NOTES ON NARBURGH CHURCH, NORFOLK.

(Taken 27th August 1844.)

The parish of Narburgh, which is situated in the county of Norfolk, diocese of Norwich, and archdeaconry of Norfolk, lies on the high road leading from Lynn to Norwich; about nine miles from the former place and thirty-two from the latter.

It derives its name from the river Nar, on whose banks it stands. And Sir Henry Spelman, whose family were lords of the town, relates in his Icenia, that John Brame, a monk of Thetford, who lived in the reign of Henry IV., in a MS. history, maintains Narburgh to have been a city in the time of Uter Pendragon, King of Britain, about the year 500, governed by Earl Okenard; and that it was besieged seven months by Waldy, a neighbouring king, who, on taking it, rased it to the ground.

It was undoubtedly a place of some eminence in Saxon times, as is shown by its name, and by the remains of certain military works which are found in and near the parish. But, whatever was the importance it once possessed, at the time of the great Survey of the kingdom by William I. it was returned as having no more than thirty-three villeins, ten borders, and six carucates of land. It was then the lordship of Roger Bigot, Earl of Norfolk, and at a very early period came into the hands of the De Narburghs, some of whom were probably the builders of the earliest parts of the parish church, where there is still remaining a very ancient monument of one of the family.

After the De Narburghs, the Shouldhams, and then the Spelmans, succeeded as lords, and continued so for many generations. This last family is of great antiquity, and many of its members have been persons of high celebrity, but the chief glory of the family is "that great antiquary, and most learned knight, Sir Henry Spelman, an honour to the college where he was educated, as also to the town and county he was born in."

Sir Henry Spelman, however, was not born at Narburgh, but at Congham, a village a few miles distant.

The principal lordship of the town is now in the family of

Tyssen; the patronage of the vicarage in Mr. Marriott, and the population is something above 300.

The Church, which is dedicated to All the Saints, is an interesting specimen of village ecclesiastical architecture, consisting of a nave, with north and south aisles, and a chancel. The nave is much the oldest part of the fabric, being early-English. And Blomefield tells us that in his time (1736) it was "camerated and impaneled with wainscot, the mitres of these panels ornamented with shields;" and he gives a list of forty-five which were then to be distinguished, though the colours of many of them were very obscure. They related to marriages in the Narburgh, Shouldham, and Spelman families. These have now all disappeared, the interior of the roof having been ceiled and plastered. The arms which may still be seen in the church are as follows:—

1. Narburgh, Gules, a chief ermine.
2. Frowick, Azure, a chevron between three leopard's faces or.
3. Sturgeon, Azure, three sturgeons naiant in pale or, over all fretty of eight pieces gules.
4. Spelman, Sable, platée between two flaunches argent.
5. Townshend, Azure, a chevron ermine between three escallops argent.
6. Eyer, Argent, on a chevron sable three quatrefoils or.
7. Bleverhasset, Gules, a chevron ermine between three dolphins embowed argent.
8. Lowdham, Argent, three escucheons sable.
9. Kelweden, Gules, a pall reversed ermine.
10. Orton, Argent, a lion rampant guardant vert, crowned or.
11. Skelton, Azure, on a fess, between three fleurs-de-lis or, a crescent sable.
12. Heigham, Sable, a fess checquey or and azure, three horse's heads erased argent.
13. Francis, Gules, a chevron engrailed ermine between three doves rising or.
14. Saunders, Sable, a chevron ermine between three bull's heads caboshed argent.
15. Willoughby, Or, on two bars gules three water-bougets argent.
16. Hawe, Sable, a fess humetté ermine between three griffin's heads erased argent.

17. Adrian, Argent, two bars wavy gules, a chief checquey or and azure.

18. Pouncy, Gules, two wings conjoined in a bordure argent.

19. Mansell, Azure, semé of cross-crosslets and three crescents argent.

20. Cornwall, Argent, on a cross-fleury sable five bezants.

21. Patrick, Gules, two pales vairy argent and azure, on a chief or a lion passant sable.

22. Heveningham, Quarterly or and gules, on a bordure engrailed sable nine escallops argent.

23. Le Gros, Quarterly argent and azure, on a bend sable three martlets or.

24. Turner, Sable, a chevron ermine between three fer-du-molins or, on a chief argent a lion passant gules.

25. Branthwayt, Or, two bendlets engrailed sable.

26. Walpole, Or, on a fess between two chevronels sable three cross-crosslets of the field.

27. Cary, Argent, on a bend sable three roses of the field.

28. Tyssen, Or, on a chevron vert two lions rampant of the first, between three roses proper.

Weever must have been a very unobservant antiquary when he could find no more than three inscriptions in this church worthy to be copied into his book of "Ancient Funerall Monuments:" nor has he copied even those three correctly.

Blomefield's account is much more full and correct; but, from a comparison with these notes, it will be seen that several interesting memorials, particularly in stained glass, have disappeared since his time. The ugly square pews with which the nave and aisles are now disfigured, being floored with deal boards, may perhaps cover some of the missing inscriptions, but most of the stained glass is entirely destroyed; and the east window is blocked up, and in its place is a heavy wooden frame, on which are painted the Commandments, &c.

All that now remains of stained glass is inserted in the two south windows of the chancel, and consists of five shields, containing the quarterings of the Spelmans, and two subjects, one in each of the small upper compartments. They appear to have been taken from other windows when the lights were re-glazed.

The font, which Blomefield says was large and antique, is now

replaced by a modern black marble basin, mounted on a pedestal of freestone.

Inscriptions as they now exist.

On the Pavement of the Nave—

" Hic requiescit NEHEMIAS INGRAM, Benjamini hujus parochiæ Vicarii apprimè fidelis frater; Londini quondam mercaturæ navavit operam. Vir verè pius, benignus omnibus, præsertim pressurâ laborantibus. Ob. Anº Domini 1728, æt. 64."

" M. S. Hoc sub marmore JULIANA uxor BENJAMINI INGRAM, hujus Ecclesiæ Vicarii, Henrici Harcock de Worstead in hoc comitatu generosi filia, cujus anima plusquam devotissima, ergastuli hujus impatiens, necnon angelorum anhelans consortium, cherubini armata pennis, in cœlum avolavit, Feb. 14, Anº Salutis 1695, æt. 32. Prædicti secunda hic requiescit uxor charissima, priori nequaquam impar, ELIZABETHA Johannis Davy de Walton Orientali generosi filia, Anº Dom. 1728, æt. 58. Novembris vicesimo tertio 1735, ætatis suæ 75, sub hoc marmore supradictus requiescit ille BENJAMIN."

On a brass plate, 1593: " Here lieth the body of RICHARDE AWSTEN, gentleman, who was a good benefactor for the poor in the town of Narburgh." This is now loose, and lies on one of the altar-tombs.

At the east end of the north aisle is a marble altar-tomb raised against the wall, with a wall-piece, on which is the portraiture in brass of a man and his wife, each kneeling before a prie-dieu. On the man's desk, which is covered with a fringed cloth, lie his gauntlets beside his prayer book; his dress is that of a cavalier in armour: on the lady's desk, her mittens. The man has a label, on which is, " With the Lord there is mercy;" and the woman another, on which, " And with him is plenteous redemption." Beneath is this inscription:

" Here do lye JOHN EYER, Esquire, late Receyvor Generale to Elizabethe the Quenes Majestie in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cantabridge and Huntynton, and one of the Maisters of her hygh Court of Chancerye, and MARGARET his wyfe, one of the daughters of Sir Thomas Bleverhasset, of Frens, Knight, and late wyfe of John Spelman, Esquire, sone and heyre apparent of Syr John Spelman, Knight; which John Eyre dy'd the xxth daye of May, the yere of our Lord MvcLxi,

and in the thirde yere of the raing of Elizabeth, by the grace of God Quene of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faithe; and the said Margaret dy'd the xvth day of December, in the yere of our Lord MDLVIII."

Over the figures are three shields:

1. Over the man: Quarterly 1 and 4, Eyre; 2 and 3, Townsend.

2. Between the man and woman: Quarterly, as before.

3. Over the woman: Quarterly, as before, impaling 1st. Bleverhasset; 2nd. Lowdham; 3rd. Kelweden; 4th. Orton; 5th. Skelton; 6th. Bleverhasset.

Sir Henry Spelman, in his History of Sacrilege, informs us (p. 247) that this John Eyre was a great purchaser of religious houses on their dissolution by Henry VIII. and that he bought of that King the Friars Carmelites, the Grey Friars, the Friars Preachers or Black Friars, and the Augustine Friars at Lynn. He was also possessed of Bury Abbey, and died without issue.

This monument has been engraved by Cotman.

On the Pavement in the Chancel.

Spelman impaling Branthwayte.

"Here lyeth the body of MUNDEFORD SPELMAN, Esq. son of John Spelman and Ann his wife, born Aug. 1, 1640. He was a man of a most exemplary piety in prayers to, and in praising, the Great God of heaven and earth; and in relieving the necessities of the poor widow and fatherless was his constant employ and delight of his life. These are the actions which will turn to account on that great day, when endless wealth, pompous titles, and the noise of victories, the pride of learning, will at best be but useless things. By Julian his wife, daughter of William Branthwayte, of Hethell, Esq. he left issue three sons and one daughter; he dyed the 30th January, in the year of our Lord 1723, in the 83 year of his age."

Spelman impaling Walpole.

"ANNA UXOR MUNDEFORDII SPELMAN Armig', filia Domini Edwardi Walpole de Houghton hujus comitatus Equitis Balnei, et Susannæ unius filiaram et cohæredum Domini Roberti Crane de Clifton in Agro Suffolciensi Militis et Baronetti; obiit 28 September, Anº Domini 1691."

Mottoes, "HOMO BULLA." "QUAND DIEU VOLDRA."

Near to the above are two shields inserted in marble:

1. In the 1st. quarter, Spelman; 2nd. Narburgh; 3rd. Frowick; 4th. Sturgeon; 5th. Frowick; 6th. Sturgeon; 7th. Spelman; 8th. Narburgh; over all a label of three points.

2. Spelman and Narburgh quarterly, with an impalement, now obscure.

Beneath, the figure of a man, with the following inscription in brass:

"Here lyeth JOHN SPELMAN, Esq. (sonne and heyre of Syr John Spelman, Knight, one of the Justices of the Plees before the King to be holden, and dame Elizabeth his wife), which John married Margaret, oon of the daughters of Sir Thomas Bleverhasset, Knight, and dame Margaret his wife, and had issue by the said Margaret too sonnes and too daughters lyving at the daye of his deth, and decessed the 27 day of December, in the year of our Lord God Mv^cXLV and the XXXVII yere of the Raigne of King Henry VIII. on whose sowle Jesu have mercy."

This monument is engraved by Cotman.

In brass:

"Here lyeth the body of JOHN SPELMAN, Esq. who first had to wyfe Judyth, one of the daughters of Syr Clement Higham, Knt. and after, Katharine, the daughter of William Saunders, Esq^r. who had, at the day of his death four sons and one daughter lyving, viz. Clement and William of the dybo of the said Judith, and Robert, Francys, and Bryget, of the body of the said Katheryne, which deceased the xxvii day of April, An^o Domini 1581."

"QUAND DIEU VOLDRA."

On this stone is the figure of a man in a praying posture, in brass.

Crest, a wild man proper; and these three shields:

1. Spelman and Narburgh quarterly.

2. The same, impaling quarterly, 1 and 4, Heigham, 2 and 3, Francis.

3. Spelman and Narburgh quarterly, impaling Saunders.

This is also engraved in Cotman's Brasses, and with it some valuable remarks on the dress, &c. of the period.

A man and his wife in brass, with this inscription, also in brass:

"Orate pro animab' HENRICI SPELMAN Legis Periti ac Recordatoris civitatis Norvici, et ELE uxoris ejus, qui obiit XXIIII die Septemb. An. D'ni 1496."

These two last mentioned memorials were originally placed in the pavement of the chancel, but are now neatly inserted in free-stone, and fixed to the north wall.

At the south-east corner of the chancel is a square pillar about seven feet in height, within which, in an upright position, are interred the remains of Clement Spelman, Esq. and upon which is his statue in alabaster, in his robes as counsellor and Recorder, the size of life. On the pillar this inscription:

"In this place doth rest the body of CLEMENT SPELMAN, Esq. Recorder of Nottingham, and in commission of Oier and Terminer for the Midland circuit, and in commission of the peace for the counties of Nottingham and Norfolk; he deceased Jan. 30, 1679, aged 72."

The next monument is very curious, and is thus described by Blomefield:

"At the east end of the north part of the chancel, is a small arch in the wall about seven feet from the ground, and in it lies a demi-statue of a lady carved out of stone, and couped at the middle, in miniature, being but about a foot long; her head-dress seems very antique, her hands are conjoined on her breast, holding a heart, and she rests on her back; within the arch, against the wall, is this inscription in letters of gold:

DOMINA : ALATHA : A : NARBOROVLh.

On each side of this the arms of Narburgh.

"This is a piece of great antiquity, and this lady is said to have died in 1293, and probably the date was formerly inscribed here, for in an old MS. of monuments, collected about the reign of Queen Elizabeth, I find it mentioned in this manner, 'D'na Agatha Narborough, obiit 1293.'"

The inscription and arms are now entirely obliterated.

Near the last, an altar-tomb of marble, with a marble wall-piece, in which is inserted a brass, engraven with the effigies of a man and woman on their knees before a prie-dieu; over the man is a label, on which is "Jesu, fili Dei, miserere mei;" over the woman, "Salvator mundi, memento mei." On the woman's robes are the arms of Frowick and Sturgeon quarterly, and above the figures the representation of the Resurrection. Over the man is a shield quarterly, Spelman and Narburgh, and over the woman, quarterly, Frowick and Sturgeon. On a brass below, this:

"Here under lyeth the bodys of Syre JOHN SPELMAN, Knyght, and secondary Justice of the King's Bench, and dame ELIZABETH his wife, which had XIII sonnes and VII daughters of their bodyes between them begitten, the which Syr John decessyed the XXVI day of February, in the year of our Lord God MvcXLV; and the said dame Elizabeth decessyd the v. day of November, in the year of our Lord MvcLVI; on whose sowles Jesu have mercy. Amen."

The next is a very large monument of marble, with a high wall-piece. On the tomb is the statue of a woman in a recumbent posture, with a singular head-dress something resembling a shell. Behind her, and a little elevated, lies a man in armour; both these figures are painted alabaster. On the upper part of the wall-piece are two arches; that to the right is occupied by a female child kneeling, and by her the arms of Spelman quartering Narburgh, Frowick, and Sturgeon. In the left hand arch is a tent, in which lies an infant; in this arch are also the arms of Spelman, and over it Spelman quartering, as before, and impaling, 1 and 4, Willoughby; 2, Gules, a lion passant guardant argent; and 3, Hawe. Between the arches this,

"CLEMENTI SPELMAN Equiti aurato, Norfolciæ (anno Domini 1599) Vicecomiti, qui primo duxit Annam filiam unicam et hæredem Edmundi Carvill armig', eâque sine prole defunctâ, secundo duxit Ursulam filiam alteram Johan' Willoughby de Risley, in comitatu Derbiæ, militis, susceptisque Johanne et Clementi filiis obiit 24 die Septem. 1607. Conjugi suo charissimo ipsa D'na Ursula, ob merita pietatis et concordiæ, memoriæ et amoris symbolum, hoc mœrens posuit monumentum."

Over this inscription may be seen, Spelman quartering in the 2nd quarter Narburgh, in the 3rd Frowick, in the 4th Adrian, in the 5th Pouncy, in the 6th Mansell, in the 7th Cornwall, in the 8th Patrick, and in the 9th, Azure, fretté gules. Crest, a woodman.

On an altar-tomb: "M. S. Hic requiescit eximiæ pietatis vir, clero benevolus, munificus egenis, JOHANNES SPELMAN Armiger, qui patriæ charus, Regni comitiis senator bis interfuit; obdormivit in Christo, Jan. 31, anº salutis 1662, æt. 56; unicam habuit conjugem verè generosam Annam, Johan' Haveninghâm equitis aurati filiam, quæ 4 filios et 8 filias enixa,

Jun. 12, 1649, reliquias deposuit mortales dum veniente Domino resurgant immortales. Munfordius filius pie posuit."

Over this tomb the arms of Spelman, and upon it Spelman impaling Haveningham. Crest, a woodman.

Mottoes, "HOMO BULLA." "QUAND DIEU VOLDRA."

"JEMIMA SPELMAN, youngest daughter of John Spelman, Esq. and Anne his wife, obiit May 24, 1744, aged 7 years. Mary, their fourth daughter, obiit 1 Nov. 1738, aged 6 years."

Spelman impaling Branthwayt.

"JULIAN, relict of MUNDEFORD SPELMAN, Esq. obiit Oct. 30, 1734, æt. 72; whose whole life was an exemplary pattern of piety and prudence."

Le Gros impaling Turner. Crest, a demi-lion rampant argent, holding a battle-axe, over all a bend sable, on which three martlets:

"Here lyeth the body of CHARLES LE GROS, late of Croswight, Esq. which family for many generations flourished in that place; he left by Elizabeth his wife, daughter of William Turner, Esq. two daughters, the eldest of which married John Spelman, Esq. of this place, and the other Thomas Western, of Great Abington, in the county of Cambridge, Esq. He died 14th day of October 1736, in the 85th year of his age."

"Here lyeth the body of AMY GOODWIN, who departed this life the 10th day of April 1782, in the 83 year of her age. She was the eldest daughter of John Goodwin, Esq. of King's Lynn, who was four times mayor of that ancient corporation."

Arms: A fess between three griffin's heads erased, impaling three griffin's heads erased.

"Here lieth the body of JOHN BRIGGS CARY, youngest son of John Cary, Esq. of Lynn, and Elizabeth his wife, sister of the late Mrs. Anne Spelman. He died at Bristol Hot Wells the 28th of Dec. 1795, in the 23rd year of his age, to the unfeigned regret of his surviving relatives."

Arms of Cary, as in p. 226. Crest, a swan rising.

"Here lieth the body of ANNE SPELMAN, wife of the Rev. Henry Spelman; she departed this life January 13, 1793, aged 51. Here lieth the body of the Rev. HENRY SPELMAN; he departed this life Aug. 30, 1810, in the 82nd year of his age."

Arms: Spelman, quartering, on a bend three martlets; on

an escucheon of pretence, a chevron between three talbots passant.

"Here lies the body of ELIZABETH, late wife of CHARLES LE GROS, Esq. who departed this life the 4th day of Feb. 1758, aged 85."

Arms of Le Gros, as in p. 226.

"Here lieth the body of JOHN LE GROS SPELMAN, Esq. who died Sept. 10, 1751, aged 27."

"Here lieth the body of ELIZABETH SPELMAN, who died Sept. 12, 1804, aged 79 years."

"Here lieth the body of MARY SPELMAN, fourth daughter and much beloved child of John Spelman, of Narburgh, Esq. and Ann his wife, who departed this life the 1st Nov. ——, in the 6th year of her age.

"'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"Here lies the body of JOHN SPELMAN, Esq. who departed this life the 3rd day of Dec. 1768, aged 75. Also lieth the body of ANN SPELMAN, relict of John Spelman, Esq. She died Nov. 19, 1781."

Arms: Spelman, impaling, on a bend three martlets.

"Here lieth the body of MUNDEFORD SPELMAN, Clerk, who died the 25th March 1751, aged 57."

The three following are neat mural tablets:

"Near this place are interred the remains of SAMUEL TYSSEN, Esq. F.A.S. of Narborough Hall, who departed this life Oct. 31, 1800, aged 44 years."

Arms: Tyssen, with an escucheon of pretence, Vert, on a bend cotissed or, three griffin's heads erased gules.

Motto: "POST MORTEM VIRTUS VIRESCIT."

"Under this tablet are deposited the remains of SOPHIA TYSSEN, of Narborough Hall, and youngest daughter of the late John Barker, Esq. of Deal, in the county of Kent; she departed this life at Cromer, in this county, on the 19th day of July 1828, in the 41st year of her age."

"This tablet is erected to the memory of HENRY, third son of SAMUEL TYSSEN, esq. and SOPHIA his wife, who died at Geelong, near Melbourne, in Australia, March 6, 1842, aged 27 years."

East Winch. G. M.