

SOME STOCK WILLS

Charles Phillips

Thes beiyng wyttnes John Freman and John stonard turner off buttysbury paryshe Red unto theme before John ponder testator the iiii day off march In the back yarde off the cokk.'

The parish church was often remembered in the wills of old days :

William att Ree, 1431 (A. of E., Winterborn, 158-9).

'Item I bequeathe to the high altar of the church aforesaid (all saints, harward Stoke) *xiiid.*'

Robert Hyd, 1500 (A. of E., Stephen, 1).

'Item I bequeth to the reparacion of the same church (Ramesdon belhous) *xiiid.*'

Thomas Blackmore, 1512 [Lord Petre's collection, A. 422].

'Item I gyve and bequethe to the most needfull warkes of the said church (Stoke, or Hertford Stoke) *vis. iiiid.*'

Thomas deryvall, 1517 (A. of E., Sell, 27).

'I bequeth into the high Aulter of the same church (Ramesden bellous) a good shepe for my tythes neclygently forgotten.'

John Wortham, 1530 (A. of E., Rypton, 86).

'I bequeth to the gyldyng of the Rowd loft within the same church (Ramsdon belhouse) *xxs.*'

Provision for the poor was frequently made in wills :

Robert Clayton, 1557 (P.C.C., Noode, 30).

'Item I give and bequeathe to euerye poor householder in the parrishe of Stocke *1d.*'

Sir Thomas Brocke, 1581 (A. of E., Brewer, 39).

'Item I will that the next wynter at the felling of my woodes my executor shall assigne and sette onte to eche and euery of my poore neightbours inhabitinge withe in Stocke aforesaide a place within my saide woodes wheare they and euery of them shall for their fieringe have for the felling and makinge tow loades of wood a pecc.'

The keeping of the roads in good order was often the concern of those making wills :

Thomas harnott (of Stock), 1517 (A. of E., Sell, 4).

'Also I bequeth to the mendyng of the hygh way at a plas called saynt Thomas oke *vis. viiiid.*'

William Samer, 1519 (Lord Petre's collection, A. 363).

'Item I bequeth to the high way by-twene Stoke and Ry bryge as is the most nede *xls.*'

Joane Dale, 1585 (A. of E., Draper, 70).

'Item I geue towarde the mendyng of the lane between Stocke brooke and Mareland gate *xxs.* to be delivered to Goodman Abell of Stocke, and he to bestowe it wthin one year next after my decease and for his care therin to be taken I geue him *xiiid.*'

Some idea of the observances in connection with the deceased, in the middle ages, can be gathered from the following :

Richard Twedy, 1521 (A. of E., Sell, 85).

'Also I gyve and bequeth xls. for an annual obbitt to be kept in the parisshe Church. of Alhallowys beforesaid (harward Stoke) for euermore and the said some of xls. to be deuydyd in v Evyn partys accordinge as deed

stokks be usyd in churchys after this manner ffurst the curat shall have hys masse peny for his dirige 11*d.* and for his beaderoll 11*iiid.* And the said curate to pray for my soule for the soulles of my father and mother my wifes father and mother and for all cristen soulles. And the Sexten to have his dutye the partie of the avauntage of the said Some to be distributed amongst poore people in the said Church in brede ale and chese saving the churchwardens Euer for the tyme beyng Reserve for ether of theym 11*iiid.* And the said church wardens euer for the tyme beyng see performans of the premissys as they woll answher afore godd onys in the yere yerely.'

A Ramsden will, of fifteen years later, shows what was happening at the parish Church in the first part of the sixteenth century :

Andrew Croxton, 1536 (A. of E., Bretton, 41).

'I will that my wiffe do cause a prieste to urge a Trentall for me.

Item I will that the 11*iiid.* that is in the handes of the said John Lyttell that Henry my sonnè shall have.

I will that there be an obyte kepte at Ramesdon ix yere wt yt for my soole and my frendes solles.'

It is clear from the following that, apart from any figures connected with the rood loft, there were also some others to be seen in our churches in the middle ages, as for instance at Stock :

Jone Palmer, 1519 (A. of E., Sell, 47).

'Item I bequeth to the buying of a candell stik to be sett before saynt sonday 11*iiis.* 11*iiid.*

Item I wyll that my executor bye one pownd of wax and sett that one halff upon the said candelstik and that other halff before all halowes in the quere so long as it will enduer.'

It is thought that by 'saint sonday' St. Dominic is meant.

Some light is thrown on the household contents of the sixteenth century by the following :

John Taylor (of Stock), 1560 (A. of E., Lupton, 86).

'Item I geve and bequeathe more unto my sonne Christopher Taylor my best latyne basone and the Ure to it and I geve unto Christiane my daughter a Latin Chaffinge dyshe and Latin bason.'

John Kinge (of Ramsden), 1571 (A. of E., Driffall, 78).

'Also I geve more to the said Susan . . . my best Caudren with a littell tinkers kettle the best of the two. . . Also I geve to my Daughter Anne . . . the gretest tynkers kettle.'

Edward Croxton (of Ramsden), 1589 (A. of E., Draper, 177).

'Item I giue more to William Croxton aforenamed my greatest poudering Trough one querne one cheese laye the better halfe of all my cheese notes.'

A bequest of animals is by no means uncommon :

William Samer (of Stock), 1519 (Lord Petre's collection, A. 363).

'Item to Margaret my mayde a cowe or 11*iiis.*'

John Wagstaff (of Stock), 1562 (P.C.C., Chayre, 15).

'Item I give to euery of my servauntes beside, one lambe a peace.'