



A Tour through Buckinghamshire.

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(Continued from page 92, Vol. 5.)

From Chalfont Road station the road runs to the village of CHALFONT ST. GILES, pronounced Chafhunt, three miles distant.

Before entering the village we pass on the north side *the Vache*, where were living in the 14th century the family of De la Vache. In the 16th century it passed to that of Gardynier, one of whom married the heiress of *The Grove*, the other principal estate in the parish. In 1564 the Vache was sold to Thomas Fleetwood, Master of the Mint.

Two of Thomas Fleetwood's descendants were Parliamentarians and regicides. One of these, Colonel George Fleetwood, whose half-brother Charles had married Bridget, daughter of Oliver Cromwell, and widow of General Ireton, escaped death with much difficulty at the Restoration, and retired to New England. Another George Fleetwood, cousin of the other, was also tried for high treason in 1661, but managed to escape execution. Another cousin, William Fleetwood, was on the other hand a Royalist. He was chaplain in the royal army, and took charge of the young princes, Charles and James, at the battle of Edgehill. After the Restoration, he was made Chaplain to Charles II. ; Rector of Denham, a parish close to Chalfont ; Provost of King's College, Cambridge ; and finally Bishop of Worcester. He died 1675, aged 81 years.

The Fleetwoods ceased to be owners of the Vache after the Restoration. George Fleetwood's estates were confiscated and given to the Duke of York, who sold them to Sir Thomas Clayton, Warden of Merton College, Oxford, connected by marriage with the Fleetwoods. Sir Thomas Clayton died at the Vache 1693, but was buried in Merton Chapel. His son succeeded, and left the estate to his wife, who in turn left it to her niece, Margaret Alston, who married Francis Hare, Bishop of Winchester, who had been Chaplain to the Duke of Marlborough, and had been present at the battles

of Blenheim and Ramilies. Dr. Hare died 1740, and was buried in the Mausoleum on the south side of the Church. In 1771 the Vache was purchased from the Hares by Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser. Admiral Palliser was one of the principals in a Court Martial at which Admiral Keppel was tried on the grounds of a quarrel between the two officers in 1778, with regard to an attack on the French fleet off Ushant. The Court Martial became a party political affair.

The monument in the park to Captain Cooke, the famous navigator, was erected by Admiral Palliser.

There is nothing of the ancient mansion remaining.

The Church of St. Giles (register 1584) is built of clunch and flint. It contains arms, brasses, and monuments of the Gardyners, Fleetwoods, and Claytons. At the east end of the south aisle is a brass to William Gardyner, his wife Anne, of the Newdigate family of the neighbouring parish of Harefield, and their five sons and three daughters, dated 1558. In the chancel is the altar tomb to Thomas Fleetwood, the purchaser of the Vache, his two wives, and eighteen children. Here also is the slab of the monument of James Clayton, which was broken up at the restoration of the church under G. E. Street in 1861. The fragments may be found in the vestry and elsewhere. James Clayton died 1714.

There are several interesting ancient frescoes on the walls. Notice the one representing the Blessed Virgin delivering souls from Purgatory, and the Story of the daughter of Herodias. From the dress of the figures it may be judged that these paintings were executed in the middle of the 14th century, which is also the date of the south aisle on the walls of which they are painted.

The alms-box and altar-table are Jacobean, and the richly carved and unusual altar rails were the gift of Bishop Hare, who was also Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, from which church they are said to have been brought.

The east window of the chancel was much injured by the cannon-balls fired at the church from Silsden Meadow, by soldiers under the command of Cromwell, when the latter was staying here at Stone House.

The village is remarkable for the number of picturesque old houses to be found in it. Of these by far the most interesting is one to be seen on the left-hand side of the village street, and which was occupied by John Milton in 1665. The house is not, however, quite as it was in the days of the poet. A large porch has been

taken down, but the large window of the room, traditionally known as "Milton's room," still remains. The plague drove Milton to Chalfont, and this house was taken for him by his friend, Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker, who had been his reader and pupil.

"I was desired by my quondam Master, Milton," writes Ellwood, "to take a house for him in the neighbourhood where I dwelt, that he might go out of the city for the safety of himself and his family."

Milton was at the time fifty-seven years of age, and had been blind for some years, and had lately married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull.

Ellwood had been imprisoned as a Quaker, and as soon as he was released from Aylesbury Gaol he went to visit Milton at this house. At this visit the poet handed to Ellwood the MS. of "Paradise Lost," and asked him to read it. The latter, when he returned the MS. to Milton at a subsequent visit, said to him "Thou hast said much here of 'Paradise Lost,' but what hast thou to say to Paradise Found?" Milton made no answer, and when he had returned to London after the plague was over he again received a visit from Ellwood, and handed to the latter "Paradise Regained," saying "This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had no thought of."

Entries in the parish register record deaths "supposed to be" of the plague 1665.

CHALFONT ST. PETER is two miles further south. This village is not so interesting as the other Chalfont.

The church (register 1528) is an adaptation by G. E. Street of a brick building of the last century. It formerly belonged to Missenden Abbey; St. John's College, Oxford, are now the patrons. There are some monuments of the Whitchurch family of the 16th century.

Chalfont House, one mile south, was the property in the last century of General Charles Churchill, whose brother-in-law Horace Walpole, as a frequent visitor here, explored the adjoining parts of the County, and has described them in his letters.

Half-way between the two villages of Chalfont and one mile west of the road is *The Grove*, once the home of the Gardyners after they had sold the Vache. The present house is modern.

One mile west of the Grove is the Quaker Meeting-house and Burial Ground called Jordans, situated in a pretty glen at the edge

of a wood. The meeting-house is a plain old-fashioned building. In the little burial ground we find amongst others the graves of the following Friends: Isaac Pennington, d. 1679; Thomas Ellwood, d. at Hunger Hill near Amersham 1713; William Penn, d. 1718 at Ruscombe near Twyford, in Berkshire, his two wives, and five of his children. There are many names of New Englanders in the Visitors' Book.

Nearer to Chalfont St. Peter than the Grove is *The Grange*. The house is modern. Here lived Alderman Pennington, one of the judges of Charles I. He gave the house to his son Isaac when the latter married Lady Springett, the widow of Sir W. Springett, but after the Restoration the estates were given to the Duke of Grafton, and Isaac was only allowed to remain in the house, by sufferance, until he was sent to Aylesbury Gaol as a Quaker. William Penn's first wife was the daughter of Lady Springett by her first husband, so the families of Penn and Pennington were connected, and Penn after his marriage lived at Rickmansworth, close by on the Hertfordshire border.

(To be continued.)

Ancient Introductions to Wills.

By W. C. Fotcham.

Your readers may perhaps be interested to read a few examples of introductions to Wills made previously to the present century. Up to within the memory of persons still living it was the almost universal custom to commence Wills with formula something to the effect of the following. This custom was not altogether confined to Wills as many ancient deeds and documents were made to commence with invocations to the Deity, such as "In the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity," &c. We need hardly say, however, that, at least in England, this pious custom has long since gone out of use. The examples given below are from Wills of persons who