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The Real Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley.

By Viscount Dillon.

SIR Henry Lee, who brought together the present Ditchley property, was a descendant of one Benedict Lee, who, coming from the old Cheshire family of that name, settled at Quarendon, in Buckinghamshire, about 1435. His grandson, Sir Robert Lee, of Burston, was gentleman usher to King Henry VIII., an office which his son, Sir Anthony Lee, also held. Sir Anthony married Margaret, the daughter of Henry's trusted adviser and friend, Sir Henry Wyatt. This "constant servant and councillor to the two kings of famous memory, Henry VII. and VIII.," as he is called on Sir Henry Lee's tombstone, evidently took a deep interest in his grandsons, the future Knight of the Garter and his brother Robert, for he left to Henry £10 and to his brother Robert 10 marks per annum during their nonage "towardes and for to finde them to scole." The will was in 1537, when Henry was about seven years of age, and he appears apart from the "scole" to have been brought up by his maternal uncle, Sir Thomas Wyatt, the famous poet at Allingham Castle, Kent. In such a home young Henry had the advantage of association with one of the brightest and best men of the day, and perhaps his love of travel was originated by contact with the successful ambassador, while the whole tone of life at Allington Castle gave a poetic tinge to his young mind. Not that

the boy, either as a boy or later on, appears ever to have broken out into verse, and judging by some very feeble verses, entitled "Not Yet," written by his father, and now in the British Museum, it is lucky he did not attempt to follow that line. But the fanciful conceits of his self-imposed office of Queen's Champion, and the idea of the Crowned Pillar, of which so much was said in the Ditchley masque of 1592, were most probably the results of his early environment.

Of his youth we only know that at the age of 14, Harry Lee was sworn to the service of the King. Probably as page he would continue and improve his courtly education, which was so marked in later years.

When the boy was eighteen his father, then a widower for some years, took as a second wife Anne Hassal, a lady with whom he seems to have had close relations for two or three years. However, in 1549, by the death of Sir Anthony, Henry found himself the owner of a good estate in the rich Vale of Aylesbury, to which he soon began to add by purchase. In 1552, Henry is mentioned as sending a present of some partridges to his future goddess the Princess Elizabeth, at that time a resident at Hatfield. On the occasion of the coronation of Queen Mary he, with seventy-nine others was dubbed a knight by the Earl of Arundel beneath the cloth of estate the day after the ceremony*. Whether he had already been to college we do not know, though in a letter of the year 1594 to Sir Robert Cecil he says: "I was once of New College, in Oxford, though not of late years."

Anyhow in 1555, on the 15th October, when Bishop Ridley was burnt at Oxford, we find him with many others "weeping pitifully" as the Martyr went to the stake. Ridley died cheerfully, for we are told that as he walked along he distributed to the bystanders gingerbread nuts, while to Sir Henry Lee he gave a new groat. But the future champion evidently chose the military career for his path, and though early in 1558 he had taken his seat in Parliament, where he represented his County, a few months later he was serving his country on the Scottish border. He is mentioned with praise in Ridpath's border history, and soon after, on June 28th, was appointed to serve at Berwick†. Sir Henry was fortunate in not being

* 1554 Ap. II. Sir Thomas Wyat, Sir Henry Lee's first cousin, was executed for his attempted rebellion on behalf of Lady Jane Grey.

† Jan., 1537. Sir Henry Lee to lead the troops for Berwick.
Sep., 1558. Queen thanks him for his services.
Oct., 1558. Sir H. Lee to go home and leave his charge with his Lieut.

concerned in the disastrous events connected with the loss of Calais. By the end of the year, however, Sir Henry was recalled to London, and the year after Mary's death he accompanied Lord Howard of Effingham and others to France, when the terms of the peace of Cateau Cambrensis were arranged between Henry II., Philip II. and Elizabeth, by which treaty signed 2nd and 3rd April, 1559, Philip gained Savoy, Corsica and many other possessions.

In 1561 Sir Henry was again on his travels, and he writes from Venice in March of that year. Parliamentary duties, travelling and looking after his property seem to have occupied the Knight's time for the next few years, and in 1566 there is a letter from Leicester—the future favourite of Elizabeth—to Cecil, dated from Sir Harry Lee's house. There was then, as later, much talk as to Elizabeth's marriage, but then, as later, it was severely discouraged by the chief person concerned. In 1568 are many letters, in the Public Record Office now, written by Sir Henry on his travels through Germany and Italy, and addressed to Cecil recounting the news and gossip of the day. Burleigh's wife was a cousin of Sir Henry, and in those days information was sought for by the ministers in the letters of their agents and relatives who might be travelling on the Continent. The travelling of those days for such as our Knight included visits to the courts and hunting and hawking with the Princes of the numerous small and large states through which an English gentleman might choose to wander, picking up as he went ideas and friends.

In 1569 there was more fighting for Sir Henry when he assisted in the suppression of a small rebellion by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland in the northern counties.

Next year Sir Henry began his connection with this County by leasing some land in Spelsbury for 21 years, and the same year we are told of his losing by floods in Bucks some 3,000 sheep besides much cattle and horses.

In 1571 the Knight appears with Hatton, the Earl of Oxford, and others in the Tilt-yard, putting into practice many of the accomplishments of that nature which he had acquired in the course of his travels in Germany, where jousting and tourneys were flourishing. About this time Sir Henry started a yearly course of tournaments at Westminster, which were held on Nov. 17th, the Queen's birthday, a date still known in the Temple as Queen's Day.

His Royal Mistress appears as early as 1572 to have begun the

series of favours and bounties, which on so many occasions she bestowed on him.

Sir Henry had many opportunities at fêtes, as also in the field of displaying his courage and skill, but in June, 1572, he showed courage of a high and rare kind when at the execution of the Duke of Norfolk he embraced that nobleman on the scaffold to which he was brought for his obstinate and repeated intrigues to further the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots. But though such scenes as that on Tower Hill must have been depressing, and we have no reason to doubt the sincerity of Sir Henry's sympathy for Norfolk's untimely end, yet within a few days we find him taking an active part in the tilt yard before the French Ambassadors, to do honour to whom jousts, &c., were performed.

In 1573 Sir Henry had again an opportunity of justifying the knighthood conferred in 1553 "on carpet consideration with unhacked rapier," and this time in a higher capacity than when he fought on the Border, for the Queen dispatched an allied force under Sir William Drury and the Regent Morton to attack Edinburgh Castle, then held for Mary by Kircaldy of the Grange. The allied force acted in the name and behalf of her seven-year old son, James, and when the army sat down before the Maiden Fortress our Knight had command of a battery on a spot later the site of Heriots' Hospital. He was in good company, for beside the two commanders, Morton, and Drury, Sir George Cary, the Queen's relative, and Sutton, the future founder of the Charterhouse, had batteries armed with some of the fine French guns taken at Flodden, and now turned against their former masters. Brave as Sir Henry was he could not but reflect that if the Scots without should throw over their English Allies and unite with the so-called Castilians within, the English would have a bad time, and so he wrote to Burghley. However, party hatred proved stronger than national feeling and the allies reduced the Castle party to such straits that an armistice was agreed on and as the main gate was too much encumbered with ruins to permit of its being opened, Kircaldy and his Secretary were lowered like St. Paul over the walls, and Sir Henry Lee and one Fleck were hoisted in as hostages till terms were agreed on. The terms were severe, for Kircaldy was hanged by his own countrymen, Sir Henry and the Berwick captains entered by the breech as the etiquette of war demanded, and the Knight was sent off to Elizabeth with the official news of the victory. His grateful Queen conferred on him the reversion after Sir Edward Dyer's death of the office of Seneschal

and Lieutenant of the Manor of Woodstock and the office of Master of the Leash. Thus was the Buckingham Squire brought into connection with the County of Oxfordshire, in which he was to make his future home. Nor did the Queen's favours stop here, for next year he received one of those cheap gifts which Elizabeth knew how to give to her favourites. This was a grant to manumit serfs, naturals and villeins. It may sound strange to some who are accustomed to sing that Britons never never will be slaves and to imagine that they never were so. But the fact remains that in the so-called good old days of Elizabeth and even up to the time of Charles II., there were in England serfs and villeins, not such as those freed in late years by the Emperor of Russia, but serfs who were bound not to leave their own neighbourhood, not to marry without the leave of their lord, and, in fact, subject to many restrictions we can hardly imagine. Well, as a reward for his good services, the Queen gave Sir Henry permission to manumit certain of her serfs and villeins, and in 1576 she gave an apparent reality to the gift by granting to him whatever money he could make out of 200 of her bond men and women by selling to them the freedom enjoyed by so many of their neighbours. This seemed at first to be a handsome present, but it was really no more than making a present of a bad debt, for when the Knight began to make terms with these bond men and women, they disputed the idea that they were not free. The result was a pretty crop of law suits, in which no doubt the lawyers made their profit at the expense of both parties, and the Knight did not realise much, while the Queen had got rid of some bad bargains. However, Sir Henry had to appear grateful, and on the New Year's Day he was among the many who gave gifts of all kinds to the Queen. We often hear that when Elizabeth died she had upwards of a thousand dresses in her wardrobe, but I doubt if she ever bought many, for her courtiers gave clothes, jewels and all sorts of presents, even to the court chimney sweep, who presented two pots of green ginger. Sir Henry on this, the first of many occasions, gave his Royal Mistress a little gold book with paper leaves to write in, a sort of tablet to hang by a chain from the waist, a favourite fashion with English women then and even now. Elizabeth also made presents in return, generally of gold or silver plate, and soon after this she lent him £3,000, to be repaid £300 a year. The rate of interest is not mentioned, but some of her debtors found

June, 1575. Permits for Sir H. Lee to have access to Dr. Astlowe, a prisoner in the Tower for counsel in physic.

her a pretty severe creditor, as did her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, the dancing Lord Chancellor and friend of Sir Henry Lee.

In February, 1577, Sir Henry accompanied Sir Philip Sidney on his embassage to congratulate the Emperor Rudolf of Germany. They went *viâ* Antwerp to Brussels. Thence to Louvain, where they saw Don John, of Austria, and on to Heidelberg and to Prague, where the Emperor was. They left Prague in April, going by Neustadt, Leuterberg and on to Cologne. Here Sidney was instructed to go to Antwerp, Breda and Gertrudenburg to congratulate William of Orange on the birth of his son. They returned by Dordrecht to England, where they arrived about the 9th June.

Sir Henry did not neglect his duties or business as a landowner, for in 1576 he had a *license special* to transport, that is export, 200,000 calf skins.

July, 1577, was memorable as the year of the fatal assize at Oxford, when so many died of the gaol fever, commemorated by a tablet erected in recent years at Oxford.

About this time there seem to have been several quarrels between Sir Henry and one Whitton, of Woodstock. No doubt the new ranger found many abuses in the management of the Royal Park, and had to make enemies of those who disliked being disturbed in their unlawful practices. However, Sir Henry came out victorious, and in the office of the Armoury at the Tower and Windsor there were also abuses to be combatted.

In 1583 Sir Henry having got a friend, Mr. Chamberlain, to look out for a desirable or rather a cheap property, the present Ditchley estate, or part of it, was brought to his notice, and the result was that it was purchased with various charges on it. No sooner purchased than it was mortgaged, and continually during the Knight's life he raised money on the property, no doubt to meet calls for his amusements in London and his buildings in Bucks.

We have no exact account of the neighbourhood when Sir Henry Lee purchased Ditchley, and we are only told that the land was as it is now, poor land. In one respect it has much changed, namely, in the families who then occupied the adjacent houses and farms. We may form some notion of the changes which have taken place in 300 years by looking at the names of the gentry as noted in 1634, when for about the last time the Heralds visited the County to verify the ancestry of the neighbours. At Ditchley lived Mr. Gibbons, at Kiddington the Babingtons, at Wilcott the Calcotts, at Hampton the Penistons, at Stonesfield the Beckinghams, at Enstone

the Ardens and Blunts, at Milton the Edgerleys, at Great Tew the Raynesfords, at Heythrop and Shipton the Ashfields, at Eynsham the Blackmans, Barrys and Howells, at Chadlington the Osbaldestons, at Glympton the Cuppers, at Woodstock the Nashs, at Stanlake and Witney the Yates, at Cornbury Park the Bridges. But few if any of these names are now to be found in the directory.

Chamberlain's report says "neither good arable or pasture to be hoped for in a long time. The sheep commons of little value, the woods much damaged." The arable fallow and other lands, with the sheep commons, were valued at 12 pence per annum.

The woods at 4/-

There was a house, but where it stood we cannot now say, as though it was done up in 1592 for the Queen's visit and no doubt kept up till the new house was partly built in 1722, the whole of the material, stone, glass and timber was utilised in the construction of the present mansion.

And now it may be asked what part did the Knight take in the general movement for the defence of our island in the momentous year of the Spanish Armada, when all England rallied round the great Queen. Well, Sir Henry met a more powerful foe than the Spaniards and was beaten. The fact is that having, as we remarked, spent many months in 1557 and 1558 fighting on the Scottish border and having had the experience of the Edinburgh campaign of 1574, Sir Henry was found to be a suitable person to organise the defence of the Northern borders. We know that in those and in earlier days, when England was threatened by a continental power, our good neighbours, the Scotch, thought it a fine opportunity to have a try at our northern counties. So Sir Henry was sent north, Dec., 1587, to arrange for possible and probable hostilities. But he was now 58 years of age and the gout attacked him. There was no getting the better of that, so while Elizabeth was reviewing her troops at Tilbury and the beacons were flaming round the coast, poor Sir Henry was on his back in his brother Robert's house at Hatfield, near York. It must have been an aggravation of the pain he suffered to feel that he was away from the proper place for such a soldier as he. However, the Queen thought no worse of him, and soon after gave him the office of Constable of the fine old Welsh Castle of Harlech.

In 1590 age and gout had somewhat affected the activity of our

1587. Mary Queen of Scots executed.
4 Sep. Leicester dies at Cornbury.

Knight, so he was reluctantly compelled to resign his self imposed office of Champion of the Queen. This he did with much ceremony and poetry and music on the Queen's birthday, Nov. 17th, at the Westminster Tiltyard. The poetry was not of a very high order, but there was one piece which has been often printed and quoted. It is said to have been written by George Peele :—

His golden* locks time hath to silver turned ;
O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing !
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain ; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen ;
Duty, faith, love, are roots and ever green.
His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers which are old age's alms ;
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.
And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,
" Blessed be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong ! "
Goddess allow this aged man his sight,
To be your bedesman now that was your knight.

Sir Henry's successor in the Championship was a very brilliant and capable friend of his, George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, one who had at his own expense fitted out no less than eleven expeditions against the Spaniards. His portrait is well known, as he is always seen with a lady's glove (the Queen's) in his hat. He was no beauty, but the Spaniards doubtless found him more ugly than did his countrymen. As to Sir Henry Lee spending his remaining years in prayer this must be taken as poetic license, for it really was in companionship with Anne Vavasour and with the amusement of building and re-edifying his houses in this and the neighbouring County of Bucks.

Two years later when, on September 20th and 21st, 1592, Queen Elizabeth came to visit him, it was not like some of her visits which were intended to somewhat bleed certain of her loving subjects. However, the old Knight gave his adored one a fine entertainment of the class customary in those days, that is masques and shows,

* Sir Henry Lee's hair was red.

with long heavy verses full of allegories and protestations of loyalty and devotion. "Happy hour, happy day that Eliza came this way," was perhaps true until the bills came in for the show. But the Queen's portrait was painted standing on the map of England with Oxford between her feet and sunshine before her, while clouds and tempest fled away behind her.

The picture still exists and shows us what the Virgin queen looked like in her 59th year.

Sir Henry continued to go to Court, making his lodgings in the Savoy Palace, near where is now Waterloo Bridge, his headquarters. There were continual rumours of further favours for him, but he was to wait a bit longer. In 1596, when his friend and patron, the young Earl of Essex went off on his expedition to Cadiz, the old Knight went some five days on the way with him, and then returned to report to his Royal Mistress the success of the journey so far. Essex we know was as brilliant as usual, being the first man on the breach, and displaying the courage and endurance which had already made him famous as a fighter. The creation of several knights on this occasion gave rise to the well known verse: "A squire of Wales, a knight of Cales and a laird of the North countree, Yet a Yeoman of Kent with his early rent can buy them out all three."

Soon after the return of this successful expedition, the Earl of Essex by his influence obtained the election into the Order of the Garter of his old friend. Sir Henry Lee was one of the very few and, in fact, almost the last Commoner who enjoyed this high distinction. We all know what has been said in later days, "that there is no nonsense of merit about the Garter," but at all events in those days there was some, and Sir Henry might well be proud of his association with the members of the Order of his and previous times.

Next year when the fiery young noble behaved foolishly and sulked under his Sovereign's displeasure, his aged friend wrote him a very beautiful letter of advice, a letter in which there was neither familiarity nor fawning, but good counsel on his duty to Elizabeth as Queen and woman.

At this time Sir Henry and Sir Francis Walsingham also were exchanging presents, and we see that he was on the best terms with the greatest and wisest in the land.

1596. There seems to have been disturbances in this part of the country, for on Dec. 14th, Roger Symons, carpenter, of Hampton Fay, confessed that the rioters in Oxfordshire meant to spoil the houses of Sir H. Lee and others and would cut off their heads.

The year 1600 was for some reasons a sad one for Sir Henry. Essex, his friend and patron, was indeed released from arrest in May, but smarting under the refusal of the Queen to renew his monopoly of sweet wines, the young and fiery nobleman was in an excited condition, and his confinement to his own house by order of the Council in June did not improve his state. He began intriguing with James of Scotland, and attempted even to drive Raleigh and Cecil from the Court, where their influence upset all his plans for rehabilitation in the favour of his Royal Mistress. Sir Henry's first cousin, Captain Thomas Lee, a devoted servant and admirer of Essex, shared the displeasure in which his patron stood.

In December one of those illustrious foreigners who visited this country, the Duke Bracciano,* head of the Orsini family, in the course of his travels visited Woodstock, and Sir Henry, in a letter to Cecil, mentions how the Duke was shown the writing on the window by Elizabeth in 1554, when a prisoner. She envied the lot of a country milkmaid, and wrote with a diamond on the glass: "Much suspected of me Nothing proved can be, Quoth Elizabeth Prisoner."

Sir Henry also entertained the foreign nobleman at his own house, and listened with pleasure to the polite sentences of his guest in praise of the Queen.

Two years before, the German traveller, Hentzner, had been through the same course of sight seeing, and was no doubt personally conducted by the old Knight.

The early days of 1601 saw the ill-advised outburst of Essex, following on the 19th February by his trial with Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton. Two days before this Sir Henry Lee's cousin, the gallant Captain Thomas Lee, was executed at Tyburn, with the usual horrible procedure in such cases, and on the 25th of the month the young and brilliant Earl was beheaded within the Tower of London, but 33 years of age and with a most glorious career before him had he been more self restrained and attentive to the good advice of his devoted admirer, Sir Henry Lee. From that day the Queen's health, popularity and influence with her people declined.

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* When the Duke went to see the Queen she danced measures and galliards in his presence. Not bad for a lady of 68.

28th Jan., 1601. Sir H. Lee bought the advowson of Charlbury and sold or mortgaged it to his brother, Cromwell Lee.

1901, Aug. Sir H. Lee shooting party at Woodstock.

Oct., 1602. Wool account, sold and delivered £360 15s.

13th Oct. 277 todd, 155 in fleeces at 26s. per todd.

Dec. 21st, 1602. Cromwell Lee dies.

24th March, 1603, the great Queen died at Richmond, aged 69 years and six months, thus closing an eventful life and a glorious reign of 44 years and four months, and we may suppose that if she was not regretted by all her subjects, yet some and amongst them Sir Harry, who had never received aught but favour at her hands, must have felt her loss honestly, especially as we have no knowledge that like some of the late Queen's courtiers, he had ever sought the favour of the new King.

However, as James proceeds to London hunting and knighting on his road, Sir Henry prepares to meet his new master and attends at Stamford Hill with 60 men the arrival of the King at the outskirts of his future capital. As Master of the Armouries he takes his place in the procession to the city, and 2nd July he occupies his stall in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, as all Knights of the Garter were bound to do.

James, who appears to have loved the chase with all the ardour of a Norman King, came to Woodstock in September, and while in the neighbourhood, of course, visits Sir Henry at Ditchley. This time the Royal visit is not accompanied by masques and poetry, but it is the horn of the hunter and the baying of the hounds that supply the music. James' Queen, the rather masculine Anne of Denmark, visits the lady who is keeping house for the Knight, the fair Mistress Vavasour, who still "flourishes like the lily and the rose," and has long and large discourse with her, leaving the attractive lady a rich jewel as a memento of her visit. The Knight too, no doubt, did not miss the opportunity, for next year he obtains a license to empark at Ditchley and also gets legal possession of Lees Rest, a bit of the Forest of Whichwood, which he had already poached from the Royal domain. The Knight now gets into temporary money difficulties, as he is building or repairing four houses in Buckinghamshire and probably spending some on his Oxfordshire residences. But good Sir Michael Hicks lends him money, and in those days the ancestor of the recent Chancellor of the Exchequer was ready to do a bit of safe business with gentlemen who were a little entangled in bricks and mortar, though always on business terms. Sometimes the interest or repayment of the loan was not quite convenient, and then Sir Michael received a buck or "a nag of a comfortable colour." Sometimes, as in 1606, the buck had to be withheld owing to the scarcity of the deer from the excessive

30 of them having great horses, many with chains of gold, others with yellow seams embroidered, "Constantiæ et fide."

drought. Even in great Eliza's days as much as £60 per annum (probably the equivalent of £600 now-a-days) was allowed for May for the winter feed of the deer in Woodstock Park, but in 1605 the drought caused the deer to stray from Woodstock to Richmond Park. This gives us a striking picture of the openness of the country in those days. The deer no doubt followed the course of the river for water and browsed along undisturbed by coach or rail.

In 1608, as in other years, the King and his eldest son, the promising Prince Henry, came to Woodstock to hunt, and the old Knight who no longer was able to attend the Feast of St. George at Windsor, had an opportunity of paying his respects to his King. And to commemorate the sport of this year, and again in 1610, Sir Henry puts up the horns of red deer killed by the Royal sportsmen in his hall and beneath them little tablets of brass recording the dates of the kills and in doggerel rhyme the course of each run. These heads and tablets yet remain, and these are specimens of the rhyme. The runs, as we may observe, are of about 5-7 miles from point to point.

1608, August 24th, Saturday. From Foxehole Coppice rouz'd, Great Britain's King I fled. But What? In Kiddington pond he overtoke me dead.

1608, August 26th, Monday. King James made me to run for life, from Dead-man's riding; I ran to Goreil gate, where death for me was biding.

1608, August 27th, Tuesday. The King pursude me fast from Grange coppice flying, the King did hunt me living, the queen's parke had me dying.

1610, August 22nd, Wednesday. In Henly knap to hunt me King James, Prince Henry found me, Cornebury Parke river, to end their hunting drowned me.

1610, August 24th, Friday. The King and Prince from Grange made me to make my race, but death near the queene's parke gave me a resting place.

1610, August 25th, Saturday. From Foxehole driven what could I doe, being lame? I fell before the King and Prince, near Rozamond her well.

Now as the years roll by and Sir Henry approaches his 80th birthday, he finds, as so often the case with the very aged, that he has outlived his brothers and sisters and the friends of his youth. His cousin, Thomas Lee, who should have been his heir has died a shameful death and the son is a "wildoats," so he makes his will in

favour of a second cousin and namesake in Bucks, later on to be one of the first batch of Baronets, the new dignity invented by the canny Scotch King, to increase his private fortune. And soon after this, on 12th February, 1611, the old Knight leaves the world which had treated him so well. He is buried according to his desire at Quarendon, near Aylesbury, in the little chapel which he had spent much money on and where the painted glass windows tell of the various matches and descents of the Lees, of Quarendon, while marble monuments record the appearance of the Knight and his immediate relatives. In the east window is a wonderful coat of arms composed of the instruments of the Passion, supported by a dove and a serpent and with the lamb and crown of thorns for crest. Below are verses which in spite of the coat of arms on monument and windowpane say :

" Why should earthe's gentry make herself so good
Giving Coate Armes for all the World to gaze on
Christ's blood alone makes Gentlemen of Blood
His shameful passion yields ye fairest Blazon
For he is anncienst and of best behaviour
Whose ancestors and Armes are from his Saviour."

The tombs and the glass are all now vanished and only a portion of the walls of the chapel remain, but there was one tomb that was never destroyed, for it was never erected. It was to be a kneeling figure of the fair Anne Vavasour. Unfortunately for her the disappointed heir informed against her in the Ecclesiastical Court of High Commission for having two husbands alive, so she was fined £1,000, which went to the informer, and sentenced to corporal punishment, which was remitted by the favour of the King.

The funeral took place 4th April, 1611, at Quarendon, and as Sir Henry belonged to the Most Noble Order of the Garter, his helmet and shield, spurs, &c., were carried at the funeral by Garter King at Arms, the famous Sir Wm. Segar, and the Heralds, Lancaster and Chester.

The neighbours from Oxfordshire and Bucks came in great* numbers and swelled the procession, as we see by the official account in the British Museum. The funeral cost some £400—probably the equivalent of £4,000 to-day. The journey and funeral pomp alone would not account for such a sum, but there was no doubt a big feast, as was the fashion of those times. "The funeral baked meats" that Hamlet speaks of were substantial meals, with chiefly

* Over 200 persons having mourning provided for them.

fish and other Lenten diet, and also fruits, spices and large quantities of hippocras, ale and other drink. In all ranks of society, from King to citizen, this custom obtained, even though the obit dinner only consisted of a bun and a horn of ale.

Sir Walter Scott in the novel of Woodstock exercised the privilege of a genius, to alter times and people to suit the subject of his romance. As we have seen, the old Sir Harry Lee had nothing to do with politics, as he belonged to a time when none were for a party but all were for the State. Charles I. he probably only saw as a small boy with weak legs and a melancholy cast of countenance, a much less interesting personage than his elder brother. As to Alice, Sir Henry Lee's daughter, her name was Mary and she died "in flower and prime of all her years," while her two little brothers, John and Henry, "slain by fortune's spite," died young. And Bevis, the Cheshire mastiff, who is painted with his master, and some highly complimentary verses. These verses either refer to, or perhaps originated, the story that one night when on retiring to rest Sir Henry ordered the dog out of the room, the faithful animal refused to go and soon after dragged from under the bed a man with a knife who had hidden himself there in order to kill the Knight. These are the verses :—

Reason in man cannot effect such love,
As nature doth in them that reason want ;
Ulysses kind and true his dog did prove,
When faith in better friends was very scant.
My travels for my friends have been as true,
Tho not as far as fortune did him bear ;
No friends my love and faith divided know,
Tho this nor that once equalled were.
But in my dog whereof I made no store,
I find more love than them I trusted more.

And now we may enquire who was the Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in the troublous times of the Civil War. Well, Sir Henry Lee, the third baronet, was born 21st November, 1637, consequently when the first battle of the war was fought at Edgehill on 23rd October, 1642, Sir Walter Scott's hero was barely five years old. When in 1655 he married Anne, daughter of Sir John Danvers (one of Charles I. judges), Cromwell was standing up for the persecuted Vaudois Protestants. He was Member of Parliament for Malmesbury at the time of the Lord Protector's death, and he himself died in London eight months after that great man. The death of Charles I.

may or may not have made a great impression on a twelve-year boy, but the lover of 21 did not let his politics interfere with his choice of a wife.

The young Sir Henry Lee's excellent mother had re-married with the Earl of Rochester, by whom she was the mother of the poet John Earl of Rochester, who after a brilliant but dissipated career ended a mis-spent life with a penitent death, and now rests without any memorial in the vault beneath Spelsbury Church. The mother of Sir Henry Lee and of the poet, managed to keep the war from Ditchley by tact, and the aid of John Cary, the estate agent and founder of Spelsbury Almshouses.

Though old Sir Harry Lee did not live as Sir Walter Scott described, he was on the whole a remarkable man. As his tomb-stone recorded, he had served five Princes and kept himself right and steady in many dangerous shocks and three utter turns of State. These we may take to have been the accession of Mary with the event of Wyatt's rebellion, when Sir Henry as a cousin must have been somewhat puzzled how to act; the accession of Elizabeth and the plots in favour of Mary Queen of Scots; and lastly the accession of James I. and the plots which occurred early in his reign. Such turns would have tried the head of the Vicar of Bray, and yet the old Knight does not seem to have lost the respect or friendship of any. He was a good soldier, a great traveller, an accomplished courtier and above all, true to his own motto, Fide et Constantiâ. To many it will seem that the finest trait in his character was his courageous sympathy with the loser, as in the cases of Ridley, of the Duke of Norfolk and of the Earl of Essex. Even in those fierce times such faith and constancy must have been appreciated by the discerning.

He was, as his epitaph says, "adorned with those flowers of knighthood Courtesy Bounty Valour," and left much patrimony with his name, honour with the world and plentiful tears with his friends.