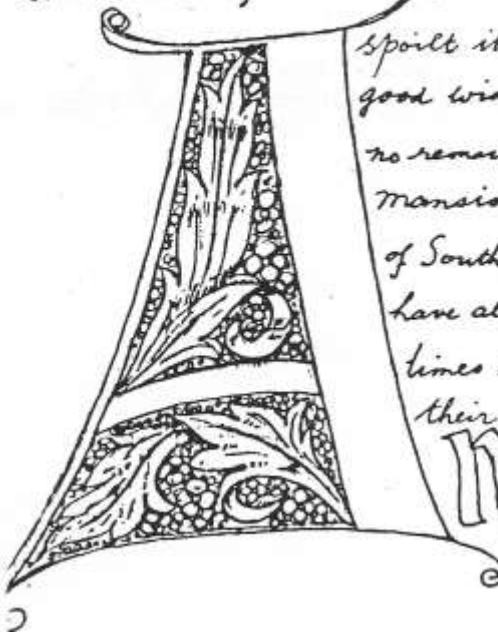


Winkleigh People

CHAPTER 8.

The Parish has its fair quota of homesteads belonging to old important families, although few could be recognised as such today. The universal decay of the class to which they belonged has brought with it a tale of houses falling into disrepair and then of demolition and remembered only by the vagaries of folk memory or by their chance inclusion in some old traveller's book. We can learn about these people therefore only in the way we could know a family by glancing in through an open door as we passed along. Time has shut many of these doors.

Winkleigh Court on an historic has been converted into a Guest House during the Second World War the Air Ministry has further spoilt its immediate surroundings by cutting a good wide road through the garden. There are no remains of Richard English's castellated mansion at Hollecombe, and the sub-manors of Southcott Collacott, and Clotworthy or Croft, have all been rebuilt in comparatively modern times and there are no records or prints of their former dimensions. Loosedon Barton is an exception to the above list. In Norman and Tudor times it was undoubtedly a pleasant and picturesque Manor

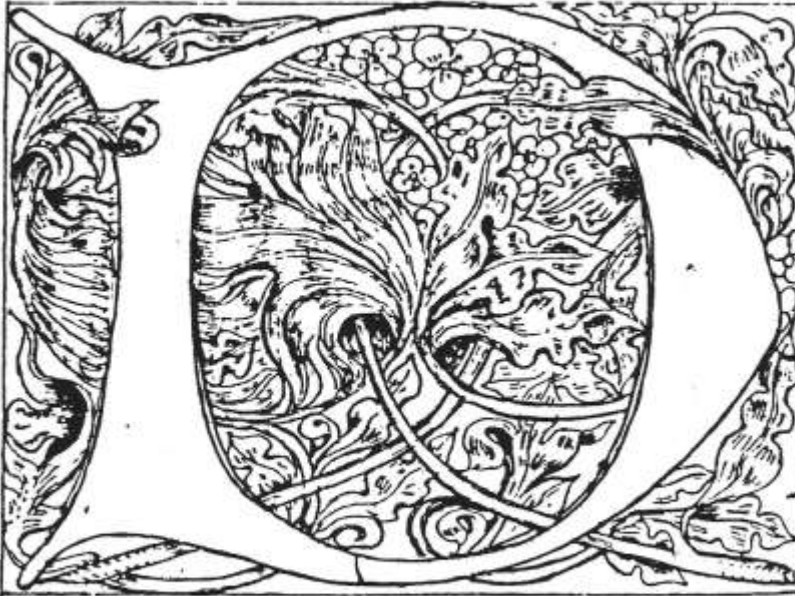




but it has been denuded
of much of those parts,
the harmony of which
expresses more than
anything else, the
unity and lifelike
character, which is
the charm of these

buildings. If this manor house is a replica of other houses which have been allowed to ^{fall into} decay, and built on modern lines, then Winkleigh has lost jewels of rare quality. Gib House, the home of the Norris family, cannot be found, neither can I find the homestead of a family of the seventeenth century named by Gould. On the other hand, the Parsonage, Townsend, Seckington and Bitheave have housed some of the important names in Winkleigh's history.

Loxendon Barton, on the extreme western edge of the parish was for a long period the manor house and until quite recently there were unmistakable traces of its former grandeur and establishment. A few years ago a squire from a neighbouring parish bought the large heavy oak studded front door, the wainscoting of the chief rooms and the large carved fireplace of the best parlour and set them up at Stafford Barton. But whatever advantage the transfer may have given to their new surroundings, the fact remains that these fittings were created



for this particular centuries old historic Manor House. The loss occasioned with their removal will be measured in the light of their aesthetic qualities in relation to the main building, rather than their "sterling" worth. The modern wall paper and **pal** substitutes seem out of place in the ancient

Building.

It is possible that portions of the house date before the fourteenth century. It is larger than the average Manor House associated with Devon, but cannot compare in size with those of neighbouring Counties. Standing on high ground it must have looked imposing in Medieval times, when there were very few houses, probably only the labourer's dwellings.

It differs from the usual small oblong Manor or Sub-Manor building in having wings extended at right angles to the main structure, with their pleasing gables, and the whole has more of the appearance of an old house in Normandy, than a Devonshire farm dwelling.

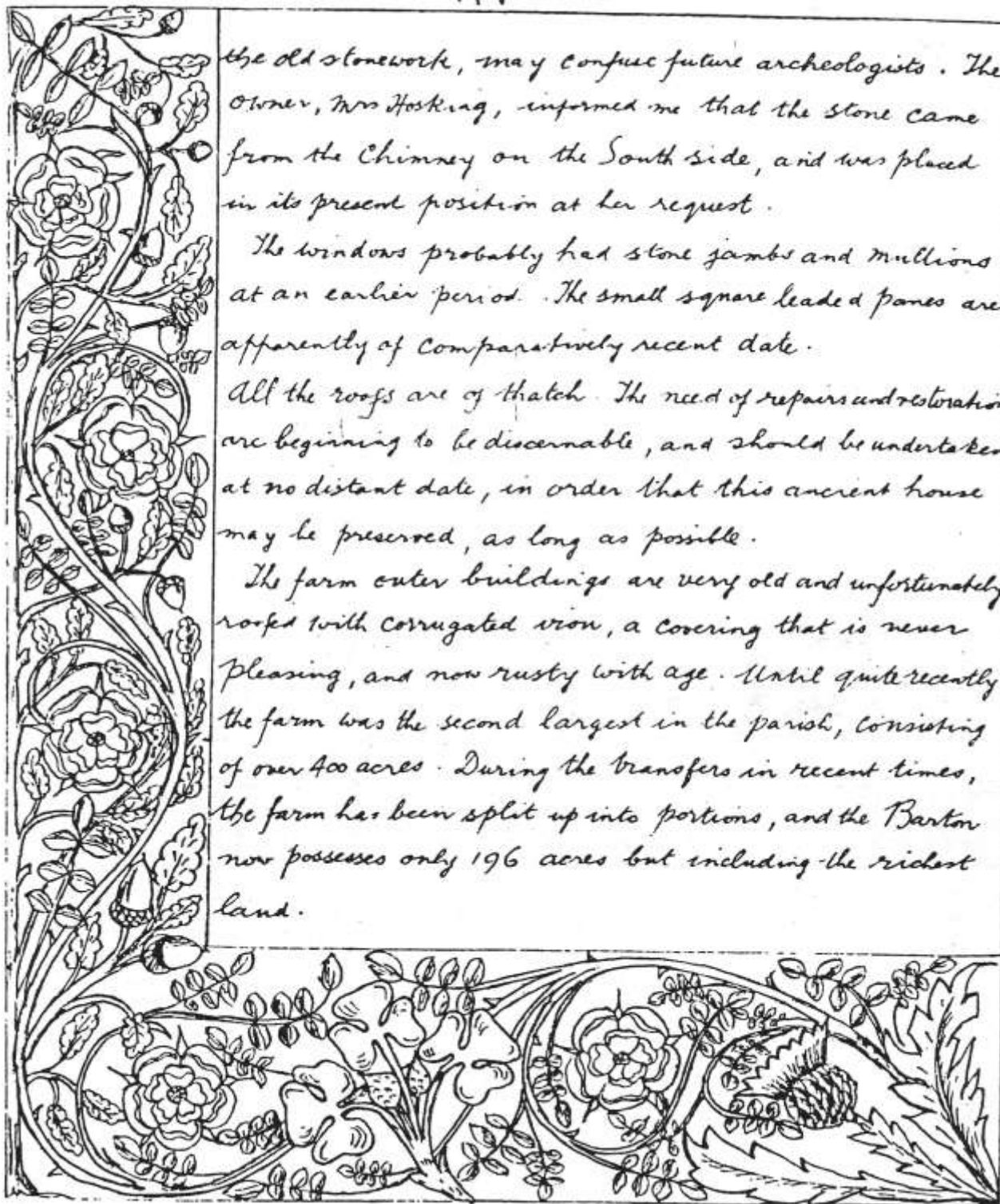
The plain circular granite archway at the entrance of the enormous porch, although frequently well with in Jacobean masonry, is thought to be much earlier. The marks of time are evident, but the date, 1651, incised on a stone over the arch, when mellowed by time with

the old stonework, may confuse future archeologists. The owner, Mrs Hosking, informed me that the stone came from the Chimney on the South side, and was placed in its present position at her request.

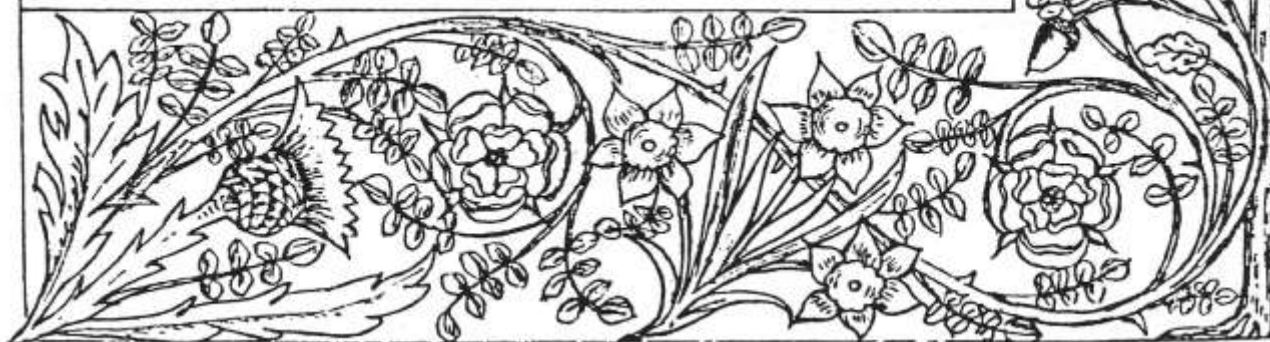
The windows probably had stone jambs and mullions at an earlier period. The small square leaded panes are apparently of comparatively recent date.

All the roofs are of thatch. The need of repairs and restoration are beginning to be discernable, and should be undertaken at no distant date, in order that this ancient house may be preserved, as long as possible.

The farm outbuildings are very old and unfortunately roofed with corrugated iron, a covering that is never pleasing, and now rusty with age. Until quite recently the farm was the second largest in the parish, consisting of over 400 acres. During the transfers in recent times, the farm has been split up into portions, and the Barton now possesses only 196 acres but including the richest land.



Yet if we have the building we know little of the Lords of the Manor. Aluric held the land at the time of Edward the Confessor, and Goscelm at the time of the Conqueror. In the 13th Century, according to Worthy, Robert de Pole was enfeoffed, later came the families of Cole, Bury and Culme. But these are only names to us and we do not know sufficient to enfuse them with character and recognise them as people. What do we know of the Culmes for instance? Westcote gives a genealogy which shows that a fifteenth century Culme was a sergeant at law and that the family was related to the Collacotts of Collacott. Lysons states that the family took its name from Colum John Broadclyst, where John de Culme was in possession in 1233 and that at the time of Edward I a Sir William Culme lived at Molland-Saracen. Again, it is known that before 1873 there were memorial stones of this family visible in the Looseton Aisle; or in an undated pre-reformation Church account there is an entry "for the bell ringing of John Culme 4^d" All that can be deduced from these





scraps of otherwise useless information is that the family had close connections with the parish and that is all ².

Quite a great deal more is known of some of the other Lords of the manor.

The Keynes family (spelt variously as Keynes, Keignes, Kaignes, Caynes, Cheines, Caygays, Hayes and Haynes) are a case in point. Their name regularly appears on Court documents from 1260, but they probably became Lords of the Manor at Winkfield shortly after the Conquest. They stayed about 15 descents, **before they left for Somerset.**

The best known known, Sir William Keynes, fought for his master, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, on behalf of Matilda and took the usurper Stephen prisoner at Lincoln on Candlemas Day 1141. The incident is described by Matthew Paris. "A very strange sight it was, there to behold King Stephen, left almost alone in the field, yet no man daring to approach him, while grinding his teeth and foaming like a furious wild boar, he drove back with his battleaxe the assailing squadrons, slaying the foremost of them, to the eternal renown of his courage. If but a hundred like himself had been with him, a whole army had not been able to capture his person; yet single handed as he was, he held out, till first his battleaxe broke and afterwards his sword shivered in his grasp with the force of his relentless blows, and he was borne backward to his knees by a great stone, flung at him. A Knight (Sir

(Sir) William Keyne



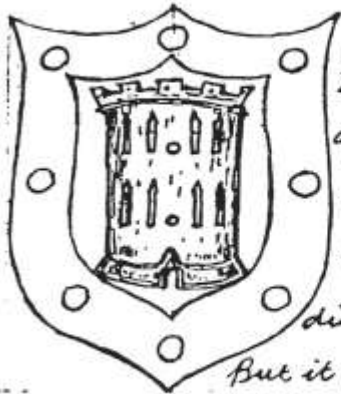
then seized him by the helmet and holding the point of his sword to his throat, called on him to surrender"⁴. They held land in Exeter, Somerset,

Dorset and Hampshire, in addition to the Manor of Winkleigh and gave their name both to the manor and the court house which were called Keynes Castle and Winkleigh Keynes respectively. This family is by no means extinct. As late as 1925 one of their descendants returned to Winkleigh from Siam to make enquiries about his forebears.⁵

We know little regarding the thirteenth century Weccmund de Portuo Mortuo who did so much to give the hamlet of Hollacombe a separate existence, as was described in Chapter 4.

These two families represent the "big" names in the parish. But in addition there are several smaller families who have owned land or resided in the parish for long periods. The Cruwys family, who gave their name to Cruwys Orchard, had a branch of the family residing at Winkleigh from a fairly early period down to modern times. The church accounts contain the earliest record of their activities in the parish. Thomas Cruwys was one of the FOUR men of Winkleigh in the Sixteenth Century and many of his descendants were Churchwardens — a sure sign

of the esteem in which the family were held. A John Cruse married Ann, daughter of Humphrey Keynes and their son Humphrey ran into a debt of £2,000, a stupendous sum for those days, being equivalent to about £132,000 today. His father, mother and his uncle, John Keynes, tried to help him by arranging a loan on the security of the family estate. The deed arranging this is dated August 1569. John Cruse, the father died in 1602, a fact recorded by the legacy of twenty shillings for the poor of the parish. The erring son, Humphrey, died in 1623, placing his property in the hands of trustees for the benefit of his son and heir, Lewis, and his wife Sarah, Alexander, Lewis' son and Frances, his wife. Lewis did not come into the estates until the mature age of 44, and he died in 1641. But shortly after the death of Humphrey Cruse, the four parties to the deeds began to sell off their farms



for quite absurd sums and when Alexander Cruse died only a portion of the estate was left. It has been suggested that the delinquency of Humphrey Cruse was in some way contributory to the fall of the Keynes family in this area but the disappearance of the family occurred before this Rake's Progress.

But it is interesting to note that one of the people to whom John Cruse was forced to convey his estates, Thomas Bretton (Broughton) of Stoodleigh (Studleigh) was an ancestor of the Broughton who eventually came into the Keynes estates ⁶.

The Gidleys of Gidley Castle settled at Winkleigh early in the sixteenth century and took a very active part in the social life of the parish. Richard Gidley was buried at Winkleigh 1574. He was the father of Bartholomew whose son of the same name repurchased the ancient family property of the Coads. George Gidley was constable in 1591. The second Bartholomew was the first of nine children; he was lucky enough to matriculate at Exeter College, Oxford 1632. He was Captain of the Stannery at Chagford and during the civil war raised a troop of horse for the King's service, of which he took command. For his bravery and zeal he was given a silver medal with an inscription stating that "peace and war had ever found him constant to his King". On the reverse are the arms granted by Edward Bysshe Clarencieux 20th November 1666 for his eminent services "before Lyme, Plymouth and elsewhere in the west, limited to him, and his heirs and those of his brother John. He was an active magistrate and a strong Churchman and conspicuous for his opposition to the conventicles after the passing

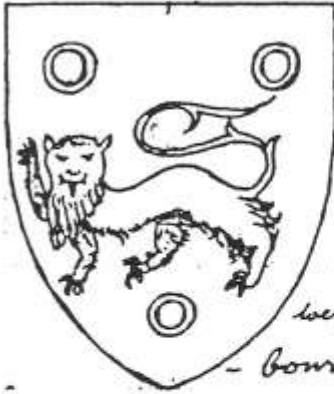
of the act of Uniformity 1662. He died without issue 1686. His real estate was settled upon his nephew, Bartholomew, son of his brother John, who inherited the manor, park and farm of Gidley, the advowson of Gidley Church, the manor of Hollacombe Parhamore and other properties in Winklesigh and Roborough. Sir Peter Lely painted his portrait. He died 1702, aged 34, leaving eight children of whom Bartholomew his heir, born in 1689 was a godson of William III. A letter preserved in which the King gives him practical advice,



apparently unheeded for he cut the entail of his property. He was buried in the Gidley Aisle at Winklesigh 1776. His son Gustavus was the ancestor of the Gidley family of Plymouth.

The Hernimans of Wood Terrill are a branch of a family well distributed on farms in the district during the seventeenth century. They are of great antiquity, having probably descended from the Hermanduri, a Saxon tribe which settled in England before the Roman Exodus. The name is variously written, Herman, Hermer





Herniman, Horniman and Harpiman. Among the property granted by King William to the Bishop of Coutance was the manor of Hermans sword, "Heomondesworda" in the parish of Bradworthy. Saxon landowners of this name were confined to only three manors in Devon (Nymet, Wadh-
- Bourne), and it is the descendants of the Domesday subtenant who probably founded the North Devon branch of the family. One of the family, James, was settled in the parish at Wood Terrill when his son Robert was born in 1598. The second son of Robert, William, was born in 1619 and his son of the same name succeeded his cousin Luke at Hernimans, South Molton, the headquarters of this family. The elder son of Robert, John, was father to George who migrated to Somerset and became the great-great grandfather of the John who founded the great commercial house of "Hornimans" and left £89,000 to Charities⁸.

The Brembridges of Winkleigh were a younger branch of the Brembridges related to Drogo Fitzmanger of Bradleigh, son of Manger, Earl of Arquis, son of Richard I. Their descendants, traceable through many generations, became vicars of Winkleigh Church in the nineteenth century and have remained closely linked until recently.

Before we pass to consider the population of ordinary folk, without lines of descent nor pretensions towards them,⁹ we may consider some of the interesting, who without roots in the parish, yet dwell there a while. There was George Henry Pinckard who was born at Court Barton in 1805, to whom is attached the legend that he went away from Winkleigh in debt and left the Key.

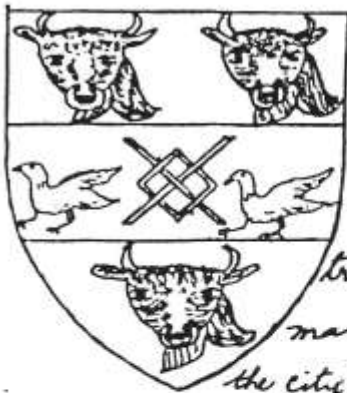
Under the door, ^{of Court Barton} returning in later years to pay in full. His early habits of thrift specially associated him with the two Friendly Societies connected with Chiddingfold and neighbour-

-ing Villages. He became a director of the Clerical, Medical and Legal Insurance Company. His piety and munificence led to the restoration of the parish Church and that of Chiddingfold. He died at Chiddingfold 1892 but left £200 to the Vicar and Churchwardens of both parishes for the purpose of providing a day of rejoicing on Friday May 25th 1894, the anniversary of his birthday (the day turned out to be one of the most delightful in May 109).

Richard Horwood Dunning of Puttsborough and Heliars, Winkleigh became an Army officer, a county J.P., and was an all round sportsman. He died in 1907. 110.

The Rev H.F. Nesbit was educated at Clare College, Cambridge and before spending the years 1918-25 as Vicar of Winkleigh had other church appointments, including the Curacy of Ilfracombe,



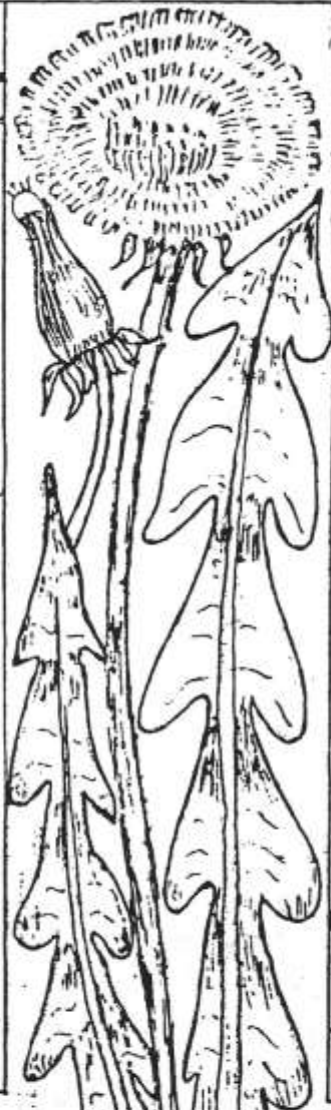


He wrote a history of the Parish Church of Ilfracombe, transcribed the Winkleigh Church Accounts from the early sixteenth century down to the present time, transcribing all the registers of Winkleigh in four manuscript volumes (which at the present are lodged at the City Library, Exeter and are the property of the Devon and Cornwall Society) and with the assistance of Canon Chandler, compiled the list of Winkleigh Rectors and Vicars. He is remembered by the frequency and punctuality of his visits (even in remote parts of this very large parish) which were most appreciated.

His story leads back to another parson of literary fame. William Davy was presented with the living of Winkleigh by Bishop Carey in December 1825. The change from the sheltered climate of Lutterleigh to the bleak air of Winkleigh was dangerous at his age of 83 and he died after performing his duty for only a few Sundays. He was buried in the Church and his body was not moved at the Restoration because of his dying wish not to be disturbed. He was born at Downhouse near Tavistock in 1743 and proved to be a clever and observant child with a mechanical turn of mind. He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford and held many livings. When preaching from his "System of Divinity" his flock listened with pleasure to the virtues of the age, but when he started on the vices with the text "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgressions" his listeners complained to Bishop Ross.

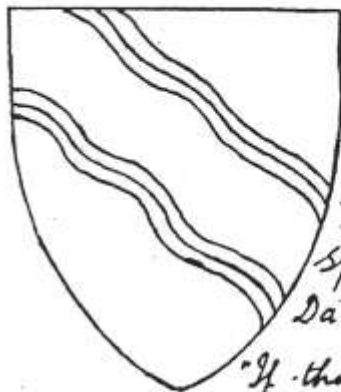
Mr Davey waited upon his ^{manuscript} Diocesan with ^{two} ~~three~~ Volumes of Sermons, the full title being "A System of Divinity in a Course of Sermons on the Being, nature and attributes of God; on some of the most important articles of Christian Religion; and on the virtues and vices of mankind."

The bishop kept the volumes for some time, sent for Mr Davey, commended him for his sermons and told him he should like to "notice with his marked approval his zeal and fidelity etc". A living for Mr Davey was mentioned



but never materialised. In 1782 when the Royal George was sunk he went down to Portsmouth with a plan for a new diving machine which was accepted and acted upon, but for which he received no credit. In 1786 Mr Davey was appointed to the perpetual curacy of Lussleigh with a yearly income of £40. At the age of 52 he borrowed money to purchase a font of casleary types of a printer in Exeter (Treasurer) and made a press with his own hands. In five months he printed 40 copies of his first Volume. It contained

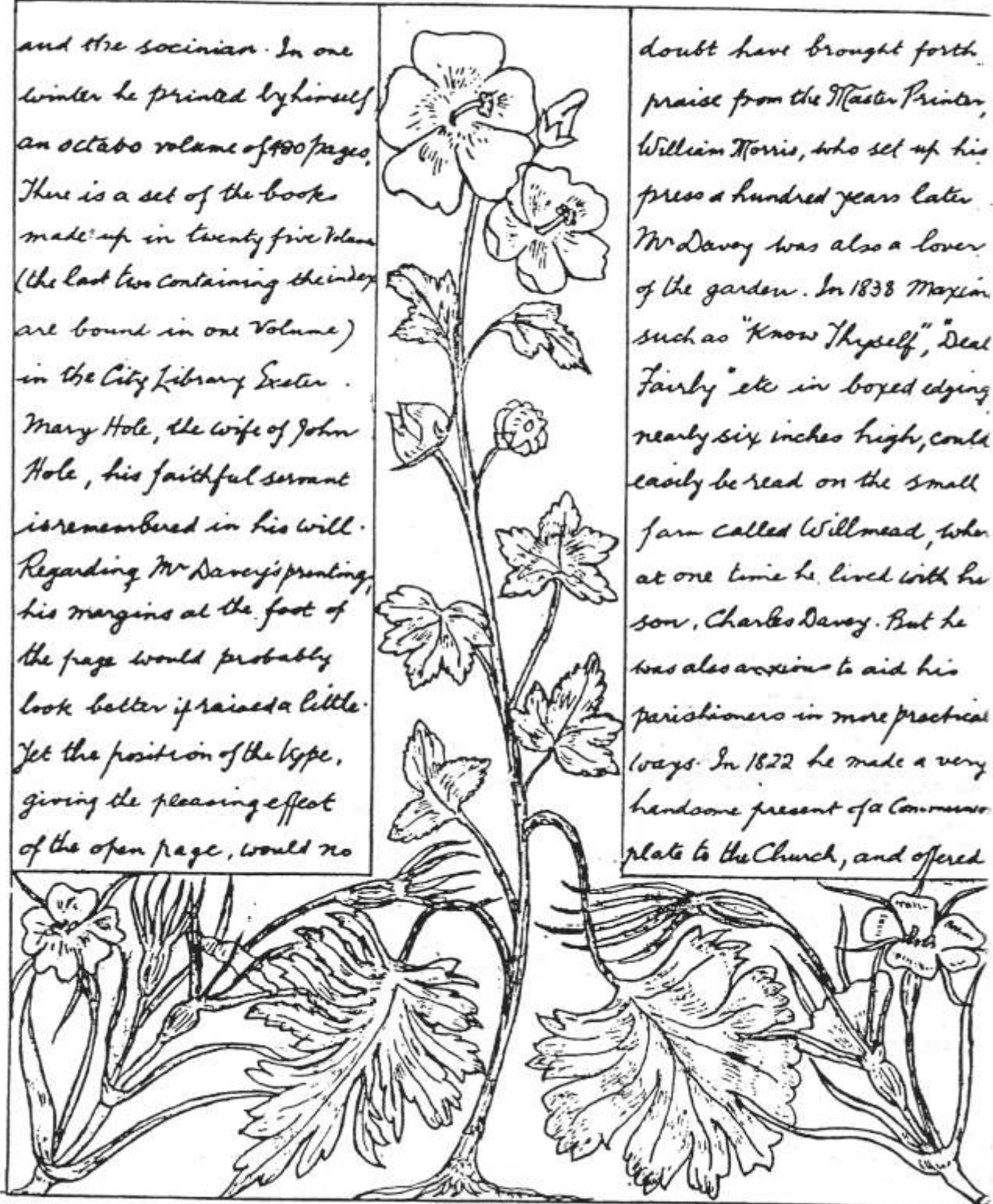




328 pages in Octavo. Twenty-six of these copies were sent to the two Universities, the Royal Society, and other learned bodies. Very few acknowledged the receipt of the specimen volumes. A patronising review of which Mr Davy did not approve brought forth the following striation "If thou hast not understanding, hold thy peace, and it shall be accounted wisdom unto thee". To compose the type Mr Davy taught his servant, Mary Hole, the art, and with her assistance alone he steadily proceeded with his laborious undertaking. In 1795 he began his second volume, adding after the name "Lustleigh". Printed by himself Pro Bono Publico. Fourteen copies only. The twenty-sixth and last book was finished in 1807. It would have cost £2000 had it been published in the usual way. There being no patron willing to lend his name to the work, Mr Davy dedicated his labours "To Almighty God". The preface, in Latin, tells us of his object and of his difficulties. The greater part of the fourteen sets were again sent away as presents. Some favorable Notices ^{as 12} appeared - one by Isaac D'Israeli in the Quarterly Review - and some letters. Bishop Fisher observed on Mr Davy presenting him with a copy, that "he could not be supposed to be able to notice every little trifle that appeared in print". Mr Davy replied that "If his lordship considered twenty-six volumes Octavo the labour of fifty years in collecting, compiling and printing, a trifle, he certainly could not allow himself to expect from his lordship either approbation or encouragement." At the age of 80 his press was printing selections from his "System" calculated to refute the dangerous and destructive errors of the infidel

and the socinian. In one winter he printed by himself an octavo volume of 480 pages. There is a set of the books made up in twenty five volumes (the last two containing the index are bound in one volume) in the City Library Exeter. Mary Hole, the wife of John Hole, his faithful servant is remembered in his will. Regarding Mr Davy's printing, his margins at the foot of the page would probably look better if raised a little. Yet the position of the type, giving the pleasing effect of the open page, would no

doubt have brought forth praise from the Master Printer, William Morris, who set up his press a hundred years later. Mr Davy was also a lover of the garden. In 1838 Maxims such as "Know Thyself", "Deal Fairly" etc in boxed edging nearly six inches high, could easily be read on the small farm called Willmead, where at one time he lived with his son, Charles Davy. But he was also anxious to aid his parishioners in more practical ways. In 1822 he made a very handsome present of a Communion plate to the Church, and offered



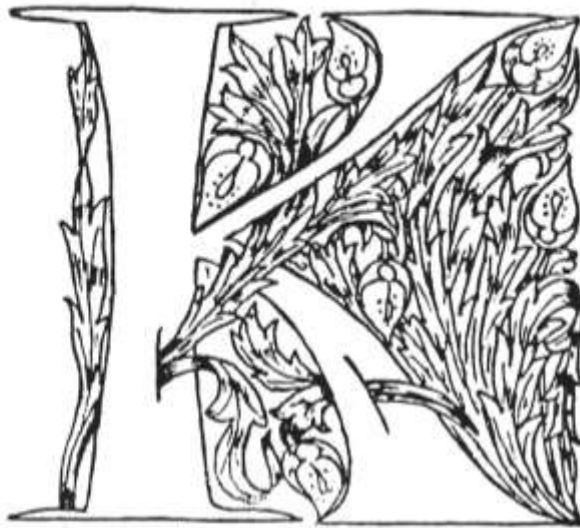
to endow a school provided that the parishioners would build a schoolroom. After many difficulties one of two stories was built on the edge of the Churchyard. In the deed gift he sets forth the object of the school. "For the educating and instructing of the poor children being parishioners of the said parish, in the principles of the Established Church of England in reading and needlework in learning their Catechism and other useful learning."

The literary achievements of other Winkley men,

if they ever existed, blushed unseen. A poet writing anonymously seventy years ago, gave us a poem on Winkley bells and John Underhill, a Hollacombe lad who migrated to London is understood to have written an exhaustive work on the Athenian Oracle, but he died before it was completed (1890³). The ancestors of our three County historians, Pole, Westcote, and Risdon (through the Barrys) all appear to have held property in the parish.

We have left aside the





Common people, who
by the nature of things
must remain anonymous,
forgotten in the parish

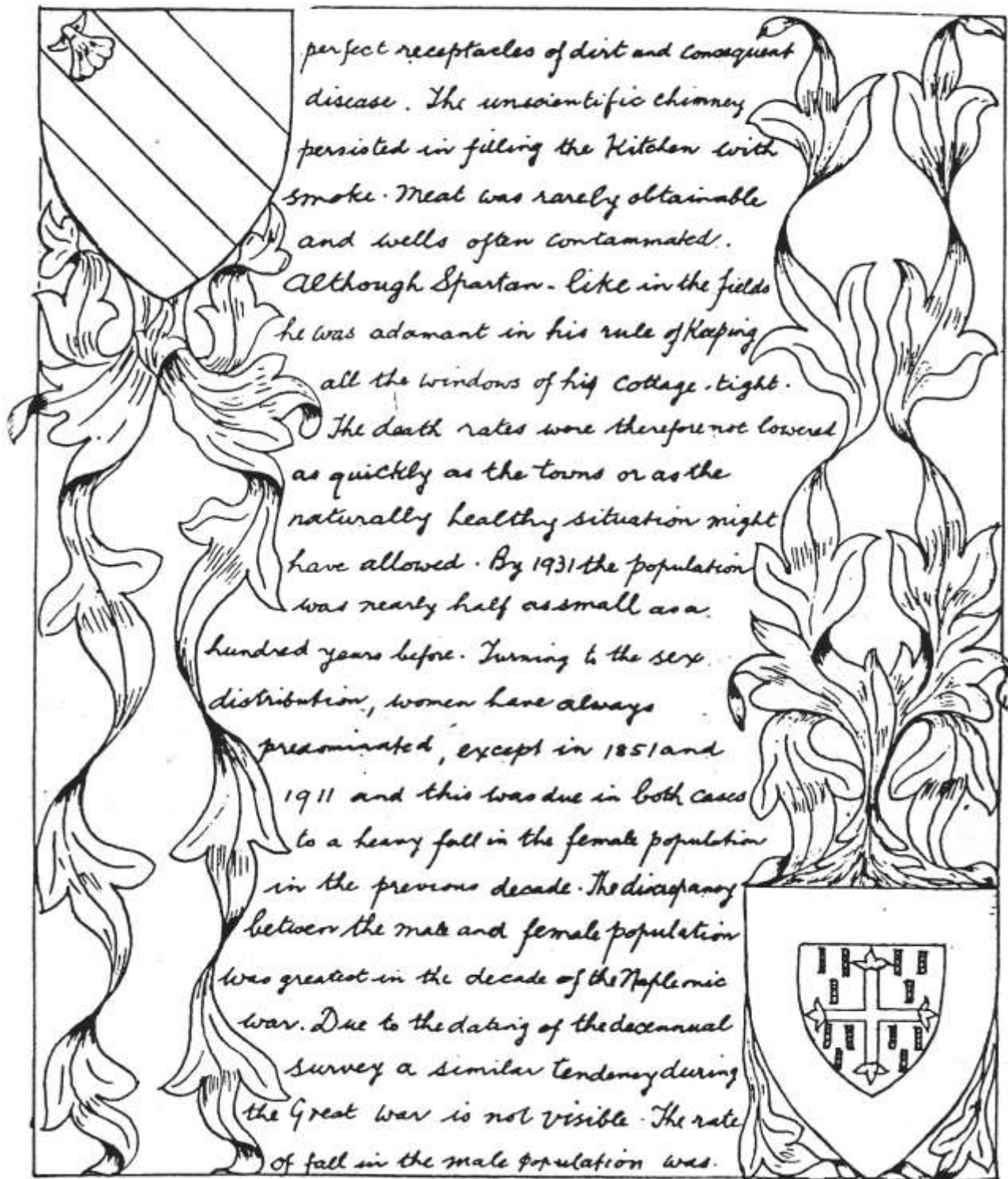
which they themselves

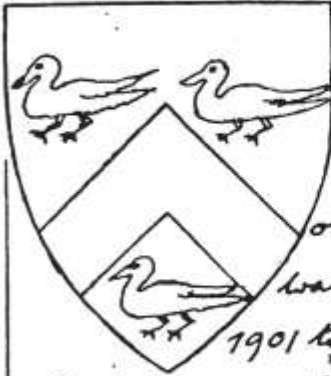
new soil

Some names appear

constantly through all the records and their families are rooted in the soil itself. The earliest indication of their numbers is contained in the Domesday entry (See Chapter 4) but conveys little. The official records of the population of Winkleigh parish from 1801 onwards are consistent with the prevailing conditions over a period of 150 years. The drop between 1801 and 1811 and the sharp rise again in 1821 reflects the Napoleonic war, but we know nothing about the privations which must have occurred. The peak came in the Forties and thereafter people gradually left. The repeal of the Corn Laws was not of prime importance here, because the type of farming practised around Winkleigh was little affected. The cause lay deeper. The labourer might love his fields but this did not always deter the more able or more ambitious, or the youngest sons, ^{from} moving out to the towns which seemed to offer so much. But indeed his town accommodation was often better than his small cottage in the country, the kitchen of which was almost invariably paved with small cobble stones, the

perfect receptacles of dirt and consequent disease. The unscientific chimney persisted in filling the kitchen with smoke. Meat was rarely obtainable and wells often contaminated. Although Spartan-like in the fields he was adamant in his rule of keeping all the windows of his cottage tight. The death rates were therefore not lowered as quickly as the towns or as the naturally healthy situation might have allowed. By 1931 the population was nearly half as small as a hundred years before. Turning to the sex distribution, women have always predominated, except in 1851 and 1911 and this was due in both cases to a heavy fall in the female population in the previous decade. The discrepancy between the male and female population was greatest in the decade of the Napoleonic war. Due to the dating of the decennial survey a similar tendency during the Great War is not visible. The rate of fall in the male population was.





greatest in the periods 1851 and 1861 and ¹⁸⁷¹ 1881 ~~1891~~ to 1891 and the interwar years. Agriculture seems to have been able to hold its labour better in the other periods. With the female population the decline was fastest between 1841 and 1851 and 1871 to 1891 and 1901 to 1911. Although the number of females is not always collected we get the highest density of family numbers in 1821 with 5.02 to a family and by 1881 the density was only 4.26. By 1931 it had reached 3.53. The rate of decline cannot be gauged between 1821 and 1881 but the biggest decline in the later period was after the First World War. The number of people housed in a separate building shows the greatest pressure to have been in the Forties. The tale of cottages in disuse in the years that follow, particularly from the 1880^s and before the Great War. It is doubtful if an analysis of the parish registers would prove more helpful. A glance at those of the eighteenth century makes it almost impossible to calculate the population trends, although various concertina effects between baptisms and burials are noticeable. The census for 1941 was postponed on account of the Second World War. If an appreciable number of squatters avail themselves of the empty huts of the Winkleigh Airport we can expect a slight rise from the latest figures. If Displaced Persons are included the figures may well be higher.

~~It might be fitting to close this chapter with the remark of an old gentleman following a presentation to a~~

It might be fitting to close this chapter with the remarks of an old gentleman following a presentation to a townsman who was leaving the district for personal advancement.

"The illuminated address and presentation should be for the native who stayed in his parish and was a good husbandman."

The enterprising pass outside the confines of parochial life to become Lord Mayors of Cardiff as Mr James Hellier did, or to name ships after the parish that gave birth to a Corn Merchant. In this way does the modern son carry the name of Winklergh beyond his homeland.

