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GILLING
AVELING

Gilling Castle.

Unpublished article by Hugh Aveling.

General history of Gilling. Stops abruptly at 1660.

(14 pp of typescript)

MS by JOHN HUGH AVELING 1917-93

This typescript from the Aveling papers has survived in isolation, and unfinished. It was evidently intended to have notes giving references, but these are lost.

At one time John Aveling (Dom Hugh 1946-67) was very familiar with the Fairfax papers, then in Leeds but now kept in Northallerton, North Yorks Record Office. This article or essay shows detailed familiarity with them. The bulk of his papers came to Ampleforth after his death, the by the kindness of his widow Aileen.

The handwriting above is that of Fr Bede Emerson, who died at Gilling in April 1980. The MS may have been lent to someone at the Castle, and been overlooked.

GILLING CASTLE

We take Gilling Castle very much for granted and are incurious about its past. Of course there are strong reasons for our lack of historical interest. For one thing, we live in an age of such rapid and immense material and social changes that even the immediate, pre-war past seems primeval and irrelevant to our pressing problems; we seem to spend most of our time nowadays trying to disentangle ourselves from the clinging trammels of the past. Hence the study of history is bound to seem an academic and escapist pursuit. Again, Gilling today seems itself to be a microcosm of so much in England - an old and bare shell swept up into, and largely adapted for, pressing modern uses. The shell - particularly now that the Great Chamber is restored - is in the awkward position of containing just enough historical material to stir our interest and imagination, but not enough to sustain and feed them. The things which once made it historically alive are long vanished. The old furniture, plate, armour, library and once numerous family portraits are gone. The muniment room, with its walls lined with illuminated parchment pedigrees and its numbered drawers stuffed with hundredweights of deeds and papers dating from the 12th to the 19th centuries, is not even a memory now. The hanging gardens are the last small survival of the once elaborate scenic layout of the Park with its surprise views, Gothic temples, rustic seats, monuments, avenue of elms and herd of deer. As for the estate and village, 18th century financial troubles and 19th century enclosures and rebuilding have swept away the common fields, the woods and almost all the old buildings. (1)

But to think on these lines is to impoverish our minds and do Gilling a real injustice. Obviously there can be a wrong sort of interest in history - escapist, irresponsible, falsifying or even paralysing present action - just as there can be a wrong and escapist religiosity. But if we are to avoid becoming mere shallow opportunists, letting affairs dissolve into a hopeless, shapeless and uncontrollable flux, we need a real understanding of ourselves - and that drives us ultimately to theology and to history. To history...but what on earth has the very local history of an obscure, remote Yorkshire country house - where no great national events ever happened and no great leaders lived, which has no grandeur of size or architecture - to do with the acquiring of a broad sense of history? Surely we can only leave Gilling's history to the pottering local antiquary or W.E.A. lecturer. But such a priori judgments about what is historically important are baseless. History is not simply made by disembodied ideas or 'movements' or by the characters of a few sovereigns and leaders; the main stuff of it is provided by the characters, actions, reactions of 'the middling sort' of men. Gilling and its life was the product of that sort of person and national history was made up of the history of a thousand Gillings. So the makers of Gilling, the Ettons and Fairfaxes, played a much fuller, more active and constant part in the main stream of English history than we realise. Thus, for instance, they organised the economic development of this area; they and others like them - and not merely the great landowners - helped the early Cistercians of Byland and Rievaulx, the Black and White Canons and the older Benedictine monasteries to develop and keep their feet in the economic blizzards of the middle ages. They rode from Gilling repeatedly to defend north Yorkshire from the Scots. They provided the manpower of crusades. They did the hard work of Justices of the Peace, Justices of Oyer and Terminer, royal Commissioners, stewards of forests which - with all due respect to the Henry IIs, Edward Is and Bractons - really made England the best-governed kingdom in medieval Europe. Gilling lords provided the expert fighting men required for the Hundred Years War and Henry VIII's war in France. In the Wars of the Roses they rose in arms for Henry IV and lost their estates and

lives in the forlorn hope of Henry VI's cause. They rode from Gilling to sit and speak in the English House of Commons and Irish House of Lords in a dozen important Parliaments between 1411 and 1688. Faced with the revolution of the Protestant Reformation, they wavered indecisively for three generations, twice rising in arms against it and ~~then~~ collapsing into conformity, and then came down firmly on side of persecuted Catholicism and were its chief pillars in north Yorkshire for a century and a half. They helped on the Restoration of Charles II and became strong supporters of James II, serving in his court, ruling the North Riding for him and sticking to him in exile. Gilling lords were personally acquainted with people like Edward III, John of Gaunt, Richard II, Henry IV, Edward IV, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, Mary of Scots, Strafford, General Lord Fairfax, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, Danby, James II and Mary of Modena. Their guests at Gilling included Elizabethan Archbishops of York and Lord Presidents of the North, a brother of the Earl of Essex and probably the Earl himself, the rebel northern Earls of 1569, three English martyrs, Thomas Morgan the Catholic faction leader, Sir Ralph Hopton the Royalist general, William Camden (probably); Cromwell's daughter Mary, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, Roger Dodsworth the antiquary, Bishop Leyburne and several later Catholic Vicars-Apostolic in the north, Chatham's Catholic aunt, one of William III's admirals, Laurence Sterne the novelist. To know something of all this in detail should enable us in future to see Gilling in truer perspective.

MEDIEVAL GILLING.

In the early, feudal middle ages, Gilling was a place of very little importance and slight population. It had a tiny stone church, built in the 11th century, its outer walls following the line of the present nave pillars. The township had, since before 1066, been divided into two small manors. One was owned - on a rather indefinite title - by the great Benedictine abbey of St Mary at York; the other was held by a succession of retainers of the lords of the baronial Honour of Thirsk for the service of a quarter of a knight's fee. The unification and rise of Gilling was the direct result of the appearance there in the early 12th century of the Etton family. They were a knightly family, retainers of the baronial Stutevilles on the latter's East Riding estates. In the early 12th century the Stutevilles made a bid to take over the entire Honour of Thirsk and it is quite likely that they originally planted Ettons at Gilling as part of that operation. In the end the design failed, but the Ettons retained a hold on Gilling under the successful claimants of Thirsk, the Mowbrays, while remaining tenants in the East Riding of the Stutevilles. From this period to the early 14th century the Ettons were slowly consolidating their hold on Gilling and rising from the status of retainers bound to military service to barons to that of relatively independent country gentry. Thus in the early 13th century they still held Gilling as one knight's fee of the Mowbrays; by the early 14th century (and, indeed, for all successive lords of Gilling until the Restoration, when feudal incidents were abolished) they held it of the Mowbrays but 'by a service quite unknown. By that time also the Ettons not only held numbers of small estates of a multiplicity of baronial lords; they were tenants-in-chief of the Crown for one small estate, and so appeared in the county court in York amongst the select little band of Yorkshire tenants in capite. (2)

One source of their prosperity was successful farming. As early as the 1160s they were in a position to make several small gifts of land to both Rievaulx and Byland and to add side aisles and a chancel to Gilling church. Soon after 1190, apparently with financial help from the Stutevilles, they bought out the abbot of York's interest in Gilling and so united the two manors. In the 13th and 14th centuries we get frequent glimpses in their deeds and law-suits of their efforts to improve the estate - mainly by piecemeal enclosure of parts of the common waste

by folding large numbers of sheep on the common fields between ~~sow~~ harvest and sowing (or leasing the right to fold to potentates like the Archdeacons of Richmond). Sheep-farming remained a profitable source of income for Gilling lords until the first decades of the 17th century. In 1374 the Ettons secured a royal licence to impark a thousand acres of waste and woodland in Gilling (almost a quarter of the entire area of the township) and in 1378 added further land to their park. Gilling Park was far from being merely a 'status-symbol' or pleasure ground for hunting. For at least the next five hundred years it was a highly profitable farming venture. In the first place it was an enclosed farm for breeding and pasturing sheep, oxen and beast; secondly it was a 'mere' for breeding horses for sale (in the Tudor and Stuart periods Scots dealers came down the Drovers' Road nearby to buy horses at Gilling); thirdly the deer were bred carefully for food and sale; and fourthly the park was a 'free chase' for game, with profitable warrens of 'conies.' Finally, in the 1370s - probably with the help of the Nevilles of Raby - the Ettons bought the manor of Cawton, adjacent to Gilling. (3)

If the bonds of feudal dependence were slackening, the rising gentry were still by social habit and by economic and political necessity clients of the baronage. The Ettons made of this growing 'bastard-feudal' dependence a second source of income. The royal service, the military needs of barons in the Hundred Years War and the sharp rivalries of pushing baronial houses provided plenty of opportunities. In 1358 Thomas Etton was an indentured esquire in Edward III's service, guarding the captive King John of France in London - he may also have served under the Black Prince in the Poitiers campaign in which John was taken, and on the Najara campaign in Spain of 1367. In 1369 Thomas certainly served under John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in a short and profitable plundering expedition to France. On that expedition and thenceforward Thomas was closely associated with John, Lord Neville of Raby. In 1381, when Neville was governor of Aquitaine, he sent Thomas with despatches to Richard II's Council board in London, and in 1386 Neville, in his will, made bequests to several Ettons and left Thomas a silver cup and fifty marks in cash. Besides this, Thomas acquired the keeperships of the forests of Nidderdale and Kirkby Malzeard and an estate in the Neville lordship of Kirkby Moorside. He lived on at Gilling into extreme old age, serving as a Justice of the Peace and Oyer and Terminer. (4) His son and heir, Sir John Etton, had already come to overshadow his father in political importance. In 1390 he served under Henry of Derby on a crusade to Prussia against the pagan Wends, and in 1391 was back at Gilling to receive a commission from Richard II to represent England in a series of tournaments against Scots champions. Derby now became an exile and it is quite likely that Sir John went abroad with him and was one of the hundred fighting men who landed with him at Ravenspur in 1399. Even if this is not true, Etton must have joined Derby soon afterwards, as the small rebel force sieged the Duchy of Lancaster castles, first at Pickering and then at Knaresborough, assembled a Yorkshire following at Doncaster and marched on Bristol to unseat Richard II. From the start of Henry IV's reign Sir John was directly in his service. In 1405 he received the stewardship of the great Forest of Galtres (between Gilling and York) with reversion to his son and grandson. He served twice as sheriff of the county, was busy as a Justice and Commissioner of Array and represented the county in the Parliaments of 1411, 1414, 1415 and 1421. In 1415, when leaving for the Agincourt campaign, Henry V entrusted to Sir John the wardenship of Roxburgh Castle, a very crucial post on the Scots Marches. He lived on at Gilling to his death there in 1433, the greatest of his family and a noted soldier. Coat armour was then coming into fashion amongst the aspiring gentry and it is not surprising that the Etton coat appeared on the seals of his charters, on several contemporary heralds' rolls, in Gilling church - which he again enlarged - and on the Castle gate. (5)

It has generally been presumed that either Sir John or his father built the Castle. The evidence for this consists firstly in the general similarity in design of the Castle and others which can be dated accurately to this period, and secondly in the fact that the Ettons were now at the peak of their importance. Unfortunately researches have failed to unearth any grant of a royal licence to crenellate (build a fortified house or fortify a manor) for Gilling. Moreover no known document before 1505 mentions the Castle - until then it is simply called a manor. However the Etton arms on the building show that it must have been built before about 1450 when the family died out, and, as we shall see, it is most unlikely that it was built after Sir John's death in 1433. A fairly considerable number of small castles - really fortified manor-houses, 'peel-towers' or 'tower houses' (like Whorlton, Tanfield, Danby, Nappa, Mortham, Hornby and Aske Hall) - sprang up in the north of Yorkshire in the later 14th and early 15th centuries. They reflected both the rise of the gentry and the great wave of Scottish raids into Yorkshire from 1309-50 followed by unsettled political conditions in England for over a century. The most devastating raid in this district was in 1322 when the Scots defeated Edward II's army at Olstead (while he was dining in Byland Abbey), sacked Byland and Rievaulx, moved through Appleton le Street (which they burned) to Malton, and thence for months ravaged the whole area, exacting hostages and protection money. In earlier periods the Ettons and their neighbours, in times of raids, removed their valuables, stock and families to the bailies of the nearer great castles - Helmsley, Sheriff Hutton, Hinderkelf (on the present site of Castle Howard). Now they were wealthier and preferred to use their means to make of their manors at least adequate shelters from the attack of rapidly moving marauders without time or means to attempt set sieges. (6)

The core of the original Gilling Castle was an almost square tower of three stories. It was remarkably large for this type of building - 72' 6" by 79' 6" - with basement walls 8' 6" thick on all except the west (present front) side, which is 12'. The massive thickness of the walls was not only for defence, but because staircases were contrived within the east, north and west walls and garderobes (latrines) within the thickness of the south wall, with openings from each of the western jambs of the three windows there. Such 'tower houses' invariably were surrounded by a curtain wall. But it is likely that Gilling had one (or even two) courtyards of ancillary buildings, most probably on the site of the present courtyard and court contained between the present two front wings. (7)

The death

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gn and it is quite likely that Sir John followed him abroad and was one of the 100 fighting men who landed with him near Ravenspur on the Yorkshire coast in 1399. If Sir John did not accompany Henry, he must soon afterwards have joined him in arms, as the future Henry IV marched fast to seize the Duchy of Lancaster castle at Pickering and (moving near Gilling) Knaresbrough Castle, before assembling his northern supporters near Doncaster to march on Bristol. (8) From the start of Henry IV's reign Etton profited much from the King's favour. He was received directly into his service and in 1405 granted the lucrative stewardship of the Forest of Galtres with reversion to his son and grandson. He served twice as sheriff of the county, was busy as a Commissioner of Array and Justice and represented Yorkshire in the Parliaments of 1411, 1414, 1415 and 1421. In 1415, when leaving for the Agincourt campaign, Henry V entrusted to Sir John the wardenship of Roxburgh Castle, a crucial command on the Scottish Marches. He lived on at Gilling to his death there in 1433 and was the greatest of his family. Coat armour was then coming into fashion amongst the gentry and it is not surprising that the Etton coat in his day appeared on the seals of his charters, on several heralds' rolls of arms, in a window in York Minster, on a tomb in Gilling church and on the Castle gate. (9)

It has generally been presumed that either Sir John or his father, Thomas, was the builder of the Castle and of additions to Gilling church. The evidence for this, as far as the Castle is concerned, consists firstly in the general similarity between the design of the Castle and that of other peel-towers which can be dated accurately to this period, and secondly in the fact that the Ettons were at their most prosperous period between 1360 and 1433. Unfortunately researches have failed to discover the grant of any royal licence to crenellate (fortify) for Gilling. Moreover no known document refers to Gilling as anything other than a manor before 1505 when it is first called a castle. The Etton arms on the front door, however, show that the Castle must be dated before the 1450s, when the Etton family died out, and, as we shall see, it is most unlikely that it was built after 1433. (10)

The considerable number of fortified manor-houses and peel-towers built in England in the later 14th century and early 15th centuries reflected both the rise of the gentry class and a new insecurity of life. The North Riding in the 14th century was often made to feel its proximity to the Scottish border. In 1322 a Scots army defeated Edward II somewhere between Byland and Rievaulx, sacked both abbeys, marched through Appleton le Street to occupy Malton and levied protection money from the Vale of Pickering. (11) Sir John Etton was frequently preoccupied with defence against the Scots and Gilling's lords were repeatedly called on active service on the borders down to 1638. Hence Gilling Castle replaced a wooden manor-house. The Castle was, pretty certainly, a three-storied square peel-tower. It was outstandingly large for such a type of building - 72' 6" by 79' 6" with basement walls of masonry 8' 6" thick on all except the west side. Presumably it had a small adjoining courtyard of accessory buildings on its west side (the present front of the house) and perhaps a second courtyard on the site of the present one. Like all North Riding manor-houses until the mid-seventeenth century, there would be a store of arms in the hall. (12)

The death of Sir John Etton ended sharply the brilliant phase in the family's fortunes. It is quite likely that Thomas Etton, a noted captain in the last phases of the Hundred Years war and lieutenant at Falaise in Normandy under the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1457-8, was a member of this family, but he certainly did not stand in the line of succession to Gilling. Sir John left two sons, both advanced in age and childless. The elder, Ivo Etton, left very little trace indeed in the documents of the time and was dead before 1450, leaving the estate to his brother, a priest and rector of Gilling, Alexander Etton. In the mid-14th century the Ettons had twice

intermarried with a West Riding family of the same class, the Fairfaxes of Walton near Tadcaster, and in 1349 the Gilling estate was entailed with remainder to the Fairfaxes. Relations with the Fairfaxes had been close. One of them was long rector of Gilling in Sir John Etton's time and others were associated with Ettons in the service of John, Lord Neville. But in 1451 Alexander Etton deliberately broke the entail and settled Gilling on Sir Thomas Neville, brother of Ralph, 2nd Earl of Westmoreland. It has been suggested - without proof, but with considerable likelihood - that the reason for this act was the passing of the Fairfax family over to the Yorkist cause. Sir Thomas Neville, like the Ettons, was a strong Lancastrian. Thomas Fairfax of Walton is said to have held minor office as master of the horse in Edward IV's household. (13) His brother, Sir Guy Fairfax, a barrister, joined a Yorkshire group critical of Henry VI's government and was made Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1478 by Edward IV. He was also a close friend and executor of John, Lord Scrope of Bolton, who was a member of the Councils of Edward IV and Richard III and fought at Bosworth for Richard. (14)

Gilling therefore passed into the hands of Sir Thomas Neville and his son, Sir Humphrey Neville of Brancepeth. Although Humphrey was said to have been born at Slingsby Castle near Gilling, it is quite unlikely that either man paid more than fleeting visits to Gilling. Both fought hard for Henry VI. Humphrey, after many wild adventures - including an escape from the Tower of London - was attainted, caught by the Earl of Warwick and beheaded in the presence of Edward IV at York in 1469. While he had been on the run, Gilling was given by Edward IV to Sir Edmund Hastings, the Yorkist leader in the Vale of Pickering and steward of Pickering Castle. Yet the Fairfaxes seem to have made no effort then to claim the estate. After the battle of Bosworth in 1485, Sir Edmund was confirmed in his stewardship of Pickering, but lost Gilling to a favourite of Henry VII, Charles Somerset, an illegitimate son of Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset and a relation of the Tudors. We have little reason to think that Somerset ever visited Gilling. Henry VII's household accounts show him as constantly at court, and a frequent opponent of the King at cards. (15)

It seems strange therefore that Thomas Fairfax of Walton should have chosen 1489 as a time for his Yorkist family to petition Henry VII for Gilling. To all appearances his case was legally very thin indeed, and politically hopeless. He could rely on his uncle, Sir Guy Fairfax, still Chief Justice under the new regime. Another member of the family may have been in Henry VII's service in Calais. Perhaps Henry might be willing to conciliate Yorkist opinion. In fact, in 1492, the King granted Gilling to Fairfax and sealed the gesture in 1494 by making Thomas a knight of the Bath on the occasion of the creation of the King's son Henry (the future Henry VIII) as Duke of York. The knighting created a stir. It was reported to the Pastons and is given much space by the chroniclers. The King graciously visited Thomas and the other 19 aspirants in their ceremonial baths. The knighting was followed at Westminster by a tournament and a lavish banquet. (16)

Sir Thomas Fairfax showed no desire to live at Gilling and died at Walton in 1505. His son and heir, another Thomas, went to serve under Henry VIII on his French campaign, distinguished himself at the Battle of Spurs and was knighted by Henry in September 1513 immediately after their entry into the captured city of Tournai, 'after the King came from Mass, under his banner in the church.' He returned with the King and was discharged at Dover. In 1516 he was one of the guard of honour to Margaret, Queen of Scots on her State visit to York. Yet he also felt no desire to live at Gilling and died at Walton in 1520. (17)

Hence Gilling remained empty between about 1458 and the 1520s. But the next heir, Sir Nicholas Fairfax, master of Gilling from 1520 to his death there in 1571,

decided to repair the Castle and live there. In February 1528 he made an agreement with John Barton of Whenby for the supply of slates and building materials for the repair of the Castle. Thereafter he constantly resided at 'my poore house of Gyllyng.' Sir Nicholas rose to be a figure of consequence in the north, well-known to the King's government. He was three times sheriff, a Justice from 1530 to 1571, a member of the Council of the North from 1548 to 1571. He was a member of the House of Commons in three Tudor Parliaments - in 1542-4 (for ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Scarborough), 1547-52 (for the county; the Parliament which passed Somerset's religious settlement), and 1563-70 (for the county.) He served on innumerable Royal Commissions - Edwardine commissions to sieze and value chantries and church-plate, an Elizabethan commission to deal with offences against the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity of 1559. He served in arms against the Scots and in March 1545 Gilling housed a Scot - 'Mr Erskine lythe as pledge with Sr Nicholas Fayrfax for the Lord Erskines eldest sonne.' (18)

We get repeated glimpses of him in the records of the time. In 1536 he was sent a personal letter from the Council to put down rebels. Instead he went from Gilling to York, where, at a meeting of gentry, he urged support for the Pilgrimage of Grace and suggested that, since it was a matter of faith, the religious of the monasteries should be called to join the rising. He then rode with the abbot of St Mary's, York to the rebel centre at Pontefract and took part in their 'Parliament', in which he urged that they should cooperate with the whole north. But soon after this he lost heart, quit Aske and the rebels and went over to the King. In return for his pardon he was forced to sit on the jury in York which tried the rebels. (19) At the dissolution of the monasteries we see him offering a handsome bribe to Thomas Cromwell if he may have the estates of Byland.. 'with my prayer and service as the Holie Goste knoweth who preseve your lordshippe. Scribled at Gilling..' He did not get what he wanted, but Cromwell's agents were instructed to watch his behaviour. In 1563 we see Sir Nicholas contracting his second marriage, with a very eligible Nottinghamshire widow - but furtively, very early in the morning in Newark Castle chapel and pretty certainly by Catholic rites. In May 1568, for the second time in his life, he came close to sacrificing Gilling and his wealth for his Faith. He and his son accompanied Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland to Carlisle to see Mary, Queen of Scots and to plan how they might rescue her. They rode back to the Earl's castle at Topcliffe, where Sir Nicholas was given a very straight warning from London that he must choose between his allegiance to Elizabeth and the Scottish Queen. In March 1569 - a few months before the rising of the Earls - the Earl of Sussex, Lord President of the North, attempted to prevent a rising by treating with the Earls. He therefore arranged a curious house party at Gilling where he, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, Lord and Lady Herbert and Sir Nicholas could enjoy 'horse-races, hunting and hawking' in the Park. Sussex failed of his main purpose, but he dissuaded Sir Nicholas from rebellion. In the event Sir Nicholas supported the government during the rising, while allowing his second son to join the Earls - and securing his pardon later. (20)

1539

It is unfortunate that we learn little of the Castle at this period. In ~~1539~~ - apparently for the first time - it briefly acquired a chaplain, when Sir Nicholas temporarily employed William Wedderall, a native of Gilling and a monk of Byland, ejected thence at the dissolution of the monastery. In 1554 a libel suit was brought by one Ann Robinson against Sir Nicholas' servant at Gilling, Thomas Browne. Ann had an unsavoury reputation, and, Sir Nicholas, fearing her influence on the 'xxx or xltie servyng men' whom he kept at the Castle, ordered Browne to clear her out of the premises. William Smales, another serving man, was present in the 'castell garthe' when Browne found her there and ordered her out. She refused to go and Browne

'said by the messe hower I shall make thee goo and so caried hir to the stockes.' Another witness said he had seen Anne in the Castle 'hoppe garthe.' This suggests that - even when we make full allowances for the Tudor habit of gross overcrowding of houses - the medieval Castle and its outbuildings could accomodate at least a hundred persons. Indeed, for an occasion like the 'house-party' of Maych 1569, it would have to accomodate many more. This meant a profusion of furnishings. The 1595 inventory of the Castle notes one detail which gives an indication of Sir Nicholas' taste - 'a bedsteade a teaster of cremysine sattan and velvett ymbroodered with armes and letters of N. and ff.ij yeallowe and Tawny curtaines of sercennett.. 'In his will he desired 'my executors to raise a conveniente tombe, accordinge to my degre, of the valewe of xxx or xl li., to be sett ever my bodey at Gillinge and my first wyffes children to be pictured and graven thereupon.' He gave to his second wife the beddings, hangings and tapestries of two chambers with a service of silver plate. This and all the furniture, fittings and plate of Gilling in 1571 were to remain permanent family heirlooms. Finally the will proceeds lengthily through the ranks of his children and grandchildren to his servants - starting with his gentlemen and yeomen servants still with him and not 'preferred to some farme or otherwaies not having an annuitie of me'. Lastly he makes provision for the foundation of a grammar school in Gilling village. (21)

During his lifetime Sir Nicholas had been improving his estate fast. When he died, he had added to Gilling Park another 1500 acres taken from Yearsley and Grimston common wastes - which gave him an enclosed area of some 3000 acres. Besides this he had bought a manor in Ampleforth and the manor of Coulton, and leased the tithes of Ampleforth, Gilling, Cawton, Coulton, Appleton and Sheriff Hutton. Without abandoning his ancestral manors in the West and East Ridings, he became one of the wealthiest men in the North Riding. When the heralds came round he insisted on quartering the Etton arms with his own; but he far surpassed the Ettons in wealth. (22)

His eldest son, Sir William Fairfax, was master of Gilling from 1571 to 1597. He was knighted in 1560 at Leith in Scotland, while on active service against the Scots and French, was most of his life a Justice, a Councillor of the North and a York High Commissioner, and sat in two Parliaments - for Boroughbridge in 1557, and for Yorkshire in 1597 (though he died soon after this Parliament met.) In religion, like his father, he wavered with a distinct bias towards Catholicism. As a young man he fought for Protestantism in Scotland in 1560, but by 1568 was accounted a Catholic and had met Mary, Queen of Scots. By 1577 he was accounted a safe Protestant and was able to sit on the bench of the York High Commission and approve of the defacing of Mass vestments and crucifixes. Yet in later life he married his only child and heir into a strongly Catholic family and was increasingly at odds with officialdom - indeed, he was elected in 1597 for the county as an Opposition candidate in the teeth of official resistance and threats that he would be deprived of his offices of profit. (23)

There survive from his time documents which give us our first real picture of Gilling Castle. These are the Gilling steward's household accounts from July 1571 to March 1582 and a complete Inventory of Gilling of March 1594/5. In our interpretation of these we are bound to be concerned with the fact that the Castle was remodelled extensively - by tradition, in Sir William's time, and certainly around 1585, the date at which, according to his inscription, Bernard Dinninckhoff finished the coloured windows of the Great Chamber. It seems that building operations were going on for years. In July 1571 the Fairfax family moved from Gilling to Walton and 'the joiners' were at work on the Castle. In February & March 1572 although the family were in residence, 'the workfolks.. Tarbyson and the plasterers'

were at Gilling and loads of stone arrived from Newburgh. There is a gap in the accounts from March 1572 to November 1574, but the workfolks were there still in November-December 1574. Then comes a gap of four years to November 1578. In the winter of 1578-9 and the following spring little work was being done. The summer of 1579 saw the family and steward at Walton and we are told nothing of work at Gilling. When they returned to Gilling in the autumn '3 wrightes' were at work there. There follows a gap in the accounts until March 1580. From then until March 1582 building work at Gilling went on in earnest. In late March 1580 'the painter' with his wife and child and two assistants, 'the cowper and the wheelwright and the plat coat man' were steadily at work. In April 'Martin the joiner' arrived, and in May 'cam Thomas Browne.' By mid-May the painter had an assistant and the joiner one and the 'plat coat man' two, and several wain-loads of timber had arrived from Byland. In July work was going on on 'the inner courte' - mostly 'ledgeing', and 12 women were employed there. Throughout the autumn Harmon and Martin, joiners, were at work. In the spring of 1581 masons arrived, with lime from Helmsley, stone in loads from 'Newbrough wood end' and wood from Coulton. By the summer a dozen men were at work - Thomas Browne, Martin the joiner, Marmaduke Bellerby the labourer, at least four plasterers, two other joiners, wrights, turners, cowpers. Stone was coming in from Yearsley Moor, plaster from Crambe. By September the men were joined by wallers and slaters. It is clear that the building had reached the end of a stage by late January in 1582 when 'Thomas Browne went away and lefte workinge.' (24) All of this corresponds with expert modern architectural opinion that the Tudor rebuilding involved the taking down and alteration of almost all the medieval outer walling of the upper two stories of the main castle. Recent renewal of the roofing has revealed a 12' main roof timber, apparently put in at this period. It clearly came from some existing building, and has faces carved in relief - some bearded and one mitred - running along one side of it. It is quite conceivable that it, together with other timbers and stones, came from the ruins of the monasteries at Byland or Newburgh.

We know a little of the workmen employed. Thomas Browne seems to have been a mason and sculptor. He also made - at some indeterminate date, possibly in the early 1590s - Sir Nicholas' box-tomb with its effigies in Gilling Church, and later made similar tombs for Sir William's brother-in-law, Sir William Bellasis, in Coxwold Church and others in the churches at Knaresborough and Otley. He used for these stone from the Vavasours' quarries at Hazelwood near Tadcaster - Catholic relatives of the Fairfaxes and frequent visitors to Gilling. (25) The plasterers at Gilling seem also to have worked for the Earl of Rutland at Helmsley Castle in the 1580s. There is a close resemblance between the Tudor ceiling of the bay in the room over the Great Chamber and a ceiling in Helmsley Castle. The painter and glazier of the Great Chamber windows, Bernard Dinninckhoff, was a freeman of York and later an architect. (25)

The elaborate genealogy and heraldry of the widows and frieze, though strange and oppressive to us, was commonplace at that period and - like modern status-symbols - expressed the aggressive self-confidence of the rising gentry and their acute anxiety. Their wealth and status was new and precarious and they wanted to make it enduring. Hence windows and frieze impress on the eye one single message - the multiple links of blood which bound the Fairfax family to the medieval nobility a thousand ways. The new lay-out of the Castle and the strictly formal and hierarchical ordering of the household and its meals - and even its sleeping arrangements - emphasised the same point. By 1595 the Castle consisted of the main tower and two courtyards of buildings, of which the inner court opened out by a gatehouse with a porter's lodge to an outer court with its own outer gatehouse.

Both gatehouses had chambers over the gate. The inventory goes round the house in this order - (1) Great Chamber (a living and dining room, with a walnut 'drawinge table of three leaves longe' with twelve cushioned stools and five other chairs; the coverings all green) (2) The Dining Parlour (another three-leaved drawing table with eight stools; furnishings green) (3) The New Lodging (a bedroom, with a fourposter bed hung in black and crimson velvet 'with cuttes of clothe of golde and fringed with cremysine silke and golde', its curtains of 'rede and yeallowe chaungable taffitie'; with a fireplace) (4) The Outer New Lodging (a black and yellow fourposter; the walls covered with hangings.) (5) The Schoolhouse (a fourposter 'of black braunched velvet and a white clothe of Tynsell'; room hung with tapestry.) (6) The New Turret (bed hung in black and crimson satin 'figured with gilte knoppes.') (7) The Pleasaunce (a bed like the last.) (8) The Old Study (a bed in purple and red hangings with blue and yellow curtains; red rugs, cupboards hung in green, cushions of cloth of gold and crimson velvet; 'one counterpointe hanginge on the wall.') (9) Paradise (bed in yellow and black velvet) (10) The Gallery and Lodging (bed in black and white taffeta; rugs in white) (11) The Green Chamber (Bed in green velvet with gold lace) (12) My Master's Chamber (His bed of black velvet with his arms on it in gold embroidery; curtains of black and yellow; rugs in red; cupboards in green; verdure tapestry hangings; cushions in red silk.) (13) The Bishop's Chamber (tapestryed room; bed in blue, gold and yellow; rugs and cupboards in green.) Besides this - presumably round the courts - were the Low Vault, the Kitchen Chamber, Chamber over the Middle Gates, Porter's Lodge, Chamber over the Far Gates, Stable and chamber over, Kilne, Dairy, Oxhouse, Wine cellar, Pantry, Hither and Middle Butteries, Kitchen, Dry and Wet Larders, Pastry, Bakehouse, Bouting House, Brewhouse. Where did the servants sleep? Most of the family's chambers contained one or two low bedsteads for servants. Most of the outhouses also contained several beds each. The library (apparently kept in a chest in the Master's room) was modest. In Latin there were 6 books ('Biblia magna Jeronomi; Cronica cronicarum; Promptuarium Jeronimi; Novum Testamentum; Praedium Rusticum; Meditationes Sancti Augustini. '), in French 14 (Livy, Suetonius, Tacitus, Caesar in translation; 2 books of Amadis de Gaul; Boccaccio; two books of Machiavelli - the Prince and 'Les Discours de Lestat'; 'Le peregrin, La description de tous les Pais-bas, Le guidon des parents, a chronicle.), and in English 18 books (Plutarch, Frossart, Chaucer, Holinshed; a few books on hawking, military discipline, agriculture; a MS key to the heraldry in the Great Chamber; and three recent Protestant works of controversy.)

In spite of the picture of the musical party in the Great Chamber frieze, the inventory contains no musical instruments whatever - and no pictures. There was no chapel. The whole fittings of the house were valued (including gold and silver plate worth some £400) at £1025 in Elizabethan money. The Park contained 388 sheep, 16 draught oxen, 17 cows and one bull - and, oddly enough, horses are not mentioned, nor arms.

The steward's accounts show him coping, in five years, with some 200 guests of the nobility and gentry (some of whom stayed repeatedly) and a much larger number of their servants and of workpeople. The nobility were the Earl of Rutland (who stayed overnight in May 1579 with a considerable train of his gentlemen and yeomen, and dined at Gilling once in March 1580 and again in October), Lord Mounteagle (who stayed overnight in December 1579 and was entertained by 'viiij plaiers'), Lord and Lady Eure and their son (visited in December 1578 and stayed overnight in October 1579), and Lord Willoughby's heir (stayed twice, in 1579-80). During these years Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York dined at Walton and we can presume, from the name of a chamber at Gilling, that some Tudor Archbishop stayed there.

After the nobility, came a string of York officials, lawyers and servants of the Archbishop and the Earl of Huntingdon, Lord President, and the whole administrative staff of the North Riding - its Justices and muster captains. Amongst these the most remarkable were Thomas Morgan and Walter Devereux. Morgan, who had been secretary to Archbishop Young and was an official of the York High Commission and later a virulent Catholic exile faction leader, dined at Gilling on Sunday October 12 1572. Walter Devereux was the younger brother of the famous Earl of Essex. He was the ward of the Earl of Huntingdon, lived with him at Sheriff Hutton, was married off by him to a relation of the Fairfaxes, and eventually died at the wars in Flanders. As a mere boy (called by the Gilling steward 'my Lord President gent. ') he stayed a week at Gilling over Christmas 1578, stayed again in January 1579, stayed a long time over Easter that year, appeared again in October and in March 1581. Sir William Fairfax and his wife were on friendly terms with Huntingdon, and when the young Earl of Essex came to Sheriff Hutton for a prolonged stay in 1582 it is quite possible that he, too, visited Gilling.

August

The visitors to Gilling were of every shade of religious belief. 'Mr Longley', who stayed overnight twice at Gilling in 1575, was pretty certainly Richard Longley of Grimthorpe, East Riding who was martyred in York in 1586 for sheltering priests. When he came to Gilling to be the guest of a member of the York High Commission, he was already a known recusant. In ~~July~~ 1580 'Mr Harrington of the Mownt' - very likely either William Harrington of Mount St John near Thirsk or his father - rode over to Gilling to dine. Nine months later these Harringtons were to shelter Blessed Edmund Campion in their house for a fortnight, and William Harrington the son was to find his vocation which led to his martyrdom. (26) Other known Catholics at Gilling included John Launder, a York lawyer (later, with his wife, gaoled in York and London) who came for a weekend in December 1574, 'Mr Anne' of Frickley (November 1571), Joseph Constable (soon to be one of the most active lay recusant leaders and shelterers of priests in the north) who stayed overnight in May 1581, and Mrs Barton of Whenby, a very frequent visitor to Gilling, who was several times arraigned for her recusancy at this period before a High Commission bench on which sat Sir William Fairfax. Several local parsons dined at Gilling occasionally - and so did three Marian priests, Sir Ralph Barton, Sir Ralph Chapman and 'old Sr Rafe Clark.' In 1571 a mysterious cleric entered by the steward as 'the preist of Thoninge' stayed overnight and supped in a private room apart. Sir William's numerous brothers and nephews, mostly resident near Whitby, haunted Gilling, staying for long periods. One brother, Nicholas, who often kept house while the family was away, was a pardoned rebel of 1569. Several of the others were recusants.

Some guests came from a distance. The Curwens, relations of the Fairfaxes, several times came over from Workington in Cumberland to stay. They were mostly Catholic-minded. From Nottinghamshire came Lady Fairfaxes relations - Harringtons, Byrons, Grevvilles. From Suffolk came the Cornwallises in 1572.

The consumption of food by this host was considerable. The annual expenditure on this alone varied between £335 and over £440. In the year March 1580 to March 1581 there were consumed 69 quarters of wheat (bread was made in the Castle bakehouse), 135 quarters of malt (beer was brewed there also in a 'greate Copper' worth £40), 20 oxen, 30 cows, 237 sheep, 22 calves, 20 pigs, 653 couple of rabbits, of fish 52 lings, 171 'kelinges', 6 mazes of red herrings, 3 barrels of white herrings (the fish was bought in Helmsley) and over £17 worth of spices. The wheat came mostly from Sheriff Hutton. The steward, John Woodward, had under him six storemen - one in the Garner (grain and malt), one in the pantry (a cook producing manchet and household bread), one in the Pastry (grinding the corn into flour), one in the Larder (meat - mostly bought, though the Park keepers produced venison and rabbits and sheep, and

friends sent game.) Another ran the 'Sallsey' - salt store, another the Spicery. Spices were expensive - rice 6d. a pound, almonds 1/-, cinnamon 4d, mace 12/-, pepper 2/9. They also stored cloves, cinnamon, ginger, sugar, nutmegs, aniseed, liquorice, 'turnesall', prunes, great raisins, currants, saffron, 'graynes and sawnders.' Although England was officially Protestant and fasting and abstinence were regarded as Popish works contrary to Justification by Faith alone, Elizabethan Statutes protected the fishing industry by making three days in each week fish days - Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays - as well as the whole of Lent, Sundays included. This fact defeats any effort to discover from the accounts and their menus traces of Catholicism, since the statutory diet coincided pretty closely with that of Catholic law and custom. Here, at least, was one factor which made it easier for an Elizabethan to practice as a Catholic. (27)

The menu for Christmas Day 1572 was -

breakfast - brawn and mustard

dinner - at the high table : brawn and mustard; frumenty; boiled mallards; boiled knuckles of veal; numble pies; peascods, roast beef; roast veal; roast swan; roast turkey; roast pork; cold grain pie; roast capon; baked venison - followed by 'gillye', roast rabbit, roast mallard, roast teals, roast partridge, cold turkey pie, roast woodcocks and a tart.

- meals of the same kind were also served as rewards, the board's end, the sideboard and in the Hall, where the servants had gingerbread in addition.

supper - at all the five tables, consisted of boiled meat, sliced beef, roast mutton, roast veal, cold grain pie, roast capons, baked venison, 'dulcetts', 'gillye', roast rabbits, roast mallards, roast teals, roast pheasant, cold turkey pie, roast partridge and a tarte.

This gargantuan eating always continued throughout the twelve days of Christmas and, on fixed days, the tenants of all the estates were entertained. There is no mention of waits or players at Christmas, but at various times during the years of the account Gilling entertained the Earl of Worcester's company of actors, Lord Mounteagless actors, Lord Berkeley's two acrobats and Sir Thomas Stanhope's musicians. (28)

The next owner of the Castle was Sir William's only child, Sir Thomas Fairfax (1576-1636) He also, like his father and grandfather, was a wealthy man, torn between leanings towards Catholicism and the fruits of high office. He also wavered; in early life he was sent to Caius College, Cambridge - then a centre of Papist influences - and married a strongly Catholic wife. He allowed his sons to be brought up as Catholics and even to be sent abroad to school. But then the pressure of his wealth led him to swing decisively into line with officialdom, to become Vice-President of the Council of the North, a governmental candidate for the York election of 1620, and, in 1628 to buy (some said for £900, others £1300) an Irish Viscounty. This gave him no seat in the English House of Lords, but the patent set him in order of precedence before English barons. In old age he married a very Protestant second wife, lived for preference with her relatives at Howsham Hall, and married off his Protestant daughters to the sons of the principal York officials. His heir was a strong Catholic and married to a Howard of Naworth. Lord Fairfax insisted that the young couple should live obscurely in hired houses in Westmoreland. In his will he did his best to prevent the estate suffering from his son's recusancy, by making him only the life-tenant, and by trying to force him (with the help of Strafford) to have his own heir brought up as a Protestant. (29)

II.

At this period Gilling was one of the great houses in the county. In the 1530s Leland, the antiquary, in his travels through the county, had come close to Gilling but had never thought to visit it or even mention it. But the maps of the county which appear in such ~~xxx~~ profusion from the 1590s invariably mark the Castle as a place of importance and usually sketch in the park. Camden, in his 'Britannia', mentions the Castle and the Fairfax family's claim to Saxon descent. (30)

We get a few glimpses of life at Gilling. Lord Fairfax was on friendly terms with Strafford and Lord Baltimore and related several times closely by marriage to the York millionaire, Sir Arthur Ingram. Fairfax and his set in Yorkshire were not adherents of the Duke of Buckingham, and full MS reports of the Commons attacks on the Duke were regularly posted to Gilling. Fairfax seems to have divided his time equally between Gilling and Walton. By 1624, when both houses were inventoried, it seems that Gilling retained almost all the fittings and furniture of 1595, but Walton - a smaller and more comfortable house, much nearer York society - contained almost all the new fittings the family possessed and all their favourite things. Lord Fairfax's chamber at Walton held 'five pictures, your owne cabinet and bookes', my Lady's Closet had a dozen pictures and her books. The Walton wardrobe held a base violin and 'the singeing bookes', the Great Chamber 'a paire of virginalls.' the ghostly lute Whereas the silver at Gilling was all heirlooms, the Walton plate was modern and included 'a gilte bowle with a cover woone at Bellman lawne' - one of the very few references after 1569 to the Fairfax's interest in horseracing. (31) Lord Fairfax's will gives us his wardrobe - 'my blacke plushe sute and cloake and my red scarlett coat with golde lace and buttons and twoe paire of new silke stockinges with garters and roses (left to his heir)..my new blacke sattan sute and coake lyned with Plush..my white sute and cloake lyned with Carronacion plush..my Browne cloath sute with golde pointes and the Cloake..my two Cholmley sutes and Coates the one greene the other Ash Collor..' (32)

The 2nd Viscount, Thomas Fairfax, master of Gilling from 1636 to 1641 was a strong Catholic, educated in France and Flanders, and married into the immense Howard clan. Through his Catholic mother and his wife, his children were linked to a tribe of Howards, Dormers, Carylls, Brudenells. Dininckhoff's glass pedigree had twice been added to by the 1st Viscount. Had the 2nd Viscount wished, he could now have easily filled in the rest of the windows. He contented himself with hanging at Gilling a series of Howard portraits. (33) It is indeed a fact that, in part due to the magic of the peerage, and, more still to the Howard marriage, the Fairfaxes ceased for the rest of the 17th century to be merely Yorkshire potentates and entered into a far wider stream of influences and opportunities.

Unfortunately there are almost no family papers for this pre-Civil Wars period. The 2nd Viscount reverted to Gilling as a home - perhaps because it lay near to Howard relations and properties at Malton, Brafferton and Hinderkelf. Messages, gifts - and, no doubt, Howards, passed backwards and forwards between Gilling and Naworth. Fairfax successfully withstood Strafford and Laud and Cottington in defence of the religion of his heir. In 1639 the Earl of Rutland, accompanied by Lord Pawlett and Sir Ralph Hopton (later the famous West country Royalist general) visited Lord Fairfax at Gilling on their way to the Bishops' War. (34) In September 1640 Fairfax himself received a royal commission to raise and lead a troop of horse from amongst the Gilling tenantry under Colonel Arthur Aston. But there is no sign that we was able to obey and he died in September 1641.

William Fairfax, 3rd Viscount (1630-48) was a royal ward. His widowed mother Alethea, retired after her husband's death to Walton and seems to have lived there the rest of her long life. Through the efforts of Lord Saye and Sele, Master of the Court of Wards and Lord Fairfax of Denton, the boy was removed from his mother just

before the first Civil War broke out and hurried down to Felsted School in Essex, to be educated by the Puritan master there. He lived in the master's own house, along with several other aristocratic Catholic wards captured during the wars. In 1645 he left school, married the daughter of an Ipswich Protestant and died young in 1648 leaving two small children, of whom the son, the 4th Viscount, died in infancy in London. Meanwhile Gilling Castle stood empty throughout the first Civil War, cared for by Thomas Ibson of Alne. In the autumn of 1644 Sir William Fairfax (of the Denton family, distant cousins) commanded a Parliamentary force which besieged Helmsley Castle. Ibson reported that at this time the castle was 'never without soldiers upon free billet' who killed and ate all the sheep in the Park. In March 1645 Colonel John Atkins, the Royalist commander of Naworth Castle and a family servant of the Howards, surrendered Naworth and retired under a flag of truce to stay at Gilling. He wrote to General Lord Fairfax from there to ask for further safe-conduct. By May 1645 Ibson reported that the Gilling estate and farms had not recovered from the billeting, and that 'the leads of Gilling castle are quite decayed, so that it raineth into the house in above fortie places which rotteth the timber...' (35)

Charles Fairfax, 5th Viscount (1631-1711), a Catholic, succeeded his infant nephew in 1648. Since his mother had Walton as her dower house, he came to live at desolate Gilling. He was in a peculiar position. Ever since his brother's wardship, the family had been under the wing of Thomas Fairfax, Lord Fairfax of Cameron, the Commander-in-chief of the New Model Army. The general helped on a Catholic marriage of one of the 5th Viscount's sisters. He attempted to intervene with the Commonwealth and Protectorate governments to have the wardship debts cancelled. He was responsible for the visit to the Gilling muniment room on December 19th 1652 of Roger Dodsworth, the noted genealogist, who was patronised by him and set to produce an accurate pedigree of the entire Fairfax family. (36)

Viscount Fairfax was only once molested by the Protectorate authorities. At Christmas 1655 'a comedy or stage play' was acted in the Castle and he was fined 5/- by the Justices. In the spring of 1660, as Monck marched south from Scotland, Royalists in Yorkshire combined to help him. A secret meeting of Royalist gentry was held at Gilling.