

Though, through the livelong day
 Soundeth thy roundelay,
 Never its accents may
 Pall on mine ear!

Come, take a bribe of me,
 Ne'er to far regions flee,
 Dwell on mine orange-tree
 Cuckoo so dear!

Another address to the cuckoo was written so far back as May 750:

Near to the valley stands my humble cot,
 The village nestles 'neath the cooling shade
 Of lofty timber, but the silent glade
 Not yet re-echoes with the cuckoo's note.

The morning hour e'er finds me, sweetest bird
 Before my gate, and when the day doth pale
 I cast the wistful glance adown the vale,
 But e'en one note alas! not yet is heard.

Flowers, the seasons, patriotism, absence, partings, and the mutability of earthly things, these all form themes, many of which are treated in what might be called a modern manner, but some of the poems have a distinctly Japanese line of thought. Such, for instance, is the following, which alludes to the belief that Japan is the dwelling-place of the gods, and the people, being their descendants, have no need of prayer:

Japan is not a land where men need pray
 For 'tis itself divine:
 Yet do I lift my voice in prayer and say
 May every joy be thine

And may I too, if thou those joys attain,
 Live on to see thee blest!
 Such the fond prayer that like the restless main
 Will rise within my breast.

These lines were written by a celebrated poet who died in 737.

A writer on Japanese literature has said that "Japanese poetry is chiefly remarkable for its limitations—for what it has not, rather than for what it has. Didactic, philosophical, political satirical poems are conspicuously absent." And we may add, that beyond an appeal in times of trouble to the gods, there is an extraordinary absence of religious thought.

The Japanese language is the language of an irreligious people. Many of the foundation thoughts of religion, such as "awe"

and "purity," cannot be adequately expressed in the Japanese tongue. In the "flowery land" no Milton has bewailed a Paradise lost, or foretold "in harmonious numbers" a Paradise regained. No Dante has sought to lift the veil of the unseen, and no Tennyson has taught them to ponder on the awful mysteries of Life and Death.

S. B.

An Heirloom in Decay

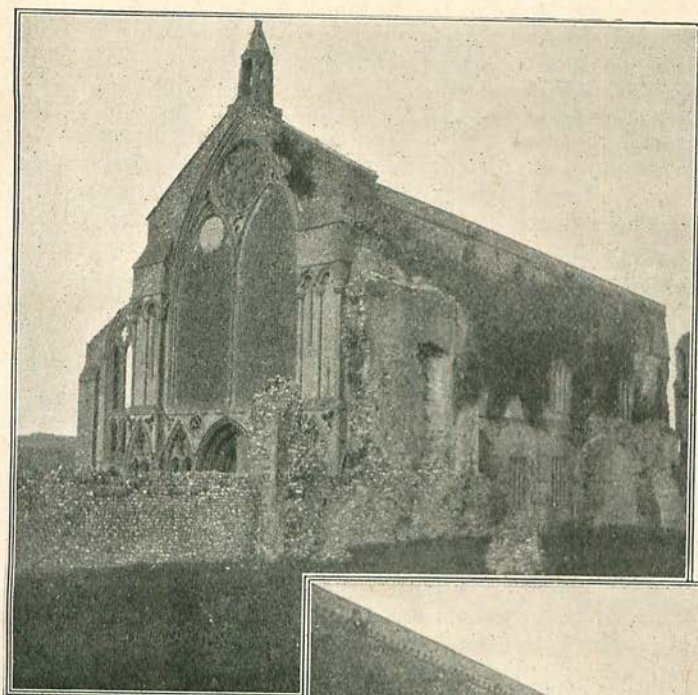
BINHAM ABBEY is one of those picturesque and priceless relics of the past that form a worthy goal for short wanderings from the more trodden routes of travel in England. It stands in a far corner of North Norfolk, near a high road to nowhere more particular than Wells-next-Sea at one end and Holt at the other, some miles from railway stations. But it accords so well with the genius of British history, that speaks from the surrounding landscape, that none who voyage thither regret the time or trouble.

Near by is Walsingham, the story of whose famous shrine of Our Lady is almost the whole story of England's religion, dating from before the Conquest, and growing ever in sanctity till it reached its zenith when King Henry VIII. walked barefoot thither from the village of Barsham. Still nearer stands, at Wighton, the wonderfully-preserved camp of the Danes who harried this part of East Anglia; on another side, the Old Hall at Stiffkey still bears the arms of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Privy Seal to Queen Elizabeth, and on its inner walls still hang the muskets served out at the time when East Anglia stood ready, day by day, to rally against the French invader. So strong is the tradition of those times that when last year a "meteorite" fell within a mile or two of Binham, some villagers gravely affirmed that it was a shell fired from a French warship off the coast.

On a third side of Binham stands East Barsham, with a relic of one of the most picturesque buildings in the kingdom, dating from the time when Henry VII. was king; and on the fourth side still rolls the sea, as it did when the Vikings swooped upon the coast and fought for their foothold against the sturdy Angles; as it did when the Norman Con-

queror stamped his civilising heel firm upon recalcitrant East Anglia; as it did when the

Friday. But of these towers and gabled buildings there remain only humped hillocks in the greensward and a jumble of craggy pillars suggesting an ivy-clad Stonehenge, where jackdaws chatter through the sunny afternoons and the kestrel rears its brood. With a printed ground plan of the ancient buildings, however, the whole arrangement becomes clear and simple, and intensely interesting. Every detail, from the "jail gate" in the wall with its "squint" on a line with the centre of the great west door, to the



Binham Abbey

watchers scanned the sea day and night for signal of the French.

Standing thus in the heart of a district whose records summarise the story of England's wars, Binham Abbey itself is an epitome of the history of the Church. The building, as it stands now, in spite of its size and beauty, is only the nave of the Church of the Priory, whose clustered towers and gables crusted the green slope that faces the blasts from the northern sea, above a meandering trout stream, where the old monks had rare sport in catching their dinner for



Norman wall of partition between the church of the monks and that of the parish, and the fierce, mutilating work of the Reformation when the rood-screen was painted

with white and covered with texts from Tyndale's versions, from under which some of the illuminated saints show here a hand and there a head—every detail is eloquent of the history of England, scarred deep in religion and wreckage, in enduring beauty and ruthless demolition. But worst of all is the age of apathy on which we seem to have entered; when such a building, through its aged vicar, appeals in vain for the small sum—scarce twice as much as has been given for a first-prize collie dog at a dog show—required to make the building worthy of the purpose, which it has served for seven centuries, as a Parish Church, and somewhat worthy of its old traditions. One need not be an architectural enthusiast or antiquarian fanatic to feel the disgrace which attaches to us as a nation when such memorials as Binham Abbey are permitted to totter to decay.

For Binham Abbey is one of those things which the citizens of the United States of America would give millions of dollars to possess; but which, although its authentic history stretches in an unbroken line from the Domesday survey, may apparently go begging in vain until another Domesday without obtaining from the British nation the £2000 required to rescue from its present state of ruinous decay what is left of the famous Priory founded by Peter de Valoines, nephew of William the Conqueror, and his wife, Albreda, as a "cell" to the Abbey of St. Albans, subordinate only to the Monastery of S. Peter de Clugny in France. But if we go into these details we shall be lost in the mists of mediævalism, when the Priory used to pay one mark or silver annually to the Abbot of St. Albans and put up—as we should now say—the Abbot for eight days in the year, "he to have only thirteen horses in his train." Equally useless would it be to plunge into architectural details, of bays and clerestory and triforium, transepts and sedilia and nebule corbel-tables. Let it suffice that there now remains the nave of what was once a magnificent pile of buildings and fragmentary portions of other parts representing Norman, Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular architecture.

But one needs no knowledge of these to realise the beauty of the west front of the Abbey—as custom calls the Priory—in spite of the fact that the splendid window is almost entirely blocked up. Inside the building there is, too, one type of moulding believed to be unique in the ancient architecture of the world. Yet now the whole aspect of the interior is spoiled by the dwarfed arches that give a hint of squatness to the whole; but this is one of the defects which the £2000, above referred to, would remove. For when the old Priory buildings were destroyed, the drainage was neglected, and a succeeding age of dull utilitarianism conceived the crude device to dry the floor for divine service by raising it three feet, so that it now runs level with the ancient sedilia and hides a great part of the doorway through which the monks came to serve the altar.

To lower the floor again to its ancient level and give back to the building its pristine grace and majesty, to mend the roof so that the rain may not drip within, and to restore the loveliness of the west window are the three objects of a struggling fund, whose raising so far reads like a story of village rummage sales and sixpenny subscriptions. And this to secure to England a memorial which was reared before she was called England; a beautiful record of her successive styles of ancient architecture; and a building which as Parish Church has its unbroken list of vicars from Alan Alam, appointed in 1310, to the Rev. Robert Corry Cavell, the present vicar, who will be mightily pleased if some are moved to help him in the task of saving the grand old Priory.

A NORFOLK NATURALIST.

The Newest Things in Violins

It has often been remarked that whereas the pianoforte has in the course of its existence undergone many changes which have tended to improve it and render it an instrument of greater beauty and quality than it was before, the violin has changed but little from the day of its birth. Since the middle of the seventeenth century the violin has been considered a perfect instrument. To-day the fiddle-player hankers after a Stradi-