



LONG MELFORD HALL.



KENTWELL HALL, LONG MELFORD.

ANNUAL EXCURSION.

GREAT WALDINGFIELD, LITTLE WALDINGFIELD,
LONG MELFORD.

The Annual Excursion this year was one of the most enjoyable events of the kind in the long history of the Institute. It is true that some old ground was gone over, but such a country as that around Sudbury, so rich in features of antiquarian and ecclesiastical interest, seems always to have something about it ever new and fresh. The Waldingfields this year constituted the comparatively new districts to be explored, and it was at the lesser Waldingfield that the Excursionists dined, and the beautiful Kentwell Hall, the magnificent Church at Long Melford, and that noble building which is the pride of the county, Melford Hall, were left as a choice dessert and most thoroughly was it enjoyed. The weather was glorious, and a party of ladies and gentlemen having a love of the beautiful in nature, and art, and in Antiquarian objects, linking the present with the long past, could not fail to enjoy themselves in such pleasant circumstances as those in which they found themselves surrounded.

The day, which by the way was the 20th of June, 1895, was as happy as it was long. Sudbury was the rendezvous, at which place trains from Ipswich and Bury were timed to arrive at about twelve o'clock. Vehicles were in readiness at the railway station, and the party soon found themselves *en route* for Great Waldingfield. It was a delightful drive through a charming country. The air was fresh, the birds full of song, and the landscape had assumed all the glory of flowery June.

On reaching Great Waldingfield, the Rev. C. A. Stokes, M.A., the Rector, gave the visitors a cordial welcome, and conducted them to the fine old parish church, of Decorated and Perpendicular character. The reverend gentleman gave a most interesting and valuable address explanatory of the chief features of the church.

The address seemed to awaken deeper interest in the fine old church, the rector having called attention to various points which might otherwise have escaped notice.

After a short stay at Great Waldingfield, the breaks and wagonettes were again speedily filled, and the several pairs of horses were soon off in the direction of Little Waldingfield, where the church, like the one in the parish just visited, is dedicated to S. Lawrence, to whom more churches are dedicated in this part of England than any other. The details of this church, which is also in the Perpendicular style, were described by the Honorary Secretary.

There was only time for a hasty visit to the Priory, now the Vicarage, but the excursionists could not, of course, do otherwise than avail themselves of the kindness of the Vicar, the Rev. A. N. Wilson, in having signified his willingness to allow of an inspection of the stone vaulted crypt, and its specially well-preserved roof.

By this time all the ladies and gentlemen were ready for dinner. Mr. Mark Rampling, of the Swan Hotel, had provided a very substantial luncheon in a handsome marquee, and the choice viands served were partaken of with hearty appetite. After luncheon Mr. Freeman Wright said he was sure they would not wish to separate without thanking the Honorary Secretary for the time and attention he had devoted to the details of that day's excursion; and also Mr. Thos. Harrison who had rendered such valuable assistance in connection with the day's proceedings. The toast was received with the utmost heartiness, and the Rev. Francis Haslewood, in rising to make acknowledgment, was most cordially greeted. In a few brief remarks, the Honorary Secretary expressed the great pleasure he experienced in doing what he could to enhance the interest and usefulness of the Institute.

As already intimated the second half included the more *recherché* items of the day's programme. The first drive was to

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where there is so much to feast and satisfy the eye of the most ardent antiquary. The first halt was at Kentwell Hall, a moated dwelling, and in some respects one of the most interesting to be found in East Anglia. It is at the present time occupied by Mr. H. Turton Norton, who very kindly threw open the principal rooms of the whole mansion quite unreservedly to the thorough inspection of the visitors, who as they went through the principal apartments could not fail to be impressed by the greatness in wealth and position of the gentlemen, who centuries back, when Long Melford was the chief centre of one of the most important industries of the country, occupied the grand old Suffolk home. The beauty of the Hall has been preserved through the centuries unto the present time. Much has been written about Kentwell Hall at different times as one of the most remarkable buildings in this favoured corner of Suffolk. Dr. J. E. Taylor, one of the most valuable members of the Institute, came forward at the call of the Honorary Secretary, and delivered one of his entertaining impromptu addresses. Alas! this is a

service he will never render again, having since been called to his long home. He was for many years the bright and shining star at the annual assemblies of this time-honoured antiquarian organization. He always imparted to the proceedings a life, and a vivacity most refreshing. He was in his element in searching out and explaining the beauties of the fine old ecclesiastical buildings of the county, and the moated homes of old England. It is hard to realise that his familiar form and his cheery presence will never again be conspicuous amongst those, who in future years, go on like enjoyable excursions to different parts of East Anglia. At this time when he came forward in obedience to the request of the Honorary Secretary, he did so with tottering steps, for his bodily strength was evidently failing him. His mind, however, was as clear and sparkling as ever. He reminded the ladies and gentlemen who gathered around him, as eager listeners have done on many previous occasions, that they had that morning travelled through one of the most interesting parts of old England, a district where 300 or 400 years ago the woollen industry was in as great practice as that of cotton now is in Lancashire and Yorkshire. At that time a great number of wool producers came over from Flanders,—men who were skilled in the art of shearing, fleecing, and preparing the wool,—to the towns and villages, and he noticed many old Flemish names over the small shops in that parish. So in this angle of the Isle we had a great deal of current history which could be marked out in many ways so as to be both entertaining and instructive. Even the trees along the avenue had a history connected with the greatness of the people who resided there in early times. They were limes or linden trees which were introduced by the gentry who lived in that and similar places in the neighbourhood, the groves and avenues of which were common in that locality. In the shape of a building like that in which they were assembled there was current history, the very shape of an Elizabethan or Jacobean House and the ground plan suggesting something. If the house were taken down, and nothing but the foundation left, it would be seen that it was in the form of the letter "E". That was the character of all later Elizabethan houses. The Jacobean house was a modification of that, and Pigeon-houses of eight gables were common in some of these old halls. The people who came over here were addicted to pigeon keeping, and dove keeping, in which the gentler sex indulged. The mansion in which they were standing was a magnificent specimen of an old English Hall. There was something about a place like that which made you feel almost as if you were standing on holy ground. It had a roof under which had dwelt many a distinguished man who had left an honoured name in English history; and one could pause for a few moments in a building like that and feel that it was a privilege, as well as a pleasure, to be enabled on that glorious summer afternoon to assemble there, and be allowed to look over the principal apartments.

The visitors then proceeded to inspect the fine old portraits,

the beautiful paintings, and the other numerous objects of deep antiquarian and historical interest with which the walls and elegant apartments are enriched, and Mr. H. H. Almack added greatly to the pleasure of the guests, as well as to their stores of information, by an entertaining and conversational description of the family portraits and other features of the mansion, which had attracted the special notice of some of the more enthusiastic members of the Society.

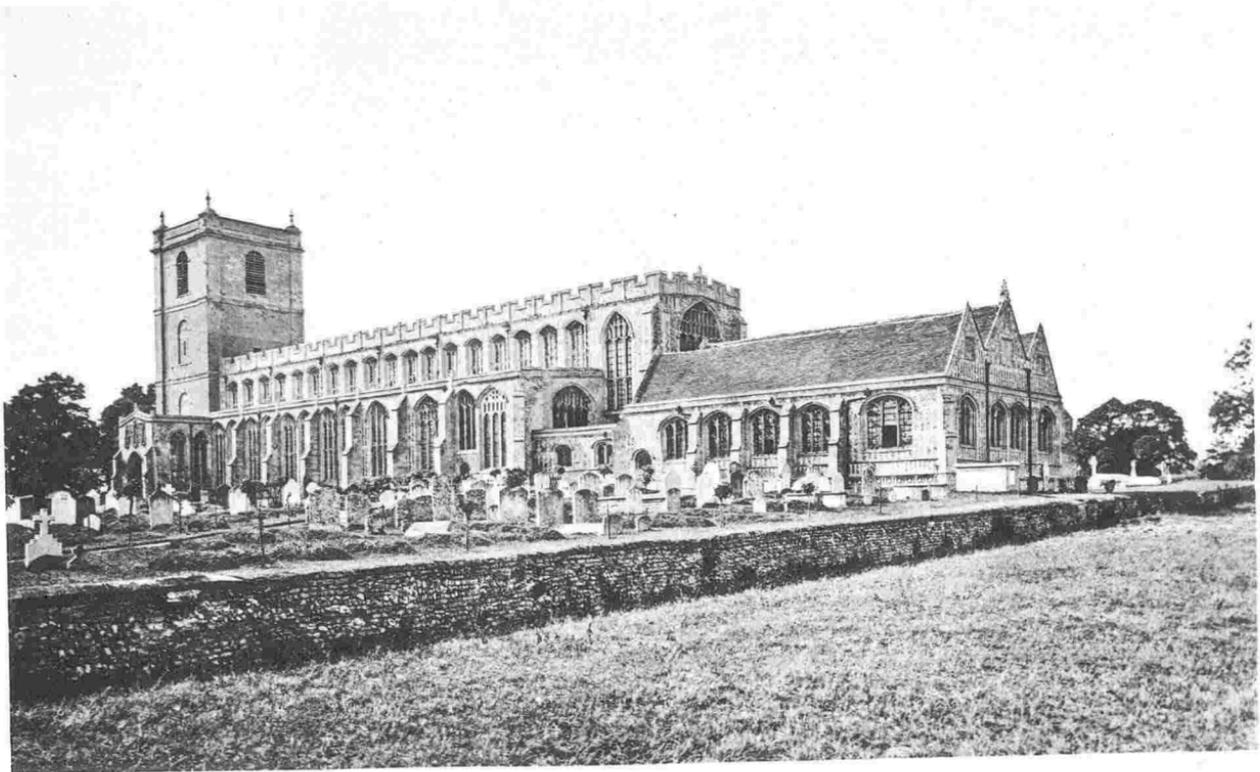
More treats were in store for the party, who had so much before them that every moment in one place seemed precious. The grand old Kentwell Hall was left with reluctance, but it was well-known that to afford strangers amongst the party any idea at all of the magnificence of the renowned Long Melford Church, and those who had been on the hallowed spot before to revive the sensations which they experienced when they first saw the building, some time would have to be spent in going the round, internal and external, of the sacred edifice. The rector, the Rev. G. St. John Topham, M.A., was equal to the occasion. His plan for making the most of the occasion was both acceptable and profitable. He did not prepare an elaborate paper—who would care to undertake such a colossal task, when to do anything like justice to the subject volumes would have to be written! He went from point to point round the exterior bee-like and sucked honey out of the sweet architectural and historical flowers which abound. He was surrounded at each point by eager listeners, and when he had done as much in the way of perambulation as time would permit, he invited his followers to the interior of the church, and mounting the pulpit pointed to the chief features of the splendid building in the pleasant chatty style indicative of close study of the history of the church. He next conducted the party round the church and ever and anon stopped to explain objects as to which information was specially solicited. One of the many matters he brought under special notice was the great care that had been taken with the fragments of ancient coloured glass which had been replaced in the East window with striking artistic effect.*

Advantage was taken of the opportunity to pay a short visit to the Hospstal founded by Sir William Cordell in the year 1573.

The last item in the programme, but by no means the least in importance, was a visit to Melford Hall, the Suffolk seat of Rev. Sir W. Hyde Parker, Bart., who had most kindly given his consent to allow members to inspect this, one of the finest moated mansions in the kingdom. The Honorary Secretary read a carefully prepared paper by the owner.

At the request of the Honorary Secretary, Dr. J. E. Taylor once more came forward, and he said he felt it a privilege to say a few words in another grand old English home in a district famous for its buildings of great beauty and historical interest. He had travelled in many parts

* For an elaborate account of the Fabric, see "Church of the Holy Trinity, Long Melford, a monograph by E. Lauriston Conder, Architect." Published 1887. Also "History of Long Melford," by W. Parker. 1873.



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of the world, particularly in the wilds of Australia, and seen the shanties of the squatters in the other sides of the world and heard the expressions of affectionate regard with which they spoke of the old home, and since he had returned he never came to a place like Melford Hall without feeling that our English homes were indeed sanctified spots, and as English people they could but be proud of such places as these. Men who built and lived in those houses bore names which were historical; they were grand men, distinguished for their philanthropy, piety, and virtue.

The visitors lingered about here to the last moment, Sir W. Hyde Parker and Lady Parker personally conducting the party round the elegant apartments, and in other ways doing their utmost to make the visit enjoyable. Tea was partaken of in the beautifully panelled hall, and before leaving the Honorary Secretary moved a very cordial vote of thanks to Sir William and Lady Parker for their great kindness in receiving the members of the Institute that afternoon. The proposition was received with the utmost cordiality.

Once more the excursionists mounted the wagonettes and were driven to Melford station, in time to catch the 7.18 p.m. train for Ipswich *via* Bury.

A large number of ladies joined the party, and evidently enjoyed the long drive through the country rich in scenery. Amongst them were:—Mrs. Haslewood, Miss Grimsey, Mrs. Wm. Biddell, Miss Mason, Mrs. F. J. Fish, Mrs. Henry Miller, Mrs. H. J. Wright, Miss Nunns, Miss E. P. Youell, Miss Gurteen, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Hopper, and others. The gentlemen included:—Rev. E. Hill, Mr. F. J. Fish, Rev. Dr. Cresswell, Mr. Wm. Biddell, Rev. M. B. Cowell, Mr. P. F. Wainwright, Rev. A. J. C. Connell, Mr. R. Hunt, Mr. Thos. Miller, C.E., Rev. W. Wyles, Mr. H. C. Casley, Mr. G. H. Grimwood, Rev. A. H. Hayes, Rev. W. H. Sewell, Mr. J. S. Corder, Mr. Henry Miller, Mr. George Calver Mason, Dr. J. E. Taylor, Mr. E. Barrett, Mr. Thos. Harrison, Mr. Geo. Abbott, Mr. J. W. Seager, Mr. Wm. Vick, Mr. R. E. Bunn, Mr. H. J. Wright, Rev. E. C. Hopper, Rev. A. L. Nunns, Mr. Henry Trigg, Mr. H. H. Almack, and Mr. F. Methold.
