

Woburn is called Woburn Abbey; for in the far-off middle ages there stood here a priory, but to what order the monks belonged the local historian makes no mention. The good brethren would seem to have lived the "hidden life" to perfection—

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

At all events, very little is known of the history of the house. The Priory did not come to an

The next that we hear of Bentley Manor and Priory Farm is in 1706, when it appears to have belonged to the family of Coghill, who, early in the previous century, had settled in the neighbouring parish of Aldenham. In 1734 it was bequeathed by Thomas Coghill to his nephew, Thomas Whittewronge, who left it in 1761 to a certain Mr. John Bennet. In the following year it passed by sale to Mr. William Waller, who about 1766 alienated it to a Mr. Duberly.



BENTLEY PRIORY. (From a View taken in 1849.)

end until the reign of Henry VIII, when it was seized among the lesser monasteries, and suppressed, its revenues being assigned, not to the king, but to the monks of Canterbury. In A.D. 1543 we are told that Cranmer gave to the king, in exchange for other lands, the late Priory of Bentley, with all lands, tenements, &c., thereunto belonging in Harrow and Stanmore, "being parcel of the possessions of St. Gregory's Priory, at Canterbury."

No sooner, however, did the royal tyrant get possession of Bentley than he granted it—doubtless not without good consideration—to Henry Needham and William Sacheverel, who sold the property in the same year to Elizabeth Colte.

It is stated in the additions made to Camden's "Britannia," by Gough, that the house of Bentley Priory was taken down and rebuilt by Mr. Duberly, and it is observed in the same work that a chapel, then appertaining to the structure, but long since demolished, "stood detached on the common."

From Mr. Duberly, Bentley Priory was bought in 1788 by the first Marquis of Abercorn, who made great additions to the original house, converting it into a noble mansion, "in which," says Lysons, in his "Environs of London," "convenience is united with magnificence in a manner rarely to be met with."

Under Lord Abercorn, whose reign here extended over thirty years, Bentley Priory was one of the