

By the Committee at Leicester.

Leic :

Upon the desires and consent of the well affected Parishioners of Hatherne and the concurrent approbation of ye Patron of the Rectory of Hatherne in this county. It is ordered that Mr. Thomas Allsopp, a godly and orthodox Divine be desired to officiate in the church of Hatherne aforesaid, and enabled to have and enjoy the sequestred Parsonage house, & the tythes & dues of the s^d Rectory.

1^o Decemb. 1648.

Tho : Hesilrige.
Arth : Staveley.
Tho : Beamont.
ffran : Hacker.
Edm : Cradock.
ffr : Smalley.

Will : Stanley.

vera cop : exam^{ta}
per :
Jane Rugeley vi.
Robert James.
John Goodman.

THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF WIGSTON'S HOSPITAL.

MR. JAS. THOMPSON said he had a short Paper to read on a measure which was proposed to be carried out by the Town Council shortly, viz., the taking down of the chapel of William Wigston. He asked the patient attention and indulgence of the members present whilst he read his Paper, which seemed to be fully called for on his part, and which was well calculated to enlist the sympathy of the Society, which was intended to act whenever occasion called for it, one of its objects being to protect and preserve ancient buildings and relics of antiquity from destruction. Mr. Thompson then proceeded to read the following Paper :

The proposal to demolish the Hospital of William Wigston in this town, with the chapel at its southern extremity, and, consequently, to disturb the remains of the dead lying beneath the floor of the chapel, involves consequences so serious that it behoves the Leicestershire Architectural and Archæological Association—a Society which professes to regard the preservation of ancient architectural remains as one of its chief objects—to consider well whether it can in any way ward off the blow, or whether it must stand by and witness in silence, and without remonstrance, the threatened violation of the tombs of the dead, and the uncalled-for destruction of one of the few remaining monuments of the piety and charity of the departed benefactors of this ancient borough.

It will serve to show the disregard of decency the proposal implies, if I inform the members of this Society what the destructive designs of the promoters of the measure really entail, should the chapel be in any way touched by the reckless hand of the spoliator. In order to do this, I have referred to the account which is given by the local historian, Nichols, of the bodies interred in the fabric. It is stated by him that among the dead who lie beneath the floor of the chapel are the following persons :

1. William Fisher, the first master of the Hospital, the contemporary of the founder, who, therefore, was well acquainted with his munificent purposes, and co-operated with him in carrying them out. He died about the year 1540.

2. Cecilia, the supposed daughter of the founder; as the fragments of a brass formerly existing implied.

3. The Rev. Geoffrey Johnson, the third of the Confraters, who was the public lecturer of Leicester in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He was the eldest son of Maurice Johnson, Esq., who represented Stamford in Parliament, in conjunction with David Cecyl, Esq., the grandfather of Lord Treasurer Burghley, in the year 1523. Mr. Johnson died in the year 1585. His monument has lately been removed from the chapel.

4. The Rev. Thomas Simpson, the fourth Master, in his day a man of theological repute, who died in 1589.

5. The Rev. Richard Clarke, M.A., the twelfth Master of the Hospital, who died in 1684.

6. The Rev. Jno. Jackson, the twelfth Confrater, who died in 1763—a man noted for his literary attainments and benevolent character.

In addition to the bodies of these six persons, others of less repute—at least as many more—thus constituting twelve altogether—lie mouldering in the dust of William Wigston's chapel.

It has been stated that the Trustees of Wigston's Charity some time ago sold a portion of the southern end of the chapel to the Corporation of Leicester—that at the south-western angle—in order that the causeway recently formed from Southgate Street to S. Martin's Churchyard might be carried direct up to it. This would necessarily involve the entire displacement of the south wall, with its window and the two interesting niches on each side, and in fact the downfall ultimately of the entire fabric. In the first instance, it will be seen, the wall could not be meddled with, at all, without being accompanied by a disturbance of the human remains lying close thereby; in the second instance, it will be perceived, the rebuilding of the wall, after the proposed mutilation of the structure, must utterly alter and spoil the interior, if it went no further. To touch the fabric as contemplated would be, indeed, to take the first step towards its complete demolition.

The plea put forth on behalf of this unreasonable proposition is

the improvement of the road. But (as will be seen by any person who visits the spot) it is on the other side of the street, where there are stables and coach-houses, that the widening is most needed and could be most easily effected. May it not be believed that the proprietor, were proper representations made to him—a gentleman known for his well-understood regard for archæological considerations—would meet the town authorities in this matter, and consent to the sale of the ground to the extent required for the formation of the causeway in the direction named? He would not, assuredly, allow the modern stable to outweigh the venerable chapel in his calculations. There is no excuse, then, for the meditated demolition of the chapel, while the street on the opposite side remains without a better causeway.

It is not to be credited that the Trustees of the Hospital were aware, either of the sacrilegious act to which they were about to consent, or of the disturbance of the bodies, when they agreed to the alleged transfer of the portion of the chapel to the Corporation of Leicester. Still less is it possible they would have done so, had they known that the consent of Parliament must have been obtained before a consecrated place could be interfered with; and that consent has yet to be applied for and obtained. It is to be hoped the Corporation will not proceed with their plans in respect to the chapel, now that the consequences are known to them, and that the consent of Parliament has to be procured before they can be attempted.

It need scarcely be added that the chapel forms part of the Hospital, and that one part of the fabric cannot be molested without damaging the other. They form a whole, unique in character, constituting a monument of former days, identified with their charitable builder, which every generation ought to preserve with pious respect for his memory. Nor need this preservation be wholly without its uses; as the chapel might still be retained as a school chapel, and the remainder of the interior as a supplemental schoolroom, or library, or museum, in connection with the new schools.

For the rest, it must needs be said that the contemplated taking up and dispersion of the remains in the chapel demand the indignant protest of every right-minded man in the community; as against an unrighteous act, a gross indignity offered to decency, and a foul insult to the memory of the dead—a measure of uncalled-for, unwarrantable, and wanton desecration.

After some remarks from the Chairman deprecating the threatened destruction of the Chapel,

MR. NEVINSON said that he fully concurred in the sentiments which had been expressed in the paper, and pointed out that it was imperative that they should do something with the object of averting the threatened destruction of the venerable edifice. He

concluded by moving "That in the opinion of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society, the proposed mutilation of the chapel of Wigston's Hospital, in order to widen the street adjoining, involving, as it will, the desecration of the remains of dead interred therein, and the destruction of the only memorial of William Wigston, one of Leicester's greatest benefactors, demands an earnest and grave protest from the Society, as equally unnecessary and repugnant to right feeling. Further, the Society would at the same time strongly remonstrate against the proposed destruction of the venerable and interesting fabric erected by William Wigston—which the Society believes might still be retained and adapted for use in connection with the proposed new schools. It is therefore resolved that a sub-committee be appointed to watch the proceedings about to be taken by the Governors of Wigston's Schools and by the Town Council, in order, as far as may be, to carry out the purpose of this protest."

The REV. T. FAIRBROTHER briefly seconded the motion.

After some discussion, in which Mr. Ordish, Mr. Nevinson, Mr. Thompson, and the Chairman joined, the motion was carried unanimously.

THE LEICESTER STAINED GLASS.

MR. TRAYLEN exhibited further portions of this glass (see page 138) and

MR. NORTH contributed the following descriptive Notes :

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

When almost every church wall and every church window was a pictured leaf in the "poor man's book," the Seven Sacraments of the Mediæval Church were often represented there in colours bright and glowing. The more enduring art of the carver, too, not unfrequently chose the same subjects wherewith to give beauty to our churches, and specially to adorn the fonts at their entrance. We may well suppose that representations by art of subjects of such bitter controversy, would not be allowed to be retained in our churches when the Reformation came. Consequently, existing paintings of the Seven Sacraments in distemper or on glass in England, are extremely rare. Indeed, the only representation of them in distemper which has come under my notice, and which is said to be unique in this country, was discovered in the year 1860, hidden under many coats of whitewash, in the parish church of Kirton in Lindsey, Lincolnshire, when that edifice was undergoing repair. It is in a very imperfect state. The central figure, a portion only of which is now visible, was our Saviour on the Cross, the base of which rested on a globe. On His right hand stands