

## THE LADY DOUGLAS SHEFFIELD DUDLEY.

This lady was the mother of Sir Robert Dudley, son of the Earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favorite. She was the eldest daughter of Lord William Howard of Effingham, eldest son of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. She was married first to John Sheffield, second, Baron Sheffield, by whom she had two children. Lord Sheffield died in 1569. Their children were :

i. EDMUND, successor to his father, and a distinguished man in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Earl of Mulgrave, and Knight of the Garter under King James I.

ii. ELIZABETH, who was married to Thomas, Earl of Ormond.

The lady Douglas had three sisters, who were married to noted men :

1, *Mary*, was married to Edward, Lord Dudley, being his third wife, and after his death she was married to Richard Mompesson, Esq.

2, *Frances*, married to Edward, Earl of Hertford. She died 1598.

3, *Martha*, married to Sir George Bouchier, Kt., third son of John, Earl of Bath.

The Lady Douglas was the second wife, as she declared, of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, being married to him at Escher in Surrey, in 1573, the same year that her father, Lord William Howard, died. But Dudley denied this, although he recognized her son, as his "base son," and his brother, Lord Ambrose Dudley, recognized him, as a legitimate son of Leicester. She was married to Sir Edward Stafford of Grafton, after leaving Lord Leicester, and he married Lady Lettice (Knollys) Devereux, Countess dowager of Essex. In 1605, Sir Robert Dudley, the son of Lady Douglas and Lord Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, brought a suit in the Court of Audience of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and got permission to examine witnesses to establish his legitimacy. He did examine the witnesses, and his mother testified, as some writers say [*See Lodge's portraits*], that she was married to Leicester, but that he, after a while, abused her and compelled her to marry Sir Edward Stafford. But, before the court had given their decision in the case, Lettice, Countess of Leicester, having great influence at the Court of James I., procured an information to be filed by Sir Edward Coke, the King's Attorney General, in the Star Chamber, against Sir Robert Dudley and his