

## ANCIENT PARISH ACCOUNTS.

THERE exists at the present time in the parish chest in the vestry, an early volume of parish accounts—not, at first sight a very fertile source of information of an attractive kind; but from quite a cursory examination of it we have made a few extracts of a quaint character. The volume commences in 1648—the year before the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell began—and the first name it contains is that of Obed Cust, a family name honoured still in this neighbourhood. The price of the book, a parchment-covered volume, is given as five shillings, which meant much more in those days than now. The first Churchwardens' Account is here reproduced, with the names of those who signed it, shewing that several families therein mentioned are still represented in the parish. Those were not the days of free education, though we find many Gosbertonians “making their mark”!

In 1648 a man is fined for brewing a “Bushell of mault before he had his licence”; and in the same year we have a sample of old-time puritanical sabbatarianism, for it is on record that two travellers for travelling on the Sabbath day were ordered to pay a fine of “xijd.”

One link with a great historical event is found inserted under 1666, viz., a notice of a collection made in the parish for sufferers from the great plague of London of the previous year.

Time and space forbid us to collect from these accounts a list of dykereeves, "digraves" or "dicke-reeves."

The volume commences thus :

"Obed Cust and Hugh Turver church [wardens] of Gosberkerk for the yeare of o<sup>r</sup> Lord [1648 ?] bought this booke price vs."

The Accompts of Heugh Turver and Thomas Jeffery Church Wardens for the yeare 1648 doth accompt and charge o<sup>r</sup> selves w<sup>th</sup> Assessment granted vnto vs by the Inhabitants of the towne and the said accountants have disbursed the sum of 31 : 17 : 2 so we are indebted unto them for the sum of 2s. 10d.

Thomas Pell  
Obed Cust  
Geo: Metchalfe  
Henrey Hunningham.  
Tho: M Money  
Henry: Melsonby:  
Henry Y Young:  
Edward † Ashwell

In 1652 Gosberton had three Constables :

Willm: Bate, Bartholomew Higdon, James Marshall.

"1652 The sd. accomptants Charge themselves with the Receipt of xx<sup>s</sup>. remainder of Tho: Girkinge saile, the rest being employed in bringing y<sup>e</sup> deceased's body to the ground, & putting out Martha his daughter apprentice w<sup>th</sup> Willm Tomson.

“The said accomptants charge themselves wth. the receipt of iij lib. xijs. a legacy given by [cer]-taine deceased to buy in Coales for the poore people.”

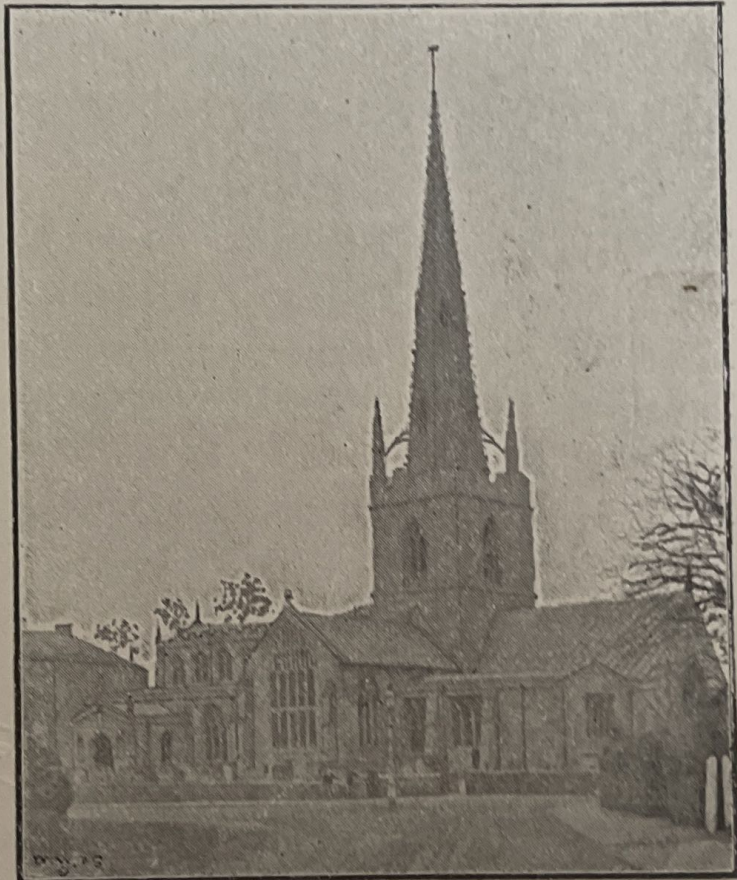
“1663. Memorand. there was xxd. forgott and the expenses amongst the neighbors when they tooke up these Accompts wch was 00—03—00.”

[Gosbertonians have become more astute financiers in later times].

“1666. [In diff: hand and later ink]. The said John Bird & Wm. Richardson Collector in the parish of Gosberton this year £9 . 10 . 2 for the use of the poor distressed Inhabitance of London visited with the plague.”

“1667. Richard Ansell overseer of y<sup>e</sup> in the roome of y<sup>e</sup> Churchmaster by the consent of the towne and Robert Boothby his appartner to the towne of Gosberton for the yeare 1666.”—[“Churchmaster” is curious].

1781. May 14. On this date is an agreement between the Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor, and inhabitants of Gosberton, and the parish doctor—  
“Mr: Betham, apothecary, to act as apothecary, bone-setter and man-midwife to those receiving relief from the parish, in consideration of the sum of £9 9 0.”



GOSBERTON PARISH CHURCH,  
(SS. PETER AND PAUL).