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MAGAZINE FROM 1731 TO 1868.
ENGLISH TOPOGRAPHY, PART VIII**

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GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME & F. A. MILNE

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EDITED BY
GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A.

ENGLISH TOPOGRAPHY, PART VIII.
(*NORFOLK—NORTHAMPTONSHIRE—NORTHUMBERLAND.*)

EDITED BY F. A. MILNE, M.A.

LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1896.



INTRODUCTION.

THE three counties of Norfolk, Northamptonshire, and Northumberland are completed in this volume, the two first being rather fuller than in other cases. The usual features of topographical details, not elsewhere noted, and of family history are represented in these counties.

Norfolk has been fortunate in its local historian, and many of the contributions are supplements to his history, giving either earlier or later information.

Among the church antiquities of Norfolk, the frescoes of Burlingham church are particularly interesting as one of the few examples of a secular subject containing contemporary drawings of costume and armour. With this may be compared the portrait of Edward I., in the church of Great Yarmouth, and the churchyard inscription to the Bartlemans, which places on record in a graphic manner an account of a fight with pirates, just off the Norfolk coast. The mural paintings discovered in Norwich in 1863 (see p. 73) are also of extreme interest, and it may be well to specify the thatched churches, described on pp. 57, 58, and 75.

The social ways and manners of former days are to be gathered in many out-of-the-way references to the doings of the times. The records of the enclosures are very interesting, and it appears that the Norfolk poor were not in every case left entirely out of the reckoning when the common lands were apportioned among owners. This subject is always one of importance, and has never received the attention of economical inquirers which it deserves. Other less generally important subjects are here and there touched upon. The grant by the parishioners of Merton "to a burning at Shipdam, a

neighbouring town, 4s. 3d., the inhabitants there promising a requital on the like occasion, Feb. 16, 1661," (p. 68), is a system of municipal insurance, which may be commended for its simplicity at all events; and in 1666 Merton sent up its contribution of 13s. 5d. "towards the releefe of the sufferers by the casualty of that sad fire in London" (p. 68). Domestic architecture is, strangely enough, not particularly noted in Norfolk, though the county is rich in examples; but in Northamptonshire the admirable article on "Mediæval Houses in Peterborough," by Mr. J. H. Parker (p. 137), is a welcome contribution to the subject. The manor house of Courtenhall, also in Northamptonshire, is described on p. 158. It is not, I believe, generally understood that licenses to eat flesh were continued so late as 1661 (see p. 68).

A point of church dedication of some interest is noted by Mr. Harrod concerning the cathedral church of Norwich (see. p. 72), for it appears that the ancient dedication of Christ Church was kept alive by popular tradition certainly down to the sixteenth century, whereas the dedication to the Holy Trinity had been substituted by Bishop Herbert in 1096.

Inventories are always interesting, as much sometimes from what they do not contain as for what they include. The library at Carbrook (p. 33), is meagre, but the list of ornamental plate at Oxnead Hall, printed from a MS. supposed to have been written by one of the Pastons (p. 84), is one of the most valuable things of the kind.

Natural history notes are not common in these collections, but a very interesting one is recorded at Hilgay (p. 52), concerning the simultaneous appearance of field-mice and Norway owls, the former being preyed upon by the latter. The "wild" white cattle of Chillingham are noted on p. 256, but it should be remembered that our best authorities have agreed that these cattle are the descendants of a breed introduced by the Romans, and are not, therefore, wild in the sense of being in their original state of nature.

Folklore is represented by the remarkable extract from the parish register of Wells, printed on p. 113, concerning the witchcraft of Mother Gabley. The way in which superstition is sometimes manufactured is illustrated by the story told of the parish clerk of Cold Higham, in Northamptonshire (p. 151). The well-known custom at Alnwick, in Northumberland, is described on p. 253, and its interesting system of representation by townships on p. 258. The

Frithstol of Hexham (p. 285), in Northumberland, is another relic of the past which is noted in these pages. The game rhyme of "Willy, Willy Waeshale" (p. 300), is a contribution of the kind which one regrets there are not more examples of. Copyhold tenures are noted at Brigstock (p. 148) and at Hexham (p. 283).

Like Norfolk, Northamptonshire can boast of a capable historian, and some of the contributions to this volume are supplemental notes to his work. The family inscriptions, arms and monuments contributed from this county are particularly rich, and are the chief characteristic of the articles.

Northumberland is interesting in a way different to the two other counties dealt with in this volume. The world is older in Northumberland. Castle and crag and burgh are the chief characteristics, while, of course, the wild border life is indicated by the descriptions of places.

In accordance with the plan of these volumes, each article is untouched, and it stands as the contribution from local residents, or specially qualified inquirers. No one will doubt, I think, that imperfectly as each county is represented by these reprints from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, they contain a storehouse of valuable information which cannot be obtained from any other source, and which, but for the record here, would in many cases not now be obtainable. Every reference to illustrations and plates is preserved, so that readers may know where to look in the original for what in some cases are of more value than the article which describes them.

G. LAURENCE GOMME.

24, DORSET SQUARE,
September, 1896.





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