

SOME ACCOUNT OF MELFORD CHURCH.

THE body of Melford Church appears to have been rebuilt the latter part of the 15th century, as shewn by the inscriptions outside, which were cleaned and made legible in 1831.* They are as follows, beginning over the entrance porch :—

“ Pray for y^e soulis of William Clopton, Margery and Marg’y his wife^s, and for y^e soule of Alice Clopton, and for John Clopto’, and for alle thoo soulis y^t the seyd John is bo’nde to prey for.”

Over the lower windows from the porch (south side) :—

“ Pray for the sowle of Rog’ Moriell, of who^s good^s y^{is} arch was made. Pray for y^e soull of John Keche, and for his fad’ and mod’, of who^s good^s y^{is} arche was made. Pray for y^e soull of Thom’s Elys and Jone his wife, and for y^e good sped of Jone Elys mak^s h’of. Pray for the soull of John Pie and Alys his wyf, of who^s good^s y^{is} arch was made, and y^{es} twey wy’dowys glasid. P’y for the soul^s of John Dist’ and Alis, a’d for the good sped of John Dist’ and X’pian mak^s h’of.”

Over the lower windows of the Martin chancel :—

Pray for the soulis of Laurens Martyn, and Marion his wyffe, Elysa-
beth Martyn a’d Jone, & for y^e good estat of Richard Martyn and
Roger Martyn and y^e wyvis and alle y^e childri’ of.....made anno
domini millesimo cccclxxxiiii.”

Under the upper battlements on the south side :—

“ Pray for the sowlis of Rogere Moryell, Margarete and Kateryn his wyffis, of who^s goodis the seyd Kateryn, John Clopton, Mast’ Wylllem Qwaytis, and John Smyth, dede these vj archis new repare, and ded make the tabill at the hye awtere, anno domini millesimo quadrin-

* The lower inscriptions are cut deep in blocks of stone, and the letters are about eight inches in length. The upper inscriptions are stone letters of a larger size, and imbedded in a cement or mortar

faced with small flints. The workmen could not read the inscriptions, and I was under the necessity of painting the letters with my own hand to make them legible.—R. A.

gentesimo octogesi^o p^omo. Pray for the sowl of Thomas Couper, y^e wych y^s ii arche dede repa^{re}. Pray for y^e sowl of Law: Martyn and Marion hys wyf, and for Rychard Martyn, and Elizabeth and Jhone hys wyvis and frendis, thyat thys chawncel repared a' d'ni m^o cccc lxx^{ix}.”

On the north side of the church:—

“ Pray for the sowlis of Roberd Spar'we and Marion his wife, and for 'Thom' Cowper and Ma'el his wif, of quos goodis Mast' Gilis Dent, John Clopton, Jon Smyth, and Roger Smyth, wyth y^e help of y^e weel disposyd me' of this... ..dede these se'on archis new repare anno domini milesimo cccc..... ..

° Inscription outside the Lady chapel:—

“ Pray for the sowle of John Hyll, and for the sowle of John Clopton, Esqwyer, and pray for the sowle of Rychard Loveday, boteler wyth John Clopton, of whos godys thys chapell y^s imbaytylled by hys excewtors. Pray for the soulis of William Clopto', esquyer, Margery and Marg'y his wifis, and for all ther parentis and childri', and for the soule of Alice Clopton, and for John Clopton and for all his childri', and for all the soulis that the said John is bonde to p'y for, which deed y^s chapel new repare a^o dom^o m^o cccc lxxxvj. Crist' sit testis hec me no exhibuisse ut merear laudes set ut spiritus memoretur. Roger Smyth and Robert Smyth.”

The tower of the church is a poor brick building, and is said to have been erected in the place of a fine tower, partly destroyed by fire, and which in falling damaged the following inscription, of which about half (the latter part) remains, running from the tower to the porch:—

“ Pray for the soul of Mast' Giles Dent, late parson of Melford, of who^s goods John Clopton, Maist' Rob't Coteler, and Thom's Elys did y^s arch make glase, and the ruf.”

There are in this village church and the Lady chapel, nearly a hundred large windows, and it was evident by the remnants of figures that the windows had all been filled with ancient painted glass, and of the richest and most delicate execution.

The great benefactor was John Clopton, of Kentwell Hall, who in his old age filled the windows with portraits of his connections by blood, marriage, or politically. He was high sheriff of Suffolk and Norfolk 30th Hen. VI. Being of the Lancastrian party he was sent to the Tower with John, Earl of Oxford, and several other persons of importance, who were all, beheaded 1461, except John Clopton, and he somehow made his peace, and lived to see the Lan-

castrian party dominant. His tomb is on the north side of the communion table, under an arch, with remains of portraits in fresco of himself, Alice Darcy his wife, and their children. He had entered into a formal written contract to marry Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Wm. Paston, but the marriage did not take place, and perhaps it was as well for him, as Dame Agnes Paston, the mother, made it a condition that his "land standeth clear," and the daughter's reason for marriage was "so that it should be both for her worship and profit."*

The tomb of his father, Wm. Clopton, who died 1446, is on the north side of the Kentwell aisle, with his effigy in armour, and four shields bearing the arms of Clopton, Mylde, Drury, and Franceys. The arms of Mylde being those of his mother, Catherine, the daughter and ultimately the heiress of Wm. Mylde, by whom his father Sir Thomas Clopton acquired the manor of Kentwell. The other two shields are those of his wives, Margery Drury and Margery Franceys. There is a brass for his last wife, with her portrait, on the floor near to his tomb. The large monumental slab of Sir Wm. Clopton, the son of John Clopton, is near the altar table, with one shield remaining, bearing the arms of Clopton impaling those of his wife Joan, daughter of Wm. Marrow, who was Lord Mayor of London, 1455.

There is a very perfect brass effigy of Francis Clopton, younger son by his second wife, Thomasin Knivet, of the last named Sir Wm. Clopton, with the arms of Clopton impaling those of his wife Bridget, daughter of Sir Robert Crane. There is also a fine brass portrait of a priest, with four shields of Clopton; this is probably "Richd. Clopton, a priest," his younger son by Joan Marrow. Adjoining to this monumental slab is one with the figures of two young ladies. There is also a large fine portrait of the wife of a Clopton, and several other slabs "reaved of their brasses," no doubt for this family.

After the lapse of upwards of three centuries, the portraits in painted glass of the friends of John Clopton were greatly reduced in number, and some that remained were in a

* See Paston Letters, vol. i. pp. 84, 85; vol. iii. pp. 189, 197.

dilapidated state*, and most of the inscriptions too much broken to be restored. About twenty-five years since the best were selected and placed in the great chancel window. They are generally in surcoats of arms which required much mending. The most important are as follows:—

Sir Wm. Howard, who was described in the ancient inscription as “Cheff Justis of Englund.” From him all the Howards of the present day are descended. This portrait is the frontispiece to the very rare volume, not published for sale, called “Memorials of the Howard family,” which was edited by a most amiable and accomplished member of that noble house, the late Henry Howard, Esq., of Corby Castle.

Catherine Mylde, wife of Sir Wm. Clopton, by whom the Clopton family acquired the Kentwell estate. She was also the ancestress of a much greater family: her second husband was Sir Wm. Tendring, of Tendring Hall, in Stoke Neyland, by whom she had one child, Alice Tendring, who married Sir John Howard, kt. Alice Tendring was a great heiress, and her grandson, John Howard, was the first Duke of Norfolk of that family.

Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford, daughter of Sir John Howard, kt., and wife of John, 12th Earl of Oxford. In 7th Hen. VII., her husband being then a ward, and having married her without licence, was obliged to pay 2000*l.* into the Exchequer to obtain pardon for that marriage. On the accession of Edward the Fourth her husband, who was an aged man, and their son, Aubrey de Vere, were beheaded, but their friend in trouble, John Clopton, escaped, and included them in his “memorial windows,” of which the lady only remains.

Sir Robert Clifford, Knight of the Body to Henry the Seventh, son of Thomas, Lord Clifford, ancestor of the Earls of Cumberland, by Joanna, daughter of Thomas, Lord Dacre, of Gillesland. He was the first person of any

* The Churchwardens' Accounts for 1577 contain the following, and several similar items:—

“Pd to Fyrmyn the glasyer, of Sudburye, for defacyng of the sentences and imagerye in the glasse wyndowes, 11*s.*”

The figures and inscriptions remaining in the 19th century were so high in the clerestory, that, as they could not be made out, probably Master Fyrmyn thought they would not do any injury.

importance who appeared in support of Perkin Warbeck. This portrait was taken from the upper part of the north side of the church, where it stood with the kneeling figures of Elizabeth Barley, his wife, and Sir Ralph Joscelyn, her first husband, who was twice Lord Mayor of London, 1462 and 1476. The two latter still remain, with others, more or less injured, but several capable of being restored. At Aspedon, in Herts, are fine portraits in brass of Sir Robert Clifford and his wife.

Sir Thos. Montgomery, K.G. He was of Faulkbourne Hall, in Essex, and a person of great importance in his day. By his will, dated 1489, he directs his body to be buried in the abbey of the Tower-hill, and that the body of Dame Philippa, his wife, shall be removed from Faulkbourne to the Tower-hill, to be laid by him: he appoints John Clopton one of his executors.

Robert Crane, of Chilton (near Sudbury), and Anne his wife, daughter of Sir Andrew Ogard, kt., of Buckenham, in Norfolk.

John Denston, of Denston Hall, in Suffolk, with the arms of *Denston* quartering *Wanton* on his coat. He married Catherine, daughter of Sir Wm. Clopton, and sister of John Clopton.

Thomas Peyton, High Sheriff of Cambridge and Huntingdon, 21st and 31st Hen. VI., and 17th Edw. IV. He married Margaret, daughter of Sir John Barnard, of Isleham, in Cambridgeshire, by which match the Isleham estate was acquired by the Peyton family. He rebuilt the church of Isleham. The portrait of his wife is in its original position, having on her surcoat the arms of *Barnard* quartering *Lilling*, but dilapidated.

Richard Pygot, a judge. He was made sergeant-at-law 4th Edw. IV. This portrait formerly stood with the portrait of Hawte, described as "judges of the law*" in the old inscription. They were kneeling with Howard, and Hawte still remains, with his robes much in want of repair.

In the chancel window are now placed large figures of

* Sir Wm. Dugdale says in his Diary, "1664. 3 Feb. Pd to Mr Hollar for the pictures of the judges at Long Melford, &c., 4^{li}." This was for his "Origines

Juridiciales," of which almost all the copies were destroyed in the great fire of London. See "Hamper's Life of Dugdale," p. 121.

the Virgin with Our Saviour on her lap; St. Edmund, with the abbot of Bury kneeling at his feet; two saints, with a monk kneeling at the feet of one, and a nun the other; St. Andrew with his cross. In the upper lights a series of smaller, but very beautiful figures, chiefly illustrating the history of St. Osyth; in one of which she is carrying her head in her hand. They were taken from a window in which the upper lights had been dedicated to this saint.

In this window there are also several interesting shields of arms:—*Tyrell* and *Darcy*; *Montgomery* and *Darcy*; *Clifford* and *Barley*; *Edward the Confessor*; *Stafford* and *Beauford*, being the arms of the Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond and her second husband Sir Harry Stafford, and put up before her third marriage with Thomas, Lord Stanley; *Sulyard* quartering *Gude*, and impaling *Andrews*, for Sir John Sulyard, Lord Chief Justice, who died 1516, and Ann his wife, daughter of John Andrews, of Bailham; *De la Pole* impaling *Plantagenet*, for John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who died 1491, and his wife, sister of King Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third; *Crane* and *Ogard*; *Josceline* and *Barley*.

In the window on the north-east side of the chancel are arms of:—*Drury*; *Clopton* quartering *Franceys*, and impaling *Royden* quartering *Knivet*; *D'Ewes* and *Clopton*; *Dynham* and *Fitzwalter*.

In two windows at the west end are arms of:—*Danvers*; *England* and *France*; *Howard* (ancient); *Peyton* impaling with two wives, apparently *Francys* (of Wickhambrooke) and *Denston*, quartering *Wanton*; *Say* and *Fray*; *Waldegrave*; *Gedney* and *Clopton*.

Some of the portraits, still dilapidated, are very interesting: few in England are of greater antiquity and importance. There are:—

John, Lord Dynham, K.G., who married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of the Lord Fitzwalter, and his wife is kneeling near to him, but without a head.

Dame Annes Say, widow of Sir John Say, kt. Her maiden name was Danvers, and it appears that she was married three times. By her will, of which John Clopton is one of the executors, she directs that a priest shall sing "for the

souls of my Lord Wenlock (who was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury), Sir John Fray, and Sir John Say, my husbands." With her are the portraits of her daughters Elizabeth and Mary, by her husband Sir John Fray, who was Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer from 1436 to 1448. Elizabeth married Sir Thos. Waldegrave, who was knighted by Edward the Fourth at the battle of Towton, 1461. Margaret was the wife of Sir John Leynham, Knt., and founded a chantry in the church of St. Bartholomew the Less, in London.

Dame Margaret Tyrell,* daughter of Robert Darcy, married Wm. Tyrell, of Gipping, who was Sheriff of Suffolk, 24th Hen. VI.

Dame Eleanor Tyrell, daughter of Robert Darcy, married Sir Wm. Tyrell, Knt. (nephew of the said William Tyrell), by whom she had Sir Thos. Tyrell, knight banneret, Sheriff of Essex, 1482.

Reynesford. There are portraits of two ladies of this family in surcoats of arms.

Also, a large figure of a lady of the Howard family; two Lord Mayors of London in their robes; several of the Clopton family in armour; and ladies in surcoats of arms. The arms and inscriptions so much broken as not now to afford any certainty as to their identity. There are some large figures of saints and angels, and in the north chancel window St. Anthony and his pig.

In a window on the north side of the chancel are four small broken portraits of great interest. Two kneel at one table, the man having on his surcoat the arms apparently of *Brotherton* and *Fitzallen*, and it is not very easy to identify him, but it is probably intended for a Duke of Norfolk bearing the arms of his great ancestors. The Howards used the royal coat of Brotherton as their first quartering, of

* Mother of Sir Jas. Tyrell, Knt., Master of the Horse to Richard the Third. Beheaded 17th Hen. VII. (See *Archæologia*, vol. i. p. 382.) On the ancient chapel at Gipping, in Suffolk, are his arms with those of his wife, daughter of Sir John Arundell, of Cornwall. An ancient inscription on the stone entrance arch of the chancel says, "Pray for the

souls of Sir James Tirell and Dame Ann his wyf." Which help he was perhaps especially in want of, as he is supposed to have been the chief agent in the murder of the princes in the Tower. I should say rather of one of them, Edward the Fifth, for "I doubt" whether the younger brother did not live to be known as Perkin Warbeck.

which proof is remaining on the tomb of the wife of the first Howard, Duke of Norfolk, in Stoke Neyland church.

The lady opposite to him is Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Howard, second Duke of Norfolk, daughter of Sir Frederick Tilney, Knt., having on her robe the arms of Tilney, and on the cloak over it the arms of Howard (without the badge on the bend which her husband acquired in memory of the battle of Flodden) quartering *Brotherton*, which quarters *Mowbray*.

Immediately below them are two other figures kneeling, one being a man with a remnant of arms on his coat, apparently "Gules, a fret Argent." The lady kneeling opposite to him is Anne Montgomery, sister to the wife of John Clopton, who married a Montgomery,* probably John, brother to Sir Thos. Montgomery, having on her surcoat the arms of Montgomery and Darcy impaled. This Duchess of Norfolk wished that death should not divide her from Anne Montgomery: she says in her will, "my body to be buried in the nun's quire of the Minories without Aldgate, nigh unto the place where Anne Montgomerie is buried."

On the south side of the altar table is a very costly tomb of alabaster (said to have been made in Italy), with the effigy in armour of Sir William Cordell, Knt., Master of the Rolls, grantee from the crown of Melford hall and manor. Melford Hospital was founded and richly endowed by him. He died without issue 1580, and the descendants of his sister Jane, who married Richard Allington, became his representatives, which brought the Melford hall estate to the family of Savage Earls Rivers.

There are many memorials of the Martin family, settled at Melford from the time of Richard the Second. Their cloth mark, and the initials of Roger and Laurence Martin, appear on thirteen stone shields outside the Martin chancel.



One very ancient altar tomb without inscription, and the brasses for husband and two wives gone, supposed to be for Lawrence Martin, "with the image of St. Lawrence and his gridiron over him." He died 1460, but it was by his

* See Morant's Essex, vol. i. p. 396.

benevolence that this part of the church was built about 1484. There are brass portraits of Roger Martin who died 1615, and his wives Ursula Jermyn and Margaret Bowles, and their children. Also of Roger Martin, who died 1624, and his three wives Eleanor Mannock, Barbara Daniel, and Alice Smith.

Several large black marble slabs in the Martin chancel are reaved of their brasses. The last Martin memorial is for Sir Roger Martin, Bart., who died 1762.

The ancient pew of their mansion, Melford Place, has much old carving, and some heads apparently intended for portraits, with the arms of Martin, Eden of Sudbury, &c.

For the Parker family there is a good altar tomb of white marble, in memory of Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, Bart., who is supposed to have been lost in H.M.S. *Cato* 1782, and for his son Sir Harry Parker, 1812. Also a tablet for Sir Wm. Parker, who died 1830.

In the north wall of the Clopton or Kentwell Hall aisle is a very curious and perfect piece of sculpture in alabaster, which has been gilt and coloured, representing the offerings of the wise men. In the *Archæologia*, vol. xii. p. 93, is an account of this very early work of art, with a good engraving, communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Craven Ord, Esq., 1794.* This is probably the "tabyll of alabaster" mentioned in the Black Book of Melford (MS.) in the long list of "gere takyn down by the kyng's comandyment" in the 2nd Edward the Sixth. "It: sold to Mr. Clopton the alt' of alebast' in owr Lady's chapell, vi. viii^d. Ma, left unto Mast' Clopton ij stonys at the ends of the alt' in Mast' Clopton's yelde, and the *tabyll of allebaster* in the seyde yelde, and a lytell tabyll in Sent Anny's chappell, and all the gere th'in, to dres up the chappell and dyscharge the churchwardens, and to do y' at hys plesur." This sculpture was found beneath the pavement, where it was probably the pleasure of Master Clopton to place it, in order that it might turn up "after many days," when the rage for cleansing the church had abated.

In the Kentwell Hall chapel is some fine sculpture, and

* Engraved also in Carter's *Specimens of Ancient Sculpture*, vol. ii. plate 8.

niches for the twelve apostles, over the tomb of John Clopton, the arch of which is open to the chancel, giving a full view of the altar table. There are also other unusual architectural arrangements for confession, &c., seldom now found in a Protestant church. Under the niches for the apostles are shields with the arms of Clopton impaling several matches, and in addition to those before named are, *Fitzlangly*, *Bellhouse*, and *Cornard* or *De Grey*.

In the wall is part of a Clopton monument, with the Clopton shield of twenty quarterings. Also a tablet with *Clopton* impaling *Barnardiston*, 1615. There is a monumental slab with *Middelton* impaling *Oglander*, to the memory of Dame Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Oglander, Bart., and of Dame Dorothy his wife, daughter of Sir Francis Clarke, Bart., and wife of Sir Hugh Middleton, died 1701. Monumental slab for Dame Sissellia, wife of Sir Thomas Darcy, Bart., and daughter of Sir Symonds D'Ewes, Bart., and Amy his wife, sole daughter and heir of Sir Wm. Clopton, Knt. She died 1661.

The roof of this chapel is surrounded with carved foliage and broad labels inscribed in ancient black letter with a long poem known to be by Lidgate, the learned monk of Bury, and evidently coeval with the building of the church, and near to the time of the author. Until lately nearly the whole was capable of being deciphered. The walls appear to have been covered with black letter inscriptions, or monumental remains.

In the church are some handsome mural tablets, more or less ornamented with arms, &c.:—John Moore, of Kentwell hall, 1753; Rev. Jas. Johnson, Rector of Melford, died 1740-1 (his son became Bishop of Worcester); Elizabeth Parker, widow, 1833; Frances Almack, 1840; Jane Faulkner, 1852.

There are also memorials for the Rev. Nathaniel Bisbye, D.D., rector, died 1695; William Hurton, esq., 1723; Wm. Beales, M.D., died 1820, when mayor of Bury, and several of his family; Rev. John Leroo, rector, died 1819; Rev. Chas. Edwd. Stewart, 1819, "a wit, a scholar, and a gentleman," and several of his family.

In the nave are several slabs, with arms, for the Drew

family. Chas. John Drew, Esq., who was murdered by his only son 1740, was buried here, and the son was hanged at Bury, 1749.

There are some funeral hatchments of rather unusual interest:

The Viscount Savage, who died 1635. The shield contains 25 quarterings of the Savage family, impaling 12 quarterings of the family of his wife Elizabeth Darcy, afterwards Countess Rivers.

Dame Mary Barnardiston, 1737, widow of Sir Robert, the 4th baronet of the elder branch of that ancient family.

Lady Firebrace (Bridget Bacon), 1782, with the arms of her three husbands, Evers, Firebrace, and Campbell.

Harriet Oliver, widow, 1834, "a benefactress to this parish." She left 3000*l.* Consols, to provide coals for the poor.

Hart Logan, esq., M.P. for West Suffolk, 1838.

The Lady chapel adjoining to the church is a beautiful specimen of architecture, and contains much fine stone work, niches for statues, the cinque foils of the Darcy family, and other badges.

There are large side aisles, and, what is very unusual, they are continued by an aisle of the same width at the east end, behind where the altar stood. Some old monumental marbles have lost their brasses. The room now used as a vestry connects the church and Lady chapel, and was probably once occupied, day and night, by chantry priests: there are the remains of a dormitory or upper chamber.

There were the priests of a chantry founded by Wm. Clopton, another by John Hill, "Our Ladie's priest," and one on the foundation of Jeffery Foot.

The extraordinary list of furniture and utensils belonging to this church 1529, mentions "the high altar," "Jesus altar," "St. Edmund's altar," "John Hill's altar," "Mr. Clopton's altar," "Mr. Martin's priest;" also the candlesticks "with ten branches," cloths of silk, &c., which hung before almost all the saints in the calendar.

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