

CHAPTER III
THE LIVING

'The true labourer is worthy of his hire, but in the beginning and first choice of industry, his heart must not be the heart of an hireling.'—RUSKIN.

WHILST concerned with matters ecclesiastical in recording the history of our Berkshire village, some account of the Living may not inappropriately follow the chapter immediately preceding.

As an introductory remark it may not be without interest to state that the territorial division of parishes, with which we are now so familiar, was first established in this kingdom in A. D. 685 by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. For some centuries the parish of Shrivenham formed a part of the diocese of Salisbury, until in the year 1836 it came to be placed under the jurisdiction of the see of Oxford, and under such jurisdiction it still remains.

The ecclesiastical parish originally included not only, as at the present time, that of Watchfield, but also the neighbouring parishes of Bourton, Longcot, and Fernham. In 1846 Longcot and Fernham were formed into a separate parish; and in 1867 Bourton was separated from Shrivenham by an Order in Council. As already pointed out in the previous chapter, the parish was originally attached to the Monastery of Cirencester, with which the appointment of the Vicar lay. It was not until the Reformation, when the last Abbot of Cirencester made his surrender to Henry VIII's Commissioners, in 1539, and the Monastery was

dissolved, that the living was confiscated to the Crown; and by the Crown, except in only one instance, the right of the appointment of the Vicar has ever since been exercised.

The living of Shrivenham is a vicarial one. And in regard to the use of the terms Rectors and Vicars, as variedly employed to denote the parson, or incumbent of the parish, it may be here stated that it is the right to the possession of what are called the greater and lesser tithes, that determines and explains the use of the title in any particular instance. It is the ownership of the larger tithes that carries with it the Rectorial title; and when, as in the case of many parishes, the larger tithes have been alienated from the benefice, the incumbent is known as the Vicar. The owner of the tithe so alienated is known as the Impropiator or Lay Rector, and is often the lord of the manor, sometimes a body corporate. Such ownership involves liability for the repair and maintenance of the Chancel of the Church, though should the incumbent be entitled to the greater as well as the lesser tithes, under the Dilapidations Act of 1923 he is freed from any such obligation and responsibility, and the care of the Chancel, as for the fabric of the Church generally, lies with the Churchwardens. In the case of our own parish, the ownership of the greater tithes—once under the grant of Henry I the property of the Abbey of Cirencester—has now come to be vested in the lord of the manor. The recent sale, and breaking up of the manorial estate will, it is not unlikely, create much difficulty in the matter of the legal liability that the ownership of the greater tithes carries with it.

At this point a digression may reasonably, perhaps, be made on the subject of tithes generally, as being the source of part of the income of the benefice. Tithes great and small are the rightful possession of the Church for the support of its clergy. Derived from the Saxon *Teotba*, the word signified a tenth part of all fruits—predial, personal, and mixed (mixt)—due to God's ministers. Tithes have been defined as 'the tenth part of the increase yearly arising from the profits of lands, stocks upon lands, and the industry of the parishioners, payable for the maintenance of a parish priest by everyone, who has things tithable, if he cannot show a special exemption'.¹ Mention of tithes is made in the Old Testament writings as an offering due to God,² whether as a mark of honour,³ or as a token of gratitude;⁴ whilst the withholding of the payment of tithes is spoken of as an act of robbing God,⁵ and it is recorded that in all countries, civilized and uncivilized, and throughout all ages, tithes have been paid. The most barbarous nations, and the heathen Greeks and Romans, out of a principle of religion common to all men, dedicated tithes to their Gods, some as a standing obligation, others offering them of free will on particular occasions. Though it cannot, it would seem, be stated with certainty when, and in what manner, and under what regulations, tithes came first to be paid in this country, yet, though without direct evidence to support the

¹ *History of Tithes*, Brocklehurst.

² Levit. xxvii. 30-2; Numbers xviii; Deut. xiv. 22, 23, 28.

³ Gen. xxviii. 22; Prov. iii. 9.

⁴ Gen. xiv. 26.

⁵ Mal. iii. 8.

statement, it is not improbable that the payment of tithe is as early as the introduction of Christianity into this country. There is the testimony of early records to show that tithes were paid in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries of the Christian era, though such payment was a voluntary act.¹ Legislation, originally by canon law, afterwards by state law, in the matter of the paying of tithes, would appear to date from towards the close of the eighth century and during the reign of Offa, King of Mercia. By an enactment of Pope Adrian in 785, confirmed later by Church Councils and Synods, and sometimes by a royal command, the payment of tithe was enjoined on the Anglo-Saxon Church. Though canon law thus enjoined the payment of the tithe it did not bind the laity; and in the following year this enactment of the Pope was enforced by the authority of the two kingdoms of the Heptarchy in their parliamentary conventions. By the law of Offa the Church then acquired a civil right in tithes by way of property and inheritance, and the clergy the support of the civil authority in gathering and recovering them as their legal right. But the enactment of Offa extended only to the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria, and it was not until some sixty years later that Ethelwulf, King of Wessex and Kent, enforced the law of Offa on the whole realm of England, whilst at the same time he devoted a tenth part of his own private possessions to religious purposes.

To pursue the history of tithes and things tith-

¹ Records of the reigns of Ethelbert (566), Ina (688), Offa (794).

able through the legal enactments of the following centuries would be beside the purpose, and beyond the compass of this present chapter, but enough, it is hoped, has already been said, and with such brevity as is possible, to point out how religious practice and Church pronouncement in the matter of tithes came to be the law of the land.

The payment of tithes was in the first instance made to the monasteries, and from such a source of income they endowed the services of a Vicar for particular parishes (such endowment, as already pointed out, being known as the lesser tithes) whilst they kept in their own hands and for their own uses the remaining tithes, designated as the greater tithes. With the dissolution of the monastic houses, *temp.* Henry VIII, and in the year 1538, the greater tithes were confiscated to the Crown; and in some instances were made over to the lords of the land, who as successors to the monasteries in ownership of such tithes, thus became the impropiators. By such act of the King about two-fifths of the whole of the tithes in England and Wales came to be alienated from the Church, and have become the property of the descendants and successors in title of those to whom they were first made over. These tithes have from time to time, in some instances, and as a matter of conscience, been restored to the Church.

The payment of tithes was originally made in kind,¹ and necessitated the collection and storing of the products of the land, and the labours of men and beasts. Hence the existence of the tithe barn,

¹ There is a local tradition of the tenth baby of the family being once offered to the Vicar as a tithe offering!

of which at Great Coxwell in our own neighbourhood we have so interesting and famous a survival. This inconvenience to the occupiers of the land—and conceive the difficulty of setting aside the tenth sheaf of corn, the tenth cock of hay, the tenth pail of milk, the tenth egg, &c., &c.—to say nothing of the indignity to the parson in securing and gathering in his dues, and the alterations to which it may have given rise, was ended in the year 1836 in the reign of William IV, by what was called ‘An Act for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales’.¹ The object of this Act, as stated by Sir Robert Peel at the time, was ‘To get a fixed money payment in lieu of tithe, and thus to put an end to the discouragement of agricultural improvement, and a demand for increased tithe in proportion to improvement’. By the machinery set up to give effect to this Act, the fair average of the value of the tithe-owner’s interests was taken into account, and the amount commuted into a permanent rent-charge upon the land.

By a recent Act of the legislature, passed in 1926, the clerical ownership of tithe has been transferred to the governors of Queen Anne’s Bounty, who now undertake on behalf of incumbents the collection of all tithes, and from the sum so collected set apart a sinking fund, by which in the course of sixty-five years, all tithes will be redeemed, and thereby cease to be a charge on the land. But this is looking ahead!

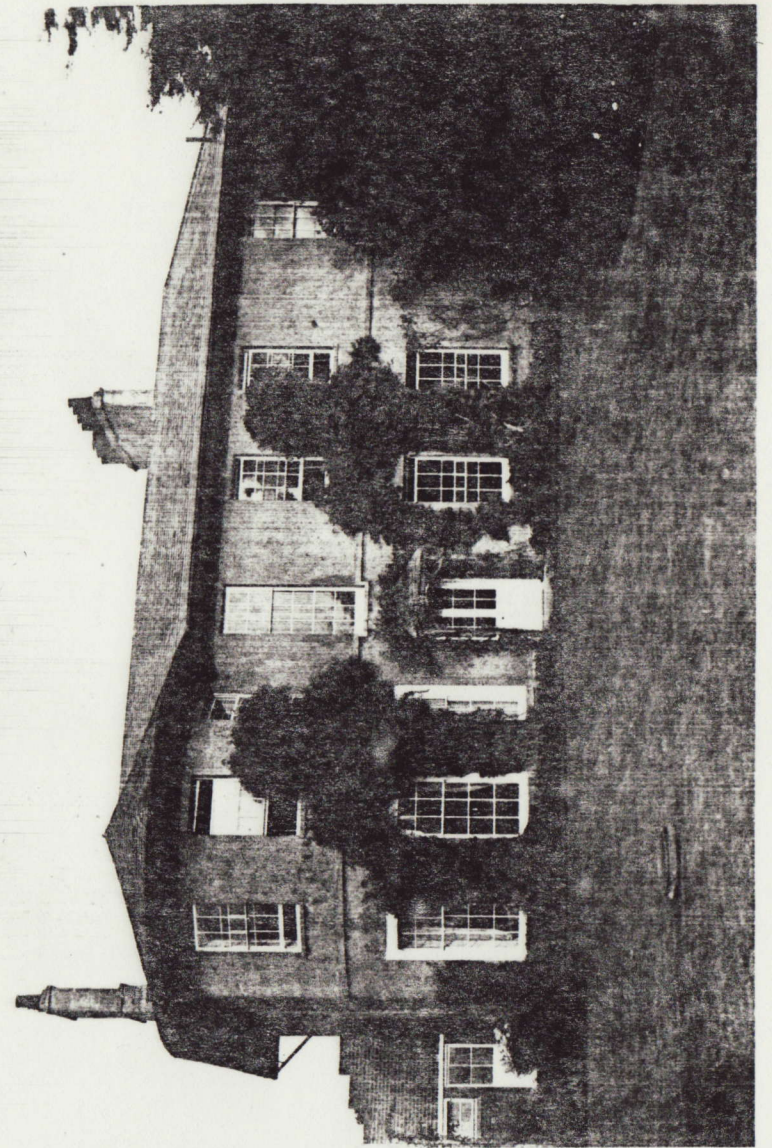
In addition to the tithe-rent charge the income of the benefice is further supplemented by the

¹ 6 and 7 William IV, Cap. 71.

possession of land with which the living has been endowed by benefactions in the past. This has, for the most part, been sold in recent years, and, be it added, to the advantage of the Vicar, who is thereby freed from the responsibility of land ownership, and from the liability—a serious one—for compulsory repairs on farm buildings. The proceeds of such sale are held in trust for the Vicar of the time being by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The only land now belonging to the benefice are the two fields in close proximity to the Vicarage, and known locally as South Side.

The present commodious Vicarage was built, it is believed, at the sole expense of a former incumbent—the Ven. Archdeacon Berens, who held the benefice for fifty-five years, and was added to by the Rev. George William Murray, his successor, for the more convenient accommodation of his large household. With all its desirability and advantages as a residence, the financial resources of the living unaided are inadequate to its maintenance and upkeep in decency and order. And it may be in coming days that, like many Vicarages of large dimensions, it will be sold, and a smaller house be found to take its place. But no claim is made to forecast the future!

Following this chapter is a table of former holders of the benefice, dating back some six hundred years. And be it remarked that there are few parishes, probably, that in latter times can record less change in their Vicars than our own, the present occupant of the Vicarage being but the third in the last one hundred and twenty-three years.



THE VICARAGE

CHAPTER IV
A LIST OF THE VICARS OF THE CHURCH OF SHRIVENHAM, FROM A. D. 1325.
Compiled from the Bishops' Registers of Institutions at Salisbury and Oxford, when not otherwise stated, with additional entries from Public Records and some Historical Notes.

οὗη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιή δε και ἀνδρῶν. HOMER, II. vi. 146.

<i>Dates of Institutions.</i>	<i>Names of Vicars.</i>	<i>Patrons.</i>
11 Sept. 1325	RICHARD DE EYTOUNE.	The Abbot and Convent of Cirencester.
9 Kalendar of April 1328 ^g <i>Note 1.</i>	JOHN SWAYNE, by exchange with Richard Ettowne. NICHOLAS AKARD.	" "
23 Dec. 1350	JOHN HAUTERYNE, by exchange with Nicholas Akard.	" "
16 Oct. 1361	WALTER BERNEFELD.	" "
16 Mar. 1362 ²	JOHN (MAY ?). DAVID CANDELAR was Vicar of Shrivenham in 1389 when he received a licence from the King to pass beyond the sea with one household servant and a reasonable sum of money to the Pope to defend his right to the Vicarage. <i>See Patent Rolls. Notes 2 and 3. Institution not entered in Diocesan Register.</i>	" "
15 Aug. 1392	WILLIAM MALLE, by the death of David Candelar.	The King—The Abbacy being vacant.
5 Aug. 1394	WILLIAM SOLLITO, by exchange with William Malle.	" "

<i>Dates of Institutions.</i>	<i>Names of Vicars.</i>	<i>Patrons.</i>
30 Dec. 1418	WILLIAM HUBERT.	The Abbot and Convent of Cirencester.
30 Dec. 1419	JOHN BURY, by resignation of William Hubard.	" "
26 Nov. 1420	JOHN OUTRED, by exchange with John Bury.	" "
20 Aug. 1425	JOHN WAKEFIELD.	" "
2 Dec. 1425	JOHN CORBYN, by exchange with John Wakefield.	" "
	JOHN FITZ, Vicar of Church of Shrivenham, was presented in 1434 to the Church of St. John Baptist, Bysseley. <i>See Patent Rolls. Institution not entered in Diocesan Register.</i>	
24 Nov. 1439	WILLIAM WARDEYN, by resignation of John Fyse (Fitz).	" "
4 Sept. 1454	JOHN MALLE, by death of William Warden.	" "
.....	THOMAS MAUDESLEY. <i>Institution not entered in Diocesan Register.</i>	
13 Feb. 148 $\frac{1}{2}$	THOMAS STERE, by death of Thomas Maudesley.	" "
.....	JOHN FAWLE. <i>Institution not entered in Diocesan Register.</i>	
29 Aug. 1522	JOHN CORBET, by resignation of John Fawle, with the Chapels of Longcote and Watchfield.	" "

It was during John Corbet's tenure of the Vicarage that the great change took place which culminated in the Reformation. John Blake, the last Abbot of Cirencester, made his surrender to Henry VIII's Commissioners in 1539, receiving a pension of £250. The Patronage of the living was then confiscated to the Crown. The next presentation was bestowed on one, Thomas White, of the City of Bristol, and he being dead, by his will bequeathed it to his Executrix, Marjorie Harrys.

29 Apr. 1564	JOHN WEBBE, by the death of John Corbett.	Marjorie Harrys, Patron for this turn.
4 Nov. 1564	JOHN LOWE, by resignation of John Webbe.	Queen Elizabeth.
2 Mar. 1566-7	GEORGE ELLYS, by resignation of John Lowe.	"

3 Aug. 1586	WILLIAM HILTON.	} <i>Composition Books R.O.</i> } <i>Institutions not entered in Diocesan Register.</i>	Queen Elizabeth.
26 Nov. 1589	WILLIAM YATE.		"
14 Mar. 159 $\frac{7}{8}$	WILLIAM POUNDE.		"
28 July 1648	HUGH PUGH. <i>Note 4. Book of Institutions R.O.</i>	} <i>Composition Books R.O.</i>	King Charles I.
1660	THOMAS BUNCE. <i>Composition Books R.O.</i>		King Charles II.
20 May 1675	BENJAMIN WOODROFFE, S.S.D.		"
24 May 1676	THOMAS KINGSTON, by cession of the last Incumbent.		"
12 Jan. 168 $\frac{3}{4}$	RICHARD VAUGHAN.		King William III. & Queen Mary II.
19 Nov. 1694	GEORGE MARTEN, by death of last Incumbent.		King William III.
14 Mar. 169 $\frac{6}{8}$	GEORGE STEPHENS, by cession of last Incumbent.		King George II.
11 Oct. 1733	CALEB COLTON, M.A., by death of George Stephens.		King George III.
18 Dec. 1764	BARFOOT COLTON, M.A., by resignation of Caleb Colton.		King George III.
26 Jan. 1804	EDWARD BERENS, M.A., by death of Barfoot Colton.		Queen Victoria.
26 May 1859	GEORGE WILLIAM MURRAY, M.A., by death of Edward Berens.		"
26 Feb. 1890	EDWARD FRANK HILL, M.A., by resignation of George William Murray. Appointed Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, 1927.		

Note 1.—Dates written thus 132 $\frac{8}{8}$ betoken the difference between the Old or Julian and the New or Gregorian style of reckoning the year. By the former, the year began on March 25th. The latter was not adopted in England till 1752. The lower figure refers to the New style.

Note 2.—Disputes were frequent between the Regular and Secular Clergy. On this occasion the Abbot of Cirencester, with some of his Monks, also petitioned to be allowed to proceed to Rome, and received permission to do so and to remain there till his suite was fully determined.

Note 3.—Patent Rolls. Letters Patent preserved in the Record Office, London, were so called as being open for public knowledge. Presentations to Livings were formerly confirmed by Letters Patent.

Note 4.—Hugh Pugh. William Shaw in his History of the English Church, during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth, speaks of Hugh Pugh as being a Nominee Vicar of the Puritans, although Charles I was still King.