

AN OLD PLAN OF THE COUNTRY NEAR NONSUCH PALACE.

A law-suit which, in the reign of Edward VI., certain of the king's tenants of Morden in Surrey, commenced in the Court of Augmentations against his tenants of Cheam, as to the rights of common in " Sparrowfield," may not, at first sight, suggest itself as a matter likely to be of much general interest to the present day student of topography. Yet, indirectly, it is so; for it was the occasion of the compilation of a somewhat remarkable plan which has been preserved with the pleadings. Plans of this date are so uncommon that the plan in question is here reproduced on a somewhat large scale.

Thomas Welshe, Thomas Herryman, Henry Herryman, William Mathew, Richard Miles, John Sherfield, and Nicholas Goryng, tenants and farmers of the King's manor of Morden, set forth in their complaint that the King and all his tenants and farmers, time out of mind, have had common of pasture for their beasts in a certain common or waste ground called Sparrowfield, containing 360 acres of land, in "Cheyeham" and Morden, and have been intercommoners throughout the year in the said Sparrowfield with the tenants of the manor of Cheam; and that they had always enjoyed and used to take and sell furze and bushes upon the said common or waste ground for fuel, and for fencing their pastures and grounds, and other necessaries without disturbance. In this privilege they had been interrupted by Humphrey Wade, Henry Mathew, William Carpenter, William Marshall, Thomas Saunder, John Gouldsmyth, and others, tenants of the said manor of Cheam, who had driven away their cattle and beasts.

In their answer the defendants deny that the King and his tenants and farmers of the manor of Morden had ever had common of pasture in the said Sparrowfield, "unless by stealth"; neither, they add, had the defendants, even ever intercommoned with the tenants of the manor of Cheam.

The suit came on for hearing, and a "plott" of the *locus in quo* was tendered in evidence. As to the accuracy of this "plott" there seems to have been doubt, and a more perfect survey was ordered; John Scott, William Saunder, and William Goodwine, being commissioned to make it. In due course the commissioners reported that they had repaired to "Sparrowfelde," and viewed and noted every part thereof, and compared the same with the "plott" formerly made, and found "some variation, imperfection or controversy " in that formerly made, such "as in leaving out of divers ways, crosses, and limits as bounds." And so they made "a true and perfect new plott of the same."

Both the " plotts " are preserved amongst the records of the Court of Augmentations. That reproduced here is certainly much the fuller in detail, and indicates many points of interest: numerous churches and other buildings are indicated, and so are right-of-ways, procession ways, wayside crosses, bridges, and the like. On the west we see "the King's palace of Nonesuch," its fantastic form - so well shown in Hoefnagel's remarkable engraving - being evidently in the draftsman's mind.

It may be of interest in connection with Nonsuch Palace, to state that there is amongst the Exchequer Accounts, etc., an account of the money expended in building the palace: workmen (sawyers, masons, labourers, etc.) were "arrested" by the King's commission, not only all over Surrey, but even in such distant counties as Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Some of the stone seems to have been quarried at Reigate, but the greater part came from the quite recently dissolved Abbey of Merton. Thousands of cart-loads of stone from Merton Abbey were paid for. A vast quantity of timber and brick was also used, and in the account for the former we have several entries for "certain principal pieces for the towers." There are many payments for iron; one for iron nails being to Raynold Ward, of Dudley, nailman."