

been done for the restoration of both church and town. It may be thankfully recorded there are now 74 houses, and 265 inhabitants. The fishery has revived, though it is far from prosperous yet. Were the harbour dredged, and provided with more serviceable quays, despite the advancement of Lowestoft, the preference of Walberswick by the fishermen of the coast is certain, because it is a port which can be reached from any point by any wind, whereas Lowestoft is sometimes very difficult of access. Moreover, it has a railway, which, especially if a line were extended from the station to the harbour, ensures ready despatch of fish to every inland market.

Meanwhile, the church has been benefited. A fine vicarage, situated in Southwold, became the property of the living by some means, and at a date which cannot now be ascertained. This was sold, and the proceeds invested by the Commissioners of Queen Anne's Bounty, for the augmentation of the income of the vicar, about 1841, the time when Sir Charles Blois gave the house now occupied as a vicarage. Four new windows were secured for the church by the Rev. H. L. James. Further neglect and ruin must be prevented: and this work is already kindly undertaken by many willing workers.

The archæologists were next driven on to Blythburgh, the charge of which is jointly held by the Rev. T. H. R. Oakes, who favoured the company with the following description:—

#### BLYTHBURGH.

Roman urns, supposed repositories of the remains of the dead, and coins were dug up in 1678, and suggest its existence in the period of Roman rule. Blythburgh is mentioned in the Suffolk Domesday.

The Church, and the ruins of the Priory, and other edifices, manifest the town's ancient importance. Here reputable merchants resided; trade vigorously flourished, especially fishery; boats sailed up to Walberswick Bridge; prisoners were tried and incarcerated; the generals and ecclesiastical courts were kept here. For a long time the only cambitor (banker) was here: three fairs annually, and a weekly market, were held: but decay commenced upon the suppression of the Priory, and gradually decreased until 1676: then fire destroyed much of the town, which, in consequence of its poverty and the loss of its trade, was not rebuilt.

The Church bears evidence of great age. The existing tower is the more ancient part of the present edifice. The south porch, nave, aisles, and chancel, are traceable to the 15th century. In 1442 John Greyse gave 20 marks towards rebuilding the chancel. The mode of procedure adopted by the authorities in the rebuilding of the churches of the neighbourhood, was to perform the work gradually, but following a complete design: either the tower would be built first (as at Walberswick, nearly seventy years before the new nave, aisles, and chancel), or a commencement would be made with the chancel. At

Blythburgh the ancient tower was reserved, while the new nave, aisles, south porch, and chancel, were erected.

It is difficult to guess the date of the Tower. It is very large, unadorned, and of a form which suggests a spire, as large as could be erected, of the destruction of which by a tempest there were several existing records. Concerning the ancient church, to which one feels it belonged rather than the present, from a Gothic window of small proportions in the tower, it can only be conjectured that it must have been a building as large as the present church, but probably with a high pitched roof, perhaps of thatch, which may have necessitated low walls, and smaller windows for want of space. But the new edifice, which adjoins the tower, is a noble substitute for whatever may have been done away. Its length is 127 feet, and breadth 54 feet. Its many windows, added to the beauty of their design and dimensions, were filled with valuable old painted glass: S. Felix is represented still in one of them. They largely contained representations of other saints and martyrs, and were adorned with many coats of arms. Armorial devices also adorned the roof, together with the sacred monogram I. H. S., introduced systematically in innumerable places, the figures of angels with spread wings, and a design of vines, flowers, and fruit, painted and gilded throughout. The remains of a carved oak screen prove it to have been a conspicuous and harmonious ornament, carried across both aisles and the nave, and dividing the chapels in the north aisle (the Hopton) and the south aisle (the lady) from the chancel. The carving of the poppy-heads and bench-ends, the lectern, the Alms-box (dated 1473), and pulpit (Jacobean), spread the effect over the whole of the nave. In these are depicted the seasons, vices, virtues, angels with crowns or shields, etc., besides many examples of flowers and foliage. In the Hopton chapel there were pews of extraordinary beauty. In panels, beautifully defined by bevelled and carved moldings, were carved figures of S. Stephen (with stones), S. John the Baptist (with lamb on book), S. Philip (with tau-cross), S. Matthias (with axe and book), S. Bartholomew (with flaying knife), S. Nicholas (with the golden balls), S. Andrew (with cross), S. Barnabas (with the Gospel of S. Matthew, with which he healed the sick), S. Paul (with open book and staff), S. James the Great (with pilgrim's staff, scrip, and wallet), S. James the Less (with fuller's bat), S. Jude (with boat), S. Thomas (with spear), S. Matthew (with carpenter's square), S. Peter (with key), S. John (with chalice, and snake issuing from it). Built into the wall of the chancel was the tomb of one of the Hoptons, whose arms and the Swillingtons occupied conspicuous places in the carving, and in the windows and ceiling. The spandrels of the ceilings of both north and south aisles are all finely carved. There are four piscinæ, proving as many altars. A fine font, raised upon three high octagonal stone steps, inscribed with "orate pro aiabs Johne Masin et Katerine uxoris ejus" (with some addition, now quite illegible), stands in a commanding position in the centre of the nave at the west end. Stairs led to the rood loft, up by

the north side, inserted in a buttress of the outer wall of the aisle, and down by the south wall of the chancel, beneath the clerestory, within the church. In 1840 there was standing on a ladder in the tower arch, a small figure, called Jack o' the clock, and beneath it this inscription—

“As the hours pass away,  
So doth the life of man decay.”

1682.

But unfortunately the figure has lost an arm and is somewhat mutilated. This exceedingly curious effigy is now removed from the tower to the place it now occupies near the vestry, in a space open to the church, and though no longer toiling hour after hour as of yore, is not altogether idle, for the parish clerk makes “Jack” toll the bell as the clergyman emerges from the vestry, as a signal that Divine Service is about to begin. Upon the panels of the screen were vermilion crosses, which may be taken for consecration crosses. There is a plain stone, with a smooth surface, introduced in the middle of an inscription beneath the east window, outside, upon which may have been painted a similar cross. There are five or six consecration crosses in flint (one at each end of this inscription, and on the buttresses), which add to the beauty of the flint decoration without. But before passing to what was without, be it remarked, as learned from the Journal of William Dowsing, for demolishing the superstitious pictures and ornaments of churches in 1643, that there were twenty superstitious pictures (one on the outside of the Church), twenty cherubims, and three “orate pro animabus,” besides “above two hundred more pictures,” which Dowsing ordered to be removed.

Without, its immense East window in the chancel, the parapet immediately above being surmounted by the figure of a monarch enthroned in the centre and by pinnacles on each corner, is the principal object in the east end. Of no less interest and beauty are the elegant buttresses decorated in flint and stone, and the remarkable row of initial letters, each surmounted by a crown, inscribed in flint beneath this window. The north aisle, as was not unusual, was left without special ornament, though its general outline is in accord with the rest of the church. It is in fact somewhat longer than the south aisle. But it is the south aisle which presents the most beautiful aspect: seven alternate windows and buttresses, and two-storied porch, surmounted by a stone parapet of finely proportioned carved open quatrefoils, are its principal features, but the wealth of detail gives a richness to the whole which is most charming. Each buttress is surmounted by some grotesque figure: and the whole is magnified by the splendid clerestory seen in vanishing perspective above, consisting of eighteen windows, and alternate pedestals carried up to the plain stone parapet of the nave. The buttresses are each a mass of decoration in stone and flint, and the porch had its niche for a statue over the entrance, stoup beside it, and a groined roof and benches.