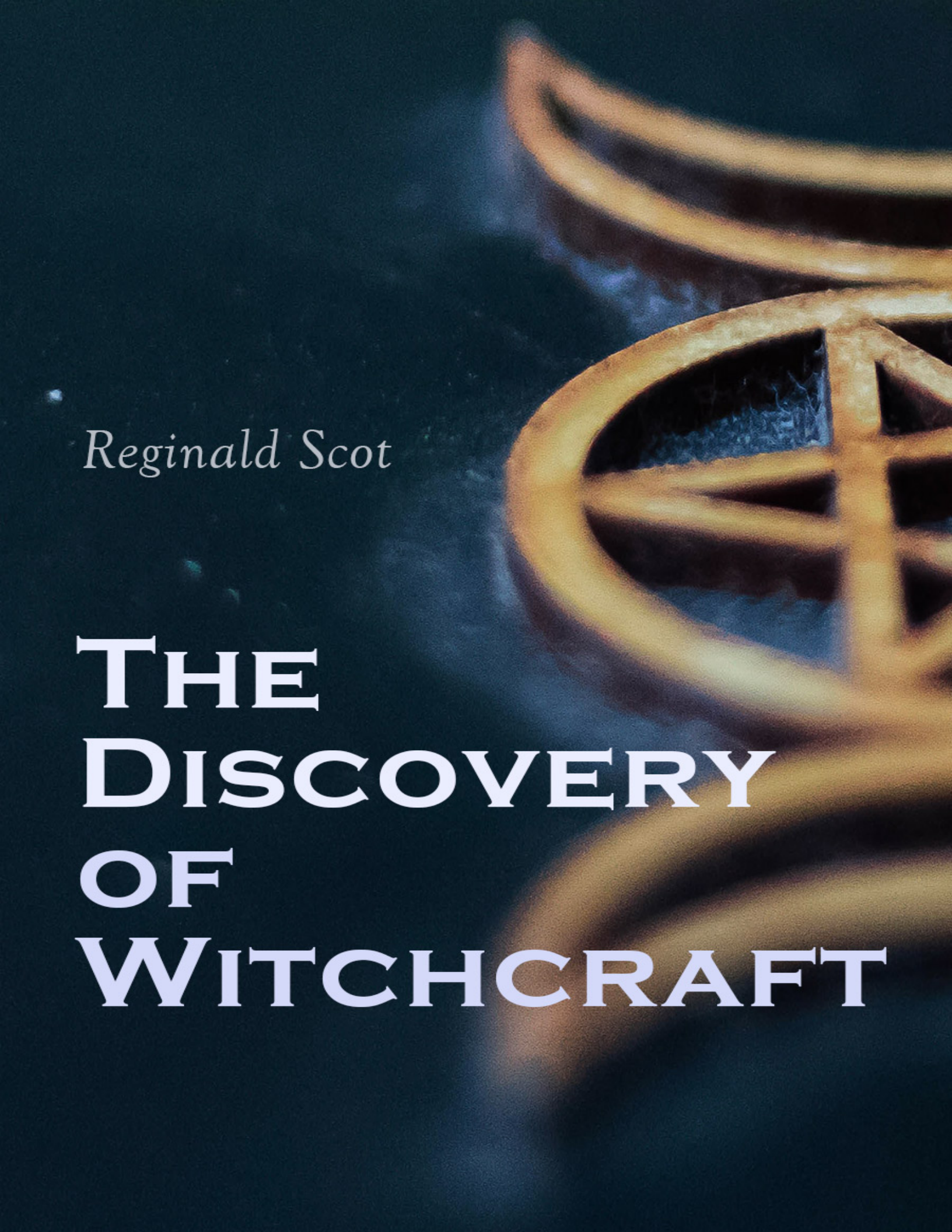




Reginald Scot

THE DISCOVERY OF WITCHCRAFT

Reginald Scot

The Discovery of Witchcraft

**Facts, Fiction & Conspiracy Theories Behind the
Medieval Witch Hunt**

e-artnow, 2021

Contact: info@e-artnow.org

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other hand, and with words to bring them together

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with words

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danger

To thrust a peece of lead into one eie, and to drive it
about (with a sticke) betweene the skin and flesh of the
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presentlie without anie salve

To put a ring through your cheeke

To cut off ones head, and to laie it in a platter, &c: which
the jugglers call the decollation of John Baptist

To thrust a dagger or bodkin into your guts verie
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The conclusion, wherein the reader is referred to certeine
patterns of instruments wherewith diverse feats heere
specified are to be executed

Heere follow patternes of certeine instru*ments 1009 to
be used in the former juggling knacks

To thrust a bodkin into your head, and through your
toong, &c

To thrust a knife through your arme, and to cut halfe your
nose asunder, &c

To cut off ones head, and to laie it in a platter, which the
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DEDICATION

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To the Memory

OF

H.R.H. PRINCE LEOPOLD, DUKE OF ALBANY,

UNTIMELY TAKEN FROM US,

THIS WORK OF AN ELIZABETHAN ENGLISHMAN,

AND OF A KINDRED SPIRIT,

WHOSE HONESTY, INTELLIGENCE, AND COMPASSION

FOUGHT AGAINST THE CRUEL SUPERSTITION

AND IGNORANCE OF HIS AGE,

IS,

BY ROYAL PERMISSION AND WITH REGRETFUL ESTEEM,

DEDICATED BY

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE

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THIS reprint is not a facsimile of the edition of 1584, for that was in black letter, and its page smaller and of quarto size. Being also for modern readers, and for use, the *i* of the original has become, where necessary, the *j* of the second edition; the *u* and *v* have been altered according to modern usage, that is, generally interchanged; while the short *s* replaces the *f*. Such modernisations render it more readable by the historical and philosophical student, by the man of science, and by the psychological physician, willing to learn all that may instruct himself and benefit others. Neither would this reprint have been undertaken, unless the work itself had appeared to my friend and fellow-student, W. T. Gairdner, M.D., LL.D., Professor of Medicine in the University of Glasgow,—and led by him—to myself and others, worthy on the above-mentioned grounds, of being reproduced, and as being both in matter and style a valuable English classic.

While, however, it is not a facsimile, yet, excepting such variations as are above noticed, and allowing for the few and trifling errors from which no copy can expect to be free, not even a photographic one, as experts in these matters well know, this will, I believe, be found a correct reprint. Every proof has been thrice, and sometimes oftener, read over with the original by myself, and these efforts have been well supplemented by the intelligence and care of its printers. Even the word-errors of the original, where not in its list of errata, have been retained, though the true or

conjectural readings have been given in the margin, or in two or three instances in the Notings at the end. Except also in two instances, where for necessity's sake alterations have been introduced within []s, and the original given in the margin, the old punctuation has been retained, it being, as a rule, very good, while any slight slips are readily observed, and do not affect the sense. For such other differences as are due to the black letter, and for others like these, I would refer the print-studying reader to the Introduction.

In the biographical portion of this Introduction, besides a supposition or two of my own, which from his writings seem to me highly probable, there have been given notices of his pedigree, age, and marriages, matters hitherto unknown or misstated, and for which I would at once record my indebtedness to Edmund Ward Oliver, Esq. This gentleman having taken an interest in investigating these questions, and being a perfect stranger to me, wrote and offered the results of his inquiries so soon as he had learnt that I was engaged with this reprint, and has since most obligingly answered the various questions that I have had occasion to put to him. A copy of Scot's Will has been also for the first time published, and some Notes and a Glossary added. Were I to have imitated the learned editors of former days, I should have added, not some, but exhaustive notes on every point, gathered from every known and unknown source; but I have confined myself to explanation, or to making a few remarks on the text, giving also the author's agreement with, or obligations to Wier, so far as I knew them, and Shakespeare's and Middleton's obligations to himself; my reason for not entering into greater details

being that I am no student of the pseudo-science of witchcraft, but a student only of what is useful, and true, and good.

It would be unseemly, especially after mentioning Mr. Oliver's name, were I to close this without acknowledging the kind assistance of my well-known friend, James Gairdner, Esq., of the Public Record Office; of my Shakespearian friends, W. Aldis Wright, LL.D., and P. A. Daniel, Esq.; of that given me by the Very Reverend Father W. H. Eyre, lately Superior of Stonyhurst; by Mrs. Amelia Green; as also by Prof. W. W. Skeat, and Dr. J. A. H. Murray, in my Glossary; though all were, and personally are, strangers; as are Miss Kath. P. Woolrych, Oare Vicarage, Kent, and Miss Ayscough, of Brabourne Vicarage; and especially that given me by my other Shakespearian friends, the Rev. W. H. Harrison, of St. Anne's, South Lambeth, and W. G. Stone, Esq. My best thanks are also due to Mr. J. J. Jervis for the use, for the printer, of a partially incomplete copy of the first edition; to the University of Glasgow for the loan, for my own use, for the greater part of a year, of another copy of this first edition; and for the use for the same period of a copy of the third edition to my Alma Mater of Edinburgh, endeared to me by the teachings, remembrances, and kindnesses of Sir William Hamilton, Allan Thomson, Christison, Traill, Jamieson, that most sagacious of surgeons and teachers, Syme, and the ever-to-be-revered physician and man, W. Pulteney Alison.

BR. NICHOLSON.

INTRODUCTION

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EXCEPT that they add the names of some who have opposed his views, or some such trifling matters, all the writers of biographical notices of Scot have drawn their information from the account given of him in Wood's *Athenæ Oxon*. Nor, indeed, until lately, unless original search had been made, were other sources available. Hence I, in the first place, give his words verbatim from the edition of 1691.

“REYNOLDE SCOT, a younger Son of Sir *John Scot* of *Scots-hall*, near to *Smeeth* in *Kent*, by his Wife, Daughter of *Reynolde Pimp* of *Pimps-court* Knight, was born in that County, and at about 17 years of age was sent to *Oxon*, particularly, as it seems, to *Hart* hall, where several of his Country-men and name studied in the latter end of K. *Hen. 8.* and in the Reign of *Ed. 6. &c.* Afterwards he retired to his native Country without the honour of a degree, and settled at *Smeeth*, where he found great encouragement in his studies from his kinsman Sir *Thos. Scot*. About which time taking to him a Wife, he gave himself up solely to solid reading, to the perusing of obscure authors that had by the generality of Scholars been neglected, and at times of leisure to husbandry and gardening, as it may partly appear from these books following.

“A perfect platform of a Hop-garden, and necessary instructions for the making and maintenance thereof, with notes and rules for reformation of all abuses, &c. *Lond.* 1576. qu. the 2. edit. as it seems.

“The discovery of Witchcraft; wherein the leud dealing of Witches, and Witchmongers is notably detected, the knavery of Conjurers, the impiety of Inchantors, the folly of Southsayers, &c. With many other things are opened, which have long been hidden, howbeit very necessary to be known. *Lond.* 1584. qu. in 16 books.

“Discourse upon Devils and Spirits.—In this, and the former, both printed together, it plainly appears that the author was very well versed in many choice books, and that his search into them was so profound, that nothing slip'd his Pen that might make for his purpose. Further also in the said *Discovery* and *Discourse*, though he holds that Witches are

not such that were in his time and before, commonly executed for Witches; or that Witches were, or are not; yet they, which were written for the instruction of all Judges and Justices of that age, (being the first of that nature that were published in the Mother tongue,) did for a time make great impressions in the Magistracy and Clergy, tho afterwards condemned by *James King of Scots* (the same who succeeded *Qu. Elizabeth* in the Monarchy of *England*) in his Preface to *Dæmonology*, printed under his Name at *Edinburgh* in 1597. qu. and by several others since, among whom was *Rich. Bernard of Batcomb*, in his Epist. Ded. before his *Guide to Grand Jury-men*, &c. Lond. 1627. in oct. What else our author *Scot* hath written, I cannot yet tell, nor anything else of him, only but that he dyed in *Sept.* or *Oct.* in fifteen hundred ninety and nine, and was buried among his Ancestors in the Church at *Smeeth* before-mentioned.

“In the time of the said *Reynold Scot* and before, have been conversant among the Muses in *Hart hall*, the *Sackviles* of *Sussex*, the *Colepepers* of *Kent* and *Sussex*, the *Sedlies* of *Kent*, and the *Scots* before mentioned, with others of inferiour note of the said Counties.”

Notes added in Bliss's Reprint.

“7. The learned author in his *Discovery* is as vehement against Popery as against witchcraft, and quite indecent in his abuse of the saints of the Romish church.”—*COLE*. [His indecency being for the most part a narrative of, and obvious reflections on, their indecency. And this I say understanding the sense in which he uses the word.]

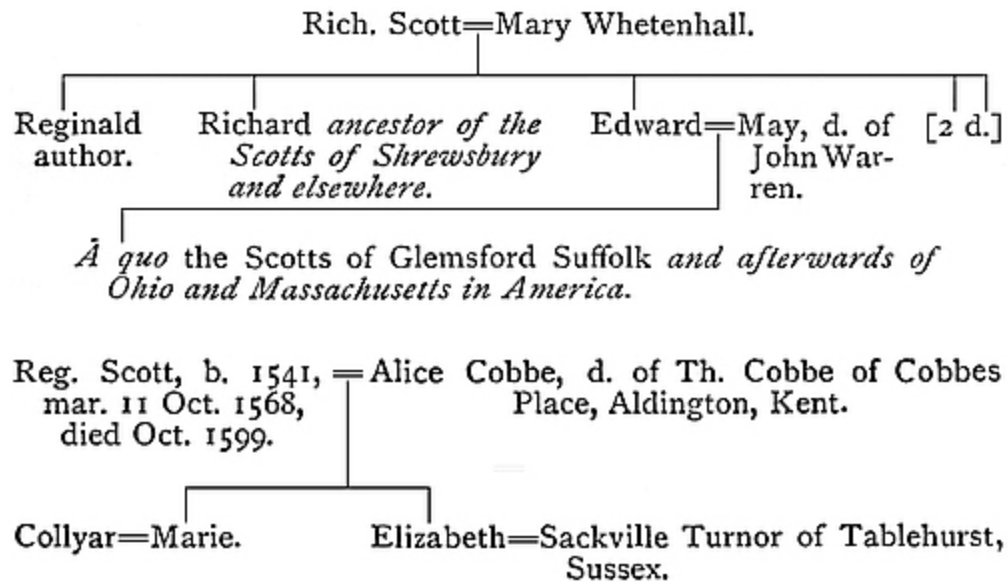
“8. See a full account of this curious book, as Mr. Oldys calls it, in his *British Librarian*, p. 213. All the copies of the first edit. 1584, that could be found were burnt by order of K. James I. an author on the other side of the question.”—*Vid. Hist. Dictionary*, sub voce “*Scot*”.

[“*REGINALDUS SCOTUS, Anglus, tractatum de Incantamentis* scripsit, in quo plerasque traditiones de Magia Melancholiæ, & morbis variis, aut artibus histrionicis adscribit.”] “Hunc in Anglia publica auctoritate combustum, sibi autem nunquam fuisse visum refert *Thomasius de crimine magiæ* § 3.”—*Vide* [J. V.] *Vogt.*, *Cat. Libr. rar.*, p. 617 [1713].

“Liber in folio scriptus Anglica lingua a *Reginaldo Scoto* in quo plurima occurrunt contra magiæ existentiam argumenta. Est ille etiam in Belgicam linguam conversus: sed plenior editio est ultima Anglica.”—*Morhof.*, ii, 459.

[Then a short note on the three editions.]

In 1874 there were privately printed, *Memorials of the Scott Family*, by Jas. Renat Scott, Esq., and from them I extract the following tables:



But as the first part of the ancestry given in this book is not supported by anything beyond possibility and legend, so this latter portion is incorrect in various particulars. Instead, however, of taking each inaccuracy item by item, it will be simpler to give a consecutive account of such facts as to his ancestry, and as to Reginald Scott himself, as can be proved by documentary evidence or rendered probable by deductions therefrom.

John Philipot, Rouge Dragon and Somerset Herald, who died in 1645, set forth the pleasant and picturesque, but slightly supported origin of the family. I say pleasant, because the Scotts in the times of Elizabeth, James, and Charles, were a family of large possessions, wealth, and influence, influence so great that it is said that Elizabeth refused the request made by Lord Buckhurst, or the Earl of Leicester, that Sir Thomas Scott should be ennobled, saying

that he had already more influence in Kent than she had. She seems also to have had from this, or from some other reason, a personal dislike to them, for in her Progress in 1573, she having passed three days at his father-in-law's, Sir John Baker, of Sissinghurst Castle, declined to visit Scotts-hall, saying she wished to proceed to her own house, though on her way thither she had to pass Sir Thomas's gates. In his *Villare Cantianum*, p. 313, Philipot has these words: "*Scotts-hall*, which is now and hath been for divers Descents the Inheritance of eminent Gentlemen of that Sirname, whom I dare aver upon probable Grounds were originally called *Balioll*. *William Balioll*, second brother to *Alexander de Balioll*, frequently writ his Name *William de Balioll le Scot*, and it is probable, that upon the Tragedy of *John*, Earl of *Atholl*, who was made prisoner by *Edward* the first, and barbarously executed, in the year 1307. (whilst he endeavoured more nobly than successfully to defend the gasping Liberty of Scotland against the Eruption of that Prince;) this Family to decline the Fury of that Monarch, who was a man of violent passions, altered the name of *Balioll* to that of their Extraction and Country, and assumed for the future the Name of *Scot*. That the Sirname of this Family was originally *Balioll*, I farther upon these Reasons assert. First, the ancient Arms of Balioll Colledge in Oxford, which was founded by *John Balioll*, and dedicated to St. Katharine was a Katherin-Wheele, being still part of the paternal Coat of this Family. Secondly, *David de Strabogie*, who was Son and Heir to the unfortunate Earl above-said, astonished with an Example of so much Terror, altered his name from *Balioll* to Strabogie, which was a Signory which accrued to him the

Right of his Wife, who was Daughter and Heir to *John Comin*, Earl of Badzenoth and Strabogie, and by this Name King *Edward* the second, omitting that of *Balioll* restored *Chilham-castle* to him for Life, in the fifteenth year of his reign. Thirdly, the Earls of *Buccleugh*, and the Barons of Burley in Scotland, who derive themselves originally from *Balioll*, are known at this instant by no other Sirname, but Scot, and bear with some inconsiderable Difference, those very Arms which are at present the paternal Coat of the Family of *Scots-hall*."

This tradition excluded, we find that Sir William Scot of Braberne, now Brabourne, in Kent, is the first of whom we have historical mention. He was knighted in 1336, when the Black Prince was created Duke of Cornwall, and died in 1350: a brass to his memory, being in Weever's time (1631), the first of the memorials of the Scot family in Brabourne church. According to Philipot, this Sir William was the same with Sir William Scot, then Chief Justice of England; but if Mr. Foss be right in stating that this latter died in 1346, the year of the Black Death, this view cannot be upheld.

Another Sir William, apparently a grandson of the above, acquired through his mother the manor of Combe in Brabourne, and through his first wife and her relations—modes of increase in which the family seem to have been fortunate—that of Orlestone, as well as other places; and in 1420 he built Scotshall, in the manor of Hall in Smeeth, and was in 1428 sheriff of the county, and in 1430 knight of the shire in parliament. He died 1433. Scotshall, from time to time enlarged or rebuilt, and especially so by Sir Edward Scot, in the reign of Charles I, became the family seat for

twelve generations. Evelyn, under date August 2, 1663, records his visit to it (soon after the young knight's marriage), and calls it "a right noble seate, uniformly built, with a handsome gallery. It stands in a park well stor'd, the land fat and good. We were exceedingly feasted by the young knight, and in his pretty chapell heard an excellent sermon by his chaplaine." It was sold, with the remaining possessions of the family, at the close of the last century, and destroyed in 1808. Some undulations in a field on the north side of the road from Ashford to Hythe, about half a mile to the east of Smeeth church, alone mark its site.

The son of this second Sir William, named Sir John, being connected with the Woodvilles, and therefore with the wife of Edward IV, and being a staunch Yorkist, and apparently a man of intelligence, was employed in special embassies to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, especially in 1467, when he went to treat of the marriage of the king's sister with the duke. He had also various other and more substantial favours conferred upon him from time to time, from 1461 onwards, including that of Chilham Castle for life, as somewhat oddly, and I think wrongly, noted in the extract from Philipot. He died in 1485, and probably intestate, as no will is recorded.

To him succeeded his son, the third Sir William in this account, and he dying in 1524, was succeeded by his son, a second Sir John. This last, by his marriage with Anne, daughter of Reginald Pympe, had three sons, and died on the 7th October 1533. The eldest, William, followed his father on the 5th June 1536, and leaving no offspring, his next brother, Sir Reginald, took his place. Of the third