

ON THE DESCENT OF THE EARLDOM OF OXFORD.

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THE Earldom of Oxford is remarkable, beyond other English Earldoms, for the length of time that it continued in one family. For a period of more than five centuries and a half it was held, in male succession, by twenty Earls of the illustrious race of Vere. It presents, in this respect, a direct contrast to the Earldoms of Lincoln and Salisbury, whose history I have endeavoured to elucidate at previous meetings of the Institute, which were repeatedly subject to the inheritance of females; and, as my aim in these papers is rather to illustrate the nature and descent of the ancient dignity of an Earl in England, than to enter into the wide field of biography, (which, in this case, would occupy a large volume,) I have comparatively little to say upon the present subject. I shall, however, be able to remove the obscurity which Sir William Dugdale left resting on the origin of this Earldom; and I have also to point out that the right of inheritance to the dignity was limited to heirs male, and consequently altered from its original character, by the special provision of an Act of Parliament, which passed for its restoration after attainder, in the reign of Richard II.

There was no Earl of Oxford until the reign of King Henry the Second. The circumstance of a person styled Earl Aubrey—*Albericus comes*, occurring in Domesday Book, combining with the fact that the first two Earls of Oxford bore the same name, and also their forefathers for two preceding generations, has suggested the supposition of an earlier origin of this dignity; but the distinction between the *comes Albericus* of Domesday and Albericus de Ver is clearly marked in this respect: the former had forfeited his lands before the period of the survey, they were then in the King's hands, and they never belonged in after times to the Earls of Oxford; but those manors which belonged, at the survey, to Albericus de Ver, descended in due succession to the Earls his posterity. The family of the *comes Albericus* of the Conqueror's days has not been discovered: but there can be no doubt that he was really the Earl of Northum-

berland of whom it is related, by Simeon of Durham, that he received that honour after the slaughter of bishop Walcher, which occurred in 1080 ; but, having little success in the difficulties which beset his position, he deserted his charge, and went home to his own country—that is, to Normandy ; after which the Conqueror appointed Robert de Mowbray in his room.¹

Albericus de Vere, the first of his name in England, came also from Normandy.² He held in chief, at the Domesday survey, lands in the counties of Middlesex, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Essex, and Suffolk. Among these was Kensington in the first mentioned county, in after ages the residence of our kings, the church of which he gave to the abbey of Abingdon, whence arose the name of St. Mary Abbat's, still attached to the church of Kensington. He also had Colne in Essex, since called Earl's Colne, where the Earls were customarily buried in a priory of their own foundation ; and Hedingham, in the same county, where they erected their magnificent Norman castle.

The second Aubrey de Vere, son of the former, made an illustrious alliance by marrying Adeliza, daughter of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Hertford ; and, in the year 1106, king Henry the First made him his chamberlain in the room of Robert Malet, lord of Eye in Suffolk, then recently slain in rebellion.³

It was Aubrey de Vere, the third after the Conquest of England, who became the first Earl of Oxford. But his elevation to the dignity of a *comte* was originally the result of his marriage, and this is one of the circumstances that have confused the old accounts of this Earldom ; for Dugdale erroneously attributed that marriage to his grandfather,

¹ This important contribution to the right understanding of the Domesday Survey, was first pointed out by Mr. Baker, in the "History of Northamptonshire," vol. i. p. 561. The Domesday student will do well to note it in his copy of the Introduction by Sir Henry Ellis, who was not aware of it. Mr. Baker further remarks that Sir William Dugdale (Baronage, i. 188) was incorrect in his supposition that this Earl Alberic was an Englishman, having misunderstood the entry under Wiltshire which led to that conclusion ; and that the historian of Leicestershire has adopted the same

erroneous interpretation of the statements of the survey,—the fact being that the tenure of the Earl was then spoken of in the past tense, because his lands were actually forfeited. In his "History of Warwickshire," Dugdale has uniformly misrepresented this Earl as progenitor of the Earls of Oxford.

² Simeon Dunelm. edit. Twysden, col. 205.

³ Robert Malet was slain at the battle of Tenerchebrai, fighting on the side of Duke Robert Courtehoise, against his father King Henry, on the 27th Sept. 1106.

the Domesday Aubrey.⁴ We owe to that accomplished genealogist, our late valuable and much lamented member, Mr. Stapleton, the information which has set us right upon this point; and which he made known in his memoir on the Barony of William of Arques, in the county of Kent, which was read at our first Archæological meeting at Canterbury, and afterwards printed in the *Archæologia* of the Society of Antiquaries.⁵

William of Arques, the Domesday lord of Folkstone, left two daughters his coheiresses, of whom Emma the younger was married, first to Nigel de Monville, and secondly to Manasses comte of Guisnes in Flanders. By the latter alone she had issue, and that an only daughter named Rosa, otherwise Sibilla, who, having been married to Henry castellan of Bourbourg, died in her father's lifetime, leaving again a single female heiress, named Beatrice. It was this Beatrice who was destined to convey the dignity of a *comte* to the man who might win her in marriage. Her grandmother, Emma, was still living, and it was by her advice, being an English woman, that a husband was selected in the English court for the future comtesse of Guisnes. The nobleman of her choice was Aubrey de Vere, son of Aubrey the king's chamberlain.⁶

The marriage of Beatrice is said to have been hastened because she was in precarious health, and lest, in case of her death without issue, the *comté* of Guisnes should revert to the next heir, by name Arnold de Gand. The comte Manasses died in the year 1137; whereupon Henry de Bourbourg, the father of the young heiress, dispatched a message to his son-in-law, Aubrey de Vere, requiring him to come immediately to take possession of the county of Guisnes, and obtain investiture from his

⁴ Probably Ver in the Bessin, not Vire, of which Hugh Earl of Chester was castellan in the reign of William the Conqueror. See Stapleton's *Rolls of the Norman Exchequer*, vol. i. pp. lxxx., cliii., vol. ii. p. clvii.

⁵ Vol. xxxi. pp. 216—257.

⁶ Leland has a fabulous pedigree: "Ex libello genealogiæ Comitum Oxoniensium," tracing the Veres in a male line of Erles of Genney, alias Gisney, from Milo Duke of Angiers, living in the year 800. This is founded, of course, on the connection

with the Comte of Guisnes, which is related in the text. After a string of princely alliances, it terminates with a fictitious marriage between Albery de Ver Erle of Genney, who came over at the Conquest, and Beatrice a sister of the Conqueror. It is to be regretted that Arthur Collins, in his "*Historical Collections on the noble families of Cavendish, Holles, Vere, Harley, and Ogle*," fol. 1752, has given some credence to this forgery. The memoirs of the house of Vere in that work occupy pp. 214—243.

suzerain the earl of Flanders. Aubrey, though then, it is said, honourably engaged in the service of King Stephen, forthwith obeyed the summons, and from that time became entitled to the style of *comte*.

However, it is further related, by the same chronicler,⁷ that he preferred a residence at the English court to the requisite superintendence of his matrimonial domains. His wife was in too delicate a state of health to enjoy his society; and in consequence, though continually sent for by his father-in-law, he obstinately prolonged his absence, until the patience of his barons was fairly exhausted. The result was one of those petty intestine wars which were then so frequent; and it was carried on for some time in the unhappy *comté* of Guisnes with various success. On one side were ranged the *comte's* bailiff, Arnold of Hammes, and the father of the *comtesse*, Henry castellan of Bourbourg. Arnold de Gand, the pretender to the *comté*, headed the insurgent party, and one of his chief supporters was Baldwin lord of Ardres. This Baldwin, being severely wounded, sought comfort in his sickness in the counsels of the abbot of la Chapelle Thierry, and, at his instigation, he withdrew from the cause of Arnold de Gand. In brief, it was concluded that Baldwin of Ardres would make a better sovereign for the men of Guisnes than either Arnold or the Englishman whom they never saw. Aubrey de Vere, on his part, seems to have been readily persuaded to relinquish so troublesome and unpromising an alliance. He assented to a divorce. The wishes of Baldwin of Ardres were accomplished; he was married to the *comtesse* Beatrice; but she survived for only a few days, and finally Arnold de Gand succeeded to the *comte* in peace.

These events took place about the year 1144. It was consequently for about seven years that Aubrey de Vere was *comte* of Guisnes. There are several English charters extant in which he uses the title of *comte*; and one to the monastery of Hatfield, in Essex, is particularly remarkable, as proving that he did so whilst his father was living. He styles himself therein *Albericus comes, filius Alberici de Ver*, and his father is the first of the witnesses.⁸ His father, the king's chamberlain, was slain in London, during a riot of the citizens, on the 15th of May, 1140.

⁷ Lambert d'Ardres.

⁸ Morant's Essex, ii. 506.

Such were the circumstances under which the dignity of *comte* first accrued to Aubrey de Vere. His apparent apathy in relinquishing it is explained by what was going on at the time in his own country. He had become one of the most active partisans of the empress Matilda in her claim to the English crown : and had received from her the promise of an English earldom. By a charter made after Milo of Gloucester had been created earl of Hereford at Oxford on the 25th July, 1141, and before the siege of Winchester in the following month, and which, from its being dated at Oxford, (though without date of the year) was probably contemporaneous with the former event, Matilda granted to him all the land of William de Abrincis, together with all the inheritance he claimed on the part of his wife, as the heiress of William of Arques ; also the town and castle of Colchester, so soon as it should be in her power to deliver it : and further, the reversion of the Earldom of Cambridgeshire and the third penny thereof, as an Earl ought to have, provided the king of Scots had it not ; but, in that case, the said Aubrey was to have the choice of four earldoms, namely, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Dorsetshire, according to the decision of her brother the earl of Gloucester, earl Geoffrey (the earl of Essex), and earl Gilbert (the earl of Pembroke).

The political influence of earl Aubrey is further shown by the fact, that at the same time the empress gave baronies to his brothers Geoffrey and Robert, and promised the chancellorship of England to his brother William de Vere.

King Henry the Second, when he came to the throne in the year 1155, though he preferred Becket for chancellor, fulfilled the agreement made for an earldom with Aubrey de Vere. The earldom given him was that of Oxford, of which he was confirmed Earl by a grant of the third penny of the pleas of the county.⁹

⁹ The charter of the creation was transcribed by Selden, from the original which he had seen among the evidences of the Earls of Oxford, as follows :—

H. Rex Angliæ et Dux Normanniæ et Aquitaniæ et Comes Andagaviæ, archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, comitibus, baronibus, justiciariis, vicecomitibus, ministris, et omnibus fidelibus suis totius Franciæ et Angliæ salutem. Sciatis me dedisse et concessisse Comiti Alberico in

feodo et hereditate tertium denarium de placitis comitatus Oxenfordscyre ut sit inde Comes. Quare volo et firmiter præcipio quod ipse et heredes sui habeant inde comitatum suum ita libere et quiete et honorifice sicut aliquis Comitum Angliæ liberius et quietius et honorificentius habet. Testibus T. cancellario, Hugone comite de Norff, Rogero comite de Clare, comite Patricio, Ricardo filio Gisleberti, Henrico de Essex constabulario, Richardo de

It is remarkable, however, that the Earls of Oxford never possessed lands in Oxfordshire. Essex was always their principal county ; and Aubrey, the second Earl, was sheriff of the counties of Essex and Hertford from the tenth to the fifteenth years of king John.

The first earl of Oxford enjoyed his dignity for a period of nearly forty years. He died in 1194, and was followed in succession by his two sons, Aubrey and Robert, the former of whom gave king John, in his sixth year, a fine of two hundred marks to be confirmed in this earldom, and in the receipt of the third penny.¹ After these brothers, six more generations carry us down to Robert, the ninth earl and fourth of his name, who is celebrated in history for the extraordinary honours which were lavished upon him by king Richard the Second.

Having been left an orphan at an early age, his wardship was given, by king Edward III., to his son-in-law Ingelram de Courcy, earl of Bedford ; and, according to the ordinary practice in such cases, that nobleman destined the young earl's marriage as a provision for the establishment of his own daughter, Philippa de Courcy. Having thus become the husband of king Richard's cousin-german, the earl of Oxford was placed in a position of family relationship towards his sovereign, which, added to his own rank and a parity of years, might at first appear to justify a familiarity which was gradually carried beyond all the bounds of propriety and decency. On the 1st Dec., 1385, to distinguish his favourite beyond all his peers, Richard introduced into this country the hitherto unknown title of Marquess, advancing the earl of Oxford to the dignity of Marquess of Dublin, with no less an appanage than the whole territory and lordship of Ireland.² About the same time he was elected into the order of the Garter. But these favours still fell short of his fond master's estimate of his deserts. The patent of the Marquisate was therefore recalled, and, on the 13th October following, the lordship of Ireland was erected into a Dukedom, and, with the adjacent islands and all other dependencies, transferred

Humet constabulario, Richardo de Lucy, Waltero filio Roberti, M. Biscet dapifero, Warino filio Geraldii camerario, Richardo de Cauvilla, Willielmo de Lanvall, Hamone Peccato, apud Dour' in transitu

Regis. Selden's "Titles of Honour."

¹ Rot. Pip. Essex.

² Pat. 9 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 18.; Rot. Parl. iii. 209.

to Robert de Vere upon his liege homage only.³ To do him further honour, permission was granted to him to bear as his arms, so long as he should live and hold the said lordship, these arms, viz.—Azure, three golden crowns within a bordure,⁴ which he was authorised to bear, quartering the arms of Vere, in all shields, banners, penons, coats of arms, and all other his equipments which were capable of being adorned with cognizances of arms, wherever he chose to display them, either in actions of war or elsewhere. But, after this extravagant exaltation, the favourite's career was brief. He was attainted by parliament in the year 1388; and, whilst in exile at Louvaine, was killed by a wild boar when hunting, on the 22nd November, 1392. He died without issue.⁵

His uncle Aubrey de Vere was his heir; and in the parliament held at Winchester, in January following, he was, for the good service done to the king and his father, restored to the estates of his family, and to the dignity of Earl of Oxford, with remainder to his heirs male for ever.⁶ Whereupon the said earl did his homage to the king, and then was put and sat with his peers in parliament, "right humbly thanking our lord the king for his good and gracious lordship." This act of parliament, and its limitation of the dignity to heirs male, became the authority upon which the succession of the Earldom was decided in the reign of Charles the First. This earl, however, was not restored to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, which the earls of Oxford

³ Cart. 10 Ric. II. p. 1. m. 2.

⁴ Patent. 9 Ric. II. pars 1. m. 1. (MS. Cotton, Julius C. vii. f. 237 b.) From the terms of this patent it would seem that these were then regarded as the *Arms of Ireland*. It may be that they were intended to be so constituted by this royal charter, and that they originated as follows: The king had himself assumed the arms of King Edward the Confessor, and impaled them with those of France and England; and he had granted to some of his peers of the blood royal the same, with differences; for instance, his nephew, Thomas Holand Duke of Surrey, bore them with a bordure argent. In like manner he appears to have assigned to his favourite Vere the arms usually attributed to Saint Edmund the King (and which, like those of the Confessor, were usually carried in the royal host), viz., Azure,

three crowns or, differenced by a bordure argent. See an essay on the Ancient Arms of Ireland, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1845, vol. xxiii. p. 603. The coat of the three crowns occurs on an encaustic paving tile, found in Essex, which is engraved in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1818, p. 305. It exhibits three crowns, two and one, quartered with the usual coat of Vere.

⁵ See a memoir of this royal favourite in Beltz's *Memorials of the Garter*, p. 299.

⁶ — "nostre dit sieur le Roi . . . de sa grace speciale restituit, done, et grante par assente du Parlement, al dit sieur Aubrey, le noun, title, estat et honneur du Count d'OXENFORD, a avoir les ditz noun, title, estat et honneur a dit sieur Aubrey, et ses heirs males a toutz jours, et luy fist Count d'Oxford en plein parlement." Rot. Parl. iii. 303.

had hitherto enjoyed from the reign of Henry the First. It was granted to the king's half-brother, John Holand, earl of Huntingdon, (afterwards duke of Exeter,) and it did not return to the Veres until the accession of Henry the Seventh.

On the history of the succeeding earls I shall only add some few remarks. John the twelfth earl was attainted and beheaded in 1461, suffering from his loyalty to his sovereign of the Lancastrian line.

His son John was restored to the dignity in 1464; but was himself attainted in 1474, in consequence of the active part he had taken on the Lancastrian side, during the temporary restoration of Henry the Sixth in 1470; having at that period distinguished himself as the last supporter of the cause of the Red Rose, which he maintained in the castle of St. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, for many months after the rest of the kingdom had submitted to Edward IV. He was subsequently imprisoned in the castle of Hammes, in Picardy, where he remained for twelve years. At length, hearing of the preparations making by Henry earl of Richmond, to assert his claim to the throne, he won over the governor of Hammes, sir James Blount, and sir John Fortescue the warden of Calais, and, with them, joined the earl at Montargis in Britany. Having thus been mainly instrumental in bringing Henry to the throne, he was immediately restored to the Earldom of Oxford, and also to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, which he enjoyed until his death in 1513.

On the decease of Henry the eighteenth earl, without issue, in 1625, the Great Chamberlainship descended to heirs female. The succession to the Earldom itself was also disputed. The heir male, Robert de Vere, descended from the fifteenth earl, made claim not only to the earldom, but also to the baronies of Bolebec, Sanford, and Badlesmere,⁷ and to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain: whilst Robert lord Willoughby de Eresby also put in a counter-claim to

⁷ Bolebec had accrued from the marriage of Isabel de Bolebec to Robert the third Earl; Sanford from that of Alice de Sanford to Robert the fifth Earl; and Badlesmere from that of Maud de Badlesmere to John the seventh Earl. Sanford, however, has not been admitted by Dugdale or Nicolas as a barony of the

realm: the family held their estates, not *per baroniam*, but by sergeantry of the queen's bedchamber, which is remarkable, considering the earl of Oxford was the king's hereditary great chamberlain. See Banks' *Stemmata Anglicana*, 1825, 4to., p. 245.

the whole, as the son and heir of Mary daughter and sole heir of John the sixteenth earl.⁸ The house of peers decided that the dignity of Earl of Oxford was clearly to be adjudged to Robert de Vere; as for the baronies of Bulbeck, Sanford, and Badlesmere, descending to heirs female, they stated them to be in the king's disposal, by reason that John the fourteenth earl had left three sisters his heirs, and the honour could not be divided; but as to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, it was referred to the judges then attending the parliament, to consider thereof, and make report upon these two points: 1. whether that Robert earl of Oxford, who made the entail thereof temp. Rich. II. upon his heirs male, was at that time seised of it or not; 2. admitting that he was, whether such an office might be conveyed by limiting of uses. Upon which reference, there being only five judges then attending in parliament (the rest being in their circuits), three of them, justices Doddridge and Yelverton and baron Trevor, declared their opinions for the heir general; but the other two, the lord chief justice Crewe and sir John Walter, lord chief baron, declared for the heir male. Though their legal advisers were thus nearly balanced, the peers were guided in their vote by the majority; whereupon Robert lord Willoughby was admitted in the house on the 13th of April, 1626, bearing his staff as Lord Great Chamberlain, and took his place above all the barons, according to the statute of precedency passed by act of parliament in the 31st Hen. VIII.

The next day Robert de Vere received his writ of summons as Earl of Oxford, and coming to parliament the day following, he had his place next to the earl of Arundel⁹.

The Lord Willoughby was in the same year created an earl, by the title of Earl of Lindsey, in the county of Lincoln. He is famous in the history of the civil war, and was slain at Edge Hill in 1642. In his family the office of Lord Great Chamberlain descended through seven generations to Robert the seventh Earl of Lindsey and fourth Duke of Ancaster;

⁸ The Earl of Oxford's case, and that of the Lord Willoughby, and a third by which the Countess of Derby claimed the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, are

printed by Collins, in his "Historical Collections," &c., pp. 269—275.

⁹ Journals of Parliament.

on whose death in 1779 it again fell in abeyance between co-heirs. These were his sisters, Lady Priscilla wife of Sir Peter Burrell, and Lady Georgiana, afterwards wife of the first Marquess Cholmondeley. Their children, the present Lord Willoughby de Eresby and the present Marquess Cholmondeley, are now jointly Lord Great Chamberlain of England, and an arrangement has been made that either family shall exercise the office alternately, in successive reigns.

According to the original practice with respect to earldoms to England, the heir general would certainly have been entitled to this ancient earldom; but the act of parliament of the 16th Rich. II., by which the dignity was revived after attainder, had, as we have seen, limited its inheritance to the heirs male; and, although the lord Willoughby⁹ appears to have relied upon the uncertainty that might arise from subsequent acts of parliament, by which the rebel earls of Oxford had been successively either attainted or restored in blood, and particularly upon an award relative to the family estates, confirmed by parliament in the 23rd Hen. VIII.; still it appeared that the act of the 16th Rich. II. had not been affected by any of them.

Robert the nineteenth earl of Oxford died in 1632, and there was only one more earl after him: but this earl, the last of his illustrious race, enjoyed the dignity for no less than seventy years. The old name of Aubrey was revived in his person. He flourished, or rather faded, in the effeminate age of Charles II., and to which his manners were unfortunately conformed. On his death in the year 1702 the male line of Veres became extinct; and it is a remarkable circumstance that the heiress of this ancient race was married to the first of an entirely new one. The heiress of Vere was united to one of the natural sons of king Charles the Second, who was created Duke of St. Alban's.

There had been a junior branch elevated to the peerage in the preceding century, in the person of the gallant sir Horatio Vere, brother to John the sixteenth earl. He was created Baron Vere of Tilbury in 1625, and died without issue in 1635.

After the extinction of the male line, lord Vere Beauclerk, grandson by his mother of the last earl, was in 1750 created



Albericus de Vere, first Earl of Oxford, A.D. 1155.



Hugo de Vere, fourth Earl, 1221-1263.

Lord Vere of Hanworth. His son succeeded as the fifth duke of St. Alban's in 1787, and this barony still accompanies the dukedom.

The title of Earl of Oxford was conferred by Queen Anne in the year 1711 on her prime minister, the lord treasurer sir Robert Harley; he was slightly connected with the Veres, from his grandmother Brilliana, daughter of Edward lord viscount Conway, having been the sister of Mary wife of Horatio lord Vere of Tilbury. To the title of Oxford was added the equally proud name of Mortimer; and it has been said that this addition was made because rumours were current that some junior branches of the Veres were still existing, and might possibly still assert their claim to the ancient earldom. This, however, has never happened. Alfred, the present and sixth Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, succeeded to the peerage in 1848, and is now the last male survivor of his family.

Five of the Veres earls of Oxford were knights of the Garter, namely, Robert the ninth earl and duke of Ireland, Richard the eleventh earl, John the thirteenth earl, John the fifteenth earl, and Aubrey the twentieth and last earl. Sir Harris Nicolas, in his *Synopsis of the Peerage*, inserted a correction to his original statement, to the effect that the duke of Ireland was not a knight of the Garter; but the late Mr. Beltz, Lancaster Herald, ascertained the fact of his election, and has inserted a biography of him in his excellent work, "*Memorials of the Garter*," which comprises biographical notices of the knights during the reigns of the first two sovereigns of the order.

Mr. Doubleday has furnished me with impressions of seals of seven of the earls of Oxford; viz., Aubrey the first earl, Hugh the fourth, Robert the fifth, Robert the sixth, John the seventh (privy seal), Aubrey the tenth (privy seal), and John the thirteenth¹. They do not differ in character from the seals of their contemporaries; and the only two which require any explanation are the first and the last.

The most remarkable feature in the first is that the earl does not display on his shield the arms of Vere. His shield has a central boss, and a circumambient line which a herald

¹ Five of these are engraved in the accompanying plates. The two others are neither perfect nor at all remarkable.

might blazon as a bordure or an orle. But in fact this seal is anterior to the assumption of coat-armour.

In the seal of Earl Hugh, in the reign of Henry the Third, the arms of Vere, quarterly, and a mullet in the first quarter, appear both on the earl's shield and on the housings of his horse.

The seal of John the thirteenth earl is a splendid specimen of the seals of Henry the Seventh's time. The shield bears the arms of Howard quartered with Vere, his mother having been the heiress of sir John Howard, the elder half-brother of the sir Robert Howard who married the heiress of Mowbray, and was progenitor of the dukes of Norfolk. His supporters are antelopes, and the crest a boar. This animal was from the earliest period of heraldry one of the cognizances of the family. The seal of Baldwin de Vere, son of Robert the crusader (presently mentioned), has a boar's head for its device. The boar alluded through the Latin *verres* to the surname of Vere. The French chroniclers whose narrations have been quoted in the earlier part of this memoir, proceeded from *Verres* to *Aper*, and Aubrey de Vere is disguised in the history of Lambert of Ardres under the designation of Albertus Aper. Weever in his *Funerall Monuments* has preserved the following inscription which was placed upon the tomb of the first earl in Earl's Colne priory :

"Hic jacet Albericus de Vere, filius Alberici de Vere, Comes de Guisney et primus Comes Oxonie, Magnus Camerarius Anglie ; qui, propter summam audaciam et effrænatam pravitatem, *Grymme Aubrey* vocabatur. Obiit 26^o die Decembris, Anno Xp'i 1194, Ricardi I. sexto."

And Leland thus varies the same story : "This Albrey, for the greatness of his stature, and sterne looke, was named Albry the Grymme²."

This name of "Grymme Aubrey," as Mr. Stapleton has remarked, is simply a translation back into English of the *Albericus Aper* of the French historians—*aper* being viewed as synonymous with *asper*. So readily was a romantic and credulous age misled by the enigmas of its immediate predecessors.

I will now close this paper with a brief allusion to the family of Vere of Drayton in Northamptonshire, whose coat-

² Itinerary, vol. vi. p. 38.



Privy Seal of John de Vere, seventh Earl, A.D. 1331-1330.



John de Vere, thirteenth Earl, A.D. 1417-1461.

armour is especially interesting. This early off-set of the house was descended from Robert de Vere, who was present when the second William Longespée was slain at the battle of Mansoura, in the Holy Land, in the year 1250³; and his cross-legged effigy is still existing in the church of Sudborough in Northamptonshire. Robert de Vere assumed for his coat-armour the simple red cross on a silver shield, the same which became the national ensign under the designation of the Cross of Saint George: and this coat of the crusaders was borne by his descendants for many generations, as may be seen in their history, which is detailed in the magnificent work of Henry, Earl of Peterborough, which goes by the name of Halstead's Genealogies, folio, 1685.

JOHN GOUGH NICHOLS.

ON THE PAINTED GLASS IN NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL AND
HALL, OXFORD.

It has often been to me a matter of surprise that there should still be wanting, not only a detailed account, but even an accurate catalogue, of the numerous and interesting specimens of ancient painted glass existing in the public and collegiate buildings of Oxford, considering the number of persons addicted to Archaeological pursuits who enjoy in an Oxford residence, and leisure time, peculiar facilities for such an undertaking.

The present paper hardly pretends to supply the latter desideratum, even in respect of the single example which forms its subject. I have had neither time nor opportunity to test the accuracy of my researches as rigidly as I could have wished; nor have I sought for any other documentary evidence than what has already appeared in print: therefore, what I have written must be regarded as a contribution only towards a more full and perfect description of the painted glass in New College Chapel and Hall. The labour expended upon it will, I dare say, be appreciated by those who have actually prosecuted similar inquiries.

³ See my "Memoir on the Earldom of Salisbury," in the Salisbury volume of the Institute, and the "History of Lacock Abbey," in which I had the pleasure to

assist the late amiable poet, the Rev. William Lisle Bowles, then Rector of Bremhill, and afterwards Canon of Salisbury.