

## SMUGGLING IN SUSSEX.

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THE system of smuggling in Sussex, and the neighbouring counties on the seacoast, dates from a period long prior to that in which heavy customs duties on imports encouraged, what is locally and technically called, "the free-trader."

The southern counties were first used for an illicit export trade in wool; and, till after the reign of Charles I., it was only during our wars with France, Holland, and Spain, when the products of those countries were prohibited here, that there was an illicit import trade of any magnitude.

### EXPORT SMUGGLING.

A few notes on the wool trade will best illustrate the origin of the illegal export of that article, of which Dryden, in his *King Arthur*, says:—

Though Jason's fleece was famed of old,  
The British wool is growing gold:  
No mines can more of wealth supply.  
It keeps the peasant from the cold,  
And takes for kings the Tyrian dye.

In the reign of Edward I., among the articles of inquiry before the jurors on the hundred rolls, 1274, was the illegal exportation of wool;<sup>1</sup> the Sussex return shows that it had been sent from Shoreham.<sup>2</sup> Soon after an export duty was imposed, on English wool, of 20*s.* a bag (or £3 of our money), increased to 40*s.* (or £6) in 1296; then lowered to half a mark a bag; and, ultimately, the higher duty was again imposed. At this time the price of English wool was 6*d.* a pound (or 1*s.* 6*d.* of our money), and many English merchants transported themselves with it.

Attempts to prohibit the exportation of wool were however

<sup>1</sup> Henry III. had been advised to permit the export to Holland and Brabant, at a duty of 5 marks the sack; and it was calculated that this duty, willingly paid,

would yield 110,000 mks. (£66,333. 13*s.* 4*d.*), implying an export of 22,000 sacks) in six months.—BLAAUW'S *Barons' War*, Ap. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii. pp. 203-209.

made by Edward III. That monarch had offered great facilities to the Flemings, to establish the woollen manufactures in this country: in 1336, the mayors and bailiffs of Winchelsea, Chichester (and twelve other ports out of Sussex), were directed not to allow the export till the duty had been paid;<sup>1</sup> and he had so far succeeded, that the cloth produced in the year 1337 was sufficient to enable him to prohibit the wear of any clothes made beyond seas, and to interdict the export of English wool, under the penalties, which then attached to capital felonies. His anticipations, however, were not realised. The merchants of Middlebourg, and afterwards of Calais, had great facilities for evading the English law; they clandestinely exported foreign cloths to England, and imported the wool smuggled out of this country.<sup>2</sup> The law was so severe, that it became useless; the punishment of loss of life and limb was soon repealed. In 1341, Winchelsea, Chichester (and thirteen other ports not in Sussex), were named, from which wool might be exported, on payment of a duty of 50*s.* a sack;<sup>3</sup> and licenses were granted for all who should give 40*s.* upon a pack of wool of 240 pounds, beyond the due custom of half a mark a pack. The next step taken by Edward was, to regulate the price of wool; and accordingly, in 1343, an act was passed, fixing, for three years, the price of Kent, Sussex, and Middlesex wool—the best wool being fixed at nine marks (or £8. 3*s.* 6*d.* of our money), and marsh at 100*s.* (or £13. 14*s.* 6*d.* of our money), showing the distinction between the two breeds of short and long woolled sheep in this country. Similar attempts at regulating the price were, from time to time, made by the Legislature. In 1353, they gave the King the duty of 50*s.* a sack<sup>4</sup> on exported wool; and, by the same statute, Chichester was one of the ten towns in England appointed as staples for weighing the wool. Ten years later, the staple was established at Calais, and there was a prohibition on exportation elsewhere; this so lowered the price of wool, that in 1390 the growers had three, four, and five years' crop unsold; and, in the next year, liberty was given

<sup>1</sup> Rymer's *Fœd.* (1821), ii. p. 944.

<sup>2</sup> In 1340, the greatest store of wool was conveyed by stealth.—John Smith's *Memoirs of Wool*, 2 vols. 8vo, 1747; vol. i. p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Rymer's *Fœd.* ii. p. 1158.

<sup>4</sup> A sack was to contain twenty-six stones of fourteen pounds each, or 364 pounds.

to export generally, on payment of a duty. In 1363, it was declared that all merchants and others, for their ease, might ship wools at Lewes, where the customers of Chichester were directed to take the customs.<sup>1</sup> In 1368, Chichester was still among the places for the staple; but in 1402 (4th Hen. IV.), the Lewes burgesses prayed<sup>2</sup> that wool might be again weighed, for home consumption and for shipment, at that town as well as at Chichester, because they were near the sea, and a great part of the wool was grown near there, and the town and neighbourhood were inhabited by many great merchants.

At this period, licenses were freely granted for the export of wool, to any part of the Continent, on payment of a heavy duty to the crown. It was to evade this duty that the smuggling trade was carried on. When, in 1423,<sup>3</sup> it was enacted that no license should be granted to export the "slight," *i. e.*, the short "wools of Southampton, Kent, Sussex, and York," except to the staple at Calais, a still more direct encouragement was given to the men of the coast to evade the law; and, in 1436, wharves<sup>4</sup> were assigned for the shipping of wool, to avoid the damage done to the King by those who shipped their wools in divers secret places and creeks, "stealing and conveying the same, not customed, to divers parts beyond the seas, and not to Calais." The shippers were required to find sureties, and to bring back from Calais certificates of unloading there.

The price of wool fell considerably; and, in 1454, it was not much more than two-thirds of its price 110 years previously; the wool-growers were alarmed, and their representatives in the Commons complained of the great "abundance of wools, as well by stealth as by license, uttered into the parts beyond the sea,"<sup>5</sup> and prayed that wool might not be sold under certain prices; Shropshire marsh wool was fixed at fourteen marks; Kent at £3, instead of 100*s.*; Sussex at 50*s.*; and Hants at seven marks a sack; whilst in the next reign of Edward IV., it was enacted that no alien should export wool, and denizens only to Calais.

In 1547, under Edward VI., complaints were made as to the falling off in the amount of duty due to the crown; the

<sup>1</sup> Prynne's *Records*, 37 Edward III.

<sup>2</sup> *Rot. Parl.* iii. p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> Act 2 Hen. VI. c. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Act 15 Henry VI. c. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Rot. Parl.* v. p. 274.

irregularity with which it was paid; and the mode in which the price was artificially raised by the merchants. An inquiry was directed into the rate of subsidy due to the King, and the weight and quality of the wool in England and Calais;<sup>1</sup> and a bill was introduced for regulating the buying by staplers and clothiers. In the year 1548, the act against regrating was continued.

About this time, it would seem that the woollen manufacture existed, both in the counties of Kent and Sussex.<sup>2</sup> In 1551, renewed attempts to improve the English manufacture were made. A body of Flemish weavers was settled at Glastonbury,<sup>3</sup> and supplied with wools; and the Legislature passed a very stringent act for regulating the times of buying wool—so stringent, indeed, that several of its clauses had to be repealed in 1553. Queen Elizabeth also favoured still more the immigration of foreign weavers. Although licenses were granted for the export of wools on payment of duty, and in October, 1560, we have an account of wools shipped legally to Bruges,<sup>4</sup> yet, practically, the merchants of the staple had obtained a monopoly of exportation.<sup>5</sup>

The loss of Calais, however, and consequently of the staple there, had most materially injured the English wool-grower and the merchants of the staple. The latter laid their complaints before Queen Elizabeth, in 1560, representing the injury they had sustained since the loss of Calais,<sup>6</sup> and obtained such redress as was within the power of the crown, namely, by license to export wool generally, on payment of export duty. A similar license had been granted to Lord Robert Dudley, which was renewed in 1562;<sup>7</sup> and in 1571, the act of Edward VI., putting restrictions on the home trade, was extended.

The Parliaments of Mary, Elizabeth, and James granted the high duty of £1. 13s. 6d. a sack on wool exported by natives, and double the amount by foreigners. It is noticeable that, at this time, short wools had become of still less value; and that the long Cotswold wool had come into the most favour.

<sup>1</sup> Act 5 and 6 Edward VI. c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> MSS. State Paper, *Lemon*. pp. 4-5. A weaver is among the victuallers of Rye, 1626, Dom. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> By the act 27 Henry VIII. c. 15,

they had acquired the sole right of buying wool in Sussex, and twenty-seven other counties.

<sup>6</sup> MSS. State Paper, Domestic. *Lemon*. p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* p. 199.

These restrictions operated very prejudicially on the trade ; and, in 1572, the Company of Woolmen petitioned the Queen to take off the restraints imposed by the act of the preceding year and by Edward VI. ;<sup>1</sup> and, five years afterwards (1577), the scarcity and high price were so great, as to give rise to grave complaints against the merchants of the staple from the clothiers of Wilts, Worcester, Gloucester, and Essex<sup>2</sup> (then the principal seats of the woollen manufacture). In August of that year, commissioners were appointed, in sundry counties, to have the special oversight for the restraint of the unlawful buying and engrossing wool ;<sup>3</sup> and, towards the close of the reign of James I. (in 1621-24-26), bills were introduced prohibiting all exportation of wool.<sup>4</sup>

On April 17, 1630, Charles I. also published a proclamation against the export of wool, but still granted licenses. In 1647, in consequence of the high price, an ordinance passed wholly prohibiting the exportation of wool and fuller's earth.<sup>5</sup> Again, on November 18, 1656, a further proclamation was issued against the exportation ; yet it was avowed, by an authority writing in that year,<sup>6</sup> that, though the exportation was prohibited almost as a felony, there was nothing more daily practised. Nor was the loss, said he, in this case all the injury ; for when honest men did "detect these caterpillars," and endeavoured, by due course of law, to make stoppage thereof and to have the offenders punished, so many were the evasions—such combinations and interests in the officers who ought to punish ; such favour had they in the courts of justice, and, in general, such were the affronts and discouragements—that the dearest lover of his country, or most interested in trade, dared not to prevent that mischief which his eyes beheld to fall upon his nation.

After the Restoration, in 1660, an act was passed entirely prohibiting the export of wool ; and in 1662, the illicit export was made felony. The severity of the punishment had no effect in discouraging the active spirits along the southern coast, and they readily risked their necks for 12*d.* a day. Seven years after the last enactment, it is stated that from

<sup>1</sup> MSS. State Paper, Domestic. p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 550.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 554.

<sup>4</sup> It was prohibited, without license, by proclamation, July 20, 1622.

<sup>5</sup> Fuller's earth was found at Nutley Common, in Sussex.

<sup>6</sup> *The Golden Fleece*, by W. S. Gent, 1656, p. 67.

Romney Marsh the greatest part of the rough wool was exported, being put on board French shallops by night, with ten or twenty men well armed to guard it; whilst in some other parts of Sussex, Hants, and Essex, the same methods were used, but not so conveniently.<sup>1</sup> In 1671, Mr. W. Carter declared that the misery of England was the great quantity of wool stolen out of England. Holland drew from Ireland whole ship-loads of wool, besides what came from England, being stolen out from the Kentish, Essex, and Sussex coasts. In the town of Calais alone, there had been at least, within two years, brought in forty thousand packs of wool from the coasts of Kent and Sussex; for Romney Marsh men were not content only with the exportation of their own growth, but bought wool ten or twenty miles up the country, brought it down to the seaside, and shipped it off;<sup>2</sup> and all attempts at effective prosecution of the offenders were defeated.<sup>3</sup>

In 1677, the landowners endeavoured, without success, to obtain a direct sanction for a legitimate export trade; and *Reasons for a Limited Exportation* were published. Andrew Marvel, writing in this same year, describes the owners as a militia, that, in defiance of all authority, convey their wool to the shallops with such strength, that the officers dare not offend them.<sup>4</sup>

After the revolution of 1688, the penalty of felony, imposed by the act of Charles II., was thought too severe. Very few convictions had taken place under it; and, in 1696, a milder punishment was inflicted;<sup>5</sup> whilst, in 1698, a direct blow was aimed at the Kent and Sussex men by an enactment, which lasted till our own day,<sup>6</sup> that no person living within fifteen miles of the sea, in those counties, should buy any wool before he entered into a bond, with sureties, that all the wool he should

<sup>1</sup> *England's Interest Asserted*, 1669, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *England's Interest in Trade Asserted*, by W. C. 1671.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Trevers, in 1675, says (p. 40): "It is well known that smugglers are not of the meanest persons in the places where they dwell, but have oftentimes great interest with the magistrates; and, being purse-proud, do not value what they spend to ingratiate themselves with persons of authority, to distrust all such as discover their fraudulent dealings, or else by bribes to stop their mouths. \* \* \* \* The smug-

glers are not only well acquainted with some attorneys and clerks, but they make good interest with the under-sheriffs in the counties where they drive their trade; and these have strange tricks and delays in their returns, in which some of them will take part with the offenders instead of executing the law against them."

<sup>4</sup> *Letter from a Younger Brother in Ireland to an Elder Brother in England*. Published anonymously. 1677.

<sup>5</sup> 7 and 8 William III. c. 28.

<sup>6</sup> 9 and 10 William III. c. 40, secs. 2 and 3.

buy should not be sold by him to any persons within fifteen miles of the sea; and growers of wool within ten miles of the sea, in those counties, were obliged, within three days of shearing, to account for the number of fleeces, and where lodged.

All the care of the Legislature had been to no purpose; the coast men had set the law at defiance—openly carrying their wool, at shearing-time, on horses' backs to the seashore, where French vessels were ready to receive it—and attacking fiercely any one who ventured to interfere. Mr. W. Carter himself was sharply attacked, in 1688. Having procured the necessary warrants, he repaired to Romney Marsh, where he seized eight or ten men, who were carrying the wool on horses' backs to be shipped, and desired the Mayor of Romney to commit them. The Mayor—wishing, no doubt, to live a peaceful life among his neighbours—admitted them to bail. Carter and his assistants retired to Lydd, but that town was made too hot to hold them—they were attacked at night; adopting the advice of the Mayor's son, they next day, December 13, came towards Rye. They were pursued by some fifty armed horsemen, till they got to Camber Point; so fast were they followed, that they could not get their horses over Guilford Ferry; but, luckily, some ships' boats gave them assistance, so that the riders got safe into the town, which had been "put into much fear;" and "had they not got into the boats," says one of the witnesses, "Mr. Carter would have received some hurt, for many of the exporters were desperate fellows, not caring what mischief they did."<sup>1</sup>

The new law was not, at first, much more efficient. Mr. Henry Baker, the supervisor of these counties, writing on his tour from Hastings, on September 18, 1698, refers the customs department to some observations he had made in relation to the *owling*<sup>2</sup> and smuggling trades; and in his letter of April 25, 1699, he states that, in a few weeks, there would be shorn in Romney Marsh (besides the adjacent parts in the level) about 160,000 sheep, whose fleeces would amount to about three thousand packs of wool, "the greatest part whereof will be immediately sent off hot into France—it being so designed, and provisions, in a great measure, already made for that purpose."<sup>3</sup> All that the new law seems to have done at

<sup>1</sup> *An Abstract of the Proceedings of W. Carter: being a Plea to some Objections urged against Him.* 1694.

<sup>2</sup> Wool smugglers were called *owlers*.

<sup>3</sup> Treasury Papers; Customs. Rolls House.

first was, to send the wool grown by the Sussex and Kent men some fifteen miles up the country, to be thence recarried to the sea and shipped.

Under the new act, seventeen surveyors were appointed for nineteen counties; and 299 riding officers, whose salaries and expenses came to £20,000 a year. They seized only 457 packs of wool, got only 162 packs condemned, and had 504 packs rescued. In Kent, sixty-five packs were seized, and eight only condemned; in Sussex, twenty-six were seized, and twelve condemned.<sup>1</sup>

The illicit exportation of wool was never stopped; and, in 1702, Mr. William Symonds, of Milton, near Gravesend, in his *New Year's Gift to the Parliament; or, England's Golden Fleece preserved, in Proposals humbly laid before the Present Parliament*,<sup>2</sup> makes twenty-five proposals to prevent the exportation of wool, which was illicitly carried on to a great extent; and, by the first, he suggests six staples or register offices at Ashford, Faversham, Maidstone, Tunbridge, Gravesend, and Dartford, for the prevention of clandestine export from those places.

In 1717, an act passed directing that smugglers of wool, who should be in prison and should not plead, might have judgment against them, and, if they did not pay the penalty, might be transported;<sup>3</sup> and yet, on May 19, 1720, it was necessary to issue a proclamation for enforcing the law.

In 1731, and in the five following years, the manufacturers petitioned for greater vigilance against the clandestine exportation of wool; it being alleged that the great decay of the woollen manufactures was, beyond dispute, owing to the illegal exportation of wool, of which 150,000 packs were supposed to be shipped yearly; and it was "feared that some gentlemen of no mean rank, whose estates bordered on the sea-coast, were too much influenced by a near but false prospect of gain," to wish for the application of a remedy proposed, viz., the registration of all wool at shearing-time, and a complete system of certificates till it was manufactured; "so that no smuggler or owler would venture to purchase it, by reason he would have no opportunity of sending it abroad in the dark."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Memoirs of Wool*, ii. p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> London: 4to, pp. 45.

<sup>3</sup> 4 George I. c. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Fleece*, 1736.



In the preamble to the act of 1739,<sup>1</sup> it is expressly avowed that, notwithstanding the penalties imposed for eighty years, the exportation of wool, unmanufactured, was “notoriously continued.” The stringent law of 1698 had failed in its object; and when, in 1787 (in opposition to the demands of the Lincolnshire wool-growers, for power to export their produce), the manufacturers brought in a bill to prevent the illicit exportation, because of the then increasing practice of smuggling British wool into France, and the inefficiency of the laws to prevent it; and when, as a remedy, it was proposed to extend the restrictions imposed upon Kent and Sussex to the entire kingdom, the opponents of the bill shrewdly asked:—“How it was the manufacturers could act so absurdly, to demand an extension of the laws relating to those two counties, when it was supposed that the greatest quantities of wool were smuggled from those parts?”<sup>2</sup>

The habit of export smuggling, then, has been, for some hundreds of years at least, part of the system under which the middle and lower classes in Sussex have been trained. Large fortunes were made by it in East Sussex, and it came to an end only during the last war with France.

#### IMPORT SMUGGLING.

The wars with France, in the time of King William and Queen Anne, revived and increased greatly the custom of *import* smuggling, for which the existing *export* system, already well organised, gave every convenience.

It was in Romney Marsh that Hunt, in the year 1696, ran cargoes of Lyons silk and Valenciennes lace sufficient to load thirty pack-horses; and, under cover of these proceedings, kept a house of resort for men of high consideration among the Jacobites—of “earls and barons, knights and doctors of divinity”—and established a clandestine post to London, and frequent communications, by means of privateers, with the Court of St. Germain.<sup>3</sup>

The vigilance necessarily used during the next war, to prevent these clandestine communications with the enemy, will

<sup>1</sup> 12 George II. c. 21.

<sup>2</sup> In 1770, only thirty-two pounds of wool were seized; in 1780, there were 12,383 lb.; and in 1782, there were 13,916

lb. seized.

<sup>3</sup> See Lord Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. iv. p. 650.

be best seen by the following account of some persons, as well English as French,<sup>1</sup> seized by the riding-officers appointed for the guard of the coast of Kent and Sussex, coming out of France; and of some other particulars relating to correspondence, &c., on those coasts, since her Majesty's declaration of war in May, 1702, to December 20, 1703:—

July 25, 1702.—Some French letters sent from a privateer, and others found in the beach near Seaford, all delivered to the Secretary Hedges's office.

October 8.—Near Seaford, two persons seized and sent to the Secretary, (by) Mr. Pelham and J. Goldham.

Jan. 4, 1703.—At Newhaven, five Frenchmen and a boy taken. Hawkins.

March 5.—At Felpham, two French prisoners. Parratt.

May 3.—A Frenchman from Calais, with letters and papers, under Beachy Head in the night, sent for. Messenger, Fowler.

May 6.—Three French prisoners at Pagham.

May 27.—Five or six French prisoners more, near Shoreham. Clark.—Captain Toosloe sett on shore, by Cleavell, from Diepe. Ditto.—Shoreham, three French prisoners more. Mose.—Three came on shore in long-boat, and made their escape through the country. Ogilvie.

October 2.—Mr. Herne seized: brought up per messenger—Seaford.

December 12.—Major Boucher, Captain Ogilby, and five more out of France, seized at Beachy Head, by express: brought up by messengers. Out of a small hoy, near Selsea, seized five Frenchmen: committed to Chichester Gaol, broke prison, and retaken by J. Field.

Seizures of silks, and other French goods, &c.—Convictions and compositions made and obtained by the said officers, within the time first above mentioned, amounting to about six thousand five hundred pounds—as per records in her Majesty's Court of Exchequer may appear. £6500

The public records of this period give us other evidence of the calling to which the smugglers betook themselves in time of war, viz., the conveyance of letters and correspondence to the enemy.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Owen, on January 3, 1703, reported the capture of William Snipp at Lydd, and John Burwash and George Fuller—described in Mr. Baker's letter of 6th of the same month “as part of the old gang of those who were *owlers* in the late war”—as openly in communication with French sloops which came to the coast; and hoped that the law would take hold of their carrying correspondence with these sloops, “else there would be more wool transported than there has been for many years;” whilst Mr. Baker declared that the “practice, if permitted, would very much encourage

<sup>1</sup> Egerton MS. 929, p. 38.

time of Elizabeth. See *Sussex Arch. Coll.*

<sup>2</sup> A custom as early, at least, as the Vol. V. pp. 195-6.

and contribute to the exportation of wool, and also the running or smuggling of French goods.”<sup>1</sup>

This system of carrying on correspondence with France, in time of war, lasted down to and through the last war, during which the daily newspapers and correspondence were regularly carried to Buonaparte, by a family then resident at Bexhill.

From the following report, made by Mr. Baker in December, 1703, it appears that the new law had, by that time, abated, though it had not quite stopped, the *owling* trade along these coasts, but that import smuggling still flourished:—

May it please your Honours,<sup>2</sup>—In obedience to your Honours, commanding me to consider how the charge of the ryding-officers appointed for the guard of the coasts of Kent and Sussex may, in some measure, be reduced without prejudice to her Majestie’s service, in preventing the exporting of wool, &c., from these coasts. Upon consideration thereof, and from observations I have made of the state of that and the smuggling trade, as they have been carried on since the present warr, I have observed and do beleave that the neck of the *owling* trade, as well as the spirits of the *owlers*, is, in a great measure, broke, particularly in Romney Marsh; where I have, in several of my late reports and papers laid before your Honours, observed unto you, that in the latter end of the last warr, and the beginning of the last peace, wool used to be shipped off from thence and from other parts of that county by great numbers of packes weekly, there are not now many visible signs of any quantities being transported. But for fine goods, as they call them (*viz.*, silks, lace, &c.), I am well assured that trade goes on through both counties, though not in such vast quantities as have been formerly brought in—I mean in those days when (as a gentleman of estate in one of the counties has, within this twelve months, told me) he had been at once, besides at other times, at the loading of a wagon with silks, lace, &c., till six oxen could hardly move it out of the place: I doe not think that trade is now so carried on as ’twas then. Therefore, upon consideration of the whole matter, since your Honours are of opinion that it is for her Majestie’s service to lessen the charge, I humbly propose:—That whereas there are now, for the security of those coasts, fifty officers appointed from the Isle of Sheppy, in Kent, to Emsworth, in Hampshire, which is coastwise more than two hundred miles, at 60*li.* per annum, with an allowance to each of them of 30*li.* per annum for a servant and horse, to assist them upon their duty in the night, the whole amounting to about 4500*li.* per annum, including the old salary of the port-officers, &c., my opinion, upon consideration as aforesaid, is, if your Honours shall approve thereof, that the said allowance of 30*li.* to each of them, for a servant and one horse as aforesaid, may be taken off, which will completely reduce one-third part of the whole, and leave it then at about 3000*li.* per annum: and for some kind of supply in their

<sup>1</sup> Treasury Papers; Customs. Rolls House.

<sup>2</sup> Egerton MS. 929, fol. 40.

nightly duty, instead of their servants, and that the course of that may not be broken, especially in Romney Marsh, where the mischief has most prevailed, I further propose that the dragoons now quartered in Kent, and, by her Majestie's order of the 11th August last, to be detached into severall parts of the Marsh, to assist the officers in the exportacon of wool, &c., as from time to time I shall direct (as per said order may appeare), may, if your Honours shall see please, be made useful in this service, pursuant to the Order in Councell by his late Majestie, bearing date the 23rd June, 1698, wherein it was ordered that, for encouragement of the said souldiers and the landlords of the houses that quarter them there (being an allowance of two pence per diem to each dragoon upon such service, and to the officers in proportion, the whole not exceeding 200*li.* per annum, to be paid by me—which was for about two years constantly paid them myself) being revived, I can see dispose those soldiers that the nightly duty of the officers shall not be interrupted, and every one of them shall always have one or more of them in the night upon duty: I mean all those in the Marsh, that is, from Folkestone inclusive to East Guldeford the same; and, this being soe ordered, your Honours do reduce the charge from what it now is full 1300*li.* per annum. The same use may be made of them upon the coast of Sussex (if it be thought for the service, as, in my opinion, it would very much be), as well in other respects as in those afore-mentioned. To all this, if your Honours can obtain the guard of cruizers, as they are appointed by the 7th and 8th of the late King, for those coasts from the North Foreland to the Isle of Wight, and shall be pleased to remove your weak and superannuated officers, as soon as you can provide otherwise for them, and, for the future, resolve to admitt none into the service; but that the officers (according to proper and apt instrucons to be prepared for them) be kept to a strict and diligent discipline in the performance of their duties. These methods being taken, I am humbly of opinion both coasts may be ventured with a single guard, see as aforesaid, during the warr, or for one year's tryall, &c.

*December, 1703.*

HEN. BAKER.

The new force was utterly inadequate to the suppression of the trade. In the next forty-five years the daring of the smugglers grew with the impunity with which they were enabled to act. Large gangs, of twenty, forty, fifty, and even one hundred, rode, armed with guns, bludgeons, and clubs, throughout the country, setting every one at defiance, and awing all the quiet inhabitants. They established warehouses and vaults in many districts, for the reception of their goods, and built large houses at Seacock's Heath in Etchingham (built by the well-known smuggler Arthur Gray, and called "Gray's Folly"), at Pix Hall and the Four Throws Hawkhurst,<sup>1</sup> at Goudhurst, and elsewhere, with the profits of their trade.

<sup>1</sup> *Ex inf.* Miss Ann Durrant, æt. 89, 1858.

We have in the Treasury Papers<sup>1</sup> many particulars of the daring and desperate acts of these companies or gangs of men in both parts of Sussex, during the first half of the last century, principally in the smuggling of tea.

In an engagement between the custom-house officers and upwards of sixty armed men, at Ferring, on June 21, 1720, William Gouldsmith, the custom-house officer, had his horse shot under him.<sup>2</sup>

In June, 1733, the officers of the customs at Newhaven attempted to seize ten horses laden with tea, at Cuckmere; but they were opposed by about thirty men, armed with pistols and blunderbusses, who fired on the officers, took them prisoners, and confined them whilst the goods were carried off.<sup>3</sup>

In August of the same year the riding officers observed upwards of twenty smugglers at Greenhay, most of them on horseback, armed with clubs, and their horses laden with tea, which the officers endeavoured to seize, but the smugglers fell upon them, and with clubs knocked one of the officers off his horse, wounded him, and confined him for an hour, whilst the gang carried off the goods.

On December 6, 1734, some officers of Newhaven, assisted by dragoons, met with a large gang of smugglers, well armed, who surrounded the officers, and confined them for about an hour and a half. The smugglers were afterwards met by three other officers and six dragoons, whom the smugglers attacked, but the officers got the better, pursued them, and seized five smugglers, armed with pistols, swords, and cutlasses, and twelve horses.

In July, 1735, some of the officers of the port of Arundel watched on the coast, expecting goods to be run out of a smuggling vessel, but being discovered by upwards of twenty smugglers, armed with pistols and blunderbusses, the officers were confined till two or three boat-loads of goods had been landed and conveyed away on horses; and in the same month, some other officers having received information that a parcel of brandy was to be run at Kingston, and going in pursuit of it, met with ten smugglers, one of whom presented a pistol, in

<sup>1</sup> Notorious instances of riots and assaults in running tea and other goods.—Customs: Rolls House.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Francis Briggs, July 26, 1733.—Customs: Rolls House.

<sup>3</sup> Notorious instances, &c.—Ibid.

order to rescue the goods ; but the officers, getting the better of the smugglers, seized the brandy, and carried it to the custom-house.

In the natural course of events these affrays must end in bloodshed ; and in March, 1737, a fatal engagement took place at Bulverhithe, with one of the then numerous gangs of Sussex smugglers, an account of which is given in a letter, dated March 10, from a person writing under the assumed name of Goring, to the Commissioners of Customs :<sup>1</sup>—

May it please (your) Honours,—It is not unknown to your Lordships of the late battle between the smuglers and officers at Bulverhide ; and in relation to that business, if your Honours please to advise in the newspapers, that this is excepted off, I will send a list of the names of the persons that were at that business, and the places' names where they are usually and mostly resident. Cat<sup>2</sup> (Morten's man) fired first, Morten was the second that fired ; the soldiers fired and killed Collison,<sup>3</sup> wounded Pizon, who is since dedd ; William Weston was wounded, but like to recover. Young Mr. Brown was not there, but his men and horses were ; from your Honours

Dutifull and most faithfull servant, GORING.

There was no foreign persons at this business, but all were Sussex men, and may easily be spoke with.

This (is) the seventh time Morten's people have workt this winter, and have not lost any thing but one half hundred (of tea) they gave to a dragoon and one officer they mett with the first of this winter ; and the Hoo company have lost no goods, although they constantly work, and at home too, since they lost the seven hundred-weight. When once the smuglers are drove from home they will soon be all taken. Note, that some say it was Gurr that fired first. You must well secure Cat, or else your Honours will soon lose the man : the best way will be to send for him up to London, for he knows the whole company, and hath been Morten's servant two years. There were several young chaps with the smuglers, whom, when taken, will soon discover the whole company. The number was twenty-six men. Mark's horse, Morten's, and Hoad's, were killed, and they lost not half their goods. They have sent for more goods, and twenty-nine horses set out from Groombridge this day, about four in the afternoon, and all the men well armed with long guns. \* \* There are some smuglers worth a good sum of money, and they pay for taking. \* \* The Hoo company might have been all ruined when they lost their goods ; the officers and soldiers knew them all, but they were not prosecuted. \* \* Morten and Boura sold, last winter, someways, 3000 lb. weight a week.

In fact the smugglers overawed most of the riding-officers, and bribed many others, so that the peaceable inhabitants of the villages were completely at the mercy of these lawless bands.

<sup>1</sup> Treasury Papers.—Customs : Rolls House.

<sup>2</sup> The family names will be familiar to

many in our own day, as very active and bold men.

<sup>3</sup> Another well-known name.

On June 13, 1744, the officers of the customs at Eastbourne, having intelligence of a gang of smugglers, went, with five dragoons mounted, to the seashore, near Pevensey; but one hundred smugglers rode up, and, after disarming the officers, fired about forty shot at them, cut them with the swords in a dangerous manner, loaded the goods on above one hundred horses, and made towards London.<sup>1</sup>

In *Seasonable Advice to all Smugglers of French Cambricks and French Lawns, with a brief State from the Honorable Commissioners of his Majesty's Customs of Smuggling, in the year 1745*,<sup>2</sup> it is said, that before the Committee of the House of Commons, which sat in 1745, to inquire into the causes of the most infamous practice of smuggling, it was in evidence: —“From Chichester it is represented that in January, 1745, nine smuggling cutters sailed from Rye, in that month, for Guernsey, in order to take in large quantities of goods, to be run on the coast; and they had intelligence that one of the cutters had landed her cargo.” The remedy suggested was the annexing the Isle of Man to the Crown of England, by purchase, and the employment of 2060 sea officers and men, in sixty vessels, to be stationed on different parts of the coast.

The most formidable gang, however, that had hitherto existed, and that which luckily furnished the climax to these scenes of crime, was known throughout our own county and Kent, as the “Hawkhurst Gang.” In the year 1747<sup>3</sup> the smugglers in these parts were grown so numerous and so formidable, by their daring and repeated attacks on the persons and properties of the inhabitants, and the cruelties exercised on some who had opposed their extravagancies, that the people of Goudhurst found themselves under the necessity either of deserting their houses, and leaving their property wholly at the mercy of these marauders, or of uniting to oppose by force their lawless inroads. The latter alternative was, at length, embraced; a paper, expressive of their abhorrence of the conduct of the smugglers, and their determination to oppose them, was drawn up and subscribed to, by a considerable number of persons, who assumed the appellation of

<sup>1</sup> *Gentleman's Mag.* vol. xiv. p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> Dearn's *Weald of Kent*. 8vo. Cran-

<sup>2</sup> *King's Pamphlets*, Brit. Mus. Lond. brook, 1814, p. 100.

1751, p. 13.

“The Goudhurst Band of Militia”; at the head of whom was a young man of the name of Sturt, a native of Goudhurst, who had recently received his discharge from a regiment of foot, under the command of General Harrison, and by whose persuasions they had been principally induced to this resolution. Intelligence of this confederacy soon reached the ears of the smugglers, who contrived to waylay one of the militia, and, by means of torture and confinement, extorted from him a full disclosure of the plans and intentions of his colleagues. After swearing this man not to take up arms against them, they let him go, desiring him to inform the confederates that they (the smugglers) would, on a certain day named, attack the town, murder every one therein, and burn it to the ground. Sturt, on receiving this information, convened his little band, and, having pointed out the danger of their situation without exertion and unanimity, engaged them in immediate preparation for the day of battle. While some were sent in quest of fire-arms, others were employed in casting balls, making cartridges, and taking every means for resistance and defence, which time and opportunity afforded. At the time appointed, the smugglers, headed by Thomas Kingsmill, made their appearance before the entrenchments of the militia,<sup>1</sup> and, after some horrid threats and imprecations by their leader, a general discharge of firearms was given by the smugglers, and returned immediately by the militia, by which one of the smugglers fell; but it was not till two more had lost their lives, and many had been wounded, that they quitted the field of battle; they were pursued by the militia, and some of them taken and executed.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Kingsmill escaped for a time, and became the leader of the desperate attack made in October, 1747, by thirty smugglers, on the custom-house at Poole. This man was a native of Goudhurst, and had been a husbandman; but, having joined the smugglers, he was distinguished and daring enough to become captain of the gang—an honour of which

<sup>1</sup> My great-grandfather, Wm. Durrant, afterwards of Lamberhurst and Boreham, M.D., was, at that time, resident with Mr. Hunt, a surgeon in the town; and (like Mr. James, in his novel of *The Smuggler*)

laid the scene of the attack at Goudhurst Church.

<sup>2</sup> “General” Sturt was, for some time prior to his death, master of the poor-house of Cranbrook. See also *Gent. Mag.* vol. lv. p. 679.



he was so proud, that he sought every opportunity of exhibiting specimens of his courage, and putting himself foremost in every service of danger.

Perin, another of the gang, was a native of Chichester, where he had served his time as a carpenter, and had successfully practised his trade, as a master, for some years, till a stroke of the palsy had deprived him of the use of his right hand; he then became connected with the smugglers, and used to sail to France as purchaser of goods for them. In this capacity, he, in September, 1747, bought a large quantity of brandy, tea, and rum,<sup>1</sup> which was loaded on board a cutter ("The Three Brothers"), with the view of running it on the coast of Sussex; but intelligence reached the revenue officers, and Captain Johnson, of the revenue cutter, at Poole, on September 22, caught sight of the loaded cutter, took her, and carried her and her cargo into Poole—Perin and the crew escaping in the boat.

On Sunday, Oct. 4, the whole body of smugglers assembled in Charlton Forest, to consult on the possibility of recovering the goods, when Perin proposed that they should go in a body, armed, and break open the Poole Custom-house; this was agreed to, and a bond was signed to support each other. The next day they met at Rowland's Castle, armed with swords and firearms; at the Forest of Bere, adjoining Horndean, Kingsmill and the Hawkhurst gang met them; they concealed themselves in a wood till the evening of the following day, and then proceeded to Poole, which they reached at eleven at night. A report, from two who were sent to reconnoitre, stating that a sloop of war lay opposite the quay, so that her guns could be pointed against the door of the custom-house, led some of the gang to falter; but Kingsmill and Fairhall (a native of Horsendown Green, Kent, of no business, inured to smuggling from infancy, and remarkable for his brutal courage)<sup>2</sup> addressed them, saying: "If you will not do it, we

<sup>1</sup> The tea was 41 $\frac{3}{4}$  cwt., packed in canvas and oilskin bags; and thirty-nine casks of spirits, slung with ropes, in order to be loaded on horses.—*History*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> He had been arrested and sent to London by James Butler, Esq., near Lewes, but escaped and rejoined his companions. It was proposed to burn down

Mr. Butler's house; but that not meeting with general assent, Fairhall, Kingsmill, and others of the gang, determined to waylay him, near his own park, and shoot him; but, by accident, he did not return home that night, and the matter becoming known, a watch was kept, and the design laid aside.—*History*, p. 147.

will do it ourselves." Then a fresh report was made, that, owing to the ebb-tide, the sloop could not bring her guns to bear. Animated with this intelligence, they all rode to the seacoast; Perin and another of the gang took care of the horses, whilst the main body went down to the custom-house, taking with them a boy they chanced to meet, to prevent his alarming the inhabitants. The door was forced open with hatchets and other instruments, the smuggled tea was carried off on the horses, to Fordingbridge; the band, after having travelled all night, there stopped for a time; but continued their journey to Brook, where the tea-booty was divided, in the proportion of five bags of twenty-seven pounds each per man.

A reward was offered for their apprehension, but it was months before any were taken. A man named Diamond was captured, and lodged in Chichester Gaol, when a portion of the gang committed murders in West Sussex to prevent evidence being given against their fellows. The victims were William Galley the elder, a custom-house officer at Southampton; and Daniel Chater, a shoemaker of Fordingbridge. The murderers were Benjamin Tapner, a native of Aldrington,<sup>1</sup> who had worked as a bricklayer; John Cobby, an illiterate son of a Sussex labourer; John Hammond, a labouring man, born at South Berstead; William Jackson and William Carter, natives of Hampshire; Richard Mills the elder, a native of Trotton, where he had been a horse-dealer, but, failing in business, commenced smuggling, and had become one of the most hardened of the gang; and Richard Mills the younger, who lived at Stedham, and had been with his father in business. It seems that, on Feb. 14, 1748, Galley and Chater were on their road to Major Batten's at Stanstead, to have Chater's evidence taken, when they were induced to stop at the White Hart, at Rowland's Castle, the landlady of which, being afraid that they were going to hurt the smugglers, sent for Jackson and Carter, and communicated her suspicions to them; others of the gang came in, and Carter soon got from Chater the real business. The men were then made nearly drunk and put to bed, from which they were awoken to be tied to one

<sup>1</sup> Trial of Benjamin Tapner and others, at Chichester, Jan. 1749.

horse, with their legs under the belly, and to be whipped till they fell twice, with their heads under. They were then taken to a well in Lady Holt Park, where Galley was taken from the horse and threatened to be thrown into the well; this, however, the smugglers did not do, but putting him again upon the horse, whipped him to death on the downs, and then dug a hole and buried him. Carter was then chained in a turf-house, from which, after being maimed in his nose and eyes by a knife, he was taken, in the dead of the night, to Harris's Well, and Tapner, having fastened a noose round his neck, bid him get over the pales to the well; they tied one end of the rope to the pales, and pushed him into the well; the rope, however, was short, and, he being some time without becoming strangled, they then untied him and threw him head-foremost into the well; and, to stop his groans, threw upon him the rails and gateposts round the well, and large stones. Galley's body was found by Mr. Stone whilst hunting; and six miles off, in the well, the body of Chater. The murderers were tried at a special assize for smugglers, holden at Chichester, before three judges—Sir Michael Forster, Knight, Sir Thomas Birch, Knight, and Mr. Baron Edward Clive<sup>1</sup>—Jan. 16, 1749. The sermon, which has been printed,<sup>2</sup> being preached by Sir William Ashburnham, then Dean, but afterwards Bishop of Chichester, from Job xxix. 14-16. The first three were convicted as principals, and the others as accessories before the fact to the murder of Chater; and Jackson and Carter for the murder of Galley. Jackson died in prison the night he was condemned. The others were hung on Jan. 18—the two Mills not in chains; but Carter was hung in chains, near Rackley; Tapner, on Rook's Hill, near Chichester; and Cobby and Hammond, on Selsey Isle, on the heath where they sometimes landed their smuggled goods, and where they could be seen a great distance east and west.

John Mills, another son of Richard Mills, and one of the gang, who, with some of his associates, saw the judges travel-

<sup>1</sup> *A Full and Genuine History of the inhuman and unparalleled Murders of Mr. William Galley, a Custom-house Officer, and Mr. Daniel Chater, a Shoemaker, by Fourteen Notorious Smugglers; with the Trials and Execution of the Seven*

*Bloody Criminals at Chichester.* Written by a Gentleman of Chichester. Fifth edition, 8vo. London: W. Clowes, 20, Villiers Street, Strand. N.D.

<sup>2</sup> *History, &c.* p. 150.

ling over Hind Heath, on their way to the special assize at Chichester, and proposed to rob them;<sup>1</sup> but his companions refused to concur with him. Soon after his father's execution he met with Richard Hawkins, put him on horseback, and carried him to the Dog and Partridge on Slindon Common, where Mills and his companions accused him of having stolen two bags of tea; and, on his denying it, flogged and kicked him to death, and then carrying his body twelve miles, tied stones to it, and sunk it in a pond in Parham Park. Mills was entrapped to the house of an outlawed smuggler named William Pring, at Beckenham, and there betrayed. He was tried and convicted at the assizes holden at East Grinstead, and there hung on Aug. 12, 1749, being conducted to the place of execution by a guard of soldiers, as a rescue was feared from the smugglers; and, after execution, he was hung in chains on Slindon Common. Others of the gang were tried at the same assizes, as highwaymen, and executed.

At length two of the smugglers, who had been evidence against the men hanged at Chichester, gave information as to the place of meeting of Kingsmill, Fairhall, Perin, and Glover; they were arrested for the breaking open of the custom-house at Poole, tried at Newgate, and convicted,<sup>2</sup> Glover being recommended by the jury to the royal mercy. Fairhall behaved most insolently on the trial, and threatened one of the witnesses; Glover exhibited penitence; but Kingsmill and Perin insisted that they had not been guilty of any robbery, because they only took the goods that once belonged to them. Perin's body was directed to be given to his friends, and he was lamenting the fate of his associates, when Fairhall said: "We shall be hanging up in the sweet air, when you are rotting in your grave;" and the night before his execution, Fairhall kept smoking with his friends till he was ordered by his keeper to go to his cell, when he exclaimed: "Why in such a hurry,

<sup>1</sup> The judges set out from London on Friday, Jan. 13th, and arrived at the Duke of Richmond's house, at Godalming, that evening. The next day they set out for Chichester, and were met by the Duke at Midhurst; and he entertained them with a dinner at his "hunting-house," near Charton. They reached

the Bishop's Palace at Chichester, at five that evening. The report that they were guarded there and back by a party of horse is erroneous; the judges, counselors, and principal officers, were in six coaches, each drawn by six horses.—*History*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *History*, &c. p. 131.

cannot you let me stay a little longer with my friends? I shall not be able to drink with them to-morrow night." Kingsmill was only twenty-eight, and Fairhall only twenty-five years of age, at the time of their trial.

Glover was pardoned; the other three were hung at Tyburn on April 26, 1749, and the body of Fairhall was hung in chains on Horsendown Green, and Kingsmill's on Goudhurst Gore.

This most formidable gang was thus broken up; but Horace Walpole's letter of August 5, 1752, and the diary of Walter Gale,<sup>1</sup> show that, to Sussex men, the profits of the illicit trade were too great a temptation to allow it to be given up.

The habit of smuggling, wrecking,<sup>2</sup> and privateering led to the perpetration of many other crimes; amongst others, to a revival of those acts of piracy which disgraced the Cinque Ports in the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

On Aug. 11, 1758, Nicholas Wingfield and Adams Hyde, of Hastings, masters of two privateer cutters, piratically boarded the Danish ship "Der Reisende Jacob," on board of which was the Marquis Pignatelli, Ambassador Extraordinary from his Catholic Majesty to the Court of Denmark; assaulting Jurgan Muller, the master of the vessel, and stealing twenty casks of butter. The Lords of the Admiralty offered a reward of £500. Nicholas Wingfield and Adams Hyde, with four others, having been betrayed by some of their accomplices, were arrested; and on Jan. 15, 1759, were brought under a strong guard of soldiers, and lodged in the Marshalsea. They were tried at the Admiralty sessions, March 9, 1759, when Nicholas Wingfield and Adams Hyde were found guilty; and on the 28th of the same month, were hung at Execution Dock. The four others were acquitted. The punishment did not operate as a sufficient warning to the Hastings men. For seven years a gang known as Ruxley's crew, most of whom lived at Hastings, boarded and robbed several ships coming up the Channel; and in particular, in 1768, they boarded a Dutch homeward-bound hoy, called "The Three Sisters,"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sussex Arch. Coll.* Vol. IV. p. 185; Vol. IX. p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Congreve, in his Epilogue to *The Mourning Bride*, alludes to this habit of the Sussex men. See also *A Descriptive Narrative of the Wreck of the Nympha*

*Americana, near Beachy Head*, Nov. 29, 1747," with the tailpiece by Mr. J. H. Hurdis: Lewes, Lee and Co. 1840.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Winchelsea*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> The usual method was to go alongside, under the pretence of trading; they

Peter Bootes commander, about two leagues from Beachy Head, and chopped the master down the back with an axe. In November, 1768, the Government sent a detachment of two hundred of the Inniskilling Dragoons to Hastings, to arrest the men, who had been betrayed by their bragging to one another how the Dutchman wriggled when they had cut him on the backbone; and a man-of-war and cutter lay off Hastings to receive the men.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers had strict orders not to allow their mission to be known; but, the day after their arrival, the Mayor (who was supposed to have aided in the evidence) was assaulted in the town, because he would not tell what the soldiers came for; the soldiers were thereupon called out, and several arrests made of parties, who were conveyed to the Marshalsea. At the Admiralty sessions holden on Oct. 30, 1769, Thomas Phillips, elder and younger, William and George Phillips, Mark Chatfield, Robert Webb, Thomas and Samuel Ailsbury, James and Richard Hyde, William Geary *alias* Justice *alias* George Wood, Thomas Knight, and William Wenham, were indicted for the piracy of "The Three Sisters," and capitally convicted; and of these Thomas Ailsbury, William Geary, William Wenham, and Richard Hyde, were hung at Execution Dock, Nov. 27.

So great was the panic occasioned by these arrests, that a shopkeeper, reported to be worth £10,000, absconded on information of having bought goods of the smugglers.<sup>2</sup>

In 1779, it became necessary to pass another act against smuggling; and, in a pamphlet making the new law known,<sup>3</sup> it is stated that the practice of smuggling had made such rapid strides from the sea-coasts into the very heart of the country, pervading every city, town, and village, as to have brought universal distress on the fair dealer; that the greater part of the 3,867,500 gallons distilled annually at Schiedam, was to be smuggled into England; that a distillery had lately been set up for making Geneva, for the same pur-

frequently mastered the crew, clapped them under hatches, and then plundered, and afterwards scuttled the ship.—*Public Advertiser*, Nov. 16, 1768.

<sup>1</sup> The man who had given information had arrested one of the gang, upon which the others swore they would murder the informant, unless their colleague was re-

leased.—*Public Advertiser*.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Advertiser*, Nov. 10, 1768.

<sup>3</sup> *Advice to the Unwary*, 1780. The well-known "Smugglers Act" was passed in 1736: it was modified in 1779 and 1784; and a review of all the statutes relating to the subject was made January 5, 1826.

pose, at Dunkirk; that the French imported five or six millions of pounds of tea, the greatest part of which was to be smuggled here;<sup>1</sup> that the trade of Dunkirk (where, and at Flushing, the Sussex smugglers, so late as thirty years since, had regular resident agents) was mostly carried on by smugglers, in vessels not only large, but so well constructed for sailing that seldom one of them was captured; that in many places near the sea, the farmer was unable to find hands to do his work, whilst great numbers were employed in carrying smuggled goods from one part of the country to another; and that the smugglers paid for what they bought in cash, or by the illicit exportation of English wool, no other articles of any consequence being carried abroad by them.

Although the illicit trade in the bulky article of wool came to an end with the commencement of the war of 1793, yet the trade in tea, silks, tobacco, and spirits continued; and, after the close of the war, was largely carried on. By degrees, tea was not easily got, and the duty on silks left little profit to the smuggler. Spirits, increased in value, by being some forty per cent. over proof, and tobacco, still, however, gave a profitable return, and lives were freely risked.<sup>2</sup>

In such a society as the Sussex, it would be improper to enter into any details which might involve the characters of persons still alive; but I may glance briefly at some of the encounters which have taken place within my own time. The trial, for murder, and conviction at Horsham, on March 28, 1821, of George England, a preventive man, for shooting Joseph Swaine, a fisherman of Hastings, in a scuffle, is in the recollection of many fishermen still alive there. On Feb. 11, in the next year, three hundred smugglers went to Crow Link, near Eastbourne, to land a cargo, but were stopped by a signal from the sentinel; four nights afterwards, they landed at Cliff Point, Seaford, three hundred half-ankers, losing only sixty-three and a horse. On the 13th, they attacked the sentinel at Little Common with bats;<sup>3</sup> he, however, shot a smuggler with his pistol; the boat made sail from the land, and a coach-

<sup>1</sup> When Pitt first lowered the tea-duty, it was averred that the smuggler was so great a rival with the open trader, that the tea-trade was then shared between them nearly equally.

<sup>2</sup> For epitaph in Patcham Churchyard, on Daniel Scales, a smuggler shot on Nov. 7, 1796, see *Sussex Archæol. Coll.* Vol. IX. p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Thick ash-poles, about six feet long.

and-six, which was waiting at the back of the beach, drove off empty to Pevensey. In September, 1824, a run was attempted at Bexhill, when seven smugglers, with one hundred tubs of spirits, were taken; and one of the blockade-men named Welch, having jumped into the boat, the smugglers pulled off with him, and his dead body was found on the sands in the morning, with the head and face bruised and lacerated. In May, 1826, a smuggling galley, chased by a guard-boat, ran ashore near the mouth of Rye Harbour, and opened fire on the guard. The blockade-men from Camber Watch-house came to the spot, and seized one of the smugglers, when a body of not less than two hundred armed smugglers rushed from behind the sand-hills, commenced a fire on the blockade, killing one and wounding another, but were ultimately driven off with the capture of their galley, carrying off, nevertheless, their wounded. On another occasion, four or five smugglers were killed whilst swimming the military canal at Pett-horse Race, having missed the spot where it was fordable. On April 13, 1827, about twenty smugglers went down to the eastward of Fairlight; a struggle ensued; the smugglers wrested some muskets from the blockade-men, beat them with the butt-ends, and ran one through with a bayonet: the smugglers at length retreated, leaving one of their number dead; another was found afterwards, having been apparently dropped by the smugglers; a third, some distance on the way to Icklesham, the body scarcely cold; the rest of the wounded men were carried off by their companions; and I have been informed, that one of the party alone carried one of his fellows on his back, from the scene of the conflict at Fairlight to his residence at Udimore, a distance of six miles at least.

Another, and nearly the last of these bloodsheddings, took place on Jan. 3, 1828, near Bexhill. A lugger landed between that village and the little public-house at Bo-peep; a party of smugglers, armed with bats, rushed to the beach, landed the cargo, and made off with it in carts, on horses, and on men's backs, straight to Sidley Green; here they were come up with by the blockade, reinforced to about forty men; the armed portion of the smugglers drew themselves up in regular line, and a desperate fight took place. The smugglers fought



with such determination and courage, that the blockade-men were repulsed, after many had been severely bruised and the Quarter-master Collins killed. In the first volley fired by the blockade, an old smuggler named Smithurst was killed; his body was found the next morning, with his bat still grasped in his hands, the weapon being almost hacked in pieces by the cutlasses and bayonets of the blockade-men. Here again, as was their invariable habit, the smugglers carried safely away all their wounded.

At the spring assizes at Horsham, in 1828, Spencer Whiteman of Udimore, Thomas Miller, Henry Miller, John Spray, Edward Shoemith, William Bennett, John Ford, and Stephen Stubberfield, were indicted for assembling armed on this night, for purposes of smuggling, and were removed for trial to the Old Bailey, where, on April 10, they all pleaded guilty; as did Whiteman, Thomas Miller, Spray, Bennett, and Ford, together with Thomas Maynard and William Plumb, for a like offence on January 23, 1828, at Eastbourne. Sentence of death was passed on all, but the punishment was commuted to transportation. They were, with three exceptions, young men under thirty years of age.

Other, but minor, affrays took place on Jan. 3, 1831, two miles east of Hastings, when two of the smugglers, William Cruttenden and Joseph Harrod, were shot dead; on Feb. 22, 1832, at Worthing, between two hundred and three hundred men there assembled, when one William Cowardson was shot dead, and several more were carried away wounded; and on January 23, 1833, at Eastbourne, when the smugglers, having killed the chief boatman, George Pett, formed two lines on each side till the cargo was run, and then left—not, however, without having several of their party wounded; but on no one of these occasions was any of the gang discovered. The last occasion on which a life was sacrificed was, on April 1, 1838, when Thomas Monk, a poor fiddler of Winchelsea, was shot by the coast-guard, in an affray at Camber Castle.<sup>1</sup>

The Abbey ruins, the dismantled Castles,<sup>2</sup> the “haunted”

<sup>1</sup> *Ex inf.* E. N. Dawes, Esq., Deputy Coroner.

<sup>2</sup> Addison's play of *The Drummer* was

founded on the scheme of a French gardener to conceal the doings of the smugglers at Herstmonceux Castle.

houses, were all used without interruption by the smugglers, as depositories for their goods. I have been present, in a house at Rye, when silks, for sale, were mysteriously produced from their hiding-places; and it was the custom of the farmers, in that neighbourhood, to favour the smugglers so far as to allow the gates in the fields to be left unlocked at night; and to broach, without a scruple, the half-anker of Schiedam, which was considerably left in some hayrick or outhouse, in acknowledgment of the farmer's accommodating and kindred spirit.

The vignette, which shows with such spirit the end of those pursuits, is the work of our late most able friend J. H. Hurdis, Esq., whose talents have often adorned and enriched our volumes. For the use of the plate I am indebted to the continued kindness of his widow.

