

ON THE PARISH AND PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STOKE ASH.

THE PARISH.

The parish of Stoke Ash consists of 1200 acres, lying on the East and West sides of the high road between Ipswich and Norwich, and is situate in the Rural Deanery and Hundred of Hartismere, in the Arch-deaconry of Suffolk, and in the Diocese of Norwich. From the first half of the name of the parish—Stoke—it would appear to have been, in Saxon or Danish times, a place fortified with stockades to resist an enemy. The other half of its name—Ash—is, no doubt taken from the ash-tree; why, it is not so easy positively to determine. It is, however, well known that the ash was accounted a sacred tree among the Teutons and Scandinavians, and Ash is a compound of not uncommon occurrence in the names of places. Perhaps it may not be rash to conjecture that superstitious worship connected with the ash-tree was formerly offered in those places at least the names of which are compounded of Ash; such, for instance, as the following:—Badwell Ash and Ashfield, two villages eight miles Westward; Campsea Ash, Ashbocking, near Needham, and Ashby, near Lowestoft, all in Suffolk. From the earliest ages the ash-tree has been widely deemed an antidote to sorcery and a cure for the supposed fascinations of evil spirits, to whose influence all diseases not arising from obvious external

causes were formerly attributed.* And it is curious, also, to remark that two superstitious practices connected with the ash-tree still survive in distant parts of England—Warwickshire for instance. For a ruptured infant, it is considered by the ignorant a safe and certain cure to pass the patient *in puris naturalibus* from father to mother, and back again, through the cleft of a young ash tree, which is immediately afterwards bandaged up; the child and the tree being supposed to recover simultaneously. As absurd is the superstition connected with a so-called Shrew-ash; or an ash tree in a hole of which a harmless shrew-mouse is known to have been imprisoned alive. Superstitions like these, strange as they are, have undoubtedly descended from former times; times in which the estimation of the ash tree may have even added the name of the tree to the name of the parish, to be, as in this instance, ever after distinguished as Stoke Ash; for names are the bladders upon which ancient errors and crude conceptions are floated down the stream of time. † In this connection I may mention that ash trees, not very old, are growing in the churchyard; and some fine ones are still said to flourish at Stoke Hall. The tree flourishes best by the side of a river or brook. The brook in this parish flows through Thorndon Pool and falls into the “rivulet called the Ea, running by Aye, Brome, and Ocley into the Waveney” at a point dividing Oakley and Hoxne.

With regard to the geology of the parish, I am able only to state that in the year 1812 as some labourers were raising gravel, they found, ten feet below the surface, amongst other remains, two grinders and four of the cutting teeth of an elephant, in a mineralized state. One of the grinders weighed 6lbs., the other $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Some British cinerary urns, and a celt, were found by some men in the year 1851 when digging on the North

* Munford's "*Local Names in Norfolk.*"

† Sir Henry Holland's "*Fragments.*"

side of the brook below the church, and were exhibited at a meeting of the Institute held at Eye, on the 27th of April, 1854. The urn exhibited by Lord Henniker stands 15 inches high, and measures 10 inches across the mouth. It is engraved in our "*Proceedings*," Vol. ii., page 101.

Unfortunately for the enquirer into the more recent history of this parish, "Stoke," is one of the commonest of place names. At the present time there are more than sixty places in England called Stoke, all of which existed at the time of the Norman Conquest; one only of these sixty Stokes, namely Stoke Ash, being situate in the Hundred of Hartismere. It is not surprising that entries from so many places bearing the same name, should have been confusing to the Conqueror's Commissioners. The fact is that in Domesday Book, under Hartismere Hundred, we find no less than six entries relating to Stoke, namely these:—

DOMESDAY BOOK.

- Section 285b *Stoches* (1)
- Section 321a *Soches* (2)
- Section 321a *Stoches* (3)
- Section 370a *Stotas* (4)
- Section 370a *Stota* (5)
- Section 370a *Stoches* (6)

Having carefully considered the nature of the different entries, I have come, with some hesitation, to the conclusion that Stoke Ash is not the place referred to in (2), inasmuch as the entry is an account of a place too large, I think, to correspond with this parish; nor in (4), (5), and (6), since these three entries refer to land possessed by "the Abbey;" no Abbey, so far as I am aware, having property in Stoke Ash at the time of the Conquest. Two entries remain (1) and (3), the first of which possibly refers to our Stoke Ash; and the third I believe certainly does so. I append the two extracts, with expansions and transla-

tions, very kindly revised by Sir T. Duffus Hardy:—

<p>(1)</p> <p>TERRA REGIS. <i>Hertesmera H.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stoches</i>. iiii. lib' i. ho'es. c' m' d. Burchardi vii. ac dim' ac p'ti. 7 val. ij. sol' 7 iiii d'</p>	<p>TERRA REGIS. <i>Hundredum de Hertesmera.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stoches</i> quatuor liberi homines com- mendati Burchardi, octo acrae, dimidium acrae prati, et valet duo solidos et quatuor denarios.</p>	<p>LAND OF THE KING. <i>Hundred of Hartismere.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stokes</i> there are four free men, vassals* of Burchard. There are eight acres [of arable land], half an acre of meadow; and it is worth 2s. 4d. * i. e., in the protection of, or freedmen enfran- chised by.</p>
<p>(3)</p> <p>TERRA ROBERTI MALET. <i>H. de Hertesmara.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stoches</i> tenuit Idē Siric' xx acr' 7 ij. bor. Tn'c. j. car'. in d'nio. m' dim'. 7 ij. acr' p'ti. 7 val v. sol. Stigand' Socā.</p>	<p>TERRA ROBERTI MALET. <i>Hundredum de Hertesmara.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stoches</i> tenuit idem Siricus viginti acras et duos bor- darios. Tunc una carucata [terræ] in dominio modo dimi- dia, et duæ acrae prati: et valet quinque solidos. Stigandus [habet] Socam.</p>	<p>THE LANDS OF ROBERT MALET. <i>Hundred of Hartismere.</i></p> <p>In <i>Stokes</i> the same Siric (the freeman or vassal of Stigand) held 20 acres and kept two provisioners. Then [there was] one carucate [of arable land] in demesne— now half a carucate, and two acres of meadow; and it is worth 5s. Stigand [has] the Soke.</p>

The parish of Stoke Ash contains two Manors—(1) the Manor of Stoke Hall, and (2) the Manor of Woodhall.

(1.) THE MANOR OF STOKE, LATTERLY NAMED THE MANOR OF STOKE HALL WITH THORPE.

The following is a list of the Lords of the Manor of Stoke Hall, as given by D. E. Davy, who, with H. Jermyn, visited Stoke Ash on April 23rd, 1819:—

A. D.	REIGN.	MANOR HELD BY
1041 1066	Edw. Confessor. Wm. Conqueror.	Siric, Archbishop of Canterbury. Robert Malet.
1274 1315	3 Edw. I. 9 Edw. II.	Prior of Eye. Prior of Eye.

A. D.	REIGN.	MANOR HELD BY
1396	20 Rich. II.	Prior of Eye, had free warren confirmed to him.
1536	28 Henry VIII	On Suppression of Priory, the King.
1537	29 Henry VIII.	Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, by grant.
1537	29 Henry VIII.	Edmund Bedingfield.
1557	5 and 6 Philip and Mary	John Parker (who died 1573) and Mildred his wife, by grant.
1566	8 Elizabeth	Edmund, Lord Clinton and Say, and Leonard Irby, Esqre., by grant.
1574	16 Elizabeth	Mildred Parker, wife of John.
1574	16 Elizabeth	John Parker, son and heir of John. John Bokenham, Esqre., of Thornham, alienated it to
1609	6 James I.	Edmund Bokenham, son and heir (died 1619) and Barbara, his wife.
1619	16 James I.	Sir Henry Bokenham, Knt., son and heir.
1648	23 Charles I.	Wiseman Bokenham, Esq., son and heir.
1670	10 Charles II.	Paul Bokenham, Esq., son and heir, who died 1682.
1729	2 Geo. II.	Thomas Tyrel Bokenham, Esqre.
1739	12 Geo. II.	Charles Killebrew, Esqre., who by will gave it to Charles Tyrell, Esqre., who sold it to
1764	4 Geo. III.	Sir John Major, Bart., who died 1781. Anne, his daughter and co-heiress, married John Henniker, Esqre., afterwards Baronet, who died 1792. Elizabeth, his daughter and co-heiress, married Henry, last Duke of Chandos.
1785	25 Geo. III.	Elizabeth, Duchess-Dowager of Chandos, William Tennant, and James Norman, Esqrs., Trustees of Dame Anne Henniker, wife of Sir John
1799	39 Geo. III.	John Henniker-Major, Esqre., and Elizabeth, Duchess-Dowager of Chandos.
1808	48 Geo. III.	Elizabeth, Duchess of Chandos, who died 1813.
1813	53 Geo. III.	John, 1st Lord Henniker. John, 2nd Lord Henniker, son and heir, died 1821, s. p.
1821	1 Geo. IV.	John Minet, 3rd Lord Henniker, cousin and heir, died 1832.
1832	2 Wm. IV.	John, 4th Lord Henniker.
1870	33 Victoria.	John Major, 5th Lord Henniker, son and heir, present Lord.

The other Manor in the parish is—

(II.) THE MANOR OF WOODHALL, NOW CALLED WOODHALL IN STOKE.

The following is a list of the Lords of this Manor from the year 1206 :—

A. D.	REIGN.	MANOR HELD BY
1206	8 John	Eustace de Gerardville conveyed by fine a carucate and half of land to William de Gerardville.
1210	12 John	William de Gerardville passed by fine this advowson to the Prior of Eye.
1270	54 Henry III.	Thomas de Gerardville. William de Gerardville, son and heir, conveyed the advowson by fine to the Prior of Eye.
1397	21 Rich. II.	Sir John Gerardville. Thomas Poley. First Court. Richard Poley, of Badley, Esqre., son and heir. Simon Poley, Esqre., son and heir (died 1485).
1485	1 Henry VII.	Henry Poley, Esqre.
1487	3 Henry VII.	Edmund Poley.
1548	1 Edw. VI.	John Poley.
1589	31 Elizabeth	Richard Poley.
1592	34 Elizabeth	Edmund Poley.
1640	15 Charles I.	Sir Edmund Poley, Knt.
1640	15 Charles I.	Sir Henry Crofts, Knt.
1646	21 Charles I.	Edmund Hervey, Esqre., of Wickham Skeith, by purchase. First Court, 1648. (Died 1664).
1664	4 Charles II.	Henry Hervey, Esqre.
1664	4 Charles II.	Elizabeth, his wife, as Guardian of his son.
1666	6 Charles II.	Edmund Hervey, Gent., son and heir of Henry and Anne his wife (<i>sic.</i>) First Court, 1671.
1695	6 Wm. and Mary	They sold it to
1706	4 Anne	William Ellis, of Cotton, Gent., and Ann his wife. First Court.
1719	5 Geo. I.	Ann, his widow, re-married to John Heigham, Gent. Their first Court, 1723. She died 1738.

A.D.	REIGN.	MANOR HELD BY
1738	11 Geo. II.	John Ellis, Esqre., son and heir of William and Frances his wife. First Court, 1738.
1739	12 Geo. II.	Frances, his widow, re-married to Sir William Gage, Bart. They sold it to
1752	25 Geo. II.	George Turner, Gent.
1784	24 Geo. III.	George Turner, Gent., cousin, by will
1797	37 Geo. III.	Rev. George Thomas Turner, son and heir, of Kettleburgh, Lord, in 1817. (Henry Jermyn, Esq., of Sibton, Steward).
1874	37 Victoria.	Henry Lewis Round-Turner, Esqre., Commander R.N., present Lord.

In the Davy Collection (which I have consulted in the British Museum) may be found abstracts of deeds relating to landed property in Stoke Ash, owned in the year 1825 by the Rev. G. Turner, bearing date:—

1640	1683	1701	1741
1646	1695	1703	1741
1647	1697	1704	1752
26 Chas. II. (1673)	1697	1706	1771
1674	1697	1737	1771

Then follow—

“Nomina Tenent : tam lib. quam. nat. of This Woodhall Manor.”
24 pages folio, closely written.

CUSTOMARY.				TOTALS :—				FREE.			
A	R.	P.	£ s. d.	A	R.	P.	£ s. d.	A	R.	P.	£ s. d.
99	0	20	4 18 3	154	1	0	1 6 6				

It should be added that some part of the parish of Stoke is in another Manor, probably that of “Brockford with the members.”

THE CHURCH.

Stoke Ash Church is dedicated to Almighty God in honour of All Saints, and consists of a West Tower, Nave with South Porch, and Chancel. Its dimensions are, in

breadth just about 23 feet, and the length of Chancel, Nave, Tower Arch, Tower, and doorway amounts to 76 feet 3 inches. We have in this small and interesting Church one or more fairly good examples of each of the various styles of architecture, Norman, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular.

NORMAN PERIOD OF ARCHITECTURE.—1066-1170.

The Priest's door in the North wall of the Chancel, on its outside is Norman work. Another North door Westward in the Nave is also Norman, but is now closed up. And a third door, that which is now protected by the South porch, is also Norman. Behind this door was a hole in the wall $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, now filled up. These remains of the Norman period allow us to suppose that a Church existed on this spot soon after the Conquest; and the following extract from the Register of Eye Priory throws additional light upon the history of the village and Church at this time:—

“Robert Malet, by his charter of foundation of the Church of the Convent of Eye, gave to the Monks there of his lands—the village called Stoke in its entirety, the holy Church [there] with its lands and tithes, without other possessions, together with all that tenement which his chaplain Bender held of him.”*

From this extract it would appear that the Prior and Convent of Eye at this early period, before A.D. 1086, were possessed of the entire parish of Stoke Ash, as well as the Advowson of the Church. How it is that the Priory did not retain the Great Tithes and leave the Small Tithes for a Vicar, in the spirit of that age—

“*Canonico tractante negotia mundi,
Jugis et assiduus Divina Vicarius implet;*”

is not quite evident.

The neighbouring parish of Yaxley suffered at this time the loss of its Great Tithes, which were paid to the Ecclesiastic who ruled the Eye Priory, by whom a resident Vicar was

* Robt. Malet p. cartam suam fundationis Ecclesie Conv. de Eya dedit monachis ibm de terris suis villam que dicitur Stoke cum omni integritate sua,

scilicet Ecclesiam cum terris et decimis sine aliis possessionibus cum omni tenore quod Bender capl' suis (sic) de eo tenuit. *Reg. de Eye*, fol. 10, quoted by Davy.

appointed, receiving as his remuneration the Small Tithes. The Parson of Stoke Ash, however, always received all the tithes of the parish, great and small, now commuted at £363, probably because no Prior of Eye considered the Small Tithes of the parish alone a sufficient maintenance for a priest. Certain it is that Yaxley has continued a Vicarage, and All Saints, Stoke Ash, a Rectory, to this day.

No names have come down to us of the Rectors of Stoke Ash during the Norman period. The name of the first known Rector of the parish, Robert of Worlingham, occurs at the commencement of the Early English style of architecture. Before referring to the Early English work in the Church, it may, therefore, be convenient to give the names of the Rectors from that time to the present.

RECTORS OF THE PARISH.

1200—Before this date ROBERT OF WORLINGHAM was Rector.

From the Kalendar of the evidences of Butley Priory, Chancellor Tanner has made the following extracts in Latin:—"Page 46. Charter of the first John [*i.e.*, of Oxford, died 1200], Bishop of Norwich, concerning the churches of *All Saints, Stokes*, and others. Also: Charter of the same John made with master Robert of Worlingham, for instituting him Parson in the said church of *All Saints, Stokes*, upon our presentation, on payment being made to us of the yearly pension of half a marc. Page 47. Confirmation by the second John [*i.e.* de Grey, consecrated in 1200 A.D. Bishop of Norwich], of the concession of the first John respecting the churches of Ramsholt, *All Saints, Stokes*, and others." Tanner also refers to Fin. Suff. [1209] 11 John n. 54 pro advoc. eccl. de Stokes.

It would appear from the above particulars that the Advowson of Stoke Ash was for some reason made over by the Eye Monks to Butley Priory, in this county, and that the concession was sanctioned by John of Oxford, Bishop of Norwich, and confirmed by his successor in the Bishopric, John de Grey. The advowson, however, seems soon to have passed back to Eye Priory; and Butley Priory does not appear to have again possessed it. It will, therefore, be convenient, in this place, to give the next undated extract:—

Chancellor Tanner quotes the following from the Kalendar of the evidences of Butley Priory:—"Page 43. Money-payment agreed upon between us [*i.e.*, Butley Priory] and the Rector of Stokes under the seal of William Norwich, elected of the Prior and Convent of Eye, and of the said Rector: Concerning tithes to be received from the domain of Sir Robert de Kenton Knight, in the villages of Debenham and Kenton, payable yearly to the aforesaid Rector and his successors: namely, 30s., at the

two Synods held at Ipswich; under penalty of 20s. for the use of the Bishop of Norwich."

Unfortunately there is nothing in this extract which enables me to fix the date to which it belongs. I doubt if the Latin text, which I add below,* has been correctly transcribed.

Here it must be noticed that the Lord of the Manor of Woodhall, William de Gerardville, in 1210 A.D., passed this Advowson by fine to the Prior of Eye. Thomas de Gerardville was the next Lord of the Manor. His son and heir, William de Gerardville, in the year 1270 seems to have disputed the Prior's right to present. For in Tanner's notes I have found the following:—

"The right of of the Prior [of Eye] in the Advowson of Stoke Ash against William son of Thomas de Gerardevil. Fin. Suff. 114, probably a mistake for 14 Henry III. [i.e. 1229] n. 141."

Certain it is that in the year

1239 WILLIAM [LE FRAUNCEYS. Reg. Prior Eye fo. 58] was instituted.

In the year 1268 the Advowson of the Church of Stoke next Thorndon is mentioned in Fin. Suff. 53 Henry III. n. 15. And in Harl. 639, fo. 58-71b, Sir Simonds D'Ewes makes the next two extracts in Latin from the Eye Register called Malet:—(1) Page 3a. "Charter of William de Gerardville respecting the Advowson of the Church of Stoke next Thorndon, in the reign of Henry III." (2) Page 6a. "Final agreement between William, Prior of Eye, complainant (querentem) and William, son of Thomas de Gerardville, keeping him out of possession (deforcientem) in the matter of the Advowson of the same Church."

At length the dispute between William de Gerardville and the Prior of Eye seems to have terminated in favour of the Prior. For, in the year 1270, William de Gerardville conveyed the Advowson by fine to the Prior: possibly on terms so advantageous that the following extract accurately expresses the nature of the conveyance:—

"William de Gerardville gave to the Monks of Eye the Church of Stoke next Thorndon."†

I wish to add that having given my best consideration to

* In Kalend. evid. Prioratús de Buttele f. 43. Compositio inter nos et Rectorem de Stokes sub sigillo W Norwic. electi Prioris et Conv. de Eya et dci Rectoris super decimis percipiendis de Dño Robti de Kenton militis in villis de

Debenham et Kenton reddendo annatim prædcō Rectori et successoribus suis xxxs. ad duas Synodas, Gipp, sub pœna xxs. ad opus Dni Norwic. Epi.

† Quoted by Chancellor Tanner:—MS. Dodsworth 138 ex Regro Eye.

the foregoing details, I offer them to the reader rather as contributions to the history of the Advowson than as being myself fully satisfied of their relevancy. I feel unable to bestow such investigation upon them as would fully elucidate their proper bearings, and must be content with placing before my readers—*συνετὰ συνεπίστω*

- 1302 April 13. JOHN OF PAKEFIELD was instituted on the presentation of the Prior and Convent of Eye.
- 1319 December 31. NICHOLAS AUBRY was instituted on the presentation of the same.
- 1324 March 15. WILLIAM LOUND was instituted on the presentation of our Lord the King [Edw. II.] on account of the temporalities of the Priory of Eye, "raone temp. Prioratus de Eye."

D. E. Davy quotes from Orig. de A^o 20 Edw. III. [*i.e.*, 1345] rot. 9. Suff. the following in Latin:—"The King, on the petition of William Lound, etc., conceded to Oliver de Denelay, parson of the Church of Stoke next Eye, all the tithes, etc., of the lands, etc., belonging to the Priory of Eye now in the hands of the King, within the limits of the parish aforesaid. The King's rent thence * xxs. vid. yearly.

Abbe: Rot. Orig. vol. 2, p 180."

- 1346 August 1. OLIVER OF DYNELAY was this day instituted on the presentation of the King, for the same reason.
- 1347 October 14. RICHARD OF NORTH CREYK was instituted on the presentation of the King, for the same reason.
- 1350 June 23. ROGER LE YONGE, the same.
- 1352 April 5. WALTER SWETE was instituted.

The following extract (from Heyd. 161) the meaning of which does not seem quite clear, I give as I found it in the Latin:—"Ad præs Dⁿⁱ R inst. ejus prob. 4 Sept., 1379, tep. in canc. ex^o sinistra coram imag. S. Mariæ." (Ad præsentationem domini Regis institutus. Ejus probatio testamenti 4 Sept., 1379, etc.), perhaps meaning:—"He was instituted on the presentation of the lord the King. His will was proved on the 4th of September, 1379, 'in canc.' on the left hand side; before St. Mary's image."

- 1379 Sept. 18. ROGER OF COUPELAND instituted on the presentation of our Lord the King "ead. raône."
- 1382 July 8. HUGH SPAKKING OF STOW was instituted on the presentation of the King, by exchange with [the parson of] Houghton Line. (Hars. 120).
- 1382 March 10. JOHN DOBBES (DOWES) was instituted on the presentation of the Prior and Convent of Eye.
- 1401 November 18. THOMAS MAYSTER, on the presentation of the same, by exchange with N. Rungton.

* Original: Redd. inde R

- 1410 October 6. JOHN FINCH (ROBERT DUNCH), on the presentation of the same, by exchange with E. Bilney.
- 1415 August 17. THOMAS MARBELL OF AYLHAM instituted on presentation of the Prior and Convent of Eye.
- 1417 May 11. EDMUND DRURY (JOHN SALTER), on the presentation of the same.
- 1432 July 24. WALTER QUYNTYN. (11 H. VI.)
- 1439 January 21. JOHN POLEY, on the presentation of the Prior and Convent of Eye.
- 1444 October 13. WILLIAM PERYMAN, on the presentation of the same.
- 1461 August 23. WALTER QUYNTYN (2 Ed. IV.) on the presentation of the same.
- 1497 May 5. THOMAS GOLDYNG, on the presentation of the same.
- 1503 September 26. ROBERT KEMP (JOHN ROTHWELL) on the presentation of the same.
- 1532 August 27. THOMAS SYMONDS, on the presentation of the same. He was Incumbent also of Hinderclay, and in 1550 Commissary of Sudbury Archdeaconry.
- Blomefd. Norfk. III., 657.*
- 1563 October 28. CUTHBERT CLERKE instituted on the presentation of the Queen. He died 1575.
- D. E. Davy refers to Pat. 17 Eliz. p. 4, m. 2 [*i.e.*, 1574] and makes the following extract:—"Humphrey Fowler holds the Queen's Letters Patent for the Presentation to the Rectory of Helmingham in the diocese of Norwich...[and] similar Letters for the Rectory of Stoke Ash in the same diocese."
- Rymer Fœd. xv., p. 742-3.*
- 1575 February 8. JOHN DARBAY, instituted it is said on the presentation of the Queen, but probably on that of Humphrey Fowler. Mr. Darbay was also Rector of Willingham St. Mary, and was buried 19 November, 1580.
- 1580 February 14. THOMAS WILLIAMS was instituted, it is said on the presentation of the Queen. Mr. Williams had been Vicar of the neighbouring parish of Eye since December, 1576, and built here the Dove-house, which still remains. Queen Elizabeth (42 regni, *i.e.*), in the year 1599 granted the Advowson of Stoke to persons by the names of Hutton and Dawes; who sold the same to Henry Bokenham, Esquire.
- 1600 December 4. JOHN TAVENOR of London was instituted on the presentation of the assigns of Henry Buckenham (*sic*) Esquire of Thornham, and died 1604.

- 1605 February 21. RAD. KIDMAN was instituted on the presentation of Sir Henry Buckenham, Knight.
- 1607 June 1. ROBERT MILLAR (ROBERT WILLAN) instituted on the presentation of the same. The late Mr. D. E. Davy, in his *Athenæ Suffolc.*: has compiled a short life of Mr. Robert Willan.
- 1646 December 21. OLIVER HALL was instituted on the presentation of Mr. Robert Willan, and was buried 14 August, 1671. After an inquisition into the state of the parish held at Thwait on the 11th of October, 1650, a return was sent in that Wiseman Bokenham, Esqre., was patron ; Oliver Hall present Incumbent, and a "preaching minister."
- 1672 May 21. PHIL. GOODWIN was instituted on the presentation of Hugh Bokenham, gentleman.
- 1674 April 1. ZACH. FISKE was instituted on the presentation of Hugh Bokenham, Esquire, of the city of Norwich.
- 1677 November 16. WILLIAM PEPPIN was instituted on the presentation of the same, and died 2 March, 1709 ; was buried in the chancel on 6th March ; and his widow in the year 1719.
- 1710 July 20. HENRY WATTS was instituted on the presentation of Walsingham Bokenham ; was also Minister of S. Helen's, Norwich, and was served by Mr. Joseph Bokenham as Curate. Mr. Watts resigned on the 16th of January, 1712.
- 1712 January. JOSEPH BOKENHAM, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, was presented to this benefice by Walsingham Bokenham, Esqre., of Hethersett, Norfolk, on the 17th day, was instituted on the 19th, and inducted on the 29th, as his own minute record informs us. He was also, on the 19th, instituted to the Rectory of Little Thornham : and he died in 1728. A few biographical facts relating to this Rector will be mentioned in the succeeding pages.
- 1729 July 1. HENRY JOHNSTON, LL.D., was instituted on the presentation of Thomas Tyrell Bokenham. He was also Chancellor of Llandaff. Mr. Edward Bock was Curate in the year 1729.
- 1755 September 22. WILLIAM GARROOD, junior, was instituted. He was also Rector of Belstead, and died 8th of April, 1789, æt. 62. Mr. Gilbert Malkin was Curate in the year 1755-6.
- 1760 Mr. Robert Adkin was Curate.
- 1762 Mr. Lancaster Adkin was Curate.
- 1779 Mr. Rayner Bellman was Curate.
- 1789 August 13. DENNY COLE, M.A., was instituted on the presentation of John Cole, B.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.

- 1790 September 11. JOHN EDGE, was instituted on the presentation of the same.
- 1794 May 15. JOHN WARD, M.A., J.P., was instituted on the presentation of the same, and was also Rector of Occold. He died 13th Sept., 1845, aged 84. Soon after the 21st of April, 1838, when the Rector was "in his 76th year," the Advowson passed into other hands.
- 1845 October 31. SAMUEL WILLIAM BULL was instituted, probably on his own presentation.
- 1861 January 3. HENRY E. MARRIOTT BULL, B.A., his son, was instituted on this day.

EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD OF ARCHITECTURE—1170-1270.

The first on the above long list of Rectors, Robert of Worlingham, was living in the year 1200, the early part of the "Early English" century. We find that an Early English architect, perhaps the Rector himself, has left us a window—North window, number three from the West—of three lights. In this window corresponding cusps spring from the flat under surface or soffit of the three lights, having almost a Transitional character, as though budding into the Decorated style.

DECORATED PERIOD—1270-1370.

In the Decorated style of architecture there were important works going on in this Church. That period has left the parish the very beautiful North window, No. 1, of three lights; also the Font, which has an octagonal bowl of chamfered edges, standing on a four-side square neck, pierced for a drain to carry off the water which had covered the bottom of the bowl at a baptism. At present the bowl is without its usual lead lining.

The excellent wagon-shaped Nave roof, which until lately was hidden by a ceiling, probably belongs to this time.

The Church Tower was no doubt the most costly work erected in this Period, and still attests, by its excellent preservation, the quality of the materials and workmanship

bestowed upon it. It is built of cut flint, with stone facings, and is 57 feet high to the top of its battlements. The lower door in the South Tower wall opens into the entrance, and is strongly ironed, like the similar door in Westhorpe Church. Both Towers were, I believe, designed as strongholds in times of danger.

PERPENDICULAR PERIOD—1370-1537.

The rest of the Church fabric, namely, the panelled roof of the Chancel, all the South windows, and the middle window on the North containing eleven stairs which formerly led to the rood loft, belong to the Perpendicular period. Each of these windows has two lights. At this time, also, the South door was first protected by a Porch of red brick (having, however, modern stone tracery in its East and West two-light windows.) It is covered with an excellent contemporary timber roof, in good preservation and tiled. Above the entrance is a niche, protected from the weather by a moulding of brick; and in the interior a fragment of the stoup or Holy-water bason. The East window is modern; the previous one, in Tom Martin's time, contained fragments of painted glass with inscriptions now lost; and when the plaster was removed during restoration I saw, on the 12th of October, 1868, on its South splay, a figure of St. Paul, 3 ft. 10 in. high; and on its North splay another figure, a male, with these emblems: On head a three-leafed crown (not a tiara), left hand grasping a staff 4 feet high, tipped with a cross. What Saint was thus represented? The rood-screen is now gone, although the eleven steps remain, as you see,* to the rood-loft. In 1819, the rood-loft was painted with the Sacred monogram, IHS., within circular wreaths. The panels, it would seem, once contained four representations of Saints, on a ground of blue and red stars or buff and red stars alternately.

* This Paper was read when the friends of the Suffolk Institute of Church was visited by members and Archæology on the 30th of June, 1874.

There are four bells :—

1. Two feet two inches, across the mouth : “William Dobson, founder, Downham, Norfolk.”

2. Two feet five inches. No inscription.

3. Two feet nine inches. O. E. “Sancta Anna ora pro nobis.”

4. Three feet one inch. O. E. The lettering is reversed, and may be read upside down thus :—“Credo + in Deum + omni + potentem,” *i.e.*, “I be + lieve in God + The Father + Almighty.”

On the bell-gate is the date, 1832.

There is a sedile in South window number 4, and there was an oak shelf above the drain in the piscina. You will also notice what is probably an ambry on the North side of the Chancel, in which cupboard the sacramental plate and consecrated oils were once kept. Its dimensions are 26 inches high, 21 inches deep, and $28\frac{1}{2}$ inches across. Its use is explained in a book printed in 1555 A.D., called the “*Fardle of Facions*” :—

“Upon the right hand of the highe aluter that ther should be an almorie, either cutte into the walle, or framed upon it, in the whiche they woulde have the Sacrament of the Lorde’s Bodye, the Holy Oyle for the sicke, and chrismatorie, alwaie to be locked.”

Quoted by Neale and Webb, p. 134 of their “*Introduction to Durandus on Symbolism*.”

There was once to be noticed a coffin-shaped stone, having no inscription ; also the matrix of a lost brass on another slab, but I was unable to find either of these slabs on the 5th of August, 1874.

The oldest Register begins a° 31 Henry VIII., or A.D. 1539, only three years after the earliest Register known, and appears to have been regularly kept since that time. The families most often named in the Register are these :—Appewhaite, Brame, Gardiner, Bokenham, &c.

In the year 1599 the bridge upon the Queen’s highway between Stoke Ash and Wetheringsett was to be repaired : the inhabitants of Stoke Ash paying three parts, Wetheringsett the fourth part.*

* Pons in Regia via infra parochia de Stoke Ash & Wetheringsett reparari debet per inhabitant. earund. villar. viz., tres

partes per inhabit. de Stoke Ash, quarta parte per inhabitant de Wetheringsett.—Rot. Pacis, 42 Eliz.

A memorandum, in the year 1600, to be found, I think, in the Register book, informs us, under date 6th October, that "The Duffhouse of Stoke Parsonage was erected at the coste and charges of Mr. Thomas Williams, parson of Stoke Ash." The dimensions of the dovehouse are, by estimation, these:— $9 \times 9 \times 16$ feet to the wall-plate. It was well built, and continues in an excellent state of repair. Like fish-ponds, the dovehouse or Columbarium was an usual appendage to the county Manor-house. Many such houses still exist, some of great antiquity. A large dovecot, of similar construction to this, still exists some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles North of Stoke Ash, at Goswold Hall, in the parish of Thrandeston. I am unable to say whether there was any law which at this time sanctioned or forbade the erection of dovehouses; but such appears to have been the case, from some Table-Talk of John Selden, the lawyer, who discoursed about this period:—

"Some men make it a case of Conscience whether a man may have a Pidgeon-house, because his Pidgeons eat other Folks' Corn. But there is no such thing as Conscience in the business; the matter is, whether he be a man of such Quality that the State allows him to have a Dove house, if so there's an end of the business, his Pidgeons have a right to eat where they please themselves."

The earliest extant Terrier of the parish was made in the year 1627. The following complete list of these documents, preserved at Norwich, I am enabled to give by the kindness of Dr. Bensly, the Diocesan Registrar:—

TERRIERS DATED

1627	1763
1706	1770
1709	1777
1716	1784
1723	1791
1725	1794
1729	1801
1735	1806
1740	1820
1747	1827
1753	1834
1760	1845

In the Parliamentary Survey made on the 11th of October, 1650, it was found that the Glebes were worth Ten pounds yearly; pensions from neighbouring ministers, £2 15s. yearly; and tithes with other Church duties worth £50 a-year.

In the year 1713 the Rector, the Rev. Joseph Bokenham, inserted in the Parish Register a Terrier, compiled with evident care, of the glebe lands of the Parsonage. From this account the following summary is taken:—

	By estimation.			By admeasurement		
	1713.			Terrier 1845.		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
1 Homestead, Orchard, and Close	2	0	0			
The same with Churchy ^d			3	2	7
2 Road Close	6	0	0	6	2	14
3 Pightle near Stoke Bridge	1	0	0	1	0	38
4 Pightle n ^r Deadman's grave Bridge ...	1	0	0	*		
5 In Snover's Close, <i>Thwayte</i>	0	2	0	*		
6 A Close formerly a Grove, <i>Thwayte</i> ...	4	0	0	*		
7 In a <i>Gt. Thornham</i> field.....	2	0	0	*		
8 In s ^d field.....	1	1	0	*		
9 In s ^d field.....	0	3	0	*		
10 In s ^d field.....	0	0	20	*		
11 Snape's Close	5	0	0	4	3	38
12 In <i>Occolt</i>	1	0	0			

On the same page of the Register on which Mr. Bokenham entered his terrier in 1713, a later hand has recorded the following list of

PENSIONS.

	£	s.	d.
1 From the Crown (Exchequer Office)	1	10	0
2 „ Rector of Thorndon (a mark).....	0	13	4
3 „ Rector of Rishangles (half a mark) ...	0	6	8
4 „ Rector of Wetheringsett	0	5	0

From the above account it appears (as was stated in the year 1706) that the church of Stoke Ash possessed 24½ acres and half a rood of glebe land, of which 9½ acres and half a rood lie out of the parish. An asterisk *

is placed against the glebes, apparently seven pieces in all, which are stated as sold in the year 1800, and certainly were sold by the year 1834 to redeem the Land-tax.

Some cottages near Thwayte, which were accidentally burnt down (perhaps about the year 1834) were not rebuilt.

The following Returns are taken from Bacon's *Liber Regis* :—

<i>The King's Books.</i>		ARCHDEACONRY OF SUDBURY : DEANERY OF HARTISMERE.		<i>Yearly Tithes.</i>		
£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	
11	1 3	Stoke Ash R. (All SS.)	0	6	8	} 1 2 1½
		Procura Archd.	0	1	4	
		Synodals Bishop's	0	4	0	
		Prior of Eye	0	15	0	
110	0 0	Portio rec. de Prior de Buttely	1	10	0	
		„ de Rector de Thorndon	0	13	4	} etc.
		„ de Rishangles	2	0	0	

WILL^m. GARROOD,

Cl^k p. h. v.,

i.e., Rector, 1755.

Bacon's *Liber Regis*,
1786.

The Tithe of the parish, as I have already stated, is commuted for the sum of £363, including the Tithe on the glebes.

From Neve's MS. it appears that every house paid the Rector 14 cheeses of their ordinary make. The almoner of the Cathedral Priory at Norwich received a Temporal rent of 6s. 8d. from this parish by virtue of his office.*

Chancellor Tanner has the following :—

“Portion of the Prior of Eye in the Church of All Saints, 4s. Perpetual Pension of the Rector of Stoke Ash granted to the same and his successors for ever, in satisfaction of claims to certain tithes in the villages of Debenham and Kenton, 30s. per annum.”†

* Blomefield *Norfolk III.*, 613.

bus suis in perpetuum concess. pro relaxatione clamei quarundum decimarum in villa de Debenham et Kenington p. ann. xxxs.” This was paid by the Queen's Receiver-General, 13 Eliz. 1570.

† In the original :—“Portio Prioris de Eye in eadem ius. Pensio perpetua Rectoris de Stoke Ash eidem et successoribus suis in perpetuum concess. pro relaxatione clamei quarundum decimarum in villa de Debenham et Kenington p. ann. xxxs.” This was paid by the Queen's Receiver-General, 13 Eliz. 1570.

We were led to give the preceding particulars respecting the endowments of the Church of All Saints, having reached in this paper the year 1627, the date of the earliest extant Terrier of this parish. Soon after that year, namely in 1630, we arrive at the death of one of the Rectors, who was Chaplain to King Charles I. The Rev. Robert Willan, *alias* Millar, for he seems to have been known under both names, was Rector of Herringswell. He was D.D., and was instituted to All Saints, Stoke Ash, on the 1st of June, 1607, on the presentation of Sir Henry Bokenham. I am unable to say in what year he became Chaplain to King Charles. He held several livings at the same time; for the benefices of Gestingthorpe, Cold Norton, and Stanway Magna, in Essex, all became vacant upon his death before the 5th of November, 1630. The above particulars, taken from Masters' "*History of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge,*" (page 413) should be compared with the list previously given of Rectors of the parish.

We next come to the following extraordinary memorandum in the Register book:—

"Note. Widdowe Reade was buried the 17th day of Jan^r, 1634, being by report six score and six years of age."

It was in this period, indeed in the next year, 1635, that another centenarian, the celebrated Thomas Parr, died at the age of 152 years. There seems to have been then living no such patient investigator of the facts and fictions of centenarianism as the present generation is happy to possess in Mr. W. J. Thoms.

Under Cromwell's rule, marriage was deprived as much as possible of the character of *Holy* Matrimony, and took place before some lay official, in private houses. To this the following extract refers:—

"A true Register of all Marriages, Birthes, and Burials since the second of december, 1653. For the towen of Sto Kash Will^m Clerke being chosen Rigester was sworne to execute the same according to the stat. before me,

"EDM. HARUEY."

Then follows an entry of Marriage on the 7th of December, 1653.

"Roger Tillite of Stoke Ash was married to Mary Clark the

daughter of Thomas Clark gent of the same parrish "att the parrish church," corrected by erasure thus, "att my house" the 26^o day of 7tber 1654.

"EDM. HARVEY."

We next reach the date of the following monumental slab now laid in the Tower, commemorating William Gardner and his son, Edmond:—

"Here lieth the body of | William Gardner of this | Parish gent who married | Elizabeth the second daughter | of Abraham Gates of Weston | Colville in Cambridgeshire | Batchelor of Divinity by | whom he left issue male | Edmund and Ambrose ; female | Mary Martha and Margaret. He died Feb. 23, in the 57th year of his age. Ano 1658."

On another slab in the doorway of the Tower :—

"Edmond his son departed this | life 24 April 1674 who | left behind him onely a son, | by Brigit his wife daughter | of Edmond Hervey Esqr. by | Jane Le Hunt his wife daughter | of Sir George Le Hunt Knt | aged 39."

In the Nave, to the West of the Gardners' slab, we find:—

"Here lieth the body | of Simeon Aldrich | who departed this | life the 21 July 1694. | N.B. he was Chief Constable."

I was unable in August, 1874, to find any trace of this slab.

Near the Pulpit :—

Under this stone was buried | Mrs. Hannah Packe etc wife of the High Sheriff of this County etc etc."

The greater part of this large slab is now concealed by the Chancel step : August, 1874.

1717

"Mary Buxton, single woman was Buried May y^e 12th (affidavit May 17th) aged 64 years, she was buried on y^e same day of y^e month on w^{ch} she was Baptised."

This entry does not appear to be quite correct, for I find:—

1653

"Mary, daught. of Tho and Mary Buxton bapt y^e 17 of May Ano p dicto."

In the years 1718 and 1719 two mural monuments exactly alike were placed on the North side of the Chancel—

1 Mrs. Frances Bedingfield.

2 Mrs. Mary Bedingfield.

And upon a small marble pavement “under the Communion Table” (D. E. Davy), are the words “Frances Bedingfield 1718”; another “Mary, 1719.” (“*Funeral Monuments*,” Vol. 2, T. Martin’s copy penes T. Mills, 1817.)

Mr. Joseph Bokenham made the following entry in the year 1722 :—

“Mrs. Bridgett Smyth Relict of Capt. Rising Smyth of Thomson in Norfolk & mother of Edmond Gardiner senr Gent. died Oct. 23 & was buried Oct. 26 in y^e Church *between her two Husbands* Gardiner & Moys. Aged 86.” (Affid. Oct. 27.)

On a black marble slab against the South wall, outside the altar-rails :—

†
IHS

“Here lies interred the body of Mrs. Dorothy Bedingfield daughter and coheir of John Dix *alias* Ramsey of Wickmer in the co. of Norfolk Esqre, and relict of John Bedingfield Esqre who departed this life Oct. 29 1723 *ætatis suæ* 59.”

“.....daughter of Henry Bedingfield Esqre.”

The rest partly concealed. That most undesirable practice of intra-mural burial was especially prevalent at this period. Henry Bedingfield, Esq., residing at Coulsey Wood, in this parish, married Mary, daughter of William Havers, Esq., lord of Thelton, in Norfolk.

In the Parish Register for the year 1723 :—

“Elizabeth y^e wife of Richard Syer was buried April y^e 16th (affid.) 18 ejusdem. This man buried two wives in one year.”

In the year 1728 the parish of Stoke Ash lost another of its better known Rectors, the Rev. Joseph Bokenham. The following is the account given of his birth and education in the Matriculation book of Caius College, Cambridge, Michaelmas, 1705, to Michaelmas, 1706 :—

“Joseph Bokenham is son of Peter Bokenham, a weaver, of Norwich, where he was born. He has been taught grammar for the space of 7 years by Messrs. Robinson Hoadley and Pate in the Public School of the same city ; and was admitted a poor student on the 2nd day of April ;

in the 17th year of his age. Tutor Mr. Hawys. Paid for entrance, 1s.*

Soon after going up to Cambridge, Bokenham was elected Scholar of his College, Caius; and in 1711 obtained his Fellowship; which, however, he appears to have vacated almost immediately, as his name as a Fellow only occurs in one half-yearly account.† This may be accounted for by the fact that in January of the next year, 1712, he was presented to Stoke Ash; and probably soon after married. It seems not improbable that he was akin to Walsingham Bokenham, of Hetherset, Norfolk, Esquire, the patron on whose presentation he was instituted to the benefice. The advowson of All Saints', Stoke Ash, seems to have been in this family for many years; for Henry Buckenham, Esquire, of Thornham, had the advowson in 1600; Sir Henry Buckenham, Knt., in 1605.

Cleere Bokenham, of Caius College, B.A. 1660, M.A. 1664, was Rector of Great Thornham, and died 1698.

Hugh Bokenham, gentleman in 1672, of Norwich, Esquire in 1674, held the advowson of Stoke Ash. Walsingham Bokenham first exercised his right of presenting to the living in July, 1710; and next in 1712, when Mr. Henry Watts resigned in favour of his Curate, Joseph Bokenham, who then became Rector of Stoke Ash.

I find another person of the same name was L'E. Bokenham, B.A. 1714, M.A. 1718, Clerk, who died in 1719, æt. 26, and was buried at Redgrave.

The Rector of Stoke Ash, Joseph Bokenham, never, I believe, published any book. But he spent some little time in the study of Norfolk and Suffolk Heraldry; of which he formed two collections:—

(1) An Alphabetical List of Arms and Monuments of this County [Norfolk] containing 1228 Coats of Arms,

* Josephus Bokenham Petri filius de Norwico textoris ib'm natus Iris gram. (i.e., literis grammaticis) imbutus per septennium sub m^{re} Robinson Hoadley et Pate in Scholâ publicâ ejusdem civitatis admissus est pauper scholaris Aprilis 2^{do} anno ætatis suæ 17^{mo} sub tutelâ M^{ri} Hawys et

solvit pro ingressu 1s. (Michs., 1705, to Mich., 1706. Matriculation book of Caius College, Cambr.)

† Information kindly given me by Rev. John Lamb, Senior Fellow and Bursar of Caius, 20th June, 1874.

collected by Mr. Borrett and Rev. J. Bokenham. The volume passed first into the hands of P. Le Neve, Norroy King of Arms, who died 1729; afterwards by purchase into the hands of Sir John Fenn, who died 1794. It is now in the British Museum, *Add.* 5522.

(2) A Collection of 730 Coats of Arms of families of Suffolk. This collection passed first into the hands of Mr. Thomas Martin, of Palgrave, who died 1771; and afterwards into the hands of Sir John Fenn, who made additions to it.* Bokenham, as has been stated, was also Rector of Little Thornham, which Living he held together with Stoke Ash by virtue of a personal union. He succeeded in that benefice Mr. Antony Fenton; but was himself the first Rector of Little Thornham to keep a Parish Register. Little Thornham church is distant about two miles.

In Stoke Register we find, under the year 1721, the following entry, made in Bokenham's exceedingly legible and elegant handwriting:—

1721

“Dorothy y^e Daughter of Joseph Bokenham Clerk Rector of this Parish & Bridgett his Wife (daughter of Edmond Gardiner Gent) was born Sept. y^e 29th and baptised November y^e 1st.”

This daughter seems to have been the only child born to him; and the above is the only notice I have been able to find of his marriage.

By the North priest's door:—

Bedingfield crest—Eagle displayed.

†
IHS

Sacred to the pious Memory
of

ELIZABETH BEDINGFIELD

Fourth daughter

of

HENRY AND MARY BEDINGFIELD

who died

April 10th 1757

Aged 23

R. I. P.

She was taken away lest wickedness should | alter her understanding
or deceit beguile her soul.

* Rev. Mark Noble's *History of the College of Arms*, *App.*, p. xxxii. A.D. 1805.

On one slab in the pavement of the Tower :—

In pious memory
of BRIDGET GARDINER
eldest daughter of
DANIEL GARDINER
And JOYCE his Wife
Who departed this life
the 16th March 1775
Aged 27.

Also in memory of JOYCE wife of the said Daniel Gardiner who departed this life March 27 1790 aged 64, also DANIEL GARDINER Gent died the 10th day of August 1800 aged 81.

“All that old family Mansion called Gardiner’s Hall, surrounded by about 175 acres of land,” was, in June, 1842, advertised in the *Ipswich Journal* for sale in July.

In the churchyard a large brick altar tomb has been erected to the memory of George Turner, Gentleman, 1781, who was probably Lord of the Manor of Woodhall in Stoke. And a like tomb to the memory of Francis Cook, 1787.

Near the Pulpit :—

Sacred to the memory of
JOHN beloved son of
the Rev^d JOHN WARD
Rector of this Parish
And MARY his wife
who departed this Life
the 27 of October 1811
Aged 13 years.

Also
in memory of
the Rev JOHN WARD
upwards of fifty-one years
Rector of this Parish
who died
the 12th of September 1845
Aged 83 years.

It remains for me to add that, by the exertions of the present Rector, the Rev. H. E. M. Bull, and the Lord of the Manor of Stoke Hall, John, fourth Lord Henniker, and with the good-will of the parish, this interesting Church of All Saints was renovated in the year 1868. The Chancel was repaired at the expense of the Rector; and for the

repairs of the Nave £300 was borrowed by the parish from the Public Works Commission, with the consent of the owners and occupiers on the security of the rates. The outside walls, which had been clumsily plastered, were now properly repaired and fresh pointed; the East window of wood was replaced by one having good stone mullions; the white-painted pews, high-backed, and of all sizes and shapes, were turned out and replaced by substantial benches of oak and pitch pine. The whitewashed walls were fresh plastered, and the whitewashed ceiling was removed from the roof, which itself was carefully repaired; and the white-painted West gallery was also got rid of.

It was at this time that the curious inner archway of the North Chancel door was discovered; and the North Nave door permanently closed. The monumental slabs were rearranged; some of them were utilized, and some probably buried.

The festival of re-opening of the Church was kept in wintry December, on the 18th day of the month, when the Bishop and Rural Dean both preached.

I find, on looking back, that I have omitted to mention one of the literary merits of the Rev. Joseph Bokenham. He occasionally wrote verses; and, thanks to the industry of Mr. D. E. Davy, who found some lines of this Rector's in the Parish Chest, and made a copy in his *Suffolk Collections*, I am able to present the reader with the following

POETICAL EPISTLE :—

“ Could you, my friend,* but take delight
 In my poor hutt to pass a night,
 There in clean straw refresh your bones
 Among us honest country drones,
 We'll strive to please you as we're able
 And show we're not inhospitable.
 Good home-brew'd beer both mild and stale
 With cyder brisk and bottled ale
 Shall whet your whistle, and for fear
 We two alone can make no cheer,

* Probably Mr. Borrett. See *ante* p. 440.

We've country parsons two or three
 As true as e'er kept company.
 Nor shall you want, I'd have you think,
 Good wholesome food no more than drink.
 Fatt bacon in the tub we've gott
 A rump of beef to put i' the pott :
 An early goose and brave tithe pig,
 Not over fatt nor very big,
 New cheese and butter, fresh as May,
 Custards and cheese-cakes curds and whey.
 This, my dear friend, shall be your fare
 If you'll be pleased to see us here.
 But what, I hope, will make you free—
 None shall more truly welcome be
 As I'm in duty bound, than you,
 To your most humble servant Jo."

The author of this Epistle, the Rev. Joseph Bokenham, died at Stoke Ash, on the 10th January, 1728, where he lies buried in an unknown grave. Among my readers I think there are few but will regret, after perusing the above lines, that time has not spared us more of the poetical effusions of the genial Rector, whose name is no longer known in his former parish.

W. H. SEWELL.