

Mr. Marshall exhibited a large engraving of the monumental brass of Alan Fleming in Newark church, 1361, from a drawing by Fowler. In the histories of Newark, Fleming is erroneously described as an ecclesiastic. Mr. Marshall deferred a more minute description of it until a future committee meeting. The paper prepared by Mr. Marshall is appended to the report of this meeting.

The Rev. J. M. Gresley exhibited a volume of original drawings by Dr. W. Stukeley, author of the *Itinerarium Curiosum* and other antiquarian works in the last century. They consist chiefly of pen-and-ink sketches, shaded with Indian ink. Among them is a sketch of Bow Bridge, Leicester, taken in 1722; and another of an arch over the Foss Way at Newark, long since destroyed. It was suggested that the former should be printed at the expense of this Society.

The committee appointed twelve o'clock, September the 10th, for their next meeting.

THE FLEMING BRASS.

[The following paper was intended to be read by the writer, Mr. E. Marshall, before the Committee of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archæological Society, at the above meeting, but time did not permit; it is therefore now laid before the members as being worthy of extended publicity.]

When I mentioned my intention of laying Fowler's engraving of the Fleming Brass, in Newark church, before this meeting for inspection, it was thought better that I should at the same time read a few remarks descriptive of it. I have therefore collected a few particulars (so far as is known) of the person represented in this engraving, and the monument itself, as well as a few remarks upon brasses in general, which I have taken the liberty of introducing into this paper, for all of which I confess myself indebted to various sources of information. Dickenson, in his *History of Newark*, published in 1805, at p. 323, says, "The early date of this inscription, the magnificence of the monument itself, and the peculiarity of the decorations, have made the person whom it commemorates the object of more than common curiosity of late years, since enquiries of this sort have become the subjects of antiquarian research. The first instance in which mention of his name is to be found, is as a witness to a deed, in conjunction with that of Thomas Adam, constable of the castle of Newark, by which one Thomas de Sybthorp conveyed a tenement in Newark. This instrument bears date 23rd, Edward the Third, 1350, and still remains among the archives of the mayor and aldermen. Others of the family appear to have lived at Newark, as their names frequently occur as wit-

nesses to deeds, deposited in the same place, at no distant period from that in which the subject of this enquiry lived. Thomas Fleming appears in that capacity in the 1st of Richard the Second, 1377; and Arnold, Ralph, and John, severally surnamed Fleming, to other deeds, between the last-mentioned period and the reign of Henry the Fifth. In this reign we find Richard Fleming consecrated Bishop of Lincoln, 1420; his brother being at the same time dean of the same church."

I find from another source of information, that Alan Fleming was the founder of one of the fourteen chantries which existed in Newark church previous to the Reformation, the foundation deed of which is given in Torre's manuscript, the Collectanea, at York, as follows: "On the 25th May, A.D. 1349, Alan Fleming, of Newark, founded in the chapel of Corpus Christi, within the church of Newark, a chantry for one secular chaplain, to celebrate masses for the souls of William de la Zouch, archbishop of York, of himself, the said Alan Fleming, and Alice his wife, and of others his friends; and for his support appointed five marks of silver to be yearly paid by the prior and convent of Shelford. The patronage, after the death of the said Alan, to be in the vicar of Newark and four faithful men in name of the parishioners thereof."

The Rev. J. F. Dimock, in a paper read by him at the Newark meeting of the Lincolnshire Architectural Society last month, said, "The endowment was increased by Fleming himself before his death, or by some benefactor afterwards; for in the account of this chantry, in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, besides the five marks from Shelford, the chaplain had another pension of one mark from Thurgarton priory, and was in receipt also of certain rents from tenements in Newark."

The brass, one of the finest remaining in the kingdom, was removed from its original position on the floor of the south transept in 1823, by the churchwardens for the time being, and fixed in an elevated position on the back of the reredos, in the lady chapel. The stone (a black marble slab, measuring 9 feet 10 inches by 6 feet 3 inches,) on which it was fixed, was also removed at the same time, and now covers a modern family vault in the nave of the church. During the late restoration of the church, the brass was fixed on the west wall of the south transept, over the place it originally occupied; its dimensions are 9 feet 3 inches by 5 feet 7 inches.

A particular description of this monumental brass, to accompany Fowler's engraving of it, was written in the year above-named, by the late E. J. Willson, esq., of Lincoln; and I think I cannot do better than give it in his own words. "Of the person commemorated by this curious monument, nothing can be ascertained from history. There was, indeed, a family named *Flamang, Le Fleming, or Flandrensis*, who possessed lands in Nottinghamshire in the

preceding century; but their pedigree does not descend to this *Alan*. Dr. Thoroton (*Antiquities of Nottinghamshire*, pp. 198, 413,) has printed the epitaph, but takes no particular notice of the deceased. Mr. Gough contented himself with a slight and erroneous description, in his vast work on 'Sepulchral Monuments' (vol. i. p. 185), and his account has passed current with two or three later writers. According to that account, *Alan Flemyng* was an ecclesiastic—a gross mistake for so experienced an antiquary as Mr. Gough to fall into, the whole costume of the figure being that of a layman—a merchant, or burgess. Some of the richest brasses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are found on the tombs of persons of that class. One of these, at Lynn, in Norfolk, bears so striking a resemblance to this at Newark, as to countenance a supposition of their coming from the hand of the same artist. The Lynn brass is very well represented in Mr. Gough's work: it contains three principal figures; but the architectural details, the canopies, smaller figures, &c., are designed in a similar style to the Newark brass. At St. Alban's, there is a brass on which the principal figure is clothed in the ancient pontifical vestments, with the name of 'Abbat Thomas' inscribed upon the verge; but, unfortunately, without any date. Many of the ornamental particulars on that brass very closely resemble those on the one at Newark; and being better preserved, our description will be assisted by reference to them.

"The portrait of *Alan Fleming* reposes within a gorgeous tabernacle of architectural design; various smaller figures are placed in niches at the sides, and upon the canopy; and a double border of tendrils and leaves encircles the whole composition, including the epitaph. Such is the outline of the design; but the elegant taste and minute care displayed in filling up every part with appropriate enrichment, are beyond the power of verbal description. The back ground to the principal figure is diapered with architectural tracery, filled up with an animal in every compartment. At the bottom a hunting match is exhibited in the centre; and, on one side, a mock tournament performed by animals; on the other, animals ludicrously dancing. Immediately over the head of the deceased was a small figure denoting the disembodied spirit, held in the bosom of its Divine Creator, who was represented in the likeness of an ancient man, as in the vision of the prophet Daniel. On each side, were angels offering incense, or playing upon musical instruments. In the other niches were saints, holding scrolls, inscribed with sentences of prayer, or instruments of their martyrdom. On each hand of the deceased are six of his friends—three men and three women, standing in pairs. The countenance of *Alan Fleming* appears young. He is placed in the pious attitude invariably observed in our old monuments, and holds in his uplifted hands a scroll inscribed with the pathetic prayer,

'*Miserere mei Domine Deus meus!*' His head rests upon a pillow, richly flowered, supported by two angels. Under his feet is a lion, in allusion to a passage in one of the Psalms. It is remarkable that there is no shield, nor armorial bearing of any sort; such distinctions being regarded as inappropriate to the peaceful followers of commerce. The inscription on the verge may be read thus: '*Hic jacet Alanus Fleming, qui obiit anno Domini Millesimo ccclxi^o in die sancte Helene. Cujus anima per Dei misericordiam requiescat in pace. Amen. Credo quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum et rursus circumdabor pelle mea et in carne mea videbo Deum, salvatorem meum, quem visurus sum ego ipse, et oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius: reposita est hec spes mea in sinu meo.*' On three of the small compartments, inserted between the words of the inscription, appear what seems to be the engraver's personal device, or cipher. It would probably be in vain to enquire who this excellent artist could be. From the peculiar style of some of the architectural details I am inclined to think he was a native of Flanders or Germany: whoever he was, he has left a splendid proof of his own skill, as well as of the munificent encouragement of the arts in his days."

Mr. G. G. Scott, the architect, said (when inspecting the brass with the members of the Lincoln Society, on the 21st of last month) that the diapered background which it possessed, satisfied him that the great brasses at Lynn, at St. Alban's, and also at Lubeck and Stralsund, had all emanated from one and the same manufactory.

In the Rev. Charles Boutell's work on "Monumental Brasses," is an engraving of the head of a bishop or abbat, on a small portion of a Flemish brass, of very large design; it is now in private hands, at Ramsgate, and measures 28 inches by 23 inches; its date is assigned in the Oxford Manual to about 1353, by Mr. Boutell to 1375. "In the tabernacle work above the head of the deceased, his soul is represented as a small figure naked, but wearing a mitre, received in a sheet into the hands of the Heavenly Father. In the niches are figures of St. Peter and St. Paul, and two other saints." The above appears from the engraving to be in a very perfect state. This description helps to give a clearer explanation of the upper part of the Fleming brass. In front of the central figure, over the head of Alan Fleming, may be traced a sheet, held in exactly the same manner as by the figure on the fragment above referred to.

These Flemish brasses usually retain the appearance of a square figure with background, whilst our English brasses are commonly cut round to the figures represented. Though the effect of the latter is altogether less splendid, some advantage is gained in distinctness of outline.

It appears that brasses are found in far greater numbers in England, than in any other part of Europe. "The whole number remaining here is probably not less than four thousand. On the Continent, the specimens are far from numerous. In France, very few seem to have survived the Revolution. One of the fifteenth century is in Amiens cathedral. They are to be found in different parts of Germany. A very fine brass in the Cathedral church of Constance, to the memory of bishop Hallum, is rendered doubly interesting by the generally believed tradition that it was manufactured in England, affording a presumption that in the early part of the fifteenth century, our brass engravers were reported to be superior to those of the Rhenish cities; bishop Hallum was made cardinal in 1411, and died on the 4th of September, in the same year, being then ambassador from the English court to the council of Constance. There is one fine example at Seville, in Spain; also a few in Funchal cathedral, Madeira; and in Denmark there are known to have existed some of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Italy is entirely without them; but some incised slabs are to be found at Rome. Very few brasses are to be found in Wales; Beaumaris, Swansea, Ruthin, and Whitehead possess the best. One example only is at present known to exist in Scotland, namely, in Glasgow cathedral. Dublin cathedral contains two of the commencement of the sixteenth century, which are all that have hitherto been found in Ireland." And now, when the numerous works published and announced for publication on monumental brasses, bespeak the great interest excited on behalf of these beautiful remains of ancient art, it is to be hoped that the comparatively few left us will be cared for, and well looked after, by those to whose care are committed the equally beautiful buildings containing them; as, from various causes, they seem to be rapidly disappearing from amongst us. I saw at the Newark meeting, a piece of brass labelled "from Waltham Abbey," representing four or five small figures; and heard the gentleman who exhibited it say, that it was given him by a person who had several pieces in his possession from the same building.

It has been stated, on good authority, that during the late restoration of Boston church (which has been so well effected) brasses were lost or stolen from the church, thus proving that innovation is not the only evil to be feared in our modern church restorations. Let us hope, then, that every individual having a regard for objects of antiquity, and who has it in his power, will, by authority or example, do his best to preserve from threatened destruction, these unfortunate, but (in so many respects) valuable memorials of the past.

