

CHAPTER VI.

FINCHAM ST. MARTIN'S¹ CHURCH.

1. The BENEFICE.

The Norwich manuscript before mentioned (anno circ. 1360) describes the revenues of this church as follows, but with no mention of Temporals :-

FYNCHAM SANCTI MARTINI.

Taxatio Spiritualitatis.

Lord William Bardolf is patron of the same.

The Rector has a house with 30 acres of land.

The value of the Rectory, with the portion of Carow Abbey, xxii marks.

The said portion of Carow in the same is xiii^s, iv^d.

The Rector's tenths xxix^s iv^d. The Abbess' tenths i^s iv^d.

Procurations v^s. Synodals ii^s. Peter's pence xvi^d.

Observe that (nota quod) the Rector has a fold-right (faldam)² of 200 sheep.

The advowson of this church was anciently in the Grandcourt family. Thomas de Grandcourt grants it by deed, sans date, to Roger his brother ; and on the 11th of May 1304 (Edward I), Roger de Grandcourt remitted all his right in the said advowson to his Lord, Hugh Bardolf. In the year 1345, or thereabouts, John Lord Bardolf granted the advowson to the Prior of Shouldham ; and in 1350 the Rectory was appropriated to the said monastery, with consent of the Bishop of

¹ St. Martin was Bishop of Tours, in France, 26 years. He died A.D. 400. He had been a soldier, and was so greatly esteemed by the French that they carried his helmet with them into their wars. -- *Bp. Mant.*

² For understanding this *fold-right* see notes 2, 3, on the possessions of Hermerus, in Domes-day.

Norwich, William Bateman. A *Vicarage* was settled, and the Vicar was to have a convenient dwelling, and £10 per annum. Again, in 1354, this appropriation¹ was further revised, and the Vicar was to have the small tithes, viz., “hay, wool, milk, flax, hemp, chickens, colts, lambs, pigs, “eggs, pigeons, geese, ducks, honey, wax, apples, pears, “plants, fruit, wood, mills, turf, mortuaries,” and glebe lands of the benefice, and a pension of 100s. per annum.

On the dissolution of Shouldham Abbey, in 1538, this lay Rectory passed from it to the Crown. In 1574, Queen Elizabeth leased it, by demise of the Crown, to Thomas Drury for 21 years, he paying £8 per annum ; and afterwards to Wm. Guybon², Gent., and Ann and Frances, his daughters, from whom it has come to the present impropiator, Mr. Hebgin.

The patronage of the Vicarage still remained in the Crown, and in the Act for its consolidation with St. Michael's Rectory in 1744 it is retained in the form of an alternate right of presentation to the united benefice.

In the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* of 1291, St. Martin's *Rectory* is valued at £14 13s. 4d. In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, the *Vicarage* is returned at £10. In the *Townson MS.* of 1659, at £10 ; “first fruits none, tenths xx^s, synodals ii^s, “procurations ii^s vi^d. Patron the King, and Roger Gunson “Vicar.”

In all the terriers down to 1716 the Vicarage house is mentioned, after which time it disappears.

It may be useful, as it is fair, here to call attention to the operation of the system of the appropriation of tithes, and the settlement of vicarages, as affecting the

¹ It may be here explained that an *appropriation* is where church revenues have been conveyed to some ecclesiastical body or corporation. An *impropriation* is where they are held by a layman, *improperly* ! according to Sir Henry Spelman, on *Tithes*, ch. xxix., p. 137. But the terms are frequently used indiscriminately.

² The Guybons were a very respectable Norfolk family. A branch, connected with the Clipsbys of Clipsby, lived at Oby Hall from 1600 to 1692. -- *Oby Register*. In 1601, “Richard Guibon was slayne in fight by one Clarke of Fincham.” -- *Downham Register*.

clergy. It commenced about the time of the Norman invasion, or perhaps earlier. The monasteries and convents got possession of at least one third of the tithes. They appointed their *Vicar* for the duties of the parish, and gave him for his maintenance generally a fixed payment, varying from five to ten pounds. When the monasteries were dissolved, the Rectories, or large tithes appropriated by them, went to the Crown, instead of reverting to the Church. These increased in value *pari passu* with the land, whilst the money payment to the Vicar remained the same. In the case here the great tithes of St. Martin's church now in the Impropiator have increased, like all other property in land, some twenty or thirty fold, whilst the pension to the Vicar, payable out of them, is still the 100s, and no more.

2. The PARISH CHURCH of St. Martin's is "a strong and "handsome building, standing in the middle of the town, and "so large that it is capable of receiving more than twice the inhabitants of the whole town."¹ Mr. Forby says that it is "a "uniform and unmixed specimen of the architecture of Henry "VI, finished about 1460, judging from a bequest to the building of the tower."²

It was no doubt a restoration or rebuilding, about that time, of old St. Martin's church,³ on the exact site, and partly on its walls. All the windows are of this date, being of the Perpendicular style, and a close inspection will shew that many of them, especially those on the north side, are insertions within earlier Transition

¹ *Act of Consolidation*, 18th Geo. II, No. 23.

² Dawson Turner's *Blomefield Illustrated*, vol. vii., British Mus. Add. MSS. 23,030.

³ Adam de Fyncham, who died in 1338, bequeaths his "body to be buried in the church of St. Martyn, near to his wife Annabel." -- See his Will.

and Decorated work. The western door-way of the tower, and its two upper stories, are of the same date. On the south side, the outer wall, with its buttresses, appears to have been rebuilt from the ground, but is awkwardly joined to the ends of the aisle, as the coping plainly shews. Even the door-way within the porch exhibits a setting on of later work over earlier,¹ at about half-way of its height, the old stoup or water basin partly remaining in the wall.

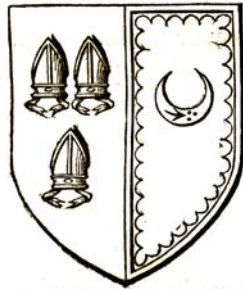
The bequest by Simon Fyncham in 1458, already alluded to, runs thus : “To the fabric of the *belfry* of the said church “vii^l vi^s vi^d, to be paid in seven years next following in equal “portions.”² There is a date on one of the hammer-beams of the roof on the north side, but the second figure, the most important, is indistinct and perplexing. Some read it 1188, which is clearly incorrect ; others 1488, which is more probable ; and others 1588, which, however, could only have reference to repairs.

The Church consists of nave, two aisles and chancel, all covered with lead. The tower is lofty and well proportioned, except perhaps that the upper and later portions are a little too heavy for the older foundations, the buttresses appearing to be rather strained. The arms of Fincham are on these buttresses, as well as on the battlements above, testifying to the liberality of Simon Fyncham's benefaction. The total length of the Church is 114 feet, and the breadth of it 44 feet. The vault of the nave is supported on ten piers, five on each side, their capitals on the north side being of a plainer construction than those on the south. Over these are ten clerestory windows, five of them of three lights each, and the other five, on the north, of only two. The roof is handsome, of oak, having its hammer beams ornamented with carved work terminating in

¹ This was pointed out to me by the Rev. E. Blencowe, Rector of West Walton, whose acute observation and practised eye detected similar evidences all round the church.

² See his last *Testament*.

figure heads, angels apparently alternating with others less pleasing. No part of the architecture of this church can be called rich, except perhaps the external buttresses of the south side, which have very elegant and beautifully crocketed pinnacles. The windows formerly contained much painted glass, a few old fragments of which are preserved in the north window of the chancel. The arms of Fincham are on the door-way of the rood-loft stairs, and also on the screen. On the inner or chancel side of the screen are the arms of William Bateman, Bishop of Norwich, who sanctioned the appropriation of this Rectory, and settlement of the Vicarage, in 1354. This shield, however, could not have been in the old church in his time, as the Bishops of Norwich did not impale their private arms with those of the see, on one shield, until 1575, as shewn by Mr. Taylor.¹ It was probably erected at the time of some repairs of the screen or chancel. A wood cut of this shield² and that of Fincham³ is here subjoined.



Bishop Bateman.

Sable, a crescent ermine, in a bordure engrailed, *argent*; Impaling the arms of the see, *Azure*, 3 mitres *or*, 2 and 1.



Fincham.

Argent, three bars *sable*, a bend over all, ermine.

¹ See *Index Monasticus*, pp. xxii and xxxi.

² There is a slight error in the engraving of this shield. The inner line round the engrailing is superfluous. Also the *ermine* in the crescent should be in *three* or *four perpendicular*.

³ The Fincham arms as now used have been surmounted by a crest, "a hind's head, "erased, or, with a sprig of holly in its mouth, vert," with this motto, "Arbore, latet "opacâ." -- *Burke*.

A few years ago the condition of St. Martin's Church formed no exception to the state of the churches in general in this deanery. The work of restoration commenced in 1844, when the tower was well repaired, and a new clock and peal of bells erected, at a total, cost of £280. In 1847 the nave was cleared of its old decayed unsightly pews and pens, of every colour and shape ; and fire engine, long ladders, buckets, wheelbarrows and bricks, were summarily removed from the house of God. New massive seats and benches of appropriate design were erected, and much other new work done, at a cost of about £325. In almost every year since then there has been some additional contribution to the "strength and beauty of the sanctuary." A very large and handsome window in the tower, erected to the memory of Mr. G. Aylmer, by his family, and containing figures of the four evangelists, is by Wilmshurst, of London. Others of similar beauty and workmanship in the south aisle are by the same artist. The most eastern of these contains the Fincham, arms, between those of the See of Norwich, and of the present Archdeacon of Norfolk, *Bouverie*. The next window to this illustrates the Resurrection of Christ ; the next the Crucifixion ; and the two last towards the porch are of cast quarries by Powell. These last four, with another at the west end of this aisle, are the munificent gift of a parishioner. The porch also has been completely renovated -- the chancel much improved -- a choir comfortably seated -- and a valuable musical instrument provided -- besides external restorations -- all by resident parishioners, whose names need not be further mentioned, but who have deserved well of their church.

There were formerly two chantries, or chapels, in this church, one at the east end of each aisle, having each their own altar, &c. These belonged to the Fincham family, having been founded and endowed by

them. Of the origin of one of them, we have the history in the will of John Fyncham, dated February 7th, 1494. He gives out of his manor of Burnham Deepdale, (“except such “lands as lie in Brancastre, west of Downgate or Dalegate”), sufficient profits and issues to found a chantry in St. Martin's church, and mass is appointed “to be saide for his soule there,” “or els, in tyme of necessitie sicknes or trowbels or “fowle wedir, or any man or woman may not labor so far,” then “in the chapell of oure lady being edefied in my maner “[i.e., manor house] of Fyncham, my brother Sir¹ Nicholas “Fyncham to do such service, if he like it ; his salarie to be “six marks and his boord, so that he be content to goo and “bord with my said son the *elder John*.”²

We see in the institution of these chantries³ one of the worst errors of the Papal religion, viz, the doctrine of purgatory,

“In prayers thus shaped amiss, and dirges sung,
“For souls whose doom is fixed.” -- *Wordsworth*.

In this chantry there is a remarkable aperture, penetrating the chancel wall obliquely, affording a view of the elevation of the host,⁴ at the high altar. Hence it is called a *hagioscope*, or holy view. It is not common.

¹ “Sir” was formerly the title of a priest, and so used by Shakespeare, and other writers.

² This allusion to the *elder John* is remarkable. He means the elder of his *two sons John*, living at the same time. -- See *Pedigree*.

³ All these chantries were suppressed in the first year of Edward VI, as being superstitious, and their revenues were given to the Crown, or sold. According to Dugdale, the number of religious houses, &c., suppressed in this and the preceding reign was, “monasteries and priories, 645 ; colleges and hospitals, 715 ; chantries “and free chapels, 2374.”

⁴ Hostia = victim, sacrifice, *host*, the consecrated wafer, supposed to be transubstantiated into the body of Christ, and before which the people were to prostrate themselves, when summoned by the ringing of a bell. This bell still remains in a chantry of Sedgford church, in this county.

3. MONUMENTS, EPITAPHS, &C., in St. Martin's Church.

On the floor of the church are several large black marble stones, dedicated to members of the Fincham family buried here. Their brasses have been stolen, except one small effigy of a woman in her shroud. This was found in 1847, and fixed in its present position for preservation. Some of the memorial inscriptions are fortunately preserved in Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 819, as follows :-

Orate pro anima Elizabethæ quondam uxoris Symonis Fyncham Armigeri, et unius filiarum et hæredum Johs Tendring de Brockdyn in comitatu Suffolc¹ : Armig : quæ quidem Elizabetha obiit ... MCCCCXLVIII [1464].

Orate pro anima Johs Fyncham filii et hæredis Symonis Fyncham de Fyncham armig : qui obiit VI die Septembr : anno dni MCCCCLXXXVI [1496].

Orate pro anima Joh : filii et hæredis Johs Fyncham filii Symonis Fyncham qui obiit ultimo die Aprilis MCCCCLXXXIX [1499].

In the wall near the screen, but originally lying in the south aisle, is a broken brass with this inscription, completed where defective from the *History of Norfolk* :-

¹ This is an error. Brockdish is in Norfolk, but the Tendrings being a Suffolk family, the origin of the mistake is apparent.

EPITAPHIUM GENEROSISSIMI HEROIS.

THOMÆ TOWNSENDI.¹

Elizabetha suo tumulum charissima conjux
 Townsendo, insigni condit amore, viro.
 Hunc terræ indignum patriæ cælestis ad oras,
 Flore juventutis, mors properata tulit.
 Si tu bis denos annos adjunxeris octo,
 Townsendi ætatis tempora certa scies.
 Hic jacet, et tristi claudat mors sæva sepulchro
 Membra, sedes superas mens tamen alta petit.
 Ærumnas æquâ virtutis lance libravit,
 Si quid peccavit, ultio virtus erat.
 Injurias omnes absorbit atque retudit ;
 Duro serenus tempore vultus erat.
 Hen fata dura nimis, quæ te fecere sepultum
 Pulvere, quem domini gloria celsa beat.
 Conjuge prole dome felix, et funere felix,
 Multum flenda bonis, stirps generosa, vale.²

Obiit xii Januar : Anno Dni 1572.

¹ In the 13th Edward II, Richard *Atte-tunnes-end* conveyed lands to Adam de Fyncham. The name is derived from the residence, *at-town'send*, hence *towns-end*. So in like manner we have *Att-hill*, *Att-wood*, *Att-field*, *Att-more*, or *mere*, and *Att-gate*, &c., as surnames.

² EPITAPH of the most noble gentleman,
 THOMAS TOWNSEND.
 Elizabeth, his dearest wife, erects this monument,
 With marked affection, to her husband Townsend.
 An early death removed him, in the flower of youth,
 Unworthy of this world, to a celestial land.
 If you will add just twice ten years to eight,
 You will certainly know the time of Townsend's life.
 He lies here, and cruel death encloses in the mounful tomb
 His body, whilst his high spirit seeks its rest in heaven.
 He weighed his cares in virtue's even scales,
 And if in ought he sinned, his virtues were his atonement.
 He forgave and forgot all personal wrongs,
 And in hard times his countenance was calm.
 Alas, the too hard fate which brought thee to the dust,
 Whom now God's glory in high heaven doth bless !
 Oh, happy in wife, in children, home, and death,
 So mourned by all the good, of noble stock, farewell !
 He died Jan. 12th, 1572.

On a stone in the centre of the nave, brought here from St. Michael.'s church, are these lines :-

Here lieth the bodies of Robert and Sarah,
Son and daughter of Anthony King, of Tilney, gent,
Who were buried on the 2nd and 15th October, 1683.

Hail happy souls, who, like their angels, were
Young, active, chaste, and free from vice ;
And now are called by God's indulgent care
To dwell with them in Paradise.
God grant we by repentance may obtain
What you by innocence did earlier gain.

In quoting these epitaphs of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, I would remind my parishioners of the errors they respectively contain. The first, "Pray for the soul." was an invention of the Romish church, and exploded at the Reformation. It finds no warrant in the inspired scriptures, which nowhere exhort us to pray for the dead, much less to dead saints, as mediators, there being "but one mediator "between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The second contains a plea congenial to human nature at all times : "If he "sinned, his virtues compensated for it"! This is great presumption. The only atonement for even one sin is the sacrifice of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of "the world." Then also we must be careful to understand what is meant by the "innocence" of little children. It is for us indeed to imitate them in the simplicity of their life and character, but not to build the hope of heaven upon it, for they are "born in sin and the children of wrath" ; and both *their* innocence and *our* repentance have that in them which needs to be repented of.

The epitaphs of the succeeding century partake too often of even a more objectionable character. So exceedingly laudatory are they, as to be sometimes irreconcilable

with common truth. I do not say that those which remain to be noticed are faulty to such an extreme, but they are surely not good specimens for our imitation, however elegant in their classical conceptions. The following was brought here from St. Michael's church, where Mr. Baker was Rector at the time of his death :-

Sub felicis resurrectionis spe¹,
 Christi præstolans epiphaniam,
 Hic juxta situs est
 Reverendus vir, Daniel Baker, M.A.,
 Hujus Ecclesiæ per XL annos
 Rector.
 Orthodoxæ Christi Ecclesiæ,
 Dictis, scriptis, precibus, exemplo,
 Incomparabile propugnaculum ;
 Divinæ Jobi patientiæ,
 (Quam poesi depinxit),
 Verus vitâ imitator.
 Idem ex
 Indefessa operâ in studiis,
 Assiduâ pietate in Deum,
 Rara amænitate in suos,
 Spectatâ probitate in omnes,
 Æternum admirandus.
 Annorum satur ad cælos migravit
 Feb : XVII^{mo},
 Anno { Salutis MVCCXXII.
 { Ætatis LXIX.

¹ In the hope of a joyful resurrection,
 Waiting for the coming of Christ,
 Near this spot reclines
 The Rev. Daniel Baker, M.A.,
 Forty years Rector of this Church.
 He was an incomparable bulwark
 Of the orthodox church of Christ,
 In his discourses, writings, prayers and example.
 In his life a faithful imitator
 Of the divine patience of Job,
 Which he depicted in verse.
 Such a man,
 For his untiring labours in study,

The epitaph to the Rev. Joseph Forby, LL.B., is sufficiently intricate to be unintelligible to most ordinary scholars, and of course to everybody else. There are more than forty words between the nominative case and its verb, and a literal translation is thus rendered very difficult :-

M.S.¹

Josephi Forby, LL.B.
 Cum sancti Michaelis Rectoris,
 Turn sancti Martini Vicarii,
 Ultimi, in hac villa,
 Et dignissimi ;
 Qui, harum Ecclesiarum
 Per alternam. cum rege vicem
 Donandi simul et tenendi
 In Parlamento identitatem effectans,
 Opus hoc,
 Calculi dolore suppressus,
 Male ominatum et posthumum,
 Marthaë viduæ mæstissimæ
 Marmor hoc pie ponenti,
 14^{to} Augusti,
 Anno { Æt : 45^{to}
 Sal : com : 1744^{to}
 Occumbens perficiendum reliquit.

Hujus ad dextram,
 Johannes filius natu minimus,
 Annos natus 8 circiter,
 Martii 4^{to} 1745
 Expirans obdormit.

His assiduous piety towards God,
 His rare affability to his friends,
 His conspicuous honesty towards all,
 Must be for ever admired.
 Full of years he passed into the heavens,
 Feb. 17, 1722. Aged 69.

¹ Sacred to the memory of
 Joseph Forby, Bachelor of Laws,
 The last Rector of St. Michael's,

Within the altar rails are also the following memorials of members of the same family :

JOSEPH FORBY, L.L.B. (as above), died Aug. 14, 1744, aged 45.
 MARTHA, relict of Joseph Forby, L.L.B., and wife of William Harvey, died May 20, 1775, aged 80 years.
 JOHN FORBY (their youngest son), died March 4, 1745.
 JOSEPH FORBY, M.A., died April 25, 1799, aged 65.
 CONSTANCE (*his wife*), died March 16, 1789, aged 57.
 SUSAN FORBY, relict of Thomas Forby, of Stoke Ferry, died May 1st, 1824, aged 92.
 ROBERT FORBY (*their son*), M.A., died Dec. 20th, 1825, aged 66.
 MARTHA FORBY (*their daughter*), died Nov. 10th, 1828, aged 67.
 ANNE HELSHAM, died July 12th, 1822, aged 23.

On the chancel walls :

JOHN HEBGIN, *Gent.*, died Jan. 6th, 1831, aged 66.
 MARY HEBGIN (*his wife*), died August 2nd, 1848, aged 80.
 HENRY YOUNG, *Gent.*, (sixteen years Church-Warden of this parish,) died Jan. 12, 1848, aged 56.

On the chancel floor :

ROBERT POOLE, *Senior*, died Nov. 2nd, 1749, aged 57.
 ROBERT POOLE, *Junior*, died Sep. 22nd, 1757, aged 27.

On the wall of the north aisle :

JAMES BARSHAM, died July 27th, 1854, aged 71.

And last Vicar of St. Martin's,
 In this village, and the most worthy :
 Who, whilst effecting in Parliament
 A consolidation, (both as to the presentation
 And the holding,) of these Churches,
 By an alternate turn with the King,
 Being arrested by a calculous complaint,
 And dying, August 14, 1744, aged 45,
 Left the inauspicious and posthumous work
 To be completed by his disconsolate widow,
 Who in her piety erects this monument.

On his right hand sleeps
 John his youngest son,
 Who expired March 4th, 1745,
 Being about eight years of age.

On the wall of the south aisle :

ELLEN, wife of THOMAS WETHERELL, died May 21, 1733, aged 37.

JOHN BARSHAM, died July 3rd, 1853, aged 81.

WILLIAM MEDCALF, (late of Tilney St. Lawrence,) born Dec. 16th, 1776, died May 21st, 1846.

In the windows of the south aisle :

JOHN DE FINCHAM, died Sept. 6th, 1496, aged 60.

JOHN BARSHAM (as above), July 3rd, 1853, aged 81.

JOHN BARSHAM DEAN, died Aug. 5th, 1830, aged 13.

JOHN AYLMER (of Cranworth), died April 5th, 1853, aged 63.

On the floor near the font :

ELIZABETH, daughter of -- CRASK, and Catherine his wife, died Jan. 1, 17--.

In the tower window:

GEORGE AYLMER, died July 23rd, 1853, aged 86.

“This window was erected by his surviving relatives,

“In token of their affectionate regard.”

4. ST. MARTIN'S VESTRY.

The vestry of this church is very good. The history of its foundation is in the Will of Nicholas Fyncham, Clk., who died in 1503, and was buried in the same. He says : “My “bodey to be beryed in the vestiary of Sent Martyns Chirche “&c.” “Item. I wyll that myn executors performe and “fynyshe up the vestiary that I have begune, as ferforth as my “goods wyll extend, a cordyng as I have shewyd on to them “by my mouth a fore tyme.” Like the church itself, however, this vestry is built upon older work, and much of the old walls remains. It had formerly an upper room in which a school was kept. The will then proceeds to

create an endowment for the parish clerk, which will be noticed hereafter. It is an exceedingly curious document, and will be found amongst the wills of the Finchams. The lead from the roof of this vestry was sold in the year 1806 for £52 17s. 6d., improperly, to supply funds for repairing the south aisle. The table is the old sounding board, and underneath, on the inner rim of its circumference, is this inscription : “Gregorye Watson, servant to the Right “Worshipful Sir Francis Gawdy, Knight, made this at his “own charge, anno dni, 1604.” Its present cover is a curious old altar cloth, with the sacred monogram and date thus : “I.H.S. 1667.” Here is also the old parish chest, with its ponderous lid and triple iron fastenings, according to canon law ; but it is not deemed prudent now to leave anything very valuable in its keeping, a certain entry in the parish books reminding us that that which hath been might be again : “1824, Ap. 19. Advertisements for an attempted robbery of “the church, 17s. 6d.” The registers, therefore, and the plate are kept elsewhere. The former will be noticed under a separate head ; the latter may be here described, viz.,

1. A good cup, of old silver, with cover. “THE TOWNE OF FINCHAM, 1568.”
 2. A smaller one, very elegant. “F. S. M.”
 3. An old paten, of silver, “ex dono Mary Baker, 1724.”
 4. A new alms dish, 1850. Sheffield plate.
 5. A large new paten, the same. “Gift of Mr. Hebgin, 1855.”
 6. A wine bottle, electro-plated. “1856.”
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5. The FONTS of Deepdale and Fincham.

The history of these two fonts is sufficiently connected to admit of their being noticed together in this work, especially as I have known Deepdale church from my infancy. In the first place an antiquarian writer (the Samuel Pegge, F.A.S.), in the *Archæologia*, vol. x, pp. 177, 185, says of the Deepdale font, that, "as a curious and singular ancient laver," it is "only paralleled by one at Fincham." It is scarcely less "curious and singular" that it should ever have been found here, occupying the mean and profane position of a common cistern in the Rectory garden. How this happened will presently appear.

(1). The Deepdale font is amongst the oldest in the diocese, and if not to be classed with those of Winchester and Lincoln cathedrals in their high antiquity, it is certainly not much later. It is undoubtedly of Saxon origin. Its most remarkable feature, and in which it appears to be unique, is that its historical illustrations are not from Scripture, but from the agricultural and domestic life of our Saxon forefathers. It is carved out of a block of Caen stone, and is two feet five inches square. "The embellishments on three of "its sides," continues Mr. P., "(the fourth, being placed "against a pillar, [wall more probably,] never had any "decoration, but only a foliage,) were, till lately (1790), "totally incrustated by frequent white-washings ; but the "present worthy and sagacious rector, Mr. Crowe, being a "gentleman of inquisitive disposition, gave himself the "trouble of denuding the whole, so that it is entirely owing to "him that this truly venerable monument has regained its "pristine appearance." He then proceeds to give Mr. Crowe's description of these embellishments, which he calls "antique portraitures," adding his own comments and corrections.

Dr. Sayers, Physician and Antiquarian, of Norwich, also published (in 1808) some account of this font in his *Disquisitions*, p. 257. He says : “The employments of most “of the figures introduced may be detected with sufficient “certainty, and I cannot hesitate to believe that it is the work “of a Saxon artist. There are several similar figures on some “circular stones in the pavement of the chapel of the Holy “Trinity in Canterbury Cathedral ; and also on the porch of “St. Margaret’s Church, York.” He then gives his opinion also of the several employments or occupations of the figures in the twelve respective divisions.

It is very extraordinary that none of these gentlemen, particularly Mr. Crowe, who himself removed the whitewash incrustations, nor any other person since, until now, should have discovered that *the names of at least six of the months* of the year are actually inscribed upon the font, in their respective compartments, in fair old Roman capitals, about an inch in height, -- some of them written upwards and others downwards, and the rest altogether omitted for want of space, the figures themselves occupying the whole field, if I may so speak. They had been overlooked in the rough and jagged surface of the stone, and somewhat injured probably by the tools used in the cleaning. I had just sent my remarks and conjectures to the press, when I determined fortunately to examine the font again more closely, having a very convenient opportunity for so doing. I quickly deciphered the months of JANUARY, FEBRUARY and MARCH. There is not a letter for April or May ; but JUNE, JULY and AUGUST are distinctly indicated ; and the last four months are also left for the discrimination of the observer, without any text to assist him. I will now proceed to describe these emblematical subjects in order, adopting the opinions of the above mentioned authors, where they are not rendered

untenable by more recent observation and discovery. The names of the months expressed in capitals are copied from the font itself.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. JANVARIVS. | A figure seated in a chair with a drinking horn in his hand. ¹ |
| 2. – EBRVARIVS. | A figure also seated, with his foot upon a hearth stone, warming himself. “Sitting at “the door of his house,” (Dr. Sayers), is not likely for February. |
| 3. MARTIVS. | A husbandman digging with a spade. |
| 4. [<i>Aprilis.</i>] | A woodman with a pruning hook, or hedging bill, in his right hand, and a branch of a tree in his left. |
| 5. [<i>Maius.</i>] | A figure with long hair, having a banner, indicating a procession, or perambulation, as customary in this month. In <i>Archæol.</i> it is called “a female figure,” but long hair was worn by the men, if free and independent. ² |
| 6. JVNIVS. | A husbandman with a weeding tool. Not a plough. |
| 7. JVLIVS. | A husbandman mowing. |
| 8. AV - - - - | A similar figure, binding up a sheaf. |

¹ “The festive board of Christmas and *New Year* was called by the Saxons *Jöl* or *Yule*, and is marked in the Runic Calendar by a *horn erect*, and filled with *ale*, which is *öl*.” -- *The Ormulum*, a Saxon MS., lately published by the Rev. R. M. White, Rector of Slimbridge, Gloucestershire.

² See *The Saxon Home*, by Mr. Thrupp.

9. [*Septembris.*] A husbandman threshing corn.
10. [*Octobris.*] A figure grinding with the *Quern stones*.¹ Not (as in *Archæol.*) a vintager “pouring “wine into a cask, from a “bladder, through a funnel, &c.” The drawing there is not faithful.
11. [*Novembris.*] A man slaughtering a pig. Suggesting ham and bacon for the winter.
12. [*Decembris.*] A merry-making at Christmas. Only two legs under the table, which Mr. Crowe thinks belong to the company, but Mr. Pegge to the table!

I may add that the *frieze* round the top of the font is ornamented with foliage and lions ; and further, that there are rusty traces of hinges and fastenings for a lid, which was locked down for fear of sorcery. “Fontes baptismales sub “*serâ clausi teneantur propter sortileqia,*” – “some vulgar “superstition better understood than explained.”²

“This venerable relic,” says Dr. Sayers, “was judiciously “entrusted (!) to my highly esteemed friend, the Rev. R. “Forby, of Fincham. That gentleman, who well knows how “to appreciate the ‘*res antiquæ laudis et artis,*’ has carefully “preserved it in his garden, and has graced it with the “following inscription :-

¹ This was first suggested by Mr. Blyth, of Sussex Farm ; and a glance will suffice to perceive that the two stones fit into each other, and that there is not the slightest resemblance to *casks, bladders, or funnels.*

² *Archæologia*, vol. x., p. 207.

Ne pereat indignum perire,¹
 Ne quo turpi contaminetur usu,
 Hoc baptisterium,
 Artis Anglo-Saxonicae opus,
 A studiosis novitatis
 Loco proprio deturbatum,
 Hic positum A.D. MDCCCVII.
 Id saltem antiqui juris obtinet,
 Ut non nisi celestem aquam capiat.²

In the year 1842, the Rector of Deepdale, my late lamented brother, with the zealous aid of his Churchwardens, succeeded in recovering their font, after an abstraction and detention at Fincham for 35 years ; and the “venerable relic,” “*a studiosis novitatis deturbatum,*” -- rursus “*in loco proprio*” positum est !

(2.) THE ANCIENT FONT in St. Martin's church belonged originally to St. Michael's. It was brought here on the destruction of that church in 1744. We have seen that it has been called a parallel to that at Deepdale already described. It is perhaps not quite so old, and differs from it chiefly in having the subjects of its bas-reliefs taken from Scripture history. Blomefield's description of it, transferred to the *Archæologia*, vol. x, p. 190, is very poor and incorrect,

¹ That it might not unworthily perish,
 Nor be polluted by some baser use,
 This font, a work of Anglo-Saxon art,
 Thrown down from its proper place,
 By the busy lovers of novelty,
 Was erected here A.D. 1807.

It retains at least this much of its original privilege,
 That it receives only the waters of heaven.

² In the place of the old font, I set up in the garden about eleven years ago a simple graduated *rain-gauge* ; and a table of its registered annual contents in inches is here given :-

YEAR.	INCHES.	YEAR.	INCHES.
1851 ..	26.63	1857 ..	20.48
1852 ..	35.34	1858 ..	19.42
1853 ..	21.36	1859 ..	24.84
1854 ..	21.02	1860 ..	30.12
1855 ..	19.11	1861 ..	20.66
1856 ..	23.64	Averaging nearly 24 inches annually.	

but it was then under whitewash and daub.¹ There is a better account of it in the British Museum,² but far from satisfactory, written probably under the same disadvantage. The font stands upon five slender modern pillars. It is 2ft. 7in. square. Its four sides, externally bordered with a cross moulding, consist each of three compartments under Saxon circular arches, exhibiting a series of sacred historical subjects. On the *North* side are figures of Adam and Eve, rude enough, with the tree of knowledge between them, representing the fall. On the *East* are the Magi, or wise men, each bearing an offering in the right hand. On the *South* the first portion contains a manger with an infant beneath two heads of cattle, and a star over them, shewing the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. The other two portions of this side contain figures of the Virgin and Joseph. On the *West* is first John the Baptist, pointing to our Saviour in the next division, coming up out of a pool within stone work, the dove descending upon him. The last of all is the figure of a Bishop with a crozier. The whole is covered with a new and massive lid. Not far from this font stands the stem of the proper font of this church, now supporting an alms box for the poor.

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6. In the CHURCH-YARD there is but little to note. On the south side is a very large stone to the memory of William Corston, a native of the village. He was the first to introduce the manufacture of *British Leghorn* into this country, pronounced a national benefit by the Society of Arts, who awarded him a gold medal in

¹ The "dauber's bill," in 1766, was 12s. -- *Old Parish Book*.

² Add. MSS. 23,030, being Mr. Dawson Turner's *Blomefield Illustrated*, vol. vii.

1805. He devoted himself very earnestly to the education of poor children, combining in his school the industrial occupation of plaiting straw with intellectual and religious instruction. He published a sketch of the life of Joseph Lancaster, whose system he pursued, and died in the 84th year of his age, A.D. 1843, greatly beloved and respected.

On the north side is a stone to the memory of John Galloway, formerly a seaman in the Royal Navy, and latterly for 18 years parish clerk. The following beautiful lines from "Lyra, Memorialis" are appropriate to his character :-

Once did I think
 Life's waves to tread,
 In mine own strength ;
 But soon in dread
 I cried for help as I began to sink.
 At length
 The master took me by the hand,
 And thus sustained I reached the heavenly land.
 MATT. xiv. 30.

Of the rest we may say, from Gray's popular elegy :-

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply ;
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

7. INCUMBENTS of St. Martin's church.

(1.) RECTORS.

1294. Edmund Bardolf, Pryn's History of King John.
 1304. John de Wacton, presented by Hugh Lord Bardolf.
 1310. Walter de Ratyngden, by the ladye Isabella Bardolf.

1314. Simon Ayscheles, by the ladye Isabella.
 1331. Thomas de Pultenye, by the lady Agnes Bardolf.
 1333. Richard le Dyer, de Kiderminster, prebendary of Litchfield, by the lady Agnes, on the resignation of Pultenye. -- *Deed, 11th Edward III, at Stow.*
 1345. Richard le Dyer again, by the Prior of Shouldham, to whom Lord Bardolf had granted the advowson.

(2.) VICARS.

1350. John de Boys, first Vicar, by the Prior of Shouldham, when the Rectory was appropriated to that convent.
 1351. Robert Coston, (not Costard. -- *Bl.*) by the Prior and convent.
 1361. Thomas de Sledmere, by the same.
 1386. Thomas Virgil (not given by *Bl.*) -- *Deed, 19 Richard II, at Stow.*
 1400. Nicholas Essex, by the Prior, &c. Also Rector of Stockton.
 1402. Matthew Aylmer, by the same, exchanged with Essex.
 1402. Richard Person, or Pierson, de Walpole, by the same.
 1404. Robert Folsham, on the resignation of Pierson, by the same.
 1409. John Clerk, exchanging with Folsham, by the same.
 1415. John Gyffe, or Juffe, (not given by *Bl.*) -- *Will of John Fincham, at Stow.*
 1424. Nicholas Thurston, alias *Muriell, Capellanus.* -- *Deed, 33 Henry VI, at Stow.*
 1455. Thomas Palmer, by the Prior, &c.
 1493. Henry Kyrkeby, by the same.
 1498. Lawrence Cootes.
 1504. John Wenham, on the resignation of Cootes.
 1506. Robert Davy, on the resignation of Wenham.
 1534. Richard Sparhawke, on the death of Davy, by the Prior.
 1545. Thomas Freke, who in 1562 is returned as "Presbyter non conjugatus satis doctus, residet, &c."
 1586. Anthony Fletcher, by the Crown, after the dissolution of the Priory of Shouldham.
 1587. Roger Gunson, by the Queen. Also Rector of Denver.
 1615. William Parker, A.M., by the King. "Mast : William Parker, Vicar, was buried October 24, 1657." -- *Fincham Register.*
 1658. Francis Power is mentioned, as being succeeded at his death by
 1658. Daniel Gardiner, admitted by the Commissioners at White-Hall, Aug. 4th.

1661. Daniel Gardiner, A.M., regularly appointed by the King.
"Bur. Sep. 80, 1682." -- *Fincham Register*.
1682. Daniel Baker, A.M., by the King. "Bur. Feb. 20, 1723." --
Fincham Register.
1723. Joseph Forby, LL.B., "ultimus Vicarius," died "Aug. 14, 1744."
-- *Monumental Epitaph*. Bur. "Aug. 16, 1744." -- *Fincham Register*

(3.) RECTORS of the Consolidated Benefice.

1745. William Harvey, M.A., by Martha Forby (widow of the last incumbent), whom he married. He was also Rector of West Winch 55 years ; and was buried at Crimplesham in 1787, aged 92. -- *Crimplesham Register*.
1787. Joseph Forby, M.A., on his own petition. Buried "April 30, 1799." -- *Fincham Register*.
1799. Robert Forby, M.A., the same. Buried "Dec. 24, 1825." --
Fincham Register.
1825. Arthur Loftus, M.A., by the Lord Chancellor. Deprived Dec. 12, 1845.
1846. William Blyth, M.A., on his own petition.