

**GENEALOGY OF
THE FAMILY OF
GRESHAM**

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GRANVILLE LEVESON GOWER

**GENEALOGY OF
THE FAMILY OF
GRESHAM**



PURCHASED BY WILLIAM LEVESON GOWER ESQ.
 24TH JULY 1832. AT THE SALE OF THE EFFECTS OF
 GEORGE WATSON TAYLOR ESQ MP OF ERLESTOKE PARK, WILTS.
 AND NOW IN POSSESSION OF THE FAMILY AT TITSEY PLACE.

GENEALOGY
OF THE
FAMILY OF GRESHAM.

BY
GRANVILLE LEVESON GOWER, ESQ., F.S.A.



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PREFACE.

THIS Work has occupied twelve years, and is at last completed. It is the history of a family which, like many others, takes its name from the place of its origin, rises into importance with the progress of mercantile adventure in Henry VIII.'s reign, fills important civic offices, takes rank among the principal gentry of the county as Sheriff or in Parliament, suffers heavily in the Civil Wars, is rewarded with a Baronetcy at the Restoration, becomes in due time extinct [as I believe the Gresham Family to be absolutely in the male line], and transmits its line and property through females. It was difficult to identify the persons intended in the Introduction to the Pedigree printed in Ward's 'Lives of the Gresham Professors,' although I have succeeded to a great extent; and there are a few blanks in the one compiled by me which I had hoped to fill up, but which, notwithstanding the most thorough investigation on my part, and the kind assistance of others, I have not succeeded in doing; some of these will, doubtless, be made good as time goes on. I have had the advantage of a very large collection of deeds in my possession to refer to, from which most of the autographs and seals are taken; but, on the other hand, of monuments, family pictures, or correspondence, there are next to none. It is a remarkable fact that whereas in the Registers of Limsfield [where for one hundred and fifty years the Greshams were the principal local residents] there are about forty burial entries, and in the Registers of Titsey twenty-three; there is in the former church only one monument—that to Martha, the wife of Sir Edward Gresham, Bart., 1712—and in the latter only two. None, I believe, have been destroyed, as the County Historians, from Aubrey downwards, only mention the above. In an interleaved copy of Ward's 'Lives of the Gresham Professors,' in the British Museum, that writer says that in the old church at Titsey there were, besides the two monuments, two hatchments—one for Sir Marmaduke Gresham, Bart., with the arms of Gresham impaling Corbet; the other for his son Sir Edward, with his arms impaling Maynard. There are, as far as I know, only eight monuments now existing in England to members of the family bearing the name: viz., two at Titsey, one at Limsfield, one at Haslemere, one at Thorpe Market, one at Walsingham, one at Fulham, and one in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate Street. The family portraits at Titsey doubtless disappeared when the house was pulled down, cir. 1770; of the Titsey line there remains but one, that of William Gresham, painted by Cornelius Ketel in the year of his death. It is a half-length on panel, representing a man standing, looking to the left, in a black silk dress with ruff, and velvet cap, the sleeves slashed with velvet and tufted, the hands folded in front. It has the painter's anagram, C. K. F. (Cornelius Ketel fecit), *Ætatis suæ* 58, 1^o DNI. 1579, and a motto, "Mon Espoir en Dieu," possibly the religious utterance of one who felt the hand of

death upon him. That there were pictures at Titsey is clear from the bequest in Dame Elizabeth Gresham's will, 1660, "I give unto Sir Marmaduck Gresham all the pictures in the galerey, not otherways desposed of," and by her devising to Mr. Richard Couper of Tempell "his own picture in the galerey," and to Mrs. Ann Anderson "her [i.e. the testatrix's] pektur drane in blaik in the galerey."

Of the portraits of Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange, I have given three representations to illustrate this work. The first is from a portrait by Sir Antonio More in my possession, which has been engraved by Thew, date 1792, and was at that time the property of Lady Northampton, from whom it descended to Mr. Wateon Taylor, and was sold among the contents of Eriestoke Park in 1832.* The second is from an engraving by Delaram, taken from the larger portrait belonging to the Mercers' Company, which is also engraved in Lodge's 'Portraits.' The third is from an engraving by Michel, published 1779, of a picture formerly in the Houghton Gallery. It is a half-length by Sir Antonio More, with the date 1550, representing him nearly full-face, with both his hands resting on a table or counter.† Other known portraits of Sir Thomas Gresham are the following:—A portrait by Sir Antonio More, seated, and in many respects identical with that belonging to me, now in the Hermitage Gallery at St. Petersburg. Another in the National Portrait Gallery, purchased at a sale at Christie's in June 1872, was formerly in the collection of Sir Henry Bedingfield of Oxburgh, co. Norfolk, Bart., and is mentioned in the 'Beauties of England and Wales,' Norfolk, p. 278. It is a half-length standing figure, wearing a black dress and a flat cap studded with small round buttons; the beard is a rich brown and forked; through a slash down the side of his dress part of a large golden chain can be seen. Another is in the possession of Sir John Neeld of Grittleton Park, Wilts, Bart., and was exhibited at Burlington House not long ago. It forms the frontispiece to Burgon's 'Life of Gresham.' It was purchased in Sept. 1890 by Joseph Neeld, Esq., from Dr. Dibdin, and was formerly in the collection of a Scotch nobleman; an enamel has been made of it by Bone. It measures 48½ inches by 28½, has the dagger and the pouch which appear in the portrait belonging to the Mercers' Company and in that at the National Portrait Gallery, and in the left hand is a pomander. Another belongs to Mr. Gresham, the High Bailiff of Southwark, and hangs in his house at Croydon. It is a small-sized half-length portrait, with richly embroidered figured dress, with pouch and belt, and the cap is studded with numerous jewels.

There hangs on the staircase at Audley End, the seat of Lord Braybrook, a small cabinet portrait, No. 33 in the catalogue. It is a half-length of a young man with his right hand on a pouch, and his left on the hilt of a dagger; it is called Sir John Gresham,

* The chair in which he is seated is evidently the painter's chair; it is identical with that in the portrait by Sir Antonio More in the Hermitage Gallery, and also with one by the same master exhibited in the Loan Exhibition at South Kensington in 1866. There is a strip of red leather at the back, a fringe with buttons on the seat, and a quatrefoil ornament on the arm.

† The Autotype Company have lately been publishing photographs of all the pictures in the Hermitage Gallery; this is not among them, although the sitting portrait before referred to is, and this latter is probably the one which Horace Walpole calls a very good portrait. [See Burgon, 'Life of Gresham,' vol. i., p. 206.] A portrait of Ann, wife of Sir Thomas Gresham, by Sir Antonio More, is in the same gallery.

Kt.* but unless there were an extraordinary resemblance between him and his brother Sir Thomas, it is, I think, without doubt, a portrait of the latter.

There is at Longleat, Wilts, the seat of the Marquis of Bath, a portrait sometimes called of Sir Thomas Gresham, but there is no resemblance in the features to any of the known portraits of him. It is a half-length, on panel with pale grey background, standing, looking to left, wearing a black cap with jewel, eyes brown, beard and moustache reddish, the surcoat black with pale brown sleeves, a long gilt chain round the neck; the right hand, which has on the first finger a pearl ring with a sapphire (or blue stone) in the centre, is closed and holds a pair of gloves; the left hand is open, with a ring on the little finger; between the two hands is a flat chain with plaques and links. It is probably, as suggested by Mr. Botfield,† a portrait of Sir Richard Gresham, father of Sir Thomas, and of Christian, the wife of Sir John Thynne, the builder of Longleat. At Baynards, in Surrey, the seat of Thomas Lyon Thurlow, Esq., there hangs in the dining-room a fine half-length portrait of Sir Thomas, resembling, in dress and detail, the Mercers' picture. There is preserved in the same house the Merchant's Steelyard, with his arms upon it.

The most interesting portrait of all remains to be noticed. It is that which now hangs in the drawing-room of the Mercers' Hall, Cheapside, and was formerly at Gresham College. It is a full-length, by Holbein, representing a young man dressed entirely in black; the beard and moustache are short; he has a ring on each hand, and in his right a pair of gloves; at his feet on the pavement is a skull; the portrait is about the size of life. On the right is written the date 1544, 26, Thomas Gresham, a merchant's mark with T. G.; on the left A. G., Love Serve and Obey, T. G. On each side of the black frame, in letters of gold, is the motto "Dominus Mihi Adjutor," with the letters T. G. It is fully described by Burgon [*Life of Gresham*, vol. i., p. 51]. When he wrote it was in the possession of Mr. Thurston of Hoxne Abbey, Suffolk, who afterwards presented it to Gresham College.‡

In the same room at the Mercers' Hall hang two other portraits of Sir Thomas; the three-quarters length, which is so well known from the engraving, hangs on the left hand of the door leading from the Hall. It is almost identical with that in the National Portrait Gallery already described. To the right of the fireplace is a small portrait, a profile head and bust. It represents an older man than the last; the beard and moustache are full and reddish, the nose hooked; he wears a cap and plaited ruff.

In all the portraits of Sir Thomas Gresham the ear is a distinguishing feature; it is large and stands out prominently from the head; with the exception of two, they are in profile, and represent the right cheek.

* Sir John Gresham's daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, married Sir Henry Nevill of Billingbere, which might account for its being so called, but Sir Thomas was so often painted that he might have presented his brother with his portrait.

† *Stemmata Botewillians*, p. cccviii and note.

‡ The same gentleman possessed the wedding-ring figured in Burgon's *Life of Gresham*, vol. i., p. 1, and in *Finger Ring Lore*, p. 319; it was given by him to my father, and is now in my possession. It is a double ring of gold linked together in the form of a gommel. Inside on one half are the words "Quod Deus coniunxit," and on the other "Homo non seperet."

Nichols, in his 'Literary Anecdotes' [vol. v., p. 280], states that Beaupré Bell, in the middle of the last century, had a portrait of Sir Thomas Gresham when young, by Hilliard, in a close green silk doublet, hat, and plaited ruff, date 1540 or 1545, which had formerly belonged to Sir Marmaduke Gresham, Bart. I have not been able to trace what has become of this picture. The picture in the Gallery at Osterley, the Earl of Jersey's, described by Burgon ['Life of Gresham,' vol. ii., p. 484], is certainly not Sir Thomas Gresham, and bears no resemblance to him.

Manning and Bray ['Hist. of Surrey,' vol. iii., p. 448] state that Aubrey mentions that in the Gallery at Dulwich is a portrait of Sir Thomas Gresham, "and some other worthless pictures. It is not there now, and as it is not mentioned in the old catalogue, it may fairly be presumed never was." Whether this is a fair inference or not I cannot say; it is certain that it is not there now. It would be interesting to ascertain whether the picture of 'Sir Tho. Gresham his Banquett,' spoken of by Burgon ['Life of Gresham,' vol. i., p. 88, and App. vi.], mentioned in an inventory of the goods of the Countess of Leicester in 1598, is still in existence; its value, as stated there, £5, suggests a large and important work.

A picture at Parham, the seat of Lord Zouche, called Sir Thomas Gresham in the catalogue, is not, I believe, a portrait of the Royal Merchant, but of Sir Thomas Gresham, Kt., of Titsey, whose son, Sir John, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Bishop of Parham, Kt. and Bart.

I have at Titsey Place two other portraits—one a half-length, similar in treatment and detail to that in the Mercers' Hall. I purchased it from Dr. Crompton of Manchester, and it was traced to a dealer's shop at Cambridge, so that possibly it came out of one of the colleges, or from some house in Norfolk. It is enclosed in an original bog-oak frame. The portrait of his wife was at one time opposite it within one frame, but being in very bad condition it was unhappily destroyed.

The other is a small portrait, half-length, which I purchased in August 1866, at a sale of the effects of the Rev. Thos. Gresley, Rector of Soile, in Leicestershire; it is a picture of the Elizabethan period, on panel, half-length, 18 inches by 18 inches, and represents a man in early life with a reddish beard, cap and doublet, with a frill round the neck, and gloves in his right hand, and on a scroll are the words, "Por Madona Crestina Leona." This portrait was originally at Aston Hall, near Birmingham.

This exhausts the list of portraits of Sir Thomas Gresham (as far as I can give them), though, perhaps, there may be others I know not of in some of the country houses of his native county Norfolk, or elsewhere. I have dwelt thus particularly upon them, as they may interest those on the other side the Atlantic* into whose hands this Work may come, and who may never have an opportunity of seeing them. The frequency of his portraits by Sir Antonio More may be due, as Burgon suggests,† to a private friendship

* I have given copies to the Massachusetts Historical Society and the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society.

† 'Life of Gresham,' vol. i., p. 206.

between them, begun at Antwerp. A list of the prints is given in Evans's 'Catalogue of Engraved Portraits,' Nos. 4648-4654, and by Granger in his 'Biographical Dictionary,' vol. i., p. 298. I have given in this Work those by Thew, Michel, and Delaram; the last is reduced from the Mercers' picture, and is rather a scarce print. There is one in Lodge's 'Portraits' from the Mercers' picture; another by Vertue in Ward's 'Lives of the Gresham Professors'; another by Faber, with a ship in the background, dated 1714, and dedicated "Domino Carolo Gresham Equiti Aurato;"* one by Hollar, in a small circle, in a view of the Exchange. Besides these, there are a host of small prints (one by Benoit) to illustrate popular histories, all taken from the Mercers' portrait, and one from the sitting portrait by Sir Antonio More, with a view of the Exchange in the background. There are two impressions of the print by Thew, one of which is dedicated to Sir William Curtis, Bart., and published in 1828.

It is to be hoped that we shall soon hear the last of the legend repeated, *usque ad nauseam*, in story-books and at popular lectures, and which has found its way even into a sermon,† viz., that Sir Thomas Gresham was a foundling, exposed in a field, and discovered to a passer-by from the loud chirping of a grasshopper, for which reason he adopted that device for his crest.‡ That James Gresham, his great-grandfather, sealed eleven letters among the Paston Letters, from 1443-1481, with his seal, the grasshopper, and that it appears with the initials R. G. on the porch of Intwood Hall, disposes of that part of the story; and that the son of Sir Richard Gresham, Lord Mayor of London in 1587, and one of the most opulent of the City merchants of his day, should be exposed as a foundling, carries its own refutation with it. The reason of the grasshopper being adopted as the family crest is satisfactorily accounted for by a writer in 'Notes and Queries,'§ who connects it with Gresham or Grass-ham, their native place in Norfolk. The Titsey branch of the family bore a grasshopper proper; Sir Thomas, and his father Sir Richard, a grasshopper or.

One would like to know the reason that prompted the adoption of their motto, "Fiat Voluntas Tua," one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The carving from the old mantel-piece at Titsey Place, given among the illustrations, carries it back to the early

* This was Sir Charles Gresham, Bart. A Baronet is not uncommonly designated as "Eques Auratus."

† In the Children's 'Service Book,' by the Rev. H. Mariyn Hart, 1873, p. 266, is a Sermon on Hagar and Ishmael, where we read how, about 350 years ago, a woman deposited her baby on the grass and went her way. By and by down the lane came a schoolboy, and hearing a grasshopper chirping very loudly, sprang over a gate, discovered the baby and ran home with him. A kind farmer's wife adopts the little orphan who had been saved from death by a grasshopper. The baby-boy becomes the merchant, places the grasshopper on the pinnacle of the Royal Exchange to proclaim to the world that his valuable life had been saved by it, and this we are bidden to remember as often as we pass the spot. The prevalence of the tradition was curiously illustrated some twenty years ago, when an old dame in my own village, well versed in legends of the past, enquired of me whether I knew the origin of the Greshams, and then proceeded, *metatis metandis*, to relate the story, substituting a member of the Titsey family for Sir Thomas, and pointing out Newhall in Limpfield, one of their manor-houses, as the scene of the legend.

‡ 'Notes and Queries,' 5 sec., x., 69.

§ 3 sec., iv., 176; 5 sec., x., 135. "Grasshelm" is, in German, grasshopper; it is a canting crest.