

CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS OF SAINT MARY'S,
SUTTERTON.

By EDWARD PEACOCK, F.S.A.

Sutterton is a village in the Parts of Holland, in the County of Lincoln. Like many of its sister parishes, it has a fine church, which presents interesting examples of almost all the styles of mediæval architecture that have prevailed in England. It is not my purpose, on the present occasion, to enter into any details as to the history of the parish or the architecture of its church. The former has been like the greater part of Lincolnshire—utterly neglected. Some notices of the latter may be seen in Morton's *Churches in the Division of Holland* and in *The Reports of the Associated Architectural Societies*.¹ In this latter work it is affirmed that "the oldest register of this parish is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It extends from 1493 to 1536. It was in the possession of Richard Rawlinson, D.C.L., a non-juror, who left it, together with other books, to that library on his death in 1755." The writer of the above notice had been misinformed as to the nature of the manuscript which was included in Dr. Rawlinson's munificent bequest. On making enquiry of the late Bodleian librarian—the Rev. Henry Octavius Coxe, he assured me that no parish register of Sutterton was in his custody, but put into my hands a Churchwarden's account-book of that place, which extends from 1483 to 1536. The manuscript is a foolscap folio volume, written on various kinds of paper. It is neither paged nor foliated and the binding is modern; some of the leaves have been misplaced. How it came into Dr. Rawlinson's hands I have not been able to ascertain. Its press-mark is Rawl. M.S. Miscell. 951. The following notes therefrom will, I think, be found of some interest.

¹ Vol. x, pp. 198-200.

1483. The receipts this year were almost entirely for small payments for candles burnt for the dead. Many are as low as *jd*; occasionally, they reach the sum of *xd*. The first payment is for making wax for the feast of Pentecost, for which *xjd* was paid. Similar entries occur in latter years, and I have frequently met with the like in other manuscripts of this nature. Wax was then in great demand for church purposes. I apprehend that it was often bought by churchwardens, either in the form of unmelted comb or in unclarified lumps. If I am right in this the charge was for making the wax fit for casting into candles, not for making the candles themselves.¹ After this comes memoranda as to mending the bell furniture, a payment of *ijd* to "Thomas Tynker for mending of ye new crosse," *jd* for a "leynd," that is a line, "to ye basn in ye hey qwhire"² and a charge of *iijd* for a "leynd" to the sanctus bell. Afterwards follows a small charge for mending "ye loke in ye qwhere," that is the lock on the door in the middle of the rood screen.

1484. The receipts this year were derived from the same sources as before; though the sums paid were somewhat larger. Among the payments we find *xvjli* of wax bought at the rate of *viijd* per *li*, and a sum of *viijd* charged for making it. A penny was disbursed for "lytyn candyls" and *xd* for the repair of the "Kyrk-house." The church-house is an ecclesiastical edifice which has, we fear, quite passed away. I cannot discover that a solitary specimen has been spared to us; though some of our members who were present at the Bedford meeting may call to mind that we saw at Ampthill a half timbered cottage adjoining the church-yard on the south, which, from its character and position, might put in a strong claim to be one of these ancient structures.

¹ It is probable that many of the church candles were of unclarified wax. I possess one—the history of which can be traced back to a period beyond the change of religion—which seems to be made of unclarified wax. A lady informs me that in France the wax which gutters down from the little tapers which burn before altars and shrines is often collected by the Sacristan who sells it to be again melted and used once more.

² A Bason suspended by cords or chains was frequently hung in the Choirs of

Churches for the purpose of holding lights. In the "Inventories of the Churches of Surrey," edited by J. R. Daniel Tyssen, we find, "A Bason for a lampe," "ij Hanging Bassyns of latten to sett taper in," and "One Bason for the pascall." Wax for "The Bason Lyght" is charged for in "The Church Accounts of Bishop's Stortford," edited by Mr. Glasscock, p. 34. "A old Maslyn Bason" is mentioned in Money's "Berkshire Inventories" 32.

Churchwardens' accounts and other similar documents bear witness that if the church-house was not a universal feature in our parish life, it was certainly a very common one. No one seems to have dwelt in it; but there the ale feasts were held, the malt for the parish brewing stored, the parish armour preserved, and in some places—Stratton, in Cornwall, for instance,¹ it was let at fair times to wandering merchants. The Sutterton church-house is mentioned in the accounts on several occasions. Lime was, as will be seen, on one occasion kept therein; but there is not as much evidence as one could wish to shew the purposes to which it was commonly devoted.² Pulpits, it has been said, were not in common use, except in the churches of large towns, before the Reformation. There was one at Sutterton, for Edward Smytht was paid *ij*d for *ij* "clopys," that is hinges, for it. As it had a door we may assume that it was made of wood.

1490. Among the receipts this year occurs a sum of *xs* paid by "Thomas Raffyn of ye plowlyth." This plough-light was no doubt the lamp of one of the parish gilds. There was a plough-light at Leverton, near Boston, and another at Louth. There was a plough gild at Kirton in Lindsey and in many other places.³ The following entry was to be seen in the church accounts of Holbeach, it occurs in a list of church goods disposed of by the wardens in 1549: "To Wm. Davy, the sygne whereon the plowyghe did stand."⁴ It would seem from this that a plough was one of the ornaments with which that church was decorated. Probably it hung on the wall in some conspicuous place near to the gild-altar. Sutterton church had been under repair this year, and had, in consequence, to be re-consecrated. The bill of costs on the occasion is given and is so curious that I reproduce it at length:—

"Be yt had in mynd yt yes be ye costes for halloyng
of ye chyrche—

¹ "Archæologia," xlv, 198.

² The following references may be of service to anyone interested in this subject:—Wallington, "Hist. Notices," i, 54-58; ii, 299. "Notes and Queries," V. S. ix, 405. Cox and Hope, "Hist. of All Saints, Derby," 24. "Archæologia," xxiii, 33; xxv, 413-440; xxxvi, 239;

xli, 339-348. Gardner, "Hist. of Dunwich," 143. Glasscock "St. Michael's, Bishop's Stortford," 5-24, 41.

³ "Archæologia," xli, 338-349; Brand, "Pop. Antiq.," ed. 1813, vol. i, p. 397; Dyer, "Pop. Customs," 37.

⁴ Marrat, "Hist. Linc.," ii, 104.

| | | | |
|--|-----|------------|------------------------|
| In primis payd in expens to Lyncoln and hom | | | |
| agayn | ... | ... | ... iijs vjd |
| Item payd pro a galon of wyn | ... | ... | ... xiiid |
| Item payd pro expensis of corpus xpi day | ... | ... | ... xiiijd |
| Item payd pro pane | ... | ... | ... xvij ^d |
| Item payd pro sereuiçia | ... | ... | ... xxjd |
| Item payd pro beffe | ... | ... | ... xxd |
| Item payd pro a Swane | ... | ... ijs | ... ijd |
| Item payd pro ij capons | ... | ... | ... xijd |
| Item payd pro ij pyggyes | ... | ... | ... viij ^d |
| Item payd pro cheppe ¹ and a lam | ... | ... ijs | ... vjd |
| Item payd pro chykyngs | ... | ... | ... vjd |
| Item payd pro butt[er], eggys, and paste | ... | ... | ... vjd |
| Item payd pro wyn | ... | ... | ... xijd |
| Item payd pro ffrankynsens | ... | ... | ... iij ^d |
| Item payd pro j li wax | ... | ... | ... viij ^d |
| Item payd pro wynegyre, ² mostard and a stoppe ³ | ... | ... | ... iij ^d |
| Item payd pro spyce | ... | ... | ... iij ^d |
| Item payd to ye coke and to ye tornars ⁴ | ... | ... | ... viij ^d |
| Item payd pro ij ellne of lynnyn clothe | ... | ... | ... xiiij ^d |
| Item payd in expensis | ... | ... | ... xxd |
| Item payd pro di. li. ⁵ rasons | ... | ... | ... ijd |
| Item payd pro owre wrytyng | ... | ... | ... iij ^d |
| Item payd pro saltt | ... | ... | ... id |
| Item payd pro horsmett | ... | ... | ... xd |
| Item payd to ye soffrygan v marces | ... | ... | ... xxd |
| Summa | ... | ... iiijli | ... xvs vjd." |

The blending of Latin and English in the above will seem strange to those who have not given attention to documents of this nature. Nothing is more common than to find an accountant begin a sentence in Latin and then, because words failed him, or because he was anxious to make his meaning clear beyond doubt, to finish it in English. Sometimes we have three languages in a single short sentence as in the following example: "Johanni Smythe pro emendacione de le locke in the

¹ A sheep.

² The use of w for v is so common in early documents as to attract little notice. See "Mon. Ang.," iii, 292; viii, 1207. Ellacombe, "Bells of Somerset," 39. "Acc. of Lord High Treasurer of Scotl.," i, clii. "Archæologia," xviii, 306;

xxx, 427; xxxv, 422-429; xxxvi, 222; xli, 356.

³ Probably a stoup, that is a vessel of some sort in which the mustard was contained.

⁴ That is to the cook and to the turnspits.

⁵ Half a pound.

Tower *jd*."¹ It is interesting to note the distinction made between ale and beer. Ale it would seem was a drink compounded without hops or other bitter herbs, beer on the other hand was a bitter drink.²

1491. This year *xijd* was paid for an altar cloth for the high altar and *ijd* for hallowing it and a sum of *viij* is charged with the following enigmatical entry to explain it: "Item payd in expens for wrongg vexacon don by Edmund Quytyngnam and Wyllm Malyn pro takyngg forth of ye bokys." What had happened I know not, whether "ye bokys" were those used for the services in the church or the records of the parish accounts we shall probably never ascertain. From some other expenses incurred with the archdeacon, John Coke, LL.D., I apprehend that whatever the precise nature of the offence may have been, he felt it to be his duty to enquire into the matter. I do not know where Med Cross was, and can only surmise that its name means cross in the mede, mead, or meadow, and that it was a boundary stone like the well-known cross of Crowland.³ Such boundary crosses seem to have been common all over Europe, and their memory is yet preserved in many instances on the names of the enclosures where they once stood.⁴ The entry wherein Med Cross is mentioned speaks of it in connection with feasting, which strengthens the probability that it was a boundary cross. The passage runs "Payd to Jon Pese wyfe for bred and alle yt was spente at Med Crose *xiiij*" and it was immediately succeeded by "Payde to Thomas Hune wyfe for a pote with ale at ye same tyme *vid ob*."

1493. The high altar and three others are mentioned this year. They are Saint Nicholas altar, our White Lady Altar, and the Altar of Saint Katherin. Edward Smyth is paid *ijd* for "a loke to ye funte." From an early period fonts in this country were ordered to be kept

¹ "Churchwardens Acc. of S. Michael without the North Gate, Bath," (A.D. 1473). Ed. by Rev. C. B. Pearson, p. ii.

² See an admirable note on the word *cerveise* in the late H. T. Riley's "Liber Custumarum," p. ii, p. 707.

³ "Archæologia," iii, 96-100. It may perhaps be worth noting that in 1483

"the hedles crose" was a boundary mark of lands belonging to All Saints', Derby. Cox and Hope, "Hist. of All Saints', Derby."

⁴ There is an enclosure in the parish of Northorpe, near Kirton in Lindsey, called the White Cross. Tradition says that a stone cross stood there in the olden time.

under lock and key lest superstitious persons should take away the baptismal water for use in magical rites, "*Fontes sub sera clausi teneantur propter sortiligia*" occurs among the decrees of the council of Durham, A.D. 1220.¹ I do not remember to have seen, in England, an undoubtedly pre-reformation font which did not shew marks of the place where the lock had been affixed. The church seems still to have been under repair for four "trey" of lime was purchased at Boston for *ijs iiijd* and deposited in the church-house. How much in quantity a "trey" of lime may have been I know not. It was a local measure the memory of which seems to be lost. Perhaps its use was confined to Boston and the neighbourhood. The Leverton churchwardens in 1506 "payd for a tray of lyme at Boston *xd*."² Two shillings was also paid for "candel to ye bason." This is probably the bason which we have before heard of as hanging in the "heygwhire."

1495. This year a pax was purchased for the high altar for the sum of *vjd*, and *ijs iiijd* paid for binding a book.

1496. An altar cloth for the high altar was painted at the cost of *xiijs*, and *vjd* for a string and a purse. This purse was probably for the reservation of the blessed Sacrament. John Folle of Kirton received *ijs viijd* for *vii*—that is seven score—"hesplantes." If this stood alone, there might be some difficulty in interpreting it. The entry that immediately follows makes all clear. It runs—"Paid for expensys for setting of ye plantys *xvjd*." The churchwardens had bought some young ash trees either for the church-yard or for other property held by them in trust for the church.

1497. This year the wardens received two sums of six shillings and eight pence each for the burial of Thomas Gybbon and Maister Hylton in the church. The custom of churchwardens charging a fee for burial inside the sacred building was not confined to Sutterton or to the county of Lincoln. I have gathered instances of the practise from nearly all parts of England.³ In this year

¹ Wilkins' "Concilia," i, 576.

² "Archæologia," xli, 342.

³ See "Archæologia," xli, 196. To the cases there mentioned may be added Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, Eastwood's "Hist,"

218; All Saints, Derby, Cox and Hope's "Chron. of," 155-168. Glasscock, "St. Michael's Bishop's Stortford," 22, 24, 33, 44, 56, 67. "Inventories of Goods in Churches of Surrey," 101.

we meet for the first time in these papers with the word "wytheword." It occurs in the following passage:—"Md. that theise be the parcelles that John Peese & Nycholas Hubbert hath receuyd of Isabell Howson for hir husband Wytheword to the churche." Mr. Francis Henry Stratmann¹ suggests a connection with the old Icelandic *vitord*=Testamentum. It occurs in such endless variety of forms that it is not easy to tell what sounds the letters represent. In the church accounts of Walberswick, A.D. 1481, we have "Queth Word;"² in those of Kirton in Lindsey, A.D. 1543, it is spelt "Wytward."³ The derivation might well be matter of controversy; but it is clear, from the connection in which it occurs, that it usually means a legacy.

1499. Vestments have occasionally been mentioned before, but it has simply been a record of their washing or mending. Here we get a note as to the colour of one: the modest sum of one penny was paid "for sylke to help ye blew vestment," three pence was spent at the same time "for frenge to ye rede vestment" and one penny for "tuckyng gyrdles."

1507. The only entry which throws any light on the ancient observances of the English Church to be found this year is a charge of *ij*d for a "lyne to the sacrament." That is a cord for suspending the little box in which the holy sacrament was suspended over the high altar. This was commonly in England made of precious metal and in the form of a cup. The cup was enclosed in an envelope of cloud-like muslin, and surmounted by a canopy. The holy eucharist was, until modern times, reserved in this manner in many French churches. There the form of the vessel that contained it was frequently that of a dove.⁴ In 1566, the churchwardens of Dowsby sold a pix and the canopy over it; which they called, probably by way of irony, "the bishop of Romes Hatt." It had this name from being made in a form not much unlike the papal tiara.⁵

¹ "Dict. of Old England," II Ed., p. 568; cf. "Catholicism Anglicum" (E. E. T. S.), 422.

² Gardner, "Dunwich," 148.

³ "Pro. Soc. Ant." II Series, ii, 386.

⁴ Rock, "Church of our Fathers," vol. iii, Pt. II, p. 206.

⁵ Peacock, "English Church Furniture," p. 70. In the reign of Edward vi., there was in Peasmoore Church "One Canopy of Black, saye hanging over the pyxe wth three crownes," Money's "Church Goods in Berkshire," 30.

1512. This year the wardens bought ij chalys casys and ij "holybred mawndes" for *xd*. In an undated fragment, which is probably twenty years older than this entry, there occurs a payment of *ij*d for "ye kyrkelofe." This is an additional proof, if proof on such a matter be needed, that the holy bread or eulogia was almost universally distributed in this country before the Reformation. So frequent are the mistakes that are still made on this very simple matter that it may not be out of place to remark that this holy loaf had nothing whatever to do with the eucharistic elements, but that it was ordinary leavened bread, such as was commonly eaten in the parish, which was blessed by the priest after he had said mass, cut into small pieces, and given to the people to eat. When the custom originated it is, in the present state of our knowledge, perhaps hardly safe to affirm. It was intended as a symbol of the brotherly love which ought to exist among Christians. Before the French Revolution, we believe that this rite was practised over a great part of Western Europe. The *Pain bénit* may still be seen distributed in several of the churches in Paris, and we have been informed that the custom is observed throughout a great part of France. It is mentioned incidentally in more than one of the old French romances;¹ and in Quevedo's *Visions* we read of a loose person who made a practise of "crumming his porrege with consecrated bread that he stole every Sunday."² One of the demands of the Devonshire men, when they broke out into rebellion in 1549, for the purpose of resisting the changes in faith and ritual, was that they should have "holy bread and holy water every Sunday;"³ and when these same persons laid siege to Exeter, they had carried before them "the pix or consecrated host borne under a canopy with crosses, banners, candlesticks, holy-bread and holy-water."⁴ The holy-bread was distributed as long as the old services continued in use. Baskets for containing it are mentioned several times among the things removed as "Monuments of Superstition" from the Lincolnshire

¹ J. M. Ludlow, "Epics of the Middle Ages," ii, 217.

² Sir Roger Lestrangle's "Translation," 5th ed., 1673, p. 108.

³ Cranmer's "Works," 1844. Vol. i, p. 176.

⁴ Heylin, "Ecclesia Restaurata, 1849. Vol. i, p. 158.

churches in the 8th of Elizabeth. In the parish of Gonwarby, for instance, we find that "one hally bred skeppe [was] sold to Mr. Allen and he makethe a baskett to carrie fish in."¹

1517 (?) Four pence was spent this year for "frenge to ye crosse cloth" and *jd* for "mendying the bowit," which I believe to have been a lantern used when the holy eucharist was carried to sick folk. John Byrkes had *iijs iiijd* paid to him "for selering of ye hye altar" and *xijd* more for making an "ambre" or cupboard.

1518. The repairs which were now going on in the church seem to have made it needful that a part of the churchyard should be separated from the rest by hurdles. These were sold when done with, for "*vij par tray*" five-pence halfpenny was received, and for "*v flekys*" sixpence. It is interesting to find the two words used. Now, perhaps, a fleak and a tray are both accounted to be dialectic equivalents of hurdle, but a very few years ago the distinction between them was distinctly marked, a *fleak* signifying a hurdle made of twisted rods, a *tray* a hurdle of bars of wood.

1519. Players are mentioned "For ye plaars rewarde of Qwatlods *ixd*." The place meant is Whaplode.

1521. It would appear that during this year the figures of two new saints were set up in the church, for we find that William Ravytt was paid "for *ijj hokys* and *sittyn of ij sanctes, ijd*." Players visited Sutterton again this year; there is a charge of *vjd* for candles for them.

1522. Candles for players are again mentioned.

1523. Medd Cross which has been mentioned before had got out of repair, for Thomas Loyke the mason received *vjs viijd* "for Meddes Crosse and helping the crosse hede in the chyrche yarde."

1524. This year furnishes us with a little more information as to the players. The churchwardens credit themselves with having received from sundry people, some of whose names are given, the sum of *ixs vjd* "for increments for the play playd on the day of the assympcon of our ladye." They also received *ijd* for "the oylde bordes off the cross & the poles & other schort endes."

1525. The players of Swineshead received "for a

¹ Peacock, "English Church Furniture," p. 86.

rewarde" iijs and iiij*d* and vij*d* for "brede and drynke," vid was paid for mending the parish bier, and id for the lantern; the players of Donington had a reward of xij*d* and there are some payments for sending a bell to Nottingham to be recast, among them is ij*d* given to a man "for techying vs the way on the nyght," ij*d* also was given "for the church worke at Boston." The receipts this year shew that there were five lights in the church exclusive of that before the high altar. They were called the May-light, the "Hognars"-light, the Plough-light, the Sepulchre-light, and All Souls'-light.

1526. This year there was received for "gateryngh the plays of Frampton and Kyrton iijs vid ob," and "of the chamberlanys of our ladys gyld for schredynges of wode of the kyrke land viij*d*;" a bookbinder and his man were paid iijs ix*d* for nine days work, and some small sums were paid for clasps and "burgens." These latter were I think bosses for the covers of the books; two pence was also disbursed for mending the image of St. Thomas, and viij*d* "to Thomas Clarke when he schold hath goyn on the se."

1527. Three yards of hair cloth was bought for xij*d* for the high altar.

1530. This year it is probable that a new image of the blessed virgin was set up in the church; ij*d* was payd for "cartying home of our lady," and id "for bred and dryng to them that helpyd hyr in to the carte"; xvij*d* was paid for a wheelbarrow and id for mending it. A curtain was suspended before the image of Our Lady, for we find id charged for "grayn" that is iron for curtain-rings for that purpose.

1531. A canopy was made this year, it cost with the "sattayn that wentt to yt" five shillings; "the playres of Whapplett when they rode ther play" had vij*d* given to them; "ij yardys of sylk lace to strynge the purse that the sacramentt ys borne in" were purchased for ij*d*. Two pence was given for a "lyne that the candelstyk hyngyth in be fore the rode," and a like sum for "on payr of chayns that the church leders wher lokyd in." This entry is curious. The church ladders are commonly the longest in a rural parish, and even now, when church rates are a thing of the past, the villagers think they have

a right to use them on urgent occasions. I should gather that at Sutterton the practice of carrying them away had become so common that the churchwardens had found it necessary to lock them up. A penny was charged for a line for the vail, that is the curtain which during Lent was suspended before the rood.

1532. A charge of viij*d* is entered "for on sylk rybyn to hyng the syluer pyxt by maister Thomas Robertson gaf," and iij*d* "for on lytyll cofer dresyng the cheynys to kepe the syluer pyxt in"; a penny was also paid for "on hyng loke to the funtte."

1534. Two holy-bread "skypes," that is skeps or baskets were bought for iiij*d*, and "one lyne that ye canaby hyngythe by" for ij*d*.

1535. Four pence was spent in "Cartt Clowttys." They probably were large broad-headed nails, but this is not certain. A cart-clout now means an iron plate nailed on an axletree to hinder its being worn away by friction against the bush of the wheel. They are mentioned among the expenses of Simon de Eya, abbot of Ramsey *circa* 1338;¹ and in the "Remembrances for the apparel of the Earl of Northumberland" in 1513;² Robert Abraham, a Kirton-in-Lindsey shopkeeper had, at his death in 1519, among his wares "iij dosan wayncloutes."³

The foregoing extracts might have been greatly increased, perhaps with advantage. My object, however, will have been attained if I succeed in drawing attention to an interesting record which contains, among much dry detail, several entries that throw a sure, though but feeble, ray of light on the past. I may, perhaps, be permitted to remark that the above notes do not represent my labours on the manuscript, but are only a few extracts therefrom. I have transcribed almost the whole volume, except in such places as one page is but a repetition of another.

¹ "Mon. Anglic," ii, 584.

² "Archæologia," xxvi, 405.

³ Kirton-in-Lindsey court roll. *sub an.*