

- 1 Thomas Wilcotes, of whom below.
 - 2 John Wilcotes, afterwards a Knight, who was heir to his brother, and married Elizabeth Danvers, but died without issue, his widow remarrying to Thomas Blount.
- And five daughters and co-heiresses, as set out in the
De Banco suit of 19 Henry VI.

(To be continued.)

Baulking Church, Berks.

By W. H. Hallam.

(Continued from page 89, Vol. 12.)

Another old world feature of Baulking is the village green or common, where still feed the pigs, and cows and ganders of the villagers, as for centuries past; but possessing exceptional interest to the County, for it was here that the second recorded fall of a meteor in Britain took place. The circumstances of this event are recorded in a very rare tract preserved in the British Museum, and details of it are worth re-printing in this Journal.

The Title is:—"Looke Up and See Wonders; a miraculous Apparition in the Ayre lately seen in Barkeshire at Bawlkyn Greene, neere Hatford, 9th April, 1628."

The writer proceeds: "So Benumbed wee are in our Sences, that albeit God Himself holla in our eares, we by our Wills are loath to heare him. His dreadfull pursuants of thunder and Lightning terrifie us so long as they have us in their fingers, but beeing off, we dance and sing in the midst of our follies. . . . The foure great quarter masters of the world (the foure elements) have bin in civill warre, one against another. . . . As for fire it hath denied of late to warme us but at unreasonable rates, and hard conditions. But what talke I of this earthly nourishment of fire? The

fires of Heaven have gone beyond their bounds. The Aire is the shop of Thunder and Lightning—many windows hath God set open in Heaven, to shewe what artillery hee has lying there, and many of our kings have trembled when they were shown unto them . . . with feare and trembling, casting our eyes up to Heaven, let us now behold him bending his fist onely, as he lately did to the terrour and affrightment of all the inhabitants dwelling within a Towne in the County of Barkshire.

The name of the Town is Hatford, some 8 miles from Oxford. Over this Towne upon Wensday being the ninth of this instant moneth of April, 1628 ; about five of the clocke in the afternoon, this miraculous, prodigious, and fearfull handyworke of God was presented. The weather was warme, and without any great shewe of distemperature ; only the skye waxed by degrees a little gloomy, yet not so darkened but that the Sunne still and anon by the power of the brightnesse, brake through the thicke clouds. A gentle gale of wind then blowing from betweene the West and North-west, in an instant was heard first a hideous rumbling in the Ayre, and presently after followed a strange and fearefull peal of Thunder, running up and downe these parts of the Country, but it strake with the loudest violence, and more furious tearing of the Ayre, about a place called the White Horse Hill, than in any other. The whole order of this thunder carried a kind of Majesticall state with it, for it maintayned (to the affrighted Beholders seeming) the fashion of a fought Battaile.

It began thus : First, for an onset, went off one great cannon as it were of thunder alone, like a warning peece to the rest that were to follow. Then a little while after was heard a second ; and so by degrees a third, untill the number of 20 were discharged (or thereabouts) in very good order, though in very great terror. In some little distance of time after this was audibly heard the sound of a Drum beating a Retreat. Amongst all these angry peales shott off from Heaven, this begat a wonderful admiration, that at the end of the report of every cracke, or cannon thundering, a hissing noyse made way through the Ayre, not unlike the flying of bullets from the mouthes of great Ordnance ; and by the judgment of all the terror-stricken witnesses they were Thunder-bolts. For one of them was seene by many people to fall at a place called Bawlkin Greene, being a mile and a half from Hatford ; which Thunder-bolt was by one Mistris Greene caused to be digged up out of the ground, she being an eye witnesse, amongst many other of the manner of the falling.

The form of the Stone is three-square, and picked in the end ; in colour outwardly blackish, somewhat like iron : crusted over with that blacknesse about the thicknesse of a shilling. Within it is a sort of a gray colour mixed with some kind of minerall, shining like small peeces of glasse. This stone brake in the fall : the whole peece is in weight nineteen pound and a halfe. The greater peece that fell off weigheth five pound, which with other small peeces being put together, maketh foure and twenty pound and better.

It is in the countrey credibly reported that some other Thunder stones have bin found in other places. But for certainty there was one taken up at Letcombe, and is now in the custody of the Shrieve."

Bisham Abbey.

By Ernest W. Dormer.

(Continued from page 18, Vol. 12.)

The Abbey as it stands to-day is a picturesque mixture of chiefly two styles. The existing portions of the conventual building which add to its beauty are scanty, considering the size of the original structure. The entrance is clearly a remnant of the early days, as is also a two-light window with a rose head above to the East. The porch has a beautiful groined vaulting with moulded ribs and light stone shafts with capitals. The hall, which is said to have been the church of the ancient Abbey, is of commanding size and has a minstrels' gallery in dark carved oak at one end. When it was restored about half a century ago, the original ribbed roof of oak was discovered ; it had been hidden by a plaster ceiling. It is apparent to anyone who has been over the house that much of the work anterior to the Hobys' erection lies buried behind their additions, especially at the eastern end, and although a recent periodical has made light of the fact, it is not a stretch of imagination to say that the turret which we shall read of later and which was "builded" by Sir Thomas Hoby, contains a good deal of the material of the tower which was erected in the 12th century. But the greater part of the erection is Tudor, and the sweetest Tudor

imaginable. The time caressed crenellated gables seen through the trees are a sight which leaves a trace of longing for many a day.

Mr. Edgar Powell has devoted much time and energy with the owner to the history of the Abbey and the Hoby family, and it is due to their careful researches that so much authentic information is now available. The author is able to express himself indebted for much of the following from the preface to the "*Lief and Travels of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt.*":—

"On the death of Sir Philip Hoby, in May, 1558, Thomas succeeded to the Bisham Abbey Estate. . . . In the year 1557, we learn from the autobiography that Sir Philip had taken in hand some scheme of new buildings at Bisham Abbey which must have been of considerable extent, since it is not till four years later that we hear of its completion by Thomas, who gives some interesting notes as to the nature and progress of the work done. The mansion house at Bisham had been the residence of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, whose arms impaled with those of her husband, Sir Richard Pole, are still to be seen there in the Council Chamber window; but on her attainder in 1539 the King reserved the place for his own use. In 1552, however, Sir Philip Hoby was allowed to purchase it in fee farm and the surveyor's description of the house at that date is extant. According to this document, it appears that the house consisted of the present hall and Council Chamber and a cloister which formed a square, with several other remains, of which the exact position is not given. It would seem probable that the cloister, of which only one side now remains, extended eastwards, as foundations have been found of late years in that direction. Thomas Hoby, no doubt, pulled down this cloister and the lodgings about it and used the material for his large additions on, the north side of the hall, where he tells us the turret was built in 1560. The fact also that his arms impaling those of his wife appear over the fireplace in the tapestry room, seems to point to his being responsible for the room on the south side of the hall as well. The monastic buildings were quite independent of the mansion and were situated on the north side of it, nearer the moat, where foundations may be clearly traced in a dry summer. It is also interesting to note that as early as 1552 the Abbey hall and Church had been completely swept away. In 1561 the new structure appears to have been finished and the house to have assumed very much its present form, and in the following year the gallery was put up at the west end of the hall, decorated with noblemen's arms, which unfortunately are not now visible."