

mansions whose builders would seem to have screened their misdeeds by planting fine rows of limes around them.

In very early times Chislehurst appears, in some measure, to have been an appendage to the Manor of Dartford, in the general description of which manor it seems to have been included in "Domesday Book;" at all events, this place is not mentioned separately in that record. In the reign of King John it was given to Hugh, Earl of St. Paul, a Norman noble; but on the seizure of Normandy by the French king, it was escheated to the Crown, but was subsequently granted to John de Burgh, "till the king should think fit to restore it to the Earl of St. Paul or his heirs." Edward II., in his fifteenth year, by consent of Parliament, granted to Edmund de Woodstock the royalty of Dartford, the fee of which was confirmed to him by Edward III. That the manor of Chislehurst was included in the above grant appears by the inquisition taken after the earl's death, wherein, among the appurtenances of the Manor of Dartford, the "rents of assize" in "Chesilhurst" are specified. On the death, without issue, of Edward and John Plantagenet, Earls of Kent, Joan, their sister, called the "Fair Maid of Kent," became their heir. After her death, in the ninth year of Richard II., the property underwent several changes of ownership, but on the attainder of Henry, Duke of Somerset, who owned it in the reign of Henry VI., it devolved to the Crown, but was soon after granted to Richard Nevill, Earl of Warwick, who fell at the battle of Barnet, in 1471. It was next held by George, Duke of Clarence, and afterwards Lord Stanley, who was subsequently created Earl of Derby, and who bequeathed his estates to his wife. Among others, she possessed this manor, which was from that time frequently called "Richmond's lands." On her death, in the first year of Henry VIII., it reverted to the Crown, where it remained till 1584, when Elizabeth granted a lease of it for twenty-one years, by the name of the "Manor of Darford Chesilhurst," to Edmund Walsingham, whose son, Sir Thomas Walsingham, of Scadbury, in this parish, purchased the fee simple in 1611. A few years later the manor of Dartford was disposed of, but Chislehurst remained with the Walsinghams till 1660, when it was sold to Sir Richard Bettenson, from whom it has descended, with the Manor of Scadbury, to the present owner, Earl Sydney.

The old manor-house, near the church, is a large, old-fashioned, red-brick, Elizabethan building. The grounds are well planted with trees, among them being some fine cedars, whilst the

terraced lawns and the alleys of box and yew carry the mind back to the days of William III. or Queen Anne. The house was once the property and residence of Sir Francis Walsingham, and adjoins the rectory. It is a happy combination of antique taste with modern convenience; fine and lofty new rooms in the rear having been built on to the old house of the Walsinghams. Four of the original rooms have been but little altered, the library or sitting-room, the bed-room above (in which Walsingham is said to have died), the page's room adjoining, and a small sitting-room on the ground floor, now made into an ante-chamber to the modern drawing-room. Much of the house is panelled with old oak, and the furniture of the ancient part is of the same material. The entrance-hall has been made lofty, by throwing the ground and the first-floor room into one; and the staircase of ancient oak, newly arranged, resembles that in the old palace of the Howards at the Charter House. Over it hangs a portrait of Queen Elizabeth herself in full royal array; it is thought to be by Holbein. Some of the chimney-pieces belonged to the old Tudor mansion, which itself appears to have superseded a still earlier structure. Over the fireplace in the entrance-hall are carved the following quaint but hospitable lines, of uncertain origin:

"Welcome by day; welcome by night;
The smile of a friend Ys a ray of Lyght."

On crossing the Common from the west, going towards the church, we notice a sunken circular pit, about five feet in depth and 120 feet in diameter. The central portion is slightly raised, so that an inner circle is formed about ninety-six feet in diameter, around which runs a broad circular margin, or walk, about twelve feet wide, upon a slightly lower level. This pit, Canon Robertson informs us in an article in the *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. xiii., was used, within the memory of men still living (1880), as an arena for bouts of cudgelling and single-stick in connection with an annual fair. Its original purpose, however, is said to have been that of a cock-pit, and it is probably one of the very few perfect examples still existing.

A granite cross on the common commemorates the Prince Imperial of France. It bears on the front the imperial crest of the bee and the following inscription:—

"NAPOLEON EUGÈNE LOUIS JEAN JOSEPH,
PRINCE IMPÉRIAL,
KILLED IN ZULULAND,
1ST JUNE, 1879."

On the rear of the pedestal is the following extract from the Prince's last will:—