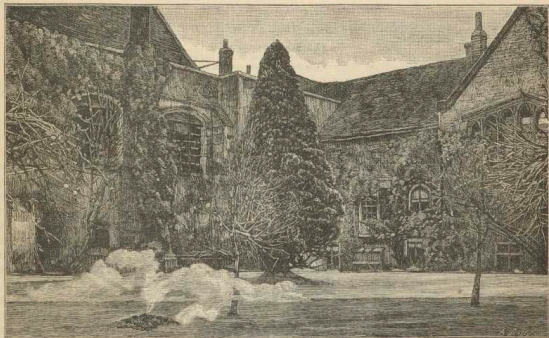


of wind blew down one of the pinnacles of the steeple, which fell upon the roof, and did great damage; and in 1744 the church was considerably damaged by lightning.

On the 11th of March, 1734-5, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, as the parish register informs us, "a fire was discovered in the roof of the middle chancel, which was supposed to have been caused by some embers carelessly left there by the plumbers. It was soon extinguished, and the damage done did not exceed £50." Finally, in the evening of the 5th of January, 1867, as stated

time, according to Walker, scarce eighteen, 'of a very ill life, and very troublesome to his neighbours.'\*\* He died in 1702, and was buried at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, in the register of which church he is styled "Parson of Croydon." The following is the story above referred to:—"O'Bryan, meeting with Dr. Cleiver, the parson of Croydon (*try'd once and burnt in the hand at the Old Bailey for stealing a silver cup*), coming along the road from Acton, he demanded his money; but the reverend doctor having not a farthing about him, O'Bryan was for taking his gown. At this our



A CORNER OF CROYDON PALACE.

above, this fine old church was destroyed by fire, nothing but the bare walls being left standing.

A singular story is told in Captain Smith's "Lives of Highwaymen," respecting Dr. William Cleiver, or Clewer, who held the vicarage of Croydon in the seventeenth century. He appears to have been collated by Archbishop Juxon in 1660, at the recommendation of Charles II., who had been imposed upon with regard to his character. "Dr. Cleiver," remarks Steinman, "was notorious for his singular love of litigation, unparalleled extortions, and criminal and disgraceful conduct, which eventually caused his ejection from this benefice in 1684. He was a great persecutor of the Royalists during the Commonwealth; and enjoyed the sequestered living of Ashton, Northamptonshire, to which he was appointed in 1645, being at that

divine was much dissatisfied; but, perceiving the enemy would plunder him, quoth he, 'Pray, sir, let me have a chance for my gown;' so, pulling a pack of cards out of his pocket, he farther said, 'We'll have, if you please, one game of all fours for it, and if you win it take it and wear it.' This challenge was readily accepted by the foot-pad, but being more cunning than his antagonist at shuffling and palming the cards, he won the game, and the doctor went contentedly home without his canonicals."

The parsonage formerly stood at the south-west corner of the churchyard, opposite to a spot now marked by a drinking fountain; beside it bubbled a small brook, here broadened into a pond, where boys caught gudgeon, and occasionally even trout.

\* Walker's "List of the Ejected Clergy," Part II., p. 402.