

## EARLY PAPER-MILLS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

BY W. H. SUMMERS.

THE manufacture of paper from rags, like many other useful inventions, is said to have been introduced into Europe by the Moors, and paper-mills certainly existed in Spain in the twelfth century, while, not long after, traces of paper-making are found in Italy, France, and Germany. It is not until the fifteenth century, however, that we find any such traces of the art in England. The writer of the article "Paper," in Chambers' Encyclopædia says, "In England there is said to have been a paper-mill at Stevenage in Hertford, in 1460, but little is known of the history of paper-making in England till about 1558, when there was a well-known mill at Dartford." This sentence is a little perplexing, for there is no stream at Stevenage which would be capable of turning a mill. It is possible, however, that what is really meant was the ancient mill on the Stevenage road, leading out of the town of Hertford, referred to in the following extract from the catalogue of early printed books in the British Museum:—

"Bartolomæus de Glanville. De proprietatibus rerum. Translated into English by John Trevisa; printed by Wynkyn de Worde, at Westminster, about 1495. The first book printed on paper of English manufacture, made at Hertford, by John Tate: the first paper-mill having been set up there in the reign of Henry VII. Bequeathed by the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks."

In an anonymous "Guide to Hertfordshire" an account of this mill is given, from which it appears that John Tate was the son of a Lord Mayor of London. He is said to have marked his paper with a star of eight points within a circle. His son, of the same name, adopted the device of a wheel, and his paper was remarkably fine and good. It is further stated that a rare poem, called "A Tale of Two Swannes," written by William Vallance, and printed by Caxton in 1590 (of

course a misprint for 1490), was on John Tate's paper; and that the mill is referred to in the Privy Purse expenditure of Henry VII., under date May 25th, 1498. The site of this mill was long known as Paper Mill Mead, and it is referred to by that name in the charter granted to the town of Hertford by Charles I.

The adjoining county of Hertford has thus the distinction of having been the first seat of paper manufacture in England, but recent researches in the Record Office have shown that paper was made at an early date in Buckinghamshire. Some particulars as to the early fortunes of the industry in this county may not be without interest.

In Elizabeth's time, the greater part of the paper used in England was probably imported from abroad. Among the Domestic State Papers of that reign (cxxxvii. 53) is a petition dated 1578, praying for the sole license of *importing* paper. But a few years later (clxxxv. 69), we come on a petition from one Richard Tottyll, soliciting a grant of the sole privilege of *making* paper in England for thirty years. He complains that his endeavours to establish a paper-mill in England had been frustrated by the French makers, who bought up all the English rags. In 1585 or 1586 we come upon a proposition made by a person named Remiger, for erecting a corporation for the sole making of paper in England (S. P. Dom. Eliz. cxcv. 132). It would appear from these documents that the older manufacture had died out. But in 1587 we find paper coming into use which is apparently of English manufacture and bears the royal arms for a water-mark, though the most frequent mark in Elizabeth's reign was the jug or flagon. This crown-marked paper was probably made by John Spilman, the Queen's jeweller, who appears to have had a patent of the sole license of collecting old rags and stuff for paper-making. He employed "High German" workmen, some of whom seem to have fallen under suspicion of disloyalty in 1588, the year of the Armada, when Sir Francis Walsingham issued a warrant dated Oct. 30th, to all justices of the peace for their arrest (S. P. Dom. Eliz. ccxvii. 70). About nine years later (July 4th, 1597) the Queen, in accordance with the well-known policy of the latter years of her reign, granted Spilman a monopoly for fourteen years on surrender of

his earlier patent, and forbade any person to erect paper-mills without his license (S. P. Dom. Eliz. ccxliv. 7).

But Spilman was not long to enjoy his monopoly undisturbed. In what county his mill was situate does not appear, but a rival to it was soon set up in Buckinghamshire.

In a document, not dated, but belonging to the year 1600 or 1601 (S. P. Dom. Eliz. cclxxvi. 6), Spilman thus petitions the Privy Council:—

“To the right ho. the Lords and others of her Mat<sup>s</sup>. most ho. priuy counsell,

“Most humbly beseecheth your good Llo., your Supt. John Spilman her Mat<sup>s</sup>. jueller. That whereas it pleased her most excellent Mat<sup>tie</sup>. for certaine considerations to graunt to your said Supt. power and authority that hymself onely and his deputies and assignes and none other should erect or build any man<sup>r</sup>. of paper-mill, nor should collect or gather any lynnens ragge or such other stuff mentioned in her Mat<sup>s</sup>. lres. patents thereof made, without his special lycense, upon such penalties, restraints and p<sup>h</sup>ibitions, as were therefore thought necessarie and behoefull. All which notwithstanding, yet so it is, yf it may please your good Llo., that divers p<sup>h</sup>ons, not regarding her Mat<sup>s</sup>. said special pleasure and graunt, haue (of purpose to prejudice, hynder, and undoe your said Supt.) erected certain paper-mills, and doe daily gather upp, collect, and ingrosse the said comodities, and most specially the best and finest stuff thereof, wherewith your Supt. doth use to make the white wrytyng paper, and for want thereof your Supt<sup>s</sup>. mills are often in danger to stand still, to his exceeding great damage. And whereas your Llo.’s said Supt. being thus diversly preiudiced, and finding that their injurious courses did tend to the utter subvertion of his poore estate, did about five daies since procure a warrant from her Mat<sup>s</sup>. justices in her highnes’ County of Buck., unto John Turner, Edw. Marshall, and George Ffrend (who lately erected a paper-mill there) willing them to appear before the said Justices, and withall commaunding them by virtue of her Mat<sup>s</sup>. said lres. patents (to them then shewen) to forbear from their said p<sup>h</sup>eedings in making of paper. They have not only very sleightly regarded

the said warrant, and both by unseemly gestures and words contemned and sett at nought her Mat<sup>s</sup>. said graunt, and forcibly withstood such as came to execute the same, but persisting therein doe still contynue to withstand her Mat<sup>s</sup>. said lycense. And forasmuch as your said Supt., having no other remedie or meanes of relief for such their intollerable abuses, is forced to flee to you for protection, and in regard that yf both their manifest contempt of so supreme authoritie, and their open and plaine wrong done and p<sup>'</sup>secuted against your Supt. should not be punished and suppressed, the president thereof would growe hurtfull to all her Mat<sup>s</sup>. like patentees, and your Supt. should, by that meanes which her highnes intended to be to him beneficiall, quite be overthrowne and brought to decay [he beseeches that] Your Llo. would vouchsafe to graunt him your warrant to bring before you the said offenders to answer their said wilfull contempt, and to receave such condign punishment therefore as yor. Llo. should think to inflict. And for the better inabling him to proceed in his workes, without such undue p<sup>'</sup>turbacons, your Llo. would likewise be pleased to graunt him your ho. lres. of assistance for the more strengthnyng of his said patent. And he will contynue his bounden duty in praying to God for the daily increase of your ho. estates in all happynes."

An endorsement on this not very coherent prayer states that Spilman had had to make brown paper instead of white, for lack of suitable rags.

The thought at once suggests itself that it is not at all likely that any person would have resisted the monopoly, and braved the anger of the Queen, unless they had some powerful backers. Who those backers were we shall now discover. Under date May 21st, 1601, we find a remonstrance addressed by the Privy Council to the Corporation of London (S. P. Dom. Eliz. celxxix. 87). In this it is set forth that the monopoly granted to Spilman, "in regard of his extraordinary charge and trouble in first devising that art in England," had been infringed by an act of the Common Council, allowing persons, not authorized by him, to collect rags in London. The answer of the Lord Mayor, Sir William Rider. is

appended (cclxxix. 88). He denies that Spilman, whom he speaks of as "one of a foreign country," had been the first to introduce paper-making into England. Others had been before him at Osterley (near Isleworth), at Cambridge, and also in Worcestershire. He complains that Spilman had employed, for the purpose of collecting rags, great numbers of poor people, especially girls and vagrant women, who ranged abroad in every street, begging at men's doors, and sometimes assaying to steal small articles from houses and stalls. By such proceedings the charters of the Corporation were violated, and the discipline of the city weakened.

It is to be regretted that there is, apparently, nothing in the State Papers to indicate in what part of Buckinghamshire the mill or mills opened by Spilman's antagonists were situate. Probably, the question might be settled by examining the proceedings of the Court of Chancery; for, in the same year, Edward Marshall, in conjunction with one Robert Style, brought a suit in that Court against Spilman. The case was heard before the illustrious Sir Francis Bacon, and he made a report upon it to Lord Keeper Egerton (S. P. Dom. Eliz. cclxxxii. 6). From this it appears—what we certainly should not have supposed from Spilman's letter—that Marshall had a lease from him of a paper-mill at a rent of £10 a year, and that Spilman had covenanted to supply him with "necessary stuff for his own mill." Apparently, Spilman had taken advantage of Marshall's being £15 in arrear with his rent to discontinue the supply of stuff. Sir Francis ordered Marshall to pay the £15 in £5 instalments, and £4 11s. 7d., which he owed Spilman for stuff, on which condition the latter was to supply him with stuff, and to take no further advantage of any past breach of covenant on Marshall's part. Style, on the other hand, was ordered to surrender his lease, and to enter into bond not to keep or use any paper-mill, or to procure stuff for making paper. This decision was confirmed by orders of the Court dated Aug. 21st and Oct. 7th, 1601.

On turning to the State Papers of the reign of Charles I., we find evidence that several paper-mills were then in operation in two districts at least of the county—in the valley of the Colne, near Colnbrook and

Horton, and in that of the Wick, at Wycombe and Wooburn. There is also evidence that some of these had been in existence ever since the days of Elizabeth. In 1635, a presentment was made in the Ecclesiastical Court at Aylesbury against Edmund Phipps, gentleman and high constable of the Hundred of Stoke, complaining that "his water-mill for paper at Horton went for the most part on every Sunday throughout the year." (S. P. Dom. Chas. I. ccxcvi. 17). In the following year we find the Privy Council issuing a warrant to one Joseph Butler, under date of June 24th, 1636, to bring before them Edmund Phipps, high constable of Stoke Hundred, together with Joshua Halsey, constable of Chesham, Bucks (S. P. Dom. cccxxvii. 64). A little later (cccxxvii. 97) is an entry of Mr. Phipps' appearance before the Council, when he was ordered to remain in custody of the messenger. The reason of his arrest is not given, but was pretty certainly his failure to get in the ship-money, for which several similar officials were called to account about this time.

It is interesting to remember that this Edmund Phipps must have been well-known to John Milton, who lived in the same little village of Horton from 1632 to 1638, and there wrote most of his earlier poems.

In 1635 and 1636, as is well-known, London and other parts of England were visited by an outbreak of the plague so severe that it was always known as "the Great Plague," till its memory was eclipsed by the yet more awful pestilence of thirty years later. An alarm was raised that the infection was being spread, as there is little doubt that it actually was, by means of the rags used in the paper-mills, and on Sept. 18th, 1636, the Council, meeting at Oatlands, issued a circular letter to the justices of the county of Middlesex (S. P. Dom. Chas. I. cccxxxvi. 61). It states that the selling of rags in this time of infection was a great cause of dispersing the plague in the country near London, and that there was no means of checking this while the Middlesex paper-mills were suffered to work. His Majesty had therefore commanded the Council to give directions that no paper-mills within that county should be permitted to continue working till it should please God to stay the contagion. The justices were required not only to stay

the working of such mills, but to suppress the buying of any rags or old clothes, and if any refused to obey, to commit them till they were brought to a better understanding.

The mills were, accordingly, closed, and some at least of those in Buckinghamshire were included. The question of compensation now arose, and it would appear that a rate was levied for the purpose on the Hundreds of Elthorne, Spelthorne, and Isleworth in Middlesex, and (apparently) Stoke in Bucks, by a decision of Mr. Baron Denham. This gave rise to a strong local agitation against the rate, which resulted in the appointment of a joint committee of Middlesex and Bucks justices, who met at Uxbridge on Jan. 19th, 1636 (1637 new style), and drew up the following curious letter to the Council (S. P. Dom. Chas. I. cccxlv. 40) :—

May it please your Lorps,

Wee his Mat<sup>s</sup> Justices of the peace of the Counties of Buckam and Midd. next adioyning to the paper Mills, whose names are here subscribed haveing very latelie received yor Lrs dated 31<sup>o</sup> Decemb. held it our duties least wee should appeare negligent in obeying yor Lorr's Comaunds to certifie you of our doeings in those things given us in charge, wherein some of us have spent our time in tenn or eleaven sev'all meetings about the said Paper Mills. In divers of which times we have endeavoured but could never receive some retornes from the overseers of the poore of the parishes, notwithstanding our warrts for that purpose, of the names and Abilities or disabilities of all those for whom this releife was praied, wch of them had been employed in other workes during the time of restraint past, and for how long time, and which not, and who for, wthout the knowledge of wch particulars wee can make no distribucon, nor agree for any some to be raised for their releife. For that it hath alreadie appeared in part unto us that divers of the poore Paper makers have been employed in other works, some of them have lived with their friends, and others refused to work when it was offered them, and it doth not appeare that some have desired the overseers, to whom it belongeth, to find them constant worke, nor can wee yett finde anie Considerable number of them wanting releife. But whilest wee were endeavouring to finde out and cause such poore as wanted to be set to work, we have still been deluded in our inquiries. And Mr. Phipps, the Paper Master of these Mills, insteade of taking care to set his poore Men to work, would involve himselfe and the Rich Paper Masters and their Richer Landlords wth the poore Paper Makers to bee releived by the Contribucon of the Countrie, and demandeth 6<sup>lb</sup> a weeke to pay his Landlord's rent, 4<sup>lb</sup> for house-keeping, 4<sup>s</sup> for his man Richard Gunn and his fower Apprentices, and 5<sup>lb</sup> for his other workemen, amounting after that rate in all to

about 850<sup>lb</sup> per ann. And he refuseth to set downe the names of those in his familie for whom he praieth this reliefe. And thus, whilst all men suffer in the comon callamitie by deadness of Trade, the Paper Masters would bee (as wee conceive) gainers if in this way they might bee relieved by the Contribucion of the Countrie, who seeke to get 500<sup>lb</sup> from the same. Upon pretence in their last petition to yo<sup>r</sup> Lopp<sup>s</sup> of two hundred persons, many of them ready to starve for want of food and ymployment in their paper works, yet make noe such matter appear to us, nor have wee seene any such Facts. Touching the supposed order of Taxacon menconed in yo<sup>r</sup> Lopp<sup>s</sup> L<sup>r</sup>s, whereby about 325<sup>lb</sup> was assessed as yo<sup>r</sup> Lopp<sup>s</sup> were informed upon the hundreds adjoining to the paper Mills in the counties of Buck. and Midd<sup>x</sup> for the time then past, and in particular 150<sup>lb</sup> for the Mills in Stoke hundred. The same was drawne by some p<sup>t</sup>icular gentlemen as a business considerable [?] as wee are informed upon such information as they then had, and not to be used by anie further than upon iust Consideracon and allowance of all parties named in that supposed order; and the rest of the Justices of the peace, howbeit divers of our names were used in the said supposed order as made upon due Consideracon by us, Whereas some of us were absent, and others of us who were present, refused to put our hands thereunto, the sight of whose names induced Mr. Baron Denham to subscribe the said order, not being acquainted w<sup>th</sup> the premisses, nor that the greatest part of the said mony should be ymployed to pay Landlord's rents, and for housekeeping, and to maintaine others in Idleness. In w<sup>ch</sup> carryage towards him he held himselfe much wronged, as he hath since declared to some of us. And Mr. Baron Denham is of opinion that the Landlords who for their p<sup>t</sup>icular Comoditie have advanced their rents tenfold some to neare 100<sup>lb</sup> others to 150<sup>lb</sup> p. ann. by converting their Corne Mills into Paper Mills should abate the ymprovement of their rents to their Farmers during this time of restraint, and that the paper masters who for their private benefitt have brought such poor people into the said parishes and gott upp a Manufacture both dangerous to his Mat<sup>s</sup> person and inconvenient to their neighbours should provide other work for their Men at their Care and Charges, yf it may soe seeme good to yo<sup>r</sup> Lov<sup>s</sup>. And wee under favour are of the same opinion, the rather for that wee conceive the Statute of the poore doth not appoint monie to be given away to anie but such poore as are not able to worke for their living, Much lesse to maintayne such as are able to worke in Idleness, And that the said Phipps hath scornfullie behaved himselfe towards us, farr unbeseming a suitor for releife, and hath said to us, that if he could not bee relieved otherwise then by the Statute of the poore, he would loose it, And at last confessed that all his other workmen were gone from him since the said restraint, and put him to noe charge, but would not give us any particular account how they had bene otherwise ymployed. And Mr. Bulstrode, his Landlord, affirmed that he had ymployed the Laborers of Horton Mill in worke soe as they neither were nor should be a charge to the Countrie. In the close of the day wee received a Peticon subscribed by about fortie freeholders of both the



Counties, wch wee understand might easilie have bene as many Scores but that they would not trouble us more with the multitude of names then matter. Wherein are divers things tending not onlie against their contribucon to the paper Mills, but for the utter subuercon of them, as being a danger to his [Majesty's] Royall person, and a gen'all Nuisance to the Countries adioyning, wch suit of theirs they besought us to recomend to yor Lopps, wch herewthall wee have sent inclosed, Most humbly submitting the cause as it is now presented to yor Lop's grave Consideracons, Together wth the behavior of the said Phipps, and the neglect of the said overseers, and doe most humblie attend yor further direçions, resting as in duty wee are bound

Yor Lopp's humble Servants,

EDW. SPENCER.  
JO. LAURENCE.  
GILBT. GOREND.  
EDW. SALTOR.  
JO. PARSONS.

Oxbridge, 19th Jan.  
1636.

To the right hoble the Lords and others of his Mat's most hoble privy Counsell.

The petition referred to is appended. It was evidently drawn up in great haste, being written in a fearful scrawl, and on paper which fully bears out the complaint as to the quality of some, at least, of what was then procurable. It runs as follows:—

Right Worshipfull.

Whereas wee the Inhabitants of the County of Buck. and Middlesex understand that upon the restraints from the Lords of his Matie's privie Counsell of the paper makers now adioyning to his Matie's howses from bringing of ragges from London and other places infected with the plague, The sayd Paper makers in the sayd Counties of Buck. and Middlesex doe indeavour to bring a great Charge and burden upon us and other Inhabitants of the hundreds bordering upon the sayd paper milles for the payment of their Landlord's Rentts, housekeeping and Mayntenance of their Workmen, and Recompense for loss of their gaynes which should have accrued to them if there had been noe Restrainte. Wee whose names are subscribed doe humbly offer to your Worships these Considerations (viz.):

First, that the Landlords, by converting their Corne Milles into paper milles, have much advanced their Rentts, some of them Raising the same from 10 or 12<sup>lb</sup> to neere 100<sup>lb</sup> p. Ann., and others from 14 or 15<sup>lb</sup> to 150<sup>lb</sup> and that the paper maisters, for their private p'fitt against the common good, have brought many poore and indigent persons among us, to the impoverishing of divers p'ishes. And therefore we hope your Worships will thinke fitt that they which for their private gains have binn the cause of soe much p'iudice should att their Charges maynteyne them or

provide other workes for them, and not to putt the Charge upon the Country whoe suffer otherwaies by these occasions :

The paperworkmen and labourers have double allowances in Wages of their Maisters more then other poore men have for other day's labours, who herewith mayntayne their wives and children, and therefore they maye well save p'te hereof against such times of restrainte.

The paper Milles, to pull down the price of Ragges, about three years since by combination among themselves, did stopp the going of their milles for six or seaven weekes together, when the times were free from danger, for their private Commoditie. And therefore wee conceive it Reasonable that when by the Acte of God they are restrained, they should otherwaies p'vide for their laborers, the Restraint being a generall good.

Wee have of late binn and nowe are Charged with other greate payments and charges by reason of his Matie's long residence in these p'tes, and the payment of the Shipp mony, and other Somes which have fallen and are likely to fall upon us by great Robberies done on the highwayes which, notwithstanding all the care the Country can use, have binn committed in the Country, and therefore [are] not able to beare the Charge, if the same should be charged. And if waye be given to this suite of the paper makers, there are many other paper mills in the County of Buck., to the number of Twelve or Thirteen, whoe are also for the reasons aforesaid restrayned, and that yett seeke no reliefe. And also divers others, as Bargemen, Carriers, and of other Professions, who by this p'sedent are like to become petitioners to his Matie and the Lords for the like, and soe bring an unsupportable Charge upon the Country, to the exhausting of the inhabitantes, and of Contributors make some of them suppliants for Reliefe also.

That wee under favor doe conceive rather that the sayd paper mills should be utterly suppresst, for that they are merely erected about 40 years last past, and have become the occasion of destroying the lives of many of his Matie's Subiectes and are a great danger and Charge to the Country, for in the last great plague before this, and this year also, the infection hath been brought into these p'tes by meanes of their ragges, as to Colebrooke, Horton, Wickcomb, and Woborne, and att other times when there hath beene no plague in London or in the Country visible before, the same hath by this occasion beene brought to Horton, a small villadge where sixteene or seaventeene persons have died of the plague. And to Colebrooke a poor towne also, where divers persons have died of the same disease, and thereby occasioned a gen'all Contribution for their Reliefe, which [danger] wee conceive to growe, for that they fetch ragges also from p'tes beyounde the seas whereatt those times the plague hath been, by which meanes wee are in perpetuall feare.

The grounds and highwayes adioyning to these Milles have been much annoyed and overflowed by the hygh penning upp of the waters farr above the size [?], whereas the sayd grounds are killed, and the sayd wayes rather become passages for boates then highwayes for men and horses to traivle.

The fishes in the Rivers have bine and are dayly destroyed and

hindered from striving upp by reason of the double Wheelles of the sayd Milles running neere to the bottom, to the depth of aboute an inch and a half with great violence, and allowances, which should allwaies be open for the passage of fishes, are made soe narrowe and layde soe hygh as the fishes can by noe means passe. And basketts and Clothes are layd to catch the sayd fishes in their striving. And the sayd allowances are stopped at their pleasure to p'cure more water to their sayd Milles. The bordering Inhabitants are much anoyed by the hideous noyse of the hammers of the paper milles, which goe daye and night without intermission, even on the Sunnedays, which are heard two or three miles off.

[Inserted in margin.] Wee farther certifie that great p'te of this mony may be levied upon many men who have lost the best parte of 2 years' p'fitts, rente, and charges by this late Delaye.

The noysome smells of the sayd infectious ragges are soe offensive as they are Cented afar off, and are of dangerous infection.

The Corne markets neere adioyning to those mills are much decayed, for that their former Corne Mills are converted to paper Mills, for y<sup>t</sup> albeit for a shewe they have Corn Mills and the sayd Paper Mills, yett their carelesnesse in grinding the same for their greater profitt otherwaies, and the feare of the Inhabitants to bring their Corne hither for danger of infection by their noysome ragges, doth cause them to goe farther, and to carry their corne to other marketts to their greater charge.

Besides, the sayd Milles being neere the chiefe howses of his Matie, and of divers honorable persons, are very dangerous to the safty of his Royall person, where the plague is brought by y<sup>r</sup> occasion into the countries adioyning.

And last of all, as they are a great anoyance to the Country, so his Matie by this meanes is much hindered in his Customes whilst they p'cure great benefitt to themselves by making paper soe unuseful as will bear no Incke on any Side, and yett is sould by them at much derer raittes than formerly, by reson att the first beginning they made good substantiall paper, fitting for booth uses of writing and printing, as by many examples of the sayd Paper is readie to be Shewed to your Worshippes.

Whearfore wee declare ourselves that wee are soe far from consenting to their Reliefe by a gen'all Contribution, y<sup>t</sup> if it maye stand good in Lawe, Wee humbly desire these Mills may be utterly suppressed, or removed further off, and thereby neyther his Matie nor his Subiectes may be endangered in their lives, [nor] the Countrie annoyed & burdened with Charge to mayntayne them whoe are soe mischeivous and offensive, and noe way necessary members of a Commonwealth, as we conceive.

All which wee humbly leave to your grave Considerations, and desire y<sup>t</sup> you would be pleased to become mediatores to their Lordshippes in our behalfe, for which wee shall ever remayne

Your Worshippes' most bounden to Command.

[Forty signatures follow, but a few of these are

illegible owing to holes in the paper and other causes. The following can be traced.]

Robert Bowyer, J. Garway, John Robins, Jo. Booth, John Ford, John Ley, H. Gould, Thomas Holmes, John Blackwell, James Wells, John Reading, William Hill, Mathewe Childe, Tho. Sowthey, John Windlesor [?], John Betts, Richard Hale, Thomas Robinson, Rog. Atlee, Henry Robins, Rychard Martin, Roger Nash, John Stanton, Henry Baron [?], Thomas Hobbs, Richard Millett, Charles Monck, Richard Shordich, John Atlee, Roger Partrydge, Henry Millett, John Wellwyn, William Nicoll, Robert Crispin, Will. Atlee, John Osmond, William Abbot.

12 Jan. 1636.

To the Right W<sup>o</sup>ll his Matie's Commissioners of the peace of the Countys of Buck. and Midx. authorised for the examininge and hearinge of the Cause touching the Paper milles and the Countrye in the sayd Counties.

This curious document, while it shows the intensity of the opposition against which the early paper-makers had to contend, contains several allusions of great interest. The allusion to the mills having been erected forty years before corresponds closely, it will be observed, with the enterprise of Marshall and his coadjutors, which, as we have seen, was in or about 1600. The inference to the deaths from plague at Horton is confirmed by the parish register, which shows fourteen deaths from this cause during four months. Nor should we overlook the indications of local discontents, arising from special causes, which probably had much to do with the side taken by Buckinghamshire in the Civil War a few years later.

Among the State Papers of the year 1637 we come upon a memorial setting forth the paper-makers' view of the case. They considered that they not only ought to have relief from the special rate, but should be exempt from paying rent during the "restraint." The document (S. P. Dom. Chas. I. cclxxvii. 60) is endorsed in pencil 18th Sept., 1636; but from internal evidence this cannot be the date of its execution. It is, possibly, a memorandum referring to the Privy Council letter of that date already referred to, though it would appear that the Bucks mills, possibly as nearer to Windsor, were closed sixteen days before the Council's order for Middlesex.

To ye right honorable ye lods & others of his Mats most honorable privy counsell.

The humble petiçon of Edmo. Phipps, Hen. Harris and Rich. West,

Sheweth that ye paper mills (of wch yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> are ffarmers) are and have been ever since ye 2<sup>nd</sup> of Septem. last, suppressed from working by reason of this contagious time, by meanes whereof yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> are altogether unable to m'teine themselves and their families, wch consist of about 120 p'sons, and much lesse able to pay ye rents, being 9<sup>lb</sup> p<sup>r</sup> weeke for the same

fforasmuch as yo<sup>r</sup> honno<sup>rs</sup>. in compassion of yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> miseries, they being debarred from working in their trades as aforesaid, have ordered y<sup>t</sup> some releefe shall be afforded them from yo<sup>r</sup> hundreds for their and their servants maintenance during this their restraint. But in regard yo<sup>r</sup> Honno<sup>rs</sup> have not ordered y<sup>t</sup> they should be discharged of yo<sup>r</sup> said rent likewise Their humble suite is y<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> honno<sup>rs</sup> will take into consideraçon this great charge wch yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> are no way able to beare, haueing no benefit at all by ye said Mills. And to order for their further releefe y<sup>t</sup> during ye time their Mills haue been and shall be suppressed from workeing, yo<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> shall be discharged from paying ye said weekly rent.

And as in duty bound they will pray for yo<sup>r</sup> honno<sup>rs</sup>. &c

It does not appear how the question was finally settled. The allusion in the Uxbridge petition to the existence of mills at Wycombe is confirmed by other documents in the State Papers, the references to which I have unfortunately lost. One bears date 1638, and makes mention of a newly-erected paper-mill at Loudwater rented for £50 of the Manor of Bassetsbury. Another, of about the same date, is signed by Matthew Richardson, paper-maker, Wycombe. It is probable that future research may throw further light on the subject, but enough has been quoted to open up a very interesting chapter in the industrial history of our county.