

THE PAVILION.

Where the historian Leland states so laconically 'there hath been a castle'—still remain the Castle Grounds. Here from about the middle of the nineteenth century till the first decade of the twentieth, situated on the right-hand side of the present bowling-green, stood the remarkable structure called the Pavilion. It was so large that it contained a spacious ballroom with musicians' gallery, cloakrooms and a refreshment room. The whole was covered by an immense roof of thatch.

Inside the ballroom walls were hung with glistening chintz in a floral design and at intervals gas jets were arranged round in star-like clusters. Dance music was provided by a band from Oxford, invariably including a harp.

The Society gatherings there were brilliant and exclusively 'County'. Deddington could have no share in those functions except such satisfaction as might be obtained from gazing upon the smart equipages which went towards the entrance gate full, returning empty to park in the market place. Sometimes the ball had been preceded by an Archery tournament, then it was the custom of ladies, whose homes were at a distance, to dress at the King's Arms or the Unicorn. Another chance for Deddingtonians to catch a glimpse of beauty, though in all probability voluminously cloaked.

The Castle Grounds Lodge, which is still inhabited as a dwelling, was in the hey-day of pavilion glory, the abode of George Jones, professional cricketer and groundsman, who was in charge of the Gentlemen's Cricket Club and the Archery, which were the outdoor attractions. From the Lodge to the pavilion site there is now only a rough track. Then it was a drive fit for the barouches, broughams and family coaches which drew up in succession at the doors, and passing on, sometimes assembled to the number of one hundred in the market place.

Mr. Robert Tucker, our postmaster for many years, relates that as a boy he remembers as many as four four-in-hand coaches there. Through the friendliness of a coachman well known to him, Mr. Tucker was, moreover, smuggled into that 'select' paradise—a most difficult adventure, for even after penetrating within the enclosure, again hurdles fenced off possible invasion—and he saw there such a scene as now-a-days would certainly not be matched. Gas constellations, shining flowery wall-hangings, and lovely ladies swaying and gyrating in billowy silks and tarlatans all frills and furbelows, graceful as bell-shaped flowers.

In the end the vogue for pavilion gaities waned, and finally, principally on account of the expense of keeping in repair its immense expanse of thatch, demolition was decided upon. A Banbury auctioneer put the effects to the hammer, but the profits did not cover expenses. A little of its concrete foundation still remains. Some years ago Mr. Robert Tucker attended a sale at the house of the late Mr. H. Cotton Risley. Among a lot of waste paper he found there the minute-book of the Pavilion Club, kept by Mr. Stratton of Croughton whose family had been among its chief supporters. It was a facetious chronicle with records of such fines as 'drinks all round' or 'penalty to be paid a bottle of port.'

An annual Flower Show, a bowling green and winter matches of the Deddington football Club is the extent of the recreation uses to which the Castle grounds are put. There is no cricket played there, nor any provision made for children's games—the children instead risking their lives (and other people's!) in the public thoroughfares. Cattle are occasionally turned into the Castle grounds, earning for the landlords a trifling sum.

Let us hope that when we have 'set our house in order' as regards drains and water supply—both being at present only 'good in parts'—the matter of a real village playground may be taken in hand.