

The following text has been extracted from the diaries of Rev. Pownoll W Phipps, Vicar of Chalfont St Giles, by his great, great granddaughter Fenella Tillier of Chearsley, near Aylesbury, and is reproduced with her kind permission.

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1886

On the 20th January I heard from my brother Ramsay that the Revd. Edward Barber, Rector of Chalfont St. Giles, had been offered the Archdeaconry of Chester, and as he was vacating Chalfont. Barber wished to know if I would accept it if it were offered me. Barber had been Diocesan Inspector of Schools for some years and we could only suppose that it was his large acquaintance with the Clergy which made Bishop Stubbs of Chester wish to have him near him as likely to be useful to him. Anyhow it caused some surprise that he should so suddenly be made Archdeacon of Chester, Canon of Chester, and Rector of Bridget's, Chester, although unconnected with that Diocese. I replied that I was inclined and willing to entertain the idea.

On Sunday 14th February I received a letter from MacHarmen, Bishop of Oxford offering me the Rectory of Chalfont St. Giles and next day I wrote to accept it. I knew a little of the place, as I thought, and it seemed to offer me rest and health. It had a good house, a fair income then, if over £450 a year, and above all it seem providential in enabling us to be near my brother so that my wife could be of use to him in sundry domestic matters and with his young family, now that he had lost his wife.

What a mercy it is that we cannot see into the future. Had I known all I discovered afterwards, I doubt if I should have accepted Chalfont. Poor Barber declined in health after going to Chester. He had always suffered from an injury to the bone of his leg, and this became worse. He used to be a tall good-looking fresh-coloured man, always with a rose in his buttonhole. He became very ill, underwent several severe operations, and at last had his leg amputated at the thigh in 1897.

At the time, however, we both felt pleased, but on the resignation of Bishop MacHarmen in 1888 Bishop Stubbs was translated from Chester to Oxford, leaving Barber at Chester instead of finding him where he would have been of much use to him.

This is looking forward, but in 1886, when I knew I had Chalfont to count upon, I certainly experienced a great sense of relief, for my health never had a chance of recovery in the constant work and anxiety of Slough. The people were so considerate and kind, urging me to remain and superintend the Parish work without myself doing more than was necessary, but this was impossible. I had been 13 years at Slough and it was quite time a fresh, younger and more capable man should take my place, and I felt most grateful to be offered an opportunity for retiring in what appeared so satisfactory a manner.

On the 2nd February the Curzons came to luncheon with us. Lady Curzon driving him in her tandem. Bentley and my brother came to meet them. That afternoon we had a party of 50 to meet the Archdeacon of Buckingham and Mrs. Randall. On the 17th we dined at Langley with the Archdeacon and met the Rev. R. W. Randall and Mrs. Randall, then of All Saints Clifton (subsequently Dean of Chichester) and Canon Savory, and next day I should take our Churches.

On the 19th I went to London and met the Bishop of Oxford at the Athenaeum and walked with him to Convocation talking about my successor. He said, "Why do you think I want to appoint a High Churchman? I dread him as much as you do." I answered, "It is the Laity who dread them." He said, "Yes, because our Brethren are such asses"! He also said it was a mistake to appoint a Curate in the same Parish to succeed.

On the 28th the Archdeacon was to preach in the evening at the Parish Church, when Mr. Whall, who was to sing the service, sent to say he could not come, as a servant was very dangerously ill in his house. I was ill myself but, being appealed to by the Organist, I sang the service for the first time in my life, and without any preparation. The only remark made by the people was that it was a long time since I had done it.

On the 11th March we had the Clerical Meeting at our house for the last time, The Archdeacon of Buckingham, the Dean of Windsor Randall Davidson, and 20 Clergy dining. Nicholas of Clewer read a strong paper on confession, and was most completely silenced by the Dean and Archdeacon. I spoke strongly against Nicholas' views, and I have ever since regretted that I spoke so warmly, as I fear I hurt Nicholas feelings, and I wish no unpleasant memories had rested on those friendly gatherings, of which I was so fond, and from which I derived so much instruction.

On the 25th March we had a large meeting of Church workers at 8 p.m., several working men attending. One of these men complained we gave him no information or teaching on Church history to enable them to argue in defence of the Church, whereas we had afternoon lectures for young ladies. This led to their inviting the Rev. E. Sturges to change the hour of his Church History Lectures to the evening. He did so, and a good many working men attended and evidently enjoyed the Lectures.

On the 27th March the Reverend H Savill Young, Vicar of Aston Rowant, Oxfordshire called and remained to luncheon. He told me the Bishop had offered him this Living and he came to see it. I showed him the 3 Churches and gave him all the information I could, and on the 31st I heard from him that he had accepted it. On the 5th April we had our last Confirmation at Slough. 91 Candidates. The Bishop MacHarmen brought his Chaplain Homes. The Archdeacon of Buckingham was also present, with Rev. E. Sturges, and Rev. W. Sells of

Wokingham. Mrs. Murdoch and her daughter came to tea. The Bishop and his Chaplain stayed and slept at our house, and the Dean of Windsor and Mrs. Davidson, the Archdeacon of Buckingham and Mrs. Randall, and the Rev. J. H. Thompson, Vicar of Datchet, our Rural Dean, all dined to meet him, while our 3 Curates and their wives came in during the evening. Altogether this was a most ecclesiastical party.

On the 7th April, after a hard day's work, I drove to Chalfont St. Giles in the evening, and spent two days there, seeing the Rectory and calling on the Churchwardens and schools and my agent James Gurney, and on Mr. Allen who showed us The Vache.

It is not easy to select the chief events of the very busy time we necessarily passed before we actually left Slough. We had frequently to go to London about various business matters and I often had luncheon with the St Albans who that season were at 1 Belgrave Place.

On the 14th I met Mr. Knowles of the XIX Century there. They were all excited about the great Liberal Unionist meeting to be held that night at the Opera. Grace was to have the Royal Box and she kindly invited me to go with her, but I had not time or health for such things, though it proved a most splendid and inspiring spectacle, and really a national event.

At the Easter Vestry I was most kindly received by the people and I had the satisfaction of preventing a contest for the Churchwardenship.

Mr. & Mrs. Savill Young came and stayed with us from the 29th April to the 1st May to be introduced to the Parishioners and District Visitors, and to arrange about fixtures. No one could have behaved in a more gentlemanly and straightforward way and it has been a great pleasure to me to feel that in all our business settlements we never had a difference. I now brought my pamphlet on the Churches and Vicarage and Rectory of Upton cum Chalvey, which was favourably received in the Saturday Review 1st May and had a good sale.

On the 15th April Beatrice and I called on Davidson, the Dean of Windsor, who had kindly consented to preach at our Flower Service. He was then occupied in writing the life of Tait the Archbishop. The service was held successfully on the 5th May and was not only my last but the last service so held at Slough.

I still suffered dreadfully from headaches and weakness and was laid up in bed every few days, making my necessary work most trying. I felt the necessity of a little rest and quiet for thought before my actual leave-taking, and so I arranged to leave home on the 7th May for a week or two. Lady Biddulph and Tahourdin Minor, Canon of Windsor, called in the morning, and I then packed up and was about to start alone for Havre and France, when I suddenly altered my plans and decided to go somewhere on my Tricycle instead. I had been using this for some little time and had incurred some risk by a nasty fall from it on the 1st May. I had gone to Eton and, going up the little bridge over the brook, I met 2 carts and foolishly let the machine run backwards down the hill to make room. No sooner had I applied the brake, then it jumped into the air and turned a somersault backwards. Fortunately I preserved my presence of mind while in the air, and guided my fall, and so escaped with only a shaking, but all who saw the accident, thought I must be killed. I now packed my bag full of clothes and started 7th May letting the Tricycle go where it liked.

We left at 5.25 and running through Datchet, Horton, and Staines I found myself once more at Shepperton, and pulled up at the Manor House at 7.45. Mrs. Lindsay was at home, and John McKerrow the Presbyterian minister and his wife were with her, and welcomed me most kindly. I dined and slept there, and left next morning never to return, and never to see her alive again.

Next day, Saturday, I called to see our old friend Miss Agnes Douglas at Dunalley and then on Mrs. De Vitre at Ashley Warren, Oatlands Park, which I left at 12.15 and stopping to luncheon at Wisley Hut at 1.20 (1 1/2 miles from Ripley) where there was a picturesque little inn by a sheet of water. I went on slowly to Guildford which I reached at 4.20. Here by mistake I put up at the White Lion instead of the White Hart and found myself among commercial travellers. Next day, Sunday, I went to church at St. Nicholas, and in the afternoon I walked to St. Martha's, the pretty little church on the hill, enjoying the repose and quiet. I bought Romola and began reading it for the first time. On Monday I left at 10 and by mistake left the road to the Hogsback and pushed my heavily laden machine up a path by the cemetery and across fields till I rejoined the road at the top. I reached Farnham - the Bush Hotel (Bromley). I left at 1.10 and passing Aldershot, Farnborough and Frimley, I reached York Town at 3.15 and had tea at a coffee house. At 3.45 I started again and passing through the Royal Military College Hotel at 4.45. It was much occupied by the Roupells of Loddon Court, Swallowfield and I was very uncomfortable, not even being able to get milk.

Next day was raining and cold, and I couldn't start till 12. I reached Keep Hatch at 1 o'clock, hindered by ropes stretched across a road by Walter to assert private rights once a year. My friends the De Vitres received me most kindly. Denis was at home, and Harry Barlow. Next day I stayed on, as it rained, and I went to Wokingham and saw Archdeacon Brown of Wells, a funny little soft-voiced man, who told me he competed with Tait for Rugby.

Next day, Thursday 13th, I was forced by heavy rain to abandon my Tricycle and return to Slough by train, where I reached home all the better for my trip. On Friday my wife, Beatrice, and I went to London, and shopped, and called on Grace.

On Saturday afternoon I went by train to Wokingham and had tea with Mrs. De Vitre and starting at 6 on my Tricycle got back to Slough by 8 p.m.

On Sunday morning 16th May I went to London and went to church at St. Paul's Cathedral and afterwards at the Temple and heard the Anthem "Whether shall I go from thy spirit" by Croft and a sermon by Dr. Vaughan who I thought affected and revolting. I then went to lunch with the Rogers at 115 Eaton Square and afterwards, with Mrs. Bagwell, went to St. Michael's, Chester Square and heard Canon Fleming preach on Despondency to a large afternoon congregation. I then went to see poor Lilla Bagwell seriously ill in bed. I never saw her again as she died. I dined with the Rogers and returned home the same night.

Next evening, Monday 17th, we dined at Archdeacon Randalls at Langley to meet the Bishop of Oxford (MacHarmen) and the James Watsons. Next day I had a visit from a Mr. Carthew from the Charity Organization Society, who came to enquire about my former Curate The Revd. George Weller, whom they suspect. He is helping Mr. Frederick Johnson in starting bubble companies, Harbours of Refuge and a National Life Boat Institute as distinct from the Association of the same name.

Next 19th was the Archdeacon's Visitation, and at dinner he kindly proposed my health in very gratifying terms. On the 21st we three again went to London and had luncheon with Grace and saw the Colonial Exhibition.

On the 26th the new Bells made by Mears and Stainbank on Whitechapel, given by Mr. Fred Charsley to complete the peal of 8 at the Parish Church, were rung for the first time and I thought them very weak and poor. With his usual liberality Mr. Charsley had given me £95 16s for these bells and also £45 to make up the sum of £105 estimated by Mr. J. Oldred Scott as the cost of a new Four for the Parish Church, towards which I had collected £60. When Mr. Scott came to stay with me (3rd March) about the Four I pressed him to use Mexican Onyx for the bowl, telling him of the Font at St. Saviour's Eastbourne of that material. He replied that it would be impossible to use that marble for so large a Font as our Church required. However at breakfast next morning he received a telegram from Brindley, 63 Westminster Bridge Road, saying: "Please endeavour to select Mexican Onyx, as I have 'a splendid block'". Mr. Scott showed me this, laughing, and he went to see it and did choose it, and anyone who now see it will, I think, agree that I was right. It stands on a thick base of Pavonazzo Marble, with shafts of Connemara Green Marble.

At this time Mr. F. Charsley was much interested in the building of a Town Hall or Institute at Slough and I took much trouble in trying to keep peace between him and the Trustees and Committees. It ended in his retiring from the Committee and building a second Town Hall at his own expense in Mackenzie Street. However he subsequently altered his mind at his son's suggestion, and pulled down his own Town Hall, removing the materials, and re-turfing the site. Mr. Charsley told me he had bought Lady Hasting's furniture and Dhuleep Singh's. On the estate of the latter in Norfolk they collected 5000 Pheasants eggs in one day, the usual average being 1000,000 a year, selling at 9d a piece, and Charsley had bought some out of that price.

Sunday 30th May was my last Sunday at Slough. I preached in the morning at Old Upton Church to a large congregation, which included the Fire Brigade, and in the evening at the Parish Church to a very large congregation, which filled the galleries and chairs, and included Archdeacon Randall and his family. My text was XXVIII Mathew. 20.

The next day, Monday, a Deputation came to us headed by Springhall Thompson and presented us with a silver tea pot and a plated silver kettle urn in an Oak box, and a purse of £162-4-3. Their address touched me very much and I replied as gratefully as I could.

Next Tuesday, 1st June, I went to Cuddesdon and was collated to the Rectory of Chalfont St. Giles to Bishop MacHarmen at 12.30. The Bishop was very unwell, but his Chaplain Holmes pressed me to remain to luncheon as it did the Bishop good. Afterwards, in walking about, he told me the Bishop was anxious I should go away for a year before beginning work at Chalfont. I was feeling wretchedly exhausted and ill, but I have a feeling that the change to country air and life would be sufficient and I had already been away so much I determined to go straight to my new work.

Accordingly next day I went to all the schools and said goodbye and then at 5.30, in pouring rain, I started the cart of Hewett the Butcher who drove me to Chalfont St. Giles where I stayed at the Stone, my brother's house until the Rectory was ready. Hewett was very amusing in his conversation during our drive. He said he was sorry I was leaving, but it all came from going to Church so much. In those crowds people took one another's breath. It was just the same with sheep. When you pen them at night you hear one of them cough. Next morning they're all coughing – and why? "Cos they takes one another's breath".

So ended my life at Slough. It lasted from 11th Nov 1870 to the 1st June 1886. They were the happiest years of my life, and the kindness and support I received during that time can never be gratefully enough acknowledged. Such friends as Springall Thompson, George Bentley and Henry Fleetwood Nash carried me through all my difficulties by their sympathy and assistance. Such liberality as that of Frederick Charsley and Algernon Gilliat was princely. An atmosphere of confidence, unity and friendliness became so recognized as the characteristic of our Parochial life that strangers remarked we seemed like one large family. It is no wonder that the sums collected for Church purposes amounted to about £3,500 during those years. The District Visitors increased from 24 to 42. The Sunday School Teachers to 60. The Choirs to 70 and the Treasurers to 15. I append some lists that may be of interest.

Hitherto I have been writing about things and people sufficiently separated from the present by time to make it comparatively easy to judge of them, but when I turn to Chalfont St. Giles where I now am I find it harder to speak. It is impossible to conceive of a much greater change than our removal from Slough to Chalfont St. Giles involved.

At that time Chalfont St. Giles was a healthy and pretty place but we gradually learnt that we must not expect much happiness there. The inhabitants were almost all Dissenters, Primitive Methodists principally, but some Independents. We had known this, but having always got on well with Dissenters, we anticipated no difficulty on that account, and we could not understand why the poor people and tradespeople at Slough, expressed their regret and sympathy at our going amongst such people. It turned out that they were right. From various causes, such as the length and unwieldy nature of the county, its having been in the huge Lincoln Diocese until Bishop Wilberforce, its being the home of the Puritan and Cromwellian adherents, and the cradle of Quakerism, the absence of railways, and its separation from the world, the poor were uncivilized and rude and a prey to violent socialistic agitators who lived by stirring them up to attack the Parson, the Squire, the gentry and Property. Intermarriage had reduced them in many cases to a low intellectual condition. They had hardly heard of Slough, though only 10 miles distant from it. And though London was only 23 miles away yet only the carriers and market gardeners or hay and straw men had ever visited it. A good many rowdy lads and rough girls stood about the streets shouting – and the people who lived mostly with their cottage doors open, turned their backs as we passed and then turned back to stare at us.

The cottages, though picturesque with timbered walls and red tiled roofs, were disgracefully devoid of decent arrangements and there was much immorality in consequence.

The influence of the gentry was very slight and often bad. The Squire, Mr. Thos. Newland Allen, son of an Army tailor who had been given by the Government two bridges, Walton and Kingston, tolls, was one of the old sporting cockfighting squires in top boots and top hat. He kept two places, The Vache in which he resided, and Newlands which he would let no one occupy for fear they might interfere with his sport. He was deaf, from an old fall in a steeple chase, and he made this the excuse for never entering the Church, but he kept a big square pew in it unoccupied. He cared for nothing but pheasants which he bred in enormous numbers being very jealous of their being shot. He employed a great many old labourers whom he kept out of the workhouse and to whom he habitually used foul and violent language. He was very courteous in manner, took quantities of snuff, and refused to take any part in Parochial matters, hating and despising the people.

Mr. Samuel Sanders of the Grove was a distinguished collector of books and pictures and resided chiefly in London at 7 De Vere Gardens. He was nervous and timid, was afraid of the people and disliked them. His family were nice good people, his wife charming. They were rich but lived very quietly and sparingly and had no taste for country pursuits, being regular cockneys.

Mr. C H Faquer was an eccentric nervous man who had a school for little boys chiefly of nobility, Prince Christian's boys, the Duke of Westminster etc. The following story of Mr. Allen is true as he told it me.

Bishop Wilberforce was coming to consecrate a church in the neighbourhood and wrote to the Rector Canon Lloyd to ask him to arrange for it. Lloyd wrote to Allen to say the Bishop preferred staying with a squire, and would Allen entertain him? Allen replied that he only entertained foxhunters. Lloyd forwarded his letter to the Bishop who wrote to Allen: "Dear Sir, I understand from your Rector that you only entertain Foxhunters. As an old Foxhunter I claim hospitality. I shall arrive at such an hour on such a day and I trust it may be convenient to you to receive me." Allen sent round and invited all the Fox hunters to meet the Bishop. They came, and the Bishop won all their hearts. Next day Allen mounted him on his best highly bred horse. Before the Bishop got his foot into the stirrup after mounting the horse took fright and galloped off. Allen was terrified seeing the horse make for the Park railings which bounded a deep lane. The horse stopped there and give 3 buck jumps which the Bishop sat beautifully till Allen came up and made him take another horse. "From that moment" said Allen to me "I would have done anything for that man".

My brother was the only gentleman who took any interest in the people, or tried to do good. This state of things was taken advantage of by two farmers name Gurney to try to obtain influence. James Gurney was a land agent acting for me and for many of the gentry and compelling the labourers he employed to vote under his direction at Vestries etc. "I know the gentry better than you do", he used to say to me, "They're most of them ruined. Believe me Rector their day is over, and it's men like me that's coming to the front." His brother William was a big good-humoured, unprincipled fellow, who neglected his work, lost all his money, and gradually became a demagogue, always going about speaking on platforms. Both of these men call themselves Conservatives and Church men. James was my Agent. William my Churchwarden. I soon found both were false. Their influence was irreligious and demoralizing, and while they boasted that they were the links to unite the upper and lower classes, they were really seeking their own ends. There were 3 or 4 unscrupulous dissenting radicals who competed with the Gurneys for influence with the people. They were mild and plausible in conversation, but were secretly always engaged in some plot, and at meetings broke out in violence. To disestablish the Church and to get their rights and obtain other people's property was their constant aim and cry.

Unfortunately the conduct of my predecessors had tended to increase these evils. The Living had been one of the chief benefices of the Lincoln diocese and as such had been held by the Chancellor of the Cathedral and other dignitaries, who did not reside. The Revd. George Thomas Prettyman, son of the Bishop, was a dreadful instance of Pluralism. He held the living from 1840 to 1859 without ever residing and when he came to visit it once a year the people hissed him, and the congregation got up and left the Church.

For 42 years there was no resident Rector, until Canon Lloyd came in 1859. He was a big handsome man, fond of horses, and always drove a Tandem, going about to preach for the SPG. To see him at advantage it was said you should see him preaching a Harvest sermon in his gown with a bunch of corn in his button hole. He had tried to bully the people and was a magistrate. One man whom he tried to drag out of a Public House wrestled with him and broke his leg. In latter life he suffered from stone and took to drink, and the Gurneys got him into subjection under them. He was succeeded by Barber who had been many years Diocesan Inspector of Schools and had no

Parochial experience. He was a great deal away from the Parish while he held the Living. My brother came at the same time as Barber, and naturally both of them being without experience, they fell into the hands of the Gurneys, who practically ruled the Parish. Their one idea was to do everything for popularity, and never to annoy or resist Dissenters.

As for society, the neighbourhood was very peculiar. At Denham the squire, Ben Way attacked his Rector, The Revd. R. H. Lathbury, simply on some silly question of shooting and after writing him insulting letters, dressed up a figure to represent a clergyman with a bible and placed opposite the Rectory, with the words "Blessed are the peacemakers". He invited the public to play football in the field on Sundays and at last shot the figure. He also threatened the poor on his estate that if they let the Rector visit them, he would turn them out. For this, and for his scurrilous letters, he was at last brought to trial, and the judge told him it was the most disgraceful case he had ever tried, and had it not been for the Rector's kindness he would have punished him severely. Ben Way used to circulate infidel tracts among his tenants, and when he died, he was buried in unconsecrated ground in his Park by his own directions.

The Clergy of the Deanery were a very odd set of men, of who it was said that they were all either evangelicals or foxhunters. Many of the Living were held by Simeon Trustee, and the Town of Chesham among others, while the Rector of Amersham, the Revd. Ed. Tyrwhitt Drake was a distinguished Foxhunter and attended at Race Meetings, living as a bachelor in the large Rectory. He has never called on me, although I have frequently on him and had lunch with him.

On first reaching Chalfont St. Giles, I stayed with my brother at the Stone. My first service was on Ascension Day, 3rd June. On the following Friday 4th June I was inducted by the Revd. Leslie Randall, Archdeacon of Buckingham, at the 6.30 p.m. service. Constantine came from Fulham and Agassez and Starkey, my two curates, drove over from Slough, and between them took the prayers and lessons. Afterwards there was a supper party of 16 at The Stone. The next Sunday my brother read the lessons in church for the first time.

It took some time to get the Rectory into order for us, as the drains were all wrong, the wall papers 6 or 7 thick in so foul a state that the workmen were made sick in removing them, and the fire grates were so bad they had to be replaced. The dirt and smell of the house were dreadful, and the cistern which served for drinking purposes as well as for the W.C. was sufficient to breed fever. Gradually we succeeded in rectifying all this and, after considerable trouble, we made the house clean, warm and comfortable.

I went over every day after breakfast to work. On the 9th, Wednesday, Beatrice came from Slough with the servants and a Slough charwoman, and the same afternoon our furniture vans began to arrive.

On Friday, 11th June, Hetherington's last van arrived, and at 7 p.m. my wife came, all of us sleeping at The Stone.

On Sunday 13th June, Whitsunday, an old woman named Chapman aged 72 sitting immediately under the pulpit fainted at the evening service, and was carried in the vestry and thence home, by my brother and W. Gurney. Fortunately a Doctor happened to be in Church, and he examined her, and found she was dead.

During this busy time I not only worked in the house arranging furniture, hanging pictures, and directing everything, but I also had to visit the sick, and several times I went to Slough and back on my tricycle to procure various necessary matters and things. In my weak state of health this was too much for me, and I had headaches and had to lie in bed with an inflamed pile. Still I buried Mrs. Chapman, going to bed again afterwards.

On Friday we had an Ellen Bourne who had worked in my mother's garden but now sold peppermint on the Thames embankment. We hired a carriage and sent her back for she had walked from Slough.

On Saturday 19th June I went to the Rectory and slept there alone, and on Monday my wife came and slept there too. The next Tuesday, Beatrice came, and so we began our actual residence then. On the 25th we all dined at the Vache with Mr. Allen, and his ward Miss Bolton, for the first and only time.

On Saturday 12th June, Constantine took his M. A. degree at Oxford, and on Trinity Sunday 20th June he was ordained Priest at St. Paul's by Bishop Temple.

Pownoll's Regiment had been left up the Nile at Shellal and suffered severely from Enteric. We were very anxious about him, and therefore it was with great satisfaction that on the 26th we heard from the War Office through Chas. Kempe that the 1st Dorsetshire Regt. were to be moved to Alexandria and to come home about the 24th July.

On the 7th July the result of the Poll for the S Bucks election was made known; Lord Curzon getting 4620, against Gilbey 3527, and so obtaining a majority of 1083 for the Liberal Unionists.

On the 7th August the Society of Cyclists visited this Parish, with their President Dr. Berry Ward Richardson, and their Secretary Dr. A. Wynter Blyth M.R.C.S., F.C.S. They visited Milton's Cottage and the Church and I showed them everything. Among others with them was Mrs. Hepworth Dixon who stayed over Sunday at the Merlin's cave.

On the 20th Pownoll arrived for his leave on his return from the Egyptian campaign, there they were sent on in the Himalaya at once and reached Portsmouth 8 August and Portland on the 10th. He was suffering from a gumboil when I met him at Slough but the Doctor said it all arose from his health having suffered in Egypt, and what he really needed was rest and good food. This happily proved true, and he soon got all right again.

On the 28th September, Tuesday, I started on my Tricycle to attend the Oxford Conference. I left at 1, and reached Henley at 5.45 where I slept at the Red Lion. That evening I went to church for the Eve service and a young gentleman in boating clothes with a lady and a little girl spoke to me afterwards, and they proved to be Edward Rasck, son of my Brighton friends, and his wife, and daughter Florence. He told me he was in great trouble, and separated from his family, and that this unexpected meeting was clearly providential, and he begged me to try and assist in a reconciliation. He took me to his lodgings, and I did my best, but it was hopeless. There was insanity in his family, and to this no doubt his faults were attributable. It was sad to remember what he had been as a pretty and bright little boy at Brighton, always fond of me and hoping to be my Curate.

Next day I went on to Abingdon, seeing Dorchester (14 miles) and Abingdon (6 miles) where I arrived 1.15. I had lunch with Griffith, my former Curate, now the Vicar. He shewed me his most interesting Churches and I went on to the Randolph Hotel, Oxford (6 miles).

At the Conference next day, Thursday 30th Sept., my brother moved an amendment on the question of R.D. Conferences, by which he tried to increase the lay representative in proportion to the population of each Parish, but he failed. On the next day Sharp of Cookham denounced Reginald Rogers with the Bishop's evident sympathy.

That afternoon, 1st Oct, I went home taking my Tricycle to Loudwater by train. I got home by 6, very tired – On the 11th we all went to Deddington and stayed with Holford Risley, until the 15th, when we came home, Pownoll and I walking from Loudwater.

On the 2nd November I drove to Slough with the Warrens, and Pownoll went on my Tricycle. We returned next day using the Tricycle between us, and that evening, 3rd Nov., 10 of the Slough Choir men drove over to supper with us at 8 p.m. They came in a furniture van which they hung with lamps inside by the light of which they played cards. They seemed to enjoy themselves and left at 10.30 p.m.

On Monday 8th November my wife, Pownoll, Beatrice and Gertie and I went to Leek in Staffordshire and the next day at 10.45 I married Constantine to Jessie Mabel Challinor at St. Edwards Parish Church. The Revd. W.H. Hopkins Curate of the Parish Church, and the Revd. Ben. Wright, Vicar of All Saints, Compton, assisted. My wife and I stayed with Mrs. Cruso, a very nice and rich old lady.

At the luncheon at Compton House Pownoll returned thanks for the bridesmaids, very amusingly. Constantine and Mabel went to Chester, and thence to Kingstown, and on to Oaklands to stay with my Mother.

I have forgotten to mention that on the 25th July the Bucks Archaeological Society visited Chalfont St. Giles and, with the assistance of Mr. S. Sandars, I prepared a paper on the Parish Church which I read at the meeting, and this was published by the Society in their records for the year. The paper was subsequently expanded into a pamphlet called Chalfont St. Giles Past and Present of which I sold the first edition myself, having it printed at Beverley, and subsequently I sold the book to Messrs. Bentley.

We stayed with the Swabeys at 3 Stanhope St., Hyde Park Gardens from the 3rd to the 7th October.

On the 31st October I went to Ireland, and wishing to cross by daylight I slept at Chester. The next day a tremendous gale got up. The railway was washed away in several places, and I and one other man were the only passengers who dared to cross in the Ulster. We never started until 2.15 instead of 1.30 as it was necessary to turn her first. I stood by the Captain on the bridge in spite of his and the sailors remonstrance's until a big wave drenched me as we were half way across. The glass steering house had been smashed coming over. I was disappointed at the waves not being higher. But the wind was too strong to let them get up. The vessel behaved magnificently and only took 4 hours to Kingstown.

I slept at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin and next morning Pownoll joined me there. He had great difficulty in getting to the train at Portland, no cab being able to reach them, but the Colonel sent 8 men to carry his things. Alarming placards of the effect of the gale at Holyhead had made him doubt my being able to cross.

We went down to Oaklands together by Thurles. Our visit would have been very pleasant but it was spoilt by a disagreeable scene with my sister and I left on the 16th sleeping at Holyhead as I had a dreadful headache. I got home next evening.

One of the cottages, belonging to the Rector of Chalfont St. Giles had been lent by him for the purpose of a Village Reading Room and this I had continued. Latterly however it had been very poorly managed, anyone having been admitted, no order maintained, roudyism had prevailed, and the room was deeply in debt. I was very anxious to improve this state of things and a meeting was called on the 21st October 1887 to decide whether the room should be continued. I offered to lend the room as usual but, in order to insure better management, I said I would not lend it vaguely to the Parish, and for a public meeting to elect managers as had been the practice, but I would nominate those to whom I would lend it, and I named my brother, W. Gurney my churchwarden, F. Register the schoolmaster, W. Curtis my tenant, and others of respectability, including several working men. To my surprise Register declined to act, saying he would only accept his position from the Parish, and my churchwarden W. Gurney followed him in declining, although he was reminded by my

brother that he did accept his churchwardenship from me. Curtis who had been Treasurer also declined. As soon as I perceived what their line was I felt that my opportunity for obtaining independence had at last come, and I told them I would not lend the room to them at all, but would carry out a plan of my own respecting it. Accordingly on the 24th I called a meeting of young men and proposed to start in the Parish a Branch of the Young Men's Friendly Society, to the advantages of which I explained, and I promised to lend the room to them to be managed by a Committee of their own. They accepted my offer. The Society was started, and ever since it has worked most successfully and satisfactorily and has proved a great blessing to the Parish.

The old Committee tried to assert their claim to the furniture, but I took legal opinion, and consulted the persons who had given it, and I found that it did not belong to the Committee of management, appointed annually, but was vested in me the Rector of the Trustees. It is only fair to say however that they only claimed it that they might themselves give it to the new Committee. Still I could not accept the wrong principle it involved. My brother generously paid off the debt.

It was partly in connection with this incident that I now decided to retire from the School Board. I know that this was a strong step to take, especially as the Board had themselves appointed me on the 26th July '86 in succession to my predecessor, Archdeacon Barber. My reasons however were that a year's experience had shewn me that my position on the board was so unsatisfactory and useless as to be absolutely humiliating. My Churchwarden W. Gurney was Chairman, and he had always shewn himself unfriendly to me.

At the time of the Vestry when the change in the Parish Charities was to be discussed and it was known that I was to be attached, W. Gurney purposely kept away, and on other Vestry occasions he had spoken disrespectfully of me and shewn his intention to assert his superiority and to follow the counsels of a very bitter Political Dissenter named Weston.

Weston was an influential member of the Board and it was at his house that preliminary meetings were always held from which of course I was excluded.

James Gurney another member of the Board used to boast that he had told Weston his heart was as black as his neck. This man Weston was deaf and used his deafness to strengthen his influences by requiring that everything should be repeated to him.

Mr. F. Register the schoolmaster had already several times spoken to me very rudely, and as the Board left everything to him, my position was intensely disagreeable, and I felt I had not the health or strength to bear the annoyances to which I was subjected any longer.

First, however, I called upon all the gentry of the Parish and asked the opinion of each, and in every case except that of my brother, I was urged not to stand for the election which was to be held in November. Thus I retired, and in the serious illness which afterwards befell me I felt most thankful that I had not to face the disgraceful scenes of violence and abuse which accompanied each succeeding election. I think too my spiritual influences has gained by separation from secular contests and freedom from the personal attacks they invariably called forth.

I do not pretend that my example should be followed in other Parishes, or that a better and stronger successor in the Rectory may not re-assume the position with advantage. I had to decide at a time when the Parish was in a very peculiar condition never likely to be reproduced. The Gentry apathetic and, except my brother, unwilling to take part in public affairs – the Gurneys pretending to represent the Church, but in reality acting with the Dissenters for popularity – the whole social condition of the Parish being entirely one of strong Political dissent, and I, the conformist minister, as they called me, conscious of ever failing health.

The condition of the Church Sunday School now became of greater importance than ever. When I came it might have been described as one of anarchy. It was under the management of Mr. Richard Matthews, who not only was incapable of controlling the children, but was an object of ridicule to them. Big rough lads dominated the whole place inside and out practising every sort of horse play, and I frequently had to go to the Policeman for assistance. My wife was pelted with stones, and even my brother's under-gardener laughed and refused to help me. I began explaining to the children that I intended to have a quiet school and that all who were not willing to behave properly would have to leave. I next removed the elder lads into a Bible class which was held at my Reading Room by my brother's governess at first, but subsequently by my wife. I then publicly caned a boy who tried to kick me and who called to the others to help him, and I took no notice of his father's threats. I required all the teachers to come every week to an instruction class, and to write out my notes of a lesson to be given in the morning.

On Sunday afternoons I marched all the children to Church for a children's service when I catechized them on the subject taught in the morning. This procession down the street had been a very troublesome business, as we were insulted and jostled and derided by big lads and men, but gradually with the help of the policeman, and by remonstrances with parents and employers, I over came these difficulties. But the last step I took was an important as any. I dismissed Mr. Mathews, and I appointed a paid female superintendent who also acted as a Mission woman. I obtained money for this from the grant I had secured from the Palliser Trust by the new Charities scheme. It was not easy to find the right sort of woman at first, but ultimately I appointed a Church Army "Nurse", paying her 12/- a week, with furnished lodgings; and I got proper rooms for her by turning some unsatisfactory tenants out of my Rectory cottage and giving half that house to the Nurse, and half to my gardener. This had additional advantage of giving me a room for meetings and for a Boy's Club in the evenings which proved very attractive and added to the Nurse's influence. To these measures may be attributed the present excellent condition to which we have attained.

Equally important at least were the steps I took to improve the condition of the Church and its services. By the help of my brother, and various gifts, we had the Church properly lighted by excellent hanging lamps, and I improved the Reredos, and gradually in time obtained Altar Frontals, Dossal hangings, and book markers for the seasons.

When I first came I found the chancel used by a number of men, women, lads and boys calling themselves a Choir. I began by getting the women to leave and to sit in the Church. I then asked the men and boys to meet in the Vestry, and thus I prevented their walking in at any time in the service, placing hats and coats conspicuously in the stalls or on the floor, and even bring their children to sit with them, as Mr. Register the schoolmaster did. We then entered and left the church in procession, and gradually they learnt to practise reverence and lead the worship as well as the hymns.

At last, in spite of the passive opposition of my Churchwarden Mr. W. Gurney, I managed to get them all into surplices, with cassocks for the boys and capes for the men, and they wore these for the first time on Sunday 23rd September 1888 at the Harvest Thanksgiving services. All these changes were received with pleasure by the congregation, nor was any objection ever made even by the Dissenters, except Wm. Worly who objected for a time to wear them as he said they would be wolves in sheep's clothing.

At the same time I introduced the Cathedral Psalter and I got Mr. Blanchett, my former Organist at Slough, to come over and explain it to them, and to gave hints to a young man named Arthur Matthews whom I had appointed organist. He was self taught and gradually improved, and he waded me from what I have always considered the mistaken custom of the Clergyman's wife playing the organ, which had been followed by my two predecessors. People always abuse the organist in Country Churches, and it is better to have a paid man.

I have dwelt at some length upon all that happened in 1887 because I look upon it as the most trying and painful period of my life, and the steps I took then have decided all that has happened since in the Parish. I realized at last that I could never expect to be the Parson or Person of the Parish. Dissent was too strongly established and too hostile, and the so-called Church people too weak and indifferent to care to have things otherwise. All I could do was to occupy as strong a defensive position as I could; and to try to keep Church interests safe from treachery within and attack from without until this tyranny was overpast and happier possibilities might arise. Certainly we were most unhappy, feeling the change after our life at Slough, and all the affection we had enjoyed there, and when Miss Brice came and spent 2 week inspecting the Parish, and reported that it was the worst she had ever seen, but that in seven years we might hope for a change, our hearts well nigh broke – but she was right!

The year 1888 was a most trying one in climate. The weather was very severe and lasted long, the summer was so cold and wet that even at Malta they had to give up white clothes and wear red. Hay was still being made and very little wheat was in on the 8th Sept. The 11th July was the coldest day in July ever known, and there was snow in places. Fortunately September was fine, but the cold began again in October with snow in the north of England. It was a bad year for me, as I was constantly suffering from dreadful headaches and yet I managed to get about a good deal and to do a good deal, although we had no regular holiday. Chalfont is a peculiarly cold and bleak place in winter, as the North winds blow down the valley from the Chilterns like a funnel, and we felt intensely the dullness and isolation, being cut off from all our friends, far from any railway, having no carriage, and surrounded by uncongenial and almost hostile neighbours.

Our house too had not yet been made as warm and comfortable as in time, and after experience we contrived to make it by putting in double windows and new fire grates, and improving floors, windows, and locks.

We were very glad therefore to go to Bestwood on the 23rd January, where we had a pleasant visit. The Duke and Grace returned from Sandringham that day, and Grace told me how last night, when undressed and going to bed, a knock came at the door, and in came the Princess of Wales to wish her good bye. She kissed her and said she looked like a little girl.

We met several agreeable people during our visit. Mrs. Grey, Mr. Trumper, Miss Higgins and Lord Arthur Butler staying there. I took a great fancy to Lord Arthur. He married a Chicago lady with £2000 a year and I afterwards made her acquaintance and like her much. He was brother to the Marquess of Ormond and brother in law to the Duke of Westminster.

One day we drove to Nottingham and saw Watts pictures at the Museum. Next day we drove to lunch at Clifton and enjoyed going over the house and seeing everything.

We met Mr. Ellison, a relation of my Rugby friend, and Mrs. Henderson, wife of our friend Col. Kenneth Henderson, and they all came to luncheon next day at Bestwood.

On the 27th we drove to call on Mrs. Holden (nee Miss Walter) at Nuttall Temple, a very interesting house built so as to show no chimneys, with its hall decorated in plaster by an Italian to represent Arts, Science and Sport.

It cost £500 to instal the electric light at Bestwood. Each lamp glass lasts 1000 hours and costs 5/4. The Colliery give the Duke 150 tons of coal a year which lasts 6 months.

We returned home on the 28th January.

On the 7th February I went to Wokingham and stayed with Lorry and Mrs. Thompson who had taken The Elms, Lady Desart's Dower House. Next day she drove me in a hired cart to a meet of Mr. Garth's Foxhounds at Swallowfield, and we passed through Bearwood, Mr. Walter's place. Middy Rogers was out and was astonished at seeing me.

On the 8th February Pownoll embarked with his Regiment on the Crocodile for Malta. The Hon. Mrs. Bagwell and Fanny, came to stay with us from the 17th to 22nd May and Lady Sybil Beauclerk from the 20th to 28th June.

Mr. Challinor, Mabel's father, came too from the 26th to 27th June and locked his bedroom door so securely that he couldn't open it in the morning and the gardener had to enter his room by a ladder.

During July and August I was considering an offer made me by the Rev. H. A. Boys, Chaplain at Algiers, to exchange with him for a year. Archdeacon Leslie Randall knew him and introduced us, urging me to agree because he thought it would do me good in my health, and Mr. Boys came and stayed with us from 26th to 27th July and liked Chalfont so much he was anxious to arrange it. For many things we should have liked it, but I thought it would be bad for the Parish, and I could not agree to Boys' stipulation that I should guarantee him £250. This would have caused me anxiety and so have nullified any good from the exchange.

It was as well that I declined, as Mrs. Boys, for whose approaching confinement he was anxious to be in England, died in her confinement at the Precincts, Lincoln, where she was staying with her father, Precenter Venables.

On the 3rd August Beatrice went to Tenby with my brother and his children. I have already mentioned that we did not go away for a regular holiday this year and the following incidents will show how Providential it was that we stayed at home.

On Bank Holiday 6th August we received an unexpected visit from the Rev. H. T. Valentine, at that time Chaplain to the London Hospital. He came on his Bicycle on his way to Chepstow. He was exhausted and we made him stay to luncheon. After lunch he started to go by Henley and persuaded me to go part of the way with him on my Tricycle as he did not know the way.

We went together to Bourne End when it suddenly came into my mind to go and see my old friend Reginald Rogers at Cookham, so I left Valentine and went to Cookham and had tea with Rogers. Afterwards on Sunday 12th August I received a letter from Rogers saying he was looking out for a suitable person to appoint to the Incumbency of Cookham Dean which was in his gift, and, as he judged from what I had told him that I did not like Chalfont, it had occurred to him to offer it to me. It was a pretty healthy place above the Quarry Woods with a nice Vicarage built by Hodson but the value of the Living was only £158. I wrote to thank him and to decline the Living, but I asked him to think of my son Constantine, Curate of Fulham if he knew of no better man.

Accordingly Rogers did write and offer it to Constantine. A very amusing correspondence ensued, as Rogers' handwriting is almost illegible, and when he took to Postcards and hieroglyphics to insure secrecy, drawing a picture of the labarum to represent Constantine, the difficulty of deciphering them and understanding his meaning perplexed me sorely.

Constantine went over to see the place, taking his father in law, Mr. Challinor, with, and the result was that he accepted it, 26th August, and he was instituted to it on the 14th November. This was a cause of very great satisfaction to us.

Constantine and Mabel settled into this pretty and comfortable home where everything promised them health and happiness. They became very popular. The Bishop made him Diocesan Inspector of Schools, to assist Drummond in that large Maidenhead Deanery, and it led ultimately to the Bishop offering him the Vicarage of Aylesbury, where he now is. As this chain of events may be traced back to our being at home when Mr. Valentine called, it is easy to see why I consider it Providential.

On the 13th August my wife and I went with our Choir on an Excursion to Dover, travelling by Uxbridge. The Naval Manoeuvres were going on, and we were fortunate enough to see the Fleet pass, and also to see a number of Torpedo boats come in for water and coal. It was blowing hard, and they all enjoyed themselves, but as we had got up very early I became so tired that, after seeing the Choir and Sunday School Teachers off on their return journey, my wife and I remained and slept at the Lord Warden Hotel. We went to bed so early that when the 9 o'clock evening gun was fired we awoke and thought the fleet were attacking Dover, as had been thought probable, and next day on enquiring about the attack were laughed at!

On Thursday 16th we went to stay with Constantine at Fulham, and next day I returned to Chalfont, leaving my wife to stay longer.

On the 27th August I went to Wokingham on my Tricycle to stay with DeVitre's and returned next day in a squall of rain and southerly gale which blew me home rapidly by the help of my umbrella. That night Beatrice crossed from Milford Haven to Waterford, going from Tenby, and had some difficulty in consequence of the storm.

On the night of 5th September the bell of the Parish Church rang to awaken the Parishioners as an incendiary fire had occurred in a house on the corner of the Vache Lane opposite the Pheasant recently occupied by Williams the Fly Driver. To insure success the incendiary had piled a load of straw on the well house opposite and burnt it. My brother and William Gurney were very active and had nearly put it out by the time the Amersham Fire Engine came.

On the 13th September our annual Flower Show was held. This was always the Chief Parish holiday in the year and my brother, as Secretary, had worked it up to great efficiency. This year however he resigned and Mr. C. R. Marchant was made Secretary in his place. A good deal of ill feeling had occurred in consequence of Mr. Weston and Mr. Marchant objecting to Mr. Sandars, W. Gurney, and I having asked Lady Curzon to distribute the Prizes as she did at St. Peter's, and Mr. Sandars and I had to drive over to Langley and ask her to accept our apologies for having to withdraw our invitation which she had accepted.

On the 1st Nov., after a Vestry and service, I went on my tricycle to Slough and thence by train to Twyford where Sturges' carriage met me. I preached that night at the Parish Church and came home next day, having luncheon at Slough Rectory. On Monday 5th Nov. I went to Deddington and stayed with Holford Risley.

*William Cartwright, then Squire of Aynho, and Edward Ramsay of Croughton were staying there and I enjoyed their society much. Cartwright was a literary man and had travelled with the Crown Prince of Germany. He had written on the Jesuits and he gave me a capital list of French works.

*William Cornwallis Cartwright, eldest son of Sir. T. Cartwright G.C.H., M.P. for Oxfordshire 1868-85, born 1826. His brother Frederick is Rector of Aynho, Northants. His sister married Dr. Goulburn, Dean of Norwich, my headmaster at Rugby.

On 7th Holford drove us to see Cornbury, Lord Churchill's place, which was let to the Wynnes. The family were away, but as Holford had telegraphed, the Butler gave us a most sumptuous luncheon. We walked in the grounds and Park which adjoins the Forest of Wychwood. Next day, 8th, I left and slept at the Randolph, Oxford, and dined at the Pembroke College "Gaudy". But Price was in the chair and Dr. Evans was ill. I sat between Weigall and Portal and talked with Webber, Bishop of Brisbane, & Br Mitchunson De Quetteville, Jourdain, Hayward and Huson Davies.

Next day Edmund, my nephew at New Coll., breakfasted with me and I returned home. Constantine and Mabel stayed with us, leaving Fulham and going to Cookham Dean.

On 19th November we went to stay with the Rogers at River Hill, and on the 22nd she drove us to Tunbridge Wells where we had lunch with the Middleton Rogers at Rustall and tea at old Mrs. Rogers, 3 Camden Park. Next day we came home.

On the 19th December Webber, Bishop of Brisbane, came and slept. He addressed a meeting that night, giving a description of Brisbane, and an eccentric old man named Green caused much amusement by asking how he would have succeeded had his wife allowed him to emigrate. He kept apologizing for asking such a question as he said it had nothing to do with religion.

The only thing I have omitted to record in 1888 is that on the 1st June I began to write the Life of My Father which I subsequently printed. I had been collecting materials for it some time previously, and I now worked at it in spare moments until it was finished.

We had an old favourite Dachshund named 'Fritz', and as had become tiresome, we gave him away to Constantine at Cookham Dean, to which place he was taken in a basket in a fly and by train. On the night of the 16th January I was awakened by the howling of a dog and I got up and went out, but could see nothing. Next morning the servants found Fritz had come back, having swum the river Thames and found his way 14 miles. He had never seen the road, so it was a remarkable feat of instinct.

Fritz travelled from Chalfont under the seat of the 'dog-cart' to the station being at Beaconsfield; then by train to Cookham; then up the hill inside a fly. I left him at the Vicarage when I came home (on the Monday!).

On the 19th March the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Stubbs, came and held his first Confirmation at our Parish Church. He was tired and stood at the Lectern with his hand over his eyes, swinging his watch in his hand. Thus he did not observe than many of the Candidates were old, and he addressed them all as children. Afterwards, on looking at the cards, he saw his mistake, and asked them to dismiss from their minds what he had said. Some years afterwards he told me that his work was so severe at this time, with the Bishop of Lincolns trial and beginning his Diocesan work, that he very nearly broke down. He had luncheon with , talking to the Miss Anthonys, and I shewed him Milton's Cottage and the Church. The Rural Dean Mr. Burgess, Saun & Wood brought the candidates and had luncheon with us.

On the 29th April the Churchwardens, Messrs. Robinson and Gurney, and I called a public meeting to consider the state of the Nave roof and the bells of the Parish Church. A Committee was appointed, Mr. J. Oldred Scott prepared plans and estimates, and we accepted the tender of Fassnidge of Uxbridge. The Revd. F. E. Robinson, Master of the Diocesan Guild of Bellringers, examined the Bells and by his advice Mr. T. Blackbourne of Salisbury was employed to rehang them.

At the same time a new Lightning Conductor was put up. We paid Fassnidge £304. 19. 3., Blackburn £45. 16. 0., Dixon & Co. for Lightning Conductor £10. 10. 0.

*Lightning Conductor put up 4 March 1890 by Dixon & Corbitt, 32 Great Hen St., E.C. and 130 Strand, W.C. Mr. Scott £18, and with other expenses we paid altogether £400 about, all of which we obtained by subscriptions.

On 14th May Pownoll arrived from Malta on leave, bringing his Dachshund "Bootles".

On 15th May I went to the opening of the Metropolitan Railway as far as Chesham, travelling from Chalfont Road in the first train just to Rickmansworth whence the special started for Chesham from London. Firbank the contractor was in the carriage with Ramsay and me. Baron Rothschild of Waddesdon took the chair and he and Sir E. Watkin spoke. Ramsay and I sat at the talk, 3 from them.

On 11th May the Revd. Bryant Burgess, Rector of Latimer and Rural Dean of Amersham, died suddenly. I addressed and liked him much, and we all felt his death greatly. He was a gentleman of the old school, the sort of man who never will be seen again. He married one of the Arnolds and so was connected with my father. Ramsay drove me to his funeral on the 16th, a most striking scene – a lovely spot – and beautiful weather. At the request of his family I preached his funeral sermon on the evening of Sunday 19th May, and they printed it.

On the 30th May I received a letter from Dr. Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, asking me to let him appoint me as Rural Dean in the place of Burgess. There were several reasons which made me hesitate and I wrote to ask him for time for consideration. He replied characteristically, 31st May, "Please to take what time you want for consideration, but consent at last. Yrs. Ever W. Oxon". I went over to Langley and slept at Birchfield, the Archdeacon's, in order to consult him, about my difficulties, (30th/31st May), and on the 8th June I wrote to the Bishop unwillingly, and accepted his offer; for which he wrote to thank me.

From the 3rd to 7th June, we stayed with the Sandars in London and bought bookcase etc. for Milton's Cottage.

For a long time I had been feeling very ill and at last it culminated in a severe and painful seizure which ultimately proved to be a Calculus which had got fixed in the urethra under my left rib. I first felt it on Whitsunday, 9th, and subsequently I had continual attacks for nine months. All this time I continued to do my duty while liable to seizures of an agonising nature. On the 21st June my wife telegraphed to Dr. Bull and he came over from Slough and injected morphia, which gave me relief. Dr. Kirkland however attended me.

On the 11th July I held my first Ruri Deanal Chapter of the Clergy, and our Archdeacon of Buckingham, Leslie Randall, kindly came and stayed with us for it. At luncheon a telegram arrived from the Adjutant General ordering Pownoll to rejoin his Regiment (which was at Malta) and proceed with it to Egypt, to which place it had been suddenly ordered. He was staying with the Bosworth Smiths at Harrow for the day, and we sent on the telegram but he never go home till 7 p.m. He had to start early next morning to catch the P. & O, as his quickest way out, so late into the night his mother helped him to pack. The Archdeacon was so interested he asked that he might stay for the night. Next morning I drove with Pownoll by the 8.56 a.m. train, and he had just time to call at his Tailors and the War Office and his Club and to buy some Fieldglasses at Watson, and then to drive to Liverpool Street for the 10.50 special train, by which he caught the P & O "Victoria" and I saw him start for Ismailia and Alexandria where he joined 25th July, and on the 25th September he was appointed Adjutant.

On 13th July we saw that our Archdeacon had been appointed Suffragan Bishop of Reading, and when we asked him why he had not told us, he said he did not know it himself, only knowing his name was one sent in to the Queen with another, as is customary.

On the 17th July I had a wisdom tooth stopped and the nerve destroyed by Mr. W. Woodhouse, Dentist in Hanover Square. He stressed it would last for several years, and who could tell where we might be then. He died not long afterwards.

From the 19th to the 22nd July Canon and Mrs. Archdall came and stayed with us, and on the 22nd Nelly Swabey. On the 1st August Beatrice went to Tenby to stay with my brother.

As it was evidently desirable that I should have a holiday this year, I arranged with the Revd. George Clench Bellewes, Vicar of St. Marks, Marylebone Road, to come and reside in my house and take charge of my Parish for August, and on the 6th August my wife and I started for Oaklands, sleeping at Chester and at Kingstown, crossing in the Ireland, and staying at the Royal Marine Hotel Kingstown until the 10th. At Bansha 3 Miss Perrys of Woodroof and Miss Moore of Barn got in and behaved very rudely. She told me Mrs. Gladstone always sat by her on the Parnell commission and said "I always give her (i.e. Grace) my hand, I know she doesn't like it, but I will do it!"

We dined that night at Marlfield, and met Dr. and Mrs. Steel, formerly Doctor at Rome, now living near S. Marco, Florence. She was a Trench. Next day, 16th Aug., Billy's birthday, we spent at Newtown, where we met Lord and Lady Arthur Butler. Next day I received a letter from Mr. Bellewes saying he must leave on Monday, though he had nothing to complain of and was perfectly happy.

I wrote to let Dr. Temple, Bishop of London, know how Mr. Bellewes had treated me, as Dr. Temple had written to me to say Mr. Bellewes was a suitable clergyman for me to engage, before I accepted him. Dr. Temple replied that he entirely disapproved of Mr. Bellewes conduct, and had sent for him, and given him a wiggling. It was certainly wrong of me ever to have engaged the man as the sight of his pew-rented Church "in disinhabit" as he called it, all covered up in brown Holland, should have warned me. I telegraphed and wrote to Mr. Robinson my Churchwarden and he most kindly saved me from having to go home by getting The Rvd. Herbert Smith Reith of Chilton, Sudbury, Suffolk, to do my duty.

On the 19th Miss Muleahy came to stay and sleep for a Ball that night at Marlfield, to which the Percy Goughs took her. A pretty girl from near She sold poultry to dress herself.

On the 20th I went to stay at Newtown. Next day the De-la-Poers of Gurteen came to luncheon, bringing her father Lord Emly, with whom I had some most interesting conversation. He had been Post Master General (as Mousell) and was intimate friend of Gladstones, with whom he had travelled and visited Monte Cassino and he described Gladstone holding a candle at the early service there. Lord Emly was a pervert.

On the 22nd Mr. & Mrs. Seely (son and daughter of Col. Seely, M.P.) of Cinder Hill, Nottingham, came to stay. Next day we drove to lunch with Lord and Lady Arthur Butler at Lord Ormond's shooting lodge, Ballypatrick, half way up Slieve-na-more, whence we had lovely views.

She was very charming, a daughter of General Stager of Chicago, owner of the Telegraph there. I was not able to walk to the top of the mountain with the gentlemen, but I drove back taking Lady Arthur with us as they were coming to stay. In the evening Colonel, Lady Hester and Miss Carew dined, and Capt. Blewett R.U., brother of one at Chorleywood who is now at Aylesbury.

Next evening the Hemphills dined, and Mr. & Mrs. Willy De-la-Poer. It was thought unwise of me to fish, so I lent my rod to Seely. On 24th August, when he and Lord Arthur went to fish at Kiltinan, I drove there, with Grace and Lady Arthur and we saw the castle which the Cooks shewed us, and walked everywhere. It was a most pleasant drive, Lady Arthur singing and amusing us.

On Sunday Mr. Baur (pronounced Bore) of Rathmines, Dublin, officiated at Killaloe and had lunch at Newtown, and in the afternoon we walked to call on the Clibbons who shewed us the hawks and their cormorant, which we saw catch large trout. Seely was an extraordinary fellow, silly and conceited, but very rich. He talked to himself aloud going to bed and getting up, and I could hear him next door. Lord Arthur I liked very much, and also Lady Arthur. Next day the ladies drove to Oaklands and left me, after I had shewn them the place and St. Patricks Well.

On the 31st August we called on Dr. Hemphill and had tea, and he shewed us the piece of skin through a microscope, which he had taken from the tooth of a man named Ryan, who had been murdered. Hemphill had the body exhumed for the purpose, and by it the guilty man Collins, on whose thumb Hemphill had observed the recent scar caused by a tooth, was hung in 1872.

That evening my sister and Col. Smith returned from Kilkee and Milton Malbay.

On Monday my wife and I drove to Newtown to say goodbye, and on Tuesday 3rd September we left, sleeping at Holyhead and reaching home next day by Rickmansworth. We left Beatrice at Oaklands.

We were present at the Chalfont St. Giles Flower Show on Thursday 5th Sept. and my wife gave away the Prizes as Mrs. Sandars was ill.

On the 21st September poor Bishop Macharners was buried at Sandhurst. I could not go to pay my last respects to one who had been so true a friend to me because unfortunately I had been prostrated by one of my very painful seizures, and we had to get the Revd. W. Borrow, Vicar of Higham Green Suffolk to do my duty.

On the 24th September we went to London to consult Dr. Buckstone Brown of 80 Wimpole St., Cavendish Square about me. He said I needed a diet as my liver was wrong, but there was no kidney disease. He prescribed cereal foods, little or no meat, no wine or spirits, and no medicini or blue pill. I went to see him again on the 22nd October when we stayed with the Swabeys, and he found I had already improved in general health, having increased 3lbs in weight. And from that time I had certainly been better on his system and have gradually got rid of those dreadful headaches. The Calculus however was still there and attacked me at times, so that I was unable to attend the Diocesan Conference at Oxford that year, or to preach the University sermon which happened to fall to me that year.

However, I managed to preach at Amersham to the Friendly Societies on the 3rd October, and to preside at the Ruri Decanal Conference at Chesham on the 10th October. Holford Risley came to us on the 9th and drove with us to it. At this time I observed an elderly clergyman walking about our village and on speaking to him I found he was Canon Benham, Rector of St. Edmund the King, London and author of the lives of Archbishop and of Mrs. Tait. He wrote every week in the Church Times "Varia", under the name of "Peter Lombard", and to my horror not only wrote in warm praise of Chalfont St. Giles, but our Church services and my sermon. I called on him and he came and dined with us on the 11th, meeting Holford, Ramsay, Sandars, and Miss Haden, and we had a very pleasant evening.

Next day Maurice Swaby came and stayed with us till Monday, when both he and Holford left.

On 20th Oct. I heard Ramsay had been made a Magistrate, at which we were all pleased. He had felt hurt at not having been made a magistrate sooner, but the Duke of Buckingham had an obstinate objection appointing any man who did not hold land in the county and refused although Lord Curzon offered to resign so as to create a vacancy. On the Duke's death, Lord Rothschild succeeded to the Lord Lieutenancy, and he at once appointed Ramsay.

On the 21st Oct. I went to Aylesbury to a meeting of Rural Deans to consider what form a testimonial to the Bishop of Reading from the Clergy of Bucks should take. It was decided to give him Plate and an address, and T. J. Williams of Waddesdon, J. L. Challis of Stone, and I were appointed a Committee for the purpose.

The same day my wife and I went to stay with the Swabeys, 3 Stanhope Street, and next day I went to see Buckston Brown as I have said.

On Wednesday 23rd Oct. we had luncheon with Grace at St. George's Hotel, Albermarle St., and afterward I went about looking at Silversmiths for a suitable Testimonial. That evening at 8.40 I went to Grace and Mrs. Scott Murray to see "Uncle Jack" at the Court Theatre. I sat between these two very attractive and well known ladies most conspicuously in the front row of the Stalls, and I certainly never laughed more heartily. The Actors and Actresses young Grossmith, Arthur Leech, and Miss Philipps knew Grace and acted to her. I found it hard to sleep afterwards from laughing.

Next day I went with Williams and Challis to several silversmiths and at last, at Williams instigation, we ordered a centre piece to be made with 5 lights and 2 candlesticks for £64 at Hodd and Sons, Minerva Works, 30 Hatton Garden, E.C., and next ordered an address to be engrossed at a Law Stationers, Molson Bros., 8 Brownlow Street, Bedford Place.

That afternoon Springall Thompson called, and the Decimus Sturges came to dinner.

On the 30th October I went to Slough and slept at the Springall Thompsons. Next day I went to the Clerical Meeting at Denham, and from that went to London, joining my wife at West Drayton. We went to the Hotel Victoria (room 536) and next day went to Westminster Abbey for the consecration of the Bishop of Reading (Leslie Randall). The Bishop of Derby (E. Ash Were) and the Bishop of Corea (C. J. Corfe) were consecrated at the same time (All Saints Day, my Birthday) by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Oxford, London, Southwell, Lincoln, Carlisle and Bishop Mitchinson. The sermon was preached by Gifford.

At 2.30 the Clergy met at Canon Furse's, 1 Albey Gardens to Present the address and testimonial (in imagination) to the Bishop of Reading. On returning to the hotel I had a most painful seizure, but by at once taking a very hot bath I recovered sufficiently to return to Chalfont that evening.

On the 6th November I was present at the induction of the Revd. Hamilton Anne Douglas Hamilton to the Rectory of Latimer. He had been Vicar of Winslow. The Bishop of Reading officiated. Lord and Lay Chesham were present but left after the service, leaving the Bishop to sleep in their house. Although the few Clergy present robed in the house, Lady Chesham never offered us tea, as Ramsay prophesied.

From the 13th to the 16th we stayed with the De Vitres at Wokingham.

On Sunday 1st December Miss Elizabeth Anthony, one of 3 old maiden ladies living together, was so ill that she was considered to be dying. Her sister Sarah got into bed with her to comfort her, and suddenly died herself, while she, although much shocked, recovered, and is still alive (14th Dec. 1897).

On the 7th I assisted at her funeral, getting out of bed for the purpose and officiating in deep snow, so running a great risk for I was very ill, and that same afternoon Mrs. Chester, the poor old Anthony's cook, died adding dreadfully to the trouble they were in, as they were much attached to her.

The following Sunday, 8th Dec., I had a very odd experience. A young gentleman name Hope and a young lady to who he was engaged, both staying with Mrs. Milner at Bell House, drove over to our service. He began to misbehave himself so much that when I was preaching, after in vain trying to catch his eye, I stopped and said I must request the congregation to behave properly, or I could not continue. He rose and bowed to me, and after the service came in to the Vestry to apologise for having annoyed me, but adding that I had acted improperly by addressing him in Church. This I denied, saying I had addressed the congregation and not him personally, and that I was surprised at a gentleman in his position setting so bad an example. On this William Gurney, my big Churchwarden, said to him "I watched and saw your misbehaviour, and so did all the congregation. I don't know who you are but I suppose you call yourself a gentleman. All I can say in that had the Rector asked I would have turned you out and I'm sorry now I didn't, but you may be sure next time you come here and act like that, I will turn you out." Mr. Robinson only said to Hope "I call a man an ass who acts as you did". Hope sat impudently on the Vestry table, but got pale and left saying to me "I hope you'll remember what 'I said to you', and I answered I hoped he would remember what I had said to him.

On the 26th Dec., when I was lying in bed very ill and hoarse Bosworth Smith called and Mr. Watson another Harrow master, and hearing of my condition they most kindly came up and sat with me and talked to me. This was my introduction to the man who wrote the life of Lord Laurence, and who for his work on Mahomet is prayed for in the Mosques of Africa every Friday he told me.

On the 30 Dec I got out of bed to take a wedding and had to return to bed in great pain afterwards.

The year 1890 began with an extraordinarily mild January and Spring, but it proved most unhealthy, and was accompanied by a dreadful visitation of Influenza, or rather Dengue Fever.

On the 6th February I drove to Iver and assisted as Chaplain at the Induction of the Revd. S. Hebert by the Bishop of Reading, and I drove back the same night.

Very early (1 a.m.) on the morning of the 25th February my first Grandchild* was born at Cookham Dean, and I christened her Evelyn Katharine. On the 17th February we had some good Wax Works here at an Entertainment and Beatrice represented Britannia wearing a helmet of Pownoll's.

I had been for some time subject to peculiarly trying attacks from my internal enemy, and on Sunday 9th March I had suffered a good deal, although I managed to get through the usual services. On going to bed that night, to my intense thankfulness and delight, the Calculus passed of itself, without much pain, and I did indeed feel grateful. I had made an appointment with Buckston Browne to see him on the following day, and so I was able to announce to him the joyful event. He told me to adhere to his system of diet, and he thought it extremely unlikely that I should ever be troubled by another. This has proved to be the case, and I thank God my headaches have almost entirely ceased, and although older and less active, I consider myself now to be in a far better state of general health. I have never touched wine or spirits, or eaten much butcher's meat, since he advised me not.

In the beginning of this year in common with the Clergy of our Clerical Society I set to work to learn Hebrew. During my first year at Chalfont I had taught myself German, and during the second Italian, sufficiently to be able to read fairly in both languages, such books as Freytag's "Soll and Haben". Goeltic's "Aus meinen leben", "Waberheit" and "Dichling", and his "Italianische Reise" with Johai, Spielhagen and Lessing, Schiller and Scheffel's "Ekkehard", Heine's "Reisebilder", he and Schuking's "Etwar aug dem Geivissen" etc. etc. and in Italian, Manzome's "Fromessi Spose" and M. D'Azeglio's "Niccolo de' Lapi", a splendid story, in my opinion better than Romola.

Now I began Hebrew because Woods, Vicar of Chalfont St. Peter, offered to instruct us, and I thought as Rural Dean it was my duty to encourage him and them. I never made much progress however, but I was glad even to acquire a smattering of a new family of language.

This Spring, when Whateley resigned the Living of Taplow, several of the people there petitioned the Bishop to give it to me. The Bishop however, very properly, gave it to Sawyer of St. Luke's, Maidenhead, who held it until 1897, when he resigned, and the Bishop gave it to Canon Garry, Vicar of Reading.

On the 16th March we heard that my Mother had been taken ill and my brother went over to Oaklands on the 20th till the 2nd April. On the 20th March I preached at Denham Church Festival and my sermon was printed.

On 9th April, on my proposition, Mr. G. J. Robinson of Roughwood Park was elected Treasurer of the Cottage Hospital. This office had been held by Leicester Hibbert whose uncle had given the hospital, and it had fallen gradually into debt. When he left Capt. Drummond of Maltman Green was appointed but he soon resigned. Mr Robinson proved a very successful Treasurer and under him it has gradually attained to great usefulness and has been financially successful.

Written in PWP diary after he got better (9th March):

I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined unto me and heard my calling. XL Ps.1

He brought me also out of the horrible pit – out of the mire and clay – and set my feet upon the rock and ordered my goings.

On 16th April I attended for the first time the annual meeting of Rural Deans, summoned by the Bishop. It had been previously held at Cuddesdon where they were entertained by the Bishop for two days. Now it was held at the Chapter House, Christchurch, Oxford, and we were entertained at luncheon in Christchurch Common Room by Archdeacon Palmer. Palmer continued to give the luncheon until his death in 18.., since which the Bishop has himself given it in the Christchurch Hall. We were all grievously disappointed by the Bishop's management of the meeting and at realizing how little guidance or suggestion we could expect from him. The elder Rural Dean lamented the days of Wilberforce or even of Mackarness. I returned by Slough, where I slept at the Springall Thompsons.

My sister and Colonel Smith came to see us on the 20th May for the day, and on the 22nd my wife spent the day in London with them. On the 28th May Moyra and Alexandra Beauclerk and Miss Wolf came from London and spent the day with us.

On the 2nd June my wife Beatrice and I went to Deddington to stay with Holford Risley. Willy Risley was staying there and Herbert Risley, son of the Revd. John Risley. He was a distinguished man in the Bengal Civil Service but in very bad health from Oriental Diarrhoea, and living on milk and raw beef juice. His wife was a very attractive and amusing German lady who had been Governess in Lord Lytton's family when he was Governor General of India. She gave us amusing descriptions of the life there. How the Indian ladies were received in State at the Palace, and no men or servants were allowed to be present, and she had been present on the celebrated occasion when the children acted a play of their own writing. Scene 1 was a Queen bidding farewell to a nobleman of whom she was fond, and who was starting for War – Scene 2 she killed the King and hid his body under a sofa. Scene 3, after a supposed interval of several years, the return of the officer, now a Lord, and who recounted his glorious deeds. The Queen said "And I too have not been idle" and drawing aside a curtain, shewed a row of cradles each containing a baby!! Lord Lytton was horrified and stopped it at once.

We went to Adderbury and got Mrs. Rasch, our Brighton friend, to come and dine. We went to Aynho and saw the Rectory, the Church, and the house where the Squire William Cartwright was coming to reside, Lady Southampton having left. Altogether it was a very amusing visit.

I left on Friday 6th and, sleeping at Cookham Dean, I attended next day the Bishop's first Visitation at Wycombe, wearing a surplice for the first time. The Bishop gave a most interesting and valuable Charge, but at dinner he was so impatient to get away that he gave the toasts while we were eating and that very shortly, e.g. "I give you the Prince of Wales and the rest of them", and then he bolted to catch the train. There was an unusually large attendance of Clergy and Churchwardens and they felt hurt and annoyed.

I had been very successful at Slough in arranging for a large Friendly Societies service at what they called a Church Parade on a Sunday. At my suggestion the Friendly Societies at and round Chalfont, led by the Odd Fellows, agreed to attend such a service at St. Giles Parish Church. This they did for the first time on Sunday 15th June at 3.30. The Bishop of Reading, with his daughter Katey Randall, drove over from Langley and robed in Reading Room, and we entered preceded by Choir and Churchwardens in procession. The Bishop preached one of his good manly sermons. Since then these services have been held in alternate years at both Parishes, Chalfont St. Giles and St. Peter, and are always popular.

On the 17th June we went to Upton Park and stayed with the Bentleys to meet Canon Ainger of the Temple (Reader at the Temple and Canon of Bristol) who arrived on the 20th. We drove with him to see Stoke Poges and Eton, and in the evening he read to us passages of Rudyard Kipling's prose stories, professing the greatest admiration for him. We returned home next day.

On 8th July Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Risley came to stay with us, bringing a German friend, Count Schweinitz, or as his visiting card gave his name "H. Hermann Graf von Schweinitz und Krain, Baron von Kander, Lieut and Adjut im Feld Artillerie Regiment, von Scharnhorst, Hannover, 1 Hannoverschen N.10"

Miss Haden and Edmund dined with us, and from that time Edmund took great interest in the Risley's boy, Crescon. They all left on the 10th. The Risleys complained of the Count making them pay his travelling expenses when on a visit, which they said is the German custom. His Uncle was German Ambassador at St. Petersburg. He could scarcely speak any English.

On the 17th July we went to the Rural Dean Conference at Amersham at which I presided. Coming away at 7.30 it came on to rain so violently that 2 ½ inches fell in 40 minutes, and we were drenched in merely getting in and out of Ramsay's Brougham. Hutchinson was staying with us for it.

On the 24th July a very successful Doll Show got up by young ladies was held at Gerrards Cross for the benefit of the Cottage Hospital, and Beatrice exhibited a game of cricket with the dolls all dressed for the Oxford and Cambridge cricket match, and this was much admired.

On the 31st the Robinsons invited all the neighbourhood to a Garden Meeting at their new house, for the Add-Curates Soc. The Rt. Hon. J. G. Talbot M.P. for Oxford, The Bishop of Reading and the Revd. C. Winter Organs Sec., spoke. The Hartopp Nashes were staying at Hill House at this time.