

THE CHANTRY OF BRAMBLETYE, AND SEDITION IN SUSSEX, TEMP. ELIZABETH, 1579.

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THE following extracts from the State Paper Office give us a curious insight into the apprehensions felt in Sussex, whenever the dignity of Elizabeth was questioned. The disturbed state of the county in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, has been noticed on a former occasion. (*Archæol. Coll.* Vol. V. p. 195.) From the examinations sent up to the Council by the justices in quarter sessions assembled, it seems that their fears were very much excited by the charge made by an angry woman against a poor attorney, who set up a right derived under the crown itself against the interest of the very gallant Mrs. Pykas. Fortunately the Council saw nothing so formidable in the matter as to take any further notice of Lord Buckhurst, or his relative or attorney, or the querulous leader of the little host of servants.

The papers were kindly pointed out to me by Mr. Robert Lemon, F.S.A., of the State Paper Office, where the Justices' letter and the examinations had become disconnected, till he brought the several parts once more together.

Of the manor of Brambletye no accurate particulars have been published. It formed a portion of the large possessions of the St. Cleres, till the death of Thomas St. Clere, on the 6th May, 1435,¹ leaving his three daughters his coheireses: Elizabeth, then aged twelve; Eleanor, then aged eleven; and Edith, then aged nine years.² The manor was holden of the King as of his duchy of Lancaster by military service, and was worth

¹ Inq. p. m. taken at East Grinstead, 13th March, 17th Henry VI. No. 56.

² *Sussex Archæol. Coll.* Vol. VIII., p. 131.

100*s.* a year. As St. Clere, however, had his park at Lanertye, in East Grinstead, he is not likely to have had a chantry at Brambletye, nor can I discover the founder. Upon the division of the estates of St. Clere, Brambletye came to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who married—firstly, William Lovell (by whom she had one son, Henry, who died leaving two daughters coheiresses, Elizabeth and Agnes); and secondly, Richard Lewknor, who is the first person described as of Brambletye,³ and who, most probably, built the house. His wife, Elizabeth St. Clere, died before 1486, without leaving any children by him; and he himself died 13th February, 1503,⁴ without issue, although he had taken for his second wife Katherine, daughter of Lord Scales, and widow of Sir Thos. Grey, Knt., one of the ladies to the Queens of Edward IV. and Henry VII. She died in 1505, and was buried at East Grinstead, where her monument recorded that she and Lewknor, her last husband, not only provided many ornaments for that church (the patronage of which had been appropriated, 26th Edward III., to the priory of Lewes),⁵ but also an almshouse for three persons. To Richard Lewknor and his wife Katherine, therefore, may be, with all likelihood, ascribed the foundation of the free chapel or chantry of Brambletye. It was endowed out of the manor with lands, and a rent-charge of 26*s.* 8*d.* After the dissolution of the colleges, chantries, &c., 1st Edward VI., the return⁶ states that Edward Stevynson was the last incumbent, “about thre or foure yeres past,” and that “this chauntry or free chappell was dissolved by the Lorde Wyndsore this thre or foure yeres, who deneith the same to be the king’s, albeit the fermor of the said Lord’s manour of Brameltie is bounden by his lease to pay the rent aforesaid to the chauntry preist accordingly.”

By the examinations it appears that there had been a commission in the time of Elizabeth (although I cannot find it among the public records), under which the chantry lands had been found as belonging to the crown, who had granted them

³ *Sussex Arch. Coll.* Vol. III. p. 95.

⁴ *Inq. p. m.* Suffolk, 18 Henry VII. No. 97.

⁵ A chantry in this church was founded 19 Edward II. by William Hellindale, and was endowed with lands in East

Grinstead and rents out of the manors of Imberhorne and Dodeleswell.—*Inq. ad quod damnum*, No. 116.

⁶ Carlton Ride MSS., under Est Grenstede.

to John Farnham, a large recipient of these grants; and he had aliened the lands to Lord Buckhurst.

STATE PAPER OFFICE, DOMESTIC, MAY, 1579.

Proceedings against John Turner for seditious words spoken on livery and seizin of Brambletye Chapel to Lord Buckhurst's use.

Our duties to your lordships in most humble wise remembered. There came before us at the late sessions, holden at Lewis now after Ester, on Katherin Pickas, who, among other matters then and there declared by her unto us, did affirme that on John Turner in seking to make liverie and sesin of a dede made from John Farnam of a chapel and certein landes to the Lord Buckhurst, in w^{ch} the said John Turner was atturnie for that purpose, did speke certein evell and unsemely wordes toching the Quenes ma^{tie} such as she thought fit to imparte unto us. The effect whereof was thus: whan the said Katherin Pickas and vj other wth her had found the said John Turner and v others wth him, at a place being nere to the hous of on Steven Frenche within Grinsted parishe in Sussex, she asked of the said John Turner what he and the rest did there. The said John Turner answered "to take possession for my Lorde of Buckhurste for the chapel of Brambletie, and land w^{ch} (as he said) pertained thereunto;" the saide Katherin answered "by what authoritie?" and the said Turner answered "by authority from John Farnam." "What hath he to do here?" (said the said Katherin.) This matter is ended by the Quene, God save her highnes." "Yt makes no matter for the Quene" (said the said Turner.) "No (said the said Katherin). Is my lord of Buckhurst above the Quene?" "Yea (said Turner), in this respecte." Upon the informacon of w^{ch} saide wordes unto us some of us were of opinion that we shold consider of the matter among ourselves, and accordinglie to procede as to the same caus upon the statute made against suche as shalle use any fals seditious or slaunderous wordes against the Quenes highnes;⁷ others were of mind that in a matter thus concerning

⁷ The stat. 1st Eliz. c. 6, extending to Queen Elizabeth the act of 1 and 2 Phil. and Mary, c. 30, by which the justices were enabled to punish the first offence by the

pillory and loss of both ears, or a fine of £100 and three months' imprisonment; and the second offence, by imprisonment for life, and loss of goods.

her ma^{tie}, we ought rather to remit the iudgement thereof to the order and wisdomes of your honorable lordships: unto w^{ch} presentlie we all assented. And therupon we toke the examinacons by othe of all such as were said to be present at the said place and time, whan the said wordes were supposed to be spoken, save of the said John Turner, and of on Alexander Middleton being but a boy of xiiij yeres of age: unto bothe w^{ch} we forbare to offer any othe, becaus the on was the partie acused, the other of so yonge yeres; but how far furthe the same wordes are proved or disproved by the deposicons of thos that were present, or how they are to be understode or expounded, we do most humbly referre to the judgement of your Lordships, to whome we send herewithall the examinacons of the said parties at large, and so doe most humblie take our leave. ffrom Lewis in Sussex this second day of May 1579. Your Lordships humblie to comande,

T. BUCKEHURSTE.

RICHARDE COUERT.

THOM. PELHAM.

JOHN COLEPEPER.

GEORGE GORINGE.

JOHN SACKEVILLE.

To the right honorable and our verie good Lordes
the Lordes of her Ma^{ties} most honorable Privee
Counsell be thes deliuerede.

Katherin Pycas, wife of James Pycas, about forty-four years of age, deposed that she being at Stephen Frenches door in Grinsted, there being then also present John Turner, Gilbert Sackville, Gent., Robert Fryer, Edmund Tomson, Robert Payne, Evans Flud, Henry Cropper, John Cotty, Edward Matthew, Richard Knight, Alexander Mydelton, and Jone Grame, the conversation passed as set out in the letter: adding that Turner spoke the words very vehemently: she added "I hope my Lord of Buckhurst will take nothing away from us wrongfully." "No, I warrant you," said Mr. Sackevyll, "there is never a right further from you;" and then she related a further talk with Mr. Sackeville, who did not deny that the words were used. (Signed by the above six justices, and also by Richard Shelley, Laurens Levat, and Henry Bartlet.)

Henry Cropper of Bramblety, servant to Mr. Pycas, con-

firmed his mistress: as did also other servants, viz. John Cotty, Edward Marten, Richard Knight, Alexander Mydelton, and Jone Greme.

John Turner, gentleman, aged thirty-eight years (unsworn), stated that by virtue of a letter of attorney by John Farnham, Esq., to Gilbert Sackvill and himself, jointly and severally, to make livery and seizin of the chantry and chapel of Bramblety to Lord Buckhurst, they came to a green between Stephen Frenche's house and the chapel, intending to make the delivery to Robert Fryer to his lordship's use, in the presence of Evans Flud, Edmund Tomson, and Robert Payn, but were set upon by Cotty, Matthew, Cropper, and others; and after some blows Turner, seeing Katherin Pycas coming towards them in great haste, and others following her with staves and other weapons, Turner and his party departed from the green to a lane a little beneath Frenche's house, and then Catherine Pycas asked Turner "what have you to do here? and will you shew your authority?" Whereupon he referred to the deed and grant to Lord Buckhurst, and the letter of attorney to deliver seizin. They then asked how Mr. Farnam came by it? and he said by the Queen's Majesty's letters patent. Then she said that her title was good, and that she had proved it before the Queen's Majesty's commissioners. Whereupon Turner answered that if her title were good, that which he did could do her no hurt, and wished her, if her title were good, to shew it to Lord Buckhurst by her counsel; and he thought if her title fell out better than his lordship's, she would find that favor, that he would not shew her. She said that she would shew it to my lord and my lord's betters, and to them that would not be afraid to shew it him, and that it was but a private thing, and that my lord would stop a poor man's living. Turner then said "there is a better way," and then went into a field, and she remained in the lane, and then went again after Turner and his friends with her company with staves. Turner asked her what she made in that ground, and she said it was her land, and Turner said it was Henry Payne's during his lease, and she answered, he should not enjoy it, and bid her men drive them out, and follow them, "you Berkshire gentleman, you think to make me stoop to you, but I will never do it:" whereunto he answered, "no, good gossip,

I mean it not," and so departed homeward and returned not.

Gilbert Sackfyle, aged sixty-eight years of age, said he was not present near Frenche's door where the words were supposed to be spoken, but he did hear the portion about it not being further from her, if her title were good. And afterwards meeting with her again, she said "we may thank you for all this," and further, "will not you say as yonder Jack hath saith?" "What is that?" "Marry," said she, "he said my Lord of Buckhurst is above the Queen," whereupon Sackville answered "he has too much wit to say so." "And will not you say so?" quoth she twice together: "No, marry, will I not," said he: but whether she said that the words were concerning the Queen, that the Lord Buckhurst was above the Queen in this respect, he knew not.

John Fryer confirmed the memorandum of the conversation as set down by Turner a few days after the discourse.

Edmund Tompson denied that those words, nor were the like spoken in his presence, and he was near enough to hear; and Payne and Flud confirmed him.

The Council, however, were not so much frightened as the Sussex magistrates, and accordingly no notice appears in the minutes of the letter or of the sedition!
