GRAVESEND IN DAYS OF OLD.

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As the Kent Archæological Society has explored so many other parts of the County, before selecting Gravesend as the *locale* of its annual congress, it might, perhaps, be inferred by gainsayers, that our town possessed no attractions for the antiquary, and had no associations linking it with the past. It is no doubt destitute of such grand castellated ruins as the neighbouring City of Rochester possesses, and, from the total loss of one of its old churches, and the entire disappearance of the collegiate foundation at Milton, few ecclesiological remains have survived; but that it has played its part in the interesting events of days long gone by, it will be the object of this paper to demonstrate.

More than a mile south of the Thames stood the ancient church of Gravesend, dedicated to God under the invocation of the Virgin Mary. It was founded at an untold period, near Perry Street. Its site, long since secularized, and in recent years disglebed (to coin an expression), is now covered with dwelling-houses; opposite, on the east, was an open space of common land, called St. Mary's Green, which was inclosed some years ago; and to the south a tract of some acres of inclosed land constituting the Glebe, has been severed in twain by the highway to Perry Street.

As that ancient site of Gravesend lies about half way between the river and the Via Militaris, or Watling Street, of the Romans, those enterprising conquerors may not be altogether excluded from its history.

The Roman station of Vagniacæ stood within half-an-hour's walk. The Roman city of Durobrivis (Rochester) was distant but seven miles to the east. Few spots in the County of Kent have been richer in Roman remains than the Southfleet and Springhead district, where pottery and other Roman remains have been continually discovered to this day. At Springhead, the explored

foundations shew that Roman baths and villas were gathered around that gurgling spring. And above, in what is now Swanscombe Forest, traversed by Watling Street, stood the interesting relics of that older British town which, having already had its day, had succumbed to a new civilization. The supposition that Springhead was the site of the Roman station of Vagniacæ has recently received interesting confirmation in the published opinion of that eminent archæologist, Mr. C. Roach Smith.

As time wore on, the departure of the Romans soon after the year A.D. 420, was followed by the incursions of the Saxons. Two important and sanguinary engagements were fought, by the natives against their invaders, in our vicinity; one at Crayford, some ten miles to the west, in the year 457, when 4000 men fell; and the other, two years before, at Aylesford, about seventeen miles to the south-east. Danish invaders came still closer home, and Gravesend probably suffered from the savage forays of those hordes, whose piratical excursions found in the estuary of the Thames every facility which nature could supply. They were successfully resisted by our good King Alfred, on the opposite side of the river, below Gravesend, and their vessels were carried as prizes to London and Rochester; but in the next century, the Danes sacked Canterbury, and passing Gravesend, took the Archbishop St. Ælphage to Greenwich, where they martyred him. In these desperate incursions, according to a well-handed down tradition, their vessels rode in the anchorage afforded by Ebbsfleet (now Northfleet Creek), the outlet of the Springhead water into the Thames.

Periods of such unrest were well calculated to induce the harassed inhabitants to secrete their money, and accordingly we find that close to the site of the old churchyard of St. Mary, in Gravesend, there was disinterred in the year 1838 a hoard of no less than 552 Saxon silver coins, which are now in the British Museum. Their dates range from A.D. 814 to a late period of that century, and with them was a silver cross. It is probable that they were secreted about A.D. 880.

About two months ago an artificial cave, or excavated place of safety, was discovered under one of the public roads at Perry Street. The surveyor kindly reopened it for inspection, after it had been connected with the road sewer. The bottom of the cave is about 20 feet below the surface, and it extends a length of 29 feet, verging upwards, with an inclination at the upper end towards Swanscombe. Its width averaged some 8 feet, and its height 7 feet. Its transverse section throughout roughly resembled the out-

line of an arch, of the Second Pointed, or Decorated period of English Gothic architecture.

To its riparian position the town owed, in later years, its mediæval note. In obedience to that law which ever tends to shorten sea passages, the continental traveller having enjoyed smooth transit on the river from the metropolis to Gravesend, avoided the roughness of the Forelands by disembarking here and making his way overland to Dover. This route became so usual that time would be exhausted in enumerating the illustrious persons who, in consequence, resorted to Gravesend, and took this old town on their way to and from the centre of Christendom and the cities and towns of Europe.

Before we hurry onward let us here note what is recorded of Gravesend and the twin parish of Milton (which together make up the town of Gravesend) in the Domesday Book of the Conqueror. At Milton there was a church, a mill, and a hythe or landing place; and turning to the record of the Gravesend Manor, we observe the mention of old Gravesend church, and of a second landing place or hythe. Domesday Book states that Gravesend comprised three manors, which agrees with the existence at this day of the three manors of Gravesend, Parrock, and Milton, within the two parishes. Attached to the hythe or landing place of Milton, were three servants or boatmen.

The existence of these "servi," as they are called in the original, and their apposition to the landing place, may be fairly regarded in connection with one of the most ancient of the franchises or rights of the town, viz., the right of ferryage from it to London: a passage popularly known as the Long Ferry, to distinguish it from the Short or Cross Ferry over the river, at Gravesend. Even lower still, opposite Higham, a similar Cross Ferry existed and was the subject of litigation in A.D. 1293. From the width of the passage, and the exposure of the situation, a larger local population and greater traffic must have existed than we are apt to suppose. Unfortunately we cannot exempt our ferrymen from the charge of having incurred adverse notice at the hands of the legal authorities. In the year 1292, it was presented before the Judges of Assize at Canterbury, that higher fares had been taken from the public than were legal, and that the landing place itself had been allowed (by the joint default of the Lord of the Manor of Gravesend and of the inhabitants of Milton) to become defective and dangerous. That the Long Ferry was an extremely ancient property of the inhabitants, of which the original grant is lost in the mist and obscurity of

ages, is clear from the confirmation made, in A.D. 1401, on September the 6th, by King Henry IV. It runs thus:—"We are informed that from time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary the men of the town of Gravesend, who in their times have successively inhabited the town aforesaid, have been accustomed and without any interruption freely, quietly, and peaceably to carry in their own vessels all persons coming to the town aforesaid and wishing to go thence by water to our City of London aforesaid." The grant proceeds to recite that certain persons from London had come and interfered with the exercise of this ferry "contrary to the will of the inhabitants of the said town, to the grievous injury of the men of the said town, and contrary to the customs aforesaid." The King, "inclining to the suffrages of our dear lieges of the town aforesaid," granted to the inhabitants, and to their heirs and successors, the right of ferrying all persons from Gravesend to London without disturbance or impediment at the charge of 4s. for the whole barge, or 2d. for each person. This recognition, of the ancient rights of the inhabitants, is said to have been obtained by the interposition of the owners of the Manor of Gravesend, the Abbot and monks of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary of Graces, at Tower Hill. The manor was given to them by Edward III, in 1376, and as late as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 26 Henry VIII, they were the owners of the Manors of Gravesend and of Parrock, and of a Manor *de le Herber* in Gravesend.

In the reign of Richard II, when that King had confirmed the previous grant of the manor to the above Abbey the inhabitants had sustained the most grievous and appalling of visitations to which a town could be subjected, and to which a river-side town was peculiarly amenable. In August, 1380, notwithstanding the beacon at Horndon, in Essex, and that at Gravesend (then standing on Windmill Hill to the south of the town), gave timely notice of the coming of the enemy, the place was attacked by French and Spanish galleys, in such force that it fell a prey to their onslaught. The whole town was sacked and afterwards burnt, and we are informed that most of the inhabitants who were spared, were carried off into bondage.

To avoid such disasters in the future, writs were forthwith issued in A.D. 1401, by the Privy Council, commanding the cities, ports, and towns throughout England, to build new barges and balingers and to arm them by Easter in that year. Gravesend was to supply one balinger. In the following year we observe the first notice of a bulwark at East Tilbury, in a commission for its erection on the

opposite side of, and lower down, the river for further defence against such visitations.

While the church at Gravesend was remote from the river, that of Milton seems to have immemorially occupied its present position, near the river bank. As no Norman work appears in it, at the present day, it was probably rebuilt as it now stands (with the exception of the present roof) in the first half of the fourteenth century, or about A.D. 1350. The original sedilia for priest, deacon, and sub-deacon, remain *in situ*, and they are worth inspection. Milton possessed a college, or chantry of secular priests, founded by the Lord of the Manor of Milton, where the New Tavern Barracks now stand upon its ruins. It was founded by Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, about A.D. 1322, in honour of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. The President of the pious community, or "Master" as he was called, with his brother priests were, besides more general prayers, specially to pray for the souls of the founder and of his ancestors. This foundation was endowed, amongst other property, with the advowson and tithes of the parish church of Milton, and though there was the usual reservation of the lesser tithes for a Vicar, the Master of the college being invariably a priest, discharged the duties of the parochial cure in *propria persona*, hence no separate vicar appears to have been appointed to the parish. This was the customary arrangement (as at Cobham, Strood, Ashford, and Wye), the College being but a few hundred yards from the altar of the parish church.

The Chantry College with its possessions fell into the hands of Henry VIII at the Reformation. It was secularized, and bestowed upon Sir Henry Wyatt; and in the thirty-first year of that reign we find it was held by Sir Thomas Wyatt in fee-simple, and it then consisted of Milton Chapel, the hall, and other domestic buildings, with wharf, two gardens, two fields on the south and east of the chapel, and a field called Millers Field, to the west of the parish church, with pasturage for two horses in the Common Marsh of Milton. The ruined buildings afterwards passed to James Fortyre, Esq., who, in 1697, granted a lease of them for five hundred years to William Symonds. With the exception of a small part, which survived as a Rectory house, they ultimately became the New Tavern, with its neat bowling green and gardens, a place of great and favourite resort in the last century for the Customs House tide waiters and others, till, in 1780, they were purchased by the Crown and converted into the New Tavern Fort and barracks.

Returning to Milton Parish Church, of SS. Peter and Paul, it

is the better opinion that the present fabric is the erection of the pious widow of Earl Aymer, Mary de St. Paul (daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Earl of St. Paul, by Mary of Bretagne his wife), to whom the manor of Milton was assigned as part of her dowry. This lady, so suddenly and so sadly widowed, died in 1377, after having, in addition to other good works, founded Pembroke Hall, in the University of Cambridge, in 1343.

The original roof of Milton Church becoming defective, was probably removed in the reign of Henry VII, and the walls carried up in the usual battlemented form of the period, when the chancel arch was filled in, some Perpendicular windows introduced, and a flat leaded roof was substituted for an early and acutely pitched one. These continued, until the proceeding narrated by our excellent topographer, Mr. Cruden, who states that in the year 1790, those battlemented walls and that roof were removed, and the slated roof of a Swiss chalet was substituted at a large cost, with a waste of money commensurate only with a lack of taste.

To revert to the old church of St. Mary, in the adjacent parish of Gravesend. It no doubt became increasingly inadequate in size for the growing population of that western part of the town, while, from the special tendency of the inhabitants towards the river, where the commerce and waterside employments more naturally called them, it resulted at last, that in the year A.D. 1497, the townsmen provided themselves with a chapel of ease, which, on the 22nd September in that year, was licensed by the Bishop for Divine worship. That building occupied the site, and was the germ of the present Parish Church of St. George. This spiritual provision was no doubt very welcome to the Gravesend townsfolk near the river, and on the 2nd April, 1510, the celebrated Bishop Fisher consecrated the chapel as a permanent place of Divine worship, but his Lordship took care to declare that it was in nowise to prejudice the Mother Church of St. Mary, and that the consecration would not authorize the burial of the dead, or performance of baptisms, or of any other holy offices, with the exception alone of the Consecration of the Lord's body. Indeed, that there was no intention on the part of the Bishop, or of the inhabitants themselves, to forego at this period the use of their ancient and time-honoured site, at St. Mary's Green, is evidenced by the fact that the ancient fabric having been destroyed by fire, and re-erected, his Lordship consecrated that restored building of the parish church, on the day following the consecration of the new chapel of St. George. The Bishop, who suffered at the hands of Henry VIII,

for refusing to acknowledge the King's spiritual supremacy, must have been a man who, nevertheless, enforced strict principles of authority. Upon an occasion of his visitation, in 1522, at Gravesend Church, it appears the churchwardens omitted to pay his Lordship the usual compliment of ringing the church bells; for which slight (probably designed) the Bishop cited those officials, who afterwards compounded for their negligence.

The Churchyard Cross of St. Mary possibly stood in St. Mary's Green, but the situation of the Public Cross of Milton is unknown; probably the only existing reference to it is now to be found in an enumeration of the fields belonging to the Lord of the Manor of Milton, in A.D. 1393, where one of the fields is designated as "near the Cross."

Albeit St. Mary's Church was rebuilt and reconsecrated, the population so much favoured the situation of St. George's Chapel, that by degrees St. Mary's became comparatively disused, and on the 22nd May, 1544, Henry VIII, who had then assumed that jurisdiction, formally authorized its disuse, and the substitution of the Chapel of St. George as the future parish church of Gravesend.

The churchyard, however, around and near old St. Mary's was still used for interments, the latest of the parochial records of which are as follows:—

"1587. Oct. This month was xiij souldiers buried in the olde churche yarde."

"1598. December the second day was Widdow Mortimer buried in the Green neere the old church yarde."

The lane which led to this chapel of St. George, having been from 1497 to 1544 called "Chapel" lane, still retains to this day that appellation, though the Chapel has now been the Church for over three hundred years.

Bishop Atterbury suspended the curate of St. George's (Mr. Gibbins, in 1721-2) for allowing the Dutch troops (brought over to quell intestine commotions) to use the fabric, at an early hour, before the parishioners required it. Six years after, the church of St. George was burned down in the great fire, and the present unsightly edifice, with the same dedication, was erected in 1731, chiefly by the aid of public moneys. The inhabitants of Gravesend parish, have, during the present century, claimed and exercised the right of appointing a Lecturer, and it is possible that the origin of the custom took its rise in the special licensing of the chapel of St. George.

Turning to the civil incorporation of the two parishes, it will be

seen that under the Charters granted by Queen Elizabeth, in 1562 and 1568, the first portreves were Edward Darbyshire and James Bate, and the last was Richard Warde in 1590, while the race of mayors began with Thomas Young in 1632, under the charter of Charles I, and has continued to the present occupant of that dignity. Under the last Charter, was created the office of Capital Seneschal, or High Steward, a dignity conferred by the charter itself on James, Duke of Lenox and Earl of Darnley, whose crest forms the principal bearing upon the town's armorial shield, and from whose arms were taken the lilies and buckles, which appear upon the bordure around the new arms, which are still borne by the corporation, pursuant to the grant of Clarencieux in December 1635.

This honorary and hereditary post is still vested in the Earl of Darnley, who is the heir of that Duke of Lenox, and who has often associated himself, in consequence, with objects bearing upon the benefit and amelioration of the town.

A great naval armament, in 1337, weighed anchor at Gravesend, and carrying five hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand (some say four thousand) archers on board, proceeded to attack the Flemings. This splendid naval equipment was under the renowned knights, Henry Plantagenet, Earl of Derby, Sir Walter Manny, Robert Ufford afterwards Earl of Suffolk, Sir Reginald Cobham, and others. The expedition was successful, the Flemings were put to the rout, and more than three thousand were slain. When we consider the large provision of transports required to carry the attacking party with their stores from the Thames, the spectacle which they must have presented before Gravesend must have been peculiarly interesting to the inhabitants. They would take a local as well as national interest in the expedition, from the circumstance that among the gallant knights embarked were Robert D'Ufford, to whom, in 1331, the King had given the Manor of Gravesend for his services, and Sir Reginald Cobham, whose relatives resided in the locality.

Gravesend is reputed, by some, to be the scene of the primary act of open rebellion in Kent on the occasion of the Wat Tyler troubles in 1381. Sir Simon Burley's bondman being arrested here, the townsmen interfered in his favour, and upon his being conveyed to Rochester Castle they rose, and the movement spread through the other Kentish towns.

Again in A.D. 1467, in the spring time of the year, the inhabitants were by the appearance of Garter King-at-arms with the King's

barges, apprized of the approach of a gorgeous retinue of 400 knights, attendant upon the Count de la Roche, commonly called the Bastard of Burgundy, who had accepted a challenge from Anthony Wydeville, Lord Scales (brother of the Queen of England), to perform a feat of arms at London. This event had been preceded by all the circumstances of solemn form usual upon such occasions. In the previous October, safe conduct had been granted to ambassadors from the Court of the Duke of Burgundy. Interesting details of these occurrences appear in the book of expenses of Sir John Howard, who acted as deputy of his kinsman the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal.

In A.D. 1503, when Elizabeth of York, the Queen Consort of Henry VII, was seriously ill, we find the following charges for dispatching a messenger by water to Gravesend, to summon Dr. Aylsworth, a physician in Kent; they occur in the "Privy purse expenses of the Queen":—

> "Item, the xxvjth day of February, to James Nattres for his costes going into Kent for Dr. Hallysworth phisicon, to come to the Quene by the King's commandment.
>
> Furst for his bote hyre from the Towre to Gravesend and again ... ... s. iii. d. iiij."

As the Queen died in the Tower about this period, it would seem that the physician was sent for at a crisis; so it may be fairly supposed that the most expeditious mode of bringing medical advice and assistance would be resorted to, and that a passage by water to Gravesend was, at that time, preferred to a journey by land, even for speed.

In 1505-6, among the distinguished personages who availed themselves of the Gravesend passenger barge, Wolsey, (afterwards the Cardinal,) appears to have made profitable use of it. Upon the treaty of marriage pending, between the King Henry VII and Lady Margaret, Duchess Dowager of Savoy, only daughter of Maximilian the Emperor, his energetic discharge of his errand to the Continent is thus described by Stow:—

"Having his dispatch, he took his leave of the King at Richmond about noone, and so came to London aboute foure of the clocke, where the barge of Gravesend was ready to launch forth both with a prosperous tyde and winde; without any abode hee entered the barge, and so passed forth with such happy speede, that he arrived at Gravesend within little more than three houres, where he tarried no longer than his post horses were providing, and then travelled so speedily, that he came to Dover the next morning."

In the year 1522, when the Emperor Charles V was to visit Henry VIII, great preparations were made for his reception, and on May the 20th, Cardinal Wolsey departed from London with a numerous and brilliant train of earls, knights, bishops, abbots, thirty chaplains, a hundred gentlemen, and seven hundred yeomen, to receive the Emperor at Dover. On Monday, the 26th, at four o'clock in the afternoon the Emperor landed, and was received by him. Henry reached Canterbury the same day, and on the following morning rode to Dover, where "with much joy and gladness the Emperor and King met." On Monday, June 2nd, the grand cavalcade reached Gravesend, by one o'clock, where thirty barges were ready to receive the Emperor and King with their respective retinues, and they embarked for Greenwich.

It was about this period, or in the year 1539, that the forts of Gravesend and Tilbury (called block-houses), were erected by King Henry VIII, for the better defence of the Thames, when an invasion of the kingdom was apprehended. At Gravesend two such forts were erected; one on the site of the present Clarendon Hotel, commonly called the Gravesend Blockhouse, and the other to the eastward, near the Thames and Medway Canal Basin, called the Milton Blockhouse.

On Monday, January 29th, 1554, the Duke of Norfolk, then Lord Treasurer, hoping to suppress Wyatt's rebellion, and having three hundred men under Sir Henry Jerningham and Sir John Fogge, with six hundred more under Captain Bret, Bryan Fitzwilliam and others (who afterwards proved faithless), left Gravesend with six pieces of ordnance, marched towards Rochester, against the rebels, and was worsted at Strood. Wyatt attacked Cooling Castle, which he reduced on Tuesday, the 30th of January, and then moved the same evening to Gravesend, where he halted for the night; but this career of success soon failed him, for on the 11th of April he was executed on Tower Hill.

It was on Thursday, the 17th July, 1606, that a Danish fleet of seven ships of war arrived at Gravesend with a Royal visitor, Christian IV, brother of the Queen of England. The ships anchored before the town, and a notification being dispatched to King James, who was at Greenwich, he and Prince Henry, attended by the Duke of Lenox, the Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Suffolk, Lord Chamberlain, and a great retinue, left Greenwich in five-and-thirty barges to meet the King of Denmark. Upon this occasion great ceremony was observed, and the inhabitants must have largely participated in the excitement

of the event. Less excitement, probably, accompanied the far more important event (in its bearing upon the transmission of the English Crown), which occurred here in 1612, when, on October 12, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, coming to England to espouse the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James the First, landed at Gravesend, and remained until the 14th, when the Duke of Lenox and others of the King's household conducted him to Court. The issue of the marriage then arranged was the Princess Sophia, whose son, King George the First, obtained the Crown, by the Act for securing the succession to that line.

In 1614 the King of Denmark came to England upon a second visit, and on Monday, the 1st of August, His Majesty, with King James and Prince Henry, took barge at London early in the morning, and proceeded to Gravesend, where they dined at the "Ship Inn." On the following day, His Majesty of Denmark and the Prince went to Rochester to view the ships in the Medway, and returned to Gravesend, where they dined, and then went on board the Danish ship; after which the Prince took leave of his royal uncle, and, on the 3rd of August, the Danish fleet, consisting of three ships, departed.

In 1623, when Prince Charles started upon his matrimonial expedition to Spain, accompanied by the Marquess of Buckingham, the first remarkable scene in their progress occurred at Gravesend. They departed on February the 18th, from Newhall in Essex, (the seat of the Marquess,) disguised with beards, taking the familiar names of Thomas and John Smith, and attended only by Sir Richard Graham. Passing over the river, from Tilbury to Gravesend by the Short Ferry, not having silver they gave the ferryman a gold piece, of the value of two and twenty shillings. This so astonished the ferryman, that, suspecting they were going beyond sea upon some quarrel, he gave information to the officers at Gravesend, who immediately sent after them, and at Canterbury they were arrested by the Mayor, as they were about to take horse for Dover. The Marquess then removed the beard with which he had disguised himself, and stated that he was proceeding to take a secret view of the fleet of the narrow seas, being the Lord Admiral, upon which the giddy travellers were released.

When Charles I after his succession to the crown went, in 1625, to meet his spouse (the Princess Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV of France), His Majesty came to Gravesend by water, and then proceeded by land to Canterbury.

After so many allusions to this water passage, or long ferry, it

is not surprising to find that in the Charter of King Charles I of 1632, the rights, etc., of the long ferry or water passage upon the River Thames, between London and Gravesend, according to the preceding grants, are confirmed to the Corporation, to be holden *in capite*, in common socage, paying to the Crown yearly the sum of six shillings and eightpence.

The town hythe or landing place at Milton, mentioned in Domesday, was not only used for the auspicious purposes above mentioned. It was probably a paved causeway following the river bank down to the limit of low water, and became in after years the site of the present town quay and pier. Part of it, or an adjoining space, was formerly called the Horse-Wash, and was doubtless used for the purposes which that name would denote, while at other periods it was found convenient, occasionally, to make this paved declivity of the river bank available for the ducking stool, for scolds; pertinent to which we find in the accounts of the Corporation the following entries:—

"1635. Oct. 23.—Paid for two Wheels and Yeekes for the Ducking Stool ... ... 3s. 6d."

"1636. Jan. 7.—Paid the Porters for ducking of Goodwife Campion ... ... 2s. 0d."

We have cited above some extracts from the parochial registers of Gravesend as to burials; but the register of marriages of the parish of Milton contains some remarkable entries at the era of the Commonwealth worth a passing notice. Parliament in 1653 revolutionized the previous form, for the solemnization and registry of marriages; after public notice of an intended marriage, (which might be given in the public market-place on three following market days), the parties made a declaration of their mutual acceptance as man and wife, before a justice of the peace, who thereupon would declare the marriage valid. The following is a specimen of these entries in the registry:—

"The consent of matrimony between Daniel Sampson, of Swanscombe, husbandman, and Ann Lane, of Higham, widow, was first published the second day of November, 1653, in the market-place at Milton-next-Gravesend. The second publication was on the ninth day of November, between the said parties in the market-place aforesaid. The third was the xvith day of the said month of November, in the year aforesaid, 1653."

It was on the 1st June, 1648, that Gravesend saw the defeated and blood-stained Cavaliers, under Major Child, driven through the town from Northfleet. At Stone Bridge, just below Huggens's.

College, with every advantage of position, they had made a stand; but they were crushed by Major Husband with 300 horse and 100 foot soldiers, who hastened onward viâ Malling, to co-operate with Fairfax in his sanguinary attack upon Maidstone, an attack which that commander so speedily accomplished, that the next day we find him returning through Gravesend into Essex.

King James II was a sovereign well acquainted with Gravesend. As Duke of York, at the age of fifteen, he was a captive here in the hands of those who afterwards sent his father to the block, and he effected his escape from them dressed in female attire, leaving England on the 20th of April, 1648, in a vessel waiting for him below the town. At the Restoration, he was invested with the office of High Admiral, and had frequently occasion to visit Gravesend, to direct the movements of ships of the Royal Navy, and to victual with stores the fleets at sea, and prize ships. A house for his special reception was erected, on the ground attached to the Gravesend Blockhouse, which afterwards became the residence of the Ordnance Storekeeper, and is now the western part of the Clarendon Hotel. On Tuesday, the 11th December, A.D. 1688, the unfortunate King left Whitehall about three o'clock in the morning, and proceeded, not to Gravesend as some say, but to Elmley Ferry, with the intention of retiring to the Continent, attended by his faithful friend and loyal follower, Sir Edward Hales, who had been lieutenant of the Tower, and upon whom the earldom of Tenterden was conferred. The Queen had left, on the day preceding, with the infant Prince of Wales, attended by Father Petre (whom the King had made a privy councillor) and others in three coaches to Greenwich, whence they proceeded by water to Gravesend and, embarking in a yacht prepared for them, sailed for France.

The frequent occasions upon which sovereigns and other personages with large retinues visited the town from the beginning of the reign of James I to that of William III, (who was frequently at Gravesend,) afforded further advantages for its development and increase. The assizes for the County of Kent were holden here occasionally, to the benefit of the inhabitants.

In the Corporate records we find this entry—

"At an assembly of the Corporation, on the 23rd of January, 1670, it was ordered that the Mayor should request the interposition of Sir John Heath, the sub-seneschal, with the Judges to prevail upon them to hold the next assize at Gravesend; and that the inhabitants, in that case, should be assessed for the expenses of the necessary arrangements."

Gravesend does not appear to have given its name to any family of note, though the name was borne by two Bishops of London. Richard de Gravesend, was Bishop of London from 1280 to 1303. His nephew, Stephen de Gravesend, was Bishop of the same See from 1318 to 1338, and held in Milton eighty acres and in Gravesend forty acres of land. It was the intention of the late Archdeacon Hale to have edited the accounts of the executors of Bishop Richard, but it does not appear that he carried the plan into execution.

In the escheats of 45 and 49 Edward III, Joan appears as the widow, and Joan and Cecilia as the daughters and coheiresses of Thomas de Gravesende, who, in 1347, was taxed for half a Knight's fee, which his ancestor, Stephen, had formerly held in Parrock, next Gravesend.

With these few remarks, chiefly collected from the works and often clothed in the words of others, and due therefore to their labours and investigations, this hasty retrospect of Gravesend in ancient days is brought to a conclusion.