

## HASTINGS RAPE, CASTLE, AND TOWN.

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READ AT THE HASTINGS MEETING, JUNE 3, 1848.

SOME doubts and difficulties have arisen as to the descent of the Honour, Castle, and Rape of Hastings, between the periods of their possession by Henry IV and their uninterrupted possession by the Hastings family, temp. Edward IV, which it is most desirable to clear up; adding some particulars not generally known as to the castle and town.

The connexion of the Pelhams with this rape, and with the manors of Crowherst, Bergherst, and Benylham, was earlier than is stated by Horsfield. He says\* that Sir John Pelham obtained the "Honour" by grant from Henry, without giving the date, and, under the head of Crowhurst,† he adds, that in the 14th Henry IV the king granted to Sir John the three manors with the "rape of Hastings." It appears, however, that Sir John was bailiff of the rape, and in possession of the manors in 5th Henry IV; for in the valuation of his manors, taken at Michaelmas in that year,‡ are the following items:

Rapa de Hastyng: valor' manior' dicti domini, ut p'ticularit' patet inferius.	ℓ	s.	d.
Burgherre valor' ib'm hoc anno	xxiii	xiii	iiii.
Benylham	xxiii	v.	
Crowhurst	xx	v.	
Balliva Rape de Hastyng: valor' dicti officii hoc anno		xiiii	v.
Receptoria valor' dicti officii hoc anno		lxxvii	xv.
Rape de Hastyns & alior' manior' d'ni		D,xxx,iiii	x.

So that the date of the first grant, as afterwards given by Collins from the Webster MSS., and followed by Horsfield,

\* Sussex, vol. i, p. 445. † Ib. p. 433.  
‡ Collins's Baron. ed. 1727, p. 331.

must be erroneous. Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, who in 1st Henry IV obtained a grant for life of the honour of Richmond, treated this rape as part of that honour, and in 8th Henry IV granted his interest therein to John Norbury. It was not till the earl's death, in 4th Henry VI, that Sir John Pelham was in the enjoyment of the rape and manors. In the Burrell MSS.,\* the grant of the rape and manors in 14th Henry IV is expressly stated to be to Sir John Pelham, "after the death of Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland." The grant did not include the castle or honour; but immediately after the earl's death Sir J. Pelham exercised his right of ownership over the rape, and as lord of the rape, by deed dated 1st May, 1427,† for the salvation of his own soul and of the soul of Sir J. Pelham, Knt., his father, and of the souls of all his ancestors, released to Thomas Ludlow, abbot of the monastery of Battle, and the convent thereof, all the abbot's hereditaments within the rape; and when, in Edward the Fourth's reign, Lord Hastings‡ disputed the right of the abbot to take any fines or americiaments within the rape, the barons of the Exchequer (Nicholas Statham and J. Ellonhede, who were two of Lord Hastings's feoffees, and W. Herveye), wrote to Bartholomew Bolne and William Chene, or their deputies, officers of Lord Hastings within the rape, advising them of the lord abbot's legal right to take fines and americiaments.

Sir John Pelham died 12th February, 1428, and in 9th Henry VI his widow Johanna obtained a grant of the rape and manors; the value§ stands thus:

D'na Johanna Pelham. Rapa de Hastyngs & Burghersh	
valor' ultra reprivas - - -	£13 2s. 4d.

And in 18th Henry VI|| the son, Sir John Pelham, had a confirmation of his father's grant.

Now arose the dispute as to whether the rape passed by the grants to the Pelhams, or whether it was not, with the castle and honour, still in the king. On the 19th July, 23d Henry VI, the king granted to Sir Thomas Hoo the castle, barony, and rape; and Sir John Pelham, though he afterwards unsuc-

\* Additional MSS. Brit. Mus. 5679, fol. 8. A copy of the grant is among the Battle Abbey records, dated Westminster, 21st November, 1412.

† Battle Abbey Charters, &c., p. 104.

‡ Ib. p. 117.

§ Burr. MSS. 5679, fol. 1.

|| Ib. fol. 8.

cessfully petitioned parliament against this grant,\* at first acquiesced in it; for by deed, dated 19th February, 24th Henry VI,† he conveyed the lordship, barony, honour, and rape of Hastings (except the three manors) to feoffees, for Sir Thomas Hoo, afterwards Lord Hastings. Sir Thomas Hoo died the 13th February, 33d Henry VI, having by his will‡ directed his feoffees to sell this castle, rape, and honour, to raise marriage portions for his daughters, his brother “to bye it afore any other man yf him list.” His brother did not exercise the option, and in 1st Edw. IV§ the feoffees conveyed to William Hastings the lordship, barony, and rape, with the hundreds, wapentake, frankpledge, fees, knights’ fees, offices, rents or services called *Castle-yard*, &c., and all fines, fee-farm rents, and services whatsoever within the rape, with the annual sheriff’s court held at Berfold (excepting the three manors by name), and on the 14th November, 1st Edw. IV,|| they appointed the same Bartholomew Bolney their attorney, to give him seizin.¶ This sale was confirmed by a grant from the crown.\*\*

In the Harl. MSS.†† there is, in the handwriting of Dugdale, a collection of papers relating to the Hastings family, and an elaborate history‡‡ of the family, apparently drawn up by Dugdale, or under his superintendence, and from these documents we learn, that although Sir John Pelham had given up the rape, there were still disputes between him and the lord of

\* Horsfield’s Sussex, vol. i, p. 433.

† Burr. MSS. 5679, fol. 9; and Collins’s Baron., p. 347.

‡ Burr. MSS. 5679, fol. 12.

§ Rot. pat. et claus, 1 Edw. IV.

|| Burr. MSS. 5679, fol. 9.

¶ Collins, in his Baron., p. 348, is wrong, therefore, in his conjecture that “this Sir J. Pelham, by being chamberlain to the queen, mother of King Henry VI, took part with the house of Lancaster against that of York, and King Edward IV prevailing, was forced to part with this barony, &c., to the said Lord Hastings, the chief favorite of that king and lord chamberlain of his household,” for Sir John released all his interest in it in 1446, during Henry’s reign, and not to William Lord Hastings, but to Sir Thomas Hoo.

\*\* Dugdale, in his Baronage (vol. i, p. 581), would seem to imply that the castle and rape were not purchased by Lord Hastings, but granted by the king, for after enumerating the grants of certain forfeited estates to Lord Hastings and his wife Catherine, and the heirs male of their two bodies, and for want of such issue to his right heirs, Dugdale goes on in the same paragraph to say, “the like grant he also obtained of the castle and rape of Hastings, in Com. Sussex;” this grant, however, was to himself and heirs (not to himself and wife) and was to confirm the purchase from the feoffees of Sir Thomas Hoo.

†† No. 3881.

‡‡ Nos. 4774 and 4849.

the honour, as to whether the manors were held under the honour. In the family history,\* speaking of William, first Lord Hastings, of that family it is said, “ In 5 Edward IV, being then possesst of y<sup>e</sup> castle, rape, & honor of Hastings, whereunto Sr John Pelham, Knt. did make title, there grew much variance betwixt him & the said Sr John Pelham touching the possession of y<sup>e</sup> manors of Crowhurst, Bourgherst, & Bevilham, w<sup>th</sup> their appurtenances, within the said honor, lordsp. & rape, as also for divers hundreds, &c., fines, amerciaments, courts, faires, liberties, etc., belonging to the said Sr John within that honor, he quitted to the said Sr John Pelham and his heirs all his right & claime thereto.” By this Sir John Pelham’s will it appears that these hundreds, &c. were the hundreds of Baldslow, Hawksborough, and Shoyswell, together with the forest and chase of Dalington. Thus ended the differences between the families of Pelham and Hastings.

The next difficulty in the descent has been the supposed seizure and subsequent forfeiture, in 9th Edward IV, by Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Devon, who was beheaded on the 17th of August in that year,† for deserting the Earl of Pembroke; and here Dugdale,‡ on whose authority the statement rests, has made a gross error in quoting the escheat roll, for I have examined that roll, and the Earl of Devon is *not* found to have possessed any estate in Sussex. The MS. and printed calendars agree with the roll, and they agree also with other evidence, for no sooner did William Hastings become possessed than he exercised all the rights of ownership, and on the 10th February in this very year, 9th Edw. IV,§ he granted and enfeoffed, inter alia, “ Castrum, honorem, rapam, et dominum de Hastings,” and all his advowsons, &c., in Hastings, &c., to George Archbishop of York, and others, as feoffees for him: they continued feoffees till they released|| their right therein to him on the 27th April, 15th Edw. IV, whereupon he, on the 5th May following,¶ made a new feoffment to Thomas (Bowchier) Lord Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury, and others.

\* No. 4849, p. 44; and in No. 3881, p. 16, is an abstract of the deed.

† Horsfield’s note, Sussex, vol. i, p. 446, is wrong as to his earlier death.

‡ Baron., vol. i, p. 173, quoting Esch., 9 Edw. IV, n. 30, which, however, does not relate to Sussex.

§ Harl. MSS., No. 3881, p. 16.

|| *Ib.*, p. 19.

¶ *Ib.*, p. 20.

This earl was beheaded by the Duke of Gloucester on Friday, 14th June, 1483: his will, dated 27th June, 1481, is extremely curious, and is printed at length in Nichols' Leicester-shire.\* His son Edward was restored to his estates. His grandson Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, upon the marriage of his son and heir, Henry, with Lady Catherine Dudley, one of the daughters of the Earl of Warwick, settled the honour and rape, then valued at £36, together with some estates in the county of Somerset, upon his son and Lady Catherine, and the heirs of the said Henry. Earl Francis† died 20th June, 2d Eliz., and in the valuation of his estates in that year "the "honour de rape Hastings" is valued at £100. Henry, the last owner of the Huntingdon family, is thus described by Dugdale:‡ He, "being a person of a gentle disposition, was so wrought upon by the Puritan party, as that he did not a little diminish his estate in cherishing that sort of people."§ He was a benefactor to the newly-founded college of Emmanuel at Cambridge, and to the poor of Leicester. In the 33d Eliz. (1591),|| he obtained a licence to alienate this rape, honour, and castle; and on the 23d June, 1591, in consideration of £2500, he conveyed them to Thomas Pelham, reserving to his heirs a free rent of £13 6s. 8d. per annum.

At what period the castle fell into decay is uncertain. The town was only partially fortified. In 1265 Simon de Montford preferred Winchelsea to Hastings for his retreat after his father's

\* Vol. iii, part 2, p. 560.

† There is one important historical circumstance connected with this Earl Francis which is not mentioned by Dugdale in his Baronage, but is to be found in his MS. history of the family. By the persuasion of the Earl of Warwick, and through their family connexion, Huntingdon joined Northumberland in his efforts to put Lady Jane Grey upon the throne. Lingard says, that when the list of persons to be proceeded against was shown to Mary, she struck out the name (amongst others) of Lord Huntingdon; but an indictment was found against him for high treason, though he found favour with Mary, and was never brought to trial. On the 4th November, 1553, the queen granted him a free pardon; on the 28th November she by writ commanded Thomas Bromley, chief justice, and the justices of the bench, not to award any process against him on the indictment; and on the 28th of January following made him lieutenant of the counties of Leicester, Warwick, and Rutland. Harl. MSS., No. 3881, p. 44. His son also received a pardon from Mary for his father's treason.

‡ Baron., vol. i, p. 589.

§ Among the Lans. MSS. are a petition from him to the queen and three letters to Lord Burghley, complaining of his wasted means, and praying for an additional grant.

|| Burr. MSS. 5679, fol. 12.

defeat at Evesham, and in 5th Edw. III, the dean and chapter of the king's free college, to protect their own property, prayed to be allowed to repair the walls of the castle, which had been devastated by the frequent inroads of the sea, and their petition was granted. In Richard II, when the French burnt a portion of the town and the church, the castle was useless as a protection. The fifth, sixth, and seventh Earls of Eu\* resided for a long time at their Château d'Eu, and founded many monastic establishments in Normandy; and it is most probable that Hastings Castle was neglected, and fell into decay during the latter half of the twelfth century or the commencement of the thirteenth.

Beside the castle itself, the lords did not possess any large property within the town as it then existed. The royal free chapel within the walls of the castle was not theirs, and after the dissolution of that religious establishment, the site and rights were granted to Sir A. Browne, by whose descendant, Anthony, sixth Viscount Montague, they were conveyed, with Battle Abbey, to Sir Thomas Webster, in 1721.† The ecclesiastical patronage of the parishes in the town was not in the lord of the rape. The church of All Saints, and subsequently the two churches of All Saints and St. Clements,‡ belonged to the abbey of Fiscamp, and a large portion of the land in those parishes, in and near the town, formed a portion of the manor of Brede, which was also part of the possessions of that abbey. The tenements within the town of Hastings still holden of that manor extend from the house of Mr. Amore, at the south-western corner of Court-house street and High street (formerly

\* *Histoire des Comtes D'Eu*, par L'Estancelin.

† Webster, *Family Papers*, p. 190; not, as stated by Horsfield, "in the reign of James I." By the Webster Papers, p. 154, it appears that on the 4th of October, 1638, Francis Viscount Montague, and others, leased to William Carr, of Mountfield, clerk, the rectory, advowson, and church impropriate of St. Mary's of the Castle of Hastings, with the vicarage of the same, with all tithes, &c. so long as Carr should remain parson of St. Clement's, in Hastings. On 4th May, 1636, Christopher Dowe was presented by the king to All Saints. (Rymer, vol. xx, p. 127.) Neither Dowe's nor Carr's name appears in the lists of rectors of All Saints and St. Clements, given by Moss, pp. 108, 122.

‡ In the Webster papers, p. 176, are the accounts from 1729 to 1740 of the incumbent of All Saints, St. Clement's, and the Castle parishes, showing what tithes were paid to him. Among them are the receipts of the tithes of the Yarmouth, mackerel, and herring fisheries. Some contributed a whole share, others three fourths only, and there is a memorandum that the minister can demand but three fourths of a share; the other is a free gift from the master and company.

known as the Maidenhead Inn, and where the adjourned courts baron for Brede have been heretofore held), eastward along the south side of High street; and through Court-house street, including the new gaol, into All Saints street, to the great meadow on the Minnis rock: the Totty lands, on part of which is the reservoir of the waterworks, and the Grange form part. The fact that when Henry III, in 1248, for state purposes, resumed possession of the towns of Rye and Winchelsea, he left the lordship of Brede, including so large a part of the town of Hastings, in the abbot's hands, proves the small importance at that time of the castle and town of Hastings as a national defence. The abbot\* continued to hold the manor till the dissolution of alien priories, when it was granted with Stening, &c. to the newly-found monastery of Syon, and at the dissolution of that monastery, it was valued at the large sum of £50 16s. 8d. In 33 Henry VIII, Sir A. Browne, who had previously had a grant of Battle Abbey, obtained a grant of this manor. Up to that time the ownership of the hundred of Gostrow and manor of Brede had been quite distinct from that of the hundred of Battle: the hundred of Gostrow† has the same privileges as Battle, but the court of Brede is not, as stated by Camden in his 'Britannia,' and by the author of 'Magna Britannia' following him, a branch of Battle. Sir A. Browne died 1548, his son, Anthony, possessed Brede from 9th to 35th of Elizabeth, and the latter's widow, Magdalen, from 35th to 41st of Elizabeth.‡ From that time the court rolls are imperfect till 1670, but the entries in those preserved, show courts to have been holden in 1639 and 1640 for John Henden; 1650-51, &c. for Charles Tufton, and Sarah, his wife, before Richard Kilburne, the topographer of Kent,§ whose signature appears to the rolls of these and other years; in 1670, for Thomas Bristow: from 1677 to 1690, for Thomas Bromfield, of Odymer, of which

\* In 16th Edward I, the abbot had a dispute with the tenants as to the customs of this manor; the suit was tried before the justices itinerant, when it was found that, according to the custom of the manor, if women, after the death of their first or other husband, married again, they lost their dower out of their former husband's estate. Harl. MSS., No. 744, p. 155.

† Within the hundred is the borough of Smegle, which has separate head-boroughs, &c.

‡ Court Rolls, Penes, W.D.C.

§ He was also steward of Bodiam.

family was Sir Edward Bromfield, fishmonger, lord mayor of London in 1637.\* From 1690 to 1712, for his son, Thomas Bromfield; and in 1712 for French Bromfield, from whom, about 1717, Spencer Compton purchased this and Odymer; in his family it remained till 1843, when William Henry, Earl of Burlington, sold the hundred of Gostrow, the manor of Brede and lands in Udimore, to Thomas Cooper Langford, and he dying in 1845, unmarried, this manor, &c. came to his brother John, the present lord.†

Mr. Holloway, in his 'History of Rye' (pp. 527-8), states, on the authority of the Rev. Edward Wilson, vicar there in 1700, that the vicarage of Rye was annexed to the manor of Brede; but it was not so annexed. When Henry III resumed possession of the town, he left the vicarage of Rye with the abbot of Fiscamp, who was also lord of Brede; and it is most probable that, on the dissolution of the alien monasteries, the right of presentation was granted with Brede to Lyon monastery, and thence passed through the Brownes to the Bromfields, Comptons, and Cavendishes; and though the manor of Brede and the patronage of Rye vicarage passed together, they were not annexed.

\* Strype's Stow's Survey, 6. 5. p. 143, and Hayley MSS. Addl. MSS., 6350.

† In 21 Edward I, William de Echingham obtained a charter of free-warren for his lands in Brede: they were distinct from the manor, which was the abbot of Fiscamp's, and were the lands afterwards of Oxenbridges, and now of the Frewens. It was to the mansion of the Echinghams that Edward III and his queen went after the victorious battle of Winchelsea, on the 29th August (24 Edward III), 1350, against the Spaniards. The queen, with her attendants, is recorded to have seen the whole of the battle from the hills of the coast; and after the decisive engagement, Froissart says that the ships anchored at Rye and Winchelsea a little after nightfall, when the king, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Richmond, and other barons, disembarked and rode to the *mansion*, where the queen was, scarcely two English leagues distant. An illuminated engraving of this fight is to be found in "A record of the Black Prince, by Henry Noel Humphries. Lond. Longman and Co. 1848."