

AN ACCOUNT OF A MAP OF KENT
DATED 1596.

BY THE HON. HENRY HANNEN.

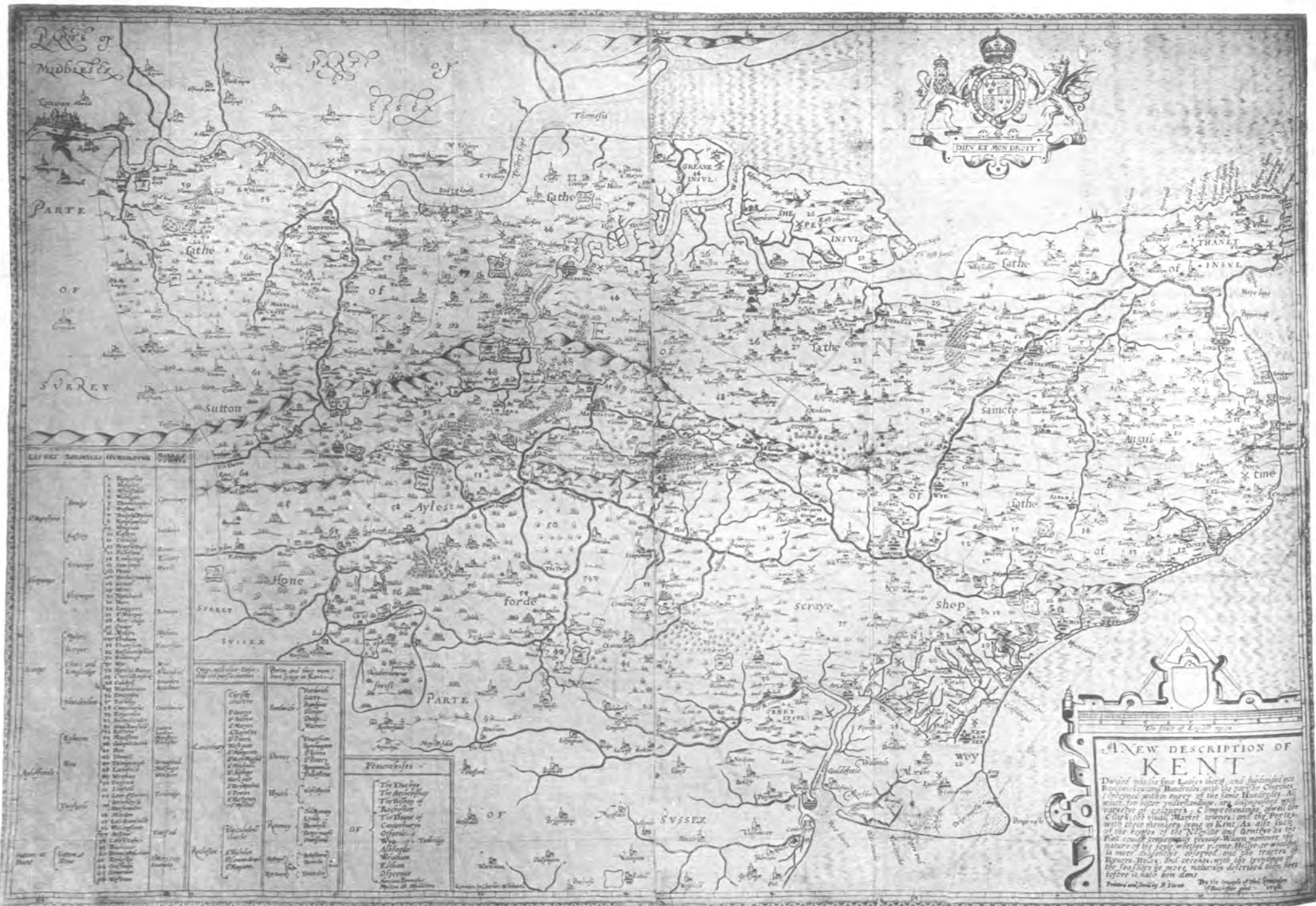
I do not propose in this Paper to refer at any length to maps of the county in general, but to confine my remarks almost entirely to a particular one, a reduced copy of which is presented with these notes.

My reason for selecting this map is that I believe that in it Kent possesses a map of the 16th century, larger in scale, more accurate in drawing, and much fuller in detail than that of any other county, and one entirely the work of a native, Philip Symonson of Rochester. It fully justifies Lambarde's contemporary description that therein "Rivers, Creekes, Waterings, and Rilles, be more exactly shadowed and traced than heretofore, in this, or any other of our lande (that I know) hath been performed."

As is well known the first county maps published were by Christopher Saxton, and appeared as a set in 1579, though individual maps in that collection bear earlier dates. Those of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, in one map, and also that of Norfolk, are dated 1574; Kent, Hampshire and some others, 1575. According, however, to Herbert in his *Typographical Antiquities*, licence to print and publish Saxton's maps was not granted until 1577, and they did not, in fact, appear until the collection was published in 1579.

This being the case, then, if it can be shewn that the map of Kent with which we are concerned was published in 1576, we have before us the earliest map of any English county.

The actual year of issue is, however, of minor importance when one considers the general features and scale of the two maps in question. It is sufficient here to point out that Symonson's map measures 31 by 21½ inches and gives the County of Kent alone, while Saxton's map is only about



Arch. Cant. XXX. Photo. De' Ath & Dunk.

P. SYMONSON'S MAP OF KENT: 1596.

21 by 16 inches, and includes the whole of Sussex and Middlesex, and parts of Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex, as well as Kent. As regards details, Saxton only gives symbols for churches and shews no roads, and in other respects is distinctly inferior to Symonson.

Before drawing attention to the numerous valuable and, in some respects, unique features of Symonson's map, I will deal with its date and reprints.

The impression which I have before me, and of which a reduced facsimile (if I may be excused the expression) is herewith given, bears two dates. My attention was first drawn to this fact by a MS. note in the copy of Philipot's *Villare Cantianum*, in the handwriting of the well-known antiquary William Twopeny.

The note refers to this copy of the map, which was inserted in the volume. Twopeny says: "The map inserted in this volume appears to be an impression of it in its original state. The original date, 1576, is nearly effaced from the copper, 1596 being inserted near it." In order to obtain further information on this point I enquired at the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the Guildhall, but none of them possessed a copy; nor, indeed had they ever heard of one. I also communicated with Sir George Fordham, whose knowledge of cartography, more especially in connection with English county maps, is second to none, and with Dr. Cock of Appledore, but neither of those two great authorities could assist me. It will be noticed that in the bottom right-hand corner one can read clearly the date 1596, and, in the extreme corner, but appearing very faintly, the date 1576.*

Considering the manner in which this map has been dealt with at later dates, it seems to be desirable to give contemporary corroborative evidence of the date of its publication. Lambarde, in the second edition of his *Perambulation of Kent*, published in 1596, says: "Divers other smal pipes of water there be . . . which I may the better passe over with silence, because they may with more pleasure bee

* This second date on all the impressions of the map that I have seen is exceedingly faint, so that it is difficult to be certain about it, but I, on the whole, agree with the late Mr. Twopeny that its correct reading is 1576.

seene in the Charde then read here. For my good friend Master Philip Simonson of Rochester, hath lately published some parte of his labor in describing our shyre of Kent, whereby not onely the Townes and Hundreds, with the Hilles and Houses of men of woorth, are more truely seated: but also the Seacoastes, Rivers, Creekes, Waterings, and Rilles, be more exactly shadowed and traced, than heeretofore, in this, or any other of our lande (that I know) hath been performed. Besides the which he hath observed sundry other things very serviceable, though not meete to be made commune."* This clearly establishes the fact that Symonson published a map of Kent in 1596, but does not help us in relation to the earlier date.

Turning, however, to the first edition of Lambarde which appeared in 1576, though "collected and written for the most part in the yeare 1570," we read (p. 177) as follows: "Maidstone: At which place (as I thinke) the name of Medwey first beginneth . . . [the river] crossing the Shire, as it were in the midst . . . If I faile in this derivation, the fault . . . is his that made the Chart of this Shyre."

From this statement it is clear that there was in existence a chart or map of the county in or before 1576. His comment, which implies that the name "Medway" first appears on the map a little below and not above Maidstone, rather complicates the question; for on my map the name appears as high up as Yalding, and in Saxton's map it is not given at all.

We are driven to the conclusion, then, that Lambarde, writing in 1576 or earlier, must have had before him either a copy of Symonson's map, but not in the same state as it appeared in 1596, or some other map of which all record has been completely lost. I suggest, as the most probable explanation, that Lambarde had seen an early, perhaps a trial, impression of Symonson's map on which some of the names that appear later had not at that time been inserted.

The following is a full description of the original map and its reprints. It was printed on two sheets joined together down the centre. It measures 31 by 21½ inches,

* Quoted from p. 199 of the reprint of the second edition, published in 1826.

on a scale of two miles to one inch. It is framed in an ornamental scroll border, inside of which are three ruled lines, containing the degrees and the minutes of latitude and longitude on the meridian of the Azores. In the top right-hand corner of the map are the Royal Arms of the time of Elizabeth, and in the bottom left-hand corner tables giving a list of the "Lathes, Bailywicks, Hundreds, Market Towns;" "Cityes with their Cathedral and parishe churches;" and Cinque "Portes and their members byinge in Kent;" and lastly, "Franchises." In the bottom right-hand corner is a scale of ten English miles surmounted by a pair of compasses, and the following inscription below:—

A NEW DESCRIPTION OF
KENT

Divided into the fyue Lathes therof: and subdivided into Baylywikes; and Hundredes, with the parishe Churches conteyned within euery of the same Hundredes. All which, for better ynderstandinge, are distinguished with varyetye of coloures: Comprehendinge aswell the Cities; the vsuall Market townes; and the Portes, with their members lying in Kent; As also such of the houses of the Nobylitie and Gentrye as the Plott could conueniently receaue. Wherin moreover the nature of the soyle (whether playne, Hyllye, or wooddye) is more diligentllye observed; and the tractes of Ryuers, Rylles, and creekes, with the trendinge of the sea-shore be more naturally described then heretofore it hath ben done.

Printed and sould by P. Stent By the travayle of Phil: Symonson
of Rochester gent: 1596 1576*

At the bottom of the map, to the left of the centre: "Engraven by Charles Whitwell." The words "Printed Stent" are engraved apparently by a different hand.

(2.) The next impression that we have of the map is in all respects similar, except that at the top near the left-hand corner, in place of "Parte of Essex" with Romforde, Dagenham, and Raynham Churches, there is given a view of Rye on which is inscribed: "Sir Anthony Van Dyck, Delineavit"; and in the top right-hand corner, in place of

* See note on p. 86.

the Royal Arms, is given: "A view of Dover Castle and Towne from y^e Landside"; and, on the bottom of the view, "W. Hollar fecit". A print of this is in a copy of Philipot in the British Museum, and the engravings are fresh and clear. This impression bears no date, though faint signs of both 1596 and 1576 can be detected. They appear to have been intentionally erased. We can, however, date it approximately between 1635-6, when Hollar first came to England, and 1641, when Van Dyke died; though it is of course possible that the plate was first published after Van Dyke's death. P. Stent's name is given as the publisher, as in the earlier impression, and Whitwell as the engraver.

(3.) The next in order of date would seem to be similar in all respects to the foregoing, except that after "Printed and sould by P. Stent" is added "at y^e White Horse in Giltspur Street," and the date "1659." A copy of this is in the possession of Dr. Cock of Appledore, and he informs me that the earlier dates are faintly visible and that the engravings are clear.

(4.) The next, again undated, is similar, but in place of "P. Stent" appears "printed by J^o Overton at y^e White Horse neare S^t Pulchers Church." Copies of this impression are in the possession of Dr. Cock, and in the Guildhall and Bodleian Libraries, and in the British Museum.* The plates in all these are exceedingly faint, the plate having evidently become greatly worn. Traces, however, of the earlier dates are still to be detected.

(5.) The map occurs for the fifth and last time in Harris' *History of Kent*, which appeared in 1719. In this case the map is surrounded by a border or frame composed of 118 arms of subscribers to his work. The meridian is altered to that of London. In the top of the map, towards the left, in a frame-like border, "A Map of the County of Kent"; at the bottom, near the centre, "Engraven by Sam^l Parker, 1719"; and filling up the bottom right-hand corner and in place of Symonson's description is "A View of Dover Castle and Towne". Above this view is a scale of 10 miles, and under it "N.B. The Line marked in the Map divides

* Mrs. Gardner Waterman of Stepway House, Hythe, also possesses a copy.
—Ed.

West from East Kent." The views by Van Dyke and Hollar do not appear.

It may be noticed that in Nos. 2, 3, and 4 a few ships are represented in the lower reaches of the Thames, but are not given either in the original impression or in Harris (5). The map given by Harris is not an actual reprint of any of the foregoing, but is based upon them. Some fresh roads are given, *e.g.*, from Croydon to Maidstone, and the churches are mostly re-drawn, and quite a considerable number of additional villages are mentioned. On the other hand the trees are reproduced exactly, both in regard to their position and number. It is clearly not made from a fresh survey, but from Symonson's map brought, more or less, up to date.

It has seemed desirable to deal at some length with the date of the map, because so much of its value and interest depends on the accuracy of its details. In regard to houses, bridges, hills, rivers, and certain other features it does not greatly differ from other early maps, but in some respects it is unique. According to Sir George Fordham—and we could not wish for a greater authority—John Norden (1548—1625 ?) was the first to indicate roads, his predecessor Saxton not giving any. The only maps issued by Norden prior to 1598 that shewed this detail were of Middlesex, London, and Westminster, which appeared in 1593. His next map, that of "Harlfordshire," was not published till 1598. It follows that if the date in the extreme corner of Symonson's map be 1576, he may claim this most important innovation and improvement. If, on the other hand, the date be 1596, he comes a very close second. In addition to this, Symonson also gives us much other information, and of a kind not found at all in Saxton, Speed, or Camden.

As is well known, in their maps, and in most of later date, only a symbol is given to indicate a church. Symonson, on the other hand, represents churches in quite a number of different ways, and in such a manner as to shew, in regard to the tower, its essential character. They are drawn to indicate the following details: (1) a simple tower; (2) with a stair turret; (3) with a lofty, low, or broken spire; (4) with pinnacles; and (5) whether next to a house or in a town or village.

Having carefully compared the map in regard to these particulars with Mr. Oyler's photographs,* I find that of the 251 old churches given by him, in the Diocese of Canterbury, 147 are correctly represented in the map. Of the remainder 81 are inaccurate only in giving a spire where there is not one at present. I have not been able to check this apparent discrepancy to any large extent, but in the few cases where I have done so, *e.g.*, West Farleigh and Maidstone, though they have no spire at the present time they had one when Symonson published his map.

In reference to this point, the representation of St. Mary's Church at Town Sutton, or Sutton Valence, is particularly interesting. It is shewn by Symonson as possessing a tower surmounted by a truncated or broken spire. On referring to Mr. Angell's account† of this church we find, *inter alia*, a picture representing it as it was in 1823, just before it was pulled down, and it is there shewn with a tower surmounted by a sloping roof, from the flat top of which projects a low spire surmounted by a weather-cock. In the text Mr. Angell quotes Hasted to the effect that "the steeple stands on the north side, and had a high spire, the upper half of which having been burnt down by lightning, it was at that part flat and covered with lead." It would be interesting to know if there is any record of the date of this destruction.

As regards other details shewn on the map, we find that the chief rivers and many of their tributaries are clearly and correctly shewn, and the chief roads and bridges, and in one case a ford, clearly noted. Towns and villages, the more important houses with their parks, castles, windmills, woods, and hills are also shewn. Changes in the coast line and in the course of some of the rivers and the innings in Romney and other marshes are particularly interesting and valuable.

In regard to the date and origin of the map there is one other point that requires notice. We find on the copy of the map here described the words "Printed and sould by P. Stent". On the dated copy of 1659 the following addition appears: "at y^e White Horse in giltspur Street". Both Sir

* T. H. Oyler, *Parish Churches of the Diocese of Canterbury* (1910).

† C. F. Angell, *Parish Church of St. Mary's at Town Sutton* (1874).

George Fordham and Dr. Cock commented on the occurrence of Stent's name on both these maps, because, as they pointed out, he was a known publisher of the seventeenth century. On referring to Sir George Fordham's Catalogue of Hertfordshire Maps I found that Stent published a reprint of Saxton's map in 1652 (?) and 1665 (?), or thereabouts, and another map, very similar to Saxton's, also of about 1665. Besides these he published a map of England dated 1665, a copy of which is in the Inner Temple Library, and Sir George Fordham tells me "there is a catalogue of Stent's maps and other publications, dated 1662, in the Gough collection in the Bodleian. It appears from an undated advertisement of John Overton's that he succeeded Stent in his business."

It is, I must admit, difficult to explain this appearance of Stent's name on maps so wide apart as 1596 and 1665. It is, of course, quite possible that there were two publishers of the same name, possibly father and son, and that the latter succeeded to the business. It is very curious that Gough does not notice this point, and still more so that both he in his *British Topography* and J. R. Smith in *Bibliotheca Cantiana*, though they quote Lambarde's statement that Symonson had "lately published" a map of Kent in or before 1596, describe an impression containing the plates by Hollar and Van Dyke, failing to notice that it was obviously impossible that Lambarde could refer to a map that must have been printed many years after his death, which occurred in 1601.

Gough also describes it as "Printed and sold by P. Stent and J. Overton." I have not been able to trace a copy with this imprint, nor have I come across a coloured impression as mentioned in the original "Description" in the copy of 1596.

Of Symonson himself I have not been able to obtain any information. It has been suggested that he worked on certain plans of the estates belonging to the Rochester Bridge Wardens, but the only plan that I have seen is evidently of later date.

A fine copy of Symonson's map of 1576—96, inserted in a copy of the second edition of Lambarde, was sold by Messrs. Sotheby on Thursday, 17 October 1912, from the collection of the late Mr. G. P. A. Pembroke.