

THE ANTIQUITIES OF WESTON TURVILLE.

BY REV. A. ISHAM.

The history of Weston Turville is identified with the Roman occupation of Britain by the discovery of coins within the boundaries of the Parish, and of an interment, which came to light in May, 1855.

The coins are of Vespasianus, Trajanus Adrianus, and Antoninus Pius. The two former were found in a cottage garden belonging to MR. SIMONS, and are now in the possession of MR. J. K. FOWLER. The Adrianus is a rare specimen, the inscription of the Emperor's name being from right to left. The third is in my own possession.

On Saturday evening, May 19th, 1855, a labourer was excavating in the Rectory garden; and at the depth of four feet six inches below the surface he discovered what proved to be a Roman Amphora used for a cinerary urn, of coarse yellowish pottery, which bore the trace of old fractures, and was further broken into fragments by the discoverer. The clay in which it was found is cretaceous, very tenacious, and impervious to water. The hole which the Amphora occupied is about eighteen inches in diameter; the contiguous clay, being streaked with dark lines in a way which distinguished it from other portions around, bore marks of disturbance to the eye of a practised excavator.

Within or under the Amphora were the following:—

A. Articles in Glass.

1. One green glass vessel, exactly resembling the drawing in MR. WRIGHT's "Celt, Roman, and Saxon," p. 226, outside figure on the left hand. This was broken apparently long ago by the pressure of the earth. The upper part of it is capable of restoration. Adhering to a piece of it were found fragments of bone.

2. Four smaller green glass vessels, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, exactly resembling the drawing of MR. WRIGHT, same page, second figure on the left: one of these is nearly entire, and in this were found ashes. The other two are very much broken; and within one of them were found some little gilded or silvered beads (one bead with a wire in it, No. 14), and part of a wooden pin, No. 19, about an inch long, among ashes.

Subsequently, part of another wooden pin, No. 18, with an ornamented head, was discovered in the excavated clay.

3. A glass vessel in numerous fragments, the glass thin, part dim milky white, part clear blue.

B. Articles in red Samian ware:—

1. 2. Two Pateræ: one nearly entire, No. 6, with the name of the potter **MXTVLLIM**; and the other though broken, No. 7, capable of restoration to a great degree. Within the former, among ashes, were leaves, probably the remains of garlands or wreaths used at the burial, and some white substance, which emitted an aromatic scent when pressed, perhaps balsam [MR. HENRY of 18, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in a letter dated 23rd August, 1855, reports the result of a chemical examination, most obligingly undertaken at request. "The aromatic substance you left with me I find to be the gum resin 'Olibanum,' the ancient Thus or Frankincense"]; some more little gilded beads, one with a wire in it; an ornament something like the shape of a glass bugle, No. 13; a fibula or brooch in bronze, the figure being a hare, No. 15, with the place for the pin clearly visible; another bronze ornament, No. 16.

2. Another vessel more in the cup shape, capable of restoration in a great measure. The name of the potter quite distinct, **METTI.M.** No. 8.

C. A vessel of common red pottery with the neck broken off, No. 9, resembling the lower half of the middle figure of the seven in MR. WRIGHT's book, p. 226. In this was found, among ashes, a twisted wire.

D. Drab colored ware.

1. Broken and imperfect, with an indented cross-barred pattern, No. 10.

2. Another plain: pieces broken in, and covered in the interior by cinerary ashes. Piece of bone found.

3. Neck of a bottle and other pieces, No. 11.

4. A very small vessel, No. 12, in size resembling the little jugs drawn in MR. WRIGHT's book, p. 304, fig. 2, without any handle.

E. Various:—

1. Several pieces of iron with rivets and nails, which were affixed to wood, as the adhering fibres of decayed wood show. The articles were put probably into a wooden chest with iron braces bound round, and when the wood

decayed, the pressure of the earth caused the fractures, the Amphora partly protecting them.

2. Part of a small circular plate in silvery metal, with copper corrosion on it, perhaps part of a mirror, No. 17.

3. A piece of a sandal, with nails in it, No. 20.

4. A small bent nail.

5. An apparently dried fruit nearly of the size of a dried apple, the exterior mouldy, the interior white and pulpy.

6. Some pieces of human bone.

The ornaments afford evidence that the burial was that of a female.

The first name of the Parish, Weston, bespeaks the settlement of the Saxons.

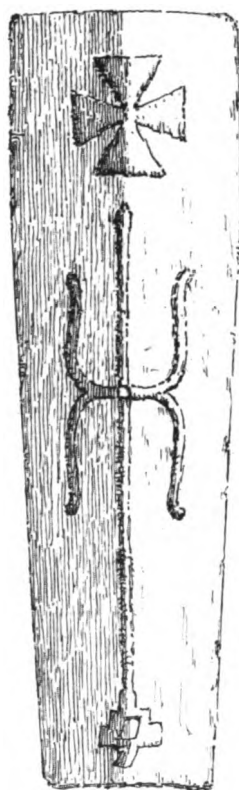
The second name, Turville, is that of one of the companions in arms of the Norman Conqueror, whose family continued here till the time of King John, and whose descendants still flourish at Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire.

During the improvements of the Church, A.D. 1860, when the eastern and southern walls of the Chancel were entirely taken down, a small Norman pillar, numbered 4, was discovered among the materials, with the same pattern upon it as described on the ornamental shaft of the door of the North Cloisters, Durham, delineated in *Old England*, No. 596. It is placed in a recess of the newly-built Chancel wall. Its height is 12 inches; diameter, 6 inches; it is perforated, as if for the insertion of a small pipe from top to bottom; and it has a piece of moulding at the top, forming part of a capital. This and the font of the same style carry us back to the Norman period.

In the course of taking down the south wall two periods of building were made quite clear. The mark of a lower roof is visible on the plaster in the interior. And when the tiles were removed an old stone weather course above such lower roof was discovered. Besides which, the mortar of the part above the first roof was less crumbling than in the lower part. The upper part must have been raised to receive the timber of the present roof, which was probably constructed about 1400. The record in Strype, that on the 8th of June, A.D. 1556, the Chancel was found in the course of an Episcopal Visitation to be in a dilapidated condition, is too late for the style of the carving. And



Roman remains found at Weston Turville. from Haverhill News.



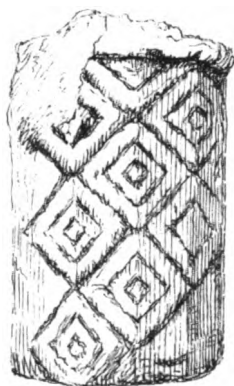
STONE COFFIN - WESTON TURVILLE



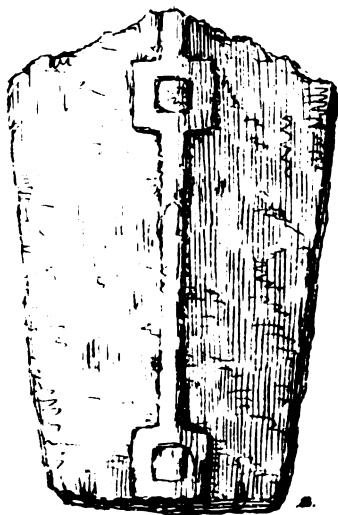
1. Shield of the Duchy of Lancaster

2.3. Stones found in Chancel Wall

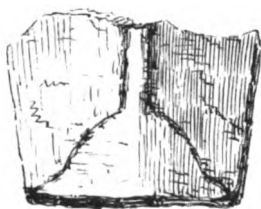
4



6

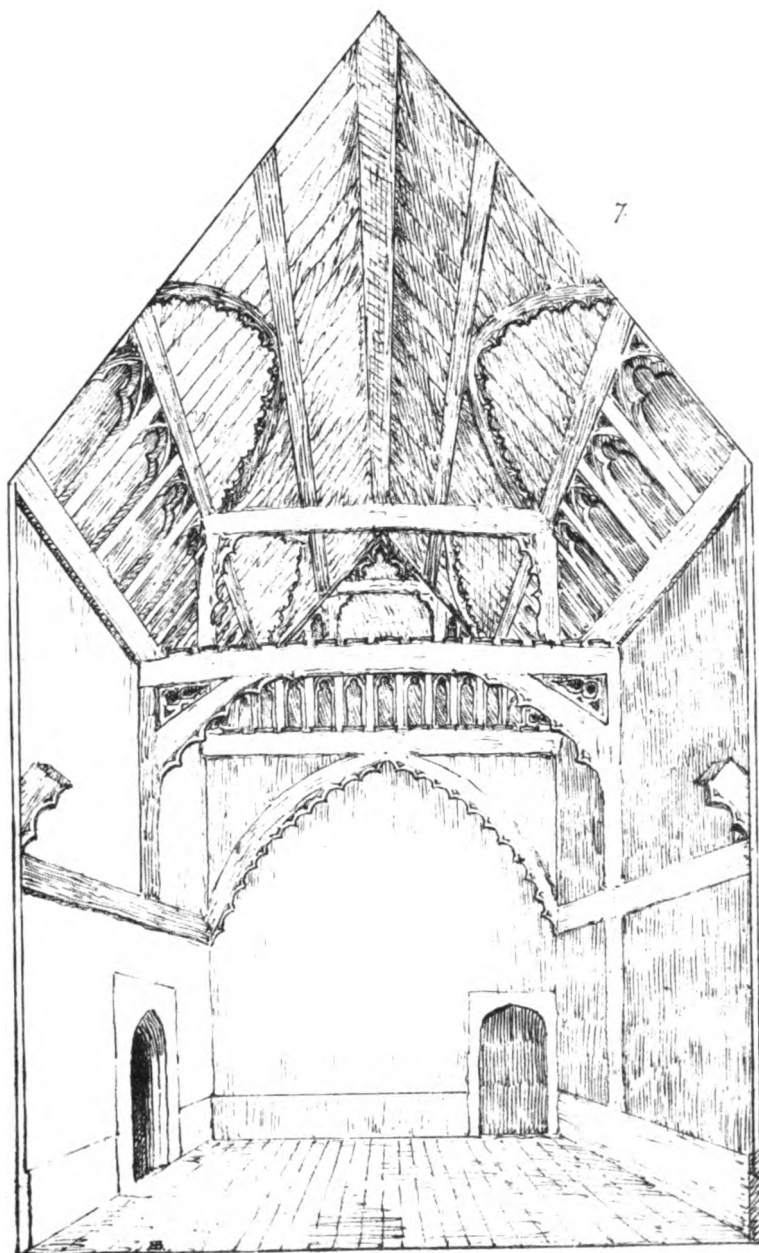


5

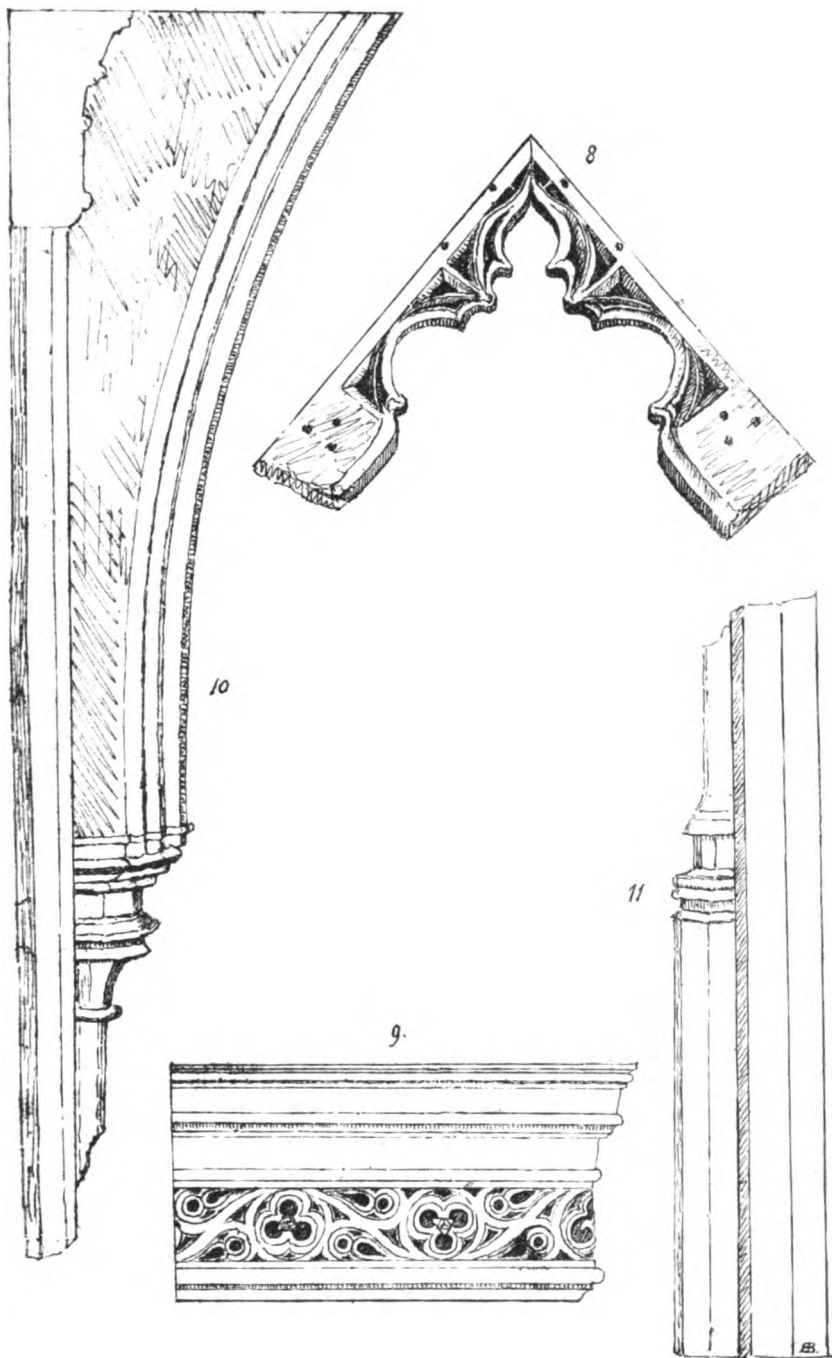


4. Pillar found in Chancel wall

5. 6. Fragments of Stone coffins



7. Interior of Old Rectory Hall.



8. Ridge piece at East Gable of Rectory Hall
 9. Oak cornice of Hall in the Hyde Manor house.
 10. 11. Bowtell, Corbell, and Hammer-brace of ditto.

it is not probable that the order made upon the Rector for the execution of the repairs before the ensuing Michaelmas, comprehended such a large amount of work as the raising of the walls and the erection of a new roof, considering the slow and deliberate methods of that period.

The original Chancel comprised a double piscina, which has been restored, similar to one of Salisbury Cathedral, completed A.D. 1258; three windows of the Early English style, the eastern and middle blocked up, the western open, without the tracery; a priest's door situated between the Eastern and Middle windows; under the Western window, a low-side window, about two feet above the floor of the Chancel, with sill and jambs, the width of the opening about 18 inches, the head formed by the materials belonging to the window above. The details so described indicate a date for the Chancel between 1250 and 1300, during the incumbency of one of the three first Rectors named by Lipscomb, previous to the sale of the Advowson by Ela, widow of Walter de Hopton, in the year 1304. And during that period the Norman pillar of some prior edifice may have been used as material.

Other relics were found in the same lower part of the Chancel wall:—

Two curious effigies of Knights numbered 2, 3, executed in Teynton stone, Gloucestershire, the same stone as in the Perpendicular south doorway of Aylesbury Church. They are preserved in a recess. The blocks are seventeen inches high, and twelve inches wide. The figures are thirteen inches high, in low relief, projecting to a level with the surrounding margin, which was formed into an arched canopy. One of them is raising the sword; the other is sheathing it. The sheathed sword is nine inches long. The shield is cylindrical, six inches long, in shape like an heating iron of extended length. The style of them is more ancient than the two figures of William Long Espée, and William Earl of Pembroke, given in "Old England," if the length of the sword, and the shield may be taken for guidance. And since William Long Espée participated in laying the foundation of Salisbury Cathedral A.D. 1220, it may not be far wrong to place them about the middle of the twelfth century. Such a date would allow time for them to have become mutilated previous to the building of the Early

English Chancel, in which the double piscina of the Salisbury pattern has been named. And being mutilated they may have been used as materials together with the Norman pillar. In the same wall were discovered some pieces of tooth moulding, which must be supposed to have belonged to the building of Norman style, in order to account for their being introduced as materials into the Early English structure.

The effigies of the Knights, which seem to have been monumental, and the tooth moulding, which would appear to have formed part of a monumental canopy, are evidently relics of an earlier ecclesiastical edifice.

Some ancient coffins were also discovered during the progress of the repair, viz. :—

1. About three feet from the line of the second nave arch west of the Chancel, at a depth of a few inches below the floor-level, a stone coffin, with a fracture across the lid. The drawing of it is annexed. The Maltese cross at the head resembles the one marked on No. 12 of the coffins discovered in Bakewell Church, Derbyshire; and the pedestal at the foot resembles that of No. 13 in the same collection. See Vol. IV, "Archæological Journal," p. 48-52. To the Bakewell coffins is assigned the date, A.D. 1100, to A.D. 1260, and No. 12 is specified as one of the earliest of them. This correspondence of the head and foot devices, and the resemblance of the floriated cross in the middle to the pattern in MR. KELKE's notices of "Sepulchral Monuments," p. 6, suggest the date of the 12th century for the Weston Turville coffin, a date coeval with the effigies of the Knights. The inside was not thoroughly examined. But when the lid was lifted, a piece of leather was taken out as wide as the corpse, being either part of the hoqueton, leathern jacket worn under the armour, or a portion of the leather in which the body was interred. Supposing the latter to be the adopted conjecture, the following remarks in "Bloxam's Monumental Architecture" tend to confirm the date already assigned. "During the 11th and 12th centuries a mode seems to have been devised and followed of preserving the bodies of persons of rank from immediate decay by salting them, and afterwards enclosing them in leather or hides. This peculiar usage was probably discontinued about the commencement of the 13th century." A small

piece of the leather which is preserved is doubled, and stitched near the edge. The style of the coffin agrees with the notion that it was made for a person of distinction, possibly, some Lord of the Manor, or some successor of Roger in the Manor of Bedgrove.

2. Two pieces of a Coffin-lid numbered 6, a few inches below the floor level, in the western end of the south aisle. A drawing is annexed.

3. Another fragment numbered 5, found in a buttress erected at the N.E. corner of the Chancel about 35 years ago.

4. A coffin, wanting only the lid, about the same depth as No. 1, at the East End of the North aisle. Between this aisle and the Vestry an arch was filled up. When the filling was removed, the spring or impost for the sub-arch was found projecting from the walls upon which the arch rested, but the sub-arch itself was wanting. The southern jamb is out of the perpendicular owing to a defect, which, there is reason to think, appeared very early in the foundations of the adjoining Chancel arch. The northern jamb was much shattered at the bottom, probably owing to undue pressure from the same defect. It is not unlikely that the original design was altered from the first, in deference to some architectural fears about the grouping of the arches or some monitory symptoms of insecurity, and the solid wall was built as a precaution. If the filling had been done to remedy an existing dilapidation, more care would have been taken in the construction of the wall, and it would have been senseless to remove the sub-arch previous to the erection of a solid support. Besides, at the time when the arch was blocked up, the small arched opening (now termed by Archæologists a hagioscope) must have been formed, about four feet above the level of the aisle-floor, close to the steps leading to the rood-loft. This was designed to enable a person standing in the aisle to see the elevation of the host at the altar. It had a sill and a small shaft on the side towards the aisle. Supposing the filling of the arch to have been nearly coeval with the erection of the Chancel arch, we may date the coffin earlier than A.D. 1250, to 1300. For the foot of it was placed under the filling, and all the bones were found removed to the foot, as though they had been thrust to the part under the wall, when the lid was

removed. The general style of it was not so ancient as the example, page 246.

In 7 Edward III., (A.D. 1333), Sir John de Molins procured a charter for free warren in all his demesne lands at Weston Turville, also to make a Castle of his Manor-house there, no doubt, on the site where the moats of the present Manor-house are traceable, near the Church-yard. Thirteen years afterwards, another John, son of the former, (compare Dugdale's Baronage and the fines mentioned in Lipscomb), obtained leave from the King, "that he might fortify his Manor House at Weston Turville with embattled walls." The traditions of their possessions here exist to this day in the names of lands, Castle Field and Molins. It is not unlikely that the father or the son promoted the Flamboyant embellishments of the south aisle. In that side of the Church, east of the south porch, the mortar of the foundations is better than in any other part; and in the east corner there remains part of an ancient screen, which cut part of the mouldings of the pillar now restored, and was met by other wood-work, likewise damaging the mouldings, and running from west to east, to complete an inclosure, which may have been the private Chapel of that great family. The son, it appears, was such a benefactor to the Canons of St. Mary Overie in Southwark, as to win for himself and his wife Egidia a promise that they would remember them in their masses, vigils, &c., and inscribe their names in their martyrology after death.

Some excellent specimens of stained glass are another evidence that persons of distinction took an interest in the edifice: among these is the Madonna (see annexed), which was removed from the eastern clerestory window, north side, about 35 years ago, to the eastern window of the Chancel, in which situation it now remains. There is also a shield in a window of the north aisle, charged with a cheveron between three bucks heads, cabossed *sable* on a field *arg.*—arms borne indifferently by the families of Gernon and Horwood, ancient landed proprietors of the County, the latter name occurring in the Parish Register at the beginning of the 17th century. Another specimen is a shield numbered 1, inserted by accident, in a reversed position, representing the armorial bearings of the House of Lancaster, the three lions, and the label with three fleur-de-lis upon every one of the three points. This



was removed at the same time as the Madonna from the Church (situation not known) to the Chancel; and it is now placed in the western window of the south side of the Chancel. The date of the introduction of this shield into the Church may be matter for speculation, unless the character of the glass determine it. Edmund Plantagenet, called Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster, second son of Henry III., bore England with a label, sometimes of five, sometimes of three points, each point being charged with three fleur-de-lis. He was also High Steward of England and Earl of Leicester. But the latter title, which has an importance in the parochial history, he did not possess until after the death of Simon de Montfort at the battle of Evesham, A.D. 1265. To the Earl of Leicester the Manor of Weston Turville was granted by Henry I. Probably Montfort was the Earl of Leicester who is recorded in the language of Lipscomb, to "have held pleas, denominated of the ancient feoffment, and view of frankpledge throughout his lands of Weston, without interruption of the King or his Bailiffs, and recovered the same liberties as against the King," in the year 1265. After that, Simon and all his adherents, dead or alive, were excommunicated by the Pope's Legate. And Edmund Plantagenet, who received the Earldom of Leicester, succeeded to certain rights in Weston attached to the Earldom. Nor is it unlikely that he being the great personage of the parish promoted the erection of the Church, considering how much he was brought into correspondence with the Pope during his long expectation of the crown of Sicily by the Papal grant, and how he owed the Earldom of Leicester to the Papal excommunication. He died at Bayonne A.D. 1296. The date of his titular privileges coincides with the date previously assigned to the Chancel. And the shield of Lancaster may have been originally introduced to his honour. The heraldic shape of it belongs to the end of the 13th, or the beginning of the 14th century.

After Edmund, Henry Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster and Leicester, was created Duke of Lancaster in the 25th year of Edward III.; and Lancashire was erected into a County Palatine. The only dukedom prior to this was the Duchy of Cornwall granted to the Black Prince March 17th, 1337. But when the Duchy of Lancaster was created, other demesnes, such as the Palace and district of the

Savoy in London were added to it; and the rights of the Earldom of Leicester in Weston Turville may be supposed to have fallen to the Duchy. Then they passed by the heiress of Henry Plantagenet to her husband John of Gaunt, who succeeded to the Palatinate. And from him they descended to his son Henry, who was the first to place the Crown in the House of Lancaster as Henry IV. In Henry IV. reign the Duchy Court of Lancaster was instituted, to the end the lands belonging to the Duchy might in all following times be distinguished and known from the lands of the Crown. This may have been the period of the introduction of the shield, if the times of Edmund Plantagenet should be judged too early for the glass. In Henry IV.'s reign, Gilbert Lord Talbot had one fourth part of the Manor of Weston Turville; and his wife was Joan, daughter of Thomas Earl of Buckingham, the youngest Son of Edward III., cousin of Henry IV. After Henry IV., the Court of the Duchy was abolished, until its revival in the time of Henry VII., in whose reign the roof of the Church may have been constructed.

The rights of the Sovereign over the Manor were exercised in early times despotically, when William the Conqueror granted it to the Bishop of Baieux; when William Rufus deprived the Bishop of it; when Henry I., granted it to the Earl of Leicester; when Edward III., angry with Sir John de Molins, because he did not send moneys to him at the siege of Tournay A.D. 1340, seized his lands, but afterwards restored them.

In our own century the last impress of regal sway has been removed from the Manor. The rights originally granted by the Crown to the Earldom of Leicester seem to have found a way back to the Crown from that Earldom through the Duchy of Lancaster; and compensation for the remnant of them was accepted on the part of George III., in the form of a small allotment measuring rather more than half an acre, under the Enclosure Act of 1799. This allotment was transferred in 1857, to Mr. John Eldridge, by the Duchy of Lancaster.

The tower of the Church is in the Perpendicular style. It was to have been built beyond the area of the nave and aisles to the west, if the original intention may be conjectured from the finish of the capitals of the two last columns. The roof of the nave may have been constructed at the

same date as the tower, in the latter part of the 15th century. A screen in the Perpendicular style, of the same date, standing in the Nave side of the Chancel arch was removed A.D. 1860. This had been painted red and green, then white over those colours, and brown lastly. About 35 years ago, a massive beam, resting on the screen, and no doubt supporting the rood-loft, together with other wood-work running up to the point of the Chancel arch, was taken away. Four of the six compartments of this screen are placed under the arch between the Chancel and the Vestry, the other two were in a dilapidated condition, the gate of the central arch was gone.

A lich-gate forms the entrance to the Church-yard across the pathway leading to the north Porch.

Mention has been made of the raising of the Chancel Walls, and the construction of the Roof, which has been recently disinterred from a vault of plaster. The timbers corresponded nearly in span and curve of brace with the timbers of the old hall of the Rectory-house, pulled down in 1837, numbered 7. This interior was divided into a wainscoted wall on the ground floor, about eight or nine feet high, two bed rooms above of the same height, and two ceiled attics above those. It stood to the points of the compass very nearly as the Church stands; and the east end was ornamented as shewn. The west end was plain with a ridge piece in the gable of plainer pattern than the one to the east, numbered 8. The carving in the roof, part of which was much decayed, was hidden by lath and plaister; and the character of the whole did not appear until the work of demolition was far advanced. The timber was very ancient, and black with smoke. The dimensions of the area were 22:9 by 18:7, the height to the wall plate, about 20 feet. The sketch annexed is from memory, assisted by memoranda and parts of the oak carving still preserved. When it was submitted to two archæologists separately, they agreed in assigning the hall to the reign of Edward III., but with some diffidence on account of the difficulty of forming an opinion upon a drawing, which does not profess to be complete in its architectural details. The agreement of two competent judges, who were uninformed about the history of the Parish, is an interesting coincidence; and it affords a foundation for the conjecture that the De Molin's family

may have erected the hall for the Priest, about the date of the Flamboyant Windows in the Church. The door in the S.E. corner communicated with two rooms, projecting to the south, the upper one of which had a small window about 18 in. by 12 in., entirely hidden by brick and mortar. The old Hall of the Hyde Manor House, (see No. 9. 10. 11.) has a floor thrown across it to form two bed rooms, which are ceiled. Its dimensions are 26 : 9 by 21 : 2. The height from the floor to the top of the cornice is 16 : 5. The carving of the roof is hidden by the ceiling ; and it is impossible to ascertain its style and condition without breaking through.

Among the old Saxon words handed down ; there is a "Twitchel," that is, "a narrow passage or alley," or perhaps, "a catch-way" or short-cut. And there is a "Pightle," or "small enclosed piece of ground."

The Parish Register of baptisms commences A.D. 1538, of marriages and burials A.D. 1566. An elaborate genealogical arrangement of all the Parish Registers of England during the 16th and 17th centuries, under the auspices of the Genealogical Society, and the various Archæological Societies of the Kingdom, might be a valuable contribution to general history, topography, and social science ; or, if so great an Archæological undertaking be impracticable, the more modest achievement of an alphabetical catalogue of parish names is suggested.

An old oak panel in the Church, bearing the inscription

**FAITH N
OT EXER
CISED SO
ONE WA
XETH SI
CKE
ANO D
OMINI
1578**

has been removed from the position near the north door to the back of the hexagonal (Elizabethan?) pulpit, an unfinished side, which was originally placed in the corner near the archway leading to the rood-loft, lately opened. In the absence of any clue to local tradition or record which might explain why the motto was carved in the year 1578, the Rev. J. H. SNELL observes, the solution will

probably be found in the complexion of the times generally at that period: the excommunication of Queen Elizabeth, A.D. 1570, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, A.D. 1572, a severe dearth in the country, A.D. 1574; or, it may have been intended to stir the people to the exercise of faith while engaged in congregational prayer, after the suppression of the religious meetings, called "Exercises," in 1577.

One of the Quarries in the eastern Flamboyant window of the south aisle bears the following inscription, which has escaped demolition for more than 200 years:—

Altiss : ^{mo}. Gloriosiss : ^{mo}.

Opt : ^{mo}. Max : ^{mo}. Laus &

honos & prostratio.

T : W : f.

1655.

A coin of Edward II., found by a labourer in the parish, is in my possession.

This brief and imperfect sketch of the past, embracing the Roman, Saxon, and Norman occupation of the county, the Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular periods of Architecture, the eras of the Reformation and the Commonwealth, helps to shew how every time may be represented in a single Parish. As we tread the scenes where men of distant ages have preceded us, speculating with animation, and meditating with seriousness, may we look forward as Christians to a world untracked, and prepared to burst upon our view, when the forms which amuse and gladden us in a fleeting hour are to pass away into indescribable eternity.