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THE RAMBLER
IN
WORCESTERSHIRE,
OR
Stray Notes
ON
CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONS.

By JOHN NOAKE.

WORCESTER:
PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

MDCCCXLVIII.

FIVE SHILLINGS.

Birmingham: JOSIAH ALLEN AND SON, Printers, 3, Colmore Row.

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TO
THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTTELTON,

Lord Lieutenant

OF THE

COUNTY OF WORCESTER,

A NOBLEMAN NOT MORE DISTINGUISHED BY THE HONOURS OF HIGH BIRTH THAN IN
THE EXTENT OF HIS OWN ATTAINMENTS AND THE CONSTANT EXERCISE
OF ACTIVE USEFULNESS AND BENEVOLENCE,

THIS VOLUME,

WITH KIND PERMISSION,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE OBLIGED AUTHOR,

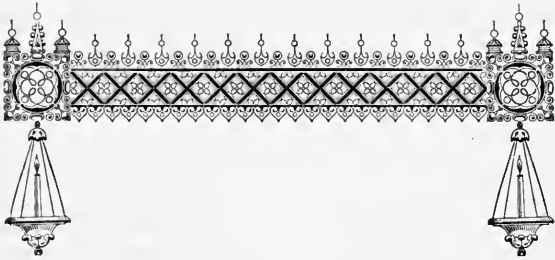
JOHN NOAKE.

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ENGLISH LOCAL

As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt native falls,
Of roving tired or desultory war ;
Such to this British isle her Christian fanes,
Each link'd to each for kindred services ;
Her spires, her steeple towers with glittering vanes,
Far-kenn'd, her chapels lurking among trees.

WORDSWORTH.



Preface.

THIS little volume—the fruit of hours snatched from a laborious professional occupation—is at length presented to the public. The objects of the writer in undertaking the work were—to beget a desire and a taste for the study of ecclesiastical antiquities; to promote the fitting and appropriate restoration of those venerable fabrics which the piety and munificence of our ancestors have left as a legacy to us; to render more decent the celebration of divine worship in all our churches; to impress a due sense of the mutual responsibilities attaching both to the clergy and their congregations; and to hand down to posterity an historical and topographical book of reference, which, though necessarily imperfect and being entirely of a popular character, he nevertheless hopes may prove useful. In the pursuit of these objects his endeavour has been to avoid the lofty and chilling altitude of what is termed “high Churchism” on the one hand and the broad highway of dissent on the other, and so to keep faithfully to

the *via media* laid down by our Church, the basis of which was established at the Reformation. If he has succeeded in accomplishing any part of his aim, or in imparting an allure-ment to the study of ecclesiological lore, he will be abundantly repaid for what has proved to himself to be a most fascinating pursuit—a labour of love, undertaken and carried out with the single desire to effect good, and without a view to personal gain or emolument.

To the numerous friends who have welcomed to their hospitable homes, and kindly assisted the writer in his work, he begs to offer the warmest acknowledgments, and doubts not that this little volume will be the means, in days to come, of reviving to them—as it will abundantly to himself—the reminiscences of many a pleasant hour.

Worcester, May, 1848.



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THE village church is passing gay,
The bells gush out in merry tune,
A flag is o'er the turret gray,
The porch holds all the flowers of June ;
For youth and beauty come to wed,
With bounding form and beaming eye—
With all the rapture love can shed,
And all the hope that gold can buy ;
And children twine, with noisy glee,
White favours round the cypress tree.

An old man sitteth on a grave—
His steps no more are firm and fast,
And slenderly his white locks wave
As breeze and butterfly go past ;
A gentle smile lights up his face,
And then he turns to gaze around,
For he has come to choose the place
Where he shall sleep in hallow'd ground :
“ Just by yon daisy patch (saith he)—
'T is there—'t is there I'd have it be.”

The bridal hearts in triumph glow,
With all the world before them yet ;
The old man's pulse beats calm and slow,
Like sun-rays lengthening as they set.
THEY see the fancied hours to come,
HE sees the real days gone by ;
THEY deem the earth a fairy home,
HE thinks it well that man should die.
Oh, goodly sight ! it should be so—
Youth glad to stay, Age fit to go.

ELIZA COOK.



The Cathedral.

Oft let me tread the gloomy aisles alone—
Sad luxury to vulgar minds unknown—
Along the walls, where speaking marbles show
What worthies form the hallowed mould below ;
Proud names, who once the reins of empire held ;
In arms who triumphed, or in arts excelled ;
Chiefs marked with scars, and prodigal of blood ;
Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood ;
Just men, by whom impartial laws were given ;
And saints who trod and led the way to heaven.

WHETHER or near the site of the present Cathedral the ancient Britons undoubtedly had a church, which, however, was rebuilt prior to its being made a Cathedral, dedicated to St. Peter, in 680. The Bishop and clergy then lived here together as one family ; and while the former preached at home, by a stone cross which then stood on the green, the latter were sent out to different parts of the diocese. Afterwards they were fixed in certain districts, and the Bishop merely kept ten or twelve priests to supply the required services. St. Mary's minster, or convent, was founded in the eighth century, and afterwards became the Cathedral, although St. Peter's was still in existence, it being recorded that St. Wulstan (1089) performed his midnight vigils there. St. Mary's, however, being inadequate for the purposes of a Cathedral, St. Oswald completed a new one in 983. In 1041, the citizens having killed two tax collectors sent by King Hardicanute, an army was sent here, who pillaged the city and burnt the

Cathedral, but could not vanquish the citizens, who had fortified themselves on the island of Bevere, a short distance up the Severn. St. Wulstan then (1089) built a monastery and the Cathedral which now stands, except the nave, which was added by Bishop de Blois 150 years subsequently. Much learned discussion has taken place as to the date of the two arches at the west end of the nave, which present an earlier order of architecture than the remainder. Green and some others insist that they formed a part of St. Oswald's building, which had escaped the fury of the Danes, and were subsequently joined to the new building; but the proposition appears so monstrous that Wulstan should have built his new Cathedral, and left these two arches standing at a distance, and in a state of unappropriation for nearly 250 years, that it is believed they were the work of De Blois, who, in commencing the nave at the west end, at first adopted the Norman style, which was just then being superseded by the pointed, and becoming dissatisfied with the former, after he had built two of the arches, erected the remainder in the latter style. The chief argument opposed to this theory is the fact that these two arches are built of white sandstone, and the others of red, thereby apparently denoting different dates; but as I am neither capable of nor inclined for an architectural dissertation, I shall be equally satisfied whichever theory my readers may side with. Suffice it to say that the Cathedral, as it now stands, was chiefly the work of the 11th and 13th centuries, and presents a few specimens of Norman, and a great deal of Gothic. Perhaps no English Cathedral, in its external appearance, presents such a patched and threadbare coat of many colours, with so little to admire, and so much to deplore, as this building; and this arises in a great measure from the tasteless manner in which the repairs have been carried on ever since the dissolution of the Priory by that Vandal of the age, Henry VIII, as well as through the unaccountable delays in repairing the spires, &c. One of the greatest blunders, perhaps, was in making a northern entrance, a fault which must be laid on the shoulders of Bishop Wakefield, who, in 1380, put a finishing stroke to the west end by renovat-

ing the roof, opening a magnificent window, and blocking up the grand entrance (west) beneath. This led to the northern entrance being opened—an arrangement which at once got rid of what every true architect aims at—a good effect. The entrance to this Cathedral from the west must have created in the beholder at first sight an impression of sublimity and grandeur, as passing through a low doorway the eye suddenly shot upward and onward, in a length of space of nearly 400 feet, resting on a succession of magnificent arches, surmounted by elegant arcades, a sprightly vaulted roof, and the whole terminated by an immense window, reaching to the roof, but partly intercepted by a splendid organ, whose turrets also aspire thitherward. We know that the beautiful Norman porch was chosen to form part of churches of much later date, and this as much from its symbolic meaning as its beauty. Herbert says—

“ Since, Lord, to Thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage;”

and Aubrey de Vere enjoins—

“ Ye who build the churches of the Lord,
See that ye make the portals low :
Let no one enter who disdains to bow.”

The verger was much better informed than I expected to find him. O’Connell used to say he remembered the story of a man in a neighbouring country who, on the subject of a mixed education, was asked if he had ever read Fenelon’s works. He replied that he had, and that Fenelon was the son of Ulysses, and that his life was written by Telemachus, who was Archbishop of Canterbury. This was precisely the sort of information I had expected from my guide in the present instance while exploring the tombs and old remains lying around me ; he however agreeably undeceived me, by showing that he had not merely learned his glossary by rote, but had read sufficient to stand a little cross examination, and “ to give a reason for the faith that was in him.” Taking me at once through the choir, he made a halt at what must be considered the chief point of interest, namely,

the tomb of King John. This is a subject, too, on which much learning and paper have been consumed, till it was satisfactorily settled, by the discovery of the remains in this tomb in 1797, that although the king was originally buried under the great east window, and between the two saints, Oswald and Wulstan, his body must have been removed at or about the period of the Reformation, when the historian informs us that the effigy was plucked away from the royal grave, and carried to the site it now occupies. A somewhat mortifying reflection, this, for human pride, that not even the utmost precautions taken by a king in marking out the place of his sepulture, and the arrangement of two reputed saints as sentinels on each side his tomb, the most learned of his fellow mortals should afterwards for many years dispute so warmly on the subject, and would not even rest without satisfying themselves of the fact by invading the repose of his ashes. In an old interleaved history of Worcester which recently fell into my hands there are some remarks in the manuscript, as follows: "This tomb was asserted by Mr. Green to be a cenotaph (*i. e.* a monument for one buried elsewhere), and accordingly the Dean and Chapter had determined upon its removal from the choir, and placing it over the supposed remains of the king in St. Mary's chapel. But on opening the tomb, on Monday, July 17, 1797, the remains of the king were found deposited in it, but evidently in such a manner as indicated their having been much deranged since their first interment; the foramen magnum of the head being turned upward, the jaws separated from the head, and one of them lying near the right elbow; the ulna of the left arm was detached from it, and lay obliquely on the breast; the bones of the toes were in good preservation, on two or three of which the nails were still visible. The body was covered with a robe reaching from the neck to the feet, apparently of crimson damask, but that is uncertain. The remains were found almost covered with a quantity of chrysalis, or skeletons of maggots. The body measured five feet six and a half inches, and was laid in a stone coffin, with a vicatry cut to fit the head." A much more lengthened descrip-

tion of the skeleton, &c., was published by Green (1797), to which I must refer all body searchers.

My guide next led me to the monument of Bishop Gauden, at the north of the altar : the features of this prelate are so striking, with large prominent eyes, that a spectator looking for some time on the figure would expect to hear it make some quotation from the book held in its hand (*Icon Basilike*), the authorship of which he appears anxious to claim, though the rest of the world seems inclined to bestow it on Charles I. Bishop Bullingham was the next who attracted my attention : lying flat on his back, the superincumbent wall is placed upon him in such a manner that nothing but his head, arms, and legs, are visible. He is well described by Green, "with his hands elevated, as if imploring a release from the barbarisms that surround him." "The next is Cicell Warmstry," said my conductor ; "she died of starvation, through having a stricture in the throat ; and you may see her likeness there, reduced as she was to a skeleton ; she died in 1649." The description, for aught I know, may be correct, but it seems more likely to be an imitation of the practice, introduced in the fifteenth century, of carving skeletons and corpses (generally portraits) as monumental mementoes.* Such devices are always unpleasing even when well executed. They were chiefly adopted for ecclesiastics. Prince Arthur's chapel, at the south side of the altar, is an object of much curiosity and interest, as being, perhaps, the most distinguished and elegant mausoleum in the Gothic style, in this country ; and one cannot but feel grateful to the friendly hand which, by daubing its superb decorations with plaster, averted the mutilating weapons of the ruthless Puritans. Skipping over a multitude of other tombs, I noticed that of Sir William de Harcourt, in the south aisle transept ; it is the effigy, in excellent preservation, of an armed knight, cumbent, and cross-legged.

* A remarkable specimen may be seen in one of the chapels at the eastern end of Tewkesbury church (a fine Norman structure), where there is a sculptured figure of an emaciated corpse, with worms and other reptiles crawling about the body.

Some antiquaries insist that this position of the legs denotes not only their having been crusaders (from *crux*, a cross), but that it was likewise a distinctive sign of *married men*.

The Lady Chapel now engaged our attention ; this is unquestionably the most interesting part of the Cathedral. The site of the original grave of King John is now covered by the effigy of Bishop Hemenhale, taken from his tomb in Jesus Chapel, and placed here as a substitute for the real effigy which has been removed as above mentioned. The king himself, though flanked on the east and west by two altars, and on the north and south by two saints, derived therefrom as much protection as the celebrated monk's cowl, in which his head was enveloped, will afford him a passport through the regions of purgatory. The saints, too (Oswald and Wulstan), suffered no better fate. Their relics, in time of pestilence, war, or other calamity, were carried about in procession to avert the wrath of heaven; and as if the miracles said to have been wrought by them collectively were not sufficient, it was the practice, for a good round sum of money received, to saw their bones into pieces, to enhance the reputation of some less fortunate churches, by retailing to them a rib, an arm, a toe, or any other portion of the body. The relics remaining at the time of the Reformation, it is believed, were buried at the north of the altar, but I have no reason to doubt that these are their identical effigies, now resting in the spots where first laid. That of Oswald (if this presumption be true) would therefore be the most ancient in this place, being nine centuries old.

The tablet to Anne, the wife of Isaak Walton, which is hard by, brought with it a panorama of flowery meads and crystal streams, with that "quaint old coxcomb," at one minute discoursing most pious language, and in the next explaining how many varieties of bait he could manufacture from some dead animal. His lady must have been a truly congenial companion, for she is described as "a woman of remarkable prudence, and of the primitive piety." After taking a rapid glance at the remaining monuments in this chapel, including the sculptured figure of the last Abbot of Evesham, which lies immediately under

the altar screen, an unknown lady, wearing a coronet, underneath one of the north windows, another cross-legged knight, and many others of extreme interest, I had an opportunity of quietly admiring the chaste beauty of Chantrey's statue of the late Mrs. Digby, elevated in what the sexton named "the Dean's Chapel;" there is also a little gem by Westmacott in the north aisle. In the nave, among a rich collection of ancient remains, there are two specimens of statuary by Bacon (father and son), which seem to be worthy points of attraction to visitors—they are monuments to Sir W. Ellis, who fell at Waterloo, and to Mrs. Solly. The latter should be particularly studied for the natural graces of the infantile figures. I need not say, however, that the monument to Bishop Hough, in the north transept, is the richest gem of all: it is Roubilliac's masterpiece; the expression of the dying bishop's countenance is perfect, and the drapery is so finely cast, and the hollowing out of the folds so cleverly managed, as to convey the ideas of lightness and texture previously unequalled in marble.

A fine monument by Westmacott was erected in the month of March of the present year (1848), at the west end of the north aisle of the nave, to the memory of the officers and 138 private soldiers of the 29th (Worcestershire) regiment of foot, who fell in the three victories on the banks of the Sutlej, 1845-6. The names include Colonel C. C. Taylor, Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Barr, Captains Lucas and Molle, Lieutenants Jones, Simmons, and Carey, Ensign Mitchell, Colour Sergeants Marshall, Swaby, and Wilkins, Sergeants Homes, Smith, &c. The private soldiers of this regiment appropriated four days' pay towards the expense of this monument.

The view from the tower is very beautiful, if not quite so extensive as other more elevated sites may afford. The most prominent object is the river Severn, approaching sinuously, and after sweeping under the handsome bridge which spans its banks, presents its fair broad bosom immediately under the Cathedral wall, and then meanders in its wanton course, washing the loveliest meadows, on its way to the Bristol Channel. Yonder is

the beautiful ridge of the Malvern hills ; on the other side, richly embrowned, rises Perry Wood, a spot where tradition asserts the interview took place between Oliver Cromwell and an individual who is generally more feared than respected ; close by is the spot from whence the former gentleman, it is presumed by the assistance of the latter, aimed his shot at the sacred edifice on which I was standing. Nearer home we look down on the ancient turrets of Edgar Tower, one of the most interesting relics of the old city ; and further on, the graceful and slender spire of St. Andrew's, with its taper point, scratches each cloud which adventures too near. The size of the city, from hence, appears much larger than would be suspected by a stranger on merely walking through the streets. In every direction it has expanded, and become modernized, by the addition of whole rows of newly-erected habitations, handsome villas, embosomed in gardens ; the approaches and highways are also cleared and widened—the whole now forming so pretty a model of an inland city, that one's grandfather would scarcely recognise it.

My guide next led me to the west end of the north aisle of the nave, and unlocking a door we ascended to some apartments over the north porch, known as “ the monks' rooms.” Dust and rubbish here also bear undisputed rule. There is nothing remarkable except a flight of stone steps leading down to near the northern porch ; but there is no egress, the terminus being blocked up. I was led to conclude that these apartments formed the Sanctuary or “ Galilee” of the Cathedral, in which, in imitation of the scriptural “ cities of refuge,” persons were admitted at all hours to claim the protection of the Church from their pursuers. The limits of the Sanctuary began at this very point, and described a circuit by way of the Palace, Lich Street, Sidbury, and back by the wall of the Severn. It was suppressed by James I. The term “ Galilee” has occasioned much controversy. The Rev. Alfred Suckling, in his *History of Suffolk*, says, “ In early ages there was always a Galilee attached to every church, in which public penitents were stationed, and the bodies of the dead occasionally deposited before interment. The name

is supposed to have been appended to these extreme porches because, as Galilee was the part of Palestine most remote from Jerusalem, so this portion of the building was most distant from the Sanctuary."

Having retraced our steps, and recrossed the nave, I was next shown through some dark and narrow passages to a similar suite of apartments, said to have been occupied by Oliver Cromwell. The darkness and gloom which reigned in this retreat must have been highly congenial to the spirit of that extraordinary man, who carried the work of demolition into almost every part of the structure. It is true that Cromwell is, as usually, called in to account for the destruction of any ancient church or castle, as King John is forced, in case of difficulty, to answer for its erection; but in this case history leaves us no doubt of the truth of the charge, for, among other horrible things committed by his party, it is said that they tore in pieces the Bibles and service books, put the surplices on their dragoons, who rode through the streets in that manner; and so wantonly wicked and shamelessly indecent were they in this their savage visitation of the church of Worcester, that whenever their subsequent enormities committed at other places want force in the description of them, they are usually pronounced "to have been as truly horrible as those they perpetrated at Worcester." I should have mentioned, in my description of the Lady Chapel, that there is not one brass monument remaining, although on many of the stones there are marks where brass figures had been fastened till these ruthless spoliators tore them up. Similar things have been done even up to our own day, though perhaps more from ignorance than malice. In an old Chapel of Ease in the neighbourhood of Stratford was, a few years ago, one of the very fine recumbent figures of a Templar. The figure was missed by a clergyman who sometimes visited the place, and he asked the sexton what had become of it. The answer was—"What! that cross-legged chap? Oh! I mended the road wi' he; a saved a deal o' limestone."

The present cloisters of our Cathedral were built in 1372; the

old cloisters, which were probably of wood, having been destroyed by fire. There is a profusion of sculpture on the roof, comprising a regal genealogy of Judah and Israel, figures of the Holy Family, the Evangelists, &c. This is a delightful spot for an occasional meditative lounge; it tells us in forcible language of the onward march of all things; and as its walls around, and the tombs beneath, connect us with the past by the strongest links, so they remind us that in a few short years—it may be days—we also shall be overtrodden by our survivors. The loud mirth of the schoolboys, rushing from the Hall, and chasing each other with boisterous merriment, not unfrequently puts an end to these sombre thoughts, else in one's reveries we might transport ourselves back a few centuries, and fancy that instead of those lads we saw the beadsmen waiting for alms at the door of the refectory (now the College School), the "coquinarius," or kitchen, returning with fresh provisions for the convent, or the chamberlain attending with towels for the monks as they stood at that bench (the lavatory) to wash their hands in Henwick water. But nearly three centuries have now rolled over our heads since the influence of this body was overthrown; since that period when (as Green expresses it) the solemnity of its processions and pageants closed, the voice of its tide and even songs died away, and all the functions of its vast and ponderous machinery ceasing their movements together, presented to the world an awful example of the mutability of power, in which even that, whose foundation was thought to have been laid on a rock deemed impregnable, and held sacred from the supposed divinity of its origin, disappeared like a vapour from before men's eyes; and its customs and ceremonies, whose observance was the familiar duty of our forefathers, in the present times become obsolete, a bye word, and almost wholly unknown among us.

In our zeal against Popish and monastic errors let us not however cast away the wheat with the chaff, but carefully preserve and resolutely defend the good grain which the sieve of the Reformation has separated for us. The daily service of the Cathedral should be held as an inestimable privilege left to us,

and it is to me a source of great surprise that so few avail themselves of it—

Are there no sinners *in the churchless week*
 Who wish to sanctify a vow'd repentance?
 Are there no hearts which fain would seek
 The only balm for death's unpitied sentence?
 Are there no poor, no wrong'd, no heirs of grief,
 No sick, who, when their strength or courage falters,
 Long for a moment's respite, or relief,
 By kneeling at the God of Mercy's altars?

Such a retreat, beyond and apart from the customary attendance on divine worship on a Sunday, seems to be occasionally necessary, to prevent one from becoming (if I may use the term) a monomaniac in the pursuit of business, and to keep alive those finer faculties and feelings which are in danger of being as it were entirely smothered in that rage for wealth, and power, and fame, which the general world considers to be the chiefest good. How grateful it is occasionally to quit such feverish society, and to calm the perturbed spirits by joining in the "service high and anthem clear." And here I must confess, that whatever may be lost to the Cathedral staff, it is my sincere and anxious hope that our legislators, in their wisdom, may never attempt to abolish those choral bodies, whose duty it is to maintain a perennial harmony in the souls of the congregation, by chanting the very language of the primitive Christians themselves under the varied circumstances of their hopes and trials—of their joys and griefs:

Hearken! sweet voices, 'neath those arches high,
 (Over the expectant, silent, dust beneath),
 Borne upwards by the deep attesting under-breath
 Of pealing organ, cease not continually to cry,
 "Holy! holy! holy! who was, and is, and is for aye
 Restorer of the Faithful! Conqueror of Death."

And now one word to the vergers and other inferior officers. I do not go the length of Mr. Hume in wishing to throw open our Cathedrals daily and indiscriminately to the public, but during the religious services to turn away the feet of any worshipper by extortion or incivility is a more serious matter. Strangers

and foreigners sneer at us for deigning to satisfy so mercenary a spirit, and I trust the day is coming when no money changers will be tolerated in the temple, for surely there are funds enough in the establishment to remunerate even a much larger body of subordinates than these.

I have heard it asserted, with much bitterness, that Cathedral congregations are all formalists, whose religion is devoid of vitality ; but let it not be thought there are no genuine worshippers here : from many a niche here and there, in my recollection, have constantly peeped out the same old faces—pleasant faces, which grew more bright and beamed with warm affection on recognising, in their old familiar corners, those who had been known to each other (though perhaps not by name) for many a long year. Such associations as these are not to be despised. I cannot but admire the Sir Roger de Coverley air with which one old gentleman regularly passes through the congregation, smiling kindly and in the most unembarrassed manner at his old friends, and then takes his seat in the utmost humility on the steps of the approach to the communion table, where he evidently joins heart and soul in the services, without one wish to claim the superior indulgences of a stall, or to become beholden to officials for any such patronage. Others I have seen who feel it a duty regularly to prop up some portion of King John's monument, and these never swerve an inch from the selected spot. There is much that is commendable in this habit of adhesiveness, for most of us have felt how easily the most trivial disarrangements will interfere with the fixity of the mind. I could point out dozens of the humbler classes whom I have seen here time out of mind, familiar not alone by their countenances, but as connected with the nook or corner of their adoption, and even the cut of their hair or the colour of their coat would for ever perpetuate them in my memory. It is said that an individual regularly attends church at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, twice every Sunday, and the coat he appears in on those occasions he has worn for 40 years, his hat 17, and his shoes 15 ! Although this poor fellow may well excite a

good-humoured laugh, I believe he is not without a counterpart in Worcester Cathedral. But let not an honest man be ashamed of an unfashionable garment ; such poverty is only unsightly to those who, decked out in gay attire, and lounging in the first and most prominent seats, would turn the house of God into a show-room for milliners and tailors. The custom of separating the men and women (by placing the former on the north and the latter on the south side) I do not much approve : levity is not much checked, nor piety advanced, thereby ; and I do not see that any thing is gained either to the single or the married. The custom is ancient, and is said to have been derived from that superstition which led our ancestors to avoid burying on the north side of churchyards, from a conviction that the prince of the air had a greater power over that part. *En passant*, I may quote the following *jeu d'esprit* (not a new one) on the subject :—

The churches in general, we ev'ry where find,
 Are places where men to the women are joined :
 At Worcester, it seems, they are more cruel hearted,
 For men and their wives are brought here to be parted.

I shall conclude this chapter by an observation on another and most interesting subject, connected not only with this Cathedral, but with the holy cause of charity—I mean the forthcoming musical festival. To those who object to such displays in the house of God, I would say that our ancestors, like the royal prophet musician of Israel, delighted in the musical services of the church, and to its adornment devoted the whole powers of their orchestra. “When,” says Wulstan, “the choral brethren unite, each chaunts your prayer by the peculiar art whercof he is master : the sound of instruments of pulsation is mixed with the sharp voices of reedes, and by various apparatus the concert proceeds sweetly.” From this we are justified in inferring that our Anglo-Saxon forefathers scrupled not to employ in the service of the church all the orchestral resources they had at command. I need not say how widely different is the effect of sacred music when produced in secular halls,

to that we experience from it in the Cathedral. There are sympathies between music and architecture which appeal to the feelings, allure from the storehouse of the mind thoughts long ago buried deeply there, melt the obduracy of human selfishness, and give us glimpses of eternity. More especially so is it in a spot sanctified by the holiest associations almost from the period when our forefathers ran wildly in the woods—in an edifice where the voices of a Cobham, a Carpenter, a Hooper, a Latimer, a Whitgift, a Stillingfleet, a Hough, and many other Christian prelates, have ascended in vindication of their religion and ours; where bishop after bishop, priest after priest, lie buried; and since the earliest of them had knelt, and prayed, and blest his flock, a thousand years had become as one day; the same everlasting Gospel was still preached, the same songs of praise ascended, and glory was ascribed to the same God, “as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” His feelings must indeed be obtuse who is insensible to such associations. I would wish the forthcoming “festival” (as indeed its name implies) to be looked forward to as in truth a religious luxury, for as Jeremy Taylor says—“God is pleased with no music from below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons.”

BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

The Right Rev. Henry Pepys, D.D., Hartlebury Castle.

DEAN.

The Very Rev. John Peel, D.D., The Palace, Worcester.

CANONS.

The Rev. Christopher Benson, late Master of the Temple.

The Rev. E. Winnington Ingram.

The Hon. and Rev. J. Somers Cocks.

The Hon. and Rev. J. Fortescue.

The Rev. J. Ryle Wood.

The Rev. E. H. Grove.

HONORARY CANONS.

Rev. H. J. Stevenson, M.A.	A. D.	1844.	. .	Hallow.
Rev. John Sandford, B.D.		1844.	. .	Dunchurch.

Rev. Thomas Baker, M.A.	. . .	1845.	. . .	Hartlebury.
Rev. W. H. Havergal, M.A.	. . .	1845.	. . .	{ St. Nicholas, Worcester.
Rev. R. B. Hone, M.A.	. . . .	1846.	. . .	Halesowen.
Rev. T. L. Claughton, M.A.	. . . .	1846.	. . .	Kidderminster.
Rev. John Garbett, M.A.	. . . .	1847.	. . .	{ St. George's, Birmingham.
Rev. Richard Seymour, M.A.	. . . .	1847.	. . .	Kinwarton.
Rev. H. A. Woodgate, M.A.	. . . .	1847.	. . .	Belbroughton.
Rev. H. J. Hastings, M.A.	. . . .	1847.	. . .	Areley Kings.

MINOR CANONS.

Rev. Allen Wheeler, B.D., Precentor and Sacrist.
 Rev. Robert Sanders, M.A.
 Rev. Thomas Littleton Wheeler, M.A.
 Rev. William Godfery, M.A.
 Rev. William Brown, M.A.

ORGANIST.

Mr. William Done.

LAY CLERKS.

Mr. Henry Shelton,	Mr. John Rickhuss,
Mr. Thomas Holloway,	Mr. Henry James Powell,
Mr. Enoch Rogers,	Mr. Henry Whitehouse,
Mr. Edward Williams,	Mr. John Stoyle.

SEXTONS.

VERGERS.

Mr. Dolvere and Mr. White. William Bull and J. Rogers.

The College School was endowed for 40 boys (King's Scholars).

Head Master . . . Rev. Octavius Fox, M.A.

Under Master . . . Mr. Thomas Baxter.

St. Oswald's.

Sweet solitude, when life's gay hours are past,
 Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at last.
 Toss'd through tempestuous seas, the voyage o'er,
 Pale we look back, and bless thy friendly shore.
 Our own strict judges, our past life we scan,
 And ask if glory hath enlarg'd the span :
 If bright the prospect, we the grave defy,
 Trust future ages, and contented die.

IT has often struck me that an almshouse, of all other sinecures in the world, is the very best, and that assuredly it is the most fitting one for him who stands as it were on the shores of time, awaiting the gale which is to waft him over the unknown deep. While other men in their old age are too frequently regarded with a malignant eye, equally for their poverty or wealth, the tenant of an almshouse is in that happy state of mediocrity which the sage desired who prayed for "neither poverty nor riches;" while the former on the one hand have to contend against the officiousness and cupidity of legacy hunters, or on the other to bear up against the frowns of niggard relatives, who fancy that the aged and infirm have no claims on existence when their finances are drained, the almshouse man, thanks to the pious forethought of others who have travelled life's pilgrimage before him, may take rest in his declining day, unmolested by a care, undisturbed by one anxiety, and left alone at his quiet leisure to contemplate "that bourne whence no traveller returns." It has often been to me a source of pleasure, as I passed by on a sunny day, to watch the inmates of St. Oswald's rambling dispersedly among the little flower knots which scent and adorn their humble but comfortable dwellings, or basking in the sun and talking of olden days, as they sat together on the resting-places which the assiduous perseverance of Mr.

Thompson has caused to be erected in the Sansome Walk. One can almost forgive a wish on such occasions to o'erleap some twenty years of existence, and look back, with them, thankfully, upon the toilsome path beset with passions, we have traversed. The same hands, too, which provided so munificent an endowment for the bodily requirements of these aged men and women, did not leave their spiritual wants uncared for. In the centre of their little community stands the chapel, from whence may daily be heard ascending the sound of prayer and praise.

The chapel is approached by passing through the principal gateway of the "Hospital," as it is still termed, and crossing a quadrangular court, formed by the dwellings of the inmates. At the entrance stood two tall, gray-headed, venerable men, as still as mutes. One of them, I believe, is styled "the Vicegerent," being a sort of lieutenant or delegate, whose duty it is to report to the master any irregularity of conduct that may come under his notice; the other, conjointly with him, performed the duties of a sexton, and also officiated as reading clerk. On my approach, they both bowed mechanically, like the clock-work knights one may read of in eastern fragments; and the clerk, to whom I applied for a seat, having handed me over to the vicegerent, the latter inspected me very keenly, and then put me in a seat close to the door. I suppose from this that the vicegerent has the charge of all the gentlemen visitors, while the clerk attends to the ladies—a guess which derived some little confirmation from the fact of the clerk being the younger man of the two. The interior of the building, which contains about 200 sittings, is neat and uniform; the seats are arranged to rise one above another, so that those in the hindermost may see well; there is a small gallery for singers at the west end; and the walls are dotted with monumental memorials. Among these is an inscription relative to some members of the Bulstrodes—a Saxon family, who, as the tradition goes, originally obtained that unique patronymic from having mounted themselves and their retainers on bulls to oppose the invasion of the Conqueror! The individual

mentioned on this tablet is George Gardner Bulstrode, lineally descended from Robert Bulstrode (temp. Henry III), and grandson to Sir Richard, of the same name, who was Adjutant-General of the forces under Charles the First and Second, and Envoy to the Court of Brussels. The son of the above George Gardner, I am informed, served in the army under the Duke of Wellington; and a part of his face having been shot away in some engagement, he underwent the operation of receiving a new face and jaw from the celebrated Carpio, whose clever manipulation was at that time well known to Europe: the flesh was drawn from the adjacent parts, and so skilfully adjusted, that the friends of the patient were even doubtful whether, if personal appearance were consulted, he had not cause to be thankful for the accident.

The congregation was composed of the inmates and a few of the gentry and others resident in the immediate neighbourhood, who regularly attend there, as a quiet and solemn retreat compared with many of the gaping, staring, and noisy churches of the city. The services were performed by the Rev. W. Hill (since appointed resident chaplain.) The rev. gentleman preached an excellent sermon on the unbelief of Thomas, and applied it with considerable effect to the individual conduct and experience of ourselves of the present day.

Among the hundreds of memorials here scattered about, I was pleased not to find one which was offensive to correct taste or feeling; there was indeed scarcely an instance of that hyperbolic extravagance with which the world is wont to load the tombs of the departed, thereby as it were *drawing bills upon heaven which will never be "honoured."*

In the time of a pestilence, five hundred years ago, St. Oswald's ground was granted by Bishop Wulstan de Braunsford as a burying-place for those who died, it being unsafe to admit more interments in the cemetery of the Cathedral. Ever since that time the spade has been in requisition here; but notwithstanding the constant tinkling of the little bell which almost daily reminds the passer-by that more ashes are here gathered

to their mother earth, the ground does not appear to be so crowded as I had been led to expect. This part of my subject brings me back to the history and associations of this interesting spot. It required but the easy transposition of a thought to bring before the mind's eye the diseased Crusader and the leprous monk of Worcester priory,* the objects of that benevolence which provided this retreat for them; the stol'd and shaven ecclesiastic chanting requiems on the very spot where I stood; and the matin bell of yonder nunnery calling the white sisterhood to their orisons.

The next mutation brought about by the altered circumstances of the times was to convert this infirmary into a hospital, that is, according to the ancient acceptation, a lodging for the destitute wayfarer; these were taken in, lodged and fed, at a time of our history when political economists had not in their wisdom thought of setting up an establishment where the mendicant has to work in a mill for two long hours *after* his scanty breakfast, and is then turned out, hungry and tired, upon the world's *bounty*. Henry the Eighth, in one of his capricious moments, thought proper not to dissolve this house, but gave the patronage to the Dean and Chapter, with whom it has remained ever since, except in the reign of James the First. The former monarch, we are told, once gave the revenues of a monastery to a gentleman for having moved his chair from before a fire, which was too warm for him, and from which he was too lazy to move himself. To a lady who had made a particular pudding for him he gave a large tract of very valuable

* Leland says—"This ancient and fayre large chapell was first erected for monks, then infected, or should after be infected, with leprosie. After, it was changed to an hospitall, and there was a maister, fellows, and poor folkes; but of the latter tymes it was turned to a free chapell, and beareth the name of St. Oswald, as a thing dedicated of ould time to him; and here were wont corses to be buried in time of pestilence, as in a public cemetery for Worcester." Davies, one of Stow's manuscript authors, reports St. Oswald to have been the founder of this hospital himself; but the leprosy was not known in England till long after Oswald's time; the small-pox also at that time was brought by the Crusaders into Europe, and seems to have been confounded with the leprosy.

abbey lands. And it is not improbable that through some similar freak a large proportion of St. Oswald's revenues also fell into private hands, occasioning much litigation, to which I shall refer by and bye. The introduction of the Reformation and of Poor Laws, having provided other means of relief for the destitute, this charity became a new foundation on the Protestant plan, for the support of aged men and women; to which was subsequently added a smaller charity hard by, endowed by Thomas Haynes, Esq., in the time of the second Charles. A great part of the lands however, which, in the time of Leland, had been "alienated and taken away," remained in private hands. Great exertions were made by Dr. Fell, the master (1631), to recover them, but with partial success. It was owing to the exertions of the late Mr. Godson, a few years ago, that the chief restoration was set on foot; that gentleman succeeding in raising the income from £300 to £2000, and the weekly stipend of 4s., formerly paid to the inmates, has been doubled. Thirty-eight suits for the recovery of houses and premises, of the estimated yearly value of £1991, were instituted; these premises being at the time let on leases, subject to fines on renewal, at a rental of £140. 6s. 8d. Of these thirty-eight suits the greater part has been pushed to a favourable issue, and a large fund of arrears has been accumulating. I do not know what legal obstacle remains in the way of settling this long pending suit, but it is reasonably expected that when the whole is adjusted to the satisfaction of the lawyers the amount of annual income will not be much short of £3000. The recipients now consist of sixteen men and twelve women, who have a coat and gowns every two years, with a regular supply of coals. It is highly gratifying to observe the scrupulous accuracy with which each inmate stacks up his little apportionment of coal in the rear of his comfortable dwelling, having separate compartments for that purpose. Their gardens, which are also on the allotment system, betoken a great deal of care and attention, and are justly a source of credit for the good management bestowed on them. I shall not readily forget the air of solid,

undisturbed comfort and repose with which one old gentleman, who sat in the door of his tent, was looking on his little promising crops, as he "smoked his Broseley" with the cool complacency of an old veteran. If ever I was guilty of an envious thought it was at that moment. The same divisional plan is carried out also in their eating and drinking, there being no common refectory, but each is allowed to expend his weekly income in whatever food, and to eat it in whatever way, he chooses. I believe this to be by far the best plan, and to prevent a vast amount of grumbling. I happen to know an almshouse in a town in Dorsetshire,* where it was formerly the custom to buy weekly for the inmates a quantity of meat, which was cut up into portions and distributed by the Prior; but with the best intentions, he, poor fellow, like the man with the ass, was never, on any one occasion, known to carve to the satisfaction of his brethren, for alas! *Prejudicata opinio obruit judicium*. One old grumbler would declare that he could not be expected to thrive upon *bones*, without something adhering to them; a second would sit in a corner, quietly venting his wrath against the leanness of his portion, in tones like the mutterings of a distant thunder-storm; while a third would loudly protest that all the fat the animal had ever possessed was unquestionably concentrated in that particular cutting the Prior had maliciously awarded to him. At length the masters decided on an ingenious plan to end these disputes; and from having witnessed its efficacy I can confidently recommend it for universal adoption in similar cases. It was enacted that when the weekly aggregate of meat came from the butcher, the Prior, as before, should cut it into the required portions, after which each man, according to seniority, came and made a selection, *but left the carver to be the last man*. Now this plan ensured a just division, for the carver was particularly anxious to "make all things equal," knowing full well that, if any difference were apparent, the smallest allowance would infallibly be left for himself.

* Sherborne, the author's native place.

When the entire funds of St. Oswald's shall have accrued, it is the intention, I hear, to increase the number of inmates; and I cannot but think this course would be far preferable to that of giving additional pay to those who are already there: the amount now given seems to be quite sufficient to insure all necessary comfort, and the longevity of the persons who die here is so great as in some measure to be a guarantee that their wants, health, and personal comforts, have not been lost sight of. I am also glad to hear that the selection of candidates is now more carefully made, and that the portals of this retreat will henceforth be open to the decayed tradesman, and to those who, in the common phrase, "have seen better days."

While at St. Oswald's, I inspected the site of the White Ladies' nunnery, which, centuries ago, stood on the north side of the above-named cemetery. Three sides of the outer walls of the chapel still partially remain, and the positions of the windows and altar are still plainly visible. On the eastern wall is a monument to "Richard Blurton, gent.," dated 1667; the deceased was a relative of the Somers and Foley families. Perhaps some of my antiquarian readers can inform me how any monument could have been erected here at so comparatively recent a date, seeing that the nunnery was suppressed and the nuns dispersed in the time of Henry the Eighth. Was it afterwards used as a parochial chapel?

At the western end is a descent of steps to an archway and vault, in one corner of which are distinct traces of two arches, now bricked up, which my attendant informed me were the entrances to subterraneous passages, one of which was said in old time to have led to the Cathedral, and the other to Hindlip. It is somewhat strange that Green, the historian, in opposition to Nash's statement, says that no indications of such openings could any where be traced, to authorise the conjecture. I have, however, no doubt of the fact, from my own observations as well at this spot as in several of the cellars in High Street, where distinct traces of such a passage still remain. Added to which, a good authority informs me that he remembers the late

Alderman Carden, in a conversation on the subject, mentioning that he himself had explored this passage in his younger days, now about eighty years ago, and actually penetrated through it as far as High Street.

This nunnery is said to have been founded by a Bishop of Worcester before the Norman conquest, for William of Malmesbury states that the mother of St. Wulstan took the veil at a house in Worcester, and this was the only nunnery ever built here. It was called "White Ladies" from the colour of the habit. The ancient cemetery is now an orchard, from which, I was informed, stone coffins and human remains had frequently been dug up, as also a variety of coins. The property is now held under the governors of a charity, founded by Queen Elizabeth, for the support of a blue coat school now kept in St. Swithin's parish. It is said to be from the garden of this house that a large pear tree in full fruit was removed and placed at the Cross when Queen Elizabeth visited this city, and from which she added to the city arms the *black pear*, in admiration, it is said, of the excellent government and order of the town, by which such beautiful and tempting fruit was preserved in so public a situation. Canon Fortescue is the present master; resident chaplain, the Rev. W. Hill.



St. Helen's.

THE antiquity of the church of St. Helen is spoken of by all the local historians; so far back as the year 963 it was "a profitable preferment," no less than eleven parochial chapels being at that time dependent on it; and in consequence of disputes between the priests of St. Helen and St. Alban concerning the parishes and the customs of their churches, Bishop Wulstan caused a scrutiny, the result of which was an affirmation that "there was no parish in the whole city of Wigracestre

but that of the mother church, to which St. Helen's had been a vicarage from the time of Ethelred, and Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, *when this see was first founded*, and Bosel made Bishop thereof in the year of our Lord's incarnation, 680."

The pavement and walls of this church are thickly set with memorials of the dead. On the north side of the communion table is a monument to Alderman John Nash, the donor of the hospital in New Street for poor men and women, which is maintained by the titles of Powick, under the disposal of the Chamber of Worcester for ever. The monument, which supports a recumbent figure of the deceased, is conceived in most barbarous taste. The inscription underneath the figure sets forth that a copy of the worthy Alderman's will (date 1661), was delivered to the Chamber of Worcester, "and appointed to be read once every year to them by the Town-Clerke." Whether or not this process is now annually gone through I cannot say.

ANNA UXOR JOHANNIS FLEETE
 ARMIGRI FILLIAET HERES JOHANNIS
 FREEMAN GENEROSI ET MARIE
 VXORIS EIVS QVINQ. LIBEROR.
 MATER QUOR. V. TRES SUPER-
 STITES RELIQUIT OBIT 30 AUGUSTI
 ETATISUE 25 A.D. 1600.

Here lyeth interde her parents oneley childe
 Her husbands deerest ioye whom a good life
 of piety and zeale and manners mylde
 If all the vertues longinge to a wife
 If love and teares and vows and common mone
 Could have redeemde her frendes now should
 not sorrow
 This stone of sad remembrance set in stone
 A cyphar to the nvmber of their sorrowes
 O life O death O both so saint-like paste
 So may we live so may we breathe our last.

On this monument there are five figures, in the attitude of prayer, represented clothed in long robes, and with an abundance of frill or ruff round their necks. On the south wall there is also a curious monument, bearing date 1630, but now fast crumbling away: it is to the memory of one of the Dingleys,

of Charlton, grandson to a Mr. Heaton, lord of a manor in Lincolnshire; underneath, indented in the stone, are a spear and halbert, crossed, and three cannon balls.

There is an aggregate sum of upwards of £200 (left in small legacies by various individuals in the seventeenth century) now lost to the parish. They are recorded on the tables, but have not been received within the memory of man.

In the year 1836 it was resolved by the parishioners to provide increased accommodation in the church; and in the progress of the alterations and repairs it was found necessary to remove the ancient pulpit from which, it is said, Bishop Latimer preached; this, and also some antique sedilia, were taken away altogether, and would probably ere this have been converted into firewood but that they fortunately fell into the hands of a person who could appreciate the old associations connected with them. The pulpit is still in the possession of Mr. Lucy, of Sidbury, Worcester, and ought to be purchased for the Museum or secured by some Antiquarian Society. It is in such a state of preservation as will admit of reërection, and might well have graced some one of the many churches which have recently arisen in this diocese. The panels of the pulpit are elaborately carved in the Gothic style; there is a fan pedestal or support, and likewise a "sounding board," all of massive oak, firm and in good order. It is hoped that this relic will not be allowed to share the fate of many others; for instance, Baxter's pulpit, formerly in the parish church of Kidderminster, but which is now or was recently in the possession of the Unitarians, and was exhibited in their chapel. In the progress of the above mentioned repairs, it is also said that the worthy Vicar (since dead) who at that time ministered at this church, observing the workmen remove this pulpit, seized from the wall a peg on which it was said Latimer had hung his hat, and carried off the memento with triumph. How trivial a thing becomes valuable by association!

St. Helen's being the mother church, the curfew is still rung here—a remnant of feudal times not so remarkably out of place

at the present time as has been imagined, seeing that it may now serve, if not to enjoin the extinguishing of fire and candle, at least to remind masters and employers of the time which is necessary to recruit the bodily and mental faculties of those who labour for them. The bells (an octave) in St. Helen's tower are remarkable for the inscriptions they bear, in honour and memory of the glorious battles and achievements of Queen Anne's victorious heroes. As most of my readers may not have seen them, they are here appended:—

1. **BLENHEIM.**

First is my note, and Blenheim is my name:
For Blenheim's story will be first in fame.

2. **BARCELONA.**

Let me relate, how Louis did bemoan
His grandson Philip's flight from Barcelon.

3. **RAMILIES.**

Deluged in blood, I, Ramilies, advance
Britannia's glory in the fall of France.

4. **MENIN.**

Let Menin on my sides engraven be,
And Flanders freed from Gallic slavery.

5. **TURIN.**

When in harmonious peal I roundly go,
Think on Turin, and triumph of the Po.

6. **EUGENE.**

With Joy I bear illustrious Eugene's name,
Fav'rite of fortune, and the boast of fame.

7. **MARLBOROUGH.**

But I, with pride, the greater Marlborough bear.
Terror of Tyrants, and the soul of war.

8. **QUEEN ANN.**

Th' immortal praises of Queen Ann I sound;
With union blest, and all these glories crown'd.

The stranger in quest of a comfortable seat, obliging attendance, and an impressive performance of divine worship, will find them at St. Helen's Church. Beyond this the only noticeable point in the services is one which, if commented on here, would have the effect of casting me upon the vexed sea of

controversy ; I shall, therefore, be satisfied in leaving the clergy generally to the instructions of their Diocesan, who has emphatically declared that as on the one hand no clergyman is justified in reintroducing non-essentials, whereby his brother may be "offended," so, on the other, a congregation have no more right to renounce their minister in consequence of things which by them are admitted to be "indifferent," but to him may be a matter of conscience, than a child may be allowed to renounce domestic ties because of the waywardness of his parents. I should mention that the zealous clerk at this church possesses an orthodox earnestness in his manner which is quite refreshing in these days of coldness, languor, and lounging. St. Helen's is in the gift of the Bishop (value £136). Rector, the Rev. J. H. Wilding. Clerk, Mr. F. Fletcher. Organist, Mr. W. Rogers. Population, 1323.



St. Alban's.

ON entering this edifice (it was during summer) a most overpowering effluvia forced me to beat a retreat for a few minutes ; the windows were nearly all close, and the ventilation being miserably imperfect, the exhalations arising in hot weather from the burying-ground underneath the floor of the church are of the most corrupt and injurious kind. There is also a plot of burial ground attached to the earth, inclosed by stretching a wall between two corners of the building ; it is of a triangular shape, and measures about two yards by five, the mould being heaped up against the church, with the surface about eight or ten feet from the ground in Little Fish Street ; so that the few remains which are laid or rather impounded here must be deposited at least on a level with if not higher than the pavement of the street, and within a few inches of the aforesaid

old wall, which abuts into it; the rains have also free license to percolate through the soil, and after becoming tinctured with whatever is there to be met with, may ooze out their impurities either under the church floor or on the pavement of the street. It is not likely that a practice proved to be so pregnant with evil will be much longer tolerated.

The church of St. Alban* is considered to be next in age to that of St. Helen, and indeed it has been a matter of dispute which of the two could rightly claim the priority, for Bishop Wulstan in 1092 held a synod, which was attended by "all the wisest men from the three shires in our diocese, Wigracestre, Gloucestre, and Warwicee," to decide certain points of priority and of customs between Alfnoth, priest of St. Helen's, and Alam, priest of St. Alban's; though the scrutiny which followed resulted in favour of the former, yet some historians have intimated that the decision was an interested one. Egwine, the third Bishop of Worcester, is said to have built a church here at the beginning of the eighth century, giving its patronage to the monks of Evesham. St. Alban's church underwent repair in the year 1815, and Valentine Green declared on that occasion "it looked decent, but nothing more need be said." The church is divided into two aisles by a row of most primitive and irregular arches, with not a single ornament, except the ghostly distorted heads which form the corbels. There is a monument at the east end of the north aisle to

"FRANCIS. YE. FIRSTE. BEGOTTEN
SONE. BETWENE. ROBERT. WARMSTRY†
AND. MARIE. HIS. SECONDE. WIEF. AND
DAUGHTER. TO. RICHARD. BROWNE.
OF. LITTE. FROME. DEPARTED. THE
XI. OF. JANVARIE. 1589."

* There are comparatively few churches dedicated to St. Alban. He was one of the first of the British martyrs, who suffered under the persecution of Diocletian, and Gildas and Bede tell us that when St. Alban was ordered to execution, he and a multitude of men walked dry through the river, and this miracle converted even his executioner.

† Probably the grandfather of Dean Warmestry, who represented the clergy of this county in two convocations, in one of which he made a speech against images, altars, crosses, and the new canons, and who, in the civil

This inscription is carved on a mural stone tablet, which also bears the arms and crest of the deceased, all rudely cut, and bordered with a deep edging of black. On both sides of the communion table are also old monuments to certain members of the Wyatt family, whose name, as connected with the charities of Worcester, is worthy of being had in remembrance, together with their animating motto, *Toleranda et speranda*—"Endure and hope!" The only remaining monument in this church calling for notice is a small square tablet on the third pillar; the inscription is in black letter, on what was once a gilt ground; it bears date 1632, and indicates, as far as the words have not been eaten away by time, that the parent (Francisca Drummond) died in childbed with her infant son, and that one tomb shelters both. The versification (of which I can only decipher the following lines) is, I suppose, a specimen of what was considered tolerably good poetry between two and three centuries ago:—

“(Fatal doom) either he must destroy
The author of his being, or enjoy
No freedom, nor no life, he chose to dye
Rather than act so sad a tragedie.
And now together like most loving friends,
They sweetly rest, their souls with one accord,
Above with Halleluiah prayse the Lord.”

Among the charitable bequests^r recorded on the tables is one by “Blundell and Osney;” and it is set forth, that in consequence of a dispute between Robert Newdick, of London, and the parishioners of St. Alban’s, it was decreed by the Court of Chancery, in the time of Elizabeth, that the said Robert Newdick should yield up certain rents to the amount of £3. 6s. 8d.

wars, was appointed on behalf of the town to treat with the army of the Parliament respecting the surrender of this place in the month of June, 1646. This family were well known as being connected with the Cathedral for many years; their residence was at the large mansion from which the “Slip” [“A long narrow piece”—*Addison*.] took its name. This fine building is supposed to have been occupied by the second Lord Windsor, an ancestor of the late Earl of Plymouth; it had a quadrangular court, and gardens to the edge of the Severn. It is now occupied as an encaustic tile manufactory.

for the minister to preach "three learned and good sermons" on certain specified feast-days in every year, and for lack of every such sermon the sum of 6s. 8d. to be deducted, in favour of "poor ancient maids and widows." I know not to what to attribute these frequent donations for sermon preaching, unless that some of our clerical ancestors were shockingly remiss in their pastoral charge, and required an occasional pecuniary stimulant. St. Ambrose says, "idleness is the devil's pillow;" wherefore many Christians, who think the devil deserves none, take it away from him, and put it under their own heads.

The congregation consisted chiefly of poor women and school children; the latter were marshalled on rising seats in the north aisle, with the exception of a few who ascended to a kind of gallery at the west end, calculated to hold about a dozen of them. The whole body sang in unison, though, in consequence of the distance of the two flanks, by no means in union or concert; the psalms in use here are a selection from those usually appended to the prayer book, and which adds another to the multifarious forms in which I had previously seen the psalms produced in churches. The rector of St. Alban's performs—what few clergymen do in general—triple duty on each sabbath—once at St. Alban's and twice at St. Helen's, and I could not help contrasting this with the policy of some of your fox hunting parsons of the past generation, and in particular with that of the rev. gentleman who held this identical cure some half-a-century ago, whose Sunday vestments, as I am informed, were sometimes a gown and at others a shooting jacket!

The number of boys and girls in the Sunday Schools of St. Helen's and St. Alban's amounts to about 160, and there is a clothing club attached. The Bishop presents to this living (value £74). Rector, the Rev. J. H. Wilding. Clerk, Mr. Fletcher. Population, 247.



St. Michael-in-Bedwardine.

Again returns the day of holy rest,
Which, when he made the world, Jehovah blest,
When, like his own, he bade our labours cease,
And all be piety and all be peace.

THE old Church was supposed to stand on the site of Bishop Oswald's Cathedral, and was probably raised from its ruins for the use of the inhabitants of the Castle precincts. It is presumed by Green that this was the site of the once famous leaden spire, or clochium, on the bell tower, part of the eastern wall of which making up the west end of the church. The spire was 150 feet in height and the tower 60 feet. There was a tradition that the latter was built by King John, but Strype refers it to Henry III. The bells were consecrated by William de Blois in 1220 ; in 1539 they were removed to the Cathedral ; the leaden spire was taken down in 1647 and sold for £617. 4s. 2d., which was divided between Inglethorpe's hospital, St. John's, Castlemorton, Dodderhill, and other churches and almshouses which had received damage during the civil wars. My recollections of the old church by no means lead me to coincide with Valentine Green, the historian, who, in his "Survey," remarked that it was "very neat, decent, and commodious, and had very pretty carvings." I have the recollection of some rude stone figures, the majority of which had suffered decapitation probably contemporaneous with Charles the First ; and likewise I have an indistinct notion that the old clerk invariably kept all the singing to himself, and was most devoutly listened to by the congregation, but whether from a feeling of incompetency to accompany the old gentleman in all his travesties, or from a pious wish not to meddle with a thing of which they probably knew about as much as himself, it is too late for the historian now to collect. The old church stood for many years in a frowning attitude, and threatened double

burial to the possessors of the graves below. Its removal was a great improvement to the neighbourhood, and made way for an unimpeded view of the Cathedral. The new erection is at a short distance from the site of the old one, and was completed and consecrated in the year 1840. The style is of the 13th century, being a transition from the Early English to the Decorated. Passing through a vestibule, which is separated from the body of the church by an elegant oak screen, the upper portion of which forms the front of a singing gallery, you enter the chapel-like building, and instantly participate in a feeling of comfort and of quiet devotion unknown to many of the large, noisy, staring churches in the city. The body is divided into aisles by three pointed arches, springing from clustered shafts; the pavement is composed of encaustic tiles—a very neat specimen of the revival—from Chamberlain's manufactory; and the chancel window (beneath which is some very good arcade work in Norman stone) is of stained glass, of excellent design, in the execution of which, the artist (Mr. Rogers) has been highly successful in imparting a mosaic-like appearance and a richness of colouring equalling the ancient examples. Let it not be thought I have turned Puseyite, in my admiration of matters external; for although I saw here much to gratify the eye, yet there was no Camdenian extravagance to frighten nervous people. The whole was appropriately neat and decorous; besides which I know of no place of worship wherein comfort and religious abstraction may be so easily attained, owing to the absence of those corps of "infantry" who in most other churches mutilate the musical part of the services and incessantly cannonade the ears of the congregation with their fits of coughing. I took my seat in one of the aisles by the side of a poor old woman, who evidently thought I was the proprietor of the pew, as she arose and would have gone out, but that I prevented the movement. The congregation was limited and select; I hope, however, these "Notes" will have the effect of drawing many others there, who I think are not generally aware of its being open as invitingly to strangers as to parishioners, and many

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likewise thinking the diminutive size of the church will not guarantee them a right of *entrée*. When Socrates was asked why he had built for himself so small a house—"Small as it is," he replied, "I wish I could fill it with friends."

The services commenced with that most appropriate anthem, "I will arise and go to my Father," which was sung by five voices in a manner that surprised and delighted me, for they had evidently been well trained in part singing, and exhibited its pleasing effect as compared with the unison system. Part singing, when judiciously blended, is the only apology that can be made for the lack of an organ; but how miserably deficient are many churches and chapels in both respects. In London, hundreds have gone to Roman Catholic chapels to "hear the music," until, from first merely gratifying their curiosity, they have become constant attendants, and even converts. The psalmody of our churches ought at least to be perfect as far as it goes—not to have an organ out of tune, the children singing half a note too flat, and the clerk bellowing out in one key, while the united movement grates upon the ear in no key at all! Will any man of common sense tell me that the droning of a solo clerk, or the screaming of a few discordant trebles, aye, and the bad taste and vulgarity of some of those modern hymns which are so often substituted for the music of the Church, will not go far to neutralize or banish the solemn and yet elevated devotion which our liturgy is so calculated to produce? Will any one tell me that such disgusting burlesques suit well the tone and spirit of our noble collects? Will any one maintain that they are really calculated to *raise* our devotional feelings, and elicit emotions meet for those whose feet stand in the house of their God?

The rector (the late Rev. W. H. Weston) preached an admirable sermon on the insufficiency of faith without works, as evidenced in the life of Balaam, who, though anxious to "die the death of the righteous," and having a clear apprehension and belief in the dispensation under which he was a prophet, "madly," as some had said, went astray, and even counselled

schemes to debauch the Israelites, and to withdraw from them that blessing of which he himself had been the messenger.

At the close of the services the shrill whimpering of a very young infant announced that an appendix might be expected in the shape of the baptismal service. The youngster went through its ablutions with a magnanimity which betokened much for the future in a hero of some two months' development. I was about to leave the group, to regain the street, when my progress was arrested by a procession of another character—the sad attendants of frail mortality to its last long home. How different, thought I, are the feelings, the hopes, and prospects of these parties—the one ushering a new being into existence, the object of their fondest hopes; the other conducting a fellow mortal to that farewell point which divides time from eternity, where

“ Their hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss!”

The Dean and Chapter are the patrons of this living (value £90). Rector, the Rev. G. St. John. Clerk, Mr. Bond. Population, 476.



St. Andrew's.

THE church of Saint Andrew is supposed to have been erected in the eleventh century, and was anciently inappropriate to the Abbey of Pershore; it has a neat interior, with Corinthian altar-piece, and a small organ. From the monumental memorials, so thickly scattered about, one would presume that in the flourishing period of this parish's history (when the clothing trade was so extensively carried on) the families of the Oldnalls and the Higginses must have well-nigh divided the parochial limits between them, and that

clothiers and bakers then had it all their own way. The vestry—an enclosure at the eastern end of the northern aisle—is rich in mural erections: among them is a curious one in the style of two centuries ago, exhibiting carved embodiments of a not less fruitful than pious couple, who are bringing up a long train of “olive branches”—the respected sire heading the van with four fine boys, and the worthy matron bringing up the rear with five blooming girls—all separately kneeling in the attitude of prayer. The names of the interesting group were not visible, for the mouldering dampness which lay on the wall, occasioned by an accumulation of damp soil which till recently had been heaped against the outside, had done much to deface these ancient relics. This same cause of defilement, which had not only greatly endangered the health of the clergyman and congregation, but had seriously injured the stability of the edifice, was removed about four years ago by the displacing of the soil and the digging of a deep trench. The north wall is apparently a portion of the original structure. Under the north-west window was a monument with the following inscription:—

Short of Weight.

H L T B O

R W

I H O A J R

A D 1780 A 63

This Mr. Weston, it appears, was a baker, and the inscription was conceived in the imputed spirit of the baker's craft. Green the historian remarks: “In *full measure* it would have stood thus: ‘Here Lieth The Body Of Richard Weston, In Hopes Of A Joyful Resurrection.’” The addition of “*short weight*” however appears to have been the invention of Green's or some other waggish imagination, for there are now no traces of it. But such untimely jests are by no means rare: here is an instance of an epitaph I have somewhere seen on one John Underwood (also presumed to have been a baker)—

“Ah, cruel Death! that dost no good
With thy destructive maggots,
Now thou hast cut down Underwood,
What shall we do for faggots?”

I agree with the commentator, that “ a man making riddles on his grave raises no monument to his understanding.” It is, however, tolerably clear that the joke in question was not perpetrated by the aforesaid Richard Weston or his friends.

On that part of the roof which is under the belfry there are some curious carvings (brought to light in the time of the good Bishop Hurd), which, on account of their diminutiveness, and the distance from the eye of the spectator, would ordinarily escape his attention. During some recent repairs they were discovered, and sketches of them taken by a talented pupil of Mr. Eginton, architect, of this city. The groining under this tower consists of four principal cells, or vaults, separated by moulded ribs ; these again subdivided. At the intersection of these ribs the following subjects occur :—On the east vault, figures of the Virgin, St. Peter, St. James the greater, and St. Thomas. On the west vault a figure of the Deity, in the act of benediction, bearing a representation of the crucifixion ; a Pope, blessing two children, from whose lips are issuing labels or scrolls ; two Saints, with books, whose distinctive emblems are obliterated. On the south vault, the Annunciation, St. Bartholomew, St. Jude, and St. Philip. The north vault contains the Nativity, St. Paul, St. John the Evangelist, and St. James the less. On the diagonal ribs St. George appears in the act of slaying the dragon ; St. Andrew ; a Bishop, bearing a book, and in the act of benediction ; and a King, with a book and sceptre. At the springing of the vaulting ribs are bosses, with foliage, grotesque heads, angels, &c. The whole carvings are executed with great spirit and effect ; and since their discovery several of the *cognoscenti* have paid them a visit.

The most striking ornament of this church (and, I may add, of the city), is its spire, the construction of which is said to have been founded upon a comparative view of the most beautiful and admired structures of Europe. For chaste proportions and a graceful tapering form it may probably risk a comparison with any other. A common mason of this city, named Wilkinson, built it in 1733, when the old one had been fractured by

lightning ; it now remains a monument to his genius, though, I believe, he never emerged from the position of a journeyman. A tradition is in existence with regard to the original spire—that it was erected by a wealthy individual, out of gratitude for having, on a certain foggy night, been preserved from a watery grave, otherwise from walking into the Severn, in consequence of hearing St. Andrew's bells suddenly strike out. This spire, however, not being the first to which I have heard the same tale applied, I suspect that monkish priestcraft gave it the start, and then assisted in its multiplication.

The present spire has been the scene of some singular oddities and adventures. At the period of the repairs in 1801 a valiant knight of the strop-and-lather brotherhood (named Baylis, I believe) ascended to the top with several of his companions, on whose chins he operated, with perfect composure and his usual quantum of skill, at this truly giddy height of 245 feet 6 inches from the ground, and the point of the spire being no more than $6\frac{5}{8}$ inches diameter ! Somebody has declared his opinion that the most uncompromising specimen of coolness and independent firmness is the man that can shave with cold water by candlelight on a frosty morning ; but the adventurer of this opinion had never heard of the barbers of Worcester. About the same time, a Mr. Joseph Cottrill, then in the employ of Barr and Co., china manufacturers, painted a cup when on the top of the spire, which is now in the possession of his widow, at Henwick ; it is a small white cup, with red sprays of flowers, and underneath the bottom of it is the inscription (which certainly betrays no token of trepidation)—“ Painted on the top stone of St. Andrew's spire, Worcester, July 18, 1801 ;—Jos. Cottrill.” While these same repairs were going on, one of the masons' mortar boys, who had originally been a sweep, and bore the appropriate pseudo-nomen of “ Spring-heel,” would frequently in rough windy weather exhibit a bit of daring trickery “ on the slack rope :” attaching a rope to the extremity of the scaffolding, he would lay hold of it, throw himself off, and descend nearly to the tower, the wind usually swinging him ten or

twenty yards hither and thither, while he dexterously prevented a collision with the spire by staving himself off with his feet as he passed it! At length, it is said, a nail or projecting part of the scaffolding caught an unnameable portion of his tattered wardrobe, and he miraculously, and by the greatest exertion of the men, escaped an awful death. History is silent as to the fate of this aerial *voyageur*, but there is no doubt that ultimately he was the victim of *some kind* of suspension. Another exploit connected with this spire, though on a much smaller scale, is related of a lad named Hobro, who, some twelve or fifteen years ago, when the vestry laid their heads together to consider in what manner the wind vane, which had unaccountably halted in its circumvolutions, should be compelled to "move on," procured a colossal kite, got into a boat on the Severn, and by skilful navigation piloted his aerial machine clear away up to the refractory cock, in which he managed to entangle it, when the string broke, and the light-winged messenger lay for several days like an impaled rook, flapping its wings on the breeze as it passed by, till at length, in a stormy night, it was blown away, when the act of separation caused the vane to resume its important functions, much to the comfort of the local authorities and others who had been daily watching progress with considerable anxiety.

To come down to a later period in the history of these achievements, in the month of September, 1844, at the completion of certain repairs, in the course of which 16 feet of the top of the spire had been rebuilt, it was honoured with an official visit of Freemasons. The capital at the summit of the spire was fixed in its position by Mr. Bennett, then the W. M. of the Lodge 349, assisted by the Senior Warden and Churchwarden, Mr. James Knight, Mr. H. J. Powell, secretary, Mr. Joseph Stephens, master of the ceremonies and architect, under whose superintendence the work was performed; and for the rest of their acts on this occasion, are they not written in the books of the lodge? save and except, probably, the record of the total amount of the bottles cracked then and there, the weight of "the fragrant weed" disposed of, and the list of toasts, patriotic, appropriate,

and local, not forgetting "the health of the old cock" who spread his presiding wing above them.

There are about 140 children in the Sunday Schools belonging to this church. In the year 1841 a Girls' National School was established in the Lower Quay, for the use of the parishes on the western side of the city. Nearly 160 children attend these schools. It was originated, I believe, at the suggestion of the worthy rector, who for the last sixteen years has officiated here, (nearly fourteen years of which he passed in the capacity of curate); and the Rev. Mr. Chesshyre (supported by a committee of clergy and laymen) was chiefly instrumental in carrying the work into effect. An infant branch has also been added, which seems to be highly acceptable to the neighbourhood. Whether or not these excellent institutions are to continue their usefulness must depend on the public support; the expense is considerable, even though managed on the most careful and economical plan; and I trust this hint will have the effect of strengthening the hands of the minister, who is second to none in his efforts at practical usefulness.

The charities of this parish (at least those which are within the administration of the church) are said to have been grossly mismanaged and lost sight of upwards of half a century ago. The result of my investigations under this head is, that at present there is available for the various specified classes of poor an aggregate sum of about £50 per annum, in money, besides small quantities of bread and coal, at stated periods, one of Shewring's six almshouses in the Tything for "honest widows or maidens of good reputation," and Jarvis's property in "the China Slip" for apprenticing poor boys. No less a sum than £527, the interest of which would have been available to the poor of this parish, has been irrecoverably lost. This is no fault of the present management, which has been conducted by Mr. Lingham in a most clear and pains-taking manner. It seems that many years ago sums were lent to tradesmen on interest, in accordance with the will of the donors; but the dispensers of the charities incautiously omitted to take proper securities, and

hence the present loss. The loss of some of these items is much to be deplored ; for instance—

“ Mrs. Ann Shewringe, wife of Alderman Shewringe—1698—£20, to purchase land on good security, and the increase to be employed yearly in buying four shirts to be given to four poor honest men, and four smocks to honest, poor widows, wives, or maidens, lawful inhabitants of this parish, to be given on St. Thomas’s Day.”

Others denote eccentricity :

“ Mrs. Martha Jones—1727—interest of £30, or 5*s.* each to be given yearly to the clerk and sexton, and to lay out the rest in bread for the poor ; but if her corpse be removed after laid in the grave, then the said largess to go to Mrs. Lane, her executrix.”

“ Lewis Randolph, pewterer, London—13*s.* 4*d.* to be given to the poor on Candlemas Day, being his wife’s birth-day.”

The charity tables set up in the church indicate the great success of the clothing trade in this parish about a century and a half ago, the last relics of which some of the old inhabitants still remember to have seen in the shape of carvings of woolsacks and other insignia on the half-timbered houses, which seem now to be nearly extinct. If these merchants pushed a thriving trade, it was apparently not forgotten by them that property has its duties as well as its rights, for they gave liberally of their abundance—their good deeds were assuredly not “interred with their bones.” The clothing, carpet, and glove trades, have however successively dwindled away with the change of fashion and circumstance, and the population (which has actually been decreasing for several years) now chiefly consists of the working classes and of the wretched poor, many of them huddled together in lodging-houses and other receptacles, whole families frequently being found clubbing together in one small tenement.

Green notices the spacious cemetery of St. Andrew’s, consecrated by Bishop Thornborough in 1635. There can be little doubt that the addition made to the churchyard in 1844 formed part of the original cemetery. Two old tenements were pulled down, and the ground on which they stood, as also a garden, restored to the churchyard, from which it had been walled off, as I am told, many years ago. The mischief of crowded burials

was taking effect in Worcester, I find, as far back as between two and three centuries, for in the year 1638, the Cathedral charnel-house, the upper story of which had been *fitted up as a school*, was the source of great complaint, on account of the unwholesome damp and smells experienced by the scholars, to the injury of their health; so much so, that the school was removed to the refectory, where it is now carried on.

An ancient doorway, near the west window, which was closed when the tower was faced, has lately been reopened and restored, as also an entrance from the north side of the churchyard, which had been suffered to remain bricked up for about half-a-century. The Dean and Chapter of Worcester are the patrons of St. Andrew's (value £165). Rector, the Rev. George Hodson. Clerk, Mr. George Yeates. Organist, Mr. Newton. Population, 1677.



St. Nicholas.

THIS building, approached by a flight of semi-circular steps, is in the Doric style, surmounted by a cupola, pyramidical top and ball. It was completed in 1732. The churchyard, which is securely enclosed with iron railings, is an exact illustration of the poetic fancy of the author of "The Irish Heiress," who, speaking of a London square, says—"It is a poor sickly plot, penned up in a place called a square, and looking for all the world as though *Nature had been there impounded for having the audacity to stray into town.*"

The original church, which stood on this site, is said to have been raised by some Crusaders on their return from the first holy war. The Saint (Nicholas) to whom it was dedicated was the patron of scholars and invocative saint of mariners; he was an eminent Bishop of Myra in Lycia. By the protection he extended to the destitute orphan and the stranded traveller,

St. Nicholas obtained a station in those heathen fanes on the coast of his diocese which were afterwards converted into Christian temples ; hence he is considered the common tutelary saint of maritime churches. His festival (on the 6th of December) was observed in the superstitious days of Roman dominancy by the scholars of Worcester school coming to the church with lighted wax candles in their hands, and there assisting at mass and vespers. In the purer days of the reformed dispensation, although the name of the saint is retained, the feast is not observed—at least, in its original form ; but it would seem that the chief characteristic of the saint—charity—is still religiously and liberally dispensed here (in fulfilment of the bequests of various pious individuals) by the rector and churchwardens, in the shape of bread, clothing, and fuel, to a very considerable amount, at stated periods of the year, by a list, *which is annually revised*, in order that, if possible, deserving objects alone may be relieved. I am informed that these regular annual charities amount to nearly £120.

As regards the conduct of the services, this church will bear a comparison with any other I have yet visited, and seems to be kept as carefully out of the track of Romanism on the one hand as it is clear of the highway of Dissent on the other. The organ (which has been repaired by Mr. Nicholson, of this city) and the choir are most efficient, though perhaps somewhat too powerful for this small building. I noticed that the congregation (and especially the female portion) abstained from joining in the musical part of the services. One word on this subject. Oh, gentle ladies, depend on it your most sweet voices would sound as melodious in the service of God as in the lighter, every day music, with which you enchant your domestic circles. Don't be misled by the notion that your paying a choir to sing for you can be any excuse—is not this the very principle on which, in superstitious countries, individuals having plenty of sins and money, but no time to pray, have actually conferred a livelihood on a body of bead-counters and other poor wretches, to do the drudgery for them?

The sermon preached on this occasion at once unfolded to me the secret of the great popularity and success which had attended the ministry of the then rector (the Rev. H. J. Stevenson.) It was an eloquent and practical appeal to the consciences and the experience of his hearers. The rev. gentleman had just been presented to the living of Hallow, near this city; and his removal occasioned the general regret of his parishioners, among whom he was much esteemed.

The interior of the church of St. Nicholas wears a warm and comfortable appearance, with its dark wainscotted sides, regularity of structure, and the exceedingly neat and cleanly arrangements. The altar-piece is of Doric design, above which is a circular window, the stained glass representing the hieroglyphic dove, encompassed with rays of brilliant transparency. The pews in the body of the church are all free, and are allotted by the churchwardens to the parishioners; the gallery, it seems, is what is called private property, having been built by subscription some years ago, when the pews were allotted to the subscribers. In the evening they are thrown open to the general congregation, but a larger church and more free sittings appear to be much required. The antiquary will not find much food, or dust, at this place, on account of the erection being comparatively modern. There are several achievements (*vulgo* "hatchments") hung on the walls as you enter—one of which belongs to a General Morrison. The font, which was formerly hidden behind the entrance door, had been removed to the centre of the church. The worthy rector had also effected a thorough ventilation of the whole building. The tower contains a handsome clock, which is (sometimes) lit up at night, the expenses being defrayed by rate.

Under the church is a spacious crypt, the floor of which was the floor of the old church, the hinges of the original entrance doors being still remaining. The originator of this kind of receptacle, whatever his intentions may have been, is assuredly not entitled to the thanks of posterity, either for an extraordinary display of foresight or prudence. The horrible details relative

to the effect which crowded burials in cities and underneath churches has had upon the sanitary condition of the population, as unfolded before the House of Commons' Committee, will bear me out, and, if generally read, would undoubtedly deter thousands from attending such places of worship, as well as from burying their dead there. There is no excuse in the case of Worcester, whose churchyards are in a truly revolting state, as I am credibly informed, while at the same time a spacious cemetery, at an easy distance, is at command. Tell me not of ancestral pride, and dark steaming chambers of death and pollution : I would that my body lay in the village churchyard or the open cemetery :

“ I gazed upon the glorious sky,
 And the green mountains round,
 And thought that when I came to lie
 Within the silent ground,
 'T were pleasant, that in flowery June,
 When brooks sent up a pleasant tune,
 And groves a joyous sound,
 The sexton's hand my grave to make,
 The rich, green, mountain turf should break.
 There, through the long, long summer hours,
 The golden light should lie,
 And thick young herbs and groups of flowers,
 Stand in their beauty by,
 The oriole should build and tell
 His love-tale close beside my cell ;
 The idle butterfly
 Should rest him there, and there be heard
 The housewife bee and humming bird.
 And what if cheerful shouts at noon
 Come from the village sent,
 Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
 With fairy laughter blent ;
 And what if, in the evening light,
 Betrothed lovers walk in sight
 Of my low monument :
 I would the lovely scene around
 Might know no sadder sight nor sound.
 I know, I know I should not see
 The season's glorious show,
 Nor would its brightness shine for me,
 Nor its wild music flow :

But if around my place of sleep
 The friends I love should come to weep,
 They might not haste to go.
 Soft airs and song, and light and bloom,
 Should keep them lingering by my tomb."

The crypt of St. Nicholas is not now much used for sepulture, only three or four funerals having taken place there during the last two years, and in these the precaution of burying in lead has been adopted. The burial ground round the church having been filled with bodies, and closed about seven years ago, the dead are buried chiefly at the cemetery on Tallow Hill, and occasionally at the parish churches. I would just remark, that the practice of burying in any other parish church or yard deprives the clergyman (whose ground happens to be full) of his fees; and so far was this the case in the parish of St. Nicholas that from personal inquiry, three years ago, I found that out of 41 funerals, no less than 20 went to other parishes, and of the remaining 21 no less than 15 were too poor to pay the fees. The emoluments under this head are generally much less than they are thought to be, and the consideration for the poor which is characteristic of the present rector tends much to reduce the receipts under this head. The Sunday Schools of St. Nicholas contain about 65 boys, 73 girls, besides a few young women, and there are 30 scholars in the Night School, which is supported by subscription; the scholars in the latter being required to belong also to the Sunday School. There is a clothing club attached, to which the children pay 2d. per fortnight, and a good per centage is added thereto at Christmas. It should be added that the managers of this club have made a rule not to receive the pence on Sundays. The Bishop's School is also in the parish, but on Sundays the children attend St. Andrew's Church at present. A coal club exists in this parish, by means of which coal to the value of £55 was distributed last winter to 84 subscribers, whose deposits amounted to £43.

The patronage of this church is vested in the Bishop (value £260). Rector, the Rev. W. H. Havergal. Curate, Rev. J. H. Thompson. Clerk, Mr. James Lloyd. Organist, Mr. Shelton. Population, 1919.

St. Clement's.

THE present church of St. Clement was completed in 1823, and consecrated by Bishop Cornwall in March of that year. It was built in the Norman style, with the avowed wish to give some variety to the public buildings of the city. The details (except the windows) were copied from some of the best specimens of the style. The interior of the church has a light, cool, and comfortable appearance; the chancel arch, supported by columns, is very handsome; the corbels which give support to this arch represent the heads of Cranmer and Latimer; the western arch is similarly supported by Wickliffe and Luther. Over the altar-piece is a painted window, with groups depicting the nativity, baptism, crucifixion, &c.; it is well executed, but is out of character with the very ancient style of architecture, being somewhat too showy and glaring. There is a handsome gallery round three sides of the church, and the whole building contains accommodation for upwards of 800 persons, one-half of the sittings being free. The expenses (nearly £5000) were defrayed chiefly by subscription, aided liberally by the Bishop and Dean and Chapter. The parishioners borrowed £1800 on the rates; and, to their honour be it spoken, the whole was defrayed without one vestry quarrel on the subject of the church-rate during a period of twenty-one years. It is a somewhat remarkable circumstance, that the Bishop who consecrated the building, as also the architect, the contractor, the churchwardens for the time being, the clerk, sexton, and every parishioner belonging to the Building Committee, have been for several years removed by the hand of death.

I had hoped that on the occasion of my visit I should have once more seen and heard the worthy and universally beloved clergyman who holds this living (the term "living" is not lite-

rally correct, for the income is what would barely support a common clerk). The appearance of a patriarchal head, on which the snows of some threescore and ten winters had fallen, led me to think my wish was gratified. But it was not he; and I learned with regret that the rev. gentleman had for many months been residing at a watering place in Somersetshire for the benefit of his health, which was much impaired. His congregation however has since hailed his return as that of a father, for never were pastor and flock more worthily united. It was well said by Wilberforce, that the number of individuals who may be preserved from eternal misery and brought to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and the degree of the eternal happiness, even of the happy, must humanly speaking depend on the minister set over the parish to which they belong. The services on the present occasion were quietly conducted, and the singing was tolerably good. The arranging of children *inside* the communion rails is in my opinion objectionable. In primitive times, as Clemens Alexandrinus tells us, none were allowed to approach the communion-table but such as were in holy orders, unless it were the Greek Emperors at Constantinople, who were allowed to go up to the table, make their offerings, and immediately return back. In spite of the danger I may incur of being called hard names, I nevertheless avow my belief that such an arrangement as I have just mentioned will induce in the minds of the young people an idea of inconsistent familiarity, and a lack of that reverential fear and self-abasement with which that place should be approached.

The crypt, which is underneath the church, keeps it apparently dry and healthy, but does not appear to be well ventilated. Among the memorials in the churchyard is a very singular one of the deaths of four brothers and sisters, of the name of Tomlins, who died on the following dates:—Elizabeth, February 7, 1831; John, February 14, 1831; Sarah, February 21, 1831; and Charles, December 4, 1831; the three first-named having died at exact intervals of a week apart. Among the attempts at versification here is the following:—

“T is hard in life our burial spot to trace ;
 St. Clement's church doth show my resting place.
 Thousands from port to port doth stroll :
 What matter where? Oh, God, receive my soul.”

The hardship complained of here, and the manner in which it is expressed, are very similar to the sentiment of an epitaph which I recently picked up, and here it is :—

“ If so soon that I was done for,
 I wonder what I was begun for.”

It is time, however, that this kind of trash had given way to a purer taste and more correct feeling. I have nothing further to add with regard to the new church, except that the scholars attached thereto number upwards of 300, and I believe the school-rooms were built at the expense of Captain Sherwood.


The old church stood near to the water's edge, on the Upper Quay, close to the city wall, which, in fact, formed a part of it. Nash says, “This church was built by the Saxons, after they had fortified the city against the incursion of the Britons. The parish to which it belongs lies on the other side of the river Severn ; and there is a monkish tradition that it was begun to be built on that side of the river where the parish lies, but that angels, by night, took away the stones to the place where it now stands ; but the true reason why it was there built was for its security, that whatever fate their houses might meet with, their church might be safe from the devastation of their enemies.” Clever fellows in their way were these said monks in their day and generation, and rich and ingenious the inventions with which they gained the ascendancy over the popular mind. I remember an anecdote with regard to the origin of a certain church at Tiverton, in the county of Devon, to this effect :—One John Greenway, who chanced to go to London on business, met an old acquaintance driving a cow and calf over a bridge. “Well,” said John Greenway, “it is somewhat strange I should meet you, for I dreamed last night about that very cow and calf (they were curiously marked), and that I should meet you driving them.” “Very odd,” said the other,

“for I have had my dream, too, though I don’t suppose it will prove as true as yours;” and then Johnny’s acquaintance went on to state that he had dreamed about a quantity of money being buried in the garden of a house at Tiverton. Greenway said nothing, but treasured up the story, went back to Tiverton, borrowed money, bought the house and garden, and found the treasure as described. Of course he could do no less than build a chapel and a few almshouses, which still remain to attest the truth of the story. Another instance of the ludicrous in these legendary matters, especially when transmuted by successive popular versions, is the fact that a certain church in Somersetshire is said to have been built by the devil; and how will my readers think this arose? The church was dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron of mariners; at first it was called St. Nicholas’ Church, then Old St. Nicholas’ Church, and lastly Old Nick’s Church, which gradually established the legend.

Now I doubt the fact of the old church of St. Clement being of Saxon construction, as much as I doubt the legend. In the first place, from the very remarkable number of churches having a Norman character, I collect that the churches before the conquest were not only small, but built of mean and perishable materials, which are not denoted by the remains still left in this instance and likewise that the Danes destroyed nearly all the Saxon churches. Further, the characteristic features of the arches are those of a period subsequent to the conquest, consequently not Saxon. Until within a few years both Saxon and Norman work was classed under the head of Saxon; but a distinction is now made in architectural nomenclature, the characteristics of the two being better known. This accounts for St. Clement’s and many other Norman churches having the credit of being Saxon. Still there are old associations clinging round the spot:—

“There came the Norman in his pride,
 Attended by his Saxon slaves;
 And then the priest of later times
 Sang mass upon their graves.”

Here, on this consecrated spot, and with the self-same stones, are now built warehouses, and barrels are heaped up, and a board invites the wayfarer, not to partake of the bread of life, but

 To the Britannia Inn.
Good Stabling.

So pass away all human things : the Roman Forum is now a cow market, the Tarpeian Rock is a cabbage garden, and the Palace of the Cæsars is a rope walk !

St. Clement's Church was much battered by the Parliamentarians in the Civil Wars which raged so furiously at Worcester. The circumstance of the church being on the east side of the river, while the parishoners resided on the west, was not the only inconvenience they suffered ; for it not unfrequently happened that the church was inundated during floods, and was thus rendered for many weeks unfit for public worship. I may illustrate this by referring to a well-known fact, that upon one occasion *a boat was floated up the middle aisle*. Such occurrences of course did not take place previous to the demolition of the ancient city wall, which was formerly close to and protected this church. The present rector, desirous of remedying these inconveniences, adopted measures, in about 1820, for raising funds to erect a new church on a desirable site upon the eastern side of the river. His zealous efforts (which were materially aided by the respect entertained for his character) were crowned with success, and shortly afterwards the first stone was laid by F. Hooper, Esq., then mayor of this city, on which occasion, as the local papers record, "considerable curiosity was excited, as nothing similar had occurred in this city in the memory of the oldest inhabitant !" Fortunately these occurrences are more frequent now.

St. Clement's is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter (value £150). Rector, the Rev. J. Davies. Clerk, Mr. G. Barrow. Organist, Mr. Peter Birch. Population, 2,155.

All Saints.

A GREAT portion of my original observations on this church is erased, in consequence of the improvements which they suggested having since been carried out, through the perseverance of the present incumbent, the Rev. C. Eckersall. Other remarks on the want of discipline in the school and choir would now be out of place.

In the seat in which I was placed there was a little active man, who had a *penchant* for “finding out the text”—my readers will readily understand what I mean. A person who “finds out the text” is a being who acts from one of four motives or moving causes—he either doubts the preacher’s honesty; he is anxious to appear what he is not; his memory is weak; or he is the victim of a custom handed down to him by his ancestors. Well, no sooner was the chapter and verse announced from the pulpit than my little friend rushes to the book cage (a little square fixture at one corner of the pew), snatches out a bible, holds it up high aloft, that he might have the benefit of the light, pounces eagerly upon a chapter—it is the wrong one—winnows the leaves backward and forward, and at last, out of breath, arrives at the desired point. By this time the preacher had delivered his first introductory sentences, setting forth the order in which he meant to proceed: this very essential part had of course been entirely lost to my friend with the bible; but not content with that, being anxious that others near him should share the advantage he had enjoyed, the little busy obliging man thrusts the book, lying open, with his finger at the verse, into the lap of his next-door neighbour, who, shaking off his attention from the minister, tries to grasp the sacred volume, but missing his hold, down it goes, with a loud report, which calls the sexton and the occupiers of all the adjoining pews on their legs, to see who has fainted. I hope, my

church-going reader, you will always take upon trust your minister's accuracy in such quotations—at all events, suspend the gratification of your doubts till you arrive at home.

A good custom prevails at this church, which I have not seen introduced into many others: it is that of lowering the gas to a subdued light previously to the commencement of the services, and also during the sermon. In general, you have to wink and blink at the preacher through a 9-inch stream of gas in a straight line between yourself and him; and so deeply will the impression be made on your ocular organs, that on emerging into the dark street, you can see nothing but a tall, dancing *ignis fatuus* waiting to conduct you home, if you are happy enough to arrive there without flattening your nose against a corner or tumbling into the gutter. On the score of expense alone, to say nothing of comfort, this hint should be generally taken. While in the humour for giving hints I may just allude to the use of the most appropriate anthem, "I will arise and go to my Father," as also of the "Evening Hymn"—the former to commence, the latter to conclude the services. It is, in my opinion, a pity that these devotional and appropriate productions should ever be superseded by others; but as they are frequently so, the anthem or hymn substituted should at least be read, for the benefit of strangers. I am also a warm advocate for each psalm and hymn having its own tune, by which it shall be known, and from which it shall be inseparable—as, for instance, the fine old tune of "Magdalen" to close the day's services, with the "Evening Hymn," instead of the meagre modern compositions often made use of, and changed every sabbath, in connexion with this piety-breathing hymn. I may, perhaps, on another occasion advance some arguments to show the benefit to be derived to devotion and discipline from a steady and regular method in church psalmody. At present I will only venture to express a hope, that the Archbishop of Canterbury may be induced by some more able advocate than myself to authorise not only one selection of psalms and hymns for the whole kingdom, but to issue general recommendations as to the

uniformity of tunes, so that they may be *in keeping with the character of each psalm or hymn*, whether characterised by expressions of joy, hope, fear, animation, prayer, or such like.

All Saints' Church appears (with the exception of St. Peter's) to be the largest in the city ; it is divided into three aisles by two rows of Doric columns. The altar-piece is a good specimen of Corinthian design. The walls and pavement of the church are literally covered with mementoes of human decay : at the east end of the south aisle, in a mural arch, are the effigies of Edward Hurdman, gent., the last bailiff and the first mayor of Worcester, with his wife Joan—the former having lived to the good old age of threescore years and ten, and the lady to the patriarchal period of 90 years ; the worthy mayor, who is in his robes, faces his wife, and both are in an attitude of prayer ; he died in 1621, but there is no inscription that can now be deciphered. On another handsome monument is the figure of Samuel Matthews (*obit* 1684), sometime “a worthy and venerable alderman of this city—in his religion orthodox and devout ; in his allegiance constant and hearty ; in his deportment amiable and obliging ; and as he was a liberal benefactor to the poor in his life, so he made ample provision for them after his death”—an example (if the stone flatters not) which ought to be held up for the imitation of all men. A local historian mentions, that near the south aisle is the tomb of a “massacred gent.,” bearing the name of Chetell, who is said to have been hung before his own door in the troublous times of 1645 ; but I have not succeeded in discovering the “gent.”

The stranger, on visiting this church, would be naturally struck with the great number of charitable donations to the poor, as recorded on the large massive, dingy boards which are hung on the walls ; and there are more than at first meet the eye, the belfry containing several other records. The donors, however, if they had any share in the arrangement of these boards, were evidently fearful of the anathema pronounced in the New Testament against the Pharisees and others who put

forth their good deeds too glaringly and ostentatiously in the sight of men, for they are placed so near to the ceiling of the church, and old Time has been so successful in daubing them with his dingy, defacing brush, that they might as well have been affixed to the pinnacles for all the information which the casual reader may hope to acquire. I have good reason to believe that these charities are faithfully administered; and it seems that they are read (or presumed to be) once in three years, and that printed copies are in the hands of the churchwardens and others. The bounties are chiefly belonging to that practical kind of benevolence which dispenses food and clothing to the hungry and naked poor, and I observed one instalment in a score of loaves placed on some shelves near the west end. This parish has thus at disposal charities to a large amount. The name of Nash is conspicuous here, as in many other churches and elsewhere, as being first and foremost in this good work.

The number of children in the Sunday Schools of All Saints is about 100 boys and 100 girls. Now that the excellent new school-rooms are built, with a teacher's residence, there will be established forthwith an infant school, and a girls' school of industry.

The patronage of All Saints' Church has been traced from Hugh de Saye, Baron of Burford, through the progeny of the Mortimers, also a branch of the Talbots, and finally into the hands of certain merchants, whose traffic in patronage being found to be an unlawful trade, it was forfeited to the Crown. (Value £138). Rector, the Rev. C. Eckersall. Curate, the Rev. J. F. H. English, B.C.L. Clerk, Mr. Griffiths. Organist, Mr. Sefton. Population, 2,203.



St. Swithin's.

ATTRACTED by the glorious creations of Handel, Tallis, Croft, Hayes, and Co., on the morning of the 20th of April, in the year 184—, I found myself (together with a genuine half-crown I had hoarded up for the occasion) most comfortably stowed away in the churchwarden's seat of Saint Swithin's Church, embowered among silks, satins, velvets, white kids, starched cravats, embroidered "vests," and the other pretty trappings in which people usually approach the house of prayer and praise. The "grand selection of music" (in which the Worcester Harmonic Society were to take the chief part) commenced with one of Tallis's anthems—the Old Hundredth Psalm; then followed the chanting of the *Venite, Te Deum*, and *Jubilate*, which was well done, although the selection of similar chants for the occasion produced something like tedium and monotony. After the Third Collect came Palestrina's anthem, "We have heard with our ears," which was almost faultlessly given as was also the anthem, "Save, Lord, and hear us," arranged from Handel. Then followed the announcement of "The Eighty-fourth Psalm, new version;" but owing to there being several eighty-fourth psalms in the absurd collection which obtains in the Worcester churches, I succeeded in finding out the right one just in time to join the orchestra in the third line of the last verse, and thus lost the beauties of the fine old "Burton tune." By the bye, I wish some one more capable than myself would agitate the question of reviving an uniform, recognised version, to be used in *all* churches, and at the same time an adaptation of tunes to them which should insure something like propriety and decency. This is a matter of much more importance than the question of surplice or gown, altar or table, east or west; for I believe a greater diversity of doctrine may be read in the different selections of psalms and hymns in use at present

than in any other mode of either ministering or preaching: not to mention the inconvenience occasioned by this diversity to the attendants at different churches. I believe that the clergy, almost to an individual, will agree with me that the present selection is most incomplete, omitting as it does a large number of psalms altogether; that it tends very frequently to confusion in presenting duplicate copies of many others; the versification is also occasionally of the most sorry if not ludicrous description; and the whole requires close revision with reference to its doctrinal points. Add to this revision a selection of tunes by competent judges, whose duty should likewise be to classify them to suit the tone and sentiment of each particular psalm, and something considerable would be gained to church harmony. In the mean time the simple fact that not one of the numerous versions which have been introduced since the Reformation, and of those now in use, has at any time received authoritative sanction, ought to weigh with the heads of the Church in coming to the decision of displacing both old and new versions for compositions evincing a purer taste.

The text selected by Mr. Havergal was—"Serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song." These inspiring words, he observed, through constant use and familiarity, now passed so smoothly over our ears, as to produce no effect on the great majority of hearers, as evinced in that criminal indifference to church music which too much prevailed. He then proposed to consider—first, the reasonableness and the propriety of the injunction; and secondly, the manner in which we may best fulfil it. Under the first head the rev. gentleman observed, "How affecting, and yet how elevating the thought, that when singing at church, we are imitating, though with almost infinite poverty, the employment of our glorified kindred; and are tuning our hearts (I will not say our voices), for the choruses of eternity! Seldom has the thrilling beauty of congregational singing been more happily painted, than when infantile poesy described it as like a little heaven below." To praise God was a duty incumbent on all His

creatures, at all times and under all events; it was not less becoming in adversity than in prosperity, as was evinced by Christ himself in singing a hymn just before his betrayal. Church music, he regretted to state, was but seldom viewed as an hallowed act—as an incentive to the highest order of worship, as a propulsive vehicle for holy praise; and it was evident that a great portion of cheerfulness—a necessary adjunct to thankful praise—was lost to those who did not sing. As to the *manner* of singing, we should come, first, with a deep sense of unworthiness, also with a lively perception of God's goodness, with great devoutness and earnestness of belief—for levity was intolerable when the honour and praise of the Great Eternal was the object. By earnestness he did not mean vociferation; earnestness, however, he grieved to say, was not a characteristic of our congregations, but rather listlessness and gazing: how many a voice which delights in the drawing-room is totally suppressed in the house of God! Perhaps it was owing to a silly notion that it was not fashionable, but rather vulgar, to sing at church; let such take good heed that their scruples exclude them not from one day taking part in the song of Moses and the Lamb! Lastly, we should study to come with the best and most becoming music. This was the desire of the fathers of the Church, and of those who framed the regulations in the time of Elizabeth. Music should be of a suitable character and intelligible to all; but it was painful to think how that rule had been neglected. A certain sort of tune had become common amongst us, to the overthrow of all consistency; and instead of the fine old melodies, we now heard flashy prettiness, and tunes which had been foraged from songs, and ballads, and marches. Much resolution and right feeling would be necessary to banish this trash, seeing the strong hold it had got on the Sunday schools and choirs. Every clergyman and organist ought to cooperate in urging right principles and promoting good practice. Surely there should be some difference between the music of the Church and that of the world. The rev. gentleman concluded by an eloquent appeal on behalf of the funds for

repairing the organ. St. Swithin's church, he observed, was the first in the city which contained an organ, and it was therefore fitting that (next to the Cathedral) it should be the first to keep pace with the improvements of the day.

After the sermon the "Hallelujah Chorus" was performed in excellent style, though unavoidably too loud for this church; one or two ladies near me appeared in much mental distress from an over acute sense of hearing, but, contrary to expectation, not one of them fainted.

Gratified as I was with the entire services of the morning, I felt nevertheless that my mission to this church was not accomplished. One cannot judge of the regular habits and every day appearance of persons when dressed in the holiday garb, neither was it in my power, from attending on an extraordinary occasion, to give an opinion of the usual conduct here. On an evening a few Sundays afterwards I therefore again presented myself to the little old lady who pilots stranger visitors through all avenues and intricacies, to their sittings. Prayers were read by the worthy and much respected curate, the Rev. J. Colville, who, although not possessing a sonorous or powerful voice, yet reads with sober solemnity and effect. Indeed, to a stranger—and much more to those who know him best—the piety of the practical Christian and the earnestness of the pastor are breathed in every line.

The chorister children were ranged along the railings at the chancel; and I was informed that the rector's object in doing so was the very excellent one of producing congregational singing. It frequently occurs that when the choir remain in the orchestra they are looked upon as the exclusive high priests of harmony, in whose avocations the people have no right to take a part; while by drafting them into the body of the church, much staring and gaping is prevented, and the singers then partake more of the character of participators in the psalmody. As far as I could judge, these means were highly successful, for the singing appeared to be general; indeed, there was a party of half-a-dozen females close at my left, who,

with myself and another old gentleman (provided they would have deigned to accept of our rude bass), would have cut no very contemptible figure had the whole onus of the harmony been left on our shoulders. The organ was chastely played to good old psalmody. The rector preached an appropriate sermon on the Ascension, from *Acts* i, 10, 11, showing the practical use to be made of the promise therein contained.

I must not forget the schools attached to this church, to which, as I hear, 100 boys and girls belong—a large number in proportion to the parish, which only numbered 900 inhabitants at the last census.

The Girls' School is under the superintendence of Mrs. Sarjeant, who is also well supported by female teachers. The children are dressed uniformly in frocks, bonnets, collars, and shawls; and I shall not forget their creditable, indeed, I may say unique appearance, among the other Sunday schools which moved in procession to the Cathedral on Whit-Monday; they were arranged on the principle of the "sliding scale," or rather of that instinctive economy exhibited in the flight of pigeons, who wisely manage to cut the air with the thin end of the wedge. So on this occasion two pretty little poppets, some four and twenty inches high, led the van, after whom the height graduated up to 5 feet, which was about the compass of a knot of bonny, healthy, cheerful looking teachers, who brought up the rear. There are unfortunately no school-rooms for their accommodation, and hence the girls had to assemble in the church, while the unlucky boys were compelled to clamber up a dark, spiral, antique flight of stairs, into the *belfry!* where, amongst ropes, and dust, and rubbish, they will have to date their first acquaintance with literature and theology; some of the younger fry often accomplish, at the risk of their neck and shins, the dark and toilsome journey, unlike the *facilis descensus* of Virgil; while the more infantile portion are indebted to the shoulders of their stalwart fellows for a vehicle to the seat of learning. Surely this might be obviated, if those who take an interest in education would only put their shoulders to the wheel; and, since writing the above,

I am informed that the large room of Queen Elizabeth's School, situate close to this church, not being occupied on Sundays, has recently been granted by the six masters for the use of the girls' schools.

The church of St. Swithin, built in 1736, is situate in a part of the city formerly devoted to the sale of plates and dishes, and other crockery, before the nineteenth century had worked out its schemes of centralization with regard to markets, *et quibusdam aliis*. It is one of the neatest erections in the city with respect to the interior: the altar-piece is Doric, and the ceiling above is stuccoed; the roof of the body is a cove-ribbed Gothic; and the pulpit is an elegant design, surmounted by a pelican feeding her brood with her blood, emblematical either of the Christian dispensation or of Divine protection. An exceedingly handsome painted east window has been since added, the production of Mr. Rogers of this city: the ground work of the centre compartment is composed of a rich scroll work of Roman character, upon which are introduced three large medallions, containing the Nativity, Baptism, and the Last Supper. The side lights are filled with a similar design, enriched with the symbols of the four Holy Evangelists, the whole being surrounded with rich borderings. The greater part of the monumental remains on the walls was beyond the reach of even my best pebble glasses. On the north side of the altar is a handsome monument erected to Joseph Withers, Esq., mayor of the city in 1749; Bacon was the sculptor, and the execution is remarkable for elegance and simplicity. Near the pulpit is a fine old monument to the family of the Swifts, one of whom represented the city in the time of William and Ann; another member of this family left the yearly sum of ten shillings to insure the preaching of a sermon on Good Friday, fearing the incumbent might forget himself without some such stimulant. Among the humbler records on the pavement are those of John Child, who fell in the retreat of the British army in North Spain, under Sir John Moore; and a small stone to Margaret Evans, an extraordinary woman whose remains lie near to the chancel: it is recorded of her, that being

for threescore years the governess of one of the most reputable boarding-schools in the kingdom, there was scarce a county or city in England and Wales but some of their most accomplished ladies have had their education at Worcester under this excellent woman, who was herself "the noble pattern of what she taught." The charities of this church are almost confined to bread, coal, and clothing, except Thomas Laslett's gift of £200 to be invested for the augmentation of the salary of the Sunday evening lecturer (on condition that the donor's vault be kept sacred), and Jouas Underhill's gift of £3 per annum for the rector to read prayers every evening at five o'clock. This latter has not been paid within memory. The total amount of charities dispensed in this small parish amount to about £30. That patron of celibacy and of forsaken women, Thomas Shewringe, also figures here in a bequest of "warm gowns" (I suppose he meant well-aired) to "ancient maides and widdowes." Beyond this there is nothing remarkable in the church except that the Lord's Prayer and the Creed have taken their departure from the altar-piece; the one has gained the north and the other the south door, apparently on their way out.

About half-a-century ago, as I gather from Chamber's history, a set of chimes (the only one in the city) was presented to this church by a revolutionary churchwarden, who caused it to play "Britons, strike home!" his colleague, however, insisted on its playing "God save the King;" and matters were at length settled so that the tunes should be played alternately. The chimes, however, detesting party dispute, soon fell into a mode of playing so that it was difficult to recognise whether the tunes were revolutionary or loyal. Within the last few years they have made abortive attempts at Derby, Hanover, and sundry other old tunes, but now they rest quietly from all their labours, the expense of winding up having been a *double bar* to their music. Many years ago, a stone figure of Time, placed over the dial, was blown down and broken to pieces. The absence of a presiding genius, so necessary as he was, shows how utterly thoughtless the authorities must have been in attempting to set

the chimes at work without reinstating this old gentleman in his place. The living is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter (value £170). Rector, the Rev. R. Sarjeant. Curate, the Rev. J. Colville. Clerk, Mr. Griffiths. Organist, Mr. Jabez Jones. Population about 900.



St. Peter's.



I HAVE seen no probable estimate of the date of the foundation of the old church of St. Peter. The first mention of it in history is in the year 969, when Bishop Oswald, who was at that time engaged in worming out the secular clerks of the Cathedral from their most opulent foundations, and to place monks in their room, gave to Wulfgar, a collegiate priest, the church of St. Peter "by the south wall," and also the manor of Battenhall. It was subsequently appropriated, by Bishop Wakefield, to the Abbey of Pershore, who were its patrons till the Dissolution. It was at first dedicated to the Saints Perpetua and Felicitas; but in April, 1420, the parishioners obtained a faculty to alter the same, and their wake was afterwards kept on the Sunday after St. Philip and St. James. The name of "St. Peter the Great" appears to have been given to distinguish it from "St. Peter the Little," which was a chapel belonging to the king's castle here.

The present building was commenced in 1836 and completed in 1838. The old one was in a very ruinous state, and contained accommodation but for 275 persons out of a population of nearly 5,000. A voluntary subscription was made, aided by a grant of £600 from the Incorporated Society; and the present erection (which contains 1030 sittings, of which 600 are free) was speedily raised. It is in the "debased" Gothic style, and is large and commodious; but a great mass of trusswork which supports the roof, being naked to the eye, gives to the whole a heavy and

lumbering effect, while the immense windows in the side walls admit a flood of light which is almost overpowering to the eye. This should be rectified either by stained glass or the use of blinds. The east window (which was painted for the old church by Messrs. Doe and Rogers, of this city) contains the figures of the Saviour, with St. Peter and Moses; the arms of the diocese are on one side, and those of John Nash, Esq., a munificent contributor, on the other. A portion of the western end of the church, containing the font, &c., is cut off by means of a glazed screen, which adds to the comfort of the adjoining seats, and there is also a huge gallery at this end. The general appearance of the church is not good. We are all more or less affected by external circumstances; and in a modern erection, with its blank staring walls and windows, its cold proprieties, studied economy, and lack of associations, there is to me nothing to compensate for the loss of those solemnities engendered within edifices o'erhung with lichens and monuments, which speak impressively alike to the most obtuse apprehension and the hardened heart.

“ I would not leave the old church grey,
Its venerable yew,
And long flat stones, in dull array,
For any one that 's new.”

On entering at the western door there is a painting on the wall at the right hand (dated 1608) intended as a monumental record of the benevolence of one William Bachelor, a member of the Corporation, who gave “ten pounds, the profits thereof to be distributed to the poore of that prish, especially to such which wante wherewith to burie them.” The old gentleman is arrayed in his municipal robes, and looks rather too gay for that period of life when one thinks of making his “last will and testament.” Another individual, who also stands at the table which divides the two, is in the act of throwing down some coin thereon, to be applied for the benefit of the poor; he is habited in the characteristic civilian dress of that period, and is a starched, important looking personage, with features of the most contemptuous *odi*

profanum class; it is tolerably clear he is jerking down his moneys less with the abstracted view of a philanthropist than of propitiating the lower orders against rising in judgment on his avarice. Gentlemen who wish to stand well in the opinion of posterity, and who leave no history behind them, cannot be too scrupulous in the selection of their portrait painters. The charity tables sprinkled about the walls describe a tolerably wide range of objects for the exercise of benevolence, including "warm gowns for ancient maids and widows;" coals, bread, shrouds, &c., for poor housekeepers and others; money to apprentice poor boys; and lastly, the sum of ten shillings was left by a Mr. S. Juice, "sometime minister of Birtchmorton," to the minister for preaching a sermon on Ascension Day. It was my intention to visit the church again on the day of that festival, with the view of ascertaining if the sermon was worth the bequest, but I have not yet been enabled to do so. I believe, however, that the bequest has been lost sight of. There is a sum of about £220 (left in small legacies to the poor of this parish) of which there is now no trace.

The reprehensible practice of late attendance appears to be observed here to a great extent, more particularly among the younger female members of the congregation, who, either from indolence or a wish to attract attention, are in the habit of indulging, sabbath after sabbath, in this breach of decorum; to all such I would commend the sentiment of one of their own sex—the good Mrs. Chapone—who, when asked why she always came so early to church, replied—"Because it is a part of my religion never to disturb the religion of others." I was also surprised at the disproportionately small number of men in the congregation. As it is not likely the ladies would resign to their husbands the superintendence of the cooking, I can only account for the absence of the latter from the supposition that the tradesmen of the parish have adopted the commercial maxim of "Six days shalt thou labour, and on the seventh *post thy books.*" The worthy clerk here wears a gown, he and the clerk at St. Nicholas' being the only two in Worcester having

that privilege, which is granted by license from the Bishop, and renders the office less dependent on the will of the clergyman.

The spacious gallery before mentioned was crowded with school children, of whom there could not have been less than four hundred; indeed, from the multitude of these "olive branches" which thronged all parts of the sacred building, it was satisfactorily demonstrated that whatever sins may be laid to the account of St. Peter's parish, a non-compliance with the primeval command to "increase and multiply" cannot be made out. Of course nothing is more proper than to bring these young pledges early to the courts of God's house, but I do not mean to say that it adds anything to the comfort of the adult part of the congregation: indeed, on this occasion, such an unintermittent cannonading of coughs, stampings, and confused sounds, was projected from this source, added to the circumstance of an old gentleman near me doing battle all the morning with the peccant matter in his lungs, that I was not sorry when the time came to beat a retreat. The school children all sang in unison, but the mass was totally unwieldy and required a conductor's baton to keep them together; it may be said of them, that

"Should they learn to sing in time,
No doubt in time they'll learn to sing."

Some adults have since taken up the post of leaders, but the performances are still wretched, the singing being fearfully loud, harsh, and usually out of tune. It cannot fail to be a source of regret to almost every attendant at St. Peter's church—the largest and most commodious in the city for the erection of an organ—that no such instrument has yet been placed there. The effect of one in such a building would be second only to that at the Cathedral: an assertion the truth of which will not be doubted by any person who had the fortune to hear the "Hallelujah Chorus" performed by the instrumental and choral societies of the city at the opening of this church in 1838. Tell me not that funds cannot be raised: there are individual parishioners who, if actuated by one-tithe of the devotion

which urged our forefathers to deeds of munificence, have it in their power nobly to present such an addition to the service of the sanctuary, without ever *feeling* the pecuniary loss—*Extant recte factis præmia.*

With regard to the schools, there are, I hear, no less than 200 girls and nearly the same number of boys in the Sunday Schools, to whom is imparted such instruction as is suited to their ages and capacities; the scriptures being taken as the basis. The funds are not in a flourishing state, there being a balance due to the treasurer.

It has been a source of regret that a great number of the poor of this parish do not attend the church; and their prevailing excuse, here as elsewhere, seems to be on the score of unseemly apparel. Others of the more respectable grade, I hear, absent themselves on account of being unable to procure seats: this, to any one who has noticed the capaciousness of the church, and the thinness of the congregation, must appear a paradox; but I have no doubt the fact is, there are not seats enough for each family to have a whole one, and consequently they will not accept of a part. On the whole, however, my inquiries have not led to the conclusion that there is an extraordinary lack of moral or religious feeling and habit, when compared with other parishes, especially considering the large amount of population and the class of individuals of which it is chiefly composed. It is also a gratifying circumstance that the opposition to church-rates—which for a long time threw an unenviable notoriety over this parish—has altogether ceased for the last five years, a circumstance which I attribute to the kind amenities and the conciliatory communion of the worthy vicar with his parishioners.

The vicarage of St. Peter, with the curacy of Whittington (value £250), is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter. Vicar, the Rev. G. L. Foxton. Curate, the Rev. G. W. Spooner. Clerk, Mr. Jones. Population, 4,575.

St. Martin's.

IN crossing the threshold of this church I met with one of the most civil, good-humoured specimens of a sexton which I believe the city affords. I was shown into a large square seat, well cushioned, having in the centre a desk for books, and at one end a handsome and capacious fixed chair, over which were elevated two regal gilt crowns. "Corporation seats" (as these are called) were originally set apart for the use of the chief magistrate whensoever he attended his parish church; though, unfortunately, in these days of sectarian strife, they are scarcely ever required for their legitimate use. In the ancient churches there was always, in cities and towns, a place set apart for the magistrates, which was called the "Senatorium," where the senators, or chief magistrates, assembled during divine service: this was probably the origin of "Corporation seats."

Although these seats (which are now exploded in the new ecclesiastical edifices) are set apart for miscellaneous company, I have generally noticed, during my rambles, the same class of definite characters occupying them—there is the married tailor or shoemaker, with his little boy or girl, who usually manages to keep the entire occupants of the pew on the *qui vive*; then there is the stationer's assistant, the glover, perhaps a labourer, sometimes (though more rarely, for they are given to gambling and absenteeism) a draper's assistant and a lawyer's clerk; and but seldom is any one of these seats without a regular visitant in the shape of an elderly gentleman (bachelor or widower), of sober habits, comfortable, good-tempered appearance, wearing spectacles, and apparently seeming to enjoy the service, which he always reads from the ponderous and ecclesiastical-looking books provided for these seats. This last character I never could elucidate: he may be a market gardener, a retired butler, an old pensioner, each, either, or neither, but he is to be found in

the "Corporation" seat of almost every church in the city, and seems to preside there, with becoming dignity, as an elder, over the more juvenile branches, who attend with a regularity only second to that of himself. It is comforting to behold the community of feeling which generally prevails in this little family, and the friendly tokens of recognition which pass between the old gentleman and each member of the brotherhood as he arrives and deposits his hat on the well-known peg and his person in the privileged nook. His casual absence from the accustomed spot, I have no doubt, is as jealously noted, and his final vacation as deeply mourned, as many others, with more decided ties of consanguinity and friendship, would have a right to expect. But the old gentleman has led me to wander.

The sermon was good, and of a practical tendency; moreover it was short, which is another recommendation, for lengthened and attenuated sermons not only oftentimes weary the hearer, but overtax his memory, and consequently fail in effect; added to which is another consideration which I fear must at all times and in all places, more or less, weigh with a weak and sinful, fallen and carnivorous race, like ourselves—I mean the periodical cravings of the appetite. An anecdote is recorded of St. Wulstan, that he was not above confessing that a savoury roast goose, which was preparing for his dinner, had once so taken up his thoughts that he could not attend to the service he was performing, and that he had punished himself for it, and given up the use of meat in consequence. Whether the anecdote be well founded or not, such an occurrence is at least more than possible with individuals of less ascetic temperament than St. Wulstan, and should therefore be prevented, unless the preacher is tolerably sanguine of his own powers, in keeping alive the attention of his hearers.

The musical part of the services deserved no share of approbation. The organ, which was built by Elliott in 1812, has received various modifications and improvements, but on the occasion in question the congregation reaped no benefit whatever from them—the screaming notes and the careless mistakes

of the female voices, being suitably responded to by the grumbling, jagged, non-interfluent tones of the instrument. It is said that our Anglo-Saxon ancestors so encouraged the cultivation of music that it was even the practice to redeem their penances by certain repetitions of singing and music: for instance, the *Pater Noster* and the 119th Psalm, sung six times over, would redeem the penance of a day's fasting. We are not told what sort of accompaniment the organists of those days vouchsafed, but if no better than what I have been doomed occasionally to listen to, there is no question that the monks frequently preferred the day's fast—at least, such would have been my choice. A correspondent of a country paper recently addressed so excellent a piece of advice to organists, and in so pleasant a vein withal, that I cannot resist quoting it here:—

“And first,” says he, “as to the method of chanting the church service. Always play the recitative portions of the chant as fast as the voices can utter the words; the *a tempo* part, on the contrary, should be sung very slow, which will inevitably tend to make the voices sink, and thus afford an opportunity of showing that you are playing correctly, and convince the clergyman and congregation that it would be far better to leave this portion of the service to you alone.

“The music of the chant, too, should be lively—plenty of crotchets and quavers in it, as stepping-stones from one note to another, affording opportunity of gracefully sliding them into each other. Carry the same system into the graver chants, should you for the sake of variety sometimes select such: every minim will thus become two crotchets, and vastly improve the original composition. Above all things avoid the cathedral plan of hitting each note, as it were, on the head, and sticking to it. Cathedral organists are like the old roofs over them, stern and unyielding, but not half so useful; they, a century behind hand, adhere to old customs—never venture upon a flourish—avoid introducing now and then a graceful modulation into a psalm or chant, because it is not ‘in the book,’ and altogether repudiate those little delicacies which the modern race of players know how to adopt with effect.

“In the choice of psalm tunes, show that you are above prejudice. Cast aside the old church melodies, as they are called, and adopt ‘New Sabbath,’ ‘The Sicilian Mariners,’ ‘Cheshunt,’ and all those fine creations of modern times which are emanations of true genius. What if their time was first beaten out on the lapstone, or stimulated the motion of the needle on the tailor's shopboard, is it not a glorious proof of the ‘march of intellect,’ when so insignificant a birthplace ushers such glorious conceptions into the world? The adoption of some of the compositions of recent date, such as those to which I have referred, will often

cause an edifying repetition of some of the words, and if one should be decimated in the process it will tend to keep up the attention of the congregation in order to join it again, thus—(*Psalm xi*):

‘ Why should I, like a tim’rous bird,
To distant moun—to distant moun—to
distant mountains fly?’

“At the close of the tune, too, never adhere to the common chord, which some folks will stupidly tell you is a graceful and harmonious conclusion. Vary it—suspend the 4th as long as possible—and above all, put in as many abstruse chords as you can contrive to make while the voices are able to hold out the original chord. It makes an agreeable change, and evinces genius.”

Leaving the pleasant banter of this satirical critic it should be seriously borne in mind, by all who engage in the music of the church, that those characteristics should be observed which are set forth by St. Bernard in the following passage, as quoted by Archbishop Parker, in the preface to his metrical version of the *Psalms*:—“If song be had at any time, let it be full of gravitie, that it neither sound out wantonness nor rudeness; let it be so sweete that it be not light; let it so delight the eares that it move the hartes in asswaging heaviness and tempering ire. Let it not deprive the letter of the sence, but rather augment it; for it is no light loss of spiritual grace to be carried away from the profitableness of the sence with the lightnes of the notes, and to be more carefull upon chanting of the voyce then to give heede to the matter.”

The church of St. Martin is a modern structure, having been erected from 1768 to 1772. The old church had the reputation of being a very irregular building, which is fully corroborated by the drawings of it still remaining—the ancient wooden porch, with a room above it, reminding one of the antiquated inns we now and then meet with in villages. The architect of the present edifice (which was built by Act of Parliament) achieved at the time an act of sagacity equal to that which is proverbially frequent among another class of professionals, for the multiplication of their own labours—through some bungling in the stipulations, he built the tower for one bell only, and then was compelled to reconstruct it for the accommodation of six, being the same number as in the old tower. The interior of the

church has a light appearance, to which eight Ionic pillars, twelve semicircular arched windows, and an altar-piece, materially contribute; though I do not think it probable that the painting of the Crucifixion (placed in the east window in the year 1827, the production of a Mr. Cottrill, of this city, since dead) will ever be mistaken for a work of Rubens or Raffaele.

The charity tables display a large amount of consideration for fatherless children, poor boys, lying-in women, and other equally unfortunate objects. The Berkeley family left liberal donations not only for the poor, but for the assistance of young tradesmen; while one Sir Robert Berkeley, Knight, seems to have turned his especial attention more to the state of the bells and their ringers; he not only renovated the "ring," but put up a new treble and tenor, for the perpetual motion of which tenor, or "Berkeley's bell," he was minded to make provision by appointing that it should be rung on certain days for ever; and on St. James's day, after the donation of 20s. to twenty poor persons, and 20s. to a preacher of a sermon, 3s. 4d. was to be paid to the ringers, and 6s. 8d. to the wardens for bell-ropes—for ever. Had this gallant knight been most grossly treated by the parish, he could not have taken a more deliberate or lasting revenge; and had he once only been doomed to write for the press during the season of Lent, when one's ears are split and distracted by the cross-fires shot from the various steeples, he surely would have perceived how enormously disproportionate was the punishment to the offence. But it is needless to quarrel with the hobbies of the dead. Among the other charities is a valuable bequest by Mr. Thomas Moore and his wife, *inter alia*, for founding a hospital for the relief and education of ten poor children. Through mismanagement of this estate, the number of boys is now of necessity reduced to six, and these seem to be but inadequately clothed for the severity of the winter season. A valuable part of the estate is now a bone of contention in a Chancery suit, between the Six (Charity) Masters* and

* The six masters are J. Dent, Esq.; W. Dent, Esq.; M. Pierpoint, Esq.; J. W. Lea, Esq.; W. Moore, Esq.; and A. Lechmere, Esq. The secretary is Mr. G. C. Carden, solicitor.

the Worcester Corporation. I am not sufficiently conversant with the facts to sketch the relative positions and claims of the parties ; but I think, after the statement publicly made by the solicitor for one of the parties—namely, that the suit would probably occupy his lifetime, *and swallow up the whole of the contested property*—that the actual, practical question now is—“*Lawyers versus Charity Boys.*” Which of these are to receive the benefit of “*Moore’s Charity?*” Unfortunately, pugnacity is a large ingredient in Englishmen’s constitutions, and I dare say the parties will prefer having a long stand-up fight in the Court of Chancery and finally carrying off the shells of the oyster, than at a timely moment to come to an amicable arrangement. There seems to be no proof that this part of the estate is to be applied, in perpetuity, to corporate uses, and why not, therefore, mutually come to terms, the Corporation relinquishing the property on condition that the century’s arrears be not claimed ?

Among the monuments in this church is a mural one, recording the death of Mr. and Mrs. Joyce Johnson (1718), who left a freehold estate to the poor, with the stipulation that the grave in which she and her husband are interred “be not opened, nor any other person buried therein, otherwise the devise to cease, and the estate to devolve to her right heirs for ever.” Two maiden ladies named Grismund have left 25s. per annum to the poor, on the same condition ; and it would seem, from the earnest manner in which these persons expressed themselves, they entertained some suspicion of the horribly crowded state to which St. Martin’s burial ground would some day arrive. They, however, are secure enough, for the new church being on a raised surface as compared with the old one, the original vaults are necessarily beneath the modern ones.

In St. Martin’s Sunday Schools there are about 350 boys and girls, who are brought to the church every Sunday morning, attended by their superintendents and teachers. The National and Infant Schools, which are in this parish, are not confined thereto, but are open to all the other parishes in the city. The

rooms which are used for the Boys' National School, in connexion with the Establishment, were built by subscriptions raised chiefly in the parish, aided by a grant from the National Society; they were built for the use of the Sunday Schools, but during the week are used by the National School. W. Rose, the clerk, takes care of the six boys belonging to Moore's Charity, under the supervision of the Rev. W. Hill.

The historians record several interesting circumstances in connexion with this church and parish, as taken from the register; for instance—in the year 1538, "John Wilkinsou, the parson," licensed one Thomas Heywood to eat flesh during Lent, "he being very sick in body;" and at the time of the Usurpation, in 1656, numerous instances occurred here (and especially between Thomas Baker, of Dodderhill, and Ann Walford, of Salwarpe) of marriages solemnized by Justices of the Peace, after "being publickely proclaimed 3 severall dayes, in 3 severall weekes, in ye market-plase of ye said cittie, according to ye acctt of parlment."

The first incumbent of the living was one Richard in 1219; and the following is a list (I have obtained from an old document) of rectors of the parish from the year 1558 to the present time, with the length of time the office was held by each:—

Rev. W. Bennel	15 years.
Rev. J. Wilkinson	48 "
Rev. J. Wyatt	3 "
Rev. N. Booksall	9 "
Rev. N. Tomkins	29 "
Rev. Thomas Tyler	9 "
Rev. H. Panting	19 "
Rev. E. Combe	48 "
Rev. R. Meadowcourt	14 "
Rev. John Tottie	23 "
Rev. J. Stillingfleet	4 "
Rev. R. Baty	21 "
Rev. D. Smith	33 "
Rev. G. Faussett, D.D.	4½ "
Rev. Allen Wheeler	

The Dean and Chapter are patrons of this living (value £378). Rector, the Rev. Allen Wheeler. Curate, the Rev. G. Elton. Clerk, Mr. William Rose. Present Organist (not the same as mentioned above), Mr. Turbitt. Population, 5,083.



St. John's-in-Bedwardine.

THE name of "Bedwardine," if we are to believe antiquaries, means something tantamount to good eating and drinking, being derived from the Saxon *beod ern* (a dining hall)—applied in this instance on account of the district being appropriated to the table of the priests of the College, whose refectory was supplied from the produce of it.

Five centuries ago the present church was a chapel, subordinate to the "anciente chapell of Wick, or Wyke." The historian says that the latter was "situated in a desolate place, at a distance from the Cathedral, and almost deserted by its inhabitants, who rather chose to reside in Worcester, or about St. John's, where was also a chapel, with a vicarage house adjoining to it, which induced William de Lynn, then Bishop of Worcester (1371), to suppress that of Wyke, which had never been consecrated;" it was accordingly ordered to be taken down, and every stone of it removed to prevent pollution. The chapel of St. John, in Bedwardine, was now made parochial, and the first vicar bore the title of "Vicar of St. John of Wyke."

The remains of the ancient chapel of Wyke are yet to be seen in the foldyard of Mr. J. Smith, of Lower Wick, and about a mile from the present church, on the road to Malvern; it is a building now partly used as a hopkiln and stable, the walls and roof of which, though apparently very old, have been raised upon foundations and remains of a much more ancient date. These remains support the newer masonry at a height varying from nine feet to twelve feet or upwards; the walls are from four feet

to six feet thick, and by aid of the old buttresses still remaining would probably defy the "tooth of Time" for as many centuries as they have already withstood its attacks. There are traces of an east window, which have been filled up, and the whole building has an ecclesiastical character. Local tradition also favours the supposition, against which the only circumstance that militates is the above mentioned order that "every stone should be removed." It is not improbable, however, that the walls were not completely demolished, but were made available for some other building. It is said to have been subsequently used as a receptacle for the gaol prisoners, who were removed thither at the time of an epidemic breaking out in Worcester; and this report derives some probability from the strongly barred windows which yet partially remain in the more recent masonry.

The enclosure in which the present church is situated seems to be glutted with the dead, and old residents say the chances are ten to one that in thrusting a stake into any part of the soil, some unlucky particle of humanity would be transfixed. The want of a cemetery is much felt by the inhabitants. Near the principal entrance to the church is a remarkable little stone, a memorial to one whose good deeds when in the flesh have evidently survived all recollection of the doer :



Who or what he was—this "Honest John"—no record saith; but there the sterling title is carved, to startle the passer-by in this perverse generation.

Among the other specimens of epitaph writing in this churchyard are the following lymphatic lines:—

“ Farewell, vain world! I give up to thee.
 For you can't say no harm of me!
 I am gone just in the full of my prime.
 The Lord thought fit to take me at his own appointed time.”

Had the poet continued his dirge for four lines more, the length of the ultimate one would probably have defied all reasonable calculation. Here also is an edition of the querulous, insinuating idea, which in every churchyard in the kingdom stares the medical man in the face—

“ Afflictions sore
 Long time I bore;
 Physicians was in vain.”

* * * *

He who studies men and things may gather much knowledge of character from the perusal of tomb-stones. A wag, for instance, cannot refrain from perpetrating a pun, joke, or *double entendre*, though it is to be graven over his own corpse. The wit, the man of letters, the humble Christian, the prosy copyist, have each their peculiar manner; but the concoction of the coarse and ridiculous stuff we often see has, I hope, entirely departed with the last generation.

The church of St. John is old and irregular, within and without, but the repewing and other repairs which were effected some few years ago have rendered it exceedingly neat in appearance. Before that period the ancient pews were invested with a sepulchral kind of character; the old wooden casing of these high and capacious receptacles was every where worm-eaten and perishing into dust, while tatters of green baize clung capriciously to the crazy fabric, like the “loop'd and window'd raggedness” of an old pauper; then, a person who could not boast of being five feet six inches from one extremity to the other, was not likely to have ocular communication with any fellow mortal, the minister even included. The renovator, however, has been far more economical in his timber.

The church is rich in monumental remains, some of upwards of two centuries standing—including the names of Gower, Ingram (*Vice-Comes ultimus*), Blount, Badger (the Vicar, who

died on the day of his birth, September 30, 1690), Carwardine, Rogers, Bund, Brigginsshaw, Patrick, Waldron, Garnett, Freeman, Lilly, Bate, Pitt, &c.

“ Quales erant
Dies suprema indicabit.”

To the credit of the officers of this church it may be spoken that the various charity lists appertaining thereto are not only within reach of the reader, but are kept so clean as to admit easily of inspection. Owing to this arrangement, I and my readers are indebted for the record of the following exquisite bit of active benevolence:—

“ Timothy Nourse—1698—£25 out of his estate at Southern, for the binding of ten poor children, at 40s. each, and for the clothing of seven old men and widows, being ancient inhabitants of this parish, who are reputed to be of good character, with one upper garment of blue cloth, *whereon shall be ye letters T N in yellow cloth, sewed thereon.*”

The man who would thus parade his “charity” to the world by marking the unfortunate recipients of it in a similar manner to convicted felons, I need scarcely add, could not have possessed the genuine principle of Christian benevolence. Of course that part of the bequest is not observed.

I was much surprised, on an evening visit to St. John’s, to find the church but half filled. It seems that the edifice is so inadequate to the requirements of this populous parish, that the majority of the church-goers stay away with the excuse that they have no pews. Those, however, who stay away altogether from the services of the Church are scarcely more culpable than another class of persons who seem to be somewhat numerous in St. John’s—I mean the *late comers*. How lamentable is it to see churches half empty at the commencement of the service—to find little more heard than the trampling of feet and the opening of pews, while the few persons assembled are making their solemn confession before Almighty God, and then to behold the minister rise to pronounce an absolution of sins in the midst of those who have not cared to acknowledge any guiltiness! So says the Rev. H. Stebbing, and so says every churchman who thinks aright.

The organ in this church is unfortunately placed so as to be but faintly audible, and requires the assistance of some *arch-mason* to render it fully available.

With regard to education and the charities, a general parochial fund is maintained in this parish, to insure the permanent support of those clubs which afford such essential relief to the poor. The charitable institutions in the parish which are assisted by this fund are—the National and Infants' School, the Infants' School Clothing Club, the Sunday School Clothing Club, the Adult Clothing Club, a Coal Club, &c.

The Boys' School, under the superintendence of Mr. Lake, has been in most successful operation since January, 1847; and the Rev. H. W. Bellairs, a Government school inspector, on his last visit to St. John's, examined several children with a view to their admission as pupil teachers. Mr. Lake has also opened an evening school for young men to learn to read and write. The attendance has been good, and much benefit is anticipated from this plan. New Girls' and Infants' Schools were opened in July last, at a cost (including the enlargement of the church-yard) of nearly £1,200. The number of children now on the school books are—boys, 97; girls, 73; and infants, 83. The deposits paid into the various clubs during the year amounted to no less than £173. 2s. 7d.; and the total receipts during the same period on behalf of all these institutions and charities (including the choir and a lending library) was upwards of £530. The committee state that, without the aid of these clubs, many families would have been almost entirely destitute of fuel and clothing. A system of charity is in operation, which needs to be very little extended, to render it fully adequate to the relief of the educational and temporal wants of the parish; and in this respect I know of no parish which presents a more satisfactory aspect. With regard to the funds left at various times for church and charitable purposes, it seems that for a long number of years, and till recently, the feoffees have been receiving and disbursing the rents and proceeds of property left "for godly and charitable purposes," whereas, under the feoff-

ment deed, it was their duty only to be receivers or trustees, and to hand over the amount to the churchwardens, who were to apply them as might be deemed best by themselves and a select meeting of the most responsible parishioners. Mr. Coucher (who is churchwarden with Mr. Philpotts) showed at a recent parish meeting that in February, 1847, he had received a balance from the late Mr. James of £15. 10s. 4¼d., and he produced accounts and vouchers of his subsequent receipts and expenditure. It was also shown that the gross annual value of these church and charity funds will be £65. 15s. 6d., and after deducting all unavoidable expenses, a clear sum of about £55 will be left, to be applied for the repairs of the church and for other charitable purposes. It was the opinion of the meeting that the feoffees had kept their accounts accurately, and had disbursed only on legitimate objects, also that no charitable bequests had been allowed to lapse within living memory.

This living (value £635) is in the gift of the Dean and Chapter. Vicar, the Rev. Canon Wood. Curates, the Rev. F. H. Bennett and the Rev. T. H. Greene. Clerk, Mr. Munn. Organist, Mrs. Bird. Population, 2,663.



St. Paul's in the Blockhouse.

ALBERTUS MAGNUS, when in honour of a crowned visitor he suddenly transmuted the frost and snow of winter into the warmth and luxuriance of a summer's day, astonished in no greater degree his illustrious guest than would the rapid and extensive changes in the district known to my readers as "the Blockhouse" be likely to astound one's grandfather, were he now permitted to leave his snug little freehold of 6 feet by 3 feet, and make a survey of that portion of the city of Worcester. At the time of the Civil Wars, and indeed up to a period within living memory, almost the whole of this

now populous neighbourhood consisted of green fields, intersected by walks and paths leading to Perry Wood, and being outside the walls and the town ditch, was overlooked and defended by a military fortification, or "blockhouse," as the best authorities have it, from which the name was derived to the mass of brick and mortar, poverty and filth, which has now superseded the open campaign. Living memory recalls the old erection which a quarter of a century ago stood near the archway at "the Friar's Gate," close to the most interesting relics of the Friar's Monastery, but I have not been enabled to ascertain whether this was the identical *block-house* or not. This ancient fortification has been replaced by another of a different character, namely, the city gaol; the old wall has been superseded by a thousand new ones; the town ditch by the canal, and the old monastery of the Franciscans has found a good substitute in the church of St. Paul. The rapid growth of this district within the last few years was occasioned partly by the great scarcity of houses for artizans of the poorer classes, which set speculators to work in a sudden mania for the erection of this description of dwelling; the formation of the canal and the establishment of Hardy's Foundry also tended to thicken the inhabitants; to say nothing of the notable attempt to draw together

"Patients young and patients old,
Patients hot and patients cold,"

to drench themselves at the wells of the Blockhouse "Spa"—which, however, like the waters of the steam engine, ended in vapour. Meanwhile the increase of the population, was exceedingly rapid, and there was no man to "care for their souls." In consequence, then, of the awfully demoralized state of the Blockhouse—or I should rather have said the extra-parochial part of it—steps were taken about twelve years ago to erect a church and to obtain the services of a regularly appointed clergyman; the individuals who chiefly moved in the business were the late Prebendary Davison, Dr. Nash, Rev. W. Godfery, and Rev. J. Davies, assisted by a number of

other benevolent individuals. Funds were raised to build the church and to secure a small annual stipend (about £26) to the clergyman, to which the Pastoral Aid Society made an addition. The patronage was to be vested in the Bishop; but when the church was ready for consecration, it was ascertained to be a doubtful point whether the patronage could be so assigned, or whether, being on extra-parochial ground, it would not vest in the Crown; accordingly the building was never consecrated, but simply licensed. Upon the passing, however, of the Act of 6 and 7 Victoria, measures were immediately taken to obtain the consent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the formation of the extra-parochial part, together with a contiguous part of St. Peter's, into an ecclesiastical parish, thereby settling the question of patronage, and obtaining a permanent endowment. This was effected about four years ago, but it involved the necessity of enlarging the church proportionably to the increased size of the district. Funds again had, therefore, to be raised, and an appeal was made to the public, which was most generously and promptly responded to. A grant of £300 had been made by the Incorporated Church Building Society in London towards the original erection; this had never been paid, as the building had not been consecrated. The society kindly confirmed the grant for the enlargement; the Diocesan Society also gave £25, the Queen Dowager £25, the Bishop £20, T. Smith, Esq., of Rose Hill, £25, Charles Pidcock, Esq., £21, and other individuals sums to a less amount.

The work having been completed, I set out on the day of the consecration for the purpose of witnessing the ceremony. It is one of the vulgar errors disseminated among our dissenting brethren, that the ceremony of a consecration is a remnant of Popery; for we find, from the most authentic ecclesiastical history, that the consecration of newly-erected Christian churches, as practised at the present time, was the general custom, being an observance as natural as it is scriptural: it was practised for centuries before Popery was known in the world. The antiquity of such dedications is evident, from its being an universal

custom amongst Jews and Gentiles ; and it is observable that, amongst the former, at the consecration of both the tabernacle and temple, it pleased the Almighty to give a manifest sign that He then took possession of them. With the Christians it was a primitive practice. Eusebius tells us that in his time new churches were solemnly consecrated, and the dedications were celebrated with great festivity and rejoicings.

But like other usages of the olden time these rejoicings and festivities have given way to the cold proprieties of the present age ; and although such relics of the past usually linger in rural districts later than in towns, yet even in the former there is scarcely one observance now remaining to impress the *senses* with delight, to be hereafter remembered, and to be associated in the mind of the crowd as an identification of themselves with the foundation and the interests of their church. My old friend, the churchwarden of ——, the other day, on a similar occasion, with a sovereign contempt for modern habits, collected promiscuously under his mahogany the feet of friends and strangers, placed a noble “baron” before them, and made the evening merry with the well-regulated pleasures of the dance. Such acts of audacity however require strong minds to achieve.

The poor inhabitants of the Blockhouse came out in groups, with crowds of wondering children, to see “ what a consecration was like,” as one of them expressed himself ; but very few of them carried their curiosity beyond a gaze at the Right Rev. the Bishop and the clergy as they arrived and passed into the church between a file of women and children.

The style and appearance of the church have been greatly improved, and it is now one of the most ecclesiastical structures in Worcester, having a nave, chancel, and transepts ; an elegant stone font has been erected in the chancel, from a design by the architect, H. Eginton, Esq. The increased accommodation by the erection of the chancel and transepts has given room for 150 extra sittings, thus making a total of 600, of which the greater part are free. A handsome set of service books, consisting of a folio bible and prayer book, with a service book for

the communion table, has been presented by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The society has also presented publications, to the value of £3, towards the Sunday School and Parochial Lending Library.

The customary services having been gone through, the Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Pepys, ascended the pulpit, and preached from the text of *Matthew xi, 5*—"And the poor have the gospel preached to them." This is a favourite subject with his lordship, and if I mistake not I have heard him give it on a former occasion; but it cannot be wondered at that one sermon should be made to do "double duty" when I am informed that during the three or four years in which his lordship had then held the Episcopate of Worcester he had consecrated no less than between thirty and forty churches. The sympathies of the Bishop of Worcester are with the poor: he preaches to them and for them, and never is his lordship's ear turned away from the petition of a poverty stricken claimant: the wealthy and the titled find in him an unflinching monitor on the fearful responsibilities of wealth, while the poor man is gained over to a recognition of his own important duties to society, and to a cheerful sense of religion, by the kindness of manner as much as by the humble seriousness and devotion characterizing his lordship's teaching. There was a beam of holy joy lighting up his eye as he called to mind the saying of his Master, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and detailed, in his own unassuming manner, the comparative excellence of the Christian dispensation, in that it taught the gospel to the poor, while both Jews and Pagans utterly despised and neglected their lower orders, allowing them to fall away into the most childish and debasing superstitions. And right well does his lordship appeal to his auditors in cases of charity or benevolency: so much so that I defy any one fairly to hear him out without putting his shilling on the plate, or else walking homeward with a confounded twitching of the conscience. "I fear," said a country curate to his flock, "when I explained to you in my last charity sermon that philanthropy was the love of our

species, you must have understood me to say 'specie,' which may account for the smallness of the collection. I hope you will prove, by your present contribution, that you no longer labour under the same mistake!" Although his lordship does not bring it home in so direct a manner as did the country curate, yet he aims at the same effect another way, by showing the utter worthlessness, not to say the positive detriment, of riches, to the possessor who uses them without reference to the bodily and spiritual requirements of his poorer fellow creatures. Another marked feature in his lordship's sentiments is the earnest warmth with which he deprecates the revival of obsolete ceremonials in the Church, as calculated, in their best effect, to do no positive good, and, in their worst, to root up the membership and communion of whole congregations. As a moderator in the recent unhappy debates his lordship has evinced much of Christian forbearance, mixed with due assumption of prelatial authority. He is aware that among the rules suggested by the Jesuits of a former day "for bringing England to the Roman religion without tumult" was one enjoining "to nourish the differences of the preachers which are in error, and so to work that they may often confer and wrangle." While holding so high an authority in the Church, Dr. Pepys perceives it to be a duty incumbent on him to interpose his veto in cases of un-called-for revivals, on the principle of my Lord Bacon, that "a froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation, and they that reverence too much of old times are but a scorn to the new;" still I have no reason to believe that his lordship can smell out the Pope in a pair of candlesticks, or that he fears the clergy will ever again voluntarily settle down in a state of celibacy.

A sweet-toned organ was erected here in 1846 by voluntary subscription. The school-rooms have been enlarged and rendered more commodious during the past year, at a cost of upwards of £400; £100 of which was subscribed by the Council Education Committee, and £50 by the National Society. The original school-rooms were built at the sole expense of the Rev.

R. Gascoyne, the first curate at this church. There are about 250 boys and girls in these schools, in addition to which an Infant School has been just commenced, and the indefatigable minister now proposes to raise funds for the purpose of erecting a house for the schoolmistress.

The neighbourhood of the Blockhouse, which I have before said was extremely demoralized, has been greatly improved in character—so much so, that the Bishop, in his sermon, made the cheering observation that the Blockhouse furnished to the magisterial bench fewer cases of offences, comparatively speaking, than any other district in the city! This speaks well for the zealous supervision of the minister, over a population of 2,000, almost of the very poorest class. The Socialists some years ago pitched their tent in this district, but have now abandoned their “Hall of Science,” which is converted into a school-room.

The Bishop is the patron of the perpetual curacy of St. Paul's (value £100). Incumbent, the Rev. D. Wheeler. Clerk, Mr. J. Shepherd. Organist, Mr. Soley. Population, 2,000.



St. George's Chapel.

CITIES and states, like other bodies, whether earthly or heavenly, have their rising and their setting—their periods of growth and decay; and in tracing the history of a city, we find that, for the most part, bricks and mortar are subject to the same kind of laws which influence flesh and blood or any other of the varied forms of ponderable matter. There are a thousand resemblances between the life of man and the history of a city; the building mania which sometimes takes possession of the public mind is represented in the rapid growth of the stripling, who, as he eagerly presses forward to the age of twenty-one, thinks not of the corrugated brow and

the silver hair ; while conflagrations, inundations, the beleagerment of factions, and the "tooth of Time," in their separate or conjoint effect on the architectural works of man, have each a type in the diseases, sorrows, passions, and several ages of humanity. The advancement of civilization, and the peaceful pursuit of the arts and sciences, for the endowment of both body and mind, contrast somewhat favourably with the dark and troublous days of the past, to which young England is wont to look back as at a lost paradise. During the last quarter of a century, what has not been achieved for the amelioration of social life ! And no reflecting man can now behold the margins of our cities, dotted as they are with villas and delightful retreats, streets widened and thrown open, marshes drained, and mortality arrested, without coming to the conclusion that these "piping times of peace" have, at least, done something for society.

Such was my train of thought one day that I sauntered by St. George's chapel, on a site where within recent memory children had gathered buttercups and daisies, and rioted in the tall grass, loudly exultant in the sunshiny present, and dreaming as little of a darker day to come, as that the shadows of chimneys would ever be cast on that spot ! Gradually, detached houses here and there sprang up, then the buildings, as though by magic, fell into ranks, became elongated, described squares, terraces, crescents, and so forth ; and now let us see their names—Britannia Square, Severn Terrace, the Moors, Albany Place, York Buildings, Barbourne Terrace, Sansome Buildings, and St. George's Square—the whole forming a very "faire suburbc." A walk in that direction affects me more than the most eloquent sermon, delivered through a canon's lips ; each house to me is a text, every chimney offers up a prayer, and the whole collection produces on my mind that kind of sensation with which a man looks upon a grown-up family, about to shoulder him into another world. The city end of the parish of Claines becoming thus populated, rendered it necessary that a chapel of ease should be erected, the mother church being at a distance of about two miles, and the total number of

inhabitants being then about 5,000. For this purpose, grants were made by some of the associations connected with church-building; Sir H. Wakeman (father of the present Baronet), being the patron of Claines, contributed largely, and the rest was raised by subscription. Mr. James Wakeman gave a painted window, and a lady in the neighbourhood presented a service of communion plate. The cost of erection was about £3,500; and the site was purchased at half-price from the proprietor, Mr. Hope. The architects were Mr. James Lucy and Mr. Lewis Belling. The foundation-stone was laid by Bishop Cornwall, on the 11th of March, 1829, and the building was consecrated in October of the following year. The erection, which forms one side of the square (if the shape of a *clock-case* may be called a square), is a conspicuous ornament to the Birmingham Road approach to Worcester, from whence its modest Gothic front is seen to great advantage, aided by the comfortable appearance of the neat dwellings on either side, nestling among shrubbery, with well-trimmed lawns and gardens lying before them.

Some eight years ago, when I attended this church for the first time on a bright Sunday in June, the sexton did me the honour of conducting me to a large pew, where sat two young women, each with an infant in her arms, attended by five or six friends of both sexes; and from the interest with which the youngsters were regarded, as well as from other indications, it was tolerably clear that I was in the midst of a "christening" party, the result of which I began to suspect would not be remarkably pleasant to myself. One of the little cherubs (who had scarcely seen the light of two months) slept away happily in its land of dreams, the whole time of the service; the other, who might have been a year old, sat upright, as though determined to witness every process of the ceremonial; and had I been the principal operator he could not have kept more intently his large and beautiful blue eyes upon me. By and bye, some inward twitching made the little beauty shout at the top of his lungs, and then with a continued whimpering he succeeded for-

a full quarter of an hour in drawing upon our party the undivided attention of the congregation, till the sexton, who I suppose had taken me for the father, thrust his head over the seat, and whispering to me in an admonitory strain, said, "Why don't *you* take the child, and see what you can do with it?" This I politely declined, not wishing, for the entertainment of the congregation, to become No. 1 in so grotesque a grouping. Accordingly I attempted another means of pacification by giving the infant the handle of my umbrella to play with. Before however I had got through the next prayer, he had made an abortive attempt to swallow the article, which necessarily issued in another violent fit of coughing, the mother regarding me with marked displeasure, as a brute not fit to be within a hundred miles of a nursery. I closed my book with a feeling of despair, and mentally vowed that if ever I should get clear of that seat I would most religiously keep aloof from it for the future. Some years afterwards I paid another visit to St. George's, and observing that the aforesaid seat was then empty, I thought that on this occasion it might be adventured with safety, and being in a measure public property—that is to say, a receptacle for miscellaneous visitors—I preferred taking possession of that, to being dependent on the politeness of the proprietors of any other pew. Strange to say, I had not been seated five minutes when another party (with an infant) were shown in, and drove me into a corner from whence there was no hope of escape. I began to think there was something more than a common fatality superintending this coincidence, and would at the time have given a trifle to be seated elsewhere, even though it were in the icy choir of the Cathedral; but on this occasion fortunately I suffered no inconvenience except what was occasioned by the thought that the congregation must have considered me as being somehow mysteriously connected with the paternity of the neighbourhood.

The officiating clergyman (who, I believe, is much respected by his flock for a large endowment of Christian piety, and exceeding amiability of manners) preached an excellent sermon

on the fundamental truths of revelation, which would have been highly impressive had the rev. gentleman dashed it with more energy and emphasis. Let it here be understood that I am by no means an admirer of that class of violent cushion-whackers concerning one of whom a little girl, who was taken to church for the first time in her life, went home and told her mother that "she had *seen a man dancing in a tub*;" but I am convinced that, however it may be with the elderly branches of the congregation, the younger members require no small degree of animation in a preacher to beat away

"The dreams that wave before their half-shut eye,"

and occasionally even a startling effort to arouse them. "Pray, Mr. Betterton," asked the good Archbishop Sancroft of the celebrated actor, "can you inform me of the reason you actors on the stage, speaking of things imaginary, affect your audience as if they were real; while we in the Church speak of things real, which our congregations receive only as if they were imaginary?" "Why, really, my Lord," answered Betterton, "I don't know; unless it is that we actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real, while you in the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imaginary."

The singing was got up by the joint efforts of one man and two or three children, posted in the western gallery, and who all sang in unison—the three hymns being sung to "Boanerges," "New Sabbath," and another composition very similar to that of "Isle of Beauty." No organ* swelled its solemn note of praise and adoration; and with the addition of a flute and bass-viol, any one would have fancied himself in a conventicle. It is gratifying that of late the public attention has been called so much to the subject of music, and that it has extended to some of our places of worship, where the aid of science and good taste is much more in requisition than formerly; still there is much to be done. Hullah and Mainzer have fairly tested our musical taste, as a nation, but "the million" is sadly dwindling

* I am glad to hear that active measures are now taken for the erection of an organ here.

down now that it is found out. It has been well said, that music, though delightful, is not to be acquired like an epidemic. Some difficulties have to be surmounted before a sound musical taste is diffused; because, in many congregations, in avoiding the drawling time in which the noblest tunes were sung during the last generation, a series of noisy song-like melodies have been introduced, and become so associated with favourite hymns, as to be really admired, although their adaptation is alike offensive to the rules of harmony and correct taste. A writer in *Blackwood* says—"There is to us more of touching pathos, heart-thrilling expression in some of the old psalm tunes, feelingly displayed, than in a whole batch of modernism. The strains go home, and 'the fountains of the great deep are broken up'—the great deep of unfathomable feeling, that lies far, far below the surface of the world-hardened heart; and as the unwonted yet unchecked tear starts to the eye, the softened spirit yields to its influence, and shakes off the load of earthly care, rising purified and spiritualised into a clearer atmosphere. Strange, inexplicable associations brood over the mind, 'like the far off dreams of Paradise,' mingling their chaste melancholy with a still, subdued, though more cheerful character. How many glad hearts in the olden times have rejoiced in these songs of praise; how many sorrowful ones sighed out their complaints in those plaintive notes that steal sadly yet sweetly on the ear, hearts that now cold in death are laid to rest around that sacred church within whose walls they have often swelled with emotion!"

Chanting, too, being that musical modulation of the voice with which prayers are offered in our cathedrals, ought properly to be adopted in our churches. We know that for the use of music and poetry in our sacred services we have the authority of scripture; and chanting especially (which Dr. Hook not inappropriately terms "the voice of the Church") continually reminds the supplicant of the solemn, unearthly duty in which he is engaged. It is devoutly to be hoped that—looking at the influence which the Roman Catholic services exercise

on the popular mind by reason of their cultivated school of music—well directed efforts may be made by Protestants towards the same end ; for surely, if by these means we can allure souls to the house of God, they are not to be slightly rejected. The musical institutions of the city likewise should take this subject under their active notice. There is no doubt that the best results would ensue from energy and perseverance, the chief obstacles being ignorance and old-established usage. Of this I will give an instance, with which to conclude the subject. In a certain church near Birmingham the practice of chanting the Psalms had been introduced by the pastor, and a small portion of the congregation seemed rather pleased with this procedure, while others felt annoyed, but none more so than an old woman, who had always been accustomed to here them *read*. She pondered for a moment on this apparent breach of decorum, and suddenly starting up, she marched down the aisle, book in hand, “spectacle on nose,” and fire in her eye, until within a few paces of the reading desk, when fixing her eyes upon the preacher, in a stentorian voice she thus accosted him—“*You aut to be ashamed on yurself, Mr. F——, you aut—to let them there chaps mouth-maul them blessed Psalms in such a manner.*” The sensation produced by this abrupt proceeding may be better conceived than described.

The only point of interest remaining in connexion with St. George’s Chapel is the state of the schools : there are Sunday and daily schools, supported by voluntary contributions and children’s pence. The former, according to the last account, contain about 130 boys and 110 girls ; the daily schools about 87 boys and 82 girls.

The curate of St. George’s is the Rev. B. Davis. Clerk, Mr. W. Greenway.



The Watermen's Church.

'T was Sabbath morn! the summer sun in cloudless splendour shone,
And ting'd with gold each curling wave, as soft it rippled on ;
I walk'd along the winding shore, bespread with pebbles rare,
For thus I hop'd ere noon to reach the distant house of prayer.

I came where by the river's bank some stately vessels lay,
And many seamen sought the beach, in Sabbath raiment gay ;
I mark'd not, as they passed along, their staid and thoughtful air,
But sigh'd and wish'd they'd turn with me, and seek the house of prayer.

At length a streamer fair and broad my fix'd attention drew,
For in its folds it gave the dove and olive branch to view ;
The seamen climb'd the vessel's side which did that banner bear ;
I followed, and with joy beheld a floating house of prayer.

Above, beneath, each steadfast eye upon the preacher hung,
And sweet and holy was the strain the sons of ocean sung ;
No vacant look, no wandering glance, no drowsy nod, was there,
Nor did one restless form disturb the seamen's house of prayer.

I listened to the gospel's sound, amidst a scene so new,
And saw at times the trickling tear a manly cheek bedew ;
I pray'd that He, who loves His own, might make that ark His care,
And many souls be born within the seamen's house of prayer.

The rippling wave, the winding shore, no longer meet my gaze,
No more the snow-white Bethel flag my pensive footstep stays ;
But oft amidst the sacred calm of Sabbath morning fair,
My thoughts with new delight recall the seamen's house of prayer.

IIUC.

READER! will you accompany me to the Floating Chapel?
I have already led you to Gothic piles, and described
to you many a relic of antiquity, with the sculptured
pageantry of death, and the moral of the "storied urn." Let us
now, nothing despising, together enter this humble structure,
and seek what edification we may among the lowly worshippers
who here hold communion with their Maker. No fretted roof
nor long-drawn aisle nor elaborate chiselling here arrests the
eye, nor florid eloquence the ear, nor brilliant equipage the
admiration, of the visitor ; but what of that ?

“ What constitutes a church ?
 Not Roman basilic or Gothic pile,
 With fretted roof, tall spire, and long drawn aisle :
 These only mock thy search :
 Fantastic sepulchres when all is said—
 Seek not the living among the dead.”

A brief history of the “Episcopal Floating Chapel” would perhaps not be unacceptable ; and indeed, while describing the ecclesiastical buildings and associations belonging to Worcester and its vicinity, it seems desirable not to omit a place of worship set apart for a body of men whose demoralized habits are unhappily notorious throughout the land. The case of this too long neglected class has of late years attracted a degree of public attention, and efforts have been made in some parts of the kingdom to promote their moral and religious culture, and that with encouraging success. About three years ago, principally through the philanthropic and Christian exertions of the Rev. J. Davies, Rector of St. Clement’s, who has been instrumental in befriending the boatmen on various navigations, aided by other excellent individuals, a committee was formed in this city for promoting the religious instruction of the bargemen and boatmen of the Severn and also of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The Lord Bishop having given his hearty sanction, and a donation of £25, to which £50 was added by the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and other benevolent individuals having also given liberally, the work was commenced. The *Albion* (a vessel noted and described among the watermen as being “remarkable for luck in her voyages”) was purchased and fitted up, at an expense of nearly £400, and was soon afloat. I have taken some pains to ascertain the effects that have been produced by the exertions of the above named rev. gentleman and of the zealous clergymen who have officiated as chaplains at this place of worship ; and the particulars I have accumulated are certainly most interesting, though by far too numerous and lengthened for my confined space. It has been abundantly proved that this rough class of men are not only susceptible of kindness, but that they appreciate, and in the main

make good use of, the efforts made by their superiors. Many of them, as well as their wives and families, have become steady and respectable in their calling, and there are not wanting instances of swearing and drunkenness being abandoned. That the boys and young watermen in general should receive instruction before their vicious habits become hopelessly deep-rooted, is perhaps, if possible, even of more importance than the reformation of the elder branches—viewed as a preventive of future demoralization. It may also be recollected by some of my readers that a police officer, who was called to give evidence before the Constabulary Commissioners, stated that “he had known instances of boat-boys of 12 or 14 years of age, connected with robberies, from whom it was quite as difficult to gain information on the subject as from the oldest thieves in the trade.” But very encouraging instances have occurred of improvement among the younger boatmen—for instance, I was told that not long ago the prize for *best behaviour* was awarded to the son of a waterman at an examination of one of the parochial schools of this city.

On the whole it is evident that the attempt to benefit the men employed in the navigations connected with this city has been attended with a success very encouraging to those benevolent individuals who have contributed to the funds. It should be remarked that the chaplain, the Rev. B. Williams, is paid by the Church Pastoral Aid Society; yet it is obvious that benefactions will be necessary from time to time to keep the vessel in repair, and for other contingencies. While on the subject, I may state, as the result of inquiries, that places of worship have been provided for this class at Oxford, Preston Brook, Runcorn, Manchester, Liverpool, and the banks of the river Weaver, as well as on the Staffordshire line, yet a lamentable deficiency still exists on almost all the navigations throughout the kingdom; and what has excited the greatest surprise is, that at Gloucester, where so many seamen and bargemen congregate, no religious instruction is provided for them (and it is well known they have insuperable objections, on account of their dress, &c., to enter any of the regular churches), but a

dissenting minister occasionally assembles a few under a canopy of tarpauling raised on board one of the vessels.

The clamorous little bell of "Noah's Ark" (now anchored near Worcester bridge) caught my ear on a Sunday afternoon, as I was trudging by the Severn Terrace, and seemed so pertinaciously to insist that all who were within sound should come and answer to its summons, that I could not resist, and accordingly bent my steps in that direction. The day was fine, and dozens of the poorer classes, as well as boatmen, were coming from all the cardinal points, and wending their way down the Quay steps, towards the chapel, while groups of idle spectators on the bridge were adjusting their elbows or chins on the railing, and knots of two or three were dangling about street corners and other "vantage ground"—some in listless vacuity, others passing coarse comment or clownish jokes on each member of the increasing congregation, as they severally passed by.

The sexton and his wife were ensconced in the little cabin, erected as a habitation for them at the one end; the former individual, with his coat and waistcoat off, appearing in a sweltering perspiration with his lusty efforts at the bell-rope. The little edifice was now rapidly filling, and I with some difficulty obtained a sitting. Although highly gratified to witness so large an attendance of boatmen and their families, I could not help thinking that the broad-cloth I saw here and there, and the liberal sprinkling of velvet and silk bonnets and shawls, had the effect of displacing coarser materials. The attendance here of the superior classes should be discouraged—they have churches of their own, and ought therefore considerably to leave the boatmen to the full advantages of theirs. The chapel is neatly fitted up with backed seats, pulpit, communion table, &c., and the ventilation is well provided for—so well indeed, that being unfortunately placed in a right line between two of the openings or trap-doors, arranged on both sides of the vessel, I caught something in my ear very near akin to *tic doloieux*. The singing was well and modestly led by two or three females, and heartily joined in by the bulk of the congregation; indeed it

was gratifying to witness the devout attention paid not only to this but to every other part of the services. Not a single instance of levity or of unbecoming conduct occurred.

The sermon was drawn from the well-known invitation of the founder of our faith—"Come unto me, all ye that labour," &c. From this passage the preacher made an excellent address, contrasting the different kinds of invitation and the promises held out by Epicureans, Stoics, Pharisees, and Sadducees, with those of Christ. This discourse, embracing the fundamentals of our religion, was couched in language so familiar and comprehensible to the intellect of the audience—occasionally soothing to their fears, encouraging to their hopes, and now and then seasoned with a spice of quiet but most startling representation—that no one present (and among them were several dissenters) could wonder at the success of the rev. gentleman's ministry. And let it not be supposed that these "plain sermons" are, after all, so easily composed; a judicious writer in a Bristol paper says—and I fully agree with him—that it is a most enviable and rare talent, that of being able to preach a good plain sermon: some people think it merely consists in talking down to the comprehensions of a rude and primitive people, whereas you have really to talk up to them—you have to make clearer to them that which is clear—you have to present great truths to them in the most striking and least involved style—you have to quicken dull apprehensions, and to teach solemn things in simple lessons, so that they may leave an impression upon easy natures not always the quickest to receive, or the best to retain them.

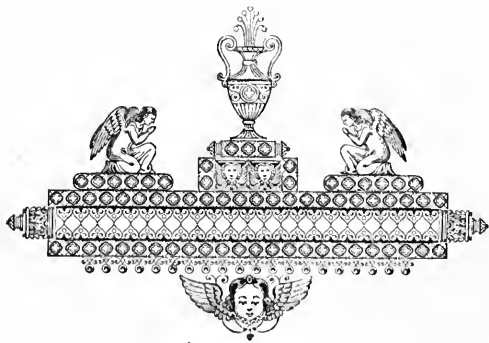
In conclusion, I must commend the Watermen's Church to the support of the benevolent. The demoralized condition of the men employed upon our inland navigations has, unhappily, become so proverbial, that little proof on this point is required. The criminal code confirms the declaration made by a gentleman well acquainted with our navigations—"that he knew of no class so reckless, so desperate, so depraved, as canal boatmen;" a declaration corroborated by the remarks made

by Chief Baron Pollock, as well as the late Baron Gurney. Between the 1st of January, 1836, and the 31st of December, 1846, there were not less than 302 belonging to this class committed to Worcester gaol, for offences perpetrated within the boundaries of the city alone, out of which number only *one could read and write well!*" It is (says the Rev. J. Davies) to be deeply deplored, that factors and tradesmen are so urgent as to the despatch of goods, and thus tempt rival companies to keep up a system of Sunday traffic, which compels the honest boatman either to wound his conscience by violating the law of God, or be exposed to the loss of his situation, and find himself and his family deprived of bread.

It may be added, that some time ago the boat-boys were invited to attend at the vestry of the Waterman's Church, for the purpose of learning to read, write, and cast accounts. The numbers recently receiving these rudiments of education were twenty boys and seven adults, among the latter being a boatman sixty years of age, and at their request the attendance was increased to two evenings, instead of one in the week.

The Rev. B. Williams is the present curate at this chapel.







J. Wood Del.

Merceder from Dingles

Pub. at Wood's Atlas Repository



Great Witley.

Go forth into the country,
From a world of care and guile ;
Go forth to the untainted air
And the sunshine's open smile.
It shall clear thy clouded brow,
It shall loose the worldly coil
That binds thy heart too closely up,
Thou man of care and toil !

THE public road to the parish church of Witley passes close in front of Lord Ward's mansion, which was recently occupied by Her Majesty the Queen Dowager ; Lord Ward, who purchased the property from the Foley family (in whose possession it had remained for two centuries), being on the continent at the time of my visit here. Having some time on my hands I sauntered through the grounds, the beauty and excellent arrangement of which were a source of admiration, although a December fog, like a thick veil over nature's face, hid half her beauties from me. These grounds were laid out and improved by the late Lord Foley, who had excellent taste, and a nice appreciation of landscape gardening : there are sheets of water, and islands, and cascades tumbling and foaming, and undulating surfaces embosomed in evergreens, and labyrinthine paths winding their crooked courses among verdant shrubberies, and lofty clustering trees to overlook the whole. The present approaches were also formed by the late lord, the old entrance leaving the turnpike road in front of the house,

passing down an avenue, and crossing the lake over a bridge. The park consists of about 400 acres, and is well stocked with deer. There are here some gigantic oaks in full vigour—one (which is in decay) near to the south front measures thirty feet in circumference; and I may here add, that immediately on the confines of the parish formerly stood an oak under which St. Augustine is said to have met the monks of Bangor; it was always called St. Augustine's oak, and may possibly have been the spot for such a meeting, for Selden considers that it took place on the western borders of Worcestershire.* The park for the most part lies in Witley parish, but a small portion is in the chapelry of Little Witley. The late lord planted the young woods which surround the park, about 200 acres. The waters, I am told, are fed from Woodbury Hill, aided by underground currents which burst forth in various parts of the parish; and as they do not vary in the hottest summer nor in the wettest winter, it is considered that they flow from some distant underground reservoir. Woodbury and Abberley hills are formed of a basaltic gravel, skirted by a layer of limestone. In the parish of Shelsley there is a basaltic dike, but not in Witley or Abberley. The substratum of the park, as of the parish, is new red sandstone, which breaks forth in the park, and crops out against the limestone which runs between the two hills, and on which lime Abberley Hall† stands. The church stands upon the solid rock (red sand), and its dryness is exemplified by the gilding of the internal decorations not having been renewed since the building was erected.

The old church stood about a quarter of a mile west of the mansion: the present one is close to and has a private entrance from the same. It was built by the first Lord Foley in the

* Bede says this conference was held on the borders of the Wiccii and West Saxons, which probably was not in Worcestershire, but, as is generally supposed, at or near Aust, in Gloucestershire. (See my article on Suckley.)

† Recently burnt to the ground. This hall, formerly Abberley Lodge, was once the residence of the poet Walsh, where Pope and others of classic celebrity frequently assembled. Part of the house is in this parish. Walsh was three times chosen parliamentary representative for this county.

beginning of the last century, and was completed by his widow; it is dedicated to St. Michael. Nash says, very truly, that "it is a room worthy of the opulence and taste of the family." It has not much pretension to any classic order, excepting the porch, which is Doric; and the general style of decoration is Saracenic. The interior is very gorgeous, with paintings and splendid gold panellings. An old man, to whom I put some questions on the subject, declared that "a hogshead of gold had been melted down for the occasion." The windows were painted by Price,* in 1719, and represent the Annunciation, the Birth of Christ, Peter Walking on the Sea, the Resurrection, John Baptising Christ, the Magi, &c.; the paintings were said to be Italian, and to have been designed for the chapel at Cannons, but when misfortunes befel the magnificent Duke of Chandos, and Cannons was dismantled, they were purchased by the second Lord Foley, and were found to answer the purpose well; the paintings, however, have been sadly disfigured by modern patchwork. The subjects on the ceiling consist of a Dead Christ, the Ascension, &c.; they were by the Verrio, who, by his distinguished performances at Blenheim and Hampton Court, gave a style and perfection to the internal decorations which characterised the early part of the last century. Some good carvings adorn the ceilings and the east wall; but the most attractive specimen of art is the monument, in the recess at the south side of the communion table, to the first Lord Foley and his lady—probably one of Rysbrach's best; the proportions of both male and female figures appear to be perfect. On the whole, this church is one of the most magnificent and costly temples in this county dedicated to divine worship, and reflects honour on the munificence of the founder. The attendance at church was not very numerous—a circumstance which surprised me, for your rural population is ever agape in the presence of rank, whether it be that of the royal blood, a live lord, or an every day country squire. Some time ago there was one of

* This Price is celebrated for his discovery of a transparent blue, but which discovery died with him.

he largest congregations ever known at a village church near Ipswich, during a visit of Sir Robert Peel at the seat of a gentleman in the parish. It seems that in this case the rural folk went to church in the full expectation of hearing Sir Robert preach, as they had heard he was a *prime* minister; and there is no doubt the right hon. baronet would gladly have dispensed with a little of his notoriety for the occasion. This passion for gazing is one of our national traits. "Did you ever see the king?" said a boy to his father; "No, my dear, but I had an aunt that was very near seeing the Duke of Sussex." Luckily Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, whose fondness for retirement renders all such public intrusions irksome, in her attendance at Witley church has the advantage of a private entrance and a large and well sheltered pew. Her Majesty did not attend the service on this morning, and I regretted to hear that indisposition was the cause. Her Majesty's usual drive was over Abberley Hill to the valley of the Teme, on which occasions it is said Her Majesty richly enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the hills. How good an example is here set to the aristocratic world, who in general are dissatisfied with every thing appertaining to the country from which they draw their immense resources—the peacefulness and quiet comfort of the English village have no charms for them, and even the elegance of London society wants a "French polish" to render its surface still more deceptive. Her Majesty's good sense in this, as in all other points, requires, however, no advocacy from me: it is, in brief, only equal to the uniform benevolence and extensive charities which have made her an object of the warmest benediction in the hearts of the poor, not only of the parish of Witley, but of the United Kingdom.* Sir Andrew Barnard and others of the suite attended divine service on the morning of my visit. The prayers were read by the rector in his usual calm and unaffected style. Of this worthy gentleman I may be allowed to say, in passing, that he combines in one the man, the Christian, and the faithful pastor, effecting much good openly, but infinitely more in secret, the object and


* Her Majesty left Witley in April, 1846.

tendency of whose life is the bodily and spiritual comfort of his fellow creatures. The poor have in him a sure friend, the higher classes a valued associate; and through his public usefulness and active benevolence the name of Pearson is linked with the history of much that is good and valuable in the county. The reverend gentleman, I understand, with the assistance of his family, takes the entire charge of the parish of Witley. The daily school at this place contains between 50 and 60 children, and there are more on a Sunday. Her Majesty the Queen Dowager took much interest in it. The state of the parish seems to be highly satisfactory, and I am told that all the cottagers have large gardens, some a quarter of an acre, others more. The late Lord Foley, to whom the whole parish belonged, was very anxious that the cottagers should be so provided; and his memory is no doubt blessed among them. The parish of Great Witley is not devoid of interest to the antiquary. On the crown of Woodbury Hill (situate therein) is an ancient fortification, believed to be a British camp, which encloses about 26 acres; indeed, there is a chain of these camps from Witley into Wales, more or less perfect. This parish formed a portion of the territory of the Silures, over which the once celebrated Caractacus ruled. There is a tradition that Owen Glendower was posted on Woodbury, and Henry the Fourth's forces on Abberley Hill, and that in the engagement which took place between the respective armies (A.D. 1405, after Owen's plunder of Worcester) the king's army used cannon: certain it is that cannon were used in those days, and as certain that balls (some of them 7lbs. weight) were found buried in Woodbury Hill, and one of which was presented by the rector to the Worcester Natural History Society.

Lord Ward is the patron of the living (value £391). Rector, the Rev. Thomas Pearson. Organist, Miss Emma Holmes. Population, 381.



Claines.


 N approaching this church from the fields, no one would suspect the existence of an ecclesiastical edifice, the site being so flanked and defended by trees. The building wears a piecemeal appearance, as though it had been formed by the junction of three or four old houses. The original portions of the building bear traces of both the Tudor and Perpendicular styles, here and there disguised by the alterations and repairs of more modern architects, the bulk of these alterations (including a handsome new porch) having been effected some five or six years ago. The porch is decorated with small stained glass windows; and a poor's box is there fixed, which, by its bright and clean appearance, puts a negative upon the facetious satire I have somewhere heard, namely, that charity boxes are the safest sanctuary for the spider to take shelter in to avoid intrusion. The interior of the church consists of a nave, chancel, and side aisles, formed by two rows of pillars and arches. The east window is of modern stained glass, bearing the royal and episcopal arms; at the west end is a gallery with an organ of tolerably good tone and quality, and small galleries over the north and south aisles are among the latest improvements. The organ was presented by the late Sir H. Wakeman, but there is no available fund out of which to repair it or to pay the organist, who, therefore, is remunerated by subscription. A new stone font stands at the west end of the church; and there is a basin on a pedestal standing by the north-west pillar of the chancel. In this same pillar is an ancient piscina (or recess used by the officiating priests, wherein to wash their hands when engaged in the services); it is probably as ancient as 9 Henry V, when Helena and John Frogmere gave two parcels of land in Northwick for the maintenance in Claines church of a chantry to the Virgin. I observed no monu-

mental remains worthy of note in the interior ; near the north window of the chancel aisle once lay the stone effigy of John Porter, who formerly occupied and gave the name to "Porter's Mills" in this parish ; this figure is now removed to the outside, and instead of being on its back, is placed on its side, and besides this, is robbed of a leg and hands ; the carving is good, especially of the cap. The inscription conveys a most equivocal compliment—"John Porter, which was a lawyer, 1577." It may have been the fact of Mr. Porter belonging to the proscribed profession of the law that induced the authorities to turn his effigy out of the church during the progress of certain repairs, and to make him do penance by lying on his side under the drippings of the roof ; the gentleman, however, seemed to have been almost prophetic on this very point while writing the epitaph which was formerly placed over the figure, for the first line of the couplet selected was—

"Omnia transibunt—nos ibimus, ibitis, ibunt."

In the churchyard, near the principal north entrance, is a fine specimen of *antiquæ reliquiæ*, in the parish stocks ; it was presided over by a still greater piece of antiquity, namely, a very venerable but decaying yew, apparently six or seven centuries old. This tree has since been blown down. As the stocks appear to be never brought into requisition (the Sunday wakes being almost suppressed here), I would advise the authorities to bargain for the sale of it to the Worcester bench of magistrates, who now, for the lack of such an hold-fast on the *understandings* of the subject, are constantly compelled to dismiss without punishment drunkards and disorderlies who may happen to possess no cash ; the act (a very old one) prescribing the stocks as the only alternative in case of non-payment of fine. The churchyard seems to be very full of bodies, but I hear the authorities are endeavouring to extend the yard by purchasing an adjoining piece of land. I suppose it has been the burial place for this very large parish ever since 1498, at which time, after divers controversies at the court of Rome as to whether the dead should be buried here or at Worcester Cathedral, it

was agreed on all sides that the parishioners should bury the dead here, on paying 6s. 8d. yearly, on the feast of the Trinity, to the Prior of Worcester.

The stoves were crackling and burning brightly and the sunbeams were streaming through the windows, the seat-doors stood invitingly open, exhibiting comfortable green-baized and cushioned interiors, and all things wore a neat and clean appearance, as I entered and introduced myself to the female sexton; the lady politely essayed to put me into one of the three immense pews (or rather rooms) which I was told belonged to Sir O. Wakeman, the lord of the manor. Notwithstanding her assurance that there would be abundance of room, as no one scarcely ever came there, I preferred to select a more humble sitting, of about 9 by 12 inches, than to flounder about, a conspicuous object, in one of as many feet. By and by, the "lord" entered and took his seat in the principal drawing-room, which, with the other two seats, forms nearly one-eighth of the whole ground accommodation of the church, and all this for a single man, a bachelor, and one who rarely brings with him a crowd of relatives or visitors to lounge upon these fifty feet of cushion. No wonder that a parish of 6,000 inhabitants were shockingly squeezed by this arrangement, and that a large number of them were consequently pushed up underneath the roof, and deposited in little galleries; I am not aware, but of course the whole expense of erecting these galleries ought to have fallen upon the "lord."

The services were performed by the perpetual curate in a solemn and deliberate manner; the singing was tolerably well managed, and the congregation were generally attentive; but I have to complain of several late comers, as likewise of the practice adopted by some young men here of standing up and leaning over the seats when the rest of the people are at prayers. A church is not properly a place for lounging or quizzing; and hence, I suppose, arose the large red curtains with which a certain respectable lady from an adjoining seminary has entirely encompassed and shut in her young pupils from the rude gaze

f mankind. This Turkish custom, I fear, must be extended f young men will persist in entering our churches with unwor- hy motives. But on the other hand, the ladies have somewhat o blame themselves for ; they too often assume the properties of the magnet by their flaunting ribbons, their rich satins and velvets ; and I feel assured that the beauty of the ladies of Claines requires no such allies to produce conquests. Of all the follies that can be fairly placed to the charge of the human race—and, heaven knows, they are as thick as gnats in a summer sunbeam—none can be laid to more people's doors than the pride and the fancifulness of the judgment in adorning, to say nothing of covering, one's outer scaffolding, the body. But when these extravagancies and follies are introduced even into the Temple, 't is not strange that, by such wooing, man becomes fallen a second time, for, as an old satirist observes—

“ When such a she-priest comes her mass to say,
Twenty to one they all forget to pray.”

Claines church, it seems, is a favourite spot—a sort of “St. George's, Hanover Square,” with the ladies of this neighbourhood, by whom it is very frequently selected for the performance of a ceremony which the generality of the sex hope to have administered, at least once in their lives, on their own account. A maiden lady (who, by the bye, had traversed the earth's orbit about fifty times) once informed me that it was but natural for people to seek retired spots to hide their follies ; but I feel confident that younger females see in the seclusion of Claines something far different from this—their bright eyes and warm hearts see and feel a poetic beauty, and withal a congeniality of position for those who, stepping forth from the crowded ranks of society, plight their mutual vows before the altar of the church, in the calmness and quietude of rural shades. There was a matter of ten or a dozen couples “asked in church” on the occasion of my visit, and I believe that during the ministry of a former curate (who benevolently put all kinds of facilities in the way of young sweethearts) the average was nearly double that of the present time. No wonder, then, that with this

amount of business on the hands of the ringers, and the constant excuses the fraternity will make for the exercise of their vocation, the ears of the villagers were dinned perpetually; and that one of the bells, wearied with so much babbling on marriages, like a vain coquette, is at last grown old, cracked, and unfit for service.* Times are much altered here since the period (1288) when William Canning (who was five times mayor of Bristol) assumed holy orders at Northwick, in this parish, actually to avoid a marriage in which King Edward had wished him to become one of the principals.

The bulk of the great tithes of this parish formerly belonged to St. Wulstan's Hospital, but Henry VIII appropriated them to Christ Church, Oxford. The monastery of the White Ladies originally received the small tithes, and the priest of St. Swithin's, in this city, also received certain of them, as ghostly father to the nuns. The minister of St. Swithin's, I believe, still continues to receive this emolument, although, of course, his "ghostly fathership" has been for many years a sinecure. As a portion of the income of the sisterhood was formerly devoted to the repairs of the chancel of Claines church, I cannot, therefore, help thinking that, as that institution is now suppressed, the proceeds of the "ghostly fathership" should be applied in the aforesaid repairs; or it may very usefully form an addition to the income of the perpetual curate of Claines, and would thus fulfil a far more legitimate purpose than that of enriching a clergyman who has nothing to do with the parish; for I understand that the whole stated income of the present curate of Claines is but £27, derived from the lay impropriator, augmented by a grant from Queen Anne's bounty, which was laid out in the purchase of land, added to his surplice fees, &c., which perhaps raise the whole to £180—a small sum indeed

* On the occasion of a recent marriage at Leicester the bells of no less than four parish churches were rung in honour of the event. When the ringers proceeded to ask for their fees, the reasons assigned were as follows:—No. 1 parish was the residence of the bride; No. 2, that of the bridegroom; No. 3, the family of the latter bury in the parish; and No. 4, an uncle lived in the parish *five and twenty years ago*.

for a perpetual curacy in so extensive a parish, where, I believe, the benevolence of the clergyman results in the distribution of a large portion of his income for charitable purposes.

The parish of Claines was originally a chapelry to St. Helen's, Worcester; it was divided into several hamlets or tythings, including the ancient manor of Northwick, and the church was called the church of Northwick, though situated in the hamlet of Claines. In 1218 Claines became a separate parish. It appears that the late Sir H. Wakeman bought the advowson of this benefice of Christ Church College, pending a suit then in the Exchequer, and the issue of which was so successful that the baronet is presumed to have made a "nice thing of it."

There are said to be, near the church, existing traces of the foundation of an old parsonage house, which house is said to have been standing within living memory, but the patron has not thought it worth his while to restore it, although the present curate, in consequence, lives in a house which, I should say, judging from its size, costs him an annual rental of some £70 or £80. So that it would seem the patron is determined to make the unfortunate curate literally fulfil the apostolic doctrine of "spending and being spent" among his parishioners; and how he would fare, were it not for the proceeds of another living, it would not be difficult to foresee.

The allotment system and provident clubs were in useful operation in this parish, under the care of Mr. Curtler, Mr. Gutch, and Mr. Palmer, the perpetual curate, whose exertions in ameliorating the condition of the poor, and educating their children, are well backed and supported by two or three active and benevolent ladies. There were upwards of thirty allotments, but these have since been much reduced. The allotments were let at £4. 8s. per acre, and the system progressed satisfactorily during the three years it was tried in this parish. I have been informed, though I am reluctant to believe it, that the two principal landowners in the parish gave no assistance to the benevolent scheme.

Among the charitable donations left from time to time in

this parish are the following:—Edward Thomas, gent., 1656, left £50 to remain as stock for ever, to place out poor children as apprentices; and in connection with this gift, I should think it is a singular instance, unprecedented in any other part of the kingdom, that there is now in hand a large sum of this stock unapplied, for lack of candidates. I am informed, however, that this is not attributable to a want of publicity, as the matter has been advertised. In a large parish like Claines, one would think there were hundreds of poor children whose parents would be delighted with such an opportunity of benefiting them. I hope this will answer the purpose of an advertisement to such persons. Among the remaining charities are—Mr. Charles Evans, £10, interest to be given to old bachelors and maids on St. John's day; and the Rev. T. Cooke, £21, interest to purchase gowns and coats for poor men and women, to be marked "C. T. M." The reflecting mind revolts at this unfeeling attempt to level poverty with crime, by putting on a badge approximating to that (the only one that can be excused) of the "R. V." on the county rogues and vagabonds. The offence to my feelings is still greater from the fact of the donor having made such unworthiness the means of perpetuating his initials to posterity; and from a *clergyman* too, whose sacred profession should have taught him to remember—

"Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name."

The intention of the donor, however, is frustrated, inasmuch as the initials have long ceased to be attached to the garments.

Since my visit here I understand that Mrs. Gutch and Miss Lavender (daughters of the late J. P. Lavender, Esq., banker, of Worcester) have followed out the suggestions of Mr. Markland, in his excellent little work on the decoration of churches, and in lieu of erecting monuments in the church to the memory of their deceased parents, have presented a handsome silver communion service, a velvet cover for the table, two elegant carved oak chairs, and have had the floor within the rails laid down with encaustic tiles.

Patron of the living, Sir O. Wakeman (value £305). Perpetual Curate, the Rev. J. Palmer. Curate, the Rev. W. Waldo Cooper. Clerk, Mr. Williams. Organist, Miss Williams. Population, 6,395.

Kempsey.

THE church of Kempsey is a plain building, cruciform and covered with lead; it is not ancient, having been almost entirely rebuilt in 1799, when the funds were raised by leasing the church lands under the trustees for ninety-nine years. The interior, as might be expected, presents but few points of interest. In the south transept is a monument with this inscription:—"Underneath, the corruptible parts of vicar, one husband, two help-mates, both wives, and both Anns, a triplicity of persons in two twains, but one flesh, are interred.—Rev. G. Boulter, vicar of this parish 50 years, and of Welland 34; aged 81." In the chancel is a bust of Alderman Farley, of this city (1821); there is a monument to Mrs. Elizabeth Eaton (1790), on the tablet of which is some carving, in relief, of the lady and four infants; the execution is far from good, and the children having the appearance of being all of one age, seem to have formed a quadruple alliance for the balance of their mutual claims on the suckling powers of the unfortunate parent. In an arched niche lies the armed figure of Edmund Wylde, a knight, who is protected at each of the four cardinal points by a monk, and on the monument are placed a veritable helmet and sword. From the top issues a fine branch of a horse-chestnut tree, which has been growing for some years and now seems in a flourishing condition. The appearance of a tree, growing out of a solid mass of masonry in the interior of a church, was so singular that I was led to inquire the cause, and found that some few years ago the then sexton of the church, who was

known among the younger fry as a pertinacious stiekler for propriety, observing a lad playing with a horse-chesnut when he ought to have been digesting the sermon, gave him a fillip on the ear with one hand and threw the chesnut away with the other ; the chesnut alighted on the top of the monument, where in the course of time it formed mould to itself and gradually shot out, till now it hangs most gracefully over the recumbent figure of the worthy knight, whose representatives, I understand, will not allow it to be removed. In the north transept is a tablet, surmounted by a skull, in memory of one John Ward. It has often struck me as exceedingly inappropriate to the Christian dispensation that the emblems of death are almost invariably made to partake of a very gloomy character ; but why Christians should have chosen a skull and cross bones for this purpose, except to seare the living from all thought of death, seems to me incomprehensible. Mrs. Child, who has written some very sensible "Letters from New York," takes up the same view of the case, and observes that the Greeks, notwithstanding their shadowy faith in a future existenee, represented death as a gentle and beautiful youth ; sometimes as a sleeping winged child, with an inverted torch resting on a wreath of flowers. Even Azrael, the awful death-angel of the Hebrews, resembling our popular ideas of the devil, was always said to take away the souls of the young by a kiss. If we really believed that those who are gone from us were truly alive as ourselves, we could not invest the subject with such awful depth of gloom as we do. If we would imbue our children with distinct faith in immortality, we should never speak of people as dead, but as passed into another world. We should speak of the body as a cast-off garment, which the wearer had out-grown ; consecrated, indeed, by the beloved being that used it for a season, but of no value in itself.

Near the entrance door of the north aisle is a record of one Christopher Meredith having left two messuages in St. Paul's Churchyard to the Company of Stationers, and charged them with £3 to buy bibles for the tenants of Kenpsey manor, and

£3 to buy school books for the poor scholars there. This is the same gentleman who in 1649 bought the manor of Kempsey for £1,812. 15s. 10d.

The congregation was large, respectable, and quiet—too quiet, I thought, for the right observance of the church services. The centre aisle was filled with a row of hardy, honest looking labourers, who kept constantly staring up at the organ during the periods of singing. What a pity, I thought, these worthy fellows are not taught to join in the services; a very little weekly practice would suffice for the purpose, and then the love of the thing necessarily arising therefrom would of itself be sufficient inducement for their regular attendance. The organ was played in a subdued and appropriate manner, but the inefficient choir received no kind of assistance from the congregation, the old clerk's being almost the only voice I heard from among them: he certainly compensated a little for this lack of duty by the extreme unction with which he managed a bass solo and otherwise contributed his quota to the general fund of praise and glory. The collection of psalms here in use was a miserable medley, wanting almost every thing that is desirable. The text was taken from the Sermon on the Mount—"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." The preacher spoke so eloquently of the happiness and blessedness that awaited the benevolent man, that without boasting of a large share of sagacity I pulled out my purse and got a shilling ready, without knowing what was to be the especial object of charity, but was not long in discovering that it was for the sufferers by the fire at Quebec, for whom England has interested herself in a manner that must do her honour in the eyes of the nations. It was a matter of regret to me that the worthy vicar, although I observed him present, did not officiate in any part of the services, and I learned with still greater sorrow that he was labouring under the effects of a serious illness. If there is one thing I like to see more than another it is a pastor respected and beloved by his flock—one who makes not his residence among them a mercenary speculation, but is willing "to spend and be

spent" for their sakes—who visits the sick, the fatherless, and the widow, and administers not only consolation but solid and substantial benefits, and that, too, with a view not that the world shall hear of the largess, but simply that he shall fulfil his Christian mission of charity and love. Such a man is the Rev. Matthew Lunn; and what a contrast does he not present to some of the "Simoniacal church-chopping patrons," as old Burton calls them, "who detain tithes," and instead of giving from their abundance to the cause of religion, add to their own from its inheritance.

The worthy landlady of the Crown Hotel received me with a welcome which I could readily see was genuine, and provided me with an excellent though homely meal. From the information she afforded me I derived much that was interesting with regard to the parish: in the first place, that the parish was not what it used to be when there were less beer-houses, and that, with a population of 1,300 or 1,400, there were no less than *nine* beer-houses; next, that some person or persons unknown (who had probably been misspending their time at one of those houses on the previous night) had robbed her garden of its finest peaches, or I should have had a better dessert; and finally, that a great number of years ago Oliver Cromwell had personally superintended the battering down of the old church, and flattened the nose of every statue then and there lying. I was much pleased with the good-natured communicativeness of the worthy landlady, and having sufficiently refreshed myself, again set out for the church. In the yard is a monument to B. Major Kershaw, of the 13th Light Infantry, who was one of the unfortunates who fell at Jugdulluch, in Affghanistan, in the disastrous affair of January, 1842; he was at the storming of Ghuznee, and it is said that he once saved the life of General Sale. There are several handsome willow trees in this burial-ground, and they are disposed with good effect, so as to realise Robert Hall's idea, that the willow typified "nature hanging out signals of distress." The willow is said to have been introduced into England by the poet Pope, who, being with Lady

Suffolk when she received a parcel from Spain, bound with withies, which appeared alive, took one, and planted it in his garden. It grew up, and afterwards became so well known as Pope's willow at Twickenham.

The following circumstances are connected with the history of Kempsey:—Henry the Second held his court here, and delivered his charter concerning Inkborough, witnessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with other bishops and nobles. In 1265, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, with his unfortunate prisoner Henry the Third, were at Kempsey, and lay at the Bishop's Palace (which then stood there), just before the battle of Evesham. Kempsey was made a prebendal church in the college of Westbury by Bishop Giffard, in 1288; and at the same time a vicarage was instituted, and 6s. 8d. reserved yearly to the bishop, and 3s. 6d. to the Priory of Worcester. The rectory fell to the Crown at the Dissolution, and was given to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester in exchange for Hallow, Grimley, Henwick, Woodhall, and Alverton, near Stratford, &c. There was originally a chantry here, with an altar to the Virgin, and rents were left for burning a taper continually before it, as well as regulations that the attendant priests and chaplains should be remarkable for chastity. There are two chapels, Norton and Stoulton, connected with this mother church. The ancient families of Beauchamp, the Earls of Warwick, Sandys, Bucke, and Nash, are interwoven with the history of this parish.

Near to the church are traces of an ancient Roman camp, in and near which have been found sepulchral urns, cups, pans, tiles, fragments of bones, fibulæ or brooches, a coin of Nero, and a thick slab of stone, with a Latin inscription in honour of Constantine the Great.

The Dean and Chapter of Worcester are the patrons of the living (value £248). Vicar, the Rev. Matthew Lunn. Curate, the Rev. — Walcot. Clerk, Mr. William Linton. Organist, Mr. Haynes. Population, 1,367.

Hallow-cum-Grimley.

THE high road from Worcester to Hallow and Grimley forms one of the finest natural terraces to be met with in this part of the country, looking down for several miles upon the rich valley of the Severn, and commanding a bird's eye view of the city and its approaches. On passing through the village, the neat and comfortable cottages, the well trimmed gardens, the clean and tidy inhabitants who here and there looked forth from their windows or doors, all seemed to be under the influences of the day of rest; the smoke curled up cheerfully from the pleasant vicarage; and nothing, save the little bell from yonder sacred turret, broke upon the solemn silence of that morning. Being a little in advance of time I took the opportunity of sauntering round the churchyard, and was much struck with the great ages recorded on the stones, the majority of them being from sixty to eighty years. The salubrity of this elevated spot seems to have been known as far back as the time of the Worcester Priory, when the monks—shrewd fellows—were in the habit of resorting to it for the sake of health and a prime “take” of fish from their preserve in the Severn, immediately below. During the last year (1847) twenty-two funerals occurred in Hallow, and the average age of six was $86\frac{1}{2}$ years.

There is here a railed tomb to Sir C. Bell, the author of one of the Bridgewater treatises, who was born at Edinburgh, and died at Hallow Park in 1842. There is also a flat tomb to Mrs. Weaver, daughter of the fourth Lord Mordington, with this pithy but eloquent epitaph—

“Of worldly wealth she had but one small talent to account for,
but her mind was well stored.”

A little, cheerful looking old woman was standing in the doorway, engaged in ringing the bell, and as she apparently took

some interest and amusement in my erratic movements, I took the opportunity of remarking to her on the apparent longevity of the inhabitants, as exhibited on the gravestones. "Oh, ay," she observed, "there's not many young uns as goes off at Holla, and most of them as dies comes from Broadheath." Having a great respect for that kind of *amor patriæ* which induced the old lady to stickle for the honour and credit of her native parish, I continued the conversation, and asked who was to preach on that day. "Why our new vicar, to be sure," she replied, in that peculiar tone which seemed to imply that I must have been living of late in the Hebrides or New South Wales, to be unacquainted with that fact. "Ah," said she, "he's reckoned a good churchman, and has done a power o' good; and if he d'an't come there's a many as 'll come for un."

By this time the vanguard of the village church-goers was seen slowly approaching the house of worship, and after I had watched the pleasing procession—for it was literally so—wind its way round the rustic lane and through the wicket of the yard, I joined the rear, and with them entered the church. The interior is spacious, well lighted, and fitted up "most decently and in order;" there is a gallery round three of the sides, and a neat little organ at the western end. The church was rebuilt and enlarged in 1830, and contains 600 sittings, 300 of which are free in consequence of a grant from the Incorporated Society. A very handsome painted window has been placed in the east window, the gift of candidates for holy orders to the vicar, who is examining chaplain to the Bishop. There are necessarily but few ancient remains here, and those are confined to monuments to members of the Lygon, Hall, and Harrison families. The services commenced with the Morning Hymn, sung to the tune of the Old Hundredth; the organ was a grinder, but the instrument has since been altered for manipulatory purposes.

In restoring the musical services of this church there must have been sacrifices made both by the minister and choir. This is as it should be, for it betokens something more than a lazy acquiescence in religious devotion. The minister, organist, and

congregation, ought to go hand in hand in their endeavours to restore the fallen state of the church service to efficiency. They should also avoid the union of vulgar music with a variety of hymns treating rather of man than of God ; and I trust the day is not far distant when this improvement will be completed by the national adoption of one uniform version of psalms—for till then it should be borne in mind that it is *improper* and *unlawful* to use in our churches any book in the worship of God except the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

The vicar gave out his text from *Matthew* iv, 23—and here I must give my readers a brief abstract of the scope and intention of this sermon. It was not, he said, too much to assert that the institutions which Christian benevolence has reared in our land have raised Britain to a prouder rank among the nations of the earth than the triumph she has acquired by her arms. The rev. gentleman then went on to show the duty and the reward of charity, quoting St. Basil, who says, “I have known many who have fasted and groaned and prayed, and expressed all kinds of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted.” The practice of indiscriminate charity, however, he observed, could not be too highly censured, while the regular support of established charities could not be too warmly commended, more especially of such an institution as the Infirmary, whose object and advantages, whether in the conservation of life and limb, the extension of medical and surgical knowledge, or the protection of the public health, was worthy of all praise. During the century which the Infirmary had now been founded, no less than 115,000 patients had been relieved ; the average number of in-patients during the past year had been 95 ; out-patients, 250 ; 659 cases of accident had also been admitted, and 21 surgical operations had been performed, within the same period. The requirements of the establishment now were—to extend the wards, to build a fever ward, to add to the number of baths, to arrange a library and museum, and to obtain a more convenient board-room. Added to these indispensable requirements was the fact that for some

years the income of the institution had been several hundreds less than the expenditure, and thus a pretty strong case was made out for the generous assistance of every one who had a heart to feel and a hand to give.

“Here’s a pretty sentence of execration upon the Rambler,” thought I; for the last five Sundays having regularly drawn as many shillings from my pocket, on behalf either of Sunday Schools, the Infirmary, or the sufferers at Quebec, and naturally conjecturing that the plethora of charity had now subsided, I had come to Hallow with nothing but a solitary sovereign in my pocket, not dreaming of another call. It will perhaps scarcely be credited, yet it is nevertheless true, that a gentleman who was recently taking a tour among his friends in Worcestershire chanced to hear, for *four or five* consecutive Sundays, a sermon on the Prodigal Son; till at last, fancying there was something in all this beyond the natural course of events, which it would be sinful on his part to oppose, he resolved to “arise and go” home to his friends. So I began to look upon these repeated charity sermons as a tax upon my absenteeism, but rather than pass by the good-humoured churchwarden at the door, I resolved to stay in my seat, and after the collection was made and the congregation dispersed, to go and offer my mite when there was a probability of getting change for the inconvenient coin I had in my pocket. In the act of doing this, the vicar, probably recognising an old face he had seen occasionally in the streets of Worcester, entered into a conversation which resulted in an invitation to partake of luncheon at the vicarage.

Having a wish to attend the afternoon service at the old parish church of Grimley, I reluctantly took my leave of this interesting family, having a few minutes to spare for the purpose of going over the allotment grounds which are in this parish laid out for the labouring families, under the auspices of the vicar. Having seen much of the beneficial working of this system in Somersetshire, under the Bishop of Bath and Wells, I have become somewhat enthusiastic in its favour, and take a

deep interest in its progress. I am delighted to hear that in this parish the allotment system works most admirably—a rood of land being easily cultivated at spare hours, and by the younger children, and furnishing vegetables for the family, straw for a pig, and about five bushels of corn for grinding, besides inducing habits of regularity, industry, and economy, giving at the same time the day labourer an interest in the soil, preserving him from the snares and temptations of the beer-house, and generally ameliorating the condition of the poor man—preserving regularity, good order, and good feeling, throughout the parishes. My own idea is, that the rood ought to be divided into three parts, and occupied as follows: one-third, potatoes; one-third, cabbages, peas, beans, onions, carrots, &c.; and the remaining portion to wheat, barley, or grain of any sort. Thus every necessary for a family would be in due season provided; and if, for instance, potatoes failed, other roots would supply their place. I hear that the rental of these allotments is at the low rate of £2 per acre, and that the payments are made most regularly. There are 62 allotments.

We read of the church of Grimley having been given, more than a thousand years ago, to the church of Worcester, by Burtwolf, King of the Mercians, before he was expelled his country by the Danes; and Pope Nicholas, in the 20th year of his pontificate, mentions the church of Grimley, with that of Hallow depending on it. At the dissolution of the Worcester Priory the benefice was given to the Dean and Chapter; but at the present moment, in consequence of certain exchanges, it is in the hands of the bishops of the diocese.

The church has been recently restored in excellent taste, and in perfect keeping with the character of the edifice, by Mr. Eginton, architect to the Church Building Society. The walls and the south doorway of the old edifice were Norman, and accordingly the new porch over the doorway is constructed in the same style. The approach to the western gallery is by an external covered stone staircase leading from the porch, and the roof of the staircase is supported by graduated Norman

shafts, terminating in arcade work. The tower is of the style which prevailed at the latter part of the 14th century, and is exceedingly well designed and executed. The interior of the church has been repaired and fitted up in a very neat manner; and by the alteration at the tower end greater accommodation has been provided for the poor. The old peal of six bells has been rehung; and the whole expenses, amounting to about £500, have been defrayed by voluntary subscriptions.

On my return home I passed through Hallow Park—a beautifully wooded estate overhanging the Severn, where stands the mansion now occupied by the Rev. R. B. Bourne, and which has for centuries belonged to the Lygons. The scenery from this spot is of the richest and most lovely description—it is, in fact, one of the fairest flowers in the garden of Worcestershire.

From a Chamber Order Book of the city of Worcester (date 1575), it appears that Queen Elizabeth chose this spot for hunting purposes, killing two bucks here during her royal visit to Worcester; on which occasion Her Majesty's horses and geldings, to the number of 1,500, were depastured on Pitchcroft; and the local historian in his own graphic language observed, "thanks be to God, amongst the said grett number of horses and geldings, not one horse or gelding was eyther stolen, strayed away, or peryshd." The peculiar adaptation of this locality for sporting purposes is recognised in the present day, if I am to judge from the scores of young men who regularly on each returning Sunday plant themselves on the edge of the Severn hereabout, to amuse themselves by disentangling their fish-hooks from all kinds of river weeds, under the idea that they are—*fishing!* Would not some one of the "City Mission," or a church clergyman whose labours are not remarkably heavy, do well to pass up the river in a boat for a few Sundays, and take on hand the backsliders on both banks? He would in that case aptly assume the character of "a fisher of men."


With regard to the moral and religious condition of the widely extended district in which Hallow, Grimley, and Broadheath, are comprised, I have a word or two to say. A chapel

of ease was established at the latter place in 1831, which contains 200 sittings, 150 of them being free. This place of worship is, I hear, generally well attended by the numerous poor families round about. There are two full services every Sunday in the parishes. With regard to scholastic establishments, there would appear to be no lack: first, there is the endowed Free School at Hallow, of which the endowment is about £100 per annum. This establishment, under the able management of Mr. and Mrs. Bullock, late master and mistress of the Bishop's School in Worcester, is most efficiently conducted. Secondly, there is the Sunday and daily school, with a lending library attached. Thirdly, daily and Sunday National boys' and girls' school at Grimley, the expenses of which are jointly defrayed by endowment, subscription, and children's pence; and fourthly, the daily and Sunday National boys' and girls' school at Broadheath, on the same footing as the last mentioned. There is a chapel at Broadheath belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon's persuasion; it was built in 1825, but is now very thinly attended. There was a Baptist Chapel at Hallow, but it is now taken by the vicar, at a yearly rental, as a daily and Sunday girls' school. Excepting a few Plymouth Brethren at Hallow, who attend a chapel in St. Nicholas Street, Worcester, there is no other trace of dissent in this district. There are but four public and two beer-houses in all the three places.

The Bishop is the patron of the living; the vicarage of Grimley, with the curacy of Hallow, being valued at £541. Incumbent, the Rev. H. J. Stevenson. Curates, Rev. F. C. Walsh and Rev. W. H. White. Organist, Mr. G. Norman. Hallow clerk, John Nutt. Grimley clerk, William Freeman. Population, about 2,000.



Hindlip.


 Y way to Hindlip lay through Fearnall Heath, a place which peculiarly marks the advancement of the last quarter of a century: the barren heath has been gradually enclosed and converted into smiling gardens; the hordes of gipsies ejected from their favourite haunts, and the dirty canvass *parapluies* of this nomad race have given way to the more substantial fabrics of brick and mortar; and now we count—a rural police station, a very handsome butcher's shop, a registrar of births, a smithy, a boot and shoe "establishment," *three* houses for the sale of liquor (!), a dissenting chapel, and a post-office (!!). Another series of twenty-five years, and we may calculate on a reading-room, a market-hall, a museum, a church, and railway station. Hindlip House and church are approached from the highway by a winding drive, sheltered on each side by young plantations; emerging from these the scenery which gradually unfolds itself is a delightful picture of one of the most interesting parts of Worcestershire: on the left may be seen the well wooded hills of Abberley; in the centre is Westwood, with its ancient recollections; and at the right, an opening in the fine old gnarled oaks disclose an undulating tract, terminated by the lofty chimneys of Stoke. The present house at Hindlip (the residence of Viscount Southwell) is a square building, of light brick; in the front of which are four Ionic pillars supporting an entablature; there are two wings, connected to the main building by crescent walls. The old house, which was pulled down about thirty years ago, is described in a MS. in the Harleian Library as being "goodly and of great receipt;" it is supposed to have been built by John Habingdon, cofferer to Queen Elizabeth (1572), and was uncommonly constructed both within and without, having trap-doors, back staircases, and hiding-rooms built so as to have the exterior

semblance of chimneys: these were probably additions made by Thomas Abingdon, the son of the before mentioned, who harboured Garnet, Oldcorn, and some others,* concerned in the gunpowder plot. For this, it was said, he was condemned to die, but by the intercession of his wife's father, Lord Morley, he obtained pardon. His wife Mary is supposed to have been the person who wrote the letter to her brother William Parker, Lord Mounteagle, in order to save his life at the intended massacre. When he had received his pardon, he retired to Hindlip, with an injunction never to stir out of the county, and during this retirement he studied the antiquities of Worcestershire, and also wrote an account of the Cathedral and the Bishops.

The church, which stands within a stone's throw of the house, is a small, plain building; the tower has an embattled top, and contains two bells. Here and there the parasitic ivy creeps over the walls, and insinuates its tendrils at each window crevice, like a humble but faithful Christian striving to catch a glimpse of the "holy of holies" through the dust, and rubbish, and obstructions, which intercept his ardent sight. There was no one on the spot beside a cheerful looking little man, who, as I concluded at the first glance, proved to be the clerk, sexton, bell-ringer, grave-digger, and a most influential member of the choral force—all in one person. He had arrived, according to his wont, about half an hour before the time of service, opened the doors, lit the stove fire, wiped the seats, arranged the clergyman's books and his own, rung the first call to the congregation,

* The MS. above alluded to gives a minute description of the "secret corners and conveyances" in this house, and of the great trouble which Sir H. Bromlie experienced in searching for the conspirators. Two of the men, Owen and Chambers, on the fourth morning of the search, came from behind a wainscot in one of the galleries, and declared they could conceal themselves no longer, for that they had no other sustenance than one apple between them during the four days. Garnet and Hall (Oldcorn) had been supported in their retreat by a quill, fixed in a hole in the chimney, and communicating with a bed chamber of the gentlewomen, who poured caudle, broth, and warm drink, into the quill. Owen is said to have murdered himself in the Tower, under the influence of constant threats and terror of torture.

and was now reconnoitring the exterior premises, with the view of ascertaining if the graves and tombstones were in the same relative position which they occupied on the previous Sunday. How enviable the situation of such a man ! Constantly engaged in the service of the sanctuary, he looks upon himself as identified with the sacred territory ; its history is his own ; he has rung that little bell, perhaps, for a quarter of a century or more ; the same familiar faces weekly respond to that call, till, removed by the hand of death, one by one they have claimed his assistance to prepare their last resting-place, and each individual he retains in his memory through a long vista of years, and narrates their names and histories as he points out the little mounds which contain their ashes. Quietly gliding down the stream of life, he torments himself not with its ambitions ; its breakers are foaming and bursting beyond him ; his share of intellect will never make him the victim of sensibility ; and his only solicitude is to see that all things pertaining to the house of God shall be done decently and in order ; his only ambition, to receive the commendation of the parson for the accuracy and sonorousness of his responses, or the super-rustic excellence which he may have imparted to some particular solo. The individual before me likewise appeared to have no traces of pecuniary distress on his brow, but seemed like a retainer of a noble house, who looked forward to no distant day of honourable superannuation in the decline of life.

In the churchyard is a tombstone, which records a strange and almost singular fatality, namely, the deaths of one Joseph Foley and his four daughters, who died consecutively in the years 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1845. The interior of the church wears a patched appearance : it is a simple oblong erection, without either aisles, transepts, or chancel ; the roof is semicircular, unornamented, and tied together with rude trusses. The pews are neat and commodious, having been renovated about six or seven years ago, and will accommodate perhaps 80 or 100 persons. At the south of the communion table there is an ancient piscina, which the utilitarian and unconscious clerk

has now converted into a receptacle for pens and ink. Above this, and inserted into the wall, is a handsome emblazoned "Memorial of J. Habingdon, Esq., some time lord of this manor, and founder of Hindlip House, showing whence he descended, and what he was who lieth here buried." This traces the pedigree of the present Spetchley family through Habingdon, the founder of Hindlip House, up to his forefathers. It is illustrated with several coats of arms. Opposite is the escutcheon of a Mr. Restall, bearing between 30 and 40 quarterings. There are also memorials of the Comptons and other families, and a mural tablet to the late Rev. Richard Grape, the eccentric rector of the parish, concerning whom I have in store many whimsical anecdotes. It is said concerning him, that in publishing the banns of matrimony it was his custom never to read louder than a whisper, under the idea that when matters came to that pass between a couple of young folk, no third party had a right to object, as some had done in church, to the publication of so laudable an intention. I have also heard, but do not vouch for its accuracy, that he was particularly reluctant to perform service in cold weather, and has been known, on his arrival at the church, after his usual walk from Worcester, if literally but "two or three were gathered together," to advise them to return home, observing that they would be much more likely to serve God by reading pious books at their own comfortable firesides than in shivering and shaking out their prayer and praise in that cold place.

While inspecting the rev. gentleman's memorial a noise at the entrance of the church diverted my attention: it was occasioned by the *entrée* of the village choir, who, having no gallery set apart for them, pitched their tent in a large pew at the west end; first came an elderly man, and took his seat as though deeply conscious of the responsibilities and importance attaching to himself as performer on the bass viol which he had brought with him; two other old men, evidently imbued with the divine principles of harmony, severally enacted the bass and tenor parts; a young man carried a clarionet under his arm; and an

interesting and rather pretty country girl, who was unquestionably his "sweetheart," seemed ready and willing to assist his exertions by giving full effect to the treble. After a little coquetting between the old man and his bass viol they struck up to the tune of "Comfort," and managed it so well as most agreeably to surprise me, after the experience I have had of rural choirs. By and by the minister and congregation—about thirty souls (the parish being a very small one) had arrived, and the services commenced. The clergyman, I subsequently understood, was the curate of Salwarpe, who had come to officiate in the temporary absence of the rector. He read the prayers in a quiet, unaffected manner, and preached a good sermon on the necessity of being always on the watch for the season of death; but his manner was not sufficiently spiced with animation, either to arouse or to occupy the attention. Not that I altogether admire what is called "a powerful preacher." "Ah, sir," exclaimed an elder in a Scotch kirk, in a tone of pathetic recollection, "our late minister was the man! He *was* a powerful preacher: for in the short time he delivered the word amongst us he knocked three pulpits to pieces and banged the life out o' five bibles." Such men overstep the modesty of nature as much as the contrary class come short of it; but unless something be done more than a mere *reading* of a smooth piece of sermon writing, experience tells us that but few listeners can keep their minds from wandering. The earliest entry in the parish registers is of a very modern date, whence I infer that the earlier books must have been at some time or other abstracted. There is no weekly or Sunday school in the parish.

I have but little to add with regard to the church. Viscount Southwell is the patron of the living (value £150). Rector, the Rev. J. Webster. Temporary curate, the Rev. W. Murray, rector of St. Martin's, Colchester. Clerk, John Harris. Population, 139.



Powick.

THE church of the pleasant village of Powick, about three miles from Worcester, is situated on an eminence, commanding the vales of the Severn and Teme, and peeping through a thick foliage of yew and elm, overlooks the "faithful city" with the eye of a monitor. On entering the churchyard some time before the morning service, I observed near the north-west corner of the church a recently moulded grave—that of an infant—on which had been deposited, no doubt by the hand of maternal affection, a bunch of snow-drops and other flowers, secured to the place with a kind of cagework of briar. The heart-broken mother, it was evident from the freshness of the flowers, had that very morning made a pilgrimage to the resting-place of her child—perhaps her only child—on whom her happy eye had beamed its warmest and purest affection from the moment of its birth, and over whom she had tended, and watched, and wept, like another Niobe, when the unsparing fates assailed it.

"Fond mother, wipe thy tears away;
That pledge to thee by God was given;
But when its prattle and its play,
And winning smiles of infancy,
Had weaned thy heart so far astray,
Then sped an angel on his way,
And took it back to heaven."

The churchyard is kept most creditably neat and clean, but I do not altogether approve of the modern plan of drawing up the headstones in rank and file—it reminds one (at a time when the feelings more willingly indulge in luxury of another kind) of political economists, of Malthusians, of a population elbowing each other even out of their graves—of any thing, in short, rather than of the quiet and undisturbed abodes we would fain secure to ourselves in death, and which, by their picturesque disorder, constitute a not displeasing feature of a rural church-

yard. But these feelings, I suppose, like Sir Robert Peel, must give way to the distinctive rule of the present day—*Necessitas non habet leges*. The bodies of Sir Edward Denny and some of his family, of Tralee Castle, Kerry, who sometime resided at Kingsend House, Powick, lie in this yard, and have a tomb to their memory. The burial ground abounds with barbarisms, in the epitaphic line, such as the following (to William Randle)—

“ His aim in learning was the seas to rove;
 The mathematics was his chiefest love;
 But God, who orders all things best,
 Eased his cares and took his soul to rest.”

The church, which is large and capacious, is of the usual cruciform shape; at the west end is the tower, which is divided into three stages; at the corners are small diagonal buttresses. The stone pinnacles, being considered dangerous to the structure, were removed some four years ago, and are now placed within the porch or entrance, to which, by the aid of some other rubbish of a similar character, they give the appearance of a museum of ancient vases or architectural remains; added to this, if the reader will imagine two filthy, worn out curtains of green baize, like those at the door of a penny theatre, which divide the church from the porch, he may form a good estimate of the decency of these approaches to the house of God. The interior has undergone great improvement, and more was intended to be done as soon as the “sinews” could be obtained. The ancient closet-like seats have been superseded by low, open, and more commodious ones, in which here and there the rough and grim carving of the knotty old oak may be seen to dovetail, somewhat inharmoniously, with the plainness of modern deal. A handsome glazed screen, well carved, divides the chancel from the nave; another, in an unfinished state, cuts off the south transept, and a third is projected for the north; it was also proposed to bring forward the communion table, and place it in front of the first mentioned screen. I have not heard whether it is intended to convert the chancel into a Ladye Chapel, but a

portion of it at least I would beg for the purpose of a vestry, the clergyman at present having to disrobe behind a piece of green baize (apparently a segment of the before mentioned curtains), which I think is spread out by means of two sticks, but of this I am not quite sure.

The east window is in the early English style, consisting of three lancet lights; the mullions are triangular, faced on the innermost angle with a light shaft or column, surmounted by a graceful foliated capital; the other windows are apparently of later date. The aisles are divided from the nave by two rows of equilateral arches. In the north transept is a handsome octagonal stone font, each face or division of the cup having quatrefoil carvings, and trefoils in the corresponding divisions of the shaft. Here are carved monuments to William Cookes, knight (1672), and Daniel Tyas, "*Vigornia et reipublicæ bonus civis*" (1678); and elsewhere are monuments to members of the Wolley, Pakington, Rea, Blount, Winford, Wall, Weston, Sowden, and Moore families.

Among the charitable donations, the records of which are left to adorn the walls of this church, is one from Phineas Jackson, of Bromyard, who gave a piece of land, a part of the produce of which was to go to "the young people who can best say the catechism at Lent." Judging from the multitudes of native infantry attending this church, I should say this donation begets the utmost competition which Phineas Jackson himself could have wished had he been alive. There are about 100 children in the schools. There is another item on the list of charities which demands notice; one Richard Collics left certain property to purchase annually gowns and coats for a stated number of poor, but with a proviso which utterly sweeps away every shadow of credit that would otherwise attach to his memory on this account. The initials "R.C." were to be placed conspicuously on the garments; and in the event of these letters being pulled off or damaged, and not replaced, "the faulty person shall be utterly incapable of such gift and bequest for ever after." This man most assuredly

possessed no real charity for the poor; his only object was to make these poverty stricken wretches the tools or monuments for perpetuating his name to posterity. .

Powick being an extensive parish, there was, as I expected, a numerous congregation on the morning of my visit; and the most gratifying feature was, that the great proportion consisted of the labouring classes, whose reverential deportment was highly creditable to them. An employer somewhere in the north of England once proposed to his work people that if they would attend church on fast days their wages should go on the same as if they worked, upon which they sent a deputation to inform him that they would also attend the Methodist chapel in the evening *if he would pay them for over hours*. The labourers of Powick, however, I have good reason to hope, are less selfish in their religious observances; and well for them it is so, as I would not give much for their chance of being *paid* to attend church. One-third of the congregation consisted of school children, who were comfortably seated round the aisles, having good thick matting under their feet, and a stove pipe above their heads, embracing the whole length of the walls. The musical part of the service was chastely executed, by the assistance of a small organ, and the psalmody was plain but devotional.

The parish of Powick is not unknown to history. Two of its manors—Prior's Court and Pykesham—together with the tithes of Bransford and Powick, belonged formerly to the priory of Great Malvern, and after the dissolution of religious houses, Henry VIII, in the 37th year of his reign, gave to Edward Lord Clinton the manor and rectory of Powyke; it afterwards belonged to Sir Thomas Bromley, knight, grandson of the Chancellor. Before the year 1650 the tithes were the property of John Nash, Esq., alderman of Worcester, who at his death bequeathed them to certain trustees for the endowing an hospital in the city of Worcester. The Beauchamp, Lygon, and Coventry families, have held possessions in this parish. In September, 1642, during the unhappy contests

between Charles I and the Parliament, an engagement took place at Powick between the forces. It was here that a detachment of the Parliament army were deceived by a manœuvre, and being attacked by an ambuscade, twenty-five of their number were killed, and the detachment fell back a distance of four miles. In 1651 occurred the famous battle of Powick bridge (an ancient structure, still remaining, and of which I made a sketch some few years ago). The right wing of a brigade under General Fleetwood having crossed the Teme, and the left arrived at Powick bridge, they drove in the foot of the Royalists to their main body, which was drawn up in Wykefield, near the bridge, secured the pass, and after a hard contest of nearly two hours' duration, wholly routed them, killing many on the place,* and pursuing the rest to the drawbridge and gate of the city.

While on the subject of the ancient associations connected with Powick parish, I may mention that in the year 1832 two sepulchral Roman urns, containing burnt human bones, were dug up from a piece of land between the roads leading to Upton and Malvern, and were presented to the museum by the Earl of Coventry; and in the year following, a little to the west of the village, two similar urns, containing the bones of children, were discovered. A coin of Claudius Gothicus and of Constantine were also found in the same neighbourhood.

The living is valued at £290. Patrons, the trustees of the Earl of Coventry. Vicar, the Rev. J. H. Turbitt. Clerk, Mr. C. Lawrence. Organist, Miss Turner. Population, 1,704.



* In one of the charity tables, "Deadfield" is mentioned as a part of the bequest.

Stoulton.

Come, gentle Spring! ethereal mildness, come!
 And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
 While music wakes around, vell'd in a shower
 Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.

HERE is something inexpressibly pleasant in the act of turning out, snail like, from our shells, for the first time in the opening year, in tasting the purity and spicyness of the spring air after it has been purged by the equinoctial gales, and in watching the early efforts of Nature to put forth the green herb and the richly varied blossom. As I set out for the village of Stoulton, on a delicious morning in April, I felt delighted at emerging from my chrysalis state to enjoy for another season the pleasures of a much loved pursuit. There was the modest daisy peeping out from among the young grass, and on southerly banks the violet and the primrose, like the long lost friends of one's youth, rejoicing at the re-union, and breathing out their sweetness on the fleeting moments; in favoured situations might be seen the celandine, the early purple orchis, and the delicate anemone; the hedges were shooting upwards, their arms loaded with myriads of little burdens or bundles of green leaves as yet carefully wrapped up in embryo and protected from the too rough caresses of Boreas and his crew; now and then a large fly would wing its way by, as though on some distant mission, and afraid either of being unpunctual, or of taking a fatal cold, through inactivity, at this period of the "unconfirmed year;" the swallow had arrived; but the cuckoo (which, as I am informed by country people hereabout, visits his Worcestershire friends on the 17th of April, and takes his leave of them again on the day of Pershore fair), had on this occasion delayed his arrival beyond the usual time; I was therefore uncheered by his welcome though monotonous note. In his absence, however, there was the lark, like

the happy spirit of a departed Christian, springing upward with exultation to heaven; and on the arable lands, now slightly tinged with the tender green of early crops, lay whole squadrons of rooks and starlings, as busy with seeds and wire-worms as income-tax assessors usually are with other people's business. Let it not be supposed for a moment that I am casting an imputation on that clear headed and sagacious gentleman—the rook; on the contrary, he is one of my especial favourites. The rook is a type of the country gentleman, living on his own broad domains, exceedingly attached to locality, regardful of the claims of high and legitimate descent, belligerent towards every manifestation of vagrancy, especially as exhibited in the crow; and above all he is preëminently devoted to the church and the other institutions of the country, keeping watch and ward over the sacred building from his lofty eyrie close at hand, and daily making a rallying point of the steeple. So much is he at length associated in my mind with rural churches, that I should deem the beautiful and unrivalled picture of an English village, with its church, homestead, and squire's house, as incomplete without the addition of the rookery. Nay, I am by no means certain that my affection for the bird is not returned, and that many of this knowing tribe, from having seen me prying about among the sacred edifices and ancient ruins so much loved by them, have not at length come to behold in me a sympathetic being—an exemplar to human kind.

The village of Stoulton consists of an inn, a smithy, two or three farm houses, cross roads, a milestone, a direction post, the village stocks, a parsonage house, and the church. The latter is dedicated to St. James; it is a chapelry, but is in many respects independent of the mother church of Kempsey, as it elects its own curate and officers. The church bears marks of great antiquity, the greater part being apparently early Norman, or, if extreme rudeness be presumptive evidence of age, it may date back to the beginning of the 11th century, for it is now becoming more generally believed that work which of late years has been called strictly Norman was in fact the

product of an earlier period, during which the Norman style (an off-shoot from the Romanesque) was gradually becoming fashionable in this and other countries, being the ante-Norman period, or that immediately preceding the conquest. It contains a large chancel, a nave, and western tower, the latter being a miserable brick erection, containing a peal of musical bells. The south doorway consists of a semicircular arch, with sub-arch, and in the angle formed by these is a single large cylindrical roll-moulding, which originally was continued down the sides as jamb-shafts, but these latter have disappeared. Above this door-way are two shallow recesses, with semi-circular arches, and three small jamb-shafts, having rude capitals or imposts, the abacus of which is a continuation of a square string-course which runs along the wall a short way, then disappears, and reappears on the wall buttresses, the latter being broad and exceeding flat, the larger ones being placed at the angles of the building, but not diagonally. This door-way is now blocked up, but that it was originally the principal entrance (and decidedly the best one for the preservation of warmth to the interior) is proved from the fact that the only attempt at anything like ornament in the whole building is exhibited in a rude kind of hatched or zig-zag indentation in the above mentioned string-course. The north door-way and recesses over are very similar to those on the south side, but are devoid of ornament. Some modern wardens of this edifice, consulting as I suppose what they deemed to be the prevailing feature of the building, namely, extreme rudeness and lack of ornament, have inserted in this ancient door-way (which is the only one now used) a door apparently made of deal, very thin, and so green at the time of its manufacture that through shrinking it has opened immense crevices all the way down, through which the north wind whistles with savage glee into the ears of the rustics who are posted at this part of the church to act as a living screen for the rest of the congregation; there is a paltry French lock and handle to this door; and the tympanum of the arch above now looks like the half of a waggon wheel, with dirty glass inserted

between the spokes, with which even the old ivy, that wanders about the exterior of the wall, disdains to come in contact. The chancel side lights are small semi-circular headed windows coeval with the oldest part of the building, but only splayed within; and between each window is one of the smaller buttresses, of the same character as the larger ones before mentioned. The east wall and window are modern, and there are two or three other windows of what I believe is called the late First Pointed period, with some others of no order at all, and encased in paltry wooden frame work. The chancel arch is of a most primitive appearance, being semi-circular and doubly recessed, or, as I should perhaps say, with arch and sub-arch, both square-edged and perfectly plain, and the latter not continued beneath the impost, which is a rude kind of string-course running along this division wall till it disappears in the side walls. The ceiling is underdrawn and whitewashed, and the walls plastered and bedaubed with a dirty slate colour, and in the centre of the church ascends the stove pipe, perpendicularly, through the roof, as though a thunderbolt from the hand of Jove had transfixed the whole building and pinned it to the ground. The seats are high-sleeping pews. The font is an interesting specimen of the early Norman: it is circular, large enough for total immersion, and its pedestal is in the shape of another basin, reversed; the top edge is ornamented with a roll and fillet, surmounted by a zig-zag and pellets. There is no monument in the church, but on the flat stones of the chancel and elsewhere are memorials of the Acton, Vincent, Chetle, Swift, and Mastres families, and Nash says that in the year 1768 was buried here Mr. Samuel Garbet, an eminent antiquary, who assisted Valentine Green in his survey of the city of Worcester, and "whose modesty was so great that he never could be persuaded to publish any thing in his own name, though always ready to assist his friends." The eye of the visitor is attracted at this church by the pressing and somewhat anti-Protestant solicitations on some of the before mentioned stones to give the departed the benefit of one's prayers—"Ora pro anima" and "Pray for his soul;" these

injunctions, too, are placed on stones of the date of 1679 and 1721, a period of between one and two centuries subsequent to the Reformation. There is a tablet on the exterior of the south wall, close to the doorway, erected to the memory of George Allen, clerk, who died in 1557, having been the minister of the parish for half a century. I am glad to hear that the church is to be considerably repaired and restored.

The congregation seemed to be exclusively a rural one, and there was a good attendance. The clergyman and clerk conducted the services with great solemnity; and a sermon, highly appropriate to these times of affliction, as exhorting the people to be prepared for and to be resigned under whatever visitation they might even yet receive at the hand of Providence, was preached from *Jeremiah* xvii, 7. The preacher's manner was serious and devout, like that of one who laboured under a humiliating sense of his own unworthiness to occupy the responsible post of a minister in the house of God, and whose good deeds and acts of charity and benevolence stood self-condemned as merely filthy rags. This feeling was, perhaps, too predominant, and caused the suppression of that energy of language and action which are sometimes absolutely necessary to startle men from their lethargy.

At this church I met with many of the too frequently prevailing characteristics, among which was that of confiding the whole management (and execution too) of the music to a clarionet player, who made himself black in the face by his constant attempts at forcing C sharp to do the work of D natural; the congregation, too, persisting in staring at him as the sole exponent of their religious harmony, as though any pleasure could be derived from watching a fellow creature apparently in the last stage of strangulation. There are, I am sure, sufficient numbers of young rustics in this parish to form a class for the purpose of learning plain and simple psalmody, such as is best adapted for the service of the church; and I hope this hint will not be lost upon the worthy incumbent.

The number of school children usually attending the Stoulton

day school is 40. In the Sunday school there are about 100; the number on the books being 111; and the children generally attend regularly, except at certain seasons. The religious naturalist, the Rev. William Dereham, was born in this parish in the time of the Commonwealth, A.D. 1657.

Stoulton is a perpetual curacy in the gift of Earl Somers (value £100). Curate, the Rev. H. L. Oswell. Clerk, William Simmonds. Population, 346.



Droitwich.

LELAND remarks of this place—"The Wich standeth somewhat in a valley, or lower ground betwixt two small hills, on the left ripe (bank) of a pretty river, that not farre beneath the Wyche is called the Salop Brooke. The beauty of the town in a manner standeth of one street, yet there be many lanes besides. There is a mean church in the chiefe streete, and there is once a weeke a meetly celebrate market. The town itselfe is somewhat foul and dirtye (when any rain falleth), with much carriage through the streets, being over ill paved, or not paved." The observations of the old historian would apply in the present day with but trifling alteration, for in dripping weather the saline borough in truth exhibits itself in a "pretty pickle" of mud, and pebbles, and narrow unpaved lanes, to the great discomfort of the fastidious visitor who may not happen to be "used to it," according to the homely phrase. If Droitwich cannot boast of many extraordinary relics, it is at least something to dwell upon, that in passing through its streets we are treading in the very vestiges which our semi-barbarous forefathers left for probably some centuries before the Christian era; and that the same

cause which gave to this place the name of *Salinæ** among our Roman conquerors, has been unceasingly in existence even from before that remote period of the world's history up to the present moment; for in the time of the ancient Britons were two great roads made here—the “Upper Saltway,” passing over the Lickey to Birmingham and the sea coast of Lincolnshire; and the “Lower Saltway,” crossing Worcestershire below Evesham, near Sudeley Castle, and to the sea coast of Hampshire. Traces of both may yet be seen.

St. Andrew's church is an old edifice, having an exceedingly patched appearance; the tower and adjacent walls, now forming the north side of the church, which escaped the fire of 1293, being the most ancient portions. The interior consists of a nave; north and south aisles, divided from the nave by three “obtuse” arches; a chancel; an aisle or chapel on the north side of the chancel (formerly used as a belfry); and “Our Lady's Chapel” on the south. In the last mentioned is a piscina, near the eastern end of the south wall; and the western arch of this chapel is supported on either side by corbels carved into busts, or rather heads and arms, supposed to be those of Henry VII and the Bishop of that period. The eastern window of the chancel is shut out by a screen, of wood or plaster, at the top of which are crocketed pinnacles and some paltry designs in painted glass, which have the appearance of a transparency. The whole is conceived in the worst possible taste. Before the accommodation of this church was increased, in 1838, the Lady Chapel was used as a vestry, but being in that year fitted up with sittings, it was thought advisable to cut off a portion of the eastern end of the chancel, as a vestry; and this is the history of the unsightly thing which was put up for that purpose. In the Lady Chapel is now a solitary table of charities, but it is impossible, from its position

* Mr. Habington says that Wich gave the name of *Wiccia* to the extent of country now called Worcestershire. In an old volume entitled “*Beauties of England*,” published by Philip Luckombe in 1791, the town is called “*Durtwich*.”

and colour, to tell what is upon it. The ancient clerestory windows of the chancel are blocked up, which was apparently done at the time the roof of the Lady Chapel was raised. The principal light afforded to the nave is by two skylights; the galleries which surround three sides of the church, and the buildings of the old parsonage which darken the south windows, rendering some arrangement of this kind necessary. In the north aisle or chapel, which is a good specimen of the early Pointed style, is a curious and probably ancient font: it stands on a square shaft, with angular feet, and is decorated with rude devices of lozenges, circles, and other tracery; the basin is capacious enough to hold the infant when immersed. There are monuments to the Norbury, Ricketts, Romney, Waldron, Hopwood, Wheeler, Jacques, Taylor, and Smith families, among which is one in memory of Coningsby Norbury, who was envoy from George I to the court of Morocco, to redeem the British slaves; he was buried in Dodderhill churchyard in 1734. In the year 1838 St. Andrew's church underwent a thorough repair, when the sum of £700 was expended in increasing the accommodation, by which means 208 additional sittings were obtained; and in consequence of a grant from the Incorporated Society, 125 of these were free; previously to this there were only 328 sittings, of which but 17 were free. As far as the increased accommodation went, these alterations were highly desirable, but the attendant barbarisms are much to be deplored.

The north gallery was entirely occupied by what is called the Coventry charity, that is to say, the school children and the inmates of the almshouses, which I will briefly describe. The schools form a part of the Coventry charity, endowed in 1686 by the Right Hon. Henry Coventry, secretary of state to Charles II. The case of the charity fell into Chancery about the year 1770, where it remained for about forty years, during which time its revenues were received by Sir J. Pakington. I think it was in the year 1826 that the Chancellor appointed trustees, and compelled Sir John to give up the revenues, lands, and interest; these trustees established schools and restored the

almshouses; at present no less than 50 boys and 50 girls are clothed, educated, apprenticed to various trades, and "started" in the world with a small sum of money, given by this excellent institution. The trustees include the Bishop of Worcester and most of the neighbouring nobility, gentry, and clergy; Sir A. Lechmere is the treasurer, and W. H. Ricketts, Esq., is the indefatigable secretary. The number of almshouse inmates is 36, who receive 5s. and 3s. 6d. per week according to age; they are also clothed, and each couple have a house to themselves. The income of the charity has been raised from £120 per annum to about £1,200, through the well applied attention of the trustees and others. It was surely a judicious thought, in every way worthy of the philanthropist and of the Christian, to provide an asylum for the youthful and the aged poor—to teach the former how to begin the world aright, and the latter how to leave it in comfort and with hope of a better. The services were exceedingly well conducted, but I have a strong objection to the custom of turning round and staring up at the organ gallery during the time of singing. It reminds one of a crowd in a fair, gazing at a raree show, and imparts to the transaction the nature of a common concert. The worthy rector, in his sermon, which was founded on a text from the apocalyptic portion of the New Testament, spoke feelingly and with enthusiasm of the effects of music on the Christian, and expressed a fervent wish for the arrival of that day when the divine principle of harmony would be carried out between all nations and all sects of Christians, and civil and religious toleration go hand in hand with the universal happiness.

The churchyard is a small piece of ground, which formerly was a portion of the parsonage garden adjoining the church; it was consecrated by Bishop Lloyd in the year 1700, at the petition of the inhabitants. The ground being full, no burials appear to have been made there of late; it is overrun with weeds and coarse grass: and the buildings of the old parsonage, which abut against and darken the church, also give to the whole a very dilapidated and uncared for condition. The

cemetery now in use is that on the site of the ancient St. Mary's de Witton Church, on the south side of the town. This church, in the time of Charles II, having fallen into decay, and the cure of souls being neglected, the inhabitants of both parishes petitioned, and obtained an act for uniting the parsonages of St. Andrew's and St. Mary Witton, "for the encouragement of a learned and orthodox minister." In the year 1843 the parsonage of St. Nicholas, which church was ruined soon after the Reformation, was also annexed to St. Andrew's by an order in council, and endowed by Miss Mary Silvester, with a rent charge of £52. 10s. 0d. per annum, thus making the living worth £350 per annum.

Among the ancient recollections of Droitwich was the chapel on the bridge, dependent on the church of St. Peter. Through the middle of this chapel passed the high road leading to Bromsgrove; the reading desk and pulpit being on one side of the road and the congregation on the other. It seems that vehicles of any sort, which were driven by at the time of divine service, made their way through the brook, but that foot passengers walked through the chapel. These latter were probably impelled onward, or seduced to remain and take a seat, according as the facial development of the minister or his style of address operated upon them at first sight. It must have been a fine field for an eccentric parson, and I could name two or three who, in that situation, would have fired such pellets after "through traffic" pedestrians, especially on occasion of charity sermons, as must have brought them back to a sense of their duty, and laid a smart toll either on their purses or consciences. The chapel on the bridge was removed about ninety years ago, and another (of brick) was built in the neighbourhood; but this also was shortly afterwards pulled down and sold; and the house on the road to the railway station, called "Chapel House," was erected with these remains; at least such is the tradition of the fate of this edifice. An antiquarian friend at Droitwich informed me that several chapels of this kind, crossing the public thoroughfare, have been known in different parts of the

kingdom. In the parish of Dodderhill was anciently a convent of Augustine friars, with an anchoret's cell, founded in 1388 by Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. Part of this friary is still remaining, and belongs to Mr. C. Pumfrey; it is situated about 100 yards from the bridge, and on the left side of the the road to Bromsgrove. In the same parish was formerly an hospital, subordinate to the priory of Worcester; it was founded in the reign of Edward I by Walter de Dover, rector of "Duddurhill," and endowed with lands given by the abbot and convent of Gloucester. This hospital fell with the religious houses, and a portion of it is still remaining as a pigeon-house near the bridge. The old Exchequer House, an ancient building which stood on the north side of St. Andrew's Church, was taken down some years ago, to make way for a turnpike road, and is now entirely removed.

I find that there is here, besides the Coventry school (above mentioned) a National and Infant School; the first is supported partly by moneys arising from landed and funded property, left by various individuals, and partly by a small weekly payment from the scholars, with the exception of 30, who are free; and the average attendance of children is about 80. The latter is supported by subscriptions and a payment of two-pence per week from each scholar, and numbers on the average upwards of 100 scholars; besides, there is a class room attached, to which the pupils who are above seven years of age (who generally number from 20 to 30) are removed, and are there taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and sewing, for the payment of four-pence per week. There is also a Sunday school exceedingly well managed by a committee of ladies, the total number of children attending it being 250.

In this borough the Dissenters have for some years been gradually on the decrease, there having, a few years ago, been in the town a meeting-house for Independents and another for Primitive Methodists, both of which have been given up; whilst the Wesleyans are but a small society of about fifty members. In the place of these, however, the Plymouth Brethren have

been recently introduced, who hold their religious meetings in a house known by the sign of the "Quiet Woman," and are mainly backed up by a lady of fortune, who resides within a mile of the town. The society is principally constituted of late teachers of the Sunday school (Methodist) and connexions of the Methodist chapel, together with small renters on the property of the lady above alluded to (Mrs. Galton).

The allotment system is still carried on in this parish, but does not seem to suit the salt-makers so well as it does labouring men, who are accustomed to out-door work, and can have their plot of land near their cottages.

I cannot close my chapter without a brief notice of the staple trade of the town. Tradition says that the salt manufacture has been pursued here for upwards of two thousand years. Several centuries ago many of the owners of neighbouring estates held shares in the Droitwich vats of brine, in proportion to the quantity of wood fuel furnished from their lands; by this means the Feckenham, Bewdley, and other forests, were dismantled, and timber became so dear that it was found necessary to substitute the use of coal. Until the year 1690 the salt trade was a monopoly in the hands of the Crown or the Corporation; at that period, however, Mr. Steynor,* an enterprising man of fortune, succeeded after much litigation in proving his right to dig for salt on his own land. Thus the trade was greatly extended; but in 1725, Sir R. Lane, sometime mayor and representative of Worcester, sunk some of the pits lower than had been before done, and boring through the talc which was at the bottom, the strong brine broke out with such violence as to kill two of the workmen. Nash describes this as an inexhaustible river of brine. At the present time (1846) there are in the town sixty-seven pans or vats, that would, if required, produce 1,000 tons per week; the vats are not constructed as formerly, being much longer, and divided so as to make fine

* The house in which this gentleman lived is I believe still remaining, near the west end of the town; it is of the Elizabethan style, and is ornamented with wreathed chimneys.

and broad salt at the same time ; this is done by the different degrees of heat—a slow fire producing the broad ; and a boiling heat, table salt. The position of the trade has been much altered within the last few years, and it is capable of a considerable extension. Some of the manufacturers, in sinking for brine, have come to *boná fide* rock salt, in considerable beds ; this is far different to the rock salt described by Nash, which was more properly a sort of gypsum and rock salt mixed.

I should here state, that through the instrumentality of the Rev. J. Topham, the Rev. Mr. Lea, and the Rev. J. Bearcroft, a night school has been established for the education of persons in the salt works, who had no knowledge of either reading or writing, with the most satisfactory result, there being at this time thirty-two women (between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four) and twenty-one males (between twelve and twenty) who are regular in their attendance, and have made most beneficial use of their time. The females are instructed by teachers who give their services gratuitously, under the superintendence of three or four benevolent ladies ; and the males, in like manner, under the vigilant attention of Messrs. Bearcroft and Lea. The schools have been in progress twelve months, and are supported by the subscriptions among their promoters and a few friends, who are anxious for the moral and religious improvement of a class of persons who have hitherto been in a most demoralized condition, and whose habits and conduct have been the theme of remark by strangers, but who, when opportunity is offered, are not unwilling to learn better and, we may hope, to act so. The school rooms are supplied gratuitously by the British Alkali Company, and thus, at a very trifling cost for books, pens, ink, paper, and slates, a vast amount of good is in progress of being achieved.

The living (value £350) is in the gift of the Crown. Rector, the Rev. John Topham. No curate is kept. Clerk, Mr. Edward Hunt. Organist, Mr. Thomas Hemming. Population of Droitwich, about 2,100.

Martley and Wichenford.

A WALK of two hours through a country rich in pasturage, hops, garden ground, tillage crops, and timber, brought me to the pleasant little village of Martley, situate nearly eight miles north of Worcester. The villagers were hastening churchward in obedience to the summons then issuing from the tower; and the school children, in their neat Sunday attire, were pouring down from their new school house, winding round the parsonage garden, and the foremost of them reaching the old wooden porch of their old parish church. How pleasing the sight, unknown to our forefathers! and how hopeful the prospect arising from these institutions! The rev. gentleman who performed the services was, as I understood, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, curate of Shelsley; but be he whoever he may, he shall have my vote and interest for an early preferment: his mode of preaching is that of an earnest and a faithful pastor, sinking all personal considerations of effect, and all the adornments of rhetoric, in the one simple object of reaching the hearts and consciences of his hearers; who in return complimented him with their closest attention; and yet he was not, like many popular leaders, the monopoliser of the thoughts and imaginations of those who sat beneath him; their aspirations did not linger in the atmosphere which surrounded his pulpit, but ascended beyond it, guided and directed by his faithful ministry; there was no unwholesome excitement on the one hand, or extravagance on the other; and indeed it was not *the man*, but the *minister* of God's word, that was listened to. The choir, consisting of rustic voices and instruments, did their part pretty smoothly in a variety of tunes which I cannot but fancy are indigenuous to and have never escaped beyond this parish. The custom prevails here, as in some other primitive places, to chalk on a slate the psalms to be sung, and hang it over the

gallery for the information of the flock below. This is a very convenient custom at Martley, where no one can hear the clerk; but a good anecdote is told of a similar instance, wherein it quite spoiled the devotion for the day. At Isle Brewers, in Somersetshire (Dr. Wolff's present pastoral charge), the clerk, when he had partly given out the psalms, discovered that the usual telegraph had not been lowered; his announcement, therefore, when interrupted, ran thus, "Let us sing to the praise and—I say (looking up to the gallery), why don't thee hang out the slate there?"

At the close of the services I stayed behind to inspect the old church: it consists of a chancel, nave, and western tower, containing a peal of six musical bells. A portion of the walls and the south doorway (now in a great measure hid by a wooden porch, with a room over) are Norman, and the rest of the building is made up of repairs and improvements of the 14th and 15th centuries. There are traces of a stoup at this entrance, and at the south of the altar is a piscina surmounted by a hood moulding, enriched by the ball flower; the moulding (which is broken off by the sill of the window above) being supported at the ends by corbel heads. The ceiling is semi-circular, and the walls are connected by rude tie-beams, but the whole interior is so plastered, whitewashed, and withal so dusty, that many points of interest are hid from the sight. There is a large gallery in the chancel, for which there appears to be no necessity; but that at the west end would not I suppose, be readily given up by the choristers. I saw no font; there is a wooden pedestal in front of the clerk's desk, and I suppose they make this available to put a basin on. In the south side of the chancel is a recumbent alabaster effigy, said to be intended for Sir Hugh Mortimer, lord of Martley, (*temp.* Henry VI.) from whom Martley descended to the ancient Barons de la Ware, the families of Mucklowe, Slaney, Foley, and the present Lord Ward. The figure of the knight is all armed except his head, under which lies his helmet, his hands joined in prayer, out of his wreath a plume of feathers (the

crest of Mortimer ; see Malvern Church, south aisle) ; from a collar about his neck hangs a fleece as an order of knighthood ; and at his feet a lion. The mutilators of monumental remains have chipped the face of the poor knight into a flat surface, and left scarcely a trace of features except a straight cut or gash (probably done with an axe), and intended as a substitute for a mouth. On the north side of the chancel is the tomb part of an ancient monument, but no figure or inscription remains. The other memorials here for the most part belong to the Nash family,* and there was an inscription to Lettice Lane, spinster, daughter of Colonel John Lane, of Bentley, Staffordshire, who died November 23, 1709, aged about 75 ; she was sister to Mrs. Jane Lane, who rode behind Charles II. after the battle of Worcester, was blind many years before she died, and assisted her sister in polishing pebbles, by rubbing them one against the other ; some of the stones thus curiously polished I believe are still in the possession of the Nash family. A great friendship subsisted between the Nashes and Lettice Lane, who on their account, lived, died, and was buried at Martley. Over the chancel arch is a painting of the royal arms, dated 1702, which seems to have been done by the village carpenter ; and I may add that the congregation may fall down and worship the beasts which he has set up without apprehension of breaking the second commandment. The accommodations of Martley church were enlarged in the year 1829, when 201 additional sittings were added, and in consequence of a grant from the Incorporated Society 151 of them are free, in addition to 110 previously.

In the list of charitable bequests to this parish is that of Thomas Sheppard, gent., of Hallow, who left £170, the interest of which was to be applied for ever to the maintenance of a person to teach the children of the parish to read, sew, and knit,

* The historian Nash says that the names Noake or Noke and Nash were originally Oak and Ash, but that it is peculiar to the people of the Martley country to prefix an N to a great many words, such as *nuncle* for *uncle*, *noddy* for *oddy* or *oddity*, &c. I think, however, the practice is by no means confined to the Martley neighbourhood.

and trustees were appointed to superintend the proper government of the school. This brings me to the state of the schools in this parish. Formerly there was a grammar school here, the revenues of which, exemplified under the seal of the Exchequer (*temp.* Elizabeth), were derived from lands in Martley, Wichenford, Knightwick, and Doddenham, of the yearly value of thirty-three shillings for the maintenance of a learned school-master for ever; and in the time of Charles I, other property worth £16 per annum was exemplified out of Chancery for the same purpose. What is become of this grammar school I cannot ascertain, but I saw the gravestone of one Anthony Mogridge, who was its master in the year 1709, and upon whose memory the epitaphist has heaped an abundance of eulogy—a somewhat rare instance, for however benign may be the original disposition of a village pedagogue, I look upon it that the daily trials of temper he is bound to undergo render it almost impossible that he can preserve it to the end, so as to reap the benison of after ages. In the churchyard are the traces of an old school, which was recently pulled down, and I suppose this was the grammar school above alluded to. New and most commodious schools were erected hard by within the last two or three years, for which Lord Ward gave the land and £300. The Rev. J. Hastings, who is the incumbent, also gave £300, being the profit arising from his publication of sermons. Dr. Nash gave a donation of £50, and others subscribed liberally. I walked through this school, and was much pleased with its arrangements. There are 64 boys and 34 girls, who are all taught on what is called the National System. Whether this has arisen out of the ashes of the grammar school, and is in part supported by its funds, I could not ascertain; but with regard to Thomas Sheppard's legacy of £170, that is invested in land at £25 per year, and goes to the support of the mistress of the present school.

At the last commutation the value of the living was £835, from which the incumbent pays a curate, the Rev. E. Acton Davies, and assistant Curate, the Rev. J. N. Townsend. The

patron and rector of the living is the Rev. James Hastings. Mr. J. Merrick is clerk. Mr. W. H. Pennington, schoolmaster ; and Mrs. Merrick, schoolmistress. Population, 1,354.

In this parish is a noble conical elevation called the Berrow Hill, and the name implies either that it was a place fenced and fortified, or that it was an ancient place of sepulture. It is of a fine oval form ; and although a natural hill, its sides were evidently pared down by the aborigines of our island to its present shape. There are two lines of entrenchment round the brow of the hill, which show it to be the site of an ancient camp. Mr. Jabez Allies, of this city, a few years ago, measured the camp, and judged it to be about 400 yards long and 190 yards wide. The trenches were still perfect in some parts, particularly at the north and south ends of the oval. It is supposed to be as large as any thing of the kind in the kingdom, and it is therefore strange that the camp has not been noticed by Nash or any other historian.

On my return home I described another route, and passed by the little ancient church of Wichensford. The doors were closed, and the services were apparently over for the day. There was a sabbatical repose about the spot ; not a living being was near, and only two or three straggling houses could be seen from the churchyard. A solitary swallow would occasionally skim the tall grass which waved over the graves, ascend to the eaves of the little capped tower, and then wing its eccentric flight away to fresh fields. Though baulked in my object of entering the church, I looked in at the windows on all sides and saw many costly mural monuments. Nash says that on the north side of the chancel was an ancient tomb of alabaster, and an armed man sculptured, with his wife on his right side ; on the south side a similar monument, both belonging to the Washbourner family, 15th century ; at the lower end of the north side a large tomb, with two armed men, and two gentlewomen kneeling above. This belonged to the same family in the 17th century. About a century ago there was a chapel in the constablewick of Kenswick, and service was performed once a month, the owner

of Kenswick paying £10 a year. A few years ago two Roman coins were found upon digging up the foundation of an old building at a farm called the Woodend in this parish. The one is a coin of Victorinus, and the other of Constans. The obverse of the latter has the portrait of the sovereign, with a ball in his hand, and the inscription "DN. CONSTANS, P. F. AVG.;" and on the reverse there is the figure of the emperor armed, in a grotto or hiding-place, leading out a boy, supposed to be one of the Christians, by the hand, thereby indicating his guardian care of them, with the inscription "FEL. TEMP. REPARATIO. P. L. C." A similar coin is set forth in Paten's work on Roman coins, pages 471 and 472, figure 5, with an interesting description of it.



Bredon.

THE approach to this church forms one of the prettiest rural pictures in the county; the venerable edifice shooting up its handsome spire far above the lofty trees which surround it, and forming a back ground to the principal highway or street of the village, on either side of which are old cross timbered buildings and pleasant gardens. The church is dedicated to St. Peter, and, from part of the masonry, appears to have been begun in the 12th century, in the reign of Richard the First, or about the time when the half of Europe was clad in armour to rescue Palestine from the hand of the Saracen. The ground plan is the Latin cross, with chancel, nave, and north and south aisles. The tower rises from nearly the centre of the building, and is seventy-two feet to the top of the battlement, surmounted by an elegant octagonal spire of eighty-nine feet, thus making in the whole an altitude of 161 feet. The exterior of the building presents generally the features of the Decorated period, with the rectangular buttress forming recess at right

angles. There are three public entrances, north, west, and south, all being within a few feet of each other. The north entrance has a porch of Norman date, with fine semi-circular arches, ornamented with the hatched and zig-zag mouldings, supported by small shafts in recess, the frieze of which is a stem and leaf of water flower. Transverse deep rib mouldings, crossing each other, form the roof vaulting of the porch, over which is the ancient muniment room. The west and south entrances are beautiful specimens of the late Norman arch, and both are ornamented with the hatched and billet mouldings. On the exterior of the north wall, at the west end of the church, is a corbel table, and several carvings on the corbels are still visible, though not easily deciphered: one of them appears to represent an ecclesiastic with the hands uplifted in exhortation. In this and the opposite wall are two narrow lights of the period when the Norman was merging into the Transition style. The western window is perpendicular, and not improbably was erected amid the very storm of civil war, when the hands that arranged its heavy mullions might have been summoned from their labour by the blast of civil strife sweeping over the stillness of the pleasant fields from the distracted neighbouring town of Tewkesbury. The aisles are divided from the nave by arches and pillars, the windows on the south side having triple lights and projecting shafts, a style peculiarly early English. The window at the west end of this aisle is blocked up by an immense, gaudy monument (*temp.* 1611), to one Giles Reede, "a worthy squire," of whom the inscription saith—

" Here lies a worthy squire ; scarce any age beheld
 A better man : and this his peere doth scarcelie yeld.
 Hardie, and wise, and juste, and temperate eake of mind,
 Gyles Reede was trulie all, if any else we find.
 Him dead his vertuous wife doth follow soon by death,
 Well pleased after such a mate to draw no breath.
 Each being other's only choice, both waxen old,
 A noble pair, them both this only tombe doth holde."

Under the semi-circular arch of this monument are the recumbent full length figures of "the squire" and his lady, with

figures of their children kneeling in compartments at the head and feet. The best monument of this Giles Reede exists, however, in the charitable foundation he left to the village, by which eight poor women are provided with a comfortable home in old age, and are clothed and furnished with coals, besides a weekly allowance in money. On the left hand of this monument was a tablet (mentioned by Nash, but not observed by me), where, under Reede's arms quartered in a lozenge, was an inscription in memory of Mrs. Katherine Reede, deceased July 1, 1623, "a person of honour and singular virtue," who gave money to be distributed yearly in pence to twelve poor women in Bredon. This aisle or transept was originally a chapel (Nash says it was called Mitton Chapel), and contains a piscina; the approach to the rude loft may yet be traced in one of the piers; and in the south wall of this chapel are three recesses close to the pavement, containing stone tombs; the cover of one of these has on it a shield cut in stone, from which issue two arms bearing a heart (an indication that the heart of the individual was buried here, and his body elsewhere); the other tombs or coffins bear crosses, one plain and the other branching or floriated in a remarkable manner. Against one of the piers of this chapel is suspended a board, containing an extract from the will of William Hancock (1718) directing that the boys to be educated at Bredon school should attend church constantly on pain of dismissal, and that the surplus funds of the said school should go to the apprenticing of poor boys. The first of the centre arches leading into the chancel, and supporting the tower, is a fine specimen of the Transition or twelfth century period, with zig-zag and roll mouldings on the face and soffit of the arch; the two pillars stand half out of the wall upon square bases, and the capitals present some deviation from the usual cubical mass of the Norman style by having six stiffly chiselled volutes or springers to support the abacus. The second arch and pillars are of the Decorated period; and in imitation of this style a handsome stone screen has been lately placed there by the present rector. The chancel is somewhat

rich in the remains which it presents. The east window is Geometric, with three of the Decorated style in each of the side walls. There is here a trefoil headed piscina, a square recess for the sacramental elements, and graduated sedilia (plain) for the three orders of priesthood. Near this is a recess containing three small recumbent figures of a man, woman, and child, the carving of which would hardly have done credit to a backwoodsman. On the north side of the chancel is a monumental arched recess, based on the ground, enriched with ball flower and leaf, and crocketed, but the finials have been broken off. This I hear is likely to be restored. On the pavement and walls are many olden inscriptions, from which I select the following:—“Februarius kalend, CIᶒ Iᶒ CLIX—*Itur præ sequar.*” (No name.)—Another to the Rev. J. Smith: “*Malus ille bonis flebilis occidit.*” “He whom evil destroys is lamented by the good.”—A third to “Johannes Prideaux, Devonienſis,” with a long Latin inscription. This was a Bishop of Worcester, who was born in 1578 and died in 1650. It appears that in the civil wars his bishoprick was sequestered and he retired to Bredon to his son-in-law Webb. He was allowed only 4s. 6d. a week for his support. In this distress, which he always bore with cheerfulness and good humour, he was obliged to sell his books and furniture in order to procure the necessaries of life. One day, going along the village with something under his gown, he was asked by a neighbour what he had got there? He replied that he was become an ostrich, and forced to lived upon iron; at the same time showing some old iron which he was going to sell at the blacksmith’s, to enable himself to buy a dinner. The steps to the altar are covered with nearly 200 old tiles, containing the emblazonments of ancient families, some of historical note, an inspection of which would well repay a visit of the cognoscente in such matters. The only remaining relic calling for notice in this part of the church is a large stone fixed against the south wall; it is of a monumental character, and appears to have been a covering to a tomb or grave. The stone is elaborately sculptured, and of very singular design. In the lower part appears

a crucifix, the shafts and limbs of the cross being ragged or raguly; above the arms of the cross are seen the busts of a man and his wife, placed under purfled canopies. From the head of the Saviour proceed two doves towards these heads. Various conjectures have been hazarded about these heads, some assigning them to St. John and the Virgin, others to Joseph and Mary, but it seems more probable that the stone is intended to commemorate some affectionate couple whose faith in the atonement was symbolized by the doves and the cross. The character of its sculpture indicates that this singular monument was erected about the middle of the fourteenth century; it was discovered some time ago with the sculptured side downwards, forming part of the chancel pavement, where no doubt it had been placed during the Reformation, as a means of preserving it from destruction. A tomb of very similar design was discovered by the Rev. J. G. Butler, of Trim, county of Meath, at the depth of three feet, in the churchyard of that place; but in this instance the figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. John appear, one on either side of the cross, under two other figures, possibly angels; and above the angels are the busts of the persons commemorated by the monument.

The general appearance of the church is of a most pleasing character, and with its high pitched roof of open truss-work, resting on corbel tables with quaint heads, &c., its low open seats of solid oak and carved ends, its elegant octagonal font standing in the centre where three ways meet from open doors, and its general excellent preservation and cleanliness within and without, it is at once an ornament and a credit to the county. Most of the repairs have been executed during the residence of the present rector. In the year 1843, when the walls were being scraped, the following sentence was discovered painted in old English characters—"It is time for the Lord's house to be built;" this had been remorselessly smeared over by some ancient professor of the brush and bucket. The church has fortunately escaped the brick and mortar "reparations" to

which many old churches have been doomed, and it is not improbable that ere long the south aisle may be recovered from the disgrace of having one of its fine old windows blocked up by a tawdry and inconsistent monument.

The churchyard contains a curious altar tomb, the covering or upper slab of which is ridged, and fashioned apparently to represent the roof of a cruciform church. Monsieur de Caumont has given, in the "Bulletin Monumental," a representation of a similar churchyard tomb near a village church in the neighbourhood of Bayeux. There are several other tombs of this description in Bredon churchyard, bearing crosses of rude workmanship. Among the "dull flat rhymes" here to be read is the following:—

" The grave his a refining pot
Unto believing eyes;
For there the flesh shall doff its dross,
And like the sun a Rise."

The services of the day were not precisely as I could have wished, being indistinctly heard. The Gregorian chants had been introduced here, but the performers being only school boys, who sang in unison, it could not be expected that they should enter into the spirit of these solemn strains. The sermon, also, was somewhat too long, and it is to be regretted that preachers will not bear in mind that ears get tired long before tongues. The dread of a long sermon keeps many from a church. Fosbroke, in his "British Monachism," relates that the rector of Bibury, in Gloucestershire, used always to preach for two hours, keeping in the pulpit an hour glass, and turning it for that purpose. I would not advise the revival of such a custom, lest the congregation should run out sooner than the sand.* In the afternoon I set out on my long wished for trip to Bredon Hill, which

* In Puritan days there was generally an hour glass on the pulpit, fastened to the cushion board, that it might be visible to the whole congregation, which, if the sermon did not hold till the glass was out, (which was turned up as soon as the text was taken), would say that the preacher was lazy; but if he held out much longer, they would yawn, and signify that they were weary of his discourse, and wanted to be dismissed. These hour glasses remained in some churches till late in the eighteenth century.

is situate at least two miles from the village. The heat of the sun was intense enough for a Burmese Emperor; so, relieving myself of my coat, and borrowing an umbrella from Boniface, I moved off slowly, and in an hour and a half gained the "Monument," or "Prospect House," as it is called, being a shattered stone hovel on the summit. From hence the views are of vast extent and really magnificent; and although not boasting of the sublimity of mountain scenery, it is said that many of the phenomena of mountainous countries may be frequently seen here, and that from its height and bulk this hill is not seldom capped with clouds. Stretching away right and left is a rich and varied country: the Avon flowing along, a stately stream, may be traced far away below through a lovely valley, winding its way to the bloody field of Tewkesbury; and it is also said that the estuary of the Severn may be seen from hence. The deep dark mass of the Malvern Hills forms here a grand appearance, and present their broad heavy form unbroken by detail; on the south; by the aid of a glass and a steady hand, may be descried the ridge of Mendip, in Somersetshire; to the west, the Black Mountains in Breconshire, the Blorenges, the Sugar Loaf, and other Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire heights; to the north, the twin Clees and the Wrekin. The abbey towers of Evesham and Pershore are fine objects in the landscape at the northern base of the hill, and on the opposite side Cheltenham lies beautifully conspicuous, protected from the east winds that are so general in England by the inner range of the Cotswolds. The cities of Worcester and Gloucester, as likewise the towns of Tewkesbury, Malvern, and others of lesser note, may be clearly traced; and the eye rests with peculiar delight on the rich vale of Evesham, rightly denominated by Drayton "the Queen of all the British vales." This valley in the olden time was the vineyard of England, and William of Malmesbury says of it—"There you may behold highways and public roads full of fruit trees, not planted, but growing naturally. The earth bears fruit of its own accord, much exceeding others in taste and beauty. No county in England has so many or so

good *vineyards* as this, either for fertility or sweetness of the *grape*."

Bredon Hill is what is called an "outlyer," or a portion which has slipped away from the rest of the grand Cotswold amphitheatre, and stands isolated; it has likewise for many ages served the purpose of a rural barometer to the inhabitants of the surrounding valleys, who may be often heard to exclaim—

"When Bredon hill puts on his hat
Ye men of the vale beware of that."

In the lias quarries which form the superstructure of the hill many specimens of *ichthyosauri* have been dug up, some of which were lately in the possession of Mr. Dudfield, of Tewkesbury; and there are many other points of great interest connected with this hill. The summit presents an ancient camp (believed from the rudeness of the work to be Danish), which on the north and west sides is defended by a steep precipice. At the beginning of the present century a landslip occurred on these sides, when a considerable quantity of wheat of a parched appearance, and which had been buried in the earth, was discovered. It is supposed to have been an ancient granary, but of what date is uncertain. The late Miss Martin, of Norton, was riding along the parapet at the time of the slip, when her horse suddenly sunk into the ground, but soon sprang up and regained his footing, having fortunately landed on the firm side of the chasm, which had opened about thirty feet wide at the surface and about forty feet deep. The effects of the slip are still visible in the many undulations which mark the escarpment or precipice, down almost into the valley. By the inner vallum of the camp is a hollow, apparently excavated by art, which appears originally to have been circular, but a large segment of the circle has been removed, probably by some landslip, of which there seems to have been several here about; in the centre of this hollow stands a remarkable object of curiosity, called "The Banbury stone," standing about nine or ten feet high; it is a ragged honeycombed mass of oolite, of a roundish figure, whose interstices are chiefly filled with stalactital incrustations. How this

colossal stone got on the top of Bredon Hill is a fact as inexplicable as the origin of Stonehenge; but it has been supposed by some antiquaries that the name "Banbury" is a corruption of "Ambury," implying its former consecration to Pagan worship; many other hills in the kingdom, which probably had Druidical stones or altars upon them, bearing that name. If this conjecture be correct, the ancient relic on Bredon Hill is indeed an object of interest, as connecting the present generation by a visible link with "ages long ago betid," when the baleful fires of Paganism lit up our high places, and the sons and daughters of ancient Britons were passed through the devouring element in the horrid rites of Moloch. It required but a little stretch of imagination to fancy this large circular hollow filled with the fires lighted in honour of the god, and the Druids and votaries leaping through them, as was usually the custom about Midsummer.*

There are two other stones on the south-western declivity, just above the village of Norton: they are tall, turret-like masses of white oolitic rock, and are commonly called "The King and Queen." A manorial court was held at this spot, as referred to in an old document in Nash's Worcestershire. It is supposed that these and other masses of stone lying about here were protruded from the soil by means of some of the landslips before alluded to.

The hill and its vicinage present many charms to the botanical eye, and among these are the following, as enumerated by a recent tourist, to whose account I am indebted for several useful hints: the woolly headed plume thistle, the elegant dropwort, the rare purple mountain milk-vetch, basil thyme, tutsan, wood-vetch, elecampane, and the pretty fern, *cistopteris ragilis*, which is seen nowhere else on the ridge of the Cotswolds.

Some ancient swords were dug up in the Camp Field many

* Bel was the title given to the sun on the first day of spring, which was changed to Moloch on the first day of autumn, when his kindly heats were ripening the fruits of the earth. The Jews then adored him as Moloch, and passed themselves and children through the fires kindled in gratitude for his benefits.

years ago; and at a place called Norton Pitch, the workmen on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, while excavating for the line, dug up several bosses of shields, spear heads, part of a sword and scabbard, and a blue and red bead, which Mr. Bloxam considered to be Romanized British or early Saxon. Several ancient foundations of buildings were also discovered near the same spot.

To return to the village. There is here a Blue School, endowed by Peter Hancock, Esq., before mentioned, with £1,000, for the education, clothing, and apprenticing of twelve boys; from the increased value of the funds a larger number of boys is now educated, and the school is under the able mastership of Mr. Lloyd. The number of boys attending on week days is 54, and on Sundays 80. A school for girls is being erected in the churchyard by the rector. The girls number about 50 on Sundays. In the village are also eight almshouses for as many poor widows. The allotment system has been introduced into this parish, and is now carried on upon a large scale, there being nearly 300 tenants, who occupy from two chains up to six acres each. The condition of many parties at Bredon has been much improved in consequence of the introduction of this measure, many of whom, from a state of comparative poverty, have been enabled to establish their own market carts, and attend Cheltenham and other places. It should not be forgotten, likewise, that the proprietor of the allotments has also become a gainer in a twofold sense, for to him has fallen the meed of praise for the introduction of an excellent scheme which is usually placed to the account of charity, while at the same time he has had the more tangible satisfaction of realising £3 and £4 per acre for land which had previously returned but 30s. or £2.

The rectory is one of the most valuable in the diocese. It was returned at £1,498, and is now probably worth much more. It was purchased for the Rev. T. A. Strickland, for two lives. There are several peculiar privileges belonging to the living. Bishop Sandys, in his answers to the queries of the Privy Council, 5 Elizabeth, said—"The parson of Bredon pretendeth,

keepeth, and excuseth, that his church and parish, with the chapels of Norton, Mitton, and Cuddesdon, are exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary; that he hath probate of wills, and committing of administrations." These privileges, I believe, are still maintained.

There was anciently a monastery at Bredon, which subsisted under an abbot of its own till after the year 841; but some time before the conquest it became part of the possessions of the Bishopric of Worcester, and was probably annexed thereto in 964, when it was included by King Edgar in the hundred of Oswaldslow, which he granted to the church of Worcester.

I append a statistical extract from the parish register from January 28, 1813, to July 25, 1846; during which time there have been 185 marriages, which require 370 signatures by the contracting parties themselves; out of this number 251 have signed with a cross. As witnesses to these marriages there have been 289 signatures, of which 134 are with a cross. In the same period there have been 907 baptisms and 622 deaths; and it appears that the greatest number of deaths occurred between the ages of 70 and 75, and the average duration of life in the parish, including from birth to death, was 40 years: but if an allowance be made for the great number of children dying under five (a great portion of whom die under one year) the average duration of life of all who live to be five years is $52\frac{1}{7}$.

The population is about 1,600. Present curate, the Rev. H. Swan; another curate will also be appointed. Clerk, John Nutting, aged 85, who has been clerk for thirty-five years.



Suckley.

THE day of my visit here was a charming sample of the month of June—that season of full blown enjoyment, when the snow-drop, the violet, and the other dainty children of spring, have surrendered their places to the riper beauties and the “leafie luxurie” of summer. All the wide air was vocal with the harmony of birds and beasts, mixed with the chirping of insect tribes from among the deep grass, and an universal fiat seemed to have gone forth for the rejoicing of all creatures, reminding one of the saying of the wise monarch of Jerusalem, who exclaimed, on beholding the profuse bounties of nature, “Come on, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like us in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wines and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered.”

The parish of Suckley not only contains some rich scenery, but presents other points of interest, especially to the geologist. The space between Ankerdine Hill and Old Storage is filled up with a chain called the Suckley and Hall House Hills; and one of them, called the Round Hill, in Alfriek, has the appearance of a tumulus. This line of hills, which is covered with woods, is a limestone ridge, continuing through Martley to the Abberley Hills, and was no doubt thrown up by subterranean force. The substratum is the syenite of Malvern, which crops out on the other side of Berrow Hill. The silurian system, when fully developed, consists of the Dudley limestone, the upper and lower Ludlow rock, the Caradoc sandstone (as at Old Storage), and the Llandilo flags. The last mentioned is the only portion of the system which does not appear in the strata of this neighbourhood. The dividing line between the old and new red sandstone passes through this parish; and at Lulsley, near to the Teme,

is a remarkable rock, or bold hilly piece in the new red sandstone, which is a conglomerate, vulgarly called Rosebury or Rosemary Rock, the real name of it being Osebury. This conglomerate, as its name implies, is composed of a great variety of formations, all jumbled together in a sort of geological olla podrida, most of the specimens being portions of strata which neither belong to the neighbourhood nor appear within many miles of it. Here is a field for conjecture and theory! It would seem as though, in the remotest antiquity, and ere this island had risen above the mass of waters, some mighty whirlpool had sucked in and concentrated at this point the heterogeneous materials which a long series of after ages compacted into one mass—a monument of the sublime mystery of Nature's laws.

Sir Henry Spelman conjectures that St. Augustine's oak stood in the ancient hamlet of Alfrick, in Suckley parish, and he was drawn into this supposition by the somewhat vague testimony of the name of the hamlet being printed "Acfrick" in old maps; "Ac" being the Saxon word for an oak. St. Augustine, the apostle of the English, is said to have held a conference with the British bishops as to the proposed introduction of Romish forms and ceremonies, which conference was held in the year 603, under an oak, standing on the limits of the Wiccan and West Saxon kingdoms. This famous oak has been claimed for many parishes, some supposing it to have stood at Aka (Rock), some say that the Apostle's Oak, on the confines of Witley and Abberley, and others that the Mitre Oak at Hartlebury, was the identical oak. Lingard says that the meeting was held at a place afterwards called Austin's Oak, probably Austelive in Gloucestershire, the usual ferry over the Severn; and Nash, and others who from their research are entitled to give an opinion, believe that the oak did not stand in Worcestershire.

The parish church lies in the valley, and, with its old tower and pyramidal top, is an object of beauty and interest as seen from the adjoining eminences. Hard by stands the rectory, a large, antique, cross timbered dwelling, over whose gabled front

some vines stretch their long arms ; and in the churchyard is the old tithe barn. The school-house, which many years ago was built up against the western end of the south wall of the church, was full of children of both sexes, and the worthy rector was sitting in the midst of them, hearing, explaining, and cross-examining them on the scriptures. It was evident from the cheerful and willing manner of the children that they viewed it in any other light than that of a task, and that incessant and long continued pains-taking must have been undergone with them. How pleasing the contrast with that of many other parishes where no trouble is bestowed on the formation of the character of the next generation, and where the clergyman thinks that the whole of his weekly duties are concentrated in one or, at the most, two attendances at the parish church. There were about 50 girls and half that number of boys in this school.

The church exhibits the same features as those of the majority of rural churches, the older portions of the walls being Norman, and the remainder the work of the 14th and 15th centuries. When I say Norman, I would make this reservation, that I say it merely in deference to the opinion of modern judges ; at the same time I believe that there is much more of what is really ante-Norman work in this country than would at first sight appear, and this belief is founded not only on the fact that extreme rudeness of style is in itself a good proof of antiquity, but also that many of these buildings were repaired in or about the 14th century—too short a period, in my estimation, having then elapsed for such massive works to require restoration had they been originally erected subsequent to the conquest. This church is defaced by several erections, such as the school and the vestry, having been built up against it, and a modern square window or two peeping out here and there from the old masonry. There is a chancel, nave, a southern aisle divided from the nave by two pointed arches of late date, and the old Norman tower (massive as a fortress) at the west end, on which formerly stood a lofty spire, which was taken down about sixty years ago to avoid

the expense of repair, it having fallen out of the perpendicular. The tower has now a wooden pyramidal top, truncated, and covered with a cap. There are six musical bells; originally there were but five, but No. 1 was added by Mr. Raester and Mr. Presdee, a ringer, who got up a subscription for the purpose. This William Presdee always rang that treble bell, and was buried directly beneath it; and as he lay in his coffin beneath the bell the ringers rang a merry peal over him according to his last injunctions. Abraham Rudhall was the founder who recast the bells, and lived at Gloucester. They are said to be a "virgin peal," that is, requiring no chipping or filing after they were cast to get them into tune. This is said to be a rare case. The interior of the church is sadly plastered and whitewashed, but there are many points of interest remaining. Two or three steps to the ancient rood-loft are still visible in the north wall; there is a circular font coeval with the oldest part of the building; and a piscina and two sedilia at the south of the altar. The sounding board of the pulpit contains the following inscription around its edge, in very old letter, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it;" and on a shelf placed against an adjoining pier I found a black letter copy of the Homilies, "Imprinted at London, by Henrie Benneman, 1578." There are also in the body of the church some venerable open seats of oak, which are as old as the Reformation. Among the more remarkable monuments are two which no doubt belonged to two of the Puritanical race: their inscriptions are—

"John Raester, a preaching Divine, and a divine preacher; parson of Suckley 42 years. Westminster, Cambridge, Lambeth hee did knowe; a scholar more in substance than in showe. Suckley enjoyed mee both in life and voice, a constant Preacher and a Teacher choice; he lived years 75; Died faithfully, shall rise gloriously. Mœrens apposuit filius. J.R. L.D. M.C. Obit anno 1640. J.N. 14."

"The epitaph of James Warwicke, preacher of the word, Made in his life, in preparation vnto his death.

"My state through God consisteth in these seuen:
Causes: Wombe: world: Christ: calling: grace: heauen:

In causes I began, in wombe was wrought,
 Borne in the world, in Christ new borne, I taught
 In calling gladsome Gospel, rest in grace,
 In heaven happiness at length I have :
 Causes corrupt seed were : wombe sin conception :
 The world vanity : Christ is saluation :
 Calling was holy meditation :
 Grace is consumption : Heauen vision :
 My death, my dust is finite, I believe
 Though captive I shall triumph, dead shall live,
 Christ's resurrection is the only key
 That shall vnlock my sepilchre of clay."

Among the charities recorded in this church is a legacy of £1,000 by Thomas Freeman, late of the Whitehouse, for establishing an annual charity for the poor. This sum has been invested in Bants Farm and Little Chapels, and the proceeds are distributed on the Sundays after Christmas, Easter, and St. Michael's. The investment seems to be a bad one, for the amount now annually distributed, as the interest of this handsome legacy, is *little* more than £25. Some few years ago a parchment was discovered in the old parish chest, which, from its worm eaten, venerable appearance, indicated an age as old as the chest itself. Upon close examination it proved to be a copy (dated 1710) of certain charities belonging to the parish, several of which had been long lost sight of. Of the five following legacies four have been recovered, but of the fifth there is no certain trace:—Clement Righter, £10; Thomas Moore, 20s.; — Gournay, £10.; — Ross, 20s.; the name of the last donor, who left a legacy of £10, is illegible. It is in the recollection of some of the parishioners that 5s. has been paid on a certain piece of land or premises in the parish, but which has been discontinued for fifteen or twenty years; this may yet be recovered.

The congregation (although, as I understood, all the principal farmers were present) consisted for the most part of labourers, of whom I never saw a larger collection in a rural church of this size. As I looked upon their clean shaven faces, and their white smock-frocks, and heard them make their responses aloud, in unison with the school children, who were thickly ranged up the centre of the nave, and thought of the kindly feeling between the

pastor and his flock which must have produced this harmony and as it were family feeling in devotion—this right appreciation of the institution of the sabbath—I could not but add another confirmation to my often expressed belief that the welfare of our church is, under God, in a great measure dependent on those who minister at her altars. To say more, in the present instance, might be misconstrued into flattery—to say less, would be gross injustice to the name of Pearson.

Population of Suckley, 1,153 ; Alfrick, 434 ; Lulsley, 120. The living was valued at £10 by an inquisition taken in 1479 ; it is now worth £634. The patronage is in the Crown. Rector, the Rev. J. Pearson. Curate for Alfrick and Lulsley, the Rev. W. Dunn. Clerk for Suckley, Mr. Daniel Holmes. Services are performed at the chapelries regularly once a day. The male population of the parish are chiefly engaged in agricultural labour, and the women in gloving. The cultivation is of a mixed kind, but there is the large quantity of 230 acres of hops in this parish ; the total acreage is 5,540. There is a singular paucity of the rising generation amongst the families of farmers in this parish ; and it is an equally remarkable fact that there has not been an illegitimate birth in the parish of Suckley for a period of five years, during which time, however, nearly ninety infants have been ushered into the world under cover of holy wedlock.



Ombersley.

IN the year 1829, an act having been obtained for the levying of rates in this parish to defray the expense of erecting a new church, which was found to be necessary in consequence of the dilapidations of the old one, the present structure was raised at a cost of about £18,000, which is not yet paid off. It is an elegant Gothic erection, of the Decorated order, having a handsome spire, and, with the park and mansion

of Lord Sandys adjoining, forms a very pleasing object in one of the prettiest and most respectable villages of the county, rendered picturesque at every turn by whole rows of ancient cross timbered houses, nicely coloured in black and white, or new dwellings built in imitation of and to match those of older dates. Every thing, too, is remarkably neat and clean, and the churchyard is, in itself, a model; its gravel walks and lawn-like turf, on which rows of young trees are growing, being scrupulously swept, and enclosed with wire fencing. On the south side of the new church is the ancient burying ground, wherein is situate all the remains of the old edifice, namely, its chancel; this has been renovated by Lord Sandys (to whom the impropriation and consequently the chancel belongs), and is now a mausoleum for that family. This old relic is covered with ivy, and, like a venerable parent who has retired into honourable superannuation, excites one's interest and regard. From the manner in which the walls are repaired and dovetailed with new work, the style of the building is not obvious, though, if I mistake not, it belongs to the Early English period, and is, therefore, about 600 years old. The ancient communion table is still remaining there; it is of oak, handsomely carved, and has the following sentence in capitals running round its four sides—"Whosoever eats this bread," &c. This table should have been repaired and placed in the new church. At the south of the table is a handsome projecting piscina, having in its basin eight grooves which terminate in the central orifice at the bottom. The sedilia, adjoining, are for the three orders, and have handsome trefoil canopies, supported by corbel heads. The windows are lancet. The chancel is occupied chiefly by monuments and inscriptions to the Sandys family for nearly two centuries. In the churchyard, the sexton (a remarkably obliging and intelligent man) pointed out the following verses on two gravestones:—

No. 1.

"Earth works on earth, like glittering gold;
Earth goes to earth before it would;
Earth builds on earth citadels and towers;
Earth says to earth, all will be ours."

No. 2.

“ Sharp was her wit,
Mild was her nature—
A tender wife—
A good humour'd creature.”

In this burying ground are also some mementoes of long and trusty servants to the parish, one of whom was Joseph Burraston (died in 1827), master of Lloyd's charity school for fifty-six years, also clerk fifty years ! The other was the late vicar, the Rev. Mr. Sockett, who likewise reckoned just half a century in his ministration ! I observed here one or two monuments of cast iron, but their rusty appearance contrasted but unfavourably with that of the grey sculptured stone. Nearly the whole of an ancient stone cross is remaining, but the top, as is frequently the case, is converted into a dial.

The new church consists of a chancel, two side aisles separated from the nave by four elegant pointed arches, from between the springers of which ascend the vaulting shafts ; there are clerestory windows with handsome fans arising between them, and branching abroad to the centre of the groined roof, where a row of beautifully carved bosses adds much to the effect of the whole. The tower is at the western end ; the spire has canopied lights, and its base is supported by flying buttresses, springing from each pinnacle. The height of the tower is 95 feet ; spire, 75 feet ; weight of the tenor bell, 19 cwt. The walls are embattled, with also a profusion of buttresses and crocketed pinnacles ; and handsome ogee-canopied windows and doors, with painted glass, and corbels carved with the oak and vine leaf, meet the eye in every direction. The commandments and the creed are included in tablets, similarly canopied, on each side of the east window. The seats, which are of oak, are judiciously constructed, and the side galleries are erected so as not to touch the pillars supporting the clerestory. The church is capable of seating about 900 persons, and a large proportion of these sittings are for the poor. There is a spacious western gallery and a good organ therein. Opposite the principal entrance doors, north and south, from which are staircases ascending

to the galleries, are placed against the wall several tables of charities, clearly and legibly painted in black and white, and within reach, so that he who stands still may read. Among these parochial largesses are the following:—Thomas Baker, of Borely, gent., gave, in 1722, £100 towards erecting and maintaining a school for poor children. I cannot ascertain how this money was applied, but the school now in existence in the village is called Lloyd's School, founded in 1729 by Richard Lloyd, of Comhampton, and endowed by him in 1731; and the words of the founder's will were "For the instruction of the poor children of the parish of Ombersley, in reading, writing, and arithmetic." These words, up to a recent period, were held to mean such children only as had a legal settlement in the parish, and thus a number of families resident in the parish, but not settled there, were excluded from the school. To remedy this defect, in the year 1838, the present incumbent established a Sunday School, which always met with the most liberal support, and has only been done away on account of the trustees having held the words "of the parish" to mean "resident *in* the parish." The children thus receive daily instruction, and the necessity for the Sunday Schools is obviated. The numbers of children in Lloyd's School are—boys, 85; girls, 98. Master, Mr. W. Manser. A branch school in the village has been recently established in consequence of the above alteration, and there are branches at Sychampton and Brookhampton, containing upwards of 120 children. A multitude of sums are recorded on the charity tables, as given by other parties, the interests to be converted into bread, clothing, &c., and this was increased by the sum of £100 received as a fine from one of the former overseers, who had misapplied the public funds, and £50 by the sale of timber upon the "Poor's Close," on the north side of the churchyard. Mrs. Dorothy Colles, widow, of Hatfield, county of Hereford, in the third year of Charles the First, gave "one half bullery of salt water, or salt phat," in Upwich (Droitwich): Dame Mercy Sandys, widow (1630), gave a silver chalice; Captain Sandys (1685) two silver flagons and silver basin, and Elizabeth his

wife gave a carpet and cushion of needlework. The sacramental plate, I understand, is still used, but the needlework is worn out.

By the good offices of the sexton I obtained a sight of the parish register, the early part of which is on vellum, and in very good preservation. It began 1574,* but is imperfect from 1649 to 1660, a period unfortunately conspicuous through intestine strife. In the year 1649 is the following entry:—"Here is to be noted that I, Edward Pilkinton, ye routed vicar, bapt. those yt. are set down orderly, and Mr. Maldon, or some other, ye rest; which maketh ye confusion." The subsequent entries are very irregular, till the period of the Restoration, when the following entry by the same individual occurs, after which the register was kept with the former care and accuracy: "Here you may see what confusion ye late civill warrs brought on our church, for sometimes here was a new stamp committee levite and sometimes not, so that there was no register kept in our fixst paper book, and that the year's accounts, here wanting, could not be had to be recorded here, which since Edward Pilkinton, ye routed vicar, hath done from the time of his restoration followeth." This book contains the register up to 1709, and it is then continued in others, in one of which is an entry of the planting of the yew tree near the old church on the 29th of January, 1713. The last volume of the register contains the signatures of the present Queen Dowager, the Duchess of Kent, also Lord Lyttelton, who, with many of the aristocracy, visited this church September 6, 1843.

The services of the day were well conducted; the chanting and psalm singing were performed in good time and tune by some youths who were placed before the organ, and that instrument was operated upon in a quiet, steady manner by a young man of the village, to whom some credit is due for his exertions in self-improvement. There were about 100 boys and girls

* The book itself may not be so old as that date, for it was not till the canon of 1597 that the old registers were ordered to be transcribed on parchment.

present. The vicar preached a good sermon from 2 Peter iii, part of 18th verse. It was a plain, unpretending discourse, such as all could understand, and which yet those who were blest with more capacious intellect could not fail to appreciate. A certain French preacher, after a long and pompous introduction, once said—"I shall now proceed, my hearers, to divide my subject into three parts: first, I shall tell you about that which I know, and you do not know; secondly, I shall tell you about that which you know and I do not know; and thirdly and lastly, I shall tell you about that which neither you nor I know." Alas! how much preaching comes under the third head.

Before concluding my chapter a few notes on the parish may not be uninteresting. I find that the allotment system is carried out here somewhat extensively. The vicar has upwards of thirty tenants on the glebe; the "Poor's Land" is now let to twenty-eight more; and Mr. Watkins and Mr. Amphlett have let land to about twenty others; so that on the whole there are at least seventy persons enjoying that privilege.

Among the antiquarian objects of interest connected with this parish is a Roman camp at Hadley Heath Common. This common was enclosed about the year 1815, and the land partly levelled. In two mounds, which appear to be the relics of Roman pottery works, were found some fragments of red earth pottery and a few pieces of Samian ware. A leaden chest, with an inscription on it, was dug up near here, but was broken to pieces by the finders; also the upper stone of an ancient hand-mill was found. There was likewise a tumulus, containing burnt bones. A trench runs through this camp and passes towards Newland Common, in Salwarp parish, joining the trench lane there, and is believed to have been a Roman road. The name "Ombersley" (Ambresloy) is supposed to have been derived from Ambrosius, as being the scene of some camp or scene of action in which this victorious prince defeated the Saxons; he having marched from York (through Worcestershire, as is supposed) to Winchester.

The only remaining point of interest with regard to this parish is the antiquity of several families connected therewith.

In this parish, adjoining to Hartlebury, was the ancient seat of the Actons, who no doubt derived their name from the oaks growing there; *Ac* in Saxon signifying an oak. This family is supposed to have been in Worcestershire before the conquest, and to have lived at Acton Hall. The present owner of this mansion is Miss Bourne, daughter of the late Mr. Sturges Bourne; to which family the estate was sold by one of the Barnebys, after having come to them by marriage with an heiress of the Actons.

Lord Sandys (who now holds the manor, and whose ancestor, Sir Samuel Sandys, purchased the crown lease from Mr. John Talbot, of Salwarp) traces his pedigree to Sandes, of Rattenby Castle, Cumberland, *temp.* Henry the Fourth. This family has been intimately mixed up with the public affairs of the city and county of Worcester for a long series of years.

The Hon. and Rev. W. C. Talbot, the vicar of this parish, is also, as his name implies, connected with ancient and honourable families.

The Rev. W. Speke, curate of Ombersley, is connected with the late William Pitt, and is also a member of one of the most ancient families in the West of England. In Roberts's "Duke of Monmouth," page 315, is the following:—"The Spekes are descended from Sir Walter l'Espek, who founded Rivaulx, Kirkham, and Warham Abbeys, in Yorkshire, A.D. 1136.* His daughter married Peter, Lord Ross, from whom the Duke of Rutland derives his pedigree. In the aisle, called Speke's aisle, of Exeter Cathedral, lies the statue of Sir George Speke. The family was of Bramford Speke, from the time of the Conqueror. The Spekes moved into Somersetshire about the middle of the 15th century, in consequence of a marriage with the heiress of Beauchamp, of White Lackington Park. The family seat is Jordan's, near Ilminster; a handsome structure built of Portland stone. This family is connected with the Norths (see Burke's

* This Sir Walter l'Espek was a famous warrior, and distinguished himself at the battle of "the Standard," fought near Northallerton, in the reign of King Stephen, when the Scots' army was utterly routed.

“Peerage”), and inherit the estates of Curry Rivel, from the great Earl of Chatham. The Spekes took an active part in Monmouth’s rebellion, and in aiding the royal cause in the time of Charles I.; also Prince Rupert, at the siege of Bridgewater; and William III., when Prince of Orange. A member of this family joined Perkin Warbeck (see “Echard,” also Wallace’s continuation of Sir J. Mackintosh’s “History of England”).

The other principal families in the parish are Watkins, of Woodfield House; Winnall, of Winnall House; and Amphlett, of Tapenhall, a branch of the old Worcestershire family of Amphlett.

Ombersley anciently belonged to the abbey of Evesham, and when that establishment had lost much of its possessions it obtained the appropriation of the church of Ombersley in the year 1326; in the ensuing year the vicarage was instituted, and further confirmed 1561, the 14th year of Pope Innocent VI. For this appropriation, William, abbot of Evesham, granted 30s. yearly to Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, and his successors. The impropriation now belongs to Lord Sandys. The parish once gave name to a forest, which was cut down in the time of Henry III.; and a market and fair were granted to Ombersley by Edward III., but no trace of either now remains.

The living is valued at £417. Vicar, the Hon. and Rev. W. C. Talbot. Curate, the Rev. W. Speke. Clerk, Mr. J. Davis. Organist, Mr. Thomas Whitney. Population, nearly 3,000 (including twelve hamlets).

Spetchley,

ANCIENTLY written “Spelea,” in the Hundred of Oswaldslowe, bounded east by White Lady Aston; west by St. Peter’s and St. Martin’s, near Worcester, south by Norton near Kempsey, and north by Warndon. The historian is very explicit as to the precise latitude of this parish,

no doubt on account of its diminutive size, the main part of it consisting of 'Squire Berkeley's park and a solitary farm: Indeed the good people of Spetchley are chiefly indebted to the number of poaching cases usually sent from that district to the sessions, as also to the fact that a line of railway found them out a few years ago, for the circumstance of their being numbered among the entities, as an assemblage of people having "a local habitation and a name." The little church, standing on an eminence, and partly concealed in the verdure of some fine old yews which overhang the road, had frequently attracted my attention from the top of coach or omnibus, until I noted it down for one of my February visitations—a period when the state of the weather does not generally sanction a ramble too far from home. The road to it passes over Red Hill—a place famous from having been the position occupied by Cromwell,* and where he entrenched his troops, in the unhappy conflicts with Charles II. then quartering at Worcester. From hence the moralist looks down on the fertile vale of the Severn, on the numerous spires and chimneys of old Vigornia, and blesses his good fortune that his lot was not cast in those turbulent days when the lea was torn up by the hoof of the dragoon's horse, the sanctuary was converted into barracks, and the smoke of the city mingled with the hot and unnatural breath of the engines of civil war.

The church of Spetchley has a venerable appearance, notwithstanding its very diminutive size. The chancel, with the chapel on the south side, contains some elaborate monuments to the members of the Berkeley family, the principal of which is that to Mr. Rowland Berkeley and his wife Katherine, whose effigies lie on an altar tomb, under a lofty canopy of white marble, supported by pillars of porphyry; the monument, together with the chapel, having been built in 1614. There is also, on the south side of this chapel, on a raised monument of white and black marble, a very good recumbent figure of Sir R. Berkeley, who was promoted in 1632 to be a justice of the King's Bench.

* Cromwell at that time had taken up his quarters at Judge Berkeley's house at Spetchley.

He is represented in his robes, and holds a scroll in his right hand. This is the Sir Robert who, with several of his brethren, having given his opinion for ship money, was impeached by the Parliament for high treason, and condemned to pay the then enormous sum of £10,000, deprived of his post, and imprisoned in the Tower. He also suffered much at the time of the civil war in Worcester, but is said to have suffered more from the conversion of his only son Thomas to the church of Rome than from all his other calamities. The father of the judge was a wealthy clothier* at Worcester, descended from an ancient and noble family, namely, from James, Lord Berkeley, ob. 3 Ed. VI., 1462, and who married the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. There are four or five mural monuments exhibiting excellent carving, and the chapel is hung around with hatchments; while at one corner, near the roof, a veritable helmet, with its crest of the muzzled bear, and surmounting an armorial banner, which the tooth of Time has almost gnawed into shreds, looks down upon the pageantry of death with a grim look of reproach, and the visor being up, imparts to it a yawning death-like aspect, which seems to read a bitter moral:—

“ The glories of our birth and state
 Are shadows, not substantial things;
 There is no armour against fate;
 Death lays his icy hand on kings.
 Sceptre and crown
 Must tumble down,
 And in the dust be equal made
 With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

A few old encaustic tiles, brasses, and scattered bits of stained glass remaining in the windows, make up the sum total of antiques. The seats, with the exception of the rector's, are confined to the nave; they consist of two batches, and would probably accommodate a hundred persons in close quarters; they are of tough old oak, and carried up so high that from the

* Mr. Rowland Berkeley left £100, and his lady £50, to be lent gratuitously for two years to two thriving young men, exercising the trade of a clothier, or any other honest calling, in this city.

seat in which I sat it was almost a matter of compulsion to climb up for the purpose of seeing the minister, who was reading the service from a little box, placed considerably lower than the rest of us. It was almost impossible to see the clerk, and in fact I should have been entirely ignorant of the presence of such functionary had it not been for a hollow sound which during the responses seemed to issue from a sepulchral cavity near to the reading desk. There is one advantage in high pews—they prevent one being stared at when at prayers, but at the same time they afford a shelter for the young and the profane, which cannot be desirable. By reducing the height of the pews at least a foot, the churchwardens would be effecting a real service to the congregation, as well as supplying the poor parishioners with fuel for the remainder of the winter; at the same time a new cloth for the pulpit and reading desk I suppose would be appreciated by the clergyman, for the tatters with which they are now covered seem as though they had been shot at by the parishioners for the last century. In fact, the whole interior of the church requires revision and a better arrangement, including the removal of the pulpit, which now stands in an improper site under the archway dividing the nave from the chancel, and shutting out all view of the eastern end.

The services were well and steadily performed; the responses were generally joined in by the two or three there assenbled together; and a few school girls in a little gallery at the west end, led on by a male villager of no great ambition, poured out their artless and unpretending psalmody. Wycliffe himself, had he been there, could not have seen an atom of supererogation to reproach—not a note of that “high crying,” as he calls it, “which was ordained of sinful men, to lett men fro the sentence and undirstonding of that that was sung, and to make men weary and undisposed to study God’s law.”

There is but one service at Spetchley on Sundays, held alternately with that of Bredicot, the school children of the latter parish also attending Spetchley church. There are about 100 scholars. Almost the whole parish seems to be under Roman

Catholic auspices, through, of course, the influence which the proprietor (the present Robert Berkeley, Esq.) possesses, and the 'squire has besides a handsome Catholic chapel in his mansion, and a residence on the estate for a priest. I have no reason, however, to believe that undue advantage is taken of this influence, for the few church-goers who reside hereabout are unmolested in their creed, and the church clergyman is allowed quietly to mingle with and instruct his people, neither party interfering with the other.

The list of charities hung up in the church contains but *two* donations—one from Moses Hyett (1767), who left £80 to remain in stock for the poor; and another sum of £20 for a like purpose; the name of the donor, singularly enough, being unknown.

It appears, by an original ledger of Worcester Priory, compiled *temp.* Henry III, that Spetchley was at that time only a chapel, but it does not appear which was the mother church, but probably St. Mary's, or the Cathedral at Worcester. "Capelle de Wittentun et Spetchley."

After spending a quarter of an hour in the churchyard, inspecting the tombs and a delicate piece of armorial carving in stone, which is placed over the exterior of the chapel door, I at length departed, much to the satisfaction of the sexton, who had all the time been keeping watch and ward over the graves, as though entertaining strong suspicion that I was a "resurrectionist." The 'squire being gone to Rome—no doubt to receive a blessing from his Holiness at the carnival—I took a leisurely stroll by his mansion and through the park, which contains a magnificent grove of oaks, leading from the house in the direction of the road to Worcester. The mansion is nearly a square structure, having two fronts commanding beautiful views: the one front is plain, and the other is enriched by a lofty and elegant portico, supported by Ionic columns.

The living is valued at £109. Patron, R. Berkeley, Esq. Rector, the Rev. R. Sargeant. Clerk, William Bettam. Population 155.

Walt.

THE church at this place is one of those buildings which till of late years passed generally for Saxon; indeed Nash mentions it as being the best specimen of that style of architecture in the county; it is, however, unquestionably Norman, and that of a somewhat late date; while the south aisle and the east wall are of the late Decorated, and the tower of the Perpendicular style. The church consists of a nave, south aisle, chancel, and western tower. The southern (which is now the only entrance) is sadly disfigured by an old porch, walled up with brick; the doorway itself is a fine example of Norman remains, having double shafts, with grotesque heads for capitals and varied zig-zag mouldings, the abacus of each being enriched with bold and graceful scroll ornaments. The porch presents traces of a roof of the Decorated period. The North door, which is now blocked up, is consistent in character, and one of the capitals is enriched with an illustration of Æsop's fable of the fox and the crane. The windows are without shafts, but possess the usual characteristics of the style, being shallow on the exterior, deeply recessed, and with widely splayed jambs inside. The nave windows surmount a string course,* similar to the cable pattern, but hollowed; the space between each band is enriched with beaded studs; the string around the chancel has been broken by the subsequent elongation of the windows below their original level. The roof is semi-circular, plain, and coiled, and, together with the whole of the interior, is whitewashed. The chancel arch has double shafts, with gro-

* In mediæval architecture the east window was usually of triple lights, to symbolise the Trinity; the windows north and south represented the other "lights of the world," such as apostles and martyrs; and the "string course" above mentioned, passing from and connecting the eastern with the other windows, was intended to show their dependence, and that the inspiration they had was from above.

tesque capitals and enriched abacus, two varieties of zig-zag ornament in the arch, and the chain pattern; the soffit is also enriched. At the right of the altar is an almorie (an ancient recess for the purpose of containing the oil for the sick, and the chrismatorie); there is also a piscina; there are other recesses in the walls, among which are believed to be a hagioscope and lychnoscope—the one at the south-west corner of the aisle, and the other underneath the third window in the north wall of the chancel. Lychnoscopes (or hagioscopes) were windows, slits, or apertures, in the wall, the purpose of which is not satisfactorily decided; but the best authorities have supposed that, as they were generally cut in the direction of the high altar, or of some chapel, they were intended for lepers, and others who were not permitted to mix with the congregation, to obtain a view of the elevation of the host; others have supposed these apertures to have been in some way connected with the ringing of the sancte bell. The font must be considered as perhaps the finest Norman specimen remaining in this county: it is a large circular basin, covered with elaborate scrolls, of antique pattern, issuing from the mouths of grotesque but expressive monster masks. The pedestal is a roll and fillet, slightly twisted; the carved work is in good preservation; it is elaborately finished, and displays a greatly variety of characteristic ornamental mouldings. It measures in height 3 feet 3 inches; diameter across the top, 2 feet 9 inches; depth of bowl, 1 foot; diameter of bowl, 1 foot 11 inches. The font is of Purbeck marble, and has been most judiciously cleaned of the whitewash by which it was disfigured; and the rector has caused it to be removed from the belfry to near the south door, its proper situation. It is earnestly to be desired that the same attention may be paid to the other portions of this most interesting church, and that, for instance, the characterless window near the pulpit may be lessened in its proportions, and the south porch removed. At the north of the altar is an ancient stone tomb, on which lies the figure of a female, supposed to represent one of the Beauchamp (Warwick) family; in the south windows are Beauchamp and Attwood's

emblazonings, with other devices; and monumental memorials of the Bromley, Berkeley, Foley, Washbourne, Philley, Barrett, Pennell, and other families, are scattered about. In the chancel and south aisle are also some highly interesting encaustic tiles, bearing monograms, emblazonings, and texts of scripture; and on a flat pavement stone is traced the rude outline of a figure in the attitude of prayer, with an obliterated inscription round the edges.

Prior to the Norman Conquest, Holt was a chapel to St. Helen's, Worcester, but is now a parish church, having the chapelry of Little Witley annexed.

The churchyard is very ample; but nearly the whole of the north side is unappropriated, and appears to have always been so. This is an instance of the long continued effect of superstition on the public mind; and such instances are constantly occurring in nearly all rural churchyards. Our ancestors believed that the north quarter was more particularly under the power of the "Prince of the air," and consequently their burials were made as near as possible to the east, which was supposed to be in some way more intimately connected with the kingdom of heaven. The north side of the ground was said to be "out of sanctuary," and the spot was accordingly appropriated to suicides. Porches are usually southern, from the same cause. Hence the naked state of the north side of country churchyards to this very day—a proof of the extreme difficulty of eradicating superstitious impressions, however absurd. In the yard is a railed tomb to Ann, Countess Dowager of Coventry, who died in 1798, at the age of 96. The late Mrs. Pickernell, mother of the present respected occupier of Holt Castle, remembered the Dowager Countess, who so long contested for the jointure left her by the Earl her husband. While the matter was being wrangled between the lawyers, and the Countess was not in receipt of the income which by right belonged to her, she nevertheless kept up her dignity and her usual establishment, although her horses and carriages were standing idle, and the other aristocratic pageantry of her household was but "dumb

show." Like Penelope, during the absence of her lord, the Dowager also exercised her feminine accomplishments, and Mrs. Pickernell had seen some most exquisite tapestry made by her hand. Near to the last mentioned tomb is a grave covered by an immense block of stone, the top of which is cut into the shape of a coffin; there is no inscription; but on inquiry I ascertained that a lady named Crump was interred there, and it appears that her brief history supplies a most unhappy commentary on the conjugal state. The tradition of Little Witley (which is in the parish of Holt) declares that such a shrew as Mrs. Crump never broke an unoffending husband's head, and so apprehensive was she that Crump wouldn't have "enough of it" while she lived with him in this world, that her constant threat was—

" From the silent dead
Still she'd try to daunt him;
Ever round his midnight bed
Horrid sprites should haunt him."

When Mrs. Caudle—I mean Mrs. Crump—died, her "sorrowing" husband did not, like Burns's hero, resolve to marry another similar in disposition to his former "spouse Nancy," with a view of retaining near his person an equal match for her ghost, should it make its appearance, but resolved that he would place over her grave such a physical obstruction that her resurrectionist intentions should not be easily fulfilled. That was the origin of the block of stone. There is no record as to the spot where the husband afterwards chose to lie, but there is no doubt that he would have preferred lying "out of sanctuary" than near to the person of his former wife. Within a few yards of this spot is a tomb to the memory of Henry Chellingworth, Esq., who died in 1841, aged 83, after having occupied Holt Castle for upwards of half a century. This worthy gentleman has left behind him a mark of warm and generous feeling which is but seldom witnessed. It was his express wish to be buried between two of his old and trusty servants, Peter Webb and Mary Chidley, whose faithfulness he had experienced for many a year; accordingly the three are buried in one tomb, and the

same chisel has recorded the annals of both master and servants.

The attendance at church was exceedingly meagre, and reflected no credit upon a population (exclusive of Little Witley) of between three and four hundred. The rector (the Rev. J. Foley, who is since dead,) read and preached in a more effective style than the average of rural rectors, and, although an aged man, read and preached without the aid of spectacles. The number of children in the Sunday Schools varies between 40 and 50.

I must not conclude without a brief notice of the ancient castle of Holt, the remains of which stand within a few yards of the church. The castle is supposed to have been built by one of the D'Abitots, and with the manor successively passed into the possession of the Warwick, Beauchamp, Bromley, and Foley families, and now belongs to Lord Ward. The tower and a portion of an embattled wall are all that remain to attest its former greatness, but an excellent mansion (built by Sir John Bourn, Knight) is attached. The castle many years ago was honoured by a visit from royalty, and was at one time a temporary depository for the crown jewels. Like all other buildings over which the wizard Time has cast a mythic obscurity, the old tower and the cellar (both of which I can say, after ocular demonstration, are well occupied) are occasionally revisited by the troubled spirits of the invisible world; and

“ If thou sleep'st alone at Holt,
Perchance in midnight gloom
Thou'lt hear behind the wainscot
Of the old haunted room
A fleshless hand that knocketh,
A wail that cries on thee; ”

and there, amidst the dust of garrets that stretch along the roof,

“ When men are locked in slumber,
The rustling sounds are heard
Of dainty ladies' dresses,
Of laugh and whispered word,
Of waving wind of feathers,
And steps of danc'ing feet,
In the garrets of Holt Castle,
When the winds of winter beat.”

It was religiously believed by the servants at the castle, not only that a mysterious lady in black occasionally promenaded "at dead of night" a certain passage near to the attics, but that the cellar had likewise been occupied by some unearthly and ill-favoured bird, resembling a raven, who, when the fit seized him, would pounce upon any unlucky wight who had adventured below for the purpose of filling his can, and having extinguished the candle with a horrid flapping of wings, would leave the affrighted wretch with scarcely strength to take back his shaking limbs. To give a probable solution to this part of the legend I need only observe that a communication in the shape of a spiral staircase formerly led from the men servants' sleeping apartments to the cellar, and that by this *ruse* they intended to keep the ale and cider *depôt* exclusively to their own management. The staircase has been stopped up for many years.


Having experienced all the generous hospitality for which the present occupier of Holt Castle (J. Pickernell, Esq.) is proverbial, I took my leave of this interesting spot and sauntered leisurely home.

Lord Ward is the patron of the living (value £579). Rector, the Rev. J. C. Scale. Curate at Little Witley, the Rev. John Levien. Clerk, John Brookes. Population, 557.



Cotteridge.

Sweet sabbath morn ! From childhood's dimpled prime
I've loved to hail thy calm renewing time ;
Soft steal thy bells upon the pensive mind,
In mingling murmurs falling on the wind,
Telling of friends and times long wing'd away,
And blissful hopes, harmonious with the day.

 HE traveller who has ever journeyed west of Worcester on the way to Bromyard has unquestionably noticed, when between three and four miles from the city, a noble avenue of lofty trees, which extends in a perfectly straight line for nearly a mile, and affords a magnificent vista, termi-

nated by a large mansion. This is Cotheridge Court, the seat of the Rev. John Berkeley, who is the hereditary holder of the perpetual curacy, and also proprietor of the parish—some 2,230 acres. Hard by is the old village church. I arrived at the lodge gates just as the bell was summoning to worship. Straggling parties here and there dotted the fields and other approaches to the humble but interesting building which formed the common centre of their sabbath day's journey; and two or three labouring boys, who, with open mouths and staring eyes, had waited for me to draw near, formed in a single file behind me. Falling into conversation with the biggest of the rank, I put to him a variety of questions, but the poor fellow evidently knew as much about the source of the Niger, or the quadrature of the circle, as of the parochial events and circumstances amid which he had spent his youth. In the first place, he did not seem morally certain that the church to which we were going was in the same position as it was on the previous Sunday; and on asking him who was the present curate, he replied that "He 'd never seen more than one mon pull the rope (meaning the sexton), as he know'd on;" but on explaining to him the difference between a curator of souls and a stretcher of bell ropes, he promptly replied that "He'd seen so many faces a-preaching there o' late, that nobody wa'n't sure o' cotching the same chap again." He had never seen or heard of a Sunday school, and likewise manifested no little malice against the cause of letters generally, from the fact of his having received, some months ago, on a nameless part of his person, a severe flagellation at the hands of some pedagogue, whose name and place of residence, however, he neither knew nor cared to recollect. Finding I could gather nothing from this rustic group, I left them to the tender care of their spiritual instructors, and moved on towards the church.

The church, which is within gunshot of the mansion, is beautifully situated, partly concealed by trees, and seems in its simplicity and rustic beauty peculiarly fitted to the scene. A correspondent informs me that it was originally built by Borlace

de Fitz, to commemorate the birth of his son, and partly as an expiation for the crimes of his youth. The original building was demolished in the reign of Henry VIII., and partly pulled down, the drawbridge, &c., still remaining to mark the age of the erection. It was here (see notes to Sharon Turner's History) that Lord Audley and the fair Anne of Cotheridge were united after their flight from Evesham in 1407. The present building was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester on its restoration in 1684. The parsonage (says Nash) was anciently annexed to the monastery of Westwood, in this county, and both were given by Osbert Fitz-hugh to the monks of Font Everaud, in Normandy. At the Dissolution the patronage came to Mr. Thomas Packington, and afterwards passed into the possession of Richard Habingdon, and Evett of Hallow, whose son sold it to the Berkeleys. The church is dedicated to St. Leonard. It is a plain ochre washed erection, not cruciform, and having no transepts. The porch is built up into a wooden bell turret, and the entrance consequently serves for a belfry. The interior consists only of a nave and chancel, with a chapel on the north side of the altar, which is kept as a crypt for the Berkeley family, but which, in my opinion, might be much more usefully applied as a school-room for Sunday scholars, or as a vestry for the clergyman, to avoid the necessity of robing and unrobing before the congregation, as is now the case. Against the south wall of this chapel is a cenotaph to the memory of Thomas Berkeley, Esq., who in 1669 accompanied Sir D. Harvey, the ambassador from Charles II. to the Emperor of the Turks, but died at a city called Megree, in Greece, and was buried among the Christians there. In the highest pane of the east window are the remains of blazouries designed for the armorial bearings of Say and Mortimer and Lucey, lords of Cotheridge. The chancel is divided from the nave by a partition wall, in which are three very low arches; the central one is circular, and is evidently of Norman workmanship by the character of its supporters; the southern arch is in the Pointed style; thus denoting the period of the erection to have been

during the "Transition." This part of the church, therefore, cannot, I should think, be less than seven centuries old, and there are many other marks of great age about it. The chancel floor is covered with encaustic tiles, the armorial and other devices on which are almost obliterated, owing to the circumstance that the ground underneath is occupied by vaults, every opening of which demands the removal of the tiles. The seats, which can accommodate nearly 200 persons, are of strong old oak, put together in a right primitive fashion, without those modern notions of economy of space through which I have so often been victimised with cramps and other aches and pains. The pulpit, too, with its sexagonal carved body, long narrow neck, and thin spider arms, or rails, by which it is approached, looks down dejectedly on the oft-returning congregation like a monitor, grown old and gaunt, and hermit-like, in the bootless task of exhortation. On the wall is a solitary table of charities, in which two or three of the names were donors of some 40s. or £5 or £6 towards the repairs of the church in 1687, and who, for so trifling a service, could hardly have expected their names would be emblazoned on the walls for all time. Surely they have been already doubly paid for their small outlay by this notoriety of nearly two centuries. At the west end is a gallery or rather square box, projecting from the wall, and of most unpretending appearance. Here were seated, high and unapproachable in their glory, the village choir, consisting of clarionet, flute, and bass viol, with a voice or two beside; the first named gentleman (Mr. Clarionet) saluted me on my entrance into the church with a note or shriek which would have eclipsed a moderate railway engine; and if the other members of the choral body did not come up to their leader in force and intensity, it could not be attributed to a lack of good-will, but simply to a difference in the calibre of their instruments. This being nothing more than a little private practice before the services, was only an epitome of what they evidently intended to achieve, and with that assurance I gave way to a kind of sad resignation. An elderly man (apparently an invalid) was seated in a wheeled chair under-

neath the gallery, and on addressing him I found that he had been for many years the clerk at the church, but through physical suffering was now unable to perform the duties of that office ; he was an intelligent and communicative man, and seemed to entertain a most commendable pride on the score of his long connection with the church. The combined efforts of Messrs. Clarionet, Flute, and Bass-viol, had become actually desirable to his ear, solely by dint of long acquaintanceship ; and I have no doubt that it was his rule to fix himself in this position before the arrival of the congregation, in order to take in as much as possible of their witching strains. He, too, evidently felt most anxious on behalf of his deputy clerk—a simple, well behaved yeoman—that the conduct of the services should not suffer from his own inability to discharge them ; and as the *locum tenens* led the responses, or left his sitting to ascend the little gallery for the purpose of giving out the psalms, the earnest eye of the ex-official was upon him, as though by his supervision he would have communicated to him a portion of his own efficiency and devotional spirit. How forcible are the effects of habit ! The good old clerk at Cotheridge, after thirty years' servitude, in ministering at the altar, could not exist, I dare say, without constantly going through the same welcome routine, and hearing the same old version of psalms, interpreted by the same triumvirate that has, I suppose, for years awoke the echoes and disturbed the dust in the old church of Cotheridge. Many years ago, I remember, business obliged me to pass daily by a certain field, in which was a horse that had spent a great portion of its youth in a mill, but which was now superannuated ; and constantly at certain hours every day that horse was seen performing its little circles—round and round—with mathematical accuracy, in one particular corner of the field, and had there beaten out for itself a hard path. I often think of that animal when I detect in myself or others the effects of early habits long pursued. The worthy clerk of Cotheridge will forgive the comparison : it is as applicable to myself as to him. The ancient custom of dividing the sexes is here observed—

the silks, satins, cottons, and straws, being arranged on one side, and the broadcloths on the other, like a border of roses breathing their fragrance in contempt over an adjoining plot of cabbages. There was a deal of late coming here, and the people generally seemed to be indifferent to the services—the responses were but faintly if at all uttered; and there was scarcely any sign of devotion except from the clergyman or his clerk—an ambiguous kind of service, truly, to the Great Author of our being, that our adorations should thus be dependent on a salary. I have heard of persons who object to shed tears at any sermon except in their own parish church, but I do not think the natives of Cotheridge are likely to become very lachrymose even there. The services were admirably performed by the new curate—a circumstance however which shall not prevent my saying that to me it would have been a source of greater gratification to have seen in the Cotheridge canonicals some one of the many needy curates I could have pointed out in this vicinity, to whom £70 or £80 per annum would have been a most desirable object. When a rich man accepts a small post, the advantage, which to him may indeed scarcely be felt at all, is probably to another a matter of severe necessity; to say nothing of the opportunity which it gives to the enemies of the church to weaken her in the affections of the people. It is also very clear that a resident minister is much wanted at Cotheridge, for the present hereditary proprietor of the benefice seems too far advanced in years to satisfy, unaided by a constant assistant, the spiritual wants of the parish, to visit the sick, to establish a Sunday school, to organize a choir, to perform more than one service on the Sabbath, and to improve generally the present system of instruction at Cotheridge, of which the youth I have mentioned at the early part of this chapter was so notable an example. Should, however, the new curate accomplish these things—in regard to which I have not any doubt of his ability and good intentions—I shall be half inclined not to look grudgingly on the extra emolument derived to him. The sermon was a good commentary on the 37th Psalm, v. 25—

“I have been young, and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.” The preacher alluded to the season (Christmas) as one the most eligible for the exercise of reflection on the rapid progress of time and the use to which we had applied it; and indeed his exhortation was efficiently seconded by the sprigs of holly which here and there fringed the seats, and reminded me, in language not to be mistaken, of that period when my youthful eye first beheld, admired, and wondered at the cause of this ancient custom—of the chequered scenes which since then had been spread around my path—of the follies of youth, and the sorrows and experience of manhood; all these things did these little holly sprigs, with their cunning sorcery, bring up before me. I was much pleased, not only with the subject of the discourse, but at the mode and manner of the preacher’s illustration; he also occasionally fixed his eye upon me, and no doubt imagined he saw in my person the effects of his discourse, in the burnings of a sensitive conscience, as visible on my face; but whatever may have been the salutary effect of his excellent theology, I can assure him that the perspiration under which I suffered was solely occasioned by a red hot stove which came close to my seat door, and which had already singed two or three ladies’ dresses in passing, it being placed, unguarded, in the central aisle, which is too narrow for that purpose.

On leaving the church, a row of labourers, who had drawn themselves up in a line facing the entrance, made their obeisance in right rustic fashion to all whom they recognised—a good old relic of the Sir Roger de Coverley times. Up the little pathway of the churchyard was moving a mournful procession; a few simple villagers attending the remains of some deceased friend to the home appointed for all living. There is something peculiarly affecting in this last solemn rite, as administered in a rural churchyard—

“When one well known to the village group
His latest breath has given,
And his soul has passed from his clay-clad form
And found its rest in heaven.”

At all times and in all places the interment of a fellow creature is indeed a subject for deep reflection, but in a crowded city the exit of a brother mortal seems to have no greater effect than the casting of a pebble into the sea; there is a temporary division of the waters, but in a moment they are reunited, and the disarrangement is not perceptible. In a small unpopulous village the death of a neighbour or friend is however a veritable sermon, lasting and impressive—from ear to ear travels the melancholy tidings—each hearer has known the deceased, perhaps for many years—and there is a mournful interest felt in his death which cannot but have its due effect on the thoughtful—while around his grave congregate not alone the paid mimics of grief, but the old and young of that rustic group in whose circle of acquaintanceship his death has occasioned a vacuum, perhaps not readily to be filled up. Man is selfish to the last, and shudders at being forgotten.

Patron of the living, the Rev. R. Berkeley. Perpetual Curate, the Rev. T. L. Wheeler. Value of the curacy, £80. Population, 228.



St. Kenelm's.

How cheering, how sweet, is the Sabbath's calm smile!

The church of our fathers, how meekly it stands!

Oh, villagers, gaze on the old hallowed pile:

It was dear to their hearts, it was raised by their hands.

SOME time ago I received an invitation, couched in the most seductive terms, for the purpose of enticing me away to the Clent Hills, some four miles from Stourbridge, on the occasion of re-opening an ancient church there; I readily consented, and set out per coach to Stourbridge, where I was safely deposited in the hospitable house of an excellent friend, who, being himself an antiquary, received me with open arms and loud exclamations of delight at my intended pilgrimage

to St. Kenelm's, to which place he proposed to escort me early next morning *via* a much shorter and easier route than that generally adopted by the public. On the following morning he gave me a proof of his zeal towards the enterprise by inflicting a tremendous rap on the door of my bed-room soon after day-break, which made me jump from my snugery in the certain belief that either the house was on fire or that the Chartists were coming. After a bountiful breakfast we set out for the hills. On our way we passed Pedmore church. This is an old building chiefly interesting for the early Norman remains still to be seen there. On the tympanum of the great door, at the principal entrance or porch, is a piece of sculpture, said to represent the Deity, surrounded by the *vesica piscis* and symbols of the four Evangelists; though I am inclined to think that the central figure is meant for either a bishop or a king of the Mercian dominions; it is difficult, however, to say whether the head covering is an ecclesiastical or regal device. The arch between the body and chancel of this church is of apparently the same date. From Pedmore church our way was by Wichbury Hill, where are the remains of Roman fortifications, undoubtedly thrown up and occupied by the troops of Ostorius, who entrenched here during the severe and often doubtful struggles they had with the Britons, the latter occupying the adjoining hills of Clent and Walton. Some authorities also believe this to have been one of the posts of Henry the Fourth, when he blocked up Owen Glyndwr after the burning of Worcester (1405). It has on the south side a double agger, or ditch, but the whole is now covered with wood. The deep trenches or ramparts are as visible as though the excavation had been but recently made. Instruments of war, Roman jars, coins, and other remnants of antiquity, have been found here at various times, and there is in the valley immediately beneath the ramparts a mound of earth, connected with the camp by a raised bank or footway, which is probably a barrow; there is no doubt of its being artificial, and the antiquity of it would seem to be guaranteed by the fact of an ancient tree

being still growing upon it. Several of the barrows or lows in this neighbourhood have in former times been opened, and burnt wood and urns containing bones and dust found in them. Skirting the finely wooded eminence of Wichbury, we passed close to the noble obelisk, which crowns the highest portion of Hagley Park. Hasting away from the witchery of this scene we descended the hill, near to the ornamental building erected by the classic taste of a former Lord Lyttelton, after a model of the celebrated Temple of Theseus; here we made a detour through Hagley Wood, and emerged on the base of the far-famed Clent Hills. The Clent and Walton hills, which are the principal eminences of the group, and are partly in the counties of Worcester, Stafford, and Salop, run almost parallel with each other, and are only separated by a deep ravine. At nearly one end of the ravine is the ancient church which was the point of our destination, and at the other the village of Clent, with its picturesque church, quietly reposes. The interval is filled up with gardens, and meadows, and stray cottages, and shrubbery, and murmuring streamlets, which unitedly form one of the most captivating retreats I have seen in Worcestershire.

What a gorgeous panorama passes before the eye from the summit of these hills! On the north may be seen Brierley Hill, Brockmoor, Womborne, and Holbeach, the heights of Sedgley, and even the churches of Wolverhampton in a clear day, but the view in this direction is generally mystified by a thousand chimneys,

“ Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long ;”

the Wren's Nest hill, the towns of Dudley, Wassell Grove, and the district of the Lye; tracing on in an easterly direction you see the extensive wood of Uffmore, Cradley Park, the village of Hasbury, Halesowen hill and town, the Rowley Hills and village, the heights near Darlaston and Walsall, Tipton, Barr Beacon, with other distant parts of Staffordshire and the Derbyshire hills. South-easterly, and situate in a flat on the banks of the Stour, are the ruins of Halesowen Abbey, which was founded in the beginning of the thirteenth century for the order

of White Canons. The spires of Birmingham, the Monument at Edgbaston, and the Northfield Chimney, 365 feet in height, shoot up in this direction. Southward are the Lickey, Tardebigg Church, Hewell Park, Redditch, and in the background are the hills of the neighbouring counties. Further on are the towns of Bromsgrove and Droitwich and the intermediate villages, till the eye rests on the towers of old Vigornia. The Malverns and Cotswolds also form a prominent and pleasing part of the outline; and in a favourable state of the atmosphere, the Bloreng, the Sugar Loaf, and the Brecon beacons, may be discerned. From west to north the towns of Kidderminster, Stourport, Bewdley, Stourbridge, Wordsley, with Hartlebury, the Woodbury, Abberley, and Clee Hills, Radnor Tump, Wichbury, Caer Caradoc (the scene of the final conflict between Caractacus and Ostorius), Kinver Edge, and the Salopian Wrekin, complete a picture which I believe to be unrivalled in this neighbourhood. When we add to these the many fascinations which the celebrated Lord George Lyttelton gathered around him in his admired and classic retreat at Hagley, and the beauties of the Leasowes, the birthplace and residence of Shenstone, we need not wonder that the muses here took up their residence, and inspired the numbers of Pope, Thomson, Lyttelton, Hammond, Shenstone, and other poets, who lingered here and sang their sweetest strains. How changed are the times, and the aspect of our little island, and the condition of our race, since the period when our British ancestors dyed these hills and plains with the blood of themselves and their Roman assailants!

The roads hereabout bear marks of the highest antiquity, and no meddling busy body of a surveyor or overseer seems ever to have interfered with the operations of nature and the usual wear and tear since the original clearing of these highways from the surrounding forests. There is a tradition here, that once on a time a corpse was being conveyed on one of these roads towards its last home in the village churchyard, but in consequence of the excessive jolting occasioned by the unevenness of the way,

the coffin accidentally slipped out; the loss, however, was not discovered till the arrival of the party at the burying ground, when they hastily retraced their route, but without a shadow of success, for the weight of the coffin had sunk it so far beneath the muddy surface of the road that all trace of it was lost, though many of the villagers seriously believe it is there somewhere to this day. After the exercise of a world of patience we arrived at the interesting spot where, sheltered by two hills, stands the very ancient church of St. Kenelm. On the sward within a few yards of the building is a stone which formed part of the base of an ancient cross. An old inhabitant, with whom I foregathered in the after part of the day, gave it as his opinion that, as the stone in question divided the parish of Clent from Romsley, the hole was cut for "bannering" purposes, and that he remembered to have seen on those occasions in his youthful days some young urchins having their heads dipped in it, while a birch was applied to a nameless part of their bodies; it being a main point in the philosophy of the parochial authorities of those times to make the young fry feel a personal interest in and recollection of the olden landmarks, for the perpetuation of the same to posterity.

William of Malmesbury and Matthew of Westminster are the first historians who gave an account of Clent and of the murder of King Kenelm. Kenulph, King of Mercia, died in 819, leaving his young son Kenelm under the protection of his eldest sister Quendreda, who, being ambitious to place herself on the throne, colleagued with her lover (Askobert), and effected the destruction of the youthful monarch, then but seven years of age. Askobert, under the pretence of hunting, took him to the Clent Hills, where some historians have said was one of the royal hunting palaces in those days, and there, in a secluded valley, cut off his head, and buried him beneath a bush or tree. The body is said to have been discovered by a cow grazing near the spot, and hence the name of "Cowbatch," retained to this day. The wily priests, ever on the watch to convert the chapter of accidents into a source of profit, gave out that a spring of water, of healing properties (especially for sore eyes) had sprung

up from the spot where the murder was committed, and that another miraculous circumstance had occurred in connection with the transaction, in the fact of a dove dropping a scroll on the high altar of St. Peter's, at Rome, containing these words :—

“ In Clent Cou bath, Kenelm, kinbarne [king born],
Ly'th under thorne, heaned [head] bereaved.”

The more popular translation is—

“ In Clent, in Cowbatch, under a thorn,
Lies King Kenelm, his head offshorn.”

The tale of course is all figurative, like that of the dove whispering in Mahomet's ear. However, the murdered king was canonized, and a chapel erected to his memory. The water was said to have possessed medicinal properties, and was much resorted to both before and after the Reformation, for the cure of sore eyes, leprosy, and other maladies. The offerings made by the pilgrims at the shrine and at the well excited the cupidity of the monks of Winchcombe, in Gloucestershire, who claimed the body because the father (Kenulphus) of the youthful saint had built them a church. After a contest, they succeeded in carrying off the body and enshrined it in their abbey (where, many years since, it was discovered with the head severed from the body, and the knife in the coffin along with it). The monks of Winchcombe also pretended to have a St. Kenelm's well, possessing the same qualities as that in the chapel yard on the Clent Hills. A few years ago, on the plea that the spring made the chapel damp, a drain was constructed; and the stream, which had probably flowed for a thousand years, was diverted from its original course into a brook a short distance off. The well itself was seen by a friend of mine about thirty or forty years ago, at the east end (external) of the chapel: it was quined with stone, and about 18 inches in diameter, the water being nearly on a level with the ground. Formerly there was a handsome structure over the well, corresponding with the architecture of the chapel, and certain lands were given to the sacrist of Halesowen Abbey for the purpose of keeping it in repair.

Notwithstanding this the site of the miraculous well is a subject of dispute. An old inhabitant tells me he remembers the existence of a well within the limits of the Cowbatch, and about half a mile from the chapel, which was called "the holy well," and that old people much resorted to it for the cure of diseased eyes, &c. A town called Kenelmstowe gradually sprung up around the holy well, and mention of the place is made in many ancient works. The town disappeared at the time that the high road from Bromsgrove to Dudley, which formerly lay through it, was changed and carried through the town of Hales; and the discouragement put upon the pilgrimages by Latimer, when Bishop of Worcester, had considerable effect in reducing the importance of the place. Traces of the town are still remaining, such as the name of "Back Lane," and other terms which imply that there must have been streets and thoroughfares in the locality. The ancient chapel, however, survived the devastation of time and circumstance, and is now one of the most interesting relics we have of early Norman (if not Saxon) times, so that we need not wonder at the laudable jealousy which stirred up the antiquarian minds of the neighbourhood a short time since, when it was given out that St. Kenelm's was to be repaired and beautified. The chapel had for many years been in a dilapidated state, and indeed has been known, on more than one occasion, literally to have served as a "den of thieves," for some bacon and other ill-gotten booty have been discovered there. The tower, which is a fine Gothic erection (*temp.* Henry the Seventh), stands on a massive lofty arch, the effect of which is injured by an interior wall of modern masonry, in which are square windows, for the accommodation of the vestry. The tower is richly adorned with niches and elaborate canopies, also projecting heads, arcade work, and embattled top with crocketed pinnacles. A great portion of the remainder of the building is of the date of Henry the Third or perhaps later; but the most ancient remains are on the south side, consisting of a round arched doorway and rude carving on the tympanum, containing the *vesica piscis*, enclosing a

figure almost identical with that at Pedmore Church. But there is a moulding here which has been a bone of contention between the *savans* who have seen it, to wit, whether it is not what is called a "beak-head moulding," and if so, it is undoubtedly Norman.

On the eastern side (exterior) of this southern porch, and near the roof, is a rude carving of a child, projecting from the wall; this was evidently a part of the original building, and was designed to represent the murdered king; he is clothed in a dalmatic, reaching to his heels, and ending in a point in the front; with his left hand he presses a book to his breast, and over his left arm hangs a hunting bugle; his right hand is extended, with two fingers elevated, in the attitude of benediction or reproof; above the head of the figure is a carving probably intended for a crown, but which appears to me, whatever it may originally have been, now to represent the head of the murderer, with an immense mouth, and teeth like those of an alligator; this improvement being probably the work of some experimenting mason or labourer; the whole figure is conspicuously painted in black and brown, on a white ground. The accompanying woodcut (kindly lent me by Mr. Harris, printer, of Halesowen) will give an idea of the figure.



Before the repairs were executed the interior of the church was extremely plain, almost verging to rudeness. Its length, exclusive of the vestry, about 40 feet; its height about 18 feet, and its width about 20 feet. It has no chancel. The south wall

was partially green with damp and age. The backs of some of the sittings more resembled the side of a horse trough than any thing else. The floor was of brick, with a little straw for the feet in some of the seats. Along the sides of the chapel stone seats were ranged, which served to support the ends of the benches. For an altar, a wooden table bearing the inscription "H. M., 1722," was used. It stood close to a pew on the one side, and the clerk's desk on the other. The gallery, which was erected in 1758, was about 6 feet 6 inches higher than the floor, and was approached by three separate staircases, each stair leading to a portion distinct from the others. The ancient way to the belfry, now used also as a means of access to the upper part of the gallery, consisted of seven thick pieces of wood, and a rude balustrade.

The repairs have been executed with good taste, liberality, and due regard to the high antiquity and interesting associations of the place; the whole, indeed, is in every way worthy of the correct judgment and refined intellect of the noble lord of the manor, and reflects honour on his liberal mind. The interior has been fitted up with open seats of oak, commodiously arranged; there is a hexagonal stone pulpit, supported on a shaft and pedestal; a neat communion table and service; an octagonal stone font, ornamented with quatrefoils, and having a conical covering of wood, crocketed; a very convenient gallery has been constructed; and the miserable old flat ceiling has been removed, the open roof being now supported by light truss work of oak. In the course of the repairs, while removing the white-wash from the walls, some frescoe paintings were discovered, which were unavoidably obliterated; but as drawings have been taken of them, accurate *fac similia* of these interesting relics will remain. An eye witness gives me the following information on the subject:—"With regard to the paintings, they were whitewashed by a general order to that effect, in common with all other churches. They represent the legend. The white-wash was not all removed when I saw them. As far as I could make out, however, I will inform you. In the slope of the

window (north side) was a representation of a man clad in a purple dress, with a large sword. Between the window and corner, and round the corner, there have been two or more courses of the story, the upper compartment containing a marriage or coronation ceremony (I think so at least). On a rude seat was what I take for Quendreda; priests and warriors were present. Underneath this, in the second compartment, was the discovery of the body (or rather the removal of the body out of the grave) by two angels; the head is cut off as per legend. These filled up one side (the pulpit side) to the window. On the other side the window were also frescoes representing a procession—probably the translation or canonization of the body, or some other ceremony of the Church of Rome. My notice is necessarily imperfect, for the paintings were in such a state of obscurity, owing to the whitewash, that it would be hazardous to say exactly what they all were. This much is certain: more frescoes there were, and they probably extended three quarters of the length of the church on each side, if not entirely round.”

Similar paintings formerly adorned the walls of Halesowen parish church, and a sketch of one them was copied in a little work published some years ago by Mr. Harris, above mentioned. The old chapel would have appeared to much better effect with the aid of painted glass windows, casting their “dim, religious light” upon this spot, hallowed as it is by the memories of so many centuries. I hope that no jealous religionist of the Rev. Mr. Close’s school will consider me to be a retainer of the scarlet lady, owing to this recommendation of mine, for I cannot see why the purity of religion should necessarily be tarnished in consequence of a taste and desire for the beautifying of God’s house; and as to the expense in this instance, it could not be very heavy. The present price of painted glass (to quote a recent writer) is so moderate, that I am told you can have the twelve apostles at sixteen shillings the square foot, and any number of the minor prophets on the same terms; local saints, shields, and patrons, bishops and blazonry, can be purchased to any amount, and there is doubtless discount for each included.

Having made a due inspection of the old building, a numerous congregation began to flock in, and we took our seats. The noble lord of the manor, with his lady and party, was present; and judging from the satisfaction which lit up their countenances, the proceedings of the day were to them a source of much enjoyment. Talk of the "good old times" indeed! here was a picture far more pleasing than that of your brutal, half civilized baron, with his degraded serfs and retainers doing to him services at which the common dignity of human nature would make us turn away with disgust. Here was a nobleman, who has purged himself of the haughtiness of aristocratic blood, bowing down by the side of the most lowly worshippers, in the house which he had repaired and beautified for their accommodation, and acknowledging by his practice that in the sight of God the most noble blood is no more dear than that which flows through the veins of the peasant. His lordship is one of the few who add nobility of nature to that of name, and such an one it is a luxury for me to honour. The classical associations of Hagley may have thrown a halo of brightness over that delightful spot, but the present owner has done more:—by mixing in every day life with his tenantry, directing their labours and encouraging their sports, by visiting the poor, and *assisting them to help themselves*, by condescending even to superintend *personally* their clubs and schools, and by a hundred other excellent schemes for turning his influence to good account, the noble lord lieutenant of the county endears himself and insures his possessions as sacred in the hearts of his neighbours, and likewise holds out an example which but few, even of those of the nobility who have more ample means at disposal, are found to imitate.

The services proceeded smoothly, and one and all present seemed to share in the common feelings which were evoked by the associations of the spot. I need not say how well the sublime melody of the Old 100th Psalm, which was given after the litany by a rustic but efficient choir, harmonized with the pleasant memories of the past, and, like the rays of sunlight

which streamed through the windows, seemed to give a cheerful assurance of brighter days to come. The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttelton, brother to the lord of the manor, preached from the text—"You shall reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord." The sermon concluded with an appeal on behalf of the Huntington and Romsley Sunday School.

A fair was wont to be held in the field in which St. Kenelm's is situate; it is of very ancient date,* and probably arose from the congregating together of numbers of persons to visit the shrine of St. Kenelm on the feast of the saint, 28th of July. By the 33rd Henry VIII., the fair, or rather, we presume, the tolls of the fair, were granted to Roger de Somery, the Lord of Clent. The article of cheese was the principal commodity brought for sale till, about twenty or thirty years ago, the fair was numbered amongst the by-gones. Clent was royal demesne, and still enjoys peculiar privileges: the inhabitants are free from serving on juries at assizes and sessions, and also of tolls throughout the kingdom, and at St. Kenelm's fair, and also at the fair of Holy Cross, in the parish of Clent; and the inhabitants sold ale and other refreshments without licence or the intervention of the gauger. St. Kenelm's wake is held, or rather used to be held, for it is now but little noticed, on the Sunday after the fair, on which day, within the recollection of numbers of persons now living, it was the annual practice to

CRAB THE PARSON.

The last clergyman but one who was subjected to this process was a somewhat eccentric gentleman named Lee. He had been chaplain to a man-of-war, and was a jovial old fellow in his way,

* Dr. Plott remarks, that "about half-a-mile north north-east of Clent church, or thereabouts, there is a plot of grass greener than ordinary, called St. Kenelm's Furrow, running up to the Knoll Hill, of great length, that still remains, the grass whereof indeed is somewhat more verdant and luxuriant than at other places, which they intend for the furrow made by the men who ran away with the woman's plough, and were never again heard of, who, in contempt of the feast of St. Kenelm, would make them work on that day, losing her eyes into the bargain, as the legend says."

who could enter into the spirit of the thing. My informant well recollects the worthy divine, after partaking of dinner at the solitary house near the church, quietly quitting the table when the time for performing the service drew nigh, reconnoitring the angles of the building, and each "buttress and coign of vantage" behind which it was reasonable to suppose the enemy would be posted, and watching for a favourable opportunity, he would start forth at his best walking pace (he scorned to run) to reach the church. Around him, thick and fast, fell from ready hands a shower of crabs, not a few telling with fearful emphasis on his burly person, amid the intense merriment of the rustic assailants; but the distance is small; he reaches the old porch, and the storm is over. Another informant, a man of Clent, states that he has seen the late incumbent, the Rev. John Todd, frequently run the gauntlet, and that on one occasion there were two sacks of crabs, each containing at least three bushels, emptied in the church field, besides large store of other missiles provided by other parties; and it also appears that some of the more wanton not unfrequently threw sticks, stakes, &c., which probably led to the suppression of the practice. The custom of crabbing the parson is said to have arisen on this wise. "Long, long ago," an incumbent of Frankley, to which St. Kenelm's was attached, was accustomed, through horrid, deep-rutted, miry roads, occasionally to wend his way to the sequestered depository of the remains of the murdered Saint King, to perform divine service. It was his wont to carry creature comforts with him, which he discussed at a lone farmhouse near the scene of his pastoral duties. On one occasion, whether the pastor's wallet was badly furnished, or his stomach more than usually keen, tradition sayeth not, but having eat up his own provision, he was tempted (after he had donned his sacerdotal habit, and in the absence of the good dame) to pry into the secrets of a huge pot in which was simmering the savoury dinner the lady had provided for her household; among the rest, dumplings formed no inconsiderable portion of the contents; whether they were Norfolk or apple dumplings is not mentioned,

but the story runs that our parson poached sundry of them, hissing hot, from the cauldron, and hearing the footsteps of his hostess, he, with great dexterity, deposited them in the ample sleeves of his surplice; she, however, was wide awake to her loss, and closely following the parson to the church, by her presence prevented him from disposing of them, and to avoid her accusation ("a guilty conscience needs no accuser") he forthwith entered the reading desk and began to read the service, John *Clerk* beneath making the responses. Ere long a dumpling slips out of the parson's sleeve, and falls plump on sleek John's head; he looks up with astonishment, but having ascertained that his reverence is not labouring under the effects of an emetic ("vomits" they called them in those days), John took the matter in good part, and proceeded with the service; by and bye, however, John's pate receives a second visitation, to which he, with upturned eyes and ready tongue, responded, "Two can play at that, master!" and suiting the action to the word, he forthwith began pelting the parson with crabs, a store of which he had gathered, intending to take them home in his pocket to foment the sprained leg of his jade of a horse; and so well did the clerk play his part that the parson soon decamped, amid the jeers of the old dame, and the laughter of the few persons who were in attendance; and in commemoration of this event (so saith the legend), "crabbing the parson" has been practised on the wake Sunday from that time till a very recent period.

I should state that St. Kenelm's is no longer a chapel but a church, with an ecclesiastical parochial district. The annual expenses of the church, such as clerk's salary, &c., were defrayed, during the last year, by a church rate, levied on the inhabitants, or rather *the holders of land* in Romsley. Previous to that time the expenses were met by collections after sermons in the church. The value of the benefice is £125 gross, and arises from the large tithe of the parochial district of Romsley. The patronage is now in the vicar of Halesowen (the Rev. R. B. Hone). The number of persons under the pastoral superin-

tendance of the Rev. Henry Veale, the present incumbent, is (according to the last census) 413. There is no parsonage house. The number of children on the books of the Sunday school is about 40. A Parochial Lending Library was established last year for the use of the Sunday school children and other persons. A Clothing Club is also attached to the Sunday school. Mr. Samuel Locock is the clerk.



Hagley.

Illustrious Hagley! now each object fades,
 Eclips'd and vulgar, named with thy soft shades.
 Where Pope has rov'd, his lyre where Thomson strung,
 And all the sons of elegance and song
 Pour'd the full tide of harmony along.
 Where the sweet Shenstone, from the neighb'ring grove,
 In soft complaining told his hapless love.

THE church of Hagley, encircled in a grove of lofty trees, and seated beneath the shadow of a fine baronial mansion in one of the most magnificent parks in the kingdom, presents a picture which perhaps no country but England can produce. Poets, wits, and statesmen, have rendered famous this beautiful retreat; and men of letters have here found patronage under the auspices of a noble, ancient, and distinguished family. But to describe the beauties and associations of the spot is no part of my present task, having been specially undertaken by others. The church is therefore the principal subject of the present chapter. It consists of a stone porch, with mullioned openings in the sides, a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, a vestry room at the west end, and a small wooden tower; the nave is the oldest portion of the building, but is probably not earlier than the fourteenth century, being divided from the aisles by three obtuse arches with octagonal pillars; the arches are doubly recessed, the edges being

chamfered. The chancel was rebuilt by George Lord Lyttelton, in 1754, and is an elaborate specimen of the Perpendicular style, the ceiling being a depressed arch, covered with panelling. The east window is gorgeously painted: subjects—the Lord's Supper, the Crucifixion, the Adoration of the Shepherds, with other scripture pieces, and a portrait of Lord Chancellor Lyttelton, 1641. New windows were at the same time placed in the body of the church, and the seats and galleries at the west end, which are carved and panelled, were erected. The cornice of the chancel ceiling was ornamented with shields of arms, in their proper colours, by Dr. C. Lyttelton, Dean of Exeter, being the bearings and quarterings of the Lyttelton family from the time of Henry the Third. On each side of the east window is a recess, with crocketed canopy and finial, containing monumental urns. The east window in the north aisle is modern, containing paintings of St. John, evangelistic emblems, &c., and a memorial to the late incumbent, the Rev. John Turner, 1847. In the north wall of this aisle, a short distance from the ground, is a depressed arch, or recessed canopy, with crockets and finial, containing a stone tomb, on the lid of which is a floriated cross. There is no memorial of the person to whom this tomb was erected. In the south aisle is a decorated piscina; and here was originally an altar, the aisle or chapel being dedicated to the Virgin, and lands being given for the celebration of masses there. A field, called the *Aspes*, or *Lamplands*, was likewise given for the maintenance of a lamp in the church to burn continually before the host. At the west end of the nave is a handsome font, octagonal, with lancet arches, and trefoils, and recesses on the faces.

The monumental remains in this church are chiefly those of the Lyttelton family, among which the most conspicuous is that to Meriel Lyttelton, wife of John Lyttelton, and daughter of Sir Thomas Bromley, Lord Chancellor—a lady who might almost be considered the second founder of the family, she having procured from James the First a grant of all the family estates, which had been forfeited to the Crown in the reign of

Elizabeth (the unhappy consequence of her husband's engagement * with the Earl of Essex). She lived a widow twenty-eight years, managed the estate with economy, and brought up her children in the Protestant religion (their ancestors having been Papists). This excellent lady commanded in her will that her body should be buried in the churchyard among the poor, which was accordingly done. There are some neat marble monuments in the chancel to other members of the family, on one of which are some exquisite verses to Lucy Lyttelton; but I observed here none of those massive marble sculptured tombs, which are so often appropriated to the memory of ancient families, where the knight and his lady—

“ Devoutly kneeling side by side,
As though they did intend
For past omissions to atone
By saying endless prayers in stone.”

In the south aisle is a monument to the Penns—a family whose residence was at Harborough Hall for nearly four centuries, but which became extinct nearly a century ago. They were the maternal ancestors of Shenstone the poet. In the north aisle is a chaste mural tablet to Elizabeth, wife of Captain W. W. Chambers, R. N., and only child of Thomas Webb Hodgetts, Esq., who died October 11, 1846, aged 30: this little memorial is a specimen of good taste.

The church was enlarged in 1827, when 205 additional sittings were obtained, 136 being free in consequence of a grant of £100 from the Church Building Society. The total cost was £825, the expense of the vestry being £120. The sum of £296. 15s. was raised by voluntary subscription, £345 by the sale of pews, and the remainder by rate. The church is warmed with hot air. The seats are closed pews, but I hope the principal occupiers will ere long unite with his lordship in throwing them open; in that case the appearance of the interior of this church would be second to none of equal size in the county. The

* It seems that John Lyttelton was a zealous Papist, but that he was condemned and his estate forfeited on very slight grounds.

organ being placed in the north aisle, had the effect of mellowing and subduing the choral services, which were participated in by the great majority of the congregation, and even the most juvenile of the school children (who were all posted in the gallery) contributed their full quota to swell the psalm of thanksgiving, and evidenced the effect of a long and arduous drilling, not only in their temperate manner of singing, but in their general good behaviour.

The rector preached from *Matthew* iv, 5, 6, 7, a sermon highly appropriate to the season (Lent), and the services throughout were impressive, orderly, and devotional.

With regard to the state of education, there is an excellent school here, which was built by the late Lord Lyttelton, and is entirely supported by the present lord. The number of children attending the day and Sunday schools together is more than 100, and the daily attendance on week days averages nearly 80. There is also a dame school, chiefly attended by infants, not under the control of the clergyman; but, as I am informed, the young woman who keeps it is a very regular church goer, and is well adapted for her situation. The worthy and zealous rector, the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttelton, last winter, established an evening school, which meets two evenings in the week for about eight months in the year, at seven o'clock, and breaks up at nine. There are more than forty names on the book, (nine from the neighbouring parishes) of men and lads, from the age of 14 to any age, but the eldest at present is about 35. The rector always attends at church himself, and superintends the two first classes in geography, mechanics, in the Bible, and in the reading books of the Irish National Society, which, I am told, are full of very useful information conveyed in an amusing and attractive way. There is here also a Clothing Club and Loan Club, established and entirely managed by Lord and Lady Lyttelton. There is a Wednesday evening service at Hagley, with a lecture, and a morning service with a sermon on Saints' days. During the past Lent there have been daily morning prayers in the church, at ten o'clock,

well attended by some labourers and several of the higher classes. The Rev. A. A. Barker is curate at Hagley ; and the present curate at Frankley (which is a donative belonging to the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttelton) is the Rev. J. G. Orger. There is a male school at Frankley managed by the clerk, and a Clothing Club belonging to the school. The name of the clerk is Cradock. The last census made the population 120. Hagley is a rectory in the patronage of Lord Lyttelton (value £751). Population, 744.

Hagley—as implied by its name—is supposed to have been a distinguished residence from early Saxon times. The manor, together with Old Swinford, Cradley, and Clent, were purchased by Sir John Lyttelton, of Frankley, Knight, in the latter end of the sixteenth century. The present house was erected by the first Lord Lyttelton, about a century ago. The family of Lyttelton has been traced nearly to the time of the Conquest, their name being taken from South Lyttelton, in the vale of Evesham. Thomas de Lyttelton married the heiress of Frankley in the early part of the thirteenth century, and the residence of the family was at Frankley for many centuries. The most distinguished of the Lyttelton family were the celebrated Judge Lyttelton, author of the “English Tenures,” who died in 1481 ; Sir Edward Lyttelton, Baron Mounslow, Lord Chancellor in 1640, author of “Reports in the Common Pleas and Exchequer ;” Lord Lyttelton, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1756 ; and Bishop Lyttelton, an eminent antiquary, who died in 1768.



Oldswinford.

THERE are in the parish of Oldswinford three churches besides the parish church, namely, Stourbridge, The Lye, and Amblecote. The church of Oldswinford is a modern erection, except the tower, which is of the date of the fourteenth century, the rest of the building (erected in 1843)

having been judiciously made in the same style. It is a very large building, with galleries on three sides, an organ at the western end, windows full of rich tracery and painted glass, and the roof supported by bold but appropriate truss work. The church contains 1457 sittings, 781 of which are free. The cost of erection was £5000, raised by subscriptions, aided by grants from the Church Building Societies. It was built from the designs and under the direction of R. Ebbells, Esq., Mr. E. Smith, of Oldswinford, being the contractor. Portions of the old church were said to be of great antiquity, and one arch, a very rude construction, was supposed to have been either of early Norman or Saxon workmanship; the walls above the arches to the side aisles were ornamented with scrolls and labels, containing texts of scripture in old English characters, in red and black colours.

In removing the old building there was an unavoidable exposure of coffins and human remains, and in one of the coffins a lady was found full dressed in ancient costume, and a great multitude of pins in her dress and lying strewed about, which, it is supposed, were in some way connected with superstitious motives. An ancient lich gate, having an ornamented arch, together with an old font, were both removed at the same time, to the regret of many who had respect for these relics and thought they might have been retained. There is a peal of six musical bells in this church.

Churchwardens and parishioners should not project the erection of an immense church like that of Oldswinford till they could first guarantee a constant succession of ministers with stentorian lungs to occupy its reading desk and pulpit, for on the afternoon that I visited this church, what with the noise of the late comers creaking their boots along the lengthy, unmatted galleries, and the low and singularly rapid reading of the clergyman, not one-third of the congregation could have been any thing the wiser or better for what was said by him. Now I trust that the worthy incumbent is not above mending a bad habit, for, as he cannot be insensible to the deeply devotional and penitential

character of the prayers of the church, he must be likewise aware that to read them over like so many "pater nosters" or "ave marias," jumbled together by monks of old with an eye to expedition, or merely as a daily task, cannot but produce indifference on the part of the people, who are already too much inclined to contract a lax and gabbling habit of making the responses. The Jewish writers, it is said, kept two pens by them, one of which was used only to inscribe the name of God—being consecrated, as one might say, to the sole inscription of this awful word. It was a happy and a holy idea, from which many of our ministers who (when reading the prayers of the church) do not pause to pronounce the awful name of the Deity with any more deliberation or solemnity than if it was the smallest particle in the language, would do well take a lesson. The sermon (by the same rev. gentleman) was a fine composition, exhibiting considerable powers of intellect: it had reference to the calling of the Christian, and his doing faithfully the work allotted to him; he spoke so eloquently of the zeal which we ought to carry with us to the performance of our Christian duties in active, daily life, and of the lamentable and reprehensible substitutes and excuses which too many are apt to frame, that I was delighted to find a clergyman with abilities of so high an order, combined with incentives to active usefulness so strong. In a district so overcrowded with population, a clergyman who (as I presume he does) mixes with, instructs, and engages the affections of his flock, must be the instrument of incalculable good.* With regard to the musical part of the services, the organ (a fine instrument) was apparently under skilful hands, but I think the time and execution were far too rapid and brilliant to be consistent with the solemnity of church music, and the school-boys' responses were made in a too loud and flippant manner. I would recommend the occasional use of the Gregorian

* The late rector of Oldswinford, I am told, was an excellent man, and practically benevolent amongst his parishioners, yet, strange to say, he was a disciple of Joanna Southcote, who frequently visited him, and had many disciples here. I have also been assured that he kept a horse always ready saddled, in order to convey him to the new Jerusalem!

chant at this church. I would also observe, that it should be remembered that it is not every person who can be an organist. The light movements of the theatre, with the effeminate and frittered music of our dissenting chapels, should be excluded, and great care should be taken to keep the style of the organ chaste and pure, suitable to holy places and divine subjects. "Religious harmony," says Collier, "must be moving, but noble withal, grave, solemn, and seraphic; fit for a martyr to play, and an angel to hear;" but in the generality of our country churches it is found widely different. Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, b. v. sec. 38, says—"In church music, curiosity and ostentation of art, wanton, or light, or unsuitable harmony, such as only pleaseth the ear, and doth not naturally serve to the very kind and degree of those impressions which the matter that goeth with it leaveth, or is apt to leave in men's minds, doth rather blemish and disgrace what we do, than add beauty or furtherance unto it." An organist with a correct ear and taste will found his (or her) musical reputation on the richness of his harmonies and the variety of his chromatic combinations. But the man who is not well versed in the science cannot expect to find success in this way; he will, therefore, seek it in another, namely, turns and shakes and "graces" of all sorts, will be called in to his aid, with little regard to taste or discrimination. A performer of such a school may succeed to his own wishes, and "split the ears of the groundlings;" but the well informed musician will turn away with mingled pity and disgust.

In the burial ground (which was much enlarged at the time of rebuilding the church, and which will no doubt ultimately extend to the road,) are the following specimens of epitaphic nonsense:—

No. 1.

"Blessed be God who thought it fit
I should be killed in a coal-pit;
So as I dreamed it proved true,
For in Christ my soul was due."

No. 2.

“ To learn the scriptures was my great delight,
And read them to my grandmother at night.”

No. 3.

“ Reader, be secret, ponder, and be wise ;
Beneath this stone a friend of secrets lies ;
Living in secret till that secret death
Gave him one more, and robbed him of his breath.
With us respected until thus removed,
Loved by the order he so dearly loved ;
Dying and dead is every honour paid,
In peace we leave him where he would be laid.”

No. 4.

“ Beneath the verdure of this earthen chest
Are laid the garments of *two saints undress'd* ;
Here 'tis decreed that they erewhiles shall lie
Till time shall end, and death itself shall die :
Then will the Saviour model them afresh,
And change this *tater'd rament* of the flesh
Like to his own—for that's the heavenly mode,
Fit to enrol the *favrites of God*.”

No. 5.

“ He gave a sye—
His victim life was ore.”

No. 6.

“ In peace requiescent.”

One stone in this yard contains the concluding bars of the music of Pope's ode—“ O death, where is thy sting ?”

The Sunday school is attended by 90 or 100 children, and is under the management of the master of Glover's Charity school. The infant school contains about 90 children, many of whose parents, I hear, think they confer a favour on the subscribers in sending them. The mistress's salary is 10s. per week. Great lukewarmness is displayed regarding these schools, and they sadly require supervision and encouragement.

The patron of the living is Lord Ward ; it was valued at £781. Rector, the Rev. C. H. Craufurd. No curate is kept. Organist, Mr. Simms. Clerk, Mr. Cogzell. Population, 17,597.

The church at Stourbridge is a modern one of brick, and has a tower of the same material, of considerable altitude, containing a peal of eight bells. This church is dedicated to St. Thomas, and was erected by voluntary subscription in the year 1735. The nucleus of the subscription was a bequest made in 1726 by Mr. Biggs, a clothier, who left the sum of £300 to the Governors of King Edward's Free Grammar School for the building of a church. The reason he assigned for so doing was the inconvenience suffered by the inhabitants of the town in having to go a long distance to the parish church, "by which dissent was fostered, and the numbers of dissenters increased." The edifice was enlarged, repaired, and "beautified," in 1809. It has a remarkably neat interior. On either side are galleries, the front of which, and the roof, are supported by massive timber pillars, turned out of trunks of elm trees said to have grown on the spot the church now occupies. The interior of the building is well arranged, and kept with the most scrupulous regard to cleanliness.

The church has been licensed but was never consecrated, consequently it is not subject to episcopal jurisdiction, and the presentation is vested in the inhabitants. In 1742 a bill was brought into Parliament to render the church parochial, but was thrown out in the Lords. At the time of the election of a minister, I am informed, the town presents all the unpleasing characteristics of a contested parliamentary election, with bands playing, bells ringing, placards posted on the walls, and other most unseemly features. The last election was in 1833, after the death of the Rev. Joseph Taylor. Some of the placards posted on that occasion I have seen. Another anomaly is, that the presentation being vested in all the parishioners, the dissenters have a voice in electing the minister for the church. The present minister is the Rev. Giffard Wells, who is also head master of King Edward's Grammar School. Assistant Curate, the Rev. Mr. Williams. Clerk, Mr. Dunn. Far be it from me to disparage or undervalue the services of the present minister,

but I think that in future elections the inhabitants would do well to select a clergyman who, having no secular duties to perform, would be at liberty to attend continually to the spiritual requirements of the people entrusted to him. I say this on public principle alone: in no way intending to disparage the present incumbent.

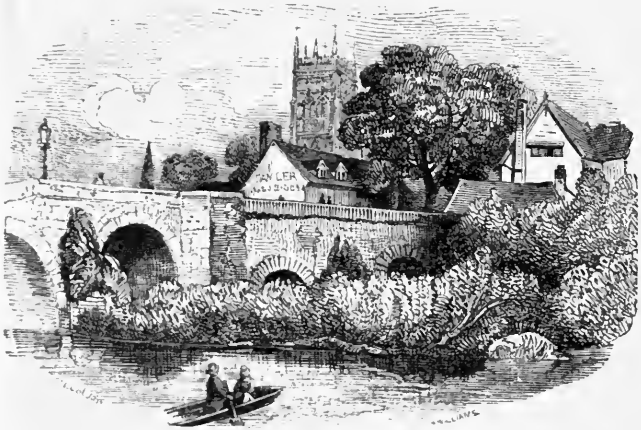
The value of the living is £134, and the population nearly 8000. The minister at Lye church is the Rev. J. Bromley, and at Amblecote, the Rev. J. G. Wirer.

The town of Stourbridge no doubt derives its name from the bridge over the Stour at that place. Dr. Lyttelton says the earliest mention of the name of Stourbridge that has occurred to him is in a Court roll of 32 Henry VI. (1454); but in a deed in the collections of J. H. Dixon, Esq., of the Croft, Upper Swinford, dated 8th March, 32 Edward III. (1358), "Storebrugge." is mentioned. Bedcote must have been a no inconsiderable vill or hamlet, and have been a place of tolerable accommodation in the time of Edward the Third, according to Dr. Lyttelton, as the king's justices met here, as well at other places, to inquire into a great riot which happened at Worcester, 23 Edward III. The town has been for many years distinguished for its manufacture of glass, the art having been introduced here from Lorraine, in 1557, by French Protestant refugees, one of whom (Henzoll) was of a noble house in Lorraine. The family arms are said to have been enrolled in the Duke of Lorraine's gallery, and emblazoned on a window with many others: the arms are—three acorns slipped; crest, a fire ball, thunderbolt, and the motto, "*Seigneur, je te prie garde ma vie*" (Lord, I pray thee, defend my life). There are innumerable descendants of this family; the name having been corrupted, more than two and a half centuries ago, to Henzie, Henzey, Ensell, &c.; but the elder branches are represented, I believe, through marriages with females, by a branch of the family of Dixon, and by the Pidcocks of the Platts, in this parish, who for many generations carried on the glass trade there; of whom is descended C. Pidcock, Esq., solicitor, of Worcester.

The clothing trade was carried on here for upwards of two centuries, and did not cease till some thirty or forty years ago. The Scotts, Hickmans, and other respectable families in this neighbourhood, carried on the manufacture of fine cloths for many generations, and acquired fortunes thereby. Many persons still living recollect the Stourbridge clothiers attending, with a servant each, the principal fairs in the district, and exhibiting their cloths for sale on standings.

Stourbridge has likewise for many years been famous for its Free School, founded by King Edward the Sixth, in 1547, and endowed with the funds of suppressed chantries at Worcester, Evesham, Martley, Suckley, &c. At this school Dr. Samuel Johnson studied for a year. A chapel, dedicated to the Trinity, stood on the site of this school, *temp.* Henry the Eighth. The clear revenues of Stourbridge chapel, *temp.* Henry the Eighth, were £5. 7s. 8d. (Lansdowne MSS.) Oldswinford Hospital, for the feeding, clothing, educating, and apprenticing of boys, was founded in 1670 by the Foley family, who held large possessions here. The income of this noble institution was, at the time of the Charity Commissioners' Report, £2289 per annum. A great portion of the income had been misapplied for some years until the interference of the present J. H. H. Foley, Esq., M.P., a worthy and active benefactor to the district. The boys now number upwards of 100, and it is believed that the number will be much increased. There are likewise Scott's Charity, Glover and Wheeler's Charity, and other institutions for the object of education, &c.





Evesham Bridge and Tower.

Evesham.

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 FROM the Market Square of Evesham the visitor to the churches passes through a narrow gateway, the walls of which are of Norman work, upwards of seven centuries old, but its original roof of stone vaulting has disappeared for many years, as testified by the antiquity of the wooden tenement which now supplies its place. We next come into the burial ground, which contains the churches of All Saints and St. Lawrence, the former occupying the north-east corner and the latter standing isolated in the centre of the yard, while Abbot Lichfield's bell tower forms the eastern, and the ancient gateway, before mentioned, the northern entrance. The west and north-west are occupied by an avenue of trees and a range of low antique buildings, denoting by many features their former

connexion with the monastic precincts, if we except a modern dissenting chapel among them, which peeps into the ecclesiastical territory with a half closed eye of shaded glass. The site of the monastery was southward of this yard and divided therefrom by a wall, which, though believed to bear the date of 1150, is still in part remaining, and contains, as a proof of its age, a semi-circular headed doorway, of decidedly Norman workmanship, which formerly led to the great quadrangle of the monastery. There are other additions to or insertions in this old wall which render it highly interesting, even if its blackened appearance and crumbled surface had not already powerfully appealed on its behalf. The ragged condition of the graves, and the general appearance of the yard, denoting a superabundance of dead, as also the heaping of soil against the church walls, are by no means creditable to the parties in charge of the same. There is no obituary record worthy of notice, with perhaps the exception of the following:—"Here rest the remains of the Rev. Benj. Davis, 20 years minister to the Presbyterian congregation in this town: he was born at Goytre, near Lampeter, Cardiganshire, Oct. 23, 1756; died Jan. 2, 1811—Adgyfodaf—Mors est Janua vitæ." I find also that one of his predecessors, the Rev. Paul Cardale, selected the north aisle of All Saints' Church for the same purpose. I don't know why a dissenter should object to take his last long sleep in company with a churchman, but judging from the arrangement and subdivision of cemeteries in our large towns, society seems very generally to coincide in opinion with the woman who declined to have her child buried by the side of another who had died of the small pox, fearing that her own little pet might catch the contagion. Would that in the grave all differences and animosities were buried, and that the world would imbibe the profound philosophy of Addison, who observes—"When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the griefs of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tombs of the parents themselves,

I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind." My meditations on the tombs were cut short by the chimes from Abbot Lichfield's tower proclaiming the hour of noon, and accompanying it with the somewhat appropriate air of "My lodging is on the cold ground." The clock is guarded on the right and left by two sanguinary looking characters carved in wood or stone, whose purposed occupation was to strike the hour on two small bells, but who, for lack of the sum of £5 more, required as I am told by the constructor, now remain motionless, and, with uplifted hammers, appear

"Willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike."

A brief outline of the history of Evesham's famous monastery, with its dependencies, will be read with interest. My sketch is chiefly gathered from Mr. May's history (a work whose merits entitle it to a place in every house in the borough and in every literary institution in the county), assisted by my own examination of the Saxon Chronicle, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, and William of Malmesbury.

The site of the town was in ancient times occupied by an extensive forest, and in the year 701 a swineherd named Eoves, belonging to the Bishop of Worcester, while tending his charge on a part of the woodland appropriated to the sustenance of the Worcester monks, beheld the Virgin Mary in a vision, which circumstance he at once communicated to the bishop, who repaired to the place, and having there witnessed a repetition of the vision, the spot became one of extraordinary sanctity. A small church is said to have existed here prior to that period, probably built by the Britons; but if so it could only have been a small one of wood and wattle work. The fame of the place increasing, King Ethelred made a grant, and a monastery

was erected in 714. This erection was probably one of wood, for it fell down in 960. But few even of the most important edifices were built entirely of stone before the Norman conquest, for William of Malmesbury tells us that even the Abbey of Glastonbury—by repute the highest and most favoured in the country—was wattled and afterwards “boarded.” Egwin, the founder of Evesham monastery, was the third Bishop of Worcester.* Of this prelate we are told that in atonement for the sins of himself and his people, he bound himself with chains, locked them together, and threw the key into the Avon, declaring that they should not be loosed except by divine interposition. He then set out for a pilgrimage to Rome, where his servant having purchased a fish for dinner, found in it the key which his master had thrown away. His triumphant return to Evesham was of course the consequence. This is a specimen of the many marvellous things which the venerable Bede so piously believes, and which even his more cautious successor of Malmesbury often adopts. The history of the monastery was afterwards chequered by accounts of the lamentable and ruthless spoliations of the Danes, and the contests between the monks and the secular clergy, in which Dunstan of Worcester was the champion of the Benedictines. In the reign of Ethelred the Unready, a chief named Godwin purchased the abbey, and afterwards it was bestowed upon Adulph, 19th bishop of Worcester, who was previously a monk of Pershore. This prelate first subjected the convent to the jurisdiction of the see—a measure which the Evesham monks never forgave, for their monastery claimed exemption from all episcopal supervision, as being subject only to the Court of Rome,† and afterwards they succeeded in regaining this privilege. A successful appeal was also made to Rome, whereby it was decided that the Bishop

* Egwin, it is likewise said, was the author of image worship in Britain, it being affirmed that when the Virgin Mary appeared to him, she enjoined him not only to erect a monastery on that spot, but to prepare an image of herself, which was to be worshipped at Worcester.

† The churches in the deanery of Evesham paid no Peter's pence to the Pope.

of Worcester was to have no jurisdiction over the churches of the Vale of Evesham, except that of Abbot's Moreton. To give some idea of the importance of this establishment it may be sufficient to state that in the time of Edward the Confessor its landed possessions were equivalent to 33000 acres! In this reign the church was rebuilt by Abbot Mannie upon a larger scale than before; but the Norman conquest, following soon after, brought its own peculiar style of architecture, and the first Norman abbot, Walter, destroyed the old church, deemed one of the finest of its kind in England, and commenced the work anew. Abbot Reginald, who died in 1149, made great additions, enriched the monastery with furniture, and decorated it with shrines. One of the modes of attaining popularity for such establishments in those days was by the manufacture or purchase of relics. In this way the bones of many a poor saint were subdivided, sawn apart, and dispersed, from those who possessed "enough and to spare" to those whose interest it was to purchase them. So the Abbot Ælfward is recorded to have made a bargain, with a company of dealers in such holy wares, for the bones of St. Odulph, which they were carrying to London for sale. The ground of saintship claimed for Odulph is, that he was once miraculously carried over the sea in a moment, to say mass for another bishop.

Abbot Adam, in 1161, completed the edifice. Pope Alexander conferred on this abbot the privilege of wearing all the episcopal ornaments except the ring. The house then became a mitred abbey. The abbey suffered some damage, during the civil wars of Stephen, at the hands of William de Beauchamp, hereditary sheriff of the county, between whom and Abbot William de Andeville the fiercest *lex talionis* was observed for some years, William de Beauchamp having at that time a strong castle on the other side of the bridge. About the year 1215 the central tower fell down; and the bell tower, built by Abbot Adam in 1161 for the reception of the great bell and clock of the monastery, also fell down within forty years of its erection—rather unusual circumstances in connection with Anglo-Norman masonry. In

that and the following century many repairs and additions were made, but the central tower was not reërected till 1319. Thomas de Marlberg, abbot in 1330, a man of taste and learning, greatly enriched and beautified the church, especially in painting and sculpture; he likewise erected beautiful sculptured monuments on the graves of his predecessors. Mr. May, in his history says, that no wreck of the accomplishments of this abbot now remains, and that sculpture at Evesham in the present day is virtually unknown, presenting nothing to the townspeople except the effigy of a perriwig-pated alderman, extended in the aisle of Bengeworth church. During the abbacy of John de Brokehampton, great acquisitions were made by purchase or donation to the monastery, including the manors and advowsons of Saintbury and Willersey, the fee of Aston Somerville, and wind-mills at Poden in Honeybourne and at Willersey; he rebuilt the church at Norton, as also the chancels at Honeybourne, Willersey, and Hampton. In 1326, Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, appropriated Ombersley church to this monastery (which it appears had then lost much of its property) to assist the brethren in entertaining the numerous visitors to their house, caused by its situation on a great public road. The monastery of Alcester was granted for the same purpose about the year 1460. Clement Lichfield was the last actual abbot of Evesham (1514). Being grossly oppressed by the extortion of Henry the Eighth, he, at the instigation of Cromwell, resigned the abbacy, which was conferred upon Philip Hawford, with the previous understanding that he should resign all into the hands of the king, so as to make an appearance of voluntary surrender—Henry's customary mode of proceeding before he exhibited force. Hawford was, of course, munificently pensioned, and afterwards preferred to the deanery of Worcester; and his tomb, supporting his sculptured effigy, lies in a recess on the east side of the altar screen of that cathedral. Meanwhile Abbot Lichfield died in honourable retirement, and was buried within the chantry erected by himself in the chapel of All Saints, Evesham. He was a liberal benefactor to Evesham, but the

greatest monument of his fame is the bell-tower of the monastery, which he rebuilt, and which remains to this day, almost the only memorial to the wayfarer of the ancient grandeur of this far-famed monastery. It was commenced about the year 1533, and is a chaste and beautiful specimen of his correct taste. It escaped the general wreck at the Reformation, either through being purchased by the townsmen or being presented to them by Sir Philip Hoby, to whom the conventual property was then alienated. The revenue of Evesham Abbey, at the time of the suppression, was equal to between £80,000 and £90,000, of our present money, per annum. Of that vast pile of building—which for many centuries looked frowning o’er the vale, and dispensed round about, for many a mile, its law, physic, and divinity—that building which lifted up its haughty towers in defiance of bishops and of princes, and of which it was said by the antiquary Grose that “out of Oxford and Cambridge there was not to be found so great an assemblage of religious edifices in the kingdom”—and within whose walls were collected the splendid shrines of Saint Egwin, Saint Wulsin, Symon de Montfort, St. Wistan, St. Odulph, St. Credan, and others, scarcely a relic now remains—a fact which need not excite our wonder when we read that the site of the monastery was actually rented as a quarry for stone! I have before stated that the bell tower was happily preserved; this erection, however, can hardly be called a relic of the abbey, as it was reconstructed but just previously to the suppression. The entrance arch to the chapter room still remains, embedded in a portion of the outer wall of the eastern cloister; it is ornamented with canopied niches and effigies, which have been much mutilated. A sculptured marble lectern, or reading-stand, is also preserved, which was probably made by Abbot Adam for the use of the chapter room (*temp.* Henry the Second). This is, I believe, in the possession of R. Blayney, Esq., of the Lodge. There is likewise now in the possession of E. J. Rudge, Esq., a massive oak chair, originally made for the use of the lord abbot on state occasions; it is boldly carved, and was probably made towards the close of the fourteenth century.

The chapels of St. Lawrence and All Saints are situated within a few yards of the site of the abbey, to which establishment they were subordinate, having been founded by the inmates of the monastery for the use of the inhabitants of the town, so as to reserve the great church of the abbey for monastic services, or for special occasions of imposing ceremonial. The chaplains were at first inmates of the convent. From the ground plan formed by Mr. Rudge, I observe that the eastern ends of these chapels were not exactly placed with reference to the cardinal points, but leaning towards the monastery. This, I imagine, is in conformity with a rule, frequently observed in the middle ages, by which subordinate *capellæ*, by a fanciful symbolism, were made to point towards the main building, or towards that part of the heavens in which the sun rose on a particular saint's day, as a token of homage and dependence, or in honour of the patron saint to whom the church was dedicated, so that any one could tell whether the church was erected in summer or winter: if in spring or autumn, it stood full east; if in winter, south-east; and in summer, north-east. Many churches built since the Reformation were purposely built north and south to show contempt for the ancient practice.

The chapel of St. Lawrence was the work of the thirteenth century, but, with the exception of the tower and spire, has been almost rebuilt since that period, its principal renovation having taken place in the time of Abbot Lichfield. In 1730 it was "repaired and beautified" in the full meaning of churchwardens' language, which amounted to a destruction of much that was valuable and interesting; but in the time of Dr. Nash it was again in ruins, and was used as a place of burial for poor persons who died of the small pox or any contagious distemper; and it was not till 1836 and 1837 that a judicious restoration was effected. The architectural features of this church do not call for observation, except with regard to its chantry, which is a beautiful specimen of the Tudor style. Mr. May says that at the east end of the south aisle was, till recently, a curious subterranean chapel, with a vaulted ceiling, in the Early Pointed

style, and having recesses in its southern wall, as usually prepared for altar worship. It was approached from the aisle by a descent of steps, and was lighted from a window next the church-yard. During some recent alteration the vaulted ceiling of this chapel was broken up, because, forsooth, a step would have occurred in the upper pavement! The stairs connecting it with the aisle were next destroyed, and the entrance closed. It is now appropriated as a private vault. An ancient relic was discovered a few years ago, on the removal of a coat of plaster from the base of the tower wall, where the sculpture is still seen; it consists of a small bas-relief of the crucifixion, with the attendant figures of the Virgin and St. John. A similar specimen was dug up within the area of the cloisters. Tradition says that the monastery once communicated with this church by "a very great and curious walk." The following inscription (now much defaced) is on the Communion table in this church— "Margaret Hay, late of this parish of St. Larens, deceased, heare hath presented and given this Communion table, as her widdowes mite, desiring all good Christians to imetate this her godly devocion and love towardses the Church both in life and deth, 1610." A far nobler monument this than the pompous and nondescript piles of marble which too often monopolize and disfigure the sanctuary.

The chapel of All Saints appears, by its oldest portions, to be coeval with its neighbour. It is a large building, of mixed and confused architectural detail, affording ample scope for future improvement. One of its interesting features (though in a debased style) is the chantry where lie the bones of Abbot Lichfield, and the church was formerly rich in brasses, monumental effigies, and heraldic paintings in the windows; but the hand of the destroyer and (still worse) of the "repairer and beautifier" have been here also. At the west end of the northern aisle of this church, above the window, externally, is a little niche containing a figure, which may have been intended to represent either the abbot presiding over the monastery at the time of the erection of this church, or, by the orb of

universal dominion held in its hand, to typify the Eternal Father. This sculptured relic is chiefly remarkable as having escaped the unsparing demolition which the Reformation brought down upon all such figures and representations. I have nothing to add with regard to this church, except that it is much complained of for the very numerous burials that have taken place within, and for the numbers still adding to those without, its walls, as being highly dangerous to the public health. In these days of the enforcement of sanatory regulations I trust this complaint will not be lost sight of.

From inquiries I have made, it appears that church matters are in an indifferent state at Evesham, and consequently dissent is gaining ground. This is not the fault so much as the misfortune of the worthy vicar, an amiable and benevolent man, much respected in the circle where he is known: but I am told that All Saints' Church, where only a clear or powerful voice can be distinctly heard, is but thinly attended at both its services, while the numerous dissenting places of worship are in a flourishing state. It is true there is but little or no accommodation for the poor in this church, and therefore it would be most desirable to have it repewed, or fitted up with open seats. St. Lawrence's Church, where a curate possessed of a sonorous voice usually officiates, is well filled in the evening, which is one proof among many of the benefit arising from free sittings; for having a great number of these, the poor avail themselves of them, and gladly come to worship at the house of God. Bengeworth church has lately been reseated and otherwise beautified, good schools and a vicarage house erected, chiefly through the exertions of the indefatigable curate, who, according to his judgment, has not left untried any means of promoting religion in the parish. I may, however, be allowed respectfully to remind him that preaching and lecturing are not to be more valued than the offering of prayer and praise which is provided in the ritual of the Church. I can fully appreciate the motives of those who, having an unskilful or an indolent shepherd set over them, stray into other and more promising pastures, yet I am of opinion

that wherever the parochial system is rightly esteemed, such parties would be admonished to return to their own fold, to pray and hear the word with their own neighbours, and to use every means in their power to restore the efficiency of the sacred services in their own parishes.

The living of Evesham (valued £208) is vested in the crown. Vicar of All Saints, the Rev. John Marshall. Clerk, Mr. William Robins. Organist, Mr. Alfred Huband. In the National Schools there are 74 boys and 66 girls.—Curate at St. Lawrence's, the Rev. — Austin. Clerk, Mr. White. Organist, Mr. H. Powell. In the Sunday Schools are 70 boys and girls.—The Rev. T. Marsden is the patron of Bengeworth (living valued £158). Vicar, the Rev. John Shaw. Curate, the Rev. W. Harker. Clerk, Mr. C. Baylis. Organist, Mr. Powell. In the Sunday Schools there are 120 of both sexes, and about seventy of these attend the Day School, recently opened. The population of Evesham and Bengeworth is nearly 4500.



The Honeybournes and Willersey.

CHURCH HONEYBOURNE is a vicarage in the archdeaconry and diocese of Worcester, worth about £300 per annum. Cow Honeybourne, an adjoining parish, is a chapelry annexed to this vicarage, although it lies in the county and diocese of Gloucester. The Rev. W. B. Bonaker, for many years the curate, now holds the united vicarage; he is a gentleman of fortune, living near Evesham. Divine service takes place in the church of the former parish, Cow Honeybourne chapel being in ruins. The living formerly belonged to the Abbey of Evesham, but after the Dissolution it passed into private hands, and is now in the gift of the heirs of the late Rev. T. Williams. The parsonage house, at the time of my visit, was let as a cottage to a labourer. On visiting the ruins

of Cow Honeybourne chapel I found the tower and a portion of of the chancel (which are in the Perpendicular style) still remaining; these formed parts of the walls of poor cottages, the whole site of the building being divided into four or five huts of the most miserable appearance; hovels, sheds, and pigsties cling to the sacred walls! and where the altar once stood was an oven for baking bread!! I saw no trace of a churchyard, for if the dead were ever buried here their ashes were mingling with the roots of potatoes, cabbages, and other vegetables, which the miserable cottagers (who hold their tenements at a nominal rent) had planted to eke out their scanty means of subsistence; not a monument, inscription, or memorial of any kind, met my eye.* I do not know when the desecration of this place of worship commenced: it must have been before the time of the present vicar, and the incumbent of that day seems to have agreed with the parishioners that if the church were allowed to go to ruin it would not only be a saving of extra duty to him, but would preserve to their pockets a pretty large sum. Meanwhile, as a necessary consequence, dissent grew and flourished, and now a Wesleyan chapel stands on the other side of the road, which is frequently filled to repletion. How long, I ask, is this disgraceful state of things to continue? What says the Homily of our church? "It is a sin and a shame to see so many churches so ruinous, and so foully decayed, almost in every corner. If a man's private house, wherein he dwelleth, be decayed, he will never cease till it be restored up again. Yea, if his barn, where he keepeth his corn, be out of reparation, what diligence useth he to make it in perfect state again! If

* It has since occurred to me that this being a chapelry there were no interments here. I have nowhere seen a history of this parish, but have reason to believe that the church (or chapel) of Cow Honeybourne was annexed by commissioners in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or rather that a sum of money was fixed by them to be paid to the vicar of Church Honeybourne for duties to be performed at Cow Honeybourne. There are MSS. in the British Museum, referring to transactions which took place here before the Reformation, chiefly to a controversy between the monasteries of Evesham and Winchcombe, "*super capellam de Hunibern.*"

his stable for his horse, yea, the sty for his swine, be not able to hold out water and wind, how careful is he to do cost thereon! Wherefore, if ye have any reverence to the service of God, if ye have any common honesty, if ye have any conscience in keeping of necessary and godly ordinances, keep your churches in good repair, whereby ye shall not only please God, and deserve his manifold blessings, but also deserve the good report of all godly people."

The church of Church Honeybourne is distant about a quarter of a mile from that which I have just described. The building is a mixture of various styles; and its tower, which supports a handsomely decorated spire, was leaning in an alarming posture until its progress downwards was arrested by a massive buttress, built up apparently a few years ago. The churchyard was overgrown with weeds, nettles, and tall rank grass. The interior is exceedingly neat, having undergone a thorough repair under the will of the late Rev. T. Williams; the seats are open, with carved finials; there is a fine wooden roof, the ends of the beams being supported by corbels of angels bearing shields, and the spandrels are filled with grotesque heads. There were three or four old people and stragglers who entered the church with me. Besides a few school children, I observed six persons in the chancel, thirteen in the nave, and the members of the village choir in the western gallery, to form a congregation.

[The observations I originally addressed to the vicar on his non-residence and on the state of the parish generally are not necessary to be printed here, inasmuch as they have since formed the subject of episcopal interference, the consequence of which is, I am told, the appointment of a resident curate.]

The service ended, I left the church, and after crossing a few fields found myself in the old British road which is said to have traversed the country from the mouth of the Tyne to St. David's. It was the street of the Upper Iceni, and in its progress crossed the Watling Street, at Wall, near Lichfield, thence through Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, King's Norton, Alcester, Bitford, Sedgebarrow, Tewkesbury, Gloucester, Lidney,

Chepstow, &c. In this old road I met with a labourer, carrying a load on his head ; he was one of those dwarfish beings

“ Whom nature when she half had wrought,
Not worth her further labour thought,
But closed the rest in one hard knot.”

He was tolerably communicative, and told me that the lane was called Bucknyld Street (a corruption of Ryknyld Street, one of the names for British highways); also that some labourers in the employ of a Mr. Corbett, while digging at a watercourse in the lane some time ago, found beneath the surface some “auld looking iron things that they said had belonged to the soldiers in times back.” On inquiry I find that the remains consisted of a human skeleton, a spear head, together with several swords, and some other relics. The road at this place is at least sixty feet wide, and so straight as to admit of an unrestricted view of between two and three miles. Near this place is Burnt House, the seat of Lord Sandon. I suppose the mansion derived its name from the circumstance of the gentleman who formerly lived here (Sir J. Keyte) being reported to have destroyed himself by setting his house on fire.

I arrived at the village of Aston Subege in time for the afternoon service. Here is a little modern church, situate very pleasantly in the midst of orchards and meadows. The neighbouring population flocked towards it at the tinkling of the little solitary bell that swung from the gable turret, and when the curate had arrived the church was full. This gentleman, who also holds the small living of Willersey, an adjoining parish, may, from the nature of his heavy duties, be justly denominated one of the “working clergy”—a faithful son of the church. The parishioners here seem united and happy amongst themselves, and most respectful towards their minister. I was delighted in observing the cordiality with which they touched their hat, or curtsied, or extended the friendly hand and exchanged the word of greeting as he passed ; and there were the churchwardens at their posts, ready to open the seats or to assist the clergyman ; a quiet, breathing devotion seemed to settle down upon the

services, and the very atmosphere itself felt warmer than at the icy region of Church Honeybourne. How immense is the power of a church clergyman for good or for evil ! There are about 25 children in the Sunday school, which is supported partly by the rector and partly by the excellent Lord and Lady Harrowby, who reside at Norton House, close to the parish, a few weeks in the year.

In the evening I attended Willersey church. This is an ancient edifice, consisting of chancel, nave, south aisle, and north and south transepts or chapels. Some portions of the church are of the Perpendicular, but others of much earlier styles. The east and west windows are obstructed by a modern altar piece and a singing gallery, which render the church somewhat dark. The church was repaired by voluntary subscription about three years ago, but the pews require cutting down into open seats. The font is the gift of Dr. Warneford. In the yard I noticed a gravestone to the memory of a Mrs. Rimell and five children, who were all burnt to death at one time, in November, 1843. The Rev. H. Cooper, the rector, performed the whole services, and preached a good sermon in defence of the church ordinances, discipline, and rubric, and in proof of the spirituality of our branch of the church. The choir at this place consisted of a bass-viol, flute, and several voices. The old man with the flute took upon himself the leadership ; and now and then, where he deemed it necessary to interpret certain passages with unusual emphasis, he would sing in one of the richest nasal twangs I ever heard, at the same time using his flute as a baton, and flourishing it about to the imminent danger of the eyes and noses of his compeers. The number of scholars in the Sunday school here is about 22 boys and 33 girls. The former are instructed by a poor worthy man of the name of Thomas Collett, for the small remuneration of one shilling per Sunday, and the latter are taught by Miss Mould, a lady who devotes nearly the whole of her time to the spiritual and temporal good of the poor and their children. There is a day school built by Lord Harrowby, a neat building ; about 20 children attend it, and a great con-

venience and benefit it has proved to the poor people of the place. There are no charities here, and the people are said to be very fond of money.


During my stay in this vicinity I took a peep at one or two other churches, and among them Saintbury, where there is a Norman doorway, a handsome restored font, a curious brass of the date of 1574, and the remains of some stone steps to the ancient rood loft.

The living of Honeybourne is valued at £190. Patrons, G. Allies and — Stapleton, Esqs. Vicar, the Rev. W. B. Bonaker. Clerk, Henry Robbins. United population, about 450.—Earl Harrowby is the patron of Aston Subege. Value, £204. Rector, John Besley, D.C.L., who resides upon his living at Long Benton, near Newcastle-on-Tyne. Curate, the Rev. Henry Cooper. Clerk, Mr. John Barnett. Population, 134.—Patroness of Willersey, Mrs. Cooper. Value, £170. Rector, the Rev. H. Cooper. No curate is kept. Clerk, Mr. William Warner. Population, 375.—J. R. West, Esq., is the patron of Saintbury. Rector, Rev. J. T. Jones. No curate kept. Clerk, Mr. William Smith. Value of the living, £415. Population, 133.

P.S. The churchwardens of Cow Honeybourne are still regularly appointed, although there is no church. I believe they are appointed at Church Honeybourne parish. Can they legally act when the appointment is not made in their own parish?



Pershore.

HE real date of the foundation of a religious house at Pershore is unknown; it is supposed, however, to have been in the year 689, by Oswald, nephew of the first Ethelred, though William of Malmesbury ascribes it to Egelward, Duke of Dorset. We find in ancient records that in the reign of Edgar, Bishop Oswald of Worcester, having expelled

the seculars, or married priests, from Pershore monastery, the convent was remodelled according to the stricter rules of St. Benedict, and received an ample charter from the king, being endowed with nearly 400 manses, or farms. Egil, Duke of Dorset, it is stated by some authorities, rebuilt the church, and to render the spot more attractive, he brought from Winchester a part of the skull and ribs of St. Edburg, for which he paid to the abbess no less a sum than £100 (or £20,000 of our present money). The convent of Pershore was then called after the name of St. Mary and St. Edburg. In 976 the church was destroyed by a chief—one Aelferus, who is styled in an ancient MS. "Nequissimus," or the most wicked. It is not known who rebuilt it, but in the year 983 the regulars were again in possession. Fulbert, or Foldbrith, was the first recorded abbot. William of Malmesbury says that when the body of this abbot was lying composed in his coffin, to the astonishment of those who watched, it revived and sat erect, when one, in the strength of virtue nothing hesitating, conjured the spirit, in the name of the Lord, that if this miracle came from God, the cause of resuscitation might be made known. The spirit answered that it was for the purpose of returning thanks to the blessed Oswald, through whose merit in the sight of God his sins had been forgiven; for when the blessed Benedict had accused his past life in the presence of God, while his conscience trembled, he had been pardoned by virtue of the prayers of Oswald; after having said which he lived for half a day, and then slept in the Lord; August 2. Pershore Abbey subsequently lost a great portion of its possessions, partly by neglect and partly by the cupidity of the rich. The church was several times destroyed by fire, once in the year 1002, again in 1223, and a third time in 1287, but a portion of the tower and south transept escaped the conflagration, and still remains, being built up with the present edifice. The point of junction between the Norman and the Early English work in the tower may be observed at the first stage immediately over the semi-circular arches. The new structure was consecrated in 1239, in the time of Abbot Gervase,

whose beautiful choir still remains as a monument to his memory. John Stonewell, a native of Longdon, Staffordshire, was abbot at the Dissolution. The annual value of the income was then estimated at a sum which would now be at least £25000. The greater part of the church and abbatial buildings was then pulled down, but the abbot and monks were handsomely pensioned. Of the once extensive Abbey of Pershore the only remains now are the choir, south transept, tower, and lesser north transept. The western archway (now blocked up), which formerly led from the choir to the nave, is still visible, as also the entrance to the cloisters on the south, being a channelled lancet arch, supported by clustered columns, with foliated capitals. The abbot's house, adjoining, is occupied by J. Y. Bedford, Esq. Several chapels attached to the abbey were pulled down at the Reformation, but some remains of the Lady Chapel, at the east end, have been recently restored, under the direction of Mr. Eginton, and now form the chancel, which had previously been separated from the choir by a barbarous mass of brickwork blocking up the archway; this has been done, the church has been partially repewed, the massive pillars which separate the aisles from the choir have been relieved of their whitewash, and other points of restoration have just been accomplished through the exertions of the ministers of the parish and influential laity. A great deal yet remains to be done, especially to the tower and south transept, which appear to be in a very dangerous state, presenting extensive fractures in the walls. The miserable west gallery, too, ought to be removed, as also the modern floor above it, which now entirely hides the beautiful tracery forming the inner face of the tower above, and which was unquestionably meant to be entirely open to the church below. A great deal of superfluous varnishing in the course of the present restorations might have been dispensed with; it gives false lights to all moulded or carved work, and is offensive to good taste. I trust that eventually the whole of the church will be repaired; but, from inquiries I have made, it does not seem that at present any thing further is

contemplated. I understand that the architect's design for the Lady Chapel was to have made it double its present length, towards which the Diocesan Society would have granted £100. It was botched by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

I was much pleased on the whole with the renovated appearance of the building, as also with the conduct of the services, the purity and ecclesiastical character of the music, the becoming attention paid by a numerous congregation (including nearly 200 school children), and finally the mark of respect paid to myself by the old sexton, who had most deferentially lodged me in the comfortable corner of a snug seat, and after the close of the services chaperoned me all over the abbey.

Among the monumental remains here that are worthy of any note is that to the memory of Abbot Newton. With some difficulty I found out the effigy, which seems to be groaning under a heap of matting, dust, and other articles piled upon it; this is towards the east end of the south aisle, and inserted on the wall above is some carved wood work, containing the following inscription, which was painted *blue and gilt* during some "beautifications" in 1784:—

M.C. bis bino triplex x. addere quarto
Anno Will'm's d'ni Newton fecit abbas.

The meaning of the inscription is—"In the year 1000, a hundred twice doubled, triplex ten (30) and 4, Wm. Newton, lord abbot, made it." Underneath are initials, devices, &c., and it probably formed a part of some stalling made by the abbot, some portions of which may still be seen on the north side of the church. At the east end of the south aisle are some handsome monuments to the Hazelwood family, who formerly lived on their estate at Wick, and which was purchased of them by an ancestor of Mr. Hudson, the gentleman who now owns it. In the month of April, 1848, a handsome marble mural monument by Laughton, was erected in the south aisle, immediately over Abbot Newton's tomb, to the memory of the late General Marriott, of Avon Bank, a magistrate and deputy-lieutenant of the county, who

departed this life March, 1847, aged 73. He was grandson of the Rev. Randolph Marriott, D.D., and Lady Diana Fielding, daughter of Bazil, Earl of Denbigh, and son of Randolph Marriott, Esq., and Elizabeth Wilson, daughter of the Bishop of Bristol. He served his country many years in India, being A.D.C. and military secretary to Lord Harris at the storming of Seringapatam. After which he had charge of the Mysore Princes, and was attached to Sir Arthur Wellesley during his service in that country. Close to the door in the north transept is the figure of a Templar, which seems to have been placed there to fill the office of a sentry, and the authorities thinking it necessary to provide him with a watch box, have jammed him into a stone coffin for that purpose; the effigy was probably meant for one of the Harewell family, who were of ancient standing in this parish. In the year 1790, in digging a vault near the communion table, very large thigh bones were found, and an earthen pot or urn half full of a black mucilaginous substance, like soot, supposed to belong to the above named Templar, who, dying in the holy wars, his bowels were embalmed and with his body here interred. Three years afterwards, upon opening the vault belonging to the Wagstaff family, and digging to enlarge the same, there was found, about six feet below the pavement, the skeleton of a man with a stake driven through his body into the ground. He appeared to have been buried in his clothes and wig, the caul of his wig being still sound and entire. At the western door is placed a gigantic stone coffin, which was dug up a few years ago, in a good state of preservation. The present font is a small wooden contrivance, lined with lead, and containing a basin; the whole is stowed away at the end of one of the aisles, the projector of the article having evidently been ashamed of it after its completion. The ancient stone font belonging to the abbey church was for many years used as a drinking trough for cattle, on a farm about a mile from the town; it was then purchased by a gentleman to adorn his lawn at Kempsey. Moses and Aaron, two other old servants of the sanctuary, who for many years

had supported the Ten Commandments at the altar piece, have met with a similar fate to that of the font and the Templar, having been compelled to abandon their honourable position in the east and take up their abode amongst the lumber of the cold and comfortless south transept.

The parish is a vicarage. There are two places of worship in the town, viz., the mother church of St. Andrew and the Abbey of Holy Cross; each having separate churchwardens, overseers, &c. The main street is in the former parish, and the rest of the town (Newlands, &c.) in the great or abbey parish, reaching nearly to Stoulton. There are four other chapelries annexed, being nearly three miles each from the town of Pershore. The vicar, with the assistance of two curates, used to perform single duties in each of these six places of worship. His income is derived from vicarial tithes (on market gardens), together with about £65, an annual donation from the late Sir J. Sebright, lord of two of the chapelries. The present vicar, soon after his appointment, pulled down the old vicarage and erected a much larger one by a loan from Queen Anne's Fund, repayable by instalments as usual; but after various extravagancies, he got so deeply in debt that his creditors obtained a sequestration of the living; he quitted the parish, and is now confined in a lunatic asylum at Bruges. The sequestration has been going on for several years, and the income seems to decrease annually; added to which, the successor of Sir J. Sebright has given notice of his intention to withdraw his donation, and the collectors have intimated their fears that the incomes of the three curates may only reach 15s. in the pound, unless the commissioners of Queen Anne's Bounty should relinquish their priority of payment. Neither the Bishop of the Diocese, under the present law, nor any other authority, has the power to rectify the above case by the appointment of even a *temporary* vicar. A correspondent who wrote to me some time ago on this subject (*inter alia*) also objects to the cutting down of the old seats in the abbey, which he said were the only protection against the cold currents from three doors. The rev. gentleman (he says)

who came to preach at a recent oratorio was pitied by the congregation when observed to hold his handkerchief first one side of his head and then on the other for nearly three hours. Finally he wrote against the interference of clergymen with the repairs of their churches.

Now, to state my views briefly, I am of opinion that it is a very important part of the clerical function to take an active share in, if not the superintendence of, the arrangements of church building and the ordering of pews. Who so fitting as the clergyman to know the requirements of his parishioners, or to judge of propriety in the structure and decoration of God's house? To whom do we owe the magnificent temples still left to us from the middle ages but to ecclesiastics, who themselves planned and often assisted in the manual work of erecting those glorious structures. It was not artistic skill alone that produced those piles; they sprang not from the hands of professional architects, a purely secular and distinct body, as those of the present day, but from a class of men, warm, ardent, devoted to the work, who were eminently successful in their grand conception of rendering the temples of the Eternal Majesty a tangible embodiment of the truths and mysteries of the worship which they offered to Him. It is true that we do not now look for such acquirements at the hands of the clergy; but the propriety of conceding to them, at all times, a leading share in the arrangements of the sacred edifices which are attached to their sphere of duty must, I think, be admitted by all right minded men. One must commiserate, of course, and very deeply too, the unfortunate clergyman who is said to have caught *tic doloureux* from the currents of air in the old abbey, and I would by all means advise that the door in the north transept be at once blocked up, and the unsightly porch erected there some years ago to be pulled down. It now forms one of the many disgraces which still cling to these venerable old walls.

This brings me to the subject of pews, and here also I am so unfortunate as to differ from my correspondent. Pews are a great abuse and a great evil in the church. They do not aid

the exercise of devotion, but often give shelter to unseemly conduct. They do not assimilate with the architecture of churches, and it has been estimated that they cause on an average a loss as to room of thirty out of every hundred sittings. They are more expensive and more unsightly than open seats; and, more than all, they are a practical defiance of the Christian principle that in the house of God all men are equal and all distinctions cease. The Archdeacon of Chichester says very emphatically that "pews are a strong abuse, a triumphant usurpation, fenced about by the difficulties and costs of obtaining a legal remedy. Private rights have no place in the house of God. It is against Him that we commit the trespass."

The only remaining circumstances which I have to notice in relation to Pershore Abbey is the recent abolition of the custom of holding the annual fair in the churchyard, which has been effected by the united exertions of the magistracy, clergy, and respectable inhabitants of the town, who were anxious to protect the sacred precincts from this periodical desecration. This fair was granted to the abbot and monks by Henry the Third, to be held on the feast of St. Edburgh and two days following in the churchyard of Holy Cross. This monarch also granted to the abbey other fairs at Broadway and Hawksbury, likewise free warren at Pershore, Leigh, Mathon, Alderminster, Cowleigh, Hawksbury, and Wadborough.

Patrons of the living, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Value, with annexed curacies of Besford, Bricklehampton, Defford, and Pinvin, £588. Vicar, the Rev. D'Arcy Haggitt. Curates, Rev. H. Malpas, B. Hemming, and Thomas Whittaker, the latter officiating in the chapel of ease. Organist at the abbey, Mr. Charles Tovey. Clerk, Mr. Thomas Bunn.



Perton.

THIS beautiful hamlet lies to the eastward of Kempsey, and its venerable little church looks down from the top of an eminence upon extensive and richly pastoral scenery. The whole parish having belonged to the noble house of Coventry for many generations* I expected to find a neat if not a handsome church therein, and had bargained with myself for a spire or at least a well built tower, peeping out from ancient yew trees; but on entering the churchyard I was sorely vexed to find the whole edifice smothered and choked with lath, plaster, and washings of various sorts, while the soil had accumulated around the venerable Norman walls in such a manner as rapidly to hasten the process of decay. The tower was originally in the centre of the building, the spiral staircase which led to it being still remaining in the south wall of the nave. The doorway leading to this staircase has a triangular head of oak, very ancient. I don't know at what period, or wherefore, this tower was removed, but the present one, which consists entirely of trusswork, covered with lath and plaster, is on the north side of the west end of the church, and is in such a state of dilapidation that only one of the bells can be rung. The date of the building appears to be about the end of the twelfth century, but I cannot reconcile this supposition with the fact (recorded in Reg. Gif. f. 233, a.) that "the Bishop dedicated the church of Perton, 4 Non. Sept. 1285," (about a century later than the apparent date of the edifice,) upon which occasion his lordship preached from this text—"Holiness becometh thine house." There are no traces of the Early English or Geometric

* The Beauchamps and the ancient family of the Foljots successively held this parish. Sir John Foliot sold it about the sixteenth century to Sir William Corteyn, and the Corteyns sold it to the Coventrys, in whose family it still remains.

pointed styles which had become general by the end of the thirteenth century, and I have endeavoured in vain to discover a cause for this seeming anachronism. The chancel window is a chaste specimen of the Decorated style, and, were its stone work restored, would be an object of some interest. Underneath this window on the outside, as also under the west window (which is a paltry modern square), is a buttress of one stage in the middle of the wall, coming up to the bottom of the window. The angles of the eastern wall are also supported by short buttresses, set diagonally, while those at the western end are square with the wall. The doorway, which is hid by a crumbling, lath and plaster porch, is on the southern side: it is of the usual Norman character, semi-circular, with zig-zag mouldings, supported by shafts in recess. The walls of the church, which are immensely thick, are tied across with straight beams, and several of the old Norman single window lights in the side walls have been enlarged to admit of double lights.

As I was seated on a grave stone, lamenting the fate of this ancient building, the sexton came with key in hand, and as he turned the rusty lock of the old door he touched his hat and cast a look of inquiry towards me as though he would fain ascertain why I, a stranger, had come to disturb the ancient reign of sameness and old faces. Presently two young men with music book and clarionet came through one stile toward the church; while from an opposite direction marched onwards a portly bass-viol resting on the shoulders of another of the village choir; an immense rent in the bag which contained the instrument suggested the idea that the latter must originally have been a fiddle, but that, like some charity school boys, it had grown too fast for its jacket, and made a compromise for an "easy fit" by splitting up the back. By and bye one or two of the villagers straggled in, and then two or three farmers were gathered together in the usual cluster at the porch, awaiting the arrival of their worthy rector. Then followed a little whispering, and a few furtive glances cast over the shoulder at me, being still astride the grave stone. Suspicion increased; I was

a marked man, and the object of my mission was to be discovered at any cost—even the breaking up of that “confounded ice” which usually bars all approach to the arctic region of John Bull’s heart. One of these worthy agriculturists in a few minutes resolved himself into a deputation to wait upon me, and leaving his friends somewhat suddenly he came up to me, and after an apology for his abruptness, put the home question—“Are you the Rambler, sir?” While I was stammering out an answer he observed that he meant no harm, but as he had ascertained from my “Stray Notes” that the inhabitants of several of the villages which I had visited “had’nt done the thing handsome” by inviting me to dinner, he was anxious to keep that part of the country from such a lasting disgrace, and the result was a pressing invitation to handle a knife and fork at his table.

The services were conducted in a most impressive manner, which had its influence on the congregation, for all apparently participated, and seemed to look up to their much loved pastor as one who had preëminently earned for himself that envied title both among the rich and poor, and as being in every way worthy to lead their humble devotions and to direct their prayers to the only source of pardon and salvation. The sermon was a beautiful composition, which, for its earnestness and simplicity of language, was calculated to reach the hearts and understandings of the least learned of that rustic group; while the iteration of that always well selected text, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” acquired keener point and gathered increased force as the preacher went along, glowing in his zeal and faithfulness, selecting from all classes of society and conditions of men unnumbered instances of the necessity of forgiveness, and of the great utility of the publican’s prayer, which, like a well digested but unassuming pocket manual, might show the way to heaven as speedily and effectively as more laboured compositions.

I was equally pleased, and indeed agreeably surprised, at the performance of the choir; for their psalmody, plain though it might be, was done in good tune and time, and without any

undue preponderance of either instrument or voice. On the whole I could not but conclude that so efficient a choir, so attentive a congregation, and so faithful a minister, were in every way worthy of a more decent and becoming place of worship, and of the bestowal of a sufficient fund for the purpose of restoration out of the princely and accumulating fortunes of the house of Coventry. The repair of this little church, and the addition of a spire, owing to the elevation and beauty of the site, would bring an ornament to these domains such as does not yet exist there. Why this object has not been effected ere now is inexplicable, for the parishioners tell me that the rector has used his utmost endeavours with the trustees of the present earl (who is an infant), and that the rural dean has paid several visits to the church, but all to no use. I hope therefore this public notice may not be without its effect; and if the broad acres of the young earl are not productive enough to admit of my proposition being entertained, in that case I would advise the trustees to avail themselves of the offer of a London church builder, who provides wood and iron churches for transmission to the colonies. He offers a church, with stained glass windows, bell, &c., capable of seating 800 persons, for 500 guineas; and if they cannot afford to buy a church he will lend them one "on hire."

It should be observed, that notwithstanding the dilapidated condition of the church, the comforts of the congregation are attended to as much as possible under existing circumstances. There is a wretched gallery at the west end, however, which ought to be pulled down and the window restored. A portion of the ancient open oak seats are remaining, but the rest of the church is occupied with pews, while one-third of the chancel is filled with a great wooden erection, put up for the purpose of a vestry. The clock, too, which formerly pointed out the lapse of time from the top of the western gable, has lost its functions, thrown off its chains, and is now resting in inglorious ease among the dust and rubbish of the tower. The chancel arch is semi-circular, of two orders, the shafts in niched recesses. In

the south wall of the chancel is a piscina, with trefoil head ; and the parish chest, hard by, bears the date of 1614. The font is probably coeval with the old walls ; it is large and basin shaped, but much shattered. In the wall south of the communion table is the following inscription :—

“ To Mrs. Elizabet Lole the Wife of
Wm. Lole Rectr. of this Church who
Died 8br. 9 Ano. 64 Aged 63.

Whose Earthlie Parts this Sacred Place mvst keepe
Till svch as rest in hope Shall rise from sleepe
Meane Time Kind Reader shee whose sperits blest
Bless Thou her Name and lett her Bodie rest
Mœstissimus eivs Maritvs
Amoris, ergo hoc poni Fecit.”

I should not omit to state that there is a neat school house in the parish, the expenses of which were, in a great measure, defrayed by the liberality of the trustees of the present earl. About thirty children attend on an average. The Sunday schools number about forty. There are also here some cottages allotments, the agents of the earl having interested themselves much in that valuable addition to the comforts of the labouring population. The system has not, however, as yet produced the moral effects which are said to attend it in other places, and this is attributed to the want of a committee of management, and to there being no prizes. The Pershore Branch of the Worcestershire Friendly Society has many members among the parishioners of Pirton, and the number I hear is on the increase.

The living of Pirton, with Croome, is valued at £438. Patrons, the trustees of the Earl of Coventry. Rector, Rev. W. L. Isaac. No curate is kept. Clerk, Mr. James Bond. Population of Pirton, 210 ; Croome, 119.



Tenbury and Burford.

THE town of Tenbury, which is in the hundred of Doddingtree, county of Worcester, and diocese of Hereford, has been from time immemorial denominated "the town in the orchard," which is a correct description, as there are few fields in the parish that do not contain apple or pear trees, more or less. It is beautifully seated in the midst of verdure, watered by the river Teme, a prolific trout stream, which, in its winding course to join old Severn, delights for many a mile the eye of the traveller from Worcester, and reminds him of a lovely but coquettish maiden taking her course among whole groups of adoring lovers, in the shape of osiers, which have assembled on the banks, and do her idolatrous homage as she passes by.

There are few antiquities in the town itself, and the church (which is dedicated to St. Mary) is the only object of much interest to the antiquary. In Domesday Book it appears that the abbey of Cormelia, in the diocese of Lisieux, Normandy, had possessions at Tametdebery, in Worcestershire. The advowson of Tenbury belonged to the prior and monastery of Shene, Richmond, in Surrey, from 1414 to 1543 (though Nash states that this parsonage and land were anciently annexed to the priory of Malvern). At this time Henry the Eighth having dissolved the priory of Shene, on July 14th, 1543, granted to Richard Andrews and Nicholas Temple the advowson of Tenbury, with the chapels of Rochford and Laysters, who, fourteen days afterwards, sold them to Thomas Acton, Esq., of Sutton Park, who had rented the tithes of the vicarage of Tenbury from the monks at Shene, for twenty-seven years previous to this time. This Thomas Acton died January 2nd, 1546 (as appears by a monument in Tenbury Church), having an only child, Joyce, who married Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, in

Warwickshire, and thus took to him the advowson of Tenbury, with the chapels of Rochford and Laysters, and Sutton Park estate. It was this Sir Thomas Lucy who prosecuted Shakspeare for deer stealing, and who was the original of his "Justice Shallow." By deed, dated September 1, 1557, the advowson of the chapel of "Lastres," and the great tithes thereto belonging, were sold to Thomas Acton, Esq., of Bockleton. The advowson of Tenbury cum Rochford continued in the possession of the Lucy family till 1716, when it was purchased for the Rev. William Read, by his trustees, and Mr. Read was instituted to the vicarage of Tenbury in 1718. He married Miss Sarah Hill, of Court of Hill, and had several children, the youngest of whom, Lucy, married clandestinely, at Corely, Salop, Mr. Lawrence, the father of the celebrated Sir Thomas Lawrence. Mr. Read's family held the living till 1762, when Thomas Hill, Esq., purchased it, and he, his heirs and descendants, held it till May 21, 1823, when the advowson was purchased by the Rev. George Hall (the late vicar), who died June 27, 1845. His executrixes (the Misses Wilkinson, to whom the advowson now belongs) have presented the Rev. John Morgan to the vicarage of Tenbury, and the Rev. Edmund Herring to the rectory of Rochford, the two livings having been separated by an order of the Privy Council on April 3rd, 1843, under the act of 1 and 2 Victoria, chap. 106.

The church is almost entirely a modern structure, consisting of chancel, nave, and aisles; the tower and chancel being the only remaining portions of the old church, which was thrown down by a flood on the 17th November, 1770. This flood was occasioned through digging a deep grave near the foot of one of the pillars supporting the roof between the nave and the south aisle, and the water which percolated through undermined the column; the nave and aisle were thrown down, the windows broken, the monuments much injured, and the organ was destroyed. The inhabitants, however, being musically inclined, determined on having a substitute for the organ, and accordingly purchased a *drum* (the one recently belonging to the

Tenbury band), together with horns and clarionets; but about thirty years ago the drum was removed, it being considered somewhat out of place. In 1777 the church was repewed by the churchwardens, and the sittings were sold to the proprietors of property in the parish to repay the expense thereof. In 1843 a new gallery was erected at the west end, chiefly at the expense of S. H. Godson, Esq., the proceeds of the spa discovered on his premises, and an excellent organ was given by Mrs. Godson to be placed therein.

The most ancient monument is in the north wall of the chancel. It is a small recumbent figure of a knight, two feet eight inches in length; he is represented as clad in a suit of chain mail, with a surcoat, which reaches to the middle of the leg, a sword on the left side, the legs crossed, a talbot at his feet, and holding a heart between his hands; the face has been broken off. It is placed on a raised tomb, three feet in length, within a canopy, which is eight feet high. Some have supposed this to be one of the Knights Templar, others (and this is the more general opinion) that it was the son of Sir John Sturmy, of Sutton, who followed his father to the Crusades, and died during his minority. At the east end of the church are two recumbent figures of a gentleman and lady, enclosed by the seats, and placed immediately under a monumental tablet on the wall, which bears the arms and crest of the Actons, and on the tablet is an inscription to the memory of Thomas Acton, of Sutton, Esquire (before mentioned), and Mary, his wife. There is another monument which was broken when the church fell, in 1770, and the remains of it are walled into the south wall of the church: it is said to have been in memory of a knight named Sturmy. The legs are broken off just below the knees, but from what remains of the figure it appears to have been of gigantic proportions. There is a handsome monument of white marble in the chancel to the memory of W. Godson, Esq., his wife, and children. It was erected about seven years ago.

It is to be regretted that there is no chapel of ease in the parish, for it contains a population of about 1800, many of

whom have three or four miles to go to church. In the hamlet of Sutton are the remains of a Roman Catholic chapel which belonged to the Acton family, the then proprietors of Sutton Park, supposed to have been built by them for the accommodation of their family and dependants. The following list of the charities of Tenbury has been kindly handed to me. In 1753 one Edward Bangham, of St. Andrew's, Holborn, whose native place was Tenbury, left by will 40s. worth of bread a year to be given to the poor, but it was withheld for many years (see tablet in the church), until the interest and compound interest amounted to sufficient to purchase £325 in three per cent. consols, the interest of which is given to the poor, with other charities, at Christmas, and the 40s. worth of bread is also given. The money is received from Lord Rodney's Berrington estate. In the above year (1753) one John Turner, of Hampton Court, left by will £100 to Tenbury and £100 to Rochford, to be put out to interest, to be yearly given to the poor. The money was vested as a rent charge on an estate in Rochford of £7 per year; £3. 10s. is received and given to the poor at Christmas, with other moneys. There is an old building called the Almshouse, at Oldwood, one mile from Tenbury, with two pieces of land, the rent of which is given, along with other moneys, at Christmas. Mrs. Mary Noxen left £25, the interest to be given to the poor, and which is given with the above. Twelve shillings per year is received from Haresbrook Farm; the giver not known, but the land it is received from is called Ball's Acre. These are all the charities received by the churchwardens. The schools are at present pretty full, there being a good attendance both on Sundays and week days.

The Rev. John Morgan is the present incumbent of the living (value, with Rochford, £1200). Curate, Rev. J. H. Davies. Clerk, Mr. Merrick. Organist, Miss Lloyd. Population of Tenbury, 1849; Rochford, 227.

Burford church, which is within a few minutes' walk of Tenbury, possesses many points of interest; it is a plain erection, consisting of nave, chancel, and western tower. Some

have supposed that the walls of the chancel are Anglo-Saxon, from the headways of two old doors which are not formed on the principle of an arch, but square headed, with a stone cross, as the architects would say, "jigged in." The chancel arch, now in the Decorated style, to correspond with the windows of the chancel, was rebuilt two and a half years ago. The old chancel arch was in so dilapidated a state as to be dangerous, and it was considered to have been coeval with the chancel walls. The windows in the chancel are Decorated insertions. The west end, and western arch, which is lamentably disfigured with lath and plaster, are Perpendicular. There is here a very perfect piscina, and some encaustic tiles within the communion rails which had been dug up from under the altar; the rest were made by Messrs. Chamberlain, of Worcester. The sedilia were also dug out (by the direction of the Rev. J. W. Joyce, the present incumbent) from beneath a tomb where they had been built in. The font is an excellent and a perfect specimen of the Perpendicular style. On the wall north of the communion table is a breadth of wood panelling, inclosed with folding doors, containing some monumental paintings of the date of 1587. The doors are divided into compartments, on which are represented the Twelve Apostles; and on the interior are paintings, nearly the size of life, of Richard Cornewall and Jenet his wife, who died in 1568 and 1547; and whose son Thomas raised the monument to their memory. Above these is a representation of the Heavenly Host, and in a narrower panelling underneath is the recumbent painted figure of Edmund Cornewall, in his shroud. This was the baron of Burford, and lord paramount of Tenbury, who bought the manor of Tenbury (*temp.* Henry VI.) from Mr. Hall, of Henwick. The figure is upwards of 7 feet in length; and tradition speaks of his prowess and virtues in such a manner as to make one almost believe that he must have been a second "admirable Crichton." There is also a monument, with an inscription, setting forth that Edmund Cornewall died at Cologne, and that his heart was inclosed in lead and sent to Burford to be buried. Underneath a canopy at the base of the

north wall is the recumbent stone effigy of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter to John of Gaunt, and wife of Sir John Cornewall, of the date of 1426; and nearer is a monument of a man in armour, supposed to represent her husband. The late Bishop of Worcester was descended from this family. Their monuments in this church are about to be restored. There are several other carved figures, brasses, &c., of the date of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; likewise some marble monuments to several members of the Rushout family (into whose possession the manor has now come) which deserve notice for the chasteness of the designs and beauty of the execution. There are also some beautiful lines to the memory of the Right Hon. Lady Caroline Rushout, who died in the year 1818.

The excellent organ in this church was the gift of the Misses Rushout, of Burford House. Around one of the bells of this church the following inscription is to be found:—

“ At service time I sound,
And at the death of men,
To serve your God and well to die,
Remember then !”

The parish of Burford is very large, extending from the river Teme high up into the Clee Hill. From its covering so large an area, one church, wherever placed, would have been inaccessible to many of its inhabitants. The benefice therefore was divided anciently into three portions. The rector of the first portion serves the chapel of Nash and the chapel of Boraston, value £337; the rector of the second portion serves the chapel of Whitton, value £286; the rector of the third portion serves the mother church, St. Mary's, value £335. There are three rectory houses, which are near the respective churches. The rectors are—Rev. H. M'Laughlin, Nash and Boraston; Rev. C. Whitefoord, Whitton; Rev. J. Wayland Joyce, Burford. The clerk at Burford is Mr. William Jones, and the organist is an amateur, E. Wellings, Esq. The daily school contains about 40 children, the Sunday school upwards of 50. Population of the three portions, 1031.

An obliging correspondent has forwarded to me the following account of the superstitions prevalent in and about Tenbury.

“The peasantry round Tenbury (like those of Shrawley) are no less superstitious and credulous than the generality of the poorer classes, and have great faith in charms. As an instance, some of them firmly believe the following is a sure remedy for scrofula. If a person afflicted with it takes the right or left foot of a toad (according as the wound is on the right or left side), and wrapping it in three pieces of linen, enclosed in a black silk bag, wears it, a piece of string to go round the neck being attached, at the same time observing the toad, for whether it lives or dies so will the person. A woman having tried this charm firmly believes it effected a cure, when the case was pronounced hopeless by medical men. The people also believe in tokens of death, such as the issuing of light from a candle after it is blown out, &c.”



Great Malvern.

Thou hast a famous church,
 And rarely builded ;
 No country town hath such,
 Most men have yielded ;
 For pillars stout and strong,
 And wondrous large and long,
 Remember in thy song
 To praise the Lord.

A thousand bottles there
 Were filled weekly,
 And many costrels rare
 For stomachs sickly ;
 Some of them into Kent,
 Some were to London sent,
 Others to Berwick went—
 O praise the Lord.

OLD SONG.

PRIOR to the Conquest, the Malvern Hills and a large district of surrounding country were covered with wood, a trace of which still remains in the local name of "The Chase," which at one time extended to about 8000 acres. Some "holy eremite," inspired with a wish for a retired and religious life, penetrated these wilds and fixed upon the site of the present abbey, or near thereto, as the place for his cell. A writer in the "Archæological Journal" of about May, 1845, in giving a description of the beautiful remains of painted glass for which the abbey was famed, mentions the third window in the clerestory, north of the choir, which had been till then unaccountably overlooked, as containing an illustration of the legend of St. Werstan and the first Christian establishment at Malvern. This memorial is still remaining, and a dwelling called "The Hermitage," near to the church, was not long since in existence, until some fashionable gentleman pulled it down and erected an Italian villa in its stead, calling it "*Il Bello*

Sguardo." Here it may reasonably be supposed was the simple oratory of St. Werstan, and here did he suffer martyrdom. In process of time great numbers of religious resorted to the spot, and historians tell us that about the year 1083 a Benedictine monastery was formed here under the hermit Aldwin and some monks from Worcester Priory. The establishment attained to great fame, having acquired large estates and possessions besides the endowment of Edward the Confessor; and constant disputes were occurring between the Bishop of Worcester and the mitred Abbots of Westminster, who claimed a preëminence of power in consequence of Gislibertus Crispinus, one of their number, having formerly bestowed several manors upon this Priory; till at length an amicable settlement was concluded by Edward I, and the priory became subordinate to Westminster. In the 15th century the priory was restored by Sir Reginald Bray, the Premier of Henry VII., whose memory is immortalized by the unrivalled skill and taste displayed by him in the erection of Henry's Chapel at Westminster, "that glorious work of fine intelligence," and in the completion of that of St. George, in Windsor Castle. Sir Reginald was born at St. John's-in-Bedwardine, in the suburbs of the city of Worcester. The abbey, thus restored, was a magnificent building, the massive round piers and semi-circular arches of the nave testifying to the Early Norman origin of that portion of the edifice, which is probably coeval with the foundation of the monastery; while the rest of the building is an elegant and diversified specimen of design and embellishment in the latest period of the Pointed style. The roof is of carved wood, flat, and of the Perpendicular style: it appears to have been designed as a temporary expedient only, provision having evidently been made for the after construction of a stone vaulted roof, which, however, was never effected. The clerestory is also of the 15th century, on a much earlier substructure. At the Dissolution, Henry the Eighth (who had been memorialized by Latimer not to suppress this house, on account of its great importance and the hospitality and usefulness of the prior,) granted the priory to William Pynnock, who

alienated it to John Knottesford, Esq., serjeant-at-arms, from whom it was purchased by the inhabitants. Dr. Card, the late vicar, observes—"To the happy circumstance of its being made parochial we owe the preservation of a fabric so touching to the heart of the Christian, and which serves to gratify the eye of the painter as well as the antiquary, from its having all the painter's beauties of intricacy of form and light and shade." The old parish church stood at the north-west corner of the present churchyard. The abbey, which now consists of nave, tower, and chancel, with north and south aisles, and Jesus Chapel on the north, must have been a noble and cathedral like structure before the demolition of the south transept aisle and the Lady Chapel at the east end. Of the former extensiveness of the establishment several proofs, such as stone coffins and other relics, have been recently discovered, as I have been informed, in the course of erecting some new villas on the south side ; but no account has appeared of them, and all investigation was suppressed, though it would probably have been very easy by these means to discover the exact locality of the refectory and cloisters. A new erection called "Knottesford Lodge," in memory of the individual from whom the parishioners purchased the church, has been recently put up on the supposed site of the refectory ; previously to this a barn stood on the spot, and the refectory "board" was there used for mangers. To pursue the history of the abbey : after the Dissolution it gradually became a ruin, and the work of restoration was left for the taste and untiring zeal of Dr. Card, the late much respected vicar, who, after constant appeals to the public and the devotion of his own time and energies to the task, succeeded in restoring this beautiful structure to its present condition. Fortunately for the Doctor, he had completed his self-imposed task ere the restorers of ancient ecclesiastical beauties were called hard names, and dubbed as followers of the great beast ; else the ruin might still have remained to us. All moderate minded Christians will see no positive mischief in the restoration of a temple for the worship of God

to its ancient magnificence, should it even involve the retention of a reredos, a piscina, or stoup. But the case is far different when, in building new churches, architects, like many of the present day, will persist in introducing these things—now utterly useless, except when seen in ancient fanes, to remind us of past ages, and of the dark thralldom from which we have been mercifully delivered. A restorer of this sort will find no sympathy in me. Churches built since the Reformation should most assuredly bear the visible impress of that distinction which exists between the tenets of the Protestant and Popish churches; but let no man's hand be stayed who is minded to appropriate his wealth and ability to the erection or restoration of edifices in some way worthy to be the dwelling place of the Eternal. One of the remaining proofs of the former magnificence of Malvern Abbey exists in its beautiful painted windows. Notwithstanding the ignorance of certain glaziers, and the mischief done by school boys, who for many years "had their fling" at these fine old remains, enough still exists to cause admiration at the genius and profuse liberality of olden days. The subjects of these paintings are chiefly taken from scripture, and the visitor should by no means forget to investigate the legend of St. Werstan (mentioned at the beginning of this article), as depicted on the upper compartment of the third clerestory window in the north wall of the chancel.

The mantle of the late vicar has fallen upon the shoulders of a worthy successor (the Rev. J. Wright); among the renovations and improvements completed by him is a chapel at the south of the chancel, which he has fitted up (for use at births, burials, and occasional services) with open seats, a screen, elaborately carved, a handsome carved pulpit and font, enriched its windows with ancient painted glass collected from other parts of the building, restored the view of the Knottesford monument, with its recumbent stone figures, and caused the vestry to communicate in a very convenient manner through the chapel to the pulpit. The whole cost must have been £500 or £600. This chapel has also been enriched by the erection of a window

of stained glass, as a token of the sincere respect which subsisted for so many years between the nobility and gentry visting Malvern, and its inhabitants, towards their late vicar. The windows contain three figures, representing Faith, Hope, and Charity. Within the railings on the north side of the east window is a small desk or stand, to which two books are chained; the one is a commentary on the Prayer Book, and the other is a small treatise on the ritual, church unity, &c. On the interior of the cover of the larger book is the handwriting of one Henry Clements (who I presume was a bookseller), with the date of "Oxford, September 3, 1701;" and his declaration sets forth that some anonymous person had directed him to forward these two books for the use of the abbey at Malvern, on condition that they should be always kept chained in some public part of the edifice. Among the monuments in this church is a carved stone image in the Jesus Chapel, supposed to be one of the most ancient specimens of mail armour; in the same chapel are also two exquisite pieces of modern sculpture; and south of the communion table is a fine Gothic tomb to the above mentioned John Knottesford. The curious and highly interesting encaustic tiles which cover portions of the pavement and the sides of the eastern wall were formerly supposed to have been manufactured at Alhambra, in Portugal, but this question was settled a few years ago by the discovery of an ancient kiln on the priory farm, with some tiles of the same character remaining; thus affording a clear proof of what had indeed long been suspected, namely, that the monks themselves had been the artificers. I must not omit to mention the grotesque carvings in *alto relievo* on the *subsella* of the stalls in the choir. These seats (like those in Cathedral stalls) or small shelving stools or flaps, so constructed as to keep the monks and canons of ancient times from sleeping during their devotions, for any somnolent individual sitting on them would have lost his balance, and been thrown forward into the body of the choir. The carvings underneath these seats have given rise to much discussion. It has been very properly asked—If they were placed there when the

monkish system was in the zenith of its glory, why is it, then, that some of those subjects are representations of the lascivious manners of that order of the religious, and so placed as to become the objects of the derision and contempt of a congregation assembled for so opposite a purpose to that of laughing at their spiritual instructors? Dr. Stukeley, in a charitable moment, attributes them to the licentious inventions of workmen. In general, however, monstrous carvings were intended to be typical of evil thoughts and bad passions which are engendered by a life of ease (as represented in sitting.) Also many carvings were satirical, and recorded the feuds between the secular and regular clergy—for instance, not unfrequently we see, in stall work, foxes preaching to a congregation of geese, an ass's head under a cowl, a double face, and so forth. Such designs are conceived in the worst imaginable taste. Before leaving the church, I would remark on the bad effect of shutting out the fine view of the north transept, or Jesus Chapel, by a modern gallery erection, merely for the sake of giving to the church four more pews, which have a strong resemblance to opera boxes.

The only object in the churchyard worth remark is a lamenting epitaph on some deceased individual who seems to have had his faith in drugs considerably modified, if not altogether demolished, by the effect they had produced on himself:—

“ Pain was my portion, and physic was my food—
Grones was my devotion, and drugs done me no good ;
Christ was my physician, and knew what was best
To ease my pain and set my soul at rest.”

The village is unquestionably one of the most fortunate in the kingdom. Favoured by nature and art, it has long been the resort of wealthy and benevolent individuals, from whom has flowed a constant stream of active goodness and charity, alleviating the condition of the poor, administering to the sick, and promoting the education of the rising race. There are now a District Visiting Society and Clothing Club, Schools, a Dis-

pensary, &c. By the report of the parochial schools for the year 1847, I find that the total receipts were £280. 7s. 3½d. ; expenditure, £257. 8s. 5½d ; amount of funds in Consols, £211. 5s. 7d. ; in Savings Bank, £86. The report of the Dispensary exhibits a total of 459 cases attended between January 1, 1847, and January 1, 1848 ; receipts, £142. 2s. 2½d. ; expenditure, £134. 17s. 11d. I find likewise that the sum of £227 was about two or three years ago subscribed towards the erection of an infant school, but the majority of the committee being of opinion that such an institution was not required, the whole sum was returned to the subscribers. All these institutions are most liberally supported ; and there is besides an under current of private charity both wide and deep. If a poor person in the village meets with an accident—a fractured leg or arm—should his pigstye be burnt down, or his prolific wife bring forth a greater number of heirs and successors than his means are thought adequate to support, the fact is immediately spread throughout the village, and a shoal of amiable ladies may be seen with purse in hand, or with salves and flannels innumerable, wending their way, like good Samaritans, as they are, to the habitation of the *lucky* individual. A broken leg is here as good as a sinecure, and frequently leaves the party with more “to stand upon” than before, while the advent of a twin to a poor family is equal to a pension to the father. But let us come to some of the more public evidences.

Opposite to the Morris School is a handsome tank, which, with two others in different parts of the hills, was erected by Mr. Morris. They are much prized by the cottagers, and will form (when Providence shall have removed him from the present life) a lasting monument to that gentleman’s worth and memory. Many a poor woman, perhaps for centuries to come, will bless his memory as she sets down her picher to receive from the salutary spring the proceeds of his bounty. The practical philanthropist is the most useful of men, and the construction of a public reservoir is not the least beneficent of his acts :

“ From the dry rock who bade the waters flow,
 Not to the skies in useless columns tossed,
 Or in proud falls magnificently lost ;
 But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
 Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.”


Leaving the tank we proceeded on the new drive by way of the North Hill church towards the “ Wych,” a name given to a passage or road some years ago cut through a portion of the hills. The highest point of the Malvern Hills (which are an eruptive chain of syenite, trap, and basalt) is 1444 feet above the level of the sea ; the view on all sides is magnificent : portions of ten or twelve counties, with the three Cathedrals of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford, and the Bristol Channel, may be seen ; and it is said that with a glass, on a clear day, more than a hundred churches may be traced out. The village and the hills generally swarm with proofs of the prosperity of the place. A new hotel and villas are springing up on the bleak side of the North Hill, close to the little church, and other handsome residences have been erected near the fine old abbey gateway. Among the distinguished individuals who have recently visited this charming retreat is Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, who was much delighted with the spot, and several times ascended the hills ; the donkey patronized by Her Majesty on these occasions received in consequence the cognomen of “ Royal Moses ;” but, like many individuals of our own race, who have basked in the patronage of royalty, the subsequent history of this donkey supplies a moral which ought to modify our ambition for courtly favours : the poor beast died a short time ago, being (as I have no doubt) *ridden to death* in consequence of this act of the worthy Queen Dowager’s having given it the premiership among the Malvern asses. The visitors to Malvern will now see its villas and lodging-houses occupied by a class of migrationists very different from the former patrons of the place. Hydropathy has taken possession of Malvern, and peopled its houses. The fashionable world and the London physicians have resigned the territory to the genii of the wells. The villagers, however, must bear with this. *Nec*

asperandum quamvis exiguum lucellum. Dr. Granville, in his "Spas of England," says—"The scope and facilities for exercise—the opportunities of scrambling up precipitous mountain sides, so as to put every muscle of the body in action and test the strength and elasticity of one's lungs at the same time—the frequent inhaling of the purest air in a lofty region—these things altogether are the charms and attractions of the two Malverns, on which a medical man must depend for any sensible change he may wish to produce on his patients through their agency. In these respects the two Malverns surpass many of the more frequented and fashionable spas in this country."

The living of Malvern is in the gift of the Foley family; value £181. Vicar, the Rev. John Wright. Curate, the Rev. James Clancy. Clerk, Mr. John Burston. Organist, Mr. Wheeler.



Strensham.

 HE church of Strensham consists of chancel, nave, and western tower; and it is mainly the work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The interior has a singular but handsome appearance, being fitted up with ancient carved oak seats, open at the ends with wainscoting high up the walls. The space, or aisle, between the two rows of seats is very wide, and the remains of encaustic tiles, still visible in the pavement, denote that the last work of reparation must have been performed regardless of expense. At the western end is a gallery, along the whole front of which is a series of panelling, with carved canopied tops, containing curious paintings of the disciples, the evangelists, the early fathers, with martyrs, popes, kings, and bishops. There are twenty-three of these figures, and the majority of them are accompanied with emblems: St. Lawrence carrying a gridiron

(the instrument on which he suffered martyrdom); the disciples, being represented as fishermen, carry oars and nets; Peter has the keys; while Judas Iscariot is conspicuous as having "the bag" attached to his belt, and is certainly made to appear a very suspicious character. This gallery contains one of the very few good grinding organs. Underneath the gallery is a Norman font, cylindrical, but slightly larger at the top than at the bottom, and standing on a shaft nearly as thick as itself. The outer face of the font is covered with arcade work, the arches of which are semi-circular and do not intersect each other; it is rudely carved. The walls and ceiling of the church are bedaubed and plastered. On the north wall, near to the pulpit, is a handsome Gothic monument, with florid canopy, crockets, and finial, and bears this inscription:—"This tablet was erected to the memory of Samuel Butler, to transmit for future ages that near this spot was born a man so celebrated. In Westminster Abbey, among the poets of England, his fame is recorded: here, in his native village, in veneration of his talents and genius, this tribute to his memory has been erected by the possessor of the place of his birth, John Taylor, Strensham." This Samuel Butler, I need hardly repeat, was the much neglected author of "Hudibras;" and the house in which he was born—a cross-timbered dwelling of about the date of the first Charles—was subsequently shown to me. It appeared originally to have been a good house of the sort, but is now tenanted by two or three poor families, who were engaged at their humble dinner tables at the time of my visit: I did not therefore disturb them to see the interior. It has been a subject of regret that no Worcestershire author has done Butler justice by writing such a biography as could have been gleaned not only from books but from local traditions. With the single exception of the aforesaid monument Butler shares the fate usually allied to genius, namely, extreme local indifference. But to return to the church. The chancel abounds with handsome marble and alabaster monuments to the Russell's, a family which came out of Normandy, and had lands given them in

Berkshire, Gloucestershire, and other counties. They were lords of Strensham from about the year 1300 to 1705, when Sir Francis Russell (the last male) left his estate between three daughters, one of whom married Dr. Richard Nash, to whom the whole of the property afterwards belonged. In the time of the civil wars Sir William Russell figured as a champion of the royal cause, and Strensham was disgarrisoned at the same time as Worcester, Evesham, Hartlebury, and Madresfield, when Sir William narrowly escaped with his life, but was eventually allowed to compound with the parliamentary committee for £1800, and £50 a year settled on his estate. He was high sheriff in 1643, and governor of Worcester the same year. In the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Sir John Russell attended Her Majesty to Worcester, and in the corporation books are entries of a charge for claret and *seck*, and a pound of sugar given to Sir John Russell, which is supposed to be the same that Falstaff calls sack and sugar, and to mean originally a dry wine, *vin sec*. The monuments are costly, and chiefly well executed, with recumbent figures and all the pomp and pageantry of grief. Some brasses, commemorative of the same family, of the dates of 1405, 1502, and 1562, have fortunately escaped destruction, and (especially that in the wall at the north of the communion table) are well worthy of attentive examination. There are here about thirty Sunday scholars, and there is also a free school, supported by James Taylor, Esq., containing six boys and six girls. I have but little space to comment on the services, which is the less to be regretted as I have but little to say. Understanding that the regular clergyman would not be present, I formed the conclusion that a good sermon would be the result, for I have found it to be a pretty general rule among clergymen to pick out their best compositions when they are to officiate in a strange church. I was not therefore disappointed in the Hon. and Rev. T. Coventry, who gave a good paraphrastic discourse on the Lord's Prayer, from *Matthew* vi, 9, &c.

Patron of Strensham, John Taylor, Esq. Value of living, £200. Rector, the Rev. J. W. Grove, D.D. No curate kept. Clerk, Mr. Joseph Davis. Population, 304.

Erkington.

AT this place I had the pleasure of witnessing a crowded church and a zealous minister, who it seems had pretty well succeeded in thinning the flocks of the neighbouring churches by holding out for their acceptance a better article than they could obtain at home. His sermon might be considered evangelical, nay, some would have called it a downright Methodistical discourse. The instantaneous conversion of the gaoler being the subject, faith was of course the prominent feature, and the necessity and desirableness thereof were painted in such glowing terms, and with an ardency of fervour, that not one of the rev. gentleman's hearers could possibly have entertained the remotest thought of sleep or listlessness. There is much in what is called Low Churchism to which I cannot become reconciled ; yet when I contrast an instance like that of Eckington with the inanimate, somnolent condition of one half of our rural churches, where the parishioners habitually sit under orthodox but drowsy discourses, varied perhaps about once per annum by the advent of some other preacher even more tedious than the regular one, I cannot but prefer that system under which the people have at least their thinking and reflective faculties brought into active play, and are not permitted to consider the church as a place for lounging and dreaminess. Let me not be misunderstood as voting for noise and rant, or for those frenzied fits and outer manifestations which have no claim to the name of religion, and are too often the cloaks for the most wretched cant and hypocrisy : the church recognizes a sober, healthy, rational medium between these excesses, in which neither the turbulent yeast of a hot, credulous imagination, on the one hand, nor the unleavened bread of passive, indifferent minds, on the other, has any thing to do. "The new sect weep for their amusement," said the *Citizen*, "but real

religion, the discipline of the heart, on the other hand, is cheerful, equable, and enduring, and is preserved safe amongst the bustle of the world and the innocent admixture of society."

The architecture of the church of Eckington exhibits to the practised eye many interesting gradations, as well as many modern "improvements" which are much to be lamented. It consists of chancel, nave, two side aisles, and western tower. The chancel contains some handsome monuments to some of the Hanford family, the oldest bearing the date of 1616, being a raised tomb, on which John Hanford and Ann his wife are kneeling and praying, face to face, with a book desk between them; and beneath them, on the face of the monument, are their three sons and seven daughters, also kneeling. The chancel arch is pointed, but the south aisle is divided from the nave by three semi-circular arches, supported by massive circular Norman pillars, having on their capitals a sort of moulding which I can only describe as similar to festoons, pendent from little uprights arranged at equal distances round the capital. This moulding is slightly diversified in each of the pillars. A row of good imitation Norman columns and arches separates the north aisle, which was added to the church in 1837 and 1838. This aisle, however, is a monstrosity, which, as soon as the funds can be raised, ought to be made uniform with the Perpendicular architecture of the vestry adjoining it on the west, which was put up in 1840. This vestry also serves the purpose of a school room. The number of Sunday scholars, boys and girls, is about 50, and those in the National School vary from 50 to 75. In this church are the remains of the old rood loft, elaborately carved; an ancient cylindrical font; a curious Norman light in the west wall, almost cut into by the great west window, which is of the Decorated order; and the western door (which a few years ago was taken from the north side, when that aisle was added, and placed at the west end for preservation) is a fine and curious specimen of Norman workmanship, containing the chevron moulded on several faces, that is, in different angles with the plane of the wall. Similar

specimens may be seen at Bredon and the neighbourhood. The shafts also terminate on the top in volutes. The tower exhibits many grotesque heads, or gargoyles, as water spouts. The roof of the church (which is now under-drawn with the usual amount of lath and plaster) is in a state which excites, perhaps more than any other part of this edifice, the indignation of the antiquary, on account of the carvings, which were originally intended to be seen from below, and to add to the beauty of the structure, but which are now totally hid. The old roof is oak; the blades, rafters, and side pieces, are all moulded; and the bands, with one exception, are all carved, as follows:—Band No. 1, at the eastern end, over the pulpit, rood loft, &c. is carved in foliage on one side; reverse, blank. No. 2, foliage on each side; the top part of this and each alternate band was panelled and carved to the summit. No. 3, foliage on each side and Gothic laced. No. 4, ditto on one side; reverse, two serpents; panels, &c. like No. 2. No. 5, ditto, ditto; reverse, Gothic laced. No. 6, the devil in the form of a serpent, with a man's head in his throat, up to the man's shoulders; a monk is beyond, pushing him in by his (the man's) foot; reverse, foliage. This is also panelled like No. 2. No. 7, plain on each side. No. 8, three serpents fighting; reverse, foliage. No. 9, Gothic laced; this one is immediately over the old porch at the western end of the church. The carvings appear to have been done when the wood was in a green state; they are well executed, more particularly the Gothic lacing on band 5. There has been a quantity of panelling, both carved and plain, removed at different times for repairing other parts of the church; the timber, which is entirely oak, is in an excellent state of preservation, excepting one place where the rain came through the roof. The old roof was formerly covered with lead, and when it had been worn through by time and the weather, it was covered with another roof of tiles and old slates, or, rather, thin stones, the lead being first removed. The woodwork over the chancel is quite plain; this roof being lower than that over the old part of the church.

The Dean and Chapter of Westminster are the patrons of Eckington (value £140). Vicar, the Rev. James Balfour. Curate, the Rev. D. L. Cousins. Clerk, Mr. Richard Powell. Population, 785.



Leigh.

IN a fine Sunday morning in the latter end of September I took an early breakfast and the road to Leigh church, which is situate about five miles west of Worcester. Some slight rain had fallen during the night, which had freshened up the appearance of things abroad in the fields, and imparted a delightful fragrance to vegetation; here and there in the roads were scattered the blossoms of the hop, which had been plucked and thrown aside by the hand of some wayfarer; the gardens and hedgerows still looked gay, though their brighter summer hues were now modified, and occasionally a solitary leaf would flutter by on the mournfully sounding breeze, which had swept it away from its fellows, from the top of some high tree, and, in its premature hurrying to earth, conveyed a startling admonition akin to that which our common father Adam must have received in witnessing the first death. The maple trees betokened the time of the year by their spots and decaying leaves; the insects, which in summer months dance in innumerable myriads around the traveller's face, as though to welcome him on his passage through their territory, were now reduced to a few of the larger kind, who hurried by in a state of uneasiness at the unexpected coolness of the morning; broods of young goldfinches appeared, linnets were congregating together, and here and there I fell in with a district gathering of swallows, taking counsel together about the when and whereabouts of their departure. The unwonted note of the woodlark also, and the glistening webs on every bush, which the decrease in the numbers of his prey had

taught the spider to stretch out with more industry and artfulness—all those minute points of Nature's economy spoke in eloquent language of a long farewell to summer.

“Farewell to summer. Lo! the word
Falls sadly on the ear ;
And, as its mournful voice is heard,
Rise visions dark and drear
Of clouded skies and withered leaves
And flowers all pale and dead.
The reaper binds the golden sheaves,
But summer's reign is dead.”

Nevertheless I love above all other the month of September ; calm, pensive, and beautiful, it comes to us like a serene old age after the heat and passions of youth have subsided. It is then, to use the language of a gifted writer, that the memory of the absent—the departed—the for ever gone, returns and hangs on the heart in the form and pressure of their time—and saddened, chastened, and purified by the spirit that haunts the sanctified abodes of death, in the tranquillity which pervades and governs us, we feel that there is a better, higher, purer joy, than the world's shallow pleasures or ambitious aims can procure—the ineffable balm of peace, peace of heart, absorbed from earth's cares and its engrossments, when the crushing remembrance of the past is forgotten, and our thoughts wander through an eternity radiant with spiritual hopes to the perfection of all human bliss.

The church of Leigh is an ancient structure, chiefly of the 12th century, but it has been much patched, and partakes of several subsequent styles ; it has a western tower, nave, chancel, south aisle, and chapel or chancel, called “Braunsford's Chancel.” The principal entrance is by an old porchway, at the western end, beneath the tower ; here are traces of a stoup, which appears to have been broken off, and, if I mistake not, it is now lying loose and unprotected on the floor in the before mentioned chapel ; the carvings on it are well executed, and are yet sharp, notwithstanding the malice of the elements and the negligence of man. The ancient doorway on the north side of the nave is

blocked up. Above this, on the exterior, is a somewhat rare remain, or specimen of early sculpture; it is a figure of the Saviour, about 4 feet 10 inches in height, placed in a shallow recess of the wall. The head of this recess is semi-circular, and is supported by late Norman pillars, of a date probably coeval with the original church. The recess is placed at the height of 15 feet 2 inches from the ground. The Rev. G. S. Munn, of Cradley, who some time ago drew the attention of the British Archæological Association to this specimen of sculpture, is of opinion that this niche or recess once formed one of the round-headed window cases of the original Norman church. In many of our early churches it was the custom to have a painting or carving of our Saviour on the principal door, the authority for which was supposed to have been derived from his own words, "I am the door," &c. These symbols, it is not improbable, were likewise frequently placed above the doorway, as in the present instance. I am told that a similar figure exists at the church of Rouse Lench, near Evesham. These examples of figures of the Saviour are of rare occurrence, in consequence of the destruction of all such representations and images at the Reformation, and subsequently by the Puritans. At the south side of the tower, in the angle formed in the tower and the aisle, is a brick erection running up the wall, and near the top of it is a square window, in which was a mean and dirty white curtain, forming a disgrace to the sacred building.

The interior of the church presents many objects of interest. The arch dividing the nave from the chancel is lofty, and, with its supporting shafts, marks the period of transition from the Norman to the Early English style. The approach to the rood loft may yet be seen, in an opening through the south pier. The east window is a modern fantastical thing, admitting light sufficient to dazzle a whole congregation. The chancel is rich in monumental and other remains. Nash says that the ceiling of the chancel was repaired and painted by Sir Walter Devereux, and that it represented the firmament, with the moon and this motto, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firma-

ment showeth his handy-work." In the middle were the arms of Sir Walter Devereux. The whole however has disappeared before those industrious but relentless artizans, the village plasterer and the whitewasher. Among the gorgeous monuments erected in the chancel are—a raised tomb with the portraiture of "Edmundus Colles, 1606 ;" a knight (Gulielmus Colles, 1615) and his lady, kneeling on a raised tomb beneath an arch, with figures of their seven sons and five daughters ; cumbent statues of Sir Walter Devereux and his lady, who died in the early part of the seventeenth century ; kneeling statues of Essex Devereux, his wife, and child, 1639 ; and here and elsewhere are memorials of the following families—Domville, Spooner, Birchett, Slaughter, Norgrove, Deakin, Treke, Jones, Taylor, Price, Racster, Baker, Bearcroft, and a flat stone to "Gulielmus Colles, 1508." The chapel is divided from the south aisle by an antique gallery, the front of which is curiously carved and gilt, resembling a rood-screen. There is in this chapel a Norman font, apparently of the same date as the older parts of the building : it is now completely hid from the congregation, being thrust aside as though its antiquity and rudeness must needs cause it to be despised ; it is also supplied with a tin can, and has no cover.

On taking a turn in the churchyard, among other inscriptions I observed the following :—

" Stop! stop awhile, ye fluttering and gay,
 If any chance to pass this gloomy way,
 And drop one silent, tributary tear,
 On an unhappy, honest sportsman's bier.
 O, snatch from fell oblivion's jaw his name :*
He died a wretched victim to the game!
 Hence, hence this useful lesson learn to know—
 Never to trust in transient joys below :
 In gayest moments death will often come,
 And rudely drag us to our final doom."

One don't know which most to admire, the idea of snatching a gamekeeper's name from oblivion, or the mysterious uncertainty in which the poet has contrived to leave his readers as to the

* Deakin.

direct cause of his death. The man may have been slaughtered by poachers—he may have made his quietus by entangling the trigger of his gun in a hedge—it is possible he may have hung himself out of remorse at the wicked system of game preservation—or he may have been choked by the bone of a pheasant; the wayfarer is left to take his choice of these and any other fancies he may please to entertain.

There were many late comers to the church of Leigh on the morning of my visit; some did not arrive till after the lessons had been read; and as the rustics passed to their seats, the rattling of their hobnails against the pavement was any thing but a desirable accompaniment to the congregational act of devotion. The singing was entirely confined to the school children, who were ranged along the aisle, led on by a master and mistress; they were then unassisted by any instrument, but I understand that an organ has subsequently been erected here. The curate read the morning services in an efficient and impressive manner, and I much wished that he had taken it into his head to preach the sermon also, for when the vicar ascended the pulpit and began his discourse, I found that from his lowness of intonation and rapidity of execution it was so much waste paper to me, and, as I suppose, to all others who sat at the distance of three yards from him. I have heard of an old joke, which, however, is not of the most reverend, of an Oxford spark saying he would give any man the Creed, and beat him before he came to the end of the Litany. It is not unlikely, from what I heard on this occasion, that the incumbent of Leigh could do this with ease. I hope he will excuse this gentle hint; he is, I believe, an amiable man, and generally beloved by his parishioners; it is, therefore, a pity that his pastoral efficiency should be marred by this defect.


I have but little to add with regard to the parish. There is a new church at the Link, near Malvern, erected about two or three years ago, which is a chapel of ease to the church of Leigh, and there is another chapel of ease at Bransford. This last mentioned is probably of ancient origin, for Habington says

that he saw a grant from Anselm, Abbot of Pershore,* for erecting a chapel in a private house at Leigh, the chaplain of the mother church of Leigh to say mass three times a week. The parish was originally divided into three rectories or portions, but at the Dissolution two of the portions sunk and became vested in the Crown. In the year 1776 an act was passed for enclosing this parish, but some difficulties arising with respect to its being within the chase of Malvern, it was not completed, or the Link ploughed, till 1778. The bridge over the Teme at Bransford was built by Wulstan, of Bransford, Prior and afterwards Bishop of Worcester, 1338. There are in this parish an endowed free school, two chapels belonging to the Lady Huntingdon connexion, and a Wesleyan Methodist centenary chapel. There are about 30 scholars in the church Sunday schools.

Earl Somers is the patron of the living (value £312). Vicar, the Rev. H. S. Cocks. Curate, the Rev. H. Boissier. Clerk, Mr. Morgan. The Misses Cox act as organists. Population, 2011.



Bromsgrove.

 HE church of the famous old Bremesgrove, or Boarsgrove, is situate at the western end of the town, on an elevation ascended by sixty-two steps, and its handsome spire shoots up from a circle of fine lime trees which surround the churchyard—a conspicuous object to all the circumjacent country. I entered the church by the south door a few minutes after the commencement of divine service. No person having been appointed to attend to the accommodation of strangers—the parish, by the bye, not seeming to anticipate the entertainment of angels unawares—I stood, hat in hand, till the footman

* A great portion of the parish belonged to the Abbey of Pershore in ancient times. Anselm died in 1203.

and housemaid of some genteel family, taking compassion on me, opened their seat, which was near the entrance door, and I took my place between them. Now, let me ask, why is there so much hoggishness and discourtesy in churchmen, disdaining even to share with a stranger a seat in the house of God—that place where all distinctions should cease, in the presence of our common Father? “Have you not mistaken the pew, sir?” once blandly said a Sunday Chesterfield to a stranger as he entered it. “I beg pardon,” replied the intruder, rising to go out, “I fear I have: I took it for a Christian’s.”

One practice observed at this church is eminently worthy of imitation, namely, that of placing the poor in the seats nearest to the reading desk and pulpit, while the gentlefolk and tradespeople take up their position chiefly in the aisles and galleries. The school children are stowed away under the tower, on a series of graduated seats, and strongly reminded me of a pen of yearlings at an agricultural show. How they manage to see or hear in that secluded box, with a monster gallery impending before them, I don’t profess to know. In ancient times, they say, this church was as famous for the production of good singers as the town was for the manufacture of clothing; but the times are changed, and singers, like other mortals, change with them. Mr. Simms was the organist here for about forty years, but being now incompetent to the duty, his son takes it, permitting his father to enjoy the trifling income arising out of an annual collection—about £20. The congregation would, however, without doubt, give corresponding encouragement were the choir conducted with spirit. A more efficient musical corps is amongst the hundred and fifty things I have to recommend to the worthy vicar for adoption: not that I mean to be pressing upon him, for it must be expected that the accumulated grievances of seventy years, during which, and prior to his induction, the parish was in the hands of non-resident vicars, cannot be easily remedied and set aside. The style and manner of the vicar (who gave a good sermon on the raising of the widow’s son) were correct and impressive.

William Rose, the clerk, belongs to a family which has provided the church of Bromsgrove with a supply of clerks and sextons for time out of mind ; he himself has been clerk for twenty-eight years ; Joseph Rose has held the office of sexton for the last twenty-four years ; his father was sexton for thirty-five, and his grandfather for twenty years. These offices are often hereditary. The clerkship of King's Norton (formerly a chapelry of Bromsgrove) is said to have continued in one family for upwards of two centuries. A gravestone in King's Norton churchyard has the following inscription upon it—" Isaac Field, shoe-maker, parish clerk of this parish sixty-two years, died July 10, 1757, aged eighty-five years. Henry, his son, who died July 21, 1795, aged eighty-one years, was clerk forty years." Thus Isaac and Henry held the office of parish clerk upwards of a century. Henry Field was the last of his family who was parish clerk there. There is something pleasing in this succession of attachments to the offices of the church, and moreover something full as worthy of consideration as the lengthy genealogy of the proudest noble. The mantle of the Roses has not fallen upon degenerate descendants, according to the narrative of Joseph Rose, the sexton, who conducted me over the church, and who pointed out here and there the shocking mutilations he had averted when threatened from the barbarous hands of Vandal churchwardens, to whom at various periods this church seems to have fallen a prey more completely than any other edifice I have yet seen in the county. Among other instances of his care, he assured me, was the preservation of a handsome trefoil headed piscina, with shelf, which, happening to present an obstacle to the enlarging of a window in the wall of the south aisle, these benighted "wardens" would have thrown into the streets, had not the sexton almost descended on his knees to obtain the relief ; having succeeded so far, he caused it to be placed in the wall near to its original position, and has furnished it with a pair of folding doors and a hasp, to preserve it from mutilation. Hard by stood an ancient tomb, bearing the recumbent figures of a man and woman, which was removed if

not destroyed by the churchwardens. These statements, I have since ascertained, must be received with considerable modification, for the preservation of the piscina was not entirely due to the sexton. The church is a large building, containing seats for 1300 persons, 630 being free. It has a chancel, nave, with clerestory, north and south aisles, and western tower with lofty spire and ten bells. The chimes have a tune for each day in the week, viz.—Monday, the Easter Hymn; Tuesday, “God save the Queen;” Wednesday, “Money Musk;” Thursday, “Life let us cherish;” Friday, the Old 113th Psalm; Saturday, “From Night to Morn;” Sunday, the 104th Psalm. On the fifth bell is the motto, “God prosper this parish, A. R., 1701;” the tenor has—

“ I to the church, the living call,
And to the grave do summon all—1773 ”

The other bells contain the vicar’s and churchwardens’ names for the time being. The chimes were constructed many years ago by an ingenious brush-maker of the town, Mr. E. Draycot, who was rewarded with £120 for his skill. The tower is of three stages, embattled, and the spire is hexagonal, ornamented; forming a good specimen of the Decorated or fourteenth century period. The gargoyles or water spouts on the tower exhibit more of the ludicrous and imaginative conception of mediæval builders than of their sense of purity and propriety. Over the west door are the sculptured figures of St. Peter, St. John, and the Virgin, though, I believe, all the twelve apostles have at various times been called in to answer to their names in connexion with these sculptured figures. Whoever they may have been intended for, the parties seem as though they had been turned out of the church, and were now making up their minds to quit for ever an edifice so mutilated. Over the south or principal porch is a dial, at the bottom of which are the words “We shall;” and, standing alone, they puzzle the casual observer; but it would seem that the constructors of the article had left its name to complete the sentence, thus—“We shall (*dial*) die all.” A poor pun and a

most inappropriate subject. The older walls of the church are of the same date as the tower, but the clerestory and other portions are additions in the Perpendicular, or that style which immediately preceded the Reformation. The horrid barbarisms which have since that time been inflicted on this noble edifice by the hands of those to whose conservation it has been entrusted are a monument of shame to the perpetrators, and, in my wrath I had almost said, a disgrace to the whole parish. I do not so much complain of the erection of immense galleries on three sides of the church—that being probably a work of necessity occasioned by the greatly increased population of the town; but the mutilations consequent thereon cannot be seen without the deepest regret. In the first place, about the year 1768 a flat ceiling was drawn under the open timber roof, and the north gallery was erected; and in order to admit light to this gallery no scruple whatever was made of demolishing the tracery of the pointed windows for the purpose of elongating them, and then a semi-circular or Italian head was cut which is now so elevated as positively to intersect the battlements! The thick stone mullions run up about one half the length of the window, and there stop short; the uppermost half of the window being occupied by iron frames and casements. This circumstance alone would have convinced me that the acting churchwarden, *pro tem.*, was an ironmonger, as I am informed he was. Under the same pretence of admitting light to this gallery, or else of affording a peep-hole for the parties sitting there, some self-constituted architects in the year 1809 cut an immense circular hole in the wall beneath the clerestory, between the springing of two arches, so as to command a loop-hole view of the pulpit from a certain part of the gallery! The south gallery was erected by the parishioners in 1824, and in the same year the roof was repaired, and the seats for the school children placed beneath the tower, which has completely spoiled the western entrance, and converted it into a receptacle for rubbish and lumber. All this inconvenience, if not the erection of the galleries, might have been avoided by a better construction of

the seats, much room being lost by the irregularity and size of the present old pews, each of the largest having only two occupants, while the small ones are inconveniently crowded. The font, a paltry thing made by a stone mason of the town, about a century ago, at the enormous expense of £1. 4s. to the parish—is hid in a north corner of the church, to keep company and sympathise with some ancient monuments of the Shrewsbury family, which have also been pushed out of their original habitations in the chancel. I am glad, however, to state that a new font has been liberally presented by the Rev. John Day Collis. While in a captious mood I may observe that the commandment tables seem to have been designed by the same tasteful artist who constructed the *Chinese* sound-board of the pulpit, and they are moreover placed most obtrusively before a more worthy object—the east window, mangled as it has been by the destruction of its tracery. I have heard that the church is to undergo great improvement very soon, but how the funds are to be raised is a question that has not been discussed. As the rectorial tithes, commuted at £1100 a year, and about forty acres of land near the church let at £4 an acre, belong to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, it may be that they intend bearing a good portion of the expense. These tithes and land they let to Mr. Clive. It may very reasonably be asked, if a new vicarage house can be built at a cost of £2000, how it happens that half the sum cannot readily be raised for the restoration or moderate repair of that venerable building—the church?

One of the piers of the north-east corner of the nave contains a staircase (recently discovered) that formerly led to the rood loft—a gallery over which, in ancient days, the holy rood (cross) was exhibited, but which was displaced in all churches at the Reformation by the painting of the royal arms, denoting the supremacy or patronage of the temporal ruler. Near here I also observed another relic, being a small rotary lectern, with an ancient volume chained to it: the work is dated 1609, and bears the following inscription:—“A sermon made in Latine,

in Oxenforde, in y^e raigne of King Edward sixt, by y^e learned and good father, John Jevvel, late Bishop of Sarisbury, dedicated unto y^e Bishop of London, as appeareth in the commentary of Master Calvine upon y^e Galathians : in English : 1 Cor. ix. 16 ; ‘ Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.’ ”

The monuments in this church possess considerable interest. On the north of the communion table is an altar tomb of alabaster, with the recumbent figure of a woman, much mutilated : it is supposed to be intended for the wife of Sir Gilbert Talbot, who died in 1490. He was second son of the second Earl of Shrewsbury, which family had a private chapel here, still in existence, in the south aisle. At the head of the figure are two angels, and at the feet two little dogs or talbots. The monument is an elaborate work, and adorned with the images of men in the compartments, holding escutcheons, but the coat armour once painted on them is quite worn off. Opposite to this is a mural monument to Mr. George Lyttelton, barrister-at-law, who died in 1600, of whom there is a painted effigy lying under an arch, in his serjeant’s gown and ruff, with a roll in his right hand. Near this is a neat monument, erected in 1710, to the memory of Doctor John Hall, Bishop of Bristol (son of a vicar of Bromsgrove), whose benefactions to the poor of this parish will ever be gratefully remembered. At the east end of the north aisle are two altar tombs, which were removed hither about the middle of the last century from their original position in the chancel : the one is to the memory of Sir John Talbot, of Grafton Manor, and his two wives, whose effigies lie upon it, the knight in the middle ; at their feet, against the wall, are affixed two brass plates to members of the Talbot and Lygon families, dated 1612 and 1632, which were torn up from the floor within the communion rails at the time of the removal of the tombs. The other tomb supports the statue of a knight in complete armour, his head encircled with a wreath, and resting on his helmet, the crest of which is a boar’s head ; at his feet a greyhound. By his side lies his lady, at her head two angels, and at her feet two griffins.

Her head dress is of a remarkable kind, being of net work, or what is called a bag dress. These effigies represent Sir Humfrey Stafford, of Grafton, and Eleanor his wife. The knight, together with his brother William, is said to have been slain while fighting against Jack Cade and the Commons of Kent, 28 Henry VI. (1450). Their son Humfrey fought under the banners of Richard the Third at Bosworth, but, after the defeat of his party, he fell into various disgraces, and was attainted in 1485 and executed. A tradition prevailed that he was drawn upon a hurdle from the Foregate or Northgate of Worcester to the Cross, and there put to death. It is, however, believed that Tyburn was the scene of his death. Connected with the monument in Bromsgrove church is a series of marvellous traditions, or rather different versions of the same tradition, referring to a wonderful wild boar. One account says that Sir Humfrey Stafford killed a wild boar that lived in an enchanted castle and destroyed all that passed that way; that he released the lady that lies by him from enchantment and the power of the boar; that he, as an act of piety, built the church in which he lies, and an abbey near to it. Another account deals a little less in the marvellous, and reports that the boar, occasioning great mischief in the country, the lady promised to marry the knight if he would rid them of the evil; which, inspired and nerved by her beauty and the hope of reward, he duly accomplished, but, unlike Atalanta of classic fame, the lady bore no share in the chase. The legend is also preserved in an old ballad. The burden of the song is as follows, namely, that the district about Bromsgrove was, in days of yore, principally covered with wood, and was much infested by a wild boar, the terror of the neighbourhood.

“ Sir Robert Bolton had three sons—
Wind well thy horn, good hunter;
And one of them was called Sir Ryalas,
For he was a jovial hunter.”

This “jovial hunter,” upon a wild lady, or witch, appearing to him, determined to destroy the boar, and proceeded to the attack

by winding four blasts to the cardinal points, which, the wild boar hearing, prepared for the encounter by whetting his tusks between his forefeet.

“ Then the wild boar, being so stout and so strong—
 Wind well thy horn, good hunter ;
 He thrash'd down the trees as he came along,
 To Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.”

For four hours—some authorities will have it was five—under a summer's sun (he must have thought it a *bore*) did Sir Ryalas tug and tussel with this wild beast, in the hope of salting in a good store of bacon for the ensuing winter. At length the boar received his quietus—

“ Oh, then he cut his head clean off—
 Well wind thy horn, good hunter ;
 Then there came an old lady running out of the wood, }
 Saying, you've killed my pretty spotted pig,
 As thou art the jovial hunter.”

“ Then at him this old lady she did go—
 Well wind thy horn, good hunter ;
 And he clove her from the top of her head to her toe,
 As he was the jovial hunter.”

“ In Bromsgrove churchyard this old lady lies—
 Well wind thy horn, good hunter ;
 There the wild boar's head is pictur'd by
 Sir Ryalas, the jovial hunter.”

It was alleged that from this circumstance Bromsgrove was formerly called Boar's Grove ; but the name appears to have been a fiction to suit the legend, for the town was called Bremesgrave in Domesday Book ; but about three miles to the east of Bromsgrove there is a place called Burcot, or Boarscot, which, while also forming a part of Feckenham forest, was said to have been much frequented by wild boars ; and an old story has been handed down in the district that the devil kept his hounds at Halesowen (*vulgo* Hell's Own), and that he and his huntsman, Harry-ca-nab, riding on wild bulls, used to hunt the boars on Bromsgrove Lickey.

Among the monumental relics which have either been destroyed or hid during the repairs and “improvements” in this

church are the following : The brass of Edward Blundell and his wife, in the south aisle ; a brass to the ancient family (now extinct) of the Barnsleys* in the middle aisle ; the statue of a man, formerly lying by the door in the north aisle, said also to belong to the Barnsleys ; and a cross-legged knight, supposed to be near a fathom deep in rubbish, somewhere at the west end. A very ancient stone effigy, apparently that of a female, was dug up some time ago in the north aisle, and is now placed on the sill of one of the windows ; it is too much defaced to admit of its age being ascertained, but the statue must have been the tenant of an older edifice than the present church. In the tables of charities here hung up I observed, among many other items, the following : Simon Crane, £1, to be paid yearly out of the rent of several houses in High Street, to buy books and musical instruments for the use of the singers of this church. I fear that Mr. Crane's bequest falls short of its object, namely, the perpetuation of an efficient choir in this church. Bishop Hall left £800, which was applied to the purchase of an estate at Elmbridge, the proceeds to be distributed to the poor in money and bibles ; but it appears that this charity was for some time in the hands of a Presbyterian trustee, and much loss was experienced therefrom. Edward Moore (1730) bequeathed £5 annually to the vicar "so long as prayers continue to be read daily." I don't know in what manner former vicars swallowed the difficulty about appropriating this £5, but the daily service has not, I believe, till very recently, been performed, there being, at the time of my visit, prayers every morning at eight o'clock, except Sundays. The Charity Trustees

* One of the Barnsley family bore a commission in the army, and was on the continent in the German wars ; he there procured an extraordinary large thigh bone, twenty-three inches long, and twenty-two inches in circumference ; it was preserved in the old hall at Bromsgrove, and when that house was pulled down in 1769, the present house was built, and the bone hung up in it. Mr. C. Cresswell, who now resides at Barnsley Hall, informs me that twenty years ago some surgeons examined the bone, and pronounced it human. The estates of this ancient family passed into the hands of E. Knight, Esq., of Wolverley, grandfather of F. W. Knight, Esq., the present M.P. for West Worcestershire.

distributed last Christmas (1846) as follows: 400 pairs of sheets, 500 shirts and shifts, and 900 four-pound loaves of bread. The vicar and churchwardens: 400 loaves of bread and £13 worth of flannel.

The following are among the monumental remains in the churchyard, which, owing to their singularity, caught my attention:—

“Sacred to the memory of Thomas Scaife, late engineer on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, who lost his life at Bromsgrove station by the explosion of an engine boiler on Tuesday, 10th November, 1840. The following lines were composed by an unknown friend as a memento of the worthiness of the deceased:—

“ My engine now is cold and still,
 No water does my boiler fill;
 My coke affords its flame no more,
 My days of usefulness are o'er;
 My wheels deny their noted speed,
 No more my guiding hand they heed;
 My whistle, too, has lost its tone,
 Its shrill and thrilling sounds are gone;
 My valves are now thrown open wide,
 My flanges all refuse to guide;
 My clacks also, though once so strong,
 Refuse to aid the busy throng;
 No more I feel each urging breath—
 My steam is now condensed in death.
 Life's railway's o'er, each station's past;
 In death I'm stopp'd, and rest at last.
 Farewell, dear friends, and cease to weep,
 In Christ I'm safe, in him I sleep.”

The stone was erected by his fellow workmen, by whom he was highly esteemed. Scaife was 28 years of age. By the side of poor Scaife's grave lie the remains of Joseph Rutherford, whose death was also occasioned by the explosion of the same engine-boiler, and a stone erected by his widow records the event. Another stone bears the following inscription:—

“Sacred to the memory of Arthur Macnally, who died May 17, 1817, aged 72. Also Ann Macnally, who died September 26, 1831, aged 76. ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh (in this very flesh), which death will reduce to dust, I shall see my God. This, my hope, is laid up in my bosom.’”

“To the memory of Thomas Maningly, who died 3rd May, 1819, from wounds received from a currier, inflicted with a knife, on the 1st day of May, under the old Town Hall:—

“Beneath this stone lies the remains,
 Who in Bromsgrove-street was slain—
 A currier with his knife did the deed,
 And left me in the street to bleed.
 But when archangels trump shall sound,
 And souls to bodies join—that murderer
 I hope will see my soul in heaven shine.”

“Edward Hill died January 1st, 1800, aged 70—

“He now in silence here remains
 (Who fought with Wolfe on Abra'ms plains.)
 E'en so will Mary Hill, his wife,
 When God shall please to take her life.
 'Twas Edward Hill, her only son,
 Who caused the writing on this stone.”

“In memory of Ann Harbert, who died February 16th, 1748, aged
two hours!”

On the top of the boundary wall, on the north side of the churchyard, lies an old stone figure, about four feet long; it has on a kind of tunic or mantle; the hands were in an attitude of prayer, but the features are all gone. It probably formed a lid to an ancient coffin; but the tradition (still very strong in the minds of the old people) is that the individual who is there represented sold himself to the devil, for certain advantages, and one of the stipulations was that, when he died, his body should not be buried either in or out of the churchyard; so the man gave directions before his death that he should be buried *under* the boundary wall, and this figure to be placed *upon* the wall; thus outwitting his Satanic Majesty in a similar trick to that of the teetotaller, who, having taken a pledge not to drink any more fermented liquors either in or out of his house, and being afterwards smitten with a vehement desire for his favourite beverage, satisfied his conscience by striding across the doorsill, and, jug in hand, draining it to the bottom. About thirty years ago the north side of the churchyard was enlarged, and “Tom’s monument,” as it is called, is now twenty yards from its original place on the old wall. How far this movement affects the agreement between the two contracting parties I am unable to say. A belief in such traditions however must tend greatly to lower the character of the enemy of mankind, as far as regards

those attributes for which he is most celebrated, namely, craftiness, subtlety, and a capacity for making advantageous bargains.

Bromsgrove is a populous town about midway between Worcester and Birmingham. The town hall is situate over the market house, and forms as it were a kind of delta at one end of the principal street, from which position the whole length and breadth of this street are seen to such advantage as to assume quite an urban character, equalled by few towns of the dimensions of Bromsgrove. At various points on both sides of the street are interesting relics of old houses, handsomely worked and decorated with cross timbers, scallops, and gables, and, what is still more valuable to an antiquary, the dates in most instances are remaining. The Hop Pole Inn (dated 1572) is a fine specimen of the style; another is dated 1610, &c. In Leland's time the town "stood somethinge by clothinge," which indeed was continued till within living memory, but was gradually superseded by the manufacture of nails and buttons. Its inns, hotels, and public buildings and institutions, are apparently well conducted. Here is a grammar school founded by that eminent dispenser of the means of education, Edward the Sixth. It was originally endowed with £7 per annum, to which Sir T. Cookes added £50, and other additions increased the annual income to £66, for educating, clothing, and apprenticing twelve boys. There are six scholarships, with fellowships in Worcester College, Oxford, belonging to this foundation. The Rev. Mr. Collis is the present master, under whose auspices the school is gaining repute. The following is a table of the number of scholars in the other public schools at the time of my visit: Day Schools, boys 87, girls 99; Sunday Schools, boys 431, girls 436; Sidemoor Infant School, boys 39, girls 48; Night School, all males, 119; total, 1260. The school funds are not in as prosperous a condition as they were twelve months ago, owing, as some think, to the amalgamation of the day and Sunday school funds and the absorption of larger sums in salaries, &c. Nevertheless I am assured that every effort is made in this parish for the advancement of the cause of education.

The vicar has opened an evening school for adults and those children who are engaged in labour all day, which I believe is progressing favourably. The plan originated in a suggestion from the operatives themselves.

The allotment system has been introduced here to a small extent, but is not likely to afford a fair criterion of the ameliorative tendency of this well devised plan so long as land is let to the poor man at the rate of £6 per acre—just treble that which would be exacted from a farmer.

With regard to the population and other statistics of the town, the last census showed the following results: 1974 inhabited houses, 110 uninhabited ditto, 18 building; 4867 males, 4804 females; total, 9671. The registration accounts gave the yearly average of marriages, births, and deaths, from June 30, 1841, to July 1, 1847, as follows:—about 60 marriages, 331 births, and 242 deaths.

The town had the privilege of a borough, 23 Edward I., and was represented in Parliament by Thomas Rastel and Thomas Burneford. Before the municipalities were interfered with, this town was governed by a bailiff, recorder, aldermen, and other officers.

The patronage of the living of Bromsgrove is vested in the Dean and Chapter of Worcester; it was worth £1200 while King's Norton remained in the gift of the vicar, which was the case till the appointment of the present Dean, who, with the Chapter (Worcester), increased the stipend, and made it independent of Bromsgrove, retaining the disposal of it themselves—an acknowledged improvement. The Rev. William Villars is the present vicar. Curates, the Rev. Paul Stedman and the Rev. — Davison. Clerk, Mr. William Rose. Organist, Mr. John Simms. Population of Bromsgrove, about 10,000.



Tibberton.

IT has been justly considered that one of the most pleasing characteristics of English scenery, on which the heart of the native loves to dwell in the contrast it presents to the peculiarities of foreign lands, is the appearance of our village churches, dotting the verdant landscape on hill and plain, and suggesting thoughts of perpetual beauty, peace, and religious repose. There they lie in the vale, snugly embosomed in the parasitic ivy, peeping forth from among solemn, aged trees, almost coeval with Christianity itself; there they are on the hill, with their tall spires pointing heavenward, a beacon to the surrounding country; there they are, where the river sweeps by green meadows on its way to the sea; there they are, nestling under the covert of deep-brown woods, in the shadow of romantic ravines, on the naked outstretched plain, or in the centre of the hamlet, every where the landmarks of our common faith, the *nuclei* of human residence and civilization, the centres of so many confederated groups of our species, around which the duties of social and the affections of domestic life are daily weaving their net. The parish church may be a rude and humble dwelling; its walls composed of stones of all shapes and sizes, no trace of architectural embellishment save, perhaps, the chevron rudely cut by the Norman over its principal entrance, no elaborate tracery on the windows, but a patch of plaster here and there, disputing with the lichen for a place on the consecrated pile. Yet we contemplate the little church with an affection and a veneration which the dwelling of royalty itself may not command. This is the place from whence the prayers and aspirations of our forefathers for many a long century have ascended to that God in whose glance the lapse of ages and even the history of our little globe itself are but as momentary incidents;

under yon grey old tombstones, obliterated by the tooth of Time, lie their remains ; and there, too, with all that we most dearly cherish, shall we have to await in silence the final summons, while our admonitory epitaphs for a few fleeting years implore the attention of the passer-by. The sensations of pious cheerfulness (says the poet Wordsworth) which attend the celebration of the sabbath day in rural places are profitably chastened by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful but happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead, a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

“ The dead ! how peacefully they sleep
 Beneath those aged trees,
 While summer breezes o'er them sweep
 With dirge-like harmonies.
 The curfew, as it slowly blends
 With winds and streams its tone,
 Seems breathing of departed friends
 That long from earth have gone.
 And, as the dial briefly tells
 How time is onward flying,
 It wakes the spirit's secret cells,
 To muse upon the dying.”

My ramble to Tibberton, in company with a worthy and venerable friend, whose heart is ever open to nature's inspiration, was a full realisation of the afore-going picture, heightened perhaps by the quietude of the sabbath and the congenial atmosphere of a September day. The humble little church of Tibberton with its modest wooden spire first catches the eye as we ascend an elevation about four miles north-east of Worcester Cross, and here the scenery on all sides is truly enchanting. Still ascending, we reach the church, which is placed on a circular mound having almost an artificial appearance, and surrounding it are some delightful specimens of genuine English lanes, cottages and gardens, orchards, cross timbered dwellings, and farmyards. The whole picture was mellowed and beautified

by the early sprinkling of autumnal tints, for every where Nature was exchanging her robe of green for one in which the thousand modifications of brown, red, and yellow, were interwoven ; while here and there might be seen the varying tints of the dahlia, hollyhock, nasturtium, and the flaring sunflower. The church appears to have been erected in the thirteenth century, the east window, and several other features, belonging to the Early English period ; there are some lancet lights still remaining in the side walls, but the other windows are square headed, being modern insertions. The walls are low, with tiled roof ; and the tower at the west end, as well as the little spire with which it is capped, is of wood and contains two bells ; the entrance is at the west end, the wooden porch and doorway on the south being stopped up. On the north side a school room has been built up against and opens into the church. There were about forty-five boys and girls belonging to this school ; and there is also in the village a daily infant school with about forty scholars. The church, as I have before said, is of the humblest description, consisting only of chancel and body, accommodating perhaps but few more than a hundred persons ; there are no monuments of note, but on the south of the communion table is the trace of a piscina, and on the north a square recess anciently used in the celebration of the Easter mysteries ; the church is well pewed, and the walls are scrupulously white-washed—a mode of decoration which, while it gave this little primitive place of worship an air of extreme neatness and purity, was not open to the objections I have heretofore advanced against whitewash and plaster being made the hiding cloak of elaborate mouldings and other architectural beauties. When care and attention are bestowed on a sacred edifice, it may be generally taken as a guarantee of the worth and usefulness of the clergyman ; I have rarely seen a due respect for the conservation of the material fabric disunited from an earnest anxiety for the welfare of the spiritual church. The present instance confirms the truth of the observation. And how pleasing it is to witness an united parish going up with a beloved

minister to worship, on the regular recurrence of Sabbath or holy day, at that much cherished spot—more venerated, but not dilapidated, through age—where their forefathers offered up their religious adoration. Some years ago the then waggish churchwarden of Tibberton suggested a rhyming couplet to be placed over the door of this church—

“A stone church, a wooden steeple—
A drunken parson, a wicked people.”

However suggestive of the former condition of Tibberton the churchwarden's jingle may have been, internal evidence, as well as the unanimous concurrence of the parishioners, would give it a direct refutation since the beginning of the present incumbency, the worthy vicar having left no available resources unemployed to improve the condition of his flock, to extend the blessing of education, to render his church a fitting place for the decent celebration of divine worship, and generally to earn for himself, by quiet and unassuming deportment, the affections of all who have the good fortune to associate with him. The repairs and improvements which he has promoted at Bredicot church (the rectory of which has been united with Tibberton into one living), are, I am informed, still more pleasing and appropriate.* There is but little if any dissent in the parish of Tibberton, and the school formerly belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon's persuasion is now merged into that connected with the church. This is one proof of the exercise of that assiduous care and Christian benevolence by a pastor

* The example so worthily set has not been lost upon other clergymen in the neighbourhood, and I may perhaps instance the case of Broughton Hackett. A respectable farmer with whom I dined on the day of my visit to Tibberton told an anecdote by way of illustrating the condition of Broughton church some years ago. The then curate, a Mr. Grice, was in the habit of dining occasionally on a Sunday at the house of my agricultural friend; walking over from Broughton, which is an easy distance, for that purpose. One Sunday the farmer waited dinner for the clergyman till his goose was almost spoiled, and then thinking he would not come, he and his family set-to without him. At length his reverence appeared, puffing and blowing, and apologised for his unpunctuality by alleging that he had lost a great deal of time that morning *through turning the pigs out of church!*

over his flock which truly "maketh men to be of one mind in a house," and endears the church establishment and her ministers to the great bulk of the people. Would that such instances were less rare!

No less pleasing to me were the services of the day: the quietude of the spot, the neatness of that little unadorned but ancient place of worship, the chaste simplicity of our beautiful liturgy, and the reverent earnestness of the rustic band who attuned their untaught energies to sacred praise, all were harmoniously blended—a concurrent tribute to the great Author of our faith; and insensible indeed must he be who values not the privilege of living in a country where, unmolested, he may worship in temples such as these. The worthy curate who officiated was formerly Principal of Codrington College, Barbadoes: there was much in his aspect and manner like a missionary: his countenance bore witness of the sweltering heats of other climates, and his voice was harsh and loud, as though haranging, from beneath a plantain tree, a large body of the dark tribes of Jamaica or of the yet remaining descendants of the aborigines of Trinidad or St. Vincent. His sermon was a good elucidation of the parable contained in *Matthew*, c. 21, v. 28 to 31; and so well was the subject treated of, that I saw but one member of the congregation inclined to "steep his senses in forgetfulness."

The parish of Tibberton makes no very prominent figure in the history of this country. The only two notable circumstances that I know of are those contained in the MS. of Mr. Fellows, under master of the college school at Worcester, and vicar of Tibberton (*temp.* 1708), who says that he was credibly informed by some ancient men of the parish (although he does not vouch for the fact) that one Roger Tandy, who held the Boverium, being part of the demesne lands of the Dean and Chapter, was so very strong, that in the reign of James I., being at Sir John Pakington's, at Westwood, he took up a hogshead full of beer, and having drunk out of the bunghole, set it down again on the ground by the mere strength of his arms, without

resting it on his knee or elsewhere. The other story was partly within the writer's knowledge, as the person mentioned was alive in his time. One Hugh Pescod, commonly called "the little Turk," declared on his oath that he was hanged up by the neck for half an hour in a pear tree near Tibberton, by Oliver Cromwell's soldiers, in August, 1651, and being afterwards cut down, and thrown into a saw-pit, he recovered, and attended Dr. Warmestry, afterwards Dean of Worcester, for several days as a guide, being then in perfect health; in memory of this event he planted several elm trees near his orchard at Woodgreen, which trees are probably still standing, as they were a few years ago.

The church of Tibberton (which was dedicated to God and St. Peter *ad vincula*) was appropriated to the prior and convent of Worcester, 1314. It is now a peculiar, subject to the jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter, and was last valued at £123. Present vicar, Rev. W. Godfery. Curate, Rev. H. Jones. Clerk, — Price. Population, 339.

The livings of Tibberton and Bredicot being each of them of very small value, and Bredicot having a small parsonage house, and Tibberton none, nor any prospect of one, the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, who are the patrons of Tibberton and Bredicot, have recently caused them to be united in perpetuity into one living, under the powers of a late most useful Act of Parliament, which gives facilities for consolidating the smaller and dividing the larger livings.

At Bredicot there is a district daily National School for educating the children of the poor in the principles of the Church of England. The district for which this school has been built comprises Bredicot and the adjoining parishes of Spetchley, White Ladies Aston, Broughton Hackett, Churchill, Upton Snodsbury, Whittington, with a small portion of St. Peter's and St. Martin's. The building is handsome and substantial, having both boys' and girls' school rooms and master's house. The average daily attendance of children is 80.

Ledbury.

TAKING advantage of a temporary stay in the interesting town of Ledbury, I could not resist the impulse to inspect its fine old church, and having managed to snatch a spare hour from the pressure of other matters, I willingly devoted it to that purpose. The reader will, I am sure, excuse the insertion of my few notes in this work, although Ledbury is not in the county or diocese of Worcester. On the south side of the churchyard is a memorial, in the shape of a stone and epitaph, to one who appears to have been a somewhat remarkable individual in his humble walk. He was a cooper, named John Heath; and the record says that "He was never known to be *paralysed* by any man in his profession; he had a natural genius for many other things, *but* leaving this sinful world in hope of a better, he died October 21, 1772 :

"When young he was beloved
By all that knew him;
But growing old and poor,
They all forsook him:
But God, his father and his friend,
Did still regard him to his end."

On the other side of the yard is one of the oldest gravestones I have met with exposed to the open air: it is to James, the son of James and Joyce Brown, and bears date 1604, being still distinctly legible. This, with the following most extraordinary instance of continued mortality, recorded on a stone at the east end of the church, is all that I saw worthy of note :

"Near this tomb are interred the children of Thomas Freeman, gent., and Hannah, his wife, hereafter named, viz:—

"Thomas,	obit.	Dec.	8,	1759,	Æt.	One day.
Elizabeth,	"	Oct.	25,	1761,	"	Five months.
Betty,	"	April	15,	1762,	"	One day.
Ann,	"	Oct.	3,	1765,	"	Near two years.
Eliza,	"	Feb.	23,	1768,	"	Five weeks.

Dan. Dew, obit.	March 9, 1770,	Æt.	Two months.
William, ,,	Nov. 15, 1770,	,,	Three weeks.
Susannah, ,,	May 15, 1772,	,,	Three years.
Mary, ,,	Sept. 17, 1772,	,,	Three years.
John, a youth of amiable disposition, and remarkably dutiful to his parents,	Oct. 28, 1772,	,,	Thirteen years.
Francis, ,,	March 16, 1773,	,,	Two months.
Maria, ,,	March 29, 1775,	,,	Three months.
"Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."			

The church is a fine old structure, with a spacious doorway of the late Norman or Transition period, with zig-zag mouldings, and supported by triple-shafted pillars on each side, with ornamented capitals; the nave is divided from the side aisles by six pointed arches and five octagonal pillars on each side; the chancel is divided from north and south chapels or chantries by interesting Norman pillars and arches, with small, round, deeply splayed windows in the wall above them. The north chapel was dedicated to the Trinity, and the south to Saint Anne; and on the north side of the Trinity chapel is the entrance to the chapel of Saint Katharine. The east window is of the Perpendicular style, and those of the nave and side aisles are highly pointed, with strong buttresses between them. There is also a north porch, and adjoining to it an ancient vestry. On this side of the church, but detached from it, is the tower, with its handsome spire, which was rebuilt some years ago by that talented operative Wilkinson, well known as the builder of the chaste and tapering spire of St. Andrew's, at Worcester. Towers were anciently in many cases erected detached from the church, to serve as fortified places of security, as beacons or look-outs in times of strife and danger; spires are of more modern origin. Leland mentions a charnel house as being here in his time, but it was destroyed on the occasion of rebuilding the spire. I have already intimated that the edifice consists of several different styles, but to give a more striking instance I may mention that on the north-east side, within the space of a few feet, a close observer may detect traces of no less than *six* distinct periods of architecture. Some of the windows on this side have their mullions and tracery thickly studded

with the ball flower, of which frequent instances occur in the early part of the Middle Pointed period; but the effect is not good. The principal north window was for many years plastered up, and presenting externally a flat and eligible surface, was used for the game of fives; the townsmen of those days thinking it right and proper that the church should be a vehicle for exercising the body as well as the soul; and here many a lusty rustic, who had become chilled with the internal atmosphere and the long sermon of the morning, promoted the circulation of heat and engendered an appetite for dinner at one and the same time. Saint Katharine's Chapel, which is also on this side, was erected in honour of Katharine Audley, a religious woman in the reign of Edward the Second. The legend says that, not being fixed in any place, she had a revelation that she should not set up her rest till she came to a town where the bells should ring of themselves: she and her maid Mabel accordingly travelled onward, till coming near Ledbury, they heard the bells ringing, though the church doors were shut and no ringers there. Here, then, she determined to spend the remainder of her days, and built a hermitage, living on herbs and sometimes on milk. The king, in consideration of her birth, or piety, or both, granted an annuity of £30 (an immense sum in those days)—“*Rex præcepit Vicecomiti Hereford quod omnes terras et tenementa quæ fuerunt Pertri de Linesey in Monyton et Delew carperentur in manum regis.*” [It is curious to mark how frequently the superstitions of the people were formerly connected with bells. Near Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, there is a valley, said to have been caused by an earthquake, which swallowed up a whole village, together with the church. Formerly it was a custom for people to assemble in this valley on Christmas Day morning, to listen to the ringing of the bells of the church beneath them. This, it was positively asserted, might be heard by putting the ear to the ground, and hearkening attentively. Even now it is usual, on Christmas morning, for old men and women to tell their children and young friends to go to the valley, stoop down, and hear the bells ring merrily.] I must

not forget to mention another legend which exists in Worcester-shire and Herefordshire with regard to St. Katharine. A person, said to be a girl with a pair of pattens on, having stolen St. Katharine's mare and colt, and led them down several brooks to avoid detection, the saint, on being informed of her loss, prayed that wherever the animals and the thief trod, the marks of their feet might be left; and that, in answer to her prayer, the prints of the animals' feet and also of the patten rings were deeply indented, not only in the earth but also in the stones wherever they trod, and that thereby they were traced to and found at Ledbury. Tracts of the mare and colt are still pointed out in blocks of sandstone lying in Whelpley and Sapey brooks, on the borders of the two counties, but Messrs. Murchison and Buckland say that the cavities of those marks are void spaces from which concretions of marlstone and other matter have been worked out by the action of the brook. St. Katharine's Chapel, in Ledbury church, is divided from the north aisle by a wall in which is a doorway surmounted by an exquisitely carved screen, which is a part of the rood loft. This piece of ornamental work seems to have been much celebrated in its day, for a friend of mine some time ago accidentally saw an ancient MS. at Ross, which was an original order to make a rood loft for that church, to be copied from that of Ledbury; but all traces of the Ross rood loft has I believe been lost. There are some ancient stalls in the chancel at Ledbury, of the same elaborate style of workmanship as the screen. In the woodwork of the altar piece is introduced a very good painting of the Last Supper (after Leonardo da Vinci), executed and presented by Mr. T. Ballard, a talented and highly respected inhabitant of the town. Aided by the subdued light from the stained window above, the effect of the picture to a spectator at the western end has all the appearance of reality. On the piers which separate the nave from the choir are two corbels, having the appearance of being inserted, not built in: the one represents the contention of a lion with a dragon, and the other a dragon with a man's head in his mouth; the last

mentioned was probably intended to represent the devil worrying a monk or friar, and may have had its origin in the contentions of the seculars and celibates. There is a great number of good corbel heads on the walls. The general appearance of the interior of this fine old church is much injured by the immensity of its galleries. Now galleries in churches are almost always ugly and inappropriate, and that which is called the singers' gallery remarkably so, generally blocking up, if not mutilating, piers and arches, the westernmost bay being usually sacrificed altogether; and if there be a west door (as is the case at Ledbury) the gallery entirely mars the effect of that and of the window above.

There are some well executed monuments in the church. Among these I noticed one by Westmacott, to the late D. E. Saunders, Esq., representing the repose of a poor family, with a dog at their feet; another by the same sculptor, to the memory of R. M. Biddulph, Esq., of Chirk Castle, Denbigh: in this latter is a female figure, beautifully wrought, in all the abandonment of grief, and two children, very true to nature. There are also two monuments by Flaxman, which invite the passer-by to linger and admire their many beauties—the one is to John Miles, Esq., of Underdown, and the other to W. Miles, Esq., of Clifton. On the pavement of the chancel is a gravestone, on the top of which is a brass figure of St. Peter, with the keys in his hand, and at the bottom another figure in robes, kneeling, with the following inscription:—

“ Say *Pater noster* for Sir W. Callow,
Who loved God well, and All-hallow.”

On another stone was a brass plate, representing the Deity; and underneath, a man kneeling, with the words issuing from his mouth, “*Miserere me, Deus.*” On a brass plate, on the north side of the communion table, was inscribed—

“ Here lyes Magister Robert Preece,
Who in his living was holden wise;
For the love of Peter, and of Paul,
Pray for Magister Preece's soul.”

On the floor was the following ill-timed pun :—

“ Præibit Dorothea,
Sequetur Carolus,
Ambo resurgint.”

“ *Godwyn* the one ; *God-won* the other.”

The above were Charles Godwin, Bishop Godwin's son, and Dorothea, his wife. There are several curious brasses on the pillars of the choir, and among them is one with the following inscription :—“ Here lieth the body of Thomas Cupper, of Glimpton, in Oxfordshire, who being seventy years of age, was made immortal the 27th of June, 1621.”

“ Dead ? Yes, and wormed : admit he be—what then ?
He lies enclosed within the hearts of men.
Earth must to earth, and here that part's confined :
His *purser part* by angels is enshrined.”

On the floor is the following inscription :—“ Stay, reader, here lies the body of James Bailey, late of Ledbury, corvisor, who departed this life December 13, 1674, aged 100 years and 8 months. He was the youngest brother of Humphrey Bailey, of Ocul Pychard, and of Samuel Bailey, late of Hereford. These three brothers lived to the age of *three hundred years* ; what one wanted the others made up.” “ *Mors rapit omnia.*”

The National Schools consist of—boys, 130 ; girls, 90 ; infants, 70. The boys and girls also attend the Sunday School, conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Biggs, the master and mistress of the National Schools. There is also here a school founded by Edward the Sixth, with a salary of £3 per annum (!) for the education of four boys. Master, Mr. F. P. Godfrey.

The patrons of the living are the Portionists of Overhall and Netherall ; valued £451. Vicar, the Rev. George Watts. Curate, the Rev. J. Bull. Clerk, Mr. Bowkett. Organist, Mr. Woodward. Population, 4591.



Severn Stoke.

A LEISURELY ramble of about two hours and a half duration by the beautiful banks of the Severn brought me to the village of Severn Stoke,* a quiet, straggling place, where the Seven Sleepers might have been stowed away without fear of disturbance, now that the highway of traffic from the south-western counties has been turned aside to the railways. On the south-west side of the village stands the church, in a capacious yard, surrounded by undulating meadows, cottages, and gardens. The building is not very ancient, and consists of a chancel, a nave divided from the south aisle and transept by four obtuse arches, and on the north is the tower, which contains five bells. The belfry and tower are divided from the nave by the north wall, in which is a shabby, modern square headed door, most unsightly in its appearance; the roof is plain arched, tied with transverse beams. The stove pipes shoot hither and thither in a very awkward manner through the length and breadth of the building. In the eastern and southern windows were formerly emblazoned the arms of the Beauchamp and other families who have in times gone by held possessions in the parish, but these memorials have been gradually broken and superseded by modern glass, so that but small fragments of these relics now remain. Among the records and epitaphs to the Somers, Newbery, Cother, Martin, and other families, is the following punning one to "Richard Somer, of Cleifton, 1598;" it is in old capitals, on a flat stone in the south transept, and is in excellent preservation although it appears to have been trodden upon for the period of two centuries and a half:

* Stoke is the ancient name for a village.

“All as the flower whom winter hath decayed
Revives in sommer gloriously araid,
So Sommer shall, deth's winter at an end,
Spring out of dvst and vnto Christ assend.”

On the wall of the south transept is painted, in conspicuous characters, this sentence :—“Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this into the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord.” To whom this beatification was addressed, or to what the term “beautify” alluded, I looked around me in vain to discover, for not only are the walls dirty and the seats devoid of all polish, but the building itself has been much tampered with, in the blocking up of doors and windows, and the opening of others of a totally discordant character. The western end of the aisle is cut off by a plain wooden partition, and the enclosed space allotted for Sunday school purposes, a stove being also provided, the pipe of which occasions the blinding of another window. In this apartment, when I arrived, were a few poor boys and girls, presided over by an ancient pedagogue and a dame, who were driving into their craniums the same amount and quality of knowledge, and probably after the same fashion, in which they themselves had received it some half a century ago. I did not see a horn book, but I think I espied a fool's cap and birch: whether the latter had been duly pickled I cannot say. It was a pity, I thought, that in a parish where there must be at least five times this number of children, so few of them are cared for, and these so inadequately, in the way of moral and religious instruction. During the progress of their initiation into the mysteries of spelling and reading, some man, who had ascended the singer's gallery, was practising for his own contentment a few solos on the clarionet (these instruments will be the death of me); and so shockingly did his tones jar on the ear, in conjunction with the shrill piping of the school children while spelling their A B C, or squalling out their dissatisfaction at the pedagogue's thumps, that I was glad to beat a speedy retreat to the church-yard. This confusion of sounds continued after the arrival of the congregation, and until the rector had entered the church.

I took my seat among some labourers, who stared at me with no concealed surprise when I attempted to join in the psalm singing; they had evidently been unaccustomed to that line of conduct, and had never been taught better. Three or four men in the gallery were kept to sing praises for the people; and the latter could not condescend to assist in the performance of that which they had entrusted to their deputies. The singing, however, though limited, would have been tolerably good had it not been for the aforesaid clarionet, which indulged in so flat a key, and coquetted so with needless appoggiaturas, shakes, and turns, that, to use an expressive phrase of an old friend of mine, "it was like smothering good honest music with onions." I for one have no objection to subscribe towards a retiring pension for this instrumentalist, provided he does not take it into his head to settle down within a mile of my residence at Worcester. The clerk and the old schoolmaster, if I do not mistake, were the same personage; and I could not help thinking that he read his part of the services in an angry tone, as though soured by the recollection of the stupidity he had had to contend with in the school room. There are now about thirty boys and girls in the Sunday school; but I am informed that a new school is to be erected, and the number of scholars increased.

The rector very speedily got through the prayers, &c., and then read a short sermon respecting the future state, and the fatherly care and anxiety of God; and thus the services ended: but how cold, inanimate, and spiritless, did they seem to me. There was more of the country gentleman than of the earnest and affectionate pastor about that discourse. It has been truly said that earnestness of tone in the preacher is every thing. 'Tis the *tone of truth* does all; and Bishop Burnet observes, that the best test of a really edifying sermon was when the preacher sent away his hearers thinking of themselves rather than discussing their instructor. On the whole, I must say I left this church and congregation with any thing but pleasing feelings—there was the form but not the spirit—there was the inert mass, the moral residuum of our nature, from which had

gradually evaporated, under the influence of dull and lifeless formality, all the cogency and power of the spiritual life. I have somewhere read that on the high roads in Japan every mountain and cliff is consecrated to some divinity, to whom travellers are required to address long prayers; but as this would require much time, many have adopted the custom of writing some form of prayer, and elevating the same on a simple sort of wind-wheel, on the top of a staff, so that the wind may keep it in motion, which is deemed equivalent to a repetition of the prayer. Are these poor Japanese in truth more culpable than many of our Church of England congregations?

The parish of Severn Stoke, I find, was not enclosed till subsequently to 1774, in which year an act was passed for that purpose; the parish, which includes the villages of Kinnersley, Sandford, and Clifton, contains about 3250 acres, with a population of about 800. The records convey a tolerable idea of the state of the highways in this parish in the fourteenth century, when we find that one Nicholas de Aston had licence to erect an oratory in his own house, which was distant three miles from the parish church, for that "in foul weather the ways were not to be passed with safety." This parish was held by the Clifford family in the time of Edward I.; and George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, who entered a volunteer against the Spanish Armada, and made eight voyages against the Spaniards, was of this family.

The church is dedicated to St. Denis. This is the saint, who, when beheaded, walked several miles with his head under his arm, from Paris to the spot where afterwards a cathedral was erected in commemoration of him. Voltaire, in his "Joan of Arc," introduces this saint as having a passage of arms with St. George for the honour of England; the two saints managed so to mutilate each other that the one was shorn of his nose and the other of an ear. Upon this St. Michael descends, separates and harangues the champions, and readjusts the lopped members—*Animum regite!*

The living of Severn Stoke is in the gift of the trustees of the

Earl of Coventry, value £746. Rector, the Hon. and Rev. T. H. Coventry. Curate, Rev. H. C. Phillpott. Clerk, Thomas Parry. Population, 744.



Shrawley.

THIS church, as seen from the turnpike road, is a most pleasing object to the eye: standing on the summit of a steep and somewhat abrupt ascent, and nestling among firs, beeches, and evergreens, which contrast harmoniously with the grey building, it looks down like a venerable patriarch, having on his head a weight of years and experience to sanction and confirm his teachings and admonitions to the tribes who dwell peacefully in the valley below.

The church consists of a nave and chancel, a large porch for the southern or principal entrance, a tower at the west end, and a modern vestry run up against the north side of the chancel; the tower is about 150 years old, the former one having fallen down; the body of the church is of mixed styles of architecture, having an embattled parapet. The principal doorway is of massive Norman masonry, the semi-circular arch ornamented with rich mouldings. The pillar or shaft which originally formed one of the supports of the eastern side of the arch has been removed, and another of a different date (probably of the fifteenth century) substituted; this stands about a yard high, and the top of it is hollowed out, evidently to serve as a stoup for holy water. This doorway is a very good specimen of its style, though more lofty in its proportions than usual. There is a bracket on the interior of the wall, placed about six or seven feet high, which was probably used in ancient times for holding tapers. There was originally a northern doorway, just opposite to and apparently of the same date as the southern; it was, however,

blocked up some few years ago, during the progress of some repairs and alterations, and just above this doorway, through the thick Norman wall, was opened an immense modern shaped window, with an ogee head! I am sure the good taste of the present rector will not long permit this anachronistic barbarism to disfigure the fabric. The baptismal font, which has been removed from near the entrance door and placed in a convenient recess on the other side, consists of a circular bason on an octangular* base: it is a remarkably good specimen of the transition from the Norman to the Early English style. The nave is divided from the chancel by an acutely pointed arch, and the roof is supported by some good old oak truss work, which was fortunately preserved in opposition to some Vandals who wished to hide its "unsightly appearance" by means of a ceiling! The chancel contains a small circular headed south door and deeply recessed Norman windows; one of which is pierced through a buttress; this is very peculiar, being but seldom met with. The exterior of the chancel walls (except the eastern wall, which was recently put up in place of the old one, which fell out) is divided into two stages by a string course, having a zig-zag enrichment. Underneath the eastern window, on the exterior side, and fastened upright to the wall, is a relic in the shape of an ancient stone coffin lid; it is prism-shaped (*i. e.* like the sloping roof of a house), which was one of the earliest shapes of coffins and sarcophagi, being so formed for the purpose of allowing the rain to run off freely; they were always placed in the open air, and were generally without inscriptions, their form being the only guide to their probable date. This specimen is plain, with the exception of a rude carving or indentation of a cross (*batonne*) on the sides; and as it appears that it was not till the year 1160 of the Christian era that these stone coffins with prismatic roofs began to be

* The octagon was anciently considered to be an emblem of regeneration, inasmuch as the first creation having occupied seven days, the commencement of the next creation or new birth (as signified in baptism) must necessarily be commenced on the eighth—*see Durandus on Symbolism.*

ornamented, it is probable this stone is nearly seven centuries old. It was accidentally dug up a short time ago at the east end of the churchyard. In the chancel wall, at the north of the communion table, an ancient recess, which had been for many years blocked up, was discovered in the course of some repairs: this was undoubtedly the receptacle of the crucifix and host, and was the scene of much ceremony, watchings, &c., at Good Friday and Easter, as a representation of the holy sepulchre. A piscina was also discovered on the south side, and over both recesses there are traces of windows. The church contains memorials and emblazonings of the Vernon family, the Cliffes, Piereys, Tolleys, &c. The Vernons came from Vernon in Normandy, where William de Vernon founded the collegiate church of Notre Dame. The Vernons of Wheatcroft (Cheshire), of whom those of Hanbury seem to have been a younger branch, descended from Nicholas de Vernon, fourth son of William de Vernon, Baron of Shipbroke. Thomas Vernon of Hanbury (ob. 1720) was a knight of the shire, and a celebrated lawyer well known by his reports. On the tablet to the memory of the lady of G. C. Vernon, Esq., and sister-in-law to the present rector, are some lines inscribed to her memory by Wordsworth, who I believe was a personal friend of the family: as I have not yet seen them in any edition of Wordsworth's works, they are here given—

“ She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
 Of happiness and hope, a youthful bride.
 O dread reverse! if aught be so which proves
 That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
 Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
 And troubles which were each a step to heaven.
 Two babes were laid in earth before she died;
 A third now slumbers at the mother's side:
 Its sister twin survives, whose smiles impart
 A trembling solace to her father's heart.
 Reader, if to thy bosom cling the pain
 Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
 Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
 Time, still intent on his insidious part,
 Lulling the mourner's best good thoughts asleep;
 Pilfering regrets we would but cannot keep;

Bear with those, judge those gently who make known
Their bitter loss by monumental stone ;
And pray that in their faithful breast the grace
Of resignation find a hallowed place."

Among the charitable donations recorded in this church is the bequest of £1000 by Councillor Vernon, of Hanbury Hall, to be divided between the parishes of Hanbury and Shrawley, and the interest to be annually laid out in the purchase of clothing and fuel for old men and women. The value of this donation was much improved by Mr. T. Severn, of Cockbaylis, now called Severn Bank, who lent an additional sum of money, and with the united amount purchased a farm at Claines ; he would receive no interest, but paid himself the principal by instalments from the rental ; the proceeds of this charity are now upwards of £80 per annum. It will scarcely be credited that the two parishes, being of somewhat unequal size, actually went to law for the purpose of ascertaining if the larger parish should not enjoy a greater share of this bequest ! I don't know the sum total that was spent in this way—it was very large—but I have the satisfaction of knowing that the graspers were disappointed in their narrow minded schemes.

On the whole the church has a very neat appearance, with the exception perhaps of the high vault like pews, which look more like receptacles for the dead than places of accommodation for the living. The church, which is dedicated to St. Mary, has accommodation for upwards of 200 persons ; there are no free sittings, but the gallery and chancel are open to all those who have not sittings allotted to them.

The reader will perhaps think it strange that neither minister, clerk, choir, or congregation, should come in for a fragment of disapprobation ; but the fact is, the services were conducted quietly, decently, and in order. The barrel organ, which formerly ground out the harmony of no less than ten tunes, and had for years kindled the musical flame of the parishioners, has now ceased its gyrations, and on account, I suppose, of old age, accident, and infirmity, was recently voted out of the orchestra ; a few singers and instrumentalists now supply its place, and by

dint of application they may make a tolerable choir. The sermon, which was distinctly and impressively delivered, was an able illustration of the festival of the church occurring on that day (Whit Sunday); and another point in its favour was its moderate length. Whitfield is reported to have said that a man with the eloquence of an angel ought not to exceed forty minutes in the length of a sermon, and it is well known that Wesley seldom exceeded thirty.

The tower contains a small bell which was dug up some years back by some men who were ploughing in a field adjacent: it is thick and quite plain, affording no clue to its history—it may have been rung in the service of a feudal baron, or to summon, as now, the assemblage of Christians to the worship of their Maker. Tradition tells of a castle which formerly stood at about half a mile north-east of the church, and also of an ancient town, of which there is now no trace; though the sexton's father had remembered the existence in the church of an old chest (cut out of a solid tree) which once contained some writings relative to this old decayed castle; but those unreflecting Goths, the church mice, having found their way into the aforesaid chest, and physically feasted on its literary contents, it is feared that not even a wreck of either the chest or the memorials is left behind.

The churchyard—a very capacious one—contains the base of an old cross, the top of which is now applied to the purpose of a sun dial, bearing the impressive words, *Ab hoc momento pendet aternitas!* Among the epitaphs is one to Thomas Cooke (1814), a gamekeeper in the Vernon family:

“ He sleeps! No more at early morn
To wake the woods with mellow horn:
No more with willing dog and gun
To rise before the sluggard sun:
No more beside the social can
To-morrow's sport with joy to plan:
Death took his aim, discharged his piece,
And bade his sporting season cease.”

Nash says that in his time (about 70 years ago) there was an

old decayed chapel on the south-east of the churchyard, but there is now no trace or recollection of the remains. The nunnery of Westwood had a yard of land on Shrawley, with a quarter of a yard of arable land: this was probably reappropriated at the Reformation. On the south of the wood are some artificial mounds, called Court Hills or Oliver's Mound, which commands a ford of the Severn. It is supposed that although the mound might have been occupied by Cromwell's forces, its origin must have been much more ancient, and some have referred it to Anglo-Saxon times. A well and the remains of a spiral stone staircase were discovered in the fortress during some excavations a few years ago, and a quantity of human bones were also dug up between the mounds and the river.

The parish of Shrawley passed from the hands of its early Norman possessors into those of the Warwick family, a facetious member of which, in the year 1478, being attainted in Parliament, preferred to meet death in a butt of Malmsey wine, and was buried at Tewkesbury. The bacchanalian earl, I suppose, thought he could not leave so many friends behind him without having a "bumper at parting." The parish contains of arable, 853A. 2R.; pasture, 529A.; woodlands, 447A. 2R. 39P.; glebe, 63A. 0R. 37P. The quantity subject to tithe is 1434A. 3R. 38P., and the tithes have been commuted at £358.

The condition of the people seems to be superior to that of many places; there are some allotment gardens let by the rector; each allotment being a quarter of an acre, let at the very moderate rental of 12s., free of all other payments; there is also a benefit club, but in the way of education more remains to be done. The Sunday school numbers upwards of fifty scholars, and is chiefly supported and superintended by the rector and his amiable sister. A shoe fund is attached to this school, experience having proved that in rural districts the supply of that article of dress is the most necessary to insure the attendance of the children. There is a day school, at which there are upwards of forty scholars, most of whom attend the Sunday school. I shall conclude my sketch by quoting Mr. Watson's account of the superstitions in this parish:—

“It would appear that many superstitions are confined to particular families ; they are very unwilling to speak of them, but they are handed down from father to son. Most of them believe that if land is left unsown in a field there will be a death in the family within the year. When the accident is discovered they never sow it again. If after death the body does not stiffen, another death will take place within the year. Some persons believe that witchcraft can prevent their pigs from getting fat, and make them waste away. When convinced of the fact, they kill the animal, and to prevent the evil intentions of the sorcerer extending to those who eat the flesh, a kind of sacrifice is offered to the evil spirit, by burning certain parts of the animal. Old women are commonly entrusted with the cure of burns, which cure is usually commenced by charming. The ordinary charm consists in repeating the following doggrel rhymes a certain number of times :

“ There were two angels came from the north,
 The one was fire, and the other frost,
 Out fire, and in frost,
 In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

The living of Shrawley (value £364) is in the gift of the Vernon family. Rector, Rev. John Vernon. No curate is kept. Clerk, Mr. Thomas Greaves. Population, 569.

Mathon.

THE ancient mother church of this parish is situate in a lonely and sequestered valley on the western side of the Malvern Hills—a spot which, till some thirty years ago, owing to poor landlords and needy tenants, presented a barren appearance, in comparison with what modern cultivation has done for it, Nature having now shown herself thoroughly grateful for the liberal assistance of art.

The original walls of the church are singularly complete,

although they have been pierced at later dates for the insertion of windows of various periods. There are a chancel, nave, and western tower; the whole, except the facings, is built with thin, flat, irregular stone. The eastern wall contains two Norman windows and a wheel light in the centre above, each deeply splayed within, and slightly without; above and below these, on the exterior, are square string courses. This eastern end is a singular specimen of Norman work. The south doorway, over which is an old wood and brick porch, has a semi-circular head, cut square in the wall (*i. e.* not splayed), the tympanum is set flush with the exterior of the wall, and has on its lower edge the cable moulding.* This is the only symptom of ornamental moulding I saw here, though an abundance of white-wash may have concealed much in the interior. The north doorway, which is precisely similar, is bricked up. The angles of the tower are supported by thin but deep diagonal buttresses, having on the front face of the second stage small duplicated niches, with trefoil heads. On the eastern side of the tower, where the nave joins on, these buttresses are altered just above the eaves of the nave, and are set square with the building, so as not to interfere with the structure of the nave. The windows in the tower are double lighted, with decorated heads, and the top of the tower is battlemented. The pinnacles are shattered. There is a peal of six bells, besides a "ting tang." The inscriptions are—No. 1, "Peace and good neighbourhood;" 2, "Glory to God;" 3, "Fear God and honour the King;" 4, "God preserve our Church and State;" 5, "Prosperity to the town" (Mathon seems formerly to have been honoured with the name of a town); 6, "The living to the church I call, and to the grave do summon all." In the belfry is the following doggrel painted on a board:—

* Mr. Hope says that the ornaments we commonly *but improperly*, call Norman, the chevron, lozenge, cable, and billet, are common to all Italian buildings of the *seventh* century, and it is, therefore, an argument in favour of the existence of more "ante-Norman" work in this country than is generally recognized. It may be added, that there was a considerable affectation of the Norman arts, customs, and language in this country even before the invasion of the Conqueror.

“ Mathon, Dec. 24, 1819.

“ Ye ringers all that do ring here,
 Ring carefully with hand and ear ;
 Let every one observe his bell,
 To ring it right and rule it well ;
 For it is, indeed, a shame to him
 That takes a bell and cannot ring.
 It's better for him to stand off,
 Than that men should at him laugh ;
 For he that interrupts a peal
 Shall surely pay a quart of ale ;
 Or ring with gloves, spur, or hat,
 Must pay the like, be sure of that.
 These rules let's all observe and use,
 That neither bells or ropes abuse.
 In silent order play your part ;
 In ringing well is best of art.”

The southern side of the church is defaced by some modern gabled windows let into the roofing. The ceiling is semi-circular, with rude tiebeams connecting the walls. The pulpit is of carved oak, hexagonal, and in panels. There is an octagonal stone font which has received some rough usage, being split through ; it has some foliated ornaments at the spring of the basin. At the south of the communion table is a rudely shaped piscina, with semi-circular head, and a square recess. On the walls and pavement are memorials of the Cliffe, Walwyn, Dangerfield, Vale, Gwilliam, Shepherd, West, Terrette, Barrett, Whiting, and other families. Several of these were ancient Herefordshire families, who came to their decline at Mathon. The Tychichus Whiting, mentioned above, it appears, was minister of the parish, and died in 1772 ; he was buried under the porch, according to his dying injunction, observing that “as he had been trod upon all his lifetime, he might as well be trod upon in death.” The poor pastor's observation is said to have reference to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and their dealings with the unfortunate vicars of this parish. The sexton pointed out to me the “hatchment” of the Vale family, hung over their seat, a part of the emblazonment of which consists of something like Medusa's head set upon a shield ; this he declared to be a genuine and undoubted likeness of the recently

deceased member of this family, William Vale, of Hall Court, Lieutenant R.N., and magistrate for the county of Hereford ; and if so, I can conceive of no lieutenant in Her Majesty's service more calculated than he must have been, from his facial development, to strike dismay into the hearts of the French. Several of the mural monuments in this church seem to have been formed of gravestones, fastened to the wall with iron cramps. At the north-east corner of the chancel is a raised monument, with the effigies of a gentleman, his wife, and daughter, kneeling and praying ; the inscription is "*Hic jacet Jana uxor Johis. Walweyn, gen., filia Paridis Slaughter, armigeri, quæ obiit, 2 Oct. A.D. 1617.*" In this church there is but one visible record of any charity, and that is a bequest of £48, being all the estate of William Burford, yeoman, who left it by will, in the year 1795, to three respectable inhabitants of the names of Spencer, Woodyatt, and Dangerfield, in trust, the interest to be divided between the poorest widows on St. Thomas's day. The property of each of the three families has dwindled away, so that I believe there is now absolutely nothing from which to recover this charity fund and its arrears of interest.

I regretted to find that the custom of burying in the church prevailed here, and that in consequence strong appeals are not unfrequently made to the olfactory nerves of the congregation for the intervention of some stringent sanatory measures. This is the less excusable, seeing that the north side of the churchyard—a large open space almost covered with nettles—is, with one exception, entirely unoccupied ; a fact only to be explained by reference to a gross superstition, derived probably from our Pagan forefathers, and inconsistent with the profession of an enlightened Christianity.

To the conduct of the services at this church I can revert with no satisfaction. The congregation have dwindled away to a shadow ; there was indeed scarcely any embodiment of a living church ; no responses save those of the clerk ; no Sunday schools ;* nor a syllable of harmony (save the mark !) but these

* I have since understood that measures are in progress for the organization of Sunday schools in this parish.

which issued from a boxed-up part of the gallery, where the wretched performers (who hide themselves by means of curtains from the rest of the church, as though ashamed of their discordant deeds) ply a miserable fiddle in accompaniment of vocal excesses which would alone have been sufficient to account for the paucity of the tormented listeners. To this mockery of the church service was I compelled to give ear, and then to listen to a home-spun discourse on the moralities, delivered in so inanimate and monotonous a tone, that I must, under its soporific effects, have sunk into a welcome nap had it not been for the warm resentment which I continued to feel against the tenants of the gallery. The unfortunate curate, however, was not altogether without excuse for his share of the transaction, as no doubt his services are a full *quid pro quo* for the wretched pittance assigned to him. What that amount is I did not inquire, but from the following statement of facts it cannot be presumed to equal, or at most exceed, the emolument of the famous Vicar of Wakefield.

The manor and living anciently belonging to the abbots of Pershore ; in 1512, the church, with the portion of Chokenhall, was appropriated to the abbey of Pershore, and the vicarage appointed. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster are now lords of the manor and patrons of the church. There are 3000 acres of inclosed land in the parish ; and I am informed that the last commutation was for £528 ; there are besides about 220 acres of glebe land, &c., which would probably let at £400 a-year, tithe free. Now what does the reader think this honourable and reverend body saw fit to award to the late vicar, for the spiritual care and cure of between 700 and 800 souls ? Just *thirty-eight pounds per annum!* This sum was increased to £93 from Queen Anne's Bounty,* and I should not have been

* This bounty was granted by Queen Anne in 1704, when Her Majesty gave her whole revenue, arising out of first fruits and tenths, for the augmentation of poor livings. These funds together amounted at that time to about £16,000 a year. The appropriation of the bounty seems at all times to have been opposed to Queen Anne's intentions. Bishop Burnet tells us that it had never been applied to any good use, but was still obtained

surprised if the Dean and Chapter had applied either to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners or to the Church Pastoral Aid Society for an augmentation of their poor vicar's salary! Fortunately for the latter he was possessed of some personal property, or the rev. gentleman, afflicted with age and infirmity, might have found to his cost the peculiar benefits of a Dean and Chapter's patronage. To add to this picture, I should state that the late vicar was formerly curate of this parish for upwards of *forty years, at twenty pounds per annum* (not equal to the wages of a tinker, much less of one who was compelled to keep a white shirt and a black suit on his back, as also to visit and relieve the poor), and that at the death of the previous vicar, the forty years' servitude of the then poor curate during the best period of his life, which had been remunerated with a less sum than one year's product of the living was deemed of sufficient merit to raise him to the vicarial post, where he might batten on £38 per annum, and become a pensioner on the bounty of Queen Anne. Besides, he was then 75 years of age; and this act of grace, if delayed any longer, might have come too late. Why this is a worse case than that of Old Radnor and the Dean and Chapter of Worcester! What will the people begin to think of Ecclesiastical Commissions who overlook such cases as this; who spend their tens of thousands on episcopal palaces and the augmentation of sees, but who will not exert their little finger to emancipate the hard-working parson from the all-devouring jaws of his so-called patron? It has been replied, on behalf of the Dean and Chapter, that they have leased the estate, and now content themselves with an annual income of only £30. 17s. from their possessions as lords of the manor and patrons of Mathon, out of which they have granted a sum of nearly £600 within the last few years towards

by favourites for themselves and their friends, and in King Charles's time it went chiefly among his women and his natural children. So in the present day its means are frequently applied to the enrichment of wealthy patrons and capitular bodies. Upon what principle of right or justice, I ask, are the patrons of lucrative livings to go a begging from a fund designed for really needy parsons?

local improvements. Oh, happy and unprecedented age, when Deans and Chapters consent to be out of pocket ; and happy these Mathonites, who lie under the shadow of such protection ! If the estate is leased, what was the amount of the purchase money, and what is become of the interest of the same ?

The present vicar is the Rev. A. J. Douglass. Clerk, Mr. James. Population, 716.



Malvern Wells.

THE church of St. Peter, at Malvern Wells, was erected about ten or twelve years ago, almost entirely through the exertions of the Rev. P. E. Boissier (a clergyman of fortune at that time residing in the neighbourhood for the benefit of his health), who is said to have expended at least £3000 in the good work—an earnest of “the faith that was in him”—a monument more honourable than mausolea, trophies, or pyramids. The building is in the Early English style, cruciform, with bell gable, has a triple lancet eastern window of stained glass, a western gallery, a handsome stone font, stone pulpit, and reading desk in good character with the style of the building. The church contains 600 sittings, of which one half are free. It stands in a pleasant situation, and is a picturesque object, whether seen from the hills above or the valley below it. Durandus, in comparing new with old churches, and their different effects on the mind of the beholder, says, that “the causes of this difference are the effect of associations in old buildings, the mellowing power of time, the evident antiquity of surrounding objects, the natural beauties of foliage, moss, and ivy, that require centuries to reach perfection ; as, on the other hand, the bareness and newness, nay even the sharpness and vigour of new work—these are sufficient to stamp a different character on each.” It is impossible not to be more or less

affected by these distinctive characters in church architecture : when beholding the moss-grown tower, the ancient archway beneath which the dead of many succeeding generations have been borne, the venerable yew and “long flat stones, in dull array,” or that old altar—

“ Where numberless and nameless knelt,
Successive at the shrine,
The poor—the penitent—and felt
The warmth of love divine,”

we feel constrained almost to cast the shoes from our feet, and to exclaim, “How dreadful is this place !” The spirits of many centuries look down upon us from those ancient battlements, and beckon us to follow them ; while the old cracked bell, which has from remote time announced their successive departure, waits in sullen silence to perform the same task for us. Although thoughts and feelings such as these are not inspired by the appearance of modern edifices, the latter nevertheless cannot be beheld without interest. To these we look with hope, to those with joy and thankfulness ; the seed time is shadowed forth in the one, the harvest in the other. Here the husbandman commences those labours which in time to come will be consummated by the sickle of death ; here the good pastor witnesses one by one the departure of the “old familiar faces” of the village, until at length he himself will also obey the universal fiat, and some brother of “the cloth”

“ Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.”

A down the long vista of time we may look with steady eye, and perceive these walls, now sharp, and bright, and clear, gradually crumbling under the influences of the seasons, succumbing to the parasitical moss and ivy, and exhibiting on their surface a gradual accumulation of mortuary memorials each of which mayhap, will have been gazed at by some affectionate and tear swollen eye. Similar reflections to these invest with interest even the newest sacred buildings, and they recurred to me in full force on approaching the church of Malvern Wells. I was somewhat disappointed in not observing any indication of trees

having been planted here; they are ever appropriate in graveyards, and would be especially so at this church, on account of its position on the hills.

The services of the day were performed by the Rev. P. E. Boissier himself, assisted at the altar by the Bishop of London (then on a visit at Malvern) and the Rev. F. Hopkinson, the then intended curate; there was a very large and respectable congregation, the bulk of which had assembled evidently with a two-fold object, to see the Bishop of London, and to add their mites towards defraying the incidental expenses attendant on the conduct of divine service at this church, which, being only a district one, is not yet adequately endowed. The chanting and psalm singing were tolerably well performed: the organ is a grinder, and the school children are the singers. The schools here, I understand, comprise about fifty boys, and an equal number of girls. The whole services were impressively conducted, with the exception perhaps of that portion which devolved upon the clerk, whose shrill piping was occasionally somewhat startling.

The bishop having ascended the pulpit, selected for his text the 1 *Cor.* xvi, 2—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Upon this the right reverend prelate founded an exhortation to his hearers in favour of almsgiving and benevolence. His lordship possesses a fine, open, dignified countenance; his manner of arguing is quiet, calm, and collected, and his style a paradigm for imitation. In beholding him, one feels at once the influence of a superior mind, apparently capable of illuminating the abstruser points of ethics and divinity, and of elucidating matters which in his usual discourses he would rather avoid or but slightly glance at. In a word, his sermons would seem to be but the chapter heads, so to speak, of his lordship's knowledge: he presents rather the *result* than the *process* of his reasoning; but in all things he "preaches as one having authority;" and occasionally, on administering one of his home truths, he accompanies it with

a sharp nod of the head—an equivalent to saying “There, I know *that* must go home to some of your consciences, and you may do the best you can by it.” The bishop in this instance applied himself to show—first, the duty incumbent on Christians of dedicating a due proportion of their goods for religious and benevolent purposes ; and, secondly, of making that dedication on the day set apart by the church for the purpose of doing honour to its divine head, and for the promotion of her own spiritual growth. His lordship first castigated the Socialists, showing that their opinions had arisen from a deplorably mistaken view of the practices of the primitive church with regard to its temporal effects. The community of goods was in some measure necessary to the infant church, which was surrounded by Jews and Pagans, who refused its members even the common offices of charity and good-will ; but there was nothing in history, or the writings of the apostles or fathers, to warrant the general adoption or the continued use of such a practice. The 38th article of the church set forth that “the riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.” The case of the rich young man, who was told to sell all that he had and give to the poor, was evidently an extraordinary one ; and his lordship observed that where individuals were thus called to the ministry *it might* be necessary “to leave all and follow Him,” to become abstracted from all worldly objects and desires, and to administer at his altars in oneness of purity and truth. (How, thought I, can his lordship reconcile this theory—too beautiful for the frailty of humanity—with the possession of several thousands per annum and a fine palace on the banks of the Thames.) The right rev. prelate regretted the miserable contraction, in these degenerate days, of the good old custom of almsgiving ; he besought the more favoured classes, who walked on vantage ground and in the sunshine of life, to descend occasionally into the valley of misery

and discourse with and relieve their distressed fellow beings, and to seek to reëstablish that relationship between the various classes of society which subsisted in older times in this country. He did not question the wisdom of a legal provision for the poor, but he asserted that such a provision tended to check the sympathies of Christian charity. [If this were the opinion which guided the majority of the Commission, of which his lordship was an influential member, and on whose report the New Poor Law was founded, there can be no doubt that by bringing the provision for the poor down to a near approximation to nothing, and interposing in the way of procuring that wretched pittance every species of obstacle, hindrance, and disgust, they used their best endeavours to reduce their views of Christian charity into practice.] People were too apt to delude themselves with the notion that the payment of poor rates was an equivalent for works of benevolence; he, however, would warn them that no such payment would ever form an item of those good deeds which ascended to heaven and were recorded there. The second portion of the sermon was an endeavour to show that the church was the place, and the Sabbath the day most fitting to make eleemosynary offerings, which would then form the substantial part of our sacrifices—the incense to accompany our prayers; and that the clergy were the most proper vehicles for the distribution of these gatherings. I shall not quarrel with the right rev. prelate for the kind consideration for the poor which breathed throughout his discourse; indeed I was delighted to hear such noble sentiments from one whose wealth no doubt enables him to set a worthy pattern in these matters; but, setting aside the contradictory portions of his discourse, upon which I commented as they occurred, I think his lordship is yearning after a revival of practices which are now for ever buried with past generations, and more than that, which are not worth revivication. The custom of collecting alms during the reading of the offertory was discontinued on sufficient grounds, and it would be inexpedient to revive it now. The church and the people are both

altered: at the time of the suppression of the monasteries, the resources of the poor having been suddenly cut off, it seemed desirable, nay, imperative, that the reformed Church should continue to supply what the old Church had been accustomed to give. The voluntary collection, however, soon became insufficient, and was at length superseded by the Poor Laws; and, as the Rev. H. Raikes, the Chancellor of Chester, has truthfully observed, "Though there is still abundant scope for Christian charity in relieving those wants which the law does not or will not reach, it does not now seem necessary or expedient to close every sermon with an appeal to the benevolence of a congregation, who are already convinced of the duty of almsgiving, and who give perhaps according to their ability."

The bishop's appeal produced a liberal collection; but I must here enter my protest against the *modus operandi* by which it was secured. The practice of shaking a plate under the nose of each individual in the congregation is one of the meanest, most disagreeable, and suspicious kind of things, that ever emanated from a conventicle. It is founded upon the supposition—a contemptible one to a dignified mind—that a man should be compelled to be a liberal, although he would be glad of the opportunity of shuffling out of it. The Dissenters call this the voluntary principle—there is no compulsion about it according to their theory, but if the plate passes by without receiving your shilling—whether you happen to possess one or not—you of course are singled out as an individual without either heart, soul, or (which is perhaps worse) *cash*. Now in deeds of benevolence it profiteth a man nothing unless he give with the heart as well as the hand; why, therefore, will you do an ungracious act for the purpose of extorting from him that pittance which perhaps his greedy eye follows with a covetous regret? It is a mask for hypocrisy, whereby the man appears to the eye of society what he is not before God. The custom ought no longer to be tolerated.

The patron and incumbent of the district church of Malvern Wells is the Rev. P. E. Boissier. No curate is kept. Mr. Robert Warrender is the clerk, and Mr. Thomas Woodyatt sexton.

Barnard's Green.

ONE of my most refined pleasures has ever been, early on a Sabbath morning, to seek the rural lanes and the quiet retired spots and the village churchyard, when yet "the grass was all besprent with dew;" and though our nature, when it journeys again toward the earth, is, as the bard of Avon says, "all fitted for the journey, dull and heavy," and we feel inclined, when we have passed the grand climacteric of our primest days, to leave the early rising and the other activities of life to younger and abler hands, yet there is an extraordinary pleasure, "once in a way," of reviving our recollections of these earlier pleasures, when the senses, not impaired or blunted by the advances of age, would voyage forth on their matin cruise, drinking deeply of the ravishing delights of the young world. Taking advantage of what proved to be the last fine Sunday of the autumn of 1845, I set out with the early bird towards the village or hamlet of Barnard's Green, to which I had been specially invited by an agricultural friend, who wished me to inspect a remarkable field of *Burletta* wheat, and likewise a prime round of beef, which he had promised should garnish his mahogany. A rich mist foretold a hot day, and I hastened on through meadows and corn fields; the heavy crops hung in golden clusters; the orchard trees bent their loaded arms to the earth; and the hedges were sprinkled with hay, which their vagrant, thorny scouts had captured from the passing waggons. All was beautiful, except to the eye of the economist; nature was wild and profuse, but she was also extravagant; here were hedges, and ditches, and waste land, which, if properly cultivated, would have provided half the labourers in the county with a good garden. With regard to the enclosure of commons and pieces of waste, such as these about Barnard's Green, which I presume have scarcely altered their appearance since the

Conquest, or the period when they formed parts of the great wilderness called "Malvern Chase"—I am not unreservedly in favour of the project. It has been said that the man who would inclose a common, with the view of letting it out to labourers, is as impudent as the thief, who, after picking your pocket of your handkerchief, coolly requests that you will mark his initials upon it; but I am of opinion that if by judicious inclosures arrangements could be made for the labourer and his family to have the undivided benefit, to which they are most certainly entitled, we ought willingly to give up all the poetry supposed to be attached to errant geese and pigs rejoicing in their franchise.

The subject of rural economy had so engrossed my thoughts that it was not till I had emerged into the Malvern road (near the beautiful grove of young elms planted by Mr. Foley, the late lord of the manor) that I began to think of the lapse of time; and on arriving at the scene of my visitation, which is a new church built some four or five years ago, I found myself in a situation which I particularly dislike, namely, a quarter of an hour behind time. The church door, too, made a harsh creaking, as though the fates had determined that I, who had lashed this unseemly delay in others, should myself be made a conspicuous mark for censure on the same account. To add to my confusion, on the little open seat into which I glided there was a paper, printed in red and black letter, with the following injunctions—"Come early, that you may collect your thoughts—precious are the few moments of serious recollection before divine service begins; create no disturbance, as you must necessarily do, by coming late," &c. It was sometime before I could muster courage to look around me; for the congregation, consisting of about seventy people, chiefly of the poorer classes, seemed to be remarkably quiet, with the exception of a lad who was engaged during the greater part of the morning in cracking nuts between the heel of his boot and the floor of the seat before me. There appeared to be no clerk or sexton here to enforce propriety, and I have been informed that this was owing to a disagreement as to who should

have the appointment, the minister or the churchwardens. This is one point of ecclesiastical law which requires prompt attention and remedy, to put a stop to the frequent bickerings and ill feeling existing in parishes. At present, I believe, if a parish refuse to pay a clerk, there is no law in existence by which the clerk can enforce payment for the performance of his duties where no land or other property is apportioned for such purpose, and thus many a congregation has been deprived of that official's services. The singing was confined to about a dozen school children—there was no organ—no animation—every thing was cold and chilly, even as the new walls and stone pavement beneath us. The sermon, too, was common-place and monotonous, being in fact little more than a string of scripture sentences—all very well in their place of course; but the clergyman's duties, I take it, are something more than those of a reader—it is his to explain and elucidate, to render intelligible and consistent—not only to collate, but to deduce and argue, and by his earnestness, if not eloquence, to allure to the path of virtue and holiness. The preacher was a stranger to the parish, and probably thought it was only fair to reserve his choicest efforts for "those of his own household." though the converse rule is generally observed. The spaces between the narrow lancet windows were filled with scriptural sentences, in all the gaudiness of red, purple, and gold, and church text; the eastern wall also glittered with the same, added to which the appearance of a stone altar and pulpit, with sedilia, a lectern, and piscina, as also the use of the surplice, and sundry other matters, made me conclude that I was at length got into the stronghold of the Puseyite camp. It is only justice to the officiating clergyman to state that this custom of wearing the surplice is not usual with him, except on those Sundays when the sacrament is administered. Nevertheless, as far as I am concerned, he is welcome to adhere to this vestment as closely as did St. Godric to the one of his choice—that severe anchorite, as it is recorded, having worn out no less than three iron shirts by constant use next to his skin. I should be

the last man to object to such forms and usages, but that it is clear they have produced much injury on being reintroduced at a period when the Protestant jealousy was aroused to an excruciating point on these trivial niceties. At all events, one would have thought that in this, the identical church in which the Bishop of Worcester uttered his first protest against such seeming frivolities, the conductors of religious services would have abstained from thus literally turning their backs on the people. If any thing tends to weaken the church it must surely be these disputes on matters of opinion.

“ Let the high condemn the low church,
The low condemn the high,
And soon the man of no church
Will scout religion as a lie.”

It may be erroneous for a congregation to forsake a minister who conscientiously believes these things to be a part of his duty, but I do believe that the clergyman who (for the sake of things not in themselves necessary to salvation) would thus risk the defection of his flock, cannot be said to walk worthy of his high vocation. I do not mean to visit the whole weight of this stricture on the rev. gentleman who officiated here, but it is to be feared that the peculiar views of the original promoters of this new building were allowed to tincture the form of the ministrations in a manner which proved most distasteful to the congregation, and at one time dwindled their numbers to a very low point. Those practices, I am happy to say, have long been discontinued.

This curate has since been succeeded by the Rev. W. J. Fancourt, a gentleman who is much beloved for his active and zealous pursuit of his Christian duties. The Sunday scholars here number between forty and fifty. Mr. Beard is the clerk.

The church of Barnard's Green (which, it should have been stated, is a chapel of ease to the parish church of Great Malvern), is situated in a delightful spot, overlooked and sheltered by the long range of the Malvern Hills. It is a neat specimen of the Early English style. Every thing connected with the

building and the yard in which it stands wears a new, clean, and quiet appearance; here are yet no "venerable yews," nor

"Long flat stones in dull array,"

nor

"The ivy mantled tower,
Rocked by the storms of a thousand years;"

here are no proud achievements on the walls, nor scarcely yet is there a path made on the greensward by the feet of the mourner lingering by the mementoes of his affection: one grave—a solitary grave—had alone broken the virgin soil of this sacred spot. On this grave is a simple stone, with a quatrefoil head, placed by Captain Allen, of the Rhyd, to the memory of an old and faithful servant, who lived with him thirty-five years as coachman; it merely records his age and death. What a subject for the moralist was this single stone! How hermit-like did it look, there in its loneliness, without a companion! Surely but few of the race of thinking mortals could pass by it without bestowing one sad thought as to who was destined to be the next victim.

A house for the officiating minister has since been erected close to the church, towards which the munificent donation of £100 was made by one individual alone at Malvern.

The evening service was conducted entirely by the curate himself, who, as if to divest my mind of any idea that he was connected with the Romanist movement, preached a sermon on justification by faith, that might have been indorsed by either the Rev. Hugh M'Neile or Mr. Close, so far as any subversion of Protestant principles was intended. At the close of the services the ceremony of baptism was performed (the font being situated at the entrance door) upon two or three infants, who went through the ordeal without signifying any disapprobation that I could glean from the unintelligible gossip they carried on in the "unknown tongues" of the nursery. Whenever I am present at a baptism, the beautiful sketch by Professor Wilson (with allowance to be made between the formularies of the

English and Scotch churches) usually occurs to me as singularly pleasing:—

“It is a pleasant and impressive time, when at the close of divine service, in some small country church, there takes place the gentle stir and preparation for a baptism. A sudden air of cheerfulness spreads over the whole congregation; the more solemn expression of all countenances fades away; and it is at once felt that a rite is about to be performed, which, although of a sacred and awful kind, is yet connected with a thousand delightful associations of purity, beauty, and innocence. Then there is an eager bending of smiling faces over the humble galleries—an unconscious rising up in affectionate curiosity—and a slight murmuring sound in which is no violation of the Sabbath sanctity of God’s house, when in the middle passage of the church the party of women is seen, matrons and maids, who bear in their bosoms, or in their arms, the helpless beings about to be made members of the Christian communion. There sit, all dressed becomingly in white, the fond and happy baptismal group. The babies have been entrusted, for a precious hour, to the bosoms of young maidens, who tenderly fold them to their yearning hearts, and with endearments taught by nature are stilling, not always successfully, their plaintive cries. Then the proud and delighted girls rise up, one after the other, in sight of the whole congregation, and hold up the infants, arrayed in neat caps and long-flowing linen, into their fathers’ hands. For the poorest of the poor, if he has a heart at all, will have his infant well dressed on such a day, even although it should scant his meal for weeks to come, and force him to spare fuel from his winter fire.”

At Hanley, within about a mile of Barnard’s Green Church, a new monastery, with the usual appendages of school and church, has been erected. It is situated on the estate of Mr. Hornyold, and, as I am informed, was constructed at the cost of Mr. Gandolfi, nephew and heir to that gentleman.* The

* The Hornyolds are an ancient Worcestershire family, traceable up to the commencement of the reign of Edward the Third. In the time of


monks belong to the order of "Redemptorists," founded by their last canonized saint, Alphonsus M. Liguori, and are, I believe, the first community of this order established in England, though they are somewhat numerous in Belgium and Italy. Alphonsus died but a few years ago, and the order he founded is rigidly ascetic. This fraternity, in selecting so beautiful a spot, have imitated the Cistercians, who sought out the most quiet and lovely retreats. The monastery was opened in August, 1846, having cost (including endowment) nearly £20,000. There are two priests and one lay brother. The old chapel is converted into a school room, and the education of a large number of children is conducted by some "Sisters of Mercy."

In addition to this monastery there is a Catholic Chapel at Little Malvern, belonging to W. Berington, Esq., whose chaplain, the Rev. W. Scott, has recently had a fine ecclesiastical looking dwelling house raised there. There is also a convent at Stanbrook, in the parish of Powick, hard by. It belongs to the order of Benedictines, and there are about twenty or thirty "religious" resident there. The community removed to their present establishment about nine or ten years since from Salford, in Warwickshire, where, for all I know to the contrary, they flourished for ages; and I hear it would be worth a "ramble" to the place to see the venerable house they quitted. Stanbrook, with its spacious hall and grounds, being considered an eligible locality, was purchased by the community. The house was considerably altered and enlarged for the accommodation of the numerous young ladies who are there educated by the nuns.



Charles the First, Thomas Hornyold brought a troop of horse at his own cost to the assistance of that monarch, and subsequently his estates were sequestered, and £3000 worth of timber sold therefrom to repair the losses of Alderman Elwins, of Worcester, "a rebel."

Warndon.

EST the reader should refer to a map, and suffer disappointment, I may as well at the outset inform him that the parish of Warndon lies to the north-east of Worcester, is situated in the lower division of the hundred of Oswaldslow, and deanery of Worcester, bounded east by Tibberton, west by St. Martin's and Claines, south by Spetchley, and north by Hindlip, and that the church is two and a half miles from Worcester Cross. It is necessary to be thus precise with regard to the latitude and longitude of the village of Warndon, or perhaps the reader may be occupied, like myself, a long time in making the discovery. Skirting the lower part of Perry Wood, I gained the New Town road, and, having passed on for a mile or so, observed a lad in a ditch holding a hook in his hand, and evincing his early interest in the science of agriculture by his cutting, thrusting, and stabbing the weeds which hung over from the hedge. He might have been better engaged in conning the collect and psalms for the day, or in getting ready his Sunday school lesson, but it seems that no such school was within his reach. I enlisted his services to point out the way to Warndon, and his directions were a fair sample of the perspicuous manner in which country folk generally delineate his line of route to a traveller:—"You will go down that lane, through the gate, down the pitch and over the stile, then along the lower meadow, and keep to your right by the trees, till you come to Trotshill, and then 'twill be all straight road; you can't mistake, sir." I thanked him for his specific information, feeling that further inquiry would only make the matter worse; and he returned to his hedge clipping with the self-satisfied air of a person who had been imparting superior knowledge to an *ignoramus*. The line of route described as "all straight road" consisted of a farm yard out of which four

roads branched, then a series of fields traversed by paths in all manner of angles, and a wood to make the uncertainty still more doubtful. By and bye the tinkling of the little bell informed me of my proximity to the church, of which indeed I had been till then unconscious, for the sacred edifice was hid by farm buildings; and its tower, being of a most unecelesiastical character, had completely nonplussed my little knowledge of church architecture.

The church has an exceedingly unpretending appearance, its ground plan being nothing more than an oblong, with a wooden tower at the west end, ascended on the inside by means of a ladder. The date of the building is that immediately preceding the introduction of the debased styles—a period of about three centuries; and the records state that in June, 1542, Henry Holbeche, suffragan Bishop of Bristol, last prior and first dean of the Cathedral Church of Worcester, consecrated the parish church and churchyard of St. Nicholas de Warndon. The arch of the south doorway (now blocked up) is semi-circular, and would seem to denote a much earlier period. There is a wooden porch at the entrance on the north side, but made so low as to remind one of the description of the doorways of houses in certain eastern countries, which are constructed low for the purpose of keeping out enemies, being in keeping with the proverb, "He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction." The structure was repaired a few years ago, in the time of the present incumbent, at an expense of £130, raised by subscription and the sale of a small plot of land formerly belonging to the church; but the repairs of the east wall consisting mainly of bricks and plaster, the whole wears a shabby, crumbling appearance. The roof is tiled, and the ceiling of the interior is waggon shaped. The only symptoms of ornament about this poverty stricken, woe-begone edifice, are a table of charities, the tables of the Creed and Ten Commandments, a few bits of stained glass in the east window (including probably the relics of the arms of Polier and Brace, remaining in Nash's time), with a row of twelve hat pegs on the south wall. There is

here an heptagonal font, without ornament, and large enough for total immersion. This shape is, I believe, somewhat rare.*

The only person in the church on my arrival was an aged man—at least a septuagenarian—who was busily engaged, brush in hand, removing the dust from his own seat and that of the clergyman. I am not sure that he extended his thoughtful attentions to any other part of the church, probably owing to an uncertainty in his mind as to whether any other part of the church would be occupied. He wore a grey skull-cap, and, being nearly doubled up with the rheumatism, hobbled about by means of a stick. This old man, who holds the conjoint responsibilities of clerk and sexton, informed me that he had officiated in that church for half a century, during which period he had “seen out” four parsons; and had I asserted the probability of his “seeing out” four more I don’t think he would have disputed the fact, for

“All men think all men mortal but themselves.”

From him I learned that there was formerly a Sunday school belonging to this church, which met in the space under the belfry; but as there was not sufficient money forthcoming for the master’s stipend, it was broken up and its influence destroyed—a fact which I had preconceived from the circumstance of having seen, but five minutes before, two sturdy young urchins engaged in bird-nesting at the walls of the tower itself, against which they would have reared a ladder for that purpose but for the arrival of one or two stragglers, who drove them further a-field, perhaps to “fit hares with brass collars,” as the next step in crime. My ancient friend the sexton, it appeared, had been recognised as the parochial carpenter for an indefinite period of time, and had himself repewed the church about

* The Rev. G. A. Poole, in his work on the decoration of churches, says—“I know of no font, worthy of especial notice, whose basin has seven sides; and this shape would be least of all adapted to the font, according to the symbolical meaning of the different numerals with the elder theological writers: for seven signifies *perfection*, whereas the font is the instrument of *initiation*. I may just mention however the heptagonal fonts at Elmeswell, in Suffolk, and of Bowden Magna, in Leicestershire.”

sixteen years ago. A large elevated seat at the south-west corner he pointed out as the then intended receptacle for the "quire"—"as fine a lot o' singers," he said, "as ony parish could show; but they were not encouraged, and so they gin it up"—in high dudgeon, I have no doubt; for it is only to hint a fault in the proceedings of your rural choirs, and they'll

" Throw down their fiddles, and depart
In savage grandeur home ;"

and pretty strong must be the influence, or rather the apology, to draw out them and their instruments once more from their hiding places. Moreover, the Warndon choir were erst in possession of a bass-viol—"a mighty good sounded one," as the old clerk informed me, and which, having cost him from time to time a matter of ten shillings in repairs, he seized upon as his lawful due at the time of the bankruptcy of the concern, and "sold him to pay for his keep, but at a loss of 6s. arter all." The poor old man seemed heartily to bewail the degeneration of all things, though in his own person he himself presented an instance of the indifference and neglect so frequently prevailing in the selection of the servants of the church. The majority of parish clerks are chosen from a class of persons wholly unsuited to the duties of their office, which is secondary only to that of the clergyman himself. Archdeacon Manning, in allusion to this subject, observes—"It is greatly to be lamented that an office of so much sacredness should have fallen into so low esteem. Next to the clergyman no one bears a more public example, or one more nearly related to the highest blessings, than the clerk who is appointed to take part in the services of parochial worship. The very name is a witness that he is the Lord's servant. It has come to pass in the smaller, that is in most parishes, that the clerk has sunk into the sexton.* But it is manifest that in the Book of Common Prayer, when the clerk or clerks are spoken of, an order of men in every way higher,

* On consulting village registers, it is found that the office of parish clerk, in nine instances out of ten, is often vested in one family. At Hope, the present clerk is the seventh in lineal succession who has held the office in that village.

and more approaching to the quality of the clergy, is intended. By the canons of 1603 it is required that the clerk 'be of honest conversation, sufficient for his reading, writing, and also for his competent skill in singing, if it may be,' a part of his office being to respond to the officiating minister, and to lead, under him, in the parochial choir." About twenty individuals formed the congregation on the day of my visit, one-fourth of whom consisted of a christening party; the rector's pue was vacant, and I don't think there were three of what is usually termed "the rising generation" in the church. It is true that the parish is a very small one (898 acres, with about 180 population), and the rectorial emoluments so limited that many a tradesman's clerk would refuse to exchange them for his salary, yet, having been once thought worthy of acceptance, I see therein no valid reason for indifference or neglect, and I would earnestly entreat the incumbent not only to make his visits to Warndon more frequent, but to use his energies in the reëstablishment of schools, and of two Sunday services as formerly, as well as in generally arousing the people from their apparent lethargy, for it is a lamentable thing to find but one-sixth of a population going up to the house of God, and that but *once* on every seventh day, in a district, too, where there is no dissenting chapel to invite the remainder.

Of the services I have nothing to say except that they were got through by the curate so rapidly that, including thirty minutes of divinity, drawn from *Romans* viii, 14, I was detained here but a few minutes over an hour.

In the churchyard is the shaft of an old cross. There are no monumental remains of any note either in the church or yard. The plain agricultural community of Warndon apparently care but little for such mementoes of rank and station, and, with Adam for their common ancestor, are ready to say with one of our best of poets—

"From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'T is only noble to be good ;
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood."

The Poher family (who had lands in Claines 13 Edward I.) were the first patrons of Warndon church, for from the reign of Edgar to the Conquest the parishes near the city of Worcester had only chapels, whose curates were appointed by the bishops or priory of the monastery at Worcester ; this of Warndon was a chapel *de feudo episcopi* till the reign of Henry the Second, when it became the chapel of Hugh le Poher, who paid out of "Warmendon" 2s. yearly to the prior of Worcester. The first recorded incumbent was Johannes de Braci (1300), and the present one (1848) is the Rev. G. St. John. Dr. Treadway Nash, the historian of Worcestershire, was the incumbent in the year 1761. The rectory is in the gift of R. Berkeley, Esq., of Spetchley. A portion of the parish is called "Smite;" and it was the supposition of Mr. William Fellows, a learned antiquary, and vicar of Tibberton (1708), that it was so called from an engagement near this place between the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes.

The value of the living is £151. Present rector, the Rev. G. St. John. Curate, Rev. J. Knapp. Population, 187.



Tardebigge and Stoke Prior.

ON my way from Stoke to Tardebigge, I passed the chapel of ease belonging to Stoke parish. This was probably the ancient cell of a hermit or religious recluse, for it is described in old books as the chapel or cell of St. Godwald ; and there are some lands in the parish which are or were known by the name of Hersfield, Hermisgrove, or Hermitsgrove, plainly having reference to this ancient Saxon ascetic. The chapel also possesses the right of burial, which

may be another proof of its antiquity. The old chapel becoming dilapidated, was rebuilt (of brick) in 1773, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. T. Brettell. The Bristol and Birmingham Railway passes close to the chapel yard; and were it possible for St. Godwald now to return to the scene of his former privacy and devotion, he would indeed marvel at the change which has taken place not only in the features of the country but in the miraculous mode of locomotion invented by his descendants. After passing some delightfully rustic lanes and meadows, the pleasant eminence on which stands the modern church of Tardebigge is attained.

The old church which stood here was probably, from Nash's description, an early Norman edifice. He says that the line which separates the counties of Worcester and Warwick ran between the two chancels; but in the year 1774 the old tower fell down and so much damaged the church that it was thought best to erect a new one; the two chancels were likewise pulled down, and one small one built, so that all the church and chancel now stand in Worcestershire. This building is entirely out of all character as a Christian temple, and is composed of a variety of orders exceedingly remote from each other; there is the Ionic column and pilaster, the semi-circular arch, and the spire, so that one scarcely knows whether to set it down as Grecian, Vitruvian, Palladian, Cinque Cento, Wrennian, Chinese, Swiss, Hindoo, Egyptian, or Gothic. The spire is a graceful tapering erection, standing on a hollow-sided tower, supported at the angles by double columns. The windows, being unfurnished with stained glass, admit the light in such copious streams as to prove any thing but pleasant to those who sit opposite to them. The Rev. G. A. Poole, vicar of Welford, says that perhaps there is no one thing which modern churches want so much, and none which old churches have lost with so great detriment to their general effect, as the windows of stained glass. A church built without reference to this consideration is too light, and requires the most incongruous contrivance of blinds and curtains. Nothing but a return to the small

apertures of Norman buildings will compensate for the want of painted glass. The western end of the church is filled up with an ugly singing gallery, in which, however, is a good organ, by Nicholson, of Worcester, presided over in a very efficient manner by a sister of the worthy vicar. On the east wall, at the right of the altar, is a monument (by Chantrey) to the late Other Archer, Earl of Plymouth (to whom belonged Hewell Grange before it came into the hands of the Hon. R. H. Clive). It is told, as a somewhat remarkable circumstance, that after this nobleman's death there was found amongst his papers, written with his own hand, the epitaph which was subsequently placed on his monument, together with *the year of his death*. Over the eastern window are the Plymouth arms, with the motto, *Je me fie en Dieu*, "I trust in God." At the left of the chancel is a handsome carved marble monument to Sir Thomas Cookes, one of an ancient family who had property in this parish; he was the founder of Worcester College, Oxford, and at the time of his death (1702) by his own direction was buried with a gold chain and locket round his neck, and two diamond rings upon his fingers. About half a century afterwards, David Cookes, Esq., heir of the family, came with a hook and pair of tongs, and after some searching succeeded in removing these articles of jewellery! What a veneration must this gentleman have had for his ancestor!

The vicar of this parish is a young gentleman who was fortunate enough to deserve and obtain, while in his capacity as private tutor, the patronage of the Hon. R. H. Clive, by whom he was presented. The rev. gentleman read the services impressively and with distinctness, but I could not understand a word from his fellow-labourer, the clerk, who seemed to be reading for his own private edification. The sermon was on the subject of *Teetotalism!* The preacher explained that the praise bestowed upon the Rechabites of old (the sons of Jonadab) was awarded to them rather on account of obedience to their father's command than for the abstract observance of complete abstinence. The crime of drunkenness he condemned

as one of the worst and most debasing which could afflict human nature—as one which, unlike many other sins, had not in it even the shadow of the remains of our nobler nature; but he would ask, was this vow of total abstinence the best mode of getting rid of the evil? It appeared to him that Teetotallers were peculiarly beset with dangers. Their institutions were held up as having peculiar power and merit in themselves, putting out of view altogether the truths of the gospel; they were thus too apt to ascribe extraordinary efficacy to human inventions rather than to the grace of God, and to nurse themselves up in a spirit of self-pride altogether incompatible with the profession of Christianity. Besides, if Teetotallers reflected on the subject, they would find that the church establishment, having existed for eighteen centuries, was much older than any of their modern societies, and that the vow which she administered to all who first entered her pale by baptism was “to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil,” including unquestionably the devil’s temptation of intoxicating drink. Now, if men had made a vow of so awful a nature as that, was any other necessary? Or if they had broken the former, was it likely they would much reverence the latter? He feared that these societies induced men to trust to an arm of flesh, to boast of the power of their associations, and to rely on their meetings and on various kinds of excitements (though not alcoholic) to escape from the sin which they and all real Christians so much despised, without even asking for grace in prayer, or observing the true course of repentance, which was a thorough change of heart, and to be humble where they were now too frequently conceited. In conclusion, the preacher declared that his object in these remarks was not to disparage the attempts of the present generation to reduce the sin of drunkenness, but rather to point out to the members of Teetotal societies the rocky dangers which awaited them in avoiding the whirlpool of intemperance.

At the close of the service at Tardbigge I retraced my steps to Stoke, and, after an early dinner, went to meditate amongst

the tombs of the old parish church. The building consists of a southern porch, nave, side aisles, chancel, transepts (the southern one, now shut out from the church by a brick wall, supporting the tower); there is also an ancient vestry north of the chancel, but a modern one has been inclosed at the western end of the church. The principal entrance and a portion of the adjacent wall (in which is a small round headed window, flush with the outside, but deeply splayed within) are Norman, as also are the massive pillars and semi-circular arches on the north side of the nave; those on the south side having "obtuse" arches, are consequently much later; the tower, which is of the Transition period to the Early English, contains on each face, except one, triplicated lancet lights, which are partially blocked up, and supports a somewhat stunted wooden spire; but the whole wears a venerable appearance. A portion of the southern wall is embattled, and one or two of the buttresses have niches in their higher stage. The western doorway is of the Tudor style. The east window is a handsome one of the Decorated order, and contains some elegant tracery and stained glass, and there are both sedilia and a piscina (very plain specimens) remaining in the chancel. The southern transept is now partitioned off, which specimen of shocking bad taste was, I believe, shown by the late incumbent; this was originally a very interesting chapel, and contains a two-light eastern window and a southern light over a piscina. In the south transept is a handsome brass mural monument, with small marble columns on each side; it is to the memory of Robert Smith, Esq., "svmtime citizen and draper of London, and free of the famovs Company of Marchant Adventurers;" he died, as the record expresses it, in the year 16090 (!) having married two wives, by one of whom he had no less than eleven sons and six daughters; the various *personæ* of this interesting family are all engraved on the plate in attitudes of prayer. On beholding this inundation of Smiths from the loins of one man, one need not be surprised at the prevalence of that somewhat unpretending patronymic now-a-days. On the next

pillar is a similar monument to a relative, but apparently a very different character to the before-mentioned Smith; this Mr. Henry Smith (who died in 1606) seemingly having left neither "chick nor child" to bewail his loss—at least, he is the only person who figures on the brass; there is besides in his countenance an air of bachelor discomfort and punctiliousness which speaks eloquently of his forlorn and solitary condition during lifetime; at his death, however, he left the sum of £100, the interest of which was to go as follows:—40s. a-year to be given "for four or six sermons to be preached by strangers, and the rest to be employed for the freeing of the poorer sort of boys' schooling." What was Mr. Smith's motive in wishing to engage the services of strange ministers I cannot tell, unless it was for the purpose of enabling the parishioners to judge of the efficiency of their own parson by comparing him with others, and thus to spur on the former to the better performance of his duty. The 40s., I believe, are now appropriated to the funds of the school in this parish. In the pillar on which this monument is placed are still remaining the steps which led up from its northern side to the ancient rood loft; and in the aisle, hard by, is a recumbent stone effigy elevated a few inches from the pavement; it is the figure of a priest in his alb and manciple, and was probably intended to represent one of the priors of Worcester Monastery; the manor of Stoke Prior (or the village belonging to the prior) having belonged to the church of Worcester ever since the year 770, when Mildred was bishop, and Offa king of the Mercians. The church of Stoke was appropriated, on the 1st of September, 1389, to the prior and convent of Worcester, for the use of the chamberlain, to provide vestments and shoes for the monks. Nash describes this monument as being in the south aisle; it is now in the north. Near the southern entrance is a handsome font, somewhat defaced, of about the 13th century. The pillar next the pulpit has been shorn of its capital and otherwise cut away by some unreflecting barbarian of former days, and I am told that it was done in order to give the minister a full view of the seats, which were

partially hidden by the pillar; although, by bringing forward the pulpit a little further from its niche, the object of the clergyman might have been gained without any mutilation. At the western end is a neat gallery, containing a good organ—the only condition which makes a gallery at all acceptable to my mind. I am glad to hear that the church is to be repaired, and restored, as far as possible, to its original beauty of design. The contemplated arrangement comprises the opening of the south transept, at present bricked out from the church—the removal of the organ gallery (the light from the west window being by its present position obscured), the organ to be placed in the transept—the restoration of the open roof—the erection of substantial oak seats, instead of the present square pews, whereby eighty additional free sittings will be obtained, and room for thirty children—the entire scraping of the walls and arches from the whitewash and colouring with which at present they are covered. Encaustic tiles for the altar, and painted glass for the east and west windows, are among the desiderata which it is hoped to be able to provide when the more important part of the work is accomplished. The sum required being nearly subscribed, I hear that the work is already commenced.

Both the church and churchyard are kept clean and in good condition, being highly creditable to the care of the minister and wardens. The yard is of an immense size, and will for many years accommodate the railway company with ground for their stokers, guards, and passengers, who may be suddenly compelled to take up their station at this part of the line. Close to the church are two ancient stones, or tomb coverings, the one raised in the middle, with a rude cross indented in a very primitive manner; and the other, which likewise contains a cross, is of a later date, exhibiting the trefoil. Among the inscriptions on the tombs is a piece of confused nonsense and presumption, commencing thus:—

“ Here lies the *refuse of a mind*,
Pious, orthodox, and kind;
When summoned to arise from dust
Its station will be with the just.”

It is to be regretted that the custom is not observed of submitting all epitaphs to the supervision of the clergyman, in which case our consecrated grounds would often be spared from the inconsistencies which now disgrace them. There is one rule of universal application, the observing of which will be sufficient to avoid most of the faults to which monumental inscriptions are liable, and would generally bring with it many simple beauties. I give it in the words of the Rev. G. A. Poole: "Let there be nothing said of the departed which, if he was a bad man, we cannot say with truth, and if he was a good man, his humility would have rejected."

There was a numerous congregation attending the church on the Sunday of my visit; amongst them I was pleased and surprised to observe a quakeress. It seems that the friends have no chapel in the neighbourhood, and accordingly a highly respectable family belonging to that persuasion, who live in the parish, regularly attend the church, and therein exhibit the best evidence of their Christian charity. It is not an usual thing to see, after a charity sermon, a quaker and a churchman in conjunction holding the plates, but I understand that it may occasionally be witnessed at Stoke Prior. This gentleman also, I am informed, some time ago gave the land on which the parochial schools are erected. The Dean and Chapter of Worcester, to whom belong the great tithes, at first gave only £25 towards the schools, but were subsequently induced to double that sum, which extraordinary act of liberality most probably was brought to pass in consequence of an unpleasant contrast having been drawn between the amount of their first donation and the generosity of a man who, though not belonging to their church, and who besides had never derived any emolument from it, hesitated not to make a voluntary donation of land estimated at the value of £400. But to return: the services were well conducted by the curate, and I was much pleased with the comparative efficiency of the choir and the management of the organ by the lady of the vicar. In this department the best taste was exhibited; the tunes selected

were of a solemn, massive, and devotional character, and given in correct time.

The vicar preached a good homely sermon from the text of "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." In his discourse he alluded to the recent in-gathering of the harvest, as an illustration of the original mandate that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. He compared the human heart to the uncultivated land, which produced no really good or intrinsically useful thing without the application of constant labour, skill, and vigilance: so also man must submit to the same process, by rooting up old habits and prejudices, and sowing in a clean soil the genuine seed of the gospel. This is precisely the kind of address which tells most effectually upon congregations generally, and perhaps in rural districts more particularly, when the minister draws his analogies from the familiar operations of their every day life, and adapts them in his discretion to times and seasons. An elderly gentleman who sat in the seat which I had taken possession of, having heard the text, folded his arms, closed his eyes, and at various times during the remainder of the discourse he quietly nodded as though in approbation of the worthy vicar's mode of working out his argument. A clergyman not far from Campden, in Gloucestershire, who was once annoyed at a similar case, one of his parishioners being in the habit of comfortably dozing during *his* sermons, but invariably staying awake when a stranger came to preach, taxed him with what he conceived to be an act of gross inattention, if not a positive insult, when the man replied very innocently, "Why, you know, when I sees you get up in the pulpit, I knows it's all right; but when a strange mon comes, I has to watch 'un." It is probable that the individual before mentioned entertained the same views, and believing also that nothing objectionable nor unorthodox could be founded on so plain and palpable a text as that selected by his own minister, he piously believed it to be a part of his duty to show every mark of confidence in the vicar by leaving him to himself.

Before concluding this chapter I should mention a supersti-

tion which prevails in and about Stoke Prior : it is a charm or incantation for the removal of the thrush (or "throcks" as it is locally termed) in children. My informant says that a few years ago he was in the house of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, when a tall, thin, mysterious looking labouring man came in, without speaking a word, and took the infant child of the farmer in his hands, and with some unintelligible grunting, put his great dirty finger in his own mouth and then transferred it to the mouth of the child, where he kept it moving as though he were churning butter ; having concluded his mumbling incantation by a few words which sounded like "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," he put down the child, spoke not another word, and left the house abruptly, without either eating or drinking. And this charm was religiously believed in by apparently respectable people ! The operator is now dead, and I don't know if he has cast his mantle upon any successor in the parish. The rising generation will probably consign this and such like superstitions to their merited oblivion, for now the schoolmaster is at work, and I am glad to hear that some excellent schools are permanently established in the village. The average number of children in the National day schools is between eighty and ninety ; on Sundays there are about twenty additional, and there are one hundred and forty names on the books. Mr. James Hemming is master of the boys', and his wife of the girls' school. A new National school (with a master's house adjoining), at Fininstall, near the Bromsgrove railway station, and which is about three miles from the parish church, has just been completed. There is now a very large establishment* near to the Bromsgrove station for manufacturing railway carriages ; and a somewhat numerous population is springing up, consequent upon the engine works at the railway station and the large alkali manufacture established in the parish. It is the duty of these companies to subscribe liberally towards carrying the educational scheme into effect, as nothing can be more reprehensible than for companies or manufacturers

* Belonging to Messrs. Kinder and Johnstone.

to gather around them a continually increasing population, and, while deriving great profits from their labour, to leave them in utter ignorance of their duty to God or man.

The allotment system, I rejoice to find, has been adopted in this parish, and uniformly attended with the happiest effects; and although the last three seasons, owing to the lamented failure of the potatoe crop, have been most unfavourable for a criterion, none of the occupiers of allotments, I hear, are behind hand in the payment of their rents.

In the parish of Tardebigge, and about a quarter of a mile north-east of Redditch, formerly stood the famous Bordesley Abbey, which is generally supposed to have been founded by Maud, daughter of King Henry the First, in the early part of the twelfth century, and to have stood on eight acres of ground. About a century and a half ago the south aisle of the abbey church being still standing, and which had served for many years as a barn or cattle shed, was restored and converted into a chapel, for the celebration of divine service, by one Nathaniel Mugg, gent., and some of the Plymouth family endowed it with an estate and benefaction. An old inhabitant of Redditch informs me that he has often attended this chapel, when Mr. Richards, the then vicar of Tardebigge, officiated there; that notwithstanding Mr. Nathaniel Mugg's restorations, it was in a bad state and inconveniently situated, and that it was pulled down about the year 1805, and what materials could be worked up were hauled away to help towards the building of a chapel at Redditch. The churchyard (a very small square plot of ground) is kept separate from the surrounding fields by a thick and high hedge, and entered by a gate, which is kept locked. About the year 1832, when the cholera raged at this place, many of its victims were buried here. The ground on which the abbey stood (still called the Abbey Meadow) is covered with large irregular heaps—now grown over with turf from the long time they have remained undisturbed—but a few inches from the surface, and in some places protruding, are large pieces of red sandstone, which apparently have formed

part of the old abbey. Many years ago an attempt was made to level the abbey meadow, which was stopped by some authorities, but during that time, I am told, they found two images of the human figure and a quantity of china tiles and quarries. One of the images stood for some years afterwards in the back yard of a gentleman at Redditch, and the persons who obtained possession of the tiles used them to ornament the sides of their fireplaces. The unconscious wayfarer, as he plods along over the consecrated ground, little thinks that on the spot he treads once stood the revered pile of Bordesley Abbey.

Patrons of Stoke Prior, the Dean and Chapter of Worcester. Value of the living, £270. Vicar, Rev. H. Aldham. Curate, the Rev. K. N. Paszkowicz, son of a Polish nobleman. Organist, Mrs. Aldham, the vicar's lady. Clerk, James Lewis. Population, 1576.

Patron of Tardebigge, the Hon. R. H. Clive. Value, £631. Vicar, Rev. J. F. Mackarness. No curate is kept. Organist, Miss Mackarness, who, together with her brother, takes great pains in training the school children for the choir, and in selecting the soundest church music. There were between forty and fifty children in the schools, which were supported mainly by Lady Harriet Clive.



Sudeley and Winchcombe.

IF my present chapter be not entirely composed of ecclesiastical ebullitions—that is to say, of comments on churches and their furniture, preachings on parsons, carpings at choirs, and censures on congregations—my kind readers must bear with me for once; my note book is now pregnant with history and anecdote of the olden time, pertaining to baronial halls, and ancient edifices now mouldering in the dust of centuries, where in former days haughty lords and

titled dames kept their court, or where the monk swung his censer, and the daily sound of matin and even-song was heard. Sudeley, although not in this county, and scarcely within the scope of my "ramblings," was nevertheless a spot which I had long desired to visit, and accordingly one fine day in July I set out with a brace of friends for a two days' tour in that neighbourhood. Our way was by rail from Spetchley to the Ashchurch station, not far from Bredon Hill. Railway travelling is to my mind rich in food for the imagination: the train—which a wit has facetiously compared to an enormous tea kettle, running away with a string of tea caddies—immediately moves off with us: fields, trees, cattle, and houses, fly past as though in hot pursuit of each other; and the velocity of their flight, as it becomes graduated more and more in perspective, produces the effect to the mind's eye of fixing us on the periphery or circumference of an immeasurable horizontal wheel, from which we and our vehicle must inevitably be thrown at a tangent, but for some unaccountable motive power which propels us in the contrary direction. Now we rush between deep cuttings, then, eagle-like, we skim the tops of fearful embankments, and pass the distance posts till (as brother Jonathan would say) "they look like teeth," or course violently beneath bridges which in the distance looked far too diminutive to admit us, and on the top of which the admiring and open mouthed peasant leans his elbows and chin; the reaper drops his sickle to take a stare at us as we pass; and the affrighted cattle, which had been eyeing our approach with stupid uncertainty as to the nature of the thing, suddenly perform an evolution, and, with tail erect, scamper off to some spot of greater quietude and safety. By and bye a horrid scream—like that of an infernal spirit shrieking through some loop hole in his fiery prison—acquaints us of the proximity of a station, and here the philosopher and the physiognomist may gather food for a month's digestion in reading the multitudes of strange faces confusedly thrown together. We do not, however, choose to go any further with you at present, gentle railway traveller, or the dinner which is now

being cooked elsewhere for us may become spoiled or misappropriated. Sudeley is about eight miles from the Ashchurch station, and a carriage being here in readiness for us, we drove off towards our destination. The country around is singularly beautiful, being diversified by wooded eminences and luxuriant valleys, while the views of the golden Vale of Evesham, the neighbouring Bredon, and the distant Malvern hills, not unfrequently called forth an ejaculation of delight. At a point where the Tewkesbury road to Winchcombe crosses another road there is an ancient direction post of a rather curious character, railed in for protection; it is composed chiefly of stone, having seven wooden arms, pointing the way to as many towns or villages; on one of the sides of the base is the following inscription:—

“Edmund Attwood, of the Vine Tree,
At the first time erected me,
And freely he did this bestow,
Strange travellers the way to show:
Eight generations past and gone,
Repaired by Edmund Attwood, of Treddington.”

The village of Gretton next presented itself. This place, I believe, is not, nor is likely to be, very noted in history; which, however, is no reason why its “short but simple annals,” or rather traditions, should find no other place of record. Not many years ago, two rich old misers, bachelor brothers, lived here, in one house—an old, dilapidated building, which, like themselves, was hastening to dissolution, and only waited the breath of the next tempest to blow it “about their ears.” The old gentlemen were staunch Nonconformists, of the Wesleyan persuasion, and the members of that sect who lived in the neighbourhood were permitted to hold their religious meetings in this house, where they were regularly exhorted and stirred up by the eloquence of the late Rev. — Byron, a minister whose eccentricity and originality are probably still remembered in some parts of this county. Wesleyan preachers are proverbial for “hard hitting,” and equally so for being somewhat indifferent as to the mode and manner of the infliction—the obnoxious sin-

ner may be scalped, thwacked with a cudgel, or have the breath beaten out of him by an avalanche of denunciations, compared with which the thunders of the Vatican were tender mercies; while on the other hand the more wealthy members of the sect—men who are looked to as props of the conventicle—receive now and then a gentle hint, a rub from the preacher's artillery, to resist which they must indeed be unaccountably fire-proof. Well, the Rev. — Byron took it into his head that these two old gentlemen possessed wealth enough to found a Wesleyan chapel, or at all events to repair the ancient domicile in which they were wont to assemble; and accordingly one evening, while warmly engaged in prayer—or rather *in asking personal favours of the Deity*—the leader of the meeting put up this delicate petition:—"We beseech thee, O Lord, in thy tender mercy (among other things) to blow this old place down with the next wind, that we may have a better house to worship Thee in." It is said that the two brothers, who were far more attached to their purses than their religion, without waiting for the conclusion of the prayer, thrust the rev. gentleman out of the house, and never again admitted him. So much for the effect of delicate hints upon some constitutions.

We had scarcely concluded our laugh at the ancient worthies of Gretton when an undulation in the road presented to us in the distance the towers of Sudeley, gleaming in the declining sun, and standing out in high *relievo* from the dark woods by which they were backed. The scene, with all its loveliness, suddenly flashed on the mind the thoughts which belong to bygone centuries, and the remainder of the journey afforded to me a reverie of the richest order. But now to our inn—I mean that famous hostelrie the White Hart, at Winchcombe, where we were well housed, and provided with excellent beds with snow-white linen. Got up early in the morning and sauntered through the town.

Winchcombe, and a small tract of ground by which it is surrounded, is said to have been formerly a county of itself, but in the time of Canute it was annexed to Gloucestershire; it stands at the base of several hills, having the little river Isborne

flowing near it. The only thing of note I find in connexion with the town (except the abbey and castle, of which I shall speak by and bye) is the fact that it was the first place in which tobacco was grown in England; "the weed" is said to have yielded a great profit to the inhabitants until its cultivation was prohibited by act of parliament. The popularity in which tobacco was held at the period when it must have been growing here is apparent from the following lines taken from the "*Marrow of Compliment*," published in 1654—

" Much meat doth gluttony procure
 To feed men fat as swine;
 But he 's a frugal man indeed
 That on a leaf can dine!
 He needs no napkin for his hands,
 His fingers' ends to wipe,
 That bath his kitchen in a box,
 His roast meat in a pipe!"

Our intention being to visit the present church and the site of the old abbey, we found out the dwelling of the sexton, who not dreaming of doing business at so early an hour, was snoring in right good earnest as we rapped at his door, and at length in his night-cap looked forth from his chamber window with a dubious kind of physiognomy, like that with which the moon peeps through a fog. Alacrity and civility, however, were the order of the day with him, and we soon moved off together to the church. Here I must ask leave to turn over a few pages of history.

Winchcombe was the site of an ancient mitred abbey, which, at one time, contained 300 Benedictine monks; it was founded in 798, by Kenulph, or Cenulph, King of Mercia, who is said to have had a palace here. A nunnery had been previously founded by Offa. At the commencement of Kenulph's reign a singular revolution in Kent directed his attention to that kingdom (A.D. 796). By the death of Aluric the race of Hengist became extinct, and the prospect of a throne awakened the ambition of several competitors. The successful candidate was an ecclesiastic related to the descendants of Cerdic, Eadburt

Pren, whose aspiring mind preferred the crown to the tonsure. Ethelheard, the Archbishop of Canterbury, beheld with sorrow his elevation; but if *he* treated Eadbert as an apostate, Eadbert considered *him* as a rebel; and the metropolitan, unable to maintain the discipline of the canons, consulted the Roman pontiff, Leo the Third, who, after mature deliberation, excommunicated the king, and threatened that if he did not return to the clerical profession, he would exhort all the inhabitants of Britain to unite in punishing his disobedience. Kenulph took this office on himself; and Eadbert, convinced that resistance would be vain, endeavoured to elude the vigilance and revenge of his enemies. He was, however, taken; the eyes of the captive were put out, and both his hands amputated. Cuthred, a creature of the victor's, obtained the throne with the title but without the authority of king, and Eadbert was reserved by the Mercian for the gratification of his vanity. A day had been appointed for the dedication of the church of "Winchelcomb," which he had built with royal magnificence: the ceremony was attended by two kings, thirteen bishops, ten ealdormen, and an immense concourse of people, and in their presence Kenulph led his mutilated captive to the altar, and of his special grace and clemency granted him in the most solemn manner his freedom. According to the national custom, the parade of the day was concluded with the distribution of presents. To the kings, prelates, and ealdormen, he gave horses, garments of silk, and vases of the precious metals; to each visitor of noble birth, but without landed possessions, a pound of silver, and to every monk and clergyman a smaller but proportionate sum. Kenulph was buried in the abbey church, and, after the Dissolution, a record of his being the founder was placed in a conspicuous part of the parish church, and remains there to this day. His infant son, Kenelm, was afterwards murdered at the instigation of Quendreda, his own sister, who was ambitious of the throne, and caused him to be privately killed by Ascobert, her paramour, while hunting on the Clent Hills, near Stourbridge. The body being found by a miracle (to which I alluded

in my chapter on St. Kenelm's Chapel), the murdered king was canonized by the pope, and his remains being believed to be endowed with miraculous powers of healing, pilgrimages were made to the Clent hills from all parts. This exciting the cupidity of the establishment at Wincheombe, which was at that time one of the most important and powerful in the Mercian kingdom, a force was sent over to take the body, which was then brought to Wincheombe abbey and interred. The ancient records say that during the funeral procession Quendreda looked out of her window, and, in token of her pretended innocence, sang the 109th Psalm: "Let it thus happen from the Lord unto my enemies, and unto those who speak evil against my soul." This, "she, as one bewyht, sang backwards, begynning at ye wronge ende," when it is said that her eyeballs fell from her head, and the ground being dyed with the blood, retained its sanguinary hue for many ages. Quendreda is frequently mentioned in the English Councils by the title of abbess, and heiress of Kenulph. Probably she was called abbess because Kenulph had left her the abbey of Winchelcomb. The abbey was destroyed by the Danes, and rebuilt, in 985, by Oswald, Bishop of Worcester. Both the abbey and the church attached to it were destroyed at the Dissolution. There are scarcely any traces now discernible. The house now standing on the site is occupied by Mr. Trenfield, and some remains of the old abbey building are visible here and there in the walls. Some years ago the coffins which had contained the bodies of Kenulph and his sainted son, together with the weapon by which the latter was said to have been decapitated, were found here. The sexton informed me that till lately these coffins had been used, the one at the abbey, and the other at a neighbouring farm, as water troughs, when he purchased them for a trifling sum for Mr. Gist, of Wormington, on whose lawn they are now used for the purpose of containing mould and flowers. To what base purposes may not even the coffin of a Romish saint be applied! Within a mile of the abbey is still shown a holy well, called St. Kenelm's Well, which, like that on the Clent

hills, was said to have sprung up in honour of the saint, and to which were attributed great virtues, particularly in disorders of the eyes.

The present church (dedicated to St. Peter) was built about a century before the Reformation, by Abbot William Winchcombe, and finished by subscription, which was much assisted by Ralph Boteler, Lord of Sudeley, the builder of the castle, the remains of which I shall presently describe. It consists of a nave, aisles, and chancel, with embattled tower at the west end, opening by an arch into the nave; on the south is a neat porch, with tracery on its ceiling; the walls of the church are embattled, and surmounted by handsome pinnacles; there is also here a great variety of grotesque heads, or water spouts, which, as symbolists would tell us, were meant by ancient architects to represent evil spirits, bad passions, heretics, usurers, lawyers, and so forth, who had been driven out of the temple. The roof of the church is panelled; the nave is divided from the aisles by eight Tudor arches, supported by octagonal pillars; there are some handsome clerestory windows, which it is probable were formerly continued the whole length up to the eastern end. A clumsy gallery, surmounting a carved screen, shuts out the whole view of the eastern end of the church; the altar is detached from the wall, and covered with an ancient but once magnificent cloth, embroidered in coloured silk and silver, and having a border containing the representations of saints and other curious devices which I was unable to decipher. The sexton informed me that he had found this cloth in a coal-hole, where it had been left through the negligence of his predecessor, who, it seems, had on several occasions permitted the beautiful symbolic figures embroidered on it to be cut off by female and other visitors, who probably wanted them as patterns for Berlin work! I would ask, where were the vigilance and attention of the clergyman during these acts of sacrilege? At the right of the altar is a piscina and one of the most handsome specimens of canopied sedilia I have hitherto seen; there are three seats, with intervening

niches, and the carvings are elaborate. There was formerly a Lady Chapel at the eastern end. The seats in this church are at least five feet high, and look as gloomy as ancient closets. The ground beneath the pavement of the church is said to be full of dead bodies, and the effluvia is occasionally most offensive. This system of things, however, is rapidly going out with the old generation; and may it, like the latter, never return! On a table in the chancel I observed some charity bread, and was informed that it is the custom here not to give away the loaves until the evening, in order to ascertain if the applicants have attended church twice in the day, without which they must expect no relief. The pulpit is of stone, and the entrance to it is so small that in case a very obese preacher were about to enter, it would be obviously necessary for the clerk to give him a pretty strong propulsion from behind. The font bears date 1634; it stands six feet high, being approached by steps; the lid is surmounted with a dove, the emblem of the Holy Spirit, as also of Christian purity. The cup of the font is large enough for total immersion, but a small metal basin deposited there shows that the rite is not performed in its full extent and significance. The Rev. G. A. Poole, vicar of Welford, in his little work on church furniture and symbolism, says—"A font of such a structure as to carry with it any reverence at all is almost never seen in a modern church; and even in ancient churches the fine old font gives place too often to a wretched basin, on a still more wretched pedestal; or, perhaps, as if by a studied perverseness, the old font, being retained, is made a receptacle for the basin really used to contain the water. The ancient place for the font is so far from being regarded, that we have a person writing on the subject of the arrangement of churches absolutely making it the praise of a portable basin, that it may be placed, if convenient, on the altar! The implied requirement of the rubric, to baptize by immersion, cannot be attended to when baptism is performed in such fonts as are now erected; and as for any religion being attached to a particular font, I suppose it would not meet with a single rebuke if the

churchwardens of half the parishes in the kingdom were to convert the fonts into quick-lime, and put pint basins, on four-legged stools, in their places."

Amongst the monumental remains in this church is the effigy of Thomas Williams, Esq., of the date of 1636; and elsewhere a curious inscription to the memory of ———, which is as follows:—"She was ——— but words are wanting to express what she was ———. Think what a good wife ought to be ———, and she was that." The sexton smiled as I read the epitaph, and with a knowing wink, observed—"Between you and me, sir, that's hypocritical; for many's the time I've seen 'em together at fight; pretty earnestly, too, I can assure ye."

The sexton having locked up the church and wished us good morning, we moved off toward the castle, where we were received with as much courtesy and kindness as though we had formed a deputation from the Archæological Congress. One of the worthy proprietors (J. Dent, Esq.) was fortunately at home, and insisted on our spending the day at the castle—a proposition which was immediately "put and carried"—for the purpose of inspecting the fine old remains of this once princely abode, as well as the restorations which have been so judiciously effected, and the rare and costly furniture and works of art which now grace the old walls of Sudeley.

Camden says that Sudeley was the residence of a line of barons descended from Goda, King Ethelred's daughter; and Leland informs us that there had been a manor place here before the building of the present castle. Raph, Earl of Hereford, Goda's son, held it, and his progeny flourished here for a long time, when it came into the possession of Thomas Boteler by marriage with the heiress. Sir Raphe, son of Thomas Boteler, about the middle of the fifteenth century, built the present castle, from the spoils, it is said, which he had acquired in the wars with France (*ex spoliis Gallorum*); he being described as "a famous man of warre in K. H. 5 and K. H. 6 dayes." History speaks of the castle as having been in every way worthy of royalty, as an instance of which "the hawle"

was "glased with round beralls." Sir Raphe, being subsequently suspected by the Yorkists of a strong attachment to the Lancastrian interest, was compelled to sell the manor and mansion to the king, Edward the Fourth. Afterwards it fell into various hands, till, in the time of Henry the Eighth, it was granted to Sir Thomas Seymour, the king's uncle, who was then created Baron Seymour of Sudeley; by him the castle was restored to its former magnificence, and when this ambitious man had gained the hand of the Dowager Queen Katherine Parr, widow of Henry the Eighth, Sudeley was their residence. The original letter, sent by the Dowager to the Lord High Admiral Seymour, and in which she accepted his offered hand, was purchased by Mr. Dent at the Strawberry Hill sale; it is a beautiful specimen of her hand-writing, and as it may interest some of my fair readers I here append a copy:—

"My lord, I send you my most humble and hearty commendations, being desirous to know how ye have done since I saw you. I pray you be not offended with me in that I send sooner to you than I said I would, for my promise was but once in a fortnight. Howbeit the time is well abbreviated, by what means I know not, except weeks be shorter at Chelsea than in other places.

"My lord, your brother hath deferred answering such requests as I made to him till his coming hither, which he saith shall be immediately after the term. This is not the first promise I have received of his coming, and yet unperformed. I think my lady hath taught him that lesson; for it is her custom to promise many comings to her friends, and to perform none. I trust in greater matters she is more circumspect.

"And thus, my lord, I make my end, bidding you most heartily farewell, wishing you the good I would myself.—From Chelsea.

"P. S. I would not have you to think that this mine honest good will toward you to proceed of any sudden motion of passion; for as truly as God is God, my mind was fully bent the other time I was at liberty to marry you before any man I know. Howbeit God withstood my will therein most vehemently for a time, and through his grace and goodness made that possible which seemed to me most impossible; that was, made me renounce utterly mine own will, and to follow his will most willingly. It were long to write all the process of this matter—if I live I shall declare it to you myself. I can say nothing, but as my lady of Suffolk saith, 'God is a marvellous man.'

"By her that is yours to serve and obey during her life,

"KATERYN THE QUEEN, K. P."

Indorsed—"The Queen's letter from Chelsea to my Lord Admiral. The answer to the Lord Admiral of her former loves."

The Dowager, however, was far from enjoying that happiness which she had expected with her beloved Seymour, owing to her jealousy of the Princess Elizabeth, who was then living with them, and who, it seems, frequently participated in "much unseemly romping" with the Admiral; he was a nobleman who appears to have been much admired for his beauty, magnificence, and courage—a triad of attributes potent enough to turn the heads and hearts of even royal dames in all ages of the world. The unfortunate Lady Jane Gray was likewise at one period a resident at Sudeley, under the care of the Queen Dowager. The latter died here in childbed. After Seymour was beheaded the castle and manor were bestowed on the Marquis of Northampton, and in 1553 on Sir J. Brydges (then created Baron Chandos of Sudeley) for his services to Queen Mary. Queen Elizabeth is said to have sojourned here during one of her royal progresses. George, the sixth Lord Chandos, was the last of this noble family by whom Sudeley was inhabited. At this time the castle became a stronghold of the Royalists, Lord Chandos being a warm supporter of the unfortunate Charles. The effects of that period of intestine strife, when

"Oliver Cromwell
He did her pommell,
And made a breach in her battlement,"

are sadly conspicuous in the "splendid ruin" which Oliver made of Sudeley. A great deal more than is true has been laid at the door of my "Lord Protector," although I admit that he was by no means a conservator of churches and castles; yet, in respect of Sudeley, history leaves us no doubt that this edifice was made a ruin by the Parliament forces. That the king encamped here is proved by a record on a board in Truro church, Cornwall, being a royal proclamation addressed to the inhabitants of Cornwall, dated from "our camp at Sudeley Castle," September 10, 1643. Lord Chandos having no male issue, and his second wife marrying with George Pitt, Esq., ancestor of the Rivers family, the castle and manor came into their possession. The late Lord Rivers in 1810 sold a part of

the estate to the late Duke of Buckingham, and in 1837 the Duke sold it to J. and W. Dent, Esqrs., of Worcester, who had previously purchased the bulk of the Sudeley estates, with the extensive manors of Winchcombe and Sudeley. The castle had been in ruins for nearly two centuries, a part only of the first court having been occupied during that time by the successive tenants of the surrounding lands. Now, however, an era of a new and different character commenced. Its present proprietors are gentlemen who having acquired great wealth through a long course of honourable commercial enterprise, were not only fully enabled in a pecuniary point of view to commence and carry on the work of restoration, but combined with that ability the exceeding good taste which was necessary to give the restoration a character in keeping with the remains of this ancient and beautiful structure. I may also add that to my own appreciation, as to that of others who duly weigh the present with the past, the old baronial hall lost nothing of its dignity or its valued associations by the change. Though shorn of its ancient splendour, the venerable pile still holds out a valuable lesson to the contemplative mind; for are not the extensive acts of public liberality and of private benevolence, and the old English hospitality of its present worthy possessors, calculated to exert a lofty moral influence and a practical usefulness in the surrounding neighbourhood, which all the imposing but valucless pageantry and grandeur of feudal times—now for ever departed—could not command?

The castle consisted of two quadrangular courts, with a lofty embattled tower at each angle, three of which are still remaining, and an embattled portal, forming the principal entrance to the quadrangle. The buildings of the first court are those which are now in course of restoration, and to these I shall return by and bye. In the second quadrangle are some beautiful relics of Sudeley's former magnificence, consisting chiefly of the grand banqueting room, the great hall, and the outer wall of the old kitchen, where there is a fireplace sufficiently capacious to roast an ox, being 12 feet in width, and exhibiting marks of

vigorous use which testify that a substantial dietary was not beneath the consideration of men of the olden time. In the watch tower is a perforated fracture, which, according to tradition, was caused by a cannon shot during the siege of the castle, which, passing through, took off the head of the royalist officer of artillery; and this circumstance was mainly instrumental in bringing about a capitulation. The event has been transmitted through various generations by means of an oral ballad, of which the following is a stanza:—

“ Bounce! bounce! again go Waller’s guns,
 And Morton hegan to swear,
 ‘I’d rather have lost ten thousand pounds
 Than the head of my cannonier.’ ”

The rising ground on which the cannon were placed is still pointed out, and a gentleman of the neighbourhood informs me that till recently the iron rod of one of the pinnacles of the ancient chapel, which stands near the castle, was bent in the direction of the watch tower, having evidently been struck by a passing shot, and left in that position. The ruins of the chapel, which stand on the lawn, are of a date coeval with that of the castle, when that kind of ecclesiastical architecture, of which it is a pure and elegant specimen, had attained its perfection. The chapel seems like a beautiful miniature of Eton. In the north wall is a block of alabaster, which, in the year 1782 was found to cover the remains of Queen Katherine Parr. These remains having been discovered by accident, were subject from time to time to many indignities and spoliations from bacchanalians and others (Sudeley being at one time occupied as a beer-house), until at length they were deposited in one of the vaults of the Chandos family, hard by; the block of alabaster would have shared a similar fate had not means been taken for its preservation, as visitors from Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, and other places—true to the English character—would each take away a fragment in their pockets to adorn their chimney-pieces; the block is, therefore, now secured by an iron grating. Mr. Lawson, writing in 1828, says—“I am sorry to report that

Queen Katherine's remains have not been redeposited with the honour and historical respect due to the royal and noble lady ; for, instead of their being replaced within the walls in their own grave, and secured from further intrusion, they are buried in a lean-to building outside the north wall, in which divine service is sometimes performed, to preserve the right as a parochial church. How much better it would be to restore the chapel itself for this purpose, and to erect a suitable monument to the memory of Katherine Parr. Surely some mark of consideration and grateful respect is due from this country to the memory of our first Protestant Queen ; and if the owner of the soil which covers her sacred dust does not endeavour to preserve her remains from further outrage, the bishop of the diocese is called upon to devise some suitable protection for the desecrated grave of this royal lady, to whom the church of England owes the preservation of the University of Cambridge." Attached to the north side of this the principal chapel is a smaller one, in which service is regularly performed. When fitted up with open seats and other suitable furniture it will be more in character with the fine old ruined building, and will form a delightful retreat in consecrated hours. On the north-west of the castle stand the remains of the grange, the walls of which are very massive ; but a portion of it was pulled down by some of Lord Rivers's tenants, to obtain through it a view of Winchcombe (!) from the room which they inhabited in the castle—a tolerably good instance of taste and barbarity amalgamated.

We come now to the restorations of the buildings of the first court of the castle. These have been going on for several years, under the superintendence of an eminent architect, and no pains or expence seem to have been spared to render this mansion in every way worthy of its ancient magnificence : carvings, paintings, tapestry, stained glass, and costly furniture, are arranged with the best taste. The paintings are by Rubens, Paul Veronese, Mabeuse, Sasso Ferrato, De Witt, Morland, Poelemberg, Weenix, Sir A. More, Reynolds, Sir P. Lely, &c. Among these are "The Paralytic," by Rubens, purchased on the con-

minent; "Henry the Eighth and his Children" (Sir A. More), a most valuable picture, being the original one sent by the Queen to Walsingham; and "The Union of the Roses," which is one of Mabeuse's best. The two last mentioned should have found a prominent place in the National Gallery. There is also a series of sketches, by Vertue, of portraits by Holbein; with a small full-length portrait beautifully carved in stone, also by Holbein; these were purchased at the Strawberry Hill sale, and are endorsed with the autograph of Horace Walpole. The tapestry is descriptive of the several sports of hawking, hunting, &c., with a very fine sea-piece. The carvings, which are chiefly by Holbein, with the valuable relics and works of art, gathered from public and private collections, convents, abbeys, &c., proclaim at once the wealth and good taste of their present possessors. Among the furniture (a portion of which was brought from Hampton Court Palace) is a mandarin's bedstead, taken at Pekin during the late war; it comprises also within itself a dressing place with every accommodation, and the trellis work which surrounds it is so beautifully and minutely carved as to surpass all my previous ideas of Chinese skill and ingenuity. These great family bedsteads are much prized in China, being held in affectionate veneration, and handed down from father to son as heir looms. I have only space sufficient to notice an unique and exceedingly valuable mosaic table, which in the 15th century adorned the palace of Lorenzo de Medicis, at Florence, and the bedstead of the Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Elizabeth; this is elaborately carved, and in the head-piece is a crucifix concealed behind a slide.

Amid these relics and ruins we lingered till the gong assembled us around the well spread dinner board. In the dusk of the evening, tea and coffee were served up on the lawn, and while the happy party were discussing the creature comforts and the questions of the day, I stole away to the old ruined chapel, sat myself in a rustic chair, and, armed with an immense pipe,* from which the clouds chased each other in pleasant and

* This pipe had belonged to the Duke of Sussex.

playful gambolings, soon became absorbed in the most delicious fancies. The moon, too, shot her silver rays upon the old walls—

“The soft, the silver moonbeam!
How silently it falls
Upon the time-worn battlement
And ivy mantled walls,
And on the turret hoary,
That proudly, 'mid decay,
Still speaketh of a splendour gone,
And glory passed away.”

There were visions of doughty barons and beauteous dames, of long robed priests, of marriage feasts and funereal processions, of solitary dungeons, carnage, and civil war, passing before me—all of which these old walls had survived, and still they looked down frowningly in their remaining strength, and still they would look down upon generations yet to come, when I, together with that joyous group whose merry laugh was ringing in my ear, should have been called to our long home, and have helped to lengthen out that funereal procession of the shadowy past which was seen in the eye of imagination winding round this time hallowed ruin. A hearty slap on the back, which nearly beat the breath out of my body, administered by one of my companions, here dispersed every thing of a dreamy nature, and I rejoined the party.

On the following morning, after breakfast, we took our leave of the hospitable host, and bade adieu to Sudeley, having but one wish remaining to be gratified. It was this: that the heir to this broad domain may be the progenitor of a long line of descendants, each and every one of whom may have the capacity to enjoy for himself, the will to dispense to others, and finally the good fortune to resign his trust with a quiet conscience.





Postscript.

The following information has come to hand since the foregoing part of this book was printed:—

Worcester.—CHURCH WARDENS FOR 1848:—*St. Clement's*—Mr. Thomas Fawkes and Mr. Ezekiel Gummery. *St. Michael's*—Mr. J. Sayer and Mr. J. Hood. *St. Peter's*—Mr. H. Chamberlain and Mr. W. Otley. *St. Swithin's*—Mr. R. West and Mr. J. L. Williams. *St. Andrew's*—Mr. J. Stallard and Mr. J. Knight. *St. Helen's*—Mr. W. Cowell and Mr. Griffiths. *Claines*—Mr. Evans, Tollardine, for the county part, and Mr. Day, St. George's Square, for the city. *St. John's*—Mr. Coucher and Mr. Phillpotts. *St. Alban's*—Mr. Nicholson. *St. Martin's*—Mr. H. Beeken and Mr. T. Burrow. *St. Nicholas*—Mr. John Stallard and Mr. W. Edgecombe. *All Saints*—Mr. Bird and Mr. Edmunds. *Tything*—Mr. J. Palmer.

Oldswinford.—The largest and oldest vault in the old church (in the middle aisle, near the reading desk) was that of the Milwards, of Wollescote⁶, in this parish. This contained a great number of lead coffins, some of them unusually large and ornamented—several members of this family having been very large in person. During the civil war of Charles the First, Prince Rupert made Wollescote House, in this parish (the residence of Mr. Thomas Milward, whose family had lived there from 1500 or earlier), his head quarters for a considerable time, and by living there and killing Mr. Milward's stock, and eating up his corn, very much injured him in his substance. The prince had a

garrison at Wichbury Wood, from Wollescote about a third of a mile; still to be seen by the entrenchments. The parliament party had a garrison at Stourton Castle, A.D. 1643. These meeting on Stourbridge Common, a sharp battle ensued, and Prince Rupert's party was worsted, and he himself nearly taken; for, riding hard to get towards Wollescote, he was closely pursued by a parliament trooper; and when the prince came to the heath gate, leading off the common to Oldswinford, the gate being shut, and the trooper very near him, and there being a boy near the gate, the prince cried "Open the gate!" which he did; when the prince was through, he said hastily "Shut the gate!" This the boy immediately did; and the trooper being thus stopped, the prince escaped. This matter broke up the quarters at Wollescote, and the prince on his departure took his signet off his finger, and giving it to Mr. Milward, told him his adverse fortune then would not permit him to recompense his damage and loyalty, but that when the king's affairs turned out prosperously he should have his loss repaired, on presenting the king with his ring, and stating the circumstances. A younger son of Mr. Thomas Milward, John Milward, D.D., of Oxford, whilst studying there, got acquainted with Mr. Harry Freeman, a Creole, and native of St. Kitts (of the family of Freeman, of Fawley Court, Bucks), who persuaded him to petition Charles the Second (then restored to the crown) for the living of St. Thomas, Middle Island, St. Kitts, and a grant of a sugar plantation, called the "Godwin Estate," St. Kitts. An ancestor of Lord Stamford's accordingly presented the Rev. J. Milward to the king, who, upon having the prince's signet, and a petition setting forth the circumstances under which it was given, and praying the above grants, presented to him, received him kindly, and promised to consider it, and have proper inquiries made into the facts. The result was the presentation of the living and the Godwin Estate to the Rev. J. Milward; on which, about the year 1664, he went over to St. Kitts with Mr. H. Freeman, whose sister he married, and was inducted into his church; but it was some years afterwards before he could get

Colonel Codrington, who had the management of the estate for the crown, to give it up; and then not until after much litigation.

The above is extracted from the MSS. of Mr. John Dovaston, of West Felton, a Shropshire antiquary, and a gentleman of known accuracy, who was a descendant of Dr. John Milward.

I also forgot to state, with regard to Oldswinford school, that the boys are not now dressed in the ancient prescribed costume, and that the modern innovation of trousers by no means harmonizes with the relics of an earlier period, as exhibited on their persons.

Cardbigge.—The number of children belonging to the schools at this church amounts to about 100, instead of the smaller number I have before named.

Monuments in Churches.—I wish to take this opportunity of recommending to public attention an excellent work (of which several editions have been published) on the subject of monuments in churches, by Mr. Marsland. Were the suggestions contained in that little work more generally circulated I have too good an opinion of English society to think that henceforth our better taste and feelings would be outraged by the erection of pompous monuments, defacing and monopolizing the space in our churches, and exhibiting epitaphic nonsense, any thing but in accordance with that Christian humility and dreadful awe which the uncertainty of our future fate should beget in us. The most fitting memorial that can be set up for a deceased member of the Church is by some addition to, repair, or beautification of that fabric in which he worshipped during his lifetime—by the gift of a font, a window, or a bible—or, should his means permit, by some charitable foundation by which posterity may be led to bless his memory.



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“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Mr. G. Jukes,
Persnore.”

“ Yours faithfully,
“ HENRY LYGON.”

WORCESTERSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

MUSEUM BAZAAR.

THE COUNCIL of this Society beg leave to inform the Public, but particularly the Ladies of the County and City of Worcester, that the MUSEUM BAZAAR will be held in the SHIRE HALL, FOREGATE STREET, on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of August next, towards which the Council earnestly solicit donations in Articles or money.

By order of the Council,

GEORGE REECE, Secretary.

Museum, March, 1848.

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We desire to state that the works of these Sisters were seen by Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, six years ago, who, as a testimony of her approbation, graciously gave her patronage.

The exhibition will close in Worcester and open in Malvern the first week in June. Both shops are furnished with every article of Needlework.

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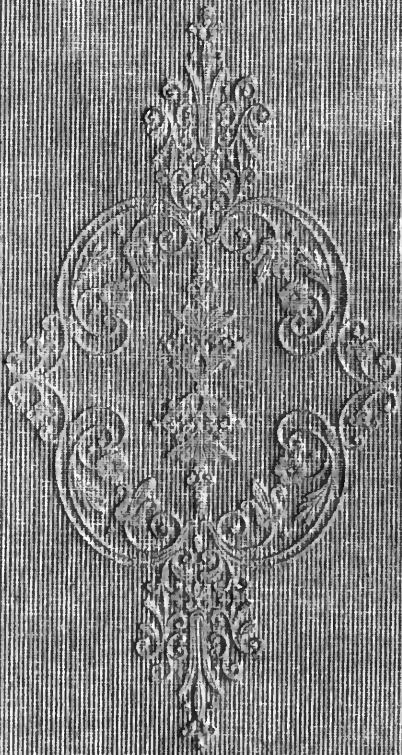


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