NORWICH AND THE BROADS

Painted by E.W. Haslehust R.B.A.

WROXHAM BROAD, EARLY SPRING

NORWICH AND THE BROADS

Described by WALTER JERROLD
Pictured by E. W. HASLEHUST

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NORWICH FROM MOUSEHOLD HEATH

THE CITY OF CHURCHES

"A fine old city, truly, is that, view it from whatever side you will. . . . Yes, there it spreads from north to south, with its venerable houses, its numerous gardens, its thrice twelve churches, its mighty mound, which, if tradition speaks true, was raised by human hands to serve as the grave heap of an old heathen king, who sits deep within it, with his sword in his hand and his gold and silver treasures about him. There is a grey old castle upon the top of that mighty mound; and yonder, rising three hundred feet above the soil, from among those noble forest trees, behold that old Norman master-work, that cloud-encircled cathedral spire, around which a garrulous army of rooks and choughs continually wheel their flight. Now, who can wonder that the children of that fine old city are proud of her, and offer up prayers for her prosperity?"—*George Borrow.*

The city of which the author of *Lavengro* wrote thus is Norwich, the "City of Churches", the "City of Gardens", the place where Nelson was educated,

where Sir Thomas Browne lived and wrote, the place which has a bead roll of famous men and women that will compare not unfavourably with that of any similar city in the kingdom. We may not believe in the legend of the old seated king buried beneath the Castle, we may look in vain for the continuous wheeling of rooks and choughs around the Cathedral spire, yet it is difficult, knowing Norwich and its story at all well, not to feel something of Borrow's enthusiasm for the city in which he lived for many years.

The city is indeed attractive in itself, with its many ancient buildings, its narrow winding lanes and alleys, its hilly streets, its tortuous river. All these features, however, become yet more attractive when we learn of the dim past of the place — of the time when what is now the valley of the Yare was filled by an arm of the sea, when Norwich was a port, and the point, it is probable, of frequent landings of those sea rovers who came as harrying invaders and remained as settlers and builders up of the new nation. If there be but little to show of that shadowy period of history, we find that it was only a little later that buildings were erected of which some still remain to whisper of the past: of the time when the Christianized Saxons began building churches, and when their Norman successors added cathedrals, and so on through the great building periods which may be said to have

dwindled at first into insignificance and then into worse. We shall find, if we enquire closely, that the old city was the scene of several state visits in the days of splendour, when Edward the Third and his consort came hither to witness tourneys, or in times no less splendid when Queen Elizabeth had in the city "such a week of festivity as was never before or since beheld in Norwich".

It is not only to the storied stones of its remaining old buildings, and memories of royal pageantry, that the city owes its attractions. From the time when Kett unsuccessfully rebelled against feudal oppression it has again and again been a centre from which have come movements for the widening of thought or the amelioration of social conditions. It is a remarkable thing that the cathedral city, the "city of churches", should also be one of the most famous centres of Nonconformity. In part it has probably owed this fame to the fact of its having been a centre in which many persecuted Protestants from the Continent found refuge. The sect of the Brownists —the earliest of Protestant Nonconformists—was originated here by Robert Browne; and the spirit of religious independence, begun thus in the reign of Elizabeth, has continued ever since to be associated with Norwich. The history of Norwich Nonconformity would indeed form a large book. Mention need only be made of

the Friends, as represented by the Gurney family—the most widely known member of which was the philanthropist Mrs. Fry—and the Unitarians, as represented by the Martineaus. Harriet and James Martineau were both born and educated here; James was a contemporary of George Borrow at the Grammar School, and had to serve as "horse" when Borrow was flogged for a boyish escapade—a fact which the author resented so deeply, that when grown to manhood he refused to attend a party at which Dr. Martineau was to be present! Then, too, if we are recalling the things which make Norwich a centre of fascination, there must be mention made, though necessarily of the briefest, of the artists who form the Norwich School—the Cromes, father and son, the Cotmans, father and sons; and of the fact that Norwich has always been associated with literature, from Sir Thomas Browne to George Borrow, from Mrs. Opie to Mrs. Mary E. Mann. At all the varied interests suggested by these names it is not possible even to glance in so brief a gossip about Norwich as this; but such a summary will at least indicate something of the range of interests which may be opened up by the sojourner in Norwich, which may well combine to make the inhabitants feel proud of the fact that they belong to "no mean city".

The first of the nicknames which have been

applied to Norwich is in all probability a very old one, for many are its ancient churches—many indeed they seem to-day, when the city is spreading in all directions, and they may well have appeared out of all proportion to the number of the inhabitants when the city was confined within walls. Though it is not so long since those walls were finally demolished, the visitor will not find it easy to trace the course of them. But should he do so, up hill and down dale from the Boom Tower near where Carrow Bridge crosses the Wensum, he will find himself passing not only many churches but also many streets taking the names of the churches to which they lead—St. Catherine's Plain, All Saints Green, St. Stephen's Street, Chapel Field, St. Giles's Street, and St. Benedict Street; then, crossing the Wensum to that part of the enclosed city which lay on the left bank of the river, he will come upon St. Augustine Street and Magdalen Street—and each of these thoroughfares takes its name from some old place of worship. Penetrating the narrow ways of the ancient city, we see that our boundary wanderings have introduced us to but few of the numerous buildings of this character which are to be found here. Truly, indeed, was it termed of old the City of Churches; but its expansion in all directions, its absorption of hamlet after hamlet and village after village that of old lay without the city

boundaries, have meant the building of new churches to supplement the many of which it already boasted. If one who seeks to beat the ancient bounds or who wanders about the tortuous by-ways is struck by the richness of the place in churches, perhaps something of the same effect would be gained by anyone who should have the luck to approach Norwich for the first time across Mousehold Heath, and should thence get a first glimpse of the city lying about the low hills between the courses of the Wensum and the Yare. This is perhaps the most picturesque view of Norwich as a whole which is to be obtained: in the foreground the gorse and broom—a blaze of yellow—and beyond the city, with the tall spire of the Cathedral dominating all, though close neighboured by the massive squareness of the Castle, while on a hill to the right is the great new Roman Catholic Church of St. John's, which, were it topped by a lofty spire, would from a distance dominate the ancient cathedral down near the river. Though these are the chief features which take the eye from the Heath, many other church towers are to be seen among the roofs of the city—bothering even those who know it intimately to name them all.

The three railway stations of Norwich all lie without the line of the ancient walls, and afford no exception to the rule that the railway approaches to

a town are generally the least attractive. Whichever be the one chosen, however, the centre of the city—whether we take the centre as the Cathedral, the Castle, or the Market-place—may soon be reached either afoot or by tramcar. Anyone coming—as perhaps the majority of visitors do come—to Thorpe Station may take a tramcar along Riverside Road to Mousehold Heath, getting a glimpse of the Cathedral across Pull's Ferry, and of the very picturesque Bishop's Bridge on the way, and then obtaining from the Heath such a pleasant comprehensive view as I have described—a view such as must have been something of a commonplace to travellers in pre-railway days, but which is worth seeking out in these times.

One who rambled about the old city to good literary purpose, nearly sixty years ago, began a chapter on the Guildhall saying: "Once again we avow that we aim not to be complete topographers, or guides to all the strange old carvings and grotesque remains of ancient sculpture, that may be found in such rich abundance around the pathways of a venerable city; neither do we purpose to furnish all the historic details that may be gleaned concerning these relics of antiquity; are they not chronicled elsewhere in 'guides' and 'tours' and manifold 'directories'". Such a preface, said the author of *Rambles in an*

Old City, is necessary lest disappointment should attend the hopes of the inquisitive. If such a disclaimer was necessary in introducing a fifty-page account of a single Norwich building, how much more so is it due from one who seeks to indicate something of the character of the whole city in an equal space.

To the visitor it is only natural that the Cathedral should be the first object of interest — the Cathedral the tall, slender, crocketed spire of which forms part of innumerable memory pictures of the city. From neighbouring hillsides, from the river, from narrow by-ways, again and again we find that beautiful spire the feature of the view, until we wonder that, even as a great Japanese artist painted a long series of pictures representing different views of Fuji-yama, some Norwich artist does not seek to present the Cathedral in the same manner of incessantly varied iteration. Placed by its original monkish builders on the low riverside meadows, the grand building scarcely shows to best advantage, though from close at hand its various parts offer a succession of beauties. Perhaps the most beautiful near view is that from the Lower Close—where we have the end of the south transept, the tower and spire immediately in front of us, with the great length of the nave to the left, and to the right the beautiful clerestory with its flying

THE MARKET-PLACE AND GUILDHALL, NORWICH

buttresses. It is this eastern end of the Cathedral that is most frequently shown in pictures, but the great length of the nave cannot fail to strike the visitor who wanders about getting many views. The private residences of the Lower Close, with their beautiful flowering shrubs and trees, make this one of the most attractive points from which to approach the Cathedral. It is, however, more often reached through the highly ornamental stone and worked flint Ethelbert or Erpingham gateways, the latter of which is immediately opposite the western end of the edifice. This gate was built by "old Sir Thomas Erpingham", who commanded the archers at the Battle of Agincourt, and who is buried in the Cathedral. Passing through it we have a statue of Nelson on the right, and on the left the old fourteenth-century Grammar School building in which the great seaman was educated, and where Robert Greene, Sir William Hooker, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, James Brooke the Rajah of Sarawak, George Borrow, James Martineau, and other men of mark also had their schooling.

Entering the lengthy, lofty nave by the western doorway, we find ourselves in a Cathedral the describing of the many features of which might easily fill this little book. The grand nave with its side aisles is 72 feet wide, while the length to the choir screen is 204 feet, and the height to the roof 69½ feet.

This roof, with its vaulting and sculptured bosses—328 of them, illustrating the course of Scripture history—has been said by competent authorities to be the most beautiful of its kind in England. The nave is divided by a number of semicircular arches springing from Norman pillars. The choir, with its many quaintly carven *miserere* seats; the beautiful presbytery and clerestory; the stained glass; the monuments, including those of Bishop Stanley, father of the more celebrated Dean, of Bishop Horne, and of Henry the Fifth's "old Sir Thomas Erpingham"; the splendid cloisters—among the most beautiful in the country—that were over a hundred and thirty years a-building; all these will successively claim and hold the attention of the visitor. For those who delight in comparisons it may be said that the spire is the highest in England except that of Salisbury, and the nave the longest excepting that of St. Albans.

From the old Cathedral it is natural to turn next to the massive Castle, which, perched on what is said to be an artificial mound or "monticle", raised on the low hill round which the Wensum flows to its confluence with the Yare, is a striking object; and from which is to be had a fine bird's-eye view of the city and surrounding country, a view less picturesque than that from Mousehold Heath, but one that may well be lingered over for the details

that can be gathered of the city lying below. From the battlements we realize that we are looking down on the City of Churches indeed, so closely do the massive flinty towers neighbour each other.

But little of the ancient Castle remains beyond the Norman keep. A great part of the present building was erected in 1824, when the Castle was utilized as the county jail. About a quarter of a century ago a new jail was built on Mousehold Heath, and the Castle, instead of being a place for the punishment of crime, was converted into one of those centres of education which should help to the diminution of crime more effectively than any punishment—the jail became a museum. And a very fine museum and art gallery it is—one of which any city might well be proud. The collections of natural-history specimens, the pictures, and the relics connected with the past history of Norwich are well worth lingering over, though here it is not possible to do more than say so.

One thing that calls for special attention, owing to its association with the past life of the citizens of Norwich, is the fearsome "dragon" that will be seen suspended among the miscellaneous collection exhibited in the keep. This figure, or its prototype, was the centre of a regular pageant holden in the city for many centuries. It was one of the more important

"properties" of the Guild of St. George, a body that started early in the fourteenth century, later to become amalgamated with the Corporation. The Dragon, with St. George and other attendants, used to parade the streets on St. George's Day, and a contest used to take place, with the inevitable result of the Dragon being defeated. When the time came that saints' days were less important in the social life of merry England, the Saint and his opponent became but picturesque features in the Mayoral processions. Then the hour arrived when the Dragon only remained as a delightfully fearsome object, parading the streets with jaws distended for the catching of coins, and with a hook with which the caps of the boys who crowded round were liable to be twitched off their heads, only to be redeemed on payment of one halfpenny per cap. In this degenerate form the Dragon, or "Snap" as he had come to be designated, perambulated the Norwich streets up to the latter part of last century.

In the keep we get a glimpse of the thick old walls, and through the narrow window-slits have successive views of the surrounding city. Here we can go up to the battlements and get the whole panorama of Norwich spread beneath us. Immediately below, on the west, is the busy Market-place, with its ancient flint Guildhall backed by the hill-top tower of

THE CATHEDRAL PRECINCTS, NORWICH

St. Giles's Church. Immediately to the left of the Market-place is the finest of all the churches in this city which can boast of so many—St. Peter's Mancroft. Looking in a north-easterly direction we have the Cathedral, with the grand expanse of Mousehold Heath beyond; between, hidden by the old houses and more modern factories along its banks, runs the River Wensum. South-easterly can be seen the flat meadows through which the Yare, having been joined by its tributary, flows on to Broadland and the populous holiday resort at its mouth. Descending from the battlements, most visitors will wish to enter the dungeons, where they will learn from the cicerone of the thickness of the walls, of the awful conditions in which prisoners of old were kept here, and will have pointed out to them the phrenological exhibition of models of heads of famous poets and infamous murderers—the tone of the guide sometimes suggesting that the adjectives should be transposed! The moat around the Castle mound is now laid out as picturesque gardens, steep steps from which give access to the gravel terrace at the foot of the keep. The moat is spanned by a road over an arch that is said to date from Saxon times, and from here on cattle-market days is to be viewed a busy scene. Immediately in front of us is the "plain" devoted to the showing and selling of cattle, and Norwich

still maintains a cattle market reminiscent of the "good old days". Here may yet be seen something of that busy activity which George Borrow was studying when that worshipper of horses took off his hat to "Marshland Shales"—"the wondrous horse, the fast trotter, the best in mother England"—when he was accosted by Jasper Petulengro, and led off to the encampment on the Heath. George Borrow was not a native of Norwich, but he lived in the city for some years, and his references to it in *Lavengro* would alone ensure him a notable place among Norwich worthies. Indeed, considerable as has been the connection of Norwich with our literature, of the two chief literary figures associated with the city it has to be said that neither of them was a native. Borrow we shall have occasion to meet again.

This is not a "guide" to Norwich, and the stranger would do well to provide himself with a plan of the city, for it is not easy to the uninitiate to get from place to place without going astray. Thanks to the excellent tramway system, with its centre near the Market-place, however, it is not possible to go far wrong without being able to amend the error easily. If we make our way from the Cattle Market, round the Castle to the Market-place, we shall see, if it be market day, a pretty and animated scene, especially at the season when flowers are plentiful. The sloping

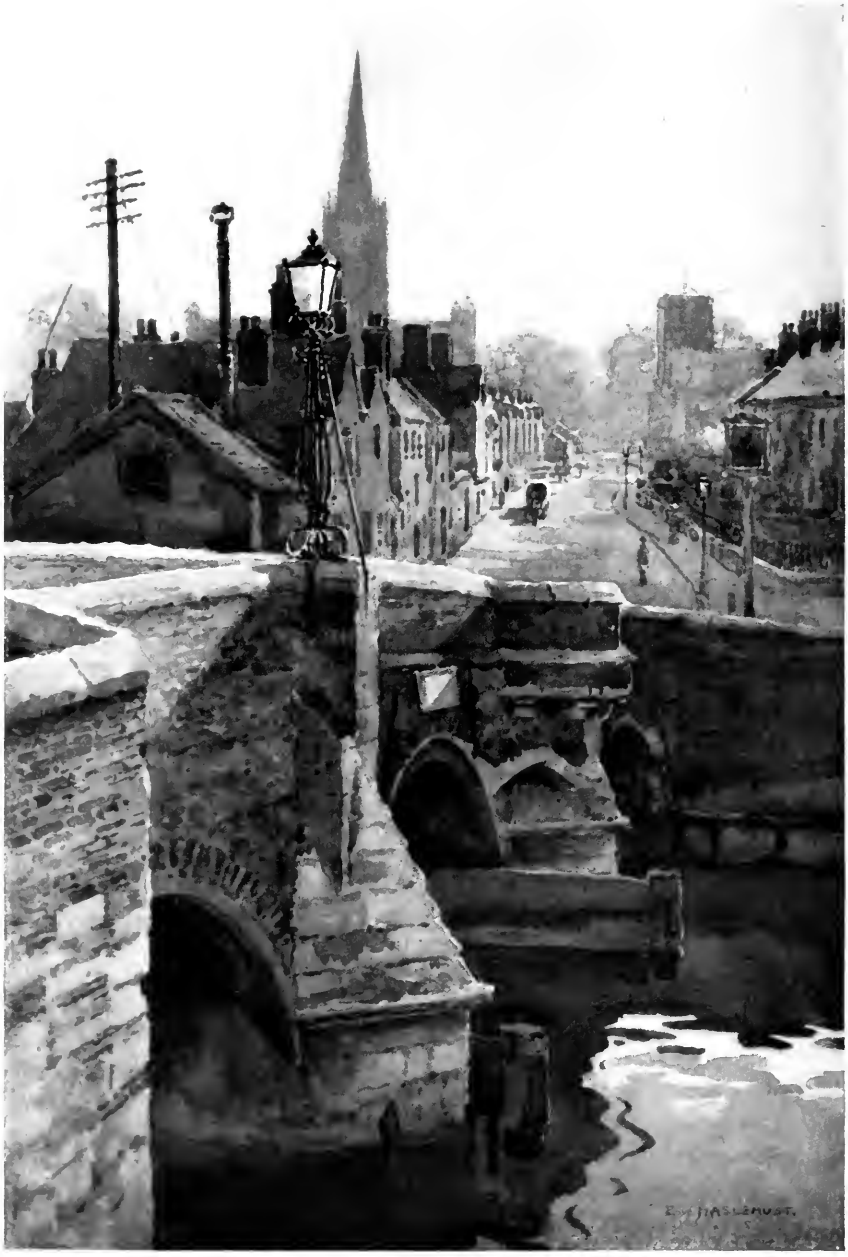
"Place", with its close-set booths, its flinty Guild-hall at one corner and the great church of St. Peter's Mancroft at the other, has something of a Continental appearance.

At the southern end of the Market-place, in a beautiful turfed enclosure, is a worthy monument to Sir Thomas Browne. This is a seated figure of the knight, holding one of those "sepulchral urns lately found in Norfolk" on which he wrote his beautiful discourse of *Hydriotaphia.* Near here, at the corner of the Haymarket, stood—until within a few years ago—the house in which lived this most fascinating master of our seventeenth-century prose literature, the house in which he gathered the many rarities of art and nature in which he delighted, and where he was visited by the diarist Evelyn in October, 1671. Evelyn's account gives us a glimpse of the city as it was then—when the Duke of Norfolk had a palace "an old wretched building . . . in the very market-place":—

> Next morning I went to see Sir Thomas Browne (with whom I had some time corresponded by letter, though I had never seen him before); his whole house and garden being a paradise and cabinet of rarities, and that of the best collection, especially medals, books, plants, and natural things. Amongst other curiosities, Sir Thomas had a collection of the eggs of all the fowl and birds he could procure, that country (especially the promontory of Norfolk) being frequented, as he said, by several kinds which seldom or never go farther into the land, as cranes, storks, eagles, and

variety of water fowl. He led me to see all the remarkable places of this ancient city, being one of the largest, and certainly, after London, one of the noblest of England for its venerable cathedral, number of stately churches, cleanness of the streets, and buildings of flint, so exquisitely headed and squared, as I was much astonished at; but he told me they had lost the art of squaring the flints, in which they so much excelled, and of which the churches, best houses, and walls are built.

This "exquisitely headed and squared" flint work is now mainly to be seen in the churches, though the Guildhall affords another example, and a fine portion of wall is still standing in Bridewell Alley, near St. Andrew's Church. Evelyn's account of Sir Thomas Browne's collections suggests that it is peculiarly appropriate that the city with which the philosophical doctor was so long associated should be noted for the fine ornithological collections in its museum. Immediately to the right of the beautiful statue of Sir Thomas Browne—it seems difficult to speak of him except by his full name—stands the grand church of St. Peter's Mancroft, in the chancel of which Sir Thomas Browne was buried. Monuments of Sir Thomas and his "Dame" are in the chancel. Years ago the head of Sir Thomas Browne was dug up by a speculative sexton and sold! It is now in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The many other attractive features of the old church include some ancient stained glass—the great east window will especially claim attention—and a wooden Baptistery



BISHOP'S BRIDGE, NORWICH

over the font, parts of which date from the fifteenth century, but most of which is modern work. The restoration of this, nearly a quarter of a century ago, was the more worthy of doing in that there is believed to be but one other of the kind in the country, and that also in a Norfolk church, at Trunch. From the top of St. Peter's tower a goodly view of the city is to be had, though less extensive than that from the loftier Castle battlements. St. Peter's Mancroft is so large an edifice that it is said many visitors surveying the city from the top of the Castle point it out as the Cathedral! The history of the church, which can be traced back to pre-Conquest days, includes two years of the ministry of Archbishop Tenison.

Of the many other churches it is not possible in this brief account to speak, but it may be pointed out that two of them, with round towers—St. Mary Coslany and St. Julian's—are said to be Saxon. Go where we may, up and down the winding roads and lanes of the old city, we shall happen upon these churches, sometimes close together, half-hidden among houses, sometimes standing boldly on the hillside, and each with some feature or features of interest to attract the student of church lore.

One other church should perhaps be singled out for mention because of the site which it occupies.

This is St. Lawrence's, which is said to mark the very point to which an arm of the sea reached in the distant days when Norwich was a port in fact. When the sea had receded sufficiently long, it may be presumed, to leave little doubt that it would not return, the original church was built, in the tenth century, during the reign of Edward the Confessor. The present edifice was erected towards the close of the fifteenth century, and seeing how narrowed is the river between the buildings at a little distance away, it is interesting to know that in the distant, but yet historical, times the sea washed over this low-lying part of the city, whereas now it is miles away at its nearest point. Before its neighbours Yarmouth and Lowestoft had come into being, Norwich was known as a fishing town, and centuries after it had ceased to be such in fact, the tradition was maintained by the custom, now discontinued, of annually, before the last day of November, sending to the king a gift of herring pasties or pies. In a chronicle history of Norwich, written in 1814, is to be seen the following under the date of 1629:—

The mayor and sheriffs received a letter from his majesty's secretaries of state, complaining of the quality of the herring pies, which, according to established usage, are annually sent to the king by the corporation, as the ancient fee farm of the city, and continued to this day. This was a fishing town; the lord of the manor of East Carlton is bound to receive the pies

and carry them to the king, wherever he may then be; this manor being anciently held of the Crown under that service. The corporation of Norwich to make and provide the pies, twenty-four in number, containing a hundred herrings, by the great hundred, in good standing pastry, and well seasoned; and they are to be made of the first herrings which come to the city. The complaint set forth, that they were not the first herrings that were taken, according to the tenure—the pies were not well baked—the herrings were deficient in number: they should be 120, five in each pye; many of them broken in the carriage, &c. The corporation being now lords of the manor of East Carlton, the pies are sent up by the sheriffs of the city annually, and placed on the king's table. No complaint has ever since been made concerning them.

Winding and involved as the network of streets may seem about the centre of the city, it is not necessary to have been in Norwich long to find that this network forms as it were the series of connections among four or five main roads that approach the city as broad thoroughfares. And each of these highways bears the name of the village or town which it connects with the county capital — though those villages are in some cases already so linked up by the expansion of the city as to form but suburbs. The Thorpe, Dereham, Earlham, Newmarket, Ipswich, and Bracondale roads radiate to those places from the tangled centre, and by each of them we may soon get out amid pleasant country scenes and to the small neighbouring villages beyond the immediate influence of the tramways, to places associated now with local worthies and now with folk of wider

influence. It is not here possible, however, to glance at Earlham, with its long associations with the Quaker family of Gurney, bankers and philanthropists, the family of which Mrs. Fry was a member; or to visit the districts associated with the names of Martineau, of Taylor, and of other families which played an important part in the social, political, intellectual, theological, and literary history, not only of their city but of their country. It must suffice to do little more than to indicate that in Norwich every street has its story. And on some of the streets the old story is written in characters that may be read without much difficulty to-day. Pass to the south of the Market-place, up the narrow way to the broad Ber Street, and along that street "yards" will be seen to occur after every few houses. These yards or courts are mostly blind alleys crowded with tenements, some of them still showing the bulging upper floors, the free use of timber, of the old-time domestic architecture, and some degenerating into a kind of slumdom. Well, these "yards"—a glance at their name will show as much—were evidently of old attached to taverns or inns, and the number of them suggests that the city must have been a busy place, with the incessant coming and going of people from all parts, to have maintained so many inns. But as the capital of the county, as one of the chief market centres of East

Anglia, as the seat of the Assizes, and also a place of manufacture, Norwich must, even in the Middle Ages, from which a large proportion of these "yards" probably dates, have been a scene of fairly continuous activity. Nor is it only along Ber Street that these "yards" are so numerous, though it is one of the best thoroughfares from which to see them; for on the south side of the river, that portion of the city along the left bank of the Wensum which was of old also within the walls, branching off from the mean streets of the district are meaner courts or "yards".

The Guildhall—like most of the old buildings here—has many ancient relics to show, including the magnificent city insignia, and relics of the Battle of St. Vincent presented to the city by Lord Nelson; also (to come from the sublime to the ridiculous) here used to be shown the buskins worn by Will Kemp, the original Dogberry of *Much Ado About Nothing*—"Head Master of Morrice dancers, High Headborough of Leighs, and only tricker of your trill-lilles, and best bell-shangler, between Sion and Mount Surrey"—on his famous dance from London to Norwich in the year 1600. The story of that wonderful dance was set forth by the dancer himself in an entertaining pamphlet entitled *Kemp's Nine Days' Wonder*, towards the conclusion of which he says,

"but now I return again to my jump, the measure of which is to be seen in the Guildhall at Norwich: where my buskins, that I then wore and danced in from London thither, stand, equally divided and nailed on the wall".

If we leave the Market-place and go up St. Giles's Street and, just before reaching the massy flint church from which it takes its name, turn down Willow Lane on the right, we come, at the corner where Willow Lane merges into Cow Hill, to Borrow's Court, immediately up which — with the fact duly recorded on its front—is the house in which George Borrow lived for nearly eight years. It is a plain-fronted, modest house, but—Sir Thomas Browne's house having disappeared — is probably the most visited of literary shrines in the city. Neither the author of the *Religio Medici* nor the "walking lord of gipsy lore" was a native of the place, but the fame of each is unforgettably associated with Norwich. It is, however, not possible to give here even a bare chronicle of the long list of Norwich worthies; one other of the number, however, must certainly be mentioned, though his shrine lies some distance away from Borrow's house. Going on downwards to the Heigham Road, and continuing for some way westward, we come, where the road nears the river, to a beautiful but somewhat battered and neglected ornate

Jacobean residence, now an inn. This is known as the Old Palace, or Bishop Hall's Palace, for here for thirteen years lived Joseph Hall, the expelled bishop of Norwich, and here he died at the age of eighty-two in 1656. The poor bishop was still on sufferance in his palace near the Cathedral when the soldiery and mob set about the work of demolishing monuments and windows in the beautiful edifice. In one of his tracts Bishop Hall gives a moving picture of the fanatical zeal of the more powerful party:—

> Lord, what work was here; what clattering of glasses, what beating down of walls, what tearing up of monuments, what pulling down of seates, what wresting out of irons and brasses from the windows and graves, what defacing of armes, what demolishing of curious stone work which had not any representation in the world, but only of the cast of the founder, and skill of the mason; what toting and piping upon the destroyed organ pipes, and what a hideous triumph on the market day, before all the country, when, in a sacrilegious and profane procession, all the organ pipes, vestments, both copes and surplices, together with the leaden crosse which had been newly sawn down from over the green yard pulpit, and the service book and singing books that could be had, were carried to a fire in the public Market-place; a lewd wretch walking before the train in his cope trailing in the dirt, with a service book in his hand, imitating in an impious scorne the tune and usurping the words of the litany formerly used in the church. Neer the publick crosse all these monuments of idolatry must be sacrificed to the fire, not without much ostentation of a zealous joy in discharging ordinance to the cost of some who professed how much they longed to see the day.

On this same occasion, it is said elsewhere, "the

Cathedral was filled with musketeers, drinking and tobacconing as freely as if it had turned alehouse".

Turned out of his bishopric, fined heavily, and otherwise badly entreated, the venerable prelate was allowed to retain his property at Heigham, and to live out the last dozen years of his life in comparative peace. His palace is, as has been said, a beautiful old place, that has, however, been allowed to fall into a bad state, instead of being carefully preserved both as a memorial to a remarkable man and as a fine specimen of early-seventeenth-century domestic architecture. The carved stonework, the piscina immediately within the door, the old panelling, and the traditions of the place, ill accord with the use to which it is at present put. Bishop Hall is one of the wonderful group of divines who form so noble a body in the history of the literature of the Stuart century; his *Meditations* and other of his works have been reissued in many forms. Thomas Fuller, treating of him as one of the "Worthies" of England, said: "He was commonly called our English Seneca for his pure, plain, and full style. Not ill at *controversies*, more happy at *comments*, very good in his *characters*, better in his *sermons*, best of all in his *meditations*."

At the back of the old palace runs the Wensum, widened out here into the meadows, and still showing

STRANGER'S HALL, NORWICH

something of the country view, though the railway now runs closely parallel with the river before crossing it just below the footbridge which has taken the place of the old ferry at the back of the Old Palace.

Though it is said that Bishop Hall's Palace should be preserved with all respectful care, Norwich is by no means without other and older buildings that may well be lingered over by anyone who feels the fascination of such intimate links with the life of our distant forbears. There is, for example, tucked away up a narrow court off Charing (from Shearing) Cross, one of the most interesting specimens of mediæval domestic architecture that I know. This is a rambling old house, evidently originally the home of a well-to-do citizen of some centuries ago. Now known as "Stranger's Hall", the building has been converted into a veritable museum of relics illustrating the domesticities of past days in general and the history of Norwich in particular. There was, I believe, some talk of pulling down the house a few years ago; but fortunately the property was acquired by an owner of reverential antiquarian taste, and he has housed so many treasures in the way of ancient furnishings, so many relics connected with the old weaving industries of the city, that the place—which is open to the public—deserves a lingering inspection and a far longer account than I can give it here.

A little east of this, one of the latest additions to the "sights" of Norwich is a grand old building which has long been one of the chief centres of civic life, as it is one of the chief attractions to the visitor. This is St. Andrew's Hall—standing a few hundred yards from St. George's Bridge over the Wensum—a place of historic interest, and one that has become familiarized to many as the scene for a long series of years of the Norwich Musical Festivals. This beautiful hall was originally the nave of the conventual church of a monastery of Black Friars, and the building of it was begun in 1415 by that old Sir Thomas Erpingham, whose name is perpetuated in one of the Gates that give admission from Tombland to the Cathedral precincts. At the dissolution of the monasteries the citizens of Norwich wisely petitioned Henry the Eighth to be allowed to "make the church a fair and large hall for the mayor and his brethren, with all the citizens, to repair unto at a common assembly". The petition was granted, and in 1544 the first mayoral feast was held here. A few years later the Duke of Norfolk and some noble guests of his were invited to the Mayor's banquet, when the following straightforward speech was delivered by a citizen:—

Maister Mayor of Norwich, and it please your Worship, you have feasted us like a King. God bless the Queen's Grace. We have fed plentifully; and now, whilom I can speak plain English,

I heartily thank you, Maister Mayor; and so do we all. Answer, Boys, Answer. Your Beer is pleasant and potent, and will soon catch us by the *caput*, and stop our manners. And so Huzza for the Queen's Majesty, and all her bonny-brow'd Dames of Honour. Huzza for Maister Mayor and our good Dame Mayoress. His noble Grace [the Duke of Norfolk], there he is, God bless him, and all this jolly company. To all our friends round country, who have a penny in their purse, and an English heart in their bodies, to keep out Spanish Dons, and Papists with their faggots to burn our whiskers. Shove it about, twirl your cap cases, handle your jugs, and Huzza for Maister Mayor, and his brethren, their Worships.

The hall in which Mr. John Martin thus simply expressed himself in the days of Elizabeth has seen many civic and other feasts since then, heard much speech-making, and echoed to many "Huzzas!" but it may be doubted whether the finest flights of oratory there uttered have won as sure a place in the histories of the city as this naïve utterance. As many as a thousand people have on some occasions dined together in St. Andrew's Hall, and nearly a hundred years ago a chronicler said of the mayor's banquet here, that it was "allowed to be the most sumptuous feast next to the Lord Mayor's Day at London, and the only corporation dinner in England (London excepted) which is graced by the company of the ladies, and a greater assembly of beauty, fashion, and elegance is seldom witnessed". But not only is St. Andrew's Hall the time-honoured centre for great public feastings or meetings, it is also the place

wherein for many years have been held the Triennial Musical Festivals. Furthermore, it contains a remarkable gallery of portraits of Norwich worthies and others, the most notable of which is perhaps Sir William Beechey's portrait of Lord Nelson—the last for which the great sailor sat. The many other portraits include examples of the work of Gainsborough, Hoppner, and Lawrence.

Architecturally the great hall, with its fine Perpendicular windows, is beautiful both inside and out. The interior of the hall, consisting of a nave and two aisles, is 124 feet in length and 64 in width, the aisles being divided from the nave by lofty and well-moulded columns supporting stone arches above which—fourteen on each side—are the beautiful clerestory windows. The grand timber roof is handsomely decorated.

Leaving St. Andrew's Hall and going down to the river we may see much of the old city—and not a little of its mean streets—by zigzagging from bridge to bridge, going from one to another, now along the left bank and now along the right. The houses and factories rise sheer from the water, affording now and again picturesque glimpses of the water-worn brickwork of the backs. In some of the old houses, too, may occasionally be seen carved doorways, which suggest that the district was at one time more prosperous than at present. Here prob-

Palace and the Cathedral, but soon came to be made public. Across it must have passed, in the terrible periods of religious persecution, many a tragic procession; for near it, to the right, behind the gasometer as we face the Gas House Hill, is the tree-grown hollow known as the Lollard's Pit—the place of an appalling number of burnings of "heretics" during more than a century and a half from 1422. As *Lavengro* has it: "Observe ye not yon chalky precipice to the right of the Norman bridge? On this side of the stream, upon its brow, is a piece of ruined wall, the last relic of what was of old a stately pile, whilst at its foot is a place called the Lollard's Hole; and with good reason, for many a saint of God has breathed his last beneath that white precipice, bearing witness against Popish idolatry, midst flame and pitch; many a grisly procession has advanced along that suburb, across the old bridge, towards the Lollard's Hole: furious priests in front, a calm, pale martyr in the midst, a pitying multitude behind."

Since these words were written, sixty years ago, "yon chalky precipice" and its surroundings have changed much; but still it is impossible to remain unmoved near a spot, however altered, that has been the scene of such awful horrors as were perpetrated by our forefathers in the name of religion.

Here are a few successive items concerning the

Pit from the chronicle history of Norwich—the city famous for the number of its churches:—

1556. In March William Carman, of Hingham, was burnt in Lollard's Pit, without Bishop's Gate. He was charged with being an obstinatic heretic, and having in his possession a bible, a testament, and three psalters, in the English tongue.

July 13. Simon Miller, merchant of Lynn, and Elizabeth Cooper, a pewterer's wife, of the parish of St. Andrew, were burnt in the same fire in Lollard's Pit.

Aug. 5. Richard Crashfield, of Wymondham, was burnt in the same place. During the time of his suffering, one Thomas Carman was apprehended (probably for speaking favourably of the martyr), and shortly afterwards burnt together with William Seaman and Thomas Hudson. Cicely, the wife of Edmund Ormes, of the parish of St. Lawrence, worsted weaver, was burnt on the 23rd of September.

1558. July 10. Richard Yeoman was burnt; a devout old minister, being seventy years of age; he had been curate to that learned and holy martyr, Dr. Taylor, of Hadleigh.

In 1531, at the same place, Thomas Bilney had been burnt for holding views that a few years later were the common property of those who destroyed him. But the Bishop's Bridge is associated with tragedy on a greater scale than that of religious persecution, with tragedy that has in it something of nobility if we take into account the motive force. It was in 1549 that the discontent of the Norfolk people over the enclosure of common lands led to an outbreak of rebellion that could only be doomed to failure, but which had about it all the elements of heroism. The people placed themselves under

the captaincy of Robert Kett, a tanner, and his brother, William Kett, a butcher, both of Wymondham. As a present-day poet, Mr. Newman Howard, has put it in the opening verses of a fine ballad:—

Ho! Kett the tanner hath saddled his mare!
Ye fat-fed gentlefolk, have ye a care!
By barn and borough, by field and fen
Bob Kett the tanner goes gathering men.

The sea-brine beats on the wry-blown toft;
Now empty the hithe is, and barren the croft.
Ho! grind your axes and out with your staves!
Though poor are we, squires, we be not your slaves!

Bob Kett the tanner hath ridden his mare,
And roused up the yeomen from Irwell to Yare!
I warrant thee, fellow, the fingers shall burn
That grabbed my meadows and emptied thy churn!

The gentles ha' robbed us of commons and kine,
They tether our cattle, our pastures they tine!
Come, learn them a lesson, they squires and they lords!
For ours are the ploughshares, if theirs be the swords.

Aye strait were our acres, aye woful our lot;
They lordings ha' gathered the little we got.
Aye dainty their dames be, aflaunt in their silk;
Our wives go a-weeping,—their babes ha' no milk!

Our wives go a-weeping,—their children lie dead;
They lordings ha' stolen their milk and their bread.
God's curse on the caitiffs! To hell wi' the knaves!
We're franklins and freemen, not villains and slaves.

Rip out wi' thy reaper, lad! Reap thee a squire.
Fine beef and fat capons, lad—they be thy hire!
Cry Kett and the Commonwealth! Loud let it ring!
Bob Kett is our captain, lads! Ned is our King!

WROXHAM BRIDGE

So widespread was the disaffection that the Ketts got together an ill-armed but thoroughly earnest force, said to number 20,000 men. This army, formed as it was declared not against the King but against the "lordings", was marched towards Norwich and encamped on that part of Mousehold Heath known as St. Leonard's Hill, immediately above the Lollard's Pit. As Mr. Newman Howard puts it in the spirited poem from which I have already quoted:—

> Ho! Kett the tanner hath gathered a host:
> They fare from the fenlands, they flock from the coast;
> They march in their hundreds; they camp on the heath.
> The city lies red in the hollow beneath.
>
> Bob Kett is our captain, lads; he shall command.
> He holdeth the town in the palm of his hand.
> The burghers are whining; aye, let them go whine!
> Cry, Down with the lordings! The people shall dine!

The Earl of Surrey's house on St. Leonard's Hill was captured, and Kett made his headquarters at the neighbouring St. Michael's Chapel (afterwards known as Kett's Castle); and there, under a spreading oak—the Oak of Reformation—he held an improvised court of justice. From there he besieged the city, and even captured it twice over before reinforcements arrived from London and finally defeated him, with considerable slaughter on both sides. About three hundred of the rebels were hanged, as a warning to their fellows not to protest in future against

the enclosure of commons or any other infringement of their rights by the "lordings". The Ketts were both taken prisoners, and before the close of the year were hanged in chains—Robert on the top of Norwich Castle, and William on the steeple of Wymondham Church. This form of hanging meant being enclosed as it were in a close-fitting cage, and there remaining until death ensued from starvation. Such a cage is to be seen in the dungeons of Norwich Castle at this day.

An earlier rebellion—one of the storm centres of which was at Norwich—seems to be less well remembered in the annals of the city. This was the rising under John Littester, a dyer who dubbed himself King of the Commons, which formed part of the peasant revolt, the main heads of which were Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. According to Froissart the Norwich dyer succeeded in gathering 40,000 "wretches" to his standard, and his rabble treacherously slew the Governor of Norwich, who had bravely gone to parley with them in their camp, and at their request. The soldier having failed with words, the bishop formed an army, and, sword in hand, succeeded in winning a victory which brought the "King of the Commons" to the gibbet.

Mousehold Heath—the scene of the Ketts' formidable encampment and brief triumph—is now consid-

erably less extensive than it was in the sixteenth century. Streets are laid out on that portion of it which is immediately above the Bishop's Bridge; extensive military barracks and their enclosures, and a large prison, now occupy goodly tracts of the old Heath; but enough remains to afford space for long and quiet wandering among the gorse and heather-clad irregular ground on the side nearest the city, or on the flat summit. It is, indeed, an extensive and beautiful common, from which, as was said earlier, may be had a fine view of the city. The biographer of George Borrow—writing but about a dozen years ago—summed up "Mussl" in words that are in part so ludicrous that they compel quotation: "Originally *Mosswold*, from its dense growth of furze and broom and bracken, it is always a wild tract, the wildest one could wish to see, *resonant of the cries and wing-flappings of noisome birds*". The visitor who expects to see flocks of vultures still battening on the remains of Kett's army will—it seems necessary to say it after Dr. Knapp's words—be disappointed! He will see instead a broad, irregular hillside and hilltop space, golden with gorse and broom in the spring, empurpled with heather in the late summer and autumn—a public pleasure-ground which, many and various as are the attractions of Norwich, may well remain one of its proudest possessions.

Outside the mediæval city on the south-east there was erected, early in the twelfth century, a Benedictine Priory, the remains of which were for the most part discovered and excavated little more than quarter of a century ago. This Priory—which has come to be called Carrow Abbey—was evidently a centre of considerable importance when time was drawing on to the dissolution of the monasteries. Here seems to have been educated that Jane Scrope the fate of whose pet sparrow moved Master John Skelton, the first of our satirists, to write his *Little Boke of Philip Sparow*:

> For the soule of Philip Sparow
> That was late slaine at Carow . . .
> That vengaunce I aske and cry
> By way of exclamacion
> On al the whole nacion
> Of cattes wilde and tame,
> God send them sorow and shame;
> That cat specially
> That slew so cruelly
> My little prety Sparow
> That I brought up at Carow.

Between the ruins of the Priory and the River Wensum now stand the extensive works of Messrs. Colman, which take their name from the old religious establishment. Until the whole plan of the Priory Church and buildings was revealed by the excavations, the only portion known was the Prioress' house,

in which Mr. Colman deposited a fine collection of literature connected with the county of Norfolk.

THE BROADS

Much has been written of the fascination of the Norfolk Broads as a holiday ground, and there can be little doubt that to appreciate them to the fullest extent it is necessary to have spent some time in the delightfully lazy fashion of sailing about them and their connecting rivers in a yacht, a wherry, or some smaller craft suitable for journeying up the dykes; indeed, many of those who have thus passed their holidays—and most who do it once experimentally do it frequently afterwards as a proven delight—agree in declaring that unless you have lingered about in a boat, have seen the sun rise and set, have enjoyed shine and shower, in the limits of a narrow floating home, then you do not know all of the quiet pleasure which the district has to afford. That may be so, and yet one who has not a complete aquatic familiarity with all the stretches of water that go by the name of "broads", but who has been on some of them, and has cycled and walked about other parts of

the district, can readily recognize that there is yet a sufficiency of fascination suggesting something of the joy that is to be had from the more gradual acquaintance which comes of studying Broadland from the surface of the water rather than from the banks.

And here it may perhaps be said that properly speaking a "broad" is formed by the overflowing of a stream or river on to the neighbouring low-lying land, so that, except where the current passes through, they are generally shallow. Some of the waters in Broadland commonly regarded as broads are strictly not such—Breydon, for example, is a landlocked estuary, and Fritton is a lake. The charm of these broads is of a varied kind, though to those who know them but little there may, as has been said, appear something of sameness. Almost invariable characteristics are the marginal willows and sallows, and other moisture-loving trees, and a wealth of common and uncommon aquatic vegetation—reeds and rushes, iris and marsh-mallow, forget-me-not and meadow sweet, and the beautiful tall great willow weed, and purple loosestrife. While there is a peculiarly rich avi-fauna for the patient observer of nature, the impatient will not see or recognize a tithe of the birds which a stay in Broadland will reveal to those who know the art of observing the shy creatures. Certain features, too, that are common to the scenery through

which a journey by river and dykes from broad to broad takes us, are the little windmills dotted about the dykes for the purpose of draining the marshlands. Though improved methods of drainage are now employed, there are happily still many of these little mills to be seen, with their revolving sails working on a windy day. Then, too, by river, dyke, and broadside are to be found stacks of reeds, or the reed-cutters may be observed at work, making great bundles of the tall reeds, with which it will be noticed many of the cottages are thatched.

It was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that the charms of this country and the delights of a picnic holiday on these waters came to be appreciated, but the writings of Mr. Christopher Davies and the early followers in his path soon made Broadland known as the place in which to spend a healthful and almost untrammelled holiday. Then, too, the broads and their connecting rivers form a veritable happy hunting ground for the angler who does not despise the delights of "coarse" fishing, and the fact that in the rivers and many of the broads the fishing is free and unrestricted makes it additionally attractive.

Norwich is one of the most convenient centres from which to set out to see this country of the waterways, although the best of Broadland lies some

distance away. From the Cathedral city the Yare can be followed to where it widens into the great extent of Breydon Water, at the farther end of which comes in the Bure, up which the voyager may go by winding streams to the most fascinating part of the district—the network of broads that lie about the Bure and its tributaries between Wroxham and Yarmouth. Wroxham, about nine miles to the north of Norwich, is indeed one of the chief centres for yachtsmen of the broads, as on leaving the railway station the visitor is soon made aware, by the boat-builders' places and the advertisements of cajoling caterers prepared to supply those who would linger about the broads with all the luxuries necessary for leading a simple life on the water. From Wroxham steamers run down the Bure to Yarmouth, affording fine views of the fluvial marshlands, and giving a glimpse of Broadland life—a beautiful journey to those to whom the fuller joys of the broads are for one reason or another denied. Wroxham Broad itself is not the bit of water by the bridge, but a far larger woodland-bordered stretch lying about a mile off down stream. Here those boating men who are not the solitude-lovers of the district gather annually for a lively regatta; but even at other seasons it is one of the most popular pieces of water, owing no doubt to its nearness to the railway and easiness of access

DRAINAGE MILLS ON THE ANT

from Norwich. The other broads that lie closest to the railway—as Oulton near Lowestoft—are also among those most popularly used, owing of course to their accessibility. Because the most accessible it does not follow that they are the least beautiful, yet those who have only visited these portions of the waters near the railway have not by any means seen the best that the broads have to show. There may be at first sight—I have heard it objected by those who have not fallen under the fascinating spell of this land of streams and broads, marshes and dykes, all fringed by lush aquatic vegetation—something of a sameness about the many pieces of water, but that sameness is no longer marked by those who have lingered lazily about the district, passing now from one to another along the rivers, and seeking the often lonely broads up narrow connecting streams; and have seen the sun rise and set in splendour over wide sheets of scarce rippled water.

As we are here taking Norwich as the centre from which Broadland is to be visited—Lowestoft or Yarmouth are the other large centres from which it may be approached—it will be as well to indicate the water route which may be taken by following the Yare and the Bure to Wroxham. Norwich and Wroxham lie but about seven miles apart in a crow line, but our course takes us most irregularly along two sides of a triangle,

the straight line of each would be more than double that distance, while the windings of the sluggish streams more than double it again, so that with excursions into the "side shows" of the broads (most of which lie away from the main streams) the boatman has journeyed a-many miles before he reaches Wroxham Bridge. There are, it is said, upwards of two hundred miles of waterways in Broadland, so that there is much to be seen by those who can best appreciate the quiet life of unconventionality away from streets and crowds. Though Broadland mainly appeals to those who like to have as it were a picnic holiday, it is to those who can enjoy angling, who delight in the observation of wild life, who can feel a glow of the purest pleasure in finding some beautiful and rare plant in its native habitat, that the tract so designated makes its strongest appeal. In its floral rarities, and in its bird life, the country of many waters is still peculiarly rich, though the "discovery" of the broads as a holiday ground has, it is to be feared, led in many cases to the rare becoming rarer. Mr. William A. Dutt some years ago appealed strongly in favour of making the whole of the district a national preserve, a sanctuary for the various birds that flourish or visit there. As he pointed out, they manage these things better in America. Canada has followed suit, and it is to be hoped that we shall do so before it

is too late, and this favoured district be rigorously protected, so that Broadland may remain in the future, as it has been in the past, Birdland.

Leaving Norwich by the Yare at the point at which it is joined by the Wensum, we find ourselves passing along a green valley, with low hills on either side, looking park-like with their many trees. We soon pass the beautifully situated village of Thorpe, on what is really the old river, the chief navigable part being a "cut" rendered necessary by the railway's double crossing of the Yare where it bends round by the village. In the early part of last century, Thorpe was notable for its aquatic spectacles, a souvenir of which is to be seen in the Castle Picture Gallery in the form of Joseph Stannard's large canvas, "Thorpe Water Frolic—Afternoon" which has been described as "the most important work of the Norwich School" which the city has to show. Past Whitlingham and Postwick, through varied greenery, our river takes us on to Bramerton—a pleasant scattered village to which steamers from Norwich bring those who like an afternoon holiday on the river. Beyond here we find the low hills, which at some points are quite close to the left bank, fall away. The Yare now takes its course through low-lying lands, until at a point about six miles from Norwich we reach the picturesque Surlingham Ferry,

and near us on the right, to be reached by a short dyke, lies the first of the broads, the irregular sheet of Surlingham, largely overgrown with aquatic vegetation. A small boat can come, by means of the cut, and get through again into the river by another dyke at the farther end. Here we get a first glimpse of the lush growth of that Broadland to which it is as it were an introduction; reeds and rushes, iris, and any number of the bright water-loving wild flowers are to be seen here and in the marshes beyond in all profusion; but such indeed form a characteristic feature of all the broads, and in this hurried survey there is not space to do more than touch upon the special features here and there. The next broad of any size is Rockland, a beautiful sheet of water a little distance away on the right, with which several dykes afford connection. At the farther end of this broad is the scattered village of Rockland. Returning to the river, we go on past Buckenham Ferry to where a long dyke leads on the left up to Buckenham Broad, and a little more than a mile beyond — on the right — to Langley Dyke, a picturesque and tree-grown branch leading to the "staithe" or landing-place for Langley, a scattered village with ruins of a twelfth-century abbey. At the obelisk of Hardley Cross, where the Chet comes in on the right side of the river, is the point of

BICKLING BROAD

division between the Norwich and Yarmouth jurisdictions over the river, where on behalf of the Norwich Corporation, in accordance with a quaint old custom, has long been annually proclaimed the following:—

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! If there be any manner of person that will absume, purfy, implead, or present action, plaint, or plea for any offence, trespass, or misdemeanour, done or committed upon the King's Majesty's River of Wensum, let him repair unto the Right Worshipful Mr. Mayor, and the Worshipful the Sheriff of the City of Norwich, for the redress therof, and he shall be heard. God save the King!

For many miles the Yare now winds through the low-lying marshlands, on past Reedham to the great extent of Breydon Water, without any further cuts or dykes inviting excursions to broads. Breydon Water—when the tide is up—is a grand expanse, in parts about a mile wide and over four miles in length, and its shores, with the muddy flats left by the receding tide, have long been celebrated as forming a wonderful place for seeing numerous water-fowl of various kinds, from the stately heron to many of the shyer visitants. From the point of view of the bird-lover much has been written about this and the neighbouring waters by men who have gone out at all times and in all weathers, gaining an intimacy of knowledge with the wild life and the district far closer than is possible to the visitor or sojourner

during a brief holiday. Breydon—as it is generally shortened—has almost illimitable attractions for the naturalist, but here we must pass hurriedly on with a bare recognition of its charms. As we enter it with the Yare we can see, just over the marshes, where the wavering Waveney also comes in from the south. The Waveney—up part of which, and a connecting dyke, Oulton Broad is to be reached—is another of the Broadland rivers, one which winds its course through low-lying country from Bungay and Beccles to within about three miles of Lowestoft before turning northwards to reach Breydon at a similar distance from Yarmouth. On the right bank, where the Waveney reaches the estuarial waters, on a low hill are the extensive remains of Burgh Castle—flinty ruins, said to be one of the finest relics of the Roman occupation. From the higher parts of the castle an extensive view is to be had over the rivers twinned on entering Breydon Water, of the Water itself, and of the marshlands beyond.

In an old plan of the district, representing this bit of country in A.D. 1000, the arm of the sea is shown as extending from Burgh Castle (the Roman Garianonum) to Norwich in the west, to Bungay on the south, and to Ludham and Caister on the north, while the land on which Yarmouth now stands is shown as a sandbank.

OLD BOAT-HOUSES, BARTON BROAD

Before continuing the journey to the Bure and the broads to be reached from it, mention should be made of the lovely mere, surrounded by woodlands, known as Fritton Decoy. This narrow and irregular sheet of water—about a mile or so east of the Waveney by Haddisco station—is one of the most beautiful of all the waters of our district, is indeed a lovely lake, open to the public during the summer months only, because during the winter season it is still, I believe, used for its old purpose, the taking of wild fowl in decoys.

Returning to the broad expanse of Breydon we have ahead of us the towers and spires of Yarmouth on its narrow peninsula, and it is necessary to go to the townside to reach the mouth of the Bure, which joins Breydon Water at its eastern extremity, with but little more than half a mile of the narrow spit of land on which the town of bloaters is situated dividing it from the sea, which it reaches about three miles farther to the south. For the first few miles up the Bure there is no special feature to be noted in the marshlands and dykes. The first village reached is picturesque little Stokesby, from the church tower of which may be had an extensive view of the surrounding country. Something less than a mile farther up, opposite Acle mill, comes in Muck Fleet, a long dyke connecting with—but not navigable to—the triune Filby, Rollesby, and Ormesby Broads, picturesque

weed- and reed-grown waters particularly popular with anglers. Acle—lying a short distance away from the Bure beyond the Muck Fleet—is another favourite angling centre, and is in a pleasant rolling country of farm fields and woodlands. A few miles farther, at Thurne mouth, with the small village of Thurne on a hillside on our right, we reach the point at which the Bure is joined by the Thurne from the north.

Along the Thurne are to be reached some of the most attractive parts of Broadland. Firstly comes Womack Broad—a narrow water largely grown up with lush vegetation—making a beautiful approach to the village of Ludham, where the bishops of Norwich once had a palace. The next point of note along the Thurne is Potter Heigham Bridge—one of the chief yachting centres for the broads. About a mile and a half beyond the bridge is the entrance to Heigham Sound, Whitelsey, and Hickling Broad. This is to many one of the most fascinating parts of Broadland. As Mr. T. Southwell writes in the introduction to his edition of Richard Lubbock's *Observations on the Fauna of Norfolk*:—

> Let the reader drift quietly through Heigham Sound on a glorious night in the early autumn, the dying breeze just stirring the sails of his yacht, and raising the slightest possible ripple on the surface of the lake, only enough to make more brilliant the

moonbeam-burnished path along the water, and to wake the whispering reeds—the stillness broken only by the cry of some startled water bird, or the splash of a monster fish as it darts into the reed-beds—and he will behold a scene which no artist can depict, and which will haunt his memory for many a day. Nor will the sights and sounds on a fine night early in summer be easily forgotten. During the day not a wing may have been seen, but after sundown the place is alive with the song of the reed-birds, the air resounds with the bleat of the snipe, water-hens and coots are calling in all directions.

From Heigham Sound we pass into Whitelsey and thence on into the broad expanse of Hickling—the largest of the true broads, for Fritton, which is greater in extent, is really a lake and not a mere broadening of a stream. Hickling is pleasantly peaceful with its low shores and its shallow waters—the channels for yachts are duly marked by posts, and going outside these the yachtsman is in danger of running aground, though a small boat may be taken anywhere outside the channel boundaries. One writer has, however, declared that outside a twenty-yard channel it would be possible to wade anywhere over the gravelly bottom. Hickling is about four hundred acres in extent, with low shores all round, that make it seem even more extensive.

From about the middle of the eastern side of Whitelsey the narrow Old Meadow Dyke leads, in something over a mile, into Horsey Mere, at the farther side of which we are within about a mile

and a half of the sea, which is shut off by sand-hills. Little more than a mile farther along the Thurne than the dyke leading up to Hickling is the Martham or Somerton Broad, one of the least visited of these waters.

Returning to Thurne mouth we may again follow the course of the Bure to the headquarters of Broadland at Wroxham, and between the two points on either side of the river—now reached by short dykes and now miles away—are broads of varying size and interest. About a mile and a half from the junction of the Bure and Thurne on the right are to be seen the ruins of St. Benet's Abbey, which was founded by King Knut on the site of a monastery which had been destroyed by an earlier generation of those Danish invaders to whom he belonged. An old archway and some massive bits of wall are all that is left remaining of what was once the splendid Abbey of St. Benet's-at-Hulm. Opposite the ruins is a dyke leading down to South Walsham Broad, with many trees at its farther end shutting off the village from which it takes its name; a village chiefly noticeable for its two churches, the new one and the superseded remains of the old standing in close neighbourliness almost side by side. The chief part of the ruin consists of a large portion of a tall tower. The church—and much other property too

HORNING FERRY

—was destroyed in 1827 by a fire started by the carelessness of a cottager's wife, who threw a shovelful of hot ashes on to a heap of dry manure lying near a stackyard.

Returning to the Bure, we have the River Ant coming in on our right; about four miles up it is the second largest of the broads, and one of the most attractive, Barton Broad, with beyond it again Stalham Broad, almost overgrown with vegetation. Barton, with its wooded shores to the west, its marshy margin, and its inevitable drainage mills, is a beautiful "bit".

Returning again to the Bure, and continuing up stream, in about a mile a dyke on the left leads to the pleasant Ranworth Broad, largely surrounded with trees, and with the village of Ranworth—the church of which is famous for its beautiful rood screen—on the opposite side. A little farther along the Bure, and on our right—the left bank of the river—Horning, Horning Ferry, and Horning Lower Street are successively reached. The ferry and its willows marking the point of crossing are a picturesque group, looking across to the marsh, backed by many trees. The Lower Street of Horning is along the river bank, with rising ground behind it. From here to Wroxham the river winds through the low land with broads lying on either side, Hoveton Little Broad,

and Hoveton Great Broad, and Salhouse Broad all being passed before Wroxham itself is reached—Wroxham, which is naturally one of the most beautiful of the broads, and also one of those most frequented.