

The Rev. Canon MEADE read a notice of a jewel—a blue sapphire—which had been lately lent by the Lord-Lieutenant of the County to the South Kensington Museum. The paper was as follows :—

The stone now set as a brooch, was originally a ring ; it is a large and fine coloured blue sapphire, but the history attached to it is that which chiefly renders it interesting. Soon after the death of Essex, Queen Elizabeth began to feel symptoms of that sickness which carried her to her grave. Neglected by most of her courtiers, mortified and depressed, she had not energy or resolution to take any definite step in preparation for the sad event which was clearly approaching, and particularly for making known her views with respect to the succession of the crown. She could not bear to hear the proposal mooted by those around her of sending for the King of Scots. When it was clear that the Queen's last hour was at hand, the Lord Privy Seal and others of the Ministry prayed her to name her successor. She answered, with some difficulty, in the oracular sentence, that " Her throne was the throne of Kings, and that she would have no mean person to succeed her." It was at this time, the tradition says, at the very moment of the Queen's death, Lady Scrope, who was in attendance at Kensington Palace, looked out of a window and, perceiving her cousin Robert Cary (afterwards Earl of Monmouth) passing by, threw out to him the ring, pointing at the same time with earnest gesticulation to the North. Cary, whether forewarned or not, understood what was intended, took horse, and rode to Scotland, and, obtaining an audience of King James informed him of the Royal death at Kensington Palace,

exhibiting the ring, as, it is supposed, had been previously agreed on between the King of Scots and Lady Scrope. The service thus rendered was a most important one, for intrigues at this time were deeply and widely laid to prevent the succession of James to the throne. Strict orders had been given to close all the doors of the Palace where the Queen died, while an equally rigid watch was maintained at Whitehall, and measures were taken to prevent any information being sent from thence to Holyrood. The story of the ring is mentioned in Robertson's History of Scotland; it is also given in the "Life of the Earl of Monmouth," upon whom King James after his accession to the English throne conferred this title, in acknowledgment of the service rendered to him. There is also a small volume in the library at Marston, drawn up by John, Earl of Orrery, which gives an account of the circumstances to which I have ventured to direct your attention. The jewel now no longer a ring, has been sent by its present possessor to the South Kensington Museum: it is worthy of much admiration for its intrinsic beauty, and is interesting also from the purpose it once served, when the succession of the true heir to the throne was secured to this kingdom. The jewel came into the possession of the Earl of Cork through John, Earl of Cork and Orrery, who lived in the early part of the last century, and to whom it was given by his intimate friend, the Duchess of Buckingham, a natural daughter of James II. The Earl of Monmouth, the loyal messenger who bore the important tidings from Kensington Palace to King James, is no longer represented in the British peerage. He had three sons, none of whom had male issue, whereby the title became extinct. He was himself a man of no mean extraction, but was descended from Lord Hunsdon, a cousin

of Queen Elizabeth, being the son of Mary Boleyn, sister of Anne Boleyn, wife of Henry VIII. For the substance of these remarks I am indebted to the present Countess of Cork, who has kindly permitted me to communicate them to the Society.

Canon Meade added that he had no doubt that the Society would duly appreciate the liberality and the good taste of the present possessor of the jewel, who, instead of keeping it in its box, had sent it to be exhibited.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that this was another instance of the value of the Association, in bringing to public notice things which were frequently hidden in a very unsatisfactory way in private chests. They were deeply obliged to Canon Meade, and also to the Lord-Lieutenant and the Countess of Cork for this privilege.

The Rev. T. HUGO tendered to the President the thanks of the meeting for his bold address, so full of criticism, and asked that it might be printed and published.

The PRESIDENT, in briefly acknowledging the cordial cheers which were given, intimated that they were quite welcome to have the address published in their Proceedings if they thought it worthy.