

THE MEON VALLEY.

BY H. W. TRINDER.

I.

The Meon River rises four hundred feet above the sea level a little more than one mile beyond Eastmeon, and pursues its placid course down the Meon Valley, through various pretty villages and towns (all of which are mentioned in Domesday Book), until after a course of some eighteen miles it falls into the Solent, a little to the east of the mouth of Southampton Water.

Throughout the whole of its course it is picturesque. Its upper waters flow through chalk downs; the most imposing of those eminences is the Beacon Hill (660 feet), which guards the right side of the valley, while Old Winchester Hill (653 feet) commands the left. On the Beacon Hill there are remains, such as fragments of rough pottery, which seem to be indications of a British village; while there is a tradition that the Roman legion which held Winchester had a summer camp on Old Winchester Hill. That hill has on it British barrows and the remains of a permanent camp or place of refuge, probably British, but, Mr. T. W. Shore thought, with signs of Roman work evident. Within a mile of Westmeon, on the Brockwood Estate (D. M. Meinertzhagen, Esq.), the remains of a moderate-sized Roman villa have recently been discovered, and a mile beyond, at Woodcote (Bramdean), two fine Roman mosaic pavements were unearthed in 1823. The larger one contained seven heads, representing the gods and goddesses who presided over the days of the week, and one extra one to fill up with; this and the head of Satura (Saturday) have been destroyed, but the rest have, fortunately, been preserved. But the people who have left most mark in the valley are the Jutes (generically

included among Anglo-Saxons), who first settled in Kent and afterwards (under Wulphere) conquered the Isle of Wight, as well as much of the Hants coast and the Meon Valley. The Saxon saint, Wilfrid, moreover, had a good deal to do with the Meon Valley, and in particular with building churches at Corhampton and Warnford¹

Wilfrid's connection with the Meon Valley was probably during that part of his troubled life when he resided among the South Saxons, whom (including, no doubt, the inhabitants of Meon Valley) he converted to Christianity. At this time the Meon Valley was isolated by the woods forming the outlying western parts of the great forest of Anderida, or Adredeswold, which stretched from the west part of Kent through Sussex into Hants.

The western part included the Forest of Bere, extending over Havant, Wickham, Hambledon, and, indeed, as late as the thirteenth century, to Titchfield and the boundaries of the town of Southampton. This Bere Forest was not disafforested until early in the nineteenth century, when it contained 16,000 acres, of which 10,000 were open land. In the grounds of West Lodge—now occupied by Captain Mabson, but formerly the ranger's house—are two fine though dilapidated oaks worthy of Sherwood Forest. The southern part of Bere Forest was sometimes called "The Beere of Porchester" and "Forest of Porchester." On the north-west side was "The Forest of West Bere," now entirely enclosed. It extended to Winchester and King's Somborne. There were also other woodlands, the remains of which are now represented by St. Clare's Wood, Preshawe, The Holt, and Longwood. The Rev. J. Bishop identified St. Clare's Wood with the Saxon "Wudu Ærscæ" and Longwood with "Hormeswudu," or "Homœres."²

¹Descendants of Wilfrid still exist in the Huddleston family of Yorkshire. One of them—John, a Roman Catholic priest—enabled Charles II. to escape from Worcester after the battle, and on his death-bed received the king into the Roman Catholic Church (see notice of John Huddleston in the Dictionary of National Biography, and Despatch, by Barillon to Louis XIV., Page xl of Appendix I to C. J. Fox's James II.)

²For further information as to these forests see Mr. Shore's paper on "Ancient Hampshire Forests," H.F.C. Proceedings, vol. I, page 40.

The Jutish settlers in Meon Valley must have found plenty to do in clearing away forest, bringing the land into cultivation, and building churches. They were successful in their exploitation, for a little before the end of the eighth century (790) King Beortric, who succeeded as King of Wessex in 783, gave "to my most faithful Prince Hemele" thirty-six "cassata,"¹ of which 26 cassata were at Hurtsbourne, in exchange for 33 cassata near the Meon River (see *Cartularium Saxonicum*, p. 359).

In 824 Ecgberht, King of the West Saxons, granted twenty-two hides at Meon to Prefect Willheard. King Alfred, who died in 901, left, among other property, Meon to his younger son.

The Meon Valley flourished in Saxon times, and at the date of Domesday Book (1086) all the present towns or villages existed, together with one (Lomer) which has disappeared, being now part of Corhampton parish.

At this time the population of England was probably less than when the Romans left. The Saxon conquest, the Danish wars, and the Norman Conqueror's campaigns and devastations caused great destruction of life. A very accurate writer (Sharon Turner) states that the persons mentioned in Domesday Book are 300,785 in number, and estimating the family of each at an average of five, the total population of England (excluding Winchester and other places and districts not dealt with in the great survey) would be about 1,504,925. Sir William Petty, in 1755, said "There were about two millions at the Norman Conquest." On the other hand, Sir Henry Ellis, writing after Sharon Turner, thinks it probable that the number was somewhat smaller. It must be borne in mind that Domesday was not a census, but a land revenue record, and that even in those days there must have been landless persons, apart from the wives and children of landowners. As to Hampshire, Sharon Turner makes the total population (excluding the Isle of Wight and Winchester) 9,807 persons.

¹A late Latin word difficult to translate; probably a variation of *casae*; it may mean farms, or, perhaps, the "yardland" of thirty acres.

The following table will show the names of the Meon Valley towns or villages as given in Domesday, and as spelled at the present time; also their population in 1901 and what it was in 1086, allowing five as the family of each person disclosed in Domesday—probably too low an estimate:—

Present Name.		Domesday Name.		Population 1901.		Estimated Population 1086
1 East Meon	—	Mene	—	1058	—	691
2 Westbury	—	Wesberie	—	—	—	71
3 West Meon	—	Menes	—	950	—	266
4 Warnford	—	Warneford	—	277	—	351
5 Exton	—	Esessentune	—	299	—	246
6 Corhampton and Lomer	—	Quedementune and Lammer	—	121	—	126
7 Meonstoke	—	Menestock	—	431	—	156
8 Droxford	—	Drockeneford	—	498	—	336
9 Soberton	—	Sudbertune	—	1189	—	196
10 Wickham	—	Wickeham	—	1160	—	251
11 Funtley	—	Funtelei	—	—	—	125
12 Titchfield	—	Ticefelle	—	1553	—	176
13 Meon	—	Mene	—	—	—	10
				7536		3001

In 1891 the population of Westbury was probably included in West Meon, and that of Funtley and Meon, in Fareham, or Titchfield.

In dealing with Meon Valley the first question is, whence its name? There are three views. The first is that the valley was inhabited by a very old British tribe, the Meonwara, and that the river and its villages took their names from them. The second is that the name Meon was introduced by one of the Wessex tribes. The third that the Jutes, who were settled here by Wulphere in 661, gave the name Meon to the river and several of the villages they founded or inhabited there. The late Mr. Shore held the first view twenty years ago, and the third in his last work. There is little written evidence on the subject, except Bede's History, but there is the important ethnological fact that in Saxon times the valley was held for 400 years by a Jutish tribe. Mr. Shore mentions that in Jutland there is a river Moen, and suggests this is much the same word as Meon, or Mene. We must either assume that when the Jutes occupied the

valley they allowed it—the river and the villages, some, at any rate, of which they probably founded, and in all of which they were the conquering class—to continue the name Meon; or that they followed the more usual course of conquerors, and stamped the whole valley with a name, Meon, which was imported by and with them. The latter, I submit, is the correct view.

Meon is the name not only of the river, of Meonstoke, West Meon, and East Meon, in the wider and more fertile part of the valley, where population at the Norman Conquest was thickest; but close by Titchfield Haven are a small hamlet and farm named Meon.

Bede says in his *Ecclesiastical History* Book II., chap. 15, speaking of the first arrival of the Angles and Saxons in 449. "Those who came over were of the three most powerful nations of Germany, Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. From the Jutes are descended the people of Kent and of the Isle of Wight, this is the race which still holds the Isle of Wight and that which until to-day, in the Province of the West Saxons, is called the Western Jutes, seated opposite the Isle of Wight." In book IV., chap. 13, speaking of Wilfred's coming to the province of the South Saxons, about 681, he says: "Ethelwach, King of that nation, had been not long before baptised in the province of the Mercians by the persuasion of King Wulphere, who was present, and was also his god father, and as such gave him two provinces, viz., the Isle of Wight and the Province of Meonwara, in the nation of the West Saxons." Whether these were the names of the Provinces when conquered or at the date Bede wrote is not clear. The latter is probable.

Ethelwerd's Chronicle, under the year 796, states "the Mercians, ravaged Kent and the province which is called Merscwari." This tribe are said to have settled near Romney, and the name is somewhat like "Meonwara." At any rate it goes to show that "Wari," or "Wara," was Anglo-Saxon, not Celtic.

The Rev. S. Lysons has, I believe, suggested in "Our British Ancestors" that "Meon" is a word of great

antiquity, and came from the East, being indeed possibly connected with the Bael-Meon mentioned twice in the Old Testament.¹

As regards the Meon Valley generally, it has not much history. As Earl Godwin, and his son Harold after him, held the manor of Soberton, it is possible that men from Meon Valley faced Harold Hardrada at Stamford Bridge, and fought at Hastings. As will be seen later, the valley narrowly escaped a battle in the days when Henry I. and his brother, Duke Robert of Normandy, were struggling for the Crown. Five centuries later, in 1644, the Battle of Cheriton may be said to have commenced at East Meon. We obtain during the Middle Ages glimpses of a busy life, of lords, knights, and other residents taking their share in county duties and paying levies towards their country's needs.²

One thing which may throw some light on the population about the time of the Restoration is the returns as regards Meon Valley villages in a religious census of people over sixteen years of age taken for the Province of Canterbury in 1676³.

Village.	Conformists.	Papists.	Non-Conformists.
East Meon	544	7	3
Westbury (no return, probably included in West Meon)			
West Meon	225	0	16
Warnford	103	0	10
Exton	118	4	1
Corhampton	94	—	—
Meonstoke	143	2	2
Droxford	345	2	20
Soberton	266	10	4
Wickham	259	2	0
Funtley (no separate return; it and Meon probably included in Fareham)			
Titchfield	869	2	47
	2966	29	103
Total	3098.		

¹Jer. xlviii., 23, and Ez. xxv., 9.

²*E.g.*, towards Richard I.'s ransom in 1194.

³I believe this census was never printed. The census was conducted by the Bishop of London for the Primate, and the original manuscript volume presented to his Grace of London is now in the Salt Library at Stafford, and was bought by the founder, Mr. William Salt. It once belonged to the Duke of Sussex, sixth son of George III.

Although wives and children of sixteen and upwards are included, something must be added for children under sixteen. On the whole, I think that a number equal to at least half that of the population given in the census should be added. This is 1549, and it brings the population of Meon Valley in 1676 up to 4,647. And this was eighteen years after the Great Protector's death, and under the Commonwealth the Church of England consisted of Dissenters, but no Roman Catholic or Episcopalian clergyman could be appointed to any preferment. Verily, the Church of England clergy of the Restoration days must have been powerful and persuasive in Meon Valley.

II.

I will now shortly mention the leading matters of interest in or relating to the various towns and villages, commencing with East Meon.

EAST MEON.

The manor of East Meon is a very large one, comprising about 18,000 acres, and including Froxfield and Steep. Domesday speaks of it as held by the King, and adds that at an earlier date Archbishop Stigand held it. It has belonged to the See of Winchester for over eight hundred years, and probably in 1086 it was in the King's hands temporarily, in consequence of Stigand (who had been, till the Conquest, Bishop of Winchester, as well as Archbishop of Canterbury) being in disgrace.

The church is a noble one, standing at the north of the village, and Petersfield road, with a fine down rising sharply a few yards behind it. Its principal feature is the central tower, surmounted by a wooden spire covered with lead. The tower is a beautiful specimen of Romanesque architecture, and it stands as firmly as when it was built. Mr. Nisbett, the well-known architect, pronounces it earlier than the church of the Domesday period. If so, it is probably Saxon—certainly its four arches look different from the Norman transepts and aisleness nave which Walkelin, acting Bishop

of Winchester at the close of the eleventh century, apparently added. Of these, the transepts and the north and west walls of the nave only stand, a south aisle and chancel with adjoining south chapel having afterwards been added. This church contains the largest and perhaps handsomest of the four black fonts which are one of the boasts of Hampshire.¹ The others are at Winchester Cathedral, St. Michael's Southampton, and St. Mary Bourne. The East Meon font and the Cathedral font have figures in high relief on two sides; the other two sides were probably placed near the walls and so have merely conventional carvings. St. Michael's font has medallions enclosing wolves carved on three sides, and the emblems of St. John, St. Mark, and St. Matthew on the fourth; St. Mary Bourne grapes on two sides and arcading on two. There is a somewhat similar font at St. Peter's, Ipswich, with archaic wolves carved on the four sides; but it is of rather lighter color than the four Hampshire fonts, which are all black. Some think that their material is marble, others slate. Dean Kitchin is of opinion that they were made at Tournai in the twelfth century. Mr. Shore thought them Byzantine (and a cast of East Meon font, in South Kensington Museum, is so labelled). My own opinion is of little or no value, but from the fonts I have seen in the Copenhagen and Stockholm Museums, I am inclined to think them Scandinavian. All the large bowls evidently came by sea and were mounted on pillars or other supports here. May they not have arrived at Southampton from Scandinavia when Knut reigned at Winchester? I believe there is a similar font at Old Hove (or Brighton) Church, and there may be other fonts in England of the same class, forgotten, in but little frequented churches. From the imposing appearance of East Meon church, William Cobbett, in November, 1822 (as he tells us in his *Rural Rides*) "felt sure that East Meon had been a large place." The signs of old ploughing on the Downs around in his opinion supported this view, so does the population as shown by Domesday; though part of that may have been at Froxfield and Steep: so does a fair, which was formerly held here on September 19th. So, perhaps, does the

¹ Vict. County Hist. of Hants, Vol. II. pp. 241, et seq.

fact that in 1592, Queen Elizabeth being at Hampton Court, and an English army being in Normandy and Brittany assisting Henri IV., several special posting stations between Portsmouth and Southampton and the Court were established, one of which was at East Meon. There is a hill between East Meon and Langrish called the "Vineyards," and it seems pretty well accepted that in the mediæval days vine growing was carried on to some extent at East Meon. In 1189, King John, then Earl of Mortain, married the East Meon heiress, Isabella, daughter of William, Earl of Gloucester, and lived there, devoting himself much to hunting, until, on his brother Richard's death, he became King. In 1198, while living at East Meon, Prince John granted Colmer to "the Church of the Blessed Mary of Southwick, and to the Canons there serving God." Possibly John and his wife lived in the old house south of the church, still called "King John's House"; or in an earlier house on that site, for the present building, or most of it, is of later date. Mr. Shore thought the present building of the fifteenth century. It contained a fine hall, but this has been divided into rooms.¹

But on the 6th February, 1331, there was a grant by the King to the Bishop of Winchester that on any future avoidance the parishes of East Miene and Hameldon be held by the Prior and Convent of St. Swithin as belonging to the spiritualities of the see.

WESTBURY.

WESTBURY has always been a knight's fee, from the Conquest until the feudal system died out, the knight holding it from Hugh de Port and subsequent tenants-in-chief. This Hugh de Port came over with the Conqueror, and must have rendered him great service at Hastings and elsewhere, as he

¹For further information as to the Church and Court House see report of H.F.C. Meeting at East Meon, page 79 of vol. i., Hampshire Antiquary and Naturalist. This account mentions that in the ninth year of Richard I. (1198) the accounts of the Exchequer show that the sheriff of Hants had credit for stocking the king's lands in "Mienes," so at that time the manor was still in the king's hands.

was given many manors in Hampshire and other counties. Several of these were in the Meon Valley. Professor Montagu Burrows traces the name "De Port," not as some do from Portsmouth, but from of a commune near Bayeux, whence Hugh de Port came. One descendant of Hugh de Port married an heiress of the St. John family and a later one adopted her name. From this family descended Oliver St. John, Chief Justice during the Commonwealth, his daughter Joanna's grandson Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, Queen Anne's minister, as also do the Paulets, including the Marquis of Winchester (who so stoutly defended Basing House) and the present Marquis (the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire). In the grounds of Westbury House (Colonel Leroy Lewis), close to the road between East Meon and West Meon, are the ruins of a thirteenth or early fourteenth century chapel attached to East Meon Church.¹

In 15 Ed. II. (1322) Robert Lewer (or Le Ewer) obtained a royal licence to crenellate his manor house at Westbury, and afterwards a grant of free warren.

WEST MEON.

This is, perhaps, the prettiest village in the valley. The river here is small and intermittent in summer. Hence it is called by the working classes "The Bourne." The valley, however, widens out from this point, and is broken and wooded.

The church is dedicated to St. Andrew, and, standing on high ground, is a conspicuous object as you enter from the west, or look east from the Beacon Hill. It was entirely rebuilt in 1844—6, by Sir Gilbert Scott, at the expense of the rector (Dr. Bailey). Exterior and interior are alike pleasing. The exterior is of knapped flints, with stone dressings. The tower also is good. In the churchyard is buried Thomas Lord, once the proprietor of Lord's Cricket

¹A description of this chapel, by Mr. N. C. H. Nisbett, will be found on page 1, vol. 2, H.F.C. Proceedings. (See also Hampshire Antiquary, vol. 1, page 62).

Ground, first started where Dorset Square now is, and afterwards moved near St. John's Wood Chapel. Thomas Lord played for the celebrated Hambledon Club towards the end of the eighteenth century. The parents of Richard Cobden are buried here, and their famous son lived here with them for several years in early life. Professor Thorold Rogers, M.P., was born at West Meon, where his father was the local doctor. In his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages" he mentions that before the nineteenth century there was no shop in the place. I have, however, seen a tradesman's token by John Foster, of West Meon, dated 1670. The Professor also says that in his youth there was no tenant farmer in West Meon; they were all yeomen. But this fortunate village with no history, was connected with the only two cases where, since the Conquest, war has approached the Meon Valley. The first was in 1101, when, after the death of William Rufus, Henry I. assumed the English Crown. His elder brother, Robert, Duke of Normandy, however, who was in the Holy Land at the time, having returned, also claimed the kingship. He landed with an army at Portsmouth, or Porchester, and directed his march to Winchester. But hearing that his sister-in-law (Henry's wife) was ill there, he turned aside and advanced towards London, until he nearly reached West Meon. Henry I., with an army, advanced from Sussex towards Winchester, and the two forces came so close to one another that they were separated only by a wood. A destructive battle seemed certain, when peace was arranged between the two brothers. Henry gave up the places he held in Normandy, restoring to Robert's followers such English lands of theirs as he had taken, and paying Robert 3,000 marks of silver a year. Mr. Shore, in his History of Hampshire, states that the meeting took place, and that the treaty was made, at Westbury. Further, he stated at a H.F.C. meeting, 31st May, 1890, that a charter by Henry I., dated February, 1102, made on the first day of the week, professed to have been "after the purification of the Virgin Mary after the compact made between me and my brother Robert at Westbury" (p. 83, vol. 1, Hampshire Antiquary and Naturalist).

On the other occasion there was actual fighting. It was in 1644 when the war between Charles I. and his Parliament was beginning to incline in favour of the latter. On March 25th, 1644, Sir William Waller, the Parliamentary general, who in the early stages of the war had been called "William the Conqueror," having taken Arundel, marched with an army of 10,000 men into East Hants. His scouts and those of the Royalists came into touch at East Meon, which, with West Meon, was occupied the same day, Waller remaining at East Meon, while Brown, with the London troops, went to West Meon. When the Parliamentarians got into West Meon the Royalist cavalry charged, and made them evacuate the village, but the same evening (under Captain Thompson) they recovered and held it. The next day a cavalry skirmish took place outside West Meon, between sixteen troops of Royalists and six troops of Parliamentarians, in which some on each side were killed. The following day had been fixed by the Parliamentarians (who were mostly Puritans) for a strict fast, but, finding that they were in touch with the enemy, they observed the fast earlier than usual. The Royalists, hoping to catch them fasting and praying, approached in force, cut off a few stragglers, and made an imposing appearance on the hill to the left of West Meon. As further troops of Waller's came up from East Meon, Waller ordered Brown to march from West Meon on to Cheriton, and this was done, in spite of numerous skirmishers. A somewhat severe combat took place at West Meon hut, but Waller, bringing up fresh men, pivoted his troops on West Meon, and drove the Royalists back on Cheriton. There a really big battle took place on the 29th or 30th of March. This battle received many names at the time; some called it Cheriton, others Alresford, others Brandon Heath, and others, again, Bramdean. Waller lay the previous night at Lamborough Field, near Cheriton, and Hopton and the Earl of Brentford were at Sutton Common, and some of the combatants were so near that the sentinels on both sides could hear the others talking. About 8.30 on the morning of the 29th (or 30th) the London Brigade attacked the King's advance, and occupied Cheriton Wood on the Parliamentary right, between Lamborough Field and Sutton Common.

About 1 p.m. 4,000 Parliamentary Horse (under Sir W. Balfour) arrived, and the engagement became general. The Royalists' cavalry, after making one charge, could not be induced to face the Parliamentarians again, but the Royalists' foot—and especially some Irish foot—behaved very well, the Irish neither taking nor giving quarter. The battle ended in the complete rout of the Royalists and their being thrown back—a few on Winchester, but the bulk on Basing House and Reading, and thence on Oxford. Sir Edward Stowell (major-general), two colonels, five captains, one lieutenant, four ensigns, and two cornets were taken, and about 1,400 Royalists and 900 Parliamentarians were killed or wounded. The Royalists strove to minimise the loss. The Earl of Clarendon treated the matter as a mere skirmish; and Charles I., writing to his nephew, Prince Rupert, on the 1st of April, said the total loss on his side would not be over four hundred, and he wondered that the Royalists had not made a much stouter fight. The result of the victory was that Waller was able to advance and take Winchester, but he was not able to capture the Castle, and was obliged again to retire. The capture of the Castle was carried out next year by Cromwell, in person.¹

WARNFORD.

Warnford, like Westbury, was in old times a knight's fee, and was one of Hugh de Port's manors. The estate is a considerable one, containing about 5,000 acres. At the present time it belongs to Colonel W. Woods. The mansion is said to date back to Elizabeth's time,² but it has been modernised and enlarged. The river Meon flows through the park. Two of the farms are let on the metayer system, the owner furnishing a herd of cows with each farm.

Below the house, on the left side of the Meon, are the church and churchyard. The church has recently been well and economically restored under the advice of Mr. Nisbett. As some valuable "Notes on Warnford Church," by that

¹ For details of the Roman Villa recently excavated at Little Lippen, near West Meon, see H.F.C. Proceedings, vol. v., p. 271.

architect, will be found in vol. v. of the H.F.C. Proceedings, all I need say is that the nave and chancel form one aisleless building, with a square tower at the west end. Tradition connects St. Wilfred with the erection of the first church, some fragments of which may be incorporated in the present building. In the south wall is a Saxon sun-dial, which is accepted by Mr. J. Romilly Allen as a relic of Wilfred's church.¹

The church was rebuilt at the end of the twelfth and commencement of the thirteenth centuries by Adam de Port, great-grandson of Hugh de Port. Mr. Nisbett thinks he began by building the present tower. He was in 1172 outlawed for an attempt on Henry II.'s life, retired to Scotland, was restored about 1180, and died in 1213. His son William assumed the name of his maternal grandmother, St. John, and in 1214 paid King John 500 marks for livery of all his father's lands.

There are two inscriptions on the outside of the walls of the church recording the rebuilding just mentioned. Copies of these and translations will be found at the end of my article in a note which Mr. Nisbett has kindly given me.

There are two fine seventeenth century monuments of the Neale family in that part of the church used as a chancel, but they sadly need restoring. Not far from the church are the ruins of a twelfth century manor house, the important part being the remains of the hall divided by two rows of pillars. These ruins are usually called "King John's House," but, as far as is known, King John had nothing to do with Warnford, and "King John" is probably a corrupt reading of "St. John." Possibly the house was built by the De Port who assumed the name of St. John.²

EXTON.

From the Red Book of the Exchequer it appears that William of Exton held half a knight's fee here. The Fine Roll of 1207 shows that Richard de Warnford gave the king 110

¹Vict. County History of Hants, vol. ii., p. 240.

²For particulars of these ruins see Mr. Nisbett's "Notes on a Ruined Building in Warnford Park," H.F.C. Proceedings, vol. v., p. 299.

marks, and a palfrey, to have the village of Exton as Richard de Warnford had it. In 1301 a pardon was given to one Geoffrey de Exton by reason of his services in the Scotch War for the death of Reginald Modersone, of Erchesfont, on an inquisition of the Sheriff and Coroner of Wilts, showing that he killed Modersone in self-defence. Exton is reported to have been the last West Saxon town when the rest of Meon Valley was South Saxon. When and how the Hants border was taken back so much further east does not appear.

The church is Early English, and was very judiciously restored some ten years ago.

CORHAMPTON.

This is a very pretty little village. The population of the parish is only 121 in number. The vicarage is close to the Meon river and very picturesquely situated. Annexed to it is an old school, formerly the elementary school of the parish in which Sir Nicholas Hyde, uncle of the great Lord Clarendon and Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Charles I.'s arbitrary days, is reputed to have had his first education.

The defunct manor of Lomer is now considered part of Corhampton. It consists of a farm on the western shoulder of the Beacon Hill and a few cottages. Corhampton and Lomer are now owned by the Campbell Wyndham family, who occupy a pleasant mansion and park there.

The great feature of Corhampton is the Saxon Church which has recently been restored with admirable judgment under the direction of Mr. Jackson, the well-known architect. The outside shows the Saxon stone framework of long and short work. The Chancel is modern and is entered by a fine Saxon arch. Into the outside south wall a Saxon sundial, similar to that at Warnford has been built. In the churchyard is a very ancient and fine yew tree, which perhaps dates back to the time of the Druids.¹

¹Some particulars of the Church, with Drawings, will be found in Mr. Nisbett's "Notes of some Examples of Saxon Architecture in Hampshire." H.F.C. Proceedings, Vol. 2, p. 309.

In 1279, Matilda, Countess of Gloucester, was reminded that she would not permit her villeins near Corhampton to do suit at the Hundred Court of Meonstoke. The Countess allowed the said suit of court as due and the said villeins did make suit. In 1295, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, owned Corhampton vill. In Richard II.'s time the Earl of Stafford was lord of the manor. In the 14th Century, Nicholas de Corhampton held from John de St. John de Basing and the latter from the King a knight's fee at Corhampton (or Kernhampton.)

MEONSTOKE.

Meonstoke, Menes, or Menestock, was probably the principal of the villages which sprang up where the valley widened out and was fertile. The Hundred Court was held there, and Meonstoke had a market and fair, which in 1246 were granted to John Mansell, who appears to have been an ecclesiastic. As early as 824, Egbert, as already mentioned, gave land at Meon to Wilfheard. Egbert was West Saxon King, so by that time Wessex evidently had reacquired Meon Valley, even if it had not extended as far as at the present eastern border of Hampshire. In 1194 and 1196 Meonstoke made payments towards Richard the first's ransom (Exchequer Red Book). In 1380, a Crown grant in fee simple was made to William de Wyndesore (afterwards Baron Windsor), who had married Alice de Perrers, of lands and tenements she acquired while single of, *inter alia*, the Manor of Meonstoke, County Southampton, in consideration of his going with the Earl of Buckingham to Brittany and undertaking to find at his own expense 100 men-at-arms for half a year from 200 men-at-arms and 200 archers with which, by virtue of an indenture with the King, he had continued in his service.

In 1332, a license to Prior and Convent of St. Swithin's empowered them to impark their woods at Moene, &c.

DROXFORD.

Droxford is now in a sense the centre of the valley, the Petty Sessions or Union being there. It is a pretty though

small village. In 826, Egbert executed a grant of land at Droxford by a charter which was of sufficient importance to be witnessed by the greatest number of Ealdermen who ever witnessed any charter.¹

Droxford has an interesting church with a tower. It has much Norman work, including two handsome doorways in the north and south walls and a fine chancel arch. The arches dividing the nave and the aisles are on piers and seem to be late Norman in date. Isaac Walton spent much of the last seven years of his life here, his daughter Anne having been married in 1676 to the rector, Dr. William Hawkins, a prebendary of Winchester.²

Until 1900 no actual remains of the Jutes had been found in the Meon Valley, though some had been found both in Kent and in the Isle of Wight. But in making Droxford railway station—which is on the left bank of the Meon and in Soberton parish—a Jutish burial place containing skeletons, arms, ornaments, and other remains, was found, though probably only a small part of the burial ground was opened. The bodies had been laid in shallow graves or trenches in the chalk. The spears and weapons were of iron. Many of them and many of the ornaments found are now in the British Museum.³

SOBERTON,

Soberton, on the left Bank of the Meon, is a long parish running from Meonstoke to near Wickham. The lower part now forms the separate parish of Newtown. The village is a long mile from Meonstoke.

About 1745, after his voyage round the world and capture of a great Spanish treasure ship, the great Admiral, Lord Anson, bought an estate and the manor house (now pulled down) at Soberton, where he lived some years. This house

¹Shore's Anglo-Saxon Race, page 179.

²See "Isaac Walton at Droxford," page 157 of Canon Vaughan's "Wild Flowers of Selborne."

³See the short but interesting article by Mr. Dale "On the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Droxford, Hants," in H.F.C. Proceedings, Vol. V. p. 173.

and manor had belonged to the Curll family, and one who was Bishop of Winchester in Charles I.'s time, and was among the besieged in Bishop's Waltham Palace and Winchester Castle, retired here when deprived of his Bishopric. Lord Anson, after a few years, sold this property (I believe to a Mr. Minchin, whose descendants still own it) and he resumed active life. He was first Lord of the Admiralty in the days of Lord Chatham.

The great object of interest in the village is a fine church. There is good Late Transitional and Early English work; and a sixteenth century tower, which is said to have been built by a butler and dairymaid whom two figures on the tower are said to commemorate. They were probably servants of Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle (a natural son of Edward IV.) who had a house and estate here and is buried in the south transept of the church. He was governor of Calais and at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

In the north aisle is a monument to (with good bust of) a Mr. Thomas Lewis, a Welshman, who married, first the only daughter and heiress of Sir Walter Curl, Lord of the manor; and thereafter lived at Soberton. His first wife dying without children he married Elizabeth, the daughter of the Rev. Edward Turnour, by whom he had one child, Elizabeth, who married the Earl of Plymouth. Their son succeeded to the title. Mr. Lewis left £8,000 a year to his grandson, but if he should die under 21 the whole estate was to go to the great Sir Robert Walpole. He died November, 1736. The executors of the will were Sir Robert, his brother Horace (Lord Orford), Mr. Baron Fortesque, and Dr. Mead. The young Earl of Plymouth attained 21 and the present earl is his descendant.

WICKHAM.

Wickham or Wykeham. This little town lies on both banks of the Meon. The church and rectory and a few houses are on the left bank, but the principal part of the place is on the right. There most of the shops and houses are built round a large parallelogram which looks as if it, like

Cheapside, had once been a tilting ground. I suppose that the houses at the east end are built where a castle formerly stood.

Rooksbury Park manor and estate are situated near the church, they belong to Mr. Carpenter Garnier, whose family have owned them since 1685, or thereabouts, when Isaac Garnier, a Huguenot refugee, acquired them. The family originally came from du Thou, in France, where one member was Seigneur in 1599. The house and park are at present occupied by Mr. Arthur Lee, M.P. The house is a fine modern mansion. Near the church formerly stood the old manor house of the Uvedale's, who owned the manor for two or three centuries. A member of this family was an early patron of William of Wickham, the great bishop who founded Winchester and New Colleges. The bishop was born at Wickham in 1324.

Sir Nicholas Uvedale, Lord of the Manor of Wickham, and Governor of Winchester Castle, assisted William of Wickham to study, made him his secretary, introduced him to his former secretary, Bishop Edington, and the two brought William to the King's notice. The church has a Norman arch and some Early English work, but much modernisation has taken place. Near the church is a mill, made largely of the timber of the famous American frigate, the Chesapeake, after her defeat and capture by the Shannon in 1813.

FUNTLEY.

Funtley is now a decayed place—a hamlet of Fareham, with brick and tile works. There are still some small remains of an iron mill erected by Henry Cort (a London naval agent) about 1784 to work a patent process to purify pig iron by "puddling." It is said to have been the first attempt in England of the kind. Unfortunately, Cort was ruined in 1789, his partner having embezzled naval funds and being prosecuted. Cort and his process are mentioned with some respect in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article on "Iron."

TITCHFIELD ABBEY.

Two miles lower down, just before one enters Titchfield, is "Place House," the ruins of a mansion which Thomas Wriothesley, a friend of Thomas Cromwell, Lord Chancellor and an executor of Henry VIII., constructed out of the church of Titchfield, otherwise Funtley, Abbey.¹

The abbey came to an end in 1537-8, when the Abbot (titular Bishop of Thetford), no doubt under pressure, surrendered the possessions of the Convent to the King's Commissioners, and by letters patent, dated 30th December; these, including the abbey, were, with a few exceptions, granted, for his "good, true, and faithful service to us," "to our trusty servant Thomas Wriothesley," who in 1547 was made Earl of Southampton. On the death of the fourth Earl, Thomas, Place House passed to his eldest daughter Elizabeth, who married the Earl of Gainsborough. On the death of their son, without male issue, it passed to their daughters Elizabeth, who married the first Duke of Portland (who was made Marquis of Titchfield, a title used by the eldest sons) and Lady Rachel, who married the second Duke of Beaufort. The third Duke of Beaufort acquired the Portland moiety, and the fifth Duke sold the property to Mr. Peter Delmé. In 1781 Mr. Delmé bought Cams Hall, Fareham, and dismantled Place House, with materials from which he and his son added to Cams Hall. At Welbeck Abbey the Duke of Portland has many documents relating to Titchfield Abbey.

Henry V. stayed at the Abbey while his troops were embarking at Southampton for France.

Margaret of Anjou and Henry VI. were married at the Abbey by the Bishop of Salisbury the 22nd April, 1445. In Place House the second Earl of Southampton entertained

¹An admirable article on the abbey and house, by the Rev. G. W. Minns, with good plan and two views of the house, will be found p. 317, vol. iii., H.F.C. Also vol. v., p. 203, H.F.C., an old map of the land about Place House (date about 1600), and a note thereon by the Rev. G. W. Minns. Also H.F.C., vol. iv., p. 177, a facsimile of a deed in 1266 between Titchfield Convent and Quarr Convent, with note thereon by the Rev. E. S. Prideaux Brune, and a reproduction of the only existing seal of Titchfield Convent.

Edward VI. from the 8th to the 14th August, 1552, and in 1569 Queen Elizabeth was entertained here. Shakspeare probably visited here, as the third earl, Henry, was his friend and patron. This Earl took an active part in establishing the first English colonies. He and Lord Arundel "set forth" Waymouth's Virginian Voyage of 1605. He was Treasurer of the Virginia Company, a member of the East India Company and an Incorporator of the North West Passage Company, and Somers Islands Company. Charles I. was here in 1625 and in 1647, for some time after he left Hampton Court, and was taken thence to Carisbrooke Castle. His host, the fourth earl, Thomas, was one of Charles' supporters in his troubles, and made great efforts for peace. He was one of four who asked (and obtained) leave to bury Charles' body. The heroic Lady Russell (née Rachel Wriothesley) was born here.

The Brethren or Canons Regular seem to have been good farmers, for a letter dated London, January 6th, 1284, from the representative of a Florentine House, gives particulars as to purchases, in many cases for several years in advance, of all or a portion of the wool of many English monasteries including Netley and Titchfield in Hants (30 Geographical Journal, page 310).

TITCHFIELD.

Titchfield, situated some two miles from the mouth of the river, is a clean, old-world town, with a population of about 1,600 persons. Near here, in November, 1897, eight bronze palstaves in good condition were found by the then Vicar (Rev. R. A. R. White), who was also active in restoring the church. This church has an old tower, probably Saxon, and it contains the handsome Wriothesley tomb erected, in accordance with the will of the second earl, about the time of the Armada. The first earl, who was originally buried at the old St. Andrew's, Holborn (the predecessor of the present church, in which Dr. Sacheverell preached his celebrated sermon in 1710), was brought from London to rest in this

tomb. The church contains Norman, Decorated, and Perpendicular work. The Rev. T. Cox's History of Hampshire (1700) mentions that Titchfield then had a school of twelve boys, who were clothed by a legacy.

The same history also mentions the following other schools for Meon Valley, which, for the time, was well supplied:—
 "Corhampton, where eight poor boys are taught to read, write, and cast accounts. . . . Soberton and Meon, where twenty-four children are taught to read."

A mile below Titchfield the river widens out into an estuary and port of importance at the time of the Conquest and some 600 or 700 years afterwards. Probably, it was once a mile long and a quarter to half-a-mile wide, and was fed by the sea as well as by the Meon. The old map of the Abbey estate—a reduced copy of which is to be found on p. 203, vol. v., H.F.C.—gives a good idea of the Haven, its extent, and access to the sea (even as late as 1,600), and shows ships lying in it. Now it is cut off from the sea by an embankment carrying a road, which has at one point sluice gates, by which water can enter or escape. Outside there is a small artificial haven, which, I think, may probably have been made after the Delmés purchased Place House and property, with a view to improve the wild-fowl shooting in the old haven, and yet give some accommodation for the small remains of commerce. Before this the entrance from the sea to the haven was a quarter of a mile or more to the west, and is now blocked up by a sea-defence embankment carrying a road. These works are locally reputed to have been made by Dutchmen. This may point to the time when the Duke of Portland was interested in Place House. The river water in the old haven forms two or three lakelets, or, as Anglo-Indians would say, gheels of some size, and connected by running water. In the present small haven the water rises to from 10ft. to 14ft., depending on the tides.

On high ground west of the old haven, and a short half-mile from it, is the old hamlet of Meon, which was a separate place in Domesday. It now consists of Meon Farm, an old timber and red-brick building of about the date of 1500

(recently used as two cottages, but now condemned as unfit for habitation), six cottages, and three new houses.

I have to thank many friends for information; in particular Mr. Nisbett, Dr. Andrews, Canon Vaughan, and the Editor of the H.F.C. Proceedings.

Mr. N. C. H. NISBETT has kindly furnished me with the following note on Warnford Church.

Inscription in South Porch over door.



The above expanded has been given as:—

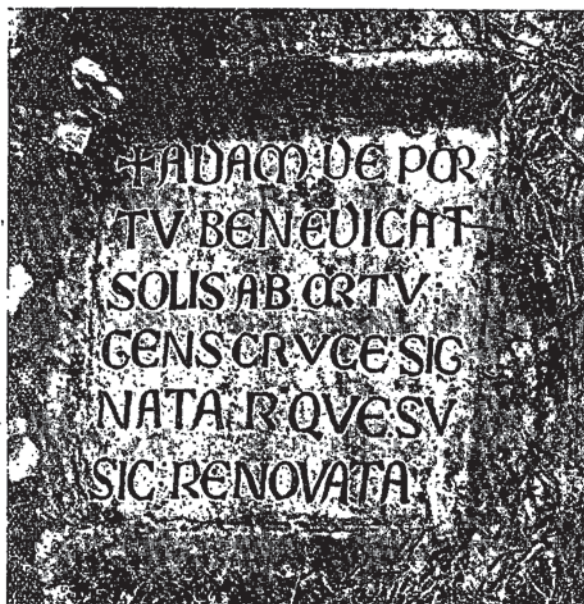
"Fratres orate prece vestra sanctificate
"templi factores seniores ac juniores
"Wilfrid fundavit Bonus Adam me
"renovavit."

There appears to have been some difference of opinion as to whether the words "Seniores ac Juniores" refer to builders

of the earlier and later buildings, or as taken by Canon Benham in the following paraphrase.

"O ye brethren pray,
 "Be ye young or be ye gray,
 "That these souls may be cleansed from guilt
 "By whom this church was built ;
 "What Wilfrid raised of yore,
 "Good Adam did restore."

Inscription on north side :—



This inscription upon the north side of the church is evidently over the position once occupied by a door and probably a porch also. It is rather singular that in the notice of these inscriptions in Grose's Hampshire, they are described as "the first on the south, and the second on the north side within the porch."

It will be seen from the accompanying photograph taken two years ago that the lettering is quite plain, so there evidently must have been some "restoration" since the

notice in Grose's Hampshire, where it is "expanded" as follows :—

Adam de Portu
Benedicat solis ab ortu.
Gens cruce signata
Per quem sic renovata.

Canon Benham has paraphrased the inscription as below :—

" Bless ye good Adam de Port
" Cross signed Christians of every sort
" By whom I was thus restored
" For the worship of Christ your Lord.

There is no evidence that the tablets bearing the inscriptions are in their original positions ; in fact, from the mouldings surrounding them, it is probable that they have either been refixed or removed from other positions.

I do not know whether the fact that the letter T is variously formed   and  would be a point worth noticing from a paleographical point of view. There is also a slight difference between the A's in the north and south inscriptions, while the D on the south side in Adam, thus , is quite different from three similar letters on the north formed thus .

The photograph of the tablet in the porch was somewhat difficult to obtain, as the stone had been in the dark and damp so long that the letters hardly shewed upon it, while that on the north had been kept white by exposure to the weather. The letters were, I believe, all re-touched by the late rector.