

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE PARISH OF YATELEY.

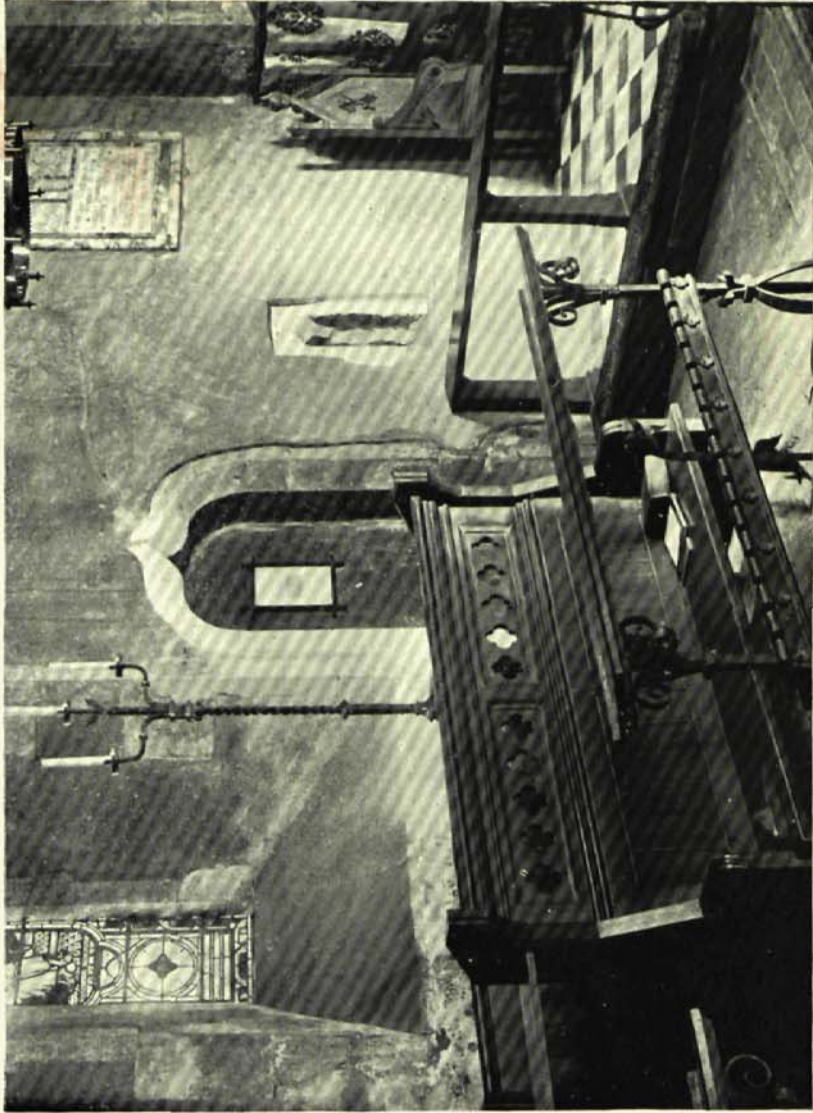
BY COLONEL J. HOLT STILWELL, V.D.

Yateley is a small village in the north-eastern corner of Hampshire, but has much of great interest to attract the antiquary. The oldest object in the parish is a Celtic tumulus, on the Hartford Bridge Flats, which was opened in 1770 by Mr. Norris, of Hawley House, who found in it a coarse earthenware urn, which he transferred to his collection of antiquities at Hughenden. A similar cinerary urn has been recently found in the Round Close near Hilfield, buried 18 inches underground, and resembles a Stilton Cheese in shape and size.

Yateley formed part of the manor of Crondal, which passed in 885 under the will of King Alfred to his nephew Ethelm.¹

In the Domesday Book Yateley is called Effele, and is thus described :—“ Hugh de Port holds Yateley, and Stenesnoc held it allodially of King Edward. It was then, as now, assessed at 2 hides. Here are 5 ploughlands, one in demesne, and fourteen villeins and eight bordars with nine ploughlands. There is a Church and two serfs, and a mill worth five shillings, and fishponds furnishing one hundred eels, three acres of pasture land, and a wood for one hundred

¹ See Crondal Records, Hampshire Record Soc. and Proceedings Hampshire Field Club, VII., pt. 1., in which the descent of the manor of Crondal, with the boundaries, is given.—EDITOR.



Doorway of (supposed) Anchoret's Cell, Yateley Church.

hogs. Its value in the time of King Edward and afterwards was one hundred shillings, and now is six pounds, but nevertheless pays eight pounds."²

In the Assize Rolls of Hampshire it is recorded that in 1236 Walter Walberd was wounded to death "next the heath between Yateleghe and Minlei," where he was found still alive by Roger the Chaplain of Yateley; doubtless the latter performed the last priestly offices for the dying man, but he failed to raise the "hue and cry" after the murderer and was accordingly tried at the assizes at Winchester, where he was acquitted by the jury "on account of his cloth." In a Compotus Roll of St. Swithun's Priory at Winchester of 1248, it is recorded that the men of Yateley were bound over in the sum of five shillings and six pence for the pledge of William their Chaplain. In 1282 Eva de Eastmille was fined at the Manorial Court at Crondal for breaking the assize of ale. This East Mill was at the ford near Darby Green, there was another mill called Green Lane Mill near the present Sandhurst Bridge, while the Yateley Mill mentioned in the Domesday Book was only recently demolished. In 1287 the three mills were occupied by John the Miller, Geoffrey the Miller, and Ralf the Miller. In 1283 Pope Nicholas IV. granted the first fruits and tenths of all the English benefices towards the expenses of the Crusades. Yateley is entered in the return for this taxation as a Chaplaincy attached to Crondal and the Chaplaincy was valued at £6 13s. 4d. In a return of the customs of the manor of Hall Place at Yateley, which was a sub-manor of Crondal, St. Swithun's Priory received from the parish,

² In the Domesday Survey, this entry is given under the Hundred of Bosberg (now known as Bosmere Hundred), which is in the south-east portion of Hants. In the Victoria County History of Hants, I., 483, Mr. J. Horace Round remarks: "This is Mr. Moody's identification. I do not know his reasons and can throw no light upon it." If Effele is Yateley, how did it pass away from the de Port family?—EDITOR.

in addition to rents, the sum of 15s. 10d. for twenty stoups of honey, nine church-scots of white corn, seventeen hens at Christmas, and 2s. for "insute."³

The chancel and main aisle of the church were built about this time. The small window over the west arch, opening into the belfry, fixes the date as subsequent to 1287, when Bishop Parker in his constitution enjoined that "in elevatione vero ipsius corporie-Domini pulsetur campana in uno latere." Side windows in belfries about the date of this constitution are very general, earlier ones are very rare and doubtful. There is an interesting squint and doorway on the north side of the chancel, and outside are the foundations of a small room attached to the church; this is believed to have been an anchoret's cell. In 1294 John de Newent was appointed by the Bishop to the living of Yateley; he was a young man not in full priest's orders. In the British Museum there is a licence granted by the Bishop of Winchester, in 1346, to pull down certain houses at "Yatelee." This probably referred to the church house, which belonged to the parish and subsequently became the "Dog and Partridge" Inn.

In 1364 John atte Lane, of Yateley, was cited in a writ from the King to the Prior of St. Swithun's to appear with tenants of the manor at Westminster for the investigation of their complaints against the Priory for exacting more from them than was due by law and custom. The case was settled by mutual agreement and was never brought into court. In 1366 the Bishop issued an interdict and suspension against the "Chapel of Yateley" owing to the parishioners having assaulted Symon the Chaplain, and they were deprived of all spiritual ministrations till they

³ "Insute," the legal French form of the Low Latin phrase "in secta," meaning "in suit" or "suit" of a lord, in which position every tenant might have to wait on his superior.—
EDITOR.



Arch of Tower, Yateley Church.

had done penance for the outrage, after which the Bishop re-opened the church. In 1378 Richard de Yateley was elected Abbot of Reading Abbey; he apparently died 1409. The old tombstone with an abbot's cross near the north porch is of about this period, and probably marks his grave. In 1378 the Bishop issued a commission to the Chaplain of Yateley to absolve one of his flock from the sentence of excommunication which he had incurred by grievously assaulting Thomas de Kingesbury, the parson of Farnborough. In 1400 the Priory at Winchester had allowed the Chapel at Yateley to become so dilapidated that the Bishop of Winchester was obliged to take action, and on 13th May he sequestered the Rectory of Crondal in order that funds might be forthcoming till the needful repairs were executed. In February, 1405, William Franklyne, of Yateley, obtained from the Lord Mayor and Corporation exemption from serving on juries in London, presumably on account of old age and infirmity. In 1418 Richard Bannister, of Yateley, left, by his will, "one parcel of land, arable and pasture, and a meadow called Waterlands containing fifteen acres in Sandhurst" (Berkshire), valued at eleven shillings a year, for the benefit of the poor of Yateley and Sandhurst. The Trustees under his will were Robert Sellane, of Yateley, and Thomas Giffard, of Cove; the family of the former remained in the parish under the name of Sellon for the next 300 years. In 1446 Cardinal Beaufort alienated the great tithes of the parish for St. Cross Hospital at Winchester on condition that a "fat portion" should be retained for the stipend of the Chaplain. In 1470 Peter South, gent, bequeathed eleven acres of meadow in Finchampstead to the parish of Yateley, and also an allotment half of which was to belong to Yateley (known then as the Inner Tything) and half to the districts of Cove and Hawley (Outer Tything) on condition that a Requiem Mass should be held for the repose of his soul on the anniversary of his death in the Lady Chapel

at Yateley Church. Since the Reformation the land has been used entirely for the benefit of the poor.

The old portions of the rood screen in the church were carved about this time, and there were interesting mural paintings which were ruthlessly destroyed when the church was "restored" in 1871.⁴ The tower of the church, which was built entirely of wood, was erected about 1500, and the ancient clock was probably placed in it soon afterwards. There is a tradition that the heat of the sun made the timber shrink on one side of the tower, and that it was raised on jacks in order to get it perpendicular again; and courses of brick were inserted on the south side, where they can still be seen. There are four pre-Reformation brasses in the church, but they have been removed and hidden away in the tower. The oldest, with the kneeling figure of a man, has the following inscription: "Pray for the soule of Richard Gale which dyed the yer of o'r Lord God 1513 on whose soul J'hu have mercy." The Gales were landowners in the parish for many generations, and the family has only recently become extinct. The second brass has effigies of a man and his wife in the costume of the 16th century, with figures of four sons and seven daughters underneath: "Pray for the soules of Willm Ryggs and Tomasyn his wyf the which Willm decessede the 29th day of August ye yer of o'r Lord 1513, on whose soule J'hu have mci (mercy)." The Ryggs, under the names of Rigers, still exist in the parish. The third brass has the figures of a man and woman; the latter has a head-dress with long lappets and a girdle hanging round her waist: "Praye for the soules of William Lawerd and Agnes his wyfe, the which William decessed the 16th day of August, the year of our Lord God 1522. On whose soules J'hu have mercy. Amen." The Lawerds were

⁴ Royal figure, whitewashed over. Rude mural paintings, probably 14th century, too mutilated to be preserved. Keyser, list of buildings having mural paintings.—EDITOR.

a Finchampstead family which subsequently changed their name to Seward. The fourth brass is a small one and has been left *in situ* in the chancel: "Orate P aia Johe uxoris Johis Hewlot et filie Robti Dyngelē cu aie ppriet Ds." Dyngelē may have lived at Dungal's Farm in Lóve Lane.

At a Manorial Court held 1529 John Jebelat, a common baker of Yateley, was fined two pence for breaking the assize of bread, *i.e.* selling bread underweight; his grandfather had been fined by the same Court in 1449. In 1537 Thomas Watts died, and in his will in the Winchester registry is described as "of Bromill within the paryshe of Saynt Peters in Yateley." This will upsets the theory that the church had no dedication as stated by the Rev. C. D. Stookes in his History. In 1538 Henry VIII. ordered a yew tree to be planted in every churchyard to provide bows. Our ancient yew tree doubtless dates from this time. Archery appears to have been popular in Yateley as numerous arrows and a target are carved on the doorways of the church.

In Edward VI.'s reign an "inquisition" or inquiry was held as to the land belonging to Bannister's Charity; but John Gale and Robert Atreath, the churchwardens, successfully defended their property, which was "for the use of the poor for ever," from the claims of the Crown. In 1567 the Churchwardens paid two pence half yearly for the "Church House" to the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, as Lords of the Manor, "on the Feasts of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary and of St. Michael the Archangel." This is the first definite record of the Almshouse and Inn, which subsequently became the "Dog and Partridge" Inn, and only recently passed out of the hands of the Churchwardens.

Two bells were placed in the tower of the church in 1577 having been cast by Thomas Eldridge and his son Richard at their foundry at Wokingham. The first is inscribed: "Love the

Lord God 1577. T.E. F.R." "T.E." are the initials of Thomas Eldridge, who died in the year that this bell was cast. "F.R." is an abbreviation for "fundator" ("founder"). The second has the following inscription: "Sancta Katarina ora pro nobis. R.E." This bell was probably cast by young Richard Eldridge in his father's lifetime, during Queen Mary's reign.

At a Swainmote Court held 1586, it was reported: "We do p'sent (present) Est Mill bridge is a bridge for both carte and horse, and that Grene Mill bridge is a bridge for horse, and bothe are in defaulte, all within the Queen's Majte payle as fare as we can fynde." The Royal Verderers of Windsor Forest endorsed this, "ignoramus"; and doubtless East Mill and its bridge disappeared altogether, while Green Lane Bridge was rebuilt for local traffic, and has since been known as Yateley Bridge. In 1604 a leading legal case, known as the Yateley Tithe Case, occupied the Courts, in which Martin Thonk, a farmer of Yateley, was sued by Robert Heath, the lay proprietor of the tithes. The case was tried at Winchester, and carried thence to the Court of Appeal, and is mainly interesting as giving the methods of levying tithes on corn, hay, livestock, wool, geese, honey, milk, gardens, and eggs..

Four more bells were added to the tower:—

1. Second Bell, inscribed: "1613 William Yare made me." William Yare was a Reading bellfounder. The three other bells were all cast by Richard Eldridge of Wokingham:—

2. Tenor Bell: "1617. R.E. Rebuke me not Lord in Thy wrathe" (bell has been recast).

3. Fifth Bell: "1617. R.E."

4. Sanctus Bell: "R.E. 1623."

In 1625 the old lych gate was erected at the entrance to the churchyard and was restored in 1800 and 1884. The



The Crystal Cup, Yateley Church.

stocks on the green outside the churchyard also constantly figure in the parish accounts. During the Commonwealth the same curate remained in charge and the usual rates for the repair of the church were made, but the churchwarden's accounts were approved and signed each year by two magistrates. At the Restoration the land belonging to Bannister's Charity was again claimed by the Crown, but John Dean and John Dewsnapp attended an "inquisition" with their title deeds, and the matter was finally settled once and for all.

The notorious Colonel Blood lived in the parish at this time and was arrested in May, 1671, at the "Crown and Cushion" Inn, Minley, for trying to steal the Regalia from the Tower of London. He subsequently obtained a royal pardon and died in Ireland. In 1671 Sir Richard Ryves, Lord Mayor elect of London, died at Yateley Hall, and left 6½ acres of land to the parish, and also the six volumes of the Polyglot Bible still kept in the church. In the same year Mrs. Sarah Cocks left to the church what the contemporary churchwardens describe as "one Chrisstially Sillver and Guilt Bowle with a cover." This beautiful cup is of Flemish work, and was to have been sold by the churchwardens in 1871 for the expenses of church "restorations," but Bishop Sumner, of Winchester, gave £50 to save it, on condition that it should never be parted with.

In 1704 Mrs. Mary Baker left by will £360 to be divided equally between the parishes of Windsor, Egham, and Yateley, for the purpose of founding a school for poor children, which was to be presided over by "a sober, pious and able Protestant schoolmaster or schoolmistress." This school was held in the house on Cricket Hill now used as a Cottage Hospital.

In 1727 the Rev. John Dart, a noted antiquary, was appointed Curate-in-Charge in the place of a man who had been inhibited by the Bishop of Winchester. John Dart's best

known works were (1) The Works of Tibullus, translated 1720; (2) The Life of Chaucer, 1721; (3) History of Westminster Abbey, in two volumes, 1723; (4) History and Antiquities of Canterbury Cathedral, 1726. He died in 1730 and was buried at Yateley. Edward Caswall, the noted hymn writer, was born at Yateley Parsonage in July, 1814; he subsequently became a Roman Catholic.

The church registers and accounts of the churchwardens and overseers furnish much interesting detail of past life in the parish. A nameless negro was christened, and, in accordance with the usual custom in such cases, was given the surname of Yateley. A suicide was buried at the cross-roads. A body snatcher was caught in the churchyard and taken to the Assizes at Winchester. The church house was divided into an almshouse and an inn, but the latter being more lucrative the almshouse was disestablished and thrown into the inn. Constant "briefs" were announced in church which met with the scantiest responses. The "affidavitis" for burial of corpses in woollen caused grave perturbation to the illiterate clerk, who in one place records an "after David." Goal money, stocks, and a whipping post were paid for from parish funds. Pauper travellers returning with "passes" to their birthplaces, and soldiers from the wars received food on their journey at the church house, where the bellringers were refreshed after celebrating Marlborough's victories and Guy Fawkes' Day, the latter a hardy annual. Rewards were paid for destroying foxes before the days of Sir John Cope and the Bramshill Hunt. Payment was made for "letters and the date of the Lord" (? an almanac), and there are many similar quaint entries worthy of study.