

Manor of Sandon (now called Sandown) lies partly in the parish of Esher, but extends into those of Walton, West Molesey, and Thames Ditton. It was conveyed to Henry VIII. in exchange for other lands in Essex; but in the first year of Edward VI. it was granted to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick. Coming, however, again into the hands of the king, Charles I. granted it, together with the manors of Imber, in Thames Ditton, as already stated, to Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester.* After successive transfers, it was purchased, about the middle of the last century, by Mr. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, then resident at Imber Court.

The hospital was dedicated to the Holy Ghost, though it was sometimes called the Hospital of St. Mary and All Saints. It was founded in the reign of Henry II. by Robert de Wateville, and was enriched by subsequent benefactions, one of which, by William de Percy, the founder of the Abbey of Salley, in Yorkshire, provided for the maintenance of six chaplains, and the keeping of "a lamp and candle of 2 lb. weight continually burning before the altar of the Virgin Mary in the hospital chapel (where the heart of William de Percy and the body of his consort Joan were interred), during the time that any mass was said at any altar in that chapel, on pain of the bishop's censure, and distress on their lands by the heirs of the founder."† In the middle of the fourteenth century the inmates of the hospital were swept down by a pestilence; and in 1436, on a plea of its reduced condition, it was united to the Hospital of St. Thomas, in Southwark, and at the Dissolution shared the fate of the other monastic establishments. In the reign of James I. the chapel of Sandon was granted to John, Earl of Mar, but it was afterwards re-annexed to the Crown. No vestiges of the building are now to be found. Part of the site of the priory is now occupied by a mansion, the property of Mr. James P. Currie, and the remainder, some 150 acres in extent, was, about the year 1870, formed into a racecourse, known as Sandown Park; it occupies some sloping ground close by the Esher railway station, and to the north of the high road.

Sandown has become known to the fashionable world of late years as the most select and exclusive racecourse in the kingdom. Here no "Derby" element intrudes itself: it is pre-eminently the ladies' racecourse. There are usually six meetings in the year: two in spring, two in summer, and two in autumn. The summer meetings are the best attended, and special trains are run on the

South-Western railway for the convenience of members. As there is considerable difficulty in being elected a member of the Sandown Club, and as members cannot admit male friends under any pretext whatever, the gatherings become altogether unique. Ladies are admitted by members on payment of ten shillings for the day, or they may become members of the Club themselves. On a hot day it is delightful to lounge beneath the trees, looking on at the races, and listening to the strains of the Hungarian Band, sometimes varied with that of a Highland regiment playing their bagpipes up in the wood; and it does not require any great stretch of the imagination to fancy oneself "hundreds of miles" from the smoke of town.

The members' stands and luncheon-rooms are most complete, and gaily decorated with scarlet and white—the club colours. There is a very pretty royal box in the members' enclosure, and the Prince and Princess of Wales are generally there, with other members of the Royal Family. The Prince is generally to be seen walking about, field-glass in hand, looking up his friends in his own cheery way. One particular feature of these gatherings is that the "correct cards of the races" are sold by pretty little girls verging on their teens, in fancy costume, sometimes as *Vivandières*, or fish-wives, or the *Directoire* dress, which is very becoming. In fact, one may say of Sandown Races that they more nearly resemble a garden-party on a large scale, with the racing thrown in.

On the slope of the hill, near the entrance to the village of Esher, is a small rustic building, constructed of flint and stone, which has been not inaptly named the "Travellers' Rest." In Mr. Howitt's "Visits to Remarkable Places" it is called Wolsey's Well; but from the initials, H. P., and the *buckle*, part of the family arms of Pelham, it would appear to have been erected by Mr. Pelham, brother of the Duke of Newcastle, by whom the neighbouring mansion of Esher Place was owned in the early part of the last century. The Travellers' Rest consists of three arched recesses, the centre one containing a seat for the weary wayfarer. Close by it is a well of clear and sparkling water.

Anna Maria Porter, the distinguished novelist, who lies buried in Esher old church, lived for many years with her mother in a small cottage in the village. Mr. S. C. Hall writes, in his "Book of the Thames":—"So far back as the year 1825 we visited the accomplished sisters, Jane and Anna Maria Porter, at their pretty cottage. . . . A tomb was erected by her daughters over the remains of Mrs. Porter; it gives the date of her birth

* See ante, p. 280.

† Dugdale's "Monasticon."