

The brass of Thomas Sparrow, 1513, is remarkable as having been inserted in an inscribed stone of far earlier date, after the fashion of a palimpsest. His daughter appears to have carried the estate of Lamienby, now called Lamorbey, between Bexley and Sidcup, by marriage into the Goldwell family.

In the church, on the south wall, is a monument to a Mr. John Styleman, who died in 1734, who had been five times married. His wife Mary, who had been twice a bride before, and who died in 1750, founded, out of his wealth and her own, almshouses for twelve poor persons. These almshouses still flourish at the west end of the High Street.

A mural monument in the north aisle commemorates Mr. Oswald Smith, of Blendon Hall; another close by is to the memory of Sir John Champneys, a former Lord Mayor of London. The latter, dated 1556, comprises the kneeling figures of the knight and his lady. There are also monuments to Sir Edward Brett, the Austens, Woolryches, Hereworths, Shelleys, Whitmores, Gerards, Brintons, Huntingtons, and others.

The church was a "peculiar" of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but it is now in the patronage of Lord Sydney. The registers date from 1565. The churchyard is surrounded by a low stone wall, and entered by a lych-gate at the south-west.

A new church, for the use of the inhabitants of the west end of the parish, has been opened for service at Parkhurst. It is a handsome Gothic structure, dedicated to St. John, but calls for little description in detail. It was built at a cost of about £4,000, and was consecrated in 1882.

Opposite the upper gates of the churchyard there formerly was an old parsonage-house of timber, like those in the West of England. It was thought to be as old as the reign of Edward IV. Its material was chestnut, and it contained a hall, gallery, painted chamber, and enclosed a square court, with a wicker gate. Having been long inhabited by poor families, and having become ruinous, it was taken down in 1776. A representation of it will be seen in Thorpe's "Customale Roffense," p. 85.

Adjoining the church is the old manor-house. It was rebuilt about the middle of the last century by John Thorpe, shortly after purchasing the property from the Austens of Hall Place. It now belongs to the University of Oxford, the rents of the property being devoted to the support of the Camden Professorship of Modern History.

Bexley Heath is situated on the main road from

London to Dover, about a mile and a half to the north of the village. In 1866 it was formed into a separate ecclesiastical district from the mother parish. It is approached from the village of Bexley by a pleasant winding lane, which leaves the Crayford road nearly opposite the National School and Hall Place. The district is a long straggling street of small shops and dwellings, fringing the main road across what was once an open heath, with one or two smaller streets and lanes branching off at right angles. Of the "heath" itself all traces are fast disappearing under the hands of the builder. The original church of the district, a modern brick building of Early English design, with a tall spire, on the south side of the road, has given place to a much larger edifice (Christ Church) on the opposite side of the way. This church, which is constructed of stone, and of Gothic architecture, was commenced in 1877, and consists of chancel, nave, and aisles. Several of the windows are filled with stained glass, and the cost of the building, up to the present time, has exceeded £9,000. The population of this district, which includes the south side of Welling, numbers some 5,000 souls.

In 1870 a hall was built here for the purpose of holding public meetings, concerts, bazaars, &c. The building is of Gothic design, and the handsomely decorated concert-room is capable of seating an audience of about 500 persons. Besides two or three chapels for Nonconformists, the other public buildings at Bexley Heath are the Foresters' Asylum, erected in 1872 for sixteen pensioners, and a library and reading-rooms in connection with the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge.

Here, on high ground, which commands far-distant views to the south and east, we once more come upon the market gardens, which we left in the vale of the Thames about Twickenham and Staines. Strawberries, raspberries, and tomatoes, are the chief production of this district, which supplies a large part of the demands of Covent Garden with fruit, vegetables, and flowers. One grower in this neighbourhood, Mr. Ladds, has upwards of five miles of glasshouses under which he raises tons of tomatoes and strawberries for the London market; he has also at Dartford Heath about fifteen acres of garden, where tomatoes are grown like hops. The outlying portions of the estate of the Dashwoods of Hall Place comprise large fields of strawberries and raspberries, the picking season of which brings down from London hordes of ragged families, each member of which can earn about eighteenpence a day. When the picking season is over, these same families travel on to the Crays and further down, for the hop-picking, which we shall describe in another