

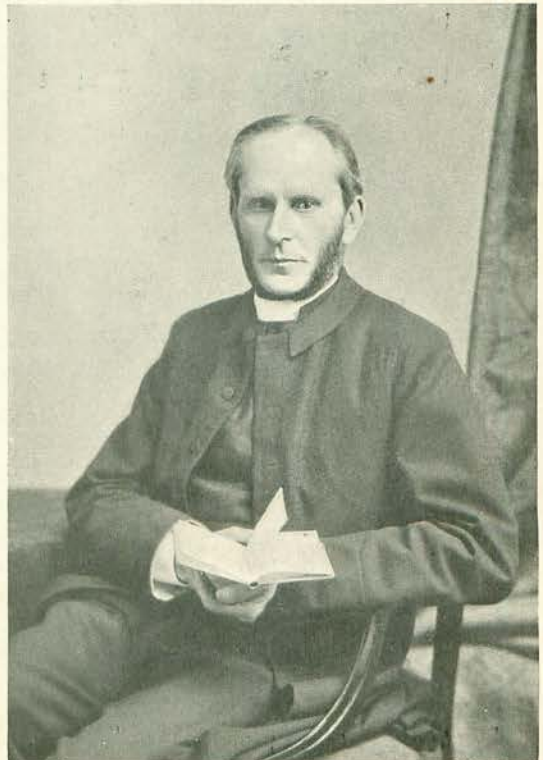
# THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

BY SARAH A. TOOLEY.

THE Bishop of Bristol is just the man to accomplish the somewhat delicate task which he has before him, of reorganising the ancient and important See of Bristol, and establishing it upon a separate basis from Gloucester, with which it has throughout the present reign been united. The Bishop strikes one as a strong and vigorous man, who brings a ripe judgment and a wide experience of life to the task. He is liberally endowed with the social characteristics which make a popular bishop, being exceedingly kind, full of tact, moderate in his views, and having withal a Yorkshireman's shrewdness and capacity for business. Few, I should think, would surpass the Bishop as an organiser. He is distinctly a man of affairs, simple in his tastes, and with a strong æsthetic sense. The Bishop seems to be equally at home whether reading a paper on Runic monuments before a society of antiquaries, giving an address to working men, having a chat at a boys' club, discoursing on old china or Chippendale in a lady's drawing-room, or preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Dr. George Forrest Browne was born in the city of York in December, 1833, and the earliest years of his life were passed in a house under the shadow of the venerable Minster—the house in which Guy Fawkes was born. Here he saw the Minster burned in May, 1841, being carried through the streets at night in a blanket to escape the danger of the falling tower. His father was Proctor of the Ecclesiastical Court of York, his mother was the daughter of the Rev. R. Forrest, sub-chanter of the Cathedral, and his ancestors, for several generations, had been connected with that city. His father removed from York, when the Bishop was

quite a boy, to Middlethorpe—a house in one of the York parishes, but inconveniently far from the parish church; and the old Archbishop Vernon Harcourt (grandfather of Sir William) placed at the service of the Browne family a part of the Archiepiscopal pew in Bishopthorpe Church. We may therefore picture the future Bishop of Bristol sitting, with a sense of awe and grandeur, Sunday by Sunday in the old throne pew. Those were the days when the Archbishop distributed doles to the poor; and on certain days each week the road from York to Bishopthorpe was lined with beggars. When Archbishop Musgrave succeeded, he was obliged, owing to a greatly diminished



*From a photograph by Elliott & Fry Baker Street, W.*  
THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL WHEN CANON OF ST. PAUL'S.

income, to discontinue the doles. The beggars were aggrieved; and Dr. Browne recalls, as a boy, seeing written up on the palings at Bishopthorpe: "God bless the *old* Archbishop; *he* was good to the poor."

From Middlethorpe the Bishop's parents removed to the still more interesting abode of Nun Monkton, a fine old Hall of the time of William III., with rows of dormer windows in the sloping roof. If you wish to see the Bishop's face light up, mention

melting down portions of these heathen deities to make bullets.

The Bishop is well known for his agricultural and horticultural knowledge, and it was at Nun Monkton that he developed a taste for farming, being allowed as he grew older to manage things in his father's absence. When a youth of eighteen, he was entrusted with the momentous commission of selling one of his father's horses. He set out for Boroughbridge Fair swelling with pride and instinct with caution. He had in mind the



From a photograph by Villiers & Quick.

THE DINING-ROOM, "THE AVENUE," CLIFTON.

Nun Monkton. Around it the happiest memories of his youth linger. There he lived a particularly merry country life with his five sisters and one brother. He shot, fished, and rode, the latter not always with success; and his sisters had a little joke that he knew the bottom of every ditch in the county. The beautiful grounds of Nun Monkton, at the junction of the Nidd and the Ouse, were ornamented with leaden statues of gods and goddesses, and the Bishop and his brothers and sisters were adepts at

guileless "Moses" in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and when the purchaser of the horse paid him in notes, he asked him to come into the bank to see that they were good. It was very disconcerting on his return to Nun Monkton to be met with sisterly inquiries, "Where are the green spectacles?"

The Bishop received his early education at the Cathedral School of York, founded by Wilfrid in 690. He was not a studious youth, but extremely active in all physical exercises and in getting into scrapes. He



Photo. by Bullingham.  
MISS ETHEL BROWNE.

was, however, an omnivorous reader of Dickens and Scott, large portions of whose works he could repeat by heart, and other standard novels. The battle of Marston Moor had been fought near his home, and he was charmed to find

pointed to his after tastes occurred when he was a youth of nineteen. A graphologist said that his writing indicated that his historical instincts were very acute. This was received with jeers in the family circle, for if



Photo. by Lord.  
MISS A. BROWNE.

the lines in "Rokeby," where Scott describes the fight: "Monkton and Mytton saw the sight." The walls of the hall of Nun Monkton were ornamented with pistols and pikes, relics of the encounter picked up in the neighbouring fields.

The Bishop considers that the destinies of his life were settled by a discussion held over him when a young boy as to whether Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather" or "Peter Parley's Annual" should be given him as a birthday present.



Photo. by Bullingham.  
MISS MONA BROWNE.

there was one thing of which the future Bishop and Professor of Archæology was more ignorant than another it was history.

In 1853 Dr. Browne went up to Cambridge, it having been decided that he should take Holy Orders. He graduated from St. Catharine's College in 1856 as Thirtieth Wrangler in Mathematical Tripos.

The scene of his life now changes to Scotland, where he became Mathematical Master and then Theological Tutor at Trinity College, Glenalmond, on the Perthshire moors,

An uncle who was present stood out for the "Tales of a Grandfather," which was accordingly given; had it been "Peter Parley's Annual," the Bishop thinks his life would not have taken the turn it did take.

a spot of extreme beauty, full of old lore and tradition, and the neighbourhood of which has become famous as the scene of many of the stories in the "Bonnie Brier Bush."

The Bishop was ordained in 1858, and three years later

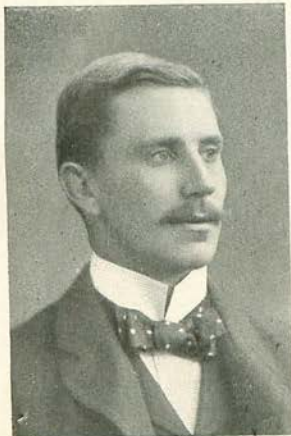


Photo. by Bullingham.  
CAPTAIN BROWNE (ELDER SON).

Another incident which



Photo. by Lord.  
MR. C. BROWNE (YOUNGER SON).

returned to Cambridge as Fellow and Lecturer of St. Catharine's College. In 1865 he vacated his fellowship on his marriage with the eldest daughter of Sir J. Stewart-Richardson, of Pitfour Castle, whose acquaintance he had made while in Perthshire.

For thirty years Dr. Browne was a leading spirit in Cambridge, as lecturer, University preacher, organiser of the Cambridge Local Examinations (a most important work, to which he devoted twenty years), member of the Council of the Senate, Governor of Selwyn College, member of the General Board of Studies and of many other boards and syndicates. He was a magistrate for the borough of Cambridge and an Alderman of its County Council. For five years he was Professor of Art and Archæology, and his lectures on the Archæology of the British Isles were extremely popular in the University, being rendered vivid by the lecturer's enthusiasm for his subject. Dr. Browne was an advocate for the Women's Higher Education Movement in Cambridge, and used to lecture to the students at Hitchin, before that college was removed to Girton. He, however, parted company with the "sweet girl graduate" when she demanded degrees from the University.

A most interesting part of Dr. Browne's work at Cambridge were his duties as Proctor of the University, a position which he held for the unusual period of six years.

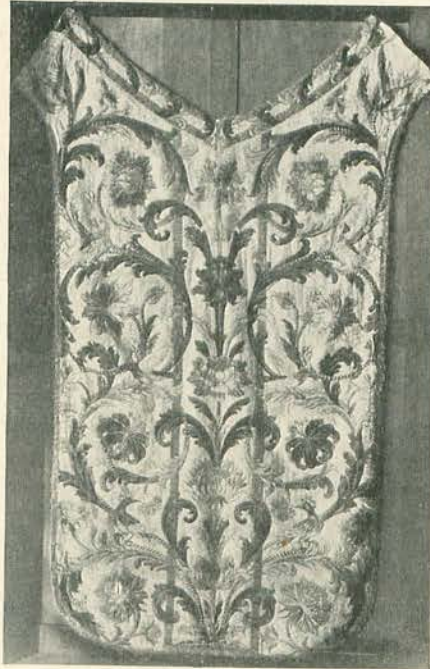
The delinquencies of undergraduates which call for the proctor's magisterial eye are a diverting side of University life; but upon all such peccadillos the Bishop keeps a tantalisingly discreet tongue, beyond the statement, given with a subdued smile, that

"young men are extremely interesting in their undergraduate days." This statement can be filled in with wine- and card-parties, escapades on the river, unavoidable reasons for not returning to the shelter of the college at a given hour of the evening, the irresistible impulse of artistic wags to caricature the dons, practical jokes on college heads, and the other num-

berless ways in which exuberant youth sows its wild oats. The proctor is, of course, an awful person, but a little redeemed from terror when it is remembered that he too has been an "undergrad." One can well understand that Dr. Browne mixed his discipline plentifully with the milk of human kindness, and that his influence for good was proportionally great.

During these tranquil years of academic seclusion Dr. Browne lived in a pleasant though unpretentious house on the outskirts of Cambridge, and devoted his leisure to

tending his garden, where he grew pears and cultivated begonias and chrysanthemums to great perfection. He has always been a man of many hobbies, and amongst these Alpine climbing and exploration for many years took a leading place. He began climbing in the early sixties, and accom-

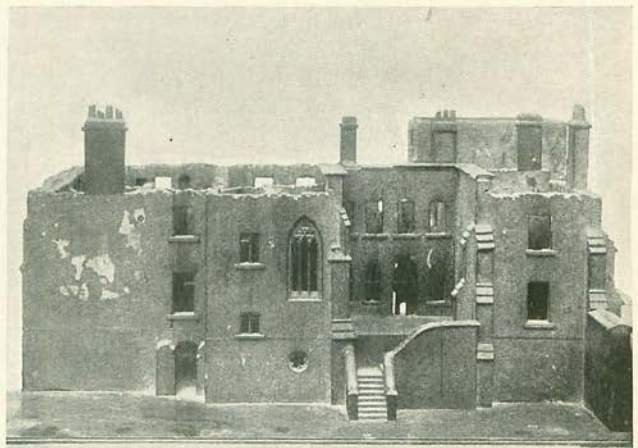


CHASUBLE.

plished some pretty tough expeditions in the days before Switzerland had been rendered as easy of access to the traveller as it is to-day. During one of these excursions he made the discovery, almost by accident, of an ice cave, and subsequently pursued the investigation into these *glacières*, the existence of which was almost unknown except to the mountain peasantry in their vicinity. The result of Dr. Browne's investigations was published in his entertaining book, "Ice Caves in France and Switzerland."

I think there was no limit to the dangers which the Bishop would face if only there was the prospect of another *glacière* to be discovered. He talks of walking down an incline of

PIT-FOUR CASTLE, PERTH, MRS. BROWNE'S EARLY HOME.



THE BISHOP'S PALACE, BRISTOL, AFTER THE FIRE IN 1831.

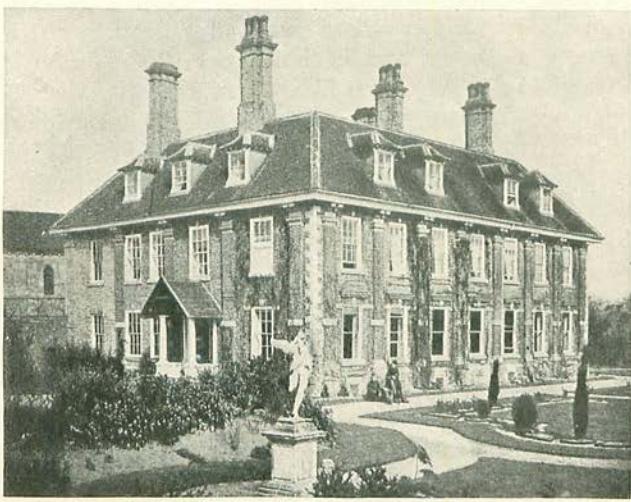
(From a model.)



solid ice into one of these caverns — a lighted candle in one hand and an axe to hew footholds in the other — as composedly as though it was an ordinary holiday excursion. His adventures

have been so many that it is difficult to single out one for special mention.

Salmon-fishing in Scotland has been another of the Bishop's hobbies, and his greatest achievement in this sport was a night's struggle on the Tay with a fish which, if only it had not finally escaped, would have been one of the largest salmon which ever fell to a fisherman's rod. The Bishop never cares to hear about that salmon. The monster held him and his Scotch fisherman tight for ten hours through a weary night, and then at dawn of day calmly made off with the tail



NUN MONKTON HALL, YORK, THE BISHOP'S EARLY HOME.



THE BISHOP IN HIS STUDY.

(From a photograph taken specially for THE LADY'S REALM  
by Villiers & Quick.)

hook, leaving the minnow and line in the hands of his would-be captors. The following year a fish, which from certain signs was believed to have been this one, was caught in a net at Newburgh, and found to be of the unprecedented weight of seventy-four pounds.

While referring to out-door sports, I should say that the Bishop has been an enthusiastic cricketer, a taste which he inherited from his father.

During later years, and after an accident put a stop to Alpine climbing, the Bishop devoted himself to the hobby of collecting antiques. He is quite an adept in dealing with curio-sellers abroad, and long experience has given him a nice estimate of prices. One of the most exquisite things which he picked up in Rome was a chasuble in hand embroidery. This is preserved, and its beauty

fully displayed, in a glass case fixed on the dining-room wall of his present abode, as shown in our illustration. In a special case the Bishop has a collection of small curios set out,—old crosses in silver and enamel of various quaint designs; a collection of silver needlecases from Holland, which he places on end in an artistic pose to look like slender pillars; spoons, medals, tiny apostles, and other beautiful trifles,—all, of course, of undoubted antiquity. I was undiscerning enough to admire a silver spoon with the handle ornamented with turquoises. "Oh, that is nothing," said the Bishop quickly; "it is quite modern." Last year, when in Italy, finding that he had exhausted other articles of *vertu*, the Bishop started to collect keys, and he has secured some fine specimens, the handles of which are of beautiful design and workmanship.

Some fine old Chippendale furniture is to be seen in the Bishop's home, but the glory

of his possessions is the collection of Leeds and Wedgwood china, arranged by his own hand in various cases and cabinets about the house, and of which our illustrations will convey some idea. I may mention, as evidence of the Bishop's ingenuity and manual skill, a design which he has made for holding china. It is fixed, as an overmantel might be, above the drawing-room chimney-piece. Of course it is not made of ordinary new wood. It has an antiquarian interest, being made out of an old clover-threshing-floor. In olden times, the Bishop told me, cloverseed was so valuable that it was threshed on a framed floor of oak. A friend presented him with some of the wood which had formed his grandfather's threshing-floor, and out of it the Bishop made this charming arrangement for china. It is of classic design, with Corinthian pillars dividing the shelves, and

the moulding of the shelves is so arranged that the pillars are seen in their full beauty. The Bishop first of all cut his design in paper, then stiffened it in paste, so that it could be erected as a model for him to work from. As further evidence of his manual dexterity, I may instance the drawings which illustrate "Ice Caves in France and Switzerland." These were executed by the Bishop with a piece of burnt wood, on paper, intended as a rough suggestion for the artist, as the Bishop did not pretend to having any knowledge of drawing himself. However, the publisher used the Bishop's sketches, and when the book appeared, some of the critics referred to the excellence of the illustrations.

Dr. Browne is widely known as a writer on antiquarian and historical subjects, and has published "English-Sculptured Stones of pre-Norman Type," "The Christian Church in these Lands before the Coming of



Photo. by  
Elliott & Fry.

THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

Augustine," and "The Conversion of the Heptarchy," and a number of other volumes on the earliest history of the English Church. "Off the Mill" is a book of a lighter character, which deals largely with his early Alpine expeditions, originally being contributed as articles to the *Cornhill*. The Bishop is a member of the Alpine Club.

In 1891 Dr. Browne was made a Canon of St. Paul's by Lord Salisbury, who intended him to hold the office without interfering with his work in Cambridge; but Dr. Browne, who had also accepted the office of Examining Chaplain to Dr. Temple, and was Secretary of the London Diocesan Home Mission, found that there was enough work in London for his whole time, and therefore relinquished his long connection with Cambridge and settled permanently in the metropolis. In 1895 Dr. Temple selected him to succeed Dr. Billing as Suffragan



Photo. by  
Bullingham.

MRS. BROWNE.

Bishop of East and North London, with the title of Bishop of Stepney. The admirable work which the Bishop did in the East End, and in which he was assisted by Mrs. Browne and her three daughters, all of whom are devoted to Anglican Church interests and to the needs of the poor, is fresh in the public mind.

Dr. Browne was a most popular and useful Bishop of Stepney, and his discourses at St. Paul's, and his lectures on Church history and antiquarian subjects in various

and Princess of Wales might have comfortable seats for the long service, Dr. Browne placed at their disposal two of his Chippendale armchairs. After the service these were besieged by loyal citizens anxious to sit in them. Two men, ensconced in the armchairs, were a little astonished when the Bishop approached and said, "These are my dining-room chairs." He has since had silver plates inserted in the backs of the chairs and suitably inscribed. An autograph portrait of the Queen, given to the Bishop in



*From a photograph by Villiers & Quick.*

THE DRAWING-ROOM, CLIFTON.

parts of London, drew large audiences by the charm and interest which the Bishop knows so well how to impart to erudite subjects. During this period Dr. Browne lived close to St. Paul's Cathedral, and he counts it of supreme interest that he was in residence at the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and took an active part in the great service. He organised the main arrangements for the Sunday morning service at St. Paul's, prior to Jubilee Day, when some thirty members of the Royal House attended. In order that the Prince

memory of her Diamond Jubilee, hangs in his study, and a silver heart, given to him by Lord Londonderry, as one of the commissioners who organised the School Children's Jubilee Demonstration, is in the Bishop's case of special treasures. While in London he took a prominent part in founding the Church Historical Society, and was its first chairman.

Dr. Browne is practically only on the threshold of his work in Bristol, to which See he was appointed by Lord Salisbury in 1897. The Diocese of Bristol was founded



by Henry VIII. out of the old Norman Monastery of St. Augustine, which he disestablished. It remained an independent See for three hundred years, and was one of great influence, having as its centre the flourishing mercantile capital of the West. As Bristol lost its commercial importance, owing to the growth of other towns, the Diocese suffered also, and shortly before the Queen's accession it ceased to have a separate existence and was amalgamated with that of Gloucester. The need for founding the See of Ripon also had something to do with bringing about this arrangement, in order that the number of bishops might remain unchanged in the House. The United Sees of Gloucester and Bristol were presided over for the long period of thirty-four years by the now venerable Dr. Ellicott, who remains Bishop of Gloucester.

The two years which Dr. Browne has spent at Bristol have been full of activity. The area of the



THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

(Taken specially for THE LADY'S REALM by Villiers & Quick.)

Bishopric stretches from a few miles east of Swindon, and includes the southern portion of Gloucestershire, part of North Somerset, and eighty parishes in North Wiltshire—in all, one hundred and eighty parishes, and the Bishop had visited each of these within nine months of going to Bristol. Not the smallest village or most insignificant church or school was neglected. He went into out-of-the-world hamlets, where the people had never even seen a bishop. Now, when letters come about parish matters the Bishop has an intimate knowledge of local needs. It will scarcely be credited in these times of prodigious diocesan postbags that the Bishop of Bristol does the whole of his correspondence himself. Neither secretary, typewriter, nor chaplain has any place in his study. He thinks that people would rather receive a few lines in his own hand-

writing than pages of dictated matter.

The disentanglement of two separate

dioceses which have been moulded into one is doubtless more difficult than the creation of a new See; but Dr. Browne is a man of tireless energy. He has lately appointed a Diocesan Missioner for Bristol, and has been instrumental in starting the Diocesan Society for meeting the wants of the Diocese in regard to fabrics and spiritual help. The Bishop has appointed a commission to inquire into the spiritual needs of Bristol as a city, and already £30,000, towards the modest estimate of £100,000 which is required, has been obtained. He issued a similar commission for Swindon—a rapidly increasing town in the Wiltshire part of the Diocese. The difficulty of obtaining money there is very great, as much of the enormous growth of the population is due to the works of the Great Western Railway, and the directors cannot give away the shareholders' money for Church purposes. The Bishop also has in hand the restoration of the famous Norman Abbey Church of Malmesbury. Sufficient money has been obtained to render the portion used as the parish church quite safe, and to preserve from further destruction the parts that are ruined. I should say that ancient edifices in the Diocese will have a good time under Bishop Browne. He has recently organised a lay-readers' board, and has in hand the creation of a board of education, and is also making arrangements for the division of the huge Rural Deanery of the city of Bristol into four deaneries.

When Dr. Browne came to Bristol it was in the condition of a diocese without a bishop's house, as the old palace by the

cathedral was destroyed by the rioters in 1831, and a second palace, erected at Stapleton, was converted to the use of the Colston School when Dr. Ellicott fixed his residence at Gloucester. A part of the scheme for reviving the See of Bristol very properly consists of an arrangement for building a diocesan residence. Several houses in the vicinity of the city were deemed suitable, but negotiations fell through. At a meeting of the Diocesan Committee the Bishop happened to say that he thought Redland Green would be just the site for building a new palace, if only land could be obtained. Next day a gentleman, who had sat silent at the meeting, called upon the Bishop and said he was the owner of the land, and would give any part of it the Bishop liked to choose.

The situation is one after the Bishop's own heart—on a breezy height, in open country, yet near enough to station and tramway to be easy of access for visitors from distant parts of the Diocese; it also overlooks an artisan colony, one of the newest extensions of the city. The cost of the palace is to be £13,000, a considerable portion of which has been generously subscribed. Donations and gifts for his new home are constantly reaching the Bishop, and he is himself collecting portraits of the most illustrious of his predecessors to adorn the rooms. The private chapel is to be quite unique of its kind. In the meantime the Bishop is living at "The Avenue," Clifton, in a hired house quite inadequate to his needs, and is actively superintending the building operations of the new palace.



SOME OF THE BISHOP'S CURIOS.