THE HISTORY OF STOWE.

By His Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, the President of the Society.

(From the Report taken of the Address on its delivery, as corrected.)

His Grace commenced by observing that, on the visit of the Bucks Archæological Society to Stowe, the first thing he had to do was to say how glad he was that the Society had chosen to visit the place and honour him with their company. It was a great pleasure to receive them, and to assist at all times in anything which, like the proceedings of the Archæological Society, tended to throw light upon the past history of their county and of their parishes, which, if not so recorded, would very soon fade away, and many interesting matters would thus be forgotten. Curiously enough, it had struck him very much of late years how persons who had written what were considered to be carefully-compiled county histories, and how those who ought to have assisted in the preserving of every record of the past—viz., the compilers of the Ordnance Survey—had, from indifference, carelessness, or some other cause, really contributed to throw by and overlay records of past history with newly-invented names of places, and very often with utter indifference to the interesting ancient monuments in churches, giving more attention to tablets and monuments of the present century than to those of centuries ago. That was a curious fact; but they would see it exemplified in one of their county histories, which was prepared, as he thought, with considerable care and labour—viz., Lipscombe's—yet in it he found interesting monuments in many of our parish churches and records entirely ignored. As regards the Ordnance Survey, he was surprised and grieved when he came home from India—the Survey having been completed during his absence—to find how entirely they had ignored, or failed to ascertain, the old traditional names of farms and fields and lands, and had solved all their difficulties by simply asking who was the tenant of the premises, and then putting the place down as "So-and-So's" farm. In one case they had ignored a name which

dated back at least to 1300; and that was an instance in which the old name was left out, and for it substituted that of, possibly, the yearly tenant. This was a great misfortune, and he had alluded to it because it was a point to which archæologists should give their attention, especially when it was remembered that these Surveys were likely to be looked upon as authentic records of the times in which they were made. It was a great pity that they should be so inaccurate.

It might be interesting to some of them to hear a few notes which he had put together concerning Stowe, the parish, antiquities, and the neighbourhood. The parish of Stowe, formerly called Stowe Langport, was, more anciently still, in the time of the Normans, recorded as two distinct parishes—viz., Dadford and Stowe, and the manor of Lamport, which formed one-third of the combined parishes, and was also separately surveyed in Domesday Book. The parishes now comprised the village of Dadford with the hamlet of Lamport, on the eastern side, and on the western side the hamlet (formerly an extra-parochial place) of Boycott. This was now merged into the county of Bucks, but was formerly, until, in fact, dealt with by the Reform Act for electoral purposes, an island of Oxfordshire. This hamlet of Boycott was also connected with the extra-parochial place of Luffield, which lies on the N.E. of the parish. There was originally in this hamlet the Chapel of St. John, of which, however, all traces have been lost. All they know of it was derived from maps or traditions, and an entry in the Records of Oseney Abbey, which set forth that a monk was sent from the Priory of Luffield to do duty at Boycott. That reminded him of what he had already said with respect to the county histories, because Lipscombe stated that Boycott was a depopulated hamlet. He had taken some trouble to ascertain the number of dwellings in the place, and found that for a couple of centuries there were only three, while there were now nine. At one time, about two centuries back, there seemed to have been ten, and yet Lipscombe put it down as a depopulated hamlet altogether. The village of Stowe, formerly extending on the north and south of the church, and on the east side of the present lawn, was entirely removed during the laying out of the grounds

by Lord Cobham, the hamlet of Dadford being materially increased, apparently for the reception of the workmen who were displaced. The church, however, remained in its ancient place, with the churchyard surrounding it, but the latter had been recently closed for burials, and a new churchyard formed near the village.

The gardens of Stowe, as they were called, were the creation of Lord Cobham in 1720-40, and still retained the general features then given. Their laying out was mainly arranged by Lancelot Browne, who remained there for some twelve or fourteen years in charge. They were completed by a person named Woodward, who lived to a great age in Buckingham. Although minor changes had at times been made, according to the changing ideas of the times, such as the conversion of straight alleys into serpentine walks, and rounding off the formal angles of the various waters, and the formation of new belts of plantation—many of which changes had probably been no improvement on the original design—at the present time the principal walks followed the course originally traced out. The principal buildings also remained, although some of the buildings in the grounds were removed at an early date, while others had succumbed to the effects of weather acting on faulty material. The Gothic temple built of an iron sandstone was one of the earliest of the buildings erected. It contained in its windows some curious fragments of old stained glass, brought by Lord Cobham, with other relics, from the Low Countries, during the Marlborough campaign. The building was originally dedicated "Libertati Majorum" —to the liberty enjoyed by our ancestors; but why or wherefore they did not know. Within the first fifteen years of that dedication the inscribed stone was removed, and all reference to the subject was dropped. Whether it was that Lord Cobham, towards the close of his life, thought that liberty to others was not quite so admirable a thing to give, or our ancestors had gained too much from their liberties, and desired not to put them forward again, they did not know, but neither in the family letters or elsewhere was there any record whatever of the removal of this dedication stone, which they knew was originally placed there. The stone, however, was found when he (the speaker) was a boy; in fact, he turned it out from amongst a

lot of rubbish. They still had the stone, which was quietly taken away without beat of drum. Another very early feature of the place—but, probably, from not being a building, not much noticed in the earlier records—was the group of the Seven Saxon Deities, stone figures, carved by Rysbrack, placed in a yew-tree grove in the gardens, when originally formed. The two pavilions on the south side of the water, and also the temples of Venus and Bacchus, were originally adorned with paintings of great artistic merit, according to the accounts left by others. They had entirely faded away, but, so far as they could judge, many of the subjects appeared to have been such as to leave little cause to regret their loss. Some monuments had been subsequently added, to record different family events or royal visits. The Queen's Temple, described as the Lady's Temple till the recovery of George III. from his illness in 1789, contained, inserted in the floor, a small Roman pavement, found in the excavation of a Roman villa at Foscott in 1840, and transferred for safety to this place. In the grove of the Saxon deities there was also, in the centre, the floor of a barrow opened at Thornborough some forty years ago. The house, in its present form, and with its existing south façade, was completed by Lord Temple about 1760 to 1780. The original house of the Temples, built somewhere, as far as could be ascertained, about 1520, remained practically unchanged until early in the eighteenth century. It was a centre block, with two detached wings, in a straight line, the centre building having buttresses or piers, with rustic cones and a high-pitched roof. These three buildings formed the nucleus of the present house, and the greater part of the walls remain enclosed in the present structure, notwithstanding all the various changes which had been made in the external as well as the internal arrangements of the house. The first step in the gradual development seemed to have been to unite the wings with the centre by the structure now the State Gallery, and the corresponding building which contained the library. The stairs of the south entrance, originally straight, were formed into two flights, returning parallel with the building. The low screen walls, which, from the north side, then surrounded the stable and farmyards on the east side, and the brew-

house, laundry, and woodyard, on the west side, were raised on their original base, first into walls with arched angles, and afterwards they were used as the basis of the existing colonnades. The next step was one of considerable change. The two wings were raised to nearly their present height, the plan being to raise them above the centre, and make them the prominent feature. Before, however, that plan was completed it was modified; the wings were flattened at the tops, and the house was elevated by raising the old walls so as to include the windows of the roof, and an open parapet was placed round on both the north and south sides.

The house remained so during Lord Cobham's time, but some time afterwards, when Lord Temple succeeded to the property, he conceived the idea of forming the grand entrance hall, and throwing the steps into a large uniform flight with a large portico. He seemed to have taken great interest and paid much attention to the work, for there were still preserved sketches in his own hand, and emendations upon the architect's plans. He employed several architects to carry out his ideas, and apparently gave the internal arrangements to one and the external to another. He completed between the years 1760-80 the present south façade to the house as it now stands. During the progress of the works he made one material alteration in the architect's plans, namely, the present portico was designed by him to be open at the two ends as well as from the house, the front being simply built against the old wall of the house. There was a correspondence which showed that the idea of this alteration struck him constantly. He wrote to the architect to know whether there would be any material difficulty in taking down the two remaining walls of the house and bringing it forward half the width of the portico, lengthening the music-room, drawing-room, and portico-screen; and with these modifications he completed in 1780 the present suite of rooms and the south façade. Gazing from those steps down the wide grass lawn, if they could imagine close-trimmed formal yew hedges, some ten feet high, cut and trimmed quite flat, enclosing a square pasture the width of those steps, and reaching as far as the wire fence, with a narrow alley also bounded by the yew edges, reaching from the centre half-way down the

present lawn, they could realize the gardens of Stowe as they appeared in the past. Then they might imagine archways pierced through the yew hedges, and in each opening a life-size figure of a nymph, faun, or one of the many deities of the heathen mythology—a tall obelisk draped with a veil of falling water streaming from its summit, occupying the central line of the narrow yew-hedged alley—and they would see in the mind's eye the Stowe gardens of the time of Lord Cobham's youth. The yews so remained for about half his life, but when his work became altered by the gradual growth of the trees he began to see the necessity of cutting wider and wider the opening line. He threw it back to within about twenty-five yards of the lime tree on the south side, and then, about 1800, Lord Temple cut away the rest of the shrubs to what was called "the church-elm." So far, with regard to the house and grounds. As they traced back to past centuries in a parish, they naturally turned to the ecclesiastical structures, and they found in the immediate neighbourhood of Stowe, traces of Luffield Priory and of Biddlesden Abbey. Of the former a considerable fragment of crumbling wall existed within his own memory, but had now almost entirely disappeared. The remains as they stood in the present century were recorded by a sketch in Lord Grenville's illustrated copy of Lyson's history, as also was the then existing crypt of Biddlesden, which was now lost. The church tower of Stowe still bore, in a niche on the western face, remains of a stone crucifix. It had been defaced with whitewash and plaster, and the lower part of the cross appeared to have fallen in since 1801. The only way to account for its not having been destroyed would be that some zealous churchwarden had filled up the niche with plaster. The brackets, which probably contained figures of saints, were still there, but the figures were gone. In the chancel there were several old brasses (1592 being the date of the oldest), and the Penistone monument, which formed the family seat, was curious and well worth seeing. This church also afforded an instance of the carelessness or indifference of those who undertook to write county histories, for Lipscombe, in his elaborate History of Bucks, while recounting the tablets of the present century, ignored as well the brasses, dating in 1592, as the fine Penistone

monument. In the parish itself there was no record or any trace of the Roman occupation; but at Foscott, somewhat north of the Buckingham and Stony Stratford road, there was an extensive Roman villa, with its baths supplied by spring water, laid on through large leaden pipes, and a large walled tank in front of the villa, with an oak pile foot-bridge across it about four and a half feet wide, and where, also, in 1837-8, was found a good specimen of a tesselated pavement, unfortunately lost by injudicious attempts at removal at a bad season of the year. The removal was left to the workmen, and nothing a foot square of it was brought home. The only record of it was a drawing which the speaker made of it when a boy. A smaller tesselated pavement was found in 1839-40, which was damaged only in one portion, and he was fortunate to remove this and place it in the centre of the Queen's Temple. In the gardens there were also found a specimen of the tile flues with which the rooms were heated, fragments of pottery, stone pillars, and one roofing tile of the old villa; all these objects were preserved in the Stowe museum. On the opposite side of the river, in the parish of Thornborough, were two barrows of considerable size, which were opened by the Duke's father in 1840. One was found to have been before cut through, and no relics except loose stones, evidently not in their original position, were discovered. In the other barrow a floor of rough stone was found about two feet below the level surface of the adjoining ground, on which were fragments of glass vessels, several of them with ashes inside them, and fragments of pottery, and in some cases the ashes had not been so completely calcined but fragments of bones could be discovered, pronounced to be human bones; also, a small gold ornament, a massive gold ring, together with some traces of iron weapons, were found. The vessels and the bones and ashes appeared to have been originally protected by an oaken plank, and inclined stones, which had subsided from the weight of the earth, and had crushed the frail vessels they were intended to protect. Investigation at the time led to the belief that the barrow was probably the burial place of Togodumnus, killed in battle with the Romans, on the banks of the Ouse, as recorded in Tacitus. The golden ornaments were in the British Museum; while the floor

having been removed with care, stone by stone, was replaced in its exact order and aspect in the grove of the Saxon deities, where it might still be seen. With these memorials of the struggles between the Saxon dwellers and the Roman invaders, their archæological traces ceased. They had nothing to show, whether the battles, which were fought in and about Bernewood Forest, were struggles with the Danes and the British, nor had they any evidences of the struggles with the Roman invaders of this island, nor had any discoveries been made of extensive barrows, such as had been made in other parts of the county, although their gravel pits occasionally yielded specimens of flint implements, giving evidences of human occupation at a far earlier date. One distinct specimen was in a glass case in the museum, accompanied by a specimen which appeared to have become subsequently encrusted over with a calcareous deposit. Both of these specimens were found by the speaker in the gravel pits in the grounds. Amongst the articles worthy of notice in an antiquarian point of view in the mansion at Stowe, the speaker mentioned a very ancient painting, of probably the second century, on wood, from Syracuse; the antique vase and statue of Venus in the north hall; in the library there was a curious antique marble of the swan bearing the *testudo* or lyre (which appeared to have had some relation to the connection between the swan when dying and music). In the orangery there was a fine specimen of the sacred bull of the Hindoos, which the speaker dug up from near the side of a river in the Bellary district of Madras, a fine carving of Rama, and a fragment of a procession of elephants—all these carvings being in hard granite or gneiss. The bull was deemed by those who have studied the antiquities of India to be a relic dating 1200 years back. In the museum room was the capital of one of the columns of the basement of the church—the original church, in fact—in which St. Paul preached, which was brought home by the speaker's grandfather, having been found by him during the repair of the modern church, in the course of which the crypt of the ancient one had been discovered. There was also a small figure of Buddha found by the speaker in India; an ancient stone hammer from Cornwall; two specimens of flint instruments from the gravel pits of Stowe; a roof-

ing tile, and some fragments of pottery and stone from the Roman Villa of Foscott. More intimately connected with the archæology of the county might be classed the exchequer chest in the ante-library, one of those in which, while the national loan accounts were kept by tallies, the tallies were stored under the custody of the teller of the exchequer, a practice which the rising generation would hardly credit as having existed far into the present century. In the chapel, over the Communion rails, hung the colours borne to France by the 1st Provisional Battalion of Militia, entirely formed of volunteers and mainly from this county, under the command of the Marquis of Buckingham. In the state bedroom was the old canopied state bed in which had slept many honoured and royal guests, the last being Her Majesty Queen Victoria. In the state drawing-room were specimens of the works of Rembrandt, Titian, Corregio, Vandyke, Rubens, and Albert Durer. He had also left in the library for inspection the illustrated edition of Lyson's history, and the roll of the *posse comitatus* of the county. Those who regarded such a body as something of a myth would be interested in seeing with what extreme minuteness every man, horse and cart, were returned as being available for the purposes of a reserved army. The roll was that of 1798. He had also placed there for inspection the Quarter Sessions roll, with the declaration required to be taken against transubstantiation on the accession of a sovereign, that being the one taken on the accession of George I.