

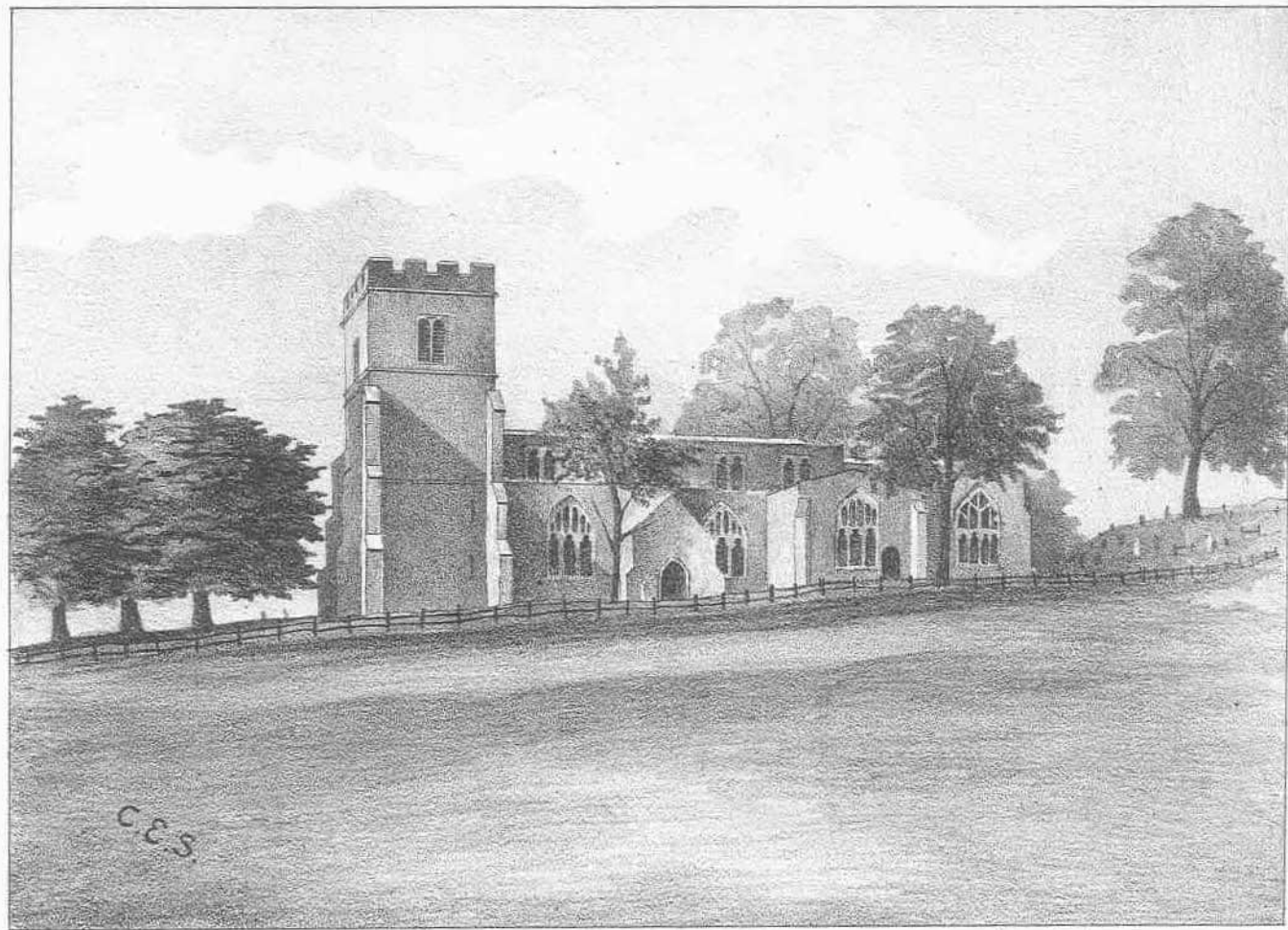
THE CHURCH AND PARISH OF GREAT MISSENDEN.

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THROUGH one of the many lovely valleys dispersed among the Chiltern Hills, there runs a small stream known as the *Misse* or *Misbourne*, which, taking its rise about a mile north-west of Missenden, passes close by the Abbey grounds to the east of the village, crossing the street west of the Church, and, proceeding in its course, falls at length into the Colno, ultimately passing into the River Thames.

It is generally supposed that the place obtains its name from the stream; but to my mind, it is safer to give pre-eminence to the *den*, or valley. A far more satisfactory explanation of the origin of the name is to be found, I think, in connecting it with the religious character of the place. It is (i.) the *Miss-den*, or valley of the Mass, *Missen* being the possessive of *Moesse*=the Mass; or, (ii.) it may be, the adjacent land was specially charged with payment for Masses. The word again may be (iii.) but a corruption of the Saxon *minstre*, or Church of the Abbey, *Minster-den*, the valley of the Minster. (iv.) The original use of the Latin word *Missa*, applied to the dismissal of a church assembly, and hence an assembly or gathering for divine worship, brings prominently before us the religious life of the community that gathered in the valley, and offers, I must think, a by no means improbable derivation. Thus, the stream, I contend, would derive its name from the place, rather than the place its name from the stream.

On the other hand, should this interpretation fail to satisfy some minds, I would mention that there are rivers in Germany to which the eighth century names, *Miss(aha)* and *Meiss(an)* are applied in the sense of winding or tortuous. In Bohemia there is the *Mies*, also



GREAT MISSENDEN CHURCH (South View)

with the ending *en* (Miesen). We have in England (Derbyshire) the *Maese*, and the *Masie* in Aberdeen; France has *Mosa* (1st cent. B.C.), also the *Maas*, *Maes*, or *Meuse*, besides others bearing similar names in Italy and Germany. Mr. Robert Ferguson (*River Names of Europe*) is inclined to refer them to the old Norse *meis*, *curvatura*, Eng., *maze*, etc. The Misbourne stream, so far as its winding character is concerned, answers to the description of these several rivers, and it is just likely that Missenden, as a place-name, may be built up of *Meis(en)den*=the stream that curves its way through the valley.

It is extremely probable that the Romans had a military station in this district, and, consequently, they may have made some use of such advantageous positions, as offered in the highest points of the ridge of which Castle Hill is a part.* Some fragments of what was believed to be Roman pottery, have been dug up at this place to the south-east of the village, and this discovery has given strength to the supposition that a small square entrenchment there is really the site of a summer camp. Except, however, that the ancient vicinal way took its course in the direction of Wycombe through this valley, nothing reliable has been ascertained relating to Roman occupation. In the adjoining parish of Lee is Bray's Wood, with its large entrenchments, in which undoubted Roman and other remains have been found, leading to the idea that the immediate neighbourhood was little else than a Roman colony.

As an evidence of Danish occupation, it may be mentioned that one of the six Amersham Manors was held by Turstin Mantel, otherwise Turstin the son of Rolf. The name still remains in "Mantle Green Farm" and in the Missenden's as "Little Mantels."

We turn to that inestimable survey of English lands and possessions—the Domesday Book—for a first glance at Great Missenden. We there find the Manor to have been held by Walter Giffard (afterwards Earl of Buck-

* The nearest point where the Roman road touched the County appears to have been Wendover (distant about five miles from Great Missenden). This, one of the two Roman ways that intersect the County, was in use in British times.

ingham), and under him Turstin Fitz-Rolf held ten hides of land. There was land for eight plough teams; in the demesnes were two; and nine villeins, with one bordar, held six. There were also two servants, pasture for two teams, woods for twenty hogs, and the rent of the woods four oræ per annum, estimated in the time of Edward the Confessor, at seven pounds. Sired, the son of Alenede, a thane of King Edward, held the Manor with liberty to sell. Hugh de Bolebec, a domestic of Walby the Bishop, also held half a hide in Missenden of one Uluiet. The land was accounted sufficient for one plough, which maintained one bordar, with pasture for one team, and woods for thirty hogs. This was held of King Edward, and valued at ten shillings, with liberty of sale.

Primitive as this condition of early Missenden may appear, it is more nearly assimilated to the present day life and surroundings of a purely rural population, than at first sight might be imagined. There were the numerous features of civilized life; the intercourse of man with his fellows in the different relationships of society, which, if somewhat restricted was in only a very slight degree inferior in its essential points to our own. Of course, a very considerable portion of the parish was at this period unreclaimed land; but this eventually would be brought more or less into cultivation. The low-lying lands would come into requisition for pasture, while the thickly wooded tracts would offer increasing accommodation for hogs and other domestic animals, or being cleared for timber would become arable land, yielding ample supplies of corn, etc., even beyond the ordinary requirements of the village.

Great Missenden, being in the hands of Walter Giffard, was accounted parcel of the Honor of Giffard. Richard I., dividing that Honor, part of the mediety which included Missenden, was given to the Earl Marshall. The male branches of the Marshalls failing, the estate passed by the marriage of Isabel, sister and co-heir of the last Earl of Pembroke (being of the house of Marshall) to Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester, Clare and Hertford, in the reign of Henry III. It remained in his heirs, Earls of Gloucester and Stafford, and Dukes of Buckingham, until it became vested in the Crown on

attainder of Edward Stafford Duke of Buckingham, in the reign of Henry VIII. William de Missenden (a benefactor of the Abbey, and who is sometimes regarded as its founder, A.D. 1133) held Great Missenden as feudatory tenant, in the reign of Henry I. Hugh, his son, took the name of Nuirs, or Naiers, in 1165 (2 Henry II.) on the death of his father. Hugh de Naiers, the grandson, had an only daughter, Joane, who married Hugh de Sanford, and their daughters and co-heiresses, Christian and Agnes, married, respectively, John de Plessetis (afterwards Earl of Warwick), and Matthew Husé. In 1261 (47 Henry II.) the Earl died seized of Missenden, and was interred in the Abbey Church, where his son, Hugh, is also said to have been buried.* Hugh, his son, who was summoned to Parliament as a Baron, in 1296, died, seized of the Manor of Great Missenden, in 1299. In 1361, Millicent, widow of Hugh Plesey, died, seized of the Manor, or rather a moiety of it. Regarding the moiety held by Matthew Husé, a fine was passed in 1345 of the Manor of Missenden, and the advowson of the Parish Church granted by Henry Husé, his great-grandson (who, upon the death of his father, succeeded to the estate) to Thomas de Missenden and Isabella his wife and their heirs. In 1347, a fine was passed of the Manor and advowson, between Thomas de Mussenden and Isabella his wife, and Thomas Lambyn, chaplain. Afterwards, there occur the several connections formed by marriage and inheritance, with Roger Elmrugge (who died in 1378); also, with respect to John de Lenveysey, until we come to the marriage of John Iwardby with Elizabeth, formerly wife of Thomas Selandyne Esq., (who died in 1481). In the reign of Henry VI., Missenden, together with its hamlets, was in their hands. The Abbey, however, possessed the greater part of the estate, and ultimately acquired the entire Lordship in matters temporal as well as spiritual.

I have been able to gather a few scattered details relating to different members of the Missenden, or

* Dugdale says he expressed the desire to be buried in the Conventual Church, near his father's burial-place, and with him his white palfrey, called "Principal," with the accustomed armour and trappings.

Mussenden family, which it may be well to place on record. This family were not only Lords of Missenden, but were also possessed at the same time of the Manors of Brackenborough and Kelstern in Lincolnshire, early in the fourteenth century. The Missenden family proper ended in one Francis Mussenden of Healing, early in the seventeenth century. An illegitimate branch, however, flourished at Great Limber, and entered a pedigree at the visitation of 1592, which is, of course, misleading. The visitation of 1562 has a pedigree of the family.

By an Inquisition Post Mortem, 43 Edw. III., Thomas de Mussenden and Isabella his wife enfeoffed their son Edmund, and his wife, Juliana, daughter of John de Grey, Chivaler, in the Manors of Kelstern and Brackenborough.

By an Inquisition Post Mortem, 18 Richard II., Edward Mussenden, Chivaler, held the Manors of Kelstern and Brackenburgh, with the Manor of Mussenden, Co. Bucks, etc. His son and heir, Bernard Missenden, proved his age, 8 Henry VIII.

James Myssenden of Great Limber, gent., by his will, dated 21st May, 1529, bequeathed to Edmund Myssenden, xxs.; to Barnarde Myssenden, otherwise called Barnarde Spencer, all his lands in Great Limber, Keleby and Killingholme, and 40s.; also, all his years of the Parsonage of Great Limber, which he had of the Prior and Convent of the Charter-house beside Coventry. To his son, Sir William Myssenden, xxs.; to Richard Myssenden, xxs.; to Dame Elyn Myssenden, 10s. yearly for twenty years; to Dame Mawde Myssenden, 40s.; to Dame Mary Myssenden, 40s.; to Dame Jane Myssenden, 40s.; to William Myssenden, 40s.; to Sir Dowke Myssenden, 20s.; to Thomas Myssenden, the younger, 40s.; to Umfray Myssenden, 20s.; to Anthony Myssenden, 40s.; to Barnard Myssenden, his son, equally with three others, he bequeathed the residue, to be divided by his "nevy," Thomas Myssenden, of Helyn, and William Dalyson, his executors; to Catherine Myssenden, his godchild, 40s.; to "Masterys" Margaret Missenden, my "neys," of Helyng, 20s. (Probate granted, 22nd June, 1530.)

The great Limber branch bore the Missenden coat-of-arms, differenced with "a bordure azure semé of plates," which has been deemed evidence of their

illegitimacy. An additional reason is that to be derived from John Mussenden's will, which, taken in conjunction with Gervase Holles' testimony, almost sets the question at rest.* In the visitation of 1592, John Mussenden, is called son of John Mussenden of Healing, by Margaret Topcliffe his wife, but his name does not occur in John Mussenden's will, where mention is made of all his other children.

Of James Mussenden's great-grandson, a certain Francis Mussenden, of Louth, Gervase Holles says:—

"Nota denique quod nullus Mussendenorum jam extat qui non ex spurio et damnato coitu emanavit. Fisciscus enim Mussenden de Louth in Com. Linc. Legista ex filio notho Bernardi Mussenden et cujusdam feminæ (Alicia Spensei nomine) originem suam deduxit. Thomas etiam Mussenden nuper de Waltham in Com. Linc. fuit filius. Thomæ qui filius fuit nothus Thomæ Mussenden militis."

In the will of John Littybury of Hagworthingham, Esq. (dated June 20, 1535), witnessed by Sir Marmaduke Myssendyne, he leaves to his brother Humfray Myssendyne (the brother, probably, of Sir Thomas Myssenden of Healing), xs. a year for life, out of his copyholds held of Lord Willoughby.

Alexander Hawkesworth, parson of Healing, in his will (30 Aug. 1537), appointed his master, Sir Thomas Myssenden, Knt., supervisor. (Prob. 13 Sept. 1537.)

Jane Disney, widow of Louth Kelsey (24th Nov., 1590), leaves "to my nephew, Francis Mussendine of Healing, one ringe of goulde, called Sergeante's ringe."

These few particulars of a family deriving its patronymic from Missenden, afford some insight into the fortunes of an extinct body, who must from time to time have exerted considerable influence upon the parish and its people. The name de Mussenden, Mussenden or Missenden is, however, still to be met with in different parts of the country.

I purposely abstain, as far as it is possible to do so, from touching upon the very important history of the Abbey, which forms so prominent a feature of interest in connection with Great Missenden, leaving it to the pains-

* *Lincolnshire Wills*. Notes by Maddison.

taking investigation of our Honorary Secretary, Mr. John Parker, F.S.A., who has undertaken this special portion. It is, however, necessary to observe that there is some degree of uncertainty respecting the founder of the Abbey. Dugdale, who gives the Foundation Charter (*Monasticon*, Edⁿ. 1827) alludes to William de Missenden as the founder in A.D., 1293, and in an Inquisition taken 51 Edw. III. (A.D. 1331), William is expressly mentioned as founder. A second Inquisition mentions William as founder (A.D. 1336), and "he lies in the Chapter-house of the same Abbey under a marble stone, with three crosses sculptured above." The ancient register* gives the date of its foundation, as recorded by Tanner, A.D. 1133, which is doubtless correct; the real founder being one of the D'Oyleys. It is no uncommon occurrence for a later donor to be regarded as the founder of a monastic house. One instance, which I readily call to mind, is that in which, after a great conflagration, the builder of a priory (the Holy Trinity, Ipswich) came to be esteemed the founder, notwithstanding that the foundation Charter was at the time in existence. The fact of Sir William de Mussenden giving to the Abbey, beside other gifts, the Manor which considerably augmented the revenues of the house, would be quite sufficient to account for his name appearing as founder. If any doubt exist, it is only necessary to remember that when Sir William de Mussenden bestowed his gifts upon the Abbey, the Conventual Church was in process of being built in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Daniel the first-named Abbot, was appointed by William de Mussenden in 1133.

It is important to observe a distinction between the Abbey Church and the Parish Church. Lipscomb, usually a reliable and accurate historian, speaks of the Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul as if it were identical with the Abbey Church of St. Mary, and as erected on the site of the Monastery. In this, Lipscomb is generally followed by the compilers of the directories and smaller histories. It need scarcely be said that both statements are at variance with facts.

The Vicarage was ordained by Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, about the year 1199, the first Clerk so instituted

* *Regist. Monast. de Missenden*, MS. Harl. 3688. *Br. Mus.*

being one Richard de Oxon (6th Nov., 1200).* It is interesting to observe the connection that existed between the Abbey and the Parish Church, as recorded in Bishop Hugh's Vicarage book. This important volume, deposited in the Diocesan Registry at Lincoln, is a record of a worthy achievement, the re-appropriation by the Bishop of a portion of the tithes to parochial use as distinct from the religious houses, the inmates of which retained the whole. It frequently happened that the Vicar of a parish, who, it must be remembered, dispensed hospitality according to his means, subsisted on a mere pittance, the vicarial tithes and other emoluments being devoured by the monks. Often the Vicar had not wherewith to pay even the Episcopal dues. Nearly three hundred Vicarages were in this way established by Bishop Hugh's intervention.

In the following entry relating to the endowment of Great Missenden Vicarage, the quaint statement is made that the Parish Priest had an allowance from the Abbey of provender for his horse and food for himself, this latter owing to the fact that the hour of the Abbey dinner interfered with the time of the parish prayers. We have no means of arriving at the knowledge how far the arrangement was a satisfactory one to the Vicar.

"MISSENDEN.—Vicaria in ecclesia parochiali de Messenden que est abbatis et conventus ibidem auctoritate concilii ordinata est hoc modo vicarius habebit sibi et clerico suo cum uno equo necessaria victus in Abbatia cum debita honestate et viginti solidos annuos pro stipendiis de altaragio ipsius ecclesie percipiendos per manum suam sicut iidem denarii ad manum suam venerint. Et preterea mansum competentem extra ambitum abbatis et solvet sinodalia. Verum quam sepius contigit quod idem capellanus propter curam parochie ad horam prandii canonicorum venire non poterat et ha . . . quantum ad cibaria sua incommode multa incurrebat de consensu victum suum et clerici sui et equi sui necessaria in curia canonicorum accipiens ad domum suam deferri faciet et ibi eis pro sua voluntate utetur. Facta est autem hec proviso per magistrum

* In the taxation of Pope Nicholas (A.D. 1288), the benefice is valued at £7 6s. 8d.

Thomam de Cant' officialem tunc Archidiaconi Buckingham.

Not having had the opportunity of consulting the Institution books at Lincoln, and being unwilling altogether to trust Lipscomb's list, I shall only say that several of the Vicars were Canons of the Benedictine house, the first name recorded being that of Richard de Oxon, Capellanus (A.D. 1200).

One at least of the Vicars, William Honor, was elected Abbot, A.D. 1521. Another, one John Foxe, is described, "modo Abbas et Incumbent." At the dissolution, one of the Canons, Thomas Bernard, had the Vicarage bestowed upon him in lieu of a pension, being charged "to pay beare and discharge the Kinge's Majestye of all manner of charges both ordinary and extraordinary goying out of the same Vicarage."

At the dissolution (32 Hen. VIII.) the Abbey and other possessions (except the advowson of the Vicarage) were granted to Richard Greneway for twenty-one years, and afterwards to Richard Hampden, Esquire, Clerk of His Majesty's kitchen, a descendant of the Hampdens of Great Hampden.* In 1553 the Rectory of the Church and Advowson and Patronage of the Vicarage of Missenden, with other demesnes of the late Monastery, passed to John, Duke of Northumberland, Earl Marshall of England, and Lady Jane his wife, and on the Duke's attainder in 1573, it was granted to Robert, Earl of Leicester. The estate afterwards passed, in 1571, to Sir William Fleetwood, M.P. for the City of London, Bencher of the Middle Temple, and Recorder of London from 1575 to 1591, and Queen's Serjeant in 1592. Sir William died at Great Missenden in 1594, and was there buried together with many of his family in the Parish Church. Queen Elizabeth exercised the right of patronage in the appointment of a Vicar in 1598, and six years later the Lord Chancellor, Egerton, presented.† In 1606, King James granted the Rectory and Church of Missenden,

* Edward VI. gave the Monastery, lands, etc., to his sister, the Lady Elizabeth, in pursuance of his father's will. It was then of the yearly value of £3064 17s. 8d.

† In the King's books the benefice is valued at £41 3s. 6d.

late belonging to the Missenden Monastery*, to Sir James Ramsay, Knt., for services performed in respect of the Gowray Conspiracy. Afterwards, the Fleetwoods and their successors presented. The estate remained in the same male line until the beginning of the last century, when it passed, by female heirs, to the Ansell and Goostry families. On the death of Thomas Goostry, it was purchased, in 1787, under a decree of Chancery, by Mr. J. Oldham Oldham, a wealthy ironmonger of Holborn, who nearly rebuilt the Abbey mansion. On the decease, in 1822, of Mr. Oldham, the Abbey estate was inherited by his son, Mr. Joseph Oldham, by whom it was sold to Mr. John Ayrton (High Sheriff for the County in 1810), who retained it for about ten years. The advowson of the Vicarage was, however, placed by the patron, Mr. Oldham, in the hands of the Trustees of Cheshunt College (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), and to this body is committed the trust of presenting a Clerk for institution upon a vacancy. The estate was afterwards acquired by the late Mr. George Carrington, whose family still reside at the Abbey.

The Parish Church, almost hidden by trees, lies off the high road at the entrance to the village. It is a large cruciform structure, erected towards the close of the thirteenth century, and measures 110 feet by $40\frac{1}{2}$ feet. It consists of a chancel, of good proportions; nave, with clerestory; north and south aisles with transepts, and north and south porches. The tower at the west end is a low embattled structure of three stages, and contains six bells. The windows in the upper portion are Perpendicular, but below, they are of Early English character. As is clearly the case with much of the entire building, many of its ancient features are lost or obscured owing to long neglect or tasteless reparation. The exterior of the Church is now faced with a rough kind of stucco, or plaster, apparently covering soft rubble stone of a perishable nature, intermixed with brick, of which the walls are mainly composed.

From Leland's description of Great Missenden in the reign of Henry VIII., it would appear to have been built wholly of the latter material. "There is," he says, "a

* Rot. Pat. 4 Jas. i. Test. 16 May.

praty Chappell of bricke in the south part of it" (the village).

The Church presents a very plain and heavy appearance, in consequence of the facing of its exterior walls, rendering the building particularly dull by the absence of attractive features in the way of architectural designs, etc., usually to be found in connection with churches of this character.

On the east side of the north porch is a doorway, giving an entrance by stairs to galleries in the north aisles. To affect this a portion of the three-light window by the north porch has been cut away.* On the other side of the adjacent buttress is a square-headed two-light window, which, where not blocked by the gallery staircase, gives light to the vestry room. In connection with the south porch, there is a dormer window on the east side, constructed for the purpose of giving light to the gallery there.

On the south side of the tower are the initials, on stone, J. B., and A. W., with the date 1732, which seem to point to the time when the tower, and possibly a greater part of the exterior, was newly plastered.

The roofs, which are covered with lead, are of one uniform level throughout, except that the chancel roof is slightly lower, and almost flat. The clerestory is Perpendicular, having five nearly square-headed two-light windows on either side. The aisles and transepts have windows of Decorated and Perpendicular character, the latter not being, in some instances, original insertions. Over the west door is the upper portion of a good three-light window. The doorway itself is of Perpendicular character, and is the only ancient woodwork remaining. The east window, which has been lately renewed, is of five lights. The two other small two-light windows, Decorated, on the south side of the chancel, immediately adjoining (the hood moulding, common to both, issuing in Corbel heads), are especially good. In the north transept, looking east, is a two-light Decorated window of flowing tracery; the other is a square-headed three-light window with trefoil heads. In the south transept

* Ascending by a flight of stairs, a room is reached (sometimes used for meetings, etc.), which by no less than four doors communicates with as many roomy pews or gallery divisions.

there is a Perpendicular window of three lights, and looking east, there are two windows, one small, of two lights, the other a three-light Perpendicular window.

It will be gathered from these remarks that Great Missenden Church is an unrestored building. It is now filled with old-fashioned deal pews, being formerly painted white, since covered, for the most part, with a coating of brown varnish; and no less than four very ugly and cumbersome galleries. The goodly proportions of the Church are entirely lost owing to these encroachments, and it is greatly to be wished that they may soon be swept away. The tower arch is entirely hidden by the west gallery, and the north and south aisles are in part similarly obscured.

The transepts, which doubtless were formerly in use as side chapels, are small, the length between nave and chancel being thirty feet. The roofs are divided into three bays, formed of moulded rafters and tie beams, and ceiled. The timbers bear slight traces of colour.

The south chapel, or transept, goes by the name of the "Abbey Pew," to which there is an entrance from the exterior by a circular-headed doorway.

The arches of the nave are pointed with good moulded capitals, and clustered columns of the Decorated style with plain corbels. The clerestory is divided into five bays, displaying to advantage the richly-moulded oak framework of the roof, which is ceiled between the rafters. The spandrels, which descend to stone corbels, representing angels with expanded wings, bearing plain shields, are elaborately carved. At the east end of the nave roof the space is lightly boarded, and this arrangement is continued on the other side of the chancel arch. This is not an uncommon feature, the boarding being sometimes richly painted and decorated, pointing to the pre-Reformation usages in connection with the rood-loft which was here erected. The chancel is approached from the nave by two steps, and further on by another step. The arch is acutely pointed, and has been renewed apparently at no very remote period.

The aisle roofs are of extremely low pitch, being nearly flat. The roof timbers are moulded, and have some remains of ancient colouring.

The chancel roof is of three bays, each divided into

eight compartments. It lacks the richness of the nave roof, the mouldings being plainer, without any carved work either in wood or stone. The chancel itself has, however, several interesting features.

On the north side, about seven feet from the ground, is a range of four sharp-pointed niches, with small detached pillars, the purpose of which it is not easy to determine. Two of these arches are partly concealed by a mural monument. Immediately beneath is an aumbrey, or credence, with an opening or flue at the top leading through behind the niches above; the censer, or a lamp, may formerly have been deposited here, and the smoke would then escape through the passages by some outward aperture.

On the south side are the decorated remains of the sedilia (three) and piscina, with cusped quatre-foil drain and narrow top ledge of stone. In the room at the top of the gallery stairs in the north aisle are numerous fragments of carved stone work, which are easily recognised as portions of the sedilia, probably cleared away from the chancel at the time the stained glass of the south-east window of the chancel was inserted. The sedilia seems to have been of very elaborate character, composed of rich canopies and crocketed niches, with a great deal of foliated ornament. Should any generous donor be desirous of restoring the sedilia to its former beauty, enough remains for the purpose.

The chancel, or priests' door, no longer exists.

In the south-west angle of the chancel, having a very wide internal splay, is a hagioscope, or squint, now blocked, but formerly communicating with the south (transept) chapel, giving at one time an uninterrupted view of the mediæval "high altar." A lychnoscope in the south wall of the chancel is immediately adjacent. It is now walled up, but the interior tracery of a two-light low window has been renewed. Of course, the plaster that now covers the exterior wall quite obscures any external marks of this window. Its position by the "squint" would enable a person to observe the celebrant at either altar and still remain at his post by the low side window, where he would possibly thrust out his hand and, ringing a bell, apprise the monks at the Abbey, and others, of the elevation of the host. Such a contrivance

would, moreover, form a means of ready communication from without, preventing needless interruption while the offices of the Church were proceeding. Or it may be, it was to give light to an enclosure. The whole subject of the so-called "low side" windows has been much discussed, and authorities differ greatly as to their use. The fact that these windows remained unglazed, protected by shutters only, which hung upon hinges (the latter often, as at St. Mary's, Chesham, remaining to this day), the improbability of their being constructed to enable leprous persons to participate in the services and receive the sacrament, leaves us the theory of general use, which is, I venture to think, the most reasonable that can be advanced.

The removal of the wainscot that now disfigures the south transept would, doubtless, reveal a piscina which accompanied the altar there.

The entrance and exit openings of the upper portion of the rood loft still remain in the piers of the Chancel arch.

On either side of the east window is a large Decorated niche of circular form, with slender pillars, and beautified by a free use of the flower ornament in the hollow moulding running round, with fan-like tracery, at the top within. These are partly concealed by the two "tables of the Law."

In a small niche at the north-east corner of the south transept, beneath the entrance to the rood loft, a fragment of a monumental brass has been fixed to the wall; it represents a small standing female figure with clasped hands, which I am inclined to regard as one of the brass effigies of the several children of John and Katherine Iwardby (see p. 313). The niche formerly would have contained an image of some kind.

Above the sedilia a stained glass transomed window of four lights has been inserted by Mrs. George Carington to the memory of her father and mother, James and Elizabeth Hodges of Jersey. One of the heads which terminate the hood moulding has been shamelessly cut away for the purpose of accommodating Mr. Oldham's mural monument.

The fine east window is also filled with stained glass, a memorial placed there by the same lady to her late husband's memory. It is Decorated, and of five lights, having detached shafts and ornamented capitals. The

arch within has rich ornamentation, terminating in corbel heads, man and woman. The hood moulding also has corbel heads, beneath which is some delicate tracery of rich pattern and flower ornament.

There are no windows on the north side of the chancel, the entire space being occupied by the mural monuments.

There is also a stained glass window in the south aisle to the memory of Mrs. Frances Sarah Greaves, erected by her father, a former Vicar.

In the south transept windows, there are fragments of old stained glass.

Browne Willis found in a window in the chancel the name of John Ottewelle, who was one of the Canons of the Benedictine house here—

Pray for the soul of John Otwell, Canon,

over which was the effigy of a priest kneeling at a desk, and on a label proceeding from his mouth—

Miserere mei Deus.

Inserted in the western window of the north aisle, by the entrance to the west gallery, are some interesting pieces of stained glass. A fragment in one of the upper segments has a portion of an armorial bearing, as far as I can make out, *paly-bendy argent and gules*, with the letters

Ses Ore.

It would be interesting to identify this, but its imperfect state has not at present allowed me to do so.

In the South Aisle (the roof of which, in common with that of the North Aisle, has apparently been lowered in pitch, the hood-moulding of the windows touching the rafters), at a considerable elevation, there are four stone corbels, human heads, inserted in the wall on either side at different points. There is also a similar corbel, in like position, in the North Aisle, by the opening leading to the gallery stairs, looking east. There can be no doubt that the original purpose of these corbels was to carry the spandrels from the rafters. If so, the spandrels have been so neatly cut away as to leave no trace of their existence.

By the South Door, in the wall of the aisle a few feet from the ground, is a small narrow niche, probably occupied in former days by a figure of some saint.

Both North and South Porches are very plain, being much defaced by plaster and whitewash. The latter has the moulding of the inner arch (corresponding to the west entrance, which has fortunately escaped the plasterer's hand) with the hood-moulding; the form also of one of the side windows, now blocked, remains.

The church is floored throughout with common pementals, which has a very mean appearance, and there is a great lack of monumental slabs, which is a little surprising in a parish like Great Missenden. It can only be surmised that the memorials of this character, which in all probability once existed, are either hidden from view or have been destroyed.

The Font placed at the west end of the South Aisle is modern and tasteless. It is circular in form, and made of composition, relieved in the base with a cable moulding, by which it is encircled, and rests upon a pedestal of carved stone.

The North Aisle is encumbered by a Vestry, which, together with the gallery above, is an obstruction that it would be a real gain to have removed. The Vestry is screened off by a partition of wood-work. This portion of the North Aisle wall has been evidently set back to afford this accommodation.

The Tower is approached by a doorway in the west wall of the south aisle.

In the West Gallery, where the choir is seated, is an organ, behind which are placed the benefaction boards.

There are several Parish Charities, the earliest being that of Nicholas Almond, of Cuddington, who, in 1629, left a small property in Thame for the relief of the poor. In 1635, Dame Jane Bois left £100, augmented by a further sum of £35, given by John Hampden and Richard Camden, and also property in Priestwood, known as "Catscroft," to be applied in apprenticing poor children, provision being made for the maintenance of the testatrix' monument in Great Missenden Church. From Gregory's Charity an annual sum of £5 is received for the poor. By the will of George Jennings an annual rent charge of a guinea is for "a sermon to be preached and the Holy

Sacrament administered on the first Sunday in old May."

In the North Aisle, near the Porch Entrance, two hatchments are fixed to the wall. Over the South Door there was formerly an achievement, very small, oblong, bearing a chevron between three birds *argent* on a bend *az.*, three escalops of the first. A hatchment bearing the Oldham arms is also to be found in the south wall of the Chancel.

On a brass plate affixed to a part of the wainscoting by the "Abbey Pew" in the south aisle, is a curious inscription in Roman capitals. It commemorates Zachæus Metcalfe, Gent., and his mother Margaret, A.D. 1595-6, and reads as follows:—

"HIC IACET ZACHEVS METCALFE GEN FILIVS
ET HERES XPOFERI METCALF ET MGARETA
VXOR EIVS QVI OBIIT 19 DIE MAIJ ANO DNI
1595, SIMILITER HIC IACET PREDICTA M'GARET
METCALF MATRIS PREFATI ZACHEI QVE
OBIIT 21 DIE MAIJ, ANNO DNI, 1596, ACET
P'DICT' CHRISTOFERVS INTENDANS HIC SE-
PVLCRI OBIIT — DIE — ANNO DNI —
FIDELIT' IN VITA SVA REDENTES IN REMISSIONE
XRI ET SALVS ESSE IN DIE IVDICIJ."

Facing this brass on the opposite wall is a portion of another similar memorial, the rich and elaborate mantling of an armorial escutcheon only.*

A small brass in the chancel marks the vault of the Oldham family: it is inscribed "The Family Vault of James Oldham Oldham, Esq., Patron of the living, Impropiator of the Parish, and Lord of this Manor, 1789." Mr. J. Oldham Oldham, who was greatly attached to the cause of Lady Huntingdon's followers was a zealous patron of the college at Cheshunt, where he was interred, and a monument erected to his memory.

Affixed to the lower part of the front of the Communion Table is an inscribed monumental brass, minus

* Figured in Lipscomb's *Buckinghamshire*.

the effigies, which originally consisted of the man in civil costume, the lady in hoined head-dress, and four children, two sons and two daughters. In 1822 these figures, which are engraved in Lipscomb,* were loose in the Vestry. The inscription is as follows :—

Hic jacent Kohes Iwardeby Armiger &
Katerina Uxor Eius filia & heres Bernardi
de Mussenden patroni huius Abbathee de
Mussenden Qui quidem Katerina obiit die
Martis x^a die mensis Julij Anno dni Millimo
ccccxxvj et dicto Kohes obiit—die mensis
—Anno dni Millimo cccc—Quor aiabs
ppricetur deus. Amen.†

Browne Willis mentions that this brass, as we may suppose, was formerly in the Abbey Church.‡ The late Patron, Mr. Oldham, appears to have taken charge of the brasses, and fixed the inscription in its present position, which is an unfortunate one.§ Dugdale gives it as “coram summo altari de Missenden,” it being then laid, as was customary and proper, on the floor.

Thirty years ago the missing brasses appear to have been fixed to the walls. The following brasses also seem now to be lost. One, affixed to a marble slab, had the effigy of a female between two men clad in armour, and below, this inscription :—

Hic iacet Elizabeth Salendyne primo uxor
Rich Iwardeby sepulte London in Ecclesia
scæ Brigittæ qui obiit ib'm x die Maij
An^o. Dni mcccclxvi quæ obiit xxv die Nobem.
A^o. supra dicto quor. aiabs p'pitiet deus.
Amen.

* Vol. ii., p. 381.

† Lipscomb's transcript of this inscription is defective.

‡ A brass to Lady Jane Iwardeby (date A.D. 1519) exists at Ewell.

§ It has received, in common with the Communion Table, a coat of brown varnish, and, in process of time, may receive other indignities up to vanishing point (!) if not removed to a more suitable position.

Another, laid on the nave floor, having the inscription:—

Pray for the souls of Richard Batenal and Elizabeth his wyfe. The which died 21 day of July in the year of our Lord 1505. On whose souls Jesus have mercy.

The following also has been noted:—

Hic iacet Thom Clement Woolman and Butcher qui multa bona huic ecclesie fecit qui obiit 10 May, 1445, et Malyn uxor quorum animabus propicietur deus. Amen.

There are several mural monuments on the north side of the chancel wall. A remarkable one has at the top a figure of Time. Under a circular arch formed of a number of books piled one upon another, is a tablet of black marble, with the following inscription:—

HIC INFRA EST
QVOD RELIQVVM EST.
GVIELMI BOIS, È GENEROSÁ
FAMILIA DE FREDVILL IN AGRO CANTIANO
ORIVNDI; IVRIS CIVILIS CANDIDATI, AVLÆ
CLARENSIS. CANTABRIG QVONDA SOCIE PVBLICIO
PROCVRATORIS ACADEMIÆ QVIS FVIT VIDES, LECTOR; QVALIS
AVTEM
NON SATIS DIXERIT LVPI MAJOR-SVMMATIM HABE. VIR FVIT
VITÆ INTEGERRIMÆ PLÆQ'-GRAVIS
SIMVL ET VENVSTVS-ERVDTVS ADMODVM ET
INVISITATA LINGVARVM PERITIA MIRANDVS.
HIS ACCEDEBAT SINGVLARIS PRVDENTIA, QVA
LONGA TVM APVD SVOS TVM APVD EXTEROS
EXPERIENTIA CONFIRMAVERAT VIXIT CÆLEBS.
POST VARIAS TANDEM PEREGRINATIONES
E VIATORE FACTVS COMPREHENSOR,
7 Feb.

Ano { ÆTATIS, 70.
{ SALVTIS, 1631.

P. E. B. D. N.

These last five initial letters can scarcely be regarded as edifying to posterity, whatever may be said of the rest of the inscription. It may be a little rash, therefore, so much as to conjecture the meaning. With considerable diffidence, I would suggest as a possible interpretation,

Pro Expectantes Beate Domini Nostri.

Other members of the same family are buried here, and have memorials placed in the chancel, among them being Dame Joan daughter of Thomas Walker, and wife, first, of David Bond and afterwards of Sir William Bois (A.D. 1635).

An inscription to Robert Armstrong (a former Vicar, 1803—1820) witnesses to the fact that the age of martyrdom is not by any means confined to a particular place or period, for it could be said of him, to quote from the words on the tablet, “*persecutione oppressus sed non derelictus.*”

Of another Vicar, Jeremiah Newell, who has left in MS. a book of most wholesome reading affecting the parish and neighbourhood—a spiritual diary, in fact, compiled by him during his incumbency—the same might with equal truth be said. With singular fidelity he relates many an incident in which he is himself seen to every advantage, without in the least desiring it. “The trials of a Country Parson,” godly, conscientious and exemplary in his life, could scarcely be more fittingly displayed.* Mr. Newell was presented by Messrs. Dickenson and Lowndes (formerly Selby), as Trustees, in 1787. He died in 1803. A memoir of him, with funeral sermon by Rev. Thomas Scott, the Commentator, has, I learn, been published.

The Rev. Richard Marks, who was presented to the Vicarage in 1820, by seven trustees, Mr. Oldham being one, held the living for just a quarter of a century. He was a native of North Crawley in this county, and at one time was a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Mr. Marks was an esteemed author, and a marble tablet in the church exists to his memory.

The Rev. Joshua Greaves, for thirty-three years Vicar,

* The book is in the custody of the Vicar of Great Missenden (Rev. C. E. Story, M.A.), who would, I am sure, be willing to show it to any who may feel interested in the account here given of his predecessor.

part of the last century several parishioners whose burials are entered are termed "Anti-pædobaptists."

Edward Brudenell Esq., Lord of the Manor of Raans and Coleshill in Agmondisham (Amersham), Clerk of the Parliaments in the reign of Edward III., Attorney to King Richard II., and Coroner of England, gave by will, dated 21st June, 1425 (3 Henry VI.) to the church of Missenden, his "silk banner with the star upon it."

In 1549, Edward VI. granted by letters patent to Sir Edward Warner, knight, and John Gosnold Esq., "the Shoppe of William Lane, Bocher," and a messuago called "Dabenes," and one close of land called "Bed-fords" in Great Missenden, formerly given to maintain lights in the Parish Church, and which it was stipulated should be held as of the Honor of Eye in Suffolk.

At the time of the confiscation of Church goods, in the 6th year of Edward VI., the following Inventory was made, and is now preserved in the Public Record Office. (*Excheq: Q.R.*)

Myssend } Thys Inventorie indented made xxijth day of
Magna. } July in the vjth yere of the reign of or sou'eign
lorde Edwarde the Sixt be the Grace of God
of Inglonde fraunce & Ireland Kyng de-
fendore of the fathe & on erthe of the
Church of inglonde & also of Ireland all
other ornaments pteyng to the parishe of
greate myssend wthin the countie of Bucks
Betewyn the Right honorable Sr fraunces
Russell, Knyght lords Russell Sr Horres
barkley Sr Edmunde peckhm and Sr Robert
Drury knyghte and Wyllm Ryllysley Esquier
of thone partie Amogte other for the seide
goods & other the pmisses by vertue of
the Kynge maiestie Comysion to them
directed beryng date the xvj day, of May in
the vj yere of the reign of or Sou'eyn lord the
Kynge maiestie yt nowe is and John Marche
Wyllm blake. All wiche goods plate Jowells
and other ornaments be comytted to the faste
custodie of John Marche Wyllm blake until
suche tyme as the Kyngs maicstis pleasure be
ffurdye knowyn.

Inprims ffurst, a Chalice of Sylu' pcell gylt.

Ite' a sute of westmets of blew velfett, wt a cope of the same.

Ite' a sute of westments of Russett Damaske wt a cope of the same.

Ite' a sute of grene sylke wt a cope of the same.

Ite' ij, blew copes of sylk.

It' iij syngle westmets ooñ white the other gren & the other blacke.

It' in the steple v grete bells & j sanz bell.

During the religious persecution of the early part of the sixteenth century, Great Missenden yielded of her own those who were willing witnesses unto death in the defence and confirmation of Reformation principles. Towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII., an aged inhabitant, "Father" Roberts, a miller, suffered death by burning at Amersham. Upwards of twenty persons were obliged to carry faggot loads wherewith to feed the flames that devoured the bodies of the martyrs, and were afterwards compelled to do penance by journeying to some distant place and there performing some act of contrition. We learn from the Register of Bishop Longland (printed in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*), that Missenden itself was one of the selected places occasionally used for this latter melancholy work. A large number of pilgrims used to resort to the famous image of "Our Lady of Missenden," which gave to the place the required character. An idea of one of these enforced pilgrimages may be gathered from an account given of the accusation brought against one Thomas Reve of Great Marlow, for speaking against pilgrimages:—

"As he was going to our lady of Lyncoln for his penance enjoyned by Bishop Smith, and being demanded whether he had done his penance in coming to our lady of Lincoln, he answered that Bishop Smith had released him to come to our Lady of Missenden for six years."

Dissuading from pilgrimages was esteemed a crime that merited severe punishment, inasmuch as it tended to impoverish those in charge of the shrine and the receivers of such gain. The town would also suffer, as a continuous stream of pilgrims coming from all parts would have ensured a certain measure of prosperity.

Missenden was doubtless much affected in this way by the steadfastness of the Reformers. The name of a parishioner, Richard Dell, occurs in Bishop Longland's Register as one accused "for reading the Scriptures in English."

The six Bells hanging in the tower are of excellent tone, and among the most melodious in the County. The tenor bell has inscribed upon it in Roman capitals—

THOMAS MEARS	FOUNDER	LONDON, 1840.
REV. RICHARD MARKS	VICAR.	
ROBERT DOUGLAS	} CHURCHWARDENS.	
JAMES POTTER		

The fifth has—

1623, C. W., and I. I. K., with a fleur-de-lis between each set of capitals. The founder's initials, E. K. (Ellis Knight, of Reading), with a fleur-de-lis, is on this bell, with the words in Lombardic characters :

LET YOUR HOPE BE IN THE LORD.

The fourth has—

T. MEARS OF LONDON. FECIT. 1824.

The third—

"LOVE GOD 1640,"

in Roman characters.

The second bell in Early English lettering—

THIS BELL WAS MADE 1603.

The first bears the date **1692.**

There is also the Saunce or Sanctus bell, commonly called "The Parson's Bell." It is dated 1782, and probably an old bell re-cast. It is placed in the north-west of the tower, apart from the other bells, and at a higher elevation, with a separate opening or window in the tower.

Some rather absurd ideas are abroad respecting these bells, which, it is said, were brought from the Conventual Church, and the tower enlarged to receive them. The tenor being of such great size was re-cast to allow of its

transit; it is, moreover, supposed to have been brought from Normandy, and to be the largest bell in the county. Originally, it is said to have carried the inscription—

Dulcis instar malis Campana vocor Gabrielis,

and to have weighed 50 cwt. It is now reduced to 30 cwt. A reference to the Church goods of Edward VI., will at once dispel the notion that Great Missenden Church bells came from the Abbey, certainly so far as five out of the peal of six and the Sanctus bell are concerned.

It is indeed a matter of regret to learn that the old Church Plate was, some years since, stolen from the Vicarage, and never recovered. The Communion Plate now in use is modern.

The Rev. John Randall, a zealous Puritan divine in the reign of King James I., and the author of several volumes of Sermons and Lectures, was a native of Great Missenden. He was a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and became Rector of St. Andrew's Hubart, in Little Eastcheap, London, where he died in 1652. Mr. Randall is best known as the author of "The Great Mystery of Godliness." (Lond. 1624 and 1640.)

The Church was repaired in 1830, and by a rearrangement of the seats and gallery, 208 additional sittings obtained. The Church, which we are told on the authority of Dr. Lipscomb, had for many years remained in "a disgraceful state of neglect," had thus sitting accommodation for 618 persons. Whatever were the advantages at the time of this reparation and remodelling of seats, there can be no question that much of the work was very poorly done, and after a lapse of sixty years the circumstances of the parish seem to require a demolition of the pews and galleries, and the substitution of open benches throughout. A few open benches are already placed beneath the west gallery.

Peterley House adjoining Hampden, was an ancient family seat of the Dormers. It is about a mile and a half from the village, and forms part of an estate of about forty acres. The old mansion having been allowed to fall into decay, a plain residence was built on the site early in the present century. It is said that many

interesting objects of antiquity were dispersed at the time the old house was dismantled.

The Dormers also erected a mansion at the north end of the Parish, known as "Elmhurst," which is generally supposed to occupy the ancient site of Elmrugge or Elmridge (a name derived from a row of very large elms), and occupied by a family of that name in the time of Edward III. They were descendants of the Iwardbys. In the ground adjacent to the modern house, remains of an early arch and doorway were discovered.

Overlooking the valley on the east stands "Healthy Hill House," a modern residence built by the late James Stephen, Esq., who was at one time a Master in Chancery. He was for some time Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and one of the projectors of the once familiar *Christian Observer*, as well as of the *British Review*. Mr. Stephen realized a fortune in the Isle of St. Christopher, where he held a valuable appointment. He died in 1832.

At the distance of about a mile from the Church on the right-hand side of the road going to Wendover, is a plantation in which a former owner, Major Thomas Backhouse, who had been in the East India Service, was buried in the year 1800, according to his express desire. His remains were deposited within a strange looking mausoleum (presumably designed by himself), built of flint and brick in the form of a pyramid, having a flat stone about three feet square at the top, while in the north and south walls a small Gothic window was inserted. The monument standing upon uneven ground rises from 16 to 18 feet high, and is about 11 feet square at the base, the lower walls rising from $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet to $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height. An entrance formerly on the west side is now blocked, and the tomb partially covered with ivy.* It appears that Mr. Backhouse, at all times very eccentric, was by his own directions *immured* in an upright position, his sword being placed in the coffin beside him. His son, Lieut.-General Backhouse,

* A drawing of the monument by Wm. Lowndes, Esq., is given in the RECORDS OF BUCKS (Vol. II, p. 148). It was at the time (1859) in a dilapidated condition.

had his father's remains afterwards removed to the Parish Church. The following entry occurs in the Parish Register:—

"August 8th, 1807.—The remains of Thomas Backhouse, Esq., removed by a faculty from the Archdeacon of Buckingham, from the mausoleum in Harvingfield to the churchyard of Great Missenden, and there interred. He died June 21st, 1806."

There was a prevalent idea in the parish that Mr. Backhouse was thus strangely interred in order to keep possession of the estate until his son returned to Harvingfield Lodge. The late residence of Mr. Backhouse is situated a mile and a quarter from the plantation.

There are some interesting and well-preserved remains of old houses of antique appearance, chiefly built of wood and plaster, with strong oak beams, having overhanging upper stories and quaint casements. The "George" Inn, situate in the principal street, or London Road, was evidently once a famous hostelry, and a building of some importance. At the further end of the courtyard is an ancient building, the lower part of which is in use as stabling, etc. The projecting upper story is reached by steps. The timbers are of immense size and durability. In recent times the upper portion has been used for holding Petty Sessions and similar gatherings; in former days it possibly served as a kind of Guildhall. The entire length of the building is seventy-eight feet. In days gone by there were other important houses of public resort to meet the necessities of the period. At the entrance to the town may be observed on the rising ground by the chalk pit a small house of Gothic character, which the stranger unwittingly might conjecture to be ancient, or at least to be formed of old ecclesiastical remains, and to have a history. The history is simply this: the house, with the one adjoining, was, in the present century, built of clay, by a too adventurous plasterer (possessed of more taste than common sense), on the ground which was a part of the Common, without either seeking or obtaining the permission of the Lord of the Manor, and, as a consequence, he had to relinquish whatever right and benefit he possessed in his house of clay in favour of the Lord of the Manor.

Of the four thousand acres, nearly one thousand are

computed to be open heath and waste, two thousand arable, and the remainder wood and meadow.

I have brought together the following FIELD NAMES, which, I believe, will prove of interest:—

Great Garden.	Bellam Field.
Pirycroft.	Dene Piece.
Windmill Field.	Raunsdell Piece.
Heming Pytt.	Bury Field.
Draxe <i>alias</i> Broughton.	The Great Bushes.
Sheep Cottis.	Brandsfee.
Horse Shoe Field.	Norwood.
Depe Field.	Gryme Field.
Rogers Field.	The Teynter Piece.
Old Grove Field.	Stocking Grove.
Middle Wide Field.	Bury Mead.
Cocks Lane.	Cockshot Piece.
Sikeman's Field.	Chalk Pit.
Draper's Herbage.	Dayvold's Grove.
Black Pound Mead.	Sawcery Mead.
Lady Wood.	South Earth.
Little Bushes.	Le Fryth.
Nynning.	Le Heigh Wood.
Little Wide Field.	Great Digged Wood.
Cobler's Hide.	Little Digged Wood.
No-Man's-Land.	

The names "Lady Wood," "Gryme Field," and "Sawcery (Sorcery) Mead," are very suggestive.

I have, in conclusion, to express my best thanks to my friend, the Rev. C. E. Story, Vicar of Great Missenden, who has at all times been most ready to give me what assistance he was able to render. We are also greatly indebted to him for the pretty sketch of the church, which accompanies this paper.

In Lipscomb's *Buckinghamshire* (vol. ii., facing p. 45), an engraving of the church (S. aspect) is given; the two sketches together will give a very good idea of the exterior. A thorough and judicious restoration of the building (which would, of course, include the removal of the galleries and the high pews that now disfigure the church), would rejoice the hearts of all interested in the welfare of the place.

I ought to say that I have been unable to examine the contents of the church chest—a capacious “hutch,” several feet long, secured by three locks, and deposited in the room over the north gallery staircase. Perhaps, at some future time, I may be allowed to supplement this paper by an account of the books and papers there, should I, upon examination, find them of sufficient interest.