

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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SEPTEMBER 1980.

Dear Member,

It is with very deep regret that I have to write of the sudden death of our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J.D. Worsey, a founder member of the Society and Treasurer for 31 years. A full obituary appears elsewhere in this issue, but I would wish to pay a brief tribute here. Utterly dedicated in his loyalty and devotion to the Society, he was a tower of strength to me in my work as secretary, never sparing of assistance and advice, "one" who would constant be, come wind, come weather", a true Christian pilgrim.

It was typical of him that he should come to see the party off to Bowood on June 14th, though not well enough to accompany members. A day of rain and grey skies and a delayed start did not dampen spirits. Members were joined at Malmesbury by others, including our sole member from South America, Mr. Barrie, home on leave from Santiago. There was a most interesting talk on the Abbey, given by a volunteer guide, and because we were behind schedule, sandwiches were eaten on the coach. Our next stop was the delightful house of Nonsuch (Ettie Meredith Brown's house) where we were cordially welcomed inside by Mr. and Mrs. H. McNeile. Luckier than Kilvert we were next able to visit Bowood and admire the wonderful collections of art of all kinds. Our Deputy President read relevant extracts from the Diary at all three places we stopped at. Our good friends at Langley Burrell, Mr. and Mrs. Payne, had laid on a wonderful tea for us, and we were happy to contribute to the fund for the renovation of the grave of Kilvert's parents. For such a full and interesting excursion we are most indebted to Mr. Hugh Dearlove, who had organised it.

The Walk and Eardisley Service were on the two days following Mr. Worsey's death. Naturally this sad event cast a shadow. Both events were well attended and blessed with good weather. For some of the walkers the area around Aberedw was a revelation, and I received glowing reports of the day when meeting them at Eardisley. The service at the church followed the usual pattern and members attended from as far afield as Surrey, Sussex and Cheshire. The Rev. J.R. Williams preached on a most unusual and interesting subject, the 19th. century squarson, a vanished "breed" which figured largely in the Diary; and ranged from Sir George Cornwall to the Hon. Rev. J. Stanhope and Rev. Price of Yazor. A very pleasant tea-party followed and our Deputy President spoke with affection and respect of Mr. Worsey. The Society is very grateful to the Rector of Eardisley, his Churchwardens and Organist; and to the ladies who catered so admirably. It was not possible to donate a gift to the church at the service, but this has now been done, as a cheque.

Our remaining events : (a) The Walk, September 20th. at 11. 00 a.m. at the Baskerville Arms, Clyro. Picnic lunch and tea. Participants should be stoutly shod.

(b) Autumn Service, Aberedw Church, by kind permission of Rev. J. Williams. Preacher: Father S. Luff, parish priest at Llandoverly. Tea will be provided at the usual cost. A coach will leave Hereford Town Hall at 11. 00 a.m. Picnic lunch, probably near Builth. Fare £1. 90. Bookings to me, please. We shall proceed on the A439 road, and could arrange for members to be picked up en route in Hay, Clyro, Glasbury and Llyswen.

The Committee has sent a donation of £25 to the Much Marcle Church Restoration Fund. It will be recalled that it was at this beautiful and interesting Church Kilvert was best man to his friend Pope.

In conclusion, an S.O.S. for an Honorary Treasurer! The Committee feels that that official should reside in the Herefordshire area, and points out that its meetings are usually no more than three per annum.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West.

Hon. Secretary.

PUBLICATIONS NOTICE:

Members' attention is drawn to two new Kilvert Society publications : "Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen" and "Twenty-four Walks in the Kilvert Country". Further details will be found in the accompanying price-list.

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"THE GATES AJAR"

(The following article comes from Rev. D.R. King of Elizabeth, New Jersey. It will be remembered that he took part in the Centenary Service at Langley Burrell).

On Friday, June 30, 1871, Kilvert noted in his diary, "Today I came to the touching tearful end of that beautiful story The Gates Ajar". The book he referred to had been published in Boston, Massachusetts, in November, 1868; its author was the twenty-four year old daughter of a professor at the Andover Theological Seminary, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1844-1911). Written less than a year before Elizabeth Payson Prentiss' Stepping Heavenward (which Kilvert also read), and of the same genre, The Gates Ajar enjoyed remarkable success. It went through fifty-five printings by 1884; before the turn of the century 80,000 copies had been sold in America and 100,000 in England. It was also translated into German, French, Dutch and Italian. (In her perceptive book, The Feminization of American Culture (1978) Ann Douglas terms it "the apotheosis of the consolation literature of the day").

The Gates Ajar was part and parcel of the sentimental fiction popular between 1850 and 1870. Orphaned heroines, long-lost relatives, shattered and regained faith, and pious lingering deaths were conventional elements in the novels Phelps was exposed to when at 20 she began her first book. In diary form, it tells the story of an orphan girl of twenty-four named Mary Cabot, of Homer, Massachusetts (near Worcester), who has recently lost her adored brother, Royal, in battle during the Civil War. Its purpose is to assure the reader that, contrary to the abstract and unconsoling teaching of the conservative Congregationalist theologians Phelps had grown up with, there exists for us after death a concrete and down-to-earth heaven, where we are reunited with our loved ones and enjoy meadows and streams, and laughter, and birds and flowers, and pianos.

The plot of the novel is simple. Mary Cabot has lost her faith in the mercy and love of God because of her brother's death. She receives no comfort from the condolences of the local lay deacon and from her minister, Dr. Bland; she wants to be assured of personal immortality but finds no joy in the prospect of being a disembodied soul in heaven singing hymns and contemplating the infinite mind and character of the Almighty. Then saintly Aunt Winifred Forceythe arrives unexpectedly from Kansas where her beloved clergyman husband, John, has recently died. She brings with her her daughter Faith; and while Mary has a chance to care for her young cousin, Winifred, the lay female theologian, sets Mary's thinking straight. (She also goes to work on Dr. Bland; and when Mrs. Bland loses her life in a fire, Winifred wins him over to her views too). Winifred articulates the author's vision of a kindly God who wants to bring everyone to a tangible heaven, which constitutes an extension of the material world, and where Jesus Christ is one's best friend, and where the dead can converse with David and St. Paul, and with President Lincoln. As a result of Winifred's influence Mary regains her faith, which is further strengthened by her aunt's noble hope and courage in the face of terminal breast cancer. Winifred takes six months to die; but she leaves Mary with a purpose in life, to bring up little Faith; and she has made Mary sure of future joys.

The conclusion of the novel is indeed "touching" and "tearful" (to use Kilvert's words). Winifred says good night to Faith; gets Mary to give her the message she wants conveyed to her brother Royal in the next world; turns to the window; and, apparently catching sight of her husband by heaven's half-open gates, exclaims, "John!" "Why, John!".

What most moved Kilvert to make his appreciative comments, however, was probably the fact that four pages from the end of the book Winifred on her deathbed points out to her niece Mary these words from St. John's Gospel: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come". This text always went to Kilvert's heart, comforting him in Salisbury Cathedral after his parting from Ettie Meredith Brown, and moving him to tears when he encountered it while reading aloud to the old soldier, John Morgan, the story of Max Krömer and the siege of Strasbourg.

The Gates Ajar had a two-fold significance for Kilvert. For one thing, if it did not instruct at least it reinforced the main elements in his theology. From passing comments in his diary, from his sermon topics, and especially from his verse, two central convocations of Kilvert's emerge: The reality of a loving God and the fact of

heaven. These two points sum up Elizabeth Phelps' message too. Kilvert had never made a formal study of theology. At Oxford his fields of concentration were Jurisprudence and History; he mentions no book of theology in his diary, or even a volume of sermons.

Apparently then he picked up his theology from his clerical father and uncle and from poetry (can one doubt that his "favourite" In Memoriam had its influence on him?). Naturally, therefore, he would welcome congenial ideas packaged in the attractive form of feminine fiction. The hymns of Frederick William Faber similarly informed Kilvert's theological outlook, with their assurance of the wideness of God's mercy and of the certainty of heaven, the heart's true home. Kilvert had in his pocket Faber's poem, "The True Shepherd", to read to William Price on January 26, 1872; and surely the perceptive Mrs. Venables realized that her protégé would appreciate her birthday gift to him, in 1874, of Faber's Hymns.

Secondly, The Gates Ajar contributed to Kilvert's understanding of feminine psychology. He liked women (and not just young girls) and they liked him. He had four sisters to learn from. But Elizabeth Phelps told him something further about women's emotional needs and sensibilities and about female intelligence (she had read Schleiermacher and Frederick Robertson of Brighton).

On Sunday, May 7, 1876, Kilvert reported:

In the morning I preached upon the Mountain of Galilee and by Miss Higginson's request I put in a little bit especially for Mrs. Venables about the duty of not being discouraged at seeing no immediate result of our work. In the afternoon I preached upon 'Mizpah' with another little word for Mrs. Venables on the loss of her baby. As I came out of church after the second service I saw a respectable elderly-looking women with a black and white checked shawl standing near the door. 'You have a very nice Church here', I said to her smiling. 'Yes', she said eagerly and enthusiastically catching hold of my arm, 'and you're a very nice man'.

Perhaps he preached in this vein and received a positive response because his reading of such fiction as The Gates Ajar had made him all the more closely attuned to the pains and yearnings of women's hearts.

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THE MELKSHAM BANK ROBBERY:

(Mr. W.K. Griffiths (Wootton under Edge) follows up his account of the murders told by the patriarch John Bryant to Kilvert with the story behind "Poor Ernest").

On April Eve 1875 we read that Kilvert and his mother called on Mrs _____. "She is steeped in trouble to the lips, first Ernest's defalcations, flight, arrest and imprisonment, then her daughter Fanny's death and lastly the death of her brother"; and later on 17 July 1875 there is the entry - "Today the Melksham Bank Robbery Trial closed at Salisbury Assizes and poor Ernest _____ was sentenced to 15 years of penal servitude. His poor family!"

The sentenced man was Ernest Awdry Stiles. He is mentioned by his full name as being present at the "jolly party" given by Sir John Awdry at Norton House, where Kilvert danced with Francie Rooke, and Eliza Stiles "crashed full on her back" in the Sir Roger de Coverley.

"The Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette" for 22 July 1875 contains a full account of the trial. Ernest Stiles had for upwards of 20 years been employed by the North Wiltshire Banking Company and had risen to be "the confidential cashier". Such was the confidence placed in him that "no proper audits were carried out by the directors, and in 9 years they had allowed him to possess himself of £21,000".

Charged with him were Henry John Bown, publican, and William Arthur Eyles, coal and corn merchant. The former had begun with an account of £100, and had been allowed to overdraw his account to the extent of £16,000 in 9 years. In the case of Eyles, bills of exchange had been paid by the bank although the account was overdrawn. These bills were kept and concealed by Stiles at his home. Eyles eventually was declared bankrupt, and this brought the whole fraud to light. Stiles fled to Spain, but was apprehended and brought back to face his trial.

The Jury brought in a verdict of Guilty. "In passing sentence, the Judge said that he believed fully that Stiles had got into the hands of Bown and Eyles, that he could not get out of them and that he was being used as a tool. But for 9 years he had been the trusted, the too trusted, servant, had abused his position and trust and had deprived his employers of £21,000 by various acts which were quite as bad as

stealing. The Judge concluded by saying that he could not pass a lighter sentence than the severest the law allowed for so grave a crime, and that was that Stiles be kept in penal servitude for 15 years".

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NOTES FROM OUR DEPUTY PRESIDENT:

NEW PUBLICATIONS:

Blue Remembered Hills - an anthology of Worcestershire Verse in honour of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Diocese, edited by Rev. D. Lockwood and F. Grice (both of the Kilvert Society). Price £2. 00 available from the Vicarage, Hanley Swan, Worcs.

Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen by E. Farmery and R.B. Taylor. New light on Katherine Heanley, with whom Kilvert fell in love at the wedding of Addie Cholmeley at Findon. Illustrated. 90p (post free) from Kilvert Society Publications, Heulwen, Castle Gardens, Hay-on-Wye, Hereford.

The Reredos of Llanthony Tertia

Mr. Guy Dearlove has pointed out to me that several pieces of Abbey Furniture from Father Ignatius's church at Capel-y-ffin have found a home at St. Julian's, Newport, Gwent. Among them are at least one tall brass candlestick, and the elaborate reredos that Father Ignatius had specially built in Munich. The incumbent of St. Julien's is deeply interested in Kilvert and welcomes visitors to his church.

Lord Cowley and Lady Feodora

In her Pilgrimage of Passion (the Life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt) Lady Longford mentions how Blunt met Lord Cowley the English Ambassador in Paris, and flirted with his unmarried daughter Feodora (sic). Blunt describes Lord Cowley as 'a curiously silent man, stiff and awkward, typically British in his anti-social manners, and ill at ease even in the bosom of his family'. This must have been the Lord Cowley whom Kilvert describes skulking on the edge of the skating pond at Draycot on New Year's Day, 1871, and complaining about the skaters. He mentions Lady Feodora (whom he calls Feodora), as having rooms in Draycot House (now unfortunately demolished). Lord Cowley may have been a distinguished diplomat (he must have been at the Paris Embassy in the last years of the reign of Louis Napoleon) but that did not prevent the Awdry girls from making fun of him, and laughing when one of them threw her torch away and gave him 'a whack on the shins'.

A Coincidence

When we were in the parish church at Wilton, near Salisbury, some time ago, we read that in the church there was the flag from the ill-fated Captain which sank off the coast of Portugal on 6 September 1870. Among the crew were the Hon. Reginald Herbert, son of the Earl of Pembroke of Wilton House - and of course Captain Cowper Coles, brother-in-law to Mrs. Venables, whose death Kilvert mentions. We failed to find the flag but the verger tells me that it is still in the church.

A Week in a French Country House.

To look at the books a man admires is often to learn a great deal about his personality. The Rev. D.N. Lockwood has already shown in his essay in A Kilvert Symposium how deeply Kilvert may have been affected by Stepping Heavenward. Now he has very kindly allowed me to read his copy of A Week in a French Country House by Adelaide Sartoris. It is easy to see how Kilvert was drawn to this story, which is a tale of preferment coming out of the blue to an impecunious curate, and with it, at last, the possibility of marriage. But the passage that most caught my eye was the description of the French curé on page 86.

The curé is an entirely different being from our country clergyman: very hard-working and exemplary, but in quite a different way, and altogether simpler and more homely. It is not at all an uncommon thing abroad to see the curé thinking nothing whatever of assisting in manual labour, but working in the fields with his neighbours, and helping them to get in their hay.

Might not this be a picture of Kilvert himself, helping the old soldier in his garden, and working in the hay-field with Jacob Knight, John Couzens and others at Langley Burrell?

F. Grice.

A SIDELIGHT ON KILVERT'S ANCESTRY:

Kilvert in a rather enigmatic passage (Vol.3. 152) speaks of wandering one day in the graveyard at Kington St. Michael among the tombs of his forefathers. Was he possibly thinking of Sir Charles Snell (fl. late 16th and early 17th C) to whom according to June Badeni (see Wiltshire Forefathers) he was distantly related? Sir Charles died unmarried and his estate was divided among his sisters, from whom sprang the families of the Sadlers, Powers, Stokes, Mascalla and Colemans. Is there any member who lives close enough to Kington St. Michael to find how many members of these families are buried in the churchyard or commemorated in the church itself? June Badeni mentions a gravestone to Sadler Gale, the eccentric squire who tried to fly, and who may be related through the Sadlers to the Kilvert family.

Wiltshire Forefathers is a mine of interesting information about many of the families whom Kilvert knew in Wiltshire - the Wellesleys, Ashes, Colemans, Meredith Browns and others; and it contains a very interesting photograph of Draycot House before it was demolished. Will any member who sees a copy of this book for sale please get in touch with me?

F. Grice.

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TWYN-Y-BEDDAU:

As the traveller on the road from Hay to Capel-y-Ffin emerges onto the open moorland, the cluster of mounds known as Twyn-y-beddau ("place of the graves") is a distinctive feature on his left. Kilvert refers to the legend of a battle there told him by Archenfield of Broad Meadow (8 December 1870), reports the visit of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club (21 May 1871) and tells of his own visit 3 days later.

The Transactions of the Woolhope Club for 1871 record that the mound excavated contained a quantity of charcoal, burned bones, a few flint flakes and a whetstone. Rev. W. Symonds expressed the view that Twyn-y-beddau was of pre-Christian date, but Rev. T.W. Webb of Hardwick - he features in the Diary - claimed that there had been two separate interments, the latter in the time of Edward III.

Twenty-seven years later the Club visited Llanigon, and the vicar, Rev. W.E.T. Morgan, speaking of the archaeological remains in his parish, referred to Twyn-y-beddau. He quoted from unpublished notes made by Rev. T.W. Webb. "Tradition says that one party came up the Capel-y-Ffin dingle, the other through the New Forest and encamped the night before in the hollow at the extreme end of the latter at a place called Pant-y-beddau ('hollow of the graves'). The fight began on the brow that is visible from the tumulus in the direction of the Gospel Pass and was continued down to the tumulus and 'there they finished them'. Blood stood deep in the battle-plain, and the name of the farm beneath, Maescoch ('red field'), seems to refer to it".

The following year's "Transactions" includes this evocative sentence spoken by a member, Mr. Lilwall of Cusop: "Twyn-y-beddau, a sad and silent witness of a battle having been fought there in far-off days; and there is a tradition handed down from father to son, among the people of this neighbourhood, that the water of the Dulas brook was dyed red for three days with the blood of those who are supposed to have vainly endeavoured to stem the current of invasion and who on that lonely and now forgotten battlefield fell in defence of their homes and their country".

It is of interest, I feel, that on the 1871 visit Club members walked from Twyn-y-beddau down to Cusop where "while they rested under the grateful shade of one of its venerable yew trees in the churchyard, an interesting account of the ancient and restored parish church was given by the curate, Rev. A. Pope". He was, of course, the friend of Kilvert. The next outing for that year was to Aberedw, one of the leaders for the day being Rev. Henry Dew of Whitney. Here as at Cusop "grand old yew trees stood at the four corners of the church. The largest measured 25 ft. in girth, a sound and sturdy tree that may live another thousand years when we hope some active member of the Club will again record its measurement". What about an 'interim' measurement later this month when we visit Aberedw for our Autumn service?.

At the visit to Llanigon in 1898 Rev. W.E.T. Morgan added a few notes on the birds and botany of the parish, the former compiled by Charlotte and the latter by Edith Thomas, two of Daisy's sisters. Rev. Morgan features in the Diary as "Morgan of Glasbury". Born in 1847, he died in 1940, one of the very few of Kilvert's contemporaries alive at the time of the publication of the Diary.

P.S. I had intended to make further reference to the Woolhope Club, but I

received yet another excellent article from Mr. R.I. Morgan which deals largely with that body. Members can learn more from his article, which will be published in our next issue.

E.J.C. West.

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KILVERT IN SOMERSET:

Kilvert has left us fairly extensive accounts of his visits to Bath and Bristol during the time he was at Langley Burrell, but he is less generally associated with West Somerset. Indeed, he would probably never have known this area, had not William and Emma Hockin been two of his greatest friends. When he first wrote about them in 1870, they were living in Cornwall. William had recently inherited a house called Tullimaar at Perranarworthal, and had made it his home, but until 1869 they were residents at Langley Burrell, and it was presumably there that the young curate met them.

His first description of the Somerset countryside was occasioned by a journey to Cornwall to stay with the Hockins in 1870. "From Weston Junction we caught a glimpse of Weston and the dim sea, then the tall white Burnham lighthouse among the green trees. Windmills whirling". He went on to describe "the long blue waving ranges of the Mendips and Quantocks left and right of the line at Taunton, the superb tower of St. Mary's with its glorious cluster of pinnacles rising above the masses of green elms against the blue hills beyond - surely the grandest tower in the three western shires". The tower is 163 ft. high, and is surely one of the most distinguished in the neighbourhood; the diarist climbed to the top when he visited Taunton for the fourth time on September 11th. 1873.

He first arrived in Taunton on September 11th. 1872:

The Hockins came to the Taunton Station to meet me and drove me to The Ferns, their house at the Nursery Gardens (off the Staplegrove Road). It is a pretty cottage of red sandstone with a conservatory, high pitched roofs and sharp gables, and covered with a wealth and profusion of climbing plants and creepers, surrounded by its own beautiful lawns and ferneries and the Nursery Gardens which are delicious with high old-fashioned beech and horn beam hedges for shelters. The ferneries are fitted with rare ferns. Many things about the house and place within and without, reminded me strongly of Tullimaar.

Though William Hockin's profession was rather vaguely described as "gentleman" in the register of St. James Church when his second son was born, it is clear that he traded as a market gardener. Morris and Co's Commercial Directory of Somersetshire for 1872 carried an advertisement for "The Old Established North Town Nurseries" and "William Hockin, Nurseryman, Seedsman and Florist". Apart from the usual produce, he specialised in "Greenhouse, Stove, and Hardy Ferns". Kilvert visited the Ferneries and aster beds and Hockin gave him "a quantity of cuttings and a ginger plant".

The purpose of Kilvert's second visit to Taunton was to baptise William Hockin's second son, who was "wonderfully placid during the ceremony", on December 14th. 1872. He was christened Lancelot Cuthbert Baines in St. James Church and Kilvert was persuaded to stay for the christening breakfast. It was presumably at this feast that Kilvert heard how, during a bad storm, a pinnacle had fallen from St. Mary's Church on to a passer-by, who had been saved by his hat.

Kilvert travelled extensively by train and we can read about other Somerset expeditions. Directly before his first visit to Taunton, he went to Weston for a short holiday and attended a lecture on craniology, phrenology and mesmerism. He also visited Wells Cathedral, was shown the Holy Thorn in Glastonbury and went on a voyage on a rather rough Bristol Channel from Weston to Ilfracombe. Two expeditions are, however, more closely related to his friends in Taunton.

In September 1873, he went to stay with the Hockins at The Ferns, and this was the last time he visited Taunton. He had already visited them in August, but there is no account of this in surviving portions of the diary. On September 9th. he went by train with his friends from Taunton to Cheddar and was much impressed by Cox's cave. "The cave is brilliantly lighted with gas and the effects are beautiful and indescribable as the light was heightened or lowered". He was shown round by Mr. Cox "who had discovered the cave in 1838" and the diarist noted the "wilderness of exquisit fretwork and delicate tracery with forests of rich beautiful pendants",

He was less impressed by Gough's cave, which was not lit by gas and where commentary was poor.

Hockin also took his friend to Wiveliscombe to see the collection of paintings at Abbotsfield. This house, built by Mr. W.F. Collard, stands back from the Barnstaple road on the edge of town, and was designed by Owen Jones in 1865. In Kilvert's opinion it was "an ugly, rambling house", but it had become quite celebrated as an artistic centre, for Mr. Collard produced pianos and moved in exalted musical circles. Kilvert was suitably impressed with the art treasures, and noted that they were said to be worth £40,000. He singled out a sunset which was probably by the Bristol painter Francis Danby and a copy of Rubens Descent from the Cross. Unfortunately, no catalogue of the collection appears to exist.

The diary gives no indication of further visits to Taunton after 1873, though the friendship with the Hockins was maintained, and Kilvert met them again when they were travelling to see the Boat Race in 1876. They continued to live in Taunton, though they sold The Ferns and moved to Tauntfield House in Silver Street. When Kilvert became Vicar of Bredwardine, increased pressure of work, the greater distance from Taunton, and failing health were all possible reasons for his not visiting his friends. Yet this remains a matter for regret; if Kilvert had travelled to Somerset in the latter 1870's we should doubtless have been able to read a larger quantity of his clear vignettes of the Somerset landscape as it was a hundred years ago.

(The author wishes to acknowledge the help of Mr. J.C. Hockin, and the account of Mr. H. Dearlove's visit to Taunton which appeared in a former Newsletter).

Rosalind Billingham.

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NOTES FROM MEMBERS' CORRESPONDENCE:

Mr. Colin Davis writes to tell me that B.B.C. Publications are going to do another collection of his Epilogues which will include his "Twelve Good Men and True" and which Radio 4 will repeat early next year. Kilvert is among the Twelve.

Mr. T. Palmer has very kindly presented to the Society the In Memoriam card for his grandfather, buried at Hardwick in 1899, who features in the Diary as Edward Morgan of Cwmpelvel Green and whose way of life displeased Kilvert.

Mrs. P.M. Murry has had published a collection of poems which includes a fine one on Kilvert, inspired by a walk she and her husband made with the late Mr. C.T.O. Prosser. Copies of the collection can be obtained from her at 85p (inclusive of postage) at Hains Cottage, Marnhall, Sturminster Newton, Dorset. DT10 1JU.

Mr. F. Druce has had published "A Good Plain Country Town, Ross-on-Wye 1800-1930". For many years he has collected old photographs of the town and interviewed elderly folk, recording their reminiscences. The results of his researches are now published. As one who has spent more than half his life in the town, I find the book delightful, the photographs evocative of a part we associate with the Diary, and the reminiscences too! The book is priced at £4. 00.

Mr. K.R. Clew writes to say that a second edition of "Kilvert's Bredwardine" has been issued. It is good that Bredwardine P.C.C. are able to raise funds from its sale for the upkeep of this fine old church with its Kilvert association. For those who have not yet a copy, Mr. H. Entwisle of Hill Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford, will send copies at 70p each (including postage). Mr. Clew further informs me that there is a new postbus service from Llandrindod Wells to Rhayader which also serves St. Harmons - which will be of interest to Society members without their own transport. (In this connection there is now a Red and White bus service direct from Hereford to Hay, Clyro and Brecon, again useful for members).

E.J.C. West.

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MR. E.J.D.D. WORSEY:

Members of the Society will be sorry to hear of the sudden death, in June of this year, of our dearly valued Treasurer, Mr. John Worsey. Mr. Worsey, who was a founder member of the Kilvert Society, and had served it with exemplary loyalty for many years, was the son of the late Prebendary Worsey, Vicar of Bodenham from 1905 to 1944. A devout churchman, he was involved in all aspects of church life at Bodenham, serving as reader, Sunday School teacher, bell-ringer, organist and Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council.

On moving to Hereford he became active in the parish of St. James. He served as Honorary Treasurer for the Diocesan Council for Education, and was a member of both the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocesan Board of Patronage. A graduate of London University, he ministered as a Diocesan reader for 47 years, and for 35 years was an active member of the Woolhope Club. At one time he was Treasurer for no less than eight church funds.

John Worsey was one of the most unassuming of men, but beneath that self-deprecating exterior there was considerable independence of mind, and his views, though quietly delivered, were always worth listening to. I shall always be grateful to him for the way in which he rallied the Kilvert Society after the sudden death of our late Secretary, Oswin Prosser. Those emergency meetings in his hospitable home in Harold Street were, I believe, crucial gatherings in the history of the K.S.; and since his death I have re-read with pleasure the address he gave to the Society at Monnington in 1966, and the article he wrote for the Newsletter on Bettws Chapel, Clyro. But we shall, I am sure, remember him most as a dear friend, a courteous and gentlemanly colleague, and an invaluable servant of the Society.

F. Grice.

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(Through the kindness of the Misses Wheeler and Mr. Godfrey Davies, a copy has come into my hands of the sermon preached by Mr. Worsey at Monnington Church in October, 1966, at a special service to give thanks for the restoration of the church and its lych-gate, and to commemorate the close connection of Kilvert with the parish. Part of the sermon is reproduced here, as a tribute to our late Hon. Treasurer. E.J.C.W).

Apart from the quiet serenity of its Sundays, Monnington possessed another attraction for Francis Kilvert. "One great feature of the place" he wrote on April 5th. 1872, "is the famous 'Monnington Walk', a noble avenue of magnificent Scotch firs bordering a broad green ride, stretching from Brobury Scar (a red sandstone precipice beetling over the winds of Wye) to Monnington Court House". A year later he says, "I love to walk up the great avenue, as up a vast and solemn cathedral aisle, while the wind sighs through the sombre Scotch firs overhead and makes mournful music as it breathes upon that natural Acolian harp which is the organ in that Cathedral".

And again in 1876 "I never saw the Monnington Walk so beautiful as it was this afternoon. The long green ride shone brilliant green in the golden afternoon and the narrowing green vista closed by the grey buildings of the Court House was striped and laced by the shadows of the black majestic Scotch firs".

There was little in the world of nature around him which Kilvert failed to observe and describe, and often illuminate with that artistic power of the imagination which was so clearly his.

Have you noticed his affection for the great trees of our countryside - a love revealed so plainly in many pages of the Diary? The blind man in St. Mark's Gospel said, "I see men as trees, walking". It might almost be said of Kilvert that he saw trees as human beings, moving and talking. There was the silver birch at Monnington, so like a graceful maiden. There were the old grey oaks of Moccas, "with such tales to tell, as when they whisper them to each other in the midsummer nights, make the silver birches weep and the poplars and aspens shiver, and the long ears of the hares and rabbits stand on end". Then there were the brilliant green elms - (as seen from the railway carriage windows) appearing to perform "a solemn dance circling round each of the fine church towers of Somerset as we sped down into Dorset" - (on this occasion Kilvert was on his way to visit William Barnes, the poet).

Again, at Langley Burrell in May 1874, "As the evening sunlight shone bright and searchingly across the lawn upon the lime, the shadows of the leaves were cast

strongly upon the tree trunk. The leaves were so brilliant that even their shadows showed a pale faint ghostly green. The shadows looked like the spirits of leaves without the body".

Much has been said in the past at similar services of Francis Kilvert's relations with the men, women and children of his day during his pastoral ministry among them. Today, if for a change, I speak chiefly of inanimate objects, the trees which Kilvert loved. I dare to do so because they are not only notable amongst the works of the Lord in creation, but also because they are surely parables of christian life and character.

First of all, the great trees rear themselves aloft above their earthly surroundings, some, like the poplars, standing straight and slim and pointing ever upwards, others, such as the oaks and beeches, rising it would seem, in order to spread themselves and give shade and shelter beneath their mighty limbs.

And so it is in the field of Christian witness and service. Some with prophetic voice direct our thoughts and aspirations higher to the things that matter most - the things of the spirit - others concentrate more particularly on giving help and protection and sympathy to those who are well-nigh overcome by storm or stress. It is the task of the Christian minister to combine both these functions, and here Francis Kilvert was not found wanting.

Secondly, the great trees are things of beauty in their own right and at every season of the year. Kilvert the artist in many a descriptive passage, took full advantage of this fact. For instance, he writes, "There is a beauty in the trees peculiar to winter, when their fair delicate slender tracery, unveiled by leaves, and showing clearly against the sky, rises bending with a loftly arch or sweeps gracefully drooping. The crossing and interlacing of the limbs, the smaller boughs and tender twigs make an exquisitely fine network which has something of the severe beauty of sculpture, while the tree in summer in its full pride and splendour and colour of foliage represents the loveliness of painting. The deciduous trees which seem to me most graceful and elegant in winter are the birches, limes and beeches".

Or again, at Langley Burrell: "Round the quiet church the trees were gorgeous, the elms dazzling golden, the beeches burning crimson - the golden elms illuminated the church and churchyard with strong yellow light, the beeches flamed and glowed with scarlet and crimson fire like the Burning Bush. The place lay quiet in the still, autumn sunshine".

And likewise, in good times and bad, in joy and sorrow, in days of calm and period of crisis, the christian virtues reveal themselves in all their beauty in human lives and character. How often they are revealed by Kilvert's pen as he records incidents in the lives of those to whom he ministered - people like Hannah Whitney of Clyro, or John Hatherell, the sawyer of Langley Burrell. Patience, gentleness, honesty, courage, endurance, and the rest - they all have their own loveliness to contribute.

Finally, the great trees are firmly established in the ground - their roots are strong and run deep. Hear what Kilvert has to say of the Moccas oaks, "those grey, gnarled, low-browed, knock-kneed, bowed, bent, huge, strange, long-armed, deformed, hunchbacked, misshapen oak men that stand waiting and watching century after century, biding God's time with both feet in the grave, and yet tiring down and seeing out generation after generation". Their natural beauty has long since faded, but they have a strange attraction of their own. "No human hands set those oaks", continues Kilvert, "they are the trees which the Lord hath planted! They look as if they had been at the beginning and making of the world, and they will probably see its end!".

Yes, and they are surely symbols of christian faith at its best, immensely strong and deep and enduring, emerging victorious time and again from the assaults of temptation, misfortune, disaster and despair. Today, in an age of spiritual doubt and confusion, this is indeed the sort of faith we so sorely need. Francis Kilvert was obviously a man of firm, unquestioning faith in the overruling providence of God and in the simple, basic truths of the Christian Gospel.

God's sovereignty, our mortality, the need for us to do good while there is still time, and the glorious hope of the resurrection of the dead, were fundamental ingredients of Kilvert's religious outlook. And, above all, he rejoiced in the wonders of God's creation. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works: in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches". How completely Kilvert endorsed those words of the psalmist in his own writings! And no doubt he would have approved of the words we sang just now from Psalm 96: "All the trees of the

wood shall rejoice before the Lord". They are doing so now through the woodwork which supports and furnishes this beautiful, renovated church, and through the timbers of the restored lych-gate.

And as we, too, take our part in this thanksgiving and commemoration service, let us remember with gratitude the work and witness of Francis Kilvert, the diarist, and of his kinsman, William Smith, at one time Rector of this parish.

"All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee".

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OUR PRESIDENT:

Many members have been following with much interest Mr. Wynford Vaughan-Thomas's Radio talks on his travels through Wales. I am very pleased to report that he will be with us for the service at Aberdw.

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THE MARRIAGE OF MR. E.L. THOMAS AND MISS DE WINTON.

(Mrs. T. Williams has sent the very long account of this wedding in the "Hereford Times" for April 21st. 1877. It is far too long to produce in toto, but I have made the following abridgement. Not only does the account contain references to persons in the diary but it has a distinct flavour, and is to my mind a vivid evocation of a scene Kilvert might well have recorded. E.J.C.W).

Edward Lechmere Thomas married Annina Margaret de Winton at Boughrood Church on April 3rd. 1877. Rev. C.S. Palmer of Eardisley officiated, assisted by the groom's father, Rev. W. Jones Thomas, of Llanthomas, and the bride's brother. There were 12 bridesmaids, including the 4 sisters of the bride, Charlotte, Edith and Daisy Thomas (sisters of the groom) and Miss Palmer. The best man was the groom's eldest brother, Col. Thomas.

Among the donors of presents appear such names as Venables, Crichton, Dew, Haigh Allen, Baskerville, Clutterbuck, Lord and Lady Hereford and Collinson.

The most interesting part of the account is of the return from the honeymoon.

"Nothing could have been more gratifying than the reception the pair met with upon their return from their tour. At Hay, the Foresters with band and flags met them on their arrival at the station, and an address was presented to the bridegroom by the Chief Ranger wishing him and his wife every happiness and success. The bride and groom's wagonet awaited them and preceded by the band passed up the principal streets of Hay, where smiles and welcome were the order of the day amongst the inhabitants of that stirring and spirited little town. Court Perseverance, of course, turned out with full 'regalia and insignia' and they were headed by the redoubtable Robin Hood and his trusty companion, Little John, mounted on a couple of 'fiery and untamed' steeds. The distance to Llanthomas from Hay railway station is some two miles, and in the same manner as it started the procession passed the whole of the way, but after having marched beyond the last house on the route the band ceased to play, and did not strike up again until they approached the entrance to Llanthomas. Arriving at the Swan Inn, a hostelry situate at the turn of the road leading round to the entrance to the grounds in front of Llanthomas, the band having struck up a lively air, the Foresters and others took the horses out of the carriage and drew it themselves, amid much cheering, through the entrance gates and along the drive to the front of the house. On alighting, the bride and groom were heartily and affectionately received by his father and brothers and other relatives and friends".

(The bridegroom thanked the Foresters and all present for the kind reception they had given his wife and himself).

"The Rev. W. Jones Thomas, addressing the Foresters and others, said he must not allow them to go away without his saying a few words to them, his parishioners and the people of Hay, for the hearty welcome which they had given his son and his wife on their return home. He hoped they would all drink the health of the bride and bridegroom in a glass of good English ale (Loud cheers). A plentiful supply of 'cakes and ale' was then handed to all present, and the invitation of the rector was heartily responded to.

"The band played with appreciable taste and skill some choice selections of music, and their brother Foresters and other persons who had been attracted to the

spot sauntered about the beautiful grounds of Llanthomas, or stretched themselves on the lawn, viewing, probably, the bold eminence of the Wenallt, the advance guard of the Black Mountain range, and dreaming that the sweet strains that soothed their peaceful breasts were led by Pan, Apollo or Dan Godfrey.

"The afternoon was fairly warm and fine, and the beautiful valley in which Llanthomas lies, and which was now assuming its fresh and green spring robes, was just such a place as one might wish to spend an afternoon in. There were attractions all round to satisfy the most fastidious lover of nature; but on the occasion referred to it would have been the last resort for a recluse, because all the echoes of the hills were delightfully busy with the sounds of music, mirth and laughter that ever and anon floated upwards through the balmy atmosphere, and which did not cease until night had descended on the scene. It must be remarked also that in addition to the attractions of Nature there were some of Art in the matter of the arrangement of greenery and flowers. At the turning of the road where the Swan Inn is situate there was a pretty arch of entwined branches and green leaves, primroses and other flowers, and on a white grounding extending across the key of the arch were the words 'Long live the Bride and Bridegroom'; and a little further on at the main entrance was another pretty arch bearing the encouraging words 'Welcome to Llanthomas'.

"Luncheon over, the party emerged from Llanthomas, the Foresters and the band again put themselves in motion and all walked in procession to a spacious meadow, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Jones of Penywrold, where a series of athletic and other sports were gone through. Later in the day several other races were run, and the sports varied by throwing oranges into a large tub for the boys to dive after, and the effects of the urchins to take the longed-for fruit out of the water with their teeth caused much mirth among those who looked on. There was also dancing and the inevitable game of "Kiss-in-the-Ring", and one of the most interesting events of the afternoon was the graceful distribution by the bride of little parcels of tea, sugar and snuff amongst the older people of the parish".

This event took place while Kilvert was at St. Harmons, for which period William Plomer recorded the complete lack of notebooks. Lechmere was on leave in 1872, and there are several references to him. Kilvert evidently liked him for "he rode the pony" to Llanthomas to say goodbye to Lechmere and young Walter Thomas. Eighteen months after the wedding Lechmere's death from cholera is recorded (September 3rd. 1878). The only child of the marriage, Walter Lechmere, died at the age of 14, and is buried at Llanigon. Nina, later married Dumaresq Thomas and died in 1932, aged 75, and they are also buried at Llanigon.

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EXTRACTED FROM "THE HEREFORD TIMES" - Saturday, July 13th. 1878 page 7.

(Sent by Mrs. Teresa Williams)

"LLANGORSE - Inquest -

An Inquest was held in this village on Tuesday last, (July 9th) before D.W.L. Thomas, Esq., Coroner, on the body of a little girl aged eight years named Ann Hargest, daughter of Thomas Hargest of Llangorse.

It appears from the evidence of a little girl who was with the deceased a few minutes before her death that the deceased and herself with another child went into a boat which was on the side of the lake adjoining the platform. The boat being loose from its mooring and unlocked, the youngest child got a little frightened and cried out. Witness and the little girl went out of the boat leaving the deceased alone and its being unlocked it went out of reach, (of the platform). The deceased by some means had nearly reached an island a little distance from the shore when witness lost sight of her and could see the bouquet of flowers that the deceased held in her hand floating on the water near the body. Witness gave information to the parents of the dead girl who immediately repaired to the spot accompanied by their neighbours. They made a diligent search to a late hour that night but to no avail. They recovered the body the following morning near the spot where she was last seen.

It is probable that the deceased lost the flowers out of her hand and endeavoured to reach them. By so doing she over-balanced herself and fell into the water.

The verdict was "Found Drowned". "

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Kilvert's poem entitled "The Sleep of Annie Hargest", Drowned in Llangorse Lake July 8th. 1878 appeared in "The Hereford Times" dated November 2nd. 1878. There is no published Diary entry referring to the child's death and Kilvert makes no mention of the tragedy when on July 18th. 1878 he visited Llangorse Lake with his father for a fishing expedition. (Vol.3. p.404).

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OBITUARY:

We record with regret the death of Mr. J.M. Bentley-Taylor of Ivington, Herefordshire, who joined the Society in 1973. To his widow and his brother, Mr. D. Bentley-Taylor, both of whom are members of the Society, we offer our sympathy.

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STOP PRESS:

Mrs. E.G. Peters will resign on September 30th. 1980, from both the Committee and the post of Assistant Honorary Treasurer on grounds of ill-health. We record her resignation with very deep regret. A founder member of the Society, she became a Committee member in 1953, next to our late Honorary Treasurer, the longest serving member. For some 13 years she had been the Assistant Honorary Treasurer. At every function of the Society, while others were enjoying conversation or a break for refreshments, Mrs. Peters was carrying out most assiduously the task of collecting subscriptions and writing out receipts, and this task was of course continued at home throughout the year. In her management of this aspect of Society affairs she won the admiration and esteem of her colleagues, none more than that of Mr. Worsey who constantly expressed his indebtedness to her. The Society is grieved that ill-health has forced this decision on Mrs. Peters, but records its gratitude to her for all that she has done so loyally and efficiently.

Mr. Hugh Dearlove has kindly offered to take Mrs. Peters's post, and we are very grateful to him. Will members please note that as from October 1st. all subscriptions should be sent to him at the following address:-

Oak House,
St. Briavels,
Nr. Lydney,
Glos.

