

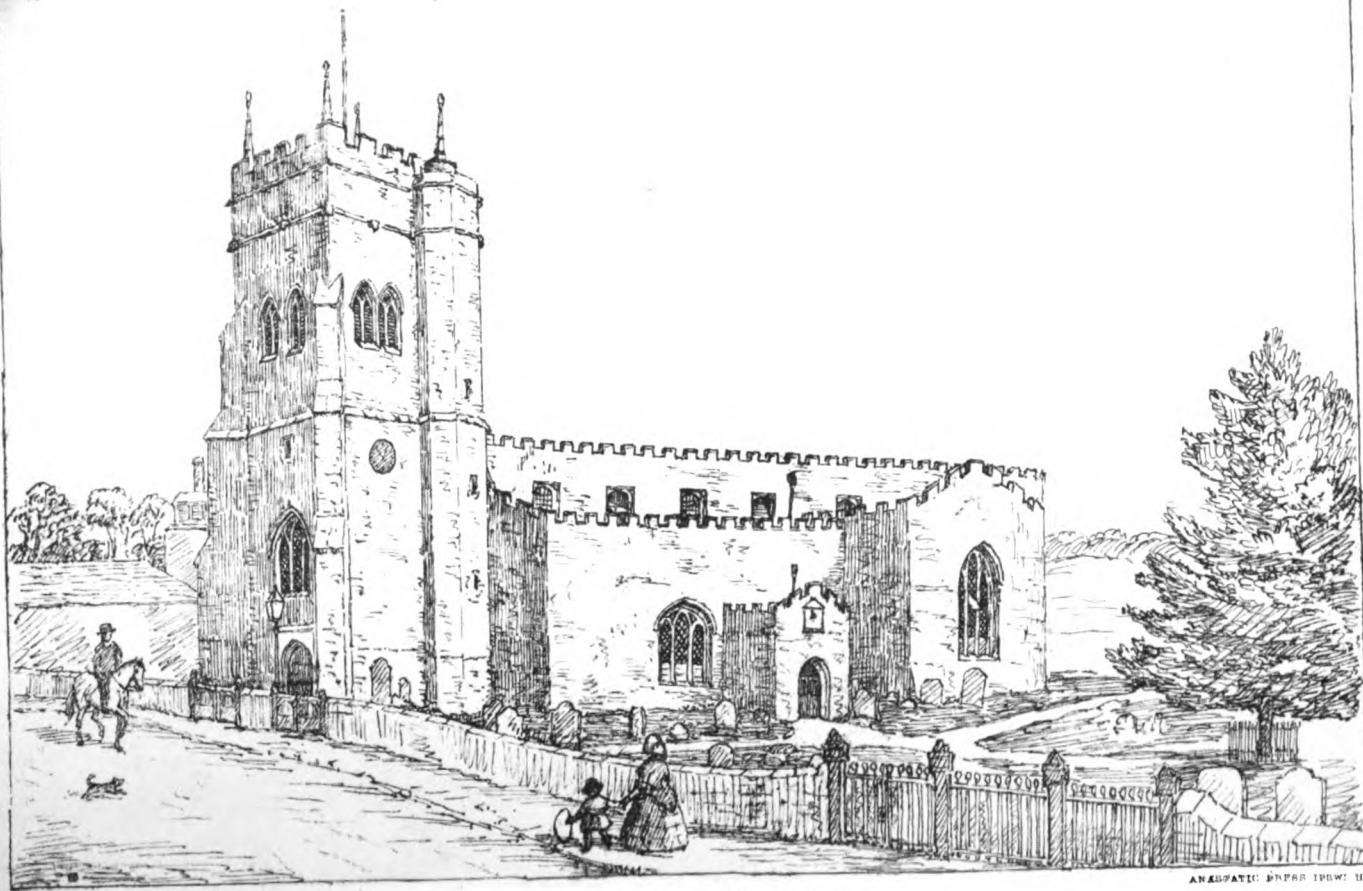
AMERSHAM.

By W. H. HASTINGS KELKE, B. A.

Of Amersham we have no certain record prior to the Norman Conquest, though Browne Willis calls it a "Saxon town," while local traditions point to conflicts with the Danes in its neighbourhood. At the time of the Domesday Survey, it comprised no less than six Manors, the chief of which previously belonging to Edith, Queen of Edward the Confessor, was then held by Geoffrey de Mandeville, who also held half a hide of land in Amersham, (or as it was then called Elmodesham,) belonging to the Manor of Ferneham (Farnham Royal,) of which, in the words of the Survey: "He disseised Bertram de Verdun, whilst he was abroad in the King's service."

Another Manor, formerly belonging to Alwin, a vassal of Queen Edith's, was held by Roger, under Odo, the powerful Bishop of Bayeux. A third by Alman, of the Earl of Moreton. A fourth by Vluiet, of Hugh de Bolebec. A fifth was held by Turstin Mantel, elsewhere called Turstin the son of Rolf, a name which seems to indicate Danish origin, and which still remains in Mantle Green Farm, as well as in Great and Little Mantles, at Little Missenden, in which parish Turstin had possessions. Lastly, one was held by Gozelin Brito. Of these, Geoffrey de Mandeville's Manor amounted to seven hides and a half, the rest to only half a hide each, all of them nevertheless being Manors.

Since the whole $10\frac{1}{2}$ hides, allowing the rather wide margin of 120 or 150 acres to a hide, would only amount to at most 1,575 acres, while the present area of the parish is estimated at about 8,000 acres, it follows that either little more than one-eighth of the parish could then have been under cultivation, unless the boundaries of the parish have since been greatly extended, or (which seems very possible) that the hidage was founded on the value of the land, and not on the actual number of acres. It



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will presently appear that little more than two hundred years after this period, two-thirds of the parish were in cultivation; the latter supposition therefore seems the more probable.

Besides the cultivated ground was woodland sufficient for keeping 470 hogs; and three mills, one of which was of the yearly value of five, and another of four shillings. The chief of these landholders, Geoffrey de Mandeville (or Magnâ Villâ), was one of the most valiant of William's Norman followers, and was rewarded with large grants of land, lying for the most part in Essex, where was his principal seat of Walden. He was constable of the Tower of London, and founded a Benedictine Monastery at Hurley, in Berkshire. He was twice married, his wives names being respectively Athelaise and Leceline; by the former of whom he had a son William, who married Margaret, daughter of Eudo Dapifer (or Steward), to William the Conqueror. Their son Geoffrey married Roasia or Rohesia, daughter of Alberic de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and was created Earl of Essex, a title long held by his descendants. Espousing the cause of the Empress Maud, he received numerous privileges from her,—his title and estates were confirmed with the Sheriffalty of London, Middlesex, and Hertfordshire, to which was added the custody of the Tower of London.

Having excited the hostility of King Stephen, he was, in 1141, seized while in attendance on him, at St. Albans, and did not regain his liberty until he had surrendered the Tower of London, and his own castles at Walden and Plessey. Geoffrey, now having divorced his sister Beatrice from her husband Hugh Talbot, and married her to William de Say, made in conjunction with the latter, inroads upon the lands of King Stephen, and of various ecclesiastics and other supporters of the Sovereign, and among other enormities despoiled the Abbey of Ramsey, in Huntingdonshire, driving out the Monks, and selling the ornaments of the Church. Henry of Huntingdon, after relating this act of sacrilege, adds, "He was, indeed, a man of great determination, but resolute in ungodliness, diligent in worldly affairs, but negligent in spiritual." The pious chronicler considers his death, which occurred soon after, as a judgment for this profanation of the Abbey. "Earl Godfrey (or Gcoffrey) was singled out

among his followers, and shot with an arrow by a common foot soldier. He made light of the wound, but died of it in a few days, under excommunication. See here the just judgment of God, memorable through all ages! While that Abbey was converted into a fortress, blood exuded from the walls of the Church and the Cloister adjoining, witnessing the divine indignation, and prognosticating the destruction of the impious. This was seen by many persons, and I observed it with my own eyes." Camden quotes from the Register of the Abbey of Walden, founded by Geoffrey, and by him endowed with nineteen Churches, among which was Amersham, that "he was mortally wounded in the head at a small town called Burwell, and when he was at the point to die, and drawing his last breath, some Templars interposed, who covered him with the habit of their order, marking him with a red cross, and afterwards took away his body to their Orchard at the Old Temple, in London, where they suspended it in a leaden coffin from a tree." This, it appears, they did, as it was not lawful to grant him Christian burial until the sentence of excommunication had been annulled, which was at length effected, principally by the intercession of the Monks of Walden, who, in consideration of his boon of nineteen Churches, might well look with a more lenient eye on the delinquencies of the deceased than their injured brethren of Ramsey.

On Geoffrey's death, the date of which is somewhat uncertain, but appears to have been anno 1141, he was succeeded by his three sons in turn, who all dying without issue, the estates devolved to Geoffrey Fitz Pier, in right of his wife, Beatrix, who was grand-daughter of Geoffrey de Mandevill's sister, Beatrix, wife of William de Say. This Fitz Pier, on payment of 7,000 marks, or about £4,500, an immense sum at that time, obtained the earldom of Essex, taking the name of Mandeville, and enjoying the estates holden by his ancestors, among which was Amersham. The Manor subsequently formed part of the dower of Christina, wife of William de Mandeville, son of the above, who died 1228, and finally by the marriage of Maud, sister and heiress of William, to Humphrey de Bohun, it passed into that family. This Humphrey was Earl of Hereford, and High Constable of

England, and in 1303, the representative of his line was created Earl of Essex. In 1296, on the death of Richard Lord Fitz John, the Manor, with the exception of £34 and 4*d.* rent, was assigned to Robert de Clifford. In 1335, Humphrey de Bohun died, seised of the Manor of Amersham.

In 1376, the King committed to Philip de la Vache the custody of Amersham and Buckland, late belonging to Edward, Lord le Despencer, deceased, to hold the same until his attainment of his legal age. In 1400, Lord le Despencer, Earl of Gloucester, was attainted for plotting to restore Richard II. to the throne, and died seised of Amersham.

The above-mentioned Philip de la Vache was elected Knight of the Garter, temp. Richard II., and dying 1407, directs his body to be buried in the Church of St. Giles, of Chalfhunt.

The Manor continued in the possession of the Bohuns till the death of the last of this line, Earl of Hereford and Essex, when it was divided between the representatives of his daughters. Of these, Mary was wife of Henry IV., mother of Henry V., while Eleanor, the eldest daughter, had married Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and youngest son of Edward III. Their daughter Anne married Edmund, Earl of Stafford, whose son Humphrey was created Duke of Buckingham, and his son, Henry Stafford, Shakespeare's "Princely Buckingham," claimed the Manor, on the ground of his descent from the Bohuns. On his attainder by Richard III., it lapsed to the Crown. Its possession was confirmed by the attainder of his son, till in 1526, Henry VIII., granted it by patent to Sir John Russell, in capite, by Knight's service.

In 1610, James I., confirmed to Edward, Earl of Bedford, the Manor and Lordship of Agmondesham, *alias* Amarsham, *alias* Amersham *cum pertinentibus*, all of which premises were of the value of £42 per annum.

Though it would be perhaps almost impossible clearly to ascertain the present locality of the different Manors specified in the Domesday Survey, yet at a very early period we find mention of different Manors in Amersham, the names of which still exist.

The first which appears to be distinctly mentioned is Raans. In 1235, John de Ran, or Rane, held the fourth part of a knight's fee, and payed 3s. 4d. scutage for lands in Aumodesham. Jordanus de Raan was father of Ricardus, whose son Walter de Raan, or Raans, held the Manor of Raans, with other lands in Amersham. His daughter Alice married Thomas de la Grove, and their daughter and heiress Agnes by marriage brought the estate to William Brudenell, of Aynho. This William had three sons, Edmund, clerk of the Parliament in the reign of Edward III., who at his death without issue in the reign of Henry VI., ordered his body to be buried in Agmondesham Church; William, and Henry. This Henry, by his will, 1430, left Shardeloes and other Manors to his son John, with remainder to his other son Edmund, who was ancestor to those of the name seated at Shardeloes, which terminated in a daughter and heir, Elizabeth, married to Thomas Cheney. From his third son, Robert, descended the Brudenells, of Stoke Mandeville. William, brother of Henry, by marriage with Agnes Bulstrode, obtained the Manors of Hedgerley and Chalfont St. Peters. Their son Edmund (first cousin to Edmund Brudenell, of Shardeloes) was lord of Raans, Coleshill, Chalfhant, &c., and patron of Missenden Abbey. His daughter by his first marriage was wife to Richard Waller, son of that Richard Waller who distinguished himself at Agincourt, and ancestor of the poet. He was married secondly to Philippa Englefield, by whom he had two sons, Drue and Sir Robert. He died, having made his will, 1457, in which are some curious particulars relative to Amersham. He directed his body to be buried in Agmondesham Church, near his wife, Philippa, and leaves to the making of a new bell in the Church, £6 13s. 4d., besides 66s. 8d. given by Agnes Bonvalet; to the provosts of the Church for the maintenance of the great light before the cross 20s., also to the maintenance of the light before St. Catherine's cross, 3s. 4d.; to the poor of Amersham, £4.; to the reparation of the highway to Ailesbury and Wendover, £40, towards which he wills that his gold cup, his two silver basons, and his great piece of gilt plate, with the cover, and three silver candlesticks be sent to the Tower of London to be melted down. He bequeaths to his son John, Chalfhant, Eure (Iver), Denham, and

Fulmer. To Edmund, Raans and Stoke; to Drue, the Manor of Hugeley (Hedgerley), and lands in various places, one of which is Amersham. To Sir Robert, founder of the family of Brudenell of Dean, Earls of Cardigan, he bequeaths his lands in Horton and Stanwell.

It would seem that John and Edmund, were sons by the first marriage, and died before their father, as Drue, who was twenty-five years of age at his father's death, took out administration to the will in 1469, and seems to have possessed Raans. He died in 1489,* and was buried in the north aisle of the Church, leaving a son Edmund (or Simon, according to some), whose daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, married Sir Robert Drury.

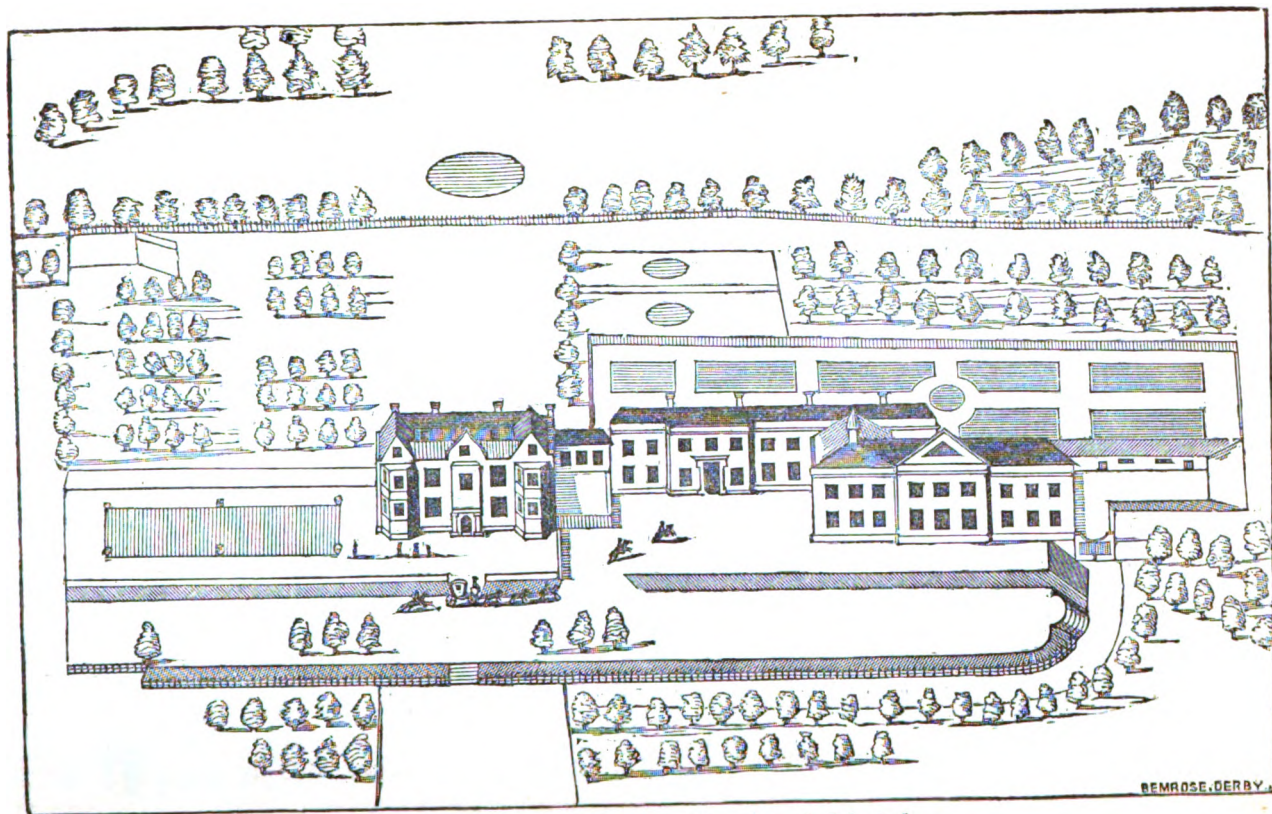
Raans afterwards came into the hands of the Proby's, of whom Heneage Proby was Sheriff for Bucks, and Thomas Proby was member for Amersham, 1651. It was afterwards sold by John Earl Gower to the Duke of Bedford, of whom it was purchased by the Earl of Burlington, to whose son Lord Chesham it now belongs. The present house at Raans was built by the Proby family, and bears their arms over the door; ermine, on a fess *gules*, a lion passant *or*; Crest, an ostrich's head erased *argent*, ducally gorged *or*, in the beak a key of the last.

The Manor of Wedon Hill formerly belonged to the Wedon family, one of whom, Sir Ralph de Wedon, had besides this Manor other possessions in Amersham, and a house standing in the Market-place. For his loyalty to the unfortunate Edward II., he was by the Queen's faction deprived of all his possessions, which were afterwards restored to him, or his son, but only on a life tenure.†

Edward the Third granted the Manor of Wedon Hill, and other places belonging to Sir Ralph de Wedon, to Sir John, afterwards Lord Cobham. The King and his son, the Black Prince, being reduced to great difficulties by the expenses of the French war, Sir John Cobham generously gave up the reversion of the greater part of his estates to them. The estates of Sir John Cobham passed into various hands, and the reversion of "Wedon Hill in Chiltone" in particular was given to Peter de Brewes, or Braose, in the 38th year of his reign. This

* So Collins; Lipscomb places his death in 1479.

† See "Records of Bucks," Vol. I., 211.



Bird's-eye View of the Old Mansion of Shardeloes.

Peter de Brewes was knighted, and, as appears by the Issue Rolls, received a pension of a hundred pounds a year from the King, "for good service in France."

The further history of Wedon Hill I have been unable to trace; it is now, together with the Manor of Woodrow, joined to the Shardeloes property.

The earliest distinct reference to Shardeloes seems to be in the reign of Edward III., who granted to William de Latymer a messuage and lands, called Shardeloes, formerly belonging to Simon de Bereford, then attainted and imprisoned in the Tower, as an adherent of Queen Isabel and Mortimer. In the reign of Henry VI., Shardeloes was held by Henry Brudenell, Lord of Raans. It was afterwards the property of the Tothills, and by the marriage of Joane, eldest daughter and co-heiress of William Tothill, and one of the extraordinary number of thirty-three children, it passed to Francis Drake, of Esher, whose grandson, Sir William Drake, Baronet, acquired by purchase the Manor of Amersham, thus uniting it to Shardeloes. He was the founder of the Amersham Almshouses, and has been by Lipscomb strangely confounded with his nephew and heir, Sir William Drake, Knight (not Baronet). This latter, says, Browne Willis, "built a very neat Town Hall, or Market House, which is the handsomest in the county, the building being of brick, standing on arched pillars, and embellished with freestone at the corners, with a lanthorn and clock at top." The old mansion of Shardeloes stood nearly on the site of the present one, but a little nearer the summit of the hill. Here William Tothill received Queen Elizabeth, who is said to have afterwards presented to him the portraits of herself and her chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, still remaining here. The gardens attached to it, formed out of a morass by Sir William Drake, nephew of the baronet, are highly praised by the authors of *Magna Britannia** as the chief object of interest to Amersham.

The accompanying bird's eye view of the old Mansion is from a family print in the possession of T. Tyrwhitt Drake, Esq., the present owner of Shardeloes, who kindly permitted it to be copied for the "Records."

The present House was built in the last century, and is a

* Published in 1720.

handsome specimen of the architecture of that date. It is so placed on the hill as to command the view of an extensive sweep of park, showing through the beautiful trees with which it is studded.

It does not clearly appear when or under what circumstances Amersham became a borough. Dr. Brady, quoted by Browne Willis, "attributes this privilege to its inhabitants being tenants in ancient demesne, and tells us that Parliament men for this place are chosen by homage in the Lord's Court Baron." The first members on record were Robert le Warner (or Warrennar), and Ralph atte Grove, in 28th Edward I., A.D. 1300. After the reign of Edward II. the representation, along with that of Wendover and Marlow, fell into abeyance, till in 1624 it was revived by the exertions of William Hakevill and John Hampden, in spite of the opposition of James I., who declared himself unwilling to have the number of the burgesses increased, declaring he was troubled with too great a number already. From that period, till disfranchised by the Reform Bill, Amersham continued to return two members, a list of whom is given by Willis; among them occur the names of Edmund Waller, the poet, in the reign of Charles I., and the celebrated Algernon Sidney, as also the two Sir William Drakes, the uncle and the nephew, William Cheney, afterwards Lord Newhaven, and other names of note.

As early as the year 1200 there is a record of the grant of a Market and Fair to Amersham, at the suit of Geoffrey Fitz Piers de Mandeville, and soon after another grant of a fair—probably a second annual fair.

In 1205 the King ordered Hugh de Neville to permit William Fitz John and Thomas his son to sell their woodland in Babington, and other places in Somerset, also in Aymodesham, "unless it be under the limits of our forest." Witnessed by Robert son of Roger, at Wudestock, 12th November.

From a deed of uncertain date it appears that Adam de la Stokke gave to Missenden Priory—founded by William de Missenden *anno* 1133—a house in Agmondesham, that namely which is in the Market place between the house of Ralf de Querdun and the house of R. de Wedune, on yearly payment of two shillings, twelve pence at Easter

and twelve pence at the feast of St. Michael. Also a mill called Brizthricke Mill.

In 1278, "the King confirmed to Walter de Amondesham all his lands and possessions in Agmodesham, to be held by service and payment of 6s. 8d., by charter," and three years later the same Walter had right of free warren in Amersham, Chesham, Little Missenden, Woburn, Beaconsfield, and Taplow.

In 1335, William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, held certain lands and tenements in Amersham, probably in right of his descent from an heiress of the Mandevilles. In the previous year "the King granted to John de Moleyns in fee one toft and one carucate of land and twelve acres of land and one pond, with all lands and tenements in Little Missenden and Amersham, in the county of Bucks, late the property of Simon de Bereford now attainted, for him to hold by due service," and the same year he had a grant of free warren in Amersham and Little Missenden.

By the *Inquisitio Nonarum*, taken in the fourteenth and fifteenth of Edward III., it appears that the valuation of Augmodesham, in Pope Nicholas's Taxation at 66 marks was now—fifty years later—reduced to 40 marks, because about one-third of the parish was waste and uncultivated, and because twenty-two pounds of the original value consisted of offerings, mortuaries, tithes of hay and flax (which must therefore have been cultivated in the parish), and other small tithes paid by demesne and tenant lands, and because there were no inhabitants who could be taxed by the fifteenth. This gives some key to the condition of the parish at that time; as its inhabitants must have all been of sufficient substance to be taxed by the ninth, except, in the words of the Act, "the poor boraile people, or other that live of their bodily travaile," who were exempted from taxation.

In 1490, Philip Agmondesham, citizen and mercer of London, left by will to his cousin, Ralf Agmondesham, his best gown and £20; to the Church of Agmondesham 20s., and wills that Margaret his wife and John his son be jointly seised in the parish of Agmondesham, except what John Bertelott late held, being of the yearly value of £4.

John Agmondesham, in 1509, leaves to Joan and Alice, his two daughters, 100 marks each; "to Emma, my wife,

my Manors in Bucks, to keep my son John during his non-age."

John Warde, son of Thomas Warde, of Agmondesham, in 1507, wills that a priest sing for his soul, during a year, and bequeaths for his salary ten marks.

The Reformation early took root in this part. In 1413, certain Lollards were condemned to death at Amersham and Little Missenden; while, nearly a century later, "Thomas Tylesworth, in 1506, was burnt in a close called Stanley's, and his daughter, Joane Clark, forced to set fire to the pile. At the same time, above sixty professors, living in and near the town bore faggots for their penance, some of which were enjoined to wear a faggot on the sleeve, and others were branded on the cheek with the letter L, for Lollard, or H, for Heretick (a new invented punishment), as marks of disgrace. The same year, one Roberts, a miller of Missenden, was burnt at Buckingham, and within a year or two afterwards, Thomas Barnard and James Mordon were burnt at Amersham, at one stake, at which time William Littlepage, Father Roger, and Father Rever, *alias* Reve, were burnt on the cheek, which last not long after suffered at the stake. Thomas Chase was imprisoned in the Bishop of Lincoln's house, of Woburn, in a place called Little Ease, and when by threatenings and scoffs they could not move him to recant, they contrived to put him to death privately, and gave out that he had hanged himself, which to confirm they buried him in the highway, with a stake drove through his body, as a *felo-de-se*. John Scrivener was also burnt at Amersham, his own children being forced to set the first fire to him."

On the land called Stanley's, at the back of the Churchyard and Cemetery, popular tradition has assigned a spot where these victims to religious intolerance suffered, and where the corn has been said not to flourish. Variouslly as this fact may be accounted for by natural causes, it has at least preserved the memory of the site through successive generations. The spot, under the direction of the late Mr. Marshall and other gentlemen of Amersham, was dug up, with a view to ascertain the real cause of its barrenness. It was found to be full of flints, which, being partially removed, the ground has since borne better than heretofore; still, however, in a dry season, showing a

difference from the surrounding land. It seems almost unnecessary to remark that, granting the tradition to be true, this spot may have been originally selected for the purpose, as being a piece of waste land, and from its situation on the hill, visible to the whole town.

We have no extant account of the general appearance of the Town earlier than the time of Leland, who visited it in the reign of Henry VIII. His description (with the exception of its Market day), would almost apply to its present state:—"Hagmondesham, *alias* Hamersham, a right pretty market town on Fryday, of one street well-built with tymber, standing in Buckinghamshire and Chilterne, 2 miles and a halfe from Little Missenden. The D. of Buckingham was chiefe Lord of it, since the Kinge, now the Lord Russell by gift, whoe dwelleth at Cheineis, 3 mile of by east. The paroch Church standeth by north-east toward the middle of the town, and in a Chappell on the north syde of it lyeth buryed Edmund Brudenell, father to Sir Robert Brudenell, late Chiefe-Justice of the Common-Pleas, and Drew Brudenell, elder brother to the said Sir Robert, and Helen his wife, daughter to — Broughton, whoe dwelt at a Mannor of his, £40 per annum. There cometh a brook almost from Missenden, and passeth hard by Hagmondesham, leaving it almost by full south, on the right ripe, and after running downe by the valleis of Chilterne towards Colne streame."

In 1553, July 10th, during the struggle to secure the crown to Lady Jane Grey, John Knox was at Amersham, where alluding to the disturbances of the time, he, in a sermon, printed under the title of "Admonition to the faithful in England," foretold the approaching retribution from the giddy ways of the past years."

In 1603, Anne Clifford, afterwards celebrated as Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, thus mentions Amersham:—"The night after, my Aunt of Warwick, my mother and I, as I take it, lay at Doctor Challener's, (wher my Aunt of Bath, and my Unckle Russell met us, which house my grandfather of Bedford used to be much at), being in Amersom. The next day the Queene went to a gentleman's house (whose name I cannot remember), where there met her many great ladies to kiss her hands; as the Marquess of Winchester, &c."

It is to be regretted that the name of this house (which was probably in this neighbourhood) should have escaped the amusing writer's memory.

It may be well to say a few words on the state of Amersham and the neighbourhood at the breaking out of the Civil Wars. Hampden, the renowned opposer of the obnoxious ship money, had been, it will be remembered, active in recovering to Amersham its representation in Parliament; his residence was in the neighbourhood; he was in the habit of attending the town as magistrate, as appears from the indentures of apprentices bearing his signature; so that it is reasonable to suppose that many of the inhabitants sympathized with him. As Amersham is expressly mentioned in the writ respecting the ship money, I quote a small portion of it:—"By our writ, bearing date the 4th day of August, in the 11th year of our reign**** we commanded the Sheriff of our County of Bucks**** the Major and Bailiffs of Chipping Wycombe, *alias* Wiccombe, as also the Burgesses of the said Burrough, and the good men in the said burroughs and parish, and in the said burroughs and parish and members of the same, and in the townes of Agmondesham, Wendover, and Great Marlow, and in all other places, townes, burroughs, villages, hamlets, and other places in the said county of Bucks, that you should cause to be fitted out one ship of war*****" One of the judges who delivered an opinion favourable to Hampden in this case was Sir George Croke, uncle to Dr. Croke, the then Rector of Amersham. Dr. Croke was, however, so far from joining the parliamentary side that he became Chaplain to the King, after whose death he retired to Ireland, and died at Carlow in 1657. Edmund Waller, who represented Amersham in three parliaments, was nephew of Hampden, and took the same view of the question of supplies—not however with such vehemence as irremediably to break with the Royalists.

It was during the Common-wealth times that Richard Baxter held here a dispute with certain Nonconformists from Chesham, of which he gives a description himself. The war of words raged in the Church till night, and a detachment of troopers was present, whether to take part in the discussion, or to keep the peace between the belligerent parties, does not very clearly appear.

The condition of Amersham, after the Protectorate, is

graphically described by Benjamin Robertshawe, Rector, in 1731. On a fly-leaf in the Register occurs this entry:—"Paul Ford was then lawfully elected Register, and sworn by Francis Russell, Esq., Justice of the Peace, the 20th day of the same month (October, 1656). To this Robertshawe has appended this remark. This Francis Russell lived at Chalfont St. Giles, on the confines of this parish. He was one of Oliver's Justices, and a fit man for the times. I knew his son, a kind of non-con.; who came to poverty, and sold the Farm. General Fleetwood lived at the Vache, and Russell on the opposite hill; and Mrs. Cromwell, Oliver's wife, and her daughters, at Woodrow high house, where afterwards lived Capt. James Thomson; so the whole country was kept in awe, and became exceedingly zealous, and very fanatical, nor is the poison yet eradicated, but the Whartons are gone, and the Hampdens a-going." This alludes to the Duke of Wharton, grandson of Lord Wharton, the celebrated Puritan nobleman, and to John Hampden, representative of the patriot. The first, by whose death the family and title became extinct, after a most profligate and wayward career, in which he shewed himself:—

A tyrant to the wife his heart approved,
And rebel to the very king he loved;

had just died in great poverty at a small convent of Bernardine Monks in Catalonia, in 1731, the very year in which this entry was written. John Hampden, whose father, after a life not dissimilar to that of Wharton, had committed suicide in 1696, died towards the middle of the last century, when the male line became extinct.

Amersham contains many old houses; indeed, if white-wash and a few modern additions and alterations were removed, the town would not, perhaps, very greatly differ from its condition when Leland visited it. The most striking and picturesque old house in the town is Little Shardeloes, now the residence of Mrs. John Drake, and of which an illustration is given. It has evidently been a place of importance, and not improbably the Manor-house of Amersham. It is apparently a building of different dates—in its present state nearly square, with numerous gables. The back seems to be the oldest part. In one of the rooms is a curious old lock, having a coronet, and the initials E. A. wrought on it. On the north wall

of the garden is the date 1688, with the letters C. H. Probably this shows the time when the wall was built, and the house, perhaps, repaired or altered.

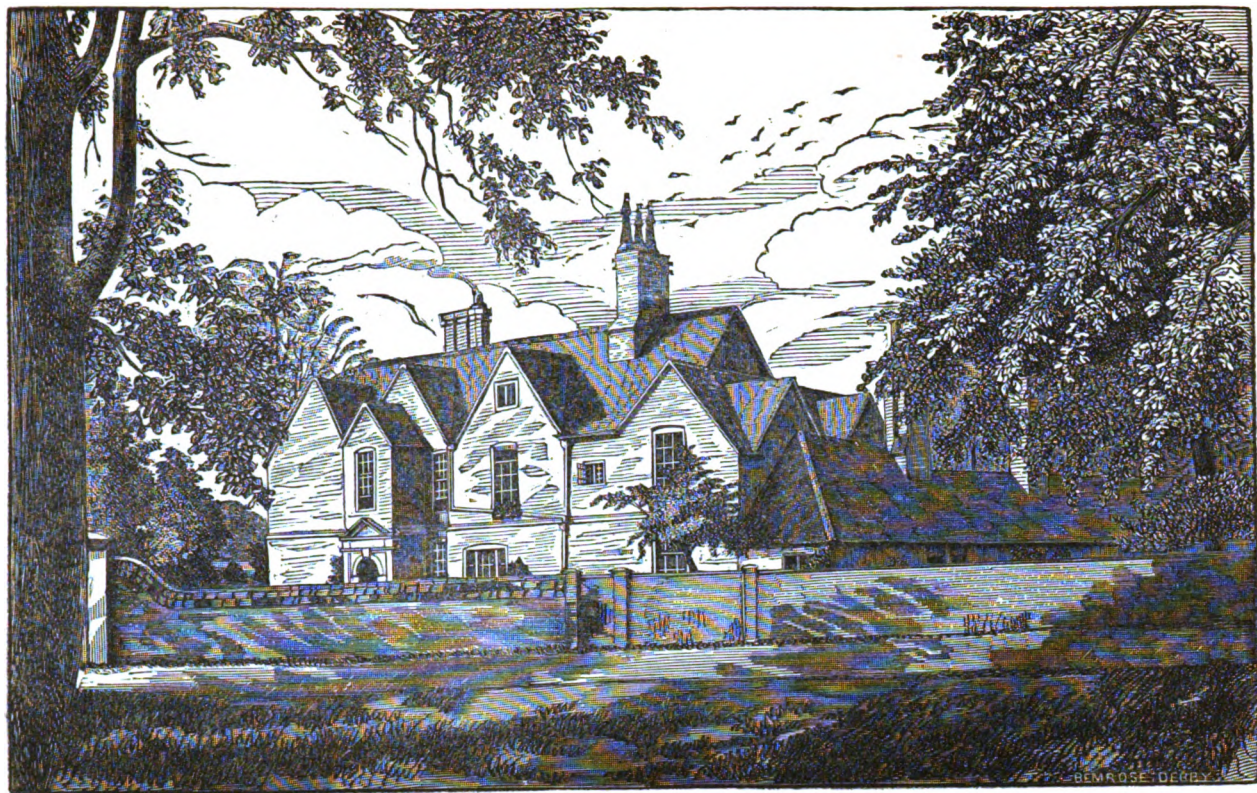
The house, now occupied by Mr. Beeson, from its position, would very well answer to the description of the house of Adam de la Stokke, given to Missenden Priory, or that belonging to Ralf de Wedune, both of which stood in the market-place (*in foro*). It contains an old fire-place, and the square-headed windows have large stone mullions. The house of Mr. Wilson has been thought to have been an old hostel or inn, and contains some windows, the wooden square-headed framework of which is ornamented with trefoil work, as shown in the accompanying illustration, at page 348, figure No. 2. Bury Farm, now in the occupation of Mr. Crouch, is a very old house, but so modernized that there remain few or no reliques of its ancient character, except an outer doorway, having a depressed arch. Corresponding to this, in the front of the older portion of the building, was a massive door, studded with nails, but now removed.

The almshouses were built by Sir William Drake, Bart., in 1617, and consist of a brick building on the south side of the street, with stone window casings and doorways, standing round three sides of a court; over the front door on a stone tablet are the founder's arms; in chief two mullets, in base a wyverne, his tail *nowed*, in a canton the Ulster badge; crest, an arm, coupée at the elbow, supporting an axe. Underneath it this inscription—

"Sir William Drake" of Shardeloes in ye county of Bucks, Knight and Baronet, in the year of our Lord 1617, to the glory of God, and for the relief of six poor widows well reputed in this parish, hath built six almshouses with all conveniences to them, and a very good allowance for ever, at his own cost and charges."

Among other charitable bequests (a list of which is given by Lipscomb), are benefactions by William Tothill, Lord Newhaven, Dr. Chaloner, &c., the last of whom founded the Grammar School.

The Church was probably founded by Geoffrey de Mandeville, no notice of a Church appearing in Domesday Book. He bestowed it upon the Abbey of Walden, which continued for some time to present to the living, after which the Bohuns were patrons. By the patent rolls it seems that the Abbot of Bregdynok (Brecknock)



Little Hardeloes.

claimed the advowson in the 22nd of Edward III., but no rector of their presentation appears in the list of incumbents. Two Bishops were in old times furnished by the living—W. de Marchiâ, presented in 1290, by Humphrey de Bohun, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, and William Grey in 1437, afterwards High Treasurer of England and Bishop of Ely, to which Cathedral he was a great benefactor.

The Church itself, dedicated to St. Mary, consists of a chancel, nave, clerestory and aisles, transepts and porch on the south side. The whole building is embattled and has been covered with plaster rough cast. There is little of the interior remaining earlier than the perpendicular style, except some of the piers to the nave, which appear to be late decorated. The groining of the porch has some rich bosses at the intersection of the ribs. The pillars, supporting the arches between the nave and aisles, have been cased with wood, so as to conceal their original shape.

One of the earliest monuments in the Church is a brass in the north aisle, consisting of the figure of a civilian in a loose-sleeved gown, and a lady in a large heart-shaped head-dress, with this inscription:—*. . . c iacent Thomas Carbonell Armig^r. & Elizabeth ux' ei' que q'dem Elizabeth obiit xij^o. die Octob A^o. dni mcccc' et predictus Thomas obiit xxij^o. die Aprilis A^o. d'ni m^occcc^oxxxix^o. Quor' animab's p'picietur Deus: Am'n.*

A few letters of the inscription are lost from the wall covering one end of the brass plate.

I have not been able to connect the name of Carbonell with Amersham, though it occurs frequently in Bucks, so early as the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. In the same aisle is a brass, the head broken off, as well as the inscription and armorial shields,—supposed by Lipscomb to be that of William Brudenell, who is said to have been buried in this Church, and to have borne the arms of Brudenell impaling Raans. He was, however, according to Collins, buried in the South aisle, where no such monument now appears; the only Brudenell there being Henry, son of this William, buried there together with his wife. The dress of both figures is very similar to the Carbonells. The inscription is:—*Hic iacet Henricus Brudenell Armig^r et Alianora ux' ejus filia Hugonis*

Preston' filii Thome Preston' Militis q'quide' Henric' obiit xxvij die Januar' A° dni m°cccc°xxx° quor aiab's p'piciet' deus. Amen.

Near the above is a figure with long flowing hair, parted down the middle, and a gown lined with ermine, reaching to the feet; by his side a female in a veil, and dress with tight sleeves, turned up with ermine at the wrists, with this inscription in old English:—

Orate pro aiab's Joh's de la Penne et Elizabeth uxoris eius filie Petri Hally armigeri que quidem Elizabeth obiit vicesimo primo die mens Novembris Annod 'ni mill' mo v°c°xxj et id'm Joh'es obiit xxvij° die mens decebris Anno d'ni m°v°xxxvij. Quor' aiab's p'picietur deus. Amen.

In the same aisle (the south) is a brass effigy of a child, kneeling, richly attired; under it these two inscriptions—
John Drake, sonne of Francis Drake, of Esshere, in the county of Surrey, Esq., by Katherin, his wife, dyeing ye 2 of Aprill, in the 4 yere of his age, 1623, lies here buried—

Had hee liv'd to bee a man,
This inch had grown but to a span,
Now is hee past all fear of paine,
'Twere sinn to wish him heere againe.
Vewe but the way by wch wee come,
Thow! say hee's best that's first at home.*

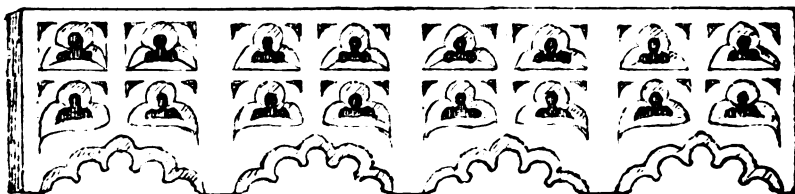
Many other brasses and some stone coffins are said to be under the seats. There must have been many monuments in the north aisle, which was the burying place of the Raans, and afterwards of the Brudenells, of whom, besides those just mentioned, there were buried in Amer-sham Church, Edmund Brudenell, and his wife, about 1425, another Edmund, with Philippa his wife, about 1460, and Drue with his wife Hellen, buried 1439, in the north aisle, as appears by Leland's account; his monument bearing the arms of Brudenell impaling Englefield, and Brudenell impaling Broughton. In the chancel and the handsome mausoleum adjoining are numerous monuments to the Tothill and Drake family, illustrating various styles during the last two centuries. And here I must specially mention the very chaste and beautiful monument to the memory of the late Mr. Drake, of Shardeloes.

The east window was brought from a private Chapel belonging to the Garrard family at Lamer, Ilerts, about

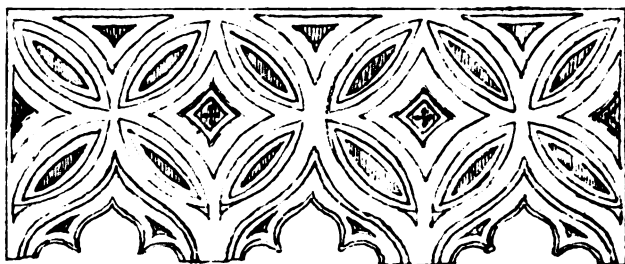
* See illustration, figure No. 1.



2



3



1. Brass of John, son of Francis Drake, A.D. 1623.
2. Carved oak Window head from an old house in Amsterdam.
3. Ditto at Chesham.

a century ago, the glass having been previously collected abroad. It is a very fine specimen of mediæval stained glass, representing ten of the Apostles, the faces being remarkably fine and expressive.

The Church registers extend back to 1551, and possibly if carefully examined might be found to contain various entries illustrative of the history of the place. There is also an old parish account book, beginning with the 31st year of Henry VIII., which, to judge from a very brief examination, seems to contain entries that might illustrate the progress of the Reformation at Amersham.

I am not aware that this town has ever produced any leading character, military or political, in English history. Fuller speaks of two or three authors born here, who were more or less celebrated in their day. John Amersham was a monk of St. Alban's, and bosom friend of the Abbot, John Wheathamsted. Fuller says, "now there was a great faction in that monastery against their Abbot, which to me seemeth no wonder; for the generality of Monks being lewd, lazy, and unlearned, they base an antipathy to their abbot who was pious, painful and a profound scholar; nor did they only rail on his person while living, but also revile his memory when dead. Our Amersham, surviving his dear friend, wrote a book (beside other of his works), intituled 'The Shield of Weathamsted,' therein defending him from the undeserved obloquies of his enemies. He flourished A.D. 1450."

Thomas Dorman was born at Amersham, and brought up as a protestant at Berkhamstead School, but becoming a Romanist, went abroad and wrote a book, "against Alexander Nowel, the English Calvinist."

The most celebrated character to whom this parish has given birth was Edmund Waller, born at Coleshill, whose baptism, occurs in the register in these words:—"1605, March. Edmund Waller, son of Robert W., Esquire, bapt. 9th." His character, both as a poet and as politician has been so frequently portrayed that it will be sufficient to quote Johnson's description of his principles:—"As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden." His irresolute and shifting conduct remains a blot on his

memory, but as a poet he will ever be remembered for the great improvements he introduced into English versification. Towards the close of his life he bought a small house with a little land at Coleshill, saying "he should be glad to die, like the stag, where he was roused." He died, however, at Beaconsfield in 1687, and was there buried.

John Gregory, described by Anthony Wood, as "the miracle of his age for critical and curious learning," was born at Amersham in 1607. He went to Christ Church, as servitor to Sir William Drake, and under the patronage of Dr. Duppa, who had been struck with his extraordinary and profound learning, he received various pieces of ecclesiastical preferment. From these he was driven by the parliamentary commissioners, during the Commonwealth, and reduced to utter destitution. A humble refuge was afforded to him by a village Innkeeper at Kidlington, to whose son Gregory had formerly shown kindness, and taken him into his service. Here in extreme poverty, and tortured by gout, this brilliant scholar lingered out the last years of his life, dying in 1646. He wrote notes on "a View of Ecclesiastical and Civil Law, by Sir Thomas Ridley," and numerous other treatises, one of which is an account of the institution of the Boy Bishop at Salisbury, while others display his acquaintance with many oriental languages.

Gregory's first patron—Sir William Drake—was born in 1606, and created a baronet in 1641. He appears from his epitaph to have been devoted to literature, and to have collected an extensive library of rare and curious books. For a considerable time before his death his eyesight had so far failed him that he was compelled to have a reader. Though firmly attached to his king and his Church, he does not appear to have taken any active part on the royalist side, by which discreet course probably he preserved his estate uninjured. In the words of his epitaph; "his loyalty led him to hate, while his prudence enabled him to despise the nefarious proceedings of the rebels." Finding, however, that they were bent on entrapping him into giving some color of punishing him for his "malignant" opinions, he went abroad, leaving his property under the care of a steward, by whose careful management it was augmented in value. He died A.D. 1669.

A brief account of Colleshill seems a fitting conclusion to this paper. Though considered as part of Hertfordshire (for reasons now lost in antiquity), it is supposed to have formed a part of Geoffrey de Mandeville's Manor of Amersham, but is not specially mentioned earlier than the reign of Edward I., when Walter de Agmondesham acknowledged holding certain lands in the stock, the right of Humphrey de Bohun. It continued to be known by the name of Old Stock, or Stock place, and afterwards belonged to the Brudenells, of whom Edmund Brudenell, Lord of Raans, held it 1469, and by his first marriage left one daughter Alice, married to Richard Waller, of Groombridge, Kent. Whether this brought the Wallers into the neighbourhood does not clearly appear, but Colleshill is said to have been by Thomas Brudenell conveyed to William Counser, 20 Henry VII., whose family sold it to Edmund Waller, a distant relation of the poet. His daughter Ann married Peter Saltonstall; they conveyed it to Sir Basil Brook of Madeley, Salop, who sold it in 1615 to George Coleshil, of Ivinghoe Aston, for £1,860, who after demolishing the greater part of the Manor House sold it to James Parrot, of Amersham. Having passed to Henry Child, of Colleshill, and from him to Henry Child, of Amersham, it was purchased in accordance with the will of Elizabeth Bent, which directed £700 to be laid out in the purchase of freehold lands, to pay annually a stipend to the rector of Amersham for preaching four sermons in the parish Church, the remainder to be applied to the comfort of six poor widows, being godly persons, constant attendants at divine service and holy communion. It may not be uninteresting to give the account of Colleshill in the Parliamentary Survey of Livings in 1649, which, though quoted by Lipscomb, seems worthy of repetition on the present occasion, as showing that the need of a Church for Colleshill was felt two centuries ago. It is as follows: "We present that Colleshill is a Hamlett belonging two parts to the parish of Agmundsham, and one to the parish of Beaconsfield, in the county of Bucks. That it is situate two miles distant from either of the parishes; that it is near no other parish; that it lyeth between the said parishes in the mid-way; that the parishes aforesaid are parsonages presentative. The one Agmondesham, worth near £300 per

annum, whereof the tithes of the two parts of the Hamlett, £50 per annum. The other, Beaconsfield, worth £150 per annum, whereof the other part of the said hamlett belonging to the said parish is worth £20 per annum; so that the tithes of the said hamlett are worth £70 per annum. That there are in the said hamlett 40 families, consisting of two hundred persons, most of them living two miles from each parish Church. And that we conceive that in the said hamlett a Church were fit to be erected and endowed with the tithes thereof, the people earnestly desiring the same." Sir Henry Chauncy gives the following account: "The inhabitants have a tradition that within this hamlett stood an ancient Chappel, and there are some circumstances to confirm it, for the foundation of an old building hath been lately ploughed up in a certain field in this vill, and the Farm to which that field belongs bears the name of Chappel Farm; without doubt this little spot of land hath in some ages past been a place of some note, for besides those above-mentioned, some other piles of building stood here, but those demolished so long since that no man can tell what or whose they were; nor should this age have known that any such at all had been did not the rubbish and foundations remaining yet within the ground bespeak it. Of these, the most considerable is found within a wood called Brainford Wood, at the entrance into the hamlett on Amersham side and not far from that, in a ploughed field, stood another smaller pile, the foundation of which being of late years digged up, discovered very curious paving work in a manner of dice work. The common opinion is that this was a Chapel oratory, belonging to the adjacent greater structure, and my author tells me that he was well acquainted with the man who some years since ploughed up a weathercock in that place, which was supposed to have stood upon the chappell; and he farther related to me that he once saw a piece of brass comb, about the bigness of half-a-crown, which was also ploughed up there; but through the carelessness of him that had it, 'tis now lost."

Thus imperfectly have we traced the history of Amersham from the earliest times downwards. The mail-clad baron, with his dependants, who alternately supported or defied the king, the gallant gentleman of later times, who

received his queen at his country seat, the loyal cavalier, and the stern puritan²—all are alike passed away, and little is it that we can now collect about them. Yet not in vain has their history been recalled if we draw from it the lessons it offers, whether of example or warning, not unmindful too what memorials they have left behind,—a Church endowed for the spiritual wants of all, or a charity founded for the temporal need of the poor. If with these feelings we look into the history of the past, we shall not find it an uninstrusive study, nor while fully conscious of, and thankfully rejoicing in, the greater advantages we enjoy, shall we view in a too censorious spirit the faults and the failings of those who have gone before.
