

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NOTES AND QUERIES.

## NORTH MARSTON CHURCH.

Her Majesty has been pleased to restore the Chancel of this Church in memory of the late J. C. Neild, Esq., who dying three years ago, bequeathed to her the vast property which he had amassed. The Church is one of mixed styles, and unusually rich in features of interest.

The Chancel is a remarkably fine specimen of perpendicular work, and the whole of the details of excellent character. It remained, however, in a dilapidated and neglected condition until last year, when Digby Wyatt, Esq., was appointed by Her Majesty to carry out its thorough repair. A view of the new East Window was published in the "Illustrated London News," of September 29th, 1855, with the following account:—

"Often a quarter of the money spent upon the marble urns, over which allegorical figures swaddled in drapery mourn the virtues of the departed squire, would have sufficed to repair the simple old chancel for which such costly memorials are a world too fine, or would have added whatever feature of use or beauty the structure might most have demanded. From such, as we deem it, culpable extravagance — in lavishing on the dead sums which would have been better bestowed in ministering to the necessities or spiritual gratification of the living — the Royal lady, by whom the monument we engrave has been erected, must be regarded as entirely free; since not only has it been so devised as to add a graceful feature to the noble old Church of the parish in which Mr. Neild's property was principally situated, but its cost has been less than a third of the whole sum spent by her Majesty in restoring simply, but most thoroughly and substantially, the chancel, which at North Marston forms an unusually large and important feature of the Church.

"The subject which has been selected for the window is the Ascension. High up in the centre compartment appears our Saviour, and at his feet are grouped the Apostles, whom he is supposed to have just left — some of whom are attentively examining the prints upon the earth left by his ascending feet. This mode of symbolising the duty of the Church is of not unfrequent ancient occurrence, being to be met with in various mediæval sculptures, as at Ely, and in some of the early block books. In the four other principal bays stand the four Evangelists, under canopies, whilst in the minor openings above are angels and the Holy Dove descending as it were to meet the ascending Saviour. Along the bottom of the whole runs the text, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.' The window has been executed with the greatest care, and a very happy result, by Miss Harriet Clarke, assisted in the ornamental portion of the work by Messrs. Ward and Nixon. Beneath the window is a reredos sculptured in Caen stone by Mr. Cundy, of Pimlico. Upon its frieze is carved the commemorative inscription, which states that—

"This Reredos and the Stained-glass Window above it were erected by her Majesty Victoria (D.S.B.R.F.D.), in the eighteenth year of her reign, in memory of JOHN CAMDEN NEILD, ESQ., of this parish, who died August 30th, 18-52, aged 72.'

"In the compartments of the reredos, as well as in the backs of two niches, one on each side of the Communion-table, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, &c., have been emblazoned; and these portions of the work, as well as whatever coloured decorations have been introduced, have been carried out by Mr. Miller, of Brewer-street, Golden-square."

There is a biography of James Neild, the father of James Camden Neild, Esq., with a portrait in the "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. lxxxiv. i. 206, lxxxiv. ii.

58, lxxxvii. i. 305. He was left an orphan at an early age, and made his fortune by diligence in the business of a goldsmith. He was born at Knutsford, in Cheshire, in 1744, and obtained the lease of the great tithes of North Marston from the Dean and Canons of Windsor, in 1798. Hp was Sheriff of this county in 1804, but was more distinguished for his benevolent and philanthropic exertions to ameliorate the state of the prisons. The son is commonly reported to have been a miser, and on one occasion to have made an attempt on his own life. Lipscomb, however, commends his kindness to the poor in providing allotment gardens, &c.

An Account of North Marston, with a south view of the Church, was published in the "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. xc. ii. 490, 580. The same view is engraved in Lipscomb, with others of two Piscinte, and the brass of Ilichard Saunders.

*1st Query.* Is there any other Church in this county, in which polychrome has been used in modern times? Most of our old Churches attest its use from the date of their erection till the 17th century, or later. It would be interesting to preserve a record, and, if possible, a sketch of all such perishable work as mural paintings.

John Schorne, Rector of North Marston in 1290, was believed on one occasion to have *conjured the Devil into a boot*. Dr. Lipscomb states, apparently on the authority of Browne Willis's MSS., that a representation of this extraordinary scene was set up in the east window of the Church.

*2nd. Query.* How was it represented? Did any fragments of the glass exist at the time of the recent restoration? and where are they now?

*3rd Query.* [F. G. L.] In an account of the Church of North Marston in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1820, p. 581, is the notice of a pulpit hanging of blue, embroidered with silver. Can any of your readers tell me if it is still in use, and if any other altar or pulpit vestments of the same color exist in the county?

The restoration of CHEDDINGTON Church, under the direction of Mr. Street, is not yet completed. The Chancel has been newly roofed, and the East wall rebuilt, with a three light window of the transition style from

Early English to Decorated. The remaining walls and windows throughout the Church are being thoroughly restored. The fragments of stained glass are preserved. All the pews have been removed, and with them a few of the original oak seats, which were plain, and in no way remarkable. Uniform open seats of stained deal are to be laid down, and the floor of the Nave to be paved with Minton's black and red tiles. The old pulpit is retained. The South Porch has been rebuilt, and a Vestry has been erected on the North side of the Chancel, far enough Eastward not to interfere with the East window of the North aisle, and rather improving than detracting from the external appearance of the Church. It will be recollected that the position first proposed, between the North aisle and Chancel, was discussed and objections stated, when the plans were laid before this Society by the kindness of the Rev. A. P. Cust, last April. Several pieces of Norman and other sculptured stonework were found built into the Avails: these have been placed in the walls of the Porch, where they may be seen and preserved. Parts of the canopy (apparently) of a tomb, and other perpendicular canopy work were also discovered. The remains of frescoes and colour, of ages before and after the Reformation, were visible on the walls: to the later date must be assigned the texts above the pulpit.

HORSENDEN CHURCH was re-opened by the Bishop of Oxford on the 29th of September, 1855, after restoration of the fittings of the interior. The old and unsightly high pews have been removed, and seats of a simple design in English oak substituted. The prayer desk and lectern are of the same material, carved by Margetts, of Oxford, and the baptismal font, of Caen stone, is executed by the same artist. These have been provided at the cost, and mainly from the designs of the Rev. W. E. Partridge, Rector and Patron, Mr. Humphrey Bull being" clerk of the works.

The Old Parish Church, dedicated to St. Michael, was pulled down with the exception of the Chancel, (which is Perpendicular,) in 1765, being then represented to be "decayed, having been erected more than five hundred years." John Grubb, Esq., the Patron, then rebuilt

the tower at the West end of the Chancel, which has from that time served as the Parish Church. It is engraved in Lipscomb.

*Query.* Are there any traces of Horsenden having been much more populous than it now is, to require so large a Church as this must originally have been ?

AKELY.—The New Church of St. James having been consecrated on the first day of our meeting at Buckingham, the ceremony was attended by a large body of members, and a brief notice of the Church was given by the author of the account of our meeting.\* The Tower standing on the South side of the Nave, and forming the principal entrance, is a striking feature well worthy of notice; we do not recollect to have seen another example of this arrangement. In our pleasure in recording so good a work, we gladly overlook considerable inaccuracy of detail: less, however, than is usually found in the works of those who have not had long experience, and devoted their talent almost exclusively to *Church Architecture*. Lithographs of the building may be obtained.

AYLESBURY CHURCH.—About six years ago those substantial repairs of the Nave were being carried out, which Mr. G. G. Scott had previously stated to be necessary. (See his Report p. 30, *supra*). The galleries and pews having then, been swept away, chairs and benches were employed as a temporary substitute until 1854, when low open seats of substantial oak were erected. The contractors for the necessary repairs were Messrs. Cooper, of Derby, — for the seats, screens, pulpit, &c., Messrs. Yonge, of Oxford. The stonework of the chancel and pulpit is by Mr. W. W. Thompson, an honorary member of our Society. Two windows in the North Chapel have been painted by Mr. Waller, and an East window by Mr. Willement is now being erected. The whole of this restoration, since the fabric was made secure, has been effected without any interruption of the Sunday — and but little of the Daily Services. The restoration of the Nave was completed early in this year, but the Chancel is still partitioned off with canvas, to enable

\* See Account of the Society's Annual Meeting at Buckingham (1855), p. 1.

the masons to finish, their work without interruption of Divine Service. It is hoped that this will be reopened by the Bishop very shortly, after which a full account of the Church and its restoration will be looked for. Suffice it to say at present, that there are few Parish Churches that surpass the one, and that the other has been carried out, as far as it is completed, in a manner not unworthy of the Vicar, our Vice-President, nor of the Architect, Mr. Scott.

Poor QUARRENDON! The past year has made sad ravages with this ruined Church. In that time the South Porch has been levelled with the ground, and much of the South wall of the nave has fallen. Last year Lady Frankland Russell pointed out to us how the East wall of the Nave had been excavated: now the Chancel Arch has been completely picked away, leaving the wall above it unsupported; and an ominous crack makes the beholder dread what may be the consequence of the first high wind.

Two years ago a door and a little pointing with Roman cement might have rescued the Church from further ruin and desecration: even now it may be enclosed, and much of the building preserved; but if the present treatment is to be continued, in a few years there will be nothing left even to mark the consecrated spot, except a few overgrown foundation stones, and the grass springing luxuriantly from the remains of those who have been buried under the shadow of its walls. Even the stones which were placed a few years ago to mark the boundary of the Churchyard, are almost lost sight of and forgotten. Is it not a reproach to ourselves in our Architectural and Archaeological capacity (to take the lowest ground,) as well as to the Guardians of that Church property, that such a state of things should be allowed? What steps can be taken to prevent further sacrilege?

The state of Quarrendon Church in July, 1817, was accurately described by "Viator," in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of that date. One of three monuments then standing in the Chancel was to the memory of SIR HENRY LEE, K.G., who died 1611. He was the greatest member of the Lee family, and was Champion to Queen Elizabeth, Master of the Ordnance to James I., &c.

A correspondent (who asks for extracts from registers or documents relating to this family) writes: —

"There are some very interesting MSS. of his [Sir Henry Lee's] at Ditchley, besides his portrait with his dog Bevis. He is the prototype of Sir Walter Scott's Sir Henry Lee, in his Woodstock. In some very ancient Court Rolls still existing, at Ditchley, I can trace the Lees from their first coining to Quarrendon, about the end of Richard II., when they were first Woodwards, and afterwards Constables, until they became Lords of the Manor of Quarrendon, and many other places in its vicinity. One Court Roll was during the time that the famous Duke of Clarence, of Malmsey notoriety, was Lord of the Manor."

The Lady of this Sir Henry Lee was buried at Aylesbury, in 1584; her monument is at the end of the North Transept.

*Query.* It has been stated that a lead coffin from this Church was used as a watering trough in the neighbourhood. Is anything known of this? Is the font, or any portion of the monuments, &c., from the Church still in existence?

A Parsonage-house is about to be built at FLEET MARSTON. It is hoped that some arrangement may be made, by which the adjoining Parish of Quarrendon, as well as his own, may benefit by the residence of a Clergyman at this place. Fleet Marston comprises 910 acres, three farm-houses and three cottages; all of the latter will most probably have to be pulled down, to make room for the erection of the Parsonage, much to the regret of the Incumbent. Already the population has gradually decreased from 46 in 1811 to 32.

At MENTMORE, the magnificent residence of Baron Rothschild has just been completed. This brings a new style, as well as example, of domestic architecture into the county. It is said to be the first attempt of Sir Joseph Paxton in that science, since neither Crystal nor Horticultural palaces — however perfect and unique in their way — can come under that denomination.

WESTON TURVILLE. One of the red Samian paterae, found here among the remains of Roman interment, in

May last, contained ashes, leaves, silver, and bronze ornaments, and with these a white substance, which emitted when pressed, an aromatic scent.\* This was shown by Rev. A. Isham to an eminent analytical chemist in London, who thus reports upon it:—

"The aromatic substance you left with me, I find to be the gum resin 'Olibanum,' the ancient Thus or Frankincense. I believe the common Latin name is derived from the Hebrew *Lebonah*, thence the Greek *libanos*. It was extensively used by the ancients; and a very long account of it is given in Pliny Lib. xii., Cap. 14,

It is used as incense in Catholic churches (mixed with other resins) to this day. If you heat a small quantity of it on a piece of iron you will readily recognise the odour."

A Member of the B. A. A. S., who is collecting an account of the Legends, Superstitions, and Curious Customs of the County, will feel obliged for any notices of ghost stories, dreams, charms, omens, conjurors, witches, holy trees, superstitious remedies and customs, or other curious stories connected with any place in Buckinghamshire. Address, C. C., care of Mr. Pickburn, Aylesbury.