

flat that they look as if a carriage and horses might be driven over them without danger of falling through.

The variegated flowers of the nineteenth century, however, contrast pleasantly with the straight turf avenue, with its wall of closely-cut yew-trees. The sloping uplands of the park, crowned by the old house, with its red-tiled roofs and tall chimneys, form quite a picture at the end of the summer, when the beeches and limes are beginning to put on their autumn dress.

In earlier days the Court House, with its dependent farms and the church, formed the demesne; but owing, in progress of time, to increasing traffic between Croydon and Bromley, and the growth of population, a wayside inn sprang up, and became a centre to the present village; hence the distance of its smaller houses from the church, which, nevertheless, is central for the parish, as several large farms and a hamlet lie beyond the Court, to the south. The chancel and Lady Chapel of Wickham Church are coeval with the old Court House, and were built about the year 1467. The north transept and tower were re-built in 1844 by the Rev. Sir Charles Faraby, then rector of the parish, at which time church architecture was still at a rather low ebb.

The edifice, which is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, occupies an elevated site near the mansion above described. The churchyard is surrounded by stately elms, beneath whose shade

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

At the entrance is an old and picturesque lych-gate, with red-tiled roof. By the old lych-gate is a pond skirted with trees, their reflected shadows on the still, placid waters seeming to point to those lying peacefully beneath the sod. There is a very interesting collection of old tombstones in the churchyard, dating from the year 1600. The church comprises a chancel, nave, and north aisle, with a low square tower at the north-western angle. The building is principally in the Perpendicular style, but in parts traces of older work are visible. It was altered in ground plan in 1844, by the addition of a north aisle to the nave and chancel, which makes the whole structure square and unsightly. The "restoration" took place before the principles of Gothic art were understood. The reredos is of old oak, worked out with the "linen pattern." The screen, which is much admired, is also of oak. The old painted windows of the Lady Chapel are very fine. This chapel belongs to the possessors of Wickham Court, and is still used by the family. The vault beneath it is now closed,

the last interment in it being that of General Sir William Cator, whose wife was sister to the late baronet. The monuments to the Lennard family are in good preservation. Among the figures represented in the painted windows are several saints, and a skeleton, intended for the founder, in a kneeling posture, with a label inscribed thus "*Ne reminiscaris Domine delicta mea*," issuing from its mouth. The windows on the north side of the chancel are considered choice specimens of ancient art, especially that of St. Catherine, who is represented with her foot resting on the head of the Emperor. It is said that a similar window exists in the North of England. The representations of St. Christopher and St. Ann are worthy of notice, and so also is the old altar-tomb. The windows were all repaired by Willemet. The east window is modern, the work of the same artist. That on the west side was erected by the West family. Here was interred, in April, 1756, Gilbert West, the learned author of "Thoughts on the Resurrection," "Translations of Pindar," the "Institution of the Garter," &c., and the friend of Gray the poet.

At the east end of the church is a marble tomb to John Lennard, Esq., dated 1618. Another member of the same family has a tablet recording his decease in 1608; while near the same spot is an alabaster slab on the wall, architectural in form, having in its centre a niche, wherein is seated a lady, with one hand resting on a Bible and the other pointing to a child in swaddling clothes lying at her feet. There are two brasses of the fifteenth century on the floor of the chancel, and among the remaining monuments is one commemorating a Countess of Devon, who died in the year 1839. In the churchyard is buried the Rev. J. T. Austen, late rector, who was in his day Senior Wrangler at Cambridge.

The register of West Wickham Church dates from the year 1558. Besides the celebrities already mentioned, it records the burial of Temple West, Esq., on the 15th August, 1757. He, as we learn from Lysons, was brother of Gilbert West. He distinguished himself as a naval officer, particularly on the 20th of May, 1756. He was made a flag-officer in 1755, and was one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

Mr. West resided in this village for a great many years, and was here, says his biographer, Dr. Johnson, "often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, Lord Chatham, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used to find at Wickham books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation."