

Historical Notices and Records

OF THE VILLAGE AND PARISH OF
FINCHAM, IN THE COUNTY OF
NORFOLK.

By the Rev. William Blyth, M.A.,

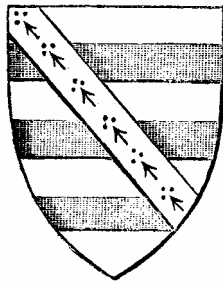
(Christ College, Cambridge.)

RECTOR OF FINCHAM ST. MICHAEL'S,
WITH THE VICARAGE OF FINCHAM ST. MARTIN'S ANNEXED ;
AND RURAL DEAN.

====

Trajecto Iside, ("Ousam" dicunt, sed corruptè, ut mihi videtur, pro "Isedem"), in Centuriam Clackclose pervenitur, quæ, cum multis in eâdem villis, ad Ramesiense Monasterium olim spectabat, hodie ad amplissimum Equitem Johannem Hare, velut unum illius Abbatîæ cohæredum.

Sir Henry Spelman's *Icenia*,
Hundred of *Clackclose*.



KING'S LYNN.
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tur, pro "Isic
multis in ead
spectabat, h
unum illius

TO
SIR THOMAS HARE, BARONET,
OF STOW BARDOLPH,
IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK;
LORD OF SEVERAL ANCIENT MANORS
IN FINCHAM;
AND LORD PARAMOUNT OF THE HUNDRED OF CLACKCLOSE;
THESE HISTORICAL AND LOCAL RECORDS
ARE VERY RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY HIS FAITHFUL AND OBLIGED SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

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* * * Many of the above names are given for two or more copies, and to all the author returns his sincere thanks for their kind and courteous replies to his circular note.

PREFACE.

The late Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Stanley, published a series of "Heads and Questions," "for the arrangement of local "information in every department of parochial and rural "interest" ; and in his Preface he says : "If a collection could "be made of all the insulated and floating facts connected "with the various branches of topographical knowledge, it is "obvious that an invaluable body of information might be "amassed, of the utmost importance to the traveller, the "antiquarian, the man of science, and the naturalist." "Society," he continues, "is justified in expecting from each "of its members his mite of contribution." Having during my Incumbency in this parish collected at leisure times a very considerable amount of historical and descriptive matter of the character alluded to, the thought of sending it to the press, for the information of others likely to be interested or amused thereby, finds at once encouragement in the words of his Lordship's little pamphlet.

I am assured also, by those competent to judge, that from the materials in hand a volume may be compiled which shall be attractive not only to my parishioners, but to many others who delight in the records of by-gone days. Nay, further, I am not unwilling to admit that I indulge the hope, as becomes a clergyman, that a word spoken in season, as is here designed, or out of season, if the reader shall so judge, may be turned to good account; and, anyhow, that "bread so "cast upon the waters" may be "found after many days." Nor do I think that any earnest man, of

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average experience in life, and confiding in his own integrity, ought to be deterred from using the press, in the conscientious promotion of a good object, by the fear of an insinuated presumption in “rushing into print,” as the phrase is, as if one were thereby necessarily rushing to perdition. The press, we know, like other great engines, is mighty for both good and evil, and for evil how mighty let the thousands of penny and halfpenny publications in large towns testify. Ought we not, then, as far as we may be able, on every fitting occasion, to enlist this powerful engine on the side of “peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety”? With all due deference, I think that the clergy especially are far too slack in their use of the press, and I for one do earnestly hope that the day is not far off when in many parishes the occasional circulation of a printed address, or even the publication of the parochial and local monthly magazine, will not be an extraordinary and exceptional feature in ministerial work, whether for the grave business of communicating religious instruction, or for supplying lighter and yet wholesome reading in these reading days.¹ And herein I may with confidence assure my clerical brethren, or any lay friend with sufficient time at his disposal, that nothing will be more acceptable to a village community, or more generally popular, than authenticated records of the locality of their birth or residence. They resemble golden treasures which have been long hid in the recesses of the earth, and are even perhaps corroded thereby, but nevertheless they will interest and delight not only the actual finder but every bystander likewise.

Blomefield's *History of Norfolk* forms, in some

¹The Parish Magazine, by the Rev. J. Erskine Clarke, of Derby, with its *local editor* and *adapted cover*, is a good specimen of what may be done in this way. To make it self-supporting, however, a larger number of subscribers would be required than can usually be found in country villages.

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particulars, the basis of these pages, as might be expected. Justly celebrated, however, as is that work of our county historian, its history of any particular locality is necessarily very brief and scanty ; the more particularly so, since he died leaving a very large part of his work to be completed by others from his notes. The Deanery of Fincham, or Hundred of Clackclose, which are co-extensive and coterminous, lie under this disadvantage. And there are, moreover, in this work many inaccuracies of importance in some of the descriptions and family histories ; not to mention very numerous typographical errors everywhere. All these have been corrected, as far as possible, by reference to original and new sources of information ; and the outline of the local history of the parish is very greatly enlarged.

By the generous permission of Sir Thomas Hare, Baronet, and more especially by the exceedingly kind assistance of the Rev. G. H. Dashwood, Vicar of Stow, I have obtained from the muniment room of the Stow estate some valuable treasures, not only specially relating to this parish, and the history of the ancient family of Fincham, but to a certain extent of general interest also. The Fincham pedigrees in their earlier parts have been made out almost entirely by Mr. Dashwood, and all are printed by himself, and, together with one or two other plates, are most liberally presented to me for this work ; and I must be permitted to say of them that they have been compiled with no ordinary care and ability, and are beautifully set up. If there be an error or two remaining, they are those of the old MSS. and Visitations themselves.¹

¹ One has sometimes heard objections raised against the study of genealogies, especially in clergymen. In reply, I would only say, not to quote the earlier parts of the Bible, that the New Testament opens with genealogies, and only warns us against those which are “endless.” Connected with biography, as they so intimately are, they may be made to subserve the best of “ends,” viz., the teaching of continuous example from generation to generation.

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I have been much assisted also by the Rev. George Munford, Vicar of East Winch, in the compilation of the early history of the parish, and especially in its illustration from Domesday Book, an "Analysis" of which, as relates to Norfolk, has been published by him.

If either in the text, translations, or notes, my descriptions or explanations shall seem to some to be trivial or unnecessary, I can only say that I have thought it better to err, if it be so, in this direction, than not to be intelligible, as far as possible, to all readers.

It is unfortunate that there are no domestic records of their ancestors existing with any of the present representatives of the Fincham family, that I can discover, if I except a few letters and papers belonging to Mr. Fincham, of Blandford, in the county of Dorset, which he has kindly sent to me. Amongst these is a letter from Mrs. Browne (formerly Mary Fincham, of Diss,) to her cousin Frederick, in London. She writes (August 16th, 1809) : "You cannot think how pleased I am that I have at last found one of the family taking an interest with me in completing our pedigree, which I have been labouring at for years ; but what can a woman do alone? The particulars I send you I had from Mr. Forby, of Fincham, the present Rector. I dined with him, and he shewed me the Church, and the old Hall, where there is enough to satisfy the mind of its former grandeur. In one little room are the Fincham Arms, exactly like those we use, which delighted me and Mr. Forby much. The church is a very pretty one, and only wants new pewing ; it would then be the prettiest church in Norfolk, and had I a good fortune it should be done. . . . My father had an aunt Goddard, whose maiden name was Fincham. Her father was a physician. I have often heard her

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“talk of the family being very grand. My uncle Fincham, of
“Diss, had a book that gave an account of the family for 400
“years back, which he gave to my aunt, but I cannot find it,
“and fear it has been used as waste paper.” I quote this letter
both for its generous and happy spirit and as conveying some
notion, though pardonably partial, of the position and
consequence of the family whose name will so frequently
occur in these pages.

For the rest, I can truly say that I am myself surprised at
the extent to which this humble attempt at village history has
grown, so far beyond my original intentions, the more so
since I have studied throughout to avoid both irrelevancies on
the one hand and insignificant minutiae on the other ; much
less would I desire to rake up events which, however
calculated to gratify uncultivated tastes, had far better be
consigned to the dark chambers of oblivion for ever. I do not
profess to write a particular and unbroken history of my
parish, if that were even possible to any man, which it is not.
There are, however, legitimate and perhaps valuable mines
still unexplored, which I must leave to others, if haply at
some future time any there shall be, who may feel
encouraged by what they find here to supplement my
defective essay, and to add another “mite of contribution to
“that stock of information which,” to repeat the Bishop’s
words, “society is justified in expecting from each of its
“members.” Only let such bear in mind that the pursuit is
both laborious and fascinating, and may easily become
expensive. It makes serious and tempting demands upon our
time ; and to succeed, in conjunction with due attention to
our other avocations, we must have patience, leisure,
opportunity, and the experience of several years ; in the
meanwhile

“FUGACES, EHEU, LABUNTUR ANNI.”

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