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**A description of the principal picturesque beauties, antiquities, and geological phenomena, of the Isle of Wight**

**Englefield, Henry Charles**

**London, 1816**

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## CHAPTER VII.

## ANTIQUITIES OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

THE remains of antiquity in the Isle of Wight are very few in number, and inconsiderable in point of size and beauty.

Of the most ancient inhabitants, the only vestiges are the barrows, which are found in considerable numbers on the chalk downs, from Shorwell to Freshwater, and which differ in no respect from those seen in most parts of England: and Longstone, which, as its name imports, is a rude piece of rock of considerable size, evidently erected by art, on an eminence overlooking the village of Mottistone. It is a mass of the hardest stratum of sandstone abundant in the neighbourhood, and, by its colour, contains much iron. It is twelve feet high above the level of the ground, and approaches to a quadrangular form, though by no means of a regular shape. It has not in the least the appearance of having been hewn or wrought, except, perhaps by having had the most prominent parts beaten off, an operation to which the rudest savages are fully competent. Near it, another large stone of about eight feet long lies on the ground, but it is quite uncertain whether it was ever in an erect position. No trace of a ditch, or earthen work of any sort, is discoverable about it. Its sides are deeply furrowed by the weather, and covered with lichens of various dyes, and the rudeness of the scenery around it accords well with the very antique character of the stone.

Of the Romans there is not a vestige in the island; and it is singular, that not even a coin should ever have been found, excepting those five mentioned by Mr. Warner, which were discovered in a field near Carisbrook, and which seem to have been accidentally dropt there. When it is considered, that they had very considerable establishments at Porchester and Bittern near Southampton, and that the Isle of Wight must have been a most convenient station for an army; secure, if its numbers were small, and affording every advantage to the most considerable body of forces, it is not a little extraordinary that it should have been so totally neglected. It appears to have been equally free from the operations of war, in the Saxon times; as not a single vestige of any camp or entrenchment of any sort, is discoverable on it. Mr. Wyndham, whose accuracy of research is well known, visited every part of the island for the express purpose of investigating this subject, and his research was fruitless.

Carisbrook castle is the only ancient fortress which was ever erected in the island. Its keep bears marks of considerable antiquity, and from its multangular form, and its situation on an high raised artificial mount, it may fairly be presumed to be of a date anterior to the Conquest. No other part of the castle is of very ancient date. The gate of entrance is extremely handsome, and is probably of the age of Edward IV., as the arms of Woodville appear on its front. The habitable part of it has been so often altered and repaired, that it is not easy to assign any precise date to any portion of it.

It does not seem that any part of the palace of the lords of the island, whose residence was here, until the seizure of it by Edward I. at the decease of Isabella de Fortibus, in the year

1293, is now in being. The extensive outworks faced with stone, were added in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who thus prepared a prison for the unfortunate Charles; the history of whose melancholy detention here, is well known. It seems that the apartments inhabited by him, are now in a state of ruin; and so transient is tradition, that it is not certainly known out of which of the windows he attempted his escape. The Governor of the island, has his residence in the castle, but his apartments, though tolerably extensive, are by no means magnificent, and far from cheerful, as only one window in the whole, looks out of the inclosure of the castle, or has the least enjoyment of the beautiful view it commands.

The situation of the castle is on a projecting steep knoll of the chalk range of hills, whose summit its buildings and outworks nearly cover. Its mouldering walls richly mantled with ivy, the keep rising proudly above the rest of the buildings, and the elegant gate, make it an object of very considerable beauty, and as such it has exercised the pencils of numerous artists.

Cowes castle is one of the numerous small forts erected by Henry VIII. along the southern coast of England, with a view of securing it against the insults of invaders. It now consists of a semicircular platform towards the sea, on which are mounted twelve heavy guns. A range of buildings forms the diameter to the semicircle, and in it are lodgings for the governor and gunner, and a magazine. The exterior part of the central building forms a part of a circle, and is the remainder of an original round tower, which was once a story higher than it now is, and had embrasures on its summit for cannon. A small etching by Francis Place, Esq., without a date, but probably done about

the year 1680, shews it in this state. The whole is of very good masonry. The hill rises quick behind it, and on a little sort of turf esplanade adjoining to the castle, are twelve very fine old elms, which, with the castle, form a pleasing picture from every side.

Opposite to Cowes castle, on the eastern shore of the Medina, a similar fort once stood, but it has been so long destroyed by the inroads of the sea, that even its site is forgotten, nor is the date of its destruction any where recorded.

The lower part of the elevated tower which now serves as a lodge to Lord Henry Seymour's grounds, was probably a look-out house, of about the same date as the forts. Of late years it had been a windmill, but in old maps it is mentioned as a sea-mark.

Sandown castle is another of Henry VIII.'s forts, but of larger dimensions, and as it commands the spot of all others in the island the most exposed to invasion, it is kept up as a fortress to the present time; and has been strengthened by more modern and regular outworks.

Yarmouth castle is also of Henry VIII.'s time. It is little more than a stone platform, possessing little strength and less beauty.

Between Yarmouth and the Needles, the site of two other forts is known; and the points on which they stood, bear the names of Carey's sconce, and Worsley's tower; but no vestige of them exists.

The remains of ecclesiastical buildings, come next under consideration. Of these the conventual edifices rank in the first place. Quarr abbey was the only one of any considerable size

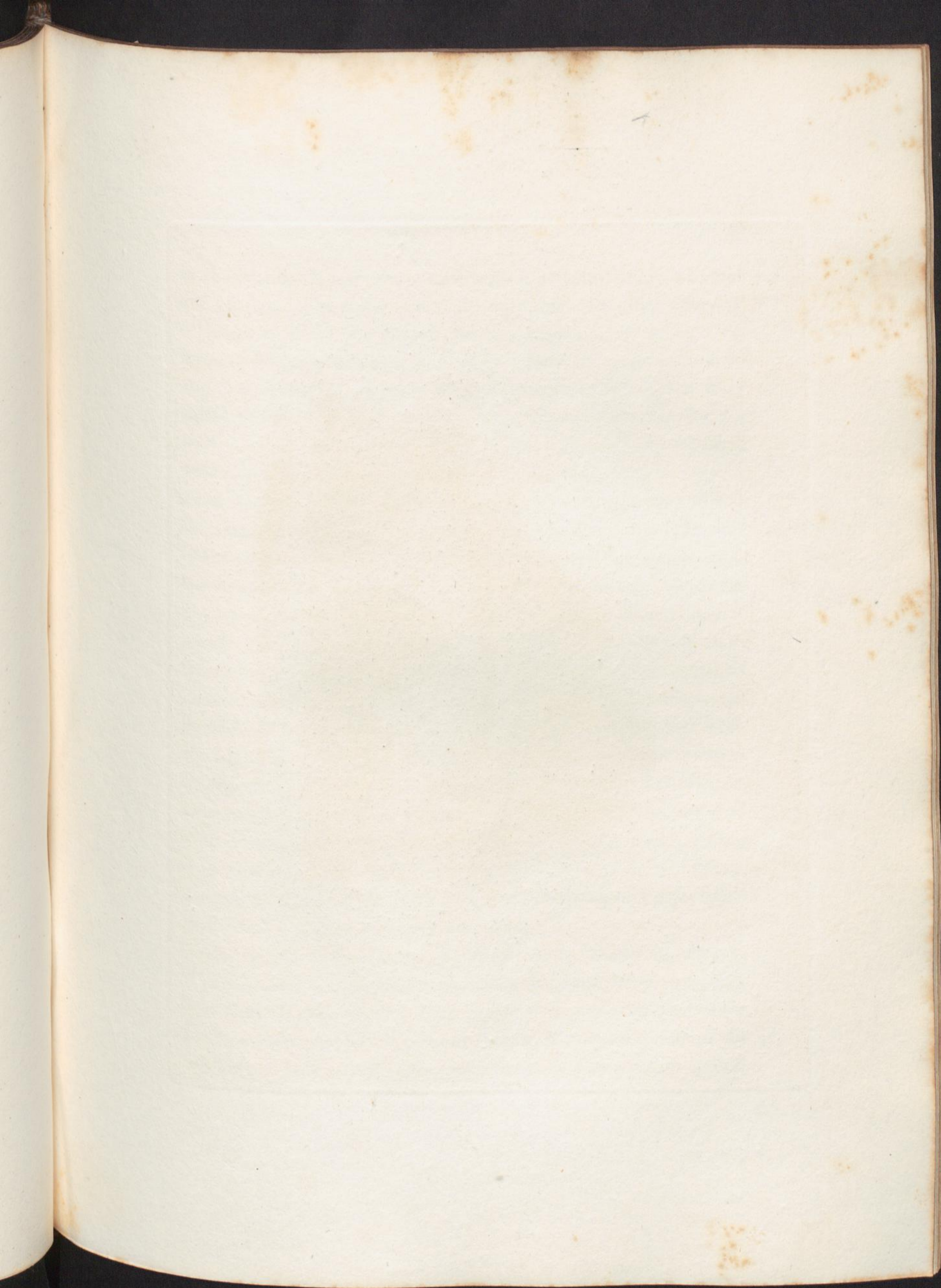
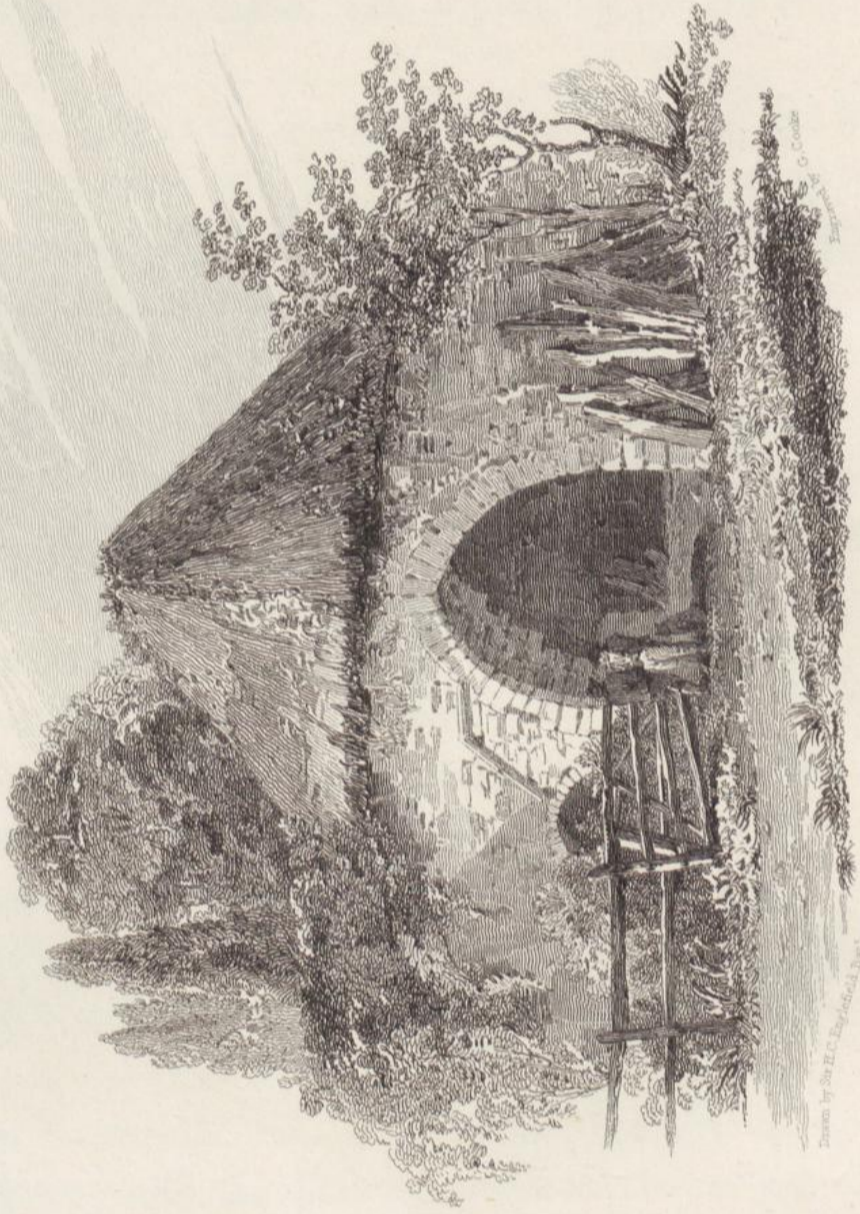


PLATE 12.



QUARR ABBEY, I.W.

London. Published by Payne & Foy, Pall Mall, 1816.

in the island. It appears to have been a building of great extent and elegance, but it has met with more than the usual share of dilapidation. Of the church not a vestige can be traced. A large building which now is used as a barn, is entirely ancient, and has arches in its walls of different periods. It has been called the Refectory, but without any certain grounds. In the wall of a stable there is a jamb of an arch, with a very neat pillar of the age of Henry III. A picturesque square vaulted room, with a pointed arched door, serves as a woodhouse; and in the farmer's garden there is a ruin overgrown with luxuriant ivy, which appears to have been designed for private apartments, the rooms being small and neatly finished, seemingly of a date not much anterior to the Dissolution. The wall of inclosure is nearly entire. It was strong, and the gates of entrance, both from the sea and the land, were fortified: a precaution by no means useless at a period when hostile fleets not seldom appeared in the Solent sea, and invaders repeatedly ravaged both the island and opposite coast of Hampshire. The area inclosed by the wall is about forty acres. A grove of most beautiful elms adorns it, and it is surrounded by gently rising ground, covered with extensive oak woods on every side except the north, where it is open to a beautiful view of the Solent sea. It is, in summer, a sweet retirement, but in winter, must be damp and unhealthy, as the soil is a deep and very wet clay.

Carisbrook priory is totally demolished, except its church, which is now, as it probably was before the Dissolution, parochial. The choir is said to have been pulled down, and marks remain at the eastern end of the present church, of a continuation of the building. It is a neat edifice with the handsomest tower steeple

in the island. On the north side is a round arched door of the latest Norman style. No other part of the church bears any marks of great antiquity, nor does it contain any thing remarkable.

Of the other conventual establishments in the island, not a trace is now left, excepting the small but very curious turret on the summit of St. Catherine's hill. The lower part was perhaps used as a belfry to the chapel of the hermitage. Its upper story was evidently constructed as a lighthouse for the direction of mariners. It is of plain, but neat masonry, octagon without, and square within, and covered with a pyramidal roof of stone. Just beneath the roof, it is pierced with eight small windows, whose openings diminish inwards, and all tend to the centre of the building. This construction, which would have been ill calculated for the admission of light from without, is perfectly well contrived for its diffusion from within. The height of the turret from the ground, is thirty-five feet, six inches, and each side of the octagon externally is four feet: the space within, is four feet square. This little edifice was not long since repaired by the laudable care of Sir Richard Worsley, and on that occasion the foundation of the Hermit's cell, as well as his oratory, was discovered. When standing on this airy summit, it is impossible not to picture to the mind the venerable inhabitant of this cell lifted almost out of the habitable world, and only recalled to it by the charitable care of his friendly lamp; mingling his nightly orisons with the howling of the storm, and pouring forth prayers for the safety of those whose anxious eyes were strained with watching for its welcome ray, twinkling by fits through the sweeping clouds; and comparing this almost angelic situation with the brutal quarrels of the keepers of the Eddystone, whom

the love of idleness leads to their dreary abode, and the fear of dismissal binds to their duty, the sublime benevolence of which they feel no more than the lamps which they light.

The parochial churches come next under consideration. Of these, several may have been erected before the Conquest, and some of the smaller ones, by their simplicity and very ancient appearance, may possibly have been built soon after the conversion of the island to Christianity, about the year 670, under Ceadwal, king of Wessex, who after a dreadful massacre of the inhabitants, gave one-fourth of the island to Wilfrid, bishop of Wessex. As it will be difficult and useless to treat of them in their order, as they are situated in the island, the alphabetical arrangement will be the most convenient.

Arreton church is a large and neat edifice of about the age of Edward I. Its windows are in a style not unusual in the island, though not very common in other places. They consist of two lights, with a circle above them, but without any tracery, which gives them a naked look. A small neat pillar flanks the windows on the outside. An ancient brass in the floor is mentioned by Tomkins.

Binstead is a small church of very considerable antiquity. Both its south and north doors, have semicircular arches, but without ornaments. Over the latter, is a strange rude figure, mentioned by almost all the writers on the island under the name of the idol. It does not appear to have been originally in its present situation. A plain semicircular arch with a carved impost, separates the chancel from the body of the church. The carving of the impost represents a dragon with a waving tail which ends in foliage; and under this, is a billeted moulding.

The ancient font stands under the north wall of the chancel, exposed to the weather. The south wall of the chancel, is of the species of masonry called herring-boned, an argument of high antiquity.

Bonchurch is extremely small, of Saxon or Norman date, curious as an evidence of the permanence of the steep slope on which it stands, during a lapse of perhaps eight centuries.

Brading church is large and handsome. Its tower stands on arches, which form a porch to the west entrance. The tower is of early pointed work, and surmounted by a low stone spire; in the west end of the church, a large semicircular arch is still visible. The body and chancel, with the chapels which flank it on either side, are of different ages, of pointed work, but not very early. In the southern chapel are several monuments of the Oglander family; on two, there are cumbent figures in armour, carved in oak, and painted. They are of the age of Elizabeth, or thereabouts, and of a workmanship more barbarous than the worst of the Saxon times. In the northern chapel are two handsome table monuments, whose sides are adorned with quaterfoil ornaments, inclosing shields, which, instead of arms, bear the inscriptions in large old English letters, well cut. A very curious engraved slab lies before the altar. The inscriptions on these may be found in Tomkins.

Brixton church is neat. It has a tower with a leaden spire. In its north wall, traces of two large semicircular arches are visible; and its east end, has a window of very singular form, approaching nearly to what is called Venetian. It has five lights; the two exterior are square-headed, the three central ones inclosed in one common arch. The mullions on which the arch

rests, have, as it may be expected, given way to the pressure. It does not appear to be of a date older than Henry VIII., and is probably still more modern than that period. The effect is not good.

Brook church is small and mean. A late repair has done away any thing which it might formerly have possessed, of curiosity.

Calbourne church is a very ancient edifice. Its original form appears to have been a cross, and of Saxon or Norman structure. An ornamented round arched door, remains, though much mutilated, on the north side; and a plain door of the same age, on the south. The arches which formed the centre of the cross are also round. The present chancel, as well as a chapel added to the east of the south cross, are of early pointed work with lancet windows on the sides, and to the east curious doubled lancets, with a round window over them, adorned with smaller segments of circles forming a quaterfoil. This is evidently the first step towards tracery; for were the two lancets brought closer together, and they, and the round window, inclosed by one pointed arch; the earliest tracery, such as appears in the windows of Netley, Tintern, and other buildings of that date, is at once formed. Ivy invests many parts of the church in a very singular manner; having taken root in the jambs of the south windows of the chancel, far above the ground; and worked its way by the edges of the casements, into the church, forming beautiful foliage round the inside of the lights. An handsome table monument, with a brass plate, stands in the south chapel, which is accurately engraved by Tomkins.

Carisbrook church has been already described as a conventual edifice.

Chale church is a mean edifice, with a neat tower of good masonry, and more ornamented than would be expected in so insignificant a place. Probably the lords of the ancient mansion, now Chale farm, adorned their parish church, about the same period when they erected the noble and church-like barn adjoining to their mansion.

Cowes church, though only a chapel of ease to the parish of Northwood, ought not to be passed over without mention. It is a neat structure of brick and stone, erected soon after the year 1600, and is in the Gothic style of James I.

Freshwater church is small, but has a very singular tower, which stands on two walls projecting from the west end of the church, and which are joined at the top by a pointed arch. Above this, it appears, that there was originally merely a small belfry, to which another story, with battlements and pinnacles, was added in a later time.

Gatcombe church is a small neat building, with a pretty pinnacled tower. Within it there is a curious monument, with the effigies of an unknown knight clad in a coat of chain mail and a flowing surcoat. The figure is cut in oak. It is faithfully given by Tomkins.

Godshill church is a very neat building, with an handsome tower. It is very advantageously situated on the summit of a steep knoll, partly covered with trees; among which the houses of the little village are built at different heights up the sides of the hill. It contains many handsome monuments of the Worsley family, and several of an ancient date now stript of their brasses.

Kingston church is an extremely small edifice situated in a very picturesque manner on the top of a steep eminence, and

shaded by a grove of fine trees. The path which winds up the hill from a deep hollow way excavated at its foot, the church, and overhanging trees, form an object well worth viewing at the trouble only of a slight deviation from the common road from Chale to Newport.

Mottiston church is small, and contains nothing worthy of notice. It is very well engraved by Tomkins.

Newchurch is a large, but low edifice: it is in part of ancient date, but has been much defaced by modern repairs. Its situation is extremely beautiful. It stands quite on the brow of a nearly perpendicular bank of the soft sand-stone of this part of the island, with several fine trees stretching forward their branches over the cliff. A winding road deep sunk in the same rock, and overhung with shrubs and trees, forms the foreground to this very picturesque little scene.

Newport church was originally only a chapel to Carisbrook. It is a large plain building, about the age of Henry IV. It is said to have been built by the voluntary contributions of the several bodies of tradesmen resident in it; who caused the insignia of their professions to be carved on the parts built at their expense. It is certain, that two, if not more, of these carvings still remain on the south side of the church; and the circumstance is curious, and perhaps singular. The pulpit is covered with carving of the elaborate style of James I.'s time: it is dated 1636. A monument of Sir Edward Horsey, governor of the island, who died in 1582, is worthy of notice. His figure, in armour, carved in alabaster, is uncommonly well executed.

Niton church is a low building, with remains of Saxon arches, in the north wall. In the church-yard is the pedestal of an

ancient cross, standing on the top of a flight of octangular steps. This it would have been scarcely worth while to notice, but for the purpose of refuting a groundless idea, which has been repeated in several late publications on the subject of the Isle of Wight, that it was an ancient baptismal font. The square hole in the stone probably gave rise to this fancy; but that hole was evidently for the insertion of the shaft of the cross: and it would be very difficult to point out any age in which baptism was administered in the open air.

Northwood church contains nothing in any way worthy of notice.

Ryde is a small chapel of ease to the distant church of Newchurch. It was built about eighty years since by Mr. Player, the lord of the manor, whose bounty is recorded on a white marble slab, singularly placed directly above the altar.

St. Helen's church having been gradually destroyed by the encroachments of the sea at the mouth of Brading haven, a modern building has been erected in a more convenient spot. Of the ancient church, the tower still remains, being carefully secured and repaired as a sea-mark to ships sailing into the roads of St. Helen's and Spithead. It is accurately engraved by Tomkins.

St. Laurence is worthy of notice, as being probably the smallest parochial edifice in Great Britain. It is twenty feet long, and twelve feet wide, and scarcely six feet to the eaves.

St. Nicholas is a little parish appendant to Carisbrook castle, and the parochial church is the chapel of the castle. It is a small modern building, now nearly disused. It stands within the castle, near the gate.

Shalfleet church is of very ancient date. Its large and low

tower is of Saxon architecture, and has a carved fascia running round it. The north door has a semicircular arch, with a square-headed doorway; and in the space above the door, a rude figure is carved in relievo, with his hands extended, and resting on the heads of animals, probably lions.

Shorwell church is of neat architecture, and has a tower with a low stone spire. Tomkins has given a good view of it, and of a brass monumental plate extant in it.

Thorley church is a very mean building, of a most barn-like appearance. Tomkins's plate is a very accurate portrait of it; but being given quite in a front view, it does not shew the singular long openings in the sides of the belfry; which, though formed of stone, have exactly the appearance of open timber work.

Whippingham church is small, and has in its walls half obliterated marks of high antiquity. Its tower, with a gabled roof, is singular.

Whitwell church is small, and does not, I believe, contain any object of curiosity: but I have not been very near it.

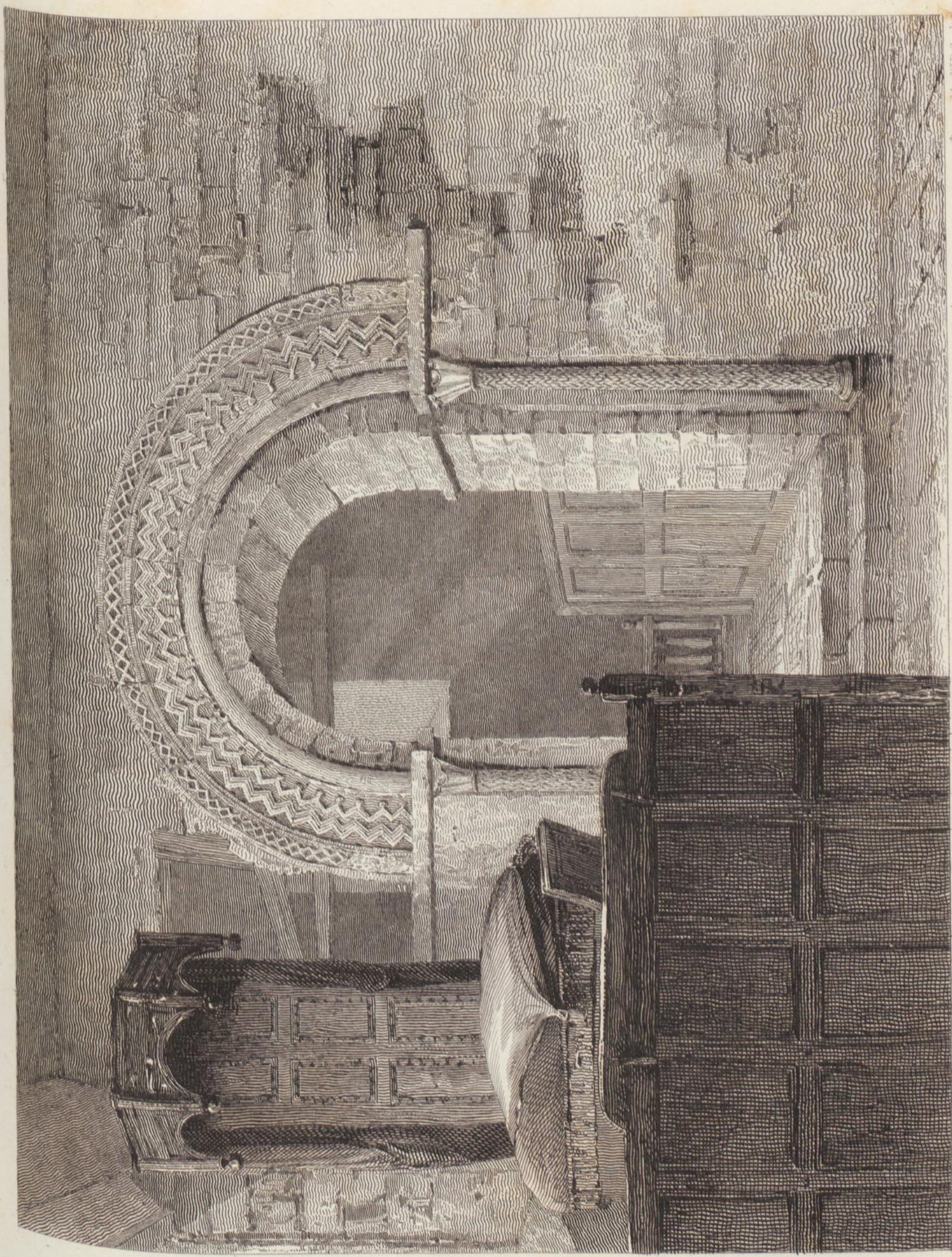
Wootton church is small, but very ancient. It has a door on its south side, with very rude Saxon zig-zag ornaments. It probably was the chapel to the manor house; for it is mentioned in the history of the island, that the church being destroyed by fire, the lord gave his chapel for the use of the parish. On that occasion it probably was enlarged towards the east: as the chancel is evidently of later date than the body of the church, and not separated from it by an arch, as was probably almost always the case in the oldest churches.

Yarmouth church is a small edifice, not older than the time of Henry VIII., when, it is recorded, that the original church was

burnt by the French. It contains nothing worthy of notice, except a tomb of Sir Robert Holmes, with his statue in white marble. He died in the year 1692.

Yaverland church is, though small, the most curious, and one of the most ancient buildings in the island. It consists of a body and chancel. The door of entrance is arched, and ornamented with Saxon mouldings of uncommon form, with a neat pillar on each side. The door way was square, and the space between the door and arch is adorned with a sort of checquer work, with roses interspersed. The body of the church is divided from the chancel by a very handsome and richly ornamented arch, in very good preservation. On the north side of this arch, there is the remain of a small staircase opening into the chancel below, and passing through the wall of separation. This evidently led into a pulpit situated nearly where the present wooden one stands, but of the original pulpit, which probably was of stone, there is not any part now discernible. The staircase appears coeval with the wall, and it is a very curious and perhaps singular remnant of ecclesiastical antiquity; bringing to remembrance the ambones or reading desks attached to the choirs or absides of the earliest Christian churches. The historians of the island refer the building of this church to the æra of Edward I. It is evident that it is of a much more early date; but, perhaps, about that time it was rendered parochial, having previously been merely a private chapel, for the use of the lord of the manor. A window on the south side, now blocked up, is apparently of about that date. The present eastern window is still less ancient.

That the principal seignors, resident on the island, had private chapels attached to their mansions, may be inferred from what

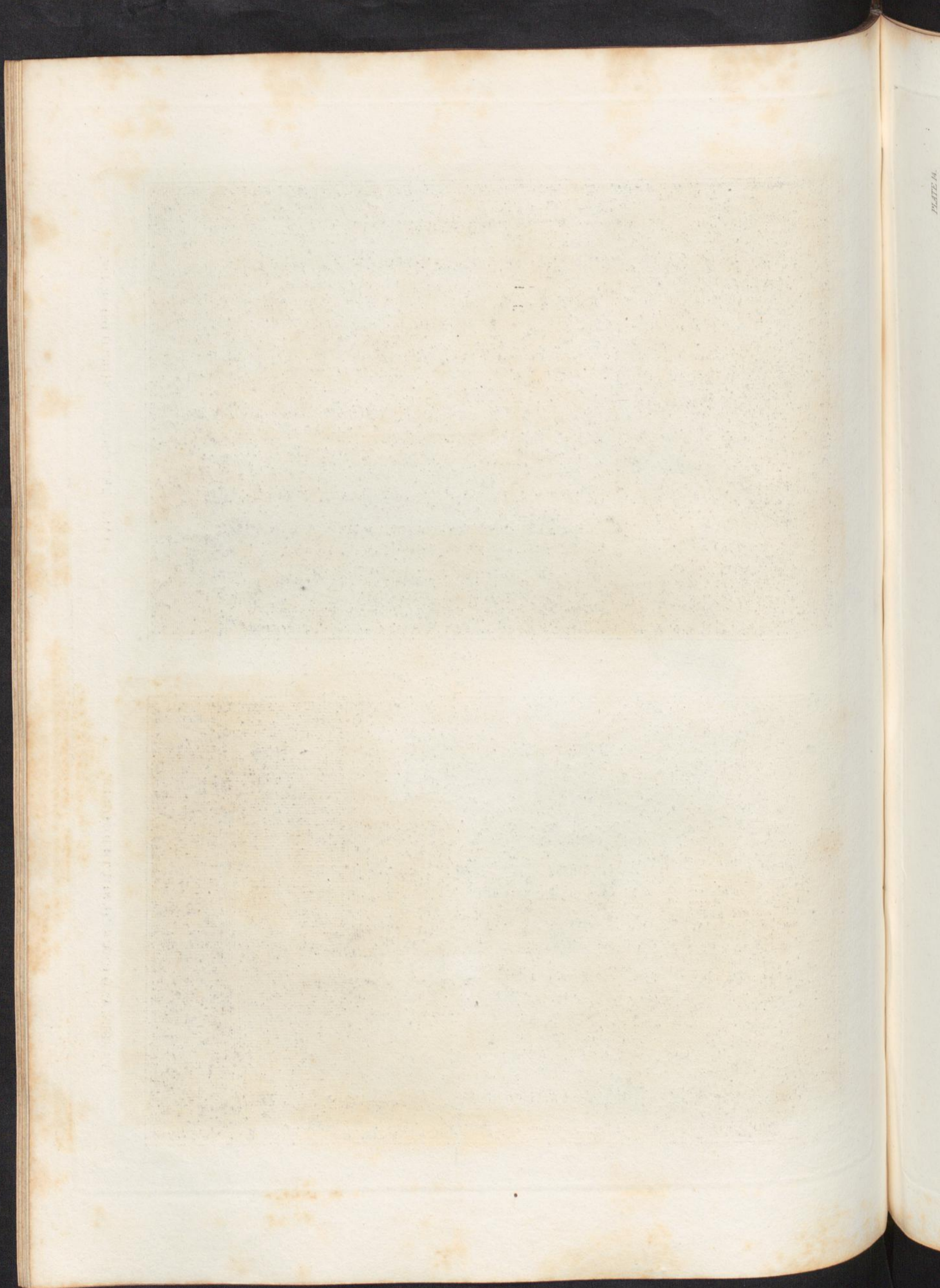


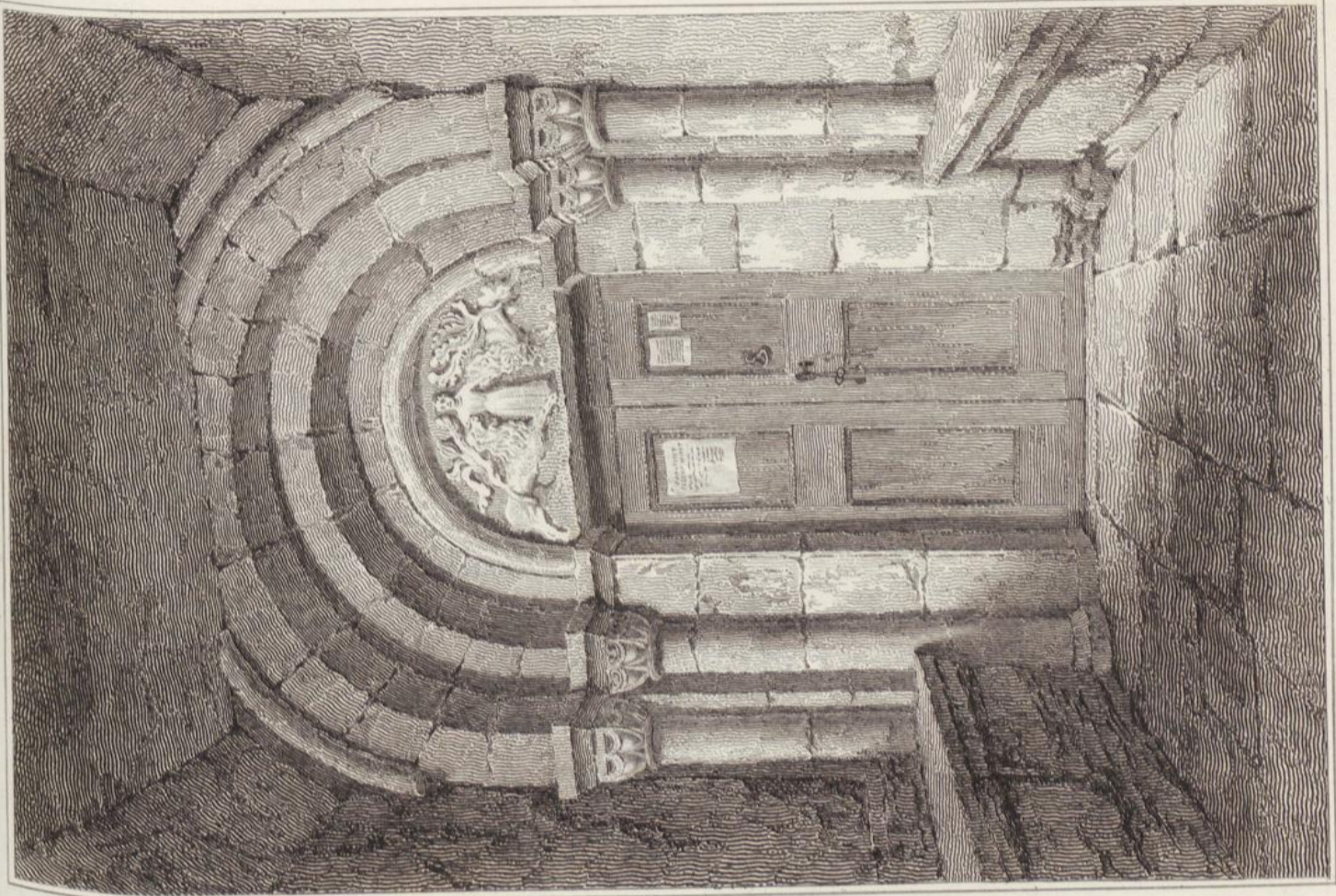
Engraved by W.B. Cooke

YAVERLAND CHURCH.I.W.

London, published by Rogers & Fife, Pall Mall, 1843.

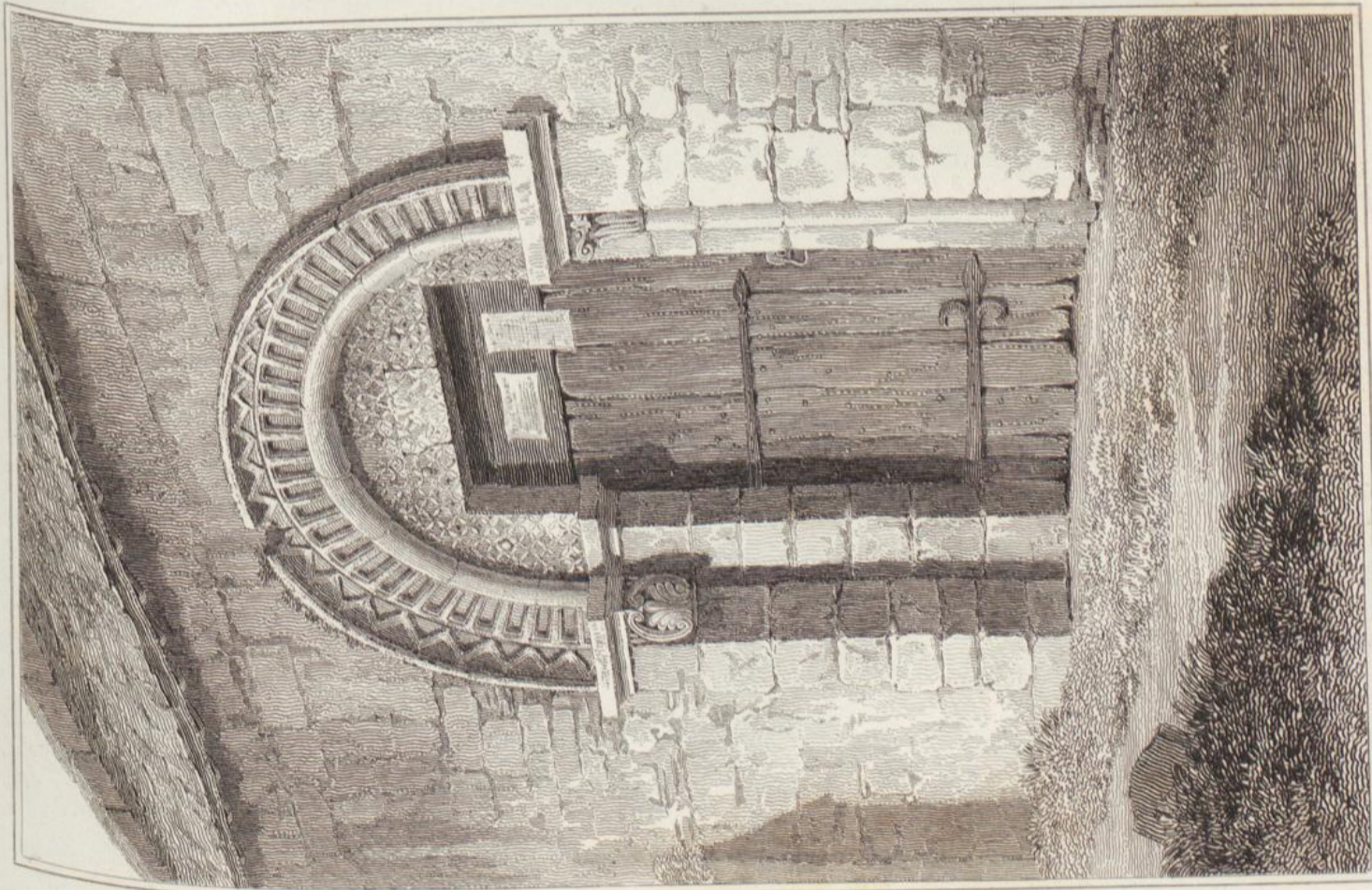
Drawn by Sir H.C. Englefield, Bart.





Engraved by George Cooke.

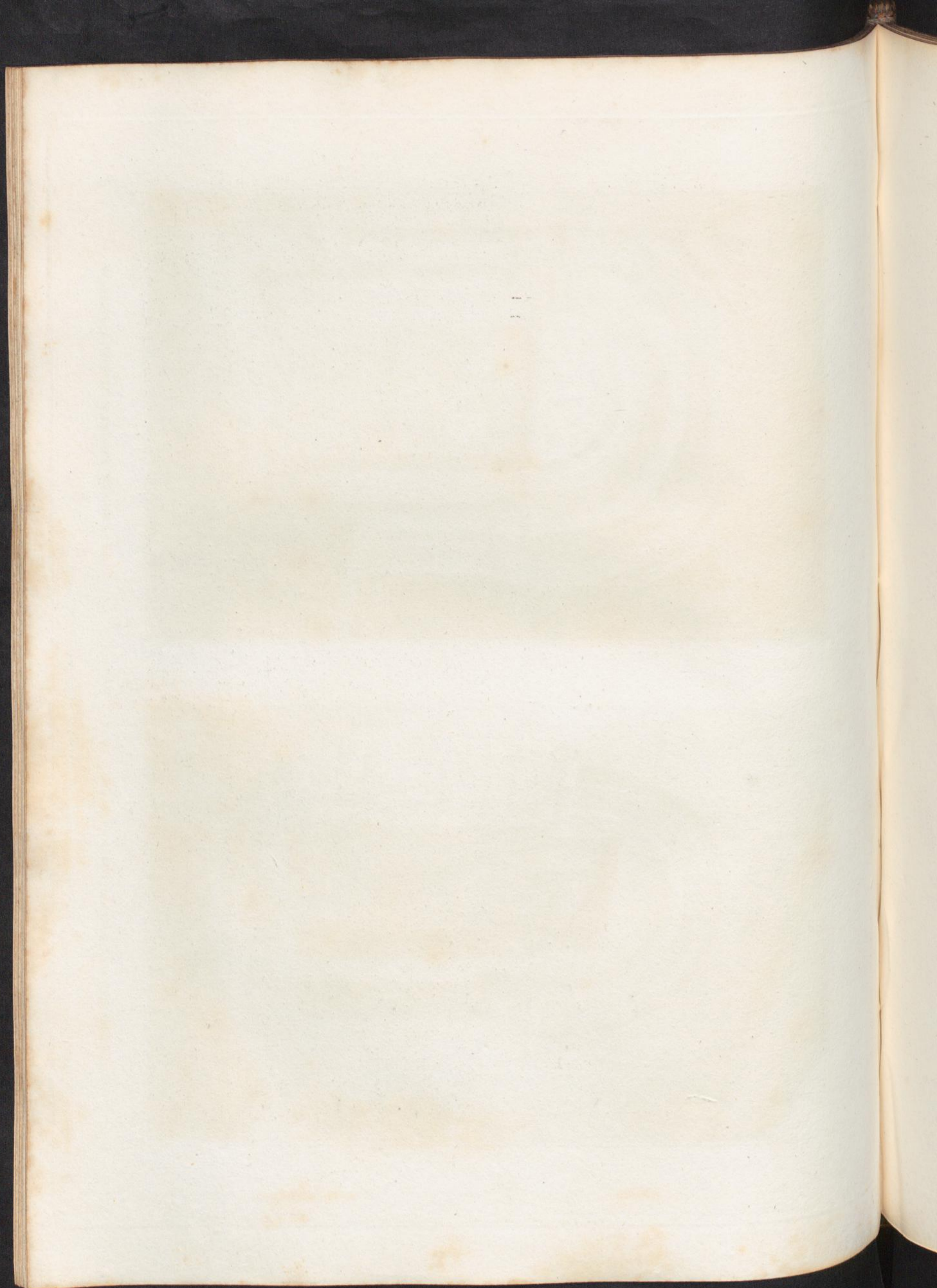
SHALFLEET CHURCH, NORTH DOOR. I.W.



Drawn by T. Webster from Sketches by W. Alexander.

YAVERLAND CHURCH, SOUTH DOOR. I.W.

London, Published by Payne & Poy, Pall Mall, 1815.



has been already mentioned with respect to Wotton church; and will be farther confirmed, by what will be stated relative to the two very ancient mansions of Swainston and Knighton.

The small ruined chapel of Wolverton undercliff, seems most properly to come under the class of parochial buildings. It appears to have been an ancient chapel of ease to the parish of Niton or Whitwell. It is a picturesque object; and Tomkins has given a good view of it.

The gentlemen's seats and manerial houses of the island, are next to be noticed. Of these, very few are of higher antiquity than the reign of Elizabeth, and a very considerable number appear to have been built just about that time. A great proportion of the farm houses, and many cottages, are nearly of the same date. Mr. Wyndham has very sagaciously observed, that this circumstance was evidently owing to the quiet and security enjoyed by the inhabitants during her reign, and which had been almost unknown to them for many preceding centuries. The records of the island bear melancholy testimony to the continual alarms in which they lived from the fear of foreign invaders, who very often attacked and pillaged different parts of the country, and almost always with impunity. To an Englishman, in these days, it happily seems almost incredible, that "the armed hoof of hostile paces should bruise the flowrets" of his highly favoured soil. The storm of war rolls awful at a distance, and his horizon is often gloomy, but the lightnings dart innocuous around him, and he lives secure, under the shade of the laurels which his victorious countrymen have planted for the protection of his coasts.

As a mansion surrounded with the modern appendages of a park, with its ornamented entrances, and buildings decorating

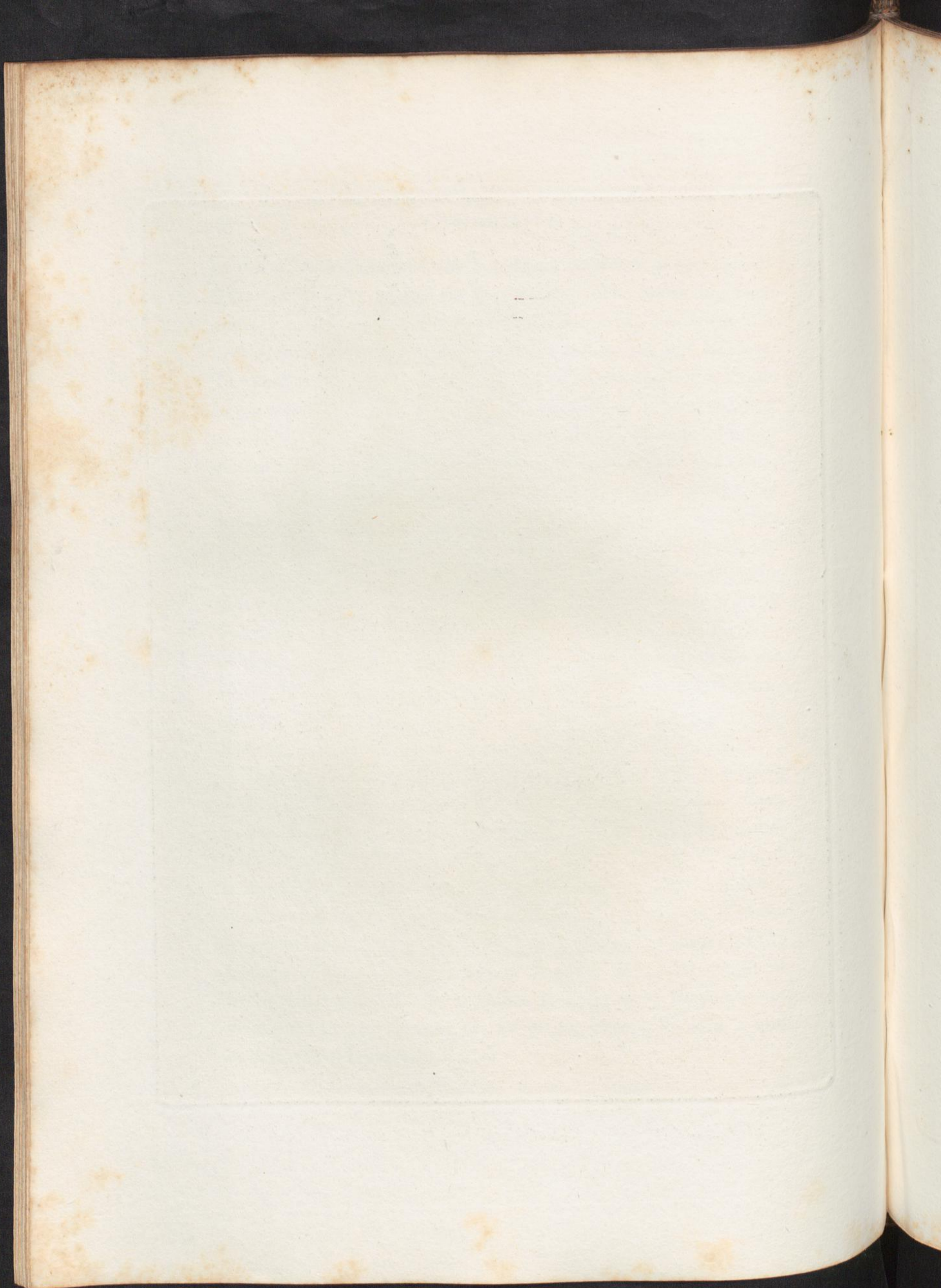
its lawns, Apuldurcombe, the hereditary residence of the ancient family of Worsley, claims the first notice. The house has been entirely rebuilt of stone, within the last century; but was at a very great expense, enlarged and decorated by the late baronet. The park was laid out by Brown, and of course the house stands like a mushroom on the open lawn, without an accompaniment or a comfort in sight. The woods, probably from being thinned at that time, are in many parts eaten up with canker and moss, so as to have, even in the midst of summer, a dead and wintry appearance. An air of melancholy magnificence, pervades the whole. It is, however, well worth a visit, on account of the collection of marbles placed there by Sir Richard Worsley, the late owner. Among these, many will be found highly worthy the attention of the curious traveller. A more particular mention of them would be superfluous, as they have been given to the world, in great detail, by Sir Richard, in his magnificent work, entitled *Museum Worsleyanum*. There are also many pictures, some of them very good.

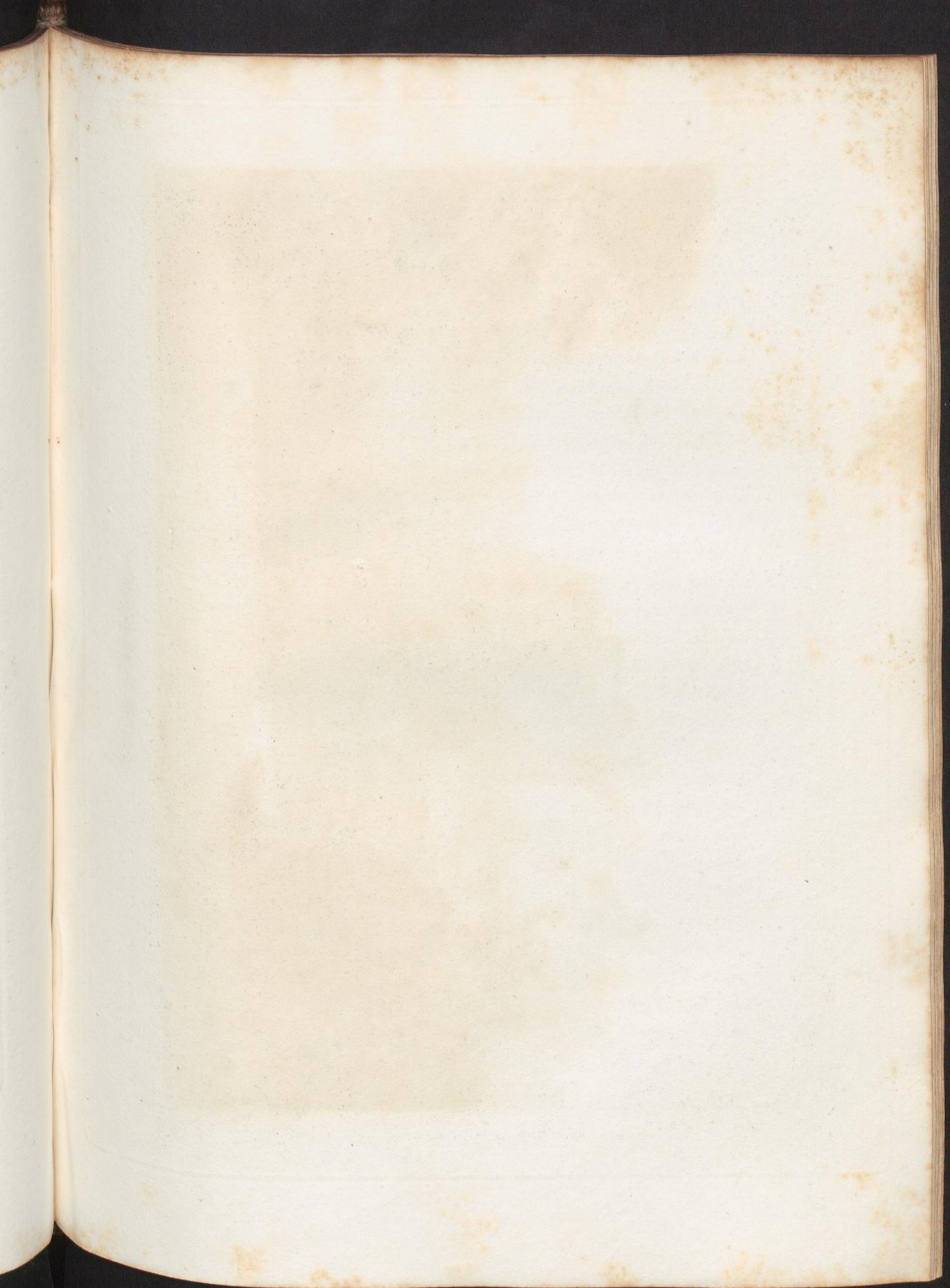
Swainston, the seat of Sir John Barrington, though in a great degree modernised, has yet remaining, in the offices, some curious fragments of high antiquity. A very neat Norman double-headed window is visible in the court, and the outside of a pretty chapel is nearly entire. It has an east window much resembling those in Arreton church, and, probably, nearly of that date. These fragments of antiquity, are possibly a part of the mansion of the bishops of Winchester, to whom, in early times, the manor of Swainston belonged. It is rather singular, that they are not mentioned in any account of the island, except Tomkins's, and in that, very imperfectly.



ANCIENT CHAPEL AT SWAINSTON.

London, Published by Ingram & Co., Pall Mall, 1816.







Engraved by George Cooke.

KNIGHTON HOUSE, A.W.

London, Published by Payne and Fife, Pall Mall. 1843.

Drawn by Sir H. C. Englefield Bart.

Knighton, the residence of G. Maurice Bisset, Esq., is by far the most considerable and beautiful of the ancient mansions of the island. It is an irregular edifice, situated on the southern slope of Ashley down, and surrounded, except to the south, by noble groves, which clothe the steep slopes of the hills, in the most picturesque manner possible. The ground falls with so quick a descent, that the southern front stands on an elevated terrace, partly formed into kitchen gardens on hanging levels, and partly in a ruder state, up which winds a carriage-road leading to the offices. A most copious and crystalline spring rises in a small dell near the house, and is dammed up for the service of a little mill, so as to form a pretty pool, at the very foot of this ascent: large trees overhang the water on either side, among which the house assumes quite a castle-like appearance. A very ancient edifice, which was probably a chapel, stands on the margin of the water, and before it was converted into offices, must have added most essentially to the beauty of the scene. Even in its present state, it is no offensive object in the picture. The principal front of the house is to the north. It is of the age of Elizabeth, irregular and broken by projections. The windows are large, and divided by stone mullions; square headed, and without any smaller arches in the angles of the lights: but their general form is very good, and the stone, of which the whole house, except the chimneys, is built, is of an extremely fine grey tint. The west end of the house is completely enveloped in a mantle of thick ivy, which having closely invested the walls, winds lightly round a tall stack of clustered chimneys, and embroiders with its deep green shoots, the glowing yellow of the ancient mossy-tiled roof. The security of the building requires

that this should be so closely trimmed, as considerably to injure its beauty, and give it rather a formal appearance. At the north-eastern angle of the house, there is a plain square tower of great strength and antiquity, in whose foundations a dungeon yet remains of considerable depth. Near this tower, in the eastern front, a part of a very handsome pointed window yet remains: its style much resembles that of the windows in Arreton church, and the chapel at Swainston: it is in great part obliterated by the insertion of a window of the same date as those of the north front. The southern front has been to a degree modernized by the substitution of sash windows to the ancient ones, but its colour is good, and two great gables remain uninjured. The house contains several large and convenient rooms. Some of them have handsome wainscot, probably cotemporary with the north front. The drawing room on the first floor, is spacious and handsome, and entirely in this style. A long gallery, low and ill lighted, extends through the centre of the house, under the roof, and in this is preserved, but with less care than so curious a fragment of antiquity deserves, a very large oaken chest covered with rich niche work, and tracery, of the age probably of Henry IV. It is but little injured, and the original lock, with tracery carved in iron, still remains. No painted glass remains in the windows, except one coat, with the arms of Isabella de Fortibus; but this appears to be of a date much later than her time. The little building already mentioned as standing at the foot of the hill, seems to be at least as old as the reign of Edward III. One window alone remains in any tolerable preservation; the form and mouldings of this, are uncommon.

North Court, the ancient seat of the family of Leigh, now the

property of Richard Bull, Esq. is next in consequence to Knighton. This house is a large and nearly regular building of the age of James I., of very good stone and well finished. It stands in a narrow valley on the southern side of the great chalk range, and scarcely out of the village of Shorwell; but a grove of noble elms which surrounds it to the north and east, and most flourishing plantations made by its present owner, completely exclude all that would be disagreeable in that vicinity. At the foot of a terrace just below the mansion, rises the beautiful spring, which gives name to the village, and which is immediately equal to the turning a large mill. The gardens are disposed in terraces up the side of the hill on whose slope the house stands; and the good taste of Mr. Bull has ornamented without destroying their regularity, which suits the ancient character of the mansion. Of this, the front is adorned with an handsome central porch. On either hand is a large window, and beyond them, semi-octagon bows, two stories high, terminated by a pinnacled battlement. Beyond these, to the right, the front terminates with another larger projecting building, which is wanting to the left. All these parts severally finish in gables ornamented with slender pyramidal pinnacles, rising from projecting corbels. The house within is fitted up in a neat and elegant style. The cheerfulness of modern life illumines the ancient rooms, without destroying their character. Many excellent and curious portraits, and a profusion of admirable prints, decorate the walls; and every refinement of attentive hospitality is accumulated in the rooms destined by the amiable and learned owner to the reception of his guests.\*

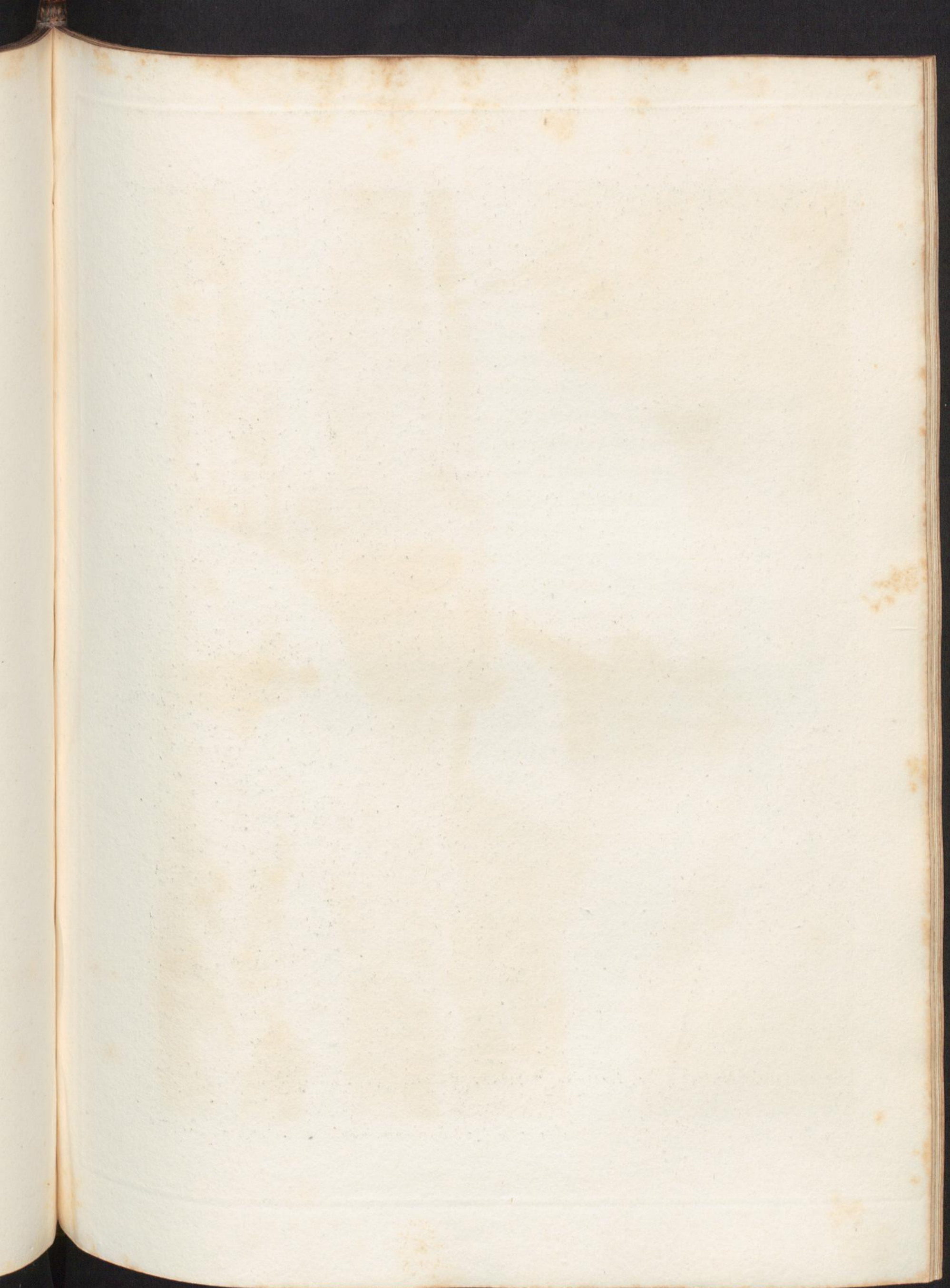
In describing this interesting place, it is impossible to omit

\* Mr. Bull, and his surviving daughter, are deceased since this was written.

mentioning a most tender memorial of affection to the memory of the late Miss Bull. It was designed by and erected under the immediate inspection of her sister. It is placed in a woody hollow, formerly a chalk-pit, and overhung by a very large, and most picturesque ash-tree. It is a low building of rough stone, like the ruin of a small gothic chapel thatched. The windows are of coloured glass which give a dim and solemn tint to a very beautiful sarcophagus of white marble, on whose front are carved in bas relief, a male and female figure reclining over an urn. On a tablet beneath, are lines from the classical pen of Mr. Bull.

Wolverton House stands about a mile south of North Court. It is a large mansion of about the same date as North Court; but it has undergone many alterations of a modern date. It is now only tenanted by a farmer, though not long since it was inhabited by Mr. Arcedecne. Some good trees grow about it, but it is, on the whole, rather a cheerless place. Not far from the present house, and nearly north of it, the site of a more ancient mansion remains. No buildings are at present visible; but a broad and deep moat enclosing a square area is entire. This was evidently the principal seat in the parish. North Court, already described, and West Court, an ancient house of smaller size, but once the residence of a gentleman, taking their names from their respective positions with regard to this now forgotten place. There is not, I believe, any account of it in the printed histories of the island.

Near the church at Kingston, stands a very considerable mansion, whose demesnes comprehend the entire little parish. It is of a date apparently older than North Court; perhaps it may be referred to the age of Henry VIII. It is now a very large farm.





Engraved by W.B. Cooke.

CHALE FARM, I.W.

Drawn by Sir H.C. Englefield Bart.

London: Published by Rogers & Figg, Pall Mall, 1855.

Chale farm, lately the property of Sir Richard Worsley, but now purchased by its former tenant, is a most curious and ancient mansion. Of the house little remains, except the great hall, now divided into two stories, but still retaining its roof of arched timber, and having on the outside a large and handsome pointed window, which has quite the air of a church; but it looks to the north. In the eastern wall of this building there is a large plain round arch, now closed up, and above it, corbels, which appear to have supported the beams of another building. Not far from the house is a most magnificent stone barn of very considerable size, and beautiful masonry. Its walls are strengthened by large square buttresses, diminishing upwards by off-sets, and between these, are long narrow loops. The timber work of the roof is arched, and the whole has more the air of a great hall, than a mere barn; yet such appears to have been its original designation. It is rather extraordinary that this ancient house, whose remains are as picturesque as they are curious, should not have been even mentioned, by any of the numerous describers of the island.

Mottiston House is now a farm, but was for a long time the residence of the respectable family of Cheke. The learned Sir John Cheke, the preceptor of Edward VI. was of this family, and probably resided on this spot, but not in the present mansion, which was built in the year 1567, as appears by a date over the porch. It is of the second order of ancient houses, in style approaching to the larger farms, and having the offices and stables attached to the dwelling house, which in the capital mansions of that date was not the case.

Gatcombe House, long the residence of a considerable branch

of the Worsley family, ought not to be omitted, although now a modern square house, standing mournfully on the naked site of the ancient mansion. When the dull area of weedy gravel and stunted turf before it, was filled by the cheerful formality of terraces and flowery borders, with the grey gables overcanopied by the rich woody hill which rises steep behind it; and the neat little church which now stands forlorn on the lawn, was connected with the antique manor house, this place must have been most singularly beautiful. It is scarcely possible to refrain from smiling at the vanity of its late owner, who has given, in Sir Richard Worsley's History of the Island, a plate of his residence, with a large artificial river winding through the meadow before it. Of this, not a single spadeful was ever dug, and a ditch with a very scanty run of water, is its only indication.

Near Gatcombe is the ancient manor house of Sheat, formerly the residence of the Gothers, a family of note in the island. It stands on the marshy borders of a little stream, but the situation might be, by care, rendered a pretty one. The house has been very handsome; but the late possessor swept away all the gables, and replaced them by the vast dull slope of a regular slated roof. It is impossible, without seeing it, to conceive the striking inferiority of this species of roof, to the play of form and rich variety of the ancient gables.

Near Arreton church, a considerable old manor house remains. It is now a farm, and so inadequate to the style of living of the farmers of this day, that the tenant is adding a large wing to it.

Barton House, just above King's key, is a very respectable building. Its chimneys are of the most ornamented sort, of the period of Elizabeth and James I.

Near Wooton church, is a stone house, now a farm, which once was the residence of the owner of the estate. It is of very neat masonry, and has three lofty stories.

Nunwell, the residence, from time immemorial, of the family of Oglander, the most ancient in the island, has been entirely rebuilt, at no very distant period. Some venerable oaks are the only remaining objects of antiquity in the place.

Yaverland is a very spacious mansion, of the age of James I. A large carved doorway, from the hall to the staircase, bears on it the date of 1620, and this is probably that of the building of the mansion. The house is of the form commonly called an half H, and is of very good stone and neat masonry. It stands on a rising ground, open to the south, and commanding a beautiful view of Sandown bay and the promontory of Dunnose. From the garden, on the northern side of the house, Brading haven and St. Helen's are very well seen. The curious little church, already described, stands very near the house to the west, and is surrounded by a grove of very noble elms. It is not easy to find a situation more desirable than that of Yaverland House, which has, however, been long degraded to a farm, and so it must, in all probability remain; as the house, and estate belonging to it, are the property of Exeter college.

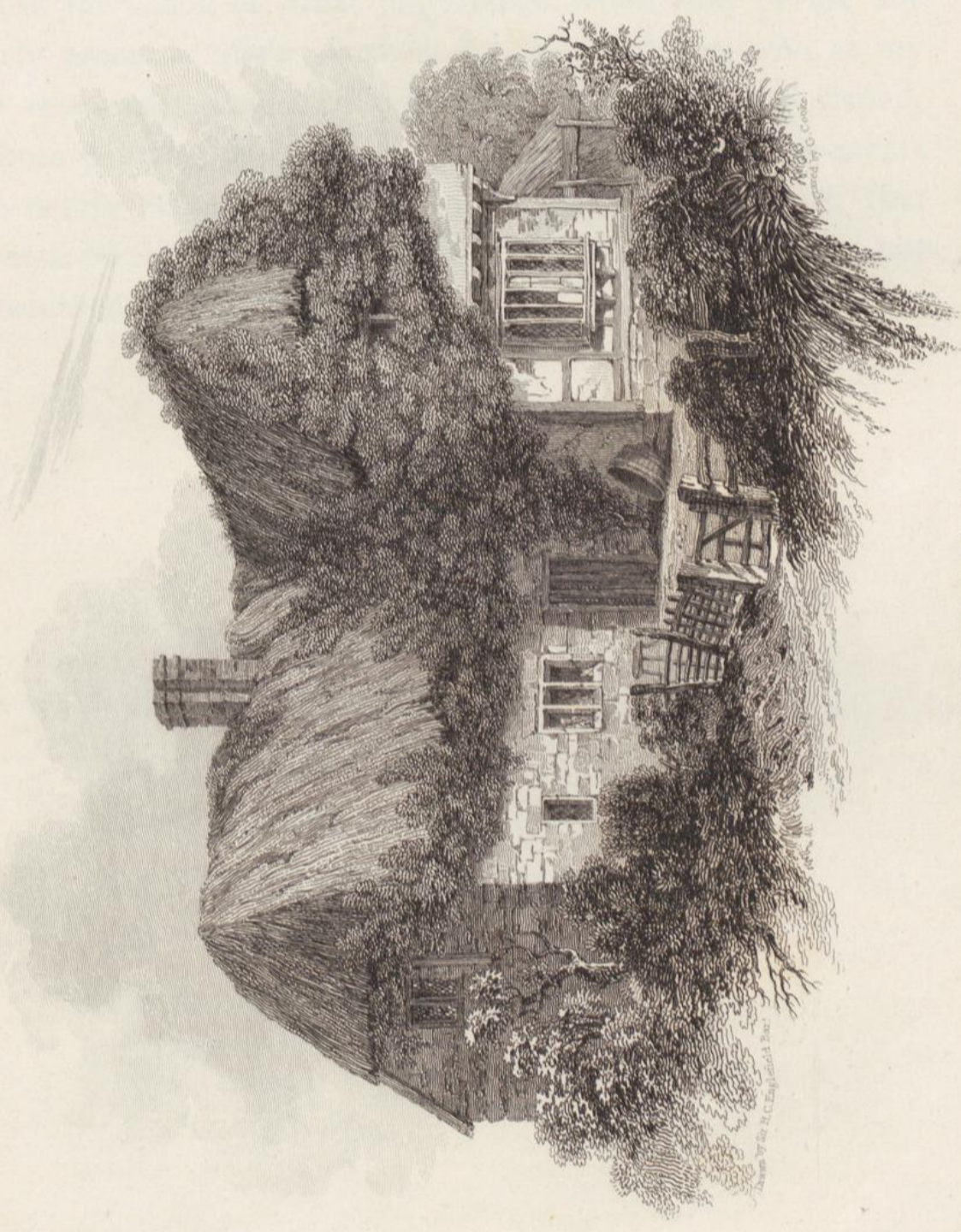
There are, probably, several other of the manerial houses on the island, worthy notice; but not having myself seen them, I can only indicate them to the curiosity of such as may have opportunity to visit them. Repston, not far from Arreton; and Stenbury between Apuldurcombe and Whitwell are likely to repay the pains of a visit. Sir Richard Worsley's History mentions the discovery of sepulchral urns near the moat, which surrounded the latter.

At no great distance from Billingham, on the road from Newport to Chale, there is a cottage so beautifully overgrown with ivy, as to have deserved a place in Taylor's map, under the name of the Ivy House. It is indeed a curious and very picturesque object. The building is itself of considerable antiquity, and beyond the size of common cottages, and the ivy tree (for the whole is the produce of a single stem) is of such dimensions and luxuriance as are rarely to be met with. Ivy seems peculiarly the growth of this island, and, besides the cottage now mentioned, there are several others which deserve a transient notice. Of these, one is at Rookley, between Newport and Niton; another at the foot of Godshill, and a fourth just by Afton House, near Freshwater. This last is so completely enveloped, that the smoke from its chimney appears to issue from the midst of a green bush, and there is not the least appearance of any part either of the walls or the roof.

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Having thus attempted to describe what appeared to me the most worthy of notice, in the repeated visits I paid to almost every part of the island; I have only to add, that it has been my wish to be as accurate as possible in every thing I have said, and to dwell more particularly on those objects which had either been totally omitted, or slightly treated on, by the numerous authors who have given to the Public, accounts of this beautiful, and very curious, though confined tract of country.

With respect to its natural history, I believe that those of my readers who are studious of that branch of science, will not regret

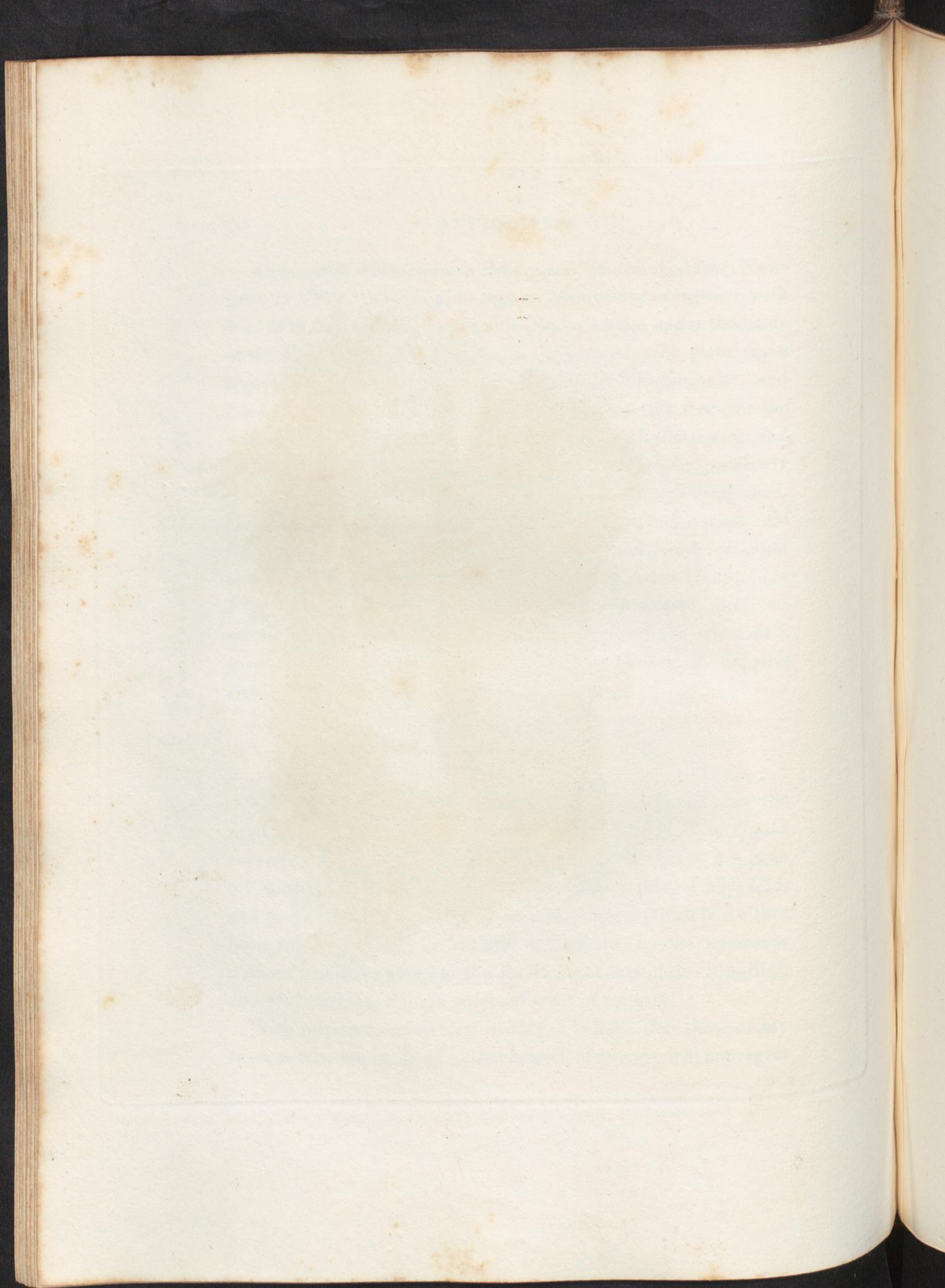


IVY HOUSE. I.W.

London. Published by Ingram & Piffy, Pall Mall, 1845.

Engraved by R. C. England & Son.

Designed by G. Cooke.



that circumstances prevented me from visiting again, many points in the island of great importance, when they peruse the masterly accounts given of them by Mr. Webster, who at my desire repeatedly examined not only the ground I had visited, but those parts of Dorsetshire whose geological arrangements are so nearly connected with those of the Isle of Wight, that without a description of them, that of the island itself, could not be considered as complete.

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