

Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire.

BY F. TREVOR DAVYS, ESQ.

Edlesborough is one of the most extensive parishes in the Cotteslow Hundred, being more than sixteen miles in circumference.

It is, with its hamlets, bounded on the north and east by Bedfordshire, having some irregular portions of Herts towards the south, so interposed that it is extremely difficult to trace, much more to describe with minuteness, its boundaries. Herts may, however, be considered its

southern border, as Beds circumscribes it towards the north, and Ivinghoe, Pitston, or Pightlesthorne, with Cheddington on the west.

The town of Edlesborough was of such importance in the reign of Edward III., that the assizes for the county were held here in 1332, but upon what emergency history and tradition are alike silent; and it has not been discovered that it has been at any subsequent period marked by a similar distinction.

MANORIAL HISTORY.

It had anciently numerous hamlets, lordships, and subordinate manors, included in or belonging to it.

Of these the chief were (besides the manors of Walter Gifard and Gilbert le Gaud in Edlesborough) Northall, Dagnal, Hudnal (anciently written Hodenhale), Ringsall, St. Margaret's in Ivinghoe (which latter, containing only two small farms and two houses, could never have been properly denominated a manor, though perhaps called a lordship), three houses in Cheddington, and two in Horton, also the manors called Boteler's (or Butler's), Bowell's, FitzHugh's, and Caldwell's, or Cawdwell Abbey, afterwards merged in Ashridge.

The larger of the manors in Edlesborough was given by the Conqueror to Gilbert de Gand, a younger son of Baldwin, sixth Earl of Flanders, by his wife the heiress of Hainault. Gilbert was nephew to the Conqueror, and attended his uncle into England. He married Alice, daughter and heir of Hugh de Montfort, a great baron; and had issue by her, Walter, Hugh (who took the name of his mother), and Robert, who was Chancellor of England; and also a daughter, Emma, married to Alan, Lord Percy. Walter, his eldest son and heir, succeeded his father in the inheritance, and having munificently rebuilt the Abbey of Bardney, Co. Lincoln, bestowed upon it many lands. He founded the Priory of Bridlington, Co. York, giving to that house also large possessions; and having married Maud, daughter of Stephen, Earl of Brittany and Richmond, died in 1139 (4 Stephen), leaving issue, Gilbert, Robert, and Geoffrey.

Gilbert, his eldest son, succeeded his father, and was the next lord of Edlesborough. Having been taken prisoner with King Stephen in the battle of Lincoln in 1142, he was, during his captivity, compelled to marry

Rohais, or Hawyse, daughter of William de Romard, Earl of Lincoln; and dying in 1156 (2 Hen. II.), especially directed his interment in Bridlington Abbey, which had been founded by his ancestor. He left issue, two daughters, Alice, wife of Simon de St. Liz, Earl of Huntingdon and Northampton; and another, named Gunnora; but neither of them had issue.

It is presumed that Edlesborough reverted to Robert de Gand (brother of Gilbert), who died seized in 1193; and having no male issue, this estate is said to have been, from the time of his death, demised to tenants of the crown. In 1196, about three years afterwards, the rent arising from it is recorded in the Pipe Rolls, to have been paid at the Exchequer; and all subsequent possessors are said to have derived their rights from new grants emanating from the crown.

The manor of Walter Gifford was of smaller extent. It was holden of him by Ralph, his subfeudatory, who had only three hides for his manor. There was land for two ploughs; one was kept in the demesne, and another might have been employed. There were two bordars, and pasture for two teams, valued at 30s.; when he first held it, at 60s.; and in King Edward's days, at 40s. This manor had anciently belonged to Toun, a man of Alric FitzGoding, and he could sell it.

Gilbert de Gand's manor was taxed at twenty hides; and there were four ploughs, and twenty-six villeins, with four bordars, had ten carncates. There were ten servants, two mills worth fifteen shillings and four pence; four carncates of pasture, and wood for four hundred hogs; the total value of which amounted to £13; in the time of King Edward £14. This manor Vlf, King Edward's thane, held, and could sell it.

In 1196 William de S'ce Maricæ Ecclesia accounted to the sheriff for 46s. for half a year's rent of the firme of Edulfesberg, and also £4 for the lands of William Blund there. This person appears to have had possessions in Swanbourne, Bledlow, Thornbury, and Aston Clinton.

In an account of the lands in Buckinghamshire which had excheated to the crown, in the next year, the same William is mentioned, with Ralph Hareng, as paying their proportion of the relief 100s. for the firme of Edulfesberg, of William Blund; as is William Blund for the same in 1197.

In 1211 Hugh de Beauchamp was released of his scutage of two fees (wanting the eighth-part of) in Edulfesberg of the knight's fees, in which Osbert Mantel had enfeoffed him.

In 1268 Hawise de Bossville died seized of a knight's fee in Edulfesburgh, Seybroke, Chetinden, and Calthorp, with other lands, etc., in Berks.

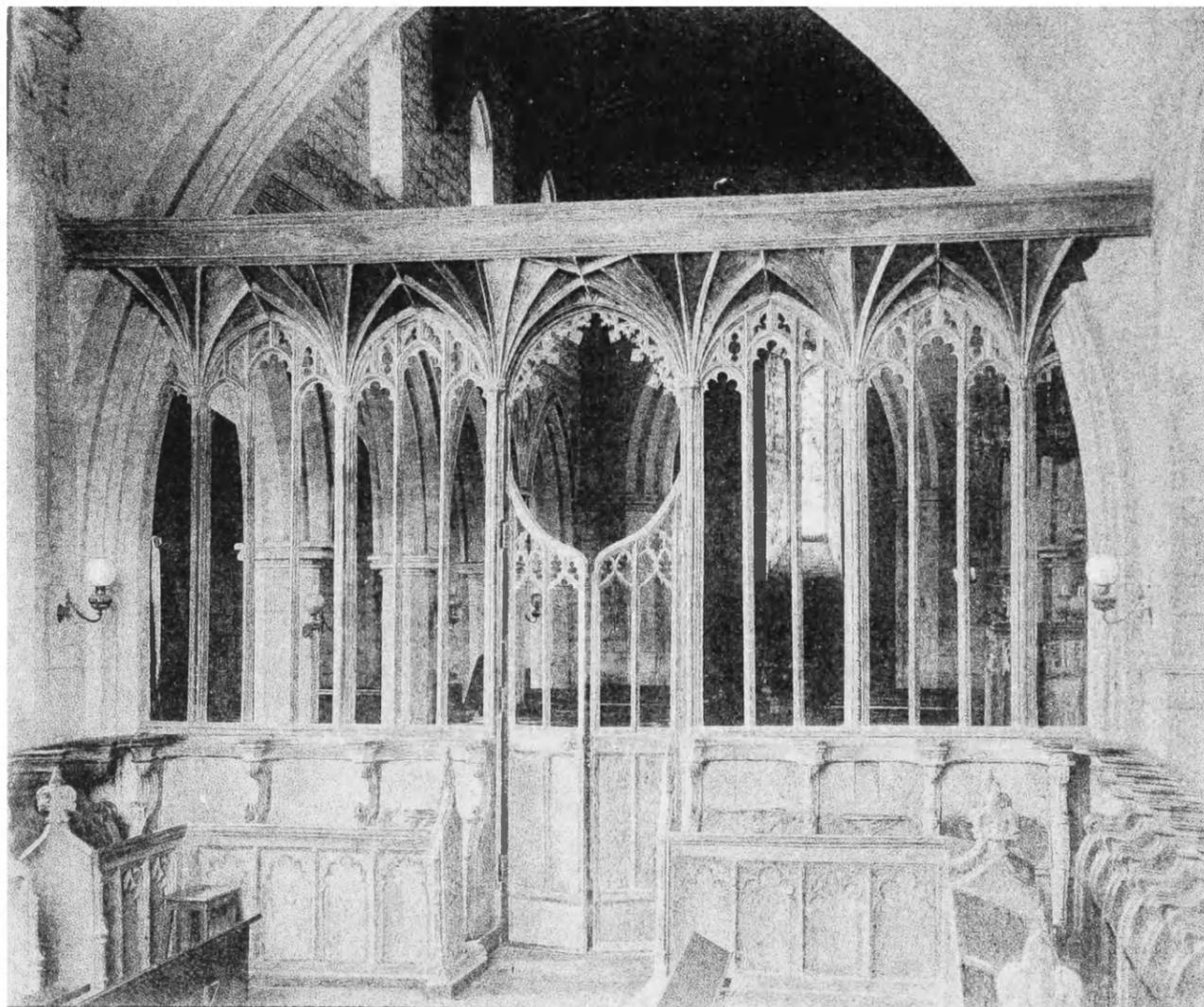
In 1278 an assize was called between Hugh, son of Robert atte the mille, of Edlesborough, and Joane de Bossville, or Basevill, lady of this manor, when the jury found that Hugh held his lands in soccage, by the service of 26s. per ann., and not by knight's service, that the said Joane had disscized him of a messuage, one mill, thirteen acres of land, three acres of meadow, and 13s. rent, and the third part of four acres of pasture; and thereupon the said Joane was in miseracordia.

In 1288 (17 Edward I.) a fine was passed between William de Chalfhurite and John de la Rye and Alice his wife, of messuages, lands, and meadows in Eselberwe (Edlesborough), the right of William.

In 1294 William FitzJohn held lands and tenements which had formerly belonged to William Walraund, brother and heir of John Walraund, deceased, and paid the king thirty-five shillings for his relief, for one messuage, fourscore and eighteen acres of arable land, seven acres of wood, and 48s. rents in Edlesborough, which he held of the king by the service of the fourth part of one knight's fee.

In 1302 Richard de Bello Campo, son and heir of Miles de Bello Campo, came into the king's court, and stated that he had that day paid his relief of twenty-five shillings for the fourth part of one knight's fee, held of the king, as of the Honough of Morteigne in Edlesborough, which the said Richard, by the king's licence, granted to William FitzJohn, in free marriage with Alice, his daughter, and sixty acres of land and a half, and thirty shillings rent, with their appurtenances, to be holden of the king by the aforesaid services.

In 1503 a fine was passed of a Mediety of Dagnall, and lands in Edlesborough, and of Dagnall Church, to Alex. Quadring. In 1558 it was found, by an inquisition, that Robert Brocas then died seized of Dagnall Manor, held of Richard Quadring. In 1616 it was the property of the Dormers, from whom it passed to the Stanhopes



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, EDDLESBORO.
VIEW OF ROOD-SCREEN, LOOKING WEST.

by marriage, and was afterwards in the possession of Philip, Earl of Chesterfield.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

The advowson and church were, in the time of William the Conqueror, given to Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire, by Gilbert de Gand, the founder and possessor of the principal manor and estate here, and this grant was confirmed in 1115 by Walter, his son and successor (the grant is given at length in the new edition of the "Monasticon," Vol. II., p. 628; also in Bardney Charters, Vol. IV., p. 630).

Gilbert de Gand, grandson of Walter, confirmed his ancestor's donation; and by patent, 15 Richard II., 1382, the King granted to the Prior and Convent of the House of Carthusians, "the advowson of the church of Edlesburgh, Co. Bucks; and also licence to appropriate, and to hold the same for ever appropriated to him and his successors, to their own proper use, so as a sufficient allowance and endowment be made to the Vicar of the said church, according to the value thereof, and the limitations made in those cases."

The estate of the Carthusians, after his appropriation, is described in the Valor Ecclesiasticus.

In 33 Henry VIII., 1542, the King granted the Rectory and advowson of the Vicarage to Richard Breme, late belonging to the Carthusian Priory, near the city of London, dissolved, to hold the said Breme, and his heirs for ever, for the twentieth part of a knight's fee, and £3 per annum at the court of Augmentation; and 23rd of June (13 Eliz.) Arthur Breme, Esq., brother of Edward, son of Richard Breme, conveyed the said manor and advowson to Vincent Randall and Edward Randall, his son and heir, citizens of London and mercers.

Vincent died, and Edward survived, and by his will dated 22 Sept., 1577, demised this rectory, until Edward Randall should come of age, to certain trustees. Edward died (20 Eliz.), leaving a son, Vincent, his heir, three years of age; and the devise of his father was ratified by a deed enrolled in Chancery, to which Arthur Breame and Thomasine his wife were parties.

On the 2nd Feb., 1614, Sir Edward Randall, knight, of Albury, in Surrey, conveyed to the Lord Chancellor Egerton and Sir John Egerton, knight, his son and heir-

male apparent, the rectory, parsonage, and church with the advowson of Edlesburgh; and by fine and recovery suffered in Hilary term 1614 (12 James I.), Sir Edward Randall, knight, and Anne his wife confirmed the above-mentioned deed; and the advowson, etc., were thereupon finally settled.

The advowson of the church, with the rest of the family estates in the neighbourhood, descended to the Dukes of Bridgewater, and ultimately became vested in the trustees appointed by the will of John William, sixth Earl of Bridgewater, who are the present patrons.

RECTORS.

Simon de Bello Campo, 1199.

Thomas de Capellanus, 1219.

Simon de Edesbury resigned 1247.

John de Crakepole, 1247. He founded a chantry here, and being Archdeacon of Bedford, gave the nomination of the Priest to his successor in that dignity. He died in 1260.

David de Frideswarde, Archdeacon of Derby.

Richard de Gravesend pr. 1263 by Bardney Convent.

Oliver Sutton presented 1292 by the Bishop.

John de Asheby; presented 5 April 1324, by the Convent of Bardney.

John de Steping presented 1 Dec. 1325.

Richard de Melbourne instituted 16 May 1349.

John Bulneys resigned 1351, and

John de Swynstede was instituted, being the last Rector of the church before it was appropriated to the Charter-House, London.

VICARS.

John Moyet was admitted 1 July 1396 to the perpetual Vicarage of this Church, on the presentation of the Charter-House London.

Robert de Elton 26 April 1402.

John Portreve 1466.

Robert Elliot 3 Sept. 1466.

William Smith 13 Aug. 1471.

William Croxton 29 Jan. 1472.

Thomas Burley.

Richard Zuybons LL.D. 1524.

John Gale inst. 27 Sept. 1550.

William Downham inst. 17 Oct. 1554 on the presentation of Thomas Parry Esq.

Nicolas Archbold presented 5 Nov. 1555.

John Godland inst. 23 March 1560 on the presentation of Trevor Smith Esq^{re}.

William Norton pr. by Edward Randall 2 Sept. 1602.

John Richardson A.M. presented 3 June 1609 by Richard Sanders Esq. to whom this turn was granted.

Mathew Carr pr. 1632 by the Earl of Bridgewater.

Andrew Campion succeeded in 1658.

Edward Brown pr. 22 Sept. 1661.

Robert Hitchcock B.D. 13 Jan 1664.

George Burhope A.B. inst 5 July 1667.

Thomas King A.M. inst 8 March 1691 on the presentation of the Earl of Bridgewater.

William Colemore A.B. presented 20 March 1702 by Jane Countess of Bridgewater.

John Dodson inst. 29 March 1729 on the presentation of Scroop, Duke of Bridgewater.

Robert Crowfoot A.B. pr. 7 Jan 1742 by the same John Tatton 1760.

John Power, presented 21 July 1770, by Francis Duke of Bridge-water.

Robert Oliver pr. by the same patron 27 July 1781.

Robert Blucke A.B. inst 11 April 1783.

Henry John Tod A.M. presented 2 April 1805 by the Right. Hon John William, Earl of Bridgewater. He was afterwards preferred to the Rectory of Setlington Co. York; advanced to a stall in that Cathedral and to the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, &c., having vacated his benefice, on becoming Chaplain and Librarian at Lambeth to his Grace Archbishop of Canterbury.

Edward Northey A.M. presented 10 July 1809 by John William, Earl of Bridgewater; and on his cession William Bruton Wroth A.M. was presented in June 1816 by the same Patron.

THE CHURCH.

As this parish is one of the most extensive in the Hundred, so the Church, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is proportionately one of the largest.

It stands on an eminence, which, Mr. Lipscomb says, "has the appearance of having been either an ancient barrow, or perhaps a Roman summer camp"; he

continues to say, "the church had a handsome square embattled tower, and thereon a pyramidal spire, covered with lead. In the tower were originally five bells, of unusually large dimensions, the tenor having weighed 29,000 lbs.; but in 1740 it was reduced about one cwt. on being re-cast. It formerly was inscribed 'Sancta Twinitas, Unus Deus. Miserere nobis.' The spire was set on fire by lightning on Friday, 21st March, 1828, and the woodwork being consumed, the lead covering the roof was melted, and running down, the bells became red-hot when they fell with a tremendous crash to the ground, the tenor was broken, and all the rest were (excepting the Saint's bell) cracked by the water from the engine then playing on the building, the rest of the building escaped destruction, only one of the rafters of the nave roof being scorched."

The plan consists of nave, north and south aisles, western tower, north and south porch, chancel, and vestry on north side of chancel.

The different measurements internally are:—Nave, 56ft. 6in. long, and 21ft. 6in. wide; north aisle, 10ft. 5in. wide; south aisle, 10ft. 5in. wide; chancel, 40ft. 3in. long, and 21ft. 2in. wide; and the chancel arch between jambs is 19ft. 5in. wide.

The nave has four bays of arcading on each side of the same date, which is of the Decorated period, with octagonal piers and moulded caps; these arcadings carry Perpendicular clerestories, with a two-light window over each bay.

At the west end of nave, each side, there are evident signs of another bay having existed, but I have failed to find any documentary evidence of how or why it was destroyed, but it gives one the idea that a former tower must have fallen and drawn away these two bays, which were not rebuilt, but the present Perpendicular tower built up to the piers.

The two aisles appear to be of later Perpendicular work than the present tower; in north wall of north aisle is a niche, within is a small fresco of 15-century date, which is intended to represent the Virgin, but is now very indistinct.

The present vestry and organ chamber was appropriated as a burial-place by the Bufford family. Some corbels (for such I take them to be) are in the walls; on

one in the east wall is a sculptured figure of a dragon, and near it a man in armour, holding a shield, on which in relief is a lion ramp.

On three other corbels:—

I. A scull, having over it a ducal coronet.

II. A chevron between three trefoils.

III. The representation of a cup, or perhaps small font, and over it a ducal coronet.

The chancel is the chief architectural feature of the church, with its ancient choir arrangement still remaining; in the south wall is a triple sedilia, with a plain Early English arch over the easternmost one, and piscina and shelf. In the east wall is a most exceptionally beautiful five-light Geometrical window, the mouldings being very deeply cut; another window of equal quality and apparently same date, of two lights, remains in the north wall; the other windows are later insertions, but remains exist (though perhaps not in situ) of a window label in south wall.

Several old paving tiles have been re-laid in different places.

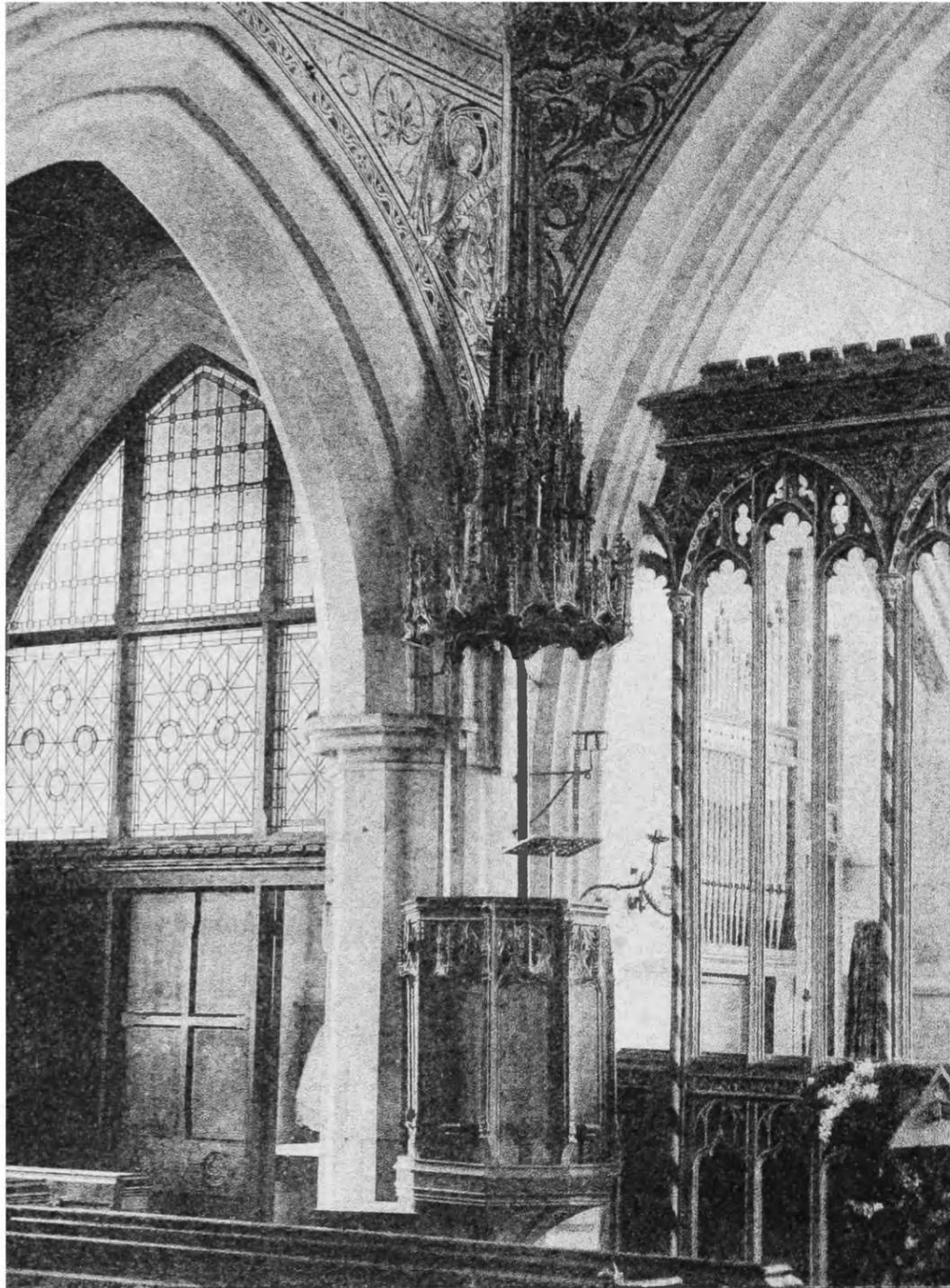
This church is rich in old wood-work, possessing an oak pulpit which appears to be of early Perpendicular date, over which is a most beautiful sounding board of carved tabernacle-work. The old hour-glass stand still remains.

The roofs of nave and chancel are both of the same construction of rather low pitch, with the beams and braces. The marks of an earlier higher pitch roof are visible on the wall of tower.

The screen is a good example of a Perpendicular rood screen, overlapping on the east side, instead of west as usual, to form a canopy over the stalls; the colouring on the screen is supposed to be restoration of the old. Some of the steps up to rood loft remain in the south aisle.

In the church some of the old stalls still remain, having misereres, some being quaintly carved. The present lectern was constructed from some of the old timber out of the tower after the fire.

In conclusion, I must say that a great part of my information on the ancient history has been gathered from Mr. Lipscomb's History of Buckinghamshire.



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ST. MARY'S CHURCH, EDDLESBORO.
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