

LICHFIELD SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE.

THE first annual meeting of the members of this society was held on the 5th of January, at the Diocesan School-room, at Lichfield, and was numerously attended. The chair was taken by the Rev. Prebendary Gresley, upon the motion of the Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of Lichfield. The report of the proceedings of the committee for the past year was read by Richard Greene, Esq., F.S.A., Hon. Sec.; and we are glad to perceive thereby that, although in its infancy, and with but small present available funds, the society is stimulating the desirable object of church restoration upon correct principles, and is, in conjunction with sister societies, strenuously resisting the gradual destruction of our venerable churches by time, and that great innovator, ignorance. We trust the day is arrived when the beautiful remains of those fabrics raised by the piety and skill of our forefathers, and venerated by us, will be rescued from the tender mercies of agrarian churchwardens, and open the fostering care of better guardians.

The report was followed by an address from the Chairman, in which he set forth, in his usual plain and felicitous style, the leading characteristics of Gothic architecture, from the earliest period to its abasement in the reign of Elizabeth, and offered some strictures upon the cheap church building of modern times.

Thomas Johnson, Esq., followed the chairman, with some most excellent practical remarks upon the care to be observed in effecting what are termed restorations. He admitted the great utility and advantage to be derived from the combined talent and inquiries of such societies; but, as a practical architect, he held out a warning to their members to remember the ancient adage, "*Ne sutor ultra crepidum.*"

The proceedings were concluded by the honorary secretary, Richard Greene, Esq., who read a paper upon the sculptures of Norman architecture, in which he advanced the somewhat startling opinion that our earliest Christian church embellishments are essentially pagan, and of idolatrous origin. He supported the proposition with great ingenuity, and most interesting facts, elucidating the paper throughout with numerous drawings.

ENGINEERS.

In a work recently published, under the title of "*Railways, their Uses and Management,*" containing much interesting matter on the subject of railways already executed, as well as those in course of progress, we find the following passage having reference to some of our leading engineers, which will doubtless be perused with interest by our readers:—

"Most happy should we be if the undertaking had to depend for its success in Parliament upon its own value, without the intervention of counsel, as not only would time and money be thus saved, but the real merits of the proposed work would be brought forward more honestly, or if it had not these pretensions and that recommendation, it would lose a false bolster and fall. It is well known that the skill and science of the different engineers are frequently useless to them, with all their assured knowledge, by their failure as witnesses. Thus George Stephenson is never put into a witness-box, if his friends can keep him out; he has not the temper for cross-examination by persons he considers ignorant of the subject, and with his opinion of himself, it would be impossible to find any person he would submit to. No man, however, deserves more credit than George Stephenson for the manner he has advanced himself in the world, which is in itself no greater proof of his natural abilities than his acknowledgement of it is of his real unfeigned excellence of heart—he is however a theorist of the wildest kind, and until he became a coal-owner, felt that the first things in the world were railways, and the first person George Stephenson. He has, notwithstanding his energy and knowledge of coals, failed to introduce them into public use at a reduction in their price, as he promised he would, and no inland coal will do so, however much its introduction into the metropolis may interfere with the sea-borne supply. His railways are not always the best or most profitable, and we think he has made a mistake also in becoming chairman of any

railway company. Robert Stephenson, with a higher education, is more calm and self-possessed, and makes a better witness. Walker, sharp, quick, and clever, may always be relied upon for all he undertakes. Sir John Rennie, however possessed of all the knowledge on the subject, cannot stand the badgering of counsel, and forgets his professional service in his gentlemanly feelings. George Rennie is too retired and modest to make known his extensive information and great mechanical knowledge under the ordinary examination of counsel—he must be drawn out, and thus makes an honest, conscientious, and intelligent witness. Young Brunel is clever and self-possessed, and would not easily be put down. Locke's testimony would look hard, matter-of-fact, and solid—economical in all its parts. Giles is hasty, anxious, but determined not to be put down; Cubitt, quiet, calm, and firm. Vignolle, energetic and fiery, looking the very personification of some new and wild theory, to be put into immediate practice by his instrumentality, would rather astonish his audience by his bold expostulations and warm support of them, than convince by his arguments and facts, except in matters of detailed and minute expense in practical experience—his evidence has, however, been largely counted on by his employers. Braithwaite is a clever machinist, with an inquiring mind; and, in our opinion, has been spoiled by being made a railway engineer; and in this latter position his only experience is the Eastern Counties line, and his declaration of the correctness of his original estimates for the whole line to Yarmouth, made at a public meeting a year and a half after obtaining the act, will hardly aid to the confidence of the public in his future undertakings; his self-opinion and readiness will always support him, whether as a witness or advocate. Bidder is, perhaps, the most perfect witness; for though Rastrick has the hardest mouth of any, and the most imperturbable determination not to be beaten, yet Bidder, with all the same pertinacity, has, in addition, an effrontery of manner (however unintentional) which defies the most resolute opposition; Gibbs is honest and straightforward, and having bought his experience on estimates somewhat dearly on the Croydon, would never again deceive himself, or others."

FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.

The Fifth Monthly Chapter of the College held on the 14th inst., at Warwick-house, Gray's-inn, the Rev. F. P. Pocock, B.A., in the chair, was numerously attended, and the following business was transacted:—

A proof of a vellum of the Fellows' St. George Election-diploma being presented, the illuminated printing of the diploma was ordered to be carried into execution, and one copy thereof to be given to each fellow, and a duplicate on parchment to be preserved in a book with the college muniments.

The Architectural Associates' Election-diploma was ordered to be printed, and one copy thereof on paper to be given to each associate, and a duplicate on parchment of every copy to be also preserved with the college muniments.

A deputation was appointed to fill up the diplomas, and the college seal was ordered to be engraved.

Messrs. F. East and F. Leake were elected architectural fellows; Messrs. F. Lloyd and J. Catchpole were elected lay-fellows; the honorary fellowship was conferred on Sir H. Fleetwood, Bart., M.P., Messrs. — Jerdan (editor of the Literary Gazette) and H. Shaw, F.A.S.; and J. W. G. Gulch, Esq., was appointed meteorologist to the college.

The discussion of the laws was then commenced, the grades of membership being fixed as follows:—1st, Architectural-fellows; 2nd, Architectural-associates (under twenty-four years old); 3rd, Clerical-fellows (ordained clergymen of the Church of England); 4th, Lay-fellows; and 5th, Honorary-fellows. The monetary contribution was set at half-a-guinea entrance for each contributing member; a guinea and a half per annum from architectural fellows, or twelve guineas at one time, in lieu of all future payments; and from all other contributing members one guinea per annum, or seven guineas at one time from clerical fellows and lay fellows.

The chapter being, from the lateness of the evening, unable to proceed farther in the discussion, or to complete the elections, adjourned till eight o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, the 28th instant.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Bristol, March 14th, 1843.

SIR,—To receive a boon from any source, and not to return thanks for the same, I have no doubt the world would pronounce ungrateful.—I mean to say, that portion of society that have the power of reason and justice to bestow praise where merit shines forth in all its splendour, as the morning sun does through the hovering mist, spreading its genial warmth alike around the worthy and unworthy of mankind, making all bright and gay that would be otherwise dark, cold, and gloomy.

The boon I speak of is your new work, and most heartily do I hope that you are fixing your foundation on a rock that will last for ages, when time, and things of time, have passed away.

I consider, with many others of our ancient city, that a work such as THE BUILDER has been long wanted; it will be always useful as a book of reference, one always suited to lay before the building gentry: for thousands of pounds are spent by our merchants for articles that are made in London alone, or goods of superior quality. This will shew at once the advantage of persons in professions, trades, and callings advertising in a work likely to become the companion of the counting-house, workshop, and office. It is frequently the case that country people are at a loss to know the town price for all useful articles, and under the present mode of transfer by steam, it is a secondary consideration as to carriage.

To illustrate what I mention, I will simply refer to two or three instances. First, I was rambling along the streets of this city a morning or two back, and by chance I strayed into the church of St. Paul's, Bedminster, where some tradesman had just finished a handsome altar-piece; the design is in the decorated Gothic, for the church is a Gothic one. The carving is of exquisite work; all the spandrels are foliated, and the buttresses are terminated with crocketed pinnacles, and two handsome canopies, with finials and hexagonal ribs, or net-work, cover the tops. But what attracts the general attention most, is the decorative plates; they appear like tables of brass, and the letters are highly finished. The characters, I believe, are what professional persons call illuminated, and are, in fact, the first in the west of England; and if the maker's name were known, I think they would become general. They were manufactured in London, I cannot say by whom. The altar-piece is done in Paiswick stone of a very fine texture, and as a modern piece of architecture, I should say, is the best of the decorated Gothic style in this city. I remember seeing, some time back, at a little distance from this city, a roof constructed of paper, and I believe the person that constructed the same was a Londoner. How useful it would be to have a reference to all London improvements and inventions, the names of such inventors, and the cost price attached. I could say much more on the subject, but I have intruded too long already on your attention. My sincere wish is, that I could render the slightest assistance to your praiseworthy work; and I have no doubt but it will meet the encouragement it deserves, for I am convinced it will rectify abuses, disperse the gathering clouds of ignorance, and expel the vices of drunken tradesmen, who frequent the taverns more for information and company than from vicious habits. Happy am I to say that such a book as THE BUILDER will, I trust, have the desired effect, as the price is within the power of the most humble tradesman, of which I am one.

With every respect, I remain, gratefully,

A MECHANIC.

Miscellaneous.

NEW BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER WEAR.—This stupendous bridge, which connects the city of Durham with Newcastle, South Shields, and Sunderland, and is destined to form a portion of the great chain of railway to Edinburgh, is built on the spot originally selected by Mr. Telford for a bridge on the line of the projected great road to the north; it was designed by Messrs. Walker and Burgess, after the model of Trajan's bridge at Alcantara; and, with some modifications to suit the locality, has been constructed under Mr. Harrison, the engineer of the railway, by Messrs. Gibb, of Aberdeen, whose perseverance and skill in the execution of the structure, and in contending with the difficulties of it, are highly praised. The bridge is entirely constructed of freestone, from the Penaber quarries, close adjoining; and as a plain, simple structure, containing boldness of design with excellence of execution and economy, rivals any other work of the kind in Great Britain. It was commenced in 1836, and finished in 1838, occupying 714 working days, and cost about 35,000l.

LOCK HOSPITAL.—The old building has been entirely pulled down, and the new and handsome edifice now in course of erection in the Harrow-road is very nearly completed.