

The Proceedings of the Society during the year 1921.

*By the courtesy of the Proprietors of the local Press we are able
to insert the following accounts:*

EXCURSION IN THE STRATTON DISTRICT.

In the afternoon of Saturday, June 9th, 1921, a large party of the members made an excursion in the Long Stratton district. At the first stop Long Stratton Church and Manor House were visited.

Long Stratton really comprises two parishes—St. Mary and St. Michael, with two parish churches. The place itself is full of historical interest, for it stands on the old Roman road known as the Pye Road, which led to the Roman burgh or fortification, Ad Taum or Tasburgh, another picturesque little village.

The Parish Church is of flint, with freestone dressings, partly erected about 1330 by Sir Roger de Bourne. It consists of a chancel, clerestoried nave of six bays, aisles, vestry, south porch, and a round embattled tower containing six bells. The church was restored in 1846-7 at a cost of £1,000, when several mural paintings were discovered, but which were not preserved. The tower is part of the older church pulled down by Sir Roger de Bourne. The interior contains many interesting features, with many memorials and heraldry.

At the Church of Long Stratton St. Mary
THE SEXTON'S Mr. W. R. Rudd pointed to the fine altar tomb
WHEEL. on which rest full-sized effigies of Judge Edmund
Reeve and his wife. From a long Latin epitaph
the Judge seemed to have possessed all the virtues. But legend
has it that he wrongfully possessed himself of the manor and
advowson, and that his ghost is still occasionally seen in a phantom

carriage driven over the neighbouring fields. Turning next to the so-called Sexton's Wheel preserved in the vestry, Mr. Rudd recalled that the Society visited the church in 1866 and saw "a curious double wheel of iron moving on an axis with a long handle. . . . But no one was able even to hazard a guess at the purpose for which it was used." Since 1866, he added, much had been learned about this wheel. According to the Rev. W. H. Sewell, of Yaxley, that parish contained the only other Sexton's Wheel known to exist. These wheels were used to determine the day from which to begin keeping the "Lady Fast." There were two kinds of fast, observed in honour of the Blessed Virgin, one movable, the other immovable. The latter was kept every Saturday. The "Lady Fast" seems to have been a species of penance, whether voluntary or enjoined, in which the penitent had the choice of either fasting once a week for seven such days of the week as Lady Day happened to fall on, his course beginning from that day, or of finishing his penance sooner by taking as many fasting days together as would serve for the whole year. There were six Lady Days in the year—the Conception, December 6th; the Purification, February 2nd; Annunciation, March 25th; Assumption, July 2nd; and Nativity, September 8th. On which of these Lady Days was a person to commence fasting? To decide this, recourse was had to lot or to the Sexton's Wheel. Both wheels are bound together on one short axle, from which run narrow shafts to the circumference to meet in the handle by which the instrument was held. A string was fastened to each of the six holes, three in each wheel, to indicate the six Lady Days. When the wheels were revolving the person who wished to consult it had to try and catch one of the strings. But radii in each wheel prevented a complete revolution being made.

Mr. Walter Rye read a short paper discussing the Roman Road through Stratton in relation to the processes of laying out hundreds and parishes.

Before leaving Stratton, a visit was paid to Stratton Manor, an ancient red brick mansion, standing on a hill almost in the centre of the town, and overlooking the main road. The house showed signs of not altogether gentle usage at the hands of the German prisoners—its last occupants. The innumerable rooms of the house were explored with considerable interest. There is a large piece of water in front of the house, known as "Stratton Canal."

A LATIN PUZZLE. At the interesting Church of Shelton, a paper was read by the Rector, the Rev. C. C. Swainson, and Mr. Walter Rye set forth the fruit of some researches into the history of the family of Shelton.

Mr. Swainson pointed out that the church is comparable with St. Peter Mancroft and St. Peter Parmentergate in having a sacristy at the east end. That only a few feet of the base of the screen

now survives is attributed by tradition to a fire which destroyed the upper part. A tomb in the south aisle bearing four kneeling effigies of members of the Houghton family has a long Latin composition on one face of it. But the Latin is so bad that no one has been able to decipher it. The Rector added that he had once referred the matter to a schoolmaster, who had pondered the matter in vain and then promised to come and see it some other day, which he never did.

Unfortunately, time would not permit of a visit
 RAINTHORPE to Shelton Hall, and the cars set out again for
 HALL. Stratton by a circular route, and from thence on
 to Rainthorpe Hall, one of the most charming
 and picturesque of the many country residences in Norfolk. After-
 noon tea was served on the spacious lawn, and Sir Charles and
 Lady Harvey were very warmly thanked for their hospitality.

The excursionists were then conducted over the hall by Sir
 Charles Harvey and Mr. F. W. Cooke. It was at Rainthorpe Hall
 that the Walpoles, Earls of Orford, lived for many years.

EXCURSION IN THE SWAFFHAM DISTRICT.

On Tuesday, July 26th, 1921, the Society made an excursion in
 the western half of the county. They first visited Elsing Church
 and Hall. Thence they travelled by way of East Dereham to
 Swaffham, where they lunched at the Assembly Rooms. A call
 having been made at Swaffham Church, a visit was next paid to
 the Priory and Camp of Castleacre, unquestionably the most
 Mediaeval parish this side of England. Afternoon tea was taken
 at Melton Constable Park, by kind invitation of Lord and Lady
 Hastings.

The Church of St. Peter at Elsing dates from
 ELSING about the middle of the 14th century, and is
 CHURCH. in the typical Decorated style. The founders
 of the church, Sir Hugh Hastings and his wife,
 were formerly commemorated by some fine stained glass in the
 east window. This was blown out by a gale, but parts of it have
 been inserted in the easternmost window on the south side of the
 nave. The principal antiquities of the chancel are plain sedilia,
 a piscina, and the remains of a splendid brass to the memory of
 Sir Hugh Hastings, who was buried there in 1347. To judge from
 what remains of it, the chancel screen must have been extraordi-
 narily rich and beautiful. There is great beauty also in the font
 cover, which has had some most obscure and interesting adventures.
 It was sent to the Great Exhibition of 1851, with the intention
 that it should be subsequently copied. Thence all trace of it seems
 to have been lost for about fifteen years. Then it turned up
 mysteriously at Mattishall, whence it was restored to its original

quarters. The antiquarian treasures of the church were indicated and commented on by the Rector, the Rev. E. C. Weddall, who pointed out that the original design of the church has never been added to, the structure being practically the same as when it left the hands of the builders. It has no aisles, and is remarkable for its breadth of span. Mr. Weddall pointed out some woodwork from the base of the screen which had been thrown aside for firewood, but which he had rescued in the hope that some day it would lend itself to restoration.

At Elsing Hall the party were received by
 ELSING Miss Clarendon Hyde and Mrs. Thackray, who
 HALL. showed them over a beautiful old moated house

with many features and associations of high antiquity. Mr. Walter R. Rudd read this paper: Some of my friends have enquired the reason Elsing Church and Elsing Hall have been chosen by me to visit on this occasion. My reply has been that I wish our members to see one of the final resting places—one of the early homes—of that ancient and illustrious line described in an old record as "The Right Honorable and Noble family of the Hastings, descended from Hastyngs a nobleman of Norway who came to England with Rollo the Dane in the reign of Alured or Alfred, King of England, about the year 890," and whose direct descendant, the present Lord Hastings, will be our kindly host this afternoon at Melton Constable Park, now, and since many years, the principal seat of the family.

We have just seen at the church the magnificent monumental brass of Hugh de Hastings, commander of King Edward the Third's army in Flanders, who died 1347.

Elsing Hall came into his possession upon his marriage with Margery, daughter of Richard Foliot, who may have erected the original mansion. It was held by the Hastings down the centuries until it passed to the Browne family by the marriage of Anne, eldest daughter and co-heiress of Sir Hugh Hastings, with William Browne shortly before the year 1554. This family and their descendants in turn have held it ever since.

The present owners trace their ancestry to the Hastings and Foliot families. Richard Charles Browne was stated by Carthew in 1864 as then owning Elsing Hall and as being "the eldest co-heir of the illustrious family of Hastings." Unfortunately, this historic building during its evolution through many centuries from a medieval fortified residence to its present condition has suffered considerably from alteration and destruction, which in many cases are the same thing! The last restoration—or destruction—seems to have taken place in 1852 by the order of Mr. Richard Charles Browne. The architect employed was Thomas Jeckell, a well-known architect of his time and for many years a member of this Society.

From his description of the Hall the following particulars are mostly taken:—

The house stands on the south side of a large area enclosed by a moat. On the west, north, and east sides the moat consisted of a single channel from twenty to eighty feet in width with about twelve feet in depth of water; and on these three sides the enclosure was defended by a wall of considerable strength with occasional turrets and buttresses, the remains of which are still visible, as well as the abutments of the bridge and gatehouse. Westward of the bridge these walls are of flintwork, extremely strong and apparently of the 14th century; but to the east they are of brickwork. There was also a wall on the south side of the enclosure, but it appeared never to have been carried up much above the level of the ground, nor to have been intended for defence. Adjoining the eastern walls foundations were found of offices and buildings supposed by Jeckell to have been stables. Jeckell considered the foundations of the house to be 13th century work. The house therefore presents the plan of a medieval residence, although the porch, the dais window, the doorways and other openings are of much later date. Over the porch are two shields carved in stone bearing the arms of Hastings and Foliot quarterly impaling Morley. Carthew, from this fact, considers the mansion—much as we now see it—is the work of John Hastings, buried at Gressenhall, who held the estate from 1436 to 1477. On the east, north and west sides the walls are of solid flint and freestone; but on the south side they are of “herring-boned” brickwork between timber studs. In the centre of the building is the dining-hall, open to the oak roof. The hall had a dais at the east end with a bay window and a gallery at the west, under which are the doors to the kitchen and offices. The hall was formerly lighted by two windows in the south wall, in addition to the present north windows, in all of which there were provisions for shutters, but no appearance of permanent glazing, although Jeckell states quarries painted with a continuous rosetree and birds sitting thereon were found, which he considered must have been temporarily fixed to the iron bars. There was a fireplace and chimney apparently built into the original wall brickwork.

Opposite the bay window on the dais was a passage leading to the long room over the drawing-room. There was also a spiral staircase communicating with the chamber, or solar, and the drawing-room, as well as with a crypt under the drawing-room. The chamber was formerly the entire length of the building with a large arched fireplace opening in the centre, in front of which a second fireplace had been built early in the 17th century. The walls of this room were originally richly colored. Numerous traces of coloring were found by Jeckell, indicating a stalk and scroll border extending round the upper part of the room. From this

room there was a small window looking into the dining-hall, and an opening to the chapel and to a building containing the necessarium, of which the foundations still remain abutting on the moat. In the chapel traces were found by Jeckell of the piscina and sedilia on the south side, the raised floor for the altar, the indentations in the wall formed for the brackets to support the altar, and a gallery at the west end, upon which the doorway from the solar opened. There were also found remains of frescoes on the walls.

At the luncheon there was no speaking apart
 THE MISSING from an important announcement by the President
 BOOTON as to the Communion Cup which disappeared from
 COMMUNION Booton Church on the 22nd of April, 1919. He
 CUP. had been on the track of it ever since. It had
 now been recovered, and it was hoped that
 shortly it would be restored to the church.

The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Swaff-
 SWAFFHAM ham is one of the finest edifices of its kind in
 CHURCH. West Norfolk, and is almost too well known to
 need description. The Rector, the Rev. F. Keeling
 Scott, gave an address, pointing out its leading features. Incident-
 ally he produced the Swaffham Black Book, and suggested that
 the Society should aid him in the publication of it. It dates
 from 1443 and contains (1) a terrier or list of church property,
 (2) a list of debts and of promises never fulfilled, and (3) a list of
 church benefactors and their various gifts. He made propositions
 as to the necessary translations and the form that the publication
 should take. Mr. W. R. Rudd promised that a search should be
 made as to how far this work had already been covered in the
 Society's transactions.

Castleacre, whose Priory and Camp were visited
 CASTLEACRE. by kind permission of the Earl of Leicester, is
 remotely interesting for its associations with
 William, Earl of Warenne, who had received it as a grant with
 many other lordships from the Conqueror. He founded there
 a great castle and a beautiful priory, both of them now in a con-
 dition of stately ruin, and yet sufficiently vestigial to permit of
 detailed study. Several generations of the Warenne family lived
 there. On the death of John, last Earl, in 1347, the estate passed
 by female succession into the hands of the Arundels, ancestors of
 the Dukes of Norfolk. After several changes of ownership it was
 bought in the early part of the 17th century by Lord Chief Justice
 Coke, Lord Leicester's famous ancestor. The remains of the priory
 are generally regarded as incomparably the finest ruin in the
 county. The Rev. Dr. Dukinfield Astley, himself an authoritative
 writer on the antiquities of Castleacre, showed the party round,
 and made such explanations as enabled them to figure roughly

what the priory was like before the age of demolition and decay. The Society last visited Castleacre twelve years ago. Dr. Astley said there had been some talk of crumbling on the part of the magnificent west front; but he could discover no signs of it since the Society's last visit.

MELTON The Hall at Melton Constable, which has been
CONSTABLE. for centuries held by the Astley family, is hand-
 somely built of brick and stone, with four fronts.

It was re-built by Sir Jacob Astley in 1680, whose successors have extended and embellished it in various directions. Its internal treasures and decorations are extraordinarily rich and beautiful. Lord and Lady Hastings, having regaled their visitors with afternoon refreshments, joined a party of guides, by whom they were competently shown over the house in batches of ten or a dozen.

At the request of the Secretary, Lord Hastings read a short paper on the remarkable antiquities of the Astley family and of the rise and development of his house and estate. He said: The Estlegas, or Astleys, are a Saxon family who were established in Warwickshire before the Conquest. Their descent and the part they had in affairs are clearly traceable through the 11th and 12th centuries, but, for all practical purposes, the founder of the family may be taken to have been Sir Thomas Astley, Kt., summoned to Parliament as Baron Astley, 1253. This Sir Thomas became one of the insurrectionary barons, and fell at the Battle of Evesham, 1265. In 1236 he married as his second wife Editha Constable, of Melton Constable. The Constables took their name from the office they held under the Bishops of Norwich, and the name of Melton Constable is derived from Mealton the Constable, who owned the manor and had his residence there. Through the 11th and 12th centuries the Constables remained in possession of Melton Constable and of their hereditary office until the death of Geoffrey de Constable in 1235. The estate then passed to his sister Editha, who married Sir Thomas Astley, as above referred to, in the following year. Sir Thomas and Editha had three sons. The eldest—Thomas—received from his father the estate of Hillmorton, in Warwickshire, and the second—Stephen—inherited Melton Constable from his mother. The third—Ralph—died during his brothers' lifetime, leaving a son—Thomas—who inherited Hillmorton and Melton Constable from his two uncles, both of whom had died unmarried. This Thomas Astley married the daughter of Sir George de Charwell, Kt., and died 1341, leaving a son, Sir Ralph, from whom we pass in the direct and uninterrupted male line to the present owner of the estate, being a continuous descent of twenty-two generations, representing 685 years, during which the Astleys have owned and occupied their home at Melton Constable. The park at Melton Constable was enclosed by Royal

charter in 1290, and the right of free warren was at the same time granted to the family by the King. It is believed that a settlement existed during the 13th and 14th centuries on the slopes to the south of St. Peter's Church, which itself was consecrated in 1092, and that the manor-house of the Astley family was situated within the still existing moated site which lies in the low ground to the south-west of the church. In about 1400 this original manor-house was replaced by a large court-yarded dwelling on a site slightly to the east of the present mansion, where it stood and was occupied for nearly 250 years. The occupant of this second house with the principal claim to notice was Sir Isaac Astley, Kt., who was a considerable figure at the Court of Queen Elizabeth. He married Mary, daughter of Sir Edward Walgrave, Kt., of Borley, and had nine sons and five daughters. The fifth of these sons was the well-known Royalist commander, Sir Jacob Astley, who was created Lord Astley of Reading in 1644, and became possessed of property in Maidstone and Kent, which eventually reverted to the head of the family. Another son was Richard Astley, who became a D.D. and a prominent ecclesiastic. Sir Isaac died in 1597, and was succeeded by his eldest son Thomas, who died in 1617, and was succeeded by his eldest son Sir Francis Astley, Kt., who died in 1637, and was succeeded by his next brother, Sir Isaac Astley, who was created a baronet in 1641. This Sir Isaac was twelfth in descent from Thomas Lord Astley and Editha Constable, and represented the thirteenth generation of Astleys at Melton Constable. He married Bridget, daughter of John Coke, of Holkham, fourth son and eventual heir of Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice of England, but had no children, and died in 1659, when this baronetcy became extinct. Sir Isaac was the last of the family to occupy the medieval house before referred to. He and all the family took a very prominent part on the Royalist side throughout the Civil Wars, and the old house, with its contents, was so illused by the rebels that at the Restoration in 1660 it was found to be uninhabitable and too ruinous to permit of rebuilding. Its foundations are traceable in the kitchen gardens, and the remnants of it are to be seen in the garden walls. The Thomas Astley before referred to, who died 1617, had three sons in all: Sir Francis, Kt., and Sir Isaac, Bart., both died without children; the third son, Sir Edward Astley, Kt., was also a prominent Royalist, and married his first cousin, Elizabeth, only daughter and eventual heiress of Jacob, Lord Astley of Reading. Sir Edward died in 1653, during his elder brother's lifetime, but left a son Jacob, who succeeded to the family estates on the death of his uncle in 1659. With this Jacob Astley began a new era, and he may be described as a second founder of the family. When King Charles II. landed in England, Jacob Astley was summoned to meet him, and, being

appointed Standard Bearer, marched into London in that capacity on May 29th, 1660. On that occasion he was knighted. On June 25th, 1660 (Thanksgiving Day), he was created a baronet, he being then not quite twenty years of age. In 1662 he was married at Kimberley to Blanch, eldest daughter of Sir Philip Wodehouse. In 1664 he commenced to pull down the ruins of the old house and prepare materials for the mansion house of the present day. He built it of bricks made in the Swanton Novers Yard and of oak felled in the park. The house was ready for occupation in 1670, but the internal decoration was not completely finished till 1687. The name of the architect is not known. Sir Jacob sat in Parliament for forty-four years as Knight of the Shire for the County of Norfolk and died in 1729, aged 90, having lived nearly sixty years in the house which he himself had built. He was succeeded by his son, Sir Philip, second baronet, who was succeeded by his son, Sir Jacob, third baronet. This Sir Jacob married Lucy, sister and co-heiress of Sir Henry le Strange, of Hunstanton, and so brought to the Astleys their claim to the ancient barony of Hastings, which was later substantiated. He died in 1760, and was succeeded by his son, Sir Edward Astley, fourth baronet. Sir Edward left a great mark on the family fortunes, and on the appearance of Melton Constable. He married Rhoda, sister and heiress of John Lord Delaval, and so brought to the Astleys the great estate of Seaton Delaval in the County of Northumberland. He was also a great forester and landscape gardener. Up to his time the park had been in the nature of an ancient forest, but between 1760 and 1780 he undertook the heroic work of laying it all out anew, and planting it in the ornamental form in which it now appears. He represented the county in Parliament for many years, together with the famous T. W. Coke, of Holkham, and died in 1802. He was succeeded by his son, Sir Jacob Henry Astley, who died in 1817, and was succeeded by his son, Sir Jacob Astley, sixth baronet, who was summoned to Parliament by writ 18th May, 1841, as sixteenth Baron Hastings. This Sir Jacob, Lord Hastings, had a great reputation as politician, agriculturist, master of fox-hounds, and art connoisseur. At Melton Constable he built the portico on the north front of the house and laid out the formal gardens. He was a buyer of works of art at the Paris revolutionary sales, and the French furniture and china, also the Oriental porcelain now to be found in the house, were acquired by him. He died in 1859, and was succeeded by his elder son, who, dying without children, was succeeded by his brother, who was married to the daughter of Speaker Manners-Sutton, first Viscount Canterbury. He died in 1872, and was succeeded by his elder son, Bernard, who died in 1875 while on a shooting expedition in India. The title and estate then passed to his second son, Sir George

Astley, tenth baronet, twentieth Lord Hastings, who did much for the improvement of Melton Constable, both externally and internally, and was a prominent supporter of the turf, being the breeder and owner of the 1885 Derby winner Melton. He died in 1904, and was succeeded by his eldest son, the present owner.

AYLSHAM, FELBRIGG, AND BLICKLING.

On Tuesday, September 20th, the Society visited the above-named places.

A interesting paper on the ancient church was read by Mr. L. G. Bolingbroke, which stated that the church proper is of the Decorated period, having been built about the year 1380, and has generally been attributed to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and one of the Duchy Courts used to be held in the town. Externally the church is a good example of a Norfolk church of the period, but has no very distinctive features except the flintwork on the south wall and the south porch, which was erected by Richard Howard, Sheriff of Norwich in 1488. It is decorated with flint and stone panelling, and above the entrance is a carved niche for a figure and the arms of France and England. Over the door in Blomefield's time was a Latin inscription in memory of the donor and his wives. On entering the church there is, however, much to interest a visitor. The tower is Early English, but the bells are comparatively late. Some of them, however, would be of interest to the members, as they bear the name of a churchwarden, George Hunt Holley, an ancestor of our Editorial Secretary, the Rev. George Hunt Holley, of Holme-next-the-Sea. The Late Decorated octagonal font has round the bowl emblems of the Evangelists with representations of the Passion and Crucifixion, while on the shaft are four shields, three bearing the arms of John of Gaunt, Morley, and Roos. The nave arcades, with alternate circular and octagonal pillars, are very effective, but they lean on both sides some 14 inches outwardly, probably due to the thrust of the roof, although some think it an intentional feature. The roofs throughout the church are modern, with the exception of that over the south transept, which was the Lady Chapel, and accordingly we find the letter "M" crowned painted upon it. The pulpit is Early Jacobean of about 1690, but its stairway is modern. Of the rood screen only the lower portion remains *in situ*. It was wholly or in part erected by Thomas Wymer, who died in 1507. A writer in the *Eastern Counties Collectanea* says: "The panels are sixteen in number, eight on either side of a central doorway. Each panel has a painted figure, but twelve—that is to say, the first six on the north side and the last six on the south—are painted not on the wood but on paper and attached to the panel;

whilst the middle four figures, two on each side next the doorway are painted on the panel itself. As far as I can judge, these last are much inferior in execution to the figures painted on paper, which I think are the finest works of art I have seen on a Norfolk rood screen." Personally, said Mr. Bolingbroke, I am a little doubtful about the paintings being on paper, but under these runs the inscription in memory of Thomas Wymer and his wives, so no doubt he gave only that portion of the screen. "Johannis Jannys" is painted under the figure on the north side, nearest the door, and probably he gave that and the three others painted on the wood. Portions of the arcading of the rood screen have been incorporated in the reredos, which was set up early in the 19th century. The two benefactors, named Richard Howard and Thomas Wymer, are both commemorated by shrouded effigies in brass on the chancel floor, where also several other interesting brasses may be seen. In the chancel there is also a somewhat mutilated monument to John Jegon, Bishop of Norwich, who died at Aylsham in 1617 in a house which he had purchased there. Bishop Jegon was an unpopular person in his day, and there is extant a contemporary ballad which paints him in anything but flattering terms. As legal Secretary to the present Bishop of Norwich I am always interested in the concluding lines of the ballad, which refer to the death of Jegon's secretary in these words:

"That Lord's secretarie, as we did heare say,
Fell drunke and was drowned upon the hie way."

There are some remarkable sedilia in the chancel, and two piscina in the chancel aisle and the south transept. In the churchyard beneath the chancel wall lies buried Humphrey Repton, who made more than a local reputation as a landscape gardener, and is said to have laid out the garden at Blickling.

Prince Duleep Singh, at the invitation of Mr. Bolingbroke, made a few interesting remarks about Christopher Layer, an Aylsham notability, a memorial on the wall of whose house has been placed by his Highness. Christopher Layer, said Prince Duleep Singh, was the last Norfolk Jacobite, and one of the very last in England to suffer death for the Royal cause. He was the squire of Booton and came of a very old Norfolk family. When he was hanged, drawn, and quartered, his brother-in-law acquired the property and kept it in the family. The Jacobites looked upon Layer as a martyr in a good cause, and those who read his life might agree that he was not half as black as he was painted. He was a thoroughly honest man and believed in the cause for which he died. There was in the house a very nice staircase of the Charles II. period. On each step of the staircase was a little hunting scene. He kept hounds, and these scenes no doubt had

something to do with the hunting proclivities of the family Layer was quite faithful to his friends. In the list of people in his papers was a gentleman whom they called Coke of Norfolk. Coke of Holkham was then known locally as Coke of Norfolk as if it was a tradition in the family that he was referred to as rather a Jacobite.

The dilapidated appearance of parts of this
 FELBRIGG old and interesting church occasioned some little
 CHURCH. surprise. The Rector, the Rev. T. South Jagg,
 dealt, in a brief address, mainly with the fine
 brasses. One, he said, in the aisle, was of Sir Simon de Felbrigg,
 who was a standard bearer to Richard II. Another was of Thomas
 Windham, third son of Edward Windham, knight, who died in
 1599. The oldest brasses, however, were in the sanctuary, and
 were of the grandfather and father of Sir Simon de Felbrigg.

By the kindness of Mr. R. W. Ketton, the
 FELBRIGG archaeologists next visited Felbrigg Hall and
 HALL. made a close examination of its manifold treasures.

The history of this handsome and interesting
 mansion, and of the distinguished people who have been connected
 with it, was described in the following paper dealing with the
 history of the hall and of the various persons of distinction who
 lived in it, which was read by Mr. Walter R. Rudd. Felbrigg
 Hall, said Mr. Rudd, has been described as a large and handsome
 mansion in a beautifully wooded park of some 600 acres. At the
 survey it was held by Ailward de Felbrigge, the family assuming
 their name from the village of which they were enfeoffed by the
 Bigods at the Conquest. The family of Felbrigge was, as a matter
 of fact, a branch of the Bigod family, which latter name was
 their true patronymic. It remained in the possession of this
 family until the death, in 1442, of Sir Simon de Felbrigge, whose
 magnificent brass we have just seen, and who was standard bearer
 to Richard II. He married Margaret, daughter of the Duke of
 Silesia, and cousin to Anne of Bohemia, first wife of Richard II.
 By his will, dated at Felbrigge 1432, he left instructions to his
 executors, Lord Scales, Sir William Paston, and others, to sell
 his manors in Felbrigge and Aylmerton after the death of his
 second wife, Catherine. Upon her decease in 1460 it was sold to
 John Wyndham, of an ancient Norfolk family, settled in Wymond-
 ham from the 12th century. There is an interesting account in
 the *Paston Letters* of a dispute between the younger branch of the
 Felbrigge family and John Wyndham, and the forcible entry into
 the place of Sir John Felbrigge in the absence of Wyndham, and
 the dragging of his lady out of the house by the hair of her head.
 The deed by which Sir John Felbrigge finally released his claim
 on payment to him of 200 marks, is, I believe, still preserved.
 John Wyndham's son was knighted by Henry VII. at the Battle

of Stoke, but was beheaded in 1503 for being concerned in the conspiracy of Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. His son and successor, Sir Thomas Wyndham, was Vice-Admiral of the Fleet, Knight of Henry VIII.'s Body Guard, and one of his Privy Councillors. His will is dated 1521. Sir Edmund, his son, was in great favour with Henry VIII. He built the south front of the hall, it is stated, on the site of the Felbrigg mansion, of which several cellars remain. The hall is built of red brick with stone quoins and windows, but the brickwork is covered with plaster. In the parapet of the bays and porch is the motto, "Gloria Deo in Excelcis," in large stone letters. Over the entrance door of the porch are the arms of Wyndham impaling Portman, and Wyndham impaling Lytton of Knebworth. The west front was built by William Wyndham, and was completed in 1687, this date being affixed to the drawing-room ceiling. The collection of many of the pictures and books was made by his son and grandson, the latter of whom carried out several alterations to the interior of the house, erected the principal staircase, and fitted up the library with carved wainscot oak. The exterior of the mansion, with the Jacobean wing tacked on to the Tudor house, reminds one of Hampton Court Palace. William Windham, the famous Statesman who possessed the property from 1761 to 1810, is not known to have made any additions to the house. I am, however, inclined to think that the magnificent French furniture, &c., may have been collected by him, and in his time the park was planted and laid out by Repton (our English Le Nôtre), who also planted and laid out Blickling Park, and whose tomb we have seen in Aylsham Church. Attached to the east side of the house is an immense quadrangle of domestic offices, covering a far greater area than the Tudor-Jacobean mansion. This part was built by Admiral Wyndham (Lukin) in 1825. It is possible he may have also covered the red brick of the Tudor house with stucco, as was the fashion at that period. William Howe Wyndham (Lukin), in about 1840, altered the billiard-room, the decorations of which are said to have been designed and carried out by Stanley, a stonemason, of Norwich, whom some of us can remember. About the same time was acquired the beautiful ancient Flemish stained glass in the great hall windows.

The reception rooms on the ground floor comprise the morning-room to the right of the entrance hall; to the left what used to be the billiard-room, and leading from this, two drawing-rooms. On the first floor is the library, a beautiful and restful apartment filled with rare books. In a closet are the ancient muniments carefully arranged in order by the late Miss Ketton. Although Felbrigg perhaps lacks the majestic dignity of Blickling, it fascinates one with its peaceful charm. Thanks to the care of the present owner, our host, the rooms (Tudor and Jacobean) and

their contents remain practically as they were in those Jacobean and Early Georgian times, which saw such a marked advance in domestic comfort, joined with elegance and artistic ornamentation.

Bacon, in his essay on building, depicts an ideal mansion of his day as containing "delicate and rich cabinets, windows glazed with crystalline glass, and all other elegancies that may be thought of." This picture seems to me to portray some of the fascination of Felbrigg. In it we see an illustration that in the manor house of the 16th century the size of the feudal great hall in proportion to the rest of the house had been very considerably reduced. We see illustrated that in the time of Henry VIII. medieval architecture had entered on its latest phase before its final overthrow. At the time the Tudor hall was built the diversion of property from the monastic orders to the laity, the growing prosperity of the country, and its more assured state, were favouring circumstances which led to an immense development of building mostly of a domestic character. The country became covered with houses of all sizes—palaces, manor houses, burgher dwellings in the towns, solitary farmhouses, cottages in the village streets. The spirit of building was abroad, and in the words of an old writer, "It is a worlde to see how divers men beinge bent to buildinge and having a delectable view in spending of their goods by that trade doe dalie imagine new devises of their own to guide their workmen withal!"

At the death of William Windham in 1810 the direct line of the family ended and the estate passed by his will to Admiral Lukin, a connexion on his mother's side, and who, by the terms of the will, assumed the name and arms of Windham. Thus it would appear this property was owned by the Felbriggs, and following them, the Windhams from shortly after the Conquest until 1810.

Of the two last Lukin-Windhams it is hardly necessary to say much. They are within the recollection of many of us. "Redan" Windham, after a distinguished military career, died abroad. His heir closed a shameful life in wretchedness.

Of the various owners of Felbrigg there stand out two, Sir Simon de Felbrigg, the standard bearer of Richard II., and William Windham, minister of George III. Windham was born in 1750, on the 3rd May, in Golden Square, London, then a fashionable residential quarter, now mostly occupied by the warehouses of cloth manufacturers and agents. At seven years of age he was placed at Eton, where he remained until he was about sixteen. On leaving Eton in 1766 he was placed in the University of Glasgow. Then followed Oxford, where in September, 1767, he was entered a Gentleman Commoner of the University College. After the usual "grand tour" this remarkable man—the school-fellow of Fox, the friend of Pitt, of Burke, of Dr. Johnson—

commenced that brilliant political career, which ended only with his death.

His political insight in many respects was far keener than that of his contemporaries or of succeeding generations. For instance, when he resigned his office in Pitt's administrations he stated it was for the following reasons:—"When the proposition of the Act of Union (*i.e.*, between England and Ireland) was brought forward I had strong objections to the measure, and I was only reconciled to it upon the idea that all disabilities attaching on the Catholics of Ireland were to be removed and that the whole population would be united in interests and affections. Believing this to be the case and finding that more impediments were started to this measure than I was prepared to apprehend, I relinquished the administration, because I thought the measure indispensable to the safety of the Empire." Had Windham's advice been followed would it not have lastingly attained that peace which we now, after more than a century of strife and of bloodshed, are striving to secure? Again he writes: "The calamities of war are undoubtedly great, but it does not follow that what may call itself Peace will ultimately be the means of diminishing them, even if it should not bring on calamities of a worse kind."

In the stilted language of the time, a contemporary describes Windham as follows:—"His tenderness as a husband and relative, his kindness as a friend and patron, his condescending attention to inferiors, his warm sympathy with the unfortunate, are so many themes of praise which it would be more agreeable than necessary to dwell upon. His talents, accomplishments, and virtues have been happily summed up by describing him as the true model of an English gentleman. . . . He was the Admirable Crichton of his age and country."

If this is too high praise, it can be declared with truth that William Windham was a brilliant personality of that radiant society which, during the last quarter of the 18th century, concentrated within itself the ultimate perfections of a hundred years of triumphant aristocracy. Nature had endowed him with intelligence and industry. Within his charmed circle, whatever one's personal disabilities, it was difficult to fail, and to him, with all his advantages, success was well nigh unavoidable. With little effort he obtained political eminence. He lived in a time of faction and anger. Great forces and fierce antagonisms were moving. A powerful movement was spreading through the country. New passions, new desires were abroad: or rather old passions and old desires reincarnated with a new potency; love of freedom; hope for the future of man. The mighty still sat proudly in their seats, but a storm was gathering out of the darkness, and already there was lightning in the sky.

After spending some time in Blickling Church, BLICKLING where the principal objects of interest were HALL. described by the Rector, the party then addressed themselves to what was perhaps the most attractive part of the day's programme, namely a tour of the famous Blickling Hall and its beautiful grounds and pleasure gardens. They also took tea in the hall by the kind invitation of Mrs. Hoffman, who, however, was unable to receive them in person as she was then in Scotland.

Canon Meyrick read an excellent paper, in which he described the most interesting features and associations of the historic residence. He said: In 1879 this Society visited Blickling, and it interested me to notice that the story of this wonderful manor was in the far better hands of my father, the late Canon Meyrick, the Rector of the parish. My excuse for daring to speak to you to-day is not my knowledge of, but my love for, Blickling. As a child, one often takes everything for granted, and does not bother to ask questions. This hall, where as a child I often played, and where Lady Lothian treated us children of the rectory as nephews and nieces—lending her horses, her park, her woods, her lake, her boat, her tennis court—in fact, withholding nothing from us. This hall is just part and parcel of myself. The name, spelt in three English and four Latin ways, probably means the Beck Meadow, *i.e.*, the lowlands lying along the course of the beck or stream above Ingworth. That was the original site of the village, and there the first hall was built. In the days of Edward the Confessor, from 1045 to 1053, Harold, Earl of East Anglia and afterwards King of England, lived in the first manor, about a mile from the present hall, situated on the bank of the Bure, where there is a field known to this day as "Old Manor Meadow."

After the Battle of Hastings, the Conqueror presented the manor to Bishop Herfast, who had been his chaplain, and later it is recorded in the Conqueror's survey that William Beanfoe, Bishop of Thetford, lived here. Herbert de Losinga, the last Bishop of Thetford and the first of Norwich and founder of Norwich Cathedral, and his successors till 1533, also used Blickling, a pleasant country retreat. Meanwhile, Bishop Eborard—Losinga's successor—gave part of the Great Manor, and the part that concerns us, to John FitzRobert, a great soldier of the 12th century, whose niece, Margaret de Cressi, succeeded him. After him came the family of Engaines, who in 1309 sold it to the De Holvestons. James de Holveston is commemorated by the earliest brass in the church, 1378. The Holvestons in 1368 left it to Sir Nicholas Dagworth. This Nicholas Dagworth came of a Suffolk family, already famous for military feats. He himself lived a stirring life as a soldier and diplomat. In 1364 he was commander in Aquitaine. There was trouble in Ireland in 1376, and King Edward III.

sent him thither "to reform that state of that kingdom." Later Richard II. employed him in Germany, Italy, Naples, Sicily, Flanders, and Scotland. About 1390 he retired from public life and built a mansion or manor house on the site of this hall. Meanwhile, the old manor hall was still occupied by the Bishops of Norwich. The new house was called the Dagworth Manor Hall, till later, the two manors were re-united, the old hall fell into decay and Dagworth's house took the name of Blickling Hall.

In Blickling Church you will find Dagworth's figure in brass, fully-armed, lying on his crest (of an eagle's head erased), and a lion couchant at his feet. "Here lies Nicholas of Dagworth, soldier, at one time lord of Blicklyng, who died on (?) of January, 1401, on whose soul may God have mercy." No trace of Dagworth's hall remains, though it stood here for 200 years.

In 1407 we find even a greater man than Sir Nicholas Dagworth, Lord of Blickling, namely, Sir Thomas of Erpingham. For 200 years the Erpinghams had lived in the village of their name, about three miles distant. In the church at Erpingham is a brass of Sir Thomas' father, Sir John. Sir Thomas took an active part in deposing Richard II., and in bringing Henry IV. to the Throne. In old age he fought at Agincourt, and you will remember Shakespeare's reference—

"King Henry: Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham.

A good soft pillow for that good white head,
Were better than a churlish turf of France.

Erpingham: Not so, my liege, this lodging likes me better,
Since I may say, 'Now lie I like a King'."

Sir Thomas built the Erpingham Gate leading into Norwich Close, and also the tower of Erpingham Church. He lived much in Norwich, in his city house in St. Martin's-at-Palace, and he lies buried with his two wives in Norwich Cathedral. Our Secretary, Mr. Johnson, will tell you that he believes Sir Thomas' house was to the north-east of St. Martin's Church. Thomas Heywood in his *Gynaikeion*, a book of nine volumes, printed in 1624, tells a story, which Blomefield quotes, about this Sir Thomas, how he founded a church and abbey in Norwich, how one Friar John dared to make love to the beautiful Lady Erpingham, how that chaste lady laid a trap for Friar John, into which the mighty Friar walked: how Sir Thomas in wrath strangled the miserable man and returned his corpse secretly to the Abbey; how another monk, Richard, was accused of the murder and condemned to death; and how Sir Thomas, knowing Richard's innocence and his own guilt, posted instantly to London, made full confession, and for his former good service was pardoned.

In 1431 Sir Thomas Erpingham sold Blickling to Sir John Fastolf, who about twenty years later sold it to Sir Geoffrey

Boleyn, Lord Mayor of London. The Boleyns came from Salle in Norfolk, so Sir Geoffrey in coming to Blickling was coming back to the county of his ancestors. Sir Geoffrey built the north-east chapel of the church and filled the window of the church with painted glass. He was great-grandfather of Queen Anne, and therefore great-great-grandfather of Queen Elizabeth. His grandson, Sir Thomas Boleyn, was at Blickling when his son, Viscount Rochfort, was beheaded on May 17th, 1536, and his daughter, Queen Anne, two days later. It is probable that Queen Anne was born in Blickling, and that Henry VIII. courted her here. By marriage the estate passed to Sir John Clere, of Ormesby, whose spendthrift heir, who erected the monument in the church, was forced in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to sell Blickling to Sir Henry Hobart.

The Hobarts were an ancient Essex family who in the 16th century settled in Norfolk. It was a Hobart who in 1511 was largely responsible for the cost of building the Council Chamber in the Guildhall of Norwich. Sir Henry Hobart, who bought the hall, became Lord Chief Justice. He demolished the house of Dagworth, of Erpingham, of Fastolf, the home of Anne Boleyn. He did not live to see the hall finished in 1628, but died three years before. The architect was Lyminge, who also built Hatfield Hall. The Hobarts, whose city house occupied the site of the Norwich High Schools in the parish of St. Stephen's, supported the Puritan cause in the 17th century. Sir John had the rightful vicar of St. Stephen's turned out, and his own chaplain, Dr. Collings, intruded. Nevertheless, we find Sir John was knighted by King Charles II., when that monarch visited Blickling. Sir John's son, Henry, fought for William III. at the Boyne. He died in 1698 of a wound received from Le Neve, with whom he fought a duel on Cawston Heath. His son, who succeeded him, was created by George II. first Baron Hobart of Blickling, and later Earl of Buckinghamshire. His eldest grand-daughter married the sixth Marquis of Lothian, the second married Lord Suffield, and Lady Suffield lived as a widow here from 1821 to 1850. Then the estate passed to the eighth Marquis of Lothian, whose widow lived here till her death in 1901. She was buried in Jedbergh Abbey.

Naturally the relation of church and hall is very marked. There are brasses commemorating the Boleyn family in the church. (1) To Cecily Boleyn, sister of Sir Geoffrey, who bought the manor of Sir John Fastolfe; she died in 1458. (2) To Isabel, daughter of Sir Geoffrey, who married William Cheyne—a brass remarkable for the head-dress and necklace; she died in 1485. (3) Antony Boleyn, uncle of Queen Anne, who died in 1483. (4) Anne Boleyn, sister of Antony, aunt of Queen Anne, who died in infancy in 1479. The great monument in the south aisle was erected by Sir Edward Clere in memory of his father. The Cleres both lived here—

descendants of the Boleyns. The arms and names of the heads of the Clere family from 1066 to 1580 are carved on the tomb. The recumbent figure is lost, if ever there were one. Nineteen of the Hobarts are buried in the vault. Four tablets commemorate members of the family. The present owners of Blickling are represented by three monuments. (1) The first Marquis and his wife by a monument in the chancel—a poor piece of work. (2) A noble monument, by G. F. Watts, commemorates the eighth Marquis, and was erected about forty years ago. (3) A beautiful bass-relief, by A. G. Walker, commemorates Constance, his wife.

A few words about the hall itself. It was built by Henry Hobart much in the shape of an H. The moat surrounding the hall is transfigured with a flower garden; the water was drained off more than 200 years ago. Note the stone bulls on the bridge, adopted as a crest for the Boleyns, from whom the property was bought by the Hobarts. Above the doorway are the Hobart arms. The gateway contains its original door, with a bull's head for a knocker. The carved figures were added to the splendid double staircase in Georgian days. On the right wall is a picture of Sir James Hobart and his wife, with Loddon Church and St. Olave's Bridge, both built by Sir James. In the breakfast-room, to the right, is a portrait of Lady Londonderry, by Sir T. Lawrence. In the morning-room are portraits of two Hobarts—one Attorney-General in the reign of Henry VII. On the chimney-piece are the Fastolfe arms, brought from Caistor. On the stairs are wooden figures of Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth. The billiard-room is hung with tapestry, representing scenes from the life of Abraham. To the right lies the chief drawing-room, with pictures of King George III. and his Queen, Charlotte, Sir Robert Walpole, the Marquis Townshend, the Earl of Leicester, Lady Suffolk, Sir Philip Sidney, Queen Elizabeth, and Queen Mary Stuart, the last three by Zuccherò. The library is magnificent. It measures 127 feet, and is lined with 12,000 volumes, largely of the 17th and 18th centuries, and purchased about 100 years ago. The MSS. are of great value. The famous Anglo-Saxon homilies and a Latin Psalter date from the days of Alfred. There are three illuminated "Hours" of the 15th century. The ceiling contains three rows of symbolic figures. The centre row represents Learning and the five senses: Touch, Taste, Smell, Hearing, Sight, interchanged with the Hobart arms. The other rows, on the one side represent Love, Hypocrisy, Friendship, Divine Vengeance, Suffering, Innocence, &c.; and on the other a harnessed lion, Prometheus, Athena, &c., &c. Another drawing-room, called Peter the Great's Room, contains Russian tapestry, representing Peter on horseback and the Battle of Poltowa raging in the background. The second Earl of Buckingham was Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Many of his letters written from there are published; and the tapestry was

the gift of the Empress Catherine. There are two Gainsboroughs of the second Earl of Buckingham and his wife. Next comes a bedroom, once a chapel; since George II. slept here it has been unaltered.

The MSS. at Blickling go back to Bishop Everard or Eborard in the 12th century. They contain much that interest the local antiquary. We find in the Langley Rental of the 15th century that the dispute between master and man in a wet harvest is no new one.

There are references to Edward I.'s visit to Hevingham, once a favourite lodge of the Bishop of Norwich, 1277.

In 1565 John Thelford leaves by will his "bow and quiver of arrows." A list of ships of the English and Dutch Fleets, who were fighting together against the French in 1691, show that there were 113 English and 68 Dutch ships, and also 30 fire ships, manned by 35,805 men, who had 6,065 guns at their command. Many papers are of the time of the second Earl of Buckinghamshire, 1723 to 1793, relating to events in Russia, where he was Ambassador, and to Ireland, where he was Viceroy from 1777 to 1781. As Viceroy he partially succeeded in an all but impossible task. Grattan says he created "a passion in his favour approaching to love."

If you wish to know how a great gentleman dressed in the year 1673 you can find here a list of his wardrobe. With the many belts, swords, hats, stockings (I find there are 47 pairs of stockings), buckles, wiggles, bootes, shoes, wearing Lynnen, all separately catalogued, you will read of

A buffe coate lyned with tabby.

A pair of knitt pantelloons of pearle coloured silke.

Other pantelloons whipt with riband of Philemot.

It may interest you to know that in 1746 William Smith, Bailiff, quotes: Beef, mutton, and pork at 2d. to 2½d. per lb. Veal 3d. to 3½d. Wheat 3s. 4d. to 4s. bushell. Barley 12s. 6d. a quarter. In 1745, owing to the Rebellion, money was scarce, and 12 per cent. had to be paid in interest, so writes Samson Gideon to Sir Thos. Dowry.

Time and the dignity of the Archæological Society forbid me speaking of lighter themes. I would like to enlarge on four ghost stories connected with this manor hall, two ancient and two modern. I could tell you of Queen Anne's walk and the racecourse over which I have galloped a hundred times; of the grisly mausoleum built by Lord Buckinghamshire in the heart of the great park for burial; and near by the lonely little cottage, buried in ferns and trees, where Lady Suffield in her old age spent hours in retirement, and where since then young children have had many a picnic; of the far-reaching pleasure grounds designed by Humphrey Repton, the famous landscape gardener,

who was born at Bury in 1752, and who in 1818 was buried on the south of Aylsham Church; of the flower gardens laid out in 1870, and of the wonderful plane trees that guard them from the north-east wind; of the lovely lake with its fish, the woods with their game, their lilies of the valley and their bluebells; of the infant Bure with its mill-pools and its trout; of the Buckinghamshire Arms, the ancient coaching hostelry and now, to my mind, the very perfection of all inns.

I could enlarge on the great characters, who lived not in hall but humble cottage, such as my dear old friend, John Barrows, the coachman of Lady Lothian, a prince with the reins, but a very king among fishermen. Above all, of Lady Lothian herself, beautiful in mind as in feature, a great lady whose long widowhood was spent here. I can never come to Blickling without seeing her graceful figure once more moving like some queen of romance from room to room, or along the walks of the pleasure grounds. I remember how, perhaps five-and-forty years ago, a very small boy sat at her feet in front of the great fireplace in the library as she read to him the absorbing story of Masterman Ready. Now, fifteen years later, the same boy, catching fish in the middle of the lake, watching her beloved figure moving in the evening along the lake to the last scene, the exquisite face, so beautiful in death, when the sorrow of a lonely widowhood had at last fled away.

Canon Meyrick was warmly congratulated upon his paper.

Before the company left for the homeward journey to Norwich the President said he was sure they would not like to leave Blickling without passing a very hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Hoffman for her great kindness in allowing them to look over Blickling Hall, and for extending to them her hospitality in giving them a most excellent tea. He was sure it was the wish of all the members of the Society that she, as one of their newly-elected members, should make many excursions with them in the future, and they sincerely hoped that she might long continue to occupy Blickling Hall.

The proposition was carried with enthusiasm.

During the day the plate in the churches

CHURCH	visited was closely scrutinised by the President
PLATE.	and others. The Felbrigg Paten was pronounced
	by Mr. Walter to be one of the most beautiful pre-

Reformation patens in England. It has for a centre St. Margaret of Antioch, the patroness or patron saint of the church. The Erpingham Cup was 1567 (Norwich), and the Blickling Cup 1568 (Norwich).