

château, or a miniature Kensington Palace, with an avenue of walnut-trees in front. Many of the older houses of the village are constructed of lath and plaster, with the huge timber beams peculiar to this class of building. In 1871 the population was 2,300, a number which had increased to 3,000 during the next decade.

The parish is mentioned in the Domesday Survey as "Orpintun," but in very early times it was spelt "Dorpentune," from the British and Saxon words signifying the "village of rising springs." At a place called Newell, in the fields at the rear of Orpington Priory, and only a quarter of a mile from the church, are the springs which form the source of the little river Cray.

At the beginning of the eleventh century the lands hereabout were purchased and given by a monk "for the good of his soul," and, with the consent of King Canute and Queen Ælfgife, to the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury. According to Philipott, and other Kentish historians, the Manor of Orpington in the reign of William the Conqueror was "wrapped up in the ecclesiastical patrimony, and belonged to the monks of Christ Church." Bishop Odo, however, seized upon this possession, but was forced by Lanfranc to restore it, on the accession of the latter to the Archbishopric of Canterbury; and it remained in the hands of the monks of Christ Church till the dissolution of religious houses, when it was taken from them, and retained by the Crown for about three years. Henry then granted it to Sir Percyvall Hart, of Lullingstone, who built for himself a mansion here, called by the singular name of Bark Hart, an appellation said to have been given to it by Queen Elizabeth, who was here entertained by Sir Percyvall, in July, 1573, with "the exhibition of a sea-fight and other pageantry." Philipott, in his "Villare Cantianum" (1659), writes as follows concerning this house:—"Bark Hart has obtained a place in the map of Kent, and therefore shall not want one in this discourse. It was built by Percyvall Hart, Esq. . . . but it was adorned with this name by Queen Elizabeth, when she was magnificently entertained at this place by the abovesaid gentleman. Upon her reception, she received her first caresses by a nymph, which personated the genius of the house; then the scene was shifted, and from several chambers, which, as they were contrived, represented a ship, a sea conflict was offered up to the spectators' view, which so much obliged the eyes of this princess with the charms of delight, that, upon her departure, she left upon this house (to perpetuate the memory both of the author and the artificer) the name and appellation

of Bark Hart." The old mansion still stands, adjoining the south side of the church, and is still owned by the Harts of Lullingstone.

The parish church and the other churches of the Cray valley, as they were before the modern restorations, are to be seen in a little work lately published, entitled "The Seven Churches of the Crays." The series commences with Orpington, and ends with Crayford.

Orpington Church is a fine specimen of the Early English style, when it had scarcely passed out of the Norman; in fact, if it were not for the Pointed arches, it might almost be taken for Norman. The western doorway, with its stoup, is one of the most beautiful in Kent. In the porch at the west end is a fine Decorated altar-tomb, which must have been removed from the body of the church or chancel. The lower part of the tower, which occupies the centre of the north aisle, has in it an Early window of slight and elegant proportions, and beside it a sort of chantry chapel. In the chancel is a piscina and sedile, and also a fine brass to Thomas Wilkynson, who was rector of this parish at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The steps leading up to the rood-loft are still to be seen in the wall at the south-east end of the nave.

The interior of the church was carefully restored in 1872. It is an open timber roof, and an oak pulpit, lectern, and an ancient rood-screen. The east windows, which are filled with painted glass, are divided by banded shafts of Purbeck marble; the reredos, of Caen stone, is carved with a representation of the Last Supper.

The tower is dumpy to a degree. It was formerly surmounted by a shingled spire, but this and the upper storey of the tower were destroyed by a thunderstorm in 1809.

In the churchyard is a fine spreading yew-tree, and the abundance of evergreens and flowers makes it most picturesque.

The Priory, the seat of Mr. Benjamin Lake, was built 600 years ago, the papers ordering its erection being still to be seen in the registers of the cathedral at Canterbury. When first built it was apparently very small; the three rooms occupied by the original prior are still to be seen. The lower one in the basement was probably a chapel, and is still used as an oratory; those above are small and snug, like one of the older rooms in a College at Oxford. The entrance-hall is clearly of the fifteenth century, and has a flat ceiling, divided into compartments, panelled with oak. The rooms are somewhat irregular, with short passages and corridors leading in all directions, and