

SADDLESCOMBE MANOR

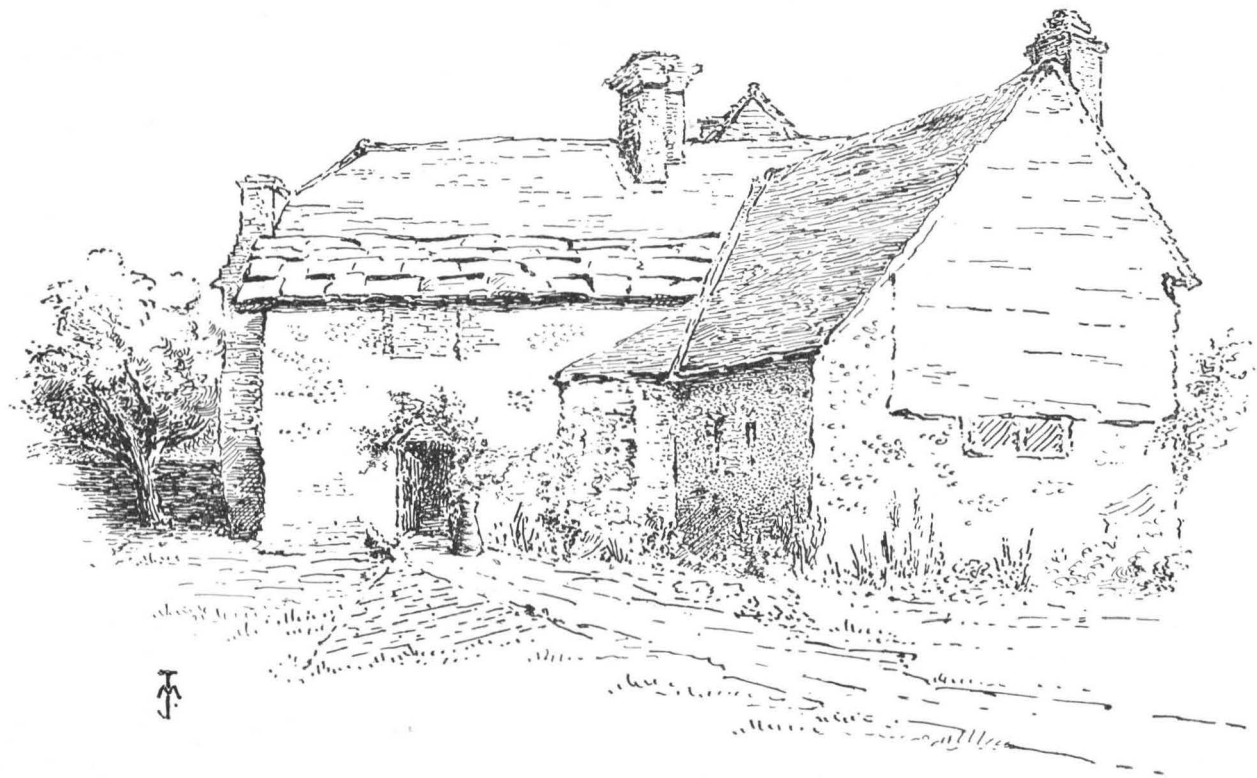
By A. O. JENNINGS.

ALMOST everyone who is at all familiar with Brighton and its surroundings will know the little hamlet of Saddlescombe, lying in a hollow beside the old road from Brighton to Horsham where it emerges from the hills, affording perhaps the most striking view of the Weald to be obtained from any of the Down passes. The place perhaps derives its name both in the English and the Norman-French form, Salescombe, or Selescombe, from the noticeable saddle-like formation of the surrounding hills.

The early history of the Manor of Saddlescombe has already been the subject of papers in these Collections—by Mr. W. H. Blaauw¹ and Mr. Horace Round.² Before the conquest it had been part of the very large possessions of the famous religious house at Bosham, but Earl Godwin had obtained a grant of this and some other of the lands of this church from King Edward the Confessor, and “Godwin the priest” had held under him. It was among the 43 Sussex manors that were given by the Conqueror to William de Warenne, who granted it by way of subinfeudation to Ralph de Caisned, and the great-granddaughter of the latter took it with her when she married into the De Say family. Some time between 1226 and 1230 Geoffrey de Say founded at Saddlescombe a Preceptory of the Knight Templars in exchange for a grant which his father of the same name had previously made to them of land at “West Grenewiche,” and the grant was duly confirmed by the chief Lord, de Warenne. This Geoffrey de Say was one of the 25 barons who were elected to superintend the execution of the provisions of the Great Charter, and were “sworn on their

¹ *S.A.C.*, IX., 227.

² *Ibid.*, XLIV., 140.



souls" to keep the King to its terms if he showed any tendency to retract.³ The Templars held the Manor for less than 100 years; when the Order was dissolved by decree of the Council of Vienne in 1312, the Papal Bull "Ad Providam" transferred all their possessions to the rival Military Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. It is said that in the 13th century the Templars owned 9000 manors, and the Hospitallers half that number, but Colonel King seems to be of the opinion that the latter order was the more wealthy of the two.⁴ In England effect was given to this Bull by an Act of Parliament passed in the 17th year of the reign of Edward the Second. In spite of this, however, the Tenants in Capite, the De Warennes and those claiming under them, kept possession of Saddlescombe until 1397. It was really an extraordinary act of defiance to which the paper I am summarising scarcely does justice. As early as 1308, 4 years before the decree of dissolution, the King had seized Saddlescombe and other property of the Templars into his own hands. Even after the decree and the papal Bull he showed no disposition to act on it, until he received a sharp reminder from the Pope; but in 1313, to give effect to the papal Bull, the King's writ had issued to put the Hospitallers in possession of all the lands and chattels of the Templars—apparently still without any effect. The lands were of course claimed by the Lords as escheats, but the *Statutum de Terris Templariorum*, after stating that the lands and the tenements of the Brethren of the Order had been seized into the hands of "our Sovereign Lord the King and of divers others the Lords of their Fees," who claimed them as escheats, goes on to provide that "neither our Lord the King, nor any other Lord of the Fees aforesaid or any other person shall have title or right to retain the foresaid lands or any part thereof in name of escheat or by any other means." Brave words, especially as directed against

³ See Matt. Paris, Chron. "Magna Carta."

⁴ See *Knights of St. John in England*, p. 5.

the King. If they were not very effective it was because the power of Parliament was not so unquestionable six hundred years ago as it is to-day.

It is noticeable, however, that, so far as Saddlescombe was concerned, there was an effort made to clothe the possession of the Warennes with a legal title. The Earl had made a grant of the manor to his natural son, Sir Thomas Nerford, but when the Act of 1324 was passed, he paid a fine of £200 to be free from suits. In 1342 he obtained a grant from the Grand Prior direct to the same son for the life of the latter and his wife "for the service of one rose to be rendered annually." On the death of the Earl, the last of the great Earls Warenne, in 1347, the Warenne estates and the title passed to Richard Fitzalan the second, Earl of Arundel, who inherited through his mother, a Warenne. His son, Richard Fitzalan the third, was executed for treason in 1397. On an inquisition held after his death it was found that the Earl of Arundel had held Saddlescombe, not in fee, but "at the will of John de Radyngton, the late Prior, and of Walter Grendon the Prior,"⁵ and though the Manor had been seized into the hands of the King, it was restored to the Hospitallers who thus at last obtained possession and became Lords of the Manor of Saddlescombe de facto as well as de jure.

Here Mr. Blaauw's history of the manor, which was based on a chartulary made by the prior Robert Botill in 1442, ends. The subsequent history, however, presents some points of interest, and as by the courtesy of the present Lord of the Manor I have had an opportunity of examining the post-reformation Court Rolls, I think something may also be usefully said as to these.

⁵ It is difficult to see how this could be if, as is generally stated, prior Grendon only succeeded on the death of his predecessor in 1399 (see e.g. *Knights of St. John, etc.*), and the Earl had been executed in 1397, but it is not always easy to reconcile the dates given for inter-related events at this period of history. Mr. Blaauw's dates taken probably from the chartulary seem altogether wrong; he states for instance, that the Earl of Arundel was executed in 1393 (*S.A.C.*, IX., 245).

Saddlescombe, as has been said, had been a preceptory of the Templars. Mr. Blaauw, misled apparently by an endorsement on the chartulary—"Prioratus eccles—Sadelescombe"—has assumed (*S.A.C.*, IX., 238) that it became a "priory," adding, "the preceptories of the Templars became priories under the discipline of the Hospitallers." Whatever the note endorsed may mean, it is clear that preceptories became, not priories, but commanderies. There was only one priory in England—that at Clerkenwell—and only one prior, the Grand Prior. But just as Saddlescombe seems never to have been an independent preceptory, but to have been attached to Temple Cressing in Essex,⁶ so it appears that it was never a commandery—at any rate it is not in the list of commanderies existing just before the Dissolution.⁷ It may have continued its connection with Temple Cressing—which did become a commandery—or it may have been annexed to the Sussex commandery at Poling.

It is doubtful what sort of establishment was maintained at the manor. The custom was that there should be three members of the order in each commandery, either Knights, Chaplains or "Serving Brothers." As a Chapel was attached to the manor, it is probable that a Chaplain at any rate was generally in residence at Saddlescombe. It is said that before the Dissolution, the head of each commandery was not distinguishable in his manner of life from the country gentlemen of the time, except that he must be unmarried. The remains of the old buildings of the manor at any rate do not suggest accommodation for any large number of occupants, simple as such accommodation would be.

Up to 1331 the Order was one undivided world order, and, as representative of the Order, the Lord of the Manor would, it seems, be the Grand Master. Thus by the writ in 1313 possession of Saddlescombe is

⁶ *S.A.C.*, IX., 243.

⁷ *Knights of St. John, etc.*, p. 61.

ordered to be given to Albert the Grand Master, though the prior, Leonard de Tybertis, is joined with him. But at the Grand Chapter held at Montpellier in 1331 the Order was divided into seven national orders, or "Tongues," as they were called, of which England was one, though all the Tongues were subject to the central authority of the Grand Master and his Council. Accordingly after this date it is always the Grand Priors who were treated as the Lords of the Manor. These form a distinguished line. To mention only those, for instance, who were in some way associated with our manor, the prior John de Radyngton (1381-1399) who was promoted from the commandery at Ribstone in Yorkshire, was responsible for the rebuilding of the Grand Priory, which had been destroyed in the Wat Tyler riots when his predecessor was murdered. Thomas Docwra (1501-1527), who is referred to later in this paper, is perhaps the most distinguished of all the Grand Priors. He had achieved fame in fighting against the infidel in the East, and was a great friend of both King Henry VII. and King Henry VIII. He had stood at the side of the latter on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and had received the title of "Protector" of the Order. He narrowly escaped, indeed, being elected Grand Master—though this had become almost an appanage of the French "Tongue." Only two Englishmen had ever been Grand Masters.

There is a striking portrait of Prior Docwra given in Colonel King's book, said to be taken from Selden's *Titles of Honour* (though I have been unable to find it there in the only edition—the 3rd—to which I have had access), showing a martial and handsome figure, not at all suggesting the ecclesiastic, but clad in armour. It was under his successor, William Weston, who had commanded the "Post of England" at the final siege of Rhodes that the blow of the dissolution fell upon the English order.

The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem only continued in actual possession of the manor for a little over a

century—until the year 1540. It appears from an entry in the Court Rolls to which I refer later that the privilege of freedom from taxes which the Templars and their tenants had enjoyed had been continued to their successors, and was confirmed by a charter as late as the year 1510. But thirty years afterwards they shared the fate of other ecclesiastical foundations. It is perhaps noteworthy that though most religious houses were dealt with by general legislation, or by an eviction disguised as a voluntary surrender, a special Act of Parliament was passed in respect of the Knights of St. John and their possessions, 32, Henry VIII., c. 24. A lengthy preamble, diffuse even for Acts of Parliament in those times, recites that “divers and sundry the King’s subjects called the Knights of the Rhodes, otherwise called Knights of St. Johns, otherwise called the Friars of the religion of St. John of Jerusalem in England, and of a like house being in Ireland, abiding in the parts beyond the sea, and having as well out of this realm as out of Ireland and other the King’s dominions, yearly great sums of money for the maintenance of their livings have unnaturally and contrary to the Duty of their Allegiances sustained and maintained the usurped Power and Authority of the Bishop of Rome lately used and practised within this Realm,” and had not only “adhered themselves to the said Bishop,” but also had “defamed and slandered as well the King’s Majesty, as the Noblemen Prelates and other of the King’s true and loving subjects for their godly proceeding in that behalf”; thereupon the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons “having deeply pondered and considered” that “like as it was a most godly act to expulse and abolish” the power and authority of the Bishop of Rome and his Religion, so in like manner it would be dangerous to suffer “any religion being Sparks Leaves and Imps of the said Root of Iniquity (!)” considering also that the Isle of Rhodes, whereby the said Religion took their old name and foundation is surprised by the Turk, and

that it were much better that the possessions in this Realm appertaining to the said Religion should rather be employed and spent within this Realm for the defence and security of the same" than used by "the unnatural subjects" referred to. In consideration of all this and much more to the same effect which I rather reluctantly omit, the Lords and Commons "most humbly beseechen" the King that the said Corporation may be dissolved in England and Ireland. Sir William Weston, the Prior in England, and Sir John Rauson, the Prior of Kilmainham in Ireland are to "lose their titles." No assemblies are to be held. The Hospital, Mansion House, Church and edifices called "the House of St. Johns of Jerusalem in England near the City of London" and the Irish Hospital Church and house are to be vested in the King, together with all castles lands and other possessions of the Order. Life annuities were granted to the Prior and members. The Brethren are discharged from their obedience, and the privileges of sanctuary abolished. It may be added that Sir William Weston the Grand Prior died—it is said—"of a broken heart" on the very day the Act took effect.

One cannot but feel that this preamble is really a high testimonial to the character and conduct of the Knights of St. John. When the Templars were dissolved the causes alleged would, if true, have justified severe punishment. The Council of Vienne professed to act on evidence of shocking crimes and blasphemies. It may be said that the best authorities are more than doubtful as to the truth of these charges, but there were at any rate definite accusations and evidence—much of it, it is true, obtained by torture—in support. So too the Act which put an end to the smaller religious houses (27 Henry VIII., c. 28), speaks of "manifest synne, vicious carnal and abominable living"; again the truth or falsity of the charge does not concern us. And the same may be said with regard to the reports on the Visitations of the greater Houses. But in this preamble there is no talk of evil

living on the part of the Hospitallers; the charge is that of supporting the authority of the Pope in England, and speaking disrespectfully of the policy which suppressed it; we may, indeed, well suppose that the charge was true. As to being "surprised by the Turk," if that is a crime, it is one which has not been uncommon both before and since the Hospitallers were accused of it; in fact, the charge was not true in their case; the siege of Rhodes lasted a long time. But the Act is commendably frank in indicating its real cause and object; it is the "yearly great sums of money" which would do more good if made available for the defence of the country than if left in the hands of the Friars.

It may be noted that when in 1324 "after great conference had before the King himself in the presence of the Prelates, Earls, Nobles and Great Men" the Parliament by the Act already mentioned transferred the lands of the Templars to the "Order of the Brethren of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem," the latter Order was to use them "in relieving the Poor, in Hospitalities, in celebrating Divine Service, in Defence of the Holy Land," and other services. I do not find any suggestion that in England at any rate they had used them otherwise.

So the Prior and Brethren of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem ceased to be Lords of the Manor of Saddlescombe, and the Order, as a Military Order ceased to exist in England. Not of course on the continent. The defence of Rhodes, of which the preamble is so contemptuous, though ultimately unsuccessful, is generally itself regarded as a splendid feat of arms, and was so much admired by the Emperor Charles V. that before the date of the Act of confiscation he had given the Island of Malta to the Knights to take the place of Rhodes (as well as Tripoli, which however they were unable to retain). And Henry VIII. had himself offered to contribute a sum of 20,000 ducats to an expedition to recover Rhodes. The Knights continued to play a part, often a distinguished part, in the affairs of Europe, until Malta

was captured by Napoleon in 1798.⁸ Of the modern revival of the Order, as to which there has been much recent controversy, it is unnecessary to speak here.

The King held the manor but a very short time. On the 15th March, 1541, there was a proposal by Sir Anthony Browne to exchange certain lands in Kent for lands in Sussex, including "the Manor of Sadelescombe," and on the 20th June, 1541, there is a grant by letters patent, setting out that Sir Anthony Browne, in exchange for a messuage called Caldeham and lands in Capell, Folkestone, Northfleet, Gravesend, and Milton, Co. Kent, lately sold to the Crown, and in consideration of his surrender of the Constableness of Harlech Castle in Wales with a yearly fee of £50 in the said office, and of £400 paid by him to the King, received a grant in fee of various Manors in Sussex, including our manor, described in the grant as "the Manor of Sadlescombe and Blakefeld and the Meadow of Hokstede in Twineham, Co. Sussex, which belonged to the late priory or Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England." This seems to have been a business transaction in which Sir Anthony Browne gave full value for what he received, but he was in fact a great personal friend of the King. He was a very distinguished soldier of the time, Knight of the Garter, Master of the Horse and, later, Royal Standard Bearer. It is interesting to note that he was also a very staunch Roman Catholic, so the King seems scarcely to have agreed with his Parliamentary draughtsman. Not only did the King load him with honours and lands,

⁸ It is to be observed that, though the Act dissolving the Order was never repealed, Queen Mary purported by letters patent dated the 2nd April, 1557 to revive the English "Tongue" "with all their ancient privileges and prerogatives." Sir Thomas Tresham was appointed Grand Prior, and was duly summoned as his predecessors had been to the House of Lords, in the Parliaments of Mary and the first Parliament of Elizabeth. See Selden's *Titles of Honour*, cap. V., par. 27. But by 1 Eliz. cap. 24 any property of which the Order may have recovered possession was again annexed to the Crown and the attempted revival of the Tongue failed. The priory became the head quarters of the Master of the Revels of the Queen. Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*.

⁹ Pat. Rolls, 33 Henry VIII. pt. 2, m. 43(4) and *Cal. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII.*, vol. XVI., No. 947(43).

the most notable of which perhaps was Battle Abbey, which he received in 1538, but there were more intimate marks of his confidence and affection. If one could have given any credit to the story that he was sent as the King's proxy in 1540 to marry Anne of Cleves, it would have said much for the affection the monarch bore his friend that it withstood even this incident, bitterly as Henry complained of the lady brought him as wife, but this picturesque tale can scarcely be true.¹⁰ Sir Anthony at any rate continued to be constantly employed by the King on various important military and civil commissions. He bravely undertook to tell the King in his last illness of his approaching end. He was one of the King's executors, and was appointed Guardian of the infant Prince and Princess, afterwards King Edward the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth. He died in 1548; there is no evidence that he ever held a Court at Saddlescombe. In 1542 he had succeeded on the death of his half-brother, Sir William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton, and by virtue of a settlement made by the latter on the 1st July, 1538, to the Cowdray property,¹¹ and for the next two hundred and forty years the history of the Manor of Saddlescombe, except for a small variation mentioned later, is that of that great historical house which has already been very fully set forth in these Collections and elsewhere. It descended from Sir Anthony Browne to his son of the same name, who at the marriage of Queen Mary in 1554 was created the first Viscount Montague. From him it passed in succession to the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and

¹⁰ See Note following this paper.

¹¹ Dates given in these Collections and elsewhere of events with which the Earl was concerned need correction. It is stated (see, for instance, S.A.C., V., 179, and Mrs. Roundell's *Cowdray*, p. 10) that the Earl died in 1543, and that grants to him of certain forfeited property of the Hospitallers in Midhurst, Trotton, Fernhurst, and other places were made to him in that year (S.A.C., XX., 27—Mr. Cooper indeed makes it appear that all the forfeited holdings of the Order were included in that grant). The date, however, is clearly wrong; the grant is dated the 24th June, 1541 (Pat. Rolls, 33, H. VIII., pt. 4, M. 39), and Mr. Nicolas (*Testamenta Vetusta*, Vol. 2, p. 707) gives the date of the death of the Earl as "at the end of 1542," and the probate of his will as the 16th February, 1542-3. As to the title by which Sir Anthony Browne succeeded to Cowdray, see Hope's *Cowdray and Easebourne Priory*, p. 21.

ninth Viscounts. On the death of the last named in 1797 without issue and on the failure of any heir male it went to the Honourable Elizabeth Mary Browne, devised to her by her brother the eighth Viscount. She was married to William Stephen Poyntz, and in 1825 she and her husband conveyed the manor of Saddlescombe to George O'Brien, Earl of Egremont, thus separating this manor from that of Cowdray, which remained in possession of Mr. and Mrs. Poyntz and their children until the latter sold it in 1843 to the sixth Earl of Egmont. On the death of Lord Egremont in 1837 the manor of Saddlescombe passed under his will to the first Lord Leconfield, and on his death in 1869 to the second Baron. He died in 1901, and was succeeded by the present Lord Leconfield, who in 1921 sold the manor to Mr. Ernest Robinson, whose family had been in possession of the farm at Saddlescombe since 1854, and who is now the Lord of the Manor.

There had however been one interruption of this line of Lords. On the death of the first Viscount Montague in 1592, the eldest son was dead, the next heir, the second Viscount, was an infant, and his mother became Lady of the Manor. It is impossible to say whether this was in pursuance of a devise by the will of her father-in-law, for her life, or in fee, or under some settlement. It may be noted however that the Lady Montague, the widow of the first Lord, on his death similarly acted as Lady of the Manor at Battle Abbey during her life; it is possible of course in both cases that this was the result merely of some friendly family arrangement. It was not a matter of guardianship *durante minore aetate*, for both ladies continued to hold their Courts after the second Viscount had attained his majority in the year following his grandfather's death. The Lady of the Saddlescombe Manor was Mary, daughter of Sir William Dormer, of Ethorp, in Buckinghamshire. She married, after her first husband's death, successively Sir Edmund Uvedale, and Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn, in Lancashire.

I do not know the date of her death, but her last Court was held on the 22nd April, 1607, when she is described as "Mary Uvedale, Widow."

The manor itself is a striking example of the peculiarity of so many of the Sussex manors that portions more or less important lie quite detached from the Manor House and demesne and often at a considerable distance from it. This is scarcely the place to enter on the various theories that have been put forward in explanation of this. See, for instance, the *Victorian County History of Sussex*, Vol. I., p. 356. It would involve, indeed, a discussion of the time in history when the limits of a manor may be deemed to have been definitely fixed, and how far it was capable of receiving additions from other manors or from allodial or waste lands. But the striking feature of the Saddlescombe Manor is that the *whole* of the freehold and copyhold tenements of the manor, with one curious small exception to which reference is made later, are separated from the Manor House and demesne by other manors, and lie at a considerable distance. As late as 1870 there were about 400 acres in the possession of freehold or copyhold tenants of the manor in various parts of the Weald—Albourne, Bolney, Twineham and Hurst. There were no such tenants at Saddlescombe—where there were about 900 acres in the demesne let to the "Farmer" while much other land formerly part of the manor, in Shoreham, Hurst, Lewes, and other places, had by one means or another disappeared from the Court Rolls. In a rental of 1783 it is noted that tenements at Bolney and Cuckfield had been "lost," and since then the same fate appears to have befallen other tenements then belonging to the manor. How far the Lord can in law lose his rights over tenements in respect of which he has neglected to claim for a long period this is not the place to inquire. It may be noted that the holding at "Blakefeld in Balecomb," mentioned in the description of the manor on the inquisition made in the 14th century, and which actually gave its name to the manor

in the grant to Sir Anthony Browne in 1541, has not only completely disappeared from the Court Rolls, but is not now easy to identify, unless it be the "Blackfold" which is shown in the ordnance map lying between Balcombe and Handcross.

The note in Domesday Book is short. I take the translation given in the reprint by the Society in 1886.

"Ralph holds Salescombe of William — Godwine a priest held of Earl Godwine. It lay in Bosham. Then and now it vouched (*se defendebat*) for 17 hides. There is land for 10 ploughs. In demesne are 2 ploughs and 23 villeins and 4 bordars with 7 ploughs. There are 13 acres of meadow. From salt 15 pence. In Leuues 1 haw. There was a wood of 5 hogs (*Silva fuit de 5 porcis*) which is now in the rape of William de Braiose. Of this land Ralph holds 4 hides, and has there 1 plough in demesne and 3 villeins and 2 bordars with half a plough.

The whole in the time of King Edward was worth £15 and afterwards £10. Now £11."

The entry has already received consideration in these Collections and elsewhere. Mr. Round has thrown light on the identity of the persons named and the reference to Bosham. "William," as has been said, is William de Warenne, "Ralph," Ralph de Caisned.

It is not easy to see the relation of the 17 hides—about 2000 acres—of arable land all stated to have been held by Ralph, with the 480 acres afterwards said to have been held by him, and it is not clear what had happened to the wood in the rape of Bramber, yielding 5 hogs by way of rent, or whether "*silva fuit*" implies that it was no longer part of the manor. The heavy fall in the value of the manor at the conquest is noticeable.

I know of no description of the manor until about 220 years later, when on the seizure by the King of the possessions of the Templars, a jury was empanelled under Walter de Gedlynge, the Sheriff of Sussex, to make a valuation of the Templars' possessions at Saddlescombe. It is not easy to identify the valuation then made with the 2000 acres for which the manor was responsible in Earl Godwin's time. There is mention in the valuation of a messuage and about

180 acres of land at Sadelescombe and sheep pasture worth 20s., other property at "Hechstead in the vill of Bolne," clearly Hickstead, though Mr. Blaauw for some strange reason identifies it as "Isted"), and at "Blakefeld in the vill of Balecombe," all held from the ancestors of Geoffrey de Say and of Earl Warenne in fee. Then there is reference to a messuage at "New Shoreham" with chapel—obviously this refers to the gift of Alan Trenchmere, *S.A.C.*, IX., p. 236, and this seems therefore properly not part of the original manor—a messuage at Lewes, which may or may not have been that mentioned in Domesday, but if so, it is curious that it is not included in the property stated to have been derived from the ancestors of Geoffrey de Say. There is, too, land at "Farncombe in the vill of Pecham"; this was a gift to the Templars from Walter de Wreng, see *S.A.C.*, IX., p. 237, and not properly part of the manor. At this time the manor itself, apparently the Manor House and surroundings, was reported to consist of a hall, 2 granges, an ox-shed, a stable, a cowshed, a garden, and a "pipe of cider." A further inquisition held a few months later at Horsham before two Commissioners with a jury gives much the same description, but refers to sundry free tenements at Shoreham valued at 20s. and "suit of Court 12d." This may be the Trenchmere land, but the suit of Court suggests it was part of the original manor, possibly part of the wood in the Bramber rape. If not, it is difficult to see how these messuages could owe suit of Court to this manor, unless it were capable of extension by subsequent gifts. If I have referred to these details, it is to show the difficulty of identifying the manor as it existed at the time of the Domesday Survey with this description of it some 200 years later. It is obvious that for some time at any rate after the conquest manors were in a fluid state, and were liable to great changes,¹² even if it could be assumed that

¹² Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, p. 302.

the statements made by the inhabitants to the Domesday Commissioners were in all cases accurate or exhaustive, or were properly understood. There must, of course, have come a time when there could be no more additions to the tenements held of the manor, though it was always liable to diminution by enfranchisements and other means. At any rate, any attempt to identify any portion of the Manor in its present state, outside the demesne, with the Domesday description, seems quite hopeless.

It generally happened where the Lord of a Manor was unable or unwilling to occupy the Manor House himself, this and the demesne were "let to farm," the "farmer" being liable by the terms of his lease to afford facilities for the holding of Courts and the entertainment of the Lord and his officers. After the eviction of the Knights of St. John in 1540, no Lord of the Manor lived at Saddlescombe. For many years the "farmers" were members of the Burwash branch of the Sussex family of Bine or Byne, who form the subject of an interesting monograph printed by the late Mr. W. C. Renshaw privately in 1921. He does not, curiously enough, refer to their connection with Saddlescombe, though he describes several members of the family as of Newtimber, the parish in which the manor is situated. There is a lease of the Manor House and farm to Stephen Bine in 1792; I do not know whether this was the beginning of their connection with the place, but members of the family continued in occupation until 1849. After a very short interval they were succeeded by the family of the present Lord of the Manor. It is quite in accordance with custom that the manor should ultimately be purchased by the "farmer"; it happened in the case of Preston Manor, when the Shirleys bought in the 17th century, but it is only quite recently that Saddlescombe Manor has become the property of a Lord, who lives in the Manor House—perhaps for the first time in the whole of its history.

At my invitation Mr. Walter H. Godfrey visited the

building with me in August, 1924, for the purpose of ascertaining if any part of the original structure pertaining either to the Templars or the Hospitallers could be traced. He has furnished me with the following notes:—

“The present house consists of an L-shaped building, constructed mainly of brick, chalk and timber, dating with certainty as far back as the early part of the 16th century, to which have been added important extensions westwards. The first addition, with its projecting porch is probably Elizabethan, and the later work further west belongs to the eighteenth century. The whole building has been very much modernised.

In the absence of any indications of medieval buildings on another site, it may be presumed that the oldest part of the present house represents—in altered and reconstructed form—the earlier fabric. Its dimensions tend to confirm this conjecture. The main part of the L plan runs north and south and would represent a hall of some 38 by 18 feet (internal dimensions), which was divided in Tudor times by the interposition of a large chimney stack, which still retains a fine 3-centred brick arch on the ground floor and a well-moulded stone fireplace, with 4-centred arch on the first floor. The presence of this chimney stack in this position conforms to the very general practice of Tudor times of utilising the old hall-space, and the oak beams supporting the floors as well as the timbers of the roof confirm the suggestion of a sixteenth century reconstruction. The Tudor fireplace on the first floor has been reduced in width, but is otherwise in good preservation.

From this conjectural hall there projects eastwards a small building of 2 bays in length, the division being marked by a truss, with curved struts beneath the tie-beam (forming a flat arch), of rather unusual design. This wing has a width inside of about 13 ft., increased now to 18 ft. under a lateral extension of the roof. Its eastern end is of timber and tilehung, a treatment which often indicates that the building was originally longer and has been shortened. On the other hand there is a very heavy oak timber, some 7 ft. 6 ins. up, in this wall, with a large splay on its upper surface, which may well represent the sill of an oak eastern window. The position of this wing, pointing east from the hall, suggests the chapel, which with the hall, is mentioned in the manorial records. The establishment of both Templars and Hospitallers was a small one, and it may well be that the present building indicates approximately the original accommodation and even its arrangement.

It is of course possible that some other site among the farm buildings may furnish more direct evidence of earlier occupation, and the raised ground on which the old wellhouse stands, or the barns to the left of the entrance road, where a section of an early

flint and stone retaining wall can be seen, might offer some reward to the excavator. In the present absence, however, of other evidence, it is fair to assume that a building containing indications of having been *altered* in Tudor times, represents an original structure, and the plan of the old part of the house offers nothing to render the further assumption that it was in fact the original preceptory, improbable."

The whole of the Court Rolls of the manor from 1584 to the present day are contained in a small folio volume. Courts were not frequent, and changes in the holdings not numerous. It seems to be complete as a record, except for a gap between the last Court held by Dame Mary Uvedale in 1607, and one held by Francis the third Viscount Montague in 1649; but apparently the book had been mislaid on the death of the lady and a record made elsewhere, for several pages are left blank, obviously for a transcription which was never carried out. There is another interval for the period between September, 1657—the last Commonwealth Court—and the Court held in September, 1669, after the Restoration. No doubt the troubles through which the Lord, the third Viscount, was passing during the civil war explain this gap.

The entries in the Rolls are those ordinarily found in the Court Rolls of Sussex manors, but I append a translation of the first entry, partly as further evidence of the persistence of surnames in Sussex in the same neighbourhood—a "Stapeley," the first name mentioned on the Rolls, was, up to 1913, a tenant of a holding held by one of the same name in the 16th century—and partly for the curious insertion in the middle of the entry of a copy of a protection certificate given by the Grand Prior, Thomas Docwra, 60 years before to Thomas Herland to testify that he was a tenant of the manor, and as such exempt from King's taxes, a matter having nothing whatever to do with the business of the Court. The certificate is obviously in common form, and it is probable that each tenant of the manor would be likely to require a copy, though I do not remember seeing one before. It is difficult to

find a reason for its being copied here; it may be noted that a Richard Harland is mentioned in the entry, and he may have been connected with the Thomas Herland of the certificate; it may be, however, on the other hand, merely a vagary of the Steward or his clerk.

Saddlescombe View of Frank Pledge held there on the 29th day of
to wit. March in the 26th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Jurors for our
Lady the Queen.

William Stapeley,
Gentleman.

John Stapeley,
Gentleman.

John Payne of Hicsted.

Gilbert Raynard.

John Westover, Senr.

John Westover, Junr.

Edwd. Mercer.

Thomas Esterfield.

John Eestor.

James Hollingdale.

Joseph Harland.

Richd. Henty.

who present on their oath that Richard Harland, Richard Bartlett, Doctor of Laws, John Payne junr., Richard Longley, Robert Wells, John Mascall, gentleman, () Upperton, Thomas Ardell, John Coulstook and William Pyckham are resident within the bounds of this View, and have not appeared, therefore every of them in mercy as appears above their names (that is 2d. each). And they further present that all else is well.

Also they elected to the office of Constable for the next year, John Mascall, gentleman.

They also elected to the office of Headborough for the next year, Edward Mercer junr.

Afferers.	Joseph Harland.	} Sworn.
	John Payne.	

Saddlescombe Court Baron of the Honourable Anthony Viscount
to wit. Montague, Knight of the most noble Order of the
Garter held there on the 21st day of March in the
26th year of Queen Elizabeth.

Essoins. Henry Bartley, Doctor of Laws, by William Stapley,
gentn., Richard Harland, by John Westover.

Homage.	William Stapeley,	} Sworn.	John Westover.	} Sworn.
	gentn.		Edward Moore.	

John Payne.

who present on their oath that Ninian Challenor, gentleman, Edward Payne, gentleman, Thomas Farncombe and John Stening are tenants of this Manor and have not appeared. Therefore every of them in mercy as appears above their names (that is again 2d.).

To all and singular, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Stewards, Constables, Toll-collectors and other officers and Ministers of our Lord the King, Thomas Docwra, Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England, greeting. Whereas the most illustrious princes, the former Kings of England in ancient times among other liberties which . . . (obviously an omission here though no space left). Our present King, Henry the Eighth, by his charter the date of which is at Westminster on the 16th day of May in the second year of his reign ratified, approved and confirmed and granted to us the prior and brethren of the said Hospital and our successors that all our men and tenants are free and quit of all scot and geld, and Hidage and carucage and Dangelde and Hornegeald and Armies and Wapentakes and Scutage and Taillage, Lestage and Stallage and pleas and plaints both of the Shire and Hundred and Ward and Wardpeny and Averpeny and Hundredpeny and Burghhalpeny and Tithingpeny and of all works on Castles parks and bridges, enclosures, cartage, Stinnage, (so written, but almost certainly Summage), murage, and navige and building of royal houses and all kinds of works, and that their corn or any of their things be not taken for the provision of castles. And that they be free and quit from all toll in every market and all fairs and on every passage of bridges and roads and of the sea throughout all his Kingdom of England and through all his lands in which he can (written "they can") give them liberties. And that all their merchandise be likewise quit in the aforesaid places from all toll, as in the said charter of our King aforesaid more fully appears. Hence it is that I appeal in the Lord to (*obtestor in Domino*) your whole body so far as you think fit to permit my beloved in Christ Thomas Herland of Bolney my tenant there at my Manor of Saddlescombe in the County of Sussex to enjoy the liberties aforesaid according to the tenor force form and effect of the said Charter of our King aforesaid. Given at London at the said Hospital on the 20th day of the month of August in the 16th year of our said Lord King Henry the 8th.

And also the Homage present the death of William Martyn who held freely of the Lord of this Manor certain lands within the parish of Bolney now in the tenure of William Bassett held of the Lord of this Manor for a rent of 12d. per annum, suit of Court, heriot when it happens, and other services whence there happens to the lord one ox delivered to the store and a relief of as much as the rent. And that Thomas Martyn is his son and next heir and of full age. And the beadle was directed to distrain the aforesaid Thomas that he be here at the next Court to do fealty to the lord and to give security for the premises etc.

Afferers.	John Payne.	} Sworn.
	Edward Mercer.	

The scribe's knowledge of Latin was evidently confined to the legal terms used in the ordinary entries on the Rolls for in copying the certificate he has made every kind of blunder, spelling words wrongly, putting the subject in the plural with the verb in the singular, and so on.

It is interesting to compare the privileges granted to the tenants and Freemen of the Hospitallers by the charter recited in the certificate with the claims of the Templars to similar exemption in a petition presented to King Edward I., which the King referred to a jury of Knights; they reported in the main in favour of the claims. (See *S.A.C.*, IX., p. 230.) The petition sought relief from even more exactions than are mentioned above. Mr. Blaauw discusses at some length the meaning of many of the words used to represent the various forms of possible royal demands, but in many cases this can only be guessed at. Obviously many of them had ceased to have any effective force when the copy was made, for the Steward, as I have said, often writes them incorrectly. I have only englished the Latin terms used, and have made no attempt to translate them. Antiquaries are in fact in many cases not in agreement as to their meaning. For instance, compare the Law Lexicons of Byrne and of Wharton on "Lestage." It is interesting, however, to notice that the phrase "brugavelpeny" in the petition of the Templars on which Mr. Blaauw expends some learning is shown by the certificate to be the Borough halfpenny tax. It is no doubt easy to moralise over the unhappy lot of a people exposed to so many possible exactions, however rarely enforced, but it must have been almost as exasperating to see how easily the servants and tenants of certain ecclesiastical houses—and perhaps of other privileged persons and bodies—escaped.¹³

¹³ See the Calendar of early Mayor's Court Rolls between the years 1298 and 1307 recently published by the Cambridge University Press, and the sentence of imprisonment passed on an innkeeper for having expressed the impious wish in the very presence of the Mayor "that tax collectors might be all hanged by the Devil." The sentence was afterwards reduced to a fine.

The other entries on the Rolls refer, as has been said, to the usual manorial incidents. Stephen Wales is fined a shilling for drawing blood on Richard Kellick,¹⁴ Edward Mercer is ordered to abate a nuisance he is causing at Cuckfield under a penalty of 20s., and in the meantime is fined 6d. Of the same offender it is said that he has encroached on the land of a neighbour "inchrochiavit super terram"—a pleasant instance of the way that stewards made their own Latin. The usual cattle stray within the manor and are impounded. John Stening and his son have sold an inn at Cuckfield called "Katches" to John Parson, and Jane Birt, widow, has to show by what right she holds a house and shop in Cuckfield called Crosshouse, an interesting example of the use in the manor of the form of proceeding embodied in the prerogative writ of Quo Warranto.

It may be worth while to refer to the first entry made in the Court Rolls of any transaction out of Court. This was on the 20th December, 1713, and was a grant by Henry the fifth Viscount Montague—who, like some of his predecessors, seems to have called himself "Mountague" or "Mountaigue"—to Thomas Street, of "a small parcel of the waste of the Manor with the cottage lately built on it lying on the west side of the house of the Lord of the Manor, called Saddlescombe House," to be held on the usual terms of a copyhold tenement. I mention this, not only as it is interesting to notice these early instances of dispositions of tenements in certain manors out of Court before the practice received statutory sanction by the Copyhold Act of 1841, but because there is considerable doubt as to the validity of the transaction. The creation of new Copyholds out of the waste of the manor can probably be justified by custom, and Mr. W. E. Nicholson informs me that it was

¹⁴ Stephen may be considered leniently dealt with. At a Court held at Preston at about the same time (27th September, 1582) on a presentment that "Elizabeth Poole was a common barretor," and had drawn blood on George Silvester, the Steward was ordered to "punish Elizabeth in the stocks for 6 hours under penalty of 5s." (*Sussex Record Society*, XXVII., 27).

extremely common in the Sussex manors in the 17th and early parts of the 18th centuries, perhaps as one form of the inclosure system which then grew up, but the Courts of Law have never recognised such a custom as valid unless the grant was made with the consent of the Homage, as it diminished the waste, over which the tenants of the manor had rights. But in the present case it is not stated that such consent had been obtained, and as the grant was made out of Court—in itself without precedent so far as I know for such a dealing—the tenants probably knew nothing of it. Curiously enough this particular tenement has ultimately been re-absorbed into the manor, though presumably not into the waste. The cottage appears to have been used by the farmers for their labourers, and on the death of Stephen Bine, his executors—Messrs. George and Nathaniel Blaker and Mr. Thomas Charles Renshaw—on the 9th May, 1850, out of Court surrendered the holding to the Lord, to be extinguished and merged, in consideration of £220. Whether this was because any doubt was entertained as to the legality of the original creation of this Copyhold, I do not know. This is the single instance of there being any tenement of the manor in Saddlescombe itself to which I referred previously.

The Court Rolls contain, too, evidence of the confusion wrought by the Civil War even in this quiet spot. There is no record of any Court, as has been said, for some years after that held in the fifth year of James First till that held on the 26th July, 1649, when only two tenants were present. At the next Court on the 4th September, 1650, John Lintott was the only tenant to appear. Two tenants at least were necessary for the holding of a valid Court, and there is a marginal note, "nil cur defectu tenentium"; the bailiff was ordered to distrain Sir William Culpeper, Bart., Walter Burrell, Esq., and a dozen other tenants, "because they have made default in attending their Court and in suit of Court and other services due and in arrear to the Lord."

Then comes the Commonwealth—two Courts only held—the entries of course now in English—and the same tenants were again in default and fined. There is no Court from 1657 till 1669, when Charles II. is on the throne, and the proceedings are once more restored to the obscurity and picturesqueness of manorial Latin, till English is resumed in 1747.

It seems proper to give the names of the stewards of the manor so far as known, as well as those of the Lords. Up to the close of the 18th century they were Thomas Churchard, first mentioned in an entry of the 14th March, 1588, and again in 1607—Edward Thurland (1649–1671), Laurence Alcock (1673–1696), John Alcock (1716), Francis Chasmore (1755), and William Sandham (1793–1801). Edward Thurland was of course the well-known Judge of that name, Member for Reigate in the Short Parliament, and again between 1658 and 1672, knighted in 1661, and made Baron of the Exchequer in 1673; the intimate friend of John Evelyn and Jeremy Taylor. One is a little surprised at first to find him discharging the duties of such an office as that of the Steward of this small manor; he was probably, however, Steward of all the Montague manors, which no doubt gave him employment—and remuneration—during these troublous times. I am not aware that the other stewards mentioned above had other title to fame.

Though there is nothing very distinctive about these Court Rolls, their very brevity—the concentration in one small volume of the records of three or four centuries—makes it easy to obtain a comprehensive view of the development of the manor in those years of change, from the time when the peace of a district was largely the concern of the Frank pledge with its tithing man and constable, and the Manorial Court was really a Court, at which transfers of tenancies were only incidents in the business, which concerned the government and well-being of the whole manor, and when every resident had to attend the View and every tenant the Court, or provide an Essoin, at the

risk of being amerced. When these Court Rolls begin, it was nearly the end of this period, the last View was held, and the last Constable elected in 1591. I think that this must be an indication of the rise of other peace officers at this time, though I notice that there were Views of Frank Pledge held for Preston Manor 70 years later. Courts, however, continued of necessity to be held as the regular means of effecting and recording changes of ownership. But copyholds are doomed. When, if ever, the legislation represented by Lord Birkenhead's Real Property Act of 1922 comes into operation, this one spark of life still remaining in the manor will have died, and it seems highly probable that this small volume will suffice to contain all the records of the Manor of Saddlescombe from the Lordship of the first Viscount Montague till land in England is no longer held "by copy of Court Roll at the will of the Lord according to the custom of the Manor."

SIR ANTHONY BROWNE AND THE PROXY MARRIAGE TO ANNE OF CLEVES.

This is a curious story. In the catalogue of the pictures at Cowdray House printed in 1777 appear the following entries:—

"No. 77. Small whole-length portrait of Sir Anthony Browne in a gold frame and Crown Glass before it. An original.

"No. 117. Sir Anthony Browne in the Dress in which he married by Proxy of Henry VIII. the Princess Anne of Cleves. Painted by Lucy. Copy from No. 77."

On one or perhaps on both these pictures was an inscription of which there are two versions, differing not only in the form of the words, though both purport to be preserving the archaic spelling of the original, but even slightly in meaning. The one is given by Mr. Gough, the Antiquary, in his *Vetusta Monumenta*, Vol. 3, and the passage certainly suggests that it was written by someone who had copied the inscription from the picture itself. Sir William St. John Hope (*Cowdray and Easebourne Priory*) follows this. On the other hand Dallaway (*History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex*) has another version which also gives the impression of being a copy taken directly from the original (it would seem that this copy was made by Mr. J. C. Brooke, *Somerset Herald*, Vol. I., p. 246), but this, besides other differences, treats as one what Gough gives as two separate inscriptions apparently on two different pictures. Mrs. Roundell (*Cowdray*, p. 20) adopts this, but adds the final sentence, taken, I suppose, from the other version.

On the whole the "Dallaway" form makes the better sense, and, though this may be a bad reason for selecting it, it is this which I cite below, omitting however that part—chiefly concerned with details of Sir Anthony's family—which appears as a separate inscription in the *Vetusta Monumenta*.

"Sir Anthonie Browne. He lyvinge was all at one time and at his death Master of the horse to Kyng Henrie the Eyght and after to Kyng Edwarde the Syxte, Captain of both their majesties' gentilmen pensioners, Chief Standard bearer of England, Justice in Oyer of all their forestes, parkes and chaces beyonde the river Trente northwarde, lieutenant of the forestes of Wyndesor, Wolmar and Ashdowne with dyvers parkes and chaces southwarde. One of the executors to Kynge Henrie the Eyght, one of their Majesties' Honourable Privie Council and companion of the most nobel order of the Garter. . . . In this dress he married by proxy Princess Anna Cleves relex of Kyng Henrie the Eyght."

The final sentence, which receives confirmation from the entry in the catalogue, so far as I know has never been challenged; several writers indeed give it implicit credit. Horace Walpole, for instance, who visited Cowdray in 1749, in an account of this visit to his friend George Montague writes (letter of 26th August, 1749), "I was much pleased with the whole-length portrait of Sir Anthony Browne, in the very dress in which he wedded Anne of Cleves by proxy. He is in blue and white, only his right leg is entirely white, which was robed for the act of putting into bed with her."

The late Sir William St. John Hope (*Cowdray and Easebourne Priory*) is equally satisfied. Nor is any doubt on the matter entertained by the D.N.B., which in the article on Sir Anthony Browne states plainly "In 1540 Browne was sent to the Court of John of Cleves to act as proxy at the marriage of Henry VIII. with Anne of Cleves," though there is no corresponding allusion in the article on Anne. Such preciseness in so serious a work as the Dictionary raised a doubt whether it might not be supported by other evidence, but I observe that the article is by Mrs. Roundell, and that it does not profess to be based on other historical sources. I think, therefore, it may be taken that the inscription and the entry in the catalogue are the only authorities for the statement.

But it is reasonably clear that the whole story is an invention. Not only is it entirely unsupported by the historian; but it is inconsistent with all the facts as known. The marriage of Henry to Anne of Cleves is of capital historical importance, arranged from motives of international policy, and having fateful results; it was perhaps the chief cause of Cromwell's downfall. All the facts, therefore, attending it are recorded and well known. I am not aware of any suggestion that there was a preliminary ceremony at the Court of the Duke of Cleves before Anne came to England. If there were, Sir Anthony Browne could have taken no part in it. We have preserved to us the deposition made by him in the subsequent divorce proceedings, in which he gives the circumstances of his

meeting the lady at Rochester after her arrival in England. He had gone there with his master, who was anxious to meet his bride and was carrying presents. On New Year's day, Henry sent Sir Anthony first into her apartment to know if she would receive him, and the deponent proceeds, "I was never more dismayed in my life, lamenting in my heart to see the lady so unlike that she was reported" (Cal. Henry VIII., Vol. XV., p. 422). Mrs. Roundell appears to have seen the deposition, but to have been under the impression that it referred to an interview at Cleves; I cannot understand why. It is obvious that Sir Anthony could scarcely have married the lady as proxy a short time before. The presents, intended as New Year's gifts, were not sent till the following morning, and then with a cold message, though the wedding was celebrated with much magnificence soon afterwards, the many almost pathetic attempts of the King to avoid carrying out an engagement he had entered into on false reports of Anne's beauty having failed. Within a few months he had divorced her.

It is difficult to speculate on the origin of the fable. The other statements in the inscription seem to be accurate, and it is just possible that the final paragraph may have been added by some one more irresponsible and ignorant—the curious form "relex" suggests this—perhaps even jocular; the whole story may have grown out of the parti-coloured dress with the right leg in white to which Horace Walpole calls attention. Both the pictures, however, were burnt in the great fire, and this line of investigation can scarcely be pursued further; but this note may provoke inquiry which will solve the problem.