

CHAPTER XX.

LOST PROPERTY.

I propose in this chapter to note some of the former possessions of the parish which, in one way or another, have been lost.

It appears almost certain that there was once a Chantry foundation attached to the parish. Thomas Cotyer, in his will dated 1473, as I have elsewhere mentioned, left a bequest to " the three priests " for celebrating mass in Hartley Church. Apart from such endowments as of a Chantry or Chantries, it is very improbable that this small parish would have required the services of two additional priests besides the Rector. Further evidence of a Chantry here is found in the fact that there is a plot of land in the parish called, on old maps " Chantry Field." But if Chantries, at any time, existed here, they, like so many other similar endowments, were abolished in the reign of Edward VI and the emoluments confiscated by the Crown.

Among the lost belongings of Hartley must be reckoned the ecclesiastical property enumerated in the inventory made by the Commissioners of Edward VI in 1552 :—

A vestment of cruell and thred with an alb.

Two candle sticks of latten.

Two towells of playne linnen cloth.

One pix of latten.

A vestment of red damaske.

One Cross of copper and gilte.

A Bible of the large volume and one paraphrasis of
Erasmus.

Three vestments all cruell and threde with their albs.

One cope of cruell and threde.

A chalice with the patente of silver weiging four ounces.

Two corparares of linnen.

Three altar cloths.

A cope of grene satten.

All these were once the property of the parish but have long since disappeared.

We have record besides of a handbell and a three-branched candlestick. But this last, we are told, was sold to pay for " necessary reparacions " of the parish Church. A bell, too, that formerly hung in the steeple has also gone.

One historian mentions " a curious wooden box in Hartley Church " and says that it was to be found " under the stained glass window in the S.W. part of the Chancel." It is no longer " under the window," and all trace and even tradition of it is lost.

In 1746, the Churchwardens purchased a josin-block. This item appears in the parish accounts for that year. The word is old Kentish for mounting-stone. In the memory of some still in the parish, this stood not far from the entrance to the

churchyard. It only cost twenty shillings but it is a pity that it should have disappeared.

At one time there must have been more memorial stones in the Church on the floor of the nave and chancel. There are now only four but we know of at least half-a-dozen other parishioners who, in times past, were buried within the walls of the Church. The stones, if there, have probably been lost at some time of re-flooring or repairing the Church.

The parish has suffered other losses. There are traditions of handsome carved oak in the Church. And there is the old west door. If it was anything like as ancient and interesting as the south door, we may well regret its disappearance.

The old east window, too, has gone. It made way for the present modern one at the end of last century. Then there was almost certainly, in by-gone times, a stone altar slab in the Church. These altar stones may easily be identified. They were usually large, perhaps 12ft. long and 4ft. wide. They were of granite or Purbeck marble and marked with a number of small incised consecration crosses. There was also the Churchyard cross which has long since disappeared.

There were time-honoured trees in the parish which, like the old churchyard yews, have one by one departed. The walnut tree on the green is

gone and so are those that once grew in front of the Black Lion Inn. The yew at the top of Stocks Hill has disappeared, and in quite recent times a number of picturesque old elms along the Church Road.

We have lost, too, the ancient Manor Court rolls. They are not among the parish archives or at the Record Office. What a great deal they would have told us about the old time Hartley people and their doings.

And the registers of births, marriages and deaths, ordered to be kept in every parish, in 1538. We have them since 1712, but all before that date are gone.

And there is something else that we have lost, or are gradually losing, and that is the picturesqueness of our roads.

Road widening, taking off corners and cutting down trees are necessary to meet the requirements of modern traffic, but they are woefully destructive of the wayside beauty of our roads and lanes.

Hoseland Hill in the past, if steep to climb, was pleasing to the eye, but road improvement has shorn it of nearly all its picturesqueness.



Hoseland Hill.



The Same View of Hoseland Hill after Road Improvement.