

Sussex Archaeological Collections.

NOTES ON OLD SUSSEX FAMILIES.

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No. 1.—*With Illustrations by MR. WALTER A. H. LOWER.*

THE County of Sussex is remarkable for the tenacity with which its families adhere to their native soil.

“Nescio quâ natale solum dulcedine captos;
Ducit, et immemores non sinit esse sui.”

It is a comparatively rare thing to find any family, gentle or simple, migrating from Sussex to other parts of England. Here they have been generation after generation, and here I hope they will remain for ages to come.

I shall not confine my remarks to any particular *sets* of families, nor to any classification of race, be they of Saxon, Danish, Norman, or Old English origin. Neither shall I confine myself to aristocratic families, but deal with noble, gentle, and plebeian alike, as they occur to my recollection.

Mr. Evelyn Philip Shirley, M.A., M.P., in his “Noble and Gentle Men of England,” which he limits to families existing in knightly or gentle position before the year 1500, can only discover in Sussex eight families of those ranks still extant; namely, Ashburnham of Ashburnham; Goring of Highden; Pelham of Laughton; Shelley of Maresfield; West Lord de la Warr; Gage of Firle; Barttelot of Stopham; and Court-hope of Whyligh. It may be as well first to deal with these, in expansion of Mr. Shirley’s notes.

Of the Ashburnhams, Camden remarks, that they are "the most ancient family in these tracts." Fuller says, they are "a family of *stupendous* antiquity." And Brydges remarks that "Genealogists have given them a Saxon origin, but that



is a fact very difficult to be proved, though very commonly asserted; they do not, I believe, appear in Domesday Book." This is certainly correct. The tradition, however, is that one Piers was father of Anchitel, and grandfather of Bertram de Ashburnham, Constable of Dover Castle at the time of the Norman Invasion. The last is said to have held out against the Conqueror, and to have been beheaded for his patriotism. This may be true, as families hold to their old traditions, and sometimes hand down to posterity genuine facts. As to the *litera scripta*, it would be difficult to show that the Ashburnham family are of such high antiquity. I say this, not to derogate from the dignity of a distinguished house, but simply in the spirit of honest scepticism. No record of the family in private or public documents relating to such early times has reached us. Certainly, at the date of the compilation of Domesday, Ashburnham was held by Robert de Cruel, or, as the name is more commonly written, De Criol. There can be no doubt, however, that the Ashburnhams of Ashburnham, have been seated there from the time of Henry II. The De Criols may have been temporary interlopers, and the estate may have been eventually handed over to the original Saxon proprietors.

Here it may be stated, parenthetically, that the De Cruels or Criols came into England at the Conquest, from a place now called Creulli, in the arrondissement of Caen. The ancient lords were formerly barons, and afterwards counts. "Henri I., roi d'Angleterre, donna la Baronie de Creulli à son fils naturel, le Comte de Glocester." *Itineraire de la Normandie*, 1828, by M. Louis du Bois, who informs us that the château of this ancient family is a confused mixture of architecture of various periods. It still exists, I believe—I have never visited it—in the same condition. After their settlement in England, the De Criols had considerable posses-

sions, particularly in East Sussex, from the 11th till the 13th century. So late as May, 1271, Edmund, son of Lord John de Criol, made a feoffment to John de Pysinge, of lands held of his brother Symon, in a place called Oresmareshurst, in the parish of *Esburneham*. This proves that the De Criols still held an interest in Ashburnham, and it is a curious fact that one of the witnesses to the document is a Richard de Esburneham. See Thorpe's "Catalogue of Battle Abbey Charters, &c.," p. 48.

The Ashburnhams, without genealogical question, have held their estate uninterruptedly for between seven and eight centuries, with one slight interval of a very few years. Sir John Ashburnham, who died in 1620, was an improvident man, and alienated his ancient patrimony. There came to the rescue a gallant lady, named Francis Holland, wife of Sir John's eldest son, John Ashburnham, groom of the bed-chamber to Charles I., who sold her own estate to repurchase Ashburnham, thus endowing her husband with the ancient possessions of his family. John Ashburnham's fidelity to his royal master is well known. He adhered to him in his adversities, and attended him in person to the fatal scaffold at Whitehall. There he took possession of some of the unhappy monarch's relics, including his shirt with stains of blood upon it, his silk drawers, and his watch. These objects were bequeathed by his descendant, Bertram Ashburnham, Esq., to the parish clerk for ever. Superstitious persons, even within my own time, have resorted to Ashburnham Church to touch the shirt for the cure of the "King's Evil;" and one scrofulous, but unscrupulous visitor, stole the outer case of the watch. Since that time, the relics have been removed to the mansion, and still remain there.

In 1830 the late Earl of Ashburnham published a "Narrative by John Ashburnham, of his attendance on Charles I. from Oxford to the Scotch Army, and from Hampton Court to the Isle of Wight; with a vindication of his character and conduct from the misrepresentations of Lord Clarendon," in two octavo volumes—an interesting and valuable work.

Ashburnham Church contains some elaborate monuments for this illustrious family, who, though so very ancient and wealthy, were not raised to the peerage until 1689, when

William III. created John Ashburnham a baron. At a later date, 1730, the dignity was advanced to an earldom. The armorial ensigns borne by the family have varied at different times. Stephen de Esburne (*sic*), great grandson of Bertram, the supposed Constable of Dover Castle, had on his seal a slip of Ash, allusive to the name. His grandson, Richard de Hasburnham, bore the *fretté* coat of the Maltravers family, his mother having been a daughter of Sir John Maltravers. The present arms, the fesse and mullets, were borne, however, by Sir John de Aschebornham, in the reign of Edward II. Bertram Ashburnham, the fourth and present Earl, is representative of the family.

So early as the reign of Henry VI. a junior branch of the family acquired the estate of Bromham, in the parish of Guestling, by the marriage of Richard Ashburnham with the heiress of Sir John de Stoneling, or Stonelinch. Here they have ever since resided. This branch received a baronetcy in the person of Sir Denny Ashburnham, at the restoration of Charles II., and his descendant, Sir Anchtel Ashburnham, the present baronet, resides at Bromham, almost side by side with the noble representative of the elder branch.

The *Gorings* derive their name from the parish of Goring, in the rape of Arundel. The first known ancestor was John de Goring, who flourished in the reign of Edward II. Subsequently the family dwelt for many generations at Burton Park, near Petworth. They obtained a baronetcy in 1622, which expired in 1725. The diminutive church of Burton is rich in monumental memorials, inlaid with brasses for this ancient family. The heiress of the elder line carried the estate by marriage to the ancient family of Biddulph, who still possess it. From the second son of Sir William Gorynge of Burton, who died in 1553, sprang the Gorings of Danny, in Hurst-Pierpoint. George Goring, Esq., of Ovingdean and Hurst, was father of Sir George Goring, Knight, who was raised to the peerage in 1632, as Baron Goring, of Hurst-Pierpoint. After holding several important offices under the Crown, he was advanced to the dignity of Earl of Norwich in 1644. His son, General George



Goring, was, like his father, a distinguished adherent to the cause of the Stuarts, and fought manfully in their interests. After the surrender of Charles I., at Oxford, he retired to the Low Countries, and became Lieutenant-General of the Spanish army there. The Earldom of Norwich became extinct on the death of Charles, the second earl, in 1672.

The Gorings of Highden descend from the second son of Sir William Goring of Burton, Bart., who died in 1601. The baronetcy was conferred in 1627, and is now held by Sir Charles Goring, eighth Bart., late a captain in the 12th Lancers. The Gorings of Wiston, now worthily represented by the Rev. John Goring, spring from the second marriage of Sir Charles Matthews Goring of Highden, the fourth baronet, with a coheirress of the old Kent and Sussex family of Fagg. See these "Collections," vol. v. page 1 *et. seq.*

The names of *Gorring* and *Gorringe*, prevalent among the respectable middle classes of East Sussex, are evidently modifications of the old spelling of the more aristocratic Goring, formerly Goringe, by a process similar to that which converts the venerable Sussex name of Bellingham (among the *genteel*) into Bellingham, a change much for the worse, I think. Of this class William Pennington Gorringe, Esq., of Kingston House near Shoreham, whose father, William Gorringe, was High Sheriff in 1806, may now be considered the representative.

The honoured name of *Pelham* stands third in Mr. Shirley's category, and requires no encomiums from me. The family originated perhaps before the Norman Conquest, at one of the three manors called Pelham, in Hertfordshire. See these "Collections," vol. iii., p. 212. So early, however, as the 28th of Edw. I., they had migrated into Sussex, and Walter de Pelham had a confirmation grant of lands in Hailsham, Horseye, near Pevensey, and other parts of the county. From that date the Pelhams have been a most important and influential Sussex family, producing many eminent personages. The story of the *Pelham Buckle* I related years ago, in the third volume of the "Collections," but I may remind the reader who does not possess that book, that that well-known badge was acquired by Sir John Pelham from the fact of his having, in connection with another



valiant Sussex knight (Sir Roger la Warr, ancestor of the Earl de la Warr, of which family I shall speak hereafter), made mainprize of John, King of France, at the battle of Poitiers, in 1356.

The earliest considerable estate and residence of the family was Laughton Place, which was acquired before the year 1403. This is now a farm house, and with various alterations and retrenchments, still stands a good specimen of the ancient fortalice, and is adorned on its old brickwork with the honoured ~~Pelham~~ Buckle, and other allusions to the family achievements. My paper, above referred to, and another by our lamented friend Mr. Blaauw, in vol. xii., p. 64, give some account of that ancient abode. In the reign of Elizabeth the family built the sumptuous mansion of Halland, the remains of which, now also a farm house, stand on the borders of Laughton and East Hothly, the boundary of the two parishes passing through the mansion. Many years ago a man who had been a retainer of the family became a pauper, and it was doubtful whether he was a parishioner of Laughton or of East Hothly. Friendly law proceedings took place between the officials of the two parishes, and a survey of the house was made, when it was discovered that this man had occupied a chamber through which the parochial boundary ran, and that his *bed* was in both parishes. What was to be done? An able counsel was consulted, and his decision was, that the poor man must be supported by the parish where his head had lain during the hours of rest; and so ended this singular dispute.¹ But before this the Pelhams had forsaken Halland, and removed to Stanmer, the present residence of the representative of the family, the Earl of Chichester, Lord-Lieutenant of the County, and president of the Sussex Archæological Society.

The Pelhams have always been liberal in church building. From my paper in vol. iii. it will be seen that their badge of the Buckle, or their arms of the three pelicans, occur in the following places:—

1. On Thundridge Church, in Hertfordshire (near the old ancestral estate of Pelham), to which the family must therefore have been benefactors.
2. At Robertsbridge Abbey, to which they are known benefactors.

¹ A modern Pelham would not have suffered an old servant to be the subject of such a curious enquiry.

The stone on which the badge was carved assists, with other venerable stones, to mend neighbouring highways! This act of vandalism took place within the last thirty years, before Archæology was a science in Sussex. The *arms* of Pelham are, however, preserved, having been built into a garden wall.

3. The *arms* in a window in Waldron Church.
4. The Arms and Buckle on the tower of Laughton Church.
5. The Buckle terminating the hood-moulding at Chiddingly Church.
6. The Buckle at Rype Church, also terminating the hood-moulding of the western door-way, as at Laughton and Chiddingly.
7. At East Hothly, the same.
8. At Crowhurst Church the same, with the addition of a buckle, in the tracery of the western window.
9. At Burwash Church, both in a window, now unfortunately removed by "*restoration*" (alas!) and on the font still preserved.
10. At Ashburnham Church, on the hood-moulding of the tower door, as usual.
11. At Penhurst there were, in Sir William Burrell's time (about 1780), the arms of Pelham.
12. At Dallington Church the Buckle remains on the battlements of the tower.
13. At Wartling Church the Chapel of St. Catherine has a Buckle.

On domestic buildings the Buckle occurs very frequently, especially at Laughton Place, Halland Place, and on old houses at Hastings, Westham, &c. This famous badge is also found in various other applications, particularly on iron "chimney backs" in farm-houses, and in some instances on milestones, and as signs of inns. My great grandfather used to mark his sheep with the Pelham Buckle. All these facts show, besides the high religious feeling of the family, the respect in which they were held in Sussex. Well may we adopt the dictum of Victor Hugo, that "for him who can decipher it, Heraldry is an *algebra*, a *language*. The whole history of the second half of the middle ages is written in blazon, as that of the preceding period is in the symbolism of the Roman Church." We may also partly concur with another eminent Frenchman, Jouffroy d'Eschavannes, who says, "L'histoire du Blazon! mais c'est l'histoire tout entière de notre pays!" There are "sermons in stones," and histories also, and as to the 14th and 15th centuries, there is no history of genealogical interest in Sussex which can exceed that of the Pelhams in their stone records of the Buckle and the Pelicans.

Camden's remark that "the high are descended from the low, and contrariwise, the low from the high," is verified in this ancient family. At Ringmer there resided, not many years ago, a Thomas Pelham, who had considerable reputation as a rat-catcher, and who claimed distant cousinship to "Lord Chiddester." How far this claim could be established I know not. Other humble persons of this name are, however, resident at Seaford, Rye, Rottingdean, Uckfield, and other places in East Sussex. However, the parent stock still flourishes, and long may it continue to flourish! The observation of Nathaniel Johnston, in his "Account of the Family of Bruce," is very correct: "That noble families are continued in a long succession of wealth, honour, and reputation, is justly esteemed as one of the most valuable of worldly blessings, as being the certain tokens of God Almighty's favour, and the prudent conduct of ancestors." And we must not forget the well-known maxim that *noblesse oblige*.

The family of *Shelley* are of undoubted antiquity, but the attempt to derive them from the date of the Norman Conquest fails. Mr. Shirley says that they were originally of the county of Huntingdon; but this is very doubtful. My own belief is, that they are of Sussex origin, and that they took their name from an estate in St. Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, where a park called Shelley is mentioned in early records. The earliest account we have in history of any of this family is of John and Thomas Shelley, who, following the fortunes of Richard II., were attainted and beheaded in the first year of Henry IV. The remaining brother, Sir William Shelley, not being connected with the followers of Richard, retained his possessions, and was the ancestor of this family, who, in the reign of Henry VI., by a marriage with the heiress of Michelgrove, of Michelgrove in Clapham, became seated at that place, where the Shelleys continued to reside until the year 1800. Michelgrove was then sold, and Maresfield became the family seat. This family, who received a Baronetcy in the year of the institution of that order, 1611, have sent off several well-known branches. Mr. Shelley, of Castle-Goring, was created a baronet in 1806. He was descended from the fourth son of Sir John Shelley, of Michelgrove, Knight, who died in 1526. The Shelleys, of Aving-

ton, in Hampshire, and the Shelley-Sidneys, Lords de L'Isle and Dudley, of Penshurst in Kent (1835), descend from the second marriage of Sir Bysshe Shelley, of Castle-Goring, Bart., and the heiress of Perry of Penshurst; and the Shelleys of Patcham and Lewes, now extinct.

This family has produced several eminent personages, and notably, Sir John Shelley, Knight of Rhodes, who was slain in the defence of that island against the Turks; the celebrated Judge William Shelley, temp. Henry VIII.; Sir Richard Shelley, Grand Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and Turcopolier; Sir Edward Shelley, who fell at Pinkiefield, in the Scottish wars; and last, but not least, the great, but unhappy Sussex poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Michelgrove, one of the finest houses in Sussex, was, to the grief of the district, pulled down by Bernard-Edward, Duke of Norfolk, who purchased the estate in 1828.



I have been acquainted with many Shelleys, ranking from the late Sir John Villiers Shelley, the seventh and last Baronet of the elder line, and long M.P. for Westminster, down to tradesmen and very humble folk. The name is widely diffused in Sussex. The arms, "Sable, a fesse engrailed between three whelk-shells Or," involve a curious heraldic pun.

We next meet, in Mr. Shirley's arrangement, with the *Wests*, Lords De-la-Warr. Mr. Shirley remarks that "the *Wests* are remarkable not so much for the antiquity of the family as for the early period at which they attained the honour of the peerage." The first recorded ancestor is Sir Thomas West, who died 17th Edward II. He married the heiress of Cantilupe, and by her became possessed of good lands in Devonshire and Warwickshire. His grandson, Thomas, espoused the heiress of De-la-Warr, then called La Warr, without the prefix of "de," and thus became connected with our county. The principal property of the *Wests* in Sussex was granted to Thomas West, whose descendants were elevated to the peerage as Lords la Warre. The origin of this name *La Warre* has always puzzled me. It is clear

that it is not from a local source; for where do we find, either in Normandy or England, a place called Warre or Warr? The "de" is certainly an interpolation, which I humbly suggest the present noble representative might, with great propriety, omit. The name La Gare (Ware=Gare) occurs in early times among the archives of Battle Abbey. The principal property of the Wests, Lords la Warr, was granted to them in the first year of Henry VII. They possessed extensive lands at Offington in Broadwater; at Halnaker in Boxgrove; at Hicksted in Twineham; and at Wherwell in Hampshire, which, with many other estates, are now alienated. At some of these places, the ancient Lords la Warr lived in princely style. Thomas, Lord la Warr of Offington, was accounted "the best housekeeper in Sussex."



From an inventory still existing, it appears that Offington House contained 65 bed-rooms and 98 bedsteads! Buckhurst, in Withyham, came to the father of the present Earl De la Warr, by his marriage with Elizabeth, coheirress of John Frederick Sackville, third Duke of Dorset.

Of the Sackvilles, I shall, of course, speak hereafter. The churches of Boxgrove and Broadwater possess magnificent monuments for the Lords la Warr.

In my paper on the Badges of Pelham and De la Warr, in vol. iii. of these "Collections," I represented nearly every specimen of the "Buckle" then known; but I was less fortunate with the La Warr badge. This may be atoned for by several examples which I have since met with. The sub-joined woodcuts represent the various forms of that badge. It will be remembered that at the Battle of Poitiers, in 1356, on the capture of John, King of France, Sir Dennis Morbeck, a knight of Artois, in the English service, and other knights, each claimed the honour of having taken the unfortunate monarch prisoner; but the King, with the high chivalrous feeling which marked his own character, and that of the age, resolved that the real captors should enjoy the reward. He therefore gave to Sir Roger La Warr the "Crampet," or metal termination of his scabbard, and to Sir John de Pelham the "Buckle" of his sword-belt. Those two

emblems of victory have ever since been used as tokens of the heroism of these two Sussex knights by their descendants.

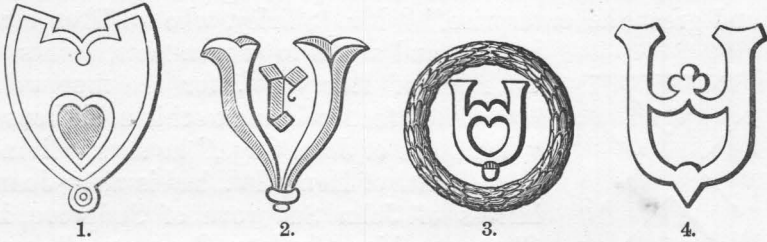


Fig. 1 is found on the magnificent tomb of Thomas, Lord la Warr, in Broadwater Church. His lordship died in 1526. Fig. 2 is from Gerard Legh's "Accedens of Armorie" (edit. 1562). Fig. 3, supported by two lions, is from a sketch which I made some years since at Boxgrove. Fig. 4 is, or was, on a quarry in the kitchen window of a house at Rype, belonging to the Rt. Honble. Henry Brand. The La Warrs formerly had lands in that parish. But the most curious representation of the badge I have yet met with, is carved in oak, at Hicksted Place, one of the old La Warr residences, and now the property of John Wood, Esq., who has kindly favoured me with the annexed sketch. It will be observed that the shield on which the Cram-



pet is placed is surmounted by a fleur-de-lis, a badge derived through female heirs from the great family of Cantilupe.

The family of *Gage* of Firle, stand next on Mr. Shirley's roll of knightly, but now ennobled families. The name of *Gaugy* (probably mis-spelt for *Guagy*) is mentioned by Leland in his list of the companions-in-arms of the Conqueror, which he copied from a roll then preserved at Battle Abbey, and which purports to be the "Roll of Battle Abbey," concerning which the late Mr. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A., speaks in Vol vi., p. 1 to 14, of these "Collections." *Gaugy* is also given in Holinshed's list, which is principally an alphabetical arrangement of Leland's. I have searched in vain in Nor-

mandy for a place resembling this name, but it probably exists in some part of France; for, as Master Wace truly observes, the Conqueror "had soldiers from many lands, who came, some for land and some for money, for great was the host and great the enterprise." Mr. Shirley, who dislikes con-



jecture, and sticks to proven facts, points to the reign of Henry IV., for the first well-established facts relating to this noble house. "John, son of John Gage," he says, "living in the ninth of Henry IV., had issue by Joan, heiress of John Sudgrove, of Sudgrove, in Gloucestershire, Sir John Gage, an adherent of the House of York, who was knighted by Edward IV., and died in 1475." This personage married Elianor, second daughter of Thomas St. Clere, of Heighton St. Clere, in Sussex, and thus acquired several manors in this county, as well as others in Surrey, Kent, Northamptonshire, and Buckinghamshire. The present family, seated at Firle, now represented by Henry Hall Gage, fourth Viscount Gage, descend from his eldest son. From his second son sprang the Gages of Raunds in Northamptonshire, who continued there until 1675. The Gages of Hengrave, in Suffolk, who received a baronetcy in 1662, descended from Edward, third son of Sir John Gage of Firle, who died in 1633. The genealogy of this family is given in Gage's "History of Hengrave," and is full of interest and minute detail, as also in various other works. As I have remarked in the "Worthies of Sussex," the first settler at Firle "established for his posterity a territorial connection with Sussex, which for length of time is surpassed only by the Ashburnhams, Pelhams, Gorings, Scrases, and Barttelots. I do not ignore Wests, Shelleys, Courthopes, and many other ancient families, but I think I may venture to assert that, with only two or three exceptions, the Gages have been longer associated with one residence than any other patrician family in the county. The fine series of family memorials in the sepulchral chapel at Firle Church is hardly surpassed in Sussex. The most conspicuous members of this ancient race were, first, Sir John Gage, soldier and privy-councillor. Henry VIII. made him a Knight of the Garter, and, as an additional mark of favour,

caused his portrait to be painted by Holbein. There is a good copy of this picture in the gallery at Firle Place. Sir John, though retaining his original church views, was actively engaged as a Commissioner in the dissolution of the Monasteries. Every Sussex antiquary should go to Firle, to examine his noble altar tomb, which, however, is of considerably later date than that of his death. Among other offices which he held was that of Constable of the Tower, and he is the central hero of Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's popular novel which bears that title. In person he was, if the sculptor lies not, a man of very noble presence, and he was in disposition very liberal. By his last will he bequeaths his gold collar of the Garter to be sold, and the proceeds to be given to the poor folk who should attend his obsequies at Firle, not forgetting the inhabitants of *forty* parishes in and near which his estates lay. He was undoubtedly the most popular "county man" of his time.

Sir John left three sons, Sir Edward, who succeeded him at Firle, having previously been created a Knight of the Bath by Queen Mary. Unhappily for him, during the Marian persecution he held the shrievalty of the county in 1557, and was engaged in the dreadful onslaught upon the Protestants. It may be inferred from the statements of John Foxe that he did this "ministerially;" that he showed, as I have elsewhere stated, much courtesy to Richard Woodman, one of the chief sufferers, and that he was not actuated by any malevolence.² His descendant, Sir John Gage, was created a baronet in 1622. He married Penelope Darcy (one of the co-heiresses of Earl Rivers), who like her classical namesake, was considered a great beauty, and was consequently besieged by many lovers. Her principal devotees were Sir George Trenchard, Sir John Gage, and Sir William Hervey, who quarrelled over her. The sprightly damsel threatened them with her everlasting displeasure if their disputes continued, but humourously told them that if they would be quiet she would marry them all three in their turn.³ This jesting promise was actually fulfilled by her becoming in lapse of time wife of the three suitors, Sir John Gage being her second choice. Lady Penelope's portrait at Firle does not come up to modern ideas of beauty,

² "Worthies of Sussex," p. 281.

³ This story, though often told, may

possibly be new to some readers of these "Collections."

but probably she was unfortunate in her painter. Sir Edward, her third son by Sir John, succeeded to the maternal estate at Hengrave Hall, in Suffolk, the ancient estate of the Darcys, where the descendants remain in honourable degree, having in the person of Edward Gage obtained a baronetcy in 1662. The elder or Sussex branch were raised to the peerage of Ireland as Viscounts Gage in 1720, and to that of England in 1790, as Barons Gage, of Firle. The present representative is Henry Hall Gage, fourth Viscount. The late Mr. Rokewode Gage has given a full account of this ancient family in his "History of Hengrave," and also in his "Hundred of Thingoe."

As in the case of the Pelhams, this noble house is represented in the very humblest ranks of society; in name, at least. More than forty years ago, a sturdy mendicant, whose "circuit" was East Sussex, averred that his name was Gage, and boys used to salute him as "My Lord." Nothing, however, is easier than the assumption of a name.

The head of the family of *Barttelot of Stopham*, Dallaway (Hist. Rape of Arundel, p. 347) believes to be among the most ancient landed proprietors residing upon his estate in the county. The family claim a Norman descent, and a "coming in with the Conqueror." The name is clearly a diminutive of Bartholomew, and it still remains in Normandy under the form of Berthelet. It exists in many Sussex parishes under the various spellings of Barttelot, Bartlet, and Bartlett. The original Barttelot is supposed to have settled at a place called "La Ford," in the parish of Stopham, and in the 14th century, "John Barttelot, de la Ford" married a daughter and coheirress of William de Stopham (descended, as Dallaway conjectures, from the Saxon proprietor), thus acquiring the whole of the parish. During the many centuries that this family have been in England, no member of



it seems to have sought titular distinctions, though many neighbours have been raised to baronetcies and peerages. The little church of Stopham is rich in memorials of this ancient race, both heraldic in the windows, and monumental on the floor. The latter, indeed, is literally a pavement of Sussex marble, inscribed with the names and dates of many generations of the Bartte-

lots, comprising a more consecutive series of brasses, &c., than can be found elsewhere in Sussex. The suffix "de la Ford," or "Atte Ford," was derived from the circumstance that the family in early times resided near a ford of the river Arun, which afterwards gave way to a ferry called Estover, from which the family derived certain revenues. The ferry was succeeded by the present bridge of seven arches, which was built in 1309, and now exists as one of the most picturesque pontal edifices of the county. The representative of this ancient family is George Barttelot, Esq., of Stopham House.

The next ancient family that I shall mention is that of *Courthope, of Whiligh*, or as it was formerly spelt Wyleigh, in the parish of Ticehurst. This family descended from ancestors who were resident at Goudhurst, in Kent, from 1413 to 1511. They were lords of the manor of Bockingfield, in that parish in 1498. Wyleigh came into the possession of John Courthope by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of William Saunders, early in the 16th century. The arms of



this family are, Argent, a fesse Azure between three estoiles or blazing stars, Sable. The existing representative is George Campion Courthope, Esq. My late esteemed friend, William Courthope, Esq., Somerset Herald, made large collections respecting the history of the family from which he was descended through a junior branch. The motto which he originally used was, "My

hope is not broken;" but in later life he employed the terser one of "Court Hope," which is perhaps among the happiest of characteristic armorial mottoes in existence.

Leaving for the present the aristocratic families of Sussex, I shall say a few words concerning some who have hardly ever risen above plebeian rank. First, I shall mention that of *Elphick*, now widely spread in East Sussex, and chiefly engaged in commercial pursuits. The probable originator of this ancient family was *Alfech*, the allodial tenant of Newtimber, in the days of Edward the Confessor, who, according to Domesday, held the then large estate of ten hides, with fourteen villeins, seven bondmen, a mill, and a wood yield-

ing pannage for wild hogs. This Saxon proprietor succumbed to the Norman Conquest, and his estate became part of the great fee of William de Warenne. I have no doubt that our Anglo-Saxon Alfech took his name from the older one of Alphegus. One of this name was a Saxon archbishop of Canterbury, who was canonized. An imaginary figure of him may still be seen in one of the windows of Alfriston Church. The Elphicks once emerged from plebeian rank. This was in the seventeenth century, or probably earlier, and they were lords of the manor of Sutton, formerly an independent parish, but now annexed to Seaford, and from them that estate descended by a marriage to the Harisons, who now possess the property.

Another family must here be named—that of *Enticknap*, well known in West Sussex. I was walking, some four or five years ago, with my friend, the Rector of Lurgashall, when we met a peasant, in the usual round-frock of the district. Said the Rector, “Ask that man what his name is, and ask him to spell it.” I did so. “What is your name, friend?” I asked. “*Emlett*, sir,” was the reply. “How do you spell it?” I enquired. “Well, sir,” replied the honest man, “we spells it *Enticknapp*!”

Another family, traditionally said to be as old as the Ashburnhams, is that of *Scrase*, who, according to an old tradition, sanctioned somewhat by a note in the Heralds' Visitation of 1634, came from Denmark, and held good lands in Sussex at the time of the Norman Conquest. *Skraas* is certainly a Danish word at the present day, and signifies aslope, or, as we say, ‘lop-sided,’ probably in allusion to the non-erect figure of the original bearer of the name. This peculiarity, however, has not descended to our modern Sussex Scrases, who are as upright in gait as their neighbours. The name written Scras occurs in the Hundred Rolls of temp. Henry III. and Edw. I., and again in the Nonæ Rolls of 1341, when John Scras was a parishioner of Plumpton,⁴ and with others made a return as to the “ninth of sheaves, fleeces, and lambs,” for that parish to the Royal Commissioners as a subsidy towards carrying on the war with France.

The connected pedigree of the family, however, dates no

further back than the reign of Edward IV., when Richard Scrasce, "Valet to the Crown" (*Valettus ad Coronam*) resided at Hangleton Place. He died in 1499, and his son, of the same name, was of West Blatchington, where his posterity resided for many generations. Their burial place was at Preston Episcopi, near Brighton, the old church of Blatchington having been desecrated. They do not appear to have been proprietors of any considerable lands in the district, but held the farm of the manor from the Nevills, Lords Bergavenny, and they and their collateral descendants, the Hodsons, have occupied the same lands, probably, as Mr. Rowland, in his "History of the Family of Nevill" remarks, from the time of the Beauchamps, one of whose female members conveyed the estate to the Nevills in 1435. "It may be presumed," adds Mr. Rowland, "that no other landlord in England could show a tenantry of such antiquity." Nearly half a century has elapsed since this was written, and if Mr. R.'s conjecture be right, that tenantry must have extended over 436 years. But I question whether the Scrases held Blatchington so early as the time of the Beauchamps, since Richard Scrasce, who died in 1499, is described (as before mentioned) as of Hangleton, the adjoining parish. This Richard was certainly of that place in 1471-2, since in the accounts of the churchwardens of Cowfold of that date, Walter Dunstall, one of the churchwardens, acknowledges that he "yowthe (oweth) to my master Scrasce, of Hangelton" a certain sum for "whete, barleyche, malte," &c., on account of the parish.⁵

That the family had been for some generations armigerous is shown by the fact that Tuppin Scras, who, with his ancestors, had borne as coatarmour *Azure, a dolphin Argent, the fins, gills, and tail Or, between three escallops of the Second*, applied in 1616, to Sir William Segar, Garter King of Arms, for a grant of a Crest, which the family had not previously borne, and that officer granted

him a *falcon volant Proper, beaked and membered with her bells, Or, standing on the stock of a tree, about which a snake is twyned*, and the motto *Volando Reptilia sperno*. Mr.

See "Sussex Collections," Vol. ii., p. 322.



Garter further states that the Valettus ad Coronam had "sealed with a Dolphine, as by certain his Deeds and Evidences appeareth." A generation or two before, and for several generations after, the date of Tuppin Scras, the family branched off to the parishes of Hove (the manor of which they held) Botolphs, Seaford, Stanmer, Pyecombe, Patcham, Lindfield, Ditchling, Wilmington, &c., and intermarried with the families of Cheyney of Warbleton, Hay of Hurst-monceaux, Blaker of Portslade; Goring of Highden; Tredcroft of Horsham; Lintott of Bolney; and other gentry families of the county. Charles Scrase, Esq., an eminent lawyer of Brighton, who bought a moiety of the Manor of Brighton, by his will, dated 1791, bequeathed his estate to his grandson, Charles Dickins, on condition of his taking the name of Scrase before Dickins. This gentleman was father of the present Charles Scrase-Dickins, Esq., of Coolhurst in Horsham, who married the Lady Frances Elizabeth Compton, daughter of Charles, first Marquis of Northampton, and is now the representative of the eldest line of Scrase. Of the junior branches, most of the members have occupied the grade of gentlemen farmers and yeomen, while a few have been engaged in commercial pursuits, and some others have been reduced to still less importance in the social scale. As I have treated more at length concerning this ancient family in Vol. viii. of the "Collections," it is unnecessary to prolong these remarks, except to state that after the Reformation the Scrases adhered to the Roman Catholic faith. Afterwards they became Protestants and Quakers—a singular revulsion, not unknown in our own times—and at length members of the Church of England. In 1730, two years after the decease of Henry Scrase, of Withdean in Patcham, five of his children, ranging between 22 and 8 years of age, were baptized in Preston Church, the ancient church and burial-place of their ancestors. In this communion most of the Scrases remain.

Lunsford must be placed amongst extinct Sussex families, unless indeed we may consider with Mr. W. Smith Ellis ("Collections," vol. vi., p. 77), that the name of Luxford is a modern corruption. According to some 17th century pedigrees the family originated at Lundresford, now Lunsford, in the parish of Etchingham, in or before the time of Edward

the Confessor. From an old chartulary of the family (Burrell MS. British Museum, 5,679), we learn that Godwin, probably Earl Godwin, made a charter to John de Londresford, son of Ingelram de Londresford. This is stated to have been of the time of William the Conqueror, which is unlikely, and the charter probably belongs to a date shortly before the Conquest. In later days we find the family seated at Battle, and they were probably benefactors to Battle Abbey, for, as we learn from the chartulary just referred to: "In the window of Battayle Abby are the Armes (of Lunsford) and this Latin verse in Caracter—

Hæc multis annis sunt Arma Johannis."

Afterwards, temp. Henry VII., they were at Whiligh in East Hothly, where flourished during the civil wars of the 17th century, Sir Thomas Lunsford, who was a celebrated Cavalier, and of whom it was reported by the Roundheads that he had strong cannibal propensities, and subsisted chiefly on young children. A mock litany of the time includes the prayer—

"From Fielding and from Vavasour,
Both ill-affected men,
From *Lunsford* eke deliver us,
That eateth up chil-dren!"

Several other allusions to this personage in his character of an anthropophagist are found in the political satires of the age; but for his true history, see Mr. W. D. Cooper, in Vol. xix. of these "Collections" (page 105); and for his murderous attack on Sir Thomas Pelham of Halland, see vols. iii. p. 223 and v. 81.

The identity of the Luxfords with the Lunsfords, though not proved, is highly probable, especially as their arms are similar.



Lunsford.



Luxford.

An inscription to a member of the Luxford family in Wartling church asserts that that family had been buried there for some centuries. Now, as Windmill Hill, in that parish, their residence for generations, is within a few miles both of Battle and Echingham, it is quite likely that the Luxfords are veritable Lunsfords. The present representative of the Luxfords (and by probability of the Lunsfords) is John Odiarne Luxford, Esq., of Higham in Salehurst. If it could be satisfactorily proved that Lunsford and Luxford are of common origin, Mr. Luxford must take equal antiquity with the Ashburnhams, and the most venerable of Sussex houses.

The name of *Woodman*, much respected both in East and West Sussex, chiefly in the middle class of life, deserves a few words of notice. It is perhaps as essentially a Sussex family as can be found. This county, as every local archæologist knows, was for the most part thickly covered with woods, the remains of the great *Sylva Anderida*, now known as the Weald. The word *wood* enters into the names of numerous localities and families in Sussex and Surrey, *e.g.*, Wood, Atwood, Holmwood, Goodwood, Norwood, Henwood, Honeywood, Horwood, Harwood, Silwood, Iwood. These are terminations; but there are other proper names which begin with *wood* as the initial syllable, as Woodward (from the office), Woodmansterne, Woodmancote, Woodhams, and *Woodman*. The occupation of a woodman, when Sussex abounded with timber, must have been one of considerable importance, since our royal and commercial navies derived their chief supply of timber for ship-building from this county, whose oak was the most valuable product of the forest. Woodmancote, a Sussex parish, signifies the habitation of a *woodman* or forester.

Oxenbridge is a name now nearly or quite extinct in Sussex. It was formerly of great importance, and second to but very few in the county. The family originated at Oxenbridge, in the parish of Iden, where lands so called still exist. The first connected pedigree is found in the Harl. MS., 1,562, and is continued in the Visitation of Hampshire down to the year 1634. The earliest name in the pedigree is that of Thomas



Oxenbridge, of the neighbouring parish of Beckley, and from him sprang two branches of importance. The elder Sir Thomas formed an alliance with the family of Moiningham, and his daughter Alianor, by a match with the heiress of William, Lord Molines, inherited the estate of that nobleman. The daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Oxenbridge by this marriage, Dorothy, married Sir Thomas Digby of Olney, co. Bucks, who was knighted by Henry VII., after the battle of Bosworth Field. The junior branch produced a Robert and a John, the former of whom was one of the conservators of the peace for Sussex, in 1430, and the latter is named one of the gentry of the county in the list of 1434. Martyn Oxenbridge, a brother of the two fore-mentioned, founded another branch, which became extinct in the second generation. Mary, their only sister, married the so-called Edward, Lord Hastings, who was, if I am not in error, the person who had the celebrated litigation of twenty years duration with the Lord Grey de Ruthyn, as to bearing the arms *Or, a maunch Gules*. A "maunch," as heraldic readers know, is a lady's sleeve. As old Drayton says in his "Barons' War"—

"A Ladie's sleeve high-spirited Hastings wore."

This celebrated cause was heard and determined in the Court of Chivalry, by the constable and marshal of England, and went against Hastings, who was condemned in heavy costs, and suffered sixteen years' imprisonment for disobeying the decision of the court. Shortly before his death, he left God's curse and his own upon his descendants, if they did not attempt the vindication of his claim. Sir Harris Nicolas thinks that, unless the barony can be considered the same as that of Bergavenny, it must be vested in the representatives of this Edward Hastings.⁶

John Oxenbridge (of 1434) had descendants down to the fourth generation, when Robert Oxenbridge died without issue. He was of Bredehie, or Bradhigh, in Ewhurst, then no doubt a considerable mansion, but now a simple farmhouse, a part of the moat of which is still remaining.

Robert Oxenbridge (1430) had a son of his own name,

⁶ Synopsis of the Peerage, ii., 308.

who settled at Brede, in a place called La Forde, now known as Brede Place, for an account of which see Mr. W. D. Cooper's article in "Collections," vol. xii., where a view and a restored upright of the mansion are given. The house, however, is for the most part of later date than the settlement of Robert there, and belongs to the earlier years of Henry VIII., when a great impulse was given to the building of large houses, which superseded the plain, low-pitched old manor-houses of "post and panel."

As the pedigree of this distinguished family has been given by Mr. Cooper in the vol. above-mentioned, and as in several subsequent ones many notices of the Oxenbridges have been printed, it is unnecessary for me to enlarge here, except to remind the reader of two or three of the best known members of the family previously to their removal to Husborne Priors, Hampshire, where they existed in knightly degree until 1638, when Sir Robert Oxenbridge and his four brothers having died without issue, their only sister, Ursula, wife of Sir John Monson, 2nd Bart., became sole heiress of their large estate. Their descendants were elevated to the peerage as Barons Monson; so that the representation of the Oxenbridges may be supposed to vest in the present and seventh Lord Monson, of Gatton Park, Surrey, and Burton Hall, Lincolnshire.

The individuals of the family to whom I allude are Robert Oxenbridge, who, with Anne his wife, has a brass in Brede Church. He died in 1487, and was the principal personage of his family. He is supposed to have been the grim Ogre ("Old Oxenbridge") who devoured young children for his daily dinner, and was cut asunder by his neighbours with a wooden saw, manufactured by the parishioners, at "Groaning Bridge," in Brede. This and the analogous story of Lunsford of East Hothly,⁷ must have been derived from some forgotten legend of much higher antiquity. Perhaps it originated in the grasping disposition of some powerful man, who having obtained the management of the estates of some persons in their nonage, appropriated them to his own use, and thus figuratively ate up his wards. In justice, however, to our two Sussex cannibals, there appears to be no evidence of their having abused any trusts in this manner.

⁷ See p. 19, *ante*.

The next noteworthy member of the family is John Oxenbridge, Canon of Windsor, in 1509, and founder of the Oxenbridge chantry in St. George's Chapel. He died in 1522, and was a benefactor to the Chapel. Over the door are the Oxenbridge arms, with the quaint rebus of *an Ox, the letter N, and a Bridge*. He was the sixth son of Sir Robert.

Elizabeth Oxenbridge, daughter of Sir Thomas O., married before 1546, Sir Robert Tirwhitt descended from the great family of Tirwhitt, of Kettleby of Lincolnshire.⁸ She was for the time a person of considerable learning and culture, though described as "not sane in divinity, but half a Scripture woman," and as remarkable for her "forwardness, fidelity, and sincerity in the religion of Jesus Christ." She was also an authoress, and wrote "Morning and Evening Prayers, with divers Psalmes, Himnes, and Meditations, by the Lady Elizabeth Tirwhitt." This work was so valued by Queen Elizabeth that she had a copy of it bound in gold and enamel, which, after having passed through many hands, was sold at the sale of the library of the Duke of Sussex, and was lately in the possession of George Field, Esq., of Ashurst Park, near Tunbridge Wells. See W. D. Cooper, in Vol. viii. of the "Collections," pp. 224-5, where an engraving of this choice little volume is given. Lady Elizabeth was also a poetess, but of no great ability, as witness Mr. Cooper's specimen.

The only other member of this ancient race that I shall mention is Sir Robert Oxenbridge, a great public character and statesman, who was M.P. for East Grinstead in 1547 and 1552, and Knight of the Shire for 1554, '55, and '57, Sheriff of Sussex, 1551, and of Hampshire, 1568. His highest post, however, was that of Constable of the Tower of London, in the years 1556-7. See Mr. Cooper's careful pedigree in Vol. viii.

The name of *Huckstepp* is still found in several parishes of Sussex, and also in Kent, chiefly among persons in various stations among the middle classes. The family is, however, of very great antiquity, as is shown in the deeds, &c, of Battle Abbey (See Thorpe's Catalogue), where we find the name of De Hoghstepe, De Huckelstepe, Huckstepe, &c., in

⁸ In 39th Elizabeth, Echingham, in this county, was the property of Robert Tyrwhitt of Ketilby, as representative of the Oxenbridges. Some members of the latter

family were buried in Echingham Church; but I have not space in this brief sketch to give the exact connection of the two families.

the latter part of the 13th century, identified with the parish of Whatlington. I have little doubt that the surname is territorial, and that it was derived from some place in that parish. Mr. Joseph Huckstepp, of Sheldwich near Faversham, has done much to trace the origin of the name and family, though a connected pedigree through the last six or seven centuries will probably never be accomplished. Certain it is, however, that the name and family rank among the most ancient in Sussex, and both were associated with the parish of Whatlington for more than four centuries.

Here, for the present, I must break off, though I could say much more on the subject of old Sussex families. Should my present lucubrations be acceptable, I hope in future volumes to continue the result of my researches and recollections, so as to present a fuller account of the main features of interest in connection with the history of the most noteworthy families, noble, gentle, and simple, of the County.

