



S^T DUNSTAN'S PALACE.

Engraved from a drawing by J. G. Cooper.

1778.

MAYFIELD PLACE, SUSSEX.

(PLATE I.)

THIS was one of the villas of the archbishops of Canterbury, for the purpose of keeping hospitality in the more remote parts of their diocese. Eadmerus, in the life of St. Dunstan, who died anno 988, seems to imply it was built by that prelate, although he does not positively express it. He also says, that he here erected a wooden church, as he had done at his other hospitable places.

THE life of this saint, as related by Osbertus, Eadmerus, and other Monkish writers is filled with relations of stupendous miracles wrought by him, as well as a number of bickerings and conflicts with the devil; in all which Satan met with more than his match, and was forced to retreat with shame and precipitation. Among the miracles, the following is said to have been exhibited at the dedication of this church. St. Dunstan performing the ceremony in person, and according to the accustomed form, going in procession round the building observed it was out of the line of sanctity, that is, that it did not stand due east and west; wherefore gently touching it with his shoulder, he moved it into its proper bearings, to the great amazement and edification of all the beholders.

MAYFIELD seems to have been a favorite residence of several of the archbishops, from the many deeds and instruments dated there, where also many courts were held, and causes heard and determined.

ANNO 1332, a Provincial council was assembled at Mayfield, and a constitution passed relating to holidays, their number, and the observance of them, and in 1362, another was held there on the same subject.

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SEVERAL of the archbishops have ended their days in this mansion. Anno 1333, archbishop Simon Mepham; 1348, John Stratford, and in 1366, after a residence of a year and a half, Simon Islip. From whence it is but reasonable to believe it must at that time be a very large and commodious edifice. A moderate one would not have contained the suite of the archbishops, who in those times had a prodigious retinue, and lived in great state, nor would a sick man as Simon Islip then was, having received a stroke of the palsy, remain so long in a house that had not every possible conveniency. In all likelihood as this archbishop received a thousand marks of the executors of John Ufford for delapidations at Canterbury, which with more of his own, he expended on his different houses, he did not forget Mayfield.

IN the forty-third of Henry III. the archbishops obtained a charter from that King for a market and fairs to be held here, and a grant of a market and two fairs was made by Richard II. in the 15th year of his reign, this perhaps was a confirmation of the former charter.

IN 1389 a great fire happened here, which burned the church and almost all the town. Here was a park, now disparked, which appears to have been enlarged the 18th of Edward III. as may be seen in Tanner's Notitia Monastica, page (199 and 200.)

ANNO 1573, this house was inhabited by Sir Thomas Gresham, who had there the honor of entertaining Queen Elizabeth when she made her Kentish progress. A large room in the habitable part of the building still retains the appellation of Queen Elizabeth's room.

THE remains of this ancient mansion are very considerable, the Great Hall retains its magnificence even in ruins. It is sixty-eight feet long, and thirty-eight broad: Its roof was taken off within the memory of persons now, or lately living. The cross arches are, however, still remaining, and give it a most venerable and picturesque appearance. The falling of some plaister at the upper end, has discovered carved in stone, a mitre formed of roses; this is said to have been the place where the archbishops Chair was placed.

THE gate house and porter's lodge remain entire, and about thirty years ago were fitted up for a dwelling-house, which is now inhabited by a farmer. On a chimney of a chamber, called the kitchen chamber, is cut the date, 1731, and on the dexter side of the door of the anti-room adjoining, are the arms of the see of Canterbury, impaling a coat, charged with six lozenges, 3, 2, and 1, in chief a goat's head coupé. There seems to have been a covered way from this mansion to the Church-yard.

This view was drawn anno 1778.