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### PLEA FOR A HISTORY OF SUFFOLK.

An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute, held at Bury St. Edmund's, July 22, 1869.

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I WISH I could hope that the meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute at Bury St. Edmund's would be the occasion of instigating some person capable to supply a great desideratum in archæology—a good History of Suffolk. Several partial histories exist, some of great merit, such as Gage's History of Thingoe, and Suckling's History of Suffolk (embracing the Hundreds of Wangford, Mutford, and Lothingland). We have Histories of Hawstead, Hengrave, Stowmarket, Bury, Ipswich, Sudbury, &c.; four volumes of the Proceedings of the Suffolk Archæological Institute, containing many valuable papers; the Supplement to the Suffolk Traveller; and several considerable MS. collections, Davy's, Jermyn's, Gipps,<sup>1</sup> &c., as well as very important materials for history in the registers, *consuetudines*, *extenta*, &c., of Bury Abbey; but Suffolk has never yet given birth to an historian who should collect all the scattered elements into one comprehensive history, and lay before the eye of the archæological world the rich variety of materials which old Time has spared, as relics of the past life of the South folk of East Anglia. And yet Suffolk is really very worthy of a good historian. There is a great variety of interest connected with it. If we want to penetrate into the duskiest corners, the deepest crypts of the history of our race, we have the flint implements in abundance, for which Hoxne

<sup>1</sup> See Sims's Manual, p. 220-222.

acquired the earliest celebrity. We have, just over the border, at the Grimes' Graves in Norfolk, one of those primitive Celtic villages—strikingly like that of Stanlake, near Oxford—which throws a melancholy light upon the social condition of the earliest known inhabitants of this island. We have a few Celtic words, chiefly names of rivers; we have ancient British barrows and other earthworks; we have British urns, and arms and other manufactured articles; all able to tell us something of the times before Claudius Cæsar brought Roman civilisation into Britain.

Even of the Romish occupation we have in Burgh<sup>2</sup> Castle, a monument scarcely less striking than Silchester or Colchester, or the Roman vallum in the North; and we have also distinct and interesting memorials in the Roman roads by which the Romans fixed their grasp upon the whole country of the Iceni. The main road from London is indicated by Stratford St. Mary's, whence it passed through the Stonhams—where Roman remains, pottery, pavements, &c., have been found in the last year—and Long Stratton, to the Venta Icenorum (Caistor). Another Roman road led from Stratford through Bildeston, Woolpit, Stowlangtoft, Ixworth, to Thetford (where its course is marked by the names of Norton Street, Fen Street, and Low Street), and thence on to *Branodunum* or Brancaster, the extreme station of the "*Littus Saxonicum*." The road which ran from Dunwich, or rather the more ancient Dommoc (now in the sea), through Sibton, is said to be "in an extremely perfect state."<sup>3</sup> The Icknield Street through Icklingham, where Mr. Prigg discovered copious remains of Roman occupation, in Roman pottery, &c., side by side with burial-places indicating neighbourhood to a British town, and other roads, all mark the completeness of the Roman occupation. In addition to the camp at Clare, remarkable Roman earthworks, on a very considerable scale, still exist at Lidgate, in the neighbourhood of which numerous Roman coins have also been found. I had the privilege of examining them with Mr. Harrod, and much regret that his design of making an accurate survey of these vestiges was frustrated. Other unequivocal ones may

<sup>2</sup> "Those who have visited the Zetland Islands are familiar with the description of castles called by the inhabitants *Burghs*, and by the Highlanders *Duns*." Note on Coningsburgh Castle, in *Ivanhoe*. God-

win (*Archæol. Handbook*, p. 23) considers Burgh Castle one of the most perfect Roman remains in the kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to Suckling's *Hist. of Suffolk*, p. xviii.

be seen at Stowlangtoft, Burgh (near Woodbridge), Bungay, and Blythburgh. Pavements, coins, swords, pottery, Roman burials (as at Rougham),<sup>4</sup> are also evidences of the Roman period.

But when we come to the period which touches us more closely, as being that of the introduction of our own Anglo-Saxon race into the occupation and eventually into the possession of these shores, both the interest of the enquiry, and the materials for it, and, I may add, the need of it, increase largely. I cannot imagine a more interesting field for a searching investigation than the history of the colonization of Suffolk, which ended in the displacement of the Romanized Icenii by the Angles. The materials for such an investigation are, of course, chiefly the names of places, which, if properly handled, by some one combining an accurate and extensive knowledge of the Teutonic dialect, with a no less accurate knowledge of Teutonic mythology, and possessing critical acuteness and sagacity, with sobriety of judgment, might, I am convinced, lead to considerable results. But the evidence from names of places would be supplemented and corroborated by such scanty historical evidences as remain. I should like, for instance, to know what is the earliest mention of the division of East Anglia into the North-folk and South-folk; I do not think that either occur in Bede, and we know that for a time East Anglia formed one diocese. Suffolk became a separate Earldom first in the reign of Edward the Confessor, who bestowed it on Gurth, Harold's brother. The earliest mention of Suffolk that I have found is one in the ninth century (A.D. 895) in a charter of King Alfred—"Do et concedo totam terram meam in oppido de Frekeham (Freckenham) in pago Suthfolciæ, &c." All the other examples, and they are frequent, are in the reign of Edward the Confessor, in whose time the first mention of Norfolk in a charter is found. Coupling this with the erection of the separate Earldom of Suffolk at this time, it would seem that the distinction of the two branches of East Anglians, north and south of the Waveney, was not generally accepted till between the reign of Alfred and that of Edward the Confessor. In fact, this name of Suffolk

<sup>4</sup> "The most remarkable (Roman sepulchral chamber) was discovered in the East-low Hill at Rougham, by Professor Henslow, in 1844." Godwin, Arch. Handb. p. 52. The contents, arranged exactly as

found, are in the Museum of the Suffolk Arch. Inst. at Bury, and the chamber itself is still quite perfect; an account by Prof. Henslow was given in the "Bury Post" of Sept. 20, 1844.

would seem to have come into general use about the same time as the name of Bury St. Edmund's for the old Beoderic's-worth; and I may remark, by the way, that we are able to discover from the charters with singular precision the time and mode of this change of name. The ancient name was Beoderic's-worth; the *worth* of the Saxon proprietor *Beoderic*. A certain Ædelflæd (late in the tenth century) left in his will some land "to St. Edmund's Stow at Byderic's-wyrde." In 945 Edmund, King of the Angles, gives to the monastery, situated in the place which is called "Æt Bederices-worth, where the holy King and Martyr Edmund rests," all the land around it, free from all charges and duties. About 958, Elfgar gives his land at Cockfield to Bedrickes-worde—St. Edmund's Stow. In 962, a certain Wulfstan gives certain lands at Palgrave to the Church of St. Edmund the Martyr, in the place called by the country people Bedrickes-urthe. In 997 Ædric gives land, half to St. Gregory at Sudbury, and half to St. Edmund at Bederices-wyrde. In 1020 Canute grants to the monastery which is called Beadrices-worde entire freedom from episcopal domination, and other privileges. But in the interval between Canute—when the first stone minster was built for the Holy Body, and the Benedictine monks were given absolute possession—and Edward the Confessor, St. Edmund got the better of Bederic, and by degrees the name of *St. Edmundsbury* became quite established in lieu of Beoderic's-worth. In all the charters and wills of Edward's time, it was always either simply St. Edmund, or St. Edmund's Church or Minster, but far most frequently St. Edmund's Bury, which has continued to be its name to the present day.

Another point connected with the early Anglo-Saxon names which is worthy of especial consideration, is the remarkably copious use of words designating the relative geographical position of different portions of the same people. I do not remember anything like this among the Semitic, Hellenic, or Latin tribes. We have East-Angles, West-Angles, Middle-Angles (Leicester), and South-Angles (Dorsetshire); East and West and South and Middle Saxons; North-folk and South-folk, North-Umbrians and South-Umbrians, North-wich and South-bury (Sudbury), North Elmham and South Elmham, and a host of similar designations. This reference to the points of the compass seems to have been common to

the Teutonic tribes, as the wide-spread names of Northmen, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Austria, Westphalians, Sutherland, Sodor, &c., indicate ; but it would be interesting to trace and account for this peculiarity, and connect it with other features in the national character. Again, it may often help to indicate the course which conquest or colonization took, as for instance, I should infer from the name of Norwich that the Saxon invasion of these parts advanced from the south-east, and did not for a time extend north of Norwich. One might conjecture that Norwich and Sudbury were the northern and southern limits of the East Anglian settlement, for Sudbury was certainly not so called with reference to Bury St. Edmund's, since it was called Sudbury for at least two hundred years, while Bury was called Beoderic's-worth.<sup>5</sup> Then again, a more exhaustive investigation of the different words which form the terminations of names of places would both be philologically important, and be a useful contribution to history. Take the name of the city just mentioned (Norwich). It teaches us at once what history confirms,<sup>6</sup> that the sea ran up so far in those days, for all the places which terminate in *wich* are on the sea, or arms of the sea.<sup>7</sup> Dunwich, Ipswich, Harwich, Sandwich, Greenwich, &c. Is not this the same termination as Sleswig ? But whether it is the same root as *oikos* and *vicus*, and why it is specially applied to places on the sea, I know not. Mr. Gordon Hill's able memoir on Bury<sup>8</sup> brings before us doubts as to the exact meaning of the termination *worth* (weorth, wryth, worthig)<sup>9</sup> in Beoderick's-worth, Ickworth, Horningsworth, Halesworth, Hepworth, and numerous other places. What are the distinctive features of stows (is stow always a burial-place ?),<sup>1</sup> byrigs, burghs, tuns, and steads, respectively ? These and

<sup>5</sup> Sudbury, as far as I know, is first named in the Saxon Chronicle under the year 797. "Bishop Alfun died at Sudbury." In the charters numbered 685, 699 (Cod. Dipl. A.S.), both of the latter half of the tenth century, Bederic's-worth and Sudbury are named side by side.

<sup>6</sup> "This year came Sweyn with his fleet to Norwich, and entirely spoiled and burnt the town." A. S. Chron. A.D. 1004. I am informed that anchors and other marine articles are found still more inland.

<sup>7</sup> Certainly all in East Anglia, and, as a rule, all over England. Droitwich and

Nantwich are famous for their salt-works, which gives some colour to the idea that there is a second *wic*, meaning a marsh. Bosworth gives to *wic* the sense of *a place of security for boats*.

<sup>8</sup> Journal of the Brit. Arch. Assoc., vol. xxii. p. 32, 104.

<sup>9</sup> It is compared with *Donauwerth*, *Kaiserwerth*, &c., and thought to mean a piece of land between two streams. Nonnenwerth on the Rhine is an island.

<sup>1</sup> The poor in Suffolk still use the expression "to bestow" for, to bury, as Shakspeare did, *Hamlet*, Act iii. Sc. ix., and iv., iii. See also Moor's Suffolk Words.

kindred points would throw considerable light upon Anglian civilization.

One other name of historical interest, illustrating the political condition of our Anglian forefathers, occurs to me. I mean that of the Hundred in which we are met, the Hundred and Deanery of Thingoe. In charters numbered 832, 915, 1342, 1346, in Kemble's "*Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*," mention is made of the Dinghowe at St. Edmund's, in connection with certain dues which King Edward grants to St. Edmund. This at once brings before us the Ding—the ancient Scandinavian court of which we heard so much in connection with the last iniquitous Danish war—the Stor-thing, the Volk-thing—preserved in the name of Dingwall, Tingwall in Shetland, Thingwall in Cheshire, &c., and enables us to picture to ourselves the old inhabitants of our county going at stated times to the Thing-hill without the North Gate to pay into court the dues of sac and soc to the appointed officer. I should like very much to know whether this "Dinghowe" is, as some say, a monument of the Danish possession of East Anglia.<sup>2</sup>

Another most interesting field of historical inquiry opens before us in the moats which are so frequent in Suffolk. There is scarcely a parish in the county where there is not one or more moats. Some of these are stupendous works, as those at Chevington, Barrow, Rushbrooke, Kentwell, &c., and I fancy that their antiquity in some instances is very great. In some places there are moats which appear to have been the defence not of single houses, but of whole tribes. At Kenninghall, in Norfolk, there are several acres inclosed within a moat, in the immediate neighbourhood of the old Saxon palace. At Ickwell-bury, in the parish of Northill, in Bedfordshire, there are, I think, twelve acres protected by a deep moat and steep banks; and at Little Saxham, besides the moat which inclosed the ancient residence of the Crofts family, there is another moat adjoining which surrounds some two or three acres. From the name Saxham, contrasted with Denham, where are the remains of ancient earth-works still called the Castle, I conjecture that after the

<sup>2</sup> For an account of the Scandinavian *Things*, see Worsaae's *Danes and Northmen*, pp. 158, 221. Mr. Worsaae seems to consider the Thing as exclusively Scan-

dinavian, but Kemble speaks of it as an Anglo-Saxon institution (*Saxons in Engl.*, vol. i. p. 132, 135).

Danish occupation of East Anglia the Saxons entrenched themselves for safety within those waters.

Coming down to more modern times, I think that a good historian would find abundant materials for illustrating the domestic life of East Anglia in the numerous houses of our gentry, for which Suffolk was and is remarkable. Of castles, those picturesque engines of oppression, those interesting monuments of Norman tyranny and Saxon servitude, we have remarkably few remains. The great baronial castle of the De Clares, the huge mound and fosse which mark the site of the castle at Haughley, Orford, Messingham, the mound at Eye, and the castle at Denham, Framlingham, and the earth-works at Lydgate and Freckenham, of which nobody knows anything, are all that occur to me; and of these several had ceased to exist soon after the Conquest. But the moated houses where our gentry lived in their state, and exercised hospitality through many centuries, respected but not dreaded by their dependents, are, from their number and their quiet grandeur, quite characteristic of the county, and, I think, pleasantly and creditably characteristic. In the immediate neighbourhood of Bury, Hawstead Place, the seat of the Drurys, Coldham Hall, of the Rokewoods, Kedington, of the Barnardistons, Boxted, of the Poleys, Melford Hall and Kentwell Hall, Barrow, of the Heighams, Denham, of the Lewknors, Hengrave, of the Kytsons, Culford and Redgrave, of the Bacons, Fakenham, of the Tollemaches, Rushbrooke, of the Jermyns, and Euston, of the Rokewoods, Bennets, and Fitz-Roys, teem with memories of East Anglian social life. A little further off, we have Helmingham, the seat of the Tollemaches, Playford, of the De Felbriggs and Feltons, Wingfield House, the seat of the De la Poles, Tendring Hall, Flixton Hall, Brome Hall, and innumerable other manor-houses, most of them moated, to tell us the same tale. Nor do I think that many counties can surpass Suffolk in the number of ancient families, which, though many of them may not have risen to great historic distinction, have yet been remarkable either for their misfortunes, or for their fruitfulness and long continuance, and for the succession of able and useful men whom they have reared for their country's service in Church and State. A history of those who have borne the title of earls or dukes of Suffolk, beginning with Gurth, coming down to the



ill-fated De la Poles, the royal alliances of the Brandons, and the tragic death of Lady Jane Grey's father, would alone furnish a sensational volume quite equal to any of Miss Braddon's. Then, even before the Conquest there were the Tollemaches, whose ancient manor-house at Bentley bore the distich :—

“Before the Normans into England came,  
Bentley was my seat, and Tollemache was my name ;”

and whose name is found connected with so many parishes of Suffolk (Bentley, Fakenham, Hawstead, Helmingham, &c., &c.). Then we have the stately family of the De Clares, carrying the name of a small Suffolk town into the royal Dukedom of Clarence, giving its name to an Irish county, to a heraldic King-at-arms, and to a College at Cambridge. There was the great house of De Vere and De Ufford; then the Wingfields and De la Poles, the Waldegraves, the Willoughbys, the Glemhams, the Rouses, the Barnardistons, the Poleys, the Jermyns, the Cornwallises, the Norths, the Cloptons, the Heighams, the Herveys, the Feltons, the Brookes, the Drury's, the Cullums, the Springs, and, more recent as Suffolk families, though of great antiquity in the west, the Hammers, the Bunburys, the Bennets, and many others seem to open a fine field of genealogical history.

In connection with these families and their residences, great interest attaches to Queen Elizabeth's royal progress through Suffolk, in 1561 and 1578. “Albeit” (of the latter Churchyard writes) “they had small warning of the coming of the Queen's Majesty into both those shires” (Norfolk and Suffolk), “the gentlemen had made such ready provision, that all the velvets and silks that might be laid hand on were taken up and bought for any money, and soon converted to such garments and suits of robes, that the show thereof might have beautified the greatest triumph that was in England these many years. For, as I heard, there were 200 young gentlemen clad all in white velvet, and 300 of the graver sort appareled in black velvet coats and fair chains, all ready at one instant and place, with 1500 serving men more on horseback, well and bravely mounted in good order, ready to receive the Queen's Highness into Suffolk, which surely was a comely troop and a noble sight to behold.



And all these waited on the Sheriff, Sir William Spring, during the Queen's Majesty's abode in these parts, and to the very confines of Suffolk. But before her Highness passed into Norfolk there was in Suffolk such sumptuous feastings and banquets as seldom in any part of the world hath been seen before." In her first progress (in 1561) the Queen passed five days at Ipswich, and visited the Waldegraves, at Smalbridge in Bures; and the Tollemaches, at Helmingham. In the progress of 1578, the houses she visited were Melford Hall, the residence of Sir William Cordell, Master of the Rolls; Lawshall Hall (where she dined); Hawstead Place, the residence of Sir William Drury; Sir William Spring's (the High Sheriff), at Lavenham; Sir Thomas Kitson, at Hengrave; Sir Arthur Heigham, at Barrow; Mr. Rookwood, at Euston, and others, while Sir Robert Jermyn feasted the French Ambassador at Rushbrooke.

I will not now dwell upon the remarkable persons whom a good history of Suffolk would have to celebrate, because I hope to have an opportunity of bringing a few such to your notice on another occasion. But I should like to mention another branch of Suffolk family history, which it would be highly interesting to investigate, I mean the families of distinction in the United States of America, which emigrated from Suffolk, and gave the names of Suffolk parishes to their adopted land. The Wenham Lake ice bears the name of Wenham, near Ipswich. Governor Winthrop, of Massachusetts, and his distinguished descendant, the Hon. Robert Winthrop, came from Groton, in this county.<sup>3</sup> An interesting volume has been published on the other side of the Atlantic, entitled "The Brights of Suffolk," by Jonathan Bright, of Waltham, Massachusetts; he tells us that the emigrants from Suffolk, between 1630 and 1640, were "considered the best as to character that come to New England." Mr. Bright enumerates, as places in New England called from Suffolk parishes, "Acton, Boxford, Groton, Haverhill, Needham, Stow, Sudbury, and others," and, as Suffolk families, Fiskes, Brights, Appletons, Wards, Browns, Bonds, Springs, Coolidges, Livermores, &c. Adding the new world to the old, what a rich mine of family history a good county historian would have to explore.

<sup>3</sup> See "Life and Letters of John Winthrop," by Robert Winthrop, Boston, 2 vols.

The ecclesiastical history of the county is one which, if well handled, would throw great light upon the course of East Anglian Christianity, and that through a period of twelve or thirteen hundred years. Felixstow preserves in an unmistakeable manner the memory of the Burgundian Apostle who converted the East Anglians to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established his see at Dommoc, A.D. 627, and was, I presume, buried at Felixstow, though the histories say at Dunwich first, and Soham afterwards. The Flixtons seem to bear the bishop's name also. Sigebert's school for the instruction of youth, after the manner of the French schools, supposed by many to have been the origin of Cambridge, his patronage of St. Fursey, the Irishman who followed up the labours of Felix, the foundation of monasteries at Burgh and Beoderic's-worth, the labours of Bishop Cedd (a name perhaps preserved in Chedburgh), and then the singularly characteristic history of the Abbey of Bury, deserve surely a good historian. The way in which this great abbey drew round itself wealth and power, brought the most proud and haughty monarchs to tremble at its shrine—drew a considerable town around it, usurped all power over the town, attracted kings and queens and parliaments to its precincts, expelled all spiritual jurisdiction that it might reign supreme, became the chief secular power in the county, filled the place with some of the finest architectural triumphs of succeeding ages—Norman, Decorated, Perpendicular—beautified numerous churches in the neighbourhood,—made it an object of ambition to the greatest nobles to belong to its fraternity, and to be buried within its hallowed walls, and all this on account of its possessing the body of an obscure petty king of East Anglia who had been slain by the Danes, is a study full of instruction and of no little interest. And then came the introduction of different religious ideas, with a new spiritual power, and it is no less curious to see the rapid fading away of the wide-spreading tree, or, if I may alter my metaphor, to see the mortar which had bound all together loosening its tenacious hold, and privileges, and possessions, and power, and dignity, and influence, and wealth, all falling to pieces and crumbling into ruins like the buildings themselves, of which scarce one stone is left upon another which has not been thrown down. The decay no less than the growth of the monastic power is a subject

worthy of a philosophic historian, as being both curious phases of the human mind, besides that both movements bring us into contact with a variety of historical personages.

Nor ought I to omit to add that Suffolk has taken an important part in several historical transactions, and also was the theatre of several important movements deeply affecting the welfare of the country. The meeting of the Barons at St. Edmund's shrine preparatory to Magna Charta; the great riot in the reign of Edward III., and those in that of Richard II., under Jack Straw, in connection with the Kentish insurrection of Wat Tyler; the insurrection under Robert Kett, in the reign of Edward VI., in which the men of Suffolk aided their North-folk brethren; the decided part taken by the men of Suffolk in favor of Queen Mary's right to the throne of England, and in the struggle against the tyranny of the Stuarts, show that the men of Suffolk, however habitually quiet and unmercurial, were not deficient in spirit to resist any semblance of oppression, or in determination to stand up for their own rights and those of their lawful sovereign. With no less spirit did Suffolk take up the cause of the Reformation. Hadleigh contributed one of the most illustrious martyrs, in the person of Dr. Rowland Taylor, and numerous pulpits in Suffolk gave the clear ring of Scriptural truth.

I would make one passing allusion to the great change which has taken place in Suffolk industry, and to the lessons in political economy which may be derived therefrom. The wool and cloth trade, it is well known, was one of the chief sources of Suffolk wealth in the olden time. The rich clothiers of Suffolk present some of the earliest instances of that great industrial aristocracy which was to dispute the palm of wealth and power with the ancient feudal lords of the soil. At Lavenham we see the two typified in the two grand pews of the De Veres and the Springs, looking one another, as it were, in the face. The numerous towns in Suffolk—Hadleigh, and Lavenham, and Sudbury, and Nayland, and Stowmarket, and so on—owed their existence chiefly to this trade. Fuller states that "all the monuments in the church of Nayland which bear any face of comeliness and antiquity are erected to the memory of clothiers," and the ancient condition of the county, as evidenced in deeds of settlement, fines, wills, old maps, and so on, exactly cor-

responded with this state of things. There were extensive sheep-walks in uninclosed parishes, and the chief wealth of many landed proprietors lay in their flocks. Agriculture was then in its infancy; the parings of St. Edmund's nails, and other relics, were more relied upon to avoid weeds in the corn and to secure good crops, than the art of good farming. But when the manufacture of cloth was drawn away to the coal country, and the wool trade consequently ceased to give employment to the population of our Suffolk towns, though we still continued to be a good wool-growing county, it became necessary to turn our minds and our hands to other branches of agricultural industry, and the result, not a little creditable to our determination and perseverance, is that Suffolk has become one of the finest corn-growing counties in England.

But I must conclude, and must ask you to forgive one whose affections are linked to Suffolk by a family residence of more than four hundred years, if he has been somewhat unduly profuse in setting forth Suffolk glories. If I have exhausted your patience, I certainly have not exhausted my subject; and I can only reiterate the hope which I expressed at first, that some competent historian will be found to supply that great gap in archæology and topography to which I have alluded, and to illustrate the antiquities, the architecture, and the families of Suffolk, with the breadth of knowledge which they require for their true elucidation, and with the power and vivacity of description which will secure for them the attention that they deserve.