

LES FEUILLES D'OR

(From the French)

The golden leaves, leaves sere and dead,
 The leaves, the summer's panoply,
 Fall, and adown the wind are sped,
 Fall, and adown the wind are led,
 That calls to them unendingly.

Amid the patter of the rain
 To meet the nearing winter's wrack
 Fitful they flutter down amain ;
 The shiv'ring branches wave and strain,
 As they would wish to hold them back,

And see with them the summer fail,
 With them the hope of every spring ;
 Beneath the storm's relentless flail
 Hark how the lone trees sob and wail,
 Each to the other signalling.

But from the leaves the sap is gone,
 The hearts that carolled weep thereby,
 And the wind lifts and chases on
 The golden leaves, their brief day done,
 The leaves, the summer's panoply.

GEORGE HEYER.

THE
 HATCHMENTS
 IN MERTON CHURCH

'Not know the figures of heraldry ! Of what could your father be thinking ?'—DI VERNON.

VERY little appears to be generally known concerning the Merton Church hatchments, and the writer (who had the privilege of repairing them some ten years ago) hopes this article may not prove uninteresting. He can, at least, assure his readers that there will, happily, be no occasion to talk, with Richard II,—

'Of graves, of worms, and epitaphs.'

Excluding the picture of the Royal Arms of the Restoration period, that may be seen over the chancel arch, there are six heraldic paintings in the Church. All are interesting, with perhaps one exception, which the writer has unfortunately failed to identify; and one at least, of which Merton may justly be proud, is of National interest.

The hatchments to be described are those of:—

- 1 Lord Nelson, 1805.
- 2 Sir William Hamilton, K.B., 1803.
- 3 Rear-Admiral Isaac Smith, 1831.
- 4 Sir Robert Burnett, 1816.
- 5 Lady Burnett, 1802.
- 6 Unidentified.

This last (a rather poor one), judging from the lozenge-shape of the shield, and from the background being entirely black, is apparently that of a widow lady. The arms are: *Azure, a chevron between three trefoils argent.* They may be those of the family of Beard, co. Derby. They are impaled with:—*gules, three fleurs-de-lys argent,* assigned in Burke's 'General Armory' to the families of Massey, Vacham, Wisemale or Wyrmale.

Lady Burnett's hatchment and that of her husband, Sir Robert Burnett, the founder of the well-known distillery at Vauxhall, are interesting in displaying differences in their arms. Anne, Lady Burnett, daughter of John Fassett, Esq., of East Ham, co. Essex, died at Morden Hall, June 12, 1802. Her hatchment is the oldest in the Church. The arms are:—*Argent, three holly leaves in chief vert, and a hunting-horn in base sable, garnished and stringed gules,* for Burnett; impaling the Fassett arms:—*Argent, on a bend sable, three*

stag-heads cabossed, of the field. The background to the Burnett arms is white, denoting that the husband survived. The latter arms are those of the ancient family of Burnett, of Leys, settled in Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire since A.D. 1324, from which Sir Robert Burnett claimed descent. They are, however, considerably modified in Sir Robert's own hatchment. He was a man of some importance in his day, and was knighted April 15, 1795; was a Deputy-Lieutenant and a Lieutenant of the Division, Sheriff of London and Middlesex in the year 1794, at a very disturbed time, when the state trials of Horne Tooke and others occurred at the Old Bailey. He was likewise Lieut.-Colonel of the Lambeth Volunteers, and died at Morden Hall, June 23, 1816, aged 76 or 78, and was buried at St. John's, Southwark.

Apparently some doubt arose, after the death of his wife, concerning his right to bear the arms of Burnett of Leys, for a fresh grant was made to him in 1812, differing from those on Lady Burnett's hatchment, but yet embodying the three leaves and bugle-horn. These new arms are:—*Per saltire vert and gules, a sword erect, the point upwards proper, pommel and hilt or, and from the blade pendant a bugle-horn stringed of the last;*

on a chief embattled erminois, three leaves of the burnet rose, also *ppr.* The crest is: On a mural crown or, a mount vert thereon a vine tree *ppr.*, fructed, on the sinister an arm issuing from a cloud, in the hand a knife pruning the vine, also *ppr.** This is placed upon a Knight's open affronté helmet. Dating from perhaps the most debased period of heraldic art (note the false heraldry of colour upon colour in *per saltire vert and gules*), these arms have none of the simple dignity of the older ones; one can, however, perceive in the sword, and the embattled chief, allusion to Sir Robert's services both civil and military. The impaled Fassett arms remain unchanged, and the black background tells us that he died a widower.

We next come to Rear-Admiral Isaac Smith, a benefactor to the Parish, who died at Merton Abbey, July 2, 1831. His was the last hatchment to be placed in the Church. The arms are those of Smith of Thaxted, co. Essex; *Erminois, three bezants*, the crest being:—*A demi-wild man ppr.*, in his right hand five ears of barley vert, in his left a flint stone *ppr.*; his hair sable, wreathed round the temples *ppr.* The flags surrounding the

* *ppr.* an abbreviation for *proper*; an heraldic term meaning in the natural colours.

MERTON CHURCH



HATCHMENT OF
SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, K.B.,
1803

From photographs



HATCHMENT OF
HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON,
1805

shield are those of the 'Red,' 'White,' and 'Blue' fleets of the Royal Navy; divisions which were only abolished in 1855. The fourth flag, the old white Ensign, has the Union Jack in the upper corner of the hoist. This Ensign now bears upon it, in addition, as everyone knows, the red cross of St. George.

Admiral Smith entered the Navy about 1766, and served for a time on board the *Grenville*, a brig commanded by Capt. Cook, the circumnavigator, whom he accompanied later in the *Endeavour* on his voyage to the South Seas, 1768-1771; and it is an interesting fact to record, that he was, I am informed, the first European to set foot upon Australian soil.

The widow of the great circumnavigator was a relative of the Admiral's, and in their declining years they resided together, spending the summer at his house at Merton Abbey, and the winter at Mrs. Cook's at Clapham.

Not the least beautiful monument in the Church is the marble tablet erected by Mrs. Cook to her relative and members of his family. It represents the kneeling figure of a woman in a remarkably graceful attitude.

Admiral Smith died unmarried. His charity consists in a sum of £630 consols, bringing in an income of £17 . 6 . 4, which, subject to

the expense of keeping the family tomb in repair, is distributed to the poor at Christmas-time.

We now come to perhaps the most beautiful armorial painting in the Church, that of the Right Hon. Sir William Hamilton, K.B., third son of Lord Archibald Hamilton, Governor of Greenwich Hospital and Governor of Jamaica, by his wife Lady Jane, daughter of James, sixth Earl of Abercorn; and a grandson of William, third Duke of Hamilton.

He was born in Scotland, December 13, 1730, died at his residence in Piccadilly, April 6, 1803, and was buried at Milford Haven, where he had acquired a property through his first wife, the daughter and heiress of Hugh Barlow, Esq., of Lawrenny Hall, Pembrokeshire. Sir William, who was knighted in 1772, began life as an officer in the 3rd regiment of foot-guards, and served in Holland under the Duke of Cumberland. He was Member of Parliament for Midhurst in 1761, eventually becoming in 1764 British envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Court of Naples.

His only child, a daughter, died in 1775 his wife dying in 1782. Of the beautiful Emma Lyon or Hart, whom Sir William married at Marylebone Church in 1791, there is no

occasion to speak; it can hardly, however, be doubted that to her we owe this noble hatchment, and that of Lord Nelson, to which we shall presently refer.

We here find displayed some of the oldest and most beautiful arms in Scotland. The shield, surrounded by the motto of the Order of the Bath '*Tria Juncta in Uno*' is divided quarterly. In the first and fourth quarters are the arms of Hamilton:—*Gules three cinque-foils ermine*, quartered with a *Lymphad sable* (or ship with sails furled, and oars) *on a field argent*, for the earldom of Arran, a family title. In the second and third quarters are the well-known Douglas arms:—*Argent a man's heart gules ensigned with an imperial crown ppr.*; *upon a chief azure, three mullets of the first*.

These latter afford a good illustration of armorial development through the centuries. The earliest arms of the Douglasses appear to have been:—*Azure, three mullets argent*. About A.D. 1290 the seal of William, Lord Douglas showed a change—*Argent, upon a chief azure, three mullets of the first*. Then comes the story of the 'good Sir James Douglas,' who, undertaking to carry the heart of Robert Bruce to Palestine, was slain in Andalusia on his journey thither. In 1355

his nephew William, first Earl of Douglas, to commemorate that event, charged his silver shield with *a man's heart gules*. About 1542 the heart appears ensigned by *an open crown gules*; and it was only after the accession of James I in 1603 that the *imperial crown ppr.* appeared as we now see it.

The Hamilton supporters are:—*Two Antelopes argents, horned, ducally gorged, chained and hoofed or*. These antelopes are charged on the shoulder with *a mullet or* to denote that Sir William was a third son. His right to use supporters, however, is very doubtful, that privilege being restricted to few besides Peers. In base of the arms is the family motto:—‘*Sola nobilitas virtus.*’

The crest, to which a romantic story also attaches is:—*Out of a ducal coronet or, an oak tree fructed, and penetrated transversely in the main stem by a frame-saw ppr., the frame gold*. The original Hamilton crest was a *Boar's head*. This disappeared in the sixteenth century, and was replaced by the singular one just described, which commemorates the escape into Scotland, in 1323, of a certain Sir Gilbert Hamilton, reputed ancestor of the present ducal house. The tale runs that Sir Gilbert slew John le Despencer at the court of Edward II, the quarrel between them having arisen from

Sir Gilbert's incautiously expressed admiration for Robert Bruce. He was so closely pursued in his subsequent flight, that, to escape capture he and a faithful squire joined some woodcutters, assuming their dress, and on the approach of his enemies cried out the word ‘Through’ to his companion, and proceeded with the work he had commenced. His pursuers passed by unsuspecting, and he followed in safety. The word ‘Through’ is over the crest, but some authorities say it should be inscribed upon the blade of the saw.

Sir William Hamilton, whose portrait, arrayed in the robes of the Order of the Bath, may be seen at the National Portrait Gallery, was a man of considerable attainments. He was a great connoisseur and collector of works of art; one of his large collections, made in Italy, now forms the groundwork of the present department of Greek and Roman antiquities at the British Museum. We are also indebted to him for the possession of the celebrated Portland vase.

We now turn to Lord Nelson's splendid hatchment.

It is curious to find him, less than three years before the great battle of St. Vincent, bitterly complaining of unmerited neglect. Thus, in 1794, after the fall of Calvi,

in which engagement he lost the use of his right eye, his services were altogether overlooked. Alluding to this, Nelson said:—

'One hundred and ten days have I been actually engaged at sea and on shore against the enemy—three actions against ships, two against Bastia, four boat actions, and two villages taken, and twelve sail of vessels burnt. I do not know that anyone has done more. I have had the comfort to be always applauded by my Commander-in-Chief, but never to be rewarded, and, what is more mortifying, for services in which I have been wounded others have been praised, who at the time were actually in bed, far from the scene of action. They have not done me justice. But never mind, I'll have a gazette of my own.'

Nelson's paternal arms at this time were:

Or, a cross patonce sable, over all a bend gules. But after the battle of St. Vincent (February 14, 1797) he received the Knighthood of the Bath, and the motto: 'Tria Juncta in Uno' surrounds the arms.

It was no doubt after this engagement that Sir Horatio was granted the crest:—*On a wreath upon waves of the sea, the stern of a Spanish man-of-war, thereon inscribed 'San Joseph,' all ppr.,* which, with the motto 'Faith and Works,' is shown over the Lion Supporter. But the Nelsonian arms attained their fullest development after the glorious

battle of the Nile (August 1, 1798). The first reward to reach him after that event, presented to him with other costly gifts by Selim III, Sultan of Turkey, was the Chelengk, or Plume of Triumph, in diamonds, which he removed from his own turban for the purpose. This is seen as a crest of honourable augmentation issuing from *a naval crown or.* The Order of the Crescent of Turkey, of the first class, is also shown. A further grant of honourable augmentation to his paternal arms was made at this time:—*On a chief undulated argent, waves of the sea, from which a palm-tree issuant between a disabled ship on the dexter and a battery in ruins on the sinister side, all ppr.* This very unheraldic and singular sea-scape forms part of the central shield. A further addition, within the original *bend gules* was: *a bend engrailed or charged with three bombs fired, ppr.*

The fine motto: 'Palmam qui meruit ferat,' was chosen by Lord Grenville for Nelson, from an Ode by the Rev. Dr. Jortin (b. 1698, d. 1770).*

* The writer is indebted to Earl Nelson for the following interesting note on the Nelson motto:—

“Palmam qui meruit ferat.”

These words came from an Ode “Ad Ventos,” published in the “Lusus Poetici” of Dr. Jortin, (author of the Life of Erasmus). It is said that at the suggestion of Lord Grenville they were applied

On November 6, 1798, Nelson was created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe, co. Norfolk, and the consequent supporters to his arms, are, on the dexter side, the charming quaint figure of a sailor armed with a cutlass and a pair of pistols in his belt ppr., the right hand supporting a staff thereon hoisted a Commodore's flag (gules according to Burke, but here argent) and in his left hand a palm-branch ppr. On the sinister side is a Lion rampant regardant, in his mouth two broken flagstaves ppr., flowing from one a Spanish flag or and gules, from the other a tricoloured French flag, in his dexter paw a palm-branch ppr. The coronet surmounting the arms is that of the Viscounty conferred May 22, 1801, after the terrible battle of Copenhagen (April 2, 1801).

A second Viscounty, with special remainder, was conferred upon Nelson on August 18, of the same year, in consequence of his having no issue.

by Mr. Canning in his speech in the House of Commons on the Vote of Thanks for the victory of the Nile.

"Et nobis faciles parcite, et hostibus,
Concurrant pariter cum ratibus rates;
Spectent Numina ponti, et
Palmam, qui meruit, ferat."

Which Mrs. J. K. Hervey renders:—

"O winds breathe calmly o'er us and our foes,
Let ship with equal ship contending close;
And while the sea-gods watch above the fray,
Let him who merits bear the Palm away."

The medals and decorations surrounding the arms are somewhat difficult to identify; the Star just over the Turkish Order is that of St. Ferdinand and Merit of Naples, founded by Ferdinand IV on April 1, 1800, to commemorate his restoration to the throne of Naples, and for which signal service he created Nelson a Knight of the Grand Cross, a few days before conferring upon him the estate and dukedom of Brontë. The ducal coronet is just over the motto of the Bath. A decoration on a green ribbon, consisting of a *cross patée* surrounded by laurel leaves, with the motto, 'Junxit Amicus Amos, 1755' is that of the Order of St. Joachim of Leiningen, of which Nelson was made Knight Grand Commander, July 15, 1802, by the reigning Count of Leiningen-Westerburg. The gold Order, upon a pink ribbon, dated 1801, with Turkish writing in the centre, refers to the Crescent before mentioned. With regard to the three gold medals suspended from ribbons, which the writer has failed to identify, Earl Nelson wrote to him some years ago as follows:—

'None of the medals refer to the Nile medal. I have the one the Admiral always wore, but this was not given by the King, and I do not think any medal was given for St. Vincent.'

Thus, for the present, must we leave this wonderful hatchment.

The 'Wimbledon and Merton Annual' for 1903, contains a view of Merton Place (facing page 32) showing a hatchment, probably Sir W. Hamilton's, in the position Lord Nelson's occupied on the front of the mansion, after his death, and previous to being placed in the Church. It has recently been exhibited with other Nelson relics, at the Earl's Court Naval Exhibition—probably the first time it has left the Church in which Nelson worshipped one hundred years ago.

WALTER LEDGER.

GYPSY ASSOCIATIONS OF WIMBLEDON COMMON

'As a gypsy grandmother
Tells a fortune neatly ;
As the Gentile trusts in her,
And is done completely ;

'So you steal and gnaw my heart,
For to that I'm fated !
And by you, my gypsy Kate,
I'm intoxicated.'

IT had been a hot day getting the caravan across London and up Putney Hill; but when the pitch for the night was comfortably made in the cool and leafy glade, the tired gypsies forgot their cares and made merry. Wanselo Petuléngro picked up his old Hungarian violin, and coaxed strange melodies from the quaint instrument, as he broke into the wild song of which the above is a rude translation, while the circle of dusky figures struck into the dashing chorus with flashing eyes and smiling teeth, in appreciation of the delicate Romany humour and pathos in the stanzas.