

## DENHAM CHURCH.

A four mile drive brought the party to the little church of Denham: The fabric itself has but few features of interest, but the monuments therein are of no common order. Mr. H. Prigg gave an account of the church, and the Lewkenor family.

## LITTLE SAXHAM CHURCH.

Time failed, otherwise it was intended, to visit the Roman earth-works at Barrow, this village was therefore passed, and Little Saxham church was reached about 6.30.

This pretty church, remarkable for the beauty of its circular tower, the rector, the Rev. H. I. Kilner, undertook to describe.

The text of his paper is here given—"Before beginning the history of this church, I will just mention that Suffolk shares the fate of many of our English counties, in having no complete county history. Suckling's painstaking work has reference to less than half the county, and the extensive and valuable work of Mr. Davy and Mr. Jermyn remain buried in the British Museum, with apparently little prospect of being utilised for a complete history of a county which is rich in historical recollections of all kinds, from the days of S. Edmund the martyr to those of Evelyn and of Horace Walpole. Of the many autumn visitors to this county (which rejoices in the *soubriquet* of silly Suffolk), few, perhaps, think of it save as the home of partridges and pheasants innumerable. Suffolk, however, possesses a peculiar character of its own. But we must pass on to the immediate subject which concerns us at the present moment—namely—this ancient church. ('Suffolk,' says Fuller, 'has no cathedral therein, but formerly it had so magnificent an Abbey church in Bury, the sun shineth not on a fairer, with three lesser churches waiting thereon in the same churchyard.') Flint work, mostly a combination of flint and stone, technically called flush work, is largely used for the construction of Suffolk churches. No account of these buildings, however brief, can omit to mention the round towers on which so much antiquarian lore has been expended. At one time it was thought that they were of Danish origin, but as Mr. Gage in his history of the Thingoe Hundred remarks, with much truth, 'If this were so, we might expect to find them in Northumbria, where the Danish dynasty held its full sway, or we might expect to find them in the mother country, but we do not. They are nearly entirely confined to the limits of East Anglia, there being 125 round towers in Norfolk, 40 in Suffolk, and in the rest of England, only two in Berkshire, two in Sussex, one in Surrey, two in Cambridgeshire, one in Northamptonshire, and seven in Essex.' These towers are of different ages. Some have distinct features of early, some of late, Norman architecture, and some have characteristics of early English style. Mr. Parker's theory is probably the correct one, *i.e.*, that constructed of flint (as they are without exception) they

are built round to suit the material, and to save the expense of the stone quoins which are necessary for square corners, and which were difficult to procure in districts where the building stone had all to be imported. Some of these towers are quite plain, others, like those at Herringfleet, near Lowestoft, and this church, have rich Norman work in the upper stories. I will here mention a little anecdote: 'A countryman, hearing two archæologists wondering over the origin of a round tower, explained it thus:—Before the flood it used to be used as a well, and when the inhabitants of the new generation, who resided on the spot, were looking for a place to build a church, they selected this site because the old well would do for a steeple, and, therefore, they built the church to it as it now stands.' There is a neat modern round tower at Higham, about four miles from here, which has very similar features to this tower. The church and tower were built about 25 years ago by the late Mr. Gilbert Scott. I wrote the other day to his son, Mr. Oldrid Scott, to ask him whether he knew of any reason why his father built a modern round tower so near such a celebrated ancient one, and whether he had built any other round towers in the kingdom, as I thought it might be interesting for you to know. In reply, he said, that he had inquired of the gentleman who made the drawing for Higham church for his father, and his answer was that they were done for a clergyman learned in architecture, and that he believes it was at his suggestion that a round tower was adopted. Suffolk is also, like the other eastern counties, rich in brasses, indeed most of the brasses in England are to be found in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent. It is supposed that wealthy clothiers, who built and beautified so many of these churches, placed in them a large number of memorials. William Dowsing, the iconoclast of East Anglia, has much to answer for in the destruction of Suffolk churches. He was appointed Parliamentary Visitor, under a warrant from the Earl of Manchester, for demolishing the superstitious pictures and ornaments of churches, &c., within the county of Suffolk, in the years 1643–44. His journal has been published, and contains an account of the destruction he wrought. Thus at Walberswick—to give but one specimen—he writes: 'Brake down 40 superstitious pictures and to take five crosses off the steeple porch, and we had eight superstitious inscriptions on the grave stones.' He also boasts of having destroyed 192 brasses in 52 churches in Suffolk, 30 of them in one church, All Hallows, Sudbury. The grave stones here have all been stripped of their brasses. This church is dedicated to S. Nicholas, and the original building consisted of a round tower and a nave, with probably a semi-circular apse. Early in the 14th century the chancel, north aisle, and south porch were added; and early in the 15th century the chapel of our Lady and S. John the Evangelist, generally now called the Lucas chapel, was built on by Thomas Lucas. The two windows in the aisle are coeval with the aisle itself, but the other windows are alterations by Lucas or his executors. Over the south porch is a double billett weather moulding of the same character as the cornice under the windows of the tower. You will

observe, too, in the nave are the corbels that supported the old Norman roof. The tower arch is very singular in its proportions, and it is 17ft. 3in. high and only 4ft. 6in. wide. The low recessed arch at the side of it was apparently designed for a seat. The east window and south windows at one time seem to have been filled with armorial ensigns; but all have disappeared except one oval in the south chancel window and eight ovals which I have taken care of, hoping one day to get them re-inserted. I have no doubt there are fresco paintings under the whitewash, I have discovered traces of how the east wall was coloured, which you can see for yourselves, and under the east window there are the remains of an old maltese cross surrounded by a circle. The stone staircase leading to the rood-loft is still in existence. And now before you inspect the church let me just say a few words about the monuments. On the north wall of the chancel is the cenotaph of Thomas Lucas, who was Solicitor-General to King Henry VII., having been promoted to that office from the household of the King's brother Jasper, Duke of Bedford, whom he served in the character of secretary. It was in 1505 that Thomas Lucas bought the estates of Little Saxham from Robert Darcy. Lucas died on the 7th July, 1531. His altar tomb standing under an arch opened into the Lucas chapel, and was intended for his recumbent figure, but he was never buried there. The arch is now filled up, and the side of the cenotaph, which was in the chapel, is placed on the top of the one in the chancel, no doubt to make room for Lord Croft's monument, which is placed at the back. The shields are (1) Lucas and Morrieux; (2) Lucas impaling Morrieux; (3) Lucas and Morrieux quarterly impaling Kemys; (4) and Kemys. In the testament of Thomas Lucas he ordered his body to be buried without pomp where his executors thought fit. He left certain legacies, and among them to this church one of the best vestments and money for the chancel to be embattled like the nave. He also provided for two honest priests to sing for two years in his chapel, and to pray for the Duke of Bedford, for himself, his wife and family, and especially for his daughter Margery Lucas, each priest to have for his salary £6 a year. After his death his son Thomas Lucas, and John Lucas, uncle of the latter, sold their estates in Little Saxham to Sir John Croftes. He died on the 28th January, 1557, and the estates passed to his son, Edmund, who survived him but a few days, and was buried at Westow. (Thomas, the eldest son of Edmund, succeeded his father. He died in 1605, and was interred at Westow. Sir John Croftes, his eldest son, who next inherited the property, died, and was buried here 29th March, 1628. Sir Henry, his son, who held the estates, died 1667.) Passing over three or four generations we come to William, Lord Croftes, in whom we are more interested. He was brought up in the household of the Duke of York, became his master of the horse, was also captain of the guard to the Queen-Mother, and accompanied the royal family in their exile to France. This mad-cap Croftes was one of those choice spirits who were the delight of Charles II., but a discredit to his court. The king honoured

him with a visit at Little Saxham in 1670. Lord Croftes married Elizabeth, daughter of William, Lord Spencer (of Wormleighton). He died without issue, 11th September, 1677, and his title became extinct. It is his monument that now occupies such a prominent position in the Lucas chapel. It was executed by Story. Against the east wall is a tablet to the memory of Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry Croftes. Also on the same wall, a marble tablet with the arms of Croftes impaling Allington. On the west wall is a tablet to William Crofts; outside the chapel is a tomb to Charles Croftes, late of Lincoln's Inn. On the outside wall of the north aisle is a stone to the memory of Samuel Leedes, formerly head master of King Edward's school, Bury S. Edmund's, and on a stone in the chancel are the arms of Leedes (a fess between three spread eagles, and crest a cock). The registers commenced with the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the first entry being 1559. On the fly-leaf of the first register book is the following:—'Edmund Croftes, who lived in this Hall w<sup>n</sup> this register book was began by order of act of parleam made in that behalf was born in ye year of or Ld 1537, being ye 28 of Harry ye 8th.' In the tower are three bells. The tenor has on it the following inscription:—'Thomas Cheese made me, 1603.' I can give no account of the massive old benches, which have been much mutilated. I hope I have not detained you too long, and I dare say you will now wish to look round the church and see the different points of interest for yourselves."

After inspecting thoroughly this interesting old church, specially remarkable for its circular tower, an engraving of which may be found in Parker's Glossary of Architecture (i., 481), the excursionists were entertained with a kindly cup of tea on the rectory lawn, by Mr. Kilner. By this time it was found necessary to hasten onward in time to catch the express train from Bury station.

Among the members present at this meeting were Mr. E. M. Dewing, and Rev. Francis Haslewood, F.S.A., the honorary secretaries, W. Cuthbert Quilter, Esq., M.P., the Revs. A. J. Bedell, C. G. R. Birch, M. B. Cowell, C. Deedes, T. E. C. Frodsham, E. J. Griffiths, H. I. Kilner, S. Maude, C. Marriott, R. C. Temple, Major Gelston, Messrs. B. Bevan, E. F. Bisshopp, W. Brown, H. C. Casley, T. B. Corfield, W. F. Cotman, J. C. Ford, B. P. Grimsey (Deputy-Mayor of Ipswich), H. S. Hawkins, G. H. Hetherington, W. F. Laxton, F.S.A., and Mrs. Laxton, W. L. Lewis, H. Prigg, H. Lacy Scott, J. R. Thompson, F. Wright. A good number of the friends of members joined the excursion as Dr. Taylor (Ipswich), Rev. Dr. Haslewood, H. D. Haslewood, Revs. F. S. Berry, L. Klamborowski, A. McKechnie, Messrs. J. L. Kingsford, W. W. Hodson (Sudbury), W. Lambton Lewis, Wilson (Ipswich), and a large number of ladies.

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