

HOLL FARM, WURNHAM.

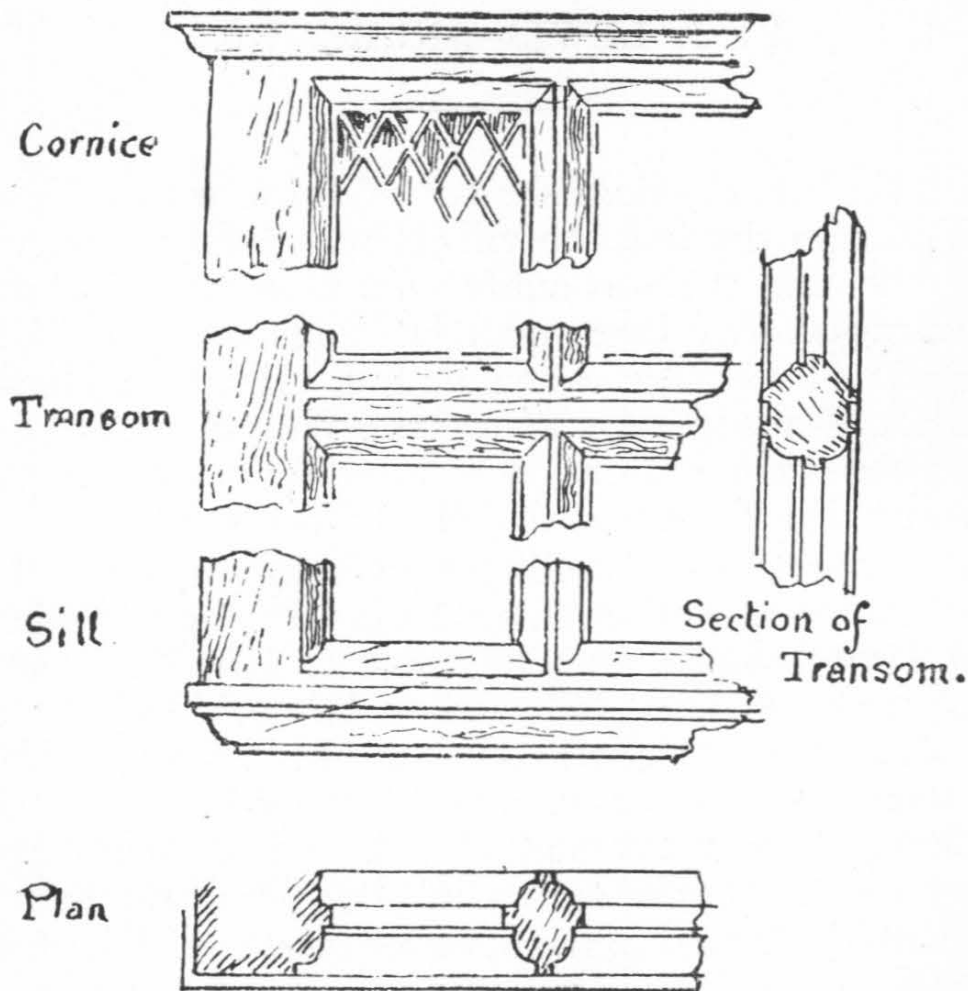
TWO FARM HOUSES AT WARNHAM.

BY J. LEWIS ANDRÉ, F.S.A.

UNTIL the recent establishment of brick works adjacent to Warnham Station, the village was purely an agricultural one, and perhaps among the most rural in Sussex. It still possesses a large number of picturesque old farm houses, such as those called Bailing Hill, Hill, Hookers, Randals, Stone, End's Place and Weston's. It is proposed here to call attention to two only of the above, the house at Hill Farm and the one at Weston's.

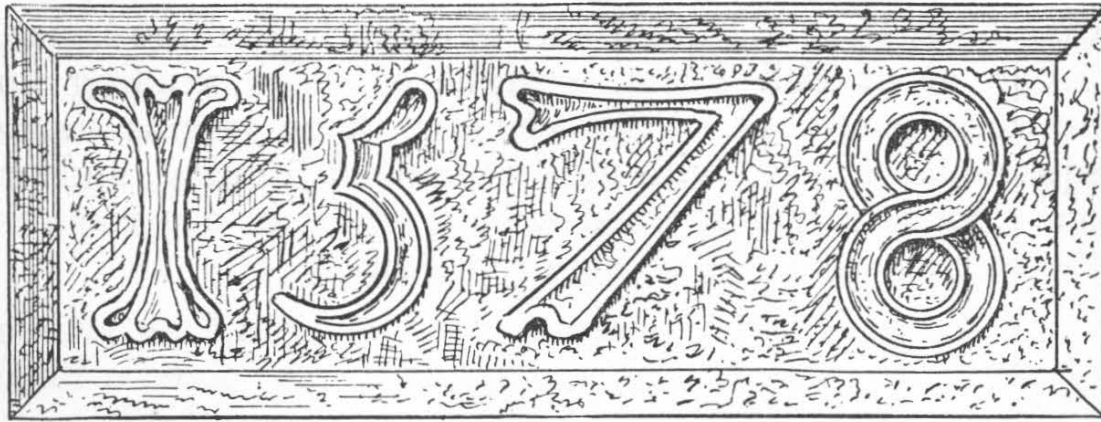
The first-named dwelling stands to the west of the principal street in Warnham, on a gently sloping eminence near Tillet's Lane, and the name of Hill Farm is thus an appropriate one. The house has evidently been at one time, to use an auctioneer's phrase, "a very desirable residence," but after having been inhabited by farm labourers, is now untenanted. As it at present appears it is a simple parallelogram in plan, and arranged in a manner often found in the humbler farm houses in Sussex, there being a central chimney stack, flanked on one side by an internal entrance lobby, or porch, and on the other by winding stairs, shut off by a door at the bottom. The back of the dwelling has four oriel windows, two below and two on the chamber floor, and they give a charming appearance to an otherwise common-place elevation. These windows have nicely moulded wooden frames, divided longitudinally by transoms, which are made stouter than the window mullions, a clever arrangement which imparts extra strength, without giving any look of clumsiness. As in many farm houses and barns, the foundation walls are of freestone and carry half-timbered framing, filled in mostly with lath and plaster work, but having one end wall weather-tiled in an ornamental pattern. The roof has a Horsham slate covering, a form

of healing now becoming rare, for as the rafters of old houses decay and become unequal to the task of supporting the heavy weight of the stone slabs they are covered

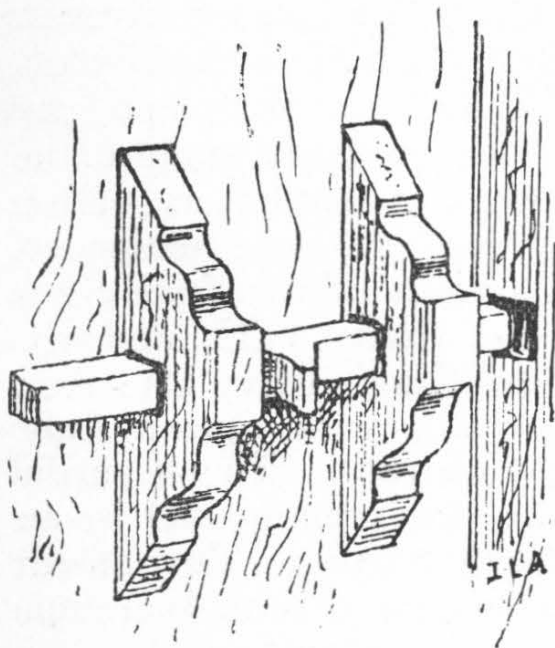


with tiles or ordinary slates. In the interior of the dwelling is a large kitchen, or living room, stone paved, and with a wide, open fire-place, over which is a depressed four-centred arch of wood; on one side of the opening is a box seat, on the other a drying closet under the stairs. A cast-iron panel in the chimney breast bears the date of the erection of the house, 1578, in ornamental numerals, as here shown, and forms a use of cast-iron which I have not hitherto noticed. The chamber floor is carried on joists and a stout girder, both being neatly stop-chamfered. In one of the upper rooms there is a moulded stone chimney-piece, with a plainly stopped four-centred arch, a form of opening which lingered on, as we see here,

well into the reign of Elizabeth, and probably was the last relic of Gothic art discarded.



Situated on a small well-wooded knoll at the junction of four roads, a little to the east of Warnham village, stands the farm house called Weston's, once, probably, a much larger erection. The building at the present day possesses no remarkable features externally, and the front facing the highway is modern, though picturesque enough, whilst the rest has recently been weather tiled over square framed half timber work. At the back of the building is a large stone-paved kitchen, with its southern side entirely occupied by a range of numerous



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casement windows with lead lights. There is a chimney corner of large size, with a box seat, and now having over it a very richly carved wooden mantelpiece, but doubtless removed from the front part of the residence when it was modernized. It has carved arched panels separated by caryatid figures. The inside doors of this part of the house are ledged ones, the boards being of two thicknesses and the stouter ones

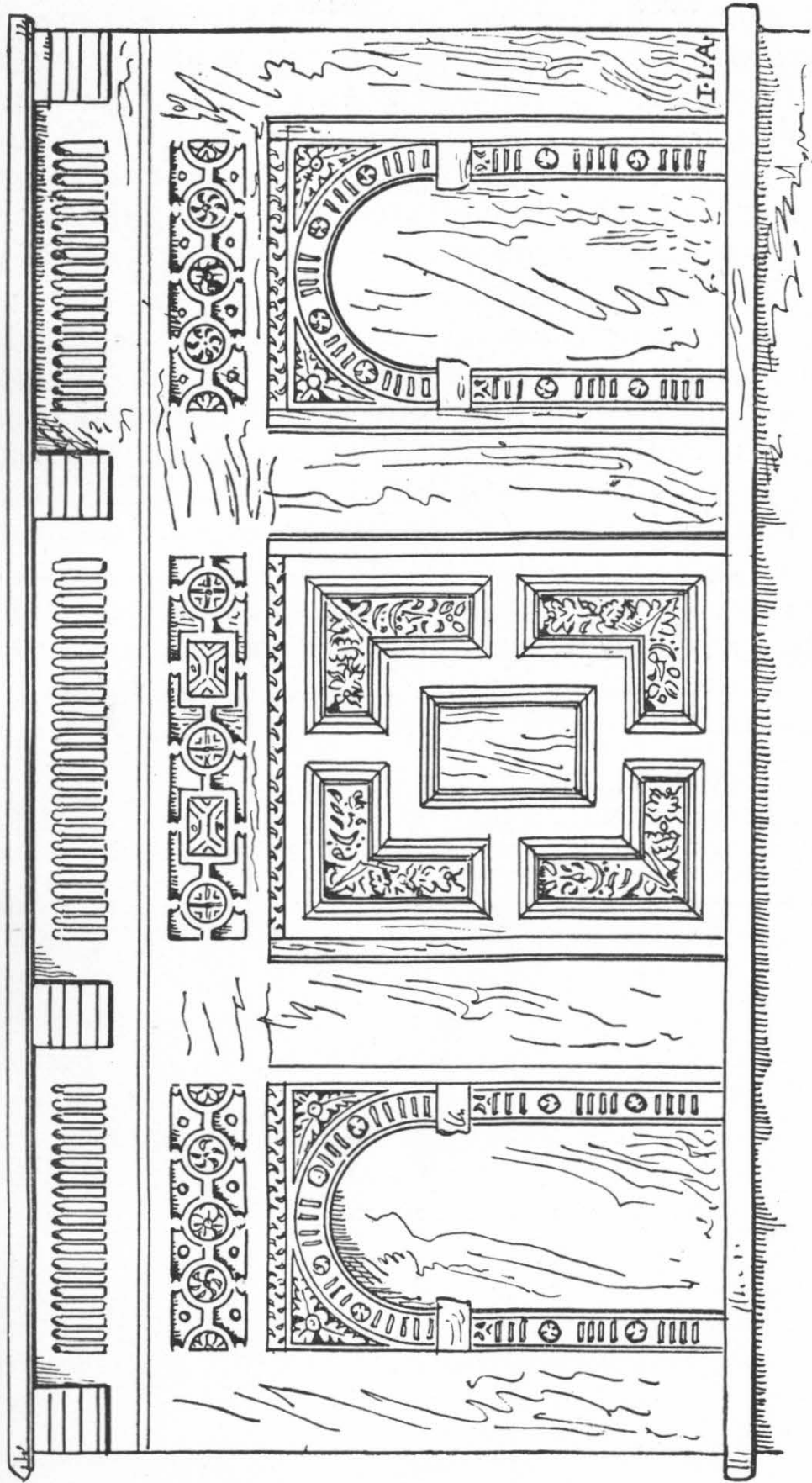
moulded. Two good old framed tables, with baluster legs, remain in the kitchen, and round these the farmer and his hands were wont to take their meals. The staircase here, if the original one, is unworthy of the house, being, as at Hill Farm, a flight of stairs winding up between partitions. The chamber floor retains much square panel work, with nicely moulded framing, and on one door is a quaint wooden bolt, whilst in one room is the elegant mantelpiece here represented.

At Weston's is preserved a "bed waggon," an article of furniture composed of a series of hoops joined a little apart by laths, and having an iron plate at the bottom within the hoops. It was placed inside a bed and covered by the clothes, a warming-pan was then introduced into the waggon, and by this means the whole bed was permeated by the heat. This article of bedroom furniture was not uncommon in Sussex country houses early in the present century, and Chambers informs us in his "Cyclopædia" that a similar contrivance was known by the name of *Arcutio*, and which, he says, was a machine made of a board covered with pieces of hoops, used in Italy to prevent children being overlaid and smothered by nurses and others.¹

The Weston family, from which this house derives its name, originated in Sussex from Radolphus de Weston, *temp.* William I., and the branch at Warnham was derived from Adam de Westmeston, great grandson of Radolphus.² Another offshoot was settled at Sutton Place, Woking, Surrey, and rose to some eminence, though probably the most notorious of the family was Sir Francis Weston, a courtier of Henry VIII., and who was one of the gentlemen of the King's Privy Chamber, but being one of those implicated with Queen Anne Boleyn, was beheaded on that account. The beautiful mansion of the Sutton Westons still remains and is one of the most interesting seats in Surrey. The Sussex branch appears to have been connected with Warnham

¹ "Chambers' Cyclopædia," Vol. I., article *Arcutio*.

² See "Sussex Arch. Coll.," Vol. V., p. 3.



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from an early date, as in the fourteenth century a Walter de Weston was vicar here, and in 1442 an Agnes de Weston was sub-prioress of the Priory at Rusper, an adjacent parish. In the seventeenth century the Warnham Westons were of some standing, and John Weston, of this place, was fined £10 in 1630 for not taking up his knighthood.³ Only four entries concerning the family occur in the parish registers, the last bearing date 1643.

Besides the two farm houses here described, there are others possessing some interest. One at Broadbridge Heath, called Broomhall, has been noticed in these "Collections,"⁴ but is now converted into a gentleman's residence; another, "Hookers Farm," a quaint building, has been "restored;"⁵ whilst at a third, Ends Place, there is a room which, according to popular tradition, was once used as a Roman Catholic chapel, and near this house a pretty silver ring was dug up some years back. It is of early fifteenth century date and bears a flower in the centre, with an initial £ followed by the letters *sabelle*—Isabelle.

³ "S.A.C.," Vol. XVI., p. 49.

⁴ "S.A.C.," Vol. XXXIII., p. 152.

⁵ Engraved in "The Antiquary," Vol. XXXIV., p. 108. A quaint spit rack from Stone Farm will be found engraved in "S.A.C.," Vol. XXXIV., p. 49, and a quaint old house in Friday Street, Warnham, in *ibid.*, p. 43.

