

BIOGRAPHY OF THE RIGHT  
HONOURABLE SIR ANTHONY  
DENNY, P.C., M.P. ;

CHIEF GENTLEMAN OF THE PRIVY CHAMBER, GROOM  
OF THE STOLE, etc., etc. ; EXECUTOR OF KING  
HENRY VIII, GUARDIAN OF KING EDWARD VI ;  
150<sup>0</sup>—15<sup>49</sup>/<sub>50</sub>.

SIR ANTHONY DENNY belonged to a race of great antiquity in East Anglia and the neighbouring counties. The family of Denny is said to be of Norman origin. "The first of this antient family" (we are told) "came into England with the Conqueror from Normandy, in which kingdom they flourished, and of whom there were several persons of great note." Sir William Denny, Lord Justice (i.e. Viceroy) of Ireland, under Henry III, died in 1261. In 1278 Hugh Deny was Baron of Sandwich, one of the Cinque Ports. Sir William de Denne, or Denny, one of the Justices for Cambridge, Essex, Hunts, Norfolk, etc., was appointed one of the Plenipotentiaries despatched by Edward I to the Court of Rome, with reference to the re-establishment of peace with France in 1302. Henry Denny was of Colchester, Essex, *circa* 1325. Sir Robert Denny was Knight of the Shire of Cambridge, 1391-3. One of the gallant English Esquires who accompanied Henry V on his victorious campaigns in France was John Denny, who, after having (it is believed) fought at Agincourt, was slain, with Thomas, his second son, about 1420. They were buried amidst the Kings of France in the Cathedral of St. Denis, "their interment" (says Fuller) "in so noble a place speaking their worthy performances." Here their tombs, with their coats of arms upon them, were seen by Sir Matthew Carew more than 130 years after.

Henry Denny, eldest son of John, was father of William Denny, Esq., of Cheshunt, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1480, who, by Agnes his wife, had a son Sir Edmond Denny, of Cheshunt, King's Remembrancer to Henry VII, and a Baron of the Exchequer, who was father of Sir Anthony.

Baron Denny married first Margaret, daughter of Ralph Leigh, Esq., M.P., of Stockwell, Surrey, and sister-in-law to Queen

Catherine Howard's mother. His second wife, Sir Anthony's mother, was Mary, eldest daughter and co-heir of Robert Troutbeck, Esq., of Trafford, Cheshire, who was nephew to Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby, and Margaret, his Countess, mother of King Henry VII, and was also great-grandson of Elizabeth, Duchess of Norfolk, whose mother and father were great-grandchildren, the one of King Edward I, and the other of his brother Edmond Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster. Mary Troutbeck, Lady Denny, was a cousin of two Queens of Henry VIII, namely, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.

Of Sir Anthony Denny's brothers and sisters the following may be noticed here: Sir Thomas Denny, of Cheshunt, who was in much favour with Henry VIII, from whom he received amongst other gifts the Manors of St. Andrew le Mott, Cheshunt, upon the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, to whom they belonged. His will directs that he be buried in Cheshunt Church, and that his arms and the following epitaph be placed upon his tomb:—<sup>1</sup>

“ As I am so shall ye be  
 Nowe praye for me of yr Charitie  
 With a Paternoster and an Ave Mary  
 For the rest of the soul of Thomas Denny,

which died the X day of May MDXXVII, and for the souls of Edmond Denny and Mary his wife, and William Denny and Agnes his wife.”

His wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Manoux, remarried after his death with the Right Hon. Robert Dacres, of Cheshunt, Master of the Requests, Privy Councillor, etc., etc. Joice, the fourth daughter of Sir Edmond Denny, married, first, William Walsingham, by whom she was mother of the celebrated Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth, of Barbara Walsingham, great-great-grandmother of Sidney, Earl of Godolphin, the statesman, and of Mary Walsingham, wife of Sir Walter Mildmay, the founder of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Joice Denny married secondly Sir John Cary, of Thremhall Priory, cousin of Henry VII. Mary Denny, sixth daughter, married the Right Hon. Sir John Gates, K.B., Vice-Chamberlain and Captain of the Guard to Edward VI, Chancellor of the Duchy, one of the Privy Council, etc., who was beheaded in 1553 for supporting the claim of Lady Jane Grey to the throne of England. Martha, youngest daughter of Sir Edmond Denny, married Sir Wymond Carew, K.B., from whom the Pole-Carews of Antony are descended.

<sup>1</sup> See Nichols, “*Testamenta Vetusta*,” ii, 628; and Druitt's “*Costume and Brasses*,” 11.

Sir Anthony, fourth (but second surviving) son of Baron Sir Edmond Denny, was born at the family seat at Cheshunt on January 16th, 1500-1. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London (founded by Dean Colet in 1509, and presided over by that famous scholar and grammarian William Lilly), where he had as his schoolfellow John Leland, the celebrated antiquary, who, in his "Encomia," addresses him in laudatory terms.

His education was completed at St. John's College, Cambridge, whence he came forth, not only a scholar himself, but a lover of scholars also, or rather, as one of the quaint biographers calls him, a "Horace somewhat, but more a Mæcenas."

He appears to have entered what would now be called the diplomatic service, under Sir Francis Bryan, about the time that statesman attended King Henry VIII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in 1520, and probably accompanied him on his various subsequent missions on the Continent. Bryan (who was also Anne Boleyn's cousin) was despatched by Henry to Rome in 1528 to treat with the Pope concerning the divorce from Katharine of Aragon. In 1531 Bryan was sent as an Ambassador to France, and in this year King Henry writes to Bryan acknowledging letters of June 16th brought from the latter by Anthony Denny.

However, regarding the earlier part of Denny's life we have little information. Leland in his "Encomia" writes as follows:—

" Tum desiderio captus peregrina videndi,  
 Acceleras votum, duxque Briennus erat,  
 Cognitiosque tibi linguarum hinc floruit alta,  
 Perplacuitque oculis Gallica terra tuis,  
 Senserat hoc regum qui prudentissimus unus,  
 Te famulum fautor constituitque suum.  
 Quanto apud illum sit tua nunc vel gratia flagrans  
 Testatur resonis aula canora modis."<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere, it is stated that "his merit having become known, he was called to the Court by King Henry." It may have been that the connection between his mother's family and the royal house in the first instance stood in his favour. The fact remains that he won, to an extraordinary degree, the confidence and favour of his sovereign, and that he alone, with the one exception of

<sup>1</sup> "Then taken with a desire to see foreign countries, thou hastenest to fulfil thy vow, and Brien was thy leader; and hence flourished for thee thy deep knowledge of tongues, and the land of Gaul greatly pleased thine eyes. This that most prudent of kings observed, and, as thy Patron, took thee into his service. His Court, tunelessly resounding with thy praises, testifies how great is thy favour now with him."

Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, has had his name handed down by history as "the friend of Henry VIII."

"We discover that Henry VIII," says Lodge, "was not incapable of firm and even tender friendships. His attachments of this kind were few but lasting, and their most remarkable objects were Brandon and Denny, the servants and companions of his younger days, from whom his affection seems never to have swerved. Denny became the King's constant and familiar companion in all his progresses, and his magnificent excursions to the Continent; combated with him in the jousts, and relieved the conversation of his private table by mingling with its gaieties the sober charms of science."

Amongst the many offices he occupied at Court were those of King's Remembrancer, Gentleman of the Bed Chamber, Yeoman of the Royal Wardrobe, Groom of the Privy Chamber, and Groom of the Stole.

In 1535 John Gostwyk, writing to Cromwell on August 13th, informs the latter that he has "delivered the Queen's letter to Mr. Denny, although he was in London on the Queen's business."

Amongst the 'Remembrances' of this year is one "To receive of Antony Denny cloth of gold and cloth of silver to be sent to the Scotch Queen." In a list of "debts owing to the Queen" (Anne Boleyn), in 1536, we find "gold and silver plate, a great gold chain, many great strange pieces of gold and suffrance in the keeping of Ant. Deny at Westminster." In January, 1536, Anthony Denny was appointed to be keeper of the new park near Westminster, etc., of the playhouses called "lez Tenys playes, bowlynge aleyes, Cocke place and Fesaunte courts, of York Place, Westminster, etc.," with various other appointments. In the June following he had a grant of "tenements, etc., in the palace of Westminster, the houses and mansions called Paradyse and Hell in Westminster Hall and the house or mansion called Purgatorye." Denny is mentioned in a letter written in July, 1537, by the Princess Elizabeth to Queen Jane Seymour. The Princess was at this time only in her 4th year, and the letter is a proof of the extraordinary precocity of the future Queen. The following is an extract from it:—

"Mr. Denny, and my lady with humble thanks prayeth most entirely for your grace, praying the Almighty God to send you a most lucky deliverance [of the child, afterwards Edward VI] . . . Writ with very little leisure, this last day of July,

Your humble daughter,  
ELIZABETH."

In September, 1537, Denny was appointed Keeper of the Royal Household in the Palace of Westminster. In a royal memorandum of 1538 his name occurs amongst those of the Privy Chamber

“to be had at this time in the King’s most benign remembrance.” A grant was made in February, 1538, of the site, etc., of the dissolved Priory of St. Mary, near Hertford, and the Manors of Hertford Priory, etc., etc., to Anthony Denny, and Joan Champernowne, “whom the said Anthony is going to marry.” The marriage took place between this date and the following June, for amongst the Privy Purse expenses of the latter month occurs, “Item, given to *Mistress Denny’s* servant for bringing sturgeons 2/-.” Joan Champernowne was the daughter of Sir Philip Champernowne, of Modbury Manor, Devonshire. Her sister, Catherine, was mother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and, by a second marriage, of Sir Walter Raleigh. Denny’s wife is described by Fuller as “a lady of great beauty and parts, a favourer of the Reformed religion when the times were most dangerous.” The description of her great beauty is fully borne out by a portrait of her still existing.

Denny’s name and that of his wife occur in the list of those who formed the party for the reception of Anne of Cleves in 1539. On September 21st, 1539, Denny writes to Cromwell that “the King is quiet and merry.” In 1540 came on the case for the divorce of Queen Anne. Anthony Denny was called as a witness for the King. Henry in his declaration says that “the lord of Essex, my physicians, the Lord Privy seal, Hennage and *Denny* can, and I doubt not will, testify according to the truth; which is that I never for love to the woman consented to marry.” Denny deposed

“that he continually praised the Queen to the King, who did not approve such praises . . . but afterwards upon continual praisings the King told him, as a confidential servant, that he could not induce himself to have affection for her . . . In reply he lamented the state of princes to be far worse than that of poor men who could choose for themselves.”

The notorious Bonner, writing to the Bishop of Westminster, February 14th, 1542, begs that “salutations be made especially to Mr. Hennage, Mr. *Denny*, Mr. Buttes, and Mr. Dr. Chamber.”

Amongst other appointments conferred this year upon Denny were those of Keeper of the royal Mansion of Hatfield, of the Waters of Waltham Holy Cross, and of “the great garden ‘called Covent Gardeyn.’” That he maintained considerable state and a large retinue is shown by his having a licence granted him, August, 1542,

“to retain in his service (besides his household servants to whom he gives meat, drink, livery or wages, and besides such as are of the King’s livery or fee) twenty gentlemen or yeomen.”

In the Print Room of the British Museum is a beautiful design by Holbein for an astrological clock, which Denny intended as a new year's gift to King Henry in 1544. On the summit is a clock driven by wheelwork, below which are fore and afternoon dials showing time by shadows, and beneath is a clepsydra indicating by means of a fluid the quarters of an hour. The drawing, which at one time belonged to Horace Walpole, bears the following inscription: "Strena facta pro Anthony deny Camerario regis quod initio novi anni 1544 regi dedit."<sup>1</sup> Denny accompanied King Henry upon his expedition to France in 1544, and fought at the siege and capture of Boulogne. He was knighted by the King "after the conquest of the Towne, on the morrowe after Mickelmasse day the last of September." His arms were recorded upon this occasion as follows:—Quarterly, 1 and 4, Gules a saltire argent between (12) crosses patée or. 2, Or, a fess dancettee gules, in chief three martlets sable. 3, Azure, three trouts fretted in triangle argent, a mullet pierced or for difference (Troutbeck). Crest—an arm erect habited azure, charged with a quatrefoil argent, holding in the hand proper a garb (bunch of wheat) or.

About this period and at different other times during Sir Anthony Denny's lifetime, his house at Cheshunt was the residence of the Princess (afterwards Queen) Elizabeth, whose mother, Queen Anne Boleyn, was a cousin of Sir Anthony's mother. Most of Elizabeth's time appears to have been spent between Enfield, Cheshunt, and the royal mansion of Hatfield, of which Sir Anthony was Keeper, and he had much to do with her early life and childhood. The wife of Lady Denny's brother, John Champenowne, was governess of the Princess, whose excellent judgment was attributed by Roger Ascham to this lady's good counsel.

At the dissolution of the monasteries, and at various subsequent periods, Denny received from the King immense gifts of lands. He had large grants in the counties of Norfolk, Middlesex, Buckinghamshire, etc. The Abbey of Waltham with a great amount of the surrounding land was granted him on a thirty-one years' lease, the reversion of which being purchased after his death by his widow, the mansion of the Abbots of Waltham subsequently became the chief seat of the Denny family.<sup>2</sup> Sir Anthony appears to have saved from destruction portion of the great library of the Abbey of Waltham, including the Chartulary or Ledger Book of

<sup>1</sup> See *Archæologia*, vol. xxxiii, 15, and vol. xxxix, 11.

<sup>2</sup> There is an engraving of Waltham Abbey Mansion (which was pulled down in 1770) in Farmer's *History of Waltham Abbey*, 1735. Some of the ancient carved oak panelling from it is now in the South Kensington Museum.

Robert Fuller, the last Lord Abbot of Waltham. This interesting manuscript, after the death of Sir Anthony's great-great-grandson James, Earl of Carlisle, second Lord Denny de Waltham, was removed from Waltham, and eventually found its way to the British Museum, where it is now known as "Harleian MS. 3739." Sir Anthony set up at Waltham a powder-mill to supply the King with gunpowder, this being the origin of the staple industry of that town, the Royal Gunpowder Factories. In Hertfordshire Denny was granted the Priory of St. Mary, Cheshunt, with all lands in Herts, Essex, and elsewhere, thereunto belonging; the Priory of St. Mary, near Hertford, and the Manors of Hertford Priory; Brantingsham (Cheshunt) Park; North Mimms Vicarage, with right of presentation; the Manors of Totteridge, Watford, Almshoe, Elstree, Parkbury, Pirton, Little Bibbsworth, Great Amwell; and nearly all the demesnes of St. Albans Abbey, including the manors and lands of eleven parishes. To these enormous gifts, amounting at the least to 20,000 acres in Essex and Herts alone, the King added in 1544 the great wardship of Margaret, only daughter and heir of Thomas, Lord Audley of Walden, K.G., Lord Chancellor of England, "the intermixture of whose estates with his own," says Lodge, "contributed to raise his [Denny's] influence in Essex and Hertfordshire into a sort of dominion." He was also made guardian of several other rich wards, who are specified in his will, which has been described as "a very remarkable and characteristic document," and "highly interesting both historically and socially."

It would appear that these royal favours were heaped upon Sir Anthony Denny unsought. It is evident that he never made use of Henry's favour to obtain for himself personal distinctions or the coveted offices of State. That he could have done so had he been so disposed there can be little doubt. His great influence with the King was, however, used, or sought, on behalf of many different persons and for many varying objects. "How easy he made the way for others to obtain their desires," exclaims Sir John Cheke, "and opened a ready access to many!" There are records of grants and appointments conferred upon various persons "at the suit" of Anthony Denny. Sir Thomas Elyot, in his Dictionary published in 1538, expresses his gratitude to the King for the interest which, owing to Sir Anthony Denny's influence, he had displayed in his work. The Dennys' interest was sought by Lady Lisle<sup>1</sup> in 1539 to procure a place for a young lady (probably

<sup>1</sup> Daughter and co-heir of Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, natural son of King Edward IV, and wife of John Basset, Esq., of Heanton, Devon. The Bassets were related to Joan Denny.

her daughter) in the Princess Elizabeth's household. Lady Lisle's messenger, John Husee, is informed by Mistress Denny that the King had said that the Princess had too much youth about her, and that none but "ancient and sad persons" would be appointed. Yet she offered "to move Mr. Denny to speak to the King."

There is a letter dated August 20th, 1540, from Wymond Carew to his brother-in-law "John Gate of the Robes," wherein Carew begs Gates to get "my brother Denny to despatch me hence, for the Lady Anne of Cleveland (Anne of Cleves) is bent to do me displeasure." In a subsequent letter to Gates, Carew says—

"Please have my brother Denny in remembrance to my lord of Canterbury [Cranmer] for my son, as also to know whether he will be so good a brother to me as to appoint that Sir Giles Stranwiche may declare his suit to the King in person."

In 1540 Sir Anthony's influence with the King was successfully exerted in response to a petition made to him by the inhabitants of Waltham to procure the restoration to them of their ancient church bells.

Sir William Paget, writing to the Earl of Hertford in April, 1543, says that his Lordship "will do well to salute now and then with a word or two in a letter my Lord of Suffolk, My Lord Wriothlesley, and others, not forgetting *Mr. Denye*."

Denny appears to have been amongst the first to embrace the reformed faith, and consequently we find him continually endeavouring to further its interests and protect its adherents, a course attended in those times with difficulty and danger. He obtained the King's pardon and favour for one Richard Turner, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, "a right godly and learned man," who, being "a free and bold preacher against popish errors," had been convened before the Privy Council and sentenced to be whipped out of the county. Archbishop Cranmer and Denny were closely associated not only as councillors of the King, but as friends and as patrons of the Reformation. They very probably first became acquainted either at Cambridge or at the house of Denny's neighbours, the Cressys at Waltham. The Cressys were related to Cranmer, and it was at their house that he made his famous proposal that the question of the King's divorce from Katharine of Aragon should be submitted to the decision of the Universities.

In 1543 what has been called "the Plot of the Prebends" was formed against Archbishop Cranmer, by certain of his rebellious clergy instigated by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. They sought to have a commission appointed to examine into "all abuses of religion." "It would have gone ill with Cranmer and the English



Reformation if that commission, with Gardiner at its head, had been let loose in Kent." Henry, however, moved no doubt by other influences, confounded the plotters by appointing Cranmer himself as commissioner. The Archbishop, however, was a poor inquisitor, and the Commission made no progress. "Then through the intervention of Sir William Butts, the King's favourite Physician, and *Sir Anthony Denny*, his favourite gentleman of the Chamber, a more expert investigator was appointed in the person of Sir Thomas Leigh," whose commission ended in a manner most discomfiting to the Archbishop's enemies. About two years later Denny was concerned in one of the most critical and perhaps most well-known incidents in Cranmer's career. The Privy Council, many of the members of which hated the Archbishop and sought his downfall, had desired leave of the King to examine Cranmer and commit him to the Tower. Henry, so far as words went, complied with their request. At midnight Sir Anthony Denny came secretly to Lambeth to the Archbishop desiring him to come to the Court. Readers of Shakespeare will be familiar with the great dramatist's description in "Henry VIII," Act V, of the subsequent occurrences:—

"SCENE I. *London. A Gallery in the Palace.*

*Enter SIR ANTHONY DENNY.*

*King Henry.* Well, sir, what follows?

*Denny.* Sir, I have brought my lord the archbishop,  
As you commanded me.

*King Henry.* Ha! Canterbury?

*Denny.* Ay, my good lord.

*King Henry.* 'Tis true: where is he, Denny?

*Denny.* He attends your highness' pleasure.

*King Henry.* Bring him to us.

*(Exit DENNY.)*

*Re-enter DENNY, with CRANMER."*

The King receives the Archbishop with favour, and gives him his signet, which he might show the Council if they committed him, in token that the King would have the matter heard before himself.

Shakespeare describes how Cranmer next day, after having been kept waiting amongst the servants outside the Council door, makes use of the King's signet, and then Henry enters in anger to defend the Archbishop in person.

Sir Anthony Denny was the early friend and patron of another famous Archbishop of Canterbury—Matthew Parker, who became Primate in the reign of Elizabeth. Parker was Dean of Stoke College when, in 1545, it came under an Act of Parliament, which

granted all colleges, hospitals, etc., to the King. "This," says Strype, "caused the Dean to bestir himself, if it were possible to prevent the dissolution," and he accordingly "made use of the interest of Sir Anthony Denny, a learned and worthy Knight." Denny applied to the King on behalf of Parker, and induced him to permit the College still to stand. However, in the first year of Edward VI the College of Stoke was dissolved. When Parker saw that there was no remedy, he applied himself to his friend Sir Anthony Denny to use his interest with the Commissioners to obtain for him some compensation for the loss of his College. Sir Anthony accordingly wrote to the Commissioners as follows:—

"Besides most hartly commendations; For that heretofore I have been a Sutor to the King, our late Sovereign Lord deceased, on behalf of Mr. Parker, Dean of Stoke, whose honest and vertuous using of that College much also moved the same late King, in such wise as his Majesty clearly resolved to permit the same to remain undissolved; I am at present stirred to require you to be favourable towards him . . . and that he be esteemed and accordingly rewarded to his deserts. That is, in having an honest and convenient Pension, which although peradventure it shall seem the greater, yet may the King's Majesty be soon thereof discharged by redemption of some other Spiritual Promotion, and the Man nevertheless worthily advanced. This much I have thought good to write in his Commendation and Favour, whose Worthiness I much esteem and tender. Trusting thereby, both for his deserts' sake and this my simple contemplation, ye will rather have respect towards him, as the Cause and Person require; and my Thankfullness for the same may deservedly ensue. Fare ye right hartly, from my House at Chesthunt the last of February, 1547,

Your own assured

ANT. DENNY."

"And no question," says Strype, "Sir Anthony Denny's request had favourable answer, and that a good Pension was settled on the Dean, until the said Pension was redeemed, according to Denny's phrase, with the dignity of the Deanery of Lincoln, afterwards conferred on him."

Like her husband, Joan, Lady Denny, was (to use Fuller's words) "a favourer of the Reformed religion when the times were most dangerous." With her sister, Catherine Raleigh, she seems to have been amongst the first who ventured to protect the persecuted reformers in Devonshire. She was a Lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine Parr, who with several ladies of her Court took a lively interest in the Reforming movement. Their sympathies aroused the bitter hostility of Gardiner and the reactionary party. The Court ladies suspected of favouring the Reformation were: Katherine, Baroness Willoughby d'Eresby, second wife of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; Anne, daughter of Sir Philip Calthorp, and wife of Henry Radeliff, second Earl of Sussex; Anne Stanhope, Countess of Hertford; *Joan Lady Denny*; Lady Fitzwilliam, widow of Sir William Fitzwilliam; and Anne Askew, daughter of Sir

William Askew of Kelsey, in Lincolnshire, and wife of one Kyme. Anne Askew was a connection of Sir Gawen Carew, Lady Denny's uncle.

“Chroniclers have wondered” (says Dr. Drake, in his History of Kent) “how Anne Askew obtained access to Queen Catherine Parr, the widowed Duchess of Suffolk, Lady Denny, and other court ladies. It was very simple. Henry VIII esteemed his brother-in-law Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and Sir Anthony Denny above all others, and Sir Gawen Carew was the brother-in-law of Charles Brandon and the uncle of Lady Denny, and was admitted within the privacy of the royal family circle.”

Gardiner's party procured from the King enactments stringently enforcing acceptance of the “Six Articles,” and prohibiting the possession of the Bible and “heretical books.” A search which was made in the Queen's apartments resulted in the discovery of several prohibited books, the gift of Anne Askew to Catherine. It was also stated that Anne had given the Queen other such books in the presence of Lady Jane Grey, Lady Tyrwhitt, and Lady Herbert. In hope of extorting evidence from her which would implicate her royal mistress and others, Anne Askew was arrested and thrown into prison. She was afterwards removed to the Tower, where she was cruelly tortured, preserving to the last an unshaken fortitude, and constantly refusing to betray her friends. From her account of her trial, which is given at length by Foxe, the following is an extract:—

“Then, said the Bishop [Bonner], I might thank other and not myself for the favour I found at his hand, for he considered, he said, that I had good friends, and also that I came of a worshipful stock. Then answered one Christopher, a servant to *Master Denny*, ‘Rather ought ye, my Lord, to have done it, in such case, for God's sake than for man's.’ . . . Master Rich sent me to the Tower, where I remained until three of the clock. Then came Rich and one of the Council charging me upon my obedience to show them, if I knew any man or woman of my sect. My answer was that I knew none. Then they asked me of my Lady of Suffolk, my Lady of Sussex, my Lady of Hertford, my *Lady Denny*, my Lady Fitzwilliams. I said that if I should pronounce anything against them I were not able to prove it . . . Then commanded me they to show how I had been maintained in the counter, and who willed me to stick to my opinion . . . Then they said that there were divers Ladies that had sent me money. I answered there was a man in a blue coat which delivered me ten shillings, and said my Lady of Hertford sent it to me; and another, in a *violet coat*<sup>1</sup> did give me eight shillings, and said my *Lady Denny* sent it me. Whether it were true or not I cannot tell, for I am not sure who sent it me, but as the men did say. Then they said there were of the Council that did maintain me, but I said no. Then they did put me on the rack, because I confessed no ladies or gentlemen to be of my opinion, and therein they kept me a long time, and because I lay still and did not cry, my Lord Chancellor (Wriothesley) and Master Rich took pains to rack me with their own hands till I was nigh dead.”

<sup>1</sup> Denny livery.

Fuller, speaking of Lady Denny, says "she sent eight shillings by her man in a violet coat to Anne Aschough, when she was imprisoned in the Compter; a small sum, yet a great gift, so hazardous it was to help any in her condition."

"It is highly honourable to the family of Denny," says another writer, "that their distinguished and pious ancestor Lady Denny persevered in affording relief to, and constantly visited, this martyred female and Saint, during the protracted period of her imprisonment and sufferings, notwithstanding the fearful danger and risk to which her humanity and Christian fortitude and feelings exposed her."

Anne Askew was burned at the stake on July 16th, 1546.

On August 31st, 1546, Sir Anthony Denny, his brother-in-law Gates, and another were commissioned to perform the responsible duty of signing all public documents in the King's name, Henry being incapacitated by illness. In the following January it became evident that the King would not recover. On the 27th of the month many signs of his approaching end appeared. His physicians and courtiers dared not warn him of his condition, for to "foretell the King's decease" had been made treason by Act of Parliament, and Henry, naturally of a violent temper, had been rendered absolutely ferocious by his sufferings. At length, as the long Thursday evening wore on, Sir Anthony Denny (who was specially attendant upon him), "boldly coming to the King, had the courage and charity" to warn him "what case he was in, in man's judgment not like to live," and exhorted him that "since human aid was now vain, it was meet for him to review his past life and seek betime for God's grace and mercy through Christ." The King, feeling his weakness growing upon him, "thanked Sir Anthony Denny heartily," and "disposed himself more quietly to hearken to the words of his exhortation, and to consider his life past, which, although he much accused, yet, said he, 'is the mercy of Christ able to pardon me all my sins, though they were greater than they be.'" Then Sir Anthony, "being glad to hear him thus speak, moved him to call in the aid of a pious minister to confer withal and to open his mind unto." The King replied that if he had anyone it should be Cranmer. After he had slept a little, feeling himself growing weaker, he told Sir Anthony Denny to send for Cranmer, who was at Croydon. The Archbishop arrived about midnight.

"The King was void of speech when he came, though not of sense and apprehension, for he stretched out his hand to him and held him fast. The Archbishop desired him to give him some token that he put his trust in God, through Jesus Christ, according as he had advised him, and thereat the King presently wrung hard the Archbishop's hand, and soon after departed,"

about two in the morning, on Friday, January 28th, 1547.

There are still in existence a splendid pair of gloves<sup>1</sup> which once belonged to Henry VIII, and which he presented when on his deathbed to Sir Anthony Denny, as a token of his esteem and his appreciation of Denny's faithfulness. The gloves are of immense size. They have large white satin-covered gauntlets embroidered in gold and colours, with the Tudor rose, the crown, and other figures in raised padded work, and worked all over with pearls, and trimmed with gold and silver lace.

Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert (who was husband of Henry's sister-in-law Anne Parr, and afterwards Earl of Pembroke) had charge of the arrangements for the King's funeral. On February 14th Henry's body was "solemnly with great honour conveyed in a chariot towards Windsor." Denny and Herbert were "the only two that were carried in the chariot with the royal corpse to Windsor, and were continually in waiting there till the interment," which took place in the choir of St. George's Chapel on February 16th.

In his will Henry named Sir Anthony Denny (who had been a witness to that document) as one of his executors, and as one of the guardians of his son, King Edward VI. He also bequeathed to him the sum of £300, which was paid to Lady Denny after her husband's death, on the warrant of Edward VI issued in the Star Chamber.

There was a clause in the King's will requiring his executors to make good all that he had promised in any manner of ways. Whereupon Sir Anthony Denny, Sir William Herbert, and Sir William Paget (Secretary of State) were required, as being those most intimate with the King, to declare what they knew of his intentions and promises. Paget (relating a private conversation he had had with the King) stated how the King had told him how he meant to bestow various honours and lands, and had ordered him to write a list of the various persons for whom they were intended. Paget added that—

"Considering what painful service Master Denny did take daily with him, and also moved of honesty for that Mr. Denny had divers times been a suitor for me, and I never for him, I beseeched his Majesty to be a good Lord unto him, and to give him Bungay, which I had heard he much desired. His Majesty much commended my suit and said he minded before to be good unto him, and to Mr. Herbert and Mr. Gates also, and bade me put upon Mr. Denny's head £200 lond (in land) a year."

Denny and Herbert confirmed all Paget's evidence, for when the

<sup>1</sup> Illustrations of these appear in Redfern's "Royal and Historic Gloves and Shoes," and in the *Connoisseur* of June, 1905, etc.

Secretary went out the King had told them the substance of what had passed and made Denny read the book over again to him; whereupon Herbert observed that the Secretary had remembered all but himself, to which the King answered he should not forget him, and ordered Denny to write four hundred pounds a year for him.

Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert were directed by the Privy Council to make all necessary preparations for Edward's coronation, and when the ceremony took place they were the two Knights who held the pall over the King when he was anointed by Archbishop Cranmer.

Sir Anthony took part in the degradation of Sir Thomas Wriothesley,<sup>1</sup> Earl of Southampton, Lord Chancellor of England, on March 5th, 1547, and he represented Hertfordshire in the first Parliament of the reign, which met in November of that year. When the Lord Admiral Thomas Seymour (the Protector's brother) lay imprisoned under accusation of High Treason Sir Anthony Denny was sent with the Lord Chancellor and others "to try if he could be brought to a submission," and he signed the sentence of death passed upon the Lord Admiral on January 17th, 1549. He took part, as a Privy Councillor, in the negotiations with the Protestants of Germany, and his signature is appended to all the Acts of the Privy Council until his death.

In 1548-9 Sir Anthony did a great service to the school of Sedberg in Yorkshire, belonging to his old College of St. John's, Cambridge. The school was run to ruin, and its lands embezzled and sold, when Sir Anthony stepped in, procured the reparation of the school, and the restitution of its possessions, firmly settling them to prevent alienation. Several letters were written by the celebrated Roger Ascham (Queen Elizabeth's tutor) to Denny thanking him for his services to Sedberg. One of these letters is directed: "*Clarissimo Viro D. Antonio Deneis Equiti aurato, Regis consiliario dignissimo, et de litteris optime merito.*"

In 1549 Sir Anthony was sent with William Parr, Marquess of Northampton, to quell Ket's rebellion in the county of Norfolk. The regard felt by Edward VI for Denny is shown by his gift to him of Gillwell Park, Sewardstone, near Waltham, which was a royal hunting lodge, used by Edward and his father when they went to hunt in Waltham Forest. The present mansion of Gillwell Park includes part of this ancient royal residence.

Sir Anthony Denny died at his seat at Cheshunt in the 50th year of his age, on September 10th, 1549-50, and was buried in

<sup>1</sup> The torturer of Anne Askew.

the parish church of St. Mary's. There seems to be no trace remaining of his tomb or monument, and there are no parish registers of a sufficiently early date to contain a record of his interment.

His will is dated September 7th, 1549. In it he desires to be buried "without all superfluous funeral charges, or bestowing of black garments," except upon the poor. He leaves a bequest to King Edward, "something suitable for a learned king," to be chosen by his executors. He desires that his ward Margaret, daughter and heir of Thomas, Lord Audley, K.G., be married to his (eldest) son; that his first daughter Anne be married to the son and heir of the Lord Chancellor; the second, Mary, to his ward, the son and heir of Sir John Shelton, of Norfolk, or to the son and heir of Sir George Cotton; the third, Douglas, to the son and heir of Sir James Somerset.

The life of Sir Anthony Denny was thus characterised by the good and learned Roger Ascham: "Religion, learning, the state, so employ all thy cares, that apart from these three thou spendest no time at all." To which one writer of that age adds: "Let the enemies, if any, of his memory abate this character to what proportion they please; the very remainder thereof which their malice must leave will be sufficient to speak Sir Anthony Denny a worthy and meriting gentleman." He must have been possessed of an extraordinary amount of tact to retain as he did the confidence and friendship of so capricious and changeable a monarch as Henry VIII. He was, nevertheless, no time-server, but a man of deep personal piety and not afraid to avow opinions favourable to religious reform when it was highly dangerous to do so. He was distinguished as a patron of letters, being described as a "Mæcenas" and a "grand favourer of learned men." The assistance rendered by him to Sir Thomas Elyot has already been mentioned. Sir Thomas Challoner dedicates to him his translation (from the Latin of Sir John Cheke) of "An Homilie of S. John Chrysostome," published in 1544. Sir Anthony also patronised art, in the person of the painter Holbein. There are several indications which tend to show that he was possessed of wit and humour. Scott seems to have noticed this, for he thus introduces him into "Marmion," in the description of the wedding of Clara and de Wilton:—

"Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,  
More, Sands, and *Denny* passed the joke."

In Strype's "Life of Sir John Cheke" there is an heroic Latin poem composed by that eminent scholar in praise of Sir Anthony,

commending his faithfulness to his King, his zeal for religion, and the great kindness and modesty of his disposition. A better known eulogy is that contained in the following anticipatory epitaph written by his friend and kinsman Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "one of the learnedst of nobles, and noblest of learned men in that age":—

*" Upon the death of Sir Anthony Denny.*

" Death and the King did, as it were, contend  
Which of them two bear Denny greatest love:  
The King to show his love gan farre extend,  
Did him advance his betters farre above;  
Nere place, much welth, great honour eke him gave  
To make it knowne what power great Princes have.  
" But when Death came, with his triumphant gift,  
From worldly carke he quit his wearied ghost,  
Free from the corpes, and straight to heaven it lift;  
Now deme that can who did for Denny most,  
The King gave welth, but fading and unsure,  
Death brought him blisse that ever shall endure."

Another epitaph, much more elaborate and curious, is amongst the Harleian MSS. and is worthy of being recorded:—

*" The Epitaphe of Sir Anthonie Dennie.*

" As shippe escaped the power of tyde, wave, wynde,  
See here lay'd uppe the worthie corps of Dennie,  
Of Knightlie vertues—stars left much behinde,  
Hys dethe as much bewept, as lyf desired of manie,  
His happe, as happie happe, as happe could happe any whan,  
His tyme, in tyme, as tymely spent, as ever tyme by manne.  
" Hys sprynge and somer paste, hys harveste drawyng nigh,  
In ballance twayne hys both youthe and age dependinge  
Hys state for hys desire, but even almost too hyghe,  
Hys lust well nigh paste fend, and strengthe upon the endinge.  
Hys care for his posteritie, to hoped for fulnesse brought,  
Soe that he seem'd for hys reward, but reste to lacke ryghte nought.  
" Of erthe, the erthe yt firste took shape, in erthe againe doth lie,  
Hys fame, by witnesse trumpe, sprede all the realms about,  
Hys honor envied of none, hys gentlenesse doth trye,  
Hys truth unto hys prince, that never came in doubt;  
Hys wisdom meante, with pleasant myrthe, to cheere the visage dull,  
Hys hart designinge ever more to fraught the needieful.  
" The thirst of Mammon's pelf, with plentie ne'er contente,—  
The privie hidden hate—the travayle aye to mount  
The wites of others blisse, dyd never hym tormente,  
Of all such courtlie vice, he hath but small accompte;  
He sought not hys reward on lowe, but hyghe in Vertue's throne  
More worthie wage, than she herself, for that he judged, none.



“ Which hier longe, he having well deserved,  
 The time but loitered here, was tarriance from his blysse,  
 Wherfor the sprite for to enioye for that it was preserved,  
 By tyme his leve doth take of that that mortal is.  
 Above the starrie skyes returned, whear yt beginninge hadde  
 To make for age unchangeable the lot, which change was gladde.

“ To him no dethe at all, but waye to better lyf,  
 To us almoste a dethe, that shall hys presence wante,  
 A great dele more than dethe, to servaunte, chyld, and wyf,  
 Whose hertes though nature forthe in sobbes awhyle to pante,  
 Yet shall in tyme the livinge joye of hys deserved renowne,  
 Ther where <sup>1</sup> sprites comforte again, and alle the sorrowes drowne.

“ Farewell, most worthie knighte, layde up in quiet rest,  
 Mæcenas to the learned, an anchor to relygion,  
 To those an open haven, that wer for Chryst opprest,  
 An enemie unto the Pope, and hys superstytion ;  
 God grant this worthie presens so deepe in others to grave,  
 That for one Dennie a thousand such, the prince's courte may have.”

Harl. MSS. No. 78, 25-6; Plut. 63 E.

There are three portraits of Sir Anthony Denny known to exist. One is in possession of the Earl of Radnor, and is at Longford Castle, Salisbury; a second was (until recently) at Greystoke Castle, Cumberland, the seat of a younger branch of the ducal house of Howard. When engraved by Hollar in 1647 this portrait was at Arundel Castle. It is very probable that it was a gift from Sir Anthony to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Both these pictures are the work of Holbein, and many engravings have been produced of them. The third portrait is in possession of Francis Denny, Esq., of Tralee, co. Kerry. It is attributed to Holbein.<sup>2</sup>

Lady Denny survived her husband for four years. She was concerned in the plans of her relations, who were amongst the heads of the Reforming party, to secure a Protestant succession to the throne in the event of King Edward's decease.

“ Kat Aschly,” the Princess Elizabeth's governess, when under examination February 24th, 1549, confessed that amongst those who favoured the suit of Lord Admiral Seymour for the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, whom she had met at Slanning's house in London, were Lady Barkley, Lady Denny, the brothers Archdeacon George Carew and Sir Gawen Carew, and their

<sup>1</sup> Weary.

<sup>2</sup> There is a portrait in the Imperial Art Museum at Vienna of a courtier of Henry VIII, by Holbein, and a companion picture of a lady, which have been thought to represent Sir Anthony Denny and his wife. See *Magazine of Art*, March and May, 1897.

nephew Sir Peter Carew. Lady Barkley was the relict of John Champernowne (Lady Denny's brother), and she had had charge of the Princess. The Carews were related to the Princess's mother, Queen Anne Boleyn.

This having been put an end to by the Lord Admiral's execution, the scheme was then proposed of marrying the Princess Elizabeth to her cousin Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon and Marquess of Exeter (grandson of Katherine, daughter of Edward IV, and Lady Denny's near relative), and raising them to the throne as King and Queen. The attempt to secure a Protestant succession, which, however, eventually was made, was that to place upon the throne Lady Jane Grey.<sup>1</sup> Lady Denny's brother-in-law, Sir John Gates, was in the foremost rank of Lady Jane's supporters, and on this account lost his life, being beheaded, with the Duke of Northumberland, on Tower Hill, August 22nd, 1553. Lady Denny was spared witnessing the eclipse which her party suffered in Mary's reign, as she died shortly before King Edward on May 15th, 1553, probably at Dallance, Essex, where she then resided. She was doubtless buried with her husband at Cheshunt. There is a beautiful portrait of her amongst the Denny family pictures.

Sir Anthony Denny, by Dame Joan, his wife, had issue five sons and four daughters.

I. Henry Denny, of Waltham, etc., eldest son and heir, born April, 1540. A friend and correspondent of Henry Bullinger, the Reformer. He died March 24th, 1574, and was buried in Waltham Abbey. He married first Hon. Honora Grey, only daughter of William, thirteenth Lord Grey de Wilton, K.G., who died in 1560, and was buried in Waltham Abbey. Lord Grey de Wilton died on December 14th, 1562, in the house of his son-in-law Henry Denny, at Cheshunt. Henry Denny married secondly Elizabeth Grey, daughter of Lord John Grey, brother of Henry, Duke of Suffolk, who (by Frances his wife, daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and Mary his wife, sister of Henry VIII) was father of Lady Jane Grey. By her Henry Denny had surviving issue a son Henry, born October, 1572, who fought with distinction in the war against Tyrone in 1595, but died unmarried before 1619. Elizabeth Denny remarried with Sir Edward Greville, of Harold's Park, and died in 1619, being buried in Waltham Abbey, where a mutilated alabaster effigy of her yet remains. By his first wife Henry Denny had, with other issue, a son and three daughters,

<sup>1</sup> Whose mother was daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, by his wife Mary Tudor, Queen Dowager of France, sister of Henry VIII.

viz., Sir Edward Denny, eldest surviving son, afterwards Lord Denny de Waltham and Earl of Norwich, who married Lady Mary Cecil, granddaughter of the great Lord Burghley, and had an only child Honora, "the richest heiress of her time," died 1614, having married James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, K.G., the celebrated favourite of James I, by whom she left an only son James, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, and second Lord Denny de Waltham, and a daughter, Lady Anne Hay, the

"noble Carlyle's gem,  
The fairest branch of Denny's ancient stem,"

of the poet Thomas Carew.

Catherine (eldest daughter of Henry) married Sir George Fleetwood of the Vache, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks, by whom she was mother of Dr. James Fleetwood, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and Bishop of Worcester, and grandmother of Dr. William Fleetwood, Bishop of St. Asaph and Ely, and of George Fleetwood, the Parliamentary commander, one of Cromwell's Lords, and one of the judges of Charles I. Anne Denny, third daughter, married George Goring, Esq., of Hurst Pierrepoint, by whom she had Sir George Goring, Earl of Norwich, the father of George, Lord Goring, the famous Royalist General. Dorothy, fourth daughter, wife of William Purvey (or Purefoy), Esq., Auditor of the Duchy of Lancaster, lies buried in Wormley Church, Herts.

II. Anthony Denny (second son of Sir Anthony), educated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. Died unmarried 1561-2.

III. Charles, educated at Merton College, Oxford. Died unmarried 1566.

IV. Sir Edward Denny,<sup>1</sup> educated at Merton College, Oxford, where his name occurs in a list in 1564. In 27th Elizabeth, 1584, he and his father-in-law, Pierce Edgecumbe, were the two Members for the Borough of Liskeard, Cornwall. He was appointed May 5th, 1589, Clerk of Recognizances in the Courts of the Chief Justices of the Queen's Bench and Common Pleas, which office he held up to the time of his death.

He was knighted by Sir William Fitzwilliam, Lord Deputy of Ireland, at Kilkenny, on October 26th, 1588-9. Sir Edward was returned Member of Parliament for the Borough of Tregony, Cornwall, October 2nd, 39 Elizabeth, 1597.

The following reference is made to him in a quaint poem by W. Vallans, describing the course of the river Lea, entitled "A Tale of two Swannes," published in 1589 :—

<sup>1</sup> See his biography by Rev. H. L. L. Denny in the *Transactions* of the East Herts Archæological Society, Vol. II, Part III.

"to Wormley Wood  
 And so salute the holy house of Nunnes  
 That late belonged to Captain Edward Dennie,  
 A Knight in Ireland of the best accompt,  
 Who late made execution on our foes,  
 I mean, of Spanyardes, that with open armes  
 Attempted both against our Queene and us."

V. Edmond, died with issue.

I. Anne, eldest daughter, died unmarried.

II. Mary, married, first in 1557, Thomas Crawley, Esq.; married secondly Thomas Astley, Esq., of Wittell, Essex, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth, by whom she had, with other issue, a son and two daughters—Sir Andrew Astley, of Wittell, who married Alice, daughter and co-heir of John Daniel, of Messing Hall, Essex, and from whose daughter Mary, wife of Thomas Darcy, the Earls of Harewood, and the Darcys, Dawes, and Milners, Baronets, descended; Elizabeth Astley, elder daughter, married the Right Hon. Edward Darcy, P.C., Groom of the Privy Chamber, and Frances Astley, younger daughter, married Sir William Harris, of Shenfield, Essex.

III. Douglas Denny, married Sir John Dyve, of Bromham, Bedfordshire (father of Sir Lewis Dyve, the Royalist leader).

IV. Honora Denny, married Thomas Wingfield, Esq., of Kimbolton Castle, Hunts, by whom she had, with other issue, Sir Edward Wingfield, "the great warrior."

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