

S. MARY'S CHURCH, HARLEY.

There has been a church at Harley since the 12th century, at least, and, the font in the present church is the one and only ornament which has survived through eight centuries; no other trace of the Norman church now remains.

*When seen were
Gung N. L. the
Assessors the
was a church here.*

*It is a volume Tynge that undoubtedly the ~~the~~ men of the font
was a church here. Harley, but before being for 15 centuries in the Harley land.*
Prior to the commencement of the 14th century, Harley

was a chapel subject, perhaps, to Cound. In the Taxation of 1291, we find that the Church of Harlewe (in the Archdeaconry and Deanery of Salop, and Diocese of Lichfield) was worth £3.6.8 per annum.

*Edward I. in 1291, on the 1st of July; Border wars starting
with Scotland lasted till 1295. Captivity of
in 1295-1297*
In 1301, Richard de Kyndeseley became the first Rector

of the parish, and he was instituted on 24th March of that year; Sir Richard de Harley, Knt., being the Patron of the Living. Four years later, he was succeeded by Thomas de Langeton, who was instituted on 10th July, 1305, and who resigned in October, 1312. John de Leicestre, his successor, who was in Minor Orders of an acolyte, was instituted on 28th August, 1313, and continued as Rector until his death on 24th August, 1331.

Edward II 1307

Edward III 1327

Sir Robert de Harley, Knt., who has succeeded his father as Patron of the Living, admitted his brother, Henry de Harley, also in Minor Orders of an acolyte, as Rector 8 Sept., 1331. Henry Harley had a license of non-residence, studendi gratia, on 31st October following. During his Rectorship, Harley fell on hard times, as is witnessed by the report of

the Assessors of the Ninth in 1341. The Parish of Harleze was now rated at 30s. and the cause of the fall in value was due to the fact that great storms had destroyed the corn crops, and a murrain had prevailed among the sheep. Starvation stalked the countryside and we are told that the inhabitants were so poorly as to be scarce able to till the ground. The Assessors agreed that in view of the fact that the glebe land and other income of the Church went to make up the Church Taxation, it must not be estimated in assessing "the present tax."

*Harleze
1338
- 1453*

*Black Death
1348-9.*

One is tempted to think that Henry de Harleze may have continued as an absentee Rector; however, we know that, on 13 June, 1352, the Bishop issued a Commission to inquire why Henry de Harleze had held, for more than a year past, the two benefices of Berrington and Harleze, and whether he had a dispensation. One would like to know his answer; it would give a clearer picture of the man. Eleven months later, on 29th May, 1353, he died.

The next month, John le Panner was instituted as Rector, and continued until his death in 1368. William de Stapleford was admitted as Rector on 15 March, 1368, and remained for 35 years, resigning in 1403. He was the last Rector under the patronage of the de Harleze family, and his successor, William de Conyngton, was presented to the living by John Daras and Johanna his wife, being instituted on 10th July, 1403, and remaining until his death in 1435.

*Kind of
Geoffrey Claver*

*John Wyke
Lottards
Episc. Translation
1373*

Rector II 1377

*Ward Tyfens
Rector 1381*

*Henry II 1384
Rector 1384*

*1402 Beate of Homildon Hill
& Sharnbury.*

1413 Henry V

*1414 Lottards Rector
1416 was of Stapleford & Harleze.*

1422 Henry VI

The Lacons now appear as Patrons of the Living and the

la Halle de Wenloke and to William de Betton in Wenloke to bring the said Richard Balle to the prison of the Castle of Salop, and when they brought him as far as the bridge which is called Stannenebrugge in Salop on the day of St. Barnabas the Apostle, in the 32nd year, the said Richard Balle for no cause fell from the said bridge into the Severn and was drowned. William de la Hulle de Wenloke was the first to find him, and raised an outcry. Buried by John Russell the Coroner."

Two months later the following occurred:

"23 August, 1304. Presentment made ~~xxx~~ by xij Jurors and by the districts of Frankeuile, Mardefole, Romaldesham, and Schoteplace, who say-- that it came to pass on the Sunday next before the festival of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, in the 32nd year, that Stephen, son of William of Stokton, went from Wenloke towards Salop, with the horse of Nicholas, the Deyere of Frankeuile, and when he arrived at the village of Harley, he alighted from the horse, and drove the horse before him, and in driving he struck the said horse with a rod, and the said horse lifted his heels, and struck the said Stephen on the breast, notwithstanding this, he went on with the said horse to Salop, where he lived for six days. He had the rites and died....Value of the horse xviijs."

On 10th July, 1305, Thomas de Langeton was instituted as Rector of Harley in succession to Richard de Kyndesley, and he held office until his resignation in October, 1312. His successor, John de Leicestre, was in Minor Orders of an

acolyte, and was instituted on 28th August, 1313, remaining until his death, which occurred on 24th August, 1331.

Sir Robert de Harley, Knt., who had succeeded his father as Patron of the living, admitted his brother, Henry de Harley, also in Minor Orders of an acolyte, as Rector of the parish on 8 September, 1331. Henry de Harley had a license of non-residence, *studendi gratia*, on 31st October following. During his Rectorship, Harley fell upon hard times, as is witnessed by the report of the Assessors of the Ninth in 1341. The parish was now rated at thirty shillings, and the cause of this fall in value was due to the fact that great storms had destroyed the corn crops, and a murrain had prevailed among the sheep. Starvation stalked the countryside and, we are told that, the inhabitants were so poorly that they were scarce able to till the ground. The Assessors agreed that in view of the fact that the glebe land and other income of the Church went to make up the Church Taxation, it must not be estimated in assessing "the present tax." These, of course, were the days when the Church of England was forced to pay excessive taxes to the Church authorities in Rome.

One is tempted to think that Henry de Harley may have continued as an absentee Rector for, we know that, on 13th June, 1352, the Bishop issued a Commission to inquire why Henry de Harley had held, for more than a year past, the two benefices of Berrington and Harley, and whether he had a dispensation. One would like to know what answer he gave:

it would provide a clearer picture of the man. Eleven months later, on 29th May, 1353, he died.

The next month, John le Panner was instituted as Rector, and he continued in office until his death in 1368. William de Stapleford was admitted as Rector on 15th March, 1368, and resigned in 1403, after 35 years in the parish. He was the last Rector appointed under the patronage of the de Harley family and, his successor, William de Conyngton, was presented to the living by John Daras and Johanna his wife, being instituted on 10th July, 1403, and remaining until his death in 1435.

The 15th century, in which these events occurred, was a troubled time for England, both at home and abroad. There was the persecution of the Lollards, to be followed by their uprising; there were the Battles of Homildon Hill and Shrewsbury; in 1455, the Wars of the Roses began, and in the next six years the flower of England died at the hands of Englishmen. It was an age of invention and discovery: gunpowder and guns were used for the first time; William Caxton introduced printing; the Cape of Good Hope was discovered; and, in 1492, Columbus discovered America. It was the century of Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Durer, Michelangelo, Titian and Holbein; and if it killed Joan of Arc at the beginning, it gave birth to Martin Luther at the end.

Undoubtedly, the old Rectory at Harley, as well as

many other homes in the village, date from this period.

When the Church Commissioners sold the Rectory in 1954, a link of at least five centuries was broken.

Two of our main treasures in S. Mary's Church also came to us ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ this far-distant century: the paten, bearing the head of Christ, is dated circa 1485, and is used regularly in the service of Holy Communion; and the oak chest, with its iron bands, long used for the protection of the records and registers, may be seen in the nave of the church. Both the paten and the chest must have been used in the old Norman church.

On 20 November, 1435, Robert Noneley was instituted as Rector in succession to William de Conyngton, by Richard Lacon, Patron of the living. He was succeeded by John Kedewen, instituted on 2 December, 1467, who was followed by John ap David, instituted on 22 May, 1473. The latter resigned in 1492, and his successor, Thomas ffishwyke, was instituted on 22 November, of that year. We do not know how long he continued as Rector or when or how he terminated his appointment but, his successor was Hugh Abbott, who died as Rector of the parish early in 1518. Thomas Benil was associated with the parish in the early years of the 16th century and, probably, he was assistant priest.

William Dyeson or Dyson was instituted as Rector on 19th April, 1518, and he was destined to hold office during the most stirring period of English Church history: the

Henry VIII
1509-47
1529. getting in
of Kate.

S. VI 1547-53
Henry I 153-57
Sig I 58-

(1563)

of the Reformation. The whole Church was crying out for reform and, when men like Erasmus and Luther touched it off, it spread like wild-fire through Europe. The fact that Henry VIII. wanted to divorce his wife, or more truthfully, wanted an annulment of his marriage, was merely the act of a shrewd man taking advantage of the times. It was but an incident in the Reformation. Englishmen were heartily sick of foreign domination, both in the affairs of the nation and in those of the Church, and, at this time England decided to run her own affairs without the help of Italy. The Bishop of Rome, whose fantastic claims to be Christ's Vicar have never been recognised by the millions of the Orthodox Church, had usurped dominion over the Church of England, which Church was founded centuries before the Church of Rome sent its mission to England in 597. Now, there was a God-given opportunity to shake off the shackles forever, and the opportunity was not missed. The Bishop of Rome played a waiting game and also, some extraordinarily silly politics, and Anglicans continued to worship in their parish churches for the whole of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary I. right on into the reign of Elizabeth I., when, even to the Bishop of Rome, it was obvious that the Church of England intended to have nothing whatever to do with him. Then he excommunicated England's Queen and called on those who wished to acknowledge his claims to withdraw from their parish churches and worship elsewhere. Then, and only then, was the Roman Catholic Church established in England; and let it be remembered that it is, in these islands, a schismatic body, a break-away from the

Catholic Church.

As far as this parish was concerned, the changes were in ceremonial and in the services themselves; the clergy and people continued to worship God in their parish church and, apparently, none of the parishioners were tempted to leave the Church at the invitation of the ~~Italian~~ Italian Bishop.

We read of Dyson in the Register kept by Sir Thomas Botelar, Vicar of Much Wenlock: "Sir Wm. Deyson, p'son of Harley, 1543"; "Sir Wm. Deyson, p'son of Harley and Sir Mich' Ball, his Curate", 15^{23rd Nov}57; "21 May, 1559, Sir Wm. Deyson, p's of Harley"; "Oct. 1560, Sir Michael Ball, Curate of Harley". Presumably these were occasions when the Harley clergy officiated or visited the Much Wenlock church.

In 1534-5, the preferment of William Dyeson, Rector of Harley, was valued at £6 per annum, which sum was chargeable with 6s. 8d. for procurations, and 1s. 3d. for Synodals.

King Edward VI. called for an Inventory of Plate, Jewels, Ornaments etc. in the Church of England, and, included in the Inventory of the Hundred of Condover is that of Harley, as follows:

"Harley, 13 August, 6 Ed.VI. (1553)

Sr. Edmonde bachelor curate there, Willi'am smythe warden of the seid church humfrey Deakyn Thomas Carter

and John Taylor.

Imprimis iiij bells in the steple.

Itm a sackcrynge belle.

Itm too payre of vestments for holy dayes, on' payre damask,
and the other chamlett.

Itm too payre of olde vestments for work dayes.

Itm a cope of whyte satten of bridge.

Itm too autur clothes.

Itm too towells.

Itm a corporas w the case.

Itm a crosse of brasse.

Itm a challes of sylur wt ye paten.

Itm a litle yle cou'yd wt ledd.

Itm a holy waturstock cou'yd wt lede.

Itm too bann's ~~paynt~~ peynted.

Itm on' sylke banner."

Thus, we are provided with a most valuable list of the church's treasures at that time; the mass vestments of the clergy; the sacring bell, which was rung at the elevation of the host in the mass; a brass cross, possibly for use in processions, and later, on the altar; the processional banners; the containers for the sacrament, and for holy water; the silver paten (which is yet in use), and the silver chalice. One is tempted to wonder if the present chalice, despite the date 1580 which is engraved on it, is the same as that mentioned in the foregoing list. Perhaps it ~~is the same~~ has been refashioned. We do know that the three bells in the tower are ~~the same as~~ those mentioned

in the Inventory but they have been recast.

The Suppression of the Monasteries finds an echo in a reference, in Sir Thomas Botelar's Register, to "Two tenemts and lands in Harley form'ly belonging to the Monastery of Wenloc". The date is 1547.

On 26 June, 1559, the Service was first conducted in the English tongue at Much Wenlock and, one wonders, if the change did not take place on the same day at Harley.

The old custom of referring to the clergy as though they were knights has now been discontinued, but bishops are still Lord Bishops, thus ranking with peers of the Realm. I would point out, however, that the very honourable title "parson" does not date from the Reformation: from the foregoing it will be seen that that has been the title of the Anglican priest through the centuries. And only Anglican priests are parsons: no other person has a right to the title.

Edmond Bachelor was assistant-priest at Harley at the time of the Inventory, and in due course he was succeeded by Michael Ball. Early in 1563, William Dyson, who had held the Rectorship for 45 years, resigned, and ~~was replaced~~ Michael Ball became Rector, being instituted on 29 October, of that year.

During the 16th century, S. Mary's Church was rebuilt. We do not know the exact year, nor do we know if any of the earlier Norman church was incorporated into the new building.

All that remains of the 16th century church today is the tower: the nave and chancel ~~of~~ having been demolished last century.

Fortunately, a description of this 16th century church has been preserved. It was written in 1827, some years before it was decided to carry out a Victorian restoration here. The description says:

"The church consists of a western tower, nave, north aisle, and chancel, with a porch to the south door. The tower, 10 feet, 10 inches square, and walls 3 feet thick, is of 3 storeys, the lower one open to the nave by an arch with plain lined imposts and square piers, and lighted by a large perpendicular west window of 3 lights; the second storey is lighted by a small lancet on north and south; the upper storey lighted on either side by a decorated window of two lights, and surmounted by battlements. The nave is entered from the south porch by a very wide circular door, and has in the south wall two square-headed mullioned windows. It is open to the roof, which has rude beams, and is supported on the north side by three rude wooden pillars. It is 40 feet 5 inches long by 16 feet 10 inches wide. The north aisle is 7 feet 8 inches wide, and is lighted at the east by a small mullioned window of two lights, with trefoiled head, and at the west by a small trefoiled light. The chancel is 24 feet by 14 feet. There is no division between it and the nave, only a slight break and part of the old screen remaining. At its east end are three very narrow lancets, on the north

two very small lancets, and on the south a square-headed mullioned window of two lights. The priest's door is square. The font is a circular bason, standing on a smaller circular shaft and a circular pedestal, plain and massive."

Mr. William Mytton's MSS contains these memoranda:

"Mem. no Township.--Farms, Blakeway and Rowley.-- A ~~Rixid~~ field here, called ye Cast~~le~~ Hill, but in ye Franchise of Wenlock.--Land, mostly arable.--Plash brook runs eastward of the Church to Sheinton; it rises at Plash.-- Breadth of ye Church, including N. aisle, 23 ft. 6 in.; Breadth of ye Chancell 13 ft., 6 in.; length of chancell 23 ft. 5½ in.; length of church 40 ft.; length of Belfry 13 ft. 6 in.; breadth of belfry 10 ft. 9 in.; breadth of church exclusive of N. aisle 16 ft. 5 in. Part of Harley Town (viz. 4 Houses is within ye Franch' of Wenlock.-- Glebe land at £20 p. ann.; Wakes after Michs day."

The Rev. D. H. S. Cranage, M.A., F.S.A., in his "An Architectural Account of The Churches of Shropshire" makes the following refernce to the old north aisle: "The aisle was apparently a debased erection of the time of Queen Elizabeth and was separated from the nave by four octagonal wooden pillars resting on stone bases and supporting the roof."

Michael Ball was succeeded as Rector by Thomas Bent, who was admitted ~~xx~~ on 14th September, 1588. He is mentioned in "An Elizabethan Clergy List of Diocese of Lichfield" under date 1602-3 and, although he held no degree, he was a licensed

preacher holding the license of the Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.

The Seventeenth Century witnessed the last great struggle, and ultimate triumph, of the Anglican Church in its march to freedom. As it had faced the attacks of the Roman Catholics, so now it faced even more vicious attacks from the Presbyterians and Independents. England was torn with Civil War, and the Cavaliers and Roundheads struggled for supremacy. King Charles I. was offered his freedom if he would abolish bishops and thus destroy the continuity of the Church of England. He refused to accept such terms and, after a trial, which was the greatest travesty of justice seen in the land, he was foully murdered. His name has been added to the list of Anglican saints, as King Charles the Martyr, and on 30th January, each year, he is remembered with deep gratitude. Cromwell, one of the most hated people in our history, became Lord Protector; to be followed by his son who, in turn, gave way for the Restoration of the Monarchy, under King Charles II. "the Merrie Monarch".

Towards the end of the Century, Rome again showed his hand, and her champion, James II, was driven from the throne, and his place taken by his daughter and son-in-law, Mary II. and William III. From that day forward it was ordained that no Roman Catholic may sit upon the throne of England.

In many churches, during the period of the Civil

War, there was no end of trouble, and many churches were either destroyed or desecrated at Cromwell's orders. But, in Harley, things were more fortunate.

Apparently, Thomas Bent continued as Rector of Harley until 1633, when, he was succeeded by the Rev. Richard Wickstead, M.A., who was instituted on 15th July, of that year; Sir Richard Newport then being Patron of the living.

Wickstead had studied at Oxford and had graduated B.A. from Corpus Christi College, in 1618, and MA from S. Edmund Hall, in 1621. At the time of his appointment to Harley the benefice was valued at £5.12.1. A little later, Kenley was also brought under his charge. But, Wickstead had interests outside the parish: he was appointed Chaplain to the Court of the Marches at Ludlow and while there, he appears to have had pupils or students under his care for the Rev. Richard Baxter (1615-91), the Puritan Divine and Composer, tells us in his Autobiography that he was one of them. Baxter, who declined the Bishopric of Hereford, is said to have written, in all, 168 works. He gave us two of our best loved hymns, "Lord it belongs not to my care" and "Ye holy Angels bright".

At that time, the Earl of Bridgewater was President of the Court of the Marches, and he appointed Wickstead to be Official of the Peculiar of Buildwas. The appointment was made in 1635 in these words:

"Know all men by these presents that I, John Earl of

Bridgewater, the true and lawful lord and possessor of the Abbey or Manor of Buildwas in the County of Salop, with all and singular the rights, spiritual and temporal jurisdictions, members, and appurtenances thereto belonging, to my beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ Richard Wickstead, A.M., preacher of the Word of God, rector of the parish Church of Harley, send greeting. I, the said Earl, do give the Peculiar of Buildwas aforesaid to the said Richard Wickstead, to have, exercise, hold and enjoy all and all manner of spiritual jurisdiction, and to hear and determine all causes and complaints in the said Peculiar, in all cases at whose or whosoever suit or suits the same are or shall be commenced, and to prove and sign and confirm all Wills and Testaments whatsoever within my said jurisdiction, and to grant Letters of Administration of all and singular the goods, chattels and credits according to the Laws and statutes now in being of this Kingdom by persons dying intestate. And I, the said Earl, do of my owne freewill, of myself, depute and give by these presents to the said Richard Wickstead Authority and power to make, exercise, and try all and singular causes, suits and trials within the said Peculiar Jurisdiction of Buildwas aforesaid. And I, the said Earl, do make, ordain, constitute, and appoint him my lawful official of the said Peculiar during my will, and pleasure. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, the first day of May, in the eleventh year of the reign of King Charles, and in the year of our Lord God, 1635.

J. Bridgewater."

A few days later, the Earl wrote Wickstead as follows:

"Mr. Wickstead. My many Businesses have made me hitherto deferr sending unto you concerning the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in Buildwas. And I doubt had it not been for Your letter, (written about two months sithence) I should scarcely have yet remembered. I have sent you the Authority for execution of the same, which now I do under Seale. I could have beene glad I had done it sooner. Butt I cannot remember all things in soe fitt time as I desire. Nowe, (though I doubt nott butt that you understand the place better than myselfe), I will acquaint you with some Information as I have formerly received from some who have executed that place whereto I have nowe deputed and appointed yourselfe; Vizt. that the place and parishioners are Exempt from the power, censure, or Sentence of the Bishop of the Diocese, neither can the Bishop or Viccar-Generall, Surrogate or Archdeacon hould any Visitation there or call them elsewhere. Only it is subject to the Visitation Metropolitically. The Power of the Jurisdiction there is to houlde visitations, to keepe Courts of Correction, to proceed against delinquents with publique penances etc.; To prove Testaments and Wills and to graunt Letters of Administration, to graunt Faculty and Dispensation for marriages, and to certifie against persons contumelious and Recusants. In all which I doubt nott butt that you will carefully take pains, and see the trust reposed in you to bee discharged to the Glory of God and good to the Government, and the people under it. Which I shall expect att your hands. And so for the present I Bidd you farewell and rest your very Loving friend

J. Bridgewater.

10 May, 1635.

At the Archbishop's Visitation the parson and churchwardens are to be present, as I am informed. And I doubt not butt yourself will be here to observe what is done and what directions are given."

John, Earl of Bridgewater, was nominated "Lord President of the Council ~~of~~ in the Marches of Wales" in 1631, and lived to see the downfall of the Court when the Civil War broke out, and it fell into abeyance in 1642. The Earl himself sided with the Parliament and his rents were seized by the Royalists.

There can be little doubt that Wickstead was also in sympathy with the Parliamentarians although, ~~possibly~~ probably, like his pupil Baxter, he did not support the murder of the King or the dictatorial powers usurped by Cromwell. But, his sympathies kept him in office at Harley and Kenley, and protected the two churches.

In 1655, during the Commonwealth, an Inquisition was held in Salop, and the following report was made regarding Harley:

"Harley is a Parish. The Gleabe land there is yearely worth fowerteen pownds. The Tythes are yearely worth ffortie fower Pownds. The Tythes of Two Tenements Within that ~~Township~~ Township are impropriate to Edward Harnage of Belwardin Gen(t) and are yearely worth about three pownds. The Tythes of wigwig neare adjoining to the said parish of Harley are allso worth three pounds yearely and are impropriate

to the said Mr. Harnage. We submit to authority whether these impropriate tythes may be united to Harley. Mr. Richard Wicksteed is minister there an able preacher and of godly life."

Wicksteed died at Harley, and was buried ^{there} (probably within the church) on 19th November, 1659, shortly before the Restoration of King Charles II.

It was not until 2 September, 1660, that the Rev. Robert Fowler, his successor, was instituted to the Rectory, by Francis, Lord Newport.

Two years later, the name of Robert Fowler, Rector of Harley, appears on the list of those who had subscribed a present to the King. Fowler gave £1. The present reads:

"We whose names are hereunder written within ye Archdeaconry of Salop doe subscribe to give Ye King's Maiesty as followeth, and ~~pay~~ pay to the Receiver appointed by His Maiesty the said severall sums affixed to or names upon ye six and twentieth day of March wch shall be in ye yeare of or Lord 1662."

~~Enx~~ At some time during the following year, Fowler resigned Harley, and, on 5th August, of that year, the Rev. Richard Phillips, M.A., was instituted to the living.

Richard Phillips, the son of Andrew Phillips, of Tone Alton, Salop, was educated at Shrewsbury School, being admitted there on 5th January, 1640; and matriculated, 6th March,

1646-7, at the age of 18, to Balliol College, Oxford. He was subsequently Postmaster of Merton College, and graduated B.A. in 1651, and M.A. in 1660. He took up appointment as Vicar of Acton Burnell in 1662 and, in the following year, he came to Harley. Phillips has been described as "a ~~pin~~ mortified and pious minister in Salop", and that is a memorial to a very short ministry for he lived only three and a half years at Harley and died there in January, 1667-8, being buried on 6th of the month in Harley church. He was only 39 years of age at the end of his life.

Curiously enough he was succeeded by another Old Boy of Shrewsbury School and, whereas, Phillips' ministry had been one of the shortest, that of his successor, Benjamin Jenks, was the longest of all, lasting 56 years.

~~The Rev. Benjamin Jenks, B.A., was the eldest son of the Rev. John Jenks, Vicar of Eaton-under-Haywood, Salop, and he was baptised there on 29th May, 1646. His family had long been resident at Wolverton, and he was related to the Rt. Rev. Dr. John Williams, Lord Bishop of Chichester, to whom he dedicated his book of "Prayers."~~

The Rev. Benjamin Jenks, B.A., was the eldest son of the Rev. John Jenks, Vicar of Eaton-under-Haywood, Salop, and he was baptised there on 29th May, 1646. His family had long been resident at Wolverton, and he was related to the Rt. Rev. Dr. John Williams, Lord Bishop of Chichester, to whom he dedicated his book of "Prayers."

He was admitted to Shrewsbury School on 16 October, 1662, and from thence he proceeded to Queen's College, Oxford, from which he subsequently graduated B.A. After taking Holy Orders, he took up appointment as ~~xxxxxxx~~ assistant-

-priest at Harley: Lord Newport came privately to hear him preach and was so much pleased with the matter of his sermons that he presented Jenks to the living of Harley and appointed him his own Chaplain. Jenks was instituted on 18th May, 1668, and his long ministry here had begun.

Jenks was a faithful pastor of his flock and, too, he was a prodigious writer of works of a devotional nature. ~~His~~ He was the author of:

"Prayers and Offices of Devotion for Families, and for particular Persons upon most Occasions", published London, 1697, 2 vols., London, 1706; 8th edition, London, 1729; 20th edition, Albany, U.S.A., 1801; 26th edition, altered and improved by the Rev. Charles Simeon, London, 1808; 30th edition, London, 1832; another edition, London, 1860. The 13th edition of Simeon's improved version appeared at London, 1866.

"Submission to the Righteousness of God, or the necessity of trusting to a better Righteousness than our own, Opened and Defended in a Discourse upon Romans, X.3." published, London, 1700; 5th edition, London, 1764; another edition, Glasgow, 1775.

"Meditations, with Short Prayers annexed, in Ten Decads, upon Various Subjects", published London, 1701.

"A Second Century of Meditations, with Short Prayers annexed, on Various Subjects", To which was added a Postscript by way of Meditation on the spoils and ruins made by the Tempest, 27 Nov., 1703, published London, 1704.

"Contemplation full of Admiration. Serious Thoughts of the Wonderful God", published London, 1705.

"The Glorious Victory of Chastity in Joseph's Hard Conflict, and his Happy Escape", published London, 1707.

"Ouranography, or Heaven opened. The substance of Cardinal Bellarmine's...Eternal Felicity of the Saints...made English" published London, 1710.

"The Poor Man's Ready Companion. A lesser Prayer Book for Families...with a new Preface upon the Creed, Lond's Prayer, and Ten Commandments", published London, 1713.

"The Liberty of Prayer asserted, and guarded from Licentiousness", 3rd edition, London, 1716.

"Meditations upon Various and Important Subjects, and Short Prayers annexed." With a Preface by the Rev. Mr. Hervey. 2 vols, London, 1756; reprinted in 1757 and 1793.

The "Harley parish-Book, bought in ye Year 1701" at the cost of Is. 6d., contains various financial statements in connection with the work of the parish. It contains, too, at the beinning of the book, a Memorandum, under the date of August, 1710, and this is well wor~~th~~ recording here.

"It was agreed by common consent, For divers good causes moving the Minister & Inhabitants of this parish of Harley, thereto, that for the better order in Ringing henceforward, & to prevent the great Abuses of some rude & exorbitant Intruders, there shall be Six persons in particular nominated & appointed for Ringers: And whatsoever Money shall at any time, or upon any occasion, be given for that service shall forthwith be divided equally among the said Six Ringers, or so many of them as shall be duly attending that office; And the Absent are to have no share in it. And that no part of ye said Money shall be spent in Ale or other Liquor drunk at the Church, to the profanation of that sacred Place; Nor any part of it shall be so spent elsewhere, but in Sobriety, & as far as shall be necessary & convenient; and only so much as every one pleases, without infringing the Liberty of any, or constrainnig him to spend more than he is willing.

And if any of the Six persons nominated do carry himself disorderly, to give scandall & just offence by his ill carriage, The Minister & Church-wardens shall have the power

to exclude & put out such offender or offenders from time to time, & to take in whom shall be thought fit in the room of the other.--

The Ringers Names,--

1. John Dale (parish Clark).
2. John Butler junr.
3. Benjamin Symonds.
4. John Chilton.
5. Humphrey Dale.
6. William Thomas.

Agreed to, & Subscribed by us,--

B. Jenks, Rector.

Robert Detton	Church
John Lloyd	Wardens.

Tho: Carter
Richard: Corfield.
Fra: Carter

John Symonds	Overseers of
Ri: Taylor	ye Poor.
Robert Clinton	" "

Benjamin Jenks was getting old but he was determined that no nonsense was to be allowed in the church or parish if he could prevent it. He has been described as "a pious divine of the English Church", and from all that we can discover of the man and his work, it was an eminently just title. Jenks was a humble and holy man of God, and his influence in this parish, and in the world at large to which his writing went, must have been tremendous. No doubt many will rise up on the Day of the Lord and give most hearty thanks for this good man.

Jenks was twice married, firstly, to Miss Baugh, by whom he had issue of a son and a daughter, and, secondly, to

the widow of a clergyman; her maiden name was Hunt, and there was no issue of this marriage. A memorial to the first Mrs Jenks is now in the vestry; and the inscription is badly defaced by the ravages of time.

Benjamin Jenks died at Harley on 10 May, 1724, and his remains were interred in S. Mary's Church, on the north side of the chancel, presumably beside the altar for his memorial ~~table~~ tablet, now on the north wall, was originally on the east wall.

Jenks is one of the number of outstanding priests who served God faithfully in one of the darkest eras of our Church. As a whole, the Anglican Church of the 18th century was, spiritually, asleep, and it was this fact which caused the revolt of the Wesleys, two ~~Anglicans~~ of our priests, and which led eventually, despite the warnings of the Wesleys, to the withdrawal of the Methodists from the Church. Things were bad in the Church of God in this century and, the evil was reflected in the life of the nation. There was pluralism, neglect and indifference in the Church; there was crime, violence, and the most appalling conditions of life in the nation. America was lost to the British and, across the channel, France was drenched in the blood bath of her Revolution: historians acknowledge that it was the witness of saints of God of the day in this land that England was spared the horrors of a similar revolution.

There is a tradition that Jenks was allowed to name his successor; if so we can be sure that the new Rector was a man

whose outlook and way of life was similiar to that of his predecessor. The new Rector was the Rev. William Painter, B.A., and he was instituted on 3rd July, 1724, by Henry, Earl of Bradford. "Alumni Oxien." says that he was the son of Richard Painter, of Oxford, and that he matriculatedⁱ in 1714, at the age of 18. It would seem that this information is incorrect, as well as their statement that Painter was Vicar of Cobham, Kent, from 1630. We know that Painter died at Harley on 7th October, 1747, and was buried in the chancel of S. Mary's. His memorial, which was destroyed in the reconstruction of the nave and chancel last century, gave his age as 67 years, which fact indicates that the William Painter of Harley and the William Painter of Oxford were two entirely different people.

On 25th November, 1747, William, Earl of Bath, instituted the Rev. James Dewhurst, B.A. as Rector. Mrs Dewhurst was the daughter of Sir Richard Hene, Bart., of Winkfield, Berks., and she and her husband were buried in the chancel vault in Harley church. Mr. Dewhurst was buried on 22nd November, 1780.

At some time during the Eighteenth Century, the present pews were added to the church, and these survived the tragic reconstruction of the 1840s.

The new Rector was the Rev. Edmund Dana, who was instituted on 13 March, 1781, by the committee acting on behalf of the then Patron, John Newport, Esq., who was insane.

Dana was a pluralist, like so many of the clergy of that period and, besides being Rector of Harley, he was Rector of Eaton Constantine as well as Vicar of Wroxeter. He resigned the living of Harley early in 1805, and continued as Vicar of Wroxeter until his death there on 7th May, 1823, at the age of 83 years. He was buried in Wroxeter church.

Presumably, Dana had always resided at Wroxeter during his Harley rectorship, and the work here was done by the assistant-priest who, possibly, was resident at the Harley Rectory. From 1800 to 1805, the assistant-priest here was the Rev. John Gibbons, M.A. and, when Dana resigned the living, Gibbons was appointed in his place, being instituted on 7th February, 1805, by Sir William Pulteney, Bart., the Patron.

The Nineteenth Century is within living memory and is it strange to remember that for the first 20 years of it, George III. sat on the English throne. It was an age of great men and women: a few months after Gibbons became Rector, Nelson, the son of a parson, and England's greatest sailor, died at the Battle of Trafalgar; Napoleon was to be defeated at Waterloo, a few years later, and his conqueror, the Duke of Wellington was to eventually become Prime Minister of England. After the brief period of the "wicked uncles" upon the throne, a young girl of 18 was to ascend it and, when she died in January, 1901, she had reigned for a longer period than any other monarch in our history, and she laid the foundations of our monarchy as a ~~popular~~ respected and loved institution, which we may now dare to think is the envy of the world.

It was an age of progress and reform; inventions altered the whole face of life, and working conditions were improved for all. Certainly there were giants in the land in those days: Disraeli, Peel, Gladstone, Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Florence Nightingale, Palmerston, Roberts, Kitchener, Baden-Powell, to name but a few.

With our Church there was the beginnings and the progress of a Movement which was to sweep through until, in our own day, it is the most powerful body of opinion with the Church. I refer to the Oxford Movement, which revived so much of the pre-Reformation customs and practices of the Anglican world. Then the first Lambeth Conference, a gathering of Anglican bishops from various parts of the world --each representing a diocese of thousands of Anglicans--, was held and, in 1948, when the last Conference met, there were well over 300 bishops present. Today, the Church of England is just what it was in the past--the Church of this country--but, the Anglican Communion, with its untold millions throughout the British Commonwealth, U.S.A., China, Japan, South America, Central America, India, Pakistan, Iran, Arabia, North Africa, Europe, the islands of the various seas, and even in the ~~Arx~~ Arctic, is an enormous branch of the Catholic Church. And all this had its beginnings in the last century.

John Gibbons ^{formerly a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge,} was a methodical ~~man~~ man, and the registers he kept bear eloquent testimony to his sense of their great historical value. He, too, was a faithful

pastor of his flock and, not only was he concerned with the people but he gave his attention to the matter of the church buildings.

S. Mary's Church was presenting difficulties. In an old newspaper report we read: "The old church of Harley although possessing no remarkable feature of architecture, was nevertheless an object strikingly interesting and picturesque to the passenger as he journeyed along the road from Wenlock to Shrewsbury. Perhaps scarcely any edifice had received a greater variety of incongruous reparations on a more economical scale; but this need not be considered singular, since the benefit of a church-rate was not known in the parish. . Two buttresses had from time out of mind tended to give support to the southern side of the nave, and as the tottering walls presented further inclinations of weakness, additional stone work seems to have been added to the original protection, until each had grown into an enormous ill-shapen mass, and even likely to fall in scattered obscurity with the fabric, should something more substantial not be effected." ~~ixxxx~~

The Rector called a Vestry Meeting to deal with the situation and, a record of the meeting is preserved amongst the records of the church. It reads:

"At a Meeting held in the Vestry of Harley Church on Jany. 29th 1845 proper Notice having been given of the same, It having been found requisite in Consequence of a Report made by an eminent Surveyor to rebuild the Nave of the

Church and make other needful Repairs in and about the same as well as to repair the Church Tower the estimated Expense of which amounts to nearly £550 and the Sum of £378 odd having been raised by voluntary subscription &c towards defraying such Expense.

It was resolved that towards defraying the Remainder of such Expense the Sum of £160 should be borrowed upon the Security of the Parish Land the Rent of which has always been appropriated to ecclesiastical Purposes and the Party or Parties advancing any Part or the whole of that Sum for such Purpose shall be allowed Interest for the same at the Rate of 3 pr Cent pr Annum.

And it was also agreed that the Surplus Rents after paying the said Interest shall be allowed to accumulate on the Hands of the Minister and Churchwardens towards the Discharge of the principal it being understood that the Party or Parties advancing the Money shall consent to receive Five pr cent pr Annum of their principal ^{till} ~~like~~ the Debt be discharged. And in Confirmation of this Resolution and Agreement we the undersigned have inscribed our Names.

(Signed) J. Gibbons.
G. Adney.
J. Crowther.
R. Cartwright.
Edward Cartwright.
Edward Davies.
Thos Bailey.

""

According to the newspaper report we find that the Duke of Cleveland, Patron of the living, gave £200; Sir George

Harnage, Bart., gave £50; and the Rev. John Gibbons undertook to rebuild the chancel and others, whose names we do not now know, also promised financial support. The name of the Rev. Richard Scott, ^{M.A.} B.D. should certainly be had in remembrance as he provided, ~~the~~ at his own expense, the panelled wainscot ~~along the east wall~~ within the Sanctuary, as well as all the windows in the church. Mr. Scott, who was a son of the Rev. George Scott, of Brentford, Middlesex, was a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, and became Vicar of Condover in 1807. The following year he became Chaplain in ordinary to the Prince of Wales. He died on 6th October, 1848, aged 68.

The work of re-building was done to a design of S.P. and J. Smith, of Shrewsbury, and stone from the vicinity was used. The pews of the old church were refitted, and in the aisle were placed a range of free benches. The pulpit and reading desk were new. The pointed arch dividing the nave and the old tower was opened, and the screen of folding doors was added. This now became the place for the village choir.

A newspaper account of the re-opening of Harley Church, which took place on 5th July, 1846, is of interest. It says: "On Sunday morning the church was re-opened, and long before the subdued and mellow chime of the village bells had ceased, a numerous and respectable auditory was assembled to welcome the occasion. The prayers were impressively read by the venerable and respected rector, the Rev. John Gibbons, M.A. who ~~has~~ presided over the parish nearly half a century; after which his nephew, the Rev. J. Longueville, M.A. preached a

most judicious and excellent discourse, from Deut., c. 4., v. 7 & 8 under which the preacher, in pointing out the great privileges which the Jewish nation enjoyed of old, from their being brought near to and in communication with God by means of Moses, and having their admirable laws framed by him, most forcibly shewed in contrast the still greater privileges enjoyed by christians, who could likewise approach God and come near to him by means of the promises which the gospel had brought to light, and by the mediation of his son; and that while the former was only the shadow of the latter was the substance of that hope to which God in his providence had called christians, and to which prophets had ever long looked for. In applying his subject the reverend gentleman urged his hearers to value the privileges of the means of grace with gratitude, for which other blessings, like the flowers of the earth, would wither, fade, and die, yet this plant of Paradise--God's richest gift to man--would flourish and abide for ever. He also warned them to consider the sin of neglecting the gospel for matters which perish in the using, and to consider it a privilege to improve the religious advantages which all might possess by a due attendance on the house of God, where his presence was promised, and where he would condescend to dwell. He hoped, therefore, in the re-opening of this church, many would return into it with fresh vigour, and worship therein in the beauty of holiness, so that a sure and certain hope might be secured of entering "a building not made with hands eternal in the Heavens."

The sermon was listened to with deep attention, and the solemnity thereof was much increased by a terrific thunder-storm happening just at the time.

An appeal was made in aid of the funds for rebuilding the church, when £21 was collected.

The entire cost of the edifice is understood to be about £850."

A tablet erected in the vestry records the re-building of the nave and chancel, and the re-opening of the church for Divine Service.

But the alterations had to be paid for and, as is already stated, a sum of £160 had to be borrowed, with the Church land as security. Mr. G. Adney, the churchwarden, lent this sum and, by 1854, the principal and interest had been repaid.

Another £50 was secured by an arrangement with Sir George Harnage and this agreement is worth recording:

"A Copy of the Agreement made by Sir George Harnage, Bart. and the Parish of Harley relative to a Piece of Land formerly given to the Parish by the Belwardine Family
Whereas a Piece of Land originally Part of the Belwardine Estate in the Parish of Leighton and now called the Parish Acre and comprising one Acre of Land or thereabouts was given verbally without any legal Conveyance to the Parish of Harley as a Consideration for a Pew and Vault in Harley Church and the Rent thereof has been hitherto received by the

Minister and Churchwardens of the said Parish and appropriated to the Use of the Church And Whereas Sir George Harnage Baronet the present Proprietor of the Belwardine Estate wishes to resume the Possession of the said Piece of Land upon giving a proper Consideration for the same And the Minister and Churchwardens of Harley being in Want of a Sum of Money to enable them to rebuild the said Church have offered to give up the free Possession of the said Piece of Land to the said Sir George Harnage Baronet and his Heirs for the Sum of Fifty Pounds which he has agreed to give for the same. We therefore the undersigned Minister and Churchwardens of the said Parish do hereby acknowledge that we have this Day received from the said Sir George Harnage Baronet the Sum of Fifty Pounds and have given up to him at the same time the full and free Possession of the said Piece of Land accordingly to be holden by the said Sir George Harnage Baronet his Heirs and Assigns forever as far as we have the Power of giving up the said Piece of Land to him. And we hereby undertake to sign and execute for the said Sir George Harnage Baronet whenever called upon by him and at his Expense any proper legal Conveyance of the same. As Witness our Hands this 26th Day of July 1847

(Signed) John Gibbons, Rector of Harley.

George Adney
John Crowther Churchwardens.

We the undersigned being Parishioners of Harley approve of the above arrangement.

(Signed) Riche Woof Cartwright.
Margaretta Cartwright.
Thos Bailey Edward Davies. ""

Now that the question of rebuilding the church, and of paying for the work was ~~settled~~ settled, the ordinary life of the parish went on its way. Under the date of 20th September, 1849, we read that "Mr. Gibbons appointed Mr. G. Wade Clerk of the Parish of Harley."

But, the years were leaving their mark on the Gibbons family and, on 19th August, 1855, Mrs Gibbons died in her 83rd year. The tablet in the chancel of S. Mary's which her husband erected indicates what a heavy blow was her passing. Three years later, on 27th December, 1858, John Gibbons died, and his body was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery, London, on 4 January, 1859.

The new Rector was the Rev. William Greenham, B.A., who was instituted by Henry, Duke of Cleveland, on 10th February, 1859. Again, the parish was fortunate in its rector, and he ministered faithfully until his death which occurred on 8th May, 1891, at the age of 71 years. His remains were laid to rest in the churchyard beside S. Mary's Church.

On 13th July, 1891, the Rev. John Charles Storey, M.A. was instituted as Rector of Harley by Harry George Powlett, Duke of Cleveland, and Patron of the living.

Service Register

There is a ~~Ministry Book~~ dating from 1891 and we are thus enabled to follow the record of the Services held in the church, and to know more of the life of the parish at that