in which 200* Royalists and 90 Parliamentarians fell. In *Whitelock's Memorials* it is stated that "Prince Rupert ranged abroad with great parties who committed strange insolencies and violence upon the country. At Ailsbury he failed of his design, by the care and stoutness of Colonel Bulstrode, Governor there."

There is a curious little volume, entitled "*Mercurius Rusticus*," published in 1646, which gives a graphic description of the disturbed state of the country, and of the insecurity of life and property at this time. The following extract relates to Buckinghamshire:—

"Master *Anthony Tyringham*, Parson of *Tyringham* in *Buckinghamshire*, having business at *Maid's Morton* at his returne came to *Buckingham*, where he met with two of his nephews. The Uncle and his Nephews glad of so happy a meeting, after some stay to congratulate the good chance, and to refresh themselves, set forward in their journey, and passed in peace without danger untill they came neere to *Stony-Stratford*, where a partie of Dragoones coming from *Ailesbury* surprized them; and instantly, (scarce asking them from whence they came) searched and disarmed them, which was no difficult atchievement, there being but one sword amongst all three. The Rebels take from them their Horses, their Coats and Money; superfluous things as they conceived for men designed to captivity; for having spoyled them of their Horses, Money and Garments, they send them with a strong guard prisoners to *Ailesbury*; while the rest of the Partee, lurking about *Stony Stratford*, stayed there to expect some fresh booty. And that in this we doe not slander these great Champions of the Subjects Liberties and Properties, the issue will acquit us; for presently after (to shew that all was Fish which came to Net) they seized upon a poore Bone lace man and a Shoemaker, robbed them of what they had, and in the same manner sent them away Prisoners to *Ailesbury*. The guard of Dragoones having brought their three Prisoners about a mile and a half on the way towards *Ailesbury*, commanded them againe to alight. The first Plunder was for the Captain or Commanders; or else a share was set apart *Anathema* for the support of the Publique Cause, these men to whose trust they were committed, now intend to plunder for themselves. And first they command Master *Tyringham* to pull off his Cassocke, who being not sudden in obeying the command, nor over hasty to untye his Girdle to disrobe himselfe of the distinctive garment of his Profession; (though now a Cassocke, contracted into the Compendium of a *Gippo*, is become the Garb of the Reformers) one of the Dragoones, to quicken him,

* In the document above referred to, the loss on the Royalist side is said to have been altogether 800 men.

cut him through the hat into the head with the sword taken from one of his Nephews, and with another blow cut him over the fingers; Master *Tyringham* wondering at so barbarous usage without any provocation, came towards him that had thus wounded him, and desired him to hold his hands, pleading that he was a *Clergieman*, a *Prisoner*, and *disarmed*; the cowardly Villaine either fearing the approach of a disarmed man, or willing to lay hold on any advantage to expose the Prisoners to the fury of his fellowes, cryed out '*Shoot the rogues, for they intend to resist*;' the word was no sooner given but a Musquet was instantly discharged at one of *M Tyringham's Nephewes*; but the Musqueteere missing his mark, another of the Rebels with his sword aymed righter, and ranne him into the shoulder; a Musquet was presented to the other Nephew, but God's Providence restrained the murderous intention of the Rebell that he did not give fire. Thus exercising their pleasure upon disarmed wounded men, they rob Master *Tyringham* of his Cassocke, rifle all their pockets, and take from them what they please, and topalliate their cruelty, they send two Dragooners back, to tell their Captains and their Companies that the Prisoners committed to their custody and conduct made resistance; Upon this false alarm given, presently the Captains and their Companies make up to them, to assist a strong Guard against three disarmed, and of them two wounded men; being come where they were, they encompasse them about, and without any examination of the businesse, presuming the suggestion to be undoubted truth, one of the Rebels, Captain *Pollard* by name, with a full blow strikes at Master *Tyringham*, and with his sword cuts his Arme and Cubit-bones crosse the elbow almost asunder; Master *Tyringham* (almost three-score yeeres of age within two) bore this barbarous usage with undaunted courage, and hearing this bloody Villaine called Capitaine *Pollard*, in a pleasant indignation, expressed the sense of the injurie thus, *That now he had made him a Pollard indeed*; a metaphor easily understood by Woodmen, who usually call a Tree whose limbs or branches are lopped off a *Pollard*. Master *Tyringhams* Arme thus miserably wounded and hanging dangling from his shoulder, without any government from the nerves or sinewes, one of his Nephews having a mourning Riband, tendered it to his Uncle to bind up his arme, but the Rebels will not permit it; though Master *Tyringham* intreat the favour to have his wounds bound up, and the very spectacle before their eyes, was argument enough to extort this mercy from them, yet they remaine inexorable, nor would they be persuaded untill a long time after: having now made sure work with their Prisoners, and rendered them so farre unable to resist, that some were hardly able to sit the jades on which they were mounted, they againe set forward for *Aylesbury*. The Dragooners horses on which they were set, being tyred, made the way very tedious, especially to Master *Tyringham*, who lost much blood all the way as they went.

" While these Gentlemen were in this miserable condition, Capitaine *Pollard*, not troubled at all for so bloody a fact, barbarously committed by himselfe on an Aged Gentleman, and a Minister of that Gospel which they falsly pretend to maintaine, but indeed deny and blaspheme in all their acting, turned aside to *Whaddon Chase*, and sported himselfe in killing some of His Majestie's Deere, which he carried along with him to *Aylesbury*; after almost foure houres riding, tyred out with tyred jades, and fainting with losse of blood, the Prisoners were againe commanded to alight at a Towne called *Whitchurch*, within two miles of *Aylesbury*. Here they fall on Master *Tyringham* afresh, and plunder him as eagerly as if he had been new come into their hands, and

not touched by them before. They pluck off his boots, and take from him his Jerkin, his Hat and Cap, all the fences provided for cold and weather, and the usuall fortifications against the injuries of wind and raine; and so made a Patterne of the man wounded between *Jerusalem* and *Jerico*, they mount him as his Spittle againe and drive on, and after an houres riding in cold and darknesse, at last they arrived at *Aylesbury*, that night the Chyrrurgious (as soon as they could be found) viewed and dressed the wound, but concluded unanimously that they must cut off his Arme the next day, or else it would Gangrene and infallibly kill him, which next day was done accordingly. Master *Tyringham* bore the losse of his Arme with incredible resolution and courage, as knowing the justice of that cause for which he suffered, and as willing to lay down his Life in testimony of his Loyalty, as his Brother Master *Edward Tyringham*, one of the Gentlemen of the king's Privy Chamber had done before him, who the last Winter being employed in His Majestie's Service, and set on by a Partee of Rebels fought valiantly but oppressed with multitudes, received so many wounds that he dyed of them. But it hath pleased God so to blesse the means used for this Gentleman's recovery, that there are great hopes he will survive these maimes, and (as himself undauntedly told the Rebels to their faces) *Live to see them hanged, Amen.*"*

Reverting to the battle of Aylesbury, a singular confirmation of the account given in the tract to which I have referred, was obtained by the late Lord Nugent in the year 1818. In the autumn of that year, some labourers who were digging for gravel near Holman's Bridge, discovered a quantity of human bones buried in pits from two to four or five feet deep. Some of the pits were found in the gravel and some in the clay. Those which were buried in the clay were much less decomposed than the others, and it was inferred from the teeth and other evidence that they were the remains of adults. The total number of bodies found was 247, corresponding very nearly with the number (290) said to have been slain in this conflict, allowance being of course made for some bodies that may have been removed immediately after the battle by friends or relatives, and some that may have been buried singly. It has been noticed that no weapons of any kind were discovered near these skeletons; but this is explained by the fact of the conflict having taken place so near the town; so that any arms would easily have been carried off for the uses of the garrison. We may therefore safely infer that these were the remains of the soldiers who fell in the battle of Aylesbury. It should be added

* "*Mercurius Rusticus*; or the Countries Complaint, recounting the sad events of this unparalleled war. Printed in the yeere 1646."—A copy of this is in the Hartwell Library.

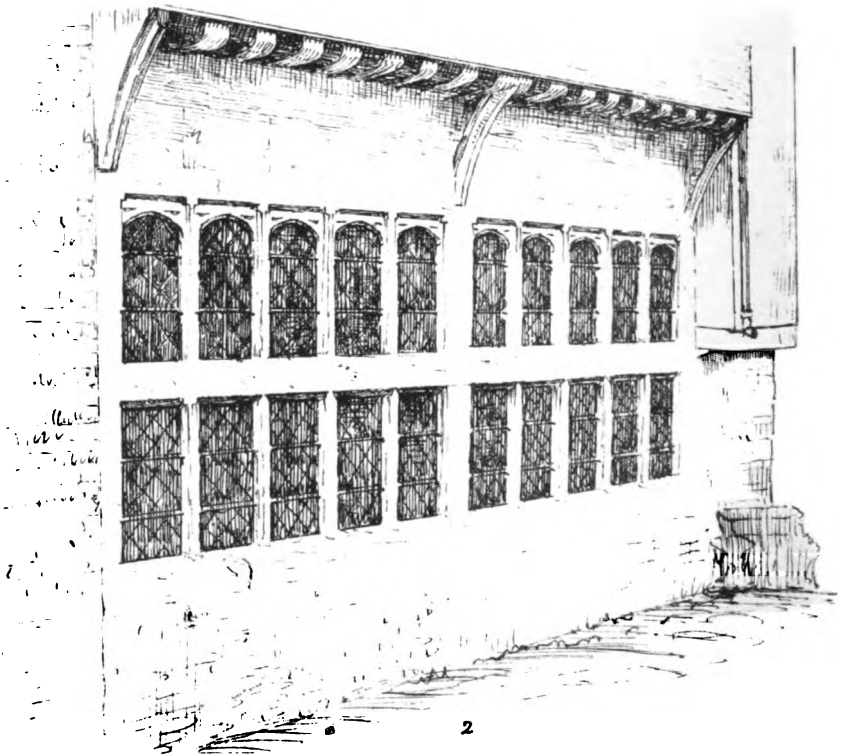
that under the direction of Lord Nugent the bones were carefully collected and buried in the Churchyard of the adjoining parish of Hardwick. By the liberality of the same nobleman a monument with a suitable inscription was erected over this their new and more appropriate resting place.

In the concluding sentiment of that inscription we shall all concur—" May the memory of brave men be respected; and may our country never again be compelled to take part in a conflict such as that which this tablet records."

I ought to mention, in connection with the political history of the town, that Aylesbury was constituted a Borough under a Charter of Queen Mary in 1554, the Corporation consisting of one Bailiff, ten Aldermen, and twelve capital Burgesses. This body formed the Common Council of the town, and had the right conveyed to them of electing two discreet and honest men of the said Borough to be Burgesses in Parliament. By virtue of this Charter the Corporation was created, and they proceeded soon afterwards to return two Members; but by degrees they appear to have failed to fill up the number of Burgesses. They however still retained their Bailiff as the returning Officer.

A sketch of the political history of Aylesbury would scarcely be complete without some allusion to the notorious John Wilkes. This clever but unprincipled satirist (the son of Israel Wilkes, a distiller) was born in London, Oct. 28, 1727. His connection with Aylesbury commenced in early life, when he was brought up under Mr. Leeson, a dissenting minister of this town; and it was established by his marriage with Mary (daughter of John Mead, a grocer of London) who brought him his life interest as lessee of the Prebendal property. He thus became possessed of the Prebendal House*, where he resided for some time. The marriage was not a happy one; and in a few years they separated. In the very year of their separation (1757) he was elected Member for

* The Prebendal House was sold from the Prebendal Estate about the year 1801, to redeem the land-tax. It is now the private property of the Venerable Archdeacon Bickersteth.



1. Ancient Town Hall at Aylesbury, as it appeared in 1738
2. Window in King's Head Hotel, Aylesbury.

Aylesbury, at a cost, it is said, of nearly £7,000. It was about this time that he started as a political writer, and set up the "North Briton." It is supposed that he was assisted by Lord Temple and Mr. Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham), the object of the publication being to oppose the "Briton," which was conducted by Smollett, in defence of Lord Bute. The celebrated article (No. 45) was a violent attack upon the King's speech, for which a warrant was issued against him; and Wilkes, notwithstanding a Habeas Corpus, which was instantly sued for, was sent to the Tower. But upon his being brought before the Court of Common Pleas, the Lord Chief Justice Pratt (afterwards Lord Camden) declared against the legality of his imprisonment; and ultimately he recovered £4,000 damages. After this he set up a press in his own house, and reprinted the "North Briton," for which he was prosecuted to conviction. This led to pecuniary embarrassments, in consequence of which he went abroad, and travelled over a considerable part of the continent of Europe. During this absence he was outlawed. But in the spring of 1768 he surrendered to the King's Bench, and on June 18th, in that year, was sentenced to twenty-two months' imprisonment, and to pay a fine of £1,000.

Notwithstanding these reverses he continued to gain in public estimation. He was frequently returned for Middlesex. He filled the office of Lord Mayor of London in 1774; and was elected Chamberlain of that City in 1779.

He died at the house of his daughter in Kensington, Dec. 26, 1797, in the 73rd year of his age.

Wilkes had a great reputation for wit, and was possessed of considerable classical taste. Dr. Johnson, who had no sympathy with his character, did full justice to his powers of conversation, and confessed himself overcome, though much against his will, by the wit and humour of Wilkes' conversation. As an instance of his classical taste, it may be mentioned that on the wall which separates the Churchyard of Aylesbury from the Prebendal grounds, there is a mural tablet which records the death of a favorite gardener, with the poetical allusion, as follows:—

To the Memory
of
JOHN SMART, Gardener,
Who died the 16th day of Nov., 1754,
Aged 54 years.
Illum etiam lauri, (illum?) etiam flevire myricæ.—*Virg.*

The earliest notices which we have of the town of Aylesbury are to be found in *Leland's Itinerary*. Leland lived in the time of Henry VIII.; and was a favourite of that Monarch, who made him one of his Chaplains, and his Librarian. He also received from his royal patron the office of Royal Antiquary. He died in 1552. Leland travelled about the country to collect such documents as he could save from the wreck of the Monasteries, which documents he afterwards gathered into the King's Library. The antiquary entered Aylesbury from the south-west, passing over Holman's Bridge, which he describes as a little bridge of stone, over a brook which he gathers is "Tame water." From hence there was a "stone causey" to the town. He goes on to say "there runneth a pretty brook almost at the very end of the town by South under a wooden bridge. It runneth down from east to west into Tame by the lefte ripe of it; about a mile bynethe Aillesbyri." The town at that time was "meetly well builded with tymbre" and had a celebrated market "with a domus civica in the middle of the market place, a late re-edified by Baldwin;* but the King gave the tymber of it." He adds, the "gaole for Buckinghamshire is in this towne."

It appears from a record of the date of Edward III. that the County Gaol was situated in Aylesbury at that early period.

Tradition points to *Kingsbury* as the site of the old Mansion or Manor House of the Chief Lord of the town. But this would probably have been at a period antecedent to the time of Henry VIII. It will be remembered that the Manor of Aylesbury was in the crown until the time of King John; and it is not improbable that the name of Kingsbury still marks this ancient Royal possession.

Temple Street and *Temple Square* derive their names no doubt from the family of Temple, who held lands in this parish in the 16th century; while *Bourbon Street* owes its title to the residence of Louis the 13th, at the neighbouring mansion at Hartwell.

There are but few antiquarian remains now existing in

* A print from a photographic sketch of this Market Hall, or Domus Civica, is given in this number, and also of the window of the room in the King's Head.

Aylesbury. There is an interesting room in the *King's Head* which deserves a visit. Its date is apparently of the time of Henry VIII. There is also a portion of the *White Hart*, built at the period of the Restoration, which together with some other remains of the same date, shew that whatever part the Aylesbury people took in the civil wars, they were all heartily glad when the rightful Monarch was restored.

The Building at the *White Hart* is worthy of special notice. It rises nearly thirty feet high, and has a steep gabled roof, with a fine stack of chimnies on the north-east side. The brick mouldings round the windows are very good; and the building generally is a good specimen of the domestic architecture of the 17th century. On the ground floor the original room is divided, and forms in part a drawing-room and in part a coach-house. The room on the first floor (generally known as the *Great Room*) is very interesting. It still retains its original dimensions (about 39 feet long, 23 feet broad, and 12 feet high). At the eastern end of the room there appears to have been a dais, such as is constantly seen in College and other Halls, with narrow side windows. These side windows have however been blocked up, and the windows at the east and west ends of the room have been modernized. The room is panelled throughout with frames of irregular sizes for the reception of pictures. The ceiling is also divided into compartments with gilt bosses at the intersection of the beams. In the centre compartment there is a painting on canvas, of two figures representing "Peace and Concord," while two cherubims are conjointly holding a crown, and the initials C. R. over the principal figures. Two others are below them, holding a scroll with the words:—

"Let Peace and Concord sit and singe
And subjects yield obedience to their King."

The sides of the room are covered with figures painted on panels, and with pictures representing classical subjects. Amongst these may be mentioned a large picture of Æneas carrying Anchises from the ruins of Troy. This is said to be a copy from the picture, by Raphael, in the Vatican. There is also over the fire-place a picture

of Thomyris the Scythian Queen receiving the head of Cyrus, and supposed to be uttering the memorable words—

“*Satia te sanguine quem semper sitisti.*”

The origin of this building is said to have been as follows:—

Lord Clarendon in his history of the Rebellion, mentions that the Earl of Rochester paid a visit to Aylesbury in 1655, soon after the rising at Salisbury; and that he lodged at an Inn, kept by a person named Gilvy. Here he was watched, and had a narrow escape of being taken. But the innkeeper was induced by present bribe, and by the hope of future reward, to assist his escape to London; from whence, after the eagerness of the pursuit was over, he contrived to make good his return to the Continent. Thus far Lord Clarendon. The rest of the story, which is nothing more than a probable supposition, is this, that Gilvy was the landlord of the White Hart Inn; and that upon the Restoration in 1660, he was sent for to Court, and that as a memorial of the gratitude of the Royalists, the Earl of Rochester adorned his Inn with this building, and fitted up the “Great Room” as it is now to be seen in its restored condition.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

This brief sketch of Aylesbury would be very imperfect if I were to conclude it without some reference to its Ecclesiastical history.*

Four Ecclesiastical Foundations are recorded to have been successively established here.

I. The Hospitals of St. John and St. Leonard.

II. A House of Franciscans or Grey Friars.

III. A Fraternity or Brotherhood of the Town of Aylesbury, more commonly known as a Chantry.

IV. A House of Trinitarians.—I may, however, state at once, that the evidence with regard to this latter Foundation is very doubtful and obscure.

I The earliest intimation which we have of the *Hospitals* is in an Inquisition made in the 34th and 35th of

* I have not included in this brief sketch any notice of the Parish Church, because that subject has been treated of more fully elsewhere. The present very interesting structure is of the date of about A. D. 1250.

Edward III., *i. e.* A.D. 1361 and 1362, from which it appears that they were founded for needy and leprous persons, by certain charitable donors in the reign of Henry I., *i. e.* early in the 12th century. At the time when the inquisition was made, these Foundations had fallen into decay, and were "seized into the hands of lay persons." The property of St. John's Hospital consisted of a messuage, 21 acres of arable (*terræ*) and four acres of meadow (*prati*). That of St. Leonard consisted of 13 acres of arable and two of meadow, partly in Aylesbury and partly in Hartwell. The Lady Eleanor, Countess D'Ormond, who held the Manor for some years in dower, was the Patroness at the time of the Inquisition.

She died in 1363.

II. The House of the *Franciscans* or *Grey Friars* was founded at the south end of the town by James Butler (or Boteler) Earl of Ormonde in 1387. He was the grandson of the above named Lady Eleanor.

It is probable that this House was founded on the site of the old Hospitals of St. John and St. Leonard, still known as the 'Friarage.' An effigy was dug up near this site many years ago, and is now preserved under a canopy in the north transept of Aylesbury Church, which has with reason been supposed to be the effigy of this James, Earl of Ormond, Founder of the Grey Friars. At all events the date of the armour, being the transition period between the chain and plated armour, coincides. This figure is erroneously stated by Browne Willis, to be that of Sir Robert Lee in the time of Henry VII.* It is unquestionably of a much earlier date, and may fairly be assigned to the Boteler family.

The value of the Grey Friars at the time of the Dissolution was £3 2s. 5d. It was surrendered Oct. 1, 1539. The House then became (by grant from the Crown) the seat of Chief Justice Baldwin, and afterwards of the Pakingtons, until it was dismantled in the civil wars. Some remains of the old foundation were discovered by Mr. T. Dell in 1840.

* Notitia Parliamentaria. A neat reprint of this work, so far as it relates to the County of Buckingham, was published by Mr. Robert Gibbs of Aylesbury, in 1864.

The following account is given of these Friars at the time of the Dissolution, by Dr. London:—

“ At Ailesbury I find them very poor and in debt—their ornaments very coarse, and very little stuff of household there. I only sold the glass windows and their ornaments with their materials. I left the House whole, and only defaced the Church there. The whole Church is well covered with lead, and a good roof.”

III. A *Fraternity* or *Chantry*.—This Fraternity was founded in the time of Henry VI., 1425, by J. Singleton, Esq., J. Baldwin the elder, and J. Baldwin the younger. It was dissolved upon the abolition of Chantries, when the Estates came to the crown. Its value at the time of the Dissolution was £23 14s. 9d.

In 1553 William Bell and Robert Ellys, Clerks, were receiving stipends of £6 13s. 4d. each.

The site of this Chantry is accurately pointed out in a subsequent grant made by Edward VI., in 1549, where mention is made of the conveyance of “ a message or tenement called the Brother House in Aylesbury, next the Churchyard, parcel of the possessions of the late guild or Fraternity of Aylesbury, &c.”

In 1553 the King grants to certain persons various lands and meadows—a message called the Plough, &c., all late belonging to “ the Fraternity of the Blessed Mary.”

It is not improbable that the old stall seats in the Chancel of Aylesbury Church were originally appropriated to the Brothers of this Chantry.

I have thus completed the very brief sketch which I purposed to make of the History of Aylesbury. I can only hope that the details may be filled up at a future time by some one with more leisure, and with the opportunity of greater research than I can command. I have spoken to you of Aylesbury in the past. Turning for one moment to Aylesbury in the present, I think that I may pronounce it to be an improving town; and I will hope that some antiquary, yet to come, may be able to speak of the 19th century as not unimportant in the annals of this town. Instead of Civil Wars, he will have, we trust, to record only a peaceful progress in material and moral advancement. He will be able to note a new and more

commodious Infirmary, not unconnected with the name of “Florence Nightingale.” He will point, let us hope, to increased railway communication—to a liberal supply of pure water from the chalk springs of the Chiltern hills; to baths and wash-houses for the poor; and to dwelling-houses of a superior character, such as may induce more persons of independent means to make Aylesbury their residence; so that a town not uninteresting in the past, may still justify the praise bestowed upon it by Camden 260 years ago, where he describes it in these words—“Upon the rising of a pretty hill standeth a faire market town, well occupied, and compassed about with many most pleasant green meadows and pastures, commonly called AILES BURY.”*

