

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RECTORS AND PATRONS.

The year 1323 is the earliest date at which we have any record by name of the Hartley Parish Priest.

In the survey of 1087 we read "ibi 3 servi." It is possible to interpret this to mean that "there were three priests there." Where the Church is mentioned in Domesday the word servus seems to be used of the clergy. And although in the case of this parish no allusion is made to the Church, the clergy may for some reason have been noted. We should certainly not have expected to find three priests here in 1087, but neither should we in 1473, and yet we know that at this latter date, there were three here because Thomas Cotyer, in his will dated in that year leaves to "the three priests for celebrating mass in the said church for my soul to each of them four pence."

There may, in either age, have been a collegiate establishment here, or at the later date chantries to which the priests were attached.

In 1323, Henry de Cotesbroke is recorded as Rector of this parish.

It must have been somewhere about his time that the Gothic reconstruction of the Church took place.

He seems to have died in 1340. In that year John de Payneswych was appointed in his place. In 1343 he resigned, and Thomas Ecton became Rector. Three years later he exchanged with Richard Mark-aunt of Testerton, Norfolk, who in a year and a half exchanged with Robert Monte. Six years afterwards he exchanged with Richard Fishe who resigned the living in 1367, when John Reginald became Rector. He resigned in 1372, and John Castrea was appointed. It was, probably, in his time that the treble bell was hung in the steeple. Richard Wyche followed, but in what year we do not know. In 1394, Nicolas Acton was Rector, Richard Wyche having resigned.

His successor John Heed, appointed in 1401, was Rector for 23 years. He became blind and resigned in 1424. It was during his incumbency that Lord Grey de Ruthyn was Lord of the Manor and the property sold to John Urban of Southfleet. John Vinosa followed and was Rector for seven years.

We come now to a period of ten years from 1431 to 1441 in which there were six Rectors of Hartley. That there should have been so many in so short a time is curious, but more extraordinary still is the fact that the same rapid succession occurred in the adjacent parishes. At Fawkham at about the same period there were four in seven years. At Sutton-at-Hone nine in fourteen years. And at Longfield

no fewer than fifteen in fifteen years! There is nothing that we know of to account for this rapid succession.

Thomas Selby was appointed in 1431. He was followed by John Fowey who resigned in 1433. John Ingham was appointed in his place, but resigned the same year and was succeeded by John Barrow. Four years later he exchanged with Richard Bray, who exchanged with Simon Moss, Rector of Alynton.

John Bonde became Rector in 1448, and Thomas Dalby in 1463.

Henry Monionagh was Rector in 1496. Ten years later in 1506, Robert Smalley was appointed, and in 1509 John Beyle. In 1530 William Cokks became Rector.

It was in 1531 that the Clergy were required to designate the King as "Protector and only supreme head of the Church and Clergy of England." This many of them did with the reservation "so far as is allowed by the law of Christ." William Cokks was Rector here when this "submission of the Clergy" was required. Whether or no he submitted we do not know, we have no record of his death or resignation as Rector, so it appears probable that he was one of those who refused. This much, at any rate we know about him, that he was the last of the Rectors of Hartley before the Reformation. In

1541, William Potter was Rector, but when instituted is not clear.

There were important ecclesiastical changes at this time. In 1546, Edward VI, ascended the throne and the Book of Common Prayer came into use. The second Prayer Book was sanctioned in 1552. In 1562 the English Bible which for two years past had been set up in the churches, was ordered to be read to the people in the public services.

In 1547 injunctions were issued that the clergy were to preach at least once a quarter, that images were to be removed from the Churches, the stained glass windows to be broken up, and the inside walls of the churches to be whitewashed. We must assume that William Potter was the Rector who carried out these instructions at Hartley

When Queen Mary came to the throne in 1553, all the statutes of King Edward in regard to religion were repealed and the Book of Common Prayer declared heretical. In 1554, five thousand clergy, and many of the bishops, were ejected.

In 1558 when Elizabeth became queen, the legislation respecting the reformation again came into force. Wm. Potter appears to have remained Rector of Hartley throughout all these changes, for his death did not occur till 1566. His will was proved in that year. In it he is described

as " Preste and Parson of Hartley." He wished to be buried in the choir of the Parish Church. To Edmund Parker, priest of Dartford, he left his "long gown lined with ruffelles." To Martin Haggerde, priest of Meopham, his " fiese gown." To Win. Herde, parson of Facam, his " sarsnett typett," his "silk hatte and best satten night cappe." He left for the repairs of the Church 20 shillings. To the poor of Ash 6s. 8d., of Facam 6s. 8d., of Longfield 3s. 4d. To " Mother " Northash a quarter of barley. And to " everie one of my parishioners of Hartley, man, woman and child, 4 pence."

It was in Wm. Potter's time that the Manor of Hartley passed into the possession of Wm. Sedley, of Southfleet.

In 1566 James Taylor was instituted. He lived 27 years after his appointment and was Eector of three parishes. He was suspended in 1586, but subsequently restored.

In 1593 Charles Hutchinson was Eector and in 1617 Henry Stacey.

In 1642 John Eves appears to have been made Eector of this parish by the Parliament. He subscribed to the declaration in 1662.

On his death in 1667, John Stacey was instituted. He resigned this year the living of Ifield but still

held the Rectory of Ridley, as we see from the following extract from the Archbishop's register,

" John Stacey, Master of Arts and Clerk Chaplayne to the Rt. Hon. His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Lenox, being already possessed of the Rectory of Ridley, petitions His Grace to grant unto him a dispensation whereby he may hold therewith the Rectory of Hartley. Both livings being not above 2 miles distant one from the other. Whereupon His Grace passed a fiat, April 29, 1667."

In 1680, John Priest was appointed. He was Rector for 30 years and on his death Samuel Dunster followed, and eleven years after in 1721, Thomas Blomefield. He held the living for 50 years till 1771, and was also chaplain to the Duke of Dorset. General Sir Thomas Blomefield, his son, was created a baronet on his return from the expedition to Copenhagen in 1807. Thomas Blomefield is buried under the Altar in Hartley Church. It was in the year preceding his death that the Manor of Hartley came into the possession of "Wm. Granville Evelyn.

Richard dark was appointed Rector in 1771 and held the living for 15 years.

In 1786 Thomas Bradley was instituted. The Rectory being in a dilapidated condition he obtained permission from the Bishop to reside out of the parish, and for many years lived at Greenhithe.

There were stirring events in Europe during his

incumbency, the French revolution in 1789, war with France in 1793. The Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and Waterloo in 1815, George the IV had been King for 6 years when he died. He held the living till 1826 when Edward Alien became Rector.

His son William Whitton Allen was curate of the parish from 1850 to 1870, when he succeeded his father as Rector. He held the living till his death in 1901, the present Rector being instituted in the following year.

## THE PATRONS.

The first Patron of the living of whom we have record is Richard Talbot in 1340.

Sir John de Bromwich presented in 1367. And then for nearly 400 years the advowson belonged to the Talbot family.

In 1394 Sir Richard Talbot presented. In 1424 John Talbot. In 1433 John Lord of Talbot and Tournevall. In 1509 George Talbot Earl of Salop. In 1566 John Hall for that time. But in 1593 William Sirche by grant of Gilbert Earl of Salop. In 1667 Frances Earl of Salop presents. In 1680 Charles Earl of Salop. In 1710 Charles Duke of Salop. He gained the latter title in 1694 being the 12th Earl, but the Dukedom expired at his death in 1717.

In 1721 the Earl of Plymouth presented the living to Thomas Blomefield. In 1771 Robert dark of Winchester gave it to Richard dark. In 1786 Richard Forrest was the patron, and Thomas Bradley the Rector.

Two hundred acres of land in the parish at this time belonged to the Bradley family, and afterwards to Dr. Forrest, at whose death the property passed to Miss E. M. Forbes. In 1870 the advowson was in the possession of Rev. Wm. Whitton Alien, in whose lifetime it passed to Mr. H. Kendall

Barnes, and then to Sir James Chance, who at the death of Rev. W. W. Allen failed to present and for that turn it lapsed to the Bishop of Rochester.

Sir Wm. Chance parted with the advowson to Small Owners, Ltd., 1912. The present Patron is Edwin J. King, Esq., of Danemore Park, Tunbridge Wells,