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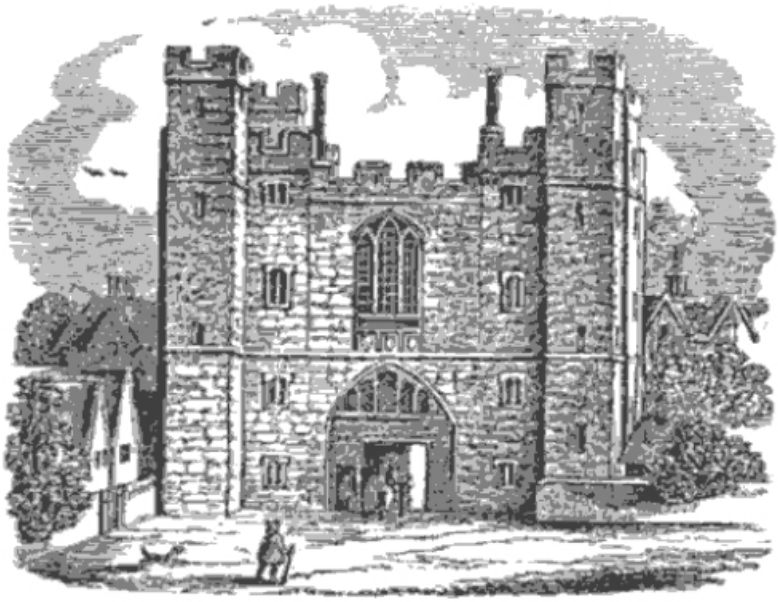
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AMPTHILL remains much the same as it probably was fifty years ago or upwards, except in population, which has increased since 1801 from 1200 to 2000. Its neat though narrow streets, mediocre unpretending market-house, and various inns,—the principal, the "White Hart," a good building of brick and stone,—are all *in statu quo*. The old "Moot Hall" remains; a building of brick and timber, with a handsome cupola, and a clock with quarter chimes. The Railway has deprived Ampthill of coaches and some traffic, but the trade is said to be quite as good as at Woburn. Thirty years ago it was perhaps reckoned the genteelest town in the county; as I have been told that *Potton*, now a humble place, was before it; but it has not now that distinctive character; many respected and popular inhabitants are no more.

The church is rather a small building, with the tower at the west end. There are four arches on each side of the nave, with clustered columns of the fifteenth century; and the tower, which is fair and strong, with a corner turret, contains five very moderate bells. There are some charitable benefactions inscribed in front of the gallery, of a creditable kind, amounting to about 60*l.* per annum. The pulpit, a handsome piece of wainscot, used to stand on an arch over the aisle. An organ was first erected about twelve years ago, though it had been projected some time before. The exterior of the church is not in a bad state, but the churchyard is so, though it was enlarged twenty-four years ago. It is insufficient for the population, badly fenced, and badly kept. In this parish is an excellent charity of the *almshouse* description, endowed by a Mr. John Cross, in 1690; a large building at some distance from the town, with a cupola. It maintains seven poor men and six poor women, who have now, from the improved condition of the estates, 20*l.* per annum each; and one of the men, who is the "Reader," has 5*l.* extra. The Bishop of Lincoln and the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford are the "Visitors."

The general ancient name of this place was rather *Antehill*, or Anthill, than *Ametulle*, given by Lysons. It is so rendered in Leland, and on Speed's Map, 1610. The former says that there was "faire woode aboute" it, which is the case now. The "honour," created by act of parliament in the reign of Henry VIII. included thirty-five parishes in Beds and eleven in Bucks, extending several miles into the latter. It still gives title to one of the coroners for the county, but those officers have latterly resided at Woburn. The office is now filled with general credit by John Green, esq. a very able provincial solicitor at that place.

A brief tribute to the present Duke of Bedford would be demanded here were it from an enemy. He has lately, both here and at Woburn, and elsewhere, rebuilt and erected additional cottages for labourers, of brick, in a neat, superior, and wholesome style; and, as this boon would be questionable if accompanied by any additional rent, lets them at a very moderate rate. All landholders would act well in imitating him in this respect.

Ampthill Park is celebrated as the residence of Queen Katharine at the period of her divorce. The site of the *Castle* is well known. The area was a square of about 220 feet. In front was a large court, 115 feet by 120; behind this were two very small ones, each 45 feet square, and between these was an oblong court-yard. Between the front and back courts the building had two small lateral projections, like the transepts of a church. The chapel, hall, and a spacious gallery, are shown. In front were two square projecting towers; and round the building, at irregular distances, nine others, principally five-sided segments of octagons.* In the park most of the "287" old oaks condemned by the Long Parliament (as useless for cutting down) remain still, but some are getting decrepid and require friendly supports.

The present house was built by the first Lord Ashburnham, in 1690; it is a spacious building of brick stuccoed, with projecting wings. It contained

* From a plan made for the late Lord Ossory.

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