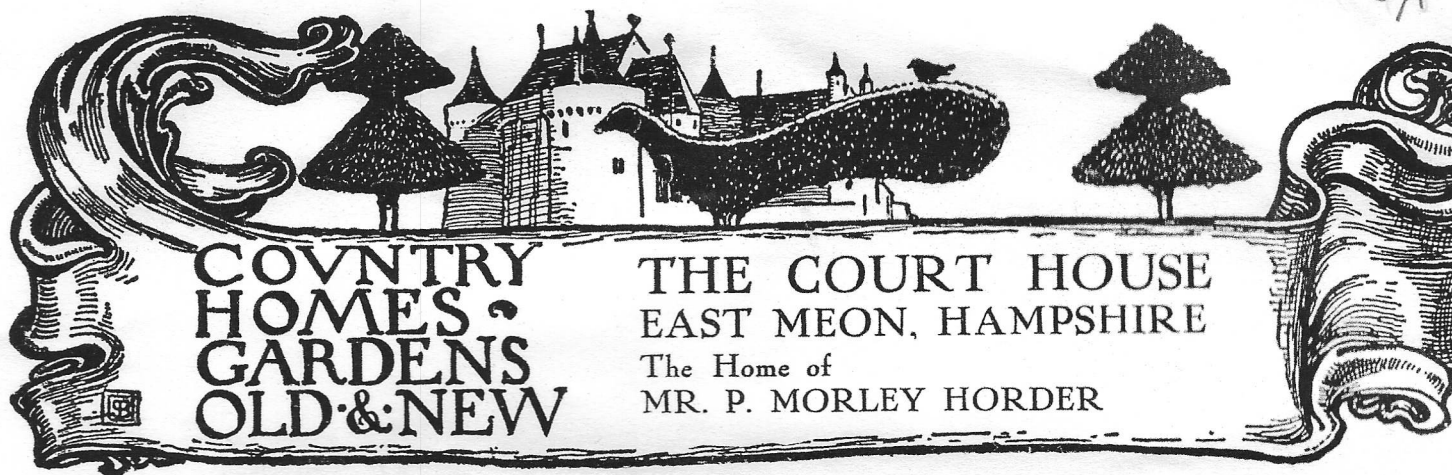


8/1



COUNTRY HOMES GARDENS OLD & NEW

THE COURT HOUSE EAST MEON, HAMPSHIRE

The Home of
MR. P. MORLEY HORDER

For over eight centuries East Meon was a possession of the Bishops of Winchester, who occasionally resided here. The Court House with its noble hall was probably re-built by William of Wykeham.

TO discover East Meon for the first time is an experience of a kind unfortunately becoming rare in these days when, the quest of unspoilt villages having been raised by photography into a cult, it is only possible to maintain the beautiful illusion by studied selection of the objects of veneration. Mercifully, East Meon is not yet a show village; nor is it necessary to go about it wearing mental blinkers; for modern vulgarity is almost entirely absent, and the place still has a life of its own, not one imposed upon it by urban standards. It owes its immunity largely to its setting—off the main roads and in a great bowl of the downs, which in the rounded mass of Butser Hill achieve one of their highest flights of grandeur.

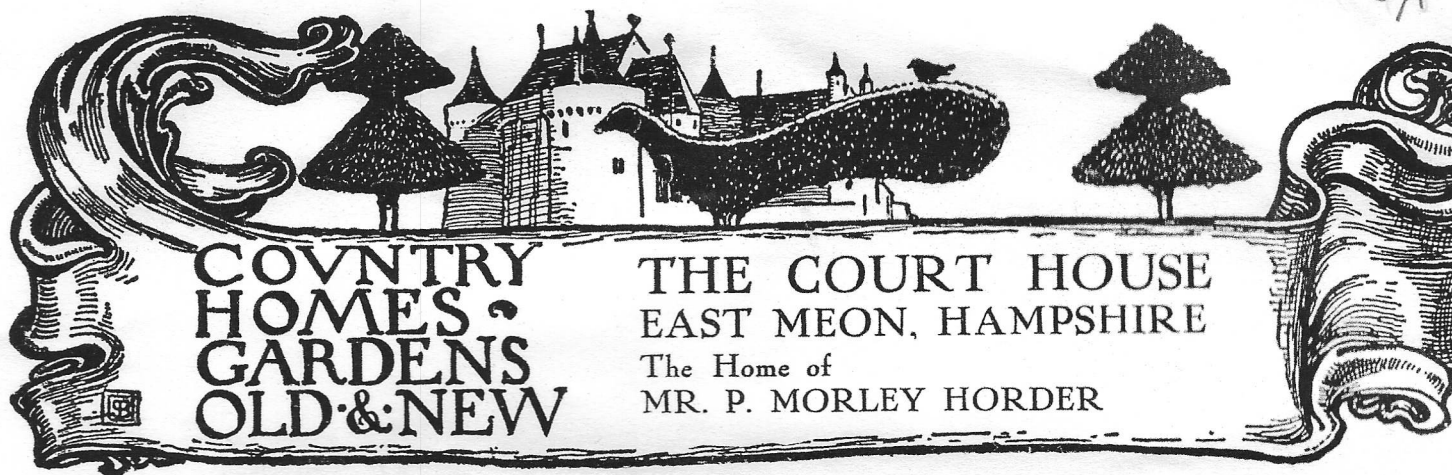
The River Meon rises at the point where the chain of the

Sussex downs meets the chalk system of Hampshire, and a connecting ridge shuts off the valley from the Weald to the east. East Meon lies at the foot of the hills on the north side of this amphitheatre of downland. Rising steeply above it is the flank of Park Down, on the lower slopes of which stands the sturdy Norman church. It is worth climbing the hill to see the village spread out at one's feet (Fig. 2) and so gain a picture of a typical agricultural township which still keeps the integrity of its compact mediæval plan. The village lies at a lower level than the church, with its main street lining the stream, which flows beside the houses under many little bridges. The cottages show a medley of flint, brick and plaster fronts with roofs of thatch or tile. The finest house in the street has a seventeenth-century front of brick with a brick cornice and projecting porch. Parallel to the main village street and immediately below the church runs the road from Petersfield to West Meon. As it enters the village from the east, it passes on the left the old Court House, which, after the church, is the oldest building in the parish. Rescued now from long years of neglect and dilapidation, it stands on the south side of the road, surrounded by gardens and orchards, and completes the picture of a mediæval village the history of which, if it could be written, would be an epitome of the history of agriculture in England.

The lovely Meon valley, at the head of which East Meon lies, has always been a self-contained region. The river finds an outlet from this amphitheatre of hills in the north-westward direction before turning south through West Meon, Warnford, Meonstoke, and William of Wykeham's birthplace to reach the sea below Titchfield. Up the valley came the early Jutes, the Meonwara, who, St. Wilfrid later converted to Christianity. They appear to have retained in a remarkable manner their tribal individuality; indeed, it is said that even to-day a slightly different dialect distinguishes the inhabitants of the Meon valley from those of other parts of Hampshire.



8/1



COUNTRY HOMES GARDENS OLD & NEW

THE COURT HOUSE EAST MEON, HAMPSHIRE

The Home of
MR. P. MORLEY HORDER

For over eight centuries East Meon was a possession of the Bishops of Winchester, who occasionally resided here. The Court House with its noble hall was probably re-built by William of Wykeham.

TO discover East Meon for the first time is an experience of a kind unfortunately becoming rare in these days when, the quest of unspoilt villages having been raised by photography into a cult, it is only possible to maintain the beautiful illusion by studied selection of the objects of veneration. Mercifully, East Meon is not yet a show village; nor is it necessary to go about it wearing mental blinkers; for modern vulgarity is almost entirely absent, and the place still has a life of its own, not one imposed upon it by urban standards. It owes its immunity largely to its setting—off the main roads and in a great bowl of the downs, which in the rounded mass of Butser Hill achieve one of their highest flights of grandeur.

The River Meon rises at the point where the chain of the

Sussex downs meets the chalk system of Hampshire, and a connecting ridge shuts off the valley from the Weald to the east. East Meon lies at the foot of the hills on the north side of this amphitheatre of downland. Rising steeply above it is the flank of Park Down, on the lower slopes of which stands the sturdy Norman church. It is worth climbing the hill to see the village spread out at one's feet (Fig. 2) and so gain a picture of a typical agricultural township which still keeps the integrity of its compact mediæval plan. The village lies at a lower level than the church, with its main street lining the stream, which flows beside the houses under many little bridges. The cottages show a medley of flint, brick and plaster fronts with roofs of thatch or tile. The finest house in the street has a seventeenth-century front of brick with a brick cornice and projecting porch. Parallel to the main village street and immediately below the church runs the road from Petersfield to West Meon. As it enters the village from the east, it passes on the left the old Court House, which, after the church, is the oldest building in the parish. Rescued now from long years of neglect and dilapidation, it stands on the south side of the road, surrounded by gardens and orchards, and completes the picture of a mediæval village the history of which, if it could be written, would be an epitome of the history of agriculture in England.



The lovely Meon valley, at the head of which East Meon lies, has always been a self-contained region. The river finds an outlet from this amphitheatre of hills in the north-westward direction before turning south through West Meon, Warnford, Meonstoke, and William of Wykeham's birthplace to reach the sea below Titchfield. Up the valley came the early Jute settlers, the Meonwara, who St. Wilfrid later converted to Christianity. They appear to have retained in a remarkable manner their tribal individuality; indeed, it is said that even to-day a slightly different dialect distinguishes the inhabitants of the Meon valley from those of other parts of Hampshire.

The lovely Meon valley, at the head of which East Meon lies, has always been a self-contained region. The river finds an outlet from this amphitheatre of hills in the north-westward direction before turning south through West Meon, Warnford, Meonstoke, and William of Wykeham's birthplace to reach the sea below Titchfield. Up the valley came the early Jute settlers, the Meonwara, who St. Wilfrid later converted to Christianity. They appear to have retained in a remarkable manner their tribal individuality; indeed, it is said that even to-day a slightly different dialect distinguishes the inhabitants of the Meon valley from those of other parts of Hampshire.