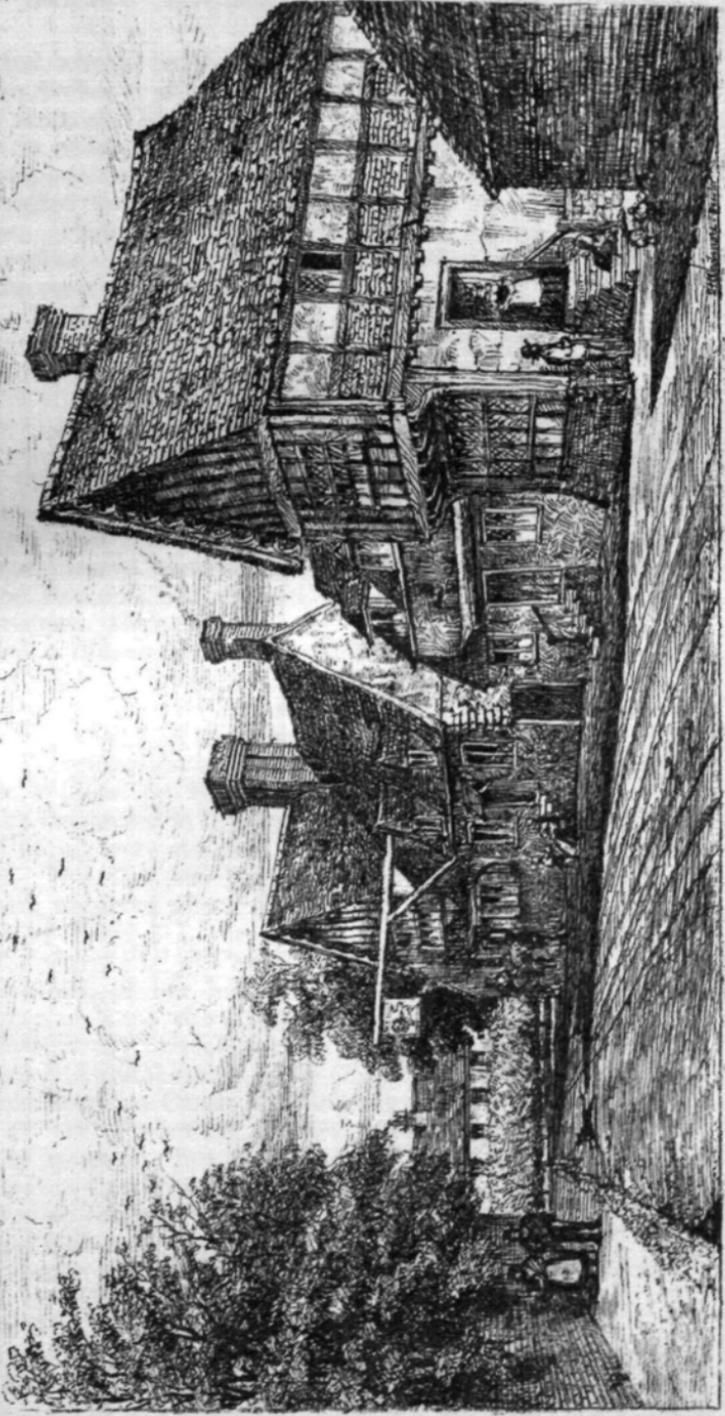


CANONS' HOUSES AT WINGHAM.

THE old houses, so admirably sketched by Mr. Wadmore for the annexed plate, are the only visible remains of those ancient dwellings which were occupied, during 250 years, by members of the Mediæval College of Wingham. They stand on the south side of the village street, at its eastern end, and were erected in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, as residences for Canons of Wingham. Hence, in the last century, they were called Canon Row.

The house of the Provost, since called *The College*, stood north-west of them on the opposite side of the village street. The Manor-house of the Archbishop was situated still further towards the north-west. In that Manor-house at least three of our kings had been entertained. Edward I was there, the guest of Archbishop Winchelsey, during three days Sept. 28-30, in 1295; Edward II there visited Archbishop Reynolds in the summer of 1324; and Edward III was entertained by Archbishop Meopham on the 20th of April 1331. Not a vestige, however, can now be seen of the archiepiscopal residence.

The ancient gabled dwelling of the Provost, called the College, which, after the Dissolution, became the seat of the Palmer baronets, remained standing until the middle of this century, when it was pulled down and a new house was built upon its site. Its destruction snapped another link between the modern village of Wingham and its ancient glory. That Provost's House had been at various epochs the residence of ecclesiastics, who eventually distinguished themselves in the state, and attained high honours in the Church. One of the earliest Provosts in the reign of Edward I was Amadeus, son of the powerful Lord St. John. Among his successors were William Reade, who became Bishop of Chichester in 1369; Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York; and five Archdeacons, four of whom were closely related to Archbishops. One of them, Thomas Morton, was Archdeacon of Ely; three were Archdeacons of Canterbury, viz., Thomas Chicheley, William Warham, and Edmund Cranmer; one Henry Ediall, was Archdeacon of Rochester. The Canons' houses had been occupied by men who subsequently achieved still higher honours. Archbishop Whittlesey, and Archbishop Kemp; Richard Courtenay, Bishop of Norwich (1413-16); and Philip Morgan, Bishop of Worcester (1419-25), and of Ely (1425-37); John Stopynndon, Master of the Rolls (1438-46); John Prophet, Dean of York (1416); Vincent Clement, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Wilts, and Winchester



. Old Houses . WINCHAM, KENT .

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(1458-72); and several ecclesiastical judges who dispensed justice, as Dean of the Arches or as Chancellor of the Archbishop, had occupied Canons' stalls and houses at Wingham.

From traces of important ruins discovered in the garden of the modern Vicarage-house, we may infer that the residences of the Canons extended southward from the street for a considerable distance. Probably they may have been erected around a quadrangular close, of which the north side stood in the present street, and the eastern side abutted upon the high road which leads to Adisham. It is a very singular fact that these Canonical houses in Wingham were accounted to stand within the liberty of the Cinque Port of Hastings.

There were six Prebendaries or Canons, and each of them was bound by the College statutes to reside here during at least four months of every year. In 1511 there were also four Vicars Choral, one Stipendiary Chaplain, four Choral Clerks, and two Choristers attached to the College. Nor was this the full complement of the staff contemplated by the statutes of foundation. The number of Vicars Choral should have been eight, each of them in Priest's or Deacon's orders; and there should have been four trained choristers. Consequently the Collegiate buildings must have occupied a considerable area. When the College was finally dissolved in 1547-8, pensions for life were assigned to the officials; and no less than fourteen of them survived until the reign of Queen Mary, when they were still receiving these annual allowances.

In the Prebendal-house attached to his Wimelingwelde Canonry, Dr. William de Heghtresbury made his will in the year 1372. Yet he was buried in Ickham Church, of which he was Rector.

Private Chapels were attached to some, at least, of the Canons' houses here. This fact has been made memorable by a curious incident which occurred about the year 1360. Dugdale* narrates how a niece of Edw. III, the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of the Marquess of Juliers, Earl of Cambridge, became a veiled nun after the death, in 1352, of her husband, John, Earl of Kent, brother of the fair Joan of Kent who married the Black Prince. Nevertheless, she subsequently forsook her vows, and was secretly married to Sir Eustace D'Aubrichecourt in the Chapel of the dwelling-house of Robert atte Brome, a Canon of Wingham.

Which of the Prebendal houses was occupied by him we cannot clearly ascertain; but it was either that of the Pedding or of the Bonington Canonry. Robert atte Brome, no doubt, derived his name from an estate in Barham, which gives its name to Brome Park the chief seat of the Oxenden family. He remained in possession of his Canonry and Prebendal-house here until 1372, when he was buried in Wingham Church. His will is preserved at Lambeth; in it he remembered all his colleagues here, bequeathing to each Canon five marks (£3 6s. 8d.); 13s. 4d. to each Vicar, and 20s. to the Little Clerks (*parvis clericis*).

* *Baronage*, ii., 95.

Whether he shared in the punishments awarded for the clandestine marriage, we cannot say; but the lady who broke her religious vows, and her husband, were both of them subjected to severe penances during the whole subsequent course of their lives.

Respecting the dwelling attached to the Chilton Canonry, which Archbishop Whittlesey once occupied, it is recorded that, in 1511, when Ambrose Payne was its incumbent, the house so greatly needed repair as to be nearly ruinous. Canon Payne had obtained the Chilton Prebend in April, 1499, and he held it until 1521, when he exchanged it for a Canon's stall in the Collegiate Church of Hastings. Whether he repaired the dwelling-house, or suffered it to fall down, we are not informed.

Mr. Parker says, in his *Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages*, that at Wingham there are several timber and half-timber houses of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and one of the fourteenth.* He ascribes the latter to the reign of Edward III,† and gives an engraving of the well-moulded barge-board in its gable.‡ One of the fifteenth century houses at Wingham, which Mr. Parker engraves,§ seems to be identical with that Prebendal-house which stands nearest to the spectator in Mr. Wadmore's sketch here given. This house contains on the ground floor, a panelled ceiling, identical with or very similar to that of the fifteenth century which Mr. Parker has engraved upon an earlier page of his work.|| The remoter dwelling-house shewn in Mr. Wadmore's sketch is now the Red Lion Inn, much frequented by artists and tourists, where the Bench of Magistrates sits once a month, and where the members of the Kent Archæological Society obtained their luncheon on the 28th of July, 1881. Many of its rooms are of great interest to the Antiquary; and one of the smaller windows in the upper storey of its front seems to be of a date almost as early as the reign of Richard II.

W. A. SCOTT ROBERTSON.

* Vol. iii., 308.
§ Vol. iii., 308.

† Vol. ii., 288.
|| Vol. iii., 127.

‡ Vol. ii., 30.