

RALPH ROWLET, GOLDSMITH
OF LONDON.

BY

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IN Romford church, Essex, may be seen the stately monument of Sir Anthony Cooke, who died in 1576, famous no less as tutor to the young King Edward the sixth, than as the father of five comely and learned daughters.

Mildred, the eldest married William Cecil, Lord Burleigh; Ann married Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and father of the great Chancellor; Elizabeth married first Sir Thomas Hoby and second John, Lord Russell; Katherine married Sir Henry Killigrew, and Margaret Sir Ralph Rowlet.¹

Of all these distinguished men such works as the *Dictionary of National Biography* say much, with the single exception of the last mentioned whose biography never appears to have been attempted, although the materials for it are not far to seek albeit somewhat scanty.

That Sir Ralph Rowlet was also a man of importance may be inferred from the fact that in the *Anglorum Speculum or Worthies of England in Church and State* (1684) among the thirteen distinguished Sheriffs mentioned, he is given a place.

An initial difficulty in making the attempt to give an account of Sir Ralph is the fact that his father's name was also Ralph, and one is sometimes at a loss to know whether a

¹ The name is variously spelt, e.g. Rawlet, Rowlat, Rowlet, Rowlatt, Rowlett and Roylett sometimes with and sometimes without a final 'e'. Similarly 'Ralph' is spelt Ralus, Radulphus, Raff, Raphe, Rauf, and Rauff. For the sake of simplicity I have spelt the name Ralph Rowlet throughout this paper.

particular fact is referable to the one or the other. They are occasionally mentioned as grandfather and grandson, the children of one are affiliated to the other, and though one was certainly knighted and the other was probably not they are sometimes referred to as both knights and at others as both simple esquires. To terminate this *Comedy of Errors* and to put together in connected form original materials hitherto scattered in a variety of places is the object of the following sketch.

Following up a clue that Rowlet was a Leicestershire name, I found in John Nichol's History of the County various references to the family as associated with Leicester; and in Mr. S. H. Skillington's History of that town (1923), it says "The old Free Grammar School at Leicester was the recipient of several bequests including a rent charge of five marks from Sir Ralph Rowlet whose father and other chief friends had their beginning in Leicester."

The School House bears, or bore, a stone tablet inscribed with the names of its benefactors—Queen Elizabeth, £10 per annum, Sir Ralph Rowlet, £3 6s. 8d. and others.

The Leicester town records in the fifteenth century, record the names of several Rowlets as its principal citizens. Robert Rowlet was elected Mayor in 1461, and on the 15th May, 1462, King Edward the Fourth for services done by the Mayor and Burgesses against the King's enemies granted them twenty marks yearly for twenty years.

A Robert Rowlet was elected Mayor in 1473 and a William Rowlet in 1497.

About this date a member of the family must have left his native town to seek his fortunes in a larger sphere, for in 1505 we have a John Rowlet mentioned in a Royal Pardon granted to Sir John Tate, Mayor of the Staple of Calais and other merchants of the same, for all offences against the Statutes relating to trade.

We are standing on sure ground when we find at St. Alban's Cathedral the monumental brass of Ralph Rowlet,

the father of our knight. It is somewhat damaged and the inscription is imperfect. What is left reads as follows merchant of the Staple of Calais and Jane his wyfe whiche Rauff deceased the day of in the yer of our Lord God MV^c

The merchant's figure remains but his wife's has gone. An indent for three sons is shown, and the brass survives for six daughters. Four shields of arms have also disappeared.

The brass has been described by Mr. William Page, F.S.A., in the *Home Counties Magazine*,¹ and illustrated in the same publication. He says of the merchant "He is represented in a long gown with surplice-like sleeves edged with fur and wearing the broad shoes of the period. The six daughters are dressed in kennel shaped head-dresses and tight fitting gowns with fur cuffs. The size of the slab is 96 inches by 46 inches."

Obviously the brass was laid down by the merchant himself early in the sixteenth century with the date of his death left blank to be filled in later on. As a matter of fact he died in 1543, but Weever in his *Funeral Monuments*² (1631) cites the date as 1519 and later writers either copy this or give other variants.

Mr. W. Page, in his *Guide to St. Alban's Cathedral*, describes the deceased merchant as "ancestor of the celebrated Sarah Jennings who became Duchess of Marlborough."

But he had other claims to distinction in addition to being the progenitor of a notable family. He became Master of the Royal Mint, was proud to describe himself as merchant of the Staple of Calais, and he led an active life as landowner, magistrate and county official.

Brasses and other memorials to merchants of the Staple of Calais are not uncommon, but no distinction appears to be made between them and the Woolmen so-called. Both

¹ Vol. 1, 1899.

² p. 569.

traded in wool, but the Merchants of the Staple were not confined to that commodity, and I suggest with caution that the Woolmen were probably concerned with the inland trade while the Staplers of Calais were the privileged Merchants who held the export trade in their hands. The list of City Companies still ends up with the Woolmen — whose arms were a Woolsack—who still continue a somewhat shadowy existence; but the Merchants of the Staple have long been extinct as a trading corporation.

A notable paper¹ read before this Society by Mr. A. Bonner, F.S.A. conclusively nailed to the counter the mistaken notion that Staple Inn, the home of the lawyers from early in the fifteenth century, derived its name from the Merchants of the Staple, whose arms were not a woolsack as shown over the entrance to the Hall, but “Barry nebulée of six, argent and azure, on a chief a lion passant guardant gules.”

The Rev. H. W. Macklin, in his *Brasses of England*, has got together a list of Merchants of the Staple of Calais, and although he includes Woolmen doubts if his list is exhaustive.

In London City churches are, or were, several brasses to Merchants of the Staple, viz:—

1489—Thomas Gilbert—All Hallows, Barking.

1518—Christopher Rawson—All Hallows, Barking.

1539—Nicholas Leveson—St. Andrew, Undershaft.

whilst others occur in Beds., Bucks., Herts., Middlesex, Northants and Oxfordshire.

To Woolmen we have

1437. John Bacon, Allhallows Barking, and many others in groups mostly centring in Gloucestershire and Lincolnshire. They are represented in civilian dress, generally standing on woolsacks and sometimes accompanied by sheep. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a sheep's fell was literally a golden fleece and in county districts in Norfolk

¹ *Transactions*, L. and M. Arc. Soc., N.S. Vol. IV, Pt. II (1919).

the villagers will tell you solemnly that their church was built upon wool.

Two brasses have been noted, viz:

1552, Richard Fermer, Easton Neston, Northants, and 1558, Anthony Cave, Chicheley, Bucks., where Merchants of the Staple are designated "Esquire" and are represented in armour. Ralph Rowlet says nothing of his ancestors and may not have been of an armigerous¹ family. It would be of interest to know what the four lost shields on his brass contained, perhaps his merchants' mark and the arms of the Goldsmiths' Company and the Calais Staplers.

Without going more deeply now into the history of the Staplers, though there is a mass of material about them in the State Papers housed at the Record Office, it may suffice to say that the Staple system was a method of regulating the export trade in wool, wool-fells, tin, lead and other commodities with a view to maintaining the prices, standardizing the quality, and facilitating the collection of the King's customs, especially the last. It was claimed by the Calais Staplers that they were the oldest trading company in existence, and though the Staple towns were frequently changed from the Continent to England and from England to the Continent the Staple remained at Calais far longer than anywhere else. Here the Royal authority was absolute and there were no rights of lords in fairs and franchises which might clash with the privileges of the Staplers.

"The Merchants of the Staple," says Mr. H. E. Malden in his introduction to the Cely papers, "were practically incorporated by the Ordinance of the Staple, the joint work of the Council in 1353 and the Parliament of 1354, embodied in 27 Edward III, cc. 21 to 28.

A Mayor and two Constables were to be chosen yearly in every Staple town, having knowledge of the Law-merchant,

¹ On a painted board in St. Albans' Abbey the arms of his daughter Margery are shown quarterly of six:—1. Rowlet. 2. Knight. 3. Forster. 4. Waring. 5. Pennington. 6. Nevill.

to govern the Staple. Correctors were to be appointed to make and record bargains, two merchants aliens were to be chosen as associates in judgment to the Mayor and Constables, and six mediators in questions between buyers and sellers. All other town franchises were to give way to those of the Staples.”

The fall of Calais in 1558 brought an end to the existence of the Staple in that town, but a gateway flanked by turrets of fourteenth century date is still to be seen there, the remains of the Gild-hall of the Merchants of the Staple of Calais. It was given to the Duke of Guise as his reward for the capture of the town.

Beyond the inscription on his own brass we have little to connect Ralph Rowlet with the Staplers, though in the Record Office is a Petition in Chancery¹ addressed to Cardinal Wolsey as Chancellor (1516-1529) in which Rowlet appears as Executor of Rauff Lemyngton, Merchant of the Staple, who placed money in the treasure-house of the Parish church of Loughborough, Leicestershire, to secure an annuity for his wife who refused to seal an agreement as to the principal.

We next have to consider him in his capacity of Goldsmith contenting ourselves for the present with the observation that it was no uncommon thing for Calais Staplers to be also Mercers, Drapers or Members of other City Companies, and that there would be a peculiar propriety in a Goldsmith carrying on the Stapler's trade, as an Ordinance required the Merchants of the Staple of Calais to bring back within three months for each sack of wool exported, silver plate to the value of two marks.

Ralph Rowlet is referred to in the State papers as a Goldsmith at least as early as 1530, and we know that he was a member of the Goldsmiths' Company² because in 1551 his

¹ Bundle 560, No. 31.

² The Clerk of the Company (Mr. W. T. Prideaux) courteously informs me that besides this entry he cannot trace anything else about the Rowlets in his records. Rowlet's name, however, appears in a List of Freemen of the Company along with

son Sir Ralph was sworn and made free of the Company "by his father's copy."

We have no record that he kept a shop for the manufacture and sale of gold and silver ware, and the business he carried on was more likely that of a merchant-banker and financier. Whether he ever had a house of his own in London is uncertain, his Will merely mentioning "the household stuff in his chamber in London."

He does not appear from the records of the Goldsmiths' Company to have taken a prominent part in its affairs, though in the early Chancery proceedings¹ at the Record Office there is a stained and damaged Petition addressed to Sir Thomas More as Chancellor (1529-1532) in which Ralph Rowlet and others, Wardens of the Craft or Mystery of Goldsmiths of London, are seeking a remedy in respect of certain messuages and shops in St. Peter's, Westcheap, devised by Robert Butler and Thomas Wood, Citizens and Goldsmiths of London to the said Mystery.

Goldsmith's Hall stood then, as now, in St. Vedast's, otherwise Foster, Lane, but was a far less pretentious structure. Nevertheless it possessed a dignity of its own and one of its most prominent Masters, Sir Martin Bowes, Lord Mayor in 1545, was Rowlet's lifelong friend and official colleague. Rowlet bequeathed Sir Martin a silver-gilt cup in token of their amity and in remembrance of the days when they sat together in their ancient hall beneath the silver-gilt image of St. Dunstan, the Patron saint of the Company, and walked in procession in their crimson and violet gowns to their festival services at the neighbouring Church of St. John Zachary.

The precise date of the birth of Ralph Rowlet is only conjectural, but it probably occurred sometime in the last

that of Martin Bowes and others in 1537—see Herberts' *History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies*.

¹ Bundle 668 No. 12.

quarter of the fifteenth century. Clutterbuck in his *History of Hertfordshire* refers to him as having been "a venerable old citizen" and we know that he died in 1543. Moreover, his son Sir Ralph, as we learn from an Inquisition Post Mortem (35 Hen. VIII) was born in 1513, so if we suggest some year between 1470 and 1480 as the date of Rowlet's birth we shall perhaps not be far from the mark. He married twice—but to his wives and family we shall refer later.

We have now to speak of his relations with the Royal Mint, and his position as Master. The references in the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* to this matter are very numerous, commencing in 1516 and occurring at intervals up to the time of his death, and there are other references in the Appendices to the 4th and 8th Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

The Mint was situate in the Tower of London and its principal officers were a Master, Warden, Comptroller and King's Assayer. At this date the Master was William Blount, fourth Lord Mountjoy, the friend and patron of Erasmus, and Ralph Rowlet and Robert Amades are spoken of as his Deputies, and later on Martin Bowes is associated with them. Amades¹ was goldsmith to Cardinal Wolsey and Keeper of the Jewels to Henry VIII. He was buried like Sir Martin Bowes at St. Mary, Woolnoth.

Various entries give particulars of the coinage of gold and silver money for which they were responsible. They are required to keep accounts of the bullion received, the waste of metal in the coinage, and see to the assay of the pieces minted. The coinage of the reign of Henry VIII has been severely criticized for its high percentage of alloy, but for this the low state of the Royal Exchequer, rather than the honesty of the Tower officials was probably responsible. However, we get such entries as the following

¹ See W. Chaffers *Gilda Aurifaborum*.

“ The Mint, 1528. The answer made by Robert Amades and Ralph Rowlet, being officers and deputies under my Lord Mountjoy, of the King’s Mint within the Tower of London, to certain articles declared in a book¹ by Hewgh Walshe, Thomas Crispe and Thomas Annsham.” Apparently the answer was satisfactory as on the 6th April, 1532 we have an Indenture² between the King and Ralph Rowlet and Martin Bowes,³ Citizens and Goldsmiths of London, in pursuance of Patent dated 5th April appointing them “ Masters and Workers of the King’s monies of Gold and Silver in his Tower of London, realm of England, and Town and Marches of Calais.”

Then later, in 1534, follows a note of the Trial of the Pyx:—

“ Assay of Silver made in the Star Chamber at Westminster on 30th October, 26 Henry VIII. John Copynger being Keeper of the Exchange within the Tower and Ralph Rowlet and Martin Bowes Masters of the Mint.”

The next entry gives the comforting assurance:—

“ At which assay it was found that the money was good and of sufficient purity according to the standard.”

Further trials are reported later.

Other entries refer to Commissions to Rowlet and Bowes for the issue of coins to be current in Ireland only, and to Warrants for the conversion of sums of £2000 into Harp Groats, and the Rev. H. F. Westlake, M.V.O., F.S.A., has given me a curious entry⁴ from the Westminster Abbey muniments (I2,260, 1542-46):—

“ Accounts of money paid to Ralph Rowlet Esqr., Master of the Mint, by the Cofferer of the Royal Household and repaid when coined.”

The Worshipful Masters were of an obliging disposition and ready to assist their Sovereign in his financial troubles, for an entry of 1536, in reference to the King’s debts, gives the names of Ralph Rowlet and Martin Bowes as “ Merchants that be contented to forbear unto a longer day.” Ap-

¹ There is no book by this writer in the British Museum Catalogue.

² Close Roll, 25 Henry, VIII.

³ See Strype’s *Eccles. Memorials*, Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 401, for a curious account of Bowe’s dealings at the Mint. Bowes died in 1566.

⁴ See also Hist. MSS. Commission, 4th Report, appendix, p. 194. 4 July, 34 Hen. VIII, Indenture between Sir Edmund Peckham and Martin Bowes and Ralph Rowlet, Masters of the Mint.

parently Rowlet's duties at the Mint in conjunction with his other occupations made him chary of accepting civic honours, for we find in a Petition to the Lord Mayor of London for diminution of the expenses of the Shrievalty, dated 1535, the name of Rowlet amongst those "who have made suit to be discharged of the offices of Sheriff or Mayor by Patent or Letters Missive or by Payment of Fines."

The course of our narrative now takes us to the ancient Abbey Town of St. Alban's and its neighbourhood, especially to the village of Redbourn.¹

Alban, a Roman Officer, received the Christian faith from Amphibalus and was martyred in A.D. 286 on Holmhurst Hill where his Abbey Church now stands. Later on the relics of Amphibalus were discovered at Redbourn, a village some four miles to the north-west, and placed in a handsome shrine near that of St. Alban. One of Rowlet's sons was named Amphabel or Affabel, and I cannot help thinking that he was so-called after the popular local saint Amphibalus. An "Affabel" Partridge was principal goldsmith to Queen Elizabeth.

Rowlet in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII acquired property both at St. Albans and Redbourn as is evidenced by the Feet of Fines for Herts. and other documents now in the Record Office. A fine² was then the usual method of transferring a freehold.

In 1520 we have entries of Rowlet's acquiring messuages and lands in the Parish of St. Stephen's, in King's³ Langley and Bovingdon:⁴ in 1537 and 1542 messuages and lands in St. Albans.

¹ *i.e.* The reedy-bourne, *not* the 'road by the bourne' as the books say.

² It was an amicable agreement of a suit either actual or fictitious whereby the lands in question were acknowledged to be the right of one of the parties. It was so called because it put an end (*Finem*) not only to the Suit but also to all other suits concerning the same matter. The last part of the record was the foot (*Pedem*) of the Fine, and was engrossed and delivered to the parties.

³ *i.e.* The King's long lea as opposed to the Abbot's long lea.

⁴ *i.e.* Bofa's Down.

In 1518 the Abbot¹ and Convent of St. Albans had leased to Rowlet all tithes of grain and hay of the Rectory of the Parish Church of Redbourn which belonged to the office of Chamberlain of the monastery and half of the great barn in the manor for 41 years, and, in the following year, the tithes of the manor which belonged to the office of Almoner were leased to the same Ralph for 31 years.

The Abbot and Convent were apparently in Rowlet's debt for a considerable sum, and these transactions² indicate the financial straits the Abbey was in twenty years before the Dissolution and go to support the contention that the money difficulties of the Religious Houses helped materially to pave the way for their suppression.

At St. Albans, it is said, Richard Boreman, the fortieth and last Abbot, was chosen by the Royal interest and put in to execute the instructions of the King and Parliament. He surrendered the Abbey in 1539 and in the following year the adjoining buildings were granted to Sir Richard Lee, the celebrated Military Engineer, who straightway began their demolition. Of him we shall hear anon.

Ralph Rowlet came in for a huge share of the plunder of the Abbey lands both at St. Albans and elsewhere. I suggest that as his name appears in the Augmentation³ Accounts as a "Purchaser," the grants made to him were not free gifts but probably sales on "easy terms."

Among the Grants in May, 1540 is an entry:—

"Ralph Rowlet, senior. Grant in fee of the site, circuit etc., of the late Priory of Praye, Herts: the Manors of Praye, Sandruge, Newneham, Caldecott, Radwell-by-Baldock, Westwyke and Gorham alias Gorhambury and Apsa alias Apsabury, Herts; the rectory of Newneham appropriated to the late Monastery of St. Albans, Herts, and the advowson of the Vicarage of Newneham: the advowsons of the rectories of Radwell and Caldecott, certain acres of wood in a field called Potterswyke in Sandruge, and other woods in Sandruge

¹ V.C.H. Herts, Vol. II., p. 369.

² See *Letters and Papers of Hen. VIII*, 1541, p. 358.

³ These deal with the property of the dissolved religious houses.

called Bechebottom, Langeley wood alias Langley Grove, Wryggeswoode, Eslandegrove and Hylkendegrownde; the woods in the Parish of St. Michael in the Town of St. Albans, Herts, called Parkewoode, Brookewoode and West Wyckhille, the wood in 'le Breche,' Conyworth, the wood in Freardenfelde, Evesdenbushes and the wood in Lyttle brook Feldes, the woods in the Parish of St. Peter in St. Albans called Smalcroft sprynge, Grubbesgrove, the wood in Westhille and Hasteless Grove; the wood called Praywood in the said parish of St. Michael, and all other messuages etc., in the Parish of Sandruge which belonged to the late Monastery of St. Albans, and all other messuages in the parishes etc., of Praye, Sandruge, Newneham, Caldecote, Radwell by Baldok, Baldok, St. Michael and St. Peter in the Town of St. Alban, Shelney, St. Stephens in the Hamlet of St. Albans, Redbourn, Langley, Colney and Wheat-hampstead, Herts, or elsewhere in England belonging to the said site and manors. To hold in as full manner as Ric: Bourman, the last Abbot of St. Albans held the same:.

Also the manor of Mynchonbury, Herts, surrendered by the Abbess of the Monastery of Chatteras, Cambs

Also a tenement¹ in the Parish of St. Alphage in Philip Lane, London, and an empty parcel of land etc.,

Also the message and two virgates of land and two tofts in Wheston,² Leicestershire and the free rent of 4d. which the said Ralph Rowlet Sen' used to pay to the Crown for a tenement in Wheston which premises belonged to the late Monastery of Garadon, Leicestershire:

Also land in Theddingworth,³ Leicestershire, which belonged to the late Monastery of Soulby, Northamptonshire,

Also the rectory of Wheston, Leicestershire, appropriated to the late Monastery of De Pratis, Leicestershire.

¹ From an inquisition Post Mortem taken at the Guildhall on the 20th June, 6 Eliz., we learn that this property was part of the possessions of the lately dissolved Priory of Elsing Spital in the City of London. It descended from Ralph Rowlet to his son Sir Ralph and by him was demised to John and Mary Howell by Charter dated 15th May, 4 Edward VI. (Papers of Hen. VIII, p. 119 and 121).

² (a). Wheston or Whetstone.—see Strypes *Eccles. Memorials* Vol. III, Pt. II p. 401. Wheston Capella cancell.—Cancell: ruinam petitur culpa Magistri Radi Rowlet, manentis juxta villa S'ti Albani, qui Emit dict: capellam (ut assertitur). (b). Wheston or Whetstone—In 1555 Sir Ralph Rowlet sold this Manor with all his lands lying in Whetstone, Blaby and Countesthorpe to John Allen, Rector of Stevenage (Nichol's *Hist. of Leicestershire*, vol. II, p. 825, and Vol. III, p. 546).

³ Manor of Theddingworth, Sir Ralph Rowlet gave out of this Manor an annuity of £3 6s. 8d. for the under Usher of the School [at Leicester] due at Michaelmas and Ladyday—These lands were purchased by Sergeant Newdigate and the annuity is paid by his heirs. (Nichol's *Hist. of Leicestershire*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 511).

Also the rectory of Theddingworth, Leicestershire, appropriated to the said late Monastery of De Pratis, and the advowson etc.

Given at Westminster 12th May, 1540. (Patent 32 Hen., VIII.),"

Established in the County of Herts. as a landowner and man of substance, and well-affected to the Royal authority, Rowlet had already been given magisterial dignity. The ancient Liberty of St. Albans had a separate commission of the Peace and other privileges. In a grant of a Commission of the peace and of oyer and terminer for the Liberty in June, 1538 (Pat. 30 Hen. VIII, Westminster, 18 June) we find Rowlet's name associated with those of such prominent people as Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal, the Duke of Norfolk, Sir Thomas Awdeley,¹ the Chancellor, and Richard the Abbot of St. Albans. And in a Commission granted at Westminster on the 4th July in the following year his name again appears.

In a list of gentlemen (1543) with the numbers of horse and foot they shall furnish for the Army in Flanders the name of Rowlet is also found. He was set down as responsible for finding ten footmen.

The late innovations in religion and particularly the dissolution of the lesser monasteries had spread revolt amongst the people, and in 1536 a dangerous insurrection broke out in the Northern Counties which is usually known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. The Duke of Norfolk just alluded to was sent against the insurgents and at first by negotiations and afterwards by the execution of martial law succeeded in suppressing the rebellion. We find the name of Rowlet figuring in a list of local gentry appointed by the King to abide in their Counties and keep good order in the absence of the rest of the noblemen (1536). Local disorder found its outlet in depredations on game preserves, and in 1540 we read of the Privy Council sending letters to Rowlet and the

¹ He was also Speaker of the House of Commons. A submissive instrument in the hands of King Henry the Eighth, he does not seem to have had any special territorial connection with St. Albans. He died in 1544.

Bailiffs of St. Albans telling them to send up thither all partridge takers dwelling thereabouts with their guns and nets.

Rowlet was evidently a *persona grata* with the then all-powerful Vicar-General Thomas Cromwell, and we discover, included in the Minister's Accounts for the years 1537 and 1539 sums of "five sovereigns for my lord's New Year's gift to Ralph Rowlet." One would like to know how they first became acquainted, whether in London or at St. Albans, or in those few years after the opening of Henry's reign when Cromwell, like Rowlet, was a thriving merchant in the Continental Wool-trade.

The Duke of Norfolk already referred to, the third of his line, waxed fat on the spoils of the Monasteries and lived on very bad terms with his wife, the patron of the poet Skelton. In 1533 he had separated from her and she withdrew to Redbourn, with a very scanty allowance. Appeals of husband and wife to Cromwell and the King failed to secure a reconciliation, and the Duchess refused to sue for a divorce. Meanwhile, the Duke was living with Elizabeth Holland, "a churl's daughter," as his wife complained, "who was but a washer in my nursery." Rowlet apparently was the medium of communication between the Duke and the Duchess and the latter refers to him in letters she writes to Cromwell from Redbourn in January and March, 1539. In the former she says:—

"It is six years come Easter since my husband put me away, and I have submitted myself in three letters which you have seen, and these three years he has sent me nothing but cruel threats, and he keeps that harlot Besse Holand and the residue of the harlots that bound me and pynnacled me and set on my breast till I spat blood, and I reckon if I come home I shall be poisoned. I would rather be kept in the Tower of London for life. He will suffer no gentlemen to come at me but Mr. Conyngsby and Mr. Rowlet and a few gentle women."

And in the latter one she tells how she has sent for him, with the Archdeacon of St. Albans and Mr. Conyngsby on account of trouble over her priest and a book of juggling.

No one would envy Rowlet his task of go-between.

Other entries in the State Papers show him engaged in the ordinary duties of a magistrate. In 1538 a man named John Lion, a servant of Sir Francis Brian, was robbed and murdered. Powell and Langford, two of the persons accused of the crime are put to examination at Redbourn by Rowlet and a brother justice. Langford explained that "the breast of his shirt was bloody by blood issuing out of his nose and because that it should be no further suspected he did turn the forepart of his shirt behind."

The years of Cromwell's administration have been described as the English¹ "Terror." A host of spies was scattered broadcast over the land and thousands of secret denunciations poured into the ear of the minister. The *Confessional* had no secrets for him. Men's talk with their closest friends was repeated to him and tortured into treason. The King's divorce, his relations with Anne Boleyn, his overthrow of the Papal Supremacy, all formed ready subjects for comment and denunciation. The following entries in the State Papers for 1535 and 1536 of the doings at St. Albans locally illustrate the general position.

"25th April, 1535. The King's Marriages.

Articles objected by the Archbishop [Cranmer], not as ordinary, against Sir Thomas Kinge, Vicar of the Chapel of St. Andrews in St. Albans 14th April, 26 Henry VIII; with his answers."

"Further answers made on 25 April, Speaks of conversations he held at Supper at the house of Ralph Rowlet, Master of the King's Mint, when Thomas Skipwith² was present; also with one Sir Thomas, Curate of Hatfield, in the house of John Hikkcs, Shoemaker of St. Albans, when Will Kent said that my lord of Canterbury should have all the Pope's power in England'

24th August 1536. Interrogatories on the above Articles [Articles spoken by Dan Aswell, being Tertius Prior in the Monastery of St. Albans] put up to the Lord Privy Seal by Thomas Newman, taken before the Abbot of St. Albans, John Conyngsby, Ralph Rowlet,

¹ See Green, Hume, and other historians, and Letters and Papers of Hen. VIII Vol. 7, p. 355—Confessions: John Bentley before Mr. Rowlet.

² He was Ralph Rowlet's son-in-Law.

Edward Brocket and George Candyshe. [He answered the charges " he never spoke such words against Queen Anne and Mr. Secretary."]."

Rowlet's last and crowning distinction was his appointment to the Shrievalty of his County. Up to the ninth year of Queen Elizabeth, Herts. and Essex were conjoined for Shrievalty purposes; and in Nov., 1541 there appeared on the Sheriff roll against these Counties, in this order, the three names of John Bowles,¹ Ralph Rowlet and John Browne. The King's choice fell on Rowlet, and on the 27th of the month he commenced his duties. We have no record of his doings while in office, but the King's policy of harrying Papists and Protestants alike was causing much popular dissatisfaction and in this year a rebellion broke out in the North. Consequently the office of Sheriff must have been a position of much anxiety. Rowlet was getting on in years, he had already seen his Patron Cromwell pass to execution. On the 16th February, 1543 (34 Henry VIII) in view of his approaching end, he made his last Will² and Testament. On the 4th March following he passed away and was buried as he desired alongside his wife and son in the tomb in the Abbey church

" I bequethe,' he wrote,' my soule unto Almighty God, my Saviour, Maker and Redeemer, and to his glorious and most blisshed Mother Our Lady Saint Mary ever Virgin, and to all the holy Company of Heaven, and my body to be buried yf it chaunce to be a place convenient for buriall in our lady chapell within the late Monastery of St. Albons where my wife lyeth and my sonne. And yf the same shall be noo suche place mete for buriall then I will my body to be buried in the Chapell³ of Saint Andrewe by the discrecion of my Executors."

The Supervisor and one of the Witnesses of his Will was a priest named Richard Stondon the indent of whose brass (now lost) is still in St. Alban's Abbey though a sketch of the

¹ Sir Ralph Rowlet married his daughter Dorothy.

² See P.C.C. 17 Spert; and Inquisition Post Mortem taken at Stevenage 14th April, 1543 (*Herts Genealogist*, Vol. II, p. 87).

³ This lay on the N. W. side of the Abbey and is now demolished.

brass by John Philpot, Somerset Herald, is reproduced in Mr. W. Page's *St. Alban's Brasses*. Below the figure was a Latin inscription which has been thus translated:—

“Behold! a priest I was, now I am a worthless corpse. And shortly I shall be dust. I seek to be remembered. Stay your step who walk over me here, and utter prayers that God will raise me from hence and lead me to heaven. Richard Stondon died on the . . . day of . . . in the year 15. . . .”

The brass was evidently prepared in his lifetime and never completed. He was obviously living in 1543, the date of Rowlet's Will, for four score pounds was to be given to him to distribute at the burial etc. and he was to have for himself a silver gilt cup of the value of £5.

I have already described the memorial brass Rowlet prepared in his lifetime and left unfinished for the date of his death to be subsequently inscribed. I have now to speak of the wife interred beside him and of the nine children she bore him, though, owing to the omissions, errors and contradictions in the Heraldic pedigrees and other records it is not always possible to be certain of the facts. Probably the Wills and Inquisitions Post Mortem are safest to rely upon.

His first wife was Jane or Joan daughter and co-heir of Robert Knight of Salop. The name of the son who predeceased his father is unknown and he probably died in infancy. The other two boys were Amphabell and Ralph, and the six girls Margery, Elizabeth, Ursula, Margaret, Joan and Dorothy. Wife Joan predeceased her husband by many years, and, following the fashion of the time, he married again. In the Register of Marriage Licences granted by the Bishop of London appears the entry “Sept. 7, 1521, Ralph Rowlet of St. Matthew, Friday Street, London and Elizabeth Latham of Sandon [Herts.]. Elizabeth survived him and was handsomely provided for in his Will. He left her his dwelling house in St. Albans for life, his manor of Sandridge for life, jewels, plate, ready money, the use of his household stuff, and two of his geldings as she shall chuse.

He then makes bequests to the poor, to the High Altar of St. Michael's, for his month's mind, for prayers for his soul during the space of ten years next ensuing after his decease, provides for his children and other relatives, gives silver gilt cups to several friends and legacies to his servants including thirteen specially named.

His son Amphabell¹ came in for his copyhold lands and tenements at Redbourn and elsewhere, leases and tithes, store and implements at Gorhambury house, plate and a half share of his wearing apparel.

Amphabell had married Mary Peryent of Digswell (or Digonswell) near Welwyn—sprung from an old established County family whose memorial brasses may still be seen in Digswell Church—but they had no children. He did not long survive his father and died in 1546. His Will² is dated 28th April in that year. He leaves 3s. 4d. to the High Altar of Digonswell for tythes negligently forgotten, gives legacies to servants, his goods and chattels to his relatives on both sides, is very specific as to the disposal of his gowns and doublets, and leaves the residue of his estate to his “derebeloved and most-faithful brother Ralph.” His widow married George Horsey a few months later.

Excepting Amphabell's sister Elizabeth who does not seem to have been married, all his other sisters made suitable alliances. Joane married Thomas Skipwith of St. Albans and had issue; Margaret married Thomas Latham and had issue; Ursula married Francis Goodyer of Polesworth co. Warwick and had issue; Dorothy married Bernard Jennings, Skinner of London and became the ancestress of the celebrated Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough. Margery married John Maynard³ and had issue. Poor Margery had

¹ He seems to have lived a quiet country life and filled no public offices. In the Subsidy Rolls for 1545 he is assessed at 1s. (*Herts. Genealogist*, Vol. 1).

² See P.C.C. 22 Alen.

³ His 2nd wife was Dorothy, dr. of Sir Robert Parrott and from them descended the Viscounts Maynard. Dorothy survived her husband and married Francis Rogers as her second husband.

died young in 1547 as is testified by some funeral verses suspended near her grave in St. Alban's Abbey:—

“ Here lyes intoomb'd a woman worthie fame,
 Whose vertuos life gives honor to her name.
 Fewe were her yeares, she died in her prime,
 Yet in the Worlde fulfilled she much tyme,
 Which virtuosly she spent, providinge still
 The hungry bellies of the poor to fill.
 Unto the God of heav'n thrice ev'ry day
 With great devotion, sainte-like did she pray:
 Her pray'rs were heard, God knewe her hart's desire
 And gave her heav'n for her eternal hier;
 Where nowe she doth enjoye that endless blis
 Which her redeemer purchased for his.

Virtus in æternum vivit.”

Having mentioned all Rowlet's other children I have now to say something of his son and heir Sir Ralph Rowlet, Knight. He was born in 1513 in Leicestershire, and, as the inheritor of great wealth occupied himself in the care of his estates¹ and in County and Parliamentary business—but he was not ashamed to continue his father's connection with the City of London and in 1551 he was sworn and made free of the Goldsmith's Company by his father's copy, and we read in addition that the “ clothyng of the Goldsmiths' was worn at his wife's funeral.”

The year 1547 was a memorable one no less for England than for Rowlet. On the 28th of January, at the age of 55, King Henry the Eighth had passed to his account and was succeeded by Edward the Sixth, then only in his tenth year. The new Parliament had much to do in the direction of reform and Ralph Rowlet, who was chosen knight of the Shire for Herts., had doubtless to take a part in the remedial legislation which was immediately undertaken.

In this year he was probably knighted for in the records of the Heralds' College² appears an entry (1 Ed. VI) of a grant

¹ There are many entries in the Feet of Fines for Herts referring to him and his property in the County.

² Harl. Soc. Grants of Arms, Vol. 66, p. 209.

of arms—coat and crest—to Sir Ralph Rowlet, knight now dwelling nigh St. Alban's in the Manor of Gorhams in the County of Herts. The arms are described¹ as "Gules a cheveron coupleclosed argent with three lions gules on the cheveron"—a fairly simple coat for Tudor heraldry. No official list of knights was kept till the reign of James the first but from 1547 onwards Rowlet is always referred to as Sir Ralph in all legal, county and public records and his wife is mentioned as Lady Rowlet. In his Will he calls himself "Miles" and in the entry of his burial in the Registers² of St. Alban's Abbey he appears as "Dominus Radulphus Rowlet Eques Auratus."

Queen Elizabeth had succeeded her sister Mary on the 17th November, 1558. Rowlet's brothers-in-law Sir Nicholas Bacon and Sir William Cecil were added to the Council of the new Sovereign and on the 9th Nov. following (1 Eliz.) Sir Ralph was appointed to the Shrievalty of Herts. and Essex.

His name appears in the Acts of the Privy Council for 1564/5 in reference both to County business and to a dispute he had with his neighbour Sir Richard Lee, to whom it will be recollected the Abbey buildings had been granted. Lee was also the grantee of Sopwell Nunnery which he rebuilt and renamed Lee's Place. This property adjoined Rowlet's house near St. Alban's of which we shall have a few words to say presently. As to the quarrel we read as follows:—

"At Westminster, the 9th January, 1565.

The Master of the Rolls, Sir Hughe Pawlett and Mr. Attorney to have the examination of the quarrel grown between Sir Richard Lee and Mr. Conynsby on the one part, and Sir Ralph Rowlet on the other part, and to send for all such as they think meet to be examined for the better boulting out of the whole truth of this matter and the circumstances of the same."

The matter in question whatever it was appears to have been serious for the next entry runs:—

¹ V.C.H. Herts, Vol. II, p. 255.

² Mr. John Harris, C. E. kindly gave me copies of the Rowlet entries from his MS. copy of the Register.

“ At Westminster, the 10th February, 1565.

A letter to the Lord Keeper to remove out of the Commission of the Peace Sir Richard Lee and Sir Ralph Rowlet Knight.”

There is no mention of the incident in the life of Sir Richard Lee in the Dictionary of National Biography.

The return of Mary Stuart to the land of her fathers and her ambition to unite the Crowns of England and Scotland in her own person were the cause of the greatest anxiety to Queen Elizabeth and her Statesmen. The religious complications in both countries, the dread of a rising in England in aid of the re-establishment of the Papal power in Scotland, and the intrigues connected with Mary's ill-fated marriages, all combined to make communications between the leaders of all parties in the two countries a matter of paramount importance and the utmost secrecy. Hence the need arose for the closest watch to be kept on all who might be the carriers of despatches between the Northern and Southern parts of the island. In the Acts of the Privy Council we accordingly meet the entry:—

“ At Windsor, the 10th Sept' 1565.

Letters to Sir Ralph Rowlet [and others] to take order with the Constables, officers and Postes of St. Albans [and elsewhere] that no man be suffered to passe in poste to or from Scotlande without licence from the Queens' Majestie or the Lords, and to signify wekely hither according to the mynute in the Councell cheste.”

I have already spoken of Sir Ralph's second marriage with Margaret Cooke which took place on Monday, the 27th June, 1558. Sir Thomas Hoby tells us in his Diary that she was “ the Queen's maid ” and he married her sister Elizabeth on the same day. Rowlet was a widower when he wedded Margaret, his former spouse having been Dorothy, daughter of John Bowles of Wallington, Herts.,—a woman who seems to have been beloved by all who knew her. Her father-in-law, the Merchant of the Staple, bequeathed her a gilt cup with flowers to the value of £10 and in ready money forty marks: also a ryng of golde with an emerawde in it. Her brother-

in-law Amphabell called her in his Will his well-beloved sister and left her a ryng of fyne gold weing 1 oz.

Both wives were buried in the church of St. Mary, Staining—burnt down in the great Fire of London and never re-built—which adjoined Sir Ralph's London residence of which I shall speak anon.

Henry Machyn, the Diarist, whose business seems to have been in that department of the trade of a Merchant Taylor which we now call an Undertaker's, makes mention of the Solemnities observed at the obsequies of the two wives who died within seven months of each other. He says, with his usual disregard of spelling:—

“ 1557. The viij day of Desember was bered my lade Rowlett, the wyff of Ser Raff Rowlett, knyght, in the parryche of Santt Mare Stannyng, with ij haroldes of armes and iiij baners of emages and iiij dosen skochyons, and ij whyt branchys, and ij dosen torchys, and iiij gylt candyll-stykes, and iiij great tapers, and mony morners, and the clothing of the Gold-smythes, and ys servandes bare torchys in blake cotes.

1558. [The iij day of August was buried the lady Rowlett] wyff of ser Raffe Rowlett, knyght, in [saint] Mare Staynnynges, with ij goodly whyt branchys, (blank) Stayff torchys and iiij gylt candyll stykes, and iiij grett tapurs, with ij haroldes of armes, and iiij baners of Saintes; (blank) was cheyffe mornor, and mony The cherche and the raylles hangyd with blake, and the street and the plasse hangyed with armes and blake, and ij song masses and a sermon, and after masse to the [place] to dener, for ther was a grett dener for vene[son, fresh] solmon and fres Sturgeoun, and with mony dysse (of) fy[sh].”

These descriptions are quoted by Strype in his *Ecclesiastical Memorials*.

It will be remembered that the Manor of Gorhambury, then part of the possessions of St. Alban's Abbey, was granted to Ralph Rowlet, Senior,¹ by Henry VIII by Charter dated 12th May, 1540 (32 Hen. VIII). It descended,

¹The preface to the *Report on the Gorhambury MSS.* erroneously says it was granted to Sir Ralph Rowlet.

to Sir Ralph as his father's heir, and is said¹ to have been sold to Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1561. The *Dictionary of National Biography* (*sub voce* Bacon) gives the date of the purchase as 1550, and other writers give varying particulars, so it may be of interest to quote some entries bearing on the subject. In the *Report on the Gorhambury MSS.* published by the Historical MSS. Commission (p. 185) we read

“ The Gorhambury Title begins.

1552, 1 April 6 Edward VI. Covenant between Sir Ralph Rowlet and Edward Saunders and others.

1555, 10 Dec., 2 and 3 Philip and Mary. Indenture between Sir Ralph Rowlet and Nicholas Bacon. Sir Ralph referred to as son of Ralph Rowlet, Citizen and Goldsmith.’ In the Feet of Fines for Herts, published in the *Herts Genealogist* we read (Vol: 1. p. 306-8).

“ 1560, Easter Term, 2 Eliz.

John Eyre, Esq.; Thomas Andrew Gent., and Edmund Wyseman, Gent., Nicholas Bacon, knt., keeper of the Great Seal etc., and Ralph Rowlet, knt. Manors of Westwick, Gorams alias Gorhams alias Gorhambury; and Praye, and 40 messuages and lands etc., in Redbourn and the parishes of St. Michael's and St. Stephens: also the advowsons of Redbourn and St. Michael's.

“ 1560-1, Hilary Term, 3 Eliz.

Nich^s Bacon, Knt., keeper of the Great Seal; Ralph Rowlet, Knt. Manors of West Wyck, Goram alias Gorham, alias Gorhams, alias Goreham Bury; and Praye; and 40 messuages and land in Redbourn and in the parishes of St. Michael's and St. Stephens near St. Albans; and the advowsons of the Vicarages of Redbourn and St. Michael's.”

On the 28th July, 1566 (8 Eliz.), Sir Ralph Rowlet made his Will,² but he did not die till 20th April, 1571. He was buried in the South aisle of the Choir at St. Alban's Abbey where his father, mother, brother and sister had already been interred. He has no monument to his memory and his last wishes as expressed in his Will were disregarded.

He desired his Executors, one year after his decease

“ to remove the bodies of my dere father and mother which now be buried in the parish church of St. Albans and also my deare and

¹ *History of St. Albans* by Mr. W. Page, p. 74.

² P.C.C., 33 Holney. Sentence for Validity, 2 July 1574, 30 Martyn. Inquisition Post Mortem, 27 Eliz. No. 3. (1575) *Herts Genealogist*, Vol. II, p. 88.

well-beloved wives Dorothy and Margaret which are and be buried in the Parish church of St. Mary Stayninge in London and to bury the same bodies in the quire of the parish church of Sandridge [Herts] in a decent and seemly manner."

The Rev. C. E. Quin, Vicar of Sandridge, kindly tells me that there is no monument or other record to show that this was ever done, and the Rev. G. S. Davies, Rector of St. Alban Wood Street, (to which parish St. Mary Staining was subsequently joined) writes that he too has no record of the removal.

The Will of Sir Ralph is a lengthy document and disposes in detail of his various manors and other property amongst his relations by blood and marriage. Towards the erection of the Free School in St. Alban's he left £100. A peculiar interest attaches to another legacy of £100 to Nicholas Judd towards his education in virtue and learning. He was in all probability the young son of Hugh Judd, a member of Sir Ralph's household who figures in a nasty business set down in the *Middlesex Sessions Rolls* (Vol. 1):—

"6 Nov., 5 Edward VI [1551]. Coroners' Inquisition post mortem, taken at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Co., Middlesex, on view of the body of Hugh Heigham, Yeoman, late the servant of Thomas Warren of the said parish, Esq., there lying dead, with verdict that, on the 22nd October last past between 3 and 5 p.m. Hugh Judd, late of London, yeoman, and late the servant of Sir Ralph Rowlet, Knt., of the aforesaid parish, was in God's and the Queen's peace in the same parish, when the aforesaid Hugh Heigham "gladiis et cultellis" assaulted him and forced upon him an affray in which the same Hugh Judd, fighting in self-defence and for the preservation of his life, with his sword gave Hugh Heigham on the left side of his body a mortal blow of which he died on the said 22nd of the last month. (G.D.R. Nov., 5 Edw., VI.)."

One of the most important items in Sir Ralph's Will as bearing on a question of London topography is that dealing with his house in Noble Street, Aldersgate. He says "Also I Will and give to Sir Nicholas Bacon, Knt. Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, all my lease and terme of years that I have yet to come of my mansion house in

London Item, I will all my household stuff which now is in my house in London unto the said Sir Nicholas Bacon.”

Nothing could be more fitting than that Sir Ralph, being a childless widower, should leave the property to his distinguished brother-in-law, who had already acquired Gorhambury, and with whom he seems always to have been on friendly terms.

The history of the site on which the house was built goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. I read in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*¹ for 1860 a letter by Mr. George R. Corner as follows:—

“ Noble Street, Aldersgate. Stow, in his *Survey of London* says “ this old house was of old called Shelley House as belonging to the family of that name. Sir Thomas Shelley, Knt., was owner thereof in the 1st of Henry the Fourth. It was afterwards called ‘ Bacon House ’ because the same was newbuilt by Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Adjoining to it was the house of Sergeant Fleetwood, Recorder of London, who newbuilt it. Fleetwood was Recorder from 1571 to 1591 and many of his letters to Lord Burleigh are dated from ‘ Bacon House ’ where he died Feb., 28th, 1594.

“ In 1628 the house² was purchased by the Worshipful Company of Scriveners and was used as the Hall of that Company, but about the middle of the last century, it was sold by the Scriveners to the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers, whose Hall it became and now is. The front in Noble Street (except the entrance to the Hall) was, however, retained by the Scriveners. The back part of the house, as rebuilt after the fire of London, may still be seen from Oat Lane, and is now occupied as a glove factory.

“ In the conveyance to the Scriveners the house is stated to have been anciently called “ Shelley's Tenement,” but then “ Bacon House,” and that it had formerly been in the possession of Sir Ralph Rowlet, Knight, afterwards of Sir Nicholas Bacon, then of Christopher and Robert Barker; Nicholas Goff the elder and Nicholas Goff the younger, and subsequently of Sara Savage and George Eglyshaw, physician; and it was conveyed by Sir Arthur

¹ Reprinted in the *Gents Mag. Library Eng. Topography*. Part XI, p. 329.

² It appears to have been acquired by Charles Bostock, Scivener, in 1629. He leased it to several Scriveners in 1631, and they in 1642 transferred the property to the Company, the date of the sale to the Coachmakers is given as 1703.

Savage and Dame Sarah, late wife of George Smithies, alderman. Thomas Viscount Savage and Richard Millard to Charles Bostock, Scrivener, I presume in trust for the Company.

“ Christopher Barker and Robert Barker were Printers to Queen Elizabeth, and Mr. Ames, in his account of Christopher Barker, says that he had a printing-office in Bacon House, near Foster Lane, in which he printed Acts of Parliament etc. Christopher Barker died in 1599, and after 1588 the business was carried on by his deputies. Robert Barker, his son, who was a prisoner in the King’s Bench from 1635, died there in 1645. Probably Nicholas Goff the elder and Nicholas Goff the younger, although neither of them are mentioned by Ames, were deputies or assigns of Christopher or of Robert Barker, and I should be glad of information on that point. Among the books printed by Christopher Barker in the list given by Ames, I find the following printed at Bacon House, ‘ *Acts of Parliament* ’ in 23 Eliz., 1581; ‘ *Christian Meditations*, ’ by Theodore Beza, imprinted in Bacon House 1582; ‘ *Acts of Parliament*, 27 Eliz., 1585, imprinted in Bacon House, near Foster Lane.’

“ The Recorder, Fleetwood, is not mentioned in the Conveyance of Bacon House to Charles Bostock, and although his letters are dated from Bacon House, Stow mentions the house of the Recorder as separate from Bacon House which was rebuilt by the lord Keeper. It may be that the Recorder’s House was built upon part of the original site of Shelley House.”

Dr. H. G. Rosedale, F.S.A. in his *Materials for a History of the Worshipful Company of Coach and Coach-Harness Makers* gives further details of the site, and quotes a paper by Mr. C. L. Kingsford, F.S.A. “ On Some London Houses of the Early Tudor Period,” which appeared in Volume 71 of *Archæologia*.

In 1612, owing to a claim by the Crown, a Commission was appointed to make a partition of the property. For this purpose the Commissioners drew up a list of all the rooms with their position and dimensions, from which, says Mr. Kingsford, the plan of the house can be restored with tolerable certainty. The entrance from Noble Street led through a great gate with a wicket into a small irregular court less than 30 feet square; behind the house there was a garden 64 feet long, narrowing towards the east. On the east side of the court was the hall, 28 feet by 17 feet. On the first floor

there were two large rooms facing the garden, and a third over the gateway, besides smaller rooms. Altogether there were over 20 rooms on the two principal floors with garrets above and cellars under the hall, and kitchen offices, which were on the south. On the south side of the garden there was a walk (or cloister) with a gallery above 68 feet long and only eight feet wide, similar to the gallery which Sir Nicholas Bacon built over a walk in his country residence of Gorhambury. The first floor must have had a considerable jetty.

For other details reference must be made to the account in *Archæologia* above quoted, but one additional fact may be mentioned which was kindly given me by the Rev. H. F. Westlake, M.V.O., F.S.A., Custodian of Westminster Abbey. The Conveyance of 10th June, 1628, describes the property as abutting on the north upon a messuage late parcel of the possessions of the Abbot and Convent of Westminster; and the Abbey Great Registers (No. 3, fol. 276b) contain an Indenture of 1 and 2 Philip and Mary (1555) between the Right Worshipful Hugh Weston, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, Westminster, in the Diocese of London; and Sir Ralph Rowlet of Hallywell nigh St. Alban's in the County of Herts., Knight, concerning a messuage and garden situate in the parish of St. Olave, Silver Street, London, which apparently relates to the property in question. An earlier lease by the Abbey of the same premises, dated 5 July, 1512, makes no reference to Rowlet.

In addition to this noble mansion in London which we have just described, Sir Ralph was happy in the possession of another residence called Halywell¹ or Holywell House near St. Albans.

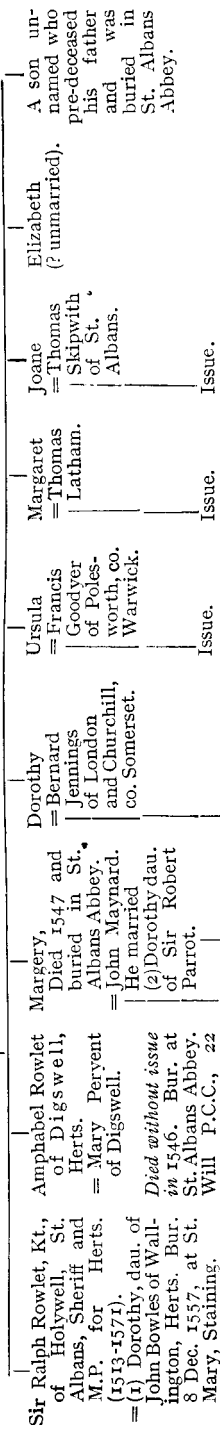
Mr. W. Page, in his *History of St. Alban's*, says Ralph Rowlet, Merchant of the Staple, "spent much money in

¹ The Holy well is said to have stood on the lawn of Holywell House. Mr. R.C. Hope's *Holy Wells of England* says nothing of the history of the well but quotes *Clavis Calendaria* which refers to St. Alban's Well which was situated on a hill-top.

PEDIGREE OF ROWLET.

Ralph Rowlet, the elder, of St. Albans, Herts., Esqr.,
 Merchant of the Staple of Calais, Goldsmith of London,
 Master of the Mint, J.P., Sheriff of Essex and Herts.,
 Died 4 Mar., 1543: buried in St. Albans Abbey.
 Will P.C.C., 17 Spert.

= (1), Jane (or Joan) dau: of Robert Knight of Salop (died before 1543 and buried in St. Albans Abbey).
 (2), Elizabeth Latham of Sandon, Herts. (alive in 1543).



Issue.
Whence came the
Sarah *Duchess*
of *Marlborough*

Issue.
Whence came
the
Viscounts
Maynard.

Arms of Rowlet—Gules a cheveron couple closed argent with
three lions gules on the cheveron.

Died without issue,
bur. at St. Albans
Abbey. Will, P.C.C.,
33 Holney and 30
Martyn.

building Holywell House at the bottom of Holywell Hill," and there Rowlet probably died. In his Will (dated 13 Feb., 1543) he said "I will that my wife shall have the custody and occupation of a chalesse, a pair of cruetts, a pair of Candlesticks of silver, one pax of ivory garnished with silver, during her life, and after her decease, I give them to my son Affabel with all other my ornaments belonging to my awlter at my house in St. Alban's."

The house is mentioned in the description of the boundaries of the town set out in the Charter of Incorporation of St. Alban's 7 Edw. VI (1553), "Mansionem Radulphi Rowlet Militis." Sir Ralph, in his Will (dated 28 July, 1566) describes himself as of "Halywell neare the towne of St. Albons." He bequeathes to his nephew Rauffe Jennyns "all the household stuff now in my mansion house called Hallywell," and "my capital messuage called Halywell and garden and park adjoining to Sir Robert Catlyn for life paying to my nephew Rauff Jennyns and his heirs one red rose at the feast of St. John the Baptist, with remainder to the said nephew."

I discovered an interesting reference to the house in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (Vol. VIII, p. 607) under the heading "God's providence in preserving the Lady Elizabeth in Queen Mary's days." The day after Sir Thomas Wyatt's rising in Feb. 1554 "Mary sent for Elizabeth, she being then at Ashbridge, Herts., sore sick in her bed and very feeble and weak of body. From Ashridge, all sick in the litter, she came to Redbourn, where she was guarded all night, from thence to St. Alban's, to Sir Ralph Rowlet's house where she tarried that night all heavy both feeble in body and comfortless in mind. From that place they passed to Master Dodde's house at Mimms and so by Highgate to the Court."

Through the Jenyns (or Jennings) family it became the birthplace¹ and residence later on of the celebrated Sarah

¹ On 5th June, 1660. The evidence for the birthplace being Holywell House and not Water End is now generally accepted as conclusive.

Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough. Mr. W. Page in his *Story of English Towns: St. Alban's*, says that she was baptised in St. Alban's Abbey and spent most of her girlhood at Holywell House or Water End and was frequently there after her marriage. It was to Holywell House that she and her husband retired after his imprisonment in the Tower, and here, on the day after their arrival, Prince George and Princess Anne of Denmark drove down to visit them. In 1714 she wrote that, however ordinary Holywell House might be, she would not part with it for any house she had seen in her travels.

The house was demolished in 1837 after an existence of some 300 years, and various dwellings in St. Alban's are said to incorporate relics of the dismantled residence of the Rowlets.