

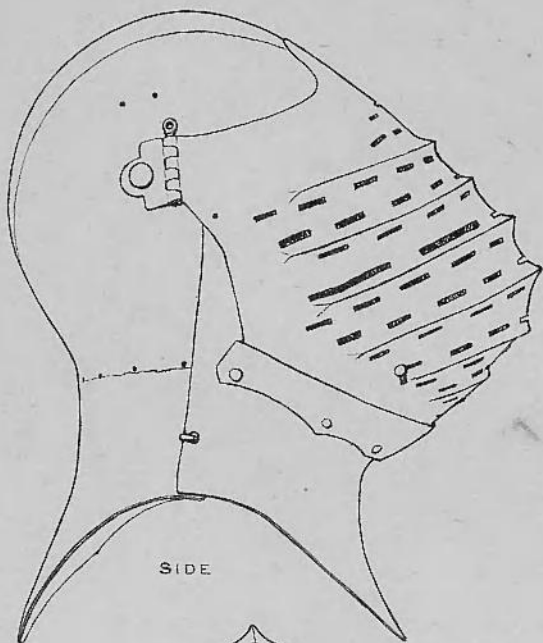
NOTES ON HELMS FROM PETWORTH CHURCH AND WIMBORNE MINSTER.¹

By W. HUYSHE.

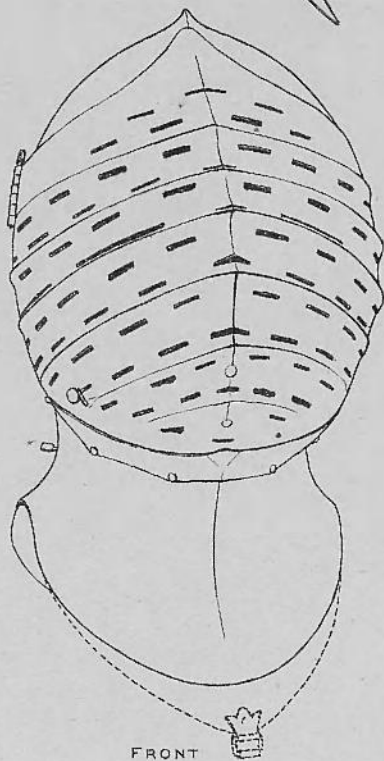
I have the pleasure of submitting to the meeting two helms, one from Petworth Church in Sussex, the other from Wimborne Minster in Dorset. The former, exhibited by permission of the Earl of Leconfield, hangs over the tomb of Sir John Dawtrey, on the north wall of the chapel of St. Thomas à Beckett, known as the Northumberland Chapel, but which is supposed to have originally belonged to the Dawtrey family. Leland says:—"Here lyith also certain of the Dautereis whos names in Latine be there wryten de Alta Ripa." The pedigree of the family of Dawtrey of Moorhouse and Petworth is given by Dallaway in his "History of Sussex," and portions of their mansion of Moore and of their house in Petworth still remain. Leland, who was the guest of Sir Henry Dawtrey when he visited Petworth, mentions both the residences of the family, "The chiefest house of these Dawtereis," he says, "is in Petworth parochie caullid the more half a mile from Petworth toune;" and he mentions their town house as "the house longing to them in Petworth by the church." The tomb of Sir John and Lady Dawtrey in the north wall of the chapel is of Caen stone canopied; the effigies kneel before desks and there are considerable remains of the colouring of the armour of the knight and the costume of his lady. Sir John Dawtrey died in 1527. The helm which is now exhibited hangs on its original iron bracket high up on the wall over the tomb, and, as very little light strikes upon that side of the chapel, it might easily be overlooked; it was not noticed at the visit of the Sussex Archaeological Society to the church.

This head-piece is a tilting helm of the early part of the sixteenth century, and is of a form familiar to us from the designs of the artists of the Maximilian period and from several existing specimens of the same type. The fastenings in front and back are wanting, and it is rather remarkable that nearly all the rivets are also missing, through the portion which rests on the shoulders are two long unclinchd rivets or rather nails. The helm as it now exists gives the impression of an incomplete piece of armourer's work, and it seems probable that it is, in fact, an *unfinished* helm, which might have been purchased in a hurry at the heaulmier's for the funeral pageant. It is, however, none the less a genuine tilting helm. It has been painted of a reddish colour and there is a rude attempt at decoration in front by means of lighter bands. This is probably of later dates than the helm itself. In the crown-piece is a hole, through which

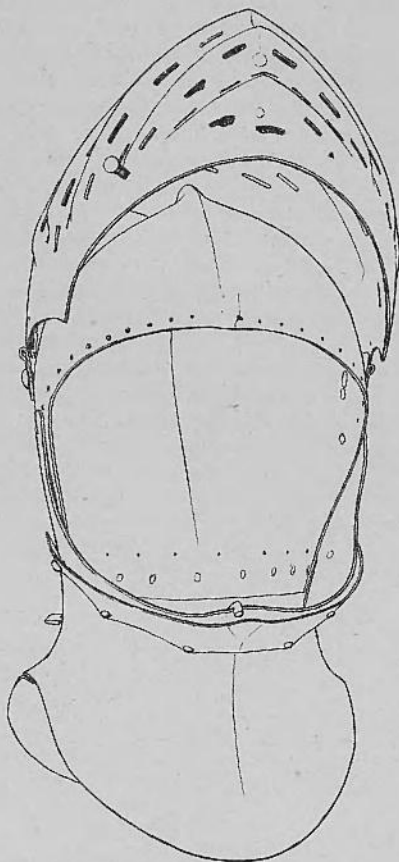
¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, 3 February, 1881.



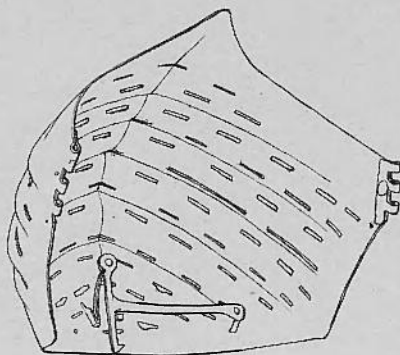
SIDE



FRONT



FRONT WITH VISOR RAISED.



INSIDE OF VISOR.

was probably originally rivetted a spike for the support of the crest of the family, a unicorn passant argent. The weight of the helm is $21\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.

The other example is exhibited by permission of the Rev. E. Fiennes Trotman, vicar of Wimborne. It has hung for many years over the tomb of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, who died in 1444, and is figured as a tail-piece to the description of the tomb in Blore's "Monumental Remains," 1826. Blore says of it: "An original helmet, so nearly of the date of the monument, is placed above it, that we can scarcely doubt its connexion with our subject." The date of the Duke's death is, however, I think, certainly too early for the helm, and its present position in the Minster is not its original one. The vicar writes to me that it has no connexion with the tomb over which it hangs, and that the old sexton tells him that in his boyhood the helm had become unattached, and was lying about the church, and was subsequently suspended over the tomb.

This helm is of the kind used for the tourney and for fighting: on foot at the barriers. I should place its date between 1480 and 1520. The perforated and fluted vizor is moveable, and can be detached from the hinges, to which it is fixed by means of a pin on either side; the spring catch, in perfect preservation, by which the vizor, when lowered, is secured to the chin-piece should be noticed. The helm is of good form and workmanship, but is disfigured by the thick coat of black paint with which it is covered. Its weight is $14\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.