

ART. II.—*Queen Katherine Parr and Sudeley Castle*, by
FRED. BROOKSBANK GARNETT, C.B.

Read at Appleby, 4th July, 1893.

HAVING recently had the privilege of visiting Sudeley Castle, through the kind courtesy of Mrs. Dent, to whom this ancient historical residence now belongs, it has occurred to me, that some particulars of the connection of Queen Katherine Parr with Sudeley, from the time of her marriage to Sir Thomas Seymour, Knt., Lord Seymour of Sudeley, and High Admiral of England, until her death in 1548, might be an acceptable contribution to the Transactions of this Society, and serve as a supplement to the paper on "The Parrs of Kendal Castle," by Sir George Duckett, Bart., which is printed in the second volume of these Transactions, p. 186.

It is not the purpose of this paper to furnish a biography of Queen Katherine Parr, for whose memoirs, reference may be made to Nicholson's Annals of Kendal, Atkinson's Worthies of Westmorland, Strickland's Lives of the Queens of England, and the article on Katherine Parr by James Gairdner, in Vol. IX of the Dictionary of National Biography. My intention rather is to place on record the circumstances of the closing days of the Queen's life, and of her interment and the discovery of her remains at Sudeley.

The Castle of Kendal where Katherine Parr was born in 1513, was dismantled and in great part destroyed within the short period of 60 years from that date, and has now remained in ruins for more than three centuries. So far as I am aware there is no monument of Queen Katherine Parr, either in the 'Parr' Chapel at Kendal Parish Church, or elsewhere in Westmorland: but it may be interesting to note that there are still to be seen in the
windows

windows of the house in Wildman Street, Kendal, known as the Castle Dairy," several quarrels of stained glass, two of which bear the date 1567, with the mottoes "Omnia Vanitas" and "Viendra le jour" above and below the monogram, A.G.;—two more with the 'Stanley' cognizance of the eagle and bantling, in the branches of an oak tree; and one with a fleur de lys surmounted by a crown. In an upper apartment of the same house, having an arched ceiling with carved oak groins, there is a massive corbel with heads of gryphons, and on bosses there are various shields with the Arms of Parr, Fitzhugh, De Ros, Deincourt, and Strickland, and one which has been described as "apparently three rabbits, two and one," but which I venture to suggest may rather represent three gryphons, two and one, being the arms of the "Garnet" family, from whom the property has descended to its present owner, Mr. Garnett Braithwaite, through a double connection, arising from the marriages of two great grand daughters of Anthony Garnet, "the Royalist," of Kendal, to ancestors of Mr. Garnett Braithwaite;—viz., Sarah Garnet mar. to John Braithwaite, at Hugill, 1755, and Susanna Garnet married to George Braithwaite, at Burneside, 1742. The same arms are still borne by representatives of the family of Anthony Garnet, whose initials appear in the windows as above stated, and also on a fine old oak bedstead, and an aumbry, yet remaining in the chamber referred to.* This ancient property therefore, with its heirlooms, to which may be added the illuminated missal found therein, which was undoubtedly the property of Anthony Garnet, whose name is inscribed on several of its leaves and which is now deposited in the Museum at Kendal, affords a direct and unbroken link with the period when Kendal Castle stood in all its

* These arms are used by the writer of this paper as being descended from the same family.

glory

glory, and when it is not too much to assume that "The Dairy" was frequently visited by Katherine Parr.

After the death of the King it appears that Katherine resided sometimes at Chelsea, and sometimes at Hansworth near Hounslow, having under her charge the Princess, afterwards Queen, Elizabeth and the Lady Jane Grey; but she was married to Seymour soon after the late King's death in 1547, about the time when Seymour received from the King, his nephew, a grant of Sudeley Castle. The Queen's letter accepting Seymour's offer of marriage, once in the Strawberry Hill Collection, was purchased by the late John C. Dent, Esq., and is now amongst the relics at Sudeley. Seymour soon set to work repairing the castle, which had previously been going to ruin, and he completed a suite of apartments especially for the private use of the Queen, in which she resided in courtly state attended by a large retinue of ladies and a numerous household.

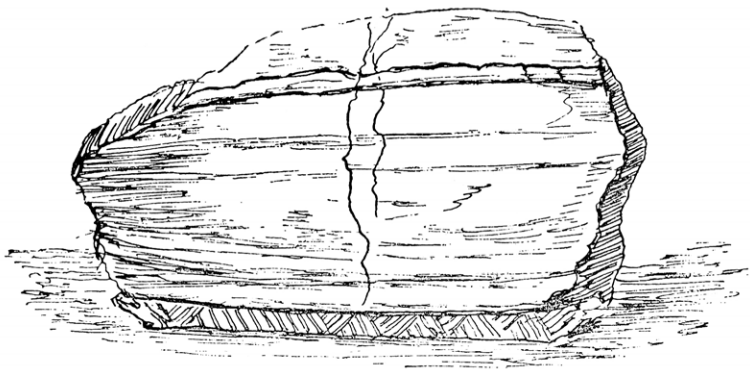
On the 30th August, 1548, Katherine Parr gave birth to a daughter at Sudeley, and expired from puerperal fever on the seventh day after. Her remains were deposited with great ceremony, and according to Protestant rites, in the chapel of the Castle. The description of her obsequies, extracted from a MS. at Herald's College, entitled "a Booke of Buryalls of truly noble persons," is given in Sir George Duckett's Paper. The Latin Epitaph written by the Queen's chaplain, Dr. Parkhurst, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, believed to have been inscribed on her tomb, is published with an English translation in Atkinson's worthies of Westmorland, and Dent's Annals of Sudeley and Winchcombe. The original monument appears to have perished, with the exception of a small fragment found in the wall near the Queen's grave of which a sketch is subjoined.

The Lord of Sudeley did not long survive his wife, for in January, 1549, he was committed to the Tower, and a

Bill

Bill of Attainder having been passed, he was beheaded on Tower Hill, March 20th, 1549.

The possession of Sudeley Castle passed to the Marquis of Northampton, upon whom Henry VIII. had previously conferred the titles of Lord Parr of Kendal and Earl of Essex; but it was taken from him on the accession of Queen Mary, and was granted in 1554 to Sir John Brydges, Lord Chandos. Being dismantled by order of the Parliament in 1649, it rapidly went to decay;—the chapel fell into ruins;—and for more than a century it seems to have been forgotten that the remains of Queen Katherine Parr were buried within its precincts.



FRAGMENT OF QUEEN KATHERINE PARR'S MONUMENT

In 1768 the following letters were addressed by the Rev. R. Huggett to George Pitt, Esq., in Half Moon Street, Piccadilly.

Sir,—Mr. Trapp, my near neighbour at Hartley, having hinted to me yt it wd be agreeable to you to have (what I had before told him for your information) an account of the death and burial of Q Kath Parre, at your Estate of Sudeley Castle, I here send you an exact copy of what I took from y^e Herald's Office, marked as above.

I

I believe this piece of history, as to y^e day of y^e death, and place of sepulture of this Queen, is not notic'd by any of our antiquarians; for in a Book lately printed at Oxford of the lives of famous women, the author having mentioned this Lady in that learned list, laments that he cannot acquaint his readers with anything relatin to her death or burial. This anecdote is altogether at your service. If it proves in the least to your satisfaction my end herein is answered; and if on any future time you may have inquiries to maka w^{ch} may lay within the compass of my reading to resolve, you may readily command, Sir

Your very humble servant,

R. HUGGETT.

Hartley, Waspaill, Hants,

July 2nd, 1768.

In reply to Mr. Pitt's acknowledgment of the above Mr. Huggett wrote as follows:—

Sir,—I was this day favoured with your letter of y^e 7th inst. Your approbation of that piece of intelligence which I communicated to you, and your thinking it worthy a place in history, is doing honour to the Herald's office—that faithful repository of many such usefull pieces of rare and curious memoranda—and w^{ch} you have full liberty to make use of in such way and manner as you may think best for public utility. P'haps the work you mention as intended for the Press may be Sir Robt. Atkyns Hist^y of Glouc^{er}, a book now grown scarce, and y^{re} can be no question but a 2nd editⁿ especially if with additional historical notices continued to the present times w^{ld} be very acceptable to the public. To the above anecdote of Q. K Parre, is to be added y^t she was twice a widow before she married Henry VIII., her 1st husband being Ed^d Burghe, her 2nd, John Neville, Lord Latimer, and y^t by Sir T. S. her 4th husband she died in childbirth. This I found am^g my heraldical MSS. and reference is made to R. Brooke, York Herald, for proof of the two former marriages; while yet the few historians w^{ch} I have here by me (and I believe of liistorians in general) mention her only as y^e widow of Neville, L^d Latimer &c. &c. &c.

Your most obed^t humble servant,

R. HUGGETT.

Hartly, Waspaill near

Basingstoke, July 9th 1768.

There are two other letters from Mr. Lucas, who was
the

the first to open the tomb of Katherine Parr, and of whose proceedings the following account was supplied to Notes and Queries by Mrs. Julia R. Bockett, daughter to Mr. Brooks of Reading, who was present at the opening, and of which an extract is given in Nicholson's "Annals of Kendal."

"In the summer of the year 1782, the earth in which Qu. K. P. lay inter'd, was removed and at the depth of about two feet (or very little more) her leaden coffin or chest was found quite whole, and on the lid of it, when well cleaned, there appeared a very bad though legible inscription of which the underwritten is a close copy : *

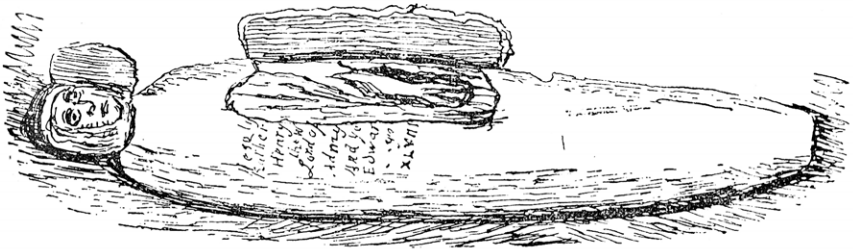
"VIth and last wife of King Henry the VIIIth 1548 "

"Mr. John Lucas (who occupied the land of Lord Rivers, whereon the ruins of the chapel stand) had the curiosity to rip up the top of the coffin, expecting to discover within it only the bones of the dec'ed, but to his great surprize found the whole body wrapp'd in 6 or 7 seer cloths of linen, entire and *uncorrupted*, although it had lain there upwards of 230 years. His unwarrantable curiosity led him also to make an incision through the seer cloths which covered one of the arms of the corps, the flesh of which at that time was white and moist. I was very much displeas'd at the forwardness of Lucas, who of his own head opened the coffin. It would have been quite sufficient to have found it ; and then to have made a report of it to Lord Rivers or myself. In the summer of the year following 1783, his Lordship's business made it necessary for me and my son to be at Sudeley Castle, and on being told what had been done the year before by Lucas, I directed the earth to be once more remov'd to satisfy my own curiosity ; and I found Lucas's account of the coffin and corps to be just as he had represented them ; with this difference, that the body was then grown quite fetid, and the flesh where the incision had been made was brown, and in a state of putrefaction ; in consequence of the air having been let in upon it. The stench of the corps made my son quite sick, whilst he copied the inscription which is on the lead of the coffin ; he went thro' it, however, with great exactness. I afterwards decid'd that a stone slab should be plac'd over the grave to prevent any future and improp'r inspection, &c."

* Note this was afterwards proved to be anything but a close copy. See page 18.

If the directions for placing a stone slab over the grave at this time were carried out, such slab had disappeared when the grave was sought for in late years. From the further examination made in 1817, upon the last occasion of the coffin being looked at, it became apparent that the inscription as given in the foregoing letter and quoted in Nicholson's Annals of Kendal was not accurate.

The coffin was opened in 1784 and 1786 (as described by Mr. Nash to the Soc. of Antiq., June 14th, 1787) and again in 1792, on which occasion it is said the tenant occupying the castle permitted a party of drunken men to dig a fresh grave for the coffin. (*Town and Country Magazine*, September 1792, and Hall's "Graves of our Fathers").



LEAD COFFIN OF QUEEN KATHERINE PARR AT SUDELEY

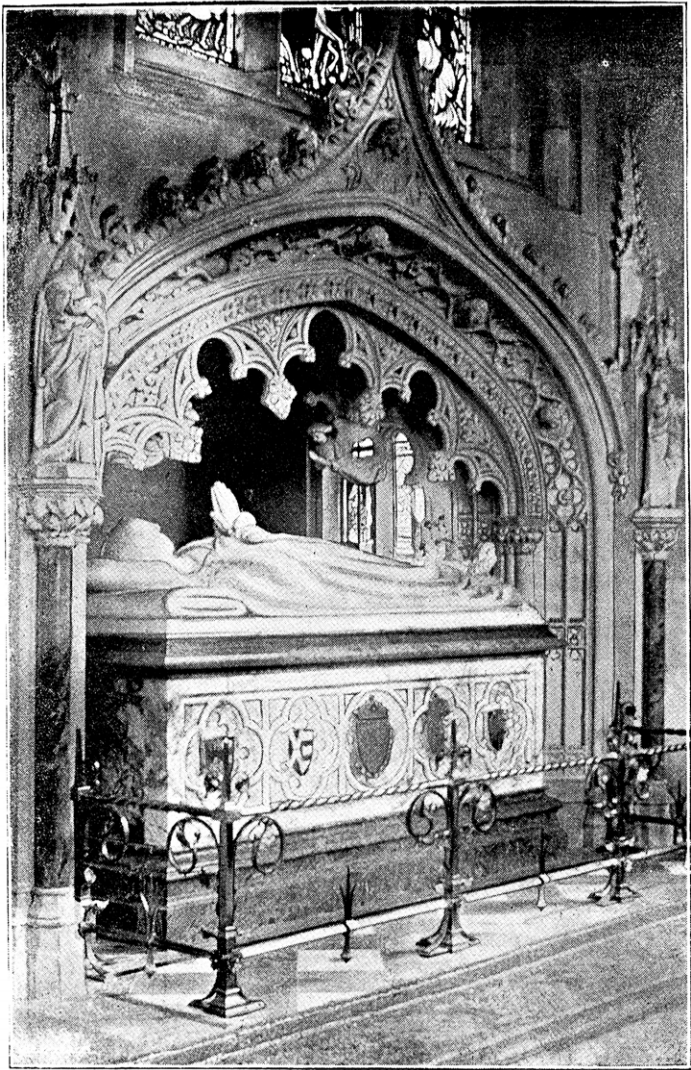
The last occasion of opening the tomb was in 1817 when the then rector of Sudeley, the Revd. John Lates, who had undertaken the repair of the chapel, determined to search for the remains of Queen Catherine Parr, in which he was assisted by Mr. Edmund T. Browne, the Winchcombe antiquary, who in a letter to Mr. Hogg gives the following account of its discovery on 18 July, 1817.

He says "after considerable search, and aided by the recollection of Mrs. Cox, the coffin was found bottom upwards in a walled grave, where it had been deposited by

by the order of Mr. Lucas. It was then removed to the Chandos vault, and after being cleaned we anxiously looked for the inscription. To our great disappointment none however could be discovered, and we proceeded to examine the body; but the coffin having been so frequently opened, we found nothing but the bare skeleton, except a few pieces of sere cloth, which were still under the skull, and a dark-coloured mass, which proved to contain, when washed, a small quantity of hair which exactly corresponded with some I already had. The roots of the ivy which you may remember grew in such profusion on the walls of the chapel, had penetrated into the coffin, and completely filled the greater part of it.

“ I then suggested to Mr. Lates that as the inscription could not be found, for the benefit of future antiquarians, it would be well before the vault should be again closed, to engrave upon it another inscription from that given by Dr. Nash. Mr. Lates then entrusted the work to me, and placed in my hands the piece of lead which had covered the breast. As it was of a very uneven surface, I was about to hammer it even, to facilitate the engraving, when to my great delight and surprize, I discovered the words ‘ Thomas Lord ’ and ‘ Sewdley,’ with some others, which left no doubt that we had discovered the original inscription, and which in the course of a few hours’ cleaning, was so free from incrustation, that the inscription was perfectly visible—from it I took a number of impressions in soft thin paper, one of which I have now the pleasure of begging you to accept. By it, the inaccuracy of the one given by Dr. Nash will be self evident.

“ We then had the different pieces of lead, which from time to time had been cut from the coffin, firmly nailed together, so as to present the original form of the coffin, and it was placed on two large flat stones by the side of that of Lord Chandos. Dr. Nash said “ the Queen must have been low of stature, as the lead which enclosed her
corpse



TOMB OF QUEEN KATHERINE PARR
IN THE CHAPEL OF SUDELEY CASTLE.

corpse but five feet four inches in length." I measured the coffin accurately, and found the dimensions as follows:—Length 5ft. 10in., width in broadest part 1ft. 4in., depth at the head and ditto in the middle 5½in."

The castle with 60 acres of land was purchased at auction in 1810 from George, Lord Rivers, by Richard Granville, Marquis of Buckingham, who took the surname of Brydges Chandos, in addition to Temple Nugent Granville, by royal license in 1799, and was advanced to the dignity of Duke of Buckingham and Chandos and Marquis of Chandos in 1822.

When John and William Dent purchased the castle from the Duke of Buckingham in 1837, it had then recently been occupied as a public house. The Dents proceeded forthwith to carry out the extensive restoration of the ancient remains and the construction of new buildings where necessary for the purposes of habitation.

The ancient chapel, which had been desecrated by the Puritans, was thoroughly renovated under the direction of Sir John Gilbert Scott, and a handsome decorated altar-tomb, surmounted by a gothic canopy, was erected on the north side of the Sacarium to the memory of Queen Katherine Parr, whose effigy was rendered as correctly as it could be from the portraits which are extant, and in the ornamentation of the tomb there is a reproduction of the pattern carved on the fragment of the original tomb.

On a pillar next to the west end of the tomb a plate is now affixed upon which there is an engraved facsimile of the inscription upon the leaden case or coffin in which remains of Q. Katherine Parr were found, and of which, through the kindness of Mrs. Dent, I have obtained a rubbing, and am able therefore to append an accurate copy of the inscription reduced by photography. The actual space covered by the original is about 15in. by 7in.

Amongst the precious relics of Queen Catherine Parr in the collection at Sudeley Castle, may be mentioned
the

the miniature portrait by Holbein, formerly preserved at Strawberry Hill, and three locks of her auburn hair.

KP

Here Lyet he quene
Kateryn Wife to Kyng
Henry the VIII And
Last the wife of Thomas
Lord of Sudeley high
Admyrall of England
And onkle to Kyng
Edward the VI

Dyed

1 September

1555

XXVIII

Another object of interest is a book which belonged to the Queen called "Devotional Tracts," fully described by

by its late possessor, Dr. E. Charlton, in a communication to *Notes and Queries*, dated Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Aug. 18th, 1850. There is also the seal of Katherine Parr (*Archæologia*, vol. v., p. 232) and the "Parr" jug from the Strawberry Hill collection, which bears upon its lid the arms of the Queen's uncle, Lord Parr, of Horton, from whom it came to his daughter Maud, who married Sir Ralph Lane.

It only remains for me in conclusion to express my sincere obligations to Mrs. Dent for the facilities afforded me on my inquiries, and for her permission so kindly given to make use of the valuable information on the subject contained in her sumptuous "*Annals of Winchcombe and Sudeley*," of which I have gratefully availed myself in the compilation of these notes relating to the last days and in memory of the fair Westmorland Dame who became the first Protestant Queen of England.