

CUPOLA HOUSE, BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

THE house in which, by the kind permission of Mr. B. Jennings, we are this day assembled, claims the attention of the Archæologist, as an interesting example of the house of an opulent burgess of a provincial town in the time of Queen Anne; and the respect of every inhabitant of Bury St. Edmund's, from the interesting circumstances and striking incidents which make up its little history.

The earliest documentary information that I have met with is, that in 1653, this house (described as three tenements) was the property and residence of Mr. Thomas Macro, apothecary.

Where the family of Macro came from is not known, but it appears from the Registers of St. James's parish, that a Thomas Macro, maltster, was buried there July 1st, 1620, and "Susan Macrowe, widowe," was buried June 28th, 1628. As the name is not found in the Registry of Bury Wills prior to this date, it may be that the maltster was the first member of the family who settled in Bury St. Edmund's. From what part of the country he came is equally uncertain, but persons of the name had been living in the neighbouring parish of Barrow, for a century at least before this time; and at a still earlier period at Soham, in Cambridgeshire, not very far distant. At the latter place, in the fifteenth century, the Macros were numerous, and owners of considerable property.

Mr. Thomas Macro, the apothecary, was probably son of Mr. Thomas Macro, the maltster, and seems to have been in a position to command the various civic honours of his town; being elected one of the two chamberlains in 1650;

a burgess of the common council in 1653; and a chief burgess in 1660. Five years afterwards, in 1665, he was chosen Alderman, or chief magistrate, but refusing to serve was fined the sum of fifty pounds. The reasons for his election and refusal are not recited in the Corporation Minutes of the time; but it is recorded there that he refused both to serve or pay. However, proceedings being ordered to be taken against him, he ultimately paid down the full fine; but requesting an abatement, the corporation "in consideration that it was the largest fine that could be inflicted," agreed to return him ten pounds. Three years later, this dignified position being more agreeable to him, he served the office, and again in 1681. He died, according to Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ix, on the 27th of September, 1701, aged 86,* and Susan his relict died April 27th, 1713, aged 88.

His eldest son Thomas died young in 1649, but a second Thomas, born in the same year that the first one died, succeeded to the house before the death of his father, and acquired a large fortune therein by the trade of a Grocer; a trade that appears to have been carried on here, not only since, but at a much earlier period, for in the cellar of the present house was preserved till lately, a large turtle shell with the arms of the Grocers' Company painted thereon, and the date 1616. This curious shell, which had been originally fixed to the outside of the house, is now in the possession of Mrs. Clark, of Northgate Street. Mr. Macro not only gained wealth but obtained a large measure of the respect and confidence of his fellow townsmen. He was elected a common burgess in 1680; a chief burgess in 1683; and Alderman in 1689,† in which year he was made a governor of Bury School, and probably purchased the Little Haugh Hall estate, at Norton, an account of which

* In the Register of burials of St. James's parish occurs this entry:—"1701. Sept. 30, Thomas Macro, senr., gent."

† Again in the years 1698, 1710, and

1720. In the *Literary Anecdotes* it is said that "he was five times chief magistrate."

will be found in the second volume of the Institute's *Proceedings*, vol. ii, p. 285. He made a notable marriage, having married at Risby church, January 9, 1678, Susan, only daughter of the Rev. John Cox, Rector of Risby.* The lady's father was a grandson of Dr. Richard Cox, the eminent Protestant Bishop of Ely,† tutor to King Edward the Sixth; a contributor to the well known "Bishop's Bible;" and one of the compilers of the famous "Lilly's Grammar." The alliance of the two families was further cemented by the marriage of his eldest sister Elizabeth at the same church and time, to a Mr. Joseph Cox,‡ probably the "one Cox, of London," referred to in the *Literary Anecdotes*, ix, 359. In 1680 we find "Mr. Thomas Macro, Junior," presenting to the Rectory of Risby, on the death of his father-in-law.§

Mr. Thomas Macro died on the 26th of May, 1737, aged 88,|| having had issue by his wife Susan Cox, three sons and three daughters, probably more.

I. Of Thomas, all that is known is that he was living in 1728, when his sister "Susan Macro, the younger, of Bury, spinster," by her will dated in 1728, and proved in 1730,¶ devised to him and his heirs her fourth part or share in one undivided moiety of all that messuage known by the name of Wills' Coffee House, in Cornhill, London, (where Dryden had his arm chair, and honoured the young beaux and wits with a pinch out of his snuff box) "devised to her by Dr. Ralph Macro, her brother." A Mr. Thomas

* Parish Register. It is not a little singular that the wives of Thomas the maltster, Thomas the apothecary, and Thomas the grocer, were each named Susan.

† In the library of the Episcopal palace at Ely, is a rude painting of the funeral of Bishop Cox, who died in 1581, with the procession on the outside and the ceremony within the church.—Lysons's *Cambridgeshire*, p. 188.

‡ See Extracts from Parish Register in

Gage's Thingoe Hundred.

§ The chancel pavement of Risby church, has inscriptions to John Cox, Rector, who died 7th September, 1680, aged 59 years; Grace his wife, who died 17th September, 1694, aged 65; John Cox, the son and Jane his wife; he died in 1667, she in 1660. *Gage's Thingoe Hundred*, pp. 81, 82.

|| *Literary Anecdotes.*

¶ Bury Registry, Lib. Clagett, iii, 241.

Macro, clerk, was chosen preacher of St. James's parish, Bury, August 26th, 1721, at a salary of eighty pounds. He resigned the place of lecturer on the 7th of February following, and was succeeded by Robert Butts, afterwards Bishop of Norwich.*

II. Ralph Macro, mentioned in his sister Susan's will as Dr. Ralph. He is probably the Ralph Macro of Trinity College, Cambridge, who proceeded M. B. in 1694, and in 1698 was styled "Medicus Londinensis."†

III. Cox Macro, who 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. (*comitiis regis*) 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 IInd,§ 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 Nor-

* Corporation Books.—Can this be the same 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. Another "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.

† Another Ralph, 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.

‡ Mr. Hunter, in *Ecclesiastical Documents* edited for Camden Society, says St. John's.

§ Mr. Hunter says George the 1st.

ton, to which he succeeded on the death of his father in 1737, and to have indulged in private professional study and in gratifying his taste for curious literature and the arts of painting and sculpture.

Dr. Cox Macro, died at Norton, on the 2nd of February, 1767, at the age of 84. 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. For an account of his descendants, see the Institute's *Proceedings*, ii, 285.

The three daughters of Mr. Thomas Macro were:—

I. Susan, before mentioned, who died unmarried in September, 1730.

II. Elizabeth, who died March 5th, 1769, aged 80; and

III. Isabella, who sold the house in Bury, about which we are more directly concerned, to Thomas Moyle, Esq., one of the five sons of General Moyle,† by his wife Isabella, daughter of Sir Robert Davers, Bart., of Rushbrooke. The house was purchased for the purposes of, and by an Act of Parliament twenty-fourth George IIInd, cap. twenty, was settled to the uses of the settlement executed on the marriage, in 1745, of Mr. Thomas Moyle with Sarah daughter of Mrs. Sarah Copinger, widow, of Bury, by whom he acquired the manor of Cokerals, in Buxhall. In the Act of Parliament the premises are described as “all that freehold messuage or tenement standing in or near the Great Market Street, in Bury, late in the occupation of Thomas Macro, Esquire, deceased; and also all those stables, houses of office and buildings situate and being in Skinner's Lane; and also all that old chamber and cellar in Skinner's Lane aforesaid.” This apparently refers to the cellar under the offices on the east side of the lane, but deeds of an earlier date show, that the “old chamber or cellar,” was under the

* In Risby church is a gravestone to “Edward Godfrey, Esq., late of ye parish of St. James's Westminster,” ob. 11th May, 1727, buried May 13th.

† He resided in the Horse-market, (now St. Mary's Square) Bury, and died in 1738.

house in the Market Place, and had been a separate freehold tenement till purchased by Thomas Macro, the grocer, in 1693.

Captain Thomas Copinger Moyle, their son, sold the premises to Mr. Robert Hockley, grocer, to whose son Lieutenant Colonel Hockley, there is a raised tomb in our churchyard; and whose grandson Major Hockley, of Ipswich, is the author of *Pandurang-Hari*, and other novels.

From the Hockleys the house was purchased by Mr. Stephen Brooks, grocer and wine merchant, in the trustees of whose will it is still vested.

Thus far for authentic history. There are, however other incidents of no less interest, if not equally supported by written evidence, which should not be passed over. The turtle shell, with the arms of the Grocers' Company, has been already noticed. Let us endeavour to discover to whom this shell belonged. In a rare pamphlet, published in 1608, entitled "The woeful and lamentable wast and spoile done by a suddaine fire in St. Edmund's Bury, in Suffolk, on Munday, the tenth of Aprill, 1608," it is related that the fire, which commenced in Eastgate-street, and was carried by the tempest that raged at the time over intermediate streets and houses, to the Market Place, then "the beautie and ornament of the whole towne," and converted the warehouses and cellars there, "wherein were a great store of fish, salt, sugar, spices, and many other comodities of great value, into a rude continent of heapes, stones, and pieces of timber," utterly destroying among others, the dwelling of Mr. Pynner, a grocer, there.

"Let us behold (says the author) the lamentation of Mr. Pinner, a grocer, dwelling in St. Edmund's Bury, aforesaid, and in the Market Place, in the parish of Saint Iames (where the most hurt was done), with the complaints and bewailings, which himsele, his wife and children powre out for that misery which the cruelty of this fire hath exercised vpon them; whereby he lost, not only all that substance that was his owne, but also those wares which he had of other mens; so that he is doubly undone; this fire shewed his glittering triumphs in devouring his goods, plate, and money, and in swallowing and eating vp a newe built house to the ground, that but lately before, cost him foure or five hundred pounds the erecting."

“He that the day before was esteemed a man (at the least) worth two or three thousand pounds, was, by this untimely accident, utterly vndone, his goods being quite destroyed and consumed, himselfe (in his estate) was made lesse worth then nothing. They that before were wont to comfort the distressed, and to feed their neighbours, and other inhabitants with bread, are by this in danger to perish for want of reliefe, being now ready to beg bread themselves.”

The course of the fire may be gathered from an inscription formerly, and till about the year 1800, on a board over the door of an old house, between the bank of Messrs. Oakes and Co., in the Butter Market, and the end of the row, which recorded that the fire passed over that house, without doing any injury to it, but burnt those on each side of it, and then extended itself to the houses in the Market Place.

These houses were almost immediately in a line with the one which now demands our attention, and as no part of the present building above the “old chamber or cellar,” is of a date prior to the fire, it is perhaps not drawing too much on conjecture to believe that the premises of Mr. Pynner occupied this very site.

And who was Mr. Pynner? Fortunately for us, the invaluable records at the Will Office supply us with some gratifying particulars. From his will it appears, that though he sustained such great losses as to be “ready to beg bread” for his family, he was not cast down, but resuming his business, obtained so large a share of the patronage of his fellow townsmen, that he not only retrieved his fortunes, but was again able to feed his poorer neighbours, and to enjoy for some years, an easy retirement in “his messuage, called the Colledge” (now the borough workhouse); and at his death in 1639,* to leave considerable possessions to his family, and grateful remembrances to many kind friends; to direct sundry acts of piety and charity to be performed,† and by his liberal gift to the Guildhall Feoffees for “the common profit of the inhabitants of Bury,” to obtain a

* He directed his funeral sermon to be preached by “Mr. Edmund Callamy,” the celebrated Nonconformist divine, then the Lecturer at St. Mary’s church, Bury.

† Among other things “for the buyeing and provideing of horne bookes and primers to be giuen to poore children of the p’ish of St. Maries, in Bury.”

respected place on the goodly roll of benefactors to the town.* Referring to the fire, he says:—

“And whereas I haue bene, am, and ever shalbee, a feeleing member and most sensible above others of the great losse and calamity wch of late yeres hapened to mee and many others by the miserable misfortune of fire within the said towne of Bury, I doe hereby, for a p'petual memoriall and a caveat to bee for ever hereafter kept thereof, I doe giue and bequeath vnto such p'sons as shalbe newly elected as aforesaid ffeoffees of the towne lands of Bury aforesaid ffory pounds of lawfull English money, for and towards the charge of erectinge and makinge of a conduit or cisterne to receiue water, to be brought vnto it; and the same conduit to be sett in some convenient place in the markett place in Bury aforesaid, for the better supply of water, to be vsed when any casualty of fire shall happen within the said towne, and other necessary vses, as shalbe thought fitt and convenient. And I will that twenty pounds of the said forty pounds shalbe paid the said ffeoffees when they shall really begin the said works, and thother twentie pounds of the said forty pounds to be paid vnto the said ffeoffees when the said worke shalbe finished and brought to perfeccon (soe as the said worke be reallye taken in hand and finished within seaven yeres next after my decease).”

But the “great losse and calamity of fire,” to which he so feelingly alludes, and against the recurrence of which to others he sought to make such precautions, was not the only misfortune that befell this worthy chief burgess. He was afterwards a great sufferer by the terrible visitation of the plague, in 1637, of which his last will gives this truly painful picture:—

“Item, whereas my late wives kinsman Francis Potter, of Bury St. Edmund, baker, at the late heavy visitacon did take great paines about me in the time of my trouble, in regard I cold gett noe body to help me, and that all my household fledd from me and left me both comfortles (in respect that at that time I had my man dyed of the sickness) when my selfe and my wife were boeth lame; in consideracon thereof I haue inffeooffed the said Francis Potter and his heires for ever in twoe messuages or tenemts in Bury St. Edmund aforesaid, in thoccupacon of the said Francis Potter and John Kinge, the said Francis Potter payeing vnto mee the said Francis Pynner, or my assignes, dureing my naturall life the sume of ten pounds p' annu' of lawfull money of England (as by the feoffm't thereof made more at large it may and doth appeare). Item, whereas Elizabeth Pell, the wife of Willm Pell thelder, and John Pell their sonne, did take like paines about me, as is before menconed, in the time of my

* The whole of this interesting will, Wills,” edited for the Camden Society may be seen in the volume of “Bury pp. 170—185.

great calamity and heauey visitacon as is aboue specified, I doe giue and bequeath vnto the said Willm Pell and John Pell, all and singler suche sume and sumes of money as the said Willm and John doe owe vnto mee either by bonds, bills, or any waies or means whatsoeu'. Item, in consideracon that John Newgate, of Bury St. Edmund, malster, diuers and sondry times hath come and resorted to comfort and conferr wth me in the time of my sorrowe and heauines, I doe giue and bequeath vnto him the said John Newgate the sume of ffoure pounds of lawfull money of England, to be paid vnto him wthin one yere next after my decease. Item, whereas Robt. Walker, of Bury aforesaid, stationer, was somewhat helpfull vnto me at the said time of my visitacon, I doe giue and bequeath vnto the said Robt Walker the sume of ffortie shillings of lauffull money of England, to be paid vnto him within one yere next after my decease."

Should the circumstances now brought forward be deemed sufficient, as I believe they are, to warrant the conjecture that the ruined grocery store of Francis Pynner, stood on this spot; it will impart an additional charm to the annals of this curious old house, if we may look upon the turtle shell with the Grocers' Arms painted thereon, as a memento of the renovated fortunes of one of the most pious and worthy sons of St. Edmund's Bury.

There is another incident that it becomes a duty to notice. In the circular conuening this meeting it is said, on the authority of the "Hand Book of Bury," that this house "was for a time the residence of Daniel Defoe, the celebrated author of *Robinson Crusoe*." I wish it were in my power to confirm this assertion; but I cannot do so. It is true that this "true-born Englishman," retired to Bury, in 1704, on his release from Newgate prison, where he had been confined for so long a time, for publishing his "*Shortest way with the Dissenters*," but all endeavours to ascertain the exact place of his abode proved fruitless, till an old inhabitant told me, that he had always understood that this was the house.

Subsequent inquiries however induced me to question the accuracy of this information, and my informant, on becoming acquainted with the real history of the house, was constrained to admit that he had confounded the celebrated collector *Macro* with the still more celebrated author *Defoe*.

However gratifying it might be to believe that one of the ablest and most useful writers of our country, should find even a temporary refuge, from the storms of political persecution, in the kindness of a strict churchman, it is due to history to acknowledge that there is no foundation for thinking that Defoe ever experienced the shelter of its walls.

The house probably owes all that is curious in its present features to Mr. Thomas Macro, the grocer, who becoming possessed of all three tenements, of which it previously consisted, either built the house anew, or converted it into one dwelling, and fitted it up according to the taste of the time. The rooms are all uniformly panelled, and some of the panels have local views and classical subjects painted thereon. In the shop there is a view of the town, taken from the Vine Fields, in which the house itself (then newly finished), with the Market Cross, are conspicuous features. As the "Court House," erected by the first Lord Bristol, about 1730, is not shewn, the view must have been taken before that time. The room on the first floor, on the east side, has some tapestry not worked but woven, of the style prevalent at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, and corresponding with some put up by Mr. Macro, in his house at Norton, and still remaining. Some of the subjects have a reference to the story of Hercules, who is figured on the panel over the fire-place, but the details are not very classically treated. Hercules subduing the Cretan Bull, and Hercules killing the Sea Monster, are easily recognized. Opposite to which is apparently Hesione bound, expecting the coming of the monster; and fourth, Hercules's first introduction to and banquet with Omphale, or one of his numerous lady loves.

The room over this has some remains of the gilding and colour, which adorned the frames of the panels. This would appear to have been a reception or state room (it is called the ball room), and before the houses in the Butter

Market were raised to their present height, must have commanded a delightful view over the town fields on the east, formerly much more wooded than at present. In the panel over the fire-place, is a curious representation of the interior of St. Mary's church, shewing the rood screen and the painted scriptures around it; the lectern on which Bishop Jewell's Works were accustomed to lie; the font with its lofty canopy; and the north gallery, which was newly built in 1707, with the Alderman's chair at the east end of it, where it was first directed to be placed in 1708. This picture was probably painted in 1710, when Mr. Macro was for the third time Alderman of the borough.

The top of the house is finished by a cupola, observatory, or pleasant chamber, surmounted by a vane on which are the letters and date

M
T S
1693

for Thomas and Susan Macro, 1693.

SAMUEL TYMMS.