

THE PARISH CHURCHES OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:
ILLUSTRATED BY WILLS, TEMP. HENRY VIII.

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It is proposed in this paper to group together certain facts relative to the parish churches of Northamptonshire which can be gleaned from the pre-Reformation wills of the county of the time of Henry VIII., and also from a few of the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary. It is much to be desired that some general analysis, or tabulated extracts from these most interesting testamentary documents, should be prepared for every county.¹

Wills are invaluable as giving absolute proof of the dedications of churches. The dedications of this county as given in modern calendars and gazetteers are most faulty. For instance, a group of old churches is assigned to St. Luke, every one of which is a recent invention. The following table shows the relative frequency of the different dedications. This summary includes all old parish churches and a certain number of parochial chapels that had fabrics at a distance from the parish church, but omits the churches of mere religious foundations.

¹ An admirable paper on the ecclesiology of the West Kent churches, by Mr. Leland L. Duncan, F.S.A., was printed in the third volume of the *Transactions of the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, 1895. Rev. F. W. Weaver, M.A., published annotated abstracts of a large number of Somersetshire wills in 1890, under the title *Wells Wills*.

The wills treated of in these pages are to be found at the Probate Office, Derngate, Northampton. I desire to acknowledge the invariable courtesy

and assistance extended to me by the officials.

A large portion of the extracts have been taken by my friend Rev. R. M. Serjeantson, M.A., to whom I am most grateful for the free use made of them in this article. I am hopeful that these pages will only prove introductory to a complete analysis for every parish by Mr. Serjeantson. In a few cases I have depended on the copious extracts made by Bishop Kennet in the eighteenth century, which are among his collections in the British Museum.

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The Celtic saint St. Columba is commemorated in the dedication of Collingtree, the terminal of the place-name

being also Celtic ; St. Wilfrid, of the Roman obedience, at Guilsborough ; St. Werburgh, at the chapel of Weedon Bec ; St. Guthlac, at Passenham, and at the chapels of Deeping Gate and Elmington ; and St. Pega, at Peakirk.

The full dedication of the church of Castor was in honour of the "Holie Virgins Seynt Keneburghe, Kenyswythe, and Tybbe," as is given in a will of 1532 ; though other wills only name St. Kyneburgh. The subsidiary church of Upton is also dedicated to St. Kyneburgh.

Pre-Reformation wills are often of value in giving the exact date of structural alterations or additions to the fabric of the church, as well as pointing to the time of considerable repairs. The fine embattled tower of Arthingworth was being built as late as 1515-17, as we find from various bequests. "Steeple" was the term then used indifferently for either tower or spire, or both. Building or considerable repairs were in progress at Whiston in 1526, at Rothwell in 1528, and at Hazelbeach in 1537 ; whilst in the latter year there was a bequest of 6s. 8*d.* to the steeple of Cransley Church "when the tyme shall come that it shall be new made." The building of the steeple of Old church was a long time in progress, certainly from 1512 to 1519. In the first of these years there was a bequest towards the steeple of 20*s.* ; in 1519 there was the handsome bequest of "xvj whethers off the second sortte, and iiij ewys of the same sortte." Richard Arnold left to the building of the roof of this steeple the best piece of oak in his yard, whilst another parishioner, in the following year, outdid this by leaving the two best pieces in his yard. The new aisle of St. John Baptist, in the church of Kettering, was building in 1512. The making of a porch at Moreton Pinkney was in progress in 1520. The roof of the church of St. Sepulchre, Northampton, was being repaired in 1528-9 ; in each of those years there was a bequest of 20*s.* towards "castynge of the leades and hellyng of pulkars." The south aisle of All Saints, Wellingborough was being built in 1530, when a parishioner left as much money as should suffice to glaze the middle window. Ten shillings were left in 1526 "to Our Blessed Lady of Ashby towards the building of the

parish church"; this would mean the nave of the conventual church of the house of the Austin Canons. A specially interesting bequest tells of repairs being done to the chapel of Our Lady standing in a wood in the parish of Croughton.

Among the bequests of general utility to the parish or district, the most usual kind were those made in favour of the repairs of bridges and highways or "causeys." There are several cases of bequests to the four bridges about the town of Rothwell, as well as to the different bridges at Oundle and Wellingborough. Other bridges that we have noticed are those of Barnwell, Brigstock, Deeping Gate, Denford, Moulton, Peterborough, Pitsford, Spratton, Walgrave, and West Haddon. The highways mentioned are generally those leading from a special place to the church, and in some instances for the causey from the parsonage to the church. Thomas Angiers of Paulerspury in 1532 left "one halff of my goodes to be spent in warkes of merceye as in mendyng of the hiewayes." Occasionally crosses, other than those in the churchyard, are named. There are bequests for two different crosses in the town of Irthlingborough, and one testator of Chipping Warden, in 1529, leaves twenty pence to the repair of the cross that stood next his house.

There are various references of interest with regard to the Sacrament of the Altar.

Thomas Doddington, of All Saints, Northampton, leaves, in 1530, £10 in money or plate to make a pix for the Sacrament, and requests that his brother (who was probably a working goldsmith of the town) should "make the said pix after such a goodly manner as he can devyse." Henry Godwin, of Irchester, leaves, in 1526, 40s. "towards the bying and purchasing of a pyxe of sylver & gylte to ley the blessed Sacrament or body of our Lord Jhesu Cryste, there to remain for ever."

Stowe Nine Churches had a bequest in 1532, of "xs. to bye a cloth to leye over the holie sacrament on Corpus Christi daye & at all other tymes nedeful."

The following relate to the English use of a canopy over the pix:—

"To mendyngē the canopye and blessed Sacrament of

the aulter *xiid.*" (Holcot); "towards the maintenaunce of a canopye over the hie aulter, *iiijd.*" (Daventry); "to the sacrament of the aulter to by a canopye *xs.*" (Great Billing); "a canope to hang over the holy & blessyd Sacrament" (Brafield).

With regard to altar plate :

The mending of a chalice gained a bequest at West Haddon of 6s. 8*d.* in 1553; whilst £3 was at the same time left to that church to buy a new chalice. Bequests are also found towards buying a new chalice on three or four occasions, 40s. being the largest sum.

In these wills the celebration of the mass of the Five Wounds is frequently enjoined. There are also instances of St. Gregory's trentals, the mass of Pope Innocent, and the mass of *Scala celi*.

A bequest of 1529, providing for five funeral masses, specifies that they are to be: (1) The Five Wounds, (2) Our Lady, (3) Holy Ghost, (4) Jesus, and, (5) Requiem "for my pore soule." A Brington will stipulates for five masses: (1) Nativity, (2) Epiphany, (3) Resurrection, (4) Holy Ghost, and (5) Assumption of Our Lady.

John Sumerly, of Mears Ashby, requested that five priests might have five groats to sing five masses of the Five Wounds on his burial day.

The use of fine household or personal linen (of course unused) for church purposes is frequently illustrated.

John Robinson leaves his best kerchief to the high altar of St. Gregory's church, Northampton, "to make a corporax." A Naseby parishioner bequeaths a kerchief to make a corporax, and three silk pillows. Henry Mayo, priest of Chipping Warden, left in 1516 "a fine kerchieff to make a corporax."

An Oundle woman left half a sheet to the altar of Our Lady, and the other half to the altar of St. Sythe. Cecile Smyth, widow, of Carlton, left in 1529 two sheets to make a surplice, one to make two altar cloths, and a table-cloth for the high altar. "A dyaper bordcloth" was left to the high altar of Flore, "to remayne as an ornament ther." Joan Parker, in 1538, desired that a fine sheet might be laid on her body when borne for burial to the church of All Saints, Northampton, which was afterwards to be used as altar cloth at the high altar.

Two references have been noticed to the houselyng cloth. There was left to the church of St. Giles, Northampton, in 1522, "a great diaper Towell to be a houslyng cloth." A "towell cloth" was left to Carlton church, "for to serve the Paryshioners withall when they take their ryghts of the church at Ester and other tymes."

"A short towell of dyaper for the lavatory" was left to the chapel of St. Werburgh, Weedon Bec, in 1527. Sir John Clarke, parish priest of St. Peter's, Irthlingborough, left, in 1518, a towel to the high altar of each of the churches of Irthlingborough. "A towell to wype ye prests handes w^t" was a bequest to the church of Naseby. The most singular of such gifts is the following, which occurs in the will of Henry Langley, of Harrowden Parva, under the late date of October 13th, 1557 :—"My best towell to hange in the rood lofte, my worst towell to hange at the hye aulter to serve the preste at washing his handes before the sacringe and after." What was the use of the towel in the rood loft? Was there an altar there? Or might it not have been used (if there was any special local devotion) to wipe the feet of the rood after salutation?

A sensible bequest, though small in amount, to the high altar of Great Brington was that of William Smyth in 1529, when he left "halfe a quarter of barley to be bestowed on suche maner of thyngs as is mostt necessary and convenyent to ye high aulter." But right through this series of wills, some very small bequest to the high altar, usually of money, is the regular rule, with few exceptions.

Among the vestments left to Northamptonshire churches are : "A vestment of velvete suitable to the best cope" (Pytchley); a cope of crimson velvet (Orlingbury); a cope and vestment of white silk that cost £7 (Kettering); a vestment price 13s. 4d. (Kilsby); "my surples and a vestment prec. xxs." to Duston church from Sir Robert Parke, vicar, 1519; a cope and vestment (Preston Capes). More frequently money was left for the purpose of buying vestments; St. Sepulchre's had a bequest of £5 of this kind, in 1534, and Rushden a like sum to buy a cope or vestment. Smaller bequests towards

the purchase of vestments were common. Such are : 40s. towards the buying of a pair (set) of vestments at Aynhoe; 40s. towards a cope at Whittlebury; 20s. to be bestowed in vestments at Hardington; the residue of a small estate at Exton to buy a cope or vestment; 6s. 8*d.* and an acre of pease towards a cope for Naseby; and 6s. 8*d.*, in 1516, "towards the bying of a cope to honour Almighty God in the church of Ashby" (Mears Ashby).

Sir Richard Knightley (the father of Sir Richard, the great Puritan and patron of the Mar-prelate tracts) by his will of 1538 was most generous in the way of vestments to the churches of his neighbourhood. "To the intent that God's service may be the better maintained" he left a vestment of the value of 20s., or 20s. to buy one, to the churches of Fawsley, Everton, Badby, Newnham, Lichborough, Stowe, Weedon, Norton, Braunston, Byfield, Woodford, Catesby, Helidon, Charwelton, Preston, Farthingstone, and Plumpton.

There are not many references in these wills to anything pertaining to Holy Baptism, but in 1526 the rector of Holdenby left "a basson and a laver" to the font; and there was also a bequest to the church of Bugbrook of "a charger to wasche the hands when chylden be crystened." Such washing would be essential at the time when chrism or holy oil formed part of the baptismal ceremony. A parishioner of St. Peter's, Northampton, desired to be buried in the churchyard and "before the christening dore."

The references to books chiefly relate to those used in the services of the Church. They are too well known to ecclesiologists, under their differing nomenclature, to need annotation.

To the church of Great Billing "ij portuisses w^t a masse boke"; "To bye a graylle for Cold Ashby church xs."; "To by a mase booke and alter clothe, vjs. viij*d.*," All Saints, Northampton, 1542; and to the church of Tiffeld the vicar leaves, in 1516, "my best Portuys, my manual of parchement, and sawter." Henry Newman, vicar of Haringworth, left in 1521 to the parish church of Elneston "my notid Portus and a surplus there to remain in the custody of the chauntry prest for ever, but

I will that the same boke and the surples be registered in the Church Reves Inventory."

There are some interesting examples of the re-supply of the old church office books towards the end of Mary's short reign. In 1557, 26s. 8d. was left to the church of Crick "towards the buyinge of a new Grayle book." On June 3rd, 1558, there was a bequest of 3s. 4d. "towards the byinge of an Antiphonar."

In 1529 the college of Irthlingborough received a bequest of 10s. towards buying books. Roger Alyn, husbandman, in 1521 left 20s. to Benefield "to the buyinge of bokes necessarie to the church."

But by far the most interesting book bequest to a church is one of March 22nd, 1526, which tends to prove that printing had not driven out the love for the beautiful and painful work of the scribe. At the date mentioned Sir William Adson, parson of Chipping Warden, left "to the paryshe church of Chepyng Warden vⁿ sterling to buy a boke called a Breviary to be made. I have spoke for ytt myselfe to oon dwellyng at the blakefreers in Herforde and payd to him in yernest vjs. viijd."

The following bequests pertain to volumes other than office books. George Symonds, parson, of Maidford, leaves "to the abby of Byndelesden my Decretalls,¹ to the abbey of Ashbye a Boke called Ludolfus de vita Jhesu,² to Sir Robert Goodmulne my boke of prayers on parchment, to Sir William Croke a boke called Virgill, to the vicar of Preston a boke called Postilla,³ to Mr. Foxley the elder a boke called De Vita Jhesu,⁴ so that he gyve it to a preste after his decease to pray for me."

Thomas Pratt, vicar of Spratton, which was a vicarage of the Austin Abbey of St. James, Northampton, left, in

¹ The Decretals of Pope Gregory IX. were printed in 1518, and with comments at several other early dates.

² Ludolph of Saxony, Prior of the Carthusians at Strasburg, was the first to write a connected life of Christ. The earliest edition of this great folio was printed in 1474.

³ This may have been the postils on the Epistles and Gospels already named, or possibly *Postilla elucidativa*

et magistralis super epistolas Pauli Reverendi patris: fratris Nicolai de Gorran sacre pagine professoris ac Provincialis Francie Ordinis Predicatorum, which was printed in 1502.

⁴ The vicar was not likely to have had two copies of Ludolph, and this was probably *Vita Christi secundum Bonaventuram*, which was printed in 12mo in 1481, and again by Wynkyn de Worde in 4to in 1525.

1510, "To the House of St. James a Boke called Pupylla Oculi."¹

The vicar of Blakesley, in 1523, left to the chantry priest of that church, in addition to his "mydyll gowne and a fustyan jackquet," "Manipulus Curatorum² et Legenda Lombardica."³

John Harres, master of arts and vicar of Hardingston, was evidently a considerable student and dabbled in physic and astrology. By his will, dated December 9th, 1558, he leaves to Master William Dixson, priest, "all my divinitie books if he will fetch them, to Doctor Tornear all my physicke bokes one excepted called my black boke & that boke to be restored to Merton Collidge in Oxford w^t an Astrolable of brasse with introductions & xxs. in money & all Potticarye stufe or ware."

In 1541, John Parnell, priest of Wellingborough, leaves to Sir Edward Parnell his "best New Testament in Latyn, a Postilla upon the Gospells & Epistles by the yere,⁴ Legenda Sanctorum, and ij of the old Portuss." He also left to Master Farnworth "the vj bokes of the byble of Hugo de Vienna."⁵

The lights before the images were in some of the smaller churches very numerous. For instance, at Dallington there were thirteen lights: those of St. Hugh, St. Nicholas, St. John Baptist, St. Anne, The Trinity, Our Lady in the Chancel, Our Lady by the Trinity, St. Katharine, St. Thomas, St. Margaret, and All Hallows, in addition to the Sepulchre and Rood

¹ *Pupilla Oculi omnibus presbyteris, precipue Anglicanis summe necessaria*, etc. by John de Burgh, chancellor and professor of divinity at Cambridge, compiled in 1385, was a favourite treatise of the educated English clergy. It treated of the administration of the Seven Sacraments and other ecclesiastical duties. It was printed in 1510.

² *Manipulus Curatorum* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1509. The colophon of the copy in Lambeth library is a sufficient explanation of its use: "*Explicit libellus intitulatus Manipulus Curatorum, pro instructione neophytorum curatorum editus a doctissimo viro domino Guidone de Monte Rocherii.*"

³ *Lombardica Historia que a plerisque Aurea Legenda sanctorum appellatur, sive Passionale sanctorum* was the title of the edition of the Golden Legend printed in 1516. In earlier printed Latin editions, *Lombardica Historia* is usually given as the secondary title. It was the work of Jacobus de Voragine (1230-1298), Archbishop of Genoa.

⁴ *Postilla Guillermi super Epistolas et Evangelia de tempore et Sanctis et pro defunctis* was printed in 1488.

⁵ The text of the Bible, with Cardinal Hugo's comments or postils, was printed in six folio volumes at Nuremberg in 1504.

lights. At Hardington there were six, at Holdenby and Kingsthorpe eight.

Among the more curious or interesting lights may be named that of St. Columba in Collingtree church, taking us back to the old Scottish church that first brought Christianity into Northamptonshire through the preaching of Diuna. St. Cuthbert's light at Bugbrook was also an unusual one for the Midlands. At Towcester there was a joint light to St. Roche and King Henry. This latter of course refers to Henry VI.; though the attempt to have him canonised failed, there is hardly a county in England but had one or more images of him in the churches.

The bequests in kind for the support of different lights or for other more general church purposes are exceedingly varied. One of the most usual is a strike or quarter of barley and other kinds of grain and malt. At Woodford, in 1526, a load of wheat was left to the chapel of Our Lady; whilst at Naseby a load of pease was left to the Rood. Sheep were common bequests for like purposes; we find them differently described as "sherehogs," "ewehoggerells," "whethers," and "lambbes." At Towcester there was left to the brotherhood of Our Lady and St. George "an oxe calfe of the age of xij wekes." There are several instances of the bequest of hives; a parishioner of Naseby in 1529 left all his hives of bees to maintain the Rood and Sepulchre lights. Amongst metal gifts to churches may be named a silver spoon, a pewter dish, and "my biggest brasse Pott."

Now and again the bequests to the various lights were in kind that did not require barter or sale to make the gift available. Thus, Thomas Robins, husbandman, left, in 1531, to the village church of All Saints, Holdenby, two pounds of wax for Our Lady's light, and one pound of wax for each of the lights of the Rood, of All Hallows, the Sepulchre, St. John Baptist, and St. Christopher.

The lights used at funerals and requiem masses are always prominent in pre-Reformation wills. They were known by different names in different parts of the country. Mr. Weaver gives a list of the West Country terms, of which the commonest was *lumen mortuorum*. Mr. Duncan found that in West Kent the usual term was

"herse lights." In Northamptonshire it is almost invariably "the torches," and small money bequests towards the torches occur in a large majority of the wills. They were great serges or yellow tapers made of a mixture of resin and wax, and were kept by the wardens ready for the use of all parishioners who required them. In addition to the simple bequest to the torches, expressions such as these are found, "to the church reeves to make torches," "xx*d.* to help to by a torche," "two torches of 4*s.* apiece."

The Sepulchre light, as has been remarked, receives special mention in the Northamptonshire wills, being very rarely omitted. But in addition to this there are some other specific references to the Easter Sepulchre, which show that in various churches it was more than a temporary erection. There are various bequests at Brigstock toward the repair of the Sepulchre, including the gift of a bullock of two years old. John Tresham, of Rushden, who died in 1420, desired to be buried in the church of St. Peter "by the sepulchre." There are also some references to gilding the Sepulchre before Easter.

With reference to the two lights on the altar, there was a bequest in 1533 of £10 to buy a pair of silver candlesticks, and a smaller sum to the church of Moreton Pinkney for two candlesticks to stand before the high altar.

A "candyllstike" was left to St. Clement's altar at St. Giles, Northampton, in 1528.

In 1531, there was left to the church of Braybrook "a candylstick of v flowers & v tapers of v ponde waxe to be sete before our lady."

The will of a Brington parishioner of the same date leaves "to the Image of our ladye that standeth in the chancell a candlestick of latten." Another will leaves "a candlestick of laten with 5 branches p^r x s" to the same image.

In 1534, there was a bequest of 3*s.* 4*d.* "to the roode lofte (Broughton) to the buying of a candellsticke to set tapers on."

As to the special time for lights, particularly at mass, there are various entries—such as "a pounce of wax candle to burn at high mass" (Kingsthorpe); "a taper of

xv^h to be continuously burning before the Blessed Sacrament at mastyme" (Old).

Henry Mayo, priest of Chipping Warden, desired (in 1516) that "afore thei ymage Petur & Paull ther be burnyng light of Wax and hon thee holy day All Seynts tyme as ytt ys used and on theer worke day at hie mass."

Here it may be mentioned that Chipping Warden was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. These wills confirm in several places Mr. Duncan's statement that the image of the saint or saints to whom the church was dedicated always stood in the chancel.

Occasionally a church possessed a sacred picture, and in those cases there was usually a lamp or light before it. References occur in these wills to "the blessed picture of our Savvour Christ Jesu," in the church of St. Andrew, Barnwell; to the painting of Our Lady of Pity, at Moreton Pinkney; to the painting of St. Michael, at East Haddon; to the painting of St. Lawrence, at Towcester; and to the painting of St. Cuthbert, at Old. Half a sieve of malt was also left to the painting of Our Lady at Barnack.

Some references to "painting" may apply to the re-colouring of a sculptured figure, but it does not seem probable that that was the case with any of the instances just cited.

In addition to the painting of Our Lady of Pity at Moreton Pinkney, there were *Pieta's* or images of the Blessed Virgin with the dead body of Christ in the churches of Brixworth, Bugbrook, Little Houghton, Great Houghton, St. Giles, Northampton, Middleton Cheney, St. Peter's, Northampton, and Rushden. "Our Lady of Comfort" was the usual name for a *Pieta* of some celebrity at the church of the Carmelite Friars of Northampton, to which bequests were sometimes made from distant parts of the county.

Two instances occur of Our Lady of the Nativity. At Bugbrook bequests were made "to the mayntenance of the natyvyte," and to "the light before the nativity in the chancell"; whilst at Long Buckby, Alice Saunders leaves two of her best kerchiefs to "Our Lady of Bethlem."

Sometimes bequests are found for particular figures or images which were obviously intended for their adornment. To "Our Lady of Whittlebury" was left, in 1522, two ells of ell-broad cloth "to be drawne upon wyre before hir." A pair (that is, a set or rosary) of "white aumber bedes" to Our Lady in the chapel at Luffenham. Another bequest left "a pere of coral bedes" to Our Lady of Walsingham and Our Lady of the White Friars, Northampton. A kerchief was left to Our Lady of Pity at St. Peter's, Northampton. There is a variety of information to be gleaned with respect to the decking of images and their various coats or garbs that pertained to the great church of All Saints, Northampton—particularly those that were carried in procession on Corpus Christi Day—but as it has not been found in wills, it would be foreign to the present purpose to quote it.

There was a bequest, in 1534, at Middleton Cheney, "To the iij Kyngs of Collyn (Cologne) oon strike or barley."

The chantry priest of Spratton, in 1520, left to the bedehouse of St. Thomas at Northampton "my iij ymages of Alabaster."

At Pitsford 40*d.* was left to the gilding of the rood loft. In 1516, 20*s.* was bequeathed at Mears Ashby for painting the rood loft, and 6*s.* 8*d.* in the following year "to the paintinge of Mary & John." At Brington, in 1531, 10*s.* was left for the fixing of Mary and John, and other bequests for a new cross (crucifix). In 1537, there were various small bequests at Wellingborough for the painting and gilding of the High Rood. At Bugbrook there were four lights in the rood loft to which bequests were made. At Rushden, in 1533, there was a bequest to the "Hye Roode," and at the same time to the "Grene Rode," whatever that may have been.

With reference to tabernacles, for the enclosing of sculpture, the following have been noticed :—

In 1516, Henry Mays, priest, of Chipping Warden, left 6*s.* 8*d.* "to the makinge of the tabernacle of oure lady of Warden."

Elizabeth Makernes, widow, of Finedon, left 36*s.* 8*d.*, in 1534, "to the making of the tabernacle of Jhesus."

In 1523, there was a bequest at Kettering to the gilding and painting of the tabernacle of Our Lady.

Altars other than the high altar occasionally obtain specific bequests. Henry Dunkley, parson, of Heyford, leaves 2*s.* in 1521 to the repair of St. Botolph's altar in that church. Simon Smith, of Foxton, leaves in the same year 12*d.* to the gilding of the altar of St. Nicholas in Foxton Chapel. A Courteenhall bequest leaves "xs. towards buying of a tabul (reredos) to sent Johns aulter."

There are a few references to banners. There was a special banner of St. Martin at St. Sepulchre, Northampton; a bequest of 5*s.* was made to the church of Brington "to bye a crosse banner clothe"; 8*s.* was bequeathed to Blatherwick church, in 1553, "to bye one banner clothe wth the picture of St. George." As a proof of there being several banners in ordinary county churches, it may be mentioned that a widow woman of Spratton, in 1544, left money to purchase "a banner clothe yt shalbe better than any now in the Church." There are also bequests towards banners for the churches of Wellingborough and Bugbrook.

The gilds, fraternities, or brotherhoods that we have noticed in these Northamptonshire wills *temp.* Henry VIII. are as follows :—

Benefield	...	...	...	St. John's.
Brixworth	...	...	...	St. Boniface.
"	...	...	...	Holy Trinity.
Cottesbrook	...	...	...	Our Lady.
Cranford	...	...	...	Our Lady.
"	...	...	...	St. Catharine.
Dallington	...	...	...	Our Lady.
"	...	...	...	The Rood.
Daventry	...	...	...	Holy Trinity.
Finedon...	...	...	...	Our Lady.
"	...	...	...	The Sepulchre.
"	...	...	...	St. John's.
Kettering	...	...	...	Our Lady.
"	...	...	...	Sepulchre.
"	...	...	...	St. John Baptist.
Mears Ashby	...	...	...	St. Margaret.
"	...	...	...	Holy Trinity.
"	...	...	...	The Sepulchre.
Moreton Pinkney	...	...	...	The Rood.

All Saints, Northampton	...	Our Lady.
"	"	Holy Trinity.
"	"	Corpus Christi.
"	"	St. John Baptist.
"	"	St. George.
"	"	The Holy Rood.
"	"	St. Catharine.
St. Gregory	"	The Holy Rood in the Wall.
St. Giles	"	St. Clement's.
"	"	Holy Cross.
Oundle	...	Our Lady.
Pytchley	...	Our Lady of Pity.
"	...	St. Nicholas.
Raunds	...	The Resurrection.
Rushden	...	Our Lady and St. Catharine.
Towcester	...	Our Lady and St. George.
Wellingborough	...	Our Lady.
"	...	St. Catharine.
"	...	Corpus Christi.
"	...	The Rood.
"	...	The Sepulchre.
"	...	Mass of Jesus.
Wollaston	...	The Sepulchre.

The custom sometimes prevailed of a dying person leaving money to a gild in order to become a posthumous member, and thus secure their prayers. A very curious instance of this occurs in the will of Widow Agnes Doles, of Oundle, in 1514, wherein she leaves a sufficient sum to the gild of Our Lady to make her two husbands and herself "brethern and systour of the seid gyld."

At Raunds there was a bequest of 6s. 8d. to the gild of the Resurrection for a dinner.

A Peterborough widow leaves a bequest to the Motherless Children of St. Catharine of Lincoln.

Roger Alyn, in 1521, leaves 10s. "to the byldynge of Seint John Gelde in the church" of Benefield, which seems to have reference to the screens or parcloes forming the gild chapel.

A matter that has caused some surprise in going through these wills is the number of instances of legacies to the religious individually and not collectively. Such gifts cannot be held to accord with the true interpretation of the vow of poverty in the better monastic days, but sufficed, we suppose, to afford a small supply of "pocket money" for particular needs. These bequests

could not, of course, reach the brethren or sisters save through their superior's hands. Bequests to each of the sisters or nuns of the house of St. John Baptist, Rothwell, are not infrequent, and it is difficult to conjecture how these good ladies could have spent their small legacies in any way save for the community.¹ The most curious-looking bequest to this community is one of 1521: "To the Convent off Nunnys a Browne Kowe." Master John Sokkes, priest, of Hardingston, left 13*s.* 4*d.*, in 1527, "To every lady in delaprey." This was the Cluniac convent of De la Pre in Hardingston parish. There are several instances of bequests not only to the Cistercian abbot of Pipewell, but to each one of his monks. The abbot of the Austin house of St. James, Northampton, had left him by the vicar of Duston in 1519, 20*d.* and at the same time "every of hys brothern 12^d" and every novice 2*d.*

In 1532 the same abbot received 2*s.* and every canon, being a priest, 1*s.* After a like manner the Premonstratensian abbot of Sulby and each of his canons were remembered in several wills. No order seems to have been exempt from these individual gifts; a priest in the north of the county, remembering the double Gilbertine house of Sempringham, left 20*s.* to be divided equally among the canons, and another 20*s.* equally among the strictly cloistered nuns. Nor were the friars forgotten. The prior of the Black Friars, Northampton, received by will a goblet of silver in 1536. Ten years earlier a well-disposed Northampton lady leaves a pair of sheets to the sub-prior of the Austin Friars and single sheets and a silver spoon to other friars, whilst the cook of the same house became the fortunate possessor of a feather bed.

Sir Richard Knightley, of Fawsley, from whose will of 1528 we have already quoted, is one of those late cases which tends to disprove the popular notion that founders of chantries were usually entirely selfish in their bequests, and that the minister was nothing more than a mass priest. In addition to providing for elaborate masses and trentals at the time of his decease, he provides

¹ Letters are extant of English ladies of Roman Catholic families, who had taken the veil in continental nunneries,

writing to their relatives last century and asking for a little pocket money to buy snuff and warm gloves

for "a secular preste to synge & praye for my soule in the parish church of Fawstey for terme of xx^{ty} yeares next after my departure, & to have yearely for his wages & salarye x markes, & that the sayd preste shall during the said tyme teach children their playn Song, after the nomber & rate as my executors shall thinke mete & convenyent, without anythinge taken of the sayd children or of ther frendes for ther techinge."

A more striking instance of general teaching being a part of the function of a chantry priest of an old foundation occurs in the will of "Sir Thomas Hertwell, of Spratton, clerk." By his will of 1520 he leaves "to every Scolar of my paryshe that can syng iiij d. & that cannot ij d., & to every scolar that I have else i d., & that have ben my scolars beyng at my buryal, a peny, & as moche at the moneth day to every scolar of myne that are present, and to such as have ben my scolars, beyng then yn holy orders, present at my buryall, xij d."

Another example of the same character is to be found in the will of John Bloxam (June 20th, 1518), priest of the chantry of B.V.M. in the church of Great Addington. One clause of this interesting will runs as follows: "I will that any priest who has been my scholar in time past to have, that he may pray for me, £10, or their value in books."

A name for Rogation Week that is seldom met with, and not quite easy of explanation, is Cross Week. "Sir John Jacson," vicar of Hambledon (Rutland), left in 1519 "To the procession in Cross week a Ewe & a Lamb." A Harleston will of 1558 leaves "every Crosse Monday yearly, 8^d. to be dronken amonge the poor." Thomas Rowell, of Cottingham, by will of 1559, left bread and drink on Cross Monday, at the discretion of the churchwardens, "so long as the worlde endurethe," the cost to be defrayed from the rent of the house in which he then dwelt.

It seems to have been the custom before the Reformation, as we well know it was afterwards, for the churchwardens to provide refreshment for those who made the often long perambulation of the parish bounds at this season. John Worthy, of Whissenden (Rutland), left, in

1537, a cow to the churchwardens, that they might evermore give the parish "bred & drinke in the Mondaye in the Rogation weke, for to pray for me and my frends." A cow was also left to the wardens of Long Buckby "to make a drynkyng w^t in the processyon weeke."

Only one reference has been found to a church ale, a testator of Norton by Daventry leaving a strike of malt for the church ale in "Whitson Weke."

Amongst various entries, difficult to classify, the following may be noted :—

In 1521 a lectern of latten was left to the church of Old. Two shillings were left in 1534 towards the making of a church clock for Towcester. Ten shillings were left to the church of Spratton in 1510, by Thomas Powell, the vicar, to buy "a par of Sensors."

In 1522, 3s. 4d. was left towards a new pair of organs for the church of Wellingborough.

Most remarkable is the 1522 bequest in a will of St. Giles, Northampton, wherein two shillings are left "to the repair of the vise of the Holy Gost." The word "vise" means a mask or representation. Probably it here refers to the model of a dove used at Whitsuntide.

There are various bequests to hermits, mention being made of the one on St. Thomas's Bridge, Northampton, of St. James's Chapel, Rushden (who kept a causeway in repair), of St. Gregory, of St. Austin, and of Haddon, the last of whom must have been a priest, for 10s. is left him to sing a trental. There is also a bequest to the anchorite or recluse at Northampton to say five masses of the Five Wounds—which is a further proof that an ankerhold sometimes contained an altar.

The wills of the parish priests usually provide that they shall be buried in the chancel of their church. John Hay, vicar of Kilsby, requests (1521) that he may be interred "afore my stawle," two other incumbents before their desks, and one beneath the lamp in the centre of the chancel. This part of the church was rarely used for lay burial; but we suppose John Nichols, of Islip, succeeded in his desire in 1531, for he left a black bullock to the parson on the express understanding that he was to lie within the chancel. Henry Godwin, of Irchester, expressed an exactly opposite and far humbler

wish in his will, of 1526, wherein he desired that his body might be buried in the parish church "next unto the holy water stoke as may be so the people may tredde and come over my grave and sepulture."

It is generally supposed that the egotistic custom of leaving money for a funeral sermon or sermons came in at the Reformation, but Phylippe Mechyll, of Flore, widow, by will of 1527, after providing for a trental of masses, left 6*s.* 8*d.* to "a clarke beyng graduatte to saye a Sermon in the said church of Flower the day of my said buryall." Robert Gun, of Raunds, in 1558, instructed his executors to provide three preachers for three sermons, at a charge of 5*s.* each.

Jane Brafield, of Northampton, in 1522, desires to have "y^e pall of y^e blacke frears upon my herse & y^m to have xxd for it." A Rothwell will provides for "ij blake clothis with white crosses on my grave & on my wyvis, & ij serges to burn at all the masses said & all masses at hi aultar for a yeaere." An All Saints, Northampton, will requests that six torches may burn at the burial and at month's mind, and that immediately after they be divided among the five chief fraternities of the church.

A general distribution of small benefactions to the parishioners on the day of the funeral was not unusual, without ordering the recipients to be present. There are several cases of 1*d.* and 2*d.*, and in one instance as much as 4*d.* being given to each householder. A Naseby testator left a cheese for every householder, the best ones to go to the poorest. The poor of Old had a load of wood distributed to them on the funeral day of a fellow parishioner.

As to provision made for funeral processions, it must suffice to quote two examples. John Naylor, of Rothwell, provided, in 1522, that "my wyfe bring me honestlye to the Chirche with xij pore folks baryng in thyr hands one taper of waxe beyng of half a li apece." Anne Shefford, of all Saints, Northampton, requested, in 1542, that "all the prestes of the College with all the clarkes of the s^a parish shall see me to the Church & they to have for their labour after the order of the Church."

James Ball, of Wellingborough, in 1526, left 16*d.* to the eight ringers to ring at his burial.

Edward Martin, parson, of Old, added a remarkable codicil to his will, in 1544, appended as he states by his own hand. Therein he provides that there were to be brewed against his burial four quarters of malt; and three bullocks, six sheep, three calves, six pigs, and "hens & capons as nede shalbe" were to be prepared for the same, together with three quarters of "bred corne, that all comers might be rejoiced."