



Funeral Report and Obituary of Rev. Stafford Brown 1847

Westbury, 17th May 1847

A few weeks only have elapsed since this town and county sustained a heavy loss in the death of that gifted man, T. H. H. Phipps, esq., of Leighton House. On Monday the 10th inst. our town was again cast into deepest gloom by the death of our venerated Vicar, the Rev. Stafford Brown. On the proceeding Friday he felt unwell; on Saturday afternoon medical aid was called in: in the evening and on Sunday physicians were sent for: and on Monday morning he expired, in the thirty-third year of his age.

“Few years but yield us proof of death’s ambition,
To cull his victims from the fairest folds,
And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.”

This is a loss to the Church generally, for he was an able and faithful minister of Christ. It is a loss to Westbury in particular, for he devoted himself, body and soul, to the interests of his parish. With a considerable private income, he yet lived in the humblest way his station would allow, that he might have more to bestow on the poor and needy. He hunted out the haunts of poverty and vice, that he might relieve the one and endeavour to correct the other. He was ever found at the bed-side of the sick and dying, ministering comfort to suffering nature, and labouring to heal the maladies of the soul. He was never more happy than when promoting the happiness of others, and his physicians attribute his early death to his incessant toil and constant exposure of his tender frame to the late inclement weather. Westbury was privileged with his labours for the brief space only of two years and three months, and yet what a vast work he accomplished.

When he came here he found only one small day school in connexion with the Church, and that imperfectly conducted; he has left three schools in a most flourishing condition, with well trained and efficient teachers. The school house for the boys is new, a spacious and commodious building, a monument of his munificence and zeal.

He found our humble parish church in a dilapidated state, disfigured internally by the incrustations of repeated whitewashings, closed arches, unsightly windows, a falling roof and a plastered ceiling: he has left it restored almost to its pristine beauty - its walls and pillars cleaned, its windows reglazed, its arches thrown open, crowned with a beautiful new oaken roof. He found the Church doors closed during the week except on Friday mornings; but before he died he re-established daily service, and a strict observance of the fasts and festivals and saint days appointed by the Church. No man laboured more earnestly than he did to develop the divine energies of our Church system, and to bring them to bear on the minds, and hearts, and practices of his parishioners. And when we consider the many and varied difficulties of an extensive and long neglected parish, perhaps it has fallen to the lot of few to be more successful. He derived indeed great assistance and encouragement in his laborious

undertakings from our late friend named above, and from that generous individual, H. G. G. Ludlow, esq. of Haywood House, who was his late Churchwarden, and he more than once acknowledged their kindness with great feeling to the writer of these lines. On Friday last his remains were committed to the grave. He was borne to his resting-place on the shoulders of eight communicants of the Church. The corpse was preceded by a large number of clergymen, headed by Canon Hamilton, the past and present Church and Chapel-wardens, and gentlemen of the town. His pall bearers were four clergymen, Col. Phipps and H. G. G. Ludlow, esq. of Haywood. He was followed by his brother and his physician, each leading one of his children; and then followed in mournful procession, the great part of the farmers and tradesmen of the parish. On each side of the Churchyard walk were ranged the national school children. Crowds of spectators witnessed the moving scene. Sympathetic sorrow sat on every brow, and the gushing tear told how dearly they loved their departed pastor. It was a day of general mourning in Westbury; the shops were closed and business generally suspended. On Sunday evening last an eloquent sermon was preached on the occasion in our parish Church to a dense crowded congregation by the Rev. A Pane, vicar of Warminster.

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