

- Lib. Reynolds.—4 Sept. 1661. Fr. Heardson, ad præs. Geo. Walsh, arm.
26 Sept. 1671. Henr. Moorehouse, ad præs. ejusd.
- Lib. Sparrow.—20 Aug. 1681. Tho. Grice, ad præs. Saræ Grice, vid.
et Isabellæ Walmsely, vid.
20 Mart. 1681. Sam. Edwards, ad præs. Tho'e Grice, arm.
- Lib. Lloyd.—30 Jul. 1690. Jo'es Pulleyn, ad præs. Annæ Grice, vid.
et Rob^t Tash, arm.
- Lib. Moore.—2 Apr. 1698. Jo'es Burgate, ad præs. Nic. Grice, gen.
in minoritate et Rob^t Tash, guardian.
31 Dec. 1724. Ricardus Swainston.
7 March, 1728. Willielmus Broome, LL.D. on the
presentⁿ of Lord Cornwallis.
26 Nov. 1745. Isaac Cowper, M.A. ad præs. ejusd.
14 May, 1784. Thomas Wythe, ad præs. ejusd.
21 Oct. 1835. James William Campbell.

WEST STOW HALL.

The Lordship or Manor of West Stow was the property of the Abbots of the monastery of St. Edmund from a very early period, and continued to be parcel of the possessions of that religious house till the dissolution, when it was granted by King Henry VIII. to Sir John Croftes, the representative of a family which had held a subordinate manor in the parish from the time of Henry I. Sir John Croftes had been a member of the household of Mary Tudor, youngest daughter of Henry VII., sister of Henry VIII., widow of Louis XII. of France, and wife of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; and when he enlarged—for it is clear that he did not entirely rebuild—the hall, he added to it the beautiful gatehouse; and in compliment to his royal mistress placed her arms over the gateway, where they may still be seen. To this circumstance we probably owe the tradition which asserts that the young and royal widow, freed from her state contract with an old and feeble monarch, and now allied to the gay and handsome object of her early and romantic attachment, passed her time in happy seclusion between the halls of West Stow and Westhorpe. At least this is the only fact which, as yet, has

been ascertained to connect the place with the beautiful Dowager of France.

Sir John Croftes made West Stow his principal residence, and dying in 1557, was buried, agreeably to his will, in the neighbouring church. His son Edmund, who survived his father but a few days, had been twice married. His first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Kytson, the builder of the stately hall at Hengrave. His second wife was Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Lord Borough. His son and heir, Thomas Croftes, removed to Little Saxham and assigned West Stow to a younger branch of the family. The family of Croftes was ennobled, soon after the restoration of King Charles II., in the person of William Baron Croftes, of Saxham, "the Madcap Croftes," as he is termed in M. Grammont's Memoirs, one of those choice spirits which were at once the delight and the discredit of the court of the merry monarch. Nor was this the only favor conferred upon the family by King Charles; for Dr. John Croftes, rector of West Stow, a brother of the peer, obtained the Deanery of Norwich, and Sir John Croftes, their cousin, received the honour of a baronetcy by the title of Sir John Croftes, of West Stow. At the death of this baronet without issue, in the year 1664, the Hall passed to his widow, who survived but a few years. Dying in 1669, she bequeathed it to the Hon. Edward Progers, of London, "the gay Progers," who, according to Le Neve, died on the "31st of December or 1st of January, 1713, aged *ninety-six*, of the anguish of *cutting teeth*, he having cut four new teeth, and had several ready to cut, which so inflamed his gums that he died thereof." Mr. Progers was a younger son of Colonel Progers, of Garreddin, in Monmouthshire, equerry to James I.; and being early introduced to court as page to Charles I., was afterwards groom of the chamber to Charles II. while Prince of Wales. In the lampoons of the times, particularly in those of Andrew Marvell, Mr. Progers is described as one devoted to assist his master's pleasures; for which reason, perhaps, he was banished from the king's presence in 1650 by an Act of the estates of Scotland, "as an evil instrument and bad counsellor of the king." He is said to have obtained several

grants to take effect upon the restoration; but it does not appear that they took effect. In 1660 he was named one of the knights of the Royal Oak, an order the king then intended to institute. He represented the county of Brecon in Parliament for 17 years, but retired in 1679. He married Miss Elizabeth Wells, one of the ladies of the court* ; and their daughter Frances, wife of Sir Sydenham Fowke, inherited West Stow, and left it to her nephew, John Edwards, esq., whose grand-daughter carried it by marriage to the Rushbrookes. From this family it passed by exchange for Little Saxham with the first Marquess of Cornwallis, and on the death of the second and last Marquess it was purchased by the late Richard Benyon De Beauvoir, Esq., and is now the property of his nephew, the Rev. Edward Richard Benyon, of Culford Hall.

The manorial hall appears to have been of great extent. There are persons still living who recollect a quadrangular court and extensive outbuildings; and the wide moat by which it was surrounded has been filled up within a very few years. The gate-house is a good example of the brick buildings of the first half of the 16th century†. In one of the upper chambers are the remains of some rude distemper paintings of the time of Queen Elizabeth, which were rendered visible a few years since on the removal of the pannelling. The subjects remaining represent four of the seven ages of man—a favorite subject of mediæval artists:—one, a youth hawking, has this inscription, “Thus doe I all the day.” Another, a young man making love to a maiden, is inscribed, “Thus doe I while I may.” The third is a middle-aged man, looking at the young couple with this inscription, “Thus did I when I might;” and the fourth is an aged man hobbling onwards, and sorrowfully exclaiming, “Good Lord! will this world last ever?” (See *Plate*.)

The gate-house is connected with the hall by a corridor, also of brick; but probably of later erection. A large room on the north side of the house, with massive beams and panelling, is nearly all that now remains of the old house.

SAMUEL TYMMS.

* Grammont's Memoirs, *note*.

† Engraved in Mr. S. C. Hall's Baronial Halls.



Thus do3 all the day

Thus do3 while I may

Thus did I when I myght

Goad lord will this world last euer

FIRE PLACE.

MURAL PAINTING,
CATE-HOUSE, WESTOW HALL.