

INTRODUCTION

ROGER ASCHAM, the third son of John Ascham and Margaret his wife, was born in the year 1515 at Kirby Wiske, four or five miles northward of Thirsk, in the North Riding of Yorkshire. There are several Wiskes in the North Riding—Kirby Wiske, Newby Wiske, Danby Wiske; the word being from the Welsh Wysg, equivalent to the Gaelic Uisge, water. There is a stream in Yorkshire called the Wisk, allied in name to Exe, Ouse, and the like.

John Ascham was house-steward in the service of Henry Lord Scrope of Bolton, who died in 1532, and was succeeded in the barony by his son John, who died in 1554. John Ascham and Margaret his wife lived together until the year 1544, when they both died on the same day, and almost at the same hour, after forty-seven years of happy marriage. Roger Ascham's elder brothers were named Thomas and Antony. Antony graduated as M.B. in 1540, studied astrology, and became Vicar of Burneston, in Yorkshire. Roger Ascham had also sisters. While still very young he was received into the family of Sir Humphrey Wingfield, "to whom," said Ascham, "next to God I ought to refer, for his manifold benefits bestowed on me, the poor talent of learning which God hath lent me. . . . This worshipful man hath ever loved and used to have many children brought up in learning in his house, amongst whom I myself was one." He was placed under a tutor, R. Bond, until the age of fifteen, when his patron sent him on to St. John's College, Cambridge, where his tutor was Hugh Fitzherbert, a Fellow of St. John's. He proceeded to B.A. early in 1534, and in March, 1534, was himself elected Fellow of his College. Robert Pember, an intimate friend of his tutor, took great