

THOMAS SMYTHE, OF WESTENHANGER, COMMONLY CALLED CUSTOMER SMYTHE.

BY J. F. WADMORE, A.R.I.B.A.

THE family of Smithe,* or Smythe, from which sprang the Lords Strangford, was settled at Corsham in Wilts in the time of Henry VIII.† John Smythe, a substantial yeoman and clothier, who married a daughter of Thomas Brounker,‡ died at Corsham in 1538, leaving his wife a life interest in his mill, with the reversion of it to his son John, as well as his other property. John Smythe's eldest son, named after his father, married a daughter of John Lygon of Richard Castle, Herefordshire, to whom a grant of arms was accorded.§ To Thomas, his younger son, born in 1522, he left a farm in the Hundred of Amesbury, Wilts, of the value of £20 per annum. Thomas, who must have been about sixteen years of age at the time of his father's death, came up to London with the intention of seeking his fortune. Before commencing business on his own account, which he was able to do after disposing of his landed property, he took up his freedom in his father's guild, the Haberdashers, and subsequently in that of the Skinners|| also, which may account for his intimate connection with Sir Andrew Judde.

In the reign of Queen Mary Mr. Thomas Smythe succeeded in the office of the Customs one Mr. Cocker,¶ to whom he paid a sum of £2500 as a fine. Shortly afterwards he married his first and only wife Alice, daughter of Sir Andrew Judde. This event must have taken place somewhere about 1554, as his second son, John, who succeeded him—the first-born, Andrew, having died in infancy—was born in 1556. Sir Andrew, according to Hasted, settled upon Smythe the manor of Ashford,** which he had only

* The name is spelt Smithe in the will, and Smythe on the monument in Ashford Church, and in original MSS. Three other gentlemen of distinction each named Sir Thomas Smith were contemporary with "the Customer:" (1) a Secretary to Lord Burleigh (died 1571); (2) a Latin Secretary to James I. (died 1606); (3) the High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1623.

† Sir R. C. Hoare's *Wilts*.

‡ Fonblanque's *Lives of the Strangfords*, p. 2.

§ Fuller's *Worthies*, vol. ii., p. 551.

|| *Haberdashers and Skinners' Court Books*.

¶ Appendix to *Calendar of Dom. State Papers*, A.D. 1567, p. 4.

** Hasted, vol. vii., p. 529. This is not strictly correct. The manor, once held by the College of St. Stephen's, Westminster, was surrendered to the Crown

recently purchased of Sir Anthony Aucher. At the time of this marriage Mr. Thomas Smythe must have been about thirty-three years of age, and his wife about twenty-four.

Mr. Smythe was confirmed in his appointment at the Customs on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and continued in the office for a period of eleven years. In 1567 he appears to have incurred her Majesty's severe displeasure,* having been accused of issuing privy warrants or cockets whereby a loss of revenue was sustained, to the extent of some £6000; and it was only through the kind intervention of his friend Cecil that he escaped imprisonment. Cecil persuaded her Majesty to be lenient, as if time were allowed he would doubtless pay up, but if he were imprisoned her Majesty would be the loser.

Previous to the commencement of her Majesty's reign, we learn from Stow† that the Customs of the Port of London were frequently evaded. To remedy these abuses, an Act was passed in the 1st of Elizabeth, and a Royal Commission appointed, which fixed landing-places for the reception of all kinds of goods and merchandise. Fifteen principal quays were named for the port of London. Billingsgate was set apart for fish, corn, salt, and stores; The Three Cranes in the Vintry, for wines and oils; Johnson's and Butler's Wharves, for pitch, tar, iron, deals, eels, hemp, cloths, skins, etc. Newcastle coals might be shipped at any place in the port of London, in the presence of a searcher; and the same privilege was granted to goods entered in the Custom House books; the Bridge House was for corn and provisions, and the Guildhalda Teutonica for foreign merchants; all other places were ordered to be closed.

Among the officers appointed by the commissioners was Mr. Thomas Smythe to the office of collector for customs and subsidies inwards; while those outwards were placed in the hands of Mr. Robinson; and Mr. Chapman was appointed controller. Besides these, there were two searchers and sixteen waiters, with other petty officers, and one packer who acted for the City of London.

This new arrangement did not work satisfactorily,‡ so Mr.

in the time of Edward VI.; and in the third year of the same reign was granted to Thomas Colepeper, who, without licence from the Crown, granted it to Sir Anthony Aucher. Sir Anthony, being in want of money, mortgaged it to Sir Andrew Judde, who subsequently foreclosed. Sir Andrew died seised of the manor of Essetesford or Asheford, of a water-mill in the tenure of one Robinson, of the manor of Estore, 110 acres of pasture and thirty-six acres of meadow, and a rental of £6 13s. 4d. (Furley, in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XVI., pp. 164-5). Furley tells us that lands held of the Crown can not be alienated without the royal licence (Furley's *Weald*, vol. ii., p. ii., p. 504). It therefore became necessary, when the estate passed to Sir Thomas Smythe and his wife Alice (on the termination of the life interest of Dame Mary, the wife of Sir Andrew Judde), to obtain a pardon or authority from Parliament for a licence to hold the same; this was done, and a fee of £31 5s. 9d. exacted to remedy the omission. The present lord of the manor is W. F. B. Jemmett, Esq.

* 1567, Appendix to *Calendar of Dom. State Papers*, p. 4.

† Strype's *Stow*, ed. MDCCXX., book ii., p. 49.

‡ 1560, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. xv., *Calendar*, p. 166.



PHOTO-LITHO. SPRAGUE & CO LONDON

S. E. VIEW OF WESTENHANGER. 1886.

Henry Smith within a short time presented a memorial to her Majesty, as to certain abuses existing in the Custom House and Mint, whereby the Crown sustained a loss; and he further prayed to be employed in superintending the customs. The result appears to have been that he, in conjunction with Mr. James Moreley, was rewarded with the farming of the customs on all* woollen cloths and wines. Another charge was made by George Nedeham.† Mr. Thomas Smythe, however, was retained as collector of customs (petty) for all foreign goods and merchandise brought into the ports of London, Sandwich, and Chichester, for eleven years; when a clear and full account of all duties and subsidies was drawn up by him, and submitted to Lord Burleigh.‡ These accounts are most beautifully and accurately entered even to farthings. The total of the petty customs received in this time amounted to the sum of £15,978 3s. 3½d., and the subsidies of impositions to £134,274 7s. 11d.: the average of both for the eleven years being £13,659 6s. 6d.§

On this average Mr. Thomas Smythe|| submitted a proposal to her Majesty to advance money yearly on all customs and subsidies of all foreign goods and merchandise brought into the Ports of London, Sandwich, and Chichester (wines only excepted), and further to pay over to the Crown a fine of £5000. This was in May, and in August we find the Queen¶ writing to the Treasurer of the Exchequer, directing him to pay over the moiety of the fine payable by Thomas Smythe, Farmer of the Customs, into the hands of Richard Stonley, one of the Tellers. Some further delay and correspondence appears to have taken place before the agreement was completed, to expedite which Mr. Smythe** wrote to Sir William

* 1567, *Domestic State Papers*, vol. xliv., *Calendar*, p. 299.

† *Ib.*, vol. xlii., 1567, *Calendar*, p. 289.

‡ 1570, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. lxix., *Calendar*, pp. 378, 382.

§ Shortly after the appointment of Thomas Smythe the following singular incident occurred. The English Government being in want of ammunition, Sir Thomas Gresham arranged for a supply from Antwerp. This required great secrecy, as its export was forbidden under the severest penalties, and various ingenious schemes were adopted to evade the law. Nevertheless the ammunition was exported in comparatively small quantities, and Sir Thomas Gresham's correspondence had frequent references to silks, satins, velvets, and damasks, which were supposed to be imported. The continual arrival of these stores at the Tower attracted attention, although the danger had been pointed out by Gresham to the Council at home. On the 13th of June 1560, Sir Thomas was much disgusted (when he was informed by the searcher who was in his confidence as conveyor of velvets) that an Englishman had been with the Customer and informed him of the many velvets of all sorts lately arrived in London, and that, if he made a general search now, he would find a great booty; whereupon the Customer desired the searcher to be with him on the 15th very early in the morning. As this would have led to an exposé of the whole transaction, the parties conferred together, and the matter was wisely and judiciously dropped. (*Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham*, by Walter Burgon, vol. i., 381.)

|| *Dom. State Papers*, May 1570, vol. lxix., *Calendar*, p. 378.

¶ *Ib.*, vol. lxxiii., *Calendar*, p. 391.

** *Ib.*, 1570, *Calendar*, pp. 390-1.

Cecil asking for his friendly assistance. The arrangement then made appears to have given satisfaction to all parties, so much so that a fresh agreement was drawn up by which the Crown granted to Mr. Thomas Smythe* the farm of the customs, subsidies, and duties of the Ports of London, Chichester, Sandwich, Southampton, and Ipswich, with the Clerkship of Woodbridge, and provides that, in consideration of the great increase of her Majesty's customs in the two last demises, exceptions are to be made of tunnage, prisage, and butlerage of all wines, and forfeitures, to be held by him for four years from Michaelmas next (September, 1572), at a rental of £20,000, one moiety to be paid on the 1st of June and the 10th day of January following.† Covenants were introduced permitting Mr. Smythe to detain out of rent all sums due for customs, etc., and dispensed with by her Majesty to any person, the same being proved before the Lord Treasurer;‡ also that no officer by any colour of their office shall withhold customs.

All wares (by her Majesty's command) brought from beyond the seas into any ports, havens, or creeks, within the realm, were to be delivered to Mr. Smythe or his assigns before unlading.

The document further provides that, if Mr. Smythe shall at any time fee the officers to conceal the customs, their offices should be voided, and he himself incur a penalty of £6000, and be further dealt with at her Majesty's pleasure. In this grant to Mr. Thomas Smythe wines were excepted.§ It may be interesting in passing to note that, according to an ancient custom, it was not an unusual thing for her Majesty,|| by an order in Council, to remit the duties altogether: accordingly we find that, on the 21st of November 1571, ten bishops were allowed to import from eight to twelve tuns each, certain of the nobility from twelve to four tuns each, the Spanish Ambassador twelve tuns or more if needful, State officers and noble ladies thirty-three kilderkins, each esquire from one to ten tuns. To this order in Council the following curious note is added: That any lady with a good reputation for hospitality, omitted from the list, may have meet allowance, provided the total quantity does not exceed 1000 tuns yearly.¶

Smythe's capacity for business was not, however, wholly absorbed in the management of the customs; he entered largely into mining speculation in company with Humphry, Shutz, Cole, and Williams.

* Appendix, *Dom. State Papers*, 1572, vol. xxi., *Calendar*, p. 438.

† *Cal. Dom. State Papers*, p. 438.

‡ A private arrangement was also made between the Lord Treasurer and Mr. Smythe to allow of the exportation (*D.S.P.*, vol. xc., *Calendar*, p. 454) of 4000 barrels of beer.

§ The importation being regulated under the Act for the Importation of Sweet Wines, 1 Eliz. (*H. Hall*, vol. i., p. 306.)

|| Appendix, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. xx., *Calendar*, p. 372.

¶ A table shewing the Customs and Subsidy of Imports and Exports in the year 1570 is given by Hubert Hall, vol. ii., pp. 243, 244.

Imports, Foreign	-	-	-	-	£45,336	18	0
Exports, English	-	-	-	-	26,665	3	10

Balance in favour of Imports - £18,671 14 2

They obtained licence to dig for minerals and ores in England, with power to impress workmen, waggons and horses.* In 1568 the works had so far proved successful that Humphry writes and sends specimens.†

We find Mr. Customer Smythe‡ at one time acting as a banker to the Commissioners appointed for improving Dover Haven as regards the tonnage money granted for the repair of the Haven, and giving a bond in conjunction with Mr. John Bird and Mr. John Watts, his brother officers, for the payment of £5000 to the Harbour Commissioners, for which an indenture was drawn up between the Crown and the Mayor and Jurats of the town of Dover for the payment of the same; and Sir Thomas Scott, on or before the 7th of June 1584, signed a warrant authorizing Mr. Customer Smythe§ to receive £5000 out of the Exchequer for the use of Dover Harbour.

His intimacy with Sir Thomas Scott, Treasurer to the Dover Harbour Commissioners, ultimately ripened into a closer connection, when Sir Robert Smythe of Leeds Castle,|| the fourth son of Mr. Customer Smythe, espoused Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Thomas Scott of Scott's Hall, Kent; and many subsequent letters from Mr. Smythe are dated from Scott's Hall.

Smythe at this time became more mixed up in mining matters, at Bokellyn in Cornwall, and at Treworthye. To William Carnsewe and Ulric Frose,¶ who appear to have had the local management of the mines, he sent money from time to time to prosecute the works. Carnsewe, although satisfied with the skill of the English miners, is nevertheless of opinion that German labourers should be tried in competition with them.** Mr. Smythe writes in return to thank Carnsewe for his offer for the furtherance of the mineral works, but the Company had resolved to go on with the lead mines at Perrin Sands, requesting that Hans Hering should be discharged. He also remonstrates against the high wages paid to the Dutch miners, when Cornishmen do as well on less wages, and intimates at the same time that the great expenses of the undertaking now fall on him,†† as the partners will not advance any more money; he further complains that the ore produced yielded but two ounces of silver to the cwt., which did not pay. Ulric Frose advised Carnsewe to work the mines deeper, to yield a profit, as in Germany it is usual to work from thirty to forty fathoms before they come to the ore. This advice appears to have been followed :

* 1565, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. xxxvii., *Calendar*, p. 259.

† *Ib.*, *Calendar*, p. 305.

‡ 1583, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. clx., *Calendar*, p. 106; and 1584, April 10, vol. clxx., No. 26, *Calendar*, p. 171.

§ *Domestic State Papers*, A.D. 1584, vol. clxxi., *Calendar*, p. 180.

|| C. Wickham Martin, *Leeds Castle*, p. 156.

¶ 1583-4, *Domestic State Papers*, vol. clxiii., *Calendar*, p. 131; vol. clxvii., *Calendar*, p. 153.

** 1584, Feb. 10, *Domestic State Papers*, vol. clxviii., No. 13, *Calendar*, p. 158.

†† 1584, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. clxix., No. 16, *Calendar*, p. 164.

a new level was completed, and the assays yield 50 lbs. of lead and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver per cwt.* He reports the ore very good, and in great quantities in the copper mine at Logan. On this Mr. Smythe replies from Fenchurch Street, London, that he has conferred with Mr. Weston about the mineral works at Perrin Sands, from which the Company expect to make 100 tons of copper per annum; he directs Ulric† to confer with Carnsewe, and to act on his advice. Shortly afterwards Ulric reports the existence of a copper lode 4 feet broad, in a tin mine at St. Helliers,‡ which he proposes to work. The new workings at Perrin Sands were soon 50 fathoms long under all the old works,§ and the copper mines at St. Ann's or Logan furnished good ore, which, when raised, was sent round by sea to be smelted at Neath in South Wales, where, at Michaelmas 1584, Ulric Frose was put in charge, and there in March 1587, with improved facilities,|| 24 cwt. were run in seven hours. For all practical superintendence Ulric Frose and Carnsewe appear to have had the management of the works, the Customer and his friends finding the capital necessary, until Carnsewe was offered a share in the undertaking, and made one of the directors. Early in 1587 the works at St. Just were closed, and the miners discharged.

Nor was the active mind of the Customer satisfied with the speculation, and the uncertain profits to be derived from mines. His position brought him almost daily into connection with some of the most adventurous and daring spirits of the age. Sir Walter Raleigh,¶ the prime promoter of the Virginia Company, and Adrian Gilbert of the Muscovy Company, who obtained grants from the Crown "to search for, discover, and acquire and colonize new and unknown lands," with exemptions from customs' duty for a period of sixty years, on condition of handing over to the Crown a royalty of one-fifth of all gold, silver, and pearls that might be obtained. Into such adventures the Customer entered with hearty zeal, fitting out ships for long voyages and the discovery of new countries.** He appears to have been on intimate terms with all the principal men of his time, at one time entertaining the Earl of Leicester and the Spanish Ambassador at his residence in Gracious Street. He was a patron and friend of the clergy in cherishing and promoting true religion, as well as a liberal and generous encourager of learning.††

* 1584, April 14, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. clxx., No. 37, *Calendar*, p. 172.

† *Ib.*, vol. clxxi., No. 36, *Calendar*, p. 183.

‡ *Ib.*, No. 62, *Calendar*, p. 185.

§ 1584, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. clxxii., No. 31, *Calendar*, p. 191.

|| 1587, *Dom. State Papers*, vol. cxcix., No. 18, *Calendar*, p. 393.

¶ *Hakluyt*, vol. ii., pp. 113, 114, 129, 132.

** Inscription on monument. *D.S.P.*, 1585, vol. clxxvi., *Calendar*, p. 227.

†† Fonblanque's *Strangfords*, p. 4; see also Catalogue British Arms, C 38 d., b. *The Life, Acts, and Death of Prince Arthur*, by John Leyland, published in 1582, is inscribed by the author to his principal patrons Lord Grey de Wilton, Sir Henry Sidney, and Customer Smythe; a second edition was inscribed to him as Chief of the Worshipful Society of Archers, 1591.

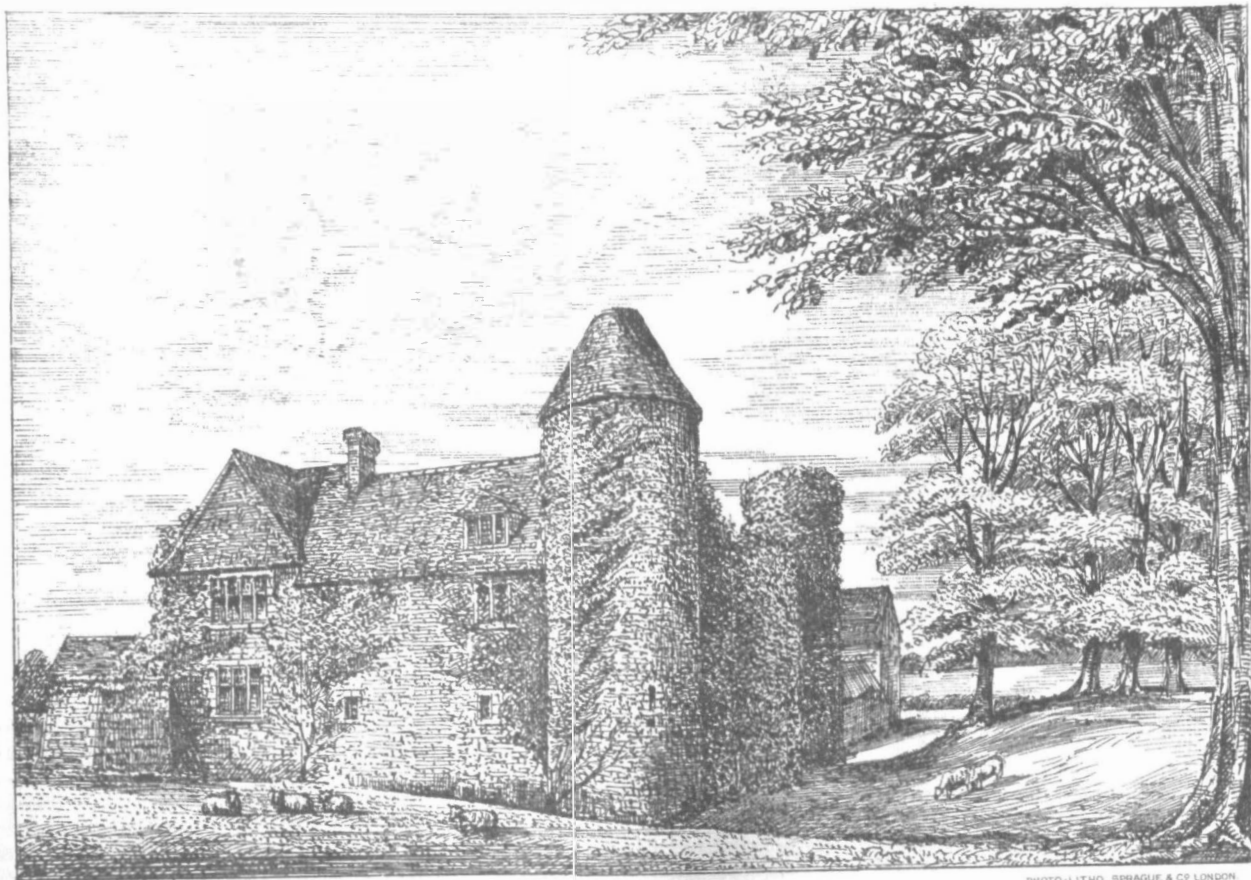


PHOTO-LITHO, SPRAGUE & CO LONDON

N.E. VIEW OF WESTENHANGER, KENT.

At this period of his life he appears to have so far regained the esteem and affection of his Royal Mistress as to have been singled out for her special regard. On the 26th of May 1585, at the Court of St. Margaret's, Westminster, her Majesty directs her faithful councillor, Jacob Croft, to prepare a grant of the royal manors Eastenhanger* and Westenhangert in the county of Kent, to Thomas Smythe, Esq., his heirs and assigns, with all and singular the rights and customs, mills, houses, workshops, and fisheries lately belonging to her Royal ancestors, Edward VI. and Henry VIII., to hold by military service, at an annual fine of £3 8s. 6½d.

In 1570, at the time of Lambard's Perambulation, there were two very fine parks on these manors. The principal buildings consisted of a moated castle and drawbridge, which were under the care of Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, when Queen Elizabeth visited Westenhangert in 1573.† The original name appears to have been Le Hangre, according to Hasted,§ when the estate belonged to the noble families of Criol and Auberville in the time of Henry III., from whom it passed to the Poynings. Hasted says that Sir Edward Poynings, K.G., "resided at Westenhangert, where he began building magnificently, but died in 14 Henry VIII. before his stately mansion here was finished." Afterwards King Henry VIII. expended large sums on completing it.|| As there are but scanty remains of its ancient grandeur, I may perhaps be excused for quoting Hasted's description of it:¶

"The ruins of this mansion, though small, shew it to have been formerly a very large and magnificent building. From one of the towers still retaining the name of Rosamond's Tower (where tradition is that the fair mistress of Henry II. was kept for some time), it should seem to have been built even before his reign. . . . The site of the house, moated round, had a drawbridge, a gatehouse and portal, the arch of which was large and strong, springing from six polygonal pillars, with a portcullis to it. The walls were very high and of great thickness, the whole of them embattled** and fortified with nine great towers, alternately square and round, and a gallery reaching throughout the whole, from one to the other; one of these on the N. side was Rosamond's Tower, and it is supposed that she was kept there before her removal to Woodstock. The room called her prison was a long upper one of 160 feet in length, which was likewise called her gallery. Within the great gate of entrance was a court of 130 feet square. Over the door of entrance into the house was carved in stone the figure of St. George on horseback, and under it four shields of arms, one of which was the arms of England, and another a key and a crown, supported by

* Record Office, *Originalia*, 27 Eliz., p. 4, m. 44, 45, 46.

† There is a view of Westenhangert in Groves's *Antiquities*; also in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1823.

‡ Hasted, vol. viii., p. 74.

§ Hasted, vol. viii., p. 68.

|| Camden's *Brit.*, p. 348.

¶ Hasted, vol. viii., p. 64.

** Licence to wall and embattle was granted in the time of Edward III. *Vide* Ric. Fogge's *Chronicle*, in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. V., p. 128.

two angels; on the right hand was a flight of twenty freestone steps, 8 feet wide, which led into a chapel, 33 feet long and 17 feet wide, curiously vaulted with stone, erected by Sir Edward Poynings, *temp.* Henry VIII., and a curiously carved canopy at each corner of the window of the chapel. . . . The great hall was 50 feet long and 32 feet wide, with a music gallery at one end, and at the other a range of cloisters which led to the chapel, and other appointments of the house in which were 126 rooms, and by report 365 windows. In 1701 more than three parts of the mansion was pulled down."

Such was the mansion which, although somewhat mutilated and damaged by a disastrous fire, Customer Smythe repaired and adapted for his own use. The accompanying plans, one dated 1648 from Colepeper's *Adversaria*,* and another representing the existing remains, will enable our readers to form a more accurate idea of its former extent and importance. The Rosamond Tower stands at the north-western angle, and may be a building of the Norman period, as the windows and work attest, but in more modern times it appears to have done duty as an oast-house, *circa* 1700, in connection with some substantial farm buildings now occupied by farm servants. There are still some remains of other towers, as well as of the principal entrance under the gateway before mentioned, and the foss which at one time encircled the building. These can be distinctly seen by travellers to Hythe and Folkestone, on the south side of the South-Eastern Railway, near the Westenhanger station.

The increasing wealth of the Customer only tends to shew that his gains were large; and Elizabeth, ever on the watch to replenish her exchequer, did not fail to require larger and larger fines for a renewal of the leases; with these demands he at length found himself unable to comply, and in consequence he again fell under her Majesty's severe displeasure. I append a copy of his letter to Lord Burleigh.

STATE PAPERS DOMESTIC, ELIZABETH, VOL. 227, No. 22.

Right honorable beinge adv^tised y^t her hignes com^dement was that I should attende yo^r ho. to vnderstande by yo^r ho. her ma^{ties} plesure concerninge my gret busines. Truly my good Lord I am most hartily sorry y^t my sicknes cannot suffer me to accomplish her ma^{ties} com^dement herin; for were I as able as I am most desierous I should have thought my selfe happie to have spoken wth yo^r ho. my selfe; But wheras it plesed yo^r ho. to com^municat wth my servant Toulderve what her ma^{ties} plesure was herin, & to requier my answer. It may plesse yo^r ho. to be adv^tised that I vnderstandinge of her ma^{ties} high & heavie displeasure concevid against me by the sinister informations of many my vnderdeserved adv^saris w^{ch} rather fancied my overthrow then her ma^{ties} benefit; And again consideringe y^t her ma^{ties} flavor vpon Erthe, as gods in heaven were y^e true grounds of all comfort bothe in heaven & Erthe: wth a sickle boddye, a diseaced minde, & a tremblinge hande (all w^{ch} were occasioned through my discomfort for her ma^{ties} displeasure) I made an offer to her ma^{ty} vnder my hande of Tenne thousand poundes by my handes to be payde in Tenne yeres to her

* *Harleian MS.* 7599 in the British Museum, *Adversaria*, Letter O.

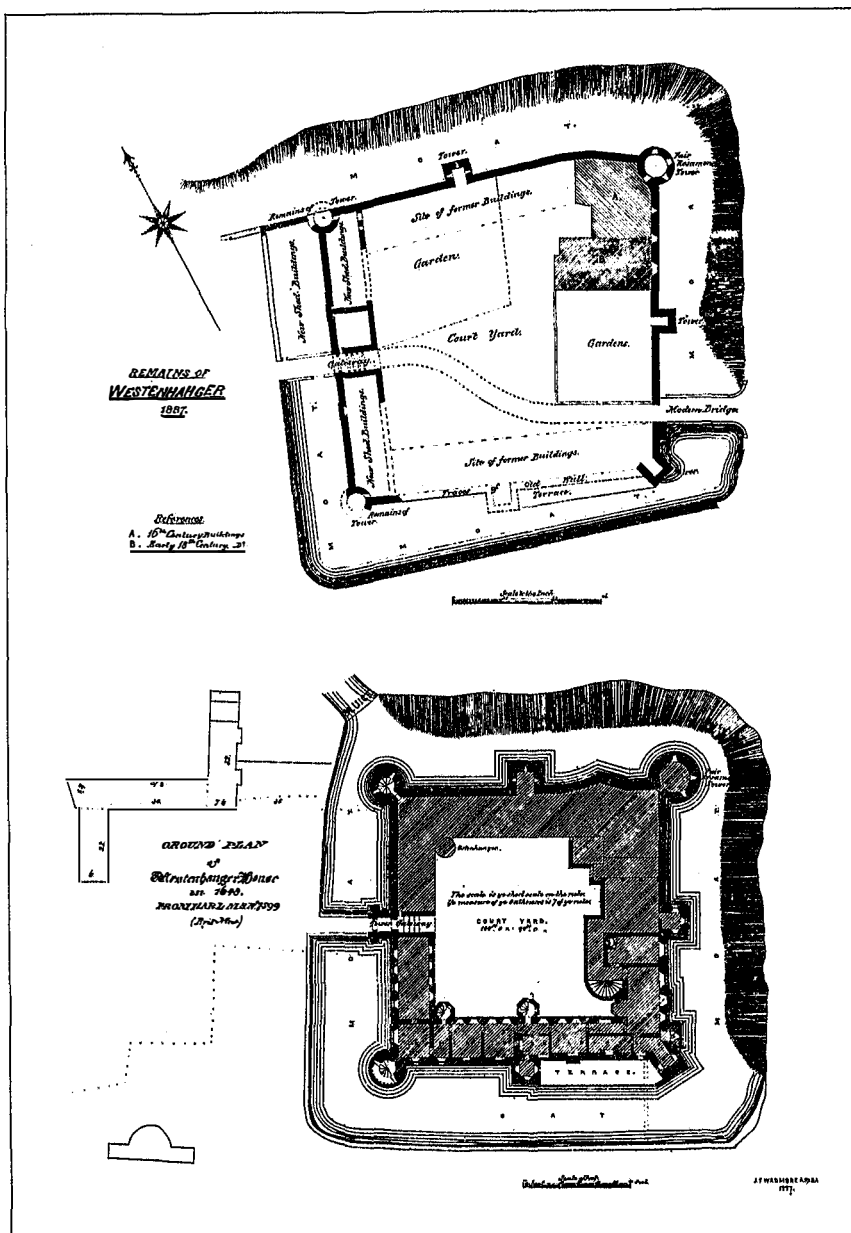


PHOTO-LITHO. SPRAGUE & CO LONDON.

GROUND PLANS OF WESTENHANGER HOUSE.
 IN A. D. 1648 AND, A. D. 1887.

ma^{ti} : & other fyve thowsande pounds to be payde into her ma^{ties} Exchequer by fyve hundred poundes a yere ; what farder promes I made upon the yerely profit of my ffarme I assuer yo^r ho. I doe not nowe remember, having nether kept coppie of my offer, nor com'unicated it wth any man who might helpe my memory. But to my best remembrance I was to paye her ma^{ty} 1000l. yerelye vpon my ffarme for fyve yeres & so to make it vpp Twenty thowsand pounde : Being in this case p'mised by the messinger from her ma^{ty} that if by strange alteration of Tymes thinges felle owte contrarily I should by her ma^{ties} goodnes be no loosor. Nowe my good L. to howe gret a portion of my welth this offer streacheth & wth howe heavie a harte I was induced to it god & my selfe best knowes. But being so faithfully assured by the messinger not only of my present quietus est but also of her ma^{ties} former most good & gracious flavor The assurance herof I esteemed so inestimable a Treasure as I strained my selfe to the vttermost to procure it. Wherfor my good L. being now againe moved by yo^r ho. to an enlargement of my former offer (wherin I protest vnto yo^r ho. I strained my selfe to the vttermost before) I am in all humilite by yo^r ho. good menes most humbly to crave pardon of her ma^{ty} herin being a thing w^{ch} without the vtter Ruin of my selfe & mine I canne by no menes performe.

Thus most hombly beseeching yo^r ho. by yo^r ho. meanes & mediatioⁿ to her ma^{ty} to free me from y^t heavie burden, of her hignes displeasure (y^t so presseth me to y^e Erthe, y^t I crave of the Erthe to cover bothe my discredit & sorrowe). I most hombly comit yo^r ho. to god & submit my selfe to her ma^{ties} com'iseration hombly praiinge aswell her hignes as yo^r ho. y^t this my offer may not be knowne to many for my credit sake. This xvith of Octo. 1589.

Yo^r ho. ever most hombly at com'ande.

THOMAS SMYTHE.

This offer was not accepted. His increasing infirmities and the weight of his Royal Mistress's displeasure combined to shorten a life already marked with many honourable and worthy actions. He departed this life on the 7th of June 1591, leaving his widow, then sixty years of age, and twelve children, six sons and six daughters, "of whom more anon."

A breviat of five pages* (in the Record Office) shews the total receipts of the four farms of Customs and Subsidy, as shewn by the books of Mr. Thomas Smythe, for a period of eighteen years, from the thirteenth of her Majesty's reign to the thirtieth, giving receipts ranging from £20,000 to £42,000 per annum; also that during the first twelve years of her Majesty's reign when Mr. Smythe was collector of the London subsidy, inwards only, it averaged £11,599 16s. 10d.; whereas from the twenty-seventh to the thirtieth, when he was farmer, it was £30,263 15s. 2½d., and that by the last farm he gained £16,119 5s. 5d. Also that from the nineteenth to the twenty-first his farm of the Customs and Subsidies inwards on London and the ports averaged £25,486 8s. 6d.; but that during the last two years when it was in the Queen's hands, under Mr. Alderman Billingsley, it was £35,823 16s. 5½d., shewing the losses her Majesty had sustained under the practices of Mr. Smythe.

Her Majesty's attention was also directed to the duty on the export off lead beyond the seas, the tax on which had continued the same for the last forty years, although many of the European states at this time obtained their chief supply from England.

* *Calendar of Domestic State Papers*, June 1591, 1594, p. 64.

† *Calendar of Domestic State Papers*, A.D. 1591, pp. 133, 155, No. 131.

As regards tin also, it appeared that 15s. 6½d. royalty was received by the Queen on every 1000 lb. weight raised in Devonshire, and 40s. in Cornwall, the miners having the right to sell it to whom they pleased unless required for the use of the state. In this respect there was a loss of revenue of some £2000, which the miners and tinnerns offered to give, but that if not left in the hands of the patentees there were other merchants who were willing to give £5000 or £6000 for it. Such facts as these go far to shew that the mining operations carried out by Mr. Customer Smythe and his co-partners were not so unprofitable a speculation as the correspondence between the managers and agents before mentioned indicated.

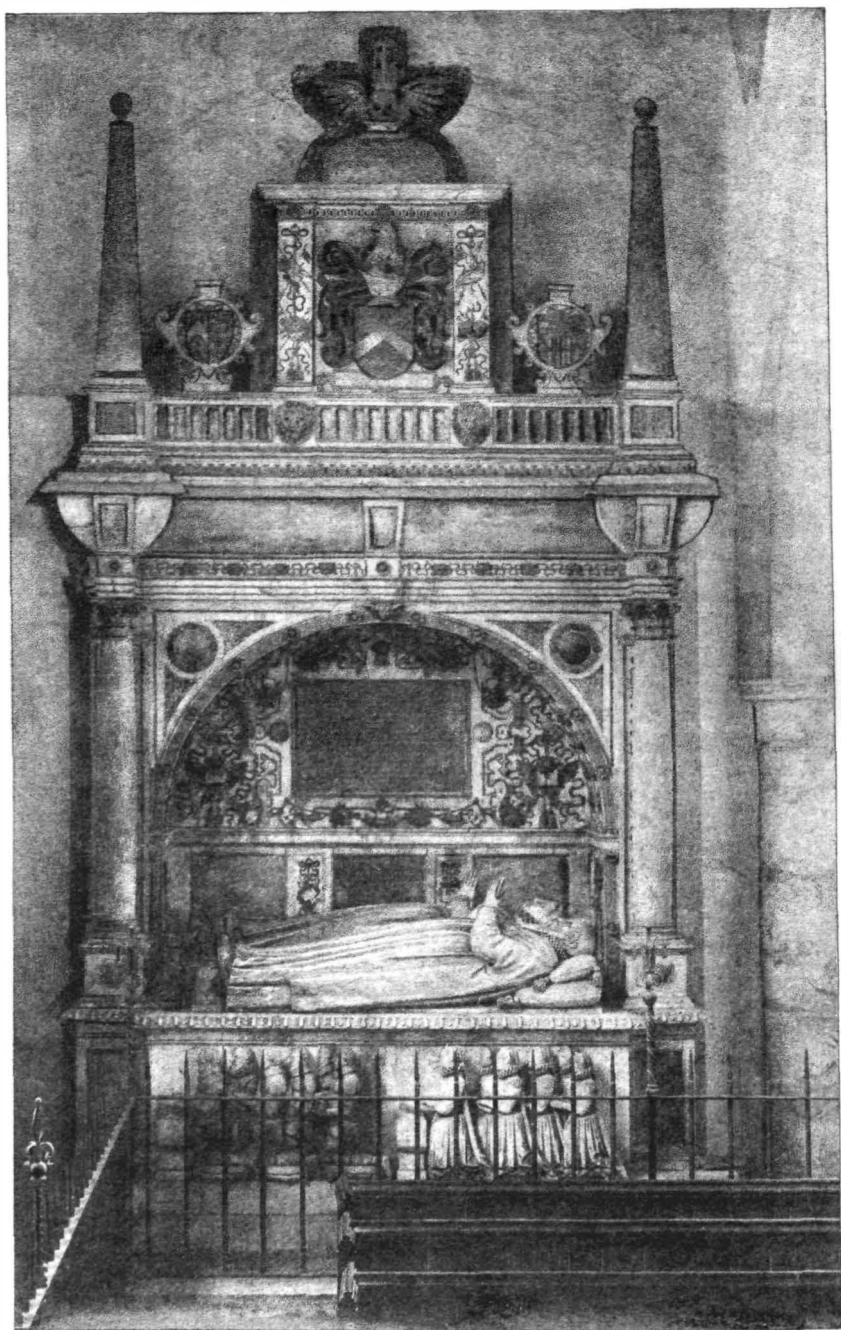
Mr. Thomas Smythe, by his wife Dame Alice, the daughter of Sir Andrew Judde before mentioned, had (besides Andrew, who died when an infant) six sons and the like number of daughters. First, John; then Thomas, Henry, Richard, Robert, and Symon—the latter was killed at the Siege of Cadiz, and he is represented on the monument as having a skull in his hands. His daughters were Elizabeth, unmarried at the time of his death; Mary, the wife of Robert Davy; Joan, the wife of Thomas Fanshaw; Katherine, who was married at the age of sixteen to Sir Rowland Hayward, a cloth-worker, Lord Mayor in 1571; Alice, the wife of William Harris; and Ursula, the wife of William Butler. His will,* dated the 22nd day of May in the 33rd year of the reign of Elizabeth, was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury by his executors Sir Rowland Hayward, Knt., John Smythe, Thomas Fanshaw, and Mr. Thomas Aldowsey. It commences with the lengthy preamble usual at that time, expressing his faith in the merits of his Saviour, and after providing that his body shall be buried by his executors in the Parish Church of Ashford, he exhorts them to avoid "vain pomp as the World by customs in times of darkness were used," but rather that the money may be expended on the poor. His next charge is as to the payment of his debts, "first such as I owe to my most gracious† Sovereign the Queen's most excellent Majesty whom God long preserve be duly satisfied," and for the more speedy arrangement thereof he wills and appoints that the leases of Maniton and Thorndon Wood in the county of Kent be sold for the payment of the same.

To his wife Dame Alice he leaves his lease and interest in his messuage and tenement in London, for the term of her natural life, together with all his household stuff therein, providing she does not marry.

To his daughter Elizabeth he leaves the full sum of £1500 for her orphan portion, according to the laudable custom of the City of London; £1400, and the residue of his goods and chattels,

* Somerset House, *vide* St. Barbe, fol. 78.

† Sir John Smythe, as his executor, received a remission of these on consideration of resigning a bond of £3000 made to him by the late Lord Cobham (*Domestic State Papers*, vol. xii., *Calendar*, p. 197).



INK-PHOTO, SPRAGUE & CO LONDON.

MONUMENT OF
THOMAS SMYTHE ESQ^{RE}
Commonly Called the Customer
IN ASHFORD CHURCH, KENT.

to his children who were unadvanced, to be equally divided according to the custom of the said city.

To his daughter Mary Davy, wife of Robert Davy, he leaves the sum of £500, and to their children the like sum of £500 to be equally divided.

To Thomas, Katherine, and William, the children of his daughter Joan, wife of Thomas Fanshaw, and of his late wife Mary, the sum of £500 to be equally divided.

To the children of his daughter Katherine, wife of Sir Rowland Hayward, Knt., £500 to be divided.

To the children of his daughter Alice, wife of William Harris, the sum of £550 to be divided.

To the children of his daughter Ursula, the wife of William Butler, the sum of £550 to be divided.

To his son John plate of the value of £100, to Thomas £100, to Henry Smythe £100, and to his children, not exceeding three at the time of his decease, £50 a year, to Richard Smythe £100.

To his brother Horsepoole and his wife £550, and to every one of his brothers and sisters a ring of gold of the value of 50 marks a piece. To his kinsman Henry Smith £20, and his brother Richard £100. To his household servants at the time of his decease £50 each. To William Bromley Rowland £20. To his loving friend Thomas Owen, Sergeant-at-Law, £20; also to Christopher Toldervey, for his great care of his affairs, £200. To Peter Loughton £20.

He further directs that his executors shall provide him a suitable monument in Ashford Church, and that a sum of £40 should be given to the poor of Ashford, £10 to the poor of Corsham, and to the prisons in and about London the sum of £40. Signed and sealed in the presence of Mr. Christopher Toldervey. Witnesses, William Whistler and William Offley.

Mr. Thomas Smythe's monument is on the south-east side of the south transept in Ashford Church. The recumbent figures of the Customer and Dame Alice, his wife, are admirably carved in alabaster. The head of Smythe has a peaked beard and close-fitting cap, and the features are those of an able and cultivated gentleman; his dress that of a well-to-do merchant, with doublet, hose, and furred gown; his hands are raised, holding a book, which he appears to be reading. The features of his wife strike one as being rather Flemish in character, on her head she wears a coif or cap. Both effigies rest on a raised monument under an arch springing from impost, the soffit of which is richly ornamented, flanked with Corinthian columns on short pedestals, supporting an enriched architrave, swelled frieze and cornice, surmounted with an open balustrading, pedestals, and obelisks. In the centre is a square coffer, carved and enriched with the arms of the Smythes, surmounted with the helmet and crest. In bas-relief, on the face of the monument below, are the effigies of the children—six sons and six daughters.

The arms of Smythe of Ostenhanger are thus described by

Edmondson, vol. ii.: Azure, a chevron engrailed between three lions passant-gardant or; Crest, a leopard's head erased argent, spotted sable, collared and lined or; granted in 1591.

The following is a translation, made by the Rev. A. J. Pearman, of the inscription on Smythe's monument:*

Sacred to memory. Here, in the certain hope of a blessed resurrection, is interred the most illustrious man Thomas Smythe, Esq., of Westenhanger, who, on account of his tried fidelity and obedience towards his Sovereign, was deemed worthy to be set over the duties of the Customs in the Port of London, which dues he afterwards purchased of the Sovereign by the payment of an annual rent of £30,000, and he presided over them with singular liberality towards those of higher rank, and love towards the trading interests. He expended the means with which an Almighty and Merciful Providence had blessed him freely and willingly, in relieving the poor to the Glory of God, in cherishing the professors of true religion, in promoting literature, and, for the advantage of the State, in fitting out ships for long voyages, in discovering new countries, and opening copper mines. And now, full of years, when he had completed his sixty-ninth year, and brought up six sons and also six daughters, by his dearest wife, herself sixty years of age, daughter and heiress of Sir Andrew Judde, Knt., Lord of the Manor of this Town of Ashford, who are placed by marriage in families of some distinction, he departed this life in firm faith in Christ on the 7th of June in the year of grace 1591.

John Smythe, his eldest son, most sorrowfully erected this monument to the best of fathers and the most beloved of mothers† as a memorial of his duty and affection, and a record to posterity, the other sons and daughters joining in his grief.

MEMORIE SACRUM.

Hic certa spe Beatæ resurrectionis conditur Clarissimus Vir Thomas Smythe de Westenhanger armiger, qui ob Spectatam in Principem fidem et observantiam dignissimus habebatur. Qui portorii Vectigalibus in Londini Portubus præficeretur, quæ postea triginta millium librarum annua pensatione a Principe redemit, et singulari in nobiliores liberalitate et amore in mercatores præstitit, opes quibus illum Deus Opt. Max. beavit, ad Dei gloriam pauperes sublevando veræ Religionis professores fovendo bonasque literas promovendo, et ad Reipublicæ usum longinquas navigationes instituendo novas terras detegendo et ærarias fodinas aperiendo libens lubensque erogavit. Jamque annorum plenus cum sexagesimum nonum annum implevisset—filiosque sex, sex etiam, filias, ex Alicia Charissima conjuge sexagenaria, filia et hærede Andrei Judæ Militis Dⁿⁱ hujus Villæ de Ashford suscepisset—qui in clariores familias matrimonio collocantur, ex hac Vita firma in Christo fide demigravit Junii Septimo anno Salutis 1591.

Johannes Smythe filius primo
genitus optimo patri matrique charissimæ
ceteris filiis, filiabus que collacrimantibus ad officiosæ
pietatis et posteritatis
Memoriam Mæstissimus
posuit.

His widow, the daughter of Sir Andrew Judde, Knt., before mentioned, survived him, living at her late husband's house in London until her decease in 1593.

* *Ashford: its Church, etc.* By Rev. A. J. Pearman. Page 15.

† Dame Alice's will is dated 1592. Mr. Pearman says that she was buried in Ashford Church on the 21st of June 1593.

Her will was proved 11 May 1598 in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury,* and we may fairly conclude from the bequests therein contained that she was of a generous and large-hearted disposition, kind and charitable to the poor and needy, a loving mother, and an affectionate friend.

As the will extends over several folios, we can only glance at a few of the bequests, although all have some matters of interest for the antiquary. Her wish is expressed to be buried without pomp by the side of her husband, and she directs that a mourning gown of black cloth of the value of xx^d a yard be given to her sons, daughters, and relatives, and one cloak of the value of xii^d a yard to her servants.

Out of the first moneys that shall come into the hands of her executors, they shall purchase lands, of the yearly value of £15 per annum at least, to be conveyed in trust to the Company of Skinners of London and their successors; ten pounds to be paid in increasing the pensions of the alms people in Great St. Helen's, founded by her worthy husband; thirty shillings for the relief of the poor women in the Parish of All Saints, Lombard Street, and twenty-four shillings per annum to poor women of St. Gabriel's, Fenchurch Street, and the rest bestowed on the Charity Warden for the time being.

To the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge £100 each; to threescore women of All Saints, Lombard Street, St. Andrew Undershaft, and St. Gabriel's, Fenchurch Street, black gowns; to those of the Town of Barnes and residue of the Parishes of London at the discretion of her executors.

To her cousins, Constance Glover and Thomas Stubbesfield, annuities of £5 a year each, and her man and maid servant annuities, 40s.; to the poor of Ashford, £20; the poor of Stamford, £5; to Christ's Hospital, Little Bartholomew's, and Bridewell, £20; to John Stoddard of Mortlake, and Mr. Roger, £5; to her brothers, Henry and Robert, £3 each.

And further the will goes on to say, "And I give and bequeath to my son Sir John Smith,† my flaggon, chain, and my great bo[w]lls which were my father's, and the furniture of my best chamber, that is to say the hanging, the tapestries, and the bedstead furnished with yellow velvet, and the pillows of yellow-like sarcenet, and yellow little quilt, a feather-bed and bolster, and pillows and blankets, and two chairs of Arras wrought, one great and the other lesser, and two high (hoighe) stools of yellow velvet, a table of wainscote, and two Turkey carpets, one pair of andirons, one pair of tongues and a shovel."

To her daughter, Alice Smith, £50; her daughters, Katherine and Margaret, £10 each; to her daughters, Katherine and Elizabeth, £10 to be paid on their attaining their majority.

To her son Thomas she gives the furniture of her own best chamber, the hangings of tapestry, and the bedstead, with the tester

* Somerset House, Lewin 1, fol. 42.

† Ancestor of the Lords Strangford.

and vallance of crimson velvet, the bed, bolster, pillows, and blankets, and the great coverlid of Arras of the Story of Paris and Helen, her longest Turkey carpet, whereof there was a finer sort of red worsted and an ordinary sort; one table-cloth of damask of the Story of Holofernes, containing five yards in length and three in breadth, and one long broad towel, and two dozen napkins, and two hand towels of the same work, and one long needle-work carpet with the cushions and covered cloth to it.

Her third son Henry receives a table-cloth of damask of the Story of the Prodigal Child, and 100 oz. of white plate, *i.e.* silver.

To Richard Smith and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Scott of Scott's Hall, she bequeathed a bedstead and furniture of green taffany, a feather-bed, bolster, and pillow; a blue velvet chair, six low stools, a feather-bed and bolster for serving, a table-cloth of damask of the Story of the Creation, six yards long, and two dozen napkins, a long towel, and two hand towels, one dozen of high stools covered with Moikyndoe, a green velvet chair, and four of the hangings of the guest chamber. To his son Thomas Smith £100, and to John £50, to be paid on attaining the age of 21.

To Robert Smith, the furniture of the bed chamber, which was hung with carving (carved wainscot), the bedstead and furniture of taffita, one long and two high stools, two chairs of green velvet, bed, bolster, and blankets, a coverlid of Arras of the Story of David and Abigail, a table-cloth of damask, six yards long, a double towel, two dozen napkins, and two hand towels of the same work, of a great flower, four yards of hangings which were in the guest chamber beside the porch, and 40 oz. of white plate.

To her son Symon, the furniture of her son John's chamber, with the bed and tester of green velvet, and curtains of green silk, a bolster, blankets, a coverlid of Arras of the Story of Susanna, a table-cloth of damask, five yards long, two dozen napkins, one large towel, and two hand towels.

To her daughter Joan (Mrs. Fanshaw), her best chain, a table-cloth of damask of the Story of Susanna, of five yards, a double towel, a cupboard cloth, two dozen napkins, and £200 in money.

To the two sons of Mrs. Mary Davy, £200 on their attaining the age of twenty-one, and the like sum to her daughter on her coming of age or marriage, which should first happen.

To her daughter Ursula (Mrs. Butler), 100 oz. of white plate, a small yellow satin quilt, £20 to her sons Thomas, Oliver, and William, and a like sum to Alice and Catherine on attaining the age of twenty-one.

To her daughter Fanshaw (Joan), the third chair of Arras, a table-cloth of damask, seven yards long by five wide, of the Story of Holofernes, a long broad towel, and two dozen napkins, and two hand towels; to her son Thomas, £20; and to William, £10; to Alice, £20; and Katherine, £10.

To her daughter Katherine (wife of Sir Rowland Hayward), her best chair of crimson velvet, embroidered with silk and gold, and a

long cushion suitable to it, and her best ring, being a diamond, to her sons George and John, £10 a year at the age of twenty-one, to her daughter Alice, £20, and to Katherine, Mary, and Amice, £10 on attaining the age of twenty-one or on marriage.

To her daughter Harris (Alice), her jewel ring and \mathcal{A}^* of diamonds, a table-cloth of long damask of the Story of Samuel, containing five yards, a double towel, and two dozen napkins, and two chairs of crimson enstuffa; to her son Thomas Harris, £14 per annum, and to her daughter Dora, £10.

To her daughter Elizabeth Smith, a long table-cloth of diaper, containing six yards in length, a long towel, and two dozen napkins, her carpet of Arras work, a long cushion of green velvet, and two end cushions, one pair of fine sheets of three yards breadth, a pillow pursed and stuffed, a large quilt of crimson taffita, a table-cloth of damask, five yards in length, a double towel, and one dozen napkins, of the work of a great flower, and £300 in money.

Then follow bequests of £20 each to her sons-in-law, Sir Rowland Hayward, Thomas Fanshaw, and William Butler, and to William Harris, £50; to Robert Davy, £20; Susanna Owen, a ring value £3; and Dr. Smith of Wood Steet, the picture of Geoffrey. Legacies are also given to Andrew Judd on his attaining the age of twenty-one, and £20 to Mr. Fisher, together with memorial rings to her brother Horsepool and her sister, his wife, value 40s. each, to — and Amice his wife, value 30s. each; to her sister Martha, a gold ring, a standing cup, and 40 oz. of plate; to her children, rings value 30s. each; to her cousin John Mellor, a ring of 30s.; John Gaythorne and his wife, rings of the value of £3; to Alice Brome and wife of Harry Smith, a ring value 40s.; to John Gaywood, Anne Cooke, Bridget Bird, and Mr. Rogers, rings value 40s.

To the men-servants residing with her at the time of her decease, Thomas Wray, the bedstead in his chamber and £3, and the like to William Payne; John Woodhouse, 40s.; Richard Smith, £5; John Meeson, £3; David Jacob, 40s., and Christopher Moore, £3.

To her maid-servants, Bridget, £4; Grace, 40s.; Susan, £3; Sarah, £3; Mother Self, £3: to be paid in full by her executors.

After mentioning the names of her executors, she prays them to be careful in the performance of her will, according to the meaning of every and all the above named; and "I pray them to be satisfied with my good will towards the said several legatees, considering that at this time I could not do better for them. In witness whereof, I, the said Alice Smith, have set my hand and seal in the presence of Thomas Peake;" and then following, as if omitted, "Item I give the remainder of my goods and chattels to the discharge of my just debts and funeral charges; and I do beg that the said remainder may be divided into six equal parts, five whereof shall be paid to my sons, John, Thomas, Richard, Robert, and Symon, and the sixth part be given to my executors. Signed in the presence of the aforesaid Thomas Peake."

* A monogram for Alice.

There is a codicil, dated May 20, 1593, when the following bequests were added: to John Smith £100, his wife £40; to Thomas 200 oz. of plate, and £200 to his wife; to Henry £100, and £40 to his wife; to Richard 200 oz. of plate, and £100 to his wife; to Robert 60 oz. of plate; to Cousin John, £10; Cousin Henry Smith, £10, and his brother Richard, £10; to Ambrose Davis, a piece of plate; to William Mosey, £5; to Mrs. Clarke, £5; to Mr. Greenham, £5; and other poor preachers, £10 a year: the residue in equal proportions to her sons.

Witnesses, Robert Smith and Elizabeth Fisher.