

ment. The house is a handsome building, in the midst of beautiful grounds."

Kent House, the ancient seat of the Lethieullers in this parish, has long been occupied as a farm. It is an old brick mansion, about a mile to the north-west of the parish church, near the field-path leading to Sydenham. The estate was long owned by the Angersteins.

Clay Hill, or the Oakery, lies midway between Beckenham and Shortlands. Here was at one time the residence of Mr. Edward King, F.R.A.S. This gentleman, who was a native of Norfolk, was elected President of the Society of Antiquaries on the decease of Dr. Miller in 1784; but on the succeeding election, in the year following, he was obliged to relinquish the chair to the Earl of Leicester, after an unprecedented contest. He was the author of various works, the principal of which are, "Observations on Ancient Castles," "Morsels of Criticism," tending to illustrate the Scriptures, and the "Monumenta Antiqua." He died in 1806, at the age of seventy-two.

Shortlands lies about a mile and a half eastward from old Beckenham Church. A portion of the estate has been cut and utilised for building purposes; a railway-station, with its attendant hotel, erected; and in 1870 the place was formed into an ecclesiastical district out of the mother parish. The church, dedicated to St. Mary, is built of Kentish rag, in the Decorated style. It consists of a chancel, nave, north aisle, south transept, and a tower with spire. This church was erected at the cost of Mr. G. Wilkinson, of Shortlands. The entrance to the churchyard is by a lych-gate similar to that of Beckenham parish church.

Shortlands was the birthplace of Mr. George Grote, the historian of Greece. He was a banker in London, and for some years sat in Parliament as one of its representatives. He was the constant and unflinching advocate of the ballot. In 1846 he published the first volume of his "History of Greece," and having for some time retired from active participation in politics, he was thus enabled to devote his entire attention to the production of that admirable work, which was completed in 1856. Mr. Grote married Miss Harriet Lewin, the daughter of Mr. Thomas Lewin, a member of an old Kentish family, who was known as the authoress of "The Life of Ary Scheffer," &c.

"A few years ago," writes the author of Unwin's "Guide to Bromley and its Neighbourhood," "a large wood, known as the King's Wood, covered the whole of these parts; but with the growth of the town this has diminished until very few traces

of it exist. Great improvements are going on at the present time in connection with the drainage, and rows of newly-erected cottages have sprung up like mushrooms, threatening to destroy entirely the rural aspect of the place. The district of Shortlands is situated midway between Bromley and Beckenham, and within easy distance of either town. It abounds in beautiful rambles, one in particular being near the church, down a lane bordered with hedgerows in summer teeming with wild flowers, while above are overhanging trees. The land on the right forms a part of the extensive estate of C. Goodhart, Esq., of Langley Park."

Langley Park, about two miles to the south-east, on the road towards Hayes, was formerly the seat of the Style family, and afterwards of the Burrells. That old gossip Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, in his "Posthumous Memoirs of My Own Time,"* mentions the rise of the Burrells of Beckenham from a respectable middle-class position into the ranks of the British peerage as one of the most remarkable freaks of fortune. Lord Algernon Percy, the second son of the Duke of Northumberland, a little more than a century ago, whilst spending a winter in the south of France, met at Marseilles in society the second daughter of Mr. Burrell, a Commissioner of Excise. He married her, and she brought her sisters forward in society; one of them became in succession Duchess of Hamilton and Marchioness of Exeter; another became the second wife of her sister's elder brother, the Duke of Northumberland. Nor was this all. The only brother of these young ladies, a man of a most graceful person and agreeable manners, through their introduction, married a sister of the Duke of Ancaster, on whose death she came in for a peerage in her own right and the great part of the Ancaster estates, and also for the high feudal office of Great Chamberlain of England. He obtained a seat in Parliament, and eventually was raised to the peerage as Lord Gwydir, and lived to see his son inherit the ancient barony of Willoughby d'Eresby. And all these honours and this wealth came to the family without any public services, and not gained on the battle-field or in the Senate. The only qualification on which the father and son started in this upward race was what Wraxall calls "the patrimonial inheritance of a very small estate at Beckenham." The estate, however, can hardly be called "very small." The house in which the Burrells lived a century ago is still standing; it is now owned by Mr. G. Goodhart, as stated above. Langley Park is still

* See Vol. I., pp. 19-22.