

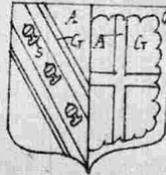
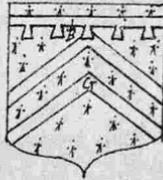
CULLUM LETTERS.

BY V. B. REDSTONE.

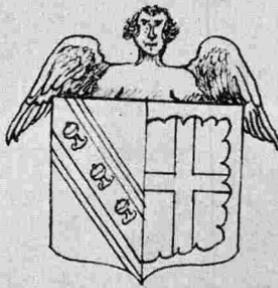
A veil of antiquity spreads itself over all places which, in early days, formed estates belonging to officers of Bury Abbey. The lands farmed by the sexton and the cellarer were valuable and highly productive. Of these lands Hardwick was one of the most important. Its pastures, groves and woodlands furnished ample supplies for the herds and flocks of the Abbey. In the days of Abbey-rule records of annual increments, arising from the estates of the religious house, were enrolled in the sexton's yearly accounts. These still exist, and were largely used by the famous antiquary, the Rev. Sir J. Cullum, Bart., F.S.A., in his well-known "History of Hawstead." The present owner of Hardwick House, in the parish of Hawstead, Mr. Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum, F.S.A., possesses a valuable series of deeds and conveyances connected with the transfer of lands in the parish from the time of the first Plantagenet Edward to the present century. Attached to many of the documents are seals of great interest; one is of especial value, viz., the seal of Abbot Curtis.

But interesting as this series of documents may be in showing us the customs attached to the transfer of land in past centuries, they do not appeal to us all alike as does a series of correspondence concerning politics, science, travelling, agriculture and domestic life carried on for many generations. It is within the numerous volumes of such varied correspondence, found upon the shelves of the extensive library of Hardwick House, that some of the most charming and exquisitely written letters compiled by men of

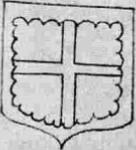
2. 3 (Rev.)



The last is in the N. Window of the Chancel, over a very ancient
 inarched Mon^t of Stone, on which lies the Sig. of a Female, large
 as life on this Mon. are the following Escutcheons in Stone.



Carltonel



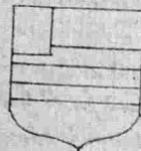
Burs



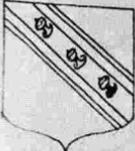
Deyton



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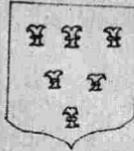
Soblor



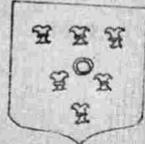
Boys



Roakwood



Roakwood



intellect, habitués of the Court, directors of the State, loving parents and simple-hearted maidens, who lived in centuries long since fled are to be found.

Too great an amount of space would be required to give the reader a fairly complete account of even the title of these volumes of letters, and it would be necessary to publish a book of no mean size to give an adequate idea as to subjects treated by the various writers who penned these letters.

The Cullums have been attached to Suffolk soil at least from the fourteenth century, and perhaps earlier. A Cullum residing at Thorndon in 1381; who was appointed one of the jury to try the rebels who followed Wat Tyler, was, without doubt, ancestor of the Cullums whose names are to be found on the earliest pages of the Thorndon Parish Register, and on the earliest Court rolls of that parish. The family sent up one of its scions to London to found a wealthy merchant-house similar to the many others which the sons of Suffolk have established in the city. Thomas, the second son, was selected to become a city apprentice. How he succeeded in business, and how he rose to eminence, is told in the pages of his yearly accounts. Much of his success was probably due to the pious atmosphere in which he lived, and to the uprightness of his dealings, rather than to any extensive speculations.

The first entry in the volumes of Cullum correspondence is a judgment of a Court held in the parish church of Chelmsford, issued to the churchwardens of Bromefield, Essex, 1587, ordering them "to find a decent pulpit and pew of panelled work very comelie, both to be placed next the stool wherein the minister now useth to say divine service." This stool or seat "where the minister saieth Divine Service" was to

be reserved for "Mistress Pake, the wife of John Pake, gent., the chiefest parisioner of that parish."

Then follow some charmingly-written letters of Rebecca Pake, written as a child, and afterwards as the wife of Nicholas Crispe, a London merchant, to her mother, the said Mistress Pake. In one of these letters, dated 1595, Rebecca Pake tells her mother, "I play my lute after supper, then commonly my Lady heareth me, and in the morning after I play an hour I am reading, writing, and sifering after I have done my lute; for my drawing I take an hour in the afternoon and my French at night before supper." She further adds that her father intended Hilliard (the famous Nicholas Hilliard, artist, in the time of Queen Elizabeth) to come and teach her. The "obedient daughter" concludes asking "pardon for my rude (imperfect) writing," to which standard of writing few children now attain.

In her married days, 1614, she commenced her epistle with "My most loving mother, my humble duty remembered unto you," and dwells long upon her spiritual weaknesses, quaintly summing them up with these words: "I have Satan, my own corruptions, weaknesses and paynes one in the neck of the other." She wrote a letter of resignation on hearing of the death of her daughter, Elizabeth, aged 13 years, mentioning at the same time her own ill-health, and that at the suggestion of her husband, she placed herself in the hands of a new doctor "who giveth me very easy Fisticke indeed." Rebecca Crispe, whose daughter, Mary, married Thomas Cullum, the city apprentice, and afterwards Alderman, died in 1637 at the early age of 36 years. The concluding lines of an epitaph to her memory are:—

"Would any know how virtues care in her did take,
I say no more, she was a Crispe born of a Pake."

On the death of her daughter, Mistress Pake found loving correspondents in her grand-children. One of them, Rebecca Strode, wife of Sir George Strode, Governor of Dover Castle under Charles II., said, "I have sent you a few plain puddings with my duty to you and my love to my Brother Cullum." Another grand-daughter, Anne Skelton, writing from Lyme Regis in the same year, 1639, complained of her unhealthy surroundings, but rejoiced to be able to say of her minister, "He is an able, painful preacher, and taketh great pains, expoundeth some part of the scriptures Mondays and Wednesdays, and preacheth every Friday and Twice every Sabbath day." Truly a conscientious man! From her grandson, a college student, William Huntley, she was favoured with a dissertation on "three things which the Orator adviseth to be observed in every action"; quotations from Martial, Sophocles, Demosthenes and Solomon embellished the essay.

After forty years of active life Alderman Cullum purchased the estates of Hawstead and Hargate (Hardwick) of the Drury family for £19,000, and returned to his native Suffolk soil.

It is from and to Hawstead that most of the interesting letters found among the Cullum Correspondence are addressed. These letters give us the true ungarbled story of the life of country squires devoted to the welfare of the simple folk around them, interested in the agricultural prosperity of the district, and friends in need and in deed.

There are to be found among these letters various other documents. For example, "a particular of what Sir Nicholas Crispe hath lost by these unhappy troubles, of which there hath come to the hands of Parliament £300,000." A petition from the same Royal adherent to the restored monarch, Charles II., stating he had been "engaged for the late King, by which I

was utterly ruined." Sir Thomas Cullum, Bart., "abated" his account by the sum of £2,300 paid into the Exchequer to obtain peace for sums received from the Customs during the Commonwealth. He was one of the first batch of Royalists to be created Baronets in 1660.

There exist various lists of Hawstead villagers who enjoyed Christmas and New Year's hospitality at Hawstead. To twenty-four families were given each a peck of wheat and a stone of beef; thirteen families sat down at the Squire's table on the Thursday after the Christmas Day, and fourteen on New Year's Day. The relationship between the squire and his tenants was such that they feared not to petition "the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Cullum (who now held his late father's estate, 1670) for Mr. John Smith to fill the cure vacant by the death of Mr. Theophilus Luddington, the last incumbent of Hawstead."

Mingled with the family correspondence are many accounts of public interest: "The victualling of 260 officers and soldiers from Barbadoes to England; paid for victualling and passage to Colonel John Strode, afterwards Governor of Dover Castle, £1,350." This warrant for payment is signed by Lords Shaftesbury and Clifford, two of the members of the Cabal Ministry, 31st December, 1671. There is a letter from Lord Arlington to Sir Thomas Cullum thanking him for some deer to stock his New Park at Euston. A letter dated 14th February, 1688, states; "Yesterday William and Mary were proclaimed. It is reported for a certainty that the Earl of Sunderland is taken at Rotterdam in woman's clothes."

It is, however, the perusal of the letters from brothers to sisters, and from sisters to brothers which would fascinate the greater number of readers. Sentences like the following strike a sympathetic chord: "For Mr. T. Cullum at his chamber in Christ's College,

Cambridge, from his sister." "I suppose sometimes you will make entertainments in your pretty chamber, and when you have a mind to a cake or anything else to eat that my sister or I can help you to pray send, and you shall have it. . . . I hope you will have some venison suddenly."

"I would have given you thanks, dear sister, sooner for all the good things you sent us, but I have had the ague. I hope it is gone again, for I have missed two bits, taking Mrs. Mary Cook's doctor's medicine, but I don't find it has got me a good stomach yet."

Columns and columns might be extracted from "The Tours through England," "The Naturalist Journal," and correspondence between eminent Botanists, as Lightfoot and J. E. Smith, author of "The British Flora," a work he dedicated to Sir Thomas Cullum, all of which throw useful light upon the science of agriculture in Suffolk during the eighteenth century. It is to be hoped that some day Mr. Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum may find time to publish one, at least, of the valuable volumes of correspondence which he is fortunate to possess.

It is fitting to conclude this brief notice of entries in the eighteenth century Cullum Correspondence by a remark of Sir Dudley Cullum, which seems applicable to the present times. It is dated 1704, and runs thus:—

"Suffolk affords little news, for there is little to be heard but the furious wrangle of parties, some people being as much enraged at the bare apprehension of being undermost as a bear is for the loss of her whelps. Two casualties might calm men and make them less solicitous for this world—Thomas Spring's death from a fall from his horse at Cambridge, and Sir John Cordell went out of the world much after the same manner at Ipswich."