

LITTLE HAUGH HALL, NORTON.

THE parish of Norton was anciently and is still divided into two manors. The principal lordship, called Norton Hall, was, in early times, in the hands of a family that took its name from the parish. Agnes de Norton, in the 9th year of Edward the Third, carried it to the Pakenhams, from whom it passed, also by marriage, to the Bardwells. In this family it continued for several generations. Of its most distinguished member, the valiant knight, Sir William de Bardwell, it will not now be necessary to speak. His deeds of chivalry and piety will more appropriately be brought to the notice of the Institute when they visit the church of Bardwell, where his trusty sword may still be found, and his effigies be seen in painted glass. This manor is now vested in the family of Woodward.

Of the lesser manor, known as Little Haugh Hall, there is nothing worth mentioning till we come to the time of King Henry the Eighth, when it suddenly sprang into considerable notice as the probable *El Dorado* of our own country.

Bishop Gibson, who edited the second edition of Camden's *Britannia*, in 1722, referring to Norton, says :

“I know not whether I should here take notice into what vain and groundless hopes of finding gold at Norton, king Henry the Eighth was drawn by a credulous kind of avarice; but the diggings there speak for me.”

The editor of the “*Magna Britannia*” a few years later, in 1730, thus rings the changes upon this statement :—

“Norton village where king Henry VIII was induced by a credulous kind

of avarice, upon what information or suggestion we know not, to dig for gold. His hopes proved vain, if they were not groundless altogether; and were it not that the diggings yet remain to show the probability of the attempts, we should not have dared to mention it."

Subsequent writers have repeated this statement, but it has always been received with suspicion. It is, however, a fact, most clearly established, that Henry the Eighth did engage in mining transactions in this county; and the following extracts from that monarch's Household Book, preserved in the library of the Royal Society, supplies the date and a portion of the cost of the experiment, if not the exact locality and results of the "Diggings."

"July, a' ° xxx ° (1538). Item, payde to Richard Candishe by the kinge's commaundement, certified by my Lord Privy Sealis I're, and other the kingis Commissioners join w^t him, to have the ouersight of the Kingis myndes of golde in Suffolke, and to convey certeyne fyners and other artificiers there, for the tryall of the ore there, the somme of *xxli*.

"Item, paide to Will'm Wade, seruaunte to Sir Piers Edgecombe, Knight, *lxs*. for his costes and expences brynginge vp hither from Cornewalle, at his owne charge, Manuel George and Will'm Wynget, myners, to be sent at this tyme into Suff., to trye and werke at the newe myne, to the saide George Manuel and Will'm for y^r charges, goynge down to Suff., vpon a reconnyng of their wagis, by the kingis commaundement, certefyed, &c., *vili*.

A small plantation on the Little Haugh estate, parallel to the Bury road, where there is a sand of yellow colour—is, as Dr. Dickens kindly informs me, traditionally pointed out as the field of gold.

Potius crediderin aurum solo defuisse quam ille avarital.

Norton is not the only place in England mentioned in history as producing gold. There is a legend that Queen Boadicea obtained gold in Essex. Cunobeline, Prince of the Trinobantes, coined at Camelodunum, now Colchester, gold from a mine in Essex. There are traces that nuggeting took place from time to time; but as the Norman kings claimed all gold and silver found as royal property, people either kept their own counsel or abstained from any ardent search. But the various edicts passed shew that the existence of gold and silver, both pure and combined with other metals, was known and believed in. In the reign of Edward the First, and for one hundred years after, there

was a wonderful interest spread abroad about gold and silver mining; and the Regent Duke of Bedford took the opportunity of the minority of Henry the Sixth to grant to himself the monopoly of all the gold and silver mines in England for twelve years. The mining department was regularly organised in the time of Henry the Sixth, and Robert Burton was appointed the Controller of mines containing any gold or silver. Queen Elizabeth also granted patents to several foreigners to seek for gold, &c., in eight counties in England, Wales, and Ireland; but the discovery of America withdrew attention from the gold mines of England. Since the year 1830, however, gold-working in England has been resumed with some partial activity, the gold localities have been ascertained over a considerable district, and have been formally acknowledged by the Ordnance surveyors.* Fortunately for the peace of our county, its clays and sands are not among the localities enumerated as offering a temptation to "prospecters."

Little Haugh Hall was the property of the Milesons in the 17th century. The heiress of Borrodaile Mileson, Esq., who died in 1677, and lies buried in the parish church, carried the manor to a family named Edgar, and Mileson Edgar, Esq., sold the estate to Thomas Macro, a wealthy grocer at Bury St. Edmund's. Where the family of Macro came from is not known; but persons of that name had been long resident at Soham, in Cambridgeshire, where they appear to have been numerous and to have possessed considerable property in the 15th century.

The first of the family of whom we have any certain knowledge, was Mr. Thomas Macro, an apothecary at Bury. He served the office of Chief magistrate several times, and resided in the house in the Meat Market, known by the observatory on the top of it. He died September 27, 1701, aged 86, and Susan his relict died April 27, 1713, aged 88.

His eldest son Thomas died young in 1649; but a second Thomas succeeded to the house in Bury before

* *Household Words*, March 15, 1856.

the death of his father, acquired a large fortune therein by the trade of a grocer, and purchased the Little Haugh estate for his country house. He served the office of Alderman of Bury in 1689 and in several subsequent years; and was elected one of the Governors of Bury School. His wife was Susan, the only daughter of the Rev. John Cox, Rector of Risby, grandson of Dr. Richard Cox, the eminent Protestant Bishop of Ely, who was tutor to King Edward the Sixth, contributed to the well-known "Bishop's Bible," and also assisted in the compilation of "Lilly's Grammar." By this marriage Mr. Macro, who died on the 26th of May 1737, aged 88, had issue three sons and three daughters. One son is mentioned as Dr. Ralph Macro in the will of his sister Susan, to whom he bequeathed a fourth share of one undivided moiety of the celebrated Wills' Coffee House, London, where "Dryden had his arm chair, and honoured the young beaux and wits with a pinch out of his snuff-box." This is, probably, the Ralph Macro of Trinity College, Cambridge, who proceeded M.B. in 1694, and in 1698 was styled "Medicus Londinensis." Another Ralph Macro, who took the degree of D.D. (*regis comitiis*) in 1728, has been confounded with him; but it could not be our Doctor, as he was dead when his sister made her will, in 1728.

Another son, Thomas, was living in 1728, for his sister Susan willed to him her interest in the same coffee house. Of this Thomas nothing further is known. A "Thomas Macro, who was lately in Virginia," is mentioned in the will of Thomas Bull, gent. of Bury, dated in Feb. 30 Car. II.; but as his mother is there stated to be dead, it cannot be our Thomas, whose mother is named as executrix to the will of her daughter Susan, in 1728. There was another Thomas Macro who was a Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, and D.D.; held the Perpetual Curacy of Great Yarmouth, where he died in 1743-4, and was buried with his wife and only son, as appears by the epitaph in Yarmouth church.

Of Dr. Cox Macro, the third son, I shall speak presently. The three daughters were named Susan, Elizabeth, and

Isabella. Susan died in September 1730, aged 43, and Elizabeth, on March 5, 1769, aged 80.

Dr Cox Macro was born in 1683, and was named after his mother's family, and not after his aunt's husband, one "Cox of London," as stated in Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes," vol. ix, p. 359. The name has given occasion to much pleasantry. It is stated by Mr. Nichols that the Doctor once applied to a friend for an appropriate motto to his coat of arms; after some little consideration his friend replied "Let it be *Cocks may crow*," a motto equally as appropriate as that of "*Quid rides*" assumed by the tobacconist.

Having been admitted of Christ's College,* Cambridge, he took the degree of L.L.B. in 1710, and obtained a fellowship. He had the degree of D.D. (*comitis regii*) in 1717, and was the senior Doctor in Divinity in the University at his death in 1767. He was appointed one of the Chaplains of king George the Second,† but inheriting a considerable fortune from his family, he seems not to have taken upon himself for any length of time the cure of souls, but to have devoted himself to the improvement of his estate, at Norton, to which he succeeded on the death of his father, in 1757, and to have indulged in private professional study and in gratifying his taste for curious literature and the arts of painting and sculpture.

Dr. Macro's house at Norton was probably one of the best specimens at the time of an embellished residence of a country gentleman of easy but not affluent fortune. He enlarged the house to adapt it to his purposes; laid out around it extensive pleasure grounds, and collected within numerous paintings, some of them very choice, and a few sculptures. Peter Tillemans, of Antwerp, the celebrated animal painter, was much employed by him; and died here in 1734, having been working the day before on the portrait of a horse. This picture, which remained in the hall in its unfinished state as a memorial of the circumstance,‡ is now in the possession of Mrs. Patteson, of Cringleford, Norfolk.

* Mr. Hunter says St. John's.

† Mr. Hunter says George the First.

‡ Ecc. Documents, edit. by Rev. J. Hunter for Camd. Society, p. 46.

A catalogue of Dr. Macro's treasures was made by his nephew, Mr. Wilson, in 1766. The works of art are first mentioned, his bust of Rysbrach, his pictures, and his drawings by the old masters, which had belonged to Sir James Thornhill. There was also a bust of Tillemans, by Rysbrach; and the inscription under the niche in which it was placed, at the top of the staircase, is yet visible :—

TILLEMANSIO
SUO
RYSBRACHIUS.

These two busts are now in the possession of the Patteson family. The catalogue then enumerates various relics of antiquity; his autographs, including many of historical value, and a body of letters from the Protestant Martyrs, probably inherited from his ancestor Bishop Cox, and one of Cromwell to his wife, dated April 12, 1651; the *Botanologia* of Henry Daniel; the Great Register of Bury Abbey during the abbacy of William Curteys, which formerly belonged to Sir Henry Spelman, and is now in the British Museum; a Ledger Book of the Abbey of Glastonbury, which Bishop Tanner rescued from destruction in the shop of a grocer at Oxford, in 1602; a cartulary of the religious house at Blackborough, in Norfolk; a vellum MS. of the works of Gower; and the original MS. of the poet Spenser's "View of the state of Ireland," to which is subscribed "E. S. 1597," probably the true date of the composition of the treatise. Here, too, was the whole of the collections of the Rev. Dr. Covell, Rector of Horringer, relating to the University of Cambridge, and his own travels in the East, with his literary correspondence; a large assemblage of charters mostly relating to this part of the kingdom; the golden charter of Croyland; and some few others which the Rev. J. Hunter edited for the Camden society, in 1840, in the volume entitled "Ecclesiastical Documents." His collection of MSS. was perhaps one of the best in private hands. Several of them had belonged to Spelman, others had formed part of the library of the monks of Bury, and many were supplied by Bishop Hurd, who being tutor to the

Doctor's only son was, we are told, more than ordinarily attentive to the augmentation of the Doctor's store room of literary curiosities.*

He had some of the rarer productions of the early Foreign and English presses; and his coins and medals were very choice.

The possessor of these valuable remains having, as he wrote to a friend, "never gone beyond his house and gardens for many years," died on the 2nd of February, 1757, at the age of 84, and was buried in Norton churchyard, in an inclosure between the side of the vestry and one of the buttresses which support the church wall.

By his marriage with a daughter of Edward Godfrey, Esq. Privy Purse to Queen Anne, who died in 1753, he had issue one son and one daughter.

The son was for some time a student at Emanuel College, Cambridge, with the advantage of having Bishop Hurd for his tutor; but feeling more inclination for a military than a clerical profession, he went abroad and died there. In a letter to him from Mr. Alvis, Rector of Great Snoring, Norfolk, he says "Your expedition to Flanders gives me, I confess, some uneasiness. I cannot help fearing that the life of a camp will disagree with the tenderness of your constitution; but whether you cross the sea, or continue in England, wherever you are I most heartily wish you happy."

Young Macro died before his father. Tradition says he was murdered by his sister, who wanted to get the property; and that a skeleton was found in a box in the house and believed to be his. On his death his sister Mary became sole heiress to the Doctor's property. Of this lady, it is related, that on the death of her father she immediately applied to Mr. Green, the bookseller at Bury, to spare for no expense in getting the announcement of his death inserted in every newspaper. This was in hopes of its falling under the notice of William Staniforth, Esq. of Sheffield, whose addresses the father would

* Literary Anecdotes, ix, p. 361; Eccl. Documents; and Gent. Magazine 1847, ii., p. 409.

not hear of. This succeeded to her wishes, and the marriage soon after took place. A portion of the literary stores of Dr. Macro was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Staniforth to Mr. Wilson, a Yorkshire gentleman—a nephew of the Doctor—who strongly resembled him in his tastes and pursuits. Mr. Wilson, who had a most extraordinary passion for amassing and transcribing character-evidence, and was no mean antiquary, died in 1783; and his collections, after his son's death in 1844, being sold by auction, have gone to increase the stupendous collection of Sir Thomas Phillips at Middle Hill. Mr. Staniforth, in 1773, in fulfilment of a charitable devise contained in the will of his father-in-law, settled the sum of £600 3 per cent. consols in trust, the dividend to be applied in the purchase of 12 poor men's coats, of strong cloth, and 12 poor women's gowns and petticoats, of strong stuff, to be given away every Easter day. The fund now consists of £724 3 per cent reduced annuities; the dividends of which, amounting to £21 14s. 8d., are received and applied to the purposes of the trust.* Mrs. Staniforth died in August 1775, and her husband on November 14, 1786, in his 70th year. Dying without issue, the mansion at Little Haugh became the property of his brother Robert Staniforth, Esq., whose daughter Jane carried it by marriage to John Patteson, Esq., some time member for Norwich.

Mr. Patteson sold Little Haugh to Mr. Robert Braddock, of Bury St Edmund's; dispersed the collection of old masters by auction, in 1819; and sold the books and MSS. to Mr. Beatniffe, a bookseller at Norwich, who is said to have realised immense profit by disposing of them to Mr. Hudson Gurney, Mr. Dawson Turner, &c.

Mr. Braddock, who died in 1812, devised the estate to his nephew Robert; and the trustees of his son sold it to Peter Huddleston, Esq., the present owner, who has added considerably to the buildings, and greatly improved the estate.

A painting by Tillemans, of Little Haugh House, with Dr. Macro and members of his family walking in front,

* Page's Sup. Suffolk Traveller, p. 800.

5 feet long by 2 feet 9 inches high, is in the possession of the Rev. W. F. Patteson, of St. Helen's, Norwich, who has also eleven family portraits: three of the Cox, three of the Godfrey, and four of the Macro family. Nine of them are three-quarter lengths, one a small half-length, and one a miniature size. Among them are Mr Cox, father of the Rev. J. Cox, Rector of Risby, by Walker; his wife, by Sir Godfrey Kneller; their daughter, married to Mr. Thomas Macro, grocer, of Bury, by Riley; her husband, by Brooke; Mr. Godfrey, Privy Purse to Queen Anne, by Houseman; Mrs. Godfrey; Mrs. Macro, their daughter, a fine portrait in her old age; Mr. Edward Godfrey, her brother, buried at Pakenham, by Ross; Dr. Macro, by Mieris, junior; and Master and Miss Macro, their two children, small half-lengths, by Tillemans. Mrs. Patteson, of Cringleford, has also a fine half-length portrait of Edward Macro, the Doctor's son, by B. Wilson; and a few of the pictures which belonged to Dr. Macro are preserved by various members of the Patteson family.

Some parts of the house still remain as in Macro's time. The most interesting portions are the painted staircase; the enriched ceiling in a lower room, and an upper room hung with tapestry. The bottom and sides of the staircase were painted by Tillemans; the ceiling and dome by F. Huysman. This appears to represent Fame crowning Science, whose triumphs are represented in the cornice by the emblems of astronomy, sculpture, painting, and architecture, accompanied by busts of distinguished professors. The carving was the work of Davis, and the stucco of Burrough. The tapestry is of the same period and style as that remaining in the house at Bury, in which the father of Dr. Macro resided.

SAMUEL TYMMS.