

ON THE MONUMENTS IN CARSHALTON CHURCH, SURREY.

By J. G. WALLER, Esq.

A LARGE number of the monuments in this church belong to a class which are entirely destitute of any archæological value, and can only be useful in recent family history. It would be difficult to find, in a church of its size, so many in which costly material and excellent execution were bestowed upon such utterly tasteless designs. I do not, therefore, conceive that I can add any information to what these memorials themselves convey, but, in Dante's words, shall say, "We reason not of these, but look at them and pass on." I must, however, commend the iron railing about that at the east end of the south aisle as an excellent specimen of the art of the smith. The design is appropriate, light, and elegant, and the workmanship as good as can be. Of the many tablets, I shall merely point out a piece of detail on that to the memory of Henry Herringham, citizen and stationer, date 1703, on the south wall of the chancel,—and this is the winged death at its base. The idea of death winged is highly poetical and suggestive, but its rendering as a mere skull, with wings attached, is a hard piece of prose. The thought first appears thus, about the end of the sixteenth century, and may be seen in monuments of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. The fashion continued until the eighteenth century, as appears by this example. In the church of St. Andrew-Undershaft, London, is a series throughout the period I have referred to.

The most interesting of the mediæval memorials is that to the memory of Nicholas Gaynesford and wife, which consists of an altar-tomb of Purbeck marble fixed against the north wall of the chancel; and above it, inlaid in a

slab of the same material, are the effigies in brass of the deceased, with the following inscription:—

“Pray for the Soulys of Nicholas Gaynesford, sūtyme esquier for the body of the most noble p̄nces Edward the iiij & Henry the vij, and Margaret his wyffe, also one of the Gentilwymmen of the most noble p̄ncesses Elizabeth & Elizabeth wyfes of the forsaid most noble p̄nces Kyġes, the whych Nicholas discesid the — day of — in the yere of oure lord God a M^oCCCC — & the forsaid Margaret discessid the — day of — in the yere of our lord God a Thowsand CCCC — on whoos Sowlles Ihū have mercy. AMEN.”

You will have observed that, in this inscription no precise dates are given, but are left blank for subsequent filling up, an intention never carried out; therefore neither of the persons here mentioned was dead at the time of the erection of the monument. Nothing is more common, on monumental brasses, than to find an uncompleted date to one of two persons, man or wife, whom the inscription commemorates. When this is the case, it is obvious, that the memorial was placed by the survivor with the intent of being buried in the same tomb after death. But it is remarkable, that these lapses seldom or never seem to be filled in. I have met with but one instance in which this has been done, and in which the execution of the date supplied bears witness to the fact. Many reasons may suggest themselves to account for it. Sometimes, without doubt, the survivor was not buried as he or she intended; a second marriage may have disarranged previous intentions. But this cannot account for all; some omissions must have been due to a failure on the part of executors. This also may be explained. It would not be easy for a workman to put in the date with the work *in situ*; in some cases it would be impossible. Then the workmen would only be found here and there, as in London or the largest towns. So in remote villages these difficulties would be a ready excuse for delays; time would roll on, and the necessity appear less and less the longer it was postponed. I think this is the most reasonable inference to account for the frequency with which these incomplete dates occur. It certainly is remarkable here that neither date should be filled in, as the

proximity of Carshalton to London does away with those difficulties which might exist at a more remote locality; as it is, one cannot be certain if either were interred in the tomb they erected. (Vide Note p. 77.)

The instance is certainly remarkable, and is exceedingly uncommon, for, as no dates are completed, another reason must be found for the erection of this monument, seeing that it was done in the lifetime of both parties. I do not think we have much difficulty, as it occupies a position in which tombs were frequently made for the convenience of enacting the semi-dramatic service of the Easter Sepulchre. These were usually on the north side of the chancel, near the altar, just as we see this. That the rite was performed in this church we have proof in the interesting inventories taken by order in the early part of the reign of Edward VI., and published in Vol. IV. of this Society's Proceedings. Under the head of Carshalton is "Item, a peynted clothe for the sepulchre." A similar item occurs in reference to many other churches in the county.

As many may not be acquainted with the nature of this ancient rite, I will endeavour, in a few words, to give an outline of its character. Although it approached very nearly to the mystery or miracle play, yet I think we may state, as a distinction between them, that, whilst one was a popular drama on a religious subject, the other was a religious rite treated dramatically. A construction was made on the north side near the altar to simulate the sepulchre, and, when tombs were erected as here, this was made upon them. On Good Friday, at the hour of vespers, a crucifix, usually, doubtless, that from above the high altar, accompanied by the consecrated host, was taken by the priests with ceremonious reverence, and placed in the sepulchre prepared. A watch was appointed to be by it day and night until Easter-day, when, previous to the Mass, the clergy proceeded to the sepulchre and removed the crucifix and host, and bore them to the altar again. The bell then rang out, and a service began with the singing of an antiphon, "Christ is risen from the dead," &c. Added to this,

varying in many places, there was an impersonation of the angels, the three Maries, the soldiers, &c.; and a dialogue took place between them, derived in a great measure from Scripture, or founded upon it. In point of fact, it was representing the sacred narrative, to render it popularly intelligible, on principles similar to those which dictated the symbolic character of ecclesiastical art.

So this tomb, we may fairly assume, was erected by Nicholas Gaynesford in aid of the celebration of this drama of the Resurrection upon Easter-day, which was performed in the Middle Ages. On this subject our friend Major Heales has written a most exhaustive paper, printed in the *Archæologia* (vol. xlii. p. 263), to which I refer all those who wish to be fully acquainted with its details and history.

The figures on the slab above the tomb are interesting examples of the time: both are kneeling, looking towards the altar, or towards a representation of the Trinity, which is now gone. The lady kneels at a desk on which is an open book, and has her hands conjoined as in prayer. She is in a long gown, of deep red colour, which colour is of enamelled work; and she wears a butterfly head-dress of great size, and a richly-worked necklace. Behind her were four daughters; but these are now gone, though given in an etching of this monument in Lyson's *Environs*.

In front of her is her husband Nicholas in complete armour, but bareheaded: he is kneeling upon one knee, his gauntlet deposited on the ground beneath him, and holds up his hands displayed,—an action of prayer one sees occasionally in monuments at the close of the fifteenth century. He also wears a collar of roses and suns. Behind him kneel four sons; the first in armour, the second with the priestly tonsure, the rest in the ordinary civilian costume, each carrying a purse at his girdle.¹ The costumes of the figures would place this

¹ In Manning and Bray's *History* these are said to be in the dress of pilgrims!

memorial as executed before 1490; indeed, the earlier years of the reign of Henry VII. will best agree with it; so we may assume that it was put up in the beginning of his reign.

On the front of the tomb are four escutcheons of arms, and three are on the slab above the figures. They consist of the arms of Gaynesford: *Arg.* a chevron *gules*, between three greyhounds *sable*, an annulet *or* for difference. Sydney, the arms of his wife Margaret. *Or* a pheon *azure*. There are also Gaynesford impaling Sydney. And *or* a cross *vert*, impaling Sydney. Also *arg.* three roses *gules*, impaling *arg.* a lion rampant, *gules* . . . All these shields are enamelled, as well as the lady's gown; and the brass is interesting on this account, for a very few having real enamel are extant. In this county we have the earliest English brass at Stoke Dabernon (1277), with fine specimens of enamelled work, especially in the large shield, where it is of unusual size.¹

It will have been gathered from the inscription that both Nicholas Gaynesford and his wife were courtiers, both having served in the court of Edward IV., and also in that of Henry VII. Both were present at the coronation of the Queen of Henry VII., and Nicholas attended her with the other squires of honour in the procession from the Tower to Westminster on that occasion, in company of the Lord Mayor of London. Like many of the courtiers of the time, they are found indifferently in the service of the Red as of the White rose.

The brief memoirs of Nicholas Gaynesford show him first in office as sheriff of the county, 38 Hen. VII. (1460), when he took the part of Edward IV., whose star was now in the ascendant, and who really dates his regnal year at this time. From Edward IV. he received the manor of Shalford Clifford, seized on the attainder of Lord Clifford. He made him also an esquire for the

¹ Having recently stated that this enamel was stolen during the restoration of the church, I am happy to say this was an error. My authority was the foreman employed, who possibly mistook one brass for the other, in which there was no enamel.—J. G. W.

body; but, before the end of the year, he was charged with treason, and a writ was issued to seize the manor of Burghersh, otherwise Kersalton, and East Shalford, late belonging to the rebel and traitor Nicholas Gaynesford. He, however, found means to pacify the king, but he never recovered Shalford, although he seems to have had his estate here restored to him. He served the office of sheriff the 8th and 12th of that reign, and when Richard III. ascended the throne he was made sheriff at the latter part of the second year; but, accommodating himself, as he seems always adroitly to have done, to all parties, he was entrusted with the same office on the accession of Henry VII., with whom he was in high favour. This story has many parallels in the lives of courtiers during the struggle between the two rival houses. They never seem to have been guided by any other principle than that of self-interest, except, indeed, in some few cases in which personal attachments were formed. "Wind-changing Warwick" was a typical creation of the time.

Margaret, his wife, belonged to that branch of the Sydneys whose star was so high in the court of Queen Elizabeth, and which has bequeathed to us so much of romance and chivalrous memory; but of her immediate parentage there is yet some doubt.

I have mentioned that the second son here represented has the tonsure of a priest. In a MS. in the British Museum, Lansdowne Collection, 874, there is preserved an inscription from a brass to the memory of Walter Gaynesford, Chaplain, who died 1493:—

"Hic iacet Walter) Gaynesford Capellan) qui obiit x die Maij
aº dñi MCCCClxxxiiij."

This Walter was, however, a son of John Gaynesford, the elder brother of Nicholas, and consequently his nephew. Manning and Bray's *History of Surrey* gives the above inscription to the name of Thomas, I believe from the authority of Aubrey. But it is certainly erroneous, and we may much more safely trust the authority of the Lansdowne MS. from which I have taken this

draught. There was a Thomas, the son of Nicholas, also called "Capellanus," or Chaplain, who doubtless was the son shown in the brass; but we have no record of any inscription to him, though possibly such a one may have been at one time in orders.

The family of Gaynesford has many memorials at Crowhurst, in this county, which have already been illustrated in the volumes of this society. Their family mansion was destroyed in 1800.¹

In 1837, there yet remained in the chancel a brass to the memory of a former vicar, but it had then, at some recent repair, been partly covered up, so that only a portion was visible. It represented a priest in the vestments of the Eucharist, holding in his hand the chalice and consecrated host. The inscription was lost, but is preserved as under:—

"Hic iacet Dominus Johannes Percebrigg,, huius ecclesie vicarius, qui obiit ii die mens Augusti MCCCCLxxiiij cujus anime propicietur deus. Amen."

Most likely, it was this memorial which is alluded to in the singular inscription to another vicar, recorded on a tablet on the south wall of the chancel, thus:—

"M. S. Under the middle stone that guards the ashes of a certain fryer, sometime vicar of this place, is raked up the dust of William Quelche, B.D., who ministred in the same since the reformation. His lot was through God's mercy to burn incense here about 30 years, and end his course Aprill the 10, an. dñi 1654, being aged 64 years.

"Quos bifrons templo divisit cultus in uno
Pacificus tumulus jam facit esse pares.
Felix illa dies, qua cultus semina solvit,
Qua placida fides medio condit humo.
Hic sumus ambo pares, donec cineremq: fidemq:
Discutiat reddens Christus utriq: suum."

"Those whom a two fac't service here make twaine,
At length a friendly grave makes one again;
Happy that day that hides o' sinful jars,
That shuts up al o' shame in earthen bars;
Here let us sleep as one, till C^t most juste
Shall sever both our service, faith and duste."

¹ Vid. Shoberl's *Topographical Description of the County*.

The allusion is clearly made to the difference between the Catholic and Protestant faith, and is called up by the proximity of a former vicar's grave.

Besides Gaynesford, another well-known ancient Surrey family connected with them by marriage—that of Ellenbridge—has memorials here, as also at the adjoining parish church of Beddington. Unhappily, the most important of these is now a complete wreck, both figures having been stolen during repairs by workmen in the early part of the year 1837. It represented a knight in armour, his helmet beneath his head, and his lady by his side, and two groups of children under an elegant double canopy, in the pediments of which were the monograms Ihs—M̄cy; and pendent from the central pinnacle a representation of a “Pietà,” or our Lady of Pity, *i.e.* the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Jesus in her lap, with its open wounds. This is of extremely rare occurrence on monumental brasses; the only other instance I now remember is at Allhallows Barking, by the Tower, on the brass of Andrew Evingar, date 1535; in fact, it is a late convention in the history of Ecclesiastical art, but has given rise to some of the noblest creations. Sculpture cannot show a greater triumph than the figure of the dead body of Christ in the Pietà, executed by Michael Angelo, for a chapel of the Virgin Mary in St. Peter's at Rome. It is a comparatively youthful work; but if it had been his only one, it would have marked out his name as worthy to stand beside those of Phidias and Praxiteles. And we have thus an opportunity of contrasting the treatment of a subject entirely ecclesiastical, by a rude and ordinary hand, with an example equally conformable to conventions, but by the hand of a rare and gifted genius.

The arms of Ellenbridge, checky *argt.* and *sable*, are repeated thrice: one hangs on a pinnacle on the dexter side, and at base beneath the female figure: there are also the arms of Ellenbridge impaling Gaynesford, that of his wife. The inscription was in Latin, but is quite gone: it ran thus: “Here lieth buried Thomas Ellenbridge, Esquire, formerly one of the Justices of the Peace within

the county of Surrey, and gentleman Porter with the most reverend father in Christ the Lord John Morton, Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of England—also of Elizabeth his wife—which same Thomas died 22 day of May, in the year of our Lord 1497.¹

This Elizabeth was the daughter of Nicholas Gaynesford, whose monument I have described. The figures of the children beneath are now gone.

In the north aisle is another brass, also to a member of the Ellenbridge family. It is a figure of a lady in long gown, confined at the waist with a girdle fastened on with a buckle, the end hanging down nearly to the feet. Over her head is a veil, with stiff pendent lappets, a fashion which prevailed with some variations for many years in the early Tudor reigns. The inscription is in English, and reads—

“Pray for the soule of Johaṅ Burton, the wyf of Heñy Burton, Esquyer, and dought^r to Johṅ Ellyngbrege, Esquyer, y^e whych Johaṅ decessed the xxiiij day of Decemb^r, y^e yer of our Lord M^oV^oxxiiij, on whose soule Ihū have mercy. Amen.”²

Above her head is a scroll as proceeding from her mouth, with these words :—

“O blyssyd lady of pite p̄y for me y^t my soule savyd may be.”

This is somewhat remarkable: as I have just pointed out, in the last monument, that “Our Lady of Pity” is represented, and as that is to a member of the same family, this allusion cannot be chance. It is, therefore, possible, that there was some religious guild or confraternity dedicated to “Our Lady of Pity,” and to which the members of the Ellenbridge family belonged; but at present we have no means of knowing whether any such had connection with Carshalton Church.

This Joan was the daughter and heiress of John

¹ “Hic iacet sepul^t Thōs Ellenbridge ar^l quondā un^l Justiciar^l pacis infra Coṃ Surr^l ac hostiar^l generos^l cū revdendissimo in Xtō Patr^l t̄ dño Johṅ Morton, Cardinal^l Archie^lpo Cantuar^l et cancelliar^l Angl. nec non Elizabeth ux^l eius qui quidem Thoṃs obiit xxii die Maij A^o dñi MCCCClxxxvij^o.” (Lansdowne MS. 874.)

² Vide Vol. III. *Surrey Arch. Coll.*, pp. 11—13.

Ellenbridge, and the widow of Richard Fromound, of an old family who have several memorials at Cheam. There was formerly a brass here to John Fromound, the son of Thomas, late of Cheam, who died Nov. 11, 1580. The father is recorded by a brass at Cheam.

In conclusion, I may perhaps be permitted a word or two on a subject always of interest; viz., female costume. The changes of fashion in our own time are rapid, yet, nevertheless, we can sometimes record the prevalence of certain specific characteristics running on for a few years. The two examples I have noted, viz. the butterfly head-dress, as it is somewhat appropriately called from its expansive wings of gauze projected at the back of the head by wire, and the stiffly-edged veil rising like a pediment in front, were in vogue from fifteen to twenty years each. At any rate, examples of the former may be seen on the monument of a lady of fashion, Lady Say, in 1473, at Broxbourne, Herts; and the brass of Nicholas Gaynesford cannot be earlier than 1485,¹ and his lady being a courtier, must also have been a lady of fashion. We thus get an exact interval of twelve years of its prevalence, yet it was in use before and after the dates mentioned.² As regards the latter, you see it as early at least as 1500; so here, as the date is 1524, we get a good twenty years, and it is seen long after. In feminine attire this is a remarkable persistence, but not equalling the absurd attachment shown to our ugly, inconvenient, frightful hat.

¹ The will of Nicholas Gaynesford, dated July, 1497, directs to be buried "beside the High Awter." His widow's will, dated 1503, directs to be buried in the "parisshe church of Kersalton," if she die in the neighbourhood; but of course the monument was already done.

² The latest occurrence of the butterfly head-dress is on the small brass at Perivale, Middlesex, to Henry Myllet and his two wives, date 1500; but it was not now a prevalent fashion.