

THE ANDOVER WOOLLEN INDUSTRY.

By EDMUND PARSONS.

IN the Middle Ages wool was regarded as the basis of English wealth. It was the staple article of export and one of the main sources of the Royal revenue. It was also an invaluable instrument in our diplomatic relations with foreign countries. For political purposes an embargo was placed occasionally by English rulers on the export of wool, but the prohibition was easily evaded by the purchase of licences, granted for revenue purposes, allowing wool to be carried out of the country.

Andover, with the great Weyhill Fair close by, was a noted centre of the wool trade, and in the year 1273 licences to export 124 sacks of wool were granted to five Andover wool merchants, two of the chief of these being Alexander le Riche and Roger Chere. Alexander was a bailiff of the town in 1263. Bailiffs were king's officers who were responsible for the payment of the Fee-Farm and whose position corresponded in many respects to that of the mayor of later years. A deed of 1291 preserved among the town records bears the name of Roger Chere as one of the witnesses. Another prominent Andover wool merchant was John de Ponyngton; he was one of the two Members of Parliament for the borough in the year 1302 and his name appears in a deed of 1289 which is still in the muniment room of the Corporation. John Goude, senior, was the head of an Andover family largely interested in the making dyeing and selling of cloth at this period. All these traders were, of course, members of the Andover Gild of Merchants, and their names occur frequently in the Rolls of the Gild which are in the keeping of the Corporation.

In the thirteenth century cloth making was a distinct and regulated industry and, although it is probable that at this period the wool trade in Andover was more active than the actual making of cloth, evidence of the practice of this handicraft is provided by an entry in a Gild Roll of the year 1262. This records that at a *Morrowspeech*, the morning-talk or meeting of the Andover Gild Merchant, an ordinance was enacted to the effect that "all weavers are to be summoned to the presence of the Gild Community and are to swear that they will tell the truth as to those who make cloths of Spanish wool and to promise that they will make no such cloths without informing the Bailiffs." In the Middle Ages English wool was considered the finest in the world and the use of the imported Spanish article was looked upon with disfavour. A photograph of this Gild Roll, the earliest of the fine Andover series, may be seen in the Muniment Case in the Andover Museum.

An enactment recorded in a Gild Roll of the year 1279 provides that no yarn or wool shall be weighed until it is brought into the

public market. Public weighing was enforced to prevent fraud. The use of standard weights and measures was enjoined by a long series of Acts of Parliament. In the year 1336 it was ordered by the twenty-four Forwardmen of the Gild that no one should dry wool or cloths under a penalty of two shillings, say £5 of to-day's money value, to be paid to the Church. This regulation was presumably intended to restrict the function to those authorised to discharge it. If the wool were imperfectly dried it would weigh heavier and so the buyer would be cheated. If the cloth were imperfectly dried it would stretch further and faults in the weaving would be more difficult to detect. In a Roll of the year 1338 there appears: "Morrowspeech held on Friday in the Festival of (Saints) Philip and James in the twelfth year of King Edward the Third after the Conquest. On which day it was ordained by the whole community of the Gild that no fuller nor weaver shall sell cloths in his house or elsewhere in his Ward unless the buyers and sellers bring them into the presence of the Bailiffs, under a penalty of two shillings to the Fund of the Bailiffs whenever and as often as they are convicted. And they shall take oath to obey this injunction in the presence of the Bailiffs under the penalty of the loss of their fellowship of the Gild." This regulation was to ensure that the Assize of Cloth as to measurements was observed, and also that the Andover market dues were paid. At this period, Whole Cloths were to measure, 24 yards by $1\frac{3}{4}$ yards when shrunk, and Narrow Cloths, 12 yards by 1 yard when shrunk. These statutory measurements were fixed by the famous Assize of Cloth of the reign of Richard I (1197) which assigned four or six men in each borough to enforce its regulations. By the Assize of Cloth of Edward I, aulnagers were appointed to see that the Act was observed, their duty being to measure each piece of cloth and to affix a stamp to shew that it was of the necessary size and quality.

During the early days of the Andover Gild of Merchants we must picture those of its members who were engaged in the cloth-making industry as master craftsmen employing journeymen and apprentices. The master combined quite a number of parts; a Workman, taking part with his own hands in the more important operations of his craft; a Foreman, superintending the work of his journeymen and apprentices; an Employer supplying the capital for materials, food and wages; a Merchant in respect of the raw materials of his trade and finally he had to get his goods into the hands of the customer. A term of seven years was recognised as the period in which the apprentice could acquire "sufficient cunning" in his calling and the master undertook to provide bed and board for him, to regulate his apparel and to be responsible for his general conduct. Apprenticeship was not a system of technical training only; it was also a system of social discipline. After completing his term of training the apprentice was free to become a journeyman, or wage-earner, and to seek employment as a hired

workman. Every journeyman looked forward to the day when he would have accumulated enough capital to set up his own workshop and take his place among the masters of the Guild.

Gradually the processes of manufacture became specialised and there grew up the several handicrafts of the weaver, the fuller, the sheerman or finisher, and the dyer. Gradually, also, the "gild system" of manufacture was superseded by the "domestic system" under which the capitalist "clothier" bought the raw material which he gave out to the spinners and weavers who worked in their own houses and owned the instruments of production. The clothier was the pivot of industrial organisation under this system and in his hands was concentrated the whole control of the woollen industry. He was responsible for the entire series of processes from the time when the wool was picked, washed, carded and spun, until it was woven, fullled, and "perfected" into cloth and was ready for sale to the draper.

Spinning was essentially a female occupation and would be carried out in many cottages in Andover and the district, while weaving was also a household occupation. The survival of the name Rack Close in Andover street nomenclature is of great interest as indicating the site of the close or enclosure in which the cloth, after being fullled, was stretched on racks or tenters in the open air to dry. The name Stretch Acre, occurring in a lease of the year 1340 which is preserved among the Andover archives, has a similar significance.

Andover was an important centre for wool and cloth in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the Hampshire Aulnagers' Accounts of the last decade of the fourteenth century we find the names of eighteen cloth-makers of the town, the two most important being John Doulyn and Reginald Touker who paid on 8 and 10 cloths respectively, and in the year 1443, Andover and Whitchurch names include those of John Basyng who paid on 10 cloths 30 kerseys, Stephen Scathlok on 6 cloths 60 kerseys, John Placy on 2 cloths 70 kerseys and William Taylour on 4 cloths 60 kerseys. From Andover the cloth industry had spread into the surrounding district, and we hear of the Abbess of Wherwell, in the year 1328, granting a lease of a moiety of a fulling mill at Middleton (the name Longparish does not occur until the middle of the sixteenth century) at the rent of a mark a year. There was a fulling mill at Upper Clatford in the year 1442.

In the 16th century a great change in the history of English cloth was occasioned by the immigration of Dutch and Walloon weavers fleeing from the cruelties of Duke Alva's religious persecution. These refugees established in this country the manufacture of the finer fabrics known as the "new draperies," many of which were either unknown here or were beyond the technical skill of English textile workers. The strangers settled in London, Norwich, Colchester, Canterbury, Thetford, etc., and at Southampton

twenty families were allowed to settle in the town on condition that every household retained and instructed two English apprentices for a period of seven years. This condition was imposed in order that the secrets of the new manufacture might become the possession of the native cloth-workers. The names of several weavers are found in documents preserved in the Muniment Room at the Guildhall. References to serge-weavers are specially interesting as demonstrating that the "new draperies" were produced locally. Serge was made by the mixture of carded and combed wool, the weft being carded yarn, and the warp, combed yarn.

In the early years of this century there was widespread slackness in the cloth trade of Hampshire. We read that "hitherto this industry had made good progress in the county, the town of Andover in particular was famous for its woollen trade, which had begun to afford employment to many who would formerly have been occupied in agriculture." Notwithstanding the decline in the production of the old drapery, including the coarse "Hampshire Kerseys," cloth-making was still extensively carried on in the town. We learn from the State Papers that at the time of the Civil War the Royalist garrison at Winchester managed to take £10,000 worth of cloth from Andover. The price of wool, although it had risen since the sixteenth century, remained stationary during the seventeenth, and at Andover market varied in the years 1692-1702 from 18s. to 32s. a tod of 28lbs., the usual price being 9d. a lb.

The outstanding influence of the clothier under the "domestic system" of cloth manufacture has been explained above. We find the names of several of these capitalist employers in the town records. In the year 1627 Richard Wigmore of Andover, Clothier, rented from the Corporation "a Messuage, Tenement and Curtilage with the appurtenances called and known by the name of the Prison situate in Andover adjoining to the east end of a stone bridge leading over the river called the West Brook." The prison occupied part of the site of the present Free Library. Another Andover clothier was Andrew Moreing, who, in 1638, rented ten acres of land belonging to the town, lying in the South Common Field, "whereof four acres shoot (*i.e.*, abut) upon the King's Highway leading from Andover to Wherwell." The clothier often held land to provide corn and hay for the horses which he used to fetch home his wool and to draw loads of cloth to market and to his customers, the drapers. A deed of 1653 records the sale of land to John Noyes the elder of Andover, Clothier, and one of the year 1691 states that Gabriell Goldney of Andover, Clothier, leased the St. John's House property from the Corporation in that year. In 1650 Alexander Cooper of Andover, Dyer, leased "the feeding, depasturing of cattle, and grass of the Common Acre." He was not to "hinder the youth of the towne of Andover aforesaid nor others, there to walk, bowle, or make use of other disports and lawful recreations as formerly they have done."

A lease of the year 1657 states that Richard Reynolds of Andover, Weaver, rented a plot of ground bounded on the east by the Common Acre, on the west by Back Lane (now East Street), and on the north by a paved way leading to the Common Acre. This parcel of land, on part of which the great Town Barn formerly stood, is described in Titheridge's Report of the year 1836 as lying "between the Independent Chapel and the road leading to the Common Acre." This tenancy was followed by that of Benjamin Philpott, alias Purveyor, of Andover, "Seargeweaver," who rented the premises in 1711. Seeing that this land was held by weavers for a considerable period and that "Rack Close" adjoins it, there seems a possibility that it was used for stretching cloth on racks or tenters in the open-air drying process.

Another interesting entry tells us that in 1708 Richard and Robert Russell of Andover, Serge Weavers, in conjunction with Charles Cooke of Andover, Clothier, were granted the right to "all the benefit, profit and advantage whatsoever of weighing cheese, hops, leather and other goods and commodities usually weighed, weighable and to be weighed at the four several Fairs belonging to the Corporation of Andover aforesaid, that is to say Leonard Fair, Mid-Lent Fair, May Fair and Weyhill Fair," for which right they were to pay £30 per annum, or some £300 in to-day's currency value. The Fair at the Festival of St. Leonard was granted to the Burgesses of Andover by King John in the year 1205 and is still held. May Fair was granted by a charter of King Henry VIII in 1511. These franchises were confirmed in the Great Charter of Elizabeth of 1599 which also gave the Burgesses the right to hold Mid-Lent Fair and Weyhill Fair. The celebrated Fair held on Wey Hill reaches back to pre-historic days and is held by prescriptive right, being anterior to, and requiring no support from, grant or charter of any description. The patent of 1599 permitting the men of Andover to fold a fair there was the cause of long drawn-out litigation in the seventeenth century.

With the introduction of steam-driven machinery and the creation of factories, chiefly in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the domestic system of cloth manufacture rapidly declined and early in the eighteenth century we find that the only active cloth-making in Andover was concerned with shalloons (light worsted cloth for coat-linings, etc.) and druggets. Here again the names of Andover craftsmen appear in the town records. In a lease of 1725 Benjamin Philpott, presumably the individual described above as a sergeweaver in the year 1711, is styled a shalloon weaver. Another entry records that in 1729 Thomas Noyes of Andover, Shalloon-maker, leased from the Corporation all the profits, benefits and advantage of searching and sealing leather placed in any of the markets and fairs kept at Andover and Weyhill, and also the profits for placing leather on the ground in the Andover markets and fairs. Leather offered for sale was inspected to ensure that it was "well and

sufficiently tanned." Other references to Andover shalloon-makers include the names of Peter Hollis and William Noyes, who leased portions of the St. John's House property from the Corporation in 1740 and 1745 respectively.

In an account of the Hampshire industry published in 1813 it is said that by that date the shalloon manufacture of Andover was much decayed, but that the women of the countryside spun yarn and worsted for the Salisbury manufacturers. By the year 1840 silk-weaving had replaced that of cloth. Although the local cloth-making industry is extinct, it is of interest to note that the ancient wool market of Andover still survives in the form of the annual Wool Fair held in the town in the month of June.

St. Blasius (or Blaise), who was martyred in the year 316 under Diocletian, is said to have been tortured with wool-combers' irons before he was beheaded and this seems to have been the reason why he was always regarded as the patron saint of wool-combers. He is also reputed to have been the founder of their craft. The wool combers of England celebrated St. Blaise's day, the 3rd February, with a procession and general festivities. In New Street, Andover, in Romsey and in other ancient centres of the cloth industry there are inns exhibiting the sign "The Bishop Blaise" where men of the trade were wont to congregate. It is recorded that as late as the year 1818 there was a procession at Andover consisting of "Bishop Blaise and his clerks" dressed all in wool. The following verses were written to celebrate the opening of a Cloth Hall in Halifax in 1779:—

"When Adam and his Consort Eve
Lived in a garden fair
They dressed themselves in green fig-leaves
For want of better wear :
But we their sons are wiser grown
Than leaves of figs to pull :
We clothe ourselves from head to foot
With ever honour'd wool.
"O let us not forget the good,
The worthy Bishop Blaise,
Who came from Jersey here to us
As ancient history says.
He taught us how to comb our wool,
The source of all our wealth,
Then let us still remember him,
While we have life and health."

One would like to know the ground for the allegation that the Bishop visited Jersey and England.

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A TRACK FROM BUTSER TO BORDEAN GORGE AND BASING DEAN?

A Statement of Evidence.

By STEPHEN COFFIN.

TYPE of soil and the resultant vegetation limited early man's movements, but it seems possible that he would sometimes have left the ridgeways and made short cuts across lower ground if the going were good enough. Traces of such routes are likely to be scanty or completely lacking after many generations of cultivation and any attempt at resurrection must be based very largely on inference from available evidence. This paper is such an attempt: a record of field evidence upon which it seems that one can, not unreasonably, base certain inferences with no attempt at specifying any period of time.

From the ridgeway on Butser, looking north, the temptation must have been great to cut across to the distant hills, to Bordean or even Basing Dean, where dry tracks along these valleys probably existed;¹ and this stretch of country, the watershed between the valleys of Meon and Rother, would for the most part not have been damp or overgrown, at any rate as far as Bordean. I have for some years considered it possible that a track made use of this watershed in early times. It is fitting to seek an ancient lineage for the commencement of such a track and the most likely route off Butser is that to the south-west of the main Butser entrenchment, which branches from the ridgeway here and which runs with a parish boundary along the spur to the south of Rake Bottom. One can, I think, assume this track to be ancient, for the following reasons. South-west of the narrow neck (across which runs a bivallate ditch) uniting Butser with Hillhampton Down (that is, in Hillhampton Bottom) is an inter-lynchet way running with a parish boundary. The former fades out; but the boundary bears slightly towards the north, shortly becomes integral with the main south spur Butser entrenchment and, running its length, turns sharply north at the earthwork's western end where this abuts on to the track under consideration, whence track and boundary run together along the spur south of Rake Bottom. It is probable that the inter-lynchet way originally continued over the ridge as the bivallate ditch, thence leading on into the further valley. But it seems reasonable to assume that even though this covered way traversed the col, the track by Rake Bottom also existed in early times, the former for local cattle transfers, the latter for wider excursions;

1. O.S. 6in. Hants 60 N.E., 60 N.W., 52 S.W., 52 N.W. Geological Survey, Sheet No. 300 (Drift). Williams-Freeman, *Field Archaeology of Hampshire*, p. 288.