

may possibly have been the case, but this may be questioned. Of the paintings on this screen, which has been rudely disfigured, presumably in Cromwell's time, some were kindly restored some twenty years ago by Mr. Richmond, senior, R.A. The names of the prophets on the screen are:—Baruch, Hosea, Nahum, Jeremiah, Elijah, Moses, Daniel, Amos, Isaiah, Jonah, Ezekiel. Ezekiel's vision of angel and lion and eagle. Annunciation and holy rood. Saviour and beloved disciple. S. Nicholas and Lady of Pity.

They portray prophets and the twelve Apostles, and various emblematical accompaniments best understood by inspection. Tradition ascribes the chapel in the South aisle to the altar of S. Nicholas, and that in the North aisle to the lady chapel. The Jack in armour now over the screen in the North aisle, formerly stood on a bracket over the Western arch, and was connected with the clock to strike the hours in the church.

The church, as before stated, was annexed originally to Reydon vicarage. The taxation of Pope Nicholas IV., amounting to £17 6s. 8d., is entered "Reydon cum Capella."

The curacy of Southwold having been augmented by Queen Anne's bounty, was formally severed from the mother church by a deed bearing date Aug. 18th, 1752. The patronage was then vested in Sir John Rous and his heirs, and afterwards bought by the Simeon Trustees.

On leaving Southwold church the archæologists adjourned for dinner at the Swan Hotel. After the repast was over members were driven to the floating bridge over the Blyth, where they dismounted, and walked to Walberswick church. The vicar, the Rev. T. H. R. Oakes, read the following paper:—

WALBERSWICK.

Walberswick is a name of Saxon origin; it is derived from *Wald*, a wood, *Berige*, a hiding-place, and *Wye*, a winding river. The river Blyth was, in fact, still more tortuous in former days than now, for its outlet to the sea was at Dunwich, and its course lay almost entirely round the site of the town. Its present outlet is artificial, cut by the men of Walberswick in 1590; the present north pier being built 1749, the south, 1742.

The situation of the town originally was indicated by the position of the ancient church, which stood on the border of the marshes to the south of the site of the present church. Robert Blackmore, senior, in order to cultivate the ground, carried away the last visible remains of the old church in 1728. Probably the town spread in an eastward direction from this point and northwards to the common. The proportions of the ruins of the present church are evidence of a large population and some wealth, especially when it is remembered that it was built at the cost of the townsmen.



WALBERSWICK CHURCH.

Here a considerable trade was done in butter, cheese, &c., and fish, principally the last. Commerce was encouraged by a series of charters dating 1262, 1483, 1485, 1553, 1558, and 1625, exempting the tradesmen from tolls and taxes upon their business, also from the entrance of any officer to serve processes of law. In 1451 thirteen barques belonged to the port, trading to Iceland, Farra, and the North North Sea, besides twenty-two fishing boats. In 1602 there were fifteen barques besides fishing boats. The town received a dole of the fish brought into port, also the king, which the churchwardens received, together with the rents of the town lands, houses of the guilds (four in number), wharfage, and other dues and public donations, to keep the houses of the guilds, the church, the quay, &c., in repair, and to pay salaries and taxes. The townsmen "by a general consent and assent, joyntlie agreeing together," gave to the churchwardens "full and absolute authoritie" for the exaction of town dues and business. In a document dated the 6th January, 1597, the dues mentioned are the herring fishing dole, the sperling fayre dole, the duties on every voyage to Iceland, and the North Sea (3s. 4d.), on every load of butter and cheese (2d.), on "greate beasts," and wharfage. It is interesting to note that, in 1491, one of the items of disbursement was "to the Sexteyne, for ryngying of the Kerfow (Curfew) Bell, 3s. 4d." As interesting, again, is an order recorded as made at Beccles Sessions, Oct. 2nd, 1609, with consent of the inhabitants, that none but old men, formerly fishermen, "should occupy the coasting business for butter, &c., and that the young men should diligently attend the fishing craft," and only eight vessels were appointed for the butter trade, regularly to take their turns. The decrease of Dunwich promoted the advancement of Walberswick, and commerce with Ipswich was established in 1495; also with Lincoln in 1502. On the 21st January, 1585, a bond was given by all the masters of vessels to carry no passengers, either outward to foreign parts or home from them without passports, under a penalty of one hundred marks; and passengers on arrival were presented to commissioners appointed to receive them.

The earliest record concerning ecclesiastical possessions is in the Domesday Book, 1085. It evidences the existence of parish churches, with some endowments, in both Blythburgh and Walberswick, long before that of the Priory. It states that two other churches belonged to Blythburgh, besides its own parish church. Later, Henry I. (1100—1135) gave the revenues of the church at Blythburgh to the Abbot and Convent of S. Osyth, in Essex, who established the Priory soon after at Blythburgh. Concerning the "two other churches," Gardner announces one to have been at Walberswick, but that no trace remains of another. But the tower of the present church at Walberswick may be considered this remaining trace of a second ancient church. Certainly two *sites* of churches are *known* at Walberswick. On the second site (the present), the tower now standing was erected nearly seventy years *before* the church which is now in ruins (vide the date of the agreement for its

erection), and it is most probable adjoined a church already standing on this spot. Again, twenty years elapsed between the demolition of the old church by the quay and the dedication of the church now ruined, and we cannot think so populous and prosperous a town would have remained churchless during this time. Contiguous to Dunwich as Walberswick was, where churches were multiplied, it is hardly doubtful that it would have two churches, one of which, after the demolition of the other, was used by the inhabitants. Moreover, the Bishop visited Walberswick annually during this interval, and persons were buried in, Gardner says, the present church (!) in 1428 and 1418.

The ancient church by the marshes was thatched. It was adorned in the manner prevalent before the Reformation, with images. This church was taken down in 1473.

A new edifice was erected soon afterwards on the site of the present church. To it all the adornments of the former church were transferred. It was dedicated in 1493, when two aisles and porch were completed. It contained a chapel of our Lady, four altars, a throne, and five images transferred from the old church; also extra windows. The ceiling was painted; and an account of utensils in the church of 1492, proves possession of a great variety of vestments and costly silver and other ware. The roofs were all covered with lead. Its dimensions then were 124 ft. (whereof the chancel was 41 ft.), by 60 ft. (whereof the nave was 27 ft.) Nave and Chancel were adorned with eighteen clerestory windows on each side, and there were two windows besides the great East window, also in the chancel. In the south aisle were eight windows; in the north were seven, a vestry with upper chamber occupying the place of the eighth at the east end.

The agreement for the erection of the Tower is dated "on the Tewesday next after the Feste of Seynt Mathie Apostle, the fourte Zeer of King Henry the Sexte." It was to be 12 ft. by 12 ft. inside, and the walls 6 ft. thick. There were to be four buttresses, "and one Vice" or stairway. It was to be built "after the stepil of Dunstale," its doors and windows "sewtly after Halesworth." The work was to proceed from year to year, "bitwixen the Festes of the Aununcyacion of our Lady and Sent Mychel Archaungel," *i.e.*, in summer only. Materials and a house to work and live in were to be provided. The remuneration was "for the Zarde werkyng, 40 scheelyngs of laughfull money of Ingland: and a cade of full Herynge eche year, in tyme of werkyng; and eche of hem (two workmen) a Gowne of lenore ones, in the tyme of werkyng; so that they scholden be gode men and trewe to the werke fornsaid." It is over 90 ft. high.

For fifty years the church prospered. The times were troublous, but there was no molestation of its prosperity. When in 1528 a Bull from the Pope was secured by Cardinal Wolsey for the suppression of certain religious houses (that their funds might be applied to the endowment of his projected college at Ipswich), there must have been no small anxiety at Walberswick. For the Priory of Blythburgh was one

of those which it concerned, and the tithes of Walberswick were parcel of the possessions of the house. But in the two years which intervened before the death of Wolsey, perhaps because the king's consent was a condition, and he may have refused it in respect of Blythburgh, nothing was done; and by his death the threatened danger was, apparently, diverted. Wolsey's scheme, however, opened the king's eyes to the possibility of gathering a huge spoil with very little trouble, and the best way to realize it was a speculation which he never ceased to consider. He was sorely in need of money: such a scheme as Wolsey's could not be overlooked. But while Wolsey sought to appropriate the funds of but forty of the smallest houses, Henry VIII. contemplated the spoliation of them all. They were upwards of six hundred in number, scattered over the whole land. Thomas Cromwell, formerly secretary to Wolsey, was the king's adviser, and was appointed vicar general. First, a strict visitation was determined on by the king's council. A general survey and valuation was made accordingly in 1535. (In this Blythburgh was rated at £48 8s., *i.e.*, £580 15s. in present currency.) Hereby a report of abuses was secured, which was made the basis of an Act, passed in Parliament in 1536, for the suppression of all religious houses under the clear yearly value of £200, and their property to be given to the king.

A second Act of Parliament next became necessary. The first only legalized the king's claim for a year: another was needed to cover later surrenders, and was passed in 1539.

These were the circumstances, then, under which the first great misfortune befell the beautiful church and the prosperous town of Walberswick: the church was robbed of its tithes: the king becoming possessed of them, they were bestowed upon Sir Arthur Hopton. The king, says Gardner, "did by his Letters Patent, dated Nov. 12th, in the 30th Year of his reign (1538), grant unto Sir Arthur Hopton, Kut., of Westwood Lodge, the Site of the Priory, the Manor of the Priory, and Hinton Hall, and the Land's called Bullock's Broome Cloose, Mill-hill Close, Arnold's Closes, Appleton Meade, as also the Water-Mill, and other tenements in Blyburgh; all the Tythes of Blyborough, Walberswick, and Blyford; the Improprations of Wenboston and Branfield; and the advowson of Thorrington, as Parcel of the Possessions of the House." The impropration of Claxon, near Loddon, in Norfolk, and some lands in Thorrington, were otherwise disposed of.

The affairs of the town had been vested in the churchwardens: This evidences the dependence of the town upon the Church. The revenues of the lands claimed by the king and granted to Sir Arthur Hopton, were seized because belonging to the church, and in the immediate decay of the town it may appear, perhaps, that a substantial benefit accrued to the town from them. On this account probably were town and Church affairs in combination, as we have seen, and on this account did the town suffer with the Church.

Upon the robbery of the tithes the town fell immediately into decay. It became very poor, and the money for the repair of public

buildings, and the expenses of the officers was not met by an income from dues and taxes.

In 1585 the great bell of the church, weighing 1707 lbs., was sold to Thomas and George Smith, of Ipswich, at 31s. per 100 lbs., *i.e.*, £26 8s. 9d. In 1633, for want of funds, a rate was made for the church: this records the number of families to have been 71, who provided £16 9s. for the purpose. The following year a part of the town was burnt. A rate made in this year was for glazing the church and running of the great bell, and records the number of the families to be reduced to 54, who provided £11 12s. 6d. A creditable record of this year is, that of the 54 families, 156 were communicants. Then came the civil war. Says Gardner, "the sacrilegious Faction viewing this fine Church, defaced all the Imagery, robbed the grave stones of the brass plates, broke down the organs, erased the King's Arms, and let the whole fabric run to ruin, substituting a meeting-house, pawned the Communion Plate, and the Church was destitute of an episcopal minister, continuing in a deplorable condition till after the King's restoration."

This was not the end of troubles which befell the town and its beautiful church. Visitors were appointed for the inspection of churches, upon the king's restoration, and the churchwardens were cited to appear at the ecclesiastical courts. They were required to put the building into good repair, provide books and other things. Accounts dated from 1596 to 1674 show that very little was done. For nearly a century it stood much neglected: Meanwhile the number of inhabitants had decreased, trade suffered more and more, and those who remained objected to provide the cost of the preservation of the edifice. Then a petition was made, setting forth that the church was much decayed and was too large for the parish (the congregation seldom exceeding 40), and praying for permission to unroof Nave, Chancel, and North aisle, and sell the materials, also three of the four remaining bells (whereof two were split), and with the proceeds to repair the south aisle. This petition was granted, and the order to execute the work dated 29th June, 1695. Thus, either by its insupportable charge to the parishioners, or through sordid avarice, did ruin completely befall the church. The three bells, lead, and timber, sold for £303 1s. 11d. The cost of the erection of a new one, 64 ft. by 20 ft., on the site of the south aisle, was £291 8s. 9d. The balance, £11 13s. 2d., remained due to the town. The churchwardens responsible for this work were Edward Collings and John Taylor. The accounts are endorsed as follows, "seen and allowed by me, C. Blois." "We are satisfied that these accounts are true, John Skoulding, Curate, Henry Earn, the marks of, William Biles, William Crow, and Samuel More."

Among the persons buried in Walberswick church are John Hopton, Esq., and Margaret, his wife; another John Hopton, Esq., Agnes and Margaret, his wives; John Norwiche, Esq., 1428, and Matilda, his wife, 1418; Elizabeth Knevet, daughter of Thomas Hopton, 1471; Thomas

Kerych, 1512. The bishop, his suffragan, and the archdeacon, visited the town annually from 1480-97.

T. W. Odiorn, in 1522, gave his "lytyll Howse for pore Folkys to dwell in yt to pray for me." Sir Arthur Hopton released to the town for ever one acre of ground, willed by Walter Burward to build a Windmill and a Mill-cote thereon for the help and use of Bartholomew Middleton, clerk, during his life, afterwards for the benefit of the churchwardens of S. Andrew's, they rendering annually at Michaelmas, one penny to the said lord. T. Alexander Richardson, 1572, gave his "Howeses in Walberswick to be an Alms Hows, the townsmen to maintain the same in good repair." Ten men in 1642 bought "a Porch-Houst in the South Street . . . for Toon Hous for the Us of the Town for ever." This was burnt down in 1749. Mr. Nathaniel Flowerdew, 1654, Minister, reported by order of Oliver Cromwell, the living appropriate to the heirs of Sir Robert Brooke, who, by custom allowed but twenty pounds per annum to the minister of the said town; the inhabitants had suffered much by fire and by loss of their common, the death or removal of their ablest townsmen, and could raise but an insufficient contribution for the ordinances of God."

The causes of the decay of the town have been, (1) Henry VIII's robbery of the tithes and abolition of the Pope's supremacy, in consequence of which people ate less fish, fishery gradually decreased, and ship-building fell into decay; (2) fires before 1583, and in 1633, 1683, 1749, in consequence of which people removed, the houses were fewer, the rates were smaller. In 1583, toll was ordered to be levied on every load of merchandise. In 1628 four score persons were paupers, "very like to perish for want of necessary food and sustenance," and thirteen neighbouring towns were taxed for their support. Certain persons in these places were to pay 9s. 6d. weekly to the churchwardens and overseers for their relief. About 1612, Sir Robert Brook (who had purchased the manor from Sir A. Hopton) seized the common, containing over 1,400 acres, and the fens, and in 1632, the quay. In 1642 they were regained by lawsuit. Sir Robert then set men and dogs to drive off trespassers, refusing to regard the judgment of the court. Four men lost their lives in the conflicts which ensued. In 1644 another law suit reversed the former judgment. A Lady Brook eventually restored them, but one of her successors again disposed them. A Lady Brook, perhaps the mother-in-law of the former, is said to have been particularly conscientious in reference to tithes, giving away all that she had by that title to him that had the care of souls. In 1685 Edward Burford tried to recover the "Town Dutis," which had been long neglected, but the townsmen now refused to have them. In 1672 only 20 dwelling-houses and 106 souls remained in the town, and but four small boats belonged to it.

Adversity thus robbed the town, even, of what little it might have provided of itself (by its duties and tolls). But piety, adversity's sure correction, survived, and despite extraordinary poverty, something has

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