THE

LORDS OF COBHAM, THEIR MONUMENTS, AND THE CHURCH.

BY J. G. WALLER.

THE village of Cobham, four miles from Gravesend and about the same distance from Rochester, is situated on the top of one of the downs of the chalk formation which characterizes the district. It probably derives its name from this feature, as the prefix "Cob" signifies "head" or "top," and is an analogue to the German "kopf;" the familiar termination "ham" is as the German "heim," *i. e.*, home. The church is large, and consists of nave with aisles, a spacious chancel, and an embattled tower at the west end, with a beacon turret at its north-west angle. A porch with room above it, on the north side, forms the principal entrance. The oldest portion of the structure is the chancel of Early English architecture; it is finely proportioned, but of great size, when compared with the rest of the church. It appears to belong to the first part of the thirteenth century, and is lighted by five lancet windows on each side, with a lancet triplet at the east end. The present roof may have been substituted in the fourteenth century, when it appears that the chancel was in a bad state of repair, but the original roof was at a higher pitch, in agreement with the style, and some corbels remain

which aided in its support. It appears that on March 19, 1326-7, a meeting was held in the chancel by the Bishop of Rochester, "Sir John de Cobham, knight, and other parishioners being present, at which the Bishop enjoined on the Prior of Levesham, who had the chancel to his use, to put it into a fit state of repair, as well as the books and vestments, before the feast of Easter next ensuing, under a penalty of xi shillings sterling, and sitting in judgment, he fined the Prior xl shillings unless the defects were sufficiently repaired by the feast named."* If the roof was not lowered at this time, when it is clear that the chancel was not in good condition, the substantial change may have taken place at a later period, when a great deal was evidently done to the church.

On the south side are three sedilia, and a piscina of great beauty of design, which belong to the second half of the fourteenth century. Close behind are the remains of a staircase, which, from its unusual position, makes its purpose a matter of speculation. When, at the restoration of the church in 1860, this was opened, several heads of female saints, and other fragments, were discovered in it, which appear to have formed portions of a screen or reredos. A close examination will shew that the cornice of the piscina is broken away at the south-east angle, as if there had been a return at that point. Supposing it to have been so, the reredos would have been carried across the chancel from that point, leaving a vacant space between it and the eastern wall. Such an arrangement is unusual. It is clear, from the relics of statues found on the staircase, that this screen must have been of an ornate character, of the same style

* Ex. Regist. Spirit. Episcopi Roffen.

and date as the sedilia. With it the staircase would be connected, and the stairs would lead to a gallery or loft, constructed of wood, behind the top of the reredos; still indicated by mortice holes in the roof above it. The use of such a gallery might be as a rood-loft, which could not have been made in this church at the usual place, or for the exhibition of relics, the conservation of which behind the reredos, as in some continental churches, would explain the use of such a structure, independently of its beauty as a decoration.

The fragments found on the staircase shew that the reredos was of tabernacle work, enriched with figures, of different sizes, beneath canopies. Amongst them are three female heads crowned, one of these would be the Virgin Mary; another St. Katherine, one of the most popular of female saints; the third possibly St. Ursula, also popular, being of supposed British origin, and of royal parentage. There are also portions of figures of the apostles, so that, in all probability, the whole composition would have been the familiar one of Christ in glory, accompanied by apostles, martyrs, and saints. It was highly enriched, as traces of colour and gilding remain, and it must undoubtedly be referred to the munificence of John de Cobham, the founder of the College. He is spoken of as having repaired the church, "a work not a little sumptuous," and as having liberally given books, vestments, and ornaments.* The list of the numerous and costly vestments, as given in the *Registrum Roffense*, suggests a ritual of imposing character.

"Reparaciones multiplices quas dictus Johannes in eadem ecclesia fieri fecerit opere non modicum sumptuose et nonnulla alia bona, libros, vestimenta, et ornamenta per ipsum Johannem in eadem ecclesia liberaliter data," etc.—*Registrum Roffense*, p. 234.

The ancient altar slab with five crosses incised upon it, emblematic of the five wounds of Christ, still remains at the east end, and beneath it, in 1860, was found an earthen pot containing bones, possibly sacred relics.

The arch which connects the nave with the chancel was constructed in 1860, to supersede an older one, which was much smaller. The nave, which has a clerestory, is divided into aisles by four arches on each side, supported upon circular columns, the date of which, like the chancel, may be referred to the thirteenth century. Screen-work of oak, formerly enclosing a space at the east end of the north aisle, is now utilized at the west of the south aisle to form a vestry. The tower is the latest part of the structure, it belongs to the Perpendicular style, and is pierced with lofty arches on three of its sides. South of the church is the college with its ancient hall, formerly connected with the church by buildings now in ruins, which had one door communicating with the nave, and another admitting to the chancel.

Cobham church is distinguished above all others as possessing the finest and most complete series of brasses in the kingdom. It contains some of the earliest and some of the latest, as well as some of the most beautiful, in design. The inscriptions are also remarkable, and the heraldry for its intelligence is in itself a study. There is an interest also in the fact that for the most part they refer to one great family. The last memorial to them is an altar tomb of great beauty, possessing some special features. In describing these memorials, one must necessarily enter, even if briefly, into a history of the Lords of Cobham and their family, who, for centuries, took an active part

in public affairs, and whose final extinction in the seventeenth century is a remarkable illustration of the instability of worldly grandeur: but it has been obscured by a veil of fiction and romance for above two hundred years. To dispel these illusions, and thus to vindicate the dignity of history, will be one of our duties.

The family of Cobham, which took its name from the village, first comes into notice in the twelfth century, when one Serlo de Cobham was possessed of property in the parish. His son Henry purchased the manor of Cobham, with the marshes of Bulham and Swanpool, from William de Quatremere, in 10 John (1208), and it is said that he was one of the crusaders present at the siege of Acre in 1191. Of this fact, perhaps, the crest of the Saracen's head, which was borne equally by both of the families who descended from him, was a memento. He held the office of Lieutenant of Dover castle, and died 12 Hen. III (1225-6). John, his son, often called the "elder," in the first year after his father's death made a division of the estates with his two brothers. In 21 Hen. III (1236-7) he was Keeper of Rochester castle, an office of importance, which, it will be seen, was often held by his descendants. In 26 Hen. III (1241-2) he was Sheriff of Kent, and was one of the Justices Itinerant from 1244-1246, being also a Justice of the Common Pleas from Michaelmas 1244 to 1251, in which year he died. He purchased the manors of Cowling and West Chalk in 1241. He was twice married, first to Maud, daughter of Warine Fitz-benedict, secondly to Joan, daughter of Hugh Neville (one of a Hertfordshire family), widow of John de la Lynde of Bolbroke, Suffolk, from whom descended

the Sterborough branch. She survived her husband and was living in 1275.

John, his son by the first wife, distinguished as "the younger," at his father's death was still in his minority, and in ward to his uncle Reginald. His first public office seems to have been as sheriff of his county, 44 Hen. III (1258-59), which he continued to hold until 1261. He was at the siege of Rochester castle in 1264 under the Earl of Leicester, the celebrated Simon de Montfort, in the great struggle between Henry III and the barons. This fact gives us a little insight into his character, for it shews that he took the constitutional side upholding the principles of the great charter, as against the crown, a precedent which we shall find followed by his great-grandson. And it may be yet more worthy of remark as the fortunes of Montfort were on the wane. The king had been ravaging the county of Nottingham, where his opponents had many manors. Upon this Montfort resolved to besiege Rochester and its castle, held for the king by John, Earl Warrenne. The bridge and part of the town had been taken, when Montfort heard that the king had come to London, upon which he left the siege and quickly returned. The king, however, leaving London aside, took the castle of Kingston, and then set out for Rochester, where he defeated and put to flight those who still besieged it.*

In the 52 and 55 Hen. III (1267-8 and 1270-1) he was one of the Justices, both Itinerant and of the Common Pleas, and had £40 granted to him yearly for the office, in which he continued until 1270; in the following year he was a Justice of the King's

* Matt. Paris.

Bench. In 1273-4 (2 Edw. I) he was Justice Itinerant in the county of Middlesex, and was made one of the King's Serjeants-at-Law in 1275, when he again appears as Justice of the King's Bench, and was appointed one of the Barons of the Exchequer. In 8 Edw. I, 1279-80, he was appointed Constable of the castle and city of Rochester for life. Yet he remained on the list of judges, as, in the following year, he was on the Common Pleas and also a Baron of the Exchequer. Sixteen years now pass away when he re-appears as taking part in the march into Scotland in 1297-8. This was the expedition which ensued upon the revolution headed by Sir William Wallace, and which terminated in the victory of Falkirk; want of provisions to supply his army compelled the king to return to England, and Sir John scarcely survived much more than a year after. He died in March, 1300, at the age of seventy-one years, within three weeks after he had been summoned, with other judges, to a Council at a Parliament at Westminster;* perhaps his last public service. It shews us how much he was esteemed by his sovereign, when we find that on the day of his burial in Cobham church, a solemn mass was said, for the repose of his soul, before Edward, the king's son, at his chapel at Westminster.† After his death his executors had a dispute with Richard de Gravesend, Bishop of London, as to the delivering up of the castle of Rochester. He was twice married,

* Parliamentary Writs, vol. i., 540.

† Oblaciones participate } 27 die Marcii in oblationibus participatis ad missam celebratam in presencia Domini Edvardi filii Regis in capella sua pro anima Domini Johannis de Cobeham defuncti et eodem die sepulti.

Liber Quotidianus Contrarotularis Garderobæ 28 Edw. I.

first, *cir.* 1258, to Joan, daughter of Sir Robert de Septvans, and one of the coheirs of Rose, widow of Stephen de Penchester, who died before 1298, secondly, to Methania, probably of a Hertfordshire family named Kirkeby, who was still living in 1301-2. His tomb in Cobham chancel has long lost its brass, but, in 1574, a small portion still remained, for in Glover's MS. of that date, in the College of Arms, it is thus noted: "The stone whereon appeareth the place where the brasse of an auncyent knight hath ben wth a lyon under his foot and at the upper end the arms of Cobham with the lyons and the lyk on his brest in a great scucheon of brass." This shews that the character of the memorial was probably similar to that of Sir John Daubernoun, at Stoke Dabernon, Surrey (1277), and the "great scucheon of brass" was the shield, the only part remaining. The stone is still preserved, but its surface has been long decayed. He was the first who changed the Cobham arms, from *gules*, on a chevron *or*, three fleurs-de-lis *azure*, by substituting for the latter three lions rampant *sable*.

We have now arrived at the time in which the memorials begin in Cobham chancel. The fine brass which lies next to the slab just mentioned commemorates Joan de Septvans, first wife of Sir John de Cobham, of whom we have just spoken.* In

* The identification of this monument as that of Joan de Septvans is now complete, but it has been rendered a matter of difficulty from its having been attributed (by Thynne, in his history of the family, published by Holinshed in his Chronicle) to Joan Beauchamp, the first wife of John de Cobham, second Baron, who died after 1343. Gough follows this authority without question, being little critical respecting dates of effigies, as established by costume. As regards this latter point, the identity of character, both in execution and style, with our earliest brasses renders it

character the brass agrees with the earliest known in England, the inscription being arranged around the verge, and composed of large Longobardic capitals, each letter distinct and separately inlaid, between narrow fillets, all of brass. The figure is in a long loose robe, called a "bliaus," having loose sleeves, covering a closely fitting garment, of which but the tightly buttoned sleeves are shewn. A veil is over the head, and the throat and neck are concealed by the wimple or gorget. The garland or coronal, usually made of fine beaten gold, is shewn above the forehead. There is a pedimental canopy, with slender shafts, and it is the only one of this description which has been preserved. The monument had four coats of arms, but there is only record extant of two, viz.,

impossible to refer it to so late a date as 1343. The brass to Margaret Camoys in Trotton church, Sussex, is identical with this in character, and is probably by the same hand; the date of her decease was 1310. The position of the monument is also opposed to the theory that it represents Joan de Beauchamp, for it is against all precedent for a husband to be buried on one side of a chancel and his wife on the other, especially when the intervening space was entirely free.

We have evidence, from a pedigree in the College of Arms, that John de Cobham was buried on the *north* side of Cobham chancel, and also that he was the first who used the lions in his arms. (Ph. Δ 57b, 59b.) This testimony to his interment, and also to the remains of the brass extant in 1574, determines that the now blank and much worn slab, by the north side of that under consideration, is the tomb of John de Cobham. It bore the three lions which he was the first to adopt in place of the fleurs-de-lis. He may have used the earlier shield as his "sigillum secretum," as it appears in documents, 16 Edw. I (1287-88), yet as early as 49 Hen. III (1264-65) he bore the lions on the chevron. The brass to "Dame Jone" lies by *his* side; in 1574 it had still remaining the arms of Cobham, with the lions, and the same with a label of cadency marking the eldest son. Now there were but four

Cobham, *gu.* on a chevron *or*, 3 lions rampant *sab.*, and the same with a label of 3 points. The first represents her husband, John de Cobham, the last her son Henry, through whom doubtless both monuments were made.

✠ DAME : JONE : DE : KOBEHAM : GIST : ISI : DEVS : DE : SA ALME : EIT : MERCI : KIKE : PVR : LE : ALME : PRIERA : QVARAVNTE : IOVRS : DE : PARDOVN : AVERA.

This is a very common formula of that period, and the length of indulgence from canonical penance, to all who should pray for the soul of the deceased, is generally fixed at "40 days." It is rarely met with on tombs after the end of the fourteenth century; but, it is needless to add, that the abuse of the doctrine of indulgences was a primary cause of

male members of the Cobham family entitled to bear these arms. Of these, two have still their brasses in Cobham chancel, viz., John second, and John third Baron; one, Henry first Baron was not here buried; the fourth is John de Cobham "the younger." The reasons stated above, are fatal to the attribution of the memorial to Joan Beauchamp, who was probably not buried at Cobham at all, but may have been at Stoke-under-Hamden, her birth-place; or in Rochester cathedral, if the arms "vaire," from a tomb there, though obviously incorrectly attributed in Glover's MS., associated with the Cobham arms, represent Beauchamp of Somerset. (*Vide* Roll of Arms, Parl. Writs, i., p. 410). The position of the brass by the side of John de Cobham's now denuded slab, and its style, completely in accord with the date assigned, leave no doubt that it represents Joan de Septvans, his first wife. The arms with the label would then be for Henry, her son, and indicate that he placed this monument to his mother's memory, as, doubtless, he did that to his father, who died so soon after; both brasses were probably executed at the same time. In fact, this label cannot possibly be accounted for in any other way, for if the theory of Joan de Beauchamp is held, then it would follow that the memorial was put up by John de Cobham, "the Founder," which the costume and style prove to be impossible.

the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Henry, eldest son of John de Cobham, by Joan de Septvans, was forty years old at his father's death, and was called "the younger," to distinguish him from his uncle Henry of Roundall. Like his father, he seems to have had a busy and active life, not only in ordinary public affairs, but also in those of Kent. He was in the expedition to Scotland, in 28 Edw. I (1299-1300) and on the 14th of January, 1304, was made, like his father before him, Constable of the castle and city of Rochester for life. In the 34th of Edw. I (1305-6), he was appointed to the still more important offices of Constable of the castle of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports. It is clear that he must have been held in high esteem, for such honours to have followed each other so rapidly.

Edward II now ascended the throne, and in the fourth year of his reign (1310-11) another expedition against Scotland took place, in which Henry de Cobham served; and in the same year he was made Justice of Oyer and Terminer in Kent. The following year was marked by the prosecution and dissolution of the Order of the Templars, and he was appointed custodian of all their lands in Surrey and Sussex (except the manor of Wucherflet), to hold them during the King's pleasure. He was summoned to Parliament as Baron from January 8th, 1313, until January 22nd, 1336, being thus the first Baron of Cobham. As Constable of the castle of Rochester, he received into his custody Elizabeth, the wife of Robert Bruce, King of the Scots, whose descendants, the Dukes of Lenox and Earls of Darnley, became, three centuries afterwards, the possessors of his own Cobham estates. This illustrious lady was taken

prisoner by Aymer de Valence, in the island of Cantire, in 1307, soon after Robert Bruce had been crowned king; and, a short time after, his daughter and sister also fell into Edward's hands. Christopher de Seyton, the husband of the latter, was executed as a rebel, the others were sent to England, with orders to be properly treated, and they were severally disposed of in convents. They were ungenerously kept in long captivity, and our records tell us of their being shifted from one place to another. After six years, a mandate was issued, March 12, 1313-4, to the Sheriffs of London, to conduct Queen Elizabeth Bruce, then dwelling in the convent of Barking, to Rochester castle, to remain under the safe custody of Henry de Cobham, the Constable. He was to be paid twenty shillings a-week for her maintenance, out of the issues of his bailiwick.* She was at fit times to be allowed to walk out, within the castle or the priory of St. Andrew, in safe custody, so that they might be secure of her body; and by a further instrument, directed to the Constable, she was allowed to have in attendance upon her Elena Edger, John de Claydon, Samuel de Lynford, and William de Preston. Later in the same year, July 18, the prisoners were conveyed to York, and thence to Carlisle. This was immediately after the defeat of the English at Bannockburn, which took place on June 14, and possibly all the prisoners were then liberated. In the following year Henry de Cobham was, with others, directed by the King to receive certain Cardinals landing at Dover.

In 1314, Lord Cobham was again appointed Constable of Dover castle and Warden of the Cinque

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. ii., pt. 1, p. 648, *et seq.*, wherein she is indifferently called also Isabella, another form of same name.

Ports; it is therefore clear that his previous tenure was limited. War with the Scots still continuing, he was ordered to remain in the north during the winter campaign of 1315. In the four following years he was again summoned to do service against the Scots. But whether these services were all fulfilled in person is perhaps uncertain, as he was Sheriff of Kent 9 Edw. II (1315-16), and Constable of the castle of Canterbury. In the next year, he and his brother James had custody of the vacant See of Worcester, to which Thomas de Cobham, their brother, was consecrated, on the 22nd of May. In 12 Edw. II (1318-19) he was Justiciary for gaol delivery at Maidstone, so that he could scarcely have been in the north at the same time; there is a writ four years later discharging him from all further attendance. In that year, (1323-4) 17 Edw. II, he was made Governor of the castle and honour of Tunbridge, and guardian of all the lands forfeited by the King's enemies in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.

A struggle was then going on between a confederation of the Barons and the King, who endeavoured to rule independently of Parliament. At the head of the Barons was the Earl of Lancaster, (equally with the King a grandson of Henry III), who for some time was all powerful. Gaveston, the king's favourite, was exiled, and, having returned, was put to death. Despenser, who succeeded him in the King's affections, was also sent out of the kingdom. At length, however, Lancaster's party waned in strength, and he was defeated at Boroughbridge, March 16, 1322; taken prisoner, and put to death, at Pontefract, with many of his adherents. Lord Cobham seems to have remained firmly on the side of the King, but several

writs are addressed to him and others on the subject. In one (1321) he is ordered to co-operate in quelling disturbances, and to refrain from attending illegal assemblies, and particularly those of the "Good Peers."* In the following year he is commanded to raise as many soldiers as he can, and march with them to the King, to muster at Coventry for service against the adherents of the Earl of Lancaster; he may therefore have been present at the battle of Boroughbridge. He presided at Canterbury when Bartholomew, Lord Badlesmere, was arraigned as an adherent of the Earl of Lancaster, April 14, 1322. Badlesmere was condemned to be drawn for his treason, hanged for robberies and homicides, and beheaded for his flight; as he was Seneschal of the king, the latter ordered his head to be spiked on the gate of the city of Canterbury.† His fate was perhaps hastened by the insult offered to Isabella, the Queen, at his castle of Leeds, where hospitality was refused to her by Lady Badlesmere.

War between France and England was again imminent, and in 1324 Lord Cobham was ordered to hold himself in readiness for service in Acquitaine, and to raise all the forces in his power in addition to those contingent upon his tenure. During this and the following year, service in France was talked of, and preparations were made, Lord Cobham being appointed leader of the detachments from the county of Kent. This array was, however, suspended July 10th, 1325. In the following year, he was appointed to blockade the shores of the Thames, from

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. ii., pt. 2, p. 18; also Parliamentary Writs.

† Parliamentary Writs, vol. ii., p. 292.

Rainham and Rochester, to prevent the landing of emissaries from France. This was no doubt occasioned by the intrigues of Isabella, the Queen, whose landing afterwards in the Orwell was the forerunner of those changes which were fatal to the King.

In the succeeding reign, 1332-33, he received a mandate to restore certain lands and tenements belonging to John Colpeper, an adherent of the Earl of Lancaster, shewing that many of the acts consequent on the Earl's defeat were now reversed. In the following year, he and his son John were appointed Constables of the castle and city of Rochester jointly for their lives. He was now seventy-three years of age, and though he lived six years longer no further mention of him occurs in our records. He died at Stoke-under-Hamden in Somersetshire, August 25, 1339, and was there buried. His funeral was attended by his son John, details of whose journey and expenses were still extant in 1574. He married Maud, daughter of Eudo de Moreville, and widow of Matthew de Columbers.

On the death of Henry, Lord Cobham, John, his eldest son, succeeded to the barony, and some dispute took place, between him and his brother Thomas, as to the distribution of the property, especially in relation to the Manor of Chissebury and advowson of Pipard's Cliff. During his father's life he had been chosen knight of the shire for Kent, in 6 Edw. II, 1312-13, and also in the last year of that reign, when he received a writ for expenses during attendance in Parliament for 67 days, £26 16s.* Again in the 4th Edw. III (1329-30) and in the 9th (1334-5). In the latter

* Parliamentary Writs, vol. ii., 365.

year he was made Admiral of the King's fleet from the mouth of the Thames westward, and next year Justice of Oyer and Terminer in the county of Kent. He was summoned to a council, September 12, 1342, on the eve of the King's departure for Brittany, and in the following year was ordered, among others, to furnish men-at-arms and archers for service abroad, where the King had already begun his campaign. As Constable of Rochester castle, he received mandates respecting the Scottish prisoners retained there. In 1347, one Duncan Macdowell and his son are mentioned, whom, in the same year, he delivered into the custody of John de la Dale.* He had a summons to Parliament as Baron, November 24, 1350, which was continued up to March 15, 1354-5. In the last year of his life (1355) his name occurs on the council, together with Sir Reginald de Cobham of Sterborough, for debate on the propriety of submitting the disputes with France to the arbitrament of the Pope, who seemed at all times anxious to put an end to the long strife between the two countries.†

Of his special military services there is no record, yet he probably took part in the active movements of the early portion of Edward III's reign, for he would hardly else have had conferred upon him the high military dignity of a banneret, in the last year of his life, when an annuity of 100 marcs per annum, out of the issues of the county of Norfolk, was bestowed upon him to support that dignity.

He married twice: first, Joan, the daughter of Sir John Beauchamp of Stoke-under-Hamden, in 1314, who was alive in 1343; secondly, Agnes, daughter

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., part i., pp. 7, 19,

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii., part i., p. 100,

of Richard Stone of Dartford. He died February 25, 1354-55.

The brass of this John, second Baron Cobham, belongs to a series of which very few are now extant. The hand of the artist is strongly defined, especially in the treatment of the features, as seen in that of the third Baron, John "the Founder," and that of Thomas, his uncle. Only two others similar to these are known; one is at Mereworth in this county, the other at Drayton Beauchamp, Bucks. The armour, that belonging to the age of Poitiers and Crecy, is one of transition, when the interlaced mail was overlaid with plate. The mail is of that description called "banded," and the thighs are defended by pourpoint.* The inscription is very remarkable, and no other exactly like it is known. It begins by asking the by-passers to pray for the soul of John de Cobham, "the courteous host," who passed away on the morrow of St. Matthew, 1354 (Feb. 25, 1354-55), when the Almighty grants that he dwell with him, and it ends thus:—"those mortal enemies he made lie low."

✠ Vous qe passez icy entour Priez pur lalme le cortays viaundour Qe Johan de Cobham auoit a noun Dieux luy face uerray pardoun Qe trepassa lendemayn de seint Mathi Le puisaunt otrie a demorer oue *ly* *En lan de* grace Mil ccc l qatre Ces enemis mortels fist abatre.†

The "cortays viaundour," which I have translated "courteous host," is, as regards the second word, an expression perhaps literally meaning "meat

* See a paper on the brass of Sir Roger de Northwode in Minster church, Shepey.—*Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. ix.

† The italics here, and in all other instances, shew what words were wanting in 1837, and have been since restored.

giver" from the French "viande," and is an extremely interesting relic of the language then used by the nobles, which was soon to give way to the developed English tongue, as seen in the poems of Chaucer. The virtue of hospitality is often spoken of on monuments, and on that of Sir Reginald de Cobham, 1402, second Baron Cobham of Sterborough, in Lingfield church, Surrey, we find it expressed by "dapsilis in mensis."* Still later at St. Mary's Cray, Kent, on a brass to Richard Manning, 1605, the same idea occurs in these words—

"Houskeper good and joyed moch to welcom frem (*stranger*) and frynd."

The termination is extremely curious. The "mortal enemies" are Hell, Sin, and Death, and the allusion carries us back to ancient customs observed in the early ages of Christianity, remains of which continued, in many places, long after the Reformation. The deceased was considered as a conqueror, and was conveyed to his rest with songs and hymns of triumph. Thus it is that Shakespear makes Horatio say at Hamlet's death—Act v, scene 2.

"Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

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* This expression is used, 1291, in describing the character of Thomas de Inglethorp, Bishop of Rochester. "Hic vir laudabilis mitis et affabilis, jocundus et hilaris, ac in mensa *dapsilis*, locetur cum beatis. *Edmundi de Hadenham annales.*"

It would be unbecoming of the writer, whilst alluding to the hospitality of the past, not to recognize that this traditional virtue still rests at Cobham Hall. One cannot but acknowledge the noble hospitality accorded to the Society by the Earl of Darnley, on July 27, 1876, so unostentatiously given and so gracefully carried out.

The same idea occurs also in "Cymbeline," Act v, scene 2. Arviragus, speaking of Imogen, says, "Sing him to the ground." Many early Christian writers record the custom.

Before we continue the genealogical descent, it will be as well to turn to those monuments which would interfere with our narrative, and which strictly follow in chronological order. The first of these is to Thomas de Cobham, brother to John, second Baron, of whom we have been speaking. The brass itself is so identical in style (being by the same hand) with that of John de Cobham, "the Founder," that a description is reserved for the latter. The inscription is in French, similar in character to the last:—

✠ *Vous qe* par icy passetz pur lalme Thomas de Cobham prietz Qe trespassa la *veille seynt Thomas le Apostre Tout puisaunt luy* ottrie ademorer en companie le vostre *en lan de grace M*l*ccc lx Septisme le haut Trinite luy soyt defendour denfern abisme.*

There were two coats of arms, *gules* on a chevron *or*, three crescents *sable*. The crescents formed a difference adopted by him in distinction from the main stem, and thus mark the Cobhams of Beluncle, and they were also adopted by Reginald, his brother, the Rector of Cowling, only differenced by an annulet *argent* in chief on the dexter side.

Of Thomas de Cobham there are but few notices; and the dispute with his brother about the division of their father's property has already been mentioned. His will, made on the day of his death, Dec. 20, 1367, desires his body to be buried in the church of St. Mary Magdalen, at Cobham, and bequeaths 100s. to the master and chaplain of the college; a dun coloured horse to his nephew, John, Lord Cobham;

to Reginald, his brother (priest), a chesnut horse; to Robert Roos, a gown with a furred border; and to John Pryk, a long cloak of various colours. He made his wife, Juliana, his executor, and the remainder of his goods were to be divided among the poor.

The next brass in point of date is that of Margaret de Cobham (1375). This was the most mutilated of the series, as it had lost all the canopy, arms, inscription, and a portion of the left arm of the figure. The latter is in a closely fitting corset, buttoned in front, and the skirt is comparatively short. A dog lies at the feet. The head has that curiously formed cap with veil, so prevalent at this time. A point to be remarked, in this figure, is the absence of the widow's costume, usually represented on the brass of any lady who had once been in that estate. The inscription ran thus:—

✠ *Icy gist dame Margarete de Cobeh'm iadis feme a Will' Pympe chiualier qe morust le iiij jour de Septembre lan de grace Mil. ccc lxxv de qi alme dieu pur sa pite eit mercy. Amen.*

This lady was the daughter of Henry de Cobham, first Baron, and sister of the two last mentioned. She was married twice:—first, to Matthew Fitzherbert, secondly, to Sir William Pympe.

Next to hers lies the brass of Maud, sister or daughter of Sir William Pympe, and wife of Sir Thomas de Cobham of Roundall (1380). It shews the figure of a lady, in closely fitting gown, having a flounce curiously defined, and over all a mantle. Her head-dress is of similar description to the last, and a dog is at her feet. She stands beneath a canopy, and the inscription is on a fillet round the verge;

most of it was lost, as were the coats of arms and portions of the canopy.

✠ Icy gist dame Maude de Cobeh'm qe *fust la feme Sir Thomas de Cobeh'm qe deuia le ix jour de aueril lan de grace M'ccc lxxx* . . . .

Deviating now, for the sake of convenience, from the chronological sequence, we will pass from the series in the chancel to a brass in the north aisle, which commemorates Reginald de Cobham, the priest, son of Henry, first Baron. It is of elegant design, and represents a priest in a cope, almuce, and surplice, standing beneath a canopy or tabernacle, which is supported on a stem, whereon was this inscription: *Orate pro anima Reginaldi de Cobham clerici.** Nearly all this stem, the head of the figure, and the arms, were lost. These latter, two in number, on each side of the stem, were Cobham of Beluncle, viz., *gules*, on a chevron *or*, three crescents *sable*, an annulet *argent* for difference.

This Reginald must have been a busy man, a type of the priest of family connections with a good look-out for the honours of his order. He was educated at Oxford; and if the same person is meant when the name occurs in documents at this time, and there was no other "Reginald" of the family then in orders, he must have lived on to a great age. So early as 1332-3 he is spoken of as Parson of Cowling, and thirty years later his name is of frequent occurrence, in connection with the College of Cobham. He was one of the executors of his brother Thomas, whose bequest to him has already been mentioned.

* The authority for this reading and for all restorations both of arms and inscriptions, shewn in italics, is Glover's MS. in College of Arms, dated 1574. Collated with Collections of Nicholas Charles, Landsdowne MS. Brit. Mus. 874.

We find the name as Parson of Northfleet in 1380, as well as Canon of Salisbury. In 1399 he is "canonicus apud Wingham et Sarum," and he was also Rector of Chartham. He died in 1402, and could not have been less than ninety years of age. The numerous deeds in which his name occurs shew him to have been a most active man of the world, and as a *clerk*, he, doubtless, had much influence with his family.

Returning now to the chancel, we notice a small brass bearing the demi-figure of a knight, holding in his hand the commemorative inscription, with a shield of arms beneath: *gules*, on a chevron *or*, three cross crosslets *sable*, in dexter chief a star *argent* for difference. The inscription is as follows:—

> Rauf de Cobham de Kent Esquyer
> Qe murrust le xx jour de Januer
> lan de grace mill cccc ij gist icy
> Dieu de sa alme eyt mercy.

The arms are those of Cobham of Chafford. Ralph de Cobham was descended from Thomas, third son of Henry de Cobham, of Roundall. His will gives nearly all we have of him that is of any interest. He appointed his wife Elizabeth, and William Tannere, Master of the College of Cobham, with two others, to be his executors, and bequeathed to his nephew, William, some of his armour with swords, jackes, and defensible sloppis. We shall see presently that he was included in an elaborate settlement of the estates.

Having dismissed these brasses which intervene, and break the continuity of our history, we now come to the story of John de Cobham, "the Founder," third Baron of Cobham; the last male of his line, and in many ways the most interesting, if not the most con-

siderable person amongst the Cobham barons. It is not often that we can gather from the dry records of the past, consisting but of meagre outlines of duties or offices, sufficient materials for the delineation of character. In this case, however, we can deduce, with some show of probability, the general disposition of the man. The founding of Cobham college; the reparation of the church with rich adornments, part of which may still be seen and bear out the word "sumptuous," which was applied to it; a share in the building of Rochester bridge; and even the construction of Cowling castle, made, as announced on the tower, still remaining, for the defence of the country; are public acts which must be viewed in the spirit of the time. In the part which he took in Parliament, he represented the wisdom and the power of the barons of England, and their eminent services in the cause of constitutional freedom.

The poet Gower (who subsequently chose him to be one of the executors of his will), has left us a picture of this Lord Cobham in some Latin lines,* which we give in a note below. "He was worthy, patient, pious, and liberal, provident and just, strong in the virtue of manners; he was not an indirect, but a true friend of the kingdom." Let us now enter into the details of his career, as far as we can gather them.

He was the eldest son of John de Cobham, second baron, by Joan Beauchamp, his first wife. The first

* Unus erat dignus, patiens, pius atque benignus
Providens, et justus, morum virtuti robustus
Non erat obliquus, regni sed verus amicus
Hunc rex odivit, in quo bona talia scivit
Ut dicunt mille, dominus Cobham fuit ille.
(Holinshed's *Chronicle.*)

information we obtain of him has relation to his marriage, which must have taken place as early as 1332-3, if we can trust the correctness of a document by which his father concedes to him and Margaret Courtenay, daughter of Hugh Earl of Devonshire, certain lands, doubtless as a settlement.* By this union he became allied to one of the noblest families of Europe, to whose history Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," has dedicated a whole chapter. Her mother was Margaret daughter of the Earl of Hereford, an adherent of the Earl of Lancaster, who was killed at Boroughbridge in the early part of the action. John de Cobham, the father, appears to have entered into a covenant with Hugh de Courtenay, in 1345, to entail the manor of West Chalk on his son John, Margaret his wife, and their heirs.†

Ten years later a receipt was given to John de Cobham, by his father-in-law, for a year's maintenance of his wife. The sum paid was £15. 6s. 8d. "for the sojourn and other necessaries of Margaret de Cobham our daughter his companion."‡ Perhaps

* *Collectanea Topographica*, vol. vii., p. 323.

† *M.S. penes* F. C. Brooke.

‡ Receipt given by Hugh Earl of Devonshire to John de Cobham for payment of a year's maintenance of Margaret his wife. April 8, 1355 :—

"Conue chose soict a totes gentz que no' hughe de Cortenay counte de Deueneschire auons receu de Joh^{a}n de Cobeh^{a}m chiualier filtz mons' Joh^{a}n de Cobeh^{a}m de Kent chiualier quynsze lyures sys south & oyct deniers pur le soiourn & aultres necessaries Margarete de Cobeh^{a}m n're fylle sa compaigne del terme de pasche darroyn passe come pleyneme't apiercot p' endentures entre no' feates. Des queaux quynsze lyures sys south & oyct deniers no' no' tenoms pleyneme't estre paietz et lau^{a}nct dict Joh^{a}n quytes p' icestes no' presentes lectres daquytaunce du n're seal enseales. Done a Colecomb le viij^{me} iour de April Laan du regne notre sogno' le Roi Edward teroys' puis le conqueste vynct & neofy'sme." (*Penes* F. C. Brooke.)

John de Cobham was absent with the army in France, where Edward III, exasperated at the double dealing of Philip, had begun an active campaign.

On his father's death in 1355 he became Lord of Cobham, and was first summoned to Parliament on September 20, in that year. In 1359 he was in the expedition into France,* consequent on the refusal of the French to assent to the treaty made by their King, John, then a prisoner in England. So large an army, and one so well appointed, Edward III had not before assembled. If Froissart is to be believed, and he seems to have been an eye-witness, it must have been popular with the nobles, for he says, "Each man got himself ready as fast as he could; there was not knight, squire, or man of honour, from the age of twenty to sixty years, that did not go, so that almost all the earls, barons, knights, and squires of the realm went to Dover (the place of assembly), except those whom the King and his council had ordered to remain to guard his castles," etc., etc.† On the King meeting them at Dover, he addressed them on the expedition, and affirmed that he would not return without an honourable peace. With loud, approving cheers, to the cry of "God and St. George," the army embarked, and arrived at Calais on October 30, 1359.

On the next morning it set forth, and the historian commends the brilliant array, the discipline, and above all, the immense baggage train, which occupied two leagues in length; "it consisted of upwards of five thousand carriages, with a sufficiency of horses to carry the provisions for the army, and those utensils

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., part 1, p. 7.

† Froissart's *Chronicles*, Johnes, 1844, vol. i., p. 269.

never before accustomed to be carried after an army, such as hand-mills to grind their corn, ovens to bake their bread, and a variety of other necessary articles." Siege was laid to Rheims, but the King abandoned it impatiently, and wasted all the country up to the gates of Paris. Ultimately, however, the Treaty of Bretigny was concluded on the 20th of October, 1360, at Calais. King John of France then returned home in freedom, a large number of the nobility of France, including several of royal blood, becoming hostages for him.

Sir John returned to England with the rest of the army, and we next hear of him as founder of the chantry or College of Cobham, in 1362. It consisted of five priests, or chaplains, one to be master, or warden, whose duty it was to say masses for the repose of the souls of Sir John Cobham's ancestors, for the good estate of himself and family while living, and for all Christian souls. For this purpose he gave the manor of West Chalk, with one messuage and one toft in Cobham, 250 acres of marsh called Rewe Marsh and Slade Marsh, lying in the wardship of St. Werburgh, Hoo, as well as an annual rent of twenty quarters and three bushels of barley, payable by divers of his tenants in Chalk.

The provisions of the treaty of Bretigny were not fulfilled, as they were most distasteful and humiliating to the French. But the royal hostages, the Dukes of Orleans, Anjou, Berry, and Bourbon were allowed to go to Calais, with a view of obtaining their ransom. In 1363, the Duke of Anjou and others broke their parole and escaped, so that about that time Lord Cobham was sent to Calais to take charge of the hostages, through whose defection King John

returned as a prisoner to England, where he died. Three years afterwards, war was renewed (on occasion of King Charles summoning the Black Prince to do homage for Guienne and Acquitaine), and during the years 1366 and 1367, Lord Cobham was again in France engaged in the war. In the latter year, he was sent ambassador to Rome, to obtain from Pope Urban V, the appointment of William of Wykeham to the see of Winchester.* In the same year he obtained a grant of a market and annual fair at his manor of Cobham. In 1370 he was made a banneret, a high military dignity often conferred upon the field by the king in person, as on Sir John Chandos by Pedro of Castile in the preceding year. Notwithstanding various successes, the fortune of war gradually went against the English. Their great leaders died off one by one, whilst in Du Guesclin the French possessed a general of great ability. In the last years of Edward III peace was again talked of; first as a truce up to the 1st of May, 1375. The commissioners, on the English side, were the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Salisbury, the Bishop of London, Sir John de Cobham, and Sir Arnold Savage, together with Master John Shepeye and Master Simon Multon, doctors of law. The negotiations were conducted at Bruges, and at length a truce for one year was agreed upon. When the time for its expiration drew nigh, which was the feast of All Saints, it was prolonged until the feast of John the Baptist (June 24th), 1376, and the commissioners remained in Bruges during the winter. The Black Prince died on Trinity Sunday, and his young son Richard was acknowledged as heir apparent to the crown. The

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., part 2, p. 136.

truce coming to an end, another effort was made to treat for peace, and Lord Cobham, the Bishop of Hereford, and the Dean of London (St. Paul's) went again to Bruges, on the part of England, and with them was the poet, Sir Geoffrey Chaucer. Yet, no place of meeting could be agreed upon, whereat to discuss the articles of peace, so war recommenced as the King of England expired, on the 21st June, 1377.*

Only a few days afterwards (30th June, 1377), Sir John Cobham was ordered, among others, to prepare for the defence of the County of Kent† against expected invasion. The French, a short time previously, had landed and burned many of our towns. On the 20th July he was appointed one of the councillors to Richard II, then in his minority, and he also appears at this time on the list of those who lent money to the king: he advanced £100.‡ But affairs abroad still continued in a most unsatisfactory condition, and Lord Cobham was for several years employed in diplomacy. In 1378 he was one of the commissioners to receive from the Duke of Brittany the castle of Brest; of which Richard Abberbury and John Golofre were appointed keepers. His parliamentary life during this reign was particularly active; his name constantly occurs amongst the triers of petitions. In 1379 he was one of the commissioners associated with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishops of London and Rochester, the Earls of March, Warwick, and Stafford, Lord Latymer, Guy de Brien, and Roger de Beauchamp, to inquire into the revenues of the crown, the expense of the king's household, etc.,

* Froissart's *Chronicles*, vol. i., p. 510.

† Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., Part 3, p. 61.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., Part 3, pp. 64-70.

and whether they were managed to the profit of the people. This commission was in consequence of the disorder and waste occurring at the close of Edward's reign, in which his dotage on Alice Piers had some part.*

In 1380-1 he had a license to crenellate and fortify his mansion of Cowling,† the re-construction of which commenced some years before, and the work went on for several years, being still in progress in 1385. On one of the towers flanking the entrance, yet remains a beautifully executed inscription, in copper enamelled, imitating the form of a deed with a pendant seal of the arms of Cobham. A copy of it is given on a plate in a subsequent portion of this volume. It is rarely, if ever, correctly printed, but it runs thus:

Knouwyth that beth and schul be
That I am mad in help of the cuntre
In knowyng of whyche thyng
Thys is chartre and wytnessyng.

In 1382 he was on a committee to consider a petition of our merchants asking for due protection on the high seas, reminding us of Chaucer's sketch of his merchant pilgrim who

"Souning alway the encrese of his winning
He wold the see were kept of any thing
Betwixen Middelburgh and Orewell."

In fact, pirates of a fierce and truculent character were roving the North Sea and Channel, and in 1379, Sir Hugh Calverley and Sir Thomas Percy put to sea to repress them. Walsingham relates, how, in this same year, Flemish pirates captured a Cornish ship, bound for Fowey, on the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24th), putting all on board to death and sinking the vessel. A boy, however, was saved

* Rot. Parl. † Rot. Pat. 4 Ric. II, Part 2 m. 24.

by jumping on board their ship and secreting himself. They put into an English port, when the boy, hearing his own language, rose up, called for help, denounced them, and they were seized. Two years later, the men of Rye saw an English ship, called the Falcon, once belonging to Lord Latimer, whose cognisance gave its name, which had been taken. They went alongside endeavouring to persuade the pirates to surrender it, but, having for answer nothing but laughter, they attacked, were victorious and brought the ship into port.* The sinking of a ship from Yorkshire is also related by the same. Acts like these aroused the indignation of our merchants, and hence the appeal to Parliament.

In the same year he was appointed to confer with the Commons on the grant of franchise, and the manumission of villeins. This followed the memorable uprising in several of our counties, especially that in Kent under Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and others, during which the king granted charters of freedom, which on its suppression were recalled and set aside. The excesses committed alarmed all parties above the condition of the serf, but the Commons boldly declared, that the risings had been provoked by the burdens laid on them by a prodigal court; and they insisted on a charter of pardon, for offences committed, before they granted a subsidy.†

The year following, Lord Cobham was sent to treat with the Count of Flanders, who had long been at war with his subjects. He had been several times defeated by the men of Ghent, under Philip of Artevelt. The Flemings sought the friendship of England, for

* T. Walsingham, *Hist. Ang.*, London 1574, pp. 229, 308.

† Rot. Parl.

Charles, king of France, had taken up the cause of the Count, and had advanced into Flanders. But the alarm raised by the uprising in England caused their overtures to be received coldly. Curious complications also arose from the crusade against the Clementines, of which the Bishop of Norwich was leader, as commander of the Urbanists. This true member of the church militant fought independently against the Count of Flanders, whilst there was an alliance between England and the men of Ghent. After various successes on either side, the capitulation of Bourbourg, by the English, brought the war to an end, and the latter quitted Flanders.

Lord Cobham, associated with the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Buckingham, the Bishop of Hereford, and others of the Council, received full powers to conclude a peace or truce with France. Each negotiator, says Froissart, kept up a grand state; but, notwithstanding many conferences, they could not agree upon a peace.* The Count of Flanders desired the men of Ghent to be excluded from the treaty; to this the English would not consent. Ultimately they were included, as well as all other allies, and a truce was drawn up to last until Michaelmas, 1384.

As war with France seemed again imminent on the expiration of the truce, so also was it expected on the side of Scotland, and in 1385 Lord Cobham was summoned to do military service against the Scots.† This summons was probably not for personal service, but for such as he was bound to supply according to his feudal obligations. He was also one of the supervisors of the subsidy granted to the king in Parliament.

* Froissart.

† Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., Part 3, p. 184.

Then came that period, in Richard's reign, which was so full of events pregnant with future trouble. In this, Lord Cobham took a part which belongs to our constitutional history. In 1386, he was with others appointed by Parliament to examine into the state of the king's court, revenues, grants, and officers' fees, and made one of the king's great and continual Council for one year. This Council, which restrained the king's power, was afterwards to feel his full resentment; but the outcry against his rule made itself heard early in the year 1388, in the memorable impeachment by the Commons, of Michael de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, the Chancellor; De Vere, Duke of Ireland; the Archbishop of York, and others. Amongst the names of the Lords Appellant, we find that of John de Cobham. On the day fixed for the meeting of these Commissioners, an armed ambuscade was placed at the Mews, under the command of Sir Nicholas Brembre, Lord Mayor of London, to waylay them on their route to Westminster. Being duly warned they avoided the snare, and then demanded a safe conduct under the king's own hand.*

On the day appointed, the Barons came well attended, and the records of our Parliament contain no more exciting scene. The Lords Appellant brought in a long list of charges against the accused, none of whom appeared, and in the presence of the king flung down their gages on the floor of the house, ready to make them good by battle. In the meantime Sir Robert Tresillian, the judge, one of the accused, was taken in disguise within the precincts of the abbey, and produced before the Lords. With great spirit he offered to defend himself by wager of battle, but this

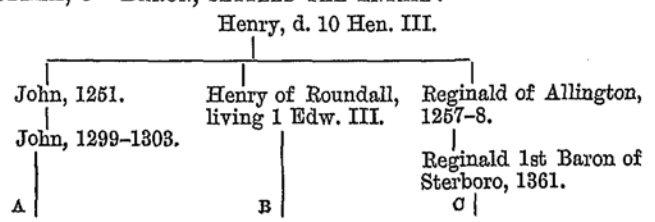
* Rot. Parl., vol. iii,

was disallowed. Judgment was recorded against him, and he was drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn and there executed. Subsequently the same fate befell Sir Nicholas Brembre, "that false knight" as he is called in the records.

In 1389 Lord Cobham sat as a member of the Court of Chivalry, in the celebrated case between Scrope and Grosvenor, concerning the right to bear certain arms.* In the year following, he signed a statement of grievances, presented to Pope Boniface; and in 1392 he was again on a Court of Chivalry, in the dispute between Morley and Lovel. During this year he was one of the plenipotentiaries to treat for peace with France, a matter with which he had been so frequently occupied. At this time, also, he rendered some assistance towards the completion of Sir Robert Knolles' new bridge over the Medway, at Rochester, and three years later he erected at his own cost a chapel opposite the east end of the new bridge, dedicating it to the Holy Trinity. He then lost his wife, Margaret Courtenay, and this trouble was a forerunner of others. Perhaps, foreseeing the dark cloud on the horizon, or anticipating the probability of his dying without a direct heir, his sole child having died; or perhaps swayed by both these considerations, he, at this period, executed an elaborate deed of entail, which included several members of the family.†

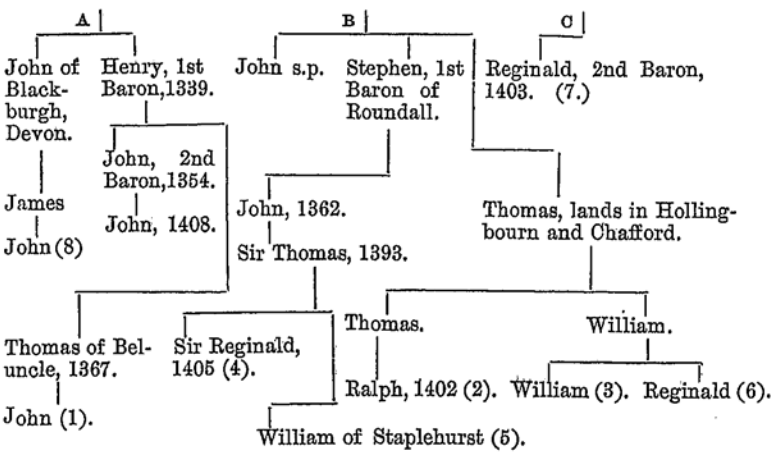
* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. iii., part 4, p. 38-59.

† PEDIGREE OF COBHAM, SHEWING NAMES OF THOSE ON WHOM JOHN DE COBHAM, 3rd BARON, SETTLED THE ENTAIL:—



It was only just in time, for in the following year the storm burst upon him. A Parliament had been assembled, in which the King had, by special writs sent to the sheriffs, tampered directly with the elections,* and thus gained a party entirely in his interest. Immediate steps were taken against those who had acted upon the Commission of 1387-88, and Lord Cobham, fleeing to the monastery of the Carthusians in London, renounced the world. That did not protect him, for he was drawn from this seclusion, and, with Sir John Cheyney, committed to the Tower. He was then brought before the Parliament, which had already condemned the Earls of Warwick and Arundel; the former having been banished, the latter executed, even in contempt of accorded pardon.

The proceedings, as recorded in the Rolls of Parliament, are interesting, as they certainly justify what



Finis ultimi Johannis de Cobham militis familiarum divisiones explicans. 19 Rich. II, 1396.

N.B.—The numerals shew the order of succession.

Heralds' College.
{ Phil. e.i. 97.
{ Ph. A. 60.

* Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. iii., 179.

the historians of the time have said, respecting Cobham's simplicity and good faith. When called in question by the King, concerning the Commission of 1388, he replied "that touching the making of the Commission he was not culpable, and touching the use and exercise of the same Commission, he would not have used it, nor meddled with it, but with the command of the King." To which the King replied, "That he was under such governance, at that time, that he could not otherwise say, by reason of those who were around him." Lord Cobham was adjudged guilty, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. All his estates were confiscated. But, for mere shame, as an historian has said, the King commuted this sentence on the venerable noble into banishment for life to Jersey, with the proviso, that if he escaped, the sentence should have full effect. In this sentence there was a saving of entail, which is worthy of note, as shewing the jealousy of Parliament over estates which might otherwise pass into the hands of the crown.* Not long afterwards, this sentence was made an article of accusation against the King himself.

Two Lords Cobham were in exile at the same time, for Sir Reginald, second Baron Cobham of Sterborough, was included in the condemnation. The numerous and powerful families connected with them, the Arundels, Staffords, Beauchamps, and others, had each their own special wrongs against the King. The general discontent is well expressed by Froissart. Henry of Bolingbroke was urged by the Archbishop of Canterbury, himself an exile, to return. Starting from Vannes in Brittany, and coasting along the shores

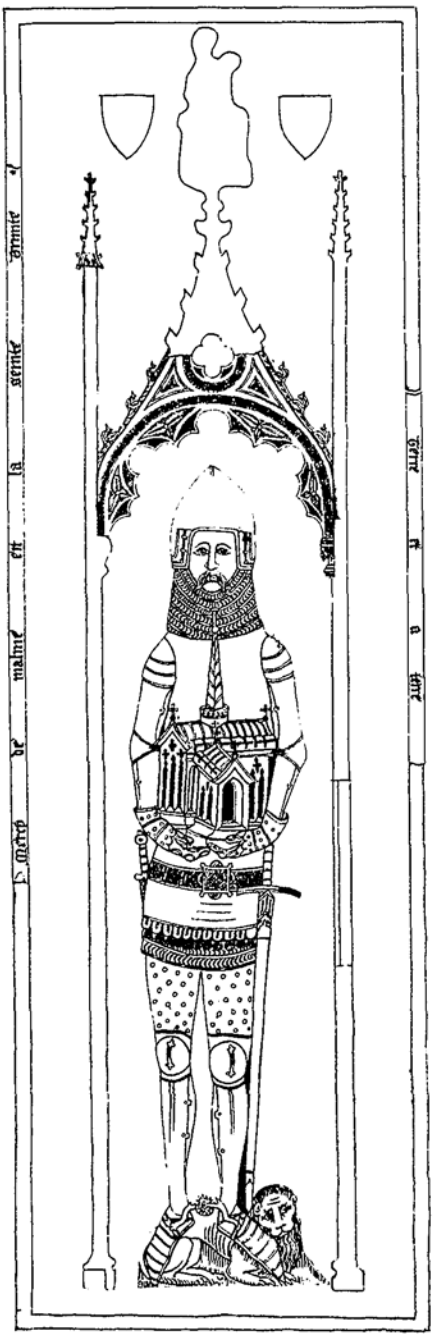
* Rot. Parl., vol. iii., 381. Holinshed erroneously says "Guernsey."

of England, he eventually landed at Ravenspurn* in Yorkshire, and among the few knights in his train was Sir Reginald Cobham. The event is well known as one of great moment in our history. The exiled nobles returned, and Parliament called King Richard to account for the sentences passed on Lord Cobham and the other Lords Appellant. A solemn surrender of his crown took place in Parliament, which decreed that the deposed monarch should be placed in safe keeping, and on the record appears the name of John Lord Cobham. A few years later, in 1406, he signed the entail of the crown upon the four sons of Henry IV, and this was the last of his public acts.†

His whole life was an unbroken succession of services rendered to the State, at one of the most critical periods of English domestic history, when the power of Parliament was rapidly developing and the Commons shewed themselves to be growing in strength. There was no matter of public importance, either at home or abroad, in which his advice, as a councillor or as a diplomatist, was not sought and given. It is evident, even from the scanty information contained in our records, that John de Cobham, the "Founder," must be placed among the most eminent statesmen of his time. He died January 10, 1407-8, and must have reached a very advanced age, for at least seventy-four years had elapsed since his marriage contract. Allowing for extreme youth at that time, he could scarcely have been less than ninety-two. His wife also, who died in 1395, must have lived considerably more than seventy years.

He seems to have held cordial relations with the Cobhams of Sterborough, who had promised certain

* Rymer's *Fœdera*. † Rot. Parl., vol. iii.



JOHN, LORD OF COBHAM. OB: 1408.
COBHAM CHURCH, KENT.

endowments to the College of Cobham. Lady Joan, the relict of Sir Reginald de Cobham, the first baron, who died in 1361, in her will enjoined her son Reginald to fulfil the above-named obligation, and she leaves to John Lord Cobham,

"One pax silver gilt with a crucifix, with St. Mary standing on the right and St. John on the left. Also a gilt cup, with a cover to match; under the foot of the said cup three lions standing, and bearing the said cup. Also I bequeath to the same lord a book called the Apocalypse and in the beginning of the said book stands the image of St. Paul. Also I bequeath to each priest officiating in the College of the Lord Cobham 6s. 8d., also to the principal clerks there 2s. apiece, and to each chorister there 12 pence."

He was one of the executors of Sir Reginald, second Baron Cobham of Sterborough, who died in 1403.*

It would be natural to assume, that Sir John de Cobham was interred beneath his effigies in Cobham chancel, among the bones of his ancestors; nor can we say he was not. Still it is necessary to note, that there is a record of a monument to a John de Cobham, Baron of Kent, once existing in the church of the Grey Friars, in London. The record referred to states that, "in a tomb raised up at the end of that altar by the door under the cross (transept) lies John de Cobham, Baron of the County of Kent."† It is difficult to see to whom this can refer, if not to this John de Cobham, for we must remember that his brass at Cobham (Pl. 1) was done in his lifetime, and therefore can give no certainty to the supposition that it actually covers his remains. That brass represents him as holding the model of a church in his hands, and is one of the most interesting of this class of monuments. From its exact resemblance in character

* Vide *Surrey Archæological Collections*, vol. ii, pp. 180, 181.

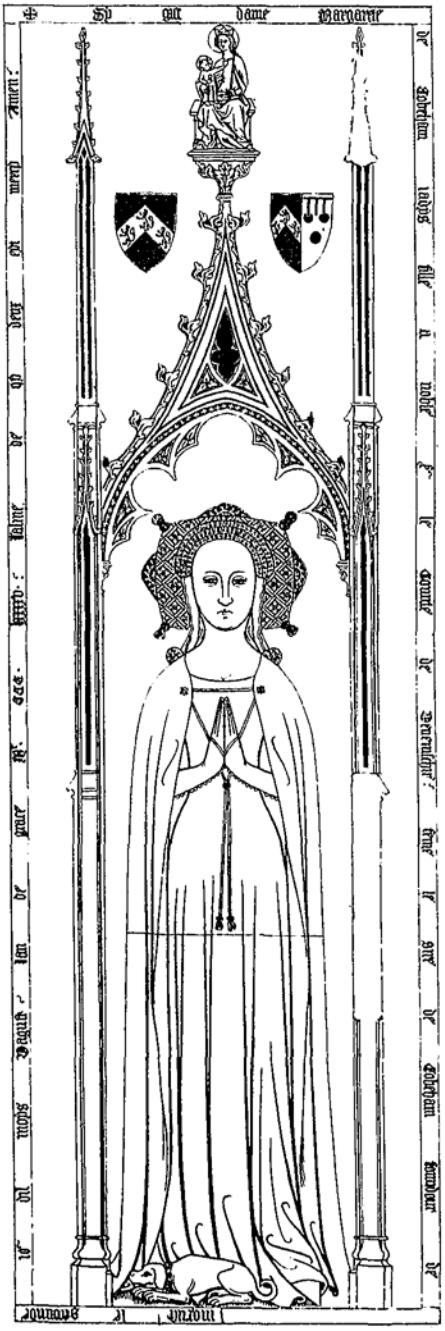
† *Collectanea Topographica*, vol. v., p. 387 and 274.

and detail to that of Thomas de Cobham his uncle, 1367, it is evident that it was executed by the same hand and at the same time. So that we have here a memorial put down forty years before his death; a very unusual circumstance indeed. In contrast with this we may mention the brass to Sir John de Lisle at Thruxton, Hants, the character of which places it twenty years later than the year of his decease, which was the same as that of John de Cobham, shewing us a divergence of sixty years one from another. Thus it is, that one memorial alone cannot be depended upon as a guide to costume. The canopy under which the figure is placed was surmounted by the Virgin and Child seated. The inscription follows a formula common at that time, viz. 1367, and runs thus,—

"*De terre fu fait et fourme et en* Terre et a terre *suy retourne Johan de Cobham foundeur de ceste place qi fu iadis nomme* Mercy de malme eit la seinte Trinite."

The two coats of arms lost were those of Cobham, viz., *gules* on a chevron *or* three lions passant *sable*. His wife's brass lies at his left side, and is of simple and yet elegant design (Pl. 2). The figure in gown and mantle, with veil and cap, like those previously described, and dog at feet, stands beneath a canopy, surmounted with Virgin and Child seated; it is in good preservation. The shields of arms bear Cobham, and Cobham impaling Courtenay, viz., *or*, three torteaux, a label *azure*. The inscription around the verge runs thus—

"Sy gist dame Margarete de Cobeham jadys fille a noble S^{r} le Counte de Deuenschir feme le sire de Cobeham foundour *de ceste place qe* morust le secounde jo^{r} dil moys Dagust lan de grace M^{l}CCCLXXXV lalme de qy deux eyt mercy Amen."



MARGARET, LADY OF COBHAM. OB: 1395.
COBHAM CHURCH, KENT.

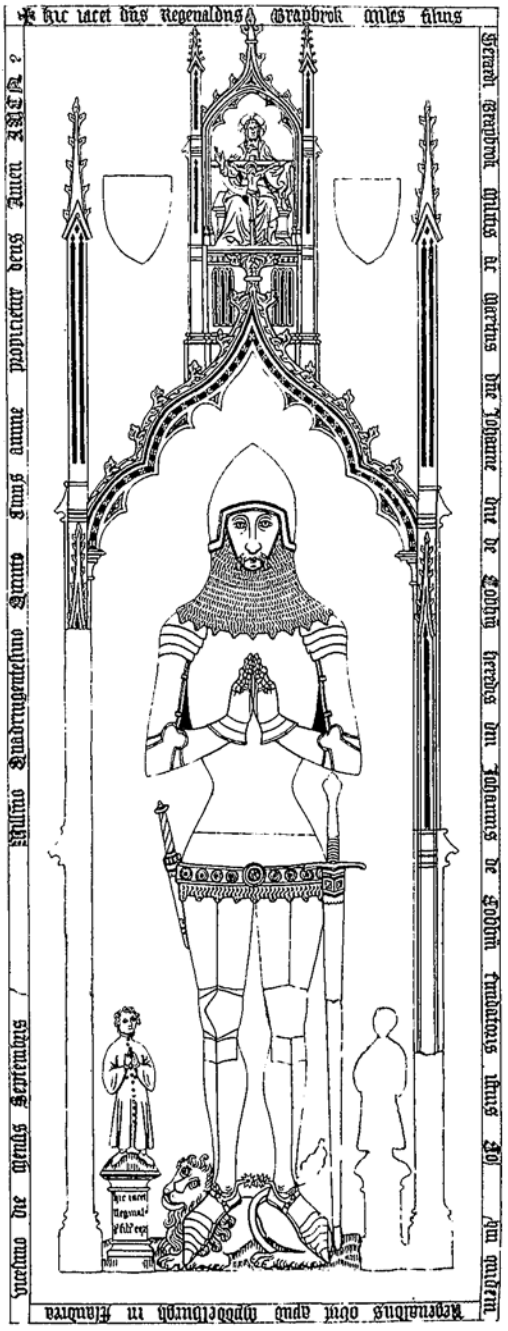
Lord Cobham and the Lady Margaret had but one child, a daughter named Joan. She was married in 1362 to Sir John de la Pole, whose mother Margaret was sister and coheiress of John Peverel of Castle Ashby. Joan de la Pole (*née* Cobham) died about 1388, when the Prioress of Higham received £35 to pray for the souls of Sir John de la Pole, his wife and children, John de Cobham, and all Christian souls defunct. She lies buried in Chrishall Church, Essex, beneath a monumental brass which represents her husband as affectionately taking her by the hand. The inscription, now gone, was in French, of which the words "sa feme priez" remain, together with three escutcheons of arms, for Cobham and De la Pole.

Again there was a failure of male offspring, and the De la Pole heiress was a daughter named Joan, after her mother. This lady must have had a remarkable life, and it would be satisfactory could we penetrate into its details more clearly. Like Chaucer's Wife of Bath, the young Joan de la Pole had five husbands. At a very youthful age she was married to Sir Robert Hemenhale, of a knightly family in the county of Norfolk. By him she had a son named William, who died in infancy, and no issue of this marriage survived her. Sir Robert died in 1391, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Her second husband, whom she probably married about two years afterwards, when yet under age, was Sir Reginald Braybrooke, son of Sir Gerard Braybrooke, as his monument tells us. His family was ancient, and at this time came into note and importance. Robert de Braybrooke, Bishop of London, one of the most considerable of its members, took an active part in the

conduct of public affairs during the troublous reign of Richard II.

Of Sir Reginald we hear very little; but he was with Richard during his expedition into Ireland, in 1399. By him Lady Joan had two sons, Reginald and Robert, who were evidently named after her two husbands, but they both died young; and a daughter, again named Joan, who, as we shall see, became heir to the Barony of Cobham. Sir Reginald Braybrooke died at Middleburgh, on the Scheldt, September 20, 1405, and the great heiress, doubtless besieged by importunate suitors, or pressed by her friends on account of the lack of a male heir, took for her third husband, Sir Nicholas Hawberk.

The Brass to the memory of Sir Reginald is of beautiful design, the work of a hand which may be traced, here and there, during the early part of the fifteenth century, as marked by a lightness and elegance not found elsewhere. Its style is distinctly English, having little or no analogy with foreign examples. The figure of the knight, in armour, stands beneath a triple-arched canopy, the apex of which is surmounted by a symbolic representation of the Trinity, consisting of a figure of God the Father, seated upon a throne, holding the cross upon which hangs Christ crucified, over whom a Dove appears descending. At the knight's feet are representations of the two sons, standing upon pedestals; inscribed "*Hic iacet Robert' fili' eor'*. Hic iacet Reginald' fili' eor'." Above are two shields of arms:—viz., *argent*, seven mascles 3, 3 and 1, *gules*, for Braybrooke; and the same impaling Cobham. The inscription on a fillet round the verge runs thus:



SIR REGINALD BRAYBROKE, OB: 1405
COBHAM CHURCH, KENT.

✠ Hic iacet d'ns Regenaldus Braybrok miles filius Gerardi Braybrok militis ac maritus d'ne Johanne d'ne de Cobh'm heredis d'ni Johannis de Cobh'm fundatoris istius Co*llegii* qui quidem Regenaldus obijt apud myddelburgh in fflandria vicesimo die mensis Septembris *anno domini* Mill'mo Quadringentesimo Quinto Cuius anime propicietur deus Amen. AMEN.

His wife is here described as the "Lady Joan, Lady of Cobham, heir of John de Cobham, the founder of this college," so this memorial could not have been placed until after the decease of the founder, her grandfather, in 1408, or she would not be called the "Lady of Cobham." The costume shews few material changes, but in it plate armour has superseded the pourpoint on the thighs, and the arms and legs are more completely covered by plate. (*Vide* Pl. 3, and compare with Pl. 1.)

Sir Nicholas Hawberk, whom she must have married not later than twelve months after Sir Reginald's death, was probably a soldier of fortune, for we hear of no family of that name; indeed, as far as we know, he appears to have been the only one who ever bore it. The name itself is but a soubriquet derived from the interlaced mail tunic; a fitting one for a soldier. In fact it is easy paralleled, as belonging to the same class as Shakespear, Breakspear, Bonnelance, Longespée, and Fortescue. He may have been one of the many free companions, of whom the time was but too prolific, to whom war was a trade, and who amassed fortunes out of plunder, or from the ransom of their prisoners. Two of his contemporaries, Englishmen like himself, Sir John Hawkwood and Sir Robert Knollys, have left famous names as leaders of free lances, and the latter has already been mentioned in connection with the Cobhams as constructing Rochester bridge. Froissart's *Chronicles* give a graphic

account of the doings of the free companions, particularly in the story of a Gascon squire, who relates that they held in bondage a large tract in the richest part of France, and "no knight, squire, nor rich man dared to quit his home unless he had compounded with us,"* a confession which shews them to have been little better than brigands.

It must not, however, be supposed that all free lances, or soldiers of fortune, were such as that Gascon squire. The ordinary rule of warfare made ransom the reward of a captor, and Froissart tells us that the English in the wars of Edward III "of happy memory," by their victories and ransom of towns, castles, and men, gained such wealth that the poorest knights became rich; and those that were not gentlemen by birth, by gallantly hazarding themselves in these wars, were ennobled for their valour and wealth.† Hawberk had evidently some esteem at the court of Henry IV, or he would not have been selected as one of six knights who formed part of the train of Queen Isabella, widow of Richard II, on her return to France, in June 1401,‡ nor of the escort when the King went to Cologne in 1402, to marry his eldest daughter Blanche, to Louis, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Bavaria. There is good mention of him in the jousting held at Smithfield in 1393, where John Stow tells us:—

"Certain Lords of Scotland came into England to get worship by force of arms: the Earl of Mare challenged the Earl of Notingham to joust with him, and so they rode together certain courses, but not

* Froissart's *Chronicles*, Johnes, vol. ii., p. 103.

† *Idem*, vol. ii., p. 518.

‡ Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council, Sir Harris Nicolas, vol i., p. 137.

the full challenge, for the Earl of Mare was cast both horse and man, and two of his ribs broken with the fall, so that he was conveyed out of Smithfield, and so toward Scotland, but died by the way at York. Sir William Darell, knight, the king's banner bearer of Scotland, challenged Sir Percie (Peter) Courtney, the king's banner bearer of England; and when they had run certain courses, gave over without conclusion of victory. Then Cookeborne, esquire, of Scotland, challenged Sir Nicholas Hawberke, knight, and rode five courses, but Cookeborne was borne over horse and man," etc.

In Cobham chancel still hang two fine specimens of tilting helmets of this time, and it can scarcely be doubted that they belonged to Sir Reginald Braybrooke and Sir Nicholas Hawberk. Hawberk's helmet may be identified, as his peculiar crest, a fish within a ring or garland, required some special means of attachment, which may be seen in the four staples on the apex.

Sir Nicholas was twice married, his first wife's name being Matilda. She was living 1 Hen. IV (1399-1400), but nothing is known of her parentage. He died at Cowling castle October 9th, 1407, leaving by a deed made on the 6th, all his goods and chattels, excepting 100*s.* of silver which he reserved, to Sir Hugh Lutterel, Sir Arnold Savage, William Cobham, Esq., and John Giffard, as it would appear in trust, by whom they were confirmed to Joan, Lady of Cobham, his widow, the same year.* His son by her, named John, perhaps after Lord Cobham, died an infant. A few months afterwards, on the death of John, the aged Lord of Cobham, January 10th, 1408, Joan de la Pole, already thrice widowed, became the Lady of Cobham.

The Brass to Sir Nicholas may be considered as about the finest of English military brasses of the time.

* *Collectanea Topographica*, vol. vii., p. 342.

It is of similar design to that of Sir Reginald Braybrooke last described, excepting that it has in addition figures of the Virgin and Child on the right side of the Trinity, and St. George on the left. At his feet is a small figure on a pedestal, on which is inscribed "Hic iacet Joh'nes fils' eor'." The arms are pendant on the shafts of the canopy. His own are of an unusual and remarkable blazon, viz., checky *argent* and *gules* a chief chapourné *gules* and *or*. On the sinister side, the same coat impales that of Cobham. His arms had in both shields been wilfully defaced, as if by the heralds, in officious exercise of their craft. Hawberk by them was evidently not considered entitled to bear them. His head lies on a helmet and crest, as above described, which was destroyed. The inscription is in similar form to that of Braybrooke:—

✠ Hic iacet d*n's Nicholaus* Hawberk miles quondam maritus d'ne Joh'ne d'ne de Cobh'm Heredis d'ni Joh'is de Cobh'm fundatoris *istius Collegii qui quidem* Nicholaus obijt apud Castrū de Cowlyng Nono die Octobris Anno domini Mill'mo Quadringentesimo Septimo Cui*us anime propicietur* deus. Amen.

Lady Joan was never suffered long to remain a widow, and now for her fourth husband she took one who perhaps is more known than any other Lord of Cobham, although he was only baron in right of his wife. This was Sir John Oldcastle, of whom so much has been written by those bitterly hostile to his cause, or those who would uplift him almost to the dignity of a saint. In this narrative, we can but touch upon certain undisputed facts, taken from our records, and thus avoid the troubled waters of controversy.

Sir John was of a family in Herefordshire, where is a village, called "Oldcastle," but it has been sup-

posed that Almeby Castle,* which belonged to the family, gave the surname: this is matter of small importance. His father was a Sir Richard Oldcastle, but the name of his mother is not known. John was born about 1360, and served as Sheriff of Herefordshire, 7 Hen. IV (1405-6). He was thrice married. His first wife was named Katharine; but of what family is not known: and of his second wife nothing is known at all, except that she bore him four children, Henry, Katharine, Joan, and Maud. His marriage with Joan, Lady of Cobham, took place before October 26, 1409, when he was summoned to Parliament, *jure uxoris*, being, however, addressed as Sir John Oldcastle, Chevalier, though in public documents he is often styled "Dominus de Cobham," as he is by our historians without reserve. Of his early life very little can be gathered, but we get from Walsingham an admission of his eminence as a soldier; and his accusers allude to his being a friend of the King (Hen. V). As to his having been the boon companion of the latter, and the prototype of the Falstaff of Shakespear, the allegations of Prince Harry's early lawlessness and irregularity do not rest upon documents that warrant implicit belief; but rather have a taint of romance and legend. It is far more likely, that he became King Henry's friend as a valiant companion in arms, and for other personal qualities, of which there can be no question.

The opinions of Wiclif had spread far and wide throughout the kingdom; the clergy had fallen into great disrepute for their pride, arrogance, wealth, and immorality. It was supposed that Richard II, on account of the predilections of his wife, Anne of

* Robinson's *Castles of Herefordshire*.

Bohemia, had either favoured, or at least been indifferent to, the spread of the doctrines of Wiclif; but as the clergy had aided in establishing Henry IV on the throne, that King was bound to heed the representations of so powerful a class of adherents. Through their influence, his reign became noted in our annals for the first statute against heresy—a statute passed irregularly, and in contempt of the privileges of Parliament.

In support of the Lollard opinions Sir John is said to have written certain treatises, notably one entitled "*Twelve Conclusions addressed to the Parliament of England.*" But he was most obnoxious to the clergy on account of the protection he afforded to the propagators and preachers of the teaching of Wiclif. Already Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been active in the work of suppression, by means of the new statute, and now a blow was to be struck at the higher powers. As, however, Oldcastle was the personal friend of the King, they proceeded with the utmost caution. At length the king himself tried his influence, and when it had no effect, he allowed proceedings to be taken against Sir John. They commenced with great apparent deference to his position and to his knightly character. The summoner was not to enter his castle of Cowling, but to await outside for Sir John to appear. All attempts of the summoner were disregarded, and at last the authorities were forced to content themselves with attaching the summons to the door of Rochester Cathedral. This also availed nothing—he refused to appear. Then the King, incensed at his opposition, sent an armed force, which arrested him; and he was committed to the Tower. On September 23rd, 1413, he was brought,

in the custody of Sir Robert Morley, Lieutenant of the Tower, before the Archbishop's Court, held in St. Paul's, at London. He then drew from his bosom and openly read a paper, containing his declaration of faith, and afterwards handed it to the court. It was as follows :—

"I, John Oldcastle, knight and Lord Cobham, desire it may be known to all Christians, and I call God to witness, that I have never entertained, and by the help of God never will entertain, any persuasion which is not consistent with a firm and undoubting belief of all the sacraments which were ordained and appointed by Christ himself for the use of his Church. Moreover, that my faith as to the four points alleged against me might be more clearly understood, I declare, first of all, that I believe that in the adorable sacrament of the altar the very body of Christ does exist, under the species of bread : the same body, I mean, that was born of his mother Mary : that was crucified for us, that died and was buried, and rose again the third day from the dead, and was exalted to the right hand of his Eternal Father, where he now sits partaker with him in glory. Then, for the sacrament of penance, I believe it is chiefly necessary for all that desire to be saved to amend their wicked lives and undergo such a penance for the sinful part of them, as by a true confession, an undissembled contrition, and lawful satisfaction, manifests itself to be agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, without which none can hope for salvation. Thirdly, with respect to images, I hold that they are no ingredient in the Christian belief, but long after the publication of the faith of Christ were introduced into the world, by the permission of the Church, to be as a calendar to the laity and the ignorant, that by visible representations of the sufferings of Christ, and of the pious lives and martyrdoms of the Saints, the remembrance of those things might the more easily be impressed on their minds ; but if one so abuses this representation as to give that worship to these images of the saints which is due to the saints themselves, or rather to him to whom the saints themselves owe all honour and adoration, and putteth his confidence

in them, which is only to be placed in God, or is so affected towards these senseless images as to be more devoted to them than to God, in my opinion he is guilty of idolatry, and wickedly sins against God, the only object of worship. Lastly, I am fully persuaded that there is no abiding place upon earth, but that we are all pilgrims, either on the way to happiness, or tending to misery: he that either knows not, or will not be instructed in, nor live in the practice of the Commandments of God, it is vain for him to expect salvation, though he went on pilgrimage into all quarters of the world; and, on the other side, he that lives in obedience to the Holy Commandments of God will undoubtedly be saved, though he never went a step on pilgrimage in his life, either to Rome, or Canterbury, or Compostella, or to any other places."*

This declaration gives us a good insight into Sir John's mind, and by it we can also understand the character of his tribunal. It did not satisfy; he was pressed closely and particularly, with threats on one side and persuasions on the other: but he declined to answer otherwise, as a man who followed the dictates of conscience. Two days later he was again brought before the tribunal, but he declined to alter his expressed opinions. The Archbishop then arose, and pronounced judgment, first invoking the name of Christ, declaring Sir John Oldcastle to be a heretic—"We have judged, declared, and condemned him sententiously and definitively in these writings; leaving him from now as a heretic to the secular judgment." All who should shew him counsel, aid, or favour, or in any way defend him, are denounced and excommunicated. The sentence was ordered to be publicly read by the curates in every parish in the diocese.†

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. ix., p. 61.

† Ibid., vol. ix., p. 61.

Sir John was recommitted to the Tower, from which, by some means, he contrived to effect his escape into Wales. Possibly, from his Herefordshire connections, he expected there to find friends amongst whom to dwell and remain in safety. Meanwhile, a rising of the Lollards took place, and an army, under Sir Roger Acton, assembled in Giles' Fields; but were defeated by the king's forces. Whether or not Sir John was connected with this outbreak, it is impossible to say; but it was natural to assume it, and to accept slight facts as evidence. Yet there is no proof, and it is unsafe to trust the narratives of historians whose religious zeal breaks out in loose and fierce invectives. However, a proclamation was issued by the king, offering a reward of 1000 marks for his capture, dead or alive. After four years, he was discovered and taken at Broniarth, Montgomeryshire, by the Earl of Powys, after some resistance, in which he was grievously wounded. The immediate agents of his capture were four tenants of the above-named noble; and it may correct some errors which have crept into ordinary accounts if we record their names, as found in the following letter. They are lengthy, doubtless so were their pedigrees. It runs thus:—

"We Jeven and Gruffuth sons of Gruffuth ap Jeven ap Gweunoys of Powys londe, gentilmen, Hoel ap Gruffuth ap David ap Madoc, and Dero ap Jevan ap Jorum ap Ada of the same lond, zemen tenauntz of Sir Edward Charletoun, knight, Lord of Powys, and takeres of Sir John Oldcastell that was myscreante and unbuxome to the lawe of God and traitour convicte to oure gracious Soveraigne Lord and his Henry, Kyng of England after the conquest the Vth," &c., &c.*

The document expresses thanks for the reward, which

* Ellis's *Letters on English History*, second series, p. 86.

Lord Powys seems to have received, and to have compounded with them.

Sir John was brought to London, and produced before the Lords in Parliament—the Duke of Bedford presiding—when the former judgment for heresy was recorded against him. On his endeavouring to defend himself, the Chief Justice told him he could not be allowed to waste the time of the Lords, and he was adjudged "traitor to God and heretic," also "traitor to the king and kingdom," and to be drawn through the City of London as far as the "novelles furches," in the parish of St. Giles, beyond the bar of the Old Temple of London, and then to be hung, and burnt hanging.*

On Christmas Day—that joyous anniversary, which our great poet apostrophizes as "so hallowed and so gracious"—in the year 1417, this terrible sentence was carried out. There was an immense crowd of spectators, at the newly-appointed place of public execution, recently moved from the Elms in Smithfield to the front of the gate of St. Giles' Hospital, at that time surrounded by fields, and distant from London. Near the unfortunate Oldcastle stood old Sir Thomas Erpingham, whom he is said to have asked to seek peace for his sect, if he arose from the dead in three days. We must distrust the monkish chronicler, who has words of insult for the unfortunate man in this supreme hour, as there is nothing in the authentic accounts of Sir John Oldcastle to suggest that he was a victim to fanatical delusions.

It would be interesting, could we gain some information of a personal character respecting the Lady of Cobham, but nothing has come down to us excepting the record of her alliances.

* Rot. Parl., vol. iv., 107.

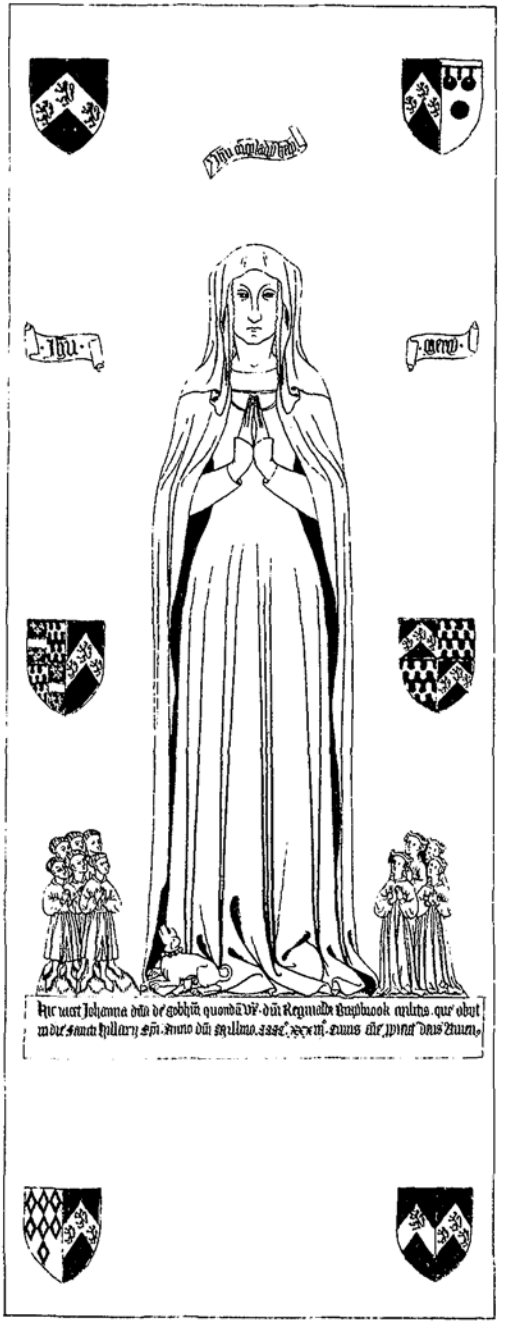
After the death of Braybrooke, misfortune seems to have followed her. Her married life with Hawberk could scarcely have exceeded a year, and that with Oldcastle not more than five, as after his condemnation in 1413, he was a fugitive in hiding; and it is probable that she never saw him afterwards. Even the barony seems now to pass into abeyance, for, from March 22, 1413, to January 13, 1445, a period of thirty-two years, no Lord of Cobham was summoned to Parliament. Neither Sir John Harpeden, whom she took for her fifth and last husband, nor her son-in-law, Sir Thomas Brooke, were recognized as Lords of Cobham. Harpeden was of a good knightly family of Hertfordshire. Mention of a Sir John Harpeden, possibly his father, occurs in Froissart, as doing good service in the wars of France, and as Seneschal of Bordeaux. He was connected by descent with the Cobhams of Sterborough, and with the family of Mortimer, as appears by the arms on his tomb. There is no record of the time of their marriage, but Sir John Harpeden survived the Lady Joan for twenty-four years, and, dying in 1458, was buried in Westminster Abbey. His tomb, in the north ambulatory of the choir, shews a well executed brass of a knight with his head resting on a helmet. There are four shields of arms, the two lower shewing, first his alliance with Cobham, secondly his own arms, modestly placed on the sinister side. The inscription on a fillet around the verge has long been gone, without any record of its character.

The Brass of the Lady of Cobham commends itself to our notice for its beautiful simplicity (Pl. 4). She is represented in the costume of a widow. A closely fitting gown, with mantle and veil, form her dress,

whilst grouped at her feet are represented six sons and four daughters, who constituted her family, and the familiar little pet dog, the symbol of rank. Above her head are ejaculatory scrolls, having "Jesu mercy; Lady helpe," also "Jh'u—mercy," disposed on each side. Six shields of arms enclose the figure, and their heraldry is an instructive example of the value of such accessories. Above are (1) Cobham, and (2) Cobham impaling Courtenay, for John "the Founder," and his wife, her grandfather and grandmother. Next comes (3) Peverel of Castle Ashby quartering De la Pole and impaling Cobham, for her father and mother—Peverel representing her paternal grandmother. On the opposite side is (4) her own coat, Cobham quartering De la Pole. Lastly, (5) Braybrooke, her second husband, impaling Cobham, and on the opposite side, (6) Brooke, her son-in-law, viz., *gules* on a chevron *argent*, a lion rampant *sable*, crowned *or*, impaling Cobham, for her daughter by Sir Reginald Braybrooke. It is a brief history of the descent, and suggests that this memorial was placed to her memory by her daughter and son-in-law. The inscription at her feet, brief and simple like the rest, styles her "the Lady of Cobham and wife of Sir Reginald Braybrooke," no mention being made of any other alliance. She died January 13, 1433-4.

✠ Hic iacet Johanna d'na de Cobh'm quonda' vx' dn'i Reginaldi Braybrook militis que obijt in die Sancti Hillarij Ep'i Anno d'ni Mill'mo CCCC°xxxiij° Cuius a'ie p'piciet' deus Amen.

It is clear that all her sons died. Two by her second husband, and one by her third, are here commemorated. Whether, of her other children, any besides Joan survived we do not know; if so, it is possible they died unmarried, or we should have



JOAN, LADY OF COBHAM, OB: 1434
COBHAM CHURCH, KENT.

heard something of their alliances. Her daughter Joan, then, made the third female who successively became heir to the Barony. She had a large family of fourteen children, and in the person of her son Edward Brooke the barony was resumed.

Of her husband, Sir Thomas Brooke,* very little can be said. He was born about the year 1391, as he was twenty-six years old at the death of his father, January 1417-18. He served as knight of the shire for Dorset in 1 Hen. V (1413-14), and for the county of Somerset in the 8th of that reign (1420-21), as also in the 1st and 5th of Henry VI (1422-23 and 1426-27). He was knighted somewhere between the years 1416 and 1422, and died in 1439, thus not surviving his mother-in-law more than five years. His widow styled herself "Lady of Cobham," but if he ever assumed the title, it could only be one of courtesy, for he was never summoned to Parliament.

Sir Edward Brooke, his son, who succeeded him, received a summons to Parliament as Lord of Cobham, from January 13, 1445, to February 28, 1463, a period in which the great struggle, between the rival

* The family of Brooke was of ancient date. William de la Brook held the manor so named, near Ilchester, in Somersetshire, in the reign of King John, which continued in possession of his direct male descendants until the attainder of Henry Lord Cobham, in 1603.

Sir Thomas, father-in-law of Joan Braybrooke, was one of the knights of the shire for Somerset in the 10th, 11th, 15th, 18th, 20th, and 21st of Richard II, also in the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 11th of Henry IV, and in 1389 was sheriff of the county. Between him on the one part and Sir John Oldcastle and the Lady Joan on the other, a marriage contract was entered into February 20, 11 Hen. IV (1409-10) that his son Thomas should marry Joan, the daughter of the latter, before the feast of Pentecost, next ensuing, if God should grant them life, (Si Deus illis vitam concedit.)

Houses of York and Lancaster, was being carried on with its varying successes. His name first appears in the proceedings of Parliament in 1450, when sentence was passed on De la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. Among the special friends whom Richard, Duke of York, consulted was Edward Brooke, Lord Cobham,* "a man of a great witte and much experience." So when the intrigues of party ousted the Duke of York from his position as Lieutenant of the Kingdom, in which he was placed during the King's malady, and the Duke of Somerset was released from the Tower, Lord Cobham joined the army which he had assembled for his protection, calling for reformation in the government, and was with the Duke of York when he encamped on Dartford Brent. He was in the battle of St. Alban's, which took place May 23, 1455, when the Duke of York gained a complete victory, and King Henry fell a prisoner into his hands.

Although the Duke treated the King with respect, and as yet put in no claim for the crown, both parties were gathering hate, and mutually arraying their strength. To prevent effusion of blood, the Archbishop of Canterbury interposed, and it was at length arranged that all the great leaders should meet in London for reconciliation. This was solemnly ratified by a procession to St. Paul's, in which the Duke of York led Queen Margaret by the hand, and each partisan one of the opposing faction. In this ceremony Lord Cobham played his part, but the whole affair was a solemn farce, for hostilities were soon resumed, and the defeat of Lord Audley by the Earl of Salisbury at Bloreheath in Staffordshire quickly followed.

* Hall's *Chronicle.*

An episode now occurs which assumes the character of a little private war. The Earl of Wiltshire was on the side of Lancaster, and he attacked Lord Cobham's mansion at Holdich, Somersetshire, with 200 men—the assault lasting five hours. Considerable damage was done, and some plunder carried off. The Earl had also caused Lord Cobham, and his brother Peter, to be indicted for felony.*

Matters had now gone beyond all composition. The Earl of Warwick, who had been governor of Calais, landed at Sandwich, in Kent, together with Salisbury and the Earl of March, eldest son of the Duke of York. They were met by Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lord Cobham, with other nobles, and, marching to London, entered the City amidst the acclamation of the inhabitants. Lord Cobham and the Earl of Salisbury remained in London to keep the citizens to their allegiance, as well as to overawe Lord Scales, who held the Tower, and to prevent his receiving any succour. On the 10th of July, however, Cobham and John Bagenhall commanded the Kentish forces in the battle of Northampton, which ended in the defeat of the Lancastrians. After this we hear no more of him, though he lived to see Edward IV on the throne, and the house of York triumphant. He died in 1464, having married Elizabeth, daughter of James Touchet, Lord Audley, whose name we find on the side of the Red Rose.

He was succeeded by his son, John Brooke, who was upwards of twenty years of age at his father's death, and now the memorials in Cobham chancel are resumed. He was first summoned to Parliament

* Harl., Ch. 46 H, 27.

August 19th, 1472—12 Edw. IV—as the struggle between the rival houses of York and Lancaster was drawing to its close. Like his father, he continued a zealous adherent of the House of York, and is said to have been in high favour with both Edward IV and his brother Richard III. He attended the coronation of the latter, and received at various times valuable grants from him. But, with that ease so often to be observed during these civil divisions, on the accession of Henry VII he ingratiated himself with the new monarch, and in the seventh year of his reign (1491-2) was employed by him in an expedition to Flanders, on behalf of the Emperor Maximilian against the French.

The avarice of Henry VII was without bounds; a plea of the devastation of the Scots obtained him a large grant from Parliament; and the taxation involved led to an insurrection of the Cornish men in 1497, under Michael Joseph, a farrier of Bodmin. Marching through Devon, they reached Wells, in Somersetshire, where they were joined by James, Lord Audley, of whom we have before spoken, who was chosen to be their leader. Hearing that the men of Kent would rise, they bent their steps thither; but the Lords Cobham and Abergavenny retained the county in its allegiance. At length the king's forces, skilfully arrayed, encountered the rebels in the fields of Deptford, Greenwich, and Blackheath, and completely defeated them. Lord Audley being taken prisoner with the other leaders was executed.

After this there is no record of John Brooke's public services, except those given in Parliament, to which he was regularly summoned as Lord Cobham. He was twice married, first to Eleanor, daughter of ——

Anstell, or Anstie, of Suffolk, who left no issue; secondly, to Margaret, daughter of Edward Nevill, Lord Abergavenny,* by whom he had several children. She died September 30, 1506, and the brass in Cobham chancel, placed to her memory and to that of her husband, has a blank left for the date of his death, shewing that he was still alive when the brass was put down. This blank was never filled up, which is found to be usually the case, so that we are not certain if he himself be interred there or not. A singular blunder has arisen from lack of a personal examination of this monument. Sir Harris Nicolas, in his Synopsis of the Peerage, has assumed that *he* died in 1506;† and as one mistake often leads to another, so it is here; for, finding him still summoned to Parliament, he assumes again that the writs must have been directed to his son in his name. Had Sir Harris taken the trouble to examine the Inquisitiones post Mortem, he would have seen that Sir John Brooke, Lord Cobham, died March 9th, 1511-12.‡

* The Edward Nevill, Lord Abergavenny, whose daughter he married, was the youngest son of Ralph, first Earl of Westmoreland, whose boast it might be that he had six sons peers of the realm, and, of his daughters, three were duchesses, one a countess, and two baronesses. His youngest child was Cecily, Duchess of York, mother of two kings, Edward IV and Richard III; her sorrows and troubles made up a life's tragedy. He first differenced the arms of Nevill, a white cross of St. Andrew on a red field, by the Lancastrian device of the red rose, which was said to be an allusion to his mother, Joan Beaufort. It will be seen in the sequel that another Lord of Cobham intermarried with this noble house.

† Thynne in Holinshed does the same, possibly followed by Sir Harris.

‡ Sir Harris is right in one way and wrong in another. His Christian name *was* substituted for that of his son in the summons of 12th November, 7 Henry VIII, 1515.

The brass originally had figures of Sir John and his wife beneath an elaborate canopy. That of Sir John is gone, but it existed in 1597.* The attire of the lady is simple, being merely gown, mantle with cordon, and an ample veil. A symbolic representation of the Trinity, in which God the Father has the triple crown, which is never found in earlier examples, hangs like a picture on the central pinnacle, and devices of the instruments of the Passion and of the five wounds are in the centre of each portion of the canopy. There were four shields of arms, of which but two remain—viz., (1) Cobham (the arms of Brooke being omitted); and (2) Cobham impaling Nevill of Abergavenny.† At the feet are representations of eight sons and ten daughters. The inscription is as follows:—

✠ Hic Jacent Johanes Broke Miles Ac Baro Baronie de Cobh'm et Domina Margareta vxor sua quondam filia nobilis viri Edwardi *Nevill nuper D'ni de Burg'eny qui quidem Joh'es obijt* . . . . die mens' . . . . A° d'ni M° V° . . . . i'pa vero *Domina Margareta obijt vltimo die me'sis Septembris A° dn'i M° v° vj* quoru' animabus propicietur deus amen.

Thomas, the eldest son of John Brooke, by Margaret Nevill, was the next and the sixth Baron of Cobham, and the brass to his memory is the last monument of that kind to a member of the family. It is an extremely characteristic memorial, and con-

* Landsdowne MSS. Brit. Mus., 874.

† The impaled coat of Abergavenny includes, besides Nevill, the coats of Warren, Clare, Despencer, and Beauchamp, with a crescent for difference. These were obtained through the marriage of Edward Nevill with Elizabeth, daughter and sole heir of Richard Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny, created Earl of Worcester in 1420, who married Isabel Despencer, sister and sole heir of Richard eighth Baron Despencer, and Baron Burghersh.

sists of two figures, a knight and a lady, with the inscription on a fillet enclosing them, each corner having a shield of arms, bearing the coats of Brooke, Cobham, Braybrooke, De la Pole.* The latter coat is not here blazoned as on the tomb of Lady Joan, but as *azure*, a fesse between three leopards' heads *or*, an annulet for difference. This was the bearing of the younger stem of the De la Poles, and why it was adopted here, and subsequently elsewhere, it is difficult to say; nor was it retained without being challenged. The inscription, which is lengthy, describes him as cousin and heir of Richard Beauchamp, Knight, and mentions his three wives; first, Dorothy, daughter of Henry Haydon, Knight, by whom he had issue, viz., seven sons and six daughters; then Dorothy Southwell, a widow; and thirdly, Elizabeth Hart, by neither of whom had he issue. He died July 19, 1529.

✠ Orate pro anima Thome Brooke militis dn'i de Cobham ac Consanguini et heredis Richardi Beauchamp militis qui quidem Thomas *cepit in vxorem Dorothea' filiam Henrici Haydon militis et habuerunt exitu' inter eos septe' filios et sex* filias et p'd'ca Dorothea obijt et p'd'cus Thomas Cepit in vxorem *Dorothea' Southwell vidua' que obijt sine exitu et postea Cepit in vxore' Elizabetha Hart et h*abuerunt nullu' exitu' inter eos qui quide' Thomas obijt xix die Julij A° d'ni MCCCCCxxix^{ti}.

* The arms of De La Pole, as before given, viz., *azure* two bars nebuly *or*, belonging to the elder branch, are exceedingly interesting, for they in some sort typify the origin of the family as eminent merchants of Hull. Nebuly, as given in heraldry, was an old convention used by painters during the Middle Ages for clouds, as its name implies. It seems to have been used specially to designate the merchant, and is the principal charge in three of the City companies—viz., the Merchants of the Staple, the Merchants Adventurers, as also by the Drapers, who getting their wares from beyond sea, naturally arranged themselves in the same category. By its form, one might almost imagine it was intended to symbolize waves, but for its frequent

The figure of the knight is in armour, most characteristic of the full development, which made it cumbrous and ungainly, but exceedingly elaborate, exercising the utmost skill of the smith. The broad toed sabbatons, and the high ridge upon the shoulder pieces for defending the neck, mark this period, from which armour was gradually to decline and to fall into disuse. The cross suspended by a chain around his neck is possibly connected with some foreign knightly order. As he had three wives, and here is shewn but one, it may be asked which is intended? This is determined by the children, as shewn beneath, and as only his first wife had issue, it must be to the memory of Dorothy Haydon. The costume of her figure is also a characteristic one, as it shews the head attire in that pedimental form which for a long time remained in fashion. But the dresses of state, with the constantly recurring mantle, seem to go on for centuries, almost unchanged, and disappear only with the Tudor dynasty, as a last relic of the Middle Ages.

Sir Thomas Brooke, Lord Cobham, makes his first appearance in our annals as taking part in the expedition which landed at Calais on June 8, 1513. It was under the command of the Earls of Shrewsbury and Derby, Lords Fitzwater, Hastings, and Sir Rice ap Thomas, captain of the light horse; amounting in all to 8000 men. A large body of these were archers, a kind of force which recalls an earlier time, and was

use in art as clouds. Here its significance in relation to the merchant might properly be that his fortunes were subject to the influences of the atmosphere. The arms used by the younger branch may have been assumed by the Cobhams instead of that they were entitled to, on account of its greater eminence and rank.

nearly abandoned in the continental armies. Another contingent of 6000 men soon after followed, and subsequently the King himself. The siege of Teroüane was then undertaken, during which an action took place August 18th, in which the French were completely routed. It is known as the 'Battle of Spurs,' otherwise as 'Enquingatte', from the village near which it was fought. On the 22nd the city surrendered, and Henry VIII with the Emperor Maximilian entered in triumph.

In the following year, Thomas Brooke Lord Cobham was attached to a force of 5000 men under Lord Abergavenny, and he took part in the rest of the campaign. He had the honour of being made a knight banneret by the King; we may therefore assume that he distinguished himself as a soldier.

We next hear of him as one of the nobles who with their wives attended King Henry and his Queen to the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold,' in 1520. It was an affair of such pomp and cost, that many of our nobility were half ruined by the display they made. Each baron was ordered to take with him two chaplains, two gentlemen, twenty-eight other servants, with twelve horses; and each baroness, two women, three men-servants, and six horses. The story of this assembly has been too often told to find a place here; it does not seem to have been politically successful.

In the succeeding year he was one of the "twelve barons" on the trial of Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham. This unfortunate noble, the inheritor of a bloody fate, since not one of his immediate ancestry, for upwards of a century, had died a natural death, is considered, by those who have ably investigated

the charge of treason attributed to him, to have been condemned through Wolsey's resentment and influence. The Duke was executed May 17, 1521, amid expressions of sorrow, and indignation, loudly vented against the "butcher's son."

In 1522 the Emperor Charles V paid a visit to England, and Lord Cobham was one of the courtiers attendant upon Henry during his stay of six weeks. It was a visit of policy, for Pope Adrian had used his influence to form a league between Charles and Henry against France, and war was declared with but little show of reason. The English had but small successes, and were soon obliged to act on the defensive, Surrey, who commanded, going into winter quarters as early as the month of October.

In consequence of Henry's wars and extravagance the large sum left by his father had long been dissipated, and heavy taxation of an illegal character was resorted to. In 1525, Parliament having shewn a reluctance to comply with the King's demand, he, by the advice of Wolsey, resolved to use his prerogative. Commissioners were appointed to levy four shillings in the pound upon the clergy, and three and fourpence on the laity; and Lord Cobham became one of the commissioners in his county of Kent, associated with Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, Sir Thomas Boleyn, and Henry Guldeford. "But the burden was so greevous that it was denied, and the commons in everie place were so mooved that it was like to have growen to a rebellion. For in Kent, the Lord Cobham, then a commissioner, thought to execute the same, but being clubbishly answered by one John Studder, he sent him to the Tower: for which the people muttered against the lord Cobham, and said expresslie,

that they would paie no monie, and in the same grudge did evillie entreat Sir Thomas Bullen at Maidstone, which tax the people refused to paie because it was the cardinal's extreame dooings and not the king's."*

In this arbitrary proceeding, which in the days of the Plantagenets would have found some of the nobles on the side of a constitutional course, as has already been shewn in this Cobham history, we view the political degradation which ensued under the Tudor dynasty, a forerunner of evils which another century developed into the great civil war. Lord Cobham took the courtiers' side, like too many others, and it needed the sturdy opposition of the people to resist, as they successfully did, this encroachment on their liberties. His public life passes away from our contemplation, in the exceptional service he here rendered; and we hear no more of him until his death in 1529. His will, made on July 7th the same year, bequeaths to his wife Elizabeth all his moveable goods, "she giving to my son Thomas and to my daughter Margaret somewhat towards their chambers as she thinketh best by her discretion." To his son and daughter above-named he left respectively £320 and 200 marks. His widow was also to have "my manor of Cobham, otherwise called 'Cobham Hall,'" etc., etc., during her natural life, which afterwards was to pass to his heirs. He commands his son, George, "upon God's blessing, that he pay to my brother Sir Edward Brooke his assigns every year during his life an annuity of 20 marcs," and he gives strict injunctions to him to fulfil all the obligations of his will.

On the north wall of the chancel, above the brass,

* Holinshed.

hangs a fine specimen of the helmet of this period, which was, doubtless, that of Sir Thomas Brooke. Of his children, his eldest, John, died in his father's lifetime; so George, his second son, became his heir. Thomas, the third son, married Susan Cranmer, a niece of Archbishop Cranmer, and by her had two sons:—(1) Cranmer Brooke, who married Abigail, daughter of Sir John Fogge, Marshal of Calais; and (2) Thomas Brooke. From the Archbishop, he obtained a "patent" of Ford Park, in Reculver, and a lease of Chislet Park. The former he bequeathed to his elder son Cranmer, and the latter he left to his son Thomas. His will, which is preserved in the Probate Court Registry at Canterbury, was proved by his widow, on the 17th of January, 1547. In it he says, "I beg the Archbishop to move [George] Lord Cobham, my brother, to remember his promise made unto me, concerning the jointure of £20 a year which he promised to Susan my wife." Thomas, Lord Cobham, had two other sons, William and Edward: the first of whom died without issue. Of his daughters, Margaret was married to Sir John Fogge, of Repton; Faith, to William Ockenden, Gentleman Porter of Calais; and Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Wyatt, of Allington, and afterwards to Sir Edward Warner.

The description of the magnificent tomb of George Brooke, Lord Cobham, and the lives of George, William, and Henry Brooke, the three last Barons, require more space than can be devoted to them in this volume. They are therefore deferred, and will appear in the next volume of *Archæologia Cantiana*.