

April 3, 1868.

Mr. TREGELLAS called the attention of the Institute to the probability —owing to the projected operations of a Building Society at Bromley — of the picturesque ruins of the fortified residence known as “Simpson’s Moat,” near Bromley Railway Station—a familiar object to most passengers by the London, Chatham and Dover line—being soon destroyed; and he urged such Members as were interested in the Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages to pay a visit to the spot before it was too late to find any traces of the few crumbling fragments which still remained.

Mr. Tregellas gave the following account of Simpson’s Moat, as the result of a personal inspection of the place (of which a view and a plan will be found on the opposite page), and of a perusal of Philipot’s *Villare Cantianum*, Hasted’s *History of Kent*, Lysons’ *Environs of London*, and Dunkin’s *Outlines of the History and Antiquities of Bromley, &c.*

The original structure appears to have been a quadrangular fortified building, surrounded by a moat, 25 or 30 ft. wide, on all sides.¹ The walls, strong and lofty, supported by very substantial buttresses at the sides and angles, and built of flints and rubble masonry; the facings, &c., of dressed stone. A huge and very handsome red brick chimney, probably built temp. Henry VIII., and of which a considerable portion was standing fifty or sixty years ago (see Warren’s *Sketches of the Ravensbourne*), adorned the centre of the north-east side of the building. It is on this side only that any traces of an original door or window are now to be seen : their positions are indicated on the plan. It is also of this side of the building only that the entire length is now to be traced ; part of the south-east side remains, but the form and dimensions of the whole must remain a matter of conjecture, unless excavations be undertaken. It seems,

¹ The moat on the north-west and south-west sides was filled in by Jeremiah Ringer, who was the last tenant of Simpson’s Moat, and occupied the place for more than 50 years. He gave the name to Ringer’s Lane, the approach to the moat from the turnpike road,

however, rather more probable that the existing walls will be tumbled into the ditches and into the sunken story, with a view to levelling an area for some modern villa, than that any such excavations will be made. At present the place is a scene of perfect ruin and confusion ; it has been inhabited, from time to time, by farmers and others, who have availed themselves of the materials afforded by the old walls, to construct, within the enceinte, buildings more in accordance with their own requirements ; and it has not been without considerable difficulty that even so slight a ground plan as that here given could be made, or that any fragments of dressed stone could be discovered from which an opinion might be formed as to the probable date of the structure.

The history of Simpson's Moat is briefly as follows :—The Manor of Simpson's was, in 1302, the property of John de Banquel, to whom Edward I. in that year granted a charter of free-warren for his lands in Bromley. Thomas Banquel died, seised of the Manor, in 1361 ; and, upon a division of his estates, it passed to his younger son, William. The next owner upon record was William Clarke, who, according to Philipot (p. 84), had a licence from Henry V. to fortify and embattle his mansion here. Lysons states that he could find no reference to this grant in the Calendars of the Tower ; nor has subsequent search availed to verify Philipot's statement, which, however, was probably not made without some authority. About the year 1450, the property came by purchase to John Simpson, from whose family it derived its present name. Nicholas Simpson, who was barber to Henry VIII., and who probably built the great chimney already referred to, aliened the Moat to Alexander Basset, by whom it was subsequently conveyed to Sir Humphrey Styles of Langley Park, near Beckenham. ² It afterwards passed

² There is a wooden tablet at the east end of the south aisle of Bromley church bearing the arms of Styles. The inscription sets forth that the pews beneath were appropriated to the sole use of the Styles, ancient owners of Simpson's, and were then (1727) the property of Lady Elwill of Langley

through the same hands as Langley Park ; and, when Lysons wrote, was the property of Lord Gwedir, whose tenant was, at that time, Samuel Rickards (or Rickets), a farmer. The owner, prior to the estate being sold for building purposes, was Colonel Jackson, who occupied the large house at the southern extremity of the town of Bromley.



Simpson's Moat . Bromley . Kent . View from the East.

