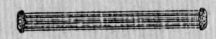
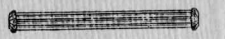
YE ..
OULDE STORIE OF HITCHAM

The little Grey Church
on the Windy Hill.



BY

THE REV. C. H. D. GRIMES, M.A.



Price 1 6

Ye Oulde Storie of Hitcham.

BY

THE REV. C. H. D. GRIMES, M.A.,
F.R.G.S., F.R. Hist. S.,
Late Scholar of Jesus Coll., Camb.,
Sometime Principal of St. John's Coll., Perth,
W. Australia.

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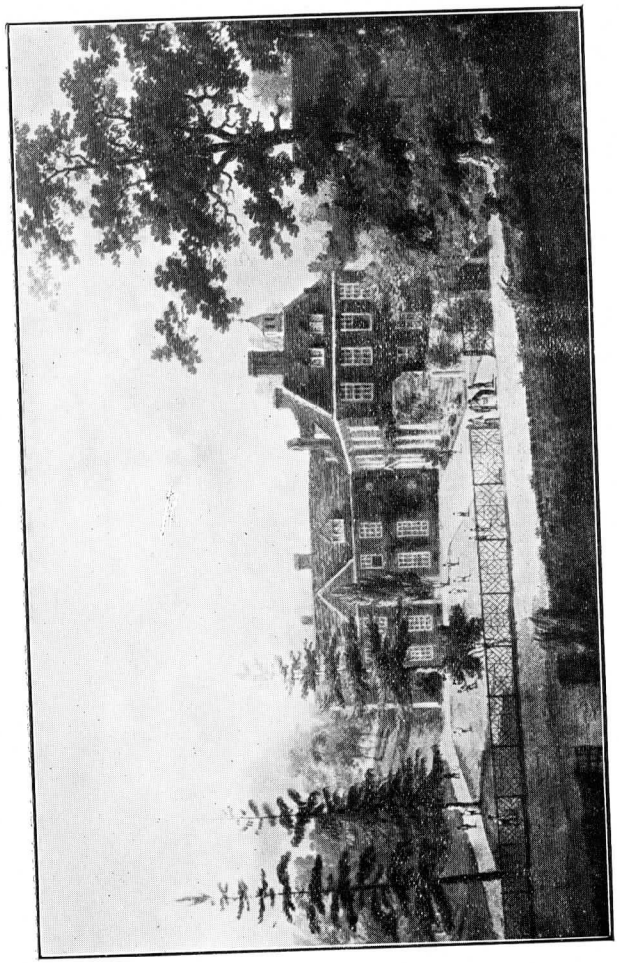


OLD MANOR HOUSE

as it stood June 4th, 1801, (pulled down 1804) from a painting by W. Pechell, in possession of Col. Hanbury—dedicated by the Painter to the Noblemen and Gentlemen educated at Hitcham House.

A History of Hitcham.

THE LITTLE GREY CHURCH ON THE WINDY HILL.

Introduction.

If these historical notes seem somewhat disconnected, as they really are, our plea is that since we began the work, by the kindness of many friends we have been led to consider fresh sources of information of which we were ignorant, and thus we have had to recast our material. Not only have we searched the parish registers, &c., but in the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, and the Aylesbury Museum we have come across much useful matter, and especially has this been the case with regard to the notes left by the late Mr. Rutland. To the Rector, Colonel Hanbury, and Mr. Leyster we wish to record our special gratitude for the help they have given, and to many others far and near who have helped with advice and information. Our object throughout has been to stimulate local patriotism, and if we have done anything to make the village more proud of its history and the great names associated with it and determined in the future to act more and more as a social unit and not as a collection of individuals, any trouble we have been to will not have been wasted. We want to visualise more clearly the Hitcham, some of whose traditions we have been able to reveal, as having an existence of its own and one to which it is a sacred duty of each of its inhabitants to render noble service.

C. H. D. GRIMES,
Hitcham, Bucks.

May, 1926.

Lords of the Manor.

The following is the entry in Doomsday Book about Hitcham : " Hitcham is the property of Milo Crispin and is held under him by Ralph and Roger. It was formerly the property of Haming, a thayn of King Edward. Hitcham contains 6 hides and 6 plough teams. On the demesne (viz : the home farm for the manor) are 2 plough teams, 8 villeins have 4 plough teams. There are 3 serfs. There is meadow land sufficient for the plough teams, and woodland to feed 100 swine. From the fishery come 500 eels. In all it is worth £4, and when received 20 shillings, at the time of King Edward the Confessor's death it was worth £5."

A hide is a term meaning the number of acres on which a free family could live comfortably. This naturally varied in size according to the richness of the soil ; it was not only arable land but meadow and woodland, roughly it was about 120 acres and usually corresponded with a plough team or was the amount of land an ox-team could plough. A freeman beside his military duty gave often only nominal service to the lord of the manor. A villein was a person who possessed the right to own and till his own land as a copyholder so long as he rendered customary service to his lord—this usually meant so many days a week service to the lord with certain bond work and tribute. He was not recognised in the courts of law and went with the estate. His holding was usually about 30 acres. The serf was wholly at his lord's disposal, there was usually about one serf to 4 villeins. Here the proportion is higher. The villeins here seem to have roughly 60 acres instead of 30. The estate for some reason was badly managed after King Edward's death, for when it was granted to Milo Crispin it was only worth one fifth of its original value and has not yet got back to it. Perhaps the course of fighting had taken place round here and the estate had become devastated We note also that Hitcham still extended as far as the banks of the Thames and the value of its fishery rights is computed at 500 eels yearly, while Dornay is also put at 500 ; but Taplow with its much longer strip of river bank is assessed at 1000. The object of the Doomsday survey was to find out all about every village, its woods, pastures, mills, fisheries, markets—in order that the King might tax them according to the assessments then made. So we see that rate collectors and their assessments are an evil from which English people have long suffered. In 1801 there were 20 houses and 32 families in Hitcham and 200 people. In 1086 there were 2 uuder-tenants, 8 villeins and 3 serfs, in all 13 families. So in 714 years Hitcham had increased 2½ times.

Milo married Maud, daughter of Robert D'ouilly, and had by her certain properties known as the honor of Wallingford. He died childless, and his other lands went back to the Crown, but his wife's

lands returned to her and she married again—a Brian Fitz Count. Milo was evidently a great soldier, for the king rewarded him with 88 manors all told. He not only got Haming's manor at Hitcham, but he also dispossessed him in two other manors. Milo appears to have lived at the Castle of Wallingford, and when he lay dying he gave to the church at Abbyndon a public inn there because the abbot had been so good to him. It is somewhat curious that today his name would have been forgotten in these parts but for the name of the Crispin Inn at Burnham close by. We know however that a William Crispin fought in Normandy against Henry I. and would have slain the king but for a faithful knight who warded off the deadly blow. We have visited the Crispin Inn and have found that it is a very old house going back probably to Elizabethan days. Ye olde landlord has been there some 60 years and declares that he believes it to be 600 years old. However inns did not have signs till at least the time of the Crusades, so we cannot prove that it goes back to the time of Crispin himself, and there is always the possibility, as one of the guests round the fire informed us when we enjoyed the hospitality of the inn, that it is called after the Saint.

To continue with our history.

We find Miles Neyrant holding Hitcham in the 13th century, Robert, Bishop of Carlisle, was its overlord, it then became part of the property of Robert Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. Miles Neyrant jun. left a widow, Isabel, whose second husband was a Beauchamp, and so his son was called Miles Beauchamp, and we find in 1300 he held the property under Edmund Earl of Cornwall. He died 1338 and his grandson was lord in 1350. On the death of the Black Prince 1376 it was stated that the heirs of Milo Beauchamp held Hitcham under him. The line came to an end with John Beauchamp whose daughter and heiress, Isabel, married in 1377 Sir Adam Ramsay, who was esquire of the body to Richard II., and a valiant soldier. In 1488 a Ramsay was lord of Hitcham ; he died in 1499 and his son Sir Thomas Ramsay died in 1510. We have his will : " I leave my wife my lands in Bucks., Beds. and Northampton for life, and appoint her my sole executrix."—Witnessed, Robert Woodford and Sir Robert Spearman, parson of Hitcham, proved Feb. 1509-1510. His son Sir Thomas took possession in 1515, he being then only 13, and died 1524, leaving an infant, Elizabeth, who inherited the property on the death of her mother 1527 and married Nicholas Clarke in 1551, son and heir to Sir John Clarke, Knt., of Weston (Kent). There is a tomb to this Sir John Clarke in Thame church, Oxon, 1539. Nicholas Clarke died 1553, and Elizabeth married Robert Alford and was left a widow in 1580. Elizabeth exercised manorial rights till her death in 1598, and then her son, Sir W. Clarke, succeeded her.

In 1618 James I. acceded to the lord of the manor the

rights of court leet and view of frank pledge ; evidently it had grown more important. Sir William died in 1625, and his son William died 2 years later, and in 1626 Hercules Clarke succeeded him, who died in 1630, and was followed by Sir Francis Clarke. Sir Francis died 1632 leaving a son John aged 7 and his mother Griselda in charge. A detailed inventory was made by Lady Clarke (showing 19 chambers in house) in which she had life interest :—great chamber over the porch, stairhead chamber, press chamber, gilt chamber, chamber within great chamber, porch chamber, my lady's chamber, nursery and maids' chamber, chamber with red bed, Mrs. Garrard's Chamber, Mrs. Lowe's parlor chamber, the gate house chamber, butler's chamber and chamber within, pantry chamber, lower gate house chamber, cook's chamber, chamber over washhouse, the hall door chamber.

In 1641 she married Sir A. Mainwaring and renounced her rights to John Clarke on the occasion of his marriage to Philadelphia, daughter of Sir Edward Carr. John Clarke entered 1645 and became a baronet in 1660. He then sold his rights to Sir Charles Dove and retired to Shabbington (Thame), they remained till 1670, when he sold to Edward Fulham, and in 1673 it passed to Edward Nicholas ; he died and his son Edward entered 1696 and died 1700, when his brother J. Nicholas sold to Rev. S. Weston and in 1713 to Samuel Travers, and shortly after it was sold to Rev. W. Friend who squandered his resources and sold it to John Friend, his brother, the celebrated physician to Queen Caroline. A John Friend died in 1728 and his son J. Friend succeeded him and died 1750, and the manor passed to a cousin, W. Friend, Dean of Canterbury, who settled it in 1761 on Robert his son and died 1766, and Robert died 1780, and having no son his brother, Rev. W. Friend, succeeded.

Monuments

There is a brass in the church with the inscription : " Pray for the soul of Thomas Ramsey and Margaret his wife, which Thomas deceased Jan. 30, 1510, on whose soul the Lord have mercy. Amen." The brass—our earliest—represents a man in full armour with his wife and 4 sons and 3 daughters ; in spite of this large family the Ramsey family did not last long. In 1524 the son, Thomas Ramsey, died, being then only 22, and there was an ancient brass in the nave just beneath the chancel steps representing a youth in armour, his feet resting on a lion couchant with the words " Hic jacet Thomas Ramsey Armiger." This brass has now disappeared.

Our next brass is that of Nicholas Clarke ; originally this same Nicholas had an altar tomb of Sussex marble in the body of the church with a brass plate on it. The plate has an effigy of a man

in full armour with his head resting on his helmet ; on his right hand 2 sons in gowns and on his left 2 daughters. The inscription records that his father, Sir John Clarke, of Weston, took the Duke of Longedvle prisoner, that he married Elizabeth Ramsey and by her had 4 children, and died of the sweat in 1551. One of these daughters, Jane, lies buried beside her father and has a brass plate with the pathetic inscription—

> Lapt in the moulde wherein her father lies
> the daughter dead here restyth in her grave
> fraught else with thewes and virtues in such wise
> as ever yet such tender years could have
> but God who knew her mete for Him alone
> did take her hence and leave her friends to moan

Nicholas would seem to have died before his father since he is always spoken of as esquire and never knight as his father and his son were. The feat which his father accomplished of capturing the Duke of Longedvle took place at the tourney of Borny by Terovane 16th August 1513. King Henry VIII thought highly of the deed, and he conferred on the knight an honourable augmentation whereby the coat-of-arms of the Duke of Longedvle the family have ever since worn on their coat-of-arms, the King sending his warrant to the College of Heralds willing and requiring them to publish this authentically under their hands and seals for continuance of the memory thereof to posterity. The family still has a representative to-day in Sir William Clarke 12th baronet. The baronetcy was only conferred in 1660, on the occasion of the Restoration, at the very time the family sold their property in Hitcham.

There is also a beautiful monument in the south chancel wall to Roger Alford of London and late of Hitcham, Esq , husband of Mrs. Elizabeth Clarke, put up by his wife in his memory and in that of hers when it should please God to take her. It represents a man in plate armour kneeling on one side of a desk, and on the other a lady in an angular head-dress with long lappels and ruff, with two small figures behind the principal figures, to represent their two children, in a recess. We have the text—" We believe that our Redeemer lyveth and that we shall rise out of the earth at the last day, and that we shall be clothed again with this skin.—Job xix. The translation is not the one to be found in our ordinary Church Bible since this did not come into use till 1611, some 30 years later, for Roger died 1580. So on the desk there is the text—" Christ is to us life and death is to us gain," also differently translated. On a cornice there is the somewhat curious motto—" Trye, Trust, and mistrust not," possibly a combination of the mottoes of Ramsey and Alford, however, a very good motto. This monument was originally in the sanctuary on the south side where the sedilia now are, and " between it and the E. wall was another tablet on which was wrote

with a pen on parchment an epitaph to the memory of Roger Alford, and altho it was most curiously writ yet now thro the injury of time it was almost obliterated" [note by Richard Steele, who visited the church 1712]. It was of the usual eulogistic form and was given in full by R.S., we quote two lines only: "tho' choleric in speech he somewhat were, his words once past his anger quite was gone." Surely we have here a typical Englishman

The second entry in our marriage register is, Mr. Roger Alford and Mrs. Elizabeth Clarke, 12th Feb. 1561. Another entry as we shall see tells us that Mr. Alford and his wife became by purchase from the Queen the first patrons of the living of Hitcham. The inscription tells us she had in all six children, and altogether we learn about her that she was 27 when her first husband died, 36 when she married again, and 56 when she became a widow for the second time. Her son, Sir William Clarke, has by far the most striking monument in the church, although on the base of it there is only the laconic inscription: "Here lies Sir W. Clarke Knt., sonne and heir to Nicholas Clarke of North Weston, Esq. and sonne and heir to Elizabeth Ramsey of Hitcham. He died Feb. 1, 1624." History relates one thing of him, and that does not redound to his credit, viz: that Queen Elizabeth visited him in 1602 when he so misbehaved himself that he pleased nobody and gave occasion to have his misery and his vanity spread far and wide.

The reference to his misery is without a clue—as to his vanity his tomb certainly ought to satisfy it. It probably takes the place of the founder's tomb or an Easter sepulchre. It is of alabaster and represents a man in full armour of life size upon a mat on an altar tomb under a canopy from which are suspended curtains of marble held back by two knights in armour. The hands are devoutly placed on the breast and the armour is finely finished. Within the recess under the canopy is carved on the wall the helmet with plumes and a pair of gloves, the plumes were once painted red and white and the gloves gilt as is the armour of a knight. The two knights who hold back the curtains are also exquisitely finished. Three sons and two daughters are carved on the front of the tomb, one of the sons in full armour, evidently Sir Francis his son, the others in cloaks: also one male and two female figures a grade lower all in cloaks, the children of Sir Francis? Above the tomb is an old helmet and once the remains of a banner. Richard Steele tells us that originally there was a stone on the ground alongside of the tomb with the words "here lies the body of Sir William Clarke," which looks as though he was buried beneath the stone and not beneath the magnificent tomb. The same authority says that there was a monument gone even in his time to Dorothy Garrard, wife to Thomas Garrard of Dorney, and eldest daughter of Sir W. Clarke, died August 26, 1647. There were also two stones in the chancel

with inscriptions missing, probably to two former rectors. There is too a monument of white marble over door leading to the vestry with the words "Sacred to the memory of Thomas de Birchingty (Bingty) from the County of Sussex, who died 27th August, 1657, aged 59," of whom nothing more is known. Sir Francis succeeded his father, and on a brass plate is the inscription: "Here lieth buried Sir F. Clarke, Knt., youngest son of Sir W. Clarke, of Hitcham. He married Grezell, daughter of Sir David Woodroffe, of Poyle in Surrey, Knt, by whom he had issue 3 sonnes, John, William, and Edmund, and 5 daughters, Grezell, Dorothy, Frances, Mary, and Elizabeth. He died March 18th, 1631."

In the marriage register we have the entry—William, sone of Sir John Oglander of . . in the Isle of Wight co Hampshire [High Admiral] and Dorothy sec. d. of Sir F. Clarke, 13 Nov. 1637; while from a letter we print elsewhere it would seem that William or Edmund Clarke married Frances, daughter of Sir John Oglander.

Sir John Clarke succeeded his father. We know from other sources he became the first baronet and it is clear therefore he was a royalist, but on his father's death he does not immediately take the title of Knight perhaps because of the troublesome times. There are two slabs on the chancel floor over the graves of two of his infant daughters, Grisselda and Philadelphia, who died in 1646 & 1647.

In 1660 he sold the property to Mr. Charles Doe and the family migrated to Shabbington. It is remarkable that it required a special Act of Parliament to effect this sale. For on Dec. 29, 1660, we find Charles II giving the royal consent to an Act of Parliament confirming the sale of the Manor of Hitcham to Charles Doe by Sir John Clarke, and the disposing of other lands of Sir John and Philadelphia his wife; the reason being that with these lands went certain customary duties to the Crown which had to be safeguarded in any transfer of property. Shabbington near Thame (Oxon) was the old family property.

About the Does we know very little. An entry in the register says that Charles Doe as patron presented James Herring to the living, and another that he died on 1st Nov, 1671, and was buried on the 2nd Nov. Another that in 1667 John Doe presented George Evans, while according to another entry James Doe, son of Sir Ch. Doe, late of Hitcham House, was buried 23rd May, 1678, and curiously enough the same day the eldest daughter of the Rector Dr. Evans, married Nathaniel, eldest son of Dr. Ingels, Fellow of Eton. We have discovered no monument to the Doe family.

In the churchyard are two tombstones side by side. One has an inscription: "Here lies the body of Ed. Nicholas, Esq., second son of the Rt. Hon. Sir Ed. Nicholas, Principal Secretary of State to their Majesties Charles I and II." He died 21st May, 1696.

The other is to his son. The register describes him as Lord of the Manor of Hitcham. There seems no evidence that the Principal Secretary of State ever owned the manor or lived here.

Another entry says that the east, south, and west wall of the churchyard was built at the expense of Ed. Nicholas, Esq. 1681, and the north at the expense of the parish, 1686. A chest in the church marked C.R. and dated 1684 would also seem to be the gift of Ed. Nicholas A further inscription on slabs within the altar rails tells us who the next owner was, for it reads : " John Friend, M.D., chief physician to Her Highness Queen Caroline (wife of George II) and lord of the manor, died July 1728." Thence the manor passed to his son John, who died 1750, and soon after to the Grenville family.

There are three other tablets on the S.E. wall to members of the Friend family, one is to Robert Friend, eldest son of W. Friend, Dean of Canterbury and lord of the manor, erected by his brother, Rev. Sir John Robinson, Bart., died Jan. 20, 1780. Another is to Rev. Sir John Robinson, youngest son of the Dean of Canterbury, d. 1832, and another to his wife, second daughter of James Spencer of Rathangar, co. Kildare.

Among other inscriptions worthy of note are that of

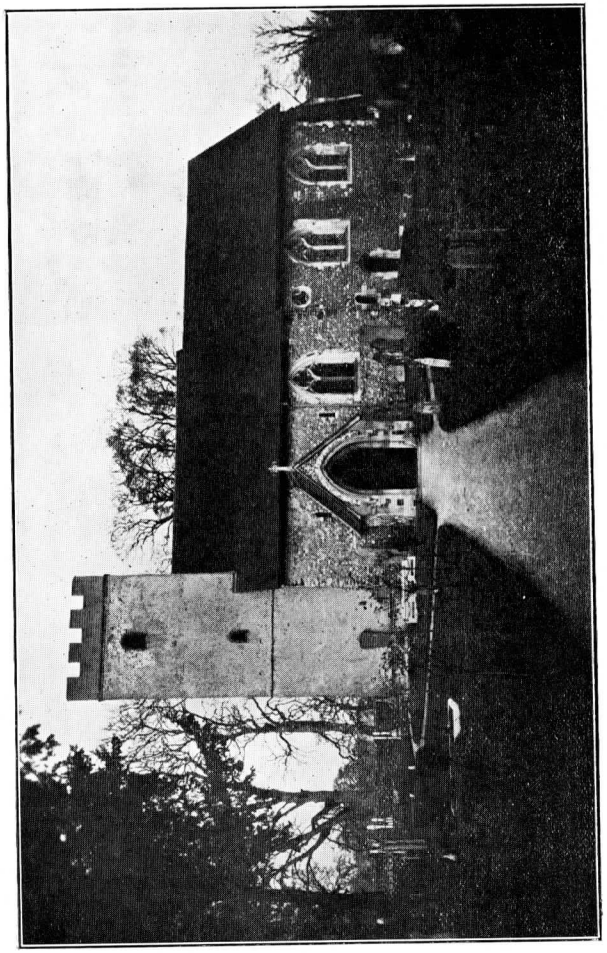
George Cruickshank, formerly a merchant of Amsterdam, who by uncommon abilities and indefatigable application acquired an ample fortune with the strictest integrity and honour which he employed in constant acts of charity and generosity most agreeable to his nature. Few men ever possessed a greater share of natural talents and none (in the busy life as his was) ever improved them with more acquired endowments, &c. &c. Finella his wife nursed him with constant attention, and being unable to preserve him in life erected this monument of affection. Died Sept. 1, 1765, aged 56.

Richard Walpole, son of the Honble Robert Walpole and nephew to Horatio 4th Earl of Oxford, died here Aug. 1811, aged 49 ; also his wife, 3rd daughter of Sir Benjamin Hammet, M.P. for Taunton. Sir Robert Walpole, the great statesman, was the 1st Earl of Oxford.

Hammet. A white marble tablet is in memory of Louisa Hammet, widow of Sir B. Hammet, M.P. for Taunton, who died at Florence in her 70th year and whose remains are buried here.

Bennet. John Grey, 2nd son of Charles, Earl of Tankerville, Aug. 23, 1753 (on a slab in pavement of the nave).

Lady Ravensworth (on a slab in pavement) Anne Delme, Lady Ravensworth. (On a mural tablet) Anne Delme, Lady Ravensworth, the best of wives, best of parents, the most excellent of women. Placed there by her affectionate daughter. Died 1794,



HITCHAM PARISH CHURCH.

aged 82. She was the daughter of Alderman Delme, Mayor of London, and mother of the Duchess of Grafton. She lived at Burnham but did much for Hitcham parish.

More (on slab in chancel). Hic Jacet. Sir John Henry More, died Jan. 1780, aged 26. Susannah Jane Dickson, only daughter of above, died April 1821.

There is a vault on the S.W. side of the family of Colonel Duncan with a long period of service in India, and close to the S. porch with an eikon imbedded in it is a monument with the inscription : " Here lies His Highness Prince Alexis Dolgorouki, K.G.R., of Nashdon, Hitcham, and Mikhablovka, South Russia, and 3rd son of Prince H.H. Serge Dolgorouki and the Princess *neé* Countess Apranine, b. 1846, d. 1915.

Manorial Rights.

We have spoken of Milo Crispin, the Beauchamps, the Ramseys, Clarkes, &c., as being Lords ot the Manor. By this term we mean a great deal more than that they owned the land. According to mediæval custom no one paid rent for their land, they all held it on terms of service. The Lord of the Manor of Hitcham held it as we have seen in the past under some overlord, to whom he was bound to supply a certain number of soldiers in time of war &c. The Earl of Cornwall, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Black Prince at different times were overlords. The Lord, after keeping certain lands for his own use let out the rest on condition that the tenants performed for him certain duties. They had to do work on his home farm and also give him some part of their produce—the serfs were almost exclusively employed on his farm. There were in addition many annoying seignoral rights, for instance, the lord of the manor would erect a mill and compel all the tenants to have their corn ground there ; he would not run the mill himself but let it out to another tenant who had to pay him a rent also in kind. The Lord also frequently had the monopoly of selling ale sometimes for the whole year and sometimes only for a part of the year, and we have the curious case of a temperate man who refused to buy ale, it was accordingly poured in at his window and he was charged for it by the Lord.

There were manorial courts at which the business of the estate was transacted. They were of two kinds : court leet dealt with public business such as would now be dealt with by the magistrates, court baron dealt with estate business or the relations between the lord and his tenants. It was not however till the reign of James I. that the manor of Hitcham was sufficiently important to have a

court leet. The tithing men, who were virtually the freeholders of the manor, sat with the lord and his steward practically as judges, so the lord's power was not altogether arbitrary. They dealt with such cases as food—for instance, at the assize of bread and ale tenants were frequently fined for selling short weight, or selling at an excessive price or of bad quality. Stray cattle went into the pound and had to be redeemed. Immorality was punished by a fine and so was brawling, &c. When a tenant died the lord claimed the best beast as heriot (and the church the second best beast). In those days everyone over 14 had to give security through his friends that he would not do wrong, his friends forfeited this if he committed a crime and they did not produce him. This was called view of frank-pledge and was a very early way of arranging for justice being done. Then there were actions for debt, sanitation, etc., which would come before these courts. Assault and battery were of course included. Rents, the taking on or resigning of a farm &c. naturally came before the court baron. There were many other rights claimed by the lord, for instance a serf could not marry without his lord's permission, and the lord was naturally unwilling to give permission to a girl to marry off the estate, since her children would then become the property of the manor to which her husband belonged. It was unfortunate that it was always to the lord's advantage through the system of fines to find a person guilty. It could not have been altogether pleasant to live in those days unless the lord of the manor was an exceptionally just man. We have not yet seen the court rolls for this manor, but no doubt they are in existence and perhaps one day will be printed.

Some Famous Men.

DR. JOHN FRIEND,

Lord of the Manor of Hitcham, 1715-1728. He was an eminent doctor and was physician to Queen Caroline wife of George II., writer, student and reader in Chemistry in the University of Oxford, and scholar at Christchurch. He left £1,000 towards promoting the study of anatomy. The anatomical theatre at Oxford was partly finished with this benefaction. He wrote a book called "The History of Physic," which was twice reprinted and translated into French and Latin. Towards the end of his life he went in for fulsome epitaphs, and Pope wrote about him these lines :

"Friend, for your epitaphs I am grieved,
Where still so much is said,
One half will never be believed,
The other never read."

He was in such repute as a physician that he received 300 guineas for a journey to Ingestrie in Staffordshire to see a patient. He was the doctor of the Tories, as Dr. Mead was of the Whigs, and when he was sent to the Tower on suspicion of being concerned in a plot, Dr. Mead attended his patients and gave him their fees, an act of generosity which should be recorded. On his son's death, The Very Rev. W. Friend, Dean of Canterbury, a cousin of his succeeded to the manor. Evidently the good doctor had not all the brains of the family, there was sufficient left over to make a dean.

William Friend, the 16th Dean, was the son of Dr. Robert Friend. He was educated at Westminster School (admitted 1727) and Christ Church, Oxford (1731). He was instituted to the Rectory of Witney on 4th April, 1739, and in 1744 became a Prebend of Westminster. He was installed Dean of Canterbury on June 14th, 1760. He died at Canterbury, November 26th, 1766, aged 55. His remains were removed to Witney and interred near those of his father and mother. It is known that he was a great lover of music, and concerts at the Deanery, in his time, were frequent.

There was also a famous Mr. Friend who was banished from Jesus College, Cambridge, at the end of the 18th century for heretical writings, and who was very probably one of this family. This gentleman possessed too much ability.

THE NICHOLAS FAMILY.

Edward Nicholas, eldest son of Edward Nicholas, who was principal Secretary of State to their Majesties King Charles I. and Charles II., was lord of the manor, and died 1696, and was buried here. His relatives, in his honour, broke the law, probably quite openly, which ordered that everyone should be buried in a woollen shroud by giving him a linen one, whereupon they were fined £5, half of which went to the informer, William Mastyn, and half to the poor. Entry in Register. The Churchyard was walled in on East, South and West sides at his expense 1681, and the North side at the expense of the parish (Entry April 22nd, 1697, G. Evans, Rector). His son Edward, who succeeded him, was the Treasurer of the Alienation Office, and died on his travels at Aix Province, September 1699, and was buried at Hitcham, 28th May, 1700. The tomb at the N.E. end of the Churchyard was erected in 1738 by his two sisters, Bridget and Elizabeth Nicholas.

SIR ED. NICOLAS,

Principal Secretary of State to Charles I. and II., was born at Winterbourne Earls, Wilts. 1644. He entered the service of the

State early in life, won a rapid promotion, and became secretary to the Lord High Admiral, member for Dover, and in 1641 Charles I. knighted him and made him Principal Secretary of State, and he held this office till 1662. Charles valued his services and found him a faithful servant, for we find him writing to his Queen (1645) "none doth serve me but Nicholas and Ashburnham." Soon after this, the King's cause being hopeless, he was ordered abroad to give what assistance he could to his son, afterwards Charles II. We find him staying at various places in his exile always trying to help Charles II., but the latter's Queen disliked him for his staunch Protestantism. His estates were of course sequestrated and he seems to have been reduced to poverty, and we find him writing—"not a shilling from the King." His son, Edward Nicolas, whose tomb is in the churchyard, was at the time tutor to the sons of Lord Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, who was also in exile, and he and Nicolas continued to serve the exiled King to the best of their ability, though the King disliked their honesty of purpose. On the King's return Nicholas was once more reinstated in the office of Principal Secretary ot State, but in 1662 was retired. The King gave him £10,000 and offered him a barony, but Nicolas refused this on the ground that he was too poor. He had already while in exile conferred on him a baronetcy with the idea that he should sell it and so relieve his poverty, but Nicolas could find no one willing to buy what must have seemed a doubtful honour. He was also given a pension of 1500 thalers by the King of Denmark. On his retirement he went to live on his estate at West Horsley in Surrey, where he made a fine collection of pictures. He died and was buried in the parish church there in 1669. His elder son John came into the title, and the younger, Edward, shortly after bought the manor of Hitcham. His grandson Edward, who died abroad, and is buried here, is said to have been secretary of the Alienation office—this office had to do with the transfer of lands, and corresponds to our Titles office to-day.

GRENVILLE FAMILY.

Right Hon. William Wyndham, Lord Grenville, who bought the present Dropmore property and erected the present house on it, was Prime Minister, 1806-1807, in the ministry of all talents, and his Government was responsible for the act abolishing slave trade and also for the Orders in Council, which by blockading the French ports, involved us later on in war with the United States. Dropmore was then part of Hitcham, but it was mostly unenclosed land. We have a note stating that the site on which the Dropmore house was built, was occupied by a small cottage, which was sold by John Williams, of Little Shardeloes, to Lord Grenville.

Lord Grenville soon after became Lord of the Manor of

Hitcham, and through him the Fortescues are to-day, though Hitcham Park and the site of the Manor House is the property of Col. Hanbury.

LORD GRENVILLE (1759-1834).

He and Dundas were Pitt's chief colleagues in the first half of the war that England waged against Napoleon. The *Dropmore Papers*, which contain his correspondence with Pitt on this subject, and which were preserved in the Dropmore Archives, throw much light on this period and are now regarded as of great importance. He strongly supported Wilberforce in his attempts to free the slaves and on the very day he left office after being Prime Minister for only a year (1806-1807) the Bill for the abolition of the slave trade received the royal sanction, and in 1815 we find him again calling attention to the slave trade in the French colonies we had restored to them. He was also a strong supporter of the movement for giving Roman Catholics equal privileges with other citizens. The King (George III) was violently opposed to this, and this was the cause of Grenville's ceasing to be Prime Minister, and also his support of these claims which we now consider so just and which was so honourable to him, excluded him from office during the remaining years of his life. In his retirement he went to live at Dropmore and amused himself with literary pursuits, and actually brought out an edition of Homer.

JOHN NEWBORO,

whose wife was the mother of Richard Sleech, sometime rector of Hitcham, lies buried in the Churchyard alongside his wife. They both have altar tombs at the N.E. of the Church, and we trust that Etonians remembering what a distinguished man he was will see that these graves are always properly cared for. The inscription on the tomb written in Latin, and that unfortunately not of the best, tells us that John was Master, viz., Headmaster of Eton, and that through his efforts chiefly the school became famous throughout the world. (Etonensis scholæ terrarum orbis per ipsum maximæ magister). It goes on to speak of his high character, saintly ways, diligence, strict discipline, to which it adds his pupils, to whom all things are known bear testimony, and ends up by relating that after a long illness against which he struggled with courage and patience of a Christian, he died June 1712. The Bursar of Eton College, from whom we sought information, kindly referred us to Maxwell Lytes' History of Eton, where we found a long reference to this distinguished scholar, which makes him take a place with John Friend amongst the most illustrious people buried in this Church. During the time of his headmastership, the new Upper School was built at a cost of £3,200. £1,800 was raised towards re-roofing the chapel, and at a cost of £3,000 the interior of the church was re-

modelled and adorned. In addition to enlarging and beautifying the school buildings, we have it on the testimony of one of his pupils, Richard Rawlinson, in his projected history of Eton, that John was a good scholar and one who could make his lessons attractive to his pupils. "The jejune and insipid explanations of the common rank of commentators he held in the utmost disdain, whilst he himself, with delightful freedom of expression, struck out something very uncommon and very surprising. Was Livy to be read, who ever found depths like him, whose soul was equally noble and equally sublime with the author. Generous and hospitable was he to the poorer lads in the foundation, and was known to be very noble in supplying them with proper books and other necessaries, knowing that even genius might be cramped by poverty. He used to give books to all the young gentlemen who took their leave of him handsomely, and this is the first reference to 'leaving money.'" He was responsible for the early training of such prominent statesmen as Sir Robert Walpole, Viscount Bolingbroke, Viscount Townshend and Wyndham, who played such an important part in the reign of Queen Anne and the Georges. Up to this time the school, although it had a large number of boys, seems to have been entirely managed by the Headmaster and the Usher, though some boys had tutors of their own. Newboro however introduced the system of assistant masters, a reform one imagines long overdue. We find, too, in his time, a strong spirit of *esprit de corps* among the boys, since Old Etonians used to meet yearly in London to hear a sermon, and afterwards to dine together. May Hitcham do its part towards preserving the memory of a great schoolmaster.

We investigated a report that Judge Jeffreys had once lived at Hitcham. We found this to be incorrect—the judge did however live close by at Bulstrode Park, Hedgerley, and the marriage register bears witness to the marriage of a son and a daughter in the church there. He was not one of the worthies of Hitcham.

There is a monument in the churchyard we had almost overlooked—to a boy John Weston, a son of Stephen Weston, who was lord of the manor. The boy was only 13 years old when he died in May, 1707, but the short and pathetic Latin inscription on his tomb says beautifully that because his friends believed that in his lifetime they owed very much to him therefore they erected this monument to keep them in mind of him. We trust that we can now leave his memorial to the care of the children of the church in token of one who was evidently of a very sunny and lovable disposition.

The Building.

The Church consists of nave and chancel and a western tower added in the Tudor period and a modern porch.

The chancel is obviously 14th century work, and very beautiful work of its simple kind. The nave is much earlier, most authorities place it as 12th century work, but we are inclined to follow the authority who says: It is Norman (built by Saxon workmen) but very early, and was either a building repalcing the wooden Saxon church, or built at the transfer of the manor from the Saxon thane to its first Norman owner (Milo Crispin). The original chancel was in the shape of an apse and very small. Certain traces of the foundations of this were found at the restoration. In fact the church as it then existed without the tower and the present chancel must have been tiny, it was probably little more than a private chapel to the manor house. The very word parish which comes from the Greek, means (by the house), and indicates that the estate round the manor house constituted the parish in those days.

The nave must have been very insufficiently lighted by the four small windows, two on either side. These windows were so small partly because the early builders found it difficult consistent with the safety of the walls to make large windows, and partly because glass was very dear, so they were often open; and again, churches in those times were not infrequently used as places of refuge in case of attack, and so the less window space the better. It is the so-called long and short work in these windows that has led one authority to believe that the nave was built in Anglo-Saxon times, while the ancient chalk coffin to which reference has been made strengthens this conjecture.

In the 14th century two bigger windows were added to the nave, no doubt to light it better. The present heavy Norman chancel arch is 12th century, and if the nave was 11th century then the old arch was done away with and replaced by this one. A curious little pillar supposed to have been placed there to support the original chancel roof is still to be seen on the east side of the chancel and is a very rare feature and therefore to antiquaries of great value.

In the chancel arch are two holes for the beam supporting the rood or large crucifix, an invariable feature of the mediæval church, and there was usually a rood screen. Probably there was one here and this is the reason of the high window above the rector's stall. A bust of a man is carved in the pier on either side of the chancel arch at the end of the arch.

There is also a piscina in the south wall of the nave indicating probably that there was a secondary altar there—who to?

The Chancel.

The nave is the body of the church and is derived from a Latin word meaning a ship, because the Church was frequently likened to a ship in which souls were carried safely over the troubled seas of life. It was the part of the church to which the laity were admitted. The chancel is derived from a Latin word which means a screen, indicating that it was shut off from the nave by a screen, often as we have seen, a rood screen, and since this screen was made up crossways we get our word 'to cancel' from it, and since the Chancellor of the Cathedral had his seat inside the screen he gets his name also from this screen. The chancel was strictly only for the use of the clergy, but frequently the lords and ladies of the parish insisted on having their seats there. So probably when our chancel was built the lord of the manor had a noble pew in it for himself and his family.

Just as in the 12th century many churches were built and possibly ours among the number, by the Lords of the Manors to atone for the violent deeds by which the Normans got possession of Saxon lands and perhaps also as a thank-offering for them, so in the 14th century a large number were built or rebuilt. At this time there were quite a number of skilled masons who were employed in church building. While building different churches they formed themselves into a band of lodges, and from these by circuitous means arose our present free and accepted masons who preserve the group spirit without the craftsman's skill. Some such lodge of well skilled masons we believe were employed on Hitcham church. We shall see reason later to suppose that possibly they were a Windsor Lodge, and that Thomas the glazier, who worked under William of Wykeham, was one of them.

Our present chancel is very complete and well-proportioned, and not much destruction would seem to have taken place in it. Probably the large monument to Sir W. Clarke so typical in its way of 16th century vanity obliterates either a founder's tomb or an Easter sepulchre. The monument to Roger Alford and his wife was originally in the sanctuary over the present sedilia or seats for the clergy in the south wall of the sanctuary.

Close to the rector's stall there is a small window very low down, and a circular window high up. These windows, which appear in many different churches, are called low and high windows. The reason for these windows has been much discussed, they have been called lepers' windows, viz. for lepers (who were not permitted to come into church and who in those days were very common) to look through ; but lepers were not permitted in churchyards. It has been suggested that they were to hear confessions, to shoot through, to look out for funerals, to see if lights

were burning before a particular saint, &c., but quite probably the simple solution is that they were to give a better light to read by in the case of the low one, and to throw light on the rood loft in the case of the high one.

Many old encaustic tiles with very curious designs on them are still to be found in the chancel. Some very similar to these are to be found at Tately, Hants, others at Little Marlow and Bonfield ; we shall say more about these later.

Furniture.

Originally the church would have no seats in it. The chief service was the mass, at which the people knelt, and in those days they knelt on the floor which was covered with rushes, for the sick and infirm there were chairs. At the Reformation when the new prayer book ordered the reading of lengthy lessons and the listening to sermons, pews became necessary and also a pulpit. The Jacobean pulpit with its sound-board was then introduced, and still fortunately remains, but the oak pews which date from 17th century were unfortunately removed in 1866 for the humbler structures which now exist. The present porch which with the great door is 16th century work is now panelled with some remains of the old oak box pews, and the hinges can still be seen there. There was certainly an earlier porch. The Communion Table also, which as a result of the Reformation took the place of the mediæval altar, was 17th century work, and probably replaced an inferior predecessor (this table has now gone).

The chalice and paten are dated 1684 and the alms-dish 1694, There is also an oak chest in the church with the date 1684 and the letters R.C. (Rex, Carolus) on it. Are we justified in supposing that the chest and many of these gifts were due to Ed. Nicholas, son of the Principal Secretary of State of Charles I and II.

Glass.

The glory of Hitcham is its ancient painted glass, which seems to belong to the time of Edward III. In the 14th century few colours were used, and here there are not more than six—white, ruby, yellow, blue, green and flesh colour. There is an east window and four side windows of two lights. Each side window has or had at the top a quatrefoil piece of tracery containing a figure of one of the evangelists holding a scroll of his writings. The figures are seated on white thrones with scrolls across their knees and their symbols behind them.

St. Matthew	with the angel	and the text (in Latin)	Matt. ii, 1.
St. Mark	,,	winged lion	Mark xiv, 16
St. Luke	,,	winged ball	Luke i, 26

St. John is missing.

Each of the main lights of the windows contains the figure of an angel placed under a canopy surrounded by a border of natural foliage. Each angel has 6 wings and stands on a wheel which is also winged. These winged wheels are unusual, and illustrate the words of the prophet Ezekiel, i, 18, 20. The angels are designed in pairs, gold-winged and white-winged. Two gold-winged angels are placed on blue grounds and have ruby halos, the wheels golden with white wings. In the next pair the wings are white, the halos blue, and the wheels white with golden wings. There are remains of an inscription under each figure which suggest the words *Seraph m Dominationes Virtutes*, these suggest that originally there were 9 angels illustrated in the east and side windows, corresponding to the nine orders of angels mentioned in the Bible.

The remains of 14th century glass in the east window are in the tracery lights. The central panel contains a seated figure of Christ, the hands and feet show the marks of the nails with streams of blood issuing from the wounds. In the four cusps are remains of the symbols of the four Evangelists, the head of the eagle of St. John and the angel of St. Matthew being still visible. The two quatrefoils on either side have six winged angels with golden wings. One holds a green cross and the other a staff in one hand and in the other a crown of green colour.

In a small triangle in the centre of the tracery above the large lights is a piece of old glass with a stag's head gold on a ground of ruby glass. The late James Powell, F.S.A., to whom we owe our information as to the glass, makes the following suggestions : This stag's head was the heraldic badge of Sir Andrew Windsore. Now his family at the time the chancel was built lived at Stanwell, six miles from Hitcham. Sir Richard de Windsore at that time married as his second wife a Molyns, the arms of Molyns appear on some of the old tiles in the chancel. Did therefore Sir Richard build this church in memory of his second wife, the mother of his heir ? Again, were the windows made by glaziers from Windsor Castle, seeing that William of Wykeham, who was in charge of the works at Windsor, introduced the nine orders of angels in the tracery of the ante-chapel of New College, Oxford, which was built about this time ?

When the windows were restored under Mr. Powell's direction being unwilling to add any new coloured glass, he filled all vacant places with plain glass ; this very much weakens the rich colour effect of the original design. We find a note made by Mr. Steele in 1712. The windows of this church were very much enriched with painted glass but so miserably performed that they are not worth particular notice, except that the east window had the complete history of our Saviour from the Salutation to the Ascension.

Hitcham House.

The old Manor House in which the lords of Hitcham lived lay close to the Church on the N.E. side. Although it has long since been demolished we know something of it, and we have already referred to the nineteen rooms in it. The last house—see the picture reproduced—was obviously an Elizabethian structure, probably raised in the palmy days of the Clarkes. Many of the old walls and much of the gardens still remain, and so well have they been preserved by the present family, that we can almost reconstruct for ourselves the grounds in the days when Queen Elizabeth visited the then owner. The Park round the house still remains, and the old trees within it are planted in such wise that an experienced eye has suggested that it was once the tilting ground of the knights of old.

Lipscombe tells us that in the hall hung 3 full length portraits, one of Charles I. in full armour, another of his Queen as St. Catherine, and another of Charles II., while there was another portrait which resembles Cromwell ; there were also two life-size ones of Lord and Lady Sunderland. We cannot now trace these.

The first description we get of the house is from an advertisement of Sale in the " London Gazette and New Daily Advertiser," Aug. 3rd, 1780. Desirably situated—the house may be had with from 11—60 acres of meadow, with the option in two years of 40 more—the whole lying contiguous to the house and enclosed with a park fence. The house is remarkably dry and in complete repair, the gardens walled and abound with a variety of choice fruits, the pond well stocked with carp and tench, the dove-cot fully stocked, every requisite office, stabling for 14 horses and standing for 4 carriages. After it was bought by Lord Grenville, it was turned for a time into a school, and Col. Hanbury has an excellent picture of the house at that time—the only picture we believe that exists of the old Manor House.

The School was under the charge of a Dr. Gretton. From the Farington Diary we learn a good deal about Dr. Gretton and his school ; for Farington after meeting Dr. Gretton at dinner the night before was invited by the latter, whom he had met before, to come and visit him. Accordingly the next day, Sept. 27th, 1806, " I rode to Dr. Gretton's, at Hitcham House, one mile from Taplow. There I walked about the grounds with Mrs. Gretton, who shewed me several of her children. She said she had 15 children (2 of them as we have seen lie buried in Hitcham Churchyard). I then rode with Dr. Gretton through Burnham Wood and by Dropmore till 2 o'clock. He spoke of his general good fortune in life. He set out in life without any prospects, and now he could retire and sit

down, possessed of £700 a year." Evidently the school paid, especially when the Doctor's large family is taken into consideration, and that he had the night before told the writer that he had lost some £3,000 recently owing to the defaulting of a friend. He said he had now 26 boys under his tuition ; the vacations are six weeks dated from 20th July and a month dated from 20th December. He said the bane of Public Schools is that the parents of many of the boys fill their pockets with bank notes, and opportunity is allowed for the expenditure of it viciously. In his school no boy, though some are 18 years of age, spends more than 2 guineas a year while at school. He desires the parents not to give them more than one guinea, and if they require more he gives them a shilling at a time. His description of the Public School boy is amusing.

The youth at Eton are dissipated gentlemen.

Those at Westminster dissipated, with a little of the blackguard.

Those at St. Paul's the most depraved of all.

Rugby was on a bad footing. Many are sons of gentlemen, but more are sons of manufacturers at Birmingham, Wolverhampton, &c., who having little sentiment of the disgrace of anything dishonourable, act as their inclinations lead them.

We can surely almost picture this die-hard Conservative Scholar.

Hitcham Farm House.—An old 17th century building with its upper storey built of a different material to the lower, is still standing, and is now two cottages.

Hitcham Bury was the old parsonage. It has been much enlarged and altered, but it has still the old 17th century fireplace. In the Terrier we print we refer to the gradual enlargement of this parsonage.

List of Rectors.

Robert died, Rector 1262
Robert de Aele, pres. 13 Feb. 1269 by Prior & Convent of Merton in Surrey
Richard de Herringwell, pr. 5 March, 1277
Robertus de Worling, pr. 1287
Edmund de Burnham, pr. 5 March, 1324
Elias de Sco. Edmunds, pr. 7 Jan. 1342
Thomas died, Rector 1361
John de Wroxton, pr. 14 Feb. 1361
John Akerman, exchanged for Thorley, Herts. with
John Barton 2 June, 1405, exchanged for Rowbarrow, Somerset, with
Lewis Kennerdsley, 19 Sept. 1406
Robert de Manfield, admitted 19 Feb. 1438, aud became rector of Taplow

Thomas Nordrym. resigned 1444
Robert Kokesey, pr. 14 May, 1444, resigned
Robert Whithead, pr. 4 Dec. 1477
Richard Appulton, died Rector 1483
Richard Spearman, pr. by the Bishop by lapse, 30 Nov. 1483
William Sampson, pr. 4 July, 1515
Richard Erington, pr. 6 June, 1522, resigned
John Belfield, A.B., pr. 5 Jan. 1531
Thomas Beabe, succeeded 22 Aug. 1536
Robert ap Griffith, pr. 2 July, 1538, the last rector presented by the Priory
Thomas Story, pr. by the Queen (Mary). 1553
Bartholomew Green, pr. by King Philip and Mary, Sept. 9, 1555
John Ball, pr. 2 Oct. 1556
Thomas Hall, pr. by Roger Alford & Elisa his wife, 25th Dec. 1569, buried 7 Sept. 1592
Robert Floide, A.M,, pr. 13 Oct. 1593, buried 3rd Aug., 1629
William Sargeant, pr. 1629 by Sir Francis Clarke and living returned as worth £80. Died 13th May, 1657
James Herring, pr. 9 Nov., 1660 by Mr. C. Doe
Dr. Phil King, died March, 1667
George Evans, D.D., pr, 28 March, 1667 by John Doe, Gent, died March 1701 and buried at Hitcham
William Montague, A.M., pr. 20 March 1701 by Mr. Evans of Windsor Castle, resigned
Richard Sleech, A.M., D.D., inst. 6 July 1702, d. 1729, buried at Windsor, being a Canon. Also rector of Farnham Royal, to which he was pres. Nov. 1721.
Thomas Archer, pr. 1729 by Thomas Evans, clerk, buried June 30, 1767
Edmund Gibson, A.M., inducted 13 Dec. 1743
Henry Sleech, A.M., inducted 3 Nov. 1771 on nom. of Eton College, and pres. by the Crown owing to the lunacy of the heir of Dr. Evans.
Thomas Pulton, Clerk, pr. by Crown as before on nom. of Eton, 17 May, 1785, buried at Hitcham
Joseph Goodall, D.D., pr. 7 May 1811, by Thomas Archer on nom. of Eton resigned
W. M. Grover, A.M., pr. March 1833, died 1866, aged 75
William Carter, pr. 1866, resigned 1869
Edward Balston, D.D., pr. 1869, resigned
Herbert Kestell Cornish, pr. 1869, died 1873, buried at Hitcham
George Frewer, M.A., pr. 1873
Edward Carter, M.A., pr, 1905
H. Wilson, MA., pr. 1916
W. H. George, M.A., pr. 1923.

In the will of Thomas Ramsey the rector is called *Sir* Richard Spearman, this prefix was not uncommon in those days. During the troublesome times of Henry VIII's reign when there were changes in doctrine Robert ap Griffith seems to have found no difficulty in accommodating himself to them, but perhaps he was a reformer at heart for the very year that Mary came to the throne he disappears. Perhaps however, Thomas Story, although presented by Queen Mary, had some qualms, for he only

stayed two years and his successor one year; but John Ball, although he started in Mary's reign, lasted on well into Elizabeth's reign.

Is Elias de Sco Edmunds Elias from St. Edmundsbury?

Dr. George Evans was evidently a royal favourite, for he was made Canon of Windsor directly on his appointment to Hitcham, & Mrs. Evans is stated after his death to have lived at Windsor Castle. Dr. Evans gave the right of presentation to Eton College, and his family have had a close association with Eton College.

Henry Reynolds entered into the Parsonage of Hitcham the 25th day of Sept. 1589, he is styled in the register 1591 Clerke and Farmer of this Parsonage (time of Queen Elizabeth).

Rev. W. Sergeant died 1657, a note tells us that James Herring succeeded him in the parsonage, one would suppose immediately, but he was only presented to the living in Nov. 1660 by C. Doe, the year of the Restoration. Another note tells us that he surrendered to Dr. Phil King, who died March 1667. It would appear that James Herring was one of those men who were put into livings in Commonwealth times and were Nonconformists at heart, and many of whom seceded in 1662. Dr. King is not given in the list compiled by Lipscombe. A son of the Rev. W. Sergeant who became a rector in Hampshire is mentioned as among the benefactors of Kings College, Cambridge, to which he gave a valuable M.S.S.

We find 4 curates to Hitcham—C. Goddard 1814-1820, James Joyce 1820-1833, John Langdale 1838-1842, A. Pyne 1843-1846, then Dr. G. Proctor 1864-1866.

Either Dr. Goodall, D.D. (1811-1833) was too busy or too feeble for the work, while Grover (1833-1866) was first too busy with other things and then as we know too feeble.

The curacy of Hitcham is first mentioned in 1210 as in possession of Merton Priory, it was worth £4-6-8 in 1291 and £11-18-2 in 1335 with a pen. of 2s. to the Priory which was paid up to the Reformation. In 1517 the Prior gained permission to unite it to Taplow and to present one of the 4 canons of Merton to it, but the Dissolution came before he exercised this right. In 1650 it was returned as worth £80.

At the enclosure of lands a certain amount was given to the poor of the parish to compensate them for their loss of rights, it is about 5 acres, and brings in about £10.

Registers.

The Registers go back to 1559, that is to say the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when Registers were first ordered to be kept in Parish Churches. There are two ancient volumes, the condition of the first is exceptionally bad, cracked, mutilated and discoloured, and towards the end illegible owing to being kept in a damp place. The parchment covers have been cut off and there

is a note saying it is a copy made in 1598 of an oulde register book —up to this time registers were made on loose sheets. The last page reads thus :—"The margins of the register were so decayed that I had to cut them in the manner they are in order to save ye rest, which was gradually moulding."

Vol. I., 1559—1676. Vol. II., 1677—1753. Vol. III, 1754—1812. Various memoranda are found in these volumes; for instance at the commencement of Vol. II. we have the remarks about the church wall already noted. Also, the barn on the S.W. side of the parsonage farm yard, together with the stable, was built in the year 1671. The barn on the S E. of the above said farm yard was built in the year 1679.

The elm trees, in triangular form, near the barn above-said were planted in the first year of King James II. (Here follow several references to Hitcham Bury the old parsonage). The little room over the kitchen pantry looking into the orchard, was built in the year 1685, in the beginning of the 2nd year of James II. Look in ye old register on ye first page how ye *parson?* age of Hitcham came first to ye Lord of ye Manor of Hitcham, and how it came to be disjoined.

The perpetual advowson of Hitcham was bought of Queen Elizabeth on ye 22nd January, in ye 2nd year of her reign, by Mr. Thomas Stephen of Inglesham in ye County of Berks., and William Copp, and sold by them on the 24th of ye same January to Elizabeth Clark of Hitcham, widdow, and hath been in ye Clark's of Hitcham ever since, till it came to Sir Charles Doe and his son, John Doe, and from them to me. Ye deed of sale to ye widdow I have in my little trunk.

Ye windows were put in ye little parlor and chamber over . . . and a closet built to each, and ye little parlor wainscoated by Richard Sleech, rector, in ye year 1702.

Another record, largely undecipherable, says that the front was built to ye Hall and a parlour and chamber over with eight new windows . . . and parlour were then painted and ye Hall. A new frame also made for ye well and a plantation made of all sorts of fruit, wall and standards, by Richard Sleech in ye yeare 1704. Ye front entry of ye Hall and Dairy and 8 new windows, 1709. Ye Chancel was new tiled 1707.
Ye House new tiled . . . . 1710.

At the beginning of Vol. II., there are about 18 entries of which the following is a specimen.

The like affidavit was made on the 24th of August, 1698, by Elizabeth How of the parish of Taplow, in ye County of Bucks., in reference to Christopher Williamson, ye son of Christopher

Williamson of Hitcham in ye County of Bucks., before William Glover, Vicar of Burnham in Bucks., Mary Glover, senior, and Mary Glover, junior, being witnesses.

A reference to the Register of Burnham suggested that these affidavits were the same as those which appear there with reference to bodies being buried in wool, and turning up our register we find that a Christopher Williamson was buried at this date, clearly showing that our surmise was correct. It was a law made to help the woollen trade about this time that all bodies should have woollen shrouds, enforced by severe penalties.

In the rubric in the Prayer Book before the Nicene Creed a Statement is made of "Here followeth the briefs, citations, &c. A "brief" meant a letter from the Bishop commanding certain collections to be made. At the commencement of the 2nd volume of our Register there is a record of a large number of collections taken up between the years 1692 and 1750, in response to briefs from the Bishop. One, the first recorded, is for the Church at Thirsk in Yorkshire, when a collection was taken up in its behalf on March 20th, 1692, amounting to six shillings and four pence.

One of the first decipherable is for the French Protestants and amounts to £1/16/6, May 1688. While the next one was for ye Irish . . . 1688; this came to the remarkable amount for those times of £4/5/6, July 1688. A little later, April, 1692, the collection for the redemption of Christians in Morocco amounts to 12/-; again in September, 1700, there is a collection for redemption of slaves now in Morocco, amounting to 15/-. Large numbers of the collections are for fires—sometimes in Churches and sometimes in towns; others for rebuilding Churches,—and names of these all over the country occur, Ely Cathedral, Chester Cathedral, St. Helen (Isle-of-Wight), Edinborough, &c.

On an average a collection was taken about once a month for some national purpose. In 1742 a collection was taken up in pursuance with His Majesty's letter amounting to £13/7/8. This is far the largest single collection, and the names and amounts given by each person are recorded. After 1710 the practice seemed to arise of paying in the briefs half-yearly, probably on the occasion of some visitation. In some cases the total loss caused by the fire is recorded. So in 1707 we read Carr Lane, loss by fire £3005. Amount given by Hitcham, 2/6. Hitcham would in fact seem to have been richer or more generous in its earliest times, for instance in 1701, in small sums, £1/13/0 was collected, whereas in 1720 the total amount is 15/6; 1723, 6/-; 1724, 3/9. The average amount for a half-year's collection is 7/- or 8/-, though occasionally we have £1 and over.

Entries in Registers.

Mr. I. Tent, in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James ye first, was living at Nowe in ye tyme of ye plague, and he came . . . . called ye . . . . and was found dead there on the backside of the same house. . . . . buried him in the same place . . . . Clerk, Randall Wright, Vicar of Bovenyary, Henry Dutton his mark X

Thomas Grove, of Calbroke, was buried on 1st day of October. We find frequent mention of the Groves of Calbrooke, for instance, Henry Grove signs the register as churchwarden in 1602. Thomas Naske of Cayebrooke, is churchwarden 1609. Joseph Grove is churchwarden and signs the register on the burial of Sir William Clarke 1624. Again in 1629, Jasper Grove is mentioned as Churchwarden.

Henry Ball is churchwarden 1672, but unable to sign his name, puts his mark.

Mrs. Anne Newborough, wife of Rev. Mr. John Newborough, Upper Master of Eton School, mother to Richard Sleech, Rector of Hitcham, and Mrs. Lucy Weston wife of the Rev. Mr. Stephen Weston, Lord of ye Manor of Hitcham and fellow of Eton College, died at Eton, December 4th, and was buried on the 7th day of December 1709.

Goody Wannel of this parish was buried, aged 92, May 25th 1710.

Rev. John Newborough, Upper Master of Eton School, was buried June 8th, 1712.

Mrs. Rebecca Evans, relict of George Evans, was buried October 28th, 1712.

We get the names of several farmers who were buried here: William Aldridge (1702), Thomas Compton (1705), John Ball (1705), John Sedding (1711), Richard Eves (1710), John Sedding, for many years farmer at the manor farm (1739), Richard Eves (1741), Farmer Wells (1735).

The references to base born children are not many, in most cases the reputed father is given. In one case the entry reads Elizabeth Pope, daughter of John and Mary, was baptised . . . Then there is a memo., this was a base born child of John Pope, of Chesham Parish and Mary Hand of this parish. In another case a base born child is called filius populi and the remark is added, being the supposed son of Ambrose; or again we have Eliza Pond, daughter of Eliza Bovington, bye born.

Sarah Keble, maidservant to Miss Nicholas, was baptised at full years of discretion and answered for herself 8th March, 1683.

Some sad entries :—

A travelling man, his name unknown, was buried Sept. 23rd, 1774.

Ann Bovington, drowned, 14 years. March 10th, 1814.

Jane Coleman, died in hawker's cart near the High Bath Road, in the parish of Hitcham, 24 years, Jan. 12th, 1845.

Hester Poole, died of burns, 4 years, July 14th, 1850.

Samuel Price, died by roadside, Hitcham Bottom, 76 years, Dec. 15th, 1855.

Further entries of burials :—

Aug. 10th, 1826, Captain William Wells, died at Berry Hill, Taplow, 38 years.

April 25th, 1832, Rev. Sir George Robinson, died at Great Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, 78 years. His mother was the widow of the Friend who was Dean of Canterbury.

Jan. 27th, 1834, Ann, wife of Sir George Robinson, died at Muscal, Kent, 66 years.

April 26th, 1844, Caroline Campbell, wife of Duncan Campbell, died at Hill House, Hitcham, 68 years.

No christenings, marriages, or burials in the years 1596 and 1677.

Reminiscences.

Mr. Webster, now in his 80th year, who was for many years churchwarden of this parish, as was his father and grandfather before him, has furnished us with some recollections of early times. He was born at the farmhouse now occupied by Mr. Dykes His father worked that farm as he did after him. In his early days there were not more than 120 people in the parish and much of the land on which houses are now built was part of his farm. In winter he employed only some eight or nine men, but in summer he can remember putting up some 80 or 90 men in the great barn which is part of the Hitcham House Farm, and which was then part of his land. Up till 1866 there was no school in the parish, and many of the children could neither read nor write, in fact that was true of some of his best workmen. A desire arose to have a school and the rector gave a piece of glebe and Mr. George Hanbury gave £300, which was the total cost of the original building, and it was afterwards enlarged. The school was only recently closed for the sake of economy, Mrs. Massy being the last teacher. In his time the village pound was standing, and the gate to it is now marked by the seat close to the church gate with the inscription above it "God is our refuge and strength." This village pound was possibly the very earliest institution in their village.

At this time almost the whole of Hitcham was owned by Lady Grenville of Dropmore, but on her death, the heavy death duties caused her son to sell a good deal of the property, and it was about this time that Mr. George Hanbury bought Blythwood and built the present Hitcham House. In his early days the church gallery was still standing at the west end, and there was no music in the church services. The clergyman went down to the vestry where the beltry now is and changed his surplice for a black gown before preaching the sermon. The Rector then lived at the old rectory which is now called Hitcham Bury, and he remembers one snowy Sunday when the rector, Rev. Grover then an old man and very feeble, was wheeled down to the church in his bath chair. The day being so bad no one but the Rector and his man and the churchwarden turned up, so after saying a prayer he dismissed them and went home. When Mr. Grover resigned after an incumbency of 32 years, Eton College offered the living to Dr. Balston, Headmaster ; he was on the point of refusing it, saying there was not enough work for so young a man as himself to do, when a Mr. Cornish who was also a master suggested that he should accept it and exchange with his father who lived at Bakewell in Derbyshire, and who was getting an old man. Accordingly Dr. Balston came to the church, was inducted, rang the bell, read the 39 Articles, preached one sermon, and then departed for Derbyshire ; and Mr. Cornish came to Hitcham. Dr. Balston afterwards became Archdeacon of Derby.

Although Mr. Cornish was an old man his two sisters assisted him to get together an organist and a choir. When he left, the interior of the church had got into a dilapidated condition, and Mr. Webster set himself to collect £200 to put it in order, and he particularly remembers how Mr. G Hanbury came first without being asked and gave £25 towards this, although he had only recently made a generous donation of new lamps. Ever since this time the church has been in excellent repair. The priest's vestry was built by Rev. Frewer, who got into no small trouble with the Bishop for knocking a hole in the wall to make the door, without diocesan consent. Mr. Webster was confirmed at Hitcham by the famous Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford, who was often called "Soapy Sam," the Bishop explained this nickname by saying that he was so often in hot water but always came out with clean hands. Mr. Webster found that he had often to act as a buffer between the rector and his brother churchwarden, and although he had a deep respect for both of them it was evident that he had often to use considerable tact to keep the good ship on its path.

One daughter of Mr. Frewer married Rev. F. Goldsmith, afterwards Bishop of Bunbury, West Australia, now rector of Hampstead.

We have talked with an old lady in the parish now in her 87th

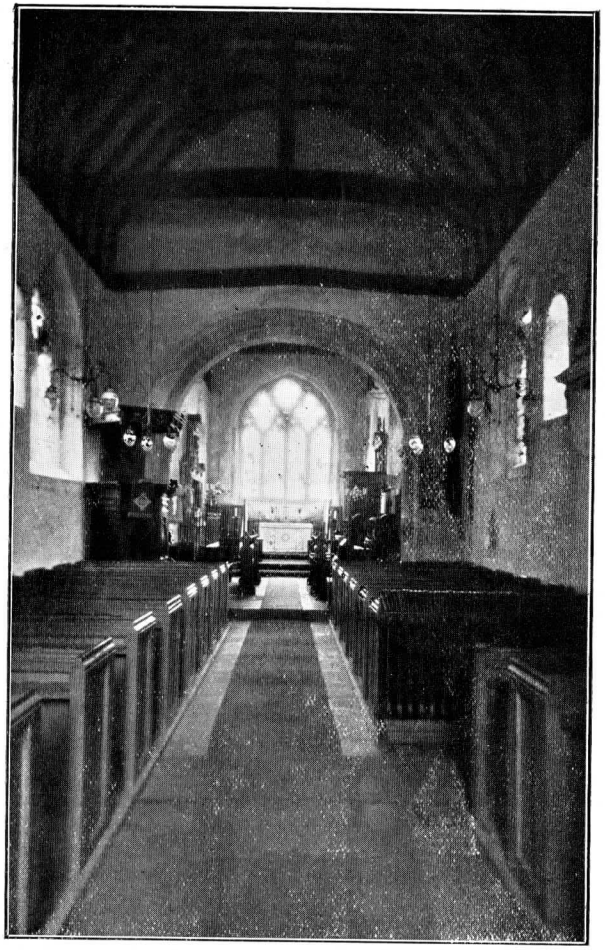
year. She was one of 12 children and has had 12 children herself. She went to school at Burnham and left when she was nine to begin a life of work which has never ceased since. When she married her husband was on the railway but soon owing to bad health had to resign and take an easier job with less pay. It was therefore necessary for her to supplement the family income. She is still bright and cheerful and in good health. She has seen Hitcham grow from a very small place and thinks if her mother could see it today she would open her eyes, but if she were to see it a few years hence she would have to open them much wider. She remembers quite distinctly Mr. Grover who was rector here till 1864, and has a New Testament which was given her as a memorial of him and in which the births of her children are registered. Of the many good deeds he did perhaps he would be interested to know that the one which lingers longest in the mind of one who is now almost the sole survivor of his erstwhile congregation is the kindness which he showed to the children at Christmas time.

The present rectory was built by Rev Carter, jun., 1905. He moved here because the old rectory was too large and it is somewhat curious that its size was largely due to his father, a former rector, who although he was only there for three years and knew his time would not be long since he had the promise of Burnham, yet made the house so big to hold his large family.

Hitcham Boys at the Front.

Although only then a parish of about 500 people Hitcham sent some 120 men to the war and they served on nearly all the fronts. One was killed at the landing at Gallipoli, another lost at Kut, one missing in France, &c. Two Military Medals were gained. Colonel Hanbury at the commencement of the war raised a battalion of the Royal Berkshires. He began with 13 men and the earliest recruits were trained in the yard of Hitcham Farm where there is a stone recording the fact. Afterwards, this space being too crowded, he moved his men to Maidenhead, where they were quartered. He himself went to the front in charge of the Royal Warwickshires. His son who was in Germany when war broke out managed to escape and fought. His two daughters were nurses—one of them in France, while his wife was busy looking after the wounded men who were brought to her house.

Another family had seven sons fighting, three in the navy and four in the army. Two were killed, one gained the M.M., and the family received a letter from the King congratulating them on doing their duty so nobly.



Hitcham Parish Church Interior.

Yet another family had three sons in the navy, one was torpedoed three times in one day and yet escaped alive—this man was evidently not meant to die out of his bed.

Anything like an adequate account of their war record would be out of place here. Inside the church the lectern is the gift of one family who lost a son, while on the wall is a beautiful tablet of stone to the memory of the fallen. Outside on the church green is a stone cross, the ground around it being always carefully tended, unlike some we have seen, by a lady who lost her husband at the front. These memorials should be a reminder that in spite of the doubters who so constantly tell us that the youth of today are not what their predecessors were, yet it is as true now as ever that when duty whispers 'lo I must,' the youth replies 'I can.'

Letter to the Times, July 1884.

To the Editor :

Sir,—A find of some Archæological interest was made a few days ago in the Churchyard of St. Mary's, Hitcham, Bucks. In digging a grave about 10 feet from the Church on the South side of the Norman Nave, a stone Cist was discovered, 4 feet 6 inches from the present surface, (this is the same Cist I noticed 14 years ago, when a grave was being dug, and a similar Chalk Cist was then found. With the remains were a quantity of iron rings $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, also some iron nails, being indicative of there having been a coffin). The inside dimensions of the present Cist were 6 feet in length, 12 inches wide at the head, and 8 at the foot, 19 do. at its greatest width. The south side was composed of 5 slabs, the north do. of 6, the covering slabs were five in number, also 1 at the head and foot, 18 stones in all, 13 inches deep at the head, and 12 inches at the foot. The side stones averaging 4 ins. and the covering do. $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in thickness. The chalk or stones of which the cist is composed were rudely squared, and hewn or axed on all sides, with a tool 1 in. wide and rounded on the edge, one other tool 3 ins. in width, the axe marks being sharp and clearly defined. A large and perfect skeleton was enclosed, but no trace of a coffin, wood or metal. The bed, or floor, of the grave was composed of fine gravel-pit sand. The bones were considerably crystalized, probably the body was covered with carbonate of lime, the skull bore traces of having lain in a liquid, it was very friable and crumbled at the touch, the femur measured $18\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in length.

Llewellyn Jewett says, "The mode of burial seems to have been "this, when the body was placed in the stone cist or sarcophagus, it was "fully draped in its usual dress. It was laid flat upon its back, at full "length, at the bottom in the cist, and any relics intended to be buried "with it, were placed by its side, Liquid lime or gypsum was then "poured in, upon and around it ; the face alone being left uncovered "with the liquid. The body was completely (with the exception of the "face) encased in liquid lime, which when it became set, formed a solid "mass. When these are brought to light and opened, a perfect impress-

"ion or mould of the figure of the deceased appears on the bed of plaster "or lime in which it had been enclosed, and in some instances the texture "and even the colour of the dress is clearly discernable. Some years ago "a cist was opened at York in which the body of a woman clothed in rich "purple, with a small child laid upon her lap was clearly discernable in "the plaster.

Whether this was an interment of the Roman-British, or Anglo-Saxon period, the orientation was very decided in this case, as in the five others I have seen in this spot, they all lying due east and west. Two thirds in length of this very interesting relic had to be removed, to obtain the depth required for the new grave. I collected the bones and placed them in the remaining third portion left undisturbed.—J. RUTLAND.

A letter to the Times in Dec. 1925, was the cause of this history being written.

Prehistoric Times.

The researches of the late Mr. Rutland, of Taplow, have revealed a wealth of information about Hitcham and neighbourhood.

In the course of excavations made during the building of the G.W.R. on Wyn Hill, where the station master's house now stands, there was found the skeleton of a rhinoceros, and a little farther off an elephant's tusk, while the tooth of a mammoth was also discovered at Cleveden, near the Ferry. These first two take us back to the pre-glacial period, when we had a tropical climate and such animals roamed about these parts; The third, the mammoth, to an even more distant past. In those days England was part of the Continent and the Thames the tributary of a great river, possibly the Rhine, whose bed lay where the North Sea now is.

We come to a much later period, but still to one far enough remote from the present, when we read of the pit-dwellers, whose home was discovered also on Wyn Hill. Their primitive houses were constructed by digging into the ground from 3 to 7 feet, and throwing the removed earth round the surface of an opening 14 to 20 feet in diameter. On the top of the bank thus raised they would insert stakes leaning towards the centre of the dwelling, and forming a hole for the smoke to escape. Several such circles were discovered at Hitcham during the excavations, and Mr. Rutland relates that he himself saw the removal from them of food vessels, drinking cups and cooking vessels, as well as bones of various domesticated animals, viz., sheep, pig, dog, &c., and broken pottery with rude ornamentation. At this spot, called Windmill Field, from the Saxon Win-hill, the field of battle, he obtained 4 axes and a chisel of polished stone belonging to the neolithic age The earliest traces of human habitation in these parts are to be found in the high ground running from Maidenhead Thicket through Clevedon and Hitcham. Here they engaged in hunting and fishing, and from the many bones of animals found had probably good sport.

Later we come to the lake dwellers as they are called, who lived in caves on the lower ground near the river, and traces of them are to be found on a line running through Maidenhead, Braywick and Cookham.

Much later still we come to Roman times. After Julius Cæsar invaded Britain in 54 B.C., as every school boy knows, his soldiers built a Roman road from London, and it would appear to have crossed the Thames at Maidenhead, where the bridge now is, by means of a ford, following largely the line of the present railway. Traces of the Roman occupation are to be found in Hitcham; for where the railway bridge crosses the road that leads from Hitcham to the Bath road, was found two urns full of Roman coins, buried there by some careful soldier, and not yet claimed by any of his descendants. These coins numbering between 400 and 500, are supposed to have been buried in the time of Aurelius, and they contain imperial coins of all the emperors from Otho to Aurelius. Arithmeticians may calculate if the coins were of the total value of £1, and put out to interest in a bank at 5 per cent. instead of being buried, what they would have been worth now. Supposing they were deposited there in the year 410, when the Roman legionaries were leaving Britain—15 centuries ago—and they will find the answer to be a sum large enough to pay the Italian debt to Britain. Later on again we find that for some reason the ford at Maidenhead became too deep, and the road ran from London through Slough, Burnham, across Burnham Cove, past the old "Waggon and Horses," (now the residence of Hon. Mrs. Bonslie), down Ensor Hill, through Clevedon Woods, and across the Thames at what is called Lady Ferry, and then into Maidenhead, and so it still went through Hitcham parish. An alternative suggestion is that after it left Burnham it went past Hitcham Church to the Colegrave Cottages, and then across Taplow Common to Clevedon. By the 13th century, we know there was a bridge at Maidenhead, and the road went back to its old position.

Hitcham, Hedgerly and Hughenden are all derived from a personal name Hycka, and Harlington, in Middlesex, seems to be derived from a similar word, proving perhaps that there was a connection between the Saxons who settled in Bucks. and those in Middlesex. It seems, however, as far as the first three are concerned hard to avoid the conclusion that the same person or different members of his family founded these three places, and if so, then we must conclude that when the Saxons invaded England in the 5th century, a chief, Hycka, came up the Thames, landed at Hitcham, and made his home here, and afterwards his sons went further afield, keeping on to the southern slopes of the Chilterns, and founded Hedgerly and Hughenden. These Saxons were

probably those known as Middle Saxons. The great mound at Taplow which covers one of the most richly furnished burials of the whole heathen Saxon times, is a proof of the heathen Saxon settlement in this corner of the Thames Valley. In this mound were found the drinking cups, the horn, the gold fringe of a cloak, and a splendid gold jewel, said to be the finest of its kind ; all these being the adornments of the chief who was buried there.

The chief's name was almost certainly Taeppa, from which the word Taplow (Taeppa's Barrow) is derived. In close conjunction with the burial ground is a field called the Bapsy field, and in it is a small pool. Tradition declares that here St. Birinus, first Bishop of Dorchester, used to preach to the heathen Saxons, and afterwards to baptise his converts in the pool. The old Saxon Bishopric of Dorchester extended from the Thames to the Humber, and was afterwards in Norman times transferred to Lincoln by S. Remigius. This pool then was undoubtedly the first font that Hitcham possessed, and the ground round its first burial ground. Is it too much to hope that some day the Bishop of Oxford, the 110th successor of St. Birinus, will once more preach to his flock standing on the same spot as the saint did, and we can assure him of a gathering not smaller in quantity, and we trust, not in quality either. Hitcham then means Hycka's homestead, and it is spelt in old documents, Hucheham, Hucham, Hugeham, Huccham, Hecham, Hutcham, Hycham, Huckham, &c.

In a fascinating book called "The Storming of London and the taking of the Thames Valley," the author treating his subject in a very original manner has thrown considerable light on what must have been the course of the Saxon invasion in these parts. According to him King Ella was in possession of Windsor in 485 and for the next 15 years he was fighting hard to gain possession of the salient which ends at Reading. He had an important camp at Bray, and the great obstacle to his progress was the presence in force of the Roman General Ambrosius Valerian on Taplow Hill and its hinter land, which as we can all see was a strong stragetic point. He finds confirmation for this view, among other things, in the name Amberden, which occurs in Amberden House, Bank Grove, on the opposite side of the river to Bray. There is also an old 14th century brass to one Nichole de Aumberdene, formerly a fishmonger of London. Amberden he thinks is a form of Aumberdene and means the dean or forest of Ambrosius.

The farm called West Town Farm, near, is he believes the remains of an old Saxon 'tun,' which was the farthest they advanced in the dene or thicket for a long time. This thicket really included Taplow, Hitcham, Clevedon and Burnham. If we study place names and remember that Stoke as Stoke Poggis means a stockade,

"ton" a fortified place behind the stockade, and "ham" a place of safety for the old, we can get for ourselves a fair idea of how the tide of conquest rolled. We have already showed that from the name Hitcham we gather that the tide rolled along the southern edge of the Chilterns, and this is what we should expect, once the Chilterns were conquered, Taplow Hill became valueless and easy progress could be made along the Thames. Till this was done there could be no safety spot here and therefore no Hit*cham* or Burn*ham*. Once done we find few more stokes or tuns for a long distance.

Our author pays great attention to the barrow at Taplow, and he gives strong reasons for believing it to be the grave of King Ella the first Bretwalda. Clearly it is the grave of a great chief who held undisputed sway over the Thames Valley, while the gold ornaments found there are so remarkable that he argues they must have been presents made to Ella by his continental relatives as a token of their appreciation of his great work in subduing Britain. It may be doubtful whether historians have as yet paid sufficient attention to the importance of the Taplow barrow. It is quite certain that many of us who live here have scarcely recognised what an historic spot we have in our midst, to which perhaps some day honour will be paid almost equal to that of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey, by the Englishmen who realise that this wonderful civilisation, which promises to become universal, was made possible by his deeds whether he be Ella or one of his greatest generals. For this we may claim with certainty, it is the tomb of the warrior who conquered the Thames Valley with all that meant toward the conquest of England. We have not space here to do more than to refer to this episode in the past, but does it not awaken in our mind as we look out on the familiar landscape a wonderful vision of the struggle these English forefathers of ours were making some fourteen centuries ago in this very place, as few in number they battled against a gallant foe to give this country the name it has ever since borne of Angle-land. Those who remember the great war will see that here they dug in tuns and stokes instead of trenches, but then their warfare was longer—15 years in one salient.

There is of course a totally different account of the Saxon Invasion. They came from the Wash by Icknield Way. This view receives considerable support from tracing the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and seeing how they lie close to this Way.

Scattered References.

Fragment of folio MSS. of the Archdeacons Courts of Buckingham 1494-5.

HITCHAM.—Isabella Filby cited by Thomas Kener in a matrimonial suit. Doctor Mandvile, John Waghan, Thomas Gate, and John Scott had been appointed arbitrators and both parties agreed to abide by their award under a penalty of 10 marks with the proviso that this award was made by St. Thomas' Day next. But the award had not been made and Thomas Kener produced John Waghan of the village of the village of Chamberlain with John Mason as witnesses. There is a note the case is stated at length in another place—but we find no further report—of this early breach of promise case where apparently the man cites the woman. Justice in the Archdeacon's court was somewhat slow, the case had been up at least twice before and adjourned.

Inventory made 1552, July 18, by order of King Edward VI of the goods of the churches of the realm by commissioners appointed by him.—2 belles, one chalice of silver with paten, 2 surplices.—Signed, Robert Gryfyte aud Richard Norrys. As no church could have less than 2 bells, the inventory shows that Hitcham was as poorly furnished as it possibly could be—the Clarkes could not have been very generous to the church.

Inventory made May 22, 1783.—A silver weighter, a ditto plate and cup ; one surplice, one bibell, 2 prayer books ; one cushion and hangings to the pulpit ; 2 table cloths, one napkin and pewter and flagon ; 1 burial cloth and register book.—John Windsor, Churchwarden, Luke Heslopp, Archdeacon. Things had improved a little since the time of Ed. VI.

State Papers Domestic 1637.—Hitcham Church. Buttresses in decay, ivy to be taken away from church and chancel. Church walls must be plastered. The minister saith there are no books except the bible and the service books. The high seat of the upper end of the south side standeth a foot into the space and that is to be taken off. No flagon. The seats on the south side to be of the height of the new seats on the north side to be provided. A cover for the font and it to be lined with lead.

Extract from Burnham Register.—The following were flogged as vagrants under Act of Parliament in time of Queen Elizabeth to stop vagrancy. Annie Smith, a vagrant beggar 15 years old, Mary Webb, a child of 13, beggar, and Isabel Harris about 60 ; they were strippt to the waist and flogged, sometimes being dragged along at the back of a cart for the edification of the spectators. As the authorities of Burnham sometimes commended these poor creatures after they had been whipt to the tender mercies of the parishes they passed through, Hitcham may often have had such persons appealing to them. At any rate it throws a side light on ye goode olde times.

Terrier dated 13th May, 1627.—This with several similar terriers we found in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. We have not given it at length but we give a precis of it. It purports to give the properties of the parish and was compiled at the direction of the Bishop of Lincoln. There are altogether 5 of these terriers, but the one we give is the only one clearly decipherable.

The Parsonage house consisting of 7 Bayes built all of timber and covered with tiles and being all chambered over and boarded and the whole building contrived in two storeys and disposed into 15 rooms—hall, parlor. buttery, sellar, larder, boulling house, kitchen, 2 entries, study,

2 bedchambers, a corn loft, other 2 little rooms above to make up the number. One garden impailed by estimasion at 7 pailes (poles) and one yard, one orchard sufficiently replenished one acre. Barn consisting of 3 bays built in timber covered with tiles, one fodder house, a stable thatched consisting of 3 bayes.

Pasture.—9 acres of rossy bromy ground, which for the moss overgrowing the same is sometimes dazed lying near the parsonage and the lands of W. Clark called the Hunts and the Colegrave.

One Coppice, 1 acre near the coppice of Mr. Henry Mansfield gent.

5 acres of meadow lying in Hitcham Mead.

4 acres in Taplow mead, whereof ½ acre is in the small mead and the other half in Slade mead. 1½ in Long mead and 1 acre near the parsonage.

5 acres of arable land alongside of the parsonage divided into 4 plots, called the pittle, the 2 barn closes and the further close.

21 acres between the parsonage house and the church.

7 acres in Warren field.

7½ acres (also described).

Below the highway from London to Bristol 4 acres. Ye farthest acre of all in ye parish in Dorney field, that in the middle lease, ye farthest acre in West town field, one acre in New Croft abutting on Marsh (lane ?).

Certain lands of Mr. Clarke which sometimes belonged to ye farmhouse being all ye arable land that he hath in ye parish of Taplow belong-ye said farm in ye said parish of Hitcham. Also certain lands in Taplow belonging to Mr. Mansfield now in ye tenure of his tenants whereof Mr. Clarke receiveth quit rents amounting to 4 acres and 1 yard whereof tythes were paid to ye parson of Hitcham but were counted in ye parish of Hitcham within ye precincts of Taplow. Stocks, rents, or any other thing inquired by ye canon and not exprest we have none so far as we know, no lands, rents or stocks for ye poor, but Mr. Wm. Clarke gave at his death which is given them as they have need, that is 4 pounds. No catechism taught but that in ye common prayer.—Robert Florde, parson, Jasper Grive, John Poole, Christopher Bevington, Abraham Stone.

An identical document, the same date, is signed by Richard Sleech, Rector, Richard Holderneth, Churchwarden. A note is added :—Since making ye above ye bayes in barn have been increased to twelve and ye lodging chambers in ye parsonage which were but 2 to 6.—G. Evans, Rector, William Taylor x Churchwarden.

N.B.—From the rooms in the Manor House and in the parsonage we have some idea of the arrangements of an Elizabethan house. It seems however surprising only to have had 2 bedrooms in a house of 15 rooms. As we know from the entry in the register the parsonage was again enlarged in 1702 and 1704. first by a window in ye little parlor and ye little chamber and a closet built to each. and then by an additional parlor and chamber.

William Sergeant (Serjeant) King's 1657, A.B. 1661, A.M. 1665, S.T.B. 1672 ; was born at Hitcham, in Buckinghamshire, and became Rector of Fyfield, near Weyhill, in Hampshire. Died at Fyfield 1667. In MSS. Nos. 22 and 30 in College Library appears :—

" Dedit Collegio Regali Gulielmus Sargeant Nuper Socius 1672."

HITCHAM.—1820. Beaumont Lodge, the seat of Viscount Ashbrook near Windsor, was enriched with some good pictures, among which is an undoubted whole length portrait of Oliver Cromwell, brought from the manor-house of Hitcham, to which property his Lordship succeeded by right of marriage.—*Lyson's Magna Britannia.*

Date of Nave (see page 15).—An eminent archæologist who has just visited it confirms our view that it is Saxon work probably of the early 11th century. He comes to this conclusion from the masonry, and it is supported by the finding of the Saxon grave near the porch.

A study of the map of the parish drawn up in 1779, owing to the Enclosure Act coming into force, reveals that Dr. Friend was the chief landlord there. He had to pay £600 as his share of the expenses of enclosing the common land of the village. For that £600 of course he received a *quid pro quo*, by taking the lion's share of the enclosed land. The Earl of Inchquin is the next large holder, paying £184, while Sir John Borlase Warren pays £40, Sir G. Palmer, Bart., £17, and the Earl of Jersey, who evidently had only small lands here, £2/10/0.

The commissioners who administered the Act were Rev. Richard Wells of Maidenhead, Henry Emblem, Surveyor of Windsor, John Mitchell of S. Weston, Oxford. Associated with them were the Earl of Inchquin, Rev. Richard Sleech, Rector, Peter Style and Andrew Pope.

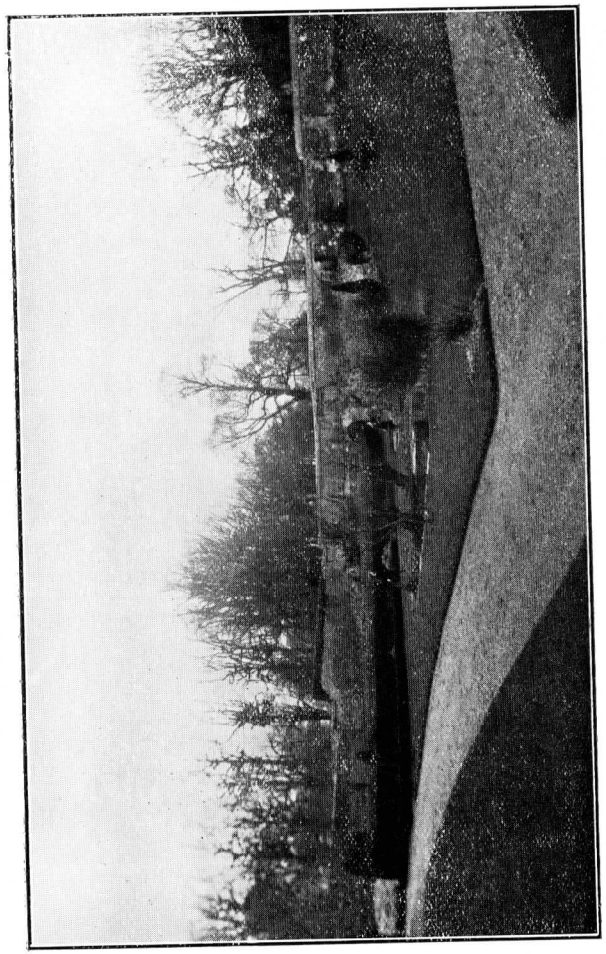
Later on we have another map dated 1843, which gives the names of all the landowners and other properties, and also gives the name of each field. Lady Grenville, of Dropmore, is now the chief landowner. Among those mentioned is Sir Gore Ouseley of Sheep Cot Farm, father to Rev. Sir G. F. Gore Ousely, the celebrated composer of hymn tunes, who was born at Beaconsfield.

In the map each field has a name, and we came across various curious names, as Cogmarthon and the Great and Little Cogmarthon at Marsh Lane; while on the Dropmore property we have Upper and Lower Brissells, Homer Corner and Pond, and Parliament Close near the Old Rectory; Hogg Hill near the station; also Lily Field, Apple Tree Field and Walnut Tree Close and Little Sly Close.

A Ghost Story.

We owe this story, among other stories, to Mr. Leyster of Taplow. We have related already that in Doomsday Book, Milo Crispin is stated to be the Lord of Hitcham. If we travel from Hitcham to Dornay on Christmas Eve, we pass at Burnham an Inn called "The Crispin." Perhaps Milo would have considered this no insult to his memory, for he was probably a good hand with the tankard.

Passing by the inn without calling in, we may reach the Church at Dornay before it grows too dark, and then in the gloaming the



Old Elizabethan Garden where Manor House stood.

sexton may tell us such a story as he did assuredly tell the Headmaster of Taplow Grammar School and his boys many years ago.

On that Sunday he pointed out to the master that the brasses which bore the name of ——— and which according to custom were taken from the coffins and affixed to the walls, were damp though the day was bright and sunny. The reason he averred to be this, that as every ——— was laid to rest and his plate affixed on the wall, next morning there was to be seen on it the damp marks of a clammy hand—the hand of a ghost—a sign that no member of the ——— family would ever be happy.

The reason for the ghostly intervention he gave as follows :— The Baron Milo had two sons, one dark haired and fierce like himself, the other fair and gentle. The dark haired one loved and married a girl, and the brother desired to marry her sister ; but her father disapproved the match, desiring a more wealthy suitor for his daughter. However, the married sister helped the pair all she could, and they often met at her house. One day, however, the elder brother came home from hunting, and finding his brother deep in a confidential talk with his wife, became violently jealous, believing that the two were in love and recalling how other times he had seen them together and how often his brother had been at his house. He accordingly challenged him to a duel, and as they were fighting his wife learning about it and realising the awful mistake, rushed between them and accidentally was killed by her husband's sword. In deep contrition for his crime he accepted the penance which his father confessor gave him as a condition of absolution, that he was to take the Cross and go and fight in the Crusades. He started out for Palestine, but in France he met the French King and was induced by him to give up his crusading vows for the present, and to take service under him in his wars with the Emperor. In the end he returned home without even going to Palestine. When the father confessor heard how he had violated his oath, he grew very angry and pronounced this curse upon him :— that no member of his family should have a happy life, and so dying unabsolved the curse has been transmitted to his family, and the ghostly seal is set upon this curse each time a member of that family dies. On our return journey we ruminate on the fact that though we have met some ghosts in our time, Milo's is the oldest, now fast approaching the age of Methuselah, for he will soon be in his 900th year. We have given this story as we heard it ; one obvious difficulty is that Milo Crispin died without issue ; can it refer to Milo Beauchamp ?

Ye Olde Letter.

A copy of a letter written by Frances Clark to her father, Sir

John Oglander, Aug. 29th, 1650. Who was Frances Clark? Was she the wife of one of the sons of Sir F. Clark. We know by the register that the eldest son of Sir John Oglander married Dorothy Clark. It would seem that her husband was a royalist as we should expect, and that he had lost his property thereby.

To my deare Father, Sir John Oglander this present.

My dear father—I creave your pardon for my long silence in not giving you thanks for your great love, which you weare plesed to show to me and mine; pardon it deare sir and think it not want of duty, but great troble and sickness wich it pleesed God to veesit one withall. 'Twas not the loss of my good, nor sickness of my children, nor of my sarvents that cold make me for gett my Duty to so Deare a father; but I have had so great a payne in my head and my teath and a swelling in my fease, that till this day I cold not gett pen to peaper. It proved to tru that oure esteate is saquastred and my husband is going to London to make his pease. I pray God to give him good suckses and me Jobe's payshans a toame; and if I may but heare of your helth and hapiness proves a comfort to me in all distresses: for while I live I desire to be your dutiful child ever to command till Death.

FRANCES CLARK.

Conclusion.

There are many questions we should like to ask if the ghosts of the past could appear before us, but alas, there are none to ask nor any to answer. In only one or two cases have we been able to lift the thick veil that conceals from us the life story of the many names that have been associated with the story of this place. Saint and sinner, their bones now lie side by side, and the same kindly earth gives them a decent burial, where once, willingly or was it unwillingly, they took part in the changes out of which Hitcham has been evolved. To-day, perhaps as never before, England requires to make the very best use of her manhood, and where shall she make a better start than in her villages. If in the past, often under intolerable conditions, she has bred so fine a race of men, what might she not do if each of us who lived in the village, pulled our full weight in the boat. It is of good omen, that as we write these lines, we have just heard of two generous gifts to the village, by Colonel Hanbury and Sir Henry Kimber respectively, one of which makes a notable addition to the church, and the other by the possession of a hall, makes possible that corporate life without which no community can make real advance.

"Every parish churchyard is full of numberless men and women who before they died had responded to the dreams of the great dreamers, and have given to the land and their people's future that small but costly sacrifice without the free gift of which they and their country would have been the poorer."