II. *Observations on the Round Church Towers of Norfolk ; and on the material employed in constructing the early religious Buildings in that County. By Mr. SAMUEL WOODWARD, of Norwich, in a Letter addressed to HUDSON GURNEY, Esq. V.P.*

Read 28th May, 1829.

Dean's Square, Norwich, May 23, 1829.

IN consequence of the conflicting opinions entertained respecting the origin of the Circular Towers of Churches, I have been led to ascertain their proportional number in Norfolk ; in order to illustrate, if possible, their origin. In doing which, I find that they are more frequent in those parts of Norfolk in which thick beds of diluvial gravel occur ; particularly in Clavering hundred (the south-east angle of the County), where they equal in number the square towers : they are found also in the northern part of Suffolk under similar circumstances, and that they are but thinly distributed, or entirely absent, in other counties of England. Their dimensions are small, and many of them have been finished with an octangular top, of comparatively modern workmanship ; they are all built with flint boulders, with the exception of that attached to the church of West Dereham, which is of Car-stone ; and I have no hesitation in stating my conviction, that they owe their form, not to any peculiar style, but have been thus built from necessity, in consequence of the absence of freestone in the soil ; and that the necessity originally influencing the Saxons, extended itself to the Normans, as may be seen in the towers of the parish churches of St. Paul and St. Mary in Norwich, founded after the Conquest.

A striking feature of this necessity is exemplified in the construction of the chapel of St. Michael, the first building erected by Bishop Herbert at Norwich; this chapel is built on Mousehold Heath, on the edge of the valley in which Norwich is situated, and from the remains there does not appear to have been any freestone used in its construction; being a parallelogram, the angles are finished with solid cylinders of masonry; the windows are long slits about ten inches wide.

There are many of these churches in Norfolk, however, which are decidedly Saxon; being enriched with ornamented arches over their south entrances, and having other marks of Saxon character, particularly the semicircular east end.

The early churches were undoubtedly constructed of the material indigenous to the soil, or most readily obtained; thus the first churches are described as being constructed of wood; as the one at Shernbourn in this county, called Stock Chapel, is described to have been (see Spelman's Posthumous Works, p. 189); and as the zeal or ingenuity of the people advanced, the churches assumed a more permanent form. This fact is borne out on an examination of the Norfolk churches; as we find that in Marshland (the neighbourhood of the locality of the oolite or freestone) there are some of the finest parochial churches in England, built entirely or in part with freestone; in Clackclose Hundred they are erected with Car-stone. In some parts of western Norfolk the hard chalk is used in the construction of religious buildings, particularly at Marham Church and Abbey: this chalk is so indurated, that it is capable of receiving the finest finish, and is even used for monumental effigies, as in those of John Steward and Ann his wife (date 1603) in Marham Church, and of Sir Oliver de Ingham and Sir Roger de Bois and his Lady in Ingham Church, placed there about the middle of the fourteenth century.

On the influx of the Normans Caen stone was introduced, and the religious edifices of eastern Norfolk are found to be mostly constructed of that material. At a subsequent period the chalk flints were introduced, cut into regular squares, and in some instances set into the

Caen stone, as in the Abbey Gate of St. Benet, Ludham, St. Ethelbert's Gate, Norwich, and Thorpe's Chapel, attached to the Church of St. Michael Coslany, Norwich. Of the squared flint buildings, that erected by William Appleyard, the first Mayor of Norwich, about A. D. 1400, in St. Andrew's parish, Norwich, is certainly one of the finest specimens in the kingdom.

I now beg leave to conclude, hoping that I have fairly supported my position; that the circular towers of churches originated in necessity, and cannot be ascribed to the styles of either Saxons, Danes, or Normans.

SAMUEL WOODWARD.