

CHAPTER XVIII.

WILLS AND TESTAMENTS OF THE FINCHAMS.

In addition to the aid derived from ancient Wills in tracing out a family genealogy, they are both curious in their language and valuable for their illustration of the religion and manners of the times in which they were made. Those of the Finchams are extremely interesting in this respect. In perusing them successively, we shall be forcibly struck with some of the prominent features of Romish error, in contrast with the light of our reformed religion. The usual introductory clause, or first bequest of early wills, disposes of the soul ; whether to Almighty God, or to the Virgin Mary, or to the Blessed Saints, or to the Holy Angels, is almost invariably a matter of equal concern (or indifference) to the testator. Whereas in Wills subsequent to the Reformation, he expresses his trust in the death and passion, or the merits and mediation, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This latter feature is conspicuous in the Wills of the Finchams of Outwell. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast, or in itself more plainly instructive.

Then the dedication of property to absolutely superstitious uses ; large gifts to the church, for masses and services for the dead ; propitiatory legacies to the priests, in payment for securing the intercessions of saints ; bequests to the poor, as expiatory sacrifices, to balance against sins committed and duties neglected ; all testify to the darkness that covered the land and the people in those times. It is not indeed the gift, but

the erroneous faith of the giver, which constrains our concern. It has been the too general sin of later times, to lapse into the opposite extreme of cold indifference to the claims of religion and charity, in the disposition of worldly estates. A bequest to the poor, or to the church of God, has become almost the exception, and the responsibilities of stewardship have been to a great extent forgotten.

But already we rejoice in the hope that this darkness also will soon be past. We may quote the prophet's oft-repeated words, and say again, that the church is "putting on her beautiful garments," spiritually, too, we trust, and not merely in ceremonials, as the shining of the light of truth leads on ; and many a large and noble act of Christian charity, whose praise is in itself, bespeaks a happy desire in its designer not to care so much to lay up treasure for himself, as to be rich towards God.

1. WILL of Adam de Fyncham, Attorney General to Kings Edward II and III. Dated Wednesday next after the feast of the Assumption, 11th Edward III (1337), and proved the following year.

This Will is of unusual interest. It ought rather perhaps to be called his Testament, as it relates only to personals. It is nearly 50 years older than the earliest documents of the kind in the Public Probate Offices. The names of the testator's relatives are put in italics, and explanatory notes are added. The original is at Stow.

In Dei nomine. Amen. Ego Adam de Fyncham, sane memorie existens, in presencia Rogeri de Shuldham et *Radulphi filii mei*, die mercurii proximâ post festum assumptionis beate marie, anno regni Regis Edwardi tercii post

conquestum undecimo, apud Fyncham condidi testamentum in hunc modum. In primis lego corpus meum sepelli infra ecclesiam Sancti Martini de Fyncham, juxta *Anabillam uxorem meam*. -- Item lego meliorem bestiam¹ meam coram corpore meo procedendam, ad opus Rectoris ecclesie antedictae. Item lego domino Willielmo parochiali capellano² ii^s, clerico parochiali sex denarios ; -- capellano parochiali ecclesie Sancti Michaelis xii^d, et Roberto clerico parochiali Sancti Michaelis supertunicam meam de estate cum capicio.³ -- Item lego centum solidos pro animâ meâ distribuendos inter pauperes et minores ville de Fyncham : -- Item lego xx^s. distribuendos inter pauperes de Thorpe : -- Item &c de Bucton : -- Item &c de Stoke ferrie : -- alicui sex denarios, alicui xii^d, aliquibus plus, aliquibus minus, prout indigeant et necesse habeant. -- Lego eciam *Anabille filie Willielmi filii mei* x marcas pro maritagio suo. -- Item *Alicie filie Johannis &c*. -- Item lego quandam annulum aureum,⁴ per quem Anabilla uxor mea et ego fuimus conjugati, et quandam firmaculum aureum,⁴ pro me tumbe Sancti Edmundi Regis et Martyris

¹ "My best horse to precede my body at my burial, for the use of the Rector of the said church." Mortuaries, though originally voluntary, became a customary payment, claimed by and due to the minister, in very many parishes, as amends for personal tithes or other duties neglected or forgotten. After the lord's heriot or best good was taken, the second best chattel was reserved for the church, and was taken thither at the funeral with the corpse. They were afterwards regulated by statute, 21 Henry VIII, cap. 6, and a money payment fixed. -- *Stephen's Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. 3, p. 98.

² "To Sir William the *parish chaplain*." This cannot mean *parish priest* as we say, for he was the Rector if any one. The difference in the legacies marks him superior to the *parish* clerk, as two shillings are to sixpence. Private individuals of wealth and rank appointed their own chaplain, or even two, to say mass for their souls for a year, as this testator does at the end of his Will. Perhaps the *parish* chaplain was one ready to perform this service, for all who might desire it, in the *parish* church.

³ "To Robert the parish clerk of St. Michael's my summer cloak with its hood," Capicium -- capitis tegmen. -- *Du Cange*.

⁴ "A certain gold ring, with which Anabilla my wife and I were united in marriage, and a certain gold brooch, to be taken to the tomb (or shrine) of St. Edmund king and martyr [at Bury], and there fixed." Rings and brooches, it is well known, were the most usual offerings at the shrines of saints. The immense amount and value of these and similar gifts to the church, taken away at the dissolution of the monasteries, "may be conjectured," says Dugdale, "by that one "monastery of Saint Edmund's Bury, whence was taken, as our records testify, five "thousand marks of gold and silver, besides divers stones of great value." -- *Dugd. Monast. Angl.*, vol. i, p. 1050. -- "The jewels and gold of the shrine of

deportari et ibidem attachiari. -- Item lego Thome Lai servienti meo duo quarteria frumenti¹ et duo quarteria ordeï.¹ -- Item lego *cuilibet filiorum et filiarum Alicie filie mee* unum quarterium siliginis,¹ vel unum quarterium ordeï. -- Item lego magistro, scholarum de Lincolnie robam² meam integram de cameletto ; et Phillippo Capellano robam meam integram de bluetto³ ; et Rogero de Dokkyng robam meam sine collobio de rubeo medleto⁴ ; et magistro Petro collobium do eâdem sectâ,⁵ et *Johanni et Thome consanguineis meis* duas robas integras que sunt ex liberatione fontis clericorum⁶ et Galfredi le Scrope. -- Item lego *Katerine sorori mee* unum quarterium frumenti, et unum ordeï. -- Item lego *Alicie filie Alicie* de Frenze unam vaccam &c. -- Item lego Galfrido Fiz unum quarterium ordeï. -- Item Johanni Elwyn &c. -- Item lego duobus capellanis pro animâ meâ divina celebrantibus in ecclesiâ Sancti Martini de Fyncham per unum annum ix marcas. -- Et ad omnia ista exequenda dilectum mihi *Johannem filium meum* et Robertum Ordiner meos constituo executores per presentes. -- Et si quid super fuerit de catallis meis post mortem meum inventis, ubicunque reperta fuerint, ea lego et concedo *Johanni filio meo* antedicto, prætor xx^s. quos lego prefato Roberto Ordiner pro servicio suo. In cujus rei testimonium meum sigillo meo consigno et includo. Datum die anno et loco supradictis. Probatum fuit &c -- XVII Kalend : Julii, 1338. -- *Archd. Norf.*

“St. Thomas Becket, of Canterbury, were carried off in two strong coffers, on the “shoulders of seven or eight men ; for the removal of the rest of the spoils, six and “twenty carts are said to have waited at the church door. . . . The jewels no doubt “went into the royal stores.” (Henry VIII). -- *Stanley's Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 239.

¹ Frumentum, ordeum, et siligo -- wheat, barley, and rye.

² “My entire robe of camlet.” -- See notes following.

³ “Of blue.” There was much variety of colour at different early periods in legal robes ; and judges and others had their summer and winter vestments. -- *Dugdale*.

⁴ “My robe of red sheepskin, without the cape, or collar.” “Medleto pro meleto, seu melote, pellis ovina.” -- *Du Cange*.

⁵ “De eâdem sectâ.” -- “of the same cut,” or fashion. The word refers not of merely to shape but to ornament. According to Canon 74, ecclesiastical persons may not wear “guards, welts, long buttons, or *cuts*.”

⁶ This passage is difficult to understand. It seems to refer to two robes, one of which he had received in right of his appointment as *Clericus Regis*, and the other from his friend Geoffrey le Scrope, who was Attorney General 14 Edward II. The full meaning of *fontis clericorum* will be found probably in the history of the college of *Clerk-in-Well*, commonly called Clerkenwell, London.

2. The WILL of John de Fyncham, son and heir of Adam, has not been found, but an INVENTORY¹ of his goods and chattels is preserved at Stow. This Inventory is dated Michaelmas Day, 13 Edward III (1339). A good fac-simile copy of it, printed for me privately, is here inserted. It contains the names of about 140 articles of furniture, plate, books, robes, armour, agricultural implements, and cattle. Some of the words are obsolete, others are so contracted as to be unintelligible to the ordinary reader, and others involve information of more or less interest ; so that I have felt it desirable to write it out *in extenso*, with a translation, in parallel columns, and a few notes subjoined.

INVENTORIUM bonorum et catallorum Johannis de Fyncham, factum die mercurii in festo Sancti Michaelis Arcangeli, anno regni regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum xiii, apud Fyncham Berton et Thorpe. Et Thome Lay servienti ipsius liberatis ad respondendum de iisdem.	INVENTORY of the goods and chattels of John de Fyncham, made on Wednesday, the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, in the 13th year of the reign of King Edward the Third after the conquest, at Fyncham Barton and Thorpe. And the said goods, &c., were delivered to Thomas Lay, his servant, to be responsible for for the same.
DE STAURO.	OF THE STOCK.
ii. stottis ² pro carecta. i. hakeney pro servo. ii. stottis pro caruca. vi. boves tractantes. vii. vacce, quarum due sunt melche, quatuor sunt ferwe, et una ad firmam dimissa. vii. boviculi. ix. juvence. vii. vituli. ii. sues. i. aper. vii. porcii ad mactandum.	2 young cart oxen 1 riding horse for the servant. 2 young plough oxen. 6 draft oxen. 7 cows, of which two are milch, four are dry, and one has been sent to the farm. 7 steers. 9 heifers. 7 calves. 2 sows. 1 boar. 7 pigs for killing.

¹ This Inventory, it will be observed, is taken in the year after his father's death, but it bears the son's name. We can only suppose that he required it for his own purposes, as for sale, transfer, or simple valuation. He himself lived many years after this.

² Stottis, *stots*, still so called. The termination "is" throughout this Inventory is awkwardly used to denote the plural, where the proper Latin was not at hand, as for instance, "carte -ropis," "tongis," "mazeris," &c.

xx. porciculi.	20 little pigs.
iii xx. multones liberati henrico atland per i talliam. ¹	3 score sheep delivered to Henry Atland by a tally.
xxx. ancee juvenes. xviii. capones.	30 goslings. 18 fowls.
xii. galline. ii. gallini.	12 hens. 2 cocks.
xx. anates et drakis juvenes et veteres.	20 ducks and drakes young and old.
ITEM IN CARECTARIO.	ALSO IN THE CART-SHED.
iii. carette ferre-ligate, cum copsis et scalis.	3 iron-bound carts, with their coverings and ladders.
ii. caruce cum totis apparatusibus.	2 ploughs with gear complete.
ii. crates. i. barwe.	2 harrows. 1 barrow.
ITEM IN STABULO.	ALSO IN THE STABLE.
Totæ felleratæ ² pro vi. equis ad tres carectas, sed quedam sunt corrigenda.	Complete harness for six horses to three carts, but some of them want mending.
i. par de traycis, odde, pro carecta.	1 pair of odd traces for the cart.
iii. carteropis. iii. teyingeropis.	3 cart ropes. 3 binding ropes.
i. vanga. ii. souffles. ³	1 spade. 2 suffle bags.
iii. furce pro fumo. ⁴	3 forks for manure.
i. sedlep. ⁵ i. horsekeppe.	1 seed basket. 1 horse-skep.
ITEM IN GRANGIA.	ALSO IN THE BARN.
iii. scale longe pro tassibus.	3 long ladders for the stacks.
iii. furce pro garbis. ii. redelis.	3 forks for sheaves. 2 riddles.
ITEM IN PISTRINA. ⁶	ALSO IN THE BAKE-HOUSE.
iiii. kymil ⁷ de plumbo.	4 coolers of metal.
iiii. kymil de ligno.	4 coolers of wood.
xiii. fatys ⁸ et tubbis. iii. soos. ⁹	13 vats and tubs. 3 soes.
ii. plumba ¹⁰ in fornace.	2 metal boilers in the furnace.
i. taptrous de plumbo.	1 leaden tap-trough.
ii. skelletrays. i. boket ferre ligatum.	2 pails. 1 iron-bound bucket.
ITEM IN GRANARIO.	ALSO IN THE GRANARY.
x. sacci. ii. wynewe cloyes.	10 sacks. 2 winnowing cloths.
ii. crebre. iii. corbellæ portabiles.	2 sieves. 3 portable chaff-baskets.
i. busellum de ligno. iii. ventilabra.	1 wooden bushel. 4 corn fans.
i. byngelep. i. ventilabrum. pro brassio.	1 bin-basket. 1 fan for malt.

¹ Tallia--a piece of wood on which the numbers are scored by notching. --Bailey.

² Felleratæ, from phalaræ, harness. -- *Ainsworth's Dict.*

³ Souffles -- saddle bags, so called up to a recent period by pedlars, &c.

⁴ Fumo is here used for *fimo*.

⁵ Lep -- basket. -- *Anglo Saxon : Forby's Dict.*

⁶ Pistrina, probably, used also as a brew-house.

⁷ Kymil, kimeling, a cooler, or keeler. -- *Bailey's Dict.*, and *Forby* in *Archæologia*, xxi, 278.

⁸ Fat, the old spelling for vat. -- See Isaiah, lxiii, 2 ; and Mark, xii, 1.

⁹ Soo, a large tub with two ears, and carried on a pole. -- *Halliwell's Dict.*

¹⁰ Plumbum, here used for iron, perhaps a ladle, or "catachresis," for melting. -- See *Fynchal Inventories*.

ITEM IN COQUINA.

- vi. patelle enee quarum. una est apud Barton.
 vi. olle enee quarum una est ap. Thorpe.
 iii. possenets. i. chafour.
 ii. tripedie. ii. mortaria.
 i. fruyingpatella de ferro.
 i. grate. i. gredillie.
 i. magnus cultellus pro dressing.
 i. hache. i boket ferreligatum.
 i. mortarium eree cum i. pestel de ferro.

ITEM IN CAPELLA.

- i. calix. i. missale.
 i. antiphena.¹ i. graduale.²
 ii. vestimenta. iv. manuturgia pro altari.
 ii. tonicellis.³ i. capa.⁴
 i. chesibulum.⁵ ii. psalteria.

ITEM IN AULA.

- i. doser.⁶ vi. quarelle.
 iiiii. mense. i. mensa dormiens.
 ii. paria trostellorum. iii. lavatoria.
 vi. pelvee. iiiii. aundhyirns.⁷
 i. ignitegium de ferro.⁸ ii. paria tongis.
 iii. cathedre.

ITEM IN SPENSA.

- xvi. cocleares argenti.
 iii. pecie argenti, unde una habet coopertorium argenteum.
 i. coupe argenti, scilicet est deauratus.
 ii. mazeris. xxiii. platers de puttre.
 xxiv. disci de eadem. xxiv. sauseria de eadem.
 ii. charjours de eadem. ii. salers.
 vi. mappe. vii. savenape.
 xii. manuturgia. iii. canewacia pro aula.

ALSO IN THE KITCHEN,

- 6 brass dishes, of which one is at Barton.
 6 brass pots, of which one is at Thorpe.
 3 little pots. 1 chafing dish.
 2 three-legged stools. 2 mortars.
 1 iron frying pan.
 1 grate. 1 griddle, or grid-iron.
 1 great knife for dressing.
 1 hatchet. 1 iron-bound bucket.
 1 brass mortar with an iron pestle.

ALSO IN THE CHAPEL.

- 1 cup. 1 missal.
 1 antiphoner. 1 gradual.
 2 vestments. 4 napkins for the altar.
 2 tonicells. 1 cope.
 1 chesibule. 2 psalters.

ALSO IN THE HALL.

- 1 hanging. 6 arrows (for the cross-bow.)
 4 tables. 1 sleeping bench.
 2 pair of trestles. 3 washing basins.
 6 ewers. 4 hearth-irons.
 1 iron fire-cover. 2 pair of tongs.
 3 chairs.

ALSO IN THE PANTRY.

- 16 silver spoons.
 3 pieces of plate, of which one has a silver lid.
 1 cup of silver, which moreover is gilt.
 2 maple bowls. 23 pewter plates.
 24 dishes of the same. 24 soup plates of the same.
 2 pewter large dishes. 2 salt cellars.
 6 napkins. 7 table cloths.
 12 towels. 3 canvas cloths for the hall.

¹ Antiphoner, a choral service book, the voices alternating. -- *Halliwell*.

² Gradual, another service book. -- *Bailey*.

³ Tonicells, from tunicella, a robe for the sub-deacon. -- *Du Cange*.

⁴ Cope, another robe.

⁵ Chesible, a short robe for the priest.

⁶ Doser, or docer, hanging or curtain. -- *Halliwell*.

⁷ Andirons, for supporting the wood, -- dogs.

⁸ Fire-cover, couvre-feu in French, whence *curfew*, to put out the fire, according to the curfew law of William I.

iv. barelle.	i. arca pro pane.	4 barrels.	1 bread chest.
iii. cultelli in uno vaso pro mensâ domini.		4 knives in a box for the lord's table.	
ITEM IN CAMERA DOMINI.		ALSO IN THE LORD'S CHAMBER.	
xi. tapetes.	ii. coverlits pro doceriis.	11 pieces of tapestry.	7 coverlets for the hangings.
xxvii. lintheanima.	ii. lecti de penarum.	27 sheets.	2 feather beds.
vi. canewacia.	iii. quilts.	6 canvas cloths.	3 quilts.
ii. long pillewys	v. curt pillewys.	3 bolsters.	5 pillows.
iii. aketones ¹	ii. bachenets. ²	3 hacquetons.	2 bascinets.
i. hauburgium.	v. haste	1 hauberk.	5 spears.
iii. mantelle.	iiii. coffris. ³	3 cloaks.	4 chests.
iii. coffris trussuris.	ii. parve arce.	3 packing chests.	2 little boxes.
iiii. forceria.	ii. gissarmis.	3 cabinets.	2 battle-axes.
i. house de ray. ⁴		1 striped mantle or rug.	
ITEM IN LARDARIO.		ALSO IN THE LARDER.	
i. archa pro carne.		1 chest for meat.	
i. alveolum pro carne.		1 small meat pot.	
ii. barelli stantes pro sale.		2 upright salt barrels.	
i. blower de enea. ⁵	ii. pondera.	1 skimmer of brass.	2 weights.
i. hamerus.	i. par pinsonis.	1 hammer.	1 pair of pincers.
i. gladium.	i. cultellus longus.	1 cleaver.	1 long knife.
i. arca. ⁶	xxxiii. segette.	1 bow.	33 arrows.

Note. -- The Barton and Thorpe portions of this Inventory contain only two words which are not found in the above, viz. :-

v. xx. oves ⁷ matrices.	5 score mother ewes.
i. busellum de stramine.	1 bushel basket.

¹ Hacquetons were quilted jackets worn under the armour. -- *Halliwell*.

² Bascinet were helmet caps.

³ Coffris. These are still called coffers by the peasantry.

⁴ House de ray. It is difficult understand exactly what is meant by this, but according to Halliwell it is a "short coarse mantle for wet weather."

⁵ Skimmer of brass. According to Bailey, *blow*-milk is *skimmed* milk, but what *blower* originally signifies I cannot find. In an old Inventory of Sir John Fastolfe occurs this: "Item two skymers of brasse." -- See *Archæol.*, xxi, p. 278.

⁶ Arca, sometimes used for arcus by inferior writers. -- *Carpentier*.

⁷ Oves, ewes. In Norfolk these are called *the flock*, and no other sheep are so called. The Great Captain of our agriculture, Mr. Coke, used to say "yowes," and rightly, thus derived, "oves," "owes," "yowes." Fr. "eaux."

3. The last TESTAMENT of John de Fyncham, son and heir to the preceding John, and grandson of Adam, is dated October 2nd (the sixth of the Nones of October), 1415, and proved at Wereham (most probably at the Archdeacon's Visitation), October 15th, 1415.

In Dei nomine. Amen. Ego Johannis de Fyncham sane mentis et bone memorie sexto nonarum Octobris anno domini millesimo CCCC quinto decimo condo testamentum meum in hunc modum. In primis lego animam meam Deo omnipotenti et beate Marie semper virgini matri sue ; et corpus meum sepeliendum in ecclesiâ sancti Martini de Fyncham. -- Item lego Christiane filie mee et conventui de Crabous v marcas. -- Item lego Margarete filie mee xiii^s iv^d. -- Item lego Johanni Wystede *meam brefiam jupam*¹ et unum quarterium ordeï. Et quicquid residuum bonorum meorum fuerit do et lego executoribus meis, ut disponendum pro animâ meâ prout eis melius fuerit visum peragendum. Et constituo et ordino Simeonem filium meum et Johannem Gyffe perpetuum vicarium ecclesie de Fyncham executores meos ad perficiendum præsens testamentum. Datum apud Fyncham die et anno supradictis. _ Probatum fuit apud Wyrham XV die Oct. anno MCCCCXV. -- *At Stow.*

4. The WILL of Simon de Fyncham, son and heir to the preceding, is written in English, and separate from his Testament, which is in Latin. The former disposes of the real, the latter of the personal property, according to the custom of the time. It is dated October 10th, 31 Henry VI (1452).

This is the last will of me Simeon Fyncham of Fyncham in the counte of Norff : Gentilman. First I will that alle my feoffees to myn use in all my londys and tenementes in the

¹ Jupam -- *jupon*, the pourpoint or doublet. It was generally of silk or velvet, and was worn over the armour, being frequently emblazoned with the arms of the owner. -- *Halliwel*. "Brefiam" is a curious variation of spelling for "breve." In Mr. Dawson Turner's *Blomefield Illustrated*, this expression, "brefiam jupam," is erroneously copied "gresiam rupam." -- *Br. Mus., Add. MSS.*, 23,030.

seid Counte after my decesse, and of Elizabeth my wyfe, make estat to John my sone, and to his heres, or to sweche persones as he shall name to be enfeoffed to his use. And in kas the seid John deye levynge me the seid Symeon, thanne I will that my seid feoffees make estat to John the sone of the seid John, in lyke wise as thei shoulde have done to his fadre. And if the seid John the son overlive not his seid fadre, thanne they shall make estat to Thomas brodyr of the seid John the son, in lyke wise as thei shoulde have don to John the Fadyr : and the lyke estat to him that ovyrleve othir til hese issue male be dispended. And if the seid John my sone deye, none issue male komyng of hym, thanne I will that if lie have on issue female, and no more, the seid feoffes kepe the seid londys til thei have reryd CC marke, wech CC marke I will the seid issue female have to here maryage. And if ii females, thanne thei to have eche of hem C^{li}. And after this don, thanne my seid feoffes shalle demene hem in estate to Laurence my sone, and to hese issue male, if any kome of hym, as thei shoulde have done to the seid John my sone, and to his issue male if they had levyd. And if it fortune the seide Lawrence to deye withowte issue male -- thanne the same to William my sone &c -- thanne to Nicholas &c. And if it fortune all my seide sones to deye, none issue male komyng of hem, thanne, after the issue female payed and content, that thei selle alle the seid londys &c, and the money reseved therefore be disposed for the sowles of me and my wyfe and oure seid issue, and of all oure ancestres and frendes, in sweech wise as kan be thought to there discretion, the seid sowles lengest to be had in preyer and remembraunce. In witness of wech thyngs &c. Geven the X day of Octobr the yere of the regne of Kyng Harry the sexte after the Conquest the XXXI (1452). -- *At Stow*.

5. The last TESTAMENT of Simon de Fyncham is dated November 25th, 14--, and proved the 17th of March, 1458.

In Dei nomine. Amen. Vicesimo quinto die mensis Novembris anno domini millesimo CCCC Ego Symeon

Fyncham de Fyncham sane mentis &c. Inprimis commendo animam meam Deo omnipotenti beate Marie virgini et omnibus sanctis ejus ; corpusque meum sepeliendum in ecclesiâ sancti Martini predictâ. -- Item lego summo altari ejusdem ecclesie vi^s viii^d. -- Item lego fabrice campanilis ejusdem ecclesie vii^l vi^s viii^d, solvenda in septem annis jam proxime sequentibus per equales portiones. – Item lego Elizabethæ uxori mee omnia utensilia et totum apparatus camere mee, una cum omnibus crateris et coclearibus meis argenteis. – Residuum do et lego executoribus meis, ad debita mea solvenda, et eleemosinas et alia opera caritativa pro animâ meâ. et animabus ipsorum quibus teneor, distribuendum prout eisdem melius ac magis Deo placabile videbitur fore faciendum. Hujus testamenti executores meos ordino Elizabetham uxorem meam et Johannem filium meum. Datum die et anno supradictis. Probatum apud Norvicum &c, decimo septimo die Marcii anno millesimo CCCCLVIII. -- *At Stow.*

6. The WILL of John Fyncham, son and heir to Simon, is dated March 10th, 1494, and was proved at Lambeth, February 7th, 1496. It is very long, and the high charges at Doctors' Commons are an effective bar to copying long wills. Here is about half of it.

In the name of Almighty God, Fader, Sone, and Holy Gost, the blessed Trinite, I John Fyncham the sone of Simeon Fyncham sumetye of Fyncham &c, the Xth day of the moneth of March, the yere of our Lord God 1494 &c, ordeigne and make for my last will in the manor and forme hereafter ensuying. First I pray exhort and require all my feoffees to myne use in and of my manor of Depdale, in the counte of Norff, that they suffre all myne executors to occupie alle my said manor, with all the appurtenances profites and commoditees of the same, enstored with all my cataill of shepe, that is to say, v^c moder shepe there left for my stoore

of the said maner, to pay all my debts, and to the performyng of alle my legacies and bequests in my testament ordeyned and specified. And over that, my said feoffees to suffre my said executours to take alle other profittes and issues of the said maner, excepte all such lands as lyegh and be within the towne and feld of Brancastre and Depdale, on the weste side of Downgate or Dalegate, for to finde and susteyne an honest and well disposed prest seculer, that shall yerely and daily, if sikeness or other resonable causes lette not him, to singe or to say masse and all other Divine service, as *placebo dirige* and *commendacionem*, as apperteneth to an annuell¹ preste for to do. And in his masse to remembre and pray for the soules of me and Beatrice late my wife, and the soules of my fader Symeon Fyncham and Elizabeth his wife, my moder, and for all my good benefactours and good doers in generall, &c. Whiche preste for to say the said masse &c, I assigne my brother Sir Nicholas Fyncham, if it may please him to take it uppon him, afore any other preste, taking yerely for his salarye vi marcs and his boord, so that he be content to goo to bord with my sonne *thelder John*, as he hath doon to for this tyme. The said salarye to be paied atte ii tymes of the yere, atte the fest of the Nativite of Saint John Baptiste, and of our Lord Jesu Criste, by evin porcions &c, first out of my maner of Depdale for iii or iv yeres, and thenne of alle myne other maners and landes, except such as I have assigned to my sonne *yonger John* by this my last will. And the said Sir Nicholas shall have the said service and chauntry if it may plese him during his lief &c ; and shall singe and say his masse &c, in the parish church of Saint Martyn, or in the chapell of our Ladye *within my maner of Fyncham*. Provided alway that onys in every weke his masse shall be of *requiem*, yf it be not contrary to the ordinance and rewle of holy chirch. Provided alway that yf Sir Nicholas shall refuse, or by any long and contynuell sikeness or unwiley² age may not do the said service, thenne that my heires &c, name another honest prest &c, to do such service in the parish chirch of Saint Marten, or els in tyme of necessite in the chapell of oure lady *being*

¹ Annuell, or annual, so called because a priest was usually appointed by will to say mass one whole year for a deceased person, and hence also his stipend was termed "annuala." -- *Ash's Dictionary*.

² "Unwiley," or unwilly, -- unfavorable ; as willy -- favourable. -- *Halliwell's Dict.*

edified in my maner¹ of Fyncham aforesaid &c -- in tyme of necessitie, whanne any woman or women &c, may not labor to go to the parish churche, or in tyme of sikeness or trowbels or fowle wedir, or any other convenient tyme. And as oft as it shall fortune that the said chauntry by death or by unwiley age or mysgovnance of the prest to falle voyde, thenne that another convenient preste be named &c. -- Item that myne heires for the tyme being shall have full power to putt in and putt oute any preste not of good conversacion and disposicion. -- Item I will that myne heires indevore them, that the said preste and chauntry be contynued and kept in perpetuite, as they will answeare to fore God, atte the day of Judgement, &c. &c. -- Prerogative Court, D. C., London.

7. The last TESTAMENT of the above-mentioned John Fyncham is in Latin, and of the same date as his Will. Besides a number of legacies and bequests to certain churches, the poor, &c., &c., it contains the following :-

*Filialis meis William Batchcroft Johanni Fyncham et Thome Fyncham cuique vi^s. viii^d. -- Item filialo Johanni librum meum veterum statutorum. -- Residuum do et lego Johanni Fyncham *seniori filio meo*, Johanni *filio juniori*, magistro Symeon Fyncham, et Gulielmo Batchcroft, &c. -- Proved with the Will as above. -- London, D. C.*

8. The WILL of John Fyncham (*the elder John*), son and heir to the preceding, is dated April 6th, 1499 ; and proved June 1st, 1499. It is much defaced by time, and in many parts quite illegible.

In the name of Almighty God the fadyr the son and Holy Gost the blessed Trinite, and owyr Lady sent Mary, and all

¹ "Maner" here means the *Manor House*. These chapels could only be erected by license of the Bishop, with the consent of the Rector or Vicar, &c. -- See Bl., xi, 18.

the holy company of hevyn, I John Fyncham the son of John Fyncham of Fyncham, the XVIth day of Aprill, the yere of ower Lord MCCCCLXXXIX, and the XVI yere of the reyngn of King Herry the VII King of Ingelond, ordeyn and make my last will in the maner and forme here ensuwyng. First I pray exorte and requir alle my feoffees in my londs wher so ever they lye in the counte of Norff : to deliver estate according to this my last will. Fyrst I geive and graunte to Jane my wyffe alle my maneris londs &c, wythine the towne of Fyncham &c, upon this condycion that she do noo voluntary wast in the howsys of the maneris, nor fell down noo gret wode, but for reparacion of the seid howsys &c. -- [Then as to the manors, lands, &c, in Hunworth, Stody, Barton, &c.] Item I will requir and exorte alle my feoffees to suffyr myn executors to take alle issues and profits of my maner in Depdale, with vi^c shep there left for store &c, for the mariage of my seid dowgthr Margaret ; and after that performed, than I wille that my son John have the saide maner of Depdale, to have and to holde to hym hese heyres and assigns for evirmore. And if it happyn my seid sone John for to dye withine age without heyr male, or if it happyn my seid sone John for to sell my seid maner of Depdale, than my *brother John* Fyncham shall have the preferment or the bying thereof, as in the last will of my fadyr more pleynty apperith, &c. &c. -- *At Stow.*

9. The last TESTAMENT of the said elder John. Date and probate the same as the Will. They are coupled together, and bear the seal of John Moreton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In Dei nomine, &c. Ego Johannes Fyncham filius Johannis Fyncham filii Symeonis Fyncham condo testamentum meum &c. Inprimis lego animam meam &c. -- Item ecclesie cathedrali Norwycensis ii^s. Item reparacioni ecclesie sancti Martini de Fyncham xiii^s iv^d. Item summo

altari ejusdem pro decimis oblitis vi^s viii^d. Item meum optimum animale pro mortuario meo. Item reparacioni campanile ecclesie sancti Michaelis de Fyncham xiii^s iv^d. Item cuilibet ecclesiis de Depedale et Hundworth iii^s iv^d. Item Margarete fille mee centum libras &c. Residuum Johanne uxori mee, ad debita mea persolvenda, injuria mea restituenda, et ad sustentacionem ipsius Johanne ac liberorum nostrorum, exceptis omnibus ornamentis capelle, quibus pater meus mihi assignavit et legavit, sub condicionem quod predicta ornanenta remanent &c. Executores hujus testamenti mei ordino facio et constituo Johannam uxorem meam, Johannem fratrem meum, Henricum. Tey militem &c &c. -- *At Stow.*

10. The WILL and TESTAMENT combined of John Fyncham, son and heir of the preceding, is dated September 11th, 32 Henry VIII (1540). It was found, without date of probate, recited in a Post Mortem Inquisition taken after his death at Norwich Castle, September 19th, 1541.

I John Fyncham of Fyncham Esquyer the XI day of September in the yere of oure Lord God a thousand fyve hundred and fortie, and in the XXXII yere of the reign of our sovraign lorde Kyng Henrie the eight, beyng of good mind and remembrance, make my testament and last will in this wise, revokyng and adnullyng alle other willes &c. -- Firste I commende my soule &c. -- and my body to be buried in the churche of Saynt Martyn on the south side of my father, and I giff and bequethe to the vicar of the same churche in recompens for my tithis negligently forgotten vi^s viii^d. -- and to the reparacion of the same churche of Saynt Martyn in Fyncham iii^l vi^s viii^d. -- also to the parson of Saynt Michell vi^s viii^d. -- and to the reperacion of the same churche of Saynt Michell xl^s. -- Item to every parson or vicar of alle such townes whereyn I have lond for tithe forgotten xii^d. -- Item I will that my most intierlie belovyd wiff Ele shall have the keyng using and occupacion of alle my chapell stuff, as well chales^l bokes

^l Chales, for chalices, used in a general sense for the sacramental plate

vestymentes &c, during hur liff, and after hur dececeas [sic] then my sone Thomas &c. -- Item I will that my said wiff &c, shall fynde an honest prest to say masse and pray devoutly for my sowle, and alle my ancettours sowles, according to the will of John Fyncham my graunt-father. -- Item I giff to my brother Skipwith my best gowne and my best dowbelett ; and I giff to Ele Skipwith his doughter all such monye as he owith me, whiche is aboute xl^s. -
 - Item I will that myne executours shall pay or do to be payde to my sister Skipwith, during the terme of vii yeris &c, at too termes in the yere, that is to say at Michelmas and Estern, at iche one of the same festivals x^s.-- Item I giff to the one of my god childern beyng a gentilmans child vi^s viii^d, and to iche one of my other god childern, John Copsey except, xx^d, and to the same John Copsey iii^s iiiii^d. -- Item to my cosyn Fyncham of Westwynch my blak chamlett gowne furred, and to my cosyn Thomas Fyncham of Well my blak gowne furred with conye. -- Item I giff to Sir John my preste vi^s viii^d. Item to Thomas Complyn my servaunt iii^{li} whiche I lent hym. Item to John Bacon my servaunt xl^s. Item to Richard Bacon xx^s. Item to William Parker vi^s viii^d. Item to Ann Calybutt and Thomasyn Fyncham, beyng now childern within my hous, to iche one of them vi^s viii^d. Item to every one of my women servaunts one quarter wagis. Item I giff unto my said wiff alle my goodes cattals plate money dettes corne &c, upon this condicion, that she pay my dettes, restore my wrongs &c, and delyver unto Thomas my sone sevyn hundred good ewes, when he come to his age of xxi yeris &c, and also tenne kyne and a bulle. And I will that she shall pay unto Ele my doughter too hundred marks of good and lawful monye of Inglond, whan she shall come to the age of xxi yeris, in full recompens for alle such shepe as I havyn gyvyn hur before this day &c. and if my childern die before the age of xxi yeris, then I will that my wiff have the said bequest to hurselff, to this intent, to bestowe it in dedes of charitie amongst my kynsfolk and servaunts and pore folk, to pray for our sowles and alle benefactours sowles, by hur discrecion. Item I giff to the said Ele my wiff alle my londes and pastures in Bowton &c. Also where before thys tyme by my dede I have graunted unto Ele my doughter an annuell rente of xx^{li} &c -- Also I will that my said wiff shall have two partes of the maner of Baynard halle in Fyncham in three parts divydid, that is to say the sight or mansion of the said maner,

lx acres in Southowe, a close in North field, a libertie of fouldcourse for cccc shepe &c. -- All the residue of alle my goodes cattalls &c, I giff to the said Ele my wiff, whom I make and ordeyn my sole executrix &c, and Sir John Spelman Kt supervyser &c. -- Witness William Skipwith and others. -- *Public Record Office, London.*

11. The WILL and TESTAMENT of Thomas Fyncham, son of the preceding John, is very long, and much injured by the effects of time. It is dated March 1st, 1550, and was proved December 21st, 1551, in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Norwich, where it is preserved. After a very incoherent introduction, in which there is something about Sodom and Gomorrha, he disposes of his real estate to his wife and her assigns for certain family uses, William his son and heir being then an infant. It consists, besides the Fincham property, of manors or lands in Brancaster, Burnham Deepdale, Burnham Norton, Burnham Sutton, and 18 other parishes mentioned. Then comes the Testament, by which he bequeaths --

To the poor folke of Fyncham xl shillings. item to my beloved wyffe all the stuffe and utensils in my house in Fyncham and in Burnham Depedale. item, to the common boxe in Fyncham vi^{li} viii^s iv^d. item, to my son William 500 good mother ewes at his age of xxi yeres, all the stuffe and utensils in the chamber above the chapell item, to Ann Fyncham my doughter 300 sheepe 20 kene and a hundred marks on the day of her maridg. Item, to my littell cosyn George Walker vi^{li} viii^s iv^d. Item, to my cosyn Fyncham of West Wynce my cloth night gowne furred with conye [rabbit skin],¹ and to Mr. Yelverton my father in-law my bay gelding, &c. &c. -- *Bishop's Registry, Norwich.*

¹ "Their skins," says Fuller, "were formerly much used, when furs were in fashion ; till of late our citizens have laid down their grave gownes, and took up their light cloaks, men generally disliking all habits, though emblems of honor, if also badges of age." -- *Fuller's Worthies*, vol. ii, 1, 124.

The Will of William Fyncham, son and heir of the preceding Thomas, and the last occupant in the family of Fincham Hall, has not been found. Most probably he never made one, having sold his estate in 1572 as a young man, and left the village. He was dead in 1586.

The foregoing, it may be seen, are, with one single omission only, (and there we have the Inventory of his goods and chattels,) a perfect series of the Wills and Testaments of the heads of successive generations of this family, from 1337 to 1551, a period of more than 200 years, immediately preceding the Reformation. Such a series must surely be rare and very difficult to procure. A like selection to a certain extent, in a way of instructive contrast, might be made from the Wills of the same family subsequently. Two, however, are all that I have thought it necessary to procure copies of, and will be amply sufficient for our purpose, which, as before hinted, is partly at least to shew from what gross and absurd superstitions the Church was now purged, and what is the true and only foundation of a Christian's hope, in that departure when he can "carry nothing away with him." They will be quoted only to the extent necessary to this end.

1. In the Will of EDWARD FINCHAM, of Outwell, dated February 1st, 1630, is as follows :-

In the name of God, Amen. The first daie of Februarie in the yeare of our Lord God, one thousand six hundred and thirtie, I Edward Fincham. of Outwell, within the Isle of Ely, in the Countie of Cambridge, Esquier, considering with myselfe that it is appointed to all men to dye, and that the tyme

of death is uncertaine, and being desirous to settle and dispose of such parte of mine estate wherewith God hath blessed me, as remaineth ondisposed by anie acte of mine yet executed, doe in my perfect memorie (thanckes be unto God) ordaine make and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner and forme followinge. First I render and give againe unto Almightye God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter, my whole selfe soule and bodye, hoping through the mirritts of Jesus Christe his dearlie beloved sonne, and my mercifull Saviour, to be saved, and after this life ended to enjoy life everlasting, -- and my bodie to be buried at the discretion of mine executors. -- *Proved in D. C.*, July 1, 1631.

2. In the Will of JOHN FINCHAM, of Outwell, dated March 19th, 1708-9, is as follows :-

In the name of God, Amen. I John Fincham of Outwell, in the Isle of Ely, and County of Cambridge, Esquire, being through the great mercie of God in perfect health and memorey, doe hereby revoake and annull all former and other Wills by me made, and doe make this my last Will and Testament in manner and forme following. First, I doe humbly commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my merciful Creator, assuredly hoping through his infinite mercie and goodness, and the passion death merits and mediation of his only son our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to be made partaker of everlasting life and eternal happiness; in order to which I most humbly begg of the Holy Ghost our Comforter and Sanctyfyer, that he would please to fill my heart with his Gifts and Graces, that I may spend the remaining part of my time that it might please my gracious God to give me leave to live in this transitory world to the glory and honour of the holy blessed and undivided Trinity, three sacred persons and one God, to whome be all honor and glory and praise both now and for evermore. As to my Body I desire it may be Christianly and decently interred in my Chappell adjoine to the parish church of Outwell aforesaid, built and dedicated by my Ancestors, &c. &c. -- *Proved in D. C.*, May 8th 1709.