A SAUNTER THROUGH KENT WITH PEN and PENCIL

By Charles Igglesden

VOL. I


A Saunter
Through Kent
With Pen and Pencil.
By
Charles Igglesden.
Illustrated
by
X. Willis.
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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

In issuing a reprint of the first volume of "A Saunter Through Kent with Pen and Pencil" I have deemed it wiser to leave most of the articles as originally written. The reason for doing so is obvious. During the past twenty years buildings have been altered and some destroyed, either by fire or demolition—Olantigh at Wye was completely destroyed by fire on December 11, 1903—while the ownership of many of our country houses has changed. To bring the description of such buildings and a correct list of owners up-to-date would practically mean re-writing all the book and I have acted upon the alternative of making but very few alterations. The present volume must, therefore, be considered to contain descriptions of the various villages as they appeared some twenty years ago.

CHARLES IGGLESDEN.

Ashford,

January 31st, 1925.

A Saunter Through Kent

With Pen and Pencil.

By CHARLES IGGLESDEN, F.S.A.

A Phenomenal Success has attended the publication of this work. There are many Sketches of the picturesque towns, villages and hamlets of the county, old houses and historic spots. Local traditions and legends are a feature of the work.

VOLUME I. Contains a Description and History of the following places:—
Kennington, Wye, Chilham, Dungeness, Pluckley, Marden, Charing, Lenham, Wingham, High Halden, Bethersden, Sturry and Fordwich.

VOLUME II. Appledore, Ebony, Hollingbourne, Great Chart, Godinton, Benenden, Willesborough, Hemsted, Ickham and Littlebourne.

VOLUME III. Elham, Lyminge, Eastwell, Allington, Aylesford, Old Carmelite Priory at Aylesford.

VOLUME IV. Tenterden, Smallhythe, Betteshanger, Brenchley, St. Michael's, Little Chart, Northbourne, Matfield.

VOLUME V. Rolvenden, Biddenden, Fairfield, Brookland, Minster, Staplehurst, Ebbsfleet.

VOLUME VI. Boughton-under-Blean, Dunkirk, Smarden, Court-at-Street, Lympne, West Hythe.

VOLUME VII. Cranbrook (including Glassenbury, Angley Swifts and Wilsley), Bilsington, Bilsington Priory, Woodchurch.

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VOLUME X. Brabourne, Bircholt, Smeeth, Sellindge, Nonington and Womenswold.

VOLUME XI. Nettlestead, Whitstable, Seasalter, Swalecliffe, Graveney, Monks Horton and Harrietsham.

VOLUME XII. Godmersham, Goudhurst, Kilndown, Luddesdown, Cuxton, Halling.

VOLUME XIII. Dymchurch, Aldington, Mersham, Sevington, Egerton.

VOLUME XIV. Westwell, Hothfield, Bearsted, Thurnham, Kingsnorth.

VOLUME XV. Hawkhurst, Sandhurst, Flimwell, Hamstreet, Orlestone, Warehorne, Ruckinge.

VOLUME XVI. Kenardington, Stone-in-Oxney, Wittersham, East Sutton, Chart Sutton, Sutton Valence, Frittenden.

VOLUME XVII. Ulcombe, Headcorn, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Bayham Abbey, Scotney Castle.

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This, the Third and Revised Edition, was published in February, 1924, bringing the description of St. Mary's Church up to that date. It also includes two full page pen and ink sketches in addition to those appearing in previous editions.

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History of the East Kent Rifle Volunteers.

The Volunteer movement is traced from 1770 to 1899, and is of interest to others beside Volunteers.

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Kensington
The Church
The Jubilee Pump
Cottingbrook
Bybrook

KENNINGTON.

FEW villages have so radically changed in appearance during the past half century as Kennington. We now associate it with a long straight road, shadowed on either side by an avenue of lime trees, with pretty ivy and flower-clad villas nestling behind. The road stands high, and below we see the undulating land between Kennington and Ashford, with the modern residence of Mr. J. S. Burra to the right, while ahead rise the Eastwell and Westwell Downs, thickly studded with some of the grandest trees in Kent; and in the fore-front of all stands the clear-cut entrance tower to Eastwell Park.

Yet many of the present inhabitants of the village can recollect the time when all this part of the parish where the highway to Faversham now runs, as well as Vicarage-road, was common land, teeming with sand and gravel pits, which were a great source of danger to the public. It was not until 1864 that the Common was enclosed and fenced off, portions being sold to defray the expense. Two acres of the land were set apart for a site on which to build the National Schools, and that portion of the land not needed for this purpose was turned into allotment gardens. On a portion of this land stands the village memorial of the Queen's Jubilee, a public pump, enclosed under a prettily-designed canopy of oak, the cost of which was defrayed by Mr. J. S. Burra. The erection of the schools entailed an original expenditure of £1,200, but a few years ago a new wing was added in order to provide increased accommodation. A further one-and-a-half acres of the Common was set aside for parish gardens, and another four acres for a recreation ground. The first houses erected on the enclosed land stand in Vicarage-road, close to the Schools, and were at the time termed

"model dwellings." In the Ball lane, the proper designation of which is King-street, stands a building now used as a dwelling-house, but which prior to the provision of the present schools was, through the liberality of Dr. Carter, used as a school.

The most picturesque spot in the parish is to be found in the old road that runs from the church to the Canterbury-road. Here we stroll past the church lying back on our left with its dark yew sentinels to the east and west; further along we find wooden plastered and brick dwellings, for the most part old and turned grim with time; the almshouses, once a disreputable beerhouse and afterwards a reading room given to the parish by the venerable Mr. and Mrs. Lake in 1890; houses where fantastically-trained yew bushes form an evergreen porch; and then finally at the other end of the lane are some tumble-down, ivy-clad buildings in a state of decay, while on the right, luring us under the shadow of their stately branches, are the tall trees that border the grounds of Captain Billington, from the boughs of which the piping of the blackbird and thrush and the cawing of a host of rooks can be heard in happy chorus.

Kennington covers a lot of ground, for it extends along the Canterbury-road beyond the Mill, while the lane towards Willesborough, branching out at Spearpoint-corner, is in the parish, and, continuing in the direction of Ashford its boundary reaches the bridge over the little stream that trickles past Bybrook. The mill, with its miniature lake dotted with tiny wooded islands, which is always noticeable to the traveller along the Canterbury and Ashford high road, has stood in the position it now occupies as long as the oldest inhabitant can remember. The water, which forms one of the three motive powers for working the mill, comes from Eastwell Lake. The property passed many years ago from the Young family to the Eastwell Estate.

Close to the Mill stands Kennington Hall, the old family residence of the Carter family, and it is with this house that two ghost stories are associated. One relates to a mysterious white lady who is said to appear at certain intervals, but these intervals are so long between that no one now living has ever seen her; the other refers to a spectre coach which drives along a neighbouring field, but neither is this apparition ever seen now-a-days,

and not even a rut is left behind to track its course. Talking to an elderly Kenningtonian in the old Street the other day I asked boldly had she ever seen either of the notorious ghosts. "Is it likely ghostes would ever let us see 'em?" she rejoined, asking a question in return. "Not at all likely," I replied; and both of us went our several ways equally satisfied that it was a simple explanation that applied to many another weird tradition.

But we have sauntered away to the outskirts of the village and must return to the church of St. Mary, which is delightfully sheltered by deep toned yews and approached through a lych gate from the west and by a pathway leading to the porch. In the year 1851 it was restored, but the masonry of the doorways, especially that which leads into the porch, is in a bad state of preservation, while the Perpendicular windows are still more weather-beaten. The beauty of the exterior lies in the tower, with its embattled parapets and its turret rising in elegant proportions till it overtops the tower itself. The string courses, too, are exceptionally well pronounced. It is essentially a church of the Perpendicular period, although the blocked-up Norman window of the chancel shows that an earlier church stood here.

The interior of the church is dimly lighted owing to the size of the windows and the rather heavy colouring of the glass. But for so small a church its pointed arches of the 14th century are wide and impressive—two dividing the chancel from the nave and one other and a half-arch dividing the nave from the south aisle. This aisle runs along until it forms a chapel to the chancel. At one time an unsightly gallery spoilt the effect of the interior, having been erected in 1675 by the owner of Burton Manor, but it disappeared during the restoration of the church in 1851. The tower arch is lofty, supported by somewhat crude octagonal piers. The chancel arch, however, is quite new. Practically all the windows are of the Perpendicular period, but in the south wall of the chancel is a blocked-up Norman window which must have been a beautiful specimen before its deep splay inside was cemented and the lancet blocked outside. Several windows are of stained glass, that in the east being a large triplet of lancets, having been placed there in memory of

Mr. H. Tritton. Other richly coloured windows have been erected to Mr. and Mrs. James S. Burra of Bockhanger, Mr. George Pemberton Carter of Kennington Hall, and Mr. William Young. In the north wall of the chancel is a delicately ornamented window, while at the east end of the south aisle are fragments of very old glass. One memorial tablet on the wall was erected to the memory of the Rev. George Carter, who died in 1818, and another to Captain and Flight Commander Alexander Jennings, of Kennington Hall, who, after serving in the Royal Artillery, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and was killed in aerial fighting in France during the Great War. There are several modern brasses, including those erected to the memory of Canon Welldon, Mr. John Salkeld Burra of the Colonial Service, who died in Sierra Leone; Corporal R. W. Tyrell, of The Buffs, who was killed in Mesopotamia; and to members of the Carter family. The church possesses some good oak carving—the screen dividing the aisle containing twelve open panels with tracery and a beautiful old door leading from the porch into the nave richly ornamented with screen work. The font is a fine specimen of 14th century masonry, octagonal in shape and supported by a stem of similar form. The eight panels contain tracery of different patterns. There are six bells in the belfry, the two oldest being made by Robert Mott dated 1602. Others were made about two hundred years afterwards by the firm of which the Mears were prominent members.

The churchyard contains some fine old yew trees, and a headstone erected close to the south entrance door records the fact that there lies buried the body of Ann Parker, who died May 27th, 1837, in the 108th year of her age. This centenarian, who was locally known as "Granny Parker," resided in a row of dwellings which stand close to the Fleet, but which are situated in Boughton Aluph parish. A few of the oldest inhabitants can remember her familiar figure, clad in a scarlet woollen cloak, hobbling about the village with the aid of a couple of sticks. Another tombstone in the churchyard refers to Sarah Culver, who was one of the infatuated admirers of the religious impostor who styled himself "Sir William Courtenay, Saviour of Canterbury, Knight of Malta," whose death subsequently occurred in Blean

Woods. He resided with Mrs. Culver at Boughton-under-Blean, and when he was shot by the soldiers from Canterbury she guarded his body, and subsequently washed it and laid it out. She expressed her belief that he was the Saviour, was only sleeping, and would rise again the third day. Soon after his death, being unable to withstand the jeers of her neighbours, she took up her residence at The Lawn, Kennington, where she ended her days at the age of eighty-two years. Up to the last she believed in the genuineness of Courtenay's mission, and during the long period between his and her demise she kept a large portrait of the religious fanatic hung in her best room, but covered with a sheet.

Close to the western entrance has been recently erected a beautiful lych gate. This is the gift of Mr. J. S. Burra, J.P., of Bockhanger, who had it built in memory of his wife, who died at Cannes in 1893. In addition to the parish churchyard there is another burial place in the village. This is situated in the fields at the rear of the residence of Captain Billington, and has been used exclusively by the religious denomination known as Quakers for upwards of a century and a half.

At Ulley Corner, facing the schools, there recently stood an ancient pollard oak, and here it was that under its shade the Court of the Lord of the Manor of Ulley was held, and it is supposed that close by at one time a Manor House existed. But, alas! this historic tree was felled to the ground a few years since.

An old smugglers' haunt a short time since disappeared by the demolition of the familiar straggling building on Goat Lees, close to the Eastwell Towers. This structure, which was, until dilapidation recently made it uninhabitable, originally the abode of a well-known smuggler of the name of Ford. A man of gigantic stature, it was no uncommon thing for him to journey on foot from Hythe by way of secluded bye lanes, known to accomplices as the "Smugglers' Track," with three "tubs" of spirits slung across his back. The capacity of each "tub" was sixteen quarts, and, contrary to what one might expect, the disposal of the contents was not done wholly surreptitiously. Inhabitants of the neighbourhood were wont to go to the old house to purchase spirits, which were obtainable at the amazingly low price of tenpence per quart, gin being the favourite beverage at the time. Ford generally "worked" with a

single partner, and, following the frequent custom of those days, was evidently in league with the local excise officers. In the neighbourhood of this old building—a red brick house, by-the-bye—is one of the tracks of the famous Hawkhurst smuggling gang, and mid-way between Ford's house and Boughton Aluph is a field known as "Burnt House Field," a name derived from the destruction by fire of a house which stood in the meadow, and in which one of the outlawed members of this gang hid for years from the officers of the law. A reward of fifty pounds was offered for his capture, dead or alive, and when his wife accidentally set alight to the structure whilst heating her oven with bean straw he managed to make good his escape.

Leaving the main road of the village we stroll towards Spearpoint Corner—where a gallows tree used to stand and highwaymen dangled in chains from its arm—and, walking down the lane leading to Willesborough, find a very old house standing by itself down a by-way on the left. This is one of the many old manor houses for which Kent is famous, and is Coningbrook, its old name being Cyningbrook, or "The King's Brook." Historians form the idea that the original name of Kennington was "Cenning," which denotes an Anglo-Saxon origin, and which means "The King's Town," giving rise to the presumption that the district once belonged to a Saxon monarch. The old manor house of Coningbrook was once the gift of Edward the Confessor, but in the reign of Charles the First it was granted to Sir Thomas Finch, of Eastwell, and it remained in the family until the disposal of the estate to Lord Gerard a few years ago. On Coningbrook Farm is a field known as Chapel Meadow, in which have been discovered the foundations of a building which, apparently, were those of the first chapel or church of Kennington, and which existed, it is supposed, in the eleventh century. Reliable evidence of this fact is supplied by legal proceedings taken in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in which the lessee of the Manor, then belonging to the Crown, was charged with taking down the roof of the chapel adjoining the mansion house, removing the tiles and setting them up on land "being none of the Queen's Majesty's." Then close by is the Chapel Bridge. Attached to the holdings are the Meads, the use and produce of which pass from the occupier of the farm to other

persons for three months each year. These persons are farmers, in some instances living in parishes far away from Kennington, and regularly every year they come and take their rights, which consist of the produce of the special plot of land for three months out of the twelve. In the lane close by Coningbrook Farm there still stands the old manor pound.

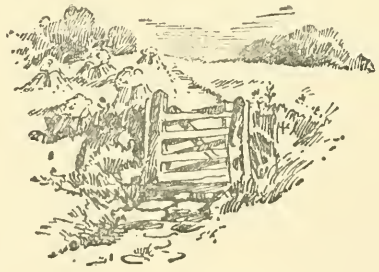
An interesting story attaches to another old place, Burton farmhouse, which stands just off the high road between Kennington and Ashford. Tradition states that during the time that barracks were in existence in the latter town a son of King William IV. was in the habit of visiting a lady at Burton. The royal rank of the visitor was unknown to the waggoner who resided at the farm, and acting on instructions from his master he surprised the Prince on one of his visits and told him that his master objected to "persons of ill-fame" tenanting his spare rooms, and that he must cease to visit the house. Thereupon the Prince unbuttoned his coat, and from his pocket took a piece of gold. Handing this to the man the royal visitor said, "If your master turns you out through anything I do I will keep you as long as you live." The waggoner, directly the Prince unfolded his coat, guessed from his decorations that his visitor was of royal rank, and he was so astounded as to be unable to thank him for the bribe which he had in his hand.

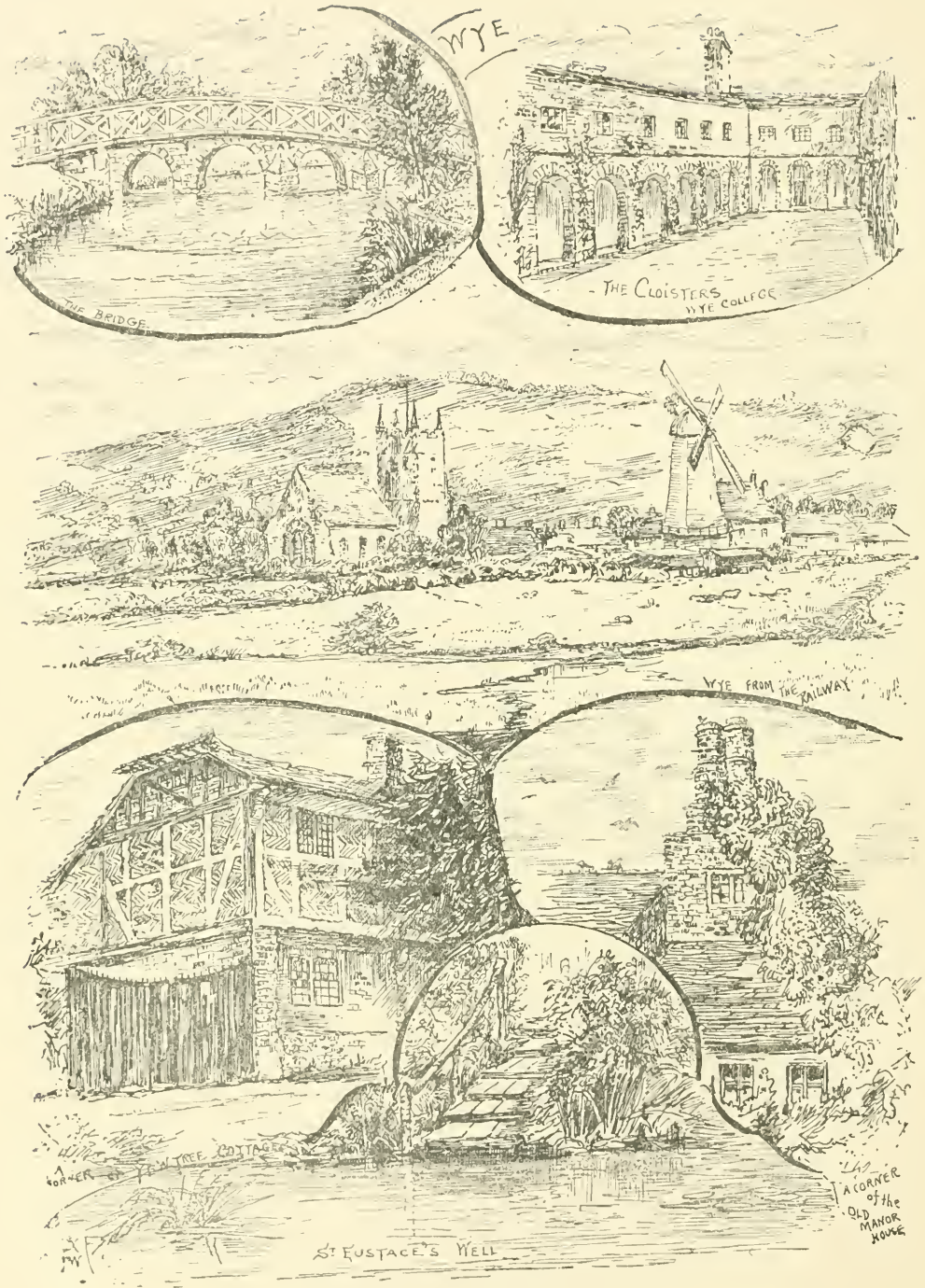
The noble gate, or tower, which adorns the entrance to Eastwell Park, at the extreme western end of Kennington, was built between forty and fifty years ago, the cost being defrayed out of a large sum of money left by Mr. Edward Hatton, uncle to the then Earl of Winchilsea, for the improvement of the estate. The tower, which took about a year to build, is constructed of Caen stone with an outer casing of black flints, each of which was squared up to a certain size with the greatest care. From the top of the tower can be plainly seen, on clear days, the Channel off Folkestone.

At another entrance of the parish—on the Ashford road, and at the spot where Kennington and Ashford are divided by a stream —is Bybrook House, which ages ago formed part of the Manor of Ulley. Its owners have included Sir W. Shorter, a Lord Mayor of London, one of whose daughters married Sir Robert Walpole

and another married Lord Conway. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was re-built by Richard Best. Within are to be found a chapel and a priest's hiding hole. An old house legend is hewn out of the stone in front, "Omnia in Bonum" (All things work together for good): "R. Best, 1577." For many years the place was allowed to go to ruin, but the front has always remained intact, and, thanks to recent renovation, it is preserved to us as a fine specimen of Elizabethan architecture.

The name Kennington is derived from the Saxon word Cining Tune, or King's Town, and it is of interest to know, as I have already mentioned, that Ball Lane was originally known as King Street.




WYE
THE BRIDGE
THE CLOISTERS
WYE COLLEGE
WYE FROM THE RAILWAY
A CORNER OF THE OLD MANOR HOUSE
ST EUSTACE'S WELL

WYE.

IN recent years Wye has become associated with two modern institutions—the South-Eastern Agricultural College and horse racing. Yet the thirteenth century saw it a town in the zenith of its fame as a royal Manor, the Liberty of which extended as far as Hawkhurst. The original importance of the town was in all probability due to the fact that it stood on the first ford of the Stour, which would have to be crossed by anyone traversing the old British highway, now known as the "Pilgrims' Way," on their way from the West of England to Dover. The old Manor House undoubtedly stood on the situation occupied by Wye Court, and in it kings sojourned during their journeying. As a mark of royal favour to the Manor, King Edward the Second, after the burial of his father, and before his own coronation, "held the solemnity of a whole Christmas" at the Manor House. It was here, too, that King Edward the First received from the Chancellor of the Realm his seal, while the town was also visited by Henry the Sixth in 1428, the seventh year of his reign. The last that can be remembered of the Manor House is a large circular building, beneath which was a dungeon locally known as the "Lollards' Hole." In extreme dry weather the position of this can easily be discerned by the turf covering the old foundations turning a brownish colour. What is now termed the Manor House is an ivy-clad building standing at the right end of Church Street, but this house, which at once strikes the eye of the visitor especially when seen from the rear, was the Manor Bailiff's residence.

As we look up the main thoroughfare, with the church standing out in bold relief at the top of the hill, there is nothing in the modern rows of shops and houses on either side to arrest attention.

But if we could cast our vision back to a century ago we should see many a picturesque old dwelling now pulled down to make room for the modern. For instance, the old gaol, together with the stocks, stood on the south side of the church and at the top of the left hand side of Church Street. Assizes were at one time held there by judges when on circuit, and at the gaol executions not unfrequently took place. A Court of Record, for the determination of various actions, used to be held here also every third week. Close by were butchers' shambles, for Wye used to hold a market every Thursday, its privilege as a market town being granted by the Abbot of Battle.

But if the inner appearance of Wye is not exceptionally beautiful its exterior, as viewed from the railway, is delightfully picturesque. Nestling under the protection of the chalk-bespangled Downs that rise in the background and roll away in the distance towards the coast, the village looks the very picture of cosiness, with its church standing in its midst, its compact rows of houses extending from the bridge to the rise in the Brook road, the wind-mill standing sentinel-like just off the street, and the white watermill overlooking the Stour as it winds along the fields, splashes over the sluice, sparkles in countless eddies under the bridge and hides itself from view while streaming along the valley past Olantigh towards Chilham.

Away over the hills is the famous Fanscombe Valley, where the old Wye Races used to be held annually on May 29th, "Oak-leaf Day." They were largely attended, and the meeting became recognised as both a popular and fashionable event. The onlookers, who had free access, watched the sport from the high ground which almost surrounded the course, and speaking of the picturesque scene on these occasions one writer says that the gatherings "not inaptly bring to the mind's eye the amphitheatre sports of Ancient Rome." These races have long since been discontinued, but an excellent course has been laid out at Harville, close to the railway station, and here race meetings are held and excellent coursing indulged in periodically.

The river close to the station was formerly spanned by a wooden bridge, which was succeeded in the year 1638 by a stone structure shown in the sketch. The present bridge is unique in structure, having five arches and pointed buttresses dividing the second, third and fourth arches on each side. Originally the bridge possessed a

stone parapet, and its width was that of the present roadway. In the parapet, on each side, recesses were provided, and in these pedestrians entered in order to avoid approaching traffic. Inscriptions were placed in the recesses, and one which has long since been lost stated that the bridge was built with stone at the charge of the whole county in 1638, and that Sir John Honywood and Robert Moyle, Esq., were treasurers; Percival Brett, Reynold Gotely and John Knight, surveyors; and Brognal Fitch, workman. The other inscription was removed and placed in an obscure position on the water side of the bridge when the stone parapet was removed and the present wooden footway, which entirely spoiled the former attractive look of the bridge, was constructed in 1881. Mr. Charles Jenyns, of Spring Grove, was chiefly instrumental in getting the alteration made and contributed a handsome sum towards the cost. The inscription referred to above reads as follows:—

THIS BRIDGE WAS BVILT ATT THE ONLY CHARGE OF THIS COVNTY OF KENT IN YE YEARE 1638 AND REPAIRED ATT THE ONLY CHARGE OF YE SD COVNTY IN YE YEARE 1638 IOHN MARSHE GENT GEORGE SIMMONS GENT HENRY COVLTER AND IOHN KENNETT BEING SVRVEYERS AND EXPENDITORS IOHN BIGGE AND IOHN TAYLOR IOHN BIGGE IVNIOR ALEXANDER BVTCHER CALEB BIGGE IAMES TASTER WORKMEN.

The parish church, which originally stood on a little hill known as Boltshill just at the entrance into the town from the river, now occupies a very prominent position at the north-west corner of the town. It was removed to its present site and rebuilt by Cardinal Kempe, Archbishop of York, in 1447, simultaneously with the foundation of the College, which adjoins the churchyard. The sacred edifice, which is dedicated to SS. Gregory and Martin, has had a chequered career. In 1572 its steeple was destroyed by lightning, and in 1685, after its restoration by Mr. Gregory Brett, a churchwarden, who was for his munificence granted a vault in the church, it collapsed, the *debris* in its fall demolishing the greater portion of the middle chancel, almost the whole of the two side ones, and the east end of the body of the church. The damage did not end here, for all the monuments of the Kempes and Thornhills, of Olantigh, were destroyed. A space of sixteen years elapsed before the ruins were removed and the work of restoration commenced. In 1701 a

brief was granted for the rebuilding of the church, the remainder of the old chancels were taken down, and the present small chancel built up at the east end, together with the tower. The following interesting tablet is in the belfry:—"On Munday, the 29th March, 1736, was rung in this Belfry by the underwritten men, 5,040 Grandsier Triples in three-hours-and-a-half being ye first set that ever rung it in the County without ye assistance of Londoners and others. Thos. Hudson, Chas. Miller, Chas. Baker, Thos. Tabraham, Thos. Jarman, Lawe Austen, Robt. Baker, Ed. Pickenden and Jno. Sharpe."

The church has the advantage of standing in a prominent spot in full view as you look up the street and the large tower is impressive. But, as you approach, the remarkable plainness of the square porch somewhat detracts from the beauty of the general exterior—a porch without embellishment in front of any sort and surmounted by a flat roof. The turret at the corner, however, is quaint and here you find remarkable gargoyles, as well as others in the side of the porch itself. Within the porch are seats and overhead is a chamber. The mouldings of the doorway, being of chalk, have crumbled badly. The interior is distinctly disappointing, for the walls are coloured in buff distemper and the roofs are whitewashed and show no timber work. But the chancel is still more inartistic and heavy, with distempered walls and a remarkably ugly window. On the nave roof are the initials, V.A. and T.N., with the date 1764. The interior is brightly lighted owing to the windows being of plain glass, while a clerestory gives additional light. Only one window is coloured—the large one over the west doorway. Generally speaking the church of St. Martin and St. Gregory is deficient in possessions of interest or value, but the 15th century pillars of the nave are of good design and the font, of the same date, is ornamented with quatrefoils containing roses. On the floor of the nave is a brass containing the figures of John Andrew and Thomas Palmer and their wife and children, she having married twice. The children are grouped at her feet.

The College, which stands close to the church, was erected at his own expense by Cardinal Archbishop Kempe on ground adjoining

the churchyard. Its founder intended the College to be utilized for educational purposes as well as for the celebration of Divine service, and here all scholars, both rich and poor, were to be taught gratis in the art of grammar. The College and Grammar School were suppressed in 1545, but the then King, Henry the Eighth, took some care for the School's revival and made a grant for the maintenance of a schoolmaster. Owing to conditions being neglected the grant was forfeited to the Crown. Eventually, in 1630, a Grammar School was founded, and this was continued until some time in the Sixties. Forty years ago Wye College was a very well known scholastic establishment, and, under the *régime* of a Mr. Billing, father of the late Bishop of Bedford, it gained great distinction. At the same time the College housed the parish school, founded by Lady Thornhill. The South-Eastern Agricultural College, which is maintained by a yearly grant of about £3,000 from the Technical Education Committees of the Kent and Surrey County Councils, and a further grant from the Board of Agriculture, obtained possession of the buildings in 1894. As may be gathered from what is said above the Grammar School was then extinct, but the College authorities gave £1,000 to assist in providing a building for Lady Thornhill's Schools. The College was restored and a new wing for domestic purposes added, together with a new quadrangle. It was opened in 1895, and now there are just under fifty students. Its rate of growth was entirely unexpected, and in addition to students from Kent and Surrey, who secure certain advantages with regard to fees, a great number come from all parts of the world, and at the present time India, Egypt, Barbadoes, New Zealand and Greece are represented. Cold Harbour Farm has been taken on a lease, and there fruit, hops, poultry, a dairy school, apiary and other minor industries are attended to. There is a staff of seven resident professors and lecturers, besides Professor Hall, M.A., the Principal, whose work is not wholly confined to the College, but to carrying out experiments and investigations and giving lectures in Kent and Surrey.

The new Lady Thornhill's Schools stand on rising ground midway between the town and the station, and close by are the new Board Schools, erected at a cost of £1,044 17s. Prior to the establishment of the Agricultural College the School Board rented what is now the chemical laboratory on a lease. Although the Thornhill and Board

Schools adjoin each other there is not the slightest connection between them.

Bridge-street possesses some interesting houses, the most noticeable being the row which includes a baker's shop. In the latter is some curious carving, and on the property are the arms of the Swan family, originally of Lydd, who at one time lived here. Another interesting building disappeared in the great fire which occurred in Church-street on October 26th, 1889. It was the business premises occupied by Mr. J. G. Clarabut. This building dated back to 1602, and it bore a plate on which were inscribed the Royal Arms, the date 1602, and the letters "E.R." (Elizabeth Regina). This conflagration, which originated in the brewery, was very destructive, and, in addition to the brewery and the draper's shop adjoining, the well-known hostelry, the King's Head, with the exception of the bar, was razed to the ground.

Olantigh Towers, which is famous as being the birthplace of Cardinal Kempe, is a noble building situated about a mile away from the village and close by the Stour. The house is surrounded with picturesque grounds which lead down to the river, and as seen from the road it presents a striking picture of beauty. Olantigh passed from the Kempes to the Thornhill family, and the last owner of that name, Major Richard Thornhill, fought a duel in 1711 with Sir Cholmley Dering, whom he mortally wounded. Mr. Jacob Sawbridge succeeded to the estate, and his eldest son, Mr. John Sawbridge, who was in 1775 Lord Mayor of London, rebuilt the house. The present owner is Mr. W. E. Sawbridge Erle-Drax, a descendant of the Sawbridge family. His uncle, the late Mr. J. S. W. S. Erle-Drax, spent large sums of money in beautifying the interior of the house and grounds. He also purchased at a great cost, at the 1851 Exhibition, the magnificent fountain which stands in the grounds, and at the front entrance there is a noble equestrian statue of himself.

The lane leading from the town to Olantigh was on May 30th, 1648, the scene of a conflict between the Royalists and the rebels. In the fight several of the combatants were slain, including Major George Somner, a well-known personage, to whose memory a monument was erected in St. John's Church, Margate.

There is at Withersden, down a lane at the right hand side of the Brook road, a "holy well," which also made the town of Wye once

famous. It is known by the designation of "St. Eustace's Well," and, according to tradition, its waters were blessed by Eustachious, Abbot of Flai, a preacher of learning and sanctity, and were endowed by such miraculous power that by merely tasting it all diseases were cured. It is recorded that a dropsical woman who drank of the waters vomited two black toads, which changed first into dogs and then into asses. The latter, after some of the water had been sprinkled between them and the woman, immediately vanished into air. The water has, within memory, been used by the villagers in the neighbourhood for curing eye affections.

Near to Withersden is situated the old-fashioned building given in the sketch. It is divided into a couple of tenements, stands on a bank on the right hand side of the road leading from the town to the Downs, and is faced by four yew trees planted at regular distances the trunks being banked up with circular mounds of earth. The houses are worthy of close inspection. The style is very peculiar, as also is the outside brickwork, which is of herring-bone fashion, intersected with large oaken timbers. The eaves project to the extent of about a couple of feet, the casements are fitted with old leadened windows which open outwards, and the rooms are large in size, ugly in shape and barn like. The property, which is known as "Yew Tree Cottage," was originally the property of Mr. W. Dann, at one time a leading man of the town. In now belongs to the Amos family.

Pett Street, a hamlet situate between the Downs and Crundale, is credited by some with being the spot where the town once stood, owing to the fact that the place once bore the name of Town Borough. On the other hand, those who have studied the geological features of the district point out that the old village of Wye mentioned in Domesday must have stood in the same spot as the present one, as the country on either side was a mere swamp years ago and quite unsuitable as a site for a town. The river bed below the bridge is hard, and here it was that the river could only be crossed by travellers passing from the east to west, or vice versa, and it would be natural for a town to spring up at such an important point.

Wye is noted for its wild flowers, especially of the orchid tribe. Out of twenty British orchids no less than fifteen have been found in the parish, and the rare lizard orchid, which was lost to the British flora for forty years, was discovered here recently. The Downs are

delightfully situated and a favourite spot for picnic parties; after a stroll on the breezy summits of the hill it is a relief to descend into the valley.

I notice that many writers infer that an ancient British camp once stood near the old racecourse, basing their argument upon the fact that earthworks have been thrown up. But more recent explorations show that these excavations are nothing more than iron pits, many of which can be found under the Kentish Downs. But another interesting feature in this neighbourhood is the number of tumuli, or ancient burial grounds, some of the mounds being very large, one for instance, going by the name of the Giant's Grave.

Besides other things I have already referred to the town boasts of being the birthplace of the first woman playwright, Mrs. Aphara Behn, who was born in 1640. She was buried in Westminster Abbey


Chilham
The Porch of Robins Croft
Ye old Woolpack
The Square and Church
The Castle

CHILHAM.

A PICTURESQUE landmark to travellers between Ashford and Canterbury by road or rail Chilham Castles, the old and the new, stand out in bold relief amid their belt and background of luxuriant foliage. Indeed, so rich and dense are the bushy shrubs and stalwart trees growing in the park and around the village Square that the latter is lost entirely to view, although it stands upon an eminence several feet above the road level.

No less than four approaches lead up to the Square, yet not many years ago the only entrance to the place was Mountain Street, where the schools now stand. Originally this road was called Mounting Street, a name derived from the existence of a mounting stone at the bottom of the hill, and it was part of the old highway between Ashford and Chilham.

Now-a-days, since the opening of the railway, the principal approach is by a pretty hill leading up from "Ye Olde Woolpack," a picturesque hostelry, and in the olden times a stopping place for the London coach. The main road from Canterbury to Ashford, via the "Pilgrims' Way," passed here before the construction of the present one leading from Bilting to Chilham.

Ascending the hill towards the Square we notice several small dwellings used as almshouses, and appropriately known as "The Poor Row." Higher up and on the opposite side of the road our attention is instinctively drawn to a long double-fronted timbered building almost hidden behind a belt of trees, and now the residence of Mrs. Tylden, whose late husband was for half-a-century Vicar of Chilham. Its name is "Robin's Croft," and inscribed over the entrance, on the dark arched oak, is the Scriptural quotation: "Yea,

the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a rest for herself." At the present time it is more commonly known as Cumberland House, it having been inhabited by a canon of that name and a vicar of the parish. It is supposed to have been built between 1460 and 1480, and was of much larger dimensions than at present; indeed as late as 1820 the most ancient part, containing a fine oak staircase, was pulled down. As we have already remarked, no road existed at this part of the village in early days, and at that time Robin's Croft stood in the fields, and one old building, at present the property of Mr. Cheesman, is supposed to have been an appanage to the house and to have been used partly as stables and farm labourers' dwellings, or perhaps as a barn. It is impossible now to ascertain who the earliest inhabitants were, as the papers in existence are badly damaged and quite undecipherable. Only the one fact is certain, that during the ownership of Chilham Castle by the Heron family Robin's Croft was in the possession of some member of it, for even as late as 1825 letters from France, addressed "Madame Heron, Robin's Croft, Chilham," arrived by post and were delivered at the Vicarage, the then Vicar of Chilham having become, by purchase, the owner of Robin's Croft. It has frequently been called the old vicarage, but as another house in the village lays claim to that title it is uncertain to which house the following ghostly legend belongs. On stormy nights, so runs the tale, there may be seen issuing from the door a cowled monk carrying a flame in his hands which, with painful struggles, he keeps alive till he reaches the entrance to the churchyard. There he is confronted by a skeleton horse, which advances step by step, the monk retiring backwards till he reaches the old Vicarage door, when the flame expires and monk and horse are seen no more.

Passing Robin's Croft we find ourselves in the village—the Market Square as it is sometimes called. The view that meets our eye cannot be described in words; even an artist, aided by the subtlety of his brush, could scarcely do justice to its quaint beauty. The old timbered houses, the shop windows with their small panes not even desecrated by plate glass, the castellated church, the deep dip down the Molash Road, where pretty dwellings nestle on either side clothed in a garb of climbing plants and flowers, the entrance gates of the Castle with the gorgeous avenue leading up to the

porch just visible in the distance, and casting a shadow over all, the tall trees dotted here and there—such is the view from the village Square. Why, so varied and quaint is it that an artist might set his easel there and by the mere turn of his head find ample material for a dozen pictures.

When we visited the village on a hot summer's day in June the cool breeze came as a welcome breath over the hills and up from the neighbouring villages, but in winter it is reputed to be cold, so cold indeed that the derivation of its name can be traced to the nature of its climate—Cyleham, "a cold place" (Anglo-Saxon). The funny man, who tells you to "Kill 'em and Cart 'em to Canterbury," and makes all sorts of feeble jokes about "Wye" and "Why" will one of these days transpose Chilham into "Cold Bacon," just as Headcorn is known as "Tail Barley."

Another derivation is that of Julham or Juliham, indicating that the place was "The village or dwelling of Julius Cæsar." Be that as it may it is certain that Chilham was selected by that ancient warrior as one of his encampments in his second expedition to Britain. History tells us that after landing on Britain's shores Cæsar marched a dozen miles inland and first encountered the Britons upon a river. As there is no other river between the village and the shore, historians deduce from this that the conflict took place at the spot upon which Chilham now stands. Confident evidence of the fact that the Romans established themselves here is derived from the important discoveries made in the parish. One of the finest Roman forts unearthed in England is that which exists in Shillingheld Wood on the Chilham Castle Estate. This circle, which has a diameter of about 126 feet, is one of the most perfect, regular and delicately executed works in existence. Its situation is between the village and Stone Stile, in the direction of Selling, and about one mile distant from the Square. The stately Castle itself stands, it is thought, upon what were strong Roman entrenchments, for when the foundations of the present building were dug at the time the estate was in the possession of the Digge family many Roman relics were found, together with the basis of a much more ancient building.

The conspicuous eminence or "earth barrow" above the picturesque water-mill near the railway line is the reputed burial place of

Laberius Dorus, the tribune of Julius, who fell whilst fighting against the Britons. This spot, above which runs the old Roman road, or "Pilgrims' Way,"—which through disuse has grown green with grass—is known by the designation of Julliberry Downs, or, as the rustics have recently corrupted it, "January Downs."

But we have strolled away from the village. Let us come back to the Square and enter the gates that lead to the Castle or Castles, for there are two so named—the ancient stone fortress and the modern residence. The former is a grand old structure, and many a siege must it have withstood before gunpowder made all buildings vulnerable to its terrific force. Yet it was considerably shattered by the Danes under Canute, and since that time has never been restored to its former strength. Built by King Lucius, it was a royal palace.

The residence itself is not of great age, as one of its former owners, Sir Dudley Digges, demolished the old building and erected the present one in its place. A family history of those who owned Chilham Castle would fill pages. It is said that no family has held it for three generations, but we trust that the old tradition will be circumvented by its present owner and the Hardy family, than which no more popular live in Kent. Mr. C. S. Hardy comes of Yorkshire blood, his father, a brother of Earl Cranbrook, having purchased the estate from a Mr. Wildman.

A singular story is told in connection with a former owner named Heron. When he came into possession several herons drove out a colony of rooks and established themselves in their present abode in the park. Strange, but true!

And now we must turn from the enchanting spot whereon stands the Castle, and from which a beautiful panoramic view extends itself in the green vale below, interwoven by the waters of the Stour, woodland and pastures running back to the Downs beyond—we leave behind this glorious country scene, so typical of Kent at her best, and turn to the parish church.

Few villages of the size of Chilham can boast of such a noble structure, with its imposing tower, castellated roof and handsome porch. It was built in 1534, and, thanks to the generosity of various owners of the Castle, since that date has passed through various stages of renovation, the latest in 1897. In that year the ancient

clerestory battlements, which were pulled down in 1784, although they formed a special feature in its architecture, were replaced. This necessitated the rebuilding of the upper part of the eastern wall of the nave, which was found to be chiefly lath and plaster. At this point an interesting feature of the new work should not be omitted—a new beam had to be inserted, together with corbels to carry the brace at each end of it. It is known from ancient records that in the second century Chilham was the residence of King Lucius, the first Christian British king, from which it is almost certain that a church stood here in early times. To commemorate this, the corbel on the south side has been carved into a head, drawn by Mr. Reeve to represent King Lucius, and the northern corbel forms a likeness of Archbishop Benson, to represent Saint Augustine, the first missionary to the Kentish Saxons in the Sixth Century. At one time a magnificent Italian mausoleum, built by Mr. Robert Colebrook, stood in the church, but, with the consent of the descendants of the family, it was demolished upon a new chancel being built. The fourteen coffins it contained were re-interred in a vault in the churchyard. A handsome gallery for the use of the "company of singers" was erected at the west end of the nave in 1772, but this disappeared twenty years ago.

When you enter the church of St. Mary you are struck with its imposing aspect—a cruciform edifice worthy of standing in a large town and seating a congregation of eight hundred peop'e. Here in this little village it is lost; and, also, its repairs and upkeep become an expensive item for so small a parish. Its proportions are beautiful and the sun's rays as they penetrate the richly tinted windows throw a warm glow over nave, aisles, chapel and chancel. In the upper portions of the northern windows are remnants of 12th century glass and another ancient relic is a stone coffin lid, although the carved cross on its surface has been mutilated. There is also a quaint poor box cut out of the newel of an old staircase. The timbered roofs are handsome and the brackets which support the cross-beams of the nave are ornamented by corbels in which are carved various designs. There are two small brasses with cut figures, one to William Fogg, dated 1616, and the other to his brother, a Professor of Physic, dated 1617. There are several large

monuments, not all of them elegant. In one chapel is a marble monument to the memory of Lady Digges, a black column rising out of the centre, while at each corner is a female figure almost lifesize. In the opposite chapel is some white marble sculpture—a group containing a man, woman and child bowed with grief—to the memory of James Wildman, the work of Chantrey the sculptor. Near by is another monument to the memory of two sons of the late Mr. Charles S. Hardy, of Chilham Castle, the figures being two little children. In the north-west corner of the church is a monument of dark marble, erected to the memory of Lady Palmer and containing an inscription which makes one hazard the opinion that the lady must have been almost superhuman in virtue. It reads as follows:—

> Sir Anthony Palmer, Knight of the Bath, erected this monument in memoriall of D. Margaret, sister of Sir Dudly Diggs, of Chilham Castle, Knight, his late loving loved wife whose goodnesse where she lived and died since it cannot be buryed in Putney needes no epitaph. She was fayrer than most women, wiser than most men, neither in her owne opinion, longer than she pleased her husband, whose onely daughter by a former wife shee more loved and cherisht than most mothers doe ther owne, fewe wives were so respectful of their husband as shee was of her brother, few sisters so affectionately kinde unto their brothers as she was to her friends, few friends (if any) so cheerfully ready to give council, comfort or reliefe as she was to the poore, upon whose sicknesse, lameness, blindness, her charitable hands wrought daily cures like miracles, for wch (no doubt) God blest her with a three-fold yssue (John Dudly Anthony) like her thoughts, words, works all perfecte mascaline, of wch although the blessed first (like to her pious meditations) stayed little in this world, the other two yet live like those fruits of her virtuous knowledge her speeches and her actions still calling to remembrance the modest, aufull, and yett ever witty pleasing conversations of her whole lyfe that never knew man's ill affection or woman's envye.

A tablet has the following quaint inscription:—

Reader why stanst gazing on
Know that this sacred precious stone
Requires from him whoe here doth sleepe,
Eies that come not to view but weepe,
Critticks avavnt give sorrow place
Een sure would heere his tombe disgrace,
Who living spent so well his daies
That envy cannot them dispraies,
Whoe now herself doth moorner turne,
To see an honest lawyers urne.

And yet another equally remarkable inscription on a tablet:—

Sleepe quiet corps expect ye happie end
Wch doth such harmlesse soules as thine attend,
Securer in thy monument of worth
Than this of marble, such best set us forth.
For these outdare the threts of fate alone,
Which are composed of actions not of stone.
Thou weart thy owne tombe, then each dust of thine
To make an epitaph doth yielde a line
Zeale, peace, religion, reader wouldst knowe more,
Could marbles speake they would say go aske ye poore,
He nor display thine auncestrie nor blood
This was thy chiefest honour, thou wast good
Heralds emblazon for a time our fame.
Tis vertue gives a never dying name,
But now being gone thou dust us this bequeath
To admire thy lyfe and to lament thy death.

The fine square porch is distinctly interesting, as here was located the priest's chamber. At the end of the eighteenth century the village school was carried on in this room, while overflow classes were held in Spratseley Chantry, which was in the north transept. Later, education was carried on in various houses in the village, while in still more recent years an old oasthouse and outbuildings, which stood on the site occupied by the present schools, were

utilised. But in 1862 the existing buildings were erected at a cost of £1,000 on land given by the late Mr. J. B. Wildman. It was at the bottom of this hill that the village stocks used to stand.

In the time of Edward the First a market was held every Tuesday at Chilham, and an annual fair for three days. Of the former nothing is now known, but the annual fair was until recent days quite an event of the year. The Square on these occasions used to be crowded with covered stalls. Then the stock fair, which was held in November, formerly attracted buyers from all parts of the district, and at the most flourishing period of its existence as many as a thousand Welsh bullocks used to be offered for sale each year. The fair has now dwindled down to nothing, and with it have passed away many old-fashioned customs.

The mention of old customs reminds one of the gay proceedings that years ago took place on Old Wives Lees, or, as it is locally called for the sake of brevity, "Overs Lees." This place is situated about a mile from the village on the top of a breezy hill, fine clumps of oasthouses, a few cottages, a small public-house and the usual general shop forming a hamlet of their own. Under the will of Sir Dudley Digges £20 per annum was left to be run for on May 19th by two young men and women. The bequest provided that "four of the best freeholders should choose a young man and a young maiden of good conversation between the ages of 16 and 24; and these two young men and the two young maidens on the 19th of May yearly should run a tie at Chilham, and the young man and young maid who should prevail should each of them have £10." This remarkable legacy benefitted the rising generation at Sheldwich, a village in close proximity to Faversham, as well. It was customary on May Day for young persons of both sexes to have a trial race at Old Wives Lees, and a similar proceeding took place at Sheldwich on the Monday following. The winners on these occasions ran in the final encounter on May 19th "among a great concourse of the neighbouring gentry and inhabitants, who constantly assemble there on this occasion." The merry proceedings, which eventually became scandalous, grew into disfavour in certain quarters, but an effort to put an end to them failed. Many years ago, however, the money was diverted from its original channel, and it now goes to the funds of the National Schools.

Excluding the Manor of Chilham there were formerly six manors in the village, namely Young, Herst, Esture (now spelt East Stour), Old Wives Lees (or as it was originally and no doubt correctly designated, Oldwood's Lees), Dane Court and Denne. The manor houses of the two first-named furnish what are probably the two oldest houses in the parish, the latter dating, it is said, from the fourteenth century. Both are now used as farmhouses. The owners of Herst Manor, which was attached to the Castle on Sir Thomas Kempe purchasing it, had to defend and repair a small turret in Dover Castle adjoining the Caldercott's Tower.

Dane Court, so the village gossips say, was at one time overshadowed by a curse. The story that has been handed down from generation to generation is that, owing to one of the family having murdered his nurse, the owner's descendants were cursed, the consequence being that none of them lived to a greater age than thirty years. This had the ultimate result of exterminating the family, and with the death of the last member the curse naturally passed away.

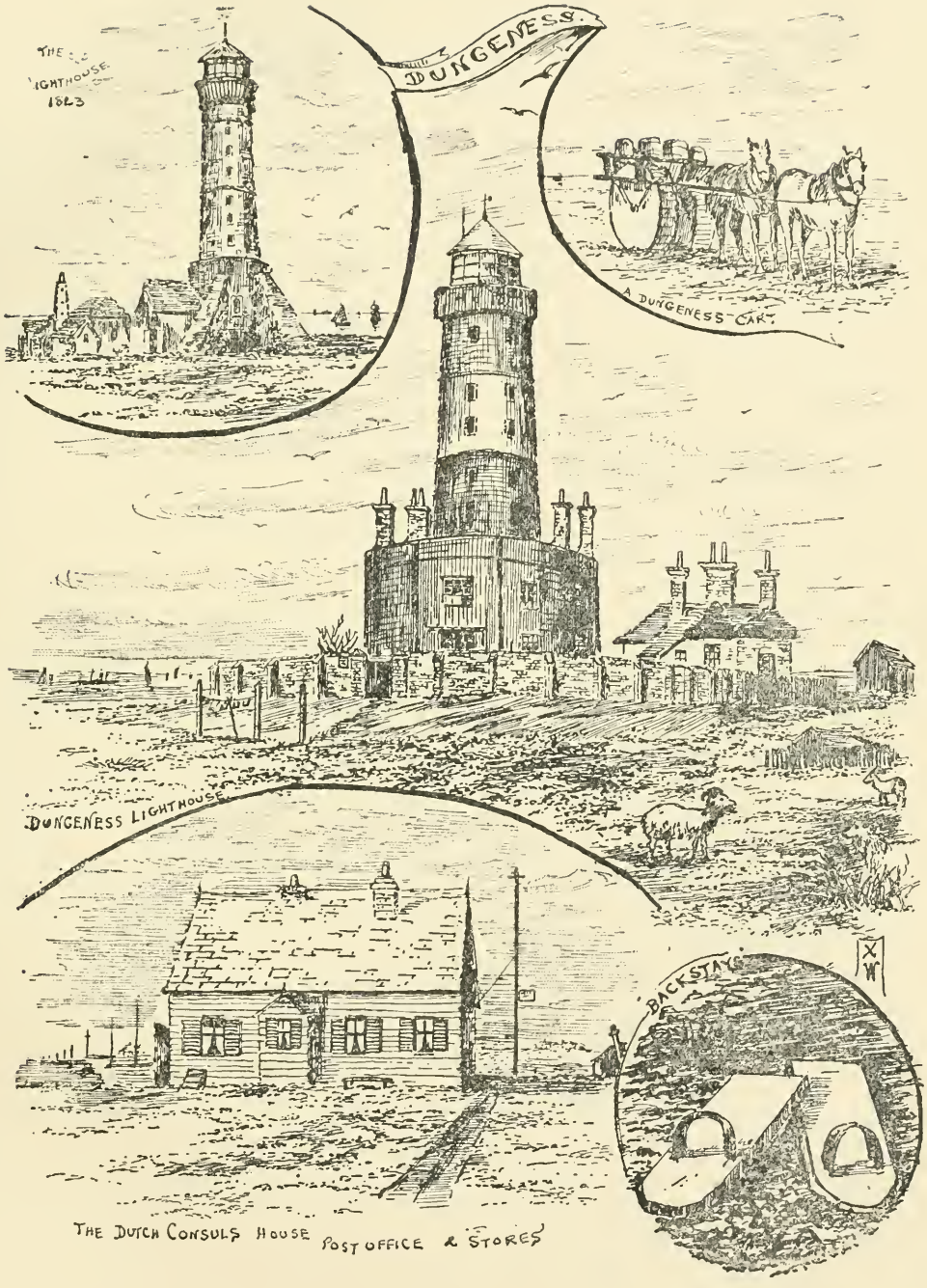
Another house in Dane-street is reputed to be the haunt of a ghost, the spirit taking the form of a headless lady who rides about at night seated on the back of a "spirited" charger. I have not been able to meet with anyone who has actually seen the ghost, but the gossip has had the effect of stirring up superstition and dread in the minds of the villagers.

And now we bring to a close our visit to this quaint old village, one of the most picturesque spots in the county, historic since the days of Julius Cæsar and abounding in folk-lore and weird traditions.

DUNGENESS.

CAN we be near the bustling world out here at Dungeness? Aye, so close that casting our eyes inland we can plainly distinguish Folkestone, Sandgate, Hythe, Romney and Littlestone on one side, and Rye and Winchelsea on the other, with Lydd further inland. Yet the close proximity of towns does not influence us at Dungeness Point, with its lighthouse—or lighthouses, for there are two—Lloyd's signal station not far off, its fishermen's huts dotted here and there along the beach, the coastguard stations at certain intervals of distance, a couple of lifeboat houses and a few other buildings. Still, it was the modern locomotive that brought us here, the South-Eastern Railway having extended a branch to the spot more for the purpose of taking back ballast in the shape of beach than for the amount of passenger traffic.

But I have come out here for peace and can afford to walk quietly, though with difficulty, over the shingle to the extreme point of the 'Ness, with its slopes so sheer that at high water ships of almost any tonnage can steam along shore within a biscuit throw from the spot where we stand. On a dreary day the place bears a look of desolation, but on this hot August afternoon everything seems bright. We loll listlessly on the beach; the sun shines overhead from a cloudless sky, while the pebbles at our feet sparkle in its rays; the wavelets lap below us, so innocent-looking, and it seems incredible that ere the moon rises they may be lashing the shore in fury and wreaking destruction around them; big vessels—ironclads, ocean greyhounds, graceful sailing craft, yachts and humble tramps—pass us round the point; pilot boats skim the surface of rippling waves; fat porpoises roll half-way out of the water, and seagulls dip at the glittering shoals of


DUNGENESS
THE LIGHTHOUSE 1863
A DUNGENESS CART
DUNGENESS LIGHTHOUSE
THE DUTCH CONSULS HOUSE
POST OFFICE & STORES
BACKSTAY

tiny fish; overhead myriad larks pour forth their songs, and plovers scream; while a goat bell tinkles among a clump of broom growing like an oasis in a desert of stone.

Yes, this is Dungeness on a lovely summer's day. What it must be on a winter's night, when the storm clouds burst, the waves go mad, the wind becomes a hurricane, and all the elements combine to wreak their fury upon the devoted ships rolling and tossing about close by—such a change can scarcely be realised. Yet it so often occurs. Then again, it seems strange that not many years ago this very spot on which we stand was a part of the English Channel, and only reclaimed from the sea in recent times. In the early days the sea ran up further than Appledore, then it began to recede until the rich land known as Romney Marsh was given to mankind as pasturage for his flocks. Yet, even then Dungeness was unknown, for not until some terrific storms visited the Kentish coast in the thirteenth century did the beach accumulate to such a height that it formed a bank upon which beacons were first lit, followed by lighthouses in more recent years. The steady accumulation of beach at the present time is attributed to the currents from the east and west meeting at this place. Standing on an eminence—for it is beached to the extent of twenty-two feet above the level of the sea—Dungeness Lighthouse looks higher than it is—a hundred feet from the base to the top of the lantern. It is built of brick and painted in chocolate colour, relieved with a deep white band to make it more distinguishable. How well it must have been built! For over a hundred years it has withstood the force of the tearing hurricanes hurling themselves around the exposed point, and only once have the elements succeeded in subduing its pride; this was during a great storm one Christmas Day, not many years since, when a tongue of lightning made a rent in the masonry on the north side. But it was a mere crack, and a coat of paint has almost hidden from view the only weak spot upon the surface of this fine specimen of eighteenth century brickwork.

There are four officers in charge of the Lighthouse, all Trinity men and specially educated for the work, whether at Dungeness, Eddystone or any other place along the coast or out at sea. It is their duty to keep the light always bright, and nothing else are

they supposed or allowed to do. By the rigorous rules of Trinity House these men must remain at their posts at all hazard; the shipwrecked mariner might claim help in times of extreme peril, the coastguard might demand their aid, but in vain, for the light-house and the lighthouse alone must claim attention. Think of the terrible consequences if the light was to cease to flash even for a few seconds! It might mean the death of thousands. Two of the Dungeness lighthouse men live in the building itself, and two have a house each adjoining. They work in watches; one is always on duty in the lantern, another attends the low light. There are two lights at Dungeness—one above on the tower, a fixed light facing south, and a low light in the fog-horn building near the sea, emitting flashes at certain intervals. The introduction of the latter some few years ago has been a great success and the means of saving many a ship. Before its erection the wrecks off the 'Ness were four times as numerous as now. But let us enter the Lighthouse proper. The interior, like everything else, is scrupulously clean. Going up the winding stairs we first notice doors on either side, leading to the quarters of the lighthousemen. Up another flight and we enter the "service room," where reserve apparatus is always in readiness for emergencies. Near here is yet another chamber, in which religious services were once held by the Rector of Lydd. Still higher we go and enter the heated atmosphere of the lantern room, for although the glass is shaded during the day by means of curtains the sun's rays force their lurid glare through them all and create intense heat. It is hot enough up here this bright summer's day, but at night the heat from the huge lamp must make it almost unbearable. And the glare! It is so powerful that the men must needs shelter their eyes behind dark spectacles. The dome is built of gun metal, and a huge oil lamp of 850 candle-power stands in the centre surrounded by brilliant prisms, which concentrate the rays to such an extent that the illuminating power is increased a hundredfold. In 1872 the electric light was used, but it is now superseded by oil. The latter is more certain, while it is a well-known fact that it penetrates fog more distinctly than the electric light. Still it is interesting to know that Dungeness Lighthouse was the first one in England to be illuminated by means of electricity.

The view from the lantern is an extensive one. At night you can see the South Foreland, Cape Grisnez on the French coast and the Varne lightship all throwing their flashes out into the Channel, while the electric lights on Folkestone Leas, the sparkling lamps of the Hythe promenade, and the flickering lights of New Romney, Littlestone and Dymchurch on one side, and the beacons of Camber harbour and the higher lights of Rye and Winchelsea on the other. Towards the south, by east and by west, are the varied lights of passing ships of all sizes and all nationalities, or the steady lights of those vessels which are riding safely at anchor in the east and west bays. In the daytime we see the irregular outline of the Kent and Sussex coast from Shakespeare Cliff off Dover to the Fairlight promontory off this side of Hastings.

The present Lighthouse is not the first built at Dungeness, as will be gleaned from a slab that meets our gaze as we descend once more to the basement. It is here stated that the Lighthouse "was erected by Thomas William Coke, Esq., in the county of Norfolk, instead of the old lighthouse, which orginally stood 540 yards to the northward, and which by means of the land increasing from the violence of the sea became useless to navigation." The date of the building was 1792, and it is further stated that it was then only a hundred yards from the sea at low water. During the last century the sea must have receded at a great rate, as a space of at least a quarter-of-a-mile now exists between lighthouse and low water mark. The original lighthouse was a grant from George the Third to Margaret Tufton Coke, Baroness Clifford and Countess of Leicester, and every foreign and British ship contributed towards its support.

Issuing from the wall which surrounds the Lighthouse we walk across the shingle to the signal station, where the Trinity flag now flies in honour of a Trinity boat which is destroying, by means of dynamite, a wreck lying in the East Bay. At this spot is the only remaining remnant of the old fog-horn house, which has been superseded by a new building. The present fog-horn is worked by means of an oil engine, and when the sailor's horror—a heavy mist—overhangs this spot, the horn emits two notes at intervals, first in a high key, then in a low key. Everything that human agency can carry out to help the mariner has been done at

Dungeness, and when we remember that as many as a thousand craft of all sizes have been known to come into the bays for shelter in bad weather, the Dungeness lights must indeed be a boon to those in peril on the sea. How different is all this from the days of old when heartless wreckers plied their fiendish trade. Why, at this very spot false lights were set ablaze, and as the doomed vessels ran aground their crews were put to death and their cargoes secured by the savage denizens of the shore. Wrecks, of course, are naturally of frequent occurrence even now, but the number is not comparatively great when we think of the dangers of such a point as Dungeness in fog and storm.

But, besides the Lighthouse, there are many things to arouse one's interest. The many acres of shingle between us and Lydd are the resort of rare birds, while the botanist can revel in the tiny clumps of vegetation that abound everywhere, and in uncommon plants which miraculously grow apparently without the help of soil. If you trace the roots they can be found several inches deep, entwined around the stones and sucking up the moisture below the surface. Hares and rabbits prosper, while a flock of goats—the pets of the lighthouse-keepers—browse about among the shingle.

But stranger still is the manner of locomotion among the inhabitants. There are no roads, and the difficulty of wading through loose beach is obviated by a peculiar boot called a back-stay, but corrupted by the natives into "baxters." It is made of a flat piece of wood about fifteen inches long and six inches wide, the toes being fixed in a leather loop like the front strap of a skate. The object is to prevent the feet from sinking into the shingle, and, although the tyro will find it difficult to walk easily, practice enables anyone to slide along at a great pace. Similar in principle are the carts which you see at Dungeness. The wheels are entirely encased in wood about eighteen inches wide, and the horses, usually running tandem, draw the vehicles over the stones with the greatest ease.

National Schools have lately been built near the railway station, and here the church services of the place are conducted by the curate of Lydd. Grants for this purpose are made both by the Admiralty and Trinity House, the former allowing £100 a year to the vicar of Lydd.

Two lifeboats are stationed along the West Bay, one being of eleven tonnage and so big that the house is too small for its accommodation. The other, lying some distance from the Lighthouse, has had a chequered career. Only a short time ago she capsized, and three brave fellows were lost. But the fact does not deter the coastguards and fishermen from manning her on occasions which are as perilous to them as to those whom they go to save.

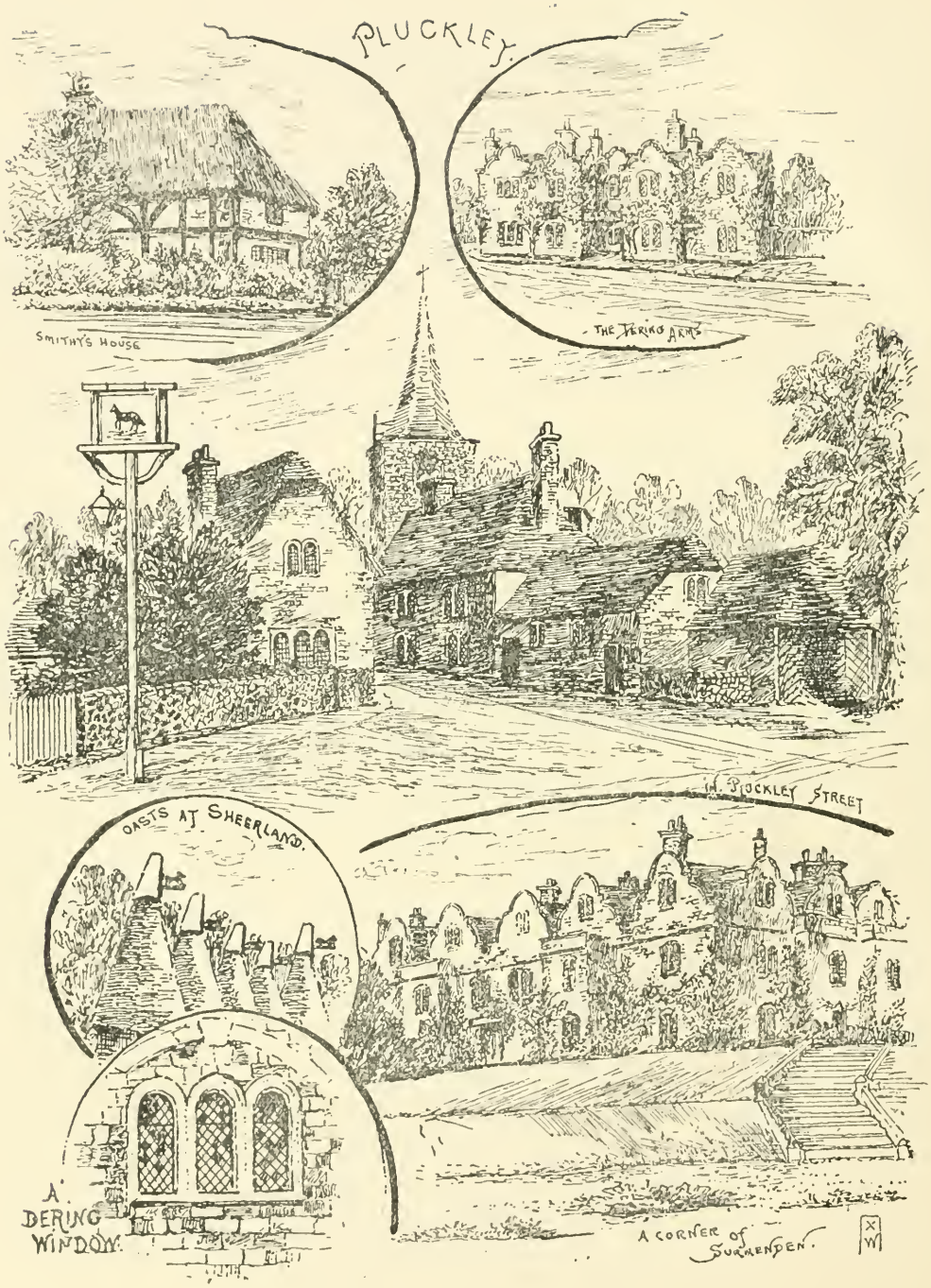
I asked a lighthouse-keeper what was the mode of procedure when they saw from the lantern a vessel in distress and being driven ashore. "We must remain on duty to keep the light ablaze," was the reply. "Of course we have a means of signalling, but you may be sure that all distressed vessels are quickly seen by the coastguard. These men patrol the shore from sunset to daylight, and so regular is their beat that a perfect cordon is formed along the coast. To give an idea of the care with which these coastguardmen work," added my informant, "a message could be conveyed by them from Dungeness to Brighton in less time than the letter post can take it." And these night patrols, it seems, are as rigorously carried out all along the British coast.

It is on the eastern shores of Dungeness that the greatest number of habitations stand—coastguard stations and fishermen's huts and dwellings, while we must not forget to notice that one of the inhabitants holds the triple positions of postmaster, general dealer and Dutch Consul. The inhabitants consist of hardy mariners, amongst whom are some of the finest specimens of the British storm warriors, and coastguard officers and men. The hamlet presents a curious spectacle, the beach being intersected by wooden paths constructed with railway sleepers, which lead from the houses to the sea. The curious patches of garden ground, which are railed off, were made up from earth brought down by the beach trains when the railway was made. Here, too, stand two forts known as the Redoubt and No. 2 Battery. During the great Napoleonic scare, which only abated with the collapse of Bonaparte at Waterloo, barracks stood on the same spot, and here regular troops, consisting of artillery and infantry, were quartered. From an old official return now before me I notice that the Montgomery Militia were quartered at Dungeness Barracks in 1798. Cavalry were at

the same time posted at New Romney Barracks. It is locally interesting to know that the Barrack Master or commandant in those days was an ancestor of the Finn family at Lydd. The present forts are now in disuse, but the old buildings must have been large, as they accommodated as many as six captains, thirteen subalterns, two quartermasters, four hundred and seventy non-commissioned officers and men, and sixty horses.

Remarkable as it may seem, pure fresh water can always be obtained from springs among the shingle, and none more delicious could be found than some I drank from a well sunk close by the Lighthouse. Once, however, these springs were polluted through the sea overflowing and flooding the dwellings near. This was on New Year's Day, 1880. At one time a spring of fresh water could be found near the sea by simply rubbing the ground.

But the puffing of the railway engine as it comes snorting into the station—or platform, for it is nothing more, a few planks having been hurriedly laid down temporarily years ago but left unaltered up to the present day—the whistle of the old guard, a veteran of forty years' service—how many thousands of miles he must have travelled!—recalls me to another world, and with a sigh I turn towards the stifling inland air, away from the fresh ozone of Dungeness, away from the glorious expanse of shingle and the deep blue sea beyond.


PLUCKLEY.
SMITHY'S HOUSE
THE JERINGS ARMS
IN PLUCKLEY STREET
OASTS AT SHEERLAND.
A DERING WINDOW.
A CORNER OF SURMENDEN.

PLUCKLEY.

ASK the railway traveller who often passes through Pluckley station what the village is famous for and he will probably answer, "brickmaking," an idea gleaned from the tall shafts and busy yards of the Pluckley Brick and Tile Works adjoining the railway. But let this same traveller alight from the train and take a mile's stroll up the hill beyond and his toil will be amply repaid by one of the prettiest village scenes in Kent.

Almost hidden in its mass of foliage, though standing on the summit of a hill, the square—it cannot be called a street—can scarcely be distinguished, and in this seclusion lies its charm. Creeper-covered cottages meet our gaze whichever hill we climb, and the church itself is simply buried amid shrubs, yews and tall majestic trees. And the freshness of the air! How invigorating it is. From one direction comes the breeze, just tinged with brine from the Channel, along the tract of country between Dymchurch Bay and Ashford; or from the south may spring up a balmy southern wind wending its way along the Weald of Kent; while from the north the crisper air of the Downs creates a vigorous change in the atmosphere. Over 300 feet above the level of the sea! It's an ideal rural health-giving retreat.

Entering the Square one is struck with the uneven appearance of everything. There is no idea of symmetry, just the reverse. It seems as though special pains had been taken to place the buildings in all sorts of odd corners, and in making them as far as possible unlike each other; all are uneven, and even the paving of the Square is undulating and the road as wavy as a billowy sea. On our left is a nest of dwellings where once the schools

were quartered, but new ones were erected some few years ago close by on the site originally occupied by the Rectory. Next we see sundry buildings, a butcher's and a general shop, the only commercial enterprises, and to show what little competition there is in Pluckley we are struck by the fact that only one public-house exists, the Black Horse, perched on the upper side of the square. This latter was once a farmhouse, the original inn being situated among the nest of cottages which we see farther to the right and nearer the church.

And this same church is well worth a visit. It is of Early English architecture, and some authorities date its age as far back as Stephen. Built of ragstone, with the walls tiled and the tower shingled, it is in a rare state of preservation, a fact no doubt due to the care bestowed upon it by many generations of Derings, who, by-the bye, possess a family chancel, which was rebuilt by one Richard Dering as long ago as the fifteenth century. It is specially noted for two handsome Tudor and Jacobean screens. The north-east wall of the church is the oldest part, and here the stone work, instead of being regularly laid, was lumped together in the plaster with utter lack of neatness. It should be chronicled that for over 300 years the parish clerkship was held by successive generations of a family named Acres, but the last one died some years ago.

Leaving the church in the cool of a summer evening we stroll among the old tombstones, composed chiefly of old Bethersden marble. Under the south wall of the church is a stone which states that "Thomas Norden pleased God and was belov'd of Him, so that living among sinners he was translated." This last word "translated" is delightfully original. On a more recent tombstone we find that the memory of a dead wife is feelingly proclaimed, and the husband has had his own name ready engraved, with space left for the insertion of the date of his own death when that event shall occur. He still survives and one cannot help admiring his cheerful acquiescence to the inevitable and his thoughtfulness in sparing trouble and expense to his survivors. Another tombstone is erected to a certain "Citizen and Salter of London who had two wives, both Dorothys." But one more tombstone is worth quoting, for it

explains how Jesse Spicer was "killed by a Ninepin Bowl, 20th of May, 1772, aged 22 years." The tragedy happened in the old Black Horse Inn.

Close to the churchyard is the entrance to the magnificent avenue of Surrenden, cresting the hill a mile long from mansion to village. It is this fine belt of trees which attracts the attention of the railway traveller. There is a double row on each side, fine symmetrical elms forming the inner rows, limes and sycamores the outer.

Surrenden-Dering is the seat of the Derings, one of the oldest of Kent families; indeed, it claims to be the only one in England which has retained its unbroken descent in the male line from the time of Harold, the present baronet being the thirtieth generation. The original building was a manor house, but this was pulled down in the reign of Edward the Third by John de Surrenden and the present fine mansion erected in its place. But during the eighteenth century a certain Sir Edward Dering enlarged and embellished it to a great extent. A peculiarity about the style of its architecture is its semi-circular gables, but more especially the shape of its windows—all alike. And this singular window is to be seen all over the estate and in all sorts of buildings in the parish. There is a tradition that during the Commonwealth a Dering escaped from the Roundheads by means of one of these windows, and since that date its peculiar shape has borne a sacred charm. Every succeeding member of the family has kept the tradition in mind, and even down to the present day the same style of window predominates all over the parish, which means the estate, as the whole area belongs to the Dering family, with the exception of a triangular piece of land about thirty acres in extent and a few smaller plots scattered about. It is said that long ago one of the old baronets vowed that he would secure every inch of land in the place. Year after year did he try to gain his desire, but in vain, as a member of the Fitch family resisted all tempting offers, all threats, all entreaties, and so the old baronet died dissatisfied, his hopes never realised.

The mansion contains some fine old pictures by the old masters, while the stained-glass windows along the staircase are

famous for the richness of their colouring. The first is erected in memory of the first-known member of the family, Fitz Syred Dering, killed by Harold's side at the battle of Hastings. The present baronet is Sir Henry Nevill Dering, Ambassador to Mexico. He succeeded in 1896, upon the death of Sir Edward Dering, one of the best-known county men for over half-a-century. Indeed, his possession of the title must have been a record, as he succeeded at the age of three and held it till the age of eighty-eight, no less a period than eighty-five years. Surrenden is surrounded by a magnificent park, extending well into the parish of Little Chart; and it is remarkable that the mansion itself stands in two parishes, the boundaries of Pluckley and Little Chart passing through the centre of the building. During the Commonwealth the Derings were Royalists, and Surrenden was unsuccessfully besieged three times by the Roundheads. The house is now tenanted by Mr. Winans, owner of celebrated American horses.

The history of the Dering family is one brimful of interest. Norman Fitz-Dering was slain by the side of King Stephen, when that monarch was taken prisoner at the battle of Lincoln, and being found afterwards with his shield covered with blood his descendants were allowed to add three "torteaux in chief" to their coat of arms. One Sir Edward Dering fell foul of the Commonwealth, and, although he escaped with his life, his estates were sequestered, and he died in great poverty at one of his farmhouses. Previously he had spent some time with the King, and during his absence Surrenden was attacked and looted by the Roundheads. It is this ill-fated member of the family who is alleged to have escaped the besiegers on another occasion through a window as previously described. His eldest son married the daughter of a London citizen named Harvey under peculiar circumstances. When the Kentish baronet proposed to her father that he should marry his beautiful daughter the latter confessed that a year previously she had clandestinely become wedded to her father's young apprentice. Her parent thereupon took steps to dissolve the union, and, notwithstanding the protestations of both the young bride and her husband, he succeeded in his designs. The reason assigned for the dissolution was that "so notorious a

breach of honesty in the bridegroom ought not to be tolerated in the State, and that so bad an example should receive every punition that could be inflicted." Strange reasoning, forsooth. Were all instances of dishonesty in a bridegroom sufficient excuse now-a-days for dissolving marriage methinks divorces would be somewhat plentiful.

In olden times fairs were held at Pluckley, one on Whit-Tuesday for toys and another on December 6th, St. Nicholas Day (the patron saint of the church) for pigs. Both have died out, but on November 4th the pedlars' fancy fair is, in a manner, kept up, but it has sunk to the level of round-abouts, cocoanut-shying and a sweet stall or two.

In Domesday Pluckley is spelt Pluckelei. In early days Pevington existed as a parish by itself, but in 1583, according to *Hasted*, it was united to Pluckley, notwithstanding that it should have been alloted to Egerton, Little Chart and Pluckley in equal divisions. It seems, however, as if *Hasted* was for once misinformed, as Pluckley did not acquire the whole of Pevington. Little Chart took a portion, which now comprises a detached part of that village situated at Monday Boys, some mile-and-a-half from the rest of the parish. Surrenden was at one time a manor, and other manors still existing are Pevington, Malmains (the seat of the old family of that name), Sheerland and Roting. These are now farms, and at Pevington, where used to exist an old church and a graveyard, agricultural work brings bones to the surface, while the collapse of an old vault now and again causes the earth to sink. In consequence of the site of this old church being situated here the parish is frequently given the double-barreled appellation of Pluckley-cum-Pevington in legal documents. It should be added that on the road leading from Great Chart to Pluckley Station there is a fine specimen of an Elizabethan homestead named Dowle Street; but it has now been converted into a couple of cottages. Although no historical connection attaches to it, the smithy's cottage on the hill, leading into the village from Smarden, is worth seeing. Its peculiar exalted position amid a cluster of trees and its thatched roof give it a most picturesque appearance. There is also a row of quaintly-built cottages further up the same hill and facing the road to Little Chart.

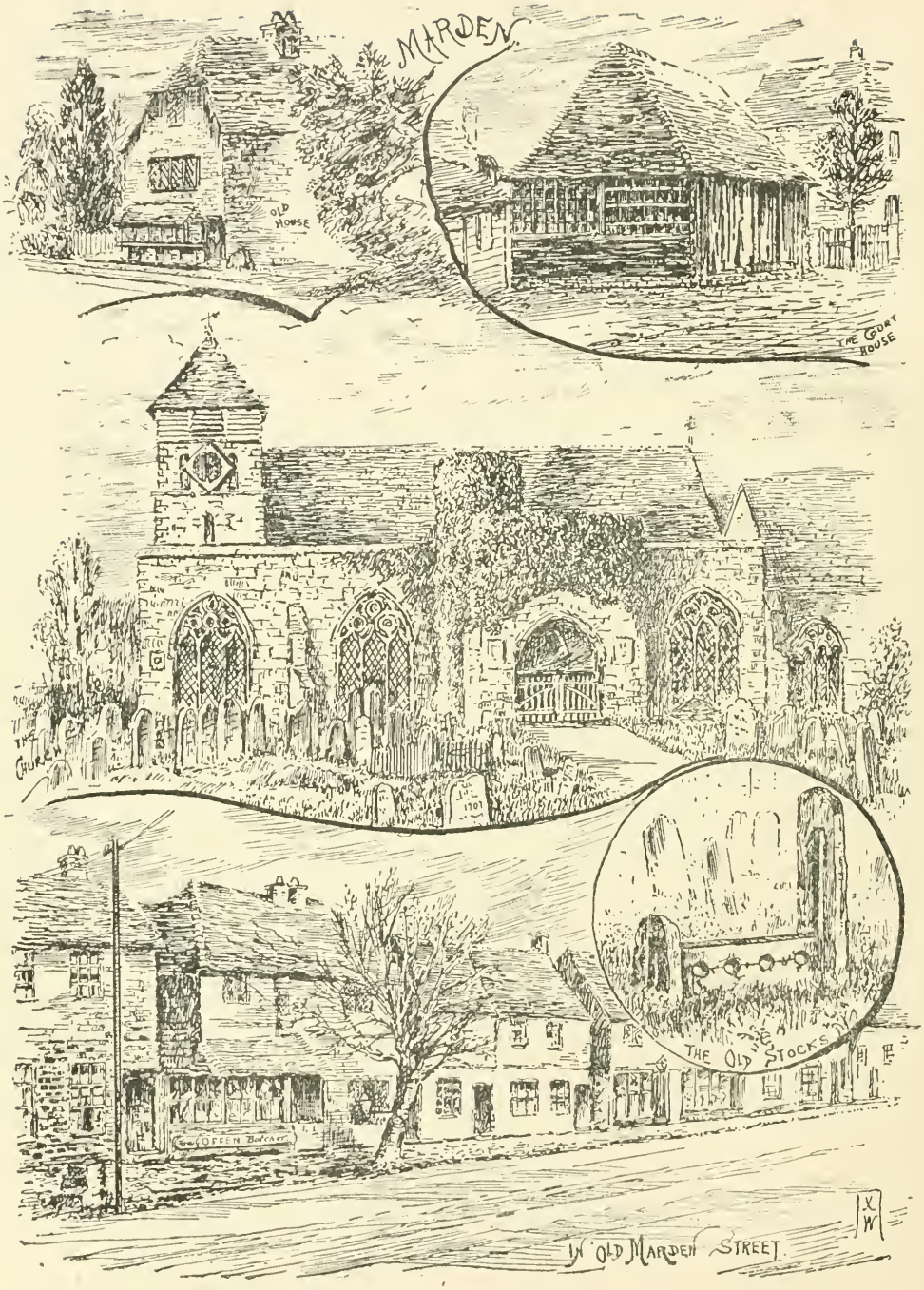
Following the direction of this little village we come to a row of fine oasthouses at Sheerland, rendered prominent by the six metal black horses standing out in bold relief from the cowls overhead. These decorations are emblematical of the Dering family, their crest being a black horse.

The new rectory is prettily situated away from the immediate neighbourhood of the church, and it should be added that the late Bishop Oxenden of Montreal was a former rector of the parish.

We bring our visit to this quaint old-time village of Pluckley to a close by returning to the neighbourhood of prosaic chimney shafts, close to the station. The Brick and Tile Works were inaugurated in 1879, with the object of manufacturing special sorts of bricks and tiles from the native clay. Adjacent an experimental boring is being put down by the Kent Collieries Corporation, and during its progress some curious geological specimens have been met with, and the Wealden clay has been shown to be of enormous depth. No great discoveries of coal have yet been made, but should the hopes of the commercial world be realised and Kent be turned into a colliery district Pluckley may perhaps become a southern coal metropolis and the fair country around a smoke-begrimed waste. But happily such a revolution is not apparent at present.

The brickmaking industry gives employment to many people, but it is quite a distinct settlement of its own down here by the railway, where the workmen live in rows of modern red houses, but the quiet village up the hill slumbers unmolested just as calmly as it has slept for years and years.

The Dering Arms, the hotel which attracts the attention of the traveller passing through Pluckley station, is a picture in itself, in the same style of architecture as Surrenden-Dering. Built of Kentish rag, clothed in a garb of ivy, and crowned with castellated roofs, it reminds one forcibly of the famous old Maypole, depicted by Dickens in "Barnaby Rudge."


MARDEN
OLD HOUSE
THE COURT HOUSE
THE CHURCH
THE OLD STOCKS
IN OLD MARDEN STREET.

MARDEN.

THERE are two distinct colonies in Marden—one consisting of modern houses to your right as you leave the railway station, and the other, which lies above the church on your left, composed of the quaint buildings of the little old village that years ago was raised in a clearing of the great Wealden forest. For not many centuries ago the spot now occupied by Marden was thickly covered by wild woodland; then a certain area of trees was felled to the ground, and possibly this very clearing was in one of the few beaten tracks by which outlet was obtained from the forest to the open country in the north and over which the rude dwellers of the forest travelled on rare occasions to Meddestane (Maidstone) to dispose of their goods and to obtain their few simple wants. Or perhaps an occasional daring pedlar ventured through the wilds in order to sell his wares. There is no doubt that the clearing was one of the typical "dens" which were dotted about the forest, and from which rude beginning we find so many of our beautiful Wealden villages now developed.

How the name Marden became attached to the place is not quite clear so far as the first syllable is concerned. In some of the most ancient records it is described as Mardenne, in the time of Edward I. it was Mereden, while another ancient spelling of it was Meredon. The present vicar (the Rev. T. A. Carr) however has a theory which certainly seems to be very nearly, if not absolutely, the correct one. The words "mere" and "mar" are synonymous, meaning originally that which was dead or waste

marsh, and Mr. Carr puts his theory thus: den is a clearance in a forest, marsh is the border of a forest. Marden is situated on the borders of the great forest of Anderida, which covered the Weald of Kent and Sussex, and it was therefore a clearance on the border of the marsh—a marsh den.

Marshden, as we will call it then, was in early ages a kind of backwood settlement, its site being selected because of its being on rising ground. It was cut off from the more civilised part of the country by a stretch of morass, which spread itself on either side of the river Beult and its various feeders, across which morass a treacherous track led to the foot of Linton Hill and onwards across Coxheath to Maidstone. Only in dry weather could this track be traversed with safety, and many a belated traveller was lured on to doom by the dancing will-o'-the-wisp. But progress commenced, and gradually the clearing widened. From the den a hamlet sprang up and the hamlet became a village, with homesteads dotted about and the forest track becoming a road. Law and order, though of a rough and ready nature, became, with the formation of the "hundreds," introduced, a church was built and the marsh den blossomed forth into the village of Merdenne, and afterwards Marden.

Strolling from the railway station we turn down the street to the right, a wide healthy-looking road, with modern houses of all sizes on either side. The most conspicuous buildings are two fine sets of schools, and it is probable that in the whole of England finer accommodation for the little ones for a place of this size cannot be found. One building is older than the other; in fact, it was erected in 1860 by public subscriptions and handed over to the trustees of the National Society. But the inevitable School Board arrived, new buildings were provided in 1896 for the increasing juvenile population, and thus at the present time Marden, with its population of 2,500, possesses a handsome Board School large enough to accommodate five hundred children, and a Church Sunday School, into which the old National School has been converted, capable of holding four hundred little ones.

Wending our way back towards the church, which is on an eminence, we notice the graveyard sloping down to the roadside, and in no wise cramped for space like so many of our village

burial places, but covering a large area of ground. The entrance to the church itself is through a fine square ivy-mantled porch, while just outside, close by the gates, stand the old village stocks. They were removed from near the ancient court-house by the late Mr. Edward Hussey, lord of the manor, in 1882. Their original rugged appearance has been spoiled by a coat of paint and an inscription in white letters; but they are none the less a rare curiosity.

The architecture of the church cannot be described as elegant, the walls being composed of stone and rubble, while a pointed wooden dwarfed cap over the tower is not graceful. But its porch is the one redeeming feature. In 1763 the fane was beautified by public subscriptions at a cost of £96 3s. 9d., and the Marden church "meat safe," an unsightly construction upon the tower, was taken away when in 1888 the church was last subjected to restoration. One of the most interesting contents of the church is the font, which has quite a unique carved oak covering, and of this a very interesting story is related. There was at the time of the Commonwealth a vicar of the name of Cornwall. The rectory of Staplehurst was filled by a Calvanistic Baptist, and the ministers met at Cranbrook once a fortnight. One day the Calvanistic minister gave an address against infant baptism, and it came about that Mr. Cornwall, vicar of Marden, promised to answer his reverend brother at the next meeting. When the ministers again assembled Mr. Cornwall stated that he had examined the question and he found infant baptism was contrary to the custom of the church, and, in order to show his conviction, he had broken to pieces the Marden font. At the date of the restoration, however, the new vicar, finding no font, caused one to be made, and placed upon it the extraordinary wooden covering it now bears. The church also contains the remains of the tomb of Sir Richard de Lacey, who was supposed to have been the founder of the South Chantry, and the new vestry was built upon the site of a former building, the use of which is unknown.

Not only is Marden rich in its possession of a fine parish church, but the Nonconformists can boast of several substantial chapels, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists each having their own place of worship. These latter buildings are all more or less modern.

Taking the direction of old "Marden Town" we notice a red house on our left, its long quaint window having a tiled canopy overhead and a luxuriant growth of flowers within. Further on, the street widens into a triangle, the road on the right leading to the Weald by way of Cranbrook and that on the left to Staplehurst; while at right angles on the latter side is another road which crosses the railway and takes us to Maidstone if we wish. But we cannot yet tear ourselves away from this village scene contracted into so small a space. The road is wide and the footpaths are wider in proportion, not smooth as cement, mind you, but glorying in an uneven, patternless collection of paving stones of all sizes and shapes, not perhaps so easy to walk upon as those of modern towns, but certainly more artistic and in harmony with the old-time surroundings. Here we see the village barber's pole, there an old house with its walls rounded off, not squared, as it turns the corner, then the butcher's shop with the customary tiled overhanging roof to protect the joints from the rays of the sun, a lamp hanging idly beneath the shades of the village tree, and finally the ancient mounting stone, by which the mailcoach passengers ascended to their seats on their journey to London ere the railroad cut its way through the village. On our right is the bran new village pump and drinking fountain, just erected by the parish council in the place of the old stable pump that once did duty in the same spot; further along are many tumble-down buildings, interspersed with the neater, white-painted wooden houses which are characteristic of nearly all our Kent villages. And then, standing quite by itself like a thing forgotten, is the most interesting building in Marden—the old Court House. Yes, although it stands here before us, a lonely, neglected little square structure, its sides dilapidated and barricaded with oaken slabs, its steep tiled roof bronzed with moss, its doors covered with glaring posters and its interior used as a store, this same weather-stained old wooden shanty was once the equivalent to a borough's town hall, and herein the lords of the manor used to hold the court-leet.

Another building with which interesting traditions are connected is an old house at Marden Beech, which used to be called the pest-house, from its having been used by the stricken parishioners during the time of the great plague. Appearances

seem to indicate that the villagers lost many of their number by the plague, and even to the present day in the wood-lodge of the old pest-house may be seen incised stones, which show that burials took place there.

At the time of the Domesday survey the manor and hundred of Marden seem to have been taken with the King's manor of Milton, to which it was an appendage. It remained in royal possession until the reign of Charles I., when it passed out of that monarch's hands to Sir Edward Browne and a Mr. Christopher Faveli. Since then the manor has belonged to several families, and is now in the hands of the trustees of the late Mr Hussey, of Scotney Castle. Within the parish are various other manors, notably those of Cheveney, Widehurst, Shiphurst, Monkton and Read. The first-mentioned possibly takes its name from a gentleman named del Chyvene, who held the manor about the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century. Subsequently it was divided, and Great Cheveney, as the one portion was called, came into the possession of the Twisden family, the first of whom to take it was a Mr. Thomas Twisden, a serjeant-at-law, afterwards a knight, a judge of the King's Bench and a baronet. Little Cheveney, the name given to the other portion, eventually was possessed by the Maplesden family, many generations of whom lived there. The Maplesdens, who were connected with the Courthopes and Coles, of Horsmonden, were of a liberal disposition. Following the example of Richard Turner, who in 1569 left certain lands the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the use of the poor, Mr. Edward Maplesden in the succeeding century devised to the poor of the parish £5 per annum, arising from the rents of a house and lands at Horsmonden, subject to a charge of 20s. per annum to be paid to a minister for preaching two charity sermons on Ash Wednesdays and Whit-Sundays. Widehurst, originally known by the name of Wogherst, is a very ancient manor, which has passed through the hands of various families, as has also the manor of Shiphurst. The manor of Monkton was at one time possessed by Leeds Priory, which was suppressed by Henry VIII., and subsequently was held by one of the Colepepers, of Bedgebury, who sold it. At a later date the Heneker family came into possession of Monkton. This family was held in high repute in the county. During the reign of Edward II., Peter de Henekin—the original name of the Henekers

—was Lieutenant-Governor of Dover Castle, a Sir John Henniker, Bart., afterwards represented Dover in Parliament, and the family generally were the owners of very much land in the county.

Very many years ago, perhaps over a couple of centuries, Marden used to boast of an annual fair for toys and pedlary, and up to the time of the constitution of Union workhouses had its parish poor-house, which accommodated about 50 poor people per year, while about the same number were relieved outside it.

What a change is the modern Marden from the old! In place of a dense forest we find fertile hop and fruit plantations, and where once was only waste marsh land are now rich, luxuriant pastures. Even as late as the end of the last century much of the land between Marden and Linton was nothing but a morass, with the turnpike road, as it had then become, often impassable. Our old friend Hasted thus wrote: "Near the road from Style Bridge to Goudhurst the country is very pleasant, but towards Hunton and towards Staplehurst much the contrary, being of a very dreary and forlorn aspect. It lies very low and flat, the soil in general a stiff clay, a very heavy tillage land; in winter the lands are exceedingly wet and much subject to inundations, and were it not for the manure of their native marle and the help of chalk and lime brought from the northern hills would be still more unfertile than they were at present, notwithstanding which there are partially dispersed some very rich lands among them, and there were some years ago three hundred acres of hop-ground here, which have of late been lessened near one hundred acres." It seems as if the hop growers were then, too, suffering from bad prices, and that the old-time growers met the difficulty in much the same manner as the present—by decreasing their acreage.

I cannot better close my sketch of Marden than by relating a strange tragedy that occurred many years ago along the Hawkhurst road. It was in the halcyon days of the highwaymen, and on a certain Christmas Eve towards the close of the last century a notorious desperado named Gilbert, who was the terror of the neighbourhood, owing not so much to his daring exploits as to the cruelty with which he treated his victims, hailed a coach just as it was entering the village of Marden. Its two occupants were an old man and a young girl, and in a bantering tone of voice both were ordered

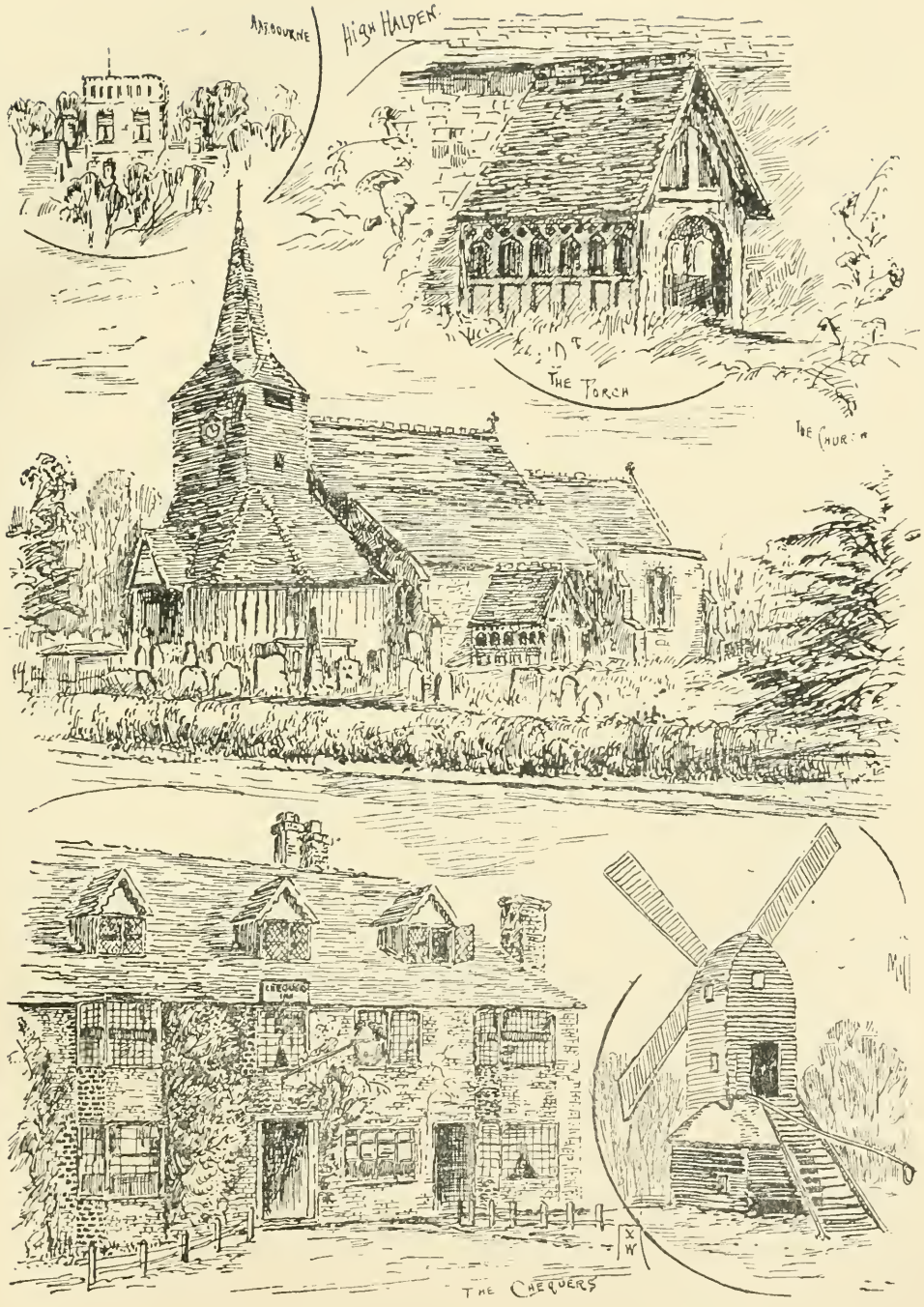
to alight. The lady had just reached the ground when through some unknown cause the horses suddenly bolted, and, dashing towards Marden, left the highwayman and his fair captive standing alone in the road. The alarm was raised in the village, and the grief-stricken old man returned to the spot with a great number of men. But all they saw by the light of their lanterns was Gilbert lying near the hedge, his hand pressed tightly against his side. Life was ebbing fast away, but he was enabled to tell his awe-stricken hearers that, recognising him as the murderer of her brother, the young lady had suddenly drawn a dagger from her belt and stabbed him in the side. Then he fell back dead. But where was the girl? All night they sought her, and at last, in the early dawn, her huddled form was seen crouched behind a tree some miles away. Her brother's death had been avenged. But she was mad. It is supposed that the highwayman was buried by the wayside, and during the last generation the country folks looked upon the spot with horror, because it was said that every Christmas Eve the ghostly struggle between the highwayman and his captive was repeated in weird silence. I give the story as told me by a descendant of the girl's father, a member of an old Weald of Kent family. But from enquiries made in Marden I can trace nothing further, so it seems as though this old ghost story is dying out, even in the recollection of the villagers themselves.

HIGH HALDEN.

HIGH Halden is described by Ireland as "very retired and as unpleasant as any within the county." It is still retired, being some six miles from any railway station, but it is nevertheless a delightful old place, with its village green, its quaint old wooden church, a quainter windmill and its view of beautiful Wealden scenery.

As we saunter from Bethersden past the Bull, the half-way house 'twixt Ashford and Tenterden, down Halden Hill and then up the gradual slope to Halden Street, on one side we can see far and wide towards Biddenden and Smarden, and on the other side, to the south, lie the wooded regions of the Weald. A little to the left of us, but just ahead, is a clump of trees surmounted by a steeple, while in the foreground are a farm yard and modern farm house. The spot whereon this last building stands is of historic interest, for it was here that the Ransleys, of smuggling fame, once lived. Of these dare devils I shall have more to say later on.

Turning the bend in the road we come full upon the triangular Village Green, with its post and telegraph office at one corner, and near by the Chequers, an old and picturesque hostelry. It was here that a strange bargain was once made. Some years ago—in 1845 to be precise—a hop picker entered the bar and begged for coppers. One of those to whom he spoke was Mr. John Waterman, who, as a joke, offered to give the fellow fifteen shillings if he would remain on the Village Green without once going on to the roads bordering it for a whole week. The hop-picker jumped at the bargain and immediately planted himself on the grass. But he had forgotten that he possessed no food, and the loss of his fifteen shillings seemed assured until some young men brought him bread. The pangs of


ASHBOURNE
HIGH HALDEN
THE TORCH
THE CHURCH
THE CHEQUERS

hunger thus assuaged he patiently remained on the Green the seven days, an object of curiosity both to the natives and passers by. During his incarceration he wiled away the hours by carving a walking stick out of a rough piece of ash, and this he presented to one of the young fellows who brought him food. The latter is now an old man, but perhaps his greatest treasure is this same dark worm-eaten keepsake of the foreign hop-picker.

We now leave the Green—where the fair used to be held on the first Monday in every year after Goudhurst fair—and taking the south-east path notice the National Schools on one side of the road and the church on the other. The former was built in 1868 with a legacy left by Mrs. Sutton, wife of a former rector. The church is a unique structure, the steeple and porch, both built of wood, being the principal features. The tower stands on great massive oak beams which rise from the ground and support the belfrey; above is the pointed steeple, while the roof slants away on three sides, forming the roof for the porch, the vestry and a large chamber. There is wood everywhere, some in good preservation, some worm-eaten and rotten. Most of it is plain, although there is a pretty piece of old pierced carving under the eaves of the south porch. The steps to the belfry, on the other hand, are solid blocks. Yes, so much wood was consumed that fifty tons of oak were placed in the tower and porch alone. This was in the reign of Henry the Eighth when the church was built, and all the wood came from the forest which at that time enclosed the village, no trouble being taken to trim it; hence the rough, crude appearance of the building. The nave is wide, of lofty, perpendicular character, and has an arcade of three fine arches. The chancel arch is pointed with shaftings, having capitals of a decorated character. The church was restored in the same year as the schools were built, the money for that purpose being left by the same lady. There is a scarcity of monuments such as one would expect to find in such a quaint old church.

Going out by the south door we turn to the left and make our way between the graves to the east end, where we see three gravestones fixed horizontally. They are to a great extent covered with earth and overgrown grass, but the name Marshall is distinguishable. A family of that name once lived at Harbourne

House, and a member sixty years ago vanished in America. Turning our back on these we find a little to our right three vaults raised semi-circularly above the level of their surroundings. These lie in the south-east corner of the burial ground, and over the left hand one we find the name of "Henry Chase Lawrence, Bachelor, deceased April 28th, 1821, aged 20 years. Son of first of the name of Henry Chase." The other two belong to the Neve family, who once occupied Tiffenden Manor. Another tombstone of peculiar interest refers to the hapless family of Ransley, the names of the two wives of Richard Ransley being mentioned, as well as his two daughters, Catherine and Mary. The dates of their death vary from 1770 to 1775.

It would be difficult to find any country graveyard so full of tombstone inscriptions in verse—doggerel, inharmonious verse—as at Halden. Here is one :—

Reader Mark.
Know its sure that die thou must
And after come to Judgment just.

The date of the above is 1746 and is in memory of a Miss Bennet, of Westfield, Sussex. Another headstone, dated 1814, refers to the death of a "parish yeoman" named Stephen Taylor, and bears this inscription :—

Stranger, who frisk along this church pathway,
Stop thy quick step and read this serious lay,
To solemn musings one short hour devote,
And give a loose to solitary thought
While this recording stone attracts thine eye
Hear it exclaim—Thou Mortal to (too?) must die ;
Be wise in time, reform, repent, amend,
Life has no length, eternity no end.

Strolling from the church and walking down the pathway to the entrance gates one notices a wooden pyramid about six feet high standing upright in the ground ; there is no inscription and no grave, for it was erected to the memory of an unfortunate suicide, whose body must needs be buried outside consecrated ground, but whose friends were allowed to place this plain, nameless piece of wood within the gates of the churchyard as some means of consolation.

Keeping along the road to Woodchurch for a quarter-of-a-mile we find an old farmhouse which was once Hales Place, the residence of the Kentish family of that name. It was during Wat Tyler's insurrection, when so many men of Kent and Kentish Men rebelled, that Sir Robert Hales, of Halden, was murdered by the latter because he refused to join them.

Now that we are so far upon the road we may as well follow it till we reach the entrance gate of Harbourne House. It is a beautiful walk, a great part of the way being shaded by leafy trees on either side of the road. This, however, is not the only entrance, for there is an equally beautiful path across the fields to this spot, which is, perhaps, the most interesting place in High Halden. The name conjures up memories of G. P. R. James's historical novel, "The Smuggler," and it is in this very spot that the plot of that book is laid. The novelist used the beautiful country round for the setting of his picture, but, the house not suiting him, he provided one from his own imaginative brain. Thirty years ago, however, Mr. Henry Latter pulled down the old house and built on the site a new one, constructed in just the same style as described by James.

Standing here at Harbourne on a bright summer's day one can scarcely imagine that not so many years ago it was the rendezvous of the unscrupulous gang of smugglers named Ransley, and that in the adjacent woods deadly conflicts were fought between the revenue officers and those who had brought contraband goods inland, over the Marsh from Dymchurch and Lydd. The old house of the Ransleys was a wooden thatched building on the Ashford road. It was, however, pulled down, and a modern farmhouse erected on the opposite side of the way, and this latter is known as Ransley House. The original structure was built after the same style as the oldest house in Halden, a queer old place that has seen five hundred summers and stands on Hope's Grove Farm.

In the days when the Ransleys thrived this part of Kent was practically given over to smuggling. The cottages all around were inhabited by men who made their living by joining the gangs who met the sea smugglers along the coast and escorted the contraband goods to houses inland. The latter were known as "hides," and it would prove an interesting research to trace out these places,

not only in and near the old buildings of Halden themselves but in the woods surrounding them. Almost everybody was in league with the smugglers, even the magistrates joining in the perilous exploits; and as all classes derived benefit from the illicit traffic it was only natural that the revenue officers found all hands against them. There was one family, however, who by their brutality had estranged themselves from the country folk; and yet for years they carried on their trade, murdered officers, and even kept the military at bay. Their name was Ransley, and the family consisted of an old man and his sons and a daughter, the latter a perfect she-devil who could fight and curse with the strength and venom of a man. In the same gang were others equally desperate, equally lawless, and it is not surprising that by the terror they spread abroad they kept the quiet inhabitants under their power. Not a man or woman dare refuse shelter to the Ransleys. But a day of reckoning came at last. One night a member of the gang murdered a poor girl in a neighbouring wood. For years the inhabitants had overlooked other tragedies—the assassination of soldiers and revenue officers, and even the deaths of their neighbours who were suspected of disloyalty to the smugglers were allowed to pass almost unnoticed. But the murder of this innocent girl aroused her friends to a state of fury. Hundreds responded to the call for revenge, a cordon was formed round the house where the murderer and his comrades were hidden, and after a desperate struggle some were secured. Ransley himself eventually decorated the gallows, at least one of his sons keeping him company, while several other members of the gang were captured and hung or scattered to other parts.

But we must return to High Halden village. Arrived on the Green again we take the Tenterden road and notice the Tylden Schools on our right hand. Here two of the last of the old-fashioned masters took their stand. They were James Jennings and James Medhurst, both of whom taught in the village sixty years ago. It would probably have shocked a present-day Government Inspector had he entered that school under their *règime* to find the master sitting at his desk clothed in a smock frock not always as white as snow, and enjoying a pull at the soothing weed from a long churchwarden pipe!

Further along the road on the left stands the mill, one of the kind known as post mills, and it is the largest of the sort in Kent. The base is circular and at a height of about fourteen feet from the ground tapers upwards until a stone pillar rises. Upon the latter the mill revolves, not only the sails but the whole body of the building turning to face the breeze. Steps from the doorway of the upper part lead to the ground and these turn with the base. There is no mechanical contrivance for turning the structure in the proper direction of the wind, the whole being done by hand. Originally the mill stood by the side of the "Dragon," but it was bodily moved to its present position at the beginning of the century, and sixty years ago it was raised eight feet above the ground.

Tiffenden is a small manor within the parish and so ancient that it was presented to Hugo de Montford by William the Conqueror for his bravery at the battle of Hastings.

It is worthy of record that in the day when individuals were allowed to issue money of their own, a Halden man named John Cook issued a halfpenny in 1667. On the obverse side was inscribed "John Cook, His Half peny," and on the reverse "In High Halden" and a lion rampant.

It is not generally known that egg services originated in Kent, while it is further a fact that the idea came from Halden. The Rev. H. P. Collins, the rector, started it in the parish in 1888, and on that occasion 200 eggs were offered in a parish numbering not more than 600 souls; but last year the service realised 1,237 eggs. From Halden the eggs are packed off to St. Luke's, Camberwell, a parish in which Mr. Collins is interested, and, strange to relate, for the past five years not one egg has been broken in its transmission. In the "Further Quarter," that is, in the northern portion of the village, there are the potteries, well known for the Halden brown ware, which is acknowledged as the strongest made.

In the days when the people were educated in religion by means of Passion plays, New Romney was the scene of the drama. Several villages around were accustomed to provide a troupe of players, and Bethersden contributed one, while High Halden sent such a famous lot of actors that they were talked about for years and years afterwards.

BETHERSDEN.

STROLLING in Bethersden the other day I asked a native where I should find any places worth visiting, any places of interest. "There baint none," he answered with a grin, "and a good thing too, for sich things doant do no good to nobody." And the old fellow passed along the road, still muttering as he walked "no good to nobody." Looking at his rubicund face, listening to the prattling of the little ones about, and hearing the hearty laughter of a cluster of waggoners and mates outside the Bull, methought perhaps he was right. Someone once wrote, "Happy is the man who has no history," and perhaps the same remark applies to a village.

In a manner the old inhabitant was right. Bethersden is not so rich either in historical buildings or associations as many of its neighbours, but there are several picturesque spots, more than one quaint dwelling and several pretty rural scenes in the lanes winding serpent-like around us. It seems that the Bethersden folk have for many years kept their joys and sorrows to themselves, have lived and died without thought or wish to migrate to other parts, and have intermarried to such an extent that the same names which appeared in the village muster-roll centuries ago are still to be found there, only altered slightly to meet the changes of spelling in the English language.

Anyone passing along the main road between Ashford and Tenterden will notice Bethersden street and its fine old church, standing on a hill close by, while at their feet is another cluster of dwellings. Both belong to Bethersden, which in other ways is a


BETHERSDEN
OVEN GRAVES
OLD SUN DIAL ON THE WALL AT WISSENDEN HOUSE
IN BETHERSDEN STREET
CORNER AT KING FARM
OLD HOUSE AT WISSENDEN

scattered parish, as two little hamlets—Wissenden along the Smarden road, and Queen Street, at the back of the Royal Standard on the High Halden road—are both included in its area. Bethersden is so extensive a parish that it covers nearly 7,000 acres.

For one thing, at least, the village is famous, and that is a product known as Bethersden marble. In the olden days it was dug from a quarry at Tuesnode and used in the construction of many cathedrals, churches and houses in Kent; but, alas! it failed to stand the wear and tear of rough weather. While at Bethersden I asked where the quarries were being worked. "No one digs the marble now," I was told, and, further, it was explained that although it had a bright and novel appearance when first polished, the surface soon became dull. It is made principally of shells, and can be found in different colours, blue and brown being the most common hues. As a matter of fact Bethersden marble has not been dug for sixty years. Up to 1825 there were no macadamised roads in the parish except the turnpike road, and nearly all the old footpaths were covered with Bethersden marble, the "Street" being similarly paved. On the old paths being pulled up and the present roads made, the slabs of marble were broken up and used on the roads. Besides being dug at Tuesnode there were quarries of Bethersden marble at Stamford Bridge near Pluckley station (in Bethersden parish), at Daniels Water, between Bethersden and Chart, and at Mr. F. Hyland's farm at Vitter's Oak. At the latter place, in the course of some recent alterations to the house, a chimney piece of the marble was taken out and is now used as a step to the front door.

We now stroll up to the church, constructed of Kentish rag, and evidently built upon the site of an older one, as various parts of the fabric are of much greater age than others; for instance, we can trace an old wall along the north aisle. Some ancient glass, too, can be seen in the windows, but unfortunately the great storm of 1822 swept over Bethersden and played sad havoc by breaking in the windows and doing other damage to the place. Tradition has it that the wind blew with such terrific force that broken tiles and glass were hurled to a spot a quarter-of a-mile off, and several birds, helpless in its power, were dashed to the ground and killed. Mr. Frederick Hyland, of

Ashford, who was born at Bethersden, and is now eighty years of age, experienced the great storm. He was two years old at the time and was suffering from an illness. His bed was close to a window and the glass was smashed in by the storm, the hail stones falling upon him in bed.

Entering the church one is struck by the numerous slabs and tablets erected to the memory of dead local celebrities, including members of the well-known Lovelace family, the Hulses, the Choutes, the Dynes, the Baldwins, the Willmotts and the Witherdens. Thanks to a complete renovation the interior is in capital preservation, re-seating being carried out in 1851; while outside the stone work was renewed and a wall built to enclose the churchyard. Prominent in the burial ground is a large oven-shaped tomb, such as we see at Smarden and other Wealden villages, with open gratings through which the coffins can be discerned. This one is in three divisions, each compartment belonging to old district families.

The parochial registers date back as far as 1578, in which year we are informed that then "was buried Creature, sonne to Robert Lappam." Then in 1632 "Joan a Pilgrim," was buried, while in 1665 "John (soe called) the son of Thomas, a Brownist, beinge first buried without the minister and covered with earth, was taken up againe and buried by the minister." In the latter year, too, "Peter Gilsonne was buried by the overseers without the minister," a duty which would surprise the overseers of this day if called upon to perform.

Leaving the church, before which the old stocks used to stand, we saunter along the Street, a wide thoroughfare, dwellings of all sizes with pretty gardens in full bloom spreading out in the foreground. A noticeable building is the Union Baptist Chapel, erected in 1815. It was built by a native of Bethersden, one Mr. J. Haffenden, the originator of a universally used patent medicine known as Haffenden's Tincture. At the end of the street is a fine old house, known as the Thorn, a name derived from a magnificent thorn tree that used to stand near its door. There is a fine speciman of Bethersden marble within, in the form of a chimney piece, as well as a fine staircase. Frid, which used to be a manor and belonged to the Cale Hill Darell family, is situated further along, but it is now converted into a farmhouse. It is

from this spot that we see Pluckley standing on a hill not far distant, with the chimney stacks of the tile works and the railway station still closer.

Retracing our steps we pass from the village down a sharp hill, at the bottom of which stand the village schools, erected in 1850. Prior to the erection of the Schools the children were educated in a building on the site now occupied by Mr. R. H. Padgham, the village dominie being Mr. Young Hyland, an ancestor of the present Bethersden and Ashford families of that name. Behind the school Mr. Hyland had a linen weaving shop. Most of the flax was grown in the parish, and several of the farms in the neighbourhood still have fields known as the "flax" fields, although the industry died out with its discontinuance by Mr. Hyland. Mr. Young Hyland was parish clerk for some fifty years.

The site upon which the village schools now stand and the field opposite were once common land, and the path to Lovelace Manor at that time passed behind the present schools. This road was shaded by a double row of beautiful sycamore trees, of which, unfortunately, very few remain. It was to this common land that loads of wood were carted and stacked, each villager having a right to take enough fuel from the heap to meet his requirements.

A turn to the right and we find ourselves in a lovely country winding lane leading to the little hamlet of Wissenden, about two miles from Bethersden. A tumble-down old wooden house of the Elizabethan period stands on our right, while within a stone's throw is Wissenden House, which was built in 1567 and at one time had a gabled front, but is now modernised with stucco. The Witherdens lived here and were the squires of Bethersden for many generations, but the last representative of the family "went through" his money and died in penury. When this last event occurred the property passed to a distant relation by the name of Curteis. On the wall that encloses the front garden is to be seen a sundial, with the inscription, "Wissonden, Tho Hogben, 1748."

Returning to the village we visit a remarkable old farmhouse known by the name of Ring, in consequence of one of the

Witherdens' gamekeepers of that name having lived here; so shaky is it that a door leading into one of the inner rooms has become jammed and cannot be moved lest the whole structure gives way. Another house is Lovelace, corrupted by natives into Loveless. Originally the property was owned by a family named Greensted, but a member of the Kent Lovelaces bought it and re-built the residence. Subsequently it passed into the hands of the Hulses, to whom monuments are erected in the parish church.

We are now on the high road again, the road that leads from Ashford to Tenterden. Here is a clump of dwellings as numerous as those in the street on the hill, and our attention is specially drawn to the white-wooden fronts of the houses. Close by stands another place of worship, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, a fine building erected in 1875. This is the second chapel possessed by the denomination, the original one being outgrown by an increasing congregation.

Just away from the village on the opposite side of the main road, and hidden by tall pines and a mass of shrubs, stands Lowood, the residence of Captain Cameron. It is a modern house, built by that gentleman in 1878 on the site of what once was an old manor house. The latter must have been a large place, as the remains of a big banquetting hall were traced when Lowood was erected. Near Lowood is an old white-fronted farm-house facing the Tenterden Road. This formerly had the fireplace in the middle of the room, the smoke and flames escaping through a shaft-like aperture open to the sky. This has, however, given place to a more modern arrangement. At Etchden, which is in the occupation of members of the Hyland family, there are the ruins of an old Roman Catholic chapel, and the house itself is a very old one. Rope walks are familiar objects at seaside places, but they are rarely met with in country parishes. In by-gone days, however, Bethersden had one, and bell ropes were made here for many of the surrounding parishes.


LIFE'S BUT A SHADOW
OBSERVE THE TIME
TEMPUS FUGIT
OLD SUN DIAL
OLD PALACE & CHURCH
PIERCE HOUSE
HIGH ST. CHARING

CHARING.

AS a rule our Kentish villages possess one of two features—either a square or one long street. The formation of Charing is of the latter category, and, taking a line from the railway station to the top of the street, its length is considerable. Practically it lies on the slope of the Downs which rise towards Stalisfield, and a stroll up the hill is well repaid by the expansive view of the Weald of Kent towards the south—the eye wandering away as far as Fairlight on the Sussex coast and the bay of Dymchurch in the east.

Coming into the village either from the railway station or from the main road that runs between London and Ashford, one is struck by the gentle slope of the street and the characteristic buildings on either side. Most picturesque of all is the little butcher's shop with its lean-to roof, while higher up the street and on the same side of the way are the Pierce Almshouses, standing some distance away from the path. The latter formerly belonged to the Pierce family, and the building was used as one large dwelling, but now they are owned by the Sayer family, who allow the deserving poor to tenant them free of charge. There is a quaint entrance hall and some good carving, which, unfortunately, has been white-washed over, to be seen inside. The Pierce arms still remain on the building. Higher up, and almost facing each other, are the two old posting houses, the Swan and the King's Head, the former retaining its old-time appearance and the latter being modernised. Another building worth noticing is a timbered house lower down the hill, although no historic connections are attached to it.

About half up the street the road to Lenham and London opens out, but this thoroughfare is of comparatively recent date, owing its origin to

the inauguration of a regular system of coach service between London and Ashford. In the old days travellers to Maidstone or London had to use the highway leading from Coppin's Corner round Chilston Park on to Harrietsham. Consequently the Pilgrims' Way which runs along the side of the Downs must have been a much more passable road than now —a mere track in the fields. It is a curious fact that for several years the highway from Charing to Ashford was closed for some unknown reason under a licence granted by Edward the First.

Almost opposite the present London road is the entrance to the Church and old Archiepiscopal Palace. But ere we enter the sacred precincts it is worth pausing to look around this space between the street and churchyard, for it was once the entrance to the Palace and must have been the scene of many a gorgeous pageant in the old days, for Cranmer lavished his riches upon the place and this so aroused the jealousy of the courtiers that he found it diplomatic to relinquish his title and hand it over to his royal master. This ancient entrance is now flanked on one side by the picturesque building of the Swan hostelry and on the other by the local fire engine house. The spot is still known as the Market Place, as it was the site of the Charing fairs granted by Henry the Sixth and held on April 29th and October 29th, but in recent years they have ceased to exist, although old inhabitants can remember the periodical collection of horses and cattle and pedlars' booths.

We have now arrived at the two show places of the village—the church and the old Palace ruins. Entering the former by its west doorway we notice overhead a carving in stone of a Tudor rose within the sun-beams, the badge of King Edward the Fourth and the arms of Hugh Brent, who, in the reign of that monarch, was the principal founder of the belfry. This door was undoubtedly used as the processional entry to the sacred edifice by the Archbishop and his attendants on their way from the Palace. Late in the sixteenth century the church was almost totally destroyed by fire. The conflagration was caused in a peculiar manner. On a hot August day a "birding piece" was fired at a pigeon perched upon the church, the result being that the woodwork of the belfry was ignited. From that date until 1878 the church had but one solitary bell, and this gained for the parish the ditty:—

"Dirty Charing lies in a hole;
It has but one bell and that was stole."

The unkind reference of the unknown poet to the bell, was, however, unmerited, for it was never purloined as ungrammatically stated; either it was cast from the remains of the bells that hung in the belfry prior to the fire, or saved from the ruins and re-hung. The present peal of six bells was secured through the exertions of Bishop Tufnell, who was at one time temporarily in charge of the parish. He also undertook and carried out the restoration of the church, £3,000 being spent on the work, while the present vicar, the Rev. W. H. Ady, has been successful in opening out a fine Early English window, which had been closed up for 200 years. The south side of the nave has recently been enriched by the gift of a handsome stained glass window by Mrs. Wheler, of Otterden Place, in memory of her grandmother, Mrs. Townsend, who was a sister of Colonel Groves, of the Moat, Charing.

Looking upwards we notice the quaint sundial on the ancient porch. It is of wood, with gilded figures, and contains the words, "Life's but a Shadow," "Redeem the Time," and "*Tempus Fugit.*" The churchyard contains something peculiar in a substitute for the ordinary headstone. It is in the form of a circular tablet affixed to a yew tree close to the vicarage, and the inscription informs the reader that in a vault beneath the shade of this yew tree repose the ashes of a once brave soldier and honest gentleman, Joshua Marshall, Esq., who died March 24th, 1772, aged 72. He was the father of a vicar of this parish. "O Vicar, who ever thou art, reflect and profit by the reflection, how small the distance, and perhaps quick the transition from yon house thou inhabitest to the caverns of the dead." A further inscription states that the "venerable remains of Mrs. Anne Barrell, the aunt, the friend, and the benefactor of the above unnamed vicar," are also deposited in the vault, and the epitaph that follows runs:—"Reader, if thou would'st wish like this truly good woman to be eternally happy, imitate her example, like her, live and die a Christian."

The vicarage beyond is a very old house, parts of it dating from the fifteeth century.

The Palace, it is supposed, was in existence before the Conquest, and after passing through various hands as the property of the archbishops, then the King, then to private persons, back again to the throne, and yet once more to commoners, it is now nothing more than a mass of ruins—gaunt walls, roofless in most places, with here and there a battered

relic of old carving. But it has its use, an unromantic, prosaic one too, for it is now the site of a Kentish farmyard. That part which was the Palace, at the period when Charing was an important ecclesiastical centre, is now the farm house; what was the great dining hall is now used as a barn and oasthouse, and here countless royal banquets were served. Archbishop Warham, who was Primate from 1503 to 1533, entertained both King Henry the Seventh and his successor at the Palace, but in 1545 the ecclesiastical glory of the Palace passed away with its surrender to the King by Archbishop Cranmer. Ever since the buildings have been leased to tenants and adapted to private use. The gateway shown in the sketch was the principal entrance to the court-yard. The palace buildings were originally much more extensive than the ruins would lead one to anticipate. The chapel which was attached to the Manor House stood on the north side of what was originally the Palace, and up to about seventy years ago a portion of the walls still stood. At that time they were found to have become dangerous and were razed to the ground. Traces of other buildings, presumably those of the kitchen which adjoined the dining hall mentioned above, have been found in the orchard, the foundations being in an octagonal form. Mention should be made of the room over the gateway, which is supposed to have been used by the archbishops who resided at the Palace as an audience chamber. It is peculiarly situated, for it possesses no staircase or even a trace of any. What were the means of ingress to this erstwhile important chamber is thus unknown. The palace was the favourite residence of Archbishop Stratford, who was Primate from 1333 to 1348, and a large portion of the buildings was erected by that prelate.

Leaving the village by the Ashford road we come to the Moat, the residence of Colonel Groves, and most delightfully situated by the side of an artificial lake and buried in a mass of foliage. Neither house nor moat are very old. The former was originally the rectory, the tenant being, however, only the lay rector, who claimed certain rights in the church chancel. The oldest portion of the building is the dining-room, walled in with lath and plaster; the other part dates back about eighty years.

Pett Place, the seat of the Sayer family, is some distance away, pleasantly situated at the foot of the Downs. The Sayers inherited

it from the Honywood family, Mr. George Sayer, marrying the only daughter of Sir Philip Honywood in the reign of Charles the Second. The building, which is an old manor house, has a noble frontage of red brick, in architectural style somewhat similar to Surrenden-Dering at Pluckley.

Charing possesses some fine old houses, but the one known as Wickens is the most picturesque of all; indeed there are few old manor houses in Kent to equal its rustic beauty. Coming towards Charing from Ashford, and about a mile from the village, you take a lane on the right and suddenly come upon the old building, almost hidden on one side by tall trees. Formerly a manor house it is now but a quarter of its original size. One of the rooms is beautifully panelled with oak, and here Henry the Eighth was entertained by John Brent as he passed on his way to the intended siege of Bullein. The chapel on the south side of the parish church is known as "Wickens Chapel," and was built at the end of the fifteenth century by Amy Brent, wife of one of the owners of Wickens.

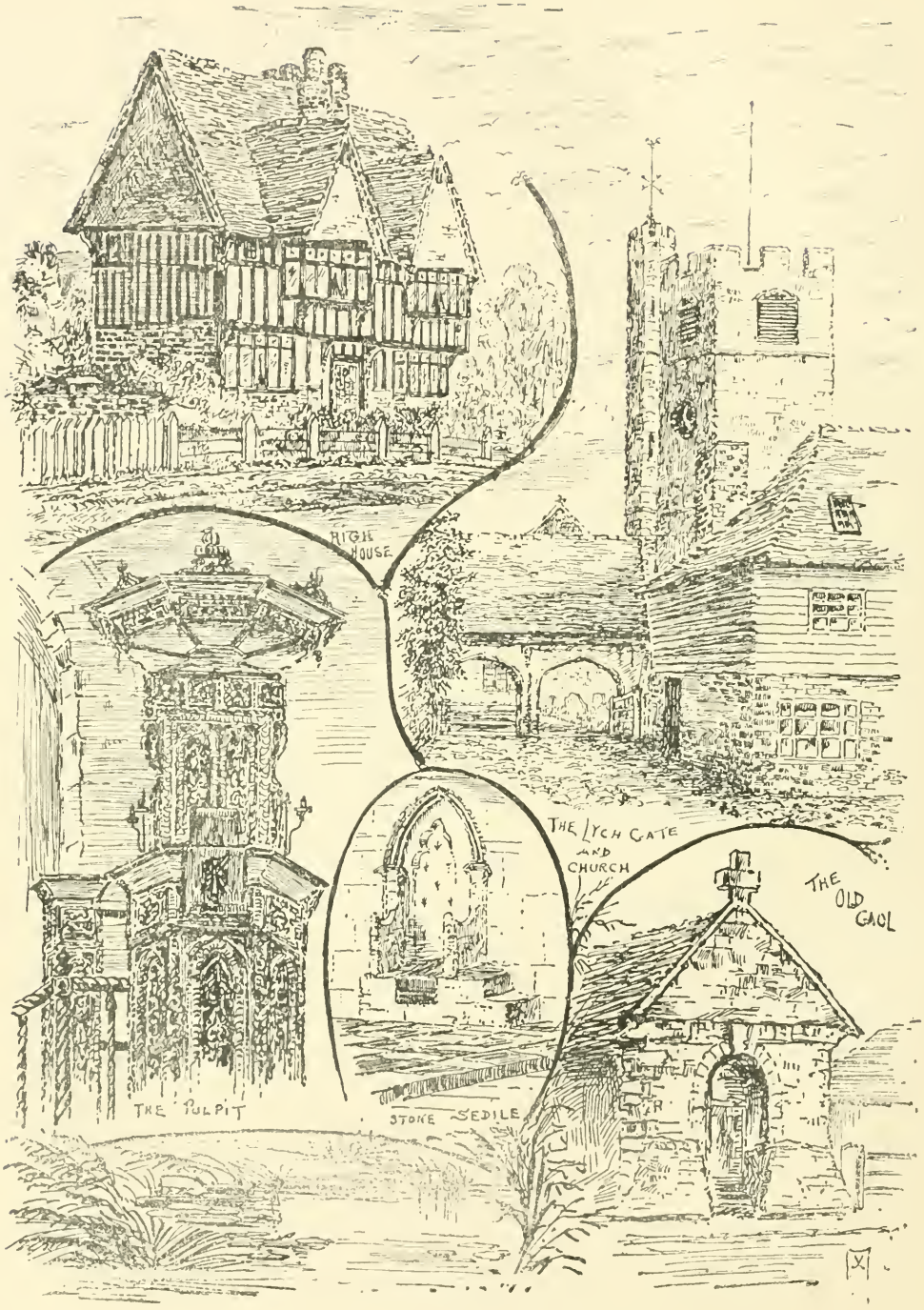
Scattered about the parish are the ruins of as many as three churches. In the grounds of Pett Place, the residence of Mrs. Sayer, still stands a portion of the remains of an old church; then there is the old Norman chapel at Newlands, between Charing and Egerton; and the Chantry chapel at Burleigh, near Charing Heath. The portions of Newlands chapel which are now standing include a Norman doorway and arches of great interest and three sides of the original wall. A modern tile roof placed above the walls has enabled the once sacred edifice to be used as a granary. The ecclesiastical parish of Charing Heath was formed in 1874 from parts of Charing and Lenham. The church, parsonage and schools were built through the munificence of the late Miss Sayer, of Pett Place.

There is no doubt that Charing is one of our oldest Kent towns, and although looked upon in the present day as a village it is entitled to the more dignified appellation of a township. Its existence can be traced back to the time of Mercia in 757, for in that year the latter despotically took it from the church of Canterbury and gave it to some of his more favoured courtiers. But before the close of the eighth century the property was returned to its original

possessors. On one occasion a certain gentleman had the audacity to take his name from Charing, calling himself Adam de Cherringes but his action so scandalised Thomas à Becket that the latter excommunicated the poor fellow, and in penance his family subsequently founded a lepers' hospital at New Romney.

As a modern parish Charing has always shown a progressive spirit. A conflagration in the village led to a fire brigade being established by voluntary subscriptions as long ago as 1830. It is housed in a building that was formerly the village lock-up. Then just over thirty years ago a gas company was formed and the streets illuminated at nights, and at the present time further strides of progression are being made by the provision of a public water supply and the introduction of an improved drainage scheme, necessary things to ensure the salubrity of the village. Among other institutions of recent date is the parish hall, erected as a Jubilee memorial in 1897; while the fine school buildings were built to accommodate the village children, who, in days gone by, received tuition in a building adjoining the Swan Hotel. Next to the schools is the cemetery, acquired in 1887, at a cost of £600.

I cannot close my visit to Charing without recalling two old traditions. One of them is that Charing Cross in London obtained its name from a cross which once stood on the summit of a hill in the old Kentish village, it having been conveyed to the metropolis and erected on the spot where the statue of King Charles on horseback can now be seen. The other tradition is that the block on which John the Baptist was beheaded, was, after being brought to England in the time of King Richard the Second, placed in Charing Church. Unfortunately it must be admitted that very little credence can be put in either of the stories, as, prior to the erection of the cross at Charing Cross, in 1292, the spot was known as Cheringes, almost identical with the ancient name of the village—Cherring and Cerringes. Then again the old inventory of the Church makes no mention of the old John the Baptist block referred to. Still, the stories may be much nearer the truth than many traditions of other villages we wot of.


HIGH HOUSE
THE LYCH GATE AND CHURCH
THE OLD GAOL
THE PULPIT
STONE SEDILE

LENHAM.

LENHAM was once described as a "decayed market town;" yet the other day, when the writer, with the best intentions to spare their feelings, was talking to some of the inhabitants and called it a thriving village, he at once found what a blunder he had committed. No, the good folks, rather than drop the designation "town," are quite content to swallow the unpleasant adjective "decayed;" they refuse to sink to the level of villagers. Technically a town is a place which possesses a Royal charter for a market, and this privilege was granted to Lenham by Henry the Third. Lying in a district freely dotted with villages and hamlets, and standing some ten miles distant from any other town, it was the commercial centre for that part of the county, and its markets were attended by all the stock dealers, farmers, millers and pedlars from the surrounding neighbourhood. Added to this, it was the half-way town on the London coach road between Maidstone and Ashford; horses were changed regularly, and the landlord of the old Dog and Bear kept as many as half-a-dozen two-stall stables always full. But, alas! the advance of science swept all the importance of Lenham away. The railway fiend was its ruin. It enticed away the old road travellers, who, greatly to the surprise and chagrin of the coach proprietors, preferred to journey to London at the rear of the snorting, smoking engine, rather than behind a team of graceful, steaming horses. In the second place the railway brought the neighbouring villagers out of their seclusion as

readily as a magnet raises a needle, and lo! in a trice, Lenham market dwindled down and its frequenters bought and sold in more advantageous places, such as Ashford and Maidstone.

It was a death-blow to Lenham. The luckless landlord of the Dog and Bear saw his stables empty; no longer did the thirsty coach loads halt awhile at his hostelry to drink cool cider in the summer days and hot grog o' winter nights; the times were changed, and so was his fortune; in quiet solitude he ended his days in a cottage "up the street" almost in penury. A 'bus took the place of the coaches, and in this vehicle the inhabitants journeyed to and from Maidstone on one side and Ashford on the other. In those days the South-Eastern was the only railway built, and Headcorn station was the one used by travellers and growers of agricultural produce. When the Chatham and Dover system was extended from Maidstone to Ashford, however, a station was erected at Lenham, and this fact, combined with its easy access to bicyclists, has brought the place once again into prominence. The village—I beg its pardon—town, is thriving with its breath of new life, and yet a longing for by-gone days, methinks, comes over the minds of the old men and women you see tottering in and around the almshouses. "Aye," says one, "them's was the days, when we had de market dere, outside de Chequers, wid de corn market over'ead. Aye, things was cheap in dem days, three big oysters a penny, and real flavoury ones, too, right out of Faversham Creek." The old man's memory serves him well, for it was in the Square that the market was held, and over the stalls was erected the corn dealers' room, upheld simply by means of trestles. When the latter came into disuse some gay young spirits of the place pushed the whole wooden structure bodily over, and it was never reconstructed. There is in possession of the Vicar an old Winchester bushel measure, supposed by some to have been used in the corn market, but it is far more likely that it was the property of the tithe owners and used by them in measuring their share of the produce of the parish.

It is a fine, large Square that Lenham glories in—on one side a row of plaster and timber houses snuggling behind a row of limes, and in the shade of which the village cobbler works

away behind windows gay with pelargoniums; then come a row of houses and shops with the fine old hostelry, the Dog and Bear, occupying an important place in the centre, and also the Red Lion Inn and post office; then more houses and shops and yet another hostelry, the Hussar; the entrance to the church, through a lych gate, over cobble stones with the old barn on the right; in the centre the Chequers Inn, standing isolated; and just behind, quite by itself, a picturesque blacksmith's forge and dwelling. Leading out of the Square are several roads—one that leads to Ashford, the opposite one to Maidstone and London, another which takes us over the hills to Faversham, and yet a fourth that leads to Headcorn, Chilston Park and the railway station. This last road, by the bye, is known as the High Street.

The Vicarage stands just outside on the Ashford road, on the right as you leave Lenham. The lay Rector is the owner of Chilston. But the tithes of certain land at East Lenham were originally leased to the Knatchbulls. Subsequently, however, in 1866 they passed into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who assigned them to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester upon the understanding that the latter kept the chancel of the church in order. This special tithe amounts to no less than £100 a year.

Coming back to the Square we notice half-a-dozen almshouses standing at the corner leading to Faversham. Originally the parish workhouse, before Unions were instituted, the building was purchased by Mr. James Stoddart Douglas, of Chilston, and converted into almshouses. Under the endowment the inmates receive £16 16s. a year with house and garden. Immediately opposite is a solid stone construction, apparently of great age, but as a matter of fact it was built at the beginning of the present century for the purposes of a lock-up. At the present time it is used as a mortuary.

More modern, for it was built in 1867, is the Institute, standing under the shade of the limes; it is used for public entertainments, and although we fear not a financial success it is a building of which few such small places as Lenham can boast. Almost next door we are struck with the picturesque corner butcher's shop, its huge safe swinging under the boughs of the

tree outside to keep the meat cool. The Chequers Inn, just opposite, was the old market house. Standing in such a prominent position it was once offered to the town for £200, but the local magnates considered the price too high, and now it could not be purchased for ten times the amount.

We next come to the church, passing through an old wooden lych gate and walking over uneven stones that constitute a footpath, while long-bladed grass and grave stones slanting in all directions give the spot a thoroughly rural air, undefiled by the neatness that generally prevails in the churchyard of to-day. The building is a massive one of flint and stone, and the traces of Norman architecture can be discerned. But the elegant style of the tower strikes one as its most attractive feature. Entering the old porch we notice a niche on the right, where the holy water used to stand, and further evidence of the Church's connection with Roman Catholicism is found in the sixteen carved stalls at one time reserved for the priests who resided at Chapel, of which we shall presently have more to say. On the south wall, facing us as we enter, is a mural painting, discovered under the whitewash years ago. It represents St. Michael holding a pair of scales. In one lies a small figure supposed to be the soul of a departed sinner, while in the other are several figures, representing evil spirits vainly endeavouring to pull the balance down. Other objects to notice are the beautifully-carved pulpit, dated 1622: the remarkable stencilling over the walls, done by the late vicar, the Rev. Charles Parkin ; and a stone effigy of a priest in a coffin—said to represent Thomas de Apulderfelde, who lived in Edward the Third's days. If you raise the carpet by the altar a brass may be seen; it was placed there in memory of one Robert Thompson, "grandchild of Mary Honywood, wife of Robert Honywood, of Charing, who at her decease had 367 children lawfully descended from her, 16 of her own body, 114 grandchildren, 228 in the third generation and nine in the fourth." One would have expected to find Kent over-run with Honywoods in the wake of such an ancestress as this, who died in 1620 in her ninety-fourth year, but strange to say, it is not. The oldest part of the church is one pillar in St. Edmund's chapel near the organ. This is all that remains of the ancient structure left after the

fire in 1299. Of this conflagration nothing is known beyond the fact that it was caused by an act of incendiarism, and the culprits were never discovered. A stone sedile, or chair used by the officiating clergy during intervals of service, let into the wall of the chancel is also supposed to have been saved from the ruins of the fire. This seat, by the bye, has frequently been claimed as a confessional chair, but there is a consensus of opinion among the best modern authorities that it was simply used as a sedile. It should be added that the communion cup at Lenham Church is a rare specimen of Elizabethan work, the date of its manufacture being 1562. It is remarkable for a beautiful belt engraved like the finest lace.

Returning from the church, and wending our way round the Square, we come to the High Street, at the end of which a grand old timbered building arrests our attention. Originally erected as a residence for the Governor of the Honywood Charity —six houses provided by Anthony of that family—it is now known as High House and used as a residence for the aged poor, who receive a shilling a week from the funds of the charity. The old oak trellis work under the gables and the strange carved human and inhuman figures that act as brackets seem to denote a very great age, but the building was erected as late as 1621, a brick to that effect being inserted in the modern brickwork.

Further along the Headcorn road we find the Board Schools. They were originally Church Schools, but handed over in 1866, and even now, although belonging to the parish at other times, they become the property of the Vicar every day after four o'clock when school closes, and the whole of Sunday. On the London road is the Congregational chapel. Religious tolerance, by the bye, was not always practiced in Lenham. Not only did the head people of the village, but the majority of the inhabitants themselves joined in persecuting the Dissenters of the place, and the latter were absolutely denied a piece of land upon which to build their chapel. But, strong in their consciences, they were determined to celebrate their service somewhere, and a room over the smithy's forge was brought into requisition. Happily those days of intolerance have disappeared under the enlightenment of the nineteenth century.

It was in those early times, too, that some old writer remarked that Lenham was celebrated for its quarrelsome women and luxuriant watercress. The former have either died out or lived to know better, but the latter still thrive and grow in the streams that wind around the village. For there are two rivers that rise at Lenham—the Len, from which the place takes its name and which flows through Leeds towards Maidstone, and the Stour, which eventually passes through Egerton, Little Chart, Ashford and Canterbury and on to Sandwich.

Crossing the railway bridge we reach Chilston, the seat of the Right Hon. Aretas Akers-Douglas, with its lovely park surrounded by winding lanes, where the rugged roots of gnarled oaks stand out on either bank. The present owner succeeded to the estate upon the death of his relative, Mr. James Stoddart, who took the name of Douglas upon coming into some Scotch estates. His cousin, Mr. Aretas Akers, assumed the same name under similar conditions. For some years member of Parliament for East Kent, the latter now represents the St. Augustine's Division of the county, and has held several important offices in Conservative Administrations. The estate and its manor were originally subservient to the priory of St. Gregory in Canterbury, and at one time Royton was the site of a mansion with a chapel attached. There is some fine old carving in the house that now remains, but all trace of the monastry has disappeared, although the place is now-a-days more generally known as Chapel Farm than Royton. The sixteen carved stalls in the parish church were reserved for the accommodation of the monks who resided here. Chapel Farm lies in a delightful spot, on a prominence and with a disused mill pool beneath, while further down, following the narrow stream, we come to Bowley, its white mill, glistening water, tall reeds, white lilies, yellow irises and overhanging trees forming a charming picture.

But we must return to the village and take a stroll a good distance in the opposite direction, for it is a big parish, over eight miles long from north to south and three miles in breadth, including the whole of the valley. Among the hills over which the Faversham road rises and wends its way are many lime kilns, some still in use, others but a mass of ruins. An old custom existed, by which the men who carried the lime were regaled with

ale as they entered the village, and an amusing story is told of a certain landlord of the Chequers Inn, who put a sentry box outside his door and when he went to bed placed therein a pot of beer for the lime carriers' benefit. It saved him a disturbed night, but it is an open question whether the refreshing beverage always found its way down the throats of the men for whom it was intended. One night some practical jokers carried the sentry box away, and the offended landlord not only refused to be comforted by ample apologies but he declined to take it back again.

Chalk pits abound in the hills, through which great caverns penetrate, and here, in the old smuggling days, much merchandise which had never paid duty was secreted. It was an ideal spot for the smugglers, who, leagued with the villagers, brought their wares from the coast and disposed of them to the gentry and farmers around. Even the justices of the peace could not resist a deal in cheap spirits and tobacco, while their wives and daughters must needs bedeck themselves in fine lace and silks brought direct from the French shores. Perhaps it was owing to this fact that the squire of the village on one occasion saved the smugglers from arrest by a clever ruse. The latter, so the story goes, had been surprised by revenue officers while carting barrels of merchandise up to the old Roman road kilns, and were in full retreat past Chilston Park, with their pursuers close at heel. It fortunately happened that the squire, struck with an original idea, was having a lake made at the time, the labourers working by moonlight. He was an old sailor and believed in continuous work by watches. Along the lane came the terrified smugglers, and, certain of the squire's sympathy, explained the danger of their position. Quick in thought, quick in action, the old salt fathomed the situation at a glance. The barrels were thrown into the mud and covered in a trice, the smugglers doffed their coats and, spades in hand, joined the gang of labourers. When the customs officers appeared all was quiet save for the thud of the spades and the clear commanding orders of the squire. In respectful tones the officers asked if the smugglers had passed that way. "No," answered the squire, and truthfully he said it, for they were working away under the very noses of the talkers, grinning among themselves and enjoying the joke, as we can well imagine. The officers passed on, the barrels were eventually un-

earthed, the squire was voted a rare good fellow, and many a year afterwards the anniversary of that night was celebrated by the secret delivery of a cask of good old cognac into the cellars of the old squire's house.

Down by the station there stands a large building, erected as a jam factory by a Maidstone firm, but alas! although the idea of making Lenham a centre of the fruit growing district was excellent and one that might have developed a thriving new industry in the place, it failed, and the voice of the machinery is still.

Outlying hamlets of the parish are pretty little Sandway (along the Boughton Malherbe road), Platt's Heath (with its chapel of ease, purchased by the Vicar from the Primitive Methodists in 1886), part of Grafty Green (at the bottom of Liverton Hill and leading towards the luxuriant Weald), Lenham Heath (with its Nonconformist chapel) and Lenham Forstal (containing its old brewery and more modern malt-houses) with quite a little colony of its own.

OLD TOWN HALL FORDWICH

DRUMS AND DUCKING STOOL IN TOWN HALL.

STURRY AND FORDWICH.

WHEN the ordinary traveller passes by train through the little station of Sturry he is not aware that within a few yards—nearly half-a-mile, to be exact—hidden by trees from the view is one of the quaintest little places in Kent, and one of great historic interest. Its name is Fordwich—pronounced fully and not in a catchy way like Woolwich and Greenwich. To the eyes of a stranger Sturry and Fordwich are apparently one, but, bless your innocence! if you suggested to a Fordwich native that he was a Sturryite his profound contempt would convince you that your knowledge of Kentish history was absurdly bare. No, Sturry is a comparatively modern village; Forwich has existed for years, and in the old days when the Stour was a big river it was a port of utmost importance. The original name of Sturry was Esturia, derived from Æstur, the old name of the Stour.

Now-a-days we stop at Sturry if, coming down the main line of the South-Eastern Railway, we wish to journey to Herne Bay as the latter place lies many miles away from that company's system. Coaches and omnibuses run from Canterbury through Sturry on their way to Herne Bay, and a fresh, invigorating drive it is, up and down over the undulating and exposed road between here and the coast. But that road takes us away from the village to the north, past a little cluster of houses, known as Broad Oak, a part of the parish of Sturry. It is, however, on this occasion of our visit to Sturry our intention to turn in the opposite direction, and wend our way along the winding street

that leads away from the railway station into the heart of the place.

There are not many peculiar characteristics of Sturry. It is common-place in appearance, with its closely-packed dwellings and shops, the plain side walls of the Strict Baptist chapel and its many hostelries. And there are plenty of the latter for so small a place. In the street alone are the Red Lion, the Rose, the Sportsman and the Swan, with the Welsh Harp standing by itself in the triangle at the end of the road from which we branch off either to Canterbury or Stodmarsh. No, there is nothing specially attractive in the view, the only relief being the canopy over the butcher's and smithy's shops on our left.

But, turning to the right, a lovely picture opens itself before our gaze—a pretty little old English church, dwarfed by majestic chestnuts on one side, a huge tithe barn on the other, and, just beyond, the tall white mill, beneath which sparkles the rippling water of the Stour. The ancient brick gateway that spans the pathway by the church was once the entrance to the large monastery, the site of which is now occupied by Sturry Court Farm. On a sultry autumn afternoon it is a relief to wander under the luxuriant trees all around us and breathe in the rich fragrance of drying hops from a neighbouring oast-house, and one notices what a great number of holiday people are lolling about in the shade, amusing themselves in little groups in the churchyard, or reading and sketching here, there and everywhere in blissful quiet and ease. Many of these happy beings are excursionists —visitors of a few hours—but the majority is composed of natives of Margate and Ramsgate and other Thanet watering places, who, letting their houses during the summer months, come inland to Sturry and spend an economical holiday in rural pursuits, or, to be nearer the truth, in delightful laziness. But we must wend our way out of more modern Sturry and enter historic

FORDWICH

by a picturesque lane, known as the Fordwich Road. Arrived at the bridge that spans the stream the epicure's palate tingles with pleasure, for is it not here that the famous Fordwich trout were

killed in days gone by and are still killed in goodly numbers, though not of such a size as of yore? Yea, and the angler, too, rests his elbows on the bridge wall, and gazing at the running water beneath pictures to himself the glorious sport that has taken place again and again within a few feet of where he stands. Surely it is a pure fisherman's story—and we know what that is—that a trout was once taken out of the water just at this spot and when weighed it turned the scale at 28 pounds. But no, it is not a fable, but the very truth, for the said fish can still be seen stuffed in Canterbury Museum. History does not record what special fly brought about the capture of this magnificent lord of the Stour, and we are not even certain that it was caught with a rod, but, if it was, what a fight there must have been between the struggling monster on the one side and the fine gut and willowy rod on the other ere the breathless angler at last landed his prey on the grassy bank. Such enormous fish are not caught now-a-days, but the members of the Stour Fishery Preservation Society obtain splendid sport with good average fish. The ancient weir in which the biggest ones used to be caught has been done away with of late.

Passing over the bridge, from which, by the bye, so many artists have selected a subject for a sketch, we come into the village. Everyone must admit that it is a model little place, a spot that appeals to the lover of old-time villages. But can it ever have possessed the dignity of a borough, with its mayor and corporation? Aye, more than this, for at one time it sent a Member of Parliament to Westminster, and it gloried in being attached to the Cinque Ports confederacy. But it was disfranchised at the time of Charles the Second, it ceased to be a borough in 1886, and a short time ago the inhabitants were impelled to specially apply for the honour of having a Parish Council—a humble Parish Council, mind you—after existing for many generations as one of the oldest, even if the smallest, municipalities in England. Alas! how are the mighty fallen.

The importance of Fordwich was attained through its proximity to Canterbury and its situation by the side of the Stour. It seems highly probable that the sea covered the whole of the Stour valley at high tides, but at all times ships easily came up the river to the old borough, and the dues were naturally of immense value; hence a

rivalry between the laymen and the burgesses on the one side and the Abbot of St. Augustine's Monastery on the other. These two parties were continually squabbling over the question of river dues, when all at once the Prior of Christ Church attempted to break down the dual monoply, and not only did he claim the right to land goods at Fordwich but he built a new quay and warehouse in the meadow on the east side of the church. But the Abbot took the matter in hand and pulled down the building, only, however, to see it once more erected by the persevering Prior. The old saying that the tug-of-war commences when priest meets priest was practically illustrated in this instance, for up went the building once more, only to be demolished again. And so the duel went merrily on until Government stepped in as mediator and settled the dispute, the Prior receiving from the Abbot a piece of ground in another spot where he could land the personal goods of the priory. It is said that the present hostelry by the river bank, known as the Fordwich Arms, was the original crane house belonging to the persistent Priors of Christ Church, for the quays and warehouses eventually became valueless when the silting up of the northern mouth of the river closed this most convenient channel of communication with the sea.

Facing us as we now enter the village is a row of red brick dwellings bearing the date of 1736. They were originally one structure, known as the Tent Hotel, and here the tent wine was housed on being landed from the quay previous to being carted to Canterbury. Strolling along the snug little street we come in sight of the church, with its plain tower and shingled spire and bright walls of flint. Inside we find a remarkable shrine-like tomb, the origin of which is unknown, but it is considered to be the earliest example of a monumental tomb in Kent. The architectural characteristics of the church are various, dating from the Norman style downwards. Not far away stands the present rectory, the erstwhile manor house, and, owing to its renovation in the form of a modernised front, it might be passed by a stranger without notice. Yet it is very old and contains a fine specimen of a fifteenth century stone fireplace and some encaustic tile pavement.

But we have left till last the most famous and remarkable building in Fordwich—the old Town Hall. Although humble in appearance no one can pass it without notice, standing alone on a plot of ground

by the river side. It is built of timber, with bricks and plaster; the lower part is now used as a store, and the tiny cell wherein prisoners were held captive still remains. So small is it that now-a-days we should hesitate to incarcerate a man there for a few hours, and yet it is recorded how debtors were imprisoned there, while on one occasion an unfortunate wretch was held captive for "a year and a day" in default of paying a sixty-shilling fine. The last occupant of the cell was a poor man who suffered four days' imprisonment for "wishing to come on the parish!" This little cell must have been the scene of many strange events, for the old borough magistrates, consisting of a mayor and twelve jurats, possessed unlimited power in criminal and civil cases, even to the extent of sentence of death.

Going up some steps we enter the old Council Chamber, a white-washed room, panelled at the upper end, with the bench of the mayor and jurats. An Elizabethan table stands in front, while, across the centre of the apartment is a substantial bar. Above the mayor's seat are the Royal Arms, the Cinque Ports Arms and the motto, "Love and Honour the Truth, 1660." A corner of the hall is partitioned off, and it was here that the jury were wont to sit, but as it measures only eight feet by seven it is hoped that the good men and true did not take much time over their deliberations in such close quarters. Several curiosities stand in the Council Chamber—a pair of drums, on one side of which are the Fordwich Arms, consisting of a lion with a trout below on a dish, and on the other the arms of the Cinque Ports; an old oak chest containing the charter of incorporation; and two staffs used by the press gangs. But the most interesting relic of all is a ducking stool, through which a bar was placed so that the unfortunate "witch" could be lowered into the water. Above, in the left-hand corner, is a small chamber or cupboard in which the poor old dame was placed to dry after her ducking. Outside the building is the identical hook, attached to a modern pulley, from which the victim was lowered to the river in the chair. Some ancient nets once used in the stream are to be seen in the lower part of the Town Hall known as the dungeon.

The old governing body of Fordwich could lawfully inflict capital punishment, and the spot where the sentence of death was carried out was known as the Feswelle, or Thieves' Well. Male-

by the prosecutor, whose duty it was to do as is done with surplus kittens—hold their heads under water until they were dead. The well was long ago filled up and the only traces of it left are some stones in the wall of a cottage garden lying between the church and the infants' school. It is strange how the mode of capital punishment varied in the various Cinque Ports. At Dover, for instance, the culprit was thrown over Sharpness Cliff, and at Sandwich the poor wretches were buried alive in Thieves' Down.

An incident which caused amusement at the time, although it might have been fraught with a tragic result, occurred not long ago, when a party of excursionists rigged up the ducking stool and began the process of dipping. All went swimmingly; but they wished to see the experiment more practically demonstrated, and a small boy standing near readily volunteered to impersonate the "witch" for the sake of a copper. He was straightway fastened in the chair, the pulley was left go and down he went to the bottom of the river. But then, when it was attempted to pull him up again the rope would not work. They pulled, they tugged, they yelled, but no, the rope was twisted and would not budge an inch. And all this time the unhappy small boy was being steadily drowned like a rat in a trap. At last, oh great relief! the rope moved, the chair came up with a bound and the senseless victim was hauled out more dead than alive. No ill effects followed his voluntary ducking, but no one has had the temerity to dip a witch since.

Some of the old customs of Fordwich are strange reading. If a person drew a knife or any weapon at another he was heavily fined or compelled to run the said weapon through his hand. Quarrelsome women were made to carry a certain mortar or mortarium through the town, a piper marching before her, making a laughing-stock of her, while her neighbours naturally joined in the fun. In the fifteenth century the ducking-stool was used as a punishment for slandering women. But the most remarkable custom of all was a duel which always took place when one man accused the other of felony. The prosecutor was placed in the river up to his waist, armed with a weapon called an "ore," three yards long, and his opponent was placed in a boat with three poles; thus the two fought until one was vanquished. The election of mayor was a great

annual event, the ceremony taking place in the parish church. Heavy penalties were attached should the chosen individual refuse to take office, the inhabitants having the power to repair to his house and raze it to the ground. It is not recorded whether this extreme measure was ever carried out.

Fordwich has its ghost story. It is to the effect that the rector of the parish in 1714—the Rev. John Nicholls—was a very staunch adherent to the House of Stuart, and on the accession of George I. he preached a sermon against the king. For this he was informed against by a Colonel Short, and the Rector was for a time suspended. On the death of the Colonel the Rector entered him in the parish register as "Samuel Short, Eskuier and *Informer*." The ghost story is to the effect that one night after the funeral the Rector was awakened by the apparition of the Colonel, but as soon as the former recognised the ghost he exclaimed, "If you are Colonel Short, as I perceive you are, may the Lord forgive you, for I do." As soon as this was uttered the ghost disappeared and never troubled anybody more.

For so small a place Fordwich is brimful of interest, although curiosities are vanishing. A gallows tree once stood near the river, and an old brick archway was pulled down not long ago. But recently, while excavating for a small reservoir from which to supply the village with water, the remains of a Roman well were discovered.

One of the old traditions of Fordwich is that a house known as Hemp Hall paid a quit rent to the Abbot and Monks of St. Austin's, Canterbury, in hemp, probably for the use of their officers and servants, for the monks being of the order of St. Benedict were obliged to wear flannel shirts and sleep upon blankets, the use of linen being absolutely forbidden.

The Manor at one time belonged to Lady Elizabeth Finch, a member of the Eastwell family of that name, and subsequently to one of the Earls of Winchilsea, from whom it descended to John Finch, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. The latter was the first and only Baron of Fordwich, as, although he married twice, he had no issue. The old term, however, gives the title of Viscount Fordwich to Earl Cowper, the lord of the manor, this title having been created in 1718.

The fine gilt mace presented to the Fordwich Corporation by Admiral Graydon, who was at one time mayor, was made out of Spanish dollars which fell to his share at the taking of Porto.

WINGHAM.

WHICHEVER way you approach Wingham a pretty view meets the eye. Coming down either of the twin hills that lead to Grove Ferry or Sandwich you see a long, picturesque, wide street, with tall limes and massive chestnuts in full bloom forming a luxuriant avenue, backed by all sorts of buildings of many sizes on either side. But even more attractive to the eye of the artist is the approach by the Canterbury Road. In the foreground is the bridge spanning the brook where thousands of small fish swim about apparently unmolested amid the lilies and reeds that partially clothe the rippling water. It is this brook that rises at Wingham Well, famous for the freshest water cress ever grown. It is the Durlock Stream, and, acting as a feeder to the Little Stour, it joins the Stour lower down at a spot called Pluck's Gutter, not far from Grove Ferry. Running along the side of the road this brook opens out into a mill pond, whose banks support a wooden mill and an abundance of rich vegetation, gardens from cottages that lie hidden amid the foliage tracking down to the water's edge. Then, as the crowning point of all, appears the tall church steeple glinting in the sun, the body of the building being hidden amid a profusion of tall trees and bushy shrubs.

Entering Wingham from this direction we find the church on the left, with the road flanked on one side by the churchyard wall and tall trees, whilst on the right is Wingham Court. Then comes the quaint block of old buildings composed of the Canons' House and the ancient hostelries known as the Dog and the Red Lion. At the spot occupied by the latter the road turns abruptly to the right


WINGHAM
OLD SESSIONS ROOM AT THE LION
THE LION
CANON'S OLD HOUSES
THE CHURCH AND PONDS
SUN DIAL

for Adisham, Eastry and Goodnestone, to the left for Preston, Sandwich, Ash, Ramsgate, Grove Ferry and Deal. This main street is of great length, trees growing on either side, and the utter lack of symmetry among the buildings adds to its charm.

The street is part of the old Roman road, and lying between both Richborough and Sandwich and Canterbury it was traversed by all the armies and celebrated personages on their way from the coast to the cathedral city. What a sight it must have been when Thomas à Becket journeyed along this route, the villagers running out to meet him and joining in the chorus, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" But, turning from the serious to the ludicrous, one can imagine the astonishment depicted upon the rustic faces when in 1255 the first elephant ever brought into England was landed at Sandwich and took his journey to the Tower of London. Tradition says upon passing through Wingham it was assailed by an infuriated bull, and taking the latter literally by the horns he lifted it in the air and dashed it to death. This famous elephant was a present from the King of France to Henry the Third.

In the long street of the village there is nothing of historical interest, but we find the Congregational chapel, a bold building, showing the date of its construction, 1835. At the other end is the new Sessions House, erected seventeen years ago. The petty sessional district is a large one, embracing a great number of parishes. The magistrates meet every alternate fortnight at Dover and Wingham.

Originally the sessions were held in a fine old oak room on the first floor of the Red Lion, and the mention of this hostelry brings us to its remarkable history. It is evidently a part of the block of buildings originally erected by Archbishop Peckham at the close of the thirteenth century for the accommodation of ten secular canons and a provost. The latter was in charge of the canons, who did not, like other priests, make a vow of poverty, perpetual chastity and true obedience. The institution was dissolved by Henry the Eighth in common with other colleges in Kent—at Bredgar, Wye, Cobham and Maidstone. It is a matter of contention whether the building now known as the Red Lion was connected with the canons' houses, but it appears to be almost a certainty that the row ex-

tended from that hostelry to the old building now only known as Canons' House, and that the intermediate erections, such as the Dog Inn, the Post Office and the Fire Engine Station, were built on the site of the old residences.

The Red Lion is a wonderful specimen of old-fashioned architecture, long corridors, uneven floors, conical ceilings and rich black oak beams and rafters giving it an air of comfortable old age. Besides being the headquarters of the magistrates in years gone by, it was also used as the market house at a time when a great stock market was held in the village, the privilege of holding it being given to the parish as long ago as the year 1252; but its celebration has now died out. Fairs in May and October were also held in the village street, yet these have also sunk into oblivion, although some of the oldest inhabitants retain memories of their existence. It should be added that one of the small windows in the upper storey in the front of the Red Lion dates back to the fourteenth century.

Of course Wingham has its ghost story, although the spirit has long ceased to trouble the village. The tradition, mixed up with the fact, is this:—In the year 1352 the widow of the Earl of Kent, who had become a veiled nun, forsook her vows and secretly married one Sir Eustace D'Aubrichecourt in the house of one of the Canons of Wingham. Such violation raised the anger of the church, and the unfortunate lady upon being caught while flying with her husband was compelled to undergo terrible penance during the rest of her life, while he suffered in a similar degree. The capture of the runaway couple was effected in a little wood lying by the side of the road just outside Wingham, and it is said that for years afterwards the screams of the bride could be distinctly heard on a certain midnight in every year, piercing the air above the howling of the wind and the rustling of the leaves. Passing through Wingham the other day we enquired whether the spirit of this unfortunate lady still roamed about, making the quiet nights horrible with her shrieks, but a native, in open-mouthed astonishment, listened to the story and replied with as much decision as a countryman is capable of evincing, "Noä, de ooman's sperit b'aint dere now." So let us hope that the poor creature has found rest at last, her earthly and spiritual penance being buried for ever.

Strange as it may seem, the greatest treasure of Wingham lies buried —not in an unknown spot as most buried treasures lie—but beneath the surface of a field near the bridge of the mill pool, and where hop-pickers' huts now stand. Several ancient relics, including indications of Roman building, having been discovered at various times, Mr. George Dowker undertook excavations, and his enterprise was rewarded by the discovery of the foundations of an old Roman villa with tiled floors and containing a bath and other remains. For some reason—it may have been a good one, although it seems difficult of explanation—this great curiosity was re-buried, and all that can be seen now is its covering of earth. The fact that the field in which it lies is known as the Vineyard emphasizes the contention that grapes were at one time cultivated in Kent, and that Wingham was the centre of the industry. Either the vine was a hardier plant or the Kentish air was balmier in those days!

Wingham, by the bye, has frequently been changed in its spelling, being known at various times as Wigam, Wyngham, Wingeham and Winganham. The origin of its name can be traced to Wingd, who was an Anglo-Saxon of importance, and Ham, which meant home. But before it was claimed by civilisation and ere it blossomed into a village it was undoubtedly a swamp.

We will now visit the parish church, named St. Mary the Virgin. It is built of flint with some admixture of stone, chiefly in the Decorated and Perpendicular styles, but its western embattled tower with spire is its attractive feature. Coming to the interior we find the original stalls, with their miseres remaining, while a wooden screen of the seventeenth century, with twisted columns, divides the chancel from the nave. In the north chapel is a fine alabaster monument to the memory of James Palmer, dated 1627. The south chapel belongs to the Oxenden family, and has a superb decorated window of five lights on the south side, and in this chapel is a vast pyramidal monument of marble to the memory of one of the Oxendens and dated 1666. The church was partially restored in 1874.

The Oxendens and Palmers are names well known in the district, and the derivation of the latter's appellation is worth recording. In the time of the Crusades many men from this part of Kent fought in the Wars, and, as a proof of their visit to the Holy Land,

brought back palms as trophies. Hence they became known as Palmers. There is but little doubt that the large family of this name, distributed all over Kent, are descendants of these old Crusaders.

Wingham Court will be noticed by any visitor to the village, lying as it does close to the street and yet nestling in its own walled-in grounds. It is not the present house itself, but the site on which it is built, which is historically famous, for behind these walls there once existed the Manor House of the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the thirteen which he possessed in Kent—at Wingham, Wrotham, Aldington, Bishopsbourne, Charing, Ford, Gillingham, Knole, Lyminge, Maidstone, Otford, Saltwood and Teynham. The exact date of the demolition of the old Manor House is unknown, but no doubt exists as to Wingham Court being located on its site.

And so we bring our visit to Wingham to a close, and, retracing our steps in either direction where large thriving towns exist, the thought comes over us that localities, like men and nations, have their ups and downs in the struggle for existence. Wingham still remains a village—a lovely picturesque one, it is true, but still a village—while around it on either side have risen important places where in days gone by not even a single dwelling stood. Wingham is still there, but dwarfed by its surroundings; the eminence it once possessed has vanished; over the grave of its Roman villa hop-pickers' huts now stand; cattle and sheep are hurdled where the Archbishops in their saintliness and pomp once sojourned; the historic dwellings of the old Canons are converted in public-houses. Yet its beauty still remains. Even the prosaic nineteenth century cannot rob it of this possession, and Wingham, as it was, and as it is, will remain for many a year to come one of the prettiest villages of this dear old county of Kent.

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