

HISTORY
OF
COTTISFORD, HARDWICK
AND
TUSMORE.

COMPILED BY

J. C. BLOMFIELD, M.A.,

Rector of Launton and Rural Dean.

COMMUNITY LIBRARY
LENDING LIBRARY
No. T.L. no. 86

"It is a degradation to man to be reduced to the life of the present; and never will he cast forth his hopes, and his views, and his efforts towards the future with due effect and energy, unless at the same time he prizes and holds fondly clasped to his heart the recollections of the past."—*Mr. Gladstone's Speech at the Restoration of the Market Cross, Edinburgh, Nov. 23rd, 1885.*

BRISTOL:

J. W. ARKOWSMITH, PRINTER, QUAY STREET.

TO

The Earl of Effingham,

THROUGH WHOSE LIBERAL AID THESE PAGES ARE PUBLISHED,

AND WHOSE NAME MUST EVER LIVE

IN REMEMBRANCE

AMONGST THE BENEFACTORS OF THE PARISHES,

OF WHICH THEY TELL,

THE WRITER

GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATES THEM.

GENERAL and Local History differ, in that the one is for the most part a record of courts, camps, and councils, of the deeds of sovereigns, statesmen, warriors, and great writers, who have each played an important part in the days in which they lived; and the other is a humbler record, descending to the ordinary life of the common people, especially of those who lived in the country. Most persons are more or less familiar with the former, but not so many are acquainted with the ways and doings of those millions of persons who tilled the fields, produced the food, built the houses, moulded the characters, paid the taxes, administered government, and carried on in their respective stations the varied business of civilized nations, through all the ages in which the great deeds of our national heroes were done. The history of the chief town of this Deanery having been given, the pages which follow must record what has been gleaned of its separate villages.

The three whose names stand at the head of this division form a distinct group, lying half a mile distant from each other, Tusmore forming the apex, Cottisford and Hardwick the angles, of an equilateral triangle, on the edge of the county as it borders on Northamptonshire. They have been in the past, as they are in the present, closely connected with each other, not only by contiguity of position, but by the daily intercourse of their inhabitants in social life. Their joint population amounts only to 327 persons, varying in rank from a peer to a peasant, but each has a separate history of its own; thus affording another proof of the oft-repeated remark, that every parish, however small, has something to contribute towards building up a general and complete account of the English people.¹

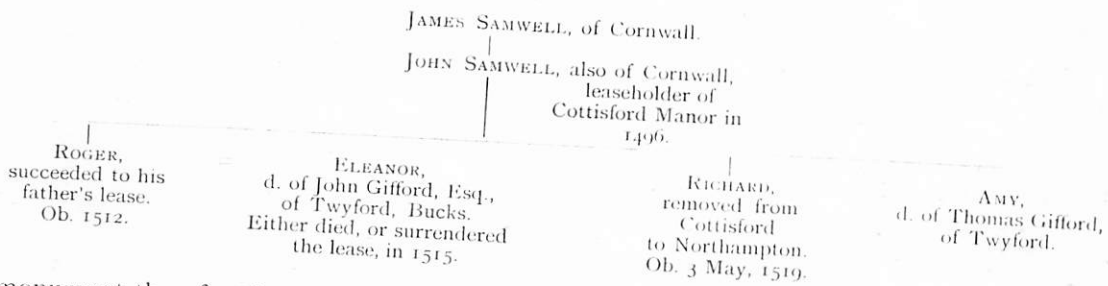
¹ "The study of local history is really the best complement and corrective of ordinary history books, in which we learn little of the existence of the people. Mr. Green made a gallant and valuable attempt to tell the story of the English people, but at most he could only add some picturesque chapters to the usual narrative of battles, Parliaments,

“sieges, and laws. Anybody who has a turn for the subject, and who is fortunate enough to live out of London, can best learn the history of the English people in the bricks, and stones, and records of his own town.”—*Daily News*, May 12, 1887.

ADDENDA.

Page 21. Mr. Hart here mentioned left by will a bequest of £10, to be divided among the poor of Cottisford.

Page 25. Since writing the note on this page, it has been ascertained that the coat of arms on one of the shields—the man's—belongs to the family of Samwell. Two members of this family leased the Eton College estate through forty-five years:



The monument therefore is probably that of John, the first resident at Cottisford, and the head of a large family.

See Burke's Extinct Baronetage, and Baker's History of Northamptonshire, vol. I., p. 224.

COTEFORD, COTESFORD, COTTISFORD.

A LITTLE stream rises in the north part of this district, and becomes a tributary of the river Ouse. A hardway, or fordable place in this stream, was known to the original British inhabitants, and to mark it a hut or cottage was early built upon its bank. This spot was thenceforth distinguished as *Cole-ford* or *Cotes-ford*, the cot or cot's-ford, and the stream as *Cro-well*, the hut or hovel stream.¹

Two or three centuries passed before the English settlers paid any attention to the waste land around the Coteford. At some time, probably in the VIIIth or IXth centuries, this was gradually broken up and cultivated, and a little village formed on the west bank of the stream, near the spot where the solitary hut of the keeper of the ford had long stood.

Among the followers of William the Conqueror was Hugh, eldest son of Robert de Grantmesnil,² a Norman baron, who distinguished himself at the battle of Senlac (Hastings), and was placed in the government of England during the Conqueror's visits to Normandy. For these services he was rewarded by a large share of the spoil of the conquered land. Among the manors given to him in Oxon, were Charlton-on-Otmoor and Cotesford.

When the Normans came over to the conquest of England, a great religious movement was going on in the Church of their own country. Countless monasteries were being then founded, for a Norman noble thought that his estate lacked its chief ornament if he failed to plant a colony of monks in some corner of his possessions. Among the monasteries of that time, two stand out as especially connected with the history of England—the Abbeys of St. Evroul and Bec.

St. Evroul's Abbey, founded in the VIth century, on a lonely spot close by the forest of Ouche, had fallen into ruin four centuries after its foundation. An effort was then made to restore it, and among its benefactors was Géroy, lord of Escalfoy, a man of great piety and valour. He had a son William, who succeeded him, and a daughter Hadwisa, who had married Robert de Grantmesnil. The sons of the latter, Hugh and Robert, were at this time purposing to found a monastery, but instead of carrying out this purpose, they were persuaded by their uncle to join with him in restoring to its former splendour the fallen house of St. Evroul. Uncle and nephews joined their energies and their purses, and a new St. Evroul's Abbey arose.³ Hugh de Grantmesnil subsequently gave to this house some of the property which he held in England, among which were the manor and village of Charlton-on-Otmoor, and "the church of Cotesford, with the tithes and "one hide of land."⁴

¹ Early History of Deanery of Bicester, p. 53.

² Freeman's Norman Conquest, vol. II, chap. viii., p. 199.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 214—234.

⁴ These gifts rest on the authority of the charter of William I. in 1081, which confirmed to the monastery of St.

Evroul the lands and tithes in England given to that house by the Norman barons, and is cited by the chronicler Ordericus Vitalis, who was a monk of St. Evroul's. See extracts from Ordericus, translated, with notes, by T. Forester, M.A., vol. II., pp. 255, 256.

The second abbey, built in a secluded valley, and named from a back or bye stream, which flowed through it, called in the old Teutonic speech of the Normans a "bec," became the most renowned seat of learning, and the most famous of Norman religious houses. Among the many great men whom the Abbey of Bec sent forth, it gave three to this country to occupy the throne of St. Augustine at Canterbury: Archbishops Lanfranc (1070--89), Anselm (1093--1109), and Theobald (1139--61).¹ England acknowledged with gratitude its indebtedness to this foreign abbey, and many pious persons were moved to give to it of their lands in this country.

Hugh de Grantmesnil had married Adeliza of Beaumont, on the Dive, in Normandy. She appears to have held in her own name, after her husband's death, several estates in England,² and among these the manor and village of Cotesford.³ The latter she gave to the Abbey of Bec. Her sister Rohais, wife of Robert de Courci, another Norman warrior, also possessed a small estate in Cotesford, and this she also gave to the same abbey. Thus the village, the church, and the chief estate of Cotesford had passed into the possession of these two foreign abbeys before the taking of the Domesday Survey (1086). They therefore find no mention there.

These foreign masters must have been very distasteful to the residents of an English village. It was grievous enough in the days following the Conquest to have Normans resident in England, occupying the confiscated estates of the former English owners, but it was a worse grievance to be subjected to foreigners who lived beyond the sea, and seldom, if ever, set foot within their estates in this country. After a short interval the Abbey of St. Evroul surrendered to the Abbey of Bec all its land and rights in Cotesford, whereby the latter became sole possessor of the manor and the advowson of the parish church.

The Hundred Rolls of Edward I. give a minute account of the village, of the owners and occupiers of the land, of their rank and degree, of the amount of their tenures, and of the rents and services each rendered, two centuries after the Abbey of Bec had possessed it.

"COTEFORD.

"The Abbot of Bec holds the manor of Coteford with the whole village of the gift of Alice "de Diverylle,⁴ and that Alice held it of old possession, and she gave the aforesaid manor with "the aforesaid village, and two carucates of land in demesne in pure and perpetual alms. And he "holds at Cotes iij virgates of land, and he does not owe suit to the county, nor to the hundred.

"VILLEINS.

"Guy, Robert's son, holds of the same Abbot one virgate of land for vjs yearly. He will "work, pay tallage, and redeem his sons at the will of the lord. Roger Faber holds of the same "j. virgate of land in the same way. John le Nyweman holds, &c.; Emmanuel Roberts, of "Crowelton, &c.; Nicholas, Herbert's son, &c.; John Moda, &c.; William, Philipp's son, &c. "William de Bledalewe, &c.; William, Roger's son, &c.; Richard, Hugh's son, &c.; Hugh de "Stretford, &c.; John Belewe, &c.; William Norte, &c.

¹ Freeman's Norman Conquest, vol. II., chap. viii.

Hook's Lives of the Archbishops, vol. II., pp. 83, 87.

² Part of the lands which had belonged to Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, &c.

³ Mr. Forester, in his note on Ordericus Vitalis, says of Cotesford, that the manor was granted to Ralph, Count d'Ivry and de Bayeux, who was brother to John d'Avranches (Arch-

bishop of Rouen 1067); and he speaks of Adeline de Grantmesnil as the wife of Roger d'Ivry; and of Cotesford being in the possession of Ralph d'Ivry, Hugh de Grantmesnil's son in law, when Domesday Book was compiled. These are palpable mistakes.

⁴ A corruption of Adeliza (Alice) sur Dive.

“ Richard ate Ford holds of the same half a virgate of land of the same by iij^s. yearly. He will work, pay tallage, and redeem his sons at the will of the lord. Walter Wydene holds half a virgate, &c.

“ COTTAGERS.

“ John Belewe holds of the same one cotlond by ij^s. yearly. He will work, pay tallage, and redeem his sons at the will of the lord.

“ FREEHOLDERS.

“ John White holds of the same Abbot iij. virgates of land, and he will hold it twice at his lord's court, twice yearly for all services.

“ John, Hugh's son, holds of the same ij. virgates of land by viij^s, and pays suit at his lord's court for all services.

“ Alice de Bello Campo¹ holds of Richard le Poide j. virgate of land by iij^d. yearly, and he is bound to do suit at the Hundred of Poch every three weeks, and at two (courts) of the County of Oxford yearly.

“ Ralph le Bar holds of the same one hyde of land by one mark yearly, and j^d. on the lord's birthday, and suit of the Hundred of Poch every three weeks and of the County twice a year. And the same Abbot holds of the same Ralph half a virgate of land.

“ Alice, daughter of the said Ralph, holds of the same Ralph one messuage with iij. acres free by j^d. yearly for all services.”

From the mention of “Cotes” in this return, as a place distinct from the village, it appears that some dwelling-houses had thus early been erected, east of the stream, on the side of the ford opposite the village. A single house was still standing close to the latter, and the owners of, or residents on, the land beyond it were designated “de Cotes,” or de Cotefelde.

The Abbey of Bec managed their estate through their Reeve, or Bailiff, resident in the manor-house, by whom they were kept in full cognizance of all matters relating to their dependants.

(Translation.)

“ Certifying about the
“ Marriage of
“ Agn. de Chaundeler.

“ To the venerable and discreet men Justiciaries of our
“ Lord Edward, by the grace of God illustrious King of
“ England, at Westminster, Oliver, Bishop of Lincoln
“ aforesaid, (sends) greeting, and reverence, and honour.

“ We received a Brief of the Lord the King aforesaid in this form, &c.: ‘ Know ye that when
“ ‘ Ralph de Chaundeler and Agnes his wife in our Court before our Justiciaries at Westminster
“ ‘ petitioned against the Abbot of Bec Herlewyn, for the third part of a croft, 64 acres of land,
“ ‘ and 3 acres of meadow, with appurtenances, in Cottesford, as the dowry of this Agnes, the same
“ ‘ Abbot came to the same our Court, and objected to the same Ralph and Agnes that she ought
“ ‘ not to have dowry thereof, because the same Agnes was never joined in lawful marriage to
“ ‘ Roger de Cotes, the first man of this Agnes; and because the cognizance of this cause belongs
“ ‘ to a Church Court, We command you that, having called together before you the persons to be
“ ‘ called, you diligently enquire into the truth of the matter herein; and that you make known to

¹ Lady Alice Beauchamp, owner of the adjoining manor of Hardwick, and resident there.

“our Justiciaries at Westminster by your letters patent what you shall have enquired therein.—
 “T. J. de Metingham, at Westminster, the XVIIIth day of May, in the XXIIId year of the King
 “aforesaid.”

“To your discretion therefore by the tenor of the presents we signify, that, having called
 “the persons to be called, the truth of the matter in the premises has been diligently enquired
 “into, and we find that formerly Roger de Cotes aforesaid, long ago, in the face of the Church,
 “lawfully took to wife Agnes, now the wife of Ralph de Chaundeler, and through many years
 “afterwards publicly lived with the same as his wife. In testimony whereof we send to you these
 “our letters patent. Fare ye well. Given at Lydington, iiij. Ides of April in A.D. MCCXCV.”

Among the gifts bestowed on the Abbey of Bec, were the manors and churches of Great
 and Little Okeburn, in Wiltshire, which were granted in 1149 by Maud of Wallingford, the
 daughter and heiress of Robert of Oily. At the former of these places the Abbey established a
 convent of Benedictine monks, and then made over for its maintenance some of their property in
 England. Among the property thus transferred was the Manor of Cotesford:—

“The Prior of Okeburn has in Cotesford in lands, meadows, a mill, rents	£	s.	d.
“and a court	...	...	...
“The same has in the same place, in fruits, flocks, and cattle	...	...	...
	10	—	—
	8	14	4” ¹

A further insight into the village life at the end of the XIIIth century is here afforded.
 Water-power had been applied to the grinding of corn, and a mill built upon the stream had
 superseded the old hand-mills, and was yielding rent. Orchards had been planted, and were
 bearing fruit. Some grassland had been enclosed for haymaking. Stock of various kinds, and
 of considerable value, were kept. The Court Baron brought in some fines and perquisites. The
 money value of the estate was increased. This advance was continuing fifty years later, for
 whereas in most parishes the valuation of the Ninths in 1341 was the same, or even below, that of
 Pope Nicholas's Taxation, at Cotesford, as also in the neighbouring parishes of Hardwick, Hethe,
 and Ardeley, it was considerably raised.

“COTESFORD.

“The parish church of the same, with all its portions, was taxed at Liijs. iiij^d., of which the
 “ninth lamb, fleece, and sheaf are assessed at Lxs., as appears by an inquisition, &c. There are
 “no persons possessing chattels, nor merchants.”²

After the severance of Normandy from the British Crown, the alien Priories, which drew
 their inmates from, and sent back their surplus revenues to the Continent, were viewed with great
 dislike by the English people, always jealous of foreigners. Hence, whenever war broke out
 between England and France, a clamour arose for their suppression. During the reign of
 Edward I., in 1285; again, in that of his son; thirdly, in that of Edward III., in 1387; and
 fourthly, in that of Richard II., in 1394, the foreign monks were driven from their houses and their
 possessions in England seized by the King, and only when peace with France was restored were
 they allowed to have their own again. The inhabitants of Cotesford, therefore, felt in an especial
 manner the troubles of those times, in the state of unsettledness in which they held their land.
 When Henry V. went to war with France, the cry against the alien Priories became loud and

¹ Pope Nicholas's Taxation, 1292 A.D.

² Valuation of the Ninths.

universal; and an Act of Parliament was passed for their final suppression in 1414. Cotesford Manor, after having been the property of the Abbey of Bec for three centuries and a half, was then seized by the King. Soon afterwards it was given to John, Duke of Bedford, and at his death, in 1435, it was held for a short time by Humphrey, Earl of Stafford, until by a charter dated 1442, and confirmed in 1444, King Henry VI. gave it to the College which he had recently founded at Eton.¹

Some estates, called Free tenures, were early established at Cotesford, the owners of which purchased the liberty to give up or transfer their holdings, and to quit the manor at pleasure, being subject to no control by the manorial lord.

The first known of these freeholders were an English family of long descent, dating from the days when our forefathers derived their surnames from some personal characteristic. The name of Blund, or White, appears early here, and at Tusmore. Among the grantors of land to the Abbey of Bec in the XIIIth century are Robert Blund (Albus) de Cottisford, Wido de Cottisford, son of Robert Blond de Cottisford (A.D. 1218), Roger, son of Guido Blund de Cottesford, Thomas, son of Walter de Cottesford, Roger, son of Joce de Cotes, Ralph de Cotes, and Ralph, son of William le Bar.²

Grant by Robert le Blunt (Albus) of Codesford, to Bartholomew, his nephew, of a virgate of land at Codesford, which was granted to Agnes, sister of the grantor and mother of Bartholomew, in free marriage. Witnesses:—Ralph Porcellus, Thomas de Ocheburn, William, the son of Gregory, William Blunt (Albo), William, the son of Robert Blunt (Albo), and Guy, his brother, Ralph Blunt (Albo) of Codesford, Aldwin, the son of Roger, Roger, the son of Bartholomew, Robert, son of William de Hethe. Fine seal attached; device, an eagle.

In 1249 one of these gave some land to Biddlesden Abbey, in Bucks. "In Codesford, Oxon, Roger White (Albus) granted 7 acres of land, and grass in his pastures and commons for six score sheep; a benefaction confirmed by charter from Matilda, widow of Wydone de Codesford, upon a fine of 3s. and 2 bushels of grain."³

Another of the same name has been mentioned among the freeholders in the Hundred Rolls of 1272; and another appears still later, Aluris Blondi, or Blund, a donor of land to Eton College.

Other chief freeholders were the family of Le Bar, who gave their name to their residence, Bar's Place.

Grant by William, Abbot of Bittlesden, and the Convent of that place, to the Abbot and Convent of Bec, of Ralph le Bar of Cottisford, with the whole tenement, wards, rents, relief, and escheats, for the sum of thirteen and a half marks. Witnesses:—Roger de Cotesford, Wydo de Tursmere, Alan of the same, John, the son of Hugh de Cottisford, Roger de Cotes, Robert of the same; Henry Brun, clerk. Fine abbatial seal attached. (Date about A.D. 1197.)

In 1218 William le Bar leased to Biddlesden Abbey, for a term of 20 years, all his houses in

¹ Eton College, under the style of "The College of the Blessed Marie of Eton beside Wyndesore," was founded by Henry VI. in 1441, the charter of gift being confirmed by Act of Parliament on May 4th in that year.

² Deeds referring to Cottisford at Eton College, preserved in the Library, drawer c. 14. See abstract of them in the Historical MSS. Commission Report IX., Appendix I., p. 357.

³ Fines, Oxon. 33 Henry III.

Codesford, with a dovecote, fishpond, and other premises, for a fine of 60s., and an annual rent of 3s.; and by a second lease he granted for the same length of time, and at a yearly rent of half a mark, a farmyard, and rights of pasturage in Codesford for twelve score sheep, and covenanted to provide the stalls with straw for litter, and to thatch the sheepfold as often as was necessary.

Release by Nicholas, Abbot of St. Pierre sur Dive, and the Convent of that place, to the Abbot of Bittlesden and the Convent of that place, of the homage and service of William le Bar of Codesford. Sept. 1237. Fine conventual seal attached.

Another family of pre-eminence enough to be early distinguished by the name of the place where they resided, de Cotes, rose to a position of more than local importance. John de Cotelde was owner of a fee in Tusmore in 1272, and was of such repute in this neighbourhood as to be called in to witness some surrenders of land in Burcester in 1275 and 1295.¹ One of this family was instituted to the Rectory of Cotesford in 1317, and was probably the same person as was elected Prior of Burcester Convent in 1331. Another descendant was honoured with knighthood, Sir Roger de Cotesford, who possessed the ancestral estate in the Cotelde, and purchased the whole of the adjoining hamlet of Turesmere, and large estates at Blechingdon and Little Haseley, in this county.²

Arms. Arg. two bars gu. within a bordure engrailed Sa.³

Before the order of baronets was created by King James I., the rank of knight conveyed an importance very different from what we attach to it in the present day. Sir Roger de Cotesford served the office of High Sheriff of Oxfordshire on three different occasions, in 1363—65, and 1369.

"An housekoler, and that a great, was he,
"Sir Julian he was in his countrie,
"His table dormant in his hall alway
"Stood ready covered all the long day.
"At sessions was he lord and sire,
"Full oftymes was he knight of the shire,
"A sheriff had he been, and a countor;⁴
"Was nowhere such a worthy vavasor."⁵

CHAUCER.

He was for many years resident in the manor house of his estate, on the east bank of the old ford, but it is probable that after the purchase of Tusmore he removed thither. Parts of his house still remain, and are among the earliest specimens of the domestic architecture of the period extant in this district. The following account is given in "Hudson Turner's Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages," vol. I., p. 161:

"The original plan of the manor house of Cottisford, as far as it can now be made out, was a parallelogram, with two, or probably three, square projections at the back. The ground floor consists of two large rooms, one of which to the N. is the kitchen, and the other the hall, or common living room. The two projections contain the cellar and larder at present, though the one to the N.W. was probably originally used for a different purpose. These are lighted by small,

¹ Kennett's P. A. In these he is called John de Cotesford.

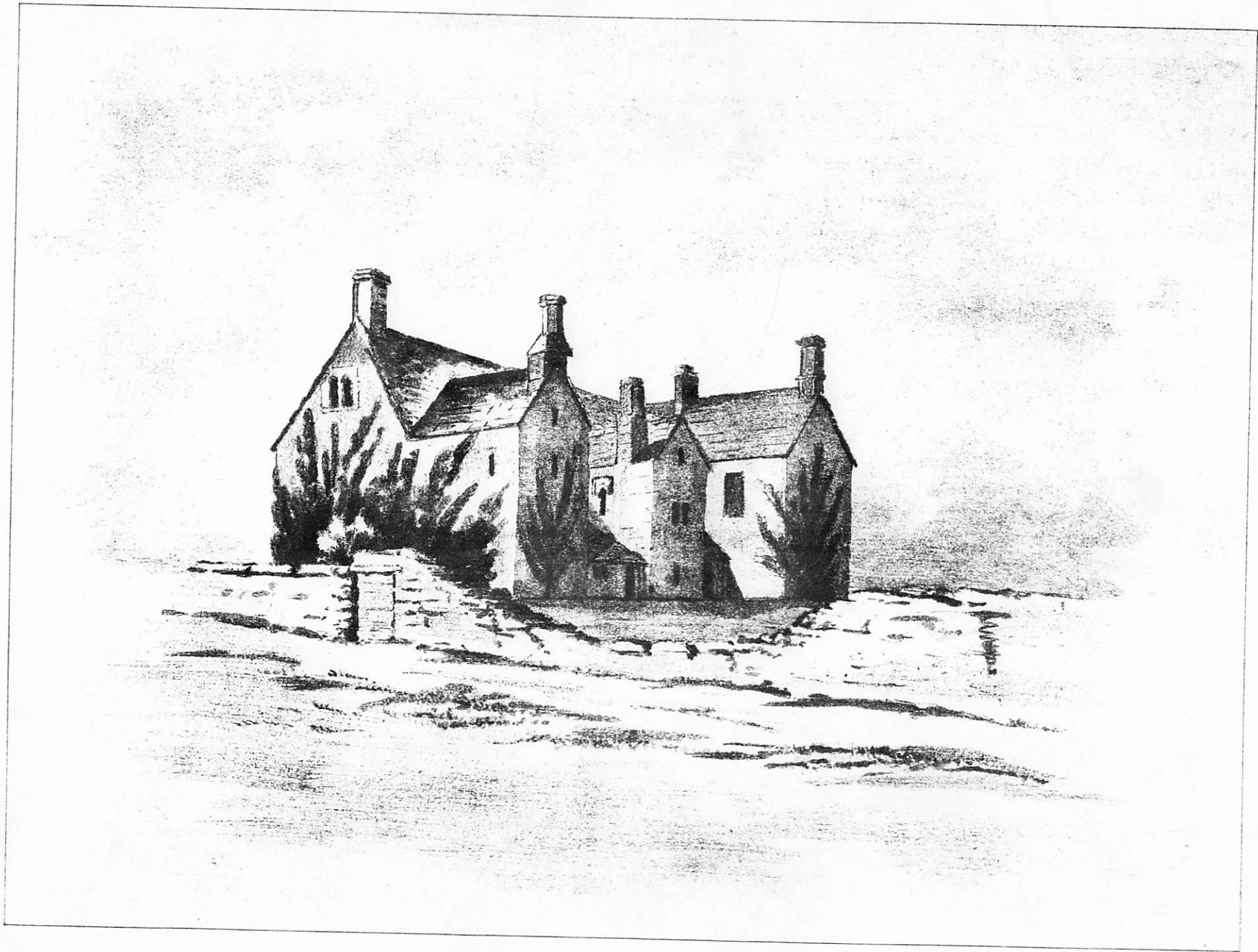
² An^o. MCCCXLIX. 23, 24 Edw. III.

³ Nigh which time the King granted to Roger de Cotesford "free warren in all his demesn lands in Blechesdon and Little Haseey, Com. Oxon." Kennett's P. A.

⁴ Mentioned by A. Wood as seen in a window in Blechingdon Church, with the superscription "Rog^r. de Cotesford miles 1450."

⁵ Serjeants-at-law were formerly called Countors.

⁶ One who was in dignity next to a Baron.



COTTISFORD OLD MANOR HOUSE.

W. & A. PHOTO. SPRAU & CO. LONDON

"narrow, square-headed windows, which are evidently original. In the hall is a large open fire-
 "place, with a projecting hood. In the kitchen are two fireplaces, and the oven: the general
 "thickness of the walls is 2 feet 6 inches. At the S. end an addition, containing the parlour, has
 "been added in comparatively modern times. The first floor presents nothing remarkable, but a
 "small closet about 6 feet square in the N.W. projection, and which adjoins one of the bedrooms.
 "In this there is a small window, looking to the N., and under it a kind of projecting bench, in
 "which is fixed a stone drain, 1 foot 8 inches in length by 10 inches deep, and which has evidently
 "been intended for pouring away refuse water, &c. The outside of the wall is here covered with
 "ivy, so that the external part of the drain cannot be seen. From the door of this closet a small
 "wooden staircase leads into the attics, which are in the roof. This is very strong and massive,
 "with tie-beams and queen posts, and appears to be of the date of the XVIth or XVIIth century,
 "at which time many important alterations were made in the house. In the northernmost of the
 "attics is the window shewn in the plate, which has had internal shutters and bolts. The principal
 "stairs are at the S.E. angle of the building, and lead out of the hall. Externally, the only parts
 "which have preserved their original character are the N. end and back, the front having been
 "almost entirely altered, only one of the small square windows before mentioned remaining to
 "show that the wall itself is original. The whole of the windows of the front, including those in
 "the attic, appear to have been inserted at the end of the XVIth or beginning of the XVIIth
 "century. They are large, with wooden mullions and transoms. The front and ends were at that
 "time also plastered, and ornamented with pargetting work. The chief objects of interest on the
 "exterior are the attic window on the N. end, before mentioned, and the chimney on the N.W.
 "projection. The window appears to be of transition work of the end of the XIIth or beginning of
 "the XIIIth century, and consists of two round-headed lights, divided by a shaft. The capital is
 "square on the abacus, but cut down below to the shape of the shaft (which is octagonal), and
 "appears to have been ornamented at the angles with plain broad foliage. This window, as before
 "mentioned, had internal shutters and bolts. The date here given seems to be that of the older
 "parts of the building, but the chimney just mentioned seems to be of the XIVth century. It is
 "octagonal, standing on a square base, and is erected with battlements; the flue belonging to it is
 "carried down the interior of the wall into one of the lower stories, but the fireplace being destroyed,
 "it is not possible now to say which. On the first floor of the middle projection is a small window
 "of the XVth century date, and now blocked up. There is no appearance of a chapel having been
 "attached to the house, but the near proximity of the parish church would render that appendage
 "unnecessary."

A tradesman taking his surname from this village, and claiming connection with the family
 at Bletchingdon, settled at Launton early in the XVth century, and was the first of a family who
 through three centuries occupied a position of importance there.

ETON COLLEGE ESTATE.

Not long before Eton College came into possession of Cotesford manor a great revolution
 affecting the agricultural classes had changed the whole face of the country. The slave, or serf,

who tilled his lord's demesne, had been gradually improving his condition. But he was still his lord's property, bound to the soil, obliged to pay for a license to remove from his manor in search of trade or hire, and liable to be pursued and brought back as a fugitive outlaw if he refused or neglected this. It now became a common act of kindness on the part of landlords to grant personal liberty to such of their dependants as they pleased, and an instance of this occurred early in the connection of this estate with Eton College, in 1458. In the laws of William the Conqueror it was directed :

"If any wishes to free his slave, he shall deliver him to the Sheriff by the right hand, in full county (*i.e.* shire-mote); and he ought to quit claim him from the yoke of slavery by manumission, and let him point out to him the ways and gates open, and deliver him a freeman's arms, to wit, a lance and a sword; then he is made a freeman."¹ The grant of freedom, however, in this case was made, not by such public manumission, but by a writ given privately to the serf.

"To all the faithful in Christ, to whom the present letters may come, William Westbury, Provost of the Royal College of the Blessed Mary of Eton, and the same College, health in the Lord for ever. Know ye that we, for our reverence of God, for the faithful and approved service paid to us, have manumitted Richard Ford, alias Goldesoll, the born servant of our lord of Cottesford, in the County of Oxford, from all yoke of service and villeinage, for ourselves and our successors, and have made the same free, and have freed him and delivered him for ever from all servile condition, so that neither we, the aforesaid Provost and College, nor our successors, can, or ought to, demand, claim, or vindicate in future any claim or right in the aforesaid Richard; namely, we have excluded ourselves for ever by the present letters from all action, right and claim by reason of the servile birth or villeinage of the same Richard. In testimony whereof we have affixed our common seal to this present writing.

"Given in our College aforesaid, on the VIIth day of September, in the XXXVIth year of the reign of King Henry, the Sixth after the Conquest of England."

The rise of the free labourer had followed at a short distance that of the farmer-class. The lord of the manor, instead of cultivating his demesne or home-farm through his bailiff, often found it more convenient and profitable to let the manor to a tenant at a fixed rent (*feorme*, Latin *firma*) payable in money or in kind.² This introduced the system of leases, a step of progress, whereby more wealthy tenants could rise to a position of equality with their former lords.

By the common law, all owners of estates could grant leases of them under certain restrictions, but by a statute 32 Henry VIII., c. 28, colleges, cathedrals, and other ecclesiastical and eleemosynary societies, were especially enabled to lease their estates on these among other conditions: (1) That the lease be by indenture, and (2) that it be either for a term of 21 years or three lives (not both), and never exceed those terms.

Accordingly Eton College has always, until the present day, leased³ their estate at Cottisford,

¹ Given in Jacob's Law Dictionary.

² Green's History of the English People, chap. v. § iv.

³ The particulars of the leases which follow have been extracted from the Eton records by the late Provost, Dr. Goodford, and kindly given by him to the writer.

at first for irregular periods, but after Henry VIIIth's reign according to the years or lives fixed by statute.

<i>Leaseholders.</i>	<i>Date and Term of Lease.</i>	<i>Yearly Rent.</i>
		£ s. d.
Robert Arderne, <i>als.</i> Arden.	April 20, 1450. 20 years.	4 13 4
John Samewell, Senr.	Sept. 29, 7 Edw. IV., 1469. 60 years.	10 0 0

[This lease included a small property of the College in the adjoining parish of Fringford, which has since that time been always included in the lease of Cottisford Manor.]

This lease passed to his descendants, and the following payments of rent are recorded in the College accounts:—

		£	s.	d.
1505.	Roger Samewell paid	11	0	0
1507.	Do. for Cottisford, Fringford, and Little Tew	11	0	0
1508.	Do. for Cottisford	11	0	0
1511.	Do.	5	13	4
1512.	Do.	11	0	0
1513.	Eleanor Samewell	11	0	0
1514.	Do.	10	13	4
1515.	Thomas Danvers	—	—	—
1517.	Do.	11	0	0
1520.	Do.	11	6	8
1521.	Do.	11	0	0

From the mention of the odd shillings and pence in these sums, it seems probable that the rent of the Cottisford estate remained at the former figure, £4 13s. 4d., and that the additional sum was the rent of land at Fringford and Little Tew, belonging to Eton College.

<i>Leascholder.</i>	<i>Date and Term of Lease.</i>	<i>Yearly Rent.</i>
		£ s. d.
John Arden	May 7, 14 Hen. VIII., 1522. 20 years.	20 0 0

The Eton records show the rent of £20 paid regularly through the whole of J. Arden's tenure. In the *Valor Eccles.* of Henry VIIIth's reign this was the value of this estate, as returned among the possessions of Eton College:

“Com. Oxon.

“Cottisford et Fryngerford.

“Valet ad firm. ibm. 7^o annū XX£.”

John Arden's lease was not terminated when he died. The following extract has been made of his will, preserved in the Diocesan Registry at Oxford:—

“1535. Oct. 10th. John Arden of Cottysford bequeaths to the Church of Cottysford a heifer of three years of age. Item, to the Church of Eynesham, Hardwick, Stoke, Euneley,

“ Myxbury, Hethe, Shellswell, Newenton, and Feryngford, to every of them iij bushels of barley.
 “ Item, to the chapel of Williamston a cow and six sheep. ‘ Item. I will that there be spent at my
 “ ‘burial such money as shall be thought best by the discretion of my executor. Item. I will that
 “ ‘there be trentall of masses said for me shortly after my decease. Item. I wyll that my month’s
 “ ‘mynd be kept every month after my decease by the space of one year in Cottysford Church with
 “ ‘v priests, and every priest to have for dirge and mass vjd. without meat and drink, and there be
 “ ‘offered at every mas id. Item. I bequeath to the Abbot of Rewley vis. viij^d, and to be distributed
 “ ‘among the Convent xiijs. iiij^d. to pray for the souls of me and Isabell my wife. Item. I bequeath
 “ ‘to the said Church of Cottisford a coverlett in the which is an image of Saint John the Evangelist.
 “ ‘Item. I will that there be provided for me immediately after my decease an honest priest to sing
 “ ‘for my soul in Cottisford Church by the space of one year, and he to have for his labor four
 “ ‘marks and his board or else viij marks, and to find himself. Item. I will that there be kept for
 “ ‘me in Cottisford Church once in the year at the discretion of mine executor by the space of vij
 “ ‘years a dirge and five masses with v priests, and every priest to have for dirge and mass vjd.
 “ ‘without meat or drink, and at every mass to be offered id.’”

In 1543 William Arden is mentioned as paying the rent to Eton College :

“ de Will-mo Arden firmario ibidem “ diversis viabus	}	£20;”
---	----------	-------

but only in that year.

<i>Leaseholder.</i>	<i>Date and Term of Lease.</i>	<i>Rent.</i>
John Arden, Gentleman.	1542. 20 years.	£20.

In this, as in former leases, “ coneyes ” are specified as let.

One or other of these lessees has left a curious and interesting testimony, which throws light upon the history of Eton College. When Edward IVth came to the throne, he looked with an unfriendly eye upon the College, which his predecessor on the throne, Henry VIth, had befriended. On the plea that the College of Eton was not finished, or likely to be finished, and was not doing, or likely to do, the work for which its founder designed it, he procured from Pope Pius II. a Bull for its suppression and for the immediate transfer of its property to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. It may be conjectured that this Bull was procured in 1467, from the fact that there still exists at Eton a list of properties of various kinds, bearing that date, which the Provost of Eton was directed to surrender to the Dean of Windsor. But that no transfer of the real property ever took place,¹ though the expectation that it would be effected was general, is clear from a curious paper, which seems to have been written early in Henry VIIIth’s reign, and which owes its origin to Cottisford :—

“ The depoyng of John Arden, fermor of Cottesford, as concerninge a freholde of 4 yarde
 “ lande in the holdinge of Pygot, wherby yt shoulde seme the College to have grete wronge.

“ There was one John Barres that did take the house of Eton College by lease, and when

¹ Edward IVth was not content with Pope Pius’ Bull, but, after the battle of Barnet, in 1471, he took stronger measures against the College. Provost Westbury, however, had made good use of the interval, and was able in that year to appeal to Pope Paul the 2nd. The Pope remitted the case to Bouchier,

Archbishop of Canterbury, who in 1476, on the ground that the College was then doing the work which its founder had designed, confirmed to it the possession of all the grants of its original founder.

"Kynge Edwarde put downe Kynge Henry VIth, then Kynge Edwarde had thoughte to have put
 "downe the Colledge, and then the same Barrys had thoughte to have kepte yt in safetye, and then
 "Kynge Edwarde remembryd himselfe and was gracyous to the Colledge agayne, and then thys
 "Barrys solde yt to one Aderbery of Aderbery, and that Aderbery solde yt to one John Samwell
 "of Cottesforde, and John Samwell gave it to one Robert Arden to maryage of hys syster, and
 "then there was one Rychard Samwell, sonne to John Samwell, when hys syster was deade, wolde
 "have had the lande againe, and the lawe wold not, and then he saide that the Colledge had the
 "righte to the lande, and then was Thomas Arden afearde of the tittle, and solde yt to Thomas
 "Langton, and then was Thomas Langton afearde for hys tittle, and would have given the Colledge
 "the patronage," &c., &c.

The relations between the Colledge and their lessee now became unsettled, probably in consequence of some blame attributed to the latter from the evidence just given; for the Colledge accepted new lessees.¹ J. Arden, however, continued his occupation until his death.

Leascholder.

John Arden (third of this name). Date of lease, 1570.

On April 8th, 1570, a deed was executed between the Provost and Colledge of Eton and John Arderne, son of John Arderne deceased, in which reference is made to a lease granted to John Arderne deceased in 1556 (no such lease appears in the books at Eton), one of the terms of which was that, on the death of John Arderne the elder, his son should within six months of attaining the age of 21 surrender the lease, and take a new one. This he had not done, but on payment of 20s. he was now allowed to do so.

Litigation followed, and in 1573 a trial at Oxford resulted in J. Arden's favour.² But soon afterwards he sold the remainder of his lease to Thomas Ridley, D.C.L., to whom in 1587 the Colledge granted a new lease for 21 years.

In this lease we have the first mention of the right of common, *i.e.* a profit, which one man has in the property of another. Common is chiefly of four sorts: of pasture, of piscary, of turbary, and of estovers, *i.e.* necessaries (from *estoffer*, to furnish). The right of the tenant in the last of these was stipulated in this lease, and consisted of *plough-bote* (the Saxon word *bote* being synonymous to the French *estover*) and *cart-bote*, *i.e.* sufficient wood from the land leased to make and repair ploughs, carts, and all instruments of husbandry, and *hedge- or hay-bote*, *i.e.* the same for repairing hays, hedges, or fences. As a set-off to this liberty, it was provided that, at the cost of the lessee, "lodging, man's-meat, and horsemeat be found for one day, and two nights for the Provost of Eton, and the officers of the Colledge on progress, so that the persons and horses so coming exceed not the number of 10 in the whole."

"John Arderne, father of James Ardern, made over his lande at his marriage unto his wife, and his heirs male of their bodies lawfully begotten; soe that when the wife of the said John Arderne died, James seized upon the land in his right, as made over at the marriage, the father

¹ Lease granted in 1550 to John Smith the elder, Gentleman, of Walden, for 40 years from Michaelmas, 1563, "or whenever a lease thereof made to John Arden, Gent., shall be voyde by reason of forfeiture, surrender, or any other wayes," &c. Rent £20. On February 16th, 1568, to John Higgeford, of Diton, in the County of Gloucester, Esq., from Michaelmas, 1584, "or whensoever a former lease thereof made to one John

Arden, Gent., shall be voyde, determined, or ended by forfeiture, surrender, or by any other means which of them first shall happen unto them." The number of years for which the lease was granted has been erased.

² In 1575 a deed was made allowing John Higgeford, whose lease of the manor is cited, to alienate the rest of his term to John Arderne without fine.

"not observing his tearme of life in it after her decease, for which James Arderne the sonne
"presently sould it unto Edward Ewers. John Arderne had sould it to Doctor Ridley, who
"presently brought James into the Chancery for concealing his title, when his father had real right
"and sould it."¹

John Arden's wife died in 1606.

"1606 Janry. 31.

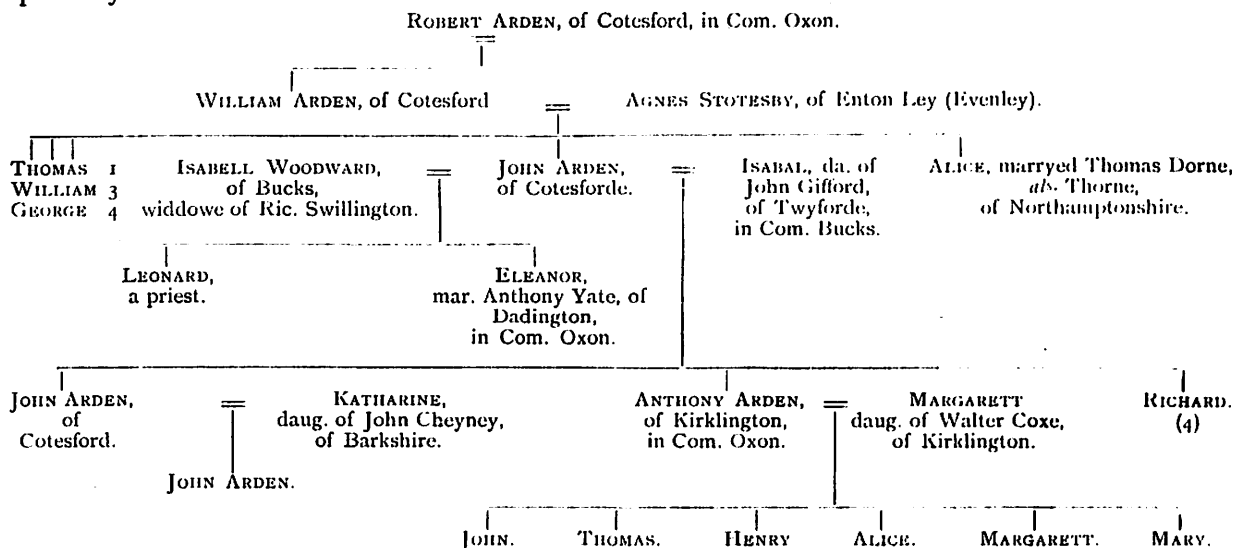
"Mrs. Anne Arderne }
"de Cottesford. } On February 1st James Arderne, son of the said Anne,
appeared and made proof that his said mother was at Church
"three months since, and is nowe deade, and before her death desired absolution. Thereupon the
"lord gave order for her burial."²

Thus we learn that the connection of this family with Cottisford, which had lasted for more than a century and a half, ended soon after this year, 1606.

The name Arden was derived from some woodland in Warwickshire, and Yorkshire (*ard*, high or great; *den*, a wooded valley). A descendant in the male line of the Saxon Earls of Warwick, before the Conquest, assumed this name in the reign of Henry I., Siward de Arden, which Siward was grandson of Alwin, the Sheriff in the reign of Edward the Confessor. The elder line of this family was long seated at Park Hall in Warwickshire, and became extinct in 1643. Representatives of a younger branch survive at Longcroft, in Yoxall, Staffordshire. Arms—Ermine, a fess chequy or and azure; and so borne by Sir — de Arderne in the reign of Edward II.³ That the residents at Cottisford claimed a relationship with the elder branch of the family in Warwickshire is clear from their assumption of the same coat of arms, which was allowed at the Heralds' Visitation of Oxon in 1566.

ARDEN OF COTTESFORD AND KIRTLINGTON.

Arms—Ermine, a fess chequy or and azure (Arden). Crest—On a wreath a boar passant, quarterly or and azure.



¹ Memorandum on an old torn paper at Eton.

² Records of the Bishop of Oxford's Court.

³ Shirley's Noble and Gentle Men of England.

Mr. E. Ewer, to whom James Arden had surrendered the lease of Cottisford Manor, was lord of Bucknell Manor, in this neighbourhood, and resident there. His tenure had come to an end before his death in 1638. A new leaseholder was found in the person of

Leaseholder.

Robert Calcot, Esq., of Byfield, Northamptonshire. Some important changes were made in the terms of the lease granted to him.

By statute 18 Eliz. ch. 6 it was directed that, with regard to College leases, one-third of the old rent then paid should for the future be reserved in wheat or malt, reserving a quarter of wheat for each 6s. 8d., or a quarter of malt for every 5s.; or that the lessees should pay for the same according to the price that wheat and malt should be sold for in the market next adjoining to the respective Colleges on the market-day before the rent becomes due. This is said to have been an invention of Lord Treasurer Burleigh and Sir Thomas Smith, then principal Secretary of State, who observing how greatly the value of money had sunk, and the price of all provisions risen by the quantity of bullion imported from the new-found Indies (which effects were likely to increase to a greater degree), devised this method for upholding the revenues of Colleges. Their foresight and penetration has in this respect been very apparent; for though the rent so reserved in corn was at first but one-third of the old rent, or half of what was still reserved in money, yet now the proportion is clearly inverted; and the money arising from corn rents is, *communibus annis*, almost double to the rents reserved in money.¹

In obedience to this enactment, the rent of this manor was changed from its former single cash payment of £20 to one of £17 16s. 10d., together with 22 quarters of wheat and 6 quarters + 3 bushels of malt. Instead of the former terms of 21 years, three lives were substituted for the duration of the lease, those of "John and James Arderne, gentlemen, sons of John Arderne, of Cottisford, Gent., and of John Calcot, son of the aforesaid Robert Calcot, or of the longest liver of them." Various former conditions were more minutely described; all apple, pear, plum, warden trees, nuts, and "such kind of frute trees," being excepted; ploughboote, hedgeboote, gateboote, cartboote, being allowed; a terrier to be delivered within three years; entertainment to be provided as before; and £5 to be paid for license of alienation.

The former lessees, the Arden family, had resided in the old home of the Cottisfords, the only buildings on the Eton estate being farm buildings and two cottages.² But as soon as a lessee from a distance entered on possession, and the residence of the Ardens was no longer available for his use, a new house was erected on the manor. This was called at the time of its erection, The Mansion, and is first mentioned in 1606, but it was then, and had been previously, inhabited.

Leaseholder.

Robert Wilson, Esq., of Hillmarton, Warwickshire.

The three lives on which Mr. Calcot held his lease must have proved of short duration, for Mr. Wilson was resident at Cottisford before 1614, five children being born to him here between that year and 1623. He was resident in the manor-house, according to a condition, now first

¹ Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. II., book ii., chap. 20.

² The lease of 1522 was written in Latin, and a copy of it, dated October 13, in the same year, was made in English. The word "mannerium" in the former is translated "yard" in the latter; and in the clause binding the lessee and his assigns

to "mayntene and repayre at their owne proper coste and charges all manner of housis to the sayd yard belongyng and appertayning," there is special mention of "two Cotages one callyd Davys Howse, the other called Symys Howse, in Cottisford aforesaid."

He continued the custom of sending presents to Eton College, and always, after 1630, in the election week of each year.

"1627. Fee to him that bought a buck from Mr. Stephens, of Cotesford, in the Election week, 3s.

"1630. To one that bought a buck from Mr. Stevens, of Cotesford, for the fee 10s. 6d., and for his paines in bringing it 5s., in toto, 15s. 6d."

Similar entries follow through every year of his tenure.

"1633. To one bringing a kegg of sturgeon to the Provost and the College from Mr. Stevens, of Cotesford, 3s. 4d."

Some disagreement afterwards arose. It does not appear what this was, but there is mention in the College records of land "plowed upp." In 1639 Mr. Stephens referred the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"1639. Mr. Weaver, the Provost, riding to my lord of Canterbury to give answer to Mr. Stevens' supplication against the College."

The lease to Mr. Stephens was renewed in 1633 for twenty-one years, but in the following year, in a second lease, there is mention of a fee of £5 for sealing a license of alienation, and in 1641 it was terminated.

Leaseholder.

Mr. George Austin.

Described, "of St. Stephen's, Coleman Strt., London, Gent." He died before the expiration of his twenty-one years' lease. His widow married Mr. Valentine Walton (*als.* Wanton), described, "of Somersham,¹ Gent.," who obtained a renewal of the former lease on August 6th, 1658, which somehow became void, for in the following year a new leaseholder appears.

Leaseholder.

Mr. John Hart, Gent., of Chilton, Bucks.

"1659. Received of Mr. Hart, the farmer there, £17 16s. 10d."

The lease bears date three years later, 1662, and in it are the same conditions as before. He died soon afterwards, for two years later his widow married again.

"1664. Edw. fil. Guil. Andrews Mil. de Lathbury, Com. Bucks, et Ann Harte vid. Joh. Hart de Cottesford generosi nupt."²

Eleven years of Mr. Hart's lease remained unexpired, and Mr. Andrews obtained a renewal of it for twenty-one years on the usual covenants. This new lease stands in the books of the College under the year 1676, but the word "vacat" is written against it on the margin of the page; it was therefore never fulfilled.

¹ In a subsequent deed Mr. Walton is described, of "Great Staughton, Huntingdonshire." In the lease book of Eton College the name is distinctly Walton, occurring several times, as it is also in the receipt which he gave for the money which the College paid him on buying up the lease; but in the audit

book of the College the name is spelt "Wanton."

N.B.—There is a Colonel Wanton whose name often appears in the journals of the House of Commons at this time.

² Cottisford Church Register.

Leaseholder.

Lawrence Lord, Esq., of Fritwell. Date of lease, 1675. Term, 21 years.

The only alterations in the covenants were that the money rent was put at an even sum, £17 17s., with an additional rent of wheat and malt. Died and buried at Fritwell, in March, 1708. He was succeeded by his eldest son, of the same name.

Leaseholder.

Lawrence Lord, Esq., jun.

Resident at Cottesford during his father's lifetime.

In the renewal of the lease to him, in 1707,¹ it is stated that this renewal was "in consideration of the tenant having built a good house." This new house, built on the site of Barsis' Place, was styled "Cottisford Manor House," and now forms the oldest part of the present house. In it Mr. Lord brought up a large family of seven sons and nine daughters, all of whom were baptized at Cottisford between 1703-24. A memorial to three who died in their father's lifetime was placed in the parish church.

"Nata est Elizabetha filia Laurentii Lord arm. et Annæ uxoris ejus primogenita vicessimo secundo Aug. MDCCIII., quatrduo humata.

"Corpora binarum sunt hic tumulata sororum,
 "Commune ambobus nomen et urna fuit.
 "Mors nondum satiata venit comitate sororum,
 "Wilhelmus heu præcox! flosculus ille cadit.
 "Jam quia congeneri miscendus pulvere pulvis,
 "Unicus hic lapis est, qui socia ossa tegit.

"Obierunt duodecimo et vicesimo secundo, Decembris mense, filia primo, hic quinto ætat. anno, annoque. Dni. MDCCIII."

His eldest surviving daughter, Anne, married, in 1732, the Rev. Shuckburgh Cotton, then Rector of Heyford Warren, in this deanery. Their children and grandchildren were buried in Cottisford churchyard, at the east end of the church, where large flat stones mark their graves, though some of the inscriptions, worn away by time and rough usage, scarcely preserve their names.²

Mr. Lord died in his home, and was buried at Cottisford on July 31st, 1743, aged 78 years. His descendants have resided and held property in Bicester, and other places of this neighbourhood, until quite recently.

Leaseholder.

Richard Eyre, Esq. Date of lease, 1739. Terms and covenants of lease the same as before.

Mr. Eyre had been a judge in India. During his eighteen years of residence at Cottisford he was a power in the village life, and even after his death it was long before he was forgotten. These were the days of popular superstitions, and many stories are current, even yet, recalling some feature of his life as known to the villagers—*e.g.* that he was seen driving his four-in-hand, &c.; that he was buried in a cask in a pond, &c., &c.

¹ Renewals of the lease on the same terms were made to father and son in 1682-88-93, 1700-07-15-31.

² Restored a few years ago by the Rev. Cotton Risley, Rector of Shalstone.

“Richard Eyre was buried January 19, 1761. Affidavit made in time.”¹

In the year before his death he obtained leave to surrender his lease to

Leaseholders.

Thomas Berney Bramston, Esq., of the Middle Temple, and of Skreens, Essex; }
and }
James Eyre, Esq., of Gray's Inn, afterwards Recorder of London.

Term and date of lease: 1766, 21 years. Conditions and rent as before.

After seven years' tenure they surrendered their lease, in 1773, to

Leaseholder.

The Rev. John Russell, Greenhill.

Then resident Rector of Fringford. His lease was renewed in 1780; on December 30th, 1787; December 20th, 1794; March, 1802; December 30th, 1808. At these dates one of the lives on which the estate was held probably fell, and a fine was paid for renewal. In 1802 Dr. Greenhill is described “of Cotesford,” having been in all previous leases described “of Fringford,” “otherwise Feringford.”

Leaseholder.

Robert Russell Greenhill, Esq. Date of lease, February 29th, 1816.

Son of former lessee, described “of Lincoln's Inn.”

Leaseholder.

William Turner, Esq. Date of 1st lease, July 28th, 1825. Term, 17 years.

“ 2nd “ Dec. 9th, 1829. “ 20 “

A member of the Irish Bar, practising in Dublin. Coming to London, he met in society a young lady of great beauty and many charms, named Maria Meares, the daughter of a gentleman in Wales. This lady had lately been engaged to a son of Lord Milsington, who was killed by banditti in Italy. Having, besides these attractions, £20,000 at her own disposal, Mr. Turner made proposals of marriage to her, and was accepted. Coming to Cottisford with this large fortune at his command, he immediately commenced a series of alterations and improvements in the manor house and its surroundings, adding to the former the present drawing and dining rooms, rebuilding the stables, and shaping the house and its premises into the appearance and form they still wear. But fortunes soon and easily made are in like manner lost. After only eleven years' tenure, Mr. Turner, becoming involved in money difficulties, sold the remainder of his lease and went abroad. He died a few years later at Bruges, leaving an only son and two daughters.

Leaseholder.

Susannah Ingram,

Of Warminster, obtained the surrendered lease in 1836 for twenty years, on the same covenants as before; but five years only had run when it was transferred, on July 29th, 1842, to

Leaseholder.

James Edward Rousby, Esq.

He resided in the Manor House until his death, in 1848, and was succeeded by his son.

¹ Cottisford Register.

*Leaseholder.*Edwards¹ Rousby, Esq.

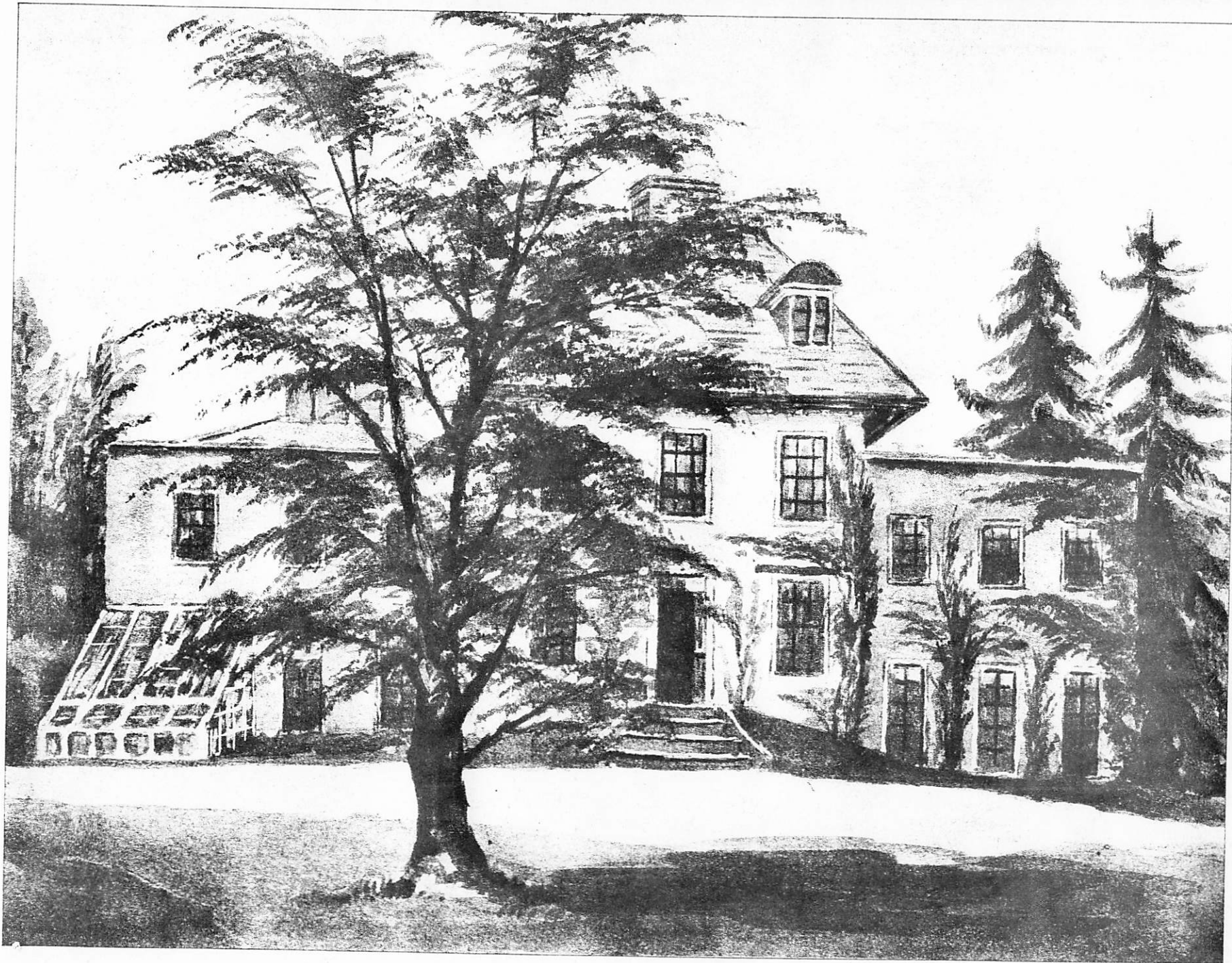
After his father's death the manor house was let to Serjeant Parry, a County Court judge; but in August, 1855, Mr. Rousby, having married in the previous year, returned into residence. There he continued until he met with a sad accident from a fall in his house, which terminated in his premature death in 1875. He was succeeded by his only son, who has enjoyed the remainder of his lease.

Such is the history of an English estate through more than four centuries. Twenty leaseholders, men of various characters and positions, held it; their modes of tenure changed; the rent-service of early days passed into the rent-charge of later times; the rude farm buildings and two labourers' cottages of the XVth and XVIth centuries gave way to the manor house or mansion of the XVIIth century, and this, too, in its turn was deserted for Barsis' Place, the residence of country gentlemen of the last and present centuries. And times and customs are changing still. A practice has recently commenced with many ecclesiastical and collegiate bodies of selling their landed estates and investing the proceeds in other securities, which cause less trouble and change in the care of them. Accordingly, in 1884, Eton College sold the manor house and premises, and a farm called "The Warren Farm," to Kendal Rousby, Esq., the present possessor, measuring together 90 acres. The College property now consists of 750 acres, and is let at rack-rent to Mr. Joseph Waters.

Mention was made at the beginning of this account of an act of kindness done to a faithful villein of the College estate. A like mention deserves to be made of a servant, highly esteemed, James Baines, who lived in the Rousby family 58 years, serving faithfully three generations, and died in 1882, with the regard and respect due to such, as the memorial-stone in the churchyard testifies.

¹ This was his grandfather's surname before he took that of Rousby, on succeeding to some property in Yorkshire.





COTTISFORD HOUSE. 1887.

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN BY G. & CO. LONDON

THE PARISH CHURCH.

Hugh de Grantmesnil, the Norman lord after the Conquest, found a church existing at Cotesford. In order to augment the endowment of the religious house, which he had recently helped to restore in his own country, he at once separated this church from the manor, and bestowed it on the Abbey of St. Evroul. This gift was confirmed to the Abbey by King William I. in the year 1081. The monks of St. Evroul some years later ceded the patronage to the Abbey of Bec, who had then become owners of the village, and the Abbey to their cell in England, the Priory of Okeburn. Thus, after a temporary separation, the advowson of the church and the lordship of the manor became again united.

The present church was built by the patrons, the Abbey of Bec, and was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, probably at its consecration by Bishop Grosseteste, in the XIIIth century. It remains to the present day the same in size and form as it was at its foundation, a small building, consisting of a tower and one aisle, which is divided into a nave and chancel. A wooden screen, surmounted by a rood-loft, originally divided the latter. The staircase to the rood-loft still remains. The screen was in recent times plastered over, with the gateway only left open; but in 1835 it was removed and the present arch substituted, at the cost of Mr. Turner, then resident in the manor house.

“On the south wall of the church, behind the great door of entrance, is the effigies of a man in armour kneeling, with eight sons, the woman and five daughters, all on a brass plate; the brass inscription underneath is torn off, so that these arms only remain. The arms belonging to the man are out of the man’s mouth. Two apes sejant, back to back. The woman’s gules, a lyon ramp. betw. 3 buckles within a bordure of roundells.

“Benedicamus Patrem, Filium, Spiritum sanctum, laudemus et superexaltemus eum in secla.”¹

In a recess on the north wall of the chancel there is a stone coffin, with a handsome cross sculptured on the lid. This was opened in 1835, and in order to lower it to the floor level, pieces were knocked off, and the lid replaced, as it now appears. Persons are still living who saw within the tomb the perfect skeleton of a tall man; but no shroud or other remains, or inscription of any kind, were discovered.

The church goods were always few. A list of them as they existed in the Post-Reformation period, during the Commonwealth, is written on a fly-leaf of the Register:—

“Goods appertaining to the Church of Cottisford, in ye county of Oxford, viz.

“Item. One silver chalice.

“Item. One greene carpett.

“Item. A chest.”

¹ Rawlinson’s MS. in Bodleian Library.

From the loss of the inscription, it is impossible to be

sure whose memorial this was, but from the coat of arms this might be conjectured.

Dr. Rawlinson, the antiquary, visited Cottisford in 1718, and wrote in his note-book:—

“A small village, situate on a small stream, call'd The Crowell. Wake here 3 weeks after the Assumption of the V. Mary, to whom the Church is dedicated, being now very much out of repair. There are 3 bells.”

Dilapidated churches, and, as a necessary consequence, slovenly services, marked this time in many parishes. The lessees of this manor had but a temporary interest in the parish; the rectors could spare nothing out of their poor pittance; and Eton College, on whom the chief obligation rested, had no conscience as to the spiritual care of this little village beyond what was common in that age with collegiate bodies. Thus, and yet more, when the rectors were non-resident, and curates changed continually, both church and parsonage fell from bad to worse ruin through three centuries and more of sad neglect. An attempt to improve the interior of the church arose from the parishioners, who, by the aid of a rate of 4d. in the pound, in 1849, reseated the north side with open sittings, in place of the old closed pews. This was followed by a like improvement on the south side in 1854.

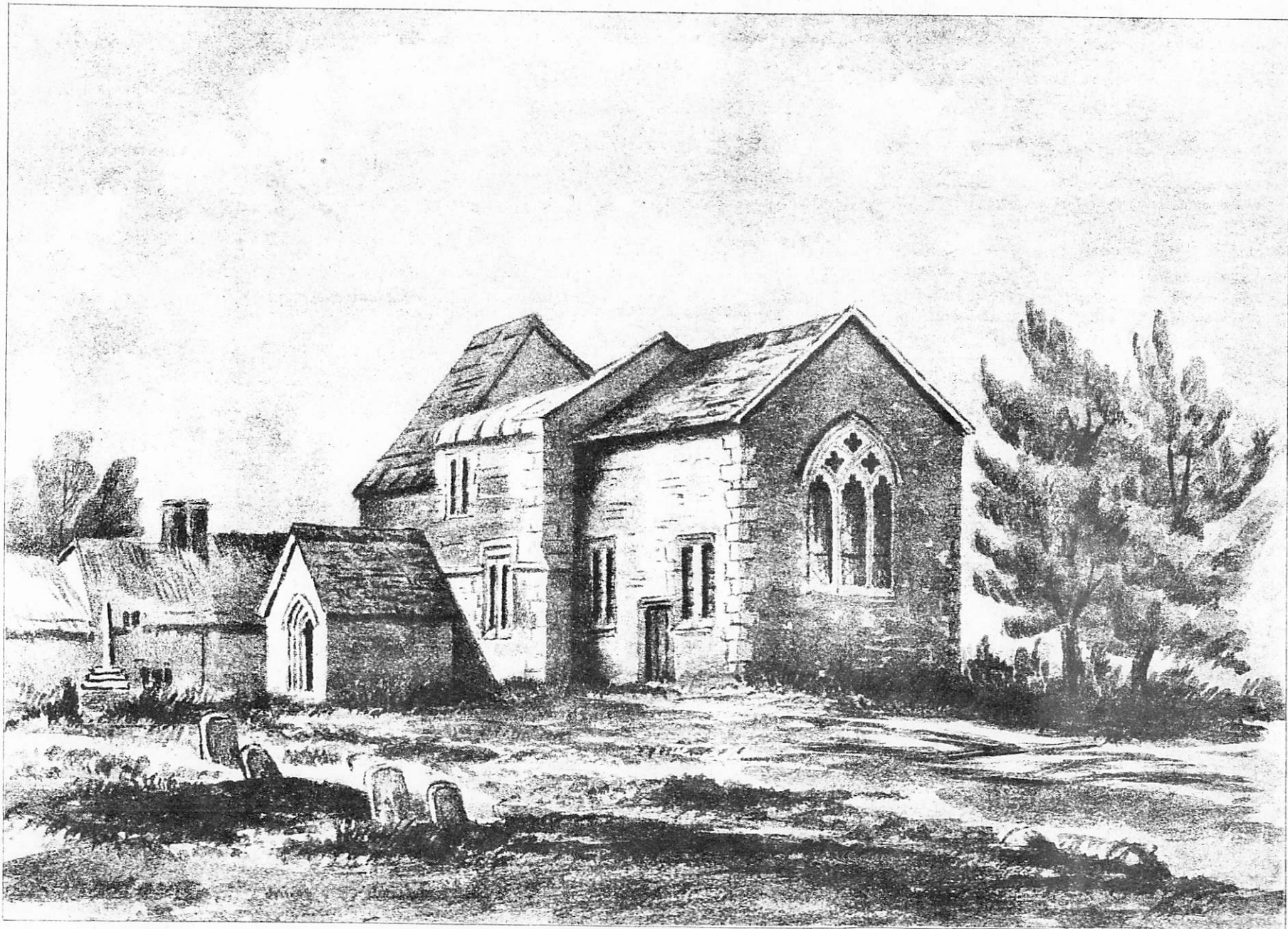
A thorough restoration of the fabric was begun in the spring of 1861, and finished in September of the same year, at a cost of £365. The principal donors to this pious work were:—Eton College, £50; the Earl of Effingham, of Tusmore House, £20; E. Rousby, Esq., £20; Rev. C. S. Harrison, rector, £20; Miss Hind, Ardley, £20; Honourable P. S. Pierrepoint, Evenley Hall, £20; raised by church rate, £50; offertory on day of re-opening, £29 os. 10d. Some special gifts were also added: the two chancel windows, by the Rev. W. M. Church, vicar of Hunstanton; the chancel door and altar table, by the Rev. J. Walker, rector of Finmere; the font, by Mr. John Mansfield, of Hethe; the lectern and prayer desk, by John Harrison, Esq., Chester; the velvet altar cloth, by Job Harrison, Esq., Chester; and worsted work for kneeling cushions, by ladies.

The restored church was re-opened for divine service on October 11th, in the same year, by Bishop Wilberforce. The church being small, two services were held, the first attended chiefly by the clergy and laity of the neighbourhood, the second by the parishioners. The Bishop, finding a congregation different from what he had expected, laid aside, on reaching the pulpit, the written sermon which he had intended to preach, and reproduced, without any notes, from memory the sermon of deep thought which he had preached a few days before at Hurstpierpoint College, in Sussex, on 2 Kings iv. 41, and which he afterwards published under the title “Poison in the Pot,” with that charm of rare eloquence, with which he so often delighted his hearers.

A window was filled with painted glass in 1870 by the rector and Mrs. Harrison, in memory of two children; and the east and west windows were ornamented with diaphane work, their own handywork, by Mr. and Mrs. Rousby, about 1860. A new altar cloth was worked and presented by Lady Maria Howard, of Tusmore, in 1873.

THE CHURCHYARD.

A small piece of ground was all that was needed for a burial-ground for this little village. Cottages closed it in on three sides, of which two were standing within living memory. Some old gravestones, with crosses carved on them, still remain. This enclosure having become too small



S.E. VIEW OF COTTISFORD CHURCH.

1825.

for the increased population of the present time, some additional ground has been recently given by Eton College. This new ground was consecrated on July 11th, in the present year, under circumstances of impressive teaching. It was late in the afternoon of a hot summer's day, when there stood in the deep shade of the trees surrounding them a little company of clergy and villagers, with the Bishop of the Diocese at their head, setting apart with psalms and hymns and prayers this ground to its sacred purposes, while beyond the encircling shade, as they faced the western sky, seen in glimpses here and there, the sun was shining in its golden evening light: fit emblems these of the shadows in which we live and die, and of the light which beyond the grave awaits the buried dead.

PATRONS. THE ABBEY OF BEC.

While the patronage of this church was exercised by a foreign monastery, several foreign clergy were sent to serve it.

	<i>Instituted.</i>	
William de Butell, clerk.	1218.	(Register 9th year of Hugh de Welles.)
Recelinux de Anderia, capellane.	1242.	Ob. 1278. (Do. of Bishop Grosseteste.)
Geoffrey de Crekelade, priest.	1278.	(Do. of Richard Gravesend.)
John de Cusantia. ¹ Preferred.		
Otto de Dune Amenay, priest.	17 Kal. Jan. 1291.	Ob. 1310. (Do. of Oliver Sutton.)
Thomas de Stanton, capellane.	7 Kal. Dec. 1310.	Resigned.
John, son of John de Cotesford, priest.	11 Kal. July 1317.	

Some difficulty arose about his institution.

(Translation.)

<p>“Commission “for the Church “of Cottesford.</p>	}	<p>“John, Bishop of the aforesaid Diocese of Lincoln, to our sons “beloved in Christ, the Abbot of Eynesham, &c., health, grace and “benediction. In the cause, which is under consideration, or lies “open for consideration, upon the Church of Cottesford, between “John de Cottesford, priest, presented to us to the said Church as vacant, plaintiff, on the one “part, and Thomas de Staunton, incumbent in possession of the said Church, defendant, on the “other part, both in all, and singular, matters belonging to this cause, even if it proceed to the “depriving or removal of the aforesaid Thomas from the said benefice, by lawful process served, “we commit our office to you, with the power of canonical coercion; commanding that, by lawful “process served before us, or our commissary, or the commissary in this part before had, you “decide the same cause by a canonical settlement. Fare ye well. Given at Stowe Park, on the “IXth of the Kalends of February, A.D. 1316.”</p>
--	---	--

The gap which here follows in the institutions of this Church through fifty years (1317--70) is sadly suggestive. The terrible pestilence, known as the Black Death, broke out in 1348, and spread to all parts of the country. So excessive was the mortality caused by it, especially among

¹ The entry in the Lincoln Registers is “pres per procurat. Abb'is et Conv. de Becco Herlewyn,” or “Becc in Anglia.”

the clergy, that there followed a great scarcity of men, either to till the ground or minister in the churches. It is probable, therefore, that for some years at this time no clergyman could be found for this small parish.

Just before the outbreak of this pestilence, that fatal war with France, which lasted through more than a hundred years, had begun. During its continuance the English kings seized on all the possessions of the foreign monasteries, and thus the Manor and Church of Cottisford were taken from their lawful possessors, and their rights and privileges exercised by the kings.

PATRONS. THE KINGS OF ENGLAND.

<i>Rectors.</i>			<i>Date of Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Sir John Smyth	...	...	(?)	Death.
Richard Picot	...	...	August 8, 1370	(?)
Robert Snawe, ¹ clerk of Barton	...	...	March 21, 1374	Resignation.
William Taylast, ² priest	...	...	December 22, 1375	(?)
Peter Chapman, clerk	...	...	December 23, 1403	(?)
William Breton, ³ clerk	...	...	February 28, 1407	Resignation.
William Andrew, clerk	...	...	January 11, 1409	Exchange.
Roger Baker	...	...	April 20, 1439.	

Most of the clergy thus presented through near a century by the kings, Edward III., Richard II., Henry IV., V. and VI., were in inferior orders. Those which follow through another century had not been educated in the schools of a University, or had only proceeded to the first degree of B.A. They, like the clerks of the previous century, were styled "Sir,"⁴ which was the title of respect commonly given to the parish priest, like that of Father, which the Russian peasant and the Irish of the present day apply to their clergy.

After 1584, through three centuries to the present day, the Rectors of Cottisford have been all University men.

PATRONS. ETON COLLEGE.⁵

<i>Rectors.</i>		<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Sir William Godacre, <i>als.</i> Gotaise	...	—	1456	Resignation.
Sir John Aston	...	—	April 7, 1456	Resignation.
William Whizt, chaplain	...	—	April 8, 1457	Resignation.
Sir Alan Patrickson, priest	...	March 13	May 10, 1458	Death.
Sir William Fesaunt, chaplain	...	November 9	November, 1458	(?)
Sir William Slatter	...	(?)	(?)	Resignation.

¹ "Presented by the King by reason of the alienation of the lands and advowsons of the Priory of Okebourne, on account of the war with France." (Lincoln Register).

² "Presented by the King for the above cause." (Ibid.)

³ "Presented by Thomas, Bishop of Durham, and John, the son of the King of England, and Constable of the same kingdom, and Warden of the Marsh in the East of England towards Scotland, to whom the said Lord the King has by

"letters patent committed and granted the said possessions, together with the fees and advowsons of the Priory of Okebourne, and other things of whatever sort belong to it," &c., &c. (Ibid.)

⁴ Sir Hugh Evans in Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor," and Sir Oliver Martext in "As You Like It."

⁵ Taken from the books at Eton.

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Sir Thomas Toppysford, priest	... January 4	May 22, 1463	... (?)
Master William Gibbys ...	... (?)	(?)	... Resignation.
Master Richard Grendon, priest	... November 4	December 7, 1470	... Death.
Sir John Lyndesey, priest ...	... July 10	July 18, 1487	... Death.
Sir James Arden, chaplain ...	... March 6	March 21, 1521	... Death.
Henry Slemaker, priest ...	... March 2	March 22, 1546	... Death.

He affords another, among the many instances in this Deanery, of the unbroken continuity of the tenures of the parochial clergy during the changes of the Reformation period, as he lived through the reigns of Edward VI. and Queen Mary, and two years after the accession of Queen Elizabeth.

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
George Pierson, clerk ...	... July 6 ¹	August 8, 1560	... Death.
John Neale, clerk ...	... March 1	(?) 1579	... Resignation.
Nicholas Lewis, clerk ...	... July 6 ²	(?) 1579	... Death.
Percival Hodgson, M.A. ...	... January 18 ³	(?) 1584	... Death. (Buried at Cottisford. ⁴)
Daniel Barker, M.A. ...	.. October 16	(?) 1592	... Death.
Thomas Bennett, M.A. ...	... January 24	(?) 1596	... Death. (Buried at Ludlow.)
Robert Claye, M.A. ...	... August 30	(?) 1600	... Resignation.
John Brooke, M.A. ...	... July 20	(?) 1601	... (?)
Thomas Allen, ⁵ M.A. ...	... March 22	(?) 1602	... Resignation.
Richard Wharton, S.T.B. ...	... May 23	(?) 1606	... Death. ⁶
Robert Claye, ⁷ S.T.B. ...	... January 11	February 25, 1608	... Death. ⁸
David Stephens, M.A. ...	... (?)	August 7, 1624	... (?) ⁹
Michael Reade, B.D. ...	... (?)	December 20, 1624.	

Resident until 1632. Registered the baptisms of his children in 1626-29-31, and the burial of a relation :

" 1632. John Read, Bacchellor of Divinitie, and Fellow of Lincolne College in Oxon, was "buried y^e 26th of Januarie."

After that year his handwriting in the Parish Register ceases. Whether he relinquished his charge, or was deprived of it, is not known; but from the careful way in which the Registers were kept during the Commonwealth, it seems likely that the curate in charge was left undisturbed. Mr. Reade died before the Restoration.

¹ "Presented to Matthew (Parker), Archbishop of Canterbury, the see of Oxford having been vacant for some years."

² "Presented to Edmund (Grindal), Archbishop of Canterbury, the see of Oxford being again vacant since 1568."

³ "Presented to John (Whitgift), Archbishop of Canterbury, the see of Oxford being still vacant."

Nov. 28, 1584.

⁴ The lord's office against Richard Blande, to prove the will of the Rector of Cottisford. } Cited by Dasie on Monday in the week past; whereupon, after proof given and a third prœcognition made, the lord reserved the penalty to the next Court.

(Records of Archdeacon of Oxford's Court.)

⁵ "Alter socius Collegii Etonensis." (Rawlinson's MSS.)

⁶ "Wharton moritur Oxonia, socius Coll. Oriel." (Ibid.)

⁷ "Rob. Claye. Mertonensis et Eton Coll. D.D." (Ibid.)

⁸ "1620. Anna, uxor Doctoris Claye, April 3." (Cottisford Register of Burials.)

⁹ "Ecclesiam, &c., legitimo modo vacantem." (Eton Books).

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Thomas Heydon ... ..	... January 8	(?) 1657	... Death.

Described "virum tam probum quam literatum."

He has entered in the Cottisford Registers the baptisms of two of his children, in 1665 and 1673; the burial of the eldest of these in the year of its birth, of his wife in 1676, and of a son in 1687.

"Mr. Thomas Heydon, Rect^r of Cottisford, was Buryed July y^e 4th day, 1691."

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
William Paxton, M.A. ... ..	... August 1	September 21, 1691...	Death.

The careful and regular handwriting in the Registers, the same during the whole time of Mr. Paxton's incumbency, proves the continuity of his residence. He recorded,

"June y^e 9, 1696.

(1) "William Paxton and Lydia Paxton were married at Holy-well, Oxon (licentiâ prius habitâ)."

(2) Baptisms of his children in 1697, 1699, and 1702;

(3) Burial of two sons on January 28 and February 2, 1718.

In answer to the Letter of Enquiry about the number of Popish recusants in the parish, he returned: "Cottisford. William Paxton, rector. No Popish recusant."¹

"Mr. William Paxton, Rector of Cotsford, was Buryed August y^e 26, 1720."

"Lydia Paxton, y^e wife of W^m. Paxton, Rector of y^e parish, buri'd Sept^{br}. 9th. 1734.

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Nathaniel Jugelo, M.A. ... ..	... September 29,	November 2, 1720	... Preferment.

Began the evil practice of non-residence, which was continued by successive rectors through one hundred and thirty-three years.

"John Downing, cler., entered upon Cottisford curacy Aug. 26, 1722."

"August y^e 26th. 1722.

"I preached at Cottisford the first time for y^e Rev. Mr. Jugelo, Rect^r. Johⁿ. Downing, "Cler."

"1728.

"Jhoⁿ. Downing, Curate, was buried in Woollen, Novembr. 29, anno predicto."

"Lætitia Downing, Wife of Mr. John Downing, who was Curate of y^e parish, was buried "Sept^{br}. 23, 1732."

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
Page Newborough, M.A. ... ..	... July 5	July 22, 1726	... Preferment.
James Smith, M.A. ... ..	... August 3	September 27, 1727...	Death.

A. Wilkins, curate, 1748.

John Prinsep, M.A. February 22,² March 3, 1768 ... Death.

Presented to the Vicarage of Bicester, 1752; to the Rectory of Hethe, 1755.

¹ From the "Original Returns of Popish Recusants for the County and City of Oxford, made by the Parsons, Vicars, &c., of the several parishes here enumerated, by command of the Queen and the Diocesan, and returned to the Office of the Registrar at Oxford," among the MSS. at

Stonyhurst College. See Tenth Report of Hist. MSS. Commission, Part IV, p. 180.

² This is the first presentation to Cottisford written in English in the Eton records.

See History of Bicester, p. 94.

<i>Rectors.</i>	<i>Date of Presentation.</i>	<i>Institution.</i>	<i>Cause of Vacancy.</i>
George Stephenson, M.A. ...	... February 13,	March 11, 1769	... Resignation
Samuel Cooke, M.A. ...	... April 11	April 12, 1769	... Death.
Held this Rectory for 51 years.			
Thomas Weldon Champneys, M.A. ...	April 13	June 10, 1820	... Death.
Francis Hodgson, B.D. ...	... February 24,	April 20, 1842	... Death.
Curates. William Watson, 1834; Henry Dyke, 1848; David Erskine Dewar, 1851.			

This retrospect of 400 years and more is not satisfactory. In the first few years after Eton College had received the trust of the advowson they appear to have sent their chaplains, or other members of their society, to take charge of this parish for a year, or some short term only. Then a bright interval followed, lasting for more than two centuries and a half, when the rectors were permanently resident from the time of their institution to their death. But in the sloth and deadness of the Hanoverian era the College lapsed into the practice, then too prevalent, of presenting clergymen, already in charge of parishes, who simply added this to some other cure which they held, and realized nothing of the connection which ought to exist between a pastor and his flock. It is probable that the poverty of this cure had much to do with this abuse. We may imagine the resident clergy of the XVIIIth and XVIIth centuries obliged to eke out their scanty endowment by farming, even with their own manual labour, their glebes, while their wives attended to the dairy, the baking, and the other necessities of a household. This was not then thought to be any hindrance to the esteem and respect of their parishioners, nor to the maintenance of a good position among their richer neighbours. But it grew more distasteful as times and manners changed. Hence the argument arose that churches not of themselves sufficient to maintain their proper minister, must be served by halves or not at all; and hence came the two great blots in the church system of the last century, absenteeism and pluralities. "When I look," said Bishop Buckner¹ in 1798, "for the chief and fundamental cause of all the ministerial negligence which I trace, whence such an evident decline of religion among the people, such great inattention to the ordinances of the Church, such rudeness of manner, such disorderly conduct, such profaneness and debauchery proceed, I feel myself constrained to believe it is in no inconsiderable degree attributable to the non-residence of the clergy." The long and sad spell of absenteeism was not broken until the middle of the present century.

Charles Sawkins Harrison,
Presented February 14, 1853. Univ. Durham. B.A. 1837, M.A., 1840, Deacon 1838,
Priest 1839. Conduct of Eton.

Before coming into residence he enlarged the rectory house, at a cost of £400; erected the present schoolroom 1856; restored the parish Church 1861; and still lives to continue in the parish the faithful oversight of this little village community.

VALUE OF THE RECTORY.

Tithes were originally voluntary payments urged on the laity by every consideration of duty. They were "a tenth part of all fruits, prædial, personal, and mixt, which are due to God, and

¹ Primary Charge, quoted in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Nov., 1799, p. 962.

See "The English Church and its Bishops," 1700—1800, by Charles J. Abbey, vol. I., p. 69, and pp. 317, 318.

“consequently to His Church’s ministers, for their maintenance.” As such Augustine preached, and taught the Christian duty of paying “the tribute of the Church.” At first, in the missionary stage of Christian effort, tithes were paid into the hands of the Bishop of the Diocese, from whose Cathedral Church the itinerant priests radiated, who sang and prayed and preached under rude crosses in secluded villages. The Anglo-Saxon custom only directed the dedication of tenths of produce; it did not regulate the apportionment. Landowners were at liberty to appropriate them to monastic establishments, or to a resident parish priest.¹ Hugh de Grantmesnil therefore was strictly within Church order when he assigned a portion of the tithes of an English village to a foreign Abbey. The tithes he gave to St. Evroul’s Abbey were subsequently ceded to that of Bec, and still later commuted for a fixed money payment of a mark yearly.

Pope Nicholas’s Taxation, 1292, gives the first record of the value of this Church.

“The Church of Cotesford, with pension deducted, Liijs. iiijd.

“The pension of the Prior of Okeburn in tithes xiijs. ivd.”

After the suppression of Okeburn Priory this pension was made payable to the King’s Exchequer. Some memoranda of it are extant.

“4 Hen. VI. (1425). John Warefelde owes xxvjs. viijd.”

“8 Hen. VI. (1429). xxvjs. viijd. is due there of arrears from the last previous year, for “xiijs. ivd. is due by the same for this current year.”

“17 Hen. VI. (1438). Liijs. ivd. of William Ardynge for the Rector there.”

“xiijs. ivd. received of William Ardyngham late the fermor of the pension there, in full of ‘his annual payment as appears in the special account.”

“19 Hen. VI. (1440). xiijs. ivd. received of Sir Roger Baker the fermor of the pension “within the said tenure of this account, as appears,” &c.

In 1444 the pension formed part of the royal gift to Eton, and was duly recorded in the College books.

“The pension of Cottisford is worth xiijs. ivd.”

But the pension was then in arrear.

“The account of Sir Roger Baker, the late Rector there, is indebted £iiij.” (6 years’ pension.)

“29 Hen. VI. (1450). Liijs. ivd. for arrears by the Rector there to the Feast of St. Michael “in the last year, and xjs. is due by the late Rector there to Sir Roger Baker, and xvjs. viijd. is due “by the said Roger Baker the late Rector there for arrears of his pension to the Feast of St. Michael in the year 26th, and xiijs. ivd. is due by the said Sir Roger in the year 27th.”

“35 Hen. VI. (1456). Cottisford. xiijs. ivd. is due by Sir William Gotaise, the Rector and “Fermor there.”

The value of this Rectory was more than doubled at the valuation of Henry VIIIth’s reign, 1535.

¹ Article on Tithes in *Guardian* newspaper, February, 1887.

"Cottysford.

	£ s. d.
"Jacobus Arden rector ꝑpetuus et rectoria sua ibm. valet ꝑ annu. ultra } "repris' coibuz. annis ex recognie' sua, &c.	vj xiiij iiij
"Sma.	vj xiiij iiij
"Et sic de clar, utp .	
"Resolucoes	null
"Decima pars dno. Regi	xiiij iiij "

In 1611 Dr. Clay recorded the net value of the Rectory to be £66.

"Persolutis persolvendis Rectoria de Cotisford clarum mihi valebat sexaginta sex libros.—

"R. Clay, Rector."

A memorandum in the oldest of the Church Registers defines the glebe, as it was at the end of the XVIIth century.

"The glebe land in Cottesford fiede lies for 4 yard lands divided into two fields: whereof
"one field, which lieth Eastward, containeth 39 acres; the other field, which lieth Westward,
"containeth 21 acres.

"There are 2 acres more in the field of Heath, and 18 or 19 lands tythable in the same field
"to y^e Rectory of Cotesford."

This memorandum has been transcribed into another Register Book (No. 2), and there it is added:

"Another part intimates,

"Lands tithable to the Rector of Cotisford out of Hardwick. Item. 8 lands, and a But,
"then in the tenour of George Philipps."

"Item. One acre in the tenour of Tho^s. Cadwallader.

"Item. Cote ffield in the tenour of Tho^s. Cadwallader." } there.

In 1703 Queen Anne generously restored to the Church the firstfruits and tenths of its several parishes, for the purpose of augmenting the incomes of the smaller ones. This Rectory was under the value of £50 per annum.

Benefice.	Hundred.	Deanery.	Valuation.	
			King's Book.	Real.
Cottesford.	Ploughley.	Burcester.	£6 13s. 4d.	£48 5s. 6d.

It was therefore discharged from the further payment of firstfruits and tenths, and in 1723 a grant of £200 was given by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty to meet a like benefaction from the Dean of St. Paul's, London. This sum was laid out in 1761 in the purchase of 16 acres of land in Barford St. Michael, in this county. The Rectory property at the present time consists of 84 acres of land, and a yearly fixed rent charge of £261 16s.

The first reference made in English history to the existence of a Churchwarden was in a work published in 1430. Two Churchwardens were always elected, and custom soon assigned the choice of one to the minister and of the other to the parishioners. Neither can lawfully act independently of his colleague, but in the lax discipline of the last century the acts of one only were

constantly accepted at the Visitation Courts of the Bishop and Archdeacon. The office of Churchwarden is one of observation and complaint, but it is certainly a true charge against these officers generally that they have submitted without protest to any state of things which they have found existing in their parishes, however far removed from proper Church order, and have seldom adopted any other form of presentment than the "All is well," which meant only a desire to avoid any disturbance of things as they were.

CHURCHWARDENS.

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Names.</i>	<i>Presentments.</i>
1703	William Topping.	
	"Name inscribed over the north door of the church.	
	"William Topping, Churchwarden, 1703." ¹	
1707	Thomas Topping.	
1732	John King	} "All is well."
1733—43	John James	
1744—47	John Westcar	"I, J. W., declare that I know nothing presentable but a little hole in the tower, for y ^e reparation of wh ^h orders have been already given, and will soon be executed."
1748	John Philipps	} "Nothing presentable."
1749—51	John Westcar	
1752	Henry Sansoms	
1753	Thomas Jarvis	
1754—56	John Westcar	"That the Parsonage House and outhouses thereto belonging are much out of repair."
1757—60	John Tebby	"That the Parsonage House is out of repair."
1763—82	John King	} "All's well."
1782—86	Thomas Cooper	
1787—92	John Chapman	"That the Parsonage barn is out of repair, but is going to be immediately repaired." "All is well."
1793—1810	Jeffery Tredwell.	
1812—16	John Clark Tredwell.	
1817—18	Josiah Jones.	
1819—25	William Tredwell	"All well, except the Parsonage House to be pul'd down."
1825—28	Same and William Saunders.	
1828	William Turner and Robert Watts.	
1829	John Roots and same.	
1831	William Turner and same.	
1832	Same and William Roots.	
1833—34	James Smith and same.	

¹ Rawlinson's MSS. in Bodleian Library.

This name is mentioned later, on the outer page of the Church Register, in the handwriting of the rector, Mr. Paxton,

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Names.</i>	<i>Presentment.</i>
1835—42	Same and Joseph Wood	... .. "That the boundary of the Churchyard has "not been well maintained." Same in 1836. In 1842, "That the Churchyard is in very "good repair."
1849—54	Same and John Gough.	
1854—57	William Mansfield and same.	
1857—61	Edwards Rousby and same.	
1861—69	Same and Joseph Waters.	
1869—87	Joseph Waters only.	

PARISH CLERKS.

"Joseph Lovell, Clerk of this Parish, was buried Feby. ye 7th, 1724."

"John James, Clerk of Cottisford, was buried July ye 13th, 1750."

"John Browne, the Clerk, aged 85, dropt down dead while he was ringing the bells for Church, Nov. 9, 1785."

Joseph Collett	...	...	...	resigned.
John Judd	...	...	...	died, 1855.
Edward Ayres	...	...	...	died, 1868.
John Moss	...	...	...	left the village.
Edmund Harris	...	...	...	left the village in 1872.
Thomas Mansfield	...	...	...	present Clerk.

PARISH REGISTERS.

The oldest existing Register is contained within a long narrow book of parchment pages, bound in two oak-board covers, which are tied together by parchment strings, with a brass clasp. The first Baptism entered is in 1610, the first Burial in 1611, the first Marriage in 1651, the page containing the earliest marriages having been lost. These dates imply that the clergy of this parish had been slow to attend to the directions previously given, and that only when the orders of the previous reigns were renewed under King James in 1603, and the Canons Ecclesiastical were agreed to in a Synod of Convocation in that year, that a new Rector, in obedience to Canon LXX, began the regular keeping of the parish Registers. Two different handwritings appear from 1635 to 1649, but from the latter year, the first of the Commonwealth, to 1657, when the Rectory was vacant, the handwriting is one and the same. This implies that no attention was paid in this parish to the order of the Parliament to appoint a lay Registrar, but that the keeping of the Registers still continued in the hands of the parish clergy.

THE VILLAGE.

The little cluster of dwelling-houses, closely encircling the little church on the western bank of the Cotesford, lay sequestered, and little changed, through a thousand years. The village was approached by three roads or trackways, one leading eastwards across the ford to Brackley, a second southwards to Hethe, and a third westwards through Tusmore to join the old Roman road to Souldern. A change was first made in 1357, when Sir Roger de Cotesford obtained a royal license to enclose the last of these roads, and diverted it into its present direction outside Tusmore Park, to the Oxford and Brackley road, leaving the old road as a bridle-way only. The population, at first small and stationary, continued such. As late as the XVIIth century the average number of Baptisms was between two and three, and of Burials a little over one, yearly. These increased slightly in the last century.

<i>Decades.</i>	<i>Baptisms.</i>	<i>Burials.</i>	<i>Marriages.</i>
1700—1710	35	16	None registered.
1710—1720	39	19	10
1721—1730	28	19	Registers
1731—1740	20	18	irregularly kept.
1741—1750	24	18	
1751—1760	25	13	
1761—1770	32	15	
1771—1780	26	26	
1781—1790	20	19	
1791—1800	24	24 ¹	

A few particulars are noted of this population.

William Walker, a centenarian.

“Gulielmus Walker, Cotsfordensis centn. ult annos natus obiit, 1657.”²

“1715. William Topping of Cotsford shore six hundred sheep.”

“1716. He shore four hundred and three score.

“Upon the piece of land on the south side of the pool belonging to William Topping, there is one hundred and 7 shocks; each shock consisting of about 30 sheaves.”

Some unusual sickness occurred in 1701, for three men in middle life and one young woman died between December and February in that year. Again, in December, 1778, and January, 1779, five young persons, aged respectively 4, 7, 12, 17 and 18 years, *all males*, died of “putrid sore throat.”

The Census tables of the present century show a rapid increase of inhabitants.

1801. Population resident:—

				<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>
The Rev. Dr. Greenhill	... 9 in family	...	...	5	4
Jeffery Tredwell	... 8 “	...	...	4	4
William Eaton	... 8 “	...	...	6	2
John Green	... 3 “	...	...	2	1

¹ Extracted from the Church Registers.

² Among the notes of Mr. Horn, Rector of Finmere, in the Register of that parish.

1801. Population resident (*continued*):—

						Males.	Females.
Richard Smith	...	...	5 in family	...	...	2	3
John Barton	...	...	3 "	...	...	1	2
Thomas Judd	...	...	4 "	...	...	2	2
William Falconer	...	...	3 "	...	...	1	2
Thomas Farrin	...	...	5 "	...	...	3	2
John Moss	...	...	4 "	...	...	2	2
William Fox	...	...	5 "	...	...	3	2
James Grant	...	...	4 "	...	...	2	2
Henry Tebby	...	...	4 "	...	...	3	1
John Robson	...	...	2 "	...	...	1	1
Edward Harpwood	...	...	7 "	...	...	2	5
William Collet	...	...	5 "	...	...	2	3
John Price	...	...	3 "	...	...	2	1
Bartholomew Price	...	...	7 "	...	...	3	4
John Hall	...	...	2 "	...	...	1	1
James Tuffrey	...	...	2 "	...	...	1	1
William Sabin	...	...	5 "	...	...	4	1
William King	...	...	4 "	...	...	2	2
Jonah White	..	...	3 "	...	...	1	2
						<u>55</u>	<u>50</u>

Years.	POPULATION.				HOUSES.		
	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Inhabited.	Families.	Uninhabited.	
1811	64	67	131	—	—	—	
1821	73	67	140	27	27	—	
1831	85	78	163	—	—	—	
1841	90	97	187 ¹	37	—	1	
1851	138	125	263	54	—	—	
1861	139	130	269	62	—	2	
1871	—	—	327	81	83	—	
1881	—	—	240	—	—	—	

On some ground to the N.E. of the village, the low evergreen bushy shrub, known as the Common Juniper, grew in abundance. Its hard wood was useful fuel, and its spicy berries may have been beneficial as medicines. Hence this spot came to be known in recent times as Juniper Hill, and a single shrub here and there yet remains to point to the origin of the name. Two cottages were first built here in 1754.

"Memorandum." Two Cottages erected in the year of our Lord 1754 on Juniper Hill in the Parish of Cotsford in the County of Oxon for the use of the poor of the sd. parish. The Expenses of which Houses or Cottages amounted to the sum of £28 7s. 6d.

¹ Of these, 140 had been born in Oxfordshire; 47 elsewhere; 47 males and 43 females were under 20 years of age, 43 males and 54 females of 20 years and upwards.

² In Parish Register.

“ Built by a rate charged on the landholders, viz. Rich^d. Eyre, Esq., the Rev. Jas. Smith, Rector, Mr. John Westcar, Henry Sansom, John Tebby, Thos. Jervis, Robt. Day, landholders.”

Two other dwelling-houses were built later. The inhabitants of these four houses alone constituted the population of Juniper Hill until about the middle of the present century.

Some unenclosed land close by was known as Cottisford Heath. In the early part of this century horse races, which attained a great amount of local popularity, were held here yearly. The spot is defined on the Ordnance Map of the county as “The Race Course,” and a writer¹ has left on record his remembrances of the spot:—

“ Dear, delightful, breezy, furzy, naughty old Cottisford Heath, how does thy name carry us back fifty years to thy racecourse in each recurring spring, replete as it was then with smug clean-shaved squires, parsons, farmers, and traders from the towns and localities of Brackley, Buckingham, and Bicester, arrayed in deep white ties, kerseymeres, top boots, and blue or black coats; replete also with young farmers, and farmers’ sons, in bright green coats, resplendent with gilt buttons. How again our memory reverts to the spruce jocks, in jackets of various colours, the ladies in and on carriages, the grooms, all important in their own eyes, the thickly-packed pedestrians, the refreshment booths, the grand stand, the extemporized stables, whose walls were fagots of gorse, and their roofs the open sky, the gambling tents, the thimble-riggers, the cards with the names, weights, and colours of the riders, and other publications, vended by bawlers, of a nature to tend only to the nourishment of vice and the corruption of youths,—

“ With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masking,

“ And other things that might be had for asking;

“ And there were songs and quavers roaring, humming,

“ Guitars and every other sort of strumming.

“ That long looked for day, at the end of March or early in April, the last hunting day but one of the season, converted into a racing day, we will suppose to have arrived. Then was to come off the Farmers’ Cup Race, for horses, not thoroughbred, that had regularly hunted with the packs of the Dukes of Grafton or Beaufort, or that of Sir Thomas Mostyn, to be ridden by the owners or friendly non-professional riders. This was the great attraction of the day. Nervous enough, and more than enough, looked many of the young farmer riders, albeit confident enough in their own saddles across country, as they emerged from the weighing scale, in tight-fitting leather inexpressibles, and flaunting silk jackets and caps, with their sweethearts and sisters, as well as trained jockeys engaged for other races, looking on. Half a dozen false starts were not uncommon; but at last the cry ‘They are off,’ ‘They are off,’ was borne upon the breeze, and the excitement became equal, among a smaller circle, to that of the Londoners on Epsom Downs on a Derby day, or at the University Boat Race. It was a condition that the winning horse should be sold for £50, if demanded in a stipulated time from the event, but this, we believe, seldom or never happened. These races were a transfer from Northbrook, near Kirtlington; and, forming an agreeable finale to the hunting season, induced farmers to bear the trampling of their corn, and their wives and daughters to bear the visits of Reynard to their poultry yards with more equanimity than is the case now-a-days, when presents of game and venison to the much-enduring agriculturists from fox-hunting lords and squires, have become exceptional.”

Cottisford Heath, containing about 446 acres, was enclosed in 1854.

¹ Mr. W. Wing, of Steeple Aston, in his Papers on the Bicester Poor Union, No. 23.

The present appearance of this village differs from what it was in former times, chiefly from the alteration of the road which passed through it. This road formerly ran in a southerly direction towards Hethe, in front of the Rectory, across the field, where traces of it may yet be seen in dry weather, and in a north-easterly direction towards Brackley, in front of the Manor house. Mr. Turner, in the second quarter of the present century, stopped this road, when he was improving the surroundings of his residence, and substituted for it the road now running east and west. At the same time he pulled down all the houses which stood round the Church, and planted the site with the trees still growing there. The landmarks and peculiar features of the old village have thus disappeared. An idea has in recent times prevailed that the old residence of the De Cotesfords, on the east bank of the stream, was once a religious house. This probably arose from the traces of a supposed domestic chapel found within it, but such a chapel was common in many large houses of laymen, and only proves that the residents were persons of property and position. This house, and the manor attached to it, were purchased of the Cope family by some member of the Fermor family resident at Tusmore, and in 1857 passed, with the rest of the Tusmore estate, to the Earl of Effingham, whose property it now is. The house has since been thoroughly repaired, its old features being carefully preserved. It is now known as "The Farm," and is in the occupation of Mr. Waters.

<i>Estimated extent of the Parish.</i>			<i>Estimated Rental.</i>			<i>Ratable value.</i>			<i>County Assessment.</i>
<i>acres.</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>ps.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>£</i>
1481	3	20	1820	12	9	1578	0	9	1686

Schoolroom built in 1856 to accommodate 50 children.

<i>Present Scholars:—</i>	
Day School.	Sunday School.
45	53

PARISH CHARITIES.

At the enclosure of Cottisford Heath an acre of it was, by the order of the Commissioners, vested in the Churchwardens in trust for a Parish School.

In 1869, Mr. John Mansfield, of Hethe, bequeathed £100 New 3 per Cents. to the Rector of Cottisford upon trust, to divide the annual dividends "thereon at Christmas among 6 of the oldest "deserving poor of this parish, male or female, as the Rector and Churchwardens for the time "being shall think proper."