

In 1857 Mr. Carew, the then owner of Beddington Park, "having contracted debts to the extent apparently of £350,000," and executed disentailing deeds and mortgages and a settlement that was disputed, an Act of Parliament was obtained vesting the property in trustees, who, under its powers, sold the greater part of the estates and discharged the debts. Beddington House, with upwards of twenty acres of ground, was purchased by the Corporation of the Asylum for Female Orphans,* for the sum of £14,500. The mansion was, as stated above, mainly pulled down in 1865, and rebuilt, the great hall being happily preserved, and incorporated in the new building. The edifice, as it now stands, is a somewhat heavy-looking example of domestic Gothic architecture. It will accommodate about 200 children, and was formally opened by the Duke of Cambridge in June, 1866.

The asylum owes its origin to that vigilant and active officer, Sir John Fielding, who, as a sitting magistrate in London and Westminster, had noticed the almost entire absence of all provision for the education of orphan girls. It was established in Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth, in 1758, whence it was removed, in July, 1866, to Beddington, after having existed and flourished for upwards of a century. The asylum was honoured in its early days by the patronage of Queen Charlotte, and it is now under the patronage of Queen Victoria, and the late and present Dukes of Cambridge have been its presidents. The children admitted must be between seven and ten years old, and have lost either both parents or at least their fathers. The charity is administered by a committee, and the children, as they grow up, are apprenticed as domestic servants. They are periodically examined, and their bright, intelligent faces, and the exquisite cleanness of every part of the asylum, speak more for the practical excellence of the instruction than any certificates of school inspectors. The election of orphans is mainly by voting; but a subscription of a hundred guineas in one sum entitles the donor to present one child for immediate admission, if found to be duly qualified. The education is conducted according to the teaching of the Established Church. Nearly 3,300 children have been rescued from poverty and vice, and reared under the auspices of this excellent institution.

The parish church of Beddington is large and handsome, and if it has lost some of its antiquity under the hands of the modern restorer, at all events it looks, both externally and internally, very

much as it must have done at the time when the first Tudor sovereign sat on the throne. It is wholly of the Perpendicular period, and therefore probably superseded an older and smaller structure. It consists of nave, chancel, and side aisles, all spacious and lofty, and an embattled tower at the western end.

According to Lysons, the church dates back to the fourteenth century, though it looks later; it is thus described by him in his "Environ of London":—"The present structure was probably erected in the reign of Richard II., being built in the style of architecture used at that time; and the clause in Sir Nicholas de Carru's will that that date, who leaves £20—then a very considerable sum—towards the building of the church, serves as an additional confirmation of this conjecture. At the west end of the north and south aisles are some ancient wooden stalls; the font, which is of an early date, is large and square, and supported by four pillars. The pulpit was probably given by Sir Francis Carew, being of mantled carving, of the same form with that of the old room in the manor-house. The pillars which separate the nave from the aisles are plain, and of rude workmanship. The altar-piece, the rails, and the pavement of the chancel were the benefaction of Sir John Leake, in the year 1710.

"In the chancel are several figures of the Carew family on flat stones; the inscriptions of most of them are gone. The tomb of Nicholas Carew and Isabella, his wife, is quite perfect. . . . At the south-east corner of the church is a small aisle, erected either by Sir Richard Carew or his son, Sir Nicholas, for the sepulture of the Carew family. Sir Richard was the first who was interred there (anno 1520), and the architecture is of that period. Sir Richard Carew's monument is in the south wall, near the door; under a flat Gothic arch is an altar-tomb, on the top of which are small brass plates, representing Sir Richard Carew and his lady; he is in armour, with a surcoat, on which are the arms of Carew; the inscription round the edge of the tomb is mutilated, but there is enough left to inform us that he died in 1520."

From Brayley's "History of Surrey" we extract the following:—"This church contains a pulpit of Elizabethan workmanship, a fine old oak chancel-screen, some curious old wooden stalls having turn-up seats, or miserere, ornamented with foliage, shields, a female head in a reticulated head-dress, and other carvings. The entrance doorway to the tower is formed by a high pointed arch, over which is a very large and handsome window, com-

* See "Old and New London," Vol. VI., p. 350.