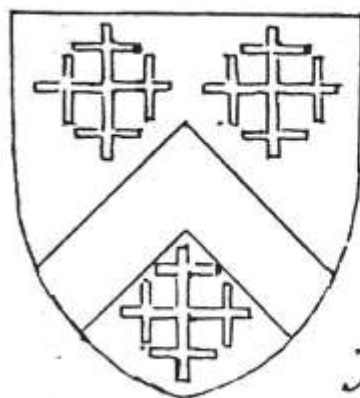




SOCIAL CHAPTER 9.

CHANGES

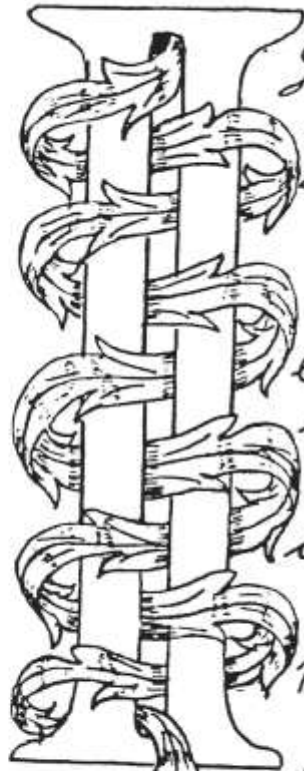
The attention of historians is increasingly directed towards the social scene with the eager hope that more light may be cast upon past ages than is revealed in the chronicles of Kings and their tortuous diplomacy. The aim of this chapter is not to fill the stage of time with a series of bright tableaux where our documents allow us and then fill in the empty scenes with material drawn from the broader National action. Our records are admittedly incomplete but the intention is to give a picture of Winkleigh's social life as they reveal it, and leave blanks when necessary. Rarely does the evidence provide even a series of links, but sudden illuminations of another-wise dark story.

If we had to rely entirely upon documents one would think that medieval life consisted exclusively of quarrels to be settled in either the ecclesiastical or civil courts. Winkleigh has no literature to show other sides of life. The Calendar of Patent Rolls do not often reflect Winkleigh names. In 1315 William Keynes was fined forty shillings because he seized, with others, a boat belonging to Stephen de Haccombe at his free passage Ryndemore and the King's land at Henton. In so



hindering his passage they prevented him from deriving any profit, so ran the complaint. In addition they assaulted his men and servants at **Le-
wroth**. We cannot tell what was the motive of this action, but it was surely not some adolescent prank.¹ Again, in

1354 Thomas Keynes received pardon, of special grace for the death of William Berd, but the circumstances are unknown. In other cases the reason is given. In 1417 Thomas Baron of Horriagge was pardoned for killing John Smyth in self-defence.² Other lawsuits were over less important matters. There are several cases of debt but in none of the instances was the debtor present to answer the charges. One was the chaplain of Winkleigh.³ But in passing it might be asked how a "husbandman" could go all the way to the King's Court at Westminster to answer charges before there was a system of arrest and local hearing? Clearly his case would go by default. When the charges were answered the case was often dismissed. Nicholas Colet, Vicar of Winkleigh in 1380 was charged with poaching on the Bishop of Exeter's ground at "morchard, Credyton and Chydeley" but escaped without punishment. Similarly in 1554 Robert Raell received pardon at Exeter Assizes for an alleged attempted burglary at the dwelling of widow Margaret Nordon.⁴ Of the hanging of



John Potter, William Heywood,
and John Pope

In the seventeenth
and eighteenth
century there are no particulars
beside the bare record of the fact
in the parish registers. Probably
some of them were victims of the
infamous Waltham "Black Act" of
1723 which was the basis of the savage
penal code of the times.

When we remember that there
were gallows at Winklesigh, three if
not four "Views of Frankpledge" at the various Manor
Courts, the small record of crimes does not justify an
illusion of law-abiding men. We cannot think that the
nature of the heavy soil demanded the full attention of the
workers. Although it was vital to their existence and they
were fully occupied in striving for a bare living, any
excessive drinking of the Church Ales might precipitate
a disturbance and due process of law: Poaching and petty
theft and assault were to be found in the byways of their
lives. The small record of these misdoings, their punishment at
the gallows, the stocks, the pillory or the cuckingstool (if there
existed at Winklesigh) or of fines or cautions or acquittals is

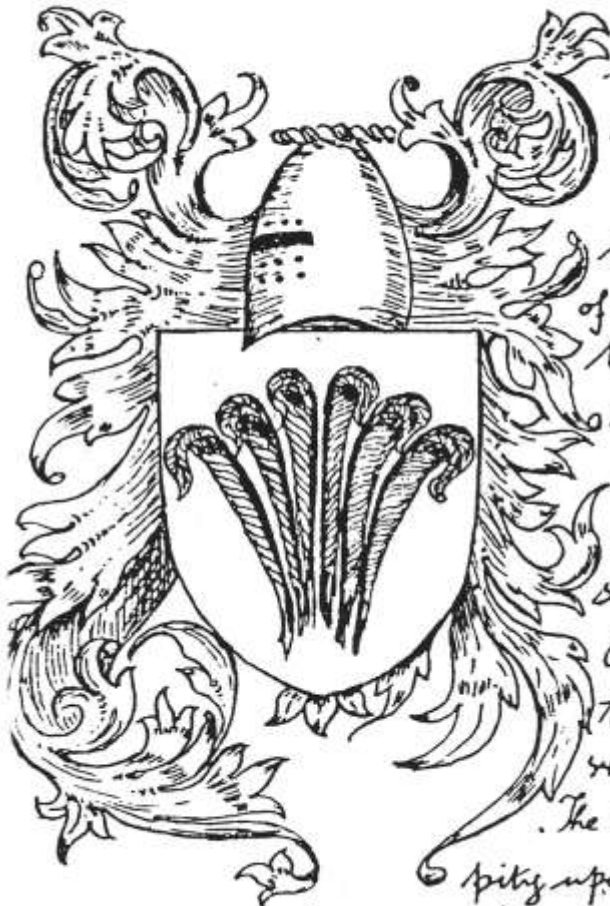


not surprising. A note in the Church documents is the most we can hope for. One case does away for the need of

peculation

upon Man's inhumanity to Man. The tone of the account is as brutal as its execution was

probably precise. We recoil at the order of Marcus Ostell and Humphrey Barry that "Margaret Clevedon shall be openly whipped in the town of Winkleigh at some convenient time until her body be bloody and that you the Constables of Winkleigh do see the same performed at your peril". This was the punishment for bearing a bastard child. Notice that it was the woman who felt the might of society, not the father, although he was known. But she felt it, not because of her moral lapse, for after all the sins of the flesh might be bought off with the aid of repentance, but because her child might become a burden on the parish. It is the Overseers of the Poor who give the order and the date is 1615. The man's punishment was to pay fourpence weekly towards its maintenance until it was two years old and



thereafter to maintain it himself—
a fairly sensible solution of the problem.

The case in the Church records leads on conveniently to an idea of how the care of the poor was tackled. The gateway to the unfortunate whose condition, either through age, infirmity or social calamity brought them into dependence upon society, is naturally the Church Accounts. In pre-Reformation times the people of Winkleigh were relatively self provident.

The close community used to take pity upon them, for it was enjoined upon them by the Gospels. The eight Guilds of the Church (of which more later) might have helped. On the disbandment of the guilds, however, Overseers of the Poor were appointed (usually churchwardens) and entries record this new method of poor relief (1601)

The infamous "Settlement Act" is seen in operation soon after its passage through Parliament in 1535. Happily, the revolting cases recorded elsewhere, do not appear in Winkleigh. Nevertheless, there were some pathetic cases as "payd one shilling for carrying of a masde (mazed) man to



Copplestone and for watching him one night "On another occasion one penny was spent on sending a man from tithing to tithing. The largest amount for a single instance was on account of awden Wetheridge

(1581) for fetching him from Cornwall for keeping his child 22 weeks, and for making 2 oblygacons and for a precept $\frac{1}{2}$ 1. 13. 4. There were numerous expenses for funerals, including shrouds. In the middle of the sixteenth century there were several entries in the Church accounts for rye at 5^s. per bushel, but as the militia expenses are sandwiched between the poor and Church accounts proper, it is difficult to state with any degree of certainty that this cereal was always expended on the poor, as was definitely the case in 1564. However, the poor were not always paid in money or food. There are various charges for clothing, as, "For cloth to make Elizabeth Howlen a coat 6^s 6^d." Ann Jope was paid 1^s to "buy her a pair of shoues". Amounts paid out are usually very small, but there are some exceptions, as in 1568

"Paid by the consent of the parishioners to Mr Stuckeyes to help a poore man XX^s; to William How to dystrey ^{among} bute ~~among~~



the poor x^s and in 1576 "Pay^d to Margaret Duke for keepyng of a poore chyld v^s. The fyghty, fyfty or fifty dole occurs in the accounts of the mid - sixteenth century. (Paid to william Hilman for fyfty dole ii^s iiiij^d and "lay'd out at the fyfty dole for the ease of the parish xv^s. 5.

Sometimes the reasons for poverty were obvious. Rarely was it met half way by actual sick relief as "Paid to old Jane Langmede when she laye syke viij^d and pd to the Clomere when they laye syke v^s. v^d." A poor man of Vonescomb "that had burnd his howes" was paid four pence. Three Shillings and four pence was paid "towards the relief of the mayhemed souldiers". Six pence went to two seafaring men ther Shipp cad away having a passe under the maior of Plymouth". A rather exotic item concerned two women "whose husbands were carried captiue to Bassinane? in Tarkey" who lost £2400 and had to pay £500 ransom.



There were entries too for people travelling
to and from

Ireland

as well as other parts. Montgomery in
Wales is mentioned but not Scotland.
With the exception of a doubtful entry
of 1532 there does not appear to have been
any briefs issued to parishioners. The practice
of presenting a "brief" was no doubt a simple
expedient for the state, but in principle
it must have been tiresome and exasperating
to the lay officials, however sympathetic
they may have felt towards the collector.
A village on the main road was unfairly
loaded with the call of these certificated
travellers, while similar villages off the
highways escaped the burdens.

In the mid-seventeenth century there
appears to have been some legal difficulty
regarding Forty Shillings (Bread Money) which was
due to the poor. It is to be hoped that the
poor had their reward and all that was due
to them not allowed to be swallowed up in
legal expenses.



On the whole payments were not for large until the eighteenth Century when they were gradually increasing. In the year 1776 £255 was expended on poor relief at Winkleigh. From 1783-5 an average of £406.0.²1 was raised by the poor rate although only £387.19⁵ was spent. By 1803 the rate produced £711.¹⁰₃ of which £518.18 was spent on workhouse, £66.¹²₃ on suits, removals etc, and £125.19.9^d on the legal obligation to maintain the families of militiamen. Fifty one persons are recorded as over 60 years of age or disabled. Two non-parishioners were relieved, as well as ten children under five and thirty eight from five to fourteen years of age - a sickeningly large number. In addition 98 persons were relieved occasionally in or out of the workhouse. By 1813 the basis of computation had changed so direct comparison is not possible. It was then that a record was reached. £969 was collected and all but one pound disbursed. £819 went to the poor, £9 for expenses, £36 on family maintenance, £102 on Church, County and Highway Rates. 76 people, excluding their children were permanently in receipt of relief either in or outside the workhouse. There were 39 people.



in Friendly Societies. By 1815 the total expenses were down to £704⁶. The reason for the tremendous cost is not far to seek. The prices of commodities had vastly increased due to the Napoleonic wars but the wages of the labourer were about stationary. Wages then stood at 7/- per week and there were no Agricultural wage Boards in those days. Winkleigh had the seventh highest poor rate in the county.

We have no record of the Friendly Society to which 39 people were reported to belong in 1813. But we do have the constitutions of two others of later formation and their general interest is worthy of their inclusion at this point.

The Female Sick Club was established July 22nd 1839. "all females of good reputation between 16 and 35 years of age shall be accepted if approved by the surgeon. A meeting to take place every Monday two-months between the hours of 6 and 8 p.m. from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and from 7 to 9 p.m. from Lady Day to Michaelmas. Payments 3^d for articles

and 1/- to the Stock and 1/- every Meeting Night. Any member having paid into the stock one year afflicted with sickness not necessitated by immoral practices and confined to her bed or room, shall receive 4/- per week and afterwards 2/- per week until judged by the surgeon to be fit for usual employment. Each member who has been a payer one year shall be entitled to £1.10 for funeral expenses provided the stock be not less than £5. Payable to nearest relative or to whom deceased has appointed. No member shall

receive any benefit during the month she is in child-bed; and if a member be delivered of an illegitimate child, she shall pay a fine of 5/- on the second meeting afterwards. Every member shall pay 1/- to the surgeon the first meeting after Christmas, The remainder to be taken from the Stock. The Clerk to be paid.



Each member every meeting
night up to 50 members - $\frac{3}{4}$ ^d
up to 100 members afterwards $\frac{1}{2}$ ^d
each. The Club-room to be paid
for as follows, 1^d every meeting
night until
embership is
100 afterwards 10j. per year

for every additional 50 the whole expense to be borne equally
among the members. No more than £5. to be paid for one illness
and that in the following manner. After the sick member
has received £2 pay to stop for one month, if illness continues
to receive pay again until she has received £2 more, and
then her pay stopped two months, when if she remains sick,
she shall receive the remaining £1. If a member shall swear or
use any profane language during meeting hours to be fined 3^d.
If a member be in any hospital or Infirmary to receive 2j. per
week during such time. Members not in place at 10 am to walk
to Church (if services on that day) to be fined 6^d. All members
to meet, wearing a pink favor on every 24th June at 10 o'clock
at the Club door (formerly a pink sash from shoulder to hip, now
usually a pink bow on blouse or coat) Fine for non-attendance
at Roll Call 3^d for not walking in proper order to Church 3^d.

In June 1876 there were 55 members and £20 in hand.



and that is all we know. Some of the provisions may seem strange to us - not so much the disallowance for a sickness "necessitated by immoral practices" nor for the deliverance of an illegitimate child, but for the frank statement of such contingencies. We can only speculate upon whether this is a token of widespread immorality, or a more outspoken acceptance of such facts.

We also have a male society for examination - The Tradesmen's Friendly Society formed in 1866 for the benefit of any tradesman, or of any denomination (farm labourers excepted - please note) earning at least ten shillings a week and in good health. The Constitution



reads "He must be of respectable Character; free from any natural infirmity, and Capable of maintaining himself; ^{not} he must, be under 16 years of age, nor above 35 years; and may be admitted by a majority at any annual, or quarterly meeting; but if at the latter, he must have been proposed at a previous quarterly meeting, and no member shall hereafter be admitted who belongs to another Society of the same kind. The admission fee is 3/- which includes the articles and 1/- only is paid at the next quarterly meeting. Some additional entrance money, as may be agreed upon, as to the ages between 25 and 35. Tradesmen's apprentices may be admitted according to the specifications above

stated, their capabilities to be clearly shown. Business to be carried on at the Barnstaple Inn. When a member has paid 4 quarterly payments he is entitled to benefits. The general business to be transacted the first Tuesday after Lady Day, Midsummer Day, Michaelmas Day and Christmas Day, at 7 pm by the Church Clock. The quarterly subscription are 2/- 6. The benefits include 8/- per week for sickness or accident confined to bed, but walking pay 4/- per week. If member dies £8 will be paid immediately to proper claimant, or £4 on the death of a member's wife. Each member to pay 1/- to the funds. Payment on account of any number of legal wives to be allowed, but on every future marriage after the first to pay 3/- to the Stock.

rade paupertas malum est
 et intolerabile
 magnum donat
 populum.

Any member admitted to Hospital to receive
 4/- per week. No money shall be lent by the
 Society. All monies not required for immediate
 use to be deposited in a Savings Bank or the
 Public funds. The Treasurer to render a true
 Account to the Trustees in the Month of July
 in every year the anniversary meeting to be
 held on every Thursday in Fair Week. Dinner
 at one o'clock. Expenses not to come out of
 the Funds. The Doctor to be paid at this meeting.
 If the funds dropped to £10 payment for
 funerals only to be allowed. All voting shall
 be done by ballot. If any member swear
 or make use of any profane language he shall
 forfeit 6^d for every oath or profane expression.
 any member speaking
 in excuse of

any member so swearing or using profane language
 shall also forfeit 6^d.

Comment is again proper here "The death of member's lawful



wife." Notice also that the ballot box was in use at Winkleigh seven years before that method of voting was adopted for parliamentary elections. Swearing was presumably a source of revenue for the Funds.

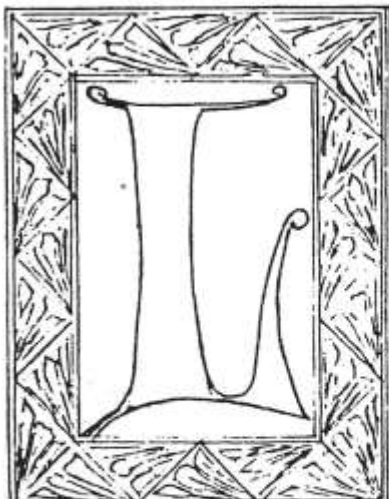
Returning to the normal civil provision for the aged and sick we have some good idea of the way in which it was viewed by the beneficiaries. The reactions are by no means the same.

If we except widows, the parishioners referred to in the accounts would be mostly infirm labourers. A winter climate of bitter east winds and frequent rain, as they worked the cold clayey soil at exposed heights from 400 ft to 600 ft, was set against them in their uncomplaining and dogged determination to carry on, and this accelerated the inevitable acute rheumatism which followed. They endured misfortune with fortitude, in the earlier centuries as well as in the twentieth, and if the cold soil was a hard taskmaster, they were nevertheless

persevering, and on the whole worked hard for a bare existence, and strove not to be a burden on the community. Indeed, in the majority of cases, before the advent of Old Age Pensions, the labourer worked up to the time of his death. Retirement was not a pleasant situation, as age grew on him. His wages were lower, but infinitely more acceptable than Parish Pay, and, when he could do no more, or when he lost the companion of his struggle for existence, the desire to live was absent, and he passed on.

When the machinery of payments

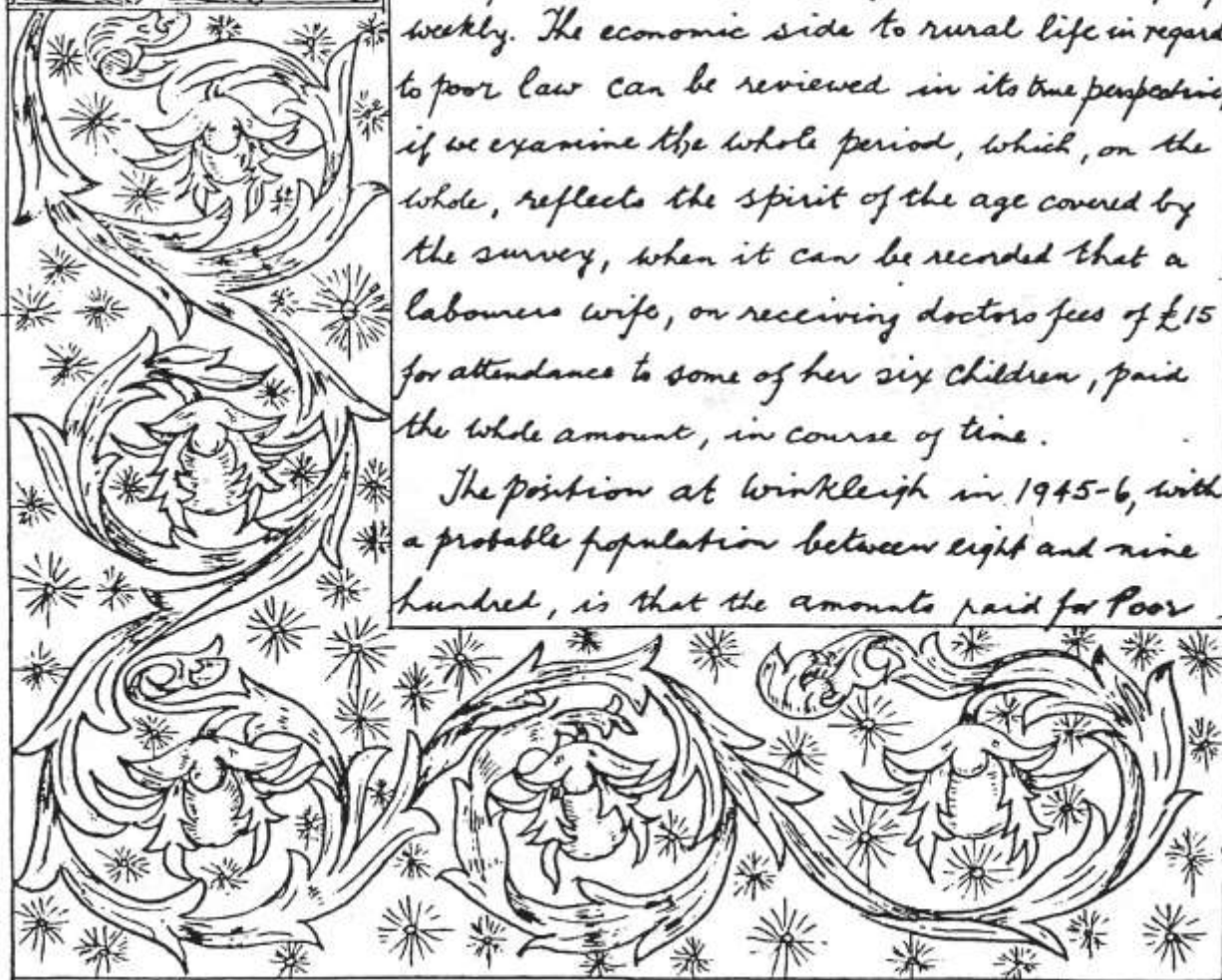
to poor persons was transferred from the Churchwardens to the Relieving officer, the poor and aged hesitated to apply for relief to which they were entitled. This miserable pittance seemed to be doled out to them as if it came from the pockets of the paying officer, instead of indirectly from the parish rate. How different, when in 1908 the Old Age Pension of five shillings per week at seventy years of age was instituted. This proved more than a sun-spot highlight for the aged worker. Many expressed their gratitude in bringing flowers from their humble gardens to



decorate the Postoffice, or as a token of esteem to the staff. The moral and economic contribution to the welfare of our aged cannot be fully estimated, neither is it fully appreciated, now that the machinery has been working smoothly for 40 years. The writer remembers the consternation of many (not workers) when they declared that 5 millions spent per annum on this great social work, would ruin the country. At the beginning of the twentieth century a labourers wage

was 12/- weekly, whilst that of the artisan was 15/- - 18/- weekly. The economic side to rural life in regard to poor law can be reviewed in its true perspective, if we examine the whole period, which, on the whole, reflects the spirit of the age covered by the survey, when it can be recorded that a labourers wife, on receiving doctors fees of £15 for attendance to some of her six children, paid the whole amount, in course of time.

The position at Winkleigh in 1945-6, with a probable population between eight and nine hundred, is that the amounts paid for Poor





of Friendly Societies. There is, however, for the relief of

In 1611 Nicholas addition he left to my best stockings; dublett and jerkyn shirt; to Samuel Barnard Reid my best shoes, to Joane Crocker my new canvas. These items of each garment He was not alone Church accounts

Some of the yeomen farmers left sums from 10s. to £5 and an inventory of the Church Goods thirty years later showed that £22.10^s had been left in legacies for the poor at various times by ten parishioners.

An account of the various Charities may be found in .

in supplementing the work of the official channels. another channel - the foundation of Charities the poor, or isolated bequests.

Mortymer left 2 shillings to the poor. In Charethie Mortymer "my beste bande and to Elizabeth Hatherleigh my second best my best waddcoatt, and one canvas Crocker my second best jerkyn, to green breeches; to Johanne Joanes my Brynford my blue stockings, to Samuel shirt to John Hatherleigh my best hatt." clothing represented wealth at this time, serving as such for many years.

in his gift to the poor, as the clearly show.

farmers left sums

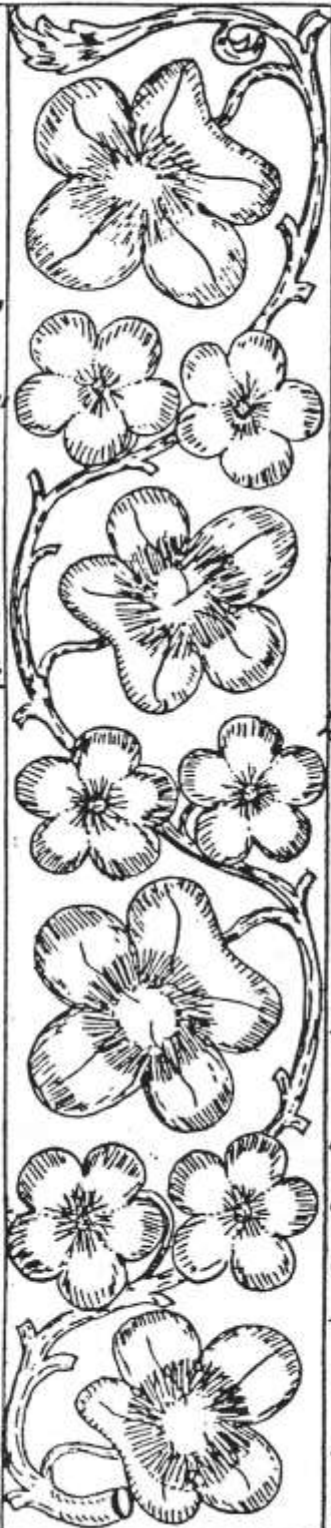


a return on the Endowed
charities of Devon presented to the
House of Commons in 1911. First,
there were the Church lands, described
in Chapter 5. Secondly, Sir John Aldard
in 1615 left £2.12⁵ to

he churchwardens
annually to provide

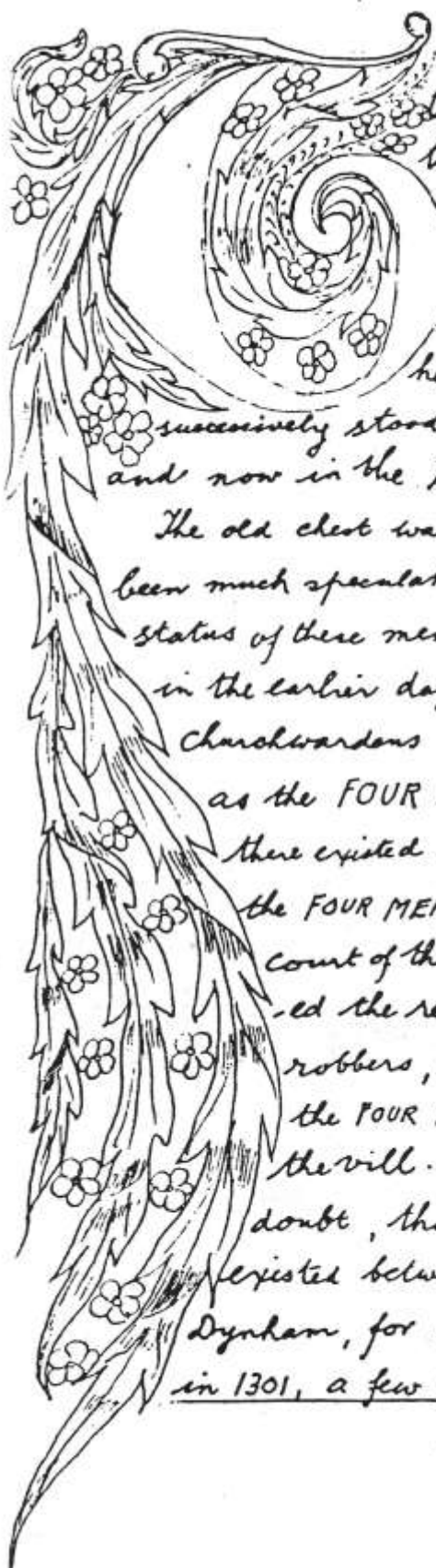
13 loaves of wheaten bread to be distrib-
uted every sabbath to 13
poor people. By 1824 the usual donation had fallen to 12 penny
loaves a week. In 1911 the bread was still being distributed but
was felt to be "of little use" Thirdly, there was the Gidley gift,
dating from 1681 which in 1824 provided five dwellings under
one roof, each containing one apartment which was occupied
by a poor widow of the parish, placed there by the parish officers,
a house garden and plot of ground which was let in order to
provide money towards the repair of the dwellings, but which
was let uneconomically to a poor man with a large family
who was already in receipt of parish relief and thus reducing
the income available to repair the dwellings. In 1877 the
old almshouse was pulled down and now the income is divided
among four poor women, at the rate of 30 shillings a year.
Finally, there was Poor's Money about whose origin there is
no record. £30 was available annually to be distributed
among poor labourers in proportion to the size of their families,

but a report of 1824 adds with disapproval that "this distribution appears to have been incorrectly extended as well to persons who do, as those who do not, receive parish relief." In 1911 it was being distributed in sums of 1 Shilling, being accumulated for the purpose. There were 52 recipients at the last occasion. During the Nineteenth Century an additional bequest was granted in 1859 by Robert Skinner with the intention of providing £52 annually for distribution near Christmas time. These bequests were merged into a United Charity for the sake of administration. There are other charities



not included in the Schedule of the charity Commissioners report of 1911. In recent years a fairly substantial sum has been received yearly from the estate of a Mr Dunn who died in Australia. The average annual contribution to the United Charities from this source is about £45. In 1947 the munificence of Miss Wright gave Winkfield the trust benefit of £9,000 after her housekeeper had had life use of it. The interest is to be devoted towards the provision of a Reading Room for men, coal for the poor and Christmas gifts for deserving cases.

In talking about the measures for poor relief, mention was made of the



Church accounts and it may be proper to hear a little more of these before venturing into our next topic.

The Rev. F. Nesbitt wrote a monograph on Tudor Winkleigh from manuscript he found in an old oak chest which has successively stood in the Church House, in the Gidley chapel and now in the Loosedon Aisle.

The old chest was in the hands of the FOUR MEN. There has been much speculation in recent times as to the origin and status of these men. In Pre Reformation times and probably in the earlier days of the church, instead of the familiar Churchwardens the parish church guardians were known as the FOUR MEN (of Winkleigh). Now at Hartland where there existed courts similar to those at Winkleigh, the FOUR MEN were nominated at, and served the Court of the manor, and a part of their duties included the responsibility of looking after thieves and robbers, and should any escape the vill or tithing, the FOUR MEN, (and Reeve) were fined, as representing the vill. The Keynes, Lords of the Manor, were no doubt, thoroughly acquainted with the relations which existed between the tenants and the lord, Oliver de Dynham, for Thomas de Caynnes held Thorry (Hartland) in 1301, a few years later Thomas Keynes held a caracuta



of land there, and Nicholas de Wynkelegh, one of the jury in the Inquisition at Bishop's Cleeve concerning the death of the said Oliver in 1299, was most probably Nicholas Keynes of Winkleigh. If the FOUR MEN were not already serving the Court at Winkleigh, in addition to the guardianship of the Church Goods, it is reasonable to suppose that the lords of Winkleigh were not susceptible to any qualms in emulating a "foreign" court. The actual activities of these men are meagre, in the records at our disposal, but we do know that they performed duties comparable with those, which today are discharged by Justices of the Peace, as well as Church matters. There are a number of antiquarians who maintain that they were governors of the Church Goods only; usually holding office for four years, and serving Treasurer in turn. But if we examine the list for Winkleigh it would appear that they were appointed annually in this parish. In the reign of Elizabeth these officials are described as the Four men and



Churchwardens. In the reign of James I the Four Men disappear from the records of Wintleigh.⁷

But we must return to the Oak Chest in the Keeping of these men, each of whom held a key to its four

Ocks. In the nineteenth century the Keys

were all in the hands of a former

squire and village tyrant - a strange and formidable individual who for some years (1859-73) acted as the self elected churchwarden and whose character dissuaded completely any attendance at vestry meetings. His memory is kept sacred by a stained glass window at the west end of the north aisle. The hasps of the Chest were forced open, (probably soon after the appointment of another churchwarden) and the contents left unprotected. Possibly some of the contents were used for cleaning purposes by the sexton and this may explain the lack of continuity in the Church accounts. An assortment of articles including old pieces of candles and broken lamp globes were found in the chest. However a large part of the original contents remained including loose sheets of Churchwardens and other accounts, starting in the early years of the sixteenth century; some deeds; and an old minute book in which is a note of the first payment for the Carving of the Rood Loft (1494) one deed is still earlier (1424)

The moiety in this deed was charged annually until recently with the quint chief rent of half a pound of pepper and a glove.

In the early 16th century the quaint formula "and he owes clear which they have paid and gone away quit occurs. The Four men and the Churchwardens appear to take their responsibilities seriously. There is very little perfunctory work. Indeed, in the seventeenth century they were not content with signing the accounts, but for many years six or seven signed in addition to the Churchwardens. Sometimes they would disallow an item in the expenditure (1655) for ringing on 1st November



(Dedication festival of all Saints) $\frac{3}{8}$ ^d not to be allowed and (1659) scene and allowed by us except the 2^s. 11^d said to be paid to the last Churchwardens which is repaid(?) to the next Churchwardens to examine whether itt were due to them and as they find itt due or not due for to be allowed or disallowed and except such money as hath been paid.

This care is in marked distinction to the entries at the foot of the two accounts (1869 and 1870) "Easter Monday: no attendance but myself, George Luxton". This seems incredible, even for the nineteenth century, until we remember that he is our old Village despot.



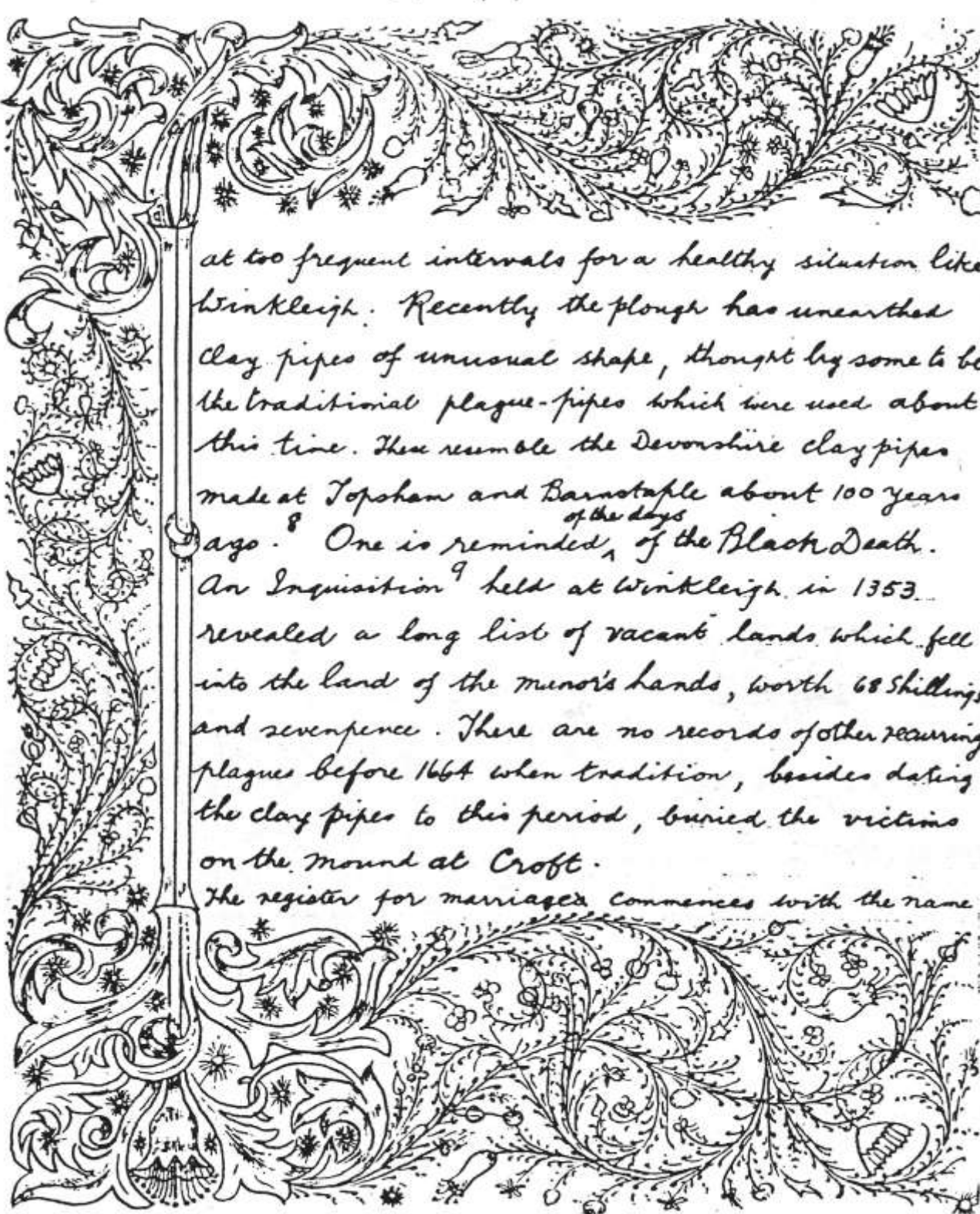
Villagers who until recently were closely related to each other would present a solid front against a man who was formidable (and eccentric) enough to build a Nonconformist building **pposite** the vicarage for the purpose

of annoying the Vicar, and who looked the Ringers in the Belfry.

The registers of Winkleigh commence thirtyone years after the mandate for keeping records was issued (1538) by Cromwell as Vicar-General, and even at this late period, the records are much earlier than most of the entries found at other towns and villages, throughout England.

Starting with the entry "1569 Rede John fillius Henry buried 3 Junii", later on there is the record of a centenarian "1801 Rebecca Jones aged 101 years, 9th April, and 130 years later Mrs Louisa Stevens of Hollacombe Barton, died on May 10th, aged 100 years.

For the latter half of the 17th Century the mortality among infants was appalling. In one year over 70 deaths of children and adults are recorded. Measles and Smallpox were the cause of most of the deaths. These epidemics, although general, appear



at too frequent intervals for a healthy situation like Winkleigh. Recently the plough has unearthed clay pipes of unusual shape, thought by some to be the traditional plague-pipes which were used about this time. These resemble the Devonshire clay pipes made at Topsham and Barnstaple about 100 years ago.⁸ One is reminded^{of the days} of the Black Death. An Inquisition⁹ held at Winkleigh in 1353 revealed a long list of vacant lands which fell into the land of the minor's hands, worth 68 shillings and sevenpence. There are no records of other recurring plagues before 1664 when tradition, besides dating the clay pipes to this period, buried the victims on the mound at Croft.

The register for marriages commences with the name



of Henry Friend (23rd November 1598) Their descendants are still living in the village. The names of the brides were omitted about this period. Worthy rightly states that the records were carefully entered by the

fficials.

Some of the earliest entries for births are unfortunate. "(1585 21 Novembris, (tom)) illegit. John Luxton Junii," and 18th Septembris Roger fillius of a poore woman that had child at Suthcott as she was ~~braygh~~ travelynge the Country". Two well known Devonshire families are also represented in the early entries of 1585, with "Thomas fillius Ricardi Callard, gent" (21 Januarii) and 1619 with "16 Augusti Samuel fillius Bartholomes filius fidley babb."

The register book for the eighteenth century, which cost 2 guinea, is plain but valuable for record purposes. The leaves resemble coarse vellum, and the entries are made in clear longhand characters by Charles Williams. A statement is made on one of the pages that "There were four clean leaves cut out from his place and sewed in the new book by order of the Churchwardens, 1770) by Charles Williams, Clerk of the Parish. Thomas Luxton of Bitbeare Wth John Letherton of Seckington, Churchwardens 1770". No reason



is given for this unusual order, probably as an 'economy' measure, when paper was costly.¹⁰

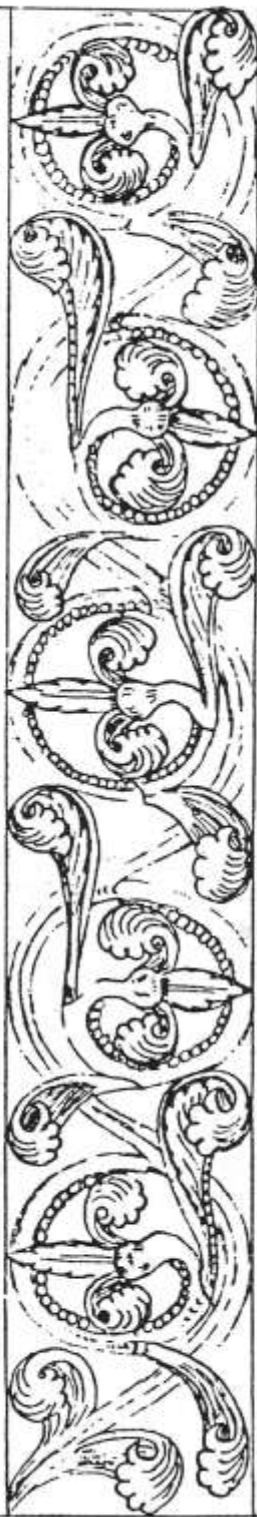
Perhaps the most interesting of the sidelights thrown by the Church Accounts concerns the Guilds. The earliest record of a Guild at Winkley is from the Chantry Rolls.¹¹ The accounts reveal that there were eight guilds. The most important was probably of All Saints, to whom the Church is dedicated; St George for the young men; St Katherine for the young women; and St Blaize for the woolcombers. The others were those of St Christopher, St Anthony, St Mary of Pety, and the Guild of St John the Baptist.

The business qualities of the guilds deserve notice. The account of each section was balanced and audited, and presented by their wardens for approval to the FOUR MEN whose duty it was to deposit the amounts into the chest. This was often referred to as the "Comyn Cofer" and frequently contained large sums varying from £17 to £35, also other gifts, probably personal treasures, such as "3 ryngges of silver 1 cover of a cruet of Silver, a lytle pyx of Silver and a pere of slyppers of Silver". One cannot read the accounts without seeing how they loved the Church, and what a joy it was even to the



poorest of them to give their richest possible gift. The accounts show that a considerable part of their income came from keeping sheep, cattle and bees. These accumulated from legacies. There would be the annual increase of lambs, and a cow would be let out on hire. The income from the sale of wool and wax made no small contribution to the funds. The members no doubt gave their services voluntarily. Sometimes we see an entry such as 2^d for the pasture of a sheep for a whole year, and 4^d for making the wax. The Fourmen had other sources of income including the rent of church lands which were until quite recently the same as it was 400 years ago. The feast of Hock-tide (when the women and girls of the parish would put ropes across the roads and bridges and demand a toll from all who wished to pass) was probably the occasion of the Hoggener Feast and the sale of Hogs Puddings (Pot an' Pudden) helped to swell the funds to a large extent. There are many entries in the Accounts

relating to this favourite dish of the parishioners, some amounting to no less than £2.15.0^d from the receipt of all these items the Four Men paid the ordinary Church expenses, the Stipend of the Guild Chaplain (who would serve the altars of the Guilds and also act as assistant curate to the parish priest) any extraordinary charges or new project. The building of the Church House and the carving of the Rood/loft by John Kelly were instances in point. The payments of the latter extended over 10 years. We may presume that Kelly was engaged on this fitting the greater part of that period, as the sum expended amounted to £54.6^s.8^d. a fairly large



sum for those days. It would appear that the usual charge for a life membership of the Guild was $\frac{3}{4}$ ^d, as there are no records of subsequent payments. Probably nearly everyone belonged to one of the Guilds. Leaving out the Spiritual side of the Guilds, they resembled the Friendly Societies of today, caring for them in sickness, relieving them when in distress, pay for their funeral expenses and obits and seeing to the education of their children.

Their social and religious life was bound up in one great brotherhood. Their holidays were Holydays. Could we see them in their processions on the Feast of their Patrons of the Guilds, watch them in their



reparation

for the representation of
the numerous Saints -
or even the evil one,
their brewing of the Church
ales, the baking of
bread

and cakes, and even the Tennis
and Bowling games after the
Worship of the Day was over, we
should find a truly quickening
atmosphere - a full realisation
of their brotherhood. Into this
united happy community came
the shadow of the advent of the
King's Commissioners, and not
long after, their actual visit,
the church accounts tell the

tale of the terrible
vandalism perpetrated
on the fittings and
other objects which
had been wrought
with loving care
by the master crafts-
men and dedicated
to the Service of God.

Here we read in Edward
VI^s reign: -

"For takyng downe of the
pycktures vij^d

For takyng downe the
Hye Gorte and other
pectors vij^d

and a little later at
the Commencement of
Queen Elizabeths reign

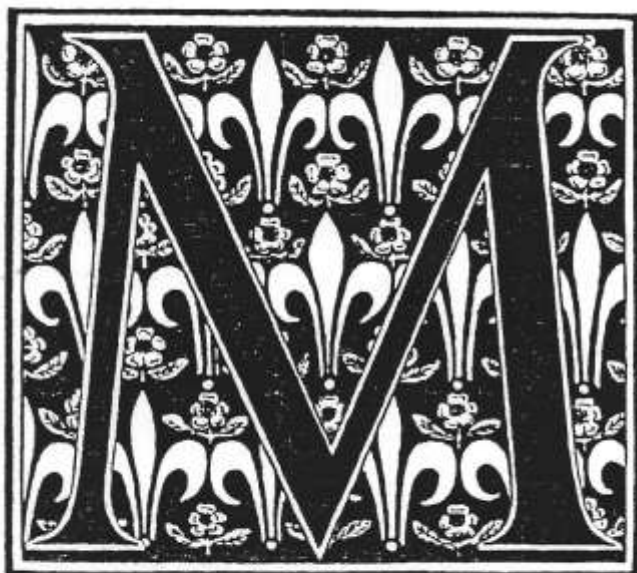
"For plockyng down
of the Ymages and carryng
out the Auters

For carryng out of the
Altar stone

Here the hand of the



destroyer demolished
the beautiful High Altar
dedicated by Bishop
Grandison more than
300 years earlier, destroy-
ing all the altars of
the Guilds, and most
probably the Rood
Loft of a more recent date.
After this great upheaval,
the Guilds are mentioned
no more. Now we find
the continual mention
of payments of pence to
poor men who were
travelling through the
parish. It is a mistake
to imagine that this
was directly caused by
the Reformation. On the
Continent Luther was
alive to the necessity
of tackling the problem
of tramps, and made
sound suggestions for



a parochial rate for the support of the impotent as distinct from "valiants", and many attempts were made in the English Legislature to eliminate tramps in Tudor times. The abuse of the apprenticeship system contributed in no small

measure to

this blot on our Social history. Had the confiscated Ecclesiastical Property and Revenue been diverted to Charitable use instead of attempting to straighten the Treasury and finances of the Crown, and not used for the increase of wealth of the already rich, the Winkleigh Church accounts would have provided quite different reading.

The reaction to the bare and lifeless church, the suppression of the eight Guilds, with the loss of the old sense of Brotherhood can be followed year by year. The introduction of high pews with doors and curtains and all that this implies in the Religious and cultural life of Winkleigh is reflected in the Church accounts from the Reformation to the restoration 1873.

The next sphere is the military. The history refers mainly to the equipment of the militia and Services in Ireland from the time of Edward II down to the Napoleonic wars. Among the papers we are fortunate in having a list of those who

"did their bit" early in the seventeenth century when they were conscripted for military training.

The earliest record is an undated account at the time of Edward VI (about 1540) "Item: John House Bow Casyes xxj^d, for three shef of arrows viij^s for iiij arrow casys xv^d for iij daggers ij^s iiij^d" (The expenses for the equipment of the service were borne

largely by the parish)

In Elizabeth's reign we find the expenses piling up and the art of making gun-powder and brass

"Canon" coincides with the expenses "for gonnes and powder"

The entries sandwiched between those of purely church expenses, provide interesting reading.

1564 "paid to the soulders to serve the quenes mathe iiij li, at the



return of the sowders x^s ,
and for drynke $iiij^d$

This expedition probably
refers to Ireland. The
1576 account is of

value in giving
us some
idea of the cost of various
articles of equipment. "Payd

for a sowders cote x^s , to make a buike of all the parish
harnys 1^d , for dressyng of a sward and new scaburd with
a clasp for the dagger and other lytle things xvi^d , for letters
to carry the flaxe x^d , to v sowders to weye harnys at Torgton
and for trussing poyntes xii^d for blackynd and scouryng
of a stock for a gonne x^d . Constable Luxton was paid for
treyngyng of $iiij$ men 5^s .

For more detailed records we must examine the Constables
Accounts. We are fortunate in having six for 1597, 1600, 1601,
1620, 1622 and 1629. The constable, appointed for the hundred,
was also a Justice of the Peace and held a responsible position
in the village. The Names of Bernard Luxton, Humphrey
Heawood, George Gyddley and Richard Wood as Constables for
various periods show that men of the well to do yeoman
class and minor were usually selected for the post.

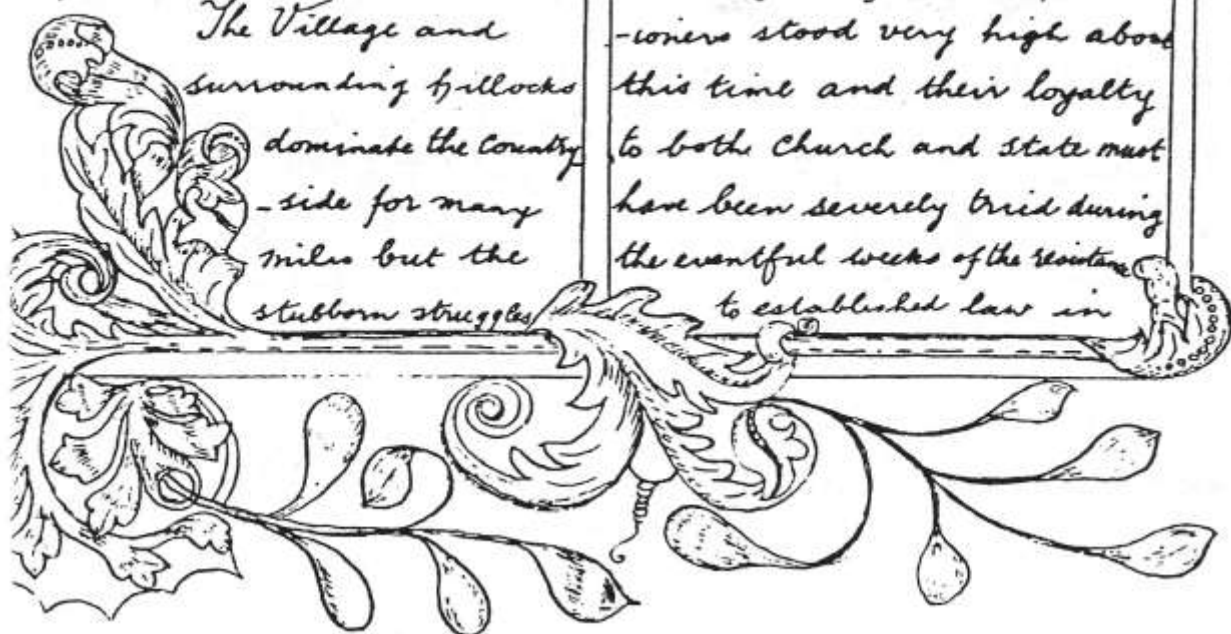
Before giving a typical account we might note the

earliest reference to a letter
post in Winkleigh 'paid to the
Hundred Constable for carrying
of post letters $iii^s. vi^d$ (that was 1601)
and in 1602 " iii^s " was paid for the
sending of post letters." The 1620
account gives a list of rate-
payers, just as the 1616 account
give a rate list for the purveyors
and a rate for His Majesty's Service
and also a rate for the gale,
manned soldiers and hospitals.
The most typical however is
that for 1601-2 and is given
in full in the Notes.^{12.}

The Village and
surrounding hills
dominate the country
-side for many
miles but the
stubborn struggles

of the Civil War passed by;
unless we except Fairfax's
campaign in the west when
the Royalists had an observation
post on Bude Hill.

The Western Rebellion
1549
broke out in 1549 at
Lampford Courtenay, a village
only a short distance from
Winkleigh. Mrs Rose Troup's
book on the subject^{13.} gives
the names and addresses of
many who took part but
there is no one from Winkleigh.
The religious zeal of the parish-
-ioners stood very high above
this time and their loyalty
to both Church and State must
have been severely tried during
the eventful weeks of the resistance
to established law in





this part of Devon.

Lord Chichester's House at Eggesford, occupied by Lord Goring's outpost was taken by Cromwell's men on 18th December 1644. Fairfax, Okey, Lambert, Fleetwood and Harrison, after attending service in Chalmleigh

Church, marched with their troops, 9,500, including 6,000 foot, by way of Bridgereeve, and defeated the Royalists at Burrington. Lt Col Dundas was severely wounded and brought to Ashreigney. Thousands of these troops must have traversed the road from Ashreigney to Hollacombe Moor, for Fairfax's men, after Burrington, were drawn up in order of Battle on Beaford Moor. The Cavaliers placed a guard at Winkley Beacon, and, although it is not mentioned in despatches at the time, it is reasonable to suppose that the left flank of Fairfax's army drove the Royalist Outpost through Winkley and joined the main force at the turnpike road, Hollacombe and Beaford Moors. The main army advanced by way of Roborough and the battle which followed (Torrington) was one of the most decisive of the final Campaign in the West. The Chronicler of the time declares that Chulmleigh was plundered of £500 by the Royalists and at

another time ~~debate~~
£200 was extracted and
£10^s day, half in money
and half in provisions.^{14.}

There is no record of
billetting or other demands
being made upon

Winkleigh. Tradition
says that the "enemy"
advanced by way of
Southcot and they
were fired upon by
the defenders of Court
Castle. (In this case
we should have thought
Croft Castle the most
probable spot.) We know
that the Lord of the manor
of Hollarcombe, Bartholomew
Gidley, was a staunch
loyalist and it may be
that the village and
hamlet were on the whole
with the same cause.
Yet a later writer adds



"It must be acknowledged
that His Majesty King
Charles Ist, had no
greater enemies in
any part of his dominions
than in the chief towns
of North Devon, owing
to the influence of
certain Puritan preachers
had obtained in these
Towns" ¹⁵ Be that as
it may, there are no
nonconformist chapels
or echoes from Winkleigh
at this period.

Perhaps the military
story ought to be
brought up to date.
We will pass by the
period of the militia
and the North Devon
Yeomanry, the
Volunteers of the Boer
war, the new
Territorials of the

First Great War and come to rest on the war which has just closed. In 1940 Winkleigh responded eagerly to the call of Home Defence and at their peak the Home Guard consisted of about 60 members for Winkleigh and 22 for Hollacombe. But it was the building of the Airport which lifted Winkleigh right out of its sleepy ways and made a lasting impression on her countryside.

After the fall of France in 1940 it was obvious that there was an urgent need for the government to make more extensive and elaborate plans for home defence. One of the results was the building of an Airport at Winkleigh.

It was natural for the occupiers of the farms concerned to protest against the commandeering of valuable arable land, but it was absolutely necessary - the Motherland was in danger! It is understood that the Air Ministry searched for better sites, but had to fall back on Winkleigh. Unofficial reports give the estimated cost at over $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions, which is reasonable, for in addition to the building of an aerodrome, with all the extra buildings in connection with the personnel of the port, they had to remedy the defects of an old world parish, in making new and wider roads, establishing



a sufficient water supply, and modern drainage. The various buildings were interspersed over a wide area. Fortunately, the minimum amount of good land was used, as the runways were made chiefly on Butchers Moor, taking in a part of the Exeter to Torrington Road from near Seckington Cross to Riddiford. The height of the land in the region of the airport is about 555 feet. A new road was made from the South of the Cottage at Bernards Cross to Seckington Cross, the road from the Village was widened and a new road was cut from the Northern entrance of Winklergh Court, through the Court garden, and demolishing Rose Cottage, a little beyond Court walk, on to the old Exeter Road. Apart from the spoliation of the Court property and Rose Cottage, the work was a great improvement for Winklergh. It is stated that the owners of the property were fully compensated.

It was suggested at the time, that the Exeter to Torrington Road should be diverted via Timbridge Hill and Hallacombe Moor, and to construct a viaduct across the valley of the Hollacombe water. Probably this would entail too much time, labour and expense. The road was however greatly improved including the widening and repair of Leach Bridge, and used to relieve



the traffic deflected via Townsend and Four Ways, and thence to Mud House Dolton, after the airport was built, until the end of the war. No time was lost in solving the water difficulty. A large filtering and pumping station was installed at Beach Bridge on the upper southern bank of the

ollacombe Water.

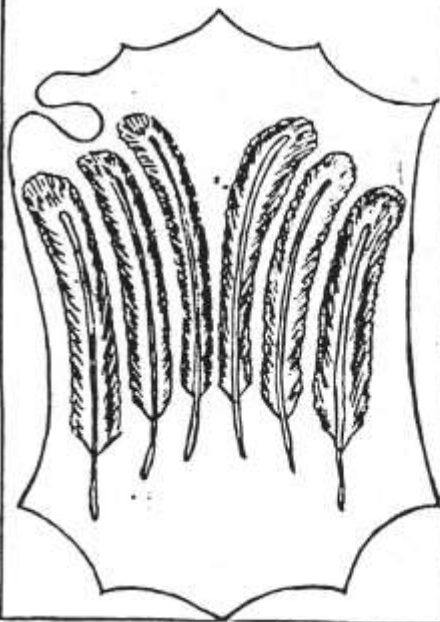
A large tank was fixed near Tollys Linhay, and the latter building was lowered. The height of the land at this point is roughly 600 feet. The drainage system was carried to the west of Goodleigh.

The airport was operational for only a part of its life but during that period it served in the defence of Plymouth and Exeter. Young local lads are our authorities for the following list of squadrons which used the aerodrome.

In January and February 1944 the American Training wing of Mustangs were in charge. From March to September 1944 the 33rd Operational Training Squadron, equipped with oxfords, Hurricanes and Defiants took over, and included two Canadian squadrons (Toronto) of night fighting Mosquitos and Beaufighters. From March to November 1945 it was used as a training base for the Norwegian Air Force, flying Norwegian Cornells and Harvards.

This vast enterprise, representing probably more capital than

was ever put to use in the parish for agricultural purposes, was a thing laboriously created and swiftly discarded. Today it remains a grotesque memorial straddled across the parish, while not even the twinkling lights of the inner and outer circles of landing lights remain to cheer the villagers.



CHAPTER 10. FOLKLORE AND CUSTOMS

Collecting material for this Chapter presented many difficulties while the older inhabitants were often reluctant in giving information, excusing themselves in having poor memories, very few of the present generation are acquainted with the folklore of the parish. Thus the author is compelled to trust in the remembered tales of his childhood, filling in as many gaps as