

MELFORD PLACE.

MELFORD Place was for several centuries the seat of the Martin family, a branch of an antient Dorsetshire race that claimed alliance with our Saxon monarchs. The first of the family settled at Melford was Richard Martin, esq., who died in 1438. His son, Lawrence Martin, who died in 1460, was one of the pious fraternity who rebuilt Melford church; and his monument there has still the image of St. Laurence with a gridiron over it, in allusion to his name, which, with that of his father and their wives, occurs under the battlements of the chancel, 1451, and south aisle, 1484.

Roger Martin, esq., of Melford, was an eminent lawyer and bencher of Lincoln's Inn. In the 14th year of Henry the Eighth he was appointed a commissioner for levying the subsidy granted to that king; and Queen Mary offered him the very responsible office of Secretary of State; but this he is said to have refused by nobly replying, "That for himself he was highly satisfied with the sufficiency God had bestowed on him, and with a private life; and as for his son, he would inherit a competency sufficient if he proved an honest man, and if he became otherwise, far too much." He was so remarkable for his charity, that when through age he was not able to go far from home, he had a whistle to his cane, that he might call the poor to him to receive his alms. The whole of his long life of nearly one hundred years was devoted to the good of his fellow-beings, and in death he did not forget the general objects of his bounty, leaving considerable benefactions to the poor, to console their miseries after his departure.*

His brother Laurence settled in London and was father of Sir Roger Martin, Knt., "a mercer and a marchant," Sheriff of London 1559, and Lord Mayor of London† in 1567-8.‡

* Playfair's Baronetage, i. p. 666.

† This place had furnished London with another Lord Mayor in 1521, in the person of Sir John Milborn, Knt., of

the Draper's Company.

‡ See Diary of Machyn, 375, and Stow's London.

Richard Martin, son of Roger, is said to have purchased Melford Hall of Sir Wm. Cordell.

In 1627 Sir Roger Martin, Knt., of Melford, was exempted by Charles the First from the statute of Queen Elizabeth relating to recusants, by which those who adhered to the Roman Catholic religion were prevented from going more than five miles from their own abode. He shewed his gratitude for this mark of royal favor by siding with the king in his unhappy contest with his Parliament and people; and was so great a sufferer through his loyalty that he was constrained to petition Parliament for redress. The result of his appeal is unknown, but in his petition he sets forth that he and his ancestors had quietly lived amongst their neighbors in Melford for about 300 years. He died in 1657.

His grandson Roger was created a baronet in 1677, by Charles the Second. He married Tamworth, daughter of Edmund Horner, esq., of Mells, Somersetshire, and the lady whose loyalty has been immortalised in these lines in *Hudibras* :

Did not a certain lady whip
Of late her husband's own lordship,
And though a grandee of the house,
Claw'd him with fundamental blows;
Tied him stark naked to a bed post,
And fir'd his hide as if she'd rid post;
And after, in the Sessions Court,
Where whipping's praised, had honor for't.

This lady, at the time referred to by the poet, was the wife of her third husband, Sir William Monson, created by Charles the First Viscount Monson, of Castlemain, a nobleman so unmindful of the favours conferred by his sovereign, that he sat as one of the commissioners and judges at the king's trial. For this it is said Lady Monson inflicted upon her lord the punishment alluded to, which had the effect of keeping him from the court on the day judgment was passed. At the restoration of King Charles the Second, Lord Monson was degraded and imprisoned, and sentenced with others to be led from the Tower to Tyburn and back, on sledges, with ropes about their necks. His wife survived, and took for her fourth husband Sir Adam Felton, Bart.*

* Hist. Hengrave, p. 247.

Sir Roger Martin, the first baronet, purchased an annuity of 260 livres French, for ever issuing out of the bank or town-house of Paris, and by deed dated 21st March, 1709, directed the same to be paid to some priest of the Roman Catholic church, for him to distribute one third part thereof among such poor Roman Catholics as may live in or near the parish of Melford, and the remainder to the support of the said priest, on condition that he reside in or near to Melford, and never fail to remember in the oblations of holy mass the dead and the living of the donor's family, saying before or after mass *De profundis*, with the proper absolve for their souls, mentioning the last of the deceased, and shall make a more especial memory upon the obiit or anniversary days respectively of himself, his ancestors, his lady, children, and descendants who shall be heirs of his estate and Roman Catholics successively, according to a schedule annexed. The whole number of souls whose obiits are to be commemorated are never at any time to exceed twenty-four, but the eleven first in the list and the eight then living to be continued in perpetuity. When a new head of the family shall die, the last to be expunged to make a way for the new deceased. The obiits were not to be understood in a strict sense or of obligation to a mass, but only that of Old Roger Martin, October 31; Richard Martin, March 8; Sir Roger Martin, my grandfather, October 25; Richard Martin, my father, January 11th; Lord Price, Rogation Tuesday; and the donor when it shall fall. The priest to be appointed by the Provincial of the English Dominicans for the time being, and all difficulties to be determined by him with the counsel and advice of the Father of the English province of the Order of St. Dominick.

The following is the annexed schedule of obiit days:—

1. Roger Martin, great great grandfather to the present Sir Roger Martin, 3rd of August.
2. Roger Martin, son of the former, 31st of October.
3. Richard Martin, son of the last, 8th of March.
4. Sir Roger Martin, grandfather to the present Sir Roger Martin, 25th of October.
5. Richard Martin, father to the present Sir Roger, 11th of January.
6. Jane Martin, mother of the present Sir Roger, 28th of June.
7. Tamworth Martin, wife of Sir Roger, 15th of August.

8. Tamworth Rokewode, eldest daughter of Sir Roger, 7th of January.

9. Elizabeth, one other daughter of Sir Roger's, 21st of August.

10. Phillippe, one other daughter of Sir Roger's, 31st of January.

11. Lord Price, as benefactor to a part of Sir Roger's estate, to have a mass on the Tuesday of every Rogation week.

These hereafter named, being all now living, are to have their obiits solemnized according as they shall happen to decease.

12. Sir Roger Martin,—1712, 8th July.

13. Roger Martin, esq., his eldest son.

14. Edward Martin, second son.

15. Henry Martin, third son.

16. John Martin, fourth son.

17. Joseph Martin, fifth son.

18. Catherine, his eldest daughter, April 3rd, 1727.

19. Jane, his second daughter.*

Tamworth Martin, daughter of Sir Roger and Lady Tamworth, married Thomas Rokewode, esq., of Coldham Hall; and their only child, Elizabeth, married John Gage, esq., one of the pages of honor to Louis XIV. ; an alliance that carried the name and estates of the Rokewodes to the Gages of Hengrave.

Sir Roger Martin, the third baronet, who married Sophia, daughter of General Mordaunt, brother to the Earl of Peterborough, and died in 1762, was the last of the family who resided here, and his son Sir Mordaunt alienated the property, and removed to Burnham Westgate in Norfolk, where he died in 1815. His son Sir Roger, the present and fifth baronet, is a Judge of the Court of Appeal in Bengal.

Melford Place is now the property and residence of Charles Westropp, esq. The only part of the old house now remaining was the chapel. It has undergone many alterations, and now serves for hall or entrance. A ceiling has been given to make a room above, but its waggon-roofed pannelled ceiling, with its cornice and beam carved with foliage of the boldest and richest design, still remains. The Gothic window or windows, for there were probably two, are filled up to their stone framework, to receive the common sashes now in. In digging some years since to make a boundary to the garden, some of the commoner sort of funeral urns and a glass vase were found; and coins and

* MS. *pene* W.S. Fitch, esq., Ipswich.

tokens, Roman and medieval, not unfrequently, while disturbing the soil. The last thing turned up was a small oval medallet, of silver, to be worn on the person. On one side is a skull with the legend "MISEREMINI MEI MISERE MISEREMINI," and on the other a cross with the words "SALTEM VOS AMICI."

SAMUEL TYMMS.



NOTICE OF A GOLD PENDANT ORNAMENT, FOUND AT PALGRAVE, SUFFOLK.

THE small gold bulla, or pendant ornament, here engraved, was found in the parish of Palgrave, in the year 1851. The woodcut has been kindly lent to me by the Archæological Institute, and has already appeared in the *Journal* of that Society.* No particulars of its discovery can now be furnished, as the silversmith of whom it was purchased was unable to recollect the person who had brought it to him. I am not aware that any other remains of a similar kind have been found in the parish, but there can be little doubt but that it is a relic of an ancient interment, where other antiquities originally accompanied it, and that it owes its preservation to the valuable nature of its material. It is composed of a small central globe, surrounded by seven concentric circles of gold wire, and has a loop for suspension, formed of a narrow strip of gold, soldered to the reverse, and extending to the opposite edge of the circle, where it is broken off, but appears to have been originally turned back, and soldered into the rest. Its purpose was, no doubt, that of an ornament for suspension on a necklace, together with beads, or other pendants. A considerable

* Vol. ix. p. 107.