

THE ROPERS AND THEIR MONUMENTS IN LYNSTED CHURCH.

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THERE is no need, in a study of the Roper family, to go further back than John Roper of Eltham, whose Will, dated 27th January 1523-4, is printed in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Volume II, pp. 153 to 173. This John Roper had three sons, William, the eldest (who, subsequently to the date of his father's Will, married Margaret More), Edward, and Christopher, the youngest. In the partition of John Roper's estates, the Eltham and St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, properties went ultimately to William, while the Lynsted property went to Christopher, who, by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Christopher Blore, of Teynham, became the father of John, first Baron Teynham and progenitor of the Ropers of Lynsted. The latter then, descended as they are from Christopher, youngest brother of William, and brother-in-law of Margaret More, William's wife, cannot boast a drop of the blood of the illustrious Sir Thomas More in their veins. The elder, or Eltham, branch of the Ropers died out in the male line with the death of Edward Roper, unmarried, at Almanza in Spain, in January 1707-8, and became finally extinct in 1724.

The original home of the Lynsted Ropers was Badmangore, the site of which is pointed out in a strip of wood by the roadside, a short distance east of the present house, Lodge. No remains of the ancient building exist above ground, but it is said that, in very dry seasons, after the periodical cutting down of the underwood, its foundations can still be traced.

The present park was enclosed and the imposing mansion, Lodge, built toward the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign¹ by John Roper, who had succeeded to his father's Lynsted

¹ The ornamental plaster ceiling on the first floor bears the date 1599.

property in 1559. Such, indeed, was the size of Lodge that it used to be said of it (as, likely enough, it has been said of many another large house) that it had so many windows as the year has days. The Manor house, built on the plan of a capital E, stood practically intact until 1829, when the greater part of both wings was pulled down by the then owner, Charles Henry Tyler.

At the death of Queen Elizabeth, on 24th March 1603, high hopes were cherished by the Catholics of England that they would be relieved from the oppressive disabilities under which they had long suffered. James VI of Scotland made them fair promises, and it was on that understanding that they gave him their united support as future King of England. Nor is it without significance that "the first man of note" in Kent to proclaim James I, was of the old religion, viz., Sir John Roper of Lynsted. How bitter was their disillusionment owing to the King's breach of faith with them, and how deep and sullen the resentment which ensued, and drove numbers of the more desperate among them to enter upon the ill-fated conspiracy of the Gunpowder Plot, in 1604, these matters are among the commonplaces of history.

Whether John Roper, first Baron Teynham, ever regretted the share he had had in setting James of Scotland on the throne of England has not been recorded; unless, indeed, the particular motto he chose for inscribing on his tomb: "My hope is in God" should be interpreted to mean that experience had taught him not to put his trust in princes. However that may have been, he handed on the tradition of his fathers' faith to his descendants, who continued sturdy adherents of the unreformed religion through the worst of the penal times until the eighth Lord Teynham, having conformed to the established church, took, on the 21st March 1715-16, the oaths, and his seat in the House of Lords, from which he himself had hitherto, like his near predecessors, been debarred by the panic legislation that followed the fall of James II.

The Roper family with its many retainers and tenants (since no small part of Lynsted parish was at one time Roper

property) was almost feudal, and, while it kept to its old spiritual allegiance, it had its own place of worship near at hand. The traditional site of this chapel used to be pointed out in a slight hollow, on the borders of Lynsted and Kingsdown parishes, in a field some three hundred yards or so to the south of Ludgate farm-house, and just west of the cart-road which runs from Lynsted village to Kingsdown Street. And, until many of the old landmarks became changed or obliterated in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a well-defined field-path used to lead direct to it from the former gate of Lodge park. It should be recalled that the present gate is considerably further north than the old gate, opposite to which, by a now disused lime-kiln, the footpath led westwards along the bottom of Dadman's Shaw, and, turning northward, passed through the Shaw to the top of the bank at the back of it. Thence, along the ridge behind the Shaw, it continued, always westwards, across the fields, until it emerged on to the Lynsted-Kingsdown road, almost opposite to the chapel. It naturally followed, that from the day when the head of the Ropers finally renounced the traditional faith of his family, he would cease to maintain a priest as chaplain to minister to himself or his household and dependents. The unreformed religion, therefore, gradually died out in Lynsted from sheer inanition. Moreover, unless it could be utilised for some secular purpose, the chapel, no longer required as such, would inevitably become derelict and fall into decay; which is precisely what did happen. No remains of this building are known to have been standing above ground within living memory; nor is it marked in the Ordnance Map, even of the largest scale; but the late Mr. Thomas Back, who was for many years sexton and village carpenter at Lynsted, and who died in 1909, aged 67, used to tell of lumps of brickwork and masonry having been frequently turned up on the spot by the plough.

The Burial Registers of Lynsted contain, from the year 1656 onward, down to 1802, more than sixty names, to which is appended the entry "Rom. Cath" or "R.C.", showing that the traditional creed lingered on in the parish for

upwards of eighty years after the eighth Lord Teynham had ceased to profess it ; there being no less than fifty-six such entries subsequent to the year 1716, when he conformed. The most frequent name of all is Allsworth which occurs no less than twelve times, the list both beginning with " Stephen Allsworth", and ending, curiously enough, with the very same name again in 1802.

In his account of Lynsted parish, Hasted (Vol. II, p. 687) states that John Roper " was knighted on July 9th¹ 1616 . . . and on the same day created a peer of this realm, by the title of Lord Teynham, Baron of Teynham . . . as a reward for his forward attachment to the King's interest, having been the first man of note who proclaimed the King " in the county of Kent. The above passage contains two inaccuracies. There can be no question that John Roper was knighted years before 1616. The distinction was in fact conferred upon him under Queen Elizabeth, on 23rd February 1587-8. Incidental confirmation is afforded by an Archidiaconal Visitation of Lynsted in 1615, when it was presented " that Sir John Roper, Knight, hath not received the communion in our parish these two years. He is a great part of the year attending upon his office at London ; we know not whether he do receive there or not". In the second place the interval between 1603 (the year of King James's accession) and the year 1616 (when Roper was raised to the peerage) would have been an unconscionably long space even for belated gratitude. Hasted's assertion, then, has no warrant in fact. On the contrary, it is a flagrant, if pleasing, fiction. Gratitude was foreign to the very nature of King James, who had none of those endearing qualities, which subsequently developed in his son and successor, and which caused King Charles I, with all his faults, to become an object of passionate loyalty and devotion.

If King James could boast of having bestowed any sort of favour on Sir John Roper, it was only the grant of the

¹ No little confusion as to this point appears to have existed. Thus, Arthur Collins, *Peerage of England*, Vol. VII, 1779, states that John Roper was knighted on 9th July 1603.

Manor of Teynham. He had scarcely been on the throne of England a year when, in 1604, there began the attempt to push Sir John Roper out of his office of *Custos Brevium*, £3,500 being offered for the reversion of it for two lives. Roper, however, refused to consent. And as to the story that the peerage was given him later to compensate him for having had his livelihood wrested from him by Villiers, it understates the real facts of the case. The plain, unvarnished truth is that Sir John Roper had to buy his barony for the substantial sum of £10,000. A facetious wag at the time perpetrated a sorry joke about the "ten Ms". The sordid story, rather hinted at than explicitly related by G.E.C. (Editor of the *Complete Peerage*, Vol. VII, 1896) is told in full in the pages of Gardiner.¹

"The emolument", he says, "of the Pleas in the Court of King's Bench was attached to an office which had long been held by Sir John Roper. In 1612 the reversion of this office was granted by the King to Somerset, at this time known as Viscount Rochester, and to" another, "who were, after Roper's death, to share between them the profits derived from the fees". In his many years of public service, Roper, notwithstanding the vast sums of money spent on the building of his palatial Manor-house of Lodge, would appear to have amassed a considerable fortune, which he evidently thought deserving of an adequate title to correspond. He had tried in 1612 to bargain with Somerset for a seat in the Upper House, but nothing came of it at the time, and he reached the ripe age of eighty-two before receiving any higher recognition than his knighthood. Roper's ambition for noble rank, however, did not abate, and it was an open secret that he had set his heart on a peerage. On his part King James was not unwilling to gratify him, provided Roper made it worth his while to do so. The price demanded was no less than £10,000, of which the King insisted on payment before he would confer the honour, if that should rightly be called an "honour" which could be bought and sold. The King

¹ *History of England from the Accession of James I, 1603 to 1616*, by Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Vol. II (1863), Chapter XIV.

was greedy as well as needy. So anxious was he to replenish his own pockets, and at the same time to oblige his infamous minion, that he pressed with unseemly haste for the conclusion of the business which should ensure a lucrative appointment for Villiers. For in the meantime the fall and attainder of Somerset, who was originally the destined recipient of the King's favour, had come to pass. Roper was made to feel as plainly as could be that he was regarded as an encumbrance, and that his Sovereign, so far from valuing him after a lifetime spent in the service of the Crown, was only impatient to be rid of him at the earliest moment. The affair still dragged on until a crisis occurred in January 1616, a false report being circulated that Roper himself was dead. At his age it might well have been true. If he really should die before his office had been definitely settled on Villiers, none could foresee what accident might make all their plans go agley. The King realised that there was no time to lose; and yet the bargaining and haggling, which this mercenary transaction entailed, continued wellnigh interminably before matters were brought finally to a head. There were various circumstances which complicated and prolonged the negotiations, one of them being the tenacity of Roper himself. Though he should be persuaded to retire, and to relinquish the exercise of his office, still he stipulated that he should enjoy its emoluments for life. At any rate he claimed the right of nominating his successor.

Another difficulty was that, in affairs of this sort, it was out of the question, from motives of public policy, that the names of those actually interested in high places should appear openly. Some person, or persons, therefore, who were mere dummies, of no standing nor importance, had to be put forward as the principal parties concerned; and particular caution was necessary in making the selection of a suitable man of straw for the purpose. The danger was lest he should either turn round and expose the whole scandalous job to universal scorn, or else should insist on laying hands on the benefits, which, standing in his name, would be ostensibly his own if he chose to lay claim to them. But at length

a safe man to hide behind was found ; a compromise was arrived at, by which all opposing interests were reconciled, and the bargain was struck. Villiers' reversionary profits were secured to him ; and Sir John Roper, having paid the full price required by the King, duly received, in July 1616, his coveted title. He did not, however, live to enjoy it long, for he died in 1618.

In the meantime, realising that in the nature of things his end could not be far off, he raised the monument, which stands on the south side of the south, or Roper, chancel of Lynsted church, to commemorate his wife and himself. He was buried in the family vault beneath the said south chancel, where " There is a noble altar-tomb of marble, the effigies of him " in armour " and his wife lying at full length on it. " (E. Hasted's *Kent*, Vol. II, p. 687.) At the back of the monument, between kneeling figures of his son and two daughters, is a tablet bearing the following epitaph :

"Spes Mea in Deo.

"Hic obdormit in Domino Johannes Rooperus, eques auratus,
 "Dominus Teynham, Baro de Teynham, cum Elizabetha uxore
 "sua, filia Richardi Parki, Armigeri, e qua progeniuit Christo-
 "pherum Rooperum equitem auratum, Elizabetham uxorem
 "Georgii Vaux, Matrem Edwardi Domini Vaux, Baroni de
 "Harrodon, et Janam uxorem Roberti Lovelli, Equitis aurati ;
 "vir æqui bonique cultor, Principibus tribus, nempe Mariæ,
 "Elizabethæ, et Jacobo nunc Regi Angliæ serenissimo, sub
 "quibus vixit, Patriæque fidelissimus. Hospitalis, pauperibus
 "beneficus, civibus benignus, et qui mortalitatis memor, certa
 "spe resurgendi in Christo, hoc monumentum sibi vivus posuit.
 "Vixit annos 84, obiit xxx die Augusti, Anno Domini 1618."

On the floor of the chapel is the engraved memorial brass, or rather latten, to his first wife Elizabeth, the mother of his children. Her hands are joined together as in prayer. She wears a French hood, ruff, and overgown, the latter open in front from the waist downward, displaying a petticoat-skirt of handsome Venetian or Florentine brocade. Her brass is accompanied by two small brasses depicting the

children, viz., the son in civil dress, on one side of his mother's figure, and her two daughters, in ruffs and gowns, on the other side. There are also an armorial achievement and three separate shields, including the arms of Roper and the voided cross of Apulderfield. At the foot is the following inscription in blackletter :

Here lyeth buried Elizabeth Rooper late wiffe of John
Rooper of Kente Esquier, dowghter & sole heyer of Richard
Parke of Kente Esquier, who had issue by the sayd John
Rooper one sonne & two dowghters. She ledt her lyfe most
vertuously and endyd the same most catholykely,
whose soule God pdon.¹

The brass bears no date, but, since it describes the husband as "Esquire", it is clear that the wife died before his ennoblement. In fact her burial took place, as the parish register testifies, on 16th September 1567.

Five years earlier, at the Archdeacon's Visitation of Lynsted in 1562, it was presented that "these, whose names follow, come not to the Church :

"Mistress Rooper, neither her sons or daughters: Sir Thomas, the priest."

Jane, Lady Lovell, one of the daughters, when widowed, founded the Teresian convent at Antwerp, and, dying on 12th November 1628, was interred by the side of her husband in the church of Notre Dame at Bruges,² where it is on record that their memorial, now lost, formerly existed.

John Roper (afterwards first Baron Teynham) married a second wife, about whom there is some degree of uncertainty, neither the exact date of their marriage, nor that of her death, being known. Her name was Elizabeth, daughter of John Dyon of Tathwell, Lincolnshire. She was a widow (her first husband having been Robert Monson, sometime Judge of the Common Pleas, *obit* 24th September 1583) at the time of her marriage, before 4th April 1584, to John Roper. She

¹ See the reproduction in *Kentish Brasses*, collected by W. D. Belcher, Vol. II (1905), No. 292, p. 90.

² *Topographer and Genealogist*, Vol. II (1853), pp. 468-9.

bore him no children, and died some time before 22nd September 1593. It is singular that the second wife is not commemorated by an effigy, neither does any mention of her occur in her husband's epitaph, the wording of which clearly implies that the recumbent figure by his side is meant to represent the first wife.

The first Baron's only son and heir, Christopher, succeeded as second Baron Teynham. He was knighted at Whitehall on 23rd July 1603. He married Catherine, daughter of John Seborne of Sutton St. Michael, Herefordshire, and died 16th April 1622. His widow caused the monument, standing on the north side of the Roper chapel, to be erected in the interval between her husband's death and her own, which occurred on 2nd October 1625. She died at Lodge and was buried at Lynsted. Because she survived her husband, she is represented on the monument as still living, in widow's hood, kneeling bolt upright, in prayer before a priedieu with an open book lying upon it. Outstretched beside her on the top of the tomb lies the effigy of her husband, wearing a suit of armour of the period, and over the armour his peer's mantle.

As to the architectural features of the first Baron's tomb, they are neither better nor worse than those of hundreds of other structures of its kind and epoch. Both monuments are surmounted by a heavy entablature supported in front by a pair of quasi-classic columns, and crowned by an armorial achievement. That of the first Baron rises out of a broken pediment; a corrupt device which is absent from the tomb of the second Baron Teynham. On the whole the second Baron's monument is distinguished by an absence of florid display and by a dignified restraint, unusual at its date as it is pleasing.

The second Lord and Lady Teynham had issue two sons, John (who succeeded as third Baron) and William, and four daughters, Bridget, Mary, Catherine, and Elizabeth. Of these sisters, Mary afterwards entered religion and ended her days as Abbess of the English Nunnery in Ghent. In William Berry's *Pedigrees of Families of Kent* (1830) the second Baron Teynham is credited with five daughters, an extra one,

Margaret, being given in addition to the four above-named. In the bas relief group on the tomb are five female figures, of whom one, if not a daughter, may represent a nurse, or governess, or some near relative. All are depicted on the monument wearing secular dress. They occupy the left, or western panel of the southward front of the tomb, while the two sons are depicted on the right-hand panel. The panels are of alabaster, sculptured in low relief; and in the middle between them is a slab inscribed with the following epitaph:

“D. O. M.

“Domino Christopher Rooper, Baroni, filio Johannis Domini
 “Teynham, Viro ab infantia vitæ innocentia integerrimo. In
 “fide ac religione Catholica constantissimo, Regi et patriæ
 “fidelitate nulli secundo, ob morum suavitatem omni hominum
 “generi gratissimo, injuriarum patientissimo, patri pauperum,
 “vitiourum hosti, optimo conjugi, qui mundi pertæsus, coelo
 “maturus, piissime obiit Anno Domini MDCXXII Ætatis suæ
 “LX Die XVI April, Catharina uxor posuit.”

Their son, John Roper, had already been made Knight of the Bath, on 3rd November 1616, on the occasion of the creating of Prince Charles (afterwards King Charles I) Prince of Wales, when he succeeded his father as third Baron Teynham. On his death, however, on 27th February 1627-8, though he was buried at Lynsted, no such costly monument as those of his parents and grandparents was erected, nor indeed ever was for after generations. No doubt the Roper family had become impoverished by the heavy fines (£260 per head yearly, at the rate of £20 per month of four weeks, thus making thirteen months in the year) levied for persistent recusancy. In 1628 the third Baron's widow, Mary, daughter of William Lord Petre, applied, together with her father and Henry Earl of Worcester, for the wardship of her son, Christopher, fourth Lord Teynham, but being recusants, they were disqualified, so the Master and the rest of the Council of Wards were informed by the King, who conferred the wardship on Secretary Conway instead.¹

¹ *Calendar of State Papers*, Vol. 1628-9, p. 419.



LYNSTED CHURCH.

Group of Daughters of the second Lord Teynham.

Sculptured by Epiphanius Evesham.

The abovesaid widow of the third Baron appears to have used such influence as she had locally in propaganda ; which proved a source of so great annoyance to Archbishop Laud that he brought the matter to the notice of King Charles I in one of his annual reports, that for 1637. " About Sitting-born", complains Laud, " there are more Recusants than in any other part of my Diocess. And the Lady Roper Dowager is thought to be a great means of the increase of them. But I have given strict charge that they be carefully presented, according to Law".¹

The widow of the third Baron died at her house off High Holborn on 14th December 1640, and was buried at Lynsted.

Beside Christopher, fourth Baron, above-mentioned, the third Baron Teynham and his wife had two other sons and four daughters ; Mary, one of the latter, becoming, according to Hasted, a nun in Ghent. By order of the House of Lords, on 5th September 1642, the fourth Baron Teynham was committed to the custody of "Black Rod". The fourth Baron was thrice married ; first, about 1640, to Mary, daughter of Sir Francis Englefield, Baronet. She died on 21st December 1647. Her heart, after having been buried at the Convent of Nieuport, was subsequently removed to the Convent of St. Elizabeth at Bruges. The fourth Baron's second wife was Philadelphia, daughter of Sir Henry Knollys, and widow of Sir John Mill. She was buried at Lynsted on 10th November 1655. The third wife, whom Lord Teynham married on 29th March 1660, was Margaret, daughter of Patrick Fitzmaurice, Baron Kerry and Lixnaw. The fourth Baron Teynham died on 23rd October 1673, and was buried at Lynsted. Anne, a daughter of his, married Bernard Howard, grandson of the Earl of Arundel.

The fifth Baron Teynham, eldest surviving son of the fourth Baron, was Christopher Roper, who was Lord Lieutenant and *Custos Rotulorum* in the county of Kent.

¹ *The History of the Troubles and Tryal of William Laud, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote by himself during his Imprisonment in the Tower, with Supplements, Edited by Henry Wharton (1695), p. 547.*

In 1674 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Francis Browne, third Viscount Montagu, and died at Brussels in 1689. Two of their daughters, viz., Mary and Philadelphia, were nuns.

There next succeeded in turn three brothers, John, Christopher and Henry, sons of the fifth Baron. The youngest of these, Henry Roper, eighth Baron, was the first head of the family, as already mentioned, to make a breach with the traditions of his ancestors. Hasted says that, "having professed the established religion, he took his seat in the Upper House on 29th February 1716, and died on 16th May following". Both these statements are inaccurate. The record of the first event is as follows, under the date of 21st March 1715 (O.S.): "This day Henry Lord Teynham sat first in Parliament, after the Death of his father Christopher Lord Teynham; and took the Oaths, and made and subscribed the Declaration, and also took and subscribed the Oath of Abjuration, pursuant to the Statutes."¹ And as for the date of his death, having become "distempered in his senses"² he ended, when aged 47, by shooting himself at his house in the Haymarket on 16th May 1723, and was buried at Lynsted.

Philip, ninth Baron Teynham, son of the eighth Baron by the latter's first wife, died in Paris unmarried, at the age of twenty, on 13th June 1727. It is evident that he had not adopted his father's change of religion, for he was buried in the church of St. André des Arts in Paris, while his heart was buried there in the church of the English nuns on the Fosse St. Victor.

He was succeeded by his brother, Henry, as tenth Baron, who, however, as an adherent of the old religion, was debarred from a seat in the Upper House. He was three times married, and, dying at Bath on 21st April 1781, was buried in Bath Abbey Church.

¹ *Journals of the House of Lords, beginning 1714*, Vol. XX, pp. 318-9.

² *Complete Peerage*, Edited by G.E.C. (Cokayne), Vol. VII (1896), p. 383.

With Henry, the eleventh Baron Teynham, son of the tenth Baron, by his first wife, the final rupture with the religious traditions of the family was consummated. On 10th July 1781 he took the oaths and his seat in the House of Lords, the fact being chronicled in the Journals of the House in similar terms to the record of the eighth Lord's profession of the reformed faith.

The armorial bearings of the Lynsted Ropers, which may be seen emblazoned on hatchments in their chapel, are : Crest : a Lion rampant, sable, holding between his paws a crown, or. Arms : party per fess, azure and gold, a pale counter-changed three roebucks' heads erased, or. Supporters : on the dexter side a buck or, and on the sinister a tyger regardant, argent.

And now to return to the subject of the second Lord Teynham's monument. It is inscribed in capital letters along the base "*E. Evesham me fecit*", a noteworthy fact, since, as Dallaway remarks, "the practice of placing the name of the artist upon the plinth is of a date much subsequent to Evesham's time". It may be that this was the rising sculptor's first really big order, and that he was so proud of it that he could not refrain from attaching his own name to it ; and there may have been a further reason. Mrs. Arundell Esdaille suggests that the opposite monument of the first Lord Teynham, which is much in the manner of Evesham's master, Richard Stephens, may actually be a product of that artist. If so, here would be an additional cause of gratification for the younger man, to have had the distinction of placing a handiwork of his own in close juxtaposition to that of his gifted tutor.

Little enough of the life and personality of Epiphan, or Epiphanius, Evesham is known. His family appears to have belonged originally to the parish of Wellington, Herefordshire. He was born in 1570, a twin, and the youngest of a family of fourteen children of his parents, William Evesham and Jane, his first wife, daughter of Alexander Haworthe, of Burghope Hall, Wellington. And since, according to the family pedigree, which is annotated by Epiphanius himself, his

father died in London in 1584, it is reasonable to suppose that the family had left its Herefordshire home before that date, and had settled in London, where in fact Epiphanius is recorded to have been living in 1591 and 1592. "He was", says Mrs. Arundell Esdaile, "the first known scion of the landed gentry to adopt the profession of Sculptor", becoming, according to a statement in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1818), a pupil of Richard Stephens,¹ at whose school of alabaster-workers in Southwark he received his training. It appears that, during his apprenticeship there, Evesham also practised engraving on metal, for two works in brass, signed with his name, are known, viz., a sundial plate dated 1589, now in private hands, and a memorial inscription to Edmond West, 1618, in Marsworth church, Buckinghamshire.

Epiphanius Evesham won the reputation among his contemporaries of a "most exquisite artist". He was chosen when the poet, John Owen, died in 1622, to execute a monument to the latter, with a small statue, for erection in the nave of Old St. Paul's Cathedral, a work which perished in the Great Fire of 1666.

Among extant monuments, identified by style, if not in every case by signature, as having been executed by Evesham, are three small tablets, in Kent, to the memory of persons surnamed Collyns. The first, to Giles Collyns, who died in 1586, and the second, to his son, John, who died in 1597, are both in Hythe church. It is improbable that the memorial to Giles Collyns was executed until some interval after his death, for by 1586 Epiphanius would have been only sixteen years old, and scarcely trained. The tablet to John Collyns is inscribed: "E. Evesham fecit." The third, 1595, to Margaret, wife of William Collyns, is inscribed "Evesham me fecit." It is in the south chapel of Mersham church.

¹ By birth a Dutchman, the surname of Stephens, "painter, sculptor and medallist", is spelt variously Steevens, Stevens and Stievens. (Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, Vol. V, 1921.)

If these tablets, as Capt. C. S. Napier observes, may not be reckoned as highly important specimens of sculpture, they are remarkable for being quite unlike other monuments of their period, the close of the sixteenth century, and for their simplicity and good taste, especially the exquisite tablet to Margaret Collyns. Next in chronological order comes the monument above mentioned of Christopher Lord Teynham which was executed between 1622 and 1625. Next, at Alderton, Wiltshire, in the south wall of the chancel, is a monument containing, within an arched recess, a female figure in the round, kneeling before a desk, presumably the widow of the man whose epitaph is inscribed beneath, viz. Charles Gore, *obit* 3rd September 1628. This figure, like the high relief figures of the second Lord Teynham and his wife, goes to show that Evesham was far less successful in his handling of statuary in the round than in bas relief, which was clearly his proper *métier*. Next is the alabaster monument of Jane, Lady Crewe, *obit* 1639, wife of Sir Clippesby Crewe. This monument is on the wall in the ambulatory on the east side of the entrance to St. Erasmus' chapel in Westminster Abbey. Next is an alabaster tablet in St. Frideswide's, Oxford, commonly known as Christ Church Cathedral. It commemorates William, Viscount Brouncker (1645), and his wife, Dame Winefred (1649), who are represented "sitting, both leaning on a table that stands between them."¹ This monument, now moved to the south transept, is, in the judgment of Mrs. Arundell Esdaile, while closely analogous, yet inferior, to the Crewe monument in the Abbey. Lastly there is a work, which, though not equal in merit to any of the foregoing, has been attributed to Evesham, viz. the bas-relief to Thomas Wood (*obit* 1649) and Susan, his wife (1650), both depicted standing between their eight children. This monument is now fixed on the wall in the north vestibule of St. John-at-Hackney.

¹ *History of the University of Oxford*, by Anthony Wood, Edited by John Gutch (1786), Vol. III, p. 479.

At West Hanningfield church, Essex, in the nave, at the foot of the chancel-step, is a floor-slab engraved with a marginal inscription, which is now almost obliterated, but which, according to the Holman MSS. (c. 1720) in Colchester Museum, commemorates a two-year-old child, John Erdeswicke, who died in November, 1622, the stone inscribed "Eversham Fecit." If this is a misreading for "Evesham," here would be, the date quite according, yet another product of Epiphanius. Further research will no doubt bring to light additional examples of the same sculptor's art.

Epiphanius Evesham was by habit and occupation a townsman, and, as such, was more familiar with domestic interiors than with out-of-door scenes; as is manifest from his dexterous treatment of the former. But, in the case of the sons and daughters of Christopher Roper, of Lynsted, he had to study to please a family of ladies and gentlemen, who, being practically debarred by their outlawed religion from mingling to any great extent in the life of cities—for recusants were forbidden by law to go more than five miles from their place of residence except by special permission—breathed a different atmosphere altogether, and, as befitted their rank and position, busied themselves, amid country surroundings, with country sports and pastimes. And yet, when it came to depicting them amid their proper environment, Evesham made no attempt to give them a landscape background. The only sign of open-air life is the cherub-thronged sky overhead, the pursuits of the sons being indicated by the presence of hawk and hound, while in the group of daughters two pet dogs are introduced. When one reflects what stiff and conventional stocks the component members of such groups of offspring are apt to be, the variety and animation here displayed are as refreshing as they are unusual. Evesham conspicuously excels in his gift of grouping, which exhibits astonishing imagination and resourcefulness.

In a publication, of the popular picture-book order, by Allan Fea, *Picturesque Old Houses*, N.D. (1902) on pages 16 and 17, occurs the passage: "Upon one of" the Roper tombs at Lynsted "are bas-reliefs in alabaster of the sons and daughters of a worthy knight and his dame—a really fine work of art, and most interesting from the grotesque costumes. The recumbent effigies¹ of the stately parents are above, surmounted by a canopy worthy of their dignity". The accompanying illustration is titled underneath "Fancy dress on a monument". This Title, as well as the description "grotesque" in the text, is absurdly inaccurate; but it just shows how even an uninformed observer could not help recognising the sculpture to be of a character and quality quite out of the common. And no wonder! Yet, striking as the sculptor's work is, it has hitherto passed practically unnoticed until a discerning and accomplished writer, Mrs. Arundell Esdaile, drew attention to it in an article in *The Times* of 30th January 1932, followed up by another on 19th February. Other writers to *The Times* contributed further particulars, with the result that the position of Epiphanius Evesham in the first rank of English monumental sculptors may now be regarded as established once for all.

What the more famous contemporary sculptor, Hubert Le Sueur, achieved in statuary in the round (as witness his magnificent equestrian Charles I at Charing Cross, and the superb standing figures of the King and his Consort, Queen Mary, at St. John's College, Oxford), that, it is not too much to say, was accomplished in low relief by Epiphanius Evesham. In an age when taste inclined to favour exuberant and ostentatious pomposity in the graphic arts, both sculptors alike were distinguished for the restrained and *gracious* simplicity of their lines. And Lynsted church is indeed fortunate in possessing a treasure of exceptional value in the

¹ This is an error; Lord Teynham only is recumbent, his wife kneeling.

shape of the choice and dainty group of ladies on the second Baron Teynham's monument, the very *chef d'œuvre* of Evesham's art.

Thanks are due chiefly to Mrs. Arundell Esdaile through whose communications to *The Times* my attention was first drawn to Epiphanius Evesham, to Mr. Ralph Griffin, F.S.A., and Capt. Charles S. Napier; to Mr. Arthur Hussey for kindly placing at my disposal his valuable unpublished memoranda concerning Kentish recusants; to Rev. Canon Goddard, F.S.A.; Rev. G. Montagu Benton, F.S.A.; Hon. Henry Hannen, Mrs. Roper Lumley Holland, Mr. F. E. Howard, General Fane Lambarde, D.S.O., F.S.A., Mr. Edward T. Long, Mr. Walter Ruck, to the respective Vicars of Alderton, Wiltshire, and Lynsted, Kent, to Mr. G. H. Potter, Clerk to the Sittingbourne and Milton Urban District Council, and Mr. Charles Back, for information and help in various ways.—A.V.