

GROOMBRIDGE PLACE, KENT.

GROOMBRIDGE PLACE, that beautiful and attractive Kentish house, remarkable alike in historical interests, the radiant beauty of its gardens, and the variety of its internal features, is situated near Tunbridge Wells, close to the Sussex border. We shall traverse very briefly the fruitful field of its history, which, however, we cannot neglect, because the associations of the house should add a great deal to the interest of the pictures illustrating its interior.

We must know something of the men who dwelt therein. After passing through the hands of the powerful families of Cobham and Clinton, Groombridge passed by sale to the Wallers of Lamberhurst, who were a race of great renown in Kent and Sussex, and the buttressed walls of the garden belong to their time, as does some of

the oak panelling. The most famous member of this old Kentish family was that Sir Richard who fought so valiantly at Agincourt, and there took prisoner the Duke of Orleans, whom he held captive for more than twenty years at Groombridge. Waller was a man of high credit, who afterwards served under the Duke of Bedford, and had custody of the Count of Angoulême, Orleans' brother, in 1437. Fresh interest was thus added to Groombridge, and the memory of those transactions is preserved about the house, where the fleur de lys of France may be observed, and has been added as an adornment to the garden gates. Waller rose higher and higher in the Royal estimation, and, having acted prominently against Jack Cade, was made receiver of the Royal Castles and manors in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Hants.



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