

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE FINCHAMS OF SUFFOLK AND EAST NORFOLK.

On reference to the Calendars of Wills in the Court of Probate at Bury St. Edmund's, I find Finchams in several places in the county of Suffolk, from the end of the 16th century downwards. Sixteen or eighteen villages are mentioned as their various places of residence, they being farmers or middle class tradesmen. Whence they originally sprung, whether from Fincham or Outwell, it is scarcely possible to discover.

The Will of JOHN FINCHAM (29), of Earl Soham, was proved April 7th, 1593. To Margaret his widow he left his "howse." To Robert his eldest son, "one coffer, a black *heckforth*, [heifer, or young cow,] and all his apparel" ; and various bequests to all his other children, -- JOHN (30), Andrew, Thomas, and Elizabeth. The following Wills also occur, but have not been consulted :-

- A.D. 1592. Thomas Fincham, of Brandon Ferry.
- 1637. Robert Fincham, of Haverhill.
- 1638. Anthony Fincham, of Thurlow.
- 1639. Matthew Fincham, of Hundon.
- 1670. JOHN FINCHAM (31), of Brandon.
- 1672. Matthew Fincham, of Barnadiston.
- 1682. Henry Fincham, of Brandon.
- 1685. Elizabeth Fincham, of Bury.
- 1689. Edward Fincham, of Barningham.

The next of the name is JOHN FINCHAM (32), of Icklingham, clothier, contemporary with John and

Susan Fincham (XXc), of Outwell. His Will was proved January 10th, 1692. His wife was Susan ....., and his only son and sole executor was JOHN (33), whom I suspect to be identical with

XXI(d). JOHN FINCHAM (33), of Thelnetham, a considerable landed proprietor, from whom we have a known and manifold descent. His wife was Dorothy White, of Thetford. He was amongst the first in these parts to adopt the tenets of the Society of Friends, when that body took its rise in this country about 1670 or 1680 ; and dying in that communion he was buried in their burial ground at Hopton, Suffolk. His Will is dated 11th month (January), 1710-11 ; and was proved December 13th, 1712.

Contemporary with him was William Fincham, Rector of Wortham, near Diss, from 1659 to 1680, when he died, aged 67. Also Catherine his wife, aged 71. -- *Tombstone in the church*. And in the Parish Register there is the following entry :-

“William ffyncham ultimus Rectour sepultus fuit in woollen according  
“to the above Act. March 25<sup>th</sup> -- 80.”

“Catherine ffyncham vidua sepulta fuit, Nov. 13th, 1689.”

Also JOHN FINCHAM (34), of Timworth, farmer, whose Will (at Norwich) was proved January 23rd, 1712. Some other names occur at the Registry at Bury, which will not be further alluded to, namely :-

- A.D. 1718. Matthew Fincham, of Hundon.
- 1722. William Fincham, of Bures Hamlet.
- 1724. William Fincham, of Reed.
- 1729. Jacob Fincham, of Ixworth.
- 1750. JOHN FINCHAM (35), of Mellis.

The family of John Fincham, of Thelnetham, consisted of

- I. JOHN (36), -- *Will* of his father.
- II. FRANCIS, who died without male issue, in 1716.
- III. BENJAMIN (1), of whom hereafter ; and six other children.

XXII(d). JOHN FINCHAM (36), inherited his father's lands at Thelnetham and Hopton, and married Mary ....., by whom he had two sons and two daughters, the eldest being

XXIII(d). JOHN FINCHAM (37), of Gissing. He died at Holbeach , in 1738, and left the Thelnetham estate to Abigail Woodward, of Norwich, to whom he was engaged to be married.<sup>1</sup>

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Reverting, therefore, to John Fincham, of Thelnetham, we have

XXII(e). BENJAMIN FINCHAM (1), his third son. He married Mary Brown, of Hempnall, and lived at Diss, and was, as I suppose, the founder of the well-known banking establishment in that town. He was buried in the Quakers' burial ground at Tasburgh, in 1727. He had issue two sons, Benjamin (2) and Zachariah (1), and a daughter, who married Dr. Goddard, a physician.

XXIII(e). BENJAMIN FINCHAM (2), was born in 1716, and married Hannah Simpson, of Diss ; and the issue of this marriage was Benjamin (3), and Hannah.

XXIV(e). BENJAMIN FINCHAM (3), was born 1741, and married, in 1763, Margaret Hopson, of Norwich,

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<sup>1</sup> This information, together with many other notes of births, marriages, and deaths, is from the Quakers' original Registers at Tivetshall and Norwich, now at Somerset House, London.



where he lived some time in a house said to have belonged to the notorious Kett. He was afterwards of Wymondham, then of Epping, and was buried at Southwark, in 1789. His issue were John (38), Benjamin (4),<sup>1</sup> and Margaret, who all died without issue, and fourthly,

XXV(e). WILLIAM FINCHAM, of Parkstone, in Dorsetshire. He married Sarah Rolles, of Poole, and died at Blandford, in 1846, leaving a son,

XXVI(e). WILLIAM COLE FINCHAM, of Blandford, in Dorsetshire, Esquire. He married, in 1855, Harriett, daughter of Robert Baskett, Esquire, of Spettisbury, and has no issue. He was the last member of the family educated in the communion of the Society of Friends, and was himself baptized into the Church of England in 1861.

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Reverting to the family of Benjamin (1), third son of John Fincham, of Thelnetham, we have his second son,

XXIII(f). ZACHARIAH FINCHAM (1), born 1722. He married, first, Elizabeth Heywood, of Diss, in 1743, and by this marriage he had issue :-

- I. ZACHARIAH (2), born 1747, of whom presently.
- II. ELIZABETH, born 1748, baptized 1763.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin had now become the favourite name in the family, and Mr. Fincham, of Blandford, tells me that he remembers his grandfather saying that he once dined with seven Benjamin Finchams ! Such a fact is very suggestive of genealogical difficulties, and the inconveniences of rapidly divided and sub-divided inheritances!

<sup>2</sup> For these extracts, and many others from the Diss Registers, I am indebted to the liberality and kindness of the Rev. C. R. Manning, Rector.



- III. BENJAMIN (5), born 1749, baptized 1764. He married Mary Anne French, and had three sons, -- Benjamin (6), James, and William ; and four daughters.
- IV. MARY, born 1750, baptized 1762. She married Henry Brown, of Diss, Esquire, and is mentioned in the Preface.
- V. SUSAN, who married Cæsar Newton, Esquire, of Sporle. He died in 1825, æt. 76 ; and his wife in 1828, æt. 72.<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that three members, and probably all, of this family renounced Quakerism one by one, and received the sacrament of adult baptism in the parish church of Diss.

XXIV(f). ZACHARIAH FINCHAM (2), married Harriet Thornton, and died 1827. His issue were Zachariah (3), Benjamin (7), who both died s. p., and seven other children, of whom the fifth in the family was

XXV(f). THORNTON FINCHAM, born in 1780. He married Ann Flowerdew, of Wortham, in Suffolk, in 1804, and had issue nine sons, -- Thornton, Edwin, JOHN (39), Robert, George, Arthur, Benjamin (8), Richard, and, lastly, Zachariah, who died s. p., 1860, having lent considerable assistance in the compilation of the family history. There were also four daughters.

XXVI(f). ROBERT FINCHAM, fourth son of the last-mentioned, married Elizabeth Mary McAdam, and has issue two sons. Baker street, London.

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Reverting once more to Zachariah Fincham (1), we find that he married, secondly, Hannah Wiseman. of Diss, widow, by which marriage he had issue, first, JOHN (40), of Haverhill, in Suffolk, who died s. p., and, secondly,

<sup>1</sup> This information, received since the printing of the pedigree, is from the Rev. W. Grasses, Rector of Winbergh.



XXIV(g). FRANCIS FINCHAM, of Kenninghall, in Norfolk, and afterwards of Charing Cross, London. He married Ann Wiseman, of Diss, and had six sons, of whom JOHN (41), the youngest, died at Calcutta, in 1821 ; and one daughter. He died in 1810.

XXV(g). HENRY FINCHAM, eldest son, of Charing Cross, born in 1781,<sup>1</sup> married Catherine Sykes, of Nottingham, and died in 1847. Of eight children, his third son,

XXVI(g). ALFRED FINCHAM, having lived 15 years in China, died at Hong Kong, in May of the present year, 1862, and is being brought home to be buried, as I expect, by the side of his ancestors in Fincham churchyard, where no adult burial of this family has taken place for more than three centuries. His cousin Albert, son of Edward and Catherine Fincham, is now the occupant and manager of the large Tea Establishment at Charing Cross, London.

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With these collateral and co-existing branches of the family, it will be seen that we arrive at the termination of several regular successions to the present time, being the XXVIth generation from William II of England, through a period of 780 years. Unfortunately the genealogical chain is broken in two places, but there is no reason whatever to doubt the correctness of the position of every generation as given above. Indeed there is proof available for them all.

There were other offshoots at various periods whose connection with the old tree it is impossible to trace.

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<sup>1</sup> The dates of the births of this family are from the Kenninghall Registers.



There were families in London, deriving from Outwell, in the 17th and 18th centuries, of whom nothing has hitherto been said. On the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk, as might be supposed from the list of names and places quoted from the Registers at Bury, a widespread connection has continued to increase and extend through the adjacent villages, until, as if by the attraction of their origin, they have again found a habitation, though in very humble life, about the source and seat of their first existence in England. One shoot, especially remarkable for longevity in the sons, I have traced from the parish of Mildenhall to Hockwold, Feltwell, Boughton, and Fincham. At Mildenhall there were Finchams of the Society of Friends in the beginning of the eighteenth century, derived very probably from Thelnetham. Of these, Francis was buried at Hockwold, May 13th, 1829, at the patriarchal age of 101. His son Francis was buried at Feltwell, about 1840, aged 85 ; having had 16 children, of whom Francis, his eldest son, is now living, in possession of a freehold cottage of his own, after the manner of a squatter, on Boughton fen, a venerable grey-haired shepherd, at the advanced age of 83 years, having five brothers and four sisters, with various nephews and nieces, five sons and two daughters, with 23 grandchildren, all living in 1862.

In Her Majesty's Dockyards the name of Fincham will long be had in remembrance. In the early part of the present century a Mr. James Fincham, from Norfolk, became an officer in the Government Establishment at Woolwich. His son was the late Mr. JOHN FINCHAM (42), of Highland House, Portsea, who rapidly rose to eminence and distinction in his profession of ship-building. In 1840 he published his "History of Naval Architecture," with plates, &c., folio, which reached a third edition in 1852. And in 1854 a "Treatise on Mastng Ships" was edited by

him. The following obituary notice of him from the "Times" will fitly conclude this outline and sketch of a very worthy English family : "The death of this gentleman took place at his residence at Highland Lodge, near Portsmouth, yesterday morning, in his 75th year. The deceased gentleman will be best remembered by the general public as for many years master shipwright of Portsmouth Dockyard, and more especially as the builder of the celebrated Arrogant, the first screw frigate possessed by this country, and still looked upon as one of the finest of her class. Much of his time and study was devoted to the introduction of the screw propeller into the British navy. For a long period he was superintendent of the School of Naval Architecture at Portsmouth. His 'History of Naval Architecture,' 'Outlines of Shipbuilding,' a 'Treatise on Laying-off Ships,' and on 'Masting Ships,' are unequalled in the English language for the amount of research and professional knowledge they contain. As an acknowledgment of their merits the Emperor Nicholas of Russia presented Mr. Fincham with a snuff-box set with diamonds, and Mehemet Ali presented him with the order of the 'Bey.' Mr. Fincham will be deeply mourned by a large circle of his friends and family." -- The Times, December 7th, 1859.