

## MEMORIAL TO G. LIPSCOMB

On 10th October, 1929, there was dedicated by the Bishop of Buckingham, at Quainton, a memorial to our County historian. The memorial, which was un-veiled by Mr. Coningsby Disraeli, takes the form of a tablet on the north wall of the chancel; it is made of green marble in a setting of white alabaster. On the upper part of the flat pilasters which flank the tablet are two bronze figures, representing Courage and Fortitude. The memorial was designed by Mr. H. Youngman, and bears a simple inscription which records the main facts of Lipscomb's life. It was subscribed for by 250 people fully representative of the county, and the success of the appeal is due to the organization and energy of the Rev. P. F. L. Cautley, the rector of Quainton.

Mr. Disraeli, speaking from the lectern, said:

I am permitted by the Rector to say a few words on the subject which has brought us all here to-day, and on the man whom we are met to honour.

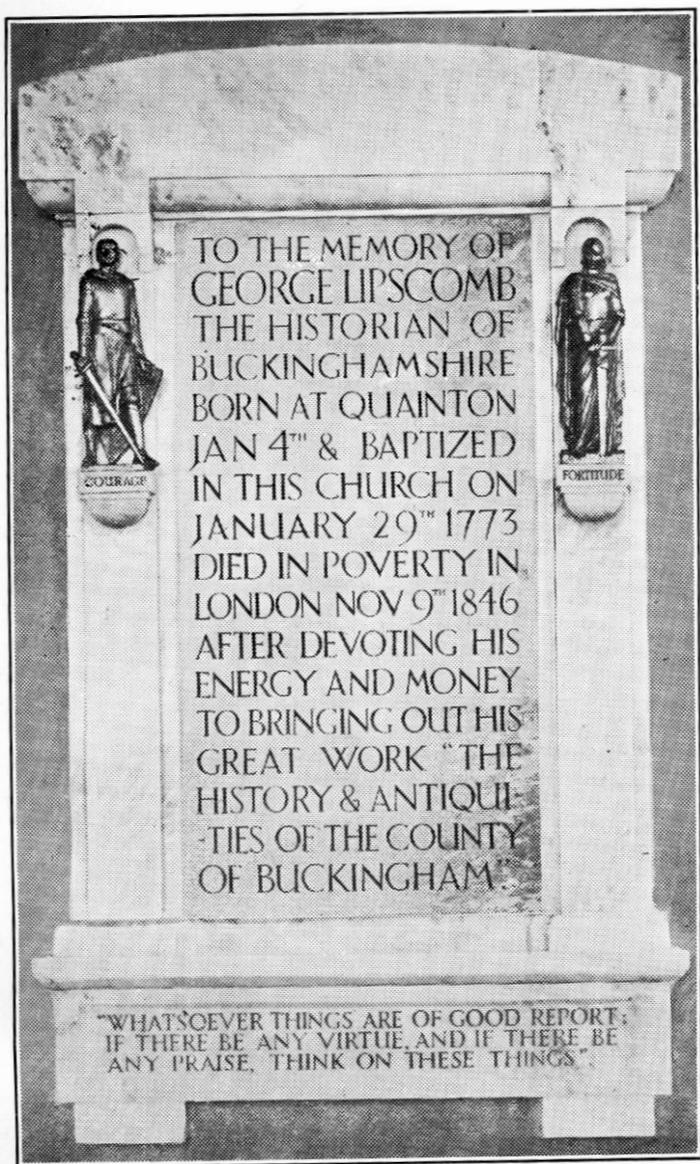
The life of George Lipscomb is a singularly interesting one. He was born, as most of you know, in this village. He was the son of a very gallant naval surgeon — whose tomb is just outside the porch here — who fought bravely for his country in the wars in many quarters of the globe, and who retired here to become the village doctor and surgeon for more than thirty years. In that little house at the top of the green—I am glad to say now properly identified with the family — George Lipscomb was born. In this church he was brought to be baptized. With the school children he was educated; and here he spent the first years of his life studying medicine and surgery under the tutelage of his father. Later he went to London pursuing with success a course of medicine, and at the age of 19 years he became house surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He was not content only to be a surgeon. His hand itched for the pen, and he became a prolific writer. He wrote many articles, not

only on medicine, but on political economics, statistics, and medical treatises well known and accepted by the profession on the different diseases which were then rife in the country. We are talking now of some-thing like one hundred years ago.

Like many other men, it gradually grew on him that he had not found his true vocation. He had a call to other things. History tells us in every land and every age are produced men who hear the call to labour, — a call there is no resisting, and which is not generally attractive because it is performed without thanks and reward, save the consciousness of a duty faithfully performed. Such a call had George Lipscomb. Perhaps it was the environment in which he was born. As a boy looking from his windows upon the village green with its ancient cross; being brought here to church, gazing on its ancient monuments, and the beautiful buildings of his native village; perhaps all this created the germ which called him to consider and write on the history and antiquities of his native county.

He was deeply impressed with the conviction that Buckinghamshire possessed local features and artificial embellishments, united with objects highly interesting to the antiquary and the scholar, which placed this County in equal rank with others which had long possessed the advantage of very learned and able Historians; and that its connection with events of national importance, together with the fame and distinction of many eminent characters, identified with it, in ancient and modern times, as heroes, patriots, statesmen, orators, and poets, dignifying and adorning the spheres in which they moved, entitled this County to at least equal regard. This was Lipscomb's apology — and he freely states it — for undertaking so laborious and so great a task.

He had material at hand on which he could commence. The Rev. Edward Cook, Rector of Haversham, had been an assiduous collector of manuscripts relating to our county, and to these he allowed Lipscomb free access. The labours of Kennet, Langley, Browne-Willis and others had already placed on record facts relating to various parts of the shire.



TO THE MEMORY OF  
GEORGE LIPSCOMB  
THE HISTORIAN OF  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BORN AT QUANTON  
JAN 4<sup>TH</sup> & BAPTIZED  
IN THIS CHURCH ON  
JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup> 1773  
DIED IN POVERTY IN  
LONDON NOV 9<sup>TH</sup> 1846  
AFTER DEVOTING HIS  
ENERGY AND MONEY  
TO BRINGING OUT HIS  
GREAT WORK "THE  
HISTORY & ANTIQUI-  
TIES OF THE COUNTY  
OF BUCKINGHAM"

"WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT;  
IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE  
ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS".

With this material at his disposal, Lipscomb devoted the remainder of his life in supplementing and extending it, and the result of all his toil, in which he expended his means, and to which he sacrificed his professional career, was the four volumes which constitute "The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham."

The whole story of that book is the story of Tragedy! Begun in fairly prosperous circumstances—he had a large list of subscribers to whom he could turn—yet the cost of collating, of transcribing, of travelling about the country from library to library to obtain his material eat deeply into the money he had, and, as I said before, he had sacrificed his professional career in order to take up the work. The first part of the first volume was published in 1832, and then began a period of great pecuniary embarrassment. It was impossible to go further. There was no money for the publishers. And then three years later his wife died, and her little income,—perhaps at that moment all they had,—died with her. Then came years of poverty and misery. And yet he worked on, sitting in his garret,—transcribing and writing with little or no means, with little or no food,—yet the work going on. Then the last few years in the debtor's prison, stricken with mortal sickness,—yet the work always going on, until at last, on his death-bed, he knew that his task was finished, and he had the joy before he died to hear that the publisher had taken up the work, and was prepared to produce it. It was produced three years after his death. Now we have it on our shelves and in our libraries—four great volumes on the history and antiquities of Buckinghamshire. Surely George Lipscomb's life was one of rare self-devotion to a great object and to love of his country!

We are honouring to-day no soldier, no sailor, no statesman, no orator, or great divine — though of these the history of our county has abundantly given. But we are honouring the man who has transcribed the memories of all these for all time. Who has written of their lives and of their deaths, their happinesses and their sorrows, their good deeds and their

follies, of their wives and children, and of their children's children. Has described their lands and their houses, their benefactions and their charities. Has portrayed—parish by parish—their churches, their buildings, their monuments, and their memorials, their histories and antiquities. He has made them all live, and safe from the obliteration of time. His object was—as he states—"to embalm the memory of the past for the benefit of succeeding generations." Truly has he obeyed the poet to—

"Call from their tombs the pious, just, and wise, "And  
bring their fair example to our eyes;

"This power is thine—'tis thine the sacred trust

"To snatch their virtues from the mouldering dust, "To  
screen them safe from Time's contagious breath

"And bid them bloom unprejudiced by death."

We honour George Lipscomb to-day ; a Buckinghamshire man, a son of Quainton. His bones may lie in a distant grave, but his spirit is with us still in the home he loved, and in placing this memorial in the church where as a boy he sat by the side of his gallant old father, we preserve always his memory and achievement from "Time's contagious breath," and in some small degree—with our gratitude—repay to him our great debt.

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to the north side of the chancel and unveiled the memorial "To the glory of God, and in remembrance of George Lipscomb, the historian of Bucks."