

presented it to the eye of the passer by in all the symmetry of its grand proportions. They are grand—for the bole of the tree, at three feet above the ground, can boast a circumference of no less than 17 feet 6 inches, while the actual spread of its branches from north to south, or from east to west, covers a space of ground upwards of 50 feet in width.

THE VICARS.

It has been already said that prior to the year 1396, when Archbishop Courtenay annexed Detling (with its tithes and its duties) to his College at Maidstone, it would seem to have had a resident Priest of its own; for in the "Subsidy Roll"* of the 46th of Edward III. (A.D. 1373) appears the name of *Johannes Capellanus* (John the Chaplain) among the inhabitants; but when it became "a Chapelrie" of the College, the duties were no doubt provided for by the Master and Fellows, among them. It has also been noticed that in the grants made by Henry VIII. and Edward VI. the minister was termed *Curate*.†

When called
Vicars. The change of title from *Curate* to *Vicar* probably took place when Archbishop Parker obtained from Elizabeth the grant of the College revenues to the See of Canterbury; for it had clearly come into use prior to the year 1571, when Dr. John Burcharde was appointed "on the death of the last vicar" (*ultimi vicarii*).

Ordinarily the Parish Registers are a reliable source from whence to trace out the succession of Vicars, but at the outset the Detling Registers present us with a difficulty. On the first page is the following entry:—"Registerium generale Baptizatorum

* See APPENDIX D.

† See page 19

Conjugatorum et Sepultorum in Parochia de Detlinge, a primo regni Regine inclytissime Elizabeth (October, 1558). After this follows a quotation of somewhat obscure application—*Justitia reipublicæ basis*—with the signature “Jo. Williams, Vicarius,” in whose handwriting each entry is made, and whose signature is repeated at the foot of each page (of the Baptisms from 1558, of the Marriages from 1563, and of the Burials from 1578), to the year 1606.

At the first glance the inference would naturally be that the said John Williams was Vicar of Detling for that half century; but the Lambeth Registers tell us that during this interval *three* Vicars of Detling had been appointed: Dr. John Burcharde in 1571, Dr. Nicolas Humfrey in 1576, and Mr. George Case in 1586, while in the Church Burial Registers occur the following entries:—

“Johannes Burcharde *ibidem* Vicarius sepultus fuit 25 die Aprilis, 1576,” and

“Nicolaus Humfrey, Vicarius sepultus fuit 8vo die Julii, 1586.”

And among the baptisms in the year 1593 the note—

“Baptizati in parochia de Detlinge per me Jo. Williams, Vicarium tune et *ibidem*.”

and a similar memorandum in the Burial Register under the same date,

“*Sequuntur Sepult, per me, Jo. Williams, Vicar.*”

The seeming contradiction involved in these entries admits however of this simple explanation, that in those days Registers were very imperfectly and irregularly written; entries were made in odd books or on rough slips of paper, and subsequently written out fair on parchment.

Thus John Williams, who was appointed Vicar in 1593,

must have collected all the rough entries he could find which had been made by the three preceding Vicars, and have copied them out into the present parchment book, signing his name at the foot of each page, and obtaining the counter signature of his two churchwardens as vouchers for the accuracy of the entries.

With these prefatory remarks we proceed to give the list of successive Vicars from the days of Archbishop Parker, noting the authority for each name.

- 1571. John Burcharde,* (Abp. Parker's Register).
- 1576. Nicolaus Humfrey,* (Abp. Grindal's Register).
- 1586. George Case,* (Abp. Whitgift's Register).
While the two previous Vicars are described as Doctors, he is termed *Magister* and *Persona literarius*. So old seems to have been the term *Literate*.
- 1593. John Williams, (Parish Register).
- 1606. Richard Rennold,* (Abp. Bancroft's Register).
(Spelt *Reynold* in Parish Register.)
 He resigned on his being appointed to the valuable Crown living of Abberton, in Essex.—"Newcourt's Repertorium," vol. 11, p. 3.
- 1612. Thomas Angood, (Abp. Abbott's Register), *resigned*.
- 1616. John Crompe, (Abp. Abbott's Register), *resigned*.
(Spelt *Crampe* in Parish Register.)
- 1632. John Craige, (Abp. Abbott's Register).
- 1639. William Sutton, (Parish Register).
- 1662. John Friday,* (Parish Register).
- 1673. Andrew Reany,* or Reaney, (Abp. Shildon's Reg.).
Transposed by Hasted and without dates.
- 1679. Charles Jermyn,* (Abp. Sancroft's Register).
Hasted mis-spells the name *Germyn*, and gives 1718 as the date of his death, whereas the Burial Register gives it August, 1704, and his successor was appointed in the following year.
- 1705. John Martin, (Abp. Tennison's Register).
- 1714. Francis Muriell, (Parish Register).
Also Vicar of Ruckinge, where he died and was buried 1750.—"Arch. Cant.," vol. viii., p. 314.
- 1750. Christopher Thomas, (Abp. Herring's Register).

* Buried in Detling churchyard.

1757. John Russell.

His appointment is not given in the Lambeth Register, but his name is mentioned as deceased on the appointment of his successor.

1764. Thomas Baker, (Abp. Secker's Register).

1779. William Polhill, (Abp. Cornwallis's Register).

Denny Martin Fairfax D.D.

Given by Hasted as the then "present Vicar" (1798), but the name occurs nowhere in the Parish Registers or the Vestry Books.

1822. Joseph Sharpe,* (Abp. Manners Sutton's Register).

He had been Curate from 1809.

1831. Robert Cobb,* (Abp. Howley's Register).

1870. Humphrey Thomas Walford,* (Abp. Tait's Register).

1875. John Cave-Browne, the present Vicar, (Ditto).

The tradition generally current in the village that Detling had never boasted of a resident Vicar until the days of Mr. Cobb, must be accepted with considerable qualification.

To him it was undoubtedly indebted for its present comfortable Vicarage,† which rendered a Vicar's residence in the village possible; while the former building which had borne that title, with its half acre of ground, was little more than a homely cottage, and had long ceased to be a fitting abode for the residence of the clergyman of the Parish. This fully accounted for the non-residence of Mr. Sharpe (who resided in Boxley), Mr. Polhill, Dr. Fairfax, Mr. Baker, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Thomas, thus covering a period of some eighty years. But before that time, it is evident that several of the Vicars—Muriell, Martin, Jermyn, and Sutton—lived in the Parish, as entry after entry occurs of "domestic events." One of these, William Sutton, deserves special notice; holding the Vicarage and residing here from

* Buried in Detling churchyard.

† It was somewhat enlarged in 1877, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as holding the Rectorial Tithes, having made a very liberal grant for that purpose.

1639 to 1662, through the exciting and disturbing period of Puritan fanaticism, he seems to have held his course in the fearless discharge of his duties, though they must have betrayed a somewhat dangerous sympathy with the views of his patron, the unfortunate Archbishop Laud; for the baptism of one child after another is recorded in the Church Register Book, not merely with the day of the month, but always as having been solemnized on one of the Church Festivals, an observance which had fallen into such disfavor in those troublous days that it needed no little personal courage and depth of principle to maintain it.

His successor's coming to live in the Parish is thus alluded to in an entry in the churchwardens' accounts, under the year 1665:—"Paid more by order and agreement of the Parish for ffeting (fetching?) of the Minister's housall (household?) to Detling £2."

THE PARISH.

In the history of any parish, there is necessarily much which would not be deemed worthy of notice in the general narrative of a County Historian; many minor local details which would not be likely to find a place in the broader field of his narrative, yet much which has interest for, and to some extent concerns, the individual parish itself.

Sources
of
Information.

From what sources is such information to be collected? There is the memory of "the oldest inhabitant;" there are the still floating traditions of a previous generation, for, say the present century; beyond these again, we can summon to our aid the Church Registers, and the Parish Vestry books, if happily they have been at all preserved. From the one we can trace the pass-