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WALSINGHAM PRIORY, A MEMOIR READ AT THE MEETING
OF THE INSTITUTE IN CAMBRIDGE, JUNE, 1854 : WITH AN
ACCOUNT OF RECENT DISCOVERIES.

BY THE REV. JAMES LEE WARNER.

THE connexion of the Priory of Walsingham with the University of Cambridge is at first sight far from obvious ; yet the tide of pilgrims who visited the far-famed shrine, would, doubtless, going or returning, halt at the seat of learning which graced the banks of Cam. That this was the case with some of them, we have sufficient evidence. The sceptical doctor, Erasmus, the eccentric chronicler, William of Worcester—and perhaps we may add also, the author of the anonymous legend, preserved amidst the quaint archives of the “Bibliotheca Pepysiana,”—these are within our reach, and have all contributed their share in illustration of the great monastery of our eastern counties, which they had in turn visited. And, as on a former visit to our Lady of Walsingham, the shades of her Augustine Canons seemed to rise before us, and impart a tone of freshness to the scene of their former glories, so let us now in imagination spend a half-hour in company with our three pilgrims, and hear what they can tell us in illustration of our monastery, whose records must be gleaned slowly, and recovered (if it may be) from obscurity, to be placed in the light of day.

The anonymous ballad of the Pepysian library, surviving in an unique copy from the press of Richard Pynson, bears internal evidence of having been composed about A.D. 1460. Its title runs thus :—

“ Of thys Chappel see here the foundatyon,
Builled the yere of Christ's incarnatyon

A thousande complete sixty and one,
The tyme of Saint Edwarde, Kinge of this region."

It relates how "the noble Wedowe," sometime Ladye of the town of Walsingham, named Rychold de Faverches, was favoured by the Virgin Mother with a view of the Santa Casa at Nazareth, and commissioned to build its counterpart at Walsingham, upon a site thereafter to be indicated. It relates very circumstantially the widow's perplexity :—¹

"When it was all formed then had she great doute
Where it should be sette and in what manner place,
Inasmuch as tweyne places were fowne out
Tokened with meracles of our Laydie's grace."

* * * * *

"The Wedowe thought it moste lykely of congruence
This house on the first soyle to build and arrere :
Of thys who lyste to have experience ;
A Chappel of Saynt Lawrence standyth now there,
Faste by tweyne wellys, experience do thus lere :
There she thought to have sette this Chappel,
Whych was begone by our Ladie's counsel."

We shall not quote specially the progress of the work according to the monkish chronicler, because it is nothing more than the oft repeated story of a building removed by miracle and set up in another place. We are only concerned here with the site, which the building, in after ages destined to be of such celebrity, actually occupied. And the legend thus proceeds :—

"All night the Wedowe permayneing in this prayer,
Our blessed Laydie with blessed minystrys,
Herself being here chief Artificer,
Arrered thys sayde house with Angells handys,
And not only rered it but sette it there it is,
That is tweyne hundrede foot and more in distaunce
From the first place fokes make remembrance."

And much interest attaches to the site thus occupied ; for however great the magnificence of the chief conven-

¹ The date of the erection of the Chapel of the Annunciation of Our Lady at Walsingham, by Richold de Faverches, has usually been assigned to the year 1061. Her son, "Sir Geffray Faverches, knyth, lord of Walsingham, foundyth the Chyrch of the seyd Priory ; and he gaffe therto the Chapel of owr Lady with the grownd with inne the syte of the seyd place, wyth the Chyrch off the seyd ton."

Account of the Foundation of the Priory, Cott. MS. Nero, E. vii. New edit. of Dugdale's Monast., vol. vi., p. 70. Blomefield has erroneously described the foundress as "the widow lady of Ricoldie de Faverches" (Hist. Norf., vol. ix., p. 274), but the charter of Roger, Earl of Clare, in the Cott. MS. expressly mentions, "Capellam quam Richeldis mater Galfr' de Favarches fundavit in Walsingham."

tual buildings about to be described, it was to the Lady Chapel that they owed all their splendour. That in fact was the shrine which kings visited barefooted—the wonder-working spot, which rivalled Compostella or Loretto—the “counterfeit Ephesian Diana” of the 14th Homily; the Parathalassian temple, which the travelled Erasmus saw, and declared that its costly magnificence, its gems, and its relics, surpassed all that he had ever seen in his most distant wanderings. “Divorum sedes! adeo gemmis, auro, argentoque nitent omnia!” Where was it? Archæology enquires, and hitherto no solution has been given or attempted. And although our legend informs us that 200 feet from the wells will bring us to the spot where it stood, still, so changed is the surface of the soil, and so occupied at the same time by the gravel walks and shrubberies of an ornamental pleasure-ground (to say nothing of a large yew tree, which has probably grown and luxuriated for at least two centuries) that excavation with a hope of success is well nigh impracticable. Yet within recent times something has been accomplished,² and the result has been the formation of a ground-plan, in which the *disjecta membra* are for the first time put together, so as to show their connexion and arrangement, as far as hitherto discovered.

The great feature of interest in these venerable ruins, in addition to the two wells already mentioned, is the great eastern window of the conventual church, despoiled of all its tracery, but flanked by staircase turrets, and surmounted by the peak of the gable, which rises, thus supported, about 70 feet. The buttresses are perfect specimens of the early Perpendicular period,³ divided into three stages of ogee-headed niches with pedestals, crockets, and canopies. Some arches of the Refectory, and the principal western gateway complete the picture; and to these may perhaps be added the town pump, a construction used originally as a domed covering to a well, and roofed with ashlar, whose slope is broken at intervals by three mouldings (See woodcut, p. 121). This well is situated in the area called the ‘Common

² The first excavations, of which the results are here described, were carried out in the year 1853.

³ In his forthcoming work, on “The Castles and Convents of Norfolk,” Mr.

Harrod, the Secretary of the Norfolk Archaeological Society, has assigned the erection of this Eastern end to John Snoring, Prior, who died A.D. 1425. It is engraved in Britton’s *Arch. Ant.*, vol. iv.

Place,' a designation which has come down to us from remote antiquity. Thus we read in a document, *temp.* Henry VI., reciting various donations, *int. al.* as follows:—"Aftyr him come Gylbertus de Clar, Erle of Glowceter & of Hertford, and he gaff thereto the ground without the west zate of the yerd of our Ladys Chapell which is now callyd the common place." And more remotely we have on a fly leaf inserted at p. 26 of the Registr. Wals. among the Cotton MSS.,⁴ the copy of an admission in the 10th of Richard II., which mentions "quendam fontem vocatum Cabbokeswell in communi villatura de Walsingham parva."⁵ In testing our ground-plan by the admeasurements of William of Worcester, which may be seen in the library of Corpus Christi College,⁶ it is satisfactory to be able to trace a sufficient coincidence. Some confusion may have arisen from his mentioning two churches: "Longitudo ecclesiæ Fratrum Walsyngham 54 gressus;" and again, "Longitudo totius ecclesiæ de Walsingham 136 gressus." The smaller church doubtless was that of the Franciscans, or "Fratrum Minorum," and taking the *gressus* to be somewhat under two feet, the length corresponds with traces existing of that edifice. That William of Worcester's *gressus* averaged about two feet appears from his measurement of the cloister, which being 99 × 96 feet he puts at 54 *gressus*: or the chapter-house, which being 16 feet wide he puts at 10 *gressus*. This evidence to the chapter-house is conclusive and circumstantial, as coinciding with the large foundations now covered with the greensward. "Longitudo propria de le Chapter-hous continet 20 gressus. Latitudo ejus continet 10 gressus. Sed longitudo introitus de le Chapter-hous a claustro continet 10 gressus. Sic in toto continent 30 gressus."⁷

The chief point of interest in the recent excavations has been the discovery of portions of the two western piers with the corresponding abutments of the western wall, the jambs of the western doorway, and the exterior buttresses. (See

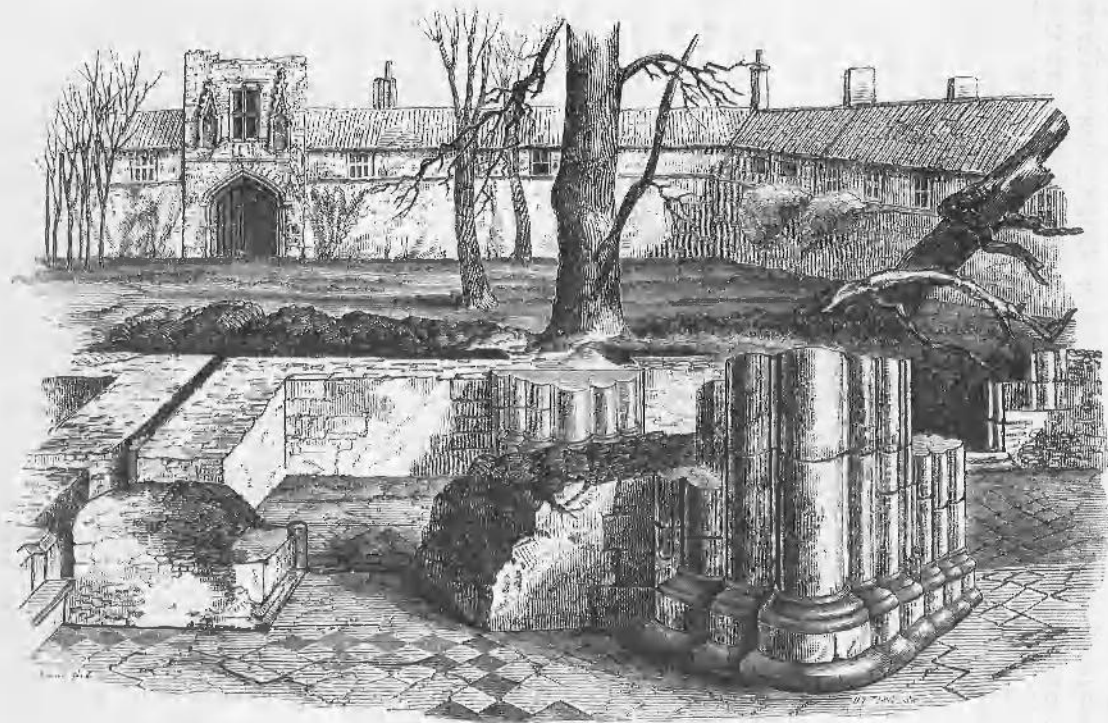
⁴ Cott. MS. Nero, E. vii.

⁵ See the entire document in the Appendix.

⁶ Edited in 1778 by Nasmyth in the volume entitled, "Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Will. de Worcestre." See p. 335.

⁷ It must be observed that a consider-

able discrepancy appears in William of Worcester's own estimate of his *gressus*. In one part of his Itinerary we find the statement, "Mem. quod 24 steppys sive gressus meas faciunt 12 virgas;" whilst in a later part he wrote, "item, 50 virge faciunt 85 gradus sive steppys meos." Itin. ed. Nasmyth.



View of the piers and remains at the West End, excavated in 1853-54, looking West towards the Gatehouse, the principal access to the Priory Close.

woodcut.) The bases of these piers are of early decorated character.⁸ The pair nearest to the doorway are massive clustered columns; each being a combination of fifteen circular shafts separated by hollows, and disposed in three groups, from whence sprang originally the architraves of the nave and side arches; and each connected by a cross wall 5 feet thick with the north and south walls of the building respectively. These grand proportions indicate most distinctly the existence in the original construction of a western tower; but it is probable that this tower had been removed before William of Worcester's visit, as he speaks only of the "*campanile in medio ecclesiæ*." This had been the case beyond all doubt with the smaller piers of the nave generally, which had been taken down nearly to the level of the pavement, and upon them may now be seen Perpendicular bases of inferior design and execution. Another peculiarity must also here be noticed, viz., that the south wall of the church, and the north wall of the adjacent dormitories, each several feet in thickness, run parallel for nine yards, separated only from each other by an interval of nine inches. A doorway through the walls, pierced at the same point, established a communication with a vestry, separated from the bay of the nave, by an ancient intrusive wall joining the large pier and its respond. This curious arrangement is exhibited at one view in the subjoined illustration, except that the interpolated wall between the pier and its respond has been removed since the discovery. The state of the smaller piers (from one of which the view here given is supposed to be taken) proves that, at some time during the Perpendicular Period, the nave was re-roofed, the piers taken down, and the pavement raised about six inches. If at that period the cloister and dormitory were added, and if in the prosecution of these extensive works a few feet additional were desired for the breadth of the aisle, no other method would so readily present itself, as to make the whole wall continuous for the church and dormitories, thus leaving untouched the western end of the church, which probably owed its preservation to the great western towers superimposed upon it.

⁸ The Institute is indebted to the courteous liberality of the Rev. D. H. Lee Warner, the present possessor of the site, for the woodcut representing these re-

mains of the fabric, which have been brought to light through the exertions of his nephew, the author of this memoir.—Ed.

Before dismissing the Itinerary of William of Worcester, we will simply quote his reference to two smaller buildings :—"Longitudo novi operis de Walsyngham continet in toto 16 virgas ; latitudo continet infra aream 10 virgas ;⁹ longitudo capelle Beatae Mariæ continet 7 virgas 30 pollices ; latitudo continet 4 virgas 10 pollices." As to the precise locality of the buildings thus indicated, we must hope that the day will come when it may be no longer conjectural ; for there can be no question but that one or other of them was the Chapel of the Annunciation, the house "arrered with angells handys," which has been already mentioned, and which formed the glory of Walsingham in its most palmy days. The writer of this memoir, having had the subject much forced on his attention, by living amidst the ruins for a series of years, may be permitted to avow his opinion, that of these two buildings one was a covering to the other, that of the interior being a wooden shrine, the "sacellum angustum" of Erasmus, that of the exterior being "novum opus" of William of Worcester, corresponding with the "opus inabsolutum" of Erasmus.

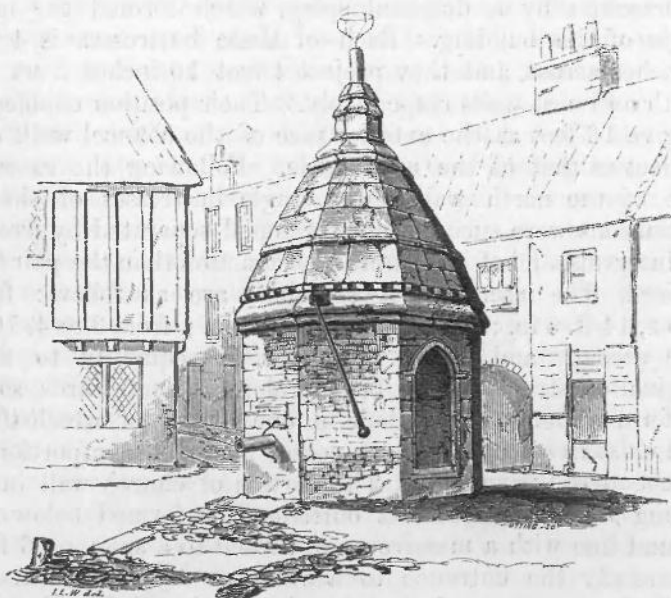
But in making this reference to the Colloquies of the great Erasmus, I feel that I am not (as previously) dealing with a legendary rhyme, or an obscure itinerary. In the case of a learned audience, I must presume a general acquaintance with the writings of the accomplished traveller, especially that the "Peregrinatio religionis ergo" is well known to those who hear me. Yet the world-wide reputation of that great man, contended for by so many universities (as the great bard of antiquity by the cities and islands of Greece) may well justify a regret in the hearing of his own Queen's, that the Cambridge of the XVIth century could not boast its Frobenius, as well as Canterbury its Warham.

The first connexion of Erasmus with the University of Cambridge was in 1509, a connexion but slightly interrupted for ten years subsequently. During this period he twice visited Walsingham. His first visit was productive of his elegant votive offering, so curiously mystified by the sub-Prior at his visit three years later (Peregr. relig. ergo), "Erasmi

⁹ In Browne Willis' "Mitred Abbeys," Addenda, vol. ii., p. 330, this passage in W. of Worcester's MS. is thus given, "Latitudo continet infra aream 10 virgas," supposed, probably, to signify the breadth

under the vaulting. By careful examination of the original MS. at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the word is certainly *aream*, as correctly printed by Nasmith, "Itineraria," p. 335.

Roterodami carmen Iambicum ex voto dicatum virgini Vualsinghamicæ." In his letter to Ammonius, afterwards Latin Secretary to Henry VIII., dated from Cambridge, 9 May, 1511, Erasmus mentions his visit to Walsingham, and his votive *carmen*. It commences thus, "ὦ χαῖρ' Ἰησοῦ μήτηρ εὐλογημένη;" and it was printed by Frobenius as early as 1518. The first edition of the Colloquies appeared but a few years later; and even had it been otherwise, no one could venture to gainsay the truth and freshness of the description. In that spirited dialogue, "*Peregrinatio religionis ergo*," a quondam Augustine Canon is drawing a picture of his fraternity, and, after a lapse of more than 300 years, the numerous pilgrims to Walsingham can find no better handbook than that of the jesting Cantab, whilst enjoying his long vacation in 1514. It is hoped that a correct plan is now produced in illustration, and it is offered in confidence, that whatever additions may hereafter be made to it, its accuracy will be established, and its errors found insignificant.



The Covered Well in the Common Place, Walsingham (See .p 117).

ACCOUNT OF RECENT DISCOVERIES AT WALSINGHAM.

Since the above was written, the hope that the lost foundations might gradually be recovered, has been fully realised. Such having been the case, the writer is now induced to relate the steps of his discovery, not only by way of marking the accuracy of his ground-plan, but also as a permanent record of many points of interest attaching to the celebrated locality, which it has been his lot to illustrate.

The first desideratum was to assign to the ground-plan of the choir its true form and dimensions. The title of Vandergucht's engraving of this part of the building, "*Cænobii Walsinghamensis quod reliquum est*, A.D. 1720," (published by the Society of Antiquaries in the "*Vetusta Monumenta*," vol. i.) compared with that of Buck, A.D. 1738, traces for us the progress of decay, or rather of ruin and spoliation. An examination of a few inches beneath the level turf revealed the hidden motive which prompted this destruction ; for there the last remnant still exists of a noble pair of stone buttresses, connected with each other at their intersection by a diagonal splay, which formed the main angle of the building. Each of these buttresses is 4 feet 4 inches across, and they project 4 feet 10 inches from the north and east walls respectively. Their position enables us to give 16 feet as the exterior face of the chancel wall, and 11 feet as that of the north aisle. Following the external face of the north wall, three single buttresses of similar dimensions were successively developed, separated by irregular intervals, and of less careful construction than the pair first noticed. The intervals between them are as follow : from 1 to 2, 14 ft. 6 in. ; from 2 to 3, 10 ft. 3 in. ; from 3 to 4, 10 ft. The second and third buttresses, subsequently to their original construction, had been prolonged northwards, so as to form a porch or vestibule, in one corner of which there still exist *in situ* a red and a yellow glazed tile, a portion of its chequered pavement. The portion of church wall intervening between these last buttresses, is formed below the ground line with a massive arch, turned to a span of 6 feet, apparently the entrance to a vault or crypt beneath the original pavement of the church. It is filled with loose mould, and circumstances did not permit an exploration of its interior. The portion of wall connecting the buttresses

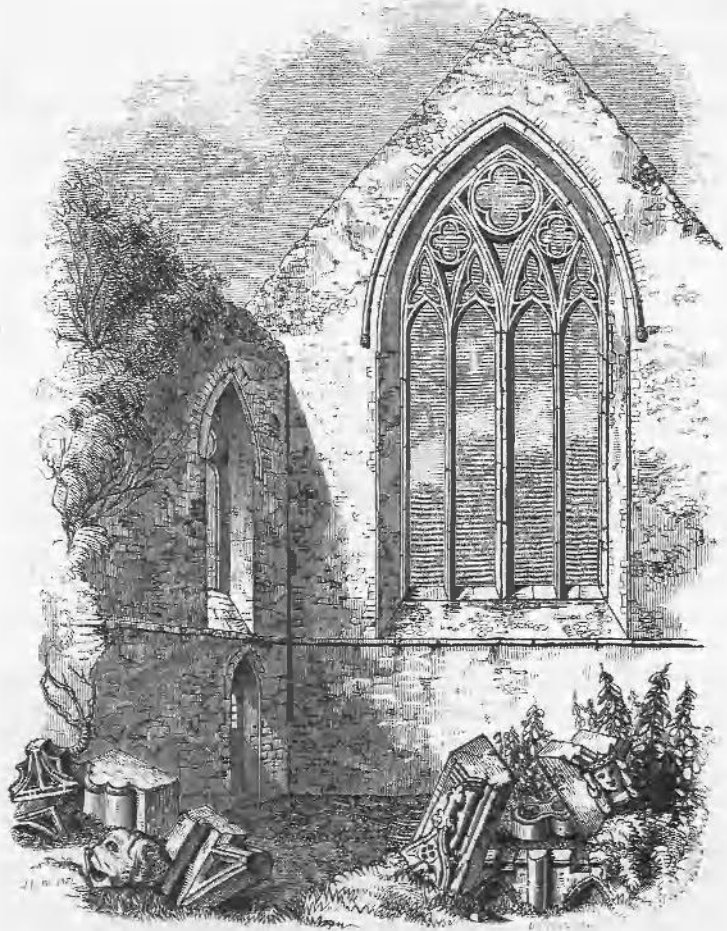
hitherto described is about 5 feet in thickness, but on the other side of a gravel walk, which crosses it diagonally over the foundations of the fourth buttress, it is found to have increased in thickness to 12 feet. The additional 7 feet are gained externally, but the formation of the gravel walk has not only in part broken the junction, but prevents a proper examination of the precise point of increase.

Remarkable, however, for solidity as these foundations are, they are comparatively insignificant by the side of others connected with them, which are now about to be noticed. The 12-foot wall pursues its course westwards, and, at a distance of 78 feet from the north-east corner of the aisle, is found to abut upon a platform of solid grouted masonry, which measures from east to west 20 feet, and from north to south 40. It is now covered with garden mould to a depth of several inches, sufficing merely for the growth of shrubs and flowers, beneath which its surface is for the most part level; but attempts seem to have been made both at the sides and centre to break through its solid crust, as if with a view to discover the secrets of its interior. Neither has the hope peradventure been disappointed; for nearly at the angle formed by it with the 12-foot wall (which passes beyond it), a stone coffin remains, which contained the larger portion of an undisturbed skeleton, interred in the south-east angle of the Lady Chapel, whose enclosure we have now entered. The measurements of this building coincide so exactly with the dimensions of the "*novum opus*," as already quoted from William of Worcester, that not a shadow of a doubt can exist as to their identity. The length, we may remember, is stated by him at 16 *virgæ*; the breadth "*infra aream*" at 10. And he adds, (apparently as connected with this particular building) "*Longitudo capellæ Beatæ Mariæ continet 7 virgas; Latitudo continet 4 virgas, 10 pollices.*"

But what was the "*infra aream*?" Authority seems wanting for the use of the word *ara*, as equivalent to *altare*, or a mere slip of the pen would account for the ambiguity. But the *area* (whatever it was) seems to have been identical with the platform of solid masonry (see the Ground-plan) which forms the eastern end of the "*novum opus*." The expression "*infra aream*" may imply that it was elevated; but why William of Worcester excluded it from his internal

measurement of the chapel, of which it formed the most honourable part, is not so apparent. Here, however, the description of Erasmus comes in very seasonably, and enables us to fill up the "lacuna," at all events conjecturally. "In eo templo," he says, "quod inabsolutum dixi, est sacellum angustum, ligneo tabulato constructum, ad utrumque latus per angustum ostiolum admittens salutatores." And speaking of it afterwards, he adds, "In intimo sacello, quod dixi conclave Divæ Virginis, adstat altari Canonicus." It seems reasonable to suppose, that this wooden sacellum, in which the costly image was thus honourably enshrined, and thus carefully guarded by no inferior minister, must have occupied the east end of the chapel, and thus that it was superimposed upon the *area*, or platform, whose place and purpose we have thus minutely investigated. With respect to the chapel itself, its level was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet above that of the church; its pavement was of Purbeck marble, bedded on solid mortar of 3 inches in thickness; and it was entered by a doorway of three steps pierced in the 12-foot wall, which separated the church from it. This being the door of entrance, a corresponding door of egress was placed directly opposite, flanked by large buttresses; or possibly these foundations may have carried a shallow porch. Their position must have had reference to the streaming throng of pilgrims, who on all grand occasions would thus be enabled to obey the "*Guarda e passa!*" of the Mystagogus, without hindrance or confusion. Their situation explains also the "*patentibus ostiis*" of Erasmus, who, probably visiting the shrine on the 25th of March, would have ample reason for remarking in the person of his Ogygius, "*Prope est Oceanus, Ventorum Pater!*"

And now, quitting the building by its northern doorway, we find ourselves in the separate yard of our Lady's Chapel, and might have left the precincts of the abbey, either by the West gate opening on the Common Place, or by the "*ostiolum perpusillum*" of Erasmus, the memory of which is preserved in Knight Street. The foundations of these gates have yet to be discovered. Not so the foundations of the north and west walls of the chapel. The west, as well as the north, appears to have had its doorway; and the north wall, at its ground line, was bedded in flat masonry at two separate levels, as if it had been cased originally with squared blocks



West End of the Refectory.

of stone of large dimensions. And it may be also noted, that small fragments of magnesian, or Roche-Abbey, limestone are found repeatedly around these foundations, although never wrought, as if they had been used in construction. And under the head of fragments, it may be added further, that amidst the copious wreck of rich mutilated carving which frequently comes to light in digging around the ruins, two unconnected portions of angels, each bearing part of the scroll, inscribed AVE MARIA—GRATIA PLENA, attest the exquisite finish and costliness of the decoration. It will be seen by the Ground-plan, that the north façade of the chapel exhibited in this instance the rather unusual composition of a central doorway flanked by octagonal turrets, and that it occupied in external appearance the place of a north transept. Its general effect must have harmonised with the east window of the church, as now standing, which, combined with the ancient wells, the elegant pulpit of the Refectory,¹ and the faithful restoration of its beautiful western window (due to the present proprietor, the Rev. D. H. Lee Warner, and of which a representation accompanies this memoir) forms a group of ruins, as grand in actual effect as it is rich in ancient reminiscences.

APPENDIX.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

IN connection with the foregoing memorials of Walsingham, and of the actual condition of the existing remains, it has been thought desirable to give the following documents, hitherto unpublished. The Acknowledgment of supremacy, in September, 1534, and the actual Surrender of the Priory, in August, 1538, to Sir William Petre, Commissioner for the Visitation of Monasteries, appear worthy to be placed on record in the full detail of their legal phraseology, since they serve as exemplifications of the formality and the deliberate purpose with which the Suppression of Monasteries was carried out. The former is especially deserving of attention; the original, bearing the autographs of the prior and canons, with a perfect impression of the fine conventual seal, has been preserved in the Treasury of the Exchequer, at the Chapter House, Westminster. The Surrender has been found entered on the Close Roll, 30 Henr. VIII., deposited at the Rolls Chapel. Our acknowledgment is due to the kindness of Mr. Joseph Burtt, in directing our researches for those documents, and obtaining transcripts. Bishop Burnet has given in the Appendix of Records, Hist. of the Reform., Book iii., c. iiiii., the Latin preamble of the

¹ A representation of this pulpit is given in Mr. Parker's Architectural Notes, Transactions of the Archaeol. Institute at the Norwich Meeting, p. 188.

Surrender of Langden Abbey, being also that occurring in most of the Surrenders, as in the subjoined document. Some houses, however, as he observes, could not be persuaded upon to adopt such form. The examples obtained by Weever from the Augmentation Office, and printed in his "Funerall Monuments," p. 106, as also in part by Fuller and Collier, and the Surrender of Betlesden Abbey (Burnet, Records, B. iii., c. iii., sect. iv.), are in English, and are not accompanied by the tedious minutiae of legal diction, of which an example is here given. Within a month after the visit of Sir William Petre, namely, in Sept. 30th, Hen. VIII., the image of our Lady, long the glory of Walsingham, was brought to London by special injunction from Cromwell, with all the notable images to which any special pilgrimages were made, and they were burnt at Chelsea.

The seal of Walsingham Priory, of which an impression, on white wax, is appended to the Acknowledgment of Supremacy, has never, as far as we are aware, been published. For the woodcuts representing the obverse and reverse of the seal, we are indebted to the kindness of the Rev. D. H. Lee Warner, the present possessor of the site and remains of the Priory, and who has liberally presented several of the illustrations of this memoir. On one side of this seal appears a cruciform church of Norman character, with a central tower, and two smaller towers both at the east and west end. The roof of the church appears to be covered with tiles, a crest of small intersecting arches runs along its ridge. Through a round-headed aperture in the nave and another in the choir are seen heads, as of persons within the church; and in a larger opening or door in the transept is likewise perceived a demi-figure in the attitude of supplication; it represents an aged man with a beard, clad in a sleeveless garment, with a hood which is thrown back, and his sleeved arm passed through the wide opening in the shoulder of the upper garment. The inscription, commencing from the cross on the summit of the tower, is as follows,—SIGILLVM ECCL'IE BEATE MARIE DE WALSINGHAM. The work is in higher relief, and has an aspect of greater antiquity, than that of the reverse: at first sight, it might be supposed that the date of its execution was earlier, or that the other side had been copied from an early type. On that side appears the Virgin seated on a peculiar high-backed throne; she holds the infant Saviour on her left knee; on her head is a low crown, an elegantly foliated sceptre is in her right hand; the draperies are poor and in low relief; over the figure is a sort of canopy with curtains looped back at each side, and falling in ungraceful folds. The Angelical Salutation is inscribed around the margin,—✠: AVE : MARIA : GRACIA : PLENA : DOMINUS : TECUM. In addition to less archaic effect of the workmanship, suggesting the notion that this side may be the reproduction of an earlier seal, it may be noticed that the word PLENA is blundered, a D being found in place of N, an error which might easily occur from the similarity of the two letters in the particular character here used. From the general execution, however, of these seals, their date may probably be assigned to the later part of the twelfth or commencement of the thirteenth century. On careful examination of the impression preserved in the Chapter House, the seal of Walsingham is found to supply an example of the rare practice of impressing an inscription upon the edge or thickness of the seal, as on that of Norwich Cathedral, the city of Canterbury, and a few others.² In the present

² See Sir F. Madden's Remarks on this peculiarity. *Archaeologia*, vol. xx.

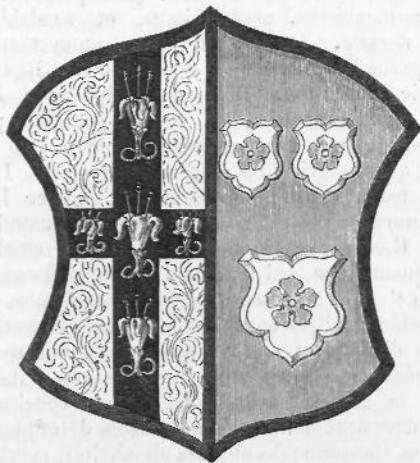


WALSINGHAM PRIORY.

Obverse and reverse of the seal appended to the Acknowledgment of Supremacy, Chapter House, Westminster.

instance, the following words of a Leonine verse may be decyphered,—
 VIRGO : FIA : GENITRIX : SIT : NOBIS : —In Taylor's "Index Monasticus" a
 second impression of the seal of Walsingham is mentioned, in imperfect
 state; it was in the possession of Mr. Miller, of London. This we have
 not had the opportunity to examine.

No seal of any of the Priors of Walsingham has hitherto been described.
 Of Richard Vowel, the last Prior, who succeeded on the resignation of
 William Lowth, 1514, a relique deserving of notice exists in the east
 window of the chancel, in the parish church of Walsingham; where it was
 placed about 30 years since, having been found in a lumber-room in the
 modern mansion occupying the site of the Prior's dwelling, for a window of
 which this painted glass may have been originally destined. Through the
 liberality of the Rev. D. H. Lee Warner we are enabled to give the
 accompanying representation. Three different coats of arms, it must be
 observed, have been assigned to Walsingham Priory (See Taylor's Index
 Monast., p. 26). *Argent*, on a cross *sable* five billets of the first:—*Argent*,
 on a cross quarterly pierced *sable*, a tree erased, *vert*:—and, *Argent*, on a
 cross *sable*, five lilies stalked, of the first. The last, for which Tanner
 is the authority, here appears impaling the bearing of Vowel, *Gules*,
 three escutcheons *argent*, each charged with a cinquefoil pierced of the first.
 The colour of the cinquefoils is faded, but there can be no doubt that this
 escutcheon commemorated Richard Vowel, whose signature appears on the



Acknowledgment of Supremacy. The upper portion of the dexter coat has
 unfortunately been destroyed; a line in the annexed woodcut shows the
 portion of the cross and of the uppermost lily here restored by the
 engraver. It is very unusual, as we believe, to find examples of the arms
 of any monastery thus impaled with those of its superior, in like manner
 as the arms of a see are often found occupying the dexter side, or place
 of honour, and impaling the personal coat of the bishop. Deans and heads
 of colleges, however, have been accustomed to impale their own arms
 with the insignia of their offices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUPREMACY.

(RECORDS PRESERVED IN THE LATE TREASURY OF THE EXCHEQUER, IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE, WESTMINSTER. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF SUPREMACY, NO. 112*).

Quum ea sit non solum Christiane religionis et pietatis ratio, sed nostre etiam obediencie regula, Domino Regi nostro Henrico ejus nominis octavo, cui uni et soli post Christum Jesum servatorem nostrum debemus universa, non modo omnimodam in Christo et eandem sinceram, integram, perpetuamque animi devotionem, fidem et observanciam, honorem, cultum, reverenciam prestemus, sed etiam de eadem fide et observancia nostra rationem quotiescunque postulabitur reddamus et palam omnibus (si res postulat) libentissime testemur; Noverint universi, ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit, quod nos prior et conventus prioratus canonicorum de Walsingham, Norwicensis Diocesis, uno ore et voce atque unanimi omnium consensu et assensu, hoc scripto nostro sub sigillo nostro communi in domo nostro capitulari dato, pro nobis et successoribus nostris omnibus et singulis imperpetuum profiteamur, testamur, ac fideliter promittimus et spondemus, nos dictos priorem, conventum, et successores nostros omnes et singulos integram, inviolatam, sinceram, perpetuamque fidem, observanciam, et reverenciam semper prestaturos erga Dominum Regem nostrum Henricum Octavum, et erga Annam Reginam uxorem ejusdem, et erga sobolem ejus ex eadem Anna legitime tam progenitam quam progenerandam, et quod eadem populo notificabimus, predicabimus, et suadebimus, ubicunque dabitur locus et occasio. Item, quod confirmatum ratumque habemus, semperque et perpetue habituri sumus, quod predictus Rex noster Henricus est caput Ecclesie Anglicane. Item, quod Episcopus Romanus, qui in suis bullis pape nomen usurpat, et summi pontificis principatum sibi arrogat, non habet majorem aliquam jurisdictionem a Deo sibi collatam in hoc regno Anglie quam quivis alius externus episcopus. Item, quod nullus nostrum in ulla sacra concione privatim vel publice habenda eundem episcopum Romanum appellabit nomine pape aut summi pontificis, sed nomine episcopi Romani vel Ecclesie Romane; et quod nullus nostrum orabit pro eo tanquam papa, sed tanquam Episcopo Romano. Item, quod soli dicto Domino Regi et successoribus suis adharebimus, et ejus leges ac decreta manutenebimus, Episcopi Romani legibus, decretis, et canonibus, qui contra legem divinam et sacram scripturam, aut contra jura hujus Regni esse inveniuntur, imperpetuum renunciantes. Item, quod nullus nostrum omnium in ulla vel privata vel publica concione quicquam ex sacris scripturis desumptum ad alienum sensum detorquere presumat, sed quisquam Christum ejusque verba et facta simpliciter, aperte, sincere, et ad normam seu regulam sacrarum scripturarum et vere catholicorum atque orthodoxorum doctorum predicabit catholice et orthodoxe. Item, quod unusquisque nostrum in suis orationibus et comprecationibus de more faciendis primum omnium Regem, tanquam supremum caput Ecclesie Anglicane, deo et populi precibus commendabit, deinde Reginam Annam, cum sua sobole, tum demum Archiepiscopos Cant' et Ebor', cum ceteris cleri ordinibus, prout videbitur. Item, quod omnes et singuli predicti, prior, conventus, et successores nostri, consciencie et jurisjurandi sacramento nosmet firmiter obligamus, et quod omnia et singula predicta fideliter imperpetuum observabimus. In cujus rei testimonium huic

scripto nostro commune sigillum nostrum appendimus, et nostra nomina propria quisque manu subscripsimus. Datum in domo nostra capitulari, xviij. die mensis Septembris, anno Domini Millesimo, quingentesimo, tricesimo quarto.

per me Ricard Vowel, Priorem
per me Willelmum Rase (*sic*).
per me Edmundum Warham, Subpriorem
per me Johannem Clenchwardton
per me Nicholaum Myleham
per me Robertum Sall'.
per me Robertum Wylsey
per me Willelmum Castellacre
per me Simonem Ovy
per me Johannem Harlow
per me Johannem Lawinxley.

per me Ricardum Garnett
per me Johannem Clark
per me Johannem Awstyn
per me Johannem Mathye
per me Thomam Pawlum
per me Edwardum Marstone
per me Johannem Byrcham
per me Johannem Hadlay
per me Thomam Holte
per me Thomam Walsyngham
per me Umfredum London

L. S.

SURRENDER OF WALSINGHAM PRIORY.

AUGUST 4, 30 HENR. VIII., A.D. 1538.¹

(PRIMA PARS CLAUS⁹ DE ANNO REGNI REGIS HENRICI OCTAVI TRICESIMO. N. 68.
DE SCRIPTO PRIORIS DE WALSINGHAM FACTO DOMINO REGI.)

Omnibus Christi fidelibus, ad quos presens Scriptum pervenerit, Ricardus Prior Domus sive Prioratus Beate Marie de Walsyngham, Ordinis Sancti Augustini, Norwicensis Diocesis, et ejusdem loci Conventus, Salutem in Domino Sempiternam. Noveritis nos prefatos Priorem et Conventum unanimi assensu et concensu nostris, animis deliberatis, certa sciencia, et mero motu nostris, ex quibusdam causis justis et rationabilibus nos, animas, et consciencias nostras specialiter moventibus, ultro et sponte Dedissee, Concessisse, ac per presentes Damus et Concedimus, Reddimus et Confirmamus illustrissimo principi, Domino Henrico Octavo, Dei Gratia Anglie et Francie Regi, Fidei Defensori, Domino Hibernie, et in terra Supremo Capiti Anglicane Ecclesie, Totam dictam Domum sive Prioratum de Walsyngham predicta, ac totum scitum, fundum, circuitum, et precinctum ejusdem Domus sive Prioratus de Walsyngham predicta, necnon totam cellam nostram de Flycham, ac totum situm, Fundum, Circuitum, et precinctum ejusdem Celle de Flicham; ac omnia et singula Maneria, Dominia, Mesuagia, Gardina, Curtilagia, Tofta, Terras et Tenementa, Prata, Pascua, Pasturas, Boscos, Redditus, Reversiones, Servicia, Molendina, Passagia, Feoda Militum, Wardas, Maritagia, Nativos, Villanos cum eorum sequelis, Communias, Libertates, Franchiesias, Jurisdicciones, Officia, Curias, Letas, Hundreda, Visus Franciplegii, Ferias, Mercata, Parcos, Warrennas, Vivaria, Aquas, Piscarias, Vias, Chimina, Vacuos Fundos, Advocaciones, Nominaciones, Presentaciones et Donaciones Ecclesiarum, Vicariarum,

¹ It is stated in Dugdale's Monasticon, new edit. vol. vi. p. 71, that Richard Vowel, with the sub-prior and Canons, on Aug. 4, 30 Hen. VIII. by deed enrolled in Chancery, surrendered the Priory with the Cell of Flicham, and all their possessions to the king. Blomef. Hist. Norf.

vol. ix. p. 278. The document is here given (*in extenso*) from the entry on the Close Roll, preserved at the Rolls Chapel. We are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Joseph Burt in directing our search and obtaining a transcript.

Capellarum, Cantariorum, Hospitalium, et aliorum Ecclesiasticorum Beneficiorum quorumcumque, Rectorias, Vicarias, Cantarias, Pensiones, Porciones, Annuitates, Decimas, Oblaciones; ac omnia et singula Emolumenta, Proficua, Possessiones, Hereditamenta, et Jura nostra quecumque, tam infra dictum Comitatum Norfolchie quam infra Comitatus Suffolchie, Essexie, et Cantebrigie, vel alibi infra Regnum Anglie, Wallie et Marchiarum eorundem, eidem Domui sive Prioratui de Walsyngham predicta, ac Celle de Flicham predicta, ac eorum utrique quoquomodo pertinentia, spectantia, appendentia, sive incumbencia; ac omnimodo Cartas, Evidencias, Scripta (et) Munimenta nostra eisdem Domui sive Prioratui, ac Celle predictae, Maneriis, Terris et Tenementis, ac ceteris Premissis cum pertinentiis, seu alicui inde parcelle quoquomodo spectantia sive concernentia; Habendum, Tenendum, et Gaudendum dictum Domum sive Prioratum, Situm, Fundum, Circuitum, et precinctum de Walsyngham predicta, necnon Cellam, Fundum, Circuitum et precinctum de Flicham predicta, ac omnia et singula Dominia, Maneria, Terras, Tenementa, Rectorias, Pensiones, et cetera Premissa, cum omnibus et singulis suis pertinentiis, prefato Invictissimo et (*sic*) Domino nostro Regi, heredibus, et assignatis suis imperpetuum. Cui in hac parte ad omnem juris effectum, qui exinde sequi poterit aut potest, nos, et dictum Domum sive Prioratum de Walsyngham predicta, ac omnia jura nobis qualitercumque acquisita, ut decet, subjicimus et submittimus, dantes et concedentes, prout per presentes damus et concedimus, eidem Regie Majestati, heredibus, et assignatis suis, omnem et omnimodam plenam et liberam facultatem, auctoritatem, et potestatem nos, et dictam Domum sive Prioratum de Walsyngham predicta, ac Cellam de Flicham predicta, unacum omnibus et singulis Maneriis, Terris, Tenementis, Redditibus, Reversionibus, Serviciis, et singulis premissis, cum suis juribus et pertinentiis quibuscumque, disponendi ac pro suo libero Regie voluntatis libito ad quoscumque usus majestati sue placentes alienandi, donandi, convertendi, et transferendi; hujus modi dispositiones, alienaciones, donaciones, conversiones et translaciones per dictam Majestatem suam quovismodo fiendas extunc ratificantes, ratasque et gratas ac perpetuo firmas nos habituros promittimus per presentes; et ut premissa omnia et singula suum debitum sortiri valeant effectum, eleccionibus insuper nobis et successoribus nostris, necnon omnibus et singulis querelis, provocacionibus, appellacionibus, accionibus, litibus, et instanciis aliisque nostris² remediis et beneficiis nobis forsan et successoribus nostris in ea parte, pretextu dispositionis, alienacionis, translacionis, et conversionis predictarum et ceterorum premissorum, qualitercumque competentibus et competituris, omnibusque doli, erroris, metus, ignorancie, vel alterius materie sive dispositionis excepcionibus, objectionibus, et allegacionibus prorsus semotis et depositis, palam, publice, et expresse, ex certa nostra sciencia, animisque spontaneis renunciavimus et cessimus prout per presentes renunciamus et cedimus, et ab eisdem recedimus in his scriptis. Et nos, prefati Prior et Conventus et Successores nostri, dictum Domum sive Prioratum, Precinctum, Situm, Mansionem, et Ecclesiam de Walsingham predicta, necnon Cellam, Fundum, Circuitum, et Precinctum de Flicham predicta, ac omnia et singula maneria, Dominia, Messuagia, Gardina, Curtilagia, Tofta, Prata, Pascua, Pasturas, Boscos,

² "Aliisque quibuscumque *juris* remediis," &c., in the Surrender of Bardney, according to the same form as the above.

Dugd. Mon. edit. Caley, vol. i. p. 640. In the Surrender of Cerne, however, *ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 628, the reading is—"nostris."

Subboscas, Terras, Tenementa, ac omnia et singula cetera premissa cum suis pertinentiis universis, Domino nostro Regi, heredibus, et assignatis suis, contra omnes gentes warrantizabimus imperpetuum. In quorum testimonium nos, prefati Prior et Conventus huic Scripto Sigillum nostrum Commune apponi fecimus. Datum in Domo nostra Capitulari, quarto die Mensis Augusti, Anno Regni Regis Henrici supradicti tricesimo. [A.D. 1538.]

Et memorandum quod die et anno predictis venerunt predicti Prior et Conventus in domo sua Capitulari apud Walsingham coram Willelmo Petre,³ pretextu Commissionis dicti Domini Regis ei in hac parte directe, et recognoverunt scriptum predictum ac omnia et singula in eodem contenta, in forma predicta.

CABBOKESWELL. See page 118, *supra*.

The following is a Copy of the Document which forms a fly-leaf at fol. 26 of the Walsingham Register, Cotton MSS. Nero, E. VII. with its various endorsements and notes.

Copia Semitæ inter Priorem de Walsingham et Stephanum Black.

Ad curiam tentam apud Walsingham, XV.^o die Junii, anno regni regis Ricardi secundi post conquestum X^o, coram Roberto Hethe tunc ibidem Seneschallum, Dominus concessit Johanni Priori Ecclesie de Walsingham et ejusdem loci conventui quandam semitam ducentem de communi via versus quandam fontem vocatum Cabbokeswell in communi villatura de Walsingham parva, ut unum . . . non . . . ad noc—aliquorum Communarium ibidem ut testatum est per homagium redditum inde domino per annualem ob^m in festo Sancti Michaelis. Et dat domino de fine VI. denarios.

(Notes)

Et nota quod ista semita jacet sub fovea aquilonari vocata Blacks, juxta Cruftam vocatam Powerscroft. Et Cabbokeswell jacet in angulo Australi foveæ de Powerscloos, juxta prædictam foveam de Blacks.

Et nota quod Dominus Richardus Dux Eboraci postea tempore Thomæ Hunt Prioris, Confirmavit prædictum, et super hoc etiam dedit Prioratui totam parcellam terræ ex parte occidentali vocatam Eleemosinariam, quæ jacet inter semitam et prædictam Eleemosinariam.

(Endorsements)

Item pars terræ vacuæ inter semitam et vetus Eleemosynarium Priori.

Ista Billa facit mentionem de quadam semita ad finem aquilonarem hujus villæ subtus tenementum quondam Nicholai Black postea Jacobi Cabb—k.

THE KNIGHT'S GATE: LEGEND OF SIR RALPH BOTETOURT.

(See page 124.)

The probable position of the *ostium* is shown in the plan accompanying this memoir. Erasmus distinctly states that the gate, to which the legend cited by Blomefield related was on the *north* side. It is singular that

³ Sir William Petre, a great favourite of Cromwell's, and one of the Commissioners employed by him to visit monasteries, of which Henry VIII. had nominated Cromwell General Visitor. Petre was afterwards Secretary of State and held posts of high trust in four successive

reigns. He had large grants out of the spoils of the monasteries, as enumerated in Biog. Brit., Life of Petre; and he obtained a Bull from Pope Paul IV., in the reign of Mary, permitting him to retain them.

Mr. J. Gough Nichols (*Pilgrimages to Walsingham and Canterbury*, p. 8) should have fallen into the error of giving the principal gateway to the *west* of the church as that in question, and he produces in illustration Cotman's representation of that gatehouse, with its old gates and "the very wicket which was the supposed scene of the miracle." Blomefield gives the following relation, from an old MS. On the north side of the close there was a very small wicket, "not past an elne hye, and three quarters in bredth. And a certain *Norfolk* knight, Sir *Raaf Botetourt*, armed cap-a-pee and on horse-back, being in days of old, 1314, persued by a cruel enemy, and in the utmost danger of being taken, made full speed for this gate, and invoking this lady for his deliverance, he immediately found himself and his horse within the close and sanctuary of the priory, in a safe asylum, and so fooled his enemy." *Hist. of Norf.* vol. ix. p. 280. An engraved brass plate representing this miracle was affixed to the gate, and was there seen by Erasmus. One of the articles of enquiry for the monastery of Walsingham (*Harl. MS.* 791, p. 27) is—"What is the sayng—of the knyght, and what of the other wonders that be here, and what proves be therof?" It is singular that amongst numerous representations of miraculous interpositions of the Virgin Mary, as for instance amongst the sculptures in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral, erected so shortly after the alleged date of this miracle, no representation of it should have been noticed.

The name of the "Knight Street," Mr. Lee Warner observes, "is the sole local evidence now remaining of the scene of Sir Ralph Botetourt's exploit. The outline of the boundary of the precincts might lead us to the supposition that the foundations of the original gate are below the present turnpike road:—but when we remember that the road has been altered, as shown in the annexed plan, we are inclined to attach credit to the report of ancient inhabitants, that formerly an old building existed nearer to the Wishing Wells, which may have been the gate in question, or possibly the chapel of St. Nicholas. This notable miracle is perhaps alluded to in the Pepysian Ballad, cited at the commencement of this memoir, and written about a century after the time to which the miracle has been assigned:—

"Foke that of feenes have had incumbrance,
And of wicked sprites also much vexatyon,
Have here been delivered from every such chaunce,
And souls greatly vexed with gostely tentatyon."

Before we close these notices of a place of such interesting memories as Walsingham, it may not be irrelevant to mention the signs, *signacula*, of metal, which were doubtless as much in request here by the innumerable pilgrims to the shrine of Our Lady, as they were in other notable resorts of pilgrimage. These tokens of vows performed were usually of pewter or lead, and they were often formed so as to be affixed to the cap or the dress, or hung round the neck, as Giraldus Cambrensis describes the Bishop of Winchester and his company, lately come from Canterbury, "*cum signaculis B. Thome a collo suspensis.*" It has been supposed that the pewter *ampulla*, of which representations are subjoined, bearing on one side the initial W. under a crown (see woodcuts), may have been a Walsingham sign, carried by some pilgrim to Cirencester, where it was found; it was brought under the notice of the Institute by Professor Buckman. Another, marked with the crowned W., found at Dunwich, is figured in Gardner's *History of that place*, Plate III. p. 66. Such *ampullæ* may have served to contain small quantities of the waters of the Wishing Wells, as at

Canterbury they were filled from Becket's healing well, miraculously tinged as if with blood. Mr. Roach Smith has given a curious essay on Pilgrims' Signs, in the *Journal of the Arch. Assoc.*, vol. i. p. 200, and they are more fully noticed in his *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i. p. 81, vol. ii. p. 43, and in the catalogue of his museum, p. 134. The original *signacula* have recently been deposited with his collections in the British Museum. Mr. Roach Smith has also kindly made us acquainted with an undoubted Walsingham sign, of which he possesses a cast. It is a small rectangular ornament of lead, on which appears the Annunciation with the vase containing a lily between the figures, and underneath is—Walsygham. We have not been able to ascertain where the original was found, or in whose possession it is preserved.

There is a curious relation by Richard Southwell, one of Cromwell's Commissioners for the visitation of monasteries, addressed to him in July, 1536. It describes a secret laboratory discovered in Walsingham Priory, a circumstance eagerly seized by the captious visitor, whose special object it was to magnify suspicion and give a colour to any mysterious discovery. The sequestrators, Southwell states, had taken possession of money, plate and stuff, found at Walsingham, and "emoung other thinges—dyd ther



fynd a secrete prevye place within the howse, where no channon nor onnye other of the howse dyd ever enter, as they saye, in wiche there were instreumentes, pottes, belowes, flyes of such strange colers as the lick non of us had seene, with poysies⁴ and other thinges to sorte, and denyd (?) gould and sylver, nothing ther wantinge that should belonge to the arte of multiplyeng."⁵ It is by no means improbable that this furnace was for no processes of alchemy, but simply the place where the sacristan melted the metals suited for his craft of casting *signacula* and "ampulles" for the pilgrims. Such a privy furnace, very probably destined for a similar purpose, may still be seen in an upper chamber in Canterbury Cathedral.

⁴ Weights.

⁵ Cott. MS. Cleop. E. iv., f. 231. Let-

ters relating to the Suppression of Monasteries, p. 138. Camden Soc.