

Archæologia Cantiana.

THE "PILGRIM'S WAY," ITS ANTIQUITY
AND ITS ALLEGED MEDIÆVAL USE.
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THAT PART OF
IT IN THE COUNTY OF KENT.

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THERE is probably no other road or trackway in the whole of England that can boast such a literature as does this path, around which myth, legend, history, enthusiasm, and tradition have combined to weave a very tangled web. Running as it does through some of the most charming parts of the south country, Hampshire, Surrey, and Kent, generally on the southern slope of the chalk hills, but at times traversing ploughed fields, along deep sandy hollow ways or through gloomy yew-lined avenues, it can be followed from Winchester and the West to Canterbury and the Coast.

Concerning the natural beauties of this road (and they are many) this is not the place to speak. Rather it is proposed to examine the historical and archæological aspects of the road and to endeavour to ascertain how far the current legend is justified.

It will be as well to indicate what is, or has been, claimed for the path, putting each separate claim as a distinct topic for investigation. Briefly, then, this road is said to be:—

- a. A continuous trackway,
- b. prehistoric and probably neolithic,
- c. leading from the Kent coast to Salisbury Plain.
- d. It was afterwards diverted, at its western extremity, to Winchester and its ports.

- e. It was more or less neglected during the Roman and early mediæval periods,
- f. till suddenly, in the thirteenth century, it became the line along which pilgrims journeyed to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury.
- g. This use continued till the destruction of the shrine and the extinction of the pilgrimage, since when a variety of causes have been at work, some of which have been destructive, and others preservative, of the road.

I. CONTINUITY.

It seems very doubtful whether this aspect of the road can ever be proved. One certainly can travel from Winchester (or even Salisbury Plain) to the Kent coast along a path that is practically continuous. But obviously some stretches of the road are of very modern construction. Did this modern road replace an earlier track? That is likely; but was this earlier track contemporaneous with the more primitive stretches of the road that it connected? Or was the genesis of the road a multiplicity of various tracks that ultimately coalesced? We know that parts of this road existed in the middle ages. For example, among the charters of Cumbwell Priory,* a small house of Augustinian Canons situated just off the main Hastings road, a mile or so beyond Lamberhurst, there are several references to land "on the hills beside the road from Thornham eastward to Einton" (*qui jacent super montes juxta vicum qui ducit de Torneham apud Einton ex parte orientale*). Another document associates the road with the walls of Thornham Castle, and there is no doubt that the road referred to is the track spoken of as the "Pilgrim Road." The date of these charters is *circa* 1214—1219, and it will be noted that the road is not described as the "way to Canterbury" or the "Canterbury Way," as is, for instance, the Walsingham Way in Norfolk. Einton, as far as I am aware, is not identifiable, but it may be Altington, a homestead a mile or

* *Arch. Cant.*, V., pp. 210, 215, 216.

so west of Hollingbourne. Part of the road existed, therefore, in the middle ages, but there is no evidence of it being part of an important road leading to or from great centres such as Winchester or Canterbury. Further discovery of similar references, in deeds or charters, would no doubt assist in some measure in linking up the road in the mediæval period, but that is a long way from proving a continuous trackway in earlier times.

On general theoretical lines the continuity of the path is far more probable. Presuming that the wave of migration travelled from the east to the west, the obvious landing place for these migrants would be that of the shortest sea passage. This would result in a Kentish landing, even as Cæsar and Augustine landed. Still impelled forward, the newcomers would find their course directed almost by natural forces. The Thames would prevent north or north-eastern ventures, the Weald would equally discourage south or south-westerly excursions. There was nothing but the line of the hills—the North Downs, and these, as may be seen by reference to a map, lead, in the main, due west to Salisbury Plain, where are some of our earliest prehistoric monuments. This is, in effect, Mr. Belloc's theory,* but it must ever remain a theory, being based on premisses that are by no means established. But the strongest proof of continuity that I have yet found is in a communication from Capt. H. W. Knocker, whose contribution to *Arch. Cant.*† some years ago considerably shook the Pilgrim Road theory. He writes:—

“It has apparently always been the law that land which supported stock did not pay tithes in kind, but that the stock so supported did. For instance, the pasture on which sheep fed paid no tithes, but the flock paid in tithe lambs. If this pasture were laid down in any year as meadow, the resulting hay crop paid tithe of hay. Timber, being a capital asset with no annual crop, paid no tithe. Underwood, part being cut every year, paid on the year's cutting. And the

* *The Old Road*, ed. 1904, p. 20 *et seq.* † Vol. XXXI., p. 155 *et seq.*

great Wealden Forest, valued from Domesday Book onwards solely for the herds of hogs fed on the beech mast and acorns, paid no tithe, but the herd of hogs paid in pigs born each year. When the herds of hogs were discontinued by reason of the improvement of so much of the forest and the felling of the great trees, the tithe pig failed. But the landowners remembered their privileges and, I think, refused to pay, even on the underwood. But some surviving boundary for their exemption must have been agreed. For want of a better boundary to the north, the old track at the foot of the chalk hills was selected, and in all our West Kent parishes you find in the apportionments that 'woodlands south of the Pilgrim Road pay no tithe.'"

Now all of this is important. Evidently there was in Kent a well-recognized continuous track on the chalk hills, and that later this was known as the Pilgrim's Road.

But it seems to be impossible to fix a time when these things happened. Capt. Knocker gives a good number of authorities,* but though they support the contention, they give no indication of date. Taking the evidence as it stands, it seems to imply, in Kent at least, a continuous well-known way along the North Downs was in existence in the middle ages. That this road is a lineal descendant of a prehistoric track may or may not be true, but of definite evidence there is none, nor can any be reasonably expected.

II. PREHISTORIC ORIGIN.

Certainly a paleolithic origin for this road must be ruled out. Geological changes, with consequent variations in surface features, make it highly improbable that any vestiges of paleolithic roads or tracks would remain. The earliest association with any of the prehistoric peoples that

* Furley, *Weald of Kent*, pp. 415 and 639—646, and see Note A; Elton's *Tenures of Kent*, p. 195, citing as to reason and evidence: Shelford on "Tithes," p. 128; *Chichester v. Sheldon*, 3 E. and Y. 1102; Gilbert, 674, 686. Coke upon Littleton, 115a, note 15; Hasted's *Kent*, i., 295, vii., 243.

is likely to leave any traces behind would therefore be neolithic, and it might be of value to enquire as to the possibility of the road being connected with the new stone age men. In the first place, the neolithic immigration would of necessity involve a sea passage, which the older peoples avoided. Therefore a state of things is likely to occur as is pointed out by Mr. Belloc.* He presumes a number of detached units, crossing the sea and landing at spots determined by the wind and tide rather than by human intention. Thus a convergence on Canterbury is possible, and the theory may hold good. But, on the other hand, this is only a *terminus a quo*. Any subsequent invasion may have been conditioned by like circumstances.

Certainly a nomadic people would prefer open country rather than river valleys, swamp or scrub and forest. Further, it must be conceded that such a passage of the hills could not be made in one continuous journey. Halts must have been called, often prolonged, and such evidence as hearths, food débris and the like ought to be available. It is almost certain that, should such a road as this have been used by a neolithic people, there would be a series of village sites strung along the line of the way. There are now practically no villages on the road: these are some mile or two to the south, on the valley bottom. This is what might be expected; early villages and inhabited sites would be on the hills.

Up to the present no definite neolithic settlements have been located on the hills, nor on the line of the Pilgrim's Road. Finds of weapons and pottery occur, but nothing as yet to denote a village or settlement. Again, therefore, the later stone age period suggests itself, but proof is lacking. It seems, however, probable that some evidence in this direction might be obtained by an extension of the methods of Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, F.S.A., in the use of aerial photographs.† Certainly his experiments in locating dykes, earth-

* Belloc, *op. cit.*, pp. 22—26.

† *Air Survey and Archæology*. Ordnance Survey Professional Papers, N. S., No. 7, 1924.

works and other sites, which are invisible to the ground observer, are deeply suggestive, and it points to the necessity of a complete aerial photographic survey of the North Downs. Till this is done, the question of settlements on the line of the road must remain unanswered.

More tangible evidence of neolithic culture in this area is found in the remarkable series of rude stone monuments on and around Blue Bell Hill, a description of which is unaccountably lacking from the volumes of *Archæologia Cantiana*. Kit's Coty House is the most noteworthy of these, but the remains are scattered more or less along the line of the road from the Medway to Wrotham.* The examples at Coldrum (the most complete), at Addington, Aylesford and Tottington, as well as others less complete or destroyed, can without exception be referred to the neolithic period. The only doubt that can arise is: Are they the work of a race that worked up the Medway Valley from the Thames, or of a people that travelled along the old road? This latter seems more likely, and certainly the presence of these monuments is one of the strongest arguments for a neolithic date for the road.

These monuments do not exist elsewhere in Kent, and the nearest example of a similar character is Wayland Smith's Cave in Berkshire. Surface finds of bleached flint flakes, or the existence of tumuli, dew ponds, and earthworks are other features of prehistoric life for the road, but their evidence singly is negligible. Cumulatively they are not much more than indicative.

Bigbury Camp, near Canterbury, affords another line of argument. The line of the Pilgrim Road runs through the earthworks.† The latter have been proved to be of the early Iron age. Is the road contemporary with the earthwork, or is it either earlier or later? I am inclined to think that the banks and ditches are subsequent to the path, though Prof. Boyd Dawkins says they are of the same age.

* See *Inviota Magazine*, vol. i., new series, for a complete list of these remains, with insufficient details by F. C. E. E. There is a map which gives the location of the stones.

† *Arch. Jour.*, lix., pp. 211—218.

The arrangement of the defences around the two entrances of the road imply its previous existence. A later road cut through the camp would not have defended entrances: a contemporary road is rarely to be found running through a hill-top earthwork. To sum up the evidence adduced for its prehistoric origin, it must be admitted that the path has been so altered and adapted for modern usage in the greater part of its length that its early origin and course are incapable of demonstration. But there does seem to be a reasonable probability that the road may date from the neolithic period.

The question of the relation of roads and parish or manorial boundaries is intricate and involved. The Pilgrim Road throughout Kent at no point forms a parish boundary. Though a road forming a parish boundary may be presumed to be older than the parish (though again, not necessarily so, as perambulation of boundaries where there was no road would tend to make one), it does not follow that a road *not* forming a boundary is not ancient. In any case, the Manor and the Parish are post-Christian institutions, and finding the Pilgrim's Way as a boundary of these would only take it back a couple of thousand years, whereas the suggested antiquity of the track is far greater than that. Even the tything or borough, a possible pre-Christian division that survives to-day as the Land Tax Parish, would not assist in a much greater degree in demonstrating the antiquity of the path.

III. THE ROUTE.

The route laid down by Mr. Belloc* is one based on the theory that Salisbury Plain was the metropolis of prehistoric life in these islands, and that the old road led to it. Geographically it does so, but only if the existence of the Harrow Way (the Hoar or old way, or the Haere or boundary way†) be admitted. This seems legitimate, as even in West Hampshire it is known as "Farnham Lane," and it is men-

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 11—16.

† *Arch. Review*, iii., p. 91; Stevens' *History of S. Mary Bourne*, p. 198.

tioned as an old way as early as 900 A.D. There exists on the plain definite evidence of a neolithic culture. This theory is at present not confirmable, though here perhaps more than anywhere aerial photography will probably fill up some gaps in the argument. It is maintained that tracks that have been ploughed, or have become worn down and grass-grown, betray their existence to the camera. If a series of photographs shew tracks converging on the plain, then a great step forward will have been taken. The recent researches at Stonehenge* have, at least in the problem presented in the conveyance of the stones from Wales, implied a fairly well-organized and populous community in that area. The route taken by this track must thus be left "not proven." But it can be quite clearly stated that, whatever its course, it owes nothing to the metal traffic in early times. Especially does this refer to the alleged "Tin Trade." Grant Allen was chiefly responsible for this tale.† He says, speaking of the road under consideration, "To this day, antique ingots of the valuable metal (*i.e.*, tin) are often dug up in hoards or finds along the line of the ancient track."

Like all legends, this tale dies very hard, in spite of the fact that it has been clearly shewn that the export of tin actually took place from the Wight, right off the line of the road,‡ that no known ingots can be traced to a site anywhere near the Pilgrim's Road, and that of the ingots that do exist none are earlier than Roman times, and others are much later.

IV. THE ALLEGED DIVERSION TO WINCHESTER.

Up to the present, all that has been postulated, and to a great extent admitted, is that there was probably in neolithic times a track along the hills from the Straits *via* Canterbury to the Salisbury Plain area and the west, along the Harrow

* *Antiq. Journal*, i., 19, ii., 36, iii., 13, 239.

† *Cornhill Magazine*, Nov. 1889, "The Bronze Axe." See Note B.

‡ *Archæologia*, lix., pp. 281—288; *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, xviii., 117—123, xx., 342, 343.

Way. But now it is maintained that at some later period (obviously later because of the longer and more difficult sea route involved), but nevertheless not beyond the prehistoric period, a second wave of immigrants landed on the Hampshire coast, and making for Winchester as a common centre (repeating thus the conditions as found at Canterbury), set out immediately for the Old Road, travelling northward by the shortest route.*

Their objective, according to Mr. Belloc, was the Straits. But why? Why should a people who have just landed from the sea desire to trek towards the sea again? Surely these people, being of like kin with the rest, would desire to reach the ancient metropolis on the plain. Therefore the attempt to make them first go north, then north-east, and then almost east till they struck the site of Farnham, seems not only to take them from their presumed objective, but to emphasize unduly the necessity for reaching the road at all. As a matter of fact, by the time Mr. Belloc has come to deal with Winchester, the stream of traffic on the road has already turned from a westerly to an eastern drift, from Salisbury to the Straits, and this on account of the traffic in metals, which has already been shewn to be imaginary.† The whole theory of the diversion of the road is rather unconvincing, being, one suspects, something of the nature of special pleading. To prepare the way for the succeeding "pilgrimage" idea, which is intimately associated with Winchester, it is necessary to bring that city on the line of the Way. Hence this diversion of the road, which is quite illogical, save that it brings into close connection two great cities, between which it is intended to demonstrate a great pilgrim traffic.

We come thus to the first really weak point in the whole theory of the road, and its obvious intention must introduce an element of suspicion into the subsequent development of the story.

* For this theory in detail see Belloc, *op. cit.*, pp. 36—38.

† Belloc, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

V. THE PERIOD OF DISUSE.

The most remarkable aspect of the theory of the road is that, its course being fully established in pre-Roman times, it sank subsequently into insignificance (being ousted by the construction of the roads which form the basis of our present road system), and it continued to decline during the early middle ages until, in the dawn of the thirteenth century, it was marvellously revived as a passage for mediæval pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas. Its decline in Roman times is not a matter for great surprise. Supposing that, for the sake of argument, the road was an important track at the time of the Roman invasion, its very defects as a military way, which we can suppose arose from its primitive and natural construction, would be quite sufficient to ensure its gradual replacement by a more direct road, which would in addition be constructed to include London, now risen to importance. Parts of it may have been incorporated in the Roman ways, or even it may have been in part remodelled by the conquerors, for here and there are obvious signs of Roman occupation, as for instance the villa at Titsey, Kent, or at Ithen Abbas, Hants. But strategically the road was useless. It linked up no important military centres, it was too much subservient to natural obstacles. Once the London roads were established, all the east and west traffic was carried on them, or else on the Maidstone—Aldershot road on the floor of the valley.

It is difficult to give a date for these later roads. They are most likely pre-Roman, carrying, as they do, the villages and towns of the historic periods, and they have been frequently remodelled. They are themselves likely factors in the decay of the older track, as they attracted the dwellers on the hillside to the valley sites, and the old way became a mere bypath, a means of communication between the scattered downland farms which have taken the place of the earlier dwelling sites. The period of disuse does not require much proving, it is apparent to any traveller on the line of the Way. Moreover, he can seek in vain for any signs

that there has been, since that time, any considerable revival of traffic.

VI. THE ROAD AND THE PILGRIMAGES.

As more has been written on this aspect of the road than of any other, it may be as well to enquire into the question of pilgrimage and its relation to this road somewhat closely. Practically the whole of the literature of the Way emphasizes this mediæval association, and the popular mind knows no other connection.

First, as to the name. Capt. H. W. Knocker said* that the name "Pilgrim's Road or Way" may be as old as the time of Queen Anne, but since he wrote thus, he has come to the conclusion that this was a generous estimate. Hasted marks the "Pilgrim's Road" on his map, but he does not mention it in the text. No old map shews the line of the road along the hills. Capt. Knocker, whose knowledge of local records and land tenure, especially in West Kent, extends over 40 years, has given me the results of his investigations among the extant rolls and records of those courts and manors whose jurisdiction covered any part of the road between Westerham and Wrotham. In brief (his communication to me covers several sheets, and deals with each manor in detail) his verdict is:—

"In all my experience and investigation I have never yet come across any documentary reference to any road known as the Pilgrim Road or Way or Canterbury Way. My investigations, in places, have ranged over a period of six centuries."

Seemingly all references to the road by its popular name are eighteenth century or later.† At Harrietsham in 1867

* *Arch. Cant.*, XXXI., p. 159.

† At Swanley the words "Pilgrim's Way" have been applied to a path crossing the fields to Eynsford; it also appears near Darent, as an alternative to "Pack Way," and an old house that formerly stood in Wickham Lane, Plumstead, was also known as "Pilgrim Cottage." None of these can have had the remotest connection with any pilgrimage, though the "Packway" leads to the old road at Kemsing. In Suffolk, a narrow lane at Weston was described to me as a "pilgrim" road, but the meaning was that the path was passable for

the road was known as the Shire Road. It was then almost out of use, a mere by-lane.* Incidentally this reference will shew how the legend grew. A number of beads were found adjacent to the road. They were assumed to be rosary beads because they were found on the Pilgrim's Road. Thence it was argued that the path had a religious use, because a rosary was found on it. In short, the name was probably given to the road in comparatively modern times, from a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that vulgar tendency to associate "pilgrim" with most aspects of the mediæval wayfarer, even as everything dug up, or every earthwork, is Roman.

Mr. Cooke of Detling has given me some information as to the existence of the usual tradition in his own district. He says, for instance, that the name was traditional in 1829. He also says that the original course of the road about one hundred years ago was to the south of the Cock Inn rather than to the north as now, and that old cottages near by were spoken of as Pilgrim rest houses.

The mediæval religious pilgrimage is a matter that has been grossly exaggerated in the past. Questions of cost, of accommodation, and of the difficulties and dangers of travel were far more powerful to keep men at home than was the call of a saint's shrine to cause them to travel. To imagine, year after year, crowds of people moving Canterburywards (and elsewhere, for Canterbury was only one of the famous shrines) would imply a congestion on the roads and in the towns that would be a very serious matter. Demands for food and lodging in even large towns would be difficult to satisfy. If then pilgrimages are transferred from the King's Highway, with its large towns strung along it, to a country lane which not only ignores the large towns, but not infrequently passes north or south of the small villages, the

pedestrians and horses, but not for wheeled traffic—a bridle path, in short. A gap on the Roman Wall near Haltwhistle Burn is called "Pilgrim's Gap," from the antiquarian pilgrims of 1906. See the *Roman Wall Handbook*, ed. 1921, p. 180. A possible solution of the use of the word may be found in its derivation from a surname.

* *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, xxiii., pp. 108-4 and 206.

ridiculousness of the contention becomes manifest. If pilgrimage was a huge annual migration, as is frequently alleged, the Kentish Pilgrims' Road was insufficient and inadequate for the sustentation of large bodies of wayfarers.. On the other hand, if the pilgrims were a much smaller body of people, if small parties or individuals visited the shrine, much as people now visit our cathedrals, there could not have been enough of this traffic on the old road to have created the current tradition, especially as there were several other routes to Canterbury. From either point of view, the evidence does not favour the religious use of the road.

The next matter that deserves attention is the amount of devotion paid to St. Thomas. Take first the collection of extracts from Kentish Wills, published in 1907 by the Kent Archæological Society under the title *Testamenta Cantiana*. Some hundreds of wills of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are there dealt with. Others are to be found in *Arch. Cant.*, XXIII., p. 134 *et seq.* The following partial summary will indicate the trend of the information therein :—

	Total References to St. Thomas.	On the Old Road.	On the Watling Street.	Else- where in County.
Shoreham Deanery . . .	3	1	1	1
East Kent—				
Dedications . . .	1	0	0	1
Altars . . .	14	0	3	11
Lights . . .	21	3	2	16
Images . . .	6	0	3	3
Doubtful. May refer to the Apostle . . .	19	4	1	14
Brotherhoods . . .	2	0	1	1
West Kent . . .	1	0	0	1

Thus, out of some 67 references to the saint, only 8 are found in churches on the line of the Pilgrim Road, 11 are on the Watling Street, Chaucer's route, while 48 are scattered about the county. One would imagine that churches situated on the route of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas would have paid more attention to the needs of the passers-by.

From these same wills we get another illuminating piece of information. Bequests are frequently made for a pilgrimage to be undertaken on behalf of the deceased by the legatee. The place of pilgrimage is mentioned, and in the wills above summarized journeys to Walsingham, to the Blood of Hailes, to the Rood of Hastings, the Rood of Boxley, to Malling, and to St. Robert of Newington are specified, but not one to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and this, too, in the saint's own county. From wills, therefore, we do not get much encouragement to persist in the current legend.

Turning now to the records of gifts and offerings made at the various stations in the Cathedral, *i.e.*, the Shrine, the Martyrdom, the Tomb, and the Corona, the published accounts are not so full as could be wished.* Still, they may be taken as fairly representative. They range from 1207 to 1420, with numerous gaps, and shew that the greatest amount offered was in 1220, the first jubilee of the murder. The sum of £1071 was recorded.

In 1420 occurred what was probably the greatest pilgrimage of all, if the figures are to be credited. One hundred thousand people are said to have visited Canterbury, and left behind them the sum of £570.

The *Paston Letters*,† under date 1471, says: "As ffor tydyngs, the Kyng and the Qwyen and moche other pepall ar ryden and goon to Canterbury. Nevyr so moche peple seyn in Pylgrymage hertofor at ones, as men sayd." This must certainly have been of large dimensions if it was larger than that of 1420, the memory of which ought not to have passed away in fifty years. Unfortunately the figures are not available, neither for pilgrims nor their offerings. But it is highly probable that all of these figures are exaggerated. In any case, these years are exceptional. 1220 was the first jubilee and the occasion of the translation, which naturally would be made a national thanksgiving day. 1420 was also a jubilee, but it was something more: it was the year of the Treaty of Troyes, which gave great hopes of a lasting peace

* *Arch. Cant.*, XIII., p. 500 *et seq.*

† *Ed. Gairdner*, 4 vols., 1910, iii., p. 17.

with France, and a relief from the burdens of the Hundred Years' War, together with considerable material advantages to the English. Again a national rejoicing can be supposed, in which the Shrine of Becket would share. 1471 was another year of excitement. The battle of Tewkesbury had just been fought and the country was in a political ferment, not knowing what was to happen next. Moreover, a great pestilence was sweeping over the country, with heavy mortality in its wake. The great hordes of "pilgrims" were those who were endeavouring to escape the ravages of the disease by flight, though only too likely extending its operations.*

There is no doubt that at intervals there were pilgrimages sufficiently large to call for contemporary comment, but they were rare, and their rarity was a good and sufficient reason for exaggeration as to their size. Taking normal years throughout a long period, it will be seen that the average offerings fluctuated round about £200 yearly. Now the average offering was 6s. 8d., † though wealthy and important visitors offered that amount at each station. ‡

If, therefore, in 1420 £570 was offered by 100,000 persons, an average of less than 2d. per person, it must be concluded that either the figures are exaggerated, or that, at a time of national crisis, people turning in thankfulness or despair to God or saints whom normally they neglect, visited the shrine of Becket in greater numbers than usual.

In any case, if it be supposed that the average individual offering was as low as 4s., that suggests a pilgrimage visitation of about a thousand a year. Half of these may be accounted for at the great festivals, leaving the rest to

* *Paston Letters*, Introd., I., ccciii.

† 1481, John Clarke of Frittenden willed that one have 6s. 8d. to visit Walsingham. 1501, John Clement of Graveny gave 6s. 8d. to a pilgrim to the same place. *Test. Cant.*, East Kent, Introd., p. xvii.

‡ 5 Ed. II., xij die Sept.

ad coronam Sci. Thome Martiris . . .	vij s.
ad feretrum eiusdem Martiris . . .	vij s.
ad punctum gladii de quo idem	
Se'us Thomas subiit martirium . . .	vij s.

Cotton MS., Nero. C. viii., fol. 50, quoted in *Arch. Cant.*, XIII., 518.

be distributed throughout the year—an average, say, of two a day. Thus pilgrimage is reduced to more intelligible dimensions, and immediately it may be seen that such traffic on any road is not going to be of such a character as to associate it with the pilgrimages to any appreciable extent.

To sum up, it may be said that though pilgrimage was an established mediæval custom, its practice was confined more or less to those of leisure or means, or to those who, as representatives of guilds* or individuals, were paid for their services. The whole of the pilgrimages were distributed over a wide area, even abroad, and, save under most exceptional conditions, pilgrimage at any one centre was never more than the place could accommodate. Therefore, to maintain that a single road was dedicated or set apart for this traffic is contrary to reason.

Another matter that requires explanation is: Why, in 1200 or thereabouts, should people suddenly select for passage a road that had been falling into disuse for many years? There were no particular associations with the road, especially of a religious nature, and the reasons given by Mr. Way† or by Mr. Belloc‡ are singularly unconvincing.

Even in the early years of the twelfth century the old road can have been of little religious interest.

In 1114-1115 seven Canons of Laon, together with seven citizens of the same city, brought relics from their cathedral and exhibited them throughout southern England in order to obtain funds for the rebuilding of their church.§ They landed at Dover and proceeded to Canterbury. From there they set out for Winchester, not touching London. That looks suspiciously like a journey along the Pilgrim's Road—their actual itinerary at this stage is not detailed—but the nature of their errand precludes any such interpretation. They went through the centres of population, distributed along the Maidstone—Aldershot road, till they reached the West, as they did after they left Winchester. Christ Church,

* *East Anglian*, N. S., vol. iii., p. 363.

† Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, Appendix, note d.

‡ *Op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

§ *Arch. Cant.*, XII., p. 238. Migne, *Patrologia*, 156, cols. 973-988.

Salisbury, Totnes, Exeter, and Bodmin (where one of the Canons tactlessly denied the popular belief that King Arthur still lived, and thereby caused a riot) were the places at which they halted, all places where their object might be accomplished.

So even here, where is a genuine pilgrimage, the old Pilgrim's Road is ignored.

VII.—SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.

That the road is ancient will, I think, be generally conceded, and that the pilgrim theory is not necessary to account for its partial preservation to-day. Throughout the middle ages the path remained more or less entire, serving as a means of communication between the scattered farms and homesteads on the hillside. A drove road is not to be ruled out as unlikely, but the evidence already adduced, especially that put forward by Capt. Knocker, puts out of court any theory of a great traffic artery. But there is one feature that has not been sufficiently emphasized. Any traveller along the Way to-day must be struck by the great number of chalk pits, large and small, abandoned and in full activity. Some of these pits from their size are of obvious antiquity, and must have been worked for centuries. Some, such as those at Brockham, Surrey, or Betchworth, near by, or that at Oxted, on the confines of Kent, have destroyed, in their extension, the actual line of the road. When it is considered what quantities of chalk and lime were in demand for the great building activity of the middle ages, it is not impossible to see here a centre of flourishing industry. Further west on the line of the road, near Reigate and Merstham, were the quarries from which the favourite building material of London and the south generally—Raygatestone—was obtained. This conjunction of quarrying operations, with the use of primitive sleds (which are still to be found on the slippery chalk hills in winter) and pack horses, would easily preserve parts of the ancient Way. Rather than Grant Allen's "Tin Road," with more likelihood the name "Chalk Road" might be substituted.

As for the rest, country tradition and immemorial use have helped to preserve portions of the Way, while enclosures such as those at Titsey, at Chevening or at Stede, have acted in contrariwise.

VIII. CONCLUSION.

This paper cannot in any sense be said to have exhausted the subject, nor to have said the last word on the matter. All that I set out to do was to indicate the general tendency of the theory of the road, which seems to have found utterance first in a pamphlet published on the occasion of the meeting of the Bath and West of England and Southern Counties Association at Shalford Park in 1871. Major-General E. Renourd James, R.E., was the author, and it was the forerunner of several books which culminated in the brilliant, but too theoretical, work of Mr. Belloc, which I have had to refer to—as must any writer on the history of the path—very frequently. (See Note C.)

Next I endeavoured to indicate what parts of this general theory were probably true and which parts unlikely. Finally I made some attempt to indicate the lines which must be pursued to reach some definite conclusion. Among those I should like to emphasize the invaluable aid that aerial photography is going to be in this direction. Much experience during the war period with such photographs convinced me of their value, but it has remained for Mr. Crawford to demonstrate the use of this development in archæology. I am certain that no ground survey will succeed in laying down definitely and undeniably the original course of the road.

A collateral study might endeavour to determine, within some precise limits, the alleged pilgrim traffic of the middle ages throughout the country, especially the "Becket" cult. The full publication in tabular form of the offerings at the shrine and other centres of the devotion, to which I have referred, is much to be desired.

Lastly, the unique series of rough stone monuments in the Medway Valley may be touched on. Too long have

they been the battle-ground of theorists, not unmixed with unfortunate personalities. A careful survey, and an equally careful and properly supervised excavation, should be made without delay. Not till then can anything definite be said concerning the neolithic date of the road.

I should like here to place on record the great amount of assistance I have received from numerous correspondents, known and unknown. To place them all by name at the foot of this paper would give it a tail far too splendid for such a poor body, but I must mention the ungrudging help and informative letters from our indefatigable Hon Sec., Mr. Richard Cooke of Detling, as well as the gifts of time and correspondence from Capt. H. W. Knocker of London, this latter teeming with facts and indications of sources of information. This is all the more appreciated, as I have reason to suspect that Capt. Knocker intended to deal with this matter himself. I can only express a wish that the deficiencies of this essay will stir him up to greater things.

NOTE A.

Furley (*Weald of Kent*, pp. 639—646) gives a full account of the litigation in 1815 over the matter of tithes. It seems from the evidence that the Pilgrim's Way was considered the boundary of the Weald in West Kent, but the result of the case showed that this was certainly not true in East Kent, in this case at Aylesford. The evidence also makes it clear that the road was quite well known by its popular name at that date, and must have been so called for half a century previously.

NOTE B.

The "Tin Legend" may, I think, be traced to the article in the third volume of the *Archæological Review* already mentioned. The author, dealing with the old roads of Hampshire, mentions the discovery of a pig of lead at Cholderton, on the line of an old track. This was published in April 1889. In November of the same year appears for the first time the discovery of tin ingots.

NOTE C.

Mr. Frank Lasham of Guildford informs me that the road in Surrey, near Guildford, was without any name in 1850, but that as soon as General James, who was an Ordnance Survey officer, undertook the revision of Surrey about 1860, the name "Pilgrim's Road" appeared on the new maps.