



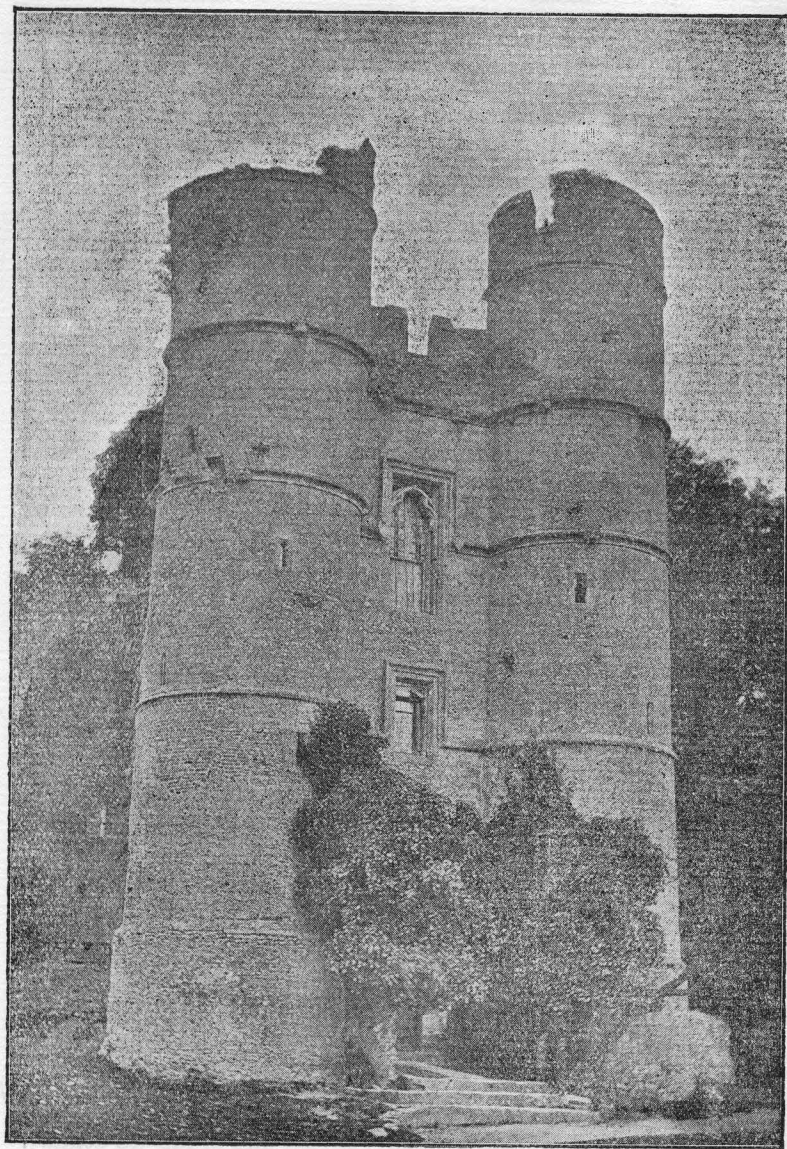
Historic Houses.

DONNINGTON CASTLE AND ITS ANCIENT LORDS.

By F. N. Macnamara, author of "The Memorials of the Danvers Family."

AMONG the many historic sites of Berkshire not the least interesting is that on which stand the ruins of Donnington Castle. These ruins crown a little hill about a mile to the north of Newbury, and the hill itself is the south eastern termination of a plateau which extends northwards in the direction of Winterbourne and Snelsmere. While therefore on three sides of the Castle the hill falls steeply to the plain on the other the summit is on a level with the neck of land which connects it with the plateau. At the base of the hill, on the southern side, runs the stream which after serving Donnington Mill passes the Hospital or Almshouse, and then the site of the ancient Priory which, with the Hospital, was founded by a former owner of the Castle. The Castle of old stood in a spacious deer park richly wooded with forest trees descendants of the Dunmincwic wood of Saxon and Norman times. The site is just one that a Norman lord would fix upon as a stronghold, for it commands the road from Oxford to Newbury and the roads from the west country passing through the latter town, and thus, while a defensive position for himself was opportunely placed for the annoyance or pillage of his neighbours. That there was a Castle on Donnington Hill at an early period we know, and probably it was a square keep within a ballium or enclosure, the entrance to which was defended by a gate tower. It was not till the year 1385 that Sir Richard Abberbury obtained leave to build anew* and embattle the Castle, making it strong with stone and chalk, a Castle which was "to belong to him and to his heirs for ever." This was the Castle which Camden, writing towards the end of the 16th century, describes as "a small but very neat Castle, seated on the brow of a wooded hill, having a fine prospect and windows on all sides very lightsome. They say it was built by Sir Ric. Abburbury, Knt., founder also of the God's house beneath it. Afterwards it was the residence of Chaucer then of De la Pole." Speght, a con-

* Patent Roll 9 Ric. 2, pt. 3, m. 6.



DONNINGTON CASTLE.

temporary of Camden's, quotes the passage in his life of Chaucer and adds, "Donnington Castle standeth in a parke in Barkshire not far from Newbury, where to this day standeth an old oke called Chaucer's oke." Ashmole,* writing a century later, says of the Castle, "when in its glory it was a handsome well fortified place, and had underneath it a hospital for several poor. This in process of time became the seat of Sir Geoffrey Chaucer who composed many of his celebrated pieces under an oak in this park." "In the unnatural Rebellion this place was in the possession of Mr. John Packer, and was garrisoned by King Charles, under the command of Sir John Boys, and was of great use that it commanded the great roads from the west to London, and from Oxford to Newbury. It was once besieged by the Rebels under Colonel Horton, who raised a battery against it at the foot of a hill near Newbury, by which he demolished three of the towers and a part of the wall. In nineteen days' time there was about a thousand great shot spent ineffectually on the brave Royalists, who held out against the menaces of Manchester's whole army, in a sally beat the Rebels out of their trenches, killed a lieutenant-colonel and chief engineer, and held out till they were relieved by the King, who at Newbury honoured the courageous Governor with knighthood. After the second Newbury fight, in 1644, it was again besieged, having during that battle, under the protection of its cannon, preserved the royal ammunition and baggage, but it was again relieved by the King, and the Rebel General, Fairfax, was forced to raise the siege, a proceeding which lessened his interest with his masters at Westminster, who soon after cashiered him, and put his command into other hands. The celebrated naturalist and philosopher, John Evelyn, Esq., of Wotton, in his discourse of forest trees, printed at London, in 1664 (p. 83), gives us an account of three oaks in the park, said to have been planted by the famous Chaucer himself, one of which was called the King's, the other the Queen's, and a third Chaucer's oak."

For a full description of the Castle and an account of the sieges which it withstood I must refer to Mr. Walter Money's† works, to Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion," to "Grose's Antiquities," and to "Boswell's Antiquities." Suffice it to say that the Castle

* Ashmole's Berkshire, Shaw cum Donnington.

† Battles of Newbury, and the Siege of Donnington Castle during the Civil War, 2nd Edition, 1884, by Walter Money, F.S.A.; a Guide to Donnington Castle, by the same author; and a History of the Ancient Town and Borough of Newbury, also by Mr. Money.

consisted of a rectangular enclosure and gate house. The former 120 feet in length and 85 feet in width, the longer sides facing north and south. At each angle was a circular tower, while the western wall formed a salient angle, designed probably to strengthen the defences in the direction from which the Castle might be most easily attacked. The gate-house projects from the eastern wall of the enclosure, rectangular, terminating in two circular towers between which was the entrance to the Castle, defended by a moat. The moat has disappeared, but that it existed in the time of Queen Elizabeth is clear from the fact that "a bridge into the Castle" is mentioned in a record of that period. The gate-house with a small piece of wall is the only part of the Castle which remains.

Surrounding the Castle are the vestiges of the earthworks which were thrown up by the Royalists, and on which they relied for the defence of the place, for experience reaped early in the war had taught them that no dependence could be placed upon the walls of an old feudal castle when subjected to the fire of Cromwell's artillery. These earthworks took the form of an irregular pentagon, the greatest angle fronting the south, on which was a very capacious bastion. Another but smaller bastion on the N.W. angle protected the position from an attack by the neck of land which joins the Castle hill to the plateau.

The Rebel artillery quickly beat down the greater part of the old walls, yet, secure within his earthworks, Colonel Boys resolutely made answer to the summons to surrender or not one stone of the Castle would be left upon another, that "he was not bound to repair the Castle, but, however, by God's help the ground he would hold."

The Castle was not rebuilt, and its debris were no doubt used in the erection of the "castle house," which stands upon the slope of the hill.

So much for the Castle as a preliminary to the history of its ancient owners. Donnington was in Saxon times a fief of the Honour or Barony of Wallingford, which at the period of the Conquest formed a part of the possessions of the great Berkshire Thane Wigod of Wallingford. Wigod made his submission to the Conqueror, and gave his daughter in marriage to William's favourite captain, Robert Doyley, and with her the Honour as dowry. The Honour subsequently lapsed to the Crown, and Henry III. gave it to the Earl of Chester, during whose lordship we first gain definite notice of the Manor of Donnington. At that time it belonged to Philip de Enerbourne, a member of the Saunderville family. The

Saundervilles* came to England at or about the time of the Conquest from Sandarville, near Chartres, and obtained possessions in many parts of England. In the year 1611-2, is mention of Philip de Saunderville of Warwick in that ancient record the *Liber Rubeus*. The Saundervilles had possessions in Derbyshire, Notts, Hants and Bucks, but their principal seats were Enerbourne, near Newbury, South Morton in Oxon, and Skipton-in-Craven, Yorkshire. In the year 1165, as we learn from the *Liber Niger*, Wm. de Saunderville held four knights' fees of the Honour of Skipton. The family for many generations continued in Oxfordshire; a charter amongst those in the Bodleian, dated 1379, concerns Lady Margaret Sanderville, of South Morton, and an old moated house in the village bears the name of, and commemorates, the family. Probably their descendants remain amongst us under the modernised name of Sandwell.

In the 16th year of Henry 3 (1231) Philip de Saunderville, elsewhere called de Enerborne, sold for sixty marks the fief of Donnington to Richard de Coupeland and his wife Joan, but Donnington did not long remain in the hands of this family, for after some fifty years Alan de Coupeland, probably the son of Richard, sold the manor or fief. A famous north country family were the de Coupelands, having possessions in Cumberland, Northumberland, Lancashire and Yorkshire. One of them after the battle of Neville's Cross with his own hand captured the King of Scotland, and refused to surrender him to Queen Philippa till on going to Calais he had Edward's personal command so to do. The de Coupelands were neighbours in Yorkshire of the Sandervilles, and it was perhaps this that brought one of them to Berkshire. Richard we find there in 1231 and Alan in 1287, while in the year 1299 we find in Cumberland an Alan de Coupeland, son and heir of Richard.

The next possessors of Donnington were the Abburburys, who held it for 127 years and derived their name from Adderbury, anciently Eadburbury, a village three miles south of Banbury. The name of both the village and the family was variously spelt, but in the 13th century that in common use was Eadburbury, we find, too, Abbresbury, Apperbury, Alburbury, Adburbury, in ancient records as variations in the name of a place which was originally Eade's burgh or borough. The first of the family of whom I find record is

* See the Duchess of Cleveland's Battle Abbey Roll, vol. 3, p. 137.

† Berks fine No. 2 of 16 Henry 3.

a certain Nigel de Edberbury, who between the years *1267 and 1270 granted a house in Culworth, a village about eight miles from Adderbury, to Adam Roce (Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., vol. i., B 1065). Another member of the family was Thomas, †son of Roger de Abberbury, who some time prior to the passing of the Act of Mortmain in 1279 gave land in Adderbury for the use of the Parish Church. And there can be little doubt that it was this Thomas who in 1289, in consideration of the gift of a sorrel sparrow-hawk, received from Allan de Coupeland the manor of Donnington with its belongings.‡ The sparrow-hawk was possibly a very fine bird, and just as one has lately read of £25,000 as the price paid for a race-horse, so this bird may have been of such supreme excellence as to be valued at the price of a manor. But, on the other hand, a hawk, a rose, a pair of gloves, a horse, were commonly at that period gifts from friend to friend, or from a bridegroom to his father-in-law, on the transference of land as dowry or otherwise, and possibly Thomas may have married Alan's daughter while Alan himself returned to the north country, for we hear nothing more of the De Coupelands in Berkshire. Thomas de Abburbury had himself property in the north, for in May, 1305, he obtained license to alienate, to the Dean and Chapter of York, houses and land in Multhorp, York, for the maintenance of a chaplain to say mass daily for his soul and for the souls of his ancestors and for the souls of all the faithful dead.¶ And another gift probably of the same nature made by Thomas was a house in the parish of St. Mary Attestrande, outside the bar of the new Temple, to the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry.§ With this Bishop the name of Thomas de Abburbury is frequently coupled in records of the period, for he went abroad with him in the King's service in the year 1296, and acted as his attorney during the Bishop's absence in the years 1301, 1303 and 1305. Thomas' services were not always of this peaceful nature, for in the year 1297, when Edward was making a military levy of the whole kingdom for the war against France, Thomas de Abburbury, having land in Berkshire of more value than £20 a year, was sum-

* The deed is witnessed by Wm. de Culworth and Thomas, parson of Culworth. Thomas was son of William, and was parson between 1267 and 1270. See memorials of the Danvers family of Culworth, by F. N. Macnamara.

† Pat. Roll, Ric. 2 and Abbrev. Rot. Orig., vol. 2, p. 288.

‡ Berks fine, No. 7, of 16 Ed.

¶ Pat. Roll, July 7, 1365, and Pat. Roll of 24th April, 1298.

§ Bishop Walter de Langton. "The greatest benefactor this Church (Lichfield) ever had." Willis's Survey.

moned to London with horse and arms for active service beyond the seas. Thomas died in the year 1305, and his post mortem inquisition (No. 44 of 35 Ed.) tells us that he held the Manor of Dynnynton of the King as of his Honour of Wallingford, land in Migham, and the village and manor of Eneburne in Berks, and in Oxfordshire the manors of Sulthorne and Steeple Aston. Walter, his brother, aged thirty and more was his heir.* The earliest notice that I have of this Walter is of the year 1285, when he acted as attorney for his brother Thomas going abroad. Other notices I have of him in connection with Berkshire property, and in the time of† Edward II. he bought of the King for 100 shillings the Castle of Donnington, from which it would appear that till that time the Castle itself had remained in possession of the lords of the Honour of Wallingford. We have no record of Walter's death; he appears to have had a younger brother Richard whose son Richard followed Walter in possession of the family estates in Donnington and elsewhere,—this we conclude from the fact that the latter Richard had a brother Thomas and that this Thomas is mentioned in a Berkshire fine as son of Richard. This view is supported by pedigrees recorded in Vincent's collections at the College of Arms, vol. 79, pp. 8 and 30, and in vol. 10, p. i. Further, according to these pedigrees Richard and Thomas had a sister Agnes, who married (Richard?) Dominus de Coleshull, while one of the Richards just mentioned married Agnes' daughter and heiress of William de Sharesull, and by her had a daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Beaufoy, of Burford.

Richard, son of Richard, was a notable man at Court and also in his county which he represented in the Parliament of the second and third years of Edward II.; he was on the Commission of Peace for Oxon and Berks. In January, 1296, he went abroad on the King's service with John Bishop, of Winchester, and in 1322 made the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella. In 1316, he was lord of Donnington in Berks and Steeple Aston in Oxon, and in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1 Edward III. heads the list in Donnington. This Richard died in the year 1333; his post mortem inquisition (8 Ed. iii., No. 38) shows that at the time of his death he held the Manor of Donyngton, land in Thatcham and manors and lands in Northampton, Oxon and Sussex; his heir was his son John, aged

* Thomas bought the Manor of Bradele Gymminges and land in Estbury, Berks fines 5 of 32 Ed. i. and 9 of 33 Ed. i. He had also land in Sussex and in Essex.

† *Beauties of England*, vol. i., p. 120.

16 years and more. John died young, and his inquisition (No. 28 of 20 Ed. 3) taken in 1346, the year after his death, shows that he held at the time nearly the same possessions as his father; his heir was his Uncle Thomas, aged 40 and more. Thomas the uncle was one of the lords of Dernford and Ledwell in Oxfordshire, in 1316 (Parliamentary Writs), and in Berks fine no. 12 of 18 Ed. 2, he, Thomas de Abburbury, son of Richard, buys land in East Henreth. We have no notice of his death, but Richard de Abburbury, whom we next find in possession of the family estates, was in all probability his son.

This Richard de Abburbury is the most interesting member of the family and he is constantly mentioned in the records of the time in connection with one or other event during the reign of Richard 2, for he was in the King's early days a special favourite with him, and he was one of those men, selected for their capacity rather than for noble birth, with whom Richard filled his Court. He was one of the knights and gentlemen who in the year 1357 accompanied the Black Prince to Gascony to the assistance of Pedro of Castile. In the year 1373 Richard de Abburbury represented Oxfordshire in Parliament, and about this time he became the first master of the young Prince Richard, and as such two manors and £40 annually from the Lordship of Chester, were granted to him (Patent Roll of 1378). He was in attendance on the Prince at Kingston when his grandfather, Edward iij., died, and on that occasion Abburbury with Sir Simon Burley, Lord Latimer, and Sir Mich. Bonde were sent by the new King with a message to the citizens of London. The following year Abburbury and Bonde were commissioned to make an inventory of the late King's jewels and other goods.

Let it be remembered that King Richard on his accession was but eleven years of age and that three parties quickly developed at Court—the King's, the party of the King's uncle John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster and titular King of Castile, and a third that of Lancaster's brother the Duke of Gloucester supported generally by another brother the Duke of York. Amongst the members of the King's party was Sir Richard Abburbury, who however subsequently came to be associated with that of the Duke of Lancaster. In 1378 Sir Richard was sent as Governor to Brest then threatened by the French, and the King's ship "the Alice" was placed at his disposal; he was at this time one of the King's Esquires of his Chamber. In 1380 Abberbury with other knights went to Ireland

on the King's service, and two years after became one of the knights of the King's Chamber. The following year he was Chamberlain to the Queen (Anne of Bohemia) and received from the King, for services rendered, the manors of Yistele in Oxon, and Carswell in Berks; in 1386 he had license to build anew and crenellate the Castle of Donnington; the gate house which remains formed a part of his work. In the year 1386 Abberbury again represented Oxfordshire in Parliament, and the same year he was sent to Spain to treat with the Duke of Lancaster regarding his affairs in that country; that he then belonged to the Duke's party is evident from his acting as his Chamberlain in the year 1388 (*Rymer's Fædera*). On the departure of the Duke from England his place in the Government had been taken by his brother the Duke of Gloucester, who was wholly antagonistic to the King's party and followers, and under his influence the merciless Parliament of this year impeached the King's ministers and favourites, some of whom fled and others, including Sir Simon Burley, were executed. Sir Richard Abberbury, Lord Zouche, and others were treated more mercifully, being simply expelled the Court (*Hollingshed's Chronicle*, vol. 3, p. 463). However, Abburbury's exclusion was not for long, as in the spring of the next year the King took the reins of Government into his own hands, and the following September we find the King holding a council at Clarendon, at which the Duke of York, the Bishop of Winchester, the Earls of Kent and Northumberland, Richard Abberbury and others were present, so that Abburbury had now again become a trusted councillor of the King.

In 1389 Abberbury is acting in a very different capacity, having with the Earls of Kent, Salisbury, and Northumberland a commission to determine the famous and prolonged dispute between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, as to which had the right to use the arms, "azure a bend d'or." And here one may say that Abburbury's own arms were "or a fess embattled azure."

In 1892 Sir Richard, who now describes himself as being in his old age,* founded at Donnington a Gods-house or hospital for thirteen poor men and endowed it with land in Donnington and with his manor of Yistele. He orders that one of the inmates be placed over the others with the title of minister, and that all attend daily mass at the Chappel of the adjacent Priory. At the dissolu-

* Patent Roll 16 Ric. 2, pt 3, M 13. Also add. Charter (B.M.) 7290 of 17 Ric. 2.

tion the estates of the Hospital were seized by the Crown, but were restored about the year 1570 upon the petition of Howard Earl of Nottingham. The Hospital still stands by the side of the road on the south bank of the Lambourne river; but the present building is probably that erected by the Earl of Nottingham towards the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century.

Sir Richard was also the founder of Donnington Priory, which formerly stood on the other side of the Newbury Road opposite to the Hospital; in the year 1365* he paid four pounds for license to give land in Newbury, Donnington and East Henreth to endow two chaplains to say mass every day for ever, in a certain Chappel in Donnington which he rebuilt, and again, thirty years after, he had license† to convey to the minister and brethren of Donnington certain lands and rents in Throp, Cudelynton and Soulthorne, which formerly belonged to Thomas Abberbury, and were left by him to Richard with reversion to the Donnyngton brethren. The Priory was one of Trinitarian or crutched Friars, and was dissolved in the year 1538. Little of the building remains and that is incorporated in the fabric of the Priory house which now marks the site.

I find frequent mention of Sir Richard in the Hastings Rolls of the City of London between the years 1373 and 1394. Abburbury had the right of presentation to the Church of Bletchesdon alternately with Queen's College, Oxford; in the year 1395 he presented, but in the year Chaucer, "as esquire of the feoffees (trustees?) of Sir Richard Abburbury" exercised the right whence it may be inferred that Richard was then dead.‡

Richard was followed at Donnington by his son|| Sir Richard Abburbury, junr., who about the year 1382 married Alice, widow of Edmund Danvers, § of Chilton, dau. and heiress of John, son of Ric. Cleet, of South Denchworth. In the year 1387 Ric. Abburbury, Junr., and his wife sold a house in Longcotes (Berks fines 1 of 11 Ric. 2). Richard represented Berkshire in the Parliaments of 1393-4 and 1336-7, and was Sheriff of Oxon and Berks in the year

* Inquis 29 of 39 Edward 3, 2nd Numbers.

† Inquis 91 of 22 Ric. 2.

‡ Ric. Abburbury bought the manor of Winterbourne Danvers, and he also held at the time of his death the manor of Pesemore, Berks fines 5 of 17 Ric. 2, and 2 of 19 Ric. 2.

|| Evidence that he was his son is not clear; he may have been a nephew.

§ Memorials of the Danvers family by F. N. Macnamara, pages 495 and 509.

1397. In the year 1415 he and his wife Alice sold to John Hyde* all the land in South Denchworth which formerly belonged to John Cleet, father of Alice. At the time they appear to be living at Donnington, for Thomas Danvers, son of Alice, about the same time signed, at Donnington, a release to Hyde of all his rights in South Denchworth. Finally,* in February 1415, Richard and his wife sold to Thomas Chaucer, for 1,000 marks, the castle and manor of Donnington, the manor and advowson of the Church of Pesemore, the manors of Winterbourne Danvers and Winterbourne Mayne, and houses and lands in Donnington, Pesemore, Winterbourne, Crookham and Thatcham. Of Richard Abburbury and his wife we know but little more; in 1227 he had a knight's fief in Weston,† in the hundred of Faircross, and it is probably he who in the year 1433 appears amongst the gentry of Berks in a list which is printed in W. N. Clarke's "Hundred of Wanting." In the year 1447 Thomas de Abburbury "censanguineus et heres" grandson or perhaps nephew of Richard released his rights in Newbury, Donnington, East Henreth, and elsewhere to the Duke of Suffolk (Pat. Roll, 2nd pt., of 26 Henry VI., M. 19), while in 1472 a Richard de Abburbury was employed in the matter of a treaty with the King of Portugal, but as a county family the Abburburys disappeared before the end of the 15th century.‡

The Thomas Chaucer who bought the Donnington and other estates was a gentleman of great influence and note in Berks and Oxon during the first half of the 15th century, and it is believed that he was the eldest son of the Poet Geoffrey Chaucer. He frequently represented Oxfordshire in Parliament and was several times Speaker of the House; he was High Sheriff of those counties in the years 1401 and 1404, and Henry V. made him Constable of Wallingford Castle, Steward of the Manor, and Constable of Knaresborough Castle. Thomas Chaucer married Maud, one of the heiresses of Sir John Burghersh, of Ewelme, and by her had one daughter Alice; he died at Ewelme and a monument|| to his memory remains in the parish church there.

Alice, the daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer, was three times married. Her first husband was Sir John Phelipp whose third

* See Berks fines 1, 2, and 3, of 2, Henry V., and Clarke's *Hundred of Wanting*.

† Knight's fees of 6 Henry VI., Q.S.R. Misc., Vol. IV.

‡ I find mention of other members of the family in Rymer's *Fædera* and elsewhere, but want of space prevents further notice of them.

|| Napier's *History of Ewelme and Swyncombe*.

wife she was. Little is known of his family ; he was with Henry V. in his wars with France, and as his monument in Kidderminster Church states was beloved by the King. Berks fine passed in Eastertide 1415, records the purchase, from Thomas Chaucer by Sir John Phelipp, of the Manor and Castle of Donnington and of the other estates lately bought by Thomas Chaucer from Richard Abburbury, and settles them for life upon himself and his wife Alice and upon their children, failing whom remainder to Thomas Chaucer. But Sir John died the following October, and another fine, dated Octave of St. Hillary, 3rd Henry V., arranges the succession of the estates in question. Alice's second husband was a nobleman famous in history, Thomas de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, Captain General of the army in France during the early years of the reign of Henry V. He was slain in the year 1428 when commanding at the siege of Orleans and was buried at Bisham in Berks. The Earl left no children by this his second wife Alice Chaucer, and she took as her third husband her late husband's comrade and fellow commander, William De la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, who was a grandson of King Richard's favourite Michael De la Pole. The Earl was made a prisoner by the French after the disastrous siege of Orleans, and he it was who subsequently arranged in France the treaty by which the English gave up what remained to them of Anjou and Maine, while the young King Henry VI. received as his bride the Princess Margaret of Anjou. The Earl was advanced to the dignity of a Marquis, and in 1448 was made Duke of Suffolk ; his subsequent career and tragic death are matters of history, and of Shakespeare's verse. By his wife Alice he left one son John, Duke of Suffolk, whose son Edmund fought on the side of Henry VI., but taking offence withdrew and was in the year 1413 executed as a Yorkist. His title and his possessions were conferred upon Charles Brandon, created in 1514 Duke of Suffolk, and thus Donnington Manor and Castle again changed its owners. Yet they were not long in Brandon's possession, and letters still preserved amongst the Public Records explain how this came about. Brandon was the close friend and companion of Henry VIII. whose sister Mary, widow of Louis XII. of France, he married. Yet even this near alliance did not restrain the King's evil desires when he began to covet the Duke's possessions. The King visited Ewelme, and it is supposed that he visited Donnington also ; anyhow he determined by means, fair or foul, to acquire both estates, and his tools, Cromwell and Rych, were employed to carry out his wishes. Therefore on the 29th July, 1585, Cromwell writes

to Rych: "The King considers the Duke's hesitation (regarding the surrender of Ewelme and Donnington) ingratitude and unkindness. . . . Touching the decay of Ewelme and Donnington, the decay is evident and great sums would be needed for their repair. At Donnington the house is in decay and Mr. Fetiplace, the keeper, has destroyed the deer and game and wasted the woods. The King expects that the Duke will part with the reversions friendly and freely remembering what benefits have been conferred upon him, and Rych is to be plain with the Duke, and councils him not to give the King cause for jealousy or mistrust, and he had best write liberally to the King." Previously, on the 24th July, Rych writes to the King that he had moved the Duke to grant the reversions; and then follows some miserable hucksterage over a dead man's goods for a fortnight before the King had sent to the block a once trusted friend, the martyr for his faith, Sir Thomas More—and now adds Rych, the Duke desires that you will not grant any of Sir Thomas More's lands lying about Chelsea as he wishes to have the house and land adjoining as part recompence for certain reversions. The end of the business was that the King purchased of the Duke the manors of Ewelme, Donnington, Hooknorton and others, and in July, 1536, granted to Lord Sands and to Thomas Wriothesley the office of Constable of Donnington Castle, keeper of the park and deer, with the herbage and pannage, also the office of Master of the Almshouse with fees as enjoyed by Walter Walshe or Ed. Fetiplace.

(To be continued.)

HURLEY.—Whilst Newlock Weir was being re-made in 1882 the blade of a bronze sword was found in the Thames. It is 13 inches in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth at the hilt—its broadest part. There are, at the hilt, two rivet holes in the metal which were used for affixing the handle. The blade is sharply pointed and is slightly ribbed on both sides. After the palæolithic and neolithic ages in this country, bronze succeeded. Iron, which succeeded bronze, must have been in use in South Britain—we are told—not later than the 4th or 5th century before Christ; and, by the 2nd or 3rd century before Christ the employment of bronze had practically ceased. The Thames, which hereabouts in Saxon days formed the southern boundary of that great kingdom of the Heptarchy and known as Mercia, and the northern boundary of the kingdom of Wessex, must ever have been a tribal frontier; and the sword may have been a relic of some river fight between the Celts on this side of the Thames and the Celts on the other side, at a period so remote from the present time as to be almost incalculable. Thus, this blade is between two thousand and two thousand five hundred years old.—F. T. WETHERED, Hurley Vicarage, May 28th, 1898.