

of Edward III. From this family the estate passed by marriage to the Willoughbys, and it has since undergone several changes of ownership. In 1796 it was purchased by Sir Claude Scott, ancestor of the present owner. That gentleman pulled down the old house, and erected near its site a handsome modern mansion for his own residence, and laid out the grounds immediately surrounding it with admirable taste.

In the park, which is extensive and well wooded, geologists will find much to interest them. "One of the most interesting localities I am acquainted with," writes Mantell, in his "Medals of Creation," "is Sundridge Park, where a hard conglomerate, entirely made up of oyster-shells and the shingle that formed their native bed, is quarried."

A local topographer, writing in 1858, gives the following particulars of these geological formations:—"In the rising ground near the lodge is an excavation called a rock pit. The rock here is composed of oyster-shells in a perfect state, intermixed with pebbles, small irregular stones, sand, &c. Underneath this rock, which forms the upper strata at this point, and which is being used for building purposes, are several layers of various kinds of pebbles, gravel, &c. Then follows a layer of rock about a foot thick, formed entirely of oyster-shells, which projects in some places several feet, and would appear to be strong enough to bear a great weight at its extremity; underneath that is a bed of smaller shells of a different kind, which crumble to dust as soon as touched. The whole rests on a bed of fine white sand. The surprise created at first sight by such masses of shells may lead the visitor to suppose he is near the residence of some bygone oyster-loving ogre of fabulous gastronomic propensities, or that the clearing of Billingsgate had formerly been carted here; but before he has settled the point in his own mind, he will probably be told that it is a common thing to find the same kind of rock at various depths below the surface, in digging wells in many parts of Kent. The same kind may be seen in the cuttings made for the railroad between Bromley and Beckenham. Similar fossils are also common in some of the cuttings on the Dover Railway."

To the north-west of Plastow lies the new district of Grove Park, which, with its rows of houses, and its villa residences, and railway-station, is rapidly assuming the proportions of a good-sized town. The hamlet of Mottingham, a little farther to the north, on the road towards Eltham, lies partly in that parish and partly in the parish of Chislehurst. It is a retired rural spot, but possesses no literary interest, nor even a church of

sufficient attraction to require special mention. The place in ancient times was called Modingham, from the Saxon words *modig*, proud or lofty, and *ham*, a dwelling. The manor-house, called Mottingham Place, was rebuilt towards the end of the last century. In the old house, according to Ireland's "Kent," were the following dates: "On the inside of a turret, 1560; on a chimney, 1561; and on an outward gate, 1635." Some of the windows contained coats-of-arms in stained glass. Fairy Hill, at a short distance to the east of Mottingham Place, was the temporary residence of Henry, Earl Bathurst, when Lord High Chancellor of England. He was the eldest surviving son of Allen, Earl Bathurst, the friend and correspondent of Pope, and being bred to the profession of the law, became a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1771, and was shortly after promoted to the woolsack, and created Baron Apsley, of Apsley, in Sussex. He succeeded to the earldom in 1775, and having resigned the seals, retired to the family seat at Cirencester, where he died in 1794.

Lyns quotes from Phillipott's "Survey" the following passage relating to a strange incident at Mottingham:—"On the 4th of August, 1585, betimes in the morning, in the hamlet of Mottingham, in the parish of Eltham, the ground began to sink in a field belonging to Sir Percival Hart, so much so that three great elm-trees were swallowed up into the pit, and before ten of the clock no part of them could be seen. The compass of the hole was about eighty yards, and it was suddenly filled with water." This is Fuller's narrative; Phillipott adds that "a sounding-line of fifty fathoms could hardly find or feel any bottom; and at ten yards distance another piece of ground sunk in like manner near the highway, and so nigh a dwelling-house that the inhabitants were greatly terrified therewith." The spot where this accident is said to have happened is near the road leading to Fairy Hill; it presents now only a slight inequality of surface, and is supposed to have been occasioned by the falling in of what had at some remote period been a chalk pit, or Dene hole.

Catford is the name of a manor belonging to the parish of Lewisham. The district stretches away westward towards Sydenham and Forest Hill; and, like its neighbour, Grove Park, is rapidly losing its sylvan character under the hands of the jerry builder. Here and there, however, along the banks of the Ravensbourne, which meanders through the level meadows, with slopes on either side, some traces of rural life are still visible. Rushey Green and Hither Green, hamlets in this locality, attest the once rural character of the neighbourhood.