

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SPALDING AND THE CHURCHES NORTH OF IT

Potato Trade—Bulb-growing—The Welland—Ayscough Fee Hall—The Gentleman's Society—The Church—Pinchbeck—Heraldic Tombs—The Custs—Surfleet—Leaning Tower—Gosberton—Churchyard Sheep—Cressy Hall—Quadring—Donington—Hemp and Flax—Swineshead—Bicker—Sutterton—Algarkirk.

THREE main roads enter the town of *Spalding*, the last town on the Welland before it runs out into Fosdyke Wash. They come from the north, south, and east. The west has none, being one huge fen which, till comparatively recent times, admitted of locomotion only by boat. The southern road comes from Peterborough and enters the county by the bridge over the Welland at Market Deeping, a pleasant-looking little town with wide market-like streets and its four-armed sign-post pointing to Peterborough and Spalding ten miles, and Bourne and Stamford seven miles.

From Deeping to Spalding the road is a typical fen road—three little inns and a few farm cottages and the occasional line of white smoke on the perfectly straight Peterborough and Boston railway is all there is to see save the crops or the long potato graves which are mostly by the road side.

The potato trade is a very large one. Every cart or waggon we passed at Easter-time on the roads between Deeping and Kirton-in-Holland was loaded with sacks of potatoes, and all the farm hands were busy uncovering the pits and sorting the tubers. Donington and Kirton seemed to be the centres of the trade, Kirton being the home of the man who is known as the potato king, and has many thousands of acres of fenland used for this crop alone. Spalding itself is the centre of the daffodil market, and quantities of bulbs are grown here and

annually exported to Holland, it is said, to find their way back to England in the autumn as Dutch bulbs. I do not vouch for the truth of this, but certainly the business, which has been for years a speciality of Holland, where the lie of the land and the soil are much the same as in the South Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire Fens, is now a large and lucrative



The Welland at Cowbit Road, Spalding.

industry here, and is each year expanding. The Channel and Scilly Islands and Cornwall can, of course, owing to their climate, get their narcissus into bloom earlier, but the conditions of soil are better in the Fens. Still, a liberal supply of manure is needed to insure fine blooms, and sixty or seventy tons to the acre is none too much, 2 crops of mustard or potatoes being taken off after its application before planting the bulbs.

Hyacinths are still left to Holland, in one part of which, at Hillegom, near Haarlem, the soil has just that amount of sand and lime which that particular bulb demands. Tulips, however, are grown in England with great success; crocuses are seldom planted as they make such a small return on the outlay. For this outlay is very considerable, nine or ten women are needed to each plough for planting, which alone costs 45s.



The Welland at High Street, Spalding.

an acre, and then there is the constant weeding and cleaning of the ground, the picking, bunching and packing, which needs many hands at once; also there is the heavy cost of the bulbs themselves for planting, *Narcissus poeticus* will cost £50 an acre of 400,000 bulbs, but 270,000 of *Golden Spur* will cost £300 and fill the same space; others will cost prices halfway between these two. Tulips want more room, and at 180,000 to the acre some will cost as much as £500. Growers like to

advertise big bulbs, but the harder and smaller English-grown bulb will often give as fine a bloom as the larger imported article. The whole industry is comparatively new, and a very pleasant one for the many women who are employed.

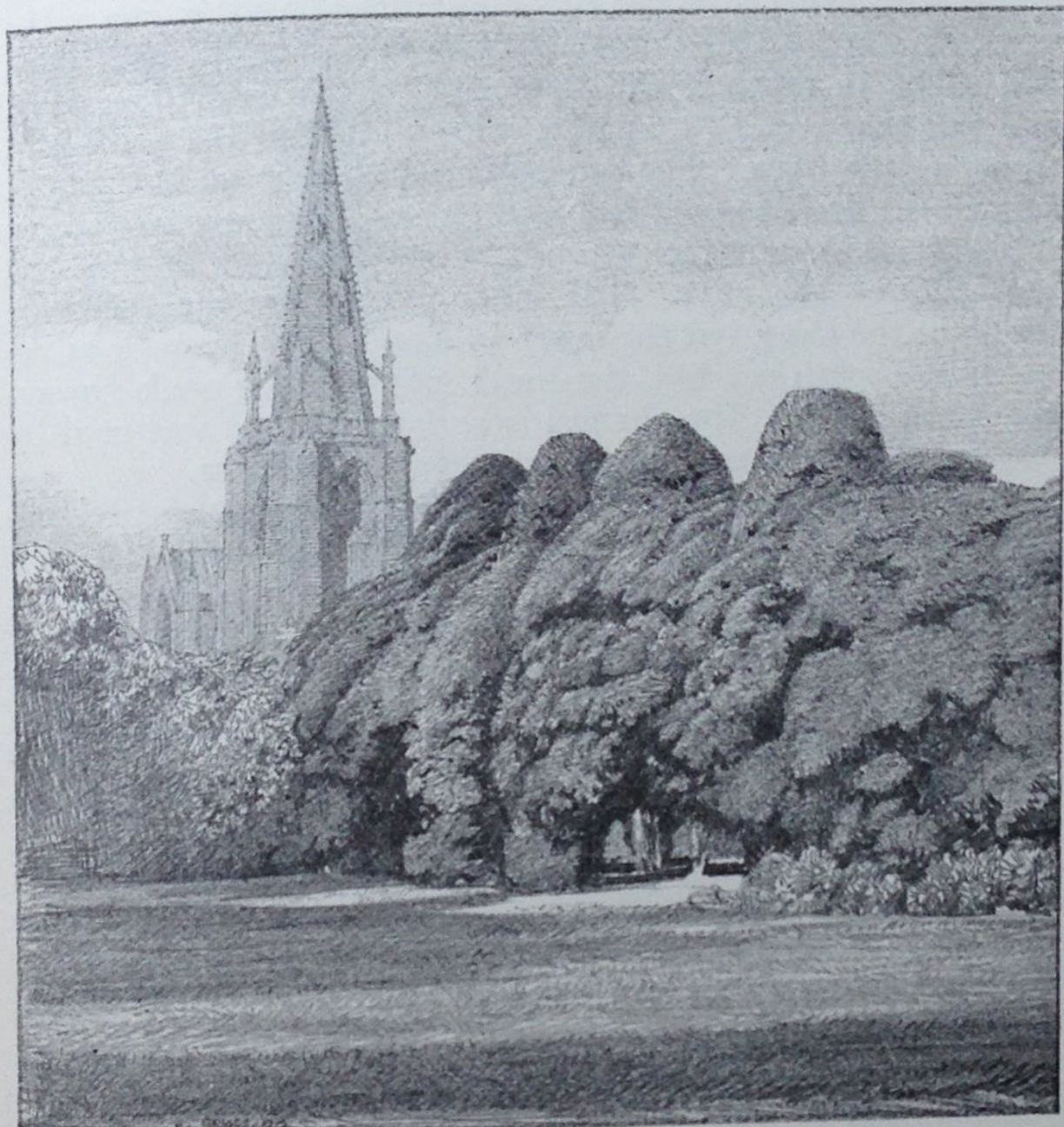
The town is a very old one, and the Welland going through it with trees along its banks and the shipping close to the roadway gives it rather a Dutch appearance. It is noteworthy as being the centre from which we shall be able to see more fine churches, all within easy distance, than we can in any other part of the county or kingdom. As early as 860 the fisheries of the Welland, together with a wooden chapel of St. Mary here, which became the site afterwards of the priory, were given by Earl Alfgar to Croyland. Ivo Taillebois, the Conqueror's nephew, with his wife Lucia the first, lived here in the castle in some magnificence as Lord of Holland. They were both buried in the priory church, founded by Lady Godiva's brother, Thorold of Bokenhale, and over possession of which Spalding and Croyland had frequent disputes. One of the priors subsequently built Wykeham chapel. The Kings Edward I. and II. stayed at the priory, and from Bolingbroke, John of Gaunt and Chaucer were not infrequent visitors. The building was on the south side of the Market-place, and a shop there with a vaulted roof to one of its rooms had probably some connection with it. At the dissolution it was valued at £878, a very large sum, and next only to Croyland, which was by far the richest house in the county and valued at £1,100 or £1,200. Thornton Abbey was only set at £730.

The river is navigable for small sea-going vessels, and many large barges may generally be found tied up along its course through the town, discharging oil cake and cotton cake, and taking in cargoes of potatoes, both being transhipped at Fosdyke from or into coasting steamers running between Hull and London.

But water carriage though cheap is limited in that it only goes between two points, whereas Spalding is the meeting-place of at least three railways, making six exits for Spalding goods to come and go to and from all the main big towns in Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire or Norfolk, as well as to all those in our own county. Thus there are twice as many ways out of Spalding by rail as there are by road.

The Welland, carefully banked by the Romans, is now bridged

for one railway after another, and runs with a street on either side of it and rows of trees along it right through the town. On your right as you enter from the south you see across the river, looking over the top of a picturesque old brick wall, the well-clipped masses of ancient yew trees which form the shaded



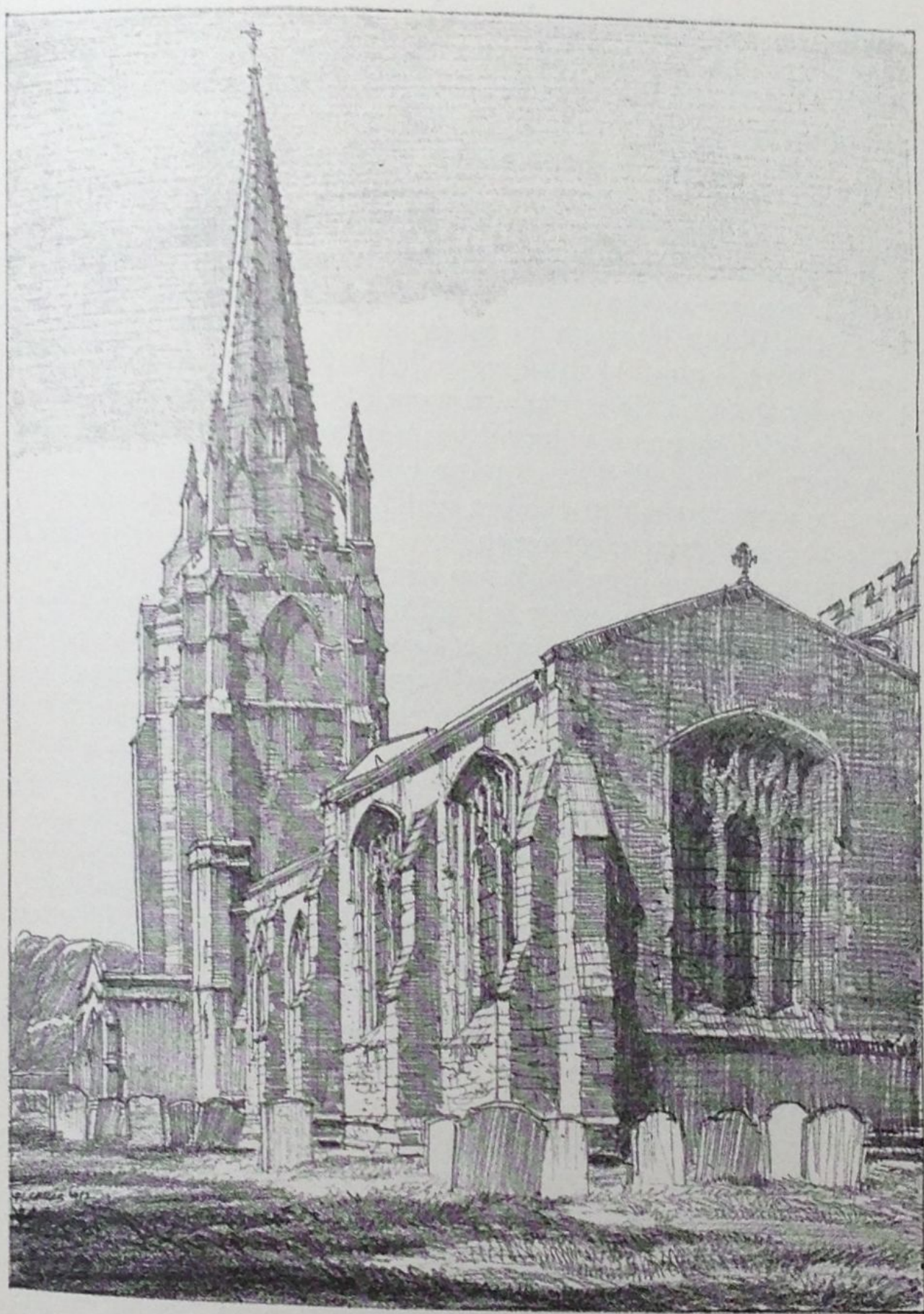
Ayscough Fee Hall Gardens, Spalding.

walks in the pretty grounds of *Ayscough Fee Hall*. The house, built in 1429, but terribly modernised, is now used as a museum, and the grounds form a public garden for the town. Murray tells us that Maurice Johnson once lived in it, who helped to found the Society of Antiquaries in 1717, and founded in 1710 the "Gentleman's Society of Spalding," which still flourishes.

Among its many distinguished members it numbered Newton, Bentley, Pope, Gay, Addison, Stukeley, and Sir Hans Sloane, and Captain Perry, engineer to the Czar, Peter the Great, who was engaged in the drainage of Deeping Fen.

Close to it is the fine old church, the body of which is as wide as it is long owing to its having double aisles on either side of the nave. It was founded to take the place of an earlier one which was falling to ruins, in the market-place. It dates from 1284, and was once cruciform in plan, with a tower at the north-west corner of the nave. The transepts, which now do not project beyond the double north and south aisles, had each two narrow transept aisles, but the western ones have been thrown into the aisles of the nave. The inner nave aisles are the same length as the nave, but the outer ones only go as far west as the north and south porches, the tower filling up the angle beyond the south porch. The chancel is so large that it was used by Bishop Fleming (1420-30) for episcopal ordinations.

The east end wall is not rectangular, but the south chancel wall runs out two feet further east than the north wall, as it does also in the church of Coulsdon, near Reigate, in Surrey. The reason of this is that it is built on the foundation of an older chapel. The flat Norman buttresses are still to be seen outside the east end. The tower leans to the east, and when examined it was found to have been built flat on the surface of the ground with no foundation whatever. It seems incredible, but the intelligent vergers were positive about it. The spire has beautiful canopied openings in three tiers, the lower ones having two lights and being unusually graceful. Standing inside the south porch and near the tower, and looking up the church, you get a most picturesque effect, for the church has so many aisles that you can see no less than twenty-three different arches. The north porch is handsome, and had three canopied niches over both the outer and the inner doorway, and a vaulted roof supporting a room over the entrance. A five-light window over the chancel arch is curious. There is a rood-loft and a staircase leading to it, and going on up to the roof. The Perpendicular west window is very large and has seven lights. This dates from the fifteenth century, when the nave was lengthened and the pillars of the nave considerably heightened and the old caps used again, and what had previously been an "early Decorated" church with only a nave and



Spalding Church from the S.E.

transepts, had Perpendicular aisles added. The large south-east chapel which, until 1874 was used as a school, was founded in 1311. An erect life-size marble figure commemorates Elizabeth Johnson, 1843. There are no other important monuments. The tower has eight bells and a Sanctus bell-cot at the east end of the nave. There are stone steps to enable people to get over the brick churchyard wall, as there are also at Kirton and Friskney. Some stone coffin-lids curiously out of place are let into one of the boundary walls of the churchyard. Close by is the White Horse, a picturesque old thatched and gabled inn. There is another inn here called "The Hole in the Wall." I wonder if this title is derived from Shakespeare's play, "The tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and Thisbe," who, says the story, "did talk through the chink of a wall," or does it refer to some breach in the sea wall? To come from fancy to fact, the real name seems to have been Holy Trinity Wall, the house having been built up against a wall of that church which, with half a score of others in Spalding, has been dismantled and utterly swept away. Another puzzling sign I passed lately was "The New Found out." The writer of an article in *The Times* of April 8, on the fire at Little Chesterford, thinks the sign of one of the burnt public-houses, "The Bushel and Strike," a very singular one, not knowing that the strike, like the bushel, is a measure of corn.

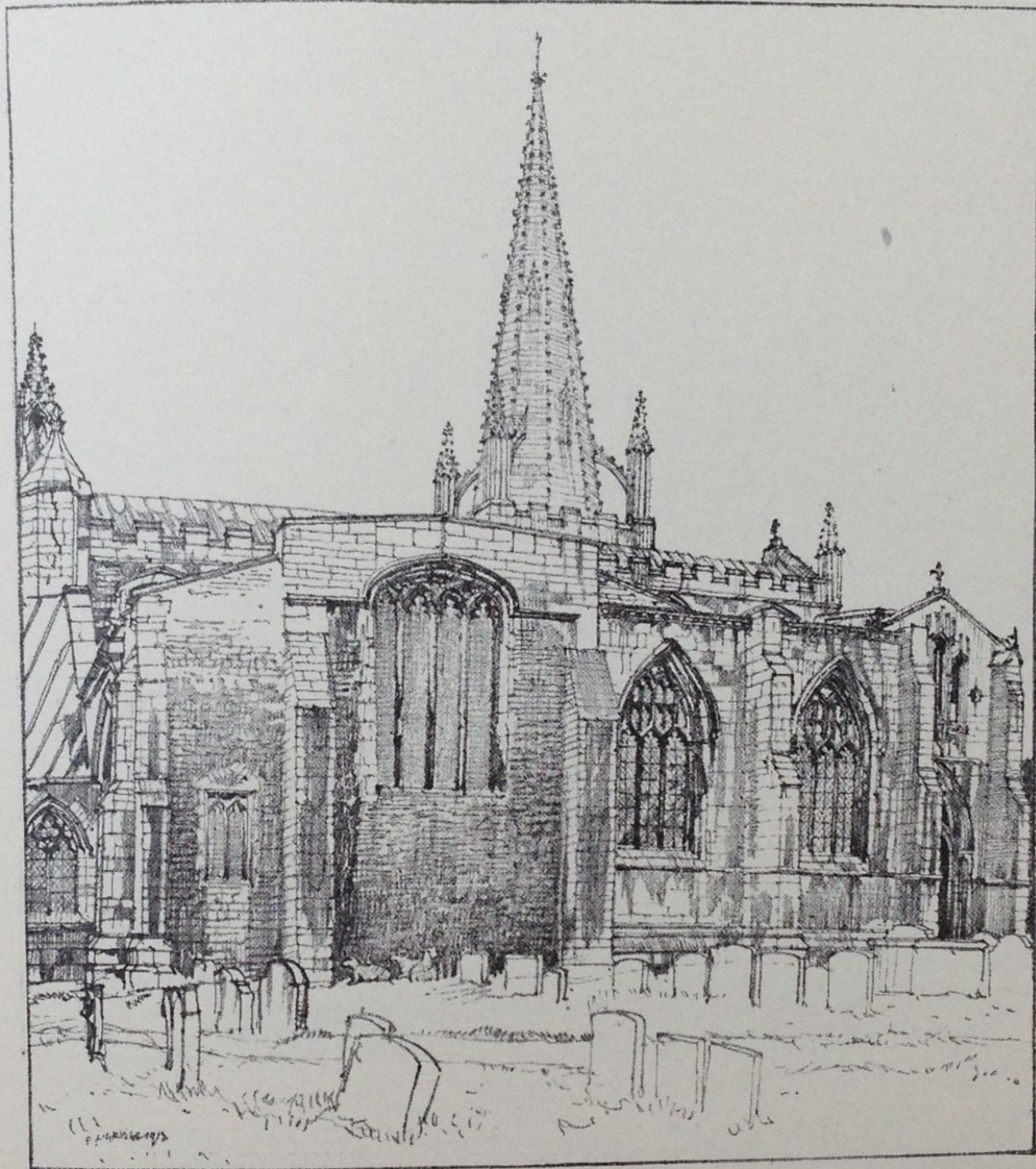
St. Paul's, Fulney, to the north of the town, is a handsome new brick-and-stone church, by Sir Gilbert Scott, who also restored the old church and removed every sort of hideous inside fitting, where galleries all round the nave came within four feet of the heads of the worshippers in the box pews. At that time £11,000 was spent on the restoration. This was in 1866, in which year the vicar, the Rev. William Moore, died, and he and his wife are buried in the nave; his parents, who had done so much for the church, are buried at Weston.

About two miles from Fulney is Wykeham chapel,¹ built in 1310 and attached to a country residence of the priors of Spalding; it is now only a ruin.

Going out of Spalding northwards, three miles bring us to *Pinchbeck*, which was an important village in Saxon times, and attached to Croyland Abbey, where a fine tower with six bells leans to the north-west. It is approached by a lime avenue.

¹ See Illustration, page 180.

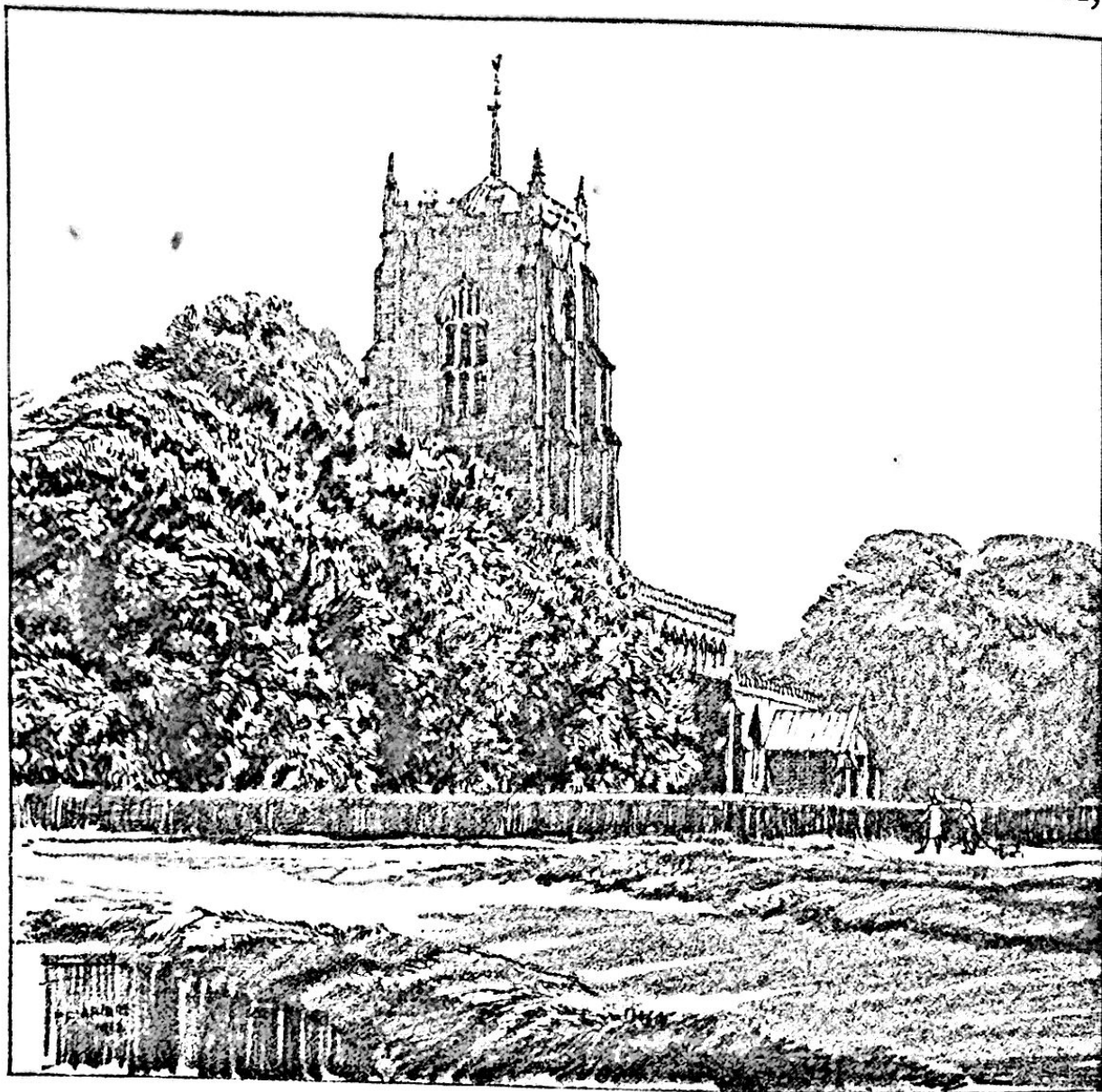
There are two rows of diaper carved work round the base of the tower, and large canopied niches on either side of the west door. The old roof on the north aisle is good, the pillars of the nave are spoilt by a hideous coat of purple paint. A



N. Side, Spalding Church.

delightful old brass weathercock is preserved in the church, and over the south porch is a dial. The high narrow tower-arch is a pleasure to look on. The altar tomb of Sir Thomas Pinchbeck (1500) has heraldic shields all round it, but is quite outdone by a brass of Margaret Lambert, a very ugly one, but

adorned with twenty-seven heraldic coats of arms of her husband and fifteen of her own. The ten fine Perpendicular clerestory windows of three lights give the church a handsome appearance, and show the large wooden angels in the roof,



Pinchbeck.

who used to hold shields bearing the achievements of the house of "Pynchebek."

THE CUSTS.

There is another name connected with this place, for one of the oldest Lincolnshire families is that of the Custs, or Costes, who have held land in Pinchbeck and near Bicker Haven for fourteen generations: though the first known

mention of the name is not in the fens but at Navenby, where one Osbert Coste had held land in King John's reign.

The neighbourhood of Croyland Abbey, of Spalding Priory, and of Boston Haven, with its large wool trade, made "Holland" a district of considerable importance, and led some of the more enterprising mercantile families to settle in the neighbourhood.

The same causes occasioned the building of the fine fen churches, which still remain, though the great houses have disappeared. Custs settled in Gosberton and Boston as well as at Pinchbeck. At the latter place, what is now the River Glen was in the fifteenth century called the "Bourne Ee," or Eau, and the road by it was the "Ee Gate." Here Robert Cust in 1479 lived in "The Great House at Croswithand," in which was a large hall open to the roof and strewed with rushes, with hangings in it to partition off sleeping places for the guests or the sons of the house, the daughters sharing the parlour with their parents. Robert is called a "Flaxman," that being the crop by which men began to make their fortunes in Pinchbeck Fen. He continually added small holdings to his modest property as opportunity arose, and his son Hugh, succeeding in 1492, did the same; buying two acres from "Thomas Sykylbrys Franklin" for 50s. and one and a half from Robert Sparowe for £5, and so on. Hugh is styled in 1494 "flax chapman," in 1500 he had advanced to "Yeoman." He then had three farms of sixty-nine acres, and by economy and industry he not only lived, but lived comfortably, and had money to buy fresh land, though his will shows that things were on a small scale still, so that individual mention is made of his "black colt with two white feet behind." After the death of his two sons, Hugh's grandson Richard succeeded in 1554, and married the juvenile widow, Milicent Slefurth *née* Beele, who brought him the lands of R. Pereson, the wealthy vicar of Quadring, with a house at Moneybridge on the Glen, which she left eventually to her second son, Richard. His grandson Samuel took to the legal profession, and, disdaining the parts of Holland after life in London, left the house there to his brother Joshua, who was the last Cust to live at Pinchbeck. The family were by this time wealthy, and had a good deal of land round Boston and elsewhere. Samuel's son, Richard, married in 1641 Beatrice Pury, and had a son called Pury, whence spring the Purey Custs. The Pury family then lived

at Kirton, near Boston. He left the law for a soldier's life, and was "captain of a Trained Band in the Wapentake of Skirbeck in the parts of Holland." He succeeded his father in 1663 and lived, after the Restoration, at Stamford. In 1677, by interest and the payment of £1,000, he obtained a baronetcy. His son, Sir Pury Cust, who had been knighted by William III. in 1690, after the battle of the Boyne, in which he commanded a troop of horse under the Duke of Schomberg, died in 1698, two years before his father. His wife, Ursula, the heiress of the Woodcock family of Newtimber, had died at the age of twenty-four in 1683. Her monument is in St. George's church, Stamford. She traced back her family to Joan, "the fair maid of Kent," through Joan's second husband, John Lord Holland, if we are to take it that she was really married first, and not simply engaged when a girl to Lord Salisbury. At all events, her last husband was the Black Prince, by whom she was mother of Richard II. Her father was Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent, the sixth son of Edward I.

In 1768 Sir John Cust was Speaker of the House of Commons. The present head of the Cust family is the Earl Brownlow.

Close to Pinchbeck, on whose already sinking tower the builders had not dared to place their intended spire, is *Surfleet*, where the tower and spire lean in a most threatening manner. Arches have been built up to support it, and by the well-known power of old buildings known as "Sticktion," it may last for many generations, but it presents a very uncomfortable appearance. For the next twenty miles we shall be constantly crossing the great dykes which drain the fens, all running eastwards. The road which divides after crossing the Hammond Beck and the Rise-Gate-Eau passes through *Gosberton*, once called Gosberdekirk, a large village with a very fine Perpendicular church. You enter by a richly moulded doorway from a very wide porch, over the entrance to which is a figure. To the right of the porch, arched recesses are seen under each south aisle window. There is a central tower with large transepts and a lofty crocketed spire. A Lady chapel adjoins the south transept. The clerestory is a later addition, and the ground has been filled up so that the beautifully carved bases of the nave pillars are two feet below the present paving. A trap-door is lifted to show one of them. The rood staircase is on the south side, and in the south transept is a particu-

larly fine window, with two carved cross-mullions. The moulding of the nave arches is carried right down the pillars, which deprives them of capitals and gives them a very feeble appearance. A similar absence of capitals is found in the tower arches at Horncastle. The roof under the belfry is groined, and a fine screen separates the chapel of St. Katherine



Surfleet.

from the body of the church. In this, there is an old plain chest with three iron bands. An elegant recumbent stone effigy of a lady and another of a knight in armour, with a shield bearing a Red Cross, are the only monuments of interest. As early as 1409, in the reign of Henry IV., Gosberton was a fat living, for in that year we find that the warden of the hospital of St. Nicholas at Pontefract exchanged the manor of Methley

in Yorkshire for the advowsons of Gosberkirk, Lincolnshire, and Wathe, Yorkshire. This manor, before the end of that century, became the property of Sir Thomas Dymoke.

The church is very well cared for, and I was glad to see sheep in the churchyard, the only way of keeping the grass tidy without going to an unwarrantable expense.

I know quite well the objections which can reasonably be urged to this plan, that the sheep make the paths and the porch



Surfleet Windmill.

dirty and may damage the tombstones ; but the porch can have wire netting doors, and the paths can be cleaned up and the sheep excluded for Sunday ; and in those churchyards which are worst cared for there are generally no tombstones which would be liable to any hurt.

Certainly in one churchyard where I have seen sheep for many years I never knew of any damage, and they did keep the grass neat where it would have cost much to keep it trimmed up by hand.

Not far from Gosberton station is Cressy Hall, a modern red

brick house, built on the site of a very ancient one. It had been a manor of the Creci family from Norman times, and passed from them to Sir John Markham, who entertained there the Lady Margaret, mother of Henry VII.

Dr. Stukeley, towards the end of the eighteenth century, saw the old oak bedstead on which she slept. It was then in a farm-house, called Wrigbolt, in the parish of Gosberton, and was very large and shut in all round with oak panels carved outside, two holes being left at the foot big enough to admit a full-grown person—a sort of hutch in fact. The property subsequently came to the Heron family, who lived there for three centuries. They kept up a large heronry there, and we read of as many as eighty nests in one tree, but since the family left the manor, at the beginning of last century, the birds have been dispersed.

The next village to Gosberton is *Quadring*, a curious name, said to be derived from the Celtic Coed (= wood). The western tower and spire are well proportioned, and the tower is quite remarkable for the way in which it draws in, narrowing all the way up from the ground to the spire. The rich embattled nave parapet and the rood turrets and staircase are also noticeable, and, as usual with these Lincolnshire churches, a fine row of large clerestory windows gives a very handsome appearance. This church has in it a fine chest, as have Gosberton and Sutterton. The latter very plain, and both with three iron straps and locks, while at Swineshead is a good iron chest of the Nuremberg pattern.

Four miles will bring us to *Donington*, once a market town and the centre of the local hemp and flax trade, of which considerable quantities were grown both here and round Pinchbeck. It was the flax trade that attracted the Custs to Pinchbeck in the fifteenth century.

Up to the last century Donington had three hemp fairs in the year, in May, September, and October, and the land being mostly wet fen, the villagers kept large flocks of geese, one man owning as many as 1,000 "old geese." These, besides goslings, yielded a crop of quills and feathers, and the poor birds were plucked five times a year. The sea shells in the soil indicate that before the sea banks were made the land was just a salt-water fen, and it is probable that the men of Donington had a navigable cut to the sea near Bicker or Wigtoft, for the

Roman sea-bank from Frieston curved inland to Wigtoft and thence ran to Fosdyke, and the sea water no doubt came up to the bank.

The Romans did much for this village, which lies between their sea-bank and the Carr Dyke. The former kept out the sea water, and the latter intercepted the flood water from the hills. This was more effectually done later by the Hammond Beck, which, coming from Spalding, ran northwards a parallel course to the Roman Dyke, and with the same purpose, but some four or five miles nearer to Donington, after passing which place it bends round to the east and goes out at Boston. Thus farming was made possible, and potatoes now have taken the place of flax and hemp.

A large green, bordered by big school buildings, now fills the Market Square. The church, dedicated to St. Mary and the Holy Rood, is late Decorated and Perpendicular, and has a splendid tower and spire 240 feet high, which stands in a semi-detached way at the south-east of the south aisle and is surmounted by a very fine ball and weathercock. The lower stage forms a groined south porch, over which as well as on each buttress are large canopied niches for statues, and over the inner door is a figure of our Lord. The pillars in the nave are octagonal. There is a large rood bracket, and the rood staircase starts, not from behind the pulpit, but from the top of the chancel step. The walls of the Early English chancel are of rough stone, with no windows on the north, but the east window is a grand five-light Perpendicular one, and three large windows of the same style are at the west end. In all of these the tracery is unusually good. A doorway at each side of the altar shows that the chancel once extended further, and there is a curious arched recess at the north-east corner with high steps, the meaning of which is a puzzle. A little kneeling stone figure is seen in the wall of the north aisle. The responds of the nave arcades, both east and west, have very large carved bosses. The roof is old and quite plain. In the church are many memorial slabs to members of the Flinders family, among them one to Captain Matthew Flinders,¹ 1814,

¹ This Matthew Flinders, of Donington, was a notable hydrographer. He was sent as lieutenant in command of an old ship the *Xenophon*, renamed the *Investigator*, to explore and chart the coast of S. Australia in 1801-3. And he took with him his young cousin John Franklin who had just

one of the early explorers, who, in the beginning of last century, was sent to map the coast of Australia, and having been captured by the French, was kept for some years in prison in Mauritius.

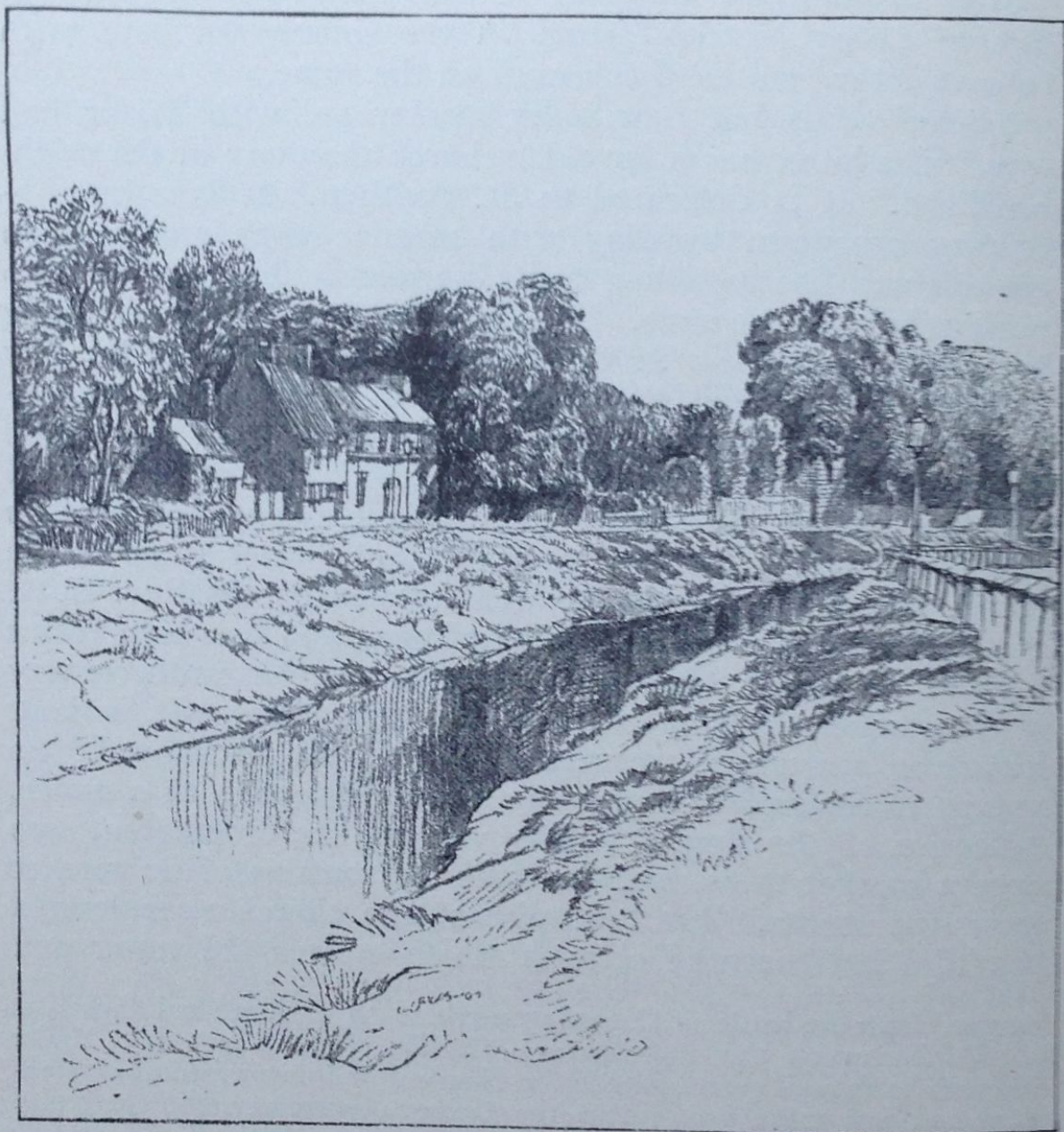
The Blacksmith's epitaph, mentioned in the account of Bourne Abbey, is also found in the churchyard here, with bellows, forge, and anvil engraved on the stone.

Swineshead is but four miles further on, with *Bicker* half way. The latter has a far older church than any in the neighbourhood. It is dedicated to St. Swithun. It is a twelfth-century cruciform building with massive piers and cushion capitals and fine moulding to its Norman arches over the two western bays of the nave. The clerestory has Norman arcading in triplets with glass in the centre light. The east window consists of three tall Early English lancets. A turret staircase in the south aisle gives access to another in the tower. The north aisle oak seats have been made out of portions of the rood screen. The Early English font, being supported on four short feet, is interesting, as is a holy water stoup in the porch. This church has been well restored by the Rev. H. T. Fletcher, now ninety-three years of age, who has been rector for half a century. In the last half of the thirteenth century a Christopher Massingberd was the incumbent. It is kept locked on account of recent thefts in the neighbourhood. As you go to *Swineshead* you pass a roadside pond with a notice, "Beware of the Swans." The village, like Donington, was once a market town, and has still the remains of its market cross and stocks. The low spire of the church rises from a beautiful battlemented octagon which crowns the tower and

returned from the battle of Copenhagen where he distinguished himself as a midshipman on the *Polyphemus*,—Captain John Lawford. Under Flinders he showed great aptitude for Nautical and Astronomical observations and was made assistant at the Sydney observatory, the Governor, Mr. King, usually addressing him as "Mr. Tycho Brahe." These two natives of Lincolnshire, Flinders and Franklin, are of course responsible for such names on the Australian Coast as *Franklin Isles*, *Spilsby Island* in the *Sir Joseph Banks* group, *Port Lincoln*, *Boston Island*, *Cape Donington*, *Spalding Cove*, *Grantham Island*, *Flinders Bay*, &c.

The *Investigator* proving unseaworthy, Flinders, with part of his crew, sailed homewards on the *Cumberland*; and touching at St. Mauritius was detained by the French Governor because his passport was made out for the *Investigator*. He was set free after seven tedious years on the island, 1803–1810, and died at Donington 1814.

is *the* feature of the building. There is a similar one at the base of the spire of the grand church of Patrington in Holderness. The tower is at the west end of the nave, and at each of its corners are very high pinnacles. The belfry is lighted by



The Welland at Marsh Road, Spalding.

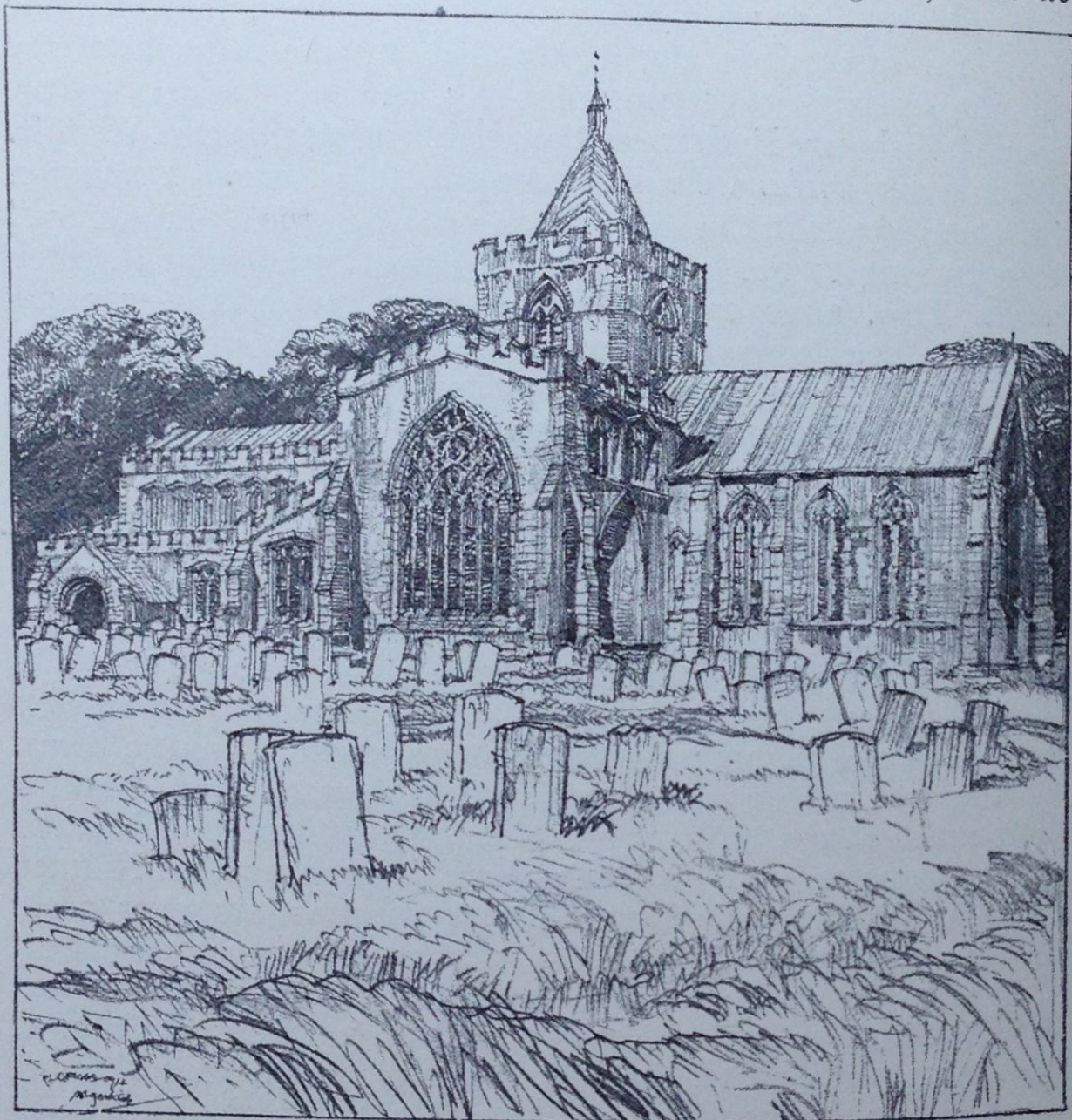
unusually large three-light Perpendicular windows, and the clerestory by large windows with Decorated tracery. The south aisle windows, too, are Decorated, those in the north aisle Perpendicular. The roof is old, and though plain in the nave, is richer in the north aisle. The clustered columns in the nave are slender, and the long pointed chancel arch, having no

shoulders, is curiously ugly. The old iron chest has been already mentioned.

At Swineshead the road goes east to Boston and west to Sleaford. This we will speak of when we describe the six roads out of Sleaford, of which the Swineshead road is by far the most interesting. But we must go back by *Bicker*, to which the sea once came close up, as testified by the remains of the Roman sea-bank only two miles off; and perhaps, too, by the name "Fishmere End," near the neighbouring village of Wigtoft. After seeing *Bicker* we will retrace our steps through Donington by Quadring and Gosberton, till we reach the "Gate Eau," then turning to the left, strike the direct Spalding and Boston road. This, after crossing "Quadring Eau-Dyke"—a name which tells a fenny tale—passes over the Roman bank as it leaves Bicker, and making eastwards after its long inland curve from Frieston, proceeds to *Sutterton* and *Algarkirk*. The names go together as a station on the Great Northern Railway loop line, and the villages are not far apart. They were both endowed as early as 868, as mentioned in the Arundel MSS. The churches of both are cruciform. *Sutterton* has a tall spire thickly crocketed, and a charming Transition doorway in the south porch. That of the north is of the same date. The Early English arcades have rich bands of carving under the capitals of their round pillars; the two eastern pillars, from the thrust of the tower, lean considerably to the west; and, showing how much of the building was done in the Transition Norman time, the pointed arch of the chancel is enriched with Norman moulding. The large Perpendicular windows are very good, but the tracery of the Decorated west window is not attractive. The level of the floor has been so filled up that the narrow transept-arch pillars are now buried as much as three feet. The fittings are all pinewood, which gives one a kind of shock in so fine an old church. There are eight bells and a thirteenth-century Sanctus bell with inscription in Lombardic letters. The wood of the massive old iron-bound chest is sadly decayed.

Algarkirk, the church of Earl Alfgar, stands within half a mile of Sutterton, in a park. The parish is a huge one, and the living was, till recently, worth £2,000 a year, but having been purchased from the Berridge family and presented to the Bishop of Lincoln, its revenues have gone largely to endow new churches in Grimsby, and the present incumbent has only one quarter

of what his predecessors had. Like Spalding, Algarkirk had double aisles to the transepts, but the eastern aisle on the south side has been thrown into the transept. The Decorated windows of each transept are very fine ones, and those at the east and west ends of the nave are extremely large and good, that at



Algarkirk.

the west filling the whole of the wall space. The clerestory has ten three-light windows, and the transepts have similar ones. Outside, the nave, aisles and transepts are all battlemented, which gives a very rich appearance. The fittings are all of oak, and there are six bells. Every window below the clerestory has good modern stained glass, and, taken as a

whole, the church is one of the most beautiful in the county.

It was Easter time when we visited Algarkirk, and the rookery in the park at the edge of the churchyard was giving abundant signs of busy life. The delightful cawing of the rooks is always associated in my mind with the bright spring time in villages of the Lincolnshire wolds. In the churchyard I noticed the name of Phoebe more than once, but I doubt if the parents, when bestowing this pretty classic name on their infant daughter at the font, ever thought of her adding to it, as the tombstone says she did, the prosaic name of Weatherbogg.

At Sutterton two main roads cross, one from Swineshead to Holbeach, crossing the Welland near Fosdyke; the other from Boston to Spalding, crossing the Glen at Surfleet.

From Swineshead two very dull roads run west to Sleaford, and north to Coningsby and Tattershall, to join the Sleaford and Horncastle road. This, after crossing the old Hammond Beck, sends an off-shoot eastwards to Boston, whose tower is seen about four miles off. It then crosses the great South-Forty-foot drain at Hubbert's bridge, named after Hubba the Dane, and the North-Forty-foot less than a mile further on, and, passing by Brothertoft to the Witham, which it crosses at Langrick, runs in a perfectly straight line through Thornton-le-Fen to Coningsby. An equally straight road goes parallel to, but four miles east of it, from Boston by New Bolingbroke to Revesby.

From what we have said it will be seen that the road from Spalding northwards is thickly set with fine churches; but that which goes eastwards boasts another group which are grander still. They are all figured in the volume of "Lincolnshire Churches," which deals with the division of Holland. This was published in 1843 by T. N. Morton of Boston, the excellent drawings being by Stephen Lewin. His drawing of Kirton Old Church shows what an extremely handsome building it was before Hayward destroyed it in 1804.

One ought not to close this Chapter without some reference to the term "pinchbeck," meaning *sham*, literally base metal, looking like gold, and used for watchcases.¹ Some Pinchbeck natives still have it that it was a yellow metal found rather

¹ The *Times*, alluding to the Ulster Plot, spoke of "The Pinchbeck Napoleons of the Cabinet."

more than a century ago near Pinchbeck, and now exhausted. But fen soil has no minerals, and really it was a London watchmaker, who was either a native of Pinchbeck or else called Pinchbeck, who invented the alloy of 80 parts copper to 20 of zinc. I remember hearing of a case at Spilsby sessions, where a man was accused of stealing a watch. The robbed man was asked, "What was your watch? a gold one?" "Nöa, it wëant gowd." "Silver then?" "Näay, it wëant silver, nither." "Then what was it?" "Why, it wor pinchbeck."

On a later occasion the thief, asking the same "lawyer feller" to defend him, said, by way of introduction, "You remember you got me off before for stealing a watch." "For the *alleged* stealing of a watch, you mean." "Alleged be blowed! I've got the watch at home now."



At Fulney.