wife built many parish churches in Yorkshire. Some I have seen, and taken drawings of them; particularly, that at Godmundham, where is the original font, in which he baptized the heathen high-priest Coifi. He built Northallerton church, now remaining. His effigies is placed on the outside of it.

I COULD recite many great and entire churches in the West Saxon kingdom, as at the Devizes, Romsey, Stukeley in Bucks; Whitby; Northumberland; Wimborn minster, Dorsetshire; many more, but we need go no further than Rochester, and Waltham abby, indubitably older than the Conquest. St. Alban's church built by King Offa.

WM. STUKELY.

XI. *Account of Lefnes Abby, by Dr. Stukeley.*

Read at the SOCIETY of ANTIQUARIES, April 12, 1753.

To the Right Honourable the Lord Hardwicke, Lord High Chancellor, &c. at Wimple.

YESTERDAY, I made a most agreeable journey, tho' it may be called a pilgrimage, to visit the venerable remains of Lefnes abby, at Earith in Kent, founded by Richard de Lucie, lord chancellor, and chief justice to Henry II. He was a near relation to your Lordship's neighbour, Lady ROISIA of Roiston. It was impossible that I should not think of giving your Lordship the subsequent account of my observations there, for an amusement, during your retirement from business and cares of state.

RICHARD DE LUCIE was chancellor, lord chief justice, and counsellor of state, to that great Monarch Henry II, the greatest, in my opinion, of those that have been since the Norman Conquest. In cap. VIII. of the second part of Lady ROISIA, I have given
a sketch

a sketch of his just character. In 1167, Richard de Lucie entered upon his high offices to that Monarch, on the decease of Robert Beaumont, surnamed *Bossu*, earl of Leicester.

IN 1173, he was constituted lord protector of England, whilst the king was in Normandy, opposing the unjust violences of the King of France, and of his own son, young K. Henry, and others combined against him in a great and formidable league. Richard built the strong castle of Chippin Ongar in Essex, to hold for the king in those troublesome times. The King was fully satisfied of his great wisdom and fidelity. And Richard soon had an opportunity of adding the character of an hero to those of his other accomplishments.

THE young king had unnaturally joined the king of France, against his own father; and engaged the Earl of Boloign among others into the confederacy. He bribed him with the donation of the famous and rich soke of Kirkton, in my native country of Holland in Lincolnshire: It is more properly called Drayton-soke. It was the original estate and seat of the first Saxon Kings, and Earls of Mercia, and the origin of the potent kingdom of Mercia; and hence the name Mercians, Marshmen.

THE Earl of Boloign was to invade England, and join Robert, surnamed *Blanchmains*, Earl of Leicester, son of the preceding: And he brought 10,000 men over with him, to favour this rebellion.

RICHARD DE LUCIE took the field, and fought them all in a pitched battle at Farnham in Suffolk; totally routed and destroyed them. He sent the Earl of Leicester, and the other prisoners of note, to the King beyond sea. After this, he went, and subdued the rebellious party at Leicester, and subverted the walls of that city, which were of Roman structure.

IN 1174, he laid siege to the castle of Huntingdon, held against the King, by the Scottish King's brother David. In a word, he saved the realm from ruin, 'till King Henry returned.

IN 1176, he projected the great affair of the assize of the realm; the appointment of the assizes, for the administration of justice; which

which is continued to this day. I have given an account of it in the second part of Lady ROISIA, pag. 92.

IN 1177, he was one of the witnesses to the award, or determination, made by our Monarch, between the King of Castile, and the King of Navarre; together with William de Magnaville, Earl of Essex, son to Lady ROISIA.

THE next year, he resigned all his great dignities and places into the King's hands. Sated with honour and human grandeur, he resolved to betake himself to the serene and mental pleasures of a religious life. Accordingly he retired to his seat and manor of Lesnes, in the parish of Earith in Kent. And on 11 June, St. Barnabas's day, he gave it with due solemnity for that purpose; and began the foundation of the church, and took upon himself the order and habit of religion, according to the Benedictin institution of Canons-regular.

THE situation of this place is extremely agreeable; a fine, dry, gravelly country, elevated, having a prospect over the Thames, into Essex. Much oak woods, with pasture, arable and commons intermixt, or open heaths. Underneath a vast extent of flat, dry marsh, very rich land, upon the Thames.

LESNES stands on a pretty prominence, half way down the hill, toward the marsh. Above is a very large and beautiful oak wood. The major part of the original house, or seat of the founder, is now left, being the present farm house. The religious buildings are towards the south; but very little remaining. There were two grand gate-ways into the first court; one to the west, another to the east; both not long since destroyed.

THE building of the mansion house is, according to the style of that time, very good: Stone below, timber stud-work above. A noble large hall with a curious roof of Chestnut. Near the upper end, a very old-fashioned stair-case of much timber, but grand. This leads up to the chambers and lodging rooms of the founder, and his successors, the priors. Beyond the hall is the parlour. On the right hand of it, the kitchen and offices.

SOUTH

SOUTH of the dwelling is the church, built of stone: Only the north wall remaining, and that ruinous; but enough to give one a just notion of the whole, in its original state. There were cloisters on the south side the church: The outward wall thereof only now remaining. There seems to have been a vault under the west end of the church: South of the cloisters was the refectory, or hall of the canons: The lodgings, kitchen, offices, and, I suppose, the sub-prior's apartment; only the outward inclosing walls remaining.

THE whole area of the church, cloisters and lodgings, &c. is now a kitchen garden. They told us they had dug up, from time to time, the foundations of the buildings, with many coffins of stones, corps and monuments. A tomb-stone still remains on the east side, by the wall. These were of the canons, who were always buried along the cloisters. Doubtless, many fine brasses, and monuments of great persons buried in the church, are now no more.

MOST of the north side of the church is standing. In this his abby the great and good founder died, the year after he entered into religion; viz. on July 14, 1179: He was interred on the right side of the altar, in the choir. The industrious Weaver gives us the inscription on his monument page 336; and in page 777 tells us how in 1630 it was discovered, after having been long covered with rubbish and the ruins of the sacred structure, from the time of the dissolution. It was opened, and his venerable remains seen by many, by himself among the rest.

THE owner of the manor covering it up again, planted a bay tree upon it, now growing upon the spot; the finest by far which I ever saw: And on viewing it with pleasure, I could not but remember those verses in Psalm XCII. 12, 13.

“The righteous shall flourish as a palm tree: He shall grow
“like a cedar in Lebanon.

“Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish
“in the courts of our God.”

WEAVER says, many other monumental effigies, tombs, and inscriptions were found. For undoubtedly many great personages were.

were here interred, during the several centuries of the continuance of this abbey; particularly the founder's descendants, relations, friends, and many great families of the neighbourhood.

GODEREY DE LUCIE, his only son, smit by his father's example, went into orders, and was bishop of Winchester: He was buried here in 1204. He was a great benefactor of the house. His epitaph is in Weaver, page 337.

RICHARD DE LUCIE's eldest daughter Maud was married to Robert Fitzwalter, whose daughter Christiana was wife to Lady ROISIA's son, William de Magnaville, Earl of Essex above mentioned. This son was equally a favourite with his mother, and with K. Henry II. His effigies she has rudely cut among the rest of her family, in her monumental Chapel at Roiston, in the chalk rock under ground. 'Tis that marked (5) in my Third Plate.

RICHARD DE LUCIE's third daughter was Roisia, named, no doubt, from our Lady ROISIA, most probably her godmother, She becoming a ward of K. John's, was married to Richard de Warren, the King's son. She had a cousin Roisia, married to Fulbert de Dover, lord of Chilham castle in Kent. All which, or many of these families probably were buried in this church.

THIS is one of those abbies, that happened to become a prelude to the fatal dissolution, so terrible a stroke to our history and antiquities. It was granted, with others, to cardinal Wolsey.

ALL the reflexion we need to add, to what has been said on our excellent founder, is this. Religion fails not, first or last, to make an impression on truly great minds. It was then the fashion and method of shewing it, to build these religious places, and largely endow them. And this was dedicated to Becket, as was the fashion of that time; and a kind of compliment to the King.

YOUR Lordship has shewn true judgment in re-building your parochial church at Wimple; a thing more beneficial to the commonwealth and mankind.

WM. STUKELEY.