HAUGHLEY PARK AND THE SULYARDS.

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In the Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk, edited by Mr. Walter Rye, in connection with the Suffolk Institute of Archæology, is found the following: "3 Edw. iv. John Sulyard *v.* Walter Bradley and Joanna his wife, of the manor of Wetherdene in Wetherdene."

This may be taken to mean that, not later than 1462, John Sulyard became lord of the manor of Wetherden.

According to the Visitations of Suffolk, this John Sulyard came from Eye. His family were chiefly noted for marrying heiresses, which will account for the quarterings, outside and inside the Sulyard aisle, in Wetherden Church. His three immediate ancestors distinguished themselves in this way. John Sulyard's only son (or only recorded son) has a history, for he improved on all his forefathers by marrying two heiresses. He devoted himself to the law, and became in succession, serjeant, puisne judge and Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas,—one of many East Anglian judges. His home was Wetherden Hall, but who built that manor house I do not know. Chief Justice Sulyard, just about four centuries ago, built the present south aisle in Wetherden church, which went by the family name. In the Sulyard aisle he was buried in the tomb under the side arch. He must have left behind him considerable possessions.

Passing over his son, buried at Wetherden in 1538, we come to his grandson, also John. Although he married thrice, not one of these three ladies is put down as an heiress; yet he made up in other ways.

In 1553 he had the good luck to take the part of Mary Tudor, as rightful queen, against Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and his unhappy puppet and daughter-in-law. A local tradition still survives, that Mary Tudor, whilst her loyal East Anglian adherents were gathering together, slept a night at Wetherden Hall. John Sulyard was with her at Kenninghall, and so, I believe, was his neighbour, Tyrrell of Gipping. For his services John was knighted, and (which immediately concerns us) received a grant of this manor (or park), one mile and a half from Wetherden Hall. Formerly in the possession of, but not a residence of, the Poles and Brandons, Dukes of Suffolk, it had reverted to the Crown. Here Sir John built this house, adjacent to the main high road; and from this time Haughley Park became the chief or only residence of the head of the family. Wetherden Hall has to this day remaining the larger inner moat stocked with fish, part of the outer moat, and the foundations and fragments of the wall. The old part is easily traced, and there are some ancient trees. Altogether, and judging by the remains, the house and the housekeeping were on a more extensive scale than at Haughley Park.

The new lord of this manor, Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1556 (the two offices were then combined), was active with his before mentioned neighbour, Tyrrell of Gipping, in prosecuting those who declined to conform to the newly made changes in religion. A room upstairs—the panelled room—is said to be the justice room, where Sir John investigated cases against reputed heretics and administered justice; but the house could hardly have been finished and furnished so early as the date of the Marian persecutions. The Diocese of Norwich was in those days conterminous with the jurisdiction over which Sir John was sheriff, consisting of the whole of the two counties of

Norfolk and Suffolk. John Hopton, confessor to Queen Mary, was bishop; and the diocese ranked third to London and Canterbury in the number of victims—six and forty recorded. One local tradition points to the top of the hill on the road to Woolpit, and a second to Rush Green on the road to Harleston at the cross-ways, as sites of stakes. These traditions are given for what they are worth. At Rush Green it is said that there used to be a stone pointing out or commemorating the spot. A former vicar of Wetherden, Father Collyn, had been married in Wetherden church, while the marriage of the clergy was yet permitted. He was deprived, as were all the numerous married clergy, but not otherwise punished.

In October, 1556, Tyrrell's son and heir married Sulyard's daughter in Wetherden church, while Sulyard was sheriff. After the death of Mary Tudor, and in spite of his record during her reign, this Sir John—the grandson of the Chief Justice and the builder of the house—escaped all annoyance and persecution, at least, so far as is known. It may have been owing to John Hopton's successor, the easy going and *laissez faire* John Parkhurst. But more probably so marked a man elected to become what was then or afterwards called a "church papist." There is an account of them in the sixth chapter of Mr. Wilfrid Wood's "Biography of Cardinal Wiseman." A "church papist" qualified by casual attendance at public worship. As Sir John, malgré the enemies he must inevitably have made, lived in peace and quietness for some years after the promulgation of the notorious Bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, he must have satisfied the authorities in some such way; and very little at first sufficed.

I find, however, that in a political sense, he once skated upon uncommonly thin ice. He was one of those who, in the autumn of 1569, met Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, at Kenninghall, and there held a conference about the marriage of the Duke with Queen Mary Stuart, a prisoner at Tutbury, with Lord Huntingdon as gaoler. As Mary's third husband, Bothwell, was still alive in

Denmark, it is difficult to see how this plan could have been worked out, even assuming that Elizabeth's objections could have been first overcome. Norfolk, in pursuit of his pet ambition, three years afterwards died the favourite family death upon the scaffold for his share in the Rudolfi conspiracy; but Sir John, with his usual good luck, never once got into trouble. He died in this house in March, 1575; and his tomb is the beautiful Renaissance piece of work all maimed and mutilated (bad Latin included) by the Huns, Goths, and Vandals of the succeeding century. Fortunate in his life, he was equally fortunate in his death; for had he lived much longer, even he could hardly have escaped.

To Sir John the persecutor, succeeded his son and heir, Edward the persecuted, destined to experience to the full the frowns of fickle fortune. He is practically the last of the family about which anything need be said. In 1558, when she came to the throne, neither Elizabeth nor her prime minister, Burghley, had any serious theological objection, if any at all, to the Roman Catholic faith. How it came to pass that in fifteen or twenty years from the accession of the daughter of Anne Boleyn, every *bona fide* Roman Catholic rendered himself liable to be looked upon and treated as a traitor, actual or possible, was owing to a political and partly also to a theological complication, which need not be enlarged upon here and now. Unfortunately for Edward Sulyard, two local matters materially contributed,—(*a*) the death of Bishop John Parkhurst, the easy going, almost exactly synchronised with the death of Sir John Sulyard, (*b*) the local ultra-protestant busy-bodies of Stowmarket and elsewhere, began to make themselves a nuisance. A popular account of this change, from a policy of toleration to a policy of persecution, will be found in Mr. Beesly's monograph on Elizabeth.* Thanks to additions to the Statute Book, Edward Sulyard became in the eyes of the law a "Popish Recusant." A bare enumeration of some of his consequent sufferings may be of interest, as he affords a concrete instance of this change in the home policy of the government of Elizabeth. The details which follow, are chiefly gathered from the State Papers, or rather from the Calendars and transcripts thereof.

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* Beesly's (E. S.) Queen Elizabeth (Twelve English Statesmen), Macmillan, 1897.

In 1580 he shared a common table and chambers with four other gentry in the city gaol of Norwich.

In 1582 Lord Chief Justice Wray, at the summer assizes, included him (or a Sulyard, christian name not given, I take to be the man), amongst those recusants who, remaining obstinate, were convicted.

In 1586 we find him living in London at a ruinous expense, so that the authorities might keep their eye on him. About this time a fat ox, intended to help pay one of his recusant fines, was "borrowed" by the royal purveyors, no renumeration being tendered. Also, Thomas Tyrrell and another Edward Sulyard of Fenning or Flemings, became bond for him. He came back to this house for a time. Up to June 1586, his fines alone amounted to £1,700, a huge sum in those days, to which must be added concurrent personal, legal, and purveyor's expenses and costs. A piteous petition to Walsingham saved him for a time from further immediate persecution.

In 1588, during the Armada time, he was again thrown into prison on suspicion, but was released on satisfying the authorities of his loyalty, all papal bulls of deposition and excommunication notwithstanding. But he had to live in London, under a bond of £2,000 not to leave the "appurtenances" of the house. In 1591 he was partially enlarged, up to six miles from his home (whether London or Haughley Park not mentioned).

In 1592 he was in the list of recusants at large; but in 1594 was in Ely prison. He was allowed to go to his own home for a fortnight.

In 1598 he was allowed six weeks absence without reporting himself, and then apparently was released from prison. At any rate the next year he was in Ely prison *again*, which implies that he had been discharged. This time he was released on paying for board and lodging, and no doubt fees as well.

Altogether his fines and expenses must have been enormous; and so far as we know he ever remained a loyal subject, opposed to the pretentions of Marié Stewart. No political offence, no denial of Elizabeth's legitimacy was ever proved against him. He broke the new penal laws against absence from church, against harbouring "popish priests," and against allowing and being present at the celebration of mass in his own house. But hundreds of others did all this without seeing the inside of any gaol. The probable solution is that the recusants were at the mercy of the local busy-bodies. His declining years were years of peace and quietness. In spite of his woes he found time to marry two wives, one of them the proverbial heiress. He died in 1605.

His son, John, had a life more pleasant, and was knighted, although the penal laws against his co-religionists remained unrepealed. In the reign of James I. a great deal depended upon paying a double land tax; and perhaps the claim on Haughley Park was punctually satisfied. But we find that, in 1614, Richard Goodrich, private tutor in the house of Lady Sulyard of Haughley, was returned as a "popish rescusant." In the Civil War the family suffered from their devotion to the Crown, but received compensation at the Restoration. Three of our four great novelists have introduced us to the Roman Catholic country gentry of more recent days; but after the flight of James II., and unless they were actively mixed up with the events of 1715 or 1745, there is less of interest to record about them. Continuing to adhere to the Roman Catholic Communion, as the law then stood all the Sulyards were excluded from the county bench and the shrievalty, from the army and the navy, and from either branch of the legal profession. They lived rather *in* the country than *of* the country,—a kind of caste, mixing and marrying chiefly with their own co-religionists. In October, 1799, died Edward Sulyard, the last of the male line of his race, so far as is known, and so far as this country is concerned. He was buried with his father, and on his memorial tablet R. I. P. is duly inscribed. Fourteen years later his wife followed him, and just before or after her death the old property was sold, Haughley Park being purchased by the Crawfords.

Three daughters were left by John Sulyard, and they married as follows :—

Sophia married John Cary, of Hampstead, barrister. He died in 1820, and in 1828 his eldest son inherited the Tor Abbey and S. Marychurch estates at Torquay. Sophia's descendants are numerous, and include Colonel Lucius Falkland Brancaleone Cary of the Rifle Brigade, the present squire of the above mentioned estates.*

Lucy married Hugh Philip Smythe, second son of Sir Edward Smythe, of Acton Barnet, Salop. Her only child, also Lucy, married the 11th Lord Arundell of Wardour. Lady Arundell dying shortly after without issue, Lucy has no living descendants.

Frances Henrietta married two months after her father's death, George William, eldest son of Sir William Jerningham, of Cossey, Norfolk. In 1825 the attainder of William, Viscount Stafford, of 1678, was reversed. This unhappy nobleman, the victim of a judicial murder, was also Baron Stafford, a title which went to heirs general. The Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords decided that the husband of Frances was the executed Lord Stafford's heir general, and he accordingly became Baron Stafford. Like Sophia, Frances has many descendants, and amongst them her grandson, Lord Stafford, and her great-grandson (through a daughter) Lord Lovat. By a coincidence, the latter nobleman also enjoys his title by the reversal of an attainder.

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* Mr. A. H. Dymond, of Exeter, the family solicitor, has supplied this information.

THE HOUSE was built in Elizabeth's reign.

Robert Ryce, in his Breviary of Suffolk, apparently written in 1618, says it was never "environed with a broad and deep ditch or moat." These moats seem to have been intended to protect the stock from wild animals. There are several in this immediate neighbourhood; but when this house was built, this need of protection no longer existed. Ryce further says that the house has three leading characteristics—plenty of material, large chimneys, and small windows. The windows are smaller, that is, than the windows of Ryce's own time, the windows of Jacobean manor houses. The fenestration was then on a larger scale.

The east front, excepting the library window and minor details, remains practically as it was built. Of course the window glass and lead have been renewed; and the porch does not appear to be part of the original house. Otherwise you have the beautifully broken front of the period, with its windows, gables, and roofs. The opposite west front is also interesting; but the north front has been revolutionised in the interest of air and light.

The dining hall reached as far as the staircase, the dais being at the south end. The withdrawing room and the small room are easily explained; but the panelling has gone. Near the foot of the fine old staircase is a trap door, a relic of the days of Edward Sulyard. One of the penal laws was directed against the celebrating of mass, and another against the harbouring of priests of the Church of Rome. When the local busy-bodies were in evidence, an unlawful visitor would descend through the floor.

Upstairs modern corridors have altered the appearance. There were none in the house as built, neither did the domestic economy and arrangements of those days require them as now. The great point of interest is the oak panelled room, traditionally said to be the room where the High Sheriff of Norfolk and of Suffolk administered justice.

I cannot agree with those who think it to have been the chief sitting or state room. There is a remarkable reticence, not only of colouring, but also of ornament and decoration, and the room is scarcely of sufficient size for those spacious days. It may well have been Sir John's business room, though whether it was finished in 1556 is quite another matter. But, be this as it may, it gives the general impression of being the room where mass was celebrated.

If Sir Walter Scott had known this house and the story of the Sulyards, we might have had another sixteenth century romance from him, in which Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth would both have been somehow introduced, much to the disadvantage of the latter. In that case, too, it might have been necessary to point out some errors in detail to which the great wizard of the north was liable, like every other writer.