

and to express a hope that I may be able to do something to deserve the distinction.

Votes of thanks to Mr. Potter for his Paper, to the Exhibitors, and to the Chairman, terminated the proceedings.

September 11th, 1855.

THE EXCURSION.

THE carriages were soon out of the town, rattling along the Groby turnpike. By some oversight the visit to the "Bird's Nest," near the Frith, was omitted; so the party proceeded onward to Kirby Muxloe. Here, the line of vehicles halted in succession at the gateway leading down to the ruined Castle; and as each vehicle discharged its occupants the group became larger, until at last it formed a considerable crowd—there being not less than fifty or sixty ladies and gentlemen in the party. Among the company were the principal visitors of the previous day, including those from Northamptonshire.

At the request of the honorary secretary of the society, Mr. Thompson briefly addressed the party, giving a few facts in connection with the history of the building. He stated that it was erected after the conclusion of the Civil Wars of the fifteenth century, known as the Wars of the Roses. That was a period when the strong castles of the feudal barons were no longer necessary, but when a regard for defence was found requisite, as well as provision for domestic comfort. The castle was erected by the first Lord Hastings, the companion and favourite of Edward the Fourth, to whom that monarch had granted licenses to build castles at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Kirby Muxloe, and Bagworth. The castle at Ashby-de-la-Zouch all had probably seen; that was on a scale of magnitude surpassing Kirby Muxloe, the latter having more the character of a rural residence. With respect to the architectural features of the edifice, he was speaking in the presence of gentlemen who understood them better than he did, and therefore he would leave them unexplained.

Mr. Flower mentioned that he had been told by the late Mr. Winstanley, that he remembered a group of towers at the north end of the ruins, similar to those now standing at the south end, but his father wanting bricks for a barn pulled them down. Mr. Winstanley himself, however, disapproved of the proceeding, and made some efforts to preserve the remains.

The inspection of Kirby Castle being concluded, the party proceeded on its route to Ratby—some of the visitors being of opinion that the architecture was of a later date than that of the licence to

erect it, namely 1474; this topic was freely discussed among them while on their way to "Ratby burrow."

On their arrival here, the Archæologists at once proceeded to inspect the Roman encampment. The decided and well-developed outlines of the agger and vallum, all round the area (comprising between nine and ten acres), struck the observation of every visitor, and left no doubt in any mind relative to the original design of these earthworks. On arriving at the extremity of it, Mr. Thompson was again requested by several members of the party to give them a few words on the nature of the work before them, which he did, illustrating his observations by pointing out the shape and position of the encampment, in relation to the surrounding scenery. Mr. Thompson gave it as his opinion that it had been formed in the middle of the first century of the Christian era, while the Romans had been engaged in the subjugation of this island—that it had been constructed in the midst of a hostile population—and that it had probably been afterwards retained by the Romans as a summer encampment for the purposes of military drill and parade, and to keep alive a martial spirit amongst the soldiery.

The ground having been perambulated, the visitors again took their places in the carriages, and were rapidly whirled to Groby Castle, where Mr. Breedon Everard received them with his usual old English hospitality, and provided refreshment in the arbour of his garden. Several of the party ascended the mound on which the keep formerly stood, and made sketches of different parts of the building.

The visit to the castle having occupied a short time, the *cortège* was again in motion, and in a few minutes was skirting Groby pool. Many of the visitors broke into exclamations of delight, as its clear and smooth expanse suddenly lay exposed before them—its beauty being enhanced by the varied masses of colour which diversified the surface and that of its banks, as it lay apparently basking in the beautiful sunshine. When the carriages arrived at Newtown, the principal portion of the visitors at once took their way by the church, and through the valley, covered with its fine old oaks and ferns, to the ruins of Bradgate.

Here the chapel was opened for their inspection. On returning to Newtown, the party found that host Beck had provided for them an ample board of cold meat, which furnished a most satisfactory luncheon, to which justice was not figuratively, but literally and earnestly, done by every one of the guests.

Again, after a sufficient interval had been allowed, the archæologists and their friends returned to their carriages, which rolled along rapidly to Ulverscroft Priory. Here the remains were carefully and fully examined, and the situation of the ancient pulpit, formerly standing in the refectory, was pointed out. The party seemed pleased with the picture presented, but many of them

wished they had been on the spot before the stacks had been raised so as to intercept the view of the former nave and chancel of the priory.

The next place visited was Rothley Temple, where remains are still to be seen of the chapel connected with the mansion, on the site which was once the Preceptory of the Knights Templars. The church was also examined, with the ancient cross near the chancel, of which so many conjectures—all hitherto unsatisfactory—have been formed.

From Rothley the party drove homewards, arriving at the Bell Hotel at six o'clock, some of the visitors having arranged for their departure by a train leaving Leicester about that time.

October 29th, 1855.

THE Rev. R. Stephens, in the chair.

The Rev. F. Thorp, rector of Burton Overy, and Mr. Alfred Ellis, of Belgrave, were elected members.

Mr. T. L. Walker presented to the society an historical account of the church of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, compiled by himself; together with a lithographic print of it, as recently restored from his designs, and under his superintendence.

Mr. G. H. Nevinson proposed that the Rev. J. M. Gresley be requested to allow his paper upon Croyland Abbey, compiled from the unpublished writings of Dr. Stukeley, and read at the late public meeting of the Society, to be printed with the Report in the volume of "Transactions," &c., of the Architectural Societies. Mr. Gresley expressed his willingness to do so, provided that it could be illustrated by a sufficient number of prints from Stukeley's drawings. It was also proposed that Mr. Thompson's paper upon Local Heraldry, read upon the same occasion, should be printed. The Secretaries were instructed to make the necessary enquiries respecting the expense which it would involve, previously to any final decision.

Mr. Thompson exhibited a fibula and arrow-head, recently discovered in a Saxon interment in a neighbouring county. The excavations are likely to be continued, the results of which he hoped to communicate at a future meeting.

The Rev. R. Burnaby exhibited a silver ring, dug up in 1820, at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, inscribed ✠ LOVE-AND-oBAY. The letter R, with which it is stamped inside, was the Assay Office letter for the year 1594.

Mr. G. H. Nevinson exhibited a small bronze figure, seated, with a ring attached to the hinder part of it, from which four short

chains, with small staples at the ends of them, are suspended. Also four third brass Roman coins; two of them of Constantius and Crispus.

Mr. T. Nevinson exhibited a door of an Aumbrey in oak, containing a representation of a winged person, perhaps S. Michael, surrounded by dragons' heads, intertwined with foliage. The carving is rude in execution, and appears to be probably of the thirteenth century. The iron hinges upon it are good, and worthy of imitation.

Mr. Ingram produced, for more minute inspection, some objects of curiosity lately exhibited at the public meeting of the Society. They are the property of John Marriott, Esq., of Beeby, and were found four or five years ago, about two and a-half feet below the surface of an old grass field in that parish, when being drained. They consist of a necklace, three fibulæ, and three hooks-and-eyes, from a Saxon interment. The bones were reduced to powder, but a few teeth were preserved. The necklace consists of seventy beads, varying in size from a peppercorn to one and a-half inch in diameter, and of various shapes. The largest are of glass, or crystal, and amber; the smallest, of semi-transparent blue glass. Others are like red pottery inlaid with yellow and green; white, ornamented with red and blue; or black, with yellow and red. The two largest of the fibulæ are above four inches long. The hooks-and-eyes are of silver, the part for sewing them to the dress being large.

The Rev. J. M. Gresley read the following Paper, containing Abstracts of several Charters relating to Gracedieu Priory, Leicestershire, not noticed by either Dugdale or Nichols. He also exhibited some of the original documents, two of them from among the evidences of Lord Ferrers, who had kindly lent them. One has a large fragment of the Common seal remaining appendant. Mr. Gresley produced drawings of the Privy seal of the first Prioress, and of the Common or Chapter seal of the House; the former from the print of it in Nichols' Leicestershire,* the latter, hitherto, we believe, unpublished.

GRACEDIEU PRIORY.

THE Priory of Gracedieu, in Latin "de Gratia Dei," was founded about 24 Hen. III. (A.D. 1239-40,) by lady Roesia de Verdun, of Alton Castle, Staffordshire, for Nuns of the Order of St. Augustine. It is not my intention here to repeat its fortunes and misfortunes, which may be found in the works of Nichols and Potter, but to

* West Gose. Hund. Pl. lxxxvii., fig. 3.