

ON MURSLEY WITH SALDEN, BUCKS.

[ST. THOMAS' RECTORY,

HAVERSFOBDWEST,

June 9, 1854.

DEAR SIR,—In compliance with the request just conveyed to me from the Society through you, I forward the two remaining papers connected with my late Parish (Mursley with Salden). The first was read at Princes Risborough, and was immediately descriptive of Salden House. The second paper is on the *Fortescues*, particularly *Sir John*. I trust, in a Biographical and Historical point of view, and as connected with Bucks, it may be found not wholly devoid of interest. The third paper contains some gleanings respecting some of the *Rectors of Mursley* or others more or less connected with it. In this, incidental light is thrown on the history of *other Parishes* in the County, and thus it may have a wider interest. Similar Contributions might do something towards forming a good County History. I am sensible of the imperfection of these Notices, but "I have done what I could," and in my own way—and shall be happy if these two last Notices of my late Parish are as favourably received as the former one was.\*\*\*\*

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours, faithfully,

THOMAS HORN.

Rev. A. NEWDIGATE.]

II.—THE FORTESCUES - PARTICULARLY, SIR JOHN FORTESCUE,  
IN THE REIGNS OF ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

Sir John Fortescue was descended in a direct line from one of the elder brothers of Lord Chancellor Fortescue, in the reign of Henry VI., who was his father's uncle. His father was Sir Adrian Fortescue, who married Anne, daughter of Sir William Reed, of Boarstall, Bucks, the mother of Sir John Fortescue. She was his second wife, and widow of Sir Giles Greville. He was very young when misfortune befel his father, Sir Adrian Fortescue. This person, esteemed of much learning and wisdom, fell under the displeasure of Henry VIII., and being attainted of treason, was beheaded 1539. He was a gallant soldier, and had served Henry in the wars: he died much pitied, as not having formed any direct design against the crown.

Sir John's early education was not neglected, since he became distinguished for extensive knowledge, singular sagacity, and perfect acquaintance with the best Greek and

Latin Authors. Some distant affinity being between Queen Elizabeth and himself, together with these qualifications, led her to choose him for the director of her studies: and as a token of her favour, she made him afterwards Master of the Wardrobe, thus "trusting him" as Lloyd in his "State Worthies" observes, "with the ornaments of her soul and body." When his brother, Sir Anthony Fortescue, was convicted of High Treason, his influence with the Queen, probably, procured his pardon. Sir John Fortescue does not seem to have addicted himself to any particular party in the State — he had a good estate, a profitable employment, and the Queen's favour, which he retained by doing his duty assiduously. In the 28th Queen Elizabeth, he sat in Parliament with Christopher Edmonds, Esq. for the Town of Buckingham. In 31st Elizabeth, he was elected Knight of the Shire for the County, with Thomas Tasburgh, Esq. In the next year, on the death of Sir Walter Mildmay, he was raised to the high office of Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer, which he held during the rest of this reign. In this post he was very useful to the Lord Chancellor (Puckering) to whom he was related, and who entirely relied on him. Camden, in his Annals, Lib. 4. p. 438, with respect to his succeeding to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, describes Sir John Fortescue "as an upright man, excellently well learned in Greek and Latin, who was a long time Director to the Queen in her study of the liberal arts, and Master of her Wardrobe," "and one," the Antiquary adds, "*that gave me light in several things, as I was writing this History.*" In managing the Revenue, he shewed much care and circumspection, as well as the highest probity. "Two men," Elizabeth would say, "outdid her expectation; Fortescue, for integrity, and Walsingham, for subtilty and officious services,"\* Thus, on account of his office, posts, and fidelity, he was admitted to be a member of the Privy Council. In the Parliament of 35th Elizabeth, he was again chosen with Robert Dormer, Esq. for the County of Bucks; and again, in that of the 39th Elizabeth, with Francis Goodwin, Esq. In all the affairs in which he was engaged, he seems to have acted with equal candour and caution, so that while he

\* Camden, quoted by D. Lloyd.

discharged them with irreproachable fidelity, he gave general satisfaction by the calmness with which he heard whatsoever was proposed to him. We find him joined with Lord Burghley and others, on the trial of Sir John Perrot, for misgovernment and indiscretion, while Deputy of Ireland — he is also mentioned as concerned in the trial of the Earl of Essex, though not as a Peer, yet perhaps, as a Member of the Privy Council. His high situation and influence rendered him, too, an object of solicitation in the Earl's favour. "My Lady Essex," says Whyte, "rises almost every day as soon as light, to go to my Lord Treasurer's and *Sir John Fortescue*, on behalf of her Lord; for to this Court she may not come."\*

Besides these transactions, he was one of those who treated with the Dutch on two several occasions.

His name occurs, with that of Archbishop Whitgift and sundry Divines and Lawyers, A.D. 1590, as one of the Commissioners for finally deciding on the case of Robert Cawdry, a refractory Puritan Minister of Sth. Luffenham, Rutland, which ended in his deprivation and deposition from the Ministry. His offence was of a kind too common in those days — depraving and mutilating the Book of Common Prayer, and speaking against Ecclesiastical rulers; and, when convicted, refusing to retract his opinions or conform to the laws established.† Towards the close of the reign, the name of Sir John Fortescue occurs incidentally, in an affair which strongly marks the temper and feelings of the Sovereign. Dr. Matthew Hutton had ventured to preach a very bold sermon before her, on the duty of appointing a successor. Contrary to general expectation, Queen Elizabeth very kindly and calmly thanked this divine for his very learned sermon. Yet, when she better considered the matter in private, she sent two Councillors to him, *Sir John Fortescue*, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir John Woolley, Chancellor of the Order of the Garter, with a *sharp message*, to which he was glad to give a *patient answer*. Some Peer, who sent to ask the preacher for a copy of the sermon, (it having caused an unusual sensation) received for answer, that Sir John Fortescue and Sir John Woolley had been with him from the Queen with such a greeting, that he scant

\* Strickland's Elizabeth, Vol. 7, p. 238. † Shype's Aylmer, p. 91,

knew whether he was a prisoner or a free man; and that the *speech* being already so ill taken, the *writing* might exasperate that which was already exulcerate" He was, however, soon after promoted.\* At the period of Queen Elizabeth's death, Sir John Fortescue was in a Commission for banishing Seminary Priests and Jesuits.

We now come to a passage in the life of this statesman, which is involved in some obscurity. It is supposed, that he, in common with Sir Walter Raleigh and others, was against the admission of King James I., except on certain terms. "At the time it was debated in Council," says Bishop Goodman, in his Memoirs, "I have heard it by credible persons, that Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, did then very moderately and mildly ask whether *any conditions* should be proposed to the King? which the Earl of Northumberland then hearing, protested that if any man should offer to make any proposition to the King, he would instantly raise an army against him." A passage occurs in one of Lord Northampton's letters to the Earl of Marr, written, it seems, before James's Accession to the English Throne, which shows this man's character, and furnishes a probable reason (for the letter was of course shewn to James) why he never rose higher in the King's favour. "Sir John Fortescue, speaking awhile ago, with a dear friend of his own, of the weakness of the time, said that his comfort was, that he was old and weak as the time itself, being born in the same year with the Queen; but yet he would advise his son to take a right course when the hour came, without taking knowledge, in the mean time, of any person or pretension; for he had found by experience, that they that met Queen Mary at *London* were as well accepted (standing free from further combination) as they that went to *Framingham*; and that they that came into the vineyard *hora undecima* (at the eleventh hour,) had *denarium* (a penny,) as well as they that had sweat before all their fellows. The practice of opponents, as he thought, would cause the labour of all men to be holden and accounted meritorious, that had so much discretion, as, in the mean time, to be silent and indifferent." Whatever scruples Sir John Fortescue might have entertained,

\* Strickland,

as to the admission of King James to the throne of England without some special stipulations, on his arrival in this country, he was among the first to welcome him, and to prove his fidelity and attachment; nor was the Sovereign unwilling to admit his subject's attentions. Soon after his Accession, the King was a guest at *Salden*: on which occasion many eminent persons received the honour of Knighthood: an account of which is given in Nicholls's Progresses.

Several subsequent proofs of James's favour were afforded in the course of his reign, which serve to negative the idea of Sir John being in disgrace at Court. Some of these shall now be mentioned. At the Election of Members for the County, January 25th, 1603, held at *Brickhill*, instead of *Aylesbury*, on account of the plague there, Sir John Fortescue and Sir Francis Goodwin were nominated: but when the Sheriff proposed them, the *freeholders* cried out, "a Goodwin, a Goodwin," while most of the *Magistrates* and the *Gentry* were for the former. Upon this, Sir Francis Goodwin tried to persuade the Electors to allow Sir John's name to stand first on the poll; but they persisted in their opposition, and Sir Francis Goodwin and Sir William Fleetwood were returned. This was represented to the King, as a great insult to Sir John Fortescue, an old Privy Councillor, and as such, worthy of respect. It was discovered, however, that Goodwin was outlawed, and hence, disqualified. A second Writ was then issued by the Lord Chancellor, drawn up by the Attorney-General; and Sir John Fortescue was returned. When the House met, March 22, Sir William Fleetwood moved that Sir Thomas Goodwin might take his seat with him for Bucks; which the House ordered the next day, and Sir Francis did sit accordingly. This caused a long dispute between the House and the King, which lasted till April 11th, when James proposed that both Members should be set aside, and a new Writ issued. To this the Commons agreed, provided Sir Francis Goodwin consented, which he did; and Christopher Piggot, Esq. was chosen. It may be presumed, that though the King did not carry his point in this instance, Sir John Fortescue felt himself much obliged to him. All this ill agrees with the subject's being on bad terms with his Sovereign. For if this had been generally known, the

affront put upon him by his County would have been a compliment to the King; nor can we readily suppose the King would have interfered as he did, had he not entertained a high personal esteem for this eminent individual. Too much stress, however, must not be laid on this transaction; since, perhaps, it rather shows James's struggle with his Parliament for power and prerogative, than any particular regard for the subject of our present notice. James himself declared that "he was indifferent whether Fortescue or Goodwin were chosen."

In the first year of this reign Sir John Fortescue was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: and there was a report that the year after, he would have been created a Baron: but this honour he, who was a very modest and disinterested man, might decline. His son Francis was made a Knight of the Bath at the Coronation of James I. He was, it is likely, more than once a guest at Salden. Anne Clifford, daughter of the Earl of Cumberland, relates in her Journal, that "Queen Anne, wife of King James I., after visiting Althorpe, Sir Hatton Fermor's, and Grafton, her brother's seat in Northamptonshire, went the next day to a gentleman's house, where there met her many great ladies to kiss her hand. It was at *Salden House*, the seat of the Fortescues. The principal ladies were, the Marchioness of Winchester, the Countesses of Northumberland and Southampton."\* On this occasion, which seems to have been on her arrival from Scotland, the King was with her, accompanied by Prince Henry, and the Lady Elizabeth, afterwards Queen of Bohemia. In his latter days, he had the pleasure to see this same son, Sir Francis, Sheriff of the County. He died at Westminster, December, 1607. Sir John's parts and learning first introduced him to Court, where from the beginning to the end of Elizabeth, he was in constant favour; and, in the latter part of her reign, employed in matters of great importance: so that if we were to set down every Commission in which he was engaged, it would swell this account greatly. There are not, however, twenty lines respecting him to be met with in all our biographies.

His lasting love to literature appeared by his contribu-

\* Strickland.

tions to the Bodleian Library. The nature of his studies is no less evident from the titles of some of the books bestowed by him on that library — amongst others, by a *Sophocles*, with MSS. Scholia in Greek; for which Sir

Thomas Bodley held himself so much obliged, that he gave directions for the donor's being received with all imaginable respect, when, going occasionally to Oxford, he visited the library. He was a particular acquaintance of the learned *Camden*, whom he assisted in his *Annals*. We have already seen the Historian's acknowledgments of his services as "*one that gave me (him) light in several things as I (he) was writing that History.*"\* This, from his position and experience, he was well qualified to do. It might be on account of this friendship, as well as by reason of his office as Clarencieux King at Arms, that Camden assisted at Sir John Fortescue's funeral; which though he died December 23, 1607, was not *solemnized till the 4th or 6th of July following, at Mursley*. One reason for this delay might be an accident which befel Camden, and which disabled him from undertaking such a journey sooner.

In the Old Whaddon Hall (Browne Willis's), was a full length picture of Sir John Fortescue, with an inscription underneath, describing his descent. "Sir John Fortescue, Knight, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the Duchy of Lancaster, Master of the Wardrobe, and of the Privy Councill to Queen Elizabeth and King James. He built Salden House, and was the sonne of Sir Adrian Fortescue, Knight, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to King Henry VIII.; son of Sir John Fortescue, Knight Banneret to King Henry VII.; great-grandson of Sir John Fortescue, Knight, Governor of Brie, in France, under King Henry V.; lineally descended in the ninth generation from Richard Fortescue, Knight, Cupp-bearer to King William the Conqueror."

He was twice married — first, to Cicely, daughter of Sir Edmund Ashfyld, of Ewelme, Oxon, and afterwards of Tattenhoe, Bucks; by whom he had a numerous family. She died young, and was buried in the family vault at Mursley, On the north side of the chancel, projecting from the wall, is an altar-tomb of Bethersden marble, with

\* Camden's Annals, p. 438,

a brass fillet round the verge, with this inscription: "Cecilia : Edmundi Ashfild: Militis : filia : Johannis Fortescue de Salden Uxor: hic sita est: obiit 7 Feb., Anno 1570." There is on this tomb the effigy of a lady in rich brocade, with the following lines on a brass at her feet: "Tria cum haberet Maxima, Cecilia, Sanctis : Animam, Constantissimam Fidem, et Castiss: Corpus: Alterum ad Deum Opt: Max: Alteram in Chari Conjugis Pectus Migravit : Quod tertium fuit Hoc Tumulo Quiescit. Vixit Ann : 29. Mens. 3. Reliquit a. Novem Liberis Superstites—Robertum, Franciscum, Gulielmum, Thomam, Elizabeth, et Elianoram. Obiit 7. Februarii. 1570." The hand of the spoiler has been busy in forcing off many of the brass accompaniments of this tomb, so that it appears rather in a mutilated or imperfect state. Above the tomb, of some years later date, are two tablets of black marble, under an arch of alabaster, with an inscription to the memory of Sir John Fortescue. On the west side, "Hic Jacet Johannes Fortescue, Miles, Magister, Magna; Guarderobae, Cancellarius et Sub Thesaurus Scaccarii, et de Privatis Conciliis Reginae Elizabeth." On the eastern side, is the following: "Postea Anno primo Regis Jacobi Factus est Cancellarius Ducatus Lancastriae. Vixit Annos 76. Et Mortuus est 23tio die Decembris, Anno Domini. 1607. Reliquit Filios Superstites, Franciscum, Praenobils Ordinis Balnaei Militem, et Gulielmum, Militem, qui in Memoria Patris Defuncti, Hoc posuere." His second wife was Alice, daughter of Christopher Smyth, Clerk of the Pipe; by whom he had an only daughter, Margery, married to Sir John Pulteney, of Misterton, Leicestershire.

There are some letters of Sir John Fortescue in the unedited *Talbot Papers*: one of his grand-daughters being married to the Earl of Shrewsbury. There is also a letter in the Harleian MSS. 286, fol. 219, to Lord Keeper-Puckering, and dated at Hendon, 1593, "where," says Norden, (Historian of Essex), " he was often residente, when he taketh the ayre in the country." He was the owner of considerable property in this part of the County of Bucks, and Patron of several Livings.

His eldest surviving son, was Sir Francis Fortescue, married to Grace, daughter of Sir John Manners, of Haddon Hall, Derby, by whom he had a numerous issue,



several of whom died before their parents. They are buried in the Chancel of Mursley, where they are represented in effigy, at the foot or lower part of a monument, on the south side. Above, are the figures of their parents; and at the upper part is an inscription in English, recording the worth of Sir Francis and his Lady. Mary, one of their daughters, was married to John, Earl of Shrewsbury, as we have just seen: another, Dorothy, was married to Sir Robert Throgmorton, of Weston Underwood. This early connexion of the Fortescues with *Romanist* families, may account, in some measure, for their ultimately embracing that form of religion: this, however, probably did not take place immediately. Sir John Fortescue, son of Sir Francis, was created Baronet of Nova Scotia, and died 1658. It is satisfactory to believe that the family\* (some of them at least) took part, on the side of the King, in the Civil Wars. It was this latter, the Baronet of Nova Scotia, who seems to have been taken prisoner, May, 1644, by Sir Samuel Luke, Parliamentary Governor of Newport Pagnell, and the supposed Original of Hudibras, by whom he was surprised near Islip, Oxon. Sir Robert Throgmorton, the husband of Dorothy Fortescue, is known to have been actively engaged in the Royal cause. The memorials of the family, however, are but scanty; and what is above related of Sir John Fortescue, temp. Elizabeth and James I. is the most full and interesting. It seems pretty clear that the Fortescues relapsed into Romanism in the course of time: their property, before concentrated in the principal member of the Bucks family, became dispersed and diffused: and that few subsequently attained to much distinction, appears from no monument remaining of them in the church of Mursley, notwithstanding their interment there in the family vault, except inscriptions on two large flat marble slabs, to the memory of the last Baronet, Sir Francis Fortescue, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Mary Huddleston.

I am favoured with the following genealogical particulars by William Courthope, Esq., College of Arms, Rouge Croix :—

\* Sir Faithful Fortescue is recorded as an active Royalist. Query—whether of this family ?

Sir John Fortescue, who was buried in 1683, had issue

1. Frances, married Henry Benedict Hall, of High Meadow, County of Gloucester, from whom Lord Gage (who afterwards possessed the property of Salden), was descended.

2. Sir John Fortescue, Bart., died 1717.

3. William Fortescue, who was living, aged twenty-six years, in 1671, but of whom we know nothing.

4. Lucy, died young.

5. Dorothy, baptized 1664, died young.

6. Elizabeth, baptized 1666, who married Thomas Brome Whorwood, of Sandwell Hall, County of Stafford.

7. Lucy, baptized 1669, died young.

There are some interesting historical notices respecting the *Whorwoods*. It was the mother, probably, of this Thomas Brome Whorwood, who was engaged in contriving the escape of Charles I.,\* whom Lilly mentions coming to receive his judgment, in what quarter of this nation the King might be most safe. "When she came to my door," says the astrologer, "I told her I would not let her come into my house; for I buried a maidservant of the plague very lately. 'I fear not the plague,' quoth she: so up we went. I told her about twenty miles from London, and in Essex, I was certain the King might continue undiscovered. She liked my judgment very well; and being herself of a sharp judgment, remembered a place in Essex, about that distance. Away she went, early next morning, unto Hampton Court to acquaint His Majesty; but in the night he had gone westward, and surrendered to Hammond, in the Isle of Wight." While the King was at Hampton Court, Alderman Adams sent him £1,000 in gold, £500 whereof he gave Madam Whorwood. "I believe," says Lilly, "I had twenty pieces of that very gold." This lady was also concerned in aiding (though ineffectually) the King's escape from the Isle of Wight. Charles had the greatest confidence in her. In one of his letters, he speaks of her as one "for whose fidelity he would answer." †

Sir Francis Fortescue, the last Baronet, married into the Huddleston family, of Sawston Hall, Cambridge. Miss

\* Life and Times of Charles I., p. 139.

† Barwick's Life, Appendix, p. 389. Some of the Whorwoods are buried in the Chancel of Mursley; but the inscription on their grave is obliterated. A copy of it, however, has been preserved.

Strickland (Life of Queen Mary I.) has an anecdote of some interest respecting this family and their residence, *quod vide*. In a letter dated May 6, 1850, Sawston, Cambridge, the late Mr. Huddleston says, "We have here the plate, some of the furniture and paintings of Sir Francis Fortescue and his Lady. The latter retired here after Sir Francis's death, and was guardian to my grandfather, while a minor. She died here; and lies in our vault, in the Church. Sir Francis was of the family of the Fortescues of Devonshire; for his arms are the same." Cole says, "Lady Fortescue lived sometimes abroad, as well as at Sawston, after her husband's death. She had two sisters, the one a nun in the English Convent at Bruges, where are also two of Mr. Huddleston's sisters. Another of my Lady's sisters is (1738) a Brigettine Nun in the Convent of Sion, at Lisbon."

Here end my notices of this family, connected with the parish of Mursley for upwards of a century and a half. The vestiges of their once noble mansion and grounds; part of the offices, the terraced walls of the garden, the fish-ponds, the bowling-green, &c. are still to be seen, as before observed. Local tradition also reports some additional facts respecting this family and their residence at Salden. There is a wind-mill still standing, in a line with the road leading to Salden from Drayton. This is s'aid to have been used for grinding com for the family at the house, which is reported to have maintained *sixty* servants, and to have employed within its walls a butcher and a baker, and for whose consumption a bullock is said to have been killed every day. One servant was engaged in opening and shutting the windows. Large cisterns are represented as having been formed at the top of the mansion, for receiving and preserving fish. In the summer, the butter was put to cool in a fountain, or spring of water. The place is still covered over by a brick arch, in the ground at the back of the present farm house. One of the Fortescues is described as having been killed by the stroke of a ball on the bowling-green. In a field called *Beggars' Mead*, next to Warren Hill, the site of the bowling-green, broken victuals were served out daily to the poor. This field is very near to the spot where Salden House stood, and probably derived its name of *Beggars' Mead* from this circumstance. One or more of the owners of the

Great House is reported to have been in the habit of giving 2s. 6d. to each poor person of the parish whom he met with in his walks. If so, no doubt many would often come across his path, to receive the liberal dole. Some old houses, at the end of the village, are said to have been built for the workmen, who were employed for several months in erecting Salden House: they are very low, and somewhat of the appearance of sheds or hovels. Some have lately been removed, and have given place to new buildings. Whatever degree of truth there may be in these traditions, they are curious and interesting, as throwing some little additional incidental light on the history of the Fortescues and their residence, and the condition of the inhabitants of the adjoining village of Mursley, in former times.



SALDEN HOUSE.