

The Shrines and Pilgrimages

OF THE

COUNTY OF NORFOLK.

COMMUNICATED BY

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WE cannot easily select a better guide in the beginning of our pilgrimage than Alice Cooke of Horstead, who in her Will (*Reg. Cast. Norw.* fol. 71) says: "Item, I will have a man to go these pilgrimages: to our Lady at Refham; to Seynt Spyrite (which appears to have been at Elsing); to St. Parnell of Stratton; to St. Leonard without Norwich; to St. Wandred of Byskeley; to St. Margaret of Horstead; to our Lady of Pity of Horstead; to St. John's Head at Trimmingham, and to the Holy Rood at Crostewyte."

In the Will of Agnes Parker of Keswick, who died in the year 1507, we read as follows: "Item, I owe a pilgrimage to Canterbury; another to St. Tebbald of Hobbies, and another to St. Albert of Cringleford."

In the Will of William Ball of Elsing, who died in 1480: "I will and bequeath to have two divers pilgrimages for me to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and one pilgrimage to St. Thomas of Westacre."

Finally, Catherine of Arragon, the ill-fated Queen of Henry VIII., directs in her Will that a man shall in her behalf "make a pilgrimage to our Lady of Walsingham, and distribute 200 nobles in charity by the way."

Such a *text* as the above might appear to be the prelude of a somewhat lengthy discourse; but, happily for the patience of the gentle reader, many of these once-celebrated shrines have through the injury of Time subsided into a mere catalogue of *names*. We know indeed their localities, and in most instances can even identify the saints in whose honour they were erected; but there are few existing remains, and in many instances local traditions are altogether silent.

These remarks apply more especially to the shrines of St. Botolph at Foulsham, St. Margaret at Hoveton, St. Blythe at Martham, St. Wandred at Bixley, St. Parnel of Stratton, St. Thomas of Westacre, St. Albert of Cringleford, and St. Tebbald of Hobbies.

How very little is now known, or is ever likely to be known, relatively to these ancient shrines, the members of our Society must be already fully aware. Mere topography is decidedly not my *forte*. Measurement by the inch must be left to arithmeticians of the Colenso school; and as I possess not the enviable faculty of

“Twisting pokers into true-love knots,”

if there were no further archæological landmarks, the case, so far as I am concerned, would be altogether desperate.

I am, however, tempted to notice two of the legends: the one, because it is strictly connected with our East Anglian district; and the other, which, although untrue to the very best impulses of our nature, is yet most decidedly *picturesque*.

The first relates to St. ALBERT, whose shrine was anciently at CRINGLEFORD. He was King of the East Angles, and was most barbarously murdered by the wife of the second Offa, whose daughter he was about to marry. The wicked queen, we are told, secretly caused a deep pit to be dug under the bedroom of her guest, placing over it the mere framework of a chair, loosely covered with a rich drapery. Poor Albert,

suspecting nothing, trying to rest upon this treacherous basis, fell down headlong into the gulf beneath, and was killed upon the spot. A church dedicated to this saint existed in Norwich before the reign of Henry III., when it was destroyed during a popular tumult.

The legend to which I have referred as "*picturesque*," is that of St. THEOBALD (or *Tebald*) whose shrine was anciently at HAUTOBOIS. He was a young Frenchman of noble birth, who from religious motives forsook his parents, gave up his country, and, renouncing all his worldly prospects, voluntarily embraced a life of poverty and self-denial.

"On one occasion," we are told, "when Theobald and his companion, disguised as common beggars, were passing through Treves, his own father, to whom he was fondly attached, rode up to them and inquired the way, not recognising his son under his rags and emaciation." This was the very severest trial that poor Theobald had ever endured; but the Hagiologist assigns it to his credit that he resolutely conquered his feelings and answered the question as if he had been a total stranger.

Having thus pleaded ignorance so far as the above-mentioned shrines are concerned, I shall proceed to tell you the *little* that I know about the rest,—not fettering myself by any rules of geographical position, but wandering about the county exactly as I used to do in those good old times which I love to recal to my memory.

I shall begin my pilgrimage with a choice morsel which I found in the "*Liber Eliensis*."

In the church of EAST DEREHAM, in this county, were anciently deposited the reliques of Saint Withburga, natural daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles, who was revered for her extraordinary sanctity as well as her royal descent. It was in the ninth century that the abbot and monks of Ely conceived and executed the *pious* theft of

these reliques (“*sanctum sacrilegium! fidele furtum!! salutaris rapina!!!*”) laying down their plans with a tact and precision that might have put the most accomplished London burglar to the blush. They cleverly managed to *intoxicate* the Dereham clergy, (who, by the way, in subsequently speaking of the transaction left out all the *adjectives*) and having divided the entire distance into stages, with relays of men and horses, were far beyond the reach of pursuit before the rightful owners awoke to a sense of their bereavement.

In the church of TRIMMINGHAM NEAR THE SEA was anciently deposited the alleged head of St. John the Baptist. Visiting this church about seventeen years ago, I very distinctly recollect that, when he was questioned about that once-celebrated relique, *an inhabitant of the village* pointed out a little strip of brass, which he said “would tell me all about it,”—a remarkable proof of the fallibility of local tradition, inasmuch as I only read thereon the words—

“Praye for the soule of William Paston,” &c. (!)

ST. WALSTAN OF BAUBURGH, (or Baber) to whose shrine I shall next conduct you in imagination, was held in deep reverence by our ancestors, and his effigy, with *a scythe* for his emblem, is still to be seen on many of our Norfolk rood-screens; as, for example, at Burlingham St. Andrew, Ludham, Barnham Broom, Sparham, and Denton. Although born of a respectable parentage, (and, according to the legend, even of *royal* descent) St. Walstan voluntarily embraced a life of poverty, and hired himself as a common labourer to a farmer at Taverham in this county. Walstan is alleged to have given away his food, and the very shoes off his feet, in charity to the poor; but when his mistress came to rebuke him for his thoughtlessness and want of thrift, she found him barefooted, loading a cart with thorns, yet totally unhurt. The time of his death having been miraculously revealed to

him, Walstan's last request to his master was, that his body might be placed in a cart drawn by two unbroken oxen, and that they should be left entirely to themselves. On two occasions they are said to have stopped with the sacred body, viz., once on the top of a hill, from which a fountain gushed forth: it is further said that they crossed over a deep pond of water as if it had been a solid mass of earth or stone. At last they are said to have reached Bauburgh, the place of Walstan's birth, where the saint was buried, and a church built over his mortal remains. Walstan's shrine and altar in the north aisle of this church were constantly served by six chantry priests, and the offerings were so considerable that in 1309 the church was totally rebuilt and splendidly adorned. There was a chapel on Bauburgh bridge, analogous to that at Wakefield, and it was the duty of a hermit, who constantly dwelt there, to sprinkle the pilgrims with holy water before they approached the sacred shrine. In those times St. Walstan was looked upon as the patron saint of agriculture, and diseased cattle used to be brought thither to be blessed, as they are at this day brought in Italy to the shrine of St. Anthony of Padua.

In a chapel at the upper end of the church of WINFARTHING was preserved a sword, called "*the goode swerde of Winfarthing,*" to which numerous pilgrims are said to have resorted. One of its alleged properties was sufficiently curious;—for it is said, that when the yoke of matrimony galled a woman, (or, to speak less metaphorically, *when any wife longed to be a widow*) she had nothing else to do but to cause a light to be burnt continually before this sword for a whole year; but the omission even of a single day was sure to break the charm, and if a suspicious husband examined his chandler's bills, this might of course occasionally happen. And let us not rashly blame such an interference! No man can reasonably be expected to die at his own expence; and if

her light was to be *his extinguisher*, we might easily pardon *any* husband if he brought such an illumination to a very full stop.

According to the legend, this relique originally belonged to a robber, who once took sanctuary in the church of Winfarthing, but escaped through the negligence of the watchmen, leaving his sword behind him.

BROOMHOLME has an advantage over all the Norfolk shrines, not excepting even Walsingham itself. In *other* instances *history* is altogether silent; but Matthew Paris has given us a long and interesting account of the Holy Cross of Broomholme, strikingly characteristic of the age in which he lived, and this I shall now translate. He begins by telling us that Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, had been elected Emperor of Constantinople, where he reigned honorably for many years; but he, on one occasion, rashly went forth to the battle without those precious reliques which the patriarch and bishops were always wont to carry before him, when he fought against the enemies of the cross. On that disastrous day the infidel force was tenfold more numerous than his own. The Christian army was surrounded by the barbarians; Baldwin himself was slain, and all his followers were either taken prisoners or put to the sword.

When the melancholy news reached Constantinople, the Emperor's chaplain, who was an Englishman, and had all the reliques under his care, taking with him those which were held most sacred, and many valuable jewels besides, secretly fled to his native country. On his arrival in England, he immediately repaired to St. Albans, the most celebrated abbey in the kingdom, and sold to one of the monks a silver-gilt crucifix, two of the fingers of St. Margaret, and several gold rings set with precious stones, all of which were at St. Albans when our historian wrote the narrative.

“At the last,” continues Matthew Paris, “taking from his

cloak-bag a certain wooden cross, he affirmed with an oath that it was undoubtedly made of the wood of that cross on which our Saviour died : but the monks did not believe him, and he was allowed to depart with this inestimable but unrecognized treasure. Now this chaplain had two little sons, respecting whose maintenance and education he was extremely anxious, and, with this object in view, he visited many abbeys, offering the said cross on the condition of their receiving himself and his children as monks. Having suffered many repulses from the richer monasteries, he at last arrived at a certain priory in Norfolk called Broomholme, miserably poor, and with all its buildings of the most humble and inconvenient description. Requesting to see the prior and brethren, he showed them the aforesaid cross, made of two pieces of wood, placed transversely the one over the other, its entire length being that of a man's hand. He humbly implored them to receive himself and his children as monks in compensation for this and all his other reliques. Being inspired by Him '*who resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the lowly,*' the prior and brethren rejoiced at the acquisition of so valuable a treasure, and reverently taking this blessed wood into their oratory, placed it there with all becoming devotion. In the year of our Lord 1223 divine miracles began to be wrought in this monastery to the honour and glory of the cross. Life was restored to the dead, sight to the blind, the lame were enabled to walk, lepers were cleansed, and devils cast out. This cross was visited, adored, and worshipped, ('*frequentatur, colitur, et adoratur*') not only by the English people, but by natives of the most distant lands, who have heard of these most wonderful miracles."

It is not a little remarkable that, while Matthew Paris speaks thus positively as to the genuine character of the Broomholme relique, other portions of his history, in which he describes *the true cross* as one undiminished whole, cannot

possibly be reconciled with such a supposition: the more especially as considerable portions of the cross were alleged to have been deposited at Westminster, Redburn, Schone, Broomholme,—and a *multitude* of places on the continent. Thus he tells us that when King Richard I. was in Palestine, a hermit shewed him a cross of *a cubit in length* as an undoubted portion of the true cross. He elsewhere says that the cross was cut in twain, and that *half of it was lost* during the crusades. Afterwards, in 1219, the Soldan is represented as having offered the Christians "*the true cross,*" (*veram crucem*) with other advantages, on the condition of their evacuating Damietta. Yet we read that in the year 1241 the true cross *in its full integrity*, together with the sponge, the lance, and crown of thorns, were solemnly deposited in the church of St. Denis at Paris, during the Passion Week of that year.

About six years after this (*viz.*, in 1247) some of the alleged blood of our Saviour was brought to this country, and in two discourses still extant, the one in an abridged form and the other in full, the bishops of Norwich and Lincoln, *while they admitted the possession of the true cross to be the glory of France*, proved indeed with great subtilty that the blood which sanctified the cross was more valuable than even the cross itself, *but made no mention whatsoever of the alleged portions of the True Cross of Broomholme, Redburn, and other parts of the kingdom.*

Now, if the value of a relique was to be estimated rather by the weight of miracles than by its actual bulk, the criterion of the Broomholme relique must have greatly exceeded that of Paris, so far, at least, as we have any evidence before us. Capgrave tells us that no fewer than *nineteen* blind persons were restored to sight through its efficacy, while *thirty-nine* of the dead were raised to life; *being about six TIMES as many as we find recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments!*

But WALSINGHAM most unquestionably stood at the very head of all our Norfolk Pilgrimages. In compensation, as it were, for the very unaccountable silence of our historians, we have the most distinct proofs that King Henry III., Edward I., Edward II., Henry VIII., and a multitude of illustrious pilgrims from all parts of the world, visited "*the sacred milk.*" King Henry VIII., who in the year 1539 *deseccrated* the shrine of Walsingham, had, in the earlier part of his reign, twice visited it as a devotee; walking barefoot, it is said, from the palace of East Barsham to this place; and, if we are to believe Sir Henry Spelman, King Henry on his death-bed, and in all the agonies of remorse, bequeathed his soul to the care of Our Lady of Walsingham!

To adopt and apply the words of Horace—

"In mentibus hæret
Pænè recens" ———

for almost in our own times the aged Norfolk peasant has been wont to term the Milky Way of the heavens "*the Walsingham Way,*" as if specially created to point out the road to that once-celebrated shrine; and in the days of Erasmus few Englishmen thought that they could prosper throughout the year, unless, according to their means, they should have made some offering to the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham.

We could not possibly have selected a better guide than Erasmus; for he visited the shrine to the best advantage, and almost at the latest moment. A very few years after his latest visit to this country, Walsingham shared the fate of all the monasteries throughout the realm. The dismantled church was thenceforward but a picturesque ruin; the revenues of the priory, to the value of about five thousand pounds a year of our present currency, were seized by the Crown, together with the magnificent altar plate and all the jewels and other treasures so vividly described by Erasmus;

and the image of the Blessed Virgin, which had been so long the object of a splendid superstition, was carried to Chelsea, and there ignominiously burnt.

It is quite certain that several of the monks pleaded guilty to the forgery of reliques and the most glaring acts of profligacy, and a majority of them, with the prior at their head, formally signed the deed of surrender. The twenty monks who had thus submitted were pensioned off on a sort of sliding scale, varying from forty shillings to six pounds a year,—and *Vowell*, the prior, received a stipend that must have been highly *consonant* to his taste ;—viz., the large and liberal allowance of one hundred pounds a year.

A chapel had been founded at Walsingham a little before the Conquest. The Virgin Mother was alleged to have appeared in person to the widow of Ricoldie de Faverches, and the chapel was said to have been built after the exact model of the *Sancta Casa* at Loretto—the sacred cottage which, according to the legend, had been miraculously transported by angels from Nazareth, till it found its last resting-place at Loretto. According to an ancient metrical narrative printed in the reign of Henry VIII., the foundations of this chapel were originally laid where “*the wishing wells*” are now seen, but they were continually disarranged in a most unaccountable way, till the founders at last recognized this circumstance as a token of the will of heaven, and the site was removed to the north-west, where the chapel afterwards stood. The son of the foundress subsequently endowed the priory, which was occupied by canons of the Augustinian Order.

For upwards of five centuries from that date Walsingham flourished gloriously, having been resorted to by numerous pilgrims from all parts of the world, and enriched by their benefactions. In one year the offerings at this shrine amounted to £260, which cannot be estimated at less than £3000 of our present currency ; and in only one single week

(while the visitors were there) the gifts amounted to 133 shillings, or about £61. 10s. present value, independently of donations in wax, which were a considerable source of revenue. We learn from the *Paston Letters*, that when John Paston lay ill at the Inner Temple, his mother (in addition to a former offering) presented *an image of his weight in wax* to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Walsingham Priory is now the merest wreck of what it once was; nevertheless Erasmus may enable us in some measure to realise its ancient glories,—

“In the *mind's* eye, Horatio.” —

After praising in general terms the beauty of the church, he describes more particularly the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was then in an unfinished state, (“*patentibus ostiis, patentibus fenestris*”) or, in other words, with the doors and windows open to the weather. Nevertheless it enclosed a small wooden chapel of exceeding splendour, to which pilgrims were admitted through small wickets at the sides. It had no windows, but a multitude of wax tapers continually burning supplied the want of natural light, while the fumes of incense breathed forth the most delicious perfume. “*You would pronounce it* (exclaims Erasmus) *the very dwelling-place of the gods, such is the blaze of silver and gold and jewels on every side!*”

One of the canons was always in attendance to receive the oblations of the faithful; not that it was compulsory to give anything, but, as our author slyly remarks, many gave because he was looking on, *while others pretended to give, but actually stole.*

He describes this magnificent chapel as having then contained many statues of the saints—some of silver, others of solid gold; and they exhibited to him at the same time altar plate, jewels, and other valuable treasures, which it would take the whole day even to enumerate. (“*Simulque*

depromit ex ipso altari *mundum* rerum admirabilium, cujus singulas partes si pergam referre dies non suffecerit narrationi.”)

Closely adjacent to the church was a building, which, according to the legend, had, like the *Sancta Casa* at Loretto, been suddenly transported by a miracle from a great distance in the very depth of winter, and when the ground was thickly covered with snow; while at the same time two wells gushed forth from the ground beneath at the command of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They were wonderfully cold, and said to be endowed with healing virtues, so far as regarded all diseases of the head and stomach. When he heard these things, Erasmus looked around him with amazement. Everything that he saw appeared to be *new*, and yet this legend extended into a very remote antiquity. His words I shall now translate. “Looking around me, I enquired how many years had elapsed since the house was brought thither? to which the canon replied, ‘Several centuries.’ ‘And yet (I rejoined) these walls do not appear to be old!’ The guide assented. ‘Nor yet these wooden columns! He did not deny that they had been very recently erected, and indeed the thing spoke for itself. ‘And then again (I said) the roof and reeds appear to be even still more recent.’ This he readily allowed. ‘And as to these beams and cross-beams, they do not seem to have been put up many years.’ He acknowledged the fact. And now, when no part of the building had eluded this scrutiny, ‘Whence then (I asked) doth it appear that this house was brought from so great a distance?’ Immediately the guide pointed out a *very ancient bear’s skin* nailed to the roof, and laughed at my dulness for having overlooked so *manifest* an argument.” Induction was for once at fault, and the bear-skin triumphantly carried the day!

It now only remains for me to say a few words about the *reliques* anciently preserved at Walsingham.

In the large gate of the priory the guide pointed out to Erasmus a very small wicket, about an ell high and three quarters of an ell wide, through which even a foot passenger could only pass by stooping, and stepping carefully over the lower ledge.

They assured Erasmus that, in the year 1314, a knight on horseback, fleeing from the eager pursuit of his enemies, called upon the Blessed Virgin in his extremity, and that, without dismounting, he and his steed were miraculously and instantly conveyed through this narrow opening. A brass plate is said to have been fastened to the gate in perpetual memory of this wonderful event.

They exhibited to Erasmus a finger joint of *gigantic* proportions, telling him that it had belonged to St. Peter. He inquired of the attendant whether he was to understand the *Apostle* of that name? and being answered in the affirmative, "Then (exclaimed Erasmus) St. Peter must have been a man of prodigious stature!" at which one of the pilgrims unfortunately laughed, and the guide was only to be appeased by the payment of an extra fee.

The most illustrious relique (I mean, of course, "*The Sacred Milk*") was at last produced with a great deal of solemnity. The canon in attendance put on his surplice and stole, and, having prostrated himself before the altar in prayer, drew forth with much reverence the crystal *ampoule* in which it was contained, and held it to the pilgrims, who kissed it as they knelt. He at the same time received their oblations on a wooden tablet, such as were then used to collect tolls in Germany.

An unlucky question of our pilgrim, as to how it could be clearly ascertained that the relique was what it professed to be, enraged the guide beyond measure. He glared upon the pilgrims for some moments in speechless horror, totally unable to articulate. At last he said, "How can you ask such a question with an *authentic* inscription before your

very eyes?" And he would have driven them forth as heretics and blasphemers, had not the remedy, heretofore so efficacious, been instantly resorted to. A little more money—a good thing well applied—lulled the tempest of his feelings in a moment; the *oil of mammon* stilled at once the troubled waters of his indignation; "the winter of his discontent" became thenceforward "a glorious summer!" and the pilgrims not only escaped an ignominious expulsion, but the appeased dignitary even volunteered to shew them "*quæ Virginis erant secretissima.*" This proved to be a rudely-carved image of the Blessed Virgin, with a *crapaudine* under its feet—a gem on which nature had depicted the form of a toad with an exactitude beyond the reach of art—symbolically representing in that position the trampling of all sin and uncleanness under the Virgin's feet, in accordance with the Vulgate translation of Gen. iii. 15 ("*ipsa conteret caput tuum.*")

After dinner, which was probably in the guest-hall of the priory, Erasmus, with his companions, returned to the Lady chapel, and with some difficulty, from its great height, contrived to read over the inscription to which the canon had referred as so very obvious a proof. By this, it would appear that a certain pious man of the name of William, a native of Paris, and a most diligent collector of reliques, went in the course of his travels to Constantinople, of which his brother happened to be then Patriarch. This brother told him about "*the sacred milk,*" earnestly advising him to beg, buy, or steal it, as being far more valuable than any of his other reliques, or even the whole of them put together ("*abundè felicem futurum si vel precariò, vel pretio, vel arte portionem aliquam posset nancisci!*") This may not appear to have been very *episcopal* advice, so far at least as the *third* clause was concerned; nevertheless, allow me to assure you that our friend William obtained the relique very honestly after all. He persuaded the fortunate possessor,

who was a nun, to *give* him a portion of the MILK; but on his journey homewards he was death-stricken. In his last mortal agony, William conjured a friend to convey this precious relique to the church of St. Genevieve at Paris. This his friend faithfully promised to do; but he also was assailed by a deadly malady, and being at the point of death entrusted the sacred deposit to an English earl, who religiously fulfilled the injunction, but solicited and obtained from the clergy to whom he conveyed the relique, that portion which was subsequently enshrined at Walsingham. Such are the brief outlines of the inscription which Erasmus read; and, with so clear and logical a statement before him, he *after dinner* blushed at his former incredulity. "I was *ashamed* (he remarks) of my hesitation; everything was so clearly placed before my eyes; the name, the place, the order of events, and, in a word, nothing was omitted."

There were, besides, numerous indulgences, granted by many prelates who had formerly visited the shrine, at the rate of forty days a-piece—the limit to which they were restricted by the ecclesiastical law. These spiritual benefits were, however, supposed to be *cumulative*, so that the aggregate would have extended to a very great number of years.

Towards the end of his pilgrimage Erasmus felt himself in a peculiarly uncomfortable position, for the monks evidently watched him, and he was apparently the subject of their whispered conversation; so that he imagined himself to be under the suspicion of having sacrilegiously purloined some of the treasures of the shrine. At length one of the canons approached and inquired his name. He told him what it was. "Was he the man who, two years ago, had written a votal tablet in HEBREW?" Erasmus confessed the fact, for, although what he had written was in reality a *Greek* inscription, he knew very well that they called everything *Hebrew* which they did not understand. Presently came the sub-prior, and told our author how many Doctors

of Divinity had been puzzled by his tablet: some pronounced the letters Arabic; others said that they were merely fancy characters. At last one was found who could read the title, and told them that it was a *Latin* inscription, but written in capitals.

At the sub-prior's request, Erasmus translated the tablet word for word; and, declining any pecuniary compensation, received for his guerdon a particle of wood emitting the most delicious fragrance, being an alleged portion of a bench on which the Blessed Virgin Mary had once sat.—“*Et sic peregrinatio nostra felicissime cessit*” are the words with which he closes his narrative, and in which I also think it prudent to take my leave of the reader, inasmuch as I have told him all that I really know as to the Shrines and Pilgrimages of Norfolk.

Most assuredly we have but little cause to regret the circumstance that pilgrimages are no longer matters of daily experience. In too many instances we know that they degenerated into a fashionable lounge—the refuge of frivolity,—and very gross and flagrant abuses were the natural result. In other instances, he who had violated the laws of God and man, visited the shrine either as an imposed penance, or as a voluntary expiation of his guilt; while the superstitious devotee, in utter forgetfulness of the duties which he owed to his family and his home, wandered about from shrine to shrine, laying up for himself, as he fondly imagined, a large stock of merit against the time to come. Still, it would be unjust to deny that some beneficial results may have arisen out of this exploded system. We are to recollect, that in the Middle Ages there were scarcely any *temptations* or *opportunities* for foreign travel, which so greatly enlarges the mind, enlightening the traveller's native country through the medium of the individual, and thus tending towards civilization. When the whole continent of Europe was convulsed with war, the person of the pilgrim was held



OBVERSE OF SEAL OF WALSINGHAM PRIORY.



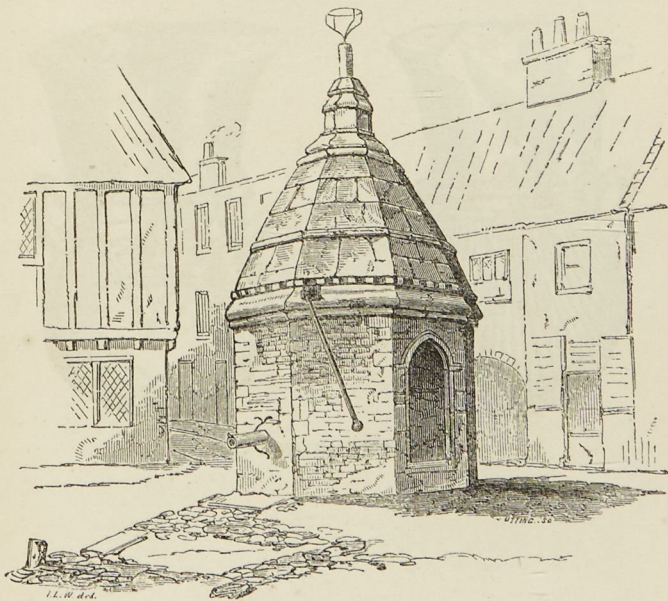
REVERSE OF SEAL OF WALSINGHAM PRIORY.

sacred, and, shielded by a common religion, he could travel even through a hostile country fearlessly and unmolested. Pilgrimages also materially tended towards the structure and decoration of our churches. England was in those times much less wealthy than she is at the present day, yet the most magnificent churches, still the glory of our land, were erected and endowed with an unsparing liberality.

Recollecting that "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth," let us follow the example of our ancestors, not in their *superstition*, but in their *zeal*; and let us not fail to emulate the virtue because we repudiate its alloy.

I have only to add a few words in conclusion, with reference to the three illustrations which accompany my paper, and for which I am indebted to the great kindness of the Committee of the Archæological Institute.

The first contains the *obverse* and *reverse* of the Priory

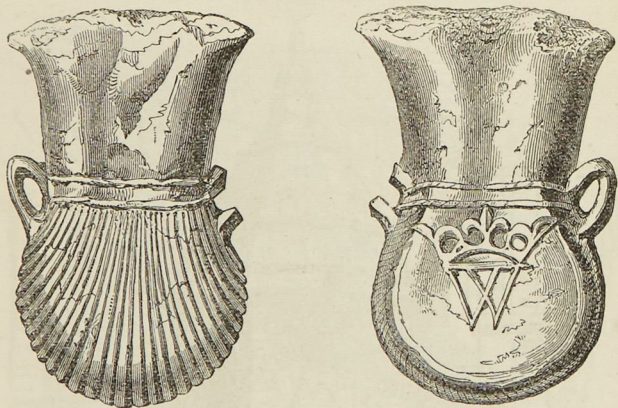


WELL IN COMMON PLACE.

Seal; and I would call the reader's especial attention to *the latter*, having not the very slightest doubt that in outline, in general character, (and *perhaps* even in minute details) it must have resembled the celebrated image of the Blessed Virgin, so long revered in this county, and which was burnt at Chelsea in the reign of king Henry VIII.

The second is a representation of the quaintly picturesque Well in Common Place, suggestive and characteristic of an age when Walsingham was in its greatest splendour.

Lastly, there is an engraving of "*the Walsingham Badge*," which was doubtless the property of some mediæval pilgrim who had visited the shrine.



WALSINGHAM BADGE.