

Records of Rowington

VOL. II

BEING A TRANSCRIPT OF A
Sixteenth-Century Manuscript
of Church and Parish Accounts

OF THE

Rowington Charity Estates

TOGETHER WITH

A Brief Retrospect of the Parish
during period of the MS.
and 100 years ago
(1821)

BY

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A BRIEF RETROSPECT OF THE PARISH OF ROWINGTON DURING THE PERIOD OF THE MS. (1550-1600)
AND ALSO ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO (1821)

THE original settlement at Rowington, as stated in *Records of Rowington*, No. I, was no doubt of Saxon origin, and at no time was it under the domination and influence of a resident lord. In the year 1125 the lordship of the "Vill Rokington", with all things to it pertaining, was granted by Adeliza de Ivry to the Abbey of Reading. Adeliza was the wife of Roger de Uvry or Ivry and daughter of Hugh de Grentemesnil, to whom William the Conqueror granted the lordship.

There appears to have been about forty-four acres attached to the manor house in the gift, which are specifically named in later deeds as "Great Buryhill, Little Buryhill, Two Upper closes, rick-yard, gardens and land whereon the Manor house stood, all of which shall at all times hereafter for ever be subject to and chargeable with the repairs of the Chancel of Rowington Church and to the re-building of the said Chancel when necessary". These lands may have been the original lands set apart by the founder of the church for the revenue of the priest serving there, but on the transference of the manor to the Abbey of Reading, the Abbat and monks became the impropiators of the benefice, with the consent of the Bishop, and thereby perpetual parsons of the parish church. They would have to depute some person approved by the Bishop to perform divine service in the parish, who, being merely their deputy, was called Vicar, and who in effect would be the curate of the real parson, and would receive a yearly salary from the monastery in tithes or glebe or rent, severally for the perpetual maintenance of the cure, which salary became afterwards a perpetual vicarage. One can imagine that some such ordinance was made here by the attachment of a house, which the Vicar would have to keep up at his own expense, of glebe lands, generally a virgate of land as was the case at Rowington, and the lesser tithes, consisting of tithes of hay, vegetables, flax, hemp, chickens, calves, lambs, piglings, honey, of the parish dove cotes, eggs, apples, fruit trees, herbs, and flowers; also tithes of milk, cheese, and butter of the tenants, and of the mills let to farm, but not of the domain of the manor. He would also have the oblations at the four principal feasts, the offerings of wax, pence paid at confession, and mortuaries.

Such ordinance would not annul the liabilities of the parson or impropiator for the upkeep of the chancel of the parish church.

No doubt, in the days of the Abbats this liability was fully discharged, but I have not come across any record since the dissolution of the monastery of any payments made by the various owners of this property on account of this charge, though it is quite conceivable that there may have been such in the days of the Bethams.

The village has always been strictly an agricultural community with a sprinkling of weavers; a peaceful habitation with an uneventful history. NO battle was ever fought within or near its borders; no historical event ever took place here; no important family ever made it their home, though at one period it contained six families who were entitled to bear arms, and at the date of the MS. there were five. Thus the ruling spirit in the conduct of the affairs of the parish was one of the ordinary parishioners, its administration being carried on by their own chosen body of representatives. Almost every parishioner can be said to have taken his share of duty in turn as Reeve,

Church warden, Overseer, Tithingman, Constable, or Ale Taster, &c. The bailiff in early days would be appointed by the Abbat of Reading, and though the manor appears to have been farmed out some time before and up to the Dissolution, the bailiff of the parish would no doubt be the farmer thereof. The personal influence of the manorial lords would not be very great owing to the distance they lived from the parish, yet I have no doubt that the death of the good Abbat, Hugh Farringdon, at the dissolution of the monastery in 1539, was deeply regretted by the inhabitants. Though Wroxall Priory adjoined the parish on one side and Pinley Priory was at the other end, the parishioners would have no connexion with either of them, each house being jealous of its prerogative; neither do they appear to have had much to do with their neighbours in the adjoining parishes. It was just such a situation as was likely to develop a spirit of independence on the one hand and on the other a narrowness and stagnation of mind in the parishioners. Yet it would appear possible to have been an ideal parish after the Reformation had been effected, where a vicar of the right mould and spirit could have done much good. But, alas, not many of the vicars who have followed since the Reformation appear to have made much attempt to fulfil their rightful duty, or to have taken advantage of their unique position. So long as men who have not been spiritually called are admitted to the ministry and sent to parishes where they are unsuited to the congregation, remaining there despite the uncongenial atmosphere, so long will there be failures and the churches remain empty. But this is by the way.

Of those families residing in Rowington at the period of the MS. and whose descendants live in the parish to-day, there remain the Avernys, Slys, Saunders, Reeves, Rogers, Smiths, and Hancocks, and the Shaksperes have only lately died out. Some of these families go back as far as the fourteenth century in the parish records. Great changes in human propensities have occurred since the time of the MS. Life was then far more simple, and there were but few comforts, luxuries, or amusements. The people had simpler tastes and less common sense, and were romantic and superstitious. Faith was stronger, though no doubt it was much weakened during the Reformation by the revealing of the falseness of many cherished superstitions, and there is but little remaining to-day. The objects of life were different; people lived much more in the present, and were less prudent than the men of to-day.

In our parish chest is an inventory of the household goods of Margaret Cryer, who left the legacy mentioned on p. 12. Her husband, Thomas Cryer, farmed in "Lowston End" at the same farm as is to-day called "Cryer's Oak" at Lye Green. The inventory was taken in 1553, and one can gather therefrom a good account of the mode of living among the middle class in the parish in the days of the MS. The hall was practically the only living room on the ground floor, though the contents of the "kitchen" rather point to that room being used for cooking the meals. The mention of "anndyrone"—used for wood fires—reminds us that no coal was used in Rowington at that time, only wood. Whether there was a fireplace in the hall there is nothing to show, but if there had been, on Easter Sunday, or God's Sunday as it was called, it was customary to put the fire out in the hall, and "clear away all things that is foul with smoke or fumes, and where the fire was shall be gayly arayed with fayre flowres, and strewed with green ryshes all aboute"—hence to-day's custom in the country of decorating our grates with evergreens and flowers when they are not used for fires. The breakfast hour was 6.30 or 7.0, the dinner hour

11.0, and the supper 5.0. The domestic furniture in this house consisted of two chairs " and other stoles "—usually three-legged—but often only one chair existed. There were six " candelstycks " of latten ware, and some of them maybe had spikes only, whereon the candles were stuck. A " table board ", not fixed, but formed into a table by laying it upon trestles, and " old paynted clothes" which were a substitute for tapestry for hanging on the walls, are also included in the inventory. There is no mention of knives or forks, and, indeed, there are but few mentioned in inventories of that time. Each man carried his own knife, and was enjoined to keep it clean and not bring it " unskoured " to the table; and fingers were generally used for forks 1 Widow Cryer had five silver spoons, and there is evidence of plenty of linen table cloths and napkins, and " xxvii pecys of pewter " and sundry cooking vessels and pans. In the chambers were three bedsteads, two feather beds, and three mattresses, with a good supply of necessary adjuncts, including eighteen pairs of sheets, and more " paynted clothes abowte the bedds ". The mention of flax, towe, and wolle reminds us that the women spun their own yarn for the linen they used. Hence the word spinster came into use. The housewife of the period would lead a very different life from that of her sister to-day. She would have to be able to cook, bake several kinds of bread, make cheese of various sorts, brew ale, prepare all sorts of wines, and make many other necessaries. She would also have to know how to prescribe for all kinds of sickness, make plaisters, ointments, &c., and, indeed, be versed in scores of quaint recipes of which no housewife of that day could be ignorant. In fact, it was held that a woman had no right to enter into matrimony unless possessed of a good knowledge of a11 these necessary arts—a little different from her sister of to-day. One is reminded of the old ballad :

They wore shoes of a good broad heel
And stockings of homely blue,
And they spun them upon their own wheel
When this old hat was new.

The farming industry at Rowington was simply self-sufficing. The prices given for various stock in the inventory referred to will convey in some measure the value of money at this period. Best oxen (draught) £1 , cattle of two years 10s, calves 3s. 3d., sheep and store pigs 2s. each. Wheat varied from 6s. a quarter in 1540 to 20s. in 1600. Beef was 2d. per pound, bread at 1d., wages 3d. to 6d. per day. Not being obliged to buy the necessities of life the people had no need to sell their produce. But little coin money was needed, except for the payment of rent, and even this was often paid in corn.

The parish being somewhat isolated and having little need of communication with its neighbours, still less with the outside world, the roads were neglected and in no condition to encourage travelling. The fields and live stock therefore had to provide all that was necessary for food and clothing, and no more was looked for. The village had its own mills and craftsmen, and nearly every household had its oven and brewing kettle or furnace. Women made their own coarse cloth and linen, and men tanned their own leather. Cows were kept only for milk and pigs for bacon, but ewes were often milked, six ewes yielding as much as one cow. Oxen were judged by their power of draught and not by their fattening capacity. Sheep were prized for their fleeces and their leather, not for their mutton, and the wool of Ryelands and Cotswold sheep commanded the highest prices. Except in a salted state little meat was eaten. The rule of eating fish twice a week was extended to three times in Elizabeth's reign,

and adding the many fasting days to the Lenten season, there would be but half the year wherein to eat flesh. White meat, by which was meant milk, butter, eggs, and cheese—Banbury cheese was considered the best in those days—was the staple food of most classes in the country, and especially of the labouring class, and this spartan fare was varied only on the numerous feast days. Incidentally the chronicles of this early period refer to the bad conditions of farming existing, very low prices, great reduction of rents, and of the ruin of farmers.

The village of Rowington must have presented a very pleasant picture at the time this MS. was written, as it was situated almost in the centre of the Warwickshire Arden, which formerly extended beyond the county boundaries, and was, according to Drayton, the largest of the British forests. Its scenery right through its greatest length, from north to south, Hay Wood to the outer boundary of Pinley (a distance of about three and a half miles), is diversified by gentle hills and valleys which are gratifying to the eye, while its frequent spots of sylvan beauty tend to soothe and elevate the mind. A land of hills and valleys, " in wisdom hast Thou made them all, the earth is full of Thy riches ". Yes, all must recognize that the objects and scenes of nature are the pictures by which

" The Truth " is illustrated. The whole face of nature, to him who can read it aright, is marked, like a dial plate of a watch, with significant intimations of the objects and processes of the world unseen. The Bible discloses all this to us. When I was a young man, visiting a remote part of Shropshire, I came across a farmer leaning over a gate, evidently deep in contemplation, and in answer to a query as to his thoughts he replied, " To think that God made all these little hills and dales "—a sermon I have never forgotten.

Rowington abounds in little home-scenes of rural repose and sheltered quiet. Every antique farm-house and many of the moss-grown cottages are pictures in themselves; and as the roads are winding, and the view often shut in by high banks or hedges, the eye is constantly delighted by a succession of small landscapes of captivating loveliness. Such a scene may be said to be associated in the mind with ideas of order, quiet, sober, well-established principles of hoary usage and reverend custom. This perhaps is the great charm of rural England and of this typically English county. It generates a sweet home feeling that is, after all, the parent of the steadiest virtues and purest enjoyments.

The nineteenth century opened, and may also be said to have closed, without upsetting the serenity of the old-world character of the sixteenth-century Rowington. To an inhabitant of fifty years ago reading the MS. there would be little of strangeness about it, and but slight variation in the customs of the villagers or the language spoken, and the characters depicted therein would almost appear familiar to him.

During the period in which I have known Rowington there have, however, been many changes both in the appearance of the dwellings and the ways of living of its inhabitants. There still exist several beautiful old farm-houses—with large barns, some no longer used for the purpose for which they were built—and many cottages, built, for the most part, of brick-noggin, with a few examples of wattle and daub between the timber frames. But the greatest change is in the everyday life and characteristic dress, and the language used by the agricultural workers. No more is Shakespeare's " lazy thresher with a flail " seen in the barn, and the wooden plough and the ox team have disappeared—the last oxen I saw used in a plough was on Holywell Farm. No

longer do we meet the old carter in his smock-frock, worked in beautiful patterns on the chest, walking beside his team with his long whip, proud of his horses all decked in brightly polished brass ornaments. The good wife's sunbonnet and beautifully washed mob-cap are fast disappearing from use. Kneebreeches I never saw in Rowington, but their sensible purpose is still exemplified by the habit of tying up the trouser below the knee. Altogether the change in the clothing has detracted from its utility and its picturesque appearance. Perhaps one misses most the loss of the pleasure of hearing good old English local sayings and phrases, and the stories of actual experiences told in homely wording> which were so charming and restful to listen to. Many a treasure did I gather and send to Professor Wright for his great Dialect Dictionary. Certainly village life fifty years ago possessed some features for which we look in vain to-day. There was more contentment and quiet happiness in all classes. The spirit of restlessness which marks our age is an enemy to some of the highest interests of mankind. The hankering after changes in legislation, as well as in personal circumstances, brings but little gain. If there were more public spirit and less self-seeking, there might be a much higher standard of morality, intelligence, and social well-being. Yet one is reminded that the seniors of every age exclaim against the growing corruption of the times, Our fathers told us of the " good old times ", but, as they were but human, and nature varies but little, I expect the times have varied but little also. As in the time of William the Conqueror robbery was rampant, so it was at the period of the MS., and so it is to-day. But, though human nature has not changed, yet there is a difference in the aspect of the country. How much more beautiful the landscape of Rowington must have appeared before the building of the railway and canal changed the contour of the land; and before the enclosure of the common lands which fringed the village all around its borders and practically secluded it from the outside world I Not only poets and painters, but all of us recognize the fact that the world owes its picturesqueness to its waste places, During the century of the MS. and since, many encroachments and enclosures were made, but the greatest was made about a hundred years ago (1824) when Rowington Green, Turners Green, Bushwood Green, Pinley Green, &c., were enclosed, nearly 390 acres in extent, a certain portion being within the parishes of Bushwood and Lapworth. Richard Fowler of Aston, gent., was the sole Commissioner. The first meeting respecting the enclosure was held at the Cock Inn on 18th July 1815, and the award was signed on 4th May 1824.

Perambulating, or beating, the parish boundaries was a customary annual event in many parishes, indeed it behoved the inhabitants to be very precise in this matter if they considered their own interests, and no doubt Rowington, from the day when the manor was given to the Abbey of Reading, had been careful to keep all that was their due, though there is evidence that the boundary both between Bushwood (Old Stratford) and Lapworth parishes was not clearly defined, and neither of the interested parties seemed anxious to determine it. I am unable to state when the last perambulation of Rowington was made, but no doubt there have been one or more within the lifetime of some of the present inhabitants. When the commons were open the parish took toll of all who had encroached thereon, and we have records of those who were liable to fines, and the amounts paid by them for several years prior to the enclosure. The accounts for the year 1807 give the list for Rowington Green and Bushwood Common, the dues amounting to £4 9s. 6d.; for Shrewley Common as

much as £11 16s. 6d.; and for Pinley Green 14s. 4d.; giving a total of £17 0s. 4d. These sums were collected on 3rd and 4th November, and during the perambulation £8 18s. 7d. was spent, chiefly in eating and drinking at the various inns *en route*, while the balance, £6 5s. 6d., was expended on cloth, &c., for the poor of the parish. From this one would infer that these processions had ceased to be regarded seriously and were looked upon more as holiday jaunts.

The last perambulation of which we have any record was on 3rd June 1829—the month of June appears to have been the usual one at this period for these processions—when dues from Shrewley Common, the only one open, were collected, and the amount received totalled £5 15s. 9d., all of which was spent at the Cock, with the exception of 1s. 6d. "gave to 3 boys going round", and sundries 12s. As Shrewley Common was enclosed soon after—the Act receiving Royal Assent in 1831—there would be no fines payable, and the lack of the "needful" to give the impetus no doubt caused any enthusiasm for these perambulations to wane, though other beats have certainly taken place since. One can imagine that the balance received from the fines of the commons, though comparatively small, must have been a welcome addition to that accruing from the charitable bequests. As each parish had to provide for and look after its own poor, it must have been no light work for the two overseers at Rowington, the cost in 1821 being £773 7s. There were over twenty permanent necessitous cases. Mr. Kimball was the medical attendant, and there is every reason to conclude that the work was carried out satisfactorily under the then existing circumstances. It is quite obvious from a perusal of the various accounts that the duties of the parish officials at this date would be considered very burdensome to-day, and that the rates and calls on the farmers were somewhat heavy, the poor rate being 5/- in the £, and the highway rate 6d. In 1834 there was grumbling about the inequality of assessment, and a parish meeting was called, whereat it was decided to have the parish revalued and assessed by Messrs. Whateley and Chapman—well-known valuers. The valuation still exists in our parish chest, and one sees there from that agricultural land was assessed, from £1 to £2 per acre. Whether the result of the assessment was satisfactory or not is not stated, neither is the amount charged by the valuers.

To revert to the enclosing of the commons, it is very unfortunate for history that the Commissioner had no "native" to assist him with the nomenclature, for few old names are retained on the map for districts, lanes, farms, or fields; indeed, in several instances such misleading names are given as "Lonesomeford", "Finwood", and "Austerton", which appear to have originated at that period. The result of the enclosures rather leads one to conclude that they were the work of land grabbers who were more or less newcomers to the parish, or such as considered their own advantage in preference to that of the parishioners as a whole. Very different was the action of the freeholders and tenants generally one hundred and fifty years previously, when they agreed together to prosecute anybody who infringed the rights of the commons (*B.2. i*, pp. 48 and 55).

As a result of my inquiries, the parish copy of the enclosures award, together with the map, have been returned to Rowington, for they, like the MS, had wandered into another parish where they lay forgotten. However, these are now deposited in our parish chest. With the assistance of this map it is easier to portray the appearance of the parish at the period when the MS. was written, and, by taking the reader an imaginary walk around, detailing the old landmarks

by the way, to pass on some idea thereof; also, by reference to the probable residences of the various persons mentioned in the MS., to make the notes thereon more interesting.

Starting our journey from the top of Rowington Green in 1821, we should find William Wheeler living at the Green Farm, and John Bradbury at the Old Quarry Farm-house, which he renovated and added to. Proceeding past the old mill known as " Bouncing Bess ", situated on the top of the Green at an elevation of 421 feet above sea-level, and two hundred yards back on the edge of the common, we should come to the small old farm-house, formerly moated, occupied by Joseph Roe. It is now known as Shakspeare Hall, so called as having been the home of a branch of the Shakspeare family from before the date of the MS., the last member of the family to reside there probably being William Shakspeare, who married Anne, the daughter of William Ives of Rowington Hall, and who removed to Knowle Hall about 1750. I believe their descendants went into the East India Service.

The next old farm-house was the White House, since renovated and renamed The Lyons, where we should find in occupation Joseph Newberry, who had been in service at Baddesley Hall. From here, which is at the same elevation as in front of the mill, we should see practically the whole of the common, and on a June day what a beautiful prospect it would be, dotted with clumps of golden gorse and fringed around with red-tiled or thatched cottages.

On the right was the Bell Inn, next to the blacksmith's shop where Job Smith plied his trade, and behind which stood the old pound, which had just been repaled by John Gazy at a cost of 14s. It still existed in my time on the right side of the road leading past Acles pit to Weston's farm and Kingswood, where the old house called Kingswood Manor House stands. This house was always in Rowington parish, so its title could hardly be justified except by the fact that Henry Ferrers, who lived and died there, purchased Kingswood Manor in 1596. The small house adjoining was occupied, early in the last century, as an inn called " William the Fourth ". Just over Kingswood brook, which marks the boundary between Rowington and Lapworth parishes, on our right stood, until recent years, the cottage wherein Humphry Shakspeare died in 1729. He left a legacy of £1 per annum to Rowington charities. In the cottage there used to be a stone whereon is engraved the arms of the Peche family, and this has since been embedded in the south wall of Lapworth Churchyard. The bridges at Kingswood and Fox's brooks were built in 1842 and cost £166 14s. 1d., towards which Mr. Bolton King contributed £15. Before that time Kingswood brook and possibly Fox's also were provided with foot-bridges only. There is note of repairs to bridge at Madmore in 1813-14 (cost £15) and again in 1821. In old times a lane called Sim Lane existed between Mrs. Weston's farm and the highway, passing at the back of Kingswood Manor House, and the question as to the repair of this lane by the parish was a cause of litigation in 1778, the lawyer's expenses costing the parish £8 15s. 1d. I am inclined to think that the parish lost the case, as they spent money afterwards for repairs to the lane. I fail to find any record as to when the lane was enclosed, but its use was destroyed by the building of the canals, as the lane led to Brome Hall and on to Lapworth Street.

But we continue our journey from the pound straight on down the Green, leaving Joseph Webb's wheelwright's shop, where the farmers' wooden ploughshares

were made, on the left, the cottage only remaining to-day, and pass William Smith's house (The Elms) followed by Thomas Tybbotts' on our right. Here we should not be likely to miss "Grinning Jinny", another mill, built entirely of wood on trestles, which stood opposite to Thomas Buffery's, where Mr. Clutterbuck now resides, Buffery being the miller. The boundary of the Green passed behind Mr. Lingard's new house. Turning round we should get a glimpse of yet another mill—commonly called "Tom O' the Wood", Thomas Averne's, which was situated in the Back Lane, adjoining St. Anne's hfeadow. The line of the common on the south side ran in front of the Charity Cottages and Mr. Hanson's farm, which John Hawkes owned and occupied at this date (1821), thence straight to Back Lane, returning alongside the front of John Pettit's house (now Mr. Reynolds's) and E. Boddington's (now E. Saunders's) and the "Three Horse Shoes", thus giving an open view. This Back Lane, as originally called, was variously known as Baker's, Buck's, or Avern's Lane, from old inhabitants who lived therein at different periods, and ran past Mrs. Vardy's, coming out by the New Inn, it was truly a back lane, and more or less impassable in wet weather, so much so that a paved way, called "The Causeway", had been made, and was entered by a stile at the back of the cottage opposite Mrs. Vardy's, and ran along the back of the Woodlands, where Thomas Wallis lived, and the present schools, coming out at the head of the alley by the Hall, alongside the orchard. Thomas Wallis had been Treasurer of the Feoffees for sixteen years and was superseded in that office this year (1821) by John Bradbury. If a new name is required for the Back Lane, either St. Anne's or Leyton Road would be appropriate, as both would perpetuate old landmarks. The small plot of land long in the possession of the Charity Feoffees and known as "St. Mary Leyton's" lay in this Back Lane.

We should now have arrived at the "Three Horse Shoes" Inn, later, about 1826, turned into three cottages by David Buffery, where we might meet John Hawkes, serving this year in the capacity of Village Constable, just returning from Stratford, where he had been to draw for the militiamen of Rowington. Passing the old thatched cottage still existing, and the New Inn, kept by James Barnett, we should pass over the newly made canal bridge—the canal was finished to Rowington in 1796—and proceed past William Gardner's cottage, coming to Joseph Burge's house (now Mr. T. F. Smith's) at the corner of Halsturton Lane, which opens on to Turner's Green. This green extended right up to Mrs. Vardy's house, and from thence the boundary went by the house adjoining, occupied by the Shakspeare family of weavers at the time of the MS., and along the hedge running by the fine old Early Tudor house—probably the residence of the Ive's family who lived in Rowington in the 15th and 16th centuries, from whom it derived its name of Ivy House, or Cottages—and on to about where the present railway bridge stands. This point was called Inwood End, and from hereabouts commenced a wood called Aespeleye Wood, which extended in early days more or less through the whole district beyond to Lapworth Street, running back up to the old British Lane, and possibly across the "Steort" into Lapworth and Old Stratford parishes. The Saxon word '(Steort" signified a promontory, as that part of Lapworth running between Rowington and Old Stratford parishes forms, and gave the name Halsturton (the house on the Steort) to the lane running therefrom to Turner's Green. Fin wood, as this district is now called, though only so since the early part of 1800, will be seen is

a corruption of Inwood. It was in this wood (Aespeleye) that the Abbat of Reading claimed pannage for his men of Rowington as early as the twelfth century, and it rather looks from the records as if the parochial ownership of the promontory referred to was a debatable matter for many years. However, to proceed on our journey, we should pass the farm-house of William Bolton, the Church warden, on our left, where the Attwood family lived at the time of the ICIS. (now Mr. Currall's), and go close by another, opposite Robert Mander's farm on our right. These two last-mentioned Tudor farm-houses were open to Finwood Green, as hereabouts was called at this date, and one of them was probably the site of the Inwood family's "living", of whom we have mention in our early records, and who doubtless took their name from the situation "in-the-wood". We will take the '(New" road, made in 1811 at a cost of £70, since the building of the canal, go past Mander's and straight on. We have an item in the overseers' book of the purchase by the parish of land at Lawsonford from a Mr. and Mrs. Farmer of Weston (near Stoneleigh) at a cost of £34 6s. 10d, for the purpose of the new road. There were also repairs to the bridge over the brook the same year, at a cost of £15. The old road went to the left by Barnhurst's farm, coming out at Lawsonford, alongside the "Fleur de Lys" Inn.

Passing over the canal we should come to cross-roads. The one right in front is but a short lane or fordrough leading to Samuel Sly's copyhold cottage on the common called Bushwood Green. The land was open up to the existing old house opposite to Barnett's at the corner of this lane, and from that point all the land on the left, bounded by the road up to Hobbs Hill Closes in Parker's Lane, together with Sugar's Close in Taters Lane, which were the only enclosed lands on the common. Henley railway line now passes through Sugar's Close. Bushwood Green was of considerable extent, and open to Parker's Lane as far as the Brook House Farm, extending northward along Bushwood Coppice, and running there from to Lapworth Street. The Green, in the words of, an old inhabitant, now dead, who well remembered the village, " was wild and pretty, but Rowington Green was beautiful—the best of them all". Passing along we should arrive at the " Fleur de Lys ", and just past that inn the level is 283 feet, the lowest in the parish. Here a branch road goes off to the right, and a short way up divides into two. The one to the right is Parker's Lane referred to. Jos. Weetman was paid £17 3s. 9d. in 1823 for one rood of land (£68 15s. per acre) at the corner, for the purpose of widening the lane, and the total cost for laying it out was £70. It led to Bushwood Hall Farm, where Thomas Howlette lived at this time, but at the period of the MS. it was occupied by Thomas Hunt. The latter left a dole of 6s. 8d. on Sugar's Close for the benefit of the poor of the parish, which is regularly recorded in the MS. as having been paid, and is still paid at the present time, One would judge that Thomas Hunt was no mean scholar—probably a lawyer—and a connexion of Thomas Hunt, master of Stratford Grammar School. The beneficiary deed conveying the dole given by him was, as notified on the deed, written by his own hand.

The other turning, on the left, past the " White Horse " Inn kept by Jacob Taylor, is Rookery Lane, and leads up to Poundley (or Poundeye) End and the Rookeries, where the Greswolde family lived at the time of the MS. and probably from 150 years earlier. Trending our way along through Lawson End, up " Brocsturneway"—where the " brook turns away " south, and just past the Mission Hall, we should pass the "Broxton Fields" mentioned in the

MS. on our right. These are still held by the Charity Trustees, and adjoin the Morehill Farm owned in 1821 by John Gem, and were no doubt anciently cultivated and enclosed. They lay between the mill of Thomas Mark and the "Hetybutts", or "Eddy Butts" (Ord. Map 341, 342), as stated in our records as early as the thirteenth century (*X. R. i*, p. 5). "Eddy" seems to signify "where the brook winds", from Anglo-Saxon derivation. It may be that the affix "butts" may refer to the contour of the land, as the word also signifies a ridge of land, and such exists thereabouts. If it refers to shootingbutts, the record is the first mention we have of any butts in the parish. That there were butts is certain, for the laws from very early days enjoined that every man child of the age of seven years and above should be provided with a bow and arrows and be taught their use. If they failed to practice such shooting during the space of one month from the age of seventeen to sixty they were mulcted in their wages. At the end of the fifteenth century the King commanded every Englishman to have a long bow of his own height, and that butts should be made in every township at which the inhabitants were to shoot "up and down" upon feast days under the penalty of one halfpenny for any time they omitted to perform the service. There is mention of "his bow and his arrows" in the inventory of the goods of John Shaxspere's will in 1546. Probably "The Heytbutts" would be made of earth banked with turf and from 100 to 140 yards apart. There were probably two sets of butts, one in the lower field and one in the upper, and the archers having bent their bows against the upper butts would travel across and proceed to shoot the arrows back to the lower butts. There were probably other butts at Inwood End, as signified by the name "Annabuttes" given to a field thereat, and at Housley End, where we get another field called the "Kyte Buttes". A little farther along from the "Broxton Fields", past the "Masons' Arms" Inn on our left, and opposite the turn to the right, stands "Brokfurlong" Farm, at this time in the occupation of John Fetherstone, where yet another branch of the Shakspeare family lived at the period of the MS. and for some generations before. At the making of the railway this house was opened as an inn called "The Black Horse".

Bearing to our left, and proceeding on for half a mile, we should arrive at High Cross. Here, probably, a wayside cross or calvary stood in early days, which would be visited in the perambulations by the parish priest in Rogation Week before the Reformation. A short way to the east was Park Farm, now called "Pitts". From High Cross we should turn to the right, and sharp to the left, leaving Holywell Green on our right, remarking that there used to be a gate there by which one entered on to the Green, and that there still exists an old sixteenth-century farm-house, known as Holywell Farm, where William Bolton lived at that time. There is a turn to the right off the Green, which led to Peacock Green, Both greens were, with the others, enclosed at this date.

We should pass along to Pinley Green and arrive at the old "Green Dragon" Inn, kept by John Pinfold. Here, turning to our right and going up the "Combsey", all open land, we should come to Lye Green, where there was a gate called Lye Green Gate leading from the Green into Claverdon parish, and near this spot is the boundary of our parish on the south side, and its greatest elevation—425 feet. The turn to the right is Clay Lane, which leads to Holywell, but, retracing our steps for half a mile and leaving "Newlands" on our left at the back of "Cryer's Oak" farm—so called from the Cryer

family who lived here previous to 1553—we come to a fordrough on our right which leads to " Pinley Ridding ", a homestead belonging to the parish up to this year. From here, traversing two fields would bring us to Claverdon Manor Farm, through which the parish boundary passes. I remember an old inhabitant of the district describing his experience as a boy during one of the old customary " beats ", when he was passed through the larder window of this manor farm to mark the boundary at that point. This would be a further corroboraiion of the evidence of Nicholas Greene, a yeoman of Rowington, given at a Commission which sat at Warwick in 1599, and is detailed in *Id. R.* i, p. 172. Herein the said Nicholas Greene affirmed that Rowington, in the perambulations

at which he was present, included those lands " parcel of the said Nunnery of Pinley ", as being within the parish of Rowington. He stated also that certain old men parishioners of Rowington had informed him that they also had included the said lands in their perambulations in their day, and that such lands were all accounted as being in the parish of Rowington.

Leaving Pinley Abbey on our right we should again arrive at the cross-roads by the " Green Dragon ". Widow Bragg, who set the haws to make the hedge on the enclosure hereabouts, still resides near by. Across the way, close to where Thomas Smith's blacksmith's shop existed, and where Hancock's shop now stands, we should observe another pound which served this end of the parish, and passing along we should come to Caudel Herne, vulgarly called " Colley Irons", the words probably signifying an enclosed or warm corner. It is situated in Shrewley parish, where the boundary skirts the road on the right. A little farther along we should pass a lane on our left which leads to Park Farm and High Cross, and just beyond this lane should arrive where Shrewley boundary crosses the road, at which point was a gate, called Pinley Gate, situated almost opposite to William Leeson's sixteenth century farm-house called Yew Tree Farm", now Mrs. Rogers's. This gate was the entrance from this end of the parish to Shrewley Common, which bordered the parish right up to " Lyaunce Farm " and " Harvies ", and extended right away up to Kenilworth. An old inhabitant who used to travel across this common told me that one might easily lose one's way in traversing it, which goes to prove its wild nature. At Shrewley, near to Mr. King's farm, was another gate which led to Hatton and Warwick. Turning to the left towards Rowington, we should cross the boundary by the " Common Gate " from Shrewley Common to Rowington, opposite to which stood Lowland Farm, occupied by D. Redings, to-day by Mr. E. Page. On the right-hand side of the road we should see Oldfield Farm, where J. Willington lived. The name Oldfield no doubt refers to the old circular moat behind the present house, which clearly denotes the site of a very old building. Opposite, we have the entrance to the High House, which was owned and occupied by Thomas Wells, by far the largest ratepayer at this date. The present house was built by Richard Betham over 200 years ago, but whether one existed here before there is no evidence to show. It was built in the times when Roman Catholics were persecuted for following their faith, and no doubt contained a secret hiding-place, for one of the Fowlers of St. Thomas's (Staff.) found refuge there.

Travelling down the hill we should pass another old farm-house on our left, in the occupation of John Taylor (now John Avern), and passing over Smalley Brook should come to the " Cock-in-the-Tree" Inn, kept by James Avern. Just beyond, on our right, would be Squadge Lane—spelt Squage in the highway accounts. Squadge Lane is an ancient one leading to Whitley End and

Mousley End. In 1793 the parish was served with an indictment respecting the repairing of this lane, with which they objected to comply and so went to law. The result was rather costly, as Lawyer Greenway's (Warwick) bill amounted to £53 2s. 4d and the case evidently went against the parish, as the extra expenses incurred by the overseer for repairs recorded in 1795, when the case was settled, would imply. There were two overseers of the highways for Rowington, one acting for Church End, and the other for Lawsonford End. They both presented separate accounts of receipts and expenditure, apparently making a levy beyond the ordinary composition on their respective districts when required for special work done therein. There were also overseers of the poor for each of these districts, and they, in like manner, kept separate accounts. At the end of Squadge Lane, which runs into Coldfield (or Colefield) Lane, is a picturesque old farm-house, now owned and occupied by Mr. William Smith, which I believe was the home of William Cowper, a Church warden during the period of the NS., whose wife was the centenarian, Joane Coper, referred to in the notes on the Church. This house, which I believe was originally called Whitley End Farm, is worth attention, for such untouched specimens of Tudor farm-houses are becoming rare on our countryside. In old days there used to be a lane continuing on from Squadge Lane, but about fifty yards south, which led due east to an old barn called Tankard's or Piper's, and came out opposite to the land called "Harvies", where a portion of the lane still exists. A farm-house and two small holdings or cottages were located hereabouts, but disappeared some years ago, though the barn existed till recent times, adjoining the field on which the pound of pepper was charged, as mentioned in the MS. (Ord. Map 857). A man named Tankard, or Tanquard, was the representative of Rowington when a perambulation of the parish boundary between the lands of the Abbats of Reading and those of Hugh, the lord of Hatton, was made *circa* 1150 (*R.R. i, p. 1*), and it is quite conceivable that this barn, which stood on the parish boundary, was the site of Tankard's "living",

Returning to Coldfield Lane, at the top of which stand the two old Shrewley mills, one of which may have been the mill referred to *circa* 1329 (*R. R. i, p. 7*) and traversing it in a northerly direction we should come to Coldfield Gate, which stood about a quarter of a mile down the lane from the mills; and passing Whitley End Farm should arrive at Tadpole Green (not a very old name). From this point another lane goes east towards Shrewley Common, guarded by Whitley Gate. The house on the left, with a sundial, was "Whitley Elm", where "Old Thomas Shakespeare " died (Church Register, 1669). At Tadpole Green the parish was awarded, by the Commissioner in 1824, ground between the road and Quarry Farm lands for a gravel pit, but it seems that the parish has now lost this ground, as it has lost other rights, through neglect. Keeping straight on down Coldfield Lane, often referred to in the overseers' books, and passing Tadpole Lane, leading to John Fletcher's farm on our right, we should come to a small stream which, rising in Hay Wood, traverses the centre of the parish, joining the Kingswood brook by the Mission Church at Lawsonford, and ultimately finding its way into the Bristol Channel. This stream is the same as Fox's brook, but is called hereabouts Tadpole brook. The lane beyond the brook is called Quarry Lane, from the ancient stone quarry which lies at the back of Quarry Farm, and it leads on to Rowington Green and Baddesley Clinton. At the bottom of Quarry Hill on the Wroxall side of the road, at the

corner of the boundary between Rowington and Baddesley Clinton parishes, may be seen the remains of a small brick bridge, over which a foot-road led to the mill belonging to the Priory of Wroxall. There is a bill of £17 *0s. 2d.* paid this year (1821) to J. Bradbury by the overseer for repairs to bridge in Quarry Lane, which might refer to this bridge. Bradbury seems to have usually supplied bricks where required. The mill was situated in the corner of the field No. 3 on Ord. Map, and it may be that the name " Mousley " had some connexion therewith. This district is an old inhabited part of Rowington. It is surmised that, at the time of the M S., Roger Oldnall, who farmed in a big way, lived hereabouts, and Richard Broke, gent., occupied the house where John Fletcher now resides, and which seems to have been called " The Hill". It was also in this house that John Warner, Lord Mayor of London in 1619, was born or resided. Here, also, lived and died Samuel Smalbroke and his wife Elizabeth, parents of Richard Smalbroke, D.D., Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry (1739-41). Their memorial stones lie in the north aisle of our church.

Retracing our steps to the foot of Squadge Hill on the Warwick highway, we should pass over the foot-bridge of Fox's brook. One John Fox was bailiff of Rowington in 1413, and the brook may have been named after him, as he owned a part of Gilbert's Land close to where it rises. He probably also owned the water-mill which used to exist at Foxbrook, the field adjoining serving as a pool to feed it. The house was owned at this date (1821) by Richard Draper, and was occupied by Thomas Bolton.

Proceeding on our way over Church bridge, which spans the small stream called Laurence brook, we should climb a short steep ascent, on top of which stands our village church, grey and old, the most striking feature in our village. Opposite thereto is the Hall, originally the old manor house of the parish appertaining to the Abbats of Reading. Whether any of the Abbats ever visited or stayed at their manor house is not known, though some information might have been obtained had the cartularies of the Abbey been preserved. In 1806 Samuel Aston of Birmingham bought the Hall and farm from William Smith, a native of Great Wolford, Co. Warwick, who had purchased the property from Thomas le Blanc in 1804. Samuel Aston erected the stone front, filling up the front of the old E-shaped house of the Tudors, and was living there in 1821. Thomas Fetherstone was his bailiff, and he was the grandfather of F. T. Taylor, the present station master at Snow Hill, Birmingham, who was born at the Hall. William Skinner, who followed soon after John Oldnall, resided here during the period of the MS., when the buildings on the site, including six barns, stables, &c., consisted of twenty-five bays.

Alongside the churchyard, the first house we should come to would be Abraham Sly's on the right of the twenty steps. This house formerly belonged to the parish, but was lost through neglect. It has since been purchased by subscription, and the land joined to the churchyard. We should see from here the old wooden-faced clock which abutted from the tower window alongside the old sundial, but facing the south-west. The clock-face was removed at the restoration, and a new metal face placed on the west side of the tower. On the left of the twenty steps was a one-roomed cottage occupied at one time by William Gazy, the parish clerk, which practically adjoined the schoolmaster's house. William Gazy became clerk in 1801 on the death of his father, John Gazy, the previous parish clerk, and occupied the office until his death in

1846, a period of forty-five years, though he served during the latter years of his father's life, and so may be credited with even a longer period. Francis Evans was schoolmaster at this time (1821) having been appointed in 1817, following the Rev. J. Jones, who was also curate. The latter received a salary of only £16 per year as schoolmaster, but Francis Evans had a capitation fee for teaching the "free scholars" which amounted to £32 per year, and at this date there was an average of sixty-two scholars. He continued as schoolmaster for nearly forty years, and during his period conducted the Sunday School also, for which he received a further £3 per year. The smallness of the salary is incredible to-day, yet it is probable that the children were turned out equal in intelligence and morality to those of these times of gross extravagance. It may interest the modern educationist to learn that Rowington School children had a garden ground as early as 1810, when a piece of ground was purchased by the Feoffees of Abram Sly " below Culver close " (opposite Fox Brook House) for £5 5s. for the use of the school. The old pedagogues were often good men, though shockingly ill-paid. William Poolton, schoolmaster, who died in 1793, began his duties at the munificent salary of 610 per annum | The schoolmaster at this date (1821) had only to cross the passage from his dwelling to reach the school-house adjoining, a two-storied building with a pent-house on the north side; and then came a gateway to the churchyard, which extended to where the present chestnut tree stands. Hereabouts came the entrance to the low half-timbered vicarage of five bays in extent, at this time stuccoed over, and the old straw-thatched barn of four bays, evidently the Vicars' old tithe barn, no doubt much needed before the " fruits " were finally commuted for money in 1846. The present vicarage was erected about 1850 in the Rev. Arthur Gem's time, and was added to by his successor, the Rev. P. B. Brodie. The Rev. Hugh Laugharne, who came from Warwick, was Vicar at this time, having succeeded the Rev. George Weale in 1812. The School-house was the same building as is referred to in the MS. as the Churchhouse and Court-house, and was probably originally built for the latter, as in early times the Manorial Court was of considerable importance, and its meetings would be red-letter days in the parish. We have a record of a court being held during the period of the MS. by the deputy steward, William Hill (see X. X. i, p. 160). Besides the jury of " twelve true men " many inhabitants of the village would be present to the summons of the bailiff, who, standing at the front door of the Court-house, called out " Oyez, Oyez, All manner of persons that have anything to do at a general Court Baron and Customary Court here about to be holden for the manor of Rowington draw nigh and give your attendance and you shall be heard ". Those who were required to answer summonses for breaking the Assize of ale and beer, failing to clean out their ditches, which were the majority of cases among others to be heard, would of necessity have to attend, but disputes about property between tenants and the receiving of the surrender of lands and admitting grantees or successors was also effected at such courts. It would be interesting to note that we have a record as early as 1284 (*RR. i, p. 129*) of two Rowington men being condemned to death for theft, and hanged at the Court-house, and this would hardly be an exceptional case as the Abbat of Reading enjoyed the privilege of the hundred courts. The question arises, where was the gallows erected ? Probably on Sentence Corner, the name given to the open space we should see in front of us after passing the school-house, where Corbett's shop now exists, but which at this date (1821) was open up to Mrs. Merriman's cottages and

Mr. Ghent's house. Hereon, no doubt, also stood the village stocks, of which we have record of being mended by William Gazy at this period, and various other " sentences " would be served here.

Going up the hill we notice the old " Elephant and Castle " Inn, now called " Wayside", which not only existed at the time of the MS. but long before, and which no doubt received its name from an early occupier coming from Coventry and using that city's arms as a sign. Adjoining the inn is a field called the Bull Ring, alongside St. Anne's Meadow. This might indicate the site whereon the sport of bull-baiting was carried on in ancient days, probably on the annual festal day of St. Laurence, the patron saint of the parish church. In later days the village wake or statute fair, now obsolete, was held at the " Elephant" *on* this day. I well remember some fifty years ago one Johnson, the waggoner at Silhill Hall Farm, attending thereat, and returning with a report of the crowds present and the good time he had enjoyed. " Mr. Perks" (Edward Perks) was mine host, and his good wife, Katherine, hostess, at this time (1821), and if we called at the inn would be able to tell us many interesting details of the inhabitants of the houses we have passed during our journey round the parish. But it is dangerous to digress, though it might make the reading more entertaining, and space will not allow.

Leaving the inn and continuing up the hill we should soon arrive at the Alley-way on Rowington Green. The name Alley signified a narrow lane or by-way, and was probably introduced at the time of the enclosures. It is a fine old name (" Alle the aleis were made playne (clean) with sand".— John Lydgate, 14th cent.) and is often used in describing the ways between the pews in churches, such as the " middle alley " or " side alley". At the back of the Alley is " Hogstyd " close, the place where the hogs were collected off the common at certain times of the year, and when they required ringing by the parish hog-ringer. On our right, opposite to the " Hogstyd " Close, and adjoining the small farm-house, now called the Glebe Farm, we should pass the Queen's Close, evidently a reminiscence of the days when the Queen was Lady of the Manor. The lane adjoining was called Queen's Lane, commonly known as " Quenny Lane " as recorded in the Commissioner's Award. Three queens have been owners of the Manor—Catherine (Parr) 1543-53; Elizabeth, for a short period; and Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. Catherine, being the first, and coming immediately after the long lease of the Abbats of Reading, 1543, would be the queen from whom the name originated. There used to be a report in the parish that William Smith, who purchased the lordship of the Manor in 1801-3, resided in a cottage in front of this farm, but this is very doubtful and evidence is wanting. More probably he was the William Smith who lived on the other side of the common at the house known to-day as " The Elms ". He was also owner of the great tithes, and it rather looks as if his purchase of both manor and tithes was a speculation on his part, as he at once proceeded to sell everything of value appertaining to those offices. He might be said to have been the last lay-rector of the parish, and, like his predecessors, does not appear to have spent anything either on the Church or parish. The great tithes were, for the most part, redeemed during his time, and others have been since, leaving but few impropiators to-day whose holdings are of comparatively small value, entailing little liability, I imagine. The only impropiators who figure as having expended anything on the Church are the Trustees of the Charities. Mary, the daughter of William Smith, was Lady of the Manor in 1821, and Joseph Harding, gent., was steward; this probably

accounts for the MS. getting into the Hardings' office, as stated in the notes thereon,