

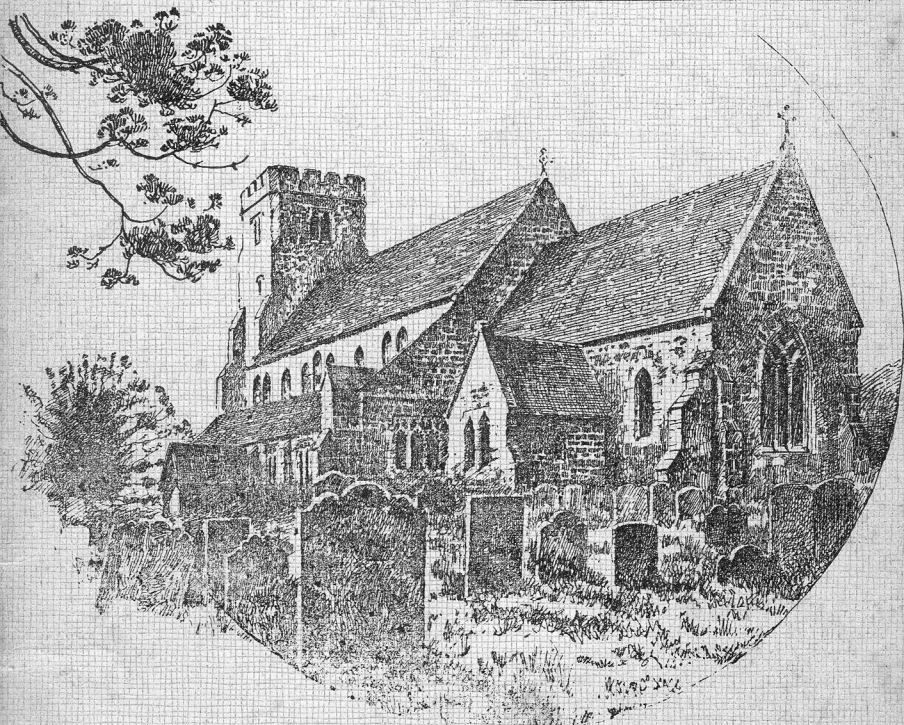
HISTORY of ROBERTSBRIDGE:

Salehurst Parish & Neighbourhood.

SECOND EDITION, Illustrated and Enlarged.

BY J. J. PIPER.

Price Twopence.



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, SALEHURST.

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W. R. BELDERSON, SILVERHILL PRINTING WORKS.

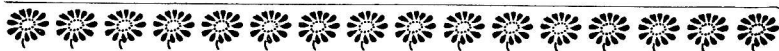
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1906.

Preface to Second Edition.

A desire has been frequently expressed that a second edition of the History of Robertsbridge and neighbourhood should be published (the first edition having been exhausted). That oft expressed desire is now carried into effect. The object of the present little work is to compress into the space of a small book the many items of interest in connection with Robertsbridge and the parish of Salehurst generally. I could have wished that a far abler pen than mine had been entrusted with the work. Carlyle once remarked that every clergyman should write the history of his own parish. My sheaf, comparatively small as it is, has been gleaned from many fields. Four debts, however, I feel in honour bound to acknowledge. The Rev. E. J. Sing, M.A., (Vicar of Salehurst), Miss A. Leigh Smith, and Mrs. Ludlow for many valuable suggestions, and Miss M. Betham Edwards for kind permission to cite from her reminiscences.

March, 1906.

J. J. PIPER.



History of Robertsbridge.

(SECOND EDITION).



CHAPTER I.



who have lived at Robertsbridge know that it has a history, some of which is worth telling. Such a tiny place it is, just three or four country inns, a commercial hotel, four or five grocer's shops, a like number of enterprising general shops, and a working-men's club and institute, opened in November, 1892. There are moreover Wesleyan, Congregational and Calvinistic chapels, an iron mission hall, and a newly erected mission church in connection with St. Mary's at Salehurst. There is also a national school for boys and girls at Northbridge street. Robertsbridge stands on the river Rother in the parish of Salehurst, on the main road from Hastings to London. It is six miles from Battle (the grave of the pride and glory of England), a like distance from Ticehurst and Hawkhurst, 12 from Hastings and 50 from London.

The quaint little town, once encircled by cornfields and hop gardens, has several small streams, all sub-divisions of the Rother, penetrating through its adjoining meadows, crossed by little brick bridges. The main roads in the neighbourhood are in good condition, although the bye-ways and lanes may perhaps be a little loose and stony, but who can expect perfection in this world. Indeed John Leland, the earliest of modern antiquaries, and library keeper to Henry VIII. before 1530, when making a tour through England in 1534-43, satirically suggested that the reason why the oxen, the swine, the women, and all other animals in this district, were so long legged, might be from the difficulty of pulling their feet out of so much mud, as thus the muscles got stretched and the bones lengthened. Horace Walpole writes "if you love good roads, good inns, etc., be so kind as never to go into Sussex." He also during his Sussex journey, in one of his letters writes thus :—"The roads at Robertsbridge grew bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness, our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness, however

without being at all killed, we got up (or down, I forget which, it was so dark) a famous precipice called Silverhill, and about 10 at night arrived at a wretched village called Robertsbridge, here we determined to stop but, alas, there was only one bed to be had, all the rest were inhabited by smugglers, whom the people of the house called mountebanks."

The extent of the parish of Salehurst is 6564 acres. Its surface is very irregular, some of the hills rising to a very considerable elevation, affording rich and extensive views of a fertile and thickly wooded country. Silverhill, which commands a whole horizon of the richest blue prospect you ever saw, may be especially noted for the variety, extent and beauty of its prospects over the Weald of Sussex and Kent. Mineral springs have been found in the district, but they have not been applied to medical purposes. Sand and stone quarries are frequently worked. A considerable quantity of excellent hops are also grown in the neighbourhood, although of late years the quantity has greatly diminished. There is, however, a fair for the sale of hops held annually on the 25th of September. The parish abounds with iron, and during many years (whilst timber was plentiful in the adjoining woods) iron foundries were carried on to some extent (see pp. 12-13).

CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF ITS NAME.

Many authorities contend that the name of Robertsbridge should be properly Rotherbridge, although the Latin of the early charters, and of the convent seal of the Abbey ("de Ponte Roberti") seems decisive against this opinion ; unless a river be crossed by one bridge only, there is nothing distinctive in a name derived from the stream itself. Sir William Burrell, while admitting Robertsbridge to be the oldest form of the name extant, inclines to think that the original was Rotherbridge, not from the river, but from the cattle which passed over it, viz., oxen, cows, heifers and steers, which were anciently called rother beasts, I too am of the same opinion, as the word rother is derived from a Saxon word, and includes cows, steers, heifers and such like horned beasts, indeed the word is used by Shakespeare.—

"It is the pasture lards the rother's side,
The want that makes him lean."

CHAPTER III.

THE ROTHER.

The Rother, the ancient name of which was Limne, rises at Rotherfield, and from almost its very source it is well supplied with tributary brooks and streamlets, and is useful for the purpose of driving water mills, some of which stand upon the site of the ancient ironworks. Etchingam Church, (formerly moated), was supplied from the Rother. The fine moat at Bodiam Castle is also fed from its waters. Formerly the Rother had its outlets between Lydd and Romney until the great storm of 1287, which drove the sea over the marshes of that district and caused a vast destruction both of life and property, altogether diverted the latter part of its course, stopping up its old mouth, and forcing it to find a new and more direct passage into the sea at Rye. In 893 the Danes brought 250 ships of war into the mouth of the Limne (Rother). One of these ships was discovered in 1822 in a field at Northiam, a short distance from the river and about two miles from Rolvenden and Newenden. After a lapse of 929 years it was found in a perfectly sound and entire state. It was buried 10 feet deep in the mud and sand. Its dimensions were : length, 65 feet head to stern ; width, 14 feet. In the cabin were found a human skull, pan, goat's horn, a dish, several tiles, parts of shoes, two earthen jars, a stone mug, and other articles.

In 1349 (22 Ed. III.) Jas. de Echingham presented a petition to the King complaining of the injury done to him in his market town of Robertsbridge by casting a dam across the Rother on the north side of the Isle of Oxney, and cutting a new river across the marsh, and by this means forcing the waters round on the north side of the Isle of Oxney. This prevented the tidal wave flowing up so high as Newenden. The Rother was anciently navigable as far as Etchingam. Sir G. B. Airey's theory, which lands Cæsar at Pevensey (the ancient Anderida), fixes the battle at which *Laberius Durus (a tribune of the soldiers in Cæsar's army) fell in battle in the second invasion of Britain, B.C. 54, at Robertsbridge, on the banks of the Rother. In the winter time the Rother, after a quantity of rain, overflows its banks, the meadows are covered, and the paths through the fields are quite impracticable. In April, 1877, the scene which was presented at Robertsbridge was most melancholy. Farming operations were out of the question. Rain had fallen (with scarcely an intermission of two days together at any one time) ever since the previous November, and the seed which had been sown was either washed out into the roads, or lay rotting in the water. If the

* By mistake called Labienus by Orosius.

English climate has a fault, the dryness of the atmosphere is not the one.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ABBEY. (1) Its Founder.

A little to the east of the village, about a stone's throw from the river Rother, stand the remains of the venerable abbey. It formerly belonged to the Cistercians, a branch of the Benedictines, which took its name from Cistercium, or Cîteaux, in Burgundy, where it began A.D. 1098. Stephen Harding, an Englishman, the third Abbot of Cîteaux, is thought to have introduced the order into this country about A.D. 1128. Their monasteries generally built in solitary and uncultivated places were reckoned in 26 Hen. VIII. to be 75 in number, exclusive of 26 Cistercian nunneries. The abbey was founded in the year 1176 (22 Hen. II.) by Robert de Sancto Martino, although the confirmatory charter of 10 Richard I., perhaps a better authority, makes the founder to be Alured (or Alfred) of St. Martin. From the earlier documents it appears likely that Robert was the originator of the institution, and afterwards enlarged by Alured so as to procure him the title and honour of founder, an occurrence by no means singular in the establishment of such houses. (In this very instance Alicia the wife of Alured, because a principal benefactress, is in one charter termed "the Foundress.") Foundations, like inventions, are often difficult to trace up with certainty to the first authors.

THE ABBEY: (2) Its Endowments, etc.

The original endowment of the Abbey consisted of all the lands, tenements, men, and services which the founder held of Geoffrey de St. Martin and his heirs in the rape of Hastings; to these were soon added other lands and manors given by various benefactors or purchased by the monks themselves, in the neighbouring parishes of "Pette," Gestal (Guestling), Heikelshom, Playden and Iden. One of the earliest benefactresses was Alicia Countess of Eu, daughter of Adeliza, Queen of Henry I., who after the death of that monarch married secondly William de Albini, thereby conveying to him the Earldom of Arundel, which had been settled upon her in dowry. Alicia, the offspring of this union, became the wife of John Count of Eu, in Normandy, and being left a widow, was married again to Alured de St. Martin, the founder of the abbey, this explains the interest she took in its welfare. This lady, for the soul's health of her father and mother, her deceased first husband, her brothers and sisters, gave to the abbey Snargate (in Kent), with the tenements and

appurtenances, which formed part of her free dowry and was therefore at her disposal, with other lands belonging to her for the maintenance of hospitality. Among the witnesses to the deed of gift are Henry Earl of Eu (her son), Robert his brother, Alured de St. Martin (her husband) and Stephen de St. Martin. It appears from a confirmatory charter of Edward III. that Cecilia de Albrincis, in her widowhood, with the consent of her son William, assigned to the abbey her capital messuage and manor of Sutton. William de Averanchis gave other lands to one Lacford at the same Sutton for the yearly rent of 7-lbs of cumin and one 20th part of a knight's fee. This gentleman being involved in the dispute between King John and his barons, was imprisoned and only obtained his liberty by selling some of his property. An original deed of William de Averanchis, confirming his mother's grant to the monks, may be seen in the British Museum to which several names of note are attached in witness, as William Earl of Warren, William Earl of Sussex, Gilbert de Aquila, Simon of Echingham and William his brother, Walter de Dene and others. It would seem that the abbey property at Sutton was in some danger of forfeiture from the baron's proceedings, for in 1221 the monks were confirmed in their possession of the manor and its appurtenances by Henry III. The abbey appears to have had its full share of litigation arising out of disputed rights and dubious claims. In one case (A.D. 1273) the convent comes off with great triumph, for their opponent is reduced to make the following abject submission :—

"To all the faithful in Christ, etc., you will understand that I, William Godfrey, raised a very unjust suit against the Abbot and Convent of Robertsbridge concerning a right of way to a certain marsh in the parish of Stane.* Moved at length with compunction for my offence and my very grievous crime I have withdrawn action, acknowledging for myself and my heirs that I had no just grounds for it, and while touching the Sacred Scriptures, I have sworn that never by me or by anyone appointed by me, nor by any counsel or help of mine shall any controversy be again raised on this subject."

One of the most lengthy suits mentioned was carried on for eight years with the abbey by Herbert de Burgherse (Burwash), and afterward by his son Reginald, about 100 acres of land in Burwash. Beginning in A.D. 1250 (34 Henry III.) it was not finished till the parties met before the Queen at Westminster and a compromise was made, and thus peace was established in the presence of our lady Queen on the Monday following Advent Sunday, in the 42nd year of the reign of king Henry. In one case the Abbot became the aggressor. William Brykenden, William Austen, William Pypesden,

* Stone, Kent. This marsh was let by the Abbot and convent (26 Hen. VIII) for £3 a year to Walter Osborne.

monks of Robertsbridge, and five yeomen¹ of the same place were charged with having gathered together divers malefactors and disturbers of the king's peace, and riotously and in warlike manner and array, to wit, with swords staves, knives, and other arms, forcibly entered the house of one Godard Oxenbrige, at Northbridge Street, in the parish of Salehurst, on the 6th day of August, in the 13th year of Henry VII. reign, and then and there dug and obstructed the course of a rivulet called Lyme² and giving it another direction.

In a rental MS. (1580) occurs an entry concerning the lease of a field called Fairfield to the monks of the Abbey by one Petronella Telfish,

"The Proffytte of the ffayre holden in two severall ffeldes. called the ffayre ffeldes yearly at the ffeste of the Hollywood (Holy X Sept. 14) Communibus annis, ys worthe pr ann. viis."

Appended is a list of the abbots of the abbey:—Dionysius I., 1184, William 1216, Walter 1261, Thomas 1293, Robert 1300, Nicholas 1320, Alan 1327, John 1340, Dionysius II. 1400, John 1410, John (another) 1436, John Goodwin 1507, Thos. Tayler 1534. The last-named surrendered his abbey to the king on April 6th, 1539, when there was granted to him a pension of £50 a year.

THE ABBEY: (3) Royal Visitors.

In olden times Monasteries were the stations of royal progress, as were the houses of the nobility at a later period. On three distinct occasions the abbey has been honoured by the presence of royal monarchs. On the 22nd November, 1295, Edward I. (Longshanks) paid a visit to the abbey during a short stay at Winchelsea, and again on the 8th August, 1297. On the 22nd August, 1324, Edward II. stayed at the abbey on his way from Bayham to Battle, feasting on the good things which on such occasions flowed in from the neighbouring gentry and clergy in aid of the convent larder. Pike and other freshwater fish, beeves, swans, herons, cheese, wine and ale were among the dainties wherewith kings regaled themselves in those days.

THE ABBEY: (4) Historical.

That Robertsbridge with its abbey has played no small part in the history of our beloved country cannot be questioned. The abbot of Robertsbridge appears to have been held in high estimation and to have shared largely the royal confidence. Towards the end of the 12th century the abbot William, with his brother, went to Rome on the part of Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, to obtain the Pope's

(1) The names are Thomas Mesthall, John Goodgroom, Woodward Sharpe, John Motes and Robert Tayler.

(2) or Limne (the Rother).

settlement of the disputes between the Primate and the monks of Canterbury. On October 30th, 1222 (7 Hen. III.) the king's treasurer was ordered to pay 10 marks to the abbot of Robertsbridge for going as the king's messenger to Poitou. On the 26th May, 1224, 50 marks were ordered to be paid to the abbots of Robertsbridge and Boxley for going on the king's business to the court of Rome. Several payments are also ordered for persons sent to Robertsbridge with messages from the Crown. But the most remarkable instance relating to a very remarkable portion of English history is this. Towards the latter end of 1192 it was rumoured that Richard I. had been made a prisoner on his return from the Holy Land. The abbots of Robertsbridge and Boxley were the Lords Justices sent into Germany to ascertain the place of his detention. Some accounts state that Richard, after having been first imprisoned by Leopold, Duke of Austria, in the castle of Durrenstein, on the Danube, was subsequently confined by the Emperor in the castle of Trifels. After traversing a great part of Germany, the abbots at last met with him at a village called Oxefer in Bavaria, on his way to an audience with the Emperor, to be held on Palm Sunday. They were present at the agreement concluded between the Emperor and the King on the Thursday before Easter, 1193, and soon after returned to England bringing with them the terms of this convention. It may be mentioned here that in 1200, several years after the return of Richard, King John paid a visit to Battle Abbey and laid with trembling hands a piece of the Saviour's sepulchre (which had been wrested from Palestine by Rich. I.) on the altar, hoping that the magnificence of the gift might close Heaven's eyes towards his own sins. The abbot and convent of Robertsbridge were also employed to collect from the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Lewes the subsidy granted in 1380 by Richard II. In 1315 the Abbey lent Ed. II. the sum of £40 to aid him in his war with Scotland.

On the suppression of the abbey by Henry VIII, the abbey lands passed to Sir William Sidney. With the exception of these few particulars all that concerned the monks of Robertsbridge is buried in oblivion. Indeed the memory of the abbey and the honours of its abbots have faded into dim obscurity, and both are well-nigh forgotten. Where the solemn strains of dirges and masses were formerly heard silence now reigns unbroken, and within once hallowed walls sacred employments have given place to secular.

In the Bodleian Library may be seen a manuscript volume bearing this inscription:

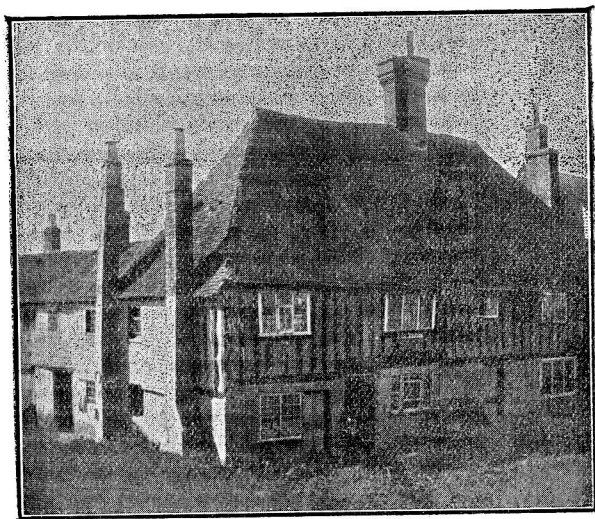
"This book belongs to St. Marys of Robertsbridge; whosoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it from this house let him be Anathema Maranatha."

It however came into other hands, for underneath is written :

"I, John Bishop, of Exeter, know not where the above said house is, nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way."

THE ABBEY : (5) Monumental Remains,

Some years ago there were several monumental remains lying about, which have since been unfortunately lost. One was a fragmental stone inscribed in ancient characters "Hic jacet Wills de Bod, etc." apparently one of the Bodiam family. Another was a carved fragment of a stone shield bearing two fleur de lis above a leopard's face. There are also in Vol. III. S.A.C., pp. 213-231, to be seen woodcuts of stone bearing the Pelham buckle and arms ; some of these may have reference to Sir John Pelham, who was a visitor at the abbey in 1418, and who, by a will dated Feb. 8th, 1429, directed his body to be buried in Robertsbridge Abbey. This Sir



OLD HOUSES AT ROBERTSBRIDGE (XVIITH CENTURY.

John Pelham was the son and successor of the Poitiers hero, and used the buckle as his badge. He stood high in the favour of Henry iv., who made him his swordbearer. In the 1st year of Henry v. Sir John was a P.C. to the king, and in the following year the king committed to his custody James I. of Scotland, who had been made prisoner by his father in 1406. The following copy of a letter,

intended to have been but not actually sent to the Earl of Chichester, relates to discoveries in the abbey and village.

"Hastings. Nov. 6th, 1823. The interest which your lordship expressed in the discovery of an effigy at Robertsbridge, for many reasons believed to be that of one of the most distinguished of your ancestors, but eventually proved to be that of a person connected only by marriage through the Lewknors, has always led me to hope that any new information which might be procured on such a subject would not be unacceptable to your lordship. A tradesman of the name of Woods, residing in the town of Robertsbridge, nearly opposite the George Inn, in lately re-building a wall, dug from the foundation a stone about 10 inches square bearing on it the Pelham buckle raised in sculptor. Being ignorant that it was a family device, he re-built it into the wall and Mr. Allfrey having since brought the circumstance under my notice, I have inspected it, and he agrees with me in the propriety of making the communication to your lordship as possibly bearing on the former enquiry. Several sculptured stones are re-built into the wall below the surface of the ground, but the proprietor does not recollect the form or import of any of the fragments. One of them however is visible and bears the initials W.P. and a date as late as James I., which may perhaps obstruct the speculation that the crest is of any greater antiquity, some branches of your lordship's family having certainly resided in the early part of the 17th century in Salehurst and Mountfield. The stone, nevertheless, which bears the crest is of the same quality of which the abbey is built, and is supposed to have been brought from it. Yet on this point a doubt may arise. I do not remember that either the Burrell or Hayley MSS. make mention of a chapel at Robertsbridge dedicated to St. Catherine¹ beside a well,² yet bearing the name and being within 100 yards of Wood's house. An aged mason remembers the foundation, and informs me that his father in his youth told him that the cellars of the inn were built from it."

Several tiles have been discovered among the ruins of the abbey bearing the arms of Warenne, Echingham, Lewknor, Harcourt and others. Some of these tiles are to be seen in the British Museum. Another fragment may be found in Mr. Lowers' "Curiosities of Heraldry." It is an angel supporting a shield. John Piper, an old resident, has also one of the ancient tiles of the abbey in his possession. In 1823, Mr. Edward Allfrey excavated at Robertsbridge abbey a monumental marble effigy in armour, of about the date of Hen. v., bearing the collar of S.S. It was removed to London by the Earl of Chichester under a supposition that it was intended for Sir John Pelham, and whose arms were found among the ruins at a short distance from the figure. It was afterwards discovered that there

(1) Several of the inhabitants have expressed an opinion that before the black death (plague) of 1348-9, a church dedicated to St. Catherine did exist at Robertsbridge. I have, however, been unable to find any evidence to support this theory.

(2) Now called Chapel Spring, situated at the top of what is known as Piper's Lane, and directly in front of one of the most ancient houses in the neighbourhood. This house was formerly a public-house, bearing the sign of the Stag until the early part of the 18th century (1742) when it came into the possession of the Piper family, who lived in it for 140 years (see illustration previous page).

were visible remains of an enrailed cross upon the breast, which determined the effigy to be that of one of the Dalyngriggs of Bodiam Castle, and not of Pelham. It was subsequently discovered that it was the mutilated effigy of Sir Ed. Dalyngruge (or Dalyngrigg), a hero of Crecy and Poitiers, the builder of Bodiam Castle in 1386 (Rich. II.) It is now in the Archæological Museum at Lewes (No. 119):

After the common fate of such buildings, the abbey is now converted into a farmhouse, with its crypt (now used as a dairy) nearly perfect, and of which Mr. A. J. C. Hare once remarked, was (with its odd pans and crocks and the light pouring down its steps from the open air) a picture worthy of the best Dutch masters. A great part of the old structure has been destroyed from the foundation. A small portion of broken walls belonging to the chapel, and unapplied to any modern purpose, still totters to its fall, whilst an adjoining fragment, which displays some remains of the cloister arches, is converted into an oast-house. The sparrow, who has asserted from the days of David an hereditary claim for shelter in sacred edifices, has found a place where she may lay her young in the conical thatched roof, so picturesque, though so incongruously united with the broken relics of gothic architecture.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Sussex, till the end of the 15th century, was one huge forest, and at the beginning of the 17th century, 140 forges were still at work in the manufacture of steel and iron. These furnaces consumed every 24 hours, from 2 to 4 loads of charcoal. The site of an ironwork was chosen near to beds of ore, and to some available water power. Artificial ponds were generally constructed by dams of earth against the stream, with an outlet of masonry for the supply of water by means of which the wheel connected with the machinery and the hammer or furnace was set in motion. The Romans knew how rich Sussex was, and not unfrequently Roman coins have been discovered in the old cinder beds. Cæsar too, knew of the iron ore found in Sussex, and took notes of the abundance of timber in this district. Indeed, the name Salehurst, like the other hursts in the neighbourhood, indicates the ancient presence of forests. The earliest known specimen of Sussex foundry work is to be seen on the wall of the N. aisle in Burwash Church. It is an iron slab of the 14th century with an inscription "Orate p annema jhone Coline." At Lewes was manufactured the iron rails for the tomb of Henry III. Sussex sent 3,000 horse-shoes to Bannockburn, and when artillery came into use,

Sussex was the first to cast it, the fires, being of course, fed by wood. Robertsbridge was once noted for its steel and iron manufactories. In 1609, John Hawes held the site of the Abbey of Robertsbridge, with the buildings lying between two freshwater rivers, abutting at the great stone bridge at the Forge pond, and including various buildings for the steel makers, among which, were 8 steel forges, also one great gatehouse called the Westgate, built of lime and stone, and used in part as a dove house and in part for the steel makers, also a great gate called the Eastgate employed as a store house for iron with a house attached to it for James Lamye the hammer man. In 1623, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester assigned a lease of Udiham iron-house, in the manor of Robertsbridge, to John Culpeper and Henry English with power to dig for iron in any of his Lordship's lands in Salehurst, Ewhurst and Whatlington. In 1707, Elizabeth, Countess dowager of Leicester, leased the Robertsbridge furnace for 11 years to Thomas Snapp, Sen. and Thomas Snapp, Jun.¹ The cannon cast at the Abbey furnaces² were floated down the Rother to Rye. In order to effect this, there were put into the river "Shuts," a contrivance something in the nature of locks. In the early part of the last century on the bed of the Rother being cleaned from Rye to Bodiam, several of the remains of these shuts were brought to light and removed. Many of the guns and shot used in the wars of that period were made at the abbey furnaces. In the year 1653, there were 27 furnaces in Sussex which were reduced to 11 in 1664. The celebrated furnaces of the abbey were the last to be worked in Sussex. There were also iron mills at Bugsell and Glaziers, Robertsbridge. The greatest existing remains of Sussex iron are the balustrades which surround St. Paul's Cathedral. They were cast at Lamberhurst furnace, and their weight, including the 7 gates, is above 200 tons. Their cost, according to the account books kept at the furnace, was £11,202 0s. 6d. It may also be mentioned that the annual consumption of wood at this furnace was about 200,000 cords. The writer has in his possession a pair of snuffers 300 years old, dated 1606, which were made at one of the furnaces at Robertsbridge. Several iron slabs made at the abbey furnace are to be seen inside the church, notably those of the Peckham family of Iridge. The famous iron works at Socknersh in the neighbourhood were carried on by the Collins family from a very early date. When Sussex lost her pre-eminence as the centre of the iron industry it was necessary that she should look about for some

(1). A tablet recording the death of the wife of this gentleman's brother may be seen on the south wall of the church. (interior)

(2). Several of the cannon balls cast at the abbey furnace are still to be seen in front of the abbey farm house.

new outlet for her enterprise. The forests of Sussex had been famous and the natives were familiar with the growth and manipulation of wood. Among the minor industries, those of wood are numerous around the neighbourhood of Robertsbridge. This industry supplies labour for many hands. The woodman who cuts the copse and makes it into hop-poles, faggots, pea-sticks, binders, etc., the youth or maiden who gaily trips up and down the hop-poles stripping their bark, and the carter who removes the poles, faggots, etc. Then again there is the hop-pole sharpener, the tanker, etc., etc. Then there are the bavin manufacturers all around our neighbourhood. A man and a boy are generally needed for this, one gathers the sticks and holds them in position while the other chops them and binds them in bundles, small twigs and large sticks are mixed, so that a bundle may contain all that is necessary for setting a coal fire ablaze. Another industry is that of the hoop-maker. Until recently some of these were to be seen in the vicinity of the railway station, busily engaged in splitting wood to form into hoops for binding tubs, barrels, etc., etc. Another industry, that of cricket bat making, deserves some mention. The cricket bats made at Robertsbridge are well known not only in England, but throughout the whole cricketing world. The notoriety which these cricket bats have gained, arises from the fact that the willow (of which the bats are made) grown in the neighbourhood of Robertsbridge is unusually light and of exceptionally good quality. The cricket bats made at Robertsbridge gained a Diploma (2nd order of merit) at the Melbourne Exhibition of 1880-1, also a Silver Medal at the International Exhibition, London, 1885. During the last 25 years, valuable deposits of gypsum have been found in the parish of Mountfield. The gypsum was first discovered when boring for coal. There are considerable works in connection with it for the manufacture of plaster of paris, etc.

CHAPTER VI.

ANCIENT SEATS.

There are several ancient seats in the neighbourhood of Robertsbridge. Higham, the ancient seat of the Highams, afterwards the property of Charles Lamb, Esq., who re-built the mansion towards the end of the 18th century. For many years it was the residence of the late Rev. G. Luxford, J.P., whose son (Major Luxford) held the position of Chief Constable of East Sussex till his lamented decease. Iridge Place, is a mansion of considerable antiquity. It was formerly the residence of the Wildigos family, from whom it

descended about the middle of the 17th century into the family of Fowle and from them to the Peckhams. It is now in the occupation of Jesse Piper, Esq. Wigsell was formerly the residence of a branch of the Culpeper family, by whom the small north chancel of the parish church was built. John, the 1st Baron Colepeper (or Culpeper), of Wigsell, was M.P. for Kent in 1640, he was taken into court favour by Charles I. and made P.C. in 1642, Chancellor of Exchequer 1642-3 advised Charles' withdrawal to York, joined him at York, presented Charles ultimatum to Parliament, contributed to the victory of Edgehill, Master of the Rolls 1643, urged Charles I. to make terms at all costs with the Scots 1645 and attended the Prince of Wales in his flight to the west, 1645. He journeyed to Moscow to borrow money of the Czar for Charles II., and to Holland to ask armed support and finally attended Charles II. on his Spanish journey 1659. He died in 1660.

Bugsell formerly had an old mansion upon it which was pulled down in the early part of last century. Traces of it are still to be seen near the present farmhouse. It derived its name from the ancient family of Boxshall or Buxhull, and was once the seat of Sir Alan Buxhull or Boxhille, 53rd Knight of the Garter, 1323-81. Sir Alan who was constable of the Tower of London, served with Edward III in France 1355, became his chamberlain in 1369, Castellan of Normandy 1370 and K.G. 1372. This same knight whilst constable of the Tower, was one of those who slew the Knight Hawles and his servant in Westminster Abbey (1378) where they had taken sanctuary. In all probability there was an ancient house at Ockham although no trace of it is now to be seen. William de Northeye was however a witness to a deed of benefaction executed to the abbey at Robertsbridge by Stephen de Ocham, for the free use of a course of water leading from his mill at Ocham. The present house at Ockham is in the occupation of Sir Edward Boyle, Bart., K.C. M.P., author of "Principles of rating," "The law of compensation" and "Law of railway and canal traffic.

Until the year 1861, there stood another ancient seat, the Old Vicarage, a little below the site of the present Vicarage house. Here was born the late lamented W. H. Wrench, Esq., C.M.G. H.B.M., Consul and Commercial Attaché to the Embassy at Constantinople. Mr. Wrench had been for 37 years in the Consular service in Turkey and was greatly esteemed. His death caused great sorrow among the British Colony and in a wide circle outside. Mr. Wrench rendered yeoman service during the recent massacre of Armenians in Constantinople, going about everywhere in order to check the bloodshed and re-assure the Armenians who had hidden themselves fearing

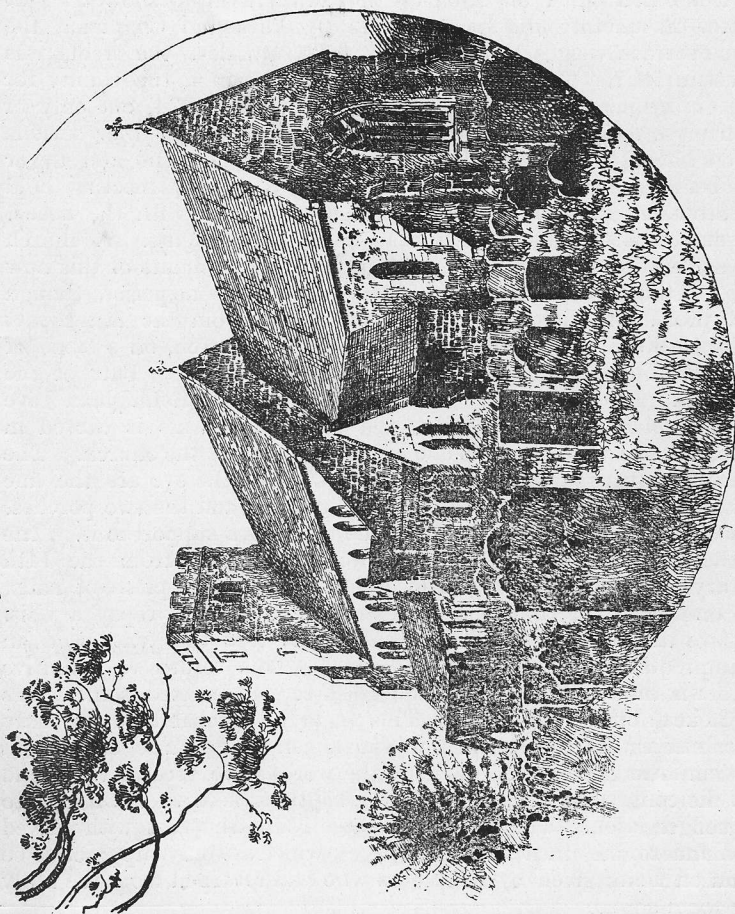
further outrages. It is a singular fact that one of Mr. Wrench's earliest experiences in the service was of another massacre of Christians. He had been sent to Damascus in 1857 and was in that city during the massacre of July 1860. He was appointed Vice-Consul at Beyrout in 1862, Vice-Consul for the Dardenelles 1866, Vice-Consul at Constantinople in 1872 and promoted to be Consul in 1879. He was made C.M.G. in 1885 and in 1895, was appointed Commercial Attaché to the Embassy at Constantinople. Mr. Wrench died October 13th, 1896, aged 60 and was buried at Scutari. A tablet to his memory may be seen on the South wall of the Church. He was the youngest son of the Rev. J. G. Wrench, D.C.L. many years Vicar of the parish of Salehurst.

A more modern residence is that of the Banks, Mountfield, formerly the residence of Sir John Bennett, the well-known London Jeweller. Sir John was a common councilman of the city of London in 1862 and in 1871-2 was a Sheriff of London and Middlesex. In 1872 he joined the London School Board and held a seat on that authority for 7 years. He was created Knight of the Bath in 1872. Some years ago, during the Lord Mayoralty of Alderman Stone, Sir John entertained his Lordship, and a large number of men of eminence in art and literature, members of the London Corporation and the Hastings Town Council at the Banks. It was the greatest show and most costly entertainment ever known in the history of the neighbourhood. The Banks was for many years in the occupation of Charles Egerton, Esq., J.P. D.L., a son of the late Lady Mary Egerton of Mountfield Court and son-in-law of Lord Brassey, K.C.B. of Normanhurst, Battle.

Not far from the Banks is Mountfield Court, the residence of the late Lady Mary Egerton, elder daughter of the 2nd Earl Manvers and wife of the late Edward Christopher Egerton, Esq., M.P. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This stately pile was built by the Nicholls family, who came over from Holland with William III. and who planted the old chestnut avenue when the king planted that at Hampton Court. The deceased lady died 12th June, 1905, aged 86, and was buried in the parish churchyard at Mountfield.

About a mile from the village, on the main road to Brightling, is another modern residence, Scalands Gate. Here lived and died the noble foundress of Girton College, Madame Bodichon. This residence also belongs to history. In the little parlour was mooted and developed the scheme of Girton College, the first University ever opened for women. Some years ago the house was considerably enlarged, the original building, however, being left intact. Its dining-room contains a chimney-piece which is absolutely unique. It

has a record of some of the most eminent men and women of the period. Painted on the wall by their own hands, are the names of M. C. Lewes, G. H. Lewes, 1866. On each side and around are the following autographs: D. G. Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, Daubigny, Henry Moore, William Allingham, W. B. Scott, Professor Sylvester, Edwin Chadwick, Henry Fawcett (formerly Postmaster-General), and many others.



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, SALEHURST.

CHAPTER VII.

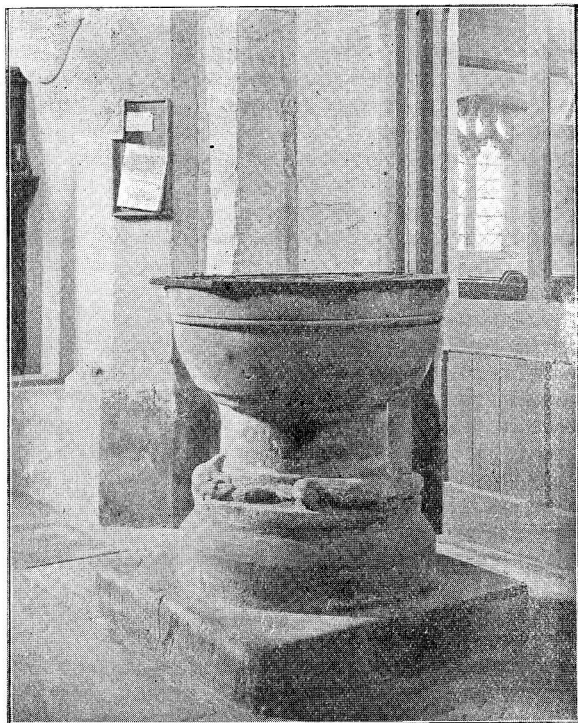
THE CHURCH.

The Church, dedicated to St. Mary, is of stone in the early English and decorated styles. The tower is lofty and embattled, and has a peculiar trick of catching the sunlight after showers. It contains 8 tuneful bells, cast in 1771 by Pack and Chapman, the tenor of which weighs 19 cwt. 28 lbs. The smallest, the treble was re-cast in 1847. The bells, among the first ten in the county for size, unfortunately are hung so heavily that, since 1774, one only of the many attempts to ring a full peal has succeeded. Other serious defects having of late manifested themselves, the bells and tower have been carefully examined by experts. A Vestry meeting held on 28th Dec., 1905, appointed a committee to deal with the needs. The curfew is still rung on Saturday and Sunday nights. A church at Salehurst is mentioned in Domesday, but no remnants of this now exist. The present building is evidently not all of one period, though in all probability the greater portion of it dates from the latter part of the 13th century. On the south side of the church, on a stone of one of the upper windows, is carved this date 1282. Part of the church is earlier, however, for in 1249 William de Echingham gave it to the abbey of Robertsbridge, and his coat-of-arms is carved in stone over the west porch as one of the founders of the church. The external features of the church which first catch the eye are the fine western tower, the great length of the building, and the two porches. The western porch was added after the tower as a support to it. The southern porch is entirely built of wood and dates from the 14th century. It is joined together by wooden dowels in place of nails. The interior of the church is interesting and will well repay a visit. Perhaps the most striking feature is the fact that the font is in an Atrium, quite separate from the nave. This return to primitive custom is the result of an oak and glass screen, erected some years ago to keep out the draughts. This is, in all probability, the only church north of the Alps with this arrangement.* The effect at a baptism is to give unusual point to the words "we receive this child into the congregation," for the newly baptised is then brought into the congregation. The font is decorated round the foot with carved salamanders (see illustration next page), which are only supposed to be found on fonts given by Crusaders who had returned from the Holy

* Chichester Diocesan Gazette.

wars. It has been said that this font was given to Salehurst by Richard Cœur de Lion (the Crusader King) as a thankoffering.

On the floor of the atrium are several iron grave stones of members of the Peckham family, who were buried in the church between the years 1661 and 1711. Before the demolition of monasteries it is not probable that any person of note was buried in the church, since the abbey would be deemed by them a more honourable place for burial, and the monks



SALEHURST CHURCH: THE FONT DECORATED WITH:
CARVED SALAMANDERS.

were nothing loth to appropriate the profits of such interment, hence it is that though there are many inscriptions and monuments, there are none of very ancient date. Amongst the earliest inscriptions, are Thos. Peckham obit 1662, William Peckham obit 1679, aged 64, and Mary his wife obit 1661. Other early inscriptions are to Robert Fowle, Esq., of Iridge, son of Sir John Fowle of Sandhurst, obit 1681 and Robert Fowle, son of the above, obit 1687. In the south aisle is a large altar tomb in a recess in the wall, the arms are defaced and the inscription gone. In the chancel, serving as the pedestal of a credence, is the old altar stone from Robertsbridge Abbey. For many years it had been the doorstep of

Bantony,* the residence of Col. Andrews, J.P., who has now kindly placed it in its present position. The organ stands in the Wigsell chapel on the north side of the choir. The Culpepers of Wigsell (see p.15) built the chapel as their burial place towards the end of the 14th century. In it there are some old monuments belonging to them, but both arms and inscriptions are defaced. There are 8 memorial windows in the church. It has 588 sittings, the register dates from the year 1575. The living is a vicarage, net yearly value £350, with residence and 5 acres of glebe land, in the gift of C. S. Hardy, Esq. and held since 1901 by the Rev. E. J. Sing, M.A., Christ College, Cambridge. The statement in Kelly's Directory of Sussex "That the inhabitants of Robertsbridge attend Salehurst church" has been classed as a "pious aspiration." Quite recently the writer read a statement to



THE THIRTEEN ANCIENT MEN OF SALEHURST, JUNE 26TH, 1902.

this effect, "Robertsbridge badly needs a church of its own," and this too, despite the fact that the inhabitants *attend* Salehurst church. Since that statement was made, however, a church mission room has been built in Fair Lane (East St.) in the centre of the town and sufficient land has been acquired for the erection of a church"and

*This residence is known to have been built of materials taken from the abbey after its dissolution.

parsonage if necessary. Freeland's Charity of £27 yearly arising from a sum of £1080 in Consols is expended on bread for the deserving poor of the parish. This charity is administered by 3 trustees who are elected triennially by thirteen of the oldest men of the parish, summoned in the church vestry for that purpose by the Vicar. The old men each receive 2/- for the trouble of coming. At the election held on June 26th, 1902, immediately after the special service, the old men were photographed (see ill. previous page). They ranged from 70 to 97 years of age, the average being 78. Close to the north door of the church and near the spot where the old men were photographed is a tombstone recording that on Oct. 8th, 1683, died Old Peter Sparke of Salehurst, aged 126 years. Some of the inhabitants have expressed doubts as to the authenticity of this statement, but the entry is recorded in the Salehurst register. The Wadhurst register also has the following : Oct. 8th, 1683 died Old Peter Sparke of Salehurst being above 126 years old by his own computation†.

Another charity is Mr. Geo. Munn's bequest of 13 guineas yearly derived from a sum of £546 in Consols ; this is applied in aid of the National Schools at Northbridge Street.

A remarkable case of heresy in connection with one of the Salehurst Vicars is worth recording. In 1441, John Boreham, Priest of Salehurst for 20 years, held and taught, publicly and privately, divers heresies, errors and pestiferous tenets of the accursed John Wycliffe, also that he had and hath divers books and tracts of accursed reading in the vulgar tongue. Boreham appeared before the bishop in the parish church and craved leave to purge himself of all the charges. The bishop assented and bade him appear that day week for this purpose at the parish church of Eastbourne. Boreham, however, did not appear and was pronounced contumacious. About a month later on Oct. 27th he was captured in London and sent down to the bishop then at Amberley Castle. The bishop sitting in front of the altar in his chapel asked him why he had not appeared on the appointed day at Eastbourne. Boreham replied that he dreaded his sentence and had therefore fled. The bishop ordered him to be kept in custody and brought before him for a final hearing in the cathedral on Nov. 4th. On that day the bishop's gaoler brought Boreham to the cathedral where the bishop sat with his assessors, the Archdeacon of Lewes and a licentiate in law. The charges were cited in Latin and English. Boreham swore on the gospels that he would return a true answer to each. The principal were as follows :

- (1) He had used exorcism to expel demons. (confessed)

†The writer read the inscription on the stone but a short time ago.

(2) Declared that he could cast out evil spirits "better than many priests by the aid of baptism could do it". (denied)

(3) Believed that by incantations and abjurations made over willow wands he could cure fever as long as the ends of such rods were hung around the necks of the sufferers. (confessed)

(4) Had disparaged the sacrament of the altar and of confession as unnecessary to salvation. (denied)

(5) Had consorted with and aided heresies instead of discovering them to the ordinary. (denied)

(6) Had books of Wycliffe and of Holy Scripture in English and knew others who had such books, yet had not informed against them within 40 days. (confessed that he had the four gospels in English and also some books of incantations).

The examination being ended, Boreham knelt down in the humblest manner before the Bishop and craved to be absolved from the penalty of the greater excommunication. His petition was granted, he again swearing on the gospels that he would never henceforth teach, or cause to be taught, or defend any of the above mentioned errors, or any other errors, contrary to the teaching of Holy Church.

It is recorded that on the occasion of the interment of Henry English (see p. 13) at the church, Dec. 10th, 1649, John Bradshaw, preacher, of Etchingham, delivered a discourse entitled "Death disarmed, the grave buried."

Among the ministers in Sussex who would not subscribe to the article in favour of the Book of Common Prayer in 1583, was William Hopkinson, Vicar of Salehurst. Hopkinson, with 6 others, were suspended by Dr. Longworth, then Canon of Christ Church, Canterbury, but on being summoned on the 6th of Dec., they all subscribed.

In 1249, the Prebend of Hastings, together with the chapel of Mountfield and the churches of Salehurst and Odymer, were appropriated by William de Etchingham with the full consent of the chief Pontiff to the abbey at Robertsbridge.

On the demolition of monasteries (31 Henry VIII.) that king granted the advowson of the Vicarage of Salehurst, with the grant of the abbey, to Sir William Sidney.

In the year 1861, a lamentable accident occurred at the church in connection with its renovation. On the 3rd of August, during a terrific gale of wind from the south-east, 24 pairs of the heavy old timbers (the brazing of the old rafters being uncovered,) fell with a tremendous crash to the bottom, the two men who were attending to the pulleys for lowering the timbers being carried with them. One,

George Wright, was killed on the spot, the other, Charles Cramp, died from the effects in the course of a few days. A little to the left of the church may be seen an inscription on a headstone to this effect. Edward Piper, the builder, and his brother, John Piper, both had marvellous escapes. The former had just turned away from the engine to walk out of the building, when down came the roof with a crash, a portion of the debris falling within a few inches of him. The latter was on the roof at the same time with the two before named, but having the presence of mind to run backwards on to the wall, escaped unhurt.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANCIENT FAMILIES.

Robert de Haia founded the Priory of Boxgrove between 1117 1135 This Robert de Haia was uncle to William the Conqueror, King of England. The family of de Haia, or de la Hay, came over with the conqueror and became widely dispersed through Britain. One branch settled at Halmaker, another in Scotland, a third remained at Battle Abbey, the name of Hay frequently occurring on the monuments of Battle Abbey. One branch gave name to a seat at Netherfield. Another branch of the same (William Hay) settled at Robertsbridge. (time Edward VI.) Another member of the Hay family was Thomas Hay, 1st Mayor of Hastings, named by the charter of 14th February, 1588, by Queen Elizabeth. Yet another member of the Hay family was William Hay, who was born at Glenbourn, Sussex, August 21st, 1695. He wrote an essay on "Civil Government," "Mount Caburn; a poem," "Remarks on the Poor Laws," an essay on "Deformity" (in which he sports with his own personal defects) and translation of some of Martial's Epigrams.

Another ancient family, Stonestreet, derived its name from Stanestreet, a hamlet in Charing, (county Kent) where was a Roman way. The names of Robert Stanestreet, of Iychurch, and Laurence Stanestreet, of Maidstone, occur in the list of gentry of Kent, 1433, and Richard de Stanestreet was M.P. for Horsham, Sussex, A.D. 1313. The name is still a common one in the neighbourhood.

Another ancient family, Piper, has already been alluded to. As far back as Edward III., this notice occurs: "John Piper married Joan, daughter of William de Lychepole, on Monday, following 25th March, 1336."

Representatives of the ancient families of Pooke, Muddle, Braban, Peckham, Snepp, Nicholls and Blundell, are still living in the parish of Salehurst.

CHAPTER IX.

MADAME BODICHON.

No history of Robertsbridge and neighbourhood would be complete without some reference to this noble lady, whose maiden name was Barbara Leigh Smith. Born April 8th, 1827, at Whatlington, she was the eldest daughter of the late Benjamin Smith, Esq., M.P., and granddaughter of William Smith, for many years M.P. for Norwich, a follower of Fox, a great abolitionist and emancipator, and the friend of Wilberforce, Clarkson, S. E. Rogers, Sir Jas. Stephen and Opie. In the winter of 1855-56 Madame Bodichon proposed to

some friends that an effort should be made to secure to working women their right to their wages. A petition was drawn up and signed with the most influential names, amongst others being Anna Jameson, Mary Howitt, Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. This petition of 3,000 names was presented to the House of Lords by Lord Brougham, and to the House of Commons by Sir Erskine Parry. It was successful, and became the first wedge to open the way years after for the "Married Women's Property Act" 1870-74-82. Reference to Madame Bodichon as the foundress of Girton College has already been made (p. 16) suffice it to say that this was the first institution of the kind opened in England where women could obtain the same



BARBARA BODICHON, THE FOUNDRESS
OF GIRTON.

educational advantages as offered to men at the universities. An excellent article appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, May 1875, giving an account of this college. The foundress of Girton was also favourably known as a writer, having many varied and interesting experiences to relate. It is, however, as a water-colour painter that Madame

Bodichon is best known ; her paintings, which were varied in subject and remarkably bold, have been frequently exhibited in London and Paris. Amongst others are the following : "Sunflowers," "Negro Women Sacrificing, Algiers," "Stonehenge," "Cornfield after a Storm" (praised by Ruskin), "Dirty Weather at St. Leonards," "Aloes," "Arab Fishing," "Early Morning, Hastings," "Rapids above Niagara," "Reeds, an Algerian Study" (afterwards chromolithographed), etc., etc. Madame Bodichon was one of the very few artists who could paint moving masses of water. Few ladies have acquired more brilliant reputation ; indeed some French critics have declared her to be the "Rosa Bonheur of Landscape." The basis of Madam's character was a sense of abstract justice ; nationality, racial distinction, religion, for her were non-existent. A human being, English or foreigner, white or black, jew or gentile, remained a brother or sister. This immense largeness of sympathy and independence of mind shewed itself in the least little thing, as one who knew her intimately has remarked, she lived from the 1st of January to the 31st of December in a perpetual whirl of business, study and pleasure.* Madame Bodichon and her distinguished husband, Dr. Eugène Bodichon, resided for many years during the winter months in Algiers. Their sojourn there was full of interest, not only from the natural charm of the place, but from the noted persons with whom they came in contact, their pleasant villa being hospitably opened to a great number of European tourists, who flocked to that sunny region to escape the cold winters of the north. The villa, on the green heights of Mustapha Supérieur, commanding a glorious view of sea, city and plain, will be long remembered by many. Among the distinguished visitors who enjoyed the hospitality of Mustapha Supérieur may be mentioned Cobden, F. Walker, Egg, Arlès Dufour and Lady Dunbar.

During the last 15 years of Madame Bodichon's life she was a confirmed invalid, although up to the last a night school for young men was carried on at Scalands Gate, Madam being assisted by an old and much esteemed friend, Mr. W. Ransom, for some years chairman of the Hastings School Board. Although Madame Bodichon has passed away, her memory still lives in the hearts of those who remain, and those who were present at Scalands Gate on the day of her interment will never forget the scene. Her remains were laid to rest in the quiet little churchyard of Brightling. Madam's whole life was wrapped up in trying to elevate the poor and alleviate the suffering of all that were down-trodden. In the whole neighbourhood it would be a matter of impossibility to find another who did as she

* Reminiscences by Miss M. Betham Edwards.

did. Never a day passed but what some one was thought of and made all the happier, and a sick father or mother was never passed over, whoever he or she might be. She gave with a free hand, and left before the recipient had time to thank her. Moreover, the fortitude which she displayed during the long years when she was racked by pain was marvellous indeed. Madame Bodichon was a true Englishwoman of noble character, strong in purpose, and quick to act on any sensible suggestion, if someone might be the better for it. The deceased lady by her will bequeathed £1,000 to Bedford College, and £15,000 to her College at Girton.

CHAPTER X.

DR. BODICHON.

Dr. Eugène Bodichon, to whom Madam was married in 1857, deserves some mention. He took a leading part in Algerian affairs for many years, and during the stormy period of 1848 was corresponding member of the Provisional Government in Paris. His first act was to advise the liberation of the slaves throughout the province, which was immediately done. Dr. Bodichon was the author of numerous works, amongst others being the following :— “Considerations sur L’Algérie,” “Hygiène à Suivre en Algérie,” “Etudes sur L’Algérie et L’Afrique,” “De l’humanité,” etc. The last-named book in 2 vols. was written in 1867, and favourably noticed by the leading English reviews. Portions of it have been translated into English, notably a monograph on Napoleon the 1st (see *Temple Bar*, 1873). This monograph Carlyle read and re-read, and told his friend William Allingham (see page 17), that the perusal of it had modified his ideas of the French Cæsar.

Dr. Bodichon was at one time an army surgeon, and those who have visited Scalands Gate may have observed, hanging on one of the walls, two pictures representing the skilful doctor gathering up such pieces as were left of M. Bombonnel’s (the panther-slayer and Franc-Tireur) face which had been frightfully mangled in his encounter with a panther. Here is a list of the wounds :—5 on the left hand, the animal’s teeth having pierced it in 3 places ; 8 in the left arm : 4 in the head : *10 in the face* ; 4 in the mouth, the nasal bone being broken ; 5 teeth wrenched out ; and the left cheek below the eyelid torn to tatters.* Yet so wonderfully and skilfully did the doctor patch and sew together the pieces that in a very short space of time

* Anglo-French Reminiscences.

Bombonnel was again at his favourite pastime—panther hunting. The doctor died in 1885.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. B. LEIGH SMITH.

Mr. B. Leigh Smith, the well-known Arctic Explorer, and brother of Madame Bodichon, for many years resided at Glottenham. In the summer of 1873, Mr. Leigh Smith visited the Swedish Arctic Expedition in North-East Land, in his yacht "Diana," and supplied them with fresh provisions. This Expedition, under the command of Professor Nordenskiöld, was in distress owing to two vessels which were to have supplied them with fresh provisions being forced to winter. During the years 1880-81 Mr. Leigh Smith, who had previously made three voyages to Spitzbergen, reached the S.E. coast of Franz-Josef Land in his screw steamer "Eira," and surveyed the coast up to Cape Lofley, by this means he increased our knowledge of that group of islands and proved that they could be reached by ships; but whilst the "Eira" was about to leave that land for the second time (Aug. 1881) it was crushed by the ice near Cape Flora and rapidly sank. Mr. Leigh Smith and his crew passed the winter of 1881-82, with only a small quantity of provisions, in a wretched hovel built of stone and with the wreckage which they had been able to save from the ship. On June 21st, 1882, they started in four boats to reach some vessels on the Nova Zembla coast. It was a most laborious and perilous voyage. On the 2nd August they were seen and welcomed by the "Willem Barents," and soon afterwards were taken on board the whaler "Hope," under the command of Sir Allen Young, which had come out for their rescue.

CHAPTER XII.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

The history of Robertsbridge would be incomplete without at least a passing notice of the distinguished visitors who have made more or less prolonged visits to our locality. The Royal Visitors to the Abbey have already been alluded to. (p. 8). John Leland and Horace Walpole have also been noticed. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, paid no fewer than five visits to Robertsbridge. The first being on Oct. 31, 1771. The year 1778, saw Wesley twice at Robertsbridge. His last visit being Dec. 7th, 1784, when, owing to

heavy snow, it took him (then in his 82nd year) five hours to travel 15 miles with a pair of good horses. The great-grandmother of the writer was amongst those who heard Wesley preach when at Robertsbridge. And what can be said of Madame Bodichon's distinguished guests who frequently honored that lady with their presence, and whose autographs are to be seen at Scalands Gate, (see p. 17), i.e., George Eliot, (M. E. Lewes), novelist, the writer of *Adam Bede*, (of which book Chas. Reade, novelist, remarked "the finest thing since Shakespeare" and of which Mrs. Carlyle, after reading it, said "I find myself in charity with the whole human race"; Madame Bodichon had a copy of *Adam Bede*, in which the author had written "To her who first recognised me in this work,") *Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, etc., etc. Prof. J. J. Sylvester, the finest mathematician in Europe, who shared with Cayley the work of founding invarrant algebra and enriched the science of number with a body of doctrine on partition. Henry Moore, the famous marine painter who exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1853. Charles Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (the friend of Ruskin) the famous painter and poet, who married the remarkable Miss Siddal, who was the original of Millais' "Ophelia," and of many of Rossetti's pictures, notably that of "Beata Beatrix," which was painted from memory after her death. Christina Rossetti, sister of the above, a gifted poetess, and the youngest member of a family of rare distinction. William Allingham, a popular poet of English origin, who succeeded Froude as Editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, and author of "Day and Night Songs," illustrated by Rossetti and Millais. Henry Fawcett, the blind Postmaster-General, who established the Parcels Post in 1882, and largely contributed to the passing of the Reform Bill, 1867. He became a consistent follower of John Stuart Mill. Sir E. Chadwick (knighted 1889), the great sanitary reformer who published an article on Preventive Police which gained him the admiration and friendship of Jeremy Bentham. W. B. Scott, poet and painter, (1811-1890) exhibited Royal Academy (1842-69), also edited a series of English poets. Daubigny, the great French painter, who would frequently remark to his noble and gifted hostess "Ah! Madame Bodichon, you always inspire me." Another gifted visitor to Scalands, and an intimate friend of Madame Bodichon's, is Miss M. Betham Edwards, now residing at Hastings, (officier de l'instruction Publique de France), the only English woman who enjoys this distinction, given as a recognition of her numerous studies of rural France. She is first cousin of the late Miss Amelia Blandford Edwards, the distinguished Egyptologist, and author of "Barbara's History." Among her numerous writings are "The White House by the Sea,"

(written whilst she was yet in her teens) "Dr. Jacob," "Kitty" (of which Lord Houghton once remarked "the best novel I ever read,") "Arthur Young's travels in France," etc., etc. Miss Betham Edwards is an excellent linguist, and owes her keen interest in France and French history, to Dr. Bodichon.

CHAPTER XIII.

TREASURE TROVE.

Perhaps the most interesting item in the latter-day history of Robertsbridge and neighbourhood was the finding of old gold at Mountfield. On Jan. 12, 1862, while a man was engaged ploughing the Barn field belonging to Taylor's Farm, the ploughshare became suddenly entangled in a piece of bright metal so as to impede the progress of the plough. This the ploughman removed, and looking back to see whence it came, he discovered a hole which the plough had gone through, measuring four or five inches across the top, and about a foot in depth, in which, upon examination, he found a considerable quantity more of the same metal. It consisted of several articles, some of which were of a circular and some of a semi-circular shape, the semi-circular pieces being finished off at the ends like a trumpet. When interred, they had evidently been placed in a box, which had totally gone to decay, the earth about the hole in which they were lying, being of a much darker colour than that of the field generally. The ploughman took the articles home to his master who, supposing them to be brass, gave them to him. After several unsuccessful attempts to part with the articles, he at last disposed of them to a Hastings man, (who had a suspicion the metal was gold) at the price of old brass, viz. 6d. per lb., the metal weighing 11-lbs. The purchaser's suspicion having been confirmed, he lost no time in taking what he had purchased, with several other pieces that he himself had dug up, to a gold refiner in London who bought them of him for £529 12s. 7d., the weight of the gold after it was melted down being 153ozs. 12grs. As a piece had been previously sold to a Hastings jeweller for £18, the whole sum realized by this treasure trove was £547 12s. 7d. The weight of the whole quantity found in the field was estimated at 12 or 13lbs, and its worth £650. A claim to this treasure trove was set up by the Crown, but while the proceedings were pending, the greater part of the gold had been disposed of in such a way as to leave no hope of its recovery. There is no doubt, however, that it was partly Celtic and ancient British ring money, and partly ornaments. The principle article discovered

was a large curved ornament having its extremity trumpet-shaped and constructed of three pieces of flattened gold placed together and then twisted so as to give it a grooved appearance. The length of the piece was about 3 feet. Considering that this treasure trove must have been in the earth at least 2000 years, it was in a good state, much of the gold still retaining its original brightness. Undoubtedly these articles ornamented the breastplates of chiefs in their wars. The finder and the disposer were both tried at the winter assizes, held at Lewes in December, 1862. The judgement passed upon them by the court was that each of them should pay a fine of £265, (the two together being the amount of the whole sum, £530, which the property realized when sold by them as old gold for melting purposes) to the Queen and be imprisoned until the same be paid.

CHAPTER XIV.

RAILWAYS.

In 1851 the S.E.R. was opened for traffic, and a station located at Robertsbridge, from whence London can be reached in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, a striking contrast to the early part of the last century when two days were required to complete the journey by coach. Indeed, there are many of the inhabitants now living who can remember the patience required for the tedious journey to London to see the Great Exhibition, soon after the railway had been opened for traffic. A light railway has recently been constructed between Robertsbridge and Headcorn (Kent), *via* Bodiam and Newenden. It crosses the main London to Hastings road between Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street, now known as the Bridges,* but formerly called the Clappers. From this point a good view can be obtained of the large steam flour mills, which unfortunately were partially destroyed by fire in Dec., 1902, the damage being estimated at £20,000. Immediately after crossing the road a fine view of the length of the Parish Church may be obtained. The railway runs along the picturesque Rother valley to Bodiam and within a few yards of Bodiam Castle, to Tenterden, thus making exploration of this part of Sussex very simple.

* These bridges were built over a century ago by the grandfather of the writer, and in 1836 were made wider for the increased traffic, consequent on the new road being made to Silverhill.

CHAPTER XV.

DIAMOND JUBILEE

The inhabitants of Robertsbridge were not behind in their demonstration of loyalty on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the late beloved and lamented Queen Victoria (1897). A special service was held at the Parish Church, the inhabitants marching in procession from the George Hill, preceded by the Robertsbridge Town Band. After the service, 60 volleys were fired on the bells, corresponding with the years of Her Majesty's reign. In the afternoon about 450 were entertained to tea, and 1,000 adults had dinner, after which a series of sports were carried out in the cricket ground. At the close of the day a huge bonfire was ignited at Silverhill. On this high and commanding station barracks were erected during the Peninsular War, as a *depôt* for the stores of the Eastern coast of Sussex. In 1806, the Duke of Wellington (then Major-General Wellesley) was in command of 12,000 soldiers encamped in the neighbourhood, himself living at Hastings House. When peace was proclaimed the barracks were removed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LATE REV. R. W. LOOSEMORE, M.A.

The very sudden death of the late beloved Vicar of Salehurst, so totally unexpected, on February 1st, 1901, created a profound sensation in Salehurst parish, and to the many who knew him in the neighbourhood. It was the theme of conversation for some days amongst all classes in the district. Happy in his work and labour of love, happy in the respect and love of his parishioners, his untiring devotion to the sacred duties of his office for 22 years was most marked. He was a genial, true, and helpful friend. For many years it was granted me the great privilege of his friendship. It was a liberal education to know him, and when I learnt the painful news of his death, amidst my grief I entertained this joy, "I knew him." The fragrance of his life still lingers in the place that no longer knows his presence. He was buried in Salehurst Churchyard, February 5th, 1901.

