

THE ECCLESIASTICAL REMAINS OF BUNGAY.

THERE is little doubt, I think, that the town of Bungay owes to St. Felix the Burgundian the establishment of christianity, if not its introduction. The earthworks of Bungay, with its light and easily-cleared soil, and excellent water, would always keep up its population, which must have rendered it too important a place to be neglected by the Apostle of the East Angles, and its nearness to Flixton, and St. Margaret's South Elmham, connected by tradition, the one with the name, the other with the church of Felix, together with its position, almost in a straight line between Dunwich and North Elmham, would afford him great facility in pursuing his missionary work.

In the time of Edward the Confessor there were divers churches here. The tower of Trinity church is thought by some to belong to this period, and the evidence will shortly be put before you.

As to the church of St. Thomas, Kirby, writing in 1764, says "it hath been so long down, that no man now knows where it stood." The parish book of St. Mary's contains an entry for the presentment of St. Thomas' church, about 1530, which shows that the church must have been in a ruinous state at that time. The patron saint was St. Thomas of Canterbury, not St. Thomas the Apostle, if we may judge from the prominence of the former saint's name in St. Mary's book.

1539. It'm in p'mis payd to Sr Rychard charnell for correkyn ye servyce of thom's bekytt	ij <i>s</i> .
It. to John Pack for Racen the Wyndows of bekyt & transposyn of staynyd clothes yt thom's beket was on	ii <i>j</i> <i>s</i> . iiij <i>d</i> .

It is conjectured to have stood between the churches now existing, but I am not aware of any better foun-

dation for the conjecture than the legend of "three churches in one churchyard."

Proceeding to TRINITY CHURCH we find a round tower, with a battlement of the debased Perpendicular character, bearing the arms of 1, *Montacute*, Erm., three fusils in fess Gu.; 2, *Brotherton*, Gu., three lions passant regardant under a label of five points; 3, *Spencer*, Bishop of Norwich; 4, the letter M, crowned; 5, —; 6, initials of John Meen and William Pell, with date 1692 (?); 7, Az., a cross flory, between five martlets, *Edward Confessor*; 8, *See of Ely*, Gu., three crowns Or.

On the parapet of the staircase leading to the roof of the south aisle, is a small shield, apparently of later date, bearing what may be meant for the arms of *Bardolph*, Az., three cinquefoils Or. That this tower is old *for a round tower*, I think will not be doubted by those who examine the interior. The original design appears to have consisted of four circular windows, about six feet below the present belfry window, and directly under each of these except that towards the east, a semicircular-headed window. The window which supplies the place of these latter towards the east, has gained for the church the reputation of being of a date prior to the Conquest. It has a gable arch, which some people think to be as infallible a mark of Saxon architecture as the semicircular arch was thought to be in the last century.* Underneath it there are yet to be seen the rudiments of a semicircular arch, whether of door or window I cannot imagine. A close inspection of the material of these arches will assist in determining their date. Amongst the rough flints we find bricks of a shape not at all unlike the Roman; but my speculations have reached their utmost bound. I dare not sit in judgment upon the bricks in question, and must leave them to more mature critics. The south aisle was known as the "Chappel or Ele of St. Mary, in Bungay Trinity." Here lie Margaret Dalinger, Prioress

* Trinity Church, however, can claim high antiquity. At the Archæological Meeting the Rev. C. R. Manning pointed

out in the north wall a small blocked-up window, with Saxon long-and-short-work.

of the convent from 1465 to 1497, and Lionel Throckmorton, of whom more anon.

The bell is from the Norwich foundry (the place of which is now occupied by a triangular block of houses near the Lamb Inn), and was probably cast by Richard Brasyer the younger, in the 15th century. It only became a tenant of the tower in 1759, after the parish had sold the grand old bell, weighing some 24 cwt., which had hung there since 1566. The inscription on the present bell is—

† Fac Margareta Nobis Hec Munera Leta.

On the shoulder are three foundry shields—on a field sprigged three bells, and a ducal coronet, which is the mark of the mediæval Norwich foundry. The parish book contains some curious items relative to the casting, as—

It^m payd to the Bell-fownder for iij hunder. one q^{ter} and vij^{lb} of his owne mettall Redy shott in the bell, at xls. the hunder. according to the account vj^l. xvjs. iiij^d.

It^m paid for wast of or mettall, wch did amount to one hunder. and half and xxx^{lb} after xxxs. the hundred. That ys to saye for xvj hunder. Bell metall & pewter [this latter was collected from door to door in the parish], after vij^{lb} the hundryd, one hunder. & xvj^{lb}, xxxiij^s. ix^d., and fyve hunder. Brasse, after xiiij^{lb} the hundr., halfe a hunder. & xiiij^{lb}, xvij^s. ii^d. So the totall of our waste of bothe mettalls amountyth to j hunder. Dd.* xxx^{lb} as ys aforesaid. And the some of monye Allowed & paid for bothe waste Amountyth so as ys p'ticularly afore notyd. liis.

It^m paid to the said Bellfownder for certayne pownds of mettall and wast that was not Bokyd nor Allowyd unto hym vs.

It^m gyven to his wife in Rewarde xij^d.

It^m gyven then to his men s'vants & unto his mayde in rewarde xij^d.

It^m paid for the dyner of me^r John underwood, his brother, hynde cocker, wards wife, the Bell-fownder and his wife, at iij^d. heade, when the Bell was sett (? sent) home ij^s.

There are also Items for "drink at Brook," and in the churchyard at the setting up of the bell. The parish reckonings in the second item are very inaccurate.

* Dd. = dimidium.

Now besides the bell founder's metal, and the pewter, &c., gathered from house to house, and most likely a small old bell in the tower, the parishioners borrowed of "gyl-lyng'h'm parish, in norff., iij C. & half of Bell mettall" (*i.e.* a bell, I suppose), the return of which, after a lapse of five years, is noted in the parish book, with two memoranda.

Me the p'ishioners bowght the same mettall of John mannock, of Dech-lyng'h'm, after o'r bell was made, and y^t cost the p'ishioners of mannock £iiij. xiijs. iiijd.

From this we can determine the cost of casting and the cost of "mettall," the latter being £1. 6s. 8d. per cwt., and the former 13s. 4d., *viz.* the difference between that and xls. per cwt., the price of "mettall Redy shott in the bell."

The second memorandum is that—

We had of Mr. Everard iiijlb of mettall more wch he forgave to the p'ishioners, and this iij C. Dd. mettall was delyv'd to the said Mr. Everard, the xij day of Dece'br, in An^o 1571, by vs John Edwards, willm alleyn, & john yronson al. P'fret [Pomfret] smythe, at the house of the said John Edwards, in Bungaye.

In 1755, this fine bell was sold for £82. 7s. 6d., by faculty, in order that the architecture of the east end might be *improved*.

There is nothing particular in the poor Perpendicular architecture of the church, to call for special notice. A payment was made for erecting a screen in the chancel, in 1558. As to the conjecture that the chancel perished in the fire of 1688, the only remark to be made is, *There is* the chancel, mutilated indeed by the "improvements," in 1754, when the present tasteful east window was erected, but nevertheless, the chancel. That it was erected *c.* 1300, I think is suggested by one of the stones in a heap in the churchyard, which seems to have been the centre piece of a three-light or five-light window, of flowing tracery. Mr. Scott has recently improved the porch, and substituted a good second-Pointed window, for a very mean late Perpendicular specimen at the west end of the aisle.

The pulpit is a fine instance of Elizabethan wood work,

costing undoubtedly more than the 5s. paid in 1558, for "making the pulpit."

A branch of the Bardolph family was settled at Scothorne, Lincolnshire, and by the year 1215, the advowson of that living had been given by Robert Bardolph to the Premonstratensian Abbey at Barlings, in the same county. Shortly afterwards Hamon Bardolph of Ilketshall followed the example of his Lincolnshire relative; and the rectorial tithes of Trinity, Bungay, passed to Barlings, with the less substantial right of presenting the Bishop's nominee to the vicarage, a privilege which seems to have involved Norwich and Barlings in occasional disputes. During this period we find no Lincolnshire names among the Vicars, but several East Anglian ones: Robert *Haustede*, Robert *Somerton*, William *de Lopham*, John son of Thomas *de Walpole*, &c. At the dissolution, the rectory and vicarage passed to the crown; but in 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted the impropriation, with the advowson of the vicarage, to the see of Ely, from which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have recently transferred the latter to the see of Norwich.

We now go to the CONVENTUAL CHURCH of St. Mary.

The Convent, dedicated to God and the Holy Cross, was founded in 1160, by Roger *de Glanville*, and Gundreda, his wife, relict of Roger Bigot, as it seems, with a very small amount of self denial.

Behold, then, the Convent beginning to sow the wind in impoverishing the "pious, humble, useful, seculars" of the neighbourhood. Six rectories in Suffolk and one in Norfolk became vicarages at once: *viz.*, Bungay St. Mary, Bungay St. Thomas, Ilketshall St. Andrew, Ilketshall St. Laurence, Ilketshall St. Margaret, Mettingham and Roughton.

Behold these ladies who were withdrawn from the consideration of things earthly, acting the part of a Jew money-lender to a needy knight, Sir James *de Ilketshall*, who in the year 1268, mortgaged certain lands to the Lady Sarah, Prioress, for 27½ marks of silver, and failing to pay the money, forfeited an acre of land, and the advowson of the church of St. John the Baptist, Ilketshall. A similar

transaction is pathetically recorded in the "Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode," where, as Little John was in Barnsdale, we are told

Then came there a knyght rydyng
 Full sone they gan hym mete,
 All decry then was his semblaunte,
 And lytell was his pride,
 Hys one fote iu the sterope stode,
 That other waved besyde.
 Hys hode hangyng over hys eyen two:
 He rode in simple a ray;
 A soryer man than he was one
 Rode never in somers day.

He is bid by Robin Hood to dinner, but has only half a pound to offer his host. Robin asks him the cause of his poverty, and he says he has lost all by ransoming his son, who had committed murder:—

My londes beth set to wedde (mortgage) Robyn,
 Untyll a certayn daye,
 To a ryche abbot here besyde,
 Of Saynt Mary abbay.

The rectory of St. John's Ilketshall, shared the fate of its neighbours, and became a vicarage in 1309; but these ill-gotten gains did not prosper, and before another century, the convent was in debt, and had to be set straight by further grants.

The great question which now comes before us is concerning the apostate Katherine de Montacute, whether the apostate of 1376, is or is not the Prioress of 1380.

This lady was probably a daughter of Edward Montacute, who died in 1362, and a sister of Joan Montacute, who carried the castle by marriage to William de Ufford. Why she fled from the convent does not appear; but Edward the Third's warrant for her apprehension is still in existence in the Tower of London:—

Touching the taking of an apostate.

The King to his well-beloved and trusty John Trailly, Knight, Andrew Cavendish, Knight, Walter Amyas, Clerk, Hugh Fastolf, Edmund Gourney, John Caltoft, and Edmund Spicer, Health: Whereas Katherine de Montacute, a nun in the convent of Bungeye,

of the order of St. Benedict, within the diocese of Norwich, having rightly and lawfully taken vows, is wandering and fleeing about from parish to parish, in divers parts of our kingdom of England, in secular dress, to the contempt of the dress of her order, in peril of her soul, and to the manifest scandal of her said order, as the Ven'able Father in Christ, Henry Bishop of Norwich, hath by his letters patent signified to us: We have appointed you and every man to take and arrest the same Katherine wherever she may be found, whether within or without the liberties, and to cause her to be delivered to the Prioress of the said Convent of Bungeye, or to her attorneys in this matter, to be punished according to the rule of the aforesaid order.

And so we command you and every man, strictly enjoining that with all diligence ye endeavour according to the above, and perform and execute those things in the aforesaid form. And we enjoin upon all and singular deputy-lieutenants, mayors, bailiffs, constables, and others our faithful subjects, as well within as without the liberties, by the tenor of these present injunctions, that they aid, counsel, and abet you and any man in performing and executing the above, so often and so much as they may be called forth by you or by any man in this matter, on our behalf.

In witness whereof, &c.

At Westminster, the 7th day of March, 1376.

It seems to me that there is no necessity for a rigid literal interpretation of this warrant, especially when we bear in mind that it is only lately that such forms have passed away. The terms of the warrant would have been just the same if the Lady Katherine had been with the Lady de Ufford all the time. All that we can conclude is that she and the Prioress had a quarrel, and that something more than persuasion was required to bring her back. For my own part, I am inclined to believe her to be the same Katherina de Monte Acuto who became Prioress in 1386, and whose hatchment stood in the church many years after her death. We find in 1536, a payment of *iiijd.* "for frynge & buckram to the Armys of ye Lady Kateryn," noted in the parish book.

Among the last privileges conferred upon the nunnery was an extension of sanctuary right, towards a most undesirable class of malefactors. This was at the beginning

of that reign in which "the flood came and destroyed them all." Two hundred years before the dissolution there had been a Prioress and fifteen nuns. At the dissolution, there were but eleven; or, as Dr. Tanner states, seven, besides the Prioress. As to the report made by the King's Commissioners, probably "ignorance is bliss."

The boundaries appear to be:—North, the present church and ruins, continued as far as the railings, where the wall ran northward for a while. South, a wall through the garden of the house now occupied by Mr. French, and Mr. Cuddon's timber-yard, the latter being the present parish boundary. East, the river partly, partly the present wall. West, the present wall.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the beauty of the tower, or the superior character of the north aisle; but it is right to draw your attention to the disadvantages under which both labour, the one from the loss of the tracery of the belfry windows, the other from the destroying hand that has removed nearly half the small finials in the battlement.* The north side of the church was evidently intended to be looked at; and, indeed, when the open market place extended, as I most fully believe it did, from the present churchyard to the head of Bridge Street, or perhaps to the ground now occupied by Mr. S. Smith's residence, the church and convent must have appeared as a noble object to the traveller entering Bungay from the west or the north.

The part of the priory building joining to the east end of the church is not a ruined chancel. The older drawings of the church represent these walls as running up to a gable. Judging from the slender piers of the north window and south side, the architecture is Early Decorated—anterior to 1300.

Pausing at the porch, we notice the two corbels, the one a knight in armour, with a shield bearing the letter M; the other apparently a representation of the fable of the

* The exterior of the north aisle has now been thoroughly restored. The battlement displays its ancient beauty, and the

Burwell clunch that formed the tracery of the windows has been replaced by Bath stone.
J. J. R., Jan., 1866.

mouse and the lion. We may also observe the shield bearing the emblems of the Crucifixion, forming the centre boss of the groined roof of the porch. The woodwork of the aisles, though late, is not to be despised.

The Church of our Lady was rich in obits, or masses for the dead, having no less than thirteen annual celebrations. The item, in 1526, for one of them contains a singular instance of heathenism:—

Payd for ye obyte of Austen leny, to ye prest & to
ye Clerk, & ye payse pe'ny

vij*d*.

Can this be Charon's obolus? Possibly so. In 1551, all the obit lands became crown property, and in the place of payments "to ye supp'resse for ye lyghts of ij obytts," we find one "more of metyngham" collecting the rents not only for Protestant Edward, but for Romanist Philip and Mary.

The north aisle of this church, which is itself dedicated to the Holy Cross, is the chapel of St. Mary; and the south aisle the chapel of St. Eligius, the patron of blacksmiths. In the former it seems there was an organ or rather "orgons," for the "makeyng of which there was paid in 1535 viiijs. vj*d*." In the same year there was a payment of xij*d*. for "mending the orgons in the quire."

In 1539 the parson of St. Peter's received ij*d*. when he came "to set orgons," and eleven years afterwards he received ijs. for the same service. These occupations seem to have been the most useful that the clergy of that day entered into. Here Sir Ellis, of Mundham, receives a consideration for writing the parish accounts, and at Mildenhall Sir somebody trudges over from Ely to keep the clock in order.

The parish book is unusually rich in events of the time of the Reformation.

In 1547, Anno. Edward VI, 1o. there is a receipt of xiiij*s*. "for certayn images that were sold."

"Itm. paid to sempson for skrapyng ye Xpofer xvj*d*." Some "tabernacles" are taken down, others whitewashed, and English Psalters, &c., are bought, but nevertheless the sexton continues to watch the Easter sepulchre, and is paid xvj*d*. for that service.

But I must not multiply extracts from this book, which would form the subject for a long essay. Our good friend Mr. Scott had purposed giving us a paper on the subject, had his health permitted him. In treating of the Ecclesiastical Remains of Bungay, I can do little more than glance at the book.

And now we are on the spot I would crave the opinion of those amongst us who have practical knowledge of masonry, whether these massive walls might not easily form the walls of a restored chancel. In that case we need little but the east wall, a roof, and a chancel-arch. Let us observe too, before passing on, the number of pieces of *hewn stone* employed in the construction of this chancel. Here is a cylindrical shaft, there a mullion, &c., &c. Now whence are these? Is it not likely that they were portions of the castle destroyed in 1174—that Rogerus le Bigot, although he received a license in 1281 “*kernellare mansum suum de Bungay*,” might never have availed himself of the license, or at any rate might have given over some of the doubtless vast heaps of masonry for the site of the then rising Convent?

Turning to the east, we find ourselves in one of the Priory buildings, but what?—here is an original doorway—there stands another not designed for its present position. Above us is an almarie, or some kind of closet. But there is nothing to identify this with the chapel of the Blessed Mary *of* not *in* the Priory of Bungay, as the words quoted in Suckling’s *Suffolk* testify.

Having now discussed briefly the churches now existing, the priory and the church of St. Thomas, there remain three other matters of interest:—

- (1.) The Chapel on the bridge,
- (2.) The Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen, and
- (3.) The Grammar school.

As to the first of these, it has utterly disappeared, and the only entry that I have been able to obtain respecting it is from Bishop Turner’s MS. “to the bylding the chapel of our lady on the brygge in Bungay, 1532.” I know of only

two other instances. Those who know Wakefield will remember at once the beautiful little Perpendicular chapel on a buttress of the bridge over the Calder. Then again, at some town in Shropshire (?) was a chapel on a bridge, which in post-reformation times had a pulpit on one side of it, seats for the congregation on the other, and the high road between the two.

It must be borne in mind that the old Bungay bridge, which stood rather higher up the stream, was a much larger structure than the present "Falcon bridge."

The chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, perhaps a lazaret, is at present the residence of Mr. Watson, blacksmith; and a number of human bones have lately been turned up in his garden. All that remains now is a portion of the western wall, with a Perpendicular doorway, nearly perfect.

The chapel in the churchyard was saved from the general wreck of the priory, and turned into a grammar school; an arrangement which, if I remember rightly, was also adopted at Wymondham. The parish book of St. Mary's contains the following entries respecting the alterations:—

1565. It. paid for ij lods Rede and my charge makyng
the chappell in ye churchyard for a gramer
skole

xxxs. xd.

It. pd for di. a C oke borde for ye skole wyndows

ijjs.

It seems from such instances that the words of the good and wise "prosper in the thing whereto they are sent," though not perhaps precisely according to the intention of the speaker. Latimer's spirited intercession to Henry VIII, to save a few of the monasteries in each diocese for theological training colleges failed of its exact intent; but doubtless such sentiments did not go forth into vacuum. Surely we may see their fruits in the sparing of this chapel of St. Mary. Endowment indeed was their none—yet there was a room, a *πὸν στῶ*, from which, however, there has been at present no sensible shaking of the earth. But the room seems to have been unbearable, and the school was removed to a position near the Bungay toll-gate, just opposite the

north-west churchyard gate. There is an entry in St. Mary's parish book, which may refer either to this change or to further improvement in the chapels in the churchyard.

1568. Itm. paid for half a hundred poplyng borde for
the skool house ijs. iiijd.

In 1580 or thereabouts, Lionel Throckmorton gave the present school premises, and "there was lent to the Town Revys of Bungaie, towards the byldyng of the newe Schole, by th' assent of the Parishioners, £8. 6s. 8d." The subsequent history of the school may be read in the interesting pamphlet published three years ago by our highly respected fellow-townsmen, John B. Scott, Esq., but it is impossible to dismiss without noticing Mr. Popson's school constitutions, throwing, as they do, so clear a light on the state of education in the days of Queen Elizabeth. One specimen must suffice—the boys are only to play on Thursdays, and then sparingly, except it be by requisition of *some honest householder*. This is an excellent illustration of a scene in the "Merry Wives of Windsor."

Mrs. Page—How now, Sir Hugh, no school to-day?

Evans—No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

The school-house still stands on the site given by Lionel Throckmorton. It was much injured, probably gutted, in the fire of 1688, but the Elizabethan E. still marks the period of its erection. A stone over the door bears the following distich:—

"Exurgit lætum tumulo subtriste cadaver,
Sic Schola nostra redit clarior usta rogo.

1690."

The convent with all its endowments, tithes, and advowsons, has utterly perished. Tradition and documents, and remains together, give but a doubtful light as to the position of cloisters and chapel and refectory. Its rights and privileges are absorbed in the great ducal vortex—the manor of Bungay Priory. It sowed the wind and reaped a whirlwind, so unsparing that it has left but £60 a year to the Incumbent of the church of the Holy Cross, better known as St. Mary's.

Its bones lie scattered throughout the parish, even unto Stowe Park, but we live in hope the days are in store which shall reinstate our grand old church to her pristine beauty—that the “building up of old waste places” will be seen by our eyes; and our town, which in a smaller degree, may be called the “Bury St. Edmund’s of East Suffolk,” will have no reason to be ashamed of the interior of St. Mary’s as compared with the exterior.

J. J. RAVEN.

METTINGHAM CASTLE AND COLLEGE.*

THE Castle of Mettingham is one of those erections of which our Societies visited another example a year or two ago at Wingfield, of a fortified manor house rather than a regular military fortress such as we have just seen upon its lofty artificial mound, at Bungay. It has been, however, a place of very considerable strength. It owes its origin to Sir John de Norwich, who obtained license from Edward the Third, 21st August, 1342, to castle his residence here in reward for his services in the French wars. The deed is printed by Suckling in his *History of Suffolk*, vol. i, p. 173. He was the son of Sir Walter de Norwich, of a family believed to be descended from the Bigots, Earls of Norfolk, a branch of whom may have adopted the name of de Norwich from birth or residence there, and who appear to have slightly changed their arms accordingly. He was an Admiral under Edward the Third, “versus partes orientales,” and was summoned to parliament as a Baron, 25th Feb., 1342. He was Governor of Angoulême, in France, where he saved his

* Read at a joint meeting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Societies, October 9th, 1861.