

morning every 26th of September, the flag floats on his tower five hundred feet in the air, and his rockets* startle the parishes for miles around with their mimic meteors. His organ peals through the vaults of his minster, and gives body to the creations of Handel, Spöhr, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn. His brothers and sisters are regaled with the splendid feast he provides for them, and return their benedictions for his bounty. Parishes far and near have their schools, their organs, their well instructed choirs. But even yet he is not satisfied, but he looks for still greater fruits of his beneficence beyond, and confidently counts on their maturity. This is the reward which I assign him, not as affirming a truth concerning his present condition, but as conveying in a figure my own appreciation of his character. As for what he has actually effected, let those sneer at it who with greater wisdom, as they think, and certainly with greater means, have done half as much. The church of Langton is nobly restored and beautified; the church of Tur Langton is replaced by one of excellent character, and amply sufficient for its destination; the church of Thorpe Langton awaits immediate restoration, and something is still left for permanent charities. This is no small contribution from one man, and that a poor one, and one whom some persons have called unwise, to the glory of God and his church, and to the good, temporal and spiritual, of his fellow-creatures.

At the conclusion of this Paper the Chairman called upon Mr. W. H. GATTY to read his Paper, entitled

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF
ST. MARY-IN-ARDEN, AND THE TOWNSHIP OF
MARKET HARBOROUGH.

WHEN requested by my friends, the honorary secretaries of the Society, to contribute a Paper, to be read at this meeting, on some point or points connected with the town of Market Harborough, it was suggested to me, on the one hand, that a short history of the place would be interesting to you as visitors; and, on the other, that an original Paper on the parish documents and registers would be a more valuable contribution to the archives of the association, and a greater help to any future local historian. A cursory search through the contents of the parish chests soon showed me that to carry out the latter suggestion would require a more industrious and advanced antiquary than myself; I therefore fell back upon the former, and resolved merely to give you a brief history of this town, collected from sources more the fruits of other persons' labours than my own.

* "To add to the grandeur and solemnity of the time, rockets be fired off from the top of the tower from seven till eight in the evening, at intervals of five minutes. The effect this will have on the neighbouring country may easily be conceived." *History, &c.*

The origin and earliest history of Market Harborough is very obscure. My friend, Mr. M. H. Bloxam—a very high authority on such subjects—writes me, “Market Harborough has been supposed to be a town of Roman origin, but I think it can claim a British origin, for the urns which are engraved in Nichols and Harrod are certainly British, with the exception of the patera, which was probably Roman. The position of the town, rising gently up from the Welland, is such a one as the Britons generally chose for their settlements, and, though it does not appear to have been fortified by them, it would be in the vicinity of a British fortified post, viz., that at East Farndon.” That the Romans had a station here is almost certain, from the vestiges of an old encampment still visible in places in a field belonging to Mr. R. Goward, on the east side of the town, and also from some antiquities of Roman manufacture found in the neighbourhood. That it was a permanent station, and not a mere temporary encampment, is rather shown by there being some smaller encampments around it, as at Lubenham and Farndon. This view may be accepted as probably correct, if we notice the situation of the place at the point of crossing the river Welland in the midst of a dense wood, as we shall see was the case when we come to speak of St. Mary-in-Arden. This is, however, only a conjectural view of the origin of Harborough. Even if it had been an important place in the time of the Romans, it is almost certain it declined afterwards, as it is not named in Domesday Book. At that date Harborough, whether a town or village, was included in the royal manor of Bowden, which manor I have reason to believe included the present parishes of both Great and Little Bowden, St. Mary, and Harborough, with the church of St. Mary’s as the parish church. This church is remarkably situated: not near any habitations, but almost equi-distant from the three places mentioned; in the midst of a large forest, believed to be a continuation of Rockingham Forest, which at that time extended for some distance south and west of Harborough. It was from this circumstance it derived the name of St. Mary-in-Arden, or in the Wood. There was another manor at Bowden distinct from that held by the King, which was then held under the Countess Judith by Robert de Buci. This unnamed manor has been thought to have been that of Harborough, but, from its size and from the following circumstances, I am inclined to think it was the manor of Little Bowden: First. That in Domesday Book the manor at Buggedone is mentioned without any distinguishing appellative as Great or Little. Secondly. Though included in the manor of Buggedone, it was held by a distinct tenure from the greater manor, whilst Harborough has always been held with it. Thirdly. In a deed of Edward VI., when he exchanged these manors for other lands with Sir Robert Strelley, it says, “Rex dedit et concessit Robt. Strelley,” et “Heredibus suis in perpetuum omnia messuagia

ac terras in Harborough et Bowden in commitatibus Leicestershire et Northamptonshire;" and fourthly. The present strangely complicated positions of the parishes of Great Bowden, Little Bowden, and St. Mary.

The earliest authentic record of Harborough by name is in the time of Henry II., A.D. 1180, when that king granted the manors of Great Bowden and Harborough to William Mauduit, his chamberlain. In the *Itinerary* of 1280 Bowden and Harborough answered conjointly as *one vill*. At that time, and for many years before and after it, these manors were royal manors, and enjoyed the privileges of "Ancient Demesne," and were several times bestowed on friends and favourites of the reigning monarchs, and again reclaimed as the grants lapsed either by death or forfeiture. By the year 1415 they had been no less than twelve times in the possession of the Kings of England. At this early period Harborough was also ecclesiastically united with Bowden, and the patronage of the two was in the hands of the King. In the matriculus of Hugh Wells, Bishop of Lincoln, in 1220, is this notice: "Ecclesiæ de Budon Patronus dominus rex, ut dicitur. . . . Item est ibi quædam capella sive ecclesia in eodem feodo quæ habet capellanum suum residentem per matricem ecclesiam." Mr. Nichols thinks this "capella sive ecclesia" must have been St. Mary's, because he supposed Harborough Chapel was not then in existence. If, however, my supposition is correct that St. Mary's was the mother church of both Great Bowden and Harborough, either the church in Great Bowden village or that in Harborough town* may have been thus referred to in this matriculus.

In 1334 Geoffrey le Scrope, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and, by summons of Parliament, Lord Scrope of Masham, had a grant of these manors in fee farm, and the patronage of the rectory of Great Bowden, with Harborough, to which benefice he presented his youngest son Geoffrey. For one hundred and seventy years this family of Scrope were lords of the manor of Harborough and patrons of the living, during which period, owing in a great measure to their energy and influence, the town obtained substantial benefits as great, if not greater than at any other time. The honour of building the chapel of St. Dionysius, in Harborough, lies between Geoffrey le Scrope, the rector from 1336 to 1378, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; though whether either of them did more than enlarge and beautify a pre-existing chapel is, I think, doubtful. In favour of the former may be said that his father, and afterwards his brother, were lords of the manor, and patrons; that the town at this period, from its situation on the high road, and consequent trade had attained a considerable degree of importance, probably had become a much more important place than Great

* The present structures are both of later date than the matriculus.

Bowden ; and, therefore, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing the rector, inspired with the ambition usual in the ecclesiastics of that age, would be anxious to see in the rising township a church worthy of himself and of it. On the other hand the claim of John of Gaunt is based upon a very ancient tradition of that romantic character which impresses itself deeply on the popular mind, though not always on that account to be depended upon, and is much strengthened by the circumstance mentioned by Mr. Burton, in his *History of Leicestershire*, dated 1622, that the old windows of the church were formerly ornamented with heraldic escutcheons, many of the coats of arms being those borne by this prince and various members of his family. I cannot myself think this a conclusive argument when we consider that these manors and the rectory were held by John of Eltham, Duke of Cornwall, brother to Edward III., and on his death were given by the King, John of Gaunt's father, to Geoffrey le Scrope, who, on building the chapel, would be very likely thus to honour and commemorate the giver and his family. That John of Gaunt, who had a house at Leicester, and frequently passed through Harborough on his way there, took an interest in his friend's work, and assisted him in it, is more than likely ; and we have reason to believe that, partly to his influence, many of the advantages then obtained by the town were due.

To this period, and most likely to the influence of the Scrope family, aided, perhaps, by that of John of Gaunt, we are indebted for the origin of our old chartered October fair, and for our weekly market. With respect to the fair it may be observed that it commences yearly on the 19th October, and continues to the 29th, or, in words more congenial to the language of grants and charters, and very apposite to the present business, on the eve, the day, and seven following days (exclusive of Sunday) of the Feast of St. Dionysius. To go into the question of the origin of fairs at such times would take up too much time. Suffice it to say it was in no way inconsistent with the habits of that period to institute a fair at the feast of the patron saint of the parish church, and to hold it in the churchyard. I said our weekly market was probably due to the same time and the same family. That it is not of earlier date is shown indirectly by an authentic record that William le Bland, lord of the town of Lubnam, obtained of Edward III., A.D. 1327, liberty of a market twice a week, and a fair to be held annually there on Wednesday in Whitsun week, and it was then a rule that no two markets or fairs should be within the distance of the third part of twenty miles of each other.

About the beginning of the sixteenth century, by the marriage of an heiress of the Scopes, the manors of Great Bowden and Harborough, passed to the family of the Wyvilles of Constable Burton, since which time they have always been held together,

though frequently in divided portions, by a great variety of lords, many of them connected with the public administration of the country. In 1536 the advowson having lapsed to the king, it was conveyed by Henry VIII., by deed of exchange, to Thomas Lord Wriothesley, the Lord Chancellor, and afterwards Earl of Southampton; by him, there is reason to suppose, it was given to the newly-established College of Christ Church, Oxford, for, in Willis's *Cathedrals*, under the article of "Endowment of the Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford," confirmed by Henry VIII., 1546, we find the rectory and vicarage of Great Bowden, and, under the article of Patronage, it is styled "Bowden Magna cur, cum *capellis*, Harborough," &c. A curious point connected with this gift to Christ Church is, that in the grant by James I., A.D. 1617, to Lord Stanhope and others, of the manors of Great Bowden and Harborough, the advowson is also included, though in the list of incumbents from 1540, there are none but curates presented to the benefice by the college. In 1564, Bowden Magna was returned as a peculiar exempt from the jurisdiction of the archdeacon, and, as an appropriation belonging to Christ Church, having annexed to it the vicarage of St. Mary, in the township of Little Bowden, and the chapelry of Harborough.

Up to this time the manors and livings of Great Bowden and Harborough had always been united; and, although the latter had long outgrown the former in size and importance, the town was still subordinate to the village feudally and ecclesiastically. But, upon Christ Church becoming the impropiators and patrons, the rectory of Great Bowden, the vicarage of St. Mary, and the chapelry of Harborough, all sank to the same level, and degenerated into curacies.

The earliest parish records now extant start from the beginning of the sixteenth century. They consist, for the most part, of deeds of gifts or bequests for charitable purposes. A full description of them is given in Mr. R. Rouse's *Collection of the Charities and Donations given for any Religious or other Public Use to the Town of Market Harborough*. To the liberality and kindly feeling of our ancestors, at this time, we are indebted for those several gifts and bequests which together make up that noble property called "The Town Estate," now yielding a revenue of about £700. per annum.

I will do little more than enumerate our benefactors, because all who wish to make themselves acquainted with the particulars of the bequests can do so by reading Mr. Rouse's book: but I think, in gratitude, we are bound, in even the feeblest attempt at giving a history of Market Harborough, to hold up their names to honour and admiration. Foremost in importance, and probably first in time, is that of Mrs. Jane Sanderson. The exact date of this bequest is not known, though most likely about the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century; in 1652 it was

described as being "time out of mind." She gave all her lands and tenements, in Harborough and Great Bowden, for and towards the maintenance and repair of the highways of Harborough, and for the ease of the poor in paying the fifteenth. In 1502 Mr. John Jenyns did enfeoff ten persons connected with the town of certain messuages and lands to the use of his wife for the term of her life, and after her death to the use of the town of Harborough, the profits, &c., thereof to go towards payment of poor men's fifteenths, and to the amendment of the highways. It is well here just for one minute to call attention to the objects of these bequests—*the lightening the public burdens of the town, not the maintenance of the poor*. As most of us are aware, at this period the supplies to the Crown were chiefly raised by direct taxation, in the form of subsidies or grants of certain proportions of the real and personal property of every individual, whether rich or poor. These demands, inconvenient as they often were to the rich, must have pressed with peculiar hardship on the poor, and frequently occasioned very serious discontent, leading to riots to resist their collection. Again, the maintenance and repair of the highways was effected chiefly by the compulsory labour of the poor, each individual being obliged to give either six days' labour, or its equivalent, for that purpose. From this we can easily understand how it was that charitable persons, more enlightened than most of their contemporaries, seeing the hardship of these public burdens on the poor, should select this mode of relieving them.

In 1600, John Lord Stanhope, a descendant of the Strelley family, was lord of the manor of Harborough. He was Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth, and a Privy Councillor; and, on May 4th, 1605, was created Baron Stanhope, of Harrington, county of Northampton, by James I. This Lord Stanhope, by deed bearing date 1611, empowered twelve inhabitants of the town to build the free school, intended by Robert Smyth to be erected in the market-place. This brings us to another very important period in our town's history, and also to a time when its records are the fullest of information. In the parish register are copies of the various deeds of gift by which Mr. R. Smyth conferred his many benefactions on the town. Of this worthy man's history we know but little more than that he was born at Harborough of poor parents, and left the place when young to seek his fortune in London. There, by ability and diligence, he prospered greatly, and became Comptroller of the City, and one of the attorneys in the Lord Mayor's Court. The effect this prosperity had upon his spirit and his life will be best shown by repeating the letter in which he announced one of his first gifts to the town.

"To my loving brother, Mr. Thos. Walker, and others, my good brethren and friends, inhabitants of the town of Harborough, in Leicestershire.

“Remembering, good brethren and friends, and considering the great mercy and loving kindness of Almighty God towards me, His unworthy servant, not worthy of the least of all His mercies, when I was first fed in that soil, fed, I say, sometimes by the gleanings of the harvest of the neighbour towns, and sometimes by the travails of my poor aged parents, and other weak means; and remembering also, and considering that with my staff I came over that *Welland*, that I came out of my country and from my father’s house with my cup empty, and God of His grace brought me hither, and made me able, in some measure, to be helpful unto others; I have thought it my duty therefore, yet once again, to remember that place where I was bred and fed. And because I know there was then greater want of food of the soul than of the body, I have prepared, and am now ready (by God’s grace) to carry another stone towards the building of this spiritual temple. I have provided to make up those thirty pounds parcel of the £50, which you heretofore received an hundred pounds, which hundred pounds, my desire is, should be employed towards the maintenance of preaching the Word by a continual lecture in that town for ever, at such times as may be most for the advancement of God’s glory and good of the town. I heartily desire everyone to judge charitably of me concerning this work. I know, and acknowledge, that by grace we are saved through Faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast himself. And I know, and acknowledge also, that when we have done all that we can we are unprofitable servants. Yet it is our duty to show our faith by our works, and ‘our light should so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.’ I have three score and ten pounds ready for you when you will send, to be employed as I have above written. The manner of employment I leave to yourselves, and to provide for the continuance of the lecture, that it die not. I lay the charge upon your consciences. I beseech God, for his son Jesus Christ’s sake, to give it a blessing, and for which my hearty commendations to you all. I commit you to the protection of the Almighty, desiring Him for to give you here in this kingdom of years, that you may, by the direction of His good spirit, walk in the straight way to the kingdom of glory.

“Your loving friend and brother in Christ,

“At London, this 15th
of November, 1606.”

“ROBT. SMYTH.

He died about 1618, having built and endowed the school-house, which forms so prominent an object amongst our antiquarian treasures, besides investing £750., a large sum in those days, to purchase an annuity with which to found a weekly lectureship, and for some other minor charitable purposes. But there is great reason to believe Mr. Robert Smyth’s good deeds were not confined to his native town. In the *New View of London*, published in two volumes,

octavo, 1708, at p. 257, it is stated that "Mr. Robt. Smyth gave yearly four Bibles, well bossed and buffed, to four poor men's children, who shall best deserve them by reading; also one dozen of bread weekly to the poor of the parish of St. Giles's, Cripplegate." At p. 550 is an account of £50. given for Bibles and bread, by one "Mr. Robt. Smyth, to the Parish of St. Sepulchre's, Snow Hill." It is not stated that this was Mr. Robert Smyth, the benefactor of Harborough; but, from the great similarity of the gifts, and the period when they were given, it is not improbable that they were all gifts of the same donor. In 1617, Mr. Christopher Shaw, of the parish of St. Benedict, near Paul's Wharf, London, by his last will, did give and devise £3. yearly to the schoolmaster of the Free School, Market Harborough, but in case the said school be dissolved, and not remain as it now is . . . the said yearly sum of £3. shall remain for the use of the poor of the parish of Market Harborough for ever, the same to be paid by the Company of Embroiderers, &c., &c., in London. In 1622, Mr. Gabriel Barber gave £40. wherewith to buy property in Market Harborough, the rent and profits of which were to be divided into three parts, two parts "to the only use and behoof of the preaching minister of the chapel of Market Harborough, for the time being, for ever; and the third part to the use and behoof of the poor people inhabiting in Market Harborough aforesaid." In the years 1632, 1634, 1639, and 1641, Mr. Richard Weston, of Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, purchased four houses and a homestead, which he afterwards left by will,—three houses and the homestead to the preaching minister of Market Harborough, and one tenement to the schoolmaster. The present parsonage, with the garden and stable, represent Mr. R. Weston's gift to the preaching minister.

Besides these there have been, from time to time, many smaller donations and bequests bestowed on the town for charitable and useful purposes; but to name and describe them all would occupy me too long this evening. On the 14th of February, 1636 (13 Charles I.), a decree was issued by the High Court of Chancery, confirming to the proprietors of certain ancient cottages in Harborough, seventy-two in number, and their tenants, their rights of common, acrehades, &c., in the fields of Great Bowden. What became of these rights at the enclosure of Great Bowden in 1779?

In 1609, 1625, and 1641, this town was visited by the plague. During the epidemic in 1641, seventeen persons died of it. In the old parish register is the entry—"Anne Townesend, a stranger, who came from Stonie Stratford, and brought with her the plague to the town, who lodged at one Vid. Nowel's, at the signe of the 'Meremaid,' and infected first that house with the pestilence, and then dyed, and was buried July 19, 1641." This scourge again appeared in Harborough in 1645, when it carried off ten persons. How brought on this occasion is not stated; but to realise the

frightful nature of the complaint, and the necessity for the very stringent measures taken to prevent its spreading, it is only needful to look down the names in the register of those who died of it, and see the awful ravages it made in the families it attacked.

There are some interesting entries in the parish accounts, showing the means taken to prevent the spread of the disease, and to disinfect the houses of the sufferers, and the air of the town.

“1609. June 5th. Item: For a warrant from the Justices *s. d.*
of the Peace, upon statute of James I., for the relief and
ordering of persons infected with the plague - - 2 0”
“For glasses for Wm. Green and Geo. Dodgeson - - xvij*d.*”
“To John Smyth, for boxes for the physician - - 2 3”
“To Wm. Stonis, for watching - - - - 0 6”
“To Richard Webb, for four graves - - - - 1 6”

And at another time:—

“Item: For eight pitch boards and two tar boards, and a
quart of tar - - - - - 1 6”
“Item: Paid to 11 that watched, for beer and bread - 7 4”
“1625. August 20th. For Mr. Prisses, in Frankincense,
pitch, tar, &c., &c., &c. - - - - - 0 3”

In 1614 the church of St. Mary's and the chapel of Harborough were regularly united. The parish of St. Mary is remarkable for its being situated, not only in two townships, Market Harborough (or rather Great Bowden) and Little Bowden, but also in two counties, Leicester and Northampton. And what adds to the singularity is that, with respect to situation, it was in two dioceses, Lincoln and Peterborough, but under the jurisdiction of the see of Lincoln. A copy of the instrument of union, under the seal of the Bishop of Lincoln, and the king's confirmation of it, are in the old parish register of Harborough. The deeds themselves are too long to recite here. A short abstract will show the grounds upon which the union was directed. The salutation and the first paragraph show the relative position of the two parishes at that time; the rest of the instrument is to this effect:—“That a petition from the inhabitants of Market Harborough had been presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, asking that the two churches might be united in consequence of the disgraceful conduct of the curates of St. Mary's, and the shameful and illegal practices carried on there; that the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, the patrons of the said parsonage or rectory, by an instrument under their common seal, had not only testified their consent to the union, but also earnestly desired the same; and that the Bishop of Lincoln himself, to whom the Archbishop had referred the case, 'having viewed the church and chapel, and having deliberately considered all the circumstances concerning the business,' found that the inhabitants of the parish of St. Mary's, living in the township of Little Bowden, were few compared with those in Harborough, and that the chapel

of Market Harborough was not distant from St. Mary's church or from the town of Little Bowden further than these last were from each other, and was larger and in every respect more convenient to receive all the parishioners than was the parish church of St. Mary's; that the curates of St. Mary's were for the most part ignorant and disorderly, having so small a stipend allowed them by the farmers there, as that no sufficient scholar will accept the cure; that frequently no services at all were held in the church by reason of the curate having stood suspended or excommunicated for unlawful marriages, or some other misdemeanour, punishable by ecclesiastical censure, to the great dishonour of Almighty God, offence of the better sort of parishioners, and evil example of others." "For these causes," the bishop goes on to say, "We, with the consent of the most reverend Father then had, and of the said Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, patrons of the said rectory, and of the incumbent there, do by these presents . . . annex, unite, incorporate, and consolidate the said Church of St. Mary, in Arden in the field, and chapel of Market Harborough, and both these cures into one; and we do also nominate . . . the minister or preacher of the said chapel of Market Harborough, for the time being for ever hereafter, to officiate the said cures of St. Mary's and of the chapel of Market Harborough, and to have the stipends and other profits heretofore due, now due or hereafter to be due, to both or either of them." But, at the same time, not wishing that the church of St. Mary's to be wholly neglected, he enjoined that it "should be supported and maintained with all due and necessary reparation . . . in such manner as had been accustomed before this union." He also appointed "that the minister of Market Harborough for the time being should hold certain services in St. Mary's Church, "and on one Sunday in every quarter of a year shall make a sermon and celebrate a communion there." But in consequence of the scandalous marriages which had been solemnized there, he "expressly prohibited and forbid all marriages henceforth to be made or solemnized in the said church under any colour or authority whatever."

Till 1646 the two parishes were united, though on account of the state of the building the services at St. Mary's had been for some time discontinued. Under the practical management of the Republican Parliament and Cromwell attempts were made to remedy many old standing anomalies in local government and parochial arrangements, and, amongst others, the peculiar position of St. Mary's in relation to St. Nicholas', Little Bowden and Harborough, was taken into consideration.

About the year 1646 a petition was presented to the committee for plundered ministers at Northampton, signed by six of the leading parishioners of St. Mary's and St. Nicholas', to this effect; after speaking of the rectory of St. Nicholas, it says:—"There is another

rectory, in Little Bowden, called St. Mary's. The church lies in Leicestershire, the tithes in Little Bowden. Mary's being worth £40 per annum, is inappropriate, and belongs to Christ Church College, in Oxford, and they allow £16 per annum to the vicar of the said St. Mary's, which church is now made useless, and the £16 paid to the minister of Harborough. But the people heretofore went to Bowden Mary's, being a bow shot off, and now to Bowden Nicholas', to which they desire this Bowden Mary's parish may be united, as lying in the same town, and the stipend of £16 per annum to be paid to the minister of Bowden Nicholas', for that some of the houses in Bowden Mary's are distant three-quarters of a mile from Harborough Church, and severed by the river Welland; but Nicholas' Church, in Bowden lies in the midst of both parishes, and is equally useful to both." The commissioners' adjudication was—"We conceive it very fit that these two parishes in Little Bowden be united into one, and that the £16 per annum be paid to the minister of Bowden Nicholas'." At this time the living of Little Bowden was sequestered from the Royalist rector, Rev. Rd. Mowse, the curacy being held by Mr. John Dowell, a Parliamentary minister, and continued so till the Restoration, when this, with many other acts of the Parliament, was abrogated, the Rev. R. Mowse restored to his living, and the parish of St. Mary's returned to its state of union with Harborough, to the curate of which place again fell the duties of the church, and he was paid the annual stipend of £16, though almost ever since the parochial charge of that portion of St. Mary's which lies in Little Bowden has been voluntarily undertaken by the rector of St. Nicholas', and that church the people have been accustomed to attend. There is no doubt but at the time of the union St. Mary's Church was in a very dilapidated state, and unfit, if not dangerous, for regular services, for in the constable's account in 1617 is an entry—"Paid to the watchmen for beer, for watching St. Mary's steeple, when that was suspected to be in danger, the 14th May." And not very many years after, probably in 1658, though strange to say no authentic record of the event has yet been found, it was blown down, when, the spire falling on the roof, demolished the whole building, except the south porch, the only portion of the original edifice now left.

For about thirty years the church was allowed to lie in ruins; but, towards the end of the century, the inconvenience of not having a chapel near the burial ground led to the present small building being erected, most likely out of the best of the old materials, whilst the remainder was sold or otherwise disposed of. In the account of the churchwardens for 1692, and the surveyor of the highways in 1694, are some interesting entries on this point. Four of the bells were, in 1682, deposited in the chancel of Harborough Chapel, and it is stated that, by the sale of these bells and other materials, a large part of the money was raised for building the present chapel. The

large house at the south-west corner of the sheep-market is said to have been built with some of the stone from old St. Mary's.

The Civil War was an eventful period in the history of Market Harborough, not only with regard to its ecclesiastical arrangements, but also socially and politically. Like the greater portion of the midland district, the inhabitants of Market Harborough were favourers of the Parliament, and, as such, were not unfrequently made to feel the enmity of the Cavaliers. On one occasion, September 12th, 1642, Prince Rupert attacked the town with 1,800 horse and some foot, and plundered the houses of the Roundhead inhabitants, taking away their arms and horses, and destroying the hay, corn, &c., &c. During the time he was thus disturbing the town news of the attack was sent to the Earl of Stamford, who was in command of some Parliamentary troops in the neighbourhood. The Earl, having only 800 horse with him, was at first somewhat unwilling to advance to the relief of the town against so superior a force; but, being moved by the distress of the inhabitants, he demanded of his men whether they would undertake so dangerous an expedition. To this they answered by a general shout, "On, on," So, "singing of Psalms," they marched forward till within sight of Harborough, where they perceived the Prince, with all his forces, moving out of the town, very confidently and securely, with the prize of arms and horses, &c., which they had taken. The Earl immediately placed his men in ambush in a wood by the road-side, and, as the Prince's party passed by, not suspecting an attack, fell on them so hotly, and pressed them so hardly, as utterly to disorder them, when the inhabitants of the town, attacking them in the rear, completed the defeat. Thirty were slain, many taken prisoners, and the Prince himself forced to fly for safety, leaving behind him the rich spoil he had taken. The victory thus won, the Earl marched back with the inhabitants of the town, where he was joyfully entertained. The end of the account says:—"There is a troop of horse quartered here for the safeguard and future security of the town against other attempts of the Cavaliers. It is now in a good posture of defence, being a rich town for trading, and well-affected to the King and Parliament, the defence of the Protestant religion, and the liberty of the subject."

I need hardly here remind you of that one most important event of the Civil War with which Market Harborough is connected—the battle of Naseby. So many good accounts have been written of it, especially that by Capt. Whyte Melville, in *Holmby House*, giving every detail of the battle, as also of the events which preceded and followed it, that I shall do no more than mention it now, as on the immediate fortunes of the town it had but little influence. On June 4th, 1645, the King left Leicester and stayed one night at Sir Richard Halford's at Wistow, and from that day till the 14th he remained in this neighbourhood, the head quarters of his army

being part of the time at Daventry, the rest at Harborough. At two o'clock, a.m., on the 14th, the King, who was sleeping at Mr. Collins's at Lubenham, was aroused by an alarm that Sir Thomas Fairfax had marched from Northampton to Naseby, and was quartered there for the night. The King immediately rose, came to Harborough, where the head quarters of the army were, and held a council of war at the King's Head Inn, the houses now occupied by Messrs. H. Hockett and Remmington, when, greatly induced by the over-boldness of Prince Rupert, the ill-judged determination was come to to attack the Parliamentary army. At seven a.m. the King marched towards Naseby, where he found Fairfax advantageously posted on the hills between that village and Sibbertoft. At twelve o'clock the two armies joined battle; by the evening, through the rashness of Prince Rupert, the King was a fugitive at Leicester, his army destroyed, his cabinet, with all his private letters, in the hands of his enemies, and his throne lost.

On more than one occasion after this, Charles I. was a visitor in Market Harborough. Here he came when he left Oxford in disguise, with the intention of joining the Scotch army in the North; and through this town he again returned on his way to Holmby House, after the Scotch had delivered him up to the Parliamentary Commissioners. After the deposition of the King and the establishment of the Commonwealth, Harborough received in some degree the reward of its adherence to the Parliament. In January, 1646, the Committee of Sequestrations ordered "that £50. per annum should be paid out of the impropriate rectory of Lubenham, sequestered from Francis Houltreay, recusant, to such ministers as shall be appointed to officiate the cure of the church of Market Harborough, a great market town." On February 16th, another £50. per annum out of the impropriate tithes of the sequestered rectory of Queniborough; and on March 4th a still further sum of £50. per annum out of the impropriate rectory of Sheepshed, sequestered from Sir Thomas Beaumont, recusant, were ordered to be paid to the minister of Harborough. But although the people of the town were agreed in their opposition to the King, they were sorely divided among themselves on the vital points of religion and politics, some being Presbyterians, some Independents. Between these sects continual bickerings occurred, culminating at length in a great fight, on Tuesday, August 3rd, 1647, in which several persons were killed and many more wounded,—resulting in the defeat of the Presbyterian party. After this trial of strength the inhabitants settled down peaceably, and the town soon resumed its ordinary habits of thrift and industry, undisturbed by any political event till the Restoration, in 1660, when the curates of Harborough lost the Parliamentary additions to their stipend, but regained the charge of the parish of St. Mary, with its emolument.

In 1666 occurred the great fire in London, by which St. Paul's

Cathedral was destroyed. It was rebuilt by Sir C. Wren a few years after, the cost of rebuilding being, to a great extent, defrayed by collections throughout the country under a royal brief. In the old parish register is an entry, "collected at Market Harborough, towards the building of St. Paul's Church, in London, October 19th, 1678, £1. 4s. 0½d." In the latter end of the year 1688, the Princess of Denmark, afterwards Queen Anne, stopped here one night on her way to Nottingham, when she left the Court to follow her husband, on the abdication of her father, James II. She slept at the house of a Mr. Mackrith, the second house south from the Swan Inn. Till 1745 the town was but indirectly interested in the chief historical events of the country. But in December of that year Charles Edward Stuart, commonly called the Young Chevalier, after some unlooked-for successes in the north advanced on his way to London as far as Swarkeston Bridge, a little on this side of Derby. The approach of his half-disciplined Highlanders created the greatest consternation throughout the country where they were expected, the effect of which cannot be better described than by relating an anecdote furnished me by Mr. Bloxam. He says, "Intelligence travelled so slowly, and rumours were so thickly spread, that the inhabitants of Market Harborough expected the Scots daily or hourly. At length an alarm was given that they were really approaching. My great uncle Mr. Rowland Rouse, then a little boy of six or seven years of age, was sent by his father, Mr. Samuel Rouse, my great grandfather, behind a man on horseback, to a neighbouring village to be out of harm's way. The principal inhabitants had baked a large quantity of bread to satisfy the demand they expected would be made on them, that they might be treated civilly. At the same time they did not neglect to hide their valuables. Some of the inhabitants went out on the Leicester road, and came back spreading great consternation by declaring that they heard the bagpipes playing at a distance. This proved to be a false alarm; and as no enemy every appeared, the good people of Harborough were terribly put out at having baked all their bread for nothing."

For many years the town had been increasing in size and commercial importance. About the time of Queen Elizabeth, a large manufacture of shoes, for foreign trade, was carried on here, and most of the principal inhabitants engaged in it. In the middle of the last century there was a considerable manufacture of tammies, shalloons, &c., employing a large number of the poor both of the town and neighbourhood, which continued till about 1820. Of such an extent was this manufacture that in some years as much as £30,000. had been returned to the town, in the article of tammies only. From these sources many of the inhabitants became wealthy, and in proportion liberal in their expenditure, public and private. The large number of good houses for a town of its size testifies to

the substantial position of the people generally. "The Elms" was built by a Mr. Massey, an attorney of the town, who was part proprietor of the manor; the other proprietor being a Mr. Bliss, who had made his fortune in the town.

But these worthy ancestors of ours did not confine their liberality to themselves. A long list of donations and bequests for the benefit of the poor, and for other useful purposes, might be made out and placed to their credit. The great efforts, however, of this kind were altering, we can hardly call it restoring, the body of the church in 1751-2, and the chancel in 1757. On these occasions the face of the church was entirely changed. The pulpit, which previously stood in the angle of the north-east pillar, between the nave and the chancel, was taken away; a doorway with a small palisade gate on the south side of the chancel, together with the sedilia and piscina were built up, and the area within the altar rails wainscoted; the old chancel screen with the rood loft removed, and the fine east window half blocked up by a screen, on which were printed in gold letters on a blue ground, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. In addition, the church was entirely new pewed, new paved, and thoroughly whitewashed. These "improvements" were effected at a cost of about £300., a large portion of which was raised by voluntary contributions amongst the inhabitants. It is amusing to see the evident feeling of satisfaction which pervades the whole description of this eighteenth-century improvement. How the good people of that time glorified themselves in the blue and gold of the "neat altar piece," and the new pulpit, "which was allowed by judges to be a good piece of workmanship, its several parts and members being adjusted and proportioned by the strictest rules of architecture." Exactly one hundred years afterwards we raised a much larger sum to undo all that they did with so much earnestness and self-gratification. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

In 1783 the Protestant Dissenters of Market Harborough purchased a plot of ground adjoining their meeting-house for a burial place. Previously they had been buried in the parish churchyard, the ordinary services of the church being used and the church bells tolled at their funerals. At first no application was made to have the bell tolled at the funerals, which took place in the new burying ground. A few years later, however, a claim was set up that the Dissenters should have the use of the church bells at their funerals. A case as to the propriety of this demand was submitted by the churchwardens to Sir W. Scott and Dr. Harris; and by the Dissenters to another counsel. The answer by Sir W. Scott and Dr. Harris was, "That by the 88th Canon the church bells are not to be used on any occasion except for the offices of the church, and for purposes approved both by the minister and churchwardens." That of the counsel consulted by the Dissenters was, "That all

parishioners, by the *paying of the church rates*, have a right to the tolling of the bell, and may require the sexton as servant of the parish to toll the bell, wheresoever they bury their dead."

In 1785 Robert Sherard, Earl of Harborough, became by purchase sole proprietor of the manors of Harborough and Great Bowden, and three years after, with the view of supplying the want of a Town Hall, he built the large red brick edifice which stands in the middle of the street, almost opposite the place we are now in. It was built on the site of the old butchers' shambles, the first stone being laid April 23rd, 1788.

By a will dated July 21st, 1797, Mr. Thomas Ratten gave £125. to the minister and churchwardens, in trust, to apply the interest therefrom "for the benefit of the Sunday School lately established in the parish:" and to the churchwardens and overseers £100., the interest of which was to be expended in purchasing "coals, to be distributed on January 1st every year, amongst such of the poor inhabitants who shall not receive alms or relief from the parish officers."

We have now arrived at the nineteenth century, and what may be called the modern history of Market Harborough. Before proceeding further, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Cox, who furnished me with the materials for this portion of my paper. At the beginning of the century Europe was in the midst of that mighty contest, the offspring of the French Revolution, and England, anticipating invasion by Napoleon himself in 1805, was stirred to the highest pitch of excitement. To the honour of Market Harborough the utmost loyalty and patriotism were displayed by its inhabitants at this crisis. At the first call of the Government a volunteer corps was formed, and in the course of a few days upwards of £600. was subscribed to defray the expenses, though happily these brave men were never called into active service. The only two members of the volunteer corps now living are Mr. Platt and Mr. J. Hill. Induced by the increasing trade of the place, the directors of the Union Canal extended it by a branch to Market Harborough, which was opened with great ceremony on Friday, October 13th, 1809. Till the opening of the railway about twelve years ago this canal proved of the greatest advantage to the town, and added much to its prosperity by causing a vast amount of traffic with the districts to the south and east of it. Another great source of prosperity was the through coach traffic, as many as forty coaches and vans passing during twenty-four hours. The tannery trade, about this time, began to languish, but a new source of employment was developed by two enterprising men named Clarke and Hall, who erected a factory in the heart of the town for spinning worsted by steam power, to which was added, at a later period, the manufacture of carpets. These together employed a large number of the population, to the manifest advantage of the

town. The carpet manufacture was suddenly discontinued, owing to complications with Goddard's Bank, which suspended payment in 1843. The worsted spinning was continued for nearly twenty years longer, but was at last given up in 1861; and the valuable machinery, disposed of by public auction, followed the carpet looms to the north of England. The proverb "that events repeat themselves," appears to be verified here, for, during the present year, the earliest recorded manufacture of the town—that of shoemaking—has been resumed, the building known as the "factory" being now used for carrying on that business. About thirty years ago our gas works were first established, and within the last two years have been considerably enlarged. In 1845 or 1846 was commenced the Rugby and Stamford railway, the first ray of that star by which we have been connected with the great railway system of the country; but the extension of the Midland by the line from Leicester to Hitchin has been the greatest benefit to Harborough, by placing our town in direct communication with the metropolis. The time which intervened between the cessation of coach traffic and the opening of this line was a period of great depression, but, during the last few years, symptoms of returning activity in trade have shown themselves, and it is to be hoped that, favoured by its central situation and star of railways, Harborough may soon return to its former state of prosperity, and be known, as it was two hundred years ago, as "a rich place for trading, well affected to the Queen and Parliament, the defence of the Protestant religion, and the liberty of the subject."

THE CHAIRMAN said another paper was to have been read on the importance of preserving ecclesiastical monuments, by the Rev. W. Monk, but, unfortunately, they were prevented hearing it by the lateness of the hour.

On the motion of the Rev. S. Andrews, a vote of thanks was given to the gentlemen who had read Papers.

THE REV. GEORGE AYLIFFE POOLE returned thanks, and said the readers of papers were not only obliged by the kind manner in which their papers had been received, but they felt also exceedingly pleased at the large and attentive audience by whom they had been so patiently listened to. It was of no use to have readers unless there were listeners also; and perhaps he might be allowed to say that their papers were not written for the mere pleasure of writing them, or even to please an audience. They were induced to write them with the hope that good would come from it, as he trusted would be the case on the present occasion. It had struck him that sometimes perhaps it would be well for them to sink their antiquarian character in their visits to the churches, and to take a view of the new and restored churches as well as the old ones. There were many new and restored churches in that neighbourhood which would well repay a visit. As to the good which might result

from that meeting, he did not know why there should not arise from that town some William Hanbury or Robert Smith, and if that should be the case Market Harborough would have good reason to congratulate itself.

SIR GEOFFREY PALMER, BART., proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee, without whose great aid the meeting could not have been brought to such a successful issue. The Local Committee had taken a great deal of trouble, and had contributed much to the comfort and convenience of the visitors. He was not present when the members of the Society visited the churches and other places of interest in the town, but from what he had seen in that room he was satisfied all would agree with him that their best thanks were due to the Local Committee.

MR. NORMAN seconded the motion, and said that, although he was a native of this county, he was a stranger to that part of it, and felt that an honour had been conferred on him in being allowed to take a part, however small it might be, in the proceedings of that meeting. One could hardly tell the amount of trouble the Committee had taken, and the thanks of the meeting were justly due to them. He could not help expressing the great pleasure with which he had listened to the papers which had been read, and in hearing them it had struck him, notwithstanding the ornaments and dresses which had been so graphically described, that the ladies of the present day showed more taste in dress than their ancestors.

THE REV. J. H. HILL returned thanks on behalf of the Local Committee for the kind manner in which their labours had been recognised, and said the greatest credit and the greatest thanks were due to the gentlemen who had lent such valuable objects for exhibition. The museum that day had been superior to anything he had ever seen before; at all events, it had been second to none, and he begged, therefore, to move that the best thanks of the meeting be given to the gentlemen who had so liberally placed their stores in the hands of the Committee for exhibition. He would, also, ask those gentlemen to allow their articles to remain another day, in order that the good people of Harborough might have a longer opportunity of inspecting them.

MR. NORTH moved that a vote of thanks be given to Sir William De Capell Brooke for his kindness in taking the chair, and he wished also to second the proposition of Mr. Hill, that their best thanks should be given to the exhibitors, for they had never seen a better exhibition. He was sure they would all think so when he said that there was hardly a branch of archæology which was not represented, or hardly a period of English history which was not illustrated in that room. He begged to thank Mr. Bloxam for entering his protest against the wholesale destruction of sepulchral monuments which, at one time, was so common. It must be painfully