

The Proceedings of the Bucks Architectural and Archæological Society,

FOR THE YEAR 1887.

SOUTH BUCKS was the locality chosen for the Annual Excursion of the Society for the year 1887, which took place on the 25th July, and although the places visited had not, perhaps, so great an antiquarian interest as those of former years, it was throughout both enjoyable and instructive. The Aylesbury contingent started for Wycombe, and were met there by members from the southern part of the county. The drive from Wycombe lay through Beaconsfield to Jordans, and a pause was made at the former place to enable those who wished to do so to visit the Church, under the nave of which lie the remains of Edmund Burke, and the Churchyard where Waller, the poet, is interred. The visitors on entering the Church had their attention drawn by Mr. John Parker, the literary hon. secretary of the Society, to the diverse pronunciation of the name Beaconsfield, by the use of a long or short E in the first syllable. "It is very much the fashion," he remarked, "to pronounce the name of the late Conservative leader as though the designation of the place from whence he took his title were derived from a high position containing a 'beacon'; but he believed the first syllable really owed its origin to the Saxon word 'Beeen,' beech, the locality of the beech forests, and that the rural people were therefore right in the use of the short E." Attention was then directed to the brass in the floor of the nave memorializing Burke, which was naturally regarded with great interest, though it was stated by one of the Church officials that the body lay some yards away from the slab, the space immediately under which is employed in connection with the heating apparatus. On repairing to the Churchyard, the visitors were joined by the Rev. Canon Cholmley, who, on the death of the Rev. S. J. Bowles, which had occurred since the last visit of the Society, had succeeded to the Rectory. Besides examining the marble sarcophagus which marks the burial-place of Waller, the company passed through the old dilapidated Rectory, and shortly afterwards started for Jordans. A very pleasant drive brought them to their destination—a plain brick building of the utmost simplicity of structure, in which members of the Society of Friends have had occasional meetings for two hundred years. In a burial-ground adjoining are the graves of the Penns, Penningtons, and other well-known Quaker families, a small stone, with only the name and date of death inscribed on it, being the sole memorial in each case. After a visit had been paid to this ground, the members of the Society entered the Meeting-house, the interior of which is as plain as its appearance from without. The walls are wainscoted and whitewashed, the seats of plain deal. Two books of signatures, placed on a small table, attest the great number of persons, and especially Americans, by whom the place has been visited during the last few years. The building is now but little used, the only religious meetings held in it being two assemblies of the Quakers of this part of the county, which take place every year.

The company being seated, Mr. Robert Gibbs, F.S.A., read his paper on "Jordans," which appears in this number of THE RECORDS.

On the conclusion of Mr. Gibbs's paper, the members drove on to Chalfont St. Giles, where the Parish Church was first visited. It was entered by way

of a very quaint old lych gate, over which a portion of a cottage—one of a row—has been built. In the Church, the Rector (the Rev. P. W. Phipps), read a paper on the "Church of Chalfont St. Giles," which also appears in this number of *THE RECORDS*.

The members lunched at the "Merlin's Cave" Inn, and subsequently proceeded to Milton's Cottage. It will be remembered that at a public meeting of the inhabitants of the parish, held on the 25th April, 1887, it was unanimously resolved to institute a fund by which the Jubilee of Her Majesty's happy reign might be loyally commemorated in this parish, to be called the Milton Memorial Fund, the object for which this fund was to be raised being the purchase of the cottage, and also its repair and future maintenance (special care being taken to preserve the original character of the building), with a view to its being set apart as a reading room and museum for objects connected with the poet Milton, and for other objects of historical interest in the parish and neighbourhood. The visitors inspected the cottage, and then, at the invitation of the Rector, went to his residence, and were shown various objects of interest. In the study, Mr. George Weller, of Amerham, on behalf of Mr. E. W. Hennell, of London, presented the Rector, as one of the trustees of Milton's Cottage, with a copy of a work on horticulture, bearing on the fly-leaf, in writing, the inscription, "John Milton." It was explained that Milton was known to have been very fond of gardening, and that it is possible he may have brought the book with him to Chalfont. The signature had probably been written by someone who was aware that the book had belonged to the poet. The Rector, in receiving the volume, expressed his gratification, and desire that other presents of a similar nature might follow.

On leaving the Rectory, the members were driven to the Vache, the seat of Mr. Thomas Newland Allen, the Lord of the Manor. This Manor of Colfunte or Chalfont was, at the time of the compilation of Domesday, part of the estate of Maigno Brito, it descended to the family of the de Wolvertons, and in 1360, Richard de la Vache acquired half the Manor by purchase, and subsequently purchased the remainder. (For an account of this Manor, see Lipscomb's "History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham," Vol. III., p. 225, et. seq.)

The Manor, with the estate and mansion called the Vache, was in 1825 purchased by Mr. Thomas Allen, of Newlands, the father of the present proprietor. The members and their friends were very hospitably received by Mr. Allen, who conducted them over the grounds, and pointed out the site of the chapel of the former mansion, no part of which is now existing. They were also shown, on an elevated spot in front of the house, a monumental erection to the memory of Captain James Cook, placed there by Cook's friend and patron, Sir Hugh Palliser, Bart., a former owner of the Vache. From the Vache the members were driven to "The Grove," the residence of Mr. Samuel Sandars, who very courteously welcomed them to his house, at which a meeting was held in the drawing-room, when papers were read by the Rev. C. H. Evelyn White, F.S.A., on "The Merlin Inn" and "Milton's Cottage," which are published with this number of *THE RECORDS*.

Mr. Sandars exhibited to the Society some rare and interesting books, which were much appreciated, and of which the following is a list:—

- (1) *Missale Cluniacense, folio, Paris, 1523*, has six leaves on vellum, and is illuminated like a MS. throughout.
- (2) *MS. Psalteriure, 4to, English work, c. 1250*. Miniatures and initials from the Duke of Sussex's Collection.
- (3) *MS. Biblia Latina, 12mo, on foetal vellum*. Illuminated for Philip the Fair, King of France. Two miniatures, and many historiated initials, in Royal binding of Louis XIV.

(4) Prayer Book (Hours) of Isabella of Aragon, Duchess Sforza of Milan, 1498. Illuminated for the Princess by Peter Claeis, of Hainault. Fifty miniatures of finest Burgundian art. 4to, vellum.

(5) Heures de Chartres, on vellum, illuminated like a MS., in best style. Printed at Paris by Pigouchet, for Vestre, 1501. 8vo. Bound by Clovis Eve. Silver clasps.

(6) Lydgate (D). Lyfo of Our Ladye. Folio. Printed by Caxton (c. 1490). W. Herbert's copy.

(7) Sarum Hours, 4to. Printed by W. de Worde (c. 1510), in contemporary English stamped binding.

(8) First Prayer Book of Edward VI. London, Grafton, 1549. Fol.

(9) MS. Prayer Book, on vellum, illuminated for a noble family of Cremona. Italian work, said to be by Attrevarti.

(10) First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Works, London, 1623. Perfect, save only the Verses. Opposite Portrait in facsimile.

(11) Scotch Prayer Book and Services. Knox's altior. Edinbro', 1643. 4to.

(12) Broadside, in large black letter. "By the King—A Proclamation for suppressing two Books written by John Milton. Sheriffs to cause all the books to be burnt by the common hangman. Given at our Court at Whitehall, 13 August, 1660." Printed by Christopher Barker, 1660.

Mr. George Weller also brought with him the following valuable books, lent by Mr. Hennell, which were inspected with much interest:—Album, containing forty-four prints of, or relating to, Milton; Milton's History of Britain, 1st edition, 1670, with Faithorne portrait; Paradise Lost, 1668, 1st edition, 4th title page, small 4to; Paradise Lost, 1678, 3rd edition, 12mo, with portrait; Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, 12mo, 1687, with two portraits; Milton's Poems, 12mo, 1645, 1st edition, with Marshall portrait; Charles I.'s Eikon Basilike, original edition, 1649, small quarto, with arms and frontispiece, and portraits of Charles I. and Charles II.; Milton's Eikonoclastes, the reply to the above, ordered by Charles II. to be burnt, original edition, 1649, small quarto.

After the reading of the papers, the Rev. P. W. Phipps, the Rector of Chaifont St. Giles, said he was very glad, on behalf of the Committee for the Preservation of Milton's Cottage, to welcome the Society on the occasion of its visit. He was anxious that it should be known that the Committee called to their assistance an architect who confirmed them in their intention not to touch the cottage at all. It had been said that they intended to make changes, and to add a porch, but on the architect's advice they resolved to do nothing of the kind. The cottage would be used for the purposes of a museum of Milton relics, and they had that day received, through Mr. Weller, the first gift in that direction. He was sorry to say that they were much in want of money. They intended to repair the cottage and its offices, and to keep it in good order, and they would be very glad of further assistance than that which had already resulted from the appeal made to the general public.

A meeting of the Society followed, the Rev. R. H. Pigott in the chair.

At the instance of Mr. Parker, a new rule to facilitate the election of members was carried; and new members were elected.

The following report from the Treasurer (Mr. Williams) was taken as read:—

"Receipts—Subscriptions, £53 3s.; sundries, £1 9s.; balance, £4 9s. 1d. Payments—Rent, £7; care of room, etc., £4 10s. 2d.; balance of account, 1885, printing RECORDS, £27 8s. 8d.; sundries, £10 8s.; balance in hand, £10 14s. 3d. The estimated liabilities for the present year were rather heavier than usual, as the cost of the current number of the RECORDS was rather in excess of the ordinary expenditure. It was hoped, however, that

the subscriptions due from the large accession of members would almost meet this."

Refreshments were kindly provided; and

The Rev. R. H. Pigott, in tendering the thanks of the visitors to Mr. Sandars, commented on the excellent reception they had met with. Referring to the work of the Society, he said that he knew Mr. Parker had it very much at heart that a new county history should be written, and hoped that by dividing the county into sections this might be accomplished.

Mr. Sandars, in responding, gave some particulars concerning the house, observing that the Grove family lived there for many generations. There was a brass in the Church of a gentleman who lived there, and who married one of the Newdegates of Harefield. After a time the house became much smaller than it originally was, but, about 1660, it was sufficiently large to be used by Pennington and the Society of Friends as a place of meeting, as Ellwood recorded. The only portion of the old house was in the drawing-room, which was made up of several remnants. He might add that he was not a Vandal, and was not responsible for the work of destruction. There was an old tree in the grounds of enormous age. He also spoke of the Church as a singularly interesting building. He described some of its features, and said that fortunately the frescoes remained; but in the south wall it was thought necessary to remove the light perpendicular windows. That was a great mistake, because Mr. Street's work, however good, was simply pattern work, and the original windows were of much more interest.

Mr. Parker, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Gibbs, of Aylesbury, for his efforts in organizing the excursion, drew special attention to the books exhibited by Mr. Sandars.

Mr. Gibbs acknowledged the compliment, and the proceedings then closed.