

ITS ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION.

For some centuries Detling had not only a Manorial but even more closely an Ecclesiastical connection with Maidstone. When Archbishop Courtenay, at the close of the 14th century,* founded his College of secular priests in connection with All Saints' Church, besides other revenues with which he endowed it, he annexed to it the tithes of the neighbouring parishes of Detling and Loose; in return for which the Master and Fellows of the College became responsible for the spiritual ministrations of these daughter Chapelries as well as for those of the mother Church. Dr. John Wootten, the first Warden, included these chapelries in a bequest he made to the church of Maidstone.† Previous to Archbishop Courtenay's arrangement, however, it would seem as if Detling had its own resident priest, for the Subsidy Roll of the 46th of Edward III. (A.D. 1373) includes among its inhabitants the name of *Johannes Capellanus*, (John the Chaplain).‡ So long as the College remained intact, the plan adopted by Archbishop Courtenay met all the requirements of the small village:§ but when, on the dissolution of the College in the 1st year of Edward V.'s reign, the revenues as well as the patronage passed to the Crown, although "the Church was left through the King's favour to the inhabitants of the town," the entire income, (rents of land, tithes, etc.,) was granted to lay courtiers and favourites, and all that

* On the authority of a Bull of Pope Boniface IX., with the Royal licence, in the 19th year of Richard II.

† Gilbert's Memorials of All Saints, Maidstone, p. 44.

‡ See APPENDIX E.

§ The said Subsidy Roll gives only 25 heads of families,

remained in the form of stipend to the officiating minister was what he could obtain under the head of "oblations, obventions," etc., *i.e.* free-will offerings of the parishioners. This continued for some years, and the Church "suffered much from the scantiness of the provision made for a person properly qualified to undertake the care of so large and populous a parish" as Maidstone with its chapelries.* Still more did the outlying Chapelries suffer. A nominal provision had indeed been made, on the basis of an arrangement into which the College itself had entered before the Dissolution, for the leasing of "the farme of one barn in Detling with adjoining buildings and tithes of crops, to one John Scobard,† by indenture under the common seal of the college in the 28th Henry VIII." The whole was then valued at £7 6s. 8d., and it was stipulated that "a reprice" of £2 13s. 4d. should be paid annually to the Curate of the chapel of Detling.‡ But though a similar condition was inserted in the Grant of the lands, etc., to Sir Thomas Wyatt, (and again, when, on Wyatt's attainder, his estates reverted to the Crown, and Maidstone Manor was granted to Lord Cobham,) that the sum of £2 13s. 4d. should be paid annually "to the Curate of Detling for the celebration of Divine Service," yet it seems that the poor Curate often failed to receive even that pittance. Nor was it until the reign of Elizabeth that matters were placed on a better footing. Then Archbishop Parker obtained for the See of Canterbury the Grant of the Rectorial revenues, and also the Advowsons, or rights of patronage, of Maidstone

* Hasted's "History of Kent," vol. iv., p. 319.

† Spelt also *Stabard* and *Stubbard*.

‡ Chancery Certificates in the Augmentation Office A, 29, 2.

and its chapelries of Detling and Loose ; thus the stipends were at least secured as a permanent charge on the revenue of the See ; though the amount remained the same. The whole Rectorial tithes of the three parishes were leased at £74 a year ; out of which the sum of £38 4s. 4d. was divided in the following proportions ; “ to the chief priest of Maidstone £20, to each of his assistant priests £6 13s. 4d., and to the curates of Detling and Loose, each, £2 13s. 4d.” *

This sum, now so insignificant in amount, though 300 years ago it represented probably ten times its present value, was the stipend paid to “ the Curate” of Detling, as it is clear he was then called. For in the Chancery Certificate in the Augmentation Office already referred to, of 28th Henry VIII., he is styled “ John Wardroper, Clerk, Curate of the Chapel of Detling.” The title “ Vicar,” must however have been adopted soon after, for so early as the year 1571, the incumbent was so styled, as will be seen under the head of Vicars.

After the Restoration Archbishop Juxon included Detling among those benefices to which on account of their poverty an annual increase was made out of the reveues of the See,† and added £7 6s. 8d. In 1718, Archbishop Tenison bequeathed the sum of £200 towards augmenting the poor vicarage of Detling : to which the Governors of Queen Anne’s bounty added a similar sum, with which, in 1732, 50 acres were purchased in Detling, known as the “ Augmentation Land ” ; and 50 years after, in 1767, Sir Philip Boteler, a liberal landowner in the

* Hasted’s “ History of Kent,” vol. iv. p. 358. Under the title of a *Pension* this sum is to this day paid to the Vicar of Detling by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners out of the Archiepiscopal revenues, now in their hands.

† Ducarel’s Endowment of Poor Vicarages, p. 34.

parish, gave another £200, which was again met by a similar sum from the Bounty Office, and with this latter sum a small farm was bought in Frinsted, in 1789 ; but this was sold again in 1847, to Lord Kingsdown, and the proceeds invested by Queen Anne's Bounty, now producing about £40 a year. Of the farm in Detling, which originally comprised 50 acres, 20 were exchanged in 1831 by the Rev. R. Cobb, Vicar, for four acres of Rectorial glebe adjoining the old Vicarage, which now constitutes the Vicarage lawn and paddock.

At what period the smaller TITHES were detached from Maidstone and assigned to Detling it is difficult to trace ; for, in the lease from the College to Simon Scobard*— as also in the Patent Roll to Sir Thomas Wyatt,† of the 4th of Edward VI., and in the Grant to Christopher Roper, of 1st and 2nd of Philip and Mary,†— the land is in each case charged with the stipend to the Curate of Detling, but no mention is made of any other than Rectorial Tithes : such stipend was also charged on the lessee of the Rectorial tithes of Maidstone, and its chapelries, after they had been assigned by Elizabeth to the See of Canterbury. Indeed it is evident that so late as the year 1648 Detling was regarded as an adjunct to Maidstone, for in the Report of the Parliamentary Commission, then appointed, the following Memorandum occurs :—

“ Rectory of Maidstone and titheries of Detling and Luse (*sic*)

“ True and perfect survey taken by Edward Boys, and Samuel Chittenden, Esquires, Ralph Watte and George

* Chancery Certificate, Augmentation office, 28 Henry VIII. A. 29. 2.

† Patent Rolls in Public Record Office.

Northcote, Gents, the third day of April, A.D. 1648, of the Rectory of Maidstone, and tithery of Detling and Luse (*sic.*) &c.

"Imprimis we find the said Rectory and titheries to be in the occupacon of Nicholas Crispe, gent. ;

"Item, we find that to the Rectory of Maidstone there is neither house, barne, nor glebeland ;

"Item, we find that to Detling there is a barne* containyng three bayes, timber built, walde (walled) with borde, and covered with thatche ; &c."†

For any express record of the assignment of the Vicarial tithes to the Incumbent of Detling, we have sought in vain.

But the Parish Vestry books seem to throw a little light on the subject, and to suggest an ex-^{How farmed.}planation of the system which was known to have been often adopted up to fifty years ago. In the Rate-books there regularly occurs, during the last two centuries, under the name of the largest occupier of land, an entry of annual rating "for the Parsonage" which is quite distinct from another entry, for a very small amount, under the name of "the Vicar" for the time being. The latter probably refers to the then humble Vicarage itself: the former to something accruing to "the Parson" other than land,—of which there was then barely an acre, being only the ground on which the old Vicarage and garden stood. It is clear then that the system prevailed in this parish, as in so many others, of the tithes being "farmed" by one of the chief tenant farmers, and that he was rated on the amount he paid to the Vicar. Such amount we are thus able to learn from the Parish Rate books: early in the 18th

* This "barne," which is mentioned in each of the early Grants already quoted, stood until 1832 (when it was removed under a faculty for the erection of the present house) on the ground now laid out as the Vicarage lawn.

† Public Records' Parliamentary Commissioners' Report, vol. A f. 403, c. 105.

century it was £20 a year, then it rose to £25, and gradually towards the close of that century it reached £60, and then £70, and eventually, in 1834 £90; when however, two years after, the Tithe Commutation Act came into operation, the Rent-charge was fixed at £193: showing that not one half the real value of the tithes had ever been paid to the poor Vicar.

THE CHURCH.

The probable time of the original building of a Church in Detling must remain a matter of conjecture.

No records have been found to help us to any approximate date. A glance at the southern wall clearly tells us that those square-headed windows belong to a much later period than that in which the wall itself was erected; indeed, over the window to the east of the porch may be traced the curves of a pointed arch, while the rough rubble construction of this portion of the south wall as clearly indicates a much earlier date. A Church must have existed in Detling at least as early as the middle of the 13th century,—say, nearly 650 years ago,—for it is recorded in the “Plea Rolls” of the 30th year of Henry III. (A.D. 1252) that one “Juliana, the wife of Ralph de Bubehurst” was charged with complicity in a murder committed in Sussex, and “was taken and imprisoned in the Archbishop’s prison at Maydenestone, and escaped therefrom to the Church of Detlinen.”* And the south wall still standing must certainly have formed part of that building in which she found sanctuary. The south door, too, itself may have

The Church

Used for
Sanctuary
in 1252.

* Quoted in Farley’s “History of the Weald of Kent,” vol. ii. p. 33.