

## IGHTHAM MOTE HOUSE AND CHURCH.

BY J. OLDRID SCOTT.

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### I.—THE MOTE HOUSE.

So much time will of necessity be occupied in inspecting this charming house and its beautiful surroundings that I feel sure I shall be consulting your wishes by making my remarks as brief as possible. There is a further good reason for doing this in the fact that, beyond what may be ascertained from examining the building itself, very little appears to be known of the steps by which the house has reached its present form. The various owners of the property are known, and their possession of the estate extends over many hundred years—from about 1180 to the present day—but it is doubtful whether any of them are actually recorded to have built particular parts of the house; and where any part is attributed to an individual owner, it is really only because the style in which it is built agrees more or less with the date at which he is known to have held the property.

There are three well-marked styles to be observed in the building, namely: Decorated, as represented by the hall and buildings connected with it; Perpendicular, as shewn in the entrance tower, the fine barge-boards and other woodwork, and in many windows and other features; and finally late-Tudor, which is found in the present chapel, various windows, etc.

Everything connected with the hall is well worthy of note. It is itself a very lovely example of the style prevailing in the first half of the fourteenth century. The doorways, the great stone arch, the roof, and the window in the inner wall are all of the most beautiful variety of the middle-Decorated style belonging to the earlier part of Edward III.'s reign.

The cross arch of stone is a notable feature, not often met with, but it may be compared with those in the hall at Mayfield in Sussex, which are almost identical in their mouldings, and apparently the work of the same designer.

The plan of the hall and the rooms adjoining it agrees with that usual at the period of its erection. The entrance is at the south end of the west front, and the "screens" must have run across nearly below the stone arch. The door in the south wall led to the kitchen, etc., as at present; the dais was at the north end of the hall, while the door opposite the large window led by a staircase to the withdrawing room and the chapel, which were placed end to end. The former is the fine room with a later oriel looking into the quadrangle, and the earlier chapel was the room to the east of it. There is a beautiful fourteenth-century opening in the west wall of this chapel which has been grated, and which made a connection between it and the withdrawing room, so that people could, when unwell, hear the services without entering the chapel. This opening is referred to as a piscina in General Luard's Paper on the "Mote House," but its real use was as I have described. The other fourteenth-century features still remaining in the old chapel are the west door and the east window. The former has details similar to the doorways in the hall below, with the same marble capitals. The window has lost its head, but if it is looked at from the outside it will be seen that the section of its jambs and mullions are identical with those of a two-light window below, which retains its fourteenth-century head and cusping.

The room below the chapel, to which this two-light window belongs, is called the crypt. It is vaulted in stone, and is all of the early period. Whether it was connected with the chapel or was for some more domestic purpose cannot be determined.

There are a few other remains of the original house connected with the kitchen and its offices, including one small window in the present servants' hall on the south side. It will be observed that the whole of the fourteenth-century remains are included in the block of buildings which forms

the east side of the quadrangle, and it is probable therefore that the original house, which is said to have been built by Sir Thomas Cawne, was limited to this part of the present building. Whether the moat at this early time took its present form is uncertain; it seems more probable that this was determined in the next century, when the gateway tower was built. This gateway tower is the principal feature which was added in the fifteenth century. The date given to this in General Luard's Paper is 1486, and this agrees with the style of architecture. If so, it would seem to have been built by Edward Haut when the estate was restored to his family by Henry VII. Though there are numerous other features belonging to this period, I need only mention the great window in the hall, and other smaller ones in various parts of the house; but I must not omit to say a word or two about the beautiful barge-boards to the two gables at the north of the hall. These are also Perpendicular in style, but earlier than the tower—one belongs to the withdrawing room, which was, after the hall, the most important dwelling room; the other to a chamber adjoining it, from which the old chapel was entered. These barge-boards seem to me to agree closely in age with that of the window in the north wall of the church, for which money was left by Sir Thomas Cawne. If he held the property for as many years as Edward III. sat on the throne, he might have erected the hall when quite a young man, and the barge-boards shortly before his death, leaving money which soon afterwards was spent on the church window; whether this is consistent with the effigy below the window being his is a question I do not feel able to settle. Unfortunately his will bears no date, or the puzzle would no doubt be solved.

Of the late-Tudor period, the chapel on the north side of the quadrangle is the most conspicuous feature. It is said to have been built by Sir Richard Clement in Henry VIII.'s time, he having bought the property from Edward Haut.

The older chapel was probably abandoned and the new one built because the house, having grown so much larger under successive owners, the space occupied by the old chapel was required for other purposes. The present chapel is a very

picturesque chamber with various features deserving careful examination. The grating in its east wall probably belongs to the time when the altar-table stood further west among the people, and was used for those members of the family who wished to be secluded. There are many windows of this Tudor period, and others still later, as well as much panelling, the balustrades of staircases, etc., all of which are of excellent design, but I need not allude to them individually. I will only add that this house, though it has not escaped restoration, has been dealt with by a loving and generous hand, no pains nor expense being spared in order to make the new features as far as possible worthy of the old.

The house is quite unique, full of beauty and interest to the architect, painter, and archæologist, while its surroundings are a fit setting for such a precious jewel.

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## II.—IGHTHAM CHURCH.

This church possesses comparatively little architectural value, but it is picturesque, and has considerable interest both in itself and from the fine monuments it contains.

The church consists of a nave and chancel without any separating arch, north and south aisles, a south porch with a fine roof, and a tower at the west end. The nave roof is a very good waggon-shaped one, with well moulded timbers. There is an old roof on the narrow south aisle, but the whole of the north aisle, with moulded brick windows, belongs to the seventeenth century.

At the east end of the south aisle is St. Catherine's Chapel. The enclosure is modern. All the architectural features of the church are of late-Perpendicular character, with three exceptions—the small windows in the east gable, seen from the outside, which have the appearance of being Norman, the fine early-Perpendicular window in the north wall of the chancel, which may belong to the end of the fourteenth century, and the seventeenth-century north aisle which I have mentioned. Of the first and third I need say

no more; but the window to the north of the chancel, besides being very beautiful, possesses much interest. It was built with funds left by Sir Thomas Cawne, who owned the Mote House in the time of Edward III., and whose effigy it is said to be that which lies below.

Sir Thomas Cawne is the reputed builder of the original house, which certainly belonged to the first half of the fourteenth century, say 1340. The window cannot be earlier than 1390, while the canopy of the tomb is still later.

The effigy, which is of extreme beauty, and is for the most part perfectly preserved, may be of the same age as the window.

The two monuments in the south-east corner of the chancel are fine examples of a later period. That on the east wall is to Dame Dorothy Selby. The upper effigy in the adjoining tomb is to her husband Sir William Selby, who died in 1641.

She appears to have been a lady of no ordinary character and attainments. Her epitaph is as follows:—

D. D. D.

To the precious name and honour of  
 Dame DOROTHY SELBY, the relict of  
 Sir WILLIAM SELBY, Knight, the only  
 Daughter and heir of CHARLES BONHAM, Esq.

—  
 She was a Dorcas  
 Whose curious needle turned the abused stage  
 Of this leud world into the golden age.  
 Whose pen of steel and silken ink enrolled  
 The acts of Jonah in records of gold.  
 Whose art disclosed that plot which, had it taken,  
 Rome had triumphed and Brittain's walls had shaken.  
 In heart a Lydia, and in tongue a Hanna,  
 In zeal a Ruth, in wedlock a Susanna,  
 Prudent and simple, providently wary,  
 To the world a Martha, and to Heaven a Mary.

—  
 Who put on } in the year of her { Pilgrimage 69 Mar. 15  
 immortality } { Redeemer 1641

The expressions "pen of steel" and "silken ink" refer, of course, to her skill in embroidery. The two subjects mentioned in the epitaph, "The history of Jonah" and "The discovery of Guy Fawkes' plot," are represented on the black marble which forms the background to the bust in the centre of the monument. The whole of this monument is of exceptionally fine and very original design.

The other, on the south wall, is an excellent example of a more usual type. The two effigies are those of two Sir William Selbys, uncle and nephew, the dates being 1611 and 1641.

There are a few other monuments about the church of less importance. Portions of two oak beams remain across the entrance to the chancel, cut off close to the wall. The upper one is probably the rood beam, while the other belonged to the screen.

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[Additional notes on the architectural history of Ightham Mote House, by Henry Taylor, Esq., together with plans, a bird's-eye view, and other illustrations, are being prepared for the next Volume.—EDITOR.]