

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

21 OCTOBER, 1895, TO 27 MAY, 1896,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXVIII.

BEING No. 2 OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

(THIRD VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)

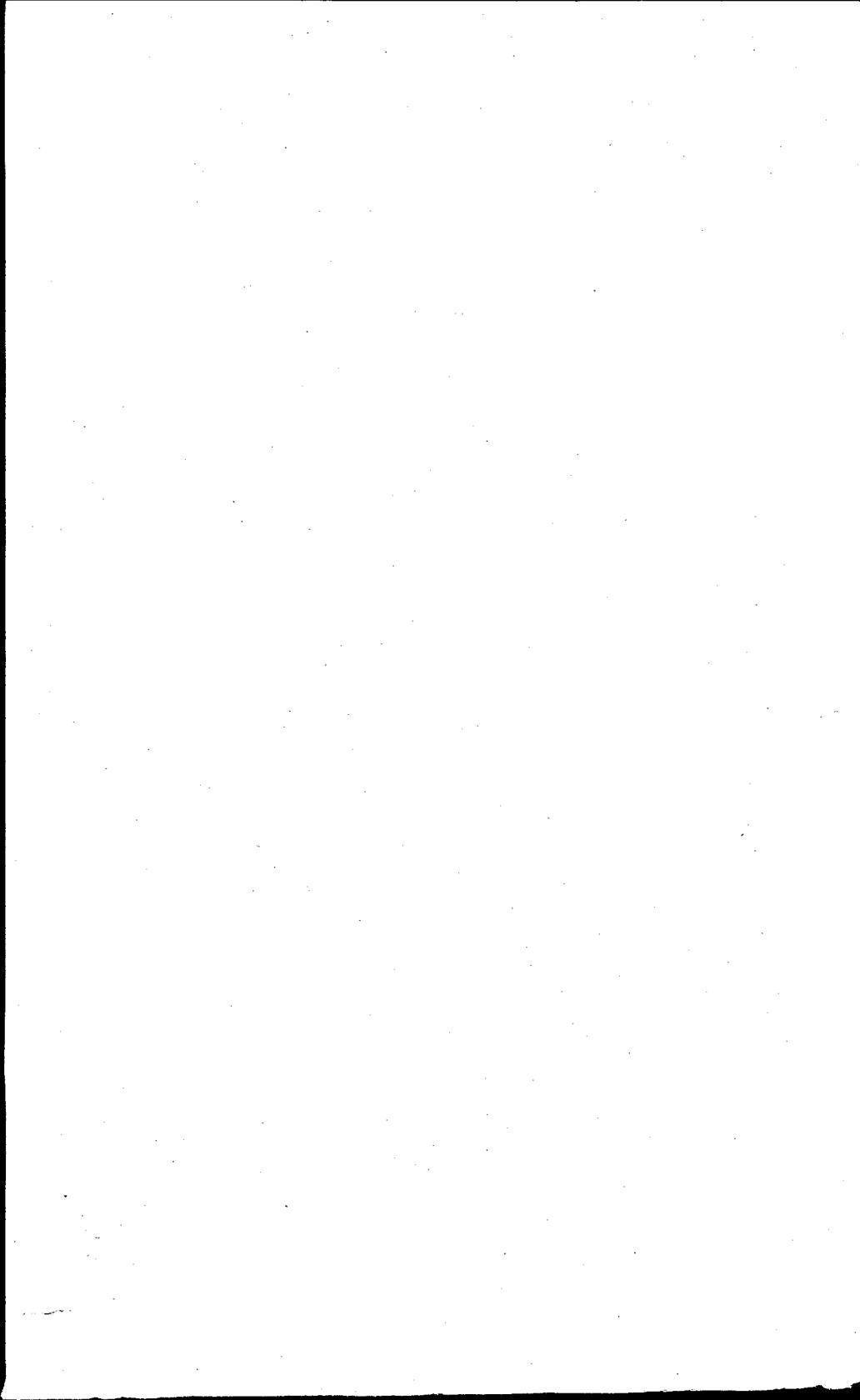
Cambridge:

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LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS.

1897.

Price 5s.



The only other hint of a knowledge of the legend which I have come across is this: that on a relief of the year 1367 over the North door of the Church of Sta Maria Maggiore at Bergamo, certain female saints are shown, with their names attached, as assisting at the birth of the Virgin. They are St Elizabeth, St Susanna, St Lucy, St Simo (not otherwise known to me) and St Anastasia¹.

At a General Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1896, at 4.30 p.m., W. M. FAWCETT, M.A., President, in the Chair:

The following members were announced as having been elected:

Mrs A. M. BABINGTON, 5, Brookside, and Mr A. W. BISHOP, Chaucer Road.

J. W. CLARK, M.A., exhibited a small object, perhaps part of a seal, found and forwarded by the Rev. G. F. Pigott.

The Rev. C. H. EVELYN WHITE made a Communication:

ON WILLIAM DOWSING'S ICONOCLASTIC VISITATION OF
THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE 1643—4.

The Journal of William Dowsing, parliamentary visitor appointed under a warrant from the Earl of Manchester for demolishing the superstitious pictures and ornaments of Churches, was printed by Dr Zachary Grey in a tract entitled "Schismatics delineated from authentic vouchers."

¹ X. Barbier de Montault on the Paliotto of Monza. *Bull. Monumental*, 1883, pp. 225 sqq.

In 1641, March 1, a commission was appointed in different localities in the Eastern counties in connexion with the Committee of the House of Lords "to take into consideration all innovations in the Church respecting religion." The appointment of William Dowsing was the outcome of an ordinance of both Houses dated August 28, 1642, directed against crucifixes, crosses, and inscriptions in the churches, as well as scandalous pictures. The execution of this work in the Eastern counties was entrusted to the Earl of Manchester, who in turn commissioned William Dowsing. We have no knowledge of any other emissaries appointed to carry out the Parliamentary order, with the exception of Dowsing's deputies, but in many cases it is clear that private persons took upon themselves to execute the order. Isolated items of expenditure in churchwardens' accounts also testify to the work of destruction in various counties.

The Journal of William Dowsing, so far as it relates to the county of Cambridge, is contained in Vol. xxxviii. of the Baker MSS. foll. 471-473, deposited in the Cambridge University Library. No mention is made of the source from which the MS. is derived, nor is there any allusion to the original document. There is a remarkable similarity between this record and the better known Journal of Dowsing dealing with the county of Suffolk. But the transcript in the Baker MSS. has attracted little notice. Dr Zachary Grey's work is very rare. Carter, in his *History of the County of Cambridge 1753*, has used Dowsing's Journal, possibly as printed by Grey. Beyond this the Journal appears to have been unused.

The Suffolk MS. was in existence in the 18th century, and an edition was published from a transcript in 1786. Mr White prepared a paper on Dowsing's Journal for the Suffolk Institute of Archæology some ten years ago, in which he collected all that could be learnt of Dowsing's personal history. The Journal relating to Suffolk comes to us direct from Dowsing's relatives, but it seems likely that the Cambridge Journal comes from the archives of the Earl of Manchester,

through Dr Williams, whose MSS. Baker incorporated among his collections.

Mr White passed over the particular visitation of the College Chapels, as being already fairly well known. After a reference to the mentions of Dowsing in the *Querela Cantabrigiensis*, or remonstrance of certain banished members of the University, Mr White alluded to the will of Dowsing, dated 1667, and recently discovered. This will was proved in the Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk, and shows Dowsing to have possessed property in Brundish Wilby, Coddendam, and Stratford St Mary in that county. His last years were passed in the last-mentioned village.

Coming to the iconoclastic work of Dowsing and his colleagues, we find that their efforts were specially directed to the levelling of chancel steps, recently set up in many churches, to the breaking down of sacred emblems, especially crucifixes and crosses, to the tearing up of memorial brasses, &c. having superstitious inscriptions, to the breaking down of ornamented glass, wood, and stone, to the effacing of pictures on the walls and elsewhere, and sometimes to the effacing of such words as the name of the Saviour. Even the inscriptions on ancient bells were sometimes not overlooked, but the obliteration of such inscriptions was not in Cambridgeshire attempted by Dowsing.

We learn from the diary certain interesting details. Thus at Barton certain superstitious objects and the glass had been hidden by the churchwardens. At Cheveley Dowsing found two staring crosses, which had escaped earlier iconoclasts. The only wayside cross mentioned in the Suffolk or Cambridgeshire Journals was at Croxton, Cambs. On a Croxton bell the Journal records an inscription, *Sit munus Domini*: probably an error for *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, which is found on the sixth bell at the present day. At Hatley St George an inscription relating that William St George gave a hide of land in Haslingfield with his daughter to be a nun in Clerkenwell was regarded as superstitious and destroyed. At Orwell orders were given that a cross on the steeple should be removed within

three weeks. At Pampisford the visitors commanded the windows to be put up, whatever that may mean. At Swaffham Bulbeck we read that "John Grange, who dwelt in the Manor this summer, after he and the other malignants had been drinking and laughing at Roundheads had his house burnt down at ten in the morning," no doubt by Dowsing and his friends. At Teversham inscriptions of the name of Jesus which Dowsing could not reach were ordered by him to be "done out." At Trumpington Mr Tompson, the Vicar, refused to obey the behest to level the chancel steps: but as a rule the local authorities were more submissive. This order to level the chancel steps occurs no less than 32 times in the Cambridge Journal. But the removal of superstitious pictures is even more frequently, 69 times, mentioned. Such pictures would no doubt as a rule be in glass, or paintings on the walls, but once they are said to have been in wood, and once in stone.

The crucifix was an object of special aversion, and is mentioned 22 times. Crosses, whether steeple crosses or on the chancel, church, or elsewhere, are frequently mentioned as demolished. At Papworth Everard pictures of Abraham offering Isaac, and of the four Evangelists were destroyed. At St Clement's, Cambridge, St Peter's keys and "divers of the Apostles," at St Mary the Less, "some popes and crucifixes, with God the Father sitting in a chair and holding a globe in his hand" were defaced.

Representations of the mother of our Lord are not frequently mentioned. At West Wickham she appeared with the infant Saviour in her arms, and also at Willingham, where there were two pictures of the Holy Ghost. At Whittlesford we find "a lamb in the glass, with a crown over it." At St Giles's in Cambridge, a dove was removed "from the high loft of the font." At St Sepulchre's and at Holy Trinity pictures of God the Father were removed. But several churches in Cambridge appear to have been wholly omitted in the visitation.

Altar-rails, where found, were broken down or burned. In

seventeen instances representations of angels were defaced. Only once a holy water font is mentioned, and in no case is direct reference made to a baptismal font. In many cases inscriptions gave offence, particularly those of the type *orate pro anima*, and *quorum animabus propitiatur Deus* as at East Hatley. At Toft a bell is mentioned with the inscription *Ora pro anima sanctae Katherinae*, but the inscription *Sancta Katerina ora pro nobis*, which is probably referred to, may still be seen on one of the bells. On some occasions Dowsing was unable to complete the work himself and left orders with the local officials that it was to be completed in a certain number of days or weeks. As a rule the names of churchwardens, overseers, or constables are mentioned, occasionally that of the incumbent.

It would appear that a regular fee was exacted for Dowsing's ministrations, and 6s. 8d. appears to have been the usual sum. At Blythburgh from the churchwardens' accounts it appears that such expenses were defrayed out of the sale of broken brass, &c. But Dowsing does not as a rule record this payment, though it is sometimes mentioned in the Journal.

Dowsing received his authority on the 19th of December: on the 20th he began by despoiling some of the University chapels. The visitation of the county began on the 3rd Jan., and the work of destruction in Suffolk was carried on at the same time. In March the work was completed for Cambridgeshire. Only 77 parishes were visited in this county, including 5 out of the 9 Cambridge parishes, so that if the Journal as we have it contains a complete record quite half the parishes in the county were passed over. But it is probable that these were visited by deputies. In the Cambridgeshire Journal, with the exception of Madingley and Willingham, all the parishes mentioned lie in Cambridge or to the south of that town.

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