

TOMBS OF HUGH GOUNTER AND HIS WIFE.

Sussex Archaeological Collections.

R A C T O N .

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ANY one climbing a side of Walderton Down may arrive at the north-eastern extremity of Racton. Halting here, and invigorated by the breeze, the pedestrian will have before him, on a bright day, one of the finest prospects to be indulged in in the district; it stretches away along the coast from Brighton to the clearly defined forts on Portsdown Hill, in Hampshire. From this eminence, the highest ground in Racton, is obtained almost a bird's eye view of this parish. Lordington House, Racton Tower, and the little church of Racton are in the foreground, with part of the watershed of the Ems, whose glittering stream is perhaps hurrying along, and beyond appears much of the wild and picturesque scenery of Stansted Forest, with the large ponds of Stansted below.

Racton is a border parish, its length much exceeding its breadth. It is bounded on the west by Warblington (Hants), on the east and south by Westbourne, and on the north by Stoughton. It contains about 1180 acres of land, partly chalk and marl, varying in fertility; and its population can scarcely be called dense, since at the last census, according to vulgar fractions, in proportion to the acreage, it numbered exactly $\frac{1}{236}$ ths of an individual. The Engineers of the Ordnance Survey observed a peculiarity about Racton, which they had noticed in but one other Sussex parish—viz., that it has no beerhouse—*absit pestis*.

Etymon.—Of the intermittent stream now called the Ems, the old chronicler, Holinshed, gave, three centuries ago, this description: "The Emille cometh first between Racton and Stansted; then down to Emilsworth or Emmesworth, and so into the ocean, separating Sussex from Hampshire. The

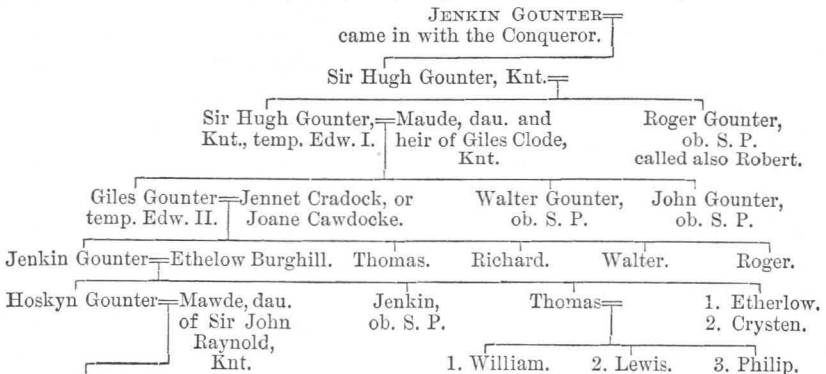
Racon riseth by, east of Racton, or Racodunum."¹ Hence it has been conjectured that from the Racon—probably the ancient name of the river—Racton derived its name. But another derivation is tenable—I allude to that of Edmunds, who says: "Racton or Rackton—from Wracca—the owner's name;² and *tun*—Saxon, an enclosure."

Manorial History.—Under the hundred of Ghidenetroi, Domesday says of Rachitone: "Ivo holds it of the Earl (Roger), Fulco held it of King Edward."³ It had constantly been rated at five hides. The arable was then four plough lands. There was one plough in the demesne, and eight villans, and thirteen borders, who had two ploughs and a half. There were three acres of pasture and a wood of four hogs; and in Chichester a haga or shop, worth twenty-pence. In the reign of the Confessor it was valued at 60s., subsequently at 40s. Its Domesday value was £4.

After the Conquest Racton became part of the vast Earldom of Roger de Montgomeri, related to the Conqueror, who dignified him with the titles of Earl of Chichester and Arundel. In later Norman reigns the knightly Sanzavers were admitted as mesne lords. Hugh Sanzaver held it in 1284. We come now to the Gounter family, whose members for many generations resided at Racton.

GOUNTER.

MSS. Coll. Arms, D. II., Vis. 1570. Vincent's Sussex continued. MSS. B. and MSS. Coll. Arms, C. 27, 1684, compared with the Racton Register.



¹ Racodunum has a Latin ending; but I have found no traces of the Romans here.

² *E. g.* may be mentioned Rackheath, Norfolk, and the "place-names" of other Sussex parishes; Yapton, *i.e.*

Eappa's town, mentioned by Bede, Chidham, Ceadda's dwelling; Bosham, Bosanham, Bosa's dwelling; Pagham, Pega's dwelling; with others as easily traceable.

³ Previously, it is said, it was held by the great Earl Godwine.

Hoskyn Gounter=^{*}Gwentlyan, dau. of William ap Richard a Gruffith.

Richard Gounter=Maud, dau. and heir of John Pierpoint.

William Gounter=Gwelyan, dau. of Meredith Harard.

Jenkyn Gounter=Gwelyan, dau. of William ap Rhishlod ap Meredith.

William Gounter=Margaret, daur. of Thomas. Jenkyn. Hugh. Margery.
Richard Kynaston.

Roger Gounter=
of Racton.

Hugh Gounter=..... dau. of John
Hugh ap Howell.

Jane, dau. and heir of Henry Aylworth, co. Wilts. =John Gounter, of Gilleston, in Wales, and of Racton, ob. 1557. Inq., p.m. =Jane, dau. of Tyrrel, widow of Edmund Lewknor, of Trotton.

1. Arthur Gounter of Racton. =Mary, dau. of Stafford, son of Sir Thomas Stafford, of Bradfield, Berks.

2. Jasper Gounter of Chichester and Ernley. =Emma, dau. of Robert Till, of Ernley.

3. John Gounter, of Chilworth, Surrey.

Sir George Gounter=1. Ursula=2. Susan, dau. Richard.
dau. of of ... Bullen,
Richard re-married to
Bayley of Thomas
the Isle Drury.
of Wight.

Richard Gounter=Mary, dau. of
of Chichester and
Aldingbourne, Thomas
1608. Hewes, son of
..... Hewes,
M.D., Physi-
cian to
Queen Mary.

1. Joan dau. of Knight, of Chanton, alias Changton, co. Hants. =John Gounter=2 dau. of
ob. v. pat. Bradshaw
Drew, re-mar-
ried to Sir
Gregory Nor-
ton, Bart.

Thomas Gounter, of Chichester, lessee of the im-
propriation of
Aldingbourne, et.
38, 1649.

Jasper. Richard.
1. Amy. ob. S. P.
2. Kathe-
rine.

Col. George Gounter of Racton. =Katherine, dau. of Sir Laurence Hyde, Knt., of Salisbury, buried at Racton, Jan. 17th, 1684. =Mary. =Ursula=
Mr. Thomas Symons,
1636.

George Gounter nat., 1646. =Judith, dau. of Richard Nicoll, of Norbiton Place, co. Surrey. =Mary. =Amphillis.

2. Sir Charles Gounter Nicoll K.B., bapt. Oct. 7, 1704, ob. Nov. 24, 1733. =Elizabeth, dau. of=Peregrine, Marquis of Lindsey, May 22, 1735.
William Blunden, of Basingstoke, Hants.

1. Elizabeth, ob. cæl. April 30, 1740. =2. Francis Katherine dau. and heir, ob. 1805. =William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, &c., ob. 1801.

George, Earl of Dartmouth &c., K.G., heir of his mother, Lord of the Manor of Racton, ob. 1810, æt. 51. =Frances, dau. of Heneage Finch, Earl of Ailesford.

1. Catherine Gounter, bapt. at Racton, Dec. 8, 1702, married Sir Henry Maynard, Bart., of Walthamstow, Essex.
2. Elizabeth Gounter, bapt. Dec. 15, 1706.
1. George Gounter, n. 1703. ob. S. P.

William, Earl of Dartmouth, s. and h., ob. 22 Nov., 1858.

William Walter, s. and h., Earl and Baron of Dartmouth, and Viscount Lewisham (the present owner).

[For the Gounter Arms, see Tomb.]

The Gounters are said to have come in with the Conquest; and the name appears on some of the so-called Battel Abbey Rolls; whatever credence may be given to them. It may be noted, however, that, in the Chronicon de Bello, we are told of a "*frater Gunterus*," who became a monk in the Conqueror's great monastery. He is described as of Mans, and as a "*vir strenuus*."⁴ In the reign of Henry V., the name of Roger Gounter, who had acquired large property in Wales, appears on the list of Sussex men returned to serve in France under the Earl of Arundel,⁵ in that campaign which resulted in the glorious victory of Agincourt. Roger Gounter may have been as valiant as Fluellin; but he did not himself fight, substituting one Morgan ap Jay;⁶ who accompanied these Sussex warriors, who then displayed such deeds of valour. His son Hugh appears to have established himself at Racton.

Hugh Gounter married a daughter of Hugh ap Howell, and a cross for Howell, opposite three gauntlets for Gounter, are still to be seen as external labels to the east window of Racton church.

His son John,⁷ described as of Gilleston in Wales, and of Racton,⁸ according to an *inquisitio post mortem*, was, at his death, siezed of three messuages, and 1450 acres of land in Racton, and elsewhere, in 1557. the manor passed to his

⁴ Ordericus Vitalis mentions that he was afterwards Archdeacon of Salisbury, and finally for many years Abbot of Thorney, in Cambridgeshire. He has also preserved his epitaph in rhyme, iii., 422.

⁵ In the fact that Racton then pertained to the Earls of Arundel, who had also estates in Wales, we have probably the cause of the introduction of the Gounters to Sussex.

⁶ S. A. C., vol. xv. According to tradition this Roger Gounter founded Racton House.

⁷ In 7 Henry VIII. John Gounter was appointed auditor of lands in Wales.—*Col. State Papers*.

⁸ Feb, 25, 1541. John Gunter with William Ernele and John Dawtrye, of the county of Sussex, gentlemen, "were appointed commissioners by a letre from the Counsail, to serche what kynds and quantite of grayne hath been lately carryed out at the porte of Chichestre," and he was soon engaged in a matter

relating to the customs. On the 23rd of March following "A letter was sent to John Gounter and William Wayte, of Chichestre, not only to stave a certain Flemish hoye there laden with wheat, but also to cause the sayde wheat to be sold . . . keeping the money in hand until such tyme as it be tryed out whether the sayd were forfeited or no." On the 9th of April, however, an order was issued to restore the said hoy to the owner, together with the money received for the wheat therein, which had been sold at 6s. 8d. per qr. ; but it is added—"as a pleyn bargain appeared between the owners of the hoy and a person at Petworth, for the said hoye and 40 qrs. of wheate, the hoy and the amount for the 40 qrs. was to be returned to the Flemings; but as it contained xviii. qrs. more than was entered in the crocket, the same was playnely forfeited by the King's Maties. laws; and half was to go to the king and half to the seysors."—Acts of Privy Council, 32 Henry VIII.

eldest son Arthur, who in the reign of Elizabeth incurred the displeasure of this great but sometimes indiscreet, and not easily appeased queen. Whilst hunting in an adjoining parish he expressed to a companion certain surmises, for which he was speedily visited. The career of Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the tragic fate of Amy Robsart, have an abiding interest; and from the following documents we gain some knowledge of contemporaneous opinion:—

“ Declaration of Arthur Gounter concerning Lord Robert Dudley. Pleseth your Honors to understande that, about thre Weekes since, I chaunced to be a buntynge with divers Jentlemen when I felle in Taulcke with a Jentleman named Mr. George Cottone, who towlde me that hyt chaunced the Quene’s Hynes to be at supper on a tyme at my Lorde Robert’s Howse, wheare hyt chaunced Hyr Hyghness to be nyghted homeward, and as hyr Grace whas goynge homeward by Torchelyght, hyr Hyghness fell in Taulcke with them that carryed the Torches, and seyde that hyr Grace wolde make ther Lorde the best that ever whas of hys name. Whereuppon I seyde that hyr Grasee must macke hym then a Dewke, and he said that the Reporte was that hyr Hyghness sholde marry hym; and I answered—I praye God all men may tacke hyt well that there might rysse no troble thereof, and so have I seyde to dyvers others synce that Tyme, and I most humbly besече your Honors all to be good to me and to pardone me herein, if I have offended.”¹⁰

From the following it is apparent that Cotton, who would seem to have repeated Gounter’s conversation, was one of Dudley’s retainers, and that his object was to elicit the sentiments of the Duke of Norfolk on such an union. Arthur Gounter was speedily incarcerated, and a more explicit statement extorted. It is entitled “Confessions of A. Guntor concerning Lord Robert Dudley,” and runs thus:—

Pleseth your Honors further to understande, that the sayde Mr. George Cotton seyde, that hyt was rumord heretofore; that my Lorde my Master shoold have maryed the Quene’s Hyghnes; and I seyde, that, yf hyt pleased hyr Hynes, I thought him as mette a Man as any in Inlande; and further he asked me, yf I herde of any Parlement towarde; and I seyde No;—but, yf ther wer eny, I thynke every Nobleman wyll geve his opinion; and then they that be my Lord Robert’s friends wyll seye that he is a mette man; and so hyt maye fortune there wyll rysse troble amonge the Noblemen; which God forbede. And then he asked me, who was my Lorde’s Frends? and I seyde, my Lorde Markes of Northampton; my Lord of Pembroke; Mr. Tresurer; Mr.

⁹ Of Warblington, which borders on Racton. (*Col. of State Papers.*)

¹⁰ Burghley State Papers, *temp.* 1560.

Lacfelde, with many others. Further I seyde, I trust the *Whyght Horse*¹¹ wyl be in quiet; and so shall we be out of troble; hyt is well knowne hys Blode, as yette whas never attaynte, nor he was ever a man of Warr, wherefor ys hyt lycke, that we shall syt still; but yf he shoole stomache hyt, he were able to make a great Powre. All these thynge béfoore rehearsed I have spoken unto dyvers other, as unto Mr. Robt. Palmer, Mr. Stowton, Mr. Benyon, and others. Further as towchyng my Lord Robert, I have seyde to Mr. Cottone that I thought hym to be the cause that my Lord my Master myght not marry the Quene's Hyghnes, wherefor I wolde that he had bene put to dethe with his father, or that some roffen woulde have dyspatched hym by the way as he hath gone, with some dagge or Gonne. Farther I seyde that yf hyt chanced my Lord Robert to marry the Quene's Hyghnes, then I dowted whether he woulde remember my owlde matter passed heartofore, and so be turned unto my Lord my master's displeasure and hinderance

By me Arthur Gounter.¹²

The matter was at length terminated by a written "submission." Gounter declared, that, for the "unfyttyn wordes" uttered by him, he had been "most worthely punished;" and was "very hartely sorry," that the like should never again enter into his heart, and much less pass his mouth; and that he would study by all means "to reduble and recompence" his former offence. This paper is signed, "Arthur Gounter;"¹³ and is directed to "The Ryght Honorable Sir William Cecill, Knight, the Quene's principall Secretary." We get the exact date of these occurrences in another of the Hatfield MSS., where, under September, 1560, we have "the saying of Arthur Gunter to George Cotton," that, "ere this, my Lord Robert's wife is dead; and she broke her neck."¹⁴ It is in a number of heads, that the queen will marry him. If she do, you shall see a grand stir; for

¹¹ The well known badge of the Earls of Arundel. The reference is to Henry Fitzalan, the last Earl. De Quadra, in a gossiping letter to the Duchess of Parma, dated London, Sept. 11th, 1560, says: "Secretary Cecil named to me the Duke of Norfolk as one of those most injured by Lord Robert, and most hostile to him, and the day after the Queen, on her return from hunting, told me that Lord Robert's wife was dead, or nearly so, and begged me to say nothing about it."

¹² Burghley State Papers.

¹³ His brother Jasper, who is mentioned as of Earnley and Chichester, appears among those cited as of Papist

tendencies, in 1576, together with "John Navye, of Racton, yeoman." Strype's Annals, II., ij., 22.

¹⁴ Lord Robert Dudley wrote concerning his wife's death on the 9th of September, but he did not go to Cumnor, where she had resided. An inquest on Amy Dudley, who was found dead at the foot of a staircase, did not determine whether her death had occurred by treachery or accident, although in the opinion of her relations, her husband had "played most foully for it." Wright observes: "Whether the story of her murder be true or not, it is now impossible to determine, though it cannot be denied that appearances are much

my Lord Arundel is sure of the Earl of Pembroke, and the Lord Rich, with divers others; to be ready with the putting up of his finger; and then shall you see the White Horse bestir him; for my Lord is of great power."

Arthur Gounter seems too, to have again offended; for, in a State paper, dated November 4th, 1585, occurs the following:—"Note of certain words uttered by one Mr. Barlowe, of Chichester, to Roger Androwe, at Racton, in Sussex, making a jest of Her Majesty's commission for impressing carts and timber for the works at Portsmouth;" and a statement is added, that Mr. Gounter had illegally tried to cause Androwe to take up the timber elsewhere.

Sir George Gounter¹⁵ succeeded his father Arthur, and but little is recorded of him. We know only that he had to lament the untimely ends of his son, and his son's wife, which happened almost simultaneously. His daughter-in-law, Johanna, died in childbed, at the age of 28; and John, his son, when 30, was thrown from his horse and killed. Sir George Gounter deceased ætat. 63, and with his lady, Ursula, lies buried in the chancel of Racton Church.

The estate passed to his grandson, Colonel George Gounter, of Racton, the well-known Cavalier. After having served Charles I. in the war, "he happened," as Clarendon tells us, "to be the lucky man who first procured the bark in which Charles II. escaped to France from Sussex." The Royalists threw themselves into Chichester on the approach of Sir W. Waller, in December, 1642; and among those taken prisoners at its surrender, were George Gounter, Esqr., and his cousin Thomas, described as "a most prudent and loyal gentleman," on whom a fine of £100 was imposed, while for his estate at Racton, George Gounter was compelled to compound at no less than £580. After the siege, he took an active part in the struggle, and became a colonel in the royal army. The gleam

against the innocence of Lord Dudley. In a celebrated pamphlet, called Leicester's Commonwealth, printed in 1584, these words occur:—"What person soever standeth in his (Dudley's) way hath the luck to die quicklie, for the finishing of his desire. As for example —When his lordship was in full hope to marrie her Majestie, and his own wyfe

stoode in the lighte, as he supposed, he did but send her asid to the house of his servant, Forster, of Cumner, by Oxforde, where shortlie after she had the chaunce to fal from a paire of staires, and so to breke her neck; but yet without hurting of her hooede that stood upon her heade."

¹⁵ Sheriff of Sussex in 1608. Hay.

of hope which shone on the Cavaliers before the battle of Worcester was then darkened; and for some weeks the usual question was—had Charles been able to quit England or not?¹⁶ In the *ipsissima verba*¹⁷ of the gallant Colonel Gounter, we have the fullest account of the King's flight through, and from this county; but in this paper it will be pertinent to consider only what occurred at Racton, and the part taken in the escape by the Colonel and his relatives.

It is necessary to premise that Colonel Gounter had married Katharine, daughter of Sir Lawrence Hyde, of Salisbury. On the 7th of October, 1651, Charles was concealed in a house belonging to this gentleman at Heale, near that city, seeking means for a passage across the Channel. It was resolved to apply to the Sussex Colonel, who in great difficulties had gone to London in vain, and had then returned to Chichester.

On that evening, after a troublesome day, he reached Racton between eight and nine. As he entered the door Mrs. Gounter told him that there was a Devonshire gentleman in the parlour, sent by Mr. Hyde. The Colonel found him "sitting att one end of the chimney, and Captain Thomas Gounter at the other." He immediately recognised him as Lord Wilmot, afterwards so well known as that notorious libertine, the Earl of Rochester. Wilmot took him aside to the window and whispered, "I see you know me, but do not owne mee."

The disguise was so complete that, although Captain Gounter had served under his command, he did not know him. A bottle of sack was produced, and a short collation. At length the Colonel enquired the reason of his lordship's

¹⁶ In the Boscobel Tracts, which contain the king's own narrative of his vicissitudes, as dictated to Pepys, we have a diary of the successive events, from his defeat at Worcester, to his landing on the Continent. This remarkable document is to be seen among the additional MSS. in the British Museum, No. 9008. It is endorsed "*emptiois jure*," having been purchased of a Mr. Bartlett, of Havant, in 1832, who discovered it in an antique cabinet, a drawer of which opened by a secret spring. The cabinet had belonged to the Gounter family, and had been

bought by him when Racton house was dismantled.

¹⁷ Col. Gounter's account is not only explicit, but admirable in its chronological arrangement. The dates are given in the margin. It is entitled "The last act in the miraculous storie of his Matie's escape, beeing a true and perfect relation," by Colonell Gounter, of Rackton, in Sussex, who had the happines to bee instrumentall in the business; and, interlined, is the statement, "It was taken from his mouth by a person of worth a little while before his death."

coming to Racton. He passed by the name of Mr. Barlow. "The king is neare," was his reply, "and in greate distresse; can you helpe us to a boate." Colonel Gounter said he doubted not that he could secure the king until a vessel could be found. Wilmot answered that he hoped the king was out of danger for the present; but that he intended to be at the Colonel's house on the next Wednesday.

The original plan was that Charles should be concealed at Racton, whilst a vessel was being procured at Emsworth.

Colonel Gounter lighted Lord Wilmot to his chamber, where a long confabulation took place. At length he wished his guest good night, and retired to his room; but not to rest. He was suddenly confronted. The curiosity of Mrs. Gounter had been excited, and she had stayed up. She wished to find out what was going on. The Colonel tried to evade her questions, but to no purpose, for the lady "broke out into a very great passion of weeping." The Colonel was compelled to go back to Lord Wilmot's room, and ask his consent that Mrs. Gounter should be taken into the secret. This, it is added, she proved able to keep, and "deported herselfe during the whole carriage of the business with soe much discretion, courage, and fidelitie, that its success did not a little depend of her concurrence."

Next morning all were early astir. Col. Gounter rode off through Bourne to Emsworth, and took with him John Day, his old and trusty servant. Lord Wilmot apparently overslept himself. He set out to follow in such haste that he left in his bed, a black purse filled with gold. As soon as this was discovered Mrs. Gounter sent it after him. He had not ridden half-a-mile from Racton, when he met the Colonel returning. His search at Emsworth had been in vain. They then rode together to Langstone; but finding no vessel there betook themselves to oysters. Colonel Gounter went home, and Lord Wilmot hastened to Mr. Hyde's to report proceedings. Captain Gounter next made enquiry. The Colonel, after a long, wet ride on a dismal night, had another interview with Wilmot. He took a few hours' sleep at home, galloped through the Rookwood into the Chichester road, and soon met his cousin in the city. Colonel Gounter now formed a project which was successful. He visited Mr. Francis

Mansell, a French merchant there, who was lavish of his Spanish tobacco, and it was finally agreed that he should obtain for the king a boat from Brighton.

This agreement was made on Saturday, Oct. 11th, "by two of the clock," and after several tiring rides, on Monday the 13th, "The Coll., for a blinde, went to Hambledon hard by, to give his sister a visit; and there borrowed a brace of greyhounds, for that his Cozin Gounter, and other gentlemen, were upon the Downes and had a minde to have a course att a haire. . The Coll. brought the greyhounds, and beat until the time served. . . and just as he came to Warneford townes, and from Old Winchester, he mett Col. Philipps conducting the King." Charles was at length brought to the house of Mr. Thomas Symons, who had married Col. Gounter's sister,¹⁸ where he spent the night, which preceded his journey through Sussex.

The King passed as Mr. Jackson, and as Penderel's scissors had left him but scanty locks, his appearance created suspicion. Charles himself thus related what happened: "I being still in the same grey cloth¹⁹ suit as a serving man, the master of the house, while we were at supper, came in, and taking a stool, sat down with us; where his brother in law, Col. Gounter, talking very freely concerning Cromwell and all his party, he went and whispered him in the ear, whether I was not some roundheaded rogue's son.²⁰ Upon which, Col. Gounter answering for me, that he might trust his life in my hands, he came and took me by the hand; and drinking a glass of beer to me, called me brother roundhead." This was the night of Monday Octr. 13th. Soon after ten the king, we are told, retired to rest, and slept well; and by break of day, "the Coll. putting up twoe neat's tongues in his pocketts, which he thought they might neede by the way, they sett out and began their journey."

It is mentioned, incidentally, that when the party "came near Lord Lumley's house at Stanstead, it was considered, that the greatness of the number of horse might possibly raise

¹⁸ In the Westbourne register is this entry, "Oct. 6th, 1636, Ursuley Gunter (married) to Mr. Thomas Simons, gent." S. A. C., xxii., 88.

¹⁹ "A short juppa of sad coloured cloth." Boscobel.

²⁰ The Racton MS., though closely written, is interlined in another hand. These words are inserted "Whispering his Bro', Mr. Symonds said—"

some suspicion of them." Capt. Gounter was therefore dismissed with thanks ; and as Racton²¹ was so near, probably repaired thither, to talk over the day's occurrences. It would here be out of place to dwell on the king's route²² over the smooth sward of our Sussex Downs. Colonel Gounter accompanied him to the coast, and had the satisfaction of beholding on the horizon the disappearing sails of the vessel which safely conveyed Charles II. from his pursuers.²³

Whether this zealous Cavalier witnessed the Restoration is uncertain. Probably he did not, since he was not alive in the following year. Ingratitude has usually been considered as one of Charles' characteristics; and among the State Papers, *Domestic*, 1661-2, occurs a Petition from "The Widow of Col. Gunter of Sussex, who assisted His Majesty's passage into France, after the battle of Worcester. For the nomination of a person qualified for an Irish Viscount, or for some other provision, *as often promised.*"

His lady, who had acted so discreetly at the time of the king's flight, long survived her husband, and was buried in the chancel of Racton church, Jan. 17th, 1684, where lie also their daughters Amphillis and Mary.

Colonel Gounter was succeeded by his son George Gounter, Esq., J.P., who married Judith, daughter of Richard Nicoll, of Norbiton, Surrey; he seems to have resided chiefly at Racton, and was there interred in 1718, aged 72.

The last owner of Racton who bore the name of Gounter, was the heir of the above Sir Charles Gounter Nicoll, K.B.,²⁴ who assumed the name of Nicoll under the will of his maternal uncle. He died in 1733, when 29, and is buried in the

²¹ In an old house in the parish are still, in an upper room, the royal arms in stucco on a large scale. According to tradition the king slept here on the night before his escape. This is at variance with Col. Gounter's account, and with the other narratives. It is likely, however, that the arms were placed here as a memento of these incidents, and from this circumstance it has been with reason inferred that Charles may have halted at this retired cottage on his route.

²² See in vol. xviii., a very interesting paper on the subject, by S. Evershed, Esq.

²³ "At 8 of the clock," says the Colonel, "I saw them on sayle, and it was the afternoone before they were out of sight." He adds that he had not left "Brighthelmston" two hours when those upon the king's track entered it. It is plain to the reader of that pleasant Sussex story, "Ovingdean Grange," that the author has closely followed the Racton MS.; but to fiction must be relegated the pursuit of Gounter by Stelfax, and the fall of the Colonel's steed by the Puritan's pistol.

²⁴ Installed Knight of the Bath, June 30th, 1732. Clarke.

chancel at Racton, where his wife Elizabeth and his daughters erected a tomb to his memory.

The estate was inherited by his daughter Frances Katherine, who in 1751 (being then the only survivor and heiress), became the wife of William Legge, second Earl of Dartmouth, whose son George, third Earl of Dartmouth, K.G., heir of his mother, and thus Lord of the Manor of Racton, died in 1810. William, fourth Earl, his son and heir, succeeded, at whose death in 1858, the manor passed to its present owner, his son and heir, William Walter Legge, Earl and Baron of Dartmouth, and Viscount Lewisham.

[NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—Descended from Ursuley, the sister of Colonel Gunter, who, as has just been stated, married Mr. Symons, a gentleman residing somewhere near Chichester, are the family of the late Mr. Richard Hart, who lived for many years at, and had considerable property in, Uckfield. This gentleman was descended from the Harts of Lullingstone Castle, Kent. Mrs. Symons was his great grandmother. For the night's protection which she and her husband, at great risk afforded, as we have just seen, to Charles II. on his road from Winchester to Brighton, His Majesty gave them a drinking cup, having the royal arms engraved upon it, and which is now in the possession of Mr. Henry Percival Hart, of Beddingham; and which, as a mark of the King's gratitude and esteem, has been handed down in the Hart family as a much valued heirloom.]

ECCLIASTICAL HISTORY.

The Church.—At what period a church was first erected at Racton we have no certain knowledge. In the time of Seffrid II., Bishop of Chichester (before 1204), the church there is described as that of "Rackington." In the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV, *circ.* 1291, the assessment of *Ecclia de Raketon*, is 100s. In the Nonæ Rolls, compiled in the reign of Edward III, we find Racton set down at £2 6s. 8d., and in the subsidy of 3 Richard III., the church of "Raketone" paid 10s.

It was probably always a small building; its present walls being most likely those of the original structure. They shew



PUNCH-BOWL.
Presented to M^R & M^{RS} Symons.
BY
KING CHARLES. II.

signs of a rood loft, and part of the ancient rood screen still exists, between the chancel and the nave.²⁵ The church was doubtless in some measure rebuilt in the early part of the sixteenth century, when the chancel, which has a good perpendicular window of five lights, was restored by Hugh Gounter. Its interior²⁶ is very interesting, from the fact that it holds the remains of generations of the Gounter family, Lords of Racton. Those on the north side are especially worthy of notice.

1. An altar tomb of Caen stone, showing the kneeling figures of a man with four sons, and a woman with two daughters, and St. John the Baptist bearing a banner and standing between them. This monument, which is richly ornamented, and in an exceedingly good state of preservation, has no date or inscription, but is evidently that of Hugh Gounter and his wife. It bears five shields, two above, bearing *Gounter*, sable, 3 dexter gauntlets 2. 1., argent, within a bordure, or. The other three each *Gounter*, impaling *Howell* quarterly of six.

- | | | |
|---|--|----------|
| { | 1. <i>Howell</i> sable, a cross, or | 4. as 3. |
| | 2. Two crescents, on a canton ermine, a bird | 5. as 1. |
| | 3. Three lions' heads erased 2. 1. | 6. as 2. |

2. A mural monument of painted alabaster, with kneeling figures of Sir George Gounter and Ursula his wife—no date.

Arms.—*Gounter* impaling *Bailie*, argent, a chevron sable between 3 moor hens, sable, armed, gules. Crest —*Gounter*, a stag's head, coupé per pale, gules, sable.

3. Mural to Sir Charles Gounter Nicoll, K.B., with his bust in marble, and to Elizabeth his wife, daughter of William Blunden, Esq.

Arms { 1. 4. *Nicholl*, sable, a pheon, argent.
quarterly. { 2. 3. *Gounter*.

Surtout *Blunden*, a lion, passant, guardant, sable,

²⁵ The dedication has not yet been discovered. As two brackets remain, on which images were once fixed, it may be conjectured that there were two shrines.

²⁶ It received considerable restoration in good taste about twenty-five years ago.

with two wolves as supporters.²⁷ Crest—an arm erect, holding a bow.

There are also in the chancel brasses to various members of the Gounter family, and slabs to the memory of Alexander Jermyn, owner of Lordington House in the 17th century, to his wife Julia, daughter of Lord Lumley, afterwards Lady Conyers, and other funeral monuments.²⁸

The Registers.—The earliest is headed “Christninges,” beginning May ye 16th, 1680, and is at the beginning evidently a copy. The most noteworthy entries are these:—

Baptisms.—Catherine, daughter of Mr. George and Mrs. Judith Gounter, baptis’d Dec. 8, 1702. George, Nov. 28, 1703. Charles, Oct. 7, 1704. Elisabeth, Dec. 15, 1706. A servant boy of Mr. Newland’s, at Lordington (a black), baptised by the name of Juba (de Lordington), Oct. 21, 1772.

Marriages.—Aprill ye 4th, 1681, Sallum Stent and Mary Matthews were married. Mr. Humphrey Kettle and Mrs. Barbara Bury, Cæl. Aug. 25, 1691. Richard Blake and Mary Bear, marry’d May 27, 1705. John Ricks and Margaret Goodfayth were marry’d, Sept. 25, 1707. Mr. William Battine²⁹ and Mrs. Mary Packham, marry’d Nov. 29, 1715. James Terry and Jane Snail were married with banns Dec. 12, 1721, and “Thomas Sheldon, of Hants, and Mary Boxall, of Arundell, in ye County of Sussex, by me, Jno. Allen, Rectr. of Racton. These people aver they were asked in ye church, of which Ric. Sheldon is to give his affidavit or suffer w^t ye law allows in such cases.”

Burials.—Catherine Gounter, the relict of Colonel Gounter, was buried Jan. 17th, 1684. Affidavit made before George Gounter, Esq., Jan. 24th, that she was buried in woollen. The Lady Julia Conyers, buried May 24th, 1691. Sir Charles Gounter Nicoll, Dec. 2, 1733. The Rev. Mr. Hulbert, Rector, buried June ye 16th, 1735. Elizabeth Gounter Nicoll, a young maiden, Jan. 19th, 1740. Love Varundell, with an affidavit, April 30th, 1740. Old Goodwife Churcher, Nov. 19th, 1693. Sarah Littleworth, Nov. 11th, 1767, and May 22nd, 1801, Jeremiah Mole.³⁰

The benefice is a rectory in the Deanery of Boxgrove.

²⁷ Surrounding his shield is the well known motto of a Knight of the Bath, *Tria juncta in uno*; and while above his banner has decayed, the suspended sword and gauntlets remain.

²⁸ Some of the epitaphs, especially those on Sir George Gounter, and on his son, probably by the same hand, are curious specimens of pedantic Latin. See Racton Monumental Inscriptions.

²⁹ As J. P. afterwards concerned in the conviction of the notorious Sussex smugglers. See S. A. C., x., 86, Genuine History, &c.

³⁰ Among names which occasionally occur are these—Whicher, Morris, Lyon, Woolridge, Grout, Fishooke, Ketchlove (Catchlove), Painter, Coal, Marvel, Woodnutt, Emmett, Pullinger, Bridle, Bear, Greentree,

It has been already said that in a list of churches and chapels granted by Bishop Seffrid II. to the great Cluniac Monastery of St. Pancrass, Lewes, appears that of Racton, and it continued in the patronage of the Prior and Convent of Lewes for several centuries. It subsequently, with that of Lordington annexed,³¹ passed to the Dean and Chapter of Chichester. The subjoined, taken from a list kindly communicated by H. W. Freeland, Esq., gives the names of the rectors and various particulars from an early period.

RACTON R.

DATE OF ADMISSION.	INCUMBENTS.	HOW VACANT.	PATRONS.
1400. Nov. 15.	John Spencer	by Resignation	{ } { Prior and Convent } { of Lewes. } The same. The same. The same. The same.
1403. April 7.	³² John Dalton	... ..
1406. Nov. 23.	Wm. Byttesby	res. ³³ John Dalton	
1407. March 1.	Henry Maiot	res. ³⁴ Wm. Batesby	
1408. Dec. 16.	Wm. Lokhaw, cap.	res. Hy. Maiott	
1409. Nov. 6.	Willm. Clerk, cap.	... ..	The same.
LORDINGTON (R.)			
1404. Nov. 21.	Richd. Jullewyn	resigned, and	{ The Dean and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } The same. The same.
1405. Oct. 8.	John Abyndon	³⁵ was instituted	
1442. July 27.	Thos. Fysshere, cap.	res. ³⁶ John Abyndon	
RACTON WITH LORDINGTON THE CHAPEL OF.			
1481. Aug. 11.	Elie Parker, Can. Reg.	... ..	{ The Bishop (hac) } { vice tie devoluto). } { The Dean and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } The same.
1484.	John Hayward	resigned and	
.. April 23.	Thos. Corveser, cap.	was instituted ³⁷	{ The same. } { The Pres. and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } The same.
1485. Dec. 17.	John Robynson, cap.	death Thos. Corveser	
1504.	John Morley	... ..	{ The same. } { The same. } { The Pres. and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } { The Bishop (h. v.) } { jure devoluto). } { The Dean and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. }
.. June 14.	John Thornton, cap.	death Jno. Morley	
1508. Feb. 19.	Simon Fowler, cap.	death Jno. Thornton	{ The same. } { The Pres. and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } { The Bishop (h. v.) } { jure devoluto). } { The Dean and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. }
1509. March 6.	John Champion	res. Simon Fowler	
1513. Jan. 16.	John Spencer	... ..	{ The same. } { The Pres. and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. } { The Bishop (h. v.) } { jure devoluto). } { The Dean and Chap- } { ter of Chichester. }
.. July 12.	John Horner	death John Spencer	

³¹ In Reg. Pratys, fol. 104, we find that this "unio" took place on account of "exilitatis stipendia," and other causes, and the contracting parties were John Gunter, armiger, of the church of Racton; and John Bremshot, miles, of Lordyug-ton.

³² This was an exchange.
³³ In ex. for Ebsham Wynton.

³⁴ In ex. for the Preb. of Dye, Linc. Dioc.

³⁵ In ex. for the Rectory of Laneford, Sar. Dioc.

³⁶ In exchange for the Church of the B. M. de Wilda, Wynton.

³⁷ The institution of Jno. Hayward does not appear.

RACTON WITH LORDINGTON, THE CHAPEL OF.

DATE OF ADMISSION.	INCUMBENTS.	HOW VACANT.	PATRONS.
1523.	William Frende	... ..	... ..
,, Dec. 18.	John Litle	res. Wm. Frende	The same.
1530. Mar. 26.	Robert Ots, Leg. Bacc.	death Jno. Litle	The same.
,, Sept. 28.	Richd. Rokisby, cap.	res. Robt. Ots	{The Dean and Chap- } {ter of Chichester. }
1551.	John Michell	... ..	... ..
,, April 4.	Thomas Hawkyns	res. Jno. Michell	The same.
1554. June 10.	Thomas Myers	res. ³⁸ Thos. Hawkyns	The same.
1558. Oct. 22.	Robt. Killegrue	... ..	The same.
1566. May 28.	Thos. Franckwell	res. Robt. Killegrue	The same.
1590. July 29.	Fras. Heydon, A.M.	d. Thos. Frankwell	The same.
1606. June 10.	John Meade, A.B.	res. ³⁹ Fras. Heydon	Hugh Barker, LL.D.
1678. June 13.	John Buckenham	... ..	{The Dean and Chap- } {ter of Chichester. }
... ..	Charles Leaver	... ..	... ..
1723. Oct. 17.	Robert Hulbert	death Chas. Leaver	{The Dean and Chap- } {ter of Chichester. }
1735. August 9.	James Allen, A.B.	death ⁴⁰ Robt. Hulbert	The same.
1755. August 6.	Richard Shenton, M.A.	death ⁴⁰ Jas. Allen	The same.
1786. April 26.	John Moore, M.A.	death ⁴⁰ Rich. Shenton	The same.
1817. Dec. 6.	Willm. Watkins, M.A.	death ⁴⁰ John Moore	The same.
1865. May 25.	{ Frederick Henry } { Arnold, M.A. }	death Wm. Watkins	The same.

Old Racton House.—At a little distance from the Church, but on the other side of the Ems, was situated the ancient residence of the Gounters.⁴¹ It was completely dismantled about thirty years ago, and only a few vestiges remain. The building was large, low, and irregular. It had walls of at least three feet in thickness, and these were of flint, with mortar of such excellent quality that ordinary tools have frequently proved useless, when attempts have been made to remove the existing concrete. There is a drawing of Old Racton House by Grim among the Burrell MSS. in the British Museum, and another of the spacious hall with its carved oak wainscot.

This was ornamented with scrolls and armorial bearings,

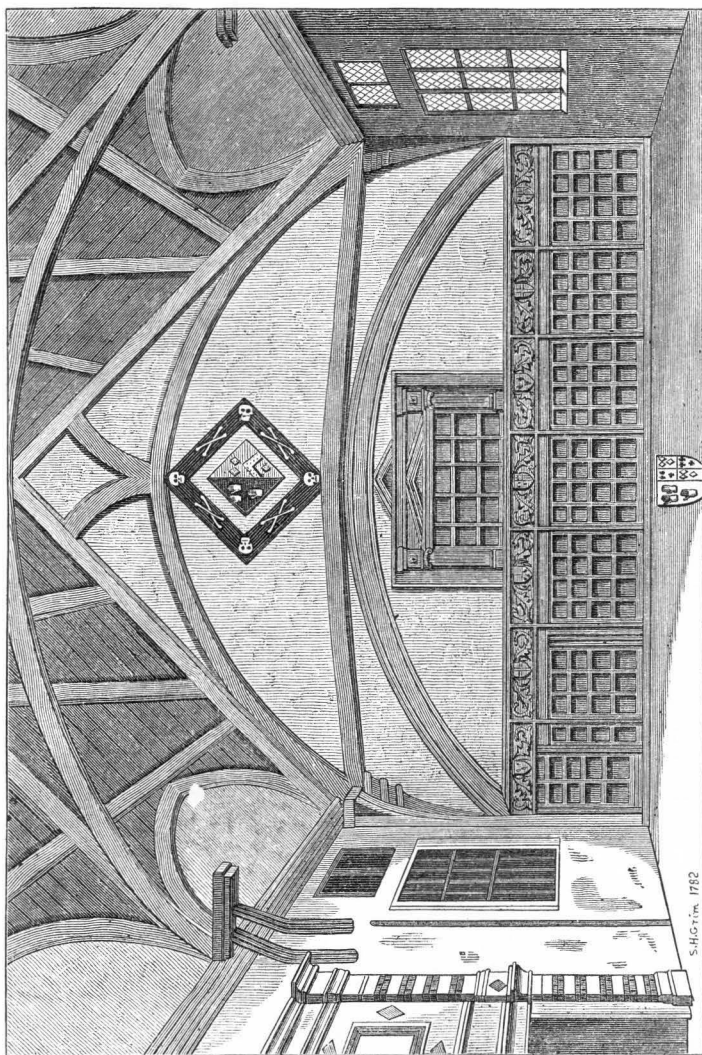
³⁸ Wm. Pye Dean.

³⁹ Under a Grant p. h. v. originally made by the Dean and Ch. of Chichester to Henry Shelly, Esq.

⁴⁰ Minor Canons of Chichester Cathedral. Richard Shenton died from the effects of a fall from his horse when returning from Racton to Chichester.

⁴¹ The arms of the Gounters frequently appear, but there are no traces of those of the illustrious family of Pole to be found, either here or near. In the reign of Henry VIII. Geoffrey Pole then lived in the parish, who with

his brother the Cardinal, and his illustrious mother, the Countess of Salisbury, were all under his ban. Were the arms of the Poles destroyed by that irascible King's orders? Such was done at Christ Church Priory, Hants. "In the church there," reported the Royal Commissioners, "we found a chapel and monument made of Caen stone, prepared by the late mother of Reginald Pole for her burial, which we have caused to be defaced and all the arms and badges clearly delete."



HALL OF OLD RACTON HOUSE.

S.H.G. del. 1782

resembling those of Old Halnaker House. It was painted light blue, and was about thirty feet square.

From Racton House to the Chichester Road was an avenue of ash pollards, some remaining yet. Near its end is a hollow, filled by the waters of the Ems, and known as Gounter's Pool. Of this there is a saying that, "When the wind lies there, it will be wet all along the valley."

Close by, an incident occurred, which has been so vividly related by Mr. Longcroft,⁴² that it ought here to be quoted, especially since it most accurately describes both the circumstance and the locality.

"The market at Chichester has not always been held on a Wednesday. At the time of which we are speaking, it was held on a Saturday. Old farmer Tribe, now lying in Racton churchyard, then the tenant of Lordington farm,⁴³ was in the habit of attending the market. Mr. Hipkin, who lived at Racton House, in general accompanied him; and they went to market, as people in those days went, on horseback. A labouring man came down to the yard at Racton, on a Saturday morning, ostensibly to ask for work; but in reality to learn whether or not the farmers were gone to market. He was told that they were gone, and that if he wanted work on the farm he must call again on Monday morning. There is a lane, with very ancient hedges on either side, which leads from Funtington to Racton, continuing up the hill on the opposite side, and passing the Monument and the 'Packhorse Inn,' which stood on the edge of Stanstead Park. They say it was a Roman road, and they call it Haresfoot Lane. To the south of the point where a bridge now spans the eastern branch of the Ems at Racton, there was, in days gone by, an entrance closed with gates. This led up to Racton House, the road itself continuing up the valley, and passing Lordington. Between nine and ten o'clock at night, the farmers returned from market, and trotted along Haresfoot Lane. They parted at the entrance gates, and Tribe rode on alone. At the spot where he passed the Ems, there was a wishy swamp, where those who watched for wildfowl sometimes took their stand, and hid themselves in the rushes, which grew there in great abundance. At the moment of his passing, a gun was pointed at him from the rushes; and before he had time to avoid the charge, and without a single word of warning, the gun was fired. Not knowing whether he was shot, he turned his horse, and rode immediately back to Racton House. The report of the gun had been heard; assistance was rendered immediately, and search was made for the highwayman, but he could not be found. The charge had entered the cantel of the saddle, and a portion of it had struck the loins of the horse; but not a shot had touched

⁴² Valley of the Ems, p. 16. To this excellent narrative I am elsewhere greatly indebted. To all who desire information as to the history of the dis-

trict it is invaluable, and much is it to be regretted that it is now out of print.

⁴³ Where, according to old custom, he held exactly fifty harvest homes.

the rider. The shots taken out of the saddle were carefully preserved. A little before this happened, a countryman picked up a pigeon, which was known to have been killed by Pitt; and it was remarked that the slug which killed the pigeon, and the slugs found in farmer Tribe's saddle, were identical, and had evidently been made from the leadwork of a window frame. Suspicion was excited. On the following morning Tribe went as usual to the church at Racton. In the churchyard, with others, stood Jack Pitt.⁴⁴ Tribe looked at him hard; but the other returned the stare with interest, and the affair remained mysterious as ever."

After committing many other acts of violence,⁴⁵ Pitt, best known as "the Gunman" from his robberies as a highwayman with a gun, was, by a curious concatenation of circumstances, at length brought to justice, and executed on the 26th of March, 1808.

While almost all traces of Old Racton House⁴⁶ have passed away, the only other ancient manorial residence in the parish,

Lordington House,⁴⁷ rich in its historical associations, and still possessing its fine old carved staircase, and a spacious pannelled room, is now inhabited by labourers; and will, probably ere long, become a ruin, while retaining its interest with the archæologist. It only remains to mention the most prominent object in the vicinity,

Racton Monument or Tower.—This is situated on a brow which gradually rises to the west of the church. At a distance one would suppose that this structure had been erected in mediæval, if not earlier times, and thus it has often disappointed the explorer. Although now ivied and dilapidated, it was built no longer ago than the middle of the last century, by George Montague Dunk, third and last Baron Halifax, who died in 1772. He used there to celebrate special occa-

⁴⁴ He resided in the neighbourhood, and the Racton Register shows that he was there in 1806.

⁴⁵ At Lavant, Hambrook Common, Havant, and other places. Mr. Lyne, Rector of Thorney, lately deceased, and who was curate of Racton fifty years ago, recently informed me that he had been one of those who patrolled the roads to take Pitt. The gunman had then fired at one Chatfield, who, when asked for his watch, held it up in bravado. He was severely wounded, and Mr. Lyne

remembered that his coat had been perforated by seventy-four shots.

⁴⁶ Its situation in the low ground near the Ems must have been very unhealthy. A new house has been erected on a better site, this is, however, in the adjoining parish of Westbourne. Some of the timber of the old building was used in its construction, and over the doorway are the arms and crest of Sir G. Gounter Nicoll, taken thence.

⁴⁷ An account of this ancient residence of the Poles has been given in S. A. C., vol. xxi.

sions by exhibiting lights and firing guns from its top, which was reached by a staircase of wood, now removed, having gone to decay. It was designed for a pleasure house and gazebo, to enjoy thence the beautiful southern view. It serves the purpose of a landmark⁴⁸ for vessels entering the harbours of Chichester and Langstone at the present time.

We started on our imaginary survey on the morning of a short winter's day. As we stand by Racton Tower, looking towards the west, the sun goes quickly down, tinging the sky with gold. The stars will soon peep out, harbingers of a clear, frosty night; but before they appear, we retrace our steps towards a cheerful fireside at home.

⁴⁸ A Sussex poet has thus limned this prominent object:—

“ Far on the seas the sailor's eye,
 Above the horizon's brim,
 Sees, towering 'gainst the cloudless sky
 A pile, well known to him.
 Round it the jackdaw wheels at noon,
 There rears it noisy brood,
 And the lone owl, beneath the moon,
 There hoots to solitude.”