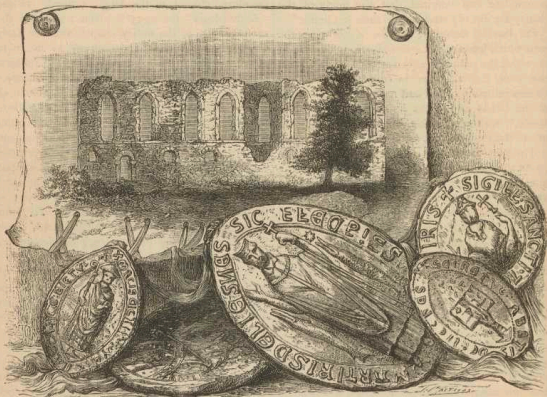


The hills at the back of the Priory garden, which stood due south in a line with the refectory and cloisters, were covered with a dense forest, called Westwood, which perfectly sheltered the religious inmates from the biting blasts of the winds, and greatly added to the beauty of the scene; for the monks, those holy men, with all their reputation for sanctity and self-denying habits, were yet too good judges of the advantages to be derived from the contiguity of wood and water and 'the burn

against the northern side of the church, between the nave and the chancel, of which it formed a component part."

The history of the fall of this religious house is the history of the destruction of a hundred such. Lord Herbert, a contemporary, writes that Wolsey "sodainly entered by his Commissioners into the said Houses (the priory of the Canon regulars of Lyesnes, of the order of St. Austin, being one), and put out the Religious, and tooke all their goodes,



LESNES ABBEY AND SEALS.

and the brae' to be indifferent to the locality of their domicile. Although professedly abstaining from luxuries, and satisfied with simples, yet they knew full well, and duly appreciated, the delicate flavours and different qualities of fish and fowl, wine and venison. The barns in which the rosy prior stowed his sheaves and the goodly fruits of the earth rest on their original foundations; and the stews, or fish-ponds, still remain on the east side of the priory.

"The whole area of the church, cloisters, and lodgings of the monks, is still a market garden. From certain indications in the boundary wall, it would appear that the church was originally about 40 feet wide and 97 feet in length, and that the tower, a structure only about 17 feet square, abutted

moveables, and scarcely gave the poore wretches anything, except it wer to the Heddes of the House, and then he caused thercheter to sit, and finde the Houses voyde, as relinquished, and found the King Founder, where other men wer Founders; and with these landes he endowed with all his colleges, whiche began soe sumpteous, and the scholers wer so proude, that everie persone judged that thende would not be goode."

Lesnes Abbey was a thriving place, with a decent revenue, and with few to share it. It was one of the first lopped off at the Reformation, and its revenues of nearly £200 per annum went to endow Wolsey's new College of Christ's Church, at Oxford, when the star of the cardinal was lord of the ascendant; but when Wolsey fell headlong