

NOTICES  
OF  
SIR EDWARD DALYNGRUGE, THE BUILDER OF  
BODIAM CASTLE.

BY MARK ANTONY LOWER, M.A., F.S.A.



THE following paper has been suggested by the recent acquisition, by the Sussex Archæological Society, of an object of considerable curiosity and interest—the mutilated effigy of Sir Edward Dalyngruge, one of the most chivalrous men that our county has produced, and the builder of Bodiam Castle.

This relic was brought to light during some excavations carried on at Robertsbridge Abbey, by Edward Allfrey, Esq., the proprietor, in the year 1823. Under the impression that it was a portion of the statue of Sir John Pelham, a benefactor of that monastery, who was known to have been buried there, it was presented to the late Earl of Chichester. It was afterwards discovered, from the existence of a “cross engrailed” upon the figure, that it was the effigy, not of a Pelham, but of

a Dalyngruge. The relic therefore lost what interest it might otherwise have possessed in the eyes of his Lordship, and it was consigned to the earth in the garden of his town-house in Stratton Street.

At a subsequent date, it was re-exhumed and placed in the coach-house, and when, two or three years since, while collecting materials for a history of Bodiam, I made inquiries of the present Earl of Chichester respecting it, circumstances, which it is unnecessary to detail, prevented my being enabled to make use of it, as an illustration of the paper in the *Sussex Archæological Collections*, Vol. IX. Afterwards, Lord Chichester was kind enough to recall my attention to the subject, and, at my suggestion, his Lordship courteously presented this sadly-mutilated piece of medieval art to our Museum of Antiquities at Lewes Castle, where it remains.

Our valued member, Weston S. Walford, Esq., has made a critical examination of the effigy, and his report upon it is contained in the subjoined letter, addressed to William Durrant Cooper, Esq., F.S.A., with which the latter gentleman has kindly furnished me.

“ My dear Sir,

“ I have inspected the fragment of an effigy in the coach-house of No. 17, Stratton Street, Piccadilly, this morning.

“ It is a headless and armless trunk, life size, of alabaster, broken off just below the waist, all the fractures being extremely rough. It is habited in a close-fitting jupon, charged with a cross engrailed (Dalyngruge no doubt). Over a camail with a vandyked edge is a plain gorget, and over that a collar of SS.,<sup>1</sup> with, apparently, a ring for a pendant. These are all the details that I could discover: possibly in a better light, and raised nearer the eye, something else might be made out of it, but I saw no reason to expect that such would be the case. The defences of the neck, and the collar, resemble those of the brass of Sir Thomas Swinborne given by Boutell, and attributed to 1412. The date of this fragment is probably

<sup>1</sup> This is an early instance of the use of that much debated and mysterious symbol. Whatever its meaning, it was at this period a mark of great dignity, although it was afterwards assumed by persons of lower

degree. For the various theories on the subject see Mr. J. G. Nichols' papers in the *Gentleman's Mag.* and in *Notes and Queries*; also an interesting paper by Mr. Foss in *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. i. p. 73, *et seq.*

between 1390 and 1400. The time of the death of Sir Edward Dalingruge who built Bodiam Castle is not known, but it was probably about 1394. I think the effigy may have represented either him or his son, Sir John, the date of whose death is also unknown, and I incline to the opinion that it was commemorative of Sir Edward himself.

“The fragment is about three feet by two. It is not worth placing in any church and it would be a pity to consign it to destruction. I am therefore disposed to recommend its being preserved, as suggested, in the Lewes Museum. It is at present wholly unprotected, and after the length of time it has been in that state, I am surprised that so much can be made out of it.

Yours truly,

WESTON S. WALFORD.”

W. Durrant Cooper, Esq., F.S.A.



Slight remains of colour (vermilion), and of gilding, are still traceable on the figure. The subjoined woodcut, from a photograph, kindly supplied by Edward Nicholson, Esq., gives an accurate resemblance of the object.

I strongly suspect that the “*Cross engrailed*” of the surcoat roused the iconoclastic zeal of the demolisher of Robertsbridge, and this probably accounts for the barbarous usage which the effigy underwent.

A rather “strange eventful history” is this of a piece of chiselled alabaster, representing a man great in his time, a valiant soldier, who had built a castle out of the spoils of war,

and who had been entombed in a monastery which he had endowed with noble gifts. No long period elapsed ere the fair proportions of the statue, reposing gracefully upon its altar tomb within the Abbey Church of Robertsbridge, were doomed to destruction by some *malleus monachorum* under the dictation of Henry the Eighth. Hacked and hewn to pieces, it was buried as a useless thing, until its exhumation, as above related, brought it to the light of day. A second inhumation and a second disinterment, a generation later, in the metropolis, and its presentation to our local museum, wind up its extraordinary career. We have all heard of the "vile uses" to which every created thing may return, but this object has returned to a use by no means vile; and it is something for the fame of a fourteenth century Hero, that curious antiquaries of the nineteenth look with interest upon his mutilated effigy, and are induced thereby to search into the personal history of the man of whom it is the rude and imperfect presentment.<sup>1</sup>

This indeed has been already imperfectly done, in a previous volume of these *Collections*,<sup>2</sup> and the reader must therefore pardon a few occasional repetitions, for the sake of a connected, though very brief, memoir.

The family to which Sir Edward Dalyngruge belonged, derived their surname from the manor and estate of Dalegrig, Dalyngrigge, or Dalyngruge, now called Dallingridge, which lies in the south-western part of the parish of East Grinstead towards West Hothly.<sup>3</sup> His father, John Dalyngruge, married Joan, a daughter and coheiress of Sir Walter de la Lynde, the last male representative of an important family seated at Bolebrook in the neighbouring parish of Hartfield.

Sir Edward was born in the most flourishing period of English chivalry, and as might be expected he was trained to arms from his earliest youth. If the statement be correct that he was born about the year 1346, I was wrong in my former conjecture that he had shared in the glories of Cressy and

<sup>1</sup> Is it too much to assert, that a memorial like the present, in Vol. XII. of the *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, is a surer means of preserving from oblivion the man to whom it relates than any alabaster statue, or other material monument whatsoever, could be?

<sup>2</sup> Vol. IX., p. 288, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> The earliest members of the family I have met with, are John de Dalingregge and William de Dalingregge, who on the 13th of May, 1296, were present at Hartfield, at the wedding feast of Robert de Brom, and Joan his wife. *Inq.* 11, Edw. II. See *ante* p. 25.

Poitiers ; and he cannot have entered upon his military career till some years later than those events. Certain it is, that in 1367 he went abroad with Lionel, Duke of Clarence,<sup>1</sup> and that he fought under the banner of Richard Fitz-Alan, the warlike Earl of Arundel, who was himself a participator in the brilliant successes of Edward III., from the fourteenth year of his reign, and was at Vannes, at Thouars, and at Cressy. The Earl married the Lady Eleanor Plantagenet, daughter of Henry, Earl of Lancaster, and having been employed in many high diplomatic missions, was at length made a Knight of the Garter.

Under such a patron and leader, it is not surprising that Sir Edward Dalyngruge made commendable progress, both as a soldier and a statesman. But he seems for some reason to have forsaken the Earl's standard, and to have joined himself to those marauding parties who, after the crippling of the French power by pitched battles and formal sieges, rendered Northern France for some years a miserable spectacle of rapine and slaughter. Three Englishmen rendered themselves conspicuous in this predatory warfare—1. Sir John Calveley, a Cheshire knight ; 2. Sir John Hawkwood, originally a tailor, and the son of an Essex tanner, who nevertheless married an Italian Donna, and became the Garibaldi of his time, for his deeds of prowess in the various states of Italy ; and 3. Sir Robert Knollys or Knowles, who acquired the title, among the French, of "le veritable Demon de la Guerre." Of this personage Barnes speaks in the following terms :—

"Nor was Sir Robert Knolles less remarkable in these days, who being born of mean parentage in Cheshire, was by his valiant acts advanced from a common souldier to a great commander ; his first rise was in these wars of Normandy of which we are speaking, where, with his English troops and Navarrais, he won from the French, towns and castles, driving the country before him like sheep, and winning prizes at such a rate, that all men were willing to follow his fortune : for he loaded all his men with plunder, and was himself worth more than an hundred thousand crowns."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pat.* 41 Edw. III., p. 2, m. 4 (1367). Edward Dalynregge, chivaler, going abroad with Lionel, Duke of Clarence

appointed Roger Dalynregge and William Malling his attornies.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Edward III.*, 1688, p. 534.

It was to the banner of this redoubtable soldier that our Sussex knight attached himself. Whether this service was so chivalrous, or so reputable, as that in which he had been previously engaged, I shall not now stay to inquire. It is pretty certain, at all events, that from the "prizes" and "plunder" to which the historian refers, Sir Edward was sufficiently enriched to build the Castle of Bodiam; and that he held his leader in high esteem, is shown by his placing the arms and crest of Sir Robert Knowles over the postern of his fortress, where they still remain.

Sir Edward, having retired from active military exertions while in the full vigour of manhood, next appears in civil affairs of considerable importance. In the year 1380 (May 2nd) he was one of a great commission appointed to inquire into the state of the realm, and the expenses of the household of the young and inexperienced monarch, Richard II.<sup>1</sup> In 1386 he was returned one of the knights of the shire for Sussex.<sup>2</sup>

In this year it was that Sir Edward obtained license to build the Castle of Bodiam on the estate which he had previously acquired in marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of John de Wardedieu, of an ancient family who had long been lords of Bodiam. The original seat of the De Bodiams and the De Wardedieus occupied a more northerly site near the Kent Ditch, the boundary line between that county and Sussex, and was probably of no great extent or importance. Sir Edward, in addition to his own patrimony, having acquired large sums by war, and having now married an heiress, was enabled to erect an edifice which should be at once a stately mansion for himself, and a fortress against invading foes. There is peculiar significance in the wording of the "Licence to crenellate," which authorises the knight "to construct, &c., with a wall of stone and lime, his manor house of Bodyham near the sea, in the county of Sussex, for the defence of the adjacent country and the resistance of our

<sup>1</sup> *Fœdera*, III. pt. iii. p. 98, and *Rot. Parl.* iii. 73, b. From *Pat.* 6 Ric. II. it appears that Sir Edward Dalyngrugg, Knt., Elizabeth his wife, and John their son, paid the King a fine of £5. for pardon for having acquired the manor of Iden from Thomas and William Taillour of Rye, without royal license.

<sup>2</sup> Edw. Dalyngrugge, Knt., released to Robert de Belkenappe, Knt., and his heirs and assigns, all his estate in the manor of Knelle, and all lands in Beckeel, Northamme and Wightersham, formerly belonging to Edmond Le Knelle, Knt.—*Claus.* 9 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 40.

*enemies;*” for it must be remembered that war was still pending with France, and that only the year before, a French army had landed in Scotland, and had penetrated into the North of England. And besides the apprehensions which all Englishmen would naturally entertain of a hostile descent on the part of that injured and resentful nation, Sir Edward Dalyngruge had strong personal motives for fortifying himself to the utmost, as he would be an object of special vengeance as one of the captains of Sir Robert Knowles, and fearful of retribution at the hands of those whose castles and lordships he had assisted in despoiling, and whose ladies he had held in *duress* for the sake of weighty ransoms.<sup>1</sup>

In the same year, 15th October, Sir Edward appears as a deponent in one of the most remarkable trials that ever occupied the public attention of our nation; and, however frivolous the cause of quarrel may appear to our practical and unromantic age, that investigation will ever be regarded by those retrospective philosophers commonly known as antiquaries, as valuable and important, because it throws a strong light upon the manners and habits of our long-dead ancestors. The history of this *cause célèbre* is briefly as follows.

In the century in which Sir Edward Dalyngruge flourished, when heraldry was yet a comparatively young science, and when heraldic bearings were generally composed of the simplest possible elements, it so happened that three warlike families decorated their shields and surcoats with the selfsame bearing, a diagonal golden stripe upon a blue ground, or in technical language *Azure, a bend Or*. It will not excite surprise that so very simple a device should have been contemporaneously used by three chieftains living in different and distant counties, and unknown to each other; but, since these badges of chivalry had in those days a significance which we can now scarcely appreciate, connected as they were with glorious exploits on the battle-field, each bearer of arms regarded them with a peculiar jealousy, and challenged every other person who presumed to carry the device which he considered his peculiar badge to the proof of prior ownership. It happened, then, that Carminow, a gentleman of Cornwall, Lord Scrope, and Sir Robert Grosvenor, all men of ancient

<sup>1</sup> See *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, Vol. IX. p. 288.

mark and distinction, bore this simple coat-armour, and each claimed it as his sole property. Hence the suit above referred to, which occupied the Court of Chivalry from the year 1385 to 1389.

Carminow asserted that his ancestors had borne the golden bend ever since the days of King Arthur, and upon that weak plea was allowed to retain it. The main suit was therefore Scrope *versus* Grosvenor, and no less than three hundred men of mark, peers, bannerets, abbots, priors, knights, esquires, and clergymen, gave evidence on one side or the other. To the Court of Chivalry came, among others, "time-honoured Lancaster," John of Gaunt, to bear witness in favour of Lord Scrope. Another witness was the gallant old knight Sir John Sully, "aged one hundred and five years," who had seen the debated ensign at the battle of Halidon Hill, at the siege of Berwick, and, later, at the field of Cresci. Geoffrey Chaucere, too, then an Esquire well seen in arms, of the age of forty, and subsequently much better known as the Father of English Poetry, deponed from his personal observation, and from what he had heard said "by old knights and esquires."

The deposition of the subject of this notice was to the following effect:—

"Sir Edward Dalyngrigge, aged forty, said that the arms *Azure, a bend Or*, belonged to Sir Richard Scrope, and that they came to him by direct descent from his ancestors, as he had heard the late Earl of Arundel say, when he was with the Earl in his youth. He had seen Sir Richard and many of his cousins so armed, with differences, in royal expeditions before Paris with the late king, and also, as he had heard in Spain; in the expedition of the Lord of Lancaster in Caux; and in the great expedition of that Lord through the Kingdom of France to Bordeaux, as well as in Brittany, when the Earl of Buckingham was there, and in Scotland in the last expedition of the King, as many knights and esquires older than himself have told him. The late Earl of Arundel often mentioned to the Deponent, that the ancestors of Sir Richard were come of noble and generous blood, and had always borne their name, and sustained their rank, with honour and integrity, from time beyond memory. He had never heard of any interruption by Sir Robert Grosvenor, or by his ancestors, to the use of



the arms by the Scropes, nor had he ever heard of him or them until this dispute commenced."<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, in April, 1390, Sir Edward Dalyngruge was associated with several other persons as commissioners in the important business of concluding a truce between the kings of France and England and their respective allies;<sup>2</sup> and on the same day he was nominated a commissioner to survey the castles and fortresses of Calais and others in Picardy, and to treat with the people of the Flemish towns and make conditions with the Earl of Flanders.<sup>3</sup>

In the same year, May 26th, he was one of the personages who affixed their seals to a letter addressed to Pope Boniface IX. setting forth the great grievances which this country suffered from the horrible excesses of the court of Rome.<sup>4</sup> The parties to this letter were three dukes, ten earls, six barons, and nine knights. This shows the consideration in which Sir Edward was held in the councils of the kingdom.

His next appearance in public affairs is in the month of June, 1392. The city of London having shown symptoms of disaffection to the weak and pusillanimous Richard, that monarch seized and imprisoned the mayor and sheriffs, and took away the liberties of the city. Sir Edward was appointed Custos of the Tower and Governor of the City—a distinguished honour.<sup>5</sup> This is another proof of the high esteem in which our Sussex knight was held as a soldier and a man of influence. He did not hold office long, however, for, as Stowe informs us, he was suspected of being too lenient towards the Londoners, and was consequently superseded on the 22nd of July following, when Sir Baldwin Radyngton was appointed in his place.

Such are the main incidents which have reached us of the life of the builder of Bodiam Castle. The date of his death has not been discovered, but there is reason for believing that it took place in 1394, and certainly before 1408, when his son is described as possessor of some of the lands which had previously belonged to Sir Edward Dalyngruge.

By his wife Elizabeth Wardedieu, Sir Edward left issue a

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Nicolas, *Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy*, vol. ii. p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> *Fœdera*, III. pt. iv. p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Stowe's *Chronicle*.

son, Sir John Dalyngruge, who made his will 22nd June, 1417, being then about to sail for Sandwich, in Henry the Fifth's second expedition into France. This knight died without issue, and settled his lands of Bodiam, &c., after the death of his wife, upon his cousins, Richard and William Dalyngruge, as mentioned in *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, Vol. IX.<sup>1</sup>

The Dalyngruge pedigree awaits completion. The following memoranda from the Public Records will assist any genealogist who may undertake the task. They have been kindly supplied by W. D. Cooper, Esq., F.S.A. :—

EXTRACTS FROM PATENT AND CLOSE ROLLS.

- 1362 (36 Edw. III. m 17, *Rot. cl.*) John Worth, cousin and heir of Sir Thos. de Seymore, granted to Roger Dalynrigg and Alice his wife (probably a Seymore) 2 parts of the manor of Shiffeld with the view of Frankpledge De la Denne.
- 1364 (48 Edw. III. *Rot. cl.* pt. 1, m. 12) John Worth, son and heir of Sir John Worth, Knight, released to the same Roger all his lands in Fletching, Maresfield, and Horsted Keynes.
- 1394-5 (18 Rich. II. *Rot. cl.* m. 22 dorso) Thomas Bestone rendered seisin to John Dalyngruge of the manors of Lynell, Harrynton, and Arthingworth, in co. Northampton, which he held by demise from Sir Edward Dalyngruge, his late father, and
- 1395-6 (19 Rich. II. *Rot. cl.* m. 10 dorso) John Dalyngruge enfeofed John Searle, Thomas Sakevyle (his-brother-in-law), Thomas Echingham, and others, with his manor of Bodiam and his castle there, and his manors of Idenne, Wyltynge, Halynton, Shyffeld, Bolbroke, Iforde, Wannyn-gore, Werplesbourne, Worthe, and Ravingdene in Sussex, and of Dancourt, Kent (identifying their property).
- 1399 (Fines 1 Hen. IV. *Rot. cl.* m. 7) The lordship and chace of Rotherfeld, late of Thomas Lord Le Despenser were committed to John Dalyngrigge.
- 1404-5 (*Rot. Pat.* 6 Henry IV.) John Dalyngruge had custody of Bramber Castle, &c., forfeited by Thomas, late Earl Marshal.
- 1406 (8 Hen. IV. *Rot. cl.* m. 31) John, son and heir of Thomas Botiller, of Sudley, Gloucestershire, released to Alice, late wife of the said Thomas, and now wife of John Dalyngruge, Knight, her part of the manors of Suydley, in Gloucester and Dorset, and Greene, co. Warwick.
- 1434-5 (*Rot. Pat.* 13 Hen. VI.) Richard Dalyngruge was appointed Constable of Arundel Castle by John, late Earl of Arundel. The Castle having come into the King's hands, he confirmed the grant till the age of the heir.

<sup>1</sup> To that article the reader is referred for several minor transactions in which Sir Edward was engaged.

1446-7 (25 Hen. VI. *Rot. cl. dorso*, pt. 1, m. 18) Edward Mille released to *Richard* Dalyngrigge and *Sibille* his wife, the manor of Limbourne, and all the lands of John, son of John Boteler, in Warblyngton, Wade, Nytimbre, Blendworth, Estoke, Westheyes, and Harlynge, and

Enfeoffed Thomas Wedale and others with the manors of Wilting and Hollington, which the said Thomas had of the gift of Sir *Richard* Dalyngrugge.

\* \* \* The third document would appear to fix Sir Edward's death in the 18th year of Richard II.