



SOUTH WINFIELD MANOR HOUSE.

## On the Manor House of South Winfield.

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**T**HE early history of the Manor of South Winfield and its connections with the important families of Heriz, de la Rivere, Bellers, Swillington, Pierpoint, and Cromwell, are of considerable interest, but as it is generally supposed that the older manor-house was in quite a different part of the parish, it will be foreign to our purpose to say anything respecting the local history of this place prior to the time of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, at whose charge the beautiful and extensive buildings, amid the ruins of which we are now standing, were originally erected.

An inquisition taken at Derby, October 25th, 1429, declared that Ralph Lord Cromwell was heir, *inter alia*, of this manor, through kinship with Margaret, sister and heiress of her brothers, John and Robert de Swillington. But this finding was disputed by Sir Henry Pierpoint, and a prolonged lawsuit followed. It was not until the year 1440 that Lord Cromwell was able to take possession of the manor, which was then secured to him by compromise, the rest of the estates devolving to the Pierpoints.

This Ralph, Lord Cromwell, seems to have been possessed of great wealth. In 1443, Henry VI. appointed him to the lucrative post of Treasurer of the Exchequer, and a year or two later the same monarch made him Master of the Royal Hounds and Falcons, an office to which very considerable perquisites pertained.

Three years after he had been assured in the possession of this manor, the king also appointed him to the offices of Constable of the King's Castle of Nottingham, and Steward and Keeper of the Forest of Sherwood. He died on January 4th, 1455, and was buried in the chancel of Tatteshall church, Lincolnshire, which he had rebuilt and changed from a parish church into a college, served by seven chaplains, six secular clerks, and six choristers. The mutilated brass to his memory still remains in the chancel. He also built a spacious castle at Tatteshall, but on a different plan to this manor-house, for it seems to have been chiefly constructed with the idea of being a strong fortress.

Some time between the years 1440-45, the Lord Treasurer began the building of this large manor-house; probably nearer to the latter than the former dates, for we know that it was not completed, especially the state apartments of the inner court, at the time of his death.

It may also be mentioned that there can be little or no doubt that Ralph Lord Cromwell was also the rebuildier of the tower and body of the church of South Winfield, whose rectory was appropriated at an early date to the Abbey of Darley. The tower exactly corresponds in style to the time when he was lord of the manor. The body of the church was demolished in 1803, but some MS. notes taken in 1770, tells us that in each of the east windows of the south and north aisles were the arms of Cromwell quartering Tatteshall.

During his lifetime, Lord Cromwell sold the reversion of this manor after his death to John Talbot, second Earl of Shrewsbury. The accounts of the Earl's agent for his manors of Winfield and Crich, within two years after his taking possession, viz., 1457-8, show that the manor-house was not then habitable, at all events not as a whole. They include payments for the expenses of seven men residing in the manor six weeks "for its safe custody," by command of the Earl of Shrewsbury, as well as numerous sums extending over a considerable portion of the year for the plastering, roofing, and mortaring of the house. In 1458-9, we find that the Earl was in residence here with a numerous retinue, so

that it is fair to assume that by that time the buildings were definitely completed. The date of this fabric may, then, be accurately placed between the years 1450 and 1460. John, the second Earl of Shrewsbury, was slain at Northampton in 1460, but the manor-house of Winfield was a favourite seat of his five immediate successors. George, the fourth Earl, died here on July 26th, 1541, leaving his body to be buried in the church of Sheffield. Two of his daughters by his first wife, Anne and Dorothy, were born within the walls of this manor-house.

George, the sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, is chiefly known in history as the custodian for some sixteen years of the unhappy Mary Queen of Scots. She was first committed to his care in January, 1569, at the Castle of Tutbury, and remained in his custody, chiefly at Sheffield Castle, until December, 1584. Through his marriage with his second wife, the celebrated "Bess of Hardwick," Chatsworth House also pertained to the Earl. There the Queen was originally taken in May, 1569, and she was also there in 1573, 1577, 1578, and 1581. But this Manor House was where she first made acquaintance with Derbyshire, sleeping here on the night of February 2nd, 1569, when being taken from Sheffield to Tutbury. The Queen was brought back to Winfield on April 20th of the same year, making a sojourn of about six months' duration.

Though Winfield Manor was a far superior place of confinement to Tutbury Castle in every particular, the Queen had not been here more than three weeks when she was taken alarmingly ill. The Privy Council sent two physicians to visit her, who reported adversely as to the cleanliness of the place. The Earl of Shrewsbury retorted that "the very unpleasant and fulsome savour in the next chamber hurtful to her health" was caused by the "continual festering and uncleanly order of her own folke." Shrewsbury, however, caused her to be removed to Chatsworth for a few days, whilst her lodgings were being sweetened and the sanitary arrangements improved. She returned on June 1st, but in August was again so unwell that she desired change, in which she was supported by her custodian alleging that the manor-

house "in consequence of the long abode here and the number of people waxes unsavory." I shall have a word to say as to the great number of her guards and attendants when quartered here, when we come to her second confinement at Winfield. The Queen herself desired to go to Sheffield, but was taken back to Tutbury Castle on September 20th. It was during this 1569 stay at Winfield, that Leonard Dacre's plot to rescue her was devised, and that the proposition of the Duke of Norfolk to marry her was made.

Local tradition is strong to the effect that the Queen of the Scots was imprisoned at Winfield for nine years, but this is clearly an error. It was not until after nearly fifteen years of dreary captivity, chiefly at Sheffield, that the Queen again saw Winfield.

In October, 1583, a proposition was made by the Privy Council for her removal to the Castle of Melbourne in the south of this county, belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster, but on a report of the condition of that building being drawn up it was found that extensive repairs were first requisite. On March 20th, 1584, instructions were sent to the Earl of Shrewsbury for the removal of the Queen from his castle at Sheffield to Wingfield Manor House, whilst Melbourne Castle was preparing. Having carefully gone through the whole of the documents in the Public Record Office pertaining to Mary Queen of Scots, as well as the little known Talbot papers at the College of Arms, and the Shrewsbury papers at Lambeth Palace library, I have come to the conclusion, from reasons that would be far too long to now explain, that the Earl of Shrewsbury, worn out by the jealousy, meanness, and cruelty of his wife, as well as by the suspicions and displeasure of Queen Elizabeth and her Council, and filled with a growing sympathy for his prisoner, did his best to bring about this second sojourn at Winfield in the hopes of her escape. The instructions to the Earl state "that for the more safety in conveying the said Queene (to Winfield), in case you shall find it necessary, for your assistance you may use the ayde of the sheriffs of our countys of Derby and Leicester." But various delays were imposed to her removal from Sheffield ; writing from thence on August 25th,

1584, to Sir Francis Walsyngham, Sir Ralph Sadler, who was to be responsible for her safety during Shrewsbury's absence at Court, states that he has entreated the Earl not to remove the Queen to Winfield till they hear again from Her Majesty, adding that he had "rather keep her there (Sheffield) with 60 men than at Winfield with 300."

It may here be remarked that Leland, writing in the time of Henry VIII., of the seats of the Earls of Shrewsbury, says—"Winfeld or Wenfeld in Darbyshire is but a maner place, but yt far passith Sheffield Castle."

It was not until early in September, 1584, that Mary's removal to Winfield was actually effected. What with her own household and domestic attendants, and the officers and soldiers considered necessary to guard her, the retinue that then took up their residence within these walls must have tolerably exhausted its extensive accommodation, for they actually numbered over 250 persons

The company at Winfield Manor House at this date comprised 120 of Lord Shrewsbury's gentlemen, yeomen, and servants; 50 pertaining immediately to Sir Ralph Sadler, the Queen's new custodian; and also 40 soldiers who were continually armed with sword and pistol. In addition to these, the Queen had as her attendants, 5 gentlemen, 14 servitors, 3 cooks, 4 boys, 3 gentlemen's men, 6 gentlewomen, 2 wives, 10 wenches and children. The Queen herself occupied two chambers, and her maids three, two married women two other chambers, and eight for her gentlemen, officers, and men servants. Sadler was most careful in guarding her during her sojourn in this extensive gaol. The inner gateway was guarded by a gentleman porter, with four or five of his company; whilst the outer ward was in charge of the soldiery. At nightfall a watch of eight soldiers was appointed, four of whom patrolled outside the walls immediately below the Queen's lodgings, which were on the west side of the inner quadrangle; and this, in addition to two other soldiers, who kept watch and ward night and day within the entrance from the courtyard that led to her apartments.

But the multiplicity of attendants and guards favoured conspiring, and no sooner was the royal captive established here for the second time, than plans were made for her removal. Dethick, the ancient seat of the Babington family, is only some four miles to the north-west of Winfield, and there seems no doubt that communications were now entered into between the Queen and Anthony Babington or his allies. But plans for her rescue came to naught. Oral tradition, that I have collected in the vicinity of Dethick, gives many a curious detail of the plotting and counter-plotting that went on; two points being specially insisted on (1) that Anthony Babington obtained personal access to the Queen disguised as a gipsy, with his face stained with walnut juice, and (2) that a secret subterranean passage led from Dethick Hall to a place near this manor house, and that it was by this route that the rescue was to be attempted. The first of these traditions may have some truth in it, but seems a corruption of the fact of a similar disguise when Babington was trying to escape in 1586. A would-be circumstantial bit of evidence, to prove the truth of this tale, was given me by an old man living at Ryber, viz. :— that a large walnut tree now growing in the inner court sprang from a nut that Anthony Babington dropped out of his pocket, when he had penetrated there as a gipsy to find out the Queen's special apartments. Much more could be said both from unpublished authentic papers, and local tradition as to the Queen of Scots and this her charming prison-house, but time will not permit. Suffice it then to say that the Queen was finally removed from here, much to her chagrin, on January 13th, 1585, on her way once more to Tutbury, the project for conveying her to Melbourn being at last abandoned.

The system of espionage of one family upon another, or of different members of the same family, and the bribing of servants and retainers for possible evidence, were probably never carried to such a pitch of perfection in any court of any age as they were by Lord Burleigh and others of the Privy Council of Elizabeth. The relentless persecution of the Roman Catholics that was continued throughout Elizabeth's reign, was specially violent in

Derbyshire. Neither George, Earl of Shrewsbury, who died in 1590, nor his son Gilbert, the seventh Earl, who died in 1616, although both holding the highest offices, escaped from grave suspicion of conniving with those who were criminal enough to cling to the Roman faith. Among the State Papers I have found several instances of the charges secretly brought against both these Earls, especially the latter, of complicity with Roman doctrines, or lack of energy in denouncing priests and recusants. Though I have not come across any precise statement of this house being searched for priests, a priest who was tortured before the notorious Richard Topcliff and three other Commissioners in 1593, confessed to having met other Romanists at Winfield Manor House, in the year 1590, and there seems to have been at that time a considerable store here of "Popish books and lewd trash," the latter expression being an elegant euphemism for such matters as a crucifix or rosary.

On the death of the seventh Earl, the estate was divided between his three co heiresses, who were respectively married to the Earls of Pembroke, Kent, and Arundel. At the beginning of the Civil War, between Charles I. and his Parliament, Winfield Manor House was held for the latter, by Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery. It was only garrisoned by one hundred men, and on Sir Thomas Fairfax calling upon Sir John Gell, who had chief command in Derbyshire, on his march northward towards Yorkshire in 1643, to supply him with more musketeers, sixty men were drafted off from this garrison. Meanwhile, William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, suddenly attacked the Manor House on December 7th, 1643, on the part of the King, and, owing to the thinned ranks of the defenders, captured it on December 19th. The following day Sir John Gell arrived with his dragoons, and though not strong enough to attempt the recapture of the Manor House, they routed two troops of horse below in the town of Winfield, and took their colours, which were sent up to London, and formally presented to the Parliament. On the retirement of the Earl of Newcastle's forces, Colonel Sir John Fitzherbert, of Tissington, was left in command of this place with a large body



of troops. The garrison proving very troublesome to the Parliamentary forces both in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, by their frequent sallies and expeditions, Sir John Gell towards the end of May, 1644, brought the whole of his troops, horse and foot, except two companies of foot left in Derby, to environ the Manor House. Here he was presently joined by Colonel Hutchinson with 200 foot. After beleaguering the place for fifteen days, a diversion was caused by the threatened approach of the royal troops from Lichfield, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Burton, and other towns, that had remained true to the King. On the return of Gell's forces, after scattering the royalists, to the continuance of the siege, it was found that his ordnance was not powerful enough for the purpose, but on his reporting this to Major-General Crawford, and that the place could only be subdued by starvation, the General sent him "four great pieces for battering," and so effectual was the fire, that after three hours battery, the garrison, who then numbered 220, yielded themselves up, on condition of each man being allowed to march off to his own home. This successful assault took place on July 20th, 1644.\* Colonel Dalby, the royalist governor of the Manor House, was killed during the siege. The heavy artillery is said to have been placed on the high ground of Pentrich Common, to the east of the Manor. In 1646, this fortified mansion, which had played so important a part in the civil war in the midlands, was dismantled by order of Parliament; the order for the dismantling is dated June 23rd.

Immanuel Halton, scion of an ancient Cumberland family, who had come into this county as auditor to the Duke of Norfolk, obtained several moieties of this manor by purchase. He took up his residence in the Manor House in 1666. He was a distinguished mathematician, astronomer, and musician; to him are due the various sun dials that may still be noted on the walls. In the Philosophical Transactions for 1676, is an account of an eclipse of the sun, as observed by him from this house. Many

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\* This is the first time that the actual and true dates of the two sieges of Winfield Manor have been given. They are taken from an old MS. book of Imanuel Halton, copied by Mr. Reynolds, of Plaistow. Wolley MSS., Brit. Mus.

parts of the building were then unroofed and went to decay, whilst the large banquetting hall was by him converted into a two-storied dwelling house, the pitch of the roof considerably lowered, and rudely devised mullions and transoms introduced into the fine series of windows on its north side. A north-west view of the house, taken from an old painting towards the end of the 17th century, is given in Blore's History of the Manor. The alterations of Imanuel Halton can therein be plainly seen. The chief entrance was then through the old portal on the north side, the room over which was still remaining, and it had a formal walled-in garden in front, planted with stiff shrubs.

"The great hall at Winfield Manor House," says Mr. Reynolds, writing in 1769, "when in its prosperity, was 24 yards and 2 in. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  long, and 12 yards and 1 inch wide. The great cellar under it is of the same dimensions, and has a row of pillars up the middle, and is curiously arched with stone. 'Tis now divided into two cellars, and hath been so for several years past."\*

If this was all that the Haltons did to the Manor House, they might have been forgiven, but in 1774, the then representative of the family built the present ugly square house at the bottom of the hill, and most barbarously pulled down much of the old fabric to find materials. Since that time only a small portion has been occupied for farm purposes, and the rest suffered to fall to decay. The buildings on the east side of the north or inner quadrangle, which are said to have been the most beautiful part of the fabric, were the first to be pulled down to form the foundations. An account of the Manor in the first volume of Shaw's *Topographer*, 1789, mentions that the roof was then off the principal hall, and that the arms and quarterings of the Shrewsbury family were exposed to the weather. This shows how speedy was the work of decay and ruin when once it was left uninhabited, for two interesting Indian ink sketches, taken by my wife's grandfather † on August

\* Wolley MSS., Brit Mus.

† Colonel Machell, of Beverley, was no mean artist; he left behind him a large collection of sketches and water-colour drawings of the most picturesque parts of England in varied and much diversified styles. He was intimate with Sir George Beaumont, Mr. Hearne, the engraver, and others who formed the artistic circle of his day. The remarkable thing about his work was that he had never drawn with either pencil or brush, until after the conflict of Bunker's Hill, and at that battle he lost his right arm.

6th, 1785 (one of which is reproduced on Plate V.) show that the roof over the banquetting hall was then perfect, and the windows glazed. Between 1789 and 1793, a large portion of the south wall of the banquetting hall fell down or was taken away, as we find by a comparison of the plates given by Shaw and Blore. About the year 1825, a lofty tower in the south-east angle of the north court fell down, and some twenty or thirty years ago the sides of the original well, which was still in use in the centre of the south court, collapsed, and the space has since been filled up. During the past twenty years I have known this ruin intimately, and until the last year or two, during which all reasonable care has been taken to preserve it, the considerable progress of decay in some of its most interesting parts has been only too painfully obvious.

The Manor House is divided into two large quadrangles or courts; the extreme length of the buildings is 416 feet, and their greatest width 256 feet. We enter by a substantial well-built gateway in the south-east angle of the south court. It is flanked on the right hand by a narrow room which was the porter's lodge. To the left hand, forming part of the south side of this court, is a large barn, having an area of nearly 90 feet by 30. With the exception of the eastern bay, which was added at a somewhat later date, it is all part of the original construction. "Notwithstanding that the barn has substantial buttressed walls," as remarked by Mr. Ferrey, "the massive oak roof seems independent of them, as the trusses are carried on strong oak posts of large size; not placed centrally with the buttresses." This peculiar construction doubtless added to its strength, and helps to account for the preservation of the barn. Only some detached portions of walling now remain on the rest of this side of the outer court; but a sufficiency of foundations have been uncovered to prove that it used to be occupied by a continuous range of buildings about 30 feet in breadth. A narrower range of rooms occupied the west side of this irregular shaped court, of which only part of the outer wall now remains; that it had two floors is proved by a portion of a flight of stone steps. The opposite or east wing of the courtyard

was also of two floors, and contained the guards' chambers, lighted by a double tier of single light cinque-foil headed windows.

In the centre of the range of buildings that divide the two courtyards is another entrance gateway, with a porter's lodge on the left hand. Over the gateway, on the south side, is a series of shields effectively arranged under a hood-mould. They now bear no trace of carving or emblazonry, but were doubtless originally designed for the arms of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, and his alliances. This is proved by the badge of a boldly carved double purse, twice repeated, which he adopted as the insignia of his office as Lord Treasurer. The same badge is found on other buildings erected by him, and it used to be on some of the oak carving of the large hall of this manor, which was removed at the time when Imanuel Halton subdivided it. Only the external walls of the farmhouse to the right of this gateway are ancient, the inner walls and fittings being of comparatively modern date.

Through this gateway we gain the inner or north quadrangle, where were the most important apartments. The rooms on the east side have altogether disappeared; and of the range on the west side only the lofty outer walls remain, and some of the foundations of its inner wall. The latter side of this courtyard is, no doubt, the site of the suite of apartments occupied by Mary, Queen of Scots. Their united area would be about 100 feet by 20; the external walls are here very plain and massive, and are not pierced with windows on the ground floor. The small triangular room in the north-west angle of the building, behind the kitchens, is also sometimes pointed out as the part tenanted by Queen Mary, but this is clearly an error, as she was at no time immured in a single room.

In the south-west angle of this court is the high tower, with its numerous cells and apartments. It is 72 feet high; the steps are good to the summit, and the ascent will be well repaid by the general view of the manor house and surrounding country.

The most beautiful part of the ruins is the south front of the banquetting hall, opening into the inner quadrangle, and the whole range of buildings on that side of this courtyard. The interior area of the large hall is about 72 feet by 36. The filling up of the

north windows with mullions and transoms, and the other interpolations of the 17th century, as already mentioned, are here to be noticed. The projecting porch, through which access is gained to the hall, is well finished and most effective. The series of four-leaved flowers carved in the hollow of the moulding of the outer doorway should be noted. The beautiful tracery of the octagon bay window of the hall, and of the principal square-headed window of the porch, seems worthy of close attention. I do not know of any better specimens of domestic Gothic of the 15th century. Observe also the quatrefoils of the parapets over the porch and over the bay window, which differ slightly in their details. The embattlements of these parapets bear shields; on one of those over the porch is a plain Latin cross; on one of those which has fallen down within the last ten years, I formerly noted the bearings of Deincourt—a fesse dancettée. Ralph, Lord Cromwell married Margaret, sister and co-heiress of William, Lord Deincourt.

In the south gable of the state apartments (to the west of the banquetting hall) is a charming little circular window, composed of three trefoils; it is remarkable that it is not precisely in the centre of the gable. Below it is the principal window of the state apartment, of four chief lights; it is a stiff specimen of perpendicular work under an ogee-shaped crocketed hood-mould with head terminals. Below this large state room was a lower hall or room that communicated with a passage leading straight to the large kitchens with their enormous fireplaces; on the left of this passage is the buttery.

The west end of the banquetting hall would doubtless be screened off with a wooden partition (as is the case with Haddon) so that a passage would be formed through it to the "portal," or north porch, by which the outer precincts of the manor house could be gained down a flight of a few steps. This portal is now in a ruinous condition.

One of the most remarkable features of the building is the large "crypt" beneath the banquetting hall. As it is considerably hidden, the local term for this spacious apartment is not

strictly a misnomer, but it must be remembered that it has no connection with ecclesiastical purposes, nor is it altogether underground. It has been conjectured that it was used as a servants' or retainers' hall, but this is scarcely likely from its position away from the servants' apartments and offices, from its two staircases communicating direct with the large hall, and from another leading into the buttery, and a fourth into the state apartment. I am more inclined to consider it to have been used as cellars and larder, and that their large size is due to the falling away of the ground, which necessitated a massive sub-structure below the banquetting hall, in order to keep it at the same level as the rest of the court. The crypt has a groined stone roof, and is supported down the centre by six pillars, from which the vaulting ribs spring in a very irregular way. The central bosses are carved with a geometrical pattern in tracery; and there are eight ornamental keystones to the wall ribs, which are rudely carved with winged figures and other designs. The stone flooring of the crypt was removed at the end of the last century. Note the east door to the crypt, on which can be seen remains of the tracery wherewith it was formerly ornamented; it is the only detail of the original woodwork of the building (except the roof of the barn) now remaining.

On the north side of the crypt are several irregularly placed windows; above them, on the exterior wall, are a row of mortice holes for joists, and the foundations of a wall some 8 feet distant can be traced. Here then was a passage or cloister, covered probably with lead; but it had no connection with the original plan, and is most likely part of Imanuel Halton's work.

At the north-east angle of the building are parts of a detached wall, said to have pertained to the chapel; the chapel was most likely on the east side of the inner quadrangle, but we may be pretty confident that it was not a detached erection, but formed a component part of the structure.

Remains of the old earthworks thrown up for defence at the south-east angle of the south quadrangle can still be traced. On the north and on part of the east sides of the manor house are ex-

cavations that are usually spoken of as a dry moat. But it seems more likely that they were quarries for the sandstone of which the rougher parts of the house are built, than made for any defensive purpose. The better parts of the building are faced with an excellent crystalline millstone grit, supposed to have been obtained from Ashover Moor, four miles north of Winfield. Some of the stones of this material are of unusually large size ; one of the windows of the kitchen has the whole of the tracery cut out of a single block without any joint.

In the large window of the state apartment is the only fragment of the old glass now remaining. It is of the pattern termed "Grisaille glass."

On the east side of the manor house were the old terrace gardens. The yew trees point out the site, for the old gardeners had only the yew, holly, and box—our three indigenous evergreens—with which to plant their terraces, walks, or bowling-greens.

To those who may take any special interest in this pile, and who may not be acquainted with the work, I would venture to recommend the excellent plans, elevations, sections, and other drawings to scale ; executed and published by Mr. Edmund B. Ferrey, the well-known architect, in 1870.

I trust the members of the Royal Archæological Institute, who have joined the excursion, will not be disappointed with their visit to one of the best specimens of Domestic Architecture of the 15th century that we have left in England. In its completeness, both from the extent of the buildings and the beauty of their irregular design, so well proportioned to the site, the manor house of South Winfield might well lay claim to the epithet magnificent.