

Surrey Collections.

ON A VICINAL ROAD WHICH FORMERLY RAN THROUGH THE PARISH OF EWHURST, SURREY, FROM THE STANE STREET AT ROWHOOK, TOWARDS THE OLD TOWN OR STATION AT FARLEY, NEAR ALBURY.

By JAMES PARK HARRISON, Esq., M.A.

BESIDES the four great Roman roads through England, and their more important branches, it is well known that there were numerous vicinal ways, the memory and traces of which are fast disappearing, save where they have fortunately been laid down in maps, or described in county histories.

I was informed some years ago by the rector of Ewhurst that one of these minor roads, according to local tradition, crossed a detached portion of the glebe near Garbridge on the Ewhurst and Cranleigh road. It was supposed to have been connected with the Stane Street; but no steps were taken at the time to track its course, or ascertain its precise termini; there was little beyond what appeared an uncertain tradition to lead one to suppose that the few stones which were seen in the sides of a ditch, for a length of about twenty-six feet, might not have once formed part of a disused farm-road; there were no flints or pebbles, or anything else that could be considered distinctive; and no Roman remains were known to exist either in the parish or for some miles around it.

On making inquiry, however, in 1869, I learnt that flints and flint-like stones were frequently turned up by

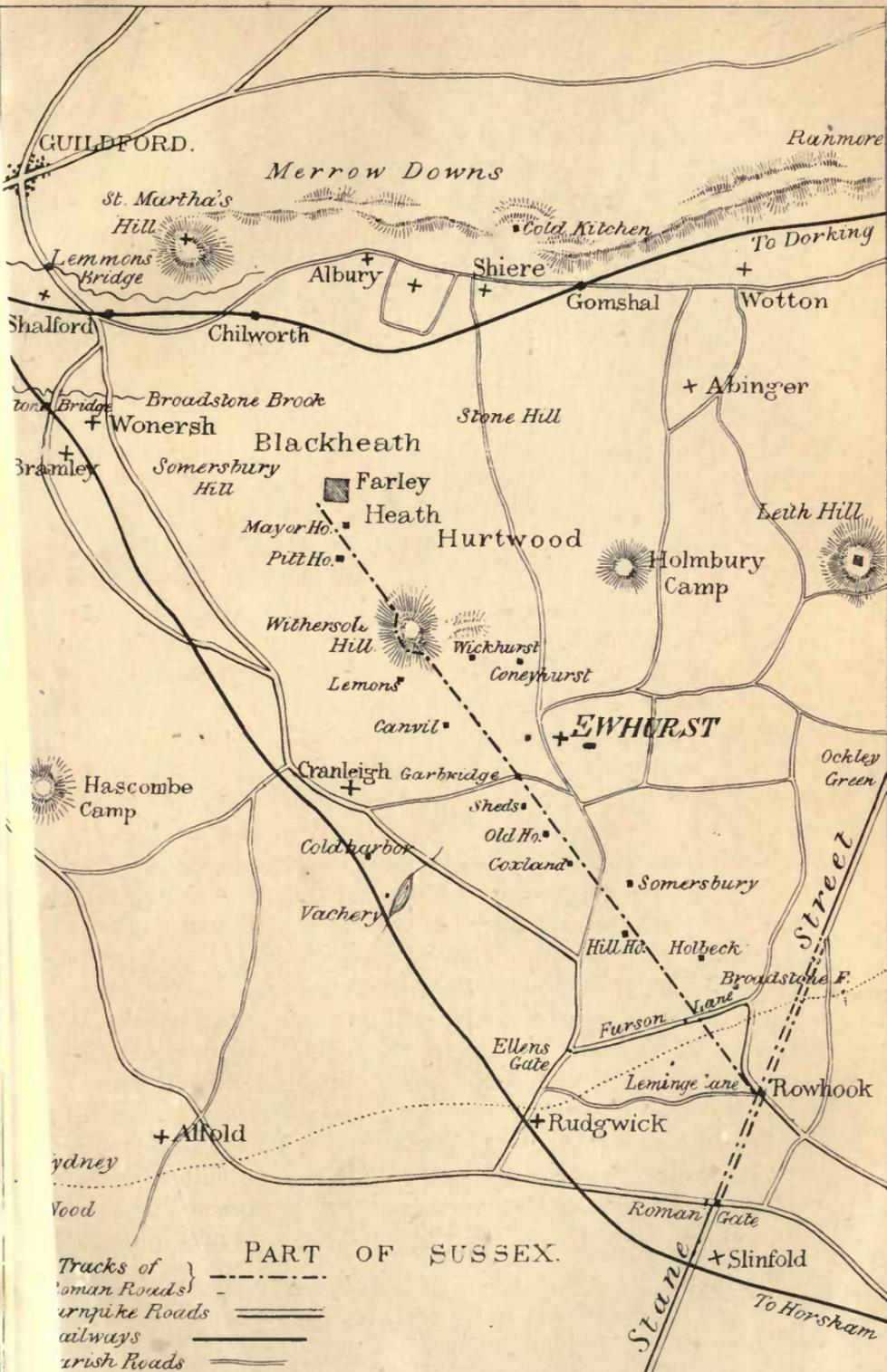
the plough and found in drains on adjoining farms ; and the further important fact was elicited, that an old labourer named Jenner, since dead, some years ago picked up part of an ancient way, on which oak-trees of a considerable size were growing, in Somersbury Wood, about a mile and a half from Garbridge (in the direction of the Stane Street), for the purpose of obtaining materials for the repair of the highway leading from Ewhurst to Rudgwick ; and I was told by an old farmer, who had spent all his life in Ewhurst, that the road referred to passed near the site of some ancient glass-works in a clearing in the above-named wood, which, it appeared, is styled Glass-house Field in the "Tithe Apportion Book."¹

On drawing a line on the Ordnance Map of Surrey connecting this field in Somersbury with the glebe at Garbridge, it was found to point in the one direction to Rowhook, where I have since heard that there is a tradition that several Roman roads diverged, and in the other to Farley, the well-known Roman settlement near Albury. (*See Plate I.*)

In the cultivated fields along the intermediate line of country, so far as search has been made, bleached flints, coast pebbles (the latter mostly at the Sussex end), and hard materials from the hills, are still to be found on the surface of the ground, though more or less scattered, and that sometimes over entire fields, owing to their having been harrowed about, and thrown by boys to a distance at rabbits or other animals. Were it not, then, for the circumstance that foundation materials are met with in drains and watercourses, it would have been difficult to fix on any but an approximate line for the road : as it is, its course from field to field in the parish of Ewhurst has, I believe, been accurately laid down by simply connecting the places, seldom far apart, where flints and hill-stones have been discovered beneath the surface by straight lines.

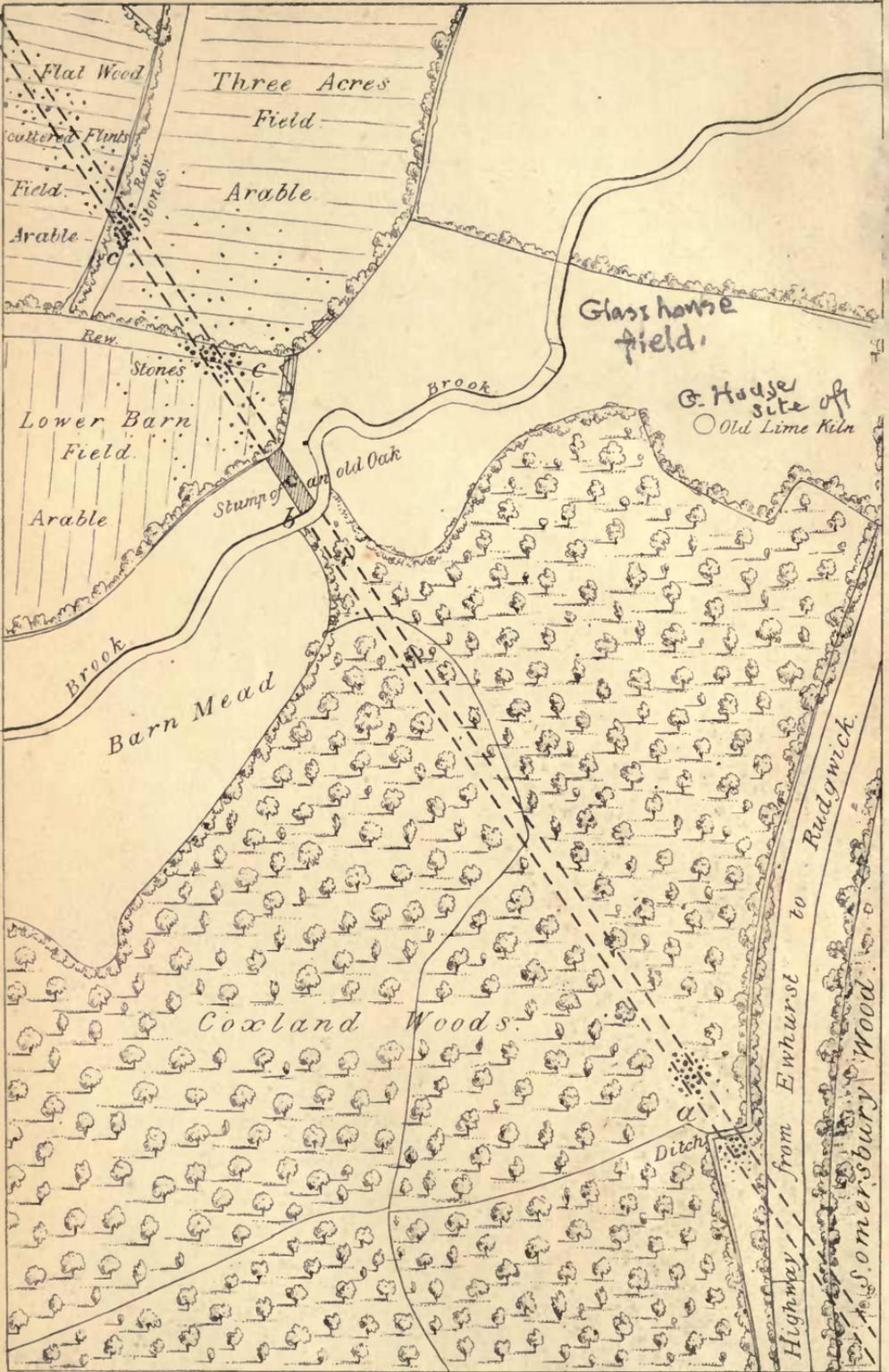
Starting from Rowhook, the road in its course towards Somersbury and Garbridge passed near Leminge Lane

¹ It is supposed that the works were in operation in Queen Elizabeth's reign. There is no allusion to them in the county histories, and there are no remains of buildings, &c.



ROMAN ROAD THROUGH EWHURST.

Scale 1/2 inch to a mile.



PART OF COXLAND FARM. EWHURST.

Scale 25.3 inches to a mile.

and Berry Field, in the parish of Rudgwick, and then, skirting Ridge Farm, crossed the Furson Road into Holbeck Farm in Abinger, and thence into Hill-house Farm in Ewhurst. Here, after going in succession through several arable fields, and a wood called Barnfield Coppice, it passed near the east end of Heron Pond¹ into Mags Wood, where numerous ancient flints, in all respects like those which are found in ploughed fields through which the Stane Street formerly ran, are met with a foot or more beneath the surface of the ground.

The road next traversed part of Somersbury Wood, and crossed the Ewhurst Road into Coxland Woods, at a spot where there is a marked break, or return, in the hedge about sixty feet wide. (See *a*, Plate II.) The width of the stone road appears to have been here about twenty feet. It then passed out of the coppice by what appears to have been a causeway leading to a winding brook, over which it is to be supposed there was a bridge, though there are now no remains of one: it was probably of wood. (See *b*, Plate II.)

This brook runs through an old meadow, formerly, perhaps, subject to inundations, but now five or six feet above the level of the stream, which has hollowed out a deep channel for itself in the clay.

The road on the further or north side of the brook was also raised slightly above the general level of the meadow, and on removing portions of the turf appeared to have been less disturbed than at any other spot, though no pebbles or flints were noticed, only hard stones.²

The road next crossed two arable fields in which some wide rewes³ have very recently been grubbed, and its exact course is in consequence clearly indicated by the abundance of hard stones which have been turned up where the road formerly passed, few or none being found on either side of its course. (See *c*, Plate II.)—Owing

¹ Now drained, or rather reduced very much in size.

² Flints would have been required for the neighbouring glass-works. They were doubtless collected for this purpose when the road became disused. See *note*, p. 7.

³ A local term = shaws.

to the practice of collecting stones from the fields for sale to the highways, a year or two hence these traces, now so distinct, will be altogether lost.

The road then passed through Flatwood Field, where there are many flints, and across a small coppice and an arable field into Broom Plat, belonging to Old-house Farm. It then traversed an enclosure, now planted as a coppice, where, two years ago, several surface drains were formed, which cut the old road nearly at right angles.

It next crossed a grass field into Old-house Woods, about two hundred yards to the right of the homestead, and thence through a corner of Buildings Farm into a pasture called Hatch Field, in Slythurst (or Sheds) Farm, where again flints and hard stones have been found in recently-formed drains, some at a depth of sixteen or eighteen inches below the ground. No flints were found in the drains in any part of this field except along the line of road.

From Slythurst it entered the Glebe near Garbridge, on the Cranleigh and Ewhurst highway, where attention was first called to it.

Proceeding northwards, the road passed to the right of Canvil Wood, first through a meadow called Five Acres, and then across two rough pastures belonging to Coneyhurst Farm, where remains are found in drains and in open ditches. It then went along the west side of an arable field into some woods belonging to Wickhurst Farm, in Cranleigh, a short distance to the right of "Lemons" Barn.

Owing to the thickness of the underwood and the unevenness of the ground in these woods, it is difficult to decide whether the road ran through them in a straight line or not.

On emerging, however, traces are again found in drains, more especially in an arable field called Eleven Acres; and from this point it is said by the tenant of the farm to have gone across Horseblock Hollow towards Withersole Hill.¹

Tradition here carries the road round the hill to the

¹ A field not far from hence, in Bowles Farm, is styled "Pontams" in the *Cranleigh Tithe Apportion Book*. A brook runs through it.

left, through Jelly's Hollow, on to the waste,¹ over which, supposing it to have gone in a line with its previous course up to Withersole, it must have passed through some arable fields to the right of Pitt House, and then by the left of Mayor House to Farley Heath.

From this ancient site there would doubtless have been communication with Guildford and the Ermine Street by Bradstone Brook and Lemmon² Bridge; and with Farnham perhaps, by Somersbury (Chinthurst) Hill, Stone Bridge, and Hillborough; and with Dorking by Stone Hill and Milton Street.³ The general direction of the highway from Dorking as far as Wotton Hatch points to Farley Heath, and is considerably out of the course taken by the Dorking and Guildford Railway.

On reviewing the names which are found on or near the line of road from Rowhook, *e.g.* Rudgewick, Berry Field, Leminge Lane, Ridge Farm, Holbeck, Somersbury (twice), Garbridge, Canvil Wood, Lemon's Barn, Wickhurst, Bradstone Brook, Lemmon Bridge, all of them words not unfrequently met with along ancient roads, it was at once noticed that Leminge Lane, Lemon's Barn, and Lemmon Bridge, occurred at three distinct points. The word, however spelt, appears to be identical with the Latinized form "Lemanus," the name of the port formerly existing at the terminus of the branch road from Canterbury to the coast, near Lymn, in Kent. It can scarcely be doubted that the root is "lem," or "lim," a limb or branch; a derivation which appears the more probable from the fact that there is a village called "Leming-Branch" at the present time on the road leading from the great Roman Way to the north to Alnwick, where we have, apparently, both the Saxon word and its Latin or Norman equivalent.

However this may be, Mr. Hodgson, in his "History

¹ My informant was an intelligent labourer named Lassam. He remembers to have heard old people speak of smugglers running their kegs along the "Roman Road" through Jelly's Hollow.

² So called in an old map of Surrey by Bowen, cir. 1720. It is now Shalford Bridge.

³ There is also a "Broadstone" Farm at about an equal distance from Stane Street and the Leming Road.

of Northumberland," expresses an opinion that "leam" and "leming" are words very commonly applied to ancient roads, or places situated near them; *e.g.* Leming Lane in Yorkshire, and the High Leme and Low Leme districts adjoining the Roman road across the river Rede at Risingham.¹

Manning and Bray also, in their "History of Surrey,"² agree with Dr. Gale and Mr. Denne in thinking it probable that "the public way, or Leman," which terminated at Stangate, on the Thames, gave its name to the parish of Lambeth; and Dr. Gale, in his "Commentary on the Itinerary of Antoninus,"³ considers that Lemington in Gloucestershire was so called from its situation on a foss way; and also that the Lacus Lemanus derived its name from the Roman road that passed along its shores.

The same learned antiquary says, with Mr. Hodgson, that the old word Leman and its modern adaptation Leming anciently signified a public way, and that the Roman road from Aldborough to Richmond (in Yorkshire) was in his time called Leming Lane.

The frequent use of this and other names, not themselves of Latin origin, in connection with acknowledged Roman ways, is illustrated by the terms "Watling," "Ermine," and "Ickenild," and the word "*Stane*," instead of the names by which those roads were called by the Romans. Looking, therefore, at the direction in which this ancient way through Ewhurst appears to have run, and the remarkable straightness of its course, even if there were a track through the forest in the direction of Farley previous to the occupation of this part of the country by the Romans, which is not improbable, still it cannot, I think, be doubted that the road was used and stoned by them. The distance whence flints and sea-pebbles must have been conveyed is in accordance with the known Roman practice of procuring wherever they

¹ Part II. vol. i. p.164.

² Vol. iii. p. 461. In a note they say that the portion of the Roman Road between Borough-bridge and Catterick-bridge, in Yorkshire, was called Leming Lane.

³ *Com. Ant.*, p. 85.

could be obtained the hardest materials for metalling roads. Thus on the Stane Street near Ockley there is, or was until lately, a tradition that baskets of flints were handed along files of soldiers from the Sussex Downs; and this, joined with the use of sea-pebbles,¹ would seem to show that the Stane Street was commenced and worked from the Sussex end, chalk-flints being procurable at Dorking, only seven miles distant, which, if the road had been open, would doubtless have been used.

The only objection which has suggested itself as to the Ewhurst Road being a Roman way arises from the absence of any deep stone substratum along the line. But precisely the same absence of any thickness of stone foundation is observable wherever the Stane Street crosses cultivated fields, *e.g.* between Ockley (Bucking Hill) and Dorking; and it was owing to the experience gained, when resident some years ago in that neighbourhood, that I am able to speak confidently as to the very similar character of the traces of the road through Ewhurst. Considering, too, the necessity there would have been for removing the foundations when the ground was taken into cultivation, and the use that would be made of the materials for making or repairing other roads in a clay district,² joined with the fact that *some* stones are found all along the line up to the Sand-hills, I think there can be little doubt that it was a *stoned* road, though not so wide or deep a one as the neighbouring Stane Street. At the same time, if the Roman Way from Canterbury to the coast, and the "Leming Ways" in other parts of the country, could be shown to have been unstoned roads, certainly the derivation of the word from "lam," or sticky, would have been perfectly applicable to clay roads in the Weald of Sussex and Surrey.

¹ See Mr. Bray's account of the Stane Street in the *Archæologia*.

² Also when the glass-works were in operation in Somersbury Wood, which there is reason to conclude they were some time after the old road became disused, the distance from which flints and pebbles for the manufacture of glass would have had to be conveyed to Ewhurst, probably led to the flints being collected from the neighbouring fields for the use of these works.

Perhaps twenty feet of stone in the middle or at the side of a wide green way would combine both meanings of the word; the soft track, as in many parts of the country, and abroad at the present time, serving as a summer road when the seasons permitted of its being used.

From Withersole Hill to Farley, as I mentioned at the Cranleigh meeting, Captain E. James, R.E., who commands the Ordnance district in which the line of country between the Sand-hills and Farley is situated, has not been able to satisfy himself that there was any distinct road, the surface of the heath itself being stone and gravel. After surveying the ground, however, he came to the conclusion that there was a practicable route very much in the line in which the road is supposed to have run. The following extracts, from a letter which Captain James has written to me since the anniversary meeting, appear of so much interest and importance, coming from the pen of an engineer officer well qualified to speak on the subject, that I cannot do better than quote the principal portion of it:—

“The Weald of Sussex was the Andreds Weald, and (with the adjoining clay district in Surrey) was probably never thoroughly settled by the Romans. It remained forest, and was occupied by the aboriginal inhabitants. The Romans, having advanced by the Thames, occupied with their outposts the line of old British works, facing southwards, on the sandstone hills, overlooking the Weald. These works were probably Crooksbury, Hillbury (Puttenham), Hascombe, Chinthurst¹ (Wonersh), Holmbury, Leith Hill, and Anstiebury. On the south of the Weald the Romans had established colonies at Chichester, Arundel, Shoreham, &c., and occupied the northern end of the South Downs with their outposts.

“The next step was to connect Chichester with London, which was done by the Stane Street. This was a paved road, and formed a principal line of traffic, strong guards being posted along it, and settlements made on it.

“At first the Stane Street formed the only means of communication from the neighbourhood of Chichester and Arundel, round by Dorking to Guildford and Farnham; and I suppose that it continued to the last to be the line by which merchandise and heavy traffic was sent.

¹ Called also Somersbury.

“ But it was necessary to have shorter lines for the purpose of patrols and the passage of light troops. Such minor roads need not have been paved, except where marshy places had to be crossed. The road from Rowhook to Farley Heath was one of these minor ways. From Rowhook to the slope of the Sand-hills above Ewhurst is only six miles, a distance which could be patrolled easily, and which could be passed by bodies of troops in daylight. On arriving at the summit of the hill near Horse Block Hollow (near Withersole), a body marching would be safe from attack ; and by using St. Martha’s Hill, which is in direct continuation of the road from Rowhook, and the most prominent point in the front distance (whether or not it had a station on the summit) as a landmark, a body of men would pass through the centre of the settlement at Farley.

“ Similar roads might, perhaps, be looked for between Cocking and Haslemere, and also between Billingshurst and Hascomb. By traversing the Weald with such tracks, the aboriginal inhabitants living in the forest would the more easily be kept in subjection.”

Assuming the road through Ewhurst to have been merely a forest road, Captain James adds that there would be little probability of finding Roman relics along it. The Roman bricks in the walls of Rudgwick Church he thinks would be accounted for by that village being no great distance from the Stane Street. It is worth notice, however, that the usual “ *Coldharbour*,” or *Caravansera*,¹ is found about two and a half miles from the vicinal road, in the direction of Vachery, near Cranleigh.

Before concluding, I have pleasure in mentioning that Captain Le Poer Trench² has satisfied himself of the former existence of this old road ; and the sappers under his direction have in more than one place discovered remains which had escaped my notice. Captain Trench has supplied me with a tracing from the new Ordnance Map with the track of the road laid down upon it ; and it is from this tracing that the map of a portion of Coxland Farm (Plate II.) has been taken. It serves well as an illustration of the way in which the course of old roads may be recovered ; and I have selected it for that purpose with considerable satisfaction, because

¹ I borrow this explanation of the name from Mr. John Gough Nichols,—a cold-kitchen.

² Captain the Hon. W. Le Poer Trench, R.E., in command of the Dorking Ordnance Survey District.

there had been some doubt on my mind whether the road went perfectly straight through Coxland. Very recently, however, some time after the sappers had left the neighbourhood, the "rewes," as stated previously, were grubbed in Lower Barn Field and Three-Acre Field, and the direction of the road up to the brook clearly revealed. Another reason for choosing this portion of the route for illustration is the fact that it is the only part that has yet been met with where much of the foundation of the road remains entire.—The scattered stones shown on the map, and the shaded part of the road, and the lettering, have been added by me to the Ordnance tracing.
