

A. Victor Haslam.

NORBURY CHURCH FROM THE SOUTH.

The Church of Norbury.*

By REV. J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.



THE Derbyshire manor of Norbury formed part of the great estates of Henry de Ferrers when the Domesday Survey was compiled. At that time (1086-7) mention is made of a church and a priest. A few years earlier, Henry de Ferrers, when founding the priory of Tutbury (1080-1), had given this church and its tithes to the monks of that Cluniac house. His grandson, Robert de Ferrers, confirmed to them the town of Norbury, which his father had given to the priory, together with the towns of Edlaston and Broughton, in exchange for the town of Stamford.

But in the year 1125, the prior of Tutbury gave Norbury in fee-farm to William Fitzherbert, on a yearly rental of 100s. It was further agreed that William Fitzherbert should pay five shillings a year to the priory in lieu of the tithe of the lordship and of two oxgangs of land pertaining to the church.

From that date, the Fitzherberts held the manor and a portion of the tithes of the priory up to the year 1422, when Nicholas Fitzherbert and Ralph, his son and heir, gave to

* It is more than twenty-five years ago since I first wrote about Norbury church (*Churches of Derbyshire*, iii., 229-247); it has always had a special fascination for me, and I could not but comply with the somewhat urgent request of the Hon. Editor that I should write about it again for the *Journal*. There is not much to be added to what has already been written; but this account is amplified in some places, and curtailed and corrected in others, as the result of three subsequent visits and of further study. The fourth volume of the *Journal* had an article by Mr. Hope on "Anthony Fitzherbert's brass"; the fourth and fifth volumes, illustrations of the "Manor House Glass," by Mr. Bailey; the seventh, a long article by myself on the "Manor House and the Troubles of the Fitzherberts"; and the nineteenth and twentieth volumes "Fitzherbert Wills relative to the Church," by Rev. Reginald H. C. Fitzherbert.

Thomas Gedney, prior of Tutbury, all their lands at Osmaston, together with lands at Foston and Church Broughton, in exchange for the fee-farm rent of 100s. and other services due to the prior out of the manor of Norbury.

Meanwhile, the advowson of the rectory remained uninterruptedly in the hands of the Fitzherberts, as successive lords of Norbury, from the time of William Fitzherbert, in 1125, down to Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, who died in 1538, seized of this advowson. After his death, the troubles and absolutely monstrous persecution of the Derbyshire Fitzherberts for recusancy or adherence to the unreformed faith began, and they became incapable as Romanists of presenting to the rectory.*

The patronage of Norbury after the death of Sir Anthony reverted in the first instance to the Crown, but it was soon disposed of, and the patronage has subsequently changed hands by purchase on several occasions.

In a previously printed list of the rectors of Norbury, the name of the earliest rector given, which was the first mentioned in the diocesan registers of Lichfield, is Roger Fitzherbert, who was presented to the living in 1320 by Sir John Fitzherbert, sixth lord of Norbury.† An earlier instance can now be added. About 1250-60, one Ralph Heylyn granted to William Wertt a small parcel of arable land in the field of Norbury, which is described as being near the Little Cross (*parvam crucem*) and adjoining the land of Jordan, late rector of Norbury. This undated charter is witnessed, *inter alia*, by William Fitzherbert, of Norbury, Nicholas Fitzherbert, and Henry, clerk of Norbury.‡

* The treatment of this family throughout Elizabeth's reign was one continuous drama of outrage and cruelty, in addition to persistent fining and general injustice. They had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the foulest of all tools of the Council, that unprincipled ruffian, Richard Topcliffe, over whose infamies in Norfolk Dr. Jessopp has waxed eloquent since I first wrote on this subject. Recently I have had occasion (many years after writing on the Derbyshire Romanists in the *Church Quarterly* and in this *Journal*) to take up the question of the treatment of the recusants in Elizabethan days in Hampshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, and Essex, and after following the matter up from the original documents in the Public Record Office and elsewhere, I have no hesitation in saying that the conduct of those in power towards the Derbyshire Fitzherberts is the sorriest tale of them all.

† *Churches of Derbyshire*, iii., 231-2.

‡ *Brit. Mus., Woll. Charters*, ix., 74.

A later insertion can be made in the long list of rectors, between the death of rector John Fitzherbert, who died in 1551, and the institution of Thomas Harpur in 1627. Richard Brown occurs as rector of Norbury during the intervening period, when there is a gap in the diocesan registers.*

Any account of the fabric of a church usually and appropriately opens with a statement as to its dedication or invocation. In the case of Norbury, the church has generally been assigned to the Blessed Virgin, and this is the dedication given in Eaton's *Thesaurus* (1742) and in Bacon's *Liber Regis* (1786).

In the light, however, of definite statements in pre-Reformation wills, this generally-accepted invocation must be re-considered. If anyone in the fifteenth century was likely to know the true and ancient dedication of this church, it would assuredly be members of the Fitzherbert family who had lived under its shadow and been its patrons and benefactors for so many generations. The exact terms of two of these Fitzherbert wills were given by the Rev. Reginald H. C. Fitzherbert, from the originals preserved at Swynnerton, in the volumes of this *Journal* for 1897 and 1898.

Ralph Fitzherbert, by will dated 20th December, 1483, left his body to be buried in "the church of St. Barlac of Norbury." Elizabeth, his widow, by will dated 20th October, 1490, desired that her body might be buried "in the Church of saint Barloke byfore the ymage of saint Nicholas by syde the body of Rauffe Fitzherbert late my husband."

I used to suppose that this "church" of St. Barloke, before I knew the real phraseology of the wills, was the name of the small south chapel of the nave to the east of the tower; but that idea must now be abandoned. This notion seemed confirmed by the presence in the centre light of the south window of this chapel of a figure with a pastoral staff in left hand, and a book in right, with the words *Sanctus Burlok Abbas* below; but it has been pointed out by Mr. Fitzherbert that the windows

* Unfortunately I cannot now lay my hands on the reference or references to this appointment; but I know that I obtained it from some authoritative source.

of the north aisle are of exactly the same size and shape as those of this chapel, so that the figure of St. Burloke may quite possibly have been moved to the chapel during one of those unhappy general shiftings of the glass of this church in the first half of last century.

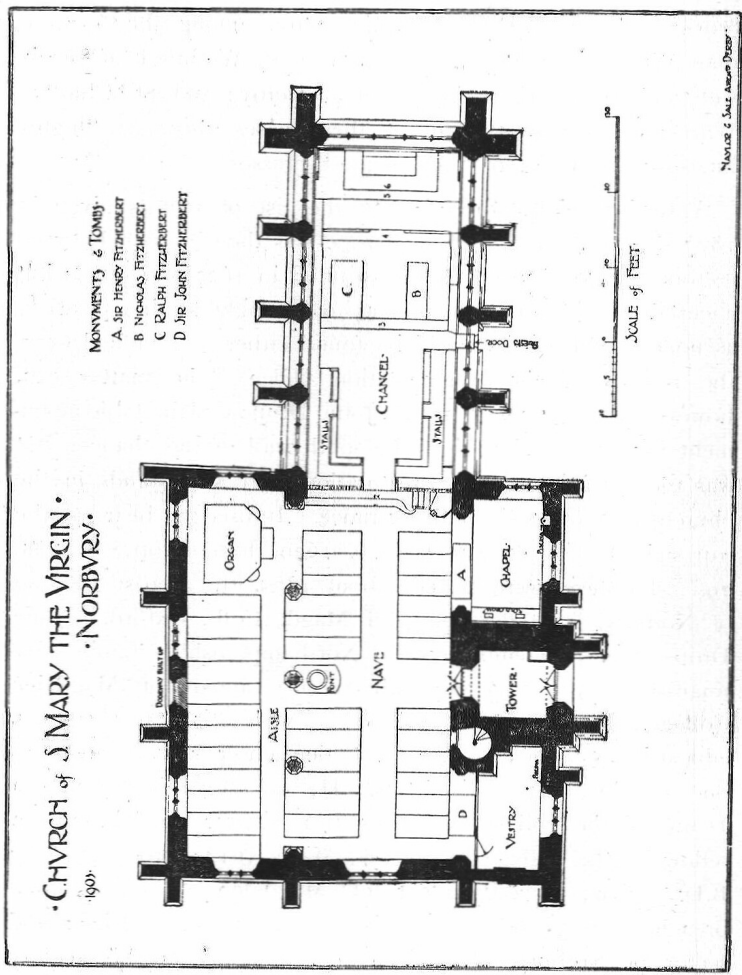
In the face of the express declaration of these two wills by members of the patronal and residential family, every ecclesiologist of experience will agree that the old and true dedication of Norbury was in honour of St. Barloke. Efforts that had previously been made to identify St. Barloke have recently been renewed with assiduity. In addition to a fresh and thorough search through the mighty tomes of the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandist fathers, as well as those which deal specially with the saints of the Benedictine order, the best-known ecclesiologists, both English and continental, have been consulted, and without result. As St. Barloke is described in the glass as an abbot, every known list of early abbots of British and Continental foundations has been searched, but in vain. It may, however, be remembered that the term abbot used from time to time to be applied in early days to almost any priest of fame who followed the Benedictine rule, even if the community under him had been very small or of vague historic probability.

The only possible solution of the difficulty—and it is set forth briefly, in default of anything better—is that St. Barloke may be identical with St. Barrog or Barroc, a British saint of some repute of the sixth century. St. Barrog, who was commemorated on November 29th, was a British saint of high birth, of the age of St. David; he became an anchorite, and was buried on the island of Barry, which is said to have taken its name from the recluse who hallowed it. The church of Bedwas, Monmouthshire, is dedicated in his honour. The recent discovery of early pre-Norman crosses, which were built up into the fabric of Norbury Church, make its dedication to an early national saint all the more probable; for in those days it was customary to dedicate churches in honour of saints who had first preached Christianity in the particular place or district, or whose names

were held in reverent and real or recent memory by the first founders. Such dedications were often disturbed by subsequent Norman re-buildings, but where they are met with they are frequently in association with the remains of ancient Christian crosses. Thus in Derbyshire there are, among the few old dedications of English origin, those of St. Werburgh at Blackwell and Spondon; St. Alkmund at Derby; and St. Chad at Wilne; and in every one of these cases there are highly interesting remains of pre-Conquest crosses.

A further slight correction to the list of rectors given in 1877 should be made. John Drope was then inserted between rectors who were respectively instituted in 1627 and 1639; but a certain doubt was expressed as to his right to that position, as no mention of him could be found either at Lichfield or in the returns of the Augmentation Office. The matter can, however, now be set at rest. John Drope's plain table-monument used to stand against the south wall of the chancel, but was ejected in the 1842 "restoration." It now stands in the churchyard near the south entrance. It used to bear on the top slab the simple words, "A.D. 1629, John Drope, Septem. 29." To these were added, about 1875, the words, "Rector of Norbury, formerly Demy, of Magd. Coll., Oxford." John Drope was a member of a Northamptonshire family distinguished in the seventeenth century annals of Magdalen College. He was, in conjunction with his two brothers, educated as a boy in the Magdalen choir school, and was one of the chapel choristers. He subsequently became a Demy of the college, took his B.A. degree, and became a fellow of the college in 1608-9; M.A., 1612; proctor, 1618; B.D., 1619; Vice-President of Magdalen, 1620; licensed preacher, 1623; rector of Grindon, Staffordshire, 1626; and rector of Norbury, Derbyshire, 1628. He held this rectory for a very short time, for he died, as stated on the monument, on September 29th, 1629.*

* Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*; and Bloxam's and Macray's *Magdalen Registers*.



MAJOR & SALE ARCHT. DRSR.

The church of St. Barloke consists of chancel, nave, north aisle, and tower between two chapels on the south side of the nave, forming a most unusual ground plan.*

A careful examination of the squared stones of the fabric, made by me in 1887, brought to light the fact that at least a score bore obvious traces of the characteristic "axeing" of Norman masons, proving that the present structure is largely composed of material that had been used in the Norman church of the twelfth century, which was doubtless erected on the site of the previous ruder church of Saxon origin. For, if Norman stone dressing could be detected on so many stones, there would doubtless be very many more whence the axeing had worn off in course of time, or in which the dressed surface had been turned inwards or re-trimmed.

Three moulded stones of Norman workmanship have also recently been noted. One of these is just above the south-east chapel arch, and the two others were placed in the south-west chapel. †

The substantially built twelfth century Norman church, consisting of nave and chancel, apparently sufficed for the worship of this retired village until the fourteenth, when a new chancel was erected on a large scale. At the west end of the nave are some remains of the internal splays of a doorway, which may have been part of some slight modification or alteration of thirteenth century date. But there seems to be no doubt that an aisleless Norman nave was extant when the chancel was rebuilt on so grand a scale. The length of the nave was then, as now, about 50 feet, and as the builders of the twelfth century were generally fairly uniform in their dimensions, it may be assumed that the length of the former chancel was about 25 feet, or not much more than half that of its successor.

When Mr. Henry Bowman wrote and illustrated his most useful and timely quarto volume on *Specimens of the Ecclesiastical*

* For the ground plan (page 78) we are much indebted to Messrs. Naylor and Sale.

† For this information I am indebted to the Rev. Douglas Adamson, who became rector of Norbury in 1894, and in whom this much-misused church has at last found a faithful and zealous custodian.

Architecture of Great Britain (Parker, 1846), he took the remotely situated but "very interesting and beautiful church" of Norbury as the most suitable one he could find wherewith to begin the work, and gave the first and, indeed, the only critical architectural account of it that has been published. Taken as a whole, Mr. Bowman considered that the architectural composition of the church was "exceedingly pleasing," notwithstanding the somewhat "glaring discordance" between the chancel and the rest of the edifice. His actual phrases with regard to the exterior of the chancel and its buttresses may with advantage be reproduced. "The general character of the exterior of this chancel is at once bold and chaste, an effect more of outline and proportion than of deeply cut mouldings or elaborate workmanship, for not the least remarkable peculiarity in its composition is the great simplicity and elegance, not only of the general features, but also of the details. The dignity and boldness of the buttresses, and the chaste simplicity of the parapet harmonize admirably with the light, elegant, and just proportions of the windows, and the whole composition is calculated to produce a very pleasing impression on the mind. The buttresses are peculiar, though divided into two stages above the string course: these are both of equal projection, so that there is, in fact, no set-off; and, again, the pyramidal cappings with which the buttresses are surmounted are unlike anything we have before met with of the same period; those of the angle buttresses are different from the rest, but still peculiar, being splayed off on two sides only, without any projecting mouldings."*

With regard to the date of this remarkable chancel, it requires some boldness to differ from one of our very first ecclesiologists, Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A.; but in this case,

* Mr. Bowman's plates of this church are ten in number: (1) ground plan; (2) view from south-east; (3) external elevation of south side of chancel; (4) a window on south side of chancel, coloured; (5) coloured glass of same in detail; (6) interior view of chancel; (7) internal elevation of south side of chancel; (8) details of stalls, double piscina, parapet, and other mouldings; (9) window, north side of chancel, coloured; and (10) coloured glass of same in detail.

as the result of nearly a dozen careful and critical visits to this church, independently of close research into its printed and manuscript history, I have not the slightest hesitation in doing so, and am quite confident that Mr. Micklethwaite would himself reverse his opinion on further consideration. In a report that he made on this church when about to be restored at the close of the year 1898, which was published in the county papers, he stated that—"Except some small remains at the west end, the oldest part of the church is the chancel, which is of very unusual character and very fine. I think it was finished and the windows glazed before the great pestilence of 1349."

As to the architectural style, it would be exceedingly difficult to produce any English work known to be prior to that great check on building and on every other work of man's hands—the Black Death of 1348-9—which would compare with the main features or with certain details of Norbury church. There is, for instance, an awkwardness in the arrangement of the tracery in the upper part of the centre of the large east window, which clearly speaks of an approach to the style that is usually termed Perpendicular, and which would have been almost impossible in the first half of the fourteenth century.

With respect, too, to the glass, which is obviously coeval with the fabric, there is no room for doubt that the treatment shows a considerable advance on the grisaille designs of York, Exeter, and other examples in England of the first half of the fourteenth century, as well as on those in use during a like period in France.*

Mr. Bowman's conjecture as to the date of the chancel, knowing nothing of the history of the fabric and judging solely on comparative architectural lines, was that it was built between 1370 and 1380. If this surmise errs, it is in putting the date rather too late, and possibly 1360 would be nearer the mark.†

* Westlake's *History of Design in Painted Glass*, 4 vols. (Parker, 1881-1894); F. de Lasteyrie's *Histoire de la peinture sur Verre d'après ses monuments en France*, 2 vols. (1857).

† The heraldic display in the windows also favours the second half of the fourteenth century; but this is too big a matter for present discussion.

Coming to history, the episcopal registers show that Henry Kniveton was instituted to this rectory in 1349, the very year of the awful pestilence, on the presentation of Sir John Fitzherbert, and that his successor was not instituted until 1395. Between these two dates the chancel of Norbury must have been erected. The Meynell MSS. and the Rawlins MSS., as the result of visits made to this church in the respective years 1817 and 1823, make mention of the fact of an inscription on a slab in the floor of the chancel to the memory of Henry Kniveton, wherein it was stated that he was the builder of the chancel. This slab was apparently ejected and never replaced during the restoration of 1842.

In addition to that which has been cited from Mr. Bowman's discriminating remarks as to this somewhat peculiar and beautiful example of a fourteenth century chancel, a few other brief remarks may be permitted. Its interior measurements are 46 ft. 6 in. by 20 ft. A particular feature of its nine large windows, for it has four on each side, is the insertion in each case, at the central intersection of the upper tracery, of a well carved double flower or rose of twelve petals. It should be noticed that the five lights of the large east window are of unequal width, the centre one being 3 ft. 6 in. in breadth between the mullions, the two next lights 2 ft. 9 in., and the outside lights 2 ft. 7 in. The arcade work of the interior of the chancel also deserves mention. The walls below the window strings, save at the east end, are filled in with a series of slightly sunk cinque-foil headed arches, five below each window. One of these arches in the south wall is occupied by the piscina niche, which has a double drain and a double credence shelf. Against the same wall are three sedilia of equal height, but without any canopies over them.

The simple old Norman church had been doubtless content with a mere bell gable turret, for one or two bells, at the west end of the nave, and this continued to serve for some time after the erection of the splendid chancel by Rector Kniveton, who was a man of considerable wealth. In the early years,

however, of the fifteenth century there was a desire for better accommodation for bells, and a small tower was built for their accommodation. Mr. Micklethwaite considers that it was erected "about a hundred years after the rebuilding of the chancel . . . and that it is a good ordinary work of the time." At all events, this tower was built some time in the first half of the fifteenth century. Its position in the middle of the south wall of the nave is decidedly unusual, and the lower story was utilised to form a porch. There is a good reason why such a position should have been chosen, which has not, I believe, been hitherto noted by anyone. There used to be a covered entrance or gallery from the adjacent manor house immediately to the west of the church, which allowed the Fitzherberts to enter a loft at the west end of the parish church without going into the open air. The old tenant of the manor house, whose family had been there for several generations, more than once pointed out to me, in the "seventies," the exact position of this passage, much of which was still standing when Mr. Meynell visited the church early in the nineteenth century.* This communication at the west end of the fabric was probably the reason why the new tower was not built in the usual place. Somewhat later, towards the close of the fifteenth century, further great changes were made in the fabric. The nave was rebuilt, and a north aisle added, as well as a clerestory. The position of the tower rendered a south aisle impossible; but chapels were designed east and west of the tower to produce as near an approach to an aisle as was possible without the removal of the tower. This work was designed and most of it carried out by Nicholas Fitzherbert, tenth lord of Norbury, who died in 1473. By the side of his monument, which originally stood in the south-east chapel, was the following epitaph, which has now been copied anew from Le Neve's manuscript collection of inscriptions:—

"In Northbury church in Derbyshire, on a tombe in a little chapel, on the right hand—

* Such a communication with the parish church was not uncommon in old days, in cases where the manor house adjoined the church, and where the family was devout. There was another Derbyshire instance at Morley.

(An *CCCC seventy and three
 Yeres of our Lord passed in degree
 The body that beried is under this stone
 Of Nichol Fitzherbert Lord and Patrone
 Of Norbury with Alis the daughter of Henry Bothe
 Eight sonnes and five daughters he had in sothe
 Two sonnes and two daughters by Isabel his wyfe
 So seventeen Children he had in his lyfe
 This Church he made of his own expence
 In the joy of Heaven be his recompence
 And in moone (*sic*) of November the nineteenth dey
 He bequeathed his Soule to everlasting jey.)

M. S. P. L.†

In the chancel is an alabaster slab with the incised figure of a priest under a canopy, in eucharistic vestments, and holding a chalice. The stone is much worn, and only parts of the marginal inscription are legible; but sufficient remains to show that Henry Prince, who was rector from 1466 to 1500, re-roofed the chancel. This re-roofing and reconstruction of the western end of the chancel became necessary owing to the rebuilding of the nave, and a lower pitch of the chancel roof was adopted to make it harmonise with the clerestoried nave. It would probably be at this time that the chancel arch disappeared. The absence of a chancel arch is a decidedly uncommon feature of an old church in the Midlands, but the fifteenth century church builders of Cornwall and North Devon usually did away with this arch, and thus gave greater facilities for the erection of elaborate screens and rood-lofts that were then becoming so fashionable. When the chancel roof was lowered the side walls were slightly raised, but the pointed edge to the battlements, of peculiar and effective design, which I believe to be of fourteenth century date, was happily retained and replaced. It was suggested about the middle of last century, and is now sometimes repeated, that the exceptional form of this parapet was an imitation of the heraldic *vair*, which occurs in the arms of Fitzherbert of Norbury (*Arg.*, a chief *vair*, *or* and *gules*, over all a bend *sable*). But irrespective of the extravagant idea of imitating a mere fur, which was only equivalent

* *Sic*, the M being omitted.

† *Harl. MSS.* 3606, f. 21.



A. Victor Haslam.

NORBURY CHURCH. INTERIOR FROM THE EAST.

to a colour and formed no part of an heraldic design, a close inspection of the actual design will show that the supposed similarity does not really exist, and has at most but a vague resemblance.

The work of reconstruction designed by Nicholas Fitzherbert was accomplished by his grandson, John Fitzherbert, twelfth lord of Norbury, who built the south-west chapel. He did not die until 1531, but by his will, dated September 21st, 1517, he left his body to be buried in the parish church of Norbury "under the newe made arche benethe the Steple or elsewhere God shall otherwyse dispose it." The plain table tomb to his memory, with alabaster sides, now stands again in its original position, namely, under the arch into the chapel to the west of the tower. A brass plate on the upper slab is thus inscribed:—

"Hic jacet corpus Johis Fitzherbert Armigeri quondā Dñi hūs manerii q' obiit in vigilia Sancti Jacobi apostoli auno dī MCCCC tricesimo primo cūs aie ppiciēt de' amē."

As to the interior of the church, there is one important detail, which is older than any of the monuments or other remains, save a few uninscribed coffin lids or old memorial stones, and that is the thirteenth century font, which is of simple but effective design. It is figured in Paley's *Illustrations of Baptismal Fonts* (1844), where it is thus described:—"The design of this font is that of a short Early English clustered pillar, the bell capital forming the bowl. The shafts of which the pillar is composed make a square, those of the angles being filleted. It is a plain but very good specimen of its style, and is most probably about the same date as the font at Ashburne."

This church is rich in monumental remains. The oldest definite monument is the stone effigy of a knight, which was made the subject of many journeyings up and down the church during last century. In the "seventies" it was placed in the most inappropriate place of all, namely, in the very centre of the chancel, as though to be as effective an obstacle as possible to decency of worship. It has now been happily placed under the archway leading into the south-east chapel of the nave,

where it formerly stood for a long time. Its original position cannot be known, for it is older than any part of the present fabric. The figure, which is of a hard stone, and in fairly good preservation, represents a knight clad in chain armour, with a hood of the same on his head, whilst over the armour is a surcoat. The right hand is on the hilt of the sword, and on the left arm is a shield. This is the monument of Sir Henry Fitzherbert, fifth lord of Norbury. He came into his inheritance in 1267; the exact year of his death is not known, but he was living in 1310. He rebuilt the manor house at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and to him was probably due the gallery that led into the church.

There are but few parish churches in England that possess two such beautiful effigy-bearing table-tombs of the fifteenth century as those of the tenth and eleventh lords of Norbury. The tomb of Nicholas Fitzherbert* (1473) bears his knightly effigy delicately carved in alabaster, in plate armour of the period. His head, with short-cut, straight hair, rests on a helmet surmounted by the crest of a clenched gauntleted hand. Round the neck is the collar of suns and roses, with a lion pendant, which was the badge of Edward IV. There are not many effigies extant wearing this collar; Derbyshire, however, has another example, which occurs on the brass to Roger Bothe (1476), in Sawley church. Roger was brother-in-law to Nicholas of this monument. The long sword rests by the knight's left side, and of all the beautifully finished details of the monument none show more care than the particulars of the sword belt. There can be little doubt that such effigies as this were not only designed by the sculptor as portraits, but that the actual armour and ornaments were faithfully copied from those worn by the deceased. The feet rest upon a lion, with the curious addition of a minute angel on the lion's back supporting the tip of the right foot. The east end of the tomb is blank, and was probably so originally as a necessity of its position. At the west end are two female figures, which were certainly intended

* Styled in error *Sir* Nicholas in *Churches of Derbyshire*.

to represent his wives, Alice Bothe and Isabel Ludlow. Originally, names were painted beneath these figures, as well as below all those on the sides of the tomb. In 1871, on the occasion of my first note-taking visit to this church, fragments of the lettering could still be detected, as well as traces of red, blue, green, and gold on various parts of the monument. Below one of the two figures at the west end the letters "Al—" could be plainly read. The sides of the monument are panelled into numerous niches to contain, beneath crocketed ogee canopies, small figures of the large family born to Nicholas Fitzherbert. On the south side are the eight sons of Nicholas by his first wife Alice. They are represented as (1) a man in armour, with a mauble having a cross patée on the left shoulder; (2) a lawyer, with a scroll in his left hand; (3) a monk, with a book under the left arm; (4) a figure in a long gown, but the head gone; (5) a man, bare-headed, in a long gown; (6) a man in civilian dress, with gypciere at the girdle; (7) a civilian like the last, but wearing a collar of roses; (8) the same as the last, but the head gone. Of these eight sons, the following are to be found in old pedigrees:—Ralph, the eldest son and heir; John Fitzherbert, of Etwall, who married Dorothy Babington; Robert, of Uphall, Hertford, who married Elizabeth Jocelyn; Roger, the fourth son; and William, the fifth.

There were also five daughters by Nicholas's first wife, and two sons and two daughters by the second wife. These nine appear on the north side of the tomb—the two sons in civilian dress, six of the daughters in the usual dress of ladies of the period, and one daughter as a nun, with veil and rosary.* Beneath the nun are (or were) traces of the name Millicent. The five daughters of the first marriage were: Joan, the wife of John Cotton; Elizabeth, the wife of Edward Crosby; Isabel, the wife of Anthony Babington; Dulcibella, and Anne.

* I have just (March, 1903) found, in searching the London diocesan registers, the name of Dorothy Fitzherbert, in a 1489 list of nuns of the important abbey of Barking, Essex, and have little or no doubt that she was another of the daughters of Ralph Fitzherbert.

The epitaph that used to pertain to this monument has been already cited. This monument now stands on the south side of the chancel. On an alabaster slab is the incised effigy of a lady with a reticulated head-dress. It is much worn, but enough of the inscription remains to show that it was in memory of Alice Bothe, the first wife of Nicholas Fitzherbert.

The other fine alabaster table-tomb, on the north side of the chancel, bears the effigies of Ralph Fitzherbert,* son and heir of Nicholas, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter and heir of John Marshall, of Upton. This monument is so precisely similar in its whole treatment to that of Nicholas that it is not only obviously the work of the same sculptor or school of Nottingham sculptors in Chellaston alabaster, but was also probably executed at the same date, namely, subsequent to the death of Ralph in 1483, when it would appear that John Fitzherbert, twelfth lord of Norbury, gave orders for the erection of tombs to both his father and grandfather. Ralph's effigy is very similar in arrangement to that of his father, one of the few points of difference being that the tip of the right foot is sustained by the diminutive crouching figure of a bearded bedesman. The collar found by Edward IV. is also round his neck, but with a boar as pendant—the cognisance of Richard III. His lady wears a close bodice and gown, which have been painted green, and a mantle painted red. The hair is arranged in a pointed, reticulated head-dress, on which are some traces of gilding. Encircling her neck is a chain, on the pendant of which are the Blessed Virgin and Child. There are two small dogs at the foot of her robe, and the cushion beneath her head is supported by two angels. The east end of this tomb is also blank, and at the west end are three angels holding shields. On the north side are six niches under crocheted canopies—(1) A man in armour, with mantle of the Knights of Rhodes; (2) an ecclesiastic with tippet or hood; (3) a pilgrim with hat on left shoulder; (4) a civilian; (5) a boy in a long gown; and (6) two boys. On the south side are eight daughters under

* He was not a knight, as stated in error in *Churches of Derbyshire*.

six canopies, four of them wearing head-dresses like their mother, and the other four in younger attire. All the children hold shields, which were formerly emblazoned. Ralph's sons were: John, the eldest son and heir; Henry, a mercer of London; Anthony, the famous judge; Richard, knight of Rhodes; Thomas, D.C.L., rector of Norbury and Northwingfield, and precentor of Lichfield; William, prebendary of Hereford and Lincoln, Chancellor of Lichfield, and rector of Wrington, Somerset; and a seventh son, who died in his youth. The five daughters who married were: Dorothy, wife of Thomas Comberford; Edith, wife of Thomas Babington of Dethick; Agnes, wife of Richard Lister; Elizabeth, wife of . . . Foljambe; and Margaret, wife of Nicholas Purefoy. One of the unmarried daughters was Alice, abbess of Polesworth, Warwick.

Le Neve's manuscript collection of epitaphs supplies the following, which has long ago disappeared:—

“ In Northbury Church in Derbyshire.—

(The dart of Death that no man may flee
Nay the common laws of mortallitie
Hath demanded to be buried here
The body of Rafe Fitzherbert Squiere
Patrone of this Church and of this towen lord
The which deceased yeares of our lord

1483

Of Marcs the second dey thus parted hee
With him is layd upon this sepulture
Elsabeth his wyfe begon in sure
Daughter of John Marshall
Esq. lord of Upton and of Sedsall.

7 sonnes 8 daughters they had in fere

In this lyfe together whilst that they were
Merciful Jesu that pitiest mankind
In thy blysee graunt them a place to fynde.
Prestes ambobus requiem Deus.)

MS. P. L.**

This monument used to stand under the easternmost arch of the north aisle arcade, and was moved to the chancel in 1842. On the floor of the chancel, also moved from the north

* Harl. MSS. 3607, f. 8.

aisle, is a separate memorial to Elizabeth, the wife of Ralph Fitzherbert. It represents a figure tied up in a shroud. The inscription is now almost quite illegible. Elizabeth survived her husband, dying in 1491. By her will, of the previous year, she left her body to be buried, as has been already stated, in "the Church of Seint Barloke," before the image of St. Nicholas.

The two beautiful tombs to Nicholas and Ralph Fitzherbert, which were two of the very finest of their kind and date ever made in England, have suffered scandalously during the thirty and odd years that I have known them. In their present condition they are still beautiful remnants of works of art, but their maltreatment in recent years has been most grievous. On this point, however, it will be better to let someone else speak.

When Sir Ernest Clarke, F.S.A., visited this church in January, 1893, he found the Christmas "decorations" in position. He described to the Society of Antiquaries how "the fine effigy of Sir Henry Fitzherbert, situated in the centre of the chancel, was practically smothered with boughs and twigs of fir, which had been stuck in every crevice. The chancel was decorated all round with the same gruesome material; and as the two magnificent altar tombs to Sir Nicholas Fitzherbert (1473) and of his son Ralph (1483) were fixed very close to the north and south sides of the chancel, it could hardly be expected that they would emerge unscathed from the depredations of the Christmas decorators. We counted on one tomb alone twenty-five recent chippings of the alabaster, especially on the side nearest the wall, and a further search would doubtless have revealed more."*

John Fitzherbert, twelfth lord of Norbury, who died in 1517, had one son Nicholas, who predeceased his father, so that Norbury then reverted to his younger brother Anthony—a man of much celebrity and probity. Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, who became a most distinguished judge, was born in 1470, called

* *Proceedings of Soc. of Antiq.* xv., 97.

to the bar in 1511, knighted in 1516, and made one of the Justices of the Common Pleas in 1522. He died in 1538.

The monument to Sir Anthony, a large blue stone with brasses, used to be in the gangway of the nave, but was moved into the chancel in 1842. In the centre are effigies of Sir Anthony and his second wife, but the head of the judge is missing. In addition to shields of arms there is a group of five girls below the dame, with their names at their feet—"Dorothe & dame dorothe, Elyzabethe, Alys, & Katheryn." The first and fourth of these daughters died in childhood, and they are represented of smaller stature than their three other sisters. The indent for the figures of five sons below the father remains, but the brass is missing. Dorothy Willoughby, the judge's first wife, does not appear on this memorial; there is an inscription to her memory in Middleton church, Warwickshire. The lady by the judge's side is Maud Cotton, his second wife, by whom he had ten children. Below the figures is a Latin epitaph in fourteen lines of Elegiac verse. The composition was originally completed by a marginal inscription, with the evangelistic symbols at the angles. Of this inscription only a few fragments remain, but the whole can be recovered from Le Neve's collections.* This remarkable brass was perfect in all its parts until it was removed during the unhappy and destructive restoration of 1842. At that time several of the brasses got loose, and the figure of Sir Anthony and the plate with the Elegiac verses were for a long time lying neglected at the rectory;† and other smaller pieces got stolen. In 1871 I made the discovery that some of the then loose pieces were "palimpsests" or re-used fragments of older brasses. These prove to be portions of brasses of fourteenth and fifteenth century date that had been despoiled from other churches, one of them being the epitaph of one Thomas, the prior of some religious house. The spoiling

* It is not necessary to give copies of these inscriptions, or to describe the heraldry and the palimpsests, as this was done thoroughly by Mr. St. John Hope in *D. & N. H. S. Journal*, iv., 48-56.

† A distinguished lady writer, niece of the then rector, has told me how she used to play with them.

of the monasteries, and the sale of their memorials, was in full swing at the time of Sir Anthony's death.

The best thanks of all Derbyshire antiquaries, and of ecclesiologists at large, are due to Sir Ernest Clarke, through whose protests it came about that the proper fixing of the loose parts of this brass was undertaken by the Society of Antiquaries in 1895. Rubbings of the reverse sides of the different brasses are now kept in the vestry.

Sir Anthony Fitzherbert was considered the greatest lawyer of his day, and was pre-eminently distinguished for his uprightness. He published various standard legal works. Sir Anthony has also long been credited with the authorship of notable books on husbandry and surveying, but Sir Ernest Clarke has now proved, beyond any possible gainsaying, that the author was his elder brother John.

A floorstone, formerly in the north-east chapel, but now in front of the priest's door, is inscribed to the memory of the last of the Fitzherberts buried at Norbury:—"Here lyeth the body of Ann Fitzherbert, wife of William Fitzherbert, Esq., and eldest daughter of Sir Basill Brook, of Madely, in the county of Salop. She had seven sons and four daughters, and deceased the 9th of July, 1653."

Striking as are the monuments of Norbury church, it is yet more remarkable for its wealth of old glass.

In Warrington's great folio work on painted glass, published in 1848, Norbury is cited first among the few parochial churches which afford "remarkably good examples" of the lighter styles of coloured glass of the fourteenth century.* Mr. Winston also formed a high estimate of the exceptional interest of the glass in this church, though he was in error in fixing the date of the chancel glass in the first half of the fourteenth century.†

Though its beauty and age have sometimes been exaggerated, I am fully prepared, after far greater experience, to repeat what was written more than a quarter of a century ago, namely, "there certainly are not six parish churches in the kingdom

* *The History of Stained Glass*, p. 39.

† Winston's *Hints on Glass Painting*, 2nd edit. (1867), plate xx.

that have so fine and extensive display." It suffered, however, most grievously during the nineteenth century. The great east window of the chancel, which had far the finest glass of all, got into bad repair about 1800, when the then rector, Mr. Mills, actually blocked it up with lath and plaster, in order to save the expense of repairing it, for which he as rector was legally liable. His successor, Rev. Thomas Bingham, was offered a large sum of money by a Roman Catholic family of Yorkshire, for permission to remove what remained of this east window glass to a private chapel. The offer was at first (1823) declined, but seems afterwards to have been accepted. At all events, this beautiful figure glass disappeared shortly afterwards, and cannot now be traced.* At this time all the clerestory windows of the nave, the large west window, and the windows of the north aisle—in fact, all the windows of the church—retained their coloured glass in but a slightly damaged condition.

When, however, the time came for the well-intentioned, but reckless and disastrous, restoration of 1842, the east window was again opened, and it was decided to remove the glass from the body of the church to fill it up. This unfortunate decision not only caused much damage and loss to the old glass in course of removal, but it effectually destroyed the harmony and consistency of the scheme of the chancel colouring by placing fifteenth century glass in juxtaposition with work of a very different style, and at least a hundred years earlier in date. On some of the quarries of the east window, as at present glazed, may be noticed the initials N. and A., and others the golden star or *rose en soleil*, the badge of Edward IV., showing that it was glass put in by Nicholas and Alice Fitzherbert, *circa* 1450. Other pieces, taken from the south-west chapel, bear J.F., representing the initials of John Fitzherbert, *circa* 1500. In the centre light is a representation of the Holy Trinity, which was taken from the south-west chapel, and below it are the

* The date of its disappearance almost exactly synchronises with the robbery of good glass from the chapel of Haddon Hall, a fact that can scarcely have been accidental.

figures of Saints Peter, Andrew, Philip, and James the Great; in the lower part of the two lights to the left are Saints Thomas, John, Bartholomew, and Simon; and in the lower part of those on the right are Saints Matthew, James the Less, Jude, and Matthias. These figures of the twelve Apostles were taken from either the north aisle or the clerestory windows. There were only ten heads left when the removal was effected, and much of the drapery of some of the figures was either missing or broken up in the process. Over their heads were the different clauses of the Apostles' Creed in Latin, in accordance with the early tradition that attributed each sentence to a different apostle; but these have got confused and wrongly arranged in the course of transfer. In the upper part of the side lights are four saints, which are probably intended for Saints Chad, Margaret, Fabian, and Edward; they were removed from the south-west chapel. In the tracery lights of this great window are six coats-of-arms—Cotton impaling Fitzherbert, Pole impaling Fitzherbert, Fitzherbert impaling Babington, and two others, about which there is some uncertainty.

The eight large windows in the side walls of the chancel still retain, for the most part, their original glazing. They are filled with grisaille glass, covered with scroll-work and leaf ornament, and admirably conceived interlacing patterns, relieved with occasional colouring in red and blue, and having a shield of arms inserted near the top of each of the main lights. In 1842, certain parts were found to be missing, and they were clumsily reproduced on the cheap by mere brush daubing, which has already worn off in parts. The window that contains most of this smear work is the easternmost window on the south side. The patterns in the tracery lights, except most of the effective borders, are modern inventions, save in the second window, counting from the westward, on the north side.

The due identification of the heraldic shields in each of these lights, together with the probable explanation for their presence at Norbury would take up more space than can be spared.*

* I should now be able to make some slight corrections and several additions to the account given in vol. iii. of *Churches of Derbyshire*.

There is some interesting glass in the south-east chapel, though a good deal of it proves, on examination, to be the more imitative smear work of 1842. In the centre of the three-light east window is St. Anne teaching the Blessed Virgin to read, with a small crucifix above them; to the left is St. Winifred; and to the right St. Scytha or Osyth.* In the base of this window are the arms of Fitzherbert impaling Bothe, with the figures of eight kneeling boys on one side, and five girls kneeling behind a lady on the other. The centre light of the south window has a figure of *Sanctus Burlok abbas*; to the left is St. John Baptist; and to the right St. Anthony. At the base of this window are a squire and two sons kneeling, and a lady and two daughters in the same attitude. These windows are obviously in commemoration of the two wives and two families of Nicholas Fitzherbert.

In the west window of the nave are some quarries of glass, with the initials N. A. and a kneeling female figure, intended for St. Mary Magdalen. As late as 1823 there were representations of the three Marys in this window. Here, also, are seven coats-of-arms of Fitzherbert alliances.

Towards the end of 1898 an absolutely necessary reparation of the nave of the church was begun and carried to a most successful issue by Messrs. Naylor & Sale, at the expense of the patron, S. W. Clowes, Esq., and his family. The roofs of nave and aisles were in a dangerous condition and the walls cracking in many places. The church was re-opened early in 1900.

Meanwhile, the chancel roof began to give way, and the walls to fail in places. The rector was successful in obtaining substantial help from the Bishop of the diocese and from general contributions; and a contract was signed with the same architects on January 21st, 1901, for the substantial repair of the chancel. In 1902 this work, with liberal help from the present patron, Capt. H. A. Clowes, was also carried to a successful issue

* Not St. Agatha, as I said in error in vol. iii. of *Derbyshire Churches*, a mistake corrected in the addenda to vol. iv.

after the best and most conservative fashion. Since then, Mrs. H. A. Clowes has offered to defray the cost of re-leading the old glass, which, being in an unsafe condition, is now being re-set by Messrs. James Powell & Sons, of Whitefriars. The total cost of the restoration of the Church was nearly £7,000.

During the repair of the chancel a most interesting discovery was made. It became necessary, for due security, to take down and rebuild the buttress on the north side between the first and second bays from the east end in order to rebuild it. The result was, that two of the large base stones were found to be the shafts of beautifully ornamented pre-Norman crosses. The Society is fortunate in having the description of these crosses from my friend, Mr. J. Romilly Allen, F.S.A., the great expert on such matters.