Surrey Collections.

SUTTON PLACE, GUILDFORD.

By FREDERIC HARRISON, M.A.

IT is not a little singular that there exists no adequate account of a house which, besides being one of the most exquisite remnants of Renaissance work in England, is in many striking features truly original, if not unique. The scanty notices in Manning and Bray, Brayley, Allen, and others, tell us little of the historical associations which surround this building; they tell us even less of its rare architectural peculiarities. There are, however, very few houses in England which unite in so remarkable a way, unity of design and construction, complete preservation and freedom from restoration, with a date anterior to the Reformation.

Sutton Place is, indeed, one of the very earliest extant examples in England of a house designed and built with a purely domestic character—without any trace of fortification or military purpose. It is singular also, in that its northern and southern façades are entirely the work of one hand, containing no earlier structure, and no later additions. It may be said to be unique in showing Gothic features in peculiar combination with the best Italian art of the Renaissance. And lastly, it is one of the rare examples of a pre-Reformation house in which, by tradition of the owner's family, the mass has been celebrated, openly or in secret, without interruption for 350 years.

From the Conquest to the reign of Henry VIII, the manor in which it stands belonged to the Crown and to

a long succession of royal favourites. The Manor of Sutton, in truth, has been held in succession by Edward the Confessor, by the Conqueror, King Stephen, William of Warrenne, Henry II, John, Bigod Earl of Norfolk, Edward III, Thomas of Woodstock his half-uncle, the fair maid of Kent and Thomas Holland, Duke of Surrey, her grandson, the Beaufort family, from whom it passed to Edward IV, then to Richard III, and so after Bosworth back to Henry VII, then to Margaret Countess of Richmond his mother, from whom the estate passed to her grandson Henry VIII. During this period of five centuries, the Lords of this Manor and their heirs apparent were attainted and beheaded on eight different occasions, when the estate reverted by forfeiture to the Crown. This was but a prelude to the catastrophe that was to befall the founder in the execution of his only son, almost before the mortar was dry on his new walls.

The hall still contains the arms or devices of all the four Tudor sovereigns, and also of some of the most famous personages of their Courts, every one of whom, we may believe, has been present under its roof; and some of the glass in the windows is identical with glass still to be seen in the Lady Chapel of Westminster. The house, too, has one tragedy of a peculiarly pathetic sort. The walls had hardly been raised when the young heir, the only son of Sir Richard Weston, the founder, was involved in the judicial murder of Ann Boleyn, and was beheaded on Tower Hill as one of her lovers. He left a child in this house, who lived to become a trusted soldier and statesman of Mary and also of Elizabeth Tudor. Elizabeth was the kinswoman of Sir Henry Weston's wife; her own mother had been executed by the same judicial stroke that had cut off his father; and she took the young soldier into special favour. He was made Knight of the Bath at her coronation in 1558, and she visited him on several occasions in this house, notably in 1560 and in 1591.

It was in 1521 that King Henry VIII made to Sir R. Weston a grant of the manor (17th May, 13 Henry VIII, Record Office, S. B. Pat., p. 2, m. 18). An ancient

exemplification of the grant is now in the possession of Mr. Salvin, the present owner and representative of the family. In 1533, Sir Richard obtained license to impark upwards of 1,000 acres more in Clandon and Merrow. He was of a family settled in Boston in Lincolnshire since the reign of Henry III, was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber or Knight of the Body to Henry VIII, Master of the Court of Wards, Treasurer of Calais, and Under-Treasurer of England. His uncle and his brother were successively Priors of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and as such stood at the head of the Roll of Peers. Another of his uncles was a Knight of Rhodes; all of these knights greatly distinguished themselves in the wars that were carried on with the advancing power of the Turks. The tomb of the younger Prior (A.D. 1540), who is said to have died of grief on the dissolution of his house, was to be seen in the last century in the Church at Clerkenwell. It showed the arms, crest, and motto of the Weston family, as seen in the hall.

Sir Richard Weston, the founder of the house, was one of those able and devoted servants of Henry VIII, who built up the elaborate fabric of administration and created the centralised power of the Tudor dynasty. He was born about 1465 and died 7th August, 1541. (See Inquisition on his death. Record Office.) His father Edmund Weston is named in the very year of the battle of Bosworth (1485), as receiving "for his good and gratuitous services, performed with great labour and great personal cost," the office of Captain and Governor of the island of Guernesey, and the other islands and places in those parts.[1] The office became almost hereditary in the family; it was renewed in favour of Sir Richard, and he held it till his death, nearly 60 years after the original appointment of his father. On the accession of Henry VIII, in 1509, we find the name of Weston along with that of the Marneys, the Darcys, Brandons, Arundells, Boleyns, Russells, and the other personal followers of the brilliant young king. The

[1] NOTE.—Materials for the Hist. of Hen. VII. Rolls Series. Record Office, P. S. No. 514. Pat., p. 2, m. 20.

Records of the Patent Rolls are full of the offices that were heaped upon him during his long career in the king's service, which lasted over thirty-two years without a break, from the accession of the king in 1509 until the death of the knight in 1541. In 1511 he was made Lieutenant of the Castle and Forest of Windsor; he was knighted in 1514, and made Knight Commander of the Bath in 1518. (Brit. Mus., Claudius, ciii, 14.) In 1518 he was one of the embassy to France. In 1520 he took part in the meeting known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold; and in 1523 he served in the French war under the Duke of Suffolk. (See *Chron. Calais*, Camden Soc. Public.) In 1525 he was appointed Treasurer of the town and marches of Calais; in 1528 he is appointed Under-Treasurer of England, and he held that office until his last illness. (See Record Office, Record 32 Hen. VIII, Rot. 7.) On the institution of the famous Court of Wards and Liveries in 1540, Sir Richard Weston, who had long practically acted as custodian of the wardships in the care of the Crown, was appointed the first master, and held that office also until his death.

He was throughout his long life in the closest personal relations with Henry; in 1516 he was named knight of the body, and when the Council in 1519 requested the dismissal of Lord Carew and the king's minions, "four sad and ancient knights," of whom Weston was one, were put into the King's Privy Chamber.[1] From that hour he remained attached to the king's household, alike under the Reformed and the Catholic faith, alike under Cromwell and Wolsey, and under the first four wives of Henry VIII.

Sir Richard was a protégé of Wolsey, for in the State papers we have the cardinal asking the king to give him the office of the Duchy of Lancaster; and there is in the Record Office a letter from Sir Richard to Wolsey, asking for his brother, Sir William, the high office of Prior of St. John's, which he obtained in 1527. The first grant of the manor was made during the zenith

[1] Hall's *Chronicle*, 11 Hen. VIII. All of them, we are told, were upwards of 50 years of age. (Caligula, D. vii, 118.)

of the cardinal's power. Sir Richard was one of the knights who attended the Emperor Charles V on his visit to England in 1522 (and it is interesting that a portrait of the emperor hangs now in the staircase). The grant of Clandon and Merrow, however, was made after the fall of Wolsey. The House was hardly built before the great struggle of the divorce, the fall of Wolsey, and the Reformation ensued. But Sir Richard continued to hold his offices and his estates throughout all the changes of religions, ministries, queens, and policies. His son Francis, named after the French king, was early taken into favour by Henry, and was appointed his page in 1526. The *Chronicles of Calais* and Sir H. Nicolas' *Privy Purse Expenses* reveal him to us as a gambler (£40 is paid to him for winnings at one sitting); he is the spoiled minion of the king, who loses to him large sums at "Pope July's game," "Imperiall," tennis, and dice. The wretched lad was made Knight of the Bath at the marriage of Ann Boleyn, and was attached to her court; he left his wife and child at Sutton, and evidently presumed on the favour of king and queen. The story of his offence may be read at length in Burnet. It was probably at most boyish impudence, expiated by a terrible fate, which he bore with courage and devotion, for with his last breath he asserted the innocence of the queen.

Strangely enough, this tragedy seems to have made no difference in the position of the father. Sir Richard retained his offices and the confidence of the king; he lived six years after at Sutton, which was the king's gift. And his widow, when the royal family are at Guildford, sends presents of pudding, peacocks, herons, and "sweet bagges" (sachets). (Sir H. Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Princess Mary*, p. 33.)

According to the Rhyming Chronicle in Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, Weston the wanton, says:—

> "I was dayntely norished under the king's wyng
> "Who highly favored me and loved me so well
> "That I had all my will and lust in every thing."

In 1540, Sir Richard was chosen as one of the knights

at the reception of Ann of Cleves along with Sir Walter Denmys, his own son-in-law, and Sir T. Arundell, whose daughter married Sir Richard's grandson. He died 7th August, 1541, before the Reformation was finally completed (Rec. Off., Inq. p. m., 34 Hen. VIII, No. 77), having held office and favour under Catherine of Arragon and Wolsey, Cromwell and Ann Boleyn, Jane Seymour, and Ann of Cleves. His pedigree and his arms, as they are seen in this Hall, are given in a magnificent roll, the work of Garter-King-at-Arms in 1632, long preserved at Sutton, and now in the British Museum (Addit. 31,890; see also Harleian MSS. Plut., LVIII B, f. 10).

His Will was proved by his executor, his friend Sir Christopher More, of Loseley, where there is in the Archives an inventory of his effects, furniture, and plate in the house at Sutton. This is one of the most interesting documents of its time. Unfortunately, owing to the destruction of that part of the house where the family lived, it is not easy to identify the 38 rooms. It begins with the "gret chambere" (the hall), "where are peces of hangynges of the story of the Egypcyons" and "a gret carpet to the table there." The inventory then appears to pass to the eastward. A bedroom and 6 chambers are given before we come to the gate. Thence the inventory appears to go to the "wodeyard"—the present stable-yard in the west side. On this side are the offices (and singularly enough "my master's chamber"); the "foole's chamber," the "prest's chambere." It gives a list of the Chapel vestments and plate, also of 5 score and 2 pairs of harness, "5 score and 2 sellats and 50 gorgeats, 4 score and 8 paire of spleatts, 38 bows and 54 sheafs of arrowes, 400 sheep, 100 cattle, 40 horses." The executors were the Earl of Southampton, Lord Russell, founder of the Bedford family, Sir C. More, and the widow. The personal estate was sworn under £360 of the value of the day. There is no reason to suppose that any of these effects remain, except possibly two pieces of tapestry "hangyngs of birds and bests, of grene and yalowe."

On the death of the founder in 1541 the estate was possessed by his grandson, Sir Henry Weston, who enjoyed it exactly 51 years till his death in 1592. Sir Henry was made Knight Commander of the Bath at the coronation of Elizabeth in 1558. He was one of the defenders of Calais in the reign of Mary; he married the daughter of Sir Thomas Arundell of Wardour, a niece of Queen Katherine Howard, a great niece of Ann Boleyn, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth and of Lady Jane Grey, and great grand-daughter of the second Duke of Norfolk. Thus Sir Henry and his wife were children of courtiers and friends of Elizabeth's mother; both were the children of men who had been executed for treason. This was certainly the period of the greatest prosperity of the family. They entertained Elizabeth here in 1560 and in 1591, and no doubt on other occasions. They seem to have remained Catholic, for in 1591 an order was made to the sheriff to search the house for a concealed priest, named Morgan (Loseley Papers). During the visit of the queen in 1560 (according to Machyn), the house was burnt—that is to say, the gateway wing and the east wing. They were much injured and were never completely restored. The gateway front was entirely removed by Mr. Webbe Weston in 1782.

During the greater part of the reign of James I, the whole of that of Charles I, and the first three years of the Commonwealth, 1613—1652, the estate was possessed (nearly 40 years) by Sir Richard Weston, the grandson of Sir Henry. He appears to have taken no part in the Civil Wars, but to have occupied himself in improving his estates. He is the promoter of the Canal navigation of the Wey. Aubrey tells us that he introduced from Flanders the contrivance of locks, and flood-gates, and also the use of clover grass. He sold a farm at Merrow and the mansion at Clandon to the Onslow family.

About this time, probably on the marriage of Sir Richard's son with the heiress of the Copley family in 1634, the house appears to have been refitted, and this would appear to be the date of much of the woodwork in the hall and gallery. At this date, no doubt, the

principal rooms of the family were changed from the eastern to the western side of the quadrangle, for the room which Aubrey calls the "wainscotted parlour" is now the entrance hall on the western side of the house. And this may have been the date of the smaller quadrangle with the present offices.

The occasion of the marriage of the heir of the Weston family with the heiress of the Copley family, a lady who united large possessions to most illustrious descent, was no doubt the occasion of the preparation of the magnificent pedigree emblazoned on vellum, by Sir Wm. Segar, and dated 1632, and also of the insertion in the windows of the great hall at Sutton Place of the painted escutcheons with the quarterings of Welles, Beauchamp, Hastings, Shelley, and Waterton—all of which appear continually in the house.

There is no evidence of any further work in the house, except of some repairs by Mr. John Weston, in the year 1724, when it would seem much of the woodwork in the long gallery was made.

Such is a sketch of the annals of the family by whom this house was raised. And without it, it would be hopeless to solve the architectural problems connected with the structure and its adornments. These problems may be thus grouped:—

1. What was the precise date of the building?
2. Under what artistic influence was it raised?
3. Whence come certain features, some of them new at that date, and others quite unique?
4. Whence come certain portions of the glass much anterior to the date of the house?

Two historical facts have considerable bearing on these questions. The first is found in the foreign relations and missions of Sir Richard Weston and his family; the other is the connection of the house with the king and his family, and the relation it bears to other buildings raised by the king himself and his personal favourites.

In the year 1518, Sir R. Weston had accompanied his brother the Prior on a grand embassy to Francis I, at

Paris, to arrange a marriage between the baby Mary Tudor and the infant Francis II. From Paris the envoys were sent to Cognac in Angoulême to see the infant (or Dolphyn as he is called in Hall, *Chron.*, fol., p. 596). The founder of the house thus passed along the country of the Loire where at this time those noble chateaux of the Renaissance were building—Blois, Chambord, Chenonceaux, and the rest—a country where Leonardo da Vinci was still at work, and which was the centre of the artistic life of France. It has struck me as probable that Sir R. Weston during this stately journey saw and was struck with those magnificent chateaux of the Loire, just then building or built, which transformed the domestic architecture of Europe. About that time his son was born, and doubtless was named Francis after the French king.

It must also be remembered that an older house on this manor is said to have stood beside the present Chapel of St. Edmund. It was held, moreover, with the Manor of Woking; and both were the property of Margaret of Richmond and then of Henry VIII. This may account for the singular fact that portions of glass appear in the hall which are certainly older than 1521. In the north bay may be seen the White Rose *en soleil*, the well-known badge of the House of York (Shakespeare's "Sun of York"), and, unless I am mistaken, the coat of Richard Duke of Gloucester himself, viz.: England ancient, a label of 3 points ermine, on each point a canton gules (see Boutell, *Royal Cadency*). There is also the coat of Henry, impaling that of Catherine of Arragon; the monograms of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, the well-known hawthorn bush and crown with H.E.; the personal emblems of Sir Reginald Bray, d. 1503, the architect of Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster; the arms and mitre of Archbishop Bourchier who married Henry VII; and furthermore, a shield for the ancient kings of Britain whom Henry Tudor affected to represent on his father's side. These, with profuse emblems of the White and Red Rose united, a fragment of a portrait of Henry VII, crowns and other

devices, are identical with designs now to be seen in the Lady Chapel at Westminster, executed under the artists who surrounded Torrigiano for the tomb and burial place of Henry VII. It will be remarked on close study, that some of these are certainly from the same hand that made the glass of which fragments still remain in Henry VII's Chapel. Either these were obtained by the builder from the maker, or they were transferred from an older mansion. I incline to the latter view, as it is most unlikely that the peculiar emblems connected with the field of Bosworth and its heroes were placed in a hall built many years after that date; or that the personal badges of Henry of Richmond and Elizabeth of York were displayed so profusely, forty years after Red and White Rose had blended by the marriage of the two houses. A careful study of the oldest glass in the hall would suggest that it was painted in the reign of Henry VII, rather than of Henry VIII; and yet the house is unquestionably later in date than 1521.

There is reason to think that the house was built about 1523—1525. The date is given by Manning (Vol. I, p. 136) as 1529 or 1530; by Aubrey (Vol. III, p. 228) as 1521. It is exceedingly improbable that the house was built so late as 1529, the year of the divorce of Catherine of Arragon, since her device of a pomegranate appears in the spandrils of the arched chimney-piece in the great hall, and again in the panelled hall, and her arms are found in the hall impaled with the arms of England. As Catherine had lost the favour of Henry VIII in 1527, it is hardly conceivable that her emblems were placed at any later date in the hall of one of the king's ministers and personal attendants. The better conclusion seems to be that the house was erected between the date of the grant of the Manor (1521) and 1527; probably on the return of Sir Richard Weston from the war in France, in 1523.[1]

The house, as originally built, consisted of a principal

[1] In the hall are the arms of the 2nd Earl of Derby, d. 1522, and of the 2nd Duke of Norfolk, d. 1524, and also a rebus for the Vicar of S. Nicholas, Guildford, who d. 1527.

quadrangle, inclosing a space of 81 feet on each side, and fronted by an arched gateway, with a tower flanked by lofty hexagonal turrets, each rising to a height of about 70 feet. On the western side is also an inner quadrangle, inclosing a space of about 50 feet × 40 feet, with stabling and offices beyond. The whole house is built of brick and terra-cotta, no stone whatever having been used in the construction or ornamentation. From the enormous quantity of terra-cotta used, there is every reason to suppose the clay was found in the neighbourhood, and probably on the estate. At Woking, within about three miles of the house, excellent terra-cotta and moulded brick is now made. This use of terra-cotta is one highly characteristic of the builder's age; it is found in one or two other contemporary examples, but it was shortly afterwards abandoned, and did not reappear until very recent times.

Sutton is one of the very earliest existing specimens of the purely domestic mansion-house, entirely planned and constructed in an era when no purpose of defence was thought of, and when modern ideas of domestic economy had been fully developed. In all the examples of houses built before the 16th century, of which Haddon Hall is a familiar instance, either an existing castellated work was adapted or incorporated with the house, or the house itself was planned with a view to military defence.[1] Down to the 16th century, mansion-houses consisted mainly of a great hall used for common purposes, and a few separate chambers for the master and his family; the rest of the edifice consisting of kitchen, buttery, guard-room, bakehouse, brewery, and other outbuildings. At Sutton Place, as appears by the inventory made on the founder's death, we find a house planned with all the apartments required by modern habits, some 40 in number; large symmetrical and unguarded windows; and all the chambers reached by passages and staircases, and not by circular stairs in

[1] Hever Castle, built by Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, Lord Mayor of London, and great-grandfather of Queen Ann Boleyn, and completed by her father, was strongly fortified.

turrets. It is accordingly an example of the modern mansion-house of the class of which Hatfield House, Wollaton, and Longleat are splendid specimens. But it is much earlier in date and of an order of architecture differing radically from any Elizabethan or Jacobean work. It is one of the very few extant examples of the Gothic Renaissance style of the age of Henry VIII and Francis I.

Every separate work of this age was the distinct creation of some particular artist. The charm of the Renaissance, in France especially, is that each product of it is unique. At Sutton Place this blending of the Gothic and Renaissance elements is treated in a way special to itself. In this age of transition, each artist selected the parts of each style for himself, and himself devised the spirit in which they should combine.

In the house before us the elements of the Gothic and the Renaissance are combined in a way that is, perhaps, without any exact counterpart. Was the designer of this house working under English, French, or Italian influence? Was he consciously undertaking a new method of building? was he following a known model? Did he belong to the masters of the Gothic art, or of the Renaissance?

Seen from a distance, the house appears to be simply Gothic of the Tudor age. But the details are in many cases purely Renaissance, and Italian, rather than English, in style; whilst there are occasional points of resemblance to some of the work of Francis I in France. It was a great building age; and one when England was brought into close relations with the artistic work of France and of Italy. Henry's sister married Louis XII in 1514. The treaty for a marriage between the children of Henry and Francis took place in 1518. Henry's visit to Francis at the Field of the Cloth of Gold took place in 1520. Sir Richard Weston was present at all these ceremonies.

On the other hand, Henry VIII had employed many Italian workmen, both on the chapel of Henry VII at Westminster Abbey, and elsewhere. Girolamo da Treviso

was the king's architect, and he is said to have introduced terra-cotta or moulded brickwork for ornaments. (See Dallaway's *Notes to Walpole.*)

The house, therefore, is probably a work of builders trained in Gothic art, but working under directions of a designer familiar with the new domestic architecture of the Renaissance, and possibly with designs for the details or moulds given by a foreign, and no doubt, Italian artist. There is no improbability in supposing that the general artistic superintendence and the finer ornamental work was given by Trevisano, whilst the master builder was an Englishman familiar only with English perpendicular models.

The parts where the different styles appear may be said to be as follows.

The general plan of the house is that of the domestic architecture of the first half of the 16th century, and in its general outline and main characteristics it is Gothic. It is far more distinctly Gothic than the houses built in the second half of that century. The gateway and tower, the quadrangle, the great hall dividing the two wings, with the principal chambers at the upper end, and the kitchen, buttery, and cellars at the lower end, are features invariably found in the centuries preceding, and in Gothic and castellated edifices. The pointed arch distinctly appears in the mullions of the upper lights in all the windows of the ground floor, in the small arcade of the parapet on the façade, and in the heads of the doors large and small. The mullions, transoms, and labels for the windows, the trefoils and quatrefoils, the bays and gables, are essentially Gothic, and Gothic of the English type. The irregular disposition of the garden or south façade is also essentially English and Gothic. The general disposition of the house is Tudor rather than strictly Gothic, and entirely English in character.

On the other hand, the use of terra-cotta is almost always traceable to foreign influences, usually Flemish or Italian. The diaper pattern in dark brick is said to have been introduced by Holbein.

The use of steps in the gables, as seen in the wings on the north end, is said to be originally a French artifice; it is common in Germany and Holland, but it is certainly rare in England. Again, the quadrangle shows a symmetry and careful disposition of parts so as to produce a regular façade, which is not characteristic of Gothic work, but peculiarly a feature of Italian Renaissance. The quadrangle, as originally built and seen from within, would be exactly symmetrical in all its parts, were it not that on the west side the windows are not all placed at quite regular intervals. But the deviation is not immediately apparent. There is, perhaps, no known example in England of a house of a date so early having a plan and façade so symmetrical as is the interior of the great quadrangle. Wollaton Hall, near Nottingham, one of the very earliest, as it is certainly one of the most perfect, specimens of the noblest Renaissance architecture in England, was nearly fifty years later than Sutton, a half-century which saw a complete transformation in habits, art, manners, and religion. The full architectural effect, and the principal ornamentation are reserved, as usual, for the interior view of the quadrangle. And it will be observed that the ancient chimneys are carefully kept out of sight from the quadrangle, all the fire-places throughout the house being in the outer and not in the inner walls. Some of the chimney-stacks are obviously more recent additions. But the most distinct feature of the Renaissance work that the house contains is in the details of the ornament in terra-cotta. The Amorini over the external hall doors, north and south, and in the parapet above, the arabesque work in the mullions, the string-courses moulded with the "Tun," the baluster ornament, the small arabesque moulding with it, and the lozenge ornament, are all entirely in the taste of the Renaissance, and are apparently of refined Italian design. Nothing in the least like any of them is to be found in Gothic work; and the perfect freedom and grace with which these Renaissance details are adapted to the Gothic work, and even applied to pointed arches, is one of the peculiar features of this house.

Yet, whilst many of the details of the ornament are of strictly Renaissance character, there is no single example, even the smallest, of classical work. The column, the arch, the pilaster, the architrave, the cornice, baluster, and the pediment are nowhere seen; nor, on the other hand, are the broad scrolls, contorted gables, the lattice-work, and fantastic parapets of the Elizabethan style proper. The spirit of the work is rather horizontal in its lines than perpendicular, but the number and disposition of the mullions over each other prevent the horizontal lines from being prominent.

The house remains, the unique work of some unknown "Master of 1525," as one of the landmarks in the history of English architecture. It is so far modern that it has all the symmetry of a Palladian design, whilst it has no single classical feature, such as occur at every point of a building of Renaissance times. The work as a whole is truly Gothic, but Gothic treated with the eye of an Italian of the age of Raffaelle and Cellini. The profuse ornamentation is of the most delicate kind, never obtruding itself, and in singular contrast with the coarse and florid decoration by which the Elizabethan and Jacobean builders sought to obtain effects of shadow and of contrast. It is interesting to speculate what might have been the future of English domestic architecture, if it had sought to adapt and retain the Gothic forms to new uses in the refined and graceful spirit of the builder of Sutton.

The problem remains—Who was he, of what nation, of which school? The solution which seems the more probable is this: that the house was erected by English builders in the contemporary English style of domestic Gothic; that it was planned under the influence of men who had seen the great palaces which had recently risen in Italy and France, and who understood the new requirements which the modern life of the 16th century had introduced; and that the English builders were assisted, if not in the symmetrical design, at least in the details of the ornamentation, by Trevisano or some of his countrymen and companions.

Whatever may be its origin, it is a building of singular interest in the history of art, as well as of a rare and peculiar beauty. It is a significant example of the flexibility of the Gothic architecture, and of the vitality that remained in it, just as it was about to be swept away. It is an evidence of the possibility of building a modern house entirely graceful and light, without resorting to a single classical expedient. Lastly, it is a wonderful example of the resources and durability of terra-cotta in building. The brick-work and moulded terra-cotta, which was originally prepared in several shades of red and orange, has been softened by age and exposure into a rich assemblage of different hues, red, brown, russet, chocolate, orange, and straw colour, but all harmonising with brick far better than stone of any shade. The whole of the work, constructive and ornamental, is in brick and terra-cotta. The bases, doors, windows, string-courses, labels and dripstones, parapets, angles, cornices, and finials, are of moulded clay.[1] In all, about fifty different moulds appear to have been used. These are combined and arranged with great ingenuity and freedom. An elegant quatrefoil parapet ornament is obtained by uniting above and below two of the trefoil heads of the window-lights. Besides this, about six other moulded plaques are used in varied combinations. One consists of a lozenge and ball ornament, one is an arabesque balustrade, others are horizontal mouldings, three others contain a "tun," R.W. and a conventional bunch of grapes—being a "rebus," or punning emblem of the builder.[2] The whole of this series of ornament, of the most delicate character, is in a wonderful state of preservation. Not a single piece is wanting in the quadrangle. And after

[1] I have not been able to discover in the original building a single piece of stone of any kind, except on the tops of the hexagonal turrets flanking the north door to the hall. These are (not improbably) restorations, or stone copies of some original finial.

[2] Of course, the vulgar story that the "tun" and the bunch of hops show that the builder was a brewer, is an idle blunder. The grapes appear as an ornament at Layer Marney, and show a foreign rather than an English designer.

360 years of exposure it is so sharp and perfect that casts have been recently taken from it and reproduced. It may be taken as certain that, from the date of its erection till our own day, those moulded ornaments have never been copied or reproduced, and that every piece of terra-cotta now remaining in the building is the original work of Sir R. Weston, except the portions which have been quite recently renewed. In 1875, terra-cotta mullions and frames, taken from casts of the existing windows, were replaced in windows which had been altered to modern sash windows probably early in the 18th century. The new mullions recently inserted were the following: four windows in the east wing at its southern end, eight windows in the garden front at its western end, and two small lights were inserted when repairing the gables of the quadrangle. The terra-cotta casts for this work were made by Messrs. Blashfield, of Stamford, in 1875.

The age in which Sutton Place was built was fruitful in works of domestic architecture. Henry VIII is called by Harrison (*Description of England*, p. 330) "the onlie phœnix of his time for fine and curious masonrie." Cardinal Wolsey was building Hampton Court, Christ Church, Oxford, and Trinity College, Cambridge. Edward Stafford, the princely Duke of Buckingham, built Thornbury Castle in Gloucestershire between 1511 and 1520. Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire was built by the Duke of Suffolk, Kenninghall in Norfolk by the Duke of Norfolk, and Layer Marney in Essex by Lord Marney. The last is the building which comes nearest to Sutton Place in character. It was built by Lord Marney about 1520, and is also remarkable for the use of terra-cotta combined with brick. Like Sutton Place, it is a Gothic building, the windows having mullions, transoms, and labels, pointed arches, and fantastic Renaissance ornaments in the Italian style. But the details of the work at Layer Marney are far more distinctly Renaissance than those at Sutton. There is nothing there so rococo as the parapet at Layer Marney. It was probably designed or decorated by Rovezzano, or Trevisano. Layer

Marney Towers still exist in ruins about eight miles from Colchester. A good account of it with drawings by Charles F. Hayward was published by the Essex Archæological Society in 1862. (*Transactions Essex Arch. Soc.*, Vol. III, part 1.)

Terra-cotta is also found in use in the following contemporary buildings: Hampton Court, Layer Marney, and East Barsham. The houses which are nearest in date to Sutton appear to be the following: Thornbury Castle, Boughton Malherbes in Kent, and Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, built by Sir Thomas Kytson 1525—1538. Of this there is the well-known history by T. Gage.

But there is one characteristic in which Sutton Place is distinguished from all of these. This is in the modern, Italian, and symmetrical nature of its plan and general arrangements, anticipating the spirit of John of Padua, or Thorpe, in giving us a modern country house, without the use of a single classical feature. In spite of mullions and bays, it is as thoroughly modern in its general aspect as if castles, battlements, and watch-towers had never been invented. In this respect, it is probably one of the earliest extant types of the country house of the English gentleman, as distinct from the castellated mansion of the feudal baron.