

SUTTON PLACE,

SURREY.

HALF encircled by the placid Wey, winding onward from Guildford towards Woking and Ripley, in Surrey, stands that very beautiful and interesting house, Sutton Place. The aspect of it carries us back at once to Tudor times. We are in the days when bar-bican and frowning battlement had fallen before the more peaceful influence of a later time, but when, in the mind of the country gentleman, something still was needful to keep the intruder parleying at the gate. It was comfortable to him even yet to look within upon an inclosed courtyard—legitimate descendant of the castle-garth—and to have a moat, or a ditch, or at least a strong gateway, without. The quadrangle has gone, for the side in which was the entrance gateway became ruinous towards the end of the eighteenth century; but the old weathered brick of the rest stands bravely in storm and sun. Old red brick, mellowed in tone, contrasting so well with the green things that clothe or neighbour it, has a charm all its own; and the house we describe derives a further loveliness from the fact that all its enrichments, and very many they are, are in material of lighter colour, a kind of terra-cotta, described by Aubrey as "Flanders brick," and said traditionally to have come from the Low Countries. The reader may conceive the charm of this building, both of hue and architecture.

Something must now be said of Sir Richard Weston, who built and dwelt at Sutton Place. Henry VIII. granted to him the Surrey estate, which had belonged beforetime to the Beauforts, about the year 1520. There was an older house in the park, standing a little to the north of the present structure, but it was not to the mind of the new possessor, who set about building a quadrangular structure in the taste of his time. Sir Richard Weston was the King's under-treasurer, while his brother, Sir William Weston, was the last prior of St. John of Jerusalem. The country people have curiously spoken of Sir Richard as having been the King's brewer, and would point to the vine leaves and grapes which surround his rebus in certain parts of the structure as branches of hops, indicative of his office.

The under-treasurer apparently did not destroy the older house without selecting from it the painted glass, with the rose en soleil of Edward IV., the crown in the hawthorn bush of Henry VII., and other badges, to insert in

his new windows, where still some of them remain. His house was elaborate in its details, and the work in moulded brick is amongst the best in the country. The mullions and transoms are beautifully worked and well preserved, and the arched and cusped heads to the lights are most picturesque both without and within. The feature of a noble bay in the courtyard, which the Tudor architect always seized upon for the exercise of his skill, is here very charming indeed, and the enrichment of lozenges, elaborately moulded, over each range of windows, is unusual. In the interior these architectural features give their old-world character, and the sunlight falls through the fretted panes, and casts the golden glory of the ancient glass upon the floor. The rebus of the builder, "R. W.," with a tun adorned with vine leaves and grapes, occurs both in terra-cotta and glass. In short, the features of Sir Richard Weston's Tudor mansion are exceedingly good and interesting, and the grouping and effect of the whole structure are most charming. A particular device in glass, though it seems to be later than the builder's time, may be noticed here, because it illustrates one of the wise saws and instances of an early date. It depicts a rustic crossing a brook, with the necks of five goslings thrust through his belt. The scene is in Wither's "Emblems" (1635), where a lout goes forth to bring home the goslings, fears lest they should be drowned in crossing the water, and strangles them by pulling their necks under his girdle. Wither applies the lesson:

"The best good turns that fools can do us
Prove disadvantages unto us."

Dire disaster overtook a son of the builder of Sutton Place, Francis Weston, who, with Brereton, was a gentleman of the Privy Chamber to the monstrous, cruel King. How much or how little is true of the gross charges made against Anne Boleyn will never be known, but it is certain that Henry was tired of her, and that with her died her brother, Lord Rochford, Sir Henry Norris, Smeaton, the King's musician, Brereton, and Weston, all involved in her fate. Weston had stood high in Royal favour, and had often played shovel-board, dice, and other games with both King and Queen. In the terrible time of the accusation Anne doubted him more than the rest, fearing he would incriminate her; and upon the scaffold on Tower Hill he publicly

lamented his foolish resolve to give up his youth to pleasure and his age to repentance.

Nevertheless, Anne Boleyn's daughter did not regard the Westons with disfavour. She visited Sutton Place in 1591, in the course of

wherein lords and ladies trode those stately measures together. Elizabeth had scarcely left Sutton Place, when the Long Gallery took fire, and a great deal of woodwork was consumed. The high-piled logs had shed their cheery blaze,



THE GREAT HALL.

her stately progress towards Chichester, and was entertained in the Long Gallery we depict. The gallery was a usual feature at the time in great houses—the long gallery at Haddon is perhaps as famous as any—and was a large apartment

but the zeal of the servant-men at the coming of so august a visitor, or their carelessness in the excitement of the hour, laid open the mansion to disaster, and the gallery long remained in ruin. Early in the eighteenth century, however,



THE LONG GALLERY.

much was done in restoring and refitting the house, particularly on the south and east sides, where the gallery and ancient Chapel are.

The Westons died out in the direct line in 1782, but a gentleman of Herefordshire, John Webbe, Esq., who was connected with them distantly, assumed the name. They had done much for the development and agriculture of the neighbourhood. A later Sir Richard Weston, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was instrumental in rendering the Wey navigable up to Guildford. From the Low Countries he introduced the devices of locks, "tumbling bays," and flood-gates, and it was he, too, according to Aubrey, who brought "the first clover grass" into Surrey from the same countries. Upon the death of John Webbe Weston, Esq., the estate passed, by the marriage of his daughter, to W. T. Salvin, Esq., in whose family the ownership still remains.

At the end of the last century partial ruin had fallen upon Sutton Place, particularly on

the gateway side of the quadrangle, which was altogether removed. The gateway had been an imposing part of the building, with a lofty, hexagonal turret at each angle. Happily the house is now in the hands of those who reverence and love it. Its old adornments are carefully preserved, and many of its venerable fittings remain. Extremely interesting is the old glass, with its shields of arms and its devices, in the glorious windows of the Great Hall, which has been referred to. It is a noble apartment, and there is great dignity in the vast extent of the wainscoted chamber. The ancient Chapel in the South Gallery is also a notable feature of the house.

Sutton Place has fallen upon good and seemly days. It is charming in itself, its internal adornments, its excellent panelling, interesting pictures, fine tapestry and furniture, and delightful in its surroundings of garden and wood upon that gentle elevation within the long sweep of the river Wey.



THE COURTYARD.