

## WEST WICKHAM COURT.

BY COLONEL J. FARNABY LENNARD.

IN the time of Edward the Confessor, this manor was held by one Godric, of the King. William the Conqueror gave it to his brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent. It came, later, into possession of the eminent family of De Huntingfield. In the seventh year of Edward I, 1278, Sir Peter de Huntingfield was lord of West Wickham; and he was sheriff for Kent in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth of that reign. This family had large possessions, both here and at Huntingfield, in Eastling. Sir Peter de Huntingfield attended the King to Scotland in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, and he died in the seventh of Edward II, anno 1313.

His son, Sir Walter, obtained a charter of free warren for this manor, and license to impark Frithwood, Ladywood, and Court wood, etc., in the adjoining parish of Addington, with other woods in this parish. Sir John his son, in the twentieth of Edward III, paid aid at the making of the Black Prince a knight. He was summoned to parliament as a baron, in the thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirtieth years of that reign. He died leaving two daughters, Joane and Alice; Joane, the eldest, married Sir John Cople-dike, and possessed this manor in Richard the Second's reign, 1399. In the seventeenth of Henry VI, 1438, Thomas Squerrye died possessed of it; then it passed to his son, who died without issue, in the fourth of Edward IV, 1463. His youngest sister then became possessed of it, and married Richard Mervin of Fontells, Wiltshire; it afterwards passed to Richard Scrope. In the seventh year of Edward IV it passed by fine to Ambrose Cressacre, who sold it, in 1467,

to Henry Heydon of Beaconsthorpe, Norfolk, afterwards knighted; whose wife was daughter of Sir Geoffrey Bulleyn. Their arms are quartered in many places about the house, in glass and on stone. He was controller of the household to the Duchess of York, Edward IV's mother. He rebuilt the house (Wickham Court), with an interior open court, now covered in and used as a staircase; and he rebuilt the church. To do honour to his king, he put up in painted glass the royal arms of Edward IV, and those of his queen, Elizabeth Woodville; of the Duchess of York; and of his sister who married Lord Cobham. These coats of arms are in the hall, with those of Henry VIII, and Anne Boleyn, with her cypher; of the De Huntingfields; Copleykes; Scropes; Cressacres, Lennards, and many others.\*

In the latter end of Elizabeth's reign, the estate was sold by Sir William Heydon to John Lennard, of Chevening, custos brevium of the Court of Common Pleas, who also possessing Knole, at Sevenoaks, gave Wickham to his second son, Samuel. This family has resided here for about three centuries, many of its scions being men of note, representing the county in several parliaments. Sir Samuel was knighted, and his son, Sir Stephen, was created a baronet in 1642.

The last of the family, Miss Mary Lennard, married Sir John Farnaby, Bart., of Kippington, Sevenoaks; he was colonel of the second regiment of Life Guards. She outlived her husband, and resided here until her death in 1833. She was succeeded by her only surviving son Sir Charles Francis Farnaby, Bart., who was again succeeded in 1861 by his nephew, the present owner, eldest son of Sir John's only daughter, who married Lieut.-General Sir William Cator, K.C.B., of the Royal Horse Artillery.

In the time of the Romans, and earlier, this is said to have been a large and important station. Its commanding

\* Other shields impale Lennard with Harman, Slaney, Leigh, Stanley of Alderley, Hale, Ogländer, Delalynd-Hussey, Carew of Beddington, Chadwick, Holmden, Bird, Weston, and Lambert. The quarterings, 1 and 4, Lennard; 2, Byrde; 3, Bickworth, occur repeatedly on wood and on stone. Shields also appear with the arms of Heydon impaled with those of Boleyn, Brooke, Carew, and with unnamed coats.

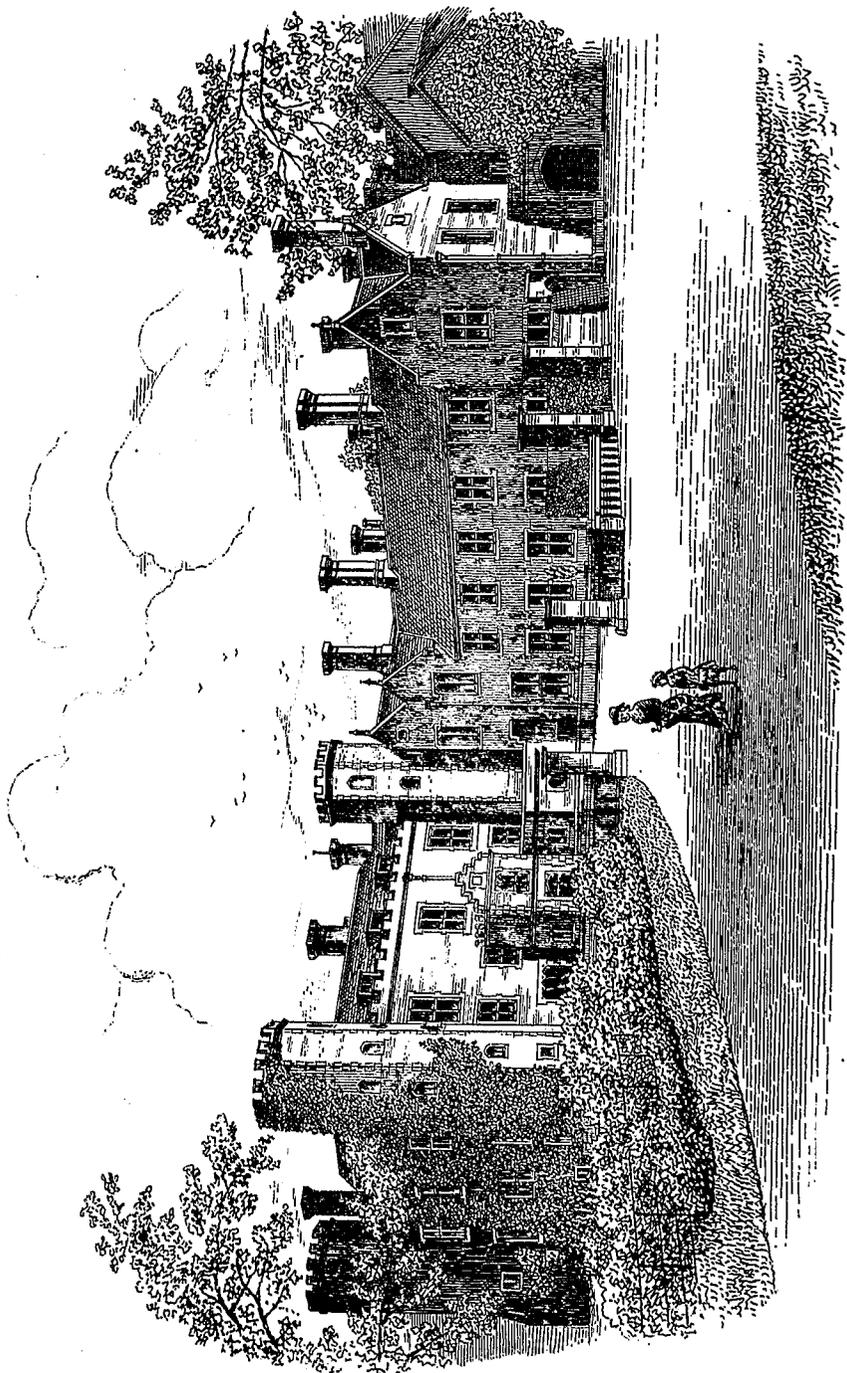
situation would have rendered it a valuable outpost if there were a military station at Keston.

In all directions, remains of old buildings are met with, and there is a legend respecting two subterranean passages, which are said to have led, one to Coney Hall Hill, adjoining Hayes Common, where there are remains of earthworks; the other towards Addington, probably to Castle Hill, which is now a farmstead; this, from its name, may have been a military station.

The owners of this manor have been, from the earliest times, Lords of Keston and Baston manors, comprising the whole of the adjoining parishes of Keston and Hayes. When the house was rebuilt, by Sir Henry Heydon in Edward IV's reign, in troublous times, it was made a fortified house, with no outside windows but those in the four turrets, to enable the inmates to watch those outside, and to light the spiral staircase in each. The rooms were lighted from the inner court (now the staircase, and enclosed). An example of these windows can still be seen, in the drawing room, over the door. There are many others, now covered with plaster, around the sides of the staircase.

It is evident, from the timbers, that the present roof is about twenty inches higher, on the outside, than the original; no doubt it was altered to gain head room. The turret roofs were flat, and in the south-east turret can be seen the remains of a trap door, leading from the stairs to the outside roof. In the turrets are marks, in the brickwork, which shew where beams were inserted to support the old flat roofs.

The walls were all embattled, with machicolations over the doorway; the present porch is of about the time of Charles I. The house was defended by three openings, near the ground, in each turret; through which the inmates could discharge their cross bolts, and thus protect each front of the house. There were also loop-holes in various places, in the turrets, for discharging arrows; with places, inside, giving the defenders space to use their bows; these can be seen in the north-east turret, on the ground floor, and in the north-west turret in the bed room floor.



The heavy oak door, at the main entrance, is original, and has a curious wooden lock and spring iron bars; there are places on it where bolts from the cross bows have left their marks; and in one place it has had a severe battering. The "entresol" is a curious feature in the house, advantage having been taken of the lower ground on the west and north sides to gain an extra floor, still retaining the ground floor rooms.

After the wars of the Roses, the house was remodelled. The battlements were replaced by a stone cornice, and extinguishers were placed on the four turrets, in the French chateau style. This was the time, doubtless, when the mullioned windows were inserted, in the outside walls; when the inner court was enclosed, and the roof was altered. The ceilings, throughout the house, were originally like that, with heavy rough beams, in the old dining hall, which has probably undergone no alteration.

The kitchen was under the entresol; the underground offices are now used as cellars. Under the north-east turret there is a dungeon, ventilated by two air shafts in the turret's outer wall.

The well was probably in the cellars; but it has long been disused. Behind the present panelling, in the drawing room, there are remains of still older panels. The chimney-piece was, originally, flush with the wall, as in the dining hall, with a fire-place as there; it still exists, behind the present stone chimney-piece. The projection was the result of the house having settled towards the north side, causing the timbers to leave the south wall, and thus the necessity for disguising it. The fire-dogs, in this room, are very beautiful, as well as curious. On them the royal arms of England are enamelled, in blue and white, on copper.

It is supposed, from the stags' heads, in the dining hall, being all American, and from the original full-length portraits of Sir Walter Raleigh and his son being here, that some of the family accompanied Sir Walter, in one or more of his expeditions, to America. There are portraits here of Sir John Lennard, the founder of the Lennard family; Dr. Farnaby, the scholar and grammarian, who founded the Farnaby

family; Sir Sydney Stafford Smythe, a baron of the Exchequer, of the Strangford family, who married a Miss Farnaby; Prince George of Denmark, to whom Sir Samuel Lennard, Colonel of the Second Regiment of Horse Guards, was Equerry; Sir Samuel himself; the Earl of Sussex, and his wife Lady Anne Palmer, daughter of Charles II; and of King Charles II, on the stair case; with others, unknown.

The additions, to the house, are in the style of a period about one hundred and twenty years later than the original structure; the junction between the old and the new parts is at one face of the south-east turret.

In Wickham Church, the Chancel and Lady Chapel are coeval with the old Keep, and were built about 1467. The Nave, Transept, and Tower were rebuilt in 1844, when church architecture was at a low ebb. The old painted windows in the Lady Chapel are remarkably fine, and have been engraved by Mr. Waller. There are one or two brasses.

The noble monuments of the Lennard family in the church at Chevening are in good preservation, thanks to the Lords Stanhope, who are now the owners of Chevening.