WINGFIELD CHURCH.

WHATEVER might have been the antiquity of the original church at Wingfield, it is evident that there are no remains in the present building, earlier than the middle or latter half of the 14th century. The family of Wingfield dates from the conquest, according to tradition; and there was certainly a church here of older date than any portion of the work before us.—I have very little doubt but that when the church was made a collegiate one, and a college erected here for priests and canons, by the executors of Sir John de Wingfield, according to his will, which was in the year 1362, the church was entirely rebuilt, and the present structure is the same, except the insertions of later date. Had we *not* known the time of the foundation of the college, I should have had no hesitation in ascribing to the architecture of this church, as nearly as possible the same date; inferring it principally from the mouldings of the various arches, and the peculiar tracery of the windows of the south aisle, which are very characteristic of late Decorated work, and nearly identical with those to be seen in the churches of Attleborough and Lopham, in Norfolk. The beautiful arches of the chancel, however, as will presently be shown, are of a somewhat later period.

Considering the church then, as a building of Edward 3rd's reign, I propose now to offer a few remarks on the various parts of it, and then to call your attention to the interesting monuments in the chancel. Its plan consists of nave and chancel, with aisles to both, those of the chancel having been, as was usual, chapels with their own altars; a tower at west end, and a south porch.

The chancel is of considerable dimensions, and apparently it underwent much ornamental alteration in the time of Richard 2nd, by the second Earl of Suffolk, of the de la Pole family. The east window is of this date, the style being early Perpendicular. There are fragments of painted glass in it, mostly with the arms of the families here entombed. There are 14 clerestory windows to this chancel, of the same period, a larger number than is usually found. The principals of the roof are supported between each of these windows by corbels of angels. The roof itself has been despoiled of its other ornamental features. The old returned stalls still remain, and have poppyheads and panelling; each seat is a miserere, the carving on the under part being all uniform, of foliage only. They are raised on a plinth, pierced with quatrefoiled air-holes. The old carved screen remains in the arches behind. The chancel is divided from its side chapels by very beautiful arches, three on the south side, and one on the north; the mouldings of two of them are ornamented with the badges of the families of Wingfield and Stafford, the wing, and the Stafford knot; a sufficient proof that they were the work of Michael de la Pole, 2nd Earl of Suffolk, whose mother was the heiress of the Wingfields, and whose wife was Catharine, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Stafford. The capitals are beautifully carved with angels, but much defaced.

The chancel arch is of very plain character, as are those of the nave. The lower panels of the roodscreen remain, but like the stalls, they are covered with modern paint, hiding any old painting that may be upon them. The bay of the roof over the screen is painted in panels, with monograms, ihc, in foliage. There are ten arches and as many clerestory windows; the latter being late Perpendicular, and quite similar to those in the nave of Diss church. The windows of the north aisle are are also late Perpendicular; but those of the south aisle are good late Decorated ones. The east and west windows of this aisle are of three lights, with fine tracery. The stair-

case which led to the roodloft remains, not as in general, in the piers of the chancel arch, but in the walls of the aisles, so that a loft ran completely across the church, as it still does in the neighbouring church of Dennington. The entrance doorway in the porch is a fine one, and has for corbels to the dripstone, the heads of a knight and lady, the former wearing the camail.

The porch itself is late Decorated, and has a niche over the outer doorway. The tower is a low flint one, with the staircase projecting on the south side. There is a good font at the west end of the nave, of the common Suffolk pattern, angels on the bowl, and sejant lions round the stem. It has four shields on the bowl, two of de la Pole, quartering Wingfield, one of Wingfield alone, and one of Stafford; so that it is co-eval with the arches of the chancel. The pulpit is formed of old carved panels with the same arms of de la Pole, quartering Wingfield, surrounded with the Garter, but is spoiled by additions of more modern date.

A very curious part of the church remains to be noticed at the east end of the north aisle. The wall at the end has a large mutilated niche and a piscina for a side altar. Beyond this wall is a room, now partly used as a vestry, forming the larger part of the chancel aisle on that side, and entered from the chancel. In this is an upper chamber of wood, accessible only by a ladder, extending over a portion only of the lower room, and having a painted side towards the east. There are holes cut from the upper room through the wall, by which a person inside can see into the chancel. It was probably used by the members of the college of priests, which formerly existed at the south west corner of the churchyard, and may have contained their library, and their vestments. There is an ancient wooden lettern remaining in it of very good design, of which there is a sketch. There is also a curious piece of an old organ, and numerous fragments of carved and painted stone work, probably from the canopies in the chancel.

Having thus briefly described the architectural features

of the church; I will now speak more particularly of the remarkable monuments before us; the persons to whom these beautiful and valuable memorials belong, and the dates which should be attributed to each. The inscriptions formerly on the tombs themselves have been unfortunately so long lost that the required information cannot be had from that source. The few published accounts relating to the parish almost all differ from each other in their statements, and the framed pedigree hanging in the chancel, as well as the cards on the monuments, are unquestionably erroneous.

The whole chancel is a kind of monumental chapel of the noble family which once possessed the adjoining castle and the estates belonging to it. It has suffered less than many from the ravages of misguided zeal, except in the destruction of the brasses and the inscriptions, the sculptured figures being nearly all perfect; and as we stand in the midst of the examples of the taste and liberality of our forefathers, and call to our minds the scene as it appeared of old, the Provost and the nine priests of the college in their stalls, the recumbent figures of the dead, on their delicately wrought high tombs, filling the lofty carved canopies on each side, the walls and niches and statues and tracery work glowing with gold and colours, the shining brasses on the floor, the painted windows softening the light, the angels in the dark roof above; we may realize in some degree the scene as it was when the powerful Dukes of Suffolk, and all the inmates of the castle worshipped in this the parish church of their quiet country village.

I shall not occupy your time with any account of the origin and descent of the noble family who are here interred. That part of the subject may be more properly noticed when we go to the castle, where they resided. It will be sufficient to say that the family of Wingfield is a very ancient one in the county of Suffolk, and was so numerous in its various branches, that it is said, in the reign of Henry 8th, there were eight or nine knights at the same time, and two

knights of the garter. Catharine the only daughter and heiress of Sir John de Wingfield, who lived in the reign of Edward 3rd, married Sir Michael de la Pole, first Earl of Suffolk, and thus brought Wingfield to the de la Pole family. To this Sir John de Wingfield, the last male heir of the line settled in this village, I venture to attribute the earliest of the three monuments. It is that on the west side of the vestry door, in the north wall of the chancel. The figure of the knight is carved in stone, and rests upon a panelled altar tomb, and over it rises a beautiful ogee canopy with crockets, finial and pinnacles, and a quatrefoil in the spandril, from which some piece of sculpture in the centre has been cut away. The armour represented on the effigy is that which prevailed in the latter part of the reign of Edward 3rd. He wears the jupon, or tight fitting leathern coat, escalloped at the lower edge, and the camail and bascinet so characteristic of the time. The card placed upon the monuments will tell you that it is the memorial of Wm. de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk, son of Earl Michael, who died in 1450. This is most evidently wrong, and I know no other of the family to whom it can be so well attributed as Sir John de Wingfield, an eminent soldier in his time, a chief favourite and counsellor of Edward the Black Prince, whom he accompanied in his expedition to Languedoc in 1355. Two long letters written by him from France, are to be found in the old chroniclers, and in Barnes's Edward 3rd. It was according to his will, that this church was made collegiate, and the college founded, and we may therefore consider this monument as coeval with the rebuilding of the church in 1362.

The next oldest monument is that under the easternmost arch of the chancel, on the south side. It is a very beautiful example, consisting of a large altar-tomb with niches, now empty, round the sides, and two recumbent effigies, carved in wood, upon the slab. There can be no doubt that this tomb belongs to Michael de la Pole, the 2nd of that name, Earl of Suffolk, whose wife was Catharine Stafford,

daughter of Hugh, Earl of Stafford, not only from the frequent appearance of the badge of her family, the Stafford knot, on the tomb and the arch above, but because there were names painted on the ledge above the niches round the tomb, referring to their children, whose effigies were within the niches; and these names could be read until recently, as follows: *An*, *Thoma*, *Johane*, *Alexander*, *Thomas*, *Philippus*, which correspond with the names of the children of this Earl. He was the son of Michael de la Pole, and Catharine Wingfield his wife. His father was a person of great eminence in the reigns of Edward 3rd and Richard 2nd; was created Earl of Suffolk, and was a knight of the garter, and Lord Chancellor; but he was impeached for supposed frauds and misdemeanors, and afterwards fled in disguise to France, where he died an outlaw. The son, however, obtained the annulment of his father's outlawry, in the 21st of Richard 2nd, and was fully restored by Henry 4th, to his possessions, with the title of Earl of Suffolk. He died at the siege of Harfleur, in 1415, and his effigy represents him in the armour of the time, which is of transitional character, when complete plate armour was not yet in use; for he wears the camail and jupon, like his grandfather just described, but has in addition a gorget of plate over the camail. His head rests on a crest, a bearded head, and his feet on a lion. The head dress of the countess by his side is the usual one of the period, the cloth or veil extended over a wide braid of hair on each side of the head, the same as we find in the brass of Lady de Burgate, at Burgate, not far distant, of the date of 1409, to whose altar tomb the present one is very similar, and may have been the work of the same sculptor. By his will he desired that his body should be buried in the church of the Carthusians, at Kingston-upon-Hull, between the tomb of his father and mother, and the altar, if he should die in these northern parts, but no tomb to be placed over him, only a flat stone; but if he should die in any other part of England, then he willed to be buried in the Collegiate Church of Wyngefeld, on the

north side of the altar of the blessed Virgin.* Whence we learn that the east end of the south chancel aisle was the lady chapel. Those figures, as the others, are engraved by Stothard in his *Monumental Effigies*. A curious feature belonging to this monument, is that on the north side of it, are attached three stone seats with arms, forming the sedilia for the chancel.

The eldest son and successor of this nobleman was Michael, 3rd Earl of Suffolk; but he was killed at Agincourt, October 25, 1415, only a month after his accession to the title, and the earldom devolved upon his brother William, 4th Earl and 1st Duke of Suffolk, who married Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer, granddaughter of Chaucer the poet. There is no monument in the church to this Earl, although the one first noticed, has been erroneously ascribed to him. There is good evidence, however, that he was buried here; and one of the brasses now lost, may have represented him. His wife's monument is at Ewelme, Oxfordshire. The events of this distinguished nobleman's life are matter of history, and will be found recorded at length by our chroniclers and genealogists. As most of the accounts of him follow Camden, I will only read what Camden himself relates of him.†

William, Earl of Suffolk, he says, was first advanced by Henry 6th, to be Marquess of Suffolk, to him and to the heirs male of his body; that he and the heirs male of his body, on the coronation day of the Kings of England, do carry a golden verge with a dove on the top of it, and such another verge of ivory at the coronation of the Queens of England. Afterwards, he advanced the same person, for his great merits, to the honour and title of Duke of Suffolk. And indeed he was a person truly great and eminent. For when his father and three brothers had lost their lives for their country, in the French wars, he (as we read in Parliament rolls of the 28th of Henry the sixth) spent thirty-four whole years in the same war. For seventeen years together, he never came home, once he was taken, while but a knight, and payed twenty thousand pounds sterling for his ransom. Fifteen years he was Privy-councillor, and Knight of the Garter, thirty. By this means, as he gained the entire

* Nicolas's Testamenta Vetusta, p. 189. † Camden's Britannia, i, 453.

favour of his Prince, so did he raise the envy of the people; and so, for some slight misdemeanors, and those too not plainly proved upon him, he was banished, and in his passage into France, was intercepted by his enemies, and beheaded.

This was in the year 1450,—he was brought here however for burial; and Bloomfield, the historian of Norfolk, mentions his monument. Speaking of the banishment of this Duke, and the king's probable intention to re-call him, as soon as the hatred of the people was a little appeased, he says:—

But God did otherwise dispose of him, for when he took shipping in Suffolk (or according to Fabian in Norfolk) with intent to go to France, he was met by a ship of war, called Nicholas of the Tower, taken and carried to Dover sands, there hsd his head chopt off on the side of the long boat, as a pledge for some satisfaction for the death of the good Duke of Gloucester: they left his body on the sands, which on the 1st of May, was taken up and carried to Wingfield, in Suffolk, in the chancel of which collegiate church he was interred, under a monument, which though much defaced, still remains. And thus (he adds) fell this great favourite, a sacrifice to the people whom he had so much oppressed (for he takes the opposite view of his conduct to that of Camden), and a just example to posterity, that as we do, our ownselves at one time or other must expect to be done by.*

Hall also, in his *Chronicle*, and Brooke, in his *Catalogue of Honor*, states that "his body was brought to this college, and here honorably interred."

We now come to the third monument, that nearest to the east end, on the north side of the chancel within the altar rails. There is a square-headed recessed canopy in the wall, on which the rose and portcullis of the Plantagenets may be observed, and a large altar tomb below it, projecting into the chancel. On the slab are two effigies, of a knight and lady, finely carved in alabaster. He wears the armour of the latter half of the 15th century, and over it the mantle of the order of the garter, and the garter on the left leg. His head rests on the helmet and de la Pole crest. She is represented as a widow, with the barbe, or plaited covering

* Bloomfield, Norfolk, iii. 157, partly quoted from Baker's Chronicle. By his will, he desires to be buried with his ancestors at Kingston-upon-Hull, and an image of his wife and himself, to be made in stone (Nicolas's *Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 256).

for the neck, and wears the sideless garment underneath her mantle, characteristic of the same period. The brass inscription formerly round the chamfer of the slab is gone. Above the canopy in the wall are the crest and supporters of the de la Poles, carved in wood, and painted; and there are iron holders at each side, perhaps for banners. This is the monument of John de la Pole created Duke of Suffolk, after the forfeiture of the title by his father, and who married Elizabeth Plantagenet, sister of Edward 4th, and Richard 3rd. He was a Knight of the Garter, and died in 1491. The costume of these figures is certainly rather earlier than would be expected from the date, and would lead to the supposition that they had been erected during the lifetime of the persons represented. As the Duchess, however, appears in a *widow's* barbe, such a conclusion cannot be maintained. It may be that they were represented in the costume they had been in the habit of wearing, although it had become old-fashioned. A similar case occurs at Little Horkesley, Essex, where a father and son are engraved on the same brass, each in the costume that he had worn in his time.

On the floor of the chancel may be observed the matrices of some fine brasses. The framed pedigree on the wall mentions gravestones to two sons of the first Earl Michael, Richard a priest who died in 1403, and John 1415, canon of York and Beverley. One of these was probably on the stone near the entrance of the chancel, which shows the indent of a priest in cope, under a canopy. Gough says that Richard de la Pole had a brass here, with "a figure of a monk, with roses in quatrefoils on his habit, and B or R in a rondeau, with a rose in a square on his breast." This with many other brasses of that noble family buried at Wingfield, I saw in the church chest, 1764, and am since told they have gone the way of many more sepulchral brasses.*"

* Sepulchral Monuments, ii. 14.

There is another indent in the middle of the chancel, which may have been that of his brother. A third fine brass near the vestry door, under a canopy, represented a widow or a nun, as the matrix shows, and may have been the figure of Catherine, daughter of Michael, 3rd Earl, who was Abbess of Barking.

Of the College formerly in the churchyard, there are now, I believe, no remains whatever.

C. R. MANNING.

FRAMLINGHAM CHURCH.

ORIGINATING in a jocular challenge, this essay can make but few pretensions to critical correctness. In composing it, the course has been followed which seemed to me best suited to realize the objects of a local archæological association. All sorts of questions have been raised, with the view of showing that there was matter deserving of further investigation. While expressing my thanks to my friend Mr. Phipson, whose acquaintance with ecclesiastical architecture is so well known, for his aid in fixing dates and measurements, I must absolve him from any participation in the more speculative matters in which I have embodied the results of my own necessarily limited reflections and researches. My time has since been so variously occupied, that many points on which I had intended to make further enquiries, must now be left for other and more competent investigators. It was particularly gratifying to me to find that on one of the questions raised, Mr. Edwards, of Framlingham, though taking an independent course of enquiry, had arrived at the same conclusion.