

DISSOLUTION OF THE CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

SIR HERBERT JENNER FORT'S judgment in the stone altar and credence table case, printed in a recent number of this journal, and the retirement from the Cambridge Camden Society of the Bishop of Exeter, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Chancellor of the University, and others, have led to a proposal for the dissolution of that association, and will, it is to be hoped, prove a heavy blow and great discouragement to those who have insidiously endeavoured for some time past to guide the nation to Rome.

On Thursday, the 13th inst., while the honorary secretary was reading to the society a report from the committee—

The president rose, and said, that the announcements he had just made of accessions to the society, however gratifying, especially by their promise of the extension of the society's usefulness in distant colonies, would not adequately supply the vacancies which he felt it his duty, though not required by the rules, to announce from the chair. The members were aware that one of their patrons, the Bishop of Exeter, had not only withdrawn, but had published his retirement and disapprobation to the world, assigning reasons of which it did not now become him to contest the validity, however much he might be prepared and desirous to disavow the imputations therein conveyed. Another of their patrons, the Bishop of Lincoln, had since withdrawn his name, on grounds similar to, and brought to his notice by, those adopted by the Bishop of Exeter; and subsequently the committee had received an intimation simply announcing the retirement of the Chancellor of the University, followed, as was to be expected by the usual etiquette, by that of the Vice-Chancellor. If the members were really animated, as he believed to be the case, by the principles which had always been professed by the society, he felt assured that they would neither be surprised nor offended, however much they might be distressed, by the remainder of the report of the committee, the reading of which he had interrupted in order to secure for it their more serious attention. The report set forth that—

"The circumstances just communicated to the society by the president demand from the committee, at this the earliest opportunity, a statement of their view as to the manner in which these announcements ought to affect its conduct at the present juncture."

"The retirement of two of its episcopal patrons, accompanied in the case of one of them by public expressions of disapprobation, and followed by that of the chancellor and his representative, have appeared to them to place the society in a position incompatible with its character as an association of members of the church and university. They feel satisfied that any advantages which might be expected from its continued operations would be insufficient to counterbalance the positive evil that must result from even an apparent disregard of the sentiments of those invested with authority. They therefore recommend unanimously that the society be dissolved."

"This recommendation can only be carried into full effect at the anniversary meeting. Till then the ordinary meetings, which have been already convened, will be held *pro forma* for the despatch of necessary business. The interval will be occupied in winding up the society's affairs. The recommendation now announced will be submitted at that meeting for, what the committee earnestly hope it will receive, its ratification."

This was received with a dead silence. It was evident that the announcement had taken the meeting by surprise. The president proceeded—He was well aware that the recommendation which the committee had felt it their duty to make to the society, was one which largely taxed its confidence, as well as its obedience to the main principles by which it had been always governed. Still it would never do for him, it would never do for them, to walk about the university, and feel that they were members of a society from which the Vice-Chancellor had withdrawn his countenance. No time for dissolution could be more appropriate than the present, and for any sacrifices required by duty they would console themselves with the reflection that the society had done its work, though its work was done. They would remember a sentence to that effect in his address to them in May

last, where he had dimly foretold the consummation to which they were now invited: a sentence suggested, as the context would show, partly by the considerations which he had been now urging upon them, and partly by the prospects of that change in the condition of the society, which had been anticipated as the consequence of the near removal of himself, and other its founders and principal managers, from the University. His career here was closed: it was a satisfaction, amidst some regret, that their light should go out together. Neither let them suppose their good would be lost, though he hoped that whatever harm, if any, had come from their operations, this act, when consummated, would blot out for ever. The principles of union in church-membership, to say nothing of architecture, which had been generated and fostered by the society, would fructify more generally and forcibly, stripped of whatever was frivolous or inappropriate, in other ground and in other forms. What he had said would, he trusted, reconcile the society to the decisive and unmistakable step recommended by the committee. It had, in addition, the highest sanctions of which it was capable. He felt assured that the society would feel that it was more in conformity with their position and their sense of duty, than to prolong, however effectually, an uneasy existence.

And in May next, therefore, unless a fresh arrangement be made, the Cambridge Camden Society will terminate its existence. To a looker-on, this step seems extreme and unnecessary; and many will say, with a correspondent, "Is there no other course open? Must a society, constituted for useful and praiseworthy ends, be dissolved because grave errors have been committed? Cannot its management be amended? Is its original and proper object inseparably connected with the course of proceeding objected to? Is the 'Study of Ecclesiastical Architecture,' to which these high personages are favourable, not capable of being pursued unless in connection with the encouragement of Poppish absurdities or errors? Cannot useful hints be given to churchwardens for the preservation of the ancient and sacred edifices intrusted to their charge, without intruding into the office and duties of the archdeacon? Cannot a design be furnished for a church at Hong Kong, unless a Romish almanac be simultaneously printed at the Pitt Press, by a secretary of the society, or the envelope of the plan be stamped with the effigies of saints of the Romish calendar?"

"The dissolution of the society, by its own act, because of complaints made on grounds here hinted at, amounts to a confession, on its part that it considers its involved object not worth carrying out, unless it could be made the means of promoting other ends not avowed; and which, if they had been avowed, the society would never have been composed of its present members."

The following letter takes the same view of the subject:—

"SIR,—As a young member of the architectural profession, and therefore deeply interested in whatever concerns it, I venture to solicit your favourable consideration of this address.

"I have observed that your able periodical is ever ready to advance and uphold the principles and study of ancient ecclesiastical architecture, apart from the superstitious and subtle feelings now too generally prevalent in describing and encouraging the admiration of the beautiful remains of our forefathers. Surely, this may always be done without making it the vehicle for disseminating those dangerous views entertained with strange infatuation by many members of the top universities. I have been led to these remarks by a rumour of the intended dissolution of the Cambridge Camden Society, and, in common with many, I should regret the benefits likely to be lost to the profession and to the community by such a proceeding. For when we see so influential and able a society, composed of men who, from their stations, intellects, and pursuits, are so capable of rendering good service to the study of Gothic architecture, if their information be conveyed according to a proper spirit—i.e., apart from the advocacy of Romanism—all sober-minded men will lament that so much advantage should be lost by the cessation of their labours. I, for one, cannot see that because most of our glorious specimens of ancient

architecture were the offspring of mistaken minds in matters of religion, it necessarily follows, we, in these reformed days, should inseparably mix up in our admiration and study of them the same feelings that actuated their founders.

"Let us hope, then, that should the Camden Society resolve upon a dissolution, it may only be for the purpose of remodelling and cleansing itself from the views and opinions which have hitherto characterized it, and will pursue its labours for the advancement of Gothic architecture, purely as an architectural society, and leave theology for a separate and distinct study.

"In the hope that you will not deem these remarks unworthy of notice in your next number, I am, &c.,

"February 18, 1845."

PROFITS ARISING FROM GAS APPLIED TO PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

It is not generally known that the very large annual profits arising from the Manchester Gas Works are applied (by a committee called the Improvement Committee), for the purpose of forming new streets, widening existing ones; opening such as appear to require increased ventilation, and in general to such improvements as more especially relate to the forming of better thoroughfares in the town.

These gas-works, now the most extensive in Great Britain, or in the world, were first commenced in 1817, and in December of that year, the Manchester public were first supplied with gas, from the establishment, at the charge of 15s. per 1000 cubic feet. The funds for this purpose were provided by the Commissioners of Police, out of the police funds. At the present period, the smallest consumer only pays 6s. per 1,000 cubic feet, and the largest (say of 80,000 feet) only 5s. per 1000 feet. With these comparatively low charges the gas committee will, however, pay, or have paid, during the present year, a sum exceeding 50,000l. to the committee of the improvement fund. Extensive as are the Manchester Gas Works at the present moment, a further extension is, it is said, now contemplated. Such is the increasing demand for gas, and such its probable immediate want, that the public need not wonder, if, in the next two years, the works should be further extended 33 per cent.

It can only arise from an ignorance of these facts that other towns do not follow the example set by Manchester. How many improvements deeply affecting the health and comfort of towns are continually postponed or entirely laid aside for want of means. Here is a plan by the adoption of which an income to supply this very want may be derived, and, at the same time, a pecuniary benefit would accrue to each gas-consumer, in paying less than he does at present for the light he has occasion for.

While on the subject of gas, we would advert to a plan, lately put forth by a Mr. Blofield, for supplying London (and all other towns situated on or by the principal railway lines) with gas at a much cheaper rate than at present. Mr. Blofield says:—

"In the first place, I propose that extensive gas works be erected, either near Birmingham, upon the Staffordshire coal-field, or somewhere upon the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Newcastle (the best locality) or Bristol coal-fields.

"The gas to be manufactured in the country upon the spot, and conveyed through pipes, laid along the railways, to a large reservoir in the neighbourhood of London.

"By making the gas in the country, in the neighbourhood of the pit's mouth, instead of in London, it would save the following expenses, among several others:—

"It would save the expense now paid for having the coal conveyed such a distance.

"It would save all those other numerous intermediate expenses, incurred between its purchase at the pit's mouth and its delivery in London.

"It would save the enormous expense of the eighteen separate gas manufactories at present in the metropolis, with all other numerous establishments, independent of those in the country on the lines of railway." H.