

ON SOME FRAGMENTS OF NORMAN BUILDING
RECENTLY DISCOVERED AT GREAT WOOD-
LANDS, IN THE PARISH OF LYMINGE.

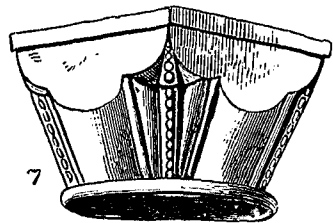
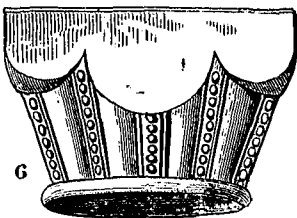
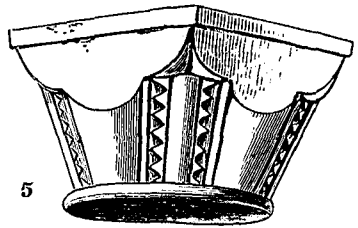
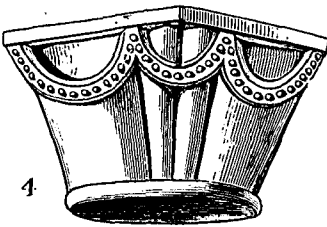
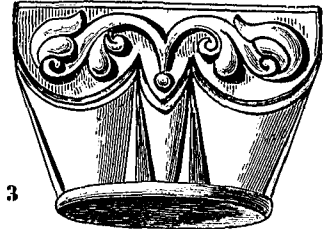
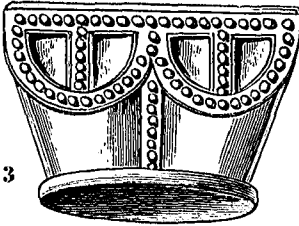
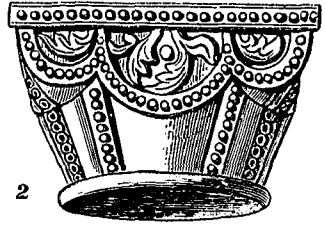
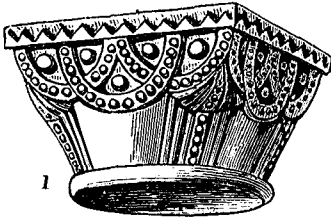
BY ROBERT C. JENKINS, M.A., RECTOR OF LYMINGE.

It is now some time since my attention was directed to a wall of considerable antiquity, which supports a portion of the road leading from Lyminge to the Stone Street, and forms the boundary of the farm-yard of Great Woodlands, the property of Miss Tournay, of Brockhul, in Saltwood. This wall, which had been recently exposed by the removal of a part of the farm-buildings, was almost entirely formed of squared blocks of Caen stone, many of them adorned with carved work of great beauty of design and excellence of workmanship. A great number of them had evidently belonged to a Norman arch of great size, and presented specimens of ordinary Norman mouldings, including the zigzag (both on the surface and in relief), the embattled, the billet, and other usual types, while others formed portions of ornamental work of another kind, and string-courses of considerable interest and beauty.

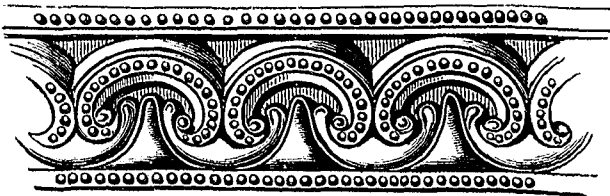
Through the kindness of Miss Tournay, who, as the worthy representative of four, at least, of the most ancient families of East Kent,—the Criols, the Brockhuls, the Sellinges, and the Tournays,—feels a natural interest in such antiquarian relics, I was permitted to take

down the portions of the wall in which these stones were found, and to remove any which appeared to me to be of antiquarian value.

My examination resulted in the disinterment from it of fourteen Norman capitals, some of simple and others of more elaborate design; every one, however, being different from all the rest. Of these, one or two of the most striking are represented in the annexed sketches. In addition to these, numerous remains of the arch already mentioned, and several fragments of carved ornamental-work were found in the wall, buried in ancient mortar, and in a very perfect state of preservation. The question naturally occurred,—“To what building of this early period could these numerous and remarkable fragments have belonged?” Towards the solution of this question I venture to offer to the reader such conjectures as appear to me to be most reasonable and most consistent with known historical facts. I observed in the first instance, that similar fragments of early masonry had been worked into many other buildings in the immediate neighbourhood,—at North Lyminge, at Ottinge, at Longage, and in an ancient wall belonging to the Rectory. On a closer examination, I found that portions of the very same mouldings which appeared at Woodlands, were to be traced in the buildings here indicated. I was led therefore to the conclusion, that the structure from which these stones were taken must have been in the immediate neighbourhood of these places, most probably at some point lying between them. For in a country where stone is easily obtained, and at a period when the carriage of stone must have been comparatively expensive, it would hardly have answered to purchase building materials of this kind to be delivered at a great distance. The question therefore narrowed itself into this form,—“Was there any building existing during the Norman period in the im-



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mediate neighbourhood of the places where these stones are found; and is there any reason to believe that its materials were scattered in this manner by sale or otherwise?"

Now it happens that the ancient residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, in Lyminge, fulfils all these conditions. Its site forms almost the central point of the localities mentioned, and it must have been of Norman foundation, as it was one of the principal manorial residences of the Archbishops from the time of Lanfranc.

The "Camera de Lymings," or as it is also called, the "Aula de Lymings," is the earliest place which is mentioned in the Register of Archbishop Peckham, the first we possess, and was visited by him in 1279. It was here that he received the homage of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, on the 9th of June in this year, beginning the circuit of his great manors from this place. This early residence appears to have been revisited by the Archbishop and his successors from time to time, until the days of Archbishop Courtenay, whose plan of rebuilding the Castle of Saltwood as a baronial dwelling involved the demolition of the "Camera de Lymings," and the union of its park with that of Saltwood. For I find that in 1382 the Archbishop granted a commission to William Topcleve, his land-steward (*Seneschallus terrarum*), to sell the houses and stones belonging to certain of his manors; and in 1387, the custody of the park of Lyminge was united with that of the park of Saltwood, the "Camera de Lymings" having, as I apprehend, been demolished between those dates. The foundations of the building are marked at Lyminge by the vast mounds and almost terraces which fill the Court-Lodge Green, the original site of the Manor-House. Considerable portions of these have been from time to time uncovered, including the foundations of an

oblong room with an inner chamber beyond, bearing some resemblance to the ground-plan of a small chapel. The singular perfection and preservation of the carved work on the stones in question, point to the fact that they must have been taken out of the building to which they belonged at an earlier period than that of the Reformation. For by that time they must have already suffered from age and exposure, and in any case would have been too carelessly removed to have preserved even the traces of their original beauty. It is possible that other solutions of this problem might be suggested than that which is here offered; but this has appeared to me the most simple and intelligible. I may venture, therefore, to close my remarks with the trite invitation,—

“ Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti, si non his utere mecum.”