

An Account of Blo' Norton Hall,

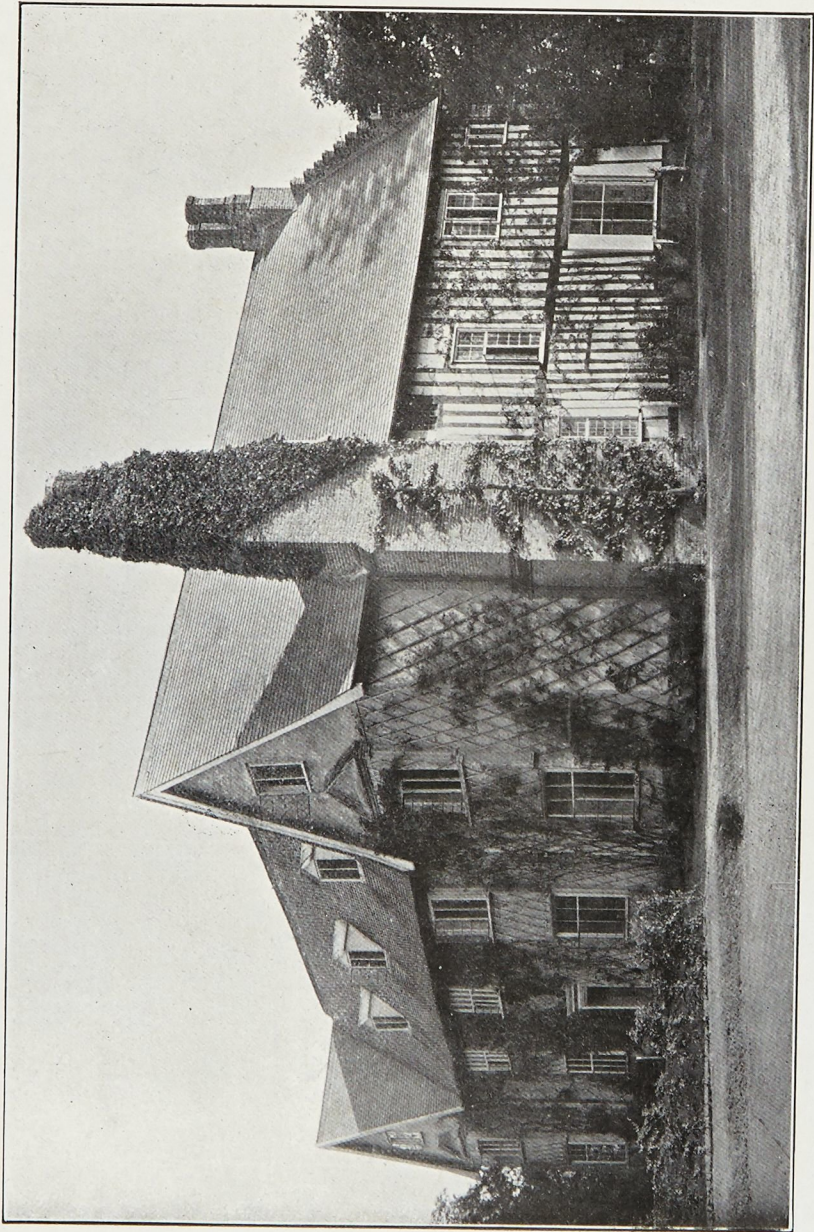
OTHERWISE THE
MANOR HOUSE OF BROME HALL IN BLO' NORTON.

COMMUNICATED BY

PRINCE FREDERICK DULEEP SINGH, M.V.O., F.S.A.,
V.P.

The claim to be the oldest inhabited house in a county, or even in the Kingdom, has often been put forward; but certainly, if my theory be accepted, there can hardly exist, in Norfolk, an earlier inhabited site than that of Blo' Norton Hall. A large moated enclosure, low down and near a river, this alone would indicate antiquity; but the recent discovery of two Neolithic flint arrow-heads and a bone-scraper of the same period puts back the possible date to prehistoric times.

In the comparatively flat province of East Anglia—the land of the Iceni—the only form of defence available for its aboriginal inhabitants was a stockade of wood or a dug out moat. There can be little doubt but that scores of the isolated moats to be found in Norfolk and Suffolk were made as enclosures for cattle—for safety against wild beasts or the enemy—and, in the larger ones, a British village or settlement, very likely, was

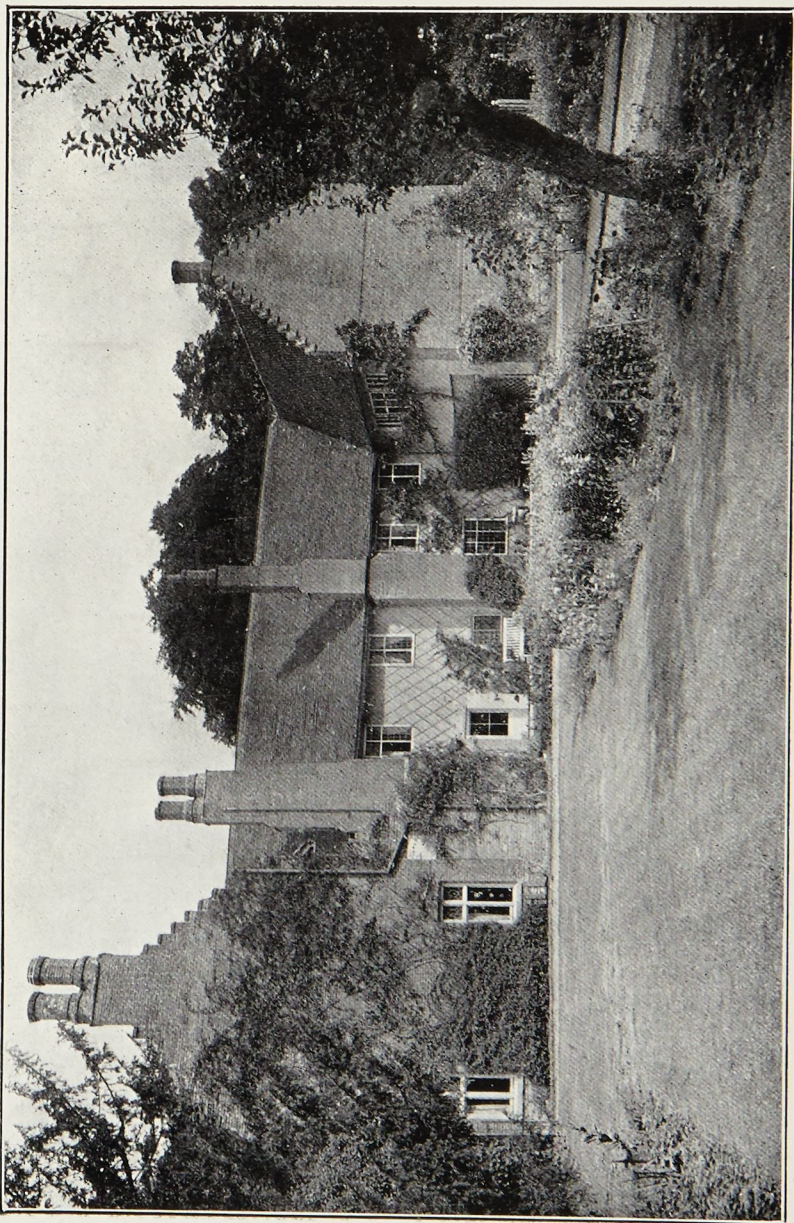


BLO' NORTON HALL—N.

placed. May one be allowed to assume that the presence of flint instruments points to something of the sort in this case? If so, it would seem probable, from the discovery of two Roman coins in the same moated space, and from the fact that it is near a river, where the Romans so often encamped, that these people utilized an already existing entrenchment. As there have been no finds after this date, until we come to the ubiquitous Nuremburg Token of the later middle ages, it is impossible to make surmises as to a Saxon or Danish occupation; but it is credible that the early Lords of the Manor saw the wisdom of adopting an existent moat, instead of digging a new one; and we get on to firm ground with the fact that this is the site of the Manor of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton.

Domesday Book records that a manor here was held by one Fulcher, under William Earl Warren, which, so says Blomefield, coming into the hands of the Bromes of Brome in this county before 1286, was joined by them to another manor, which they got from the Bigods, and the whole was thenceforward known as Bromehall Manor. Whatever small and early Manor House may have existed, it carried on the habitation of the spot until, by re-building or enlargement, the present Hall, the earliest date on which is 1585, came into being.

It is a simply planned and inornate old dwelling, this manor house of which I treat, and, considering how little it has been touched by the hand of the "restorer," but few architectural features are there by which its age can be judged. One of the greatest authorities on English Domestic Architecture has given it as his opinion that the mouldings of the arch of the hall fireplace, with its deep-splayed spandrils, and the section of the wooden mullions of some of the upstairs' windows are more



BLO' NORTON HALL—S. W.

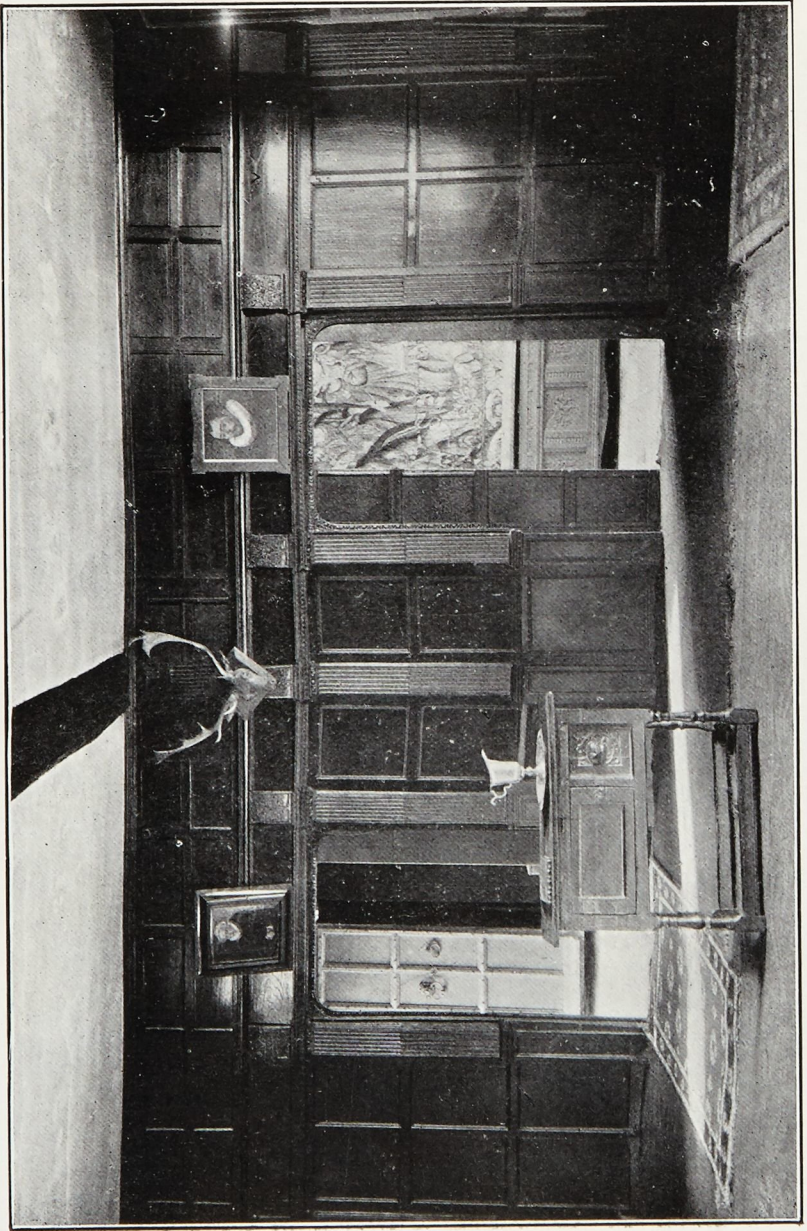
like 1535 than 1585. If so we may have here the work of John Brampton, who died in the former year and who, so Blomefield asserts, re-built Brome Hall—but of this anon. It must not, also, be forgotten that in Norfolk, where brick superseded timber so early, a half-timbered house of this size with the timbers set so close together, points to a pre-Elizabethan date. On the other hand, the chief details that still exist are of the Elizabethan period or later.

The building does not face due north and south, but stands with its corners to the points of the compass, so that the main front is to the N.E. and the garden front to the S.W. The moat—about three-quarters of which is perfect—measures, approximately, 150 yards by 130 yards and is about 30 feet wide; it encloses an area of between two and three acres, and almost in the centre of this the house is situated. The plan of the house itself is in the shape of a letter **E** with the central portion missing and with one of the wings longer than the other. The shorter one certainly gives an impression of greater age and, if so, then the house may once have been **L** shaped; the longer wing being added later—say in 1585. This sounds the more probable in that the original staircase is now hidden away in a mysterious manner behind the back stairs, whereas the later main-staircase (Jacobean) is in what I hint at as being the newer wing. Except for the three large buttress chimney-stacks and the two crow-stepped gables at the ends of the wings, the entire house is of half-timber work. The N.E. front was plastered over some 200 years ago, in rather a pleasing manner, the effect of stone quoins being produced at the corners and round the windows. The S.W. side is also plastered, and is ornamented with that pricked

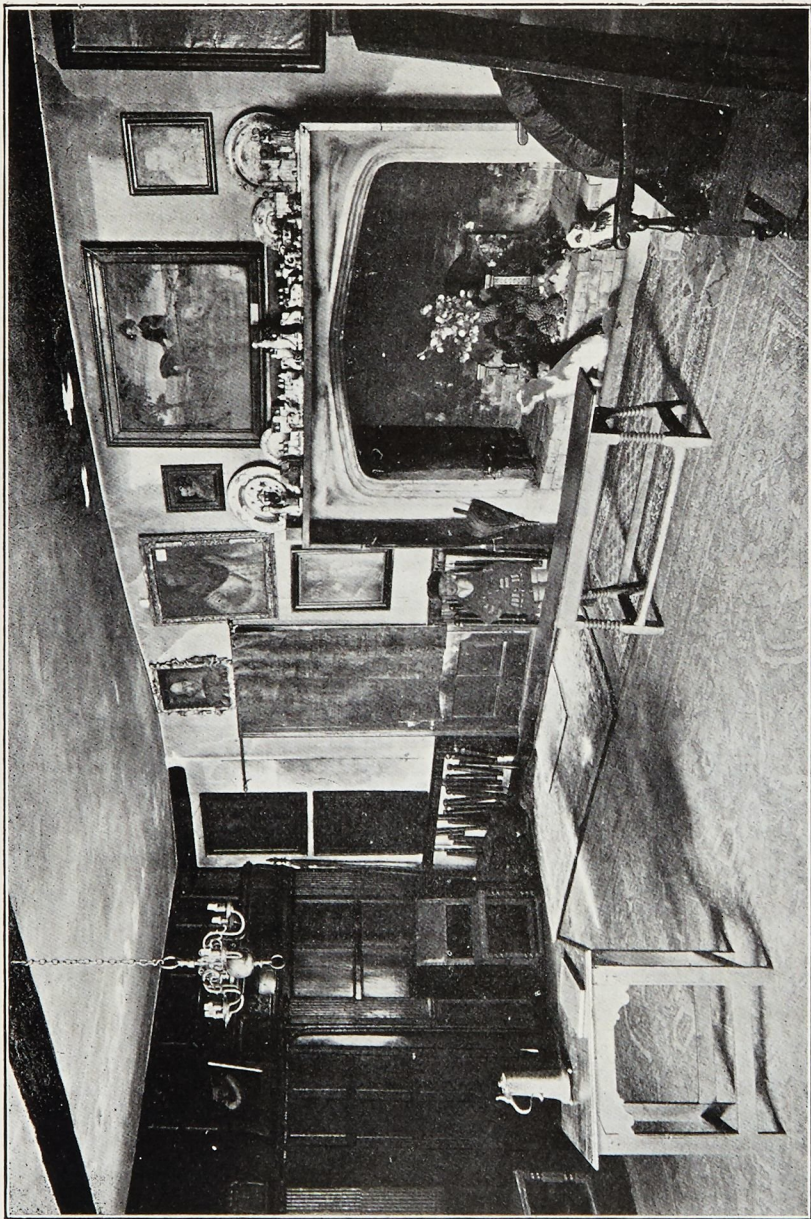
zig-zag pattern so frequently seen in East Anglia. On the two other sides the plaster is later, and that on the N.W. has recently been removed, showing the oak timbers with the original plaster over "wattle and daub" between them. Incidentally three blocked-up windows were exposed, one of which has the original mullions and stanchions, both of wood. Two sides of the roof of the house retain delightful old tiles, those on the S.W. side being laid in a diagonal pattern; it is unfortunate that the remainder was re-roofed with those abominations called "Broseley" tiles some fifteen years ago. Those on the N.E. side are already fast decaying.

The old front door of oak, of the early 17th century, heavily studded with nails, has round the keyhole the outline of an elaborate pattern—obviously adapted, as we shall see, from the ornamentation of the screen in the hall—showing what, once, the "escutcheon" was like. As the screen is of Elizabethan date, it is somewhat unusual to find a cross as the centre of the design. One other detail of interest must be noted before going on to the interior, and that is a small round disc of terracotta, let into the kitchen chimney, on which are incised the letters $\begin{matrix} \text{E.H.} \\ \text{B.} \end{matrix}$ with below, the date 1585. This gives us, at least, the year when this chimney-stack was erected, the upper part of which was re-built in the 18th century. I should like to point out that these initials, which stand for Elizabeth Brampton and her son Henry, occurring as they do in such an unimportant position, would seem to indicate an alteration rather than the original building of the house, as some have thought.

Entering the house by the heavy oaken door, one comes at once to the original entrance passage; to the



SCREEN IN THE HALL.



THE HALL.

left, as one would expect, are the kitchens, pantry, etc., and to the right, through the screen, is the Hall. The Screen, one of the chief features of the house, is of panelled oak divided by seven fluted pilasters, and having in it two flat arches with rounded corners and carved spandrils; the edges of these openings are carved with a moulding somewhat resembling that known as "egg and dart" which stops about three feet from the ground. The doors, of course, are modern additions. Over each pilaster is a convex bracket, decorated with the design I have indicated as being reproduced round the keyhole of the front door. Above is a cornice—not the original one—and connecting the screen with the ceiling are three square fluted pillars; the space between them, which was originally open, has been filled in with panelling, doubtless to prevent draught.

The Hall itself is 25 ft. 4 in. by 21 ft. 4 in. On the left is the fireplace (previously referred to as having early mouldings) with a four-centred arch, 6 ft. wide by 5 ft. high. Running right across this ceiling, as well as that of the entrance passage, is a great oak beam 31 ft. 6 in. by 14 in.; it is unsupported, except at the ends which are stopped with a simple design. The walls, as indeed in so many other parts of the house, have the oak studs exposed, which although most effective, were not, I imagine, originally intended to be shown, as, in a will dated 1600 which I shall often have occasion to refer to, the Hall is described as being hung with stuff. The window which is of square leaded panes, has a very charming and old-fashioned appearance, but that it cannot have been put in before 1800, is shown by a very careful drawing of the house of that date. The window was then mullioned and transomed; in it are the arms of Brampton and Browne, but they, like

all the other heraldic glass in the house—which I shall not trouble to describe—are quite modern.

Among the Lansdown MSS. at the British Museum is an interesting account of the glass in "Mr. Brampton's House in Norfolk," but this, alas! refers to Brampton Hall, where the senior branch of the family resided.

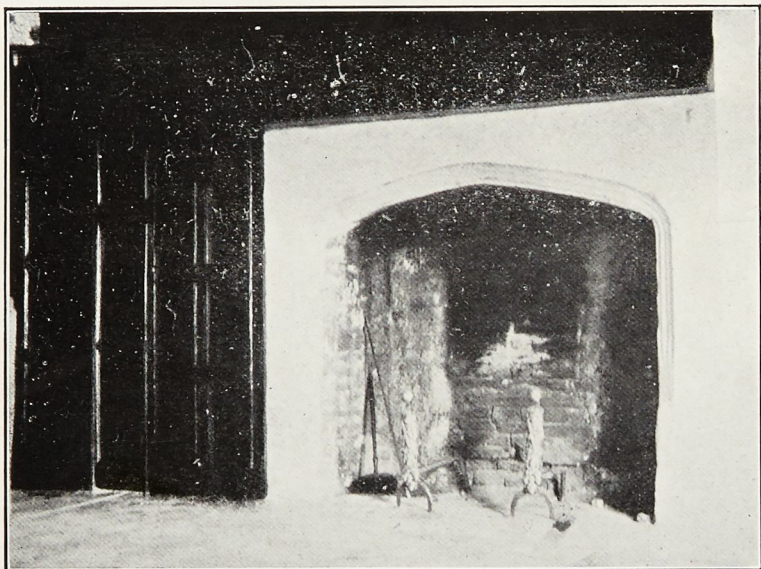
Through the Hall is the Great Parlour, a room that is rather interesting, in that it has undergone various alterations, and shows signs of most of them. The wall facing as you enter, is covered with Jacobean oak-panelling, and in the centre is a large fireplace, 6 ft. 6 in. wide by 4 ft. 4 in. high. The archway is somewhat similar to that of the Hall, but the spandrils are shallow and the whole is surrounded by a square moulding which gives it a somewhat later appearance. In the spandrils are the initials E.B. H.B. (though part of the H is broken away) which, being the same as those on the kitchen chimney already recorded, would give us the date of *circa* 1585. On the left of the fireplace is a late 17th-century window, the other one being large and similar to that in the hall; and round the top of the wall runs a simple plaster cornice, *circa* 1775, with a chair-rail of like date below.

The other room on the ground floor, now the Library, is to the eye entirely modern, but if the walls were stripped and the fireplace opened out many interesting features would, I feel sure, be revealed.

Between this room and those already mentioned is a short passage and also the main staircase which, of course, is of oak. As far as the first landing it is carried between walls, but from thence onwards and returned along the side of the second landing, extend the extraordinarily high and massive Jacobean bannisters and hand-rail, which must have been made during the first quarter of the



THE STAIRCASE, CIRCA 1610.



FIRE PLACE, "BRAMPTON" ROOM.



BLO' NORTON HALL-S.

17th century. I have recently seen at Worth Church, in Sussex, a West Gallery dated 1610 with identical massive balusters.

The landing leads to the haunted chamber, now known as the "Brampton" room. It has an oak floor, the walls are oak-studded, like the Hall, and in the corner to the right of the window is a small blocked-up doorway, whose purpose will be shown later, but which, if opened out now, would lead into the well of the staircase. The most interesting feature of this room is the fireplace, which has only recently been found. It is very similar in design to that in the great parlour, but differs in having the spandrils merely indicated by lines on the plaster and not cut.

All three large fireplaces are, in the usual Norfolk fashion, made of moulded bricks covered with a strong plaster or cement; stone only being found in very early or very important houses. The initials on the great parlour fireplace, by the way, are modelled in the plaster itself. The wall round the fireplace is panelled in oak, *circa* 1620, and to the left of it is a dark closet which once contained a private staircase leading to the attic above, of which only the two top steps remain. It is said that the ghost so disturbed the inhabitants of the room by constantly ascending this staircase that it had to be removed!

At the other end of the landing is a lobby with three doors; that in the centre leads to the "Best" Room, so named after the Bests who were Lords here from about 1680 to 1719. Except for a few oak studs, there is nothing of interest visible, but some future antiquary would, no doubt, be well repaid by opening out two high and small windows on either side of the present one, and also the large fireplace, all of which obviously exist. The

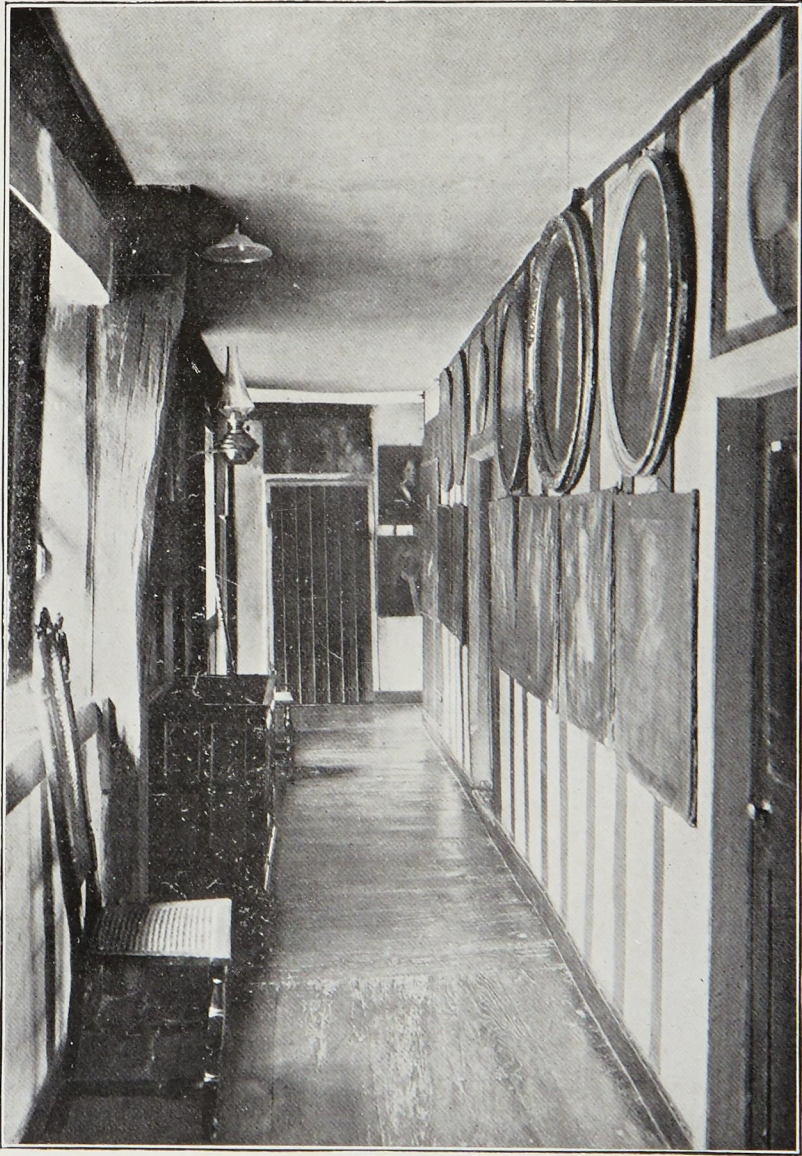
window to the left of the fireplace was only discovered and restored a few years ago. The left doorway of the lobby gives into a long closet which was partitioned off the "Best" Room some long time ago. At the end of it is the small mullioned window with wooden bars that was discovered under the outer plaster, and to the left of this, exactly opposite to the little blocked-up doorway of the Brampton Room, is another in the same condition. That there was once communication between these is clear—either by a passage or a room—for above the present staircase window (*circa* 1680) can be seen a mullioned window of three lights, plastered up, which would have given light to such.

Taking the door to the right of the lobby, we enter the Drawing-room. The timber work of the walls here is particularly good, especially that to the left of the door. The oak is massive and the design so well balanced, that possibly, it was always intended to be seen. Here again, the fireplace has been closed up and a modern one inserted.

This chamber is a passage room, and the door from it takes one to a "Gallery," 31 ft. by 5 ft. The walls are like those already described and, on the left, are three very solid projecting timbers, part of the main construction of the house. The floor is of oak, as are the mullions of the four windows; of these the two larger are transomed, whilst the smaller ones, only recently unplastered, are plain. In this case, the wooden stanchions had been cut off, flush with the sills and heads, before they were closed up.

On the right of this passage are two small rooms with walls constructed of wooden struts and studs.

The further and larger of these has
H.B.
1613 deeply,
R.B.



THE GALLERY.

if roughly, carved on one of the timbers, which is of elm, as, indeed, are many in the inner walls of this part of the house. H. B. would, of course, fit for Henry Brampton—the same Henry whose initials with those of his mother, have already been recorded twice—but who was R. B.? At first I thought the R., which had been somewhat cut into, had been intended for a K., and that it stood for Katherine the wife of Henry Brampton; but I find that she died and was buried at Blo' Norton in 1612. I therefore consider that these initials are, probably, merely the work of two of the younger sons of Henry Brampton, viz., Henry and Robert, who would have been respectively twenty-one and eighteen in the year the letters were cut.

Beyond this room is the upper portion of the original staircase, constructed with solid oak treads, which leads to the attics and, at the end of the gallery, is the "Browne" Room. Part of it has been at some time cut off and now forms a bath-room.

Beyond this, again, is the "Brome" Room, from all appearances the oldest in the house, with oak flooring and two small mullioned windows, having a larger and later one between. To the left of it is a double closet, once a passage, with a blocked door between it and the bath-room and, originally, having a spiral staircase at the further end leading down to the offices. This is proved by the tiny windows and apertures in the brickwork of this, the south corner of the house. All the walls of this part are, as usual, heavily studded with oak, and in the room two wide bracket-like beams support the ceiling—or rather the floor above—on either side of the chimney. The door, as are most of those at this end of the house, is made of overlapping oak boards of the 16th century.

Connecting the "Brome" Room with the Gallery is a comparatively modern passage, which also leads to the back staircase; but, underneath this passage and behind the said staircase, there still exists the old original stairway of the house, all the stairs except those which are on the curve, consisting of solid oak blocks. It started from the same doorway as does the present flight, the lowest step of which is *in situ*, and then went up a few steps to the landing from which "winders" brought it round to a second straight flight, and so up to the end of the gallery, where the top step can still be seen forming part of the floor. There may have been a newel to support the "winders," otherwise it is entirely between walls. This old staircase, fortunately preserved, now forms a convenient housemaids' closet.

As has been said, the upper part of this staircase is still in use and leads to the attics. The two attics to the right, at the top of the stairs, have been modernised, but that to the left is long and open, running the whole length of the house. It is in its pristine state, and therefore can never have been used as a room, for, even in those days, servants would hardly have slept beneath the bare tiles. At the end of this is another long attic running at right angles, the further half of which shows signs of having been ceiled and plastered; at the end of it is the chimney stack, to the left of which are the two top steps, already mentioned, of the ghost's staircase. This room is now the Oratory.

From this description of the house as it now is, it is patent that, although nearly all is ancient, there remain very few "milestones" by which the various parts can be dated. It is interesting, therefore, to be able to turn to a document of 1600 and to see what rooms existed then. In her will, dated 1600 and proved

1603, Elizabeth Brampton, the then owner of the house, actually mentions the following rooms:—

1. "The Hall."
2. "The Chamber over the Hall."
3. "The Parlour."
4. "The Chamber over the little Parlour"
[which gives us also]
5. "The Little Parlour where we usually do
still."
6. "The Great Chamber."
7. "The Chamber over the Larder."

All these can be identified with existing rooms, and the kitchen called

8. "The Backhouse" (Bakehouse ?) or Kitchen is
the same as now.

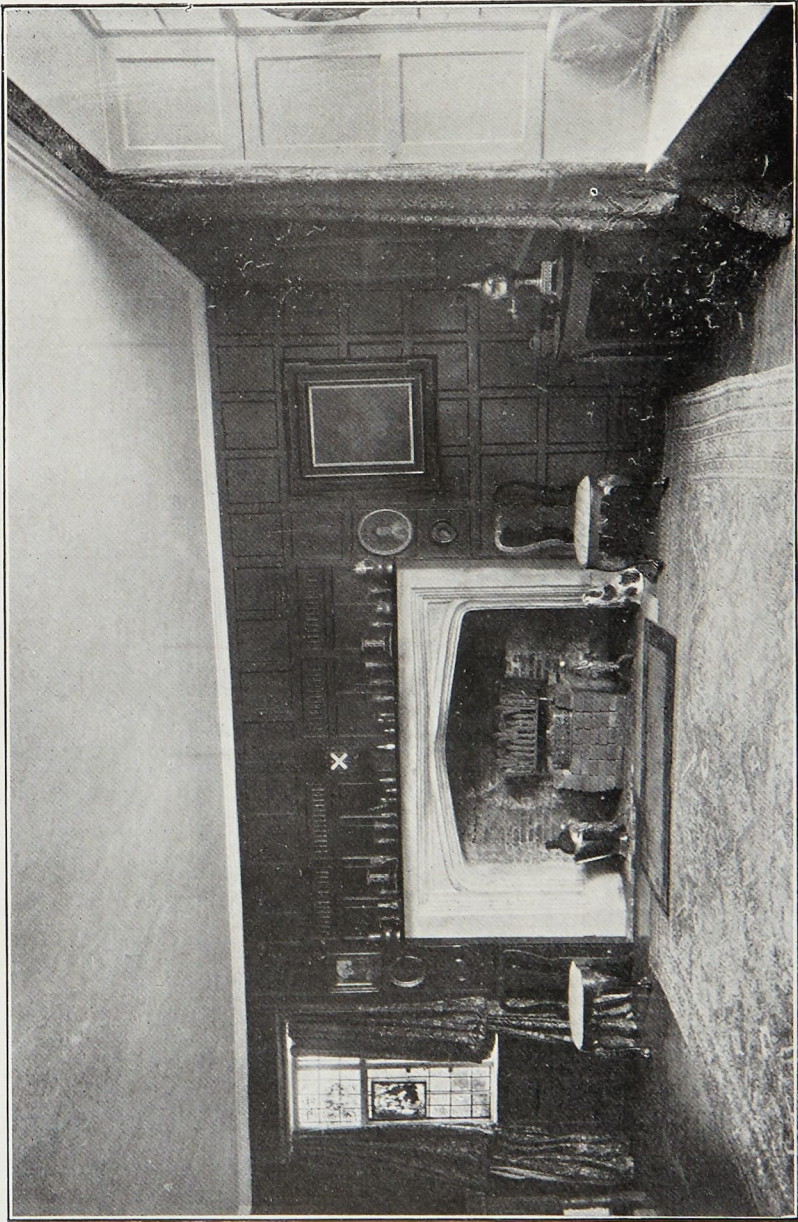
Then come the doubtful rooms.

9. "My Chamber" (also "My Closet"). This
could only be the room over the Kitchen,
and the present Bath-room which once
formed part of it. Possibly the Linen
Closet adjoining was "My Closet."
10. "The Maids' Chamber."
11. "The Press Chamber."
12. "The Gallery."

These are all open to discussion; but can be accounted for by the two small bedrooms mentioned before, as opening out of the long passage or gallery, and the attic which is now the Oratory. At the same time it should not be forgotten that, before the present staircase was made, there must have been another room, occupying the upper portion of it, which has to be taken into consideration.

This comparison of the rooms as they were and are, shows how few changes of importance have taken

place since 1600. Subsequently the staircase and some wainscotting was introduced, and it is possible that the date 1613 on the elm post, already recorded, may refer to some structural alterations. Later in the century six windows were inserted, presumably replacing old mullioned ones, and it is perhaps worth mentioning, that one of the supports to a beam in the long attic is made from the old sill of a mullioned window. Then again, in Queen Anne or Early Georgian days various doors were altered; but nothing else was done until 1776, when the Great Parlour was modernised. Then, the oak panelling was torn down and used for a West Gallery in the Church, the plaster cornice and chair-rail, still in part existing, were put up and the walls were papered. This paper was of blue, rather nice if somewhat crude, and spotted with "8-foils" of white, with a twisted border. A small piece of it still exists in a cupboard which once formed part of the Great Parlour. At the same time the mullioned window was taken out and the large fireplace blocked up; only a comparatively small aperture being left, round which an "Adam" mantelpiece was fixed. It has the usual design of ox skulls and festoons of husks, but I fancy that it is rather unusual in having this ornamentation made of lead, nailed to the wood, and not of carved wood or of composition. Some thirty years ago, the then tenant asked that this might be removed and it was taken to a house belonging to the owner of Blo' Norton Hall, where it is carefully preserved, whilst a truly awful monstrosity in cast-iron took its place. However, on the recent happy discovery that the original fireplace was practically intact, the old one has been opened out again and such of the panelling as had been rescued from the demolished West Gallery—when the Church



THE GREAT PARLOUR

was "restored"—has been placed round it. It seems probable that other panelled rooms were destroyed in 1776 (which date, by the way, is on the back of the Adam mantelpiece) in accordance with the "taste" of the time. Judging from the fragments which came back from the Church, and from others in different parts of the house, there must have been at least four wainscotted rooms at one time. The dates of the various pieces of panelling are approximately—

1. Previous to 1550.
2. *Circa* 1600.
3. „ 1620.
4. „ 1650.

It is instructive to note that the last is not real panelling at all, but is composed of large oak boards, with the mouldings laid on. As panelling for wall covering succeeded to and took the place of arras and hangings, it is clear—as we shall see from Elizabeth Brampton's will—that, in 1600, neither the Hall nor the Great Chamber could have been panelled, for we are told that both were then hung with "grene saie." In the Parlour no hangings are referred to, so possibly the remnant of the early (1550) panelling was part of the furnishings of that chamber. I wish one could locate, even speculatively, the two lengths of panelling with which the space between the hall screen and the ceiling is filled in. Being carefully finished on both sides, they obviously formed part of a screen or partition, but it is needless for me to add that they are not *in situ*, as the panels and cornice run the wrong way, and also, because they have been cut down to fit their present places. The woodwork of the modern mantelpieces in two of the upstairs rooms is made up of flat and fluted pilasters similar to, but not of the same width as, those

on the hall screen, together with a bit of a "billeted" frieze, thus giving us some indication of how one, at least, of the panelled rooms was treated.

Having, just now, seen what rooms existed 313 years ago, let us try and picture what they, then, looked like.

The Hall, as I have said, was hung with "grene saie" and it had three windows with curtains of the same material. The small openings of two of these can be seen high up, on either side of the large window. The furniture sounds rather scanty, viz., "one counter and one longe forme," but I take it that some, at least, of the "25 greate joyned stooles" and "six small joyned stools," etc., mentioned just before, were also in the hall.

The Parlour, as has been suggested, may have been panelled as no hangings are named and, as only "one curtain of divers colours" is mentioned, there can have been but one window at that date. For furniture it had "a long framed table of joyner's worke, one square table, varnished, and the frame thereto; one liverie cubbard, of joyner's work, and a carpet of carpet work with roses wrought therein belonging to the same cubbord." Doubtless some of the stools and chairs mentioned subsequently belonged here too, and if so, no doubt the family ate here and no longer in the hall.

The Little Parlour was used for stiling and presumably contained no furniture of importance, none being cited. In the room over it stood a "Lyverie Bedstead with a Kanapie hanging over" it. This seems to have had on it a "coverlett of blew and redd." There was also there "one redd rugge and one other coverlet of redd green and yellow." Gay colours were evidently the fashion under Elizabeth!

The Great Chamber, like the hall, was hung with "grene saie." Only one window curtain, of the

same material, is mentioned, although the two small windows were probably open at that date. The closet now behind this room, but which once formed part of it, has all along the top of the wall, close together, a number of small wrought-iron hooks, from which no doubt the hangings depended.

In the chamber over the hall, was a "coffer barred with iron and covered with grene leather and paynted thereupon heads and faces of men and women."

In "my chamber where I laie" there was "one posted bed with a tester of yellow and redd and curtaines of redd and grene." There were also "two trendle bedsteads standing in my chamber," and in "my closett" there seems to have been the "bille^{mt} (habilament?) coffer"; also "the deske coffer, two of the greatest boxes for ruffes with lockes upon them, and two little joyned stools and one little clock."

In the chamber over the larder "a posted bedstead with a tester of taffeta" is mentioned. In the Press chamber—whichever that was—there was a "lyverie bedstead and a great joyned press with a lock, one table with a frame to brush upon." And, finally, in the maids' chamber and gallery there were bedsteads of various kinds.

The variety of beds named is rather unusual. There are "lyverie" beds, "trendle" beds (i.e., trundle or truckle beds: small beds on wheels, capable of being pushed under a big bed in the day time and pulled out, at night, for an attendant); then there were "posted beds with testers"; also a "seiled bedsteade with a tester with knopps gylt and curteins which curtains and tester are of green saie." This, doubtless, was in the great, or chief guest's chamber. Finally comes a "borded bedstead" which does not sound the acme of comfort!

All the above information is, of course, obtained from Mistress Elizabeth Brampton's will. I do not think I have ever before seen one so full of details. It forms a wonderful inventory of the contents of the house, and gives one a very good idea of the possessions of the Lady of a small Manor in the spacious days of Good Queen Bess. What would one not give now, even to behold her "pot with a cover of silver double gilt, a salt sellar of silver double gilt without a cover, seven silver spoons whereof one hath upon the end thereof a picture of an apostle." Also, "a silver salt-sellar and cover double gilt weighing XIX ozs. which cost £6. 7s. 6d.," also "a silver salt-sellar parcel gilt"; then again, "a silver salt-sellar with a cover of silver" and many other spoons etc. And what of her cushions of needlework "whereof one is wrought with gillie flowers and wood-bines another with a rose in the midst and hawthorn bunches in the corners and a third wrought with slips of roses"? And then, of course, there is linen and furniture innumerable.

But alas! not one single article which she names can be found here to-day. The only pieces of furniture of interest, which belong to the house, are the oak chest of drawers with cupboard doors and a top that lifts up, standing in the hall, and the six walnut chairs with "claw and ball" feet in the Great Parlour. The date of the former is about 1630, so it may have been brought here by Henry Brampton or his son Gawdy. The chairs are of the time of Queen Anne, *circa* 1710, so they were probably made for Nathaniel Best who died in 1719. Two are shown in the view of the great parlour.

There is, also, a very fine piece of needlework—*temp.* Charles I.—which, although no longer in the house, is



ARMS OF ROBERT BROWNE OF BLO' NORTON.



NEEDLEWORK, TEMP. CHARLES I.

still in the possession of the owners. Beyond that it had "always" been here its history is uncertain and the fact that on it are embroidered what may be intended for the arms of Head, Co: Kent, gives one no clue. In the same possession is a hair-trunk studded with brass nails which form the initials N. B.—doubtless for Nathaniel Best; and, also, a very fine old sword with basket hilt, of the early 17th century (?) which was found, many years ago, in one of the attics.

I must here add a word about the various alterations and "restorations" of modern days. Until some eleven years ago no sort of restoration had ever been attempted and, except for the destruction of 1776, any changes which took place were slight and of an utilitarian character, such as the dividing up of rooms and the making of closets out of parts of them. The only exception to this was the scraping of the paint off the staircase which was done under the auspices of the late Rev. George Norris.

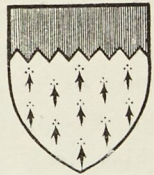
In the year 1901 Mrs. Adlercron, then Miss Bancroft, came to reside here and she at once proceeded to do some very judicious and genuine restoration. The "Brome" Room, which had been divided in two, was again made into a single chamber, and the two small mullioned windows opened out. She also unblocked one of the large windows in the gallery, and stripped and cleaned a number of the oak studs about the house. Since then, under the present tenancy, two more small windows in the gallery have been opened out and the fireplaces in the Great Parlour and "Brampton" Rooms have been discovered, and panelling replaced around each of them. The modern partition dividing the entrance passage has been taken down, putting back the lobby to its original size and use and, last but not least, the

bad and modern plaster has been removed from the N.W. side of the house, thus revealing the charming "black and white" work of Elizabethan days.

Having completed our ancient and modern survey of Blo' Norton Hall, let us try and gather somewhat further of its history by tracing the lives of its owners and the people who dwelt there.

According to Blomefield, the Bromes acquired the manor in two parts in the reign of Henry III.; certainly it was not later than 1280, as we find them here then. Owing to the fact, however, that Brome (now spelt Broome), their original seat in this county, is only about twenty-five miles to the east,

BROME.



it is not likely that "Brome Hall" in Blo' Norton was, in early days, a house of much importance. The pedigrees given by Blomefield, under the Parishes of Brome and of Blo' Norton, by no means tally. Under the former he inserts one generation more between William de Brome, who lived in 1241, and James Brome, who died without issue in 1510; moreover, the Christian names of both husbands and wives vary considerably. I have not had time to go into the earlier steps, but from wills and inquisitiones post mortem I have, at least, been able to reconstruct the last three generations, as may be seen on p. 229.

In neither of Blomefield's pedigrees is this descent—save for the correct mention of James Brome and his two sisters—shown; but it cannot be questioned. The only uncertainty is as to the Christian names of the parents of Richard, who died in 1507, and of his brother Henry, and that will probably be solved in due time. Richard, one is surprised to find—if one has followed

..... Brome = (? Olive)

Henry Brome, mentioned in his brother Richard's will.

Richard Brome of Brome, and of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton. Will dated and proved 1507. Buried in Norwich Cathedral, M.I.; d. 1507.

..... Yaxley

Gilbert Brome, = (? Margaret, dau. of d. before 1507, referred to in his son's inq. post mort.

..... Calthorpe, and who, afterwards, married Richard Coote of Blo' Norton; d. 1521. Bur. at Blo' Norton, where was, formerly, M.I.).

	(1)	1st	2nd
James Brome of Brome, and of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton; d. July 2nd, 23 Henry VII., inq. post mort., 1510, d.s.p.	Mary Brome of Brome, co-heir to her brother, aged 23 in 1510; b. (c.) 1487, d. 1540. Bur. at Brome.	John Jenney of Hardwicke, co. Norfolk. Will dated 1511, proved 1512. Calls Margaret Coote his "mother."	Ralph, 2nd son of Sir Ralph Shelton of Shelton; d. 1538. Bur. at Brome.
	Margaret Jenney, mentioned 1511 & 1540.	Edward Jenney, mentioned 1511 & 1540.	Another son, mentioned 1511.
		Dorothy Shelton, mentioned 1540.	Ralph Shelton, mentioned 1540.

(2)	1st	2nd	3rd
Anne Brome, co-heir to her brother, of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton, aged 22 in 1510, when she was the wife of John Brampton.	John Brampton of = Brampton, who had married as his first wife, Thomasine, dau. of Sir John Jermy of Metfield, co. Suffolk, by whom he had issue; d. 3 Nov., 27 Henry VIII., 1535.	John Stede (Blome = field callshim Robert Stede and says he was her first husband) of Blo' Norton, who died 1540, <i>who left his wife Anne his universal legatee and executrix.</i> Richard Calthorpe, Christopher Coote, and Bridgett Brampton were witnesses of his will.	Robert Rokewode of Stanningfield, co. Suffolk (called of Lavenham), who had married 1st Anne, dau. of Nicholas Asheton, by whom he had, amongst others, a daughter Elizabeth, who married Thos. Brampton, son and heir of his wife Anne (Brome).
Thomas Brampton, of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton, heir to his mother, married his step-sister Elizabeth.	William, of Ecclesby-the-Sea.	(1) Bridget.	(2) Blith.

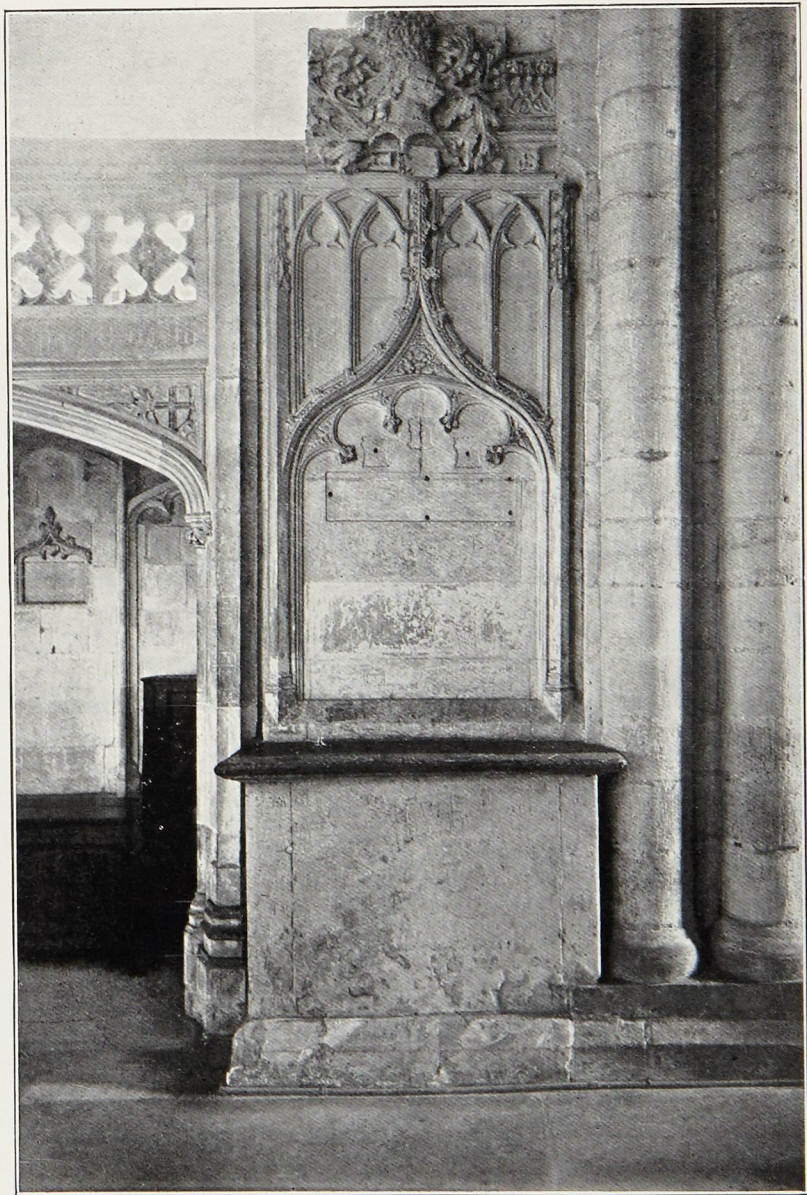
Blomefield—died seised of Seymers Hall Manor as well as that of Brome Hall. He willed that if he died in Norwich he should be buried in the Cathedral. No doubt he did there die as his monument, somewhat mutilated, still exists there. Weaver (1767 Ed. p. 524) records the inscription:—

“*Hic facit Richardus Brome armiger cuius anime
propitiatur Deus*”

and adds “on a wall behind him is a monument with his achievement cut with his helm, coat, mantle and crest. His crest is a bunch of broom, green, with golden flowers, on a wreath.” Blomefield is able to add valuable information to this, as he gives the Arms, viz., “*Broom*, ermine a chief indented gul. impaling *Yaxley*, erm. a chevron sab. between three mullets, gul. pierced or.” Crest, a bunch of broom vert, flower or. He continues: “The inscription is now lost as are three shields from the altar part of the tomb, though the two initial letters of his name still remain in cipher.” Sad to say, the arms are now gone and only a bare shield, with the helm and crest, and initials remain.

This is all that we can record of Richard Brome. He was probably an oldish man when he died, as his youngest grand-daughter must, then, have been twenty-one years of age. Of Gilbert his son, who died in his father's lifetime, still less can be ascertained. His very name only being re-established by mention of it in the inquisition post mortem of his own son James. Of James again, who died in 1508, one can learn little, but that he had no issue and left his two sisters his co-heirs.

I cannot help wondering who was Margaret Coote, widow, mentioned in this inquisition, and also in Richard Brome's will, to whom the latter (according to



MONUMENT TO RICHARD BROME, NORWICH CATHEDRAL.
DIED CIRCA 1507.

the inquisition) had demised "the Manor of Blonorton called Bromehall." It has been suggested, with much plausibility, that she was Margaret, daughter of (Sir William ?) Calthorpe of Eccles-by-the-Sea, who had married Richard Brome's son, Gilbert, and who was, afterwards, the wife of Richard Coote. A search into the early Coote pedigree which is, at present, rather unsatisfactory, might clear this up. It is certain that later the Brampton family were lords of Eccles-by-the-Sea and it should not be ignored that John Jenney (see below) refers to "Margaret Coote widow" as his (*i.e.*, his wife's) mother in his will dated 1511.

On the death of James Brome his sisters inherited his property and the elder, Mary, married, first, John Jenney of Hardwick and secondly Ralph, second son of Sir Ralph Shelton of Shelton. The younger sister, Anne, married three times. Blomefield says her first husband was Robert Stede, but he must be in error, for the following facts make it plain that she married, first, John Brampton and secondly, not Robert, but John Stede. She was only twenty-two in 1510 when she was already the wife of John Brampton of Brampton, and the inquis. post mort. of John Stede of Blo' Norton held in 32 Hen. VIII. clearly shows that he left a widow, Anne, formerly widow of John Brampton, whose maiden name was Brome. Moreover, there is a will of "John Stede of Blownorton, in Norfolk, Esquire," dated 19th September, 1540, and proved the 12th November the same year, appointing as "universal legatee and executrix" his wife, Anne.

John Brampton died in 1535 (it is he who is said, by Blomefield, to have re-built Brome Hall in Blo' Norton), and his widow married yet again; this time wedding Robert Rokewode (called "of Lavenham") of Stanningfield, co. Suffolk. The two Brome sisters and their

families seem to have had a mutual exchange of property, as we find Mary's representatives buying Anne's moiety in Brome and, *vice versa*, Anne's purchasing Mary's share of Blo' Norton; and, thus, the consolidated Blo' Norton Manors, with the exception of Seymers Hall, came to the Bramptons; Thomas, son and heir of John and Anne Brampton, eventually inheriting his mother's estate. He is hardly more than a name. In the inquisition post mortem of his father, of 1535-7, he is mentioned as being "under 24," and so was born about 1513. In 1562 he married Elizabeth, the daughter of his step-father, Robert Rokewode, by his first marriage.

BRAMPTON.



Of this union there were three children, Henry, son and heir, Bridget who died in 1599, and Anne who married, first, Edmund Keene and, secondly, Thomas Nashe.

This Anne, by her first marriage, had a son Thomas Keene of Brandon, who received 40s. under the will of his grand-mother, Elizabeth Brampton. By his will, which is very short, Thomas Brampton makes his wife his sole executrix and residuary legatee. There is some confusion about the date of this document (see *Norfolk Visitations*, vol. i., p. 74), but I think the year of his death, 1576, is intended, and it was proved in 1582.

Thomas Brampton lies buried in the chancel of Blo' Norton Church; his slab has been removed from its proper position, but this inscription still remains on the brass:

"No brabe Attyer nor worldly Pompe,
But Deathe in tyme wille quelle,
Yet Brampton's Soule by virtues Love
K hope in Heben dothe dwelle."

BRAMPTON OF BLO' NORTON.

(1st) Thomasine, da. of Sir John Jerry of Metfield, co. Suffolk, = John Brampton of Brampton, son of Thomas Brampton of the same, d. 1535. (2nd) Anne, da. and co-heir of Gilbert Brome of Brome and of Brome Hall in Blo' Norton, aged 22 in 1510. = (2nd) John Stede, d. 1540. = (3rd) Robert Rokewode of Stanningfield, co. Suff. Anne, da. of Nicholas Assheton of Assheton, co. Lancs.

(1) Robert Brampton, a quo, Bramptons of Brampton. (3) William Brampton of Eccles-by-the-Sea, where he held his first Court in 1545, d.s.p. (1) Bridget = (1) John Frens. = (2) Thomas Girling. (2) Blith = (1) Thomas Shernborne. = (2) before 1562, Lancelot Smallpeice of Hockering. (2) Thomas Brampton of Blo' Norton, heir to his mother, d. 1576. Bur. at Blo' Norton. (1562) Elizabeth, da. of Robert Rokewode of Stanningfield (called "of Lavenham,") d. 1603.

Henry Brampton, bap. at Blo' Norton, Aug. 30th, 1564; married at West Harling, Feb. 19th, 1587; b. 1564. (1587) Katherine, da. of Henry Everard of Linstead, co. Suff., by Katherine his wife, da. of Sir Thomas Gawdy, Kt., d. 1612. Bur. at Blo' Norton. (1st) Edmund Keene, gent. Anne = (2) Thomas Nashe, before 1601. = (3) ? Edward Shardelew. Bridget, b. before 1576; d. 1599. Bur. at Blo' Norton.

(1) Gawdy Brampton of Blo' Norton, bap. there 1589 and mar. there 1615; had the estate settled on him by his father, 1627; b. (c.) 1589; d. about 1665. (1st, 1615) Anne, da. of Vincent of Marlingford, d. 1654. Will proved 1656. (2nd) Dorothy "da. of Philip Briscoe the elder" (Blo' N. Deed), became possessed of Blo' Norton after Gawdy Brampton's death and held her first Court 1680, d. 1703. Bur. at Blo' Norton. (2nd) John Best, called "of London," owned land in Kent and at Exning, is assigned the estate of Blo' Norton, on certain conditions, by Dorothy Brampton in 1680. Will dated 1694. Bur. at Blo' Norton. (1st) Ashley Brampton, bap. at Blo' Norton, 1590 (? Agent for Mr. Gawdy of West Harling), b. (c.) 1590. (2) Henry, bap. 1592. (3) Edward, bap. 1593. (4) Robert, bap. 1595. (5) Philip, bap. 1596. (6) Anthony, bap. 1603. (7) Thomas, bap. 1604. (8) James, bap. 1608. (9) John, bap. 1609. (10) Anne, bap. 1591. (1) Elizabeth, " 1597. (2) Dorothy, " 1600. (3) Maria, " 1602. (4) Alice, " 1606. (5) " d. 1607. Anne = Thomas Rede of Weston, co. Suffolk (1664 Visit.).

(1) Henry Brampton, son and heir, disposed of his interest in Blo' Norton, 1658-9, is called "late of Blo' Norton" in 1659 Deed; d.s.p. (2) Catherine, only da. of Sir Dru Drury, 1st Bart. of Riddlesworth. (3) Thomas, bap. at Blo' N., 1622. (4) Charles, bap. and d. 1623. (5) Gawdy, bap. 1625. (6) Edward, bap. 1628; d. 1629. (7) Anne, bap. and d. 1619. (8) Anne, bap. 1620. = John Bokenham, gent. (9) Francis (sic), bap. 1627. Will dated 1651, proved 1656. (10) Dorothy, bap. 1631. = Jetter. (1) John. (1) daughter. From pedigree in Blo' Norton papers. Both d.s.p.

(1) William Bokenham, d. 1661. (2) John, d. 1661. (3) John (?), d. 1662. (4) Elizabeth, d. 1662. (5) Anne, d. 1663. (6) Dorothy, living 1656.

Thomas Jetter claimed (and failed to prove his right) the Blo' Norton Estate, 1731, when he was "aged 60," b. (c.) 1671.

Nathaniel Best of Blo' Norton. In Blomefield's *Norfolk* said to be son of John Best by a previous marriage, but in Blomefield's MSS. he is called son of John Best by Dorothy Brampton "before marriage." He was left the estate of John Best by will dated 1698, and in 1700 Dorothy Best, relict of John Best, assigns it to him. Died 1719. Bur. at Blo' Norton. By will dated 1710 he devises his estate to his "kinsman" Robert Browne.

Blomefield puts an asterisk to "Lore" and gives its meaning as "guide." Before the above inscription he also says: "On three Brass Plates upon a stone at the North East corner of the chancel, Brampton, quartering Brome, impaling Rookwood,

Here lieth intered Thomas Brampton Esquier
who decessed the ix daye of November in the yere
of our God MCCCCXXVH."

The two latter brass plates, alas! have been reeved, the matrices, only, remaining.

Of the various owners of Blo' Norton Hall, of whom it has been possible to recover a few facts, there are three which are rather prominent in the history of the place. The first of these is Elizabeth, wife of the above Thomas Brampton, who lived here as wife and widow near forty-one years. She was, as I have said, born a Rokewode of Coldham in Suffolk, an ancient family who clung to the ancient faith; but, from the preamble to her will, it is clear that she had adopted the tenets of the Reformation and, possibly on this account, broke with her Roman Catholic relations, for, although various others are mentioned, not one of the Rokewodes or their connections is named in the will. The Stanningfield registers, in which parish Coldham Hall is situated, only begin with the year 1561, so the date of her birth is not given there; but, as she was married in 1562, we may take it that she was born about 1545. Her married life lasted fourteen years, for as we have seen, her husband—probably a good deal older than herself—died in 1576. In 1582, when his will was proved, she evidently found herself left very well off, so that she soon decided to re-build or re-construct the old house. This alteration (I have already given my

reasons for stating why I do not believe it was an entire re-building) was finished in 1585, which is witnessed by the terra-cotta disc already described. The fact that her initial comes first and her son Henry's after, both here and on the great parlour fireplace, show us that she did not give up the reins before she was obliged to do so. She died in 1603, not an old woman according to my computation, but a widow of twenty-seven long years. She was buried in the church and, let us hope, "as nigh unto the place where my well-beloved husband lieth as conveniently may be," as was her expressed wish.

The next Lord of the Manor was Henry Brampton, her son and heir. He was born at Blo' Norton in 1564, and married at West Harling in 1587, Katherine, daughter of Henry Everard, of Linstead in Suffolk. She was grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Gawdy of West Harling and, like her mother-in-law, came of a strong Papist family. She died in 1612, and was buried here; but her husband was not, so it is possible he went and lived elsewhere, after he had settled his estate on his son Gawdy, named of course, after his great grandfather Sir Thomas, in 1627. They had about fifteen children, of whom apart from Gawdy but little is known save that the second son Ashley, born in 1590, "attended to the affairs" of Mr. Gawdy of West Harling, and was evidently married, as it is recorded that his daughter Anne married Thomas Rede of Weston in Suffolk, but beyond this, Henry himself is a cypher and his mother, certainly by her will, seems to have thought less of him than of her grandson.

This said grandson, Gawdy Brampton, is the second person whose name stands out in the history of this house, and with it is associated a scandal, a



GAWDY BRAMPTON.
BORN 1589. DIED ABOUT 1665.

tragedy, and a ghost! He was born here in 1589 and married firstly, in 1615, Anne, daughter of Vincent of Marlingford. Their eldest son Henry, the dates of whose birth and death are both unknown, married Katherine, daughter of Sir Dru Drury, first Baronet of Riddlesworth. From the Blo' Norton papers, it would appear that Henry, by deeds dated 7th July, 1658, and May, 1659, mortgaged or sold his reversion to the estate, so that even if he outlived his father, which is doubtful, he has no further interest for us, more especially as he died without issue. Of another son, I know not which, Anthony Mingay gives us this information: "My cousin Gawdy Brampton, has bound out his son as an apprentice to my brother Utting's son" (*Gawdy Papers*, p. 172). Of the daughters, Francesca ("Francis" in her will) was born in 1627 and died unmarried about 1656, in which year her will (dated 1651) was proved. Anne, born in 1620, married John Bokenham "generousus." A branch of the Bokenham family lived not far off at Thelneham Hall, but I cannot prove that he actually belonged to that family, although it seems probable. They had five or six children, all of whom except Dorothy, whose death I cannot find, deceased in the years 1661-3.

Dorothy Brampton, the youngest daughter of Gawdy and Anne, was born in 1631 and married someone of the name Jetter. About this date there was a copyholder of the Manor here of that name, and it is possible he was her husband. It seems likely that the Alice Jetter, mentioned later in Nathaniel Best's will, was their child, as certainly was Thomas Jetter whose name comes into our history presently.

Anne, the wife of Gawdy Brampton, died between 1654 and 1656, as her will is dated the former and proved

the latter year. It is not of great importance save for the mention of various children and grand-children; but it is of value in that it gives us the approximate date of her death which, there being no entry of it in the registers, was always uncertain.

It is curious how some families contrived to "lie low" during the troubled times of the Great Rebellion, and one gathers nothing of Gawdy Brampton at this period. His cousin, Framlingham Gawdy, was a notorious Roundhead, and I fear that the lord of Blo' Norton must have been on the same side, as his name appears in none of the compounders' or sequestration lists; but, if so, he probably went on living here quietly, as East Anglia—except where the estates of loyal men were concerned—was hardly touched by the Civil War. It is uncertain when he married again, but we know that his second wife was named Dorothy Briscoe. Blomefield says she was the daughter of John Briscoe of Hackney, but, in a Blo' Norton deed of 1662, she is referred to as "the daughter of Philip Briscoe, the elder," and Philip and Hallet Briscoe—possibly her brothers—sign the document. Dorothy seals with "3 greyhounds courant," which are the usual Briscoe arms.

She is said to have been beautiful and many years younger than Gawdy, and scandal associates her name with that of John Best whom she probably afterwards married.

The story goes that Gawdy Brampton and Best were friends, but that Gawdy having gambled away his estate to the latter, went up by the secret staircase—since demolished—to the attic and there hanged himself from a beam, and that his ghost still frequents his bedroom and ascends the ghostly stairs. It is a curious fact that no record of his death or burial can be traced.



DOROTHY (BRISCOE), SECOND WIFE OF GAWDY BRAMPTON AND
AFTERWARDS OF JOHN BEST.

BORN . . . DIED 1703.



JOHN BEST.
BORN . . . DIED 1698.

He left no will, neither was administration of his property granted to his widow or anyone else. He seems simply to have disappeared! The last reference to him when living is in a Mortgage Deed of 1663; and, in 1668, we find his widow exhibiting a Bill in Chancery, in which she states that "Gawdy Brampton died about three years before." The uncertainty as to the date of his death is very strange and seems strongly to point to some mystery.

He may or may not have ruined himself by gambling and, consequently, have committed suicide, but if what all the facts seem to point to is the case, he does seem to have had reason to be disgusted with life owing to the behaviour of his wife. Blomefield passes the matter over lightly, in his printed history, but in his own manuscript notes in the Bodleian Library at Oxford he states the case baldly enough, and, although it is unnecessary to go into the question here, everything seems to indicate that Nathaniel Best who afterwards succeeded, was a son of John Best and Dorothy Brampton. The couple were no doubt married later as, in a deed of 1700, the latter styles herself "Dorothy Best relict of John Best, formerly Dorothy Brampton." And yet, in his will dated 1698, John Best leaves "to Mrs. Dorothy Brampton the wid (*sic*) the sum of ten pounds to buy her mourning with."

Whatever the relationship was, Gawdy Brampton's widow assigned the estate to John Best in 1680 and, from that time onwards, she seems to have had little to do with the place although, by the aforesaid deed of May 23rd, 1700, she made over the property to "Nathaniel only son and heir of John Best" and by her will dated July 12th, 1700, she devises all her estate to "Nathaniel Best of Blow Norton gent" and

his heirs. She died in 1703 and was buried here that year, having outlived her second husband about five years. This latter was also buried at Blo' Norton. I have been able to find out very little about him. He is called "of London" in his will, dated 1694, and he leaves property at Exning in Suffolk and also at Boughton Malherbe in Kent. He may therefore have been a scion of the old Kentish family of that name, but

BEST.



the only time I have found his arms on a seal he uses the coat of the Worcestershire Bests, viz., "Sab., a cinquefoil between 8 cross crosslets or." His portrait shows a strong, lined, and rather austere face. He also names in his will "Anne Groot" his late wife's sister and "Emma May Elizabeth Vesey" his late wife's niece, so he was evidently married before, which would of course, give colour to Blomefield's printed statement as to Nathaniel Best being his son by a former marriage; but, in connection with the whole story, it is interesting to note that he leaves his possessions to his "son" Nathaniel Best out of his "natural affection" for him. I do not think this wording is usual in the case of a bequest to a legitimate son.

Nathaniel Best, the son, lived here a bachelor. His picture shows a pleasantly kind face, and, from the fact that he speaks of his "cousin and housekeeper," Alice Jetter (no doubt, as has been suggested, a grand-daughter of Gawdy Brampton), to whom he bequeaths ten pounds in his will, it would look as though he did what he could for the disinherited heirs of the Bramptons. He died in 1719 and, like his predecessor, was buried here. The following inscription, which is rather curiously worded, is inscribed on a large ledger-stone in the

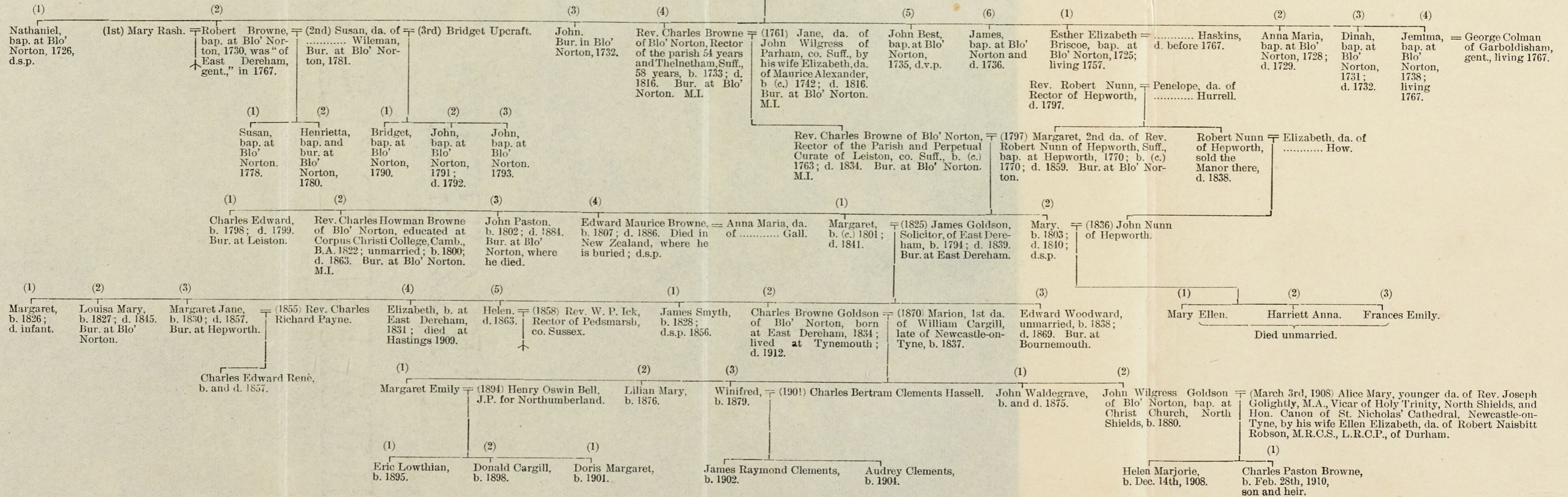


NATHANIEL BEST.
DIED 1719.

BROWNE AND GOLDSON OF BLO' NORTON.

Robert Browne of = Elizabeth
Great Yarmouth,
also of "Middle
Row, Holborn,
Perriwig-maker,"

Robert Browne of Blo' Norton, = (1719) Hester Wright "of Hamp-
to which property he succeeded stead," married at the Crutched
under the will of his "kinsman" Friars (St. Olaves', Hart Street,
Nathaniel Best, bap. at St. Register) in 1719, b. (c.) 1692;
Nicholas' Church, Gt. Yarmouth, d. 1776. Bur. at Blo' Norton,
April 25th, 1697; b. 1697; d. "aged 84."



chancel. Whoever caused it to be placed there, whether it was Robert Browne or a successor, seems to wish to prove that the property belonged to John Best by purchase and not by right of his wife.

M. S.

On the south side hereof
 Rest the remains of
 Nathaniel Best, gent.
 He was the only son and heir of
 John Best, gent.
 Who purchased the Manors and
 Estate in this Parish of Mrs. Brampton
 Whom he afterwards married.
 He died in 1695, She in 1703,
 And were buried in this Chancel.
 The said Nathaniel Best
 Gave the same estate to
 Robert Browne, gent. his heir
 And departed this life
 in 1719.

The date 1695 is, of course, wrong. As it happens the registers for 1691 to 1700 are missing so we can learn nothing from them, but the fact that the deed, by which John Best gives his estate to Nathaniel Best, is dated 1698, proves that he cannot have died before that year.

Nathaniel Best, in his will dated 1710, describes himself as "of St. Edmunds, Lombard Street." He bequeaths his estates at Blo' Norton and at Boughton Malherbe to "my kinsman Robert Browne now living with me" so he had evidently already adopted him as his heir. In the same will he calls him "Robert Browne Junior, son of Robert Browne in Middle Row, Holborn, Perrywigge Maker."

What the connection was has not, at present, been discovered, but "kinsman" had a very wide meaning in those days; and one knows in the case of Alice Jetter, above mentioned, how very loosely even the term "cousin" is used, so there may have been no blood relationship at all. Be that as it may, young Robert succeeded here at the age of twenty-two, having been born at Yarmouth in 1697. The registers there only state the bare fact that he was the son of Robert and Elizabeth Browne. There was a family of Browne, connected with the Keddingtons, bearing arms almost identical with those used by the Blo' Norton Brownes, who lived in Suffolk about that time, and at Upper Rickinghall in the same county, not more than six or seven miles from Blo' Norton, is a monument inscribed:

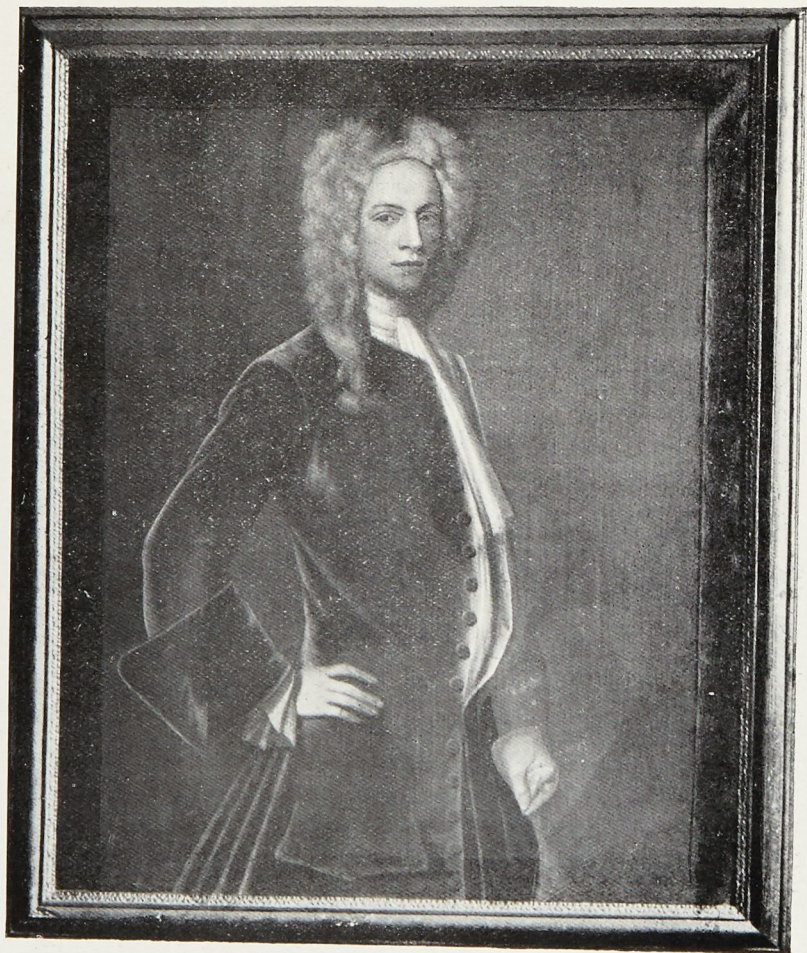
"Here lyeth ye body of John Browne, gent.
Who departed this life October ye 3rd.
With the comfortable hope of Eternal life,
Anno Domini 1716 aged 23." (or 28)

Above are these arms—On a bend, three eagles displayed. Crest, an eagle, wings endorsed.

These Armorial insignia are absolutely the same as those used by Robert Browne (as the tinctures are not given), and the crest is much more like that on his achievement than the one, a goss-hawk rising, which Blomefield attributes to him. On his letters, however, he seals with an eagle displayed, which is the crest of Browne, Vicount Montague. His arms, which Blomefield records, and which are here illustrated, are really those of Houghton as the eagles are Or; whereas those borne by Browne co. Suffolk should be argent. However, people were not over careful about heraldry in those days, and the similarity in the arms may give us a

BROWNE.

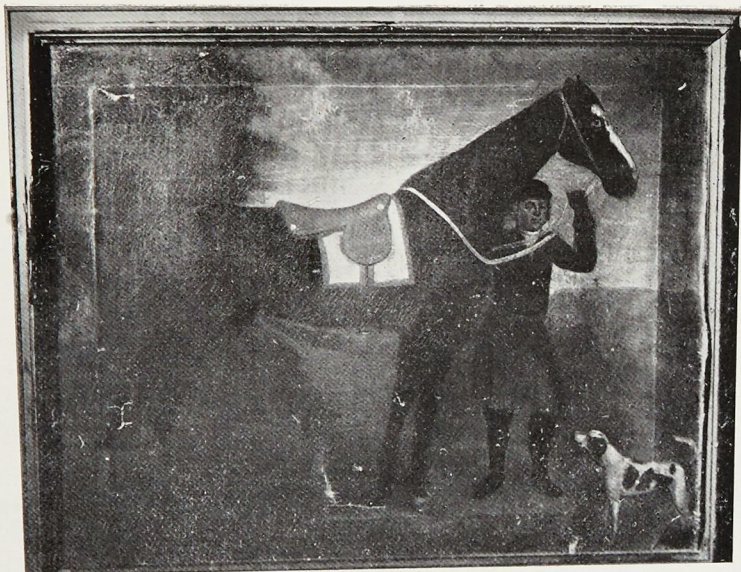




ROBERT BROWNE.
BORN 1669. DIED 1766.



HESTER (WRIGHT), WIFE OF ROBERT BROWNE.
BORN ABOUT 1692. DIED 1776.



HORSE, HARRIER, AND GROOM OF ROBERT BROWNE.



"O RARE BLACK WINDER."
FAVOURITE HOUND OF ROBERT BROWNE.

clue to the family from which the Blo' Norton Brownes originally sprang. It is quite possible, therefore, bearing in mind that Robert Browne was born at Yarmouth (notwithstanding that his father is sometimes called "of London"), that the family was one of good East Anglian descent.

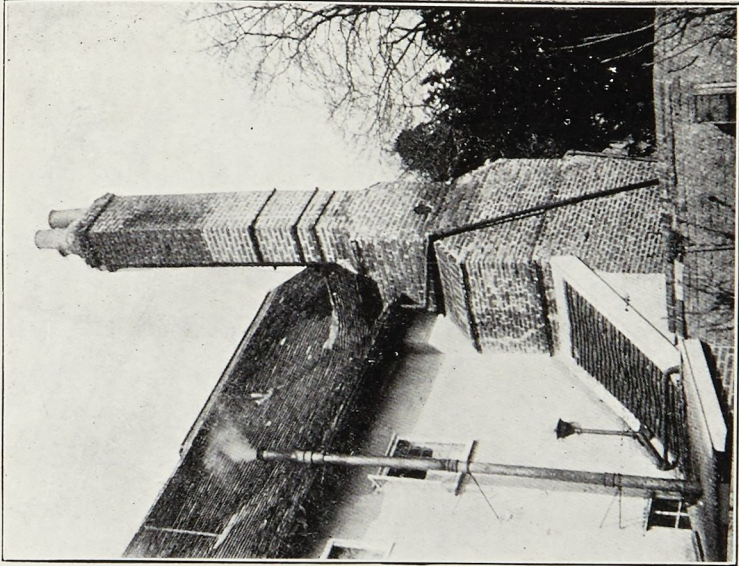
The name of Robert Browne is the third which looms rather largely in the annals of Blo' Norton. He has come down to us, in his portrait in the style of Heins, as a goodlooking young man, somewhat of a dandy, wearing a red coat. Unlike his kinsman he lost no time in getting married, and the ceremony took place in 1719 at St. Olave's, Hart Street, in the City of London, but who the lady was has always been a puzzle. In the marriage registers she is merely called "Hester Wright of Hampstead," and nothing further has ever been made out about her. Her picture shows her as being young, if not quite as young as her husband, and even the very plain mode of dressing the hair, prevalent *circa* 1720, cannot make her look other than pretty and attractive. They had forty-seven years of married life together and were blessed with a family of ten children, of whom the eldest son was named Nathaniel, in memory, doubtless, of their benefactor.

Robert Browne was a typical country gentleman of the day. Farming his land, attending the market at Harling, as a letter of his, which I was fortunate enough to come across, shows, and keeping a pack of hounds here. A picture representing his horse and groom and a harrier still hangs in the hall, as well as another of his favourite hound. "O Rare Black Winder" is the delightful inscription on the latter. As the illustration shows, he is decidedly a quaint animal with the look of the bloodhound about him. The date of

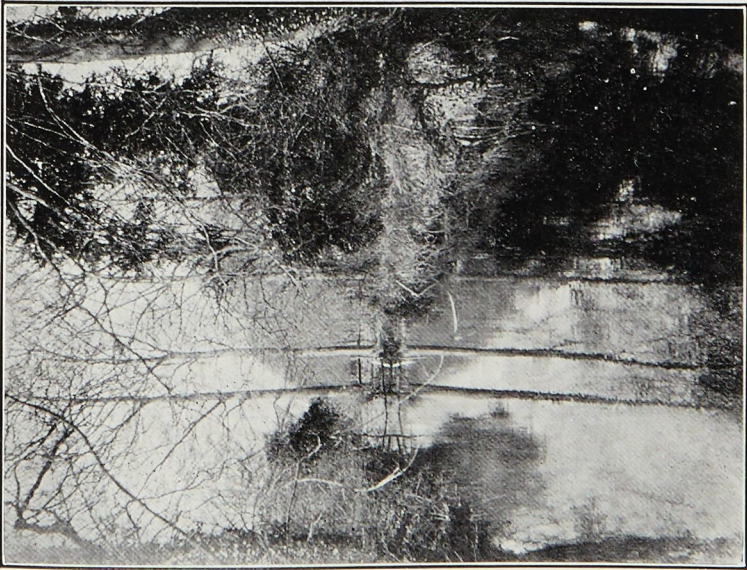
the picture is about 1730. Having two such distinct types of hounds, it would almost look as though Robert Browne kept more than one pack. I have often wondered whether the buck's head affixed to the oaken hall screen can have been one of his trophies. Besides being a farmer and a sportsman, he was keenly interested in the history of his old house—a rather unusual addition to the tastes of a sports' loving squire of Georgian days.

Now Robert Browne was born, as has been observed, in 1697, and he died in 1766. He was, therefore, absolutely contemporary with Francis Blomefield, overlapping him somewhat, at both ends, as to actual age. He evidently fell rather foul of Blomefield and, owing to his notes, we are able to correct one or two of the historian's statements. It was during Robert Browne's possession of the place that the first volume of *The History of Norfolk* was published. Among the Blo' Norton papers is the original folio edition of the portion containing the "Hundred of Guilteross," and on page 165,¹ under Blo' Norton, occurs the following statement:—"The house right over against the Church is called 'The Place,' which name it assumed when it was re-built by John Brampton, its old name being Brome Hall." Now it is a pity that Blomefield who so rarely speaks of a manor house should, in this case, have gone out of his way to stereotype a statement which has been a stumbling block to all who came after. Robert Browne was evidently very angry with this mis-statement, and he has put a large double score against it and adds "This is false, the Bramptons never owned any but this house which Mrs. Elizabeth Brampton and her son Henry built in 1585. See their names in

¹ Vol. i., p. 248, in the quarto edition.



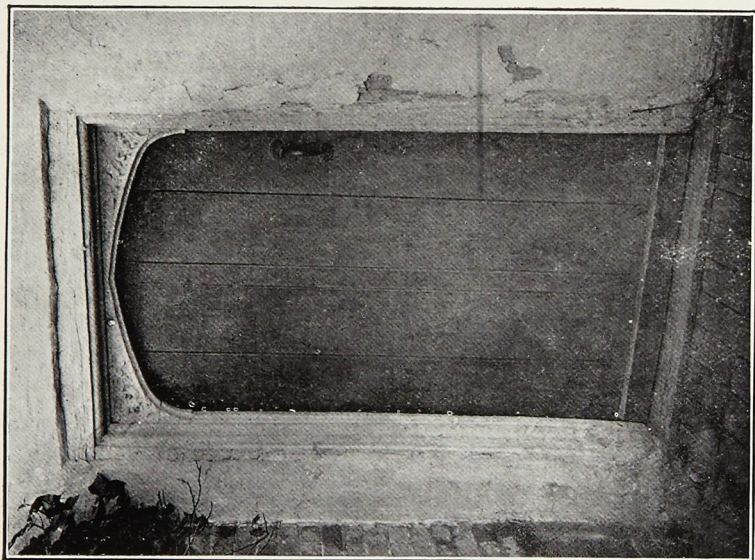
"BACKHOUSE" CHIMNEY
WITH ERRA-COTTA DISC BEARING INITIALS
E. H.
1585
B.



THE MOAT.



THE CHURCH FARM,
AT ONE TIME CALLED "THE PLACE."



DOORWAY AT THE CHURCH FARM.

the Great Parlour chimney and on the outside of the Back-house chimney which is now (1750) re-built." In another place he says "I have lived in this parish more than 48 years," as much as to say, "surely I must know as much about it as the parson of Fersfield"! Now, at first sight, one might think that Blomefield, being a careful antiquary, was really more up in the subject than a hunting squire, even if he were the owner, but there is no doubt that Robert Browne was right in this case, as again when he says, "So it does not appear the Bramptons ever owned the house called the place."

The small property, The Place, which Blomefield confounds with this Hall is described in a survey of the Manor of 1666 as "that freehold tenement late Clarkes." It is now merely called the Church Farm; it never seems to have formed part of the ancient demesne of the Bromes and Bramptons, and was only purchased by Nathaniel Best from whom Robert Browne inherited it, and at the latter's death it was sold for the benefit of some of his children. It certainly is a very old house and, amongst other features, has a room with a heavy beamed ceiling of late 15th or early 16th century work, and also a door with charmingly carved spandrils. If the ornament, as it seems to do, represents pomegranates, it probably gives us a date soon after the marriage of Katherine of Aragon, when that, her emblem, came into vogue. So Blomefield's suggestion as to the date is correct enough. He seems to have found in a window, amongst others, the arms of the Calthorpes and of the Bromes. These he acquired and placed in his study window, but they perished in the fire when that room was burnt. He states in his history that William Calthorpe, who married Cicely

Brome, had an estate (not a Manor) here in 1536. A very plausible solution, therefore, would seem to be that this was their house, but I do not come across the name "The Place" until the 18th century.

In the above-named "Survey of the Manors of Bromehall, Brenthall, and Seymers, in the Parishes of Blo' Norton and Garboldisham and the lands belonging to each made 27th day of November 1666" full mention is made of the "capital messuage and seite called Broomhall" and its surrounding closes, which in many cases bear names identical with those by which they are known to-day, thus showing, as our worthy Robert Browne has said, that this, and not the Church Farm, is the ancient manorial site. By the way, he has one final hit at Blomefield when he says "also ye pedigree of ye Bramptons as is here set forth is very erroneous and defective"! Once more he is right, as Blomefield misses out a whole generation, and makes Henry and Gawdy Brampton brothers, instead of father and son. I have purposely left the discussion of "The Place v. Brome Hall" until this point, although it should by right have been taken earlier, as I think that Robert Browne's statements bearing upon it are of great interest; and it is nice to think that it was, thanks to his record of the initials upon it, that the fireplace in the Great Parlour was searched for and is now, once again, just as he knew it.

After he had been in possession about ten years, his title to the estate was challenged by a certain Thomas Jetter, son of Dorothy, youngest daughter of Gawdy Brampton. He may have belonged to an armigerous family which occurs both in the 1612 and 1664 visitation of Suffolk, and who lived near Lowestoft, although I do

not find his name or the Brampton marriage recorded. Thomas, the claimant, seems according to the papers relating to the case, to have been sixty years old in 1731. As he bases his claim on his heirship to Gawdy, it is evident that by that time the male branch of this line of the Bramptons had quite died out. The attempt to oust Robert Browne came to nothing and, from the evidence cited, John Jermy (Recorder of Yarmouth¹?) gives an opinion, dated 1731, to the effect that Thomas Jetter has no claim, and that Robert Browne's title is good. Thenceforward Robert Browne continued to live here in peace. His death occurred in 1766 and, although he is buried here and a monument has been erected to his memory, that memory is kept green by his own portrait and those of his horse and his hound, as well as by his trenchant comments on Blomefield.

His widow, who succeeded him as Lady of the Manor, continued to live on here until her death, in 1776, when she was laid to rest near her husband. It is strange that so little has come to light as to her family and connections. In her will she mentions her "sister West," living at Raphoe in Ireland, to whom she leaves ten pounds if still alive. Another sister of hers was Mrs. Elizabeth Fairley,¹ who lived, died, and was buried at Blo' Norton. The entry in the register says, "Elizabeth Fairley was buried, Jan. 24, 1774, act. 84." Finally the registers record, in 1727, the burial of "Frances Wright, Widow, from The Hall." Who can this be but the mother of Hester and her sisters?

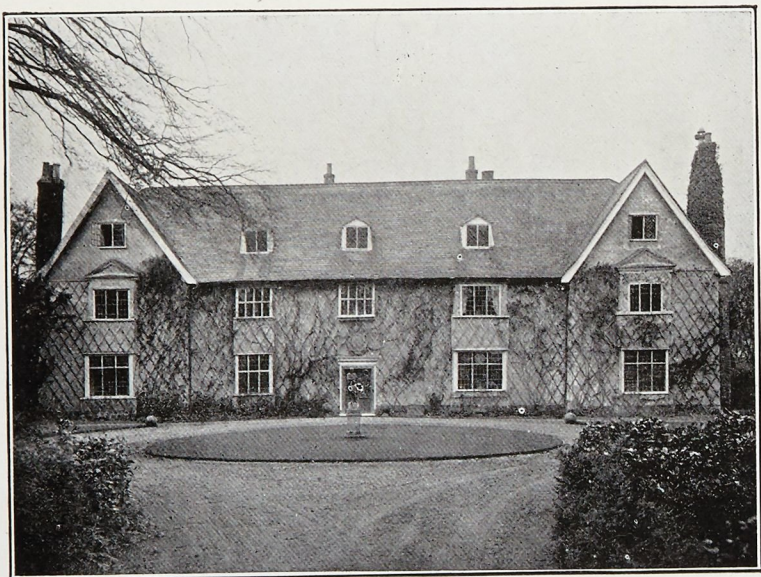
For some reason, perhaps because he was the "ne'er do weel" which tradition asserts, Mrs. Hester Browne disinherited her eldest surviving son Robert, except as

¹ A rose that used to grow on the hall was named after her—"Madame Fairley."

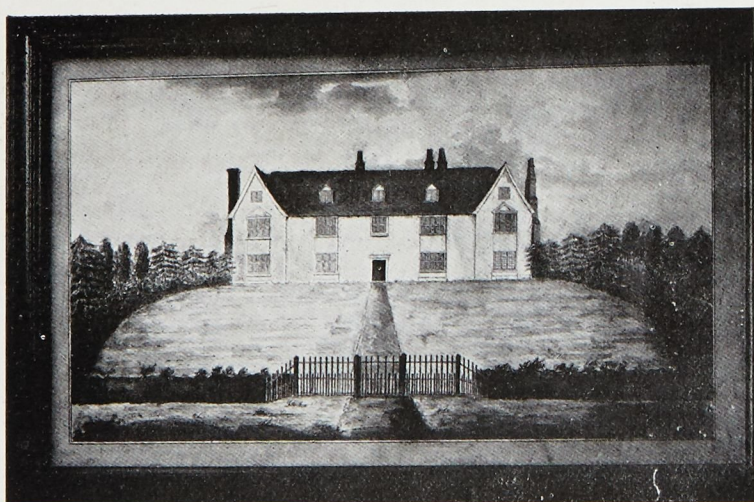
regards the Church Farm which was to be sold for his benefit and that of his children. He married three times and his third wife is said to have been much his inferior in station. By his various marriages he had seventeen children, most of whom lived to maturity, but they did not get on very well in life, and no doubt several of their descendants still continue in Norfolk. The only one who is of interest to us at Blo' Norton is his fourth daughter, Mildred, a child of his second wife. She was born in 1775 and she married Benjamin Giles, described in a deed of 1809 as "of Walworth, Surrey, Limner," to whose brush we are indebted for the charming little water colour drawings which help to illustrate this paper. The one which gives a view of the main front of the house is signed on the gatepost, "B. Giles, 1800."

Mrs. Giles lived at Blo' Norton a good deal, and was well remembered by an old dame who died as recently as 1880.

Robert the eldest having been passed over, the next brother, Charles, became the heir. He was the first of three "Squarsons" of the same name. He was born in 1733 and, when he was twenty-nine years of age, he instituted himself to the Rectory of Blo' Norton, which he held for the lengthy period of fifty-four years, whilst the living of Thelnetham in Suffolk, which he held together with Blo' Norton, he was actually rector of four years longer! He it was who discovered the three-quarter length portrait of Charles I. now hanging in the hall, in a cottage at Thelnetham, having been put to the base use—though it sounds hardly credible—of a hearthrug! At first sight the mere fact that it has a contemporary frame would seem to belie the tradition; but, when on closer inspection, one finds that the picture

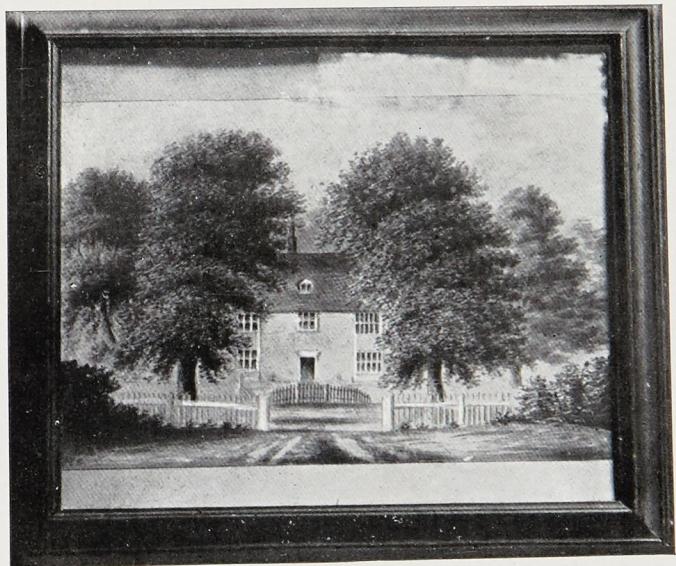


BLO' NORTON HALL—N.W.



BLO' NORTON HALL—N.E.

From a watercolour drawing by B. Giles, 1800.]



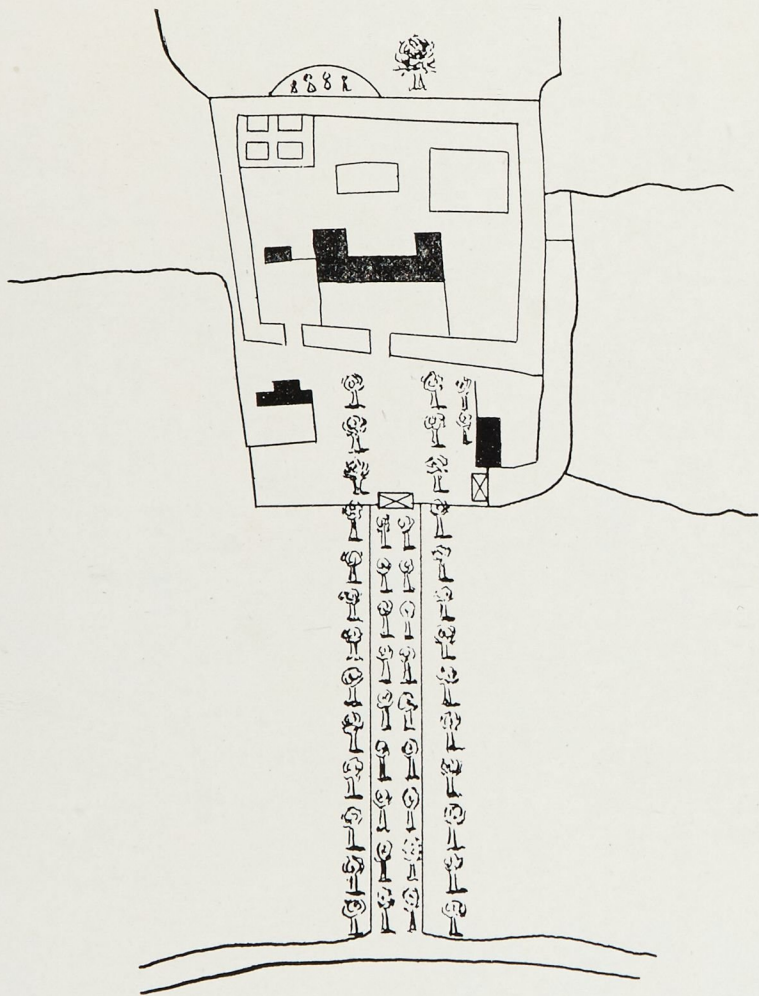
BLO' NORTON HALL, CIRCA 1800.

After a water-colour drawing by B. Giles.]



THE AVENUE, CIRCA 1800.

After a water-colour drawing by B. Giles.]



PLAN OF BLO' NORTON HALL, &c.. 1776.

From an old map].

is much larger than the frame and that a good piece of the canvas is turned back, one, again, begins to believe the story. It is within the bounds of possibility that this picture came from Riddlesworth Hall, which is the nearest large house—and where Blomefield recorded such a portrait,—as another from the same collection, was recently picked up in a neighbouring village.

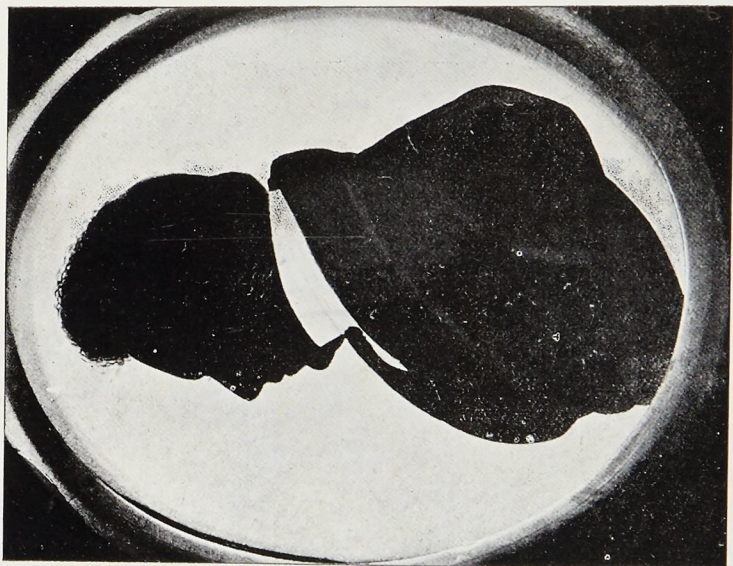
Charles Browne died in 1816 at the good age of eighty-four, and his wife, who was daughter of John Wilgress of Parham in Suffolk, through whom the Brownes get a descent from the armigerous families of Paston, Shelton, and Alexander, passed away the same year. There is a tablet to their memory in the church. It is to these two, or rather the lady, I believe, that two serious acts of vandalism must be attributed. The year that Mrs. Hester Browne died (1776) and in which Charles Browne succeeded, is identical with the date of the alterations to the Great Parlour. It is said that once, when her husband was safely away in London, his wife destroyed the mullioned windows (this can only refer to that of the Great Parlour as the others are shown in Giles's drawing of 1800) and cut down the Lime Avenue, leaving only the four large trees at the lower end. What her husband's feelings and remarks may have been on his return from a long and tedious journey, history does not relate! The Avenue shown in the accompanying illustration is the outer avenue of oaks, since cut down; the four large limes, still standing, can clearly be seen. She is also credited with painting the picture frames, which are all, save those of Robert and Hester Browne, of the date of Nathaniel Best, a stone colour.

No early plans seem to have survived and, therefore, one of 1776 is of some interest. The moat was then

complete, having merely a central and a postern bridge by way of access to the house. The double avenue was still existent; the fish stew, as well as the present fish pond, is shown and the great oak over the moat, though a little out of position, is specially marked.

To Charles Browne succeeded his son, another Charles. He was born in 1763 and, like his father, was rector of Blo' Norton, with which he held the perpetual curacy, of Leiston, near Saxmundham. His name is scratched on a pane of glass with the date 1779, while on another pane, with the initials of his father, C. B., is the date 1748. They would have been fifteen and sixteen in those respective years.

He married, in 1797, Margaret, daughter of the Rev. Robert Nunn of Hepworth, Suffolk, and he departed this life in 1834 aged seventy-two, whilst she died in 1859, at the advanced age of eighty-nine. Both passed away in this house and are buried in the churchyard, but only the husband has a monument in the church. They had six children of whom Charles Howman Browne, the third "Squarson," inherited the estate. He was born in 1800, was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and died, a bachelor, in 1863, when a tablet was erected to his memory in the church. His three brothers died without issue, while of his two sisters, Mary, the younger, married her cousin Robert Nunn and had three daughters, who all died unmarried. The elder sister, Margaret, married in 1825, James Goldson, Esquire, of East Dereham, whose son Charles Browne Goldson, Esquire, was the late owner of the estate. The latter was born in East Dereham in 1834 and married, in 1870, Marion, daughter of William Cargill of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who survives him, he having died March, 1912.



THE REV. CHARLES HOWMAN BROWNE.
BORN 1800. DIED 1863.

From a silhouette.]



THE REV. CHARLES BROWNE.
BORN 1733. DIED 1816.

From a miniature.]

I should here like to record my deep indebtedness to him for the great amount of information, traditionary and otherwise, with which he so willingly furnished me; also for the free use of his deeds and papers and, still more, for the sympathy and interest which he displayed in all my researches. Nothing which had to do with Blo' Norton was otherwise than of interest to him. I cannot help expressing my satisfaction that, although he did not live to see the completion of this paper, the notes I had already been able to put together cleared up many doubtful points, and shed some new light on the history of the old manor house. His only son, John Wilgress Goldson, who resides at Middlesbrough, is the present owner and Lord of the Manor. He was born in 1880 and married, March 3rd, 1908, Alice Mary, younger daughter of the Rev. Joseph Golightly, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, North Shields, and Hon. Canon of St. Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle-on-Tyne, by whom he has issue, Helen Marjorie, b. Dec. 14th, 1908, and Charles Paston Browne, b. Feb. 28th, 1910.

All things considered, it is not much that it has been possible to put together. Some errors have been rectified, some facts established, and some vague traditions have been confirmed or refuted. With regard to such, one wonders what ground there is for the belief that a number of Royalist Troops were once secreted in the roof here!¹

When everything is said and done, this is only one of those old houses, whose owners can never have been said to have made history, but who have been content to live the uneventful lives of country gentlemen, whilst

¹ Perhaps, after all, Gawdy was a secret sympathiser with the principles of his more worthy cousin, Sir Charles Gawdy of Framlingham, the Royalist.

a quiet pride in their old home has prevented them from re-building and re-decorating it when the fashions changed. In this sense it is typical of the less important Manor House, scores of which existed all over the country. Not a parish in Norfolk but can show remains of one or more. There were three Manors in this comparatively small parish of Blo' Norton, each with its Hall and, I have no reason to doubt that, the other two were as good houses as this, certainly Seymers Hall—from 1520 to about 1640, the seat of the Cootes—must have been. There are two interesting facts to be remarked with regard to Blo' Norton Hall—(1) that since about 1280 it has never been sold outright, but there has, ever, been a connecting link with each possessor, and (2) the curious association of the letter B with Blo' Norton, as is evinced by the succession of the families of Bigod, Brome, Brampton, Best, and Browne.

It is generally usual when writing about a place to start by discussing the origin of its name; I have reserved this to the end. One is often asked the reason of the apostrophe after the word "Blo'," obviously the shortening of the prefix. A learned friend of mine says he believes that Blo' Norton stands for Norton below (i.e., in a hole), in contra-distinction to some unknown Norton, on a hill. Blomefield says it is equivalent to "Bel'eau" (Beautiful Water), as he had seen it so written in ancient deeds. My own opinion—for what it is worth—is that if, as Mundford says, Bylaugh and Belaugh mean "by the water," then "Blo'" is a phonetic shortening of Belaugh—probably Blomefield's Bel'eau—and the name means merely Norton by the water, which is a very apt description of its situation, as the village is quite near to, and the parish lies on the North bank of the Little Ouse.



UNKNOWN PORTRAIT, CIRCA 1668, SAID TO BE A BRAMPTON.

LIST OF PORTRAITS AT BLO' NORTON HALL.

1. Gawdy Brampton, aged about 38, *circa* 1625.
2. Dorothy, second wife of Gawdy Brampton, aged about 22, *circa* 1660.
3. John Best, second husband of No. 2, aged about 55, *circa* 1665.
4. Man (unknown), said to be a Brampton, aged about 45, *circa* 1668.
5. Nathaniel Best, aged about 25, *circa* 1690.
6. Robert Browne, aged about 24, *circa* 1720.
7. Hester, wife of Robert Browne, aged about 20, *circa* 1720.
8. King Charles I., $\frac{3}{4}$ length, in armour with right hand on a large glass sphere: after Vandyck.

N.B.—This picture was found in a cottage at Thelmetham.

APPENDIX.

*Chancery Inquisitions Post Mortem, Exchequer Series,
File 613, No. 12.*

James Brome, esquire.

Inquisition taken at Norwich on the Vigil of St. Luke,
2 Henry VIII. [17 Oct., 1510].

The said James was seised of the manor of Brome.....
and of the manor of Seymors in Blonorton.

Richard Brome, grandfather of the said James, was seised
of the manor of Blonorton called Bromehall, and demised the
same to Margaret Coote, widow, for her life, on his death
the reversion thereof descended to the said James, his heir,
viz, son of Gilbert, son and heir of the said Richard.

The manor of Seymors is held of the Earl of Surrey, as of
his manor of Forncette, as half a knight's fee, and is worth
6 marks a year.

The manor of Bromehall is held of the Earl of Arundel as
of his manor of Castleacre, as half a fee, and is worth 10 marks.

The said James died 2 July, 23 Henry VII. [1508].

Mary, wife of John Jenney, and Anne, wife of John Brampton,
esquire, his sisters, and heirs, are now aged 23 and 22 respec-
tively.

Will of Richard Brome, Esq.

Norfolk Archdeaconry Court, Register "Grantham," fo. 12.¹

A long, religious preamble.

If I die in Norwich to be buried in the Cathedral Church
and the Prior to have 6^s 8^d, the subprior 20^d and every
monk 20^d.

¹ A large corner of the book is quite gone. In the margin the will is
given as that of "Richard Brome, armiger," and in the Index he is called
"of Norwich."

All such lands and tenements as I have purchased within Brome are to be annexed to my manor of Broome..... apparent and his heirs.....

My manor of Seymours to be annexed to my manor of Blonorton for ever, on the condition that the said Jamys my heir apparente and his heirs and assigns pay to my brother Henry Brome 5 marks a year for his life, and 5 marks a year to my executors towards the performance of this will—and if he refuse then exōrs to sell all lands in Brome and Blonorton and money to be applied to purposes of this will and to pay above annuity, &c.

I will that.....said brother.....a devote priest..... in Cambrych to find.....and my mother for me..... space of 7 years.....and also for his salary 5 marks a year. Feoffees to make an estate of my lands in Brome and Blonorton to my executors.

To Elzabell (Ogyers?) otherwise called Elizabell Bery of Norwich, wydow, a yearly pension of £10 for her life, out of my manor of Sunderland Hall in Norfolk.

To the master of Mettingham and his brethren for singing a dirige and masse, 13^s 4^d.

To each poor man and woman in Brome, 1^d.

To the Church of Norton, 5 marks.

Residue to executors.....[? Ev]erard, Esq., and Jamyssaid Robert.....

Dated 15th Ma....., [150]7.

Proved 1st Sept^r 1507 by James Jullys "executor^o executor^o in huiusmodi testamenti nominati."

Will of Jhon Jenney.

Episcopal Consistorial Court of Norwich, Register "Johnson," fo. 204.

I, Jhon Jenney, dwelling in Brome next Bungay, "being off hool mynd and syk off body" make my will, the Thursday next byfore S^t Andrew thapostle, 1511.

My soul to Almighty God and our Lady S^t Mary, etc.

My body to be buried where it shall please God.

To the High Altar of Brome Church for tithes neglected 6^s 8^d.

 " " " of Hardwyk Church " " 3^s 4^d.

 " " " of Norton Church " " 20^d.

To the Church of Intwood, 3^s 4^d.

"I will that when the town of Hardwyk bye a booke callyd antiphoner my exōrs to pay them 40^s."

To the Mother Church of Norwich, 20^d.

To each "frierhous" in Norwich, 20^d.

To the Chapel in the Feld in Norwich, 6^s 8^d.

To the Churche of Brome to y^e most necessary thing to be had ther, 3^s 4^d.

To the Nunys off the Abbey off Bungay, to be prayed for, 3^s 4^d.

To my sister Dame Katerin, nunne in Brosiard, 6^s 8^d.

"To May [*sic*—error for Mary] my wyff all my utensiles of my hous and juellys to her own disposicion except a bed I last bought, a payre off fustians and a coverlett off counterfett arras to my son Edward Jenney, and if he die I will that if my wif be with a son he to have it, or ellys I wolde it be departyd amonge my doughters by the discrecon off my wiff and my executors after my wyff's decesse."

To Margaret my dowghter, after the death of my said wife "a wheite countre wayinge [*sic*—but (?) an error for counterpayne].

Item, "my wife to have all my plate terme off her lyff, that is to say—a stounding cupp gilt with a cover, a flatt cupp gilt with a cover, a flatt cupp parcell gilt with a cover, 2 gilt salts with a cover, a powdere Box of silver parcell gilt and vj spones with livards [? leopards] hedeys, parcell gilt and she to leyve [? leave] the said plate to my soon Edward and his heyres, paying to his sisters £20."

My lond in Hardwyk callyd Comys my wife to have it term of her life and if she be with a son, my son Edward to have it, paying to his Brodre £20.

All residue to my wife and my executors for performing this my last will and payment of debts.

Mary my wife and Sir John Brondiche exōrs.

My moder Margaret Cotte [? Margaret Calthorpe, afterwards Coote, and widow of Gilbert Brome], wedow, supervisor and for iche of ther labors I giff 20^s.

Dated [27 November] 1511.

Proved 12 January, 151 $\frac{2}{3}$.

Will of Mary Shelton.

Consistory Court of Norwich, Register "Godsalve," fo. 330.

I, Mary Shelton of Brome, late wyff of Rauf Shelton, esquier, make my testament in this manner:—

My soul to Almighty God and my body to be buried in the Church of S^t Michael of Brome.

My executors to paye to Margery my dowghter and to Dorathie my dowghter, to iche of them £40, of the bequest of my husband Rauff Shelton.

I will Rauff Shelton my son have all my stuff of house except a counter poynte, a fether bedde, a payre of fustians, the which is my son Edward Jenney by his father's will and ij spones that Sir Edward Jeney gave him.

I will that Margaret Jeney my dowghter have a little fether-bed, a payer of blankettes, a rede coveringe and fyve payre of shets.

I will the toune of Brome have four kine to thentent to kepe yerely for my husbonds Rawf Shelton and John Jenney sowles and myn dyrige and masse, the priest to have 4^d, the clerke 2^d, offering 1^d, the Ringers 4^d and mete and drinke, and the residewe of the money to go to the Reparacion of the Church of Brome where most need is.

To Margery Jeney my dau^r, £10.

„ Dorathie Shelton „ £10.

Raff Shelton my son to have my mariage ringe, and the other Ringe I give to Dorathe my dowghter.

Robert Elsyng to have "his lyvery and 10^s."

I freely forgive Henry Stañard all such debts as he doth owe me.

Residue to son Rauff Shelton.

Said son Rauff Shelton and John Goff executors, the latter to have 40^s for his labor.

Robert Bridkirke, parson of Elingham }
 John Randolf, Henry Stanard and others } witnesses.

Dated 26 August, 1540.

Proved 12 February, 154 $\frac{2}{3}$, by son Ralf.

**Will of Thomas Brampton, Esquier, of Bolokenton (sic),
 co. Norff.**

Consistory Court of Norwich, Register 1580-82, fo. 478.

My soul to God Almighty, Father, Soñe and Holy Goste.

My body to be buried in the Chauncel of the Church of Norton aforesaid (sic).

To 12 of the poorest of the Toun, each xij^d.

To Thomas Bullock, my godson ij^d.

To Bridgett, my dau^r £100 within a month after her marriage, if she marry with her mother's consent.

To Elizabeth my wife an annuity of 5 marks a year, out of the manor of Brome until son Henry is 21 and he is then to pay her vj^{li} xiijs^s iiij^d a year for her life.

To the Reparation of Norton Church, xx^s.

All residue to wife Elizabeth, sole executrix.

John Sander }
 Francis Wrighte } witnesses.
 Homfreye Murriell }

The names of the pore people to receive the gift above rehersed Robert Caruer, Harrold, John Deffeild, John Paine, Robert Austeine, widow Howss, widow Cooke, Tho^s Rerpeleie, Tho^s Riuet, Robert Bulloaks wife, Robert Sporle.

Dated 2 November, A.D. five hundred four score and seventeen in the 18th of Queen Elizabeth.¹

Proved the last Day of October, 1582, at Norwich by the proctor of the executrix.

¹ There must be an error here, the 18th of Elizabeth was 1576. Probably the five hundred four score and seventeen is an error in the record and the 18th Elizabeth the right date.

**Will of Elizabeth Brampton of Bronorton (*sic*),
co. Norff., widowe.**

Consistory Court of Norwich, Register 1603, fo. 273.

My soul into God's hands trusting to be saved only by the merits death and passion of Jesus Christ his son.

My bodie to be buried in the Chauncell of the Church of Blonorton as nighe unto the place where my wellbeloved husband lieth as conveniently may be.

To Gawdie Brampton £20 when 21 and a pott with a cover of silver double gilt, a salte seller of silver and double gilt without a cover, one goblett of silver, one silver sponne gilte and 7 other silver spones whereof one hath uppon the ende thereof the picture of an appostle, three other knoppes and engraven with G. and B. and too others of them engraven with T. and B. and one other of them knopped and engraven with E. and B. Also a newe dome bedd, 2 new feather beds, 8 best pillows, 8 best blanketts, 4 coverletts whereof one of Pulham worke with birds of yellow and grene. Two other couler blewe wrought with white harts and one other is a little new one of Arras worke: Also one other coverlett of blew and red and one redd Rugge and one other coverlet of redd, green and yellow, one lyverie bedstead standing in the Chamber over the litle parlour where we usually still, and the kanapie hanging over the said bedstead. Also two trendle bedsteads standing in my chamber: [Also a quantity of sheets and linen, all set out with lengths and breadths] three new pillowberes [? pillowcases] "verie fyne," nine other good pillowberes, a diaper table cloth $3\frac{1}{2}$ yards long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ yds. wide and many other table cloths, cubbord cloths, diaper and plain Towells, "Kalico" towells, napkins of damaske, 2 dozen napkins wrought att the ends with coventree blewe thred; Also to him three quishons of Nedill worke, whereof one is wrought with Gilly flowers and Woodbines, one other wrought with a Rose in the mydest and hawthorne branches in the corners; the third wrought with slippes of Roses—one cofer bounde with Iron and covered with painted leather wherein my naperie for the butterie lyeth; one other cofer called the billem' [? habiliment]

coffer, also the deske coffer, twoe of the greatest boxes for ruffes with lockes uppon them and two little joyned stooles and one little Clocke standing in my closett and also the best pewter basen and ewer and sixe candlestickes of pewter—all to be delivered to him when 21.

If Henry, my son, the father of the said Gawdy, die before Gawdy comes of age, then Gawdy to have same on Henry's death.

To the said Gawdie Brampton, on the death of my son Henrie, a silver salt seller and cover, double gilt, weying xix oz^s which cost vj^{li} vij^s vj^d also a silver salt seller parcell gilt, 12 silver spones, besides those before given: Also the Hanging and one window curtaine all of grene saie in the great chamber, the hangings of grene saie in the hall and three window curtaines of saie in the same chamber: Also one seilde bedsteade with a tester with knoppes gylte and curteins which curtains and tester are of grene saie—a joyned cubbord, one carpet for the cubbard of damaske worke color yellowe and redd. A posted bedstead with a tester of Taffata in the Chamber over the larder. In my chamber where I laie one posted bedstead with a Tester of yellow and redd and curtaines of redd and grene. In the preschamber one lyverie bedstead, one great joyned presse with a locke, one table with a frame to brush uppon. In the maids chamber a lyverie bedstead and a trendle bedstead. In the Gallery two lyverie bedsteads and one borded bedstead. In the parlor a long framed table of joyner's worke, one square table varnished and the frame thereunto, one liverie cubbard¹ of joyner's work and a carpett of carpett worke with roses wrought therein belonging to the said cubbord and one window curtaine of diverse collors hanging in the parlor—one chair of leather, one chair engraven with Adam and Eve and one other of Sipres [? cypress]—25 greate joyned stooles, 6 small joyned stooles, 3 footstooles and one shorte joyned forme. In the hall one counter and one longe forme. In the Chamber over the hall a coffer barred with iron and covered with grene leather and

¹ A cupboard in which "liveries of food," *i.e.*, servant's allowance, was kept.

paynted thereupon heads and faces of men and women: three other coffers of furr, two other great coffers of wood bound with iron whereof one is the coffer wherein the evidence doe laye and the other coffer is of furre standinge in the Chamber over the larder: two great boxes with lockes—sundry other feather beds and blanketts, a greate coverlett or Counterpoynte of Arras worke, 12 pewter platters, 12 pewter dishes, 12 pewter sawcers, 12 pewter porrengers, 12 pewter frute dishes, 12 peuter plates and 12 “blanketinge” plates. In the backhouse a great brass hanged, a great brass cawdron, a mashfatt, one yeldinge fatt one coolinge keler and a boultunge tunne. In the dayrie 3 cheese presses and one longe bourde to salte cheese upon. In my chamber a table with tressels and a joyned cubbard.

To my daughter Nashe, a silver salt seller with a kover of silver.

To my grandchild Henrie Keene, 40^s.

To Thomas Billingford, parson of Blonorton, 40^s.

To Dorothy Thorne, 20^s a year for her life.

To widow Starlinge, Boyce Bullock's wife, Alice Bullocke widow, Robert Awsten and his wife, John Eldred's wife, Tho^s Cock's wife and to widow Edwards, 2^s each.

All residue to Henrie Brampton my son, the sole executor.

Thomas Billingford, clerke	} witnesses.
John Master	
Robert Master	
Thomas Wolman	

Dated 1st August, 1601.

Proved 6.....1603 [faded and cannot be read].

**Will of Anne, wife of Gawdy Brampton of Blonorton,
co. Norfolk, gent.**

Prerogative Court of Canterbury, “Berkeley,” fo. 116.

In Trinity term, 1641, a fine was levied between Robert Morse, gent., Thos. Stone and Edw. Heighoo, gents., plaintiffs

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and Gawdy Brampton and me the said Anne, deforciant, of 2 messuages, 2 gardens, 2 orchards, 33 acres of land, 30 acres of meadow, 90 acres of pasture in Blonorton and by Indenture of 16 Oct. then last past it was settled that after the death of Henry Brampton, gent., the said Gawdy's father, the said lands [boundaries and dimensions given] should be to said Gawdy and Anne his wife on payment of £16 yearly and £216 in one sum.

I hereby give all my lands and tenements in Blonorton to Dorothy Brampton and her heirs, excepting a close there called Brendhall which I give to my husband, for life, with reversion to my said daughter, Dorothy Brampton.

To my grandson, Brampton Lowrie, a close called Bottom Close in Blonorton, to him and his heirs for ever.

To my son, Gawdy Brampton, £8 a year.

To my grandchildren, Elizabeth, Ann and Dorothy Buckenham, 40 marks each, at their ages of 21.

To my grandchild, William Buckenham, £20.

To Ellen Wade, widow, 20^s.

To the poor of Blonorton, 20^s.

Executrix: my daughter, Dorothy Brampton.

[Hand and Seal.]

Witnesses:—Tho. Catton, Jeremy Goodwin [*mark*],

Tho. Catton, jun^r.

Dated 31 May, 1654.

Proved 1 April, 1656, by the executrix.