

Bedfordshire Mercury,

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1878.

By the death of Colonel HIGGINS the County of Bedford loses one who has been associated with almost every good work undertaken within its borders for half a century; for the gallant Colonel was born as far away back as December, 1798, a year after his brother the late Mr THOMAS CHARLES HIGGINS. As a lad he was at Rugby, before the days of its greatest renown, but when it shewed real solid work, as it has done ever since; thence he passed to Trinity College, Oxford, where in due time he took his degree. Prominent, as we have said, in everything, he was especially so in three departments: as a Politician, as a Justice of the Peace, and as a Sportsman. Colonel HIGGINS was a Liberal, and liberally so; without going to extremes he has consistently held with his party as it emerged from its former whiggism to its more modern standpoint; and he avoided that bitterness which always hinders the cause from whose partisans it emanates. Twice, in 1857 and 1859, he contested the county in connection with his friend the present Duke of BEDFORD: but a somewhat conservative county could only make room for one liberal then, and Sir RICHARD GILPIN was too liberal a conservative for one, even as strong and capable a man as the owner of Piets' Hill, to oust. Nevertheless he took a position it was no slight honour to reach. As a magistrate the Colonel was long conspicuous: not only did he hold the offices of Deputy Vice-chairman of Quarter Sessions, Chairman of the Police Committee, and Chairman of the Bedford Division Bench, but he worked unceasingly in fulfilment of the duties attaching to each. Up to within five or six weeks of his death he occupied his place at the Division Sessions, while at the last Quarter Sessions he made some vigorous and shrewd remarks on several topics under consideration. When it is known that on the day of his death the same Court resolved to accept Mr WATERHOUSE'S plans, although not so completely as one could wish, it is with melancholy interest that his words of three months' since must be read. They were as thorough as wise; his last words before sitting down were these: "I do urge upon the Court, while we are about this matter, not to enter upon extravagant expenditure of money, which would be unjust and ruinous, but at the same time, if we are to have a court at all, let us have one which will be a credit to the county and perfectly adapted for the transaction of any amount of business that may be brought

forward." As a sportsman not much need here be said. He agreed with Lord PALMERSTON's famous dictum that the best thing for the inside of a man was the outside of a horse: he was Secretary and Treasurer of the Oakley Hunt, and to the last season of his life was seldom absent from the meet. It was to his own order that Mr STEPHEN PEARSE, the eminent artist, painted the large and well-known group of the Oakley Hunt, one of the attractions at Picts' Hill: this work, containing portraits of the old Duke, Mr Whitbread, Mr Barnett, the late Mr Magniac, Captain Newland, Mr Harry Thornton, Lord Charles Russell, Mr Arkwright, and its gallant owner, is henceforth to be the property of the ducal owners of Woburn Abbey—by special bequeathment. The COLONEL was on horseback within ten days of his death—erect as ever and with evident enjoyment of his ride. For many years he held a commission in the Beds. Militia. He was also Chairman of the Bedford and Northampton Railway, his banquet in connection with the opening of which line, will long remain in the memory of those who were present. Humane and considerate to a degree, he was a prominent member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; these columns have recently recorded the part he took in the question of providing improved conveniences for removing cattle by rail. From the same love of helping the weak he was prompted to take the greatest interest in the formation and subsequent success of the Bedfordshire Reformatory, where his loss will be keenly realized. In educational matters he was always to the fore: the County School, the Grammar School, the University Extension Scheme, found in him a

ready helper. At Turvey, schools, village clubs, and the Working Men's Reading-room, occupied his attention. A sound Churchman, he was as open hearted to all sects as man could wish: when fellow parishioners of his were in trouble he never inquired whether they were of his own Church; wherever there was need of help he let nothing intervene between his power and willingness to assist. For very long he read the lessons at his parish church,—nothing but indisposition hindering him from so assisting his clergyman. A class of young women received his special care: most assiduously did he devote himself to their best interests, and though for six weeks he has been more or less indisposed, yet the last Sunday that he was at home, October 6th, he paid them what no one then dreamed would be a farewell visit. Nearly two months ago he had a slight threatening of paralysis, but, under judicious treatment, he quite recovered from it, and last week started for Hunstanton hoping to be thus set up for the winter. From his arrival there on Thursday he gained strength, and wrote home in the best of spirits: on Tuesday afternoon, after a walk on the beach, he appeared fatigued. Early in the evening, when in the act of speaking of his intention to dress for dinner, he sank back in his chair as in a doze; and without regaining consciousness he expired at midnight. Every thing was done for him by Dr. WHITTY and Dr. LOWE (of Lynn); Mr SHARPIN, of Bedford, his ordinary medical adviser, arriving too late to be of any avail. The cause of death was apoplexy. So ended a life of varied experiences, of many friendships, and of much usefulness.