ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

England,—"On whose Soulles withe all Chrysten Sowlles Thome-potent lorde have Marcy. Amen."

The Rev. J. M. Gresley said he had a few articles to lay before the Meeting relating to a former Leicestershire rector, afterwards

ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

A few brief notes respecting his preferments in this county occur in his diary. He says in "1608, The advowson of North Kilworth in Leicestershire given to me, April."—"1609, I changed my advowson of North Kilworth for West Tilbury in Essex, to which I was inducted Oct. 28, to be near my Lord of Rochester, Dr. Neile," who afterwards continued his friend and patron, and died Archbishop of York.—"1610, my Lord of Rochester gave me Cuchstone in Kent, May 25."—"I left Cuchstone and was inducted to Norton, Nov., by proxy." This is said to have been Norton-juxta-Twycross, in this county; but I find in Nichols that Gabriel Rosse was rector there from 1609 to 1658. It was, I should think, Norton near Feversham, in Kent, that Laud had.—"1617, I was inducted to Ibstock in Leicestershire, August 2, in my return out of Scotland," whither he had attended King James, and left Norton.—"1624, July 23, Friday, I went to lie and keep house, and preach at my livings held in commendam, Creeke, and Ibstock."—"Aug. 7, Saturday, while I was at Long Whatton with my brother, my passion by blood, and my fear of a stone in my bladder." This was William Laud’s half brother, the only son of his mother by her first husband, John Robinson, clothier, of London. He became a prebendary of Westminster and archdeacon of Nottingham.—"Aug. 8, Sunday, I went and preached at my parsonage at Ibstock, and set things in order there." What Laud means by I "set things in order there," may be easily imagined,—the sweeping away of Puritanism and the restoration of ecclesiastical arrangement, and performance of divine service, such as we have witnessed so many instances of during the revival of the last quarter of a century.—"1625, March 6, I resigned the parsonage of Ibstock, which I held in commendam." Laud had then become Bishop of St. David’s. Thinking that possibly some trace of Laud’s incumbency at Ibstock might still be found there, I visited it last week, but the church contains nothing whatever of his time. In the registers there are no entries under the dates when he appears to have been there. The only record of him is the following, written at the foot of the page, containing entries in the year 1617,—"Johannes Pickeringe Cler p Dr. Laude; Johannes Taylor, Thomas Cramp, Gardiani." The end of 1618 also is signed by J. Pickeringe in the same way. This is all that remains at Ibstock of its rector the archbishop.
Mr. Gresley produced a letter of Laud's, and read the following observations:—Soon after the Reformation, on the 4th of June, 1561, the steeple and the roofs of St. Paul's Cathedral were consumed by a violent fire, occasioned by the negligence of a plumber, who left his pan of coals unquenched at his going to dinner. The roofs were repaired, but the steeple was not rebuilt. Nothing further seems to have been done till King James I., 1621, issued a commission under the Great Seal to inquire into its condition, and take steps for its restoration. The King and the nobility were subscribers; John King, then the Bishop, gave £100. per annum. Mountain, who succeeded King, "procured with great charge and trouble," says Heylin, "huge massive stones to be brought from Portland for the beginning of the work: but money coming slowly in, and he being a man of small activity, though of good affection, the heat of this business cooled by little and little, and so came to nothing." On Mountain's death, Bishop Laud, his successor, took up the work with his habitual vigour, and was encouraged and supported by King Charles I. Another commission was issued, and money was collected throughout the kingdom; Laud subscribed £100. per annum. In the course of eight or nine years more than £100,000. were raised, of which upwards of £10,000. were given by the King. "The Puritan Ministers," however, says Heylin, "and their adherents, inveighed against it, as the repairing and adorning of a rotten relique, insinuating to the people, as they found occasion, that it was more agreeable to the rules of piety to demolish such monuments of superstition and idolatry than to keep them standing." In 1640 the work was rapidly approaching its completion: but then came the Great Rebellion. "As this Bishop fell," continues Heylin, "the work fell with him, which clearly shows upon what wheel the whole engine moved, whose soul it was which gave both life and motion to that great design, a work of such a vast magnificence as required a large and open heart, commensurate in some manner to the greatness of it." The letter before the meeting is one signed by Laud, when Archbishop of Canterbury, "W. Cant," expressing his thanks to Henry Lord Clifford for a subscription towards the restoration of this Cathedral.

Mr. Gresley then exhibited a curious arrangement of three prints in one frame, so contrived that when standing opposite to it, only the portrait of King Charles I. can be seen; when a little on the right hand side, only Archbishop Laud; when on the left, only the Earl of Strafford. The engravings are by N. J. Visscher, a printseller at Amsterdam, two hundred years ago. Probably this memento of those three great men was once all but venerated by some Royalist in exile.

Mr. Gresley also exhibited a small edition of Herodian, printed at Basle, which appear to have been the property of Archbishop
Laud. Upon a fly-leaf at the end is the autograph of the celebrated Bishop Gardiner, once archdeacon of Leicester:—“Liber Stephani Gardineri Angliae Cancellarii,”—which office he held from August, 1553, to his death, November 12th, 1555. On the title-page was written “Liber Thomæ Bani (?) Olim Henrici Harveye Doctoris viuisq’ Juris que decessit Cantabrigia’ mense Januarii 1584.” Below this, “Liber Tho: Ellis e Coll: Jesu Oxon:” and then, “William Laude, pelle mora’ vinces” (?) but this has been crossed over with ink. The binding of the book is stamped with figures of S. Katerine and S. John the Evangelist. It came into Mr. Gresley’s possession at the sale of the library of Dr. Landon, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, about twenty years ago.

As connected, perhaps, with this volume, Mr. Gresley produced an anastatic print of a book-case, one of five or six, which, until about twenty years ago, stood in the inner or eastern library of St. John’s College, Oxford. This library was built by Archbishop Laud, who had been President of the College. Externally it has always been a finished and beautiful structure, but curiously enough, the internal roof, until about 1837, was of arched plaster and perfectly plain. Its only furniture consisted of the book-cases above mentioned, and of two or three others made of deal, with panels of open work like the plainer panels of the original book-cases, but with no panels containing the more elaborate devices found on some of the panels of the older or oaken book-cases. Obviously these deal book-cases had been made, at some time or other, to imitate those of older date. When the College, in 1837, determined to fit up the inner library, and to complete the inner roof, all these book-cases, which were evidently not originally intended for the room, were disposed of. The question is, where did these cases come from? The dexter compartment (to speak heraldically) has on three of its panels a mitre, and on one, the arms of the See of Canterbury. The centre compartment has on two of its panels a mitre; on one, the arms of the See of Canterbury impaling Archbishop Laud’s private arms (viz., on a chevron, between three estoiles, three crosslets patée fitchée), and on one other his crest, a Lark, a lauda,—an allusion to his name. The sinister compartment has on one of its panels Laud’s private arms, and on three his crest. The remaining panels in each compartment are plain. Hence it is obvious that the book-cases must have been put up by Archbishop Laud, or made by the College in honour of him, or acquired by the College from his property. Now it seems unlikely that they should either have been put up by the Archbishop, or have been made by the College in honour of him. It is evident that they must have been made for a room much lower in height, and that they were only adapted to this room by most clumsy and incongruous additions. We cannot
suppose that either the Archbishop or the College could have formed so inaccurate an estimate of a room with the proportions of which they were necessarily well acquainted. It remains, therefore, that we adopt the following theory: that as it appears by the Archbishop's Will that he gave his books to the College of St. John, the cases in which they had been kept in the Archbishop's Library accompanied them; and that the College, finding them disproportioned to the room, raised them upon stands, and afterwards had sundry other cases made, more or less resembling the originals.

A silver medal, which Mr. Gresley also exhibited, is similar to the one in the Bodleian collection, engraved in Nichols' Leicestershire, vol. iv., pl. cxxi., p. 759. On the obverse is the Archbishop, wearing his square cap, and the inscription GVIL LAVD ARCHIEPISC CANTVAR X IAN, 1644, the day he was beheaded. On the reverse, above the view of London and Southwark, angels are carrying his mitre and pastoral staff heavenwards, other angels below following them with the crown, the sceptre, and the globe; and the inscription, SANCTI CAROLI PRE-CYRSOR.* This medal was probably struck after the restoration of the Church and Monarchy. "Various opinions," said Mr. Gresley, "there ever will be respecting the Archbishop, until the Judgment day, but they may be readily reduced to two. The one is that of certain heroes at the anti-confessional meeting at St. James' Hall, on Monday last, and their admirers—'that traitor Laud' and 'the soul-debasing superstitions which he maintained.' The second, that of others, at least equally distinguished and religious, and of myself,—'our great Archbishop and martyr, to whom, perchance we owe it, that we who now live, are still members of a branch of the Church Catholic. As it is written near the grave of Sir Christopher Wren, the rebuildor of that material fabric which Laud loved—Lector, si monumentum quaeris, circumspice, so it has been truly said of the Archbishop, his monument is the present English Church."


The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Several Members of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society, residing in Melton Mowbray, being desirous to avail themselves of any help they could obtain from its Members in elucidating the past history of their town, determined to hold a series of public evening meetings, at which papers of local