

THE STORY OF KESTON IN KENT

BY

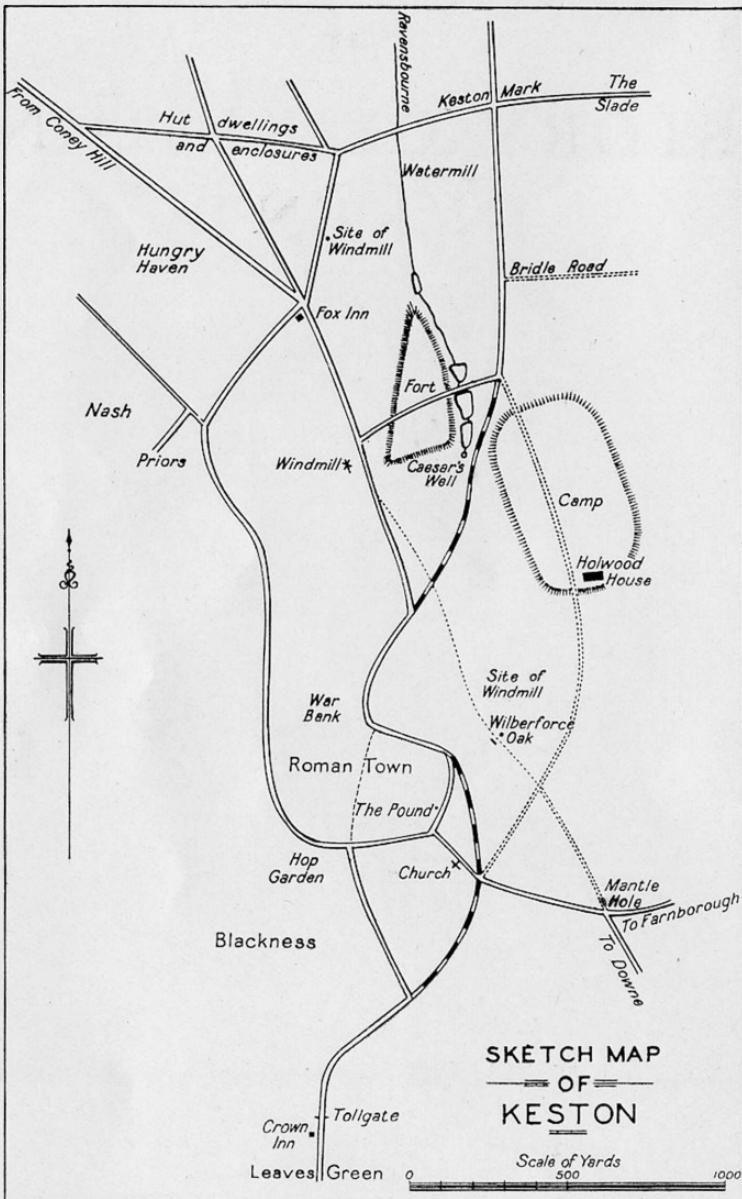
FREDERICK SIDNEY GAMMON

Rector

1934

LONDON: THOMAS MURBY & CO.
1, FLEET LANE, E.C.4

ONE SHILLING & SIXPENCE



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ЯНТ.
КОТАКИ ТО УЯРТА
ИН КЕИН

ПОММАДА СИДНИ ГАММОН
ХУДОЖНИК СИДНИ ГАММОН

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PREFACE.

This book is simply the result of an attempt to gather together what has been discovered of Keston's past, and it is published for those who love the place and value its associations

CHAPTER ONE

THE earliest Britons of whom we know, called Palæolithic or early stone-age men, were nomads, and lived by hunting wild animals; but they have left little trace of themselves. Their successors, the Neolithic or later stone-age men, were more civilised and of a much higher type. They settled down, and grew corn, and had cows, sheep and goats, horses and dogs, and they made pottery. None can say when they came to this country, though they were certainly here about 1,800 years before Christ.

It is with these people that the story of Keston begins, for there are indications that a large tribe of them dwelt here: they have left behind them their weapons and implements, and the remains of their homes and their fortresses are still to be seen.

These people knew nothing of metals, and for tools and weapons they made use of the horns and bones of animals, and of flints which they found in the chalk. Many flints fashioned into hammers, chisels or spears have been found in Keston; and in 1897 in Mill-field, where there had obviously once been a factory for their production, nearly a thousand pieces of flint were discovered in a circular area fourteen feet in diameter.

Traces of their houses are still to be seen on both Hayes and Keston Commons. In such flat and open country, it was their habit to make saucer-like depressions in the ground; in the centre of each they would place the trunk of a tree, and branches covered with turf or long grass would be made to serve the purposes of a roof. The houses were very much like bell-tents. It has been estimated that

there are about 150 of these hut-floors on Hayes Common, and there are a few on Keston Common. They vary in size from ten to thirty feet in diameter, and are from six inches to two feet six inches in depth; the larger ones have an encircling mound, with a break for an entrance, and some of them have a low conical mound in the centre. The floors are in groups of from four to six, and each would have accommodated from two to six individuals. Smaller depressions of about four feet diameter, with no surrounding mound, are placed at some distance from the larger ones, and were undoubtedly fireplaces for the cooking of meat.

In addition to these, near by there are many straight ditches with mounds, enclosing spaces which were probably stockaded enclosures for the purpose of securing cattle at night, and at other times when wolves were about.

Here, of course, these people would have been unprotected from attack by a hostile tribe, so they constructed a fortress into which they could go with their families and their cattle, and defend themselves and their possessions. This still exists on Holwood hill, but only in part. Sufficient of it remains, however, to give an idea of its shape and size. Hasted describes the camp as oval, and nearly two miles in circumference, but it appears to have been no more than half that, enclosing approximately a hundred acres.

The entrenchments stand upon undulating ground about five hundred feet above sea level. The position is to some extent naturally defended on the west by a gully, and beyond that by a ridge about twenty feet high forming a natural rampart. On the north there is a gentle slope outside the earthworks which would have commanded an extensive view north-west. The works consist of two fosses dug in sandy clay and gravel, with the ballast thrown inward to form two ramparts, a third rampart being formed on the west by the counter scarp of the outer fosse. Beyond a rampart and fosse on the north, there is no trace of further entrenchments to form a complete enclosure, the

southern continuation of the work having been destroyed when Holwood house was built and its gardens made.

The extent of this existing entrenchment, measured along the interior rampart, is about 700 yards; the northern part forming the segment of a circle, and the western side running in an almost straight line nearly north and south. The inner trench is about 54 feet wide, and the outer 42; and the depth of the inner trench is more than thirty feet. Originally, no doubt, the fosses were deeper, and the ramparts higher; and there would, of course, have been palisading on the ramparts as an additional protection, while the fosses would have been filled with sharpened stakes. It has been asserted that when Mr. Pitt was levelling part of the entrenchments, it was found that they were formed by earth deposited upon the trunks of oaks, which were in a sound state though black from age.

The original and only entrance to the camp was on the west side, leading in an oblique direction through the three banks, so that the opening at the outer bank is opposed by the face of the second rising considerably above it, and the opening of the second by the face of the third, which rises still higher.

Not far from this camp, on Keston Common, there is a single bank and ditch running in an almost straight line from east to west for about 700 feet, the fosse on the southern side being 24 feet in width measuring from the top of the vallum to the opposite side. Mr. A. J. Kempe inspected this during his investigations in 1828, and thought it was perhaps of British origin and intended to protect the spring which we now call Cæsar's well. But Mr. B. H. St. J. O'Neil has recently propounded an interesting conjecture with regard to this single stretch of earthwork: he thinks that it is one side of a promontory fort, the other two sides, running to a point northwards, being protected by boggy valleys and thus needing no artificial works. The triangular space so enclosed would be about 29 acres, and what appears to be an entrance can still be seen in the middle of the bank which forms the southern side. It may

well be that here was a fort which served its purpose until a larger and stronger place was needed and was constructed upon the neighbouring Holwood hill.

These then are the traces of the earliest Keston people which remain to enable us to know something of them and their manner of life.

CHAPTER TWO

JULIUS Cæsar paid two visits to Britain. He came first in August B.C. 55, but stayed only a fortnight. In the following year he came again with over 30,000 men, and forced his way probably along what we now call the Pilgrims' Way, turning north somewhere about Westerham to ford the Thames above Kingston en route to St. Albans. Keston was thus on his line of march. Some have thought that the Holwood camp was made by him on this occasion, and indeed it is still marked on Ordnance survey maps as "Cæsar's Camp"; but the place appears to have been too strong to have been cast up in the short time that Cæsar then had, and the camp is larger than the Romans were accustomed to make their military stations. He probably subdued it, and passed on.

About a hundred years later another Roman army came under the command of Aulus Plautius, and in a few weeks had over-run Kent on the way to Essex. He, however, found the Britons a little too much for him, and sent word to the Emperor that his affairs were in danger. Dr. Tabor and Hasted imagine that it was at Holwood that Aulus Plautius awaited the coming of the Emperor Claudius. Harris says that he cannot find "a place more likely for him to lye in" than this. Its advantageous position, size and strength, and its distance from the Thames not being too great, inclined many to this opinion.

When the Britons had been subdued, Romans came and settled here. They loved the sunny southern slopes of hills, and it was on that side of Holwood hill, below the camp, that they built their residences.

The remains of several buildings have been unearthed, in three groups. First, on a mound thirty yards long, a circular building, and in a line north-west of it, at a distance of two feet, a small square building containing a coffin, and further on two other graves. Secondly, parts of a dwelling house, the corridor running round two sides, with four or five rooms behind it. Thirdly, part of a structure including three rooms, perhaps of the same house, and a little to the south of it.

About 1798-1800 a stone coffin, several coins, a dagger, a spur, a key, a coarse earthen vessel, and a few large nails were found, together with a hundred pieces of pottery, and the foundations of the circular building. These discoveries stimulated Mr. Kempe in 1828 to make excavations, and he thus described the circular building : " Its walls are a yard in breadth, their exterior circumference 90 feet; they were built of flint, and bonded for the greater part of their circuit with a double course of Roman brick: the outer surface of the wall, where it rose from the original level of the soil, at about two feet nine inches from the foundation, was covered with a coat of cement composed of an admixture of lime with gravel and coarse fragments of broken tile. On this was laid a coat of stucco composed of lime and tile more minutely broken. The surface of the latter being rendered very smooth, was lastly covered with a dark red pigment very carefully laid on." There is a three foot break in the wall on the eastern side, probably for a doorway, and the building has six external buttresses or platforms for columns or pilasters, measuring three feet by four feet. A trench across the centre of the interior revealed neither floor nor burial, but charcoal and grit stone, and a piece of coloured wall plaster, human ashes and bones, and potsherds, one ornamented with "a scroll pattern in which the head of an animal formed the connecting links," were found near the entrance; an urn with a bronze ear-ring in it was found whole.

Writing in the *Athenaeum* of the 28th October, 1893, Mr. George R. Wright says : " In the closer investigation

of this important and interesting relic, we came across, at the eastern end of the spherical building, a little below the surface of the soil, a wall of flint and chalk, of an apse-like character, and which soon proved to be so on digging beneath the surface, and then afterwards verified by measurements from the portions we had exposed. Finding that this apsidal wall opened into the building, the walls of which ceased to complete the building at this point, we came to the irresistible conclusion that here was a convincing proof that at one time or other the remains of the ruined temple must have been used as, or turned into, an early British church. This discovery added greater interest than before to the investigation we were upon, the more especially as nearly due west from the opening to this presumed apse, and where no doubt had stood an altar of stone on possibly a floor of tesserae, we had already found the remains of two buttresses, of about three feet nine inches long and four feet wide, projecting from the main walls of the building, and forming without doubt once the principal entrance to it as a Roman temple, or later Christian church, as the case may be." Upon this, Mr. Daniel Kettle of Hayes Common went post-haste to the site, and in the same periodical three weeks later wrote that no such apsidal wall was there. It seems likely that the circular structure was a tomb, and the fact that no remains were found suggests that it had been disturbed and robbed at some early date. Or it is just possible that it was merely an ornamental structure, forming part of a cemetery though not actually covering a burial.

Two feet north-west of this building there were uncovered the walls of a square one, some twelve feet by eleven feet, built in similar fashion, with a foundation four feet by three feet projecting from the south-west face, out of which a stone coffin with an ansated label for an inscription had been taken in 1798. This coffin was removed to West Wickham, where it lay in 1828 in the garden of the Manor House in a fractured and neglected condition, and it is now believed to have perished.

Two graves were found in a line to the north-west of this tomb, the first similarly built and containing a stone coffin with a coped lid "covered with a coarse cement" which hermetically sealed it. The second, cut in the chalk, contained some hundred potsherds of all varieties, some of coarse red "clay mixed with broken oyster shells" and some of "unbaked clay, decorated with a running cord-like ornament pinched up with the fingers."

In another part of the same field "masses of ruinous walls" were found. On digging in these places Mr. Kempe found "tesseræ, bones, teeth of animals, portions of charcoal, tiles, nails, the tongue of a fibula, and lastly the foundation wall of a Roman building, two and a half feet in breadth and thirty feet long, with two projecting walls, about a foot asunder, on the north side, probably the walls of a flue." Some of these articles are illustrated in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for May, 1829.

In 1855 Mr. G. R. Corner opened these foundations again, and came upon another wall at right angles to the former towards the south and east. This wall was of similar construction, but four feet thick and twelve feet in length. On the north side of it a pavement of flints resting on a cement bed, and pieces of detached wall in a line, which if continuous would be about 78 feet long. Several other lengths of detached walls were found in close proximity to these.

About a hundred feet south of these foundations Mr. Corner made some more excavations. "Here we came, at about eighteen inches only below the surface, to the foundation of a wall running in a direction north-west and south-east, and which we opened for a length of 49 feet, together with a wall extending at a right angle from it at the north-west end, for a length of 12 feet 6 inches. These walls were two feet thick, and at the highest about four feet from the foundation. They were composed of flints and mortar, with a single course of Roman bonding tiles laid along the whole length of the wall; upon a foundation of about six inches of flint work, resting on the chalk; the super-

structure above the tiles being composed of flint work, except that at the angle formed by the two walls, seven inches above the long course of tiles, there were two layers of tiles as a quoin. The bonding tiles were 11 inches wide, and had been 16 inches long; but as the thickness of the wall required more than one tile, and the length of the two would have been too much, they were all broken at the side, when they met in the centre of the wall. We traced and laid open these walls and other foundations connected with them, until we discovered what appears to be the almost complete foundation of a small Roman villa, being 60 feet 6 inches in length, by 32 feet 8 inches in width." No sign of a tessellated floor appeared, but Mr. Corner found "tiles of all sorts," some of them ornamented with various patterns. They had semi-circular marks made apparently with the fingers, no doubt for the purpose of helping the mason to lay correctly. Some of the tiles were marked X; but this was probably a mason's mark, crosses, triangles and other geometrical figures being common as mason's marks. On one tile was the impression of a dog's feet.

Mr. Kempe found a "rudely fashioned silver instrument which appears to be a clumsy kind of stylus," and among other articles picked up was a brass ear-ring regularly scored with small indentations, and the horn of a small deer deeply notched by some small weapon, "the result," says Mr. Kempe, "of a missing blow from the victimarius who sometimes used the axe instead of the malleus." Some circular pieces of coarse grey pottery of the size of a crown piece, with a hole in the centre, were also found, also a "minute portion of some other ornament of brass impressed with a pattern of small circles." Numerous fragments of pottery were found at every excavation of the site, chiefly of black or dark grey earth: some being of the "finest texture minutely and elegantly ornamented." Some pieces of red Samian ware were also found unornamented, but some of the pottery, apparently sunbaked, was of very rude and clumsy make, of a date previous to the Roman occupation.

The following is a list of some of the coins found, with the dates given by Mr. Corner :—

1. Clodius Albinus. Second brass. Legend : Sæcvli Frvgi-fero Cos II. Genius standing. A scarce type.
2. Carausius (A.D. 287-293). Third brass. Pax Aug. Peace standing. (Two coins.)
3. Allectus (A.D. 293-6). Third brass. Galley type. Legend obliterated.
4. Claudius Gothicus (A.D. 268-70). Third brass. Æqvitas Aug. Equity standing.
5. Victorinus? (A.D. 265-7). Much defaced.
6. Constantinus Magnus (A.D. 306-37). Second brass. Soli Invicto Comiti. In the exergue: PLN i.e. Money of London.
7. Ditto. Third brass. The labarum between two soldiers. No legend.

Among other money found was a coin of Hadrian, the first money on which the head of Britannia appears, helmeted and spear in hand. There was also found a small brass coin of Valens.

In February, 1829, Mr. J. Ward's workmen discovered a skeleton deposited in a grave formed in the solid chalk, and at a short distance from it some fragments of pottery. Two or three years earlier another skeleton was found near the same place, which is $\frac{2}{3}$ ths of a mile south-south-east from the Holwood camp, and about the same space east from the Roman settlement, which lies also at the same distance south-west from the camp.

A small Roman terra-cotta lamp, which has been thought worthy of reproduction in the Victoria County History of Kent, was turned up in 1882 by a gardener in a garden close to Keston Common and within 300 yards of Holwood camp. It is nearly perfect, wanting only a small part of the handle. Its length is $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and its breadth only $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, thus it has a rather longer shape than is usual with Roman lamps.

A Roman bronze pendant of a rare type, which was found in Keston, is now in the Roman-British room in the British Museum, and is illustrated in the official guide-book.

There is no doubt that there was here a Roman town of some size, and many persons have claimed that it was the Noviomagus of Antonius. This opinion is now, however, generally abandoned, though the name is still printed on the Ordnance survey maps of the district, and no one yet knows where Noviomagus was, except that it was ten miles from London.

CHAPTER THREE

ROMAN rule in Britain ended about the year 410, and for many years the quietude of life was undisturbed, but the villagers had a rude awakening in the latter part of the century in the coming of the Saxons. These invaders entered into possession of the Roman-British villages, and "called the lands after their own names." Indications of their presence in Keston are probably and only to be found in names which persist even to the present day.

There is perhaps no more fruitful cause of discussion than the derivation of place-names, and all that can be done here is to set down the derivations which have been suggested at different times.

Warbank is the name now given to that part of the hillside where the Romans had their town. It is said to be a corruption of "Ward" or "Weard" bank, and here was probably the "Weard settle," the watch seat, mentioned in Anglo-Saxon Charters of the ninth and tenth centuries. Mr. Roach Smith suggests that the Saxons did not understand what the circular building was, but supposing it to be a watch tower, called it "Weardsettle." Mr. Kempe says: "It may be no violent stretch of fancy to suppose that the town here abandoned by the Romans was destroyed in the wars between the Saxons and the Britons, and that in the name of 'Warbank,' or hill of battle, we have a brief record of a sanguinary conflict."

The name Keston has been supposed by Hasted to be a corruption of "Casterton" or "Chesterton," *i.e.*, the place of the camp, from the camp on Holwood hill. Others suggest that it is a contraction of "Cæsar's (or as the

Britons would pronounce it, Kæsar's) town." But in the three Charters already referred to, describing grants of land at a place called Bromleag (Bromley), "Cystaniga Mearce" occurs as one of the boundaries, and is undoubtedly Keston Mark. It may be that this means the mark or boundary of the territory belonging to the descendants or followers of a chief named Cystan, who gave his name to the place in early times; but Mr. Corner gives this derivation: "This name seems to be composed of Cyst, a chest or coffin, Stane, stone, and Ing, a field. It would thus mean 'The field of stone coffins,' a name singularly applicable to a spot where sepulchral remains, including stone coffins of a date anterior to the Anglo-Saxon name of the place, have been found at so recent a period." Mr. W. H. Stevenson, in a letter to Professor Haverfield, held this to be incorrect: Cyst Stane, he said, would have yielded "Cheston." He seems to have forgotten, or perhaps he did not know, that in Domesday, the name of the place is given as "Chestan." Flavell Edmund in his *Names of Places* suggests that the name comes from Cissa's town, Cissa meaning a King's name. This is an interesting suggestion, for Cæsar gives the names of four British kings who ruled in Kent without referring to their particular localities, and it may be that Keston was in fact a King's town, since the British camp on Holwood hill is one of the largest in Kent.

Many sources have been suggested for the name "Holwood." The most probable would seem to be "Holt Wudu," the Anglo-Saxon equivalent to the modern word wood or forest. Holly, Holy, and Old, are among other suggested origins.

Now we come to Keston Mark. The word Mark is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "Mearce," which signified in its proper and restricted sense "a boundary." The original meaning is "a forest" or "wood," the more modern sense of boundary being a secondary one, derived from the fact that forests were generally the marks or boundaries which separated the land of one family or tribe

from another. A large part of England was in these days covered with dense woods, Kent especially so. Many of the German conquerors having secured a footing in the country, betook themselves to peaceful pursuits. Having penetrated the woods, and made there a fair clearing for themselves, one or more families would set to work to erect their habitations and cultivate the ground. In order to prevent the aggressions of others, the mark system, established in their own land from time immemorial, and (as Mr. J. M. Kemble says in *Saxons in England*) invariably introduced into every State they founded upon the ruins of the Roman power, would be at once adopted. He says "If the nature of an early Teutonic settlement, which has nothing in common with a city, be duly considered, there will appear an obvious necessity for the existence of a mark, and for its being maintained inviolate. Every community not sheltered by walls, or the still firmer defences of public land, must have one, to separate it from neighbours, and protect it from rivals."

A mark might be some natural feature of the landscape, such as a large tree, a river, hill, morass, rock, or not infrequently the burial mound of an ancient warrior. In want of a well defined natural object, posts of wood or stone were often set up, on which were carved the figures of beasts and birds, or inscriptions. These warned the intruder, and if a stranger attempted to slink through without first shouting or blowing his horn, he was liable to be slain, or forced to pay according to his presumed crime. In order that the mark might be respected, it was consecrated by mysterious and often cruel and hideous rites, and placed under the guardianship of certain deities; direful punishments from them descending upon the unlucky wretch who even accidentally "stepped over the mark." Everything was done with the view of increasing the awe with which it was sought to invest the mark, and near by was sometimes the place of execution of criminals. What form Keston Mark took we have no means of knowing.

CHAPTER FOUR

WITH the coming of the Normans, Keston was bestowed by William the Conqueror on his famous and infamous half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who received larger grants of land than all his Norman companions, but was ultimately deprived of his vast possessions on proving a traitor to the King.

At the time of the great survey (1085-6) Keston was held from him by Gilbert de Maminot, as appears from the following entry in the Domesday book: "The same Gilbert (Maminot) holds of the Bishop, Chestan. It is assessed at $\frac{1}{2}$ sulung. There is land for On the demesne is 1 plough; and 4 slaves (are there) with 1 plough. There is woodland (to render) 5 swine. In the time of Edward the Confessor and afterwards it was worth 60 shillings, now (it is worth) 40 shillings. Sberne Biga held it of King Edward."

One passage in Domesday book equates $4\frac{1}{2}$ hundred acres with $2\frac{1}{2}$ sulungs, making half a sulung equal to 90 acres. The demesne was the portion which the tenant retained and worked as a home farm, as opposed to the portion held by the peasants. One plough on the demesne means that there was as much land as could be ploughed by one plough, and the cattle belonging to it, in one year, with meadow pasture sufficient for their keep, and houses for the ploughmen. It varied in different counties from 40 to 100 acres. The woodland was not measured, but was valued at the number of swine which it would support.

The Victoria County History identifies Gilbert de Maminot with the man of that name who was Bishop of

Lisieux from 1077 until his death in 1101. He was physician and chaplain to William the Conqueror, who appears to have raised him to the episcopate as a reward for his services in his medical capacity rather than as his chaplain, for he was more eminent as a man of science than as an ecclesiastic. But according to Hasted, Gilbert was one of William's favourite captains, and one of the eight barons whom John de Fienes associated with himself for the defence of Dover castle. He resided at Deptford, where he built himself a castle. His son, Wakelin, was Lord Warden of the cinque ports, and held out Dover castle against King Stephen, but was defeated and obliged to fly the realm. His son, also called Wakelin, married the Countess Juliana and died childless in 1191; whereupon his sister Alice became his co-heir, and brought the manor of Keston to her husband Geoffrey de Say, of whose great-grandson William it was held at half a knight's fee by William de Pesun in the reign of King Edward I.

In 1345 Sir John de Huntingfield was in possession of the manor, and then paid aid for it at making the Black Prince a knight. He died leaving two daughters, Joane and Alice, the former of whom possessed the manor and married John Copledike. In the reign of Richard II the manor was in possession of Sir Robert Bealknap, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, who was attainted and banished to Ireland with other judges in 1388. Two years after, an Act was passed to the effect that the wives and friends of the banished justices should have to farm all their lands, not being sold, to the value of certain annuities assigned to the banished judges, notwithstanding any patent made to others; and in consequence of this, and in spite of the attainder, his wife, who is designated indifferently Sybell and Juliana, was permitted to remain in possession of her husband's estates until her death in 1414-5. Then the estates escheated to the Crown, but Hamon Bealknap her son, by petition of Parliament, in that same year had them restored to him.

The manor, with Baston manor in Hayes parish, was

soon after alienated to Squerie of Squeries Court in Westerham, and Thomas Squerie of West Wickham was found by Inquisition to have died possessed of it in 1438, leaving John his son and heir. On his dying without issue in 1463, his two sisters became his co-heirs, of whom Dorothy (the youngest) marrying Richard Mervin of Fontels in Wiltshire, he, upon partition of their inheritance, became in her right possessed of the manor. Soon after, he conveyed it upon certain trusts to Philip Reynolds and Thomas Tregarthan, who alienated it to Richard and Stephen Scroope, by whom it was sold to Henry Heydon of Baconsthorpe in Norfolk, one of whose descendants, towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, conveyed it to John Lennard of Chevening, Custos Breuium of the Court of Common Pleas. Not long after, he settled it on his second son, Samuel, who seated himself in West Wickham and was subsequently knighted. His eldest son, Stephen, was created a baronet in 1642, and dying in 1709 was succeeded by his son Samuel, who delivered the estate, on his death in 1727, to his son Samuel. He died without male issue, leaving it to his daughter Mary. She married John Farnaby (subsequently baronet) of Kippington, Sevenoaks, whose son the Reverend Sir Charles Francis Farnaby succeeded to the estate, and died in 1861. His nephew, John Farnaby Cator, son of Lieut.-General Sir William Cator, who married Miss Farnaby, took the surname of Lennard on coming into the estate, and was made a baronet in 1880. He was followed by his son Henry Arthur Hallam Farnaby Lennard in 1899, and upon his death in 1928, his son Stephen became Lord of the manor of Keston.

We pass now to the court which the lord of the manor regularly held, the transactions of which are carefully recorded in the manor court rolls. Twice a year, generally in April and October, though occasionally at other times, the freeholders of the lord assembled, and the steward of the manor, or senescal as he is sometimes called, was in attendance. Every free tenant was bound to be present at these courts: the roll was called each court day, and the

names of absentees recorded, a fine being imposed on those absent without lawful excuse.

The reports of the proceedings are invariably headed : "Keston South Court, Court Baron and View of Frank Pledge eximii viri of . . . Lord of ye said Manor holden" The gathering thus had a two-fold purpose : it was not only the court of the lord of the manor for the transaction of business connected with the estate, but it was also "the view of Frank Pledge."

Frank Pledge was the name given by the Normans to a system adopted originally by the English after the Danish invasions for the preservation of order, whereby a body of men were pledged to do their utmost to bring to justice any of their number who broke the peace. The first thing that was done at these gatherings was the swearing in of the "Jury for the King," numbering sometimes as many as thirteen and often as few as six. The jury then "Presented," *i.e.*, fined, the defaulters in attending the court.

After that came the appointment of various officials. Someone was chosen Borsholder, who had a wand of office, for the entry of the appointment in 1659 states : "John Beadle chosen Borsholder of Keston, to whom is sent the Rod by Nicholas Whiffen." The Borsholder was the elder of the Borth or Pledge, who not only presided over the assembly but was mainly responsible for the peace within the view of his pledge. The office had other names : for example, we come across the phrase "Capitall leet. de Keston," the head of the leet of Keston, reminding us that he was sometimes called the headborough : again, he is called the "Decener," the tenth or tithingman. In Saxon times the frank pledge was called a tithing, either because it was a group of ten men, or else because its area was a tenth part of one of the hundreds into which a county was divided for administrative purposes.

Then the Ale-conner or taster was appointed and sworn to look to the assize (*i.e.*, the standard of quality, measure or price) and goodness of bread, ale and beer sold within

the jurisdiction of the pledge. We get a variation in the title of the office when we are told on one occasion of the "Appointment of Thos. Death gustator." And, of course, there was the parish constable to be appointed. It is interesting to note that at one court during the Commonwealth, 23rd April, 1655, "John Brown and George Durling elected churchwardens. Robert Phillips and Wm Lane elected overseers for ye poor."

Other business done by the court can be indicated by extracts from reports of meetings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries :—

If any one break hedges within bounds of said manor to forfeit 12d. each time, 4d. thereof to the informer.

Thomas Daye aged upwards of 12 years took oath of allegiance. George Croucher admitted guardian to Thomas who was under age.

John Morgan drew blood from Tho Sympson and Thos Sympson fecit insultum sup idem Johān.

The children of John Bankes are common disturbers of their neighbours, to be reformed sub plna.

John Raddams of Keston is a man of an evill life fame and conversation, and a receiver lodger and harbourer of lewd idle and suspicious persons, to the great disturbance of his neighbours. Fined 20s.

John Bettes of Croyden baker broke ye assize viz. in le twopenie howshold lofe octo uncias and in le peny Wheaton lofe quatuor uncias.

John Surie cois tipulator berie sold by unlawful measure.

John Johnson broke ye lord's park and took away his animals.

John Covill amerced 26s. 8d. for cutting down and carrying away a tree of the Lord's.

Roger Delves amerced for shooting rabbits in the ground of George Phillips.

John Cofin and Geo. Burlinge amerced 10s. p non provident unum parium Eclipium* ante festum Cristi px sequen. jury p domina Regina psnt hedge of Phillip Isaac in Coxes-croft to be repaired.

Hedges of Thos Stephen at Shottoland and near his orchard and near Longhedge and on lands called Millfield to be cut down or trimmed.

George Mannynge gent to remove hedge at prebyll hyll or shew sufficient cause in writing wherfore not.

Thomas Stephen to remove his gate in Tenaker lane to place where it was before.

* ?A pair of stocks.

Wm Cawstin of West Wickham yeoman took & carried away 8 loads of mud on ye highway from old brooke hill toward Nash. Fined 10s. for digging a ditch in the highway from oldbrooke hill to Nash so that persons cannot pass without great danger and difficulty. To fill up under penalty of 40s. Thomas Stephens and Wm Phillipes encroached on common of Keston called Leaves Green by building a tenement & inclosing 3 or 4 acres—to be removed, penalty £5. (Eighteen months later) Thomas Stephen and Wm Phillip forfeited £5 for not removing tenement built by them upon the common of Keston called Leaves Green and the incrcachment there to be removed under penalty of £10.

Thomas Stephen about 7 years since erected cottage on Keston Heath & permitted Michael Isac to dwell there not having an acre of land adjoining contra formam statuti.

Henry Maning LL.D. and Peter Maning gent dug sand at Hollwood Hill to the nuisance of ye passengers.

Slutt's bridge appears to have been a troublesome matter for some years. In 1644 it is "to be maintained by George Phillipps & Robt Knowe"; four years later "to be repaired by the parishioners"; and in 1660 it is reported that "Henry Round and Thomas Covill, surveyors of ye Roads of Keston did not repair ye way at Slutt's bridge." It would seem to have been on the Bromley-Downe road across the bog a little to the south of the bridle-path to Farnborough.

The thoroughly popular or democratic character of these courts is shown in the fact that the lord of the manor was just as amenable to them, and that the jury were just as ready to enforce presentments in his case as in the case of the humblest freeholder or tenant: "the lord requested to repair ye ways apud le psons hill apud le gravel pytt & apud Longfelde."

In order to complete the picture, perhaps we may be allowed to cull three entries from the view of Frank Pledge of West Wickham:—

Samuel Fremsby is cois sagitator in tormento not having £100 in lands nor tents, and shot on Sunday last post meridiem in the lands of Richard Phillipes within this visum a rabbit of ye value of 2d. and carried it away.

John Bankes forfeits 2s. for suffering his hogs to go at large not sufficiently yoked.

Discord betw. wife of John Wardne (4d.) and wife of Wm Wright (2d.).

Now we turn to the proceedings of the court baron—the court of the freemen—which immediately followed. Again jurors are sworn, and the jury (called “the Homage”) present defaulters, and the whereabouts of stray animals are stated. Then deaths of tenants are reported, and the names of their successors; new tenants are admitted, and rents adjusted and apportioned where necessary.

Thomas Whiffin a tenant of ye manor died since last court, heriot and constraint of heir for fealty and relief.

Heriot was at this time a contribution from the estate of the deceased tenant to his lord; and relief was the payment which the heir made to the lord for the privilege of taking over the tenancy; fealty being the oath which he took to the lord and to observe the customs of the manor.

Richard Austen fealty for lands held in right of his wife.

George Mannyn gent who held Kynsdowne, Graysdowne, Coxecroft and Holwoodscroft died since last court, Peter Manning is his son and heir.

Michael Stable since last court alienated an acre of wood land called Bushie Grove in Keston near Holwood Hill to Peter Manning gent and his heirs. No heriot is due therefore because said Michael remains a tenant.

Tho Kitchill gent steward of ye manor recorded that John Homfrey one of ye customary tenants 4 Febr 34 Elizab. surrendered messe & orchard called Pipers & land called little Okisland and apprnts in Keston near Levesgrene alias Lefegrene which had been lately surrendered by Wm Homfrey son or heir of John Homfrey deed to use of said John Homfrey by copy dated 20 March . . . Elizab.

George Phillips did not scour his ditch in Martyn's heath against ye lands of Wm Lane.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOR many centuries the manors of West Wickham, Baston and Keston, comprising the whole of the parishes of West Wickham, Hayes and Keston, have been held together, the seat of the Lord of the manor being at Wickham Court; thus there has been no manor house in Keston. But in the seventeenth century there was a small house on Holwood hill, which had been built by one of the Lennard family, and which Sir Stephen Lennard then parted with to a Captain Richard Pearce, several members of whose family lived in Keston at that time and for many years afterwards.

There is in the British Museum a letter written in 1771 by Mr. Robert Burrow of Holwood to Hasted in reply to a request for information respecting Holwood, from which the following is abstracted. "Hollwood Hill in the parish of Keston (otherwise Kaiston) in the County of Kent, now the property of Robert Burrow Esq. On 2nd January 1693 this House and Garden, with the Appurtenances, and ten acres of land, four of pasture, and 112 acres of woodland, were the property, and in the possession of Richard Pearce, and Judith his wife. . . . On 15th February 1709 that Capt. Pearce settled the Premises on his niece, Elizabeth Whiffing, and Nathaniel Gatton of Beckenham, upon their marriage. On 26th July 1732, the Premises being then part of the Estate of Nathaniel Gatton, an Infant, and greatly out of repair, Mr. John Buxton, the Infant's Relation and Guardian, let them upon lease for ten years to Mr. John Owen of London, Linen draper, for only £20 a year. The 13th May 1736 Owen assigned his lease to

Duncombe Colchester, and Wm Braund of London, merchants: and on 29th April 1737, Colchester assigned his interest to said Wm Braund." The property having passed to her meanwhile, "On 5th July 1765 Ann Dippen conveyed the premises to Peter Burrell, of Beckenham. On 3rd June 1766 Peter Burrell conveyed it to Wm Ross, of Nicholas Lane, London. On 3rd July 1767 Mr. Ross conveyed it to Robert Burrow."

After the death of Captain Pearch, Lord Tyrawley, then Col. O'Hara, came to live at the house; and when he ceased to occupy it, it was used as a hunting lodge, and it is described as being then a very small old plastered brick building, very dirty and much out of repair. Mr. John Calcraft took Holwood in 1754, and it became a rendezvous for the heads of the great political party of the time, who there privately formed their schemes of parliamentary manœuvre.

The celebrated actress and beauty, Mrs. George Anne Bellamy, spent some few years of her chequered and unhappy life at Holwood. In one of her letters there is an interesting account of some improvements she effected: "I spared no expense to clean and beautify it. What made me more partial to it was that Lord Tyrawley had once been the owner of it.* Some years before Mr. Calcraft bought it, the house had been occupied by six gentlemen belonging to the Croydon Hunt; as it lay adjacent to a wood consisting of several hundred acres, from whence it derives its name. This induced these gentlemen to erect offices and stables to it worthy of a better house; for it was old, and built after the ancient manner in apartments. It not having been tenanted for four years, I found it required nearly as much cleansing as the Augean stable, for the house had as many inhabitants of the vermin kind as the gardens and ponds, which were over-run with weeds, frogs, toads and other reptiles. This made the task, which I had undertaken to see performed myself, not only troublesome but expensive. However, a fortunate circumstance tended to

* He was her father: see chapter xii.

accelerate it. There being in the cellar a great deal of curious wine, Dr. Francis, who loved his bottle, cheerfully accorded me his assistance. General Campbell sent me a gardener, and supplied me with many shrubs and relics from Combe-bank. He likewise favoured me with his advice how to lay out the ground, which consisted of 11 acres. In February I built a hothouse, a succession house, a green-house and an ice-house, and completed the whole of the complicated undertaking within four months. . . . After the end of the summer I found that I had expended six hundred pounds here, notwithstanding General Campbell had presented me with all my curious plants and shrubs."

Robert Burrow, who purchased Holwood in 1767, added to the beauty of the grounds by various purchases. He grubbed up and converted considerable woods into pasture and sheets of water, and planted shrubberies. This gentleman sold in 1784 to Mr. Randall, a London shipbuilder, who found a purchaser in the autumn of the next year in the Rt. Hon. William Pitt.

At a special vestry held in the Parish Church on 6th July, 1790, thirty acres of the Common known as the Bulwarks adjoining and once forming part of the camp, were permitted to be enclosed and added to the estate, Mr. Pitt agreeing to pay a perpetual annuity of £10 for the poor of the parish, and to divert the course of the Westerham road which ran through the camp and close to the house.

In the recesses of public business, Holwood was Pitt's favourite retirement, where he spent his time in effecting alterations, in the course of which he mutilated the camp. It is, however, but fair to say that a part of the south-eastern entrenchment had been levelled some years before. Alluding to this spoliation by Pitt, the possessor of Holwood in 1848 says: "The Roman camp was still more perfect and distinct when I first saw it in 1789 and 1790, but Mr. Pitt levelled one part of the Bulwarks, to the great horror of his secretary Mr. Long, afterwards Lord Farnborough, who assured me that when Mr. Pitt pointed out the levelling

to him as an improvement, he could not help exclaiming 'You have spoiled the camp for ever.' " Lord Bathurst also says: "Mr. Pitt was fond of Hollwood, and shewed taste in planting, but mismanaged the water sadly, and laughed when I remonstrated against his levelling, as he did, part of the fortification in the Roman camp there. All the Roman remains among us, and whatever related to Gothic or ancient times, he held in no great respect."

Like Gladstone, Pitt was fond of "cutting." Some of his cuttings were improvements—that, for instance, through the northern shrubberies, opening out a view of the surrounding country, to which a writer in the European Magazine alludes humorously: "The house stands on a high hill, the gentlemen who have hitherto lived in it, judging not much good was to be had from the north, had defended it in that quarter by large plantations of evergreens, but the present possessor has cut down these plantations, and seems to be open to everything that comes from that delightful region"; a reference to Pitt's coqueting with Lord North. Mr. Wilberforce, who was fond of visiting his friend at Holwood, says in his diary: "Walked about after breakfast with Pitt and Grenville. We sallied forth armed with billhooks, cutting new walks from one large tree to another through the thickets of the Hollwood copses." With what ardour Pitt applied himself to planting will be seen in the following extract from a letter addressed from Downing Street to his mother on the 15th November, 1786: "To-morrow I hope to get to Holwood, where I am impatient to look at my works. I must carry on there, however, only my passion for planting, and leave that of cutting entirely to Burton." Unfortunately he planted upon what remained of the ramparts, clumps of fir whose roots have greatly distorted their original conformation. Pitt's alterations involved the destruction of a celebrated fox-cover, which is alluded to by the humorous writer already quoted: "Whether from natural antipathy to the animal, or from too much of the 'Fox' in another place, certain it is that the first order he issued was for the utter

destruction of the fox-earth, being a lodgment in one side of the Bullwarks, which the sagacious Reynards are supposed to have been in quiet possession of since the Roman abdication."

Upon Pitt's retirement from office in 1801 his first care was to provide for the discharge of his financial obligations. The smallness of his private fortune, and the scanty recognition he received for his public services, prevented him from satisfying these claims without bringing his available property to sale, and retiring to a modest style of living. He disposed of Holwood in 1823 to Sir George Pocock for £15,000, much to the grief of his friends, who wished to re-purchase it for him, but he would not hear of it. To possess Holwood had been his desire from boyhood. "When a boy," says Lord Bathurst, "William Pitt used to go a birds-nesting in the woods of Hollwood, and it was always, he told me, his desire to call it his own." His liking for the place never abated. "He took," says Sir George Rose, "the greatest delight in his residence of Hollwood, which he enlarged and improved (it may be truly said) with his own hands. Often have I seen him working in his woods and gardens with his labourers for whole days together, undergoing considerable bodily fatigue, and with so much eagerness and assiduity, that you would suppose the culture of his villa to be the principal occupation of his life." It is said that when night drew on, the work of planting was not interrupted but frequently completed by lantern light. It must have been with no slight pang that he brought himself to the determination of parting with the estate.

To the house Pitt did little more than add a moderately sized dining room with a spacious bow window, which he covered with pantiles and curiously variegated stucco, then much in vogue. Sir George Rose has seen Holwood "strewn with Latin and Greek classical works." The walls of one room are said to have been covered with Gilray's and other political caricatures levelled at himself, which seemed to afford him much amusement. He used

to show them to his friends, and laugh heartily when a particularly good hit at himself was made. Near the house, on a conical mound which at one time was part of the entrenchments, there still stands "Pitt's Oak" under which it was the Prime Minister's habit to sit and read.

In 1823 Holwood was purchased by John Ward, a London merchant who was a magistrate and deputy-Lieutenant for the county. He pulled down the house, and erected near its site the present mansion from a design by Decimus Burton, under whose direction it was completed in 1827. "The exterior of the mansion is very chaste in the Grecian style, adopted by the Romans in the erection of their country villas, and in excellent keeping with the old fortifications in the park; whilst the interior is commodious, and furnished throughout in the most perfect taste." To the rear of the house, on a slope to the south-south-east, Mr. Ward endeavoured to form a vineyard in the open, and imported ten varieties of vines, five white and five black, from different parts of Burgundy and the Rhine, but the experiment proved unsuccessful. It was when this vineyard was being made that the workmen found the skeleton and pottery mentioned in chapter two. He made the present approach to the house, and built Beckford's lodge; uprooted much of Pitt's plantations with little remorse, and added to the importance of Holwood by the purchase of the adjoining royal manor of Farnborough.

At his death the estate was purchased by Mr. Brassey, the engineer, who sold it in 1855 to Lord Chancellor Cranworth, and from him it descended to Robert Alexander, C.B., after whose death in 1882 it became the property of the Earl of Derby.

CHAPTER SIX

THERE was a church here in the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66) valued at a hundred shillings, though there is no mention of it in the Domesday book. Whether any



EXTERIOR OF CHURCH IN 1877.

part of that building remains in the present structure there is no telling. The pillars of the chancel arch, about two feet four inches thick, and some parts at least of the nave walls, which are two feet six inches or more in thickness,

are probably Norman, and may date from early eleventh century. The chancel, which measures internally about twenty feet by seventeen feet, and has walls of flint about two feet six inches thick, is early English, of about the time of Henry III (1216-72); and is not built in a straight line with the nave, but turned a little to the north. This feature is to be observed in many churches, and is thought to be because of an old belief that the head of our Lord fell upon His right shoulder towards the north when He died upon the cross. Such a chancel is called a "Weeping chancel." In the east wall above the altar is a modern window designed to match the trefoil lancets in the side walls, four in number and part of the original building. The newer east window is accounted for by the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Holwood house was demolished, a window from there was inserted in place of the existing window, to be in its turn discarded when the church was restored in 1877. The piscina basin used to project from the wall, but has been broken off flush, either by Cromwell's soldiers, or when the building was fitted with box pews.

The nave has a breadth of 18 feet 9 inches, and was originally 35 feet long, but was lengthened by about 15 feet in 1881. At the east end of the south wall there is a filled in arch, of a size sufficiently large to suggest that it was intended to give access to a transept or chapel. The arch is visible outside as well as inside, but there are no indications that such an addition was ever made. The western jamb of this arch has for its impost a curious and interesting stone, which is obviously not in its original position, for that part of it which ought to fit flush against the wall is rounded at the corner, and was intended to be in an exposed place. On the side of the stone is a quaint representation of a human face, very broad, with lizard eyes, and the mouth broad and grinning, stuck full of teeth. The late Professor Parker, C.B., of Oxford, pronounced it "early Norman work, probably of the time of William the Conqueror." The carving has been kept perfect by

the deposit of whitewash under which for many years it had been hidden until the restoration of the church in 1877.

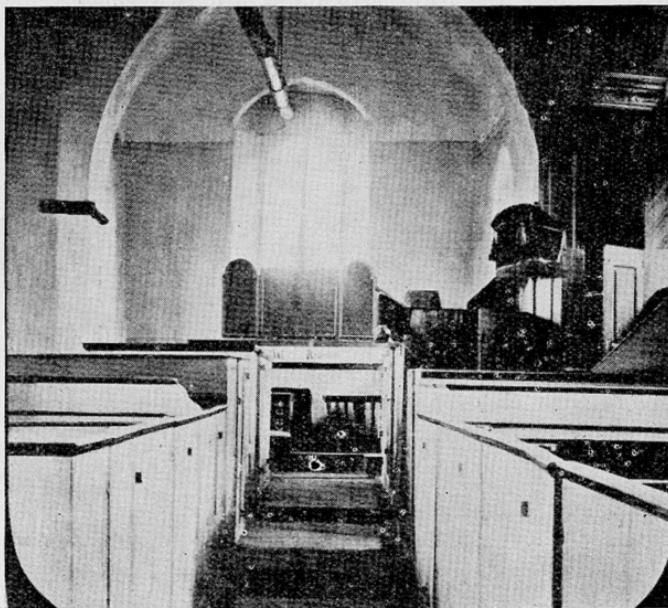
There are traces of two doorways in the south wall. The one, visible inside and out, opposite the present entrance, was the original way into the building, in spite of the fact that the roadway is to the north of the church. The other doorway, visible only on the outside, in the walled-up arch, was no doubt the parson's entry. There is a trace of a door, too, in the north wall to the west of the present door, which superseded it in 1881.

What seems most likely is that an early Norman building was partially taken down and rebuilt in the time of Henry III, and supplied with a new chancel. In support of this view, you have the pointed chancel arch on Norman pillars, the filled-in arch with the displaced Norman stone, and the uppermost five stones at the eastern end of the north wall of the nave which have been made use of as corner stones though obviously worked for the interior of a building.

The church underwent a restoration in the early part of the eighteenth century, when parts of the exterior were fresh flinted, and certain defacements made good, a new font was set up, six new seats were erected in the body of the church, and a gallery was built. During the period 1877 to 1881, considerable works were carried out: the nave was lengthened and a new gallery was put in, the three-decker disappeared with the old box-pews, a new font was built and the altar was enlarged, and a porch and a vestry were added, and the building was entirely re-roofed. Mr. George Clinch thus described the interior of the church before this restoration was carried out: "There was a ceiled roof to the nave, supported by rough-hewn king posts, and there was a ceiled roof to the chancel. The pews of deal were lofty in height, and bald in appearance. The pulpit also was high, and above it was a ponderous sounding board, in the middle of which was the figure in relief of a dove carved in wood, and the entire structure was grained. On either side of the communion table was

a dusky oil painting, representing probably Moses and Aaron. The east window in the chancel was a bare bald stonework arrangement, Romanesque in design, and of very unpleasing effect. It is reported to have come from Mr. Pitt's old house at Holwood."

Canon 82 of 1604 ordered "that the Ten commandments be set up on the east end of every Church and Chapel, where



INTERIOR OF CHURCH IN 1877.

the people may best see and read the same," but some churches had them in pre-Reformation days. Traces of them were to be seen south of the window on the east wall where the whitewash had peeled off, but subsequently some of the plaster on which they were painted fell away. The remainder of the painting might be uncovered but that the plaster is in such a perished condition. The pictures of

Moses and Aaron referred to by Mr. Clinch are now in the vestry, but they originally flanked a board behind the altar on which the commandments were painted, which has now disappeared.

At the foot of the chancel steps is a large slab of Bethersden stone 7 feet 2 inches long and from 2 feet 11 inches at the head tapering to 2 feet 7 inches at the foot. An incised cross fleurie on a recessed base occupies the chief part. Under the transverse limbs are two shield-shaped depressions, and there are remains of an incised marginal inscription in Lombardic characters. Mr. Kempe deciphered part of the inscription to be the words REVENVE DE IRELANDE IADIE. The grave is that of Sir Robert Bealknap, of whom something will be found in chapters 4 and 12. The other graves in the nave are those of Mr. Duncomb Colchester 1746, Mrs. Alice Kay 1761, Mrs. Jane Greene 1710, and "The Revd. Christopher Clarke, M.A., Archdeacon of Norwich, Prebendary of Ely & Rector of this Parish. He died the 19th of May, 1742, aged 70."

In the sanctuary are the graves of "Jane, the wife of the Revd. James Hodgson, Rector of this Parish," and of three of their children 1782-94; and of "Judith and Elizabeth the Wives of Capt. Richard Perch of Hollwoods hill" 1683 and 1704. The chancel floor has the graves of "Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, eldest daughter of Francis Lee of Bagerle Hall in the County of Chester Gent. She dyed the 24th of March 1687-88 in the 46th year of her age"; "Jane the Relict of Edmund Smith of London Gent and Daughter of Thomas Pyke late Rector of this Church" 1701; Mr. Richard Hetherington "Commissarie of Marines" 1711; and one other the inscription on the stone being hidden by the benches.

On the east wall of the chancel is a reredos to the memory of Lady Caroline Legge 1885, flanked on either side by panelling in remembrance of John Fells, church-warden, 1933. The north wall supports a carved marble relief to George Kirkpatrick "of the Hon^{ble} East India Company's Civil Service" 1838, and a wooden tablet re-

cording that to perpetuate the memory of John Wheeler Wheeler-Bennett the endowment of the Rectory of Keston has been increased by £100 a year in perpetuity by Christina Hill Wheeler-Bennett his wife 1928, while opposite is a brass in memory of Montague Wilmot Holland killed in the South African war 1900.

On the north wall of the nave is a tablet containing the names of those belonging to the parish who were killed in the Great war 1914-18, and two brasses in memory of two of them: Frederick Cecil Boosey and Rupert George Boosey 1915.

Four of the nave windows, "Faith," "Prayer," "Love" and "Hope," are a memorial to George Bentham Rae 1909. Two windows in the north chancel wall, St. John and St. Bartholomew, commemorate Robert Alexander, C.B., of Holwood 1882, whose features have been bestowed upon St. Bartholomew. One of the windows in the opposite wall is in memory of Henry John Rönn 1889, and depicts St. Peter. The east window has two lights: the baptism of Jesus, and the meal at Emmaus, and commemorates John Day 1855 and Margaret Owen Day 1879.

The dedication of the church is unknown, all attempts to discover it having failed so far. It is said by some people that the church has no name, because it was only a chapel of Orpington Priory; but a handy list of benefices in his patronage drawn up for Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury 1272-8, shews that there was then a church at Keston, and that Orpington had three chapels—at Cray, Knockholt and Hayes.

St. Audrey's mission church was built by Lord Sackville Cecil in 1889 on the site of a windmill, for the convenience of parishioners at the northern end of the parish. The parish church of Hatfield, the seat of the Cecils, is dedicated to St. Audrey, and probably accounts for the name here.

St. Etheldreda, or Audrey, was daughter of Anna King of East Anglia. She dedicated her virginity to God, and kept it through two marriages: (1) with Tombert, Prince

of the Fen-men in 652, and (2) with Egfrid, son of Oswy, King of Northumbria, 659. Through the influence of St. Wilfrid she fled from her second husband after 12 years, and after much difficulty she eluded the pursuing Egfrid, retired to Ely, and there founded a monastery for men and women. She was followed by Wilfrid, who consecrated her Abbess in 673, and soon had a large number of monks and nuns under her; she died there 679. Many legends are told of her; in her youth she had been fond of wearing quantities of jewellery, and the word "tawdry" is a corruption of "St. Audrey," from the cheap necklaces, etc., that were sold at St. Audrey's fair, formerly held in the Isle of Ely and elsewhere on October 17th, against which day her name appears in the Prayer book calendar.

The church, and the house in the garden of which it stands, together with other buildings which were formerly a steam mill, were acquired by the churchpeople of the parish in 1908, upon the death of Lord Sackville Cecil, and are now vested in the Parochial Church Council.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE parish of Keston was a Peculiar of the Archbishop of Canterbury until the middle of last century; that is to say, it was actually part of the diocese of Canterbury in spite of the fact that it was within the territory which formed the diocese of Rochester, and the Archbishop had the patronage of the benefice, and instituted the rectors. Then it became territorially included in the diocese of Canterbury; and when the diocese of Rochester was re-constituted in 1905, the parish became part of that diocese, and the patronage of the benefice passed to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral.

The list of rectors commences in the twelfth century with the name of *Henry de Baix*. Generally, episcopal registers are not in existence prior to the end of the thirteenth century, and it is only then that it is possible to begin a consecutive record. *William, Archdeacon of Taunton*, was rector in 1207, as we learn from Patent Rolls of the reign of King John; then there is a gap until 4th July, 1286, when *John de Bidke* (or *Bidik*) was collated by Archbishop Peckham; 1297, *Robert de Hegham*; 13th June, 1313, *William de Trompeton*, nominated by the King during a vacancy in the Archbishopric; 1327, *Stephen de London* (or *Honylane*) upon his ordination; 14th September, 1349, *Thomas Raundes*, by the King, the Archbishopric again being vacant; then *Thomas Dits*, who subsequently exchanged benefices with *Nicholas Souch*, rector of Twynell in the diocese of Lincoln; *William Galby* was collated on the 5th September, 1387; *John Malling* (or *Miller*) became rector in 1398, and exchanged with *Nicholas Balsham*,

rector of Offham, in April, 1400; then *David Sparke*, who was subsequently vicar of Darent; 1410, *Roger Bernard*, chaplain of the Holy Trinity, St. Peter's, Cornhill; then *John Langford*, who in 1412 exchanged with *John Newton*, vicar of Marden; next *William Hilton*, who on 22nd November, 1424, exchanged with *Richard atte Hoo*, rector of Hanwell; he exchanged in 1425 with *John Ellcombe* of Estburgate, Chichester, who on 31st October, 1429, exchanged with *William Fferrour*, warden of Wyke chantry in the diocese of Bath and Wells; then we have *Robert Ayleward*, who on 17th August, 1445, exchanged with *Matthew Brandrede* of Lullingstone; on the 20th May, 1447, we have *Philip Delen*, "Chaplain of the Church of Keston, vacant by the resignation of Matthew Brandrede the last rector there" who went to Hunton; then *Michael Hewson*; 12th August, 1456, *Thomas Ffisher* "on the resignation of Michael Hewson"; 10th January, 1457, *John Harvey* "on the resignation of Thomas Turnour" (?Ffisher, for there was hardly time for there to have been another rector between Ffisher and Harvey); 12th October, 1468, *Thomas Lamplugh*; after that, *John Brenan*; 28th April, 1472, *Nicholas Nywtun* "by the resignation of John Brenan"; 26th August, 1478, *Thomas Kirkham*; 6th September, 1481, *John Brome* "by the resignation of Thomas Kirkham"; *John Jordeyn*; 10th October, 1509, Master *Roger Rowland*; 16th October, 1512, *Walter Michell* "by the resignation of Roger Rowland"; 5th January, 1517, *George Hull*; 7th December, 1524, *William Sterlyng* "on the resignation of George Hull"; 14th January, 1545, *Robert Garret*, L.B., succeeded on the death of William Sterlyng, but upon the restoration of the Roman rites by Queen Mary Tudor, we have registered the appointment to the rectory of "Humphrey Barker by the Queen jure prerog. 19 July 1554 on the resignation of Robert Garret." What happened when Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 and reversed Mary's ecclesiastical policy we do not know, for when on the 19th May, 1584, *Nicholas Pearson* was collated, the Archbishop's registrar simply states that it was "on the death of the

last Incumbent," and the parish registers do not help us because all the entries up to 1603 were re-copied in that year, and we have not each incumbent's writing up to that date as we have afterwards. On the 18th July, 1626, *Francis Bradshawe*, S.T.P., was instituted "on the resignation of Nicholas Pearson"; 8th September, 1627, *Thomas Pike* "by the resignation of Francis Bradshawe"; 20th December, 1658, *Robert Low*; 12th October, 1660, *Edward Smith*, son of Prebendary George Smith who was rector of Chelsfield 1626-46; 30th May, 1678, *Edward Taylor* "by the death of Edward Smith"; 25th May, 1680, *Thomas Chapman* "by the cession of Edward Taylor"; 27th March, 1691, *George Taylor*, brother of Edward, "on the presentation of the King and Queen"; 17 April, 1704, *Christopher Clarke* "on the death of George Taylor"; 7th June, 1742, *William Best*, D.D., vicar of St. Laurence, Jewry, who died 1760; 1761, *John Taylor Lamb*; 14th June, 1774, *James Hodgson* "on the death of John Taylor Lamb"; 29th May, 1799, *William Wilson*, who died ten months later, 2nd September, 1800, *Joseph William Martin*, died 12th November, 1858, buried in the churchyard on the 19th, aged 82; 1858, *Joseph Thompson*, buried at Keston 3rd November, 1876, aged 57; 24th February, 1877, *Thomas Scott Huxley*, who resigned in 1880; 1881, *Charles Howard Wright*, resigned 1906; 1906, *George Herbert Johnson*, who exchanged in 1911 with *Charles Robert Rowan Stack*, vicar of Holy Trinity, Frome, who was reinstated to that benefice in 1915; 2nd July, 1915, *Augustine Briggs*, resigned 10th October, 1923; 25th January, 1924, *Frederick Sidney Gammon*.

We know nothing more about the rectors than has already been stated until we come to William Sterlyng, and there are two interesting things to notice about him. Among the documents in the Public Record Office relating to the reign of Henry VIII are two volumes containing the signatures of the secular clergy to the declaration that "the Bishop of Rome hath no greater jurisdiction committed to him by God in this realm of England than any

other foreign bishop." This declaration engrossed in latin at the head of sheets of parchment was signed by the clergy in each deanery, and among the signatures of the clergy of the deanery of Shoreham is that of " Wyllm Sterlyng, Rector de Kestone." The date of this " Renunciation of the Papal Authority by the clergy " is 1534. The other thing is that it was during his incumbency that registers of baptisms, marriages and burials were ordered to be kept, in 1539; and he lost no time in obeying the order. The third entry in the register he started is that of the burial in the churchyard " 1545 Mr. Williame Sterlinge parson of Keston 20 Dec."

There is a brass in Hayes church, put up by him before his death, to the memory of Robert Garret, who was rector of Chislehurst 1552-66, and of Hayes from 1560 or earlier, until 1566, when he died. A man of this name was rector of Keston from 1545 until 1554, when he was apparently extruded on the accession of Mary Tudor.

Nicholas Pearson is the next rector of whom we have anything to record, for among the parish records is this document :—

Memorandum that Thomas Steven of Keston yeoman the 20 of September Ao.Dm. 1602. and in the xlviijth yeare of the Reigne of our Soueraigne Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of Engl. Sco. Ffranc. and Ireland Queene &c did lease unto Mr. Nicholas Pearson then Parson of Keston and Joane his wife one Cottage or house yarde and garden with sixe acres of land lyinge in Keston uppon the heath To have and to hold the said house and land to the said Joane Pearson her heires executors Admrs & Assignes from the feast of St. Michaell th'arch-Angell last past before the date hereof unto the full end and terme of one hundred and twentie yeares from thence next ensuinge then fully to be compleat & ended. Yealdinge and payinge durante the said terme sixe shillinges and eight pence p ann. to be paid half yearly 3s. 4d. at our Lady day & 3s. 4d. at St. Michaell th'archangell. to be tendered to the churchwardens on the communion table or within 7 dayes after the said feaste at farthest. beinge lawfully demanded by the churchwardens of the said parish. who ar to bestowe the said mony with the consent of ye Parson then beinge on the parish church or things necessarie thereunto. And if it be unpaid the churchwardens ar to distraine on the said land and ye distresse to take & carrie away & keep & detain till the mony behind be

paid & the arreages or their charges ar satisfied. The house and land ar now in th'occupation of Robert Phillips who bought it of the heires of Mr. Nicholas Pearson

These thinges ar true We wittnes the same
Ita testor Thomas Pike John Covill
Rector ecclesiæ de Keston John Brown.
Ano Dm 1637

TM - 1

The document is in the writing of Mr. Pike. Mr. Smith, rector 1661-78, has added: "Copia hæc vera sic correcta. Edw. Smith. Rector." His correction was to cross out the words "or sell" and substitute "& keep & detain."

Joane the wife of Nicholas Pearson was buried on the 25th November, 1615, and he "married by license" Judith Busset on 29th January, 1616; not with such haste as would at first sight appear, for until 1752 the calendar year ended on the 24th March, so that he was a widower for 14 months.

Next we notice Mr. Pike, who became rector in 1627, and had a long incumbency in troublous times, for the period of the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth was one of ecclesiastical anarchy. In 1640 a Committee was appointed to deal with "scandalous ministers," *i.e.*, clergy who were loyal to Church and King. Puritan mobs wrecked and pillaged churches, and Keston did not escape, for Mr. Pike writes in the register: "1645. On the 23 of Aprill our church was defaced our font thrown downe and new formes of prayer appointed." The next two baptisms are noted as having taken place at Farnborough. In that year the House of Commons abolished the Book of Common Prayer, and established in its stead the "Directory for the Public worship of God in the Three Kingdoms." It became a crime to use the prayer book publicly or privately. The advent of Oliver Cromwell to supreme power in 1653 affected the clergy even more severely. In 1654 he appointed a committee in each county to enquire as to the learning and sufficiency of the beneficed clergy. Many clergy had been ejected from their benefices in 1643 on refusal to take the covenant, more in 1645 when the prayer book was forbidden, and most of those who had so

far retained their benefices were now ejected. A Commission of Enquiry into the value of Church Livings, dated 29th March, 1650, returned that "Keistone was a Parsonage having 10 acres of glebe land and an house belonging to it worth £40 per An., one Master Thomas Pike enjoying it." One wonders whether Master Pike was enjoying it. However, the registers of the parish seem to indicate that life here was comparatively unaffected by the turmoil, and Mr. Pike continued in office until his death on 17th January, 1657, his body being buried in the churchyard three days later.

The benefice was then vacant for almost a year till Robert Low became parson. There is an old worn slip of paper with this in his writing: "Memorandum that I Robt Low became Rector of Keston by vertue of ye grat seale of Richard Lord Protector of ye Commonwealth of England Scotland etc. on ye 20th day of December in ye yeare 1658. Anno nativitatis meae vicesim septimo" *i.e.*, in his 27th year. He died 13 months later. To the record of the burial in the churchyard in the neat handwriting of Edward Smith his successor "Robert Low Rector of Keston buried Jan" someone has inserted "Pretended" before "Rector" and somebody else has added "N.B. One of Cromwel's Parsons." Evidently he was looked upon as an intruder, and his death was indeed timely, for in the year that he died the monarchy was restored and the Presbyterian and Independent ministers were ejected from the benefices to which Cromwell had appointed them.

It was during the incumbency of Mr. Edward Smith that, in order to encourage the wool trade by "lessening the importation of linen from beyond the sea," an Act was passed (in 1666) to the effect that all corpses should be buried in woollen material. Twelve years later a second Act was passed with more stringent regulations, ordering an affidavit signed by a magistrate to be brought to the minister within eight days; but in 1680 a concession was made allowing the affidavit to be signed by a minister. It should be remembered that until 1700 only wealthy

people were buried in coffins: for others, the parish kept a shell in which the body, wrapped round with material, was carried to the grave, where it was taken out and buried. The following is a copy of an affidavit found in the register chest of this parish:—

I John Blow of the Parish of St. Clements Danes in the County of Middlesex maketh Oath, that Jane Remington widdow of the Parish of St. Andrew Holbon in the county aforesaid, lately deceased, was not put in, wrapt, or wound up, or buried in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet, or Shroud made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver or other than what is made of Sheep's Wool only; nor in any coffin, lined or faced with any Cloth, Stuff, or any other Thing whatsoever made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold or Silver, or any other material, contrary to the late Act of Parliament for burying in woollen, but Sheep's Wool only: Dated the fifth day of May in the fourth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Brittain France and Ireland—Defender of the Faith &c and in the year of our Lord God—

Sealed and subscribed by us who were present, and Witnesses to the Thos. Harrison. Swearing of the aforesaid Affidavit . Willim Blow.

I Richard Mason, minister, do hereby certifie That the Day and Yeare abovesaid, the said John Blow came before me, and made such Affidavit as is above mentioned, according to the late Act of Parliament intitled An Act for burying in Woollen. Witness my Hand this Day and Year above written.

Richard Mason.

George Taylor, rector 1691-1704, was married in Keston church on the 10th April, 1694, to Sarah Lee of London "by Virtue of a License."

Christopher Clarke is the next rector to note. Educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was ordained priest in Lambeth Chapel in 1697 by John, Bishop of Norwich, in the presence of Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy. He was chaplain to James, Earl of Derby, and was curate of Downe in 1696, resigning in 1714 when he took the rectory of Hayes. Meanwhile he had been appointed rector of Keston in 1704, and he resigned Hayes in 1733. Second son of a wealthy apothecary of Norwich of some note then, after the death of his eldest brother who died without issue, Mr. Clarke succeeded to Marlingford hall and estate in

Norfolk, of which town he thus became lord and patron. On the elevation of Archdeacon William Trimmell to the see of Norwich, he became Archdeacon of Norwich on 22nd February, 1721. He was a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and one of the Governors of the Bath Hospital then newly established. He married Jane, daughter of Edmund Smith, rector of Westborough in Lincolnshire, who sometime resided at Keston Mark and was buried here, having by his will augmented this living "in case his daughter died without issue." Mr. Clarke died childless and his estate passed into possession of Thomas Green of Gray's Inn. He appears to have been a kind and charitable man, and his death in 1742 was much regretted. He was one of the benefactors of Bromley College founded by John Warner, bishop of Rochester, for the benefit of 20 widows of loyal and orthodox clergymen: his name appears on the second of the four large tablets on the walls of the interior of the college, as a donor of five guineas towards repairs. In Mr. Clarke's time, chiefly at his own expense, Keston church underwent a restoration; and in the register he has left the following record of his works: "The 8th day of November 1716 ye New Font was set up in the Church. And in the year 1729 the New Barn & Stable were built. The Font only a Parish Charge. Six new seats erected in the Body of the Church 1732. And the Gallery built for Young Men & Servants 1733 all at the charge of the Minister. The Springhead made into a well for the Publick good April 1736 by the said Minister, and to be called The Arch-Deacon's Well."

William Best the next rector was son of Thomas Best "yeoman of Blackness Farme" in the parish. He was baptised in the church, presumably by Mr. Clarke, on the 29th October, 1709, and has left this record of his induction: "William Best, D.D., Vicar of St. Laurence, Jewry, London, was collated to the Rectory of Keston by his Grace John Lord Archbishop of Canterbury June 7th An Dom 1742 & inducted on the 10th of the same month

by the Revd Mr Sandford Minister of St Mary Aldermanbury Lond & in the Presence of John Lloyd Lectur^r of St George Middlx Miss Mary Cutts & Others." He was author of "An Essay upon the Service of the Church of England, considered as a Daily Service: to which is added the present state of the Daily Service throughout the bills of mortality" 1746; and also published in the same year a sermon entitled "The Royal Soldier."

William Wilson, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, who was collated in 1799 on the 29th May, died on the 26th March following. The story is told of him that he was presented to the benefice on the recommendation of the Bishop of Lincoln to the Prime Minister (Pitt), and was found dead in his bed, frightened to death by the loneliness of the place. He missed the companionship of the collegiate life to which he had been accustomed, and was so shy that he did not make new friends. However, his successor, Joseph William Martin, was made of sterner stuff; he endured the loneliness for no fewer than 58 years, and died rector of Keston in his 83rd year, being buried in the churchyard.

Thomas Scott Huxley, during his short incumbency, repaired and partly rebuilt the house on the west side of the church which until 1925 was the official residence of the rector, but was then sold as being too large. He also commenced the restoration and enlargement of the parish church, which was carried to completion by his successor Charles Henry Wright.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ONE of the effects of the Reformation was to render superfluous many of the costly and elaborate ecclesiastical vestments and articles which had hitherto been necessary adjuncts to the services; and in consequence of information that some of such church goods had been embezzled or removed contrary to his express commands, Edward VI in 1552 issued a commission to enquire into the whole matter, and to make a return in writing to the Privy Council. It was ordered that as many of the old vestments or utensils as were necessary to the due and proper performance of the reformed services should be preserved to the use of the church "leaving . . . in every Parish Church or Chappell of common resort, one, two, or more Chalices or Cups, according to the multitude of the People in every such Church or Chappell, and also such other Ornaments as by their discretion shall seem requisite for the Divine Service in every such place for the time."

The Public Record Office possesses a collection of these inventories, and among them is the list relating to the church goods at Keston, which is here given in full:—

KESTON—XXIII November VI Ed. VI.

Robert *Barrett, parson : Thomas Comfort, Churchwarden.
First one chalice with the patent of silver weyng vi ouncts and
iiij quarters.

Item iiij small bells of brasse suted in the steple, on handbell of
brass, and one smale sacryng bell.

Item on crosse cloth of lynnen painted.

Item iiij banner clothes of lynnen clothe painted and iiij staves
to them belonging.

Item on surplesse, and on rochett of lynnen clothe, and one
funte cloth of lynnen.

* ?Garret.

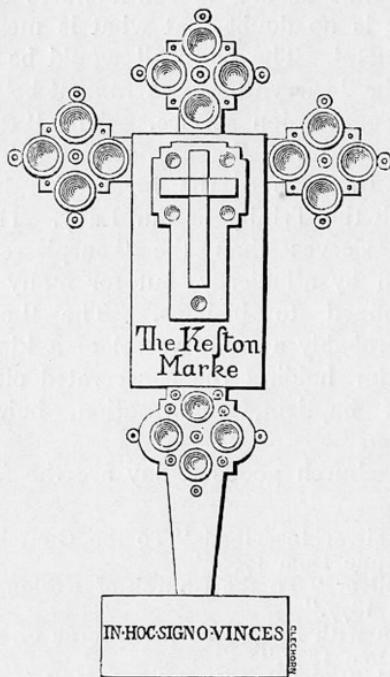
Item on old dyaper towell, and ij other of playne clothe.
Item ij alter clothes one of diaper & thother of playne clothe,
& an olde alter clothe to hange before the Alter of
thred & silke wrought together.
Item one crysmatory of latten, one crosse of copper & gilte
with a staff belonging thereto.

With regard to these goods: the "bells of brasse suted in the steple" were for ringing to service. The term "bells of brasse" sounds absurd to bell-founders of the present day; but there is no doubt that what is meant is bells of ordinary bell-metal. The handbell would be used for processions, and the "sacryng" or sacrament bell in the course of the Holy Communion service. The "crosse cloth of lynnен" was used for the purpose of veiling the cross during Lent. In some of the inventories it is described as painted with the Trinity or our Lady. The "rochett" had narrower sleeves than the "surplesse," and was originally worn by all clergy, but for many years now it has been confined to bishops. The "crysmatory of latten" was probably a small vessel of a kind of brass or mixed metal, for holding the consecrated oil used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and extreme unction.

Among the church goods to-day are the following altar vessels:—

One chalice of silver inscribed "To the Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1709."
One flagon of silver "To the Church of Keston in Kent Anno Domini 1877."
One silver paten with foot, "To the Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1847."
One pewter dish "To, the Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1709."
One chalice and paten of silver with no inscription, dating from 1889.
One brass alms dish "Keston Church the Gift of Nancy Anderson Whit Sunday 1901."
One silver paten "The Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1925."
One chalice of silver "To the Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1929." "The Gift of William Henley Dodgson."
One paten of silver "The Church of Keston in Kent Anno Dom 1929."
One chalice and paten of silver "Keston Church 1930."

The altar in the parish church is interesting. In the course of the 1877 restoration, it was found to be in a decayed state, and it was necessary to replace the legs and some other parts, but the 17th century top was retained and incorporated in the new work. Besides the four crosses, one in each corner, in the centre are a couple of crosses



inlaid with a device formed of different woods. It is a cross bordonée, underneath which is written "In hoc signo vinces" and "The Keston Marke." A woodcut of the device is here reproduced, by permission of the Society of Antiquaries from *Archæologia* XXXVI at the end of a paper by Mr. Corner, who says that the device "seems to indicate that the clergy of that day sought to divert the thoughts of the people from a superstitious notion about

Keston Mark, to the Christian Mark of the cross." Mr. Akerman suggests that "this cross is a reproduction of a very early cross set up on the establishment of Christianity in this part of England, the earliest part of the island converted."

In 1887 the Dowager Countess of Derby gave a chime of six bells, and the bell cote was enlarged. The largest of these bells measures only 21 inches at the mouth, and weighs approximately two cwt., and it is safe to assume that this is the lightest set of six bells in the county. The bells bear the initials G.D.L. but no date, and are the work of Messrs. Lewis & Co., of Brixton. The ringing bell is slightly larger than the biggest bell of the chime, and bears the inscription: "Thomas Bartlet made me 1621." The chime of four bells in St. Audrey's was cast by Messrs. Mears & Stainbank, of Whitechapel, 1888.

The organ in the parish church, also the work of Messrs. Lewis & Co., was acquired in 1908, while that in St. Audrey's was constructed by Messrs. Henry Jones & Sons, of South Kensington.

The font in St. Audrey's was formerly in the parish church, having been put in by Christopher Clarke in 1709, and taken out in 1880 to make way for the present font. It was placed in St. Audrey's in 1889 by Mr. G. Buchanan, of Towerfields, Keston, into whose hands it came on the purchase of the Poplars, the residence in 1880 of Mr. M. J. Powell, one of the churchwardens, to whom Mr. Huxley had sent it in that year. The stand and cover are still missing, and the cracked basin stands on a wooden pedestal.

The oak reredos in St. Audrey's is a memorial to Alfred Torrens and Edward his son, and the brass eagle lectern to "E.H. 1908." The oak lectern in the parish church commemorates Catherine Ferguson Davey, 1868.

CHAPTER NINE

PARISH registers were instituted by the Injunctions of Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-General, dated 5th September, 1538. These injunctions, issued in the very year of the dissolution of the greater monasteries by the man who was chief agent in their dissolution, were naturally received with mixed feelings; and rumour had it that he intended to levy a tax on the ministering of the sacraments. However, the then rector of Keston lost no time in obeying the order.

The original registers were paper books, deemed perishable and unsuitable for permanent records: so in 1597 the Convocation of Canterbury ordered parchment registers to be provided, the old paper registers to be transcribed therein. This direction was embodied in Canon 70 of 1603. So we find the first volume of the registers of this parish headed:—

“ The Register booke of all Christenings Mariages & Burialls w^{ch} have happened wthin the parishe of Keston from A^o 1541 untill A^o 1603.”

And all the entries for that period are well written in one hand, whereas after that year the entries are made in different hands, and to the above heading there have been subsequently added some words which seem to be “ et ye ffollowinge daies.” The first entry is dated 1540.

Some of the entries are of more than ordinary interest:

1570 Thomas Comporte a man of 100 yeares of age before he dyed was buried ye	18th September.
1581 Thomas Allen slayne at Treblehill as it was supposed with a carte buried	

1582 Elizabeth Steven the wief of Tho: Steven 15 Ffbruary.
 1604 Thomas Steven buried the 21 of Septembr a man of 103
 yeares olde before he dyed.

Terrible outbreaks of the oriental or bubonic plague occurred in London in 1603 and 1665, and Keston did not escape :—

1603 A woeman wth her child were } buried of ye plague ye } 29th July.
 Richard Adams ye 6 of August.
 Judith May ye 24 of August.

And here apparently is a whole family, in three weeks :—

1603 Peter ye sonne of Thomas Sanders } who dyed of ye plague & was } buried } 8th September.
 Joan ye daughter of Thomas Sanders } 19th September.
 Martha Sanders ye 22 of September.
 Anne Sanders ye same day.
 Thomas Sanders ye 24 of September.
 Elizabeth Sanders ye same day.
 James ye son of ye said Thomas 30 September.

1665 Sept 22 Joan the wife of John Wright buried. } of ye plague
 Octob 5 Mary the daughter of } as was
 William Covill buried } suspected.

Here is a tragedy :—

1616 Henry Baker buried ye 27th March.
 Martha ye daughter of ye said Henry 3rd April.
 Alice ye wyfe of the said Henry ye 22nd April who
 desperatelie drowned herself.

Some entries are quaint :—

1632 A man child of Thomas Newman wch died presently after
 he was borne was buried the 10th of December.
 1638 A poore maide about 20 yeares buried the 1 of Januarie
 her name was Marie Robinson.
 1703 Robin ye miller buried March ye 13th 1703.

Another tragedy :—

1716 Mr. Henry Burton late Chaplain to his Majesty's ship
 Valeur being distracted stabb'd himself with his sword
 at a poor Cottage on Bromley Comon; but coming
 to himself was very Penitent, & continued so for a

fortnight after, his wounds were in a fair way of Recovery, but he ventur'd abroad & caught cold & relaps'd into ye like plurisy & Asthma, wch he had before the unhappy Accident. All wch circumstances being consider'd, & a Coroner's inquest thereupon acquitting him of Self Murder, he was allow'd Christian Burial February 23rd 1716.

N.B. I visiting him under this Misfortune
He desir'd to be Buried at Keston.

In the latter half of the 18th century there are burials of people named Pepys, Pipys or Peeps, some of whom lived in the parish and some in London, including "Mr. John Pepys Watchmaker of St. Bridgets comonly Brydes in the City of London," probably descendants of the diarist.

At about the same time various local place names make their appearance in the registers. A husbandman "at ye holly bush" brings his child to be baptised, another man comes from "Hungry haven," while another lives "in the Slade," and another is "of the Hop Garden." A map of 1770 shows "the Slead" about two-thirds of the way along the road from Keston Mark to Locks Bottom, and Hungry haven on the left hand side of the road from the Fox Inn to Coney Hill. The hop garden was quite near the parish church, being the ten acre field bounded on the north by Jackass lane, and on the east by Blackness lane.

It may be convenient to give here a list of field-names which appear in the manor court rolls: Graysdene, Coxecroft, Holwoodsdowne, Pipers, Little Okisland, Oakfelde, The Harpe or Hoke or Hoyle, Pricklandes, Kitchincroft, Farthingdene, Polters, Longecroft, Whetstones, Mechesdene, Kingsdene, Loamepittfield, Little Breach, Great Breach, Chalkefeild, Broomfield, Symcocks, Barnefeild, Myery Grove alias Tollers Brooke, Leavye grove, Padmills Parketts, Parhams, Meates Deane, Chalcroft, Shott's land, Fallowfield green, Southcourt wood. Few of these names appear in the map made after the survey of the parish in 1840 in connection with the commutation of tithe, most of the fields being then designated by their acreage.

The highway across Leaves Green from the south, which

Dr. and Mrs. Howarth (in their *History of Downe* recently published) tell us is named Wallstreet on a fifteenth century map, originally passed along Blackness lane and probably straight on along the present footpath to Warbank, turning left along Jackass lane to Priors, and right to pass the church for Downe and Farnborough, with a turning to the left just before the church leading past the pound to the Fox Inn and Hayes Common.

The road running south from Keston Mark originally went over the top of Holwood hill by way of Mantle hole to Downe. A survey of the manor made in 1632 shows Holwood house eastward of the road.* In 1770 the course of the road was changed to bring the house to the west of the road, in order to unite the house to some ornamental grounds which Robert Burrow had added to the estate: at the same time apparently, the road was diverted to join the Downe and Farnborough road (Shire lane) near the church, instead of at Mantle hole, the original length of road becoming a footpath—which it still is. In 1790 the whole road was made to pass over the western shoulder of the hill, in order to incorporate into Holwood estate the additions made by Pitt, the old road (dotted on the map at the beginning of this volume) becoming a drive through the estate. Two other lengths of road were made at about the same time, the trustees of the Bromley-Westham road recouping themselves by a toll-gate across the road at the northern end of Leaves Green where Paygate cottage still stands as a reminder of it. The 1790 additions are shown in black and white on the map, so that the course of the ancient trackways in the parish can be the more easily seen.

The parish is oblong in shape: approximately two miles long and one broad. The acreage according to the Ordnance survey is 1,486, though the tithe commutation survey makes it a hundred less, and estimates the common land at 53 acres.

* The present house does not stand upon the site of the old one.

The first census of the population was taken in 1801, when there were 183 people in the parish; in 1811 there were 216; 1821, 252; 1831, 391; 1841, 568; 1851, 644; 1861, 690; 1871, 717; 1881, 731; 1891, 746; 1901, 832; 1911, 986; 1921, 1,029; and in 1931 there were 1,728.

CHAPTER TEN

MONASTERIES were centres for the relief of the poor, and their dissolution resulted in parish churchwardens being charged by statute with this duty out of voluntary contributions which, under ecclesiastical persuasion, the parishioners were expected to make. It was enacted in 1572-3 that the aged and infirm should be cared for by overseers of the poor, a new authority. In 1601 a law was passed providing for a general assessment upon parishioners, and an act of 1691 gave the magistrates controlling powers over the assessment and spending of the poor rate.

Among the parish records is a rate book beginning in 1709. At a meeting of the vestry in the parish church "An Assessment for the Relief of the Poor of the Parish" at so much in the £ would be made, and the following declaration signed by those present: "We whose names are subscrib'd to this Assessment, being Inhabitants of the Parish have seen & perus'd the same, & the several sums therein mention'd are by our Approbation rated upon the Respective Persons according to ye best of our Judgments." Then three justices would give a certificate in these terms: "We whose Hands are hereunto subscribed and Seals put, her Majties Justices of the Peace for the sd County (Quorum unus) do allow & Confirm the within mentioned Assessmt Amounting to . . . And do Apoynt . . . Together with the Presant Churchwardens to Collect the same and to Distribute it According to Law." At the end of the year "All the Accounts of . . . of the Parish of Keston Overseer stated and allowed by us in Vestry." Although not always were the accounts passed

by the parishioners, for the overseer's accounts for 1714 contained the item : " Spent att the bonfiers 07.06," against which was written by the rector : " Allow'd now, but never to be so any mor." Then the accounts were carried to the justices and they would certify : " We her Majts Justices of the Pease for the said County of Kent whose hands and seals are hereunto sett have examined the within written accounts & also a list of those buried in Woollen for the year last past and do allowe of the same."

The accounts show the overseer to have been a busy man of many parts, for there are expenses incidental to attending the quarterly sessions at Croydon, Rigate, Gilford, Madston, and even so far afield as Reading, for which last journey he had to hire a " hors " at a cost of six shillings, and to spend £1 10s. on the road upon himself and the witnesses he had to take with him ; and there were also frequent visits to London. These appearances before the magistrates were for determining the settlements of widows and children who had been left chargeable on the parish, and issuing warrants for those who had thus disposed of their family responsibilities. Sometimes there were Counsels and " Sillisitors " fees to be disbursed.

The poor were relieved in their own homes, and nurse children boarded out, for there were as yet no institutions. Clothes had to be provided, so we have :

for a pear of brechis for John harslut	02.02
for a pe aer of stokings for John harslut	00.09
paid for a waskekote for John harslut	02.04
paid to 2 Shifts for ye Wid burchfeild	05.09 ₁
Payed for to Shifts and a Pettecote for Susan Ivesson	06.06
Paid Mumford for Mending Dame Whiffins Shues	00.09
Paid for cloth to Mend old Chapman Shurts	00.07
for a Gown and Petty Cote and Making for Susan Preson	10.00

Occasionally a boy was apprenticed :—

paid for the Indenters for Roberd beadel	05.00
and paid his Master his mony	03.00.00

Then we have :

for Exspencis worning the alehous kepers	01.00
and we should like to know why.	

Other items are :

pade for a counstable staff for this parish	02.06
gave to Jone Semen that had a loss by fier	01.00
paid for a woman that was tackin ill	01.06
gave to a man with a pass	00.06
pade for nussin the man with the small pox	01.01.06
pade for a coffin for him	07.00
gave to a sick man on the rode	01.00
for 8 pd of muton for ould Wiffen	02.00
Paid for Bleeding Ann Lance	01.00
payed to Chapman for Drink and Vitils	00.10
Gave som Saylers upon ye road	02.00
for a Coffen for the Parish	10.00
Payed Mr. Clark for Berreing of the man	02.00
Payed the Arterdaved and laying the man out	01.06
Bad money not Collected	09.00
for shaveing of nicolas odel	02.00
Exspences about parrish bisnes	06.00
for biere & tobaco	05.00
for carring William doltons wife to bethlem & the charges there	03.19.06

The prodigality of overseers and magistrates led to the establishment of "workhouses" or "houses of industry" in the middle of the 18th century, and a parish workhouse came into being, entries concerning it beginning in 1752 :—

Payed fore weeks for the Pore at the Workhous	01.03.00
Paid for Repairing the workhouse	10.09
Paid for wood for the workhouse	03.09
Paid for 2 Pans and a Dish and 2 spunes for the workhouse	00.06
Paid for a Porridge Pott for the workhouse	01.04
Paid John hosking for Beaf for ye workhous	02.07
Paid George Wallis for Bear for the workhouse	12.10

In the 19th century parish workhouses were replaced by workhouses for unions of parishes, managed by bodies of Guardians of the poor, and the parish workhouse was given over to private occupation.

There are two more entries in the rate book to notice :—

1750 May 4. Mem : at the said Vestry Mr. George Phillips agreed to take Susan Preston a Parish Girl for a year from the said 4th of May to find her in dyet & cloaths at two Guineas by the year.

1754 April 19. N.B. This was an illegal Vestry because held at a publick Ale House. W. Best. Rector.

The Vestry book, "No Book of Minutes having been heretofore kept," commences in 1795, when on April 14th there was a meeting "to take into consideration the most speedy and effectual means of raising this parishes proportion of men for the service of his Majesty's Navy." Knockholt, Farnborough, Chelsfield, Cudham, Down and Keston had to raise two men between them, and at this meeting one of the overseers was ordered to pay into the hands of the Regulating Captain the sum of £5 17s. 3d. as the proportion of the Parish of Keston towards raising the men.

1796 December 6th. Hayes and Keston had to raise one man, and "William Randall of High Wickham in the County of Bucks appear'd and offer'd himself to Serve the said Parishes whereupon he was chosen."

1826 February 19th. Permission given to Mr. John Ward of Holwood and Mr. Henry H. Smith to enclose three acres of common land "adjoining the Fish ponds and at the source of the Ravensbourne."

1830 April 1st. Permission to Mr. George Kadwell of Hayes to enclose a "piece of land adjoining his own property in the Parish of Keston on which land a School Room occupied by Miss Banks has been erected" in return for 12 loaves annually at "Xristmas."

1830 March 13th. Meeting at the Fox Public house "to determine and make a legal division of the road leading down to a farm calld Purgatory." It was decided by the magistrates present that a post should be fixed in the middle of the hill clearly defining the part which Hayes and Keston should for the future repair. This road is now known as Fox hill, and the farm as "Priors."

1834 April 3rd. Permission to "Mr. Wm Best to enclose a small piece of Parish land in the front of his Wheelers work shop on his rendering annually six Quartens loaves of good Bread"; and that the "tenant of the Fox Public House should be permitted to enclose a small piece of Parish land in the front of his house on his rendering annually four Quartens loaves of good Bread."

1831 November 17th. "That the Parish of Keston should repair & widen the road extending from the sheep sheds to the boundary of the said Parish towards Farnborough. And that permission should be granted to John Ward Esq. of Holwood to make at his own expence a new road through his premises at the back of the houses at Mantle Hole from the Down Road to the aforesaid sheep sheds the Parish consenting that the said John Ward Esq. should enclose the old road as his own property."

1843 June 15th. Agreed to sell the 30 acres enclosed by Pitt in 1790 to John Ward for £300.

1851 January 24th. Vestry "approves and assents to" the Mid-Kent and Dover Railway Bill.

1856 June 19th. Permission to the Hon Lady Caroline Legge to enclose a rood of land on the common close to the lower pond on her covenanting to pay ten shillings to the parish on Christmas eve every year.

1863 June 18th. Two persons nominated "to point out the parish bounderies to the persons employed in making the Ordinance Survey as directed by the Court of General Sessions."

1863 July 30th. Appointed "two suitable persons to fill the offices of Collectors of the Property and Income Tax for the year ensuing."

1873 April 1st. "It was found by a notice from the Magistrates at Maidstone that the appointment of a Parish Constable was unnecessary." Before there was any organised police force, in villages a parish constable was appointed by the jury at the court leet, or where no such court was held, by two justices. Owing to the formation of police forces some thirty years earlier, in 1872 an Act was passed which provided that for the future no parish constables should be appointed unless the justices in quarter sessions should think it necessary.

The local government act of 1894 took the civil administration of the parish from the churchwardens and overseers appointed by the vestry, and gave it to a council specially appointed for the purpose.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THERE are traces of three windmills in the parish. One is said to have been situated just above Wilberforce's Oak in Holwood, and all that now remains is a small space of level ground where it formerly stood. The date or the reason for its removal are not known, but it is not marked upon a map made in 1632, though a large field on the north side of the church is named "Mill Feilde" on that map, and there are references in the Manor Court Rolls to the "Great Mill Field." This field is not to be confused with the mill field mentioned in chapter 1, where another mill stood on the site of St. Audrey's mission church and was latterly known as Olive's mill; it was so damaged by a severe gale on an Oxford and Cambridge boat race night in the seventies of last century, that it had to be demolished. The third mill still stands on the western margin of Keston common, and is a post mill, with the date 1716 upon the mill post, a fine solid piece of timber two feet square. The sails were damaged by the gale just referred to, since when the mill has been but an interesting relic of bygone days. In 1913 Mr. A. R. Powys, secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, inspected the building, and on his recommendation the weather boarding which encloses the whole of the upper structure was renewed, and the framework strengthened with iron plates and additional beams. Much of the old machinery remains, and two of the stones are still in their places.

In Padmill wood there is a bank which is said to be the remains of a water mill, worked by the river Ravens-

bourne which takes its rise from Cæsar's well, a mile away. At the end of the 18th century the well was used as a public bath, a small building being erected on its brink to serve as a dressing room, twelve trees planted by Mr. Burrow and a fence of palings screening it from the public



KESTON WINDMILL.

gaze. The new piece of road to take the place of the old road which now ran through Holwood as the result of Mr. Pitt's enclosure of thirty acres of the common, passes so close to the well that its privacy was destroyed, and the trees were grubbed up and the building was left exposed and allowed to fall to pieces. The road from the point

where it passes the well and ascends towards Westerham is still known as Coldbath hill. The water had the reputation of possessing the virtue of curing persons afflicted with weak or rheumatic limbs. In Hasted's view of the entrenchments, in his *History of Kent*, there is shown a small path leading down to the well, which Mr. Thorpe who contributed the plate calls "the antient road to the spring."

There have been several conjectures as to the circumstance which obtained for the stream its romantic name of Ravensbourne. Harris supposes that our ancestors had a fancy to liken this, the Medway and the Cray, to three birds, the raven, the eagle and the crow. Some suppose the word to be a corruption of "Romansbourne." Others think that it is named after the "raefin," the banner of the Danes, since during the reign of Ethelbert, the Danish fleet lay for two or three years at Deptford where the stream runs into the Thames, its mouth serving the Danes as a harbour, and the raefin being often displayed on its banks. But there is a story that when Cæsar and his army were encamped upon Holwood hill, they were in distress for water, being unable to find any in the vicinity. One day a soldier saw a raven alight near the camp, and dive his beak into the turf. Concluding that it was for the purpose of quenching its thirst, the next coming of the bird was watched for, and the spot particularly noted; the result being the discovery of the stream, and the naming of it for ever after.

The ponds into which the stream from the well now flows were made at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Mr. John Ward, then owner of Holwood, for the purpose of supplying his house with water; and remained the property of the owners of Holwood until 1926, when Lord Stanley presented them to the parish to form part of the common, in order that the area of the common might not be diminished by the building of the village hall upon part of it. The middle pond was a gravel pit, and near by it is the ram by which the water was forced up to the house at Holwood.

From the well of water on one side of the common we pass easily to the well of knowledge on the other. "Keston National School was erected under the superintendance of the Rev. Joseph Wm Martin, rector of the Parish in the year 1855, on a portion of Keston Common conveyed in trust for that purpose to the Rector and Churchwardens for the time being and their successors by Indenture executed by the Rev. Sir Charles Francis Farnaby Bt on the 11th day of June, 1855. Which said Trust Deed provided that the School shall be in union with and be conducted according to the principles of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the Church of England. And the principal officiating minister of the Parish shall have the superintendance of the religious and moral instruction of all the scholars, and also the management of the Sunday School. But in other respects the control and management of the school shall be vested in a committee consisting of the principal officiating minister his licensed curate or curates if thereto appointed by him, the Churchwardens if members of the Church of England, and five other persons." Lord Cranworth was one of the first five appointed, and although he was Lord High Chancellor of England, he managed to find time to attend the meetings and take the chair.

The annual report, dated 14th April, 1859, states "The school having been closed for a short time in consequence of a change of teachers was re-opened under a certificated Master and Mistress in the end of January, 1859." The following year's report shows them then to be "assisted by a candidate Pupil Teacher who aids them in instructing the junior classes." Mr. and Mrs. Lockyear became master and mistress in January, 1859; he died in 1863, and the committee met to appoint their successors. Mr. and Miss Osborne "the only candidates who came before the Committee withdrew their application on the ground of Miss Osborne wishing to spend Sundays frequently in London not being acceded to by the Committee." However, on the 8th January, 1864, "an agreement was made with Mr. and

Mrs. Carrington to be the Master and Mistress of the School." Two months later we find that correspondence had passed between the secretary and the schoolmaster, and it was agreed (by the committee) that the schoolmaster had not been acting rightly, but as he had written an apology he ought to have further trial.

In January, 1866, Mr. Netttingham, of Ascot Heath School, and his wife were appointed, and soon after "a new piggery was consented to be built at the request of Mr. Netttingham," who subsequently appears to have "not attended to duties which the Committee thought to be necessary, 1st the teaching of a night school 3 nights in the week from 7 to 9 o'clock, charging 1d. a night to each in attendance, 2nd playing the [church] organ in the holidays, 3rd to procure his wife to teach in the Sunday school." He resigned on the 31st March, 1868, and on the last day of that year Mr. L. M. Weston and his sister Fanny were appointed after having had charge of the school two months on trial. In 1874 Mr. and Mrs. Shergold were master and mistress for a few months; at the beginning of April that year Mr. and Mrs. Peate; and on the 1st October, 1876, Mr. and Mrs. E. Sears came into office and held it until 1890, when on the 25th July Mr. F. G. Taylor, B.A., was appointed with an assistant mistress. A new infants' class room was built; and in the following year, in consequence of the adoption of the Free Education Act, children's school pence ceased to be collected, one penny a week having up till now been charged for a child under eight, and two-pence for a child over that age, the balance of the cost of running the school coming from a Government grant and donations from parishioners. A new class room, boys' cloak room, and other additions were made in 1899, and the master's house was enlarged in 1906. Mr. Taylor retired in 1924, and was succeeded by Mr. Harold Mainwood, B.A., who resigned on appointment as Head of Stratford-on-Avon Central School in 1926, being followed by Mr. Ernest Hawkins in January, 1927. Mr. Frederick Richard Godden, the present head teacher, was appointed by the School Managers as from the 1st October, 1934.

and the only one known to have been born in Keston, was John Bealknap, a native of the village, who became a Justice of the Peace in 1362, and in 1366 was appointed King's Sergeant. He was a man of great energy and influence, and was a member of the council of nobles summoned to meet at Nottingham in 1386, to consider the conduct of the judges in the trials of Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and of other nobles.

CHAPTER TWELVE

AMONG those who have dwelt in Keston or been connected with the place are some whose deeds have been recorded, and of whom it is possible to give biographical details.

SIR Robert de Bealknap was in 1366 appointed King's Sergeant, at the same time doing duty as one of the Justices of Assize; and in 1374 he was made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, but was not knighted until 1385. In 1381 on the outbreak of the Wat Tyler insurrection against the poll tax, he was sent into Essex with a commission of trialbaston to enforce observance of the law, but the insurgents compelled the Chief Justice to take an oath never more to sit in any such sessions, and Bealknap was only too glad to escape without suffering personal violence. In 1386 the impeachment of Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, for corruption and waste of the revenues, was followed by transfer of the administrative authority to a council of nobles responsible to parliament. The king at the instigation of his friends summoned the judges to a council at Nottingham in the next year; and they were asked whether the late ordinances by which Pole had been dismissed were derogatory to the royal prerogative, and in what manner their authors ought to be punished. The questions were answered in a sense favourable to the king, and a formal act of council was drawn up embodying the questions and answers and sealed with the seal of each judge; though Bealknap protested with some vigour against the whole proceeding, but yielded eventually to the threats of death with which the Duke of Ireland and the Duke of Suffolk plied him. Early next year all the judges who

had subscribed to this document (except one who was summarily executed) were removed from their offices, arrested and sent to the Tower by order of parliament on a charge of treason. They pleaded that they had acted under compulsion and menace of death; nevertheless they were sentenced to death with the consequent attainder and forfeiture of land and goods, but at the intercession of the bishops the sentence was commuted to one of banishment to Ireland, the attainder however not being removed. As already stated the wives and friends of the judges had to administer their estates, and to provide subsistence allowances out of the profits, the amount of Bealknap's allowance being £40 a year. The judges were recalled to England in 1397, in which year an act of restitution was passed by which Bealknap and his colleagues were restored to their rights, but the act was annulled two years afterwards upon the accession of Henry IV. Bealknap appears to have died in 1400, since he did not join his companions in adversity when in 1401 they petitioned parliament for removal of the attainder. His grave in Keston church has been described in chapter six.

JAMES O'Hara, second Lord Tyrawley, 1690-1773, was distinguished for brilliant qualities of mind, but his vicious mode of life obtained for him unenviable notoriety. He was created Baron Kilmaine during the lifetime of his father, after having served with bravery and distinction in all the wars of Queen Anne's reign, and being severely wounded while fighting under his father (who was also wounded) at the battle of Almanza in 1707 when only 17 years old, and was lame for the rest of his life and "literally covered with the scars of war." In 1728 he was appointed Envoy Extraordinary to the court of Portugal, where he remained as Ambassador until 1741, returning to England "with three wives and Fourteen children." He was Ambassador to Russia 1743-5, Field Marshal 1763, and also Governor of Portsmouth. Once more in 1752 he was Ambassador to Portugal, and also Governor of Minorca until 1756.

JOHN Calcraft the elder, born 1726, was the son of a Grantham solicitor. Through the influence of the Marquis of Granby he obtained a small clerkship in the Pay Office or Commissariat Department, but his astounding rise to wealth and power was due to the patronage of Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland. When Fox became Paymaster General he appointed him agent for as many regiments as he could, and later to the lucrative position of deputy Commissary General of Musters. After a time Calcraft withdrew from the civil service, and devoted himself entirely to his business as an Army agent or quasi banker and contractor to the Forces, in which position he found his knowledge of the greatest utility and speedily secured a "revenue superior to any nobleman's estate in the Kingdom." He "riots in the plunder of an army" was the expressive phrase in which Junius afterwards summed up the general estimate of his profits. In 1763 Calcraft deserted the cause of Fox for his more illustrious rival, throwing himself with characteristic energy into the task of reconciling Pitt with the other discontented politicians; and in the same year he was ejected from his post of deputy Commissary General. In 1768 he was returned as member of parliament for the city of Rochester, and continued to represent it until his death, which took place at Ingress Abbey, Belvedere, 23rd August, 1772. Calcraft made large purchases of landed property, and was reputed to possess estates worth £10,000 per annum. He became the owner of the manor of Wareham in 1767, and subsequently purchased the chief part of the town, his body being buried at St. Mary's there, and a monument erected to his memory in the chancel.

GEORGE Anne Bellamy was born at Fingal in Ireland on St. George's day. According to her "Apology" she was born in 1733; she afterwards substituted 1731 for that, supplying a copy of her birth certificate, but the year 1727 is given without comment by Chetwood in 1749, and is more probable. Her mother was a quakeress, daughter of a rich farmer at Maidstone, and eloped from a boarding school with Lord Tyrawley, then Ambassador at Lisbon, where

she married Capt. Bellamy, master of a trading vessel. The birth shortly afterwards of George Anne (so named in mistake for "Georgiana") led to the immediate disappearance of the captain. Lord Tyrawley acknowledged paternity of the infant, and sent her when five to a convent at Boulogne until she was eleven, when she returned to England and lived in St. James's street with a peruke-maker who was formerly in the service of his lordship. Her name appears in the bill for Covent Garden for the 27th March, 1742, and she rose rapidly in her profession. Those who are minded to do so, can read her subsequent adventures in "An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy, late of Covent Garden Theatre, written by herself," which was published in six volumes in 1785, three years before her death. She was said to be married to Mr. Calcraft.

WILLIAM Pitt was the second son of Lord Chatham and was born at Hayes Place in 1759, being baptised in Hayes Parish Church. In January, 1781, he took his seat in the House of Commons as member for Appleby, in the following year becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer, a remarkable position for a man of 23. In December, 1783, he was asked to form a government, and became First Lord of the Treasury and again Chancellor of the Exchequer; from which time, with a brief interval, he ruled the nation for twenty years. He died in 1806 and was accorded a national funeral, his remains being laid beside those of his father in Westminster Abbey, and a statue put there in his honour.

WILLIAM Wilberforce was a frequent visitor to Keston to see his friend William Pitt. In Holwood is an old tree called "Wilberforce's Oak," and under it a stone seat bearing the following inscription. "From Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, 1788. 'At length I well remember after a conversation with Mr. Pitt in the open air at the root of an old tree at Holwood, just above the steep descent into the vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice on a fit occasion in the House of Commons of my intention to bring forward the abolition of the slave trade.' Erected by Earl

Stanhope 1862. By permission of Lord Cranworth." On one of his visits, which happened at a week-end, he notes in his diary: "Sun. 31 July 1791. To Holwood Chapel," by which he must have meant Keston parish church. Three days before his death in 1833, he was told that the bill to give freedom to the slaves in the British Empire had been accepted by the House of Commons, and would



WILBERFORCE'S OAK.

be carried in the House of Lords; and he passed over happy in the knowledge that after fifty years of struggle the victory had been won.

ROBERT Monsey Rolfe, Baron Cranworth, was Lord High Chancellor of England from 1852 to 1866. A man of high personal character and strong common sense; a sound lawyer and an acute and patient judge; he had a seat on the judicial bench for 20 years before being entrusted with the great seal. There is an oil portrait of him by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery. He

died in 1868, and his remains rest in the churchyard beside those of his wife.

THOMAS Brassey (1805-1870) was a contractor who is said to have built 78 million pounds worth of railways in various parts of the world.

ROBERT Alexander, C.B., was born on the 2nd July, 1813, and was in the Bengal Civil Service from 1832 until 1861. He died in Switzerland on the 16th August, 1882, and is commemorated by two memorial windows in the chancel of Keston church.

GEORGE Wyndham Hamilton Knight Bruce, who was baptised in the church on the 7th June, 1852, became Lord Bishop of Bloemfontein in 1886 and of Mashonaland in 1891: the house named Heathfield was the home of his boyhood.

Although never a resident of Keston, Dinah Maria Mulock, better known as Mrs. Craik, expressed a wish that her body should be laid in Keston churchyard, and there it has lain since 1887, thirty years after she published the book by which she is principally remembered: *John Halifax, Gentleman*. In 1864 she married George Lillie Craik, a Scottish man of letters, and lived at Shortlands for the remainder of her life.

Passing now to bequests which have been made to the parish, we come first to William Crowland of West Wickham, who by his Will in 1521 left "To the church of Keston to the makynge of setts in the same church vjs. viijd."

Thomas Steven of Kestone, yeoman, by his Will dated 28th January, 1599, and proved the 28th April, 1607, thus stated his wishes: "To be buryed in the parrish church of Kestone soe neare vnto the corps of my late wief as conveniently maiebe. To the reparacion of the parrish church of Keston xxs. Item, I geve vnto the churchwardens of the saide parrishe to the vse of the parrishioners of the same parrishe one cup of syluer, nowe remayninge in the custodie of the parson of the same parrishe, to be allways used at the administracion of the sacrament of the Lords

Supper as heretofore vsuallie yt hathe been, for which onlie purpose I bought yt, and I will that the same cupp allwaies remaine in the custodie of the parson of the saide parrish nowe beinge and which for ye time shalbe to thonlie vse aforesaide."

"In memory of the execrable Gunpowder Plot, Sir Samuel Lennard bart in the year 1617 gave 20 shillings p. ann to the Minister [of West Wickham] to preach on the 5th of November and 40 shillings to 40 poor people, viz. . . . 10 of Keston . . . who are all to be present to hear the sermon. The land in Haies called Dockmead is charg'd with the payment of this money." The charge on the land has been commuted by a money payment.

In 1873 £300 was left for the benefit of the poor of this parish by the Will of Mr. F. Hastings Toone, but it does not appear how the money was disbursed.

Four years later the Rev. Joseph Thompson bequeathed £100 towards the cost of building a new church on Keston Common. The estate yielded only two-thirds of the legacy, which was paid into Court (where it still is) against the day when it is possible to use the money for the purpose for which it was left.

By the Will of Miss Ann Staples, of which probate was granted on the 3rd November, 1892, there was bequeathed "To the Rector of Keston the sum of £500 to be invested in $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Consols in the names of the Rector and of such other persons as shall be nominated by the Archbishop of the Diocese in Trust to apply out of the dividends a sum of £10 yearly towards apprenticing to some trade a boy or girl born in the Parish being the child of a poor tradesman handicraftsman or respectable labourer, it being nevertheless my express direction and intention that such child and his or her parents, and the person to whom such child shall be apprenticed, shall be all members of the Church of England, and I direct that the residue of the dividends shall be invested from time to time so as to accumulate at compound interest, and on the termination of any of the apprenticeship terms I direct that so much of the accumula-

tions as will realize the sum of £10, or any less sum, shall be paid to the apprentice whose apprenticeship shall so terminate if the apprentice has been of good behaviour during his apprenticeship; and I direct that this bequest shall be called 'Best's Gift,' in remembrance of her first cousin, Mr. John Best, of Blackness, who had wished to marry her, but she would not consent because of the kinship between them, and he had to content himself with making her his legatee.

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