



IRON GATES AT CARSHALTON PARK
The Central Sections.

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BY

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DURING the past three or four years the grounds of Carshalton Park have been cut up into plots for small villa-residences. The fine timber trees have been felled, and several new roads constructed across what was once a charming estate.

Notwithstanding all the changes which have taken place, the splendid iron screens and gates still remain, but as they are actually offered for sale and may, at any moment, be destroyed or removed to make way for more brick villas, it seems desirable to put on record a few particulars of what must be considered one of the finest pieces of wrought iron-work in the kingdom.

Sir William Scawen, M.P. for Surrey, and one of the Directors of the Bank of England, is popularly believed to have caused the gates to be placed at the entrance to his park, where he intended to build an important mansion. He died in 1722, and his tomb, with semi-recumbent marble effigy, is at the east end of the south aisle of Carshalton Church.

These gates, a canal extending towards the high ground to the south, where there was a grotto, and some rather ambitious stables, were the only portions ever completed of the scheme for a new house. Plans, elevations, and sections of the projected building were engraved, and published in James Leoni's translation of Leon Batista Alberti's *Architecture*, in 1755. The plates, however, are dated 1723, and the lettering on them, as well as the descriptive letter-press (pages 3-4), states that the house was designed for Thomas Scawen, Esq.,

Sir William's younger brother. This Thomas Scawen was Alderman of London and Governor of the Bank of England; he was knighted on 25th September, 1714, and died 22nd September, 1730. It is probable, therefore, that the new house was projected before his knighthood, although the plates of plans, &c., were not engraved until some years later. No mention is made of the iron gates in Leoni's book.

The screens and gates, which are almost entirely wrought, and probably of Sussex iron, consists of a range of seven sections, 113 feet in length, and including three gates. The whole is flanked by two piers of Portland stone, 17 feet high, on which are groups of lead castings representing Actæon and Artemis. These piers are elaborately and deeply carved on the western or inner side (see the accompanying photograph), and some delicate ornament adorns the eastern side.

The iron-work is particularly good. It is characterised by great delicacy and refinement of line rather than elaboration of decorative details. The artist who designed the work sought to produce effect, not in the method employed by Tijou, at Hampton Court Palace and St. Paul's Cathedral, by means of florid ornament, but rather in the style of the mediæval iron-workers who relied on proportion and grace of form. The Carshalton iron-worker certainly employed Renaissance scrolls, etc., but he designed with simplicity and restraint.

The photographic illustration which is here reproduced is taken from the western side, so as to bring the delicate curves of the iron-work into strong contrast against the sky.

The removal of the gates and piers from their present place at Carshalton can only be a question of months, but before it is too late, one cannot help expressing the pious hope that some wealthy person will rescue them from destruction, and place them in a public park or other suitable place where they will be kept in safety, and remain as a pattern for the designers of iron gates in future generations.



IRON GATES AT CARSHALTON PARK :
The Northern Pier from the Inside
of the Park.