

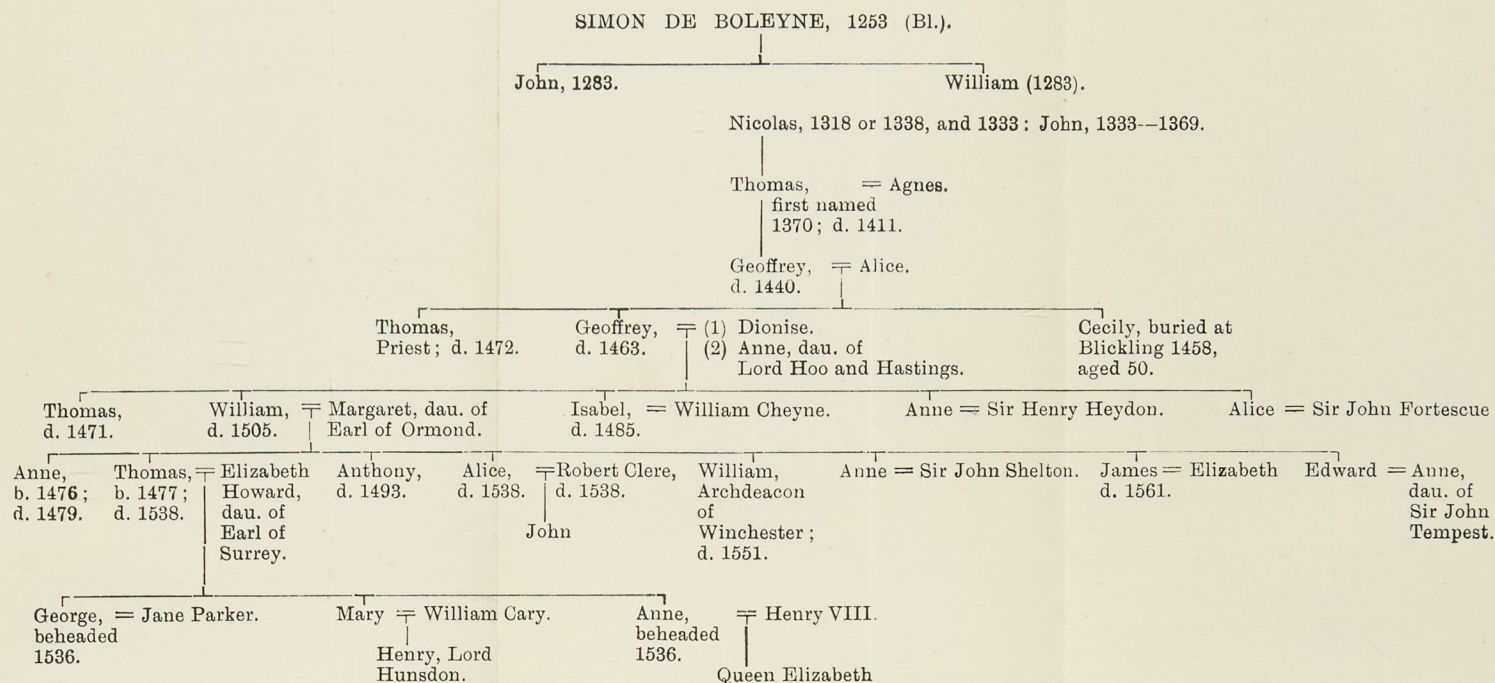
Some Notes on the Boleyn Family.

COMMUNICATED BY

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The object of this paper is to bring together and present in one purview as many facts as the compass of an article will allow, with regard to the early history of the Boleyn family and its connection with Salle in particular. The family has won a wide fame, largely owing to the romantic and tragic story of Queen Anne Boleyn, and imagination has been active with regard to the Queen's forebears. Many are interested in the story, even outside the county of Norfolk, but the Rector of Salle has special reason for being interested, and to some extent a responsibility rests upon him to produce what can be relied upon as trustworthy evidence. In this work he has had the advantage of access to contemporary Court Rolls of two Manors of Salle, Stinton, belonging to the Brewes, and Kirkhall, belonging to the Mautebys, from the beginning of the reign of Edward III. onwards. The Rolls are not complete, but they are invaluable as far as they go. They are in the possession of the Bulwer family, to whom they have come down with the inheritance of the Manors. The late Colonel E. A. Bulwer gave every facility for consulting them.

THE BOLEYNE GENEALOGICAL TREE.



Other Boleyns named in Briston Court Rolls are;—

John Boleyn, 1420.

Thomas of Briston, "Messor" of Mauteby Manor, 1454: had land at Briston (1442).

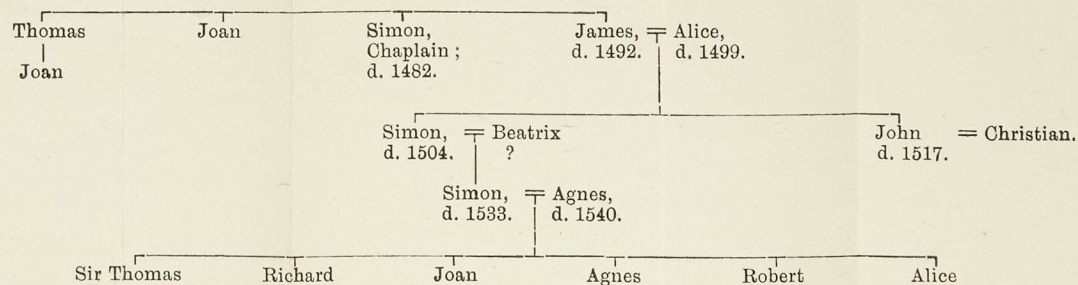
Thomas of Gunthorp, held 8 acres at Gunthorp of Mauteby, 1470-5

Robert, "Comptor" of Briston Court, 1472-3;

Edmund, had land at Briston, 1442;

Two are found among the citizens of Norwich, viz., Edmund, shoemaker, 1460; Robert, barber, 1499.

The following are of Gunthorp or Bale:—



trespass; in 1348 as plaintiff in a plea of debt. And in the same year he pays the Lord 4d. "for a fine" for 1 rod of pasture. In 1356 he surrendered into the hands of the Lord $\frac{1}{2}$ a cottage. In 1357 the Lord conceded to him 1 pightle for the term of 5 years at a "firm" rent of 2 qrs. of barley, and two years later $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of demesne near Frothker-wood, and 1 close, and 1 piece of pasture called Shotker, and 2 more acres for 4 years at a rent of 12s. and 4 bushels of barley. In 1357 he was fined 3d. for storing corn "out of villenage" without leave. In 1366 John Boleyn is named among others as tenants who were bound to do fealty: he was fined 3d. He also is named as holding from the Lord 1 close and 1 cottage at 3s. rent, and Shovecrofts at 2s. rent for 2 years. In 1363 he served on a jury of a Coroner's inquest *re* the death of Alice Damisell of Salle. In 1368 there was an order of the Court to "arrest" John Boleyn to reply to John Rook in a plea of trespass: and in 1369 John Boleyn was fined 4d. for not appearing *re* the trespass. It appears that John died soon after. In 1377 Emma Boleyn is named: she may be his widow.

It appears from the evidence of the Court Rolls, as if John were the father of Thomas, our next subject, for land usually passed from father to son; but see later. In 1370 Thomas Boleyn had $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres near Frothker-wood and 2 acres of demesne and 2 pieces of pasture called Shotker and Frothker for a term of 5 years. It is not easy to identify pieces of land exactly, but it looks as if the land held by Thomas was the same as that held by John. There is here a gap in the evidence of the Court Rolls. But the Close Rolls contain an entry in 1386, "Writ of *supersedeas omnino* by mainprize in favour of Thomas Bulleyn of Salle..... executor..... for render of a bond or box." In 1398 he appears as a

witness; and in 1398 Thomas and Agnes, his wife, are named in a list of indulgences granted by Boniface IX. In 1399 Thomas Boleyn and others were sued in the Court of Common Pleas for £14 as executors. In the same year the Court Rolls say: "Thomas gave to Geoffrey his son one messuage in Salle without leave"; and in a later Court the same year Thomas Boleyn came into Court and he or Geoffrey was allowed to retain possession. There is no further mention of Thomas, but it is quite certain that he was the father of Geoffrey. The Court Rolls afford some evidence that Blomefield was right in assigning Thomas Boleyn's death to 1411. This perhaps is the place to add that when Martin visited (*circa* 1731) Salle Church, he saw on the south side remains of a coloured glass window, giving the story of Cain and Abel and Noah's ark, with an inscription, "O. p. animabus Thome Boleyn . . . qui hanc fenestr . . . (feceru)nt."

The first mention of Geoffrey in the Court Rolls, after that in 1399, is a very interesting one. It is in 1408. Geoffrey, one of seven named, "with other commoners of the Town of Salle entered the Lord's Manor and there occupied a close of the Manor with the timber (*meremio*= cut wood) of the Church of Salle, and also entered the house of the Lord in the said Manor and there broke one small building and despoiled other belongings of the said house without leave. Therefore consultation must be had with the Lord and his council." The matter was too serious, it seems, to be dealt with by the Court.

This incident, taken in connexion with several other pieces of evidence which point to the Church of Salle being in building at that time, suggests that Geoffrey Boleyn had some share in the work. In the same year it is noteworthy that the Jurors of the Court presented that Geoffrey Boleyn and William Schefeld, parson of the Church of Salle (1401-28), occupied a ditch or bank

of the Lord about the Manor with a great ash tree: they are warned to remove it within seven days or forfeit it.

In 1409-10 Geoffrey is named several times in connexion with small pieces of land sold to him, for which he did not pay in due time. In 1412 Geoffrey Boleyn made trespass on the Lord by ploughing over one division between the land of the Lord of Mauteby and the Prior of Cokesford, by which he appropriated 1 rod of land of the Lord. And in 1412 the Lord conceded and let *ad firmam* (= for a fixed rent or for farming) to Geoffrey one close called Frothker-wode and 15 acres for 6 years at a rent of 6s. 8d. and 14s. 6d. Then there is a gap in the Court Rolls.

In 1422 Geoffrey is named as continuing trespass. In 1424 he is named as one of 22 tenants paying a fine for absence from the Court.

In the accounts of Kirkhall Manor for 1434, there is an item "for 6 loads of barley and oat straw bought of Geoffrey Boleyn for thatching, 4d. a load—2s. For cartage of the same from the messuage of Geoffrey to the Renthouse 6d."

In a Survey of another Manor, Stinton, of about 1430-40, Geoffrey is found to hold 23 pieces of land comprising in all 10 acres.

To these pieces of evidence may be added one from a deed of Nugoun's Manor, now in the keeping of Sir Dymoke White, Bt. The deed traces the possession of Marshgate Green, as belonging to Nugoun's Manor from the reign of King John.

Under 1419 it has "Geoffrey Boleyn made *unum fontem* in the said Green without any agreement with the Lord": the Court orders distraint before the next Court to make satisfaction or composition with the Lord for wrongful occupation.

de manus xpi nobis precantibus



Hic iacet Galfredus Boleyn qui obiit xli die mensis martij a dni m^o c^o lxxv et ei Alia uxor ei^a sic pueri cor^o dni q^{uod} aⁿim^{as} p^{ro}curi de^o Ann^o

Brass of Geoffrey and Alice Boleyn at Salle.

Year after year the case was brought up and Geoffrey Boleyn was charged with keeping and continuing *unum fontem*, for which he paid nothing to the Lord.

In 14 Henry VI. (1435-6) "Geoffrey Boleyn occupies *unum fontem* and has drawn water without leave or payment. The well is put under ban, and Geoffrey Boleyn is in grave misdemeanour." At last, in 1439, Geoffrey Boleyn pays a fine for drawing water.

These pieces of evidence seem to point to the fact that Geoffrey was not himself a Lord, but merely a tenant of the Manor. He made his living by farming, holding about 30 acres of land.

The Visitation of the Archdeacon of Norwich, 1368—1420 (P.R.O.), states, under Salle: "1 herse cloth of tapestry, with 2 cushions of the same set, of the gift of Geoffrey Boleyn and others."

Salle retains three relics of the Boleyns of those days. One is a loke, part of a *venella* called as early as 1480, "Old Boleyn's Lane," and still known as Boleyn's Lane. Another is a field called "Bullen's Croft." The third is the gravestone in the Church, with brass. The stone holds a very important position, one-third of the way down the middle alley, in front of the screen and rood loft. The stone is about 9 ft. long and 4 ft. 6 ins. broad. The inscription says: "Here lie Geoffrey Boleyn, who died 25th March, 1440, and Alice his wife and their children: on whose souls may God have mercy. Amen." And over their heads: "God be merciful to us sinners." In Martin's day there were effigies of five sons and four daughters.

His wife Alice is said by Blomefield to have been daughter and heiress of Bracton; but the present writer has come across no evidence bearing on this statement. The mention of Alice in the Court Rolls suggests that Alice survived Geoffrey. It is unfortunate that a careful search has failed to find the will of Geoffrey.

Of their children, three only are known for certain—Cecily, buried at Blickling, with inscription: "Here lyth Cecily Boleyn, suster to Geoffrey Boleyn, lord of the manor of Blicling, whiche Cecily deaced in her maydenhode of the age of 50 yeeres the 23rd day of June the year of our Lord 1458, whose soul God pardon." She was "the spiritual daughter" of Thomas Drew, Chaplain of Salle, who in his will (1443) left her "1 pair of beads of coral, with Paternosters gilt."

One son, Thomas, became a priest and had an interesting career. He was one of the first men of Salle to go to Cambridge University, where he became Fellow of Trinity Hall. From 1422-29 he was Rector of Reepham. In 1434 he went on the King's business to the Council of Basle in the suite of Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, who presented him to the living of Hackford next Reepham in 1436. After being Prebend of Hereford in 1441, he was made Prebend of St. Stephen's, Westminster, in 1446, and held the Prebend till his death in 1472. He combined with it the offices of Sub-Dean and Precentor of Wells (1450) and the Mastership of Gonville Hall, Cambridge, from 1454-72, and in 1458 that of the College of Maidstone.

In 1448 Thomas was one of seven persons appointed to draw up the statutes of the new College at Cambridge founded by Queen Margaret, later Queens' College, and a Dionisius Boleyn appears as a benefactor, perhaps a son of Geoffrey II. by his first wife, Dionisia.

In 1455 the Manor of Stiffkey was conveyed to Thomas and Cecily and others, and so came to the Boleyn family.

In connexion with this Thomas, there is an important piece of evidence concerning Nicolas Boleyn. It comes from the de Banco Rolls (membrane 156) and is dated 1463.

"Thomas Boleyn, clerk, seeks against William Doreward and others, the Manor of Calthorpe, called Hookhall, as his right and inheritance in which William, etc. have no entry, except after the disseisin which Bartholomew Calthorpe, Kt., made to Nicolas Boleyn, kinsman of the said Thomas, who is his heir. Thomas says that Nicolas was seized of the Manor as of fee and right in the reign of Edward III. and took the explees, and from the same Nicolas descended the right to Thomas as son and heir, and from Thomas to Geoffrey as son and heir, and from Geoffrey to this Thomas, who now seeks as son and heir."

This means that Nicolas claimed that Sir Bartholomew Calthorpe had ousted him from the Lordship of the Manor of Hookhall, and the freehold lands going with it. One hundred or more years later Nicolas' great-grandson claimed the title. The result of the trial was that Thomas won his claim. The value of the Manor is given as £19. The evidence is important and irrefragable. It is difficult to reconcile with it the inferences drawn from the Court Rolls on two points.

(1) It states definitely that Nicolas was the father of Thomas I., and not John, as the Court Rolls imply. It does not give a date for Nicolas, but if Rye's date, 1318, is right, it is remarkable, but not impossible, that his son Thomas does not appear in the Court Rolls till 1370, and lived till 1411.

(2) The Salle Court Rolls seem to prove that the Boleyns were villeins, holders of land under the Lords and not Lords themselves. But this extract speaks of Nicolas and his descendants as owning a manor at Calthorpe as of fee and right.

It is further noteworthy, that though Geoffrey, who died in 1463, does not name Calthorpe among his manors, William Boleyn, who died in 1505, does.

The other son of Geoffrey I., also Geoffrey by name, became the most famous of the Boleyns in the 15th century, and must have been an important subject of Henry VI. He was married twice: for his second wife he had Anne, the daughter of Lord Hoo and Hastings. She was the first link of the Boleyns with the nobility and introduced into the family the "fateful" name of Anne. From various sources we glean a good deal of information about him. It is said that he went up to London under the wing of Sir John Fastolf, but the first bit of evidence of him is contained in an extract from the *Calendar of Letter-books* of the City of London under date 1435.

"1 Feb: 14 Henry VI. (1435-6) came Geoffrey Boleyn, Hatter, before the Mayor and Aldermen, and showed that whereas he had been admitted into the Freedom of the City in the art of Hatter in 1428, he had long used and was now using the art of Mercery. He therefore prayed to be admitted to the Freedom in the art of Mercery. His prayer granted."

The Patent Rolls have: 1430, "John Kyng of Salle dwelling in the town of Bristol, mercer, for not appearing to answer Geoffrey Boleyn of Salle touching a debt of £14"; 1439, "Richard White, Essex, for not appearing to answer Geoffrey Boleyn touching a plea that he render 100 quarters of charcoal."

In 1445, "by a petition of Geoffrey Boleyn, merchant of England, the King has learned that divers persons daily publish that divers merchants have sold merchandise to alien merchants . . . contrary to statute, and so he and others may be vexed therein . . . the King has pardoned him all contempts, offences, and forfeitures, and all that pertains to the King by reason of the premises."

Also, "Exemption for life of Geoffrey Boleyn, citizen and merchant of London, from being empanelled . . . and

he and his servants be not vexed by any purveyor.... of the King by land or water, and that he may freely sell and carry his goods wherever he will in England."

In keeping with these, as to character and extent of Geoffrey Boleyn's trade, we find under 1446, "John Hunt of Swepstone (Leics.), chapman, for not appearing to answer Geoffrey Boleyn for a debt of £40."

In 1446 Geoffrey Boleyn was Sheriff of London and also of Middlesex.

Between 1447 and 1450 Geoffrey Boleyn negotiated with Sir John Fastolf for the purchase of Blickling. Between 1450 and 1452 Sir John found difficulty in obtaining his money, and to expedite matters he presented a petition to Cardinal Kemp, the Chancellor, setting out that whereas Geoffrey Boleyn had bought the Manor for 2000 marks and an annuity of 90 marks, he had so far received only half of the purchase money.

Some light may be thrown upon this by an entry in the Patent Rolls under 1451, which says that Geoffrey Boleyn and four others lent the King £1246 to pay for an expedition to France, to be repaid in 1453.

He became Lord Mayor of London in 1457.

The will of Geoffrey Boleyn was dated June 14th, 1463, and proved July 2nd, 1463.

"I desire to be buried in the Chapel of St. John, Church of St. Laurence in Jewry, London, in the south part of the chancell, but if I die in Norfolk then to be buried in Blickling Church, in the Chapel of St. Thomas I made in the north side of the Chancell there. I bequeath to make a new roodloft in St. Laurence Church £100, and to the work of the body of Blickling Church £20 at the discretion of my brother, Master Thomas Boleyn.

"To a priest 200 marks to pray for the souls of me, my late wife Dionise, of Geoffrey and Alice, my father

and mother, and of Adam Book, in whichever chapel I am buried, for 20 years, the said priest to be a doctor bachelor or scholar of divinity.

"To my wife, Anne, half my silver plate and household goods. To my son Thomas 300 marks, to my son William the like, at their age of 25.

"To my daughters, Isabel, Anne, and Alice, if still unmarried, 1000 marks each at ages of 25.

"To the poor householders of Blikling, Holkham, Stukey, Mulkebarton, Kemsing and Sele £200."

Geoffrey was buried in the Church of St. Laurence, Jewry. The church was destroyed in the great Fire, 1666; but Weever (1631) records the inscription: "Hic incineratur corpus quondam Gaulfridi Bulleyn, civis, merceri et majoris London, qui ab hac luce migravit 1463, cuius anime pax sit perpetua."

Anne, his wife, survived Geoffrey. The *Paston Letters* speak of her as alive in 1469, staying in Norwich with her daughters, Anne and Alice. They say that Alice was being courted by John Paston; but she married Sir John Fortescue. Isabel married William Cheyney, and Anne married Sir Henry Heydon of Baconsthorpe.

Isabel's grave is at Blickling, with the inscription: "Hic jacit Isabella Cheyne quondam uxor Willi Cheyne de insula de Sheppy que obiit xiii die mensis Aprilis A.D. 1485."

The will of Geoffrey's eldest son, Thomas, is extant. He died 1471. It begins: "I bequeath and give my soul to Almighty God my maker, and to his modir Marye our lady swete virgyn, and my body to be buried in the oolde Jewry of London beside my fadir." He orders "lights, torches and tapers" for the funeral. He leaves to his mother, Anne Boleyn, "she to dispose and do her best advyse to helth of my soule all my goodes." His mother was sole executor. He orders

his "place in the towne of Ingham to be sold. Those debtors who are not of power to pay or satisfie without their hurte or undoing are to be for gave and pardoned so they pray for my soul."

About the year 1469 John Paston (*Paston Letters*, vol. 2, p. 50) writes: "I had with me one day at dinner in my mother's place, she being out, Lord Scales, Sir John Howard, and Thomas Boleyn." Thomas might be either the Thomas who died in 1471, or Thomas, his uncle; but the latter would probably have been called Sir Thomas.

Weever transcribed the inscription on Thomas' tomb in the Church of St. Laurence, viz., "Hic jacet Thomas Bulleyn, de comitatu Norfolci Armiger qui obiit ultimo die mensis Aprilis A.D. 1471."

The will was like most mediæval wills, a death-bed will: it was made on the 23rd April.

Perhaps this is the best place for what may prove a diversion from following the direct line of descent. It concerns Simon Boleyn. Blomefield, somewhere, calls him the youngest son of Geoffrey I. The facts are these: For a good many years he served, as a priest, the Church of Salle. He was a parochial chaplain, not a stipendiary. The latter was attached to guild altars and chantry chapels. The former was more like a modern curate: he was attached to the church and worked under the rector. The rector spoke of him as "my chaplain," and he called the rector "my master." It is not known when Simon became parochial chaplain, but he was in Priest's Orders in 1455, for in that year John Perry, Chaplain, of Gunthorpe, leaves him "a book with 2 clasps" and calls him *Dominus*. So Simon must have been born before 1431. He died at Salle: and his will is preserved (Norwich Consistory Court, Caston, p. 124). It was made in 1478, and was not proved till

1482, which agrees with the inscription on the brass in Salle Church—"Orate pro anima domini Simonis Boleyn capellani qui obiit tertia die mensis Augusti 1482." The indent of the chalice is clear, but the brass had gone in Martin's day (1731). The will is interesting but too long to give *in extenso*. He wills to be buried within the church: he leaves 6s. 8d. to the "repair of the Church of Gunthorp and an altar cloth of diaper to it." The terms of a contract between himself and a fellow chaplain, Wm. Jekkes, are to be carried out. He names his sister Joan, and Joan, his niece, a daughter of Thomas Boleyn, and two sons of James Boleyn, viz., Simon and John. His executors are his brothers, James and Thomas with *of Gunthorp* added, and John Crome, Rector of Bathle (*i.e.*, Bale).

Of these, John Crome had been a chaplain at Salle. James, the brother, died in 1492, and his will is extant. William Jekkes, who willed to be buried next to Simon, died at Salle in 1499. It seems that they were friends and may have been of much the same age. His friend outlived him seventeen years, and his brother James ten. The reasoning is precarious, but it looks as if Simon cannot have been even the youngest son of Geoffrey I. And further, his family seems to have been connected with Gunthorp, Bale, and Briston; and there is a fair amount of evidence to show that another branch of the Boleyn family lived in that direction.

Perhaps that branch is to be derived originally from William Boleyn of Thurning, who, about 1283, was bailiff of the Manor of Walsingham in Salle. In 1420 the Court Rolls name a John of Briston, the next village to Thurning. In 1442 Thomas and Edmund held land at Briston of Mauteby Manor. In 1454 Thomas of Briston is named as "messor," and there is a will of one Thomas of Briston, 1477. Later, Thomas of Gunthorp

had 8 acres of Mauteby at Gunthorp, 1470-5. And in 1472 one Robert was "comptor" of the Briston Court. There is a will of Robert of Briston, 1501. The later Boleyns are all of Gunthorp or Bale.

It seems quite likely that Simon belonged to that branch, but who his father was is uncertain. One would judge that he was one generation later than Geoffrey II. The chief link of connexion with the Boleyns of Salle, besides his being Chaplain here, was that his grave is next to Geoffrey I. (perhaps his great-uncle), which is not unnatural. It is noteworthy that no evidence has come to hand connecting the Boleyns with Salle between Simon Boleyn (died 1482) and James Boleyn, who appears about 1520.

After this diversion, we now return to the main stream.

William Boleyn, son of Geoffrey II, made affiance with nobility and married Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Ormond. They had a large family. Of these Anne died in 1479 at the age of 3 years 11 months and 13 days, as her gravestone in Blickling Church proves. Anthony died in 1493 and was also buried at Blickling. Besides these they had Thomas, William, James, and Edward: Alice, Margaret, and (a 2nd) Anne, of whom Alice was married to Robert Clere, Margaret to Sir John Sackville, and Anne to Sir John Shelton. Thomas was married to Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Surrey and Duke of Norfolk, and Edward to Anne Tempest; James' wife was called Elizabeth, and William was a priest.

Blomefield says that William (senior) was knighted at the coronation of Richard III., and with this agrees the evidence of the monuments in Blickling. Anne's inscription, 1479, speaks of William as armiger, and Anthony's in 1493 of him as miles. He was Sheriff of Norfolk in 1500-1.

The chief interest and evidence of William is contained in his will. It was made on October 7th, 1505: and Blomefield records the inscription on the gravestone in Norwich Cathedral: "Hic jacet corpus Willelmi Boleyn militis, qui obiit 10 Oct. A.D. 1505."

In his will he leaves to Thomas, his son, all the manors of Blickling, Calthorpe, Wikmere, and Mekylberton, subject to a payment of 200 marks per annum to his wife, Dame Margaret, with the right to dwell at Blickling. To Thomas he also leaves his manors of Fylby, West Lexham, Possewick, and Stiffkey. To him also "the whole piece of new arras, and my gold collars of Esses."

To his wife "£50, 2 great silver pots, 2 middle silver salts with cover, 1 doz. silver spoons, a bed of blue bawdekyn, half my napery, and linen, featherbeds, pewter and brass in Blikling and my plate in Norwich."

(Blomefield says that William Boleyn's house in Norwich was on the north side of St. Julian's Church.)

To James he leaves the Manor of Fretyngnam, subject to a payment of £7 to William Lumnour.

To Edward the Manor of Gowthorp.

To Blickling Church: to High Altar 6s. 8d., to the repair £20, and 4 silver candlesticks, and a vestment of velvet.

He wills to have 4 secular priests to sing for his soul and the souls of his Father and Mother, 3 in Norwich Cathedral, and 1 at Cambridge for 20 years, each to have 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) a year.

He wills Dr. Hugh, Austin Friar at Norwich, to sing and preach for the said souls for 4 years and to receive £4 a year.

To every household in Blyklyng rich and poor, 5s.

He wills to be buried in Norwich Cathedral next to the sepulchre of Dame Anne, his Mother.

His executors were Thomas, his son, and Thomas Earl of Ormond.

Witnesses included Dame Anne Heydon, John Shelton, and Dame Anne, his wife.

Thomas, William's eldest son, is said to have been born in 1477. In 1512-3 Thomas was Warden and Constable of Norwich Castle along with Henry Wyatt. He is credited with negotiating the preliminaries for the field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, and was a familiar figure at the Court of Francis I. During the King's courtship of his daughter, honours were heaped upon him. It may be of interest to record that in 1528 he hired "the Manor of Tonbridge from the Dean and Canons of Cardinal College for 21 years, the grantee to provide lodging for the Dean and such others as shall ryde the progresse." Thomas died two years after the execution of Queen Anne. His sister, Alice Clere, and her husband, Sir Robert, both died the same year. The inscription on Thomas' tomb at Hever, Kent, reads: "Here lieth Sir Thomas Bullen, K.G., Erle of Wilscher and of Ormond, whiche decessed the 12 dai of Marche in the iere of our Lord 1538."

His elder daughter, Mary, dishonoured by King Henry, afterwards married Sir William Carey, whose son Henry became Lord Hunsdon.

The story of Anne, his younger daughter, is so well known to students of history that there is no need to relate it here in detail. She was born 1506-7. At an early age she was introduced to Court life as Maid to Mary of England, wife of Louis XII. On her return to England she became, at the age of 15, Maid to Queen Catherine. Her beauty and grace caused a stir at Court: she was of dark complexion, with wonderful eyes and long black hair of exquisite softness. Her rise to royal favour was coincident and not unconnected with the

decline of Wolsey, whom she held responsible for the interruption of her courtship with Lord Percy; but Wolsey was really the tool of the King in this matter. Later, negotiations for her marriage to Sir Piers Butler, to reconcile the conflicting claims of the Butlers and Boleyns to the Earldom of Ormond, gave way to the King's fascination for her. Henry and Anne were married "much about St. Paul's Day," 1533 (so says a letter of Cranmer). In May the Divorce was pronounced by Cranmer, and Anne was crowned in Westminster Abbey, with great concourse, on Whitsunday. The future Queen Elizabeth was born in September. For three short years Anne enjoyed the King's favour, and then the end came with tragic suddenness. The small incident of dropping a glove was magnified into a grave offence: monstrous and gross charges were brought against the Queen, with little or no evidence. She was condemned to be burnt (for incest) or beheaded at the King's discretion. She was beheaded at the Tower on the day after the execution of her brother George, Viscount Rochford, on May 19th, 1536. Wakeman says that "of all the foul acts of tyranny, which the history of England records, not one perhaps is stained with a deeper dye than the murder of Anne by her unscrupulous husband."

There is a circumstantial story, incorporated in Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*, how Anne's body was disinterred by night and taken under disguise by Sir Thomas Wyatt, whose sister, Mistress Mary Wyatt, attended Anne on the scaffold, and brought, packed in a cart among boxes, to Blickling and thence to Salle under pretence of having a midnight Mass, and there buried in the church as the ancient burial place of the Boleyns. A black, nameless, marble slab is supposed to mark her grave, but there are several which

could be so described. The Boleyns seem to have severed their connexion with Salle when Geoffrey II. bought Blickling; and the Rector of Salle (1902-9) has recorded that "the remains of Queen Anne, identified by the six fingers on her left hand, have been recently disinterred in the Tower of London."

This seems the best point to pick up the threads of the other line of the Boleyns, who lived at Gunthorp and Bale.

James Boleyn died 1492: he was brother of Simon Boleyn of Salle. He willed a Trentale for his soul and masses for 3 years; to his wife, Alice, he left a tenement with 10 acres and 10 marcs, and his goods, "provided she keep his anniversary for 10 years." (Norwich Consistory Court, Normane, fo. 8.)

Alice died 1498: she willed to have a Trentale, for which she left 10s. She left to the inmates of 4 houses at Norwich, called "the Sykehowses," 12d. each house, and willed to have a canopy at the back of the Crucifix between the Church and Chancel of the B.V.M. of Gunthorp. To John, her son, her messuage and 10 acres in Gunthorp, Bale, and Hyndrynham; one priest to celebrate for her for 1 year: her anniversary to be kept for 5 years, and 1d. worth of white bread to be distributed to each house for 5 years.

Simon died 1504: "Beatrice my wife to have all my howses and lands for the time of her life, so she keep herself sole and a widdow. To John Boleyn my brother 12d., to Christiana his wife 8d." Beatrice died 1515.

John Boleyn of Gunthorp died 1517. "To my wife Christian all my household that is for to say, brasse, pewter, laten, bedding etc. all my nete catale and also my messuage that I dwell in: a priest to sing in Gunthorp."

Simon Boleyn died 1533. Agnes his wife and Robert his son named.

Agnes Boleyn died 1540: to her daughter Joan she left 5 mares and to Agnes 33s. 4d. yearly. Sir Thomas her son, priest, to sing for her soul and Simon's and receive 20 marks. She names also Robert, Richard, and Alice. To Richard she leaves all the cart gear.

After this parenthesis, we bring to a close the story of the main line of the family.

Upon the death of Thomas, there were two surviving sons of William. One was William. His record is as follows:—Pensioner of Gonville Hall, B.A. 1503, M.A. 1507, University Preacher 1512-5, Rector of St. Peter's, Cheapside 1516-29, Prebend of St. Paul's 1529, Archdeacon of Winchester 1529-51, Rector of Holt 1534, and of Postwick 1543-51. He was buried at Stiffkey 1551.

His brother James inherited Fretyngnam from his father, and came into the Blickling estates in 1538, and also held land at Salle. Blomefield says that "after Edward III. the Boleyns had an interest in More Hall," one of the manors of Salle. He also says that at the Dissolution of the monasteries, Henry granted to him in 1541 Walsingham Manor in Salle in return for Kemsing, etc., in Kent. The former statement is almost certainly wrong, and the latter right. They are really contradictory. For the will of John Ffyshe, 1524, proves that Walsingham Manor is the same as More Hall. John Ffyshe leaves to Alice, his wife, his "house with all purtenances longeing to the Manor of Walsingham, otherwise called Moo Hall, containing 10 acres and 7 acres of the Prior of W." The Manor was quite a small one. The Feet of Fines show that in 1251 it consisted of 1 messuage, 30 acres, and 26s. rent. In 1428 it was valued at £7 11s. 10½d. temporalties.

But James had lands in Salle before 1541. In 1520 (the earliest reference to him in Salle records) James

and Dame Elizabeth held land of the surrender of John Ffounteyn. In 1523 he was fined for not attending Kirkhall Court. In 1529 he was M.P. for Norwich. In 1537 we find that Simon Bulwer surrendered 1 close containing 14 acres, and another of 10 acres to the use of James and Elizabeth. Adam Ffyshe aliened to James and Elizabeth 12 acres of Kirkhall Manor, and Richard Ffyshe surrendered to them 6 acres. In 1539 the large Manor of Cawston, which had been confiscated by the Crown on the attainder of Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, was granted by Henry VIII. to James in exchange for manors in Kent. It seems as if James accumulated a fairly large estate in Salle, and Moor Hall appears later as coupled with Hawes Manor. But he sold his Salle estates to Sir John Clere, his nephew, who also bought Blickling from him. Sir John was Lord of More Hall in 1556. So the Boleyns ceased to have any landed interest in Salle before James' death in 1561.

Some extracts from his will may find a place here. The title is "The will of Sir James Bowleyne of Blicklyn, Knight, dated 20 Aug. 1561." He wills "to be buried in the north side of the Chancel of Blyklyng, near the east end. £50 at least to be distributed to the poor, lame, sick, and most needy impotent persons (4d. a piece) dwelling within 5 miles of Blikling. To the Queen (Elizabeth) "my basin and ewer all gilt and my written book of the Revelations of St. Bridget, most humbly beseeching her Highness to read and well to ponder the same."

"To my niece, Elizabeth Shelton, £400 owing to me by her Grace out of the Manor of Hethendon in Kent.

"The £400 which my nephew, Edward Clere, oweth me, part of his father's debt for the purchase from me of the Manor of Blickling and other lands shall be paid by (specified) instalments.

"My farm at Muswell Hill near Higate Co. Middlesex; my purchased lands in Oulton and to be sold.

"To my nephew and servant John Wodhouse, gentleman, 400 ewes at Baywood in Causton, etc., if he shall take to wife Frances Sefowle to whom he is already handfasted or ensured."

Proved 21 Nov. 1561 and administration granted to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon.

James was buried at Blickling, Sept. 2nd, 1561 (Reg.).

From this survey it appears that the family of the Boleyns, which has become famous in English history, was, like the Pastons, of somewhat humble origin. The piece of evidence as to the claim of Thomas Boleyn to a manor at Calthorpe is important, but it is not easy to fit it in with the evidence from contemporary Court Rolls and Rentals of Salle, as to the position of the family at the beginning of the 15th century. There is no doubt that they were enterprising men and took advantage of openings of trade and of the change in feudal conditions after 1400, and rose on the favouring tide from villenage under a lord to the rank of yeomen and tradesmen of the middle class; while Thomas attained distinction in the academic and ecclesiastical world. The second Geoffrey established the position of the family financially by successful trade, and socially by marriage with the nobility. He was one of the many Dick Whittingtons who have gone to London from the country, and become wealthy merchants and renowned citizens and mayors of the metropolis. The coping-stone of fame was the elevation of Anne to the Throne itself.

An article in the *Somerset Archæological Journal* by Dean Armitage Robinson on Thomas Boleyn, Precentor of Wells 1451-72, quotes a paragraph from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1849. The paragraph says: "The

family of Boleyn was of Norman extraction. They were possessed of manors and lands at Salle and the adjacent villages in the 12th century. Among the Blickling evidences there is a deed, 1280, with the Boleyn seal attached, retaining enough to show that they bore then the same arms as were afterwards used by this family. I presume that this will settle the question as to the 'gentility' of the Boleyns."

The present article supplies to the readers fresh and reliable evidence, which will help them to form a reasoned judgment.
