

Some Notes on the Desecrated Church of St. Cuthbert, Norwich

BY

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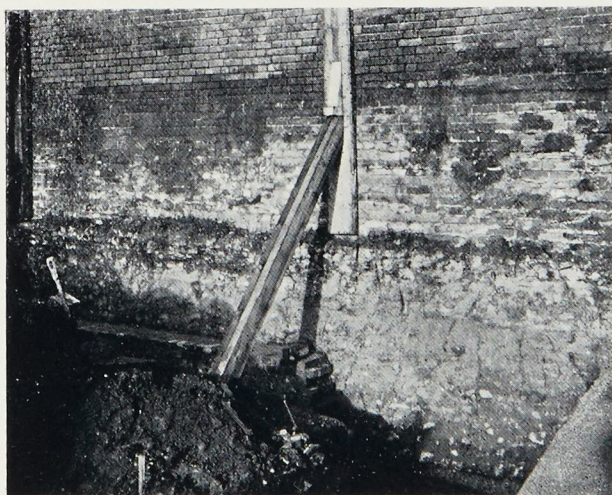
Hon. Treasurer.

During January, 1939, excavations were commenced at the rear of what was latterly known as "King Street House," last occupied by Messrs. Bullimore & Co., in order to lay the foundations of a large new building giving extensive office accommodation.

On the north side of the garden, which extends to St. Faith's lane (formerly Seven Cote Row) the mechanical excavator revealed the foundation of a substantial wall built of rough flints and descending at least 9 ft. Some human skulls and bones were also found in the garden. On looking at Blomefield's map it appeared most probable that this was the foundation of St. Cuthbert's Church. The wall ran in an East and West direction and shewed that the church was not possessed of an aisle, at least on the south side. Mr. Thos. Wayt was kind enough to take a photograph for me and it is here reproduced: the modern brickwork in the trench represents the beginnings of the wall of the new offices alongside the old church foundation. This church belonged to the Norwich Priory, and in 1272 the parish was united with that of St. Mary-in-the-Marsh, but, as



THOS. GODSALVE AND HIS SON.



The South foundation wall of St. Cuthbert's, with the new brick wall rising in front of it.

Blomefield says, the parishioners not consenting, it was dismembered again, and became a separate parish as formerly, and so continued until after 1492, when it was united to the church of St. Mary the Less (now known as the French Church). It was demolished in 1530 before the time of the Reformation, while in 1535 the Prior and Convent leased out the Churchyard to Thomas Godsolve of Norwich, who totally cleared the ruins of the church and built a house there. John Bale tells us that the Godsolve family were remarkable speculators in Church lands, so that this was one of their smaller investments. Thomas Godsolve himself still lives for us by the magic brush of Holbein, for at Dresden is his portrait painted in London in 1528. —It shows us rather a florid high cheekboned face: he is robed in a rich furred gown and holds a quill with which he has just written on a sheet of paper placed in front of him *Thomas Godsolve de Norwico etatis sue anno quadragesimo septo*. Behind him stands his son, John, who bears a very remarkable likeness to his parent. An inkpot is on the table and a little paper affixed to the wall above the figures bears the date *Anno Dm. M.D.XXVIII*. The picture was in 1655 in the collection of the Earl of Arundel, and in 1749 was purchased in Paris for the Dresden Gallery.

Thomas Godsolve, who died in 1542, was registrar of the Consistory Court at Norwich. He was an intimate friend of Thos. Cromwell, and in a letter to the latter dated Norwich, November 6th, 1531, he says: "I send you half a dozen swans of my wife's feeding," and a year or two later he sends, "six swans and a maund (basket) with pears of my own grafting." He was buried in St. Stephen's Church.

The son, John Godsolve, became clerk to the signet to Henry VIII., and was one of the fifty-five *Knights of the Carpet dubbed by the King* [Edward VI.] *after the Coronation, being Shrove Tuesday*. A year or two later he was made Comptroller of the Mint. He had some connection with the Steelyard, for in November, 1532, he and William Blankenhall received

a grant in survivorship of the office of the common meter of all cloths of gold and silver tissue, satin damask and other cloths and canvas of aliens and others called "foreyns" *alias* "le stilliarde" in the City of London with the usual fees, etc. He also obtained in July, 1534, an annuity of £8 to him and his heirs for ever out of the issues of the Manor of Stokesby in Reedham, Norfolk, in the King's hands by the attainder of Thomas Cardinal of York. In 1535 he received the offices of Constable and Keeper of the Castle and Gaol of Norwich, succeeding Sir Henry Wyatt and Sir Thomas Boleyn in these posts. Sir John died in 1556. The home of the family was at Buckenham Ferry, and they held Inglose's Manor in Loddon until 1614, when it was aliened in favour of Robert Hobart. The old Hall still contains some panelling on which appear Thomas and John's initials, a merchant's mark and their arms. (*v.* Willins' *Norfolk Manor Houses*, Pl. 8.)
