

since the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1837. The gentlemen connected with the local societies were each distinguished by a white satin ribbon, the members of the Historic Society having the name printed on their badges. The strangers here, as at the dinner, were distinguished by the colour red. In one of the rooms, an extremely interesting collection of antiquities and curiosities had been laid out by Joseph Mayer, Esq., F.S.A., the Honorary Curator of the Historic Society. This showed some of the riches of our own district, and the generous contributions of numerous others.

It had been kindly arranged by the Committee for the Congress, that the Papers to be read on Thursday evening should be read in the Town Hall of Liverpool. An opportunity was thus afforded to many who knew little of archaeological pursuits, to witness something of the nature and manner of the investigations. At the close of the first Paper by Mr. Waller, the large supper-room was thrown open; and at the close of the second by Mr. Fairholt, the presentation of the mazer dish occurred, of which there is a separate notice below. After the reading of the third Paper by Dr. Hume, the company began to disperse. At eleven o'clock carriages were again in readiness to convey the strangers to the landing-stage; and by means of a special boat and train that waited their convenience, they returned to Chester.

The object of the Liverpool Committee,—viz., to free the members of the Association from all expense, from the moment that they set foot upon Lancashire,—was more than realised. They desire to record their grateful acknowledgements to the following gentlemen, the kindness of all of whom contributed much to the enjoyment of the day and the success of the arrangements. The special train from Chester to Birkenhead and back was procured through William Bragge, Esq., the chief engineer of the line. The use of the boat was granted by the Birkenhead Commissioners, on the application of Messrs. Hughes and Mortimer, members of the Historic Society. Joseph Brereton, Esq., of Speke Hall, the Rev. R. Rothwell, of Sefton, and Thomas Weld Blundell, Esq., of Ince Blundell, afforded every facility for the examination of the antiquities in their respective neighbourhoods. An elegant *dejeuner* for all the visitors was prepared by Mr. Brereton, in the principal banqueting room at Speke. Finally, the extended hospitality of the Mayor of Liverpool was worthy alike of his own generosity and of the town which he represented.

NOTES ON SPEKE HALL.

By H. C. Pidgeon, Esq., Honorary Secretary.

[This Paper was read in Speke Hall, before the excursionists and visitors, on the 2nd of August. It is reprinted from the Journal of the Archæological Association.]

Among the varieties of the "stately homes of England," few are more interesting than the moated, half-timbered houses, which form so remarkable a feature in the counties palatine of Lancaster and Chester. Of these ancient and curious edifices, in some parts

called "Post and Petrel," from the French *poutrelle*, a crossbeam, we have in Speke Hall a very perfect and curious example, and the visit of the Association to it will not, I hope, prove an uninteresting or unprofitable excursion.

I shall not detain those who are so conversant with ancient architecture by entering at any length into the history of the building. On a careful examination it will be found, that the mansion is the work of a lengthened period. Some of the carved wood-work in the garden-front appears of the time of Henry VII, while the lower portion of the edifice, as seen from the moat, is evidently of a period still earlier, and shews that the present superstructure is raised on the ancient foundations. Many dates remain on the building, tending to identify various portions; but one of the inscriptions, (that over the principal entrance,) has led to some confusion, as it relates not to the principal front of the mansion, but to the erection of the bridge over the moat, one of the latest additions to the building. The details of the carved-work are most interesting, and a rich and picturesque effect is obtained, especially in the garden front, by the disposition of the masses.

At the Conquest, a Saxon thane, Uctred, as we learn in Domesday, held Spec. Shortly after, Espeake and Oglahal, or Oglet, were held by Benedict de Gerneth, or Garnet, by the marriage of whose daughter Speke came into the family of Molyneux. The name of William de Molines occurs eighteenth on the roll of Battel Abbey. Adam was son and heir of William's brother, Vivian de Molines, who obtained lands of Roger de Poitiers, and settled at Sefton, where, near the church, yet remains the moat, which surrounded the family seat.

A considerable Lancashire family, named Norris, had long held lands in Blackrod, Sutton, and other parts of the palatinate. It appears from the manuscript of Sir William Norris, that a daughter of Roger de Gernet married Richard or Peter Molineux, of Little Crosby, and that she released the lands here, which were her dower, to Alan le Norres, who was the first person of that family who possessed any part of Speke, and from whom are descended the families of Lord Norris of Ryeot, Oxfordshire, and the Berkshire Norrises, one of whom built the beautiful family seat at Bray, named Ockwells. The Ryeot Norrises merged in the Lindsays, who claimed the barony.

The Norrises were all warriors, holding their estates by military service. Of their martial achievements, I shall only notice the presence of Sir Edward Norris at Flodden-field, September 9, 1513, and of Sir William Norris at Edinburgh, 8th May, 1543, as involving a question of interest as to the mansion itself.

It has been said that the screen in the hall was brought from Holyrood, after the battle of Flodden-field. Secombe says, "This valiant and heroic gentleman, Sir Edward Norris, who commanded a body of the army under general Stanley at Flodden-field, where he behaved with so much courage and good conduct that he was honoured by the king, his master, with the like congratulatory letter above mentioned for his good services, etc., in token whereof he brought from the deceased king of Scotis palace all or most of his princely library, many books of which are now at Speke, particularly four

large folios, said to contain the records and laws of Scotland at that time, etc.; and he also brought from the said palace the wainscot of the king's hall, and put it up in his own hall at Speke, wherein are seen all the orders of architecture, as Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite, and round the top of it this inscription: 'Slepe not till ye hath considered how thou hast spent y^e day past. If thou have well done, thank God; if other ways repent ye.' This statement, under varied forms, has been perpetuated in topographical books. Mr. W. R. Whatton, at the desire of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, investigated the subject. His opinion is that the screen did not come from Holyrood, but was executed by Edward Norris in 1598. But that this or any trophy from the king of Scotland's palace was not taken after Flodden-field is certain, because that battle did not lead to the presence of the English army at Holyrood at all. The victory was so dearly bought that the Earl of Surrey, instead of invading Scotland, stopped at Berwick—put some troops in garrison, and disbanded the rest of his army. In the library of the Athenæum, at Liverpool, are twelve or fourteen folio volumes of Scottish Acts of Parliament, etc., with the following inscription at the beginning of each volume: "Md. y^t Edyn Borow wasse wone y^e eight daye of May in Ano xxxvi. H. viij et ano Dni mccccclij and y^t y^e boke called Bartolus sup primi degesti veteris was gottn and brought a waye by me Willm. Norres, of y^e Speke K y^e xi daye of May foursaide and now y^e boke of me y^e foursaide Willm. geven and by me left to remayne att Speke for an heir-loume. In witness hereof written with my none hand and subscribed my name—P. me WILLM. NORRES, milit." Baines assumes that this proves the fact of Sir William having brought some curious pieces of wainscot from Holyrood to Speke, "which was re-erected by Sir Edward Norris, to whom, on the authority of Secombe, this transfer of the relics has been generally attributed." Here is confusion worse confounded. Sir William brings, in 1543, some carvings, which are re-erected by his grandfather, the hero of Flodden.

The most recent account of Speke is the small notice in the prospectus of Nash's fourth volume of *Mansions*. Mr. Nash says, "he is inclined to think, that not only the panelling, but most of the carved wood-work, is of earlier date than 1598," the date fixed by Whatton, and he notices the presence of something like the florid vigour of the Venetian carvers in wood in this screen.

Mr. W. J. Roberts, a member of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, who has most diligently collected information as to this interesting house, and the families who have been its possessors, has enabled me to throw some light, perhaps, on the subject. In a careful investigation which I made with him, we satisfied ourselves that this screen is no importation direct from Holyrood. Above the carved-work, on a panelled surface beneath the roof, are two figures of angels, bearing shields, such as are placed in our churches at the foot of the principals of wood roofs. These, it is probable, may have been brought from Holyrood chapel, and in time it has come to be believed and stated, that the whole of the wainscot was obtained from the same source. As to the florid Venetian carving, our researches may also enable me to throw light on the

subject. Messrs. Bullock and Gandy (the cabinet-makers, of Liverpool,) restored the screen, and the work was entrusted to Mr. Bridgens, the sculptor, known to antiquaries by his valuable etchings of the carved work at Sefton church. The parts which exhibit the greatest freedom are restorations in plaster coloured over. I may mention that Mr. Roberts is arranging his very valuable notes, and, as a history of a curious house, and a very ancient and important family, I hope he may be induced to give them to the public.

The Norrises retained Speke till Thomas, only son of Edward Norris, dying without issue, his cousin Mary succeeded to the property. This Mary, in 1736, married Lord Sidney Beauclerk, fifth son of the first Duke of St. Alban's. His grandson (son of the well-known Topham Beauclerk) transferred the property to the family of Watt, who at present own the property. The present occupier (Mr. Brereton of Liverpool) well deserves, and I am sure will receive, the cordial thanks of the company for the kindness with which he has thrown open the house to us, as he well merits the thanks of all friends of archæology for the care he has taken of so valuable an edifice.

[The following Papers were read at the meeting of the Archæological Association, held in the Town Hall, in the evening. They are reprinted from the Journal of the Archæological Association. The Wood-cuts illustrating the first Paper have been kindly lent by the Council of the Association.]

I.—ON CERTAIN CHURCH BRASSES IN CHESHIRE AND LANCASHIRE.

By J. G. Waller, Esq.

Although in this part of England monumental brasses are much less numerous than in those counties on the eastern coast, yet amongst them are at least three of a very interesting character, if not even unique examples. Two of these, now under consideration, are monuments to members of the same family, well known in the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire, where its several branches have resided for many centuries.

The first monument to be noticed, being the earlier in date, is that of Roger Legh and wife, in Rivers Chapel, St. Michael's, Macclesfield. This brass is much mutilated, the figure of the lady being altogether gone, and is very coarse and rude in execution. It consists of the kneeling figures of a gentleman and six children, in the long gowns then worn by civilians; an inscription beneath, in Latin, states that Roger Legh deceased 4th November 1506; and Elizabeth, his wife, 5th October 1489; a label from the mouth of the principal figure has on it, "a damnatione perpetua libera nos Domine;" one corresponding from the female figure, which is preserved in a drawing, Harl. MSS. 2151, British Museum ran thus:—"in die iudicii libera nos Domine."