

Hertfordshire." Though a man of excellent education and comfortable means, he lived in one room, in his house, called Redcoats Farm. No one was admitted to this room; it is said he wore no clothes except an old blanket, and never washed! He was "a Jacobite" and refused to sign any document which had V.R. upon it, for fear that by so doing he was acknowledging the "existing dynasty." Lucas was no miser, for he gave away a good deal of money. Any beggar or tramp was relieved by him, but first of all he had to say "the Lord's Prayer," and although Lucas was a Protestant he gave a double alm to the man who could recite that prayer in Latin. Of course he only saw people from his window, he had to keep watchmen about the place, for he was once very nearly murdered by a house-breaker. Dickens describes Lucas under the name of "Old Grimes," and reports a conversation which he had with him. Lucas however flatly denied that the interview ever took place.

Should our readers desire to know more about this strange individual they can purchase at Hitchin *The History of the Hermit of Hertfordshire*.\*

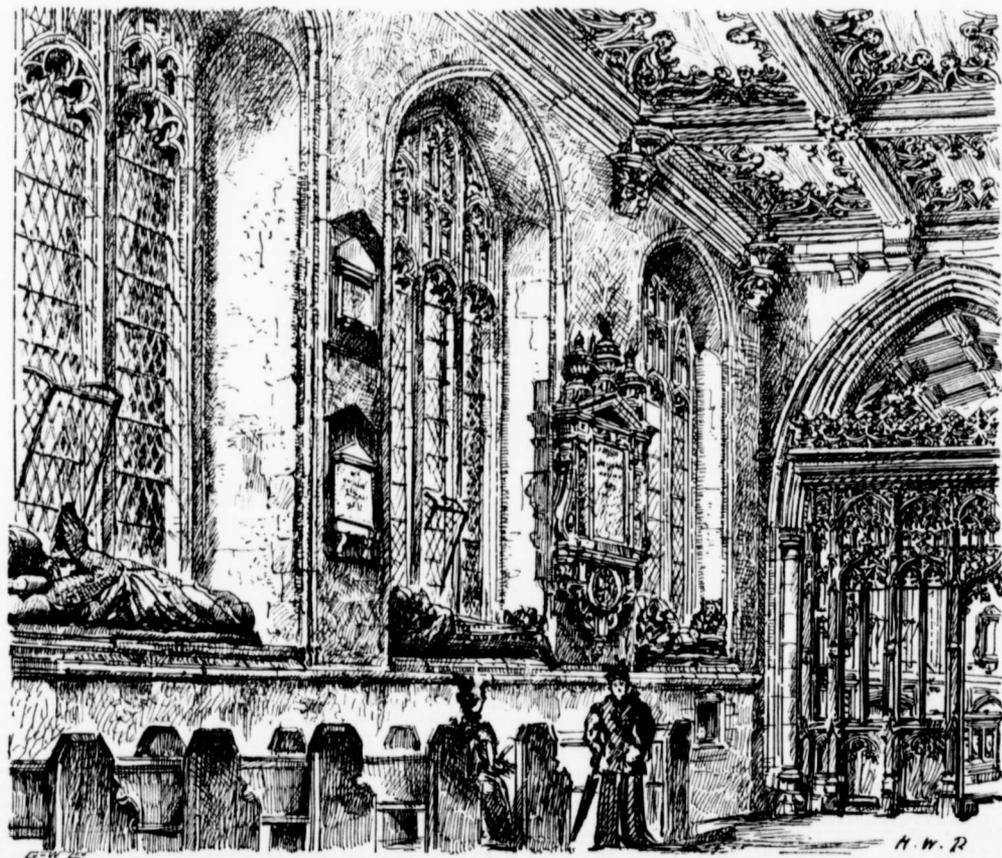
Ippolitis or Saint Hippolite is a remarkably pretty village; it receives its name from the dedication of its church to Saint Hippolyte, an Arabian saint who appears to have

been a veterinary surgeon of great skill and eminence; he is, I believe, the patron saint of horse-dealers. Very few, if any other churches are dedicated to him in England, but there is a town in Austria which bears his name and several churches in France. Norden and Sir Henry Chauncey tell a curious story about the church here. They say that horses used to be driven into this church up to the altar, and Chauncey adds the details. They were brought out of "North Street," through the north porch of the church, which together with the church itself had a boarded floor for that purpose. Clutterbuck disbelieves the story, and points out that there is no North Street at St. Hippolite's, and that neither the church nor the porch have a wooden floor; however, this is not decisive, because in Norden's time (the commencement of the seventeenth century) the street north of the church may have been called "North Street," and the floor of the latter may have been boarded.

The church of Saint Hippolite is a remarkably pretty structure, of very diminutive scale, although it has all the features of a fairly large parish church, chancel, nave clerestory, aisles, western tower and two porches: it is really not larger than a chapel. It is most charmingly situated on the top of a hill, the ground falling rapidly away to the west and an elm-shaded road winding up to it. Although surrounded with vast and magnificent trees its proportions are so good that it does not look

insignificant, and the tower is really a dignified object. Internally there is a pretty little rood-screen and handsome founders' tomb. The place is a typical example of an old English village of the smaller kind, very sequestered and delightful. Passing along the pretty road west of the church and descending the dip, we soon find ourselves in the main road leading to Hitchin, but if we turn to the left in the opposite direction to Hitchin, we come to an inn called The Royal Oak; here there is a pathway leading up to a singular-looking wood-clad hill; if we follow this path (cyclists should leave their machines at The Royal Oak) we shall, upon entering the wood, come upon a very curious old ruin overgrown with trees and brambles. This is Minsden Chapel. Your girls who have an exploring mind will find the building interesting, but don't let them go there in their best clothes, as they will have a struggle with the brambles which completely fill the interior, and are the only congregation that has filled those sacred walls for many years, as the last time that any holy rite was performed here was in the year 1738, and that was a marriage by special licence; probably the building was a ruin at this period, as it had not been used for regular service since the year 1626. It is a little building about forty feet by seventeen, but a regular archaeological puzzle about it is a series of square apertures through the walls, which go right round the

\* Paternoster and Hales, Hitchin.



EFFIGIES OF KNIGHTS TEMPLARS, HITCHIN CHURCH.