

## Notes on Art.

## MEDIÆVAL ART IN KENT.

To those genuinely interested in the well-being of the people from a health point of view, nothing is more fascinating than the study of the relics of ancient hygienic institutions. There are many more of these relics than might at first be expected or believed. Kent and Sussex, as being the most thickly settled in early times, are richest in such remains, and one of the most interesting I have seen is the Leper Hospital at Harbledown.

Lanfranc, the Archbishop, was its founder, and though its *raison d'être* has happily ceased to exist the foundation still remains, an active and beneficent charity for deserving old people. Passing along a deep-cut hollow way (vividly described by Erasmus, in whose day leprosy was still rife in England), you come upon an ancient timbered gate house, and passing under the archway, enter an enclosure which at once recalls Frederick Walker's immortal "Haven of Refuge."

The lowly, massive, Norman chapel stands on the sharp slope of a hill in almost the same condition as in Lanfranc's day, without addition or alteration, so far as the structure is concerned. It is in the simpler ruder form of Norman work, known to experts as "ashlar," that is, all the carving has been done with an axe not a chisel.

It consists of a nave, chancel, and one aisle. High in the wall between the nave and aisle is a long narrow slit in the masonry, just large enough for a person to squeeze through, and by this entrance the unhappy lepers gained access to the aisle, passing across the nave by a sort of covered-in gallery, which has disappeared.

They had an altar of their own in the aisle, which was entirely divided from the main body of the chapel, where, presumably, the ordinary inhabitants of the neighbourhood worshipped.

Service is now held only once a week, on a Friday afternoon, in the little chapel, which is sadly in need of restoration internally. Weeds are growing on window sills and walls, and the damp trickles down in a fashion very distressing to the lover of antiquities.

The small dining-hall is now not used, the dwellers in the pretty little houses of grey stone, preferring to cook for themselves, and the huge kitchen beneath it, with its vast mediæval hearth, is used as a wash-house by the community. The genial old *sub-prior* pointed out to us one "brother" who had received the Royal Humane Society's Medal I forget how many times, for saving life. One felt that he well deserved this evening of rest in this little peaceful place.

The grounds contain a well, said to be of medicinal qualities. It is called the Black Prince's Well, and he is said to have tried its waters in his failing health. His *fleur-de-lys* is cut deep into the stone above. There is a most interesting collection of relics of the old times—chiefly the crystal from A' Becket's shoe, which was the most treasured possession of the lepers, and which wayfarers were allowed—for a consideration—to kiss!

There are also several "mazers"—bowls of hazel wood bound with silver rims—which we were told were almost unique, and a metal-bound money-box, in which the unfortunate creatures collected alms.

## A Book of the Week.

## "THE GRASSHOPPERS."\*

"THE Grasshoppers" is full of good qualities. The story is attractive, and the dialogue natural and amusing. Mrs. Sidgwick, or (as she prefers to use her pseudonym) Mrs. Andrew Dean evidently knows German domestic life very well, for her study of Hamburg persons is very graphic. Herr Hansen, one of the chief characters in the novel, is a typical commercial German—kind-hearted and business-like in his courting, but he was not a captivating lover for Hilary, who had studied for a short time at one of the Cambridge Universities, and suffered from aspirations; but when this clumsy German sat down to the piano she forgot that "he had talked about food all through dinner," for his playing was music and not mere organised noise. Herr Hansen is the most interesting individual in the book; his character is well conceived, and admirably and subtly described.

The moral of the story is preached upon the text selected from Le Fontaine's fables of how

" La cigale ayant chanté  
Tout l'été,  
Se trouva fort depourvue  
Quand la bise fut venue."

The grasshoppers, as represented by the Frere family, eat, drink, spend, sing, and are merry through all their days of prosperity, and when the frost of business failure and bankruptcy slays the head of the family they found themselves in great destitution and misery, and obliged to live with a most disagreeable, hard-hearted relation in the commercial town of Hamburg. They didn't like it at all, and there are many amusing pages in which are described the rich Hamburg merchants' wives' and daughters' opinions about the English girl's want of practical information. Hilary who, according to English light, has been well educated, seeks in vain to earn a little money by teaching. Frau Meiner informs her that German girls have no use for Greek and Latin, and that in Germany they expect "people to understand the work they undertake; no one employed daily governesses, and for all private lessons they preferred old-established teachers." So poor Hilary, in spite of her fine education, could obtain no work at all. Her mother was ill, and her sisters were pining for their accustomed comforts. At last, in despair poor Hilary exclaims,—

"The truth is, we ought not to be alive at all. Ladies without money are the most helpless, the most pitiable creatures in the world. If I could be a cook or a housemaid I could earn a comfortable living, and have the market in my own hands. Every girl who is not to inherit a fortune should either be strangled at birth, or taught a trade."

Mrs. Dean never wearies her readers by didactically insisting upon her moral. The story—and it is a powerful story—preaches its own lesson, and one that will, that must, come home to the hearts and consciences of all mothers of daughters. Nell's and Hilary's mother had equipped her daughters admirably for the only career in which she considered women can find real happiness. "She had given them beauty,

\* "The Grasshoppers," by Mrs. Andrew Dean. 6s. (Adam and Charles Black, 1895.)

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