

THE DESECRATED CHURCHES OF
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

(Continued from page 267.)

18. **MURSLEY**, which gives name to the Deanery in which it is situated, is about four miles from Winslow. The parish, at the time of the Domesday Survey, contained two manors, Mursley and Salden; the latter was the larger of the two, and was at an early date distinguished by the erection of a manorial Mansion, and became a Hamlet with a Chapel-of-Ease. "Warine Fitz-Gerald, who was the second husband of Agnes, daughter and heir of Richard Fitz Neale, or Fitz-Nigel, was a co-founder, with the said Agnes, of a Chantry Chapel at Salden, A.D. 1250, dedicated to St. Nicholas, in which prayers were directed to be said for their "souls, &c."* A list of the Chaplains is given in Cole's MSS. in the British Museum. The first name is John de Chandon, A.D. 1250 ; the last but one is Richard de Mursley, and the last is Hugh Withee de Kimpton. The Chapel was discontinued in A.D. 1350, † and was probably destroyed when the new manor-house was built about 1580. The population of Salden in 1841 was thirty-eight.

19. **SOULBURV**. The hamlet of Bragenham in this parish possessed a Chapel, and in the reign of Elizabeth was described as consisting of ten families. The Chapel has long since perished, the village disappeared, and the manor-house is now the only dwelling in the hamlet. ‡

20. **LISCOMB HOUSE** : within the spacious court of this Mansion there was a Church or Chapel, in which Robert Lovett, lord of Liscombe, founded a Chantry in 1301, as appears by this extract from Bishop D'Alderby's Register in the Archives of Lincoln; "Robto' Lovet D'no de

* Lipscomb, vol. III., p. 426.

† See a paper on the History of Mursley by the Rev. Thomas Horn, late Rector, in the "Records of Bucks," vol. i., p. 73,

‡ Lipscomb, vol. III., p. 463,

Liscombe Epus concessit here Cantuarium in Eccliam de Liscombe." This Church, which has long since been suffered to fall into ruins, was much resorted to for the celebration of marriage before the alteration of the Marriage Laws.*

21. **STEWKLEY**, famous for its fine Norman Church, contains a small hamlet called Littlecote, or Lidcot, which formerly had a Chapel dedicated to St. Giles. Lipscomb objects to Lyson's calling this a Chapel-of-Ease, and states that it was probably only a Chantry belonging to the contiguous manor-house; whereas he himself proves by more than one notice of this Chapel that it was for the use of "the vill" or hamlet.

When this Chapel was founded has not been ascertained, but it must have been in or before the year 1266, for in that year Hugh de Dunster provided for it the following furniture, and delivered it to the custody of the Abbot of Biddlesden: "Unum Altare de albo lyons, benedictum mobile ----, unus calix argenteus et deauratus, unum missale in viculmo sine nota, et unum missale cum exorcismis et principalibus festis in viculmo sine nota, et quatuor pixae vestimentorum plenarie, de quibus una casula est de rubeo samito, et aliae duse de rubeo serico lineato, et duae aliae feriales de fusco tunico, et unum ---- ordinis de Lincoln."

The above-named articles for the use of the officiating priest, and the Chapel itself would certainly not have been provided for a mere Chantry Chapel. In 1266, Hugh de Dunster and Alice his wife appointed the chaplain of St. Giles' Chapel at Littlecote, lying within the parish of Stewkley, but extraparochial, to pray for the souls of themselves, of John Brethach, and Richard de Stanton; and assigned him for his maintenance a messuage and out-buildings adjoining the Chapel, three acres of arable land in Littlecote, together with a pension of five marks yearly, chargeable on lands at Preston Capes, in the County of Northampton, then belonging to Biddlesden Abbey. And by Deed of the same year, William de Byham, Abbot of Biddlesden, in consideration of the release of the above-named rent charge, and the confirmation of two carucates of land, and a meadow in Thorn-

* Lipscomb, vol. III., p. 467.

borough, to the Abbey, by Hugh de Dunster, further secured the payment of this annual stipend, augmented by the allowance of three quarters of grain; viz., one of wheat, one of barley or wheat, and one of "aucti;" all chargeable on lands at Thornborough.* —

In 1339 a fine passed between Sir John de Molyns, knt., Querent, and Sir Peter le Veel, lent., Deforciant. of messuages, lands, and rents, in Stewkley, Littlecote, Dodyngton, Swanbourne, and Hoggleston, and *the Advowson of the Chapel*, of the Vill of Littlecote, which Peter granted, and Thomas Traylley held for life.†

In 1363, Thomas Missenden passed a fine of messuages, lands, and rents, in Swanbourne, Lidcot, and Stewkley, with John Colewell and Elizabeth his wife; which also included *the Advowson of the Chapel of Lidcot*. ‡

In both these notices the Chapel is described as an advowson, and in the first as the Chapel, not of the mansion, but of the "Vill of Littlecote."

From the foregoing notices it is evident this was not merely a private, or a Chantry Chapel, but intended for the use of the inhabitants of the vill or hamlet. As, however, its chief endowment arose from the Chantry connected with it, some colour was given for its suppression, and, therefore, in 1553, Edward VI granted it to Edward Cowper, Clerk, and Valentine Fayrwether, Citizen and Haberdasher of London, together with land called "Chapel-land" in Lidcot, then in the occupation of William Shepherd.

The Hamlet of Littlecote is rather more than a mile from the Parish Church, and contained in 1841 twenty-eight inhabitants. No remains of the Chapel exist, but the site is fixed by tradition on a spot where now grow three fir-trees.

22. WINGRAVE. The village of Wingrave is pleasantly situated on an eminence, about six miles from Aylesbury, and half-a-mile south of the turnpike-road from that town to Leighton Buzzard. The population of this parish was in A.D. 1801, 602; and in A.D. 1851, 813.

* For these two notices, from the Harleian MSS. 4714, I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. H. Roundell, Vicar of Buckingham.

† Lipscomb, vol. III., pp. 477, 481.

‡ Lipscomb, vol. III., 160.

Rowsham, or Rolleston, is an important hamlet of this parish, distant about two miles and a half from the Parish Church, and contains some good houses and a long-established brewery.

In the reign of Henry III, and probably much earlier, there was a Chapel at Rowsham dedicated to St. Lawrence, which was ecclesiastically dependent on the Mother Church of Wingrave, and recorded in Ecton as, "not in Charge." It appears to have been connected with the manor called Burbage, which had a manor-house bearing the same name, and standing near the centre of the hamlet. In the reign of Edward I. this manor was possessed by the Pipards, and soon after, according to Lipscomb, became the property of Edward the Black Prince. After passing through several other proprietors it came to the family of Lucas, and still continues in the same.

The Chapel has long since been destroyed, and no remains of it are now standing, but tradition assigns a small croft containing about three roods, and situated near the centre of the Hamlet, as the site on which it originally stood. From an old man living at Rowsham, I learned that a house, which stood on this spot, was pulled down about twenty years ago, when, in digging up its foundations, and making a temporary saw-pit, several sculptured shafts and blocks of cut free-stone were found, which were supposed to have belonged to the windows and arches of the demolished Chapel. This old man further said that he had heard his father, who died forty years before, aged eighty, speak of the Chapel as having been partly standing within his recollection in the field above noticed, and that it had one bell. These traditions are supported by the fact that several fragments of the ancient Chapel are still to be met with. Some carved beams, which now form part of the roof of a malt-house, and others used in a barn, have all the appearance of having once belonged to an ecclesiastical edifice. There was also, in 1852, an ancient gothic door with fine massive foliated hinges, and thickly studded with nails, used as the door from a farm-yard into an adjoining garden. In the same farm-yard there were several blocks of chiselled stone used for the foundation of a brick wall, which had the appearance of having formed

parts of the demolished Chapel. I was also informed that a few years previously there was an old porch against a cottage door in the same yard, which was believed to have once been a "Church porch." Nothing is certainly known as to whether this Chapel had any endowment separate from the Mother Church, but it is probable that a field adjoining the hamlet, which still bears the name of the "Church field," once belonged to it. No traces of interment have been discovered here, from whence it is probable that the Chapel was provided solely as a Chapel-of-Ease for the inhabitants of Rowsham, and such a Chapel is still needed. For the population of the hamlet is from two to three hundred, and the Parish Church, as before stated, is about two miles and a half distant.