

## ISLEHAM AND MILDENHALL,

June 1870.

The President Lord JOHN HERVEY.

Starting from the Angel Inn, Bury St. Edmund's, the party gave a passing glance at the barrows on Risby Heath, which had been opened a year or two before by the Rev. Canon Greenwell; in one of these barrows the Canon found a contracted burial of a man of unusual size.\* Over this heath a small dyke passes, stretching from the ploughed land above the heath in a Northerly direction until it meets the low ground formerly a marsh bordering the river Lark.

A mile further the road crosses the Icknield way at right angles, and soon passes Cavenham Church. This building, which was under repair, dates from the end of the thirteenth century. It has an elegant angle piscina of Decorated work, with a shaft of Purbeck marble. In a window West of the priest's door are some remains of stained glass, with an inscription which has been thus read: PRIEZ POR ADAM LA VICAR.

### TUDDENHAM.

Tuddenham Church, where the Vicar kindly met the party, possesses a fine Porch with a well-proportioned arch supported on bold shafts of grey Barnack stone. The Church dates from the 14th century, the Clerestorey having

\* An account of the Canon's work (*Suff. Arch. Inst.*), June, 1869. appeared in the Quarterly Journal

been added much later. The octagonal piers of the Nave are of Barnack stone, having a decided rose-coloured tint ; is this colour natural, or the effect of fire, as generally thought by the members ? The East window is unfortunately dwarfed by the modern ceiling of the Chancel ; it has Decorated tracery of an unusual type. The Tower contains six fine-toned bells in the somewhat uncommon key of G., and over the West door a quatrefoil circular window deeply and widely splayed inside is introduced with excellent effect : Chedburgh Church has a similar window in the West gable. Martin (MS. *Church Notes*) mentions these arms in the windows : gu. 3 lions passant or, and arg. a cross potent fitchy or.

#### ISELHAM OR ISLEHAM.

The first object of interest was the beautiful parish Church, where the Rev. J. D. Gedge read the following paper :—

The Vicarage of Isleham was formerly in the gift of the Bishop of Rochester, of which diocese Isleham was a peculiar. The Bishop himself received the Rectorial tithes, an estate, to which the tithes probably became attached, having been presented by King Alfred to Burhig, Bishop of Rochester. The Church, which is dedicated to St. Andrew, is the work mainly of the 14th century. It was begun in Decorated and finished in Perpendicular times, and is for the most part Transitional in character. It is made up of chancel, nave, two aisles, and transepts. The east window of the chancel consists of five lights, of a Late Decorated or Transition character ; the side windows are of the same date, and so is the lean-to vestry. On the south side is an angular piscina, and a wide seat for sedilia of the same period ; but the stalls and misereres are Perpendicular ; the rood screen, which has lately been removed, dated from the time of Elizabeth. On the north of the chancel, under a flat arch, enriched with quatrefoils and foliated work, is a fine altar tomb of Purbeck marble to Sir Thos. Peyton, Knt., who died in 1484, and his two wives. Their effigies are engraved on brass, and have elegant canopies. Sir Thomas is represented in armour with singularly large, scalloped elbow-pieces, and a long sword across his middle. Both the dames have the gauze head-dress of the 15th century. One is attired in a richly embroidered gown ; the other has a fur cape and cuffs. Both have their hands spread abroad in an unusual manner. On the north wall of the chancel was discovered an interesting mural fresco of the Virgin and Child, which has now been covered up. The chancel

arch is curious Transition work, the piers being clusters of four shafts with a boutell in the angle between them. The nave is of five bays, and has piers and arches of the same date as the chancel arch. The eye will immediately detect the most remarkable feature of the edifice in the deep and rich panneling of the spandrils of the nave, surmounted by a well-designed cornice-string and battlement. The shields, carved on panels, bear the arms of Bernard and Peyton. The fine and lofty clerestory is the latest part of the Church, and with the roof is purely Perpendicular. The roof has open panneling between the tie beams and principals, and carved angels for hammer-beams. An inscription round the roof tells us that it was erected by "*Cristtifer Peyton wyche dyd mak this rofe in the yere of our Lord mccccxxxix, beynge the x yere of Kyngge Henry the VIII.*" The north transept has a good sepulchral recess, well moulded and crocketed, with a figure of a cross-legged knight in chain mail, 13th century, much mutilated. In this transept, to the south-east, is a piscina, Decorated in style, which still bears traces of having been coloured; to what Saint this chapel was dedicated I have been unable to discover. The south transept is early Perpendicular in character; here also we find a sepulchral recess with a mutilated figure of a knight of the 13th cent., in stone. This transept, which was formerly a chapel dedicated to St. Catharine, is filled with tombs of Bernards and Peytons of the 15th and 16th centuries. Amongst them is a gravestone with brasses, containing effigies of Sir John Bernard, Knt., who died in 1451, and his dame, by the marriage with whose daughter this property fell to the Peytons; he is represented in plate armour, bareheaded, with his helmet under his head; on it is his crest of a bear muzzled; the elbow-pieces are very large and deeply indented; he bears a long sword, and rests his feet upon a bear. The Lady has a reticulated head-dress and veil; she is clothed in mantle and robe, with tight-fitting boddice, and has a spaniel at her feet. The octagonal font, with its deeply carved panneling, is a fine specimen of Perpendicular work. The lectern is in the form of a brazen eagle, and is unusually good in its workmanship; tradition says that it came originally from Ely. It bears a coat of arms unfortunately too much obliterated to be read with any certainty; it may be a chevron between three cinquefoils. There is a large porch to the south of a Transitional character. The benitier, now filled up with masonry, still stands in its place. The tower is modern, replacing one which fell in 1862 known to have been split by lightning long before. Workmen were engaged in its repair at the time of its fall, but taking warning by the sudden extrusion of a portion of the stonework, had just time to escape, when it simply collapsed, and that so quietly as not even to break the bells. In a line with the south aisle forming its western continuation is a parvise or porch-court, which may have been a baptistery, and at one time probably contained a priest's chamber, being divided into two floors.

Illustrations of the monuments in this Church are engraved in Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments and Lyson's Magna Britannia.*

The Register of the parish dates from 1560 ; during the years 1704-5-6 the entries of the Churchmen and Dissenters were kept distinct, a separate page of the Register being assigned to each : the date on the Church-plate is 1686.

The Peyton family, whose name fills so large a part in the history of this parish, derived from William Malet, Sheriff of Yorkshire, under William I. The Uffords, Earls, of Suffolk, derived from the same stock. They take their name from Peyton Hall in Boxford, where they were seated long before they came to Isleham. Thomas de Peyton, whose tomb we have seen in the Chancel, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire in the reign of Henry VI., began to rebuild this Church. The date of his birth was singularly attested on the feast of All Saints, in the eighteenth year of that reign ; it was then sworn by John Welford, that he was 22 years of age, having been born on Valentine's day, and baptized at Drayton in 1418, and the following curious evidence was adduced : Robert Chapman swore there was a great storm on that day ; another remembered falling from his horse that day ; another had buried his wife, and another had buried his mother on that day : another had his daughter Margaret burned on that day, and another fell from a tree and broke his arm on that same day. This portentous infant grew up to marry the daughter and coheir of the Sir John Bernard whose tomb we have mentioned. In the Parish Church of Long Melford are portraits of this Thomas Peyton and the heiress of Bernard still existing ; they were put up about 1485. Of this union was born the Crystofer Peyton, whose name with that of Elizabeth his wife, as well as those of his father and mother, appear on the nave roof, and on a mural brass on the West wall of the South transept. Sir Robert Peyton, grandson of Crystofer, who lived in the reign of Henry VII., also lies buried here ; his tomb bears the epitaph :—" Of your charity pray for the soul of Sir Robert Peyton, Knt., who departed to God the 18th day of March, 1518, and for the soul of Dame Elizabeth his wife, who departed to God in the year of our Lord, 1500." From John, the second son of this Sir Robert, descended the Peytons of Doddington, one of whom recently departed from amongst us. Robert, the eldest son, perpetuated the name of the family in the memory of the parish more than any other of his line, through his marriage with Frances Hazelden, the foundress of the Peyton Hospital. With her he obtained properties in Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Rutland. Sir Robert died in 1550, his dame thirty years after. On her tomb there is a Latin inscription which may be thus rendered :—

" What's life but sorrow ?—Death that sorrow's end ?  
See death on life, blest life on death attend ?  
Why wish sweet Frances back to life again ?—  
To be with God she must be gone from men."

On the tomb of Richard their third son, a student of Gray's Inn, buried here in 1574, is an inscription of an extravagantly laudatory character ; et us hope he deserved it. The first Baronet, created by James I. in

1610, was apparently great grandson of this Frances Peyton ; he was educated at Bury Grammar School, and afterwards at the University of Cambridge. Having been superseded in the honourable office of Custos Rotulorum for the county of Cambs by the favourite Buckingham, he took part against the Stuarts ; in the subsequent reign he sided with the Parliament, and became so impoverished in the wars that he had to sell the Isleham property ; the Peyton family had no more any connection with Isleham. A son of this Roundhead, by his second wife, founded the family of Peyton, at Rougham, in Norfolk. The immediate successor of the first Baronet lived and died in London ; a son of his was one of the intimates of the Merry Monarch, who forgave the disloyalty of the grandfather for the roystering capacities of the grandson. It is curious to relate that Algernon Peyton, of Doddington, was created a Baronet in the same year in which his far-away cousin, the King's favourite, was buried at St. Gyles's-in-the-Fields (1666).

The Peyton Hospital formerly existing in this parish, and now represented by the almshouses on the road to Mildenhall, built a few years since, was founded by Frances Peyton, whose epitaph we have rendered above, in 1579 (21 Elizabeth), the year before her own death. In the grant of the hospital we find lands to the yearly value of five marks granted for the relief the mendicant poor, who then, as now, are stated to be very numerous in Isleham. Also a hospital or almshouse was to be erected, for one master, six brethren, and six sisters, with power to increase their number to nine brethren and eleven sisters—twenty in all. The right of nomination was vested in the heirs of the foundress ; as also a right to change the statutes and ordinances of the hospital, as circumstances might require—a most valuable and, I think, unusual provision. To the statutes and ordinances at the time being, the brethren and sisters, on admittance, were required to swear obedience on the four Gospels. A rent-charge of 200 marks a-year was devised to the hospital.

There were up to a comparatively late period five large manor houses in the parish. Of Isleham-hall, the Peyton Manor-house, a curious painting, done in the latter part of the 17th century, is in the possession of Mr. Read, of Mildenhall.

The members next visited “an ancient building now used as a barn which standing at a small distance West of the parish Church was the Conventual Church or Chapel”\* of the alien Priory of Iselham.

The Priory, dedicated to St. Margaret, was a cell to the Abbey of St. Jagitto, or St. Jacutus de insulá, in the diocese of Dole in Brittany. An alien Priory, a cell of the same Abbey, existed at Lynton, Cambs, and Tanner

\* *Magna Brit.*

considers it doubtful if there ever were two distinct cells at these two places. He thinks that the Priory was first seated at Iselham, and that it was afterwards removed to Lynton, assigning as a reason that in the grant of Henry VI., c. 1450, to Pembroke College, Cambridge, no mention is made of Iselham; the estate was then valued at £10 13s. 4d. Existing documents show that the Iselham Priory was occupied in 1219, and Lynton Priory occurs in the Norwich taxation in 1255. Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

The Chapel was probably erected in the latter half of the 12th century. The East end is apsidal, and is supported by narrow buttresses, diminishing in stages. In the interior we find a fine circular arch, at the entrance to the chancel, and the piers and spring of another at the entrance of the apse. The windows of the apse take the form of very small and narrow loopholes deeply splayed to the interior. At the West end is one window of like character and two circular openings higher up towards the roof. The South doorway is of the square-headed trefoil shape, while that to the North is late pointed Transitional Norman. The masonry of the walls deserves examination, since it consists chiefly of very rude herring-bone masonry, such as we find employed during both Saxon and Norman periods, and is done in rough stone, alternating with tiles.

The moat of the old Priory may still be traced in the meadows beyond the Chapel.

Leaving Iselham, the route lay by Worlington, across the low meadows through which the Lark wanders to Wammil Manor-house, now occupied by Mr. W. Paine, who kindly provided welcome refreshment and permitted the visitors to ramble at will over this interesting example of an old Manor-house; but, before entering, stragglers were collected, and under the shade of one of the noble trees in front of the ancient gate the Rev. J. D. Gedge read that portion of his Paper (printed elsewhere) which relates to Wammil and the Warners.

Resuming the walk, on nearing Mildenhall Mr. Gedge pointed out the site of the old Manor barn, the foundation

of which may still be traced; the practice of commencing the proceedings of the Courts of the Lord of the Manor within these old walls was continued up to the last generation.

After luncheon a visit was paid to the Museum, which had been arranged in the Working Men's Reading-room by the Rev. J. D. Gedge and James Read, Esq. Here Mr. H. Prigg read the paper upon the tumuli of Warren Hill, which has been printed at page 287.

Lord John Hervey, the President, now took the opportunity of moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Prigg for his paper, to Mr. Paine for his kind reception of the Society at Wamhill, and especially to the Rev. J. D. Gedge and James Read, Esq., who had made all the excellent arrangements of the day.

A visit to the Church, where Mr. Gedge continued his paper pointing out the leading features of the building, concluded the meeting.

Space does not permit us to enumerate all the interesting objects which formed the Museum; we can only name a few:—

Mr. Read exhibited early maps of Herringswell (1726), Isleham, and Wicken. A map of Mildenhall showing the islands during the early fen period, was exhibited by the Rev. J. D. Gedge. Mr. Read brought Court Rolls of the Manors of Barton Parva, of Isleham, (one as early as 1408), and of Wicken of the reign of Elizabeth.

The same gentleman exhibited the diary of William Coe, a person possessing some property in Mildenhall, and a farmer evidently in a superior condition of life. The diary commences June 5, 1680: "I fell from a horse at Bury & was taken up dead by one Clem Simpson." An interpolation made at a much later date adds: "I was then a school boy." The last entry is May 25, 1728: "Whit Sunday. I received the blessed Sacrament of the body & blood of my Dear Redeemer, renewed my vows & resolutions of better obedience to God's holy will." The Parish Register records the burial of "William Coe, gent. Sept., 1729."

The diary is written in a small 16mo. book, bound in calf. It lays bare the inner life of the man; gives in detail his falling away, vows of amendment soon to be broken and again renewed, his prayers and thanks for preservation from numerous accidents, all recorded under the head of "Mercies received."