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THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

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(concluded from Vol. LXXII)

During the long drawn out hearing of the Chandos Peerage Case which was referred to in the previous instalment of this paper, evidence was produced to show that a certain Ann Jackson *alias* Bridges, widow, of London, executed a Will on the 12th October, 1641. Among other bequests were included the sum of Ten pounds "to the Poore of the parishes of Maidstone, Horton, Framingham and the Parish wherein my Corps shall be buried" and "to my Aunt the Lady Astley, for to buy her Mourning, the Sume of Tenn Poundes". Nothing in the Will seems to indicate any connection with the Best family although according to the Indenture of June, 1629, already quoted, a John Best, gent. was the tenant of Allington Castle. Dame Katherine died intestate in January, 1647-8, and her cousin-german John Bridges was, after a hearing before the Court of Prerogative appointed the administrator of her estate.

Sir John signed his Will on the 3rd January, 1639, in the presence of Jo. Vrrick, Jo. flecher and John Harrison. According to the last paragraph the document, as originally written, extended to "twentie sheetes of paper" (the Somerset House record of eight pages is, of course, a contemporary copy) and provides not only much genealogical information concerning the family, various members of which he designates "cosens" irrespective of the degree of relationship but also, because of the phraseology, an insight into the fear which obviously beset him that its provisions might engender dissension or strife between those he intended to benefit and those he did not. On account of its length the will must be summarized here.

Following the customary pious preamble and direction that his body "be buryed in such convenient manner" as his Executor should think fit there follows a series of bequests to the poor and various relations.

To one hundred poor persons of Maidstone Boxley Aylesford and Allington 6/8d. each	£33 . 6 . 0
To "frances Bourne my servant yf hee shalbe dwelling w th mee att the tyme of my decease "	£20 . 0 . 0
To Anne Dearing on the same terms	£10 . 0 . 0
All other menservants } over and above their	£5 . 0 . 0
All other maid servants } wages	£3 . 0 . 0
To Alice Cage da. of " my sister Elianor Knachbull " if a widow and " she demand the same "	£100 . 0 . 0

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To "my lovinge cosen Edward Lenton of Graies Inne, Esquire"	£50 . 0 . 0
To "my godsonne John Knachbull, eldest son of Norton Knachbull at twenty one years of age"	£100 . 0 . 0
To Ruth Rogers da. of Anthony Nevile of Mattersey co. Nottingham Esquire, deceased, if a widow or unmarried	£100 . 0 . 0
To each child of "my cosen Curtis and late neice Bridget, da. of my sister Eleanor"	20 Markes
To each child of "my cosen Turke and late neece Margaret da. of my sister Eleanor"	£10 . 0 . 0
To each child of "my cosen Allen and late neece Susan da. of my sister Eleanor"	£10 . 0 . 0
To "my neece Disney da. of my late sister Margaret Nevile"	40 Markes
To "Nevile Hall son of late dame Margaret Hall who was da. of my late sister Margaret on condition that he immediately pay over the same to his sister Debora towards her portion given her by late father Sir William Hall K ^t . if he had not already paid all her portion." Otherwise to him and his heirs	£200 . 0 . 0
To "my cosen Debora"	40 Markes
and the other children of dame Margaret to be divided equally	40 Markes
To "my welbeloved cosin Sir Jacob Astley K ^t " if alive, but if dead to Elizabeth his daughter if liveing and 21 years of age. Otherwise to the eldest child of Sir Jacob then living	500 Markes
To "my cosen Anne Bridges or Agnes Bridges by what name soever shee bee called whoe is neece to my wife Dame Katherine the full some of One Thousand poundes of lawfull money of England." But if the said Anne should be dead half the sum to Sir Jacob or his heirs and the other half to Thomas Astley "one of the sonnes of my late uncle Thomas Astley" and Iren Astley to be divided equally, if dead to the heirs of the latter	£1,000 . 0 . 0
To "my cosen Thomas Astley aforesaid"	£100 . 0 . 0
To "Irene Astley one of the sons of my late uncle Richard Astley"	40 Markes
To "my beloved cosen Norton Knachbull son of my late sister Eleanor"	300 Markes
and to Thomas Knachbull his brother	£100 . 0 . 0

To "my godsonne John Clifford the sonne of George Clifford of London, gent."

£20 . 0 . 0

"And because I would have dame Katherine my wife to pay to Bridget Cherson als. Wainewright during her life the some of flower poundes quarterlie," at the usual quarter days, "I have herein enlarged my legacie towards her . . . And I desire as much as in my said wife may bee, that such care may be taken in the payment thereof, as that the said Bridget her selfe may receive the same that she may have the whole benefitt thereof to her selfe without her husbände or any other intermeddling with the same."

"I give to John Devorax the sonne of Jone Devorax sometyme my servant the some of Tenn poundes to be disposed of in the most beneficall way it may be for the putting or binding of him to some honest trade or misterie. And if in my life tyme I shall have disposed of him or placed him with any person whatsoever then this legacie to be void."

"And though I conceive it will not be much materiall yett for an establishment of a certaine peace and amitie (as much as in me is) amongst those of my kyndred, my will and desire is that (the aforesaid) John Nevile shall "sign seal and deliver to the said Sir Jacob Astley to his use "one General Release . . . of all my lands tenem^{ts} or hereditaments whatsoever . . . in due forme of lawe . . . as my said Executor shall thinke my mind to be, and one other like release to be made muntatis muntandis by my said Cosine John Nevile to my said cosine Norton Knachbull" (who) "in due form of lawe . . . shall deliver to the said Sir Jacob such general release . . . And if any of my said cosins John Nevile, Norton Knachbull and Sir Jacob Astley shall refuse to make and give such releases . . . I doe hereby declare that it be taken as a manifestation of the want of his or their love and respect to mee and as a neglect of mee and of the performance of my Will and desire."

"Item I give John Nevile One Thousand Markes (or if dead) to his eldest son (or other children) otherwise to Sir Jacob Astley. And further my Will is That all my legacies herein before bequeathed shalbe . . . After that my Executor shall have received of my cosin Norton Knachbull his heirs, etc, the some of Twoe Thousand poundes w^{ch} hee owes me uppon the Statute w^{ch} hee hath acknowledged to mee. Then within One and Twentie daies to pay . . . such of my legacies as my Executor shall think fitt . . . so much as the Two Thousand poundes shall extend unto."

The Will continues to recite in the same terms that the sum of

fifteen hundred pounds owing on another Statute by Sir James Oxinden kt. and One thousand pounds owed by Sir Jacob Astley should similarly be applied to meeting the legacies.

No legatee was to benefit before reaching the age of twenty one and each had to give a full acquittal to the Executor. Also "if any legatee, Maideservant or manservant, to whome I give Wages of five pounds or under by the year . . . shall wthin ffourtie daies before my death or at any time after my death imbezill, take away, conceale, convey away . . . any of my goods, houshold stuffe or chattells whatsoever, or shall know of any other person" doing the same "and not discover the same to my Executor then . . . he, she or they shall loose the benefitt of this my last Will."

Item . . . "my Executor out of my personall estate shall wthin Eighteen months the next after my decease cause to be sett upp and finished in the Chancell of the Collegiate or usuall Church in Maidstone . . . near the monument of my late father . . . One faire Monument of my said father my late mother and my selfe with such Coates of Armes Ornaments and Incriptions as by some herault of Armes shalbe approved, in and about the accomplishment whereof . . . my desire is there bee expended One Hundred pounds or neare the same wthin Tenn pounds at the most."

"Item my Will is that my Terrier booke and great Mapp of all my lands and all my Originall Writings and pattents which . . . concerne any of my said lands tenements or heritaments passed or conveyed in my life tyme to the said Sir Jacob Astley (other then the Counterparts . . .) either in the life tyme of the said dame Katherine or after her death, when and at such tyme as my Executor shall think fitt shalbe delivered to the said Sir Jacob or his heires.

Item I give to my welbeloved wife dame Katherine All my silver plate and all my houshold stuffe or bedstedles, ff featherbedds, bouldsters, blanketts, ruggs, matts, mattresses, Court cupboards, tables, Carpets, Couchchairs and chairs, stooles and hangings whatsoever as are properlie belonging to and ordinarilie used in the severall roomes of my house called the Pallace w^{ch} I intende soe to be without disfurnishing any other roomes in the said house (that is to say) houshold stuffe of the sortes aforesaid properlye belonging to and ordinally used in the roome now comonlie used to dyne and supp in, in the little redd chamber thereunto adioyning, in the room where my said wife now usuallie lyeth, in the little roome or closett thereto adioyning, in the great dyning roome, in the great Lodging Chamber thereto next adioyning towards the North, in the little Chamber within the same, in the Chamber where my selfe doth now usually lodge, in the Chamber next adioyning where my maidservants doe usuallie lye and in the Chamber wthin the same where my said Cosine Agnes Bridges did heretofore



Sir John Astley

Melton Constable collection of portraits

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Jacob 1st Lord Astley

Melton Constable collection of portraits

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The original farm house of Boarley Farm, Boxley



The Barn, Boarley Farm, Boxley

usuallie lye. And concerneing all my household stuffe comonlie used in any of the roomes aforesaid and in the kitchen, buttery and bakehouse and w^{ch} is of iron, brasse, pewter and lynnenn my will is that the same be devided into fower equall partes as well for the quantitie as the qualitie as neare (as for the tyme being) may bee, three partes whereof I give to my wife and the other fowerth parte . . . to my Executor."

Item I doe hereby grant (etc) to my trustie approved and wellbeloved freinde William Harrison of Upper Each in the parish of Woodnesborough (co. Kent) gent. the severall roomes (in the Palace) The Roome w^{ch} I use for my closett where all, or the moste parte, of my bookes and writings now are, the inner roome wthin the same and the roomes and places within the said Closett and inner roome, the little closet goinge upp the gallerie and the whole gallerie and little chamber at the end thereof with all the roomes to the said gallerie belonging, the chamber over the closet aforesaid sometymes called the Schoolehowse and the inner roome thereto, the Chamber next the buttery where my sister Elianor Knachbull usuallie did lye, wth all the inner roomes to be gone into out of the same, and the hovell w^{ch} is att the ende of the great Stable for horse and bests to stand with free libertie of ingress, egress . . . and abidinge . . . by through over and uppon all the staires stepps court yards, backsides, wayes roomes and passages . . . from and immediately after my decease (for) the full end and terme of One whole yeare . . . without paying any rent for the same, and such stable room for the horses, mares and geldinges of the said William . . . as my wife for her tyme or Sir Jacob for his tyme shall think fitt w^{ch} I have done for the benefitt of my Executor that hee may have the more ease in the execucon of my will and though I could have enlarged the same yett I thinke fitt to refer any enlargement both to my wife . . . and to Sir Jacob . . . after her death, as they in their severall love to my Executor shall please to enlarge themselves.

And I doe hereby . . . appointe the said William Harrison to be the sole and onely Executor of this my last Will and testament and to him . . . I doe hereby give all my goods, Cattells and chattells not hereby bequeathed. And I doe . . . nominate . . . Sir Humfrey Tufton knight and my fowernamed cosine Edward Henton to be the Overseers. And I do give to (sd.) Humfrey Tufton my book of Ortelins his Mapps and my booke of postures for the Warres sent mee out of the Lowe Countries by my cosine Sir Jacob Astley as a token of my love towards him. . . . And as much as the said William Harrison hath beene of Councell with mee and of longe tyme privie to my estate and affaires, and in them all I have founde him trustie, for all w^{ch} I have given him his ordinarie fees and mones hee hath disbursed for mee, butt have not as yett given him such full recompence for his love, respect and faithfullnes towards mee as I have meant him my Will is that what

advantage soever can redunde . . . (to him) . . . hee may have and take the same. . . . And I doe hereby publish and declare that I doe this knowlinglie and freely."

A further desire was expressed that Sir Jacob Astley should "favour helpe and assist" the Executor "in what hee can". Then follows a clause "that if any legatee . . . named or meant . . . whome my Executor shall not well and certainly knowe . . . demande any legacie . . . such legatee . . . shall first make verie good and satisfactorie prooffe . . . of his or her being the true and undoubted partie to whome such legacie . . . ought to be paide."

The Will was proved at London 10 February 1639.¹

The inscription on the Astley monument records Sir John's death as having occurred on the 26th January 1639, but if the evidence of a manuscript "*Herald-painter's Work-book*" produced in the Chandos Peerage Case is to be relied upon the funeral did not take place until a month later. The relative entry in the manuscript is as follows:

"Sr John Astley, K^t, Mr of the Jewell-house and of the revels. He de'ted this mortall life and his funeral was solemnised on Thursday, the 20th. of February 1639, at the great church of Maydstone by three officers of armes, Mr. Ryly, Mr Crounce, and Mr. Dugdall."²

Jacob Astley to whom Sir John bequeathed his estates was the second son of Isaac who was grandson of Thomas of Melton Constable, Norfolk, where Jacob was born in 1579. Of all the members of his family he, perhaps, is best remembered on account of his distinguished military career, a career destined to earn him a place in National History. At the age of nineteen he was already serving with distinction in the Netherlands and later under the King of Denmark. Returning to England Charles I entrusted him with several important tasks, part military and part diplomatic, and at the outbreak of the Great Rebellion in 1642 he became major-general of foot. How far these duties permitted him to enjoy his Kentish inheritance it is difficult to say, but during the troubled years which followed he cannot have spent much, if any, time at the Palace which in any case was in part occupied by dame Katherine.

The Civil War saw him fighting continually on the side of his monarch. It was at Edgehill that he initiated, what has since become something of a custom with our national war leaders, of issuing some prayer or inspired battle cry to hearten the fighting forces. Churchill's "We will fight them on the beaches . . ." and Montgomery's "Knock 'em for six" had their earlier counterpart in Wellington's "Up boy and at them" and Nelson's "England Expects . . ." Astley's oft quoted battle prayer, "O Lord thou knowest how busy I must be this

¹ i.e. 1639/40.

² *Review of the Chandos Peerage Case*, Beltz, p. 30 and Appendix X.

day. If I forget thee do not forget me. March on boys " has the same ring of robust faith as the committal of his soul to the Almighty with which his Will is prefaced. The wording rings more of personal choice than the stereotyped phraseology of the attorney.

In the numerous actions of the war, at Gloucester, Newbury, Arundel and Naseby his powers of leadership proved of immense value to the royal cause. In 1644 the King created him a baron and after service in the west country he was present at the last stubborn battle in March, 1646, Stow-on-the-Wold. Taken prisoner during the fight he was forced to give his parole that he would play no further part in the war. His remark to his captors has become almost as famous as his prayer at Edgehill, " You have now done your work and may go play unless you will fall out among yourselves." He was brought back to London, but it was not until 1648 that an ordnance was passed clearing him of the charge of delinquency, and it was not until May, 1651, that he finally obtained full liberty. On 20th of that month the Warden of the Fleet was ordered to bring Sir Jacob Ashley (the name was often so spelt) before the Committee of Examination " tomorrow at 9 a.m." Then on 31st under the Day's Proceedings of the Council of State it was recorded¹ " Sir Jacob Ashley to be bailed, on security in 1,000, l. with two sureties in 500L each on the usual terms, when he can return to his residence in Kent until further order ".

So at last he was able to return to the Old Palace, an old and no doubt a sick man with but a few more months to live. By his German wife, Agnes Imple, he had had two sons and two daughters. The eldest, Bernard, fell during the siege of Bristol, and in consequence his estates were destined to pass to his second son Isaac. Of the daughters Anne married Sir Francis Stydolf of Norbury, Surrey, and Elizabeth, her kinsman, Sir Edward Astley of Melton Constable.

The old cavalier signed his Will on the 20th February, 1650, at the Palace in the presence of Francis Fowler, Henry Leventhorpe, James Mason and George Blake.

The preamble states that the testator " borne at Melton Constabell " in the Countie of Norfolke being . . . of sound and perfect memory and understanding, praises be to God therefore knowinge the uncertainty and unstabilitie of the bodily life which is a Taboenakle of Clay whose founda^{on} is in the dust Doe here make and declare this my last Will and Testament . . . "

" First and chiefly I recommend my soule to the pleasure of my God, my ffather and Maker, to Jesus Christ my Saviour and Reemer and to the Holy Ghost my Sanctifier and Comforter hoping wth a full assurance by that Glorious worke of the Holy Trinity in mans redemption w^{ch} was wrought by my saviore Jesus Christ his bitter death and

¹ S.P.D.

passion to obtain a full and free redemption of all my sinns and that at my good Gods blessed and appointed time I shall be received to raine wth the blessed in the Kingdom of Heaven. I will that my body shall be buried in such convenient manner as my best friends then thereby shall think fitt wthout any more ceremony than ordinary wthout the charge of a ffunerall."

After his decease all his debts were to be settled "wthin as short a time as may be wth conveniency" and "twelve pence a peice" were to be paid "to fforty poore people in or near the place I shall be buried".

To his "deare wife Agnies" he left the Manor of Weles Dures in the county of Norfolk which after her death was to pass to his son Isaac together with "the p^{ceeds} or Interest of Two Thousand pounds part of Three Thousand poundes which lies in the Bancke or Cantories in Holland the use of which Two Thousand poundes I did allowe my Sonne Sir Isaack duringe my life in part of his then present maintenance which after my decease he was to surrender to my wife Agnies and she to hold it duringe life". From the proceeds of "all Bonds bills monies debts or ought else that shall (be) found due unto me in England at my death" his wife was "to see me Interred and pay what debts I shall leave behind me". Also his wife was to enjoy his house "called by the name of the pallis in Maidstone" with all the house stuff therein "provided that she hath use thereof for time of her life only And at her decease leave them in good Condition to my Sonne Isaack and his heires. Now if it shall soe fall out Anne the wife of my Sonne Sir Isaack shall survive her husband that then the said Anne . . . shall have a Convenient proportion in the said house or pallas for her and her family to dwell in duringe her naturall life."

The Will continues "whereas there hath been lately a Match Solempnized betwixt my said Sonne and Anne the daughter of Sir ffancis Stydolge, knight I doe bequeath and have settled upon him and his heires Male forever All my estate that I purchased of Sir John Asheley, knight, in Maidstone Allington Alsford and Boxley . . ."

The "youngest sonne" Edward "after mine and my wife Agnies our deceases" was to have the three thousand pounds "that lies in the Banke or Cantories in Holland". If he had issue Male the sum was to descend upon him or them, or if daughters to be divided amongst them as the said Edward should think fit. If he was survived by a widow (in fact he never married) she was to have the interest for life. However "if it shall please God thus to take away my sonne Edward without issue" two thousand five hundred pounds of the total sum was to pass to Isaac. A life interest in the remaining five hundred pounds was bequeathed to "my daughter Elizabeth Asteley wife unto Sir Edward Asteley knight of Hilderstone in the County of Norfolk". and the capital was to pass to their issue male. If there was no such

issue it was to descend to Isaac and his issue male and failing any such "upon my nephew Waldgrave Asteley only son of my brother Waldgrave Asteley deceased in the Nether Lands and for want of issue in my said nephew upon my brother Richard Asteley minister of Barrow in the countie of Norfolke, and for want of issue male in my said brother upon the heires apparent nearest descended from me".

"Item it is further my will and intentts that in case my nephew Waldgrove Asteley or his heires male cannot be made free denison of this nation and thereby unabelled to inherit this estate and soe my brother Richard Asteley and his heires coming betwixt that is to say enjoy the estate before him" then the said Richard or his heires were to pay to the nephew Waldgrove the sum of Five hundred pounds.

If Isaac died leaving a daughter or daughters and Edward should die without male issue then those who inherited the estate were to pay to such daughter the sum of fifteen hundred pounds and if there were more than one daughter two thousand pounds.

"And as for my deare Daughter Elizabeth Asteley in regard I have already given her two thousand pounds to her married porcon and the worth of ffour hundred pounds in plate and Jewells and the like I doe conceive her to have out of my estate already a full childe part only I have here left her as a token of my ffatherly affe^{con} ffifty pounds to buy her a jewell. And in case she be not matured before my death I have left wth my deare wife Agnies that w^{ch} shall defray the charge thereof."

"Item I bequeath as tokens of remembrance of my love Rings of twentie shillings a peice to my deare wife, my sonne Isaac, my sonne Edward, my sonne (son-in-law) Sir Edward Asheley, my good cozin Sir Isaac Asheley and his lady Bridget Asheley, Sir John Traseie, Sir Thomas Alcock, to my hon^{ble} and approved cozin the Ladie Elizabeth Digby, my brother Richard Asteley and his wife my sister Berry and last although not least in affection to my dear daughter in law the Lady Anne Asheley.

Item I give unto Jacob Asteley my grandchild ffive poundes to buy him a sword to mainteyne the Honour of the Name.

Item I give to my cozin Francis ffowler Twentie Poundes.

Item I give to my faithful servant Henry Leventhorpe ffive poundes."

His wife Agnes was to be "full and absolute Executrix" in which task his son Isaac was joined as an assistant.

A month before Jacob Lord Astley died there arose some pressing necessity, perhaps connected with the £3,000 pounds deposited in "the Cantories", for Sir Isaac to journey to Holland. On 30th January, 1651, a pass was issued by the Protector and Council.¹ "For Sir Isaac Ashley and his lady, Howard Day and Anne Lloyd to Holland." A

¹ S.P.D.

similar journey was necessary in July, 1554, when the pass issued was for Captain Isaac Ashley (his noble title obviously was not recognized) and his wife with 2 men and 2 maids.

Probably because of the disturbed conditions of the times no effort was made to prove Jacob Astley's will immediately after his death, and in fact this was not done until after Isaac's death in 1662, but in November, 1653, Isaac, to make the title to his inheritance reasonably secure, underwent the normal legal process, a process beneficial to the attornies, of initiating a fictitious suit in which Doe and Roe played their allotted parts and thereby was enabled him to suffer a Recovery. The resulting document among the Astley deeds in the writer's possession has two unusual features of interest. Being of the Commonwealth period it is written in English, instead of in the more customary Latin and because, in the absence of a sovereign on the throne of England, the elaborate initial letter of the script is filled in with "doodled" scroll work in place of a monarch's portrait.

It is to be regretted that more is not to be learned about the domestic life of these later Astleys and the part, if any, they played in the affairs of Maidstone. No traveller such as Celia Fiennes or of a later age Viscount Torrington or William Cobbett has left any picture of contemporary life at the Old Palace or of its occupants. True, the *Records of Maidstone* tell us that the Lady Agnes, widow of Jacob Lord Astley, applied to the Mayor and Jurats for "the lobertie of layinge and placeinge of a stone over the Corps of her said deceased husband lyinge now buried in the Chauncell of the Parish Church,¹ whilst the grandson, the second Jacob, with other gentlemen of the district in August, 1683, "came freely and offered themselves to be made freemen of this Corporacion" of Maidstone,² but these are meagre material upon which to found a picture of half a century or more of family life.

Isaac, second Lord Astley, died in 1662 and was buried in the family vault in the chancel of Maidstone church. He left no Will but the inevitable legal matters to be dealt with following his decease would seem to have entailed the proving of his father's Will in the Consistory Court of Canterbury on the 6th May, 1663,³ when Administration was granted to his widow Ann. An Inventory of his possessions at the Palace had been prepared the previous January and because of its interest as a record of the furnishings of a house of the period is well worth quoting *in extenso*.⁴

¹ *Records of Maidstone*, p. 130.

² *Ibid.*, 161.

³ The Original Will and the Registered Copy are preserved among the County Archives, K.A.O. P.R.C. 31/132 and P.R.C. 32/53 ff. 1-4. The Probate Copy is in the Writer's possession.

⁴ K.A.O. P.R.C. 27/15/1.

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An Inventory of the goods and Chattels of the Right Honorable Isaak Lord Astely Barron of Reddinge deceased made and taken the eight and Twentieth of January Anno-Domini 1662 by Peter Harrison, John Tonge and John Downes.

Inprimis	his Purse	01	04	6
Itm.	in Plate valued in the perticulers	76	10	00
Itm.	his Parliament Robes	30	00	00
Itm.	his other wearing apparrell Linnen and woollen	43	10	00

In his Clossett.

Itm.	his Library of bookes	10	00	00
Itm.	A case of Silver Instruments; Three Swords and Belts; Three fowleing peeces and severall other Armes	12	10	00
Itm.	ffive Dammaske Table Clothes; Six dozen of Dammaske Napkins and Six Dammaske Towells			
Itm.	One little Table and Carpett; some Trunks and Boxes; Three Chaires	02	00	00

In the Longe Gallery.

Itm	Two Trammell Netts ¹ ; a coveringe for a Boate with iron bayles for ye Boate ²	06	10	00
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In the Clossett within y^e Queenes Chamber.

Itm.	One ffield Beddsted; a Canvas Cover; one feather bedd and bolster; one quilt; one Rugg and Two blanketts; a Little Table and Carpet	03	08	00
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In the Queenes Chamber.

Itm.	One high Bedstead mat and Corde; one feather bedd and bolster; two downe Pillowes; one Rugg; Two blanketts; a redd and white quilt head Cloath and Tester; a paire of Vallence of Branchd Velvett and gatten; a paire of Taffety Curtens, Two Tables; Three Chairs; Three stooles a Window Curten; one Lookinge glass; Two paire of anirons with ffire and Tonges	16	09	00
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¹ "A fishing or fowling-net with three layers of meshes." *Oxford English Dictionary*.

² vessels for bailing out water.

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In the Chamber within the Nussery.

Item.	One smale bedsted; mat and Cord head Cloth, Curtens and Vallence, one ffeather bed and ffllock bolster, three ffeather pillowes, one Table and Carpet, one old Chaire	04	06	00
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In the Nussery Chamber.

Item	One high bedsted; mat and Cord, greene sarge curtens and Vallence, one greene Rugg; Two blanketts, one ffeather bed and bolster, one green baies Screene, Two Window Curtens, one Table and Carpet, one Court Cupboord, five Chaires, One pair Anirons, one paire of Tonges and a large lookinge glasse	17	04	00
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In the great Dining Roome.

Item	One Large looking glasse, one Drawinge table with a Redd Cloth Carpet, one side Table and Carpet, eighteen gilded chaires, one gilded stoole, one paire of great brasse Anirons, Two large Windon Curtens and rodds and a suite of gilded Leather hanginges	27	00	00
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In the best Chamber.

Item	ffive peeces of Tapestry hanginges, a foote Carpet of Turkey woorke, nyne Chaires of Orresse ¹ worke, one high bedsted, mat and Corde, Counterpart, Curtens and Vallence, head Block and Tester, one ffeather bed and bolster, two ffeather Pillows, one Rugg and blankett and one Dimmity blankett. One Large looking glasse, one paire of brass Anirons, one Bayes Windon Curten and Rodd, two gylded standers, one Kettle, Table and Carpett	54	16	00
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In the Closett next y^e best Chamber.

Item	Two peeces of old hanginges, a small bedsted mat and Cord, one Downe bed, and ffeather bolster and pillow, one Rugg and blanket, Curtens vallence and one old Chaire.	09	10	00
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¹ "Embroidery made of gold lace" *O.E.D.*

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In the Little Parlour.

Item.	One Round Table, one Sideboord Table, Ten Chairs, Two paire of Anirons, ffirepan and tongs with brasses.	04 10 00
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In the Closett within the Parlour.

Item	Six earthen Bottles, Two little Tables	01 07 00
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In the great Hall.

Item	One Longe Joynd Table; one little Table, one Court Cupboord, one forme, five lowe stooles, one paire of Anirons, One pewter Sconce, two Turkey Crpets.	07 15 00
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On the Staires head.

Item	One old Stand; one Turkey Carpet, one paire of Striped Curtens and Vallence, some old cases for Chaires and Stooles, One Clocke and Weights	04 15 00
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In the Inner Chamber

next my Lords Lodgings

Item	One Old field Bedsted; Head Cloth and Tester Curtens and Vallence, One ffeather bed, and bolster, three pillowes, one ffloke bed, two matts, a paire of Curten rodds, one presse Cupberd, one Court Cupboord, fferty and nine yardes of wrought and unroght Dimmity, ¹ one old chaire and one peece of old hanginges	16 19 06
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In my Lords Lodginge Chamber.

Item.	One high bedsted, matt and Cord, Curtens and Vallence, headcloth Tester and Counterpointe; one ffeather bed and bolster and one pillow, three blanketts, one Rugg, five Chaires, a Close stoole and pan, one Window curten and rodd, a peece of old Tapestry, one Table and Carpet, one paire of Anirons and Tonges.	12 03 00
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In the Pantry.

Item.	Three sellers ² of stone Bottles, Two Stooles a presse for linnen and one Trundle be(d)sted.	06 17 00
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¹ Stout white Cotton cloth striped or figured in the loom by weaving with two threads.

² Cellar "a case; esp. of bottles". O.E.D.

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In the lowe roome next the Garden

Item.	A halfe headed bedsted, one Trundle bedsted, one Chaire, seaven Trunkes, fforty seaven paire of sheets fine and coarse, fforty and nyne pillow Coates, eighteene Towells, more one Dosen of course towells, eight napkins, eight course Table Cloths, two Large feather pillowes.	48	10	00
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Item.	Two diaper Table Cloths, two Dosen of Diaper Napkins, Two paire of fine fflaxen sheets, fflower paire of Holland sheets, Three paire of lesser Holland Sheets, more Ten paire of Sheets, ffive Table Cloths, more Two dosen of Napkins and fflower Towells.	36	14	00
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In the Old Ladyes Chamber.

Item	One high bedsted, matt and cord, striped staff hangings, one feather bed and bolster, a little German clock, two Trunks, a Chest of Drawers one hamper and one Chaire, one Stone, Twelve Table Cloths; one sideboord cloth, five Dosen of plane napkins, more Thirty fflower Diaper Table Cloths, nine sideboord Cloths, Twenty two Dozen of napkins and twenty three Towells all Diaper, Two paire of ffine Holland sheetes and fower paires of pillow Coats.	11	12	06
Item	Two ends of Woollen Cloth.	06	10	00

In the Lowe Parlour.

Item.	One Clock; one Suite of striped stuffe hangings, one Couch bed, one Chaire, fflower Stooles, six Cusheones, Two Carpetts and one Table	06	06	00
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In the Lower Hall

Item.	One Round Table and Carpett; one Settle, one Court Cupboord, an Iron grate, one Chaire.	02	07	00
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In the Chamber next the Lower Hall.

Item.	One bedsted Matt and Cord, one blankett, one Rugg, one feather bed and bolster, two pillowes; Curtens and Vallences; headcloth and Tester, Two Chaires and a Cupboord.	09	07	00
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THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In the Maides Chamber.

Item.	One bedsted Matt and Cord, Curtens and Vallences, one feather bed and bolster; headcloth and Tester, one little Table; Chaire and Cushions	06	11	00
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In ye men Servants Chamber.

Item.	One bedsted matt and Corde. feather bed and bolster and one flock bolster, Two feather pillowes, Curtens and Vallence, one Table and two Chaires.	04	00	00
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In y^e Chamber next y^e mens Chamber.

Item.	One bedsted, matt and Cord Curtens and Vallences, Two feather bedds and bolster, one flock bolster, one flock bolster, one Rugg and one old trunk.	05	14	00
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In the Washhouse and Brewhouse.

Item.	One great furnace, two small Coppers; one Buckin tubb, ¹ two great renching tubs, seaven smale Keelers and one washing Keeler. ²	14	18	00
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In the Kitchen.

Item.	Two Jacks to roste meate; one Iron Drippin Pan, severall peices of Latten ware; fower Iron potts, five brasse kettles, seaven brasse Skilletts, three brasse basting ladles, One brasse Scummer, two ffryinge pans; two brasse warmeinge pans, one paire of coale racks, two paire of pott hangers, one Iron forke, one paire of tonges and fire shovell; one Iron bar for y ^e fire and a cole sifter.	09	15	00
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Item.	Sixty fower pewter dishesses great and smale; weigth; Two hundred and one quarter, grosse: pewter plates, Six dosin and eight plates with some sacers, weight, eighty fower pounds.	14	00	00
Item.	Six pewter basons, ten pewter Chamber potts, Twelve Candlestickes; two bed pans.	02	06	06

¹ For "steeping or boiling yarn clothes, etc." *O.E.D.*

² "A vessel for cooling liquids; a shallow tub." *ibid.*

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In the Stable.

Item.	One horse, fower saddles with other furniture,	}	12	00	00
Item.	In the River, one boate and oares.		03	10	00

Att Allington Castle neere Maidstone

Item.	Ten peeces of Tapestry hanginges; Two bed-steds; one Longe Table, Two side Tables, two formes, ffive stooles	}	14	00	00
Item.	In Lumber and things forgotten		00	03	00

The totall of this Inventory coms to Six hundred eighty two pounds eighteen shillings

Peter Harrison

John Tonge

John Downes

Apprissors.

Jacob, Isaac's heir, was a boy in his teens when his father died. Did he spend his youth at Maidstone, where was he educated, was the sword duly purchased whereby he might "maintain the Honour of the Name" in the Country's service, on sea or on land, are a few of the questions which further research might answer. But we do know that when he chose a wife she was a member of his mother's family, Frances the daughter of Sir Richard Stydolf of Norbury, bart. There were no children of this marriage and when Jacob died in 1688 his Kentish estates passed to his cousin Sir Jacob Astley of Melton Constable, although his widow continued to reside at the palace until her death in July, 1692.¹

It is clear from a number of the Astley deeds between 1715 and 1718 that Sir Jacob Astley intended his estate in Kent should descend upon his second son, John, and a settlement to this end was made on 27th July, 1715. But, as a memorial tablet in Maidstone church tells us, John Astley fell a victim to small-pox and died in London on 30th June, 1719, at the age of 42. No doubt as a result of this loss the ageing Sir Jacob retained little further interest in his possessions in and around Maidstone. A neighbouring Norfolk landowner was Robert, Lord Romney, and a year after John's death an Act of Parliament sanctioned what amounted in effect to an exchange of the Norfolk lands of Lord Romney (which were settled upon his wife Elizabeth and their issue) for those of Sir Jacob Astley in Kent. Details of this Act are included as a note to Hasted's account of the Town and Parish of Maidstone.² In this manner the long association of a distinguished

¹ Russell, *History of Maidstone*, p. 348.

² *History of Kent*, Vol. II, p. 96.

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family with the County town and the surrounding district came to an end.

In concluding the writer would like to express his grateful thanks to Dr. Hull, Miss Milling and other members of the County Archives Staff and his staff at County Hall and to Mr. L. R. A. Grove for valuable help during the preparation of this paper.