

STONAR AND THE WANTSUM CHANNEL.

PART II.—HISTORICAL.

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WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE POTTERY.

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCES.

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| A.S.C. | - | <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.</i> |
| A.C. | - | <i>Archaeologia Cantiana.</i> |
| abp. | - | Archbishop. |
| T. Elm. | - | <i>Historia Monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis</i> , by Thomas of Elmham. |
| Thorne | - | <i>Wm. Thorne's Chronicle of St. Augustine's Abbey</i> , edited and translated by A. H. Davis, 1934. |
| Blk. Bk. | - | <i>Black Book of St. Augustine</i> , ed. Turner and Salter. |
| St. Aug. | - | The Abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury. |
| C.C.C. | - | The Priory of Christ Church, Canterbury. |
| B.C.S. | - | <i>Cartularium Saxonicum</i> , ed. Birch. |
| K.C.D. | - | <i>Codex diplomaticus aevi Saxonici</i> , ed. Kemble. |
| Robertson | - | <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters</i> , ed. A. J. Robertson. |
| Somner | - | <i>Roman Ports and Forts</i> , by Wm. Somner, 1693. |
| Boys | - | <i>History of Sandwich</i> , by Wm. Boys, 1792. |

THE physical conditions described in Part I of this paper continued to exercise their influence during the historical period. In the prehistoric period the drift of the Thanet shingle across the eastern mouth of the Wantsum channel had caused the formation of Stonar. The necessity of the river water to find an outlet and the strength of the tidal currents had kept open channels at each end of the obstruction and Stonar remained an island. The historic period is dominated directly or indirectly by the gradual and progressive deterioration of the Ebbsfleet entrance until it was completely choked and by the narrowing of Sandwich Haven into a tortuous river bed.

Early in the fifth century the Roman legions had been withdrawn from Britain and the last spot to be abandoned was the harbourage of the Wantsum channel with its great

port of Richborough (Rutupiae and the Rutupine Shore). The events of the next hundred and fifty years are more or less obscure. It was the period of the Dark Ages and the records are a mixture of fact, tradition and legend. The British Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* (usually associated with Nennius) need to be read with caution. The main authorities are the A.S.C. and the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede. The former was probably not drawn up in the form in which it has come down to us until the time of King Alfred (871-99): the latter dates from c. 732. The earliest known Kent charter is of the year 604. The time-honoured date of the Teutonic landing in Kent, 449, is more than suspect. Bede, a better authority than the A.S.C. places the arrival between 449 and 456. The British King Wyrtegeorn, Vortigern (the Guorthigern of the *Historia Brittonum*) who is said to have called for the help of the invaders is now held to be probably mythical. Hengest and Horsa are not free from doubt.

Ebbsfleet is first mentioned in 449. It is one of the earliest place-names to appear in British history, and after the lapse of 1,500 years the name and the place are still known. It is now a small hamlet in the parish of Minster in Thanet. It is half a mile from the sea at high tide and two miles at low tide. It lies in low ground a mile to the S.W. of Cliffsend but on the edge of rising ground towards the N. The name Ebbsfleet is of great interest and will be discussed at a later stage. Under the year 449 the A.S.C. records :

Wyrtegeorn invited the Angle race hither and they then came in three ships hither to Britain at the place named Heopwines fleet.

Another version reads :

Hengest and Horsa invited by Wyrtegeorn King of the Britons sought Britain on the shore which is named Ypwines fleet.

These records seem to show that the Ebbsfleet entrance was then the more direct and commodious, and it seems to

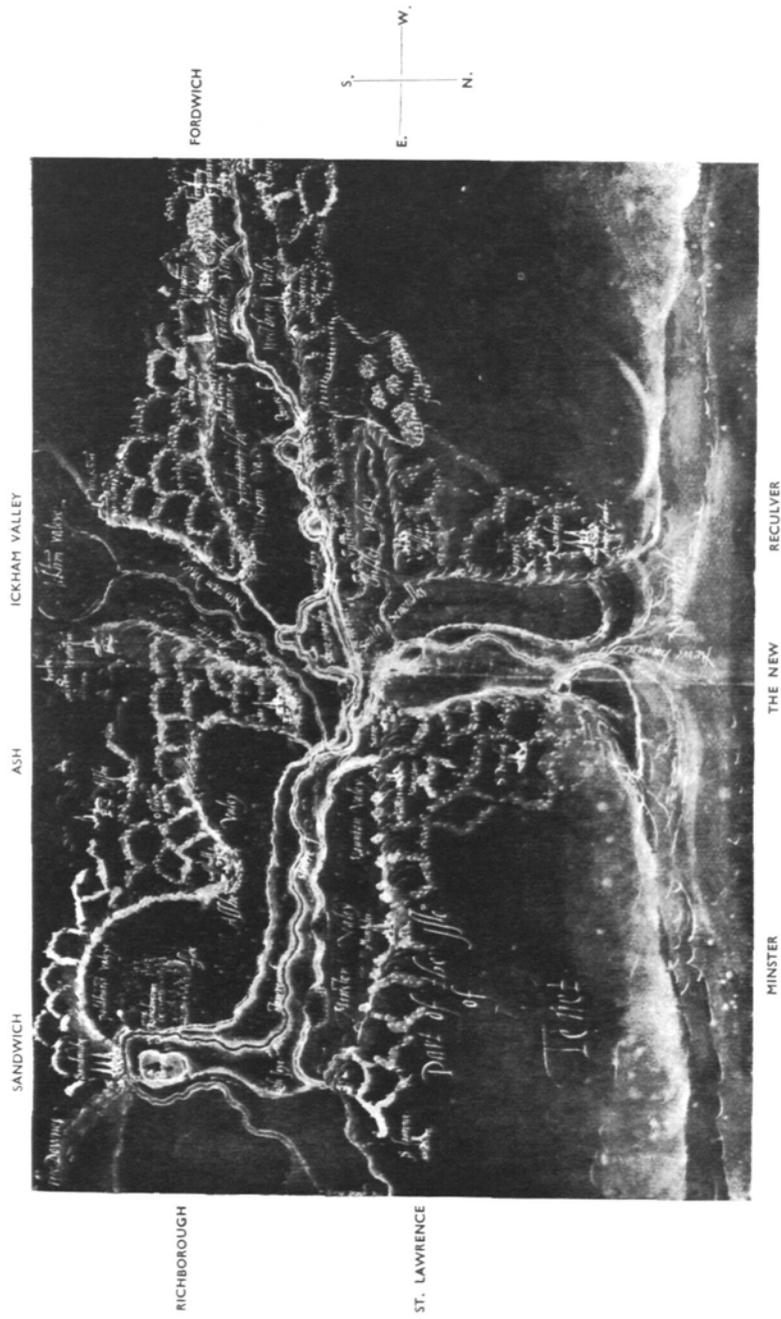


PLATE I. The earliest plan of the Wantsum and the Stour. c. 1595. R.M. Royal MS. 18 D. III.
 Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

have remained for some time the usual landing place at this part. The first mention of Sandwich is in 665 when Wilfrid Bishop of Northumberland, returning from his consecration in France, is said to have arrived in Sandwich Haven (Eddius Stephanus, *Life of St. Wilfrid*). In 597 Augustine came to Britain. Thorne (p. 4) says he landed in the island of Thanet in the place called Retesborough (Richborough) : Bede says it was in Thanet. An old tradition places the spot at Ebbsfleet. Lambarde says that about a century and a half later St. Mildred, the second abbess of Minster, coming out of France, landed at Ippedeflete (*Peramb. of Kent*, 100).

About 670 a lady of royal birth named Ermenburga came into possession of lands in Thanet, founded there a convent for Nuns and became its first abbess. She is usually referred to in the records as Domneva (i.e. domina aebba or Lady Abbess—A.C. xii. 82) or as Aebba. The convent was erected "in the southern part of the island near the sea" (T. Elm. 215) and was known as Sudmynster in c. 700 (B.C.S. 91) and Suthmynster in 824 (B.C.S. 378) and later as Minster.

A tragic and romantic story as to the way in which Ermenburga became possessed of her large estates in Thanet (forty-eight ploughlands is perhaps equal to about 5,760 acres) is narrated by the monkish chroniclers and has been widely spread. It is found in Thorne (234-5) and in T. Elm. (192-215). The story has been retold and examined by an acute and learned scholar, the late Canon R. C. Jenkins, in A.C. xii. 180-4, and it need not be repeated here. It is regarded by Canon Jenkins as an invention of later date and it presents many improbabilities. The Thunor legend centres round miracles and the narrative is confused. It is inconsistent with the charters which record large grants of land in Thanet and the adjoining areas to the abbess and her successors at a later period. Finally there is no mention of it in the A.S.C., in Bede, in Ethelweard or in Florence of Worcester.

According to the charters the monastery at Minster was gradually endowed by a series of gifts. In 676 Swaebhard King of Kent, granted to the abbess Aebbe the land called

“ In Sudaneie ” in Thanet, containing forty-four manentes together with a “ court ” containing twelve manentes in a place beyond the island called Sturgeh (Sturry) (B.C.S. 42). In Sudaneie means “ in the southern part of the island ”, i.e. Minster and surrounding land. Further gifts were showered on the abbess by Swaebhard and Oswin, Kings of Kent, though the exact dates are not always clear ; about 690 ten manentes in Sturry (B.C.S. 35), eighteen manentes in Thanet (B.C.S. 40), five aratra in Sturry and Botdesham (B.C.S. 41). In 694 Wihtred gave to Aebbe or her successor four aratra in Thanet at Humanton (B.C.S. 86) and in 697 forty manentes in Thanet at Haeg (B.C.S. 96).

Another argument against the Thunor legend is that Ermenburga carefully selected the site of her monastery with a definite purpose in mind. The Wantsum channel formed part of the ordinary shipping route between London and the Continent, and the unnamed spot chosen was a sheltered harbourage just within its eastern entrance of Ebbsfleet. The channel remained available for through traffic four centuries later since in 1052 Harold and his father Earl Godwin passed with their ships from Dover through Sandwich and Northmouth and by way of the Swale channel to London. (A.S.C.) In addition to its advantages as a port, the situation was also a convenient centre for sheep-farming and the wool trade with the Low Countries. In her monastery the practical abbess had planned an institution which should be both self supporting and useful. For her purpose ships and facilities for transport were necessary and these were gradually obtained by her and her successors.

In c. 747 Ethelbald the Mercian overlord of Kent, after receiving letters from Boniface, granted to Mildred and her family of nuns in Thanet exemption for one of their ships from the tax due by public law in the port of London (T. Elm. 306). In 748 Ethelbald granted to the abbess Edburga and her monastery in the Isle of Thanet half the tax and tribute of a ship which she had recently purchased at Leubuc (the port of Lubeck in the Baltic Sea) and put together not far from her monastery (T. Elm., 314). In c. 760 the Mercian King Offa confirmed to the abbess

Sigeburga the freedom from toll for the passing of a laden ship given by his predecessor Ethelbald (T. Elm., 321). About 761 Eadbert King of Kent granted to the abbess Sigeburga and her monastery in the I. of Thanet the passage tax on two ships at Sarre just as the Mercian Kings Ethelbald and Offa had previously remitted tribute in the place called Lundenwic, and also all tribute and tax at Fordwich and Sarre on a second ship which had been lately built in the same monastery (T. Elm., 322).

“The place called Lundenwic” was undoubtedly the harbourage of Minster with its outlet at Ebbsfleet. Sudaneie was a description rather than a name and is not met with after the first half-dozen years of the monastery’s existence. For the next three-quarters of a century the place was called Lundenwic from its intimate association with the shipping trade of London. (See the Appendix on the thirteenth century pottery.) In the Laws of Hlothere and Eadric of c. 685 occurs the passage, “If any Kentish man shall buy anything in Lundenwic let him take unto him two or three honest men or the King’s portreeve to witness”, etc. (Textus Roffensis 8). In the reign of Ini, King of the West Saxons (688-726) the English Boniface, leaving the eastern parts of England for Holland, embarked at a market town (forum rerum venalium) which is still [says Willibald in his *Life of St. Boniface*, published 1603] in the ancient speech of the Angles and Saxons called Luidewinc [in the margin Lundenwich]. After some time he returned from Cuentawic (Etaples) to the above named place. Somner (p. 2) quotes the statement and feels no doubt that the place is Lundenwic. Somner and Harris believed that Lundenwic was Sandwich, but the latter place already had its own name and it is indubitable that all these shipping charters were addressed to the monastery at Minster. Lundenwic is not found after 761 and from that time Minster took its name from the monastery there.

Early in the ninth century the life of the monastery at Minster was rudely interrupted by the Danish invasions. Records of the early raids are vague and scanty but there is no doubt that the nuns passed through a long period of

anxiety and that their activities were curtailed. The raids continued and in 978 Thorne (p. 38) records that Thanet was laid waste by the Danish pirates and the monastery of nuns at Menstre burned with the clergy and people who had taken refuge there. It is probable that the few survivors were then removed to Canterbury. About 1009 the whole of Kent was laid waste by the Danes. Canterbury was captured and burnt and Leofryma the last abbess of the monastery taken prisoner (Thorne 40-1). After an existence of nearly 350 years the monastery of Minster had reached its tragic end.

It is notable that so far as can be gathered from the records the Danish attacks were made through the Sandwich entrance. Perhaps this was partly because the main object of the Danes was to reach Canterbury which was more conveniently approached from the mainland side, but it also throws light on the condition of the Ebbsfleet channel. It may be assumed that the monastery at Minster had been accustomed to keep their channel clear of the shingle drift for the convenience of their shipping and that in the two centuries of Danish raids this care had been relaxed.

Sandwich had suffered severely from the Danish attacks. The A.S.C. records a naval action in 853 at Sandwich in which the Danes were put to flight and of their return with 350 ships in the same year when Canterbury was stormed. A period of quiet seems to have followed but the times called for an efficient local control and this could best be afforded by the monasteries. In a charter dated 966 (the true date being *c.* 973) King Edgar granted the port and town of Sandwich to C.C.C. (B.C.S. 1185). The grant was confirmed in 979 by Ethelred the Unready who added Eastry (Boys, 728). But fierce Danish attacks began again in 994 and continued with short intervals until 1014 when the English resistance collapsed.

On coming to the throne of England Cnut set vigorously to work to restore order and prosperity in the devastated area. In 1023 he granted to C.C.C. an amended and carefully drawn charter of Sandwich Haven (K.C.D. 737 : Robertson, p. 158). The grant includes :

the haven of Sandwich and all the landing places and the water dues from both sides of the river from Pipernaesse to Maercesfleote whoever owns the land in such wise that when it is high tide and a ship is afloat the officers of Christchurch shall receive the dues from as far inland as can be reached by a small axe thrown from the ship. And no one shall ever in any kind of way have any control in the said haven except the monks of Christchurch and theirs shall be the ship and the ferrying across the haven and the toll of every ship that comes to the said haven at Sandwich whatever it be and wherever it comes from.

The tidal estuary of the Stour from Sandwich to the sea is still known as Sandwich Haven, and the point of the mainland on the right bank of the river at its mouth is still called Pepperness. The name Marksfleet has long since disappeared, but an interesting and probable suggestion as to its position has been made by the editors of the *Crawford Charters*. They point out that in the summary of this grant included in the A.S.C. under 1029 one version substitutes the name Nortmuthe for Maercesfleote, and they suggest that the point intended is that where the North Stream flows into the Stour just outside the N.E. corner of Sandwich. (See Pl. II, p. 67, of Vol. LIII.) In their view the grant embraces the stretch of the river from Sandwich to the sea. This view receives corroboration from the fact that C.C.C. in subsequent disputes with St. Aug. never appear to claim that Sandwich Haven extended into the Wantsum channel any further than this.

In 1027 Cnut gave to St. Aug. the estates of the derelict monastery at Minster by the description of All the land of St. Mildred within the I. of Tanat and without with all customs belonging to her church both on land and on sea and on shore (K.C.D. 1326 : Thorne, 571). Both the eastern entrances were now vested in the two powerful monasteries of Canterbury and the King looked forward to an early return of prosperity in the area. His prudent intentions were however largely defeated by the hostility which quickly

arose between the two monastic bodies and which continued to break out for centuries until it was finally ended by the removal of C.C.C. from Sandwich. The story of the early phases of the quarrel is told in a famous charter of 1039 (K.C.D. 758 : Robertson, p. 174) and it centres round the deterioration of the abbot's port of Minster at Ebbsfleet (Hyppesfleote).

When in 1027 Aelfstan the resourceful abbot of St. Aug. came into possession of the convent lands he found the Ebbsfleet channel in a deplorable condition owing to centuries of neglect. The tides and the river outflow still swept through the passage but it had been ruined as an entrance for shipping. The obvious choice was to make use of the entrance through Sandwich Haven but this depended on the goodwill of C.C.C. who controlled the Haven and who were actively hostile. Aelfstan set to work by divers and devious ways to undermine the influence of his jealous neighbours. Cnut had then died and his successor Harold Harefoot was taking little personal interest in the affairs of the Kingdom, but his advisers were induced to take Sandwich into the royal hands and to deprive C.C.C. of it for a year. Aelfstan also acquired from the King's steward the third penny of the toll of Sandwich. In 1039 the King was lying very ill at Oxford (he died in the following year) and messengers from C.C.C. came to his bedside and dwelt on their grievances. The King was won over, disavowed the acts of his advisers and authorized the preparation of a charter of reinstatement. The charter recited the priory's complaints, the King's ignorance of his advisers' actions, and his Order that Sandwich should be held by C.C.C. as fully and completely as in any King's day with rent, water and shore rights, fines and everything. The abbot then invoked the assistance of abp. Eadsige, and offered C.C.C. ten pounds for the third penny of the toll but the offer was refused. He next asked permission to make a wharf opposite to "Mildrythe aeker" (apparently in the Haven at the South end of Stonar) but this was also refused. C.C.C. proved implacable and the abbot was thus driven to his last expedient of an effort to re-open his own port.

Then Abbot Aelfstan came on the scene with a great company and had a trench dug at Hyppelesfleote with the intention of providing a channel for ships such as they had at Sandwich but it was an utter failure. . . . Then the abbot let the matter drop.¹

The convent of Minster had depended largely on foreign trade carried on in its own ships. Under the abbey the manor had a somewhat different economy. Ships remained in use but they seem to have been private ventures and paid toll. The Black Book displays a policy of general agriculture producing large quantities of corn and cattle; fishing had grown and wool was still exported. The shingle drift and possibly some elevation of the land had held up a large accumulation of silt in the old channel of Ebbsfleet and along the west side of Stonar of which it formed the greater part. The silt was fertile and held out the promise of a new era of agricultural prosperity. For the first time Stonar begins to appear in the charters. About 1087 Wm. the Conqueror ordered that St. Aug. and Abbot Wydo do securely hold all their rights and customs at Estanores both on water and on land (Thorne, 574). In 1088 Wm. Rufus decreed that no one has any authority in Estanores except Abbot Wydo and his brethren of St. Aug. and they hold the same land freely and quietly and the whole shore up to the half of the water (T. Elm., 355). In 1090 the claim of the citizens of London to dominion of the town of Stonar was rejected by the Justices and the rights of the abbot affirmed. These charters were confirmed by Hen. I, Stephen, John and Hen. III (Thorne, 59).

The quarrels between St. Aug. and C.C.C. broke out again in 1127 owing to the growing prosperity of Stonar. It was complained by C.C.C. that their privileges as owners of Sandwich Haven were being infringed; houses had been erected on the Stonar side that ships might stop there, illegal tolls and customs were being taken by the abbot's people who

¹ This passage was inadequately quoted in Part I, p. 77. The present translation is taken from Miss Robertson's book, p. 179.

were making use of their own boats instead of the ferry. Under a royal writ the sheriff of Kent held an inquiry by an independent jury who found that the toll of Sandwich Haven and all the maritime customs on both sides of the river from Burgegate (note not Pepperness: Burgegate was probably in Sandwich and the finding appears to restrict the claims of C.C.C.) to Marksfleet and the small ferry boat belonged only to C.C.C. (Boys, 548-53).

As soon as Sandwich Haven became the only through waterway it was seen to be intolerable that any local owners should be able to forbid its use. "Queen" Eleanor in 1190-94 granted other land in Kent to C.C.C. in exchange for the port of Sandwich (Boys, 657). There was no Queen of England named Eleanor at this time and the lady was probably Eleanor, daughter of Hen. II who in 1176 married Alphonso III, King of Castile. This exchange was probably made under pressure but it was ineffective and the disputes continued. Further pressure was applied, and in 1242 (27 Hen. III) "by the counsel of prudent men" an arrangement was forced on C.C.C.

For the sake of peace it has been granted by the prior and chapter that for the future there be free access by ship to the channel of Minster by the river of Sandwich and free return: with this addition that if in the river itself before the channel is reached any ship shall drop anchor . . . or shall be unloaded there, then the said prior and chapter are to have the maritime customs; but in the channel aforesaid they shall claim no right for the future (Thorne, 208).

The concession was carefully hedged about with restrictions. The Minster channel was not to be maliciously enlarged to the detriment of the prior and chapter and they were to have all the maritime customs in the port of Sandwich on both sides of the river within the bounds of the Haven. In many respects the grievances of St. Aug. still remained, and in 1290 Edw. I pressed on C.C.C. a further arrangement by which they gave up to him their port of Sandwich and all their rights and customs there, with some exceptions, in

exchange for 60 libratae of land in another place in Kent (Boys, 663). The decisive step, however, was not taken until 1364. In that year Edw. III forced C.C.C. to accept the manor of Burley in Essex in exchange for the customs and rents together with all the rights which they had or ought to have in the town and port of Sandwich (Boys, 669). The local differences between the two monasteries were brought to an end and the control of Sandwich Haven by C.C.C. entirely ceased.

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century definite indications began to appear of impending ruin. The closing of the Ebbsfleet exit was a disaster of the first magnitude. As the most direct and commodious channel it had taken the great bulk of the river outflow and of the tidal currents. The long and winding bottleneck of Sandwich Haven proved quite unequal to perform the task alone and was being encumbered by increased deposits of silt. Complaints of havoc wrought by flooding began to be heard. The real cause was not understood and everything was put down to the abbots' "inning" operations and other works designed to turn the new conditions to account. In 1266 men of Sandwich and Stonar burnt two water mills at Stonore and Hepesflete which obstructed the Ebbsfleet channel (Thorne, 249). (See note at end.)

The abbot took legal action in 1280 against the men of Sandwich. He set forth that he has a wall of sand and stone between Stanore and Clivesend by which his manor of Minster is protected from the rage of the sea and that the people of Sandwich by force dig up the materials and carry them away in their boats; that in his marsh between Stanore and Hippelesflete they dig the soil and carry it away in their boats by force; that in the same marsh a windmill and a watermill have been burnt by them (Boys, 660). Mediators intervened and in 1283 a composition was agreed upon which made certain provisions in the event of the abbot's wall being thrown down by the sea, and prohibited the carrying away of soil from his marsh or the removal of beach from the sea wall.

A remarkable picture of the abbot's great manor of

Minster in the closing years of the thirteenth century is displayed in the Blk. Bk., pp. 15-63. The manor covered an extensive area and included Minster, Ebbsfleet, Stonar, Cliffsend, St. Johns (Margate), St. Laurence (Ramsgate), and St. Peter's (Broadstairs). The rents, customs and services of the tenants are set out in detail. Rents were paid by 105 tenants at Stonar as against 61 at Minster. Large augmentations of the contributions in kind to the mother church had been made in 1259 and at that date the manor of Minster was the largest contributor. Agriculture and sheep farming were the principal industries, but sea fishing from Margate and Ramsgate had become important (p. 28). Many tolls were payable. The condition of the Ebbsfleet channel is not very clear and perhaps some of the entries were obsolete. The channel is called in one place the "Passagium de Heppa", and a toll of 4d. is charged "For every ship that comes into the Flete de Menstre or into Heppesflet and there sells produce" (p. 29). On the other hand a rent of 2s. is paid for a certain mariscum de Hippe (p. 50), the services include the maintenance of the marsh wall (p. 28), and the abbot derived a substantial income from the marsh of Stonore (Thorne, 387). The passage was still obstructed by water mills (pp. 21, 29, 54, 58) and by kiddles.¹ One hereditary kiddle at Clyuesend paid a yearly rent of 6d. (p. 64). Seven persons paid rents totalling 40d. for kiddles (p. 41). In 1428 two persons (one of them the tenant) admitted carrying away stones from a kiddle near Clyuesend and were fined by the abbot (p. 62). The prosperity that seems to appear in the Blk. Bk. may have been more apparent than real.

The name given by the Saxon invaders to their landing place was Heopwines flet, Ypwines flet. No further mention of the place is recorded for nearly 600 years, and in 1039 it had changed to Hyppes flete. In c. 1237 it was Heppesfiete (Blk. Bk. 428), in 1240 Ipelisflete (Assize Rolls for Kent). The most numerous references to it are in the Blk. Bk. where it appears (often as a personal name) as

¹ A kiddle is a barrier in a river or channel with an opening fitted with nets to catch fish.

Heppesflete, Eppesflete, Hepperesflete, Heppesflet, Hippilisflete (pp. 15-88). Occasionally it is shortened to Heppa, Eppa, Hippe or to Flete, Flida or to Porta.

The meaning of flete is "passage" as seen in "Passagium de Heppa" above and in Florence of Worcester's explanation of Wippedesfleote (a different place) as Wipped's passage. In the first element of Hippelesflet, Hipperesflete the sonants *l* and *r* are not part of the root: they come in, fall out or exchange quite freely and they do not in any way affect the signification. The essential part of the first element is Heop, Hep, Hip, and this by virtue of Grimm's law would be the form in which we should expect to find "ship" (O.E. *scip*). The later forms of Ebbsfleet therefore appear to indicate that the meaning of the name is "ships passage". The additional element in the early forms—Win—is the same as the first element in Winchester and Wincheap (=men, folk, people) and the early forms signify "ship peoples' passage".

The closing of the Ebbsfleet channel was in 1313 the subject of a presentment by a jury of the hundred of Cornylo at Canterbury which is set out in Boys, 665-6, and transcribed in A.C. XXII, 135-6. It is made clear by this record that by "the water course called Minster Flete" is meant the Ebbsfleet channel. The jury found that the flete "used to be so wide that two cogges might turn therein clear of one another", that it "is part of the King's stream running over the soil of the abbot to the abbot's town of Minster", that it had been improperly filled up by a predecessor of the abbot on account (as he alleged) of a raging tide and an extraordinary inundation of the river over his ground by which he would have lost the profit of about a thousand acres. The jury believed the flete could be repaired at a cost of £20 and made navigable to Minster without any hazard to the abbot's lands. The presentment shows a complete misconception in the minds of all parties as to the real cause and gravity of the trouble.

The seaward end of the Ebbsfleet channel of Minster Fleet near Pepperness is still shown in Boys' map of 1775 (see the reproduction on p. 69 of Part I) and is there marked

Minster Sluice. It also appears on the 6" O.S. map of to-day. The filled up channel forming the northern boundary of Stonar is significantly referred to as Ealdeheuene (Oldhaven) in an undated MS. register of St. Aug. quoted in Boys, 834.

The history of the area for the next three centuries makes melancholy reading. The prehistoric growth of Stonar had destroyed the Wantsum channel. Minster and Sandwich had been created by their ports and fell with them. Constant and increasing complaints of flooding were made, the silting of the river spread to the higher reaches, the Northmouth dried up, and from Pepperness to Fordwich flooding became endemic. The great inundation of 1365 spread far beyond Stonore and all the levels or marshes between Canterbury and the sea were in danger of being overflowed (Boys, 669). During the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries numerous commissions were appointed and reports made; experts from the Low Countries were called in to advise, various remedies were proposed and some attempted, but the real cause of the trouble, lying bound in the roots of the past, was imperfectly grasped and little relief obtained. The most sensible step was taken in 1775 when the Commissioners of Sewers obtained parliamentary powers to connect the two parallel courses of the Stour by making a cut across the narrowest part of Stonar, but this plan by a shortsighted policy of the Sandwich corporation was vigorously opposed and was only authorized subject to restrictions which impaired its utility. Disastrous flooding continues to this day.

At the dissolution Stonar fell into the hands of the crown in a poverty stricken state. Flooding had almost destroyed its agricultural life and the removal of the manorial organization was the last straw. The dwindling population fell to almost nothing. In 1554 a lease of the estate was granted to John Johnson alias Anthony for twenty-one years at the yearly rent of £23. It was sold in 1558 with the patronage of the church to Nicholas Cryspe (of Quex) and his brother John Cryspe for £637 (Boys, 834). In 1569 at abp. Parker's Visitation there were no houses on it. But to the Crispe family or to their advisers occurred the

brilliant idea of turning to profit the conditions which had ruined Stonar, and they established on the seaward side the business of obtaining salt from evaporated seawater. It is stated in the Sandwich records for 1595 that "The Saultes at Stonard are assessed for £3". The work was carried on by tenants and in the early part of the seventeenth century a power of attorney was granted "to distress for arrears of rent for y^e Salts" (New Black Book of Sandwich, p. 240). The salt workers probably lived in Sandwich as in 1683 the Rural Dean reported to the abp. that Stonar hath now but two houses upon it and one of them was lately erected, and that there is no church or parsonage house (A.C., XXI, 186). As late as 1851 the Census returns show fifty-two persons employed in the salt works.

From the Crispes Stonar passed by sale to Sir George Rooke of St. Lawrence near Canterbury and in 1787 it was again sold to Charles Foreman of London. The official assessment of the yearly value remained at £23 based on the cultivated area. The fresh marsh of 140 acres was reckoned at 3s. 4d. per acre and the salt marsh of 240 acres at an average of 9½d. No value seems to have been put on 12 acres of stone bache (bare shingle). But on the sale to Foreman the annual rent of the whole estate was estimated at £880 and the price at 25 years' purchase was £22,000 (Boys, 835). The salt pans must at that time have been a profitable venture.¹

NOTE (p. 51). In 1462 (I Edw. IV) a royal grant was made to C.C.C. of a plot or quantity of land called 'Hosand' within the jurisdiction of the Port of Sandwich. The said plot was submerged by the sea in the time of Henry III (1216-72) so that no profit could be made from it until the time of Edw. III (1327-57) when the sea receded and it was raised and grew into dry land and became a pasture (Cal. of Patent Rolls).

¹ Salt pans (salinae) are mentioned in Domesday Book, and one worth 30d. is believed to have been at Stonar (Birch. Domesday Book: Hussey, Chronicles of Wingham). But there is no trace of a salina in the Blk. Bk.