

Proceedings of the Society.

The annual meeting was held on July 15th, 1869, and an excursion was made in the district north of Newport Pagnell. The beautiful parks of Tyringham, Gayhurst, and Chicheley were embraced in the circuit, and the picturesqueness of the scenery, which charmed the visitors on every hand, contributed in no slight degree to the pleasure and success of the meeting. The eminent antiquary, Mr. J. H. Parker, accompanied the expedition, and described the principal architectural features in the several buildings visited.

The members and their friends met at the church at Newport Pagnell. The north porch is the oldest part of the building, and dates from the reign of Edward III. Over it is the priest's room, to which there is not any trace of an external entrance. The chantry chapel at the East end of the South aisle is of the same date. The sedilia have no seats similar to those at Lathbury. The remainder of the church is a good specimen of the style of Henry VII. The foliated arches, both inside and outside the South porch, are uncommon; and the modern wooden doors spoil the appearance of this part of the building. The rood loft extended as far as the first pillar of the nave, the square capital and the different form of the corbels distinctly marking it; the remains of the staircase leading to it are visible.

The chancel has some fine windows of stained glass by Gibbs, the principal one representing our Saviour bearing the cross, and the patron saints of the church (St. Peter and St. Paul). The first window on the south side contains figures of St. Matthias and Thomas; the second, St. Barnabas and St. Jude; and the third, St. James (major) and St. John. The first window on the north side exhibits St. Philip and St. Bartholomew; the second St. Matthew and St. Simon; and the third, St. James (minor) and St. John. The beautiful stained glass window at the east end of the south aisle was placed there by the late vicar. It is in four compartments, and the subjects are—Moses lifting up the brazen serpent; Christ healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda; Christ giving sight to the blind; and the good Samaritan. Beneath the window is a brass plate with the following inscription:—"This window was erected to the memory of Robert Collison, surgeon, a liberal benefactor to this parish, who died April 3rd, 1860, aged 78 years, by his grateful friend, George Morley, vicar."

In the churchyard there is an epitaph by Cowper, on Thomas Abbott Hamilton, 1788.

Weever, in his "Funeral Monuments" tells a story that the body of a man was found in the north aisle of this church in 1619, with "all the concavous parts of his body and the hollowness of every bone, as well ribs as other," filled up with solid lead, the skull with the lead in it weighing 30 lbs. 6 oz. The churchyard is very beautiful both in its situation and adornments, sloping gradually down from the church to the river Lovatt.

From Newport Pagnell the visitors proceeded to Lathbury Church, which was undergoing a thorough restoration. The date of the lower portion of the tower, Mr. Parker fixed at about A.D. 1120. It was no doubt a low Norman tower; the battlements were added at a later period. The south aisle is of the time of Henry II., and the rest of the church of Edward III. One of the pillars in the south side of the nave presents some very curious carving of an oriental—perhaps an Egyptian character, and Mr. Parker stated that many of the crusaders brought home with them from the East copies of designs which were afterwards used in the decoration of churches both in France and England. One of the accompanying illustrations represents one face of the capitol of the old Norman pillar in the south aisle. This evidently belongs to the same period as the still more curious flat carved slab, of which a photograph has been taken. It is likely that they were introduced from the East by the Crusaders. This slab, in one division

of the work, represents an attack made by the serpent, or evil spirit, upon some animal. The serpent has the knobs or scales on his body, and the head of a dog, which was usual in the 13th century. This piece of sculpture which is in excellent preservation, was found carefully imbedded in one of the old square piers of the nave; and formed possibly an ornament of the original Norman doorway. The steps to the rood loft are in remarkably good preservation. The low window on the south side of the chancel was probably the "leper's window," the object being to separate lepers from the congregation, for there are rubrics which enjoin the administration of the Sacrament to those unfortunate persons on a cleft stick, so as to avoid contact. Mr. Parker declined to say that these windows were, as sometimes styled, "confessional windows," save that they might be thus used for lepers. With regard to the Confessional, he endorsed the remark of Mr. Pugin, that every odd hole and corner of which people do not exactly know the use is termed a Confessional. The old practice was that confessions should be made (not, as in modern Roman Catholic churches, in boxes screened from the general view), but in the open church, the priest sitting in the sedilia in the chancel, the penitent kneeling beside him, in the sight, though not in the hearing, of the congregation. Attention was also directed to some other features, such as the old 14th century glass in the south window of the chancel, and the sedilia and piscina, which have been carefully preserved. Some curious and valuable frescoes in the nave and other parts formed the subject of a paper which was read at the meeting.

From Lathbury the excursionists proceeded to Tyringham Church. The age of the Norman tower was a subject of some discussion. The lower portion, up to a "set off" dates from about A.D. 1120; the upper portion is of the time of Henry VII., and the body of the church is in the style of George III. On the south side of the chancel, outside the church, and exposed to the weather, is a brass to the memory of Mary, wife of Anthony Catesby and daughter of John Tyringham, 1507. The removal of this valuable brass to the interior of the church was strongly recommended. The party then walked across the park to Tyringham House, which was rebuilt by Wm. Praed, Esq., in 1792, and were most hospitably entertained at luncheon by Mr. and Mrs. Tyringham. Some of the objects of interest, in connection with this ancient family, in whose possession this estate has been for many generations, were exhibited. Among these was an autograph letter from Charles I., written from the Isle of Wight in 1648, in which, with characteristic coolness, he requests from the then head of the family, an immediate remittance of £500:—

To our trusty and well-beloved friend, Will. Tiringham:—We must ascribe it to a more potent arme than that of flesh, that when we seeme to be in the lowest condition, we are not destitute of compassionate friends. of this we have beyond our hopes a present experience, euen from those we esteemed our professed enimies, by whose assistance we doubt not but our affaires will suddenly be so stated, that some designes for our present inlargement will be speedily put into execution. But to make these engines moue usefully, monie is our only want, a suppliment whereof we cannot promise to our selfe, but from those who have bin most faithfull to us, and in this ranke we must euer reckon you, whose forwardnes in our service we cannot forgett without purchasing to ourselfe the ignominious stampe of ingratitude: if our intelligence fayle us not, and we haue noe reason to suspect it, you are at present provided to furnish vs with five hundred pound, and it is a present and speedy supply must aduance our designes. We must therefore desire and conjure you, as you loue us and tender our safety, without delay to deliuer that sume to this bearer, and if possibly without noise, in Gould, to whom you may giue credit, though we must not giue you his name, for that he desires may be concealed, and so farre we haue reason to comply with

him, that will undergoe such a hazard for vs. All that we shall giue you more in charge, is that you communicate this negotiation to noe one living ; and this we must charge upon you as matter of trust and honor ; we haue already too much cause to make vs sensible of our oune and our friends suffering for want of secrecy, and had it not bin to preuent the like, we could not haue thought it reasonable to moue you for so great a sune. There remaines only to lett you knowe, that this seruice will be so acceptable to us, that it will not be easy for vs to sett a proportionable valuation upon it, yet you may be confident of such returnes from vs, as may stand most with our honor, and the meritt of the engagement you hereby putt upon us, we shall euer prize at the highest rate. We rest confident of yur loue, and be assured of ours.

Aprill 10, 1648.

CHARLES R.

The next place visited was Gayhurst, one of the seats of Lord Carington—a fine Elizabethan mansion, one side of which was rebuilt by Lord Keeper Wright in a style grievous to the antiquary. Modern improvements have obliterated all traces of "Digby's hole," where Sir Everard Digby, one of the conspirators of Guy Fawkes, contrived to conceal some of his accomplices, although he himself was taken in the hunting-field, near Dudley, soon after the discovery of the plot. Among other *notabilia* of Gayhurst we may notice a picture by Hogarth, also a portrait of William Pitt, who was a great friend of the first Lord Carington, and some old tapestry of the 17th century, formerly belonging to Lord Willoughby d'Eresby. Here was born the famous Sir Kenelm Digby, who espoused with so much warmth the cause of the unfortunate Charles I., and who was afterwards imprisoned and exiled by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. He was, besides being a gallant soldier, a very learned man, and presented to the Bodleian library, a large and valuable collection of manuscripts. Cowper says of Gayhurst, "The situation is happy, the gardens elegantly disposed, the hothouse in the most flourishing state, and the orange trees the most captivating creatures of the kind I ever saw." The church, which is dedicated to St. Peter, is built in the Grecian style, and was finished in 1728, at the expense of George Wrighte, Esq., Keeper of the Great Seal, who purchased the estate in 1704, of the representatives of the Digby family.

From Gayhurst the party proceeded to Weston Underwood and inspected the church, which is all of one period—namely, Richard II. The style is Early Perpendicular, and is in excellent preservation. The glass in the chancel window is no doubt the original glass, and the sedilia and piscina are likewise old. A helmet and a coat, said to have been worn by one of the crusaders, are preserved in the church. Some old documents and a terrier are preserved in the parish chest. From the churchyard may be seen the house where Thomas Scott, the commentator lived. The pear tree is still standing from which Scott used regularly to send a basket of pears to his landlord, Mr. Higgins, receiving in return a receipt for his rent.

The most interesting relic was the house where Cowper lived and wrote his translation of Homer, after his residence at Olney. Mr. Swannell, the present occupier, courteously welcomed the visitors, and conducted them to Cowper's bedroom, where, on the panel of the window shutter may still be read a couplet in the poet's beautifully regular hand, expressing his regret at leaving these familiar scenes, on the occasion of his removal into Norfolk—

"Farewell, dear scenes, for ever closed to me,
Oh ! for what sorrows must I now exchange thee."

June 22.

— 28, 1795.

It would seem that the departure had been fixed for the 22nd, but was delayed until the 28th, and the second date was afterwards added. The sitting-room used by Cowper remains in very much the same state as when

he used it. The house is still, as in Cowper's time, the property of the Throgmorton family. The "Wilderness," in which Cowper found the "boundless contiguity of shade" which he celebrates, and where some inscriptions from his pen are still to be found, was also visited.

Passing on to Olney, which is still more intimately associated with the memory of Cowper, the visitors paused in front of the large house in the Market-square where he lived, and where he and Mrs. Unwin arrived Oct. 14, 1767. They then paid a visit to Mrs. Welton, who has collected many objects of interest, and who courteously exhibited her treasures to the Society. Among these were a striking profile likeness of the poet in his later years, and one of Lady Austen, his devoted friend, at the age of about 17. Some other relics, after they had been examined with interest, Mrs. Welton, with a generosity which showed how much she appreciated the value of the gift, presented to the Society. One of these was the poet's poker*—a short iron rod, about the diameter of a child's finger, one end being flattened out and bent into the form of a sabre, several holes being made in it of which no one seemed able to divine the object. Another was a piece of "Cowper's Oak," still growing in Yardley Chase, the theme of one of his smaller poems. A button worn by Cowper was also given to the Society. These presents were duly acknowledged by the Rev. C. Lowndes. The visitors next proceeded to view the summer-house where, according to tradition, "John Gilpin" was written—the chief ornament of which now consists in some hundreds of autographs scribbled on the walls. This summer-house lies midway between Cowper's house and the rectory, where his friend John Newton resided, and into the garden wall of which an opening (still traceable) was made that he might pass more readily without going into the street.

A visit was next paid to Olney Church, a building in the Decorated style of Edward III., possessing few features of interest. The sedilia are of plaster, having been, probably, more or less faithfully restored from the early stone ones. The low window in the chancel was noticed as probably having served as the "Leper's window." The church is now being restored, Lord Dartmouth having contributed the munificent sum of £1200 towards the repairs of the chancel.

Emberton Church was next visited. The account of the restoration of this church will be printed in the "Records" of the Society.

At Chicheley Church a very brief halt was made, the hour fixed for the annual meeting having arrived. This church presents the unusual feature of a central tower without transepts. The tower is of the time of Henry VII., the aisles being of earlier date—probably of the time of Henry III. The chancel is of the 18th century.

At Chicheley Hall the party was courteously received by the Rev. Greville Chester (in the absence of his brother, Major Chester), who exhibited the most remarkable of the many treasures in the archives of this old mansion. Among these may be noticed a MS., entitled "The King's answer to the Divines' prayer concerning religion"—probably an original composition of Charles I.; the seals of Cardinal Wolsey and Archbishop Laud, and an autograph of Richard Cromwell when Protector.† Also a

* In the history of "Olney and the Lace-makers," page 18, the author says, "Two or three doors off I used to visit an old lady who recollected sitting on Cowper's knee, and was very proud of stirring her fire with the poet's poker." This old lady was a Mrs. Mason, who gave the poker to Mrs. Welton.

† The mansion of Chicheley having been outraged by the rebels, and made more or less uninhabitable, Henry Chester obtained leave of Richard Cromwell to reside in Beds (at his mansion of Tilsforth, in the church of which parish he is buried), while Sheriff of Bucks.

document professing to emanate from "the keepers of the liberty of England by authority of Parliament"—a grant to the same Henry Chester, made during the period just previous to the dethronement of Charles I.; the seal of Philip and Mary; a license to preach, dated 1670, by the Bishop of Lincoln; a Hebrew MS. of the Book of Esther; and an autograph letter from George IV. to the uncle of the present Major Chester. In the library are several books of the highest interest to the curious student, among which is an early edition of Ben Jonson, and one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, editions of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity"—which, though it contains only the five books at first published, has, curiously enough, the title page of the later edition, containing the eight books. Another curious book, "The history of the life and death of Mary Stuart," has on the parchment cover an imitation of the well-known signature of Queen Elizabeth. There is a curious collection of old tracts, including the "Natural History of the Hanover Rat," and many other works of which time would not permit even a hasty inspection. A splendid collection of photographs from Rome, Venice, and the East was displayed in the Hall, and were in themselves fully worth a visit.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting was held in the drawing-room of the mansion, the Ven. Archdeacon Bickersteth, D.D., in the chair. Time being limited, the report of the committee, which was as follows, was "taken as read":—

"Your Committee have much pleasure in tendering for your adoption the report of the proceedings and position of the Society.

"They desire to avail themselves of this opportunity to acknowledge the very hearty welcome given to the Society at its annual meeting at Eton, by the Rev. C. O. Goodford, D.D., Provost of Eton. The Society was indebted on this occasion to the Rev. Wharton B. Marriott, for one of the most interesting and instructive papers ever read before the Society. This paper has been printed in the "Records of Buckinghamshire," and illustrated with drawings from wood blocks lent by the Rev. W. B. Marriott.

"During the past year the Society has again been strengthened by the accession of several new members, but on the other hand it has to regret the loss by death of one of its hon. secretaries. Your Committee beg to recommend the Rev. Bryant Burgess, rector of Latimer, to the vacant office."

The officers of the Society were re-elected *en masse*, and the following new members were admitted:—Rev. H. Draper, Edgcombe; A. Robarts, Esq., Lillingstone Dayrell; H. Trower, Esq., Wolverton Park; Rev. M. Smith, Newport Pagnell; Rev. H. W. Lower, Wolverton End; Rev. J. Greaves, Cosgrove; Rev. J. Benthall, Willen; Rev. A. Smith, Wendover; Rev. D. Greig, Addington; Mr. H. Coles, Aylesbury; Mr. J. G. Rowe, Aylesbury; Mr. T. W. Robinson, Aylesbury; Mr. G. B. Wilkinson, Manor Farm, Wolverton; Rev. H. Blagden, Hughenden.

The Ven. Archdeacon Bickersteth, D.D., then read a paper on "William Cowper," the poet.

The Rev. H. BULL, in moving a vote of thanks to the Archdeacon for his paper, said he hoped the time would never come when the merits of Cowper would cease to be appreciated, and that the county would never cease to be regarded as classic ground, by the memory of that genuine and delightful poet. The influence of Cowper's poetry was becoming more and more valuable at the present time, as the work of a man of fine temper and deep piety, and at the same time of thorough honesty. In these days of religious excitement, and wear and tear of body and mind, one could not find a more soothing elixir than the poetry of Cowper, and as an admirer of his poetry he felt deeply indebted to the Archdeacon for doing him such ample justice.

The Rev. GREVILLE CHESTER said he might be allowed to mention that Cowper had often been a guest in that house, and that he wrote the epitaph on his grandfather, which is included in every complete edition of his works.

Mr. PARKER, in seconding the vote of thanks, wished to say a word about architectural meetings generally. He was confident that it was a great advantage to a county to have such a society. These semi-social and semi-scientific meetings were of great service. They originated some 25 years ago at Oxford, and now there was one in almost every county. This Society had the great advantage of profiting by the experience of others, and now the work would be thoroughly well done. He hoped the Archdeacon would some day be able to tell him, with regard to the Archdeaconry, as the Bishop of Bath and Wells told him lately respecting his diocese, that there was not a church in it which has not been restored. Things were moving in this direction, many beautiful churches had been restored, and others were in progress.

Archdeacon Bickersteth, in acknowledging the compliment, said it was a pleasure to him to refresh his memory with recollections of Cowper, whom he had admired from his earliest days.

The Rev. H. Bull read a paper on the frescoes in Lathbury Church.

Mr. PARKER, in moving the thanks of the Society to Mr. Bull, said it was perfectly clear to him from personal observation that, from the earliest period in the history of the Church, every place of assembly for Christian worship was decorated with colour, as far as the means were available. Up to the fourth century, when what was called the "peace of the Church" was established by Constantine, the early Christians could only meet in the halls of their own houses—whence the name Basilica. But from the earliest time when they were permitted to have churches, they were decorated with pictures and mosaics as far as possible. They were all aware that the early paintings were Scripture subjects, and it was not until the 8th or 9th century that we have the legends of the Saints. With regard to the material used, he did not know what might be the case in this particular instance, but generally the ochres were employed, which, being the natural colour of the earth, never changed. These were fixed with sizes of various kinds. Properly, fresco is work done while the mortar is wet, and work done subsequently is termed distemper. In the Catacombs are drawings certainly from the 4th and 5th century downwards. In the churches at Rome there is a series of mosaics which compare with those to be found in the Catacombs. In the time of Charlemagne there was a great revival—many mosaics were put in the churches, and many new frescoes were painted in the Catacombs, but whether some of these were in most instances repetitions of old ones it is difficult to say. Many of them were clearly additions, not corresponding at all with the early work. The principle of decorating the House of God was one adopted by the Catholic Church from the very earliest antiquity.

The Rev. C. G. HULTON seconded the vote of thanks to Mr. Bull, which was carried unanimously.

There were two other papers announced, one by the Rev. C. G. Hulton, on "Emberton Church," and one by the Rev. J. Bentall on "Willen Church;" but as the time for leaving approached, the meeting was brought to a close by the ARCHDEACON, who tendered the thanks of the members to Major Chester and to the Rev. Greville Chester for the hospitable reception they had experienced.

The company were afterwards entertained at dinner at Chicheley Hall, and thus one of the pleasantest excursions ever enjoyed by the members of the Society was brought to a close.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting and Excursion took place July 28th, 1870. The members and their friends met at Great Marlow at half-past ten a.m., and embarked in a saloon-boat, which was moored on the River Thames, immediately opposite the refectory of the old monastery attached to Bisham Abbey. It is said that in this refectory the French prisoners were kept during the war. Some of the party visited the church of All Saints, which is a modern Gothic building, in the vestibule of which is a picture of the "Spotted Boy," an extraordinary *lusus naturee*. The boat was drawn by two horses, and a start was made up the river. The first point of debarkation was Bisham Abbey, where G. H. Vansittart, Esq., met the members and conducted them over the principal apartments, and explained the various features of interest connected with them. The Abbey is described in "Murray's Handbook of Berks, Bucks, and Oxfordshire," as the most interesting house in Berks, and full of historical associations, having been the burial-place of more historical personages than any other country place in England. It has undergone many alterations, but retains portions of early work. The hall was formerly the site of a preceptory of Knights Templars, and afterwards the church of a priory of Benedictine monks of the order of St. Augustine, founded by Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, 1338. It has been lately restored by its present owner. The ceiling was removed, disclosing an Early English wagon roof of oak, which has been thoroughly restored. At the east end of the hall is a fine Early English window, now built up, and painted in imitation of coloured glass. When the plaster was taken down, which for a long time had blocked up the window, the stone mullions were found in tolerable order. There was also discovered on the upper part of the window at the north side the fresco of a half figure of St. Peter with the Holy Key; the colours were in such a state of preservation that it was easily restored. In a recess, on the north side of the hall, is a fresco by Roddam Spencer Stanhope, representing the death of Thomas Montague, fourth Earl of Salisbury, and his esquire, Sir Thomas Gargrave, at the siege of Orleans, in 1428. His body was brought to England and interred at Bisham. "The Earl, on the third day after his arrival before Orleans, entered the Tower" (on the bridge, which had been previously taken from the enemy) "and ascended to the second story, where, from a window that overlooked the town, he was observing what was passing within. While thus occupied, a stone from a veuglaire struck the window and carried away part of his face, and killed a gentleman behind him.* His tomb, and that of the Earl of Warwick, the king-maker, who was also buried here, were destroyed by Sir Thomas Hobby, about 200 years ago, when he erected the oak screen at the entrance. Here also rest the remains of William, Earl of Salisbury, who fought at Poitiers; of his son John, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded and attainted 1400, whose son was the Earl killed at the siege of Orleans; of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded at York in 1460, for his attachment to the Lancastrian cause; of two sons, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, and John, Marquis of Montague, who both fell in the battle of Barnet, 1471, and whose bodies were brought here after having been exposed three days to all comers in St. Paul's Cathedral. Here too is interred Edward, Earl of Warwick, the last of the male line of the Plantagenets, who was beheaded in 1499, for attempting to escape with Perkin from the Tower, where the Earl had been imprisoned by Henry VII., who was jealous of his pretensions as son of the Duke of Clarence. On the south side

* "Chronicles of Engerrand de Monstretet." This account is confirmed by others—Fabyn, Rapin, etc., etc.

of the hall is a magnificent marble mantelpiece, with richly carved oak panelling, which was originally given by James I. to the then Earl of Plymouth, and was brought here from the Earl's country seat in Worcester in the year 1843. The panelled room adjoining the hall is a fine specimen of domestic architecture, and contains a large number of notable portraits, including Van Tromp by Sir Peter Lely; General Monk, first Duke of Albemarle, a famous portrait by Peter Bursler, painted about the time of the Commonwealth; John Claypole, by Peter Bursler, married to Elizabeth, second daughter of the Protector; Prince Henry, eldest son of James I., by Zuchero; Henrietta Maria, his queen, by Vandyke; Princess Caroline, mother of George III.; Lord Edwin de la Sandys, Lord Chief Justice, temp. 1684. There is also a singular painting of Lady Hobby, whose husband died in 1566 in France, when ambassador there. She is represented with a very white face and hands, dressed in the coif, weeds, and wimple, then allowed to a baronet's lady. In this dress she is still supposed to haunt a bed-room, where she appears with a self-supported basin moving before her, in which she is perpetually trying to wash her hands "with invisible soap in imperceptible water;" but it is remarkable that the apparition is always in the negative, the black part white, the white part black. The legend was that she beat her son William to death because he could not write without making blots. It is remarkable, as illustrating the legend, that about thirty years ago, in altering a window-shutter in the dining-room, a number of children's copybooks of the time of Queen Elizabeth were discovered pushed between the joists of the floor, one of the copybooks answering exactly to the story, as if the child could not write a single line without a blot.

Behind the tapestry in one of the bed-rooms (representing the history of Tobit) a secret room was discovered with a fireplace, the chimney of which is connected with that of the hall for the sake of concealing the smoke. Tradition tells that when Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, was going to the Crusades, he came with all his train for last prayers at the Abbey he had founded, and his daughter came from Medmenham with the abbess to meet him. A squire, who had been in love with her before, seized the opportunity for elopement, and they escaped in a boat, but were taken at Marlow. She was sent back to her convent, and her lover was shut up in the tower, whence he tried to escape by means of a rope which he had made from his clothes torn into shreds. The rope broke and he was dreadfully injured, and was taken into the Abbey, where he afterwards became a monk.

Lady Hobby was one of the three learned daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, preceptor to Edward VI., who were said to be equally distinguished for their piety, virtue, and good fortune, her two sisters being respectively married to Lord Bacon and Lord Burleigh. On the death of her husband she had the body brought to Bisham, together with that of his brother, Sir Philip Hobby, who died about the same time when papal legate at Rome. She erected a magnificent monument to their memory in Bisham church, on which she inscribed three epitaphs in Greek, Latin, and English, one of them ending in the lines—

"Give me, O God, a husband like unto Thomas,
Or else restore me to my husband Thomas."

Which prayer was fulfilled in her marriage at the end of a year with Lord John Russell.

The Princess Elizabeth resided two or three years at the Abbey, and one of the apartments is still called her Council Chamber. The care of the Princess had been entrusted to Lady Bacon and Lady Burleigh, but they not liking the office, transferred their trust to their brother-in-law, Sir Thomas

Hobby, who was then possessor of Bisham. In the Council Chamber, which still retains its name, is a bay-window which is said to have been thrown out for her, and a dais was erected sixteen inches above the floor, which was reduced when Mr. Vansittart took possession of the abbey. The windows in the apartment contain some ancient shields of painted glass, two of which were originally in the church at Bisham; but it is uncertain when they were removed. Among them are those of Montague, who married Catherine, daughter of Lord Grandison, created Earl of Salisbury, and who died in 1343: Sir Richard Pole, and the Lady Plantagenet, his wife; the Countess of Salisbury, beheaded by Henry VIII.; and Cecil, Earl of Exeter, who married one of the daughters of Neville, Lord Latimer. These were the only pieces of stained glass at Bisham which seem to have escaped the fury of the Puritans, probably, as suggested by Mr. Vansittart, because they contain no ecclesiastical symbol. The windows of Bisham Abbey must have been very rich in stained glass, for when the floor of the dining-room was relaid, about ten years ago, an immense quantity of that material was found smashed into atoms beneath the flooring, none of the pieces being, as remarked by Mr. Vansittart, so large as a sixpence.

Among the pictures in the room is a very remarkable portrait of James I. by Zuchero, said to be the best extant of that Sovereign. There are also two prints of George III. and Queen Charlotte, which were presented by the latter to the eldest daughter of the late Mr. G. Vansittart.

In the grounds are traces of portions of the foundation of the ancient Abbey, and the original moat round the garden still remains.

Leaving the Abbey the party proceeded to the Church, where they were received by the vicar of Bisham, the Rev. T. E. Powell. The church at one time consisted of Norman nave and tower with north and south door. The church has undergone many alterations, and in 1856 it was restored in the Early Decorated style. It contains several interesting brasses, and some splendid monuments of the Hobby family. The Hobby window at the east end of the aisle is a very fine specimen of the art of enamelling on glass, now completely lost, and contains a shield of thirty-eight quarterings, said to be the richest in England.

On leaving the grounds Archdeacon Bickersteth tendered the thanks of the company to Mr. Vansittart and the Vicar of Bisham, for the information they had so courteously given them.

Proceeding up the river, the party arrived at Hurley, and visited the Church and Lady Place. The church was founded by Geoffrey de Mandeville, a famous soldier at the battle of Hastings, in the eleventh century. About 1087 it was annexed to Westminster Abbey, after which it became the burial-place of Edith, sister of Edward the Confessor. There are traces of Norman work in the doorways and windows. When the church was restored the original windows on the north side, which were formerly closed, were re-opened, and those on the south side restored; one decorated window on the south side being allowed to remain. In the vestry room, which has been added to the east end, separated from the chancel by only a modern screen of Norman character, are some ancient monuments of the Lovelace family. The remains of Lady Place, once the residence of John, Lord Lovelace, so celebrated in the Revolution of 1668, was formerly a Benedictine Priory of St. Mary, founded in the reign of William I. This house was occupied till the dissolution, as a cell to the Abbey of Westminster. Macaulay, in his history, says: "This mansion, built by his ancestors out of the spoils of Spanish galleons from the Indies, rose on the ruins of a house of our Lady in this beautiful valley through which the Thames, not yet defiled by the precincts of a great capital, rolls under woods of beach, and round the gentle hills of Berks. Beneath the stately saloon adorned by Italian pencils, was a sub-

terranean vault in which human bones had sometimes been found. In this dark chamber some zealous and daring opponents of the Government held many midnight conferences during that anxious time when England was impatiently expecting the Protestant wind." This vaulted chamber was visited, and the site of the celebrated "Meal Tub Plot" pointed out, as well as the exact position where the meal tub stood, in which the pretended conspirator Dangerfield alleged he found the papers which implicated the Roman Catholics, but which are supposed to have been placed there by himself. The house itself, which was, to use the words of Macaulay, "a perplexing labyrinth of panelled rooms, some of the paintings on which were attributed to Salvator Rosa, was entirely destroyed in 1837; and the vaults, covered by a mound of green turf, are now all that remains of a building where the confederate Lords held their meetings for the purpose of promoting the revolution of 1688. An inscription records the foundation of the place, at the time of the Norman Conquest, and the part it took in the revolution of 1688. The house was visited by the Prince of Orange after he came to the throne. The last inhabitant of Lady Place was the brother of Admiral Kempenfelt, and here he and the Admiral are said to have planted two thorn trees, in which the former took great pride. One day, in coming home, he found that the tree planted by the Admiral had withered away, and said, "I feel sure that this is an omen that my brother is dead;" and upon that evening came the news of the loss of the Royal George. The magnificent inlaid staircase of Lady Place has been removed to some house in the north of England. The painted panels, when the house was destroyed, were sold in one lot for £1000. The foundations of the original monastery are still visible, forming a vault where some years ago were discovered three bodies in their Benedictine habits; and traces of the walls and windows are to be found in the different farm buildings. The quadrangle, where paced the old monks seven or eight centuries since, is now a garden.

The party having once more embarked, passed by the beautiful seat of Sir W. Clayton, Bart., and proceeded to the small remains of Medmenham Abbey, a few miles further up the river on the Buckinghamshire side, where they arrived about two o'clock. An account of Medmenham Abbey will appear in the next number of the RECORDS.

The members then walked up the hill to inspect the Danish entrenchment, close to the residence of C. R. S. Scott Murray, Esq., formerly M.P. for Bucks. The house is about a mile distant, and is approached by a steep ascent through luxuriant woodlands. Attached to the house is a Roman Catholic Chapel, commenced by Pugin and completed by his son. It contains a superbly executed altar-piece representing scenes in the history of St. Carlo Borromeo, a beautiful crucifix by Seitz, and some quaint old pictures of the Virgin.

The encampment which gives Danesfield its name is described by Langley as "a strong and perfect Danish encampment, in the form of a rude horse-shoe, fortified in its circular part by a double vallum." Lipscomb, however, discredits this account, and says that from the warlike instruments discovered here there is little doubt that the fortification is the site and remains of the ancient mansion of the Bolebecs.

Descending the hill by winding walks among woods of holly, yew, and box, which clothe the steep escarpment towards the river, the company soon found themselves at the side of the barge which had been brought down the river to await them; and having embarked proceeded on their homeward voyage.

The annual meeting of the Society was now held, and Mr. Du Prè, on the motion of Archdeacon Bickersteth, D.D., was requested to take the chair.

The first business was the election of the officers, who were all unanimously reappointed.

The following new members, whose names had been submitted and approved by the committee, were next elected: Rev. F. B. Ashley, Wooburn; Mr. J. E. McConnell, Woodlands; Rev. W. H. Ridley, Hambleden, Henley; Rev. W. J. Blew, 16, Warwick Street, Pall Mall; Rev. F. B. Harvey, Cheddington; Mr. E. Swinfern Harris, Stony Stratford; Mr. L. Poulton, Aylesbury; Rev. J. A. Cree, Great Marlow; Mr. T. Wootton, Aylesbury; Mr. W. Brown, Tring; Rev. T. B. James, North Marston; Mr. J. P. Ellames, Manor House, Little Marlow; Rev. T. Troughton, Preston; Rev. J. Greaves, Great Missenden; Rev. C. W. Heaton, Aston Clinton; Mr. C. Carter, Great Marlow; Mr. E. Wood, Aylesbury; Mrs. Bartlett, Peverel Court, Aylesbury; Sir W. Brown, and Lady Brown, Putney; Mrs. Rumsey, Princes Risborough.

The Chairman then called on Archdeacon Bickersteth to deliver an address on the River Thames.

The Ven. Archdeacon BICKERSTETH then made the following remarks upon the Thames:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—I must apologize for not being in a position at this moment to do justice to so interesting a subject as that of the origin and ancient characteristics of this grand old River Thames. I had hoped to prepare a paper not altogether unworthy of being read to you, and placed upon our Records; but, not having had time for this, I yesterday, amidst the press of other business, put together a few notes, which I hope may be of some little interest, if you will kindly accept them in this brief and rudimental form. At the outset, I fear I am likely to have to encounter some opposition, when I venture, as being associated with Buckinghamshire, to assign the source of the Thames to that good county. I am well aware that this honour is claimed for other counties, especially Gloucestershire; and I do not deny that there is something to be said on that side of the question, inasmuch as the Gloucestershire stream has the longest course, and is navigable from Lechlade. Moreover, there is, not far from Cricklade in Wiltshire, on the borders of Gloucestershire, a considerable spring, which from time immemorial has borne the name of the “Thames head.” But, unfortunately for that view, the river which flows from that source ceases to be called the Thames long before it reaches Buckinghamshire, and is merged in the Isis. In favour of the Buckinghamshire origin we have at least the argument of continuity. The name of the stream flows on continuously with the stream itself, without any inconvenient break, from the point where certain little rivulets, well known to many of us, which surround the town of Aylesbury, meet together within a few miles of Lower Winchendon. There the river assumes the name of the Thame; and, flowing westwards until it reaches Dorchester, it there mingles its waters with the Isis, and thenceforward it becomes the Thame Isis, Tamesis, or Thames. There is one unbroken connection of name between the Thame and the Thames; and, therefore, I presume, in behalf of the county with which I am associated, and in spite of much that can be said in favour of its Gloucestershire origin, to assign to the Thames its source in the highest ground of the Thame watershed, that is, in the parish of Stewkley, in Bucks. If you ask me why the Gloucestershire river bears the name of Thames in that district, and loses it lower down, my answer is this—our river names are amongst the oldest we have, and these ancient names are for the most part names expressive either of water, or of some peculiarity in the streams formed by water. Now, the word Thame—Tame or Tam—is a Celtic word, which signifies *broad* or *spreading*; and I believe that this fact very much explains the reason why this name has been assigned to the river on which we are now floating, at different points in its course. The Isis, on the other hand, is the Latin form of another Celtic word, which is spelt *uisge* and pronounced

whisk, and signifies "water." It appears in many different forms in the names of rivers, both in this and other countries. The Ouse, Isis, Oise, Esk, Axe, Usk, and many others, are all forms of this very ancient Celtic word, *uisge*, a water. You may trace the word in *whiskey*, *uisgeboy*, or *usquebaugh*, which means "yellow water." I said that Thame or Tam means *broad* or *spreading*; and any one who has seen the valley of Lower Winchendon, when the watershed of the Thame has been swollen by a flood, will perceive at once the propriety of the word Tam or Thame, as applied to that river at such a time. When it receives the Isis near Dorchester, it becomes the Tam Isis, Broad Isis, Tamesis, or Thames, and so retains that name from the time when it receives it in the Vale of Aylesbury, until it loses it at the Nore. I may mention, that if you notice the low alluvial flats through which we are now passing, and which prevail in many parts of the Thames valley, you will, I think, see reason for supposing that in primitive times the Thames, instead of being confined within narrow banks as now, spread its waters over a wide district, and formed large lagoons, dotted with small islands. I may add that the names of places near the Thames illustrate this in a remarkable manner. The word *Eton* or *Ea-ton* is really "an island town;" the word *ea*, *ey*, or *eyot* (now corrupted into *ait*, and employed still to designate the little islands on the shores around us, where the swans form their nests) meaning "a small island." *Dorney* (Dorn for Thorn—German) means "Thorn Island." Westminster Abbey stands on what was anciently called Dorny or Thorny Island. *Putney* or *Putten-*ea** means "Pond island." *Chelsea*, a corruption of *Chesel-*ea**, means "Chesel or Shingle island," and so on. Thus, a great variety of names are indicative of the primitive characteristics of the River Thames. It was, as its name implies, a broad and sluggish stream, spreading its waters over a very wide surface, and covered over with small islands, and presenting such an appearance as we now only see under the influence of large floods. I must now only express my regret that I cannot further illustrate my subject. I have been unwilling altogether to disappoint you; and, perhaps, what I have said may be suggestive of other illustrations as we float thus pleasantly down the river. Of this, at least, I am satisfied, that the Thames was, in ancient times, a far broader stream than it now is. It was then, emphatically, the Thames, or the *spreading water*, dotted over here and there with marshy islands, the traditions of which are still preserved in the names of places near its present shores.

The Rev. J. BARNES, Rector of Little Marlow, then read a paper by Mr. Birch, of the British Museum, on the Nunnery of Little Marlow, which will be printed in the next number of the RECORDS.

The Rev. F. B. Ashley next read a paper on Wooburn Church, with a brief history of the parish.

The following letter was then read by Mr. Lowndes, the Secretary:—

MARLOW, *July 28th*, 1870.

MY DEAR SIR,—I much regret that I have business engagements, which will, in addition to my house being full of visitors, prevent my taking part in the excursion to-day. My brother and I wish to be allowed to provide the refreshments on board, and have accordingly sent down the necessary ingredients for claret cup, etc., etc., and a man to superintend the manufacture, etc. Trusting you may have a pleasant expedition, I am, my dear sir, yours very truly,

OWEN PEEL WETHERED.

Rev. Charles Lowndes.

A hearty vote of thanks, on the motion of the Rev. J. GRAVES, was awarded the donors for their thoughtful liberality.

Archdeacon BICKERSTETH moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman,

observing that he was an old member of the Society, and that whatever might be the political views of those present, there was no one who did not entertain a regard for the senior member for Buckinghamshire.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. DU PRÈ said he had enjoyed the intellectual treat of the day, though he did not regret to hear there was more substantial fare awaiting them on their return (laughter). With respect to Buckinghamshire, he was very proud to represent it, although he was not at all sure the source of the Thames was contained in it.

The company soon after arrived at Marlow, where, on landing, vehicles were in readiness, which conveyed them to Spinfield House, the residence of J. Carson, Esq., who had kindly offered to entertain the Society.

After the good things provided had been done ample justice to, Mr. CARSON gave "The Health of the Queen and the rest of the Royal Family," which was received with great enthusiasm.

Mr. CARSON then said he was honoured with the company of the members of the Archæological Society, who had had a charming day for a very interesting visit to the neighbourhood, and he was happy to learn from their Secretary that they had been pleased. He would not take up their time by dilating upon the great good which the Society did, for he would leave that to others who were more competent than he was. They had present on that occasion a gentleman whom he and his family were proud of the honour of entertaining upon so interesting an occasion, and whose services the Society valued very highly. He would give the toast of "Success to the Bucks Archæological Society," coupled with the name of the Ven. Archdeacon of Buckingham.

The ARCHDEACON said:—I thank you much, Mr. Carson, for your kindness in wishing success to our Society. I thank you also, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind reception of Mr. Carson's words. I sometimes think that I am myself becoming an archæological specimen, so often have I had the privilege of responding to this toast. I have, however, to remind our kind-hearted and generous host, whose hospitalities have so much gratified and refreshed us, that the duties of President on this occasion have been discharged by our excellent friend, Mr. Du Prè. But as you have done me the honour to couple my name with this Society, I will only say that these annual gatherings are amongst the happiest that the year brings round to me. My pursuits are for the most part of a different nature from those which this Society promotes. But I take pleasure in archæological investigations, and am glad to add my humble contributions to the general store, as far as my leisure, which is not much, enables me. Of this at least I can from my heart assure you, that I enjoy with unmingled pleasure such days as these, which cheer me amidst the heavy labours and anxieties which God's Providence has assigned to me. Let me add that the enjoyments of this day have added greatly to our debt of obligation to our excellent Secretary, the Rev. Charles Lowndes, who arranges these excursions for us, and always contrives to bring us to a happy anchorage at their close. Once more let me thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Carson, for the pleasant hospitalities of Spinfield, of which our Society will always retain a grateful recollection.

Mr. CARSON then said they were all highly honoured by having one of their county members present on that occasion. He would not be doing his duty to the Society did he not notice the circumstance, and he wished him health and strength to enable him to represent the county for a long time. He had served the county honestly and faithfully for many years. (Cheers.)

Mr. DU PRÈ thanked them for drinking his health as one of the members of the county, and regretted that they had not either of the other members present who were possessed of greater powers of oratory than he was. He

had been so long a member that he thought it would be well for him to retire, and for them to look out for a better and a younger man. (Cries of "No, no.") He had spent with them a very pleasant day, and had enjoyed himself very much, and if he could do anything to contribute to the success of the Society in any way, he should be happy and proud to do it. (Cheers.) Mr. Du Prè added, the Archdeacon suggests that I should ask you to come to Wilton Park. I shall be very happy to see you there. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CARSON then said if anything gave him more pleasure than another, it was to see an old friend. They had present on that occasion another Archdeacon besides their old friend Archdeacon Bickersteth; but he came from beyond the seas, and he would be glad of that opportunity to meet so many persons of his own profession. He alluded to Archdeacon Campbell from the island of Jamaica. (Hear, hear.) The Church in Jamaica had come in for a share of that measure which had been meted out to it in Ireland. The case was not exactly the same in Jamaica, but the Government of this nation had disestablished and disendowed the Church in that island. The Church in Jamaica was now in the position that it was obliged to appeal to its friends in this country for aid and support, and Archdeacon Campbell had come as one of a deputation to represent to the people of this country the position of affairs there, and to seek to enlist their sympathy on behalf of the poor people of Jamaica.

Archdeacon CAMPBELL said he agreed with what Mr. Carson had said that little good would be done for Jamaica unless something was done for the purpose of extending religion in the island. In Jamaica there were many religious bodies, all doing a great missionary work, and all united in promoting Christianity and resisting heathenism. He then stated that he was one of a deputation which had been deputed to come to England, and endeavour to make the people acquainted with their position, and appeal to them for help in the present crisis.

A hearty vote of thanks having been given to Mr. Carson for so kindly and liberally entertaining the Society, the members and their friends rose and returned to their respective homes, having had one of the most pleasant and agreeable excursions which it has ever been their lot to enjoy.