

THE CHURCH AND MANOR OF BROMLEY.

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THE Manor of Bromley has a history. It commences with Ethelbert and Offa, two Saxon kings who gave land in this place to the Church of Rochester. Ethelbert is remembered by the fact of his conversion to Christianity; and Offa by a less auspicious event, viz., that he murdered his son-in-law, and to atone, as he supposed, for his sin, adopted the convenient method of causing his people to pay an annual fine to Rome. Perhaps it was in one of his penitent moods that he conferred land upon the Church.

“The place which by the husbandmen is called Bromleg,” as the old charters have it, seems to have changed owners repeatedly. In 862 we find the name of Bromleg, indicating a tract of land, which the fourth Ethelbert, king of Wessex, gave to one of his ministers. This gift is recorded as measuring ten carucates or plough lands, and the boundary marks extend into what are now surrounding parishes.

There is a difficulty in estimating the real extent of land described in ancient charters, as the amount included in a carucate is said to have varied from forty to a hundred acres. Besides this it seems doubtful whether they always took cognizance of woods and waste lands, which must then have occupied a large area, compared with such portion of the country existing as meadow or actual plough land.

Later on, king Edgar granted about the same quantity of land to the Church of Rochester, but his son Ethelred caused it to be laid waste, in consequence of a dispute with the Bishop, giving a portion to his minister. In 998, however, he restored six out of the ten plough lands to the Church, which retained possession until the Conquest, when

Odo of Bayeux obtained the manor, together with several others in the county, but they were taken from him in 1076, though it appears only about three plough lands were returned to the Bishop of Rochester, and for those he was taxed at the time of Domesday survey.

This area of land was probably somewhere about co-extensive with the present parish of Bromley, and from the distribution of bishop's lands marked on old maps, there is reason to believe that this was the case. The Bishops of Rochester then, with interruptions, held Bromley from early Saxon times.

It was a poor manor, neither pasture nor arable land being worth much, and hence, soon after the Conquest, portions of it were converted into knights' fees; and while, at the time of the Domesday survey, there is no mention of any owners of land in Bromley besides the Bishop of Rochester, shortly after this date there were several freeholders in the place.

It seems probable that the practice of sub-infeudation by lords of manors had become general before the reign of John, inasmuch as he granted a charter with permission to the archbishops of Canterbury to convert into knights' fees any lands of the fee of their church held in gavelkind.

Concerning this sub-infeudation and various other matters, I am indebted to information received from the late Coles Child, Esq., owner of Bromley Manor, who kindly allowed me access to his manuscript notes.

He says, "There can be little doubt that the Bishops of Rochester, either with or without direct permission from the Crown, had converted portions of their land in Bromley, and elsewhere, into knights' fees, in like manner as the Archbishops had been authorized to do."

In less than a century after the Domesday survey, twenty-seven persons held of the bishop by military service.

Perhaps the first of these was Welfgeot de Bromlega, who lived before 1189, and was owner of the sixth part of a knight's fee, the same as held afterwards by Walter de Braibroc, and subsequently by de Baacquelle or de Banquell, who was possessed of the Simpsons' estate, or manor, as it has been

called, though it is extremely doubtful whether its owners exercised manorial rights. Probably then Simpsons' was the first estate carved out of the bishop's manor. It comprised only a moderate amount of land in Bromley, but those who possessed this place originally held a large tract in the parishes of Beckenham, West Wickham, and Hayes. Indeed this last mentioned portion of the Simpsons' property must have comprised a great part of the land included in the Saxon charter of 862, which was not afterwards conferred upon the church.

In 1303 a charter of free warren was granted to John de Banquelle and Cecilia his wife, in all their lands in Lee, Lewisham, and Bromley, and this charter was afterwards transferred to Sir Richard Sturry. Moreover, so late as 1627, a charter of free warren was granted to Sir Humphry Style, of Simpson's Place.

In the reign of Henry V, this place passed to one William Clarke, who according to Philipot received licence to crenelate and fortify his mansion.

About the year 1450 the property came to John Simpson, and Nicholas Simpson, who was barber to Henry VIII, conveyed it to Sir Humphry Style. The ruins of this moated dwelling, situated by the Ravensbourne, have but lately disappeared, being supplanted by modern bricks and mortar.

More important than the last mentioned place is Sundridge, now held by Edward H. Scott, Esq., the owners of which place have always enjoyed manorial rights, though they originally owed suit and service to the Bishop. This manor was first passed to the family of Blund, and Peter le Blund, Constable of the Tower of London, was lord in the reign of Henry III, holding it by the fourth of a knight's fee.

Another estate which was separated from the chief manor at an early date was Blakebrok, or Blackbrook, as it is now called.

Blackbrook was held by Sir Thomas Latymer, to whose father a charter of free warren was granted in 1329, and the Latymers conveyed the estate to Richard Lacer and Juliana his wife. In the Close Roll, 7th year of Edward III, are

two deeds recording the transfer of Blackbrok and other lands in Bromley to Richard Lacer, who also possessed property in Deptford. He was Mayor of London, and assisted in punishing the abettors of the rebellion under the Earl of Kent. Lacer married a second time, and there is a memorial brass in Bromley Church to his wife Isabella, who died 1361.

As applied to a spot near Blackbrook, we find marked on old maps and inserted in ancient charters the names of South-barrow, and South-borough. For many years a residence has been so indicated, which formerly was inhabited by a certain Andrew Beadle, one of whose family is mentioned in the forty-third year of Elizabeth. It has from time to time received various additions, and is now in the possession of Archibald Hamilton, Esq.

At a short distance is a place of considerable antiquity, called Turpington Farm, which tradition points out as the site of the court house of the first lords of Blackbrok. Writing in 1797, Wilson in his history of Bromley says, "I heard this place was famous for having been an ancient barony of one of the feudal lords; was shewn a farm-house that had been the barons' court-house; another which had been the jail."

Northwards, from the above-mentioned place was Cross-in-hand; it is shewn on Rocque's map published 1741, and various entries appear in the parish register, of deaths occurring about this period, at Cross-in-hand.

Further northwards is Widmore, Wigmore, Windemere, or Wymere. In the Exchequer Subsidies, county Kent, under the Hundred of Bromley, occur the names of Symon de Blackbrok, Thomas de Wyndemere, Henry de Hoke, etc. The last probably lived at what is now called Hook farm, Bromley Common.

At Widmore is a picturesque cottage, with a gate-way bearing the initials, A. B. and date 1559. In the possession of Miss Ellis is a print of it engraved 1714, in which a notice hangs from the arch, "J. Curtis, licensed to let Post-Horses." In 1813 it was still inhabited by a Curtis, but had ceased to be a posting house. In 1861 the Misses Telford had the

floors relaid, when a number of coins were found which had dropped between the boards. There were two silver sixpences of Queen Elizabeth, and coins of almost every reign since, also a quite fresh copper token of the White Hart, Bromley, dated 1660, a hart being engraved on one side. Besides these, several Roman Catholic, Latin and English books, and some manuscript sermons, were discovered, all concealed in the floors or wainscoting.

Written inside one of the books is a copy of verses, which convey a Roman Catholic or Protestant sentiment, according as the lines are read from top to bottom, or from left to right. The verses are as follows :

“I hold as faith	What England’s church allowes
What Rome’s church saith	My conscience disallowes
Where the King’s heade	The church can have noe blame
The flockes misleade	That houldes the Pope supreme
Where the altares drest	The sacrifice is scarce divine
The people are blest	With table bread and wine
He is but an asse	Who the comunion flies
That shunnes the masse	Is catholique and wise.”

At an early period, then, the population of the manor of Bromley seems to have had three chief centres, the district from Blackbrook to Widmore, the ancient hamlet of Plaistow, and the neighbourhood of the London Road, which last soon became the town of Bromley, where we find the ancient market place, the church, and rectory.

In various Inquisitions we find names of persons holding land in Bromley in early times, but they cannot generally be identified, or connected with known families or estates; thus in the year 1480 there is an Inquisition upon Bernard Cavell, who is reported as dying seised of “one messuage and sixty-one acres of land in Bromlegh, of which three acres are called Wellfield, and four acres of wood.”

In the Patent Roll 4th Ed. II, part 1, memb. 17, 1310, is a license to crenelate, granted to William de Bliburgh. It runs thus: “The King to his bailiffs and faithful men, greeting. Know ye that we of our special grace have granted to our beloved clerk, William de Bliburgh, that he may strengthen

with a wall of stone and lime, and crenelate his mansion of Bromley, Kent, and may hold that mansion thus strengthened and crenelated for himself and his heirs for ever.”

There is also an Inquisition post mortem, which was held upon the same de Bliburgh ; it describes his mansion as a messuage with a garden, in the town of Bromley, consisting of two acres of land. Besides this he also held one acre and a half of wood, three acres and three roods of meadow, twenty-six acres of land, and three acres of alder wood.

He seems also to have held in Beckenham, of Maurice le Brun, two acres of wood, and twenty acres of arable land.

To a portion of this property a quit rent of five shillings was attached, which fact led the late Mr. Child to identify it with that subsequently held by Mompeson, Peach, Cator, and Waller. At any rate it seems probable that de Bliburgh's property was situated on the north side of the Beckenham lane, and it is worthy of note that here near the Ravensbourne, there is now a wood of alder trees. At de Bliburgh's death his property came to his niece Agnes, wife of Richard Doulee.

Perhaps the most ancient house within the town of Bromley was the Rectory. Of this however I shall speak again, preferring now to notice another property which consisted of about thirteen acres. From the description of the boundaries, in a conveyance from Sir Edmund Style to Richard Thornhill, in the 19th of Elizabeth, the original of which deed is in the possession of Robinson Latter, Esq., of Pixfield, I have no doubt the thirteen acres comprised the whole east side of the High Street, from the very ancient Inn called the Bell, up to and including the ground upon which is now built the Bromley College for clergymen's widows. It would appear by an Inquisition post mortem of Samuel Thornhill, in the 40th of Elizabeth, that the site was held of the Bishop of Rochester, as of the manor of the Rectory of Bromley in free socage, by rent of 16 pence, and court service twice in the year for all services.

We find by a marriage settlement that, in 1532, one Thomas Knight was owner of those thirteen acres on which are now standing so many houses constituting the town of Bromley. He also held Tuppingsdens near Blackbrook, before

mentioned, as well as ninety-four acres at Bromley Common, called Goodwyns, which there is reason to connect with an estate now called Cooper's Farm.

Thomas Knight is described as a citizen of London, and "pandoxator," *i.e.*, a brewer and seller of his own beer. He had a son Robert, who contributed twenty marks to the loan to Henry VIII, 1542; and the next owner, John Knight, probably sold the estate to Style, who conveyed it to one Richard Thornhill, who settled it on his son Samuel, who died during his father's lifetime, and thus the property came back to Richard Thornhill. This Richard married twice, his second wife being a daughter of William Watson of Frindsbury. He died in the year 1600, and there is a large brass to the memory of himself and wives, in Bromley Church. Subsequently the house and ground were held by John Thornhill, in the 4th of Charles I.

It may not be uninteresting to mention that Dr. Hawksworth, editor of the "Adventurer," lived afterward in this mansion, which belonged to the Knights and Thornhills.

There are in the possession of Mr. Latter about twenty-three panels of very deeply and elegantly cut oak carving, in the best style of the Tudor period; on which both the name and initials of Thomas Knight occur in several instances. Their date is identified with the period in which the above-named Thomas Knight lived by the occurrence, on several of the panels, of the well-known badges of Catherine of Arragon and Henry VIII, as the castle of Castile, the sheaf of arrows, the pomegranate slipped, the portcullis and Tudor rose. One also bears the royal coat of arms of Henry VII, used also for a time by Henry VIII, the supporters being a dragon dexter, and the greyhound collared sinister. Two of the panels also bear the arms and shields of William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury 1504 to 1532. There are also several ecclesiastical emblems, such as the five wounds encircled by a crown of thorns, the monogram I. H. S.; also an emblematical device representing sin as a bird with a dagger, attacking an angel who bears a shield, and numerous figures of angels and cherubs; from which it has been inferred that probably the panels formed a por-

tion of the rood screen of Bromley Church. They were found by their present possessor about thirty years since, covered with numerous coats of paint, the greater part of which has been removed with infinite labour and trouble, owing to the thickness and number of the coats of various colour, in some parts fully half an inch deep, and nearly obliterating the carving. They then lined a cupboard in a house in the town of Bromley, which was built about 1796, upon part of the land formerly belonging to the mansion owned by Thomas Knight, which had then recently been purchased and pulled down by the builder of the house in which they were found. This may be taken to make it probable that they formed part of the materials of the old mansion; but it so happens that the same builder, in the year 1792, as appears by the parish register, accepted a contract for £1300, to repew and make alterations in the church, and therefore, having regard to the ecclesiastical character of the subjects of the carving, as the old materials removed from the church would become the property of the contractor, it is at least an open question whether they were not removed from that edifice, and used in the construction of his house.

We have so far noticed the manor of Bromley, but have said little concerning the manor house. This, from an early date, constituted a residence for the Bishops of Rochester.

Hasted attributes to Bishop Gundulph the first episcopal palace in Bromley; but the massive and enduring character of all Gundulph's known works would lead one to suppose that had this been the case, the palace would hardly have become ruinous, as it did in 1184, requiring to be rebuilt by Gilbert de Glanville. The Bishops had held Bromley since 955, if not longer; therefore it is probable they had a residence here from a date much earlier than the Conquest.

The first house and gardens probably did not cover a larger space than two acres, and were surrounded by a moat. The masonry supporting the ancient drawbridge, the remains of which consisted of a rude mass of flint and chalk, cemented together by mortar which had become as

hard as stone, were discovered by Mr. Child some years since, about forty-five yards north of the present house; and it was then impossible to open the ground to the south without meeting with foundation walls, the lower portions of which were constructed of blocks of chalk.

The Bromley Palace was not in constant use till after the Reformation, about which time the bishops gave preference to their Bromley residence in consequence of the thin walls, stone floors and general absence of comfort which characterized their Palace at Rochester.

Bishop Glanville, who rebuilt the house at Bromley, seems to have taken an interest in the place, for in 1205 he obtained from King John a right to hold a market here every Tuesday throughout the year. This appears by the Close Roll 7th John.

Bishop Hamo de Heth, from Hythe, Kent, laboured under great pecuniary difficulties, and in 1320 he sold the woods at Elmstead. In 1337, however, amongst other extensive repairs in the diocese he spent a considerable sum on the farm buildings at Bromley.

In the Charter Roll 25 and 26 Henry VI, No. 22, we find a grant to the Bishop of Rochester to hold a market in the manor of Bromley on Thursday in every week; and a fair in the street with toll and pickage of the same in every year, to last for three days, to wit, on the vigil, the day, and on the morrow of St. James the Apostle, notwithstanding that within the aforesaid manor he may hold another fair on the day and on the morrow of St. Blaize. This charter, it will be observed, fixes Thursday for the weekly market, on which day it is still held.

The fairs at Bromley were, with the market and market house, let on lease by the Bishops, the last lease expiring in 1862. But the fairs having become a great annoyance to the inhabitants, the late Lord of the Manor took steps to put them down.

Mention is made above of a fair on the day of Saint Blaize. This saint appears for some reason to have been associated with the early history of Bromley. Within the demesne land of the Manor and near the Palace, is an ancient

well which from time immemorial has been dedicated to Saint Blaize, there having been a shrine attached to the well, and pilgrimages to the shrine were encouraged by promise of indulgences to those who worshipped there on certain occasions.

It is on record also that persons to whom penance had been enjoined, were sometimes ordered to offer a candle at the shrine of St. Blaize, at Bromley. Thus, in 1456 one Thomas Ferby suffered excommunication for having procured the celebration of a clandestine marriage in St. Paul's Cray Church, and as penance, it was enjoined that he should offer at the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, at the image of St. Blaize in Bromley, and in Chislehurst Church, a wax taper of a pound weight, and should for two years allow exhibitions to two scholars, at Oxford.

Again, in 1458 Walter Crepehog, who had promoted another illegal marriage, was directed to be whipped three times round the market place of Rochester, and as often round his parish church, carrying in his hand as a penitent a torch of the value of 6s. 8d., which he was to present at the altar in Rochester Cathedral; he was also to present a torch of the same value at the image of St. Blaize in Bromley.

Tradition asserts that the parish church of Bromley was originally dedicated to St. Blaize, but no authentic information concerning the point is on record.

There is little to record concerning the Bromley Palace. No account of important alterations exists till 1669, when the Archbishop granted a licence to Bishop Sprat, to "demolish and take away" the old "chappell," which was "wainscotted eight foote high with oake wainscott," and ornamented with the "old fashioned small panels." This chapel adjoined the gate house and was separate from the mansion, a room within which, thirty-nine feet long, was proposed as a substitute for the old chapel, and on Oct. 30, 1701, it was consecrated; but in 1774 Dr. Thomas pulled down the whole house, erecting the present building, which bears the date 1775, and the arms of the Bishop quartered with those of the see. Considerable alterations were made by the late owner, who purchased the manor in 1845.

The old building erected by Gilbert de Glanville stood

further south than the present one, and would seem by the foundations to have covered a larger space of ground ; it was doubtless the work of different periods, and was probably built of chalk and flint, as is the oldest part of the church and rectory house.

I am not aware that any objects of interest have been found during the various alterations effected of late years in the manorial property, with the exception of the leather sole of a shoe with pointed toe, such as were worn in the middle ages, and the broken glass of some wine flasks.

Closely associated with the history of the Manor and its episcopal residence, is the Rectory and Rectory House. The foundations of the latter are probably as old as any other building in the neighbourhood.

There is evidence that at a very early period land near the Church had been allotted for the support of a rector, and in this case, as in that of Sundridge, a sub-manor had been called into existence, claiming rights independently of the parent manor, for the rectors held courts and levied quit rents and heriots, and also claimed to recover by escheat the land of a tenant who died without heirs.

Occasionally this arrangement caused the local interests of the bishop and the rector, the superior and inferior lords, to clash ; thus in the time of Edward I, Thomas de Woldham, bishop, claimed certain privileges in his manor as well of his own tenants as those of the rector, and he complained that Abel de St. Martene caused in like manner dues to be levied upon the tenants of the lordship of the rectory, so that these persons were twice called upon for the same payment.

In the Calendar of Records, we find an account of the manorial courts of the early rectors of Bromley commencing 1453. They are of particular interest, as describing the transactions of the sub-lord and his tenants, and various names are mentioned, such as Pynnesknoll, Bartelottes fields, Tomkyns croft, Hopkyns walle, and Pyeshaugh, as distinguishing several holdings, which names are mostly taken from those of former occupiers. The names of persons may occasionally be recognized as probably indicating the ancestors of some of the present inhabitants.

Thus, at the Court of Richard Fryston, Clerk, of his Rectory of Bromley, came Robert Blondell as a tenant of the Lordship, and acknowledged himself to hold of the Lord one virgate of land by the rent of three pence, to be paid annually, and a heriot after the death of each tenant, and he performed his fealty to the Lord in full court.

At this court came Alexander Curtis, and acknowledged himself to hold two acres of land lying at Hopkins' walle, at the end of the town, by the rent of sixpence.

Again, at another court it was represented that William Barnard and his family broke the fences of the yard, and cut the Lord's wood in his grove, and he placed himself at the mercy of the Lord.

The Rectory is spoken of as having, in the time of Charles I, a manor and good mansion house, with a gate house, a large barn, and fifty-one acres of glebe land. It may be interesting to note that Kemble gives the endowment of a church, in Norman times, as one hide of land, equivalent to the estate of a single family, and sufficient if properly managed to support the presbyter and his attendant clerks.

In 1537, by order of Henry VIII, the tithes of this parish were transferred to the Bishop of Rochester, and the officiating clergyman ceased to inhabit the rectory house. Moreover, after the Restoration the tithes and glebe were usually leased for a term of twenty-one years, renewable every seven years, at a rent of £60, and forty quarters of oats, valued fifty years ago at £40, with a fine on each renewal.

I believe the lease of this property passed into the hands of the Emmett family soon after the Restoration, and it continued so, except for a short period, until the end of the last century, when it passed by marriage to James Norman, Esq., by whose son it was resigned in 1828.

There is no doubt that in early times the living of Bromley was much sought after. So far back as 1235 Richard de Wendover, rector of Bromley, was elected Bishop of Rochester by the monks of that Cathedral; but Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, at first refused to confirm the election on the grounds that de Wendover was illiterate, so

the monks appealed to the Pope, who after three years decided in de Wendover's favour.

In Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, we find mention made of the Bishop of Rochester in 1327, after the coronation of the young King Edward, consulting with the prelates and nobles of the kingdom, concerning certain matters relating to the church of Bromley.

About this time John de Frindsburie, Rector of Bromley and executor of the will of the late Bishop Thomas de Woldham, had brought himself into disgrace, and it was expected that he would shortly be deprived, which indeed he was in 1329, and Hugh de Pennebrige collated in his stead. But even in these somewhat primitive times it seems to have been difficult to deprive one in possession, for de Frindsburie proved contumacious, sent his chaplain to Rochester, and at the high altar, with bell and candle, excommunicated his bishop; which excommunication was afterwards revoked, and at a subsequent visitation of the diocese by the archbishop, the rebellious rector was severely punished; nevertheless he eventually retained the living.

Concerning the first church at Bromley evidence is conflicting. Although mention is made in the *Registrum Roffense* of a church being reclaimed with the manor from Odo in 1076, it must be remembered that this account of the transaction at Penenden Heath was written many years subsequently; the fact that no church is recorded in the Domesday survey *quantum valeat*, weighs against the correctness of the assertion, as the words "Ibi ecclesia" are often found in Domesday book where a church existed, and moreover it mentions churches in other manors belonging to the Bishop of Rochester.

Possibly public services were held in a chapel within the episcopal residence.

It is on record, however, that the sum of 9d., the amount due from a parish church, was paid by Bromley for chrism rent, about forty years after the Domesday account was compiled, and there is now to be seen a font of undoubted Norman origin.

Whatever kind of edifice existed so far back as the

twelfth century would appear to have been of insignificant character, for, excepting the font, nothing remains distinctive of the Norman period.

It is scarcely possible to fix a date for the church now standing, and no wonder, for Sir Stephen Glynne tells us that in 1829 the arches and piers had been removed to make way for galleries, and a little later, a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* remarks that during the extensive alterations then carried out, and which eventually cost £4367, hardly any thing remained of the old church but its walls. At this period the north aisle, a modern structure, was elongated; while the chancel, and a side chapel on the south, were thrown into the main building, thus entirely changing its character.

I should suppose that the greater part of the present church was built in the fourteenth century.

A small recess now on the north side of the altar, and originally situated beneath a small window in the north wall of the chancel, carries us back some five or six hundred years. Its foliated capitals, and elegant mouldings, have justly caused it to be described as a "graceful relic of the Edwardian period."

There was formerly a hollow stone in its centre, the cavity being rectangular, and the entrance surrounded by a circular moulding. This cavity has been conjectured to have been the shrine of a heart, but its small size, only four inches by five, and the absence of any sufficient protection anteriorly, causes me to look upon this suggestion as doubtful, and to favour the supposition that the original use of the recess was that of a credence table.

In the south wall of the chancel were sedilia, the arches above which were open, leading to a small chantry, which I suspect was dedicated to the Virgin, for one of the early bishops is spoken of as officiating before the altar of the Virgin at Bromley.

The ancient oak door of the south porch, with its massive lock, is "a good specimen of the fast decaying fine doors of our old churches." It is preserved in the present porch, but that in which it formerly hung was pulled down in 1829.

The embattled tower still retains some of its grotesque corbels and gargoyles, with very good specimens of square-headed belfry windows. That in the lowest stage was restored in 1872 with Perpendicular tracery, and at the same time the mouldings of the west door were released from their coating of plaster, and proved to be of similar character to those of the small sacristy or priest's doorway, removed from its proper position and let into the tower wall in 1829.

A few years ago, a window was discovered, over the west door, having a very depressed arch, but mouldings deeply cut, and apparently also like those of the east window, of which Sir Stephen Glynne remarks, "the arch is large and supported within by shafts apparently early curvilinear, the mouldings are bold and good, but the tracery is gone and the greater part walled up." He also says the south aisle is carried to the west wall of the tower, and the west portion of it has a wood coved roof. The arch, with piers supporting it, which connects the south aisle with the tower, is the only original one left within the church.

Briefly, the present church when built seems to have consisted of a nave with small chancel, a chantry chapel, and south aisle, the latter communicating by a large archway with the interior of an embattled tower, which had square-headed belfry windows, and was supported by diagonal buttresses.

The services in this church were in years gone by carried on with the assistance of rich vestments, ornate crosses, silver and gilt sacramental vessels, a crysmatory of silver, for holding the oil used in baptism; a pix of silver, for consecrated wafers; cruets of silver for wine or water; cloth of gold; a canopy of green satin of Bruges; a frontal for the altar of "tawny velvette," curtains of yellow and red satin, copper or latten censers, and candlesticks, little pewter bowls for oil to light the rood loft, and so on. All these and more we are told of in the Inventory of Church Goods taken in November, 1552.

A most interesting account of the inventories of parish church goods in Kent may be seen in Vol. VIII. of *Archæo-*

logia Cantiana. It would seem that at the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII, the property of all such institutions was by Act of Parliament assigned to the Crown, but the goods belonging to parish churches were left untouched.

Soon after the accession of Edward VI it became evident that steps should be taken to secure, from loss or embezzlement, such goods as were considered superfluous in the services of the Reformed Church.

Edward therefore issued commissions in the second and third year of his reign, the commissioners being ordered to take account of the plate, jewels, vestments, bells, and other ornaments of every parish, and to commit them to the safe keeping of the churchwardens.

It appears that embezzlement by private persons, and burglarious thefts, had *occasionally* occurred in the parishes of Kent.

Alienation of parish church goods did, however, take place under other circumstances, which may have been to a certain extent approved by the commissioners; and this was by the sale, with the consent of the whole parish, of articles of value, in order to raise funds for necessary alterations or repairs. Thus in the Bromley Inventory mention is made of 39s. 1d. remaining from the sale of a cross of silver, after £12 7s. 7d. had been expended on the repair of the church (vide *Archæologia Cantiana*, VIII., pp. 112-114.

The inventory of church goods in Bromley was made by a commission issued in the 6th Edward VI, with wider scope for its functions than had been accorded to those of previous years. The government thought it unwise longer to leave the considerable quantity of surplus plate, vestments, etc., in possession of local authorities, and decided that after making adequate provision for services, the remaining church goods should be appropriated to the public good, and hence the King's council issued orders for the seizure of all such property as was not needed for the parish church.

Besides this the same commission was directed to visit all "chapels, brotherhoods, guilds, and fraternities," connected with monastic institutions, so as to ascertain whether

all the property formerly belonging to them, and granted to the King by Act of Parliament, had been duly surrendered or not.

Burnet and Strype give erroneous accounts of these transactions, favouring the supposition that a wanton spoliation of parish churches was authorized by the Crown; whereas it is clear that care was taken to leave such goods as at the time were considered sufficient; and it is also evident that if this commission had not been issued, much of the church furniture throughout the kingdom would have been lost, or misappropriated, because it was not in use.

The Register of Baptisms in Bromley Church commences soon after this Inventory was taken, *i.e.*, in 1558; that of Marriages in 1575; and of Burials, 1578.

There is record of seventeen deaths from the plague in 1665-1666. Amongst the first of these are mentioned, "a strange woman near the windmill," which was situated in the London Road, and the "daughter of the strange woman." Possibly these vagrants brought the plague to Bromley.

The following is an extract from a letter amongst the State Papers; it refers to John Bowle, consecrated Bishop of Rochester, Feb., 1630.—"Rochester was in the summer time beat from his house at Bromley by the plague, but the Archbishop sent for him up out of Berkshire."

In 1666, Bishop Warner died at Bromley Palace. He willed that a Hospital or College, for twenty poor widows of orthodox and loyal clergymen, should be erected near Rochester Cathedral, leaving £8,500 for this purpose; but probably because a suitable site could not be obtained there, Parliament passed an act allowing the executors to build upon any spot within the diocese, and Bromley was selected.

Besides this bequest, Bishop Warner is said to have spent eight hundred pounds upon his palace in this manor.

About this time an act was passed by the Government commanding that all persons, unless under certain exceptions, should be buried in woollen cloth, and before burial it was required that an affidavit should be made setting forth that the law had in each case been complied with. This act was

for the benefit of the wool trade, and when in exceptional cases it was not complied with, a fine was imposed, which in some cases at all events was given to the poor.

Thus we find that on April 1st, 1797, there was buried here the Right Hon. Elizabeth, Countess of Derby, and an affidavit was made that the rule was remitted; and so in the parish accounts, March 11th, 1765, "Received of Mrs. Willett 50 shillings for burying the body of Mrs. Neegrade in Linen, for the poor of the parish."

Then in the register for 1814, under July 24th, comes the entry, "N.B. Act with respect to burying in woollen repealed, so that no affidavits will in future be required."

In some of these old registers we find the deaths from smallpox numerous, and fatal accidents were tolerably frequent; thus September 12, 1725, James Gleys killed by a coach. August 31, 1795, William Burton killed by a Lewisham chariot. August, 1797, William Aptice killed in boxing. May 1, 1798, Thomas Grelly killed by the Tonbridge waggon. July 2nd, 1796, Eliza Mann murdered at Charles Long's, Esq., Bromley Hill.

Every now and then is mentioned the death of "the old Beadle."

In 1797 we read a somewhat curious memorandum; on November 26 died one John Reynolds, aged 85, and against his name it is written, "This man was servant to James Norman, Esq., of Bromley Common, and afterwards to his son George Norman, Esq. He was by birth an American; he left that country for murdering a Custom-house officer, at Long Island. He had been in the family many years, and was allowed his weekly wages to the day of his death. He was well known by the name of Old John."

On the fly-leaf of one of the register books is another interesting memorandum, thus: "A Register of those that have had certificate (under the hands and seals of the minister and churchwardens of the parish of Bromley, in the county of Kent), of their not having been touched by His Majesty for the King's Evil, according to an order of Council made the 9th of January, 1683."

Some of the wardens' and parish accounts are extant. In

the 18th century are various entries of sums paid for hedge-hogs; always four pence a-piece. Probably a superstitious dislike for these creatures existed, and caused a price to be put upon their heads.

Guy Faux Day was kept during the last century with vigour; so on Nov. 9th, 1765, was "received of Mr. Millins, constable, one pound, being the penalty paid by Daniel Handyside for throwing squibs in this town; gave the same away in bread to the poor." But though this excellent constable was so diligent in repressing fireworks, he did not repress the pigs, which are said to have continually perambulated the streets of Bromley, to the danger and annoyance of passengers; hence in 1770 two men were appointed to traverse the town, to impound swine found wandering in the streets; and that the inhabitants might know these men were on duty, one of them was ordered to carry a bell and ring it twice a day, opposite the College gate, the Bell Hotel, the White Hart, and the Three Compasses. I suppose in olden time swine were very common everywhere throughout the country. In Hudibras there is mention of a sort of Veterinary Surgeon, whose particular duty it was to look after the pigs, and who blew a horn to let people know of his coming.

On a fly-leaf of the register is a description of a robbery which took place in the church.

"On the night of the 13th of April, 1791, the vestry room door was broken open, and the chest of deal, in which the plate was kept, was robbed of the following articles: one large flaggon with lid fixt, one quart chalice; one rich chased chalice and loose cover, with a straining spoon, one large paten, and one small paten; the above were all gilt; the gold fringe from the pulpit and communion hangings; one large damask cloth, and two damask napkins."

In consequence of this robbery a silver-gilt chalice with cover was given to the church, on which is engraved the following inscription:—"Ecclesiâ de Bromley (Com^u Cantii) furibus spoliatâ hoc poculum Cœnæ Salvationis nostri celebratione utendum, donavit Georgius Norman, ejusdem Parochiæ Generosus, Junii mense A.D. MDCCXCI."

The population of Bromley has been estimated to have consisted at the time of the Domesday Survey of 320 persons; and basing his calculations on the parish registers, Dr. Farr has reckoned the probable number at the time of Queen Elizabeth at 2040, which would give an average increase of about 350 per century. But the enumerated population in 1801 was only 2700, giving a smaller increase than heretofore; hence if these estimates are correct it is probable that at some one period the growth of the population was considerably greater than during the rest of the time, and most likely this was the period at which the Bishops of Rochester commenced to convert portions of their manor into knights' fees.

In 1821 the enumerated population was 3147, and at this rate the increase per century would be about 2000. Again in 1841, we find the population at 4325, making per century 5800. In 1871 the number had amounted to 10,674; making a rate of increase per century of 21,100. The present estimated population is 15,000, shewing a very much higher rate of increase than at any previous time.

There are not now many brasses of interest in Bromley Church. The oldest has been referred to as bearing an inscription to the memory of Isabella Lacer, who died 1361.

A large brass to Richard Thornhill and his two wives has also been noticed. Thornhill lived in the house afterwards inhabited by Dr. Hawkesworth; he contributed one hundred pounds towards the fund raised for resisting the Spanish Armada. A certain Timothy Low of Bromley also gave twenty-five pounds, and John Scott twenty-five pounds.

Not long after the time of Richard Thornhill an endeavour was made to implicate Bishop Sprat and others in a conspiracy against the Prince of Orange. For this purpose his name was forged and appended to a document, purporting to describe the plot, which document was secreted in Bromley Palace. This being found led to the arrest of the Bishop, who thus describes the circumstance: "As I was walking in the orchard at Bromley, meditating on something I intended to preach the next day, I saw a coach and four horses stop at the outer gate, out of which two persons alighted; I immediately went towards them, believing they were some of

my friends. By the time I had got to the gate they were entered into the hall; but seeing me hastening toward them, they turned and met me, about the middle of the court. The chief of them perceiving me to look wistly on them, as being altogether strangers to me, said, ‘My Lord, perhaps you do not know me; I am Clerk to the Council, and here is one of the messengers; I am sorry I am sent upon this message, but I am come to arrest you on suspicion of High Treason.’” The Bishop was kept in arrest but a short time before the plot was discovered, and those wrongly suspected released.

Bishop Atterbury appears to have spent much of his time at Bromley. This Bishop was actually deprived of his benefice for high treason.

In a letter to Matthew Prior, dated August 26th, 1718, he says, “My peaches and nectarines hung on the trees for you, till they rotted.” In another letter, addressed to Alexander Pope, is the following paragraph: “I never part from this place (Bromley) but with regret, though I generally keep here what Mr. Cowley calls *the worst* of company in the world, my own.”

Several of the Bishops of Rochester died in Bromley Palace, and some were buried in the parish church.

John Younge, Bishop of Rochester, who died in 1605, was interred within the chancel of Bromley Church, and brasses with his arms were inserted in the pavement. During the late alterations in the church, the workmen discovered a leaden coffin under what was formerly the floor of the chancel; all inscription had been effaced by time, but probably the coffin contained the remains of Bishop Younge.

John Buckeridge, translated from Rochester to Ely in 1628, died in 1631, and was buried in the parish church of Bromley. So also was Zachary Pearce; he became Dean of Westminster in May, 1756, Bishop of Rochester in June, 1756, and he died in 1774.

The next and last Bishop interred here was Dr. Thomas; his monument bears date 1792.

The living of Bromley ceased to be a rectory in 1537, when by order of Henry VIII it was transferred to the

Bishops of Rochester, who were commanded to “appoint, ordain, and sufficiently endow perpetual vicars,” also to “cause to be distributed a certain reasonable sum of money, arising from the fruits of the church of Bromley, among the poor parishioners of the aforesaid church in each ensuing year for ever.”*

I am informed that the original division of income was two-thirds for the see of Rochester, and one-third for the vicar of Bromley. Unfortunately the vicar’s portion was fixed in money, as being more convenient than a division of the tithes, which were often paid in kind. Hence the worth of a fixed income, which seemed large in early days, became ridiculously small as the value of money changed; and although the annual stipend was increased some years ago, at the instigation of Bishop Murray, it appears still to remain far short of that which was intended, when the rectory was first transferred to the see of Rochester.

In 1845 there was a redistribution of parishes within that diocese, and Bromley has since been associated with Canterbury, while the living is in the gift of the Bishop of Worcester.

At the time of this redistribution of parishes, the manor of Bromley, passing from the Bishops of Rochester, was sold, and so was severed the connection between the bishopric and the manor, which had existed with slight intermissions since early Saxon times.

* *Patent Rolls*, Henry VIII.