MAXEY CHURCH AND PARISH.

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In preparing a paper on Maxey, I am suffering from an excessive abundance of material. I have collected matter that would fill an octavo volume; and it is difficult to condense sufficiently so as to present a fairly intelligible account of the place, and at the same time not to omit many things that would be likely to interest some, at least, of my hearers. I must, accordingly, make the most of my time, and without further preface devote myself to the subject.

The name of the place describes itself. It is somebody's island. The first syllable, Make, or Mak, is certainly a personal name, though the name is lost. It is situated in one of the gravel uplands of the great wash district, and some parts of the parish are no more than 25 ft. above sea level.

The earliest date at which I find Maxey mentioned is 1013, when it is on record that the place, then part of the possessions of the monastery at Peakirk, was destroyed by the Danes. Thirty-five years later, Edmer, or Edmund, Lord of Holbrook, is said to have recovered possession of it. It is not mentioned in Domesday. About a hundred years later, in 1145, Pope Eugenius III confirmed to Abbot Martin, of Burgh, the fee of Roger de Torpel and the land which he had in Maxey. From that time to the present, the place has been intimately associated with the Abbey and Cathedral of Peterborough; although now the connection (with one small exception, to which I shall refer hereafter) is limited to the right of presentation to the vicarage. In Abbot Benedict's time there was some sort of dispute as to the rectory; for he is said to have acquired the church of Maxey, which he deraigned against Roger de Torpel; by which I understand that he succeeded in establishing his right against the claim of Roger. Some part of the church, as we now see it, was standing at least half a century before Benedict's time. He was abbot from 1177 to 1193. Not long before his death, an important incident in the history of the place occurred. In 1190 the Almoner of Peterborough applied to the Pope to have the church of Maxey permanently assigned to his office. He represented that he had no ecclesiastical benefice to enable him to maintain due hospitality and to give alms. In July, in the same year, in consequence of this application, Pope Clement III sent to Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, urging him to use his influence with the abbot and convent to obtain their assent to the proposed arrangement. The bishop succeeded so well that the almoner seems to have got more than he asked for; and in the following year, December, 1191, the next Pope, Celestine III, issued a bull confirming the two churches of Normanby and Maxey to the office of almoner. In 1194 this grant is mentioned in another bull, which gives to the almoner lands in Clopton and Sutton. The present successor to the dignity of almoner of the monastery—though unfortunately not successor to his emoluments—is the Precentor of the Cathedral; and it is a curious reminiscence of this grant to the almoner (this is the one other connection between the parish and the cathedral to which I have referred), that one small field in the parish still belongs to the precentor; and I believe he is the only member of the cathedral foundation who now possesses a vote for the county in virtue of his possession of landed estate.

Immediately after this grant of the church of Maxey to the almoner, the vicarage was constituted. The deed of the ordination of the vicarage is given in the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum, and in Bishop Kennett's notes in the cathedral library, and it has recently been printed by Mr. Gibbons in the Liber Anti-
quae of Bishop Wells of Lincoln. In this deed the grant to the almoner is recited, and he is charged with the payment of six marks a year to the vicar, and a residence for the vicar was to be provided in the parish. I do not find the exact date, but from other evidence I gather that this was between December, 1191, and the following March. I cannot discover the name of the first vicar.

From 1220, with perhaps one single omission, the list is complete. Upon the death of a vicar, the sacrist of the abbey claimed as a mortuary his best horse, with saddle and bridle. On one occasion the vicar, Robert de Newenden, died in parts beyond the seas, on his return from a journey to Rome. This was in 1349 or 1350, and because he had his horse with him the sacrist had to content with his next best animal, which was a black cow. In 1440, at the death of Stephen Woodhall, the sub-sacrist also advanced a claim for ceragium, wasscot, a payment for wax candles for the abbey church, and obtained it.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the dean and chapter frequently allowed the right of presentation to the vicarage to be included in the lease of the rectorial lands. Thus, Lawrence Robinson, in 1555, presented Richard Lively, and he afterwards resigned in favour of his daughter’s husband, Robert Buddle; on whose death his son, Zachary Buddle, succeeded. In these cases clearly the rector’s lands (commonly described as the Parsonage of Maxey) were leased by successive renewals to members of the same family. In 1656 John Claypole, Oliver Cromwell’s son-in-law, is returned as patron. Any genealogists present might make a note of this. I have occasionally found pedigree-hunters, who, having come across an instance of an ancestor presenting to a living, two or three centuries ago, assume too hastily that he was at the time possessor of the manor, or at least of considerable property in the parish; whereas the fact may often be that he was merely lessee of the rector’s lands, or of the great tithes. I believe this was the case with another chapter living, that of Great Easton, in Leicestershire, till quite recent times. And I have been given to understand that the dean and chapter never presented directly to that living until they appointed Mr. Cape in 1833.

The vicarage house has always been on the present site. Indeed, the whole of the medieval residence is incorporated in the existing vicarage. It was built of Barnack stone; and the quarries there having been exhausted in the fifteenth century, the old house must have been built before that time. No account seems to have been preserved showing the extent of the pre-Reformation house. But the parsonage—by which I understand the residence on the rectorial glebe, and which is still standing—had a hall, a parlour, a kitchen, and four chambers. The vicarage would certainly not be more capacious than this: more probably it was smaller; and, indeed, the actual size can be exactly determined. Two of the outer walls are still outer walls of the present house; the other two walls are still standing, but are now merely inner partition walls, and are about 2 ft. 3 ins. thick. It was nearly 36 ft. long by 19 ft. broad. The old door, and at least one of the windows, can be traced. The enlargement has, no doubt, been gradual. The old house would be clearly incapable of accommodating a married man with a family. About a century ago, for many years, the vicar was non-resident, and the house was let. At one time, before the Poor Law Acts, it was used as the poorhouse of the parish. At another time it was let out in separate tenements to labourers, and the upper story was hired by a farmer as a granary. When I first went to the parish, more than one of the older men could remember this, and had themselves carried sacks of corn up to the top of the house.

The church of S. Peter, though not large, is a dignified and most interesting building. Except for three cottages close to the churchyard, now called Church Hall, and formerly the parsonage, there are no houses at all near the church. Hardly any person visits it without asking why the church is so far from the village. Strangers immediately conclude that there was once a village round the church, and that the houses have perished. Of this there is no indication whatever. The true explanation is, that when the church was built, early in the twelfth
better than quote Mr. Irvine’s words, proving, as they seem to do most conclusively, that this earliest Norman work at Maxey belongs to the first years of Henry I’s reign, and is of earlier date than any Norman work (except fragments) to be seen at the cathedral. The parts of the lower part of the tower, he says:—

“are in perfect agreement with the work at Castor church; and the bases of the arch from the tower to the nave present the same singular scaling ornament almost invariably found in the work of the architect, or master-mason, of Castor, as to leave no doubt of this being his work. Here, oddly enough, part of his design seems to have been borrowed from the neighbouring Saxon tower of Barnack, existing then as at present. The vertical stone slits at Barnack reappear at Maxey as two narrow slips of plinthless buttresses placed on the wall face, a good way inwards from the angles, just as at Barnack.

“The position of the corbel table seems to prove that the proportion of this new tower was so low (perhaps from doubt as to the stability of the foundation on the mound), that a further addition of a fresh Norman stage was soon made, mounted over the corbeling; this again, in its turn, to be finally terminated with the present upper pointed storey. The caps of the tower arch are carved with the beautiful and rich work found in all the buildings of this able architect, and can well be compared with that seen at Castor and Wakerley. The first appearance of those curled and ornamented angles which were perfected in the Early English age, are here excellently displayed. Their scale-worked bases have been mentioned above. Outside is seen the very same string, with its horizontal line of diamonds left in relief, that the architect uses at Wakerley. The date of the work cannot differ in any appreciative degree from that of Castor church. This date must have been prior to 1116, because no trace of any of the characteristic points of the design occurs anywhere in the cathedral of Peterborough; while those singular fragments of the period of Abbot Ernulf, found re-used in the great south-east pier of the tower, appear considerably to resemble it. Accordingly, when the next extension at Maxey is executed, namely (as at Wittering and Barnack), a north aisle, not a trace of the work of the architect of the older portion is to be seen; but the bases of the piers are found to present peculiar sections, precisely similar to what is seen in the apse, and found at other points westward of the cathedral: work which is known to be not earlier than 1117 or 1118. This work at Maxey presents caps, abaci, and bases of very plain, simple workmanship, in all cases square only, while the attempts at ornamentation are of the slightest description.”
The next extension of the Norman period consisted in adding a stage to the tower, and in erecting the south nave arcade and south aisle. If these two were not done at the same time, we should have four distinct periods of Norman work. The capitals in the south arcade, as well as the bases (which is unusual) have a square recess in the angles of the plan which always marks late work; the capitals themselves are more richly carved, and the outer order of the arches is cut with large indentations, which formed the precursor of the nail-head ornament of the later Norman style, which was itself to develop into the dog-tooth of Early English. The Norman clerestory windows remain in this wall, below the later clerestory, and can be seen beneath the roof in both aisles.

The Norman chancel has entirely disappeared. It may simply have been removed to give place to an enlarged chancel in later style; but more probably, as I should judge, some defect became apparent in the east wall of the nave, above the chancel arch; and the fact that the piers to the east of the nave are very much out of the perpendicular confirms this theory. The sturdy walls, though out of plumb, might still be strong enough to support an additional clerestory, and mediaeval builders did not shrink from such a method of reconstruction. The roofs of new aisles and new outer aisle walls might be relied upon to receive the thrust, and the new main roof would be strongly timbered. It is certain that the aisles were rebuilt and enlarged in the early geometric period; and I should judge the lower part of the existing chancel arch to be of this date; but on this point I should be glad of the opinion of any visitors to the church tomorrow. This is not the only point on which I should like to consult competent architectural critics, but other special matters I must leave till we can inspect the building.

Whatever may have been the character or extent of the chancel then, as I suppose, rebuilt, it was all absorbed in a further enlargement in the fourteenth century, when the chancel was brought into its present state. The alterations then included the erection of a dignified rood-loft, so large that it contained an altar upon it, the piscina attached to which is still to be seen in the south wall of the nave. This is a feature so very rare that I have been able to find notices of fifteen other churches only in which such a piscina is known to have existed, although I have very carefully noted every mention of such a thing that has come under my observation. The clerestory, of course, had to be erected, and the chancel arch raised. The present somewhat ungainly appearance of this arch, which has 6 ft. perfectly straight above the capitals before the springing of the arch, is due to the removal of the rood-loft. These alterations made the Norman tower too low, and a belfry stage was added. Later in the century, the lady-chapel was built. The chantry is known to have been founded by Sir Robert de Thorpe in 1367. To obtain a grander entrance to this from the north aisle, its wall was removed, and rebuilt as before, about 4 ft. to the north; the lady-chapel itself projecting three more feet northwards. The arch from the north aisle is a large cusped arch of singular beauty, and I know of no example in a village church equal to it. The mouldings of this arch, the ball-flower on it, and other details, seem to agree with the date assigned to the foundation of the chantry, although the large windows in the chapel are of Transition character, which many would conjecture belonged to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Other objects of interest I can do no more than enumerate. Two black-letter inscriptions remain: one to a vicar, about 1390, the other to Thomas Anable, 1402, who is said upon it to have had "this sepulchre" (hunc tumilum) made. This is generally believed to refer to an erection in the north of the chancel, which may be supposed to have been an Easter sepulchre. It is a graceful piece of work, in good condition, with no indication of anything in the nature of an inscription. There are three handsome sedilia, and a piscina in the east wall, all canopied. The position of the piscina is due to the usual place being occupied by the door to an ancient sacristy. This is a most singular chamber, and, as far as I know, quite unique. It had two doors, each
with three locks. Its dimensions are 9 ft. 1 in. by 6 ft. 4 in. It is 9 ft. 1 in. in height from the floor to the centre of the stone groined roof. A small lancet is in each wall, except where the chamber adjoins the chancel, and each window is protected by iron bars. At one time, in the early days of the revival of ecclesiological study, this was called an oratory; but there can be, I think, no doubt whatever that it was the sacristy of the church. A good sepulchral arch remains in the south aisle, near the piscina, but no effigy or inscription exists. I may add that the splendour of the chantry caused it for some time to be believed that the church itself was dedicated to S. Mary. But the true dedication, to S. Peter, is given in several ancient deeds which are in my keeping.

At the time of the suppression of chantries the value of this one was £9 0s. 8d., very nearly equal to the vicarage, which was given at the same time as £10 10s. 7d. I imagine that the lady-chapel must have been let by the grantee after the Reformation; for I find in 1560 a Maxey yeoman bequeathing "all the corn which lieth in the chapel," and this is the only building that could be so described. In the present century it has been used for the parish school.

There are three manors: the manor of Torpel, the manor of Maxey with its members, and the manor of Maxey and Northborough. The former, which extends beyond the limits of the parish, takes its name from the earliest-known owner of the manor. Both the first-named manors have at different times belonged to the Crown. The manor of Roger de Torpel came to be part of the settlement upon Eleanor of Castile; after her death it reverted to the Crown, and was granted a few years later to Edward of Woodstock, son of Edward I by his second wife. It now belongs to Lord Kesteven. The manor of Torpel, as well as that of Maxey with its members, which for several generations had been in the family of the De la Mares, belonged in 1409 to John Beaufort, Marquis of Dorset, one of the sons of John of Gaunt; he died in 1410, and the manors came to his eldest son, Henry, and afterwards to the next son, John, Duke of

Somerset. On his death they passed to his only child, the famous Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, the mother of King Henry VII, known generally (at any rate to Cambridge men) by the simple title of Lady Margaret, the foundress of St. John's and of Christ's Colleges at Cambridge, and of the Margaret Professorships in both universities. At her death, a few months after the accession of her grandson, Henry VIII, the manor of Maxey with its members came to the Crown, and was granted in 1560 to Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the great Lord High Treasurer of Queen Elizabeth; and from one of his descendants it passed by purchase to the Fitzwilliam family of Milton, Mr. George Fitzwilliam being now lord of the manor. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as successors to the rights of the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough, are lords of the third manor, which is of very small extent.

I may be allowed once more again to speak of Lady Margaret. She owned the manors, as has been said, but did not reside here, having a good house at Collyweston, a few miles on the other side of Stamford, about twelve miles off. But both she and her mother, Margaret Beaufort, Duchess of Somerset, used to come, at least occasionally to Maxey. In 1456, a petition was presented to the High and Gracious Princess the Duchess of Somerset by her poor priest Beadsman, Dan John Bukke, Prior of Deeping, against the miller of West Deeping, "for determining the corn of their house, which was of the foundation of her noble progenitors." The Duchess summoned her council in all haste to consider the matter, and it was settled in favour of the Prior. This document, giving the decision of the council (which is to be found in the Red Book of Thorney), is dated at the Castle of Maxey. Her daughter, Lady Margaret, was interested in the disputes about the boundaries of the parts of Kesteven and Holland, in Lincolnshire. Quarrels as to the exact boundaries were of frequent occurrence. Sometimes they became the occasion of disturbances and riots. Richard II issued a commission on the subject, but it did not succeed in finally settling the question. In the interests of peace, Lady Margaret obtained a new commission from
the King, her son; and the report, dated September 8th, 1500, was presented by the Commissioners at Maxey Castle, in the presence of the most noble Countess. Among the Commissioners were Lords Willoughby, Rosse, Fitzwater, and Hastings. This report I have transcribed from the papers of the Commissioners of Sewers at Spalding, and have printed at full, with a translation, in the second volume of *Penland Notes and Queries*.

Before the manor of Maxey came to the Beauforts, it had belonged to the Thorpes. In 1374, a licence to cremellate the manor house was granted to Sir William de Thorpe. The place was, rightly, thereafter called the Castle. The same cannot be said of two neighbouring manor houses, those at Woodcroft and Northborough, though both are very commonly called castles, and the appearance of the former seems quite to justify the title; but the published lists of such licences to cremellate do not contain the names of either of those places. The moat which surrounded Maxey Castle is in good condition; but no part of the castle itself remains. The farmhouse which now goes by the name is a fairly good specimen of late seventeenth-century date, but it is built outside the moat.

The De la Mares were a knightly family of considerable importance. They were connected with Maxey for more than two hundred years. They were Foresters of Kesteven and Hereditary Constables of Peterborough Abbey. In 1294, this office was claimed by Geoffrey de la Mare, but disputed by the Abbot. The claimant, however, produced a deed by which Abbot John (1114-1125) had granted to Brian de la Mare and his heirs for ever the office of Constable of the Abbey. Several important privileges were attached to the office. The Constable had the command of the men supplied by the Abbey for the King's wars; he had the right of serving the Abbot at his installation feast with the first dish, and of having as his fee all the gold and silver plate which the Abbot personally used at the banquet; he had the right of stopping when he liked at the Abbey, with three men-at-arms, five horses, five pages, and two greyhounds. He had two robes a year, or 40s. for each.

He claimed also to take any message the Abbot might want to send anywhere in the kingdom, at the Abbot's expense. These rights were all said to be attached to his free tenement in Maxey. But after establishing his claim, this Geoffrey sold the office to the Abbot for 60 marks, and was discharged for ever from all duties and services appertaining to it. In 1227 Brian de la Mare died; and King Edward I, passing through the country just before Christmas on his way to York, seized his lands as being part of the forest of Kesteven and Holland. In 1283 Peter de la Mare, going against the Welsh enemies of the King, was drowned near Snowdon. The Abbot took possession of his lands by right of wardship. The heir was, however, detained by Mabel, wife of Nicholas de Weston, and proceedings were taken against her. In the end she purchased of the Abbot the *maritagium*, or right of bestowing in marriage, of Geoffrey the heir, and his brother for 110 marks; and at the same time Geoffrey of Southorp bought the wardship for 200 marks. This Geoffrey died in 1327. The sacrist demanded his body for burial in the monastery; and he was there buried, in the lady-chapel, by his ancestors. And the sacrist took for his fee the war-horse, and all his arms, his sword, lance, helmet, breast-plate, aketon (padded tunic), and greaves. But, because the war-horse was worth more than five marks, the Abbot took it, contrary to the custom of the house, with the bridle, saddle and trappings. The next day the sacrist protested, so the Abbot gave up all the harness; but he kept the horse. The son of this man, also named Geoffrey (though he is sometimes called Godfrey) was the last of his race. He married the daughter of Geoffrey le Scrope, one of the King's Chief Justices. It is conjectured by some antiquaries that two effigies at Glinton, of a knight and his lady, represent this couple; and further, that to him is due the erection of the beautiful south transept and manor house at Northborough.

There have resided also in the parish, at various times, members of the Fairfax, Worsley, and Claypole families. My mention of these must be brief. A branch of the Fairfax family of Yorkshire settled at Deeping Gate in
the early part of the fifteenth century, or perhaps earlier; and for at least four generations lived at Fairfax Hall, in this parish. William, the second of the series, was High Sheriff of the county in 1461. I have a tolerably complete pedigree of this family from the twelfth century. William Fairfax, the last to live here, died in 1505, and left an only daughter and heiress, Margaret, who was thrice married: (1) to John Peyton, (2) to Miles Worsley, (3) to Robert Brudenell. When making some alteration in a garden wall at the vicarage in 1881, a stone was found that seemed to have some carving on the surface, and it was brought to me to try and interpret it. After careful washing and scrubbing, I discovered an impaled coat-of-arms. On the dexter side was the shield of the Brudenells, a chevron between three knights' caps; and on the sinister side a coat, quarterly, about which I knew nothing. Not till ten years later did I find out that this stone was really commemorative of the third marriage of Margaret Fairfax with Robert Brudenell. The quartered coat has the arms of Fairfax and Harrington. I have seen a most interesting psalter belonging to William Fairfax, son of the High Sheriff and grandfather of Margaret Brudenell. In this psalter is a small MS. calendar, described in Notes and Queries, 3rd S., ii, 310, that contains notes of the births, baptisms, etc., of his children at Deeping Gate. The sponsors were many of them ladies of rank, such as Edith St. John, daughter of the Duchess of Somerset; Elizabeth Zouche, daughter of Lord de Grey; and ecclesiastical and monastic dignitaries, such as the Abbots of Peterborough and Bourne, the Archdeacon of Leicester, the Prior of Deeping, and many neighbouring rectories. Robert Brudenell himself was buried at Maxey in 1539.

The second marriage of this same Margaret Fairfax to Miles Worsley reminds us of another family of note long resident in the parish and neighbourhood. This family, originally from Lancashire, appears in the Northamptonshire Heralds' Visitations. Richard Worsley, of Deeping Gate, appears among the contributors to the defence of the country at the time of the Spanish Armada. By his will, 1607, in which he describes himself as Esquire, he desires to be buried in the parish church of Maxey, where his ancestors lie. A descendant, in the next century, Susan Worsley, of S. Clement Danes, spinster, left the residue of her estate to the poor of Maxey, where she was born.

I must not altogether pass over the Claypoles. The family may be said to have been founded by James Claypole (his grant of arms is dated 1588), who bought Northborough Manor. His second son, Adam, ultimately heir, acquired also the manor at Lolham, in Maxey parish. This seems to be the same as the manor of Torpe before mentioned. He resided sometimes at Northborough and sometimes at Maxey, some of his children being baptised at one place and some at the other. He died in 1684. He was of Gray's Inn, as were also his son and grandson, both named John. His son John, baptised at Maxey in 1595, was a follower of Cromwell: he was M.P. for Northamptonshire, and High Sheriff, 1654. His son, John Claypole, also of Gray's Inn, Northborough, and Lolham, married Cromwell's daughter Elizabeth. He was one of the Protector's Lords of the Bedchamber, knighted 1657, Master of the Horse, Member for Carmarthenshire, 1654, and for Northamptonshire, 1656, and Ranger of Whittlebury Forest. But he lived chiefly in London, and seems to have met with losses, for he sold the Lolham estate. His wife died young, in her twenty-eighth year, according to the coffin-plate at Westminster Abbey, where she was buried in August, 1658, less than a month before the death of her father, the Protector. None of their children left any descendants. The Protector's widow found a home with her son-in-law at Northborough. It is known that Cromwell also used to visit his daughter at her home there; and there is a tradition that he sometimes came to see her at Lolham, where one of the rooms is still known as "Oliver's room."

I do not find any mention of Maxey in connection with the fighting during the Civil War in the seventeenth century, beyond a single reference in the Calendar of State Papers in December, 1643; after recording that
the Earl of Essex had taken Grafton, in Northamptonshire, and that the King's army is quiet, I read that "some Irish are come with their arms and colours to Maxey." It is certain that fighting did take place at no great distance off. Crowland, six miles from the end of the parish, and Woodcroft, in the adjoining parish, are two well-known instances; and I think there is evidence of the very unsettled state of the country in the buildings of farmhouses all through the neighbourhood. Many have tablets let into the walls, with initials and dates. We find there was a very general course of rebuilding and restoration going on between 1660 and 1700. Many houses that have no date are yet manifestly of the same period.

I have been much interested in the field-names and place-names in the parish. The enclosure, about 1814, did away with a great number of these; but by the help of the older men, who would call to mind what their fathers had told them, I have identified a very great number of them, and find this identification a considerable help in elucidating the history of the parish. There has always been a large number of ancient grass enclosures. When the stock was scattered about the unenclosed fields, and in the large extra-parochial district of Borough Fen Common, many of these closes were quite small, only one or two acres, conveniently situated near the houses, where the stock could be placed when brought home from pasture. Some twenty-five or thirty of these remain, and give a singular appearance to the place. They are long strips of grass, close to one another, separated by hedges. They are mostly 250 or 300 yards long, by 25 or 30 broad. Each parish, when putting cattle on the Fen Common, had to mark them with its brand. I have secured four of these old brands, three of which were for Maxey and one for Deeping Gate. Without entering into the reasons for my conclusion, I may say that this study of the place-names has satisfied me that, at the time of the enclosure, the boundaries of the parishes were considerably modified. A system of "give-and-take" was adopted, so as to make the boundaries more regular. The main division of the parish

was into fourteen large fields, subdivided into furlongs, which is an ancient English measure of area as well as of length, and as such is used by Shakespeare. The different names are very suggestive. Some explain themselves, others seem hopeless. I must mention one only—I have no time for more. I found the name "Cock's Pit Close" in some old parish books. After satisfying myself as to its position, I went to explore, and found in the turf a genuine old cockpit, of very considerable dimensions, very nearly perfect. It is in a secluded part of the parish, close to the river, far away from any houses.

I am reluctantly obliged to pass over a great number of subjects on which I could write at some length. I have made copies or abstracts of upwards of one hundred wills of persons belonging to the parish. I have examined the oldest Sessions Books belonging to the Magistrates of the Liberty. I have gone through all the old rolls of the manor, and copied in full one which I came across at a second-hand bookseller's, of a more ancient date than any now in the keeping of the Steward of the manor. I have taken down the words, and in some cases the airs, of the children's rhyming games. I have collected all the proverbs, weather-sayings, and provincialisms. I could tell something about the old crops, when hemp, flax, and rye, and lentils, were grown; something of the stocks, of the two village crosses, of the quaint payments made with reserved rents in leases, of a tremendous fire, for which a brief was issued; and much else.

I may be allowed, in conclusion, to point out that what it has been such a pleasure to me to do for Maxey history is also within the reach of any educated man residing in the most secluded village, who has any taste for antiquities, and who can read ancient documents. It is true that not many villages have so interesting a church; but all the sources from which I have derived my information are freely accessible to all genuine students.